Megaregional travel crosses boundaries of political jurisdictions and typical planning boundaries. Detailed work is often done on specific projects (like high speed rail) with little or no attention to the needs of vulnerable populations. State DOTs consider environmental justice in project planning, but in a localized manner, not focusing on interregional travel needs.

It is important as megaregion planning matures that access to opportunities promoting equity across rural communities improves. There should be better connections and access to employment, health care and other trip purposes from rural to urban communities within the megaregions, especially for high need populations.

The objective of this research is to formulate a rubric styled framework for planners to craft purpose and need statements that will support development of transportation projects for vulnerable populations in megaregions. The framework will be designed to assist decision making by providing an assessment tool to identify the location of vulnerable populations and determine the travel needs that can be met in the megaregion beyond traditional jurisdictional boundaries.

The study is designed to identify vulnerable populations in the Texas Triangle corridors coupled with an investigation of their mobility needs. The purpose is to link these communities with improved mobility to meet essential and desired lifestyle improvements.

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