

BYLAWS OF EASTTEXCONNECTS

(Amended and Adopted January 20, 2010)
(Amended February 01, 2010)
(Amended March 01, 2010)
(Amended November 17, 2010)
(Amended May 18, 2011)
(Amended May 15, 2013)
(Amended March 16, 2016)
(Amended May 16, 2017)

Article I. NAME AND PURPOSE

- 1.1** Name: The name of the committee is EasTexConnects, *originally named East Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Planning Steering Committee.*
- 1.2** **Purpose:** EasTexConnects has been established to ensure that the benefits of the State's public transportation resources are maximized through coordination of services within and beyond the Texas State Planning Region 6, that consists of Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood counties and is the standing committee designated to oversee regionally coordinated transportation planning activities. EasTexConnects will update the East Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Plan and will coordinate and review the work produced to ensure the Plan complies with project goals as well as ensure projects are implemented in a timely manner and according to The Texas Department of Transportation requirements.

Article II. AUTHORITY

- 2.1** EasTexConnects was created by authority of and in compliance with the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 461, Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation.

Article III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1** Goals and Objectives will be reviewed and revised with each funding grant period. Goals and objectives may be revised in the interim with plan reviews, public input and changes in the demographics and economics of the communities served and expectations of funding agencies.
- 3.2** **The goals as prescribed by EasTexConnects are as follows:**
- 3.2.1 To improve the delivery of transportation services.
 - 3.2.2 To generate efficiencies in operation that can lead to increased levels of service.
 - 3.2.3 To enhance customer service /satisfaction.
 - 3.2.4 To encourage cooperation and coordination

3.3 Priorities for Public Transportation in East Texas

- 3.3.1 People first, barrier free
- 3.3.2 Multi-modal interconnectivity across the region
- 3.3.3 Aggressive outreach and education to a broad base
- 3.3.4 Increased/Flexible funding
- 3.3.5 Increased and expanded services
- 3.3.6 Emergency planning and homeland security
- 3.3.7 Remain consistent and supportive of current and future adopted TxDOT and FTA goals and objectives

Article IV. MEMBERS

- 4.1.** This committee includes representatives from multiple transit agencies (private and public), the metropolitan planning organizations, health and human services agencies, the local workforce development agency, transportation purchasers, and the general public.

These may be chosen from, but are not limited to:

- Urban and rural transit providers
- Multimodal transportation providers
- Agencies that fund public transportation for the general public
- Client transportation providers including Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Health and human service agencies that fund or purchase transportation for clients
- Users of public transportation - urban and rural
- Agencies that provide services for clients who need transportation
- Advocates for those who use or need public transportation and advocates for transit coordination
- Interested general public
- Business community

- 4.2** **Selection and Appointment of Members.** EasTexConnects membership shall be for an indefinite period. A subcommittee for selection and appropriate distribution of committee members shall be appointed. Membership of the committee is proposed by sitting members of the committee to the extent as may be practicable in Section 4.1. All voting members must reside in State Planning Region 6 or be employed by transportation related organizations serving the same geographic area. Appointment will be made by an application review process, unless the position selection is by designated agency, and the appointment made by majority vote of EasTexConnects. A five to seven member sub-committee shall be appointed to review and recommend applicants to EasTexConnects and will endeavor to ensure broad geographic representation.

4.3 Composition of EasTexConnects:

- 4.3.1 One member appointed by the Lead Agency.
- 4.3.2 A representative from every rural and urban public transit operator.
- 4.3.3 Representative from each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- 4.3.4 One representative from the local Workforce Development Board.
- 4.3.5 One or more members from Health and Human Service operators.
- 4.3.6 Two or more local private-for-hire transportation providers.
- 4.3.7 Two or more members who are advocates and/or users of transportation for the disabled, elderly, economically disadvantaged and other populations who historically have limited access to transportation.
- 4.3.8 Two or more persons representing providers or facilities engaged in common carriage of air, rail or over the road (OTR) transportation.
- 4.3.9 Ex-officio, non-voting, members as assigned without restriction from The Texas Department of Transportation and the Lead Agency of EasTexConnects.
- 4.3.10 One representative appointed by the County Commissioners Court from each of the fourteen counties.

4.4 The voting membership will be up to twenty-one voting members, and additionally one voting member may be appointed by each County Commissioners Court for a maximum of 35 total voting members.

- 4.4.1 All Voting Memberships will be numbered positions.
- 4.4.2 Members are expected to participate in discussions, prepare for and attend meetings, serve on subcommittees and vote without prejudice to special interests or for monetary considerations.
- 4.4.3 Members must comply with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act and Open Records Act.

4.5 **Attendance:** Members must attend 50% (2) meetings in a calendar year. All members are expected to attend all meetings. If a member misses two (2) meetings they will receive a letter from the Chair requesting an explanation and inquire if they are still interested in serving on the committee. A member may send a proxy who will count as present towards attendance but the proxy is not allowed to vote.

- 4.6 **Removal:** Any member may be removed or replaced by the entity represented. EasTexConnects will notify a member by mail with reasoning of its intention to remove their membership at least one month prior to removal. EasTexConnects may approach the entity represented and ask for removal of the Member for good cause by vote of EasTexConnects membership.

Article V. OFFICERS

- 5.1 **Officers:** The officers of EasTexConnects consist of a Chair and a Vice-Chair.
- 5.2 **Election:** Election of a Chair and Vice-Chair shall occur at the beginning of the State of Texas fiscal year.
- 5.3 **Terms:** Officers serve two-year terms, beginning on the date of selection.
- 5.4 **Duties of Officers:**
- 5.4.1 Chair - The Chair shall call meetings of EasTexConnects to order, shall act as Chair of such meetings, shall set the final agenda, appoint subcommittees with the approval of a majority of EasTexConnects membership, may call a special meeting for reasonable cause with the concurrence of the Vice-Chair and shall chair the Executive Committee. **The Chair shall only vote in case of a tie, but may make and second a motion.**
- 5.4.2 Vice-Chair - The Vice-Chair shall conduct the duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's absence.
- 5.4.3 In case the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent or unable to perform their duties, EasTexConnects may appoint a Chair pro tem.
- 5.5 **Removal:** A two thirds majority of voting members of EasTexConnects membership may vote to remove an officer, but at no greater frequency than once during the calendar year. If removed from the elected position the officer would become a voting member of EasTexConnects. If the Chair is removed, the Vice-Chair assumes the position. All other offices are filled by an election at that meeting or no later than the next regular meeting.

Article VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairman, the Vice-Chair, one public and one private transit provider along with one member of EasTexConnects, the Lead Agency, and The Texas Department of Transportation. These members shall serve at an ex-officio capacity.
- 6.2 Term of the Executive Committee shall be the same as for officers.
- 6.3 The Executive Committee shall oversee the direction of EasTexConnects as voted by a majority of EasTexConnects members on a per item basis in a timeframe authorized by EasTexConnects as a whole and in advance of the need for action. The Executive Committee may address emergency

situations regarding personnel and funding issues. In emergency situations, the committee will be notified by email within 24 hours and the issue will be discussed at the next meeting.

6.4 Four members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

6.5 **Removal:** A two thirds majority of the voting members of EasTexConnects may vote to remove an elected member of the Executive Committee, but at no greater frequency than once during the calendar year. If removed from the elected position the officer would become a voting member of EasTexConnects.

Article VII. MEETINGS

7.1 **Meetings:** Shall be held quarterly and scheduled a year in advance with the approval of the membership and in compliance with funding entity requirements.

7.2 **Special Meetings:** Special EasTexConnects meetings may be called by the Chairperson with the concurrence of the Vice Chair, upon request.

7.3 **Notice:** Written notice, including an agenda, of each meeting shall be prepared and mailed, or electronically transmitted, or hand delivered to each EasTexConnects member at preferably five (5) business days before the meeting date but no later than the official posting of the meeting as required by the Open Meetings Act.

7.4 **Open Meetings:** All meetings of EasTexConnects shall comply with the Open Meetings Act.

7.5 Every attempt should be made to complete the work of EasTexConnects within a 2-hour time frame during regularly scheduled meetings.

7.6 **Conduct:** Except where these bylaws require otherwise, generally followed principles of parliamentary procedure shall govern the conduct of EasTexConnects meetings.

7.7 **Agenda:** The agenda will be the responsibility of the Chair to finalize in coordination with the administrative assistance of the Lead Agency. All Voting Members may post agenda items.

7.8 **Quorum:** One third of the total voting membership, excluding vacancies, constitutes a quorum for conducting EasTexConnects business.

Article VIII. VOTING

8.1 **Voting:** Except where these bylaws require otherwise, all actions and recommendations of EasTexConnects will be approved by a simple majority of the voting members present. The Chair votes when required to break a tie. A proxy is not allowed to vote.

Article IX. SUBCOMMITTEES

9.1 **Established:** Subcommittees may be established or dissolved by the Chair with approval of EasTexConnects and shall serve for a specific purpose.

- 9.2 Membership:** Members of a Subcommittee may volunteer for service on a Subcommittee or may be appointed by the Chair. In either case voting approval of EasTexConnects membership is required.
- 9.3 Stakeholders:** Stakeholders other than EasTexConnects Members may be asked to serve on a Subcommittee as a resource by the Chair based on the recommendation of an EasTexConnects member.

Article X. LEAD AGENCY

- 10.1 EasTexConnects** is required to select a Lead Agency. The East Texas Council of Governments was selected in 2009 for the 2009-2012 Texas Department of Transportation funding cycle.
- 10.2 From and after** August 31, 2011, EasTexConnects shall consider the designation of a fiscal agent for terms of one year providing this is consistent with The Texas Department of Transportation policy.
- 10.3 Responsibilities of the Lead Agency:**
- 10.3.1 Assist EasTexConnects in compliance with Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 461, the Open Meetings and Open Records Act, preparation and compliance with State grant fund requirements, especially The Texas Department of Transportation, and any other state, federal or private grant applications or funding appropriate for the goals and objectives of EasTexConnects.
 - 10.3.2 Act as EasTexConnects' fiscal agent for all money awarded on its behalf. Report on at least a quarterly basis the budget and expenditures for all funds awarded on its behalf.
 - 10.3.3 Oversee any employees on a day-to-day basis whose position is primarily funded through EasTexConnects' awarded grants and report to EasTexConnects or its agent on the performance and job duties of any such employees.
 - 10.3.4 Complete any reporting requirements as directed by the State, The Texas Department of Transportation or any other grant agencies and comply with their record retention policy.
 - 10.3.5 Preparing and posting the activities, meetings, meeting minutes and other information of interest to the general public on the East Texas Council of Governments website.
 - 10.3.6 Communicate and coordinate information about EasTexConnects and its activities to other organizations which have an interest in our outcomes and processes such as the North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority, Neighboring Council of Governments, and any other appropriate state agencies or interested parties.

Article XI. AMENDMENTS

- 11.1 Amendments:** EasTexConnects may recommend an amendment to these bylaws at a regular or special meeting to be voted on at the next subsequent meeting.