

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 Technical Memorandum #1 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, and the transit demand estimates for the study area.

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 report represents the first of two interim reports which will be submitted for review and comment prior to the submittal of the final product. The final product will be a single document that will provide 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

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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.

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 will be 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.

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 regional providers.
- Areas for service expansion.

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.