

Identified Barriers and Constraints

South Plains – Region 2

The following list of barriers and constraints have been identified by members of the South Plains regional coordination group and will be included in the final plan.

Barriers and Constraints

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

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

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

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

Barrier	How it obstructs coordinated services
A lack of resources – capital and operating – to meet current needs.	The planning group has not identified any significant duplication of service provision in our region. The urban and rural transit networks are restricted because they cannot grow to meet demand. Our region is older, poorer, and more disabled than the state average, which means that demand for transportation services will continue to grow. Funding levels that do not meet current needs will certainly not be sufficient in the future, as demand for services increases.
Transportation needs that cross into other regions or states.	The transportation needs of persons who live outside our boundaries, but who may require services available only in our region, may not be adequately met.
Medical trips – such as dialysis – scheduled for facilities that may not be the closest destination.	The Medicaid scheduling requirement does not permit the transportation providers to operate in the most efficient manner, which therefore places even more pressure on an already-strained system.

Cost of insurance/high insurance requirements

Costs that rise faster than our funding allocations mean that more of our funds are pulled away from direct provision of transportation in order to cover overhead expenses.

Additionally, in situations where a municipality's risk managers get involved in coordinated transportation services, their insurance requirements place an extreme hardship (at best) on private providers who wish to coordinate with public entities.

Restrictions that prohibit a rural provider from doing trips in urban areas.

Our most significant unmet need in the region is in areas of the city of Lubbock that are not served by Citibus' fixed route system. However, under current rules, Citibus is not permitted to utilize rural providers to assist in meeting transportation needs in the urban area.

Inflexible Medicaid rules.

Rigid Medicaid rules result in two situations – one is that Medicaid passengers are given preferential treatment when compared to other system passengers; the other is that Medicaid rules do not give transportation providers the ability to operate at peak proficiency. This impacts any funding that is allocated by formula, as we are penalized for the inefficiencies that (1) we do not cause, and (2) we cannot change.

Additionally, we are looking at a program to provide a safe place to wait for rural passengers who have long waits for their return trips. This is a serious issue in our region, but it appears that Medicaid rules would prohibit payment of trips from a central wait location. This means that, while we could provide a safe and comfortable waiting location for rural passengers, that facility could not be used for Medicaid recipients.

Limited Citibus service area.

Because of not being able to use Federal funds for operating assistance, Citibus is not able to grow the system to meet increasing needs. This impact ripples throughout our community and region – for example, WorkSource assists residents in finding jobs, but in many cases newly-hired individuals are unable to have transportation to their job, if it is not on the limited fixed route system. And, as noted previously, we cannot use rural providers to provide trips in the un- or under-served areas of urban Lubbock.

Project continuity for JARC and New Freedom projects

Our region intends to include JARC and NF projects in our plan, and to apply for these funds. While JARC and NF projects will greatly assist in meeting unmet needs in our region, if the projects are only funded for one year, that puts the transit providers in a bad position with passengers who will come to depend on service that we cannot guarantee the ability to provide past the end of the grant commitment. In many cases, it takes months to develop ridership on new programs, and it is likely that ridership could take almost the entire first (only) year to grow to acceptable levels.

Not only will there be an even greater obstacle for our passengers who had no service before, but it will create a lingering problem of public relations and credibility for the providers.

Funding levels that are formula-based actually provide a disincentive for coordination

All public transportation providers whose funds are provided by formula/performance measures are actually in jeopardy of decreased funding amounts if the number of trips they provide decreases, or if their performance factors are impacted negatively. This is a huge disincentive for coordination – none of the providers in our region can afford to lose funding.

511 System

The lack of a 511 system in our area means that we are not able to provide comprehensive transportation information across the region.

Restrictions on vehicle size/fuel types that are funded by the state

In many cases, it would be much more economical to operate smaller vehicles, such as accessible mini-vans, to provide trips to remote areas with low demand for transportation services. Purchase of these vehicles is prohibited if state funds are used.

Likewise, restrictions on fuel types or requirements for low-emission vehicles hampers the providers' ability to purchase vehicles that more closely meet the specific transportation needs in the region.

Constraint

How it obstructs coordinated service

Confusion about different vehicles/logos/drivers among passengers, especially elderly passengers or ones with cognitive disabilities.

We are concerned that an effort to coordinate transportation services will make the service actually more difficult for our passengers, because they won't always be able to understand why different vehicles are picking them up. A vast re-painting scheme for all vehicles in the region is not fiscally feasible; additionally, we are NOT the same provider – as we all operate independently from one another – and looking like we are the same provider may not be in anyone's best interest.

Ongoing problems with the TEJAS system

The TEJAS system does not automatically update, so the TSAP must pull trips multiple times during the day, which wastes already-full staff time.

Different needs of assistance (or expectations of assistance) among different service populations and how that balances with transit system's need for efficiency

Increased levels of customer assistance will impact transit system efficiency; our funding is formula-based so this will ultimately impact how much funding we can receive. A comprehensive, region-wide travel training program would help, but a program of that sort is constrained by funding and staffing.

In our region, we have identified almost no duplicated services. Our concern is that coordination will end up being more costly than what we currently provide. All the providers in our region are already operating as tightly as possible, and without duplicated services to "harvest" for funding, it is hard to see how we can afford to meet the needs that currently not being met in our region.

None of the providers have additional funds to meet unmet needs and there are not significant amounts of duplicated services that can be eliminated. That means there is not additional funding that can be reallocated.

Katrina evacuees have much different expectations of public transit; current service meets neither their needs nor their expectations

Approximately 100 Katrina evacuees have relocated to Lubbock. The housing where most of them live is not on a bus route; most of these residents are familiar with using transit and would use it here to get to their jobs, but are not able to. This hinders their ability to work.

Cost of trips

Agencies that have a choice between directly providing transportation or providing gas vouchers for their consumers frequently find it more cost-effective to do either of those options rather than scheduling trips on rural providers.

The following section includes the barriers and constraints forms.

**Barriers and Constraints
South Plains Region
September 2006**

Region: LUBBOCK

Barrier # 1

Brief description of the Barrier:

A lack of resources – capital and operating – to meet current needs.

Source of Barrier

___ **Is the Barrier officially documented?** If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

Is the Barrier something you know by reference but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Citibus is restricted by SAFETEA-LU on how Federal funds may be spent – for capital only. The City of Lubbock has not been able to fund the operating needs of the system, and the route structure is unable to grow to meet the demands of newly-developed parts of the city.

All providers – urban and rural – do not have sufficient funding levels to meet needs.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

The planning group has not identified any significant duplication of service provision in our region.

The urban and rural transit networks are restricted because they cannot grow to meet demand. Our region is older, poorer, and more disabled than the state average, which means that demand for transportation services will continue to grow. Funding levels that do not meet current needs will certainly not be sufficient in the future, as demand for services increases.

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Barrier # 2

Brief description of the Barrier:

Transportation needs that cross into other regions or states.

Source of Barrier

 Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

 X **Is the Barrier something you know by reference** but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

We have transportation needs that do not stop at our regional boundaries, or at state boundaries.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

The transportation needs of persons who live outside our boundaries, but who may require services available only in our region, may not be adequately met.

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Barrier # 3

Brief description of the Barrier:

Medical trips – such as dialysis – scheduled for facilities that may not be the closest destination.

Source of Barrier

 Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

 X **Is the Barrier something you know by reference** but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Dialysis trips, particularly Medicaid-funded ones, are not always scheduled at the clinic nearest the patient's home.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

This scheduling requirement does not permit the transportation providers to operate in the most efficient manner, which therefore places even more pressure on an already-strained system.

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Barrier # 4

Brief description of the Barrier:

Cost of insurance/high insurance requirements.

Source of Barrier

 Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

 X **Is the Barrier something you know by reference** but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Mandatory insurance limits strain our already tight budgets.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

Costs that rise faster than our funding allocations mean that more of our funds are pulled away from direct provision of transportation in order to cover overhead expenses.

Additionally, in situations where a municipality's risk managers get involved in coordinated transportation services, their insurance requirements place an extreme hardship (at best) on private providers who wish to coordinate with public entities.

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Barrier # 5

Brief description of the Barrier:

Restrictions that prohibit a rural provider from doing trips in urban areas.

Source of Barrier

 Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

 X **Is the Barrier something you know by reference** but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Restrictions that prohibit rural providers from doing trips (other than Medicaid) in urban areas.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

Our most significant unmet need is in areas of the city of Lubbock that are not served by Citibus' fixed route system. However, under current rules, Citibus is not permitted to utilize rural providers to assist meeting transportation needs in the urban areas.

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Barrier # 6

Brief description of the Barrier:

Inflexible Medicaid rules

Source of Barrier

 Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

 X **Is the Barrier something you know by reference** but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Medicaid rules about early appointments, priority trips, no payment for no-shows, etc.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

Rigid Medicaid rules result in two situations – one is that Medicaid passengers are given preferential treatment when compared to other system passengers; the other is that Medicaid rules do not give transportation providers the ability to operate at peak proficiency. This impacts ANY funding that is allocated by formula, as we are penalized for the inefficiencies that (1) we do not cause and (2) we cannot change.

Additionally, we are looking at a program to provide a safe place to wait for rural passengers who have long waits for their return trips. This is a serious issue – and an identified unmet need – in our region, but it appears that Medicaid rules would prohibit payment of trips from a central wait location. This means that while we COULD provide a safe and comfortable waiting location for rural passengers, that facility could not be used for Medicaid recipients.

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Barrier # 7

Brief description of the Barrier:

Limited Citibus service area

Source of Barrier

Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

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- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

Is the Barrier something you know by reference but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Directly related to lack of ability to use Federal funds for operating assistance.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

Because of not being able to use Federal funds for operating assistance, Citibus is not able to grow the system to meet increased needs. This impact ripples throughout our community and region – for example, WorkSource assists residents in finding jobs, but in many cases newly-hired individuals are unable to have transportation to their job, if it is not on the limited fixed route system. And, as noted in another barrier, we cannot use our rural providers to provide trips in the unserved areas of Lubbock.

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Barrier # 8

Brief description of the Barrier:

Project continuity for JARC and New Freedom projects.

Source of Barrier

Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

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- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

Is the Barrier something you know by reference but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Our region intends to include JARC and NF project in our plan, and to apply for these funds. We are concerned about project continuity if these projects are awarded competitively, one year at a time.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

Our region intends to include JARC and NF projects in our plan, and to apply for these funds. While JARC and NF projects will greatly assist in meeting unmet needs in our region, if the projects are only funded for one year, that puts the transit providers in a bad position with passengers who will come to depend on service that we cannot guarantee the ability to provide past the end of the grant commitment. In many cases, it takes months to develop ridership on new programs, and it is likely that ridership could take almost the entire first (only) year to grow to acceptable levels.

Not only will there an even greater obstacle for our passengers who had no service before, but it will create a lingering problem of public relations and credibility for the providers.

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Barrier # 9

Brief description of the Barrier:

Funding levels that are formula-based actually provide a disincentive for coordination.

Source of Barrier

Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

Is the Barrier something you know by reference but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Any system that receives formula funding will risk a funding cut if a significant number of trips are reallocated to other agencies/providers.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

All public transportation providers whose funds are provided by formula/performance measures are actually in jeopardy of decreased funding amounts if the number of trips they provide decreases, or if their performance factors are impacted negatively. This is a huge disincentive for coordination – none of the providers in our region can afford to lose funding.

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Barrier # 9

Brief description of the Barrier:

511 System

Source of Barrier

Is the Barrier officially documented? If Yes, define specific source of Barrier.

- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

- Texas Statute (Transportation Code, for example) _____
- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

Is the Barrier something you know by reference but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

There is no 511 system in our region.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

The lack of a 511 system in our area means that we are not able to provide comprehensive transportation information across the region.

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Barrier # 9

Brief description of the Barrier:

Restriction on state-funded vehicle size/fuel types.

Source of Barrier

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- Federal Statute _____
- Federal Agency Regulation _____
- Federal Funding Policy _____

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- Texas Regulation (Administrative Code, for example) _____
- Texas Agency Policy, especially funding policy _____

- Regional Government Policy _____

- Local Agency Policy _____
- Local Interpretation of Federal/State law _____

Is the Barrier something you know by reference but not necessarily documented? If Yes, define your best understanding of the source of Barrier.

Systems that depend on State funds for vehicle purchases have to use vehicles that are not best suited to the particular needs in the region.

Specifically describe how this Barrier is obstructing coordinated regional service.

In many cases, it would be much more economical to operate smaller vehicles, such as accessible mini-vans, to provide trips to remote areas with low demand for transportation services. Purchase of these vehicles is prohibited if state funds are used.

Likewise, restrictions on fuel types or requirements for low-emission vehicles hampers the providers' ability to purchase vehicles that more closely meet the specific transportation needs in the region.

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Constraint # 1

Brief description of the Constraint

Confusion about different vehicles/logos/drivers with passengers, especially elderly passengers or ones with cognitive disabilities.

Source of Constraint

Specifically describe how this Constraint is limiting or restricting coordinated regional service.

We are concerned that an effort to coordinate transportation services will make the service actually more difficult for our passengers, because they won't always be able to understand why different vehicles may be picking them up. A vast re-painting scheme for all vehicles in the region is not fiscally feasible; additionally we are NOT the same provider – as we all operated independently from one another – and looking like we ARE the same provider may not be in anyone's best interest.

What is your Region doing to take Local initiative to address and resolve constraint?

None of our providers currently have the resources to train every one of the passengers who may be impacted by this constraint.

Do you need additional assistance on how other Regions have tackled and resolved similar Constraints?
Would you like to post a request for advice or suggestions from other Regions on the RSP website?

We would be interested in a solution other than a common paint scheme.

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Constraint # 2

Brief description of the Constraint

Ongoing problems with the TEJAS system.

Source of Constraint

The TEJAS system does not automatically update, so the TSAP must pull trips multiple times during the day, which wastes already-full staff time.

Specifically describe how this Constraint is limiting or restricting coordinated regional service.

The TSAP spends too much time each day pulling trips from the system and cross-checking to make sure that all trips scheduled in TEJAS are scheduled to a provider.

What is your Region doing to take Local initiative to address and resolve constraint?

This constraint is not within our ability to resolve.

Do you need additional assistance on how other Regions have tackled and resolved similar Constraints?
Would you like to post a request for advice or suggestions from other Regions on the RSP website?

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Constraint # 3

Brief description of the Constraint

Different needs of assistance (or expectations of assistance) among different populations served and how that balances with transit systems' need for efficiency.

Source of Constraint

Specifically describe how this Constraint is limiting or restricting coordinated regional service.

Increased levels of customer assistance will impact transit system efficiency; our funding is formula-based, so this will ultimately impact how much funding we can receive. A comprehensive, region-wide travel training program would help, but a program of that sort is constrained by funding and staffing.

What is your Region doing to take Local initiative to address and resolve constraint?

This is not something that can be completely resolved at a local level; a comprehensive travel training program could help, but a program of that sort is constrained by funding and staffing.

Do you need additional assistance on how other Regions have tackled and resolved similar Constraints?
Would you like to post a request for advice or suggestions from other Regions on the RSP website?

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Constraint #4

Brief description of the Constraint

In our region, we have identified almost no duplicated services. Our concern is that coordination will end up being more costly than what we currently provide. All the providers in our region are already operating as tightly as possible, and without duplicated services to “harvest” for funding, it is hard to see how we can afford to meet the needs that are currently not being met in our region.

Source of Constraint

Specifically describe how this Constraint is limiting or restricting coordinated regional service.

None of the providers have additional funds to meet unmet needs and there are not duplicated services; that means there is no additional funding that can be reallocated to streamlining existing services in order to meet unmet needs.

What is your Region doing to take Local initiative to address and resolve constraint?

Do you need additional assistance on how other Regions have tackled and resolved similar Constraints?
Would you like to post a request for advice or suggestions from other Regions on the RSP website?

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Constraint #5

Brief description of the Constraint

Katrina evacuees have much different expectations of public transit; current service meets neither their needs nor their expectations.

Source of Constraint

Specifically describe how this Constraint is limiting or restricting coordinated regional service.

Approximately 100 Katrina evacuees have relocated to Lubbock. The housing where most of them live is not on a bus route; most of these residents are familiar with using transit and would use it here to get to their jobs, but are not able to. This hinders their ability to work.

What is your Region doing to take Local initiative to address and resolve constraint?

Do you need additional assistance on how other Regions have tackled and resolved similar Constraints?
Would you like to post a request for advice or suggestions from other Regions on the RSP website?

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Constraint #5

Brief description of the Constraint

Cost of trips on rural providers.

Source of Constraint

Specifically describe how this Constraint is limiting or restricting coordinated regional service.

Agencies that have a choice between directly providing transportation or providing gas vouchers for their consumers frequently find it more cost-effective to do either of those options rather than to schedule trips on rural providers.

What is your Region doing to take Local initiative to address and resolve constraint?

Do you need additional assistance on how other Regions have tackled and resolved similar Constraints?
Would you like to post a request for advice or suggestions from other Regions on the RSP website?

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