

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development Corporation (SECED) contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (LSC) to prepare the Regional Transit Element for the 2025 Southeast Colorado Regional Transportation Plan. This Final Report presents a summary of the existing conditions related to public transit services in Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers Counties. Information in this report includes a description of the communities, a review of the existing transportation providers in the study area, issues to be addressed in the study, transit demand estimates for the study area, and the long-range and short-range transit elements for the Regional Transportation Plan.

SECED undertakes activities of mutual concern in cooperation with the Southeast Region of Colorado. SECED provides incentives and develops promotional activities that will market and advertise the advantages of locating a business in the Southeast Colorado area, encourages retention and expansion of existing businesses in the area, promotes redevelopment, and generally enhances the economic growth of the area. SECED serves as staff for the Southeast Transportation Planning Region and supports the regional transportation planning efforts.

This Final Report incorporates the short-range and long-range transit elements for the region. This Final Report was submitted to the Advisory Committee and the Regional Planning Commission as a draft for review and comment prior to completion. This final product provides the transit element for the next Southeast Colorado Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).



PROJECT BACKGROUND

SECED has the challenge of updating the six-year Regional Transit Development Plans (TDP), which are required by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The updates are necessary in order to maintain eligibility to receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds.

The SE Colorado Regional TDP expires as of 2001, and needs to be updated in order to maintain funding eligibility in 2002 and 2003. As part of the changes in the transit planning process, CDOT requests that the long-range (20-year) RTPs incorporate a transit element rather than separate TDPs. CDOT indicates that the transit element should include capital and operating expenses for the 20-year period and the first six years of the short-range plan.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update the SE Colorado Regional Transit Development as a regional transit element. This plan update will feed directly into the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, which, in turn, is used as input to the Statewide Transportation Plan. The Statewide Transportation Plan looks ahead 20 years and is updated every six years.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Chapter II provides a community economic and demographic overview of the entire study area. The chapter includes projections covering the six-year and twenty-year horizons. Other pertinent data within the chapter include activity centers and land use patterns.



Chapter III presents the existing transportation providers within the six counties. Information included for the providers includes service information, schedules, operating data, and ridership information. Chapter IV presents the transit needs assessment for the Southeast Region.

Chapter V presents the Long-Range Transit Element for the Regional Transportation Plan. The Long-Range Transit Element includes an analysis of unmet needs, gaps in the service areas, regional transit needs, a policy plan for the Southeast Transportation Planning Region (TPR), and a funding plan. This chapter identifies a policy plan for the Southeast Region, which identifies policies and strategies for transit service within the region.

Chapter VI presents the Short-Range Element for the Southeast Region over the next six years. This chapter includes the six-year program of prioritized projects for each transit provider within the study area. Details for each project include the agency responsible for implementing each project. This chapter also includes the financially-constrained plan for transit. The constrained plan is based on projected funding for the region and the individual providers.

ISSUES

The list of issues presented in the following text has been identified from a variety of sources including previous reports, the inventory of existing providers, interviews with transit managers, the kick-off meeting, and discussion with and observation of users. Issues have been identified that may require short-range or long-range actions. Each of the issues were considered when developing transit alternatives for the study area.

Regionwide

- Effective non-emergency medical transportation throughout the region.
- Juvenile transportation options to Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and La Junta.
- Assistance for farm labor transportation.

Otero County/La Junta

- Increased coordination with existing agencies.
- La Junta City Transit – most effective service type.
- La Junta City Transit vehicle replacement.
- Coordination with Bent County.
- Prisoner transportation due to the boarding of prisoners in other county jails.

Introduction

Bent County

- Vehicle replacement schedule for Golden Age.
- Transportation needs at Fort Lyon VA Hospital.

Crowley County

- Transportation needs being met.

Prowers County/Lamar

- Increase coordination with area resource providers.
- Areas for service expansion.
- Land/building – shop acquisition for storage and maintenance.

Baca County

- Needs of the Senior Center.
- Vehicle replacement schedule.
- Role of farm labor transportation.

Kiowa County

- Transportation needs within the county.
- Role of farm labor transportation.

This Final Report was reviewed by the local communities, the Advisory Committee, and the Regional Planning Commission, who are concerned with the future of transit in the Southeast Region. Comments were submitted to LSC and the Advisory Committee.