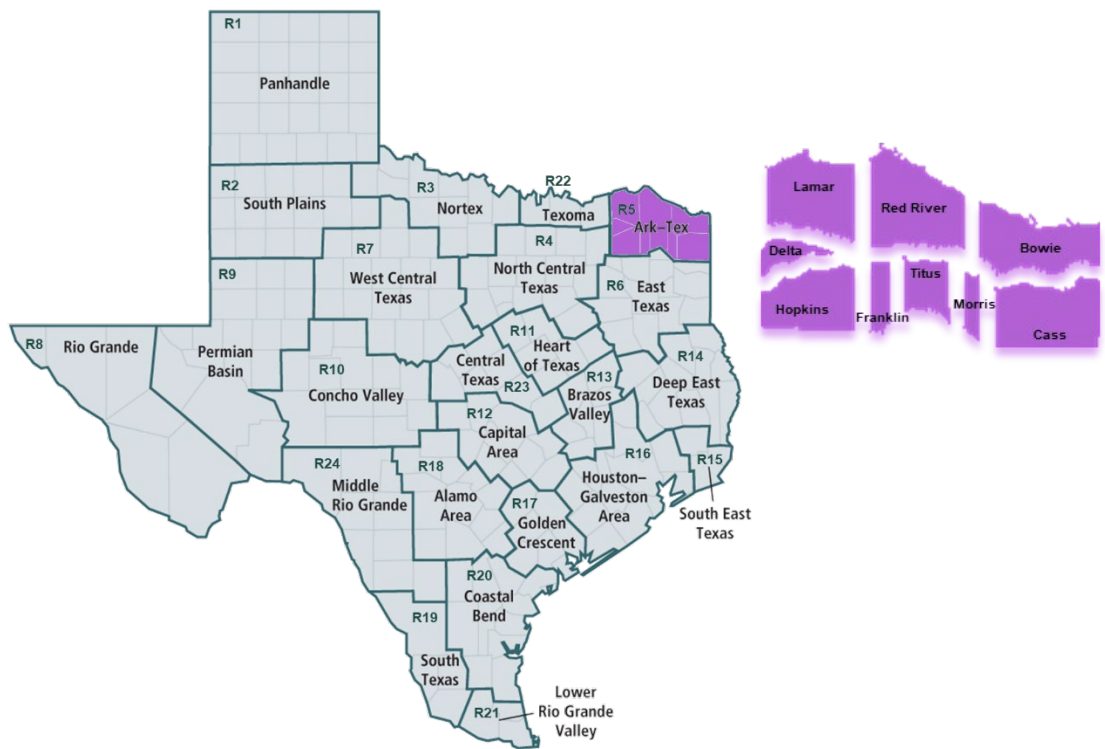# Ark-Tex
# Council of Governments (ATCOG)

## Region 5

# Regional Interoperable
# Communications Plan (RICP)



20 February 2021/DRAFT Template
Created from
V-3.0 – December 2020

Distribution is limited to those parties authorized by the ATCOG. The point of contact (POC) for this document is the ATCOG. Current contact information for the POC can be found in Section 1 of this document.



**TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS**





**Ark-Tex Council of Governments**

# Regional Interoperable Communications Plan

# Approval & Authorization Page

On March 31, 2022 the Board of Directors of Region 5, Ark-Tex Texas Council of Governments, adopted the Regional Interoperability Communications Plan (RICP).

This plan was updated October 2021, and the RICP was presented to the ATCOG Board of Directors on March 31, 2022. The RICP was recommended for ATCOG Membership on March 31, 2022.

The ATCOG region includes: Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus Counties, to include all jurisdictions and/or public safety agencies within these counties.


Signed:


---

Executive Director,                                          Date

# Texas Association of Regional Councils

**01 Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC)**
Counties Served: Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, Wheeler

**02 South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG)**
Counties Served: Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry, Yoakum

**03 Nortex Regional Planning Commission (NORTEX)**
Counties Served: Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, Young

**04 North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)**
Counties Served: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Tarrant, Wise

**05 Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ARK-TEK)**
Counties Served: Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, Titus Counties in TX and Miller Co., AR

**06 East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)**
Counties Served: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, Wood

**07 West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG)**
Counties Served: Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Knox, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Scurry, Shackelford, Stephens, Stonewall, Taylor, Throckmorton

**08 Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG)**
Counties Served: Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio

**09 Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission [PBRPC]**
Counties Served: Andrews, Borden, Crane, Dawson, Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Howard, Loving, Martin, Midland, Pecos, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Ward, Winkler

**10 Concho Valley Council of Governments (CVCOG)**
Counties Served: Coke, Concho, Crockett, Irion, Kimble, Mason, McCulloch, Menard, Reagan, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, Tom Green

**11 Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG)**
Counties Served: Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, McLennan

**12 Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG)**
Counties Served: Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis, Williamson

**13 Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG)**
Counties Served: Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, Washington

**14 Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG)**
Counties Served: Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, Tyler

**15 South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC)**
Counties Served: Hardin, Jefferson, Orange

**16 Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)**
Counties Served: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, Wharton

**17 Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC)**
Counties Served: Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Victoria

**18 Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG)**
Counties Served: Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Frio, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, McMullen, Medina, Wilson

**19 South Texas Development Council (STDC)**
Counties Served: Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, Zapata

**20 Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG)**
Counties Served: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio

**21 Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC)**
Counties Served: Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy
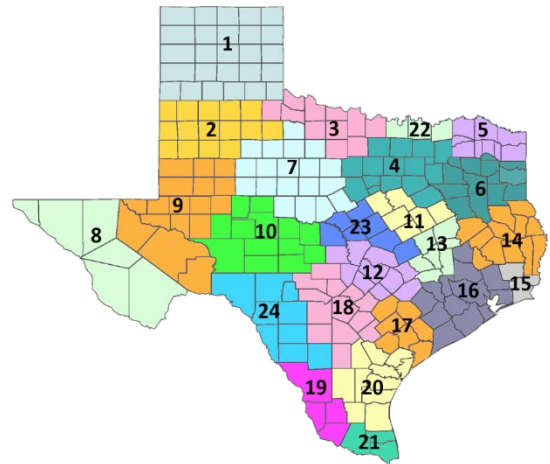
**22 Texoma Council of Governments (TEXOMA)**
Counties Served: Cooke, Fannin, Grayson

**23 Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG)**
Counties Served: Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, Mills, San Saba

**24 Middle Rio Grande Development Council (MRGDC)**
Counties Served: Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, Zavala

# Record of Change

This Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) is subject to information and/or equipment updates and changes. The use of this Record of Change helps manage the RICP modifications throughout the life of this document.

| Change # | Description | Change Date | Approved By |
|---|---|---|---|
| 001 | Created RICP | 09/2009 | |
| 002 | New Template | 02/2021 | |
| 003 | Kickoff Meeting | 02/23/2021 | |
| 004 | County Data Calls | 02-08/2021 | |
| 005 | Final Priorities Workshop | 9/16/2021 | |
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# Executive Overview

This document establishes a Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) for the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Region 5. The RICP is intended to document the distribution of funding build-out and migration of regional communication system(s) to a P25 Compliant Standards-Based Shared System and reference revisions to policies and procedures in addition to operational guidance.

*"From terrorism to tornadoes, whatever happens, everyone is involved in truly a team effort," Steve McCraw, Director.*

Recognizing the need for an overarching emergency communications strategy to address communication deficiencies that exist at the regional level, this guide provides the governance and authority needed to decide on the grant funding disbursement for regional interoperable communications. This document includes, on a strategic level, equipment requirements, policies and procedures that explain the equipment's operational use, training that must occur on the new equipment, the build-out plan of communications systems to achieve region-wide interoperability, and usage by all relative agencies on a daily basis.

This document establishes a RICP for the 10 counties of Region 5 which also includes Miller County, Arkansas.

The RICP is intended to document the Regional Interoperable Migration Plan (RIMP) and outline the priorities for public safety communications related objectives.

It specifies public safety, public service, and non-governmental emergency responders' daily operations and emergency response activities available within the designated area, who controls each resource, and what rules of use or operational procedures exist for activation and deactivation of each resource.

The RICP is aligned with the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) and the Statewide Communications Interoperable Plan (SCIP) goals and objectives for achieving P25 interoperability.

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The 2014 NECP sets forth five strategic goals based on the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum that provide continuity with the 2008 NECP. Collectively, the NECP goals aim to enhance emergency communications capabilities at all levels of government and across disciplines in coordination with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and communities across the nation:

| NECP (National Emergency Communications Plan) | |
|---|---|
| *Goal 1* | *Governance and Leadership: Enhance decision-making, coordination, and planning for emergency communications through strong governance structures and leadership.* |
| *Goal 2* | *Planning and Procedures: Update plans and procedures to improve emergency responder communications and readiness in a dynamic operating environment.* |
| *Goal 3* | *Training and Exercises: Improve responders' ability to coordinate and communicate through training and exercise programs that use all available technologies and target gaps in emergency communications.* |
| *Goal 4* | *Operational Coordination: Ensure operational effectiveness through the coordination of communications capabilities, resources, and personnel from across the whole community.* |
| *Goal 5* | *Research and Development: Coordinate research, development, testing, and evaluation activities to develop innovative emergency communications capabilities that support the needs of emergency responders.* |

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# Table of Contents

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# 1 Introduction

The Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) is a strategic plan that:

- − Establishes a regional vision for the future state of local emergency communications.
- − Sets regional goals and priorities for addressing deficiencies in the region's emergency communications structure.
- − Provides recommendations and milestones for emergency response providers and relevant government officials to improve their communications capabilities.

The RICP includes the Regional Governance Structures (RGOV), the Regional Interoperable Migration Plan (RIMP), and Regional Standard Operating Procedures (RSOP).

ATCOG and the State Administrative Agency (SAA) partnered in the development of this Regional Interoperable Communications Plan.

Several referenced sources that aided in the production of this document, or which might help clarify parts of it, are contained in Appendix E. A Glossary of Terms in included as Appendix F.

The following is the multidisciplinary team for establishing and completing initiatives and milestones relative to the RICP scope or timeframe.

## 1.1 Regional Interoperable Communications Plan Points of Contact

**Regional Plan Coordinator (Primary):**

Agency Name:     Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)
POC Name:        Whitney Fezell
Title:           Homeland Security Planner
Address:         4808 Elizabeth Street, Texarkana, Texas 75503
Office Phone:    903-255-3554
E-Mail:          wfezell@atcog.org

**Alternate Primary:**

Agency Name:     Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)
POC Name:        Mary Beth Rudel
Title:           Deputy Director
Address:         4808 Elizabeth Street, Texarkana, Texas 75503
Office Phone:    903-255-3520
E-Mail:          mrudel@atcog.org

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**State of Texas POC:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Agency Name: | State Administrative Agency |
| POC Name: | Janice Bruno |
| Title: | Communications Coordinator |
| Address: | 5805 North Lamar Road, Austin , Texas 78752 |
| Office Phone: | 512-377-0029 |
| 24/7 Phone: | 214-861-2040 |
| E-Mail: | janice.bruno@txdps.state.tx.us |

| | |
|---|---|
| Agency Name: | Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) |
| POC Name: | Jesse Graves |
| Title: | Communication Supervisor |
| Address: | 4700 University Blvd, Tyler Texas  75707 |
| Office Phone: | 903-939-6003 |
| 24/7 Phone: | 903-861-6001 |
| E-Mail: | jesse.graves@dps.texas.gov |

## 1.2    Regional Participating Agencies

The list of counties and cities represented in the RICP, along with POC emergency phone numbers, can be found in Appendix A. Appendix A also includes information on other regions and/or counties that are participating in this regional communications system.

## 1.3    Focus Group Sessions

The ATCOG annual Focus Group Session will take place in the month of June. The group will identify and/or re-evaluate:

- Areas and agencies lacking operability/interoperability.

  o Identify and plan to overcome gaps in regional operable/interoperable communications, policies and training.

- Accomplishments and status of projects.

  o Progress along the Interoperability Continuum in an appropriate category that best fits the specific agency and/or local area. Re-evaluate regional requirements as technology evolves and circumstances dictate. Review communications related SOPs created by the included agencies, to preclude conflicts or non-compliance with current standards or initiatives.

- Initiatives and priorities for funding.

  o Prioritize and recommend projects for funding based on Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) priorities and initiatives,

This information will be submitted annually to the Office of the Texas Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) to be integrated into the revised SCIP Initiatives, and revised SCIP Funding Plan.

## 1.4    RICP Ratification Process

After customizing the RICP template with regional policy and procedure information, formally identifying the regional governance structure, and providing a high-level design to reach a regional public safety Shared System for voice communications, the following ratification procedure will be employed:

1. The Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition (TxICC) Technology Advisors and the Communications Area Managers of the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS), Public Safety Communications Service will collaborate with the COGs in their regions on the final review and compliance of the RICP.

2. RICPs must be compliant with the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), National Incident Management System (NIMS), National Response Framework (NRF), Core Capabilities, and the Texas SCIP (TxSCIP).

3. The COGs will develop a review and comment period for participating agencies, jurisdictions, and counties.

4. The RICP documents approved at the COG will be submitted to the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) at the Office of the SWIC, and to the State

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Coordinator for Communications (SCC) at the Governor's Division of Emergency Management.

5. The Office of the Governor, Homeland Security Grants Division, and the Office of the SWIC have final authority over statewide communications interoperability.

# 2 Governance

The RICP addresses the following objectives set forth in the 2014 NECP.

**NECP Objectives:**

- To facilitate the development of effective governance groups and designated emergency communications leadership roles.

- To integrate strategic and tactical emergency communications planning efforts across all levels of government.

- To develop coordinated grant requirements that promote Federal participation and coordination in communications planning processes, governance bodies, joint training and exercises, and infrastructure sharing.

- Emergency responders employ common planning and operational protocols to effectively use their resources and personnel.

- Emergency responders have shared approaches to training and exercises, improved technical expertise, and enhanced response capabilities.

ATCOG has integrated preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities to communicate during significant events.

## 2.1    Statewide Governing Body

Texas interoperable communications plans and governance is directed and approved by the Texas Governor. Figure 1, the Texas Governance Organization Chart, identifies support positions from the Governor's Office down to the regional level.
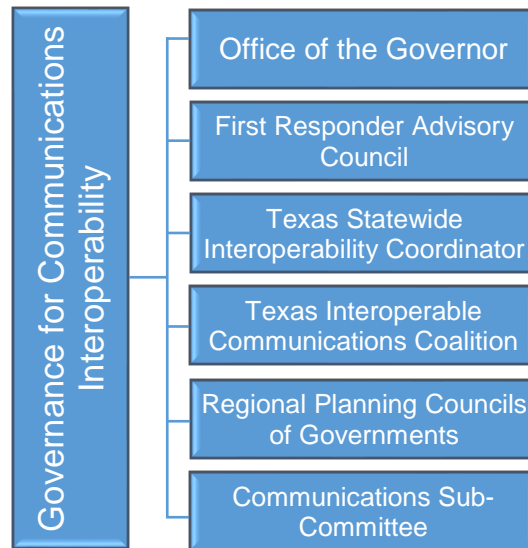


**Figure 1: Texas Governance Organization Chart**

## 2.2 Regional Governance Authority

In accordance with the:

– Texas Emergency Management Statutes Code 421, and
– Texas Statewide Communications Interoperable Plan (SCIP),

Texas regions will develop governance structures which will provide oversight for the development and implementation of (1) the regional integrated public safety radio systems, and (2) the RIMPs.

Regions will adopt existing or create new governance agreements that provide supervision in the use of appropriated money, including money from relevant federal homeland security grants, for the purposes of designing, implementing, and maintaining a regional integrated public safety radio communications system that provides interoperability between local, state and federal agency first responders.

Regions will develop, implement, and train on the common regional SOP, consistent with guidelines in the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Response Framework (NRF), and the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

## 2.3 Regional Interoperable Communications Sub-Committee

The RICP was developed under the authority of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Executive Board. On March of 2003, the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Executive Board appointed members to the ATCPG Homeland Security Committee, designated as an advisory committee to the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Executive Board. The ATCOG Homeland Security Committee is advised about communications by the ATCOG staff for the Interoperability Communications Committee.

Membership is open to all and may include representatives from the following public safety and public service disciplines:

– Critical Infrastructure Utilities
– Emergency Management
– Emergency Medical Services
– Federal
– Fire/Rescue/EMS
– Law Enforcement
– Military
– Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)
– Private Partners
– Public Health
– Public Works
– State
– Tribal Entities
– Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)

## 2.4    Regional Governing Body Responsibilities

The ATCOG – Emergency Management Committee will:

- Ensure the RICP is maintained and updated at regular intervals, or as critical updated information is identified.
- Ensure the dissemination of updated plans to all participating agencies.
- Ensure training requirements are established in support of the RICP.
- Ensure the initiation of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Mutual Aid Agreements (MAAs) for interoperable communications.
- Ensure the promotion of regular interoperable equipment/solutions testing; assist agencies with test evaluations, and dissemination of the results.
- Ensure the promotion of interoperable communications capabilities through trained communications personnel.
- Schedule annual Focus Group Meetings.

## 2.5    Meeting Schedule

The ATCOG Interoperability Communications Committee meets at Pilgrim's Bank in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, at 12:00 pm quarterly.

## 2.6    RICP Maintenance and Update

The ATCOG Stakeholders will revisit the RICP, as needed, and:

- Discuss initiative progress and status. Identify potential new initiatives.
- Determine if existing initiatives have become a higher/lower priority.

Updates to this document can be recommended by any of the participating agencies or by the Office of the SWIC. Requests for modifications or additions to this document should be submitted to the RICP POC for distribution to the ATCOG and the ATCOG Interoperability Communications Committee.

Where revisions are necessary, the ATCOG Stakeholders will revise the specific section(s), record the change(s) on the "Record of Change" page, submit the updated section(s) to the Regional Plan Coordinator, and provide a courtesy copy to the Office of the SWIC. Revisions to the RICP will require review from the ATCOG Interoperability Communications Committee and endorsement from the ATCOG Executive Board.

Agencies participating in this plan will be formally notified via email within 30 days of any approved modifications or additions to this RICP. Revisions to the RICP adopted by reference and current subsequent versions can be requested from the Office of the SWIC when necessary.

# 3   Current State

The ATCOG regional systems are summarized below. Channel usage is summarized in Appendix C, and a description of the methodology for gathering some information on regional communications assets is contained in Appendix D.

## 3.1   Regional System

Texas has adopted the "Project 25 Standard" as the technology solution and long-term interoperability goal for voice public safety agency communications. The TxSCIP directs the foundation for statewide interoperable communications to be based on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) "System-of-Systems Approach for Interoperable Communications". The system-of-systems definition is: "A system-of-systems exists when a group of independently operating systems comprised of people, technology, and organizations are connected, enabling emergency responders to effectively support day-to-day operations, planned events, or major incidents." [1]

Utilizing the system-of-systems recommendations, and in compliance with the TxSCIP, each system in the region will develop high-level strategic plans to implement a regional interoperable communications system which will become part of the Texas system-of-systems.

With a system-of-systems approach, planners are able to consider how technology is evolving to maintain system connections and overcome interoperability challenges. This approach allows for greater consideration for backwards-compatibility, standard technical interfaces, and migrating to advanced technologies.

**Core Capabilities**

The National Planning Scenarios[2] and the establishment of the National Preparedness Guidelines[3] steered the focus of homeland security towards a capabilities-based planning approach. Capabilities-based planning focuses on planning under uncertainty, as the next danger or disaster can never be forecast with complete accuracy. Therefore, capabilities-based planning takes an all-hazards approach to planning and preparation which builds capabilities that can be applied to a wide variety of incidents.

For the past several years, states and urban areas have used capabilities-based planning to perform baseline assessments of their homeland security efforts by comparing their current capabilities against the Core Capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal and the Emergency Support Function (ESF)[4] annexes. This approach identified gaps in current capabilities and focused efforts on identifying and developing priority capabilities and tasks for the jurisdiction.

In September 2011, DHS released the first edition of the National Preparedness Goal[5] in response to Presidential Policy Directive 8: National Preparedness (PPD-8). The National Preparedness Goal describes our nation's security and resilience posture through Core Capabilities, which represent an evolution from the Target Capabilities List

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[1] http://www.safecomprogram.gov/NR/rdonlyres/FD22B528-18B7-4CB1-AF49-F9626C608290/0/SOSApproachforInteroperableCommunications_02.pdf
[2] National Planning Scenarios: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/media/factsheets/2009/npd_natl_plan_scenario.pdf
[3] National Preparedness Guidelines: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/National_Preparedness_Guidelines.pdf
[4] ESF Annexes: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-esf-all.pdf
[5] National Preparedness Goal: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/prepared/npg.pdf

(TCL). The Core Capabilities address five mission areas (Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery).

## 3.2    Mobile Communications Command Program

The Mobile Communications Command Program (MCCP) has been established by the DPS and will be used to provide and/or restore emergency communications due to natural disasters (such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, etc.) and man-made disasters caused by terrorist or criminal activities. DPS is the designated first responder state agency and will continue to implement and manage the MCCP equipment. The MCCP may include:

- Cargo Trailers
- Cellular on Wheels (COWs)
- Command/Communications Trailers
- Computers for each Command Trailer
- Family Radio Service (FRS) Radios
- High Frequency (HF) Radio Equipment
- IP Gateway Devices
- P25 Compliant Portable Radios with Trunking
- Portable Gateway Devices
- Portable Generators
- Primary Towing Vehicles
- Satellite Telephones and Radios
- Suitcase Digital Repeaters
- Trunking Site on Wheels (SOWs)
- Video Downlink for Helicopters

When called upon to support planned events, respond to hostile events or natural disasters, the MCCP assets can provide augmentation to expand the area of coverage of existing systems, assist with wireless communications during planned events if necessary, or provide critical communications capabilities to local systems damaged during a hostile event or natural disaster.

To request MCCP assets, follow the same procedure you would for any other request, by working with the local emergency management coordinator via a State of Texas Assistance Request (STAR).

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# 4 Future System(s)

## 4.1 Approach and Methodology

Representatives from the ATCOG were gathered in a workshop with representatives from across the region. The workshop was used to develop the current RICP to determine where the counties currently stand with planning for public safety interoperable voice and data communication systems and associated funding. The need that every representative in the workshops discussed most often was the need for additional funding in order to complete interoperability projects.

## 4.2 Planning by County

The following sections list, by county, initiatives that have been completed, areas where deficiencies still exist, and plans for future systems to address those deficiencies.

Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus Counties

### 4.2.1 Bowie County

Bowie County has two primary communications systems. The Sheriff's department is operating on a trunked 800 MHz system with approximately 100 subscriber units and the Volunteer Fire Department operates on a VHF system with approximately 150 subscriber units.

**Completed:**

- COG Networks have text to 9-1-1 Capabilities.
- Fire department added a mobile communications unit with additional communications capabilities.
- Most agencies in the county operate under a P25 system. Some new subscriber units were purchased for P25 compliancy.
- County agencies added a gateway to the resources available.
- Two standalone repeaters were added to the county to provide coverage in the rural areas and increase accessibility to the 800 MHz system.

**Deficiencies:**

- **Antiquated Radios**: The portable and mobile radios in the county are very old and in need of replacement. All portable and mobile radios in the county, except recently purchased ones, are in need of updating. Radios should be multiband and at a minimum have access to the VHF and 800 MHz bands.
- **Deployable Backup Power Sources**: The county currently does not have sufficient deployable backup power for redundant solutions for critical infrastructure and communication site needs. The new sites have built in 24 hour backup power; however, the older sites still do not have sufficient backups.
- **Broadband**: County agencies do not have current broadband capabilities that would be considered operationally efficient for public safety. Some FirstNet devices have been purchased at this time. The county has one site tied in through DPS fiber and broadband access but would like to expand this access to other sites in the county.

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- **CAD System Upgrade**: Currently CAD is outdated and not as efficient for operations as it needs to be. Currently trying to identify funding for a new CAD system in partnership with Texarkana.
- **Coverage Concerns**: Currently there are several zones within the county that lack proficient coverage for public safety operations. If the new towers can be tied into the existing system, only one additional tower is necessary to cover the dead zones in the county.
- **Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) Radio System/Equipment**: The VFDs need to be added to the 800 MHz or a VHF system needs to be built out countywide to allow for the greatest interoperability and efficiency for public safety operations and to allow the combination of funding towards a similar goal. Currently there are 13 VFDs that have their own standalone sites/frequencies but they do not have a system for all of the agencies.
- **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
    o Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
    o Basic and Advanced Interoperability
    o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
    o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
    o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
    o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
    o FirstNet
    o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
    o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**
- Purchase multiband P25 complaint radios.
- Need an additional radio site for 800 MHz coverage.
- Identify the best radio system solution for funding and the county VFD.

**Funding Needs:**

1. Funding is needed for all identified projects.

## 4.2.2 Cass County

[Add County Summary]

**Completed:**

‒ [What was completed]

**Deficiencies:** [Pick from below list and add a short explanation]

‒ **Antiquated Radios**: [Add antiquated radio information if applicable]
‒ **Backup Power Sources**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Back-up Power**: [Add backup power information if applicable]
‒ **Broadband**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **CAD System Upgrade**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Coverage Concerns**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Dead Zones:** [Add dead zones information if applicable]
‒ **EMS Dispatch Upgrades**: [Add EMS dispatch upgrade information if applicable]
‒ **Encryption**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Equipment Upgrades**: [Add EOC equipment information if applicable]
‒ **Funding:** [Add information if applicable]
‒ **In-Building Coverage in the Hospital**:
‒ **In-building Coverage**: [Add inbuilding coverage information if applicable]
‒ **Interference**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Interoperability**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Hospital/Medical Communications**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **M&E**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Mutual Aid Radios/Communications**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **System-of-System Issues**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **System Maintenance**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Medical Communications**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **P25 Compatible Encryption: [Add information if applicable]**
‒ **Public Safety Broadband: [Add information if applicable]**
‒ **Redundant Power: [Add information if applicable]**
‒ **Satellite Device Upgrade**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Satellite Communications**: [Add backup power information if applicable]
‒ **Temporary Equipment**: [Add temporary equipment usage information if applicable]
‒ **Update End User Radios**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Upgrades**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Upgrade Needed in EOC PSAP**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **VFD Apparatus Radios**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **VFD Funding**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **VFD Radio System/Equipment**: [Add information if applicable]
‒ **Training and Exercise Requirements**: [modify below bulleted list]
  o Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
  o Basic and Advanced Interoperability

- o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
- o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
- o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
- o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
- o FirstNet
- o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
- o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

- − [Add future system information if applicable].

**Funding Needs:** [Add funding needs information if applicable].

## 4.2.3  Delta County

Delta County is on a P25 shared radio system. Both the Sheriff's Office and the Volunteer Fire Department are on the system and there are 24 mobiles and over 50 portables on the system. The county is in great need of updating and expanding their system; however, they are severely limited by budget constraints.

**Completed:**

- COG networks have text to 9-1-1 capability.
- Sheriff and VFD are P25 compliant.
- All of the newly purchased portable radios are P25 compliant.

**Deficiencies:**

- **Antiquated Radios**: The portable and mobile radios in the county are very old and in need of replacement. The County does replace a radio or two each year as funds become available, but is unable to keep up with changing technologies and increased prices of radios. All portable and mobile radios in the county, except recently purchased ones, are in need of updating.
- **Backup Power Sources**: The county currently does not have sufficient deployable backup power for redundant solutions for critical infrastructure and communication site needs. During the recent winter storms, the backup power went down and the county agencies were forced to use portable/direct talk paths while the power was being restored.
- **CAD System**: The County would like to upgrade to a CAD system to allow the responders a greater level of functionality when conducting public safety operations. The system has been purchased and will be deployed in the next couple of months.
- **PSAP Console Upgrade**: County PSAP consoles are outdated and are in need of updating. The County would like to add IP based consoles to the center which will allow greater functionality.
- **Coverage Concerns**: There are several fringe areas of the county that are lacking proper, if any, radio system coverage. The current system does not have enough sites to cover the entire geography of the county. Have recently received quotes to add one new site to the system, although at least three new sites are needed.
- **Encryption**: The County would like to update their radio system to include public safety grade encryption that will allow them secure talk paths while maintaining P25 compliancy.
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Equipment Upgrades**: The current EOC is insufficient for current operations and is located, as needed, in the FD training room. The equipment used is often portable and not powerful or capable enough for emergency support in major incidents.
- **System Upgrade & Maintenance**: The radio system and all of its components are old and also insufficient for public safety operations to have reliable LMR communications at all times, resulting in using cell phones and other means to communicate official traffic when LMR is not available. In addition to updating the existing sites, multiple (at least three) new repeater sites are needed to provide the necessary coverage to locations that are lacking.
- **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
  - Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)

o Basic and Advanced Interoperability
o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
o FirstNet
o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

− Once funding is identified the county is in need of upgrading the antiquated radios the responders currently have, both portable and mobile.
− PSAP needs to update current consoles to IP based units that will allow a much greater level of functionality and information exchange.
− At least three repeater sites need to be added to the system to give more coverage and functionality to the system. At least three sites may be needed to provide sufficient countywide coverage.
− A standalone EOC facility is needed for the county. This may be deployable equipment to create the EOC in various locations as needed, as the current EOC is based around portable equipment in a training room.

**Funding Needs:**

- External funding needed through state or federal grant programs. Nearly $300K is needed for the IP based consoles for the PSAP and to upgrade the portable and mobile radios for the county.

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## 4.2.4 Franklin County

Franklin County is a rural community serving 295 square miles. The agencies in our county include Franklin County Office of Emergency Management, Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Mount Vernon Police Department, Winnsboro Police Department, Franklin County Water District Lake Patrol, Mount Vernon Fire Department, South Franklin VFD, North Franklin VFD, Purly VFD, Texas Department of Public Safety, and Texas Game Wardens. All of our departments have mobile radios and portable radios that are P-25 capable but that are several years old law enforcement radios are approximately 10 to 15 years old and fire department radios are approximately 15 to 25 years old. Our radio infrastructure hasn't been upgraded for approximately 10 to 20 years, if not longer.

**Completed:**

− Text to 9-1-1 capability obtained.
− Law enforcement agencies became P25 compliant
− The 2021 budget provided the county with enough funding to purchase 15 new portables.

**Deficiencies:**

− **Antiquated Radios**: End user radios in the county are very old and near end of life in many cases. The current radios are beyond the timeline for manufacturer support and responders are in need on a multiband solution to assist in mutual aid operations.
− **Back-up Power**: Currently, the County has an insufficient supply of deployable back up power to supply redundancy to key infrastructure and radio system sites that do not have sufficient back up power.
− **Encryption**: Law enforcement agencies in the county need a means of secure communications while maintaining P25 compliancy. AES encryption is necessary to give law enforcement agencies secure communications talk paths.

− **System Infrastructure**: The infrastructure for the county radio system is aging and in need of replacement. All towers, repeaters, antennas, cabling, and associate radios/servers need to be replaced with a modern P25 radio system.
− **VFD Radio System/Equipment**: The infrastructure and end user radios that the VFD uses are old and near end of life. The infrastructure can be housed in a new radio system; however, the end user radios will also need to be replaced.
− **PSAP Equipment**: The current workload for the PSAP is increasing dramatically and the County is in need of a dual station console due to the growing call volume in recent history that will not be decreasing in the future.
− **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
  o Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
  o Basic and Advanced Interoperability
  o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
  o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
  o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
  o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
  o FirstNet
  o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator

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        o   Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

- The Franklin County Sheriff's Office received a grant to provide them with 15 hand held radios for the 2021 budget year.

**Funding Needs:**

- $1.0-$1.5M in funds is needed to replace the current and antiquated radio system and end user radios.
- Franklin County needs funding to place new repeaters and equipment in three different locations within Franklin County. These locations would allow for LE and Fire to broadcast county wide. This cost is expected to be in the $750K to $1.0M range.

## 4.2.5  Hopkins County

Hopkins County has a 4-site P25 radio system with 150 Mobile and 400 portable radios. The system covers two PSAPs, 2 EOCs, the County Sheriff, County Fire (both paid and volunteer), EMS, City Police, City Fire, and one hospital.

**Completed:**

– Upgraded to have a CAD system for both PSAPs
– Built and installed a communications tower and the associated antennas, repeaters, etc.
– Mobile Communications trailer was purchased for county agencies.
– COG networks have text to 9-1-1 capability.
– All agencies have transitioned to complete P25 compliance.

**Deficiencies:**

– **Antiquated Radios**: Agencies in the county have been unable to maintain a consistent radio replacement cycle and the mobile and portable radios are near or over end of life timeframes. Additionally, due to the neighboring counties and regions, multiband radios are needed to provide the proper levels of interoperability to allow responders to more efficiently respond in mutual aid situations.
– **Amateur Radio Resources**: The county is in need of additional amateur radio resources to provide another level of communications redundancy.
– **Coverage Concerns**: The Sheriff's Office has coverage concerns in the fringes of the county. The far west and far northeast sides of the county have little to no coverage. Additional sites are needed in these areas to provide sufficient coverage for public safety response.
– **PSAP Equipment Upgrades**: The PSAP radio communications equipment is in need of update. Current radios are not as capable as newer technologies and hinder dispatch operations during busy timeframes. These radios are out of the manufacturer maintenance cycle. Current radio system does not interface with the CAD system.
– **System Maintenance/Upgrades**: Many of pieces of equipment on each of the tower locations (antennas, cables, routers, etc.) are outdated and in need of replacement. The loss of a single site in the 4-site system would severely limit public safety communications.
– **Medical Communications**: Currently communications with medical facilities is lacking. Additional equipment and resources are needed in order to properly operate and communicate with medical facilities. Training for medical personnel to use the radio equipment.
– **Satellite Communications**: County agencies need to have a satellite redundancy for communications. No satellite resources are available at the local level.
– **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
   o Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
   o Basic and Advanced Interoperability
   o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
   o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
   o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)

- o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
- o Public Safety Broadband
- o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
- o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

- – The County is in need of a new primary tower site. The current site is a 52 year old tower that has been refurbished but is in need of replacement. By updating the site the system will become much more robust. The goal of this project would to give responders more tools and functionality for communications and alleviate at least some of the county's coverage concerns.
- – PSAP radio upgrades are in need of updating in the near future. The updated CAD system and radios do not leverage the full capabilities of the CAD system due to their age and capabilities.
- – The county is in need of updating the antiquated radios, both portable and mobile. Most radio are near or at end of life.

**Funding Needs:**

- - Assistance to Firefighters grant (AFG) will be coming up shortly and the county will be submitting for funding to replace fire and EMS radios in the near future.

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### 4.2.6  Lamar County

Lamar County is a rural Texas county with two primary radio systems. The County agencies use a multi-site VHF system with microwave backbone. The City of Paris uses a UHF system for their operational needs. The County system has several different channels for law, fire, and administrative needs that are used by both local and county agencies. There are two PSAPs and two EOCs in the county; one each at the Sheriff and Paris PD facilities.

**Completed:**

- Received a grant to upgrade dispatch consoles for the County center.
- Currently upgrading three repeaters on one system tower.
- COG networks have text to 9-1-1 capability
- In the process of fully upgrading system and end user radios to P25
- County has purchased a new trailer with additional communications capabilities.

**Deficiencies:**

- **Antiquated Radios**: Although the county has received some grants recently, agencies are unable to keep up with the radio replacement cycle necessary for all responder's portable and mobile radios.  Due to the makeup of surrounding counties frequency bands, multiband radios will be most effective.
- **Amateur Radio Resources**: The County is in need of additional amateur radio resources to provide another level of communications redundancy.
- **Coverage Concerns**: Due to terrain and county size, there are several areas of the county that lack sufficient RF coverage.
- **Deployable Back-up Power**: Currently, the county has an insufficient supply of deployable back up power to supply redundancy to key infrastructure and radio system sites that do not have sufficient back up power.
- **Encryption**: Law enforcement agencies in the county need a means of secure communications while maintaining P25 compliancy. AES encryption is necessary to give law enforcement agencies secure communications talk paths.
- **EOC Communications**: A new EOC is currently being built, however, funding for radio and IT capabilities is still needed to properly create the EOC space that is needed during disasters.
- **Satellite Communications**: The County is in need of additional satellite resources for redundancy. Recent summer and winter storms have knocked out primary means and not enough satellite resources area available.
- **System Maintenance**: The primary tower for the radio system is in need of replacement, as well as all of the system equipment, generators, cabling, internet access, and shelter. Currently, the county pays a great deal in maintenance every year, at an unknown amount due to failures of the system that need to be addressed immediately.
- **VFD Apparatus Radios**: All of the fire agencies in the county are VFDs and new equipment for communications comes straight form their budgets. Grants will be needed to upgrade the entire set of end user radios.
- **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
  - Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
  - Basic and Advanced Interoperability
  - Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator

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- o  Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
- o  Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
- o  Communications Unit Training and Exercise
- o  FirstNet
- o  Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
- o  Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

- –  The highest priority for the County is to replace the aging radio system tower and associated radio equipment. Expansion of the system to include additional sites would be ideal and allow for coverage dead zones to be smaller or nonexistent.
- –  Portable and mobile radios needs to be updated for all personnel and need to be multiband radios for both internal and external county communications.
- –  Upgrading to a CAD system that is available in all communications centers and vehicles.

**Funding Needs:**

- -  Although funding is identified from annual budgets, it is not enough for the entirety of the radio system and radios that the county needs to update.

## 4.2.7 Morris County

[Add County Summary]

**Completed:**

− [What was completed]

**Deficiencies:**

− **Antiquated Radios**: [Add antiquated radio information if applicable]
− **Backup Power Sources**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Back-up Power**: [Add backup power information if applicable]
− **Broadband**: [Add information if applicable]
− **CAD System Upgrade**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Coverage Concerns**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Dead Zones:** [Add dead zones information if applicable]
− **EMS Dispatch Upgrades**: [Add EMS dispatch upgrade information if applicable]
− **Encryption**: [Add information if applicable]
− **EOC Equipment Upgrades**: [Add EOC equipment information if applicable]
− **Funding:** [Add information if applicable]
− **In-Building Coverage in the Hospital**:
− **In-building Coverage**: [Add inbuilding coverage information if applicable]
− **Interference**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Interoperability**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Hospital/Medical Communications**: [Add information if applicable]
− **M&E**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Mutual Aid Radios/Communications**: [Add information if applicable]
− **System-of-System Issues**: [Add information if applicable]
− **System Maintenance**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Medical Communications**: [Add information if applicable]
− **P25 Compatible Encryption**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Public Safety Broadband**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Redundant Power**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Satellite Device Upgrade**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Satellite Communications**: [Add backup power information if applicable]
− **Temporary Equipment**: [Add temporary equipment usage information if applicable]
− **Update End User Radios**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Upgrades**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Upgrade Needed in EOC PSAP**: [Add information if applicable]
− **VFD Apparatus Radios**: [Add information if applicable]
− **VFD Funding**: [Add information if applicable]
− **VFD Radio System/Equipment**: [Add information if applicable]
− **Training and Exercise Requirements**: [modify below bulleted list]
  o Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
  o Basic and Advanced Interoperability
  o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator

- o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
- o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
- o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
- o FirstNet
- o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
- o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

– [Add future system information if applicable].

**Funding Needs:**

- Although funding is identified from annual budgets, it is not enough for the entirety of the radio system and radios that the county needs to update.

## 4.2.8  Red River County

Red River County is a rural Texas county with a single site radio system that serves the entire county. Agencies in the county are comprised of 11 volunteer fire departments, with four full time fire fighters, four local police departments, and the county Sheriff. Emergency medical services are provided through a private vendor and there are two clinics and no hospital in the county. The agencies within the county do not have a CAD system and overall the radio system and radios are antiquated and in need of replacement.

**Completed:**

− New portable and mobile radios have been purchased for county agencies using grant funds.

**Deficiencies:**

− **Antiquated Radios**: Although the county has received some grants recently, agencies are unable to keep up with the radio replacement cycle necessary for all responder's portable and mobile radios.  Due to the makeup of surrounding counties' frequency bands, multiband radios will be most effective.
− **CAD System**: Currently the County has no CAD system for any of the agencies. Purchasing CAD will allow agencies to maintain better situational awareness during an incident and better records after.
− **Coverage Concerns**: There are two areas of concern in the county where coverage is lacking. The entire northern portion of the county and the southeast portion of the county are both in need of supplemental coverage considerations.
− **Encryption**: Law enforcement agencies in the county need a means of secure communications while maintaining P25 compliancy. AES encryption is necessary to give law enforcement agencies secure communications talk paths.
− **System Maintenance**: The primary tower for the radio system is in need of replacement, as well as all of the system equipment, generators, cabling, internet access, and shelter. Currently, the County pays a great deal in maintenance every year, at an unknown amount due to failures of the system that need to be addressed immediately. A new system should have additional sites to ensure coverage issues are addressed.
− **VFD Apparatus Radios**: All of the fire agencies in the county are VFDs and new equipment for communications comes straight form their budgets. Grants will be needed to upgrade the entire set of end user radios.
− **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
  o Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
  o Basic and Advanced Interoperability
  o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
  o Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
  o Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
  o Communications Unit Training and Exercise
  o FirstNet
  o Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
  o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

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- The highest priority for the county is to replace the aging radio system tower and associated radio equipment. Expansion of the system to include additional sites would be ideal and allow for coverage dead zones to be smaller or nonexistent.
- Many radios in the full time and volunteer agencies are in need of an upgrade or replacement. The need for multiband radios is becoming more prominent due to other surrounding counties being on disparate radio frequency bands.
- The agencies in the county could use a CAD system to help them maintain situational awareness of activities during an incident and help with record keeping after.

**Funding Needs:**

- Grants have been received to replace some of the antiquated radios.

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### 4.2.9 Titus County

Titus County is approximately 400 square miles. It is quite diverse in the land use and population. In 2019 the estimated population was 33,000. It contains 3 incorporated cities: Mt. Pleasant, which is the county seat; Winfield; and Talco. The land use in the unincorporated areas ranges from open pasture land to pine plantations and hardwood stands with numerous subdivisions and large homes scattered throughout. Two independent school districts and a junior college as well as an electrical power plant are located in the incorporated areas. There are many miles of roads including 20 miles of Interstate 30. Additionally, there is 15 miles of rail line that runs through the county as well as the City of Mt. Pleasant downtown area. There are 3 large lakes in the county and a state park that attract large numbers of people to the county. All the above sets the stage for the possibility of a natural or manmade disaster where critical communication is required. Emergency services are provided by the following agencies: Mt. Pleasant Police Department, Titus County Sheriff's Department, Mt. Pleasant Fire Department, 5-Star, Argo, Cookville, Nortex, Sugar Hill, Talco, and Tri-Lakes VFDs, Titus Regional Medical Center (TRMC) EMS, Pct. 1 & 2 Constables, Sandlin Lake Patrol, Texas Game Wardens and DPS. Mt. Pleasant, Chapel Hill and Northeast Texas Community College have their own police departments. Mt. Pleasant Police Department dispatches their resources and all fire resources, TRMC EMS's dispatch center is located in Texarkana and dispatches their resources, and Titus County SO dispatches the rest of the resources. Mt. Pleasant Public Works and Titus County Commissioners provide support services as well. All agencies operate on conventional VHF radio systems with the exception of TRMC and Titus County Commissioners, which operate on UHF, and the Mt. Pleasant Police Department, which operates on a 700 MHz trunked system. The majority of the portables, mobiles and repeaters were purchased with Homeland Security Grant Funds and are from 10-17 years old. The exceptions are the Mt. Pleasant Police Department, which installed a 700 MHz trunked system in 2018, and the Mt. Pleasant Fire Department, which purchased portable radios in 2018. Mt. Pleasant Fire also has a mobile communications/command platform equipped with VHF/UHF/700/800 radios and gateway. It is also equipped with satellite internet and sat phone. It is a registered resource with Texas Department of Public Safety Communications Coordination Group for regional and/or state deployment.

**Completed:**

– There was nothing to be accomplished from the last one

**Deficiencies:**

– **Antiquated Radios**: As stated above most radios are old and nearing end of life. Exceptions are Mt. Pleasant Police Department that installed a 700 MHz system in 2017 and the Mt. Pleasant Fire Department that replaced all the VHF portable radios in 2018 with P25 capable and has replaced some of the mobile radios since then as well.
– **CAD System Upgrade**: End of life, consider standardization across the county and a unified dispatch.
– **Coverage Concerns**: SO, EMS, FD has dead zones north of town, 271 south, Chapel Hill/NTCC.
– **Dead Zones:** See cover concerns above.
– **EMS Dispatch Upgrades**: Moving to a central dispatch with fire, sheriff, and police. LifeNet contract renewed in Fall of 2020 for 12 mos.

- **In-building Coverage**: Fire/SO/EMS: There are some buildings in town, mainly big box stores where it is hard to communicate out of. Metal buildings and roofs are problematic. The problem increases the further resources get from the communications towers in Mt. Pleasant, even in residences, which can jeopardize responder safety.
- **Interference**: MPFD: There are times when some fire departments in Oklahoma interfere with our repeater channel. We hear them very clearly. We also have some departments in Texas near us that use the same frequencies but different sub-audible tones. We can hear them when we have open squelch but when the squelch is closed one can tell the signal is distorted, similar to when two people are trying to talk at the same time.
- **Interoperability**: All VHF portable and mobile radios should be programmed with all the VHF interoperable channels. Mt. Pleasant Fire also has multiple gateways with VHF/UHF and 700/800 radios attached.
- **System-of-System Issues**: Multiple systems being used in the county, consider standardization. See future systems below.
- **Public Safety Broadband**: Until AT&T can provide a strong reliable signal here, connecting to FirstNet is not possible. However, when and if that time comes, then funding will be needed to accomplish this.
- **Satellite Device Upgrade**: Upgrade to comm trailer and SAT phones.
- **Satellite Communications**: Upgrade to comm trailer and SAT phones.
- **Update End User Radios**: See future systems below.
- **Upgrades**: Establish a Central Dispatch Center for all law enforcement, fire and EMS in Titus County.
- **VFD Apparatus Radios**: As stated above, many of the radios in the VFDs are old with some nearing end of life use, and parts are not available to repair them.
- **VFD Funding**: Funding is a major problem for VFDs. They receive monthly payments from the Count; however, it is used mostly for maintenance of buildings and apparatus. Some of the VFDs have fund raisers but these two funding sources will not support wholesale replacement of their mobile and portable radios, especially if it is with P25 compliant radios.
- **VFD Radio System/Equipment**: The VFDs, with the exception of Talco, operate on the Mt. Pleasant Fire Department radio system. The VFDs are responsible for the purchase and repair of the portable and mobile radios. MPFD is responsible for the maintenance of the repeater. Mt. Pleasant Police Department does all the dispatching of fire resources, including Talco.
- **Training and Exercise Requirements**:
    - Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)
    - Basic and Advanced Interoperability
    - Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator
    - Basic Trunked/Analog Radio System Training
    - Communication Assets and Mapping Tool (CASM)
    - Communications Unit Training and Exercise
    - FirstNet
    - Basic and Advanced Telecommunicator, EMD and cross training for dispatch.

o Training on SOPs for state and national interoperability frequency management

**Future Systems:**

– As stated above, the portables, mobiles, and repeaters are all aging and nearing end of life except for the Mt. Pleasant Police Department's (MPPD) 700 MHz trunked system.  In 2018 the City of Mt. Pleasant purchased the 700 MHz system for approximately $900,000.  The system is only being used by the MPPD which only has about 40 personnel. The abilities of the system are far from being exceeded by the number of radios on the system.  To provide more reliable communications, safety for first responders countywide, and to fully utilize the 700 MHz system, we are working towards having all first responder agencies migrate to the 700 MHz system.  This will be done over several years.  To accomplish this, talk groups will be established on the 700 MHz system for all first responder agencies, and the agencies will begin to integrate dual band P25 radios that are 700 MHz and agencies' specific frequencies (UHF or VHF) into the agencies.  The 700 MHz talk group will be patched via gateway to the agency's UHF or VHF frequency until total integration is achieved.  This will allow those that are using the 700 MHz radios and those still using the VHF and UHF radios to still communicate. The VHF/UHF channels in the radio are also necessary to communicate with agencies in our region that use those frequencies for operable communications as well as the use of the interoperable frequencies.

**Funding Needs:**

- The estimated cost for all first responder agencies to migrate to the 700 MHz system with all vehicles and personnel equipped with P25 dual band radios is approximately $1.8 million.

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# 5 Priorities

This section summarizes the ATCOG goals, including a description of timelines associated with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. The goals of this RICP are aligned with the major lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum as well as the NECP.

Goal timelines are defined as the following:

- **Short-term**:  includes priorities projected for completion within 3 years from ratification of the RICP

- **Medium-term**:  includes priorities projected for completion between 3 and 5 years from ratification of the RICP

- **Long-term**: includes priorities projected for completion between 6 and 10 years from ratification of the RICP

## 5.1 Bowie County

### 5.1.1 Priority/Goal Description: Multiband Radio Replacement Cycle

**Priority Level:** High       **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Bowie County Emergency Management/Sheriff's Office

**Point of Contact:**

Agency Name: Bowie County
POC Name: Lance Hall
Title: Emergency Manager
Address: 710 James Bowie Drive, New Boston, Texas
Office Phone 903-628-6776:
Cell Phone: 903-277-1531
24/7 Phone: 903-277-1531 or 24 hour dispatch 903-798-3189
E-Mail: lhall@txkusa.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - None Identified
- Additional funding needs
  - Grant and future budget monies will be needed


### 5.1.2 Priority/Goal Description: Acquisition and Installation of a Stand-alone Tower on the 800 MHz System

**Priority Level:**  Medium        **Priority Time:** Medium

**Lead Agency:**  Bowie County Emergency Management

**Point of Contact: Lance Hall**

Agency Name: Bowie County Emergency management
POC Name: Lance Hall
Title: Emergency Manager
Address: 710 James Bowie Drive, New Boston, Texas
Office Phone: 903-628-6776
Cell Phone: 903-277-1531
24/7 Phone: 903-277-1531
E-Mail: lhall@txkusa.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- – Identified funding streams
  - • None Identified
- – Additional funding needs
  - • Grant and future budget monies will be needed

### 5.1.3    Priority/Goal Description: Consolidated VFD onto the 800 MHz System or Countywide VHF (engineering study needed)

**Priority Level:** Low     **Priority Time:** Low

**Lead Agency:**  Bowie County Emergency Management

**Point of Contact: Lance Hall**

Agency Name: Bowie County Emergency Management
POC Name: Lance Hall
Title: Bowie County Emergency Manager
Address: 710 James Bowie Drive, New Boston, Texas
Office Phone: 903-628-6776
Cell Phone: 903-277-1531
24/7 Phone: 903-277-1531
E-Mail: lhall@txkusa.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- – Identified funding streams
  - • None Identified
- – Additional funding needs
  - • Grant and future budget monies will be needed

## 5.2    Cass County

**Priority/Goal Description:** [Add description]

**Priority Level:** High        **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:** Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Robin Betts**

Agency Name: City of Atlanta
Title: EMC
Address:
Office Phone:
Cell Phone:     903-799-0542
E-Mail: rbetts@atlantatexas.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
- − Additional funding needs
    - • [Add Funding Needs]
    - • [Add Funding Needs]

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## 5.3   Delta County

### 5.3.1   Priority/Goal Description: Radio Replacement Cycle for Portables and Mobiles

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Tanner Crutcher**

Agency Name: Delta County
Title: EMC
Address: 200 W Dallas Ave, Cooper Tx 75432
Office Phone:  903-395-4400
Cell Phone:    903-395-2146
24/7 Phone:
E-Mail: tcrutcher@deltacountytx.com

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - [Add Funding Streams]
  - [Add Funding Streams]
- Additional funding needs
  - [Add Funding Needs]
  - [Add Funding Needs]

### 5.3.2   Priority/Goal Description: Updating PSAP Consoles to IP Based

**Priority Level:** Low/Medium/High        **Priority Time:** Low/Medium/High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Tanner Crutcher**

Agency Name: Delta County
Title: EMC
Address: 200 W Dallas Ave, Cooper Tx 75432
Office Phone:  903-395-4400
Cell Phone:    903-395-2146
24/7 Phone:
E-Mail: tcrutcher@deltacountytx.com

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - [Add Funding Streams]
  - [Add Funding Streams]
- Additional funding needs

- [Add Funding Needs]
- [Add Funding Needs]

### 5.3.3     Priority/Goal Description: Three Additional Repeater Sites Needed

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Tanner Crutcher**

Agency Name: Delta County
Title: EMC
Address: 200 W Dallas Ave, Cooper Tx 75432
Office Phone:  903-395-4400
Cell Phone:     903-395-2146
24/7 Phone:
E-Mail: tcrutcher@deltacountytx.com

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - [Add Funding Streams]
  - [Add Funding Streams]
- Additional funding needs
  - [Add Funding Needs]
  - [Add Funding Needs]

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## 5.4 Franklin County

### 5.4.1 Priority/Goal Description: Replace Radio Infrastructure for County Radio System

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Josh Dailey**

Agency Name: Franklin County
Title: EMC
Address: 208 TX-37, Mt Vernon, TX 75457
Office Phone:  903-537-4539
Cell Phone:
E-Mail: Jdaily@co.franklin.tx.us

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- – Identified funding streams
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
- – Additional funding needs
    - • 1-1.5 Million needed to replace the Radio System

## 5.5    Hopkins County

### 5.5.1    Priority/Goal Description: Upgrading the Primary Radio Tower Site

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Andy Endsley**

Agency Name: Hopkins County Fire Department
Title: EMC
Address: 1286 Texas St # B, Sulphur Springs, TX
Office Phone:   903-439-6217
Cell Phone:
E-Mail:  aendsley@hopkinscountytx.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams
  - • [Add Funding Streams]
  - • [Add Funding Streams]
- − Additional funding needs
  - • [Add Funding Needs]
  - • [Add Funding Needs]

### 5.5.2    Priority/Goal Description: Updating PSAP Radio Equipment

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Andy Endsley**

Agency Name: Hopkins County Fire Department
Title: EMC
Address: 1286 Texas St # B, Sulphur Springs, TX
Office Phone:   903-439-6217
Cell Phone:

E-Mail:  aendsley@hopkinscountytx.org **Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams
  - • [Add Funding Streams]
  - • [Add Funding Streams]
- − Additional funding needs
  - • [Add Funding Needs]
  - • [Add Funding Needs]

### 5.5.3 Priority/Goal Description: Radio Replacement Cycle

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Andy Endsley**

Agency Name: Hopkins County Fire Department
Title: EMC
Address: 1286 Texas St # B, Sulphur Springs, TX
Office Phone:   903-439-6217
Cell Phone:
E-Mail:  aendsley@hopkinscountytx.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams (Where is the money for this project)
  - Or we have identified 0 dollars for this funding
  - [Add Funding Streams]
  - [Add Funding Streams]
- Additional funding needs
  - [Add Funding Needs]
  - [Add Funding Needs]

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## 5.6 Lamar County

### 5.6.1 Priority/Goal Description: Replace and Upgrade Existing Radio System to a Multi System

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:** Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Quincy Blount**

Agency Name: Lamar County
Title: EMC
Address: 231 Lamar Ave, Paris Texas 75460
Office Phone:  903-782-1118
Cell Phone:
E-Mail: qblount@co.lamar.tx.us

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - None Identified
- Additional funding needs
  - Grants Needed

**Priority/Goal Description:** Replace antiquated portable and Mobile radios with Multiband radios

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:** Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Quincy Blount**

Agency Name: Lamar County
Title: EMC
Address: 231 Lamar Ave, Paris Texas 75460
Office Phone:  903-782-1118
Cell Phone:
E-Mail: qblount@co.lamar.tx.us

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - None Identified
- Additional funding needs
  - Grants Needed

### 5.6.2 Priority/Goal Description: Purchase CAD System for County Agencies and Vehicles

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

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**Lead Agency:** Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Quincy Blount**

Agency Name: Lamar County
Title: EMC
Address: 231 Lamar Ave, Paris Texas 75460
Office Phone:  903-782-1118
Cell Phone:
E-Mail: qblount@co.lamar.tx.us

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - None Identified
- Additional funding needs
  - Grants Needed

## 5.7 Morris County

**Priority/Goal Description:** [Add description]

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:** Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Brandon Singletary**

Agency Name: Morris County
Title: EMC
Address: 500 Broadnax, Ste B Daingerfield Tx 75638
Office Phone:  903-563-4103
Cell Phone: 903-563-4103
E-Mail: brandon.singletary@co.morris.tx.us

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams (Where is the money for this project)
    - Or we have identified 0 dollars for this funding
    - [Add Funding Streams]
    - [Add Funding Streams]
- Additional funding needs
    - [Add Funding Needs]
    - [Add Funding Needs]

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## 5.8   Red River County

### 5.8.1   Priority/Goal Description: Replace and Upgrade Existing Radio System to a 3-Site System

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Amanda Willow**

Agency Name: Red River County
Title: EMC
Address: 400 N Walnut Street, Clarksville Texas, 75426
Office Phone:
Cell Phone: 903-732-7860
24/7 Phone:
E-Mail: emc@co.red-river.tx.us

**Action plan*:*** [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams
  - • None Identified
- − Additional funding needs
  - • Grants Needed

### 5.8.2   Priority/Goal Description: Replace Antiquated Portable and Mobile Radios with Multiband Radios

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Amanda Willow**

Agency Name: Red River County
Title: EMC
Address: 400 N Walnut Street, Clarksville Texas, 75426
Office Phone:
Cell Phone: 903-732-7860
24/7 Phone:
E-Mail: emc@co.red-river.tx.us

**Action plan*:*** [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams
  - • None Identified
- − Additional funding needs
  - • Grants Needed

### 5.8.3    Priority/Goal Description: Purchase CAD System for County Agencies

**Priority Level:** High  **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Amanda Willow**

Agency Name: Red River County
Title: EMC
Address: 400 N Walnut Street, Clarksville Texas, 75426
Office Phone:
Cell Phone: 903-732-7860
24/7 Phone:
E-Mail: emc@co.red-river.tx.us

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams
  - • None Identified
- − Additional funding needs
  - • Grants Needed

## 5.9    Titus County

### 5.9.1    Priority/Goal Description: Antiquated Radio System Infrastructure

**Priority Level:** High   **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Larry McRae**

Agency Name: Titus County
Title: EMC
Address: 100 West First Street Mt Pleasant, Texas, 75455
Office Phone:  903-575-4144
E-Mail:  lmcrae@mpcity.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams (Where is the money for this project)
    - • Or we have identified 0 dollars for this funding
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
- − Additional funding needs
    - • [Add Funding Needs]
    - • [Add Funding Needs]

### 5.9.2    Priority/Goal Description: Antiquated Radio Replacement

**Priority Level:** High   **Priority Time:** High

**Lead Agency:**  Ark Tex Council of Governments

**Point of Contact: Larry McRae**

Agency Name: Titus County
Title: EMC
Address: 100 West First Street Mt Pleasant, Texas, 75455
Office Phone:  903-575-4144
E-Mail:  lmcrae@mpcity.org

**Action plan***:* [Insert known text here such as migration plan, known milestones, order of operations, etc.]

**Funding:**

- − Identified funding streams (Where is the money for this project)
    - • Or we have identified 0 dollars for this funding
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
    - • [Add Funding Streams]
- − Additional funding needs
    - • [Add Funding Needs]

[Add Funding Needs]

# 6 ATCOG Regional Priorities

This section summarizes the ATCOG goals, including a description of timelines associated with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. The goals of this RICP are aligned with the major lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum as well as the NECP.

Goal timelines are defined as the following:

– **Short-term**: includes priorities projected for completion within 3 years from ratification of the RICP

– **Medium-term**: includes priorities projected for completion between 3 and 5 years from ratification of the RICP

– **Long-term**: includes priorities projected for completion between 6 and 10 years from ratification of the RICP

## 6.1 ATCOG Priority Regionwide Engineering Assessment

**Priority/Goal Description:** ATCOG has 9 counties and a number of municipalities in the region that are in need of updated or new radio system infrastructure, including towers, antenna, repeaters, cabling, protective structures, etc. Every county in the COG has some type of radio system infrastructure upgrade or replacement as a top priority of the county. An engineering study to identify the best approach for combined efforts for the reason is needed to ensure the most efficient and cost effective method moving forward.

**Priority Level:** High      **Priority Time:** Short-Term

**Lead Agency:** ATCOG

**Point of Contact:**

Agency Name:       Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)
POC Name:          Whitney Fezell
Title:             Homeland Security Planner
Address:           4808 Elizabeth Street, Texarkana, Texas 75503
Office Phone:      903-255-3554
E-Mail:            wfezell@atcog.org

**Action plan***:* ATCOG representatives contacted the Texas SWIC's office to request a CISA/ICTAP Technical Assistance project in the form of a regional engineering assessment. The Assessment was approved and will be conducted in early 2022.

**Funding:**

– Identified funding streams
  • Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure (SERI) grant
  • CISA ICTAP Technical Assistance

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## 6.2 ATCOG Priority Updating Antiquated Radio Infrastructure

**Priority/Goal Description:** ATCOG has 9 counties and a number of municipalities in the region that are in need of updated or new radio system infrastructure, including towers, antenna, repeaters, cabling, protective structures, etc. Every county in the COG has some type of radio system infrastructure upgrade or replacement as a top priority of the county.

**Priority Level:** High     **Priority Time:** Medium-Term

**Lead Agency:** ATCOG

**Point of Contact:**

Agency Name:     Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)
POC Name:     Whitney Fezell
Title:     Homeland Security Planner
Address:     4808 Elizabeth Street, Texarkana, Texas 75503
Office Phone:     903-255-3554
E-Mail:     wfezell@atcog.org

**Action plan:** ATCOG representatives contacted the Texas SWIC's office to request a CISA/ICTAP Technical Assistance project in the form of a regional engineering assessment. The Assessment was approved and will be conducted in early 2022.

**Funding:**

- Identified funding streams
  - Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure (SERI) grant

## 6.3 ATCOG Priority Updating Antiquated Portable and Mobile Radios

**Priority/Goal Description:** Every county in the COG had as one of their top priorities to replace aging portable and mobile radio for nearly all agencies within their counties. The logical step to take is to include any radio purchases with an associated update or replacement to the radio system infrastructure, if contracted.

**Priority Level:** High **Priority Time:** Medium-Term

**Lead Agency:** ATCOG

**Point of Contact:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Agency Name: | Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) |
| POC Name: | Whitney Fezell |
| Title: | Homeland Security Planner |
| Address: | 4808 Elizabeth Street, Texarkana, Texas 75503 |
| Office Phone: | 903-255-3554 |
| E-Mail: | wfezell@atcog.org |

**Action plan:** ATCOG representatives contacted the Texas SWIC's office to request a CISA/ICTAP Technical Assistance project in the form of a regional engineering assessment. The Assessment was approved and will be conducted in early 2022.

**Funding:**

– Identified funding streams

## 6.4 ATCOG Priority Updated PSAP Equipment and Software

**Priority/Goal Description:** Several of the counties in the region identified some kind of PSAP capability or technology to be updated or replaced.

**Priority Level:** High **Priority Time:** Short-Term

**Lead Agency:** ATCOG

**Point of Contact:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Agency Name: | Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) |
| POC Name: | Whitney Fezell |
| Title: | Homeland Security Planner |
| Address: | 4808 Elizabeth Street, Texarkana, Texas 75503 |
| Office Phone: | 903-255-3554 |
| E-Mail: | wfezell@atcog.org |

**Action plan:** ATCOG representatives contacted the Texas SWIC's office to request a CISA/ICTAP Technical Assistance project in the form of a regional engineering assessment. The Assessment was approved and will be conducted in early 2022.

**Funding:**

– Identified funding streams

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## 6.5   Planning Summary

The timeline, milestones, and projected costs for the plans delineated above are summarized in Appendix B.

# APPENDIX A  PARTICIPATING, COUNTIES, JURISDICTIONS, AND AGENCIES

**Table 1: Participating Counties/Jurisdictions/Agencies**

| Region/County/Urban Area | Agency Phone# |
|---|---|
| Ark-Tex Council of Governments | 903-691-2511 |
| Bowie County | 903-798-3101 |
| Cass County | 903-748-6375 |
| Delta County | 903-395-4400 |
| Franklin County | 903-457-4539 |
| Hopkins County | 903-314-1652 |
| Lamar County | 903-249-3134 |
| Morris County | 903-645-2114 |
| Red River County | 903-427-2680 |
| Titus County | 903-575-4100 |
| | |
| | |

**Ark-Tex Council of Governments Emergency Preparedness Taskforce**

**Table 2: ATCOG POC Information**

| NAME | JURISDICTION | TELEPHONE | E-MAIL |
|---|---|---|---|
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**State Agencies Contact Information**

**Table 3: ATCOG State Agencies POC Information**

| State Agency | POC Name | Emergency Contact Information |
|---|---|---|
| State Communications Coordinator | Janice Bruno | 512-466-6589 |
| Texas Department of Public Safety | Holly Faison | 713-569-0125; holly.faison@txdps.state.tx.us |
| Texas Department of Public Safety | Cindy Hood | 512-377-0020; cindy.hood@txdps.state.tx.us |
| Texas Forest Service | Jared Goodman | 409-423-2890; jgoodman@tfs.tamu.edu |
| Texas Department of Transportation | Steve Templeton | 409-898-5735; steve.templeton@txdot.state.tx.us |

### Federal Agencies Contacts

**Table 4: ATCOG Federal Agencies POC Information**

| Federal Agency | POC Name | Emergency Contact Information |
|---|---|---|
| Federal Bureau of Investigation | Michael Davis | 214-797-1256; michael.davis@ic.fbi.gov |
| Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms | James Whatley | 281-372-3262; james.whatley@atf.gov |
| United States Forest Service | Bruce Silvey | 936-366-1033 |
| US Army Corps of Engineers | Sam Gramlich | 409-384-5716; samuel.j.gramlich@usace.army.mil |
| Congressman Kevin Brady | Sarah Stephens | 936-441-5700 |
| Federal Emergency Management Agency | Gary Jones | 940-898-5399 |
| Congressman Louie Gohmert | | |

### Tribal Agencies and Contact Information

**Table 5: Tribal Agencies POC Information**

| Tribal Agency | POC Name | Emergency Contact Information |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

### Nongovernmental Agencies and Contact Information

**Table 6: Nongovernmental Agencies POC Information**

| Organization | POC Name | Emergency Contact Information |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
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| | | |

### Amateur Radio Teams

**Table 7: Amateur Radio Teams POC Information**

| Name/Location | Email | Phone | Organization | Call-sign |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mike Miles | wd5efy@arrl.net | 936-631-1521 | ARES | WD5EFY |
| Mike Miles | wd5efy@arrl.net | 936-631-1521 | RACES | WD5EFY |
| Gordon Thibodeaux | gordon.thibodeaux@co.sabine.tx.us | 409-787-2409 | MARS | AARQZ |
| Tom Trissell | | 903-517-1787 | Red River CO | KC5ILO |
| Ed Olague | | 903-885-7530 | Hopkins CO | KE5DOP |
| Rosalio E. Salas | lsalas@1starnet.com | | Red River Valley Club | WB5RDD |
| Robert Game | KC5NTGEC@wmconnect.com | 903-293-4963 | Cass County | |

# APPENDIX B  TIMELINE/MILESTONE/COST ESTIMATE, BASIC REQUIREMENTS

**[Add ATCOG Timeline/Milestones/Cost Estimate from Excel sheet]**

# APPENDIX C  ATCOG RADIO SYSTEMS

| County | City | Agency | Usage Name | Tx | Rx | Rptr | Tx Tone | Rx Tone | P25 NAC | Label | Call Sign |
|--------|------|--------|-----------|----|----|------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-----------|
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# APPENDIX D  REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS ASSESSMENT

## CASM Overview

The Communication Assets Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool provides the ability for representatives of public safety agencies to collect, store, and visualize communication assets, and analyze interoperability gaps.

The communications asset information contained in CASM was used in assessing communications capabilities in the ATCOG to aid in preparing the RICP.

Authorization to view data for a particular area or State is controlled by the Administrative Manager (AM); each user must have a username and password in order to login.

The Regional CASM Administrative Manager/POC is listed in the following table:

**Table 8: Regional CASM AM POC Information**

| POC Name | Phone# | Email | Area of Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Karla Jurrens | 512-424-2104 | karla.jurrens@dps.texas.gov | State of Texas |
| John McDowell | 936-433-4011 | jmcdowell@datcog.org | Program Administrator |
| Robin Wright | 409-423-0458 | rwright@datcog.org | Coordinator/Systems Manager |
| Mary Beth Rudel | 903-691-2511 | mrudel@atcog.org | Region Administrator |
| Brenda Stone | 903-691-0652 | bkstone@atcog.org | Region Administrator |

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# APPENDIX E  REFERENCES

## National

- A Guide for Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Implementation, (DHS/CISA): https://www.dhs.gov/publication/ictapscip-resources

- American Radio Relay League (ARRL): www.arrl.org

- APCO International: www.apcointl.org

- Auxiliary Communications Field Operations Guide (AUXFOG) is a reference for auxiliary communicators who directly support backup emergency communications for State/local public safety entities or for an amateur radio organization supporting public safety. https://www.dhs.gov/safecom/resources.

- The Communication Assets Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool is a web-based application that provides the ability for representatives of public safety agencies within an urban area or state to collect, store, and visualize data about agencies, communication assets, and how agencies use those assets. https://www.dhs.gov/safecom/resources.

- Communications Unit Leader Training: http://www.dhs.gov/video/communications-unit-leader-training

- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Public Safety Technical Assistance Tools: https://www.dhs.gov/safecom/resources.

- DHS CISA FY2021 TA/SCIP Guide Highlights & Offerings: https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FY2021_TA_SCIP_Guide_Signed_508.pdf

- Department of Homeland Security Target Capabilities List (TCL): https://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/training/tcl.pdf

- Department of Homeland Security Universal Task List (UTL): http://www.ncrhomelandsecurity.org/ncr/downloads/Universal%20Task%20List.pdf

- EMAC: www.emacweb.org

- FCC ULS: http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/index.htm?job=home

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC):
  o FCC Enforcement Bureau: www.fcc.gov/eb
  o FCC Public Safety & Homeland Security Bureau: www.fcc.gov/pshs
  o FCC Special Temporary Authority (STA): https://www.fcc.gov/media/radio/special-temporary-authority

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): www.fema.gov

- First National Strategy for Homeland Security: https://www.dhs.gov/publication/first-national-strategy-homeland-security

- Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS): http://www.dhs.gov/gets

- Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN): https://www.dhs.gov/homeland-security-information-network-hsin

- Lessons Learned Information Sharing: https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/104192

- National Emergency Communications Plan: https://www.dhs.gov/national-emergency-communications-plan

- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Information: https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system

- National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG): https://www.dhs.gov/publication/fog-documents

- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC): www.nifc.gov

- National Interagency Incident Communications: www.fs.fed.us/fire/niicd

- The National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG) is a collection of technical, operational, and regulatory reference material for radio technicians responsible for radios that can be used in disaster response applications, and for emergency communications planners. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/National%20Interoperability%20Field%20Operations%20Guide%20v1.6.1.pdf

- National Preparedness Guidelines: https://www.dhs.gov/national-preparedness-guidelines

- National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC): www.npstc.org

- National Regional Planning Council (NRPC): www.nrpc.us

- National Response Framework: https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1466014682982-9bcf8245ba4c60c120aa915abe74e15d/National_Response_Framework3rd.pdf

- National Response Plan: https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/NRP_Brochure.pdf

- National Telecommunications & Information Admin (NTIA): https://www.ntia.doc.gov/home

- National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG): www.nwcg.gov

- FCC public safety radio pool eligibility for statewide use of interoperability channels within Texas: http://publicsafety.fcc.gov/pshs/releases/index.htm

- Radio Reference: www.radioreference.com

- SAFECOM: https://www.dhs.gov/safecom

- SAFECOM Training and Exercise: https://www.dhs.gov/safecom/training-and-exercises

- Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP): http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/documents/texasSCIP.pdf
- Wildland Fire Communications: https://www.nifc.gov/NIICD/
- Wireless Priority Service (WPS): http://www.dhs.gov/wps

## Texas

- Texas Government Charter 421: http://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/GrantsResources/txEmerMgtStatutes.pdf
- Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan or (TSICP) and MOU: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/documents/tsicpMOU.pdf
- Texas Communication Field Operations Guide: https://casmnextgen.com/pslib/index.php/webview?docid=186
- Training and Exercises Templates:
- https://pslib.casmnextgen.com/pslib/index.php/webview (Search for 'Texas')
- RGCOG RSOP: https://www.preparingtexas.org/index.aspx
- Alabama–Coushatta Tribe of Texas is a federally recognized tribe of Alabama and Koasati in Polk County, Texas. http://www.alabama-coushatta.com/

## COGs

- 01 Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC): www.theprpc.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=PRPC.php
- 02 South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG): www.spag.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=SPAG.php
- 03 Nortex Regional Planning Commission (NORTEX): www.nortexrpc.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=NORTEX.php
- 04 North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG): www.nctcog.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=NCTCOG.php
- 05 Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ARK-TEK): www.atcog.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=ARKTEX.php
- 06 East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG): www.ETCOG.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=ETCOG.php
- 07 West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG): www.wctcog.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=WCTCOG.php
- 08 Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG): www.riocog.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=RGCOG.php
- 09 Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission (PBRPC): www.pbrpc.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=PBRPC.php
- 10 Concho Valley Council of Governments (CVCOG): www.cvcog.org https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=CVCOG.php

- 11 Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG): www.hotcog.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=HOTCOG.php

- 12 Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG): www.capcog.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=CAPCOG.php

- 13 Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG): www.bvcog.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=BVCOG.php

- 14 Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG): www.DETCOG.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=DETCOG.php

- 15 South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC): www.setrpc.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=SETRPC.php

- 16 Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC):
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=H-GAC.php

- 17 Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC): www.gcrpc.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=GCRPC.php

- 18 Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG): www.aacog.com
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=AACOG.php

- 19 South Texas Development Council (STDC): www.stdc.cog.tx.us
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=STDC.php

- 20 Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG): www.cbcog98.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=CBTCOG.php

- 21 Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC): www.lrgvdc.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=LRGVDC.php

- 22 Texoma Council of Governments (TEXOMA): www.texoma.cog.tx.us
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=TCOG.php

- 23 Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG): www.ctcog.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=CTCOG.php

- 24 Middle Rio Grande Development Council (MRGDC): www.mrgdc.org
  https://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=MRGDC.php

# RSOP Links to Referenced Documents

**Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP)**:
http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/documents/texasSCIP.pdf

**Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan (TSICP)**:
http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/documents/tsicpMOU.pdf

**Texas Communication Field Operations Guide:**
https://www.dps.texas.gov/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/documents/txCommFldOpsGuide.pdf

**Texas Training and Exercises Templates:**
https://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/Preparedness/exerciseUnit/TrainExerPlan.htm

# APPENDIX F   GLOSSARY

| Item/Acronym | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| AES | Advanced Encryption Standard |
| AFG | Assistance to Firefighters Grant |
| AM | Administrative Manager |
| APCO | Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials |
| ARRL | American Radio Relay League |
| ATCOG | Ark-Tex Council of Governments (Region 5) (Arkansas-Texas) |
| AUXCOMM | Auxiliary Communications |
| CAD | Computer Aided Dispatch |
| CASM | Communication Assets Survey and Mapping |
| CISA | Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency |
| COG | Council Of Governments |
| COMU | Communications Unit |
| COW | Cellular on Wheels |
| DHS | Department of Homeland Security |
| EMAC | Emergency Management Assistance Compact |
| EMS | Emergency Medical Services |
| EOC | Emergency Operations Center |
| ESF | Emergency Support Function |
| FCC | Federal Communication Commission |
| FD | Fire Department |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FRS | Family Radio Service |
| GETS | Government Emergency Telecommunications Service |
| HF | High Frequency |
| HSIN | Homeland Security Information Network |
| Interoperable | Ability of a system to use the parts or equipment of another system |
| LE | Law Enforcement |
| LMR | Land Mobile Radio |
| MAA | Mutual Aid Agreement |
| MCCP | Mobile Communications Command Program |
| MHz | Abbreviation for megahertz. 5 MHz = 5,000,000 Hz or 5,000 kHz. |

| Item/Acronym | Definition |
|---|---|
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| Mutual Aid | Personnel, equipment, or services provided to another jurisdiction |
| NECP | National Emergency Communications Plan |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organizations |
| NIFC | National Interagency Fire Center |
| NIFOG | National Interoperability Field Operations Guide |
| NIMS | National Incident Management System |
| NPSTC | National Public Safety Telecommunications Council |
| NRF | National Response Framework |
| NRPC | National Regional Planning Council |
| NTIA | National Telecommunications and Information Administration |
| NWCG | National Wildfire Coordinating Group |
| P25 | Project 25 |
| PD | Police Department |
| POC | Point of Contact |
| PSAP | Public Safety Answering Point |
| RGOV | Regional Governance Structures |
| RICP | Regional Interoperable Communications Plan |
| RIMP | Regional Interoperable Migration Plans |
| RSOP | Regional Standard Operating Procedures |
| Rx | Receive |
| SCC | State Coordinator for Communications |
| SCIP | Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan |
| SERI | Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure Grant |
| SO | Sheriff's Office |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| SOW | Site on Wheels |
| STAR | State of Texas Assistance Request |
| SWIC | Statewide Interoperability Coordinator |
| TCL | Target Capability List |
| TSICP | Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan |
| Tx | Transmit |

**PUBLIC SAFETY SENSITIVE**

| Item/Acronym | Definition |
|---|---|
| TxDOT | Texas Department of Transportation |
| TxDPS | Texas Department of Public Safety |
| TxICC | Texas Interoperable Communications Coalition |
| TxSCIP | Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan |
| UTL | Universal Task List |
| VFD | Volunteer Fire Department |
| VOAD | Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters |
| VHF | Very High Frequency – For public safety LMR, usually refers to VHF High Band with a range of 136 to 164 MHz VHF Low Band has a frequency range below 100 MHz |
| WPS | Wireless Priority Service |

# Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)

## Regionally Coordinated Public Transportation Plan

May 2022

# Table of Contents

REGIONALLY COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This document was prepared by:

Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)

In cooperation with:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

The document was reviewed and approved by:

Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)

on INSERT DATE OF BOARD APPROVAL

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CRF part 21; The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the bases of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance; and Section 324 of title 23 U.S.C. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender; ATCOG is committed throughout the development of its plans and programs to ensure that no person on the grounds of age, gender, race color or national origin is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal financial assistance. No plans, programs or policies developed or implemented by ATCOG will have a disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effect on minority and low-income populations. ATCOG plans continue to work on improving the accessibility of employment to the identified protected populations. Further, many of the current ATCOG public meetings are held in minority and low-income communities in the region and are located near accessible public transit facilities. Funding is allocated as part of the Unified Planning Work Program for a Title VI Plan to maintain an analytical approach that produces procedures that meet Title VI requirements by ensuring that federally funded transportation projects adequately consider effects on low-income and minority segments of the population. For more information on ATCOG's Civil Rights program and the procedures to file a complaint reach out to:

Veronica Williams, Transportation Planner

4808 Elizabeth Street Texarkana, TX 75503

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Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) in planning projects: 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age in employment business opportunity; and Section 1101 (b) of the SAFETEA-LU (Pub. L. 109-59) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in USDOT funded projects; 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts; ATCOG follows the TXDOT DBE Plan. Funding is allocated as part of the Unified Planning Work Program to maintain an analytical approach that produces procedures that meet Environmental Justice requirements by ensuring that federally funded transportation projects adequately consider effects on low-income and minority segments of the population. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: The provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It is the policy of ATCOG to ensure that all agency programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities and are in compliance with the applicable regulations as a condition of receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Transportation. ATCOG will make reasonable accommodations to a qualified individual with a disability who attends on-site meetings and meeting facilities meet this requirement. Every effort is made to ensure that meeting facilities off-site are ADA accessible. A notice is published in advance of all ATCOG public meetings that reasonable accommodations will be provided for meeting locations on and off-site with a phone number and contact persons listed to provide assistance if needed. In addition, ATCOG members are actively involved in various ADA-related initiatives which are being carried out as part of the Unified

Planning Work Program including Elderly and Disabled Planning, the Job Access/Reverse Commute Program, and the review of ADA compliance documents developed by the region's transit and paratransit agencies, all of which focus on ensuring that transportation program and services across the region are accessible to those citizens with disabilities. Restrictions on influencing certain federal activities: CFR 29, Part 20; It is the policy of ATCOG that no state or federal funds received by the agencies shall be paid to any person for the purpose of influencing the award of a federal contract, grant, or loan or the entering into of a cooperative agreement. NO state or federal funds received by the agencies shall be used directly or indirectly to influence any member of Congress, any member of the State Legislature, or any local elected official to favor or oppose the adoption of any prosed legislation pending before any federal, state, or local legislative body. Credit/Disclaimer Statement "The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the State Planning and Research Program, Section 505 [or Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f)] of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation."

Questions or other interest regarding the plan may be directed to:

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## Acknowledgments

Thanks to the project stakeholder committee and public of ATCOG region for their input and ideas received during the plan development. Contact information for stakeholder committee members appear in the Appendix.

## Lead Coordinating Agency

| Ark-Tex Council of Governments |
| --- |

## Stakeholder Committee Members (2020-2021)

| Senior Adult Planning Committee | Martha Baker |
| --- | --- |
| The Randy Sam's Shelter | Tiffany James |
| Mission Texarkana | Cody Howard |
| Express Personnel/Pros | Penny Everett |
| United Way of Lamar County | Jenny Wilson |
| Ram Foundation | Dede Fasken |
| Habitat for Humanity | Judy Martin |
| North Lamar ISD (High School Transition) | Gylnese McNabb |
| The Kings Daughters | Kay McNeal |
| PJC- Adult Education | Susan Sanchez |
| UAMS-University of Arkansas Medical Sciences | Tammy Duran |
| UAMS-University of Arkansas Medical Sciences | Jackie Williams |

## Partners

| Texas Department of Transportation | Amanda Powell |
| --- | --- |
| Northeast Texas Community College | Martha Baker |
| United Way of Greater Texarkana | Mark Bledsoe |
| United Way of Greater Texarkana | Molly Riley |
| Texas A & M of Texarkana | Carl Greig |
| Express Personnel | Penny Everett |
| UAMS-University of Arkansas Medical Sciences | Jackie Pierce |
| UAMS-University of Arkansas Medical Sciences | Tammy Duran |

## State and Federal Agency Partners

| Texas Department of Transportation | Texas Department of State Health Services |
| --- | --- |
| Texas Workforce Commission | US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) |
| Texas Veterans Commission | |

# Executive Summary

Coordination among rural transportation providers and human services is crucial when connecting communities to essential resources. Regionally Coordinated Public Transportation Plans (RCTP) provide a framework to coordination and outline a vision for the next five years.

This plan is an update to Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG)'s RCTP, as required by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) every five years to qualify for Section 5307, 5310, or 5311 Program funding.

The nine-county region discussed in this report has three public transportation providers, TRAX, Paris Metro, and T-Line. TRAX provides on-demand service to all nine counties, while Paris Metro and T-Line only provide fixed route service within Paris and Texarkana, respectively.

This plan provides updates to the existing transportation provider inventory and an understanding of transit need within the region. Transit need was calculated based on the number of vulnerable populations within each county. Key findings from this report indicate that the majority of counties within the region demonstrate a "moderate" transit need with the exception of Morris County, which demonstrates a "high" transit need and Bowie County, which demonstrates a "low" transit need. The highest transit need is in northeastern Paris, located in Lamar County.

In conjunction with a transit need assessment, a gap analysis was also conducted to identify gaps between existing transit need and the distribution of services to the vulnerable populations in the area. Specifically, Cass, Morris, and Delta County each demonstrate a considerable transit need with limited access to transportation services. This has been identified as the most significant gap within the service area. These counties are neighbored Bowie and Titus County where transit need, and resources are low. Since the primary public transportation provider in this region is TRAX, there are limited coordination strategies that will address the lack of resources in the area.

Alternatively, fixed route bus service is available in both Paris, TX and Texarkana, TX. These transportation services can only be accesses within the city limits. Coordination between fixed route and on-demand transportation services can also be difficult since the resources needed to operate each service can vary drastically.

To address this gap in service, coordination goals and objectives have been developed using stakeholder and public feedback. With only three major public transportation services within the nine-county region, a key component to successful coordination in the region will be increased communication, documentation, and outreach. ATCOG has developed detailed strategies and performance metrics to guide coordination and facilitation within the region to improve and expand travel options and access to opportunity.

## *Background on RCTP*

In 2004, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13330, which established the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) to "promote interagency cooperation and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services."

In August 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which included a requirement that projects selected for funding under the New Freedom (Section 5317), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC – Section 5316) programs "must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" beginning in 2007.

The New Freedom program has since been consolidated into the Section 5310 program and the JARC program has been consolidated into the urban transit (Section 5307) and rural transit (Section 5311) programs. However, the requirement for Section 5310 funding recipients to certify that projects are included in a coordinated transportation plan has continued through both the Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty-first Century (MAP-21) Act and now the FAST Act.

Additionally, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that any coordinated plan be "developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public." The FTA also requires all coordinated transportation plans to include the following elements:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit);

- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and the gap in service;

- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gap between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and

- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Though the coordinated transportation plan requirement only applies to communities and organizations applying for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program funding, FTA expects that other federally-funded programs—specifically the urban transit (Section 5307) and rural transit (Section 5311) programs—be included in the planning process and coordination activities. In addition, FTA requires that projects identified for funding in a coordinated transportation plan be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and in the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000.

Note that throughout this document, agencies that primarily receive funding under FTA's urban transit (Section 5307) or rural transit (Section 5311) programs are referred to as public transit providers, as they operate transit services with no eligibility requirements and are available to all customers. Agencies receiving funding through the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program are referred to as human services transportation providers because many provide specialized transportation services for seniors or PWDs. When discussing coordination in general, though, all public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers and all human services agencies are included.

01

# Introduction

# 1 Introduction

The Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments that serves nine counties in northeast Texas. It operates with an aim to coordinate planning, services, and funding for its constituent governments. ATCOG is conducting a five-year update to its Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP).

The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) requirements indicate that RCTPs funded by Section 5307, 5310, or 5311 Programs must "identify the transit needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes; provide strategies for meeting these needs and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation".[1] The FTA's goal for this plan is to increase mobility for historically disenfranchised groups through locally coordinated efforts.

This plan highlights these key demographic groups – seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people of low incomes – and other historically disenfranchised groups that benefit from access to public transportation services such as households without vehicle access, non-White populations, rural populations, and people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

## 1.1 Service Area Overview

ATCOG, headquartered in Texarkana, TX, serves a nine-county area in northeastern Texas within Planning Region 5 of the Texas Association of Regional Councils. Specifically, the following nine counties will be discussed in this plan: Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus (Figure 1).

According to the 2019 5-year American Community Survey, the service area has a population of 282,678. The general population of the area has remained stable, with only a 0.3 percent growth since 2010. The region is 53 percent rural and 47 percent urban. It has a racial makeup of 68 percent White, 17 percent African American/Black, 12 percent Hispanic and Latino, and 4 percent all other races.

**Funding Sources**

**5307** – The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program provides transit capital and operating assistance for planning in urbanized areas.

**5310** – The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities program provides funding to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

**5311** – The Rural Area Formula Program provides funding, planning, and operations assistance to support public transit in rural areas (< 50,000 population).

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[1] "Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans." Federal Transit Administration. https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/coordinated-public-transit-human-services-transportation-plans

*Figure 1: ATCOG Study Area*
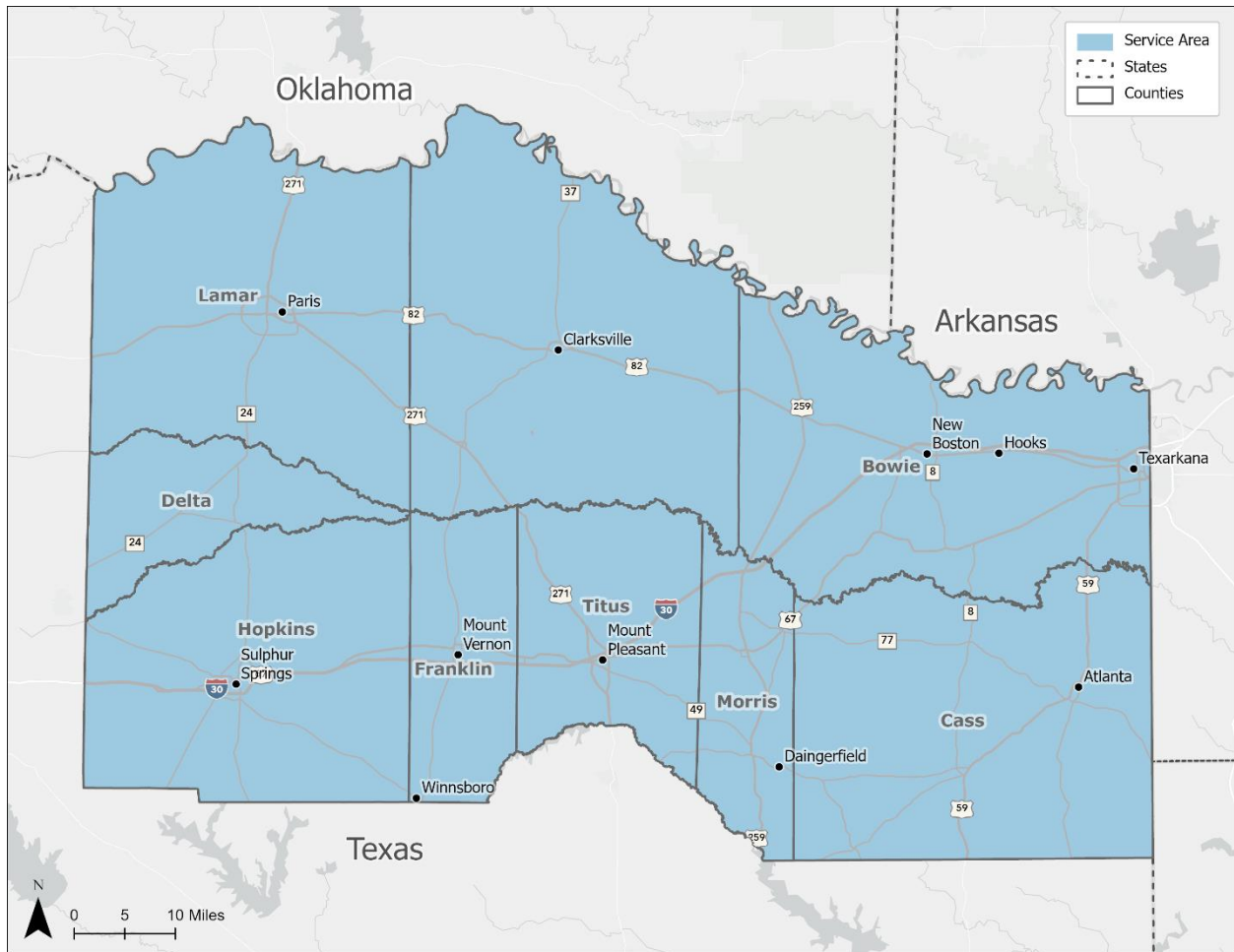
## 1.2 Population & Employment Density

To provide broader context to this transit need analysis, it is essential to explore where people work and live within the service area.[2] The most common daily trips are between home and work. Figure 2 and Figure 3 illustrate a clustered distribution of population and employment within the service area. As expected, these higher population and employment density clusters are located within the largest cities in ATCOG service area: Texarkana, Paris, Sulphur Springs, Mt. Pleasant, and Atlanta. These maps provide a framework for where coordinated efforts can be concentrated.

*Figure 2: Population Density by Census Tract*



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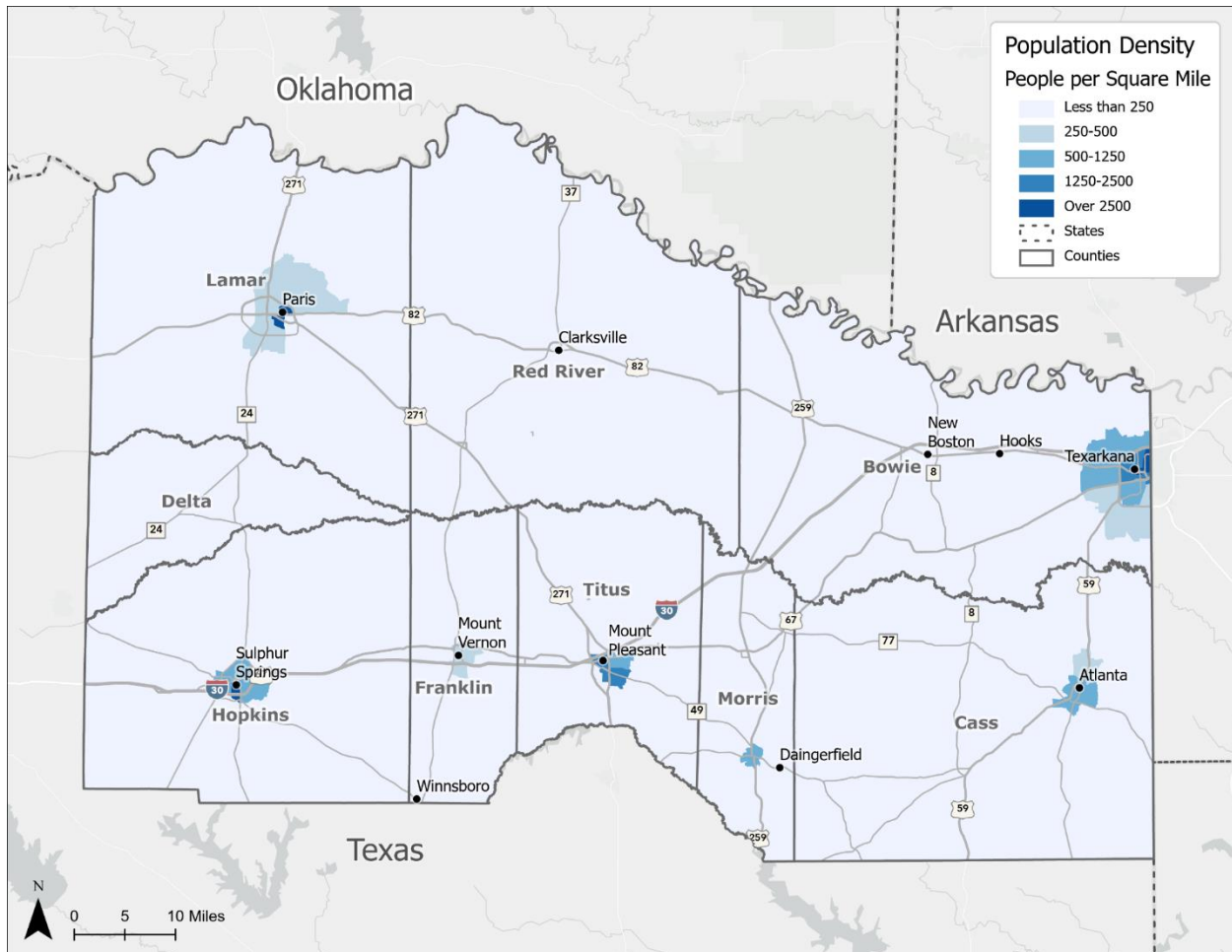
[2] 2015-2019 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates) and 2017 Work-Based Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Data were used for this analysis.

*Figure 3: Employment Density by Census Tract*

# 02
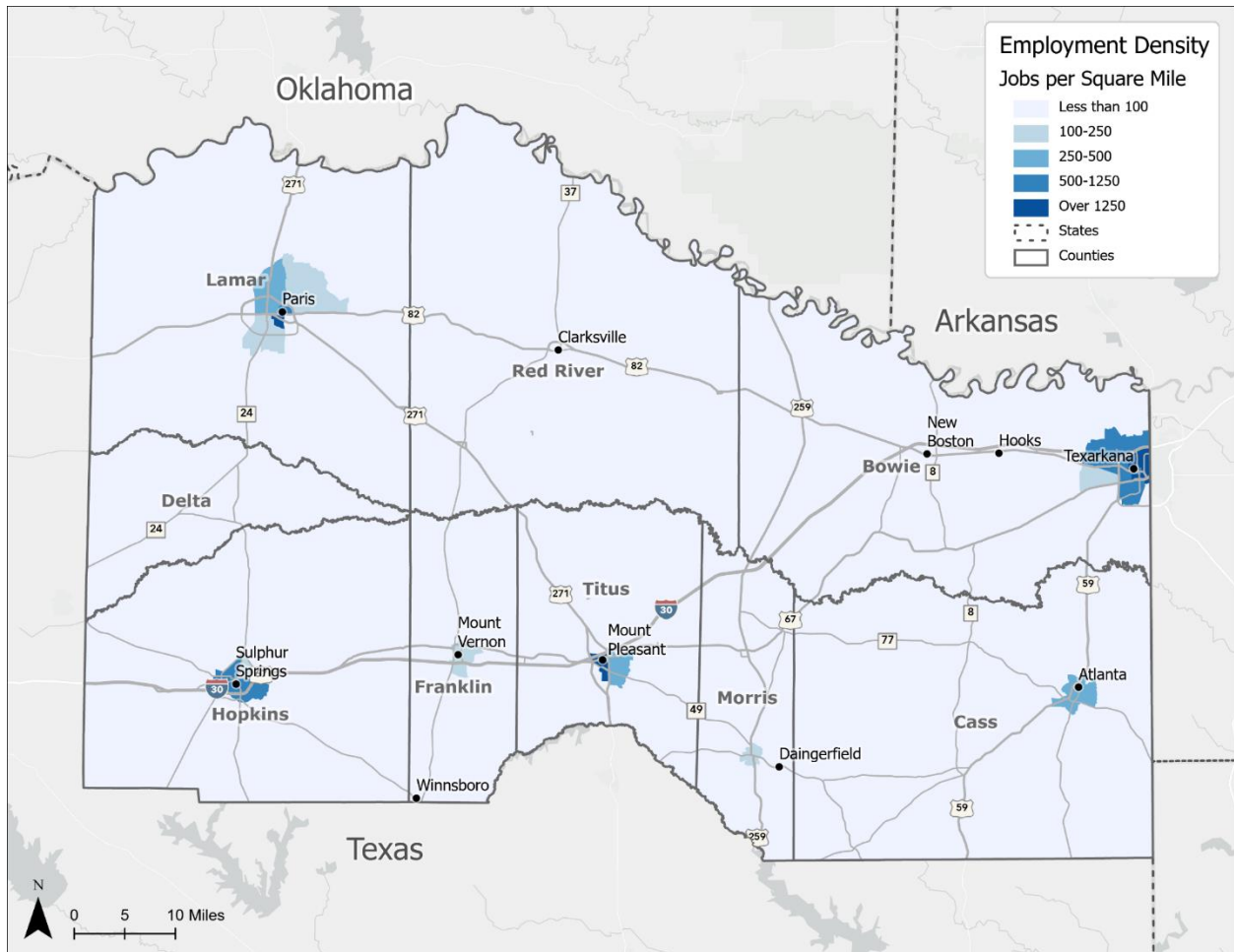
# Transportation Resources in the Region

# 2 Transportation Resources in the Region

Transportation services in the region are provided by either public transportation providers or private providers. Public transportation providers are accessible to all members of the public, whereas private transportation providers may apply restrictions as to who can utilize their service. Often, human services organizations will provide transportation services; however, these services are typically restricted to their clients or program members. A comprehensive list of all providers in the region can be found in Appendix A. This list was developed using online resources, a transportation provider survey and phone calls to verify services and resources available in the region.

## 2.1 Public Transportation Resources in the Region

There are three public transportation programs in the service area: TRAX Rural Public Transportation, Paris Metro, and the Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line). All three of these programs are operated by ATCOG, the primary service provider in the region.

### 2.1.1 ATCOG Rural Transit District (TRAX)

ATCOG operates TRAX, the rural transit district (RTD) in the nine-county area. Passengers may call to arrange transportation from their homes or a designated pick-up point. TRAX is funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

ATCOG RTD is governed by a five-member subcommittee of elected officials from the Executive Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments. This committee meets as necessary on the same mornings as ATCOG Executive Board Meetings to set policies and procedures for ATCOG RTD. The Transportation Committee also governs any major decisions or purchases and settles any complaints or grievances for ATCOG RTD.

ATCOG RTD holds title to a fleet of 51 vehicles, all of which are equipped to provide ADA accessible transportation service to users. The vehicles are housed in the counties where they are operated. In 2020, the nine-county region's estimated monthly ridership was 6,044.

### Paris Metro

Paris Metro is a fixed route bus service available in Paris, TX that is operated under TRAX. The service operates within Paris city limits five days a week, Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. In addition to the fixed route bus service, Paris Metro also offers ADA Complementary Paratransit, this service operates the same days and hours as the fixed route bus service. The Paratransit service was launched in July 2016 and provides curb-to-curb transportation for eligible persons with disabilities who are unable to use the regular fixed route bus.

Paris Metro is funded by TxDOT and local stakeholders such as, United Way of Lamar County and The RAM Foundation, which provide a local match for funding. In addition to this funding, the Texas Veterans Commission reimburses six-month passes for approved veterans. The estimated monthly ridership for the fixed route system in 2020 varied between 1,000 and 4,000.

### 2.1.2 Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line)

Texarkana Urban Transit District (TUTD) operates the T-Line Bus System, a fixed route bus service, and the ADA Complementary Paratransit service within the city limits of Texarkana, Wake Village and Nash.

TUTD is funded through the Section 5307 Small Urban Transit Program by the FTA and TxDOT. ATCOG entered an Interlocal Agreement with the TUTD Board of Directors to provide management and fiscal services to the T-Line Bus System on April 4, 2011. As of 2021, T-Line has a fleet of 15 buses.

The ADA Complementary Paratransit service operates the same days and hours that fixed route service is provided (Monday to Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.). The Paratransit service provides curb-to-curb transportation to eligible persons with disabilities who are unable to use the regular fixed route bus system. All origins and destinations of the Paratransit clients' homes are within ¾ of a mile of the fixed bus route.

## 2.2 Private Transportation Resources in the Region

Privately owned, for-profit transportation services within the nine-county region include taxicab, ride share services, and intercity rail (Amtrak).

There is one Amtrak Texas Eagle stop in Texarkana, TX at 100 E Front Street that connects communities from Dallas, TX and Little Rock, AR. Service is available at this Amtrak stop twice a day, seven days a week. There is one roundtrip that passes through the city each day. The northbound service arrives at 8:43 p.m. and the southbound service leaves Texarkana at 5:58 a.m.

Taxicab services that are available in the region include, but are not limited to:

> City Taxi (Texarkana, TX)
> Artex (Texarkana, TX)
> City Cab Company (Paris, TX)
> Lone Star Cab Company (Paris, TX)
> Yellow Cab (Paris, TX)

### 2.2.1 Client Focused Services

There are also transportation services in the region that are limited to the clients of human services organizations, residents of a particular community, or specific demographic groups (e.g., the elderly, disabled, or people below the poverty line).

#### Texas MTO Region 5 Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (Medicaid)

Medical Transportation Management (MTM) is responsible for all non-emergency medical transportation within Planning Region 5, which includes the following Texas counties: Anderson, Angelina, Bowie, Cass, Cherokee, Delta, Franklin, Gregg, Harrison, Hopkins, Houston, Lamar, Marion, Morris, Nacogdoches, Panola, Rains, Red River, Rusk, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, Smith, Titus, Trinity, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood.

MTM provides brokerage services for Medicaid transportation covering thirty-five counties in east and southeast Texas, including the nine counties that make up both the Ark-Tex planning region and the Medicaid Transportation Service Area 5. For instance, in addition to providing traditional taxicab service, City Cab in Texarkana provides human service agency transportation under contract with MTM.

Medicaid transportation is available Monday through Saturday to medical facilities within the county of residence, to adjacent counties, and for clients living in the Ark-Tex region traveling to Dallas, TX and

Shreveport, LA. The office serving Region 5 is based in Houston, TX (approximately 200 miles south of Texarkana), with MTM headquartered in St. Louis, MO.

### Northeast Texas Community College

TRAX provides shuttle service to the Northeast Texas Community College in Mount Pleasant. This shuttle service differs from the services TRAX offered while under contract with the college. The previous services operated Monday through Thursday during the fall and spring semesters. There was a scheduled time to bring students to campus in the morning and return them home in the afternoon. The current shuttle service is arranged directly with students, so they are responsible for paying their fare.

### Opportunities, Inc.

Opportunities, Inc. provides developmental and support services to assist individuals with housing, employment, and medical needs. Located along the Texas side of the state line in Texarkana, the agency's services and client groups include:

- Developmental day programs and early Head Start for children aged five and under,
- Employment training, supported employment, residential programs, and other services for adults with developmental disabilities,
- Adult day care services for adults with medical needs, and
- Senior housing.

Opportunities, Inc. serves clients in Bowie County, TX as well as Miller and Little River Counties in Arkansas. This service transports the public to and from senior meal centers, grocery shopping centers, bill paying locations, medical facilities, and other essential destinations from 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The agency operates a fleet of 25 vehicles (almost half of which are wheelchair-accessible).

### Texarkana Volunteer Center/HandsOn Texarkana

HandsOn Texarkana also known as the Texarkana Volunteer Center has developed the Escort Program, a volunteer service that provides transportation to the doctor, grocery store, and necessary errands. It coordinates volunteers to provide transportation for low-income people who are at least 60 years of age or have a disability and have no other means of transportation.

### Veterans Administration Community-Based Outpatient Clinic

The Veterans Administration Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Texarkana, Arkansas, owns vans and coordinates volunteer van drivers to transport veterans in the Texarkana area to the Texarkana clinic as well as to Overton Brooks VA Medical Center in Shreveport, Louisiana. This service is typically operated from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Due to lack of volunteers, the trips to Shreveport have been reduced from four days/week to two days/week.

### Xpress NEMT LLC

Xpress NEMT LLC is a private bus service that provides on-demand response for medical purposes. This is a for-profit service that operates in Paris, TX and is available to the public 24/7 via their app. This organization owns two vehicles, both of which are ADA accessible.

### Christus St. Michael Express Care

Express Care is a non-profit that the Christus St. Michael Healthcare System supports via grant funding to provide pick up for Wadley Hospital. The user must be a patient with an appointment at Christus St.

Michael to be eligible to this transportation service. The organization owns seven vans and approximately half are ADA accessible.

*Haven Homes*

Haven Homes is a faith-based, non-profit that provides transitional housing to men and women who suffer from substance abuse. The organization is in Texarkana, TX and provides transportation to its clients Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Haven Homes owns four vehicles which can be used to provide everyday trips to its clients.

**03**

# Comprehensive Assessment of the Public's Unmet Transportation Needs

# 3 Comprehensive Assessment of Public's Unmet Transportation Needs

The following section is a comprehensive assessment of the public's unmet transportation needs. To identify transit need within the service area, two major analyses were conducted. First, population and employment density were assessed to identify major concentrations of where people live and work. Second, a Transit Need Index (TNI) was created to identify communities that require additional support with mobility.

## 3.1 Methodology

Due to the scale of the analysis, the most-recently available data was collected and assessed at the levels of census tracts, counties, and state. Most of the data collected for the TNI was obtained from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2015-2019), except for the urban and rural population counts, which was gathered from the 2010 Decennial Census (Table 1). Data was collected at multiple geographic levels to highlight which counties are demonstrating the greatest transit need and to highlight the areas within each county that require additional support.

*Table 1: Data Sources*

| Source | Year(s) | Table Number | Data Description |
|--------|---------|--------------|------------------|
| ACS 5YR | 2015-2019 | B25044 | Tenure by Vehicles Available |
| ACS 5YR | 2015-2019 | B01001 | Sex by Age |
| ACS 5YR | 2015-2019 | C21007 | Disability by Veteran Status |
| ACS 5YR | 2015-2019 | DP05 | Race and Ethnicity |
| ACS 5YR | 2015-2019 | B17021 | Poverty Status |
| Decennial | 2010 | H2 | Urban Rural |
| ACS 5YR | 2015-2019 | B16004 | Language Spoke an |
| LEHD | 2017 | -- | Employment Data |

With 53 percent of residents living in rural areas and 18 percent of the population being 60 years and older, a key consideration while exploring the TNI demographics in this region were rural and aging populations. Residents living in poverty and populations with LEP were concentrated in fewer than half of the census tracts. Only 42 percent of tracts had a higher-than-average number of residents in poverty and only 27 percent had higher-than-average number of people with LEP.

The overall TNI is a cumulative score that ranges from one (1) to seven (7). It is used to determine gaps in transportation needs for the following key demographic groups:

Households without vehicle access,

Population 65 years or older,

Individuals with disabilities,

Non-White populations,

People of low income,

Rural housing units, and

People with limited English proficiency (LEP).

The TNI evaluates whether the population of a census tract or county contains a higher percentage of a key demographic group compared to the service area. If a key demographic group comprises a greater percentage at the census tract or county level than it does across the service area, then that tract or county receives a sub-score of one (1) and is noted as an area demonstrating transit need. However, if the percentage of the demographic group is smaller at the tract/county level than it is for the overall service area, the tract or county receives a sub-score of zero (0). An example of this methodology is shown in Table 2 using example data from a census tract to compare it to the service area.

*Table 2: Example of Transit Need Index Scoring Methodology*

| | Census Tract A | Service Area | Sub-Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Households Without Vehicles** | 3% | 2% | 1 |
| **Population 65 Years or Older** | 12% | 18% | 0 |
| **Disabled Population** | 9% | 14% | 0 |
| **Non-White Population** | 58% | 32% | 1 |
| **Low-Income Population** | 1% | 2% | 0 |
| **Rural Housing Units** | 0% | 23% | 0 |
| **Limited English Proficiency** | 3% | 2% | 1 |
| | | **TNI Score** | **3** |

This process was conducted for each key demographic and then aggregated to create an overall score. These scores are categorized as follows:

*Table 3: Transit Need Index Scoring System*

| TNI Rating | Overall Score |
|---|---|
| **Low** | 0-2 |
| **Moderate** | 3-5 |
| **High** | 6-7 |

## 3.2 Transit Need Analysis

### 3.2.1 County

On the county-level, Morris County ranks as "high" transit need relative to the service area, while Bowie County ranks as "low," and all other counties rank as "moderate." Table 4 shows the counties' demographics. The indices which exceed the overall rates for ATCOG service area are highlighted in blue.

*Table 4: Key Groups by County (Compared to ATCOG Service Area)*

| | Bowie County | Cass County | Delta County | Franklin County | Hopkins County | Lamar County | Morris County | Red River County | Titus County | Service Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Households w/o Cars | 6.77% | 7.74% | 7.20% | 2.98% | 3.93% | 8.07% | 7.05% | 5.60% | 4.19% | 6.33% |
| Senior Population | 16.35% | 21.91% | 20.12% | 21.69% | 18.27% | 18.91% | 21.47% | 24.44% | 13.97% | 18.21% |
| Disabled Population | 10.56% | 17.33% | 16.84% | 16.38% | 14.37% | 17.16% | 18.86% | 17.31% | 11.54% | 14.04% |
| Non-White Population | 36.21% | 23.69% | 19.24% | 21.33% | 26.72% | 25.58% | 35.60% | 26.61% | 54.83% | 32.62% |
| Population in Poverty | 15.57% | 18.15% | 19.79% | 9.22% | 13.78% | 17.19% | 17.54% | 19.32% | 17.46% | 16.20% |
| Rural Housing Units | 33.69% | 75.02% | 100% | 75.08% | 58.61% | 44.99% | 80.53% | 76.60% | 53.17% | 53.41% |
| LEP Population | 1.17% | 0.45% | 0.30% | 1.94% | 2.56% | 1.17% | 1.29% | 0.14% | 8.51% | 2.10% |
| TNI Score | 2 (Low) | 5 (Mod.) | 5 (Mod.) | 3 (Mod.) | 4 (Mod.) | 4 (Mod.) | 6 (High) | 4 (Mod.) | 3 (Mod.) | NA |

**Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** demonstrates the spatial distribution of the TNI score in the service area.

*Figure 4: Transit Need Index (TNI) by County*
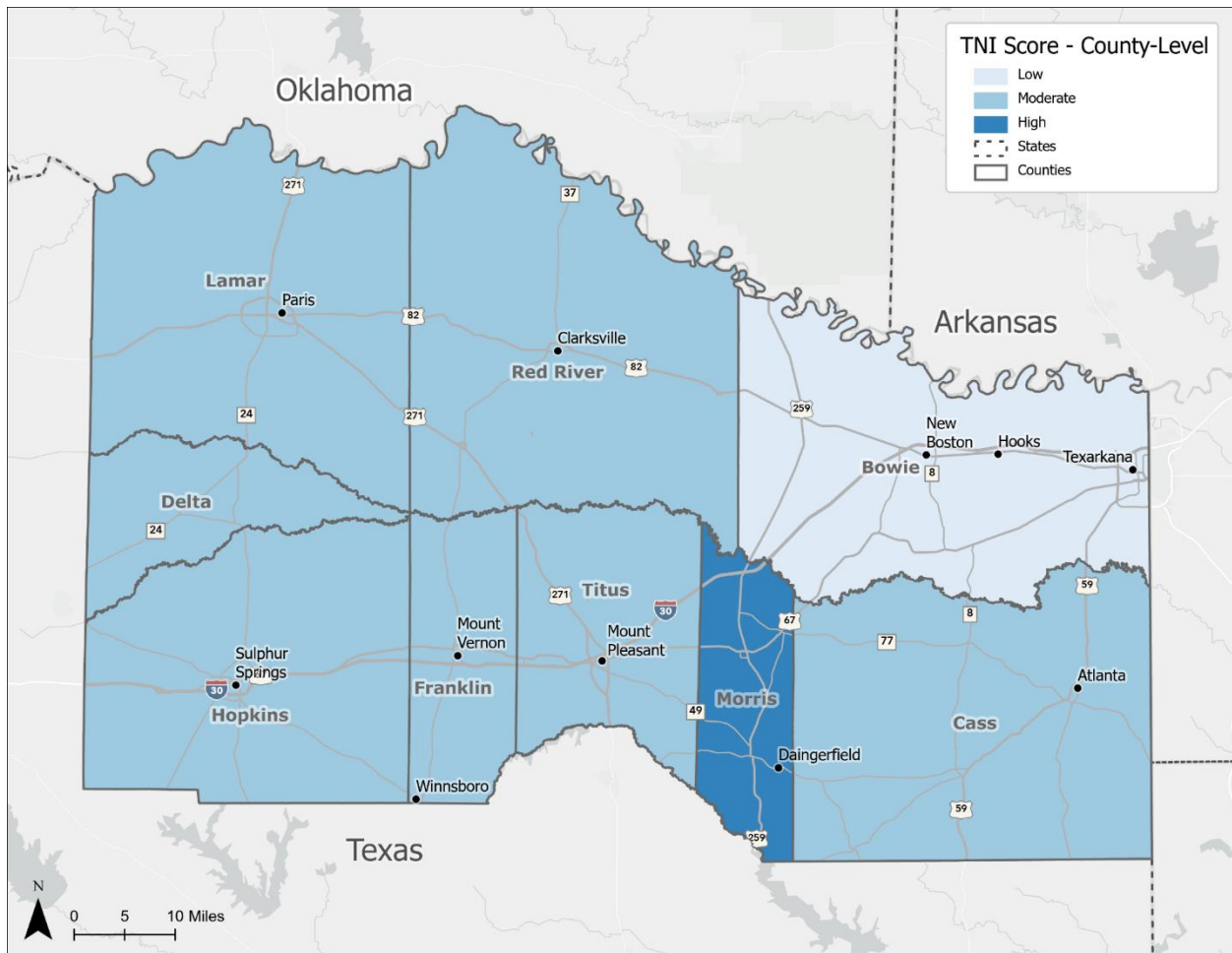
### 3.2.2 Census Tract

Analysis of transit need at the census tract level provides a more granular look at where transit is most needed within ATCOG service area. This will help direct additional support and resources to the areas with the most need.

*Figure 5* shows that the only census tract with a "high" transit need is in north Paris. Dark blue indicates that six (6) of the seven (7) demographics are greater than the service area. The City of Paris has higher percentages of each demographic group except for rural housing units. This area should be prioritized and monitored due to the considerable number of vulnerable populations.

*Figure 5: Transit Need Index (TNI) by Census Tracts*
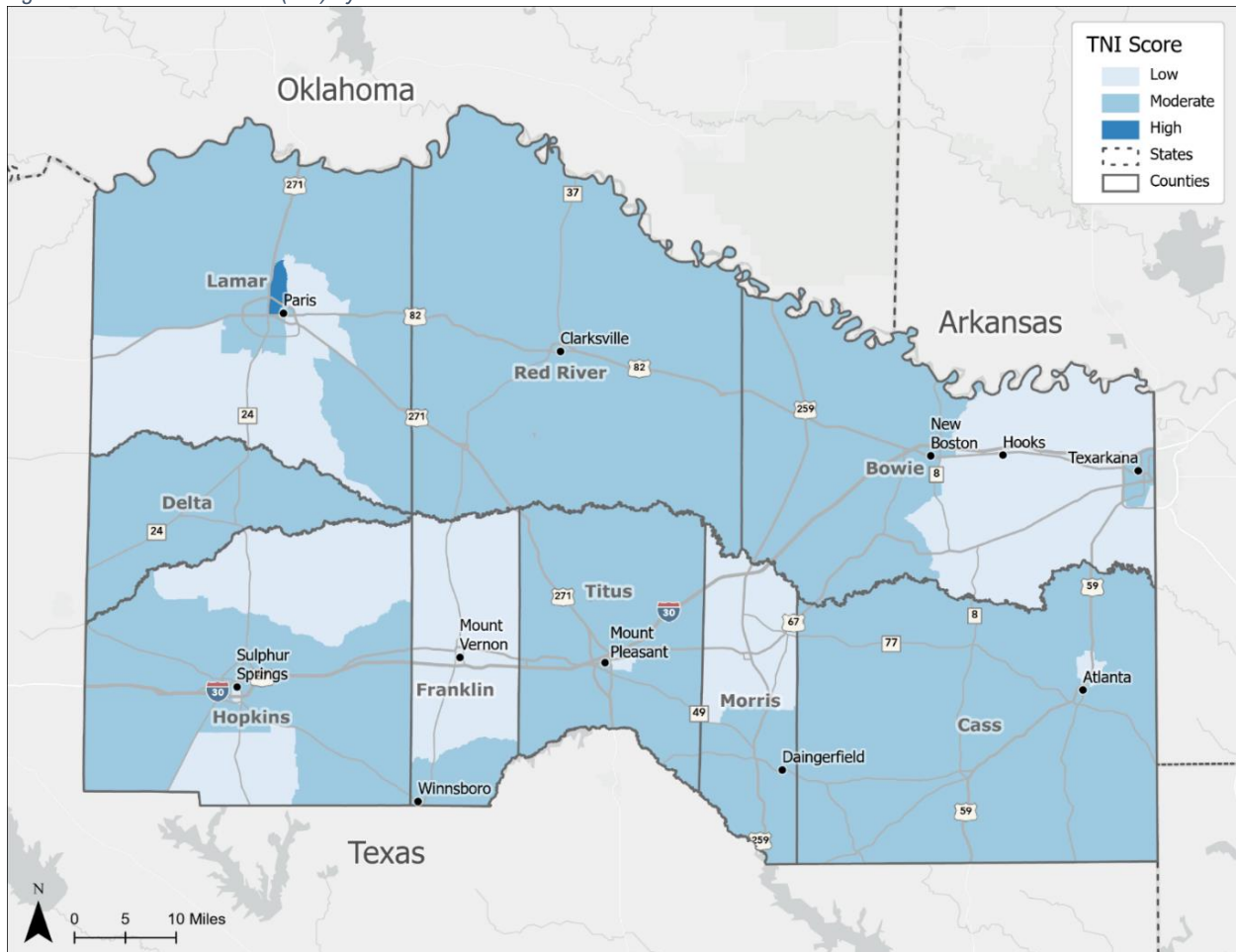
### 3.3 Key Findings

Like much of the US, northeast Texas is experiencing the impacts of an aging population. With this comes the difficulties of coordinating transportation resources for elderly and disabled populations, whose voices are often underrepresented in community conversations. Simultaneously, the state must also combat relatively high levels of poverty and the systematic barriers that prevent minority populations from accessing public transit.

The transit needs assessment presented in this report have guided transportation coordinators in further discussion of which populations and areas require additional support and resources at the census tract level. The results of this analysis will be compared against the distribution of transit providers and services in the following section to identify where the gap in service is within the service area.

**04**

# Assessment of Overlaps & Gaps in the Delivery of Transporation Services & Gap Analysis
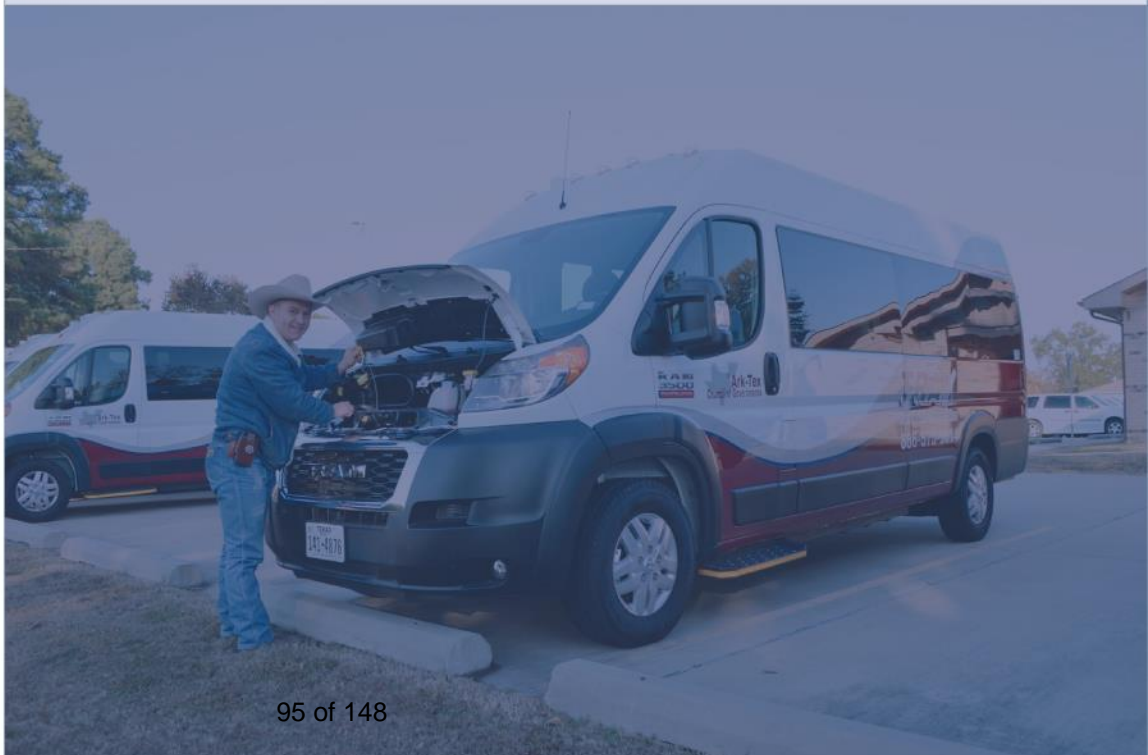
# 4 Assessment of Overlaps & Gaps in the Delivery of Transportation Services & Gap Analysis

The existing service providers were assessed for both the quality and level of service they offer. The riders' experience was quantified using quality-of-service indicators including service time accessibility, ease of use, ADA accessibility, and general access (Figure 6).

*Figure 6. Quality of Service Indicators*



| Service Time Accessibility | Ease of Use | ADA Accessibility | General Access |
|---|---|---|---|
| What days can I get a ride?<br><br>What times can I get a ride? | How can I book a ride?<br><br>What forms of payment are accepted? | What percent of vehicles available are ADA accessible? | Who is allowed to use this service?<br><br>Where is this service provided? |

Transit providers were assessed on a relative scale with respect to the quality of service in each indicator. Each provider could have earned a maximum of fifty (50) points. Transportation provider scores were averaged in counties with multiple providers.

Most counties in the service area rely solely on TRAX for transportation services, shown in light green in Figure 7. For this reason, the quality of service appears static across most counties due to the scarcity of service options in the region. Most transportation services available are equal across all counties with additional services in the cities of Paris and Texarkana (as shown in dark green). These places have a higher population density than neighboring areas and can support a fixed route bus service.

*Figure 7. Transportation Service Providers by Service Area*
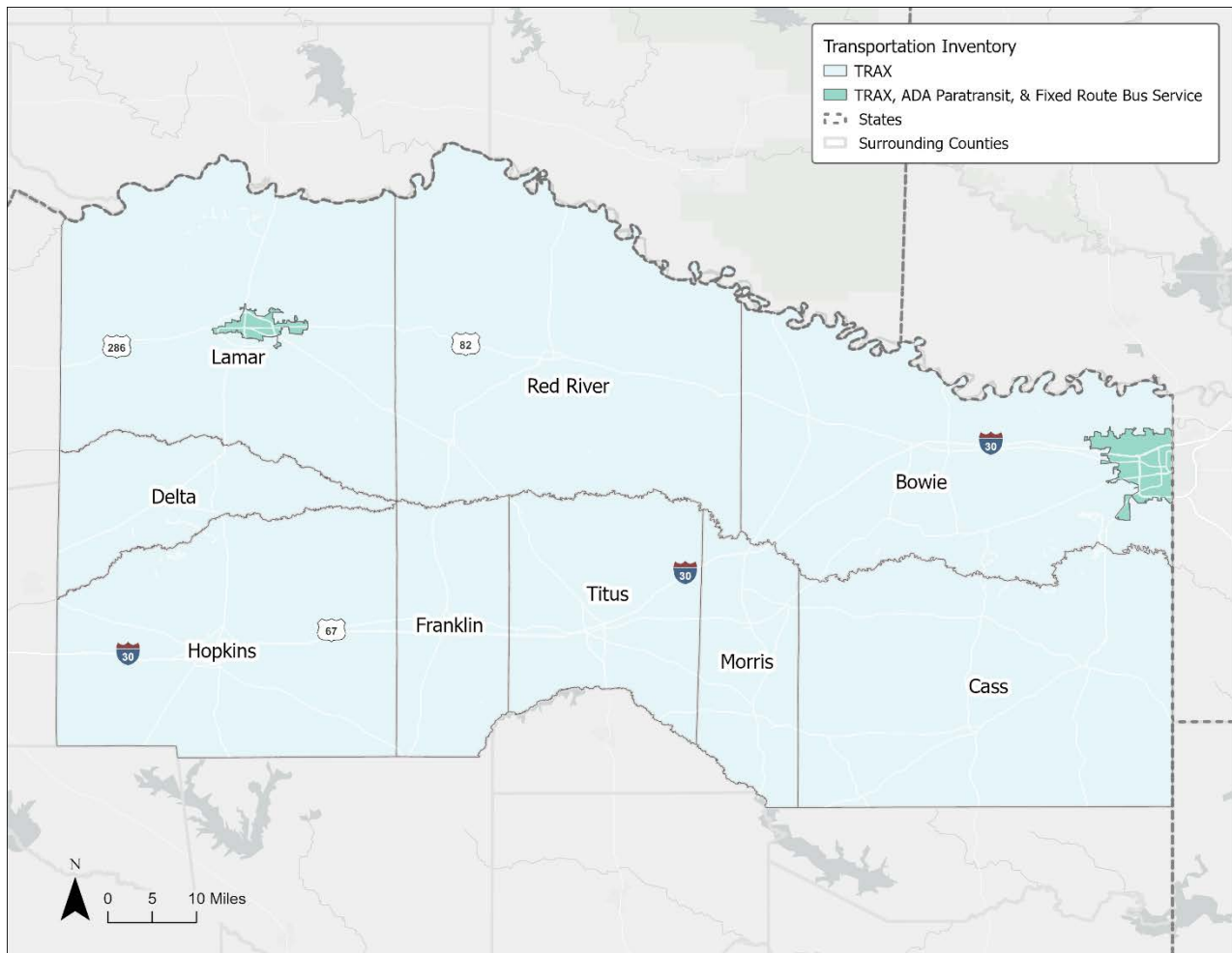
## 4.1 Service Time Accessibility

The Service Time Accessibility (STA) score evaluates the hours and days a transportation service is in operation. Each day and hour of operation may award a provider one (1) point, for a maximum of thirty-one (31) points.

Table 5 provides details on the days and hours of operation. Note that there are no transportation providers in the service area that operate for a full twenty-four (24) hours, seven (7) days a week. While the providers would have scored better if their services were available for more days and times, it is important to note that a twenty-four/seven (24/7) service may not be necessary in each county. As indicated by the TNI, some counties have lower transportation needs. The counties with greater need may experience a greater quality-of-service with broader hours of operation.

*Table 5: Provider Service Time Accessibility Scores*

| Transportation Service Provider | Days of Operation | Hours of Operation | STA Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| TRAX | Monday – Friday | 9 | 14 |
| Paris Metro | Monday – Friday | 12 | 17 |
| ADA Paratransit (Paris) | Monday – Friday | 12 | 17 |
| Texarkana Urban Transit District | Monday – Friday* | 13 | 18 |
| ADA Paratransit (Texarkana) | Monday – Friday | 13 | 18 |

*Saturday service was suspended on 10/23/2021 due to driver shortages. It is undetermined at this time whether Saturday service will return.*

Each Transportation Service Provider operates from Monday through Friday. TRAX operates between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Paris Metro and the ADA Paratransit services in Paris operate for twelve (12) hours each day, 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. The Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line) and the ADA Paratransit services in Texarkana operate for thirteen (13) hours each day, 5:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Figure 8 demonstrates the spatial distribution for service time accessibility. The cities of Paris and Texarkana both offer an ADA Paratransit service and a fixed route bus service, which is why they have a higher STA Score.

*Figure 8. Regional Service Time Accessibility*
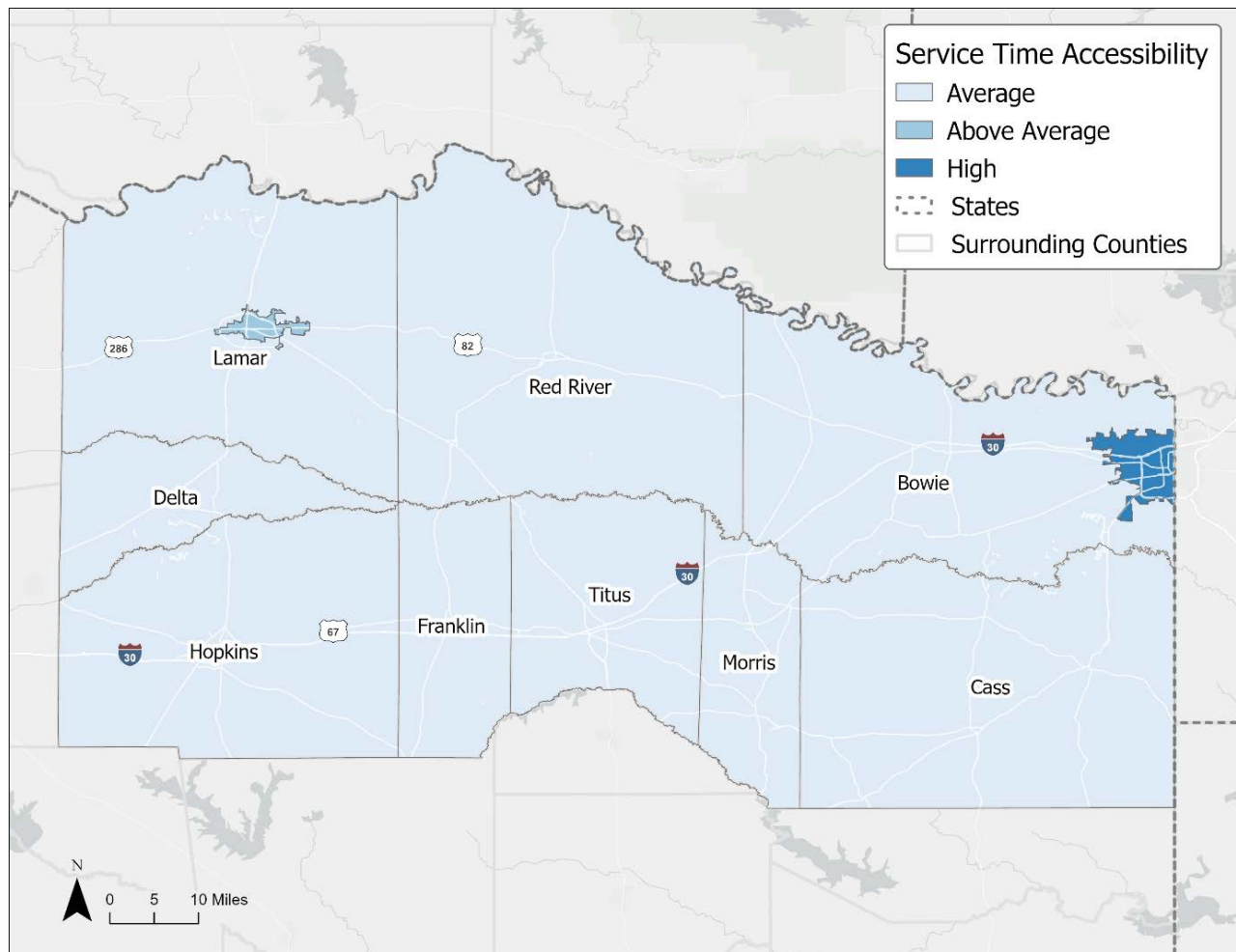
## 4.2 Ease of Use

The Ease-of-Use indicator considers the forms of payment accepted and methods available to book a ride. Most of the transportation service providers in the region accept a ticket or pass to utilize the services. This indicator considers the options available to purchase one of those tickets or passes (e.g., credit card, cash, personal check, etc.).

This indicator assumes that the more payment options a passenger must utilize a service, the easier it is for them to use. Transportation providers could have earned a maximum of seven (7) points if each of the following criteria was met as described in Table 6:

*Table 6: Ease of Use Indicators*

| Methods to Book Service | Payments Accepted |
|---|---|
| Call | Card (Credit/Debit) |
| Online/App | Cash |
| Fixed Stop/Subscription Service | Check |
| | Crypto/Digital Wallet |

Ease of use across the region is equal. Paris Metro and T-Line are the only fixed route services in the area. As the other transportation providers offer a demand-response service, potential riders call for rides and are permitted to pay in cash or via personal check (Table 7). In Texarkana, passengers may use a debit or credit card to purchase a transit pass

*Table 7: Provider Ease of Use Scores*

| Transportation Service Provider | Methods to Book Service | Payments Accepted | Ride Free* | Ease of Use Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TRAX | Call for Ride | Cash & Personal Check | Personal Care Attendants Children < 13 | 3 |
| Paris Metro | Call for Ride & Stops | Cash & Personal Check | Adults 60 or Older Children ≤ 5 Individuals w/Disabilities | 4 |
| Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line) | Call for Ride & Stops | Cash & Card (Credit/Debit) | Adults 60 or Older Children ≤ 5 Individuals w/Disabilities | 4 |
| ADA Paratransit (Paris) | Call for Ride & Subscription Service | Cash & Personal Check | Personal Care Attendants | 4 |
| ADA Paratransit (Texarkana) | Call for Ride & Subscription Service | Cash | Personal Care Attendants | 3 |

*This category is not included in the Ease of Use Scores, included for comparison's sake.*

Paris Metro and the ADA Paratransit services in Paris, TX outperformed the other transportation providers in this category because passengers have more flexibility in booking or utilizing the services. Passengers can either call for a ride, utilize a fixed stop or enlist in a subscription service. Similarly, the T-Line system offers the same flexibility for booking and utilizing its services (Figure 9).

*Figure 9. Regional Ease of Use Scores*
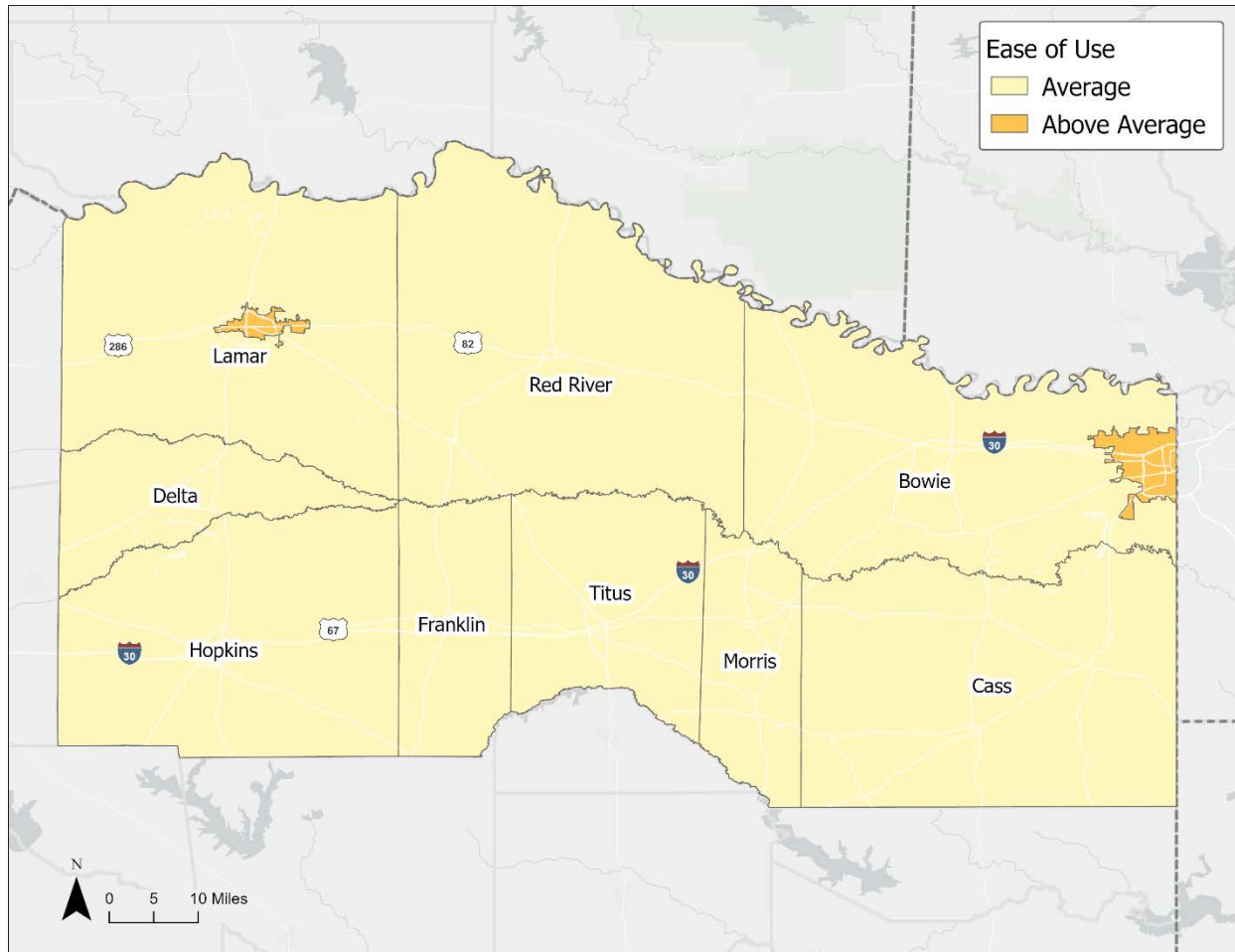


## 4.3 ADA Accessibility

This category awarded transportation service providers a maximum of three (3) points depending on the overall percent of ADA accessible vehicles in their fleet. Points were awarded based on the ranges in Table 8.

*Table 8: ADA Accessibility Indicators*

| Percent of Fleet ADA Accessible | Points Awarded |
|---|---|
| 0% | 0 |
| 1-25% | 1 |
| 26-75% | 2 |
| 76-100% | 3 |

ATCOG does not purchase vehicles if they are not ADA accessible; for this reason, all transportation service providers operating within the service area scored equally in this category (Figure 9).

*Figure 10. Regional ADA Accessibility Scores*
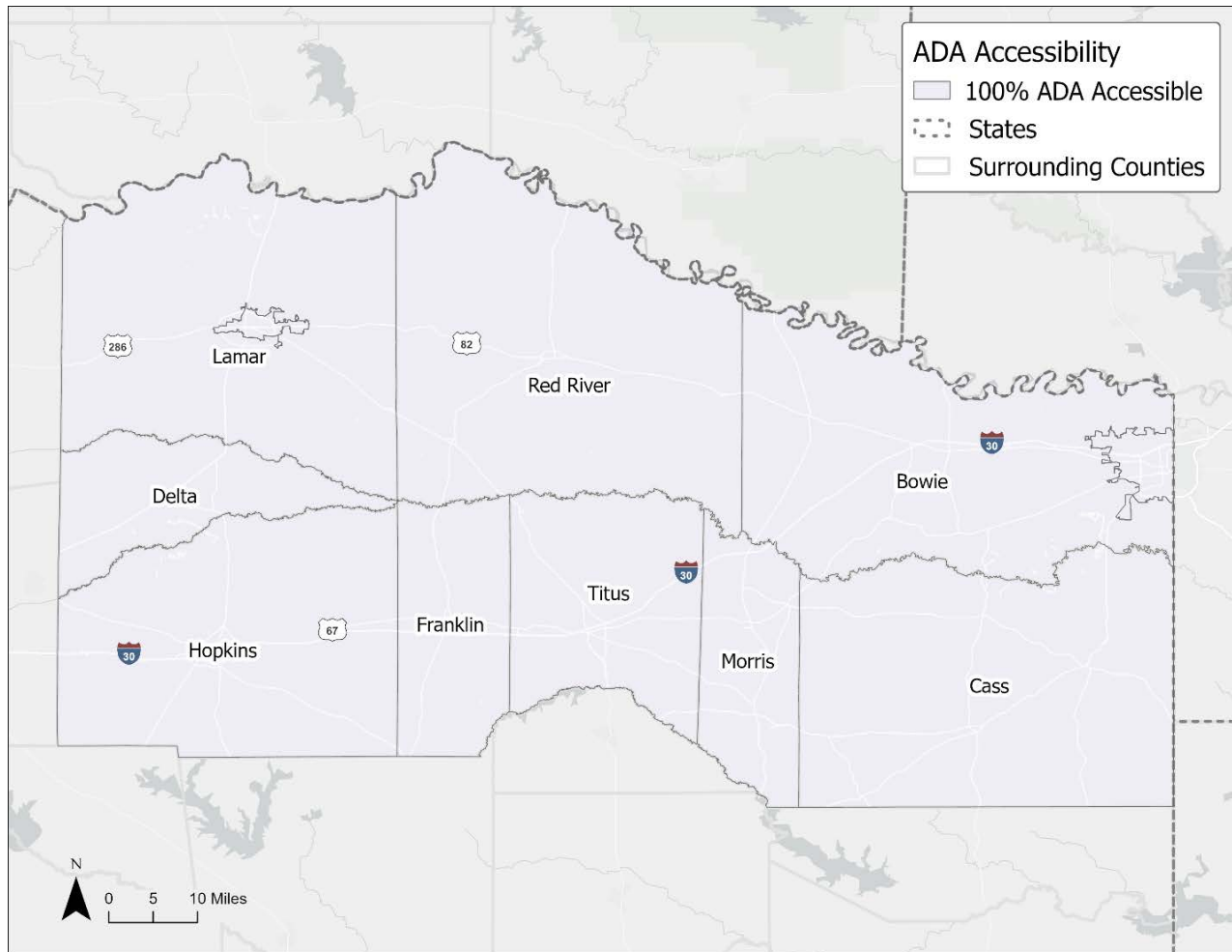


Notably, while the vehicles purchased by ATCOG are all ADA accessible, other organizations offering private or client-focused transportation services in the area provide a more varied experience. These other organizations range from medical centers to volunteer organizations with third-party transit services. These services are considered private because most of the organizations only provide transit as an ancillary service for clients without other means of transportation (Table 9).

*Table 9: Private or Client Focused Transportation Services*

| Organizations | Service Area | Rider Type |
|---|---|---|
| ArTex Taxi | Texarkana, TX | Public |
| Christus St. Michael Express Care | Hopkins County | Clients |
| Cornerstone Retirement Center | Texarkana Metro Area | Clients |
| Hands on Texarkana | Texarkana Metro Area | Clients |
| Haven Homes | Texarkana, TX | Clients |
| Lone Star Cab | Paris, TX | Public |
| Medical Transportation* | All ATCOG Counties | Clients |
| Northeast Texas Community College | Morris County & Titus County | Students |
| Opportunities, Inc. | Bowie County | Clients |
| Veterans Administration | Bowie County | Clients |
| Xpress NEMT, LLC | Paris, TX | Public (Medical) |

*\*Provided through the Texas Health and Human Services Medical Transportation Program.*

Most of these organizations will only transport passengers to their own facilities. For example, the Northeast Texas Community College transportation is limited to students and is typically used as transportation to sport events.

ATCOG residents who primarily rely on these organizations for transportation may perceive a lower quality of service in the area due to the varied circumstances vehicles and drivers may appear in. The previous Regionally Coordinated Public Transportation Plan (RCTP) cited multiple complaints from residents about drivers collecting them in unsuitable vehicles or with poor hygiene. Further, a number of the vehicles these organizations use are not ADA accessible. Given that many of these organizations use individual contractors to provide transportation services, this problem still exists at the time of this report writing.

## 4.4 General Access

The General Access indicator evaluates transportation service providers to determine where they operate and who is permitted to use the services. Providers were awarded one (1) point for each of the counties they service within the study area for a maximum score of nine (9) points if all counties are serviced (Table 10).

*Table 10: Transportation Service Provider General Access Scores*

| Transportation Service Provider | Service Area | Points Awarded |
|---|---|---|
| TRAX | All ATCOG Counties | 9 |
| Paris Metro | Paris | 1 |
| Texarkana Urban Transit District | Texarkana | 1 |
| ADA Paratransit | Paris | 1* |
| ADA Paratransit | Texarkana | 1* |

*\*Due to its restricted ridership, the ADA Paratransit service was scored but is not included in the regional general access scores.*

ADA Paratransit is a complementary service providing demand response, door-to-door transportation for eligible riders. The days and hours of service, service area, response time, fares, trip purposes, and capacity restraints for ADA Paratransit aligns with the criteria established by the FTA for ADA Paratransit operations. Eligible passengers may bring a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) on trips to assist with boarding, riding, or alighting a vehicle. Depending on schedule availability, other guests are also permitted to use the services.

Even without including the ADA Paratransit service, the cities of Paris and Texarkana received the highest scores for general access. As depicted in Figure 7 each county is serviced by TRAX, but the cities of Paris and Texarkana each have a fixed route bus service. The combination of TRAX and the fixed route services create an above average quality-of-service in these communities.

## 4.5 Transportation Service Cost

If fares are too high, they can become inaccessible to residents and negatively impact the passenger's perceived quality of service. A one-way adult ticket on public transportation in the region can vary from $0.50 to $2.50 depending on the service used. Ticket cost may also vary depending on the quantity purchased or the distance traveled.

When purchasing tickets for TRAX, passengers may choose to buy in bulk to receive free tickets. For every $20 spent, passengers receive five (5) free tickets. TRAX also charges a variable rate for rural transit passengers. Rural passengers are charged $1 for the first 10 miles and an additional $1, for each 10 miles, or portion thereof, after.

Each county has $1 transportation service provided by TRAX. The average cost increases in Paris and Texarkana due to the cost of ADA Paratransit services. In Paris, TX the ADA Paratransit services cost $1. In Texarkana, TX the ADA Paratransit services cost $2.50. Texarkana's average costs are the highest in the region (

Figure 11).

*Figure 11. Average Cost of a One-Way Ticket*
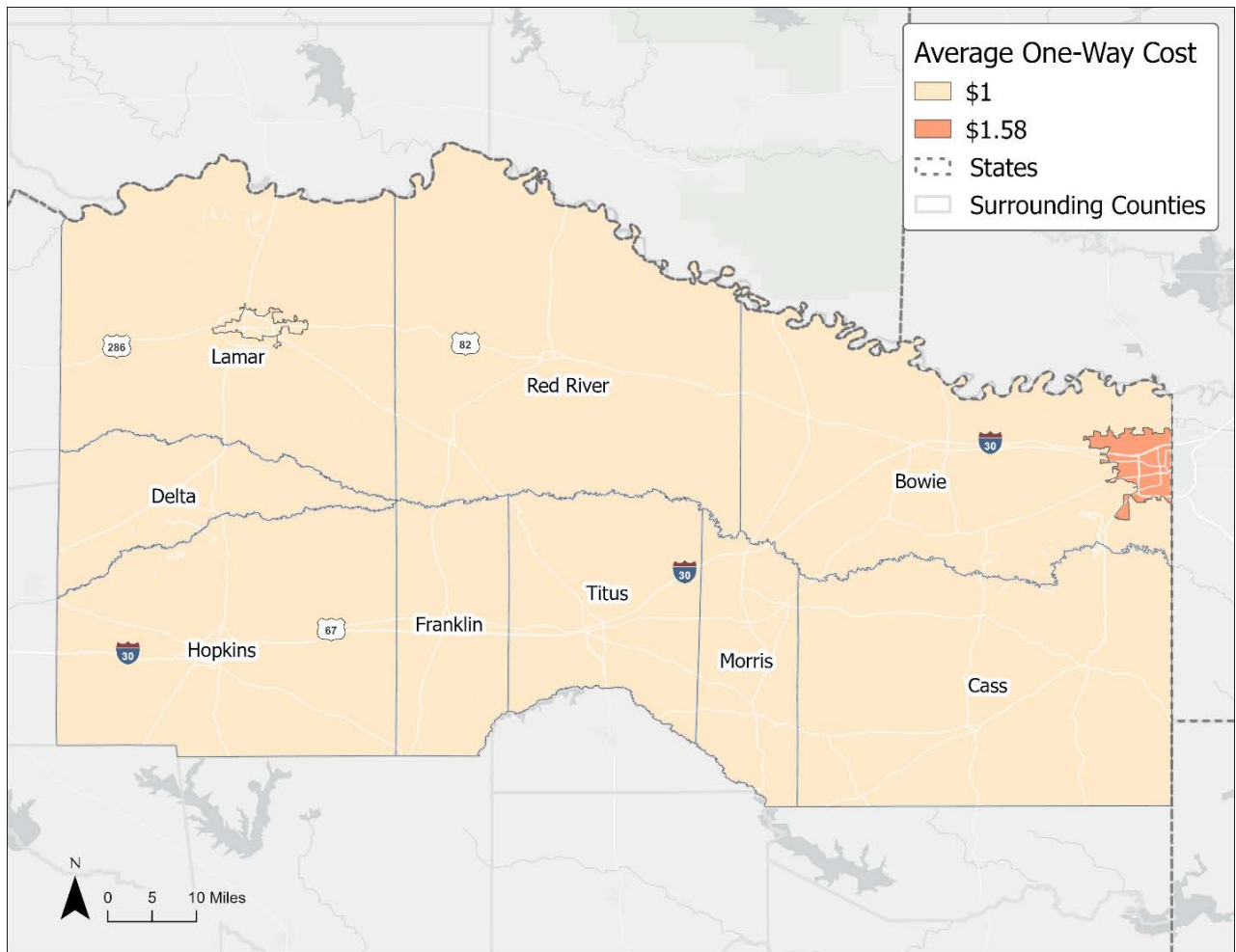
## 4.6 Comprehensive Quality of Service

The Comprehensive Quality of Service Score averages each indicator to quantify the experience of transit users as shown in Table 11. Transportation services in the region received an average score between twenty-four (24) and twenty-nine (29) points.

*Table 11: Cumulative Quality of Service Scores*

| Transportation Provider | Service Time Accessibility Score | ADA Accessibility Score | Ease of Use Score | General Access Score | Comprehensive Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TRAX | *14* | *3* | *3* | *9* | *29* |
| Paris Metro | *17* | *3* | *4* | *1* | *25* |
| T-Line Texarkana Urban Transit District | *18* | *3* | *4* | *1* | *26* |
| ADA Paratransit (Paris, TX) | *17* | *3* | *4* | *1* | *25* |
| ADA Paratransit (Texarkana) | *18* | *3* | *3* | *1* | *25* |
| Maximum Possible Score | **31** | **3** | **7** | **9** | **50** |

Most counties in the service area are serviced by TRAX, which ranks first in quality of service in the region. TRAX earned twenty-nine out of fifty (29/50) which is an average quality of service. TRAX has the lowest service time accessibility score. Most transportation providers in the region operate for at least twelve hours a day, whereas TRAX only operates for nine (9) hours a day.

Similarly, the ADA Paratransit service in Texarkana scored the lowest in ease of use. This service only accepts cash payments. If more forms of payment were accepted the service would be more user-friendly and would match the other providers in the region.

## 4.7 Gap Analysis

To identify where the gap in service is located, the Comprehensive Quality of Service Score was evaluated against the TNI as shown in Figure 12. This provides nuanced insights into the dynamics of transportation services in the region, specifically:

> Cass, Morris, and Delta County each demonstrate considerable transit need with limited access to transportation.
>
> Despite the services available in the Paris city limits, the rest of Lamar County also demonstrates a moderate transit need with limited access to transportation.
>
> Transit services are available in Texarkana but are limited in the rest of Bowie County.
>
> Transit need in Bowie and Titus County may be low but the surrounding counties, Cass, and Morris County, have significant need.

*Figure 12. Quality of Existing Transportation Services & Low Mobility Populations*
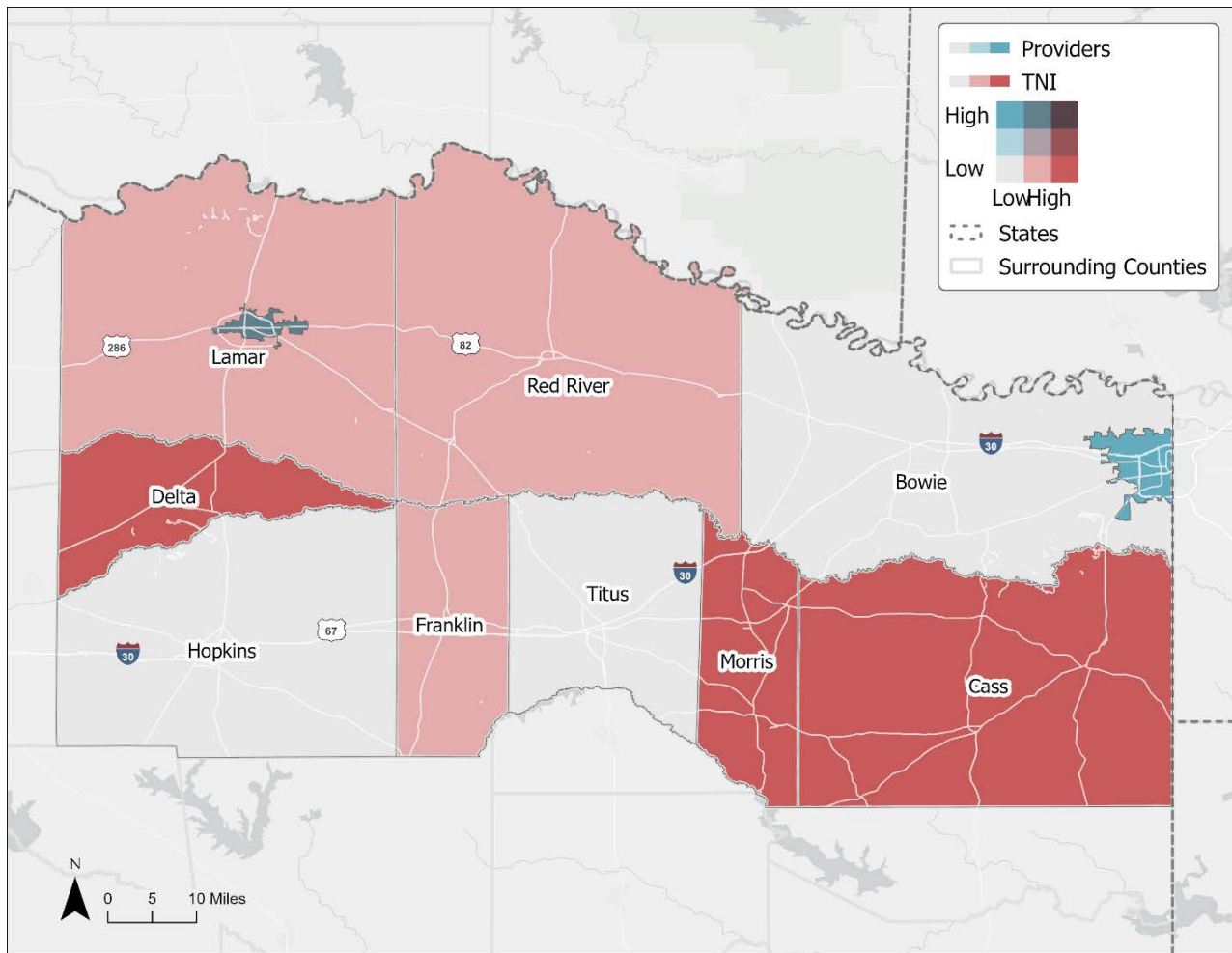


While Bowie, Hopkins, and Titus County show the greatest lack of transportation services, they also demonstrated the lowest need. The highest need remains in the following counties: Cass, Delta, and Morris.

### 4.7.1 Consequences of Gap in Service

A transportation service gap can deprive individuals of access to critical human services and opportunities. This is especially true for the elderly and people with disabilities. By addressing transportation service gaps, the region can optimize its services and increase quality of life for all residents, which is part of the overarching mission of this plan.

Feedback obtained through the public survey indicates 48 percent of respondents felt they could not reach their desired destination due to lack of transportation options Appendix F. Also, almost half the respondents indicated that they typically reach home after 5:00 p.m. Since 2016 ATCOG has been receiving comment cards requesting extended hours or days of service. These wishes have also been expressed at Steering Committee meetings.

If all providers offered more days and/or hours of operation, the public would have more exposure to service, and this would improve the overall service evaluation.

**05**

# Planning for Comprehensive Services

# 5 Planning For Comprehensive Services

ATCOG met with existing providers and regional stakeholders to discuss their needs for transportation, as well as how to work collectively toward setting organizational and regional goals for seamless, equal-access transportation services for the region's residents. As shown in the previous chapters, data development allowed ATCOG to document available services, current needs, gaps in service as well as indicate what happens when gaps in service generally occur.

To determine how programs currently work together in the region to help facilitate coordination of service, ATCOG identified the following methods used to integrate various programs. Stakeholders used these methods to frame the context of what is happening elsewhere in the region, as well as confirm activities and aspirations (vision, goals, objectives, priorities) which effect the provision of human services transportation and transportation services in the study area.

## 5.1 Existing Strategies and Initiatives

Working through existing strategies and initiatives focus on personal connections and continued coordination within human service agencies, non-profits, and other local partners.

Generally, since the development of the original 2012 plan, ATCOG has been successful implementing strategies to blend resources from agencies, FTA, and others to facilitate current levels of service and public information. As part of their ongoing commitment, ATCOG continues to develop strategies with input from the partners and stakeholders listed in this chapter, using facilitated meetings with stakeholders, and other partners organized around an action-item agenda.

One example of recent success was the purchase of new ADA accessible buses which improved service reliability and safety for both drivers and passengers regionally. Further, at the start of the COVID pandemic, ATCOG had the ADS (Ambulance Decontamination System) installed to clean all buses operating in the region in the delivery of FTA transportation services to keep them sanitized for the safety of our passengers and drivers.

A crucial component of public engagement and outreach within the planning region is the yearly public meeting for each county. This is an ongoing activity that has taken place for more than twenty (20) years where ATCOG visits each of the counties and promotes the services available to residents.

Similarly, TRAX and Paris Metro have been working with North Lamar High School since 2017 to provide travel instruction to disadvantaged students. The annual training has been successful. During the month of July, several students will ride the transportation service once a week on various routes to get a feel for how the service operates. Students and their parents gain familiarity with the service and have continued to use it because of this training.

More recent engagement strategies have taken place at local job and health fairs to promote transportation services to the public and establish relationships and potential partnerships. This approach relies on engaging with people where they are located. ATCOG has also been actively supporting COVID-response techniques and coordinating with local health departments to offer transportation for residents to receive their vaccine in 2021.[3]

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[3] Services were offered from April to August in 2021.

## 5.2 Local Non-Profit Partnerships

ATCOG has been successful in building relationships with local non-profits. These groups support the regional transit services available by providing funding or connecting residents with information regarding services. For instance, TRAX and Paris Metro have partnered with Lamar County United Way and United Way Greater Texarkana since 2016. TRAX attends several meetings per year to promote the region's services to the other nonprofit agencies. Together they brainstorm ways TRAX can assist other agencies to effectively manage mobility for the region. United Way Greater Texarkana has contributed a local match for funding towards TRAX services since 2016.

Horizon House Transitional Shelter provides supportive housing solutions services in Paris, TX. The organization comes in monthly to buy bus tickets for their clients, which allows them to go to school, job fairs, doctor appointments, counseling, etc.

Several groups, including the King's Daughters, the Lamar County Human Resources, and the Red Cross, collaborate with ATCOG to promote local transportation services. Working with local non-profits ensures that the most disadvantaged communities have access to transportation. A list of ATCOG's current local non-profit partners can be found in Appendix D.

## 5.3 Organizational Coordination Strategies

The Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis to encourage coordination and address regional transportation issues. Due to recent events with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Steering Committee last met on March 10, 2020. The current list of the Regional Steering Committee members invited to participate in plan development and approval of the various recommendations can be found in the acknowledgements at the front of the plan as well as in Appendix E.[4]

The service area's transportation programs are well-coordinated between TRAX and most of the human service transportation services. However, a persistent challenge the Committee faces is the relationship between TRAX and Texas Health and Human Services (THHS) Medical Transportation program for Medicaid patients.

TRAX receives calls regularly from Medicaid patients unhappy with the safety, security, and responsiveness of the transportation service provided through the THHS Medical Transportation program. Passengers report drivers showing up in pick-up trucks and other vehicles in poor conditions, drivers smoking or with drivers with poor hygiene.

A consistent challenge for Medicaid patients is the inability to schedule rides, especially if they are in a very rural area. This could be a result of the types of rides and services covered by Medicaid. This includes referrals to:

> Public transportation, like the city bus;
> A taxi or van service; or
> Commercial transit, such as a bus or plane, to go to another city for an appointment.
> Assistance provided through the THHS Medical Transportation program includes:
> Money for gas.

---

[4] TRAX has open communication with Opportunities Inc., which is funded by Medicaid and Area Agency on Aging (AAA)-ATCOG.

Meals and lodging for children and youth 20 and younger staying overnight to get covered health care services.

Payment for some out-of-state travel to neighboring states (Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico).

Services do not include scheduling for emergency or nonemergency transportation by ambulance. Therefore, the Medicaid transportation provider will refer patients to TRAX, which also has Paratransit curbside service for the disabled. This continues to strain limited transportation resources within the area due to the lack of regional coordination with THHS.

## 5.4 Service and Operating Strategies

There are a limited number of options when it comes to the provision of transit service in rural areas. In ATCOG service area there are three types of public transit of services, which are described below:

1. ***Demand-Response (county wide)*** - This is typically advance reservation service where customers call in the day before and schedule a ride. This is the most expensive service on a per trip basis and is also the least productive mode.
2. ***Fixed Schedule*** - This approach has scheduled times when the vehicle is available in a designated area. Each rural area is served on designated days and times, depending on-demand for service.
3. ***Fixed Route*** – This refers to services that operated on the same route servicing stops at scheduled times and days.

Given the service options available in the region, the Steering Committee has emphasized the following priorities related to transit users:

Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience,

Expand the availability of services to those who are under-served, and

Increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service.

## Ongoing Coordination with Regional Stakeholders/Stakeholder Interests

Existing strategies and initiatives focus on personal connections and continued coordination within human service agencies, non-profits, and other local partners.

A crucial component of public engagement and outreach within the planning region includes maintaining contact between the various stakeholders and partners in the region which play an active role in helping manage resources or completing referrals for transportation. Maintaining the current committee's meeting schedule is an ongoing activity that stakeholders have identified as critical to rebuilding relationships and understanding available resources.

The project's stakeholder committee, as outlined in Table 12, included the following groups:

***Stakeholders*** defined as groups who reach those in the location population that have needs for transportation services or act as local coordinating agents for funding and program administration.

***Partners*** defined as groups which may offer funding for transportation service or represent individuals with needs for transportation services. These groups could provide transportation service to individual program participants, may offer opportunities to purchase rides on existing services, or distribute information to groups under-represented in current outreach efforts or underserved by current transportation service options.

*Table 12: Project Steering Committee, ATCOG Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan*

| Steering Committee | Representing |
|---|---|
| Senior Adult Planning Committee - NETCC | Senior Services |
| The Randy Sam's Shelter | Homeless Services |
| Mission Texarkana | Homeless Services |
| Texarkana VA Outpatient Clinic (VA) | Veterans Services |
| Express Personnel | Workforce Services |
| UAMS-University of Arkansas Medical Sciences | Medical (caseworker) |
| United Way of Lamar County | Community Support |
| Ram Foundation | Community Support |
| Habitat for Humanity | Homeless Services |
| North Lamar ISD (High School Transition) | Transitional Support for Special Needs |
| The Kings Daughters | Medical/Food |
| Paris Junior College – Adult Education | Educational Services |
| UAMS – University of Arkansas Medical Services | Medical (D.O.N) |
| **Partners** | **Representing** |
| Texas Department of Transportation | Funding Partner |
| TWU- Texarkana Water Utilities UWGT | Information Distribution Partner |
| Texarkana Metropolitan MPO (TX/AR) | Funding/Grants Partner |
| Texas Workforce Center | Workforce Development |
| Texas Veteran's Commission | Veterans Services |
| North Lamar ISD | Children (Education) |

*Note, other groups contacted as part of ongoing outreach could be added to this group over time. Some of these groups added could include those who expressed an interest in learning more about transportation options offered in the region or provide a duplicity of connectivity to key demographic groups in the region. This list is likely to expand as ATCOG and the stakeholder committee continues forth on their outreach and education activities associated with the implementation actions associated with the plan.*

All the project stakeholder agencies, partners, and interested parties provide a variety of client-based transportation resources, such as the following:

FTA section 5307, 5310, and 5311 programs designed to fund transportation or provide mobility management assistance for the public or participating clients.

Health and human service agencies who deliver transportation services to clients directly using agency vehicles and drivers or purchase transportation services for clients by contract.

Workforce programs who offer funding for purchase of transportation to clientele in need of service, and/or individuals who could work in the delivery of transportation services as part of the services offered by FTA-funded programs and/or health and human service agencies.

Other groups which pay for client public transportation fare or reimbursement for personal transportation.

All the groups received invitations to participate in the stakeholder committee and provide input to plan development.

## 5.5 Recommended Coordination Strategies

The Steering Committee believes that the best way to coordinate human service transportation is by providing quality and effective public transit. Most of the coordination effort over the course of the plan focuses on activities that the region can control:

> Continue to seek small scale coordination efforts,

> Further coordinate TRAX services and reduce duplication of effort,

> Continue coordination opportunities with intercity bus services,

> Seek individual agreements with the private sector,

> Foster opportunities to coordinate with providers in adjacent service areas, and

> Grow staff knowledge to assist transit stakeholders interested in building transit capacity in the region to participate and fully utilize applicable TxDOT Public Transportation Division programs.

As ATCOG continues to rebuild its relationships and presence within the region, it is recommended that the Steering Committee continue working with ATCOG staff to identify and engage several groups in the discussions related to meeting transportation needs. These groups, as identified in the acknowledgements, previous table, and Appendix E include representatives from all transit service providers, potential funding agencies, private sector transit providers, including other human and social service agencies, representing seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, individuals with low income, job seekers (workforce training), and children. Their role in plan development and implementation, as previously described meets the first test to coordinate successfully: building a comprehensive network of interested parties. It also begins to address one of the greatest barriers to coordination in the region: infrequent communication and engagement. During the next five years, ATCOG aims to expand and facilitate frequent and meaningful engagement between Steering Committee members and regional transportation providers.

To facilitate these coordination strategies, the Regional Steering Committee meeting will be held quarterly and will include discussions of and decision-making on proposed transit projects. Members will be expected to guide and comment on project findings and recommendations. All meeting notices will be posted, and stakeholder surveys will be conducted for additional input. The Regional Steering Committee meetings will be considered an official meeting under the Texas Open Meeting Act. This will require the Committee to record official minutes and submit them to TxDOT. Summaries of subcommittee meeting discussions, activities, and attendance will be circulated following every meeting.

In addition to coordinating with the Regional Steering Committee and local partners, ATCOG is dedicated to building staff capacities to improve participation in TxDOT programs. This will include active engagement in TxDOT Public Transportation programs, which are developed to support rural transportation agencies. By building this knowledge base, ATCOG will be better equipped to participate and meet federal requirements necessary to access these program resources.[5]

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[5] TxDOT Public Transportation programs include Planning Assistance (49 U.S.C. 5304), Rural Transit Assistance Program (49 U.S.C. 5311(b)(3)), Rural Discretionary (49 U.S.C. 3511), Intercity Bus (49 U.S.C. 5311 (f)), and Urban Fleet Replacement Flexed Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (49 U.S.C. § 5307).

**06**

# Integrated Planning Process

# 6 Integrated Planning Process

Creating an integrated planning process emphasizes the need to align the RCTP's goals and strategies with statewide planning efforts as well as health and human services planning across Texas. This section reviews relevant plans and identifies common goals and strategies. Stakeholders used these plans to frame the context of what is happening elsewhere in the region, as well as confirm activities and aspirations (vision, goals, objectives, priorities) which effect the provision of human services transportation and transportation services in the study area. The focus of such review was to identify plans adopted since the development of the previous plan, as well as resource documents which stakeholders draw from as part of their effort to effectuate coordination of resources. Reviewing current planning efforts also assures that the plan's vision, mission, goals, objectives, and analysis outcomes align with the complementary efforts happing in the region.

## *6.1 Statewide Planning*

### 6.1.1 TxDOT Public Transportation Programs

The Texas Department of Transportation's Public Transportation Division (PTN) manages state and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) public transportation grants. Its main objective is to provide a safe, reliable network of transportation options for people who use alternatives to driving alone. It is also responsible for providing financial, technical and coordination assistance to the state's rural and urban public transit providers. TxDOT releases a regular call for projects in the following programs:

- Planning Assistance (49 U.S.C. 5304)
- Rural Transit Assistance Program (49 U.S.C. 5311(b)(3))
- Rural Discretionary (49 U.S.C. 3511)
- Intercity Bus (49 U.S.C. 5311 (f))
- Urban Fleet Replacement Flexed Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (49 U.S.C. § 5307)

These projects can provide assistance needed by rural transit agencies, such as ATCOG, to help build agency and transit provider capacity, support this plan's recommendations, and ensure successful service delivery within their regions.


### 6.1.2 TxDOT Strategic Plan 2021-2025

The Texas Transportation Commission adopted the TxDOT 2021-2025 Strategic Plan in May 2020. The plan includes the mission, vision, goals, objectives, and "budgetary structure" that will guide transportation development in Texas over the next five years. Additionally, the plan provides an implementation plan and performance measures to ensure the goals of the plan are achieved. The seven (7) strategic goals for the TxDOT 2021-2025 Strategic Plan include:

- Strategic Goal 1: Promote Safety
- Strategic Goal 2: Deliver the Right Projects
- Strategic Goal 3: Focus on the Customer
- Strategic Goal 4: Foster Stewardship
- Strategic Goal 5: Optimize System Performance
- Strategic Goal 6: Preserve our Assets
- Strategic Goal 7: Value our Employees

### 6.1.3 Texas Transportation Plan (TTP) 2050

The Texas Transportation Commission adopted the Texas Transportation Plan (TTP) 2050 in 2020 to serve as TxDOT's long-range, performance-based transportation plan (LRTP). The TTP addresses the statewide planning requirements under the current federal surface transportation act – Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST Act), and Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 16.

The TTP 2050 was developed through a collaborative process of metropolitan planning organizations and communities, as well as city, county, transit, stakeholder, and private company officials. The TTP 2050 guides planning and programming decisions for the development, management, and operation of the statewide, multimodal transportation system in Texas over the next 30 years. The plan lists the following goals which appear consistent with the objectives of human services transportation coordination:

1. Optimize System Performance: Movement of People and Goods
    1. Enable reliable travel times
    2. Increase travel options/connections
    3. Increase access to jobs, services, and activity centers
    4. Leverage transportation assets to support economic growth and vitality
2. Focus on the Customer: Communicate Effectively
    1. Communicate effectively with the public and partners
    2. Be accountable and transparent in decision-making
    3. Encourage feedback from the public and stakeholders
    4. Improve communication and coordination with all planning partners and stakeholders
3. Foster Stewardship: Protect and Preserve the Human and Natural Environment
    1. Enhance communities' quality of life through infrastructure and design choices
    2. Design a resilient and future-focused transportation system

### 6.1.4 Unified Transportation Program (UTP)

The 2022 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) identifies planned investments and infrastructure improvements over the next 10 years that address TxDOT's strategic goals (as listed above). The UTP is a mid-range transportation plan that links statewide and rural transportation plans to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other short-term investment programs. Specifically, the UTP lists projects and programs planned for construction and/or development within the first 10 years of the Texas Transportation Plan (TTP) 2050.

Project development includes activities such as preliminary engineering work, environmental analysis, and right-of-way acquisition and design. It is a critical tool in guiding transportation project development within the long-term planning context. In addition, it serves as a communication tool for stakeholders and the public in understanding the project development commitments TxDOT is making.

The overall goals of the 2022 UTP include the following:

1. Promote safety; reduce crashes and fatalities;
2. Preserve our assets; maintain and preserve transportation system conditions; and
3. Optimize system performance enhance mobility, reliability, and connectivity, and mitigate congestion.

### 6.1.5 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the programming document for prioritizing and scheduling projects. The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects are included in the STIP, and other road safety projects also may be included utilizing state funds. While the STIP does not contain goals and performance measures, it is based on a set of needs set out in the TTP, which are mentioned in the description above.

### 6.1.6 Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2017-2022

The Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) creates a process for strategically investing in roadways and programs that will increase the safety of transportation infrastructure in the state of Texas and make progress towards the vision of zero fatalities (Vision Zero). Through processes of stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and priority setting, this plan was able to identify areas of concern:

1. Distracted driving
2. Impaired driving
3. Intersection safety
4. Older road users
5. Pedestrian safety
6. Roadway and lane departures
7. Speeding

The plan then sets realistic performance targets (based on data analysis) and aspirational targets to help improve these areas of concern and make progress towards Vision Zero. Additionally, statewide efforts are reviewed to create a uniform effort that connects and aligns goals from different planning partners throughout the state.

### 6.1.7 Texas Transportation Asset Management Plan, 2019-2023

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires all states to develop a Transportation Asset Management (TAM) Plan. The purpose of developing TxDOT's group TAM Plan is to assist the department in achieving and maintaining a state of good repair (SGR) for all public transportation assets, setting standards and performance targets for managing and maintaining both the state's bridge and pavement systems as well as vehicle assets. The state of Texas is required to meet the following requirements in accordance with the MAP-21 Act and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act):

1. Description of National Highway System (NHS) pavement and bridge assets inventory
2. Statement of the asset management objectives and performance measures
3. Performance gap identification
4. Life cycle planning (LCP)
5. Risk management analysis
6. Financial plan for a minimum of 10 years
7. Investment strategies

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the entity responsible for publishing the TAM Plan. TxDOT must abide by or build upon the standards and performance measures set forth by FHWA, which then fall upon the local transit agencies throughout Texas to use during the adoption of their agency specific TAM Plans and other transportation plans. The latest Texas TAM Plan was adopted in 2019, its planning process resulted in the following seven priorities:

1. Deliver the right projects,
2. Focus on the customer,
3. Foster Stewardship,
4. Optimize system performance,
5. Preserve our assets,
6. Promote safety, and
7. Value our employees.

## *6.2 Regional Planning*

### 6.2.1 Texarkana 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for coordinating transportation planning within the Texarkana MPO metropolitan boundary area. This plan is revised every five years to reflect current transportation and land use conditions/trends. Each update to the plan gives the Texarkana MPO the opportunity to extend the forecast period to keep the planning horizon at least 20 years.

The plan consisted of public and stakeholder meetings, technical data analysis, existing plans plan review, and evaluated potential projects to meet community goals and performance-based criteria. The resulting product is a comprehensive model for the future of the transportation system that considers all modes and the needs of all users. The following goals were established for this plan:

1. **Safety:** Improve safety for all who travel in the region.
2. **Operations & Maintenance:** Maintain the current transportation system in a state of good repair and maximize functionality.
3. **Mobility:** Improve the ability for travelers to reach destinations quickly and efficiently.
4. **Accessibility & Travel Choice:** Provide a variety of reliable transportation options that are equitable and context sensitive.
5. **Sustainability:** Enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
6. **Economic Vitality:** Expand economic opportunities and strengthen the regional freight network.
7. **Quality of Life:** Implement plans, programs, and projects that contribute to the overall goals and objectives defined in the 2045 MTP to ensure an enhanced quality of life in the Texarkana region.

### 6.2.2 Texarkana Regional Active Transportation Master Plan (TRATMP)

The Texarkana Regional Active Transportation Master Plan (TRATMP), which defines a comprehensive vision for active transportation facilities, was prepared by the MPO in 2018. This document is intended to serve as a roadmap for enhancing bike and pedestrian access and mobility in the region. This plan directs investment decisions in the Texarkana MPO planning region by assessing existing conditions and needs, creating design principles, examining public outreach initiatives, selecting projects, and identifying financing sources for implementation.

Based on the following project goals, the TRATMP provides a regional vision for collaboration between the MPO and cities within the MPO Study Area for bikers and pedestrians:

1. Create an all ages and abilities network,
2. Provide safe routes to school for children,

3.  Maintain and repair sidewalks to improve overall sidewalk conditions,
4.  Build complete network of on road bike lanes,
5.  Provide access to transit stops using sidewalks and bike facilities,
6.  Create a connected network of bicycle/pedestrian paths and trails,
7.  Fill in sidewalk gaps to create a complete sidewalk network,
8.  Promote public health through active transportation,
9.  Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety along roadways,
10. Develop a designated regional bicycle route system,
11. Create bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities to boost economic activity,
12. Create complete streets policies that are ready for community adoption, and
13. Educate the community on the benefit of active transportation investments.

Overall, the goal of this plan is to improve mobility and public health; reduce environmental pollution; encourages higher density; and increases equity for low income or mobility impaired individuals.

## 6.3 Health and Human Services Planning

### 6.3.1 Health and Human Services System Coordinated Strategic Plan for 2021-2025

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) system serves millions of Texans every month. Comprised of two agencies—The Health and Human Service Commission (HHSC) and The Department of State Health Services (DSHS)— the HHS system helps families receive the food, housing, medical care, and mental health care they need. Services for older adults, disaster relief, and fighting human trafficking also fall underneath the HHS system umbrella. Overall, the programs operated through HHS accounted for $38 billion dollars of spending in fiscal year 2020. The mission of the HHS system is to "[improve] the health, safety, and well-being of Texans with good stewardship of public resources," and the strategic plan outlines the following goals to achieve that mission:

**Goal 1**: Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Process Improvement
**Goal 2**: Protecting Vulnerable Texans
**Goal 3**: Improving the Health and Well-Being of Texans
**Goal 4**: Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability
**Goal 5**: Customer Service and Dynamic Relationships

### 6.3.2 State Plan for Independent Living 2021-2023

The State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) is a strategic plan that will guide the delivery of Independent Living services in Texas over the next three (3) years. The mission of the SPIL is "to empower Texans with disabilities to live as independently as they choose." This mission stems directly from Title VII, Chapter 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the Act), which established the Independent Living Services and Centers for Independent Living programs. The purpose is of this law included the following ideals:

1.  Promote the independent living philosophy, based on consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access and individual and systems advocacy;
2.  Maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with significant disabilities; and
3.  Promote the integration and full inclusion of individuals with significant disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

The goals for the strategic, three-year plan echo the ideals of Title VII:

**Goal 1** Advocacy: Texans with disabilities receive necessary supports and services to become more independent.

**Goal 2** Community Integration: Individuals with disabilities receive the community integration and community-based living supports needed to be more independent.

**Goal 3** Network Capacity and Sustainability: The Independent Living Network operates effectively, is adequately funded, and has the capacity to expand.

## 6.4 Common Goals and Strategies

ATCOG shares several of the statewide, regional, and health and human services planning goals and objectives. Many plans across these levels aim to increase connectivity in the region, enable more reliable travel times, and increase access to jobs, services, and activity centers across the region. Specifically, the following themes expressed throughout these plans align with this plan's identified goals:

1. Improve communication and coordination with all planning partners and stakeholders.
2. Encourage public feedback and participation.
3. Optimize system performance, enhance mobility, reliability, and connectivity.
4. Identify performance gaps within the transportation and coordination systems.
5. Prioritize vulnerable and historically disenfranchised groups.

**07**

# Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

# 7 Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

## 7.1 Regional Vision

The vision for ATCOG's coordinated transportation plan is to provide the public the ability to move throughout the region safely, reliably, efficiently, and affordably by using a seamless network of public and private facilities and services that are easy to comprehend, responsive to individual travel needs and easy to access.

This work builds on previous efforts and emphasizes a clear customer orientation for planning and operations. It is focused on the quality of the travel experience from a customer's perspective. The regional vision for transportation is based on a mutual recognition that some essential policies, functions, and actions must be formulated and carried out on a regional scale to reflect localized user needs.

## 7.2 Mission Statement

***"Improve and expand travel options and access to opportunity for all Texans to encourage economic growth and enhance their quality of life."***

An integral component of this mission is understanding how to effectively "manage mobility" for the region. Improving and expanding travel in a region with scarce resources requires concerted effort to manage and supply transportation to those in need. The concept of "mobility management" is the basis for this plan. It invites and legitimizes the broadest possible range of actions to meet mobility needs now and in the future. In simple terms, managing mobility promotes:

1. The consideration of all transportation needs in the region;
2. The contributions that can be made to meeting those needs from all modes and providers, public and private, in partnership; and
3. Regional planning with locally focused customer-based service design and delivery of human services.

To achieve this mission, the goals for the region are described in the following section with key associated objectives.

## 7.3 Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are intended to encourage and support progress toward seamless travel throughout the region by specifically enhancing coordination of public transit. Each goal outlined below is followed by an operable objective that will lead us to success (Table 13). These goals and objectives were developed using public and stakeholder feedback on existing transportation services in the region.

*Table 13: 2022 Goals and Objectives*

| Goals | Objectives |
|---|---|
| **Goal 1:** Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience. | **Objective 1A:** Utilize trip data to improve transit system performance and reliability. |
| | **Objective 1B:** Survey regional customers on their experiences regularly to determine user attitudes toward service provided and devise improvement strategies. |
| | **Objective 1C:** Educate riders, stakeholders, partners, and others on how to utilize available transit services and resources effectively. |
| **Goal 2:** Expand the availability of services to those who are underserved. | **Objective 2A:** Utilize regional customer survey data to devise improvement strategies for system. |
| | **Objective 2B:** Utilize inventory and hours of service data to expand service available to underserved citizens in the region. |
| **Goal 3:** Increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. | **Objective 3A:** Implement coordination strategies to increase cost effectiveness and efficiency of overall transportation system |
| | **Objective 3B:** Make capital equipment purchases and planning decisions that allow for cost efficiency and an improved rider experience |
| **Goal 4:** Establish and sustain communications and decision-making mechanisms among sponsors and stakeholders. | **Objective 4A:** Maintain the continuity of the Steering Committee by assigning roles and responsibilities as part of the initial meeting. |
| | **Objective 4B:** Educate policymakers on proposed actions and investments. |
| | **Objective 4C:** Broaden the base of community and regional stakeholders and partners expressing their support for coordinated transportation. |

**08**

# Sustain Planning &
# Implement Plan

# 8 Sustain Planning & Implement Plan

ATCOG has experienced significant organizational changes in the past three years, from employee turnover to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Over the next five years, ATCOG will prioritize rebuilding the organization's presence in the region and establishing partnerships within the community. ATCOG is well-positioned to begin this "rebuilding" phase with their current staff and expertise in transportation services and coordination.

ATCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1968. They are a regional council of governments covering over 6,400 square miles and serving nine northeast Texas counties Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River and Titus Counties in Texas and Miller County in Arkansas. ATCOG has staff in the following departments and programs Executive, Administration, Finance, Information Technology (IT), Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Criminal Justice, Economic Development, Environmental, Housing, Transportation, and Public Safety (which operates both 9-1-1 and Homeland Security).

ATCOG has two full-time transportation staff, including two transportation planners, one in Texarkana and another in Paris, dedicated to supporting the plan's implementation. They receive technical support from a combination of on-site support staff which handle administrative tasks. ATCOG will engage consultants as needed to work through specific work elements, including plan updates and plan implementation activities, where augmentation of their technical expertise is required.

ATCOG maintains a transportation program to support delivery of public transit services in the region. ATCOG's Rural Transit District (TRAX) provides low-cost demand-response transportation for residents of Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River and Titus counties from their homes or other designated pick-up points to meet transportation needs. This rural transportation network does not provide intercity transportation within Nash, Texarkana, or Wake Village.

ATCOG's Rural Transit District is funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 program.

ATCOG uses an annual budgeting process, dedicating funds generated through grants, revenues from member governments or other agencies, to help finance the annual work plan. This work plan, once presented to their board of directors, is approved for implementation with expectation that as part of the agency budget an annual report will document outcomes of activities undertaken.

As a regional agency, ATCOG provides a neutral forum for regional stakeholders and partners (identified in Table 12) to be part of the regional coordination committee. In this forum, they will provide input on evaluating activities outlined in this plan, as well as to discuss and set plan priorities. This group will also review data and provide feedback, including identifying where other partners are needed to expand available information and resources used as part of the decision-making process.

Each of regional stakeholders helps to provide ATCOG with direct connection to various constituencies across the region. This allows them to reach these groups with a combination of materials including surveys and information on available transit services. Stakeholders also assist ATCOG by offering their support, both written or through in-kind support to grant projects, outreach, and the like.

Key elements of implementation will be guided by the goals and objectives outlined in the previous chapter. The strategies that will be used to achieve these goals emphasize broadening the regions coordination at an organizational level, prioritizing public engagement and stakeholder participation, and by establishing a practical workplan. Also included is a detailed implementation plan that prioritizes strategies for each objective and outlines resources needed to meet the goals identified in the previous section.

## Transportation Planning Agencies

There are three primary agencies operating in the ATCOG region which the agency draws on regularly to provide funding and technical support as part of the plan implementation process.

### State – Texas Department of Transportation

The TxDOT Public Transportation Division[6] works with others to provide a safe, reliable network of transportation options for people who use alternatives to driving alone. The division provides financial, technical, and coordination assistance to the state's rural and urban public transit providers, as well as to TxDOT's Bicycle/Pedestrian and State Safety Oversight programs.

### Urbanized Area – Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization

The **Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** is the administrative agency for the Texarkana Urban Transportation Study (TUTS). The MPO study area is comprised of nearly 195 square miles in northeast Texas and southwest Arkansas. The purpose of the MPO is to provide local citizens and elected officials the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process.

The Texarkana MPO consists of a Policy Committee, a Technical Committee, a Citizens' Advisory Committee, and the MPO Staff. The MPO serves the cities of Texarkana, Nash, and Wake Village, and portions of Miller and Bowie Counties and is responsible for continuous, comprehensive, and coordinated transportation planning within the MPO Study Area.

The three main products of Texarkana MPO are the long-range transportation plan (20+ years), officially known as the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The first two documents list the planned (MTP) and the approved (TIP) allocations of federal funds while the UPWP, identifies planning efforts to be undertaken during a two-year period.

### Urbanized Area - Texarkana Transit District (TUTD)

Texarkana Urban Transit District (TUTD), operating as T-Line Bus System, operates a fixed route bus service and ADA Complementary Paratransit Service within the City limits of Texarkana, Wake Village and Nash, Texas. Information on this service appears in the Transit Needs (See Table 5).

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[6] As developed using information from the Texas Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division: thttps://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation.html.

## 8.1 Public and Stakeholder Engagement

As the lead agency, ATCOG is committed to engaging the public and promoting regional service through public engagement efforts. A key strategy to obtaining useful information is utilizing a multi-faceted outreach strategy to obtain feedback. Enhancing the quality and availability of transportation resources to individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, advocates for children, and other members of the public is a priority for ATCOG and the plan Steering Committee.

For instance, in the creation of this plan a survey was developed by the project team and promoted via social media, the Steering Committee, notices at the transit office, and at public engagement events. Taking the time to attend public events for vulnerable communities helps to reach populations that are historically underrepresented. ATCOG will continue to collect relevant public feedback to improve services and coordination within the region. Additional information on public and stakeholder engagement can be found in Appendix E and F.

## 8.2 Executing a Practical Workplan

ATCOG has developed performance measures to help achieve each of the objectives, which are discussed in the following chapter. The Steering Committee meetings will serve as a time to form focus groups or subcommittees. These groups form as needed to look in depth at progress on reaching specific goals and objectives. These groups would discuss outcomes and activities using data collection, additional outreach with key stakeholders and to interested parties/others to discuss progress and impediments and report back to the main steering committee during scheduled meetings or via email to ATCOG staff.

Each meeting agenda in the future should include a discussion of the RCTP workplan with the topics as chosen by the Steering Committee.

The process of plan implementation will include opportunities to develop and present an annual regional workshop with a quarterly meeting series with stakeholders to work the plan - evaluate goals and objectives and report on activities, including subcommittees and meetings with individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, advocates for children, and other members of the public.

## 8.3 Implementation Plan

To effectively implement the plan, the following section has defined multiple elements to achieve each objective including a strategy, priority level, responsible party, time required, staff requirements, capital costs, and a performance metric. Table 14 through**Error! Reference source not found.** create a framework to achieve each of the four (4) goals identified in this plan. These goals and strategies were developed in collaboration with the Steering Committee and are guided by the public's needs.

*Table 14: ATCOG RTCP 2021 Implementation Plan – Goal 1 (Objectives 1A, 1B, and 1C)*

| Goal 1: Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Description** | **Details** |
| **Objective 1A** | Utilize trip data to improve transit system performance and reliability. | |
| **Strategy** | Collect and review data from providers across region to ensure system performance. | Identify data required, collect information quarterly (by email), and review. |
| **Priority Level** | Low | This is a long term, on-going effort that requires consistent effort |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | This is an on-going effort with no end date |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Staff will collect and process data and prepare the annual summary report. |
| **Capital Costs** | Minimal | Agency annual report already developed, requires minimal effort to by staff to create spreadsheets and data summary reports. |
| **Performance Measures** | Passenger trips utilized, hours of revenue service, vehicle miles traveled | Data to be supplied by providers (electronically) |

| Goal 1: Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Description** | **Details** |
| **Objective 1B** | Utilize regional customer survey data to devise improvement strategies for system. | |
| **Strategy** | Engage with transit users through surveys and other feedback tools (i.e., comments cards) | Comment cards are already in place with providers |
| **Priority Level** | Low | This is a long term, on-going effort that requires consistent effort |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | This is an on-going effort with no end date |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Staff will collect and process surveys or comment cards and drivers will participate in Steller Star Customer Service training |
| **Capital Costs** | Moderate | Materials printed for comment cards and staff needed to distribute and process surveys |
| **Performance Measures** | Findings and trends in the data collected, reported regularly to stakeholders, partners and ATCOG Board. | Level of data maintained from public surveys and feedback from public engagement events |

| Goal 1: Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Description** | **Details** |
| **Objective 1C** | Educate riders, stakeholders, partners, and others on how to utilize available transit services and resources effectively. | |
| **Strategy** | Utilize available materials and information to expand community-based knowledge of transit resources. | Document meetings and events attended, along with locations with information posted in region. |
| **Priority Level** | Moderate | This will build community information, help to maintain their engagement moving forward. |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | This is an on-going effort |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Existing staff is sufficient |
| **Capital Costs** | Moderate | Time and staff required to develop and implement education programs. |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities. Number of items in the plan that move from a planning to implementation phase. | Number of events conducted. |

*Table 15: ATCOG RTCP 2021 Implementation Plan – Goal 2 (Objective 2A and 2B)*

| Goal 2: Expand the availability of services to those who are underserved | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | **Description** | **Details** |
| **Objective 2A** | Utilize regional customer survey data to devise improvement strategies for system. | |
| **Strategy** | Maintain a consistent database of regional transportation surveys from community members and target groups. | This will build on the database developed as part of this project |
| **Priority Level** | Low | This is a long term, on-going effort that requires consistent effort. |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG and Transportation Service Providers | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | Attend community meetings with other organizations like AAA /Tex ADRC – inform them of our servicers available |
| **Staff Requirements** | Moderate | May require additional staff or staff training |
| **Capital Costs** | Low to Moderate | Depending on staffing requirements or additional training required |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of surveys collected; number of constituent groups represented (individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, advocates for children, and other members of the public) | Level of data maintained regarding providers and demand for services as well as the quantity and quality of resources available |

**Goal 2: Expand the availability of services to those who are underserved**

|  | Description | Details |
|---|---|---|
| **Objective 2B** | Utilize inventory and hours of service data to expand service available to underserved citizens in the region. |  |
| **Strategy** | Collect and review a consistent database of transportation services, capacity, and relevant resources | This will build on the database developed as part of this project |
| **Priority Level** | Medium | This is a long term, on-going effort that requires consistent effort. |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG and Transportation Service Providers | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | Attend community meetings with other organizations like AAA /Tex ADRC – inform them of our servicers available |
| **Staff Requirements** | Moderate | May require additional staff or staff training |
| **Capital Costs** | Low to Moderate | Depending on staffing requirements or additional training required |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of recommended actions in the coordinated plan for resolving these gaps & inefficiencies | Level of data maintained regarding providers and demand for services as well as the quantity and quality of resources available |

*Table 16: ATCOG RTCP 2021 Implementation Plan – Goal 3(Objective 3A and 3B)*

| Goal 3: Increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Description** | **Details** |
| **Objective 3A** | Implement coordination strategies to increase cost effectiveness and efficiency of overall transportation system. | |
| **Strategy** | Schedule and hold quarterly stakeholder meetings to evaluate and prioritize action items by establishing dedicated time within each session | This will be included in the agenda and actively discussed during each meeting |
| **Priority Level** | Moderate | This is a long-term initiative to engage the committee in active discussion of action items to improve cost effectiveness and efficiency |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | Quarterly | The Steering Committee will meet quarterly |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Existing staff is sufficient |
| **Capital Costs** | Low | Time and staff |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of active, formal partnerships. Number of activities identified in the coordinated plan that are underway, but not completed. | Summary of data received Level of detail in the list of strategies and work plan |

## Goal 3: Increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery

| | Description | Details |
|---|---|---|
| **Objective 3B** | Make capital equipment purchases and planning decisions that allow for cost efficiency and an improved rider experience. | |
| **Strategy** | Schedule and hold quarterly stakeholder meetings to discuss and document services and needs; Utilize TAMs, surveys (as necessary) to document specific capital projects. | This will be included in the agenda and actively discussed during each meeting |
| **Priority Level** | Moderate | This is a long-term initiative to collect data which helps determine needs and service profiles across the region. |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | Quarterly | The Steering Committee will meet quarterly |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Existing staff is sufficient |
| **Capital Costs** | Low | Time and staff |
| **Performance Measures** | . Number of activities or capital projects identified in the coordinated plan that are underway, but not completed. | Collect and review data. Summary of data received, and findings identified. Level of detail in the list of strategies and work plan |

*Table 17: ATCOG RTCP 2021 Implementation Plan – Goal 4 (Objective 4A, 4B, and 4C)*

| Goal 4: Establish and sustain communications and decision-making mechanisms among sponsors and stakeholders to guide Plan implementation effectively | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Description** | **Details** |
| **Objective 4A** | Maintain the continuity of the Steering Committee by assigning roles and responsibilities as part of the initial meeting. | |
| **Strategy** | Develop roles and responsibilities of Steering Committee members to review and discuss during a dedicated time within each session at quarterly meetings | Roles and responsibilities are not mutually exclusive and may be assigned to multiple members |
| **Priority Level** | Moderate | This will be an important strategy to engage the Committee and encourage active participation |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | Recurring | This effort will require the Committee to produce a list of assigned role and responsibilities that will be reviewed every year |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Existing staff is sufficient |
| **Capital Costs** | Low | Time and staff |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of formal, active partnerships<br>Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities. | Define roles and responsibilities |

**Goal 4: Establish and sustain communications and decision-making mechanisms among sponsors and stakeholders to guide Plan implementation effectively**

| | Description | Details |
|---|---|---|
| **Objective 4B** | Educate policymakers on proposed actions and investments. | |
| **Strategy** | Provide board members with a quarterly update regarding progress on RCTP goals and objectives | This will include progression made toward each of the goals, new grants available, coordination strategies, etc. |
| **Priority Level** | Moderate | This will ensure that decision makers are engaged and staying informed with the Committee's efforts |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | This is an on-going effort |
| **Staff Requirements** | Minimal | Existing staff is sufficient |
| **Capital Costs** | Low | Time and staff required to develop and present progress report to the board |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities. Number of items in the plan that move from a planning to implementation phase. | Number of events where policymakers are engaged |

**Goal 4: Establish and sustain communications and decision-making mechanisms among sponsors and stakeholders to guide Plan implementation effectively**

|  | Description | Details |
|---|---|---|
| **Objective 4C** | Broaden the base of community and regional stakeholders and partners expressing their support for coordinated transportation. |  |
| **Strategy** | Maintaining existing relationships to increase organization's presence and expand partnership opportunities | The Steering Committee is currently in a "rebuilding" phase and re-establishing relationships is critical to coordination in the region |
| **Priority Level** | High | This is a critical action item because coordination is a collaborative process |
| **Responsible Party** | ATCOG | ATCOG will act as the lead agency for this strategy |
| **Required Time** | On-going | This is an on-going effort |
| **Staff Requirements** | Moderate | Existing staff is sufficient; dedicated time to attend virtual and in-person events |
| **Capital Costs** | Moderate | Travel costs, staff, and promotional materials needed to build relationships and promote services |
| **Performance Measures** | Number of community engagement events attended. | Number of public engagement events attended |

**09**

# Performance Measures to Evaluate Effectiveness

# 9 Performance Measures to Evaluate Effectiveness

## 9.1 Texas Statewide Performance Measures

Per TxDOT's Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Guidebook, ATCOG's performance measures will align with TxDOT guidelines for Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning. ATCOG will be required to maintain data on statewide performance measures, which fall into three categories.**Error! Reference source not found.** Table 18 shows the performance measures that will help guide ATCOG toward action as they implement the regional plan.

*Table 19: TxDOT Requirements for Performance Measures*

| TxDOT Requirement Category | Required Performance Measure |
|---|---|
| Collaborate | • Number of active, formal partnerships.<br>• Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities. |
| Identify Gaps & Inefficiencies | • Number of gaps & inefficiencies identified in the coordinated plan, including those concerning priority groups.<br>• Number of recommended actions in the coordinated plan for resolving these gaps & inefficiencies. |
| Resolve | • Number of items in the plan that move from a planning to implementation phase.<br>• Number of activities identified in the coordinated plan that are underway, but not completed. ATCOG will report the number of objectives in progress.<br>• Number of activities identified in the coordinated plan that are completed. ATCOG will report the number of completed objectives. |

The performance measures in this chapter draw from the foundational TxDOT requirements above and the community-driven goals and objectives discussed earlier in this plan.

## 9.2 Regional Plan Performance Measures

The performance measures detailed in Table 20 are broken down by their corresponding goal, objective, performance measure, threshold, and data source. The table provides each objective with a performance measure and reasonable thresholds to guide ATCOG on how to measure and monitor success.

To ensure that metrics are being met, ATCOG will conduct a workshop at least once every 1-2 years and will continue having stakeholder meetings quarterly to discuss issues. The workshop discussed here would meet multiple needs. This would be an ATCOG transit coordination meeting that would allow stakeholders to cover multiple topics over the course of one (1) to two (2) days. This roundtable activity would allow stakeholders to talk about challenges, developing partnerships with other groups/agencies, and past coordination sessions to discuss needs from the state and other groups. As of 2021, ATCOG is in a "rebuilding" phase. The organization is looking to re-establish partnerships, improve services, and promote coordination after significant employee turnover and the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This means that it will take at least eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) months to develop a concept for this workshop. This event allows opportunities to bring together potential partners and stakeholders to

provide input on activities occurring in the region, data on potential needs and possible resources to bring into the region. Groups interested in joining the project Steering Committee would be invited to these meetings which occur on a quarterly basis.

The final action at such a meeting would be for the committee to approve a program of projects for the region that is then proposed to local governing bodies, such as the MPO. This will allow key decision makers to provide feedback and support throughout the process.

*Table 20: Objectives and Performance Metrics*

| Number | Objective | Performance Measure(s) | Threshold | | Collected How? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | Utilize trip data to improve transit system performance and reliability. | Passenger trips utilized, hours of revenue service, vehicle miles traveled | Above and Beyond | All data is maintained and used to improve system performance as indicated by performance measurement. Key findings and improvement shared with stakeholders for accountability. | Collected from providers across region. |
| | | | Fully Successful | All data from public engagement is maintained and used to improve system performance as indicated by performance measurement. Key findings and improvement NOT shared with stakeholders for accountability. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | Data collected but not used to improve system performance or reliability. | |
| 1B | Utilize regional customer survey data to devise improvement strategies for system | Findings and trends in the data collected, reported regularly to stakeholders, partners and ATCOG Board. | Above and Beyond | All data from public engagement is maintained and used to develop improvement strategies. Reports documenting trends in data prepared and shared with stakeholders and community. | Public engagement feedback and responses |
| | | | Fully Successful | All data from public engagement has been maintained but NOT used to develop improvement strategies. Key findings or observations (not data driven) reported regularly and shared with stakeholders. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | No data or surveys have been maintained. | |

| Number | Objective | Performance Measure(s) | Threshold | | Collected How? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1C | Educate riders, stakeholders, partners, and others on how to utilize available transit services and resources effectively. | Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities. | Above and Beyond | All data from public engagement is maintained and incorporated into a new public engagement program for education of regional partners and community. | Public engagement feedback and responses |
| | | | Fully Successful | Education/public engagement created but only based on existing resources and service. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | No education program. | |
| 2A | Utilize regional customer survey data to devise improvement strategies for system. | Number of surveys collected; number of constituent groups represented (individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, advocates for children, and other members of the public) | Above and Beyond | Conduct community transit workshop with annual transit survey in region with human services transportation constituent groups represented (individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, advocates for children, and other members of the public); Report findings annually to plan steering committee including description of actions to be taken to address findings; Identify funding opportunities locally and with TxDOT PTN assistance to address specific needs. | Public engagement feedback and responses |
| | | | Fully Successful | Conduct annual transit survey in region with human services transportation constituent groups represented (individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, advocates for children, and other members of the public); Report findings to plan steering committee including description of actions to be taken to address findings Identify funding opportunities locally and with TxDOT PTN assistance to address specific needs. | |

| Number | Objective | Performance Measure(s) | Threshold | | Collected How? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Needs Improvement | No data is collected. | |
| 2B | Utilize inventory and hours of service data to expand service available to underserved citizens in the region. | Number of recommended actions in the coordinated plan for resolving these gaps & inefficiencies | Above and Beyond | Identify up to 3 partners who can increase the supply of services and meet demand in the region; create and share a centralized database for available vehicles and ride booking/sharing to include local providers and partners. Collect and maintain data for available vehicles and ridership, report findings annually. Apply to PTN for funding to expand the hours of additional hours of service to close gaps in availability. | Ridership and vehicle statistics from providers; TAM State of Good Repair Report; List of grants pursued |
| | | | Fully Successful | Collect and maintain data for available vehicles and ridership, report findings regularly, and build staff capacity and knowledge base to apply for PTN funding. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | No data is collected. | |
| 3A | Implement coordination strategies to increase cost effectiveness and efficiency of overall transportation system. | Number of active, formal partnerships.

Number of activities identified in the coordinated plan that are underway, but not completed. | Above and Beyond | Conduct annual stakeholder and community transit workshop; Produce annual report on strategy implementation, to include information on up to 10 new partners added and transit service provided and consumed in the region; Conduct quarterly stakeholder committee meetings to report on strategy implementation with TxDOT's representative(s) in attendance. | Summary of data received; List of strategies and work plan accomplishments |

| Number | Objective | Performance Measure(s) | Threshold | | Collected How? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Fully Successful | Produce annual report on strategy implementation, to include information on up to five new partners added as well as transit service provided and consumed in the region; Conduct quarterly stakeholder committee meetings to report on strategy implementation with TxDOT's representative(s) in attendance. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | Conduct quarterly stakeholder committee meetings to report on strategy implementation with TxDOT's representative(s) in attendance. | |
| 3B | Make capital equipment purchases and planning decisions that allow for cost efficiency and an improved rider experience. | Number of activities or capital projects identified in the coordinated plan that are underway, but not completed. | Above and Beyond | Produce annual report on strategy implementation, to include information on up to 10 new partners with cost efficient programs added or new purchases. | Summary of data received, and findings identified, List of strategies and work plan accomplishments |
| | | | Fully Successful | Produce annual report on strategy implementation, to include information on up to 5 new partners with cost efficient programs added or new purchases | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | No new partnerships or collaborative purchases. | |
| 4A | Assign roles and responsibilities for various aspects of execution among Steering Committee members. | Number of formal, active partnerships. Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities. | Above and Beyond | Expand committee membership to include at least five new stakeholders and potential funding partners; Conduct quarterly stakeholder committee meetings to report on strategy implementation with TxDOT's representative(s) in attendance. | Steering Committee list with a description of assigned roles, responsibilities as it related to on-going work tasks. |
| | | | Fully Successful | Roles and responsibilities assigned, and Steering Committee fully engaged and participating. | |

| Number | Objective | Performance Measure(s) | Threshold | | Collected How? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Needs Improvement | Roles and responsibilities assigned, but Steering Committee not engaged. | |
| 4B | Educate policymakers on proposed actions and investments. | Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities.<br><br>Number of items in the plan that move from a planning to implementation phase. | Above and Beyond | With stakeholder help and ATCOG staff support, schedule, and conduct regional transportation workshop (annually) to include policymaker's forum/educational events on their role in transportation service development; Increase the number of policymaker partners offering to support regional services; Attend more than 10 meetings and engage policymakers with additional educational meetings, materials, and events. | Database of public engagement events with report made to Steering Committee of dates, times, partners, and groups engaged |
| | | | Fully Successful | With ATCOG Staff only, schedule and attend at least 10 meetings and engage policymakers with follow-up using educational materials. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | No events where policy makers are engaged. | |
| 4C | Broaden the base of community and regional stakeholders and partners expressing their support for coordinated transportation. | Number of community engagement events attended. | Above and Beyond | With Stakeholders input and support, create your own events, create website posts and materials, rider information/comment cards, resources campaign/Flyer, host annual public meeting, include surveys and distribution of public materials. Attend and promote regional transportation services at more than ten events a year. | |
| | | | Fully Successful | With Stakeholders input and support, create your own events, create website posts and materials, rider information/comment cards, resources campaign/Flyer, host annual public meeting, include | |

| Number | Objective | Performance Measure(s) | Threshold | | Collected How? |
|--------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|---|----------------|
| | | | | surveys and distribution of public materials. Attend and promote regional transportation services at least ten events a year. | |
| | | | Needs Improvement | With ATCOG resources, create our own surveys, and public information materials. Attend and promote regional transportation services less than five events a year. | |

**10**

# Lessons Learned

# 10 Lessons Learned

Through the development of this plan a number of lessons learned emerged. A key area of growth for the next five years is documentation and the maintenance of organizational relationships. Due to various internal and external transitions ATCOG has had to refocus its efforts within the region. This includes redeveloping relationships with existing human services and transportation agencies as well as rebuilding best practices for engagement and community trust.

During the COVID pandemic the Steering Committee was unable to meet for a number of sessions due to social-distancing health advisement and similar barriers. This resulted in gaps in communication and hindered the progress of the previous work plan. Coordination is an on-going effort that requires consistent maintenance and communication. Through this experience, ATCOG has realized the critical role that on-going discussion plays in progressing the goals and objectives within the region.

In addition to improving communication and collaboration within the service area, the opportunity to create partnerships beyond this region remains limited due to jurisdictional considerations. ATCOG service area is limited to only three public transit providers, only one of which services all nine counties. While coordinated efforts with Arkansas have not been considered in this plan, it has been noted as an opportunity to consider in the future. This could lead to shared strategies to implement for residents who need to travel across state lines.

Finally, a lack of existing data in the preparation of this plan highlighted the key importance of documentation and file maintenance. The limited planned events and interactions with stakeholders and the public was evidence in the limited input received for this project. ATCOG will focus on prioritizing activities and events to improve coordination and feedback from the community, stakeholders, and Steering Committee.