Coordination Plan Guidebook

Step by Step Instructions for Updating and Maintaining Regional Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plans

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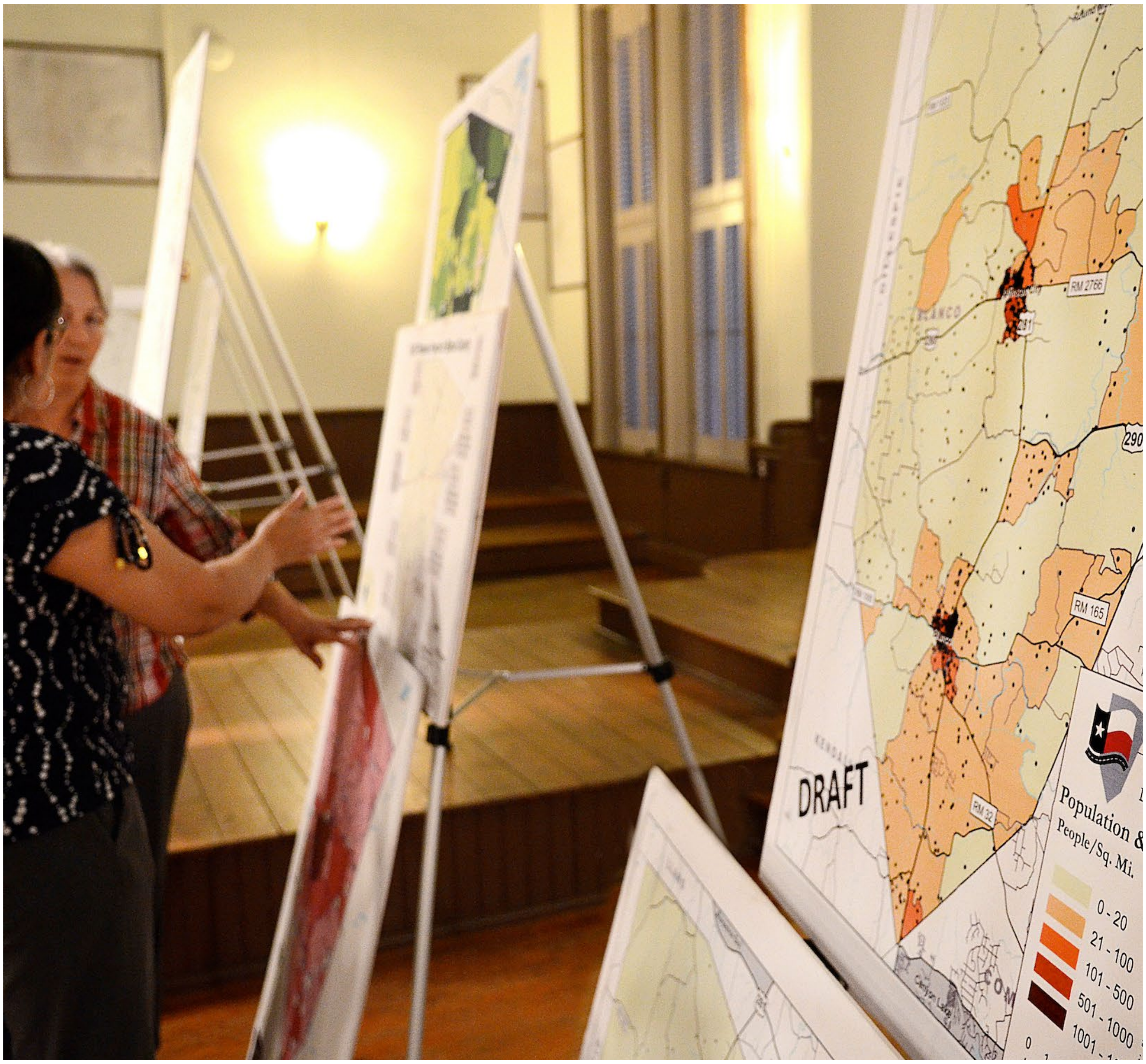

Chapter 1. Introduction

Why It Matters

The development of an RPTCP is a federal and state requirement. Such a plan must be developed/updated every five years. This guidebook provides a blueprint and toolbox to support the development of an RPTCP. Each plan culminates in the identification and prioritization of new and expanded instances of transportation coordination.

The benefit is that each RPTCP describes how enhanced coordination or the introduction of new coordinated transportation services will close the gap of unmet need.

This *Coordination Plan Guidebook* (guidebook) introduces coordination of transportation services and guides development of a five-year regional public transportation coordination plan (RPTCP). This guidebook is aimed at lead coordination agencies, regional coordination committee (RCC) members, and other stakeholders who participate in each region's transportation coordination planning. The RPTCP process is led by a lead coordination agency—chosen by regional stakeholders and funded by TxDOT—whose main functions include preparing and updating the RPTCP and serving as the moving force behind coordination activities in the region.

1.1 Purpose of a Five-Year RPTCP

The plans themselves are not the end product. Although required by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) regulations, the real purpose—according to TxDOT—is to provide a blueprint and a toolbox for implementing new and expanded instances of coordination that result in new efficiencies. In turn, these efficiencies are used to expand existing services or introduce new services that close the gap of unmet need among transit dependent populations (see Section 1.2). For TxDOT, the ability to better meet unmet needs is the ultimate goal of coordination; these plans reflect a necessary step to get there.

Often, additional funding may be needed to implement such new and/or expanded coordination projects or strategies. Key among these is FTA's Section 5310, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. However, these coordination projects or strategies cannot be funded using Section 5310 funds unless they first appear in the RPTCP. Other funding sources, such as the biennial Coordinated Call, may be used for pilot projects. Contact your public transportation coordinator for more information.

TxDOT is committed to an ongoing review of its coordination and cooperation processes for improvements, with a particular focus on ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to provide input to the transportation planning process. TxDOT is also committed to monitoring the success of the various tools provided in this guidebook and will provide updates as new best practices are developed within Texas and around the country.

1.2 Guidebook Intent

TxDOT's intent for this guidebook is to provide the information and tools for RCCs to better meet regional public transportation needs and reduce need gaps for targeted groups. Consistency across regional plans enables a more thorough understanding of statewide needs. Funding between five-year plan years will be evaluated on the performance and progress of projects identified in each RPTCP. High quality RPTCPs—with well-defined goals, strategies, and projects—represent the best interests of everyone in the region and TxDOT.

The guidebook offers a clear introduction to coordination and a step-by-step approach to developing each region's RPTCP. It is intended to guide the:

- Development of systematic ways for communities to improve collaboration and communication across public transit agencies, human service organizations, and transportation providers.
- Identification of community resources, gaps, and needs for transportation access and mobility through local and coordinated efforts, with a particular focus on the following transit-dependent and other populations (target populations) to which Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies:
    - Seniors.
    - People with disabilities.
    - Low-income residents.
    - Zero-car households.
    - Youths.
    - Residents with limited English proficiency.
    - Veterans.
    - Clients of workforce agencies.
    - Employment/job seekers.

Specifically, this guidebook is intended to support the:

- Determination of projects, strategies, and approaches to addressing gaps and unmet needs through coordination.
- Prioritization of projects, strategies, and approaches for funding and implementation that will effectively and efficiently increase service through coordination, with an emphasis on the target transit-dependent populations.
- Development of an RPTCP that is organized based on the new TxDOT RPTCP template.
- Utilization of methodologies and tools that will help develop RPTCP content.
- Development of an RPTCP that is in concert with current Federal and State requirements.

1.3 Guidebook Organization

Figure 1 shows the guidebook chapter organization in relation to an RPTCP's chapter organization. Appendix C of this guidebook (included in a separate document) provides an outline and checklist for development of each region's RPTCP, including required chapters to ensure all necessary elements are included for RPTCP submittal. Other appendices included in this separate document are:

- Appendix A contains a lead coordination agency–RCC organizational member memorandum of understanding (MOU) template.
- Appendix B contains an example RCC mission statement and bylaws.

- Appendix D describes a methodology to determine major trip generators.
- Appendix E describes a methodology to create a coordination area map.
- Appendix F describes a methodology to collect and exhibit area demographics.
- Appendix G describes a methodology to create a transit need index map.
- Appendix H contains an example transportation provider survey.
- Appendix I describes various transportation service modes and models.
- Appendix J contains an example vehicle utilization chart.
- Appendix K contains an example goals and strategies matrix.
- Appendix L contains a two-year coordination plan timeline.
- Appendix M contains a 15-month coordination planning project timeline.
- Appendix N contains an RFP example for soliciting bids from consultants to develop an RPTCP.

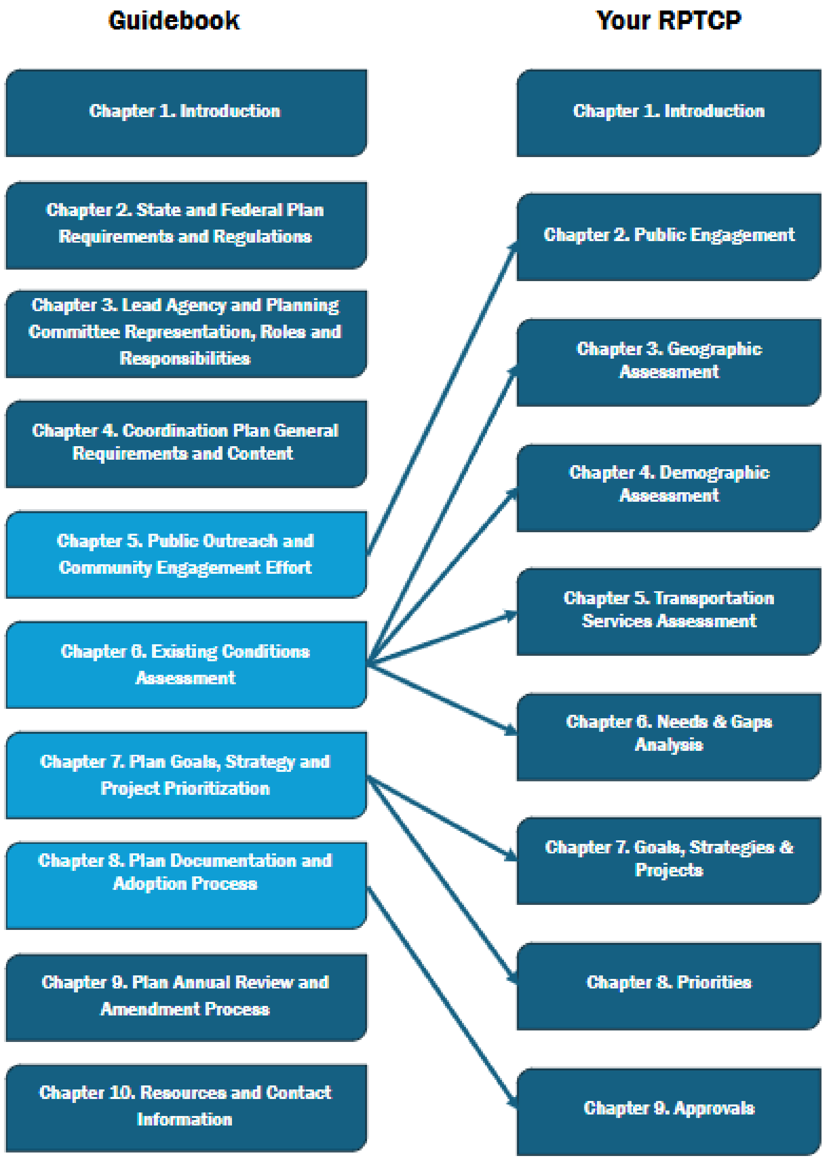

Figure 1. Comparison of Guidebook and RPTCP Chapter Organization.

Chapter 2. State and Federal Plan Requirements and Regulations

Why It Matters

Federal and state RPTCP requirements provide the foundation for this guidebook. Texas builds upon federal requirements with additional expectations for regional coordination spelled out in the Texas State Management Plan and Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code.

The benefit is that the requirements ensure each region's RPTCP meets federal and state requirements and expectations.

Federal and Texas state coordination requirements and expectations for development of each region's RPTCP provide the foundation for this guidebook. This chapter describes these federal and state requirements.

2.1 Federal Requirements

Federal requirements for RPTCPs were defined in *FTA Circular C 9070.1H*, effective November 1, 2024.[1] These requirements include:

- **Coordinated plan.** Projects funded under Section 5310 must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The RPTCP must include:
  - An inventory of available services and resources.
  - An assessment of target population transportation needs.
  - Strategies to address identified gaps and inefficiencies.
  - Priorities for implementation and funding.
- **Stakeholder engagement and public involvement.** RPTCPs must be developed through a process that includes input from:
  - Public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers.
  - Human service agencies.
  - Advocacy groups for seniors and persons with disabilities.
  - Representatives from underserved populations.

  Community engagement is essential to ensure plans reflect local needs. Public involvement strategies include accessible materials, community meetings, and outreach to traditionally underserved populations.
- **Inclusion in regional transportation planning frameworks.** Depending on the environment (urban or rural), projects must also be included in other regional plans as follows:
  - *Urbanized areas*. To be eligible for funding projects in urbanized areas, the project must be included in the:
    - Metropolitan transportation plan, prepared and approved by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO).
    - Transportation improvement program, approved jointly by the MPO and the governor.
    - Statewide transportation improvement program (STIP), developed at the state level and jointly approved by FTA and the Federal Highway Administration.

[1] Federal Transit Administration. (2024). *Enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities (Section 5310).* https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/fta-circulars/enhanced-mobility-seniors-and-individuals-disabilities

  - *Nonurbanized (rural) areas*. Projects outside urban areas must be included in the:
    - Statewide long-range transportation plan, developed at the state level (projects not directly included in this must at least be consistent with its goals).
    - STIP.
- **Compliance with federal regulations.** RPTCPs must also align with Title VI (nondiscrimination), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, accessibility), and other civil rights requirements.

2.2 State Requirements

Building upon these federal requirements, additional expectations for regional coordination are detailed in the Texas State Management Plan[2] and Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code.[3] These efforts are overseen by TxDOT's Public Transportation Division (PTN).

Chapter 461 details a three-part intent to:

- Eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services.
- Generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service.
- Further the state's efforts to reduce air pollution.

Further requirements include identifying:

- Overlaps and gaps in the provision of public transportation services, including services that could be more effectively provided by existing, privately funded transportation resources.
- Underused equipment owned by public transportation providers.
- Inefficiencies in the provision of public transportation services by any public transportation provider.

TxDOT has chosen to meet these requirements by having the locally designated lead agencies produce an RPTCP for each of the 24 regions in the state instead of producing a single statewide plan. That is, TxDOT has chosen to implement the requirement for a statewide plan by utilizing the individual plans from the 24 planning regions collectively.

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[2] Texas Department of Transportation. (2024). *FY 2024 state management plan*. https://ftp.txdot.gov/pub/txdot-info/ptn/programs/grant-smp.pdf

[3] Texas Legislature. (2003). *Duties of public transportation providers* (Texas Transportation Code § 461). https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/TN/htm/TN.461.htm#:~:text=DUTIES%20OF%20PUBLIC%20TRANSPORTATION%20PROVIDERS,provision%20of%20public%20transportation%20services

Chapter 3. Lead Coordination Agency and RCC Representation, Roles, and Responsibilities

Why It Matters

Successful coordination in a region is dependent upon the lead coordination agency leadership and its team of coordination champions—the RCC.

The benefit of defined representation, roles, and responsibilities is that it helps ensure effective collaboration and decision-making in development of each region's RPTCP.

The success of each region's RPTCP relies upon the leadership of the region's lead coordination agency and the active participation of a well-represented RCC. These entities work together to ensure the plan is inclusive, compliant with state and federal requirements, and reflective of the region's unique needs. This chapter outlines the roles and responsibilities of the lead coordination agency and the RCC, providing a framework for effective collaboration and decision-making.

3.1 Lead Coordination Agency

A lead coordination agency is chosen by regional stakeholders and ratified as such in a letter provided to TxDOT PTN from the RCC naming the lead agency. This lead agency may apply for FTA Section 5304 planning grant funding that helps support the development of an RPTCP and related coordinating activities in the region as well as activities to maintain the RPTCP between the five-year renewal cycle. TxDOT's Regional Public Transportation Coordination Planning website, https://transitplanningtx.org/, lists the current lead coordination agencies by region (see Table 1).

Table 1. Lead Coordination Agencies by Region in Texas.

No.	Region Name	Lead Coordination Agency
1	Panhandle	Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
2	South Plains	South Plains Association of Governments
3	Nortex	Nortex Regional Planning Commission
4	North Central Texas	North Central Texas Council of Governments
5	Ark-Tex	Ark-Tex Council of Governments
6	East Texas	East Texas Council of Governments
7	West Central Texas	City of Abilene
8	Upper Rio Grande	Project Amistad
9	Permian Basin	Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission
10	Concho Valley	Concho Valley Transit District
11	Heart of Texas	Heart of Texas Council of Governments
12	Capital Area	Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
13	Brazos Valley	Brazos Valley Council of Governments
14	Deep East Texas	Deep East Texas Council of Governments
15	South East Texas	South East Texas Regional Planning Commission
16	Gulf Coast	Houston-Galveston Area Council
17	Golden Crescent	Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission
18	Alamo Area	Alamo Area Council of Governments
19	South Texas	South Texas Development Council
20	Coastal Bend	Coastal Bend Council of Governments
21	Lower Rio Grande Valley	Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
22	Texoma	TAPS Public Transit
23	Central Texas	Central Texas Council of Governments
24	Middle Rio Grande	Southwest Area Regional Transit District

3.2 Lead Coordination Agency Roles and Responsibilities

The lead coordination agency is ultimately responsible for:

- Forming the RCC—the planning body that helps develop the RPTCP—and supporting its ongoing efforts.
- Developing the RPTCP.
- Ensuring coordination among stakeholders.
- Managing administrative responsibilities.
- Meeting compliance requirements.

Its role is vital to ensuring an RPTCP is comprehensive, inclusive, and effective.

Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of the lead coordination agency are as follows:

- **Identify RCC members.** Develop a list of direct and indirect stakeholders, ensuring broad representation. Determine individual RCC representatives from stakeholder organizations (organizational members) and secure commitments for their participation. Ensure that the committee includes representatives from stakeholder organizations that collectively provide services to the following target populations:
    - Seniors.
    - People with disabilities.
    - Low-income residents.
    - Zero-car households.
    - Residents with limited English proficiency.
    - Veterans.
    - Clients of workforce agencies.
    - Employment/job seekers.

  It is also strongly suggested that members of these population groups (individual members) be directly represented on the RCC.
- **Develop an MOU between the lead coordination agency and RCC-member stakeholder organizations.** An MOU (also called a letter of agreement or letter of intent) is a legally *nonbinding* document required by TxDOT as an indication of commitment for the annual Section 5310 applications. The MOU formalizes the relationship between the lead coordination agency and the stakeholder organizations with respect to the stakeholder's participation on the RCC. Appendix A contains a lead coordination agency–RCC organizational member MOU template to assist in development.

Best Practice!

TxDOT highly encourages each RCC to formalize a structure that includes a mission statement and bylaws (see Appendix B).

- **Develop a mission statement and set of bylaws for the RCC.** A best practice is to develop an RCC structure that includes a mission statement and bylaws. The mission statement clarifies the RCC purpose. The bylaws details responsibilities, membership requirements, meeting frequency, attendance expectations, voting procedures, and quorum rules. Both aim to provide structure and commitment to the planning process and are valuable in clarifying roles. Appendix B contains an example mission statement and bylaws.
- **Ensure compliance.** Verify that the RPTCP adheres to all FTA and TxDOT requirements, including stakeholder engagement, public participation, and alignment with identified regional transportation priorities.
- **Record and retain RPTCP-related information.** Maintain comprehensive records of all processes, decisions, and materials associated with the RPTCP. These records must be retained for transparency, compliance, and future reference.
- **Provide information to TxDOT and the public.** Respond promptly to requests for information about the RPTCP from TxDOT, the RCC, and the general public. The lead coordination agency is responsible for ensuring that information is accessible and accurate.
- **Appoint a contact person.** Designate an individual responsible for answering questions and serving as the primary point of contact for the RPTCP. This designation ensures clear communication with stakeholders and the public.
- **Amend the plan.** Review and amend the RPTCP annually or as needed to ensure it reflects changes in regional needs, available resources (i.e., new providers or services), and community priorities. This review also provides an opportunity to update strategies and maintain relevance.

3.3 RCC Representation, Roles, and Responsibilities

Composition and Size

The RCC plays a critical role in the development, implementation, and ongoing review of the RPTCP. Composed of organizational and individual representatives from diverse sectors, the RCC provides expertise, insights, and support to the lead coordination agency throughout the process.

RCCs across the United States typically include representatives from:

- Public transit agencies serving the region (or parts thereof).
- Public and private human service agencies who operate or fund transportation services (or other services) for seniors, persons with disabilities, and/or other target populations.
- Private, for-profit carriers.
- Individuals/riders of such transportation services.

Although well-rounded representation is desired, too many members on an RCC may compromise its functions. RCCs composed of no more than 15–20 members are generally more manageable.

Regional coordination should not be the responsibility of only one person acting as a coordination champion. If the sole champion were no longer able to serve in that role, the project becomes vulnerable to failure. Accordingly, it is important in any region to build up a team of coordination champions—this team is typically the RCC.

Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of the RCC are as follows:

- **Establish an RCC mission statement and bylaws:** The lead coordination agency, in conjunction with RCC candidates, may develop a mission statement and set of bylaws for the RCC.
- **Determine RCC officers**: Establish leadership by appointing committee officers, such as a chair and vice-chair, to guide discussions, facilitate meetings, and ensure accountability.
- **Set RCC meeting schedules**: Establish regular meeting dates and times to maintain momentum and ensure consistent progress. Clear scheduling fosters accountability and participation.
- **Participate actively in the planning process**: Engage fully in the development, execution, and evaluation of the RPTCP. Committee members are responsible for contributing their expertise to shape a plan that reflects prioritized regional needs and priorities and coordination projects and strategies.
- **Assist with transportation provider surveys and other data gathering tasks**: Support the lead coordination agency by making transportation providers aware of survey efforts and encouraging their participation. Provide a reality check to the resulting service profiles and unmet needs.
- **Identify collaborative opportunities**: Identify areas where committee members or their organizations can assist the lead coordination agency in achieving the goals of the RPTCP. Collaborative efforts may include sharing resources, aligning services, or pooling expertise.
- **Engage stakeholders**: Assist the lead coordination agency in gathering input from stakeholders—particularly seniors, persons with disabilities, and other underserved populations—by helping arrange interviews, focus groups, and RPTCP review processes to ensure that the needs and priorities of the community are reflected.
- **Provide consensus on plan adoption and amendments**: Work collaboratively to achieve consensus on the final RPTCP and any subsequent amendments. Consensus building strengthens the plan’s alignment with regional goals and fosters stakeholder support and ensuing forays to seek funding for coordination projects and strategies identified in the RPTCP.

Chapter 4. RPTCP General Requirements, Organization, and Content

Why It Matters

Defined requirements help ensure meaningful representation and involvement, fulfillment of lead agency duties, the conduct and inclusion of all RPTCP elements.

The benefit is that these requirements will result in the successful identification, prioritization, and funding of various coordination projects that address unmet transportation needs and close transportation gaps in each region.

Each of the 24 different regions in Texas develops an RPTCP on a five-year cycle for their region. The process is led by a lead coordination agency—chosen by regional stakeholders and funded by TxDOT— that prepares and updates the RPTCP and acts as the moving force behind coordination activities in the region. The RPTCP:

- Provides profiles and assessments of the transportation services in the region.
- Identifies and prioritizes the unmet transportation needs of seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and other target populations in the region.
- Identifies and prioritizes coordination projects and strategies in the region for subsequent funding that would address unmet needs and close the service gap.

4.1 General Requirements

This section describes the representation and lead coordination agency requirements in the RPTCP, as well as key elements to be included the RPTCP.

Representation Requirements

The lead coordination agency is required to demonstrate meaningful public involvement in the RTPCP's development by ensuring direct participation from:

- Seniors.
- People with disabilities.
- Low-income residents.
- Zero-car households.
- Youths.
- Residents with limited English proficiency.
- Veterans.
- Clients of workforce agencies.
- Employment/job seekers.

Organizations that collectively provide services to these target populations are regularly included on RCCs across the United States. Such organizations may include:

- Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers.
- Centers for independent living.
- Adult day programs and other human service agencies that focus on individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
- Commissions for the Blind and Blinded Veterans Association.
- Public and private entities operating transportation open to the general public or subpopulations.
- Faith-based or other volunteer driver programs (American Red Cross, American Cancer Society).
- Nonemergency medical transportation brokers/providers.

- Hospitals and medical centers.
- Colleges and universities.
- Youth commissions.
- Special education coordinators.
- Casa Latina.
- County Veterans commissions and local/regional chapters of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans Transportation Services (typically based at most U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers).
- Workforce commissions.

While input from advocacy groups is valuable and encouraged, this input alone does not fulfil the requirement of these key group's individual participation.

In addition, the lead coordination agency must also ensure that each of the RPTCP stakeholders are invited and provided with appropriate opportunity to participate in the coordinated planning process. Membership in the RCC is discussed in Section 3.2. Appendix A contains a sample invitation letter and a lead coordination agency–RCC organizational member MOU template to assist in development.

Additional outreach activities and the development of service profiles are described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this guidebook. Note that once a draft of the RTPCP has been developed, all stakeholders and the general public must be given the opportunity to review the document and provide input.

Lead Coordination Agency Requirements

In addition to ensuring participation of required stakeholders, the general public, and advocates, the lead coordination agency is also required to:

- Ensure that the RPTCP is updated at least every five years. In particular, Section 5310 funding eligibility requires that an RPTCP be updated every five years.
- Create, document, and implement a process for retention of documents used to create the RPTCP.
- Ensure data and research used to develop the RPTCP are current.
- Ensure the RPTCP's scope addresses the needs of diverse groups.
- Consistently track and document the progress made since the last RPTCP and future goals.

Key Elements

Key elements required in the RPTCP include:

- A comprehensive public outreach and community engagement effort that reflects the needs of individuals in the community served and ensures participation of individuals and groups that represent target populations.

- An assessment of the geographic area being served by the RPTCP and the methodology used for the geographic area assessment.
- An assessment of the demographics in the area being served by the RPTCP that includes target populations and a five-year population projection.
- An assessment of available transportation services that includes profiles of the current transportation providers (and services) in the area. These data are mostly gathered through a transportation provider survey. The responses are synthesized into profiles that include the service types provided, relevant eligibility and service policies, vehicle inventories and utilization, technology usage, ridership and service statistics, perceptions of met/unmet needs, and existing instances of coordination.
- An assessment and prioritization of transportation needs and gaps within a single county, across multiple counties, or throughout a region in the RPTCP area. The assessment includes an analysis of the geographic/demographic maps in combination with the transportation profiles and input from follow-up interviews and other outreach efforts.
- Documentation and prioritization of goals, strategies, and activities to address the transportation gaps, as well as coordination opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery that can be harnessed to provide new or expanded services.
- Signatures of the lead coordination agency representative and RCC members who participated in the development and approval of the RPTCP.

4.2 Organization and Content

The required chapter organization and content for an RPTCP is as follows:

- Cover page.
- Executive summary.
- Table of contents.
- Chapter 1. RPTCP introduction and organization.
- Chapter 2. Public outreach and community engagement.
- Chapter 3. Geographic assessment.
- Chapter 4. Demographic assessment.
- Chapter 5. Transportation services assessment.
- Chapter 6. Needs and gaps analysis.
- Chapter 7. Goals, strategies, and projects.
- Chapter 8. Priorities.
- Chapter 9. Approvals.
- Appendices.

Appendices can be used to provide information that was used to prepare the RPTCP such as:

- Detailed outreach activities including example materials used.
- Feedback from outreach activities.
- Transportation provider survey instruments.
- Participating transportation provider contact information.
- Transportation provider survey responses.
- RCC strategy prioritization exercise results.
- Feedback for RPTCP review.

To ensure that the required elements of the RPTCP are included, this guidebook includes a checklist tool (see Table 2), which can also be used to allocate the necessary time and resources to develop the RPTCP. The checklist tool follows the same chapter organization as the guidebook and the RPTCP template.

Table 2. RPTCP Requirements Checklist Tool.

RPTCP Element	Complete
Cover page	☐
Executive summary	☐
Table of contents	☐
Chapter 1. RPTCP content and organization	☐
Stakeholder list (required and others)	☐
Lead agency description and contact	☐
RCC representatives list	☐
MOU and RCC structure (mission and bylaws)	☐
Chapter 2. Public outreach and community engagement	☐
Public outreach plan to include: • Stakeholder identification/recruitment. • Meeting locations/times. • Description of feedback materials, including accessibility considerations. • Public feedback on draft RPTCP.	☐
Documentation of stakeholder/focus group meetings to include: • Number of meetings/addresses/dates. • Attendance, including target populations. • Summary of meeting outcomes, including identified needs/gaps.	☐
Documentation of surveys/questionnaires to include: • Survey/questionnaire process and instrument. • Number of participants. • Participant demographics.	☐
Chapter 3. Geographic area assessment	☐
Basic area map showing urban, small urban, rural, MPO, and rural transportation planning organization areas	☐
Regional projects and strategies	☐
Table and map showing area trip generators and a description of the methodology	☐
Chapter 4. Demographic area assessment	☐
Description of area demographics	☐
Current population	☐

RPTCP Element	Complete
Projected five-year population	☐
Population by age group	☐
Population by race	☐
Number/percentage of persons with disabilities	☐
Number/percentage of low-income households (below Federal poverty level)	☐
Percentage of population that speaks English	☐
Chapter 5. Transportation services assessment	☐
Transportation services profiles, each to include: • General information. • Service modes and models provided. For each service provided include: • Service policies. • Fleet inventory/utilization. • Supporting technology. • Vehicle operators/training requirements. • Ridership/service statistics. • Operating expenses/revenues (by funding source). • Perceptions of met/unmet needs. • Types of existing coordination. Transportation provider profiles categorized as: • Regional public transportation services and programs. • Municipal public transportation services and programs. • Public human service agency transportation services and programs. • Private nonprofit human service agency transportation service and programs. • Private for-profit carriers.	☐
Mobility management services and programs, each to include: • Driver training programs. • One-call/one-click service coordination. • Coordination services for persons with disabilities or seniors. • Joint fare programs. • Funding agreements. • Educational programs.	☐
Chapter 6. Transportation needs and gaps assessment	☐
Transportation needs survey in rural/urban areas	☐
Transportation needs index and maps	☐
Summary of area transportation needs/gaps, including methodology to identify unmet needs.	☐
Chapter 7. Goals, strategies, and projects	☐
Documentation of goals and strategies (in a consistent format that is easy for stakeholders and the public to understand) to include: • Goal description. • Description of needs/gaps to be addressed. • Description and prioritization of strategies to address the needs.	☐

RPTCP Element	Complete

• Implementation timeline, including action steps.
• Parties responsible to support implementation.
• Resources needed to implement each strategy, including:
  ○ Funding.
  ○ Staff time and manager.
  ○ Contract services.
  ○ Assets (e.g., buildings, vehicles, technology, other capital needs).
  ○ Volunteer support.
• Cost estimate and funding sources.
• Performance measures and targets.	

Chapter 8. Priorities	☐
Description of prioritization/rating methodology	☐
Documentation of priorities	☐
Chapter 9. Plan approval	☐

• Document individuals included in plan adoption (law requires inclusion of seniors; persons with disabilities; members of the general public; and representatives from public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers).
• Outline the steps completed for RPTCP adoption to include:
  ○ Draft RPTCP comment period, including outreach to stakeholder organizations.
  ○ Documentation by the lead coordination agency of all comments, requested changes, and actions taken.
  ○ Development of final draft RPTCP.
  ○ Documentation of any final revisions stemming from public comment following public notice and opportunity to provide feedback on final draft RPTCP.
  ○ Planning committee review of final draft RPTCP.
  ○ Public planning committee meeting for RPTCP adoption.
  ○ Planning committee signatures and participation documentation.
	☐

Signature page	☐
Submission of RPTCP (in Microsoft Word), including the signature page, to TxDOT	☐
TxDOT transmittal of approval letter to lead coordination agency or return of the RPTCP to the lead coordination agency with a list of items that must be corrected or added (i.e., missing, incomplete, or incorrect information)	☐

Chapter 5. Public Outreach and Community Engagement

Why It Matters

Public outreach and community engagement require meaningful participation of specific target groups.

The benefit of this participation is that the resulting RPTCP identifies and reflects community-specific transportation needs and gaps.

Public outreach and community engagement require meaningful participation that identifies and reflects the region's transportation needs. A variety of engagement tools and materials may be used to help ensure the RPTCP reflects the community needs.

5.1 Purpose of Public Outreach and Community Engagement

Public outreach and community engagement is an integral part of any planning effort, allowing the lead coordination agency to learn firsthand about the needs of the community. It is imperative that robust and meaningful engagement be part of any plan development.

The RPTCP is required to reflect the needs of individuals in the community served by ensuring participation of individuals and groups that represent target populations throughout the community and reflect the demographics of the community. Special efforts are required to include participation of:

- Seniors.
- People with disabilities.
- Low-income residents.
- Zero-car households.
- Youths.
- Residents with limited English proficiency.
- Veterans.
- Clients of workforce agencies.
- Employment/job seekers.

The RCC—responsible for developing the RPTCP—is a good source of information to identify appropriate stakeholders that must be involved in the engagement effort. The planning committee will also likely have information about how best to engage with specific stakeholder groups or populations. For example, small group conversations with seniors in the morning at a local community center is an appropriate technique to get information from this particular demographic group.

5.2 Engagement Plan Development

A public engagement plan outlines activities, times, locations, and opportunities for input that are appropriate for the audience. A comprehensive engagement plan also ensures that no groups or special populations are overlooked. The public engagement plan needs to be reviewed by the planning committee. The public engagement plan must include at least the following components:

- Audience descriptions including:
  - An identification of stakeholders.
  - A description of stakeholder recruitment methods.

- Event descriptions including:
    - An identification of meeting locations and variable times of day to maximize participation opportunity.
    - An explanation of the meeting formats most appropriate for the audience (e.g., open house, presentation with questions and answer period, pop-up tabling event, etc.).
    - An identification of any special accommodations that may be necessary for meetings (e.g., translators, interpreters, accessibility, etc.).
- Materials used including:
    - A description of required materials used to explain the purpose of the RPTCP.
    - A description of any additional materials used such as maps, comment forms, existing conditions reports, etc.
- Feedback mechanisms used including:
    - A description of appropriate tools used to gather input such as surveys, interviews, maps/graphics, etc.
- Nontraditional engagement techniques used including:
    - A description of any virtual meetings held.
    - A description of any websites with feedback opportunities.
    - A description of any apps, games, etc. used.
- Documentation and reporting description including:
    - A description of results tabulation and summary methods.
    - A description of input use.
    - A description of the communication plan informing the public of how their input was used in decision-making.
    - A description of any stakeholder and focus group meetings.
    - A summary of the number, locations, and dates of any meetings.
    - A summary of meeting attendance, including target populations.
    - A summary of meeting outcomes.
    - An analysis of needs identified.

5.3 Engagement Tools and Techniques

The engagement plan—developed and reviewed by the planning committee—identifies the most appropriate tools and techniques to engage stakeholders and the public. This section provides more explanation about the use of various options.

Stakeholder and Provider Questionnaires and Interviews

For the RPTCP, questionnaires are a staple tool for establishing existing conditions. Questionnaire are used to:

- Learn about existing transportation services and their customer base, scope of operations (hours, days, and areas of operation), operation methods, service policies, ridership, costs, etc.
- Qualify and quantify the met and unmet needs of the riders, clients, customers, or constituents of participating organizations.

If the engagement plan calls for using these types of instruments to receive feedback, the methodology for their development and administration must be carefully considered before beginning. A sample plan and sample frame will be necessary to understand how results will be analyzed and/or weighted. Preliminary questions include:

- Who the questionnaire will be sent to and why (a letter of invitation to participate in this process will be concurrently developed).
- How the questionnaire will be tailored to ensure meaningful responses from each type of organization (see Section 6 and Appendix H).
- Whether the lead coordination agency will allow some flexibility in helping the target organizations respond to the questionnaire.

Invitations can be issued formally via a letter to participate in the process or informally via a telephone call, especially if the recipient is known and a working relationship has already been established. Many such target organizations may already be on the RCC.

A common approach, which allow some flexibility on the part of the respondent, is to send the questionnaire to the target recipient and allow them the option of a follow-up phone call or in-person visit to complete the questionnaire together or to complete and send back the questionnaire and follow-up with the recipient by phone to get any missing information or get clarification as needed.

When using this approach, the recipient should be given a firm date to return the completed questionnaire or to schedule the phone call. Best practices suggest allowing 2–3 weeks to return the survey.

Subpopulation Focus Groups

Focus groups are useful for understanding the reasons why transportation needs are—or are not—being met. Focus groups allow for more in-depth conversations that can elaborate on the transportation needs and the ability or inability of a particular service or network of services to meet these needs. Secondarily, focus groups can also determine if certain groups are aware of the full set of transportation providers available to serve their trips.

Consider the audience when deciding to use this technique. Will the focus group participants feel comfortable discussing these topics in a small group setting of their peers? A guide must be developed to direct the conversation and ensure that the facilitator or interviewer covers all the desired topics. An experienced facilitator or interviewer will yield the best outcomes. Analysis of the data collected from focus groups or interviews is often more labor-intensive due to its qualitative nature. It is important for the analyst to remain neutral and present results as objectively as possible.

Focus groups can be organized around riders from certain transportation services or based on the target populations identified in Section 5.1. The latter approach will certainly strengthen the inclusivity of the RPTCP.

Best (low-cost) practices for acquiring focus group participants include issuing a public service announcement in a local paper or on a local radio station or utilizing the organizational stakeholders to recruit participants from the ranks of clients, customers, or constituents they service. Note that providing transportation to in-person focus groups may be needed and that the site chosen for each focus group must be accessible. Focus groups can also be conducted remotely or virtually, but it takes a very skilled practitioner to ensure that attendees have every opportunity to participate and that any one participant does not dominate the conversation.

Websites with Feedback Forms for the General Public

Websites with feedback mechanisms will be very important for general public input once the draft final RPTCP is in its final state. An opportunity for anybody from the general public to provide feedback on the draft final RPTCP is a requirement. The most feasible way to solicit public feedback—short of a public survey which can be very expensive—is to provide a link to the RPTCP on the lead coordination agency's website and a companion open-ended feedback form. This opportunity must also be publicized via stakeholder organizations (on their webpages or through their mailing/social media lists) and through public service announcements sent to local newspapers and radio/TV stations. Additionally, social media channels are effective at getting the word out about the availability to provide feedback.

Engagement Documentation

To ensure adequate documentation of engagement efforts, the RPTCP must include:

- A description of the process used for targeting and involving participants.
- A summary of the number of questionnaires distributed and completed.
- A summary of identified unmet needs by subpopulation and as appropriate, by area, day and time period, and/or trip purpose.
- A description of how the input shaped or helped to prioritize the unmet needs, strategies, or projects identified in the RPTCP.

5.4 Materials Development

Outreach materials developed for any outreach and communication must:

- Be user-friendly.
- Be easy to read.
- Use plain language.
- Use both graphics and text to accommodate different learning styles.

Online materials must be accessible (see Section 5.5) and print materials must also be available in large-print format.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that recipients of federal funds must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to people with limited English proficiency.[4] Best practices include making print and online materials available in common languages for the area, usually English and Spanish.

Materials at in-person meetings must be accessible to all attendees as well. For example, consider attendees who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices when considering meeting layout. Will display boards be accessible to them (i.e., not too high)? For attendees with motor skill disabilities, will they be asked to provide written input? If so, are scribes available to assist?

5.5 Website Accessibility

TxDOT strongly suggests that the lead coordination agency also ensure that information pertaining to the RPTCP on its website be accessible. The most common standards for website accessibility include the following:

- The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide a compilation of accessibility guidelines for websites.
- Section 508 is a federal law.
- The ADA defines requirements based on civil rights law.

The key difference between WCAG, Section 508, and the ADA lies in how they prioritize different aspects of web operations vis-à-vis compliance toward a more accessible digital space. In some cases, WCAG has more stringent standards; in other cases, Section 508 or

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[4] U.S. Department of Justice. (2002). Guidance to federal financial assistance recipients regarding Title VI prohibition against national origin discrimination affecting limited English proficient persons. *Federal Register*, *67*(117). https://www.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/media/document/fr_2002-06-18.pdf

the ADA are more stringent. Broad differences that set them apart are as follows:[5]

- The WCAG is a set of formal guidelines for developing accessible digital content. The primary focus of these guidelines is on HTML accessibility. Although the outlook of these guidelines is nearly identical to the standards set forth in Section 508, WCAG represents a universal approach towards inclusiveness and a higher degree of access.
- Section 508 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and reflects federal law. Section 508 mandates that federal agencies acquire, develop, use, and maintain electronics, communications, and information technology that can be easily accessed by people with disabilities. Per this law, any technology is considered to be accessible if people with disabilities can use it with the same effectiveness and ease as people without a disability. The purview of Section 508 revolves around incorporating digital accessibility in government websites, online activities, or information and communication technology in any form so that uniform access can be granted to all federal employees and the general public.
- The ADA focuses on ensuring the same level of access to the disabled as their able-bodied counterparts. To that effect, it has guidelines in place for state governments, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, information and communication technology, digital media, and websites.

The WCAG comprises a set of standards curated by the World Wide Web Consortium to give website owners, as well as companies, actionable guidelines for creating a digital world accessible to people with disabilities. The WCAG defines three tiers of compliance:

- Level A covers the most basic accessibility features for the web. Inclusion of these features is required to provide accessibility to people with different types of disabilities.
- Level AA is an extension of the basic accessibility features that address the most common/biggest hurdles in accessibility for disabled people. Compliance can help remove significant barriers when accessing information on the web.
- Level AAA is the top tier of web accessibility that seeks to remove all hurdles in web accessibility for disabled people. Implementation of Level AAA features is optional and left to the discretion of website administrators.

Most transit agencies are now using WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines as a reasonable standard for the development or refinement of their websites and apps. See also WCAG 2.1 Compliance.

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[5] Harmon, M. (2024, March 11). Difference between WCAG, Section 508 and ADA–Tools of web accessibility. *KITABOO Blog*. https://kitaboo.com/wcag-section-508-ada-accessibility-difference/

Because the WCAG is not a regulatory or statutory body, it has no associated compliance plan. However, its guidelines for different tiers can serve as a cornerstone for compliance with Section 508 or ADA requirements. The WCAG also provides valuable guidance for anyone committed to ensuring digital accessibility on their platforms.

No one organization issues a universally accepted certification for accessibility that would be accepted by the courts. Adherence to the guidelines is generally accomplished by retaining an agency or auditor's services (with WCAG specialists) to thoroughly test your website or app against the WCAG standards. Once audited, the website or app would need to remediated based on the agency/auditor's recommendations and then undergo a re-audit. If the modifications meet the agency/auditor's approval, the agency/auditor would then issue a statement of conformance. Website administrators can also issue a statement that the website has been deemed to be WCAG complaint at a specific level.

In lieu of a formal audit, one or more customers with a disability may test-drive the site or app to determine if it is accessible for them and if the information is organized well.

5.6 Public Outreach for Individuals with Disabilities and Difficult-to-Reach Populations

In addition to the guidance in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, it is important to understand that other audiences may be difficult to engage. These may include minority groups, seniors, or other marginalized populations. It may be necessary to use a trusted intermediary with these groups to gather input from them. Community or faith-based organizations may provide guidance on how to best interact with the target audiences. If necessary, these organizations may serve as liaisons. However, be cognizant that input will be delivered secondhand by a *spokesperson*; the information received may differ from the originally input.

5.7 Documentation

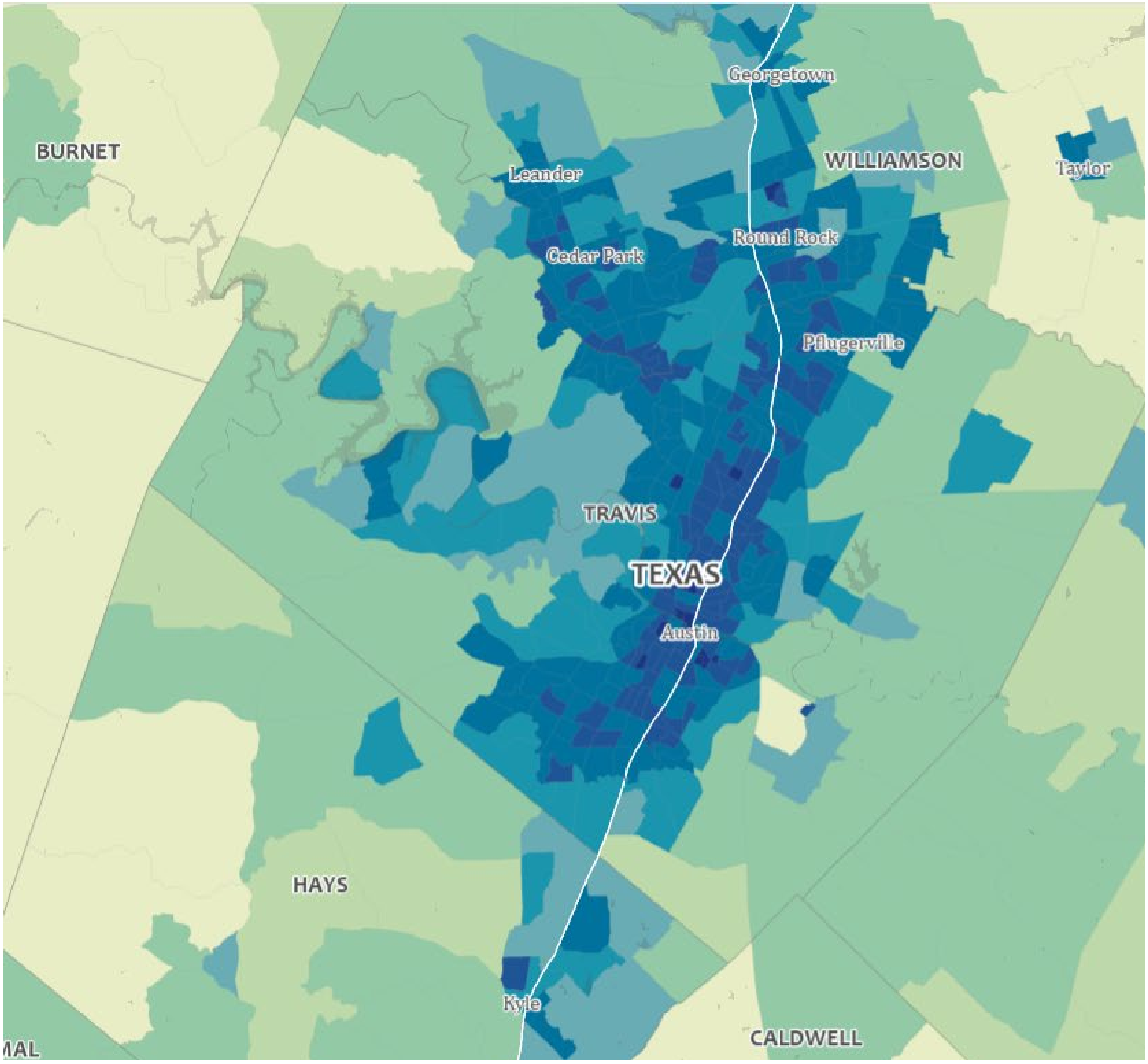
Documentation of stakeholder and public outreach feedback is crucial to ensure a thorough and accurate needs assessment. These activities form the heart of understanding what services are being used, how well they are performing, where they are missing the mark, and where they are absent.

Documentation of engagement activities provides the necessary input when scoring, ranking, and prioritizing projects to be included in the RPTCP. Likewise, engagement activities will help to inform strategies that will be employed to meet the needs.

Documentation must include all efforts undertaken including, but not limited to the following:

- A summary of in-person meetings to include the:
    - Number of meetings held.
    - Meeting attendance, categorized by transit-dependent population types (if possible).
    - Use of interpreters/translators.
    - Meeting times and locations, transit availability, and building accessibility.
    - Materials used (e.g., displays, maps, comment forms, sign-in sheets, etc.).
- Website analytics (e.g., visits, views, length of time on page, etc.).
- Social media analytics (e.g., views, shares, impressions, etc.).

These statistics are useful data points that can also inform future efforts. However, the most important part of documentation is the summary and analysis of what was heard.



Chapter 6. Existing Conditions Assessment

Why It Matters

Assessments that document existing geographic, demographic, transportation services, and other characteristics in a region provide the basis for identifying regional needs.

The benefit of these assessments is that the results ensure an accurate, up-to-date regional depiction that forms the backbone of the RPRCP.

Requirement

The geographic area assessment (typically a series of maps) can be a useful and powerful visual tool to assist decision-makers in identifying community destinations and gaps in transportation to reach major destinations.

Best Practice!

Geographic area maps can help stakeholders understand jurisdictional boundaries, major destination locations, and existing transportation services. Visualization is useful for stakeholders to identify coordination opportunities and transportation gaps.

Providing an accurate and up-to-date regional and local context is essential for developing a quality RPTCP. The purpose of this chapter is to document existing conditions in a region by piecing together assessments of the:

- Geographic area.
- Demographics.
- Transportation providers (each provider).
- Transportation service modes and models.
- Mobility management.
- Vehicle inventory and utilization.
- Technology.
- Transportation needs and gaps.

A final step includes the prioritization of unmet needs based on the information gathered through these assessments.

6.1 Geographic Area

Chapter 3 in the RPTCP contains the geographic area assessment. The RPTCP must clearly depict the geographic areas it represents, including urban and rural areas, counties, and various jurisdictions. This depiction typically includes a regional map or series of maps, depending on the size and complexity of the region.

Typical geographic area assessments include the following:

- A coordination region map that shows:
  - County boundaries, urban/rural designations, and city and other relevant jurisdictional boundaries.
- A major trip generators map that shows:
  - Locations of major destinations such as major employers, healthcare centers, senior centers, day program providers, colleges, major shopping locations (e.g., grocers), and other prominent destinations, keeping the Section 5310 target populations in mind.
  - Transportation origins and destinations (if data are available and applicable).
- A transportation providers map (see Section 6.5) that shows:
  - Service areas of transportation providers, including public transportation bus routes and service boundaries for demand-responsive transportation services such as ADA paratransit services, premium and alternative services (if different), microtransit services, and dial-a-ride services. (Note that it may not be possible to complete the transportation provider map until the transportation provider survey has been completed [see Section 6.4]).
  - Service areas of transportation providers for weekdays, weekday evenings, Saturday, and Sunday (some of these categories could be combined).

- Service areas of transportation providers for services available to the general public vs. services that have limited rider and trip purpose eligibility.

The geographic area assessment must also include a description of the methodologies used to create the various maps. Appendix D describes a methodology to determine major trip generators. Appendix E describes a methodology to create a coordination area map.

6.2 Demographics

Chapter 4 in the RPTCP contains the demographic assessment (see Appendix F). The region's RPTCP must include demographic overviews of the planning region and counties to provide context for the goal and strategy setting process. Because these plans are updated at least every five years, it is useful to provide a longitudinal review showing the change in demographics over a 5–10-year period. Typically, data from the American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) are utilized to obtain the most recent available population estimates.

The methodology described in Appendix F includes instructions on how to utilize the U.S. Census Bureau's online tools.

Requirement

The demographic assessment is a useful tool to identify population growth, areas of high public transportation demand, and required modes of transportation.

Demographic Assessment Requirements and Methodologies

Multiple maps can be produced to assist with a demographic assessment. Typically, data are displayed in tables and/or density or propensity maps to visualize areas of each priority population. These metrics, by county, include the following:

- Current and projected total populations.
- Current and projected populations of older adults.
- Number and percentage of people with disabilities.
- Number and percentage of low-income individuals.
- Number and percentage of Veterans.
- Number and percentage of Youth (under 18).
- Number and percentage of residents with limited English proficiency.

Best Practice!

Demographic area tables and maps can help stakeholders visualize population densities by target population and population changes.

These maps can also include:

- Populations by age group.
- Populations by race and ethnicity.
- Other attributes that may be important to the region.

Population projections—typically available from the state demographer's office—are also extremely useful and can be used to project the population of older adults.

6.3 Transportation Providers

Requirement

The transportation provider assessment makes up the largest share of the RPTCP and provides a crucial component to understand how, where, and when transportation services exist and where the transportation needs and gaps lie.

Best Practice!

TxDOT strongly recommends the use of a transportation provider survey to ensure robust data collection in a consistent format that is essential to understand the community's unmet transportation needs.

Chapter 5 in the RPTCP contains the transportation providers assessment.

Much of the work in developing coordination strategies depends on collecting accurate and up-to-date information and service data for each of the regional and local transportation service providers that serve the area, providing service(s) to the general public or specifically to seniors, persons with disabilities, and/or other Section 5310 target populations.

The term *transportation service provider* can mean an entity (a public agency, private enterprise, nonprofit organization, or for-profit company) that operates a transportation service and/or contracts for such a service, purchases service from another agency, or provides a subsidy to a rider (e.g., with user-side subsidy programs).

The lead coordination agency and its RCC participants can use multiple approaches to collect these data. Indeed, it is possible for some transportation providers participating on the RCC to provide their own information and data. For public transit agencies, the lead coordination agency may collect service data from the FTA's National Transit Database. Google searches and agency websites can also be good sources of information, recognizing that not all websites are up-to-date. Phone calls to agencies and providers can also yield useful information that is not available online.

While these data sources can be useful, TxDOT strongly recommends the use of a transportation provider survey to collect information in a consistent manner, allowing transportation profiles to be prepared in a consistent format. In this way, the agency or organization can fill in the data gaps and verify the prepopulated data if needed through follow-up requests for clarification or interviews. Appendix H contains an example transportation provider survey.

Transportation Provider Survey Purpose

The purpose of a transportation provider survey is to collect details of each service that is currently being provided to gauge the transportation needs among the Section 5310 target populations that are already being met and to help fine-tune the transportation needs that are not being met.

Transportation Provider Survey Questions

With this in mind, a transportation provider survey generally asks the respondents to provide the following information:

- General Information about the organization, including the:
    - Provider name, address, and website.
    - Respondent name and contact information.
    - Type of organization/legal authority.

- General functions and services offered.
- Catchment area.
- Types of clients, customers, or constituents served.

- Service modes and models of the service(s) provided.
- Service policies for each service type or program, including:
  - Rider eligibility policies (e.g., general public, seniors, human service agency clients).
  - Trip purpose limitations or prioritization (e.g., no restrictions or prioritization, medical trips only).
  - Service areas and service days/hours.
  - Fare policies, including different fare media accepted.
  - Booking/reservation policies.
  - Levels of driver assistance offered (e.g., bags carried, assistance on/off vehicles, assistance to the door, assistance through the door).
- Fleet inventory and utilization information, including the:
  - Inventory of revenue vehicles by type, capacity, accessibility, model year, and odometer readings.
  - Utilization of nondedicated service providers by day and time.
- Supporting technology used, including:
  - Scheduling/dispatching demand-responsive transportation services technology.
  - In-vehicle driver communication/data collection systems.
  - Customer-facing mobile applications.
- Vehicle operators, including the:
  - Total number of full-time and part-time revenue vehicle operators and/or full-time equivalents.
  - Special operator training requirements specific to the mode (as appropriate).
- Ridership and service statistics by service or program for the most recent specified calendar or fiscal year, including the:
  - Total annual one-way passenger trips per year, broken down by rider or trip purpose, if applicable. A one-way trip is taking a person from Point A to Point B; a passenger is counted each time he/she boards a vehicle.
  - Total annual revenue vehicle hours and miles (if tracked).
- Operating expenses and revenues for the most recent specified calendar or fiscal year, including the:
  - Total annual expenditures and revenues, broken down by funding source, if applicable.
- Perceptions of met and unmet needs to help identify:
  - Top destinations served by the provider.

- Capacity limitations (i.e., where/when/what trip requests cannot be accommodated both within the region, and if meaningful, beyond the regional boundaries).
    - Other barriers that generally inhibit a rider's mobility.
    - Service enhancements that might address those barriers.
    - Other useful transportation services utilized by the provider's customers, clients, or constituents.

- Types of existing coordination, including:
    - Coordination activities in which the provider is currently involved.
    - Any issues experienced by the provider in these coordination activities.

6.4 Transportation Service Modes and Models

Survey responses from the transportation provider will likely include one or more of the following services:

- Fixed route transit services, including:
    - Bus services.
    - Rail services.
- Demand-responsive transportation services, including:
    - Dial-a-ride.
    - Taxi vouchers and user-side subsidy programs.
    - Volunteer driver programs.
    - ADA paratransit.
    - Flex transit.
    - Microtransit.
    - Alternative services.
- Vanpool.
- Micromobility.
- Ferry transit.
- Intercity bus/rail.

Each of these service modes and different service models are discussed further in Appendix I. Appendix I is intended to help the lead coordination agency and RCC participants better understand the services that may appear in the profiles and ultimately be involved in coordination efforts.

6.5 Mobility Management

The mobility management assessment is included as a subsection of Chapter 5 in the RPTCP. Other transportation services and programs in the region may help coordinate transportation (and support) services and/or educate individuals about service access. These services and programs generally fall under the heading of mobility management.

The FTA defines mobility management as "an innovative approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to customers, including older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Mobility management focuses on meeting individual customer needs through a wide range of transportation options and service providers. It also focuses on coordinating these services and providers to achieve a more efficient transportation service delivery system."[6]

Examples of mobility management services and programs include:

- Driver training programs.
- One-call/one-click transportation service coordination.
- Transportation service coordination for individuals with disabilities or seniors.
- Joint fare programs.
- Funding agreements.
- Educational programs.

Profiles of mobility management services and programs describe the organizations involved, the service or program functions, and the extent to which the service or program has directly or indirectly resulted in meeting unmet needs.

6.6 Vehicle Inventory and Utilization

The vehicle inventory and utilization assessment is included as a subsection of Chapter 5 in the RPTCP. An accurate and comprehensive inventory of transportation vehicles across providers is essential for understanding regional capacity and identifying opportunities for resource optimization. The transportation provider survey and profiles discussed earlier in this chapter serve as the primary sources of data for this section. These tools collect detailed information about fleet size, condition, and usage patterns, forming the foundation for an effective vehicle inventory and utilization assessment.

Requirement

The vehicle inventory and utilization assessment provides a comprehensive and detailed listing of fleet composition, accessibility features, condition, and usage.

This information is critical to identify fleet upgrade needs, shared usage opportunities, and other strategies to maximize the efficiency of regional transportation resources.

Vehicle Inventory

The transportation provider survey is required to document key characteristics of transportation assets, including:

- **Fleet composition.** Include all vehicles used for public and human service transportation, categorized by type (e.g., buses, vans, sedans).
- **Accessibility features.** Identify vehicles equipped with wheelchair lifts, ramps, or other accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

[6] Federal Transit Administration. (2018). *Mobility management*. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/resources/171/mobility-management-brochure.pdf

- **Condition and age.** Gather data on vehicle age, mileage, and maintenance history to identify replacement needs and potential service risks. For public transit agencies, some of this information can be found in the TxDOT PTN inventory.

Vehicle Utilization Analysis

Evaluating vehicle utilization helps assess operational efficiency and uncover areas for improvement. Such an analysis should consider:

- **Service demand.** Analyze usage metrics, such as trip frequency and average passenger loads, to identify underutilized assets.
- **Geographic distribution.** Examine the coverage area of each provider to detect service overlaps or gaps.
- **Collaborative opportunities.** Explore the potential for resource sharing, such as loaning vehicles during peak demand or consolidating trips across providers.

This analysis supports decision-making around fleet upgrades, shared usage agreements, and other strategies to maximize the efficiency and impact of regional transportation resources.

See Appendix J for tips on building a vehicle inventory.

6.7 Technology

Requirement

The technology assessment offers a snapshot of existing technologies in use.

Integration of technologies across transportation providers can improve accessibility and coordination of services across the region.

Technology enhances transportation systems by improving efficiency, accessibility, and coordination. The technology assessment builds upon the data collected in the transportation provider survey and profiles, focusing on current tools and identifying opportunities for integration and innovation.

Current Technology Landscape

The transportation provider survey offers a snapshot of technologies currently in use, including:

- **Scheduling and dispatch systems.** Identify platforms used for trip management and their compatibility with regional coordination efforts.
- **Fleet tracking.** Assess the presence and functionality of global positioning systems (GPS) for vehicle monitoring and route optimization.
- **Open data.** Determine whether agencies are publishing information about their services using open data standards like General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) for Fixed-Routes and GTFS-Flex for flexible and demand responsive services.

Technology Integration

Integration of technology systems across providers is crucial for effective regional coordination. Considerations related to technology integration include the following:

- **Interoperability.** Highlight opportunities to connect scheduling, dispatch, and tracking systems to enable seamless data sharing.
- **Digital accessibility.** Evaluate public-facing tools for usability, ensuring they meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and those with limited digital literacy.
- **Cybersecurity.** Address the importance of safeguarding sensitive rider and operational data.

Future Innovation

It is also recommended to identify any current plans to implement technological advancements, such as real-time trip information, AI-powered dispatch systems, or automated vehicles. These innovations can further enhance service quality and operational efficiency when aligned with regional needs and resources.

By leveraging insights from provider surveys and profiles, the technology assessment ensures that regional transportation systems remain adaptable and future-ready.

6.8 Transportation Needs and Gaps

Chapter 6 in the RPTCP contains the transportation needs and gaps assessment, which is a culmination of the previous assessments. It combines what was learned in the geographic, demographic, and transportation provider assessments to provide a comprehensive understanding of the area's unmet transportation needs and gaps.

Requirement

The transportation needs and gaps assessment combines previous assessment information to provide a comprehensive understanding of the area's unmet transportation needs and gaps.

Identification of the unmet needs might best be exemplified by significant instances of someone from one of the target populations not being served by the existing set of transportation providers.

Transportation Needs Index

A transportation needs index (TNI) is useful for combining geographic, demographic, and transportation provider data. A TNI is usually categorized by small geographies such as block groups or census tracts. Each geography is assigned a TNI score that represents high concentrations of key demographic populations, such as seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Geographies with high TNI scores can then be highlighted in a regional map.

A TNI map can provide a general idea of where and when current services and what types of trips are being provided across populations. The TNI map—showing provider service areas, service times, key destinations (demand generators), and customer/trip eligibility—is useful for revealing where and when there is service duplication and where and when there is no service available (i.e., service gaps) for certain populations and/or for certain trip purposes.

Analysis of similar service overlaps on the map, remembering any limitations to rider or trip purposes, can point to service duplication that may be remedied through a coordination strategy. The TNI map will not show whether or not any of the services are experiencing capacity constraints. That understanding will come from the responses to the transportation provider survey or from the transportation provider scheduling software systems, if available.

Origin-Destination Study

If actual origins and destinations (O-D) with GPS locations from provider scheduling technologies are available, these data can provide a finer, more exact picture of where trips are being taken for a particular transportation provider. Other information from the scheduling system, such as trip denials, can be helpful in understanding transportation service needs. Data from a regional one-call/one-click system (if in existence) can also provide data on trips for which a solution was found and for which a solution was not found.

Service gaps can be pinpointed visually or perhaps more methodically by preparing O-D matrices for target populations (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities) by using certain trip origin areas (or census tracts) on one axis of the matrix and certain destination areas or destinations on the other axis. Matrices developed for certain time periods (weekday, weekday evening, Saturday and/or Sunday) can quickly show where transportation services are available and where they are not.

One can also add notes on these matrices regarding limitations based on capacity constraints, determined again from the transportation provider survey responses. Such notes can also include whether the fares for available private, for hire services such as taxis or transportation network companies might be unaffordable for many in the target populations.

This information will highlight where the availability and duplication of service exists as well as any service gaps. Service gaps can also be identified using denial or complaint data from the providers or through public outreach efforts such as rider focus groups. For example, a focus group facilitator can come *armed* with the maps or matrices to confirm conclusions. Such information can also be tested in follow-up interviews with providers or with entities that constitute key destinations. For example, with respect to clients of workforce agencies, interviewing a hospital administrator or a grocery store manager might unveil that they have challenges with staffing third-shift jobs if no transportation services are provided during late night and early morning hours (see Chapter 5).

Identifying Unmet Needs

The next step in the process is to document unmet needs or service shortcomings. A TNI map and the scheduling system O-D analysis (if available) are good tools to help identify unmet transportation needs and gaps. Note that unmet needs can also be confirmed and refined or augmented by input from the community engagement process (see Chapter 5).

Identification of unmet needs might best be exemplified by significant instances of someone from one of the target populations needing to make a trip within the region (or between regions) that cannot be served by the existing set of transportation providers. The service limitations may result from:

- Limited service areas or times.
- Limited services for rider types or specific trip purposes due to missions or grant regulations.
- Limited services due to a low operational budget and high operational costs.
- A lack of accessible vehicles or underutilization of equipment.
- A lack of supporting technology.
- Insufficient personnel (e.g., a lack of trained drivers).
- Constrained capacities due to limited vehicle availability.
- Service policy parameters.
- Siloed transportation services/programs that suffer from inefficiencies due to a lack of coordination, even if serving the same types of riders and trip purposes in a common part of the region.

In the RPTCP, unmet needs are to be identified as regional (inter-county) or county-based/local and can be qualified by day/time periods, other limitations associated with specific target populations, trip purpose constraints, and other factors such as fare affordability, improvised trip limits, etc.

6.9 Prioritization of Unmet Needs

Prior to developing goals and strategies to address the unmet needs (see Chapter 7), the lead coordination agency and RCC must prioritize or rank the unmet needs to be addressed.

This process of prioritizing unmet needs is typically undertaken in a workshop setting. Each unique set of unmet needs is presented to the group, often with the maps and matrices evidencing the unmet needs. The extent of a particular unmet need can also be further qualified by information elicited from transportation providers and outreach efforts. Next, the information is discussed and a vote is held to identify a priority order for addressing the various identified needs.

Prior to discussion and voting, the RCC should determine which metrics will be used in the ranking process. Quantitative metrics can remove subjectivity from the scoring process. However, other metrics such as transit equity may be difficult to quantify. In those instances, labels of *high*, *medium* or *low* may be used.

Requirement

The ranking and grouping of unmet needs— along with their underlying causes—form the basis for developing goals, strategies, and approaches for addressing those needs.

The voting process can be structured in any number of ways, using quantitative and qualitative measures. The important point is that the RCC determines which measures will be used for scoring and how they will be weighted prior to the voting process.

After the ranking exercise, the lead coordination agency and RCC members may wish to further categorize the ranked list into high, medium, and low priority groupings, based on the rankings.

The ranking and grouping of unmet needs—along with their underlying causes—form the basis for developing goals, strategies, and approaches for addressing those needs. This process is discussed further in Chapter 7.

6.10 Submission of Interim Plan

TxDOT requires the submission of an Interim Plan consisting of Chapters 1 through 6 of the RPTCP. See Appendix M. for a detailed timeline of when the Interim Plan is due.

Chapter 7. Goals and Strategies

Why It Matters

Goals and strategies are developed to address the unmet transportation needs in the region. A coordination goal or strategy <u>**must**</u> be included in the RPTCP as a prerequisite for applying for Section 5310 grants to fund the project or strategy.

The benefit of developed goals and strategies is that the results outline a set of actions or programs designed to achieve specific regional goals to meet unmet transportation needs.

Chapter 7 in the RPTCP contains the goals and strategies, which are developed by the RCC to address the prioritized unmet needs. The development of goals and strategies results in a set of action items or programs that address the unmet transportation needs in the region. Generally, coordination strategies can often produce more service through cost efficiencies by:

- Reducing operating costs (e.g., by serving together two or more trips from different programs/sponsors that are sharable rides; as productivity increases, the cost per trip decreases).
- Reducing administrative costs (e.g., by reducing staff or by freeing up staff to handle other responsibilities).
- Providing access to additional funding sources (e.g., by using revenues from another sponsoring agency as match to leverage additional federal funding).

The entities involved in the coordination strategies can utilize the savings to provide more trips within the context of the current services, expand the reach of the service (both service times and service areas), and/or expand rider or trip eligibility. In addition, coordination strategies can lead to enhanced service quality. For example, a combined driver training program can reflect the best of the best aspects of each program, thereby resulting in better trained drivers and a higher quality and safer service.

7.1 Types of Coordination Strategies

Before developing goals to address the prioritized unmet needs, the RCC should first review common types of coordination strategies that address specific needs. Coordination strategies are generally categorized as three types:

- Cooperative agreements.
- Joint-use agreements.
- Purchase-of-service or consolidation agreements.

Cooperative Agreements

Examples of cooperative agreements include the following:

- For requests they cannot accommodate, one entity can provide information about other services. As a more formal approach, a third party could offer a one-call/one-click system that would match riders and their requests with providers that voluntarily provide their service information (including any restrictions as to rider/trip/service area limitations). Such an agreement requires no financial transaction, but the arrangement leads to more trips being served.
- Entities can make joint procurements of vehicles, parts, in-vehicle communications equipment, maintenance (from a maintenance vendor), technology, and even an operations vendor. Again, no financial transaction between the

participants is required. Such agreements can result in significant savings due to economies of scale, where a larger group benefits from greater purchasing power.

Joint Use Agreements

Examples of joint use agreements include the following:

- One entity can take the lead in providing a service that other entities can take advantage of, such as a driver training program. Costs of the program can be defrayed among the participating organizations.
- Vehicle sharing arrangements, where an operating entity uses a vehicle to provide a dial-a-ride services during the weekdays and a faith-based organization uses the vehicle to provide transportation to its members for religious services, field trips, or other activities. In such an arrangement, the faith-based organization would pay a daily or per-vehicle-mile rate for use of the vehicle.
- Facility sharing arrangements, where one entity rents office or vehicle storage space from another entity. A joint use agreement could also provide shared use of maintenance facilities at different times of the day.
- Technology sharing arrangements, where adding another organization onto an existing software license costs less than a whole new license.

Purchase of Service or Consolidation Agreements

Purchase of Service Agreements

A purchase of service agreement—where one agency purchases services from another agency—can make sense if the purchasing agency does not operate a service or cannot accommodate all the requests for service with the vehicles it operates itself.

The services purchased can involve:

- Rides from different sponsoring organizations being comingled on the same vehicle at the same time.
- Rides from different sponsoring organizations not being comingled; in this case, trips from different organizations might be viewed as incompatible and would be served at different times (when the operating agency's vehicle is otherwise idle).

In such an arrangement, the payment rate structure can be a per-trip rate if all trips are relatively similar in length or a distance-based rate if trip lengths vary widely. Distance-based rate structures can include per-mile or zone-based rates, for example.

Generally, simpler rate structures are easier to administer (invoice, pay, and monitor), and per-trip rates are simpler than distance-based rates.

Per-trip rates make sense when the rate is determined based on historical information. For example, an operating agency may document the actual cost of operating a set of trips (sponsored by a particular agency) over a period of time (e.g., a three-month period). From this time period, an average cost per trip can be derived. This average cost per trip becomes the billing rate for the next three-month period. This process repeats, with any major mismatches between revenue and costs from the preceding three months woven into the new rate.

Consolidation Agreements

Consolidation agreements facilitate consolidated services, where all related functions of two or more transportation services/programs are consolidated into one service/program. One of the existing providers or a newly created entity could take the lead.

Consolidated services generally follow one of two primary models:

- A single provider model, where a single contractor provides service delivery and possibly other functions.
- A brokerage model, where a broker coordinates but does not operate the services in-house. Instead, it uses two or more contractors. Variations of the brokerage model include the following:
    - An administrative brokerage model, where the broker organizes the service delivery network but contracts with operations contractors to perform call and control functions, operations, and other functions.
    - An operational brokerage model, where the broker directly performs call center functions and may assign trips to its providers under contract. Such brokers could also be involved in scheduling and even dispatching.
    - A combined brokerage model, where the provider operates (or contracts for the operation of) a dedicated fleet. Otherwise, it assigns trips it cannot handle—or prefers not to serve directly—to one or more ove*rflow providers*.

For consolidated services, the rates negotiated between sponsorship agencies and the consolidated service provider can be structured the same way as the purchase of service agreements discussed previously. And again, a simpler rate structure minimizes the administrative burden on both ends.

7.2 Coordination Obstacles and Other Considerations

When developing possible coordination projects and strategies to pursue, coordinating agencies and partners need to be aware of specific obstacles and considerations that can thwart coordination attempts. Such obstacles and considerations may include the following:

- **Regulatory or funding limitations.** Some regulatory or funding limitations may present constraints to the way coordination is handled. For example, a funding agency may require that a funded rider not be on the vehicle for more than 60 minutes. As a second example, Medicaid-sponsored nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT) trips may need to be transported to a destination beyond a transit agency's dial-a-ride service area. Before entering into such an arrangement with a funding agency (or an NEMT broker), it is important to understand how such requirements impact operations. If the requirements of the funder are too cumbersome or costly for the transit agency, the transit agency may not want to participate in such an arrangement. Alternatively, the transit agency could negotiate a rate with the funding agency or broker that covers the additional costs associated with meeting those requirements.
- **Insurance or liability requirements.** In a purchase of service or consolidation agreement, participating agencies may have different insurance/liability requirements. Generally, the insurance levels of the operating entity stand; however, the risk managers of the two agencies may reach a resolution.
- **Relinquishment of control.** The prospect of purchasing service from another agency can be a potential obstacle because it is generally perceived as giving up control, but it does not have to result in poorer quality service if service quality expectations for the purchasing agency are included in the contract or agreement. For example, a certain level of service quality can be defined in the agreement by specifying service quality metric standards such as on-time performance with a detailed definition of on-time service.
- **Behavior incompatibility/special needs.** With some disability populations, and especially riders with intellectual or developmental disabilities, behavioral incompatibility is an issue that can thwart comingling. With some technology solutions, this can be programmed into the scheduling system parameters so that riders with conflicting needs are not put on the same vehicle at the same rime. With less sophisticated approaches to scheduling, such incompatibilities can be *manually* considered. This issue is a real concern that can make a difference in the extent of comingling vs. coordination strategies that involve using vehicles at different times for different sponsors or groups of riders.
- **Change from the status quo.** Change is hard, especially for the Section 5310 target populations. When implementing coordination strategies, effort must be put toward preparing current riders for how the transportation service will change for them, and devoting staff to customer service assistance during the transition period.
- **Cost savings expectations.** Coordination strategies may not yield available savings right away. In terms of expectation management, lead coordination agencies and coordination

partners understand that they need to “play the long game” with certain coordination strategies and that coordination strategies may need some seed money for implementation before future cost efficiencies can be realized.

- **Capacity and accessibility of the existing vehicle supply.** Responses to the transportation provider survey and the vehicle inventory for each provider detail the types, accessibility, and capacity of vehicles currently in use. Survey responses may also indicate whether a service is capacity constrained because of fleet size and whether the types of vehicles in use are a good fit for the service (they may be too small, not be accessible, or too large for the volume of trips being served). When considering consolidation strategies, it is important to consider whether the existing supply of vehicles will be adequate or whether additional vehicles—and maybe different types of vehicles—will be needed.
- **Vehicle availability.** Many transportation service agencies fully utilize their fleet during peak morning and afternoon hours. For example, senior transportation programs often focus on bringing seniors into a senior center for programs and congregate meals during the day and take these same riders home in the afternoon. Adult day program transportation services similarly bring participants to/from the day program facility or a work site. Sometimes these fleets may also be used for individual medical trips or field trips during the middle of the day or evening.
- **Differences in service policies and parameters.** When consolidating services, recognize that different services can have different service policies. When planning consolidation, the participating agencies discuss whether the differences can coexist or whether the consolidation brings with it a common set of policies and parameters. The latter option may be challenging for services where funding determines certain parameters such as maximum onboard travel times.

7.3 Development of Regional Goals and Strategies

The next step in the process is to develop goals for the RPTCP. In most cases, these goals can be directly associated with the prioritized unmet needs. While the overarching goal is to close any service gaps, specific goals can guide efforts more effectively. Examples of such goals include the following:

- Protect the existing transportation network’s sustainability.
- Expand transportation provider capacity to meet the needs.
- Create partnerships between transportation providers that will eliminate mobility barriers.
- Eliminate price as a barrier to reliable, safe transportation.
- Enhance information and outreach efforts.

In the RPTCP, each strategy should be tied back to a goal. Multiple strategies can be developed for each goal as appropriate.

A strategy consists of action items or programs that could be designed and implemented to achieve a specific goal (or set of goals) and address a specific unmet need. The strategies can apply to the region, individual counties, municipalities, or a consortium of providers or sponsoring organizations.

Funding for some coordination and mobility management strategies, including seed funding, can come from sources aimed at a specific audience such as Section 5310. Also, according to the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, over 100 different federal funding sources exist for transportation services that could potentially be tapped. FTA Section 5307, 5310, and 5311 funds require 20 percent local matching funds for most coordination and mobility management projects. Operational funding under Section 5310 requires a 50 percent local match. Revenue from agency sponsors can be used as local match for Section 5307 and 5311 funding. In addition, TxDOT's transportation development credits can be used as local match for capital projects.

For each goal/unmet need/strategy, the RPTCP must detail the following elements, except where noted as optional:

- The goal to be achieved.
- The name and description of the strategy, project, or program, including how it focuses on the unmet need.
- The scope of the strategy (e.g., regional or more localized in focus, total population or only certain subpopulations affected, etc.).
- The unmet need to be addressed, including a description and the priority assigned to the unmet need or gap.
- An implementation timeline for action steps (optional).
- Participants responsible for leading, supporting, and/or participating in the implementation of the strategy and the coordination/mobility management effort itself (optional).
- Resources needed to implement the strategy including (optional):
    - Seed funding.
    - Management/staff time.
    - Contract services.
    - Asset resources (e.g., buildings, vehicles, technology, other capital needs).
    - Volunteer support.
- Cost estimate (a *relative cost* can substitute for a cost estimate as long as the cost range is defined).
- Potential funding sources (optional).
- Performance measures and quantifiable goals (optional).

Coordination strategies that failed in the past should not necessarily be abandoned. Such efforts can be identified in the RPTCP, with a narrative describing why this past strategy did not work, along with correlating, correcting strategies identified in the RPTCP.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, once project/strategy summaries have been developed, it is advisable to seek public and other stakeholder feedback for these projects/strategies and their initial prioritization before they are incorporated into the RPTCP. Outreach efforts such as focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and RCC meetings are excellent ways to determine priorities. Feedback/input from these meetings can be used to modify or refine each project/strategy description as appropriate (see Section 7.4) or introduce a new project or strategy into the RPTCP. The descriptions of the strategies must be included in Chapter 7 of the RPTCP.

7.4 Prioritization of Projects and Strategies

Chapter 8 in the RPTCP contains the project prioritization and strategies. The next step is to prioritize the strategies using a process similar to the process used by the lead coordination agency and RCC to prioritize unmet needs (see Section 6.9). A best practice is for stakeholders to consider the answers to the following three questions:

1. Does it leverage existing resources used for the transportation of the Section 5310 target populations?
2. Does it improve access to resources for the Section 5310 target populations?
3. Does it address the prioritized needs identified in the planning process?

Suggested weighting criteria may be developed based on responses to the following series of questions:

- Does the strategy/project benefit a single county, multiple counties, or the entire region?
- Does the strategy/project address high priority needs/gaps?
- Does the strategy/project reduce or eliminate duplication of services or result in more services or an expansion of services?
- How many organizations will be participating in the strategy/project?
- Does the project expand transportation to unserved populations?
- Is the project sustainable in terms of long-term funding?
- Does the project improve the transportation network?

A table listing the strategies for each of the main goals must also be included in the RPTCP. At a minimum, this table should include the:

- Name of the strategy.
- Counties, regions, municipalities, or organizations to which it applies.
- Prioritized unmet need(s) that it addresses.
- Final prioritization or ranking of the strategy.
- Cost estimate or cost range.

Chapter 8 of the RPTCP contains this table, along with documentation of the prioritization process.

Appendix K contains an example goals and strategies matrix. In this example, the lead coordination agency and RCC identified five different goals. For each goal, a matrix of strategies was developed. Each strategy was, in turn, tied back to the region or specific county (or counties), the needs addressed, the priority level, and the relative cost.

Chapter 8. RPTCP Documentation and Adoption Process

Why It Matters

The RPTCP must include all required elements prior to TxDOT submittal. Appendix C provides a checklist of all elements that must be included in each region's RPTCP.

The benefit of the RPTCP documentation and adoption process is that it ensures all elements are included and that stakeholder feedback is reflected in the final RPTCP.

The region's five-year RPTCP must include all required elements prior to approval and submittal to TxDOT. Appendix C provides a checklist to ensure all elements are included.

8.1 RPTCP Review and Document Retention

As discussed in Chapter 2, FTA and TxDOT require that the following groups be given an opportunity to review the RPTCP:

- Public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers.
- Human service agencies.
- Advocacy groups for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Representatives from underserved populations.

In response to this requirement, the draft RPTCP (or a link to the draft RPTCP) is sent to all RCC members, including TxDOT's regional public transportation coordinator, and all transportation provider survey respondents for review and comment. Importantly, this step allows entities wishing to pursue coordination projects/strategies through Section 5310 to make sure that their prioritized project/strategy is included in the RPTCP. Section 5310 also requires that individuals who adopt the RPTCP must be involved in the planning process.

The draft RPTCP (or a link to the draft RPTCP) must be sent to TxDOT's coordination program manager, who will place the draft or link on TxDOT's Regional Public Transportation Coordination Planning website for public comment. The lead coordination agency must also contact all municipalities and human service agencies in the region to alert their constituents and clients that the RPTCP is ready for review and inform them of where it can be found, how to provide feedback, and when feedback must be received. The comment period must be no less than one month.

Note that in the final RPTCP, the lead coordination agency must document stakeholder involvement and sources used to prepare the RPTCP, including all comments and feedback from the review period and a summary of requested changes and actions taken.

The RPTCP itself and all materials involved in preparing the RPTCP must be retained up until the date when the next five-year RPTCP is finalized and accepted by TXDOT, whichever is later.

8.2 RPTCP Finalization and Adoption

After the end of the comment period, the RCC meets to review and discuss the feedback received to determine how, if at all, the draft RPTCP should be revised.

Once the RPTCP has been finalized, the next step is to formally vote on its adoption. This process must also include approval signatures and documented participation in RPTCP development. Once adopted, the RPTCP is sent to TxDOT. Chapter 9 of the RPTCP contains the adoption documentation.

Chapter 9. RPTCP Annual Review and Amendment Process

Why It Matters

An annual review of each RPTCP chapter is recommended to identify required amendments for new or revised strategies that are immediately needed to address significant changes.

The benefit is that the amended RPTCP may pave the way for new or revised Section 5310 grant applications in the next grant cycle and to ease the *lift* in the next five-year RPTCP development.

Over the course of each five-year interval, demographic characteristics of the region change, service provider policies change, some providers cease providing transportation services, and new services or programs are added (including newly coordinated or expanded services and mobility management efforts that spring from the RPTCP). Significant annual changes may have a positive impact on closing the service gap.

9.1 Lead Coordination Agency Annual Review Requirements

TxDOT recommends that the lead coordination agency and RCC members take the time to annually review each chapter of the RPTCP to determine whether:

- Geographic and demographic characteristics remain accurate or require updating.
- Service profiles (e.g., policies, ridership, etc.) remain accurate or require updating.
- New service profiles need to be added.
- Transportation needs and gaps remain unchanged or have changed due to the implementation of coordination efforts and new/expanded services and programs.
- Statuses of goals and strategies remain unchanged or require updating in lieu of changing demographics and/or coordination accomplishments.

Again, this step is not required; however, by undertaking this review annually, the *lift* required to develop the following five-year RPTCP is significantly lessened, especially when it comes to developing the service provider profiles. Moreover, new or revised strategies that appear in the amended RPTCP may pave the way for new or revised Section 5310 grant applications in the next grant cycle.

9.2 RPTCP Amendment Process

TxDOT therefore suggests that one RCC meeting be devoted to the annual review of the RPTCP, with RCC members reviewing the RPTCP in advance and coming to the meeting with suggestions for necessary updates. At the meeting, RCC members can discuss what changes/updates should be a part of the amended RPTCP and what, if any, ramifications they have on prioritized unmet needs and prioritized goals and strategies.

At the discretion of the lead coordination agency, and with concurrence from the RCC, some minor changes (e.g., minor changes in geographic/demographic data, service policy descriptions, or timelines and other minor edits) may not require a formal RPTCP amendment process.

More significant changes meriting consideration for an amended RPTCP might include the addition of transportation providers or services, the removal of completed goals, and/or the elimination of a particular unmet need. Again, the lead coordination agency and the RCC members participate in this process to determine whether a formal RPTCP amendment is needed or would be beneficial.

After the discussions have ended, the lead coordination agency should prepare the following information for the RCC members:

- A summary of the changes requested.
- The rationale for each change.
- The potential impact of the changes, especially their effect on unmet needs.
- The appearance of these changes as revisions or additions to the RPTCP.

A vote of the RCC to approve or reject the amendment would follow. It is then up to the lead coordination agency to resubmit the RPTCP, as amended and with the approval date, to TxDOT.

Chapter 10. Resources and Contact Information

Why It Matters

Contact information for TxDOT staff is included in this guidebook. Additional resources are included in a separate appendix document.

The benefit is that resources and contacts can be helpful in providing step-by-step processes and knowledge that can enhance the planning process.

10.1 Resources

In addition to the resources available in the separate appendix document, the following resources may be beneficial when preparing an RPTCP.

- Texas Regional Public Transportation Coordination website (https://transitplanningtx.org/).
- FTA Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans website https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/coordinated-public-transit-human-services-transportation-plans.
- National Center for Mobility Management Guidance website https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Writing_a_Coordinated_Public_Transit_Human_Services_Transportation_Plan.pdf.
- *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services* (Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 101) https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_101.pdf

10.2 Contact Information

Contact information for the TxDOT PTN Coordination Program and public transportation coordinators is as follows:

- Kari Banta, Program Manager, 512-486-5959, kari.banta@txdot.gov.
- Public transportation coordinator information can be found at: https://www.dot.state.tx.us/business/governments/coordinators.htm.