

Existing Transportation Services

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the existing transportation providers within the southeast study area. The chapter discusses elderly transportation service and other providers within the six-county region.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER SURVEY

A Transportation Provider Survey, shown in Appendix A, was sent to all providers within the six-county area. This included the six agencies which are listed below.

- Arkansas Valley Community Center
- La Junta City Transit
- Golden Age Transportation Service (Bent County)
- Prowers Area Transit - Prairie Dog Express
- Baca County Senior Transportation
- Kiowa County

ARKANSAS VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

Arkansas Valley Community Center (AVCC) is based out of La Junta and provides specialized transportation to disabled clients. The private, nonprofit agency provides demand-response service five days per week for developmentally disabled clients in Bent, Crowley, and Otero Counties. AVCC also provides a scheduled service between Rocky Ford and La Junta.



Operating hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for the scheduled service. Fares for the scheduled service are \$0.50 in town and \$1.00 between cities. Demand-response service is available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. The operating budget for AVCC is approximately \$100,000. Table III-1 shows performance measures for the system for fiscal year 1999.

Annual	
Vehicle-Miles	65,000
Vehicle-Hours	4,620
One-way Trips	21,600
Program Trips	12,000
Operating Cost	\$97,000
Cost per Hour	\$21.00
Pass. per Hour	4.68
Cost per Trip	\$4.49

Programs offered by AVCC include:

- *Community Integrated Employment* assists people with developmental disabilities to work in jobs in the community. Not only do they integrate with others, they achieve both productivity and independence.
- *Supported Living* and residential services provide individuals with a choice. People with developmental disabilities can choose to live in the most normal environment possible, residing and working in their communities.
- *Social and Leisure* experiences encourage individuals to become involved, to take part in community activities, and expand their network of friends.
- *Early Childhood* services provide infants and children at risk with early intervention through preschool.
- *Family Support* helps families keep their children at home with funds that can be used to cover costs that insurance won't cover, respite care, and a variety of other needs.
- *Case Management* assures that people are eligible for services and that they attain the expectations in their individual plan through continuing support and advocacy.
- *Community Participation* provides frequent access to the local community for integrated social and lifestyle activities.
- *Specialized Habilitation* services assist individuals to develop many of the basic personal skills needed for a healthier life.
- *Vocational Services* provide meaningful employment for participants. These services include vocational assessment, work services, occupational skills training, and job placement.

- *Assistive Technology Demo Site*, in cooperation with **RMRTI**, allows any person with a disability to try various communication and computer devices to determine if they are appropriate.

LA JUNTA CITY TRANSIT

La Junta City Transit, formerly called “Smile Hi City Transit,” serves the City of La Junta and surrounding communities within Otero, Bent, and Crowley Counties. The service operates from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Three vehicles operate the modified fixed-route and the demand-response services during the day.



The City Transit is based out of the La Junta Senior Center. The Transit Coordinator also manages the Senior Center and reports directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of La Junta. Other transit staff include two full-time drivers and four part-time drivers.

The modified fixed-route service operates with a 45-minute headway eight times per day. The route begins at the Senior Center and makes stops at the County Courthouse, grocery stores, senior living facilities, low-income housing facilities, hospital, nursing home, assisted living facilities, doctors, day care facilities, Otero Junior College, and area schools. Other popular destinations include Wal-Mart, La Junta Industrial Park, La Junta Gardens, Bent’s Old Fort, Phillips Pipe Line, Macko Pipe and Steel, and south to the former Air Force Housing Complex.

The operating budget for fiscal year 2000 was approximately \$121,000 for the City of La Junta. Approximately 17,400 annual trips were provided by the agency. The modified fixed-route service provided 1,458 trips and the demand-response service provided 15,919 annual trips. Table III-2 provides performance measures for City of La Junta Transit.

Annual	
Vehicle-Miles	48,457
Vehicle-Hours	2405
One-way Trips	17,377
Operating Cost	\$120,981
Fares	\$8,878
Cost per Hour	\$50.30
Pass. per Hour	7.23
Cost per Trip	\$6.96
Farebox Recovery	7.3%

Short-term needs and cost estimates for the City of La Junta Transit include the following:

- Rehabilitation of two buses - \$30,000
- Purchase of one bus - \$52,000
- Medicaid route expansion - \$4,000

Long-term needs for the agency and approximate costs include:

- Route expansion - \$4,000
- Larger bus - \$120,000
- Increase staff - \$80,000
- Facility update - \$10,000
- Continuous vehicle replacement

Specific issues identified in the last Regional Transit Plan are listed below. The LSC Team will consider each of these issues as alternatives are developed for this Transit Element.

- Evaluate existing service effectiveness, especially the route deviations.
- Service expansion areas to increase ridership.
- Evaluate fare structure.
- Increased marketing efforts.
- Need for bus stops.
- Grant writing coordination.

The fleet for City of La Junta transit includes two 12-passenger Ford buses (one - 1995 and one -1996). A 2000, 20-passenger El Dorado bus is also operated by the city.

GOLDEN AGE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE (GATS)

Golden Age Transportation Service is a private nonprofit agency based in Las Animas. The agency provides demand-response service for seniors in Bent County. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance for the transit service.

GATS operates one bus five days per week, Monday through Friday from approximately 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Operating costs for fiscal year 1999 were approximately \$28,000. Approximately 14,100 annual trips were given with 1,700 annual miles. Table III-3 provides performance measure data.

Annual	
Vehicle-Miles	1,700
Vehicle-Hours	2,080
One-way Trips	14,103
Operating Cost	\$28,000
Cost per Hour	\$13.46
Pass. per Hour	6.78
Cost per Trip	\$1.99

PROWERS AREA TRANSIT SERVICES

Prowers Area Transit Services (PATS) is a community-based transit system providing general public service within the boundaries of Prowers County. Three types of service are provided by PATS:

- Demand-response service
- Contract services
- Special trips

The demand-response service requires a 24-hour advance reservation. Three buses are operated Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Within Lamar, the cost per trip is \$1.00. Outlying areas (Holly, Granada, Bristol, Hartman, or Wiley) to Lamar cost \$5.00 for a round-trip that includes three stops within the City of Lamar. Discount ride coupons are also available for purchase.

Existing Transportation Providers

The PATS program is managed by the Transit Director, who reports directly to the Prowers Area Transit Advisory Board. Four full-time drivers and one part-time driver provide the transit service. Four vehicles are operating on the average day for PATS.

The operating budget for fiscal year 2000 was approximately \$128,300, plus \$50,700 in capital costs. PATS reported over 15,350 annual passenger-trips for 2000 and approximately 21,500 annual vehicle-miles. Table III-4 provides performance characteristics for PATS.

Annual	
Vehicle-Miles	21,550
Vehicle-Hours	4,016
One-way Trips	15,351
Operating Cost	\$128,311
Fares	\$16,208
Cost per Hour	\$31.95
Pass. per Hour	3.82
Cost per Trip	\$8.36
Farebox Recovery	12.6%

Short-term needs and cost estimates for PATS include the following:

- Replace two buses - \$50,000 each
- Service expansion - \$20,000
- Bus facility expansion - \$30,000
- Operating funding - \$40,000

Long-term needs for the agency and approximate costs include:

- Bus garage expansion
- Service expansion
- Continuous vehicle replacement

Specific issues identified in the last Regional Transit Plan are listed below. The LSC Team will consider each of these issues as alternatives are developed for this Transit Element.

- Vehicle replacement schedule.
- Funding sources.

- Staff training.
- Grant writing assistance and coordination.

BACA COUNTY SENIOR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Baca County Senior Transportation is based in Springfield and provides demand-response service to seniors in the county. The transit service is primarily designed for seniors, but is also available to the general public. Typically, transportation is provided from the outlying communities into Springfield for medical, shopping, and social/recreational purposes.

No fare structure is set for senior riders. However, suggested donations of \$1.00 for seniors and \$3.00 for general public riders is encouraged. The service operates five days per week and provided approximately 15,130 annual trips in 1999. Approximately 22,000 annual vehicle-miles were driven by the one bus. Table III-5 presents the performance measures.

Annual	
Vehicle-Miles	22,022
Vehicle-Hours	1,764
One-way Trips	15,130
Operating Cost	\$28,538
Cost per Hour	\$16.18
Pass. per Hour	8.58
Cost per Trip	\$1.89

KIOWA COUNTY SENIOR TRANSPORTATION

The Kiowa County Transit Service provides transportation services primarily to senior residents within Kiowa County. The service is available five days per week. One full-time and one part-time driver operate one minibus for Kiowa County.

Operating costs for fiscal year 2000 were approximately 12,200, plus \$2,700 in capital costs. Approximately 1,160 annual trips were provided with over 27,800

Existing Transportation Providers

annual vehicle-miles. Table III-6 presents performance measure data for Kiowa County.

Annual	
Vehicle-Miles	27,836
Vehicle-Hours	1,081
One-way Trips	1,158
Operating Cost	\$12,161
Fares	\$1,049
Cost per Hour	\$11.25
Pass. per Hour	1.07
Cost per Trip	\$10.50
Farebox Recovery	8.6%

Short-term needs and cost estimates for Kiowa County include the following:

- Replace two buses - \$50,000 each
- Hire two additional staff - \$36,000

Long-term needs for the agency and approximate costs include:

- Additional vehicles (6) - \$400,000
- Service expansion

OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

Bent County Memorial Nursing Home

The Bent County Memorial Nursing Home is located in Las Animas and operates two accessible vans. The vehicles are used approximately three days per week for the clients of the nursing home. Clients typically travel to medical appointments and other necessary trips. The vans are also used for child day care five days per week.

SE Colorado Family Guidance and Mental Health Center

The Southeast Colorado Family Guidance and Mental Health Center is based in La Junta and has two vehicles providing transportation services. The agency provides weekday transportation for clients, as needed. Service is provided to Fowler, Ordway, Rocky Ford, and La Junta. Family Guidance also has an outreach center in Lamar, which provides mental health service to residents of Prowers, Kiowa, and Baca Counties.

Child Development Services/Head Start

Child Development Services (CDS) provides transportation for Head Start children in Bent, Crowley, Otero, and Prowers Counties. Approximately 12 buses/vans are based at the five centers—La Junta, Rocky Ford, Las Animas, Olney Springs, and Lamar. The vehicles are not wheelchair accessible. During the summer, migrant Head Start uses the vehicles. Approximately 150,000 annual vehicle-miles are provided by the agency. The annual transportation budget is approximately \$150,000.

Fort Lyon Veterans Administration Hospital

The VA Hospital in Fort Lyon provides transportation to La Junta for medical appointments. One bus is operated by the hospital, Monday through Friday. Approximately 5,000 annual trips are provided by the agency.

Long's Transportation

Long's Transportation is a private operator providing school district and other charter trips within Bent County.

Sandhaven Nursing Home

The Sandhaven Nursing Home provides transportation to clients Monday through Friday in the Lamar area. Primary trips are for medical appointments and adult day care. The nursing home has one van for clients.

Lamar Community College

The college operates two vans and one bus to athletic events, student trips, and administrative purposes.

Holly Nursing Care Center

The Holly Nursing Care Center operates one accessible van for nursing home residents in the Holly area and Lamar. The van is used daily, including weekends, for medical, nutrition, and social/recreational purposes.

Existing Transportation Providers

Weisbrod Hospital and Nursing Home

The Weisbrod Hospital and Nursing Home is located in Eads and has one van available for transportation. Transportation is provided to the Eads Senior Center, planned outings, Fort Lyon VA Hospital, and to Lamar for shopping and medical appointments.

Fowler Health Care Center

Fowler Health Care Center has one van for medical appointments in La Junta and Pueblo. The vehicle is used approximately twice a week.

TNM&O/Greyhound

Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma (TNM&O), a subsidiary of Greyhound Lines, operates intercity bus service along US 50, between Wichita, Kansas and Denver. The service also operates on US 287 between Amarillo, Texas and Denver. Greyhound makes three trips daily in each direction through Lamar on the north/south route using US 287. This route travels through Springfield, Campo, Lamar—then travels on US 50 to Pueblo. An additional daily route operates on US 50 between Wichita, Kansas and Denver via Lamar and Pueblo.

Designated stops in the Southeast Region include Springfield, Lamar, Las Animas, La Junta, Rocky Ford, Manzanola (flag stop), Fowler, and Pueblo.

School Districts

School districts in the Southeast Region also provide transportation services. Over 200 vehicles are used to transport students in the region. The major concerns for the school districts are student safety boarding and debarking the vehicles.