



BRAZOS VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
P.O. DRAWER 4128 · BRYAN, TEXAS 77805-4128

**BVCOG Regional Transportation Coordination Plan:
Interim Status Report**
Reporting Period: May 1st, 2006 through June 30th, 2006

Vision: *A partnership of transportation providers committed to increasing the efficiency of regional transit services. Here to There: providing the region access to coordinated mobility options with one call.*

Mission: *To provide an efficient coordinated transportation plan for the region allowing expanded service areas and centralizing oversight.*

Goals & Objectives:

Goal: Develop meaningful partnerships between the transportation providers in our region.

Objectives:

1. Identify transportation providers, users and potential users.
2. Conduct monthly steering committee meetings to provide guidance.
3. Establish a forum for collaboration and planning cooperation between transportation users and providers.

Goal: Increase efficiency in regional transportation.

Objectives:

1. Identify existing capability and capacity.
2. Identify funding sources and opportunities.
3. Develop standard inter-local and other agreements to facilitate coordination.

Goal: Pursue a brokerage service to coordinate transportation arrangements.

Objectives:

1. Develop software interfacing to allow our 2-1-1 service to view and arrange transportation appointments.
2. Develop rideshare databases and forums to increase individual carpooling and rideshare efforts.
3. Develop an effective marketing plan to promote the use of the brokerage services.

Goal: Implement and maintain a regionally coordinated transportation plan.

Objectives:

1. Provide useful solutions to eliminate barriers and constraints to coordination.
2. Secure funding for the growth and maintenance of our coordination planning.
3. Implement a comprehensive coordinated plan eliminating gaps and expanding services.

BVCOG Regional Transportation Interim Status Report

This report updates the progress the Brazos Valley Council of Governments has made on a Regional Transportation Coordination Plan from the previous interim status report submitted on May 5th that covered the period from June 2005 to May 2006. We have developed a vision, mission statement, goals and objectives for achieving a regional transportation coordination plan, which can be found on the next page. This updated timeline lists the significant accomplishments since the previous interim status report submitted on May 5th. The final table describes the composition and participation of the steering committee for the regional transportation coordination.

During this reporting period two monthly coordinated public transportation meetings have since been facilitated by BVCOG staff. During the first meeting on May 22nd, a broad-based steering committee for the Coordinated Public Transportation was re-affirmed that includes officials from across the region in fields including but not limited to health care, public transportation providers, workforce board and local ISD's. For the following steering committee meeting on June 26th our staff compiled results from two surveys sent to transportation providers and conducted research to assess the current transportation situation for Brazos Valley including telephone calls to discuss transportation profiles and answering questions about the survey. The Texas Transportation Institute recognized the BVCOG as having the highest survey response rate to date of any COG in the state of Texas for the transportation provider inventory survey. A follow-up survey regarding transportation financing was conducted and the corresponding results were analyzed for steering committee presentation. A data collection packet was created analyzing transportation provider data as well as graphical representations of relevant demographics by area. The results of both the research and the surveys were presented in the most recent steering committee meeting on June 26th. BVCOG will use the opportunity as a "retreat" to develop key goals and objectives for consideration by the full steering committee.

Additionally, the BVCOG was awarded one of only twenty grants nationally from the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) for its successful application to have a five-member team representing the Brazos Valley region participate in the inaugural Institute for Transportation Coordination (ITC). The Institute for Transportation Coordination is an intensive training and planning forum created to enhance the capacity of communities to provide cost-effective and customer-focused transportation services by coordinating funding, information, services, and equipment. The Institute is designed to support specific communities in promoting the delivery of coordinated human services transportation to all individuals with disabilities, persons with low incomes, seniors, youth and others. The three-and-a-half-day forum will promote active and open collaboration within and across community teams that come to the Institute with a commitment to ensuring that those who are transportation disadvantaged can access healthcare, education, recreation, employment and other life sustaining activities.

During the TxDOT Best Practices Roundtable on June 28th-29th BVCOG staff received further direction in providing TxDOT with the identification of barriers and constraints to coordinated public transportation. The preliminary list of barriers and constraints to transportation coordination we have identified can be found after the timeline section. Brief descriptions of proposed solutions to these barriers and constraints are also provided in this section of the report.

Progress from June 17th, 2005 to April 30th, 2006 was reported to TxDOT in our previous interim status report submitted May 5th, 2006. The following timeline represents major tasks undertaken as of June 30th, 2006:

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|----------------------|--|
| May 1, 2006 | TxDOT Contract appropriates funds needed by the BVCOG to begin work on a coordinated regional public transportation plan |
| May 5, 2006 | Preliminary interim status report completed and submitted to Kelly Kirkland at TxDOT |
| May 16, 2006 | Began calling to discuss transportation profiles and answering questions about the TTI transportation survey. |
| May 22, 2006 | Regional Transportation Committee Meeting held. During this meeting, our steering committee was established. |
| May 30, 2006 | Final notice given for transportation provider survey. BVCOG Transportation Finance Survey completed. |
| May 31, 2006 | Application submitted for CTAA Grant to attend the Institute of Transportation Coordination Forum in Washington D.C. |
| June 1, 2006 | Finalized respondent list received from Jeff Arndt with TTI. 104 respondents are listed for the Brazos Valley, which is the leading response rate of any region to date. |
| June 5, 2006 | Finance survey mailed; steering committee meeting dates established. |
| June 12, 2006 | Final database of all transportation provider contact information created. |
| June 15, 2006 | CTAA grant awarded to attend the Institute of Transportation Coordination Forum in Washington D.C. |
| June 16, 2006 | Finance survey follow up calling and corrections. |
| June 23, 2006 | Finance Survey data exported and analyzed for steering committee presentation |
| June 24, 2006 | Data collection packet created analyzing transportation provider data as well as graphical representations of relevant demographics by area. |
| June 26, 2006 | June Regional Coordination Steering Committee meeting held. Field research methodology discussed as well as identification of current barriers and constraints. |
| June 28, 2006 | Began creating of future user survey and data collection |
| June 29, 2006 | Texas Best Practices Roundtable, Austin TX. |
| June 30, 2006 | Texas Best Practices Roundtable, Austin TX. |

Preliminary Barriers and Constraints

Barriers:

1. School bus and government vehicle exemptions within the state do not allow other entities to use the same vehicle.

Proposed Solution: Remove or standardize exemptions in state and federal law which prohibit vehicle and equipment sharing between transportation providers public and private.

2. JARC regulations disallowing transportation planning with economic development funds.

Proposed Solution: Provide economic stimulus data for the project to make the case for the provision of planning and maintenance funds to be drawn from economic development funds.

3. Federal Transportation Agency population restrictions for Job Access Reverse Commute program.

Proposed Solution: Identifying areas where population boundaries may be redrawn as beneficial to the JARC program.

4. Lack of provisions for joint procurement of vehicles, insurance and technology among separate agencies.

Proposed Solution: Standardize vehicle selection pools as well as allowing the pooling of funds between agencies for group purchases; Remove or standardize vehicle guidelines between agencies such as the NHTSA and state agencies.

5. Bidding process for Medicaid transportation funding which is resulting in reduced service.

Proposed Solution: Establish profit limitations or performance measures for private sector competitors to reduce undercutting and subcontracting.

6. Older Americans Act Section 1321.67 disallows charging older Americans for transportation and is in direct conflict with the needs of other programs.

Proposed Solution: Amend the Older Americans Act to allow for future coordination between agencies which operate through fees and agencies who operate in compliance with the Older Americans Act.

7. Non-standardized driver training programs and requirements.

Proposed Solution: Allowing workforce training programs to establish standard training and certifications to increase inter-agency driver availability and compatibility. Create a common labor pool of drivers that can be sent anywhere to drive anything.

Constraints:

1. Software capability to allow services like 2-1-1 to act as a broker/locator of transportation

Proposed Solution: Survey existing software and modify as necessary.

2. Insurance cost and prohibition of different drivers and purposes for the same vehicles.

Proposed Solution: Work to eliminate exclusivity of insurance coverage and provide for combined insurance purchasing between agencies.

3. Urban and rural jurisdictional boundary conflicts.

Proposed Solution: Establish centralized authority and boundaries for transportation.

4. Lack of qualified or certified drivers as well as a lack of available backup drivers.

Proposed Solution: Allow workforce programs to provide increased training and coordination programs; standardize driver requirements; allow brokerage services to lease both vehicles and drivers.

5. Lack of an available area wide inventory list of transportation providers.

Proposed Solution: Make transportation inventory studies available to providers.

6. Large providers with insufficient understanding of local needs.

Proposed Solution: Coordinate larger providers with smaller providers as a mutual exchange of both information and transportation provisions.

7. Limited funding in the face of increasing transportation costs.

Proposed Solution: Decrease costs through efficiency; Mobility Fund redirections.

8. Varying trip reservation guidelines.

Proposed Solution: Usage of a brokerage service to ensure rapid and dependable vehicle procurement.

9. Shortfall of effective multi-county routes from rural areas to urban areas.

Proposed Solution: Utilize transportation route patterns discovered through planning to develop effective routes to expand service volume and area.

For the remainder of the contract period the BVCOG will adhere to the outline below to accomplish the regional planning effort:

Overall Work Plan Outline

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|---|--|
| <p>Task 1: Develop Goals and Objectives Write Mission Statement Achieve Consensus on Goals and Objectives</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Fall 2005</p> |
| <p>Task 2: Data Collection Current Providers Customers Service Gaps Unmet Need Existing Coordination</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Spring/Summer 2006</p> |
| <p>Task 3: Public Involvement and Input Providers Customers Health and Human Service Agencies Advocacy Groups Workforce Boards TxDOT</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Task 4. Identify Constraints Legislative Bureaucratic Perceived</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Summer 2006</p> |
| <p>Task 5. Develop and Choose Coordination Strategies Brokerage Lead Agency Provider</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Summer/Fall 2006</p> |
| <p>Task 6. Refine Regional Coordination Strategy Finalize Regional Strategy Submit Plan</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Fall 2006</p> |
| <p>Task 7. Implementation Implement Strategy at Regional Level</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p> |

Steering Committee Composition and Participation

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments takes pride in the participation and selection of our 35 member steering committee. The committee provides representation from each of our 7 counties as well as a variety of service areas. Our steering committee contains a blend of public and private sector providers allowing for a multitude of viewpoints and opinions to be discussed. The Brazos Valley Council of Governments steering committee has specialists from TxDOT, Brazos Transit, HHSC, Workforce, medical professions, agencies representing the elderly, the Bryan/College Station MPO, as well as multiple school districts. For a complete listing of organizational representation, please see the attached coordinated transportation steering committee list.

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments actively engages our steering committee with workshop activities to create survey materials and datasets. The steering committee is tasked with providing guidance on the navigation of potential problem issues and suggested resolutions. The diversity and level of representation in our steering committee provides sufficient information in the room to generate focused discussion towards the resolution of service gaps. Our steering committee has an open forum to discuss current project priorities as well as to establish new priorities. The steering committee will provide approval for our final regionally coordinated transportation plan.

The steering committee for our region holds monthly meetings on the fourth Monday of each month. Their meeting schedule is as follows:

All Meetings held at 1:30 PM in the Center for Regional Services

Monday June 26th
Monday July 24th
Monday August 28th
Monday September 25th
Monday October 23rd
Monday November 20th

**Brazos Valley Council of Governments Regionally Coordinated
Transportation Steering Committee**

| First | Last | Organization | City | State | Phone |
|--------------|--------------|--|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Ramona | Aguirre | City of Hearne | Hearne | TX | 979-279-2301 |
| Bob | Appleton | Texas Dept. of Transportation | Bryan | TX | 979-778-9707 |
| Bill | Conaway | CSISD | College Station | TX | 979-764-5440 |
| Mary | Cunningham | Grimes Co. Chamber | Navasota | TX | 936-825-6600 |
| John | Dean | City of Bryan | Bryan | TX | 979-209-5900 |
| Barbara | Dever-Henson | MHMR | Bryan | TX | 979-822-6467 |
| Mildred | Edwards | Grimes County | Navasota | TX | 936-825-6382 |
| Karen | Garber | BV Community Action Agency | Bryan | TX | 979-779-7443 |
| Dena | Gaskin | B/CS Chamber | Bryan | TX | 979-260-5200 |
| Judy | Greer | BV Community Action Agency | Bryan | TX | 979-691-6231 |
| Ted | Hajovsky | A.V.P. Blinn College | Bryan | TX | 979-209-7211 |
| John | Happ | City of College Station - Councilmember | College Station | TX | 979-690-6565 |
| Laura | Higgins | TTI | College Station | TX | 979-845-8109 |
| Mary J. | Hurley | Senator Steve Ogden Office | Bryan | TX | 979-776-0521 |
| Laury | Kasowski | Rape Crisis Center BV | Bryan | TX | 979-731-1000 |
| Carolyn | Kraus | RSVP | Bryan | TX | 979-595-2800 ext. 2026 |
| Margie | Lucas | Brazos Transit | Bryan | TX | 979-778-4497 |
| Vancy | Mayes | BVCAA | Bryan | TX | 979-779-7443 |
| Ella | McGruder | Project Unity | College Station | TX | 979-764-8100 |
| Linda | McGuill | BVCOG | Bryan | TX | 979-595-2800 |
| Jeannie | McGuire | Project Unity | College Station | TX | 979-764-8100 |
| Tony | Morelos | Grimes County Chamber of Commerce | Navasota | TX | 936-825-6600 |
| Doug | Morris | Brenham | Brenham | TX | 979-836-3695 |
| Weldon | Peters | BVCOG | Bryan | TX | 979-595-2800 |
| Hank | Roraback | BV United Way | College Station | TX | 979-696-4483 |
| Ron | Ross | Division for Blind Services | College Station | TX | 979-693-8804 |
| Troy | Rother | COCS | College Station | TX | 979-764-3838 |
| Shawna | Russell | TxDOT | Austin | TX | 512-463-8585 |
| Joe | Scarpinato | First State Bank | Hearne | TX | 979-279-3909 |
| Mark | Smith | COCS | College Station | TX | 979-764-3639 |
| Cynthia | Tauss | Office of the Governor Regional Rep | Houston | TX | 281-335-8282 |
| Jennifer | Timms | BCSMPO | Bryan | TX | 979-260-5298 |
| Darla | Walton | Texas Dept. of Transportation | Bryan | TX | 979-778-9668 |
| Bryan | Wood | TXDOT | Bryan | TX | 979-778-9600 |
| Robert | Wright | Washington County | Brenham | TX | 979-830-7058 |