

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN PURPOSE AND NEED

Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plans have been developed to respond to the need of improving the delivery of services in an environment of increasingly constrained revenues. It also responds to the State of Texas and Federal regulations. The Texas House passed H.B 3588 which contains a transit planning requirement focused on filling service gaps and eliminating overlaps in service. Each area of the state is required to have a plan. There was no guidance on how the plans should be developed, what should be in them or who should be involved. Subsequently a statewide study group was formed to guide the regional planning process. This group determined that there should not be any requirements for how the plan should be developed, the planning horizon, nor what should be in the plan. Recommendations were made regarding the regional service study area (i.e. each Council of Government area would produce a plan).

HB 3588 is a far reaching transportation act, covering a wide range of highway and transit related issues. House Bill 3588 added Chapter 461 to the Transportation Code. For the purposes of public transit operators, there are a number of changes that may have an impact on operations. These include:

Sec. 461.004. DUTIES OF TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Requires that department identify:

- (1) overlaps and gaps in the provision of public transportation services, including services that could be more effectively provided by existing, privately funded transportation resources;
- (2) underused equipment owned by public transportation providers; and
- (3) inefficiencies in the provision of public transportation services by any public transportation provider.

Sec. 461.005. ELIMINATION OF OVERLAPPING SERVICE.

Requires that TxDOT

- (a) encourage public transportation providers to agree on the allocation of specific services and service areas among the providers.
- (b) If public transportation providers do not reach an agreement on a service plan the department may develop an interim service plan for that area.

The **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)** was enacted in 2005, as Public Law 109-59. SAFETEA-LU authorized the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

The SAFETEA-LU human services transportation coordination provisions require that transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, lower incomes optimize efficiency and effectiveness by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation provided through multiple federal programs. Coordination will improve access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most effective transportation possible with available resources.

Coordinated Planning

- SAFETEA-LU requires the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for all FTA human service transportation programs: Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program, Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program and Section 5317 New Freedom Program.
- SAFETEA-LU requires the plan to be developed by a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.
- SAFETEA-LU planning requirements become effective in FY 2007 as a condition of Federal assistance. JARC planning requirements existed previously and accordingly, are effective immediately.

The Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is a collaborative product that is just one part of the planning process that will continue to identify issues, barriers, and opportunities to make public transportation services more efficient and effective. The Plan responds to the requirements laid out in the Transportation Code – Chapter 461 and SAFETEA-LU.

SUMMARY

The Coastal Bend Region consists of 12 counties with a projected total population of the in service area of 638,345. The dominant market and destination in the service area is Corpus Christi, the only urbanized area in the Coastal Bend region.

The agreed to plan is based on a rational planning process that allows for the use of tried and true approaches to transit planning. This approach allows for:

- an open process with participation by any interested party
- Public participation at various times in the process
- Collection and analysis of information necessary to make appropriate decisions
- Uniformity of data across regions
- Innovation in the development of alternatives and the final plan.

The planning process included a:

Review of Demographics and Land Use – The first phase of the Plan identified where people likely to use the service reside and where people want to go (trip attractors).

- Review of Existing Services – This task required a survey of all providers of publicly funded transportation, as well as private providers such as taxi companies and intercity bus operators.
- Analysis of Needs – After completion of: the demographic review a random sample of transit dependent and potential users was conducted to assess the familiarity with existing services and the need for additional services (**Attachment 3**).
- Development of Service and Institutional Alternatives – The next step in the process was the discussion with stakeholders about service alternatives and institutional/organizational alternatives.
- Development of Final Plan – Based upon stakeholder consensus the final transportation coordination plan was developed.

Overall there appears to be a growing need for transit services in the twelve county area. Even the low population counties have potential service needs. Following are the major observations:

Over 70% of the Coastal Bend population resides in towns of over 5,000.

Much of the needs are for service into Corpus Christi for work, medical, and other needs. Other communities such as Alice, Beeville, Mustang Island, Rockport, Kingsville, and Sinton also attract some employees.

There are a number of potential corridors that cross jurisdictional lines. Most surprising of which is that there is potential for a Duval County through Jim Wells to Corpus Christi service, based on the need.

There is a need for a position to focus on the concept of inter-county coordination that replaces individual transit system thinking with regional thinking and planning. This concept requires that planning be addressed by trip needs, not by transit system needs. The transit systems have agreed to actively work together to integrate regional schedules.

The approach chosen and detailed in the plan that follows, calls for a regional Transportation Coordinator (**Attachment 4**) that will work closely with each of the operators to reduce or eliminate duplicative services, seek funds, plan services, and conduct a variety of other tasks. It will also be the charge of the Transportation Coordinator to keep the planning process alive and work toward future revisions and implement able actions.

BACKGROUND

The following provides an overview of the transit operating environment in the Coastal Bend Council of Government region.

SERVICE AREA DESCRIPTION

The Coastal Bend Council of Governments region consists of 12 counties: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, Mc Mullen, Nueces, Refugio, and San Patricio depicted in Figure XX. The region had an estimated population of 549,012 at the 2000 census in an area of 12,943 square miles. This provides a population density of 42.4 persons per square mile as compared to a statewide density of 79.5. The dominant market and destination in the service area is Corpus Christi, the only urbanized area in the Coastal Bend region with over 52% of the regions population. Other destinations include the cities of Alice, Aransas Pass, Beeville, Kingsville, Robstown, Rockport and Sinton.

Population Growth

It is estimated that the region has grown approximately 9.6% over the 1990 – 2000 period and is expected to grow about 13% by 2010 based upon the data from the Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer.

Identification of Potential Transit Riders

The Plan identified the population segments which are most likely to use transit and where they reside, and then compared this to existing services. These transit dependent population segments include the following:

- **youth** – the data indicates that 24.1% of the regions population is between the ages of 5 – 19 with a statewide comparable distribution of 23.6%;
- **elderly** - the data indicates that 11.7% of the regions population is over 65 with a statewide comparable distribution of 9.9%;
- **persons with a mobility limitation** – the data indicates that in the working age population group (ages 21 – 64) 22.7 % were categorized to be in a disability status (compared to 19.9% statewide) however, 52.2% were employed;
- **commute to work** – the data indicates that 75.7% of the workers over 16 commute to work alone, 16.6% shared a ride and 1.2% used public transportation as compared to 77.7% driving alone, 14.5% sharing a ride and 1.9% using public transportation statewide;
- **persons living below the poverty level** – the 2000 Census indicated that 16.2% of the regions families were living in poverty status compared to 12.0% statewide.

The data also indicates that areas of high relative need based on the number of persons who are transit dependent are concentrated within the cities and towns of the service area. Clearly

McMullen and Kenedy Counties have extremely low populations, making transit service difficult and expensive.

County of Residence	Trips within the County	Trips to Nueces County	Trips to all other Counties	% of Total Trips made to other Counties
Aransas	4,474	215	757	3.1%
Bee	8,082	131	596	2.4%
Brooks	2,137	7	360	1.5%
Duval	2,589	163	572	2.3%
Jim Wells	9,802	544	1,655	6.8%
Kenedy	146	0	81	0.3%
Kleberg	9,413	2210	2,876	11.8%
Live Oak	2,724	94	349	1.4%
McMullen	308	0	70	0.3%
Nueces	113,225	n/a	12,614	51.7%
Refugio	2,120	27	187	0.8%
San Patricio	12,860	2,445	4,290	17.6%
Sum	167,880	5,836	24,407	100.0%

Journey-to-Work

The journey-to-work data gives us a snap shot of what may be an important component of any coordinated inter-county transportation service. Using data developed by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, over 198,000 daily journey to work trip origins were analyzed to determine the inter-county movement.

The following Table summarizes the journey-to-work data for the Coastal Bend region. Of the total work trips 87% are to locations within the county that the worker resides. Of all of the work trips that are made daily to another county 24% are coming to Nueces County while Nueces County generates 52% of the inter-county travel leaving 24% of the work trips between counties other than Nueces County.

The journey-to-work data reveals that the major employment locations are, San Patricio (18% of the inter-county journey to work), Kleberg (12%), and Jim Wells County (7%). The other eight counties account for about 11 percent of the destinations.

Work Trips Within and Between Counties

Identification of Major Destinations

Major destinations are those locations which are likely trip destinations for the community and in particular transit users. They include such places as major employment sites, human service agencies, retail shopping, and other needs.

A summary of the major destinations and their respective locations is presented in the following discussion.

The region has 4,775 establishments which employ ten or more employees with the ten largest employers being in Corpus Christi or the industrial area of north Corpus Christi Bay. Far and away the largest concentration of employment sites is in Corpus Christi at the Naval Air Station, downtown and the retail areas along South Padre Island Drive. There are also smaller concentrations of employment sites in Alice, Beeville, Kingsville, Rockport/Fulton, and Sinton. The regional retail center is located along South Padre Island Drive in Corpus Christi. Shopping is also available in the larger towns of Alice, Kingsville, Beeville, Sinton, and Corpus Christi. Specialty shops of Aransas Pass, Port Aransas and Rockport appeal to tourists

The major medical facilities are all located in Corpus Christi, with smaller facilities in the small cities and towns throughout the service area. One of the most important elements in developing a regional public transit plan is the medical transportation need.

Educational facilities are another of the key destinations in the community whether for education, training, or recreation. For the purposes of this analysis, they include training programs, universities and colleges. Colleges and universities are located in Corpus Christi, Kingsville, Beeville, and Alice. Public and private employment training facilities are located in Alice, Beeville, Corpus Christi, Kingsville, and Sinton and are major destinations.

Overall Needs

The review of needs included interviews and input from a variety of stakeholders that participated in the process. The second part of the needs review included a survey of individuals residing in the more rural counties to determine their familiarity with rural public transportation services and a rudimentary assessment of the need for service.

The availability of public transportation and the quality of available public transportation has in the past and continues to be an issue to the Area Agency on Aging. Access to medical and social service agencies is a concern frequently raised by clients. As would be expected, the rural elderly have a particular problem in scheduling reliable service to medical appointments and medical facilities.

The need for improved public transportation is a high priority of the Blind Commission. A survey conducted on client concerns several years ago indicated that transportation was the number one issue. The Director indicates that transportation to medical appointments, job training and employment opportunities is a continuing concern to individuals that are visually impaired. The problem exists in both rural areas and the city, with no particular community or agency need being highlighted.

The WorkSource is responsible for assisting in the employment of welfare clients throughout the Coastal Bend region. In order to accomplish this goal, significant resources are directed to transportation to get these persons to work. According to the Director for Welfare Reform Programs, there are 3,800 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients in the Coastal Bend region. Although this program has seen a decline in the number of clients transportation to training and work continues to be an issue.

Overall there appears to be significant need for transit service to work. Even some low population corridors have potential for service. Following are the major observations:

- One half of the rural population of the Coastal Bend region resides in towns of over 5,000;
- Much of the needs are for service into Corpus Christi for work, medical, and other needs. Other communities such as Alice, Beeville, Mustang Island, Rockport, Kingsville, and Sinton also attract some employees;
- The trip origins as expected come from Corpus Christi and the larger towns and cities.

THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE COASTAL BEND REGION

Planning Horizon

Although there is no specific timeframe discussed in the recent legislation, typically the short-range planning horizon is four to five years. This is in large part due to the fact that as the planning horizon is lengthened, its value recedes due to the short term nature of funding.

Process

The agreed to plan is based on a rational planning process that allows for the use of tried and true approaches to transit planning. This approach allows for:

- an open process with participation by any interested party
- Public participation at various times in the process
- Collection and analysis of information necessary to make appropriate decisions
- Uniformity of data across regions
- Innovation in the development of alternatives and the final plan.

The planning process included the following tasks:

Review of Demographics and Land Use – The first phase of the Plan identified where people likely to use the service reside and where people want to go (trip attractors).

Review of Existing Services – The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) developed a survey for all providers of publicly funded transportation. The surveys included information about the operational assets, policies and practices of the operators. This data was submitted and is maintained by TTI.

Analysis of Needs – Determining transportation needs in rural areas is part art and part science. Demographic data and journey- to-work data were reviewed, but survey and anecdotal evidence is also considered in estimating need and demand.

Development of Service and Institutional Alternatives – The next step in the process is to develop a series of service alternatives and institutional/organizational alternatives. Service alternatives can introduce new services, new routes, modifications and a variety of other service needs. Coordination alternatives developed include possible consolidation of services to simple sharing of vehicles, maintenance or training programs.

Selection of Alternatives – Interaction of the stakeholders identified near term and long-range actions suitable for the region.

Development of Draft and Final Plan – Once the preferred actions were identified, the final plan was developed, identifying operational needs: vehicles, staff, technology, budgets and funding sources.

Public Participation

Public participation and input has been sought throughout the process and relied on the outreach efforts of the stakeholders. Shareholder input was most useful during the discussion of alternatives and in the review of the draft plan in order to allow for changes to be incorporated into the final report.

COASTAL BEND TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

In order for the plan to be realistic, the requirements placed on the public transit providers in the plan must match funding available. It must be recognized that not all needs can be met with the current or projected funding levels therefore, priorities are required. Funding agencies must be served and general public dollars must be spread over a broad service area. The objectives of this plan are to determine the best use of existing dollars within the regulatory and contractual framework. However this plan also identifies additional needs if/when funding becomes available.

The objective of the coordination effort is to:

- Improve public transportation services for choice riders and the transit dependent persons in the 12 county area. The emphasis will be to provide better transportation for individuals traveling for employment, day care, training, non-emergency medical and other destinations as needed.
- Coordinate activities of various agencies involved in regional transportation, including transportation providers, human service agencies, and employers. The purpose of the coordination would be to channel resources in the most effective manner to ensure as many one-way trips as possible.

The service plan addresses inter-county service in the Coastal Bend region. The Transportation Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating these services, while the public transit providers will for the most part provide the service. The close working relationship between the Transportation Coordinator and the operators is essential. Coordinating inter-county public transportation services in the Coastal Bend area is a challenging effort in part due to the region's size. The clustering of destinations in Corpus Christi, Alice, Kingsville, Beeville, and Sinton (as well as medical destinations outside of the region to San Antonio and Victoria), and the resulting distance involved in traveling between homes and destinations add to an already difficult process.

It is recommended that the transit systems; REAL, Bee Community Action, Kleberg County and Corpus Christi RTA take the lead in each of their service areas as the primary transportation operators for their respective portions of the region. Each system has the willingness, operational resources and expertise needed to accomplish an improved level of inter-county coordination.

Coordination of Regional Transportation - The Concept

The plan supports the concept of inter-county coordination that replaces individual transit system thinking with regional thinking and planning. The transit systems have excellent cooperative relations in large part to the efforts of the Corpus Christi TxDOT District - Public Transportation Coordinator.

The primary recommendation detailed in the Transportation Coordination Plan calls for the creation of a Regional Transportation Coordinator that will work closely with each of the operators to reduce or eliminate duplicative services, seek funds, plan services, and conduct a

variety of other tasks. Following that are a series of Recommended Service Improvements that can incrementally improve overall coordination of services.

Regional Transportation Coordinator

The success of the Regional Transportation Coordinator is dependent on having a relationship with the transit systems, which will enhance coordination efforts. The public transportation providers will form an inter-county consortium. The primary trip purpose focus will be medical employment and education / training, however, while schedules should target these trip purposes, other purposes such as recreation, shopping and personal business should not be ignored. The Regional Transportation Coordinator would be responsible for the following:

- The Transportation Coordinator should take the lead in inter-county transportation planning efforts. This task will include eliminating duplication through joint use of resources. An important element of the Transportation Coordinator will be to seek grant funding for a variety of projects in the region. The Transportation Coordinator should be able to identify a need and with assistance from the appropriate operator, fulfill that need in a timely manner.
- Increasing the use of ride sharing. It makes sense to link up rideshare and transit components, because they are part of the progression of transit service.
- Recruiting and coordinating volunteers. Volunteers are an important resource for meeting community transportation needs.
- Coordinating inter-county human service transportation. Explore the possibility of combining the human service trips (Medicaid, Title III, and Workforce) with general public service to reduce costs for all.
- Promoting the use of public transit and marketing the range of inter-county services available to the public. This may include participation in public meetings acting as an advocate of public transit services and marketing the variety of transit options.
- Providing information and referrals or provide information on all options available whether operated by a transit system, intercity bus, taxi, ridesharing, or other service.
- Developing public/private partnerships and sponsorship programs. Private businesses can help transit by promoting the service, encouraging employees to use transit, and in buying vehicle advertising packages.

Staffing - Employment

The Regional Transportation Coordinator position could be an employee of the RTA or other funding agency. The position would be supervised through the Planning Department and supported by the RTA. Many of the services are coordinated through Corpus Christi, and RTA has the capability and desire to improve this program. It therefore seems appropriate for RTA to be the employer.

Administrative Budget

The administrative budget will include all of the cost items associated with the Regional Transportation Coordinator. This includes office staff support, office equipment and supplies, possible rent, telecommunications and other items associated with running an office. Travel and training will include funds to attend meetings, conferences and training for the Coordinator. Marketing in the form of brochures and other simple grass roots approaches will be budgeted. The budget below reflects the basic anticipated costs of the Regional Transportation Coordinator activity:

Staff Wages and Fringe	\$60,000
Staff Support	\$26,000
Office Equipment & Supplies	\$12,000
Rent	\$ 6,000
Communications	\$12,000
Travel	\$ 2,000
Training	\$ 2,000
Marketing	<u>\$10,000</u>
TOTAL	\$130,000

One-time expenditures for a region wide telecommunications and dispatch system, dispatch software and hardware and general office furniture would add an additional \$1500,000 - \$500,000 depending on the sophistication of the system.

Multiple Funding Sources

A number of on-going funding sources are present to ensure sustainability of the Regional Transportation Coordinator. Funding could include WorkSource, RTA (in-kind), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Section 5311 (through the local rural operators, with rural match), as well as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning funds, Coastal Bend Council of Governments, and private sponsorship funding and support. Part of the Transportation Coordinator's responsibilities will be to ensure that these funds are available for administration and operation of needed services.

Oversight

The Stakeholders group should continue to meet periodically to provide program evaluation and oversight. At minimum this should include; the TxDOT District, all of the public transit providers, the Council of Governments, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and representatives from human service agencies that are providing funding to the Transportation Coordinator or the rural transit systems. Important to this process is the inclusion of the private sector, including all of those businesses that are major sponsors of the service. There should also be representatives of the riding public as well.

This Oversight Committee would be responsible for providing guidance to the Coordinator. The

Committee could develop and/or review policies to help promote the service, secure grants, and determine where and how the funds will be used. This Committee will also be involved in planning efforts for the region.

Recommended Service Improvements

To successfully coordinate services on a regional level a new way of thinking must be adopted that includes:

- **Thinking Regionally and Across Agency Lines** - Operators and the Regional Transportation Coordinator must think regionally, rather than implementing a action or service without considering any needs beyond the one being addressed.
- **Marketing Service** – The services available must be marketed regionally to residents of the towns served, to employers in the communities served, and human service agencies (especially Medicaid and Title III). Information on services must be posted in each community and senior center, clinics and other public facilities. Just as marketing is essential for most other businesses, marketing community transit is very important to success.
- **Utilize Private Inter-City Carriers** - Private intercity bus operators have significant levels of service through the South and West Corridors with additional service in the Northeast Corridor. These providers may provide a cost effective alternate for trips to and from the larger communities. Intercity schedules need to be available to inform customers of all of the options. Agreements may need to be developed for inter-city buses to accept vouchers from agency clients or to develop joint facilities. Where feasible, rural operators may need to become intercity agents.
- **Transfer Centers and Intermodal Opportunities** - Transfer points should be developed for each major community served. These will be designated stops and as ridership increases, consideration should be given to developing shelters and formal transfer facilities. These can be in existing shopping centers or other locations where parking is available. These sites could ultimately be developed as park and ride facilities.

There are a variety of service related issues that provide an opportunity for improved coordination. They include:

Vehicles

The systems that are operating service in the high density corridors should use their largest vehicles. As the service and the demand grow, it will be necessary to invest or purchase service from operators that have larger capacity vehicles. Without larger 30-35 ft. vehicles, ridership will be limited by vehicle size. All vehicles should be accessible for persons with disabilities.

Vehicle Utilization

An important feature in any longer distance transit service is a guaranteed ride home in the

event of a customer emergency where they must get home in mid-day. Customers need the security of knowing that they can get home in the mid day in the event of a serious need. The customer would call the designated telephone number and would be scheduled on a mid day medical or training return trip, or can be scheduled on an intercity bus.

Fares

Developing a unified fare policy must be explored by the Oversight Committee. A multi-tiered fare may be necessary for specialized services for their unique service. Medicaid rules are more demanding, customers typically require door-to-door service as opposed to curb-to-curb, and there is an approval/eligibility/reporting process that is far above and beyond what is needed for the general public.

Advertising

The Regional Transportation Coordinator should set up standards for advertising on the service. Advertising should be tasteful within the normal bounds of advertising accepted in the Coastal Bend area.

Diver and Staff Training

The Regional Transportation Coordinator should develop a unified training program possibly using FTA – 5311 funding, that would provide consistent standards, guidance and information on those issues common to all operators. Supplemental training by each operator on individual policies and practices is assumed.

Performance Standards

The Oversight Committee must develop broad based policy directives which guide the service and are ultimately measured through the performance standards. The standards are a valuable management tool that can be used to measure service quality, and productivity.

A framework for action

Individuals and organizations are catalysts for envisioning, organizing, and sustaining a coordinated system that provides mobility and access to transportation for all. This framework of action (Attachment 5) has been used as a guide to determining if the **Coastal Bend Council of Governments - Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan** is responsive to the elements of a sound coordinating plan. In general there is an affirmative answer however, this is a planning process and work will continue to refine and define the plan to respond to the needs of the Coastal Bend.

**STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COASTAL BEND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN**

AGENCY	REPRESENTATIVE
• Coastal Bend Council of Governments	Richard Bullock, Director of Planning & Dev.
• Metropolitan Planning Organization	Tom Niskala, Transportation Planning Dir.
• Texas Department of Transportation	Stephen Ndima, District Planning Assistant
• Area Agency on Aging	Betty Lamb, Director
• Accessible Communities, Inc.	Judy Telge, Executive Director
• Regional Transportation Authority	Fred Haley, Director of Planning
• Health and Human Services Commission	Carol Corneilson,
• WorkSource	Larry Demieville, Planner / LMI Specialist
• Workforce Network	Karen Givens, Manager
• Workforce 1	Pam Miles, Program Specialist
• American Association of Retired Persons	Eloy Soza, Mobility Specialist
• Rural Economic Assistance League, Inc.	Gloria Ramos, Executive Director
• Bee Community Action Agency	B. P. Loya, Transportation Director (retired) Anna Simo, Transportation Director
• Kleberg County Human Services	Art Pecos, Executive Director
• Kleberg County Human Services	Leandro Villarreal, Transportation Coordinator
• Community Action Council of South Texas	Eli Ramirez, Transportation Programs Director
• MV Transportation	Gayle Knight, Manager
• Lefleur Transportation	Joel Cura, Regional Manager
• Coastal Bend Council of Governments	Robert Thomas, Emergency Mgmt. Planner
• Others attending include:	Juan Soliz, Mary Saenz, and Anna M. Flores

BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS THAT HINDER COORDINATING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

In accordance with the Regional Coordinated Public Transportation Plan, the Work Plan involves identifying and analyzing existing barriers and constraints which serve as obstacles to coordination of transit services. The review of barriers has involved evaluation of institutional objectives, agency conflicts, and existing gaps in service. This task also included determining what transportation needs may be addressed through further coordination that may be currently inhibited by the existing barriers.

This document is an overview of the barriers and constraints that have inhibited transit coordination and transportation cooperation plans in the Coastal Bend region.

Federal Barriers

- Differing matching requirements among federal programs
- Lack of financial incentives
- Reluctance to share vehicles and resources. Programs that provide specialized human service transportation have distinct requirements (eligibility standards, vehicle needs, and insurance).

Policy/Regulatory/Organizational/Structural

- Differing eligibility criteria (program might provide transportation exclusively for one type of use)
- Providers are governed by varying jurisdictions
- Extensive monitoring and reporting required without administrative dollars
- Seamless fare and rates needed across region to allow coordination to work
- Insurance and liability issues (standards are set by participating organizations)
- Insurance Carrier restrictions against vehicle sharing as well as differing insurance requirements for various programs may preclude providers from carrying clients of other programs
- Inability (or inconvenience) to integrate information systems across programs
- Agencies may maintain separate policies regarding staff qualifications (training, drug and alcohol protocols, etc.)

Funding

- Federal assistance is categorical or designated for specific purpose which creates limited application of services for narrowly defined user groups
- Uncertainty about cost allocation between participants and funding agencies
- Providers may have different fiscal year, which complicates budgeting and contracting associated with coordination
- Some providers are paid by the vehicle trip rather than the passenger trip and as a result there is a fiscal disincentive to coordinate

Operations

- Large geographic areas to cover
- Cost of providing services compared to the fare charged
- Conflict with scheduling riders – can't anticipate when they will be done at the doctor's office
- No single reliable source of information about all programs available
- No single point of coordination of services, dispatch or customer contact
- Client based vehicles are not used to capacity
- Efficiency limited by de-centralized trip scheduling
- Operational and maintenance challenges (Alternative fuel requirement for new vehicles)
- Lack of flexibility in rural services – existing services have limited hours and days of operation

Education

- Training needed for those transporting ADA clients
- Uncertainty of customer eligibility/ intake process
- Lack of information about matching fund requirements. Some federal funds can not be used to match.
- Public education is needed about transportation needs and availability of services.
- Public misconceptions and negative connotations associated with public transportation services

Other

- Competition between agencies for available funds
- Lack of trust (organizations may feel their clients would not get the same level of customer service if transportation service is provided by other organizations)
- Ownership and territorial ("turf") issues
- Difficult to identify all potential participants in the process

Gaps in Services

- Limited transportation for employment purposes
- Limited transportation for business purposes

Questionnaire administered by TAMU-CC staff (Spanish and English as required)

The Social Science Research Center at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi is working with the Coastal Bend Council of Governments to help plan for the future of public transportation in the Texas Coastal Bend. We'd like to know whether or not you or members of your family use or would use public transit to travel around the region. Your responses will help to Council of Governments meet needs of current and future residents of the Coastal Bend. We appreciate your taking the time to complete this brief survey.

Q1. What is the most commonly used form of transportation that you and members of your household use?

- Own Vehicle (Car/Truck/Van/Motorcycle)
- Taxi
- Bus
- Bicycle
- Walking/wheelchair
- Van Service
- Other (Specify)_____

Q2. What is the most commonly used form of transportation that you use to travel to work?

- Own Vehicle (Car/Truck/Van/Motorcycle)
- Taxi
- Bus
- Bicycle
- Walking/wheelchair
- Van Service
- Other (Specify)_____

Q3. Have you or anyone in your family used public transportation in the Coastal Bend area within the last six months?

- Yes, respondent has
- Yes, other household member(s)
- No

Q4. How often do you use the following transportation methods (mark as many as apply):

	Not at all (0 times per week)	Occasionally (1-4 times per year)	Regularly (1-4 times per month)	Often (1-4 times a week or more)
Taxi				
Bus				
Own Vehicle				
Van Service				
Bicycle				
Friends/Family Members (share a ride)				

Walk/ wheelchair				
Other _____				

Q5. What types of public transportation, if any, are you aware of that are available in your area?

Taxi	
Bus	
Van Service	
Share a ride	
Other	

Q6. I would like to read to you some reasons people give for using public transportation. As I read each one tell me if you currently use or how regular public transportation would improve your ability to access the following:

	Do not use public transportation	Currently use	Improve access somewhat	Greatly improve access
Health and Medical Needs (doctors office, pharmacy, dentist etc.)				
Shopping and Daily Activities (work, daycare, grocery store, look for a job, etc.)				
Social, Recreational, and Community Events (senior center, community festival, beach, swimming pool, parks, etc.)				
Education services such as job training, school, college				
Federal government services such as Social Security, IRS, Veterans Benefits				
State and local government services such as Medicaid, WIC, Food Stamps, Unemployment				

Q7. How would you rate the availability of public transportation (taxi, bus, van service, or share-a-ride)?

Excellent

Very good
Good
Fair
Poor
No access at all/ Not available in community

Q8. Would you be willing to pay for public transportation if it were available?

No _____ Yes _____ If yes, how much? _____

Q9. If public transportation were available would you be able to call 24-hours or more in advance to schedule a trip you might be taking?

No _____ Yes _____

Q10. Have you or another family member ever had a problem getting transportation in order to meet your needs such as shopping, medical care, recreation or personal activities?

Not at all
Once in a while (once a month or less)
Regularly (weekly basis)
Everyday

Q11. Do you feel you are getting your transportation needs met?

Yes
No

Q12. If you answered no in question #11, pick one or more options that may apply to your situation:

I cannot find regular transportation to work
I cannot find transportation at the times I may need it
I am not able to get involved with activities due to...
I cannot find regular transportation for shopping, medical care, etc.
I cannot find accessible transportation
Other (please describe) _____

Q13. If you or another member of your family were injured or ill, would you be able to find immediate transportation to get to medical care?

1. YES
2. NO

Q14. What method of transportation would you be able to immediately access in an emergency?

Taxi
Bus
Ambulance
Own vehicle
Bicycle
Other friends/Family members
Walk

Other (Specify) _____

Please answer the following questions about yourself (this information is used for demographic purposes only and not as a source of identification, all information is strictly confidential):

Q15. Are you:
Male
Female

Q16. Are you:
Employed full-time
Employed part-time
A full-time home-maker
A full-time student
Retired
Not employed at this time?

Q17. Thinking about your current place of work, do you travel outside the county you live in?

Yes
No

If yes, what county do you travel to for work?

Q18. What is the five digit zip code of your home or place of residence?

Q19. What is the five digit zip code of you place of work?

Q20. How many persons of each age group are in your household?

Age Range	How Many Persons
0-6	
7-11	
12-18	
18-24	
25-44	
45-64	
65 & OVER	

Q21. How many vehicles are owned or leased by members of your household?

Q22. What year were you born? _____

Q23. What is the highest level of school you have completed?

No school
Grades 1-8
Some High School
High School graduate/GED/Alternative School
Some college/vocational school
Vocational school graduate/college graduate

Q24. If you have a disability, how would you describe your disability?

Physical
cognitive
multiple disabilities (one or more disabilities that interfere with a life function)
hearing loss
vision loss
emotional/mental health disorder
other (please describe) _____

Q25. What was your income level for the tax year 2005?

less than 10,000.00 per year

10,000.00 to 14,999.00

15,000.00 to 24,999.00

25,000.00 to 34,999.00

35,000.00 to 49,999.00

50,000.00 to 74,999.00

75,000.00 to 99,999.00

100,000.00 to 149,999.

150,000 to 199,999.00

200,000 or more

Q26. If you use public transportation, what would you like to see be done to improve service?

Q 27. Do you have any other thoughts or comments on how public transportation service could be improved?

Proposed Regional Transportation Coordinator Job Description

Job Number: XXXX

POSITION: Regional Transportation Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: *(sponsoring agency)*

BASIC PURPOSE: Under the direction of the xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, and in coordination with area public and social service agencies, plans and coordinates a regional transportation network to serve the public transportation needs of residents in the Coastal Bend region, with specific emphasis on providing transportation to transit dependent residents in designated public programs. The Coordinator will work closely with the Regional Public Transportation Coordinating Workgroup, transportation providers and social service agencies in the Coastal Bend region.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES: Explains services, routes, options, schedules and procedures to customers, employers and /or referring agencies; coordinates implementation of the recommendations of the Regional Transportation Coordination Plan or other similar studies; facilitates, and administers transportation services contracts with transportation services agencies in the region, maintains records and prepares reporting templates and reports relating to system operations, ridership, fares, fees and other charges, as well as accounts receivable and payable components. Interprets, and explains transportation contract provisions to appropriate staff at coordinating agencies such as but not limited to WorkSource of the Coastal Bend, their customers, and contractors; coordinates marketing and promotional efforts to improve services and increase ridership; assists in coordinating services with other service agencies in each county. Acts a Liaison to other transportation programs such as the RTA ridesharing and vanpooling projects and; serves on regional transportation committees and workgroups and performs as a public transit advocate. Assists in obtaining funding for transportation services between the designated counties. Prepares reports documenting employment and health service related transportation needs, resources and gaps. Assists in performing general and technical research data collection and analysis on agency and regional transportation services. Adheres to all *(sponsoring agency)* polices, rules and regulations including safety policies.

NON-ESSENTIAL DUTIES: May periodically assist in displaying demographic data to plot, plan and develop effective transportation services, may assist with the administration of grants, contracts and reports related to transportation needs. Performs other duties as assigned.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGES, AND ABILITIES: Good written, verbal, public presentation and computer skills. Highly effective interpersonal skills; ability to work effectively and confidentially with various sectors of the community including employers and the public. Ability to read maps; working knowledge of database and spreadsheet design. Good telephone skills for interacting with customers, employers and referring agencies. Ability to respond with sensitivity to the multicultural, socioeconomic and political issues in the community as they relate to transportation services in the region. Working knowledge of public transportation systems in the Coastal Bend region.

RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT JOB REQUIREMENTS: Bachelor degree in Public Administration, Social Services; Psychology or related area and one year experience in planning, supervision or coordination of public transportation services, or the above stated educational requirements and one year experience in social services which included direct contact with clients and/or employers; or any combination of related education, training, and experience which provides the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to perform the duties specified above. Good working knowledge of MS Word and Excel preferred. Bilingual (Spanish/English) preferred.

SALARY RANGE: \$XX,XXX to \$XX,XXX based upon experience

A framework for action

Individuals and organizations are catalysts for envisioning, organizing, and sustaining coordinated system that provides mobility and access to transportation for all.

- 1 Have leaders and organizations defined the need for change and articulated a new vision for the delivery of coordinated transportation services?
- 2 Is a governing framework in place that brings together providers, agencies, and consumers? Are there clear guidelines that all embrace?
- 3 Does the governing framework cover the entire community and maintain strong relationships with neighboring communities and state agencies?
- 4 Is there sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, and other community leaders?
- 5 Is there positive momentum? Is there growing interest and commitment to coordinating human service transportation trips and maximizing resources?
- 6 Is there an inventory of community transportation resources and programs that fund transportation services?
- 7 Is there a process for identifying duplication of services, underused assets, and service gap
- 9 Has the use of technology in the transportation system been assessed to determine whether investment in transportation technology may improve services and/or reduce costs
- 8 Are the specific transportation needs of various target populations well documented?
- 10 Are transportation line items included in the annual budgets for all human service programs that provide transportation services?
- 11 Have transportation users and other stakeholders participated in the community transportation assessment process?
- 12 Is there a strategic plan with a clear mission and goals? Are the assessment results used to develop a set of realistic actions that improve coordination?
- 13 Is clear data systematically gathered on core performance issues such as cost per delivered trip, rider ship, and on-time performance? Is the data systematically analyzed to determine how costs can be lowered and performance improved?
- 14 Is the plan for human services transportation coordination linked to and supported by other state and local plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan or State Transportation Improvement Plan?
- 15 Is data being collected on the benefits of coordination? Are the results communicated strategically?

- 16 Does the transportation system have an array of user-friendly and accessible information sources?
- 17 Are travel training and consumer education programs available on an ongoing basis?
- 18 Is there a seamless payment system that supports user-friendly services and promotes customer choice of the most cost-effective service?
- 19 Are customer ideas and concerns gathered at each step of the coordination process? Is customer satisfaction data collected regularly?
- 20 Are marketing and communications programs used to build awareness and encourage greater use of the services?
- 21 Is there a strategy for systematic tracking of financial data across programs?
- 22 Is there an automated billing system in place that supports the seamless payment system and other contracting mechanisms?
- 23 Has an arrangement among diverse transportation providers been created to offer flexible services that are seamless to customers?
- 24 Are support services coordinated to lower costs and ease management burdens?
- 25 Is there a centralized dispatch system to handle requests for transportation services from agencies and individuals?
- 26 Have facilities been located to promote safe, seamless, and cost-effective transportation services?