



Region 24

**Middle Rio
Grande Region
Transportation Plan**

**Lead Agency:
Community Council of
Southwest Texas, Inc.**

December 1, 2006

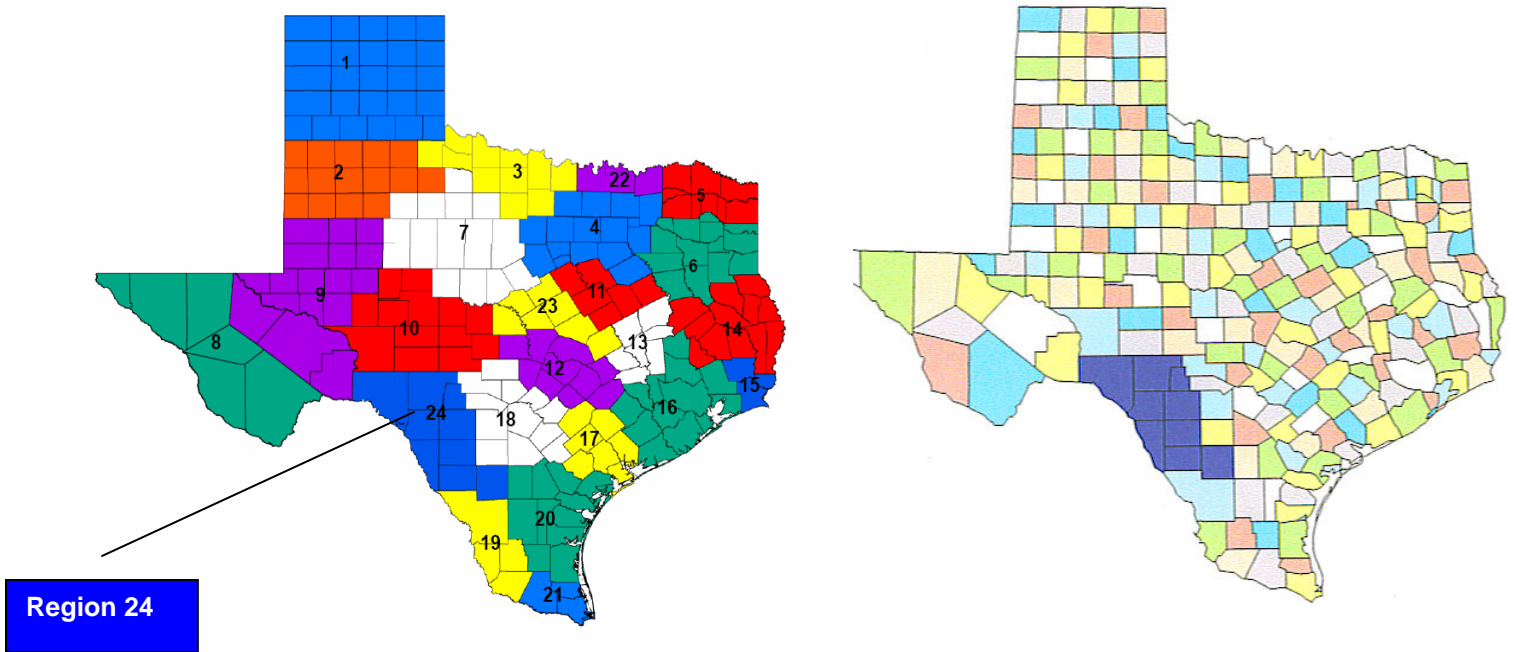
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Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc. the designated lead agency working with local communities, state and regional agencies, business leaders, and public has developed the Regional transportation Plan for the nine-county service area known as the Middle Rio Grande Region in Southwest Texas. This Regional Plan will guide transportation investments for the next five (5) years. Technical studies conducted across the region, along with extensive public outreach and support from the business community, have contributed to building a transportation plan that is designed to balance various needs throughout the region while meeting performance-based standards.

REGIONAL BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Middle Rio Grande Region is composed of the counties of Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Zavala. The overall population of the nine (9) counties is 161, 330 in which 71.1% is of Hispanic origin. The Middle Rio Grande Planning region is comprised of 14,333 square miles southwest of metro San Antonio to the Texas-Mexico border, between Eagle Pass and Del Rio.



Statistical data indicates this area to be one of the poorest regions in the country. This translates to 31% (2000 U. S. Census) of the region’s entire population having incomes below the established federal poverty level compared to 15.4% for the State of Texas and 11.8% for the U.S for this same period.

In demographic terms, we are both younger and older than the state as a whole. A greater proportion of our residents are below 19 and over 65 compared to statewide numbers. In addition, the income generating population within the 20 to 64 age range in the region is less than the state and this is reflected in the economic environment of the region. People who have grown up here cannot find employment, thus move away during their income producing years, and return to the area only during their retirement years. The results are communities with more consumers of public services, particularly in public education, pediatric and geriatric health services, and not income generating producers. The region’s schools, hospitals and health care facilities are severely stressed, and local taxpayers are

unfairly burdened.

Unemployment rates are extremely high in the region, as much as three or four times as high as state and national averages. This has a direct correlation with the low education levels in the area. Only fifty-four percent (54%) of the adult population (25+) completed twelve or more years of formal education. Less than 8% of the region's population has a college degree, and 3.6% have graduate or professional degrees. Equivalent statistics for the State of Texas and the nation, as a whole, 15.6% are college graduates, and 8% have graduate and/or professional degrees. More than 40% of the region's population can be classified as functionally illiterate, often in two languages, as compared to 23% for the State of Texas and 20.7% for the nation.

In economic terms, the Middle Rio Grande area is a poor region. Four of our nine counties are among the poorest counties in Texas and the nation. The mean per capita and household incomes are 60% of those in the state and 39% of those in the nation. One-third (1/3) of our residents earn incomes below the federally established poverty level.

All of these factors are reflected in unusually high rates of teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and welfare dependency. At any point in time, there is a small difference between the number of individuals on public assistance rolls and that on the region's payrolls, both public and private.

Ninety eight percent of the region's population is clustered in and around its 22 municipalities. Nearly half of the area's 154,381 residents live in the three cities of Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde. Del Rio is the region's largest city with a

population of 33,867. Eagle Pass has a population of 22,413. Uvalde’s population is 14,929. (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2000*). Del Rio and Eagle Pass are major points of entry to Mexico.

1. *Regional Population Estimates*

1980	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	2000	2005	2010
125,077	134,085	136,901	139,776	142,711	145,708	148,768	154,381	162,354	171,145
Source: Texas State Data Center									
Currently, the estimated population of the region is 161,330.									

2. *Median Age, Sex and Racial Composition*

- a. The median age of the population, according to Texas State Data Center, was 30.8 years for the year 2000.

Age Distribution

Age	Population	Area Percent	Statewide
Under 5	13,678	8.9	7.8
5-14	29,129	18.9	15.8
15-19	13,246	8.6	7.8
20-44	50,162	32.5	38.5
45-64	30,135	19.5	20.2
65+	18,031	11.7	9.9

- b. Texas State Data Center statistics indicates that the 2000 male and female population distribution was 48.9% and 51.1%, respectively.

- c. The ethnic composition of the district is as follows:

White	18.10%
Black	0.88%
Hispanic	79.71%
Other	1.13%

3. Education

Level of Attainment	No. of Persons	% of Population *
Not a High School Graduate	41,731	46.9
Less than 9th grade	27,747	31.2
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	13,993	15.7
High School Education or Better	47,154	53.1
High School Graduate or GED	20,178	22.7
Some College, no Degree	13,292	15.0
Associate Degree	3,190	3.6
Bachelor's Degree	6,947	7.8
Graduate or Professional Degree	3,547	4.0
Total	88,885	100%
* For persons 25 years and older. Source: U. S. Bureau of Census - Census 2000		

4. Median Family Income and Per Capita Income

The median household income for families based on the 2000 Census was \$24,460 for the region. The statewide figure was \$39,933. Regional per capita income based on the 2000 Census was \$10,522 and the statewide figure was \$19,293. The estimated median household income for 2004 is \$25,899 and the per capita income is estimated at \$11,295. The proposed area possesses a poverty rate of slightly over 25% on average. The unemployment rate in the county of Maverick is the highest depicted at slightly over 14.5% and Zavala County at 12%, while the region's average is 6.9%. Almost half (48%) of the households in the area show an annual income of \$25,000 or less.

Economic Levels			
County	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate	Median Household Income
Dimmit	28.3%	8.4	\$23,635
Edwards	22.8%	4.1	\$25,940
Kinney	19.5%	6.0	\$29,876
La Salle	26.9%	6.8	\$23,469
Maverick	28.8%	14.7	\$23,861
Real	20.6%	4.6	\$26,917
Uvalde	23.4%	6.2	\$27,617
Val Verde	22.4%	7.3	\$30,407

Zavala	32.7%	12.0	\$18,553
All information taken from the U.S. Census and Texas Workforce Commission			

5. *Size of the Labor Force and Growth Trends*

According to the Texas Workforce Commission Labor Market Information the following is the current employment distribution for 2004:

INDUSTRY	Estimated Employment 2004
Agriculture	5,540
Mining	550
Construction	1,070
Manufacturing	2,690
Durable Goods Manufacturing	740
Nondurable Goods, Manufacturing	1,950
Transportation and Public Utilities	3,280
Transportation	2,780
Communications and Utilities	510
Wholesale Trade	9,390
Retail Trade	7,990
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	1,270
Services	18,300
Government	6,450

6. *Unemployment Rates and Workforce*

Although new employment opportunities have occurred as a result of NAFTA, the region continues to suffer from high rates of unemployment. The Texas Workforce Commission reports unemployment rates (August, 2005) for the region, as follows:

County	Avg # Persons in Labor Force	Avg. # of Persons Employed	Avg. # of Persons Unemployed	Unemployment Rate %
Dimmit	3,943	3,629	314	8.0
Edwards	1,141	1,099	42	3.7
Kinney	1,567	1,493	74	4.7
La Salle	2,411	2,257	154	6.4
Maverick	18,057	16,315	1,742	9.6
Real	1,834	1,770	64	3.5
Uvalde	12,388	11,661	727	5.9
Val Verde	19,986	18,785	1,201	6.0
Zavala	3,823	3,306	517	13.5
Total	65,205	60,454	4,751	7.3

Employment and Business

	2000 Census	%	2004 Estimate	%
Age 16+ population	108,693		115,281	
In Labor Force	57,587	53.0%	60,900	52.8%
Employed	49,359	85.7%	52,060	85.3%
Unemployed	6,947	12.1%	7,449	12.4%
In Armed Forces	1,281	2.2%	1,391	2.4%
Not in Armed Forces	51,106	47.0%	454,381	47.4%
Emp in Blue Collar Occupations	26,388	53.5%	36,031	---
Emp in White Collar Occupations	22,971	46.5%	4,182	---

Source: Sites On Texas

7. Vocational Schools

Southwest Texas Junior College offers skill(s) training in nursing, auto mechanics, air conditioning and refrigeration, commercial truck driving, and instruction for aviation training. SWTJC has its main campus in Uvalde, with satellite offices in Eagle Pass and Del Rio.

8. Labor Skills Needed

The following table indicates the top 25 occupations in the District with the highest annual rate of new job growth. (Texas Workforce Commission: Labor Market

Information)

Fastest Growing Occupations	
Occupation	Growth Rate
Child Care Worker	45.5%
Fast Food Preparation & Serving Workers	33.8%
Teacher Assistants	33.8%
Customer Service Representatives	30.4%
Secondary School Teachers	28.0%
Registered Nurses	26.1%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	25.0%
Waiters & Waitresses	23.2%
Elementary School Teachers	22.5%
General & Operations Managers	22.5%
Personal & Home Care Aides	21.0%
Home Health Aides	20.8%
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	20.4%
Janitors & Cleaners	20.3%
Middle School Teachers	19.0%
Cashiers	18.3%
General Office Clerks	16.7%
Laborers/Freight, Stock/Mtrl Movers, Hand	12.5%
Retail Salesperson	11.2%
First-Line Suprvs/Mgrs of Retail Sales Wkrs	9.9%
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	7.5%
Secretaries, Ex Legal, Medical, & Executive	3.5%

9. Retail Sales

County	1990 Gross Sales	2004 Gross Sales	Increase Or (Decrease)	1990 Amt Subject To State Tax	2004 Amt Subject to State Tax	Increase Or (Decrease)
Val Verde	280,639,356	853,203,241	572,563,885	136,075,969	274,430,347	138,354,378
Maverick	411,330,845	569,475,103	158,144,258	131,325,773	252,647,561	121,321,788
Uvalde	292,766,824	556,406,954	263,640,130	90,889,972	160,380,286	69,490,314
Zavala	144,282,656	53,496,366	(90,786,290)	13,416,361	17,030,755	3,614,394
Dimmit	82,169,959	87,162,953	4,992,994	32,620,255	38,518,919	5,898,664
La Salle	24,126,054	69,801,880	45,675,826	9,804,015	20,062,160	10,258,145
Kinney	21,423,717	33,461,239	12,037,522	6,722,751	7,878,554	1,155,803
Edwards	10,964,734	16,365,839	5,401,105	3,746,811	6,874,014	3,127,203
Real	8,606,614	16,508,385	7,901,771	3,746,140	7,784,132	4,037,992

10. Infrastructure and Services

Community Facilities

▶ Housing

All major municipalities in the Economic Development District operate and maintain public housing facilities.

▶ Water and Waste Water

Adequate water delivery and wastewater treatment facilities exist in all but a few small enclaves where septic tanks are still utilized.

▶ Educational Institutions

The two post-secondary educational institutions in the District are Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College, a branch of Sul Ross State University, and South West Texas Junior College. Both are located in Uvalde, but both have satellite campuses in Del Rio, and Eagle Pass. Through an education collaborative, SWTJC offers a two year associated degree, residents in the area can receive a variety of four year degrees in a dozen fields as well as master's degrees in education and business administration through Sul Ross Rio Grande College without leaving the region. Additional degrees to be offered Bachelor of Science degrees in nursing, chemistry and biology and a bachelor of business administration in management information systems. Both Southwest Texas Junior College and Sul Ross Rio Grande Campus are key players in the workforce development system in providing just-in-time training in various vocational and technical fields.

▶ Industrial Parks

The District has numerous industrial Parks. Del Rio, Uvalde, and Carrizo Springs each

have one. Eagle Pass has two. The City of Cotulla presently has an area designated as an industrial area. The five (5) counties of La Salle, Dimmit, Zavala, Uvalde, and Maverick have been designated as a federal Empowerment Zone areas which allows businesses to receive various incentives to locate or hire people from the zone

► Medical facilities (including both hospitals and clinics)

The following municipalities maintain either a hospital or clinic:

Rural/Indigent Clinic(s)	Hospital/Districts
Uvalde	Uvalde
Eagle Pass	Eagle Pass
Campwood	Carrizo Springs
Leakey	Del Rio
Cotulla	Crystal City

► Emergency Response

Each of the nine counties provides a volunteer force for remote areas. The municipalities of Eagle Pass, Uvalde, and Del Rio have full or paid fire protection teams. Crystal City, Carrizo Springs, Big Wells, Cotulla, Rock Springs, Brackettville, Sabinal, Utopia, Concan, Leakey, and Encinal each have a volunteer force. In addition to fire protection a majority provide EMT services including the counties of La Salle, Dimmitt, Zavala, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Maverick. While the remaining counties either have a volunteer staff or have to rely upon service from a neighboring county, everyone has access to services. Emergency response is a very important issue in our region due to sporadic climate changes that cause flooding, and hail damage to homes and businesses throughout the region.

► Programs for low-income population and senior citizens The Middle Rio Grande Development Council partners with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). AAA supports the services: Congregate Meals, Home-Delivered Meals, One Way Trips, Health

Maintenance Vision Care, Legal Awareness Contacts, Elder Abuse Publicity Efforts, Health Education Programs, and Legal Assistance Service.

An analysis of the region's economy reveals that government accounts for the largest portion of employment. This may be attributed to additional federal law enforcement: Immigration and Naturalization, Drug Enforcement Agency, and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol required along the border area. The absence of traditional employment opportunities in the region (e.g. agri-related) is also some reason for this phenomenon. Federal, state, local governments and school districts, however, continue to be principal employers in most of the smaller communities of the region.

Although agriculture is no longer the most significant economic sector of the region, it nevertheless represents a vital segment of the economy, and has numerous support industries. Agricultural properties are being utilized for recreational purposes more frequently to offset losses in agricultural production. There are several economic opportunities in the region when it comes to the tourism and recreational business industry. These include hunting, bird watching, water sports and nature hikes. The regional tourism and recreation service industry associated with hunting and recreation realize economic spillover gains and have begun to witness growth on a year round basis.

The competitive advantage that the border communities have due to their proximity to a huge Mexican market continues to allow the border economic development foundations to attract business and economic development projects to the region. However, limited and slow developing infrastructure improvements to roadways and ports of entry have contributed to the inability to maximize the economic potential of

the border region.

Border retailers continue to rely on Mexican shoppers for a significant portion of their trade while the tourism and recreation segments of the economy rely on the adjacent San Antonio metropolitan area as a primary trade area. Similarly, San Antonio retailers and service vendors derive trade opportunities from the region. The absence of major retailers and other vendors of goods and particular services in the Middle Rio Grande area force the populace to trade beyond the region, often forcing some to relocate outside the region.

The local economies in the region continue to be driven by small business. In order to attract new development, municipalities offer tax abatements, tapping fee waivers, and the like. In addition, the prospects for economic development in La Salle, Dimmit, Zavala, Maverick and Uvalde counties have been enhanced by their designation as federal Empowerment Zones. Particular attention needs to be given to those areas that are suffering most from unemployment/underemployment and other economic distress.

11. Work Force and Transportation

Due to the stagnant economy of the area, opportunities for individuals and families are scarce. The area is primarily strong in retail with large chains providing lateral employment opportunities with minimal room for growth. Such jobs provide only minimum wage, no benefits, and no opportunities to gain additional job skills or educational/job training avenues. Hence, families seek comprehensive care assistance to meet daily living needs such as energy assistance, transportation, food & shelter, medical, and housing. Also due to the rising utilization of advance pay loan institutions,

increase in fuel & energy cost, and rising cost of property values, the region is experiencing an influx of individuals and families seeking assistance to meet basic living needs.

The table below depicts transportation patterns of those in the labor force within the region:

County	Total % of Population in Labor Force	% That Car Pool	% That Use Public Transit	Mean Travel Time	% That Travel Outside County to Work
Dimmit	54.1%	16.7%	.3%	21.2 minutes	20.3 miles
Edwards	52.5%	20.1%	.3%	23.4 minutes	23.9 miles
Kinney	42.4%	14.9%	.4%	22.2 minutes	27.8 miles
La Salle	45.7%	25.6%	0%	25.8 minutes	50.7 miles
Maverick	50.7%	16.7%	.5%	20.2 minutes	13.0 miles
Real	50.3%	16.7%	.8%	21.8 minutes	28.3 miles
Uvalde	58.6%	18.9%	.3%	19.8 minutes	11.9 miles
Val Verde	56.8%	17.7%	.1%	17.6 minutes	8.8 miles
Zavala	44.9%	21.8%	.7%	18.1 minutes	31.0 miles

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDERS

Regional Transportation Lead Agency: Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc.

Rural Transit Districts:

**Southwest Transit (A program of the Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc.)
Counties of Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Zavala**

**City of Del Rio
Val Verde County**

Throughout the process of developing a regional plan, numerous regional stakeholders' meetings were held throughout the area. The following demonstrates such meetings held through the planning process:

February 4, 2005	Uvalde, Texas
May 3, 2005	Uvalde, Texas
June 22, 2005	Uvalde, Texas
October 6, 2006	Pearsall, Texas
December 14, 2005	Uvalde, Texas
February 22, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
March 1, 2006	Del Rio, Texas
March 9, 2006	Carrizo Springs, Texas
March 29, 2006	Carrizo Springs, Texas
March 30, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
April 12, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
August 3, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
August 10, 2006	Eagle Pass, Texas
August 14, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
August 16, 2006	Carrizo Springs, Texas
September 13, 2006	Eagle Pass, Texas
October 11, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
November 13, 2006	Uvalde, Texas
November 20, 2006	Carrizo Springs, Texas

Throughout the planning timeline, various interested agencies and individuals took part in stakeholder's meetings. They include:

Southwest Transit
City of Del Rio
Community Service Agency Head Start
Community Service Agency Elderly Nutrition
Middle Rio Grande Development Council of Governments
Middle Rio Grande Work Force
CCSWT Early Head Start
CCSWT Elderly Nutrition Center
MRDCG – Area on Aging Agency
Fort Duncan Medical Center
CCSWT Head Start
Cano Transportation
Kerrville Bus Company
Gabriel Tafolla Charter School
CCSWT Housing Department
CCSWT Social Service Department

TxDOT San Antonio District
TxDOT Laredo District

These agencies contributed to the planning process through technical support, stakeholder meetings, public presentations, client needs assessment, provider survey and inventory assessment, public forums, peer group meetings, five year planning retreat, and a regional economic development conference.

REGIONAL TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

At the inception of the planning process, stakeholders inventoried the needs of the region and designated those constraints and barriers that hinder the region's ability to provide the essential level of service needed for the transportation network. Assessing the constraints was not the only aspect, but stakeholders felt it necessary to assign tasks to begin overcoming such constraints and barriers. It was determined in order to successfully coordinate to provide a more seamless mode of transit services throughout the region; all would have to be able to share resources such as space, money, and people. The following listed below depict those constraints that hinder a regional approach to providing transit services as well as tasks developed to begin the process of change throughout the region :

1. *Documentation – Undocumented coordination.*

Task: Begin documenting coordination that has historically been in practice in form of inter-local agreements or memorandums of understandings.

2. *Turf Issues – the ownership of land, equipment, and funds. Animosity between agencies is immense due to historical relations or lack there of.*

Task: Began comparing clients, services, needs, and funding.

Task: Common Languages – incorporate regional transit plan into various agencies' 5 year plans. Include such areas as technology, fuel, drug & alcohol, training, certifications, and operations.

3. *Client Goal – The development of people.*

Task: Through a needs assessment it was proven that stakeholders share the same clientele and interests in moving people in our area out of poverty and to becoming self sufficient in order to enhance their quality of life. This included areas of education, housing, transportation, workforce, and economic development.

Task: Develop modes for comprehensive services and a uniform referral system.

4. *Public Officials/Political Climate*

Task: Set forth an initiative to include public officials and others (who are politically strong) to be a part of the planning process as well as interested parties in transit.

5. *Training - Training was lacking across the board. It was also determined that there was not the needed workforce for the type of employees needed for transit.*

Task: Develop a regional training co-op by utilizing those stakeholders' staff that are certified and already contain training programs that can be provided throughout the region.

Task: Utilizing school districts' and charter schools' pool of drivers and shared training.

Task: Work with the workforce and the Southwest Texas Junior College to gain adequate training for CDL operators, mechanics (alternative fuels, lifts, etc...), and automation with the ultimate goal of developing unavailable trained workforce to support transportation occupational demands.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

The Middle Rio Grande Region possesses two Rural Transit Districts that cover the nine (9) county area. Additionally one Intercity Carrier as well as numerous private

transit providers including taxi services makeup the region’s transportation network. Although all modes of transportation were targeted as stakeholders within the region, various transit providers have not taken part in the planning process to date. Those providers remain target agencies that current stakeholders plan to continue recruiting to the network. Those include school districts, local colleges, private providers, taxi associations, and various social service transit providers. The table below indicates those transit providers that showed interest in being included in the region’s transportation plan:

Agency Name	Type of Service	Type of Entity	Area of Service
Southwest Transit	Rural Public Transit, Medical Transportation, Job Access, Elderly/Disabled Transportation	Rural Transit District	Counties of Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, and Zavala.
City of Del Rio	Rural Public Transit, Medical Transportation, Job Access, Elderly/Disabled	Rural Transit District	Val Verde County
Kerrville Bus Company	Intercity Bus Services	Intercity Provider	Counties of Kinney, Maverick, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Zavala
Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc.	Charter School Transit, Head Start Transit, Early Head Transit,	Private, Non-Profit	Counties of Edwards, Kinney, Real, Uvalde, and Zavala
Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc.	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	Private, Non-Profit	County of Uvalde
Community Services Agency	Head Start Transit, Early Head Transit,	Private, Non-Profit	Counties of Dimmit, Maverick, La Salle, & Frio
Community Services Agency	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	Private, Non-Profit	County of Dimmit
County of Edwards	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	County Government	County of Edwards
County of Kinney	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	County Government	County of Kinney
County of La Salle	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	County Government	County of La Salle
County of Maverick	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	County Government	County of Maverick
County of Real	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	County Government	County of Real
City of Del Rio	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	Municipality	City of Del Rio
County of Zavala	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	County Government	County of Zavala

GAPS IN SERVICES

Although the region has shown successes in coordination for over fifteen years, the transit network still provides a large amount of stand alone services and a limited amount of duplicated services. Due to minimal funding in all areas, the overall current delivery of services only meets 33% of the transit needs in the area based on the region's needs assessment. Distance to medical facilities, employment, training, and vital living needs is great. On average 23.97% of the labor force travels outside their prospective county for employment. The average travel time to employment is 21.12 minutes.

1. Job Access Needs

While there has been a moderate increase in public transit funds, the mobility demands created for families who must meet the work requirements has by far exceeded the limited funds. The new demands for welfare to work transportation has far exceeded equipment and fueling resources, thus creating a need for collaborative measures between public and private sectors. The Middle Rio Grande communities plagued by stagnant economies have found the need to look to metropolitan areas and larger rural communities to place some of its unskilled labor force. Major employers in the region include:

Laredo:

Laredo Independent School District, United Independent School District, Texas Gas Corp, City of Laredo, Mercy Regional Medical Center, H.E.B. Grocery Company, Webb County, McDonald's Restaurant, Texas A&M University, The Laredo National Band, Doctor's Hospital, Laredo Community College, International Bank of Commerce, Laredo State Center, Wal Mart, Barry of Laredo, TSI Equipment, Miracle Candle Co., Sears Roebuck Co, Texas Mexican Railway, J.C. Penny, Immigration & Naturalization Services, Delphi Packard Electric, International Stores, Builders Square, Daniel B.

Hastings, Inc. , Sony Magnetics, Coca Cola Bottle Co, El Metro Transit.

Uvalde:

Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, City of Uvalde, County of Uvalde, Super Wal-Mart, Williamson & Dickey, Sierra Industries, Amistad Nursing Center, Garland Foods, First State Bank, Security Service Federal Credit Union, Vulcan Materials, H.E. B. Grocery Foods, Super S. Foods, Border Patrol, 38th Judicial, Tandem Oil, Maxi Energy, Statewide Transport Trucking Division, Uvalde Memorial Hospital, Uvalde County Clinic/Our Health, Texas A&M Research Center, Holiday Inn, Best Western, McDonalds, Wendy's, Taco Bell, Kettle Restaurant, US Cellular, General Tire Proving Grounds, UPS, Unifirst Uniforms, Southwest Texas Junior College, Rio Grande College/Sul Ross State University, Texas Mohair, Uvalde Family Practice, MG Materials, Sears Roebuck, Bealls, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Subway, Dairy Queen, Tractor Supply, Torres Ready Mix, Uvalde Concrete, Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc., F&F Auto Supply, Lack Furniture, United State Postal Service, Garner State Park & Recreation, Southwood Nursing Home, Family Dollar, Dollar General, Uvalde Inn, Central Power & Light/AEP.

Carrizo Springs:

Carrizo Springs Independent School District, Community Service Agency, City of Carrizo Springs, Dimmit County, McDonalds, Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc., Wal Mart, H.E.B. Grocery Foods, Bear Motors, Bear's Tejano Club, Vida's Used Cars, Carrizo Springs Hospital and Nursing Home.

Del Rio:

Federal Agencies, San Felipe Del Rio CISD, Laughlin Air Force Base, Wal-Mart Supercenter, Val Verde Regional Medical Center, City of Del Rio, County of Val Verde, Plaza Del Sol Mall, HEB Grocery, Texas State Agencies, The GEO Correctional Facility, Union Pacific Railroad, The Bank and Trust, Border Federal Credit Union, Del Rio National Bank.

San Antonio:

There are number of employment opportunities in Bexar County. With the addition of the Toyota plant in San Antonio, local workforce is anticipating a large number of residents that will be commuting for work placement.

One of the most rapidly growing industries in the region is that of the trucking industry. This is apparent primarily in the border areas of Del Rio, Laredo, and Eagle Pass. Due to the great demand of this industry, the Southwest Texas Jr. College has expanded its truck driving training to each extension site located in Eagle Pass, Uvalde, and Del Rio. This program assists interested students to obtain their Commercial Driver's License.

Welfare recipients need seamless modes of transportation alternatives to get to work. Since the current regional transportation system operates primarily on a reserve-a-ride, first come first served basis, it was anticipated and proven to be true that the work related trips exceeded the systems capacity as welfare to work laws are enforced; Thus, having enlarged the gaps in services to disabled passengers. In order to meet such demands, the current regional service delivery system has expanded its services to provide transportation alternatives to those seeking employment, education, and training as well as those thrust into the workforce due to welfare-to-work reform. Although this expansion has been widely received, it is small scale and does not begin to meet the needs of the target area.

In assessing the target area’s public transportation needs, job accessible transportation has become vital to the long term success towards increasing the number of welfare recipients to become self-sufficient, including those recipients who are disabled. Due to the stagnant economy of the proposed area, residents must seek job opportunities and educational/training opportunities in larger outlying communities such as Eagle Pass, Laredo, Carrizo Springs, Del Rio, Uvalde, and San Antonio.

Due to the region’s proximity to the border of Mexico, a large square mileage of the area is considered to be that of *Colonias*. The most heavily populated areas of colonias are present in the following counties:

Dimmit County Colonia Demographics:

Colonias: Asherton, Big Wells, Brundage, Catarina, Espantosa, Carrizo Hills	
Total Colonia Population	3,690 36% of total population
Total Colonia Acreage	2,909

Zavala County Colonia Demographics:

Colonias: La Pryor, Chula Vista, Loma Grande, Camposanto/Elcometa, Bushy Creek Subdivision, Popeye Lake, River Spur, Triangulu, Bee Cross Subdivision, Nueces Campsite Lots, Amaya, La Hacienda Estates #2, Batesville		
Total Colonia Population	4,071	35% of total population
Total Colonia Acreage	1,857	

Uvalde County Colonia Demographics:

Colonias: North Uvalde, Uvalde Estates, Sabinal, Knippa, Vanessa, Brice Lane, Vanham, Fort Clark Road, Gonzales, South Grove		
Total Colonia Population	3,664	14% of total population
Total Colonia Acreage	3,685	

Maverick County Colonia Demographics:

Colonias: Loma Bonita, Deer Run 1-5, South Elm Creek 1-4, Sauz Creek, Siesta Acres, Kickapoo Indian Village, Riverside Acres, Florintino Ramos, Rosita Gardens, Rosita Valley, Victoriano Hernandez, Los Guajillos, Loma Linda Ranchettes, Border Housing #1, Loma Linda 1-5, Chula Vista 1-5, Chula Vista School Block, El Pueblo Nuevo, Rockaway Country Sites, La Herredura, Eagle Heights 1-4, Zamora Lands, Las Brisas, Wilson & Bargo, Morales Circle, Morales 2 west, Morales 2 east, Morales 3, Morales 2a, Big River Park, Hector Rodriguez, Green Acres 1-2, Paisano Heights, Las Carretas, Lago Vista, Nellis Lands, Heritage Farm, Las Quintas Fronterizas, Cedar Ridge 1-4, El India Townsite, Los Jardines Verdes, Fabrica Townsite, Seco Mines, Cenizo Heights, Normandy, Quemado, Radar Base, Hopedale, Airport Subdivision, Elm Creek 1-2, La Hacienditas		
Total Colonia Population	22,285	44% of total population
Total Colonia Acreage	5,085	

Goals To Address Job Access Regional Needs

Dimmit County

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To coordinate with the Community Service Agency Elderly Nutrition Program to provide local transit service through a purchase of service contract.

Task 2: To open daily routes from Big Wells, Brundage, Asherton, and Catarina for job access needs through coordination efforts between Southwest Transit and the Community Service Agency Elderly Nutrition Program.

Estimated Costs: \$175,000

Val Verde County

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To enhance the current service delivery system by adding a deviated fixed route in Cienegas Terrace.

Task 2: To enhance the current service delivery system by adding a deviated fixed route in Val Verde Park Estates.

Estimated Cost: \$170,000

Maverick County:

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To open new routes from the Northern Colonias of Quemado, Seco Mines, Deer Run, and Siesta Acres for job access and public transit needs.

Task 2: To open new routes from the Southern Colonias of Chula Vista, Pueblo Nueva, Loma Linda, Loma Bonita, Hacienditas, Herradura, El Indo, and Quintas Fronterisas for job access and public transit needs.

Task 3: To coordinate with Maverick County Elderly Nutrition Center to provide additional local job access transportation within the city limits of Eagle Pass.

Estimated Costs: \$350,000

Zavala County:

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To enhance the current transit system by providing extended hours for the colonias of Chula Vista and Loma Alta for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 2: To enhance the current local transit system by providing extended hours within the city limits of Crystal City for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 3: To enhance the current transit system by providing extended hours and days of operation for the communities of La Pryor, Batesville, and Crystal City into the city of Carrizo Springs for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 4: To enhance the current transit system by providing extended hours and days of operation for the communities of La Pryor and Batesville into the city of Uvalde for job access and educational/training needs.

Estimated Costs: \$230,000

Uvalde County:

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To enhance the current transit services by expanding hours of service and days of service for the colonias of Uvalde Estates and Deer Valley for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 2: To coordinate with the Uvalde Elderly Nutrition Center to expand hours and days of operation for local transportation within the city of Uvalde for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 3: To expand hours and days of operation into the city of San Antonio for job access and educational/training needs.

Estimated Costs: \$180,000

Kinney County:

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To enhance the current transit services by expanding hours of service for local transportation in the city of Brackettville through coordination with the Kinney County Elderly Nutrition Center for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 2: To open daily routes into the city of Del Rio for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 3: To open daily routes into the city of Uvalde for job access and educational/training needs.

Estimated Costs: \$60,000

Real County:

Goal: To enhance transportation services to better serve job access needs within the county.

Task 1: To enhance the current transit services by expanding hours of service for local transportation in the city of Leakey and Campwood through coordination with the Real County Leakey Elderly Nutrition Center and the Real County Campwood Nutrition Center for job access and educational/training needs.

Task 2: To open daily routes into the city of Uvalde from Campwood, Leakey, and Montell job access and educational/training needs.

Estimated Costs: \$150,000

Employer Assisted Strategies:

It was identified through the Job Access needs assessment that employers have determined that their employees have a need for employment transportation. Even though their employees have access to public transportation, the hours and days of operation may not meet their needs. As noted in the employer's surveys, a small

number of employers contained the financial capabilities to assist with transportation costs.

This would be a target goal for the region. Major and interested employers remain target recruits to join the regional transit stakeholders in assisting with the transit needs of the area which also includes job access, training, and support transportation services.

2. *Mobility Needs/New Freedom Initiative*

Through the region's needs assessment, transit providers face barriers in meeting the needs to provide the same level of service currently being provided let alone increasing the level of service. New initiatives and avenues are targeted to assist in not only meeting the current level of service, but to also strive towards increasing the level of service to meet a larger percentage of gaps in service. The following are the gaps in service for meeting mobility needs:

- Vehicle replacement for an aging fleet. 95% of the vehicles used to provide service in the region are over ten years in age, have an average life mileage of over 104,987 miles. It is estimated that over 65% of the inventory is in need of replacement just to continue the current service delivery.
- Lift and wheelchair accessible vehicles. Only 33% of the current inventory in the region is lift and/or wheelchair accessible.
- Certified staff to transport persons with disabilities.
- Provide various modes of communication devices and systems for persons with disabilities to schedule transportation.
- The lack of accessible ramps needed by wheelchair accessible clientele.

The table below depicts those providers in the region that provided a transportation inventory:

Agency	Type of Service	Annual One-way Trips	# of Vehicles	Average Mileage	Average Age of Vehicles	Average Annual Cost
Southwest Transit	Rural Public Transit, Medical Transportation, Job Access, Elderly/Disabled Transportation	154,000	30	96,000	10 years +	\$1,800,000
City of Del Rio	Rural Public Transit, Medical Transportation, Job Access, Elderly/Disabled	44,000	15	111,090	5 years	\$780,00
Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc.	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	10,680	2	106,000	10+	\$13,000
Community Services Agency	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	3640	2	34,000	2 Years	\$76,000
County of Edwards	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	0	0	0	0	0
County of La Salle	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit		2	55,000	6 years	\$13,000
County of Real	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	960	2	75,000	10 years +	\$13,000
City of Del Rio	Elderly Nutrition Support Services – Transit	4056	3	68,000	10 years +	\$9,800

It is estimated that in order to continue the current level of service, the cost to replace 65% of the fleet mentioned above will cost approximately \$1,080,000,

3. Rural Public Transportation and Elderly/Disabled Transportation Side-Barriers

Both rural public transportation providers in the region have experienced an increase in services over the past five years despite a decrease in funding, and rising costs in fuel, insurance, and an aging fleet. Maintenance costs continue to increase as a result to the aging fleet. Alternative fuel issues also contribute to serve as a barrier due to lack of fueling stations, certified alternative fuel mechanics, and the effectiveness of alternative fueled vehicles.

The need for efficiency is great as well as the need to grow technologically. The cost to automate its services with current marketed scheduling software, Global

Intelligence Systems, and communications is not a reality with current funding and budgets but yet it is needed in order to grow with the transit industry as a whole.

The need to expand services into unserved areas, expand hours of operations, and days of operation proves a hardship due to costs.

Southwest Transit

Southwest Transit Operations Program (STOP) has been administered by CCSWT since 1981 and celebrates its silver anniversary this year. The program is funded through the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program. In collaboration with the rural public transit system, CCSWT is also funded through the TxDOT's Medical Transportation Program to provide medical transportation to eligible Medicaid clients to medical facilities. Southwest Transit contains a fleet of thirty (30) vehicles and operates in an eight (8) county service area. Over 140,000 one-way trips are performed on an annual basis traveling over 350,000 miles annually. The program contains one (1) project director, one (1) mechanic, two (2) systems operator, one (1) trainer, and twenty-five (25) drivers.

Demand response, deviated fixed routes, door-to-door services, and various routes (both locally and out-of- area) are provided to the general public for a small fee. Scheduling and dispatching routes are performed centrally in the City of Uvalde. Southwest Transit is unique in its operation due to its in-house mechanic and maintenance facility, as well as two multi-modal facilities located in Uvalde and Eagle Pass, 1 transit terminal located in Crystal City, 1 Park & Ride Facility located

in Uvalde, and 4 transit offices located in Brackettville, Cotulla, Rocksprings, and Campwood.

Southwest Transit Operations Program has an extensive training program which includes such training as Passenger Assistance Techniques and Sensitivity, Bus Safety, Blood Born Pathogens, CPR, First Aid, Defensive Driving, Customer Service, Communications, Conflict Resolution, and Stress Management. Due to such training efforts, CCSWT has had the honor of receiving the Texas State Para-transit Rodeo Championship Title nine (9) times and placing at the National Para-transit Rodeo Championships two (2) times.

Hours of Operations

CCSWT’s business office hours of operation are Monday through Saturday 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. A voice mail system is available for clients to leave messages between hours of operation. An emergency contact is provided to all clientele. This emergency contact is via a cell phone to the Transit & Safety Director who is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays.

CCSWT’s Hours of Operation for transit services is depicted in the table below:

County	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation
Dimmit County	Monday through Saturday	4:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Edwards County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Kinney County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM
La Salle County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Maverick County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Real County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Uvalde County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 9:00 PM
Val Verde County	Monday through Saturday	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Zavala County	Monday through Saturday	4:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Due to CCSWT's commitment to providing seamless modes of transportation, Southwest Transit has for the past ten years provided services even during holidays. Although the Community Council of Southwest Texas, Inc. observes 12 holidays including employee birthdays, the transportation department provides full services on such holidays.

CCSWT currently has a fleet of the following:

12	Type II	Wheelchair accessible	1 duel fuel propane
7	Type III	Wheelchair accessible	1 duel fuel propane
1	Type X	Mini-van	
1	Type VII	Mini-van with Wheelchair accessible	
5	Type IX	Full size van-15 passenger	
1	Type II	Wheelchair accessible	Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel
2	Type III	Wheelchair accessible	Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel

Will add in 2007:

3	Type II	Wheelchair accessible	Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel
4	Type III	Wheelchair accessible	Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel

City of Del Rio Transportation Program

The City of Del Rio Transportation Program is funded through the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program. In collaboration with Southwest Transit, the City of Del Rio is also funded through a sub-contract to provide Medial Transportation to eligible Medicaid clients to medical facilities in Val Verde County. The City of Del Rio contains (15) vehicles and operates within the county of Val Verde. Over 44,000 one-way trips are performed on an annual basis traveling over 283,624 miles annually. The program

contains one (1) project director, two (2) dispatchers, one (1) trainer, one (1) mechanic and twelve (12) drivers.

Demand response, deviated fixed routes, door-to-door services, and various routes (both locally and out-of- area) are provided to the general public for a small fee. Scheduling and dispatching routes are performed centrally in the City of Del Rio. The City of Del Rio is unique in its operation due to its in-house mechanics and maintenance facility, as well as a multi-modal facilities located in the city of Del Rio. The City of Del Rio’s hours operation are Monday through Saturday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Due to the City of Del Rio’s commitment to providing seamless modes of transportation, the transportation program has for the past ten years provided services even during holidays.

City of Del Rio Transportation Program currently has a fleet of:

- 2 Type I Conversion Van
- 6 Type II Wheelchair accessible
- 6 Type III Wheelchair accessible
- 1 Type VII Mini-van with Wheelchair accessible

REGIONAL STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE	STAKEHOLDERS
Mainstream/integrate all transit service of the region. Coordination initiative.	Continuity of all services providers, staff, vehicles, maintenance, and training.	Increase transit efficiencies.	2-5 years	Rural Transit Districts, Intercity Provider, Elderly Nutrition Center, Private Providers, Human Service Providers
Develop a vehicle replacement program and vehicle maintenance program	Longer life span of vehicles and fast turn around of replacing an aging fleet.	Save 10% on purchases and inventory.	Implement within 18 months.	Rural Transit Districts, Intercity Provider, Elderly Nutrition Center, Private Providers, Human Service Providers

Develop a regional Co-Op for fuel, parts, and services	Lower costs of purchasing such items. Establish fueling depots.	Save 5-10% on purchases and inventory.	Implement within 18 months.	Rural Transit Districts, Intercity Provider, Elderly Nutrition Center, Private Providers, Human Service Providers
Continue with regional stakeholders committee	Continuation and follow thru of regional plan. Continuation of the development and documentation of coordination between providers and supporters.	Host regional stakeholders meeting. Host regional planning sessions and summits.	6 times per year	Rural Transit Districts, Intercity Provider, Elderly Nutrition Center, Private Providers, Human Service Providers, other transit supporters.
Staff Development and high tech training for all transit staff (drivers, dispatchers, mechanics, and trainers).	Highly trained staff to better implement and carry out goals of the regional service delivery system and plan. Cross training from provider to provider.	Reduction in maintenance costs, work hours, accidents, and programmatic cost. Increased teamwork within the region. Increased coordination between transit providers	Within 10 months	All transit stakeholder in the region.
Marketing	Advertising on vehicles and bus schedules, Promote services on radio, television, flyers, and presentations. Monthly rider campaigns, provider to provider discounts.	Increase client base.	Ongoing	All transit stakeholder in the region.
Alternative Funding	Provide services to the public such as marketing/advertising, vehicle maintenance, drug/alcohol collection services, and training. Seek tax base authority. Coordinated funding applications.	Increase local funding by 10%.	Implement within 10 months.	All transit stakeholder in the region.

Levels of Coordination

Although the Middle Rio Grande region provides unique transit alternatives to its riders, it has set a state-wide precedence in the area of coordination. Through inter-local agreements between the Southwest Transit, the City of Del Rio Transportation Program, and Kerrville Bus Company, regional providers are able to offer seamless

modes of transportation for residents in the region to anywhere in the United States. Other coordination efforts include drug & alcohol collection, marketing, training, feeder routes, and assistance during mechanical failures. Through two multi-modal facilities (Uvalde and Eagle Pass) and one multi-modal facility located in Del Rio, coordination of transit services has given both rural transit districts (Southwest Transit & City of Del Rio) and Kerrville Bus Company an avenue to venture into creative means to provide regional transit services.

Regional providers collaborate with other comprehensive care providers in the region that comprises a vast referral system. It is through this referral system that the region promotes its transit service. Included in such efforts are presentations at local colonias associations, nutrition centers, community centers, and at public comment sessions. Other distributions are by flyer, radio, periodicals, and local television. Coordination and referral efforts with local workforce, employers, medical facilities, and educational institutions are primary avenues to recruit riders

LEVELS OF SERVICE

Level of Service	Description	Providers	Costs
Current Level of Service 33% of need met	Costs include current level of service provided plus the cost of replacing 65% of the fleet. Services such as Rural Public Transportation, Medical Transportation, and support services.	Southwest Transit City of Del Rio Regional Elderly Nutrition Centers	\$2,817,000
Job Access Services 100% of need to be met.	Costs include operations, administration, and needed fleet to meet service need.	Regional providers	\$1,315,000
Disabled & Elderly Services 100% o need to be met.	Costs include operations, administration, and needed fleet to meet service need. This includes the increase in elderly riders due to "Baby Boomers".	Regional Providers	\$1,480,000
Seamless Level of Service 100% of need to be met.	Costs include operations, administration, and needed fleet to meet service need. Services such as Rural Public Transportation, Medical Transportation, and support services.	Regional Providers	\$11,987,000
GIS/Technology	Costs of updating scheduling software, implementation of GIS Systems, and communication equipment.	Regional Providers	\$1,459,000

Attachments