

Transportation Planning: A Strategic Planning Approach

Kyle G. Ingham

Local Government Services Director

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission

Amarillo, TX

What is a Council of Governments (COG)?

- Authorized under Local Government Code 391 in 1965
- The purpose of this chapter is to encourage and permit local governmental units to:
 - join and cooperate to improve the health, safety, and general welfare of their residents; and
 - plan for the future development of communities, areas, and regions so that:
 - Transportation is improved
 - Public Health grows
 - Agriculture and Business are recognized
 - Healthful Surroundings are recognized
 - Historical and Cultural Values are Preserved
 - Efficient and Economical Use of public funds is commensurate

What We Are Not:

- Transportation Providers
 - PRPC has no direct transportation services.
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - Staff Member Sits on Amarillo MPO
- Services Provider
 - As such not a major destination of public Transportation

We Do Lots of Planning

- Area Agency on Aging
- Dispute Resolution
- Regional 9-1-1 Services
- Workforce Development
- Regional Services
 - Criminal Justice
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Solid Waste Mgmt.
- Local Government Services
 - Economic Development
 - Regional Transportation
 - Water Planning
 - Local Services
 - Parks
 - Infrastructure

What Role do they Play in Transportation?

- Began Public Transportation Planning in 2006
 - Adopted first regional plan in 2007
 - Utilized consultant for first plan development
 - By 2011 over 90% of identified strategies implemented
- Serve as a neutral meeting and planning entity
 - Private, urban, and rural transportation providers now talk
 - Forum for service providers to meet with transportation
- Conducted comprehensive update with 2011 Plan
 - Developed Plan Internally
 - Utilized Strategic Planning Methods from other planning
- Developing the 2017 Regional Transportation Plan
 - Utilizing a strategic planning process

Why Strategic Planning?

- Logical way to assess things.
- Results in strategies that address actual Needs
- Utilizes qualitative and quantitative Input & output
- Provides a dialogue between representatives of interest groups

How to not plan strategically

- Need – I want a bus
- Evidence – I need a bus
- Goal – To get a bus
- Objective – I don't have a bus
- Strategy – Buy a bus



What is the Strategic Planning Process?

- Utilized philosophies from other Planning Efforts
 - Identify available resources
 - Establish localized demand
 - Identify gaps between resources and demand (Needs)
 - Generate viable strategies to address Needs
- Develop research providing evidence of gaps
 - Utilize quantitative data
 - Retrieve qualitative information
- Ultimately make interested parties interact
 - Use sit down sessions to work through the process

Step 1 – Identify the Resources

- Asset Inventory
 - Done Last Year
 - Identify Trans. Providers
 - Urban
 - Rural
 - Private
 - Academic (post-second)
 - Non-profit
 - Shake out the Information
 - Surveys
 - Visits
 - Follow up Calls



Step 2 – Identify Demand

- From the Public

- Contact Riders

- Surveys & Interviews
 - Use gatherings of riders

- Contact Trans. Providers

- Gain access to riders
 - Restrictions apply

- From Destinations

- Contact Places where riders go

- Medical
 - Shopping
 - Social Services

- Understand the end market



Step 3 – Identify Gaps (Needs)

- Where does demand exceed resources
 - Specific Routes
 - Specific Times
 - Specific Populations
 - Specific Destinations
- Unique gaps
 - Lack of faith in system
 - Poor provision of service
 - Lack of resource awareness
 - Resources exceed demand



Step 4 – Planning Session

- Put all interest in one room.
- All voices are equal
- Have data from previous 3 steps handy
 - Bring other plans to the process (including MPO docs)
- Strong leadership to moderate



< How we hope it looks

What we try to avoid >



Strategic Planning Outcomes

- Needs are identified 1st
- Needs must be prioritized
 - Prioritizing at this phase avoids project bias
- Goals are developed to specifically address needs
 - Quantifiable Objectives are established to measure progress towards meeting Goals & address Needs
- Strategies are then developed to meet specific Needs
 - Responsible parties & potential funding streams identified
 - Careful when assigning “responsibility” – This is a recommendation
 - Tread lightly on issues outside of your control

Including Priority Populations

- Priority Populations are included on the PROMPT
 - The trick is to ensure they participate in the process
 - Get them to meetings
 - Dang sure get them to the strategic planning meetings
 - Schedule meetings around their availability
 - Bring food if you have to
 - Build relationships
 - It is not rocket science – It is good planning
 - Have quality membership for each interest area
 - Don't add members to meet a quota
 - Add members who know what they are talking about that happen to represent an interest area
 - Don't shy away from members that may say something controversial
 - Use the Planning Process
 - Don't write it yourself, ask them to bless it, & be surprised if it is not representative of all interest groups

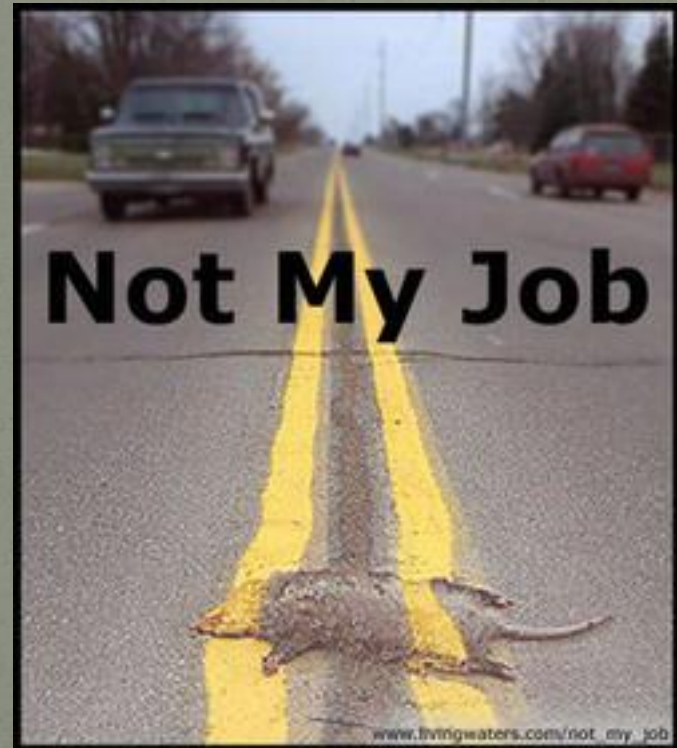
Don't Waste Your Time on A Paperweight

- Paperweights
 - Are not distributed
 - Are not referenced
 - Are individually developed
 - Meet requirements
- Dynamic Documents
 - Are easily updated
 - Are readily available
 - Have applicable info
 - Are required to be used
 - Have funding implications



Avoid Building a Paperweight

- Decision makers involved in the planning process.
- Develop Real Strategies
 - Realistic
 - Address a need
- Include Fundable Strategies
 - TxDOT funding
 - Plan inclusion required
- Commit to Annual Review
- Put the Plan Everywhere
- Take Responsibility



The Tricky Part - Implementation

- Big Problems – Lack of:
 - Authority
 - Funding
- Planning Agency often has no authority for funding to implement a majority of strategies.
- Risk stepping on partner toes by overstepping role
- Can be difficult to motivate responsible parties to implement
- Very Basic Options
 - Encourage providers to implement
 - Assist in the pursuit of funding for strategies
 - Inclusion at the planning stage can avoid some conflicts
 - Use other planning team members to motivate
 - Implement things your agency can access

Translating to TxDOT Language

- The Prescribed Table of Contents
 - Introduction
 - Resources
 - Gap Analysis
 - Comprehensive Services
 - Integrated Planning
 - Vision, Mission, Goals...
 - Implementation
 - Performance Measures

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REGIONALLY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

This section shall include a general description of the background and purpose of this five-year plan and the methodology used to develop it including a description of how the development and approval process engaged priority populations including individuals with disabilities and individuals 65 and older.

II. TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES IN THE REGION

This section shall include a list and narrative description of:

- Transportation providers derived from a current, comprehensive inventory of providers including those offering public fixed route and demand-response services, and those offering services through private, non-profit, community-based organizations, health and human services agencies, work force agencies, and others. The Texas Transit Provider Profiles completed by Texas A & M Transportation Institute (TTI) in early 2016 includes some, but not all information that may be included in this inventory. This inventory is to include transportation resources in addition to ones included in the Profiles report such as 5310 providers, private transportation providers and others.
- All agencies responsible for transportation planning in the region.

III. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC'S UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, ASSESSMENT OF OVERLAPS & GAPS IN THE DELIVERY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES & GAP ANALYSIS

This section shall be based on a current, comprehensive regional needs assessment and gap analysis and include a narrative description with supporting data explaining the region's unmet needs and inefficiencies based on findings from this needs assessment. This section shall include:

- Geographic data
- Demographic data on overall population, age, race, income, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, and other data to indicate need for transportation services.
- A list and narrative description of all health and human services agencies and programs, and work force agencies, and contact information derived from a current, comprehensive inventory of such agencies.
- Assessment of transportation overlaps and gaps in services including unmet transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, individuals with limited English proficiency, children, veterans, people lacking transportation to and from employment and other members of the public.
- A description of the research methodology, observations/findings and recommendations.
- Research instruments such as questionnaires or other research tools.

IV. PLANNING FOR COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

This section shall describe how this five-year plan integrates services of various programs including:

- Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)

Translating to TxDOT Language (2)

- Introduction
 - You can Handle This
- Resources in the Region
 - You did this last year
 - Build the chapter around providers & availability
 - Textualize Step 1 Above
- Gap Analysis
 - This is the meat & potatoes of the Plan
 - Identify all Needs identified
 - Provide the qualitative & quantitative documentation of those needs
 - Textualize Step 3 above

Translating to TxDOT Language (3)

- Planning for Comprehensive Services
 - This is your strategy listing
 - Include Responsible Parties & potential funding streams
- Integrated Planning Processes
 - Discuss the other plans considered through the planning process
- Vision, Mission, Goals, & Objectives
 - Goals & Objectives developed through Planning Session Identified
 - The Mission is to address the contractual obligations for the process
 - The Vision is a conceptual construct to be developed by each respective planning group.

Translating to TxDOT Language (4)

- Sustain Planning & Implement Plan
 - Address regional capacity to implement plan
 - Address what the planning agency can do to help facilitate implementation
- Performance Measures
 - Identify the converse of Need Evidence & start working towards it
 - Identify how progress towards meeting Objectives will be monitored
 - Deal with the required metrics

My Thoughts After Preparing This

- This is how we are approaching it in our region
 - Each region will likely be very different
- Our process will be aimed at planning to meet the Need in our region while still hitting TxDOT required formatting
 - Trying to get maximum impact from planning
- Remember to develop a plan
 - Not just a document that meets requirements
- Use some common sense:
 - Many strategies are not limited to one interest group
 - Keep everyone happy – Make a strategy/interest group key!
 - Identify Objectives that align with Statewide Metrics

So What Have We Learned?

- Doing this the right way is time consuming
 - It is not a quick and easy process to acquire the necessary information, conduct a planning session, & then break everything out into a logical document
- Our moderate success is tied to relationship building & having a plan up front.
 - Relationships generate the date, ensure participation in planning, & ultimately result in buy-in. Having a plan up front ensures that you know what to do with all of this.
- If you are going to the trouble of developing a plan
 - You might as well develop a plan that will be used.



PANHANDLE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Questions

Kyle G. Ingham
Local Government Services Director
Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
(806) 372-3381
kingham@theprpc.org