

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION

Work Plan

North Central Texas Council of Governments

October 10, 2005

North Central Texas
Regional Public Transportation Coordination

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This Work Plan outlines the process whereby the North Central Texas region (Attachment 1) will develop a Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan that meets the requirements of Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code. The Plan will identify long-term as well as short-term strategies that can be implemented in the North Central Texas region to achieve a more coordinated and efficient public transportation system.

Background

In 2003, the 78th Legislature passed House Bill 3588 (Article 13), thereby amending the Texas Transportation Code by adding Chapter 461, "Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation." Chapter 461 cites the multiplicity of public transportation providers and services, coupled with a lack of coordination between State oversight agencies, as generating inefficiencies, overlaps in service, and confusion for consumers. The focus of Chapter 461 is the coordination of transportation funding and resources among the Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Department of Transportation. The intent of the legislation is to eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services, to generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service, and to further the State's efforts to reduce air pollution.

Process

The Texas Transportation Commission formed the Regional Planning and Public Transportation Study Group in January 2005 to formulate an action plan that addressed the public transportation coordination provision of House Bill 3588. The Study Group met through Spring 2005 and presented their recommendations to the Texas Transportation Commission in May

2005. Following adoption by the Texas Transportation Commission, a statewide kick-off workshop was held in Austin on June 14, 2005.

While a statewide effort, the Study Group recommended a bottom-up approach in which the planning efforts would take place at the regional level. The 24 Council of Governments (COG) boundaries were selected due to their close proximity to the Texas Workforce and Health and Human Service boundaries. Each region has been tasked with designating a lead agency, preparing a work plan, and estimating the funding needed to carry out this planning effort. These three items are to be presented at the second statewide workshop to be held in Austin on October 19, 2005. Following this meeting, each region will have until September 2006 to prepare a formal plan for submittal to the Texas Transportation Commission.

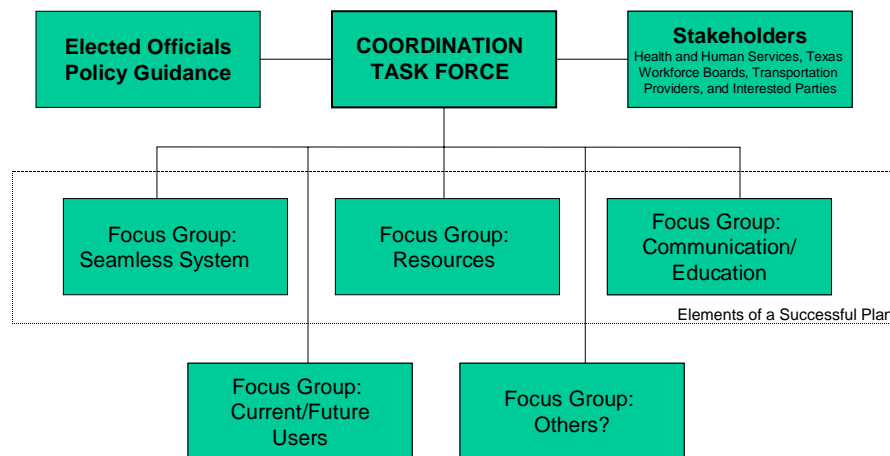
On August 1, 2005, the North Central Texas Council of Governments hosted the initial Regional Public Transportation Coordination Workshop. The meeting included over seventy representatives from four main stakeholder groups, including: Health and Human Service Agencies, Local Texas Workforce Boards, Public Transportation Providers, and Interested Parties. At this meeting, the North Central Texas Council of Governments was selected by consensus to serve as the region's lead agency. Acting in this capacity, NCTCOG organized two additional stakeholder workshops, one on September 12 and another on October 4. The purpose of these meetings was to create a methodology for developing a regional coordination plan, and finalizing this work plan document for presentation in Austin on October 19, 2005. In addition, NCTCOG staff has designed a coordination webpage and created a stakeholder database, as well as started the process of compiling a list of potential coordination strategies and anticipated constraints.

COORDINATION STRUCTURE

The structure by which the North Central Texas region will approach regional public transportation coordination has been a topic of discussion at stakeholder meetings and a focus of staff efforts. By incorporating comments from the three regional stakeholder meetings, and data from geographical areas involved in similar regional planning processes, a task force with issue specific focus groups is the structure that will be used to guide this regional effort. The Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force will be fundamental in overseeing that all elements of the work plan are met and kept on a timely schedule. The North Central Texas Council of Governments will provide staff support to the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force, while stakeholder expertise will be utilized as needed through issue specific focus groups. An organizational chart mapping out this hierarchy is provided in Exhibit 1. In addition, the membership composition of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force is outlined on Page 4.

Exhibit 1

**North Central Texas
Regional Public Transportation Coordination**
Lead Agency/Staff Support: North Central Texas Council of Governments



Task Force to meet monthly.
Updates to Stakeholders at significant milestones.
Issue specific focus groups determined by Task Force, meet as needed.

**North Central Texas
Regional Public Transportation Coordination
Task Force Membership**

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	
Region VI Representative	1
Health and Human Service Agencies	
Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)	1
Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)	1
Department of State Health Services (DSHS)	1
Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)	1
Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)	
Fort Worth District	1
Dallas District	1
Medical Transportation Program	1
Texas Workforce Boards	
Worksource for Dallas County	1
Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County	1
North Central Texas Workforce (14 Counties)	1
Transportation Providers	
Public	
Metropolitan Transportation Authorities	3
Small Urban Providers	2
Dallas District	
Fort Worth District	
Rural Providers	2
Dallas District	
Fort Worth District	
Private	
For-Profit Provider	2
Non-Profit Provider	1
Interested Parties	
Advocacy Groups	1
Business Community	1
User/Potential User	1
Total:	24

WORK PLAN ELEMENTS/TASKS

The North Central Texas Council of Governments, based on comments and input received at regional stakeholder workshops, has broadly identified ten tasks for the completion of a regional coordination plan by the September 2006 deadline set by the Texas Transportation Commission. The following is a brief summary of each task:

Task 1: Develop Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force, with the support and input of staff, will articulate the mission, goals, and objectives of this initiative. These will be closely linked to the primary objectives of House Bill 3588.

Task 2: Data Collection

The Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force will oversee the data collection element; however, significant input from issue specific focus groups will be sought. Stakeholder expertise will be utilized in the areas of transit operations, workforce development, and health and human services. NCTCOG staff will facilitate data collection and analysis, including but not limited to: providers, service areas, funding programs, eligibility requirements, customers, and gaps in service. In addition, NCTCOG staff will examine existing coordination efforts at the local, state, and federal levels to identify best practices.

Task 3: Public Involvement/Outreach

Throughout the process, the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force will address public involvement and outreach. Involvement from all of the identified stakeholder groups, as well as the general public, will be solicited.

Task 4: Problem/Constraint Identification

This portion of the Work Plan has already begun. NCTCOG staff has, and will continue to take note of constraints, both legislative and operational, throughout this process. Notation began at the August 1 Kick-off Workshop, and will continue following submittal of the regional plan in September 2006.

Task 5: Methodology for Evaluating Coordination Strategies

The Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force will develop a qualitative and quantitative methodology for evaluating coordination strategies identified throughout the planning process. This methodology will be used to evaluate and prioritize a master list of possible strategies into a short list of strategies and recommendations to include in the Plan. The methodology will be sensitive to strategies that address the long-term needs of the region, as well as high-impact strategic elements that can be implemented in the near-term.

Task 6: Develop Master List of Coordination Strategies

Coordination strategies could include plans, programs, policies, projects, and partnerships (5 P's), as well as engineering, education, and enforcement (3 E's). These strategies will address current constraints to move the region towards a more coordinated and efficient public transportation system. Initial constraints identified through stakeholder workshops fell generally into three categories: seamless system/jurisdictional issues; education and communication (i.e., provider to provider, provider to current/potential user); and resources (i.e., funding, centralized procurement of equipment and services). Each of these will be evaluated based on the methodology developed by the Task Force to sift the master list down to a manageable set of short-term strategies to be included in the Plan.

Task 7: Compile Short List of Coordination Strategies

A short list of strategies from Task 6, determined by the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Task Force, will be compiled and reviewed by regional stakeholders and NCTCOG staff. Strategy description, obstacles to implementation, regulatory and legislative implications, proposed resolution, timeline, and funding requirements are all elements that will be researched and documented. The Task Force will focus on developing an appropriate mix of long-term strategies versus near-term elements that can be implemented on a more strategic basis.

Task 8: Documentation of Regional Plan

The projects documented in Task 7 that are determined to be effective in magnitude, scope, and funding will be documented and included in the regional plan.

Task 9: Finalize and Submit Regional Plan

Time will be given for public comment on, and stakeholder review of, the Regional Coordination Plan. The Plan will be revised as needed, based on comments and feedback. NCTCOG staff will submit the Regional Plan for adoption by the Texas Transportation Commission, in advance of the September 2006 deadline.

Task 10: Implementation and Monitoring

Once the Plan is developed and submitted to the Texas Transportation Commission, on-going efforts will be necessary to initiate and monitor implementation of the strategies recommended in the Plan. It is anticipated that this will be an on-going effort that will require the continued participation of the stakeholders involved in the development of the initial Plan.

SCHEDULE

The schedule to complete each of the tasks identified on the preceding page is outlined below. It provides a rough estimate for which the Task Force can base decisions and the region can monitor progress.

Task 1. Develop Mission, Goals, and Objectives	Fall 2005
Task 2. Data Collection	Winter 2005
Task 3. Public Involvement/Outreach	Winter 2006
Task 4. Problem/Constraint Identification	Winter 2006
Task 5. Develop Methodology for Evaluating Coordination Strategies	Winter 2006
Task 6. Develop Master List of Coordination Strategies	Winter/Spring 2006
Task 7. Compile Short List of Coordination Strategies	Spring 2006
Task 8. Documentation of Regional Plan	Summer 2006
Task 9. Finalize and Submit Regional Plan	Fall 2006
Task 10. Implementation and Monitoring	Fall 2006

BUDGET

The North Central Texas Council of Governments estimates that the cost for development of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is approximately \$250,000, which includes staff resources and associated direct and indirect costs. Approximately \$150,000 in transportation planning funds to support this effort are being made available through NCTCOG's Regional Transportation Council, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Denton-Lewisville, and McKinney urbanized areas. This project will be funded in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation. Cooperative services will be provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and local Workforce

Development Boards. NCTCOG is requesting \$100,000 in additional planning funds from the Texas Department of Transportation to fully fund the Regional Public Transportation Coordination planning effort in North Central Texas.

Costs

Estimated Costs	\$250,000
Salaries	
Benefits	
Indirect Costs	
Supplies	
Rent	
Communications	
Postage	
Utilities	
Miscellaneous Expenses	

Available Planning Funds

Transportation Planning Funds* (Provided through NCTCOG's Regional Transportation Council)	\$150,000	(60%)
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Planning Funding Needs

Funding Requested From TxDOT	\$100,000	(40%)
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* Transportation Planning Funds may only be spent for transportation planning activities within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area Boundary (Collin, Dallas, Denton, Rockwall, Tarrant and portions of Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, and Wise Counties)