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**EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS**



PRESS RELEASE

Residents of East Texas Have Spoken.

EasTexConnects and ETCOG Have Listened!

Kilgore, TX, August 22, 2016: Nearly 400 individuals throughout 14 counties in East Texas have shared insights into their mobility needs and transportation challenges as EasTexConnects and the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) updates its Five-Year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan for the East Texas region.

The results of public input regarding the Plan will be presented at the next EasTexConnects committee meeting. The meeting is scheduled for August 17 at 1:30 pm at the East Texas Council of Governments offices, 3800 Stone Road, Kilgore.

The Five-Year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan seeks to identify and offer solutions to mobility challenges within the East Texas region, which includes Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood counties. The Plan, which is funded via a TxDOT grant obtained through the EasTexConnects committee and East Texas Council of Governments, is updated every five years. More project details can be found on the project website, www.EasTexConnects.com.

Community input for the Plan update was been gathered via stakeholder roundtables, listening sessions with community members, and online surveys of community members and stakeholders. Stakeholder roundtables were held in June, while one-hour public listening sessions were held in late July in each of the 14 counties.

The community outreach has yielded recurring feedback including expanded service hours, better connectivity between home and employment, and more frequent service from rural communities into Tyler and Longview, along with requests for travel training and educational marketing campaigns. Vehicle procurement needs and funding opportunities for individual counties have also been identified.

"We're pleased that so many residents of East Texas have gotten involved in the process," said Melissa Cure, project manager for the East Texas Council of Governments. "We've really listened attentively to their comments, and we intend to incorporate much of what we heard into our transportation plan."

Multiple recommendations from the 2011 Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan have already been implemented, including campaigns to educate the community, development of a multi-modal "Interconnectivity Day," and a regional transit vehicle shared maintenance program.

For more information, contact Melissa Cure, ETCOG's Transportation Planner/Analyst at 903-218-6435.

About EasTexConnects

EasTexConnects is a regional steering committee comprised of 35 members who include elected officials or their appointees; citizens; representatives of social service agencies; local transportation providers; and businesses in East Texas. The committee's purpose is



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to improve the quality of life in East Texas by ensuring availability of 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.

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.