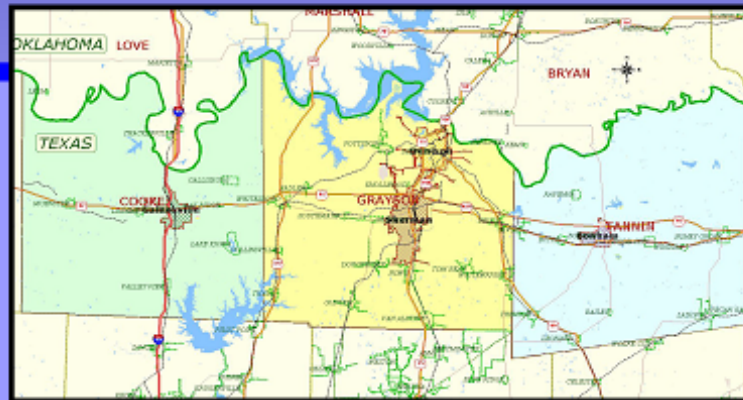


Regional Public Coordination Transportation Plan Texoma Region #22

COOKE • GRAYSON • FANNIN



MISSION

“Developing Transportation
Services”

December 1, 2006
Prepared for TxDOT Transportation

Texoma Council of Governments • 1117 Gallagher Dr. • Sherman, Texas 75090

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1 Executive Summary

Participants in the three-county Texoma Region's coordination process have a history of working together.

During the last six month period, the regional committee has met monthly, designed interview and survey forms, contacted area providers, researched availability of services and funding, developed a Mission Statement, Goals, Objectives and Action Items and increased the communication between the involved entities. Public meetings were conducted in conjunction with TxDOT to increase public awareness of the project.

As an integral part of this project, each of the 24 regions studying public transportation in their area was charged with assessing Barriers, Constraints and Best Practices in public transportation. This Coordination Committee addressed this issue with enthusiasm, generating significant topics for discussion. The primary barrier identified was the legislative requirement for the use of alternative fueled vehicles in public transportation. The increased cost of vehicles, decreased miles per gallon, increased maintenance and scarce fueling stations have resulted in increased cost of public transportation. This is in direct opposition to the goal of the Transportation Coordination Project.

As a function of our location in the state, sparse population, and tight transportation budgets, the committee did not identify significant overlaps in service. The primary service provider is Texoma Paratransit Service (TAPS), a non-profit, public transportation system providing transportation to persons of all ages. TAPS operates a fleet of 65 vehicles in Cooke, Fannin, Grayson, Montague, Clay, and Wise counties.

A list of unmet needs, identified by the regional committee included the following:

- A lack of service to some major job/training/educational facilities
- Insufficient services in the rural areas
- Aging vehicles
- Need for a central place to wait for rural passengers awaiting their return trip
- Need for a centralized transportation information system
- Need for travel training
- Rural senior citizens and people with disabilities suffer from a lack of reliable transportation
- Accessible taxis
- Enhance services to meet unmet needs

From this information, and from the identified barriers and constraints, the regional committee developed a list of proposed coordination projects that include consolidating programs (consolidated fuel purchase), JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) or New Freedom funded projects. The projects include:

Proposed JARC and New Freedom projects:

- Hire and coordinate a regional Mobility Manager position to improve current and unmet needs

Proposed JARC projects:

- Facilitate a Sr. Center with transportation services
- Service to job training/education programs
- Funding the cost of trips to job/training/education programs

Proposed New Freedom projects:

- Improve vehicle fleet
- Improve currant and unmet needs

Before any project receives state or federal funds, it must fit into the policy goals of the Regional Transportation Plan prepared by the Sherman-Denison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Although this plan is developed looking forward 5 years, it is recommended that this plan be updated annually to address changes in the region as well as new SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) requirements. A full update is required by TxDOT every two years. The Regional Transportation Plan is not a wish list but a plan with recommended projects that have a reasonable chance of being funded.

As projects are approved for federal funding, they are placed in the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) list. The TIP covers a four year period and lists projects that should be implemented over this period. The TIP is reviewed and updated every quarter. Funding constraints as well as project readiness are some of the factors considered by the MPO in setting priorities for the TIP.

The committee will pursue funding opportunities for the proposed projects, and will work to examine the appropriateness of other items outlined in this report. There is continued need for leadership and a central coordination effort. It is the consensus of this Committee though planning is ongoing and a constant challenge, it is time for implementation.

The Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan for the Texoma Region was approved by the boards of participating entities; these approvals are included in Appendix C.

2 Background

Legislative Mandate

Under HB3588, the Legislature has mandated statewide coordination of public transportation and the development of Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plans. The bill included five points to consider when developing regionally coordinated transit system plans. The five points of the plan, and potential local applications, appear below:

- **Eliminate waste and inefficiencies**
This is generally applied to transportation systems and providers that have overlapping service areas, or to those areas where there are a multitude of agencies or providers whose service delivery could be combined. The Texoma region's service area is served by one public transportation provider, as well as three cab companies and several human service agencies.
- **Generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service**
This approach generally includes enhanced coordination of trips, including increasing the percentages of trips that are shared-rides with other passengers. Prior to the beginning of the regional planning process, several human service agencies in the Texoma region purchased tickets or monthly passes from TAPS to distribute to eligible clients.
- **Further the state's efforts to reduce air pollution**
The Texoma region is currently an attainment area but bordering a non-attainment area that could impact Texoma. Any increased utilization of public transportation or any sort of shared-ride system will have the effect of reducing emissions, and will therefore assist in our region's continuing to have high air quality standards.
- **Ensure maximum coverage of service area**
Coverage in the rural counties of the region meets most transportation needs. The weakest coverage is within Fannin County area, in an area that is outside of the current route structure, but still within the area. As the city of Bonham continues to grow, this area of weak service coverage will represent increasing numbers of potential transit users.
- **To the maximum extent feasible, use the existing transportation providers, and in particular the fixed route components of the existing networks, to meet the client transportation requirements of the state's social service agencies and their clients.**
The stakeholders in the Texoma region are committed to working together to provide exemplary, coordinated transportation. Given current funding levels, however, large-scale expansion of service is not feasible.

Goals for coordination

In general, the goals for the Texoma region's coordination effort are:

- To develop and implement a strategy for support of public transportation
- To enhance efficiency and effectiveness of current public transportation services
- To develop a regional public transportation coordination service plan
- To increase the resources available to enhance public transportation services in the region.

Structure

History

The first meeting of the regional committee was held in April 2005. Subsequent meetings were held in May, July, August, and November. By the spring of 2006, Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) had been selected as the provider and meetings resumed in April 2006.

Planning Organization

The committee includes representatives of the following:

- TAPS
- Texoma Council of Governments
- MHMR
- TxDOT
- Sherman/Denison Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Workforce Texoma
- Area Agency on Aging and Disability
- United Way of Grayson County
- Goodwill Industries
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Red River Hospital
- Grayson County College
- APART
- County Judges
- Senator Office-Estes
- Senator Office-Phillips
- Precinct Commissioners
- General Public from all 3 counties

TCOG serves as the lead agency and is responsible for all associated reports and documents.

Additional Information

The stakeholders committee, listed above, is intended to be somewhat fluid, with organizations and representatives changing as needs, interests, personnel, and funding changes. The committee is particularly interested in continuing to identify consumers, or their advocates, who may be willing to participate in the process.

In addition to transit providers, there are several agencies in the region that use state-funded vehicles for client transportation. These have been identified as follows:

- Tri-County Senior Nutrition Project, Inc.
- Stone Brook Assisted Living
- The Willows Retirement
- Goodwill Industries of Sherman
- Grayson County Senior Citizens' Centers
- Special Education Department – Region 10
- The Homestead of Denison
- The Renaissance
- Texoma Specialty
- Denison Nursing and Rehabilitation
- Wesley Village Retirement Community
- Clyde W. Cosper Texas State Veterans Home, Bonham

All of these agencies were invited to participate in the regional planning process; only one has done so.

People in the Texoma region are encouraged to get involved in developing the Regional Transportation Plan.

Various agencies purchase bus passes or contract directly for distribution to their clients:

Agency
Region 10 of TEA
VA Hospital
Texoma Medical Center
Wilson N Jones Hospital
Wound Care Center
Texoma Workforce of Grayson County
Gainesville Center Management
Blue Cross Blue Shield
Adult Day Activity Center
Community Health Center
Becca Health Care
Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities
Senior Health
Grayson County Interfaith Hospitality
Grayson County Children's Protective Services
Wesley Village Center for Independent Living
Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
Peterbilt
Texas Instruments
Texas Department of Transportation – Medical Transportation Program
Women's Protective Services
Sherman Crisis Center
Sherman Independent School District
Grayson County Adult Day Care
Raytheon
MHMR

3 Characteristics of the Region

Regional Geography and Demographics

Due to statewide shifts in population patterns the population growth in our region is slower than that of the entire state (+6.07% from 2000-2004 in the region; +7.3% statewide). Of the three counties in the region, all had population increases, with one county (Fannin) showing an increase of nearly 6.9%.

While our population is not growing at the same rate as that of the rest of the state, the need for transportation services is increasing. The Texoma region has more residents with disabilities (22.67% region; 16.0%) statewide and more persons age 65 and above (15.4% region, 9.9% statewide.) These population components are traditionally seen as being heavily transit-dependent.

The rural counties in our region are being hit particularly hard, as younger, more educated residents follow job opportunities to urban areas, leaving behind a demographic that is more dependent upon a wide range of social services.

These demographic characteristics present challenges to transportation providers. It is clear that there will continue to be increased demand for social services. And while the Texoma region makes up approximately 1% of the square miles in the state, the population accounts for approximately only .80% of the statewide total population. Transportation providers will have to look for ways to meet increasing demands for service with stagnant – or decreased – funding levels.

County	Square Miles	Population (2000 Census)	Population (2004 Estimate)	% Change 2000-2004	Actual Change	% with Disabilities	% Persons Below Poverty	% Persons 65 years and older
Cooke	874	36,363	38,634	+6.2%	+2,271	21.0%	14.1%	14.9%
Fannin	891	31,242	33,395	+6.9%	+2,153	25.0%	17.9%	16.1%
Grayson	934	110,595	116,244	+5.1%	+5,649	22.0%	13.3%	15.1%
Region Total	2,699	178,200	188,273	+6.07%	+10,073	22.67%	15.10%	15.4%
Texas	261,797	20,851,820	22,490,022	+7.3%	+1,638,202	16.0%	15.4%	9.9%

Regional Agencies Responsible for Transportation Planning

TAPS is the public transportation provider for the Texoma Region. The Sherman/Denison MPO provides planning efforts to TAPS. Although the S/D MPO has been a part of the regional coordination effort since its inception, they do not provide financial or technical support for planning efforts that fall outside of the metropolitan area boundary. The bulk of the Texoma region is outside of this urban boundary.

Descriptions of the Region's Public Transportation Providers

The public transportation provider in the Texoma region is TAPS their service areas, by county, are shown below:

County	County Seat	Transportation Provider
Cooke	Gainesville	TAPS
Fannin	Bonham	TAPS
Grayson	Sherman	TAPS

TAPS

TAPS operates in seven (7) counties, with three (3) of the counties in the Texoma Region. TAPS services include demand response, commuter bus services and special services.

	Square Miles	Population '00	Rider Trips '05
Clay	1,057	11,006	6,381
Cooke	874	36,363	76,122
Fannin	891	31,242	49,122
Grayson	934	110,595	51,212
Jack	920	8,763	5,703
Montague	931	19,117	45,706
Urban			140,413
Wise	905	48,793	22,374

In FY2005, TAPS carried a total of 397,033 passengers; due in part of several factors including congestion and high gasoline prices, FY2006 ridership increased. The ridership for both years is shown below:

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Rural	256,620	272,994
Urban	140,413	135,797
Cooke	76,122	86,521
Fannin	49,122	56,689
Grayson	51,212	50,741
Total	397,033	408,791

Due to funding regulations, TAPS is in a constant struggle to meet transportation needs of a growing demand on a shrinking budget.

4 Coordinated Transportation Plan

Coordination Actions/Strategies

During the time of the plan's formulation, the Texoma Transportation Steering Committee examined unmet transportation needs in the region and looked at areas where transportation services were duplicated among different transportation providers; a coordination plan was then developed.

The Texoma Transportation Steering Committee participated in completion of **Framework for Action** during monthly meetings and individually. The respondent information was presented during the October 31, 2006 meeting. The corresponding chart is included with this report. The distribution of the needs has continued in an effort to recognize the transportation needs of the Texoma area. 1780 surveys have been received.

Texas State Planning Region 22 has actively pursued inter-regional coordination. Members of the Texoma Transportation Steering Committee have attended meetings in State Planning Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 14. Committee members from Regions 3 and 4 have attended meetings in Region 22. These activities have resulted in increased communication between and among regions and will facilitate the completion of the Region's goals for coordinated transportation.

Current Assessment

The public transportation providers in the region, while working with constrained budgets, do their best to meeting basic transportation needs. Because of the nature of providing transportation in sparsely populated areas, TAPS transit provider has a strong history of working with the rural communities to assist when needed.

The committee found no significant duplication of transportation services in the Texoma region. The state funded vehicles that were located were primarily being used by nursing homes or care centers, only one of which elected to participate in the coordination plan. The ones that did not participate were generally located in very remote areas of the region and the numbers of trips represented by these agencies, and their vehicles, was determined to have an insignificant impact upon overall regional transportation.

From the beginning of this region's planning process, the committee felt that the key to regional transportation coordination was the Medicaid contract; this contract represents a large number of the trips taken by the rural providers and the cab company. Irving Holdings, Inc. was selected as the regional Medicaid contractor and began serving in that capacity on July 1, 2006. TAPS is serving as the subcontractor to Irving Holdings, Inc. on the project.

Unmet Needs

The regional committee has worked to identify the following unmet needs in the region:

- Lack of fixed route service around the region located in the cities of Sherman and Denison makes it inconvenient for participants in job training/education programs to have transportation to the programs
- Maintenance of aging vehicles

- Long trip times and long waits for return trips for passengers coming into Texoma from rural areas; no place for them to wait comfortably until return trip
- Different program requirements leave some individuals without transportation
- A way to provide information about all transportation programs in the region
- Lack of coordinated travel training program in the region
- Some citizens suffer from a lack of reliable transportation. This is due to a variety of causes, including aging vehicles operated by senior citizen centers and assisted living facilities in rural areas. These centers may not have adequate funding to purchase transportation from rural providers, and when their vehicles are inoperable, there is not reliable transportation for their clients. Interest in seeking grant funding for these centers varies widely, according to interest from center staffs, and from the supporters. The level of transportation service offered through these centers is somewhat uneven.

Opportunity for Improvement

Given current resources, the transportation provider's direct provision of transit services is well-coordinated. The providers have had a strong working relationship for several years, and the history of working together is evident in these communities.

There are opportunities of coordination in other areas including:

- Purchasing vehicles
- Purchasing fuel
- Funding
- Facilities use/sharing
- Trip scheduling and dispatching
- Travel training/bus familiarization
- Fleet insurance
- Health insurance
- Map design and printing
- Website design and hosting
- Training
- Advertising and public relations

Barriers and Constraints

A brief description of barriers and constraints to coordination reported herein were derived from public outreach and steering committee activities to date within the Texoma region. Items and issues listed represent real experiences as well as perceptions reported by those attending public meetings and responding to the transportation survey. The Steering committee distributed surveys working with numerous social service agencies. Most of the responses derived from community outreach were consumer-oriented and much of their focus is related to the delivery and experience of transportation services.

As part of their support for the regional coordination effort, the Texas Department of Transportation has pledged their assistance in eliminating items that are identified acting as barriers or constraints to achieving a fully-coordinated plan.

Generally speaking, a barrier can be considered a state or federal statute or regulation, or formal policies. Barriers are generally written into statute, code, regulation, or contract language for funding agreements. Barriers will take formal legislative action to resolve.

Constraints are considered to be something that limits freedom, but that are not generally codified. Using this guideline, constraints are most appropriately addressed and solved at a local level.

The following barriers and constraints have been identified by participants in the local coordination process.

Barrier	How it obstructs coordinated services
A lack of resources – capital and operating – to meet current needs.	<p>The planning committee has not identified any significant duplication of service provision in our region.</p> <p>The urban and rural transit networks are restricted because they cannot grow to meet demand. Our region is older, poorer, and more disabled than the state average, which means that demand for transportation services will continue to grow. Funding levels that do not meet current needs will certainly not be sufficient in the future, as demand for services increases.</p>
Alternative fuel vehicle requirement Concern. A lack of coordination from agencies and providers.	Some transportation service providers do not want other agencies to know the internal workings of their businesses, what they have (vehicles, grant money, contracts, agreements, etc.), or what they do (service provided, how they obtain grants, etc.) This may be out of concern that too much information sharing will disadvantage their operations, may ultimately reduce their share of funds, or may expose business practices that may not be accepted by others. Trust can only be gained by effective communication, small successes, and mutual respect.
Transportation needs that cross into other regions or states.	The transportation needs of persons who live outside our boundaries, but who may require services available only in our region, may not be adequately met.
Medical trips – such as dialysis – scheduled for facilities that may not be the closest destination.	The Medicaid scheduling requirement does not permit the transportation provider to operate in the most efficient manner, which therefore places even more pressure on an already-strained system.
Cost of insurance/high insurance requirements	<p>Costs that rise faster than our funding allocations mean that more of our funds are pulled away from direct provision of transportation in order to cover overhead expenses.</p> <p>Additionally, in situations where a municipality’s risk managers get involved in coordinated transportation services, their insurance requirements place an extreme hardship (at best) on private providers who wish to coordinate with public entities.</p>

<p>Inflexible Medicaid rules.</p>	<p>Rigid Medicaid rules result in two situations – one is that Medicaid passengers are given preferential treatment when compared to other system passengers; the other is that Medicaid rules do not give transportation providers the ability to operate at peak proficiency. This impacts any funding that is allocated by formula, as we are penalized for the inefficiencies that (1) we do not cause, and (2) we cannot change.</p> <p>Additionally, we are looking at a program to provide a safe place to wait for rural passengers who have long waits for their return trips. This is a serious issue in our region, but it appears that Medicaid rules would prohibit payment of trips from a central wait location. This means that, while we could provide a safe and comfortable waiting location for rural passengers, that facility could not be used for Medicaid recipients.</p>
<p>Limited Provider service area.</p>	<p>Because of not being able to use Federal funds for operating assistance, TAPS is not able to grow the system to meet increasing needs. This impact ripples throughout our community and region – for example, Texoma Workforce assists residents in finding jobs, but in many cases newly-hired individuals are unable to have transportation to their job, at a guaranteed time. And, as noted previously, we cannot use rural vehicles to provide trips in the un- or under-served areas of urban Texoma.</p>
<p>Project continuity for JARC and New Freedom projects</p>	<p>Our region intends to include JARC and NF projects in our plan, and to apply for these funds. While JARC and NF projects will greatly assist in meeting unmet needs in our region, if the projects are only funded for one year, that puts the transit providers in a bad position with passengers who will come to depend on service that we cannot guarantee the ability to provide past the end of the grant commitment. In many cases, it takes months to develop ridership on new programs, and it is likely that ridership could take almost the entire first (only) year to grow to acceptable levels.</p> <p>Not only will there be an even greater obstacle for our passengers who had no service before, but it will create a lingering problem of public relations and credibility for the providers.</p>
<p>Funding levels that are formula-based actually provide a disincentive for coordination</p>	<p>All public transportation providers whose funds are provided by formula/performance measures are actually in jeopardy of decreased funding amounts if the number of trips they provide decreases, or if their performance factors are impacted negatively. This is a huge disincentive for coordination –the provider in our region can not afford to lose funding.</p>

511 System	The lack of a 511 system in our area means that we are not able to provide comprehensive transportation information across the region.
Restrictions on vehicle size/fuel types that are funded by the state	<p>In many cases, it would be much more economical to operate smaller vehicles, such as accessible mini-vans, to provide trips to remote areas with low demand for transportation services. Purchase of these vehicles is prohibited if state funds are used.</p> <p>Likewise, restrictions on fuel types or requirements for low-emission vehicles hampers the providers' ability to purchase vehicles that more closely meet the specific transportation needs in the region.</p>
Lack of knowledge of various transportation options	Clients may be eligible for Medicaid trips, but use agency transportation instead; or clients may not fully understand the transportation options that are available and instead opt for not taking trips
Emergency Evacuation Coordination	<p>Coordination among transportation services has no greater challenge than during emergency evacuations. Despite great strides during the last year, many special needs users still are uninformed about regional transportation plans for and what to do during emergency evacuations.</p> <p>Users who are required to pre-register their evacuation needs often need outreach and additional assistance.</p> <p>There is a perception that FEMA can take vehicles from federally funded agencies during emergencies. They must be participants in regional plans to ensure that local preplanning is effective and not compromised and that FEMA'S plans are supportable.</p>

Constraint	How it obstructs coordinated service
Ongoing problems with the TEJAS system	The TEJAS system does not automatically update, so the TSAP must pull trips multiple times during the day, which wastes already-full staff time.
Different needs of assistance (or expectations of assistance) among different service populations and how that balances with transit system's need for efficiency	Increased levels of customer assistance will impact transit system efficiency; our funding is formula-based so this will ultimately impact how much funding we can receive. A comprehensive, region-wide travel training program would help, but a program of that sort is constrained by funding and staffing.
In our region, we have identified almost no duplicated services. Our concern is that coordination will end up being more costly than what we currently provide. Our provider in our region is already operating as tightly as possible, and without duplicated services to "harvest" for funding, it is hard to see how we can afford to meet the needs that are currently not being met in our region.	Our provider does not have additional funds to meet unmet needs and there are not significant amounts of duplicated services that can be eliminated. That means there is not additional funding that can be reallocated.
Katrina evacuees have much different expectations of public transit; current service meets neither their needs nor their expectations	Approximately 150 Katrina evacuees have relocated to Texoma. The housing where most of them live is not on a bus route; most of these residents are familiar with using transit and would use it here to get to their jobs, but are not able to. This hinders their ability to work.
Cost of trips	Agencies that have a choice between directly providing transportation or providing gas vouchers for their consumers frequently find it more cost-effective to do either of those options rather than scheduling trips on rural providers.
Awareness	There is a perception that many public officials are often unaware of community needs for public transportation and or do not understand sources of funding for public transportation. Thus, they do not become involved in coordination, or do not become effective advocates for the needs of their constituencies. In some communities, businesses and major employers have a limited awareness of transportation options for their employees.

Recommended Actions

Based on the identified unmet needs, the barriers, and the constraints, the regional planning committee has developed the following strategy to assist in filling the gaps in service that exist in the Texoma region.

Unmet Need	Remediation Strategy
Limited service to Southeastern part of Grayson County	Develop an on-demand shared-ride service to Whitewright Civic Center. Propose for JARC funding.
Kentucky Town Expand TAPS fixed route service	Establish Sr. Civic Center Propose for JARC funding Dependant upon additional funding
Maintenance of vehicles	Establish maintenance agreements with TxDOT
High trip costs to human service agencies who wish to use rural providers	Examine the possibility of negotiated rates for some trips. Other trips could be funding through JARC program. Propose for JARC funding.
Different program requirements; need for a centralized information system for transportation-related items	Implement 511 system
Need for travel training	Develop region-wide Mobility Manager position, who can be responsible for travel training, including curriculum development and direct training. Propose for New Freedom funding.

Other Coordination Opportunities	Remediation Strategy
Consolidated vehicle purchases	Requires approval of funding entities
Consolidated fuel purchases	Requires approval of funding entities
Central trip scheduling and dispatching for Medicaid trips	Related to implementation of 511 system
Consolidated insurance purchases	Requires approval of funding entities
Map design and printing	Requires interest and support from transit providers
Coordinated websites	Requires interest and support from transit providers
Coordinated employee training programs	Requires interest and support from transit providers
Coordinated advertising and public relations	Requires interest and support from transit providers, but could be done in conjunction with implementation of 511 system

Timeline for Implementation

Based on the identified opportunities for coordination, the Texoma Transportation Texoma Transportation Steering Committee proposes the following timeline:

Item	Date
Study applicability and interest in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated vehicle purchase • Consolidated fuel purchase • Consolidated insurance purchases • Map design and printing • Coordinated websites • Coordinated employee training programs • Coordinated advertising and public relations 	Second quarter, FY2007
Study in more detail the needs for vehicle maintenance and possibility for centralized/coordinated maintenance facility	Second quarter, FY2007
Submit JARC application to include the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service for Kentucky Town (Civic Center) • Human/social service agency trip rate for program participants 	As soon as possible
Submit New Freedom application to include the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Mobility Manager position, to include travel training program 	As soon as possible
Implement 511 system	Verify possible statewide implementation dates
Central trip scheduling and dispatching of Medicaid trips	Related to 511 system implementation

Members of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Committee will meet as needed but no less than on a quarterly basis, during the following year, 2007. The goals and objectives of the present plan will be reviewed and progress will be assessed. Revisions will be made as necessary and progress will be documented.

The Coordination Committee will continue to recruit new members and will solicit input from the public through public meetings. It is planned that these meetings will be held in conjunction with public meetings held by TxDOT. This cooperative presentation will not only increase coordination among agencies but will coordinate the information presented to the public.

Area employers and businesses will be contacted to schedule meetings. Members of the Coordination Committee have committed to addressing these businesses and will provide information and answer questions to further assess the public transportation needs of the area. Area assisted living facilities will be included to address the needs of the elderly. Contact with churches will continue, to include the needs and assets of these entities as the Coordination Project continues to grow.

5 Public Involvement

Public input was vital to ensuring that this plan will meet the needs and aspirations of our citizens. Surveys were taken at ten public meetings held throughout the region. In addition, 1500 households were randomly surveyed, and 280 residents responded to surveys mailed with their water bills. The results show strong support for increased and improved public transit services. Respondents in both the household and water bill surveys considered improved bus service to be the most important part of the plan, at the same time acknowledging that expanded hours of service will be essential to transit's success. Though participants at the public meetings ranked increased bus service as their top priority, fully 60 percent also supported developing accessible right-of-way streets, sidewalks, intersections, traffic controls, bike lanes and related facilities.

Public hearings were advertised on TCOG web site and in the Herald Democrat, Fannin County Shopper, Texoma E-News, Gainesville News; these newspapers are distributed throughout the region and is typically used by all providers for notices of public hearings or public listening sessions.

163 citizens attended the Gainesville meeting; they were there to address some specific concerns about TTC-35 rather than to comment on the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Planning process.

A low turnout from the public is typical for the region.

Appendix A – Provider Inventory

Name	Ridership (Annual)	Annual Cost	Rider Profile	Routes	Hours	Reservations	Fleet	Accessible	Fuel Types
TAPS			General Public, Elderly, Students, ADA	Demand Response	6AM-6PM M-F	Day in Advance/ Same Day			Gasoline Diesel Propane
American Red Cross	No Data								
Area Agency of Aging		\$2850.	Elderly/ADA	Tri-Cnty	As Needed	As Needed		Yes	
The Homestead of Denison	360 +	\$46,419.	Elderly/ADA	Tri-Cnty	6AM-6PM M-F		Van	Yes	Gas Diesel
The Renaissance Assisted Living	1000	\$60,000.	Elderly	Tri-Cnty	7AM-6PM	1-Day Notice	4-Van	2-Yes 2-No	Gas Diesel
Wesley Village	2912	\$9,301. Est.	Elderly	Tri-Cnty	8AM-4:30PM M-F	1-Day Notice	3-Bus 1-Van	Yes	Gas
Brentwood Place	2500	\$9,700.	Elderly	Grayson	9AM-5PM	As Needed	1-8pasg. Van	Yes	Gas
The Willows	350	\$5,000.	Elderly	Grayson	3-Day a Wk	24 Hr. Notice	1-15pasg. Bus	Yes	Gas
Texoma Specialty Care Center	4000	\$5,000. Appr.	Elderly	Grayson	24 Hr	As Needed	6-Van	Yes	Gas
Stone Brook	1040		Elderly	Grayson	9AM-5PM M-F	As Needed	1-Bus	Yes	Gas
Collinsville ISD	1350	\$76,983.	Students	3-Route School area			School Buses	No	Diesel
Grayson County MHMR	No Data								
Clyde W. Cosper TX State Veterans Home	1700	\$42,000.	Elderly/ADA/ Veterans	All Areas (as requested by Physicians)	24/7	As requested by Physicians	1 Van	Yes	Gas
Denison Nursing & Rehabilitation	200 +		ADA/Elderly	Tri-Cnty	24/7	As Needed	1 Vehicle	Yes	Gas
Grayson Cnty Public Health District	No Data								
Cooke Cnty Public Health District	No Data								
Fannin Cnty Public Health District	No Data								
Home Hospice of Grayson Cnty	No Data								
The Rehabilitation Center	No Data								
The Salvation Army	No Data								
WNJ Hospital	No Data								
TMC Hospital	No Data								
Red River Hospital	No Data								
Community Specialty Hospital	4000	\$5,000.		Tri-Cnty	24 Hrs	As Needed	1-6pasg. Van	Yes	Gas
Crawford Street Place, Inc.	No Data								
Texoma Workforce	Uses TAPS								
DADD	No Data								
TANF	No Data								
Heartland Flyer			Elderly/ADA Students/ General Public	Located Stop Cooke Cnty	8AM-9PM Daily		Passenger Rail	Yes	

Appendix B – List of Participants

Wayne Dodson	Public – Cooke Cnty
Goldie Hall	Public – Grayson Cnty
Phylis Alexander	Public – Grayson Cnty
Robin McCoy	Senator Craig Estes Office
Penny Sansom	TxDOT
Carol Mayo	TxDOT
Bobby Littlefield	TxDOT
Janis Thompson	Texoma Council of Governments/AAA
Bill Herrington	City of Van Alstyne
Gentry Grant	Cowboy Cab
Bill Goodson	City of Whitewright
Frances Pelley	TCOG
Sue Ann Stephens	TCOG – Economic Development
Peggy Shelley	TCOG – 911
Sarah Somers	TCOG – Criminal Justice & Emergency Planning
Robert Wood	S/D MPO
Ven Hammonds	TAPS
James Sasser	Irving Holdings – Yellow Cab, Inc.
Wally Johnson	S/D MPO
Freddy Leslie	TAPS
Tony Maddox	Texoma Regional MHMR
DeAnn Bilner	TAPS
Jan Bishop	APART
Jeri Waterloo	APART
David Henderson	United Way of Grayson County
Glynis Alexander	Goodwill Industries
J.D. Hall	Fannin County Judge
Bob Rhoden	Texoma Workforce
Kathy Roberts	Texas Department of Health and Human Services
James Powell	NCTCOG
Michelle Bloomer	NCTCOG
Tim McGraw	Grayson County Judge
Tom Parker	Red River Regional Hospital
Nora Hodges	Nortex
Bill Freeman	Cooke County Judge
John Overman	Texas Transportation Institute
Richard Grandy	Texoma Medical Center
Christie Shearer	Texoma Council of Governments/Transit Planner

Appendix C – Sources

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/home/>

ADA
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
<http://www.transportation.org/>

American Public Human Services Association
http://www.aphsa.org/home/home_news.asp

American Public Transportation Association
<http://www.apta.com/>

The Beverly Foundation
<http://beverlyfoundation.org>

Bureau of Labor Statistics
<http://www.bls.gov/>

Community Transportation Association of America
<http://www.ctaa.org/>

Federal Transit Administration
<http://www.fta.dot.gov/>

GPO access
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html>

Just Transportation Alliance
<http://www.justtransportation.org/>

National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates
<http://65.114.146.18/>

National Transit Institute
<http://www.ntionline.com/topic.asp?TopicArea=4>

National Transportation Library
<http://ntl.bts.gov/index.html>

Project Action
http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_homepage

Public Transportation: Wherever Life Takes You
<http://www.publictransportation.org/>

Ride Connection
<http://www.rideconnection.org/>

Rideshare Online

<http://www.rideshareonline.com/index.htm>

Rural Transportation

<http://www.ruraltransportation.org/index.shtml>

Seniors Drivers

<http://www.seniordrivers.org/home/>

Taxicab, Limousine and Paratransit Association

<http://www.tlpa.org/>

Texas Department of Transportation

<http://www.dot.state.tx.us/>

Texas State Date Center

<http://txsdc.utsa.edu/>

Texas Transit Association

<http://www.texasrtransit.org/>

Texas Transportation Institute

<http://tti.tamu.edu/>

Transit Cooperative Research Program

<http://www.tcrponline.org/index.cgi>

The Beverly Foundation

<http://beverlyfoundation.org/>

The Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program

<http://www.planning.dot.gov/default.asp>

Transit Cooperative Research Program

<http://www.tcrponline.org/index.cgi>

United We Ride

<http://www.unitedweride.gov/>

Sherman-Denison MPO

<http://www.sdmppo.org>

COMSIS Corporation (1990) Guidebook for planning small urban and rural transportation programs

Transportation: Environmental justice and social equity: Conference proceedings

Gray, B.H. (1989) urban public transportation glossary. Washington DC: Transportation Research Board, National Research Council

Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. Statewide metropolitan transportation planning. Federal Register 65:02, pp. 33922-33958

Appendix D – Survey Form

Transportation Survey (Cooke, Fannin & Grayson Region)

We need your HELP!!! These survey questions were designed by Texoma Council of Governments, Transportation Department. The purpose of this survey is to analyze and report on service quality, measure consumer satisfaction, create opportunities, develop understanding, detect unmet needs and identify needed service improvements. Please answer all the questions. If you need help completing this form call 903-813-3577 Monday thru Friday.

1. What is your age group?
 - a. 0-15
 - b. 16-64
 - c. 65 or over

 2. What is your county residence and town (city)?
 - a. Cooke Town (city) _____
 - b. Fannin
 - c. Grayson

 3. Employment Status:
 - a. Outside the home
 - b. Home base business
 - c. Retired
 - d. Student
 - e. Not currently employed outside the home

 4. Any public assistance or welfare payments from state or local welfare office?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

 5. Do you know that TAPS is available for all citizens in your area?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

 6. What kinds of transportation do you normally use to travel around your area? (Circle all that apply):
 - a. Car, Truck or Van
 - b. Bus (TAP'S)
 - c. Taxi
 - d. Rides from a friend or relative
 - e. Walking
 - f. Bicycle
 - g. Other (please specify) _____

 7. How often do you drive? _____
 8. How often do you use public transportation? _____

 9. Where do you go on public transportation?
 - a. Get to and from work
 - b. School and educational activities
 - c. Shopping
 - d. Social visits to family and friends
 - e. Medical Appointments
 - f. Other

 10. What time do you usually leave home for work?
_____ (Time) a.m. p.m.

 11. How many minutes does it usually take you to get to work? _____ minutes

 12. Are any persons in your household, age 16 or older, dependent on public transportation or rides from friends or relatives because they do not have a car or do not drive?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

 13. Which best describes where you live:
 - a. Sherman, Denison urban area
-

- b. In a rural area or small to medium-size town

14. Which statements best fit your situation (circle all that apply)?

- a. I drive my own vehicle
- b. I cannot drive a car due to a disability
- c. I cannot legally drive a vehicle
- d. I can drive but can't afford a vehicle
- e. I need a wheelchair accessible vehicle but they are expensive and I cannot get help to buy one
- f. I don't drive, but a relative or friend usually takes me wherever I need to go
- g. I use public transportation when it is available and convenient
- h. Other (please specify) _____

15. Is transportation?

- a. A major problem that has a big effect on your life
- b. A fairly significant problem
- c. An occasional problem
- d. Not a problem

16. Circle any of the following statements that describe how transportation problems affect your life:

- a. Lack of transportation limits my work opportunities
- b. Lack of transportation makes it difficult for me to run errands and take care of household business
- c. I don't get to see people much because I don't have transportation
- d. Lack of transportation for medical care is a real problem for me
- e. My lack of transportation contributes to family tension.
- f. I need better transportation in order to live on my own in the community
- g. Transportation cost keep me from getting out in the community as often as I need or would like
- h. Other (please specify) _____

17. Which transportation problems are in your area? (Circle all that apply)

- a. No public transportation
- b. Not enough public transportation
- c. No door-to-door (curb-to-curb) transportation service
- d. Not enough door-to-door (curb-to-curb) transportation
- e. Lack of sidewalks, bike routes
- f. Inaccessible environments (streets, sidewalks, crossings, etc.)
- g. No way to get from one town to another

18. If your area has public transportation services, do any of these factors affect your ability to use the system effectively?

- a. Lack of sidewalks
- b. Inaccessible right-of-way (streets), sidewalks, intersections, traffic controls, etc
- c. Difficulty in crossing streets safely
- d. Limited hours of service
- e. Long distances to travel between home, bus stops and final destination
- f. Not enough stops
- g. Infrequent service
- h. It is unsafe to walk and wait in my area
- i. Lack of schedule information in accessible form
- j. Bad weather
- k. A traveling companion is needed but unavailable

19. If convenient, on-call door-to-door rides were available to you, approximately how many one-way rides would you need each month? _____ Rides per month?

20. Do you have a disability?

- a. Mobility or orthopedic impairment
- b. Visual impairment
- c. Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- d. Mental Illness
- e. Developmental disability
- f. Other: _____

21. Do your needs require special accommodations such as wheelchair accessibility, stretcher, child car seat, animal assistance?

- a. Yes
- b. No

22. What are some of the things you liked about public transportation?

23. What are some of the things that can be better about public transportation? (Attach additional page if necessary)

Appendix E – Inventory Form

Texoma Regional Transportation HB3588 Requirement for Regional Transportation Plans

Re: Legislation Transportation Requirement
Please forward an Inventory list with the following:

Name of Organization/Facility: _____

Annual Cost (Expense): _____

Mileage (Annual): _____

Number of Vehicles: _____

Ridership (Annual): _____

Rider Profile (Circle all that apply): General Public, Elderly, ADA, Students

Trips per Year: _____

Routes: _____

Hours of Service: _____

Reservations (example, 24 Hr notice, etc): _____

Fleet Type: _____

Accessible (if so, how many) _____

Fuel Types: Gas _____, Propane _____, Diesel _____,

After completion of required information, please forward to my attention by mail, email and/or fax.
We appreciate your time and efforts. If you have questions please feel free to contact me.