

Appendix D

Texas DOT: Coordination Plan FAQ
 Sample Plan Outline
 Best Practices Form

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning Provisions of SAFETEA-LU

1. What is the purpose of the coordinated human services transportation planning provisions?

The provisions aim to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older Americans, and individuals with lower incomes. The provisions ensure that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple Federal programs. A coordinated plan for human services transportation enhances transportation access, minimizes duplication of Federal services, and encourages the most cost-effective transportation possible.

2. What will result from coordination efforts between human services agencies and transportation providers?

SAFETEA-LU requires the establishment of a “locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” (hereinafter, a “coordinated plan”) for all FTA programs for underserved populations: the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310); the Job Access and Reverse Commute program (Section 5316); and the New Freedom program (section 5317).

3. Should there be one plan or three separate plans for each program listed in question 2?

There should be one coordinated plan. This coordinated plan may include elements that address the unique needs of one population, but it also should recognize that many transportation needs cross population groups, and that individuals frequently fall within several population categories. The plan should coordinate services so as to minimize the duplication of efforts and enhance services.

4. What constitutes an acceptable coordinated plan? Are there criteria?

SAFETEA-LU does not define an acceptable plan, and FTA has not yet developed criteria. FTA is formulating opportunities for interested parties and the public to comment on criteria. The planning process in the JARC program and the United We Ride (UWR) Framework for Action provide examples for discussion.

5. Who must participate in the development of the plan?

SAFETEA-LU requires that representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers, human services providers, and the public all participate to develop a plan.

6. Who is responsible for the development of the plan?

SAFETEA-LU does not specify a lead. That will be a local decision.

7. Are funds available for the development of the coordinated plan?

Recipients may use up to 10 percent of funds received under Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 to administer, plan, and provide technical assistance for projects. Planning activities can also be funded from the following sources:

- Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning program
- Section 5304 Statewide Planning program
- Section 5307 Urbanized formula program, and
- Section 5311 Nonurbanized Area formula funds for state administration

The development of the coordinated plan is an eligible planning activity and can be funded at 80 percent FTA share under the planning programs or urbanized area formula program. No match is required for administrative funds allowed under Sections 5310, 5311, 5316, and 5317.

8. What is the timeline for the development of the coordinated plan?

Beginning in FY 2007, as a condition of Federal assistance under Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 programs, the recipient must certify to the Secretary of Transportation that projects selected emerged from the coordinated plan.

9. How will FTA continue to support the Presidential Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination?

SAFETEA-LU Section 3046 establishes a new human service coordination project. Funded at \$1.6 million annually, it is expected to support the implementation of the Presidential Executive Order on Human Service Transportation Coordination and the United We Ride initiative.

10. Are there other new provisions in SAFETEA-LU that support coordination efforts?

Section 5302 defines mobility management as an eligible Federal capital expense supported with 80 percent Federal public transportation funding. Mobility management consists of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers.

Sections 5303 and 5304 (Metropolitan and Statewide Transportation Planning) encourage Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and States to consult with organizations conducting other planning processes as they prepare long-range transportation plans. Public and private operators and individuals with disabilities are included on an extensive list of groups for which MPOs and States must provide an opportunity to comment during the development of long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs.

In metropolitan areas, MPOs must prepare a participation plan, in consultation with these groups, that describes opportunities to comment on the long-range transportation plan. Also, this involvement and coordination in metropolitan areas is to be considered in the design and delivery of services provided by organizations providing non-emergency transportation services with Federal funds other than those from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

11. What kind of State-level or regional planning is envisioned for the coordinated planning process for small urban and rural areas that are within the Governor's apportionment?

In areas under the Governor's apportionment funds will flow to the State and the State will select projects through a competitive process. This competitive process differs from the planning process. Although the State will be responsible for selecting projects, their involvement in local planning activities is optional. In States that have regional planning agencies, these agencies may take the lead on the development of the coordinated plan. In other cases the transit provider, a human service agency, or another entity might take the lead. Communities will make these decisions.

Funds are allocated to the State and are not entitlements to individual localities under the Governor's apportionment. Funds are to be distributed based on a competitive process using criteria established by the State that are consistent with program objectives and Federal requirements. Projects selected, whether by the State or by the designated recipient (in large urbanized areas), must be derived from a local coordinated plan. A single regional plan might include projects for both a large urbanized area and surrounding areas that receive funds from the State's apportionment.

Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan

Preparing a Regional Coordination Plan

At the June Best Practices Roundtable, the Study Group suggested an outline be drafted to assist regions in preparing coordination plans. The outline on the following page was prepared as a collaborative effort involving the Study Group, TxDOT, regional representatives, and TTI. The outline reflects planning elements that many regions are currently working on, coupled with elements mentioned in existing federal guidance¹. The goal in preparing this outline was to satisfy both HB 3588 and SAFETEA-LU requirements. The outline is intended as a tool you may use to help in preparing your plan.

How long should the report be?

There is no prescribed length. The executive summary should be brief (2-5 pages) and summarize the major elements and actions in your region's plan. The most important aspect of the plan is that it is "your" region's plan and that it speaks to the appropriate audiences, including your planning partners (FTA, TxDOT, MPOs, other entities) and stakeholders.

How often do we update the plan?

The Study Group recommends the plan be updated annually, but plans may be updated and amended as often as needed. A full update will be required by TxDOT every two years. The Study Group also recommends that regions should look at a 5-year planning horizon. USDOT proposed planning rules indicate plans should be updated every 4 years in non-attainment areas and every 5 years in attainment areas to maintain consistency with other transportation planning requirements.

What is the "Framework For Action"

The "Framework for Action" (FFA) is a valuable planning tool that regions are encouraged to use.² It is a self assessment tool designed to help regions and communities assess coordination progress. The "framework for action" is available at the Regional Service Planning website at <http://www.regionalserviceplanning.org/clearinghouse/>. Click on Website and Reports and look under published reports.

¹ See March 15 Guidance and June 9 NPRM in the Federal Register posted on the FTA website http://www.fta.dot.gov/17003_ENG_HTML.htm

² Framework for Action is available at: <http://www.regionalserviceplanning.org/clearinghouse/>

Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan

(Sample Outline)

- **TITLE PAGE**
- **TABLE OF CONTENTS**
- **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**
- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** (2-5 pages highlighting key goals and action items)
- **BACKGROUND**
 - Regional Description
 - Geography and Demographics
 - Planning Partners (*who does what*)
 - Current Public Transportation Services/Providers (*who does what*)
 - History of Regional Coordination of Public Transportation
 - Past/continuing planning activities (*share what's been done*)
 - Past and current implemented projects/services
- **REGIONAL SERVICE COORDINATION PLANNING**
 - Planning Process & Work Plan Descriptions (*what are you doing, how, and with whom*)
 - Organization
 - Lead Entity(ies)
 - Other Involved Entities
 - Committee(s) Structure Description
 - Outreach/ Public Involvement Description
- **COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN**
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Regional Needs Assessment
 - Regional Transportation Resources: Overlaps and Gaps (*unmet needs*)
 - Strategies to Address Gaps and Needs
 - Barriers and Constraints
 - Coordination Action Plan
 - Actions Items / Service Descriptions
 - Prioritization / Implementation
 - Schedule
 - Inter-regional Coordination
 - Action Plan Evaluation
 - Continuing / Sustaining the Coordination Plan
 - Continuation strategies
 - Plan Update Cycle / Process
- **APPENDICES**
 - Provider Inventory Summary
 - Public Outreach Activities Summary
 - Framework for Action

Identify and Document *Best Practices*

What is a Best Practice?

- *Something that demonstrates achievement,*
- *A practice that is most likely to succeed*
- *A practice or program of the highest quality or standard or the most excellent type*
 - *A practice that is most likely to have or come near to the desired outcome*
 - *An action or initiative to resolve a Constraint*

Why document a Best Practice?

- Highlight the way(s) your region already coordinates public transportation and shout it out so that all can hear!
- Draw attention to your successes by sharing you experience with others
- Demonstrate how a constraint was overcome; share your achievement with others
- Regions can chart a course to improved performance by studying the best business practices, operating tactics and winning strategies of other regions

What are examples of the outcomes of a Best Practice?

- Improve the delivery of transportation services
- Generate efficiencies in operation/increase levels of service
 - Encourage cooperation and coordination
 - Enhance customer satisfaction
 - Improve efficiency and effectiveness

Region:
Best Practice # ____ Brief description of the Best Practice
Which of the following does your Best Practice address? Check all that apply. Add any additional achievement that you feel is important. <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the delivery of transportation services <input type="checkbox"/> Generate efficiencies in operation/increase levels of service <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage cooperation and coordination <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance customer satisfaction <input type="checkbox"/> Improve efficiency and effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Other. Describe _____
Briefly describe the Constraint this Best Practice resolved or helped to overcome?
<u>Specifically</u> describe how this Best Practice is achieving the benefits identified above. Try to quantify to the extent possible. Attach additional pages as required to describe in detail and with supporting facts.
Can your local Best Practice be replicated in other regions? If Yes, provide a description of how this Best Practice can be of value to other Regions?
Person Identifying Best Practice: Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ Agency: _____
Responder: Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____ Agency: _____