

Appendix G:

Stakeholder Meetings: Summary of Responses

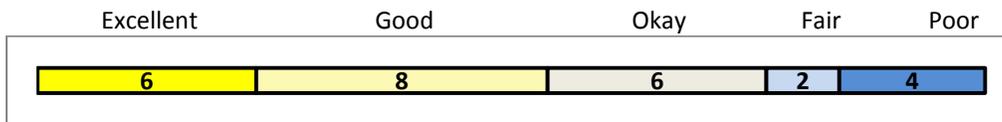
EastTexConnects Stakeholder Meetings: Summary of Responses

Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) staff met with members of the EasTexConnects Committee during July and August 2013, to discuss regional transportation coordination in East Texas (Planning Region 6). Out of 29 committee members, TTI met in person or by conference call with 26 (90 percent of the membership). TTI was not successful in scheduling time with two members and one member declined to meet. Researchers followed a discussion outline in each meeting or conference call to obtain answers to core questions. The interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes in duration.

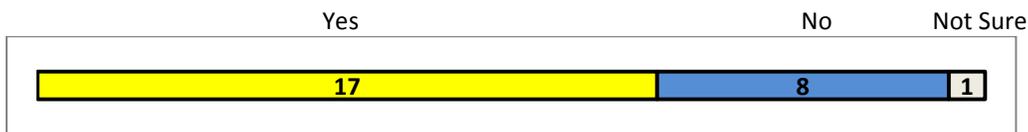
This section summarizes responses for the 10 more structured questions found within the survey document. The questions discussed here were adapted from United We Ride’s “*A Framework for Action, Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System: A Self-Assessment Tool for Communities*” (UWR Assessment Tool). While some respondents also shared examples and comments, TTI’s primary focus was on obtaining a structured response (such as a 1 to 5 rating, yes/no, or agree/disagree) during this portion of the interview. Combined scores and responses to these questions are found below. Additional statements and comments offered as part of these questions are presented in a later section of this summary

Responses to the 10 questions modeled after the UWR Assessment Tool

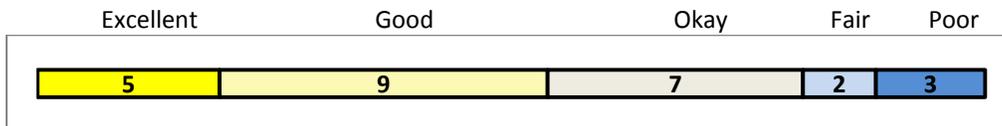
1) How would you rate the governing framework [EasTexConnects] that brings together providers, agencies, and users?



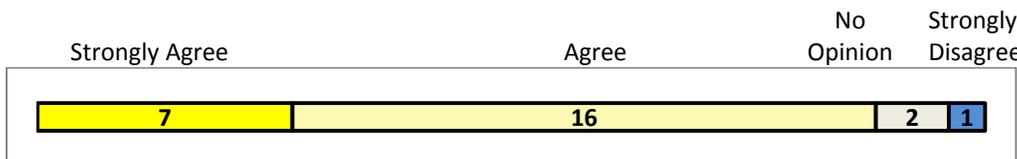
2) Are there clear opportunities that all support?



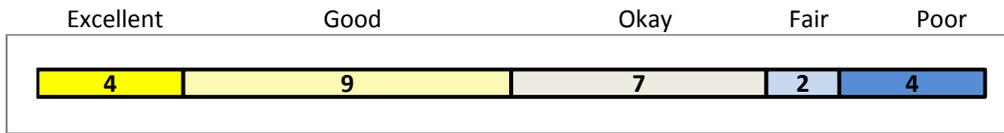
3) How would you rate the sustained support for coordinated transportation planning among elected officials, agency administrators, and other community leaders?



4) Is there positive momentum in the region? Is there growing interest and commitment to coordinated public transit and human service transportation to maximize resources?



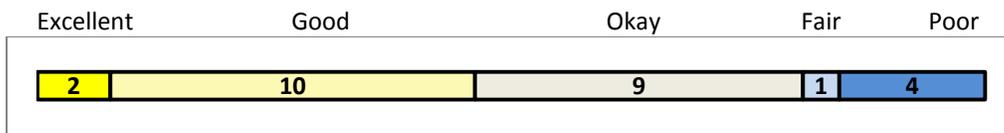
5) Please describe your overall evaluation of how well is the region doing in the area of making things happen by working together.



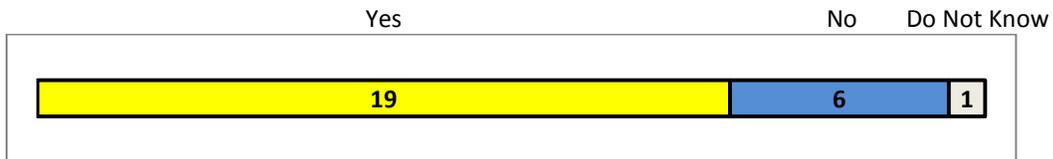
6) Are there adequate resources and programs that fund transportation services?



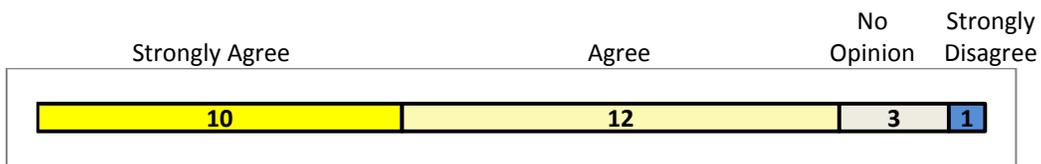
7) How would you describe the region's process to identify duplication of services, underused assets, and service gaps?



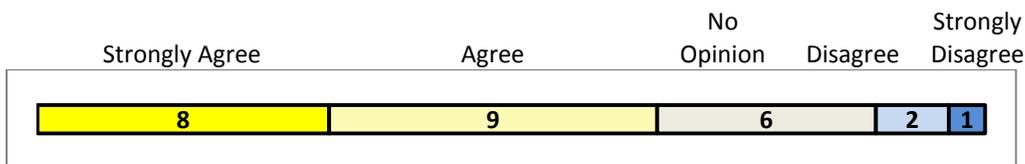
8) Have community outreach and previous planning processes adequately involved the full complement of potential stakeholders?



9) The region should pursue a seamless payment system that promotes customer choice.



10) The region should pursue a single call center/dispatch for all providers to book demand-response trips.



What is successful regional public transportation coordination for the region?

This section summarizes responses from a series of questions asking each stakeholder to define his/her vision for regional public transportation coordination.

Themes from Stakeholder Comments

- Regional “compact” so that all providers are committed to work together for common goals [to expand service, enhance customer service]
- Multimodal – public transportation, private transportation, non-profit transportation service providers, intercity bus, regional rail, airport transportation
- People first, customer first, barrier free
- Interconnectivity between modes
- Transportation for medical, work, shopping, personal trips [and MTP?]
- Expanded service
 - Days of week
 - Span of service per day
 - Regional access/regional connections
 - Access to jobs, education, training
 - Veterans to medical/support services
- Mix of service types appropriate to markets
 - Match type of service (fixed route, demand response) to market/customers
 - Rebuild intercity bus connections
 - Expand regional rail
- Regional connections
 - Urban-rural
 - Fixed route-demand response
 - Intercity-local
 - Public-private
 - Connections to jobs, education, training
 - Veterans to services
- Seamless connections, transfer points
- One call, one click for the customer to access information about all services
 - “No wrong door”
- Mobility management to help individuals access service
- Seamless fare for the region, all transportation services/providers
- Public information/marketing to ensure the general public is aware of services, successes
- Customer information to ensure riders and possible riders know how to access services
- Extraordinary customer services
- Transparent information
 - Data, benchmarks, milestones, performance measures
 - Measure success
 - Provide information to document return on investment
 - Equitable distribution of services according to need
- Public support, local government support
- Expand resources (dollars) for public transportation

What are the expected benefits of regional public transportation coordination?

This section summarizes responses from a series of questions asking each stakeholder to explain the expected benefits of coordinating regional public transportation.

Themes from Stakeholder Comments

- Benefit regional economy if clients/users have access to transportation that is affordable and make connections to jobs (leading to more earned income, more purchase of goods and services, more personal activity)
- Economic growth, ease of getting to/from places
- Benefits individuals because they have access to better jobs, health services, food (less isolated and happier, healthier lifestyle)
- Benefits providers because can share costs and reduce inefficient trips
- Build positive reputation. Demonstrate success.
- Better outcomes, accessible transportation for more people
- Better service, lower cost, and potentially more service as well
- Improved geographic coverage, access to/for persons in need
- More efficient service
- Better service for people, meeting needs
- Better physical/mental health by facilitating people to get out and participate in the community
- Better service for Veterans, connections to medical services
- Increase in number of riders
- Connections
- Lower cost/rider
- Improve performance measures
- Better service to the customer
- Expand services
- Possible to implement the Regional Coordination Plan

What are the impediments to regional public transportation coordination?

This section summarizes responses from the question “In your opinion, what are the impediments to regional public transportation coordination?”

Comments from Stakeholder Comments

- Committee is large and diverse
- Not every member of committee has same vision
- Some members more assertive than others
- Do not always practice effective communications tools
- Lack of mutual trust among some providers
- Tendency to get stuck on a divisive issue
- Tendency to get stuck on issues that are not pertinent to delivery of services to the customer
- Passengers tend to get lost in the conversation
- Not looking at big picture, not focused on quality of service or delivery of service
- Not all stakeholders agree on priorities
- Turf, plant the flag

- Public and private providers represent different business models
- Fare structure and sharing
- Providers serve constituent base
- Local governments focus on service for residents
- Need public to be more aware of the services available
- Need more local share investment
- Funding has become a competitive process, need to refocus on collaboration
- Lack of transparency

- Size of the region is large, diverse urban/rural
- Advance scheduling for demand responsive service
- No service evenings
- Conflicts about rules on transfers
- Is there progress to close the gap (in needed services)? Need data
- Demand responsive transit not really conducive to work trips in outlying areas

What changes are needed to deliver highly coordinated public transportation?

This section summarizes responses to a question about what changes are needed to achieve highly coordinated public transportation in East Texas.

Comments from Stakeholder Comments

- Focus as a committee on Actions
- Facilitator to help improve communications
- If needed, seek training on conflict resolution
- Recognize we may not always agree, but we can still respect one another
- Work to implement more elements of the Regional Coordination Plan [Update]
- Focus on the rider and services
- Expand outreach
- Seek non-traditional answers to challenges of providing service to very different urban and rural markets
- Focus on delivery of service to the customer
- Need more service
- Need connections
- Implement project reporting system to track progress, share data
 - Data transparency

What are expectations of this project?

This section summarizes responses to a question about stakeholder expectations for this project.

- Focus on common goals
- Energized to tackle issue(s), accomplish, make progress
- Plan of action, dates/goals, next steps, tracking accountability
- Provide objective, transparent data
- Back up facts with data
- Revisit service design
- Set positive tone, set of priorities that can be implemented
- Provide real and measurable strategies to make systems work together better
- Recommend enhancements based on need
- Remember the goal is to get better service for the end user (customer)