

Regional Public Transportation Coordination Steering Committee Meeting

Hybrid Meeting
November 2, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Homer E. Nagel Room



Agenda

1. Introduction of New Regional Public Transportation Coordination Steering Committee Members

-Bob Dickinson, Director, Transportation & Environmental Resources, SETRPC

2. Review and Discussion of the Regional Transit Connectivity Study Between the Cities of Beaumont, Port Arthur, Orange, Silsbee and Jasper

-Bob Dickinson, Director, Transportation & Environmental Resources, SETRPC

-Fred Fravel, Vice President, KFH Group

3. Other Business

4. Next Meeting Date – February 2023

5. Adjourn



Regional Transit Connectivity Study

Focus of the Study: Regional Transit Connections

- The focus of the study is on potential **regional** connections, for example linking Port Arthur, Beaumont, Silsbee, Orange, Jasper or Woodville..
- The study could also look at longer-distance service to Houston or Lake Charles, Louisiana.
- Services could be designed to meet needs for work trips, education, health care or connections to national intercity networks of bus, rail and air services.
- This study will identify:
 - the potential demand for regional services,
 - the most cost-effective means of providing these connections,
 - the financial feasibility of such services.

About the Study:

- Funded by the Texas Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division,
- Conducted under the auspices of the Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC)
- Study consultants: KFH Group.
- The study will take six months to complete.

Key steps in this process:

- Identify goals, objectives, and existing data
- Review demographics, travel patterns and existing services
- Public and stakeholder outreach
- Develop potential alternatives
- Select preferred options, develop costs and funding concepts
- Draft and Final Plans

Input Needed!

The study team needs input on the need for regional transit options:

- Who needs to make regional trips?
- What is the purpose of their regional trips?
- Where do they live, and where do they need to go?
- What times do they need service?
- How much would they be able to pay for regional trips?



One way to provide your input is by completing our on-line survey—it's easy!

Online survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SETRPC>

Sign up to be on the list for future information about the study, including opportunities to provide more input:

Name: _____

Group (if representing somebody besides yourself): _____

E-mail address: _____

Questions? Comments?

- SETRPC: Bob Dickinson, Director, Transportation and Environmental Resources Division at 409-899-8444 ext. 7520.
- KFH Group: Fred Fravel: KFH Group Project Manager: 301-951-8660: ffravel@kfhgroup.com; Bennett Powell: KFH Group Public Outreach Coordinator: bpowell@kfhgroup.com





Regional Transit Connectivity Study

Survey of Stakeholders Regarding Regional Transit Needs in Southeast Texas

This study is focused on determining if there are unmet needs for regional public transportation in southeast Texas, potentially linking Port Arthur, Beaumont, Silsbee, Orange, Jasper or even providing service to Woodville, Houston or Lake Charles, Louisiana. There are local public transit services in Beaumont and Port Arthur, and countywide services in areas of Orange County, Hardin County and rural western Jefferson County (and in mid-Jefferson County for persons with disabilities and seniors 60 and older). This study will look at the feasibility of additional services to connect key hubs in the region. The study is funded by the Texas Department of Transportation and is being conducted under the auspices of the Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC) by the KFH Group.

We are interested in getting your input about the potential needs for regional services and connecting the region to other places.

Please help us by answering the following questions:


1. If you are representing an organization, what type of services does your organization provide?



2. What is your organization's service area?


3. Does your organization serve a particular clientele or stakeholder group? Please indicate characteristics of your target market/those eligible for your services.

4. Does your organization assist your clientele in finding longer-distance transportation when needed? (information and referral, carpool matching, operation of transportation services, arranging for rides with volunteers or other providers, etc.)



7. Are there particular markets or groups that you see needing regional service? For example, workers with a daily commute, community college students, persons who need medical services only available in other towns, clients needing particular services in other towns? Where do you think people wish to go—are there destinations needing additional service?

8. Please offer any comments regarding other aspects of regional bus services that you see as critical to attracting ridership, such as vehicles, condition of bus facilities, schedule information, wheelchair accessibility, marketing, amenities, etc.



9. Do you see any potential need to connect cities or towns in the region with more-distant locations such as Houston or Lake Charles? Or for providing connections to available intercity bus services to go those places?

10. Do you want to receive future notifications about this study, including any additional surveys, meeting notices, or study reports?

Contact Information:

Name / Title:	
Organization:	
Mailing Address:	
Address 2:	
City/Town:	
State / Province:	
ZIP / Postal Code:	
Country:	
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	

Please return your completed survey by October 28, 2022 to:

Bennett Powell
bpowell@kfhgroup.com
KFH Group, Inc.
2111 Dickson Drive, Suite 32
Austin, TX 78704

Thank you!

For more information about this study, please contact Fred Fravel at KFH Group ffravel@kfhgroup.com or Bob Dickinson at SETRPC at bdickinson@setrpc.org or 409-899-8444 ext. 7520



SETRPC:

Regional Transit Connectivity Study

Presentation to the Regional Public Transportation Steering
Committee

November 2, 2022



Focus of the Study

- **The focus of the study is on potential regional connections, for example linking Port Arthur, Beaumont, Silsbee, Orange, and Jasper.**
- **The study could also look at longer-distance service to Houston or Lake Charles, Louisiana.**
- **Services could be designed to meet needs for work trips, education, health care or connections to national intercity networks of bus, rail and air services.**



Focus of the Study

- **This study will identify:**
 - **the potential demand for regional services,**
 - **the most cost-effective means of providing these connections,**
 - **the financial feasibility of such services.**



About the Study



Funded by –
TxDOT PTN



Lead Agency–
Southeast Texas
Regional Planning
Commission



Consultant–
KFH Group, Inc.



Timeline –
6 Months to Complete

We will focus on solutions that can be implemented and will **improve regional mobility for residents**

Key Steps

**We Start with Data Collection
And Stakeholder Outreach**

Goals and
Objectives

Demographics,
Travel Patterns,
Existing Service

Alternatives and
Funding

Draft and Final
Plans



2022 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan

Area-wide Community Engagement Survey Key Findings from profile of average respondent:

- Absent or Insufficient Public Transportation is a barrier for trips to:
 - **Work (19 percent)**
 - Access to healthcare (22 percent)
 - School/Training (13 percent)
 - Shopping/personal errands (22 percent)
- **Travels within home county (44 percent) or travels within home county and neighboring counties (47 percent)**
- Greatest motivator for future use of transit:
 - Later evening service (28 percent)
 - **Service between Beaumont and Port Arthur (27 percent)**



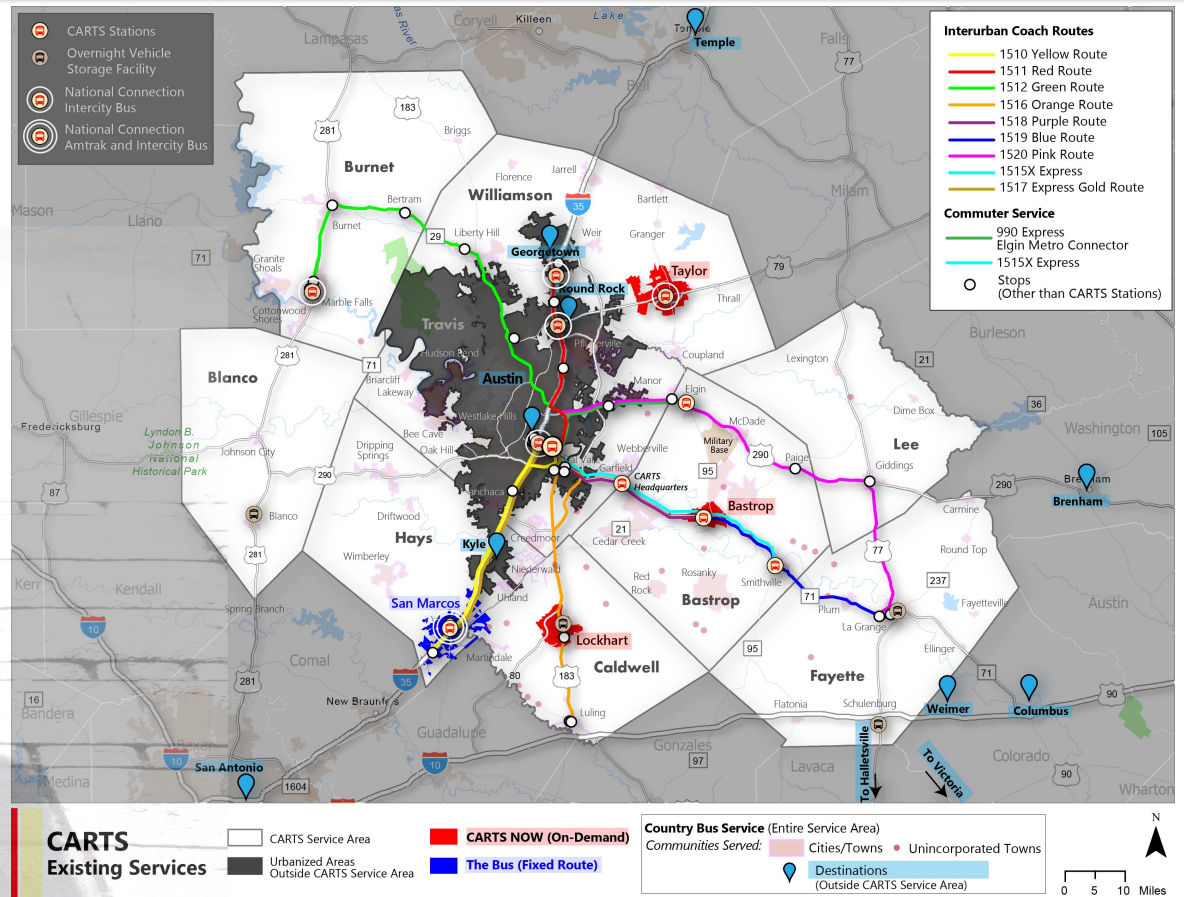
What is Regional Transit?

Regional Transit

Longer Distance

Commuting, Medical,
Personal Business

Open to the General
Public



Regional Transit is Not

- Local public transit within a town or county
- Long-distance transportation dedicated to clients of a particular agency
 - *But it would be open to clients who need to make regional trips*
- Intercity bus service (like Greyhound or Flixbus)
 - *But it could connect with or feed into intercity bus service, or Amtrak*
- Airport limousine service

Regional Transit Example: Midland Odessa Urban Transit District-EZ-Connect

Commuter service connecting Midland (2021 population 131,325) and Odessa (2021 population 112,483)

Service operated by Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUTD)

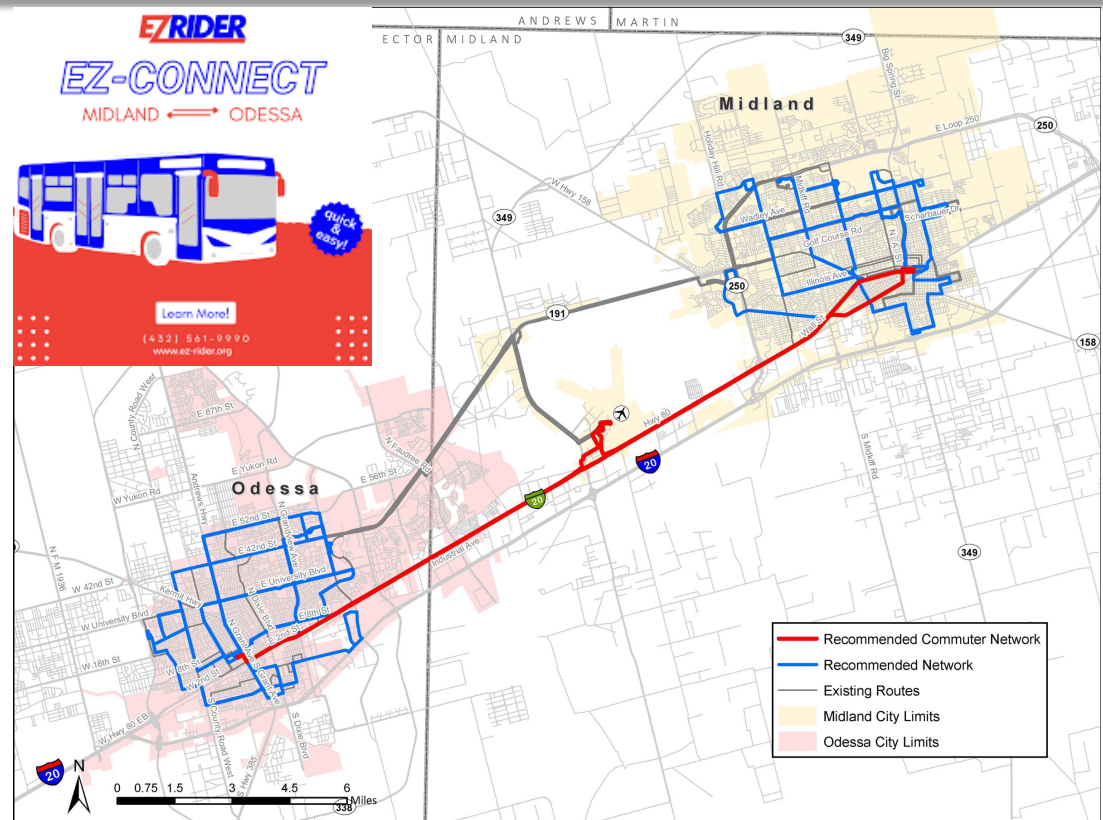
Stops at Downtown Transfer Plazas, MOUTD Administrative Offices, will call stops at airport and driver's license service—20 miles one-way

Fixed-route, fixed schedule trips in each direction:

- Weekdays 6:15 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 3:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.
- Saturday 8:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.

Standard Fares-same as local service (\$1.25 adult base fare)

Requires two vehicles



Regional Transit Example: North Central Regional Transit District



North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) operates regional services in northern New Mexico

Complete network—two particular examples:

- Taos to Santa Fe 300/200
- Tres Piedras 360

Taos to Santa Fe (70 miles one-way)

- Weekday only, five daily round-trips
- Stops at transit centers, park and ride lots, medical center
- Fare-free
- Timed connections with local routes at each end

Tres Piedras to Taos (32 miles) one-way

- Connects Tres Piedras (population 567) with Taos (6,595)
- Service Monday and Wednesday only
- One morning and one afternoon round-trip, fixed-schedule
- Stops at key rural intersections/locations (Post office, Visitor's Center, a church) with timepoints
- Makes connections with other transit routes in Taos
- Fare-free

Regional Transit Example—Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT)

Operated by contractor for regional consortium through regional planning agency

Four routes connecting smaller towns with La Crosse, Wisconsin, example Prairie du Chien (5,487) to La Crosse (52,185)

Stops at medical facilities, Walmarts, key shopping en route; in La Crosse each route has multiple stops at downtown, transfer center, key medical destinations, university/college, major employer

Fixed-route, fixed-schedule

- Weekday only
- 3-4 daily round-trips on each route—early a.m., mid-day, late afternoon

\$3.00 fare one-way



Regional Transit Example: Afton Express



Connects Staunton (population 25,661) and Charlottesville (45,672), Virginia (40 miles one-way)

Administered by the regional planning agency, operated by their contractor

Stops include shopping mall, park and ride lots, university, Amtrak station, downtown transit centers

Weekday only, four trips each way:

- A.M. trips all eastbound to Charlottesville (5:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 7:10 a.m., and 7:50 a.m.)
- P.M. trips all westbound (3:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., 5:05 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.)

Fare is \$3.00 each way

Regional Transit Examples: Key Takeaways

Regional solutions are possible in a wide variety of population and distance settings

To serve work trips:

- Daily service, at least weekdays (maybe some Saturday)
- Fixed-schedules—early morning, late afternoon evening (allowing for a full 8-hour workday)
- Mid-day service allows for family emergencies, etc.

Connections with existing local public transit networks are critical

- Transit centers are mandatory stops
- Schedules to allow for timed transfer with local transit

Two options for stops in destination cities:

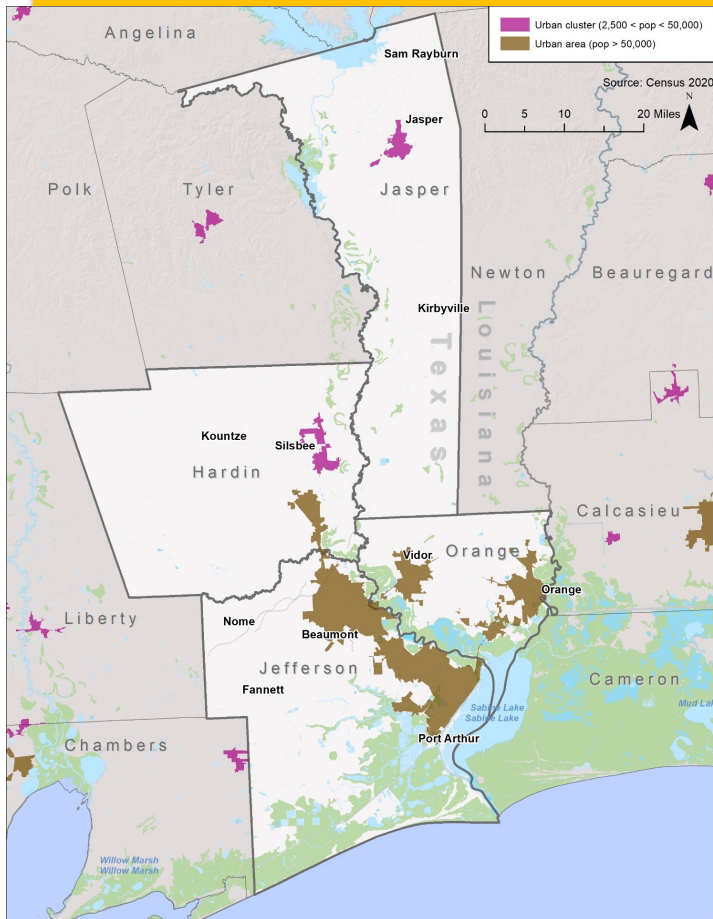
- Stop only at transit centers/park and ride lots, or
- Also make multiple stops at key destinations to allow many riders a one-seat ride

Rural and very rural services are different:

- Less than daily—once or twice per week
- Scheduled service with designated stops to group trips
- Connections to other transit needed, but also may need stops at medical, key shopping in destination towns

Fares--\$3.00 each way seems to be a maximum

Demographic Considerations for Regional Transit

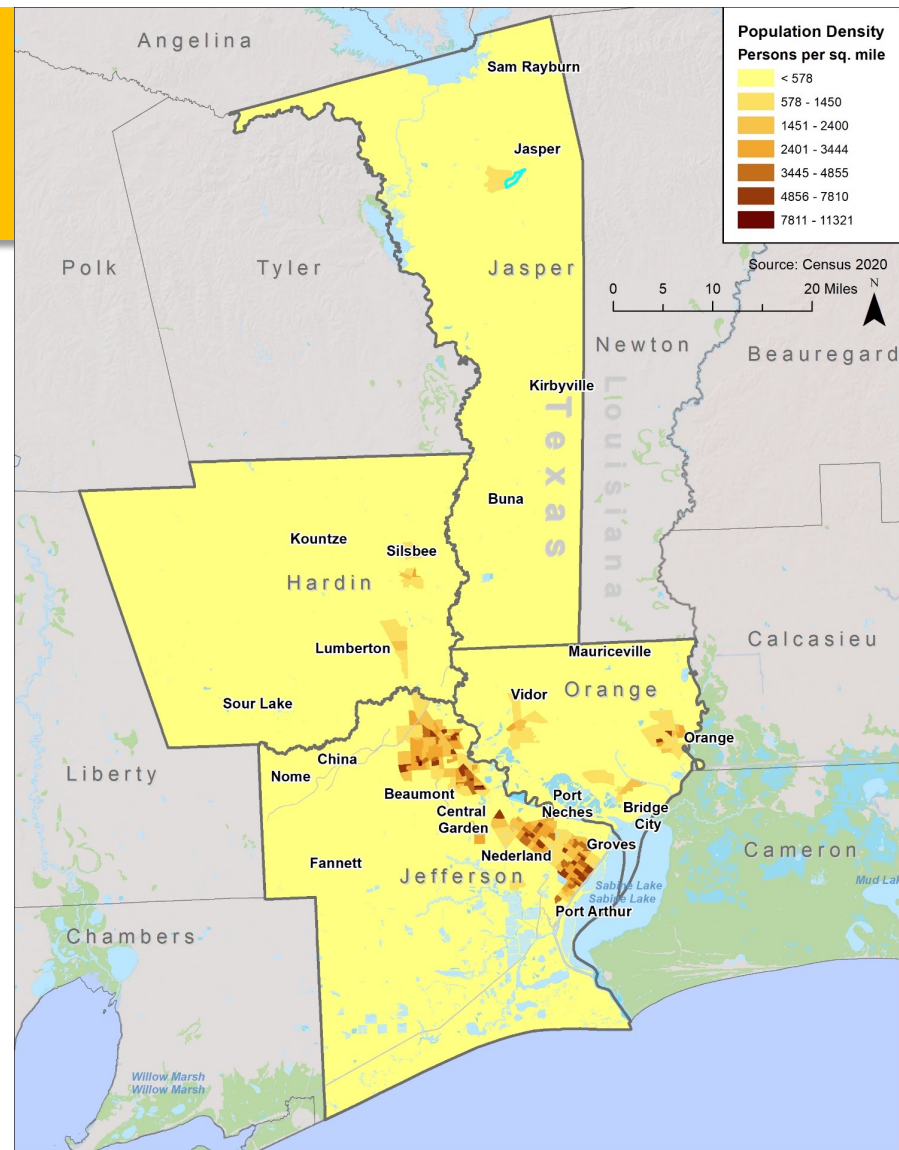


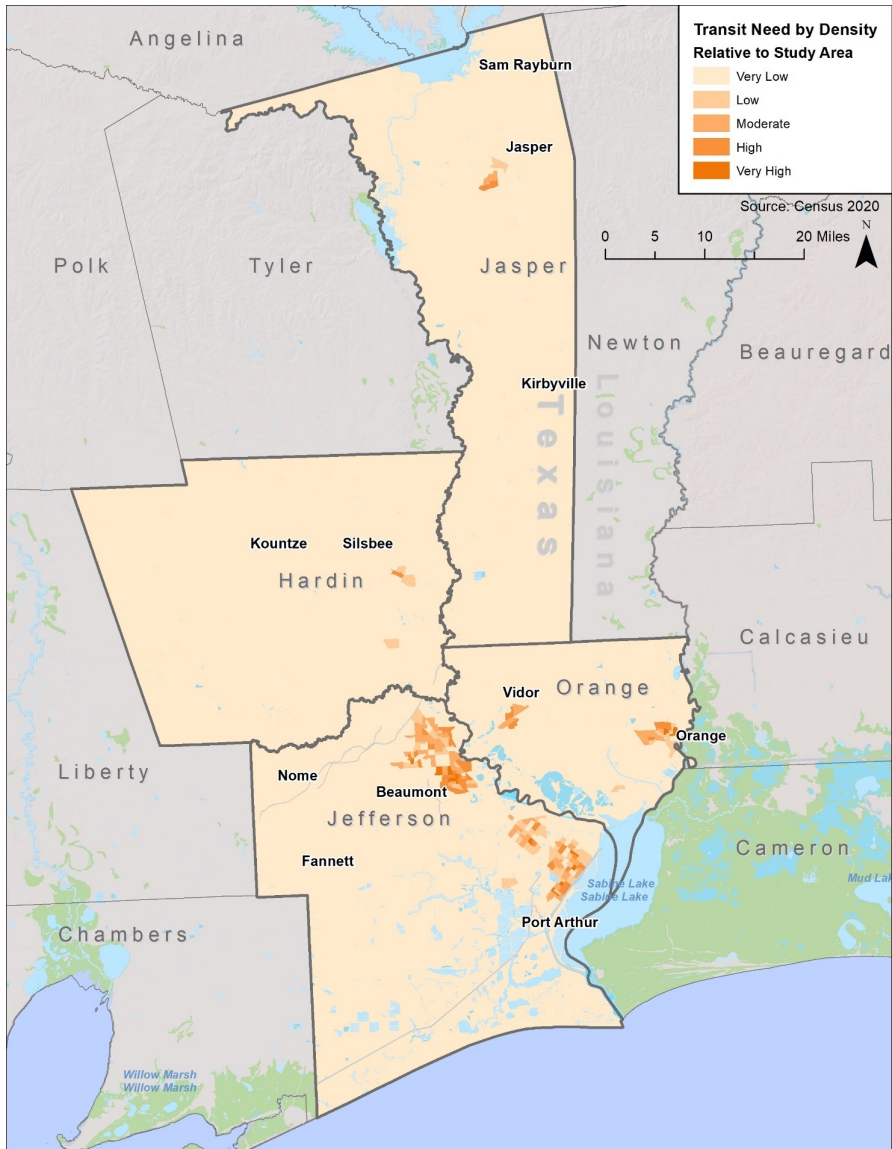
- **Population Density**
- **Places with a High Density of Transit Needs Population**
- **Places with a High Percentage of Transit Needs Population**
- **Locations of Minority and Low Income Population**
- **Employment Density**
- **Regional Travel Patterns**

Overall Population Density

Block Groups with the highest population Density are in:

- **Beaumont**
- **Central Garden**
- **Nederland**
- **Groves**
- **Port Arthur**
- **Orange**





Places with a High Density of Transit Needs Population

Census Block Groups with a high Transit Dependence Index (TDI) score are in the following places:

- **Beaumont,**
- **Port Arthur,**
- **Orange,**
- **Vidor,**
- **Silsbee,**
- **and Jasper.**

Places with a High Percentage of Transit Needs Population

Jasper

- Jasper

Hardin

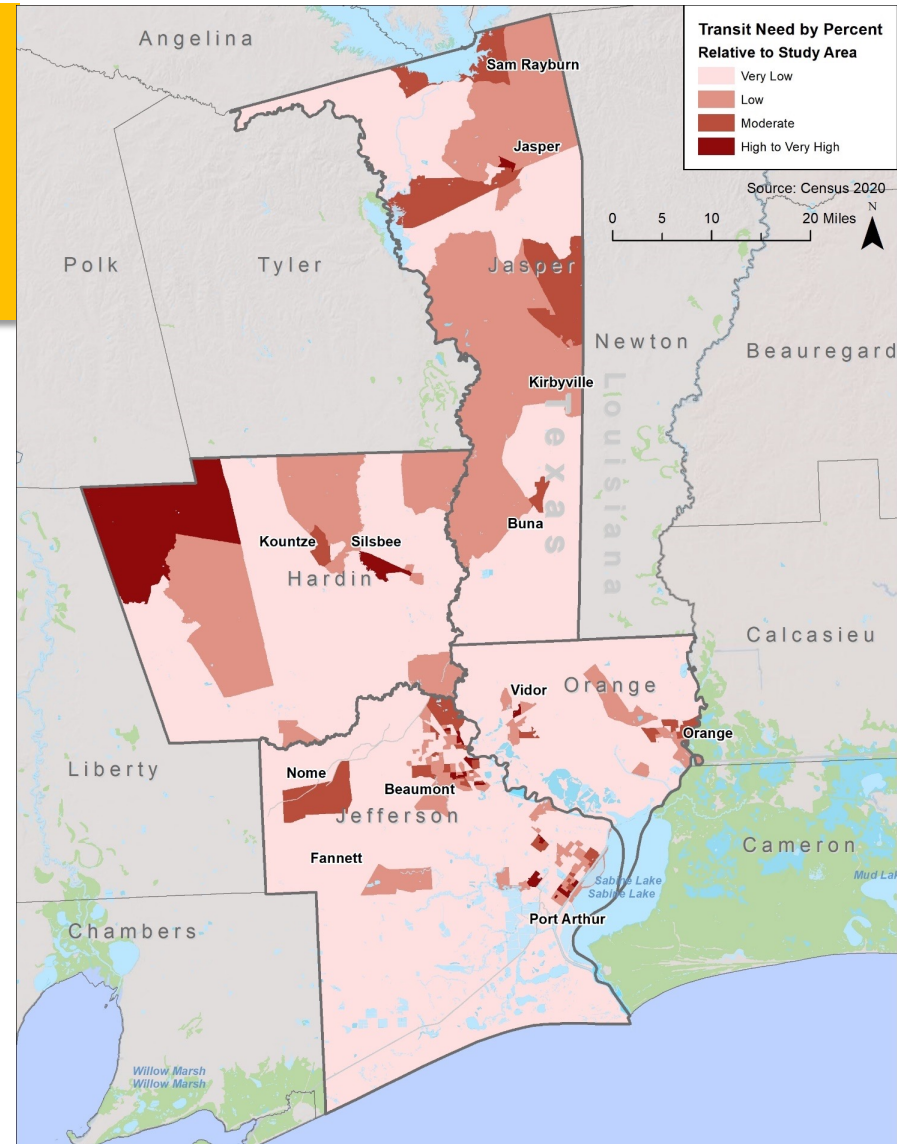
- A block group making up part of western Silbee that stretches west to Kountze.
- The northwest portion of the county

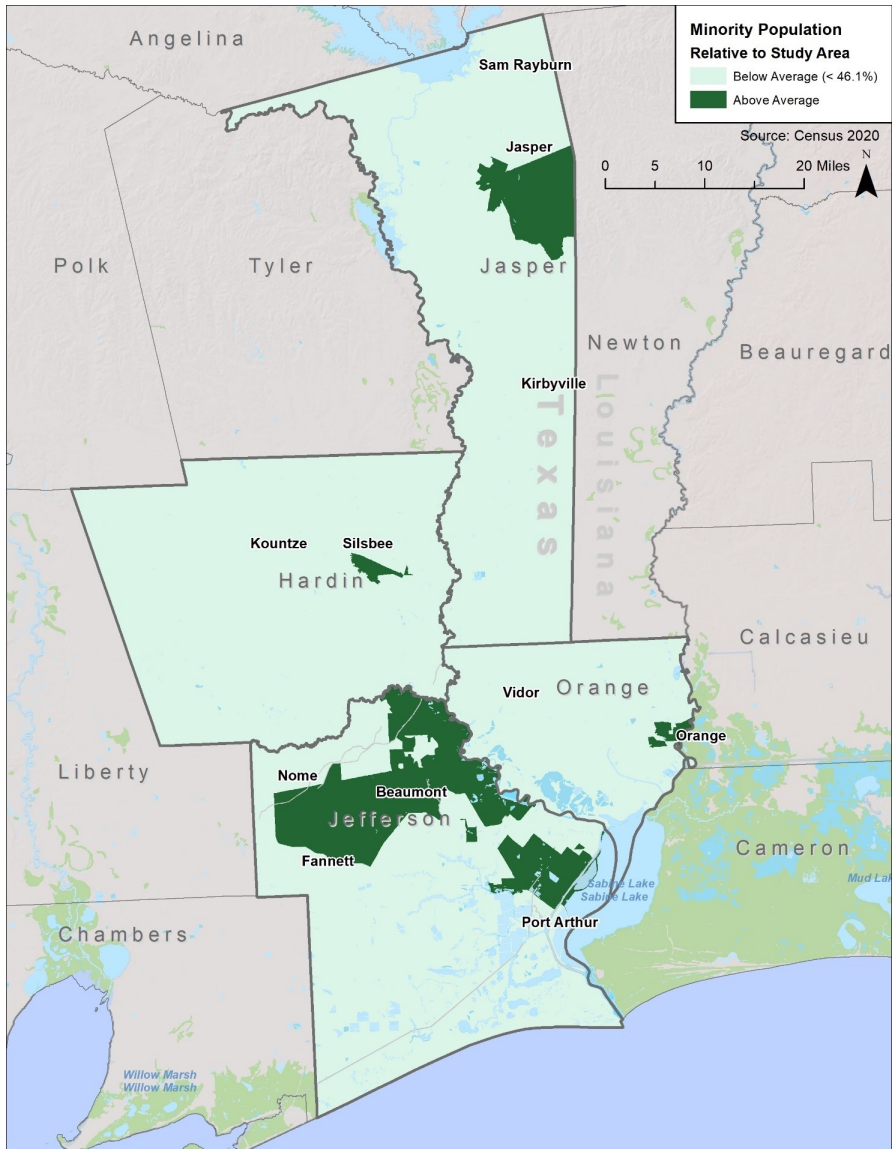
Jefferson

- Several block groups in the outside of the city core of Beaumont

Orange

- One block group in northern Vidor.
- A few block groups in Port Arthur.





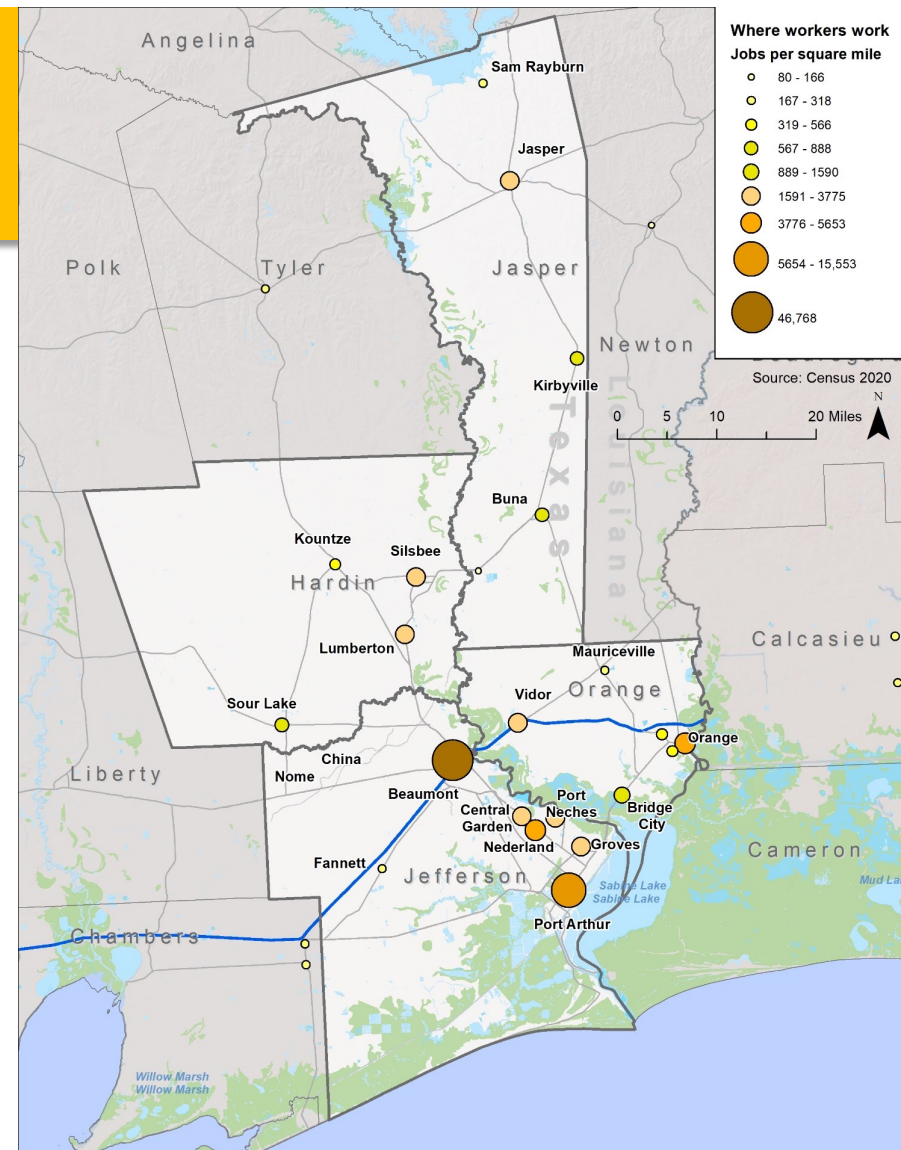
Location of Minority Populations

- The average percentage of low-income persons per block group is 17.6%.
- 161 block groups in the region with an above average percentage of minority persons,
 - 140 are in Jefferson,
 - 10 are in Orange,
 - 13 are in Hardin, and
 - 14 are in Jasper County.

Employment Density

The places with the most jobs per square mile are in

- **Beaumont (46,768 jobs/sq. mile),**
- **Port Arthur (15,553 jobs/sq. mile),**
- **Orange (5653 jobs/sq. mile),**
- **Nederland (5525 jobs/sq. mile),**
- **Lumberton has the most jobs at 2891 jobs/sq. mile.**
- **Jasper (2660 jobs/sq. mile).**



Regional Travel Patterns

- 71% of the 159,218 jobs in the service area, about 71% are filled by residents in the SETRPC service area (Jefferson, Orange, Jasper, or Hardin Counties).
- More than a third of all workers (35%) residing in the SETRPC service area work outside of it.
- Of those SETRPC residents employed outside of the service area, the most common workplace destination is Houston (10%).
- Within the service area, the top places to work are Beaumont (25.1%), Port Arthur (7.4%) and Nederland (3.1%).

Work Locations for SETRPC Residents	Count	Share
All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)	138,679	100%
Beaumont, TX	34,848	25.1%
Houston, TX	13,880	10.0%
Port Arthur, TX	10,195	7.4%
Nederland, TX	4,306	3.1%
Orange, TX	3,836	2.8%
Vidor, TX	2,385	1.7%
Central Gardens, TX	2,115	1.5%
Lumberton, TX	2,021	1.5%
Jasper, TX	1,863	1.3%
Silsbee, TX	1,854	1.3%
All Other Locations	61,376	44.3%

Key Issues

What **places** in the SETRPC region need to have a transit connection?

Are we trying to serve **work trips or provide basic mobility** for other kinds of trips? **Or Both?**

Do we need routes connecting to **Houston or Lake Charles?**

Do we need connections to **intercity** bus services?

Should regional services serve **multiple stops** in destination cities? Or just link **transit centers and park and ride locations?**

Who could operate such services?
Contractors, existing transit agencies?

How could regional services be **funded and administered?**



We Need Your Input



- **Who needs to make regional trips?**
- **What is the purpose of their regional trips?**
- **Where do they live, and where do they need to go?**
- **What times do they need service?**
- **How much would they be able to pay for regional trips?**

Online survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SETRPC>



Next Steps

Gather data and information

Existing conditions -
Develop demographic data and review service

Community involvement –
surveys, meetings, focus groups and interviews

Developing regional service options. Tried and true as well as innovative services designed to serve more riders

Reaching a consensus and developing the plan



Contacts:

- **Questions? Comments?**

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