



September 29, 2006

Kelly Kirkland, Planning and Support Section Director  
Texas Department of Transportation  
Public Transportation Division  
125 East 11th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

Dear Mr. Kirkland:

The attached is submitted as input into the identification of barriers and constraints that hinder the efforts to coordinate public transportation in the Coastal Bend Council of Governments region. The stakeholders have been meeting since November of last year and have been actively engaged in the decision making process associated with the study.

The review of barriers has involved the evaluation of agency conflicts, operator concerns, and existing gaps in service. The attached is a preliminary list of existing constraints and barriers that has been created based on input from the stakeholders. We are continuing to evaluate these items in accordance with the needs and concerns of the Coastal Bend region, as identified in the data collection and survey efforts currently underway.

Work is underway on all elements of the study and it is anticipated that a draft will be under review by the end of October. Please let me know if additional information is desired.

Submitted by,

Tom Niskala,  
Transportation Planning Director.

cc: John Buckner  
Executive Director  
Coastal Bend Council of Governments

Paula M. Sales-Evans, P.E.  
Director of Transportation Planning & Development  
Texas Department of Transportation

# Coastal Bend Regional Coordinated Public Transportation Plan

September 29, 2006

## BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS THAT HINDER COORDINATING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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

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

### Federal Barriers

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

### Policy/Regulatory/Organizational/Structural

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

### Funding

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

## **Operations**

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

## **Education**

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

## **Other**

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

## **Gaps in Services**

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