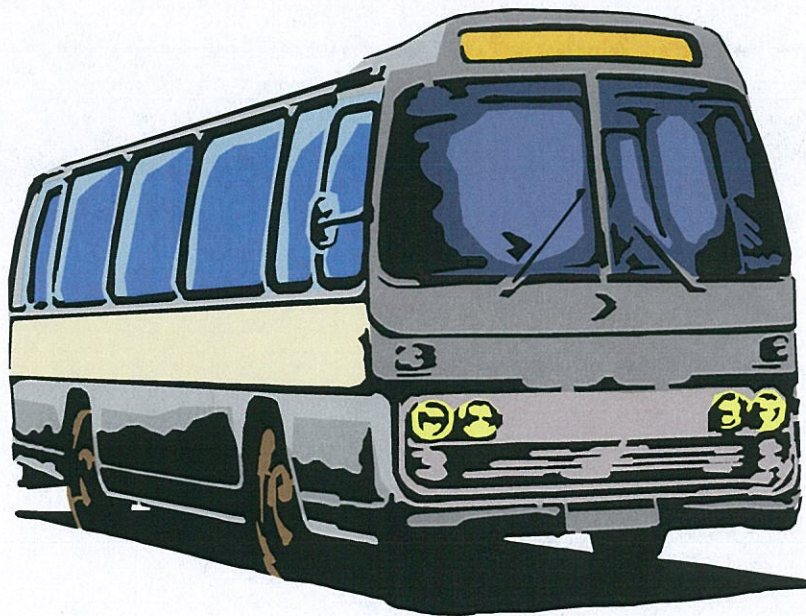


Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation

Regionally Coordinated Public Transportation Plan
Effective 2011-2015



Equal Access to Transportation for All

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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Background of Coordinated Planning Process to Date

The Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) has worked towards a goal of coordinated transportation planning since the 1990s. The Panhandle of Texas remains a leader in coordination and cooperation between public and private transportation providers. In 2006 the Regional Transportation Advisory Group (RTAG) was officially created in response to the Texas Legislature's passage of HB 3588 and the Federal Transportation Administration's (FTA) guidelines regarding the planning requirements for Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) funding. The group immediately began working towards adopting a Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan and in January 2007 that plan was formally accepted as a guideline for transportation planning in the Texas Panhandle. In examining the original plan, RTAG has been integral in completing most of the objectives set forth. Those that have not been fully implemented have at the very least been explored and researched and are still in the development phase. RTAG was meeting on a bi-monthly basis from 2006 until 2008 when it was determined that a quarterly meeting would be a better schedule for our RTAG members. Changing the meeting dates to quarterly allows the PRPC to present more material information at the meetings.

Also in 2008, the PRPC hired a transportation coordinator/mobility manager as a way to fulfill one of the goals set forth in the original 2007 plan. The mobility manager has been tasked with completing several projects relating to coordination planning. Part of that position's responsibilities includes helping members of RTAG write grants for projects they would like to see come to fruition. Also included is maintaining an open dialogue with TxDOT officials and staying current on the latest grant programs offered including JARC and NF. There have been 2 successful New Freedom and one JARC program funded in the last 3 years as well as a Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) project in order to research and conduct feasibility studies into the Senior Ambassador Coalition (SAC) voucher program. SAC is a 501(c)(3) organization which operates for the sole purpose of improving the life of Seniors in the Texas Panhandle. During this time the mobility manager has had the unique opportunity of working

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with several organizations working towards improving the quality of life for Texas Panhandle residents. There is also a large initiative currently on the table to begin an Independent Transportation Network, the first of its kind in the state, which will greatly enhance access to transportation resources for Senior Citizens and those with Visual Impairments.

Methodology of Obtaining Public Input

In the process of creating the 2007 Regionally Coordinated Plan, the consultants went through 10 public meetings, 7 workshops, and several stakeholder interviews and site visits. Many of the issues that were problems during that time period remain problems today even with the projects that have been completed to date. Therefore, much of the information gleaned at that time is very much still applicable today. However, in an effort to obtain more up-to-date information there were several methods utilized.

Beginning in late 2009 PRPC staff started working towards the goal of creating a set of surveys which could be sent out to stakeholders and clients of public transportation in order to collect more relevant data. Surveys were developed over a 2 to 3 month period and once functionally completed were delivered to Dr. David Rausch, Teel Bivins Professor of Political Science, at West Texas A&M University. Through a series of phone calls and e-mails Dr. Rausch reviewed and critiqued the surveys for the purposes of outlining any possible statistical misgivings that wording in the surveys might create once responses were tabulated. He suggested that staff conduct pre-testing of the surveys in order to determine any misunderstandings which staff may have overlooked. In January and February 2010 surveys were pre-tested on a few individuals and small changes were made in order to make the surveys as user-friendly and easily understandable as possible. Finally in the months of March-June 2010 the surveys were distributed to over 250 individuals with 55 responses. Our original target was to have a 10% response rate and these responses totaled almost 25%. Surveys were also sent out to all of the public and private transportation providers which we are aware of in the Texas Panhandle, including taxi services. None of the taxi services responded to the survey but there were 4 other responses mostly from those providers already involved in the coordinated planning process. There were also surveys sent out to service providers such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities and there were 10 responses to that survey.

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Also held during this time period were 2 (RTAG) meetings at which public involvement was always solicited and welcomed. In July 2010 PRPC staff held three separate public hearings around the Panhandle for the purposes of obtaining public input into the process. On July 14, 2010, a meeting was held at PRPC offices at 5:30 in the afternoon. The hearing was left open until 6:00 at which point it was closed due to no public participation. The next day, July 15, 2010, two public hearings were held in Pampa, Texas at 10:00a.m. and Hereford, Texas at 3:00p.m. respectively. The Pampa meeting was attended by two city staff members, the Director of Public Works and an Engineer in Training. The Hereford meeting had no participants. The problems faced in this area come with the fact that the Texas Panhandle spans 26,000 square miles and there are only two public transportation providers. More about the geography and demographics of this region will be explored in Chapter 3.

RTAG members, in August 2011, adopted a new name for the group in order to better describe the role of the group in the transportation planning process. After adopting the goals and objectives outlined later in this document, as well as a mission and vision statement, RTAG adopted the name PROMPT which stands for the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation. RTAG will be referred to as PROMPT from this point forward in this document.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

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There are only two public transit providers for the region's 26 counties; Amarillo City Transit serves the City of Amarillo and Panhandle Transit takes care of everything else. So, unlike some of the planning regions in the state, there is less complexity in the Panhandle region because of this clear division. Issues such as overlapping service areas or large gaps in service areas are not present. Many of the health and human service agencies work at some level with one or both of these agencies to meet their transportation needs.

This chapter includes a profile for Amarillo City Transit and Panhandle Transit, including service characteristics (service area, routes, and schedules), vehicles, and budget. Following this section, a review of the planning partners is provided. (Note: Planning partners are defined as key or representative human service agencies that responded to the Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey and/or participated in follow-up phone calls or site visits. Many of these agencies are not members of the official planning committee, the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation.)

Amarillo City Transit - Organization Structure and Staffing

Amarillo City Transit (ACT) is managed by the City of Amarillo. ACT's staff includes:

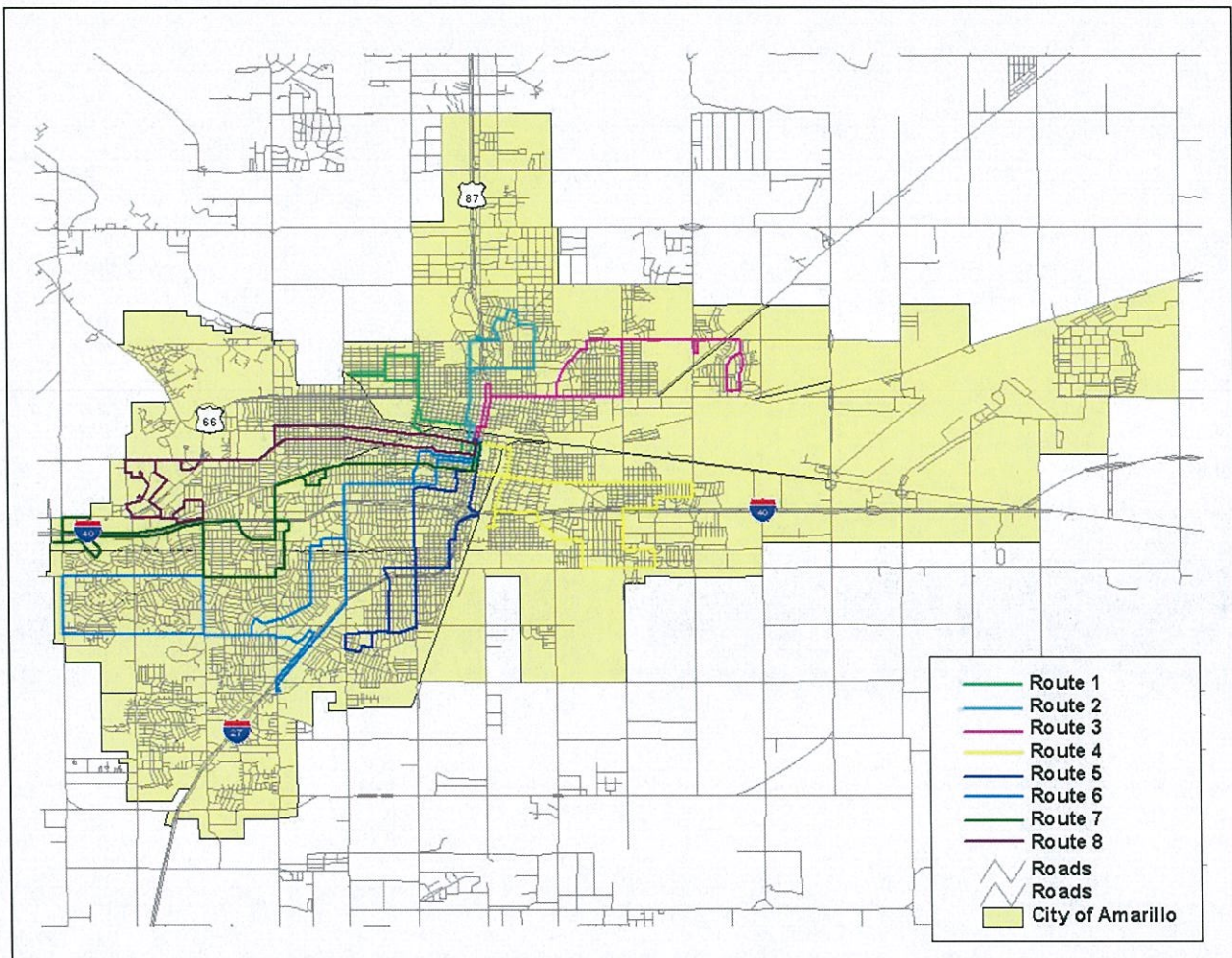
- 1 director
- 2 supervisors
- 1 trainer
- 4 dispatchers
- 31 drivers (21 Fixed Route and 10 Spec-Trans)
- 1 shop supervisor
- 5 mechanics; and
- 3 maintenance personnel (staff that park and clean vehicles).

Service Area

The City of Amarillo is about 100 square miles. ACT covers 85% of the city and has a service area of about 74 square miles. Areas not served by ACT include that portion of the city east of Lakeside Drive. Both fixed route and demand response service operate within these boundaries.

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ACT Routes and Amarillo City Limits



Service Characteristics

ACT operates eight fixed routes within the city limits. It operates six days a week, Monday to Saturday, from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, with no service on Sunday. There is no service on the following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Eight routes make up the fixed-route system with each starting in the downtown at the main transfer point at 3rd and Fillmore. The system pulses at the station every 30 to 45 minutes to allow riders to transfer between routes. Transfers are free, cannot be used to make the return trip, and are time-limited. Spec-Trans is the demand-response system. It operates six vehicles and

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serves all points within ACT's service area (i.e., does not limit its service to a ¾ mile corridor abutting a fixed route).

Fare

ACT charges 75¢ for adults, 60¢ for children over the age of six; 35¢ for senior citizens, people with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders. The Spec-Trans system charges \$1.50 for adults and 75¢ for children. Personal care attendants ride for free.

Fleet Characteristics

ACT's has 17 30-foot buses to serve its fixed route. During peak service periods, it operates 12 vehicles, leaving five spare. All the vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and audio and visual information systems for impaired persons. Five of the vehicles have "kneeling" capability. Each vehicle has a seating capacity of 23. ACT operates seven minibuses (less than 30 feet) to serve Spec-Trans eligible riders. During peak-service periods, it operates five vehicles, leaving two spare. All the Spec-Trans vehicles are wheelchair accessible with a seating capacity of eight.

Significant Issues Faced by Organization

ACT has faced increasingly tight funding and will soon be in a position where it will need to consider an alternative to fixed route with a complementary para-transit service. Over a period of five years (from 2004 to 2009), ACT has experienced a permanent reduction of \$272,824 in state support – from \$672,980 to \$400,156. ACT is currently receiving \$400,156 (FY2010) compared to \$672,980 (FY2004). Decreases in state funding are due to a TxDOT funding formula for public transit which link funding levels to performance, transit need, and local financial commitment to transit.

Furthermore, ACT will lose about \$1.34 million in federal funding support for operations once Amarillo's population exceeds 200,000, which was expected by the 2010 census. However, planning documents and projections from the City of Amarillo are projecting a population of approximately 199,000. Therefore, the fear of losing that federal funding has decreased somewhat. Once census numbers are tabulated fully, the extent of the loss of revenue will be

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further explained. The increase in fuel costs from 2006-2010 have also exacerbated the problems faced by ACT regarding transit funding.

Staffing is another significant issue faced by ACT. New drivers at ACT start at \$9.75 an hour with no increases automatically given upon full-time employment. There was an increase given upon becoming a full-time driver; however, due to budgetary demands, this is no longer an automatic option. This salary level makes it very difficult to attract and retain qualified employees. Consequently, ACT faces a turnover rate of about 50 percent each year. High turnover affects ACT by generating high overtime costs.

Panhandle Transit

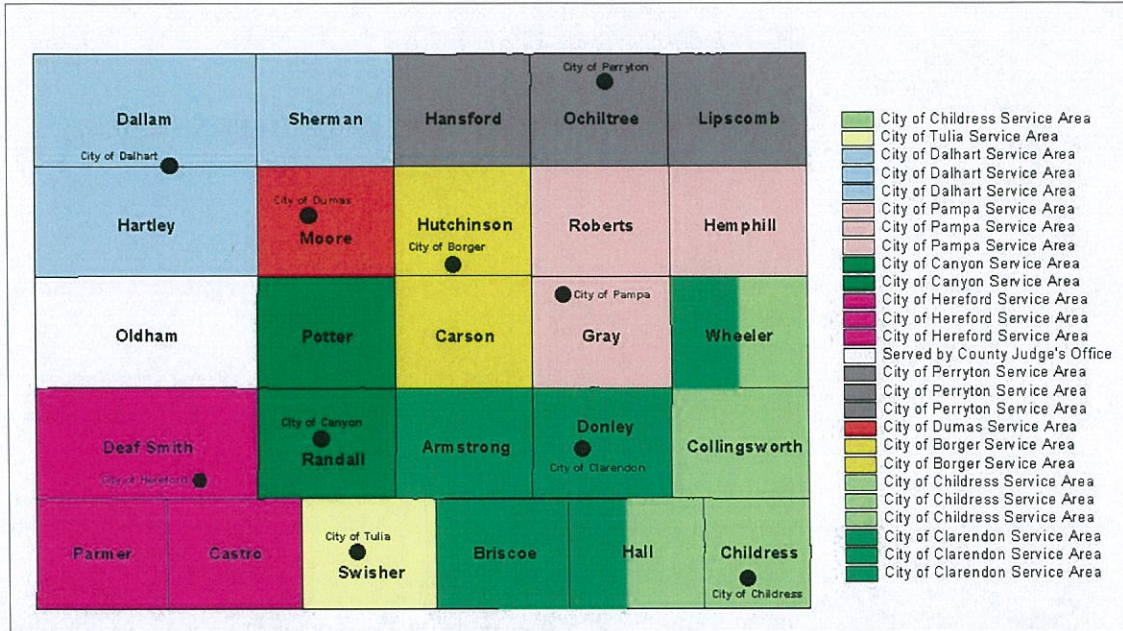
Panhandle Transit is the name of the service operated by the Panhandle Rural Transit District. Panhandle Transit is one program under the management of Panhandle Community Services, a nonprofit organization that provides human and social service assistance to low-income individuals in the Panhandle.

Service Area

The Panhandle is comprised of 26 counties and covers nearly 26,000 miles. Panhandle Transit serves this entire region, minus the 100.24 square miles within the urbanized area of the city of Amarillo. It has divided the service area into ten service regions that are each managed by a local office.

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Panhandle Transit Service Offices and Service Regions



Service Characteristics

Panhandle Transit operates a demand-response system, five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. There is no service on Saturdays or Sundays or on the following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. Characteristics for each of the regional offices are described in Tables 2.3 to 2.11.

Fare

Panhandle Transit charges \$1 for a one-way trip in town and \$20 for a monthly pass that is good for an unlimited number of in-town trips. It charges 17.5¢ per mile for travel outside of a community, plus a minimum charge of \$2.50.

Fleet Characteristics

Panhandle Transit has a fleet of 52 cut-away style vans in its fleet. Forty-one of these vehicles, or 77 percent, are wheelchair accessible; ten are spares/high-mileage vehicles.

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Ridership and Operating Costs

During the 2004 – 2005 operating period, Panhandle Transit delivered 139,784 one-way trips at a cost of approximately \$1.4 million, or \$10.30 per trip. See Appendix C: FY04 to FY05 Panhandle Transit Operating Statistics by County.

Significant Issues Faced by Organization

Like ACT, Panhandle Transit is facing difficulties attracting and retaining qualified drivers. The recent change to the Medicaid contract has worsened this situation as drivers may now be asked to work non-traditional hours; in fact, some are being asked to start work at 2:00 am or 3:00 am in order to get dialysis patients to the clinic for early morning sessions. With beginning pay at \$6.15 an hour, it cannot find drivers willing to work these hours for this pay.

Vehicles are another issue for Panhandle Transit. Given the size of the region, its vehicles are worked very hard and have a significant mileage on them; for example, eight vehicles have over 200,000 miles. It has \$360,000 in local funds that it will use to purchase new vehicles and has recently requested a Letter of No Prejudice from the Federal Transit Administration in order to capture and leverage this value against potential future federal funds up to \$1.8 million.

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Planning Partners – Health and Human Services Organizations

Amarillo High Plains Dialysis Center

Program

The Amarillo High Plains Dialysis Center provides dialysis treatment. It operates from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and from 8:00 to 5:30 pm on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. (In order to meet the needs of all of its patients, it has to have Saturday service. The lack of public transportation on Saturdays creates a barrier to receiving treatment.) There are two centers in Amarillo; one in Pampa and one in Hereford. For each of the four centers, 200 to 225 people are served daily.

Transit Resources

The center does not directly provide transportation but assists patients to access transportation resources if needed. The center depends upon Medicaid transportation, Amarillo City Transit (especially Spec-Trans), Jan Werner Transportation, and Panhandle Transit. The Center has no financial resources available to provide or support transportation. However, the Texas Kidney Health is a state program available to patients. Texas Kidney Health reimburses drivers 13¢ per mile for transportation costs. In order to qualify for this program, patients must make under \$60,000 annually and the reimbursement limit is \$200 per month.

Transit Needs

Between 600 - 800 kidney dialysis patients use some form of public transportation three times a week; this equates to 1,800 – 2,400 trips per week. Amarillo High Plains Dialysis Center reports the greatest transportation challenge has been delivering service on Saturdays and holidays when the public systems are not running. However, AMR, the Medicaid contractor for the region since June 2006, now provides service on Saturdays through its two sub-contractors.

Similarly, patients were provided with curb-to-curb service; this lower level of service can be a problem for some patients if they are in a weakened state after treatment. Now, AMR provides door-to-door service through its sub-contractors.

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No subscription service is available. Appointments must be set every week.

Coordination Issues

At one time, the center investigated the feasibility of establishing a brokerage in Amarillo. Insurance costs, training needs to meet insurance specification, staffing issues (who would drive, coordinate and dispatch) stalled the project. Prior to this, some level of coordinated service was provided through the Panhandle Transportation Consortium.

Other issues with coordination include:

- **Public Acceptance:** Patients believe there is a stigma with riding a bus.
- **Level of Service:** Patients want point-to-point service; especially after receiving treatment, they are medically fragile and need to return home quickly. If the coordination resulted in a longer trip, coordination of services would not serve dialysis patients well.

Desired Outcomes from Coordination Study

More accessibility and availability, especially in areas outside of Amarillo; more trips by Panhandle Transit, provision of service for patients on Holidays.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Amarillo Senior Citizens Association

Program

The Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA) is a non-profit organization that provides congregate meals, support services, and recreation to the seniors of Amarillo and Potter and Randall counties. It has 1,200 members who pay a \$35 annual membership fee; however, services are available to nonmembers as well. Last year ASCA provided its service to 5,380 individuals. The ASCA is open to the public for congregate meals which are available free-of-charge but a \$5 donation is strongly encouraged. The ASCA receives funding from private foundations and a small amount through a federal employment program for senior citizens (Senior Aid Program). It receives no funding support from the city or state.

Transit Resources

The ASCA does not provide transportation. Its staff of 20 includes a resource/referral clerk who is charged with reviewing members' needs and ensuring that appointments and resources are coordinated to ensure the needs are met. Transportation is one of the needs that may be reviewed. The resource/referral clerk will arrange transportation for members through its buddy system – other ASCA members who are willing to pick-up and take people to the center or an appointment. At its core, the buddy system reflects the friendship between people at the center and is fairly limited. On average, between 20 and 25 trips are provided each month through this buddy system.

Transit Needs

The ASCA owned a van that was used for group outings but that was sold about one year ago when the ASCA didn't have the funds to operate it – rising insurance and fuel costs were of particular concern. The ASCA estimates it spent approximately \$2,000 annually on insurance and maintenance costs and felt like it did not use the van enough to warrant the expense. The ASCA used to have a contract with Jan Werner Transportation but this was allowed to expire as the ASCA had some concerns with the level of service that Jan Werner was able to provide. (Jan Werner's service was in high demand and trips would be booked up two weeks in advance. Preference was given to medical trips and some members could not conveniently schedule personal or shopping trips that ASCA wanted to take.)

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The ASCA felt like many members did not use public transportation because: 1) the fixed-route schedule was too structured; 2) bus stops were difficult to access; 3) the Spec-Trans service is perceived by members as charity and they do not want to accept charity.

Coordination Issues

The ASCA is a member of the Seniors Ambassador Program and would be interested in exploring a volunteer program directed toward providing service to seniors. The ASCA may have resources that it can access through its Senior Aid Program that could help cover overhead costs.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

A transit program directed toward seniors that provides a higher level of service and greater flexibility.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

American Medical Response (AMR)

Program

AMR is the Medicaid contractor for Region 1 since June 2006. AMR is a transportation broker and is able to optimize Medicaid transportation by using multiple sub-contractors whose vehicles are routed through its RouteMatch system.

Transit Resources

AMR is the transportation broker for the Medicaid contract in Region 1. As such, AMR does not directly own or operate any vehicles but instead relies on its network of subcontractors. In Region 1 this includes LeFleur Transportation, Taxi Pro, and Panhandle Transit.

Transit Needs

A brokerage benefits from a large pool of subcontractors that compete for business. The participation of more qualified taxi and transportation providers will improve the cost-effectiveness of the service.

Coordination Issues

The timing of the award for the Medicaid contract in Spring 2006 resulted in a disruption to the coordination process, further exacerbated by a lack of adequate communication between the prior Medicaid-contract holder, Panhandle Transit and AMR. At the beginning of AMR's contract, the company requested that all ten taxi companies and Panhandle Transit be part of the AMR provider network. Some of these entities did not communicate with AMR during that period, as the contract award was regarded as a "contingency award." AMR had an obligation to meet the contractual requirements. However, TxDOT had not communicated with Panhandle Transit to inform them that its bid had been considered non-responsive at this point. Thus, LeFleur was subcontracted.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

A larger AMR provider network

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Area Agency on the Aging of the Panhandle

Program

The Area Agency on the Aging of the Panhandle (AAAP) provides support services to individuals 60 years and older. The AAAP provides the planning, coordination and implementation of many services, such as: congregate and home delivered meals, emergency response services, adult day care, minor home repairs/modifications, homemaker services, personal care assistance, legal assistance/representation, and transportation. Most of AAAP's clients are low-income.

Transit Resources

AAAP does not directly provide transportation but coordinates with Amarillo City Transit, Panhandle Transit, and Jan Werner Transportation. AAAP may pay for 100 percent of the cost of the trip for authorized clients. AAAP directly purchases service through an open bid. In 2009, AAAP budgeted \$98,031 for transportation which calculates to 4,853 one-way trips at a cost of \$20.20 per one-way trip. In 2010 the AAA began a pilot project for a Transportation Voucher program. The AAA set aside \$5,000 and began offering services in March of 2010. As of July 2010, 97 one-way trips were paid for at an average cost of \$17.15 per trip. These trips are unique in that the client not only has transportation, but that the driver acts as an escort and does not leave the client until he or she is dropped off at his or her final destination for the day.

Transit Needs

The biggest challenges are addressing trip cancellations, trips that need to be scheduled with less than a 24-hour advance reservation, and prejudice against riding the bus ("cultural expectations"). Another issue is finding drivers for its congregate meals program.

Coordination Issues

AAAP currently sits on the Senior Ambassador Coalition/ transportation task force (SAC). SAC investigated the possibility of establishing an Independent Transit Network (ITN) in 2006 and concluded at that time that the start-up costs and high fares made the program unfeasible. However, through a TxDOT funded research process, SAC has once again begun to look into the possibility of establishing an ITN and hopes to determine full feasibility within the next 2 years.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Desired Outcome for Coordination Study

More flexible and higher level of service for seniors

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

American Cancer Society, Road to Recovery Program

Program

The Road to Recovery Program (RRP) is a volunteer program that provides medical trips to cancer patients. It is organized under the American Cancer Society. The service is free-of-charge; however, clients must be referred to the program through a practitioner.

Transit Resources

RRP relies on volunteers who supply their own vehicles to drive patients to their medical appointments and the pharmacy. The American Cancer Society will indemnify the driver and provide training. It currently has fifty drivers who work in Hereford, Clarendon, Memphis, Pampa, Borger as well as Amarillo. RRP will take clients to any destination. Lubbock and Wichita Falls are common destinations outside of the 26-county Panhandle region. The program is funded 100 percent from public donations.

Transit Needs

The RRP coordinator feels that there is a large, unmet need but does not have a measure of how many trips are unmet. There are approximately seven clients that cannot be helped for every one that is. In Amarillo, there were about 2573 requests for services in the Panhandle and only 354 clients actually received services. The common denominator among the RRP clients is that they do not have anyone else that they can turn to.

Coordination Issues

Many of the clients cannot take public transit because they are in such a weakened state and need help getting into their homes. RRP is seen as the last resource. RRP staffers will move patients out of RRP into existing transport programs once it is feasible because of the high demand. RRP works with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program to find volunteer drivers. Recently ACS/RRP began receiving service from a New Patient Service Center coordinated out of Austin. This can cause issues within itself as the sheer distance from Austin to Amarillo often causes a disconnect in understanding the special issues in the Texas Panhandle.

Desired Outcome for Coordination Study

Assistance in filling volunteer driver positions

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

ASC Industries

Program

Texas Panhandle Mental Health Mental Retardation (TPMHMR) has served individuals of the Texas Panhandle with mental illness, mental retardation or developmental delays since the mid-1960s. The Amarillo State Center (ASC) has workshops located in seven locations in the Texas Panhandle: Amarillo, Borger, Clarendon, Dumas, Hereford, Pampa and Perryton. ASC offers Employment Assistance. This program secures competitive employment in the community. The program includes job development, employment planning and assistance in obtaining employment.

Transit Resources

ASC relies on Spec Trans to provide work trips to clients who do not live in foster homes. Some clients live in one of 15 group homes. Group homes typically have one van that is driven by the attendant who provides transportation to that home's residents. ASC also owns sedans that are used for site visits. ASC encourages clients to use Fixed Route, if possible, and ASC provides this travel training certification. ASC performs all its vehicle maintenance in-house. It is not known how much is spent on transportation because it is not accounted for as a line item. Overall, the sources of funding include: DSHS/DADS; MHMR; other state programs; Medicaid/Medicare, local funding and federal funding.

Transit Needs

It is difficult to schedule a trip on short notice when there is an urgent need but not an issue that would normally be considered an emergency; for example, a client may have an acute case of the flu and needs to see a doctor that day. If they are unable to reserve a ride through Spec-Trans on short-notice, they have in the past called an ambulance to provide the trip. Transportation is impossible to access before 6:30 am or after 6:30 pm. Many of ASC's clients work schedules outside of transit operating hours. Transportation is very difficult or impossible to access in the River Road area of Amarillo. ASC vehicles may or may not have a wheelchair lift; however the ones with the lifts are in bad shape. It lacks the funds to purchase enough new vehicles. In rural areas, there are times when clients are unable to get to work or are stranded at work if the weather is bad and Panhandle Transit is not running.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Coordination Issues

Spec-Trans typically delivers over 500 trips to ASC clients each month. The average monthly ridership is about 2,000 trips; therefore, about one-quarter of all trips are in support of a single state agency. A one-way Spec-Trans trip costs ACT \$31.00 to provide and the fare is \$1.50. Each trip is therefore subsidized at \$29.50/trip. At 500 trips a month, this represents at \$14,750 subsidy per month that is provided by the public transit system.

Van pools would be difficult for ASC clients since they cannot exceed 3 percent of the workplace. Without a higher concentration of clients, vanpools would not be feasible.

Desired Outcomes from Coordination Study

Service that can respond to trips with a short-term notice (less than 24 hours)

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Baptist Saint Anthony Home Care

Program

Baptist Saint Anthony Outreach Home Care (BSA) provides services and support during short, critical health periods. The program sends social workers to patient's home to check on their health and make sure they are in a safe condition. Because of this contact, BSA outreach workers become aware of the transportation needs of its clients although the organization does not provide transportation.

Transit Resources

BSA does not provide transportation but the social worker will help the client to access transportation resources if needed. BSA has an occupational therapist that is trained in analyzing a patient's driving skills.

Transit Needs

Elderly people or those with medical issues need more flexible scheduling that does not require 24-hour advance notice. This need stems from people who may not be able to keep appointments because of their more fragile state of health. For example, on the day the appointment is made, the client feels fine but, on the day of appointment, he/she may be feeling unwell. Also, a client may need a medical appointment on short-notice (less than 24 hour) but one that would not ordinarily require an EMS trip.

There are perception issues regarding transit services. Some clients feel like there is a stigma attached to riding and there is a perception on the behalf of the BSA that feelings of pride prevent clients from using the bus. There are restrictions on the number of trips that can be made under one reservation and there is no service on Sunday (when many elderly people want to attend church). Also, there is a need for more flexible (extensive) service and service on Sundays. BSA clients and some elderly people need a higher level of transit service than that which is provided by Spec Trans, such as help getting into their homes and with packages.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Coordination Issues

The BSA is a member of the Senior Ambassador Program. A subcommittee of this group, the Senior Citizen Ambassador Transportation Task Force focuses on transportation issues for seniors. This group has formed a non-profit corporation in order to address the transit needs it sees and may base its program on the Independent Transportation Network model (<http://www.itnamerica.org/>). One challenge identified thus far in setting up an ITN includes recruiting volunteers. Another is the cost of the program may prohibit access to people on a fixed income.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

More flexible service for seniors

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Craig Methodist Retirement Community

Program

The Craig Methodist Retirement Community (CMRC) provides long-term nursing care and assisted living services for over 350 clients. It is organized on a model of progressive care where there are different facilities available to help clients to transition between phases of dependency. The facility includes cottages, apartments, and licensed assisted-living and nursing-care centers. Other facilities include a pharmacy and an Alzheimer's care unit.

Transit Resources

CMRC provides transportation to its clients. It operates one 18-passenger bus and one nine-passenger van, both with lifts. It employs 1.75 full-time equivalents to provide transportation service; one full-time employee who drives the bus and one who assists with scheduling and paperwork. Regular trips for grocery shopping are scheduled on Wednesday morning and personal trips are scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. Medical trips take up the capacity on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. CMRC has received funding support from TxDOT to purchase one vehicle.

Transit Needs

Given its resources, CMRC is limited to providing 13 trips per day. The transit coordinator estimates that it cannot meet about five trip requests each week. However, the coordinator feels like residents of the facility would not want to take public transportation but instead would like to receive more services that are restricted to members of the CMRC facility.

Coordination Issues

There is not much use of ACT services by CMRC clients. It wants to continue to provide specialized services from within the CMRC community.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

None at this time

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Department of Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Program

DARS provides rehabilitative services to enable people to return to employment. Eligibility for DARS assistance is determined by the presence of a disability. DARS serves about 2,000 clients annually. DARS does not directly provide transportation to clients but provides support for the purchase of transportation as long as the trip is related to training or rehabilitation for employment. DARS will also provide modifications to personal vehicles to assist with mobility. The DARS Independent Living Services Program will help with adaptive equipment.

Transit Resources

DARS provides a commute subsidy up to \$50 per week to help offset a client's transportation costs. The amount of the subsidy is determined by the distance traveled. DARS purchases about \$3,000 of transportation annually from Panhandle Transit, ACT fixed route, and Spec-Trans. Occasionally, it will purchase taxicab services.

Transit Needs

It is estimated that about 95 percent of DARS' clients have transportation. The five percent of clients without transportation is estimated to be about 40 individuals. The largest transit need is for fixed route, after-hours services.

Coordination Issues

DARS frequently coordinates with the Texas Workforce Commission on a broad range of employment issues but has not focused explicitly on transportation.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

Extended fixed route hours

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Health and Human Services Commission

Program

This description reflects the insights of the Medicaid and Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) eligibility oversight manager. This office oversees the Amarillo offices and the hospital-based staff in Amarillo. In 2005, it served over 15,000 unduplicated clients. There are also offices located in the Texas Panhandle towns of Borger, Childress, Dalhart, Dimmitt, Dumas, Hereford, Memphis, Muleshoe, Pampa, Perryton, Shamrock and Tulia.

Transit Resources

The HHSC arranges for transportation as part of the support it provides to its clients but it does not fund any transportation. It directs clients to United Way's 2-1-1 referral service if a client needs transportation.

Transit Needs

The HHSC does not tabulate the number of clients it refers to transit but estimates that services for the low-income are in great need. In the HHSC office, welfare-to work support services is one of the biggest needs in the Panhandle region. For example, in April 2006, there were 8,334 active cases. For low-income workers or those trying to move from welfare to work, transportation between the work site, child care facilities and home is very difficult. The limitations of the ACT fixed route and its schedule is a limitation to some clients and there is also a gap in service between the cities of Canyon and Amarillo (i.e. inside of city of limits of Amarillo but outside of the ACT service area. However, because it is in the city limits, the area cannot be served by the rural transit provider, Panhandle Transit.)

Coordination Issues

The HHSC believes that there could be a useful partnership between the HHSC and the Texas Workforce to fill the child-care transportation gap. In particular, there is an interest in exploring the use of Work Source funding to transport children to day-care.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

HHSC would like to see a greater recognition among all the stakeholders of the need for more and improved transportation. HHSC would like to see greater transportation resources available for child care for low-income families.

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Hereford Senior Citizens Center

Program

The Hereford Senior Citizens Center (HSCC) provides recreation, support and congregate meals to people 55 years old and above who live in the Hereford area. The program is operated by a paid staff of 12 and a regular volunteer staff between 20 and 25 who assist in the home-delivered meals program.

Transit Resources

The HSCC has four vehicles. Three vans are used to deliver meals and one van is used for client transportation. The delivery vans are used from 10 am to 12 pm. The client van is used from 8 am to 4 pm and will take clients to medical, shopping, or other personal appointments locally. Approximately 1.5 full-time equivalents are dedicated to providing transportation. Currently, about \$350 per month is budgeted for transportation (this includes meal delivery transportation costs).

Transit Needs

In the past, HSCC provided trips into Amarillo but this service has been discontinued because it was too costly. The HSCC would resume this service if it had the operating funds and capital to purchase an additional vehicle. The HSCC feels like Panhandle Transit has limited usefulness for its clients because of the need for a higher level of service. At the HSCC, the driver will also serve as a personnel attendant if needed. The HSCC will also provide last-minute trips and/or use private vehicle if needed. Meeting trip needs after 4:00 p.m. is difficult.

Coordination Issues

The HSCC is working with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to recruit volunteers for all of its programs. The HSCC may be interested in working with Panhandle Transit to resume HSCC's service to Amarillo if its vehicles are needed.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

Higher level of service and more responsiveness for trips for seniors

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

Jan Werner Adult Day Care / Transportation

Program

Jan Werner Adult Day Care was formed in 1978. It is a nonprofit organization that serves 143 daycare clients. It delivers service under the Department of Aging and Disability's PACE Program (Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly). It has 135 PACE clients. Jan Werner provides door-through-door transportation to its clients. Certified Nurses Assistants (CNA) act as drivers and provide a very high level of assistance to riders. It provides trips for the Area Agency on Aging. Service is provided from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Transit Resources

Jan Werner Transportation operates 25 vehicles; nine of these vehicles were purchased by TxDOT and the remaining vehicles were purchased by Jan Werner. All of the most-recent vehicle purchases were made by Jan Werner. TxDOT last awarded a vehicle to Jan Werner in 2000. Since then, Jan Werner has purchased eight vehicles with its own resources. There are five additional vehicles on inventory but they are not in use. It maintains its own vehicles at an on-site shop and operates a fueling station. There are three drivers and 13 CNA's that serve as Adult Day Care part-time drivers. Last year, Jan Werner delivered about 65,000 trips and had operating costs of \$374,481 (or \$5.76/trip). However, these operating costs do not allocate the hours CNAs spend driving as transportation expenses. Consequently, the cost per trip is under-reported.

Transit Needs

There is a need for more vehicles. (Currently, Jan Werner sells old vehicles to agencies like the Catholic Family Services.)

Coordination Issues

Jan Werner is able to be as efficient as it is because it can utilize its CNAs as drivers. If Jan Werner were to provide service under a coordinated system, it would want to maintain this operating model. Numerous and cumbersome regulations are also a coordination issue. If Jan Werner had to comply with all the regulations and rules, it would be very difficult to provide the same high-level of service that they currently provide. For example, Jan Werner wants to

Chapter 2: Transportation Resources

continue to provide door-through-door service. If it were to provide service to the city, it would no longer be able to provide door-through-door service because of a prohibition against losing sight of the vehicle.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

Jan Werner would like to see a program like the Panhandle Transportation Consortium 5310 program resumed. This program was streamlined, open to all agencies, and very popular.

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Kings Manor

Program

Kings Manor is nonprofit nursing facility located in Hereford, Texas. An affiliated program to Kings Manor is the Good Samaritan that provides hospice care.

Transit Resources

Kings Manor owns a 1997 van and a 2005 van with a lift that was donated. The Good Samaritan operates three sedans. It employs four part-time van drivers who together work two full-time equivalents. Many of the drivers are nursing assistances and provide an additional level of assistance. Most the trips are medical or shopping trips. It will take clients to Amarillo or Lubbock, if needed for medical purposes. In the past, Kings Manor has received funding support from TxDOT to purchase two vehicles.

Transit Needs

The Kings Manor transportation supervisor believes it has enough resources to fill its needs. It believes that it needs to keep some level of transportation services available at the center because it needs to respond to after-hours or short-notice trips.

Coordination Issues

The Kings Manor transportation supervisor expressed a concern that it would be too difficult to coordinate trips with her clients and those of other agencies. Since many of the clients are in fragile health and have a high need for assistance, there is a concern about mixing them with other riders.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

None at this time

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Panhandle Independent Living Center

Program

The Panhandle Independent Living Center (PILC) provides training, advocacy, and peer counseling to help individuals with disabilities lead independent lives. It is funded through the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Education, and private foundations. All clients that are served have some disability and 23 percent are elderly. Last year, it served 245 unduplicated clients, up from 175 in 2007.

Transit Resources

PILC budgets approximately \$8,000 for transportation (excluding salary). These funds come from federal sources (50 percent), state (25 percent) and private grants (25 percent). It operates two vehicles that it uses to directly provide transportation to its center – a 1989 10-passenger van with a lift and 250,000 miles and a 1993 5-passenger van with a ramp with 120,000 miles. PILC also obtains service from other providers. It operates a summer youth program and local agencies have provided transit services to this program. PILC purchases bus tickets from ACT for people needing transportation to the center. In 2008, PILC began a municipal travel training project funded by the New Freedom Initiative and administered by the Texas Department of Transportation. Current annual funding totals \$100,000.00. The project, expected to continue through 2013 has received match fund support from the Don and Sybil Harrington Foundation and the Mary E. Bivins Foundation.).

Transit Needs

PILC's clients' greatest need for transportation is from 5:00p.m. to 6:00a.m. and on weekends. PILC strives to provide daytime transportation as drivers are available. Trips to the airport are another need because there is no accessible transportation to the airport.

Coordination Issues

Through referrals from United Way and allied agencies, PILC has provided transportation for people in wheelchairs that need a trip that is critical but does not warrant an emergency call. It does not advertise this service because it does not have the capacity to fill trip demand. PILC would like to be more available to the public but its insurance limits it to short trips. Conversely,

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it does not want to become a “taxi service” and would rather work together with existing providers. For example, PILC would be interested in working with a private provider such as a taxi service to provide wheelchair accessible trips to the airport. The PILC works with the city’s transit system on a number of issues. The PILC works with ACT to complete eligibility reviews for Spec-Trans service and it provides personal travel training to 3 or 4 people per month. Other coordination efforts include an initiative in 2002. Here, PILC worked with Easter Seals to provide transportation and mobility training to Easter Seals staff in a “Train the Trainer” workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to move people from the Spec-Trans service to fixed route. The program was considered a success by PILC and it had about 12 clients.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

After-hours service or longer hours of service; an accessible service to the airport

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Panhandle Regional Planning Commission – Workforce Development Centers

Program

Workforce Development Centers provide employment and training support to help people find and retain employment.

Transit Resources

The Panhandle Workforce Development Center (PWDC) provides clients with gas vouchers to subsidize transportation costs for job-related trips or payment authorizations for public transportation. In 2005, the PWDC spent about \$120,000 in gas sales and \$12,000 in bus vouchers and personal car repair.

Transit Needs

Access to job sites that are outside of the existing transit service areas or operating hours are one of the biggest transit needs for those seeking employment. Service to Amarillo College East Campus is needed since much of the training and resources used by PWDC clients is located here, and currently, this campus is not included on the Amarillo City Transit route. However, all other Amarillo College campuses are served by ACT. Lastly, many low-income workers need access to day care that is convenient to transit. Currently, the Amarillo College West Campus has a day-care center.

Coordination Issues

Gas vouchers have worked well in the past because they best respond to the multiple trip needs for a client's personal work plan. The public transit system was not considered feasible because of the length of the trip, the difficulty in making multiple trips, lack of access to some areas, etc. However, the gas vouchers are becoming an increasingly difficult approach because of the rising cost of gas and the difficulty in preventing abuse. (That is, once a client has received a voucher, it is very difficult to control how it is spent.)

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: Expanded hours of service in Amarillo; and service to Amarillo College east campus ¹

¹ During later discussions, desired outcomes was expanded to include better public transit service. Gas vouchers are difficult to control and can be easily be abused and spent for uses other than employment-related trips. A pilot project in Hereford, Texas, is being developed by Panhandle Transit, Hereford Workforce Center and other stakeholders start a modest fixed route.

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Park Central – Baptist Community Services

Program

Park Central is one in a family of nursing and assisted living centers owned and operated through the Baptist Community Services. Other facilities include The Continental, Ware Living Center, Harrington Living Center, The Talmage, Plemons Court and The Arbors. It is one of the largest assisted living and nursing facilities in the region.

Transit Resources

Park Central provides transportation for a fee from 8:00 to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. It provides approximately 24,000 trips annually. It operates four sedans, two vans with lifts, and one 30-passenger bus. Transportation staff includes three full-time drivers, four part-time drivers, and five transportation aides. (Transportation aides assist the rider to prepare for the trip 20 minutes prior to departure, transports the person to the vehicle, and completes all paperwork.) Park Central will accept Medicaid/Medicare for residents who have been long-term clients and are now facing a change in finances.

Transit Needs

Park Central needs a 30-passenger vehicle with room for four wheelchairs to meet the needs of the increasing number of clients who are not ambulatory.

Coordination Issues

Park Central is meeting the needs of its clients very well. The organization does not rely on federal or state funding for transportation and does not see at this time how it can be involved in a coordinated system since it is dedicated to providing a high level of service to its residents.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study

None identified at this time.

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History of Regional Coordination of Public Transportation

Past and Current Planning Activities

There are three bodies that address the range of human services transportation within Amarillo and the Panhandle:

- **Panhandle Transportation Consortium (PTC):** This group formed in 1995 to maximize the efficiency of funds available for transportation and to review requests for Section 5310 vehicles. Agencies that participated in the PTC included the Area Agency on Aging of the Panhandle, Canyon Retirement Center, Texas Department of Transportation; City of Amarillo/Amarillo City Transit; Jan Werner Adult Day Care; Jan Werner Transportation; Amarillo MPO; Texas Department of Health and Human Services, and some participation for Friona Estate and Edward Abraham nursing homes. Many of the agencies that participated on the PTC are now serving on the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation that is overseeing this study.
- **Senior Ambassadors Coalition:** The Senior Ambassadors Coalition (SAC) is about nine years old. Participating agencies include Baptist St Anthony Hospital, Area Agency on Aging, Alzheimer's Organization, Adult Protective Care, Texas A&M University School of Nursing, Texas Tech Health Science Center, and nursing and assisted care facilities. Transportation is a key concern for the group and it has formed the Transportation Task Force to discuss strategies to increase the availability and quality of transportation services for seniors.
- **Advisory Commission for People with Disabilities (ACPD):** The ACPD is a group of Amarillo citizens with disabilities that discuss, evaluate and advise the City Commission on matters and issues that affect persons with disabilities. ACT attends the ACPD monthly meeting for transportation issues.

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Texas Transportation Institute Data

Inventory Respondents, by TxDOT and Provider Type

TxDOT District	M	U	LEP	R	Other	Total
Abilene		1		1		2
Amarillo		1		1	4	6
Atlanta		1		1	2	4
Austin	1			1	7	9
Beaumont		2		1		3
Brownwood				2		2
Bryan		2		1		3
Childress				1	1	2
Corpus Christi	1			3		4
Dallas	2	1	2	4	9	18
El Paso	1			1	5	7
Fort Worth	1		2	3	3	9
Houston	1	3		2	4	10
Laredo		1		2		3
Lubbock		1		2	4	7
Lufkin					2	2
Odessa		1		1	4	6
Paris		1		2		3
Pharr		3		3	2	8
San Angelo		1		1	2	4
San Antonio	1			2	12	15

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Tyler		2		1	2	5
Waco		2		1	1	4
Wichita Falls		1			2	3
Yoakum		1		2		3
TOTAL Responses	8	25	4	39	66	142
Total Sent	8	25	4	39	117	193

- M - Transit authority/municipal transit department receiving federal but not state funds
- U - Urban transit district receiving federal and state funds
- LEP - Urban transit district serving a limited population (seniors and persons with disabilities)
- R - Rural transit district receiving federal and state funds

Method to Obtain Updated Information

In 2007, PROMPT worked hard to determine the number of providers and planning partners in the Panhandle Region. Through a series of personal contacts, face to face interviews and surveys, the comprehensive list of planning partners was created. However, since that time, PROMPT has focused more on projects and needs than maintaining those relationships. Therefore, when the time came to determine what updates needed to take place, administrative staff took some time to make personal contact with those providers again.

A series of e-mails were sent out over a period of days asking planning partners to review and update their information. Follow up phone calls also took place when necessary. Information was also gleaned from the Texas Transportation Institute's inventory pursuant to legislative mandate.

In the Texas Panhandle, it is not difficult to track down the amount of resources available as there is only 1 rural and 1 urban public transportation provider. Each provider sits on PROMPT and maintains constant contact with the group regarding their individual issues and needs.

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Unlike the larger urban areas across the state, the Texas Panhandle enjoys coordination at a deep level and open communication between most public and private providers.

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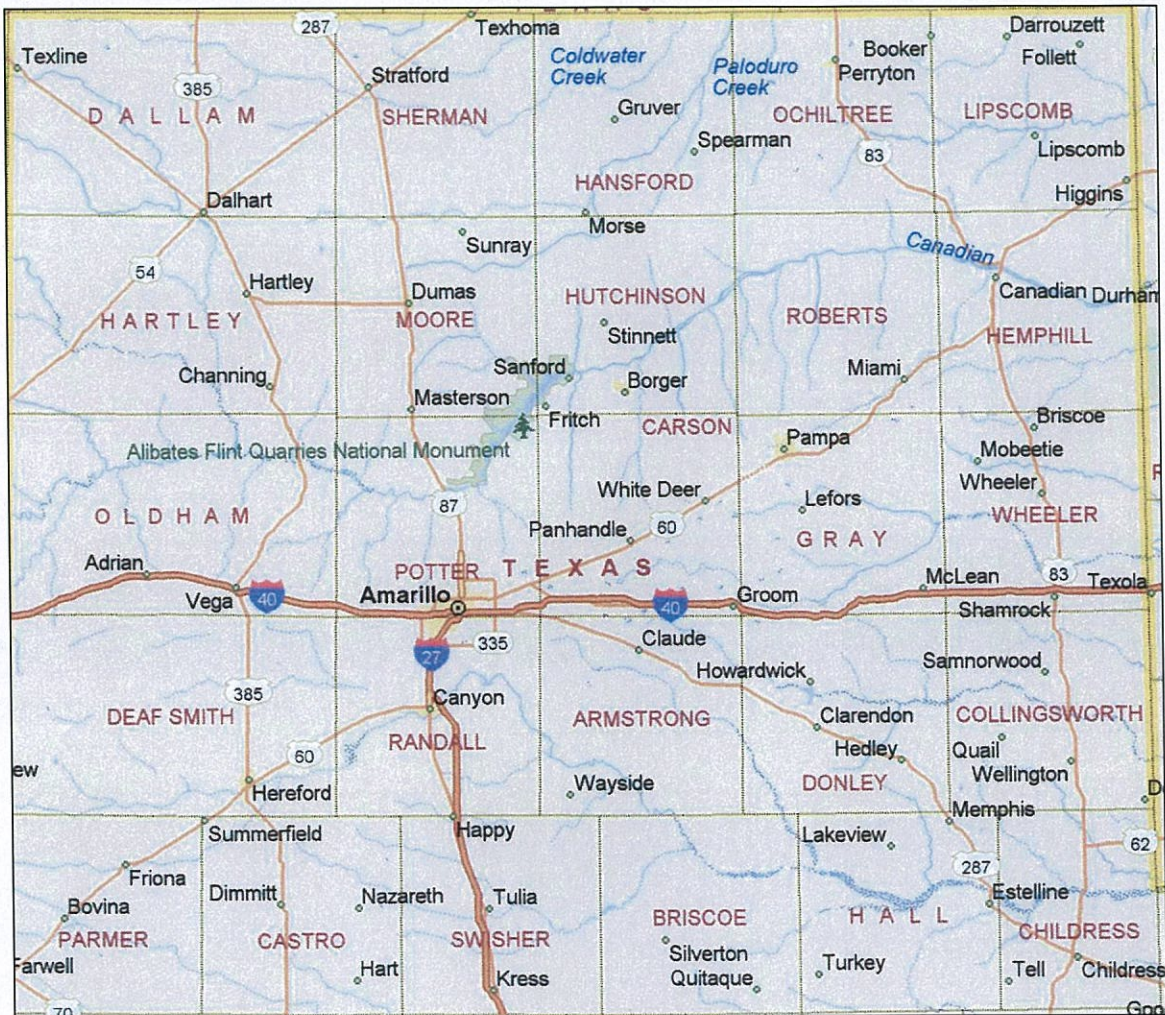
In order to understand where mobility may represent a greater challenge, a demographic profile was completed in 2006 for each of the counties within the Panhandle region. The county-level profiles focus on characteristics associated with higher transit use: percentage of people who are elderly and/or disabled; have low incomes; have higher levels of low education attainment; and or are recent immigrants. It is not expected that these demographics have changed significantly since the Census, but it is anticipated that when the official 2010 Census data comes out that the demographics will be updated.

Geography

The Texas Panhandle consists of the northernmost 26 counties in the state and is bordered by New Mexico to the west and Oklahoma to the north and east. There are 62 cities in the Panhandle and the largest city is Amarillo with less than 200,000 people. The remaining cities are all under 20,000 people. Because of the size of the region, distance between cities is a major factor. Interstate 40 (I-40) is the major east/west thoroughfare. Interstate 27 (I-27) connects Amarillo to Lubbock and US 287 crosses the region from the Northwest to the Southwest to connect the region to the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

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Map of Panhandle Region



Demographics

Population

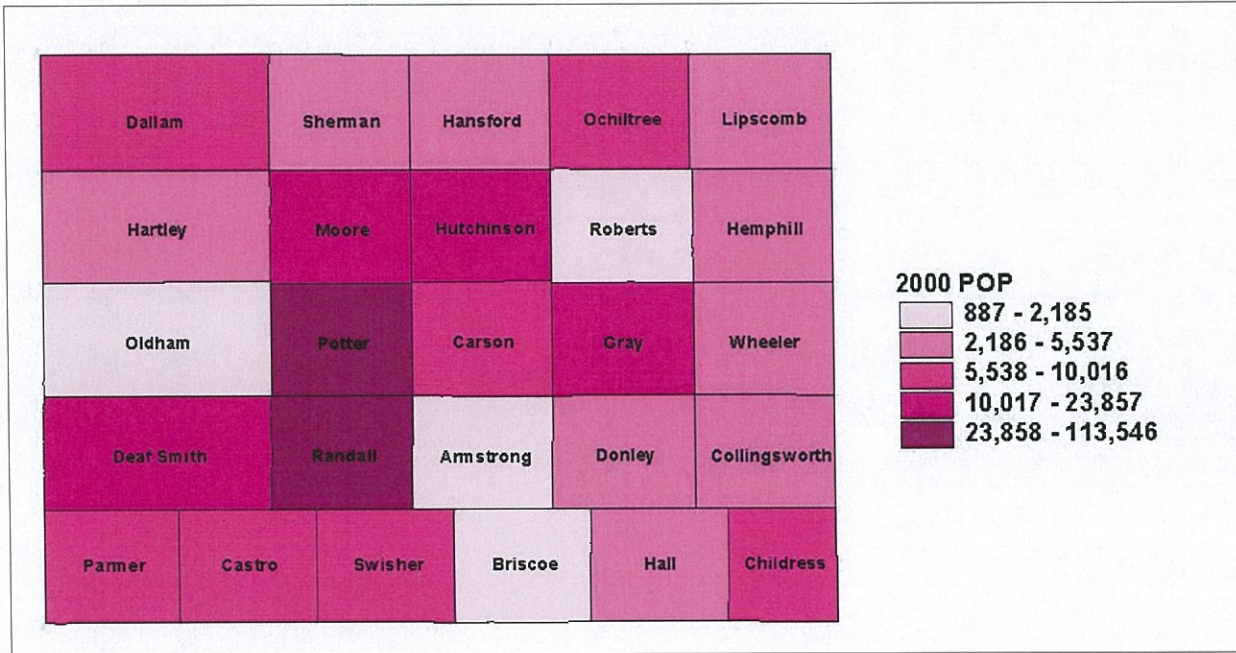
One of the goals of public transit is to provide services efficiently - to provide the most people with a good service at the most reasonable cost. Knowing where the population is concentrated helps to determine how to allocate available transit to benefit the most users.

A major challenge to providing transit services within the Panhandle region is very low population density throughout the region. With the exception of Potter and Randall counties, the average density 8.00 people per square mile. Roberts County, the least populated county in the region, has less than 1 person per square mile. By comparison, the City of Amarillo's average

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density is 2,423 people per square mile – comparable with that of Abilene, Waco, Denton, and Port Arthur. Furthermore, between the 1990 and 2000 census, 15 counties lost population. This decrease has affected and will continue to affect its ability to secure federal and state dollars to fund transportation.

Panhandle Region Population by County

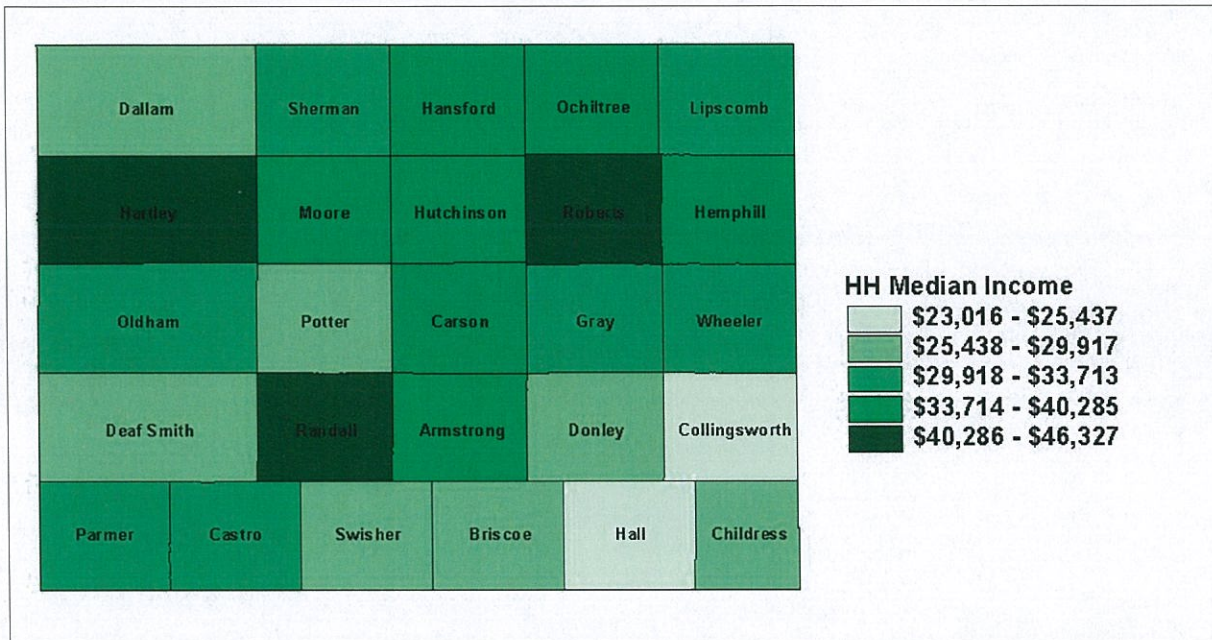


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Median Household Income

The median household income is \$33,348, a little less than the statewide average of \$39,927. Conversely, the number of people at or below poverty is 14 percent, a little better than the statewide average of 15 percent.

Panhandle Region Median Household Income

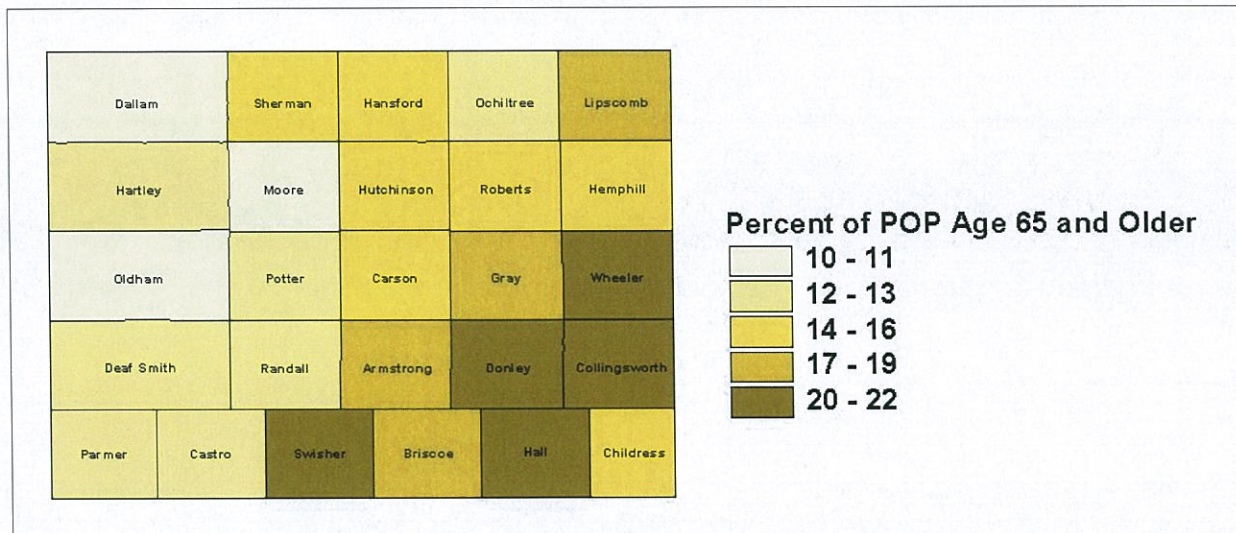


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Elderly Population

People over age 65 traditionally use transit in proportionately greater numbers. Areas with higher concentrations of elderly people are generally considered areas of higher than average transit need. On average, 13.67 percent of the Panhandle population is elderly (65 years and above), compared to 9.92 percent statewide. Four counties have an elderly population over 20 percent.

Panhandle Region Percent of Elderly by County

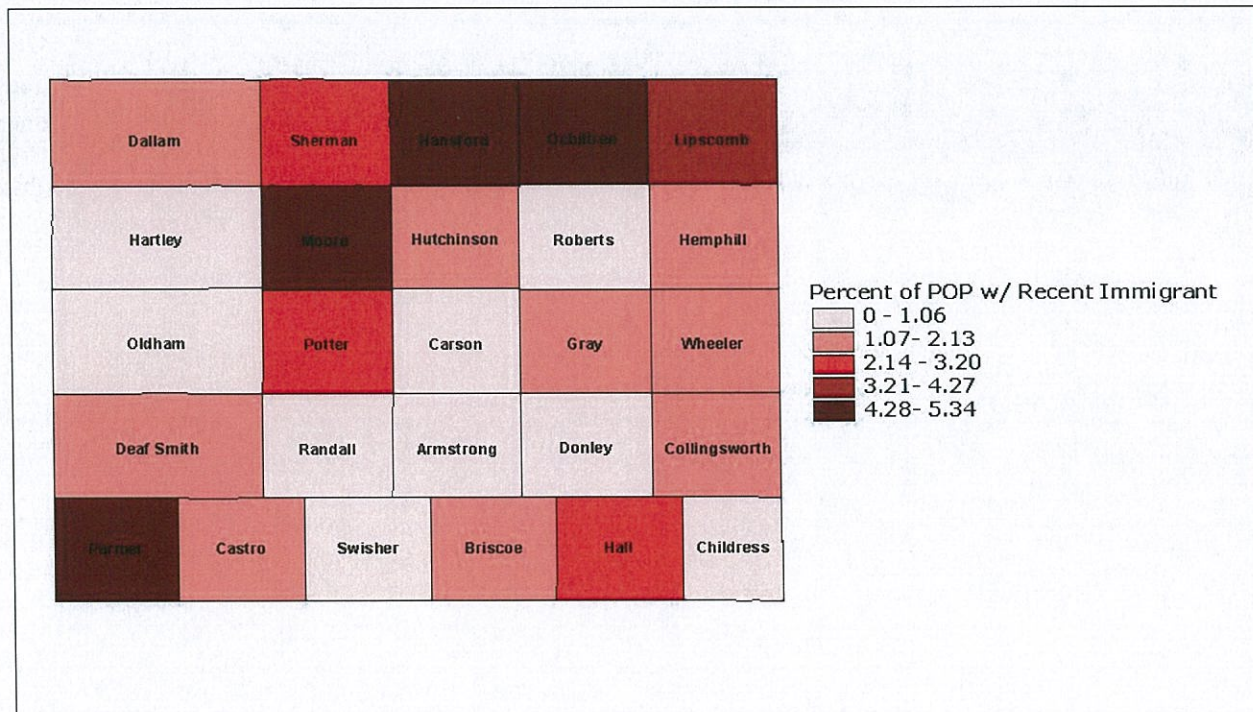


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Recent Immigrant Population

Areas with a large numbers of recent immigrants tend to have a higher transit need. This is primarily due to the higher likelihood of lower than average income and, therefore, fewer or no automobiles. For this demographic, only recent immigrants who have arrived between 1995 and 2000 are considered. The Panhandle region population is composed of approximately 1.84 percent immigrant population compared to 3.80 percent statewide. Counties with a high number of recent immigrants are Ochiltree, Hansford, Moore, and Parmer counties. These are areas that are likely to have a higher need for transit services.

Panhandle Region Percent of Population with Recent Immigrant Status

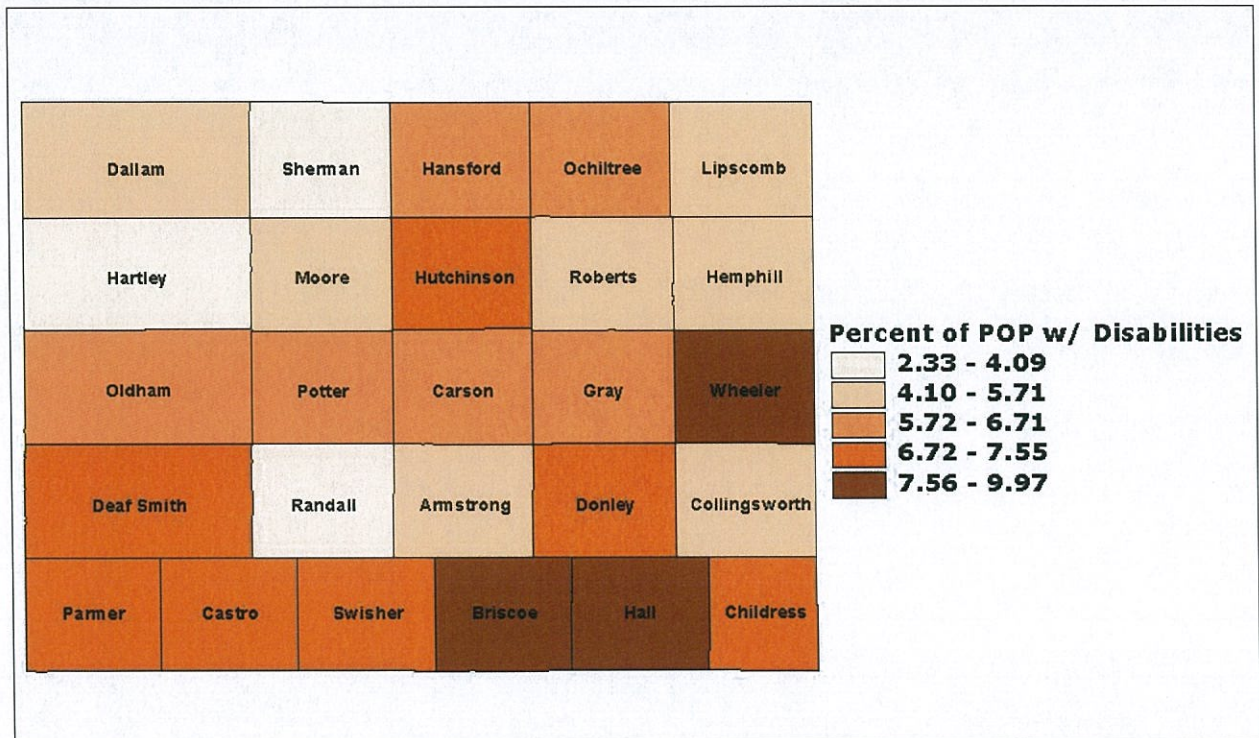


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People with Mobility Disabilities Population

People with disabilities are more likely to use transit services. Because the Census data reports, and individuals can claim multiple types of disabilities, only one type of disability was measured to reflect the need for transit. The “Go Outside” disability counts those individuals that have difficulties “going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office.” While this single condition may not capture all individuals with disabilities that need transit, it was chosen as reflective of transit need as its rate of occurrence is about average compared to all other types reported. Within the Panhandle region, 5.91 percent of the population has a mobility disability that prevents them from going outside alone to go shopping or the doctor’s office. By comparison, 6.52 percent of the population statewide has this disability.

Panhandle Region Percent of Population with Mobility Disabilities



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Transit Needs Index

A more complete analysis of all transit market demographics is the Transit Needs Index. Bus ridership tends to increase or decrease with changes in key demographic characteristics. For example, income is a major determinant in who uses transit; as one moves up in income, usage tends to decrease. Some groups are genuinely more likely to use transit irrespective of income. These include women, minorities, immigrants (especially recent immigrants), persons without a car, the mobility impaired, persons over the age of 65, and those with less than a full high school education.

A Transit Needs Index is tool that captures and measures the differences in transit usage for a particular group compared to the group norm. An index of 1.00 indicates average transit usage, higher indicates above average usage (for example, 2.00 is twice the average), and lower indicates less than average. The following table outlines the transit-use index for average metropolitan transit use for the key demographic groups.

Typical Transit Needs Values

Market Niche	Transit Need Index	Market Niche	Transit Need Index
Sex:		Household Income:	
Male	0.85	Under \$20K	1.15 (average)
Female	1.18		
Race & Ethnicity:		Immigration Status:	
White	0.68	Non-immigrant	0.84
Black	2.72	Immigrant	2.08
Hispanic	1.73		
Asian	1.74	Limitations:	
Vehicle Ownership:		Work Limitation	1.25
No Car	5.76	Mobility Limitation	2.41
One or more Car	0.68	Education:	
Age:		No School	2.59
60-64	1.07	Elementary	2.08
65-69	1.10	Junior High	1.69
		Some High School	1.25

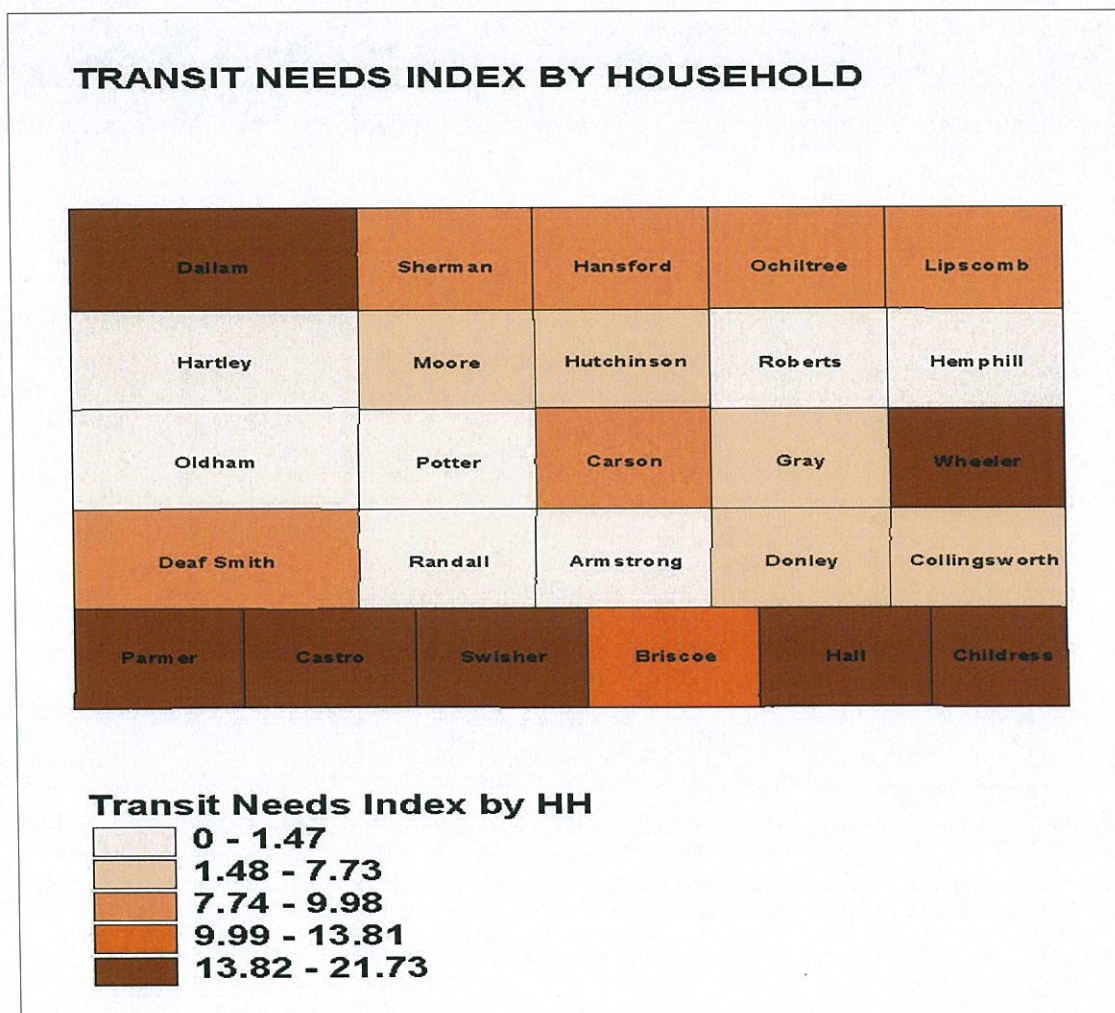
Source: Transit Cooperative Research Program. Chapter 1: Current Transit Markets

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A Transit Needs Index is designed to relate demographic data such as household income, mobility-impaired/work-impaired population, auto availability, education attainment, minority status, immigrant status and age to transit need. Research supports the theory that a positive relationship exists between these data and higher transit usage.

All the counties within the Panhandle were evaluated and given a score for each of these eight characteristics. Depending on the characteristic, the average or median score for the set was used to establish the center value for the region’s relative scale. Scores were then summed to create a composite score which was then weighted by the number of households.

Panhandle Region Transit Needs Index



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The Transit Needs Index is one way to reflect the potential demand for transit services. The highest concentration of need on a per household basis is along the southern border of the region – Parmer, Castro, Swisher, Hall and Childress. In addition to this concentration, Dallam County to the north and Wheeler County to the east reflect high need.

Of those counties listed above, the county judges from Swisher, Moore, Roberts, Gray and Childress are members of the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation and are involved in planning for coordinated transit. The prevalence of higher-need counties along the south border points to the potential need for a greater focus on inter-regional coordination with the South Plains District. However, in recent months PROMPT officials have begun discussions with officials from the South Plains District and invited them to PROMPT meetings to increase coordination with that region.

Description of Transportation Service Gaps and Inefficiencies

A transit gap is an area, time, or market that is not being satisfactorily served by existing transportation services. This unmet demand will later be the focus of coordinated strategies.

Currently, Panhandle Transit has identified that there are 5 major problems associated with providing transportation to clients. There is a lack of adequate funding to serve the needs associated with ridership, funding amounts are inconsistent and fluctuate often leading to inconsistent delivery of service, state restrictions have become too rigid in determining who may and may not be eligible for services, people are generally unaware of the transportation services available to them and, in general, the Texas Panhandle is a large geographical area whose demographics remain mostly rural causing unique problems and situations for a rural transit provider.

ACT has identified 4 major challenges in providing transportation to their clients. As their funding continues to fall, lack of adequate funding becomes a major source of contention. It has been anticipated that funding may drop significantly with the outcome of the 2010 Census. However, as planners have continued to project population estimates, the City of Amarillo is not expected to rise above 200,00 which would drop ACT funding by nearly 1.5 million per year.

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ACT has considered moving to a flex-routing system instead of fixed routing. However, this decision has not yet been made. Government funded programs with difficult requirements have also caused problems within ACT as have unfunded mandates from the State. Finally, the City of Amarillo is geographically spread out which causes difficulties in setting up a fixed route system. Currently ACT is unable to provide service to residents East of Lakeside Blvd which eliminates many residents, as well the airport and other large venues to which public transportation would normally be able to travel.

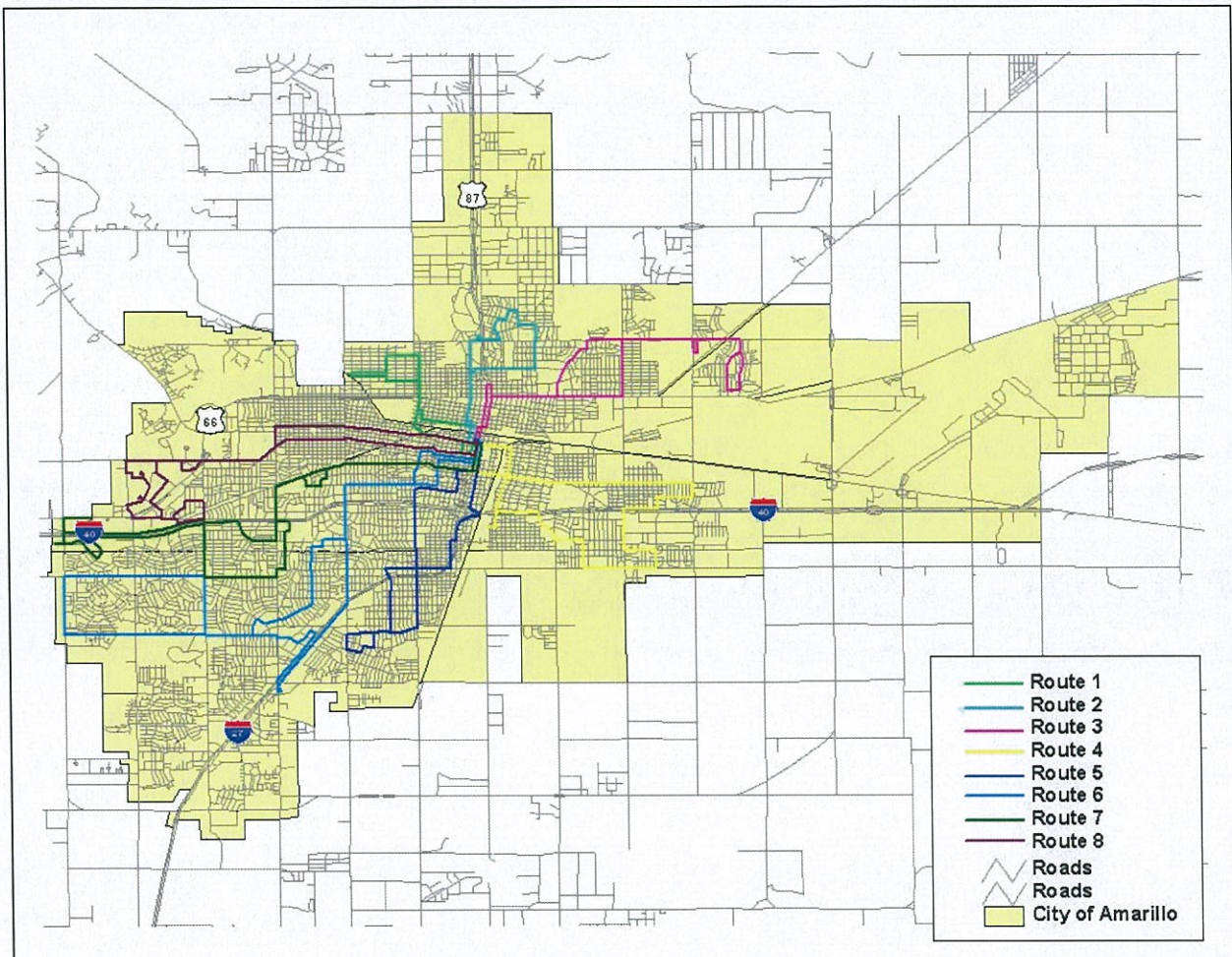
In Amarillo, there is a gap in service for those areas that lie within the city limits (and thus, cannot be served by Panhandle Transit), yet outside of Amarillo City Transit's service area. Some destinations that are outside the service area yet of interest to riders are the Amarillo International Airport and the East Campus of the Amarillo City College.

Transit Gaps: Areas with No Service

There are no rural areas throughout the 26-counties without access to some transit services through Panhandle Transit. It provides in-county service Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm in all 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle. However, vehicles are based in 10 centrally located cities and buses are used on an "on demand" basis. There is a central clearinghouse in Canyon, TX, located in Randall County at which all calls are taken. Buses are then dispatched based proximity which can be monitored by a sophisticated software package acquired in 2009 by Panhandle Transit.

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Amarillo City Transit Routes and Amarillo City Limits



Transit Gaps: Times with No Service

In the rural areas, transit service is not available outside of Panhandle Transit's regular operating hours: Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Likewise, there is no transit service in Amarillo outside of Amarillo City Transit's regular hours of Monday through Saturday, from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. At present, there is no estimation of the unmet demand for service outside these hours. However, the Panhandle Coordination Survey indicates that there is a need for transit beyond these hours, specifically to address workforce issues.

In face to face interviews and through general experience, it is widely accepted that more transportation in the evening hours is still a major need in the Texas Panhandle. This trend is

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expected to continue as travel in the evening hours for returning home from work will continue to be a major issue. However, the survey also concluded that another reason for utilizing public transportation is for medical appointments between the hours of 8:00a.m. and 12:00p.m. Tuesday was the most popular day for those needing travel arrangements. 63% of respondents noted that they would utilize public transportation if it was available in their area; however 56% noted that they do not utilize public transportation. Interestingly, there are few places that public transportation is completely unavailable in some capacity. Public awareness of transportation options available was noted as the area most in need of improvement regarding public transportation services and this was echoed through conversations with transportation providers. There is a unique juxtaposition in that all realize the need to increase awareness, but all are struggling with advertising their services due to lack of ability to meet demand. In discussions with providers it was pointed out that it is nearly impossible to determine “unmet need” because people in the Texas Panhandle are simply unaware of the services available to them.

Transit Overlap

Vehicles

Little to no transit vehicle overlap was identified outside of Amarillo. In the rural regions, there is no public transportation provider besides Panhandle Transit, including taxis. Excluding Potter County, Panhandle Transit operates 84 vehicles to serve the remaining 25 counties.

There is a higher concentration of resources within the City of Amarillo. This is expected as the city is the headquarters for many agencies and has the highest population. The table below outlines the number of vehicles by organization for Amarillo.

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Demand Response-type Vehicles in Amarillo

Organization	Number of Vehicles based in Amarillo
Amarillo City Transit (ACT)	23
Panhandle Transit (PT)	19 (Note: Estimate of vehicles making scheduled MWF trips; trips T,Th as needed for Medicaid.)
Jan Werner Transportation	3
ASC Industries	15
LeFleur Transportation (Medicaid Subcontractor)	11
TaxiPro (Medicaid Subcontractor)	5 (no vehicles are wheelchair accessible)
Baptist Community / Park Central	7
Maverick Boys and Girls Club	4
Panhandle Independent Living	2
Wesley Senior Program	2
Opportunity School	1
Palo Duro Nursing, Seville Estates, Kirklands Court, Martha's Home	1 each

Other

Other sources of duplicated transportation resources include maintenance facilities, driver training, and reservation/scheduling/dispatch software. Where duplication exists, there may exist a potential to share resources; however in order to do so will require additional resources in-and-of themselves in order to upgrade, expand, and/or hire additional personnel.

- **Maintenance:** Several agencies manage maintenance centers to service their vehicles. However, each system currently lacks the capacity to expand maintenance operations to include other agency's vehicles. For example, ACT is constrained by the lack of space and the number of qualified mechanics that can be hired given budgetary restrictions. The Texas Panhandle MHMR operates a maintenance center that is sufficient to handle their vehicle load as does Jan Werner Transportation; however, in each case, there is no excess capacity.
- **Software:** ACT uses Trapeze and Jan Werner Transportation and Panhandle Transit use Shaw software. Migration to a common software platform may facilitate future ride-sharing. Of the two packages, the Trapeze software is more powerful.
- **Driver Training:** Each program maintains its own driver training program that is tailored to their specific market. For example, Jan Werner Transportation drivers also serve as personal care attendants and their training reflects a higher level of service from that of ACT or Panhandle Transit.

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- Travel Training: Texas Panhandle MHMR, Goodwill, and the Panhandle Independent Living Center, and ACT are just a few of the agencies that provide travel training to their clients.

Methodology to Determine Service Gaps and Inefficiencies

Several of the methodologies used to determine service gaps and inefficiencies in the writing of the original plan have remained accurate and timely in determining the inefficiencies 3 years later. However, staff utilized several methods of determining the above mentioned gaps and inefficiencies.

After reviewing the methodologies utilized in the original Regional Transportation Plan, staff and PROMPT officials have agreed to take a bit of a different approach with the update. We chose to focus more on the results from the surveys distributed in a more straight-forward manner to determine need. As the coordination process has continued over the last 3-4 years, it has become evident that PROMPT maintains a close watch on the pulse of those needing public transportation and has continued to develop projects to address the needs as they arise.

As is completely explained in the Introduction, in Late 2009 and early 2010 surveys were developed and reviewed at several points by PRPC staff, PROMPT members and members of the Senior Ambassador Coalition (SAC) Transportation Task Force. Once surveys were completed they were submitted to Professor David Rausch with West Texas A&M University. His recommendation included pre-testing with members of the public which was performed in early 2010. Finally surveys were submitted to the general public and an overall response rate of approximately 25% was obtained. Staff was pleased with input received and was able to glean important and relevant information regarding public transportation awareness, perception and usage. Surveys were also submitted to transportation providers and health and human service providers. Data analysis was completed in mid 2010 and survey results were presented to PROMPT at that time for approval. Personal interviews were also conducted with some survey respondents as well as transit providers. PROMPT remains active in the Panhandle area and there are 5 County Judges seated on PROMPT so public input remains the top priority for

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members. Staff prides itself on its working relationship with PROMPT members and coordination in and among members remains at a constant high. It has been said multiple times, but is worth repeating that the Texas Panhandle sets a wonderful example for the rest of the state on maintaining coordination and cooperation among public and private providers, end-users and public officials and the hope is that coordination will continue long into the future to ensure that citizens of the Texas Panhandle are receiving the highest level of service delivery possible. For a complete explanation of this process, please refer to Chapter 1: Introduction of this Plan Update. Survey instrumentation and data analysis will be included as appendices to this update.

Chapter 4: Parallel Planning and Staff Structure

Chapter 4: Parallel Planning

As has been stated previously, there are only 2 public transportation providers in the Texas Panhandle. There are 26,000 square miles to cover, yet population densities average around 8 people per square mile. Therefore, to state that anything in the Texas Panhandle is duplicated or that there are parallel processes taking place would probably be a stretch, if not altogether a false statement. However, there are several planning processes which are being undertaken at the same time all playing a role in the provision of public transportation. The most notable parallel processes will be defined in this chapter.

Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation vs Senior Ambassador Coalition Transportation Task Force (PROMPT vs SACTTF)

The Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT) is the group responsible for the coordination and cooperation among public and private transportation providers, elected officials representing different regions of the Texas Panhandle, Health and Human Service providers and other individuals important to the process of planning and coordinating regional public transportation. PROMPT, which began as the Panhandle Transportation Consortium in the mid 1990s, has been in existence long before legislation mandated such a coordination initiative. Meetings were held either monthly or quarterly, as attention was demanded, for the purposes of coordinating the aforementioned individuals into a cohesive planning group with power to begin addressing the needs associated with providing transportation. In 2005 legislation was passed requiring these types of activities and PROMPT was officially formed. The original plan was drafted in 2006 and adopted in 2007 by PROMPT with submission to TxDOT following. The purpose of PROMPT has always been to constantly evaluate, determine and address needs regarding transportation delivery in the Texas Panhandle. PROMPT does not focus on one particular demographic, yet chooses to continue to have members representing each particular demographic on the Board. As will be explained later in this chapter, there are members representing the elderly community, the workforce industry and health and human service industries.

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The Senior Ambassador Coalition was formed in approximately 1997 for the purposes of establishing a coordinating group to address the needs of Senior Citizens in the Texas Panhandle. However, the Transportation Task Force (SACTTF) began in 2005 as members of SAC noticed that transportation in the Texas Panhandle, as in any region, for Senior Citizens can be quite a challenge. Beginning in 2007, SAC began to undertake the arduous process of planning to enhance and grow the transportation industry in the Texas Panhandle to accommodate the demographic with which they were most concerned, the elderly. Throughout this process they typically maintained quarterly meetings. They began the SAC Voucher program in 2007 in which elderly individuals, after being screened by the Area Agency on Aging, may receive a voucher to utilize a transportation provider set forth through their rules for needed trips. There are two representatives from the SACTTF which also sit on PROMPT as representatives there and who maintain coordination between the two planning groups.

It would be incorrect in our estimation to state that these are two parallel planning groups. The groups end goals are similar in that ultimately they would like to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation provision to the citizens in the Texas Panhandle. However, it is clear that one group is focused on a much smaller and concentrated demographic while the other maintains a broader scope of work.

Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization vs Panhandle Rural Transportation Planning Organization (MPO vs RPO)

The Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally mandated administrative agency responsible for the coordination of the highway, transit and land use planning process necessary to receive federal funds for highway and transit improvements. As stated on the MPO website, the purpose of the MPO is "...to provide local citizens and elected officials the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process." There are 11 voting members on the MPO made up of a variety of non-elected and elected officials, 8 non-voting members made up of mostly city and state officials and 6 ex-officio members representing various elected and non-elected positions within the 360 mile area which the MPO encompasses. The MPO serves the cities of Amarillo and Canyon and parts of Potter and Randall Counties.

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The Panhandle Rural Transportation Planning Organization (PRPO) was established in the Texas Panhandle in 2010 after TxDOT released their rules proposing and defining RPOs. The definition of RPO according to TxDOT is

“A voluntary organization created and governed by local elected officials with responsibility for transportation decisions at the local level, including an organization established by a council of governments or regional planning commission designated by the Governor pursuant to Local Government Code, Chapter 391, to address rural transportation priorities and planning and provide recommendations to the department for areas of the state not included in the boundaries of a metropolitan planning organization.”

Much like its MPO counterpart, the RPO is responsible for obtaining public input into the transportation planning process. However, as the MPO is concerned with the metropolitan area, the RPO is concerned with the rural areas within its boundaries. Therefore, the PRPO covers the top 15 counties of the Northwest Texas Panhandle. The counties included are: Dallam, Sherman, Hansford, Ochiltree, Lipscomb, Hartley, Moore, Hutchinson, Roberts, Hemphill, Oldham, Carson, Gray, Deaf Smith and Armstrong. The RPO board is made up entirely of elected County officials representing their individual counties.

Much like with the PROMPT/SAC comparison, there is no parallel planning taking place between these two organizations. Any planning that takes place is specific either to the rural or to the metropolitan area respectively between the RPO and MPO. Staff from the PRPC are members of the MPO and PRPC is actually the administrative arm of the RPO so coordination between the groups will be maintained at all times.

PRPC Staff Structures and Roles

As lead agency on this venture, the PRPC has once again created a team which will carry the weight of collaboration and ensure that the planning process is as successful as our previous efforts have been. Listed below are the team members contributing to the 2010-2012 planning effort for the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission followed by the expertise and responsibilities held by each member.

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The Executive Director of the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, Gary Pitner, has been involved in public service for 32 years. Graduating from then West Texas State University (WTAMU presently) in 1978 with a B.S. in Public Administration, Mr. Pitner is an integral part of every planning effort undertaken by the PRPC. Working his way up from a position of intern in 1977 to Executive Director in 1985, Mr. Pitner understands the fine minutia associated with planning, developing and implementing regional plans on projects ranging from water quality, and solid waste management to emergency services 9-1-1 planning, including transportation planning. His responsibilities for this project include but are not limited to the following:

- To guarantee the delivery of the services described in the application;
- To provide adequate staffing for the delivery of services of the project;
- To provide adequate facilities and equipment to facilitate the planning process; and
- To provide supervision and oversight to ensure the overall quality of the services to be delivered of the project.

The Director of Local Government Services, Kyle Ingham, began his career in 2000 with a B.A. in Business and an M.S. in Political Science as a Regional Services Program Specialist. His responsibilities included Solid Waste, Criminal Justice and Hazard Mitigation programs. Like Mr. Pitner, Mr. Ingham has been involved in the planning process of many different grant programs in his time at the PRPC. However, as the team leader on this effort, Mr. Ingham's vast experience as a grant writer for the Amarillo Independent School District from 2004-2008, coupled with his planning experience from his previous tenure, 2000-2004, with the PPRC will be invaluable. Mr. Ingham has been involved in the development of over 75 planning grants between his two positions, is highly skilled in the art of project management, having managed over \$14,000,000 in monetary gains for AISD, and has developed and maintained positive relationships with city leaders from 69 cities and 26 counties in the Panhandle region. He also serves as a voting member on the Amarillo MPO. Mr. Ingham's responsibilities for this project include but are not limited to the following:

- To monitor the progress of the planning process and ensure that *performance measures* are in place;
- To assist team members in developing and evaluating *needs assessments*; and

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- To oversee the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT) and ensure its forward progress.

Jamie Allen, Local Government Services Coordinator for the PRPC, began her career in a similar fashion to Director, Kyle Ingham. After obtaining a B.A. in Spanish and a Master's of Public Administration, Ms. Allen began in the Regional Services Department as a Program Specialist. She was also challenged in a myriad of programs including managing the implementation of a safe room grant program totaling upwards of \$3 million to over 1400 applicants in the Texas Panhandle. However, in July 2008, she began serving as the Regional Transportation Coordinator, as well as acting as City Management Consultant to 2 small cities located South of Amarillo. In her time as Regional Transportation Coordinator, Ms. Allen has developed strong relationships with public and private transportation providers, health and human service agencies and municipal authorities in order to further the goals set forth in the regional transportation plan. Ms. Allen's responsibilities for this project include, but are not limited to the following:

- To *plan, coordinate and conduct all necessary public hearings*;
- To continue working towards the goal of maintaining a completed *inventory* of assets;
- To plan, schedule, coordinate and conduct the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT) meetings;
- To provide research and data as needed by PROMPT;
- To *interact with the public, businesses and local government officials during all aspects of the planning process*;
- To assist potential applicants with the planning required for any JARC and New Freedom applications;
- To post legal notices as required by and report progress to TxDOT; and,
- To educate health and human service providers and transit providers of the transportation coordination listed in the 2006 Regional Transportation Coordination Service plan.

Taylor Head is another integral team member for this effort. Mr. Head has a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration and has been with the PRPC since March 2011. Since that time he has been extensively involved in the Economic Development process in which transportation plays

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an integral role. He will begin assisting Mrs. Allen in advisory committee meetings by attending and keeping minutes of those meetings. His strengths include survey and data work, complicated data processing utilizing Microsoft Excel and well-developed interpersonal skills. His responsibilities include but will not be limited to the following:

- To attend and provide support services during all public hearings and advisory committee (PROMPT) meetings;
- To provide research and data as needed by the PROMPT and the Director;
- To conduct phone/face-to-face interviews as required;
- To maintain files and records pertaining to the planning process; and,
- To maintain and update the PROMPT website with public notices and minutes from previous meetings.

Cindy Boone, Director of Finance and Julie Lyles, Accountant 2, PRPC, will assist the aforementioned team members in *carrying out the financial responsibilities* associated with this grant. With almost 27 years of finance experience at the PRPC between them, Ms. Boone and Ms. Lyles are an invaluable asset to this effort. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- To process *financial documentation and billing* to TxDOT;
- To maintain financial records and payroll associated with the project;
- To prepare records for auditing as necessary; and,
- To process and issue payment on any accounts payable associated with the project.

Leveraging Resources

As the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) serves a region spanning 26,000 square miles encompassing 26 counties and 69 cities, leveraging resources is one of the priorities valued most. The Local Government Services Department at PRPC covers a wide variety of programs including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Texas Department of Rural Affairs, Community Development Block Grant Administration for approximately 30 projects per year
2. Texas Department of Transportation Coordination and Planning for Public Transportation

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3. Contract City Management Services for various cities around the area
4. Texas Parks and Wildlife Park Grant Administration for various cities around the area
5. Texas Water Development Board Water Planning Administration
6. Census administrative activities as needed
7. Community and Economic Development Assistance Fund administration through the Texas Department of Rural Affairs
8. Miscellaneous Other Planning Activities
 - a. Rural Transportation Assistance Program grant administration and research
 - b. Disaster Fund administration in times of natural or man-made disasters as necessary
 - c. Research for member cities of PRPC on various subjects (funding from dues paid annually)

With only four full-time staff members in the department, there is a constant reminder to multi-task and meet all demands of all projects with which staff is involved. And, as public servants, staff are resolute in always meeting the needs of the cities dependent upon the services provided. In the future it is expected that new projects will be on the horizon and new grants will arise needing an administrator. In those events, PRPC will continue to make itself available. Future plans will continue to include the above projects and program administration including Public Transportation Coordination and Planning. As long as improvements can be made in these areas, PRPC will look for and implement new and exciting strategies to make those improvements happen.

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Chapter 5: Steering Committee Explanation

Originally comprised of 19 individuals charged with overseeing the progress of the 2006 Regional Transportation Plan, the membership of PROMPT has remained largely unchanged. The long tenures of many of the inaugural members of PROMPT may only be interpreted as a testament to their dedication to the success of public transportation in the Texas Panhandle. Though at times it has been a challenge, PROMPT has always met any challenge head on and worked hard until a solution is found. The following is a complete list of the current PROMPT board members categorized by affiliation:

- **County Judges** – Our County Judges are invaluable to this effort. Though they serve on many boards here at the PRPC, they rarely miss any of our PROMPT meetings because they understand the importance of the task put before them. Each Judge brings a unique perspective to the table as the demographics of their particular counties are so different. For example, Childress County sits at the southeast corner of the Panhandle, boasts a population of 7,688 and is home to Childress, Texas, one of the larger cities in the Panhandle. However, Moore County is home to Dumas, which resides in the northwest quadrant of the Panhandle and has a population of 20,121. The two county seats are separated by 161 miles and each has a unique set of challenges to face regarding public transportation needs. Each Judge understands the needs of residents of the Panhandle in general and works hard to ensure that resources are placed equitably around the region to maximize the use of scarce funding.
 - The Honorable Vernon Cook, Roberts County Judge
 - Born and raised in Perryton, Texas, Judge Vernon Cook has established a life-long love of the Texas Panhandle evidenced by his service to its residents. As a teacher, counselor and agriculture extension agent, Judge Cook developed the unique skill of listening to the needs of his students and clients and then finding solutions to those needs. This skill set has proven to be useful as his stint as Judge of Roberts County has continued for 18+ years and there's no sign of that changing anytime soon. Judge

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Cook also serves on the PRPC Board of Directors and the Panhandle Regional Water Planning Group among other civic roles he plays.

- The Honorable Harold Keeter, Swisher County Judge
 - Judge Keeter has been County Judge of Swisher County since taking office in January 1995. As a manager of a family owned business, and life-long resident of Swisher County, Judge Keeter has the privilege of having a personal relationship with many of the constituents which he serves. He has used that relationship to shape his career as County Judge and provide service on many boards at PRPC including the Board of Directors and the Panhandle Regional Emergency Management Advisory Council (PREMAC.) A member of PROMPT since its inception, Judge Keeter provides a unique perspective on the needs of rural citizens regarding public transit.
- The Honorable Jay Mayden, Childress County Judge
 - Judge Mayden has been a life-long resident of Childress, Texas and was born just a few minutes away in Memphis, Texas. As a police officer for 10 years, Judge Mayden has worked with the citizens of Childress on a face-to-face level. Through that work, Judge Mayden accrued an invaluable understanding of the needs of the citizens of Childress County and thus was elected County Judge in 2002. As well as serving on PROMPT, he serves on the PRPC Board of Directors and the Panhandle Regional Emergency Management Advisory Council (PREMAC) among others.
- The Honorable Richard Peet, Gray County Judge
 - Judge Peet has been involved with political and advisory boards in the Texas Panhandle for many years. A graduate of Midwestern State University with a major in government and history, he taught high school and college government classes for over 20 years. He served as Mayor of Pampa for six years and City Councilman for two years. He has been appointed by the Governor to serve as chairman for the last nine years on the State Community Block Grant Review Committee. He has served as

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Gray County Judge since 1995 and has been married to his wife for 42 years boasting three sons and eight grandchildren.

- The Honorable Rowdy Rhoades, Moore County Judge
 - Judge Rhoades is an integral part of the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation and has participated in the transportation planning process since its inception. Raised in Dumas, Judge Rhoades has owned his own body shop, giving him knowledge of the intricacies involved in transportation fleet and maintenance. He has been involved in the political sphere first as Mayor of Dumas followed by his stint as County Judge since 2007. Judge Rhoades and his wife have two daughters.

- **TxDOT Representatives** – Although we have seen some changes in the representation of TxDOT on our board with the loss of Kim Butler, the Childress District representative, Lynn Castle and Susan Stockett have continued to be a positive and strong force in public transportation for our region. The two represent areas separated more by geography than by differences in transportation needs. Given the similarity of their regions, they continue to aide PROMPT in providing innovative ideas for funding sources and collaboration efforts.
 - Lynn Castle, Lubbock District Representative – Non-Voting Member
 - Representing the Lubbock District, Lynn Castle is a Certified Transit Programs Administrator for TxDOT. With extensive knowledge in several program areas including Intercity Bus (ICB), Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP), and many more, Lynn is a valuable asset to PROMPT. His knowledge is continuously sought regarding program and grant opportunities and he is always willing to aide in regional coordination projects in the Amarillo and Lubbock Districts in order to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

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- Susan Stockett, Amarillo District Representative – Non-Voting Member
 - Susan Stockett represents the Amarillo District at the PROMPT meetings. Ms. Stockett has worked in the planning department at TxDOT for over 12 years and is a constant source of reliable information for PROMPT. Her expertise as Public Transportation Coordinator is displayed continuously through various meetings she attends to outline the rules and regulations associated with the administration of grant and other funding from TxDOT. Ms. Stockett is always available for questions regarding possible projects and often attends miscellaneous coordination meetings to help participants determine the viability of possible coordination projects.

- **Transit Agency Representatives** – Given that there are only two public transportation agencies for a region whose size exceeds a fifth of the nation’s states, Judy Phelps, Director of Amarillo City Transit and Lylene Springer, Director of Panhandle Transit, have a formidable opponent in the battle to provide adequate public transportation. These challenges have not gone unanswered with Ms. Phelps and Ms. Springer at the helm, however. The collaborative efforts undertaken by them both have increased the value of public transportation in the Panhandle exponentially.
 - Judy Phelps, Amarillo City Transit
 - Ms. Phelps has a true passion for providing the most effective public transportation for citizens of Amarillo, as evidenced by her tenure for the City of Amarillo. Judy has been employed by the City of Amarillo since 1992 and a mere 5 years after beginning her career with the City took on the arduous task of managing transit as the Director of Amarillo City Transit. Recently Ms. Phelps has been integral in determining the steps for the City of Amarillo following the outcome of the 2010 census. She is always willing to take time out of her busy schedule to meet for workshops on collaboration and her work ethic and passion for public

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transit are an asset to the City of Amarillo. She has served on PROMPT since its inception in 2006.

- Lylene Springer, Panhandle Transit
 - Lylene Springer was raised on a ranch in rural New Mexico giving her a uniquely personal perspective on the challenges faced with rural transportation planning. Mrs. Springer has worked with Panhandle Transit since 2003 originally as a driver. She worked her way up through the ranks of the transit industry working as office manager, dispatcher and scheduler, Director of Operations and finally the Director of Panhandle Transit. Mrs. Springer has her Bachelor of Science from West Texas State University (now West Texas A&M University) in Canyon and taught school for 10 years. She is married with three children and one new grandchild.

- **Other Key Transportation Providers** – There are several transportation providers in the area which graciously give of their valuable time to serve on PROMPT. They are private transportation providers who understand the value of collaboration and cooperation among private and public transportation providers. They often offer their services and cooperate with public transit providers at a moment's notice if a need arises and they are more than willing to coordinate with public providers if needed.
 - Jim Chilcote, Jan Werner Adult Day Care
 - Mr. Chilcote is the Facilities Manager and Director of Transportation for Jan Werner Adult Day Care. Jan Werner is an essential partner to public transit as he works closely with our Area Agency on Aging in the delivery of services to elderly and disabled individuals. Having held this position for 20 years, Jim is an integral member of PROMPT and provides a unique perspective on the needs of the elderly and disabled in the Panhandle.

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- Craig Lawlis, Lefleur Transportation
 - Lefleur specializes in the transportation of clients in wheelchairs and offers a great transportation alternative with private trips and non-emergency medical situations. They are currently working with the Senior Ambassador Coalition travel voucher program whose pilot project has enjoyed great success. They are working on a van pooling program and also operating a park and ride program to a major business Monday – Friday. Craig is a very active member on PROMPT and is always willing to get together to discuss how the incredible collaborations between all transit providers can be even more successful.

- **Health and Human Services** – The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) provides vital services to clients in need all over the state of Texas. Administering programs ranging from Medicaid and refugee services to CHIP and family violence, HHSC employees offer services that are absolutely critical to many residents in Texas. Other Health and Human Services are represented on the board as well including Baptist Saint Anthony’s Home Care and Hospice, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and American Medical Response.
 - Claudia Stanford, HHSC, O.E.S.
 - Claudia Stanford serves as Volunteer Coordinator for HHSC. A little over a year ago, HHSC inherited the Medical Transportation Program. This program assists individuals who are covered under various Medicaid programs and those who are on the Children with Special Health Care Needs Program with transportation. HHSC serves to a wide population with limited or no income in which access to transportation is a constant issue for many. Ms. Stanford contributes a great deal to PROMPT and her contributions are vital to maintaining high-quality services to Medicaid clients.

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- **Elderly and Disabled Community/Area Agency on Aging of the Panhandle (AAAP)**–
The Area Agency on Aging of the Panhandle (AAA) provides services to the elderly of the 26 counties of the Panhandle. The Mission of the AAA is to improve the lives of senior citizens in the Panhandle by helping them remain independent and living in their own homes with quality of life. Senior citizens can take advantage of such programs as congregate and home delivered meals, emergency response services, personal care assistance and legal assistance, among many others. The AAA is also in partnership currently with the Senior Ambassadors Coalition on a voucher program which provides travel service to low-income seniors with a local transit provider. They are a valuable resource to the elderly for transportation in the Texas Panhandle.
 - Melissa Carter – Area Agency on Aging
 - Melissa Carter has worked for the AAA for 9 years and was appointed as its Director in 2006. She works diligently to ensure that seniors are provided with affordable and accessible public transportation and has been a driving force in the pilot project with SAC involving travel vouchers. She is a member of the SAC committee on the voucher program and has great knowledge and passion in dealing with the needs of seniors in the Panhandle. Having worked at the PRPC, Ms. Carter also has firsthand knowledge of the unique situation the Panhandle faces geographically in regards to transportation. She is a founding member of PROMPT and attends meetings with great determination and forethought.
 - Laura Reyher, RN, BSN – Baptist St. Anthony’s (BSA) Home Care and Hospice
 - Laura Reyher has been a registered nurse for 31 years and has given of herself to the home health care industry for 18 years. Primarily, her interest has been finding suitable transportation for senior adults who are unable to drive themselves and cannot access the local public transportation system. Ms. Reyher was a founding member of the Senior Ambassadors Coalition (SAC) , a group of 70 different organizations, agencies and businesses working to improve the lives of senior adults in the Texas Panhandle. She chairs the Transportation Committee which

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began 3 years ago. She has served on PROMPT since its inception and provides valuable insight into the needs of the elderly population regarding transportation.

- **People with Disabilities** - Established in 1988, Panhandle Independent Living Center is a private, non-profit, non-residential organization managed and operated by and for individuals with disabilities. Our purpose is to assist people of all ages to gain effective control and direction of their own lives. PILC attempts to stimulate and promote a growing sense of personal dignity and responsible community participation of individuals with disabilities through training, community development, and direct services to meet the unmet needs of individuals with disabilities.
 - Carl McMillen, Panhandle Independent Living Center
 - Having served as executive director of Panhandle Independent Living Center (PILC) since 2000, Mr. McMillen has a wealth of knowledge about the Panhandle's disabled population. The strength of PILC is that they use the information they are given from clients and then cater their services to meet the needs expressed. As an PROMPT member, he is knowledgeable of disability issues including access to public transportation, housing, employment and maintaining independent living skills. Since December, 2008, his agency (PILC) has conducted a public transportation travel training project funded by the New Freedom Initiative, administered by TxDOT.
 - Chris White, Panhandle Independent Living Center
 - Chris White works for the Panhandle Independent Living Center (PILC) as the Transportation Coordinator and clearly has a heart for those with disabilities. She has volunteered for the Special Olympics and is currently attending West Texas A&M University pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Social Work. Ms. White has a passion for ensuring that people with disabilities are able to create and maintain independence and is a great asset to the steering committee.

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- **Workforce Development** – Workforce Development programs are designed to assist individuals who are economically disadvantaged, unskilled or unemployed in finding jobs in the region’s labor market. The PRPC Workforce Development programs involve themselves in a myriad of activities including training at post-secondary institutions for trades, etc., computer learning training, and even child care assistance. However, several large projects approved by PROMPT for grant funding have been developed out of necessity for job access purposes. Workforce development programs and centers are an invaluable asset to the Texas Panhandle.
 - Trent Morris, Workforce Solutions
 - Born and raised in Tulia, Texas, Trent Morris is a native Texas Panhandle resident. Graduating from Texas Tech with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Finance, Mr. Morris has a unique perspective in his role as president and owner of the group responsible for the contract of managing and operating eight Workforce Solutions offices located throughout the Panhandle. He has twenty years experience in the industry and lends a realistic and optimistic viewpoint to the Workforce Development sector in the Panhandle. Trent is married with two beautiful daughters currently in the 3rd and 6th grades.

- **Medicaid Transportation** – Recently it has become increasingly important to understand the vast disparity that exists between transportation clients utilizing private or other funding and those reliant on funding from Medicaid for transportation purposes. The Medicaid industry continues to evolve and public demands continue to increase pressure on equitable transportation provision for Medicaid clients.
 - Efrain “J.R.” Cortez
 - Efrain Cortez grew up as the son of missionary parents in Mexico. He attended St. Mary’s University where he studied Global Economics and soon thereafter began working in the non-emergency medical transportation field. He worked in that sector for 10 years before accepting a position with American Medical Response 2 years ago. He

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has a wife and newborn daughter and his experience with not only rural, but international affairs and medical transportation makes him a vital asset to the PROMPT repertoire.

- **Public at Large** – The public plays one of the most important roles in the development of transportation projects and programs. PROMPT has failed in its mission if the focus is ever removed from the public it serves. The purpose of having public representatives is to maintain a real life focus on transportation issues which surround everyday users of public transportation.
 - Connie Short, Amarillo Kidney Specialists
 - Connie Short has been a Registered Nurse since 1985 specializing in Critical Care for many years. However, the majority of her career has been spent specializing in dialysis, one of the main medical issues associated with public transportation. Mrs. Short has a first-hand view of the challenges created with medical transportation seeing patients who are forced to travel for up to 12 or 13 hours plus for dialysis care 3 days a week. Mrs. Short has 3 children and 5 grand children and is originally from Fairview, Oklahoma, boasting between 3,000 and 4,000 in population lending PROMPT another personal rural transportation perspective.
 - Susan Stevenson, Amarillo Education Foundation
 - Susan Stevenson currently works as the Executive Director of the Amarillo Education Foundation. Her past board experience includes her serving on several City boards and commissions and County advisory commissions. Ms. Stevenson has lived in Amarillo for 10 years and has a passion to ensure that transportation is available to those with special needs, immigrant and refugee populations and those populations that are disenfranchised.

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- **Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization** – The Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally mandated administrative agency responsible for coordination of the highway, transit, and land use planning process necessary to receive federal funds for highway and transit improvements. The purpose of the MPO is to provide local citizens and elected officials the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process. The Amarillo MPO consists of a Policy Committee, a Technical Committee, and the MPO staff. The MPO serves the city of Amarillo, parts of Potter and Randall Counties, and the Texas Department of Transportation Amarillo District. The MPO study area is comprised of nearly 360 square miles in the Texas Panhandle.
 - Travis Muno, Amarillo MPO
 - Travis Muno was raised in Dalhart, Texas in the Northwest corner of the Panhandle. He graduated from WTSU (now WTAMU) with a Bachelor in Business Administration/Business Management. He has worked for the City of Amarillo for 10 years and the Amarillo MPO for the last 4 years. Travis is married with two daughters and two more on the way. His urban transportation perspective has given him a unique viewpoint on transportation in the Texas Panhandle and his opinions are highly valued among the group.
- **Vacancies** - There are only 2 vacancies for PROMPT at this time. One is for a representative from TxDOT which occurred after restructuring at the Department. The other is from Medicaid Transportation. Staff is working diligently to find replacements for these vacancies.

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Plan of Routine Engagement for Steering Committee Members

There are at least 4 PROMPT meetings per year scheduled to be held each quarter or more often than necessary. In previous years PROMPT has met on a bi-monthly basis. However, it became apparent that there were not enough material topics to discuss to justify some of our members driving for 4-4.5 hours round trip for a 45 minute general discussion. Therefore it was determined in 2009 that meetings would be held on a quarterly basis. Some meetings have gone longer in between as various items of interest had not yet been completed and some have been shorter as time and deadlines have dictated. However, in the Texas Panhandle, and especially with those involved with PRPC, rarely is there a time when an individual only serves on one volunteer body. Many of the individuals with PROMPT are also involved in other aspects of coordination around the Panhandle. This gives administrative staff the ability to seek those individuals out who may be attending other meetings in PRPC offices to discuss transportation related issues. Also, staff are involved in RPO, MPO and SACTTF meetings so coordination is an ongoing activity.

Plan of Routine Regionally Coordinated Plan Update Process

Each year's activities with PROMPT are mapped out in a TxDOT mandated work plan submitted before the Fiscal Year begins. This work plan is approved in contract form and therefore is maintained throughout the year. Part of the work plan includes a routine review of progress made in completing projects included in the Regional Coordination Plan. At times throughout the year, staff at PRPC review the work plan as it relates to the Coordination Plan to ensure that projects being completed are falling in line with the Plan itself. Also included in this constant monitoring process is whether or not the plan should be updated to include new projects that may present themselves. Right now the major concerns coming before PROMPT are not coordination related or planning related, but are focused rather on financial restrictions and personnel restrictions. These two will remain constants so PROMPT members are continually challenged to think outside the box and maintain creative thinking to come up with new projects to address these issues.

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Vision Mission and Goals

The Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation recently adopted, for the first time, a Vision Statement, Mission Statement and set of Measurable Goals. The purpose of adopting this statements and set of goals is to continue to steer PROMPT in the direction of increasing service delivery and efficiency in public transportation.

Vision Statement as Adopted

“Equal Access to Transportation for All”

Mission Statement as Adopted

“To Enhance access and promote transportation resources in the Panhandle while coordinating and unifying all resources available.”

Goals of PROMPT Through the Year 2016

1. Working with AISD to fill gaps
2. Encouraging the City of Amarillo to continue to evaluate routes and aiding in initiatives to deal with loss of funding with Census numbers expected to breach 200,000
3. Working with Medicaid brokers to fill gaps
4. Continuing to coordinate and improve communication between all public and private transportation providers

These goals are measurable as each year the group’s workplan will include objectives such as establishing contact, maintaining a certain number of introduction meetings with appropriate personnel, meeting notes from those meetings, etc. One of the over-arching and less discussed goals of PROMPT is to maintain an actual schedule of work so as to ensure the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars in a time when waste in government is highly touted and many vital planning processes are in danger of budget cuts. Specific workplan goals and objectives are distributed to PROMPT members on a yearly basis in order to ensure that staff stays on track with the planning process as it was intended. Performance measures are also built into each year’s workplan. It may not be entirely appropriate to list specific objectives and performance measures in a planning document which will be treated as a living document and will evolve on

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an almost constant basis. However, as stated previously, PROMPT understands fully the need to ensure that planning dollars are being utilized to their highest potential.