

# PRESS RELEASE

## Helping Improve Mobility in East Texas Is As Easy As 1 – 2 – 3

**East Texas, 6/22/2016:** Persons residing throughout the fourteen counties of East Texas are invited to participate in a short-term project to improve mobility throughout the region. The affected counties include Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood.

The project is an update of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan completed in 2011. Among the more important recommendations arising from the 2011 project were increased marketing/public education regarding public transit programs/services, one-stop regional call center, funding to expand public transit service hours, online regional trip planner, and regional transit vehicle maintenance.

The current project is funded via a TxDOT grant obtained through the East Texas Connects committee and East Texas Council of Governments. The committee is composed of 35 members representing a wide range of public, private, and social service organizations. ETCOG is the regional governmental organization whose responsibilities include regional transportation planning.

Participating in the current project is as easy as one, two, three:

1. Visit this project's website to follow the project's progress. [www.EasTexConnects.com](http://www.EasTexConnects.com)
2. Complete a short online survey regarding your current travel needs and preferences.
3. Attend one of 14 community meetings to be held in late July.

Anyone who completes the brief online survey by July 30, 2016 will be entered into a random drawing for a selection of four 50-dollar VISA gift cards.

"Our goal is to involve as many East Texas residents in the current project as possible," noted Melissa Cure, project manager for the East Texas Council of Governments. "By hearing directly from area residents we will focus on those future public transit/mobility improvements that are of greatest importance. It's a valuable opportunity to help shape the future of public transportation in East Texas."

One-hour community meetings will be held in late July in each of the 14 counties covered by ETCOG. Each meeting will include a short presentation followed by questions/comments from the public. The initial results from the community survey will be available for review/discussion, and light snacks/beverages will be served.

EasTexConnects is a committee comprised of elected officials or their appointees, citizens, and representatives of social service agencies, local transportation providers, and businesses in East Texas. The committee's purpose is to improve the quality of life in East Texas through transportation choices. The mission is to create and connect a comprehensive, flexible, and sustainable public transportation system throughout and beyond the 14 counties of State Planning Region 6.



The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) assists in project planning and coordination across a diverse group of public agencies throughout the East Texas region. The East Texas region is designated as Planning Region 6 by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and encompasses 14 counties with a population of approximately 850,000 (Census 2015).

**About ETCOG**

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.

**PROUDLY SERVING 14 COUNTIES**

**ANDERSON CAMP CHEROKEE GREGG HARRISON HENDERSON MARION PANOLA RAINS RUSK SMITH UPSHUR VAN ZANDT WOOD**