

Chapter 8: Action Plan Evaluation

As noted in Chapter 5: Strategies, JARC and NF awards are competitive. An objective approach to selecting and evaluating potential action plans/pilot projects will ensure that the best projects for the region are chosen. The best projects will address the goals adopted by the RTAG¹, coordinate resources, meet demonstrated transit needs and demands, have support from key players, be realistically achievable given available resources and potential resources, and project a balance across the region. In the following section, each project will be briefly reviewed in respect to these criteria.

JARC-Eligible Projects

Job Access in Childress, Texas

Criteria 1: Does project meet the goals adopted by RTAG?

1. To Improve Existing Delivery of Service: Yes – By extending hours of service, new riders would be served.
2. To Generate Efficiencies in Operations: Yes – A project designed to utilize existing vehicles to serve high-productivity commuter trips will improve efficiency. If the project requires new vehicles, the project will be less competitive and it will be a more difficult to obtain JARC funding.
3. To Enhance Customer Satisfaction: Yes – A survey conducted with employers indicates that there is a high interest in the service.
4. To Encourage Cooperation and Coordination: The project does not directly address this goal. However, it will involve the cooperation of Panhandle Transit, City of Childress, Childress Regional Hospital, the Childress Prison, and Workforce Development.

¹ The goals adopted by the RTAG are the same goals reflected in H.B. 3588: 1) improve existing delivery of service; 2) generate efficiencies in operations; 3) enhance customer satisfaction; and 4) encourage cooperation and coordination.

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Criteria 2: Does the project coordinate resources? Possibly – A project that can be executed using existing Panhandle Transit vehicles will be a stronger project than one that would require new vehicles. Furthermore, the participation of Childress Workforce Development (CWD) has yet to be secured. It is estimated the CWD spends about \$5,200 annually in gas vouchers. The commitment of some these funds to a transit program would create a stronger, more competitive project. Lastly, it is recommended that the lead agency work with area employers to gain their financial support for the program.²

Criteria 3: Does the project meet identified needs? Yes – Job access was the second highest need that was indicated on the Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey.

Criteria 4: Does the project have support and is it realistically achievable? Yes – The project has strong support for the City of Childress, Childress Economic Development Corporation, Panhandle Transit, Childress Prison, and Childress Regional Hospital. Other large employers, including Wal-Mart, have expressed their support for the project as well but have yet to commit financially.

Criteria 5: Is the project ready to move forward? Yes – Critical tasks to be completed include operations and financial planning and securing of employer support.

Job Access in Hereford, Texas

Criteria 1: Does project meet the goals adopted by RTAG?

1. To Improve Existing Delivery of Service: Yes – By extending hours of service, new riders would be served.
2. To Generate Efficiencies in Operations: Unknown – The project will test the effectiveness of fixed route over demand response in a very small urban setting (less than 15,000). Typically, industry standards recommend a minimum of 4 households per acre

²One source of information for employers regarding tax-free commuter benefits for their employees can be found at <http://www.commuterchoice.com/>

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to support a minimum level of local, fixed route bus service. Hereford is substantially less dense with approximately 1.35 households per acre.

3. To Enhance Customer Satisfaction: Yes – a fixed route will allow riders greater flexibility because they will no longer need to schedule a trip for in-town service.
4. To Encourage Cooperation and Coordination: The project does not directly address this goal. However, it will involve the cooperation of Panhandle Transit, City of Hereford, local employers, and the Hereford Workforce Development office.

Criteria 2: Does the project coordinate resources? Yes – The Hereford Workforce Development office is a strong supporter of the project and has indicated that it is willing to commit some of its estimated \$7,500 in gas voucher funds for support.

Criteria 3: Does the project meet identified needs? Yes – Job access was the second highest need that was indicated on the Panhandle Transportation Coordination Survey.

Criteria 4: Does the project have support and is it realistically achievable? Yes – The project has strong support for the City of Hereford, Panhandle Transit, Hereford Workforce Development, and local employers.

Criteria 5: Is the project ready to move forward? Yes – Planning continues for fixed route and complementary paratransit operations.

NF-Eligible Projects

Travel Training through the Panhandle Independent Living Center

Criteria 1: Does project meet the goals adopted by RTAG?

1. To Improve Existing Delivery of Service: Yes – The project will build on the existing capacity of the PILC's travel training program.

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2. To Generate Efficiencies in Operations: Yes – The project will encourage higher use of ACT’s more cost-effective fixed-route system over the more costly ADA paratransit system.
3. To Enhance Customer Satisfaction: Unknown – The need for travel training has been expressed most strongly at the agency level in anticipation of flex routing in the future and the dissolution of the traditional fixed route / complementary paratransit service. Should flex routing be instituted, it is anticipated that there will be significant demand by customers for travel training on the new system.
4. To Encourage Cooperation and Coordination: The project does not directly address this goal. However, it will involve the cooperation of ACT, PILC, Goodwill Industries, TPMHMR, and all other agencies whose clients currently depend on Spec-Trans service.

Criteria 2: Does the project coordinate resources? Yes – It coordinates the existing travel training capacity of PILC, Goodwill, and ACT.

Criteria 3: Does the project meet identified needs? Yes – As mentioned previously, travel training will become critical regardless if flex routing is instituted because of the need to lower Spec-Trans demand and costs.

Criteria 4: Does the project have support and is it realistically achievable? Yes – PILC has been identified as the lead agency and ACT and Goodwill are in support.

Criteria 5: Is the project ready to move forward? Yes – Critical tasks to be completed include identification and verification of local share. It is estimated that PILC may spend about \$10,300 annually in its provision of travel training. These expenses are eligible as local share. Other local share opportunities include health and human service agencies that provide travel training as well.

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Voucher Project for Same-Day Medical and Essential Needs Trips

Criteria 1: Does project meet the goals adopted by RTAG?

1. To Improve Existing Delivery of Service: Yes – The project will would provide essential trips at times and to destinations not currently served by ACT.
2. To Generate Efficiencies in Operations: Unknown – Providers may contract with non-emergency medical transportation provider LeFleur or private taxi companies.
3. To Enhance Customer Satisfaction: Yes – The project was supported by a majority of attendees at the Amarillo Workshop on August 31. Increased access to medical trips was ranked as the first concern in the Transportation Needs Survey.
4. To Encourage Cooperation and Coordination: The project does not directly address this goal. However, it has the capacity to form working relationships between the public sector agencies and private sector providers.

Criteria 2: Does the project coordinate resources? Yes – The project would coordinate the small transportation funds of a number of agencies to participate in a voucher program. In future years, the program may be increased through the application of Section 5310 funds. Lastly, there is an opportunity to increase the utilization of Panhandle Transit vehicles if they can be contracted to deliver trips during idle times when vehicles are waiting in Amarillo for return-trips.

Criteria 3: Does the project meet identified needs? Yes – As mentioned previously, same-day medical trips was the top priority in the Transportation Needs Survey.

Criteria 4: Does the project have support and is it realistically achievable? Yes – Senior Ambassadors Coalition has been identified as the lead agency. Furthermore, member agencies of the Senior Ambassadors have expressed an interest in a voucher program.

Criteria 5: Is the project ready to move forward? Yes – Critical tasks to be completed include identification of participating agencies; and transportation funding available from participating agencies that can be applied toward local share.

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Transportation Coordinator / Mobility Manager Position

Criteria 1: Does project meet the goals adopted by RTAG?

1. To Improve Existing Delivery of Service: Yes – The position would be tasked with developing new opportunities to coordinate service.
2. To Generate Efficiencies in Operations: Yes – The position would be tasked with developing new opportunities to coordinate service to improve efficiencies in operations.
3. To Enhance Customer Satisfaction: Yes – The position would be tasked with supporting current efforts and developing new opportunities to improve customer satisfaction.
4. To Encourage Cooperation and Coordination: Yes – The position would be responsible for developing a regional network of coordinated transportation. This position would serve as a bridge for transit providers and health and human service agencies as these organizations continue to meet the requirements of H.B. 3588.

Criteria 2: Does the project coordinate resources? Yes – The position would support planning efforts of organizations such as the Amarillo MPO, ACT, DARS, DADS, TPMHMR, HSHC, PRPC, Panhandle Transit to include coordination objectives in their community and mobility planning.

Criteria 3: Does the project meet identified needs? Yes – There is low awareness at the local level of the need for coordinated planning and this project did not receive strong support or interest during the August 31 workshop. However, there is awareness within some agencies that the coordination of resources will be necessary if transportation funding levels continue to decrease. This position would be an investment in the long-term potential of the Panhandle region to succeed together by working together.

Criteria 4: Does the project have support and is it realistically achievable? Yes – PRPC has been identified as the lead agency. However, it is anticipated that a mobility manager-type project may be a proposal that is repeated in a number of regions. If so, there is currently nothing in this project's development that may make it unique from its competitors.

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Criteria 5: Is the project ready to move forward? Yes – Critical tasks to be completed include identification of local share.