Appendix E:

Case Studies

- Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, TX
- Hill Country Transit District, TX
- Texoma Area Paratransit System, Inc., TX
- Foothill Transit, CA
- Valley Metro, Phoenix/Maricopa County, AZ
- Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance, OR
Golden Crescent
Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC), TX

Profile
The Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission is the rural-urban transit district for an 8-county region covering 7,087 square miles of non-urbanized land area bordering the Gulf Coast. The counties served include Calhoun, Dewitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, and Victoria. The region also contains the Victoria urbanized area. GCRPC serves as the lead agency for the State’s regional transit coordination plan.

GCRPC’s rural service area population was 160,333 in Census 2000 and grew to 161,645 (0.8 percent) in Census 2010. The population density per square mile is 22.81. Gonzales County experienced the largest growth (six percent). The Census 2010 population of the Victoria urbanized area was 63,683, a 3.5 percent increase over the 2000 Census population 61,529. Error! Reference source not found. depicts the Golden Crescent service area (shown in white). The orange area depicts the Victoria urbanized area.

Transit Service
GCRPC directly operates transportation service within Victoria and DeWitt counties. GCRPC uses subcontractors to provide transportation in the other six counties. Subcontractors include Calhoun County SCA, Inc., Goliad County, Gonzales County SCA, Inc., Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc., and Lavaca County.

Rural demand response transportation service is branded “R-Transit” in Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, and Victoria Counties. R-Transit service operates Monday through Friday 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. Customers must schedule rides 24 hours in advance.

Using an interlocal agreement, the City of Victoria contracts with GCRPC to operate fixed route and paratransit service in the urbanized area. Urban service is branded as “Victoria Transit.” Victoria Transit includes three fixed routes with more than 70 stops and approximately 30-minute frequency and complementary paratransit for people with disabilities that cannot use fixed routes. Bus service is available Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Victoria Transit also operates four flexible Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) routes (Flex Routes) seven days a week, with limited hours on weekends. Flexible routes serve individuals who have
trip origins and destinations within ¾-mile radius of the job access routes. In addition to the rural and urban transportation service, GCRPC is also the Medical Transportation Program operator for Medicaid-eligible passengers.

Fares vary by service type (fixed route, flexible JARC route, paratransit, and rural demand response) and by youth, adult, elderly, and Medicare cardholders. For example, paratransit fares are $1.50 per trip, or $13.50 for a 10-trip book. Victoria Transit offers bulk passes for all services. Fare details are available here: [http://www.victoriatransit.org/fares.html](http://www.victoriatransit.org/fares.html).

### Operating Statistics

The table below shows GCRPC’s rural and urban operating statistics for FY 2013 as reported to Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Public Transportation Division (PTN). For rural service, GCRPC operates 1.3 million revenue miles per year at $2.34 per mile and over 62,000 revenue hours. GCRPC provides 212,000 passenger trips annually at approximately 0.16 passengers per revenue mile. Annual operating expenses are $3.2 million dollars and 2013 capital expenses were $474,000, for a total $3.6 million. For urban service, GCRPC operates 654,000 revenue miles per year (at $3.06 per mile) and 42,000 revenue hours). GCRPC provides 354,000 passenger trips annually (at approximately 0.54 passengers per revenue mile). Annual operating expenses are $2 million dollars. For both urban and rural service, GCRPC provides more than 2 million revenue miles and 566,000 passenger trips annually.

**GCRPC 2013 Operating Statistics.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Revenue Miles</th>
<th>Annual Revenue Hours</th>
<th>Annual Passenger Trips</th>
<th>Annual Operating Expenses</th>
<th>Annual Capital Expenses</th>
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### History

The GCRPC was created in November 1986 and is a regional voluntary association of local governments and other agencies. From 1986 until 1999, GCRPC administered rural public transportation services. In 1995, the Victoria County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) commissioned a study to assess the need for transit in Victoria. Based on the study findings, the City of Victoria began demand response service through an interlocal agreement with GCRPC. Victoria Transit’s fixed route service began in 2002 and the JARC program began in 2008.

### Best Practices

GCRPC began fostering public-private partnerships in 2008 to provide vanpool service for employees in the region through JARC programs. One of GCRPC’s most successful partnerships is with Inteplast (a plastics and chemical manufacturing company) to provide rural transportation for employees in the community of Lolita.
Inteplast has a 700-acre site where more than 2,000 people are employed. The plant operates seven days a week, with shifts from 7:30 am to 7:30 pm and workers need affordable and reliable transportation during non-traditional work hours. Inteplast reported to the local newspaper *The Victoria Advocate* that the company was losing employees who could not afford the commute to work from communities 25 to 40 miles away.

Inteplast purchased the first bus, and GCRPC initially operated one R-Transit route that generated 1,300 trips per month. The success of the service spurred GCRPC to expand to four more routes that now generate 9,000 trips per month. Inteplast estimates that over 35 percent of their workers use the program to commute to and from work. Inteplast has a three-year contract for service and provides GCRPC a 50 percent local match.

The GCRPC Director of Transportation Services states that service reliability is critical to the project’s success. GCRPC took several steps to make sure the employees using the service can get to and from work on time. To ensure on-time performance, GCRPC developed partnerships with outlying communities to house vehicles so the vehicle can start the route each day in the community served. For example, the City of Yoakum houses vehicles for GCRPC for trips to Inteplast generated in Yoakum. GCRPC also purchased additional buses to ensure an adequate spare ratio, further demonstrating GCRPC’s commitment to service reliability.

GCRPC also partners with other regional employers for transit service. GCRPC has a contract with Workforce Solutions in Golden Crescent to provide unlimited transit passes for Workforce Solutions clients. Workforce Solutions committed to provide a 4 percent local match to GCRPC for three years. Additionally, GCRPC coordinates with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and Amour Adult Day Care to provide passes. GCRPC directly contracts with Affectionate Arms Adult Day Health Care Center to provide transportation services through a grant from the TxDOT Section 5310 Elderly & People with Disabilities Program.

The agency expanded evening and weekend service to accommodate the hours of employees in the region. In 2008, GCRPC began a “Flex Route” JARC program for employees in the City of Victoria. Flex Route stops are designated with a specific logo, and all customers on the Flex Route stops receive a ride without fare. Customers are typically retail employees.

The City of Victoria has provided GCRPC a 6 percent local match to operate Flex Route service.

**Opportunities**

GCRPC will soon enter into a new partnership with Devereux Victoria, part of the Devereux Foundation—the nation’s largest nonprofit behavioral healthcare system. Devereux’s treatment facilities specialize in treating children and adults with emotional, behavioral, developmental, and psychiatric disorders. GCRPC received funding for vehicles and preventive maintenance from Devereux to help provide transportation to work for their clients. GCRPC is purchasing four vehicles to transport Devereux clients to and from The Foundation, located in rural Victoria County and to housing facilities in Victoria so they can get to work and job training.
Hill Country Transit District (HCTD), TX

Profile
The Hill Country Transit District, also known as “The Hop,” is a rural-urban transit district responsible for providing services in nine counties. HCTD serves Hamilton, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, Milam, Mills, San Saba, and the non-urbanized areas of Bell and Coryell counties—approximately 9,000 square miles. Additionally, HCTD operates urban transit services in the Killeen and Temple urbanized areas (UZA) and is the Medical Transportation Program (MTP) provider for the region. As of Census 2010, the population of the non-urbanized (rural) areas served by HCTD was 164,934, the population of the Killeen urbanized area was 217,630, and the population of the Temple urbanized area was 90,390. With the population of the urbanized area now over 200,000, Killeen is classified as a large urbanized area and a Transportation Management Area (TMA).

The HCTD service area experienced approximately 20 percent growth from 2000 to 2010. The figure below depicts the HCTD service area, including the Killeen and Temple urbanized areas.

Transit Service
HCTD operates door-to-door demand response public transportation in the non-urbanized areas of the nine counties within the HCTD service area. HCTD operates nine urban fixed routes in Killeen and four fixed routes in Temple. In 2012, HCTD’s fleet included 61 vehicles dedicated to rural service, 45 vehicles operating in Killeen, and 37 vehicles operating in Temple.
HCTD operates demand-response or paratransit service in three areas:

- Demand-response service to the non-urbanized areas in the counties of Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, Milam, Mills, and San Saba.
- Americans with Disabilities (ADA) complementary paratransit service to the cities of Copperas Cove, Killeen, and Harker Heights.
- ADA complementary paratransit service to the city of Temple.

HCTD provides human services transportation through the TxDOT non-emergency Medical Transportation Program and three separate Area Agency on Aging contracts for persons 60 and over. HCTD has an agreement with Hill Country Community Action to provide Head Start transportation services. In all, HCTD provides an average of over 975,000 one-way passenger trips per year, with a 143-vehicle fleet and a 165-member staff. Many riders are elderly, particularly in the rural areas, and a large number of trips provided service dialysis and other medical appointments. HCTD directly operates all modes and routes.

Service is available Monday through Friday from before 5:00 am until 10:00 pm and Saturdays from before 5:00 am until 6:00 pm. On Sundays and holidays, no service is provided. The standard fare for a one-way trip in the urban areas is $1.00. Half-fare rides, verified by an agency issued eligibility card, are available to the elderly, individuals with disabilities, Medicare eligible riders and students. Monthly passes are available for the 13 urban routes for $25.00 per month. Rural demand response services operate with a distance-based fare with “suggested contributions” ranging from $1.00 for the shortest trips to $18.00 for the longest trips (150 miles maximum).

**History and Governing Body Representation**

Until 1998, HCTD was known as Hill Country Community Action—a community service provider. In 1998, the Hill Country Community Action board voted to separate the portion of the organization responsible for transit to create a standalone rural transit district - HCTD. During the same year HCTD entered into an interlocal agreement with the cities of Copperas Cove, Harker Heights and Killeen to provide fixed route and paratransit services. HCTD began offering services in these cities in 2000 as an urban-rural provider. Shortly thereafter (2001/2002) the City of Temple named HCTD the transit service provider and federal/state grant recipient for the Temple urbanized area.
A 14-member Board of Directors governs HCTD. The board is comprised elected officials, with a representative from each of the nine counties HCTD serves. The cities of Belton, Copperas Cove, Harker Heights, Killeen and Temple also appoint an elected official to serve on the board. A transit advisory committee representing the Killeen and Temple urbanized areas advises the HCTD Board of Directors on the interests of the cities within the HCTD service area. The advisory committee consists of riders, social service agency representatives and representatives from each city council within both cities.

**Best Practices**

*Automated Scheduling and Dispatch*

In 2008 HCTD implemented an automated scheduling and dispatch system. The new system helps HCTD reduce or eliminate duplicative or redundant services and helps identify opportunities for more efficient routing. The automated software allows HCTD to keep service hours constant while expanding transit into previously un-served areas, resulting in overall increase in vehicle boardings/revenue vehicle hour in the urban areas.

**Maintenance and Repairs**

Within the urban service areas, HCTD has begun to deploy a three-step process to centralize repairs:

1. Bring fleet maintenance in-house using industry standards for preventive maintenance inspection and repairs.
2. Computerize preventive maintenance scheduling and reporting to track costs and control quality.
3. Merge urban service into one central urban maintenance facility to minimize maintenance travel and allow for fleet resource sharing between HCTD’s two urban service areas.

**Strategic Growth and Service Expansion**

HCTD routinely seeks opportunities for growth and service diversification. The agency has approached stakeholders in both the Killeen and Temple urbanized areas about the potential for transit service expansion in both cities. In addition, there are several transit generators and attractors in the cities. Temple is home to a major Veteran’s Administration Hospital and the city of Killeen is home to Fort Hood. The military base alone has a population of approximately 53,400 as of the 2010 census. The VA Hospital in Temple draws patients seeking care from throughout Central Texas. Thus, there is demand not only for transit services within the two cities, but for connecting services throughout the region.

HCTD recognizes the demand for transit services connecting current members of the military and the veterans in the region. The agency has been present at various events supporting the military in the region, including the VA Health Fair, depicted above.
Texoma Area Paratransit System, Inc. (TAPS)

Profile
Texoma Area Paratransit System, Inc. is a rural-urban transit district serving a 7-county region. The service area is 5,601 square miles in total, including non-urbanized (rural) land area and two urbanized areas (UZAs) plus part of the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington (DFWA) urbanized area. TAPS is the federal and state grant recipient for rural transit in the counties of Clay, Montague, and Cooke, and the non-urbanized portion of Grayson, Fannin, Collin, and Wise Counties. The urbanized areas include Sherman-Denison (urbanized part of Grayson County) and as of July 1, 2013 TAPS began managing and operating transit service in the McKinney urbanized area, and the portions of Collin County that fall within the DFWA urbanized area. The direct grant recipient for Sherman-Denison is the Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG). TCOG, in turn, contracts with TAPS for the delivery of all services within the TCOG service area. TAPS is now the McKinney urbanized area direct recipient for federal transit funds and serves as the grant recipient of state funds for the McKinney urban transit district. The designated recipient for the DFWA urbanized area is the North Central Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and TAPS is a subrecipient of NCTCOG to receive federal transit funds for the area of Collin County that falls within the DFWA urbanized area but outside of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) service area.

TAPS’ rural service area population was 200,948 in Census 2000 and grew to 220,927 (10 percent) in Census 2010. The population density per square mile is 39.54. Wise County experienced the largest growth (10 percent).
Transit Service
TAPS provides a variety of service types, each focused on different transit markets. TAPS provides general public demand response service in the rural and urban areas and fixed route service within the Sherman-Denison urban area. TAPS contracts with the private sector for transit management, including a subsidiary company as the employer of drivers and dispatchers. TAPS operates fixed route service to select locations outside of its service area (major employers, DART light rail system, and shuttle service to Dallas airports), and new fixed route service to major employers in southern Oklahoma through a Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grant. TAPS also operates three park and ride lots. The agency is also a Medical Transportation Program (MTP) subcontractor for the region.

TAPS accepts cash and passes as fare. Individual trip fares for seniors and individuals with disabilities are $1.00 for one-way in town trips, $1.50 for out of town trips and $2.00 for out of county trips. General public trip fares are $2.00 for one-way in town trips, $3.00 for out of town trips, and $4.00 for out of county trips. Premium services, including Tex-Express and McKinney Commuter Connect, have slightly higher fares that vary by service type. The fare structure is available at the following location: [http://tapsbus.com/fares/](http://tapsbus.com/fares/). In November 2013, TAPS began offering a “Go Anywhere” pass for $80 a month. Customers with the Go Anywhere pass have unlimited rides on any service (excluding airport shuttle service).

History and Governing Body Representation
TAPS was first a van and a station wagon ride service created by the Area Agency on Aging in 1986. Service was provided by 13 separate Senior Centers and communities in Fannin, Grayson, and Cooke counties. TAPS’ service area has grown to include Montague, Clay, and Wise Counties and in 2013, TAPS began managing and operating transit service for Collin County. TAPS now operates more than 2.8 million revenue miles and carried more than 400,000 passenger trips annually.

TAPS is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors made up of elected officials representing each of the counties in the service area and cities within the urbanized areas:

- Grayson County Treasurer
- Fannin County Judge
- City of Sherman Council Member
- Clay County Judge
- City of Bonham Council Member
- Wise County Commissioner
- Collin County Commissioner
- Mayor of the City of McKinney
- McKinney City Council Member
- Mayor of the City of Wylie
- Cooke County Commissioner
- Clay County Representative
- Montague County Representative
- City of Decatur Council Member
- City of Denison Council Member

Best Practices
Fuel Contract
TAPS has many innovative partnerships in the service area and beyond. For example, TAPS purchases fuel from bulk fuel purchasers such as the City of Bonham and neighboring Tarrant County. TAPS is able to “piggyback” on Tarrant County’s existing diesel fuel contract at a discounted rate. The fuel savings discount is passed through to TAPS and is used as local match. TAPS’ spends $50,000 to $60,000 per month in fuel. Since establishing fuel-purchasing partnerships, TAPS has been able to save approximately 21 percent on fuel.

College Partnerships
Colleges are also partners with TAPS for pass programs. Grayson College (Viking Route) students and
Austin College (Roo Route) students can show their student identification on any TAPS fixed route without paying a fare. TAPS has agreements with the aforementioned colleges where the institution pays a set amount for TAPS services; students do not pay transportation fees. Austin College requires that all students live on campus. As such, the Roo Route operates non-traditional hours from 4:00 pm to midnight and takes students from campus into the community, spurring economic development. The Roo Route generated 22,000 trips this year. TAPS also maximizes social media to inform customers. The agency will launch a Youtube Video to depict upcoming changes to the Viking Route. The Viking Route generates approximately 64,000 trips per year.

**Commuter Routes**

TAPS operates many job access (commuter) shuttles including service between the cities of Nocona, Gainesville, and Bowie to the Peterbilt Motor Company facility. Employees can purchase an $80 monthly pass for unlimited shuttle rides. TAPS operates Peterbilt routes out of two locations in the morning. The first route is from Sherman and Gainesville to Denton and uses a 54 passenger motor coaches. The second route is from Bowie and Montague and uses two smaller passenger vans. The motor coach uses the Peterbilt facility as a layover location before the return trip in the afternoon to minimize deadhead. Each afternoon, a 43-passenger vehicle goes from Sherman to Gainesville to Denton. The program is so popular, that all seating is at capacity and there is a waiting list for service. Peterbilt also has an employee coordinator on-site who is dedicated to the program with TAPS and used by TAPS as local match. TAPS also provides job access routes for Texas Instruments, Trailblazer, and United America that connect Denison, Sherman, Bonham, McKinney, and Richardson, and a shuttle that connects Texoma-area communities to the Alliance Airport.

**Inter-State Coordinated Services**

The Red River Route takes TAPS customers from Texas to Oklahoma and operates 10 trips per day. The Red River Route, depicted in a series of maps below, connects with Southern Oklahoma Rural Transportation System (SORTS) at the Choctaw Resort. The route provides service in one of TAPS’ highest growth areas. The TAPS Executive Director estimates that 90 percent of the service is job access related.

![Red River Route (Texas to Oklahoma)](image-url)
Foothill Transit Transit

Introduction
Foothill Transit is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) comprised of 22 member cities in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys of Southern California. The agency provides fixed route bus service over 327 square miles. Public sector employees comprise Foothill Transit’s management team, including the Executive Director. Foothill Transit contracts all operations and maintenance services to two private contractors that operate out of two different facilities. The contractors provide all bus operators, mechanics and supervisors. Foothill Transit pays for fuel.

Transit Service
Foothill Transit uses 305 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses and three electric buses to operate 34 fixed route lines, most of which are local bus service. Foothill Transit also operates Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service using 30 articulated buses, and park and ride service, operated out of facilities shared by regional operators throughout the valley. In 2013, Foothill Transit opened its first fully owned and operated park and ride in the City of Industry. Bus stops are paid for and maintained by the cities in the service area; Foothill Transit pays for and maintains the bus stop signs. Foothill Transit operates five transit stores where customer service representatives sell fare media and answer customer questions.

Fares
Foothill Transit accepts cash, passes, and a regional TAP smart fare card on all routes. Other regional operators, including Omnitrans, a bus operator in neighboring San Bernardino County, also accept TAP cards. Single base cash fare is $1.25, Express cash fare is $2.75 -$4.90 (depending on the hour), and transfers are $0.50 if purchased at the time the customer pays the full fare. Fare media sold at five “transit stores” located throughout the service area. Detailed fare information is available here: http://www.foothilltransit.org/PassesFares/.

History and Governing Body Representation
Foothill Transit was created in 1988 as a unique JPA following the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD) announcement of service cuts and fare increases that would negatively affect the San Gabriel Valley. Foothill Transit assumed operation of 14 bus routes, previously operated by the RTD, and was tasked by community leaders to provide superior public transportation while reducing costs and improving local control. For 25 years, three separate private contractors (one contractor for management services, two separate contractors for operations and maintenance) operated Foothill Transit. In 2013, the
Executive Board voted to terminate the management contract and make management staff public sector employees. Operations and maintenance services continue to be provided by contractors.

Foothill Transit’s Governing Board is comprised of elected representatives of 22 member cities in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys and 3 appointees from the County. The Governing Board meets twice a year and approves the agency’s budget. The 22 member cities are further broken down into “clusters.” Each cluster appoints a representative to serve on the Executive Board that meets monthly and sets agency policy.

Best Practices

Unified Branding
Foothill Transit operates as a unified agency under one name and one logo in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, despite being operated by three different entities (management team, two operations and maintenance contractors) and jointly led by 22 different cities. The bus livery is the same (white with striping and agency logo) for all 308 vehicles in the fleet. All operators wear the same uniform, displaying the Foothill Transit agency logo, despite working for a private contractor. There is one fare structure, bus book, system map, and customer information phone line for the entire agency.

Foothill Transit established a single brand for the agency, and uses marketing and communications tools to maintain a unified front in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. Foothill Transit maintains a Facebook page and Twitter account, distributes a monthly newsletter to customer called “Footnotes,” emails Rider Alerts to customers, and publishes a new Bus Book with each bi-annual service change. Additionally, the agency announced in October that it is undertaking a new branding scheme for vehicles and marketing materials. The branding change is the first in the agency’s 25-year history.

Alternative Fuels
The changes to branding coincide with several big milestones, including the purchase of 64 new CNG buses. The purchase of the new vehicles aids in the retirement of the agency’s last diesel bus. As of November 1, 2013, Foothill Transit’s fleet is 100 percent alternative fueled (CNG or electric). The agency operates 12 electric buses on Line 291, which is the first all-electric bus line (route) in Southern California.
Valley Metro
Phoenix/Maricopa County, AZ

Profile
The transit system in the Greater Phoenix metropolitan area in Maricopa County, Arizona is known as “Valley Metro.” Maricopa County is located in south central Arizona, has a population of 3.8 million, and covers 9,200 square miles.

The Greater Phoenix metropolitan area is comprised of two urbanized areas: Phoenix-Mesa and Avondale-Goodyear. The urbanized areas are comprised of multiple cities as illustrated in the figure to the right.

Transit Service
Three primary agencies contract for fixed route bus service in the Phoenix area including the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), the City of Phoenix, and the City of Tempe. The standard service delivery method within the region is contracting to third-party transportation providers. RPTA, City of Phoenix, and City of Tempe contract with private companies to operate fixed routes for the region. Several additional cities fund transit services by contracting through RPTA, City of Phoenix, or City of Tempe.

All transit services are subject to one fare structure. Local bus (and light rail) fare is $2.00 for one ride, $6.00 for an all-day bus pass, $20.00 for a seven-day pass, and $64.00 for a monthly pass. An all-day rail pass is $4.00. Fare details are available here: http://www.valleymetro.org/paying_your_fare/fare_options/.

History and Governing Body Representation
In the 1980s and early 1990s, the region had a fragmented transit system, with the majority of transit service provided by City of Phoenix (Phoenix Transit System). The Valley Metro Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) was created in 1985 with the passage of Proposition 300, a countywide, 20-year half-cent sales tax for freeways, with a small portion going towards public transit and the
RPTA. As a political subdivision of the state of Arizona, the RPTA core mandate is to plan, develop and operate a regional transit system in Maricopa County.

In 1993, the name Valley Metro was adopted as the identity for the regional transit system in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Under the Valley Metro brand, local governments join to fund the Valley-wide transit system that citizens use today. Elected officials from local governments comprise the Valley Metro Regional Public Transportation Authority Board of Directors. A board of elected officials comprised of mayors, council members and a Maricopa County supervisor oversees the RPTA. These agencies can join the RPTA by resolution of their governing bodies. Membership is open to all municipalities in Maricopa County and to the county government.

Though the RPTA’s core mandate has not changed since its inception in 1985, the agency’s mission was reaffirmed with the passage of Proposition 400 in 2004. With more than $3 billion (2006 dollars) in funding coming to the RPTA from the half-cent sales tax, the Arizona legislature has mandated the agency execute the transit elements of the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The below map depicts the vision of the Super Grid Bus System as a part of the RTP.
The Valley Metro RPTA Board of Directors approved a solid direction for the agency in 2007. The mission, vision and goals provide a path for successful implementation of the projects and services set forth in the RTP.

At Valley Metro, we develop and deliver an integrated regional transit system with excellence, in collaboration with member agencies and through public and private partnerships. In doing so, we improve the quality of life and the environment, and support economic development.

A Board of Directors governs RPTA (Valley Metro). The RPTA consists of 16 public agencies that set policy for bus and paratransit. RPTA board members include:

- Mesa Council Member
- Chandler Council Member
- Avondale Council Member
- Buckeye Council Member
- El Mirage Mayor
- Gilbert Council Member
- Glendale Council Member
- Goodyear Vice Mayor
- Maricopa County Supervisor
- Peoria Council Member
- Phoenix Council Member
- Scottsdale Council Member
- Surprise Mayor
- Tempe Council Member
- Tolleson Council Member
- Wickenberg Council Member

Best Practices
Seamless Transit

Today, Valley Metro represents fixed route, American with Disabilities (ADA) complementary paratransit, demand response for the general public, light rail, and vanpool transit services. These transit services operate under the unified name. Three primary agencies contract for fixed route bus service. RPTA, City of Phoenix, and City of Tempe contract with private companies to operate fixed routes for the region. Several additional cities fund transit services by buying service through RPTA, City of Phoenix, or City of Tempe.

To the customer, Valley Metro operates as a unified transit system in Maricopa County despite being operated by three agencies, using multiple private contractors, and funded by a regional tax and local taxes, representing 21 cities. All agencies use the same branding on all services (green and purple with Valley Metro logo). RPTA produces one printed transit book and system map for bus and rail services, available both in print and online. Additionally, the customer information phone line is the same for the entire system. Valley Metro also has a seamless fare structure for all services. Valley Metro accepts coins, cash, and transfers.
Regional Transportation Coordination
In 2009, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the lead agency for regional transportation coordination, worked to update the Human Services Coordination Transportation Plan. The MAG region has been particularly successful in coordinating human services transportation. In March 2009, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) bestowed the United We Ride Leadership Award for major urbanized areas to the MAG Human Services Coordination Transportation Planning Program.

The region determined five major goals to work towards in the next few years:

1. Transportation Ambassador Program
2. Standardized Driver Training
3. Standardized Coordination Policies
4. Need and Demographic Tracking
5. Travel Training for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Of the 5 goals, the most notable is that of standardized driver training. The stakeholder agencies, including for profit and nonprofit organizations, have the opportunity to train their drivers with the newly developed standardized driver training program for a certificate of completion. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) expanded the online training portal to include the standardized driver-training course. In addition, the agency is working with the stakeholders to increase the number of hands-on trainings throughout the year.
Profile
The North by Northwest CONNECTOR Alliance (the Alliance) is a partnership of five transit agencies in a 5-county area of northwestern Oregon. The Alliance was formed to:

- Foster collaboration.
- Improve transit connections.
- Share resources.
- Brand and market transit service in all five counties as a single service.
- Promote environmentally friendly travel.

The Alliance manages the area’s coordinated regional transit system, known as the North by Northwest CONNECTOR. The CONNECTOR is a national model for interagency partnerships and the use of private-public strategies to promote transit. The CONNECTOR is a partnership of Columbia County Rider, the Sunset Empire Transportation District, the Tillamook County Transportation District, Benton County Transit and Lincoln County Transit.

Transit Service
Working together, the five transit partners that make up the Alliance have been successful in promoting environmentally conscious travel across service areas to diverse pools of customers. Strategic partnerships have allowed the Alliance to brand and market transit service as a single, seamless service across county lines, serving population and employment clusters, tourist attractions, and commuter and visitor markets.

The Alliance integrates transportation services and provides connections to the metropolitan areas of Portland, Albany and Corvallis, Oregon and Longview/Kelso, Washington. The CONNECTOR is comprised of three elements:

1. Partnerships - The CONNECTOR system includes a public-private partnership between the Alliance and a new non-profit organization, the North by Northwest Foundation. The Foundation is tasked with raising funds for transit service in the 5-county area.
2. Capital - Capital includes transit buses and other equipment, owned and operated by each of the five partners. The partners share some assets such as transit stop facilities.
3. Operations - The system includes all transit operations and services provided by the five partners. Each partner is responsible for operations in their own service area. The alliance works together to coordinate schedules, transfer locations, and even staff.

For local customers, fares are set by each transit agency in the CONNECTOR system. For visitors, CONNECTOR offers 3-day passes for $25.00 and 7-day passes for $30.00.

History and Governing Body Representation
In 2010, five agencies joined to form The Alliance. The partners jointly applied for and were awarded a $3.5 million U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) for regional strategies to increase transit use.
Immediately following the grant award, Columbia County worked with the other four alliance members to create an intergovernmental entity according to Oregon statutes. The intergovernmental agreement was executed within eight months.

The alliance worked with a consultant to implement the tasks outlined as part of the grant. The first step was a study to establish baseline conditions and connection needs. Charette workshops were held in all five counties to identify needs. Route and service changes were implemented to improve connections.

Throughout the project, the Alliance met monthly and alternated between in-person meetings at a different location around the region and by teleconference calls. Each partner agency had specific responsibilities throughout implementation.

The CONNECTOR is overseen by a Coordinating Committee consisting of one member representing each partner agency. Members include:

- Clastop County (Sunset Empire Transportation District)
- Lincoln County Transit
- Columbia County Rider (CC Rider)
- Tillamook County Transportation District (The Wave)
- Benton County Rural and Special Transportation

The Foundation is governed by a board of community members representing businesses, higher education, and other civic interests.

**Best Practices**

*Regional Coordination*

The Alliance took many steps to create unified service in the region. Centralization practices include:

- Single name and logo.
- Centralized website.
- Co-branding at stops.
- Fare policy committee.
Marketing
The group’s ability to pool available advertising space among the five transit agencies enhances bus advertising efforts. Pooling advertising space allows the foundation to attract larger advertisers and maximize potential revenue. The foundation also actively works to attract visitor information advertising through opportunities such as rack cards, posters and links from its website. Such opportunities allow the alliance partners to simultaneously promote transit ridership and local retailers, providing win-win revenue opportunities for the region.

One option for entities considering allowing advertising on their website is Google AdSense, a free program offered by Google that can be used for website advertising. A small piece of coding is added to an organization’s website to allow advertising to appear. The types of advertisers invited to use the space can be selected and managed. Advertisers bid and win the right to advertise in the space provided. The host entity is paid a small amount each time someone visits the website and clicks on an ad. This type of advertising takes some time to generate significant revenue because the amount generated per click is relatively small — a few cents. However, website advertising is an innovative way to generate local revenue.

The Alliance works in concert with the North by Northwest Transportation Foundation to increase ridership and generate revenue using the following tools:

- Regional pass sales.
- Visitors pass sales with promotional fares (new riders mean new revenue, increased ridership numbers and farebox recovery).
- Employer support of transit (employers subsidize bus passes and offer other company-specific incentives to increase ridership).
- Hotel and motel industry partnerships (Newport City Loop had 30 hotels participating as of December 2011, generating $90,000 annually for Lincoln County Transit).
- Tribal partnerships (tribes have access to additional federal funding opportunities, and tribal-run casinos provide a large source of employees and customers requiring transportation; tribal casinos are a source of advertising opportunities).
- Branding and marketing efforts of the CONNECTOR, which are used to generate additional ridership by area visitors.

Lessons Learned
Coordination success and lessons learned by CONNECTOR include:

**Enlist the right partners** - All partners had to broaden their perspectives beyond the customer base in their individual service areas. Achieving a regional outlook required compromise, and sometimes challenging financial tradeoffs. Each transit agency participating in the CONNECTOR pilot project had its own “bottom line,” and some agencies were less accepting of change than others.

**Set a realistic timeline** - Due to grant requirements, the project schedule was shortened to 26 months. The condensed schedule meant that partners had to share information about their needs and management practices, both good and bad. Several coordinating committee members had known each other prior to the
project, which made it easier to share openly, and a non-judgmental approach by several initial members of the coordinating committee quickly became a cultural norm for the group. This environment of trust was foundational. From a negative standpoint, although all CONNECTOR work tasks and programs were complete, there was not time to calculate a measurable benefit.

Secure the right resources - The partners decided to retain an independent contractor for on-going administrative support after the pilot project, rather than using staff at one of the partner agencies. This heads off any perceived issues of undue influence by any member agency as collective decisions are made, avoids staff capacity conflicts, and ensures the CONNECTOR alliance administrative work does not fall by the wayside when individual agency workloads are heavy.

Establish a regular forum for collaboration - A standing monthly meeting day and time allows participants to know meeting dates well in advance, which helps to avoid scheduling hassles and improves participation. Meetings should be publicly noticed and open to the public.

Largest Successes Occur Where Partners Embrace Change - CONNECTOR ridership increases have resulted from partnerships to improve service. For example, a Tillamook County’s route was extended to Lincoln City in 2012 and ridership increased over 74 percent on weekends and 71 percent on weekdays. To implement the changes, Lincoln County had to be willing to allow Tillamook County to operate within its service area, reduce its own service, and pay Tillamook County for increased operational costs.

Do Not be Discouraged by Early Returns - When it comes to performance measurement related to transit system changes, it is important not to be discouraged by near-term performance variability or even initial decreases in performance. Transit managers serving on the CONNECTOR Coordinating Committee have observed that it usually takes one to two years before the effects of transit service modifications stabilize.