Ark-Tex Regional Public Transportation— Human Services Coordination Plan

Completed with assistance from our Regional Coordinated Transportation Planning Partners

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Ark -Tex Regional Public
Transportation- Human
Services Coordination Plan
2017

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Prepared by:

Ark-Tex Council of Governments



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Ark-Tex Regional Public Transportation-Human Services Coordination Plan 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) embarked on the update of the *Regional Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan* with the full intention of broadly reaching out to the Priority Populations identified through the planning process. ATCOG and the Regional Coordination Steering Committee (RCSC) recognized that an update was needed to focus on development of an operations component to the plan and to identify strategies that help eliminate gaps in services. In other words, planning efforts should be directed toward not only gathering data but also implementing service. These potential services can include traditional fixed route and paratransit services, but also included innovative designs such as flexible routes, dial-a-ride service routes, as well as other approaches.

This plan hinges on the strong evidence that the best way to coordinate service is to provide excellent public transportation that a wide variety of persons can use.

This plan has been developed over the course of the past twelve months, with input from many interested stakeholders through an open planning process with ten public meetings and five RCSC meetings. These meetings, the review of existing services, demographic and land use analysis, and other details of the planning process are summarized in the beginning of this document.

The plan first discusses the state and federal planning requirements, followed by a summary of the Inventory of Existing Resources (detailed in Appendix A) and Comprehensive Needs Review (Appendix B). The Plan then discusses the coordination of this planning process with other programs & plans that are in place within the Service Area. This is followed by a discussion of the vision, mission, and goals of the planning effort. A presentation of Strategies, Projects and Plan Details that speaks to the sustainability of the planning process and the performance measures to be utilized. Finally the supporting technical memoranda are presented as appendices.



PURPOSE OF THE COORDINATED PLAN

The purpose of this planning process update is twofold. The first is to continue moving forward with implementation of coordinated efforts. The RCSC approach to mobility and transportation choices calls for local planning and local decision making based on sound planning activities.

The second purpose is to meet the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) rules regarding development of a coordinated transportation plan for any locale to receive a variety of funds from the FTA, a very important resource for funding.

State Coordination Requirements

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) administers the Section 5310, 5311, 5311(f) & 5307 Urbanized Area for the State. TxDOT's Public Transportation Division (PTN), manages these funding programs that are affected by the Coordinated Plan. TxDOT has provided support to the regions in the development of their plans.

Federal Coordinated Transportation Plan Elements/Requirements

FTA guidance defines a coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan as one that: identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, people with low incomes, veterans, children and the general public; provides strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.

- Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities) was authorized by Congress in 2012 in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The goal of the Section 5310 Program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the availability of transportation mobility options.
- Section 5311 (Non-Urbanized or Rural Area) financial assistance to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized (rural) areas for any needs and provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation (Section 5311(f)) to the maximum extent feasible.
- Section 5307 (Urbanized Area) Section 5307 is a formula grant program for urbanized areas providing capital, operating, and planning assistance for mass transportation.



INVENTORY OF EXISTING RESOURCES

This section reviews and summarizes the existing transportation services in the region. While this is a summary, details are provided in Appendix A.

The inventory of resources is organized as follows:

- Planning Organizations agencies responsible for transportation planning in the region, including state, regional, and local organizations.
- Public Transportation Providers operators of fixed-route, flex-route, and demand-response transportation services that are open to the general public (including taxis and other private for-profit providers).
- Client-Focused Services services provided to clients of human service agencies and programs, typically limited to particular demographic groups and trip purposes. This category includes private, non-profit community-based organizations, health and human service agencies, workforce agencies, schools, municipal programs targeted to particular groups, and others.

Planning Organizations

There are three planning agencies with responsibilities for planning transportation in the Ark-Tex region. These include: ATCOG, Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and TxDOT.

Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATCOG is a voluntary association of local governments, organized in 1968 under authority granted by the Texas Legislature in 1965, covering Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus Counties. ATCOG conducts planning, assists local governments in implementing plans, contracts with local, state, and federal governments and other public and private agencies, reviews and comments on applications of federal and state-grants-in-aid and solid waste permits, assists local governments in solving governmental problems, and is the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for its nine counties. ATCOG is the lead agency in this planning effort, as well as the region's primary provider of public transit and coordinated human service transportation.

Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO serves the cities of Texarkana, Arkansas, Texarkana, Nash, and Wake Village, Texas, and portions of Miller and Bowie Counties, and is responsible for



continuous, comprehensive, and coordinated transportation planning within the MPO Study Area, which is comprised of nearly 195 square miles in northeast Texas and southwest Arkansas. The MPO is the administrative agency for the Texarkana Urban Transportation Study (TUTS), a 25 year transportation plan for the Texarkana Region that was adopted in September 2009. The MPO also developed the Texarkana Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan which was adopted in October 2009.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

TxDOT is the state agency responsible for public transportation as well as construction and maintenance of all interstate, U.S. state highways, ranch-to-market (RM), and farm-to-market (FM) roads within the State. The mission of TxDOT is to provide safe, effective, and efficient movement of people and goods. The state is organized in 25 geographic districts, each responsible for local highway design and maintenance, right-of-way acquisition, construction oversight, and transportation planning. The Ark-Tex region spans two TxDOT Districts: Paris (which covers the following Counties: Delta, Fannin, Franklin, Grayson, Hopkins, Hunt, Lamar, Rains, and Red River) and Atlanta (covering Bowie, Camp, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Morris, Panola, Titus, and Upshur Counties). The Atlanta District takes the lead in working with the Ark-Tex region.

TxDOT has funding oversight over state public transportation funding through the PTN. PTN, through its Public Transit Coordinators, work closely with transit systems. TxDOT manages, provides oversight, and disperses funding in rural areas for Sections 5310, 5311 & 5311 (f).

Public Transportation Providers

The following public transportation entities currently provide services in the Ark-Tex region:

- ATCOG Rural Transit District (TRAX)
- Texarkana Urban Transit District
- Other
 - o Intercity Bus
 - o Intercity Rail
 - o Taxi

Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATCOG operates TRAX, the rural transit service in the nine-county area, and also recently became the provider of the T-Line service in the Texarkana urbanized area.



TRAX

TRAX is the region's rural transit district. A program of ATCOG, TRAX provides general public and coordinated human service transportation in all nine counties of the region. This program coordinates all services funded under FTA Sections 5310, 5311, 5311(f) as well as services contracted from human service agencies. Services are operated through in-house staff. At points when other programs were available through the FTA & TxDOT, partnering with private transportation providers occurred.

TRAX services are provided on a demand-response basis throughout the region, with 24-hour advance notice requested. In Mt. Pleasant, TRAX operates a small flex-route bus service. A fixed-route with complimentary Paratransit service was launched in Paris July 2016 operating 4 routes 12 hours/day M-F. Various commuter routes are also provided in the region through InterCity Bus funding. Offices are maintained in Texarkana (with administrative staff at this location) and in Paris with calls received, schedules prepared and drivers dispatched. A maintenance facility is located in Mt. Pleasant. Vehicles are also based in Sulphur Springs.

Texarkana Urban Bus System (T-Line)

T-Line, is the small urban transit system serving the Texarkana Metropolitan area. T- Line was formed in 1999 as an urban public transit district and is governed by a board of elected officials and management from Texarkana, Wake Village, and Nash, Texas as well as Texarkana, Arkansas. The T-Line had originally been operated by a private contractor. In April, 2011, the T-Line Board of Directors awarded the operation of the transit system to ATCOG, who assumed management of the T-Line. T-Line provides approximately 300,000 trips/year.

Intercity and Privately-Operated Transportation Services

Intercity Bus - Within the region, Greyhound's Dallas - Little Rock - Memphis - Nashville Route stops in:

- Texarkana, Arkansas
- Mt. Pleasant
- Sulphur Springs

TRAX operates a full-service Greyhound ticket office in Paris with 3 Greyhound Connect routes being provided 7 days/week from Paris to Mt. Pleasant, Texarkana to Linden and Texarkana to DeKalb. These are funded through 5311 (f) grants.

Intercity Rail - Amtrak's Texas Eagle stops in Texarkana, at 100 E Front Street, in between Dallas and Little Rock. The next station to the south is in Marshall, and to the north is in Hope, Arkansas. Currently one roundtrip per day is made, with south/west-bound service stopping in Texarkana at 5:58 a.m. and north/east-bound service stopping at 843 p.m.



Taxi - The following taxi companies were identified in the Ark-Tex region:

- City Taxi, Texarkana
- ArLaTex Taxi, Texarkana
- City Cab Company, Paris
- Lone Star Cab Company, Paris
- Yellow Cab, Paris (TRAX coordinates with Yellow Cab for after hour service needs in Paris).

Client-Focused Services

This section inventories those transportation services that are limited to clients of human services, residents of particular communities, or specific demographic groups (based on age, for example).

City Cab

In addition to providing traditional taxicab service, City Cab in Texarkana provides human service agency transportation under contract with MTM (broker for Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation).

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

Medical Transportation Management is responsible for all non-emergency medical transportation within 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 35 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. 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, to Dallas and Shreveport. In 2015, East Texas Support Services provided 72,779 one-way trips originating in the nine counties of the region.

The office serving Region 5 is based in Houston, Texas (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. The shuttle bus service was provided for the students during the fall and spring semesters. This service operates Monday through Thursday, with a schedule timed to bring students to campus in the morning and return them home in the afternoon. This service had previously been operated by TRAX under contract to the College. Now the service is arranged directly with the students who are responsible for their fare.

Opportunities, Inc.

Opportunities, Inc., provides developmental and support services which assist individuals in attaining a full life in the community. 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 age 5 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, Texas as well as Miller and Little River Counties in Arkansas. This service transports the general 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 (vans and buses, almost half of which are wheelchair-accessible).

Texarkana Volunteer Center/HandsOn Texarkana

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

Veterans Administration Community-Based Outpatient Clinic

The Veterans Administration Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Texarkana, Arkansas, owns a couple of 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 to 2:30 p.m. Due to lack of volunteers, the trips to Shreveport have been reduced from 4 days/week to 2 days/week.



SUMMARY OF NEEDS

The assessment of transportation needs is summarized through the following sections (See Appendix B for details):

- Description of the Geographic Area
- Regional Demographic Profile
- Origin and Destination Data
- Health and Human Service Agencies and Programs (including Workforce) Needs

Description of the Geographic Area

The nine-county Ark-Tex area of Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus Counties is a geographically unique area of Texas. The largest cities, Texarkana and Paris, are each at the far opposite ends of the region. Most of the service area is rural in nature, with few major destinations outside the larger cities and the Interstate 30 corridor. The cities with at least 4,000 in population (the minimum threshold for a full-time vehicle) are listed in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Cities with at least 4,000 Population

City	County	Population	
Texarkana, TX*	Bowie	37,280	
Paris	Lamar	24,782	
Mount Pleasant	Titus	16,051	
Sulphur Springs	Hopkins	16,098	
Atlanta	Cass	5,605	
Wake Village*	Bowie	5,471	
New Boston	Bowie	4,688	

^{*}Texarkana and Wake Village are both within the Texarkana UZA and are therefore within the service area for Texarkana Urban Transit District.

Brief profiles are provided on each county in the region (Appendix B). Summary population data is provided in Table 2-2 (total county population and change since the last census).



Table 2-2: County Population Growth, 2011-2015

County	2011 Population (Census)*	2015 Population (Census)*	Percent Change (2011- 2015)	Land Area (Square Miles per Census 2000)	2015 Population Density (Persons Per Square Mile)
Bowie County	92,684	93,389	.8%	888	105
Cass County	30,499	30,313	-1%	937	33
Delta County	5,198	5,217	0%	277	20
Franklin County	10,535	10,651	1%	286	37
Hopkins County	35,314	36,223	2.5%	782	46
Lamar County	49,940	49,440	-1%	917	55
Morris County	12,809	12,516	-2%	255	51
Red River County	12,697	12,455	-2%	1,050	12
Titus County	32,434	36,623	13%	411	80
Region Totals	282,110	286,827	1.7%	5,803	49.4

^{*}Estimate

Population Density

Population density is an important indicator of how rural or urban an area is, which in turn affects the types of transportation that may be most viable. While fixed-route transit is more practical and successful in areas with 1,000 or more persons per square mile, other scheduled or demand-response transportation services are typically a better fit for areas with lower population densities. Major tourist destinations and other high concentrations of destinations are notable exceptions to this guideline and can often best be served by fixed-route transit.

Detailed maps display the population density of block groups across the region, as presented by County with the largest cities in each County shown as well. These are shown in Appendix B. As illustrated in these maps, the highest density areas across the region (3,000 or more persons per square mile) include Texarkana, Paris, Mount Pleasant and Sulphur Springs. Communities containing block groups with densities between 1,000 and 3,000 persons per square mile include New Boston, Hooks and Clarksville. Most of the region has a population density below 1,000 persons per square mile - a significant threshold with regards to local fixed route service needs.

Demographic Needs Analysis

This analysis identifies where concentrations of people who are potentially dependent on public and specialized transportation services (henceforth referred to as "transit dependent") to meet mobility needs (as an alternative to the private automobile). People who are potentially transit dependent are those segments of the population that, because of demographic characteristics such as age, disability, income, or automobile availability, may be less able to drive than the general population. These



demographic groups are more likely to be customers of public and specialized transportation services, and generally have greater need for such services to access basic life needs such as grocery shopping, medical services, and employment.

- People Living Below the Poverty Level People with limited economic means generally have the fewest transportation options (since while other groups may be unable to drive themselves, they may still be able to afford other options).
- Individuals with Disabilities Individuals with disabilities are more likely to need transportation services as many disabilities affect the ability to operate a vehicle, and may also limit such options as walking or bicycling. This demographic group is more likely to need specialized transportation services than the general population.
- Elderly People -Seniors are more likely to need transportation services as aging can affect the ability to operate a vehicle, and may also limit such options as walking or bicycling. Some segments of this demographic group are also more likely to need specialized transportation services (ADA Accessible).
- Youth Population Teenagers under the driving age often have limited transportation options, especially when a family member is not present. Experience indicates that teenagers are often in need of transportation for after school activities, employment, and recreational activities.
- Autoless Households Autoless households are a helpful indicator of areas that are more likely to need transportation options because residents do not have access to a personal vehicle or cannot drive for various reasons.

It is important to note that, with the exception of youth and elderly populations, none of these groups are mutually exclusive. The needs analysis described below takes into account each of the above five categories equally.

Another demographic cohort that is examined is populations with limited English proficiency. While this is in no way an indication of transit dependency, this data allows transportation providers to target marketing materials and user information to non-English speaking communities. For the Ark-Tex region the American Community Survey shows that of the 281,597 residents at total of 2,598 people have limited English proficiency and are spread throughout the region.



Methodology

Demographic and economic characteristics of the population are key factors when evaluating the need for public transit services in the planning area. The objective of the needs analysis is to identify the location of population segments that are traditionally dependent upon public transit services. The identified locations are then compared to areas of existing service in order to determine geographic gaps where transit service may be introduced or expanded. This geographically focused assessment complements other assessments regarding level of service, service quality, and system connectivity.

This socioeconomic analysis produces a Transit Dependence Index (TDI) to define areas where public transit service may be most valuable. This output is calculated by utilizing data from the American Community Survey's (ACS) five-year estimates and the US Decennial Census. These indices augment an overall needs assessment that also incorporates a gap analysis to determine whether the existing transit network adequately and impartially serves vulnerable populations. The following is a description of the process undertaken when computing the various indices.

Transit Dependence Index

The TDI is an aggregate measure that may be used to effectively display relative concentrations of transit dependent populations within a study area. The framework for the TDI is based on the findings of a 2004 National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) report that examined the process of assessing environmental justice persons and, subsequently, produced an index to locate concentrations of low-income populations.

This means of evaluating and analyzing transit dependency involves looking at block level census data as a means of comparison on the basis of the following variables:

- Population Density
- Households without a Vehicle
- Senior Population (65+)
- Youth Population (ages 10-17)
- Number of Households Living Below the Poverty Level

These variables are then assigned rankings based on preset ranges and the number of persons in the above-listed "transit dependent" categories is compared to the average calculated level for the entire planning area. If the level is higher than the average, and to what degree it is higher, values are assigned. The values are assigned for each of the above listed variables. These values are then totaled and multiplied by the Population Density ranking to arrive at the respective Transit Dependency results.



The same process is then undertaken of comparing the respective Transit Dependent Indexes (TDI) to the average of TDI's for the planning area. The communities within each county determined to have the greatest need are:

• Bowie County: Texarkana, Hooks, New Boston & Dekalb

• Cass County: Atlanta, Queen City & Bloomburg

• Franklin County: Mt. Vernon

Hopkins County: Sulphur Springs

• Lamar County: Paris

Morris County: DaingerfieldRed River County: ClarksvilleTitus County: Mount Pleasant

MAJOR TRAVEL ORIGINS, DESTINATIONS AND TRAVEL CORRIDORS

Major Trip Generators

An important part of the analysis of unmet needs is determining where people need to travel. This includes major employment centers, medical centers, and educational facilities.

Major employers (with 1,000 or more employees at one site), major medical facilities (hospitals and medical centers), and the locations of educational facilities (high schools, colleges, and universities) were mapped. Most of the major employers are located in Texarkana, Paris and Sulphur Springs. Several are located along I-30 in Franklin and Hopkins Counties. Sulphur Springs, Paris and Mount Vernon in particular have a number of large warehouse distribution centers.

Maps in Appendix 2 display significant travel destinations. Just as important to the needs assessment is determining where people live who need transportation services (trip origins). Travel origins were to some extent addressed through the demographic analysis at the block group level.

Travel Corridors and Commuting Patterns

One indicator of travel patterns at the county level is the journey-to-work data available from the Census Bureau. This serves as a foundation for travel patterns.



Introduction and Methodology

This section focuses on commuter patterns derived from journey-to-work data from the U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics (LED) "On The Map" application, 2013 Work Destination ("Where Workers are Employed who Live in the Selection Area") and Home Destination ("Where Workers Live who are Employed in the Selection Area") Reports. From this dataset we extracted summaries for worker flows between home and work for the nine counties of the Ark-Tex Area, by place of residence and place of work.

It should be noted that, although work trip patterns may not fully reflect travel for other trip purposes, they nevertheless provide a general indication of access and mobility needs. Supplemented by insights gained through the community surveys, interviews with stakeholders, public meetings, and by field observation, the final plan combines this data and reflects a thorough understanding of the basic travel needs of the region.

Findings

The findings of this analysis are displayed in detail in Appendix B. Bowie County has the most trips both into and out of the county in the region. A major factor of the large inter-county travel in Bowie County is the fact that the city of Texarkana sits on the border of two counties (one in Texas and one in Arkansas). Hopkins, Lamar and Titus counties also have significant inter-county travel for the region. These counties have some of the larger cities outside of Texarkana in the region, in Sulphur Springs, Paris and Mt Pleasant.

Travel Need Extending Out-of-Region

The commute trip data reveal that Dallas County and Tarrant County are significant out-of-region employment destinations in the western part of the region, as is Shreveport, Louisiana in the eastern part of the region.

NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC AND HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY CLIENTS

In addition to the assessment of quantitative data, a critical component of the transportation needs assessment is to gain input from a variety of health and human service agencies, educational institutions, medical facilities and workforce development specialists in the planning area. It is equally important to listen to the direct input of members of the public at large. Several methods were utilized to accomplish this.



Survey

An on-line survey was developed in order to provide an easy means of receiving input from a wide range of respondents throughout the planning area. The survey was promoted through the Ark-Tex Council of Government's website, Facebook, flyers and emails. Appendix B shows the means of promoting both the on-line survey and the public meetings, contains the actual survey questions and the data analysis of the survey results. There were 111 on-line surveys completed throughout the planning area. Additionally hard copy surveys were taken to the Public Meetings. Another 88 surveys were completed in this manner. The results show that 81% of respondents do not currently use TRAX, but those that do use it for trips to medical appointments and shopping/errands most frequently. Work was the next most selected use with social services and government offices next.

Meetings

A total of 9 Public Meetings were held throughout the planning area. These meetings included:

Bowie County – Hooks & New Boston
Cass County – Atlanta/Queen City & Linden
Delta County – Cooper
Hopkins County – Sulphur Springs
Lamar County – Paris/Reno
Morris County – Daingerfield
Red River – Clarksville
Titus County – Mount Pleasant

All supporting data for the meetings is attached in Appendix B including Public Meeting notices and sign-in sheets. In communities with Senior Meal Centers, the meetings were coordinated with the Site Managers at the time that the meals are served. This allowed us to make a presentation and receive input/feedback from the attendees. Others from the communities were able to join at this same time to participate.

There were recurring themes in the comments that were received through these meetings. The major takeaways were:

- People already utilizing TRAX service were overwhelming positive about the service, with a few comments about trip timing,
- Frustration voiced about trip denial. They are having to call further in advance to ensure that they can schedule when they want to.
- Still resistance from people wanting to remain "independent" and drive themselves. Approach was used that they need to be informed in case they do need the service at some point, even on a temporary basis due to an illness of injury. This seemed to break down walls and get their attention.



- Many people are mis-informed about the service, still believing it is for medical use only. The meetings allowed us to correct this perception,
- Need exists for "Out of Service Area" Medical services, especially for Veterans,
- Regular service for work or other frequent trips (dialysis, chemo, dayhab programs) is needed,
- Longer hours and weekend service requested (some for work purposes),
- Fixed Route in Sulphur Springs gaining increasing local support (now that Paris is operational),
- More routes in Texarkana and in Paris requested for Fixed-Route (Texas A&M Texarkana campus for example & major employers not on the current routes).
- Need for service from City to City (Texarkana to Mount Pleasant for example).

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS, INEFFICIENCIES AND SERVICE GAPS

Critical to understanding the issues related to mobility is a detailed listing of unmet needs within the region. The identification of needs is both a qualitative and quantitative process, approached from multiple directions. Further, there are both operational and coordination needs. That is, there are needs related directly to the provision of service and those needs directly related to a coordination activity that may be able to improve access or mobility.

As need is a qualitative and quantitative set of measures we use a variety of approaches to determine this unmet need. In this mobility planning document the needs are determined by using the following data sets:

- 1. Demographics, destinations and service coverage The demographics and destinations are compared with the existing service coverage area to determine gaps in available service.
- 2. Agency survey results human service agencies and advocates were surveyed to determine needs. The results of this survey were tabulated and included in this review.
- 3. Provider survey results Public transit systems, and human service agencies that provide transportation were surveyed for a variety of purposes including the identification of need.
- 4. Input from interviews with each transit provider and other human service and advocacy stakeholders* (all stakeholders were given an opportunity to participate). This was the center topic of discussion at the Regional Transportation Steering Committee Meeting in March and again in June. Care was taken to ensure that all required Stakeholder Commitment Checklist Categories had input and were involved with this process. Minutes and



sign in sheets from those meetings are attached. Agencies involved in the Steering Committee meetings and/or other direct conversations regarding needs and gaps are:

- Small Urban (5307)—Texarkana Urban Transit District (Eric Elmore)
- Rural (5311) Ark-Tex Council of Governments (Nancy Hoehn)
- 5310 Recipients Ark-Tex Council of Governments (Nancy Hoehn)
- Private Transportation providers MW Transportation (Mike Weatheread) & Yellow Cab Paris Tx (Wendy Raney)
- Non-profit Transportation Provider Opportunities, Inc. (Myra Jones)
- Human Service Providers Randy Sam's Shelter (Jennifer Laurant), United Way of Lamar County (April Carl), Lakes Regional MHMR (Christina Sampson), King's Daughters (Kay McNeal)
- MPO's Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization (ReaDonna Jones)
- Individuals with Disabilities agencies Lone Star Legal Aid (Sharon Reynerson), Disability Rights TX (Chris McGreal), Red River Valley Down's Syndrome Society (Krissy Crites), ETCIL (Robert Morris) individuals William Conder & Rhonda Johnson
- 65+- agencies AAA (Lisa Reeve), Senior Citizens of Texarkana (Eden Leach), Lamar County Human Resource Council (Shelly Braziel), individuals Frank Strogner,
- Low Income Paris-Lamar County Health Department (Emily Neely), Randy Sams Shelter (Jennifer Laurant), Lone Star Legal Aid (Lisa Crittenden), Domestic Violence Prevention Txk (Amy Smith), Salvation Army (Lt. Michelle Hutchinson), Habitat for Humanity (Judy Martin), Titus County Cares (Judy Lee)
- Veteran's Reps East Texas Veteran Resource Center (Charles Cowgill)
 & Lamar County (Laura Bivens)
- Workforce Reps Paris Junior College Workforce Development (Sheila Reese) & Texas Workforce Commission (Karen Sanders)
- Advocates for Children Lamar County Head Start (Jeannie Dunlop), Child Development Center – Mt. Pleasant (Shonda Brown), CASA for Kids (Sharon Eubanks), Boys & Girls Club (Henry Shaw) Children's Advocacy Center (Rebecca Peevy)

*Contact information for these entities provided in Attachment to the Plan.

5. Needs identified through ongoing planning efforts – This involved a review of previous coordinated plans, as well as any local plans available (St. Joseph's Community Plan for Paris dealt extensively with transportation needs in the Community and especially as it affected access to healthcare).



- Demand for trips to Marshall, Longview & Tyler (mostly medical)
 - Coordination with ETCOG on these services has started.
 - Pursue VA funding for ability to meet need.
- o Some concern that the rural services are not practical due to long infrequent service.

These Unmet Needs represent a comprehensive description for all residents in the Service Area. When considering which of these gaps apply to Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, many of the same gaps affect those target populations as well. Specifically, Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities have unmet needs as it pertains to reaching medical appointments, shopping and other personal business destinations (bank, post office, etc). Demand exceeds resources. Additionally there are an increasing number of requests from Seniors to travel from one end of the service area to another for specialist medical appointments. That service is not available.

Unmet needs for Commuter Service, whether for work or higher-ed purposes affects Individuals with Disabilities who are unable to accept a job or register for classes without assurance of transportation. Access to Senior Meal Centers affects Seniors, many with disabilities. This is also the case of veterans needing to travel outside the Service Area to VA facilities. The vast majority of the veterans are Seniors and over 60% are disabled.

OPPORTUNITIES & BARRIERS

The key requirements for coordination revolve around three critical components: leadership, trust, and a good business deal. In the region, TRAX has been very successful in coordinating a wide variety of services including, but not limited to:

- o Coordination with MHMR Transportation to sheltered employment in Bowie, Cass, Morris, Franklin, Hopkins & Lamar Counties. This involves working with numerous MHMR programs/agencies in the various counties.
- o Adult Day Care This service is coordinated with the general public service in Bowie and Texarkana proper.
- o Area Agency on Aging Senior transportation throughout the service area to meals and other services.
- o Northeast Texas Community College Service from Mt. Pleasant to the community college is provided by TRAX.
- o Paris Junior College Service from Clarksville to Paris is now operational.
- o Head Start-TRAX provides Head Start transportation in Titus County and Lamar County.
- o WIC, Literacy Council Service in support of these programs on an as-needed basis.
- o T-Line Texarkana's urban system is currently operated by TRAX and coordination between the two systems is on-going. Demand for additional routes/service times.



Operational Unmet Needs

These are unmet needs that are identified as operational related. These needs were identified by stakeholders, consumers, other agencies, through the review of existing plans and through the demographic review. They are as follows:

Connectivity between population centers & rural areas

- Medical Appointments (including outpatient treatment/dialysis)
 - Demand has grown resulting in longer lead times for trip scheduling and heavy dialysis demand ties up resources every day of the week.
- O Access to shopping & other government (including court) & social services
- O Access from one end of the service area to the other (2 hour travel time)
 - These trips are currently limited to certain days/week or not available at all and need to be expanded to accommodate more passengers (requests from Red River County into Texarkana).

Expanded Commuter service

- O Job access is a big need. Without public transportation more transit dependent people in rural areas are being forced to move to urban areas with public transportation for work purposes. Where fixed route service is available there are needs that exist outside of the current hours of operation or off the current routes. Major employers in Texarkana, Paris, Sulphur Springs, Mt. Pleasant and Mount Vernon generate significant commuter demand from a dispersed, geographically large area. Moreover, many run 24 hour operations making it difficult to provide transportation.
- Commuting for higher education. This is true for the Junior Colleges in the Region (Texarkana College, Paris Junior College and NE Texas Community College) and 4 year institutions (Texas A&M Texarkana). Texas A&M Texarkana is not on a current route for T-Line.

Expanded Service within rural counties (to County Seat if possible)

- o Sheltered Work Programs
- o Medical appointments, etc.
- Senior Meal Centers
- o Job Access (incl. Ind. w/disabilities needing transportation to employers).
 - 5310 Grant funds are providing Senior Meal access in 2 counties.
 5310 funds can help with sheltered work programs as well.

Extended hours of operation (for fixed-routes, deviated route & demand response)

- Demand for weekend service
- o Evening service for fixed-routes for job access & school
 - This is difficult as it is truly a matter of funding. Grants will be sought as will partnerships with employers.

Access to destinations outside of service area

 Veteran Transportation to Longview/Tyler & Bonham clinics & Shreveport VA Hospital



- o Greyhound Ark-Tex operates 3 Greyhound Connect Feeder Routes; Paris to Mt. Pleasant, Texarkana to Linden and Texarkana to DeKalb. These routes converted from 5 day/week service to 7 day/week service effective 9/1/16. The Texarkana Routes also stop at T-Line enabling access between the two transportation systems.
- O Adjacent Rural Transit Systems TRAX has worked well with adjacent transit agencies, even providing emergency services in Fannin & Grayson Counties for 3 months in early 2016 for TAPS. TRAX has recently coordinated service with ETCOG to service residents of Camp County that need to travel to Mt. Pleasant in Titus County.
- Job Access- TRAX previously had a contract to provide this service through JARC and New Freedom funding sources. We see potential of partnering with private transportation providers (Yellow Cab in Paris for example) to secure much needed work related transportation. This would allow access to employers not of the current routes or after hour service. Also we are currently in discussions with Lowe's Distribution Center in Mount Vernon to provide transportation to employees with disabilities.
- o Texarkana Housing Authority Assisted the Authority while apartments were being renovated. TRAX provided transportation to and from the temporary housing.
- o Pilgrim's Pride- TRAX received funding to support the Mt. Pleasant fixed route service.

Barriers to coordinate services exist for a number of reasons. As the process of meeting with stakeholders unfolded it became clear that barriers exist because of:

- Awareness Despite efforts to promote the services there are many entities/people that still do not even know we exist.
- Education For some who know service is provided they have no idea what we do, how we are funded, where we operate or how we can truly be of service. Many assume it is strictly medical related trips.
- Resources This is a **BIG** reason that barriers exist:
 - o **Time** both our time and time of the people we are trying to coordinate with. Even getting Regional Steering Committee Members to attend regular meetings is difficult. Not because they aren't interested or don't see the benefit of being involved, but because of the time constraints of their own job. Our time as ATCOG staff is also limited, which affects our ability to be out in the region improving Awareness & Educating the public.
 - o **Funding** with limited funding available through traditional funding sources the ability to close the gaps is limited. It is not only the level of funding being insufficient to meet the demand but the lack of stability in funding precludes effective planning. Funds may be available to "launch" a new program but then not available to sustain the program. This makes



effective delivery of services difficult if not impossible. Funding even for basic service is insufficient and additional grants need to be secured to meet demand. Funding for local match requirements is also a barrier. Should be successfully secure grant funding we do not necessarily have sufficient sources of local match.

- o **Funding Formula** the current funding formula is weighted heavily on the population/area side vs. the performance side. We receive half of the funding that the adjacent transit agency yet we provide an equivalent number of trips each year.
- Policies Limitations exist to provide the best service and coordinate due to cumbersome policies that will not allow it and an inability to get to decision makers that can change it. This is true with trying to work with transporting Veterans to VA Clinics outside of the planning region. Funding for transportation exists within the VA to reimburse the Veteran for his mileage. However, this is not allowed to be used towards Pubic Transportation. Another significant barrier to coordination is the State Medicaid Transportation Program was created by policies of The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The policies do not take advantages of coordination opportunities and the savings and better service that can result from the coordination.

VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Regional Plan Vision

Testing Basic Notions

The "Vision" for coordinated transit and human service transportation on a regional scale throughout the Ark-Tex area must reflect several overarching notions. These notions should be discussed and confirmed at the outset of development of the Regional Planning and Public Transportation Plan effort and should be tested and updated as necessary throughout the development of the Plan as well as in implementation. The three basic notions include:

- A clear customer orientation for planning and operations that is focused on the quality of the travel experience from a customer's perspective;
- A mutual recognition that some essential policies, functions, and actions must be formulated and carried out on a regional scale, e.g., integrated fare policy, information technology applications, etc., while others must reflect more localized user needs, e.g. service designs;
- A recognition that opportunities for coordination and integration of services exist on several levels, ranging from sharing funding, expertise, and vehicles where practical (a conventional view) to consolidating operational and

management functions (an operational view).

A Regional Plan Vision

Residents (including the general public and human service clientele) and visitors to the 9-county Ark-Tex Area will be able 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.

An Over Arching Theme: The Mission of Managing Mobility

These ideas noted above can be captured and expressed by embracing a broader sense of shared mission on the part of the ATCOG, TxDOT, and other key stakeholders in Regional Plan development. That mission is to seek ways to more effectively "manage mobility" for the region.

The concept of "mobility management" as a basis for Regional Plan development invites and legitimizes the broadest possible range of actions to meet mobility needs now and in the future. Managing mobility:

- Includes consideration of all transportation needs in the region;
- Includes contributions that can be made to meeting those needs from any and all traditional and non-traditional modes and providers, public and private, in partnership; and
- Recognizes that managing mobility will require region-wide policy-making and planning on the one hand, coupled with locally-focused customer-based service design and delivery of human service and other services as needed. Preliminary goals for the Regional Plan are noted below with key associated objectives.

The Mission

"Travel options and access to opportunity are improved and expanded for all Texans, are provided cost-effectively, are used more extensively, and support broader state and local goals for economic growth and enhanced quality of life."

Regional Plan Goals and Objectives



Plan goals and objectives are intended to encourage and support progress toward seamless travel throughout the region by specifically enhancing coordination of public transit

Goal 1: Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience

- A. Understand the key elements of quality as customers view them.
- B. Measure those elements on a regular basis.
- C. Monitor and report changes in performance across those elements.
- D. Evaluate and prioritize actions that can enhance key elements.

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

- A. Monitor the supply of services and changes in travel markets, particularly the market for specialized transportation services.
- B. Identify and prioritize gaps in service.
- C. Evaluate and prioritize alternative approaches to expand service to fill gaps.

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

- A. Identify opportunities for enhancing cost-effectiveness and efficiency in operations.
- B. Identify opportunities to coordinate service.
- C. Evaluate and prioritize alternative actions to address these opportunities.
- D. Identify implementation strategies appropriate to the potential cost and benefit of priority actions, e.g. pilot projects vs. wholesale programmatic change.

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

- A. Assess and consider policy-making roles and responsibilities for various aspects of Plan execution among service sponsors, providers, and others.
- B. Assess and consider new or alternative options for governance and management of elements of the network.
- C. Educate policy-makers and the public on the need for, value of proposed actions and investments, and the costs of not responding ('doing nothing.')
- D. Advocate Plan actions and investments among decision-makers and the public.



COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE STRATEGIES AND PLAN

Introduction

Based on the results of the needs assessment, inventory of resources, and gap analysis developed previously, and in consideration of the mission, visions, goals, and objectives, staff and the RTSC identified priority areas (Strategies) for additional services and activities. These recommendations are an extension and update to the previous plan from 2012. Some of those strategies that have yet to be implemented, as well as new strategies related to service or coordination are presented.

Key Ingredients of Success

As in any business relationship, successful coordination is built on three pillars. Without all three in place, the efforts are likely to collapse. These pillars are:

- 1. Trust The entities involved (in-effect, business partners) must be able to trust each other. TRAX has built up this trust over a period of years to the point where trust has been earned. They are the "Go to" organization.
- 2 Leadership Without leadership, the project will never be initiated successfully. TRAX has effectively led this effort since the process started.
- 3. A Good Business Deal Plain and simple, coordination requires that all entities get a good deal and that the transit system is not given an unfunded requirement. TRAX has ensured that all of its relationships have been equitable.

The Need for Leadership

As has been discussed previously, success will be dependent on leadership at the regional level and at the strategy/project level. There is strong leadership at the regional level. Leadership at the local level will be project dependent. No project should move forward without the appropriate leadership or "champion."

Inclusion of Existing Strategies

As a starting point in the development of strategies, the planning process first reviewed the new activities being implemented, followed by the combined new and older strategies developed for the 2010 Coordinated Plan Update. Some of these strategies have been completed, some are no longer relevant and many are included in this next round. The result is an updated selection of strategies.



TRAX: Recent Activities

TRAX has been aggressively seeking funding and has been very successful in bringing in more funds to the region through a variety of activities. Following are the new activities planned by TRAX. TRAX has received funding for these services through the ICB, Planning, RTAP & 5310 – Seniors and Individuals with disabilities funding programs.

TRAX has implemented or is prepared to implement the following projects:

- 1. ICB TRAX is has made a commitment to partnering with Greyhound on Inter-City Bus Service. In September 2016 3 feeder routes started. These served Paris to Mt. Pleasant, Linden to Texarkana & DeKalb to Texarkana. This service also established the TRAX Paris office as a Greyhound Ticket Agent. This 5 day per week service expanded to 7 days per week in September 2016. This service connects with the Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line) transfer station providing access throughout Texarkana and with the Paris Metro Transit Center in Paris.
- 2 State Planning Assistance Planning City Bus evaluation and modifications for Mt. Pleasant in 2017 & Sulphur Springs in 2018.
- 3 RTAP-funding is secured for development of a Fleet Management/Maintenance Plan.
- 4 Coordination with ETCOG to provide service across our service area borders to facilitate the transportation needs of our residents.
- 5 Other Capital Funding-this is proposed for:
 - The procurement of needed vehicles,
 - Additional capital in support of the above projects.

These services are gaining in importance — lack of transportation is the biggest impediment to accessing healthcare and jobs. TRAX and the RTSC is dedicated to moving people and getting them to health care, jobs, and just about any other reason people need to travel. These projects are all supported by local funding, ensuring a local stake in success.

Organizational/Coordination Tasks

The transportation programs in the service area are well coordinated between TRAX and most of the human service transportation programs. The exception to this is Medicaid Transportation, far and away the largest human service transportation program. This decision was made at the state level. While most Rural Transportation Agencies believe



that these activities should be coordinated, that decision is currently out of the hands of the local participants. The Medicaid provider, it should be noted, did not respond to the survey. TRAX receives calls regularly from Medicaid patients either unhappy with the safety, security of responsiveness of the transportation service via medical transportation. They complain about an inability to schedule rides, especially if they are located in a very rural area. This would appear to be a result of the providers being "for profit" and therefore these high mile trips are not cost effective for them to provide. Therefore, they are trying to shift trips for these patients to our service, which is not the manner that they should be treated nor the position that we should be placed. Taking these passengers, that should be riding medical transportation results in us not being to provide a trip to another person that does not have Medicaid. This has been a highly frustrating situation. Passengers report drivers showing up in pick-up trucks and other vehicles not in good repair, drivers smoking or with hygiene problems. The entire situation is very unfortunate.

The committee firmly believes that the best way to coordinate human service transportation is by providing quality and effective public transit.

The majority of the coordination effort over the course of the plan will focus on activities that the region can control:

- Continuing 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 (Taxi Service and employers)
- Foster opportunities to coordinate with providers in adjacent service areas to provide access outside of our borders

Coordination Task No. 1 - Continue Coordination Efforts

The key participants in the Ark-Tex area should continue to work together in a formalized setting allowing all participants and other interested parties to participate. TRAX continues to excel in this area, adding a new partner in Greyhound Bus Lines.

Coordination Task No. 11- Continue the work of the RTSC.

A committee should be maintained including: all major operators, funding agencies, private sector transit providers, other agencies, and consumers. Having political or business leaders on the committee is advisable as well.

Coordination Task No. 12 - Human Service Coordination Opportunities.

In this task, TRAX is working closely with the AAA, United Way (and its partner agencies) and workforce board to target specific populations in need of transit services throughout the rural service area. These efforts are intended to improve mobility for elderly and persons with disabilities that cannot ride the fixed-route or fixed schedule bus. TRAX continues to do an excellent job in coordinating services.



Recommended Strategies: Service and Operating Tasks

In order to effect a change and improvement in what the customer sees, ultimately there must be service improvements. The RTSC stated that three of the primary goals of the plan should be to:

- Enhance the Quality of the Customer's Travel Experience
- Expand the Availability of Services to Those Who are Un-served
- Increase the Cost-Effectiveness and Efficiency of Service

Delivery Service Alternatives

There are a limited number of options when it comes to the provision of transit service in rural areas. In the Ark-Tex region there are four levels of need. They are described below along with proven, potential service designs.

- 1. Rural Areas Rural areas of the type found in the Ark-Tex region can be served by:
 - a. Demand-response, county wide This is typically advance reservation service, where customers call in the day before and if there is space they are given a ride. This is the most expensive service on a per trip basis and is also the least productive mode. This type of service should be used only as a last resort for people that cannot access any other mode.
 - b. Fixed schedule service 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 (could be daily or could be first and third Thursday of the month for example).
- 2. Small Towns 2,000 population to 10,000 population
 - a. Advance notice demand-response current service uses this mode. It is simple to operate, but due to the advance reservation requirement, it is not customer-friendly and will suppress ridership.
 - b. Dial-a-ride Small communities can use a dial-a-ride (proven across the country). Dial-a-ride is paratransit with no advance notice. With TRAX's new technology this is even simpler than it was manually. After all, it only takes a minute to schedule a trip, why should the customer have to call the day before? This service is customer-friendly and it will increase ridership (assuming fares are the same).



- 3. Small Cities Sulphur Springs, Mt. Pleasant and Paris
 - a. Flex route A flex route is basically a fixed-route that will go off route (typically no more than 1/4 of a mile) to pick up a person with disabilities. This type of service eliminates the need for ADA complementary paratransit, but as a result provides a poorer level of service for all. Ark- Tex will still have a paratransit vehicle in service wherever a fixed-route is located; therefore the advantages (lower cost) of flex route are eliminated.
 - b. Fixed-route The standard type of transit service used in small and large cities across the world.
- 4. Commuter Service Is usually a progression of services depending on the population densities:
 - a. Ridesharing/vanpool This is an inexpensive mode where either customers are matched for ridesharing purposes or if enough riders are available from one general area (or along a route), a vanpool can be formed. Vanpools can use minivans or 15 passenger vans.
 - b. Fixed schedule or fixed-route These are typically supported by park and ride lots.
 - c. Coordination with private transportation providers to meet the need via a voucher program or MOU.

Competing Against Oneself

In each case, as a new service is being phased in, demand-response service should be reduced by the same number of vehicles. For example, if fixed-route is being implemented in a small city, the existing paratransit service should be eliminated for all except persons certified to ride the complementary paratransit service or if under a specific contract for paratransit services. To allow riders a choice between riding fixed-route or the very expensive paratransit, destroys the intent of the service and puts the transit system in the unenviable position of competing with itself for riders. If this is permitted, the fixed-route service will be a waste of effort.

Potential Service Designs - County-by-County

Bowie County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural communities into Texarkana, and potentially to New Boston as well, so that residents can access county government services.

For a county as populated as Bowie, each part of the county should be served five days per week. This service should provide at least two trips per day, and ideally four trips per day to give rural residents flexibility on when they can come into and depart from the city. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the



morning and bring them into the city. Once in the city, the route could either connect with the T-Line, or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

- An early morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.
- A late-morning trip (for example, 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.) could serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.
- An early afternoon trip (for example, 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.) could take people home from medical appointments, those in town for senior center programs, and other activities that end earlier in the day.
- A late afternoon/early evening trip (for example, 4:30 p.m 6:30 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

While the general operating times should be consistent from day-to-day, and may include some fixed stop times (for example, the vehicle arrives at the hospital or departs the senior center at the same time each day), the service should be flexible enough to accommodate individual trip needs around these scheduling "anchors." Each passenger trip should be scheduled at least a day in advance to allow for efficient scheduling. Four such trips per day could be operated with one small accessible vehicle and two part-time drivers.

Small Town Service. Ideally, each small town with population greater than 2,000 should be served with local dial-a-ride service during the weekday. In Bowie County, this would include *Hooks and New Boston*.

A generally recommended design for this type of service is one accessible vehicle operating at least seven hours per weekday (for example, 800 a.m. to 300 p.m.) to provide local residents with transportation to local medical appointments, shopping, human services, personal business, part-time employment, etc. The service area is typically within the city limits (and extending out to any popular shopping or medical destinations that may be just beyond the city limits) with all trips scheduled on a real-time (immediate-response) demand-response basis.

This service could also connect with the rural fixed-schedule service previously described to improve mobility for rural residents who may not need to travel as far as Texarkana or New Boston to meet their needs, as well as to allow for greater efficiency in scheduling pick-up of residents living in the other small towns who do wish to travel to Texarkana or New Boston.



Commuter Service. Texarkana is the largest hub for employment in the region. It is particularly dominant in the eastern end of the region and draws commuters from surrounding counties. Many commuters from Cass and rural Bowie Counties travel daily to the Texarkana area. Ridesharing with vanpools and subscription bus are inexpensive approaches to meeting the needs of commuters. The most significant commuter corridors include:

- Cass County U.S. Highway 59 corridor Fixed/Flex Route Service
- Interstate 30 from New Boston and possibly beyond (in implementation stage)-Fixed/Flex Route to New Boston, vanpoolbeyond
- U.S. Highway 82 to DeKalb (fixed/flex route) and perhaps Clarksville (Red River County)- (vanpools)

Cass County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural communities into Atlanta, and potentially to Linden as well, so that residents can access county government services.

At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week (for the least populated areas), up to as many as five days per week for more heavily populated rural communities.

This service should provide at least two trips per day, with up to four trips per day to give rural residents flexibility on when they can come into and depart from the city. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the city. Once in the city, the route could provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city or a customer can transfer to fixed-route.

- An early morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.
- A late-morning trip (for example, 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.) could serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.
- An early afternoon trip (for example, 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.) could take people home from medical appointments, those in town for senior center programs, and other activities that end earlier in the day.



• A late afternoon/early evening trip (for example, 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

While the general operating times should be consistent from day to day, and may include some fixed stop times (for example, the vehicle arrives at the hospital or departs the senior center at the same time each day), the service should be flexible enough to accommodate individual trip needs around these scheduling "anchors." Each passenger trip should be scheduled at least a day in advance to allow for efficient scheduling. Up to four such trips per day could be operated with one small accessible vehicle and one to two part-time drivers.

Cass County residents have a need for out of area service with medical destinations in Marshall, Longview and Tyler, including VA Facilities in Shreveport, LA.

Small Town Service. Ideally, each small town with population greater than 2,000 should be served with local dial-a-ride service during the weekday. In Cass County, this would include Atlanta and Linden.

A generally recommended design for this type of service is one accessible vehicle operating at least seven hours per weekday (for example, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) to provide local residents with transportation to local medical appointments, shopping, human services, personal business, part-time employment, etc. The service area for such service is typically within the city limits (and extending out to any popular shopping or medical destinations that may be just beyond the city limits) with all trips scheduled on a real-time (immediate-response) demand-response basis.

This service could also coordinate with the rural fixed-schedule service previously described to improve mobility for rural residents traveling into town.

Commuter Service. Cass service needs for commuters extends from Linden/Atlanta to Texarkana. This service is in the planning/implementation stage at this time in combination with Greyhound.

Delta County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural areas into the county seat of Cooper so that residents can access county government services. In addition, regular service is recommended to connect Delta County residents with regional medical and other services in Paris (Lamar County) and/or Sulphur Springs (Hopkins County).



At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week and provide at least two trips per day. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the closest city. Once in the city, the route could connect with local transit service (if applicable for Paris and Sulphur Springs) or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

- The morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.
- The afternoon trip (for example, 4:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

Additional trips could also be provided during the mid-day to serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.

Commuter Service. Delta County is between two major employment hubs. The county can clearly benefit from service between Sulphur Springs and Paris, as is discussed in the Hopkins and Lamar County recommendations to follow.

Delta County residents have a need for out of area service to the VA Facility in Bonham, Fannin County

Franklin County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural areas into the county seat of Mount Vernon so that residents can access county government services. In addition, regular service is recommended to connect Franklin County residents with regional medical and other services in Winnsboro (Wood County), Mount Pleasant (Titus County), and/or Sulphur Springs (Hopkins County).

At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week and provide at least two trips per day. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the closest city. Once in the city, the route could connect with local transit service (if applicable for Sulphur Springs or Mount Pleasant) or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

• The morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.



• The afternoon trip (for example, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

Additional trips could also be provided during the mid-day to serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.

Commuter Service. Franklin County is positioned between Hopkins and Titus County, two employment hubs. Commuter service, based on the travel patterns indicate primary service to Mt. Pleasant in Titus County and lower, yet still significant numbers into Hopkins County. Service, either vanpools or fixed-route/schedule service could be possible, especially in light of planned services from Mt. Pleasant to the Lowes distribution facility in Mt. Vernon, where service could be coordinated with regional service between Hopkins and Titus Counties.

Franklin County residents have a need for out of area service with medical destinations in Longview and Tyler, including VA Facilities.

Hopkins County

Fixed-Route City Service. Sulphur Springs is large enough to support a small fixed-route public transit system. Even one or two routes operated on 30-60 minute headways could support current downtown revitalization efforts, provide a means for employees to reach jobs, and encourage visitors to leave their cars parked while visiting the city's parks historic sites, shopping, and restaurants.

Such a service would require one to two accessible vehicles suitable for constant boarding and alighting. Service should operate a recommended 12 hours per weekday (for example, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to cover most job commuters). It should stop at all major city and county public facilities, the Chamber of Commerce, at least one grocery store, drug store, and household goods store, education centers, major employers, the county hospital, other major medical destinations, tourist destinations, municipal parking facilities, senior housing, and other high-density housing. Fixed stops would need to be established along the route (approximately every 500-1,000 feet recommended). Routes have been designed for Sulphur Springs.

In addition, demand-response ADA paratransit would be needed to transport people who are unable to use accessible fixed-route transit because of a disability. This service would need to be equivalent to the fixed-route service in terms of geographic area of coverage (serving a 314 mile radius around the fixed-route system), days and hours of service, and fares, as well as meet other federal requirements. Please note - that vehicle is already in place and would require no additional expense.



Alternately, instead of the fixed-route service which requires ADA complementary paratransit, flexible route (route deviation) service could be operated to meet the trip needs of individuals with and without disabilities, with the route flexing upon advanced request within a limited service area (such as ¼ mile).

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural communities into Sulphur Springs. At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week (for the least populated areas), up to as many as five days per week for more heavily populated rural communities.

This service should provide at least two trips per day, and ideally four trips per day to give rural residents flexibility on when they can come into and depart from the city. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the city. Once in the city, the route could either connect with local transit services if implemented, or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

- An early morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.
- A late-morning trip (for example, 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.) could serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.
- An early afternoon trip (for example, 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.) could take people home from medical appointments, those in town for senior center programs, and other activities that end earlier in the day.
- A late afternoon/early evening trip (for example, 4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

Commuter Service. Commuter needs outside Hopkins County include service to Hunt and Dallas Counties, with lower numbers along the I-30 corridor as well as some service to Paris (in combination with service through Delta County). This could be vanpools or routes.

Hopkins County residents have a need for out of area service with medical destinations in Greenville, Longview and Tyler, including VA Facilities.



Lamar County

Fixed-Route City Service. Paris now has a small fixed-route public transit system. Four routes are operated on 30 minute headways and support economic development efforts, provide a means for employees to reach jobs, and encourage visitors to leave their cars parked while visiting the city's historic sites, shopping, and restaurants.

Such a service requires two to three small accessible vehicles and operates 12 hours per weekday (6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. to cover most office job shifts).

In addition, demand-response ADA paratransit is in place to transport people who are unable to use accessible fixed-route transit because of a disability. This service goes above and beyond ADA requirements of serving a 3/4 mile radius around the fixed-route system by serving everyone within the "loop". Additionally all persons with disabilities and anyone 60+ ride the fixed route for FREE. This has encouraged passengers to ride the fixed-route if possible.

It is recommended that additional routes be looked at in Paris, as well as, extended hours of service. Moreover, partnering with major employers that are not located on the routes in order to meet workforce needs is warranted. This may involve working with private transportation providers.

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural communities into Paris. For a county as populated as Lamar, each part of the county should be served five days per week. This service should provide at least two trips per day, and ideally four trips per day to give rural residents flexibility on when they can come into and depart from the city. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the city. Once in the city, the route could either connect with local transit services if implemented, or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

- An early morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.
- A late-morning trip (for example, 830 a.m 1030 a.m) could serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.
- An early afternoon trip (for example, 2.00 p.m. -4:00 p.m.) could take people home from medical appointments, those in town for senior center programs, and other activities that end earlier in the day.



• A late afternoon/early evening trip (for example, 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

Small Town Service. Ideally, each small town with population greater than 2,000 should be served with local dial-a-ride service during the weekday. In Lamar County, this would include Reno. Due to its proximity to Paris, it may be more effective to extend fixed-route service from Paris out to Reno. At a minimum, local dial- a-ride should be provided within Reno with connections made to local service in Paris.

A generally recommended design for this type of service is one accessible vehicle operating at least seven hours per weekday (for example, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) to provide local residents with transportation to local medical appointments, shopping, human services, personal business, part-time employment, etc. The service area is typically within the city limits (and extending out to any popular shopping or medical destinations that may be just beyond the city limits) with all trips scheduled on a real-time (immediate-response) demand-response basis.

Commuter Service. Lamar County supports a considerable majority of commuters internally. Other commuter needs are dispersed to Hunt, Dallas, Hopkins, and Titus Counties. Please note that service is planned and will soon be implemented between Paris and Mt. Pleasant. Need exists for veteran transportation to Bonham in Fannin County.

Morris County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural areas into the county seat of Daingerfield so that residents can access county government services. In addition, regular service is recommended to connect Morris County residents with regional medical and other services in Mount Pleasant (Titus County).

At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week and provide at least two trips per day. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the closest city. Once in the city, the route could connect with local transit service (if traveling to Mount Pleasant) or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

• The morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.



• The afternoon trip (for example, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes. Additional trips could also be provided during the mid-day to serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.

While the general operating times should be consistent from day-to-day, and may include some fixed stop times (for example, the vehicle arrives at the hospital or departs the senior center at the same time each day), the service should be flexible enough to accommodate individual trip needs around these scheduling "anchors." Each passenger trip should be scheduled at least a day in advance to allow for efficient scheduling.

Commuter Service. Commuter needs are primarily to Mt. Pleasant and that service is currently available.

Morris County residents have a need for out of area service with medical destinations in Marshall, Longview and Tyler, including VA Facilities.

Red River County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural communities into Clarksville, and potentially to Paris as well, so that Red River County residents can access regional medical and other services in Paris.

At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week (for the least populated areas), up to as many as five days per week for more heavily populated rural communities.

This service should provide at least two trips per day, with up to four trips per day to give rural residents flexibility on when they can come into and depart from the city. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the city. Once in the city, the route could provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

- An early morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.
- A late-morning trip (for example, 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.) could serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.
- An early afternoon trip (for example, 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.) could take people home from medical appointments, those in town for senior center programs, and other activities that end earlier in the day.



• A late afternoon/early evening trip (for example, 4:30p.m. - 6:30 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

Up to four such trips per day could be operated with one small accessible vehicle and one to two part-time drivers.

Small Town Service. Ideally, each small town with population greater than 2,000 should be served with local dial-a-ride service during the weekday. In Red River County, this would include Clarksville.

A generally recommended design for this type of service is one accessible vehicle operating at least seven hours per weekday (for example, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) to provide local residents with transportation to local medical appointments, shopping, human services, personal business, part-time employment, etc. The service area for such service is typically within the city limits (and extending out to any popular shopping or medical destinations that may be just beyond the city limits) with all trips scheduled on a real-time (immediate-response) demand-response basis.

This service could also coordinate with the rural fixed-schedule service previously described to improve mobility for rural residents traveling into town.

Commuter Service - Primary commuter needs are to Paris. This service can start as a vanpool and graduate to fixed/flex route as demand warrants. Increasing demand exists for trips to Texarkana.

Titus County

Fixed Schedule Rural Service. Regular service is recommended from the outlying rural communities into Mount Pleasant, where local fixed-route service is already provided. At a minimum, each part of the county should be served one to two days per week (for the least populated areas), up to as many as five days per week for more heavily populated rural communities.

This service should provide at least two trips per day, and ideally four trips per day to give rural residents flexibility on when they can come into and depart from the city. Flexible routes could be designed to pick up people in the rural communities in the morning and bring them into the city. Once in the city, the route could either connect with existing Mount Pleasant transit services, or provide curb-to-curb service on the same vehicle that transported them to the city.

• An early morning trip (for example, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.) could be timed to meet job shifts, early morning medical appointments, human service day program start times, etc.



- A late-morning trip (for example, 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.) could serve people coming to town for mid-day appointments, senior center activities, shopping, etc.
- An early afternoon trip (for example, 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.) could take people home from medical appointments, those in town for senior center programs, and other activities that end earlier in the day.
- A late afternoon/ early evening trip (for example, 4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.) could be designed to pick people up from their jobs, day programs, late afternoon appointments, etc. and return them to their rural homes.

Commuter Service - Commuter service is proposed to Mt. Vernon to serve the Lowes facility; this could expand to Hopkins County.

Titus County residents have a need for out of area service with medical destinations in Marshall, Longview and Tyler, including VA Facilities.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES & EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS

All Transit services will be operated by TRAX, the regional transit system that also operates the T-Line service in Texarkana. The management and staff have experience in implementing new effective service as evidenced by the Paris Metro fixed-route service. The efforts will be evaluated both on a cost and delivery of service basis. Feedback from passengers and advocates it central to this. Finding ways to close the gaps, securing the funding to do so and starting service is the goal. Modifications will be made as necessary throughout the process.

CONCLUSION

Ark-Tex Council of Governments has processed a large amount of data during the process of formulating this plan. The opportunities to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders has reinforced certain needs and made us aware of others. It is clear that while good work is being done daily to meet the transportation needs of the residents of NE Texas, there is much more that needs to be accomplished. ATCOG stands committed to introducing new programs and expanding existing ones during the 5 year period covered by this plan. Identifying and securing new sources of revenue will be integral to reaching this goal.

Signature Pages



Small Urban Transit District (5307)	– Texarkana Urban Transit District
Erio Elmoe	2/16/17
Signature Eric Elmore	Date
Rural Transit District – Ark-Tex Cou	ncil of Governments
Signature Nandy Hoehn	Date
MPO – Texarkana Metropolitan Pla	nning Organization
Signature ReaDonna Jones	Date
Non-Profit Transportation Provider Signature Myra Jones	- Opportunities Inc. 2/14/17 Date
Private Transportation Provider –)	′ellow Cab, Paris Tx
Signature Wendy Raney	Date



Signature evidencing involvement, support and approval of the 5 Year Coordinated Transportation Plan for Ark-Tex Council of Governments: Small Urban Transit District (5307) - Texarkana Urban Transit District Signature **Eric Elmore** Date Rural Transit District - Ark-Tex Council of Governments Nancy Hoehn Signature Date MPO - Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization ReaDonna Jones Date Non-Profit Transportation Provider - Opportunities Inc. Signature Myra Jones Date

Date

Private Transportation Provider - Yellow Cab, Paris Tx

Wendy Raney

Signature

Signature evidencing involvement, support and approval of the 5 Year Coordinated Transportation Plan for Ark-Tex Council of Governments: Small Urban Transit District (5307) – Texarkana Urban Transit District Signature Eric Elmore Date Rural Transit District - Ark-Tex Council of Governments Signature Nancy Hoehn Date MPO – Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization Signature ReaDonna Jones Date Non-Profit Transportation Provider - Opportunities Inc. Signature Myra Jones Date Private Transportation Provider – Yellow Cab, Paris Tx

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	with Disabilities (Agencies) Star Legal Aid – Paris office	
 Signature	Sharon Reynerson	Date
Lone	e Star Legal Aid – Texarkana office	
 Signature	Lisa Crittenden	Date
Disa	bility Rights TX – Dallas Office	
Signature	Chris McGreal	Date
Red	River Valley Down's Syndrome Society	
Signature	(Krissy Crites	Date
Lake	es Regional MHMR	
 Signature	Christina Sampson	Date
Individuals	with Disabilities (Community Members)	
William	- Conho	2-14-17
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		2-14-17
Signature 4	Rhonda Johnson	Date



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Lake	s Regional MHMR		
Signature	Christina Sampson	_	Date
Individuals	with Disabilities (Con	munity Members)	
Signature	William Conder	-	Date
Signature	Rhonda Johnson	-	Date



Individuals with Disabilities (Agencies)

Lone Star Legal Aid - Paris office Signature Sharon Reynerson Date Lone Star Legal, Aid - Texarkana office Lisa Crittenden Disability Rights TX - Dallas Office Signature Chris McGreal Date Red River Valley Down's Syndrome Society Krissy Crites Signature Date Lakes Regional MHMR Signature Christina Sampson Date Individuals with Disabilities (Community Members) Signature William Conder Date

Date

Rhonda Johnson

Signature



Individuals 65+ (Agencies)	
Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	
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Signature Lisa Reeve	Date
Senior Citizen Services of Texarkana & NE Texas	/
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Cherry aga	7
Signature Eden Leach	Date
Lamar County Human Resource Council	
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Signature Shelly Braziel	Date
Individuals 65+ (Community Members)	
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Workforce Representatives	
Paris Junior College Workforce Development	, ,
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Ramela anglin PJC President	0115/2017
Signature For Sheila Reece	Date
Texas Workforce Solutions — Vocational Rehabilit	ation Services
Signature Karen Sanders	Date



Human Service Providers	
United Way of Lamar County	
A. O. Carl	2/15/17
Signature April Carl	Date
Randy Sam's Shelter	
Signature Jennifer Laurent	Date
King's Daughters	7
Signature Kay McNeal	Date
Veteran's Representatives Veteran Service Officer	
Signature Laura Bivens	Date
Signature Macy Martinson	Date
Advocates for Children Lamar County Head Start	
Signature Jeanne Dunlop	Date
CASA for Kids	
Signature Sharon Eubanks	Date



Human Service Providers

Un	ited Way of Lamar County	
Signature	April Carl	Date
Ran	ndy Sam's Shelter	
Signature	Jennifer Laurent	Date
King	g's Daughters	
Signature	Kay McNeal	 Date
	Representatives Texas Veteran's Resource Center Charles Cowgill	Date
Signature	Macy Martinson	Date
Advocates for Lama	or Children Ir County Head Start	
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Signature	Jeanne Dunlop	Date
CASA	A for Kids	
Signature	Sharon Eubanks	Date



Advocates f	or Children (cont.)	
Child	ren's Advoçacy Center	
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Child	Development Center	
Signature	Shonda Brown	Date
Boys	& Girls Club	2-14,17
Signature	Jerome Pitkins	Date
Members of		2-15-17
Signature	Édwin Pickle	Date
	Robbin Bass (Rep. John Ratcliff's office) Advocates/Agencies -Lamar County Health Department	Date
Signature	Emily Neely	Date
New Suite	Hope Center	2/15/17
Signature	Tantita Scott	Date
Hous	ing Authority of Texarkana	
Signature	 Tarisha Duson	Date



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Signature	Rebecca Peevy	_	Date	_
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Signature	Shonda Brown	_	Date	
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Signature	Edwin Pickle	•	Date	-
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Signature	Tantita Scott	-	Date	
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	for Children (cont.) Idren's Advocacy Cent	er	
Signature	Rebecca Peevy	-	Date
Chil	d Development Cente	r	
Signature	Shonda Brown	-	Date
Boys	s & Girls Club		
Signature	Henry Shaw	-	Date
Members o	f the Public		
Signature	Edwin Pickie		Date
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Signature	Robbin Bass (Rep. J	ohn Ratcliff's office)	Date
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Coordinated Transportation Plan Ark-Tex Council of Governments



	for Children (cont.) dren's Advocacy Center	
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Coordinated Transportation Plan Ark-Tex Council of Governments



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Signature	Lt. Michelle Huchinson	Date
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Signature	Amy Smith	Date
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Signature	John Godwin	Date
Red	Cross	
Signature	Jeff Cottingham	Date
Bow	ie County Community Supervision	& Corrections Department
Signature	Jack Pappas	Date



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Signature	Robert Morris	Date
Dom	estic Violence Prever	ntion Txk
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ATTACHMENT 1

Deliverable #1
Report on Transportation Resources