

Chapter 2: Planning Partners

There are only two public transit providers for the region's 26 counties; Amarillo City Transit serves the City of Amarillo and Panhandle Transit takes care of everything else. So, unlike some of the planning regions in the state, there is less complexity in the Panhandle region because of this clear division. Issues such as overlapping service areas or large gaps in service areas are not present. Many of the health and human service agencies work at some level with one or both of these agencies to meet their transportation needs.

This chapter includes a profile for Amarillo City Transit and Panhandle Transit, including service characteristics (service area, routes, and schedules), vehicles, and budget. Following this section, a review of the planning partners is provided. (Note: Planning partners are defined as key or representative human service agencies that responded to the Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey and/or participated in follow-up phone calls or site visits. Many of these agencies are not members of the official planning committee, the Regional Transportation Advisory Group.)

Amarillo City Transit

Organization Structure and Staffing

Amarillo City Transit (ACT) is managed by the City of Amarillo. ACT's staff includes:

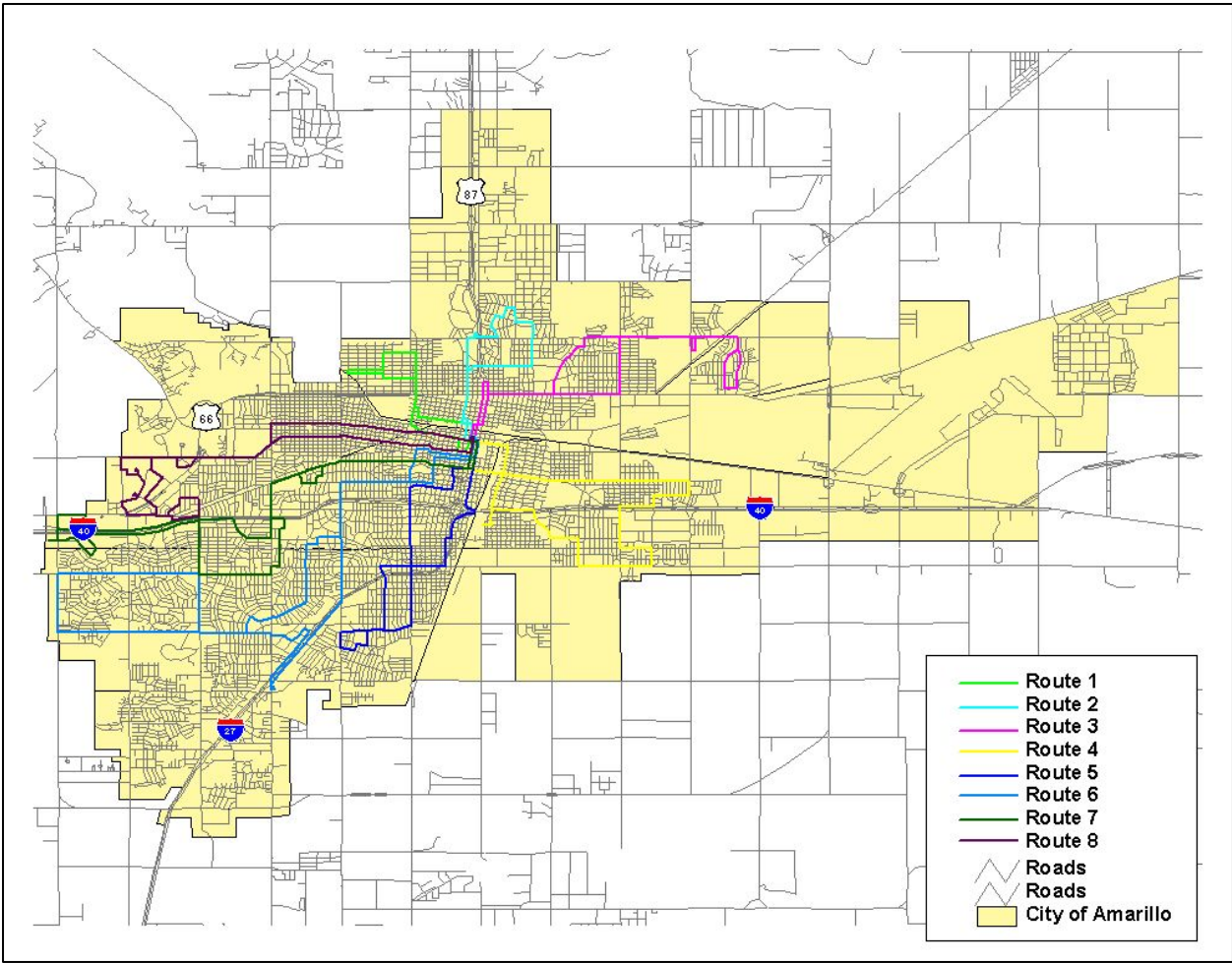
- 1 director
- 2 supervisors
- 1 trainer
- 4 dispatchers
- 31 drivers (21 Fixed Route and 10 Spec-Trans)
- 1 shop supervisor
- 5 mechanics; and
- 3 maintenance personnel (staff that park and clean vehicles).

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Service Area

The City of Amarillo is about 87 square miles. ACT covers 85 percent area of the city and has a service area of about 74 square miles. Areas not served by ACT include that portion of the city east of Lakeside Drive. Both fixed route and demand response service operate within these boundaries. See Figure 2.1: ACT Routes and Amarillo City Limits.

Figure 2.1: ACT Routes and Amarillo City Limits



Service Characteristics

ACT operates eight fixed routes within the city limits. It operates six days a week, Monday to Saturday, from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, with no service on Sunday. There is no service on the

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following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Eight routes make up the fixed-route system with each starting in the downtown at the main transfer point at 3rd and Fillmore. The system pulses at the station every 30 minutes to allow riders to transfer between routes. Transfers are free, cannot be used to make the return trip, and are time-limited.

Spec-Trans is the demand-response system. It operates five vehicles and serves all points within ACT's service area (i.e., does not limit its service to a ¾ mile corridor abutting a fixed route).

Fare

ACT charges 75¢ for adults, 60¢ for children over the age of six; 35¢ for senior citizens, people with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders. The Spec-Trans system charges \$1.50 for adults and 75¢ for children. Personal care attendants ride for free.

Fleet Characteristics

ACT's has 17 30-foot buses to serve its fixed route. During peak service periods, it operates 12 vehicles, leaving five spare. All the vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and audio and visual information systems for impaired persons. Five of the vehicles have "kneeling" capability. Each vehicle has a seating capacity of 23. ACT operates seven minibuses (less than 30 feet) to serve Spec-Trans eligible riders. During peak-service periods, it operates five vehicles, leaving two spare. All the Spec-Trans vehicles are wheelchair accessible with a seating capacity of eight.

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Ridership and Operating Costs

Table 2.1 reflects ACT’s operating cost and number of trips delivered for fixed route and Table 2.2 reflects the same for Spec-Trans.

Table 2.1: ACT Fixed Route Operating Cost and Trips, 2000 - 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Trips	901,346*	314,813	352,089	349,446	348,104
Operating Cost	\$1,857,022	\$1,733,410	\$1,929,009	\$2,045,679	\$2,133,235
Cost/Trip	\$2.06	\$5.63	\$5.48	\$5.85	\$6.13

* Figure is reported as published by the National Transit Database.

Table 2.2: Spec-Trans Operating Cost and Trips, 2000 - 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Trips	27,085	22,781	22,766	23,481	25,743
Operating Cost	\$477,906	\$538,455	\$584,187	\$620,649	\$709,047
Cost/Trip	\$17.64	\$23.64	\$25.66	\$26.43	\$27.43

Significant Issues Faced by Organization

ACT is facing an increasingly tight funding and will soon be in a position where it will need to consider an alternative to fixed route with a complementary para-transit service. Over a period of five years (from 2004 to 2009), ACT will experience a permanent reduction of \$272,824 in state support – from \$672,980 to \$400,156. Over the next three fiscal years, ACT will lose an additional \$144,958 in state funds. ACT will then receive \$400,156 (FY2010) compared to \$672,980 (FY2004). Decreases in state funding are due to a recently adopted TxDOT funding formula for public transit which link funding levels to performance, transit need, and local financial commitment to transit. Based on these TxDOT’s standards, ACT’s funding is projected to decrease during the 2004 – 2009 timeframe. TxDOT has indicated that it will re-evaluate its formula beginning in FY2008 at which time, future year state funding for ACT may change.

Furthermore, ACT will lose about \$1.34 million in federal funding support for operations once Amarillo’s population exceeds 200,000, which is expected by the 2010 census. These decreases are further exacerbated by an increase in fuel costs.

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Staffing is another significant issue faced by ACT. New drivers at ACT start at \$8.53 an hour; this increases to \$9.30 for full-time permanent drivers. This salary level makes it very difficult to attract and retain qualified employees. Consequently, ACT faces a turnover rate of about 50 percent each year. High turnover affects ACT by generating high overtime costs. In 2005, ACT expended \$68,000 in overtime for fixed route and \$27,000 for demand response.

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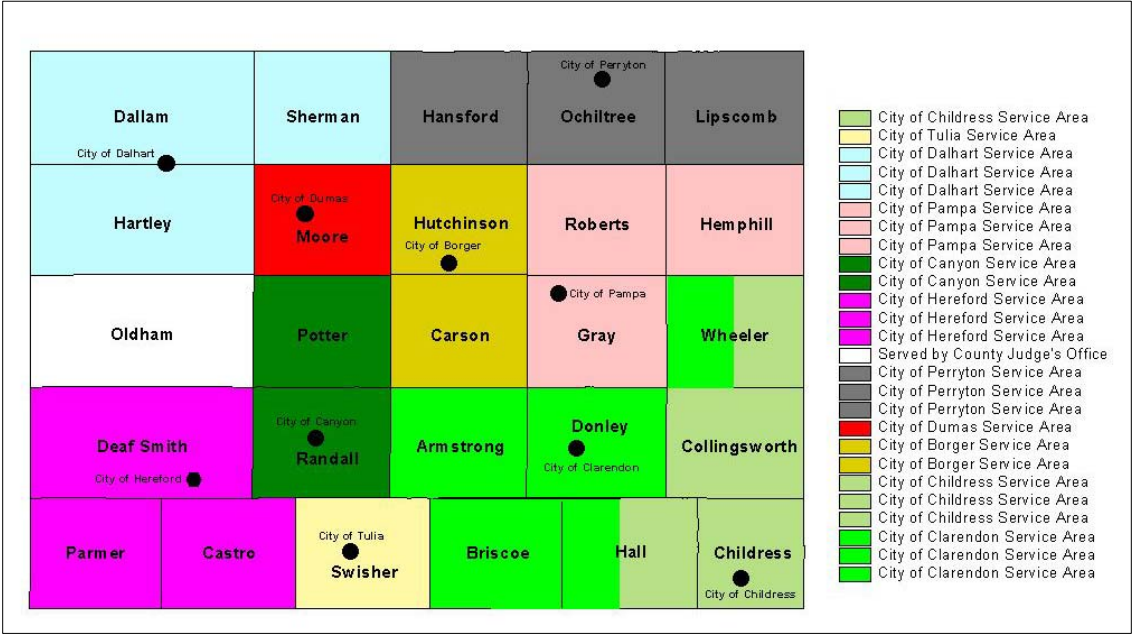
Panhandle Transit

Panhandle Transit is the name of the service operated by the Panhandle Rural Transit District. Panhandle Transit is one program under the management of Panhandle Community Services, a nonprofit organization that provides human and social service assistance to low-income individuals in the Panhandle.

Service Area

The Panhandle is comprised of 26 counties and covers nearly 26,000 miles. Panhandle Transit serves this entire region, minus the 87 square miles within the urbanized area of the city of Amarillo. It has divided the service area into ten service regions that are each managed by a local office. See Figure 2.2. (Note: Some counties are served by more than one office. Hall and Briscoe counties are served by the Donley, Childress, and Tulia offices.)

Figure 2.2: Panhandle Transit Service Offices and Service Regions



Service Characteristics

Panhandle Transit operates a demand-response system, five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. There is no service on Saturdays or Sundays or on the

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following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Eve. Characteristics for each of the regional offices are described in Tables 2.3 to 2.11.

Table 2.3: City of Borger serving Carson and Hutchinson counties

Number of Vehicles	4
Number of Employees	3 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF; Hutchinson TTh
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid; Borger TPMHMR satellite workshop daily; regular work trips for about 9 clients; local college; Crisis Center for Domestic Violence

Table 2.4: City of Clarendon serving Armstrong, Brisco, Donley and Hall counties

Number of Vehicles	3
Number of Employees	3 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo M-F; school trips M-F

Table 2.5: City of Hereford serving Deaf Smith, Castro and Parmer counties

Number of Vehicles	4 (1 minivan with no lift; 2 cut-away with lift; 1 high-mileage solid body 15-passenger van with lift)
Number of Employees	3 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo M-F; school trips M-F; Hereford Satellite Center; some trips to Hereford Senior Center and nursing homes

Table 2.6: City of Childress serving Collingsworth, Wheeler and Hall counties

Number of Vehicles	3 (15-passenger with lift; one minivan without lift; 6 passenger van)
Number of Employees	2 FT drivers; 2 Panhandle Transit drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF; Lubbock T or Th and switching off with Plainview T or Th; Quanah T or Th as needed
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo M-F; school trips M-F in Memphis

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Table 2.7: City of Pampa serving Gray, Hemphill and Roberts counties

Number of Vehicles	5: four 12- or 15-passenger vans with lifts, one 9-passenger van with no lift
Number of Employees	5 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF, Perryton MWF, MF Canadian; W Shamrock and Wheeler
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo MWF; school trips M-F; Satellite workshop M-F, about 15 riders

Table 2.8: City of Perryton serving Hansford, Lipscomb, and Ochiltree counties

Number of Vehicles	3: one 21-passenger with wheelchair lift; two 12- to 14-passenger with no lift
Number of Employees	3 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF, Perryton MWF, MF Canadian; W Shamrock and Wheeler
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo MWF; school trips M-F; Satellite workshop M-F, about 15 riders

Table 2.9: City of Dalhart serving Hartley, Oldham, Sherman and Dallam counties

Number of Vehicles	2: one 10-passenger van and one 17-passenger van
Number of Employees	2 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo MWF; school trips M-F (pick up from school only; do not provide morning service)

Table 2.10: City of Dumas, Moore County

Number of Vehicles	3: three 18-passenger with lift
Number of Employees	3 drivers; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo MWF
Notes on Service Provided	Medicaid to Amarillo MWF; Senior Citizen Center, Satellite Workshop in Dumas MWF

Table 2.11: City of Canyon serving Randall County and rural Potter County

Number of Vehicles	4: one 11-passenger with lift; one 21-passenger with lift; one 16-passenger with lift; one 19-passenger with lift
Number of Employees	3 FT and 1 Panhandle Transit; shared office staff with PCS
Schedule for out of county trips	Amarillo M-F
Notes on Service Provided	Provide trips to West Texas State University; field trips for local daycare; Skywest for shopping

Fare

Panhandle Transit charges \$1 for a one-way trip in town and \$20 for a monthly pass that is good for an unlimited number of in-town trips. It charges 17.5¢ per mile for travel outside of a community, plus a minimum charge of \$2.50.

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Fleet Characteristics

Panhandle Transit has a fleet of 52 cut-away style vans in its fleet. Forty-one of these vehicles, or 77 percent, are wheelchair accessible; ten are spares/high-mileage vehicles.

Ridership and Operating Costs

During the 2004 – 2005 operating period, Panhandle Transit delivered 139,784 one-way trips at a cost of approximately \$1.4 million, or \$10.30 per trip. See Appendix C: FY04 to FY05 Panhandle Transit Operating Statistics by County.

Significant Issues Faced by Organization

Like ACT, Panhandle Transit is facing difficulties attracting and retaining qualified drivers. The recent change to the Medicaid contract has worsened this situation as drivers may now be asked to work non-traditional hours; in fact, some are being asked to start work at 2:00 am or 3:00 am in order to get dialysis patients to the clinic for early morning sessions. With beginning pay at \$6.15 an hour, it cannot find drivers willing to work these hours for this pay.

Vehicles are another issue for Panhandle Transit. Given the size of the region, its vehicles are worked very hard and have a significant mileage on them; for example, eight vehicles have over 200,000 miles. It has \$360,000 in local funds that it will use to purchase new vehicles and has recently requested a Letter of No Prejudice from the Federal Transit Administration in order to capture and leverage this value against potential future federal funds up to \$1.8 million.

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Planning Partners – Health and Human Services Organizations

Amarillo High Plains Dialysis Center

Program: The Amarillo High Plains Dialysis Center provides dialysis treatment. It operates from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and from 8:00 to 5:30 pm on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. (In order to meet the needs of all of its patients, it has to have Saturday service. The lack of public transportation on Saturdays creates a barrier to receiving treatment.) There are two centers in Amarillo; one in Pampa and one in Hereford. For each of the four centers, 200 to 225 people are served daily.

Transit Resources: The center does not directly provide transportation but assists patients to access transportation resources if needed. The center depends upon Medicaid transportation, Amarillo City Transit (especially Spec-Trans), Jan Werner Transportation, and Panhandle Transit. The Center has no financial resources available to provide or support transportation. However, the Texas Kidney Health is a state program available to patients. Texas Kidney Health reimburses drivers 13¢ per mile for transportation costs. In order to qualify for this program, patients must make under \$60,000 annually and the reimbursement limit is \$200 per month.

Transit Needs: Between 600 - 800 kidney dialysis patients use some form of public transportation three times a week; this equates to 1,800 – 2,400 trips per week. Amarillo High Plains Dialysis Center reports the greatest transportation challenge has been delivering service on Saturdays and holidays when the public systems are not running. However, AMR, the Medicaid contractor for the region since June 2006, now provides service on Saturdays through its two sub-contractors. (The National Kidney Foundation will provide for taxi service on holidays but does not provide funding otherwise.)

Similarly, patients were provided with curb-to-curb service; this lower level of service can be a problem for some patients if they are in a weakened state after treatment. Now, AMR provides door-to-door service through its sub-contractors.

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No subscription service is available. Appointments must be set every week.

Coordination Issues: At one time, the center investigated the feasibility of establishing a brokerage in Amarillo. Insurance costs, training needs to meet insurance specification, staffing issues (who would drive, coordinate and dispatch) stalled the project. Prior to this, some level of coordinated service was provided through the Panhandle Transportation Consortium.

Other issues with coordination include:

- **Public Acceptance:** Patients believe there is a stigma with riding a bus.
- **Level of Service:** Patients want point-to-point service; especially after receiving treatment, they are medically fragile and need to return home quickly. If the coordination resulted in a longer trip, coordination of services would not serve dialysis patients well.

Desired Outcomes from Coordination Study: More accessibility and availability, especially in areas outside of Amarillo; more trips by Panhandle Transit

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Amarillo Senior Citizens Association

Program: The Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA) is a non-profit organization that provides congregate meals, support services, and recreation to the seniors of Amarillo and Potter and Randall counties. It has 1,200 members who pay a \$35 annual membership fee; however, services are available to nonmembers as well. Last year ASCA provided its service to 5,380 individuals. The ASCA is open to the public for congregate meals which are available free-of-charge but a \$5 donation is strongly encouraged. The ASCA receives funding from private foundations and a small amount through a federal employment program for senior citizens (Senior Aid Program). It receives no funding support from the city or state.

Transit Resources: The ASCA does not provide transportation. Its staff of 20 includes a resource/referral clerk who is charged with reviewing members' needs and ensuring that appointments and resources are coordinated to ensure the needs are met. Transportation is one of the needs that may be reviewed. The resource/referral clerk will arrange transportation for members through its buddy system – other ASCA members who are willing to pick-up and take people to the center or an appointment. At its core, the buddy system reflects the friendship between people at the center and is fairly limited. On average, between 20 and 25 trips are provided each month through this buddy system.

Transit Needs: The ASCA owned a van that was used for group outings but that was sold about one year ago when the ASCA didn't have the funds to operate it – rising insurance and fuel costs were of particular concern. The ASCA estimates it spent approximately \$2,000 annually on insurance and maintenance costs and felt like it did not use the van enough to warrant the expense. The ASCA used to have a contract with Jan Werner Transportation but this was allowed to expire as the ASCA had some concerns with the level of service that Jan Werner was able to provide. (Jan Werner's service was in high demand and trips would be booked up two weeks in advance. Preference was given to medical trips and some members could not conveniently schedule personal or shopping trips that ASCA wanted to take.)

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The ASCA felt like many members did not use public transportation because: 1) the fixed-route schedule was too structured; 2) bus stops were difficult to access; 3) the Spec-Trans service is perceived by members as charity and they do not want to accept charity.

Coordination Issues: The ASCA is a member of the Seniors Ambassador Program and would be interested in exploring a volunteer program directed toward providing service to seniors. The ASCA may have resources that it can access through its Senior Aid Program that could help cover overhead costs.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: A transit program directed toward seniors that provides a higher level of service and greater flexibility.

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American Medical Response (AMR)

Program: AMR is the Medicaid contractor for Region 1 since June 2006. AMR is a transportation broker and is able to optimize Medicaid transportation by using multiple sub-contractors whose vehicles are routed through its RouteMatch system.

Transit Resources: AMR is the transportation broker for the Medicaid contract in Region 1. As such, AMR does not directly own or operate any vehicles but instead relies on its network of subcontractors. In Region 1 this includes LeFleur Transportation, Taxi Pro, and Panhandle Transit.

Transit Needs: A brokerage benefits from a large pool of subcontractors that compete for business. The participation of more qualified taxi and transportation providers will improve the cost-effectiveness of the service.

Coordination Issues: The timing of the award for the Medicaid contract in Spring 2006 resulted in a disruption to the coordination process, further exacerbated by a lack of adequate communication between the prior Medicaid-contract holder, Panhandle Transit and AMR. At the beginning of AMR's contract, the company requested that all ten taxi companies and Panhandle Transit be part of the AMR provider network. Some of these entities did not communicate with AMR during that period, as the contract award was regarded as a "contingency award." AMR had an obligation to meet the contractual requirements. However, TxDOT had not communicated with Panhandle Transit to inform them that its bid had been considered non-responsive at this point. Thus, LeFleur was subcontracted.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: A larger AMR provider network

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Area Agency on the Aging of the Panhandle

Program: The Area Agency on the Aging of the Panhandle (AAAP) provides support services to individuals 60 years and older. The AAAP provides the planning, coordination and implementation of many services, such as: congregate and home delivered meals, emergency response services, adult day care, minor home repairs/modifications, homemaker services, personal care assistance, legal assistance/representation, and transportation. Most of AAAP's clients are low-income.

Transit Resources: AAAP does not directly provide transportation but coordinates with Amarillo City Transit, Panhandle Transit, and Jan Werner Transportation. AAAP may pay for 100 percent of the cost of the trip or may share the cost with the client, depending on client's income level. AAAP directly purchases service through an open bid. In 2006, AAAP budgeted \$90,000 for transportation that calculates to 5,389 one-way trips at a cost of \$16.70 per one-way trip.

Transit Needs: The biggest challenges are: addressing trip cancellations; trips that need to be scheduled with less than a 24-hour advance reservation; and prejudice against riding the bus ("cultural expectations"). Another issue is finding drivers for its congregate meals program.

Coordination Issues: AAAP currently sits on the Senior Ambassador Coalition/ transportation task force (SAC). The SAC has investigated the feasibility of establishing an Independent Transportation Network earlier in 2006. However, SAC has since delayed implementing this program because of high start-up costs (\$250,000) and high fares (at least \$10/trip and an additional mileage charge).

Desired Outcome for Coordination Study: More flexible and higher level of service for seniors

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American Cancer Society, Road to Recovery Program

Program: The Road to Recovery Program (RRP) is a volunteer program that provides medical trips to cancer patients. It is organized under the American Cancer Society. The service is free-of-charge, however, clients must be referred to the program through a practitioner. The American Cancer Society will reimburse volunteer drivers for costs; however, most drivers do not take advantage of this or ask for minimal reimbursement. Clients must be ambulatory to use the service since people are using their personal cars.

Transit Resources: RRP relies on volunteers who supply their own vehicles to drive patients to their medical appointments and the pharmacy. The American Cancer Society will indemnify the driver and provide training. It currently has five drivers who work in Hereford, Clarendon, Memphis, Pampa, Borger as well as Amarillo. RRP will take clients to any destination. Lubbock and Wichita Falls are common destinations outside of the 26-county Panhandle region. The program is funded 100 percent from public donations.

Transit Needs: The RRP coordinator feels that there is a large, unmet need but does not have a measure of how many trips are unmet. There are approximately three clients that cannot be helped for every one that is. (In Amarillo, there are about 15 clients in the program. That would equate to 45 clients who need, but cannot access transportation services.) The common denominator among the RRP clients is that they do not have anyone else that they can turn to.

Coordination Issues: Many of the clients cannot take public transit because they are in such a weakened state and need help getting into their homes. RRP is seen as the last resource. RRP staffers will move patients out of RRP into existing transport programs once it is feasible because of the high demand. RRP works with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program to find volunteer drivers.

Desired Outcome for Coordination Study: Assistance in filling volunteer driver positions

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ASC Industries

Program: Texas Panhandle Mental Health Mental Retardation (TPMHMR) has served individuals of the Texas Panhandle with mental illness, mental retardation or developmental delays since the mid-1960s. The Amarillo Service Center (ASC) has workshops located in seven locations in the Texas Panhandle: Amarillo, Borger, Clarendon, Dumas, Hereford, Pampa and Perryton. ASC offers Employment Assistance. This program secures competitive employment in the community. The program includes job development, employment planning and assistance in obtaining employment.

Transit Resources: ASC relies on Spec Trans to provide work trips to clients who do not live in foster homes. Some clients live in one of 15 group homes. Group homes typically have one van that is driven by the attendant who provides transportation to that home's residents. ASC also owns sedans that are used for site visits. ASC encourages clients to use Fixed Route, if possible, and ASC provides this travel training certification. ASC performs all its vehicle maintenance in-house. It is not known how much is spent on transportation because it is not accounted for as a line item. Overall, the sources of funding include: DSHS/DADS; MHMR; other state programs; Medicaid/Medicare, local funding and federal funding.

Transit Needs:

It is difficult to schedule a trip on short notice when there is an urgent need but not an issue that would normally be considered an emergency; for example, a client may have an acute case of the flu and needs to see a doctor that day. If they are unable to reserve a ride through Spec-Trans on short-notice, they have in the past called an ambulance to provide the trip.

Transportation is impossible to access before 6:30 am or after 6:30 pm. Many of ASC clients work schedules outside of transit operating hours.

Transportation is very difficult or impossible to access in the River Road area of Amarillo.

ASC vehicles may or may not have a wheelchair lift; however the ones with the lifts are in bad shape. It lacks the funds to purchase enough new vehicles.

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In rural areas, there are times when clients are unable to get to work or are stranded at work if the weather is bad and Panhandle Transit is not running.

Coordination Issues: 1) Spec-Trans typically delivers over 500 trips to ASC clients each month. The average monthly ridership is about 2,000 trips; therefore, about one-quarter of all trips are in support of a single state agency. A one-way Spec-Trans trip costs ACT \$31.00 to provide and the fare is \$1.50. Each trip is therefore subsidized at \$29.50/trip. At 500 trips a month, this represents at \$14,750 subsidy per month that is provided by the public transit system. 2) Van pools would be difficult for ASC clients since they cannot exceed 3 percent of the workplace. Without a higher concentration of clients, vanpools would not be feasible.

Desired Outcomes from Coordination Study: Service that can respond to trips with a short-term notice (less than 24 hours)

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Baptist Saint Anthony Home Care

Program: Baptist Saint Anthony Outreach Home Care (BSA) provides services and support during short, critical health periods. The program sends social workers to patient's home to check on their health and make sure they are in a safe condition. Because of this contact, BSA outreach workers become aware of the transportation needs of its clients although the organization does not provide transportation.

Transit Resources: BSA does not provide transportation but the social worker will help the client to access transportation resources if needed. BSA has an occupational therapist that is trained in analyzing a patient's driving skills.

Transit Needs: Elderly people or those with medical issues need more flexible scheduling that does not require 24-hour advance notice. This need stems from people who may not be able to keep appointments because of their more fragile state of health. For example, on the day the appointment is made, the client feels fine but, on the day of appointment, he/she may be feeling unwell. Also, a client may need a medical appointment on short-notice (less than 24 hour) but one that would not ordinarily require an EMS trip.

There are perception issues regarding transit services. Some clients feel like there is a stigma attached to riding and there is a perception on the behalf of the BSA that feelings of pride prevent clients from using the bus. There are restrictions on the number of trips that can be made under one reservation and there is no service on Sunday (when many elderly people want to attend church). Also, there is a need for more flexible (extensive) service and service on Sundays. BSA clients and some elderly people need a higher level of transit service than that which is provided by Spec Trans, such as help getting into their homes and with packages.

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Coordination Issues: The BSA is a member of the Senior Ambassador Program. A subcommittee of this group, the Senior Citizen Ambassador Transportation Task Force focuses on transportation issues for seniors. This group has recently formed a non-profit corporation in order to address the transit needs it sees and may base its program on the Independent Transportation Network model (<http://www.itnamerica.org/>). One challenge identified thus far in setting up an ITN includes recruiting volunteers. Another is the cost of the program may prohibit access to people on a fixed income.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: More flexible service for seniors

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Craig Methodist Retirement Community

Program: The Craig Methodist Retirement Community (CMRC) provides long-term nursing care and assisted living services for over 350 clients. It is organized on a model of progressive care where there are different facilities available to help clients to transition between phases of dependency. The facility includes cottages, apartments, licensed assisted-living and nursing-care centers. Other facilities include a pharmacy and an Alzheimer's care unit.

Transit Resources: CMRC provides transportation to its clients. It operates one 18-passenger bus and one nine-passenger van, both with lifts. It employs 1.75 full-time equivalents to provide transportation service; one full-time employee who drives the bus and one who assists with scheduling and paperwork. Regular trips for grocery shopping are scheduled on Wednesday morning and personal trips are scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. Medical trips take up the capacity on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. CMRC has received funding support from TxDOT to purchase one vehicle.

Transit Needs: Given its resources, CMRC is limited to providing 13 trips per day. The transit coordinator estimates that it cannot meet about five trip requests each week. However, the coordinator feels like residents of the facility would not want to take public transportation but instead would like to receive more services that are restricted to members of the CMRC facility.

Coordination Issues: There is not much use of ACT services by CMRC clients. It wants to continue to provide specialized services from within the CMRC community.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: None at this time

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Department of Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Program: DARS provides rehabilitative services to enable people to return to employment. Eligibility for DARS assistance is determined by the presence of a disability. DARS serves about 2,000 clients annually. DARS does not directly provide transportation to clients but provides support for the purchase of transportation as long as the trip is related to training or rehabilitation for employment. DARS will also provide modifications to personal vehicles to assist with mobility. The DARS Independent Living Services Program will help with adaptive equipment.

Transit Resources: DARS provides a commute subsidy up to \$50 per week to help offset a client's transportation costs. The amount of the subsidy is determined by the distance traveled. DARS purchases about \$3,000 of transportation annually from Panhandle Transit, ACT fixed route, and Spec-Trans. Occasionally, it will purchase taxicab services.

Transit Needs: It is estimated that about 95 percent of DARS' clients have transportation. The five percent of clients without transportation is estimated to be about 40 individuals. The largest transit need is for fixed route, after-hours services.

Coordination Issues: DARS frequently coordinates with the Texas Workforce Commission on a broad range of employment issues but has not focused explicitly on transportation.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: Extended fixed route hours

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Health and Human Services Commission

Program: This description reflects the insights of the Medicaid and Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) eligibility oversight manager. This office oversees the Amarillo and Canyon offices and the hospital-based staff in Amarillo. In 2005, it served over 15,000 unduplicated clients.

Transit Resources: The HHSC arranges for transportation as part of the support it provides to its clients but it does not fund any transportation. It directs clients to United Way's 2-1-1 referral service if a client needs transportation.

Transit Needs:

The HHSC does not tabulate the number of clients it refers to transit but estimates that services for the low-income are in great need. In the HHSC office, welfare-to work support services is one of the biggest needs in the Panhandle region. For example, in April 2006, there were 8,334 active cases. For low-income workers or those trying to move from welfare to work, transportation between the work site, child care facilities and home is very difficult.

The limitations of the ACT fixed route and its schedule is a limitation to some clients and there is also a gap in service between the cities of Canyon and Amarillo (i.e. inside of city of limits of Amarillo but outside of the ACT service area. However, because it is in the city limits, the area cannot be served by the rural transit provider, Panhandle Transit.)

Coordination Issues: The HHSC believes that there could be a useful partnership between the HHSC and the Texas Workforce to fill the child-care transportation gap. In particular, there is an interest in exploring the use of Work Source funding to transport children to day-care.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: HHSC would like to see a greater recognition among all the stakeholders of the need for more and improved transportation. HHSC would like to see greater transportation resources available for child care for low-income families.

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Hereford Senior Citizens Center

Program: The Hereford Senior Citizens Center (HSCC) provides recreation, support and congregate meals to people 55 years old and above who live in the Hereford area. The program is operated by a paid staff of 12 and a regular volunteer staff between 20 and 25 who assist in the home-delivered meals program.

Transit Resources: The HSCC has four vehicles. Three vans are used to deliver meals and one van is used for client transportation. The delivery vans are used from 10 am to 12 pm. The client van is used from 8 am to 4 pm and will take clients to medical, shopping, or other personal appointments locally. Approximately 1.5 full-time equivalents are dedicated to providing transportation. Currently, about \$350 per month is budgeted for transportation (this includes meal delivery transportation costs).

Transit Needs: In the past, HSCC provided trips into Amarillo but this service has been discontinued because it was too costly. The HSCC would resume this service if it had the operating funds and capital to purchase an additional vehicle.

The HSCC feels like Panhandle Transit has limited usefulness for its clients because of the need for a higher level of service. At the HSCC, the driver will also serve as a personnel attendant if needed. The HSCC will also provide last-minute trips and/or use private vehicle if needed. Meeting trip needs after 4:00 p.m. is difficult.

Coordination Issues: The HSCC is working with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to recruit volunteers for all of its programs. The HSCC may be interested in working with Panhandle Transit to resume HSCC's service to Amarillo if its vehicles are needed.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: Higher level of service and more responsiveness for trips for seniors

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Jan Werner Adult Day Care / Transportation

Program: Jan Werner Adult Day Care was formed in 1978. It is a nonprofit organization that serves 143 daycare clients. It delivers service under the Department of Aging and Disability's PACE Program (Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly). It has 135 PACE clients. Jan Werner provides door-through-door transportation to its clients. Certified Nurses Assistants (CNA) act as drivers and provide a very high level of assistance to riders. It provides trips for the Area Agency on Aging. Service is provided from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Transit Resources: Jan Werner Transportation operates 25 vehicles; nine of these vehicles were purchased by Jan Werner and the remaining vehicles are TxDOT vehicles. All of the most-recent vehicle purchases were made by Jan Werner. TxDOT last awarded a vehicle to Jan Werner in 2000. Since then, Jan Werner has purchased eight vehicles with its own resources. There are five additional vehicles on inventory but they are not in use. It maintains its own vehicles at an on-site shop and operates a fueling station. There are three drivers and 13 CNA's that serve as Adult Day Care part-time drivers.

Last year, Jan Werner delivered about 65,000 trips and had operating costs of \$374,481 (or \$5.76/trip). However, these operating costs do not allocate the hours CNAs spend driving as transportation expenses. Consequently, the cost per trip is under-reported.

Transit Needs: There is a need for more vehicles. (Currently, Jan Werner sells old vehicles to agencies like the Catholic Family Services.)

Coordination Issues: Jan Werner is able to be as efficient as it is because it can utilize its CNAs as drivers. If Jan Werner were to provide service under a coordinated system, it would want to maintain this operating model. Numerous and cumbersome regulations are also a coordination issue. If Jan Werner had to comply with all the regulations and rules, it would be very difficult to provide the same high-level of service that they currently provide. For example, Jan Werner

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wants to continue to provide door-through-door service. If it were to provide service to the city, it would no longer be able to provide door-through-door service because of a prohibition against losing sight of the vehicle.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: Jan Werner would like to see a program like the Panhandle Transportation Consortium 5310 program resumed. This program was streamlined, open to all agencies, and very popular.

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Kings Manor

Program: Kings Manor is nonprofit nursing facility located in Hereford, Texas. An affiliated program to Kings Manor is the Good Samaritan that provides hospice care.

Transit Resources: Kings Manor owns a 1997 van and a 2005 van with a lift that was donated. The Good Samaritan operates three sedans. It employs four part-time van drivers who together work two full-time equivalents. Many of the drivers are nursing assistances and provide an additional level of assistance. Most the trips are medical or shopping trips. It will take clients to Amarillo or Lubbock, if needed for medical purposes. In the past, Kings Manor has received funding support from TxDOT to purchase two vehicles.

Transit Needs: The Kings Manor transportation supervisor believes it has enough resources to fill its needs. It believes that it needs to keep some level of transportation services available at the center because it needs to respond to after-hours or short-notice trips.

Coordination Issues: The Kings Manor transportation supervisor expressed a concern that it would be too difficult to coordinate trips with her clients and those of other agencies. Since many of the clients are in fragile health and have a high need for assistance, there is a concern about mixing them with other riders.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: None at this time

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Mom Mobile

Program: Mom Mobile is a program under the Northwest Texas Healthcare System (NWTHS). It provides free transportation medical appointments to low-income mothers and their children. If transportation is a barrier to medical care, NWTHS believes that it is more cost-effective to provide for the transportation now rather than pay for costly health problems later. Mom Mobile will take the client to any medical, Women-Infants-Children, or Department of Health Services facility within Amarillo or Canyon. It provides service Monday to Friday, 7:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Transit Resources: Mom Mobile manages a \$42,000 operating budget. It owns and operates one vehicle – a 1998 Ford 350 van that is not wheelchair accessible and has one driver. It is submitting a grant for a new vehicle and hope to be able to expand service in the future. Mom Mobile will purchase bus passes or taxi vouchers if it cannot meet the demand. Many of the clients that are served by the Mom Mobile would be eligible for Medicaid transportation.

Transit Needs: The program functions well but needs more funds to expand. It is supported entirely through private foundations and private funding from the hospital.

Coordination Issues: The program's director does not perceive any significant coordination between agencies is currently ongoing as he believes that most trips are Medicaid-eligible and/or being served by Amarillo City Transit through Spec Trans. If a coordinated system were in place that met his clients' needs, he would like to be "out of the transportation business all together." However, at this time this is not feasible. If a coordinated system were in place, he would be concerned that the program would be flexible enough to meet his clients' needs. For example, it would need to be able to respond to short-notice trips; many of his clients do not have good organization skills. He would not like to see them without transportation because they failed to schedule something in advance.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: The program director would like to see more education/information about what services are currently available.

Panhandle Independent Living Center

Program: The Panhandle Independent Living Center (PILC) provides training, advocacy, and peer counseling to help individuals with disabilities lead independent lives. It is funded through the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Education, and private foundations. All clients that are served have some disability and 75 percent are elderly. Last year, it served 175 unduplicated clients.

Transit Resources: PILC budgets approximately \$8,000 for transportation (excluding salary). These funds come from federal sources (50 percent), state (25 percent) and private grants (25 percent). It operates two vehicles that it uses to directly provide transportation to its center – a 1994 12-passenger van with a lift and 250,000 miles and a 1993 5-passenger van with a ramp with 120,000 miles. PILC also obtains service from other providers. It operates a summer youth program and Laidlaw Transportation has provided transit services to this program. Panhandle Transit has donated transportation to the PILC for various events in the past. PILC purchases bus tickets from ACT (last year: 100 fixed route and 430 Spec-Trans).

Transit Needs: PILC’s greatest need for transportation is before 6:00 am and after 5:00 pm. About fifty percent of the trips PILC provides fall into this category. Trips to the airport are another need because there is no accessible transportation to the airport.

Coordination Issues: Through United Way referrals, the PILC has provided transportation for people in wheelchairs that need a trip that is critical but does not warrant an emergency call. It does not advertise this service because it does not have the capacity to fill trip demand. PILC would like to be more available to the public but its insurance limits it to short trips. Conversely, it does not want to become a “taxi service” and would rather work together with existing providers. For example, PILC would be interested working with a private provider such as a taxi service to provide wheelchair accessible trips to the airport.

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The PILC works with the city's transit system on a number of issues. The PILC works with ACT to complete eligibility reviews for Spec-Trans service and it provides personal travel training to 3 or 4 people per month.

Other coordination efforts include an initiative in 2002. Here, PILC worked with Easter Seals to provide transportation and mobility training to Easter Seals staff in a "Train the Trainer" workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to move people from the Spec-Trans service to fixed route. The program was considered a success by PILC and it had about 12 clients.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: After-hours service or longer hours of service; an accessible service to the airport

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Panhandle Regional Planning Commission – Workforce Development Centers

Program: Workforce Development Centers provide employment and training support to help people find and retain employment.

Transit Resources: The Panhandle Workforce Development Center (PWDC) provides clients with gas vouchers to subsidize transportation costs for job-related trips or payment authorizations for public transportation. In 2005, the PWDC spent about \$120,000 in gas sales and \$12,000 in bus vouchers and personal car repair.

Transit Needs: Access to job sites that are outside of the existing transit service areas or operating hours are one of the biggest transit needs for those seeking employment. Service to Amarillo College East Campus is needed since much of the training and resources used by PWDC clients is located here, and currently, this campus is not included on the Amarillo City Transit route. However, all other Amarillo College campuses are served by ACT. Lastly, many low-income workers need access to day care that is convenient to transit. Currently, the Amarillo College West Campus has a day-care center.

Coordination Issues: Gas vouchers have worked well in the past because they best respond to the multiple trip needs for a client's personal work plan. The public transit system was not considered feasible because of the length of the trip, the difficulty in making multiple trips, lack of access to some areas, etc. However, the gas vouchers are becoming an increasingly difficult approach because of the rising cost of gas and the difficulty in preventing abuse. (That is, once a client has received a voucher, it is very difficult to control how it is spent.)

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: Expanded hours of service in Amarillo; and service to Amarillo College east campus ¹

¹ During later discussions, desired outcomes was expanded to include better public transit service. Gas vouchers are difficult to control and can be easily be abused and spent for uses other than employment-related trips. A pilot

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Park Central – Baptist Community Services

Program: Park Central is one in a family of nursing and assisted living centers owned and operated through the Baptist Community Services. Other facilities include The Continental, Ware Living Center, Harrington Living Center, The Talmage, Plemons Court and The Arbors. It is one of the largest assisted living and nursing facilities in the region.

Transit Resources: Park Central provides transportation for a fee from 8:00 to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. It provides approximately 24,000 trips annually. It operates four sedans, two vans with lifts, and one 30-passenger bus. Transportation staff includes three full-time drivers, four part-time drivers, and five transportation aides. (Transportation aides assist the rider to prepare for the trip 20 minutes prior to departure, transports the person to the vehicle, and completes all paperwork.) Park Central will accept Medicaid/Medicare for residents who have been long-term clients and are now facing a change in finances.

Transit Needs: Park Central needs a 30-passenger vehicle with room for four wheelchairs to meet the needs of the increasing number of clients who are not ambulatory.

Coordination Issues: Park Central is meeting the needs of its clients very well. The organization does not rely on federal or state funding for transportation and does not see at this time how it can be involved in a coordinated system since it is dedicated to providing a high level of service to its residents.

Desired Outcome(s) from Coordination Study: None identified at this time.

project in Hereford, Texas, is being developed by Panhandle Transit, Hereford Workforce Center and other stakeholders start a modest fixed route.

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History of Regional Coordination of Public Transportation

Past and Current Planning Activities

There are three bodies that address the range of human services transportation within Amarillo and the Panhandle:

- **Panhandle Transportation Consortium (PTC):** This group formed in 1995 to maximize the efficiency of funds available for transportation and to review requests for Section 5310 vehicles. Agencies that participated in the PTC included the Area Agency on Aging of the Panhandle, Canyon Retirement Center, Texas Department of Transportation; City of Amarillo/Amarillo City Transit; Jan Werner Adult Day Care; Jan Werner Transportation; Amarillo MPO; Texas Department of Health and Human Services, and some participation for Friona Estate and Edward Abraham nursing homes. Many of the agencies that participated on the PTC are now serving on the Regional Transportation Advisory Group that is overseeing this study.
- **Senior Ambassadors Coalition:** The Senior Ambassadors Coalition (SAC) is about nine years old. Participating agencies include Baptist St Anthony Hospital, Area Agency on Aging, Alzheimers Organization, Adult Protective Care, Texas A&M University School of Nursing, Texas Tech Health Science Center, and nursing and assisted care facilities. Transportation is a key concern for the group and it has formed the Transportation Task Force to discuss strategies to increase the availability and quality of transportation services for seniors.
- **Advisory Commission for People with Disabilities (ACPD):** The ACPD is a group of Amarillo citizens with disabilities that discuss, evaluate and advise the City Commission on matters and issues that affect persons with disabilities. ACT attends the ACPD monthly meeting for transportation issues.

Current and Past Implemented Projects

PTC Section 5310 Purchase of Service

Beginning in 2000, Amarillo was granted an exception from Section 5310's requirement that the funds be allocated to capital equipment or preventative maintenance. From 2000 to 2004, the PTC oversaw the expenditure of \$382,547 from Section 5310 funds for purchase of service.

The purchase of service was not considered an unqualified success by all the agencies that contracted for service. The contract was awarded to Jan Werner Transportation, a subsidiary of Jan Werner Adult Day Care. Jan Werner used its vehicles and adult day care staff to deliver the service. Participating agencies paid a flat fee for the service for unlimited rides. However, the service was very popular and agencies had trouble getting its clients on the vehicles; and vehicles would be completely booked up at least two weeks in advance. There were also questions about the efficiency of the service because hours were limited and at times the vehicles were underutilized. (This happened because Jan Werner used its care attendants to also serve as drivers and these staff members were busy with other duties at these times.) In the fall of 2004, the purchase for service agreement discontinued. Prior to this date, the PTC used toll credits as its local match. In 2004, it was not successful in acquiring toll credits and could not come up with the local match.

Amarillo Kidney Dialysis Center Transportation Brokerage

At one time, the Amarillo Kidney Dialysis Center investigated the feasibility of establishing a brokerage. Insurance costs, training needs to meet insurance specification, staffing issues (who would drive, coordinate and dispatch) stalled the project.

Public Transportation Agency Ticket Sales

Both ACT and Panhandle Transit sell tickets and passes to agencies and organizations. Tickets are priced at the public rate and do not require a written contract. See Table 2.12: ACT Ticket Sales, Prior 12 Months and Table 2.13: Panhandle Transit Agencies Served.

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Table 2.12: ACT Ticket Sales, Prior 12 Months

Agency	Type of Ticket	Amount of Ticket
Amarillo Independent School District	Fixed Route	120
Panhandle Independent Living Center	Fixed Route / STS	100 / 430
City of Amarillo Community Development	Fixed Route	11,500
Texas Panhandle MHMR	Fixed Route	5,339
United Way	Fixed Route	3,793
Potter County Probation	Fixed Route	1,000
Northwest Texas Hospital	Fixed Route	3,200
High Plains Epilepsy Association	Fixed Route	1,500
Perkins Community Center	Fixed Route	100
Amarillo Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse	Fixed Route	1,600
PASO, Inc	Fixed Route / STS	575 / 60
Texas Home Management, Inc.	STS	300
Catholic Family Services	STS	10
Potter/Randall Adult Child Protective Services	Fixed Route	411
Canyon Educare	STS	60
Baptist St. Anthony Hospital	Fixed Route / STS	170 / 40
PRPC	Fixed Route	748
West Texas Management, Inc.	Fixed Route	50

Table 2.13: Panhandle Transit Agencies Served

Agency	Agency
Panhandle MHMR	Maverick Boys and Girls Club of Canyon
Texas Commission for the Blind	Maverick Boys and Girls Club of Amarillo
Texas Veterans Commission	Panhandle Independent Living Center
Texas Health and Human Services	Social Security Administration
Adult and Child Protective Services	TxDOT: Childress, Amarillo, Lubbock
Trailee Crisis Center	Lubbock Regional Transportation Planning
Golden Phoenix (Pampa Regional Hospital)	Nortex Regional Transportation Planning
Hereford Care Center	Clarendon Community College
Childress Nursing Center	All 26 County Judges and Commissioners
Hall County Senior Center	Amarillo MPO
Hall County Clinic	Meredith House Retirement Center, Pampa
Golden Crescent Senior Center	Texas Education Agency, Region XIV Service Ctr
Texas Work Source (Hereford)	Greenbelt COOP Services
Hereford Senior Center	School Districts: Canyon, Hereford, Clarendon
First Baptist Church, Canyon TX	School Districts: Tulia, Perryton, Borger
Texas Panhandle Lions Foundation	Palo Duro Nursing Home and Rehad
XIT Rodeo and Association	First United Methodist Church, Canyon TX
Memphis Public School District	Dialysis Specialist, Childress
Dalhart Chamber of Commerce	Dialysis Specialist, Amarillo