

2023

Capital Area Council of Governments

ANNUAL REPORT



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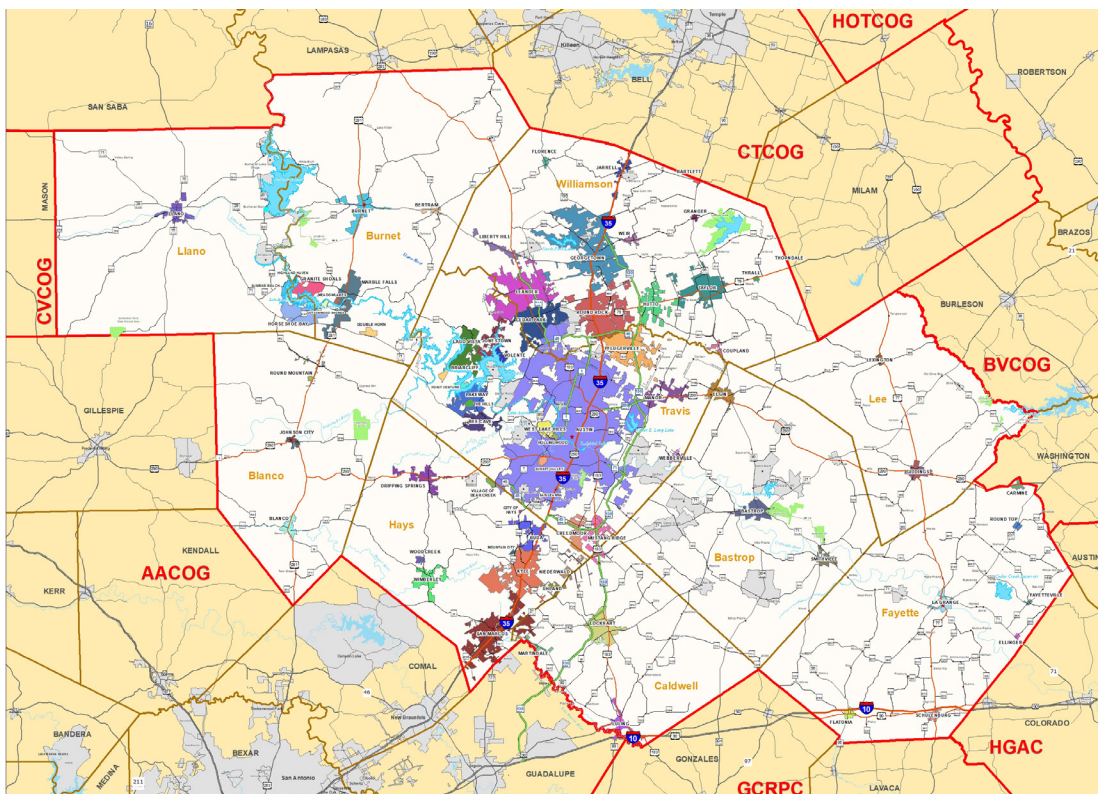
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About CAPCOG

Since 1970, CAPCOG has served a ten-county region that includes Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Travis and Williamson counties. The region spans more than 8,400 square miles and according to the 2022 Census estimates has a population of more than 2.5 million, with 2.4 million living in the five-county metropolitan statistical area. This population estimate is more than six times the region's population of 446,602 in 1970.

CAPCOG started with 37 founding member governments but now includes 100 county, city and associate members that support and participate in its regional planning efforts.

As a regional partner directed by its membership, CAPCOG assists jurisdictions with regional planning in the areas of emergency communications, aging resources, law enforcement education, criminal justice, solid waste management, air pollution reduction, homeland security, transportation, economic and community development, GIS data and usage



CAPCOG will continue to strengthen the Capital of Texas ten-county region by supporting urban and rural local governments through coordination, collaboration, and sharing of ideas and resources.

From the Executive Committee Chair



Chair
Judge James Oakley
Burnet County

Serving as chair of CAPCOG and working with the other county and city officials is an honor; we are all dedicated to service beyond the boundaries of our local jurisdictions. The nature of councils of governments is based on representatives of the cities and counties bringing their collective knowledge and ideas together to maximize the impact of programs that serve us all, and it seems to be an effective model for government.

This year we approved the purchase and installation of 9-1-1 call taking equipment that is state-of-the-art as our region moves to Next Generation 9-1-1 systems that allows emergency responders to arrive more quickly at an emergency with transmitted data to enhance the response provided. We also acquired high-accuracy aerial imagery to enable first responders to substantially improve locating wireless callers. We had valuable discussions about maximizing funding for criminal justice, solid waste, and services for seniors which will be implemented as future funding decisions are made.

I am proud to have served as chair this year and be a part of this board that convenes monthly to collaborate on regional issues and challenges with like-minded people who strive on providing the highest level of customer service to all the region's residents.

From the Executive Director



Executive Director
Betty Voights

Several years ago when we started issuing an annual report, I decided a message from the outgoing Executive Committee Chair along with one from the executive director would be a nice touch. This will be my last one as CAPCOG's full-time executive director.

The Executive Committee Officers mapped out a process in August for hiring CAPCOG's third executive director in its history. They formed a Recruitment Committee that has developed a timeline with a goal of having someone hired as early as September and provide four months for transition between us. I told the officers in August 2019 during my annual performance evaluation that I would leave in five years — we were all surprised. I hadn't planned this announcement, but it was the right choice, and I will stay at full speed until I leave. I don't plan to quit working, but managing an agency for 27 years is enough, and anyone reading this likely knows my passion is really economic development and community planning at the local level.

I have always been lucky to have great staff — we are all dedicated to how work should be done at a regional level, and I'm sure that will continue.

Executive Committee



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Judge James Oakley
Burnet County



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Representative Terry Wilson

The CAPCOG Executive Committee also serves as the Capital Area
Emergency Communications District's Board of Managers.

Administration

The Administrative Services staff manages agency functions to include budgeting, purchasing, audits, contracts, compliance, records management, human resources, website maintenance, membership and information technology (IT) to support the program staff and ensure their missions are accomplished.

The finance department led the organization through another successful audit and facilitated the annual budget process which concluded with a \$42.7 million, fiscal year 2023-24 budget that includes a total of 72 staff positions. It also oversaw the agency's procurement and investments on a daily basis.

The administrative staff also updated several policies which focused on streamlining and clarifying procedures while easing employees' use of benefits.

After launching training.capcog.org; a website dedicated to allowing CAPCOG partners to register for law enforcement and emergency telecommunicator continuing education

courses as well as other CAPCOG workshops, CAPCOG began the process of refreshing capcog.org. The site isn't expected to change much, but its renovations will deliver a more user-friendly and accessible site with greater mobile optimization while also integrating training.capcog.org, so training courses and other CAPCOG information can be found in the same digital space.

The IT department upgraded the operating systems (OS) of virtual servers to the most current OS due to end-of-life protocols to ensure secure operations and necessary security updates were occurring. It also replaced a physical host server and began its software replacement to further protect servers from security vulnerabilities. These enhancements to CAPCOG's digital infrastructure help ensure all staff can work seamlessly and securely from the office, at home, or throughout the region.

The Caldwell County Courthouse peers over the trees near sunset in downtown Lockhart.



The Regional Law Enforcement Academy (RLEA) conducts basic peace officers courses (BPOCs) so local agencies can hire officers ready to serve their communities based on Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) standards and local training recommendations. It also provides local law enforcement agencies with TCOLE mandated and agency requested in-service peace officer training.



102

Cadets were enrolled in four Basic Peace Officer Courses in 2023.



Percent of graduating Basic Peace Officer Course cadets passed their TCOLE exam on their first attempt.

CAPCOG through the BPOC program helped establish the foundation for my career through excellent instruction and leadership. This foundation and the tools I learned allowed me to progress and handle the world of modern policing and be a better officer and member of the community.

**–Officer Kyle Crouch
Kyle Police Department**

The Regional Law Enforcement Academy (RLEA) achieved a major milestone in 2023 as it started its 100th Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) in July. The full-time, day course marked other academy successes as it sought to improve cadet recruitment throughout the year — the course began with nearly 40 cadets, making it the largest class in the past five years. BPOC 99, a part-time night course, ramped up in Hutto a month prior with 20 cadets. The classes are anticipated to graduate in March and April 2024.

The academy also graduated two BPOCs in June and August of 2023 with the cadets from those classes helping the academy achieve the highest pass rate in the state for the TCOLE Basic Peace Officer’s exams. A hundred percent of the graduating cadets passed their exam on the first attempt, which has been a

long-standing goal of the academy often achieved for a number of years. The academy’s BPOCs continued to exceed the state’s training requirements by nearly 380 additional TCOLE credit hours of law enforcement instruction to better prepare cadets to work for Central Texas law enforcement agencies, ensuring they are ready for duty upon graduation.

RLEA also provided more in-service training courses in 2023 than the previous year as it continued to partner with additional local agencies to host regional courses as well as expand its in-service course catalogue. Popular courses during the year included Intermediate Crime Scene, Basic Instructor, De-Escalation, Interacting with Drivers who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, New Supervisor, Mental Health Officer, and 40-Hour Crisis Intervention Training.



Basic Peace Officer Course No. 98 cadets stand together for photos after their graduation. Every graduating cadet in 2023 passed their Texas Commission on Law Enforcement exam on their first attempt.

285

Law enforcement officers were trained during 2023.



28

In-service courses were offered during the year.

The academics in CAPCOG's Basic Peace Officer Course truly helped me comprehend the material and know what to do and expect and how to think when it comes to passing the TCOLE test, but more importantly, to know what is needed in the field.

**–Officer Jaciel Cortina
San Marcos Police Department**

Cadets that graduated in 2023 went to work for the following agencies:

- Travis County Sheriff's Office
- Leander Police Department
- Williamson County Sheriff's Office
- Elgin Police Department
- Kyle Police Department
- San Marcos Police Department
- Jonestown Police Department
- Travis County Constable's Office, Pct 4
- Taylor Police Department
- Bastrop County Sheriff's Office
- Bee Cave Police Department
- Caldwell County Sheriff's Office
- Manor Police Department

The Emergency Communications Division provides technical, operational, and educational support to the region’s 31 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). It maintains critical emergency communications network infrastructure at each PSAP and across 8,400 square miles to ensure 9-1-1 calls and texts are answered.

2.03

Million 9-1-1 calls were answered by public safety answering points in the CAPCOG region.



14,634

Text to 9-1-1 sessions were answered by emergency telecommunicators.

CAPCOG has given me the ability to take interesting classes and to improve my telecommunications skills. It also provides a forum to meet other telecommunicators from neighboring agencies.

**– Telecommunicator Austin Lytle
Travis County Sheriff’s Office**

After years of progressing toward Next Generation 9-1-1, the Emergency Communications Division began a final step by procuring and planning for the installation of a new call handling system during 2023. The procurement was the largest in CAPCOG history and replaces 9-1-1 call-handling equipment (CHE) across 31 PSAPs and region’s core hub systems. The new equipment is a redundant system in three geographically separated centers coupled with individual CHE at each PSAP. It will deliver 9-1-1 calls through geo-diverse fiber paths and enable PSAPs to divert calls to another location if required. The CHE also will include a new mapping system that pinpoints cellphone callers within a 10-foot square location and provides real-time life safety information such as breadcrumb caller movement, available first aid and AED equipment locations, interactive video and photos, and

interactive texting with translations. Equipment began arriving in late August with full regional implementation anticipated in the first quarter of 2025.

The division hosted Austin Police Department’s 9-1-1 staff and other city and county emergency departments for several months during 2023 in CAPCOG’s Back Up Center (BUC) as the Combined Transportation, Emergency & Communications Center (CTECC) underwent remodeling and upgrades. Operations at the BUC mirrored those at CTECC and transitions between sites experienced no loss of call traffic for the agencies.

In-person and virtual telecommunicator and 9-1-1 related training continued to support the region’s 800+ public safety telecommunicators. Courses were selected to portray current events,



Sixteen test call-handling stations are ready to be used at the CAPCOG training center. Telecommunicators will train on the new call-handling equipment as they are installed throughout the region in 2024.



1,308
Emergency telecommunicators received training.



284 Courses were offered to 9-1-1 operations staff members.

enrich telecommunicators' physical and mental health and advance career paths to supervision and leadership roles. After completing its first in-person, 80-hour basic telecommunicator course in 2022,

the division hosted two 88-hour courses for local emergency telecommunicators; 98 percent of graduating students earned their Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Basic Telecommunicator Certificates.



54 Public outreach events were supported by the Emergency Communications Division.



51,018 People were estimated to be reached with 9-1-1 public education materials.

CAPCOG has enhanced our community outreach by providing the public with information on safety and calling 9-1-1 in a way that the public can use and relate to. Their materials helps in attracting the public to get our message of public safety and awareness. It opens up that dialogue.

**—SGT. Steven Ward
Leander Police Department**

The Homeland Security Division partners with local governments and other emergency management stakeholders to conduct regional planning and support the coordination of operations, situational awareness, and training to respond to natural or man-made disasters.



48

Agencies from four counties participated in the regional exercise.



Emergency response personnel took an active role in the regional exercise.

CAPCOG's various committees, subcommittees, and task forces provide an emergency manager with the resources to maximize their partnerships with their regional partners... I believe we are able to better serve our community because of the resources and understanding provided by CAPCOG.

**–EMC James K Altgelt
Bastrop County**

Planning efforts by the Homeland Security Division are constantly evolving as the region continues to prepare and train local emergency management and homeland security officials, agencies, and organizations for a variety of probable emergencies and incidents that could impact a number of local jurisdictions. In 2023, the division began regional planning efforts for the April 8, 2024, total solar eclipse that will traverse Texas directly through CAPCOG's western counties and possibly bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to the state. The regional planning summit connected local and regional emergency management, public safety, public health, and healthcare officials with federal and state agencies such as the National Weather Service, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Texas Department of Transportation to discuss infrastructure capacity and what problems could occur.

Additional planning meetings continued throughout the year and were scheduled into the new year.

As part of the 2023 annual regional full-scale exercise, the division partnered with the City of Austin Communication Technology Management Information Security Office to facilitate a regional Cybersecurity Seminar that educated public sector information technology personnel about ever-changing cybersecurity threats and their countermeasures. Following the seminar, the regional exercise included cyberattacks on the Georgetown, San Marcos, and Hays County emergency communications systems that also impacted regional HazMat operations. Nearly 50 agencies from four counties, including three hospitals, participated in the two-day exercise.

Other training facilitated by the division



Emergency management personnel from around the region work on a response plan during an exercise as part of an All-Hazards Incident Management Team position-specific training course.



18.6 Million

Text messages and phone calls were made to residents through WarnCentralTexas.



21 Events were initiated in WebEOC.

included three All-Hazards Incident Management Team position-specific and four Weapons of Mass Destruction/ Hazardous Materials courses for regional emergency responders. CAPCOG also partnered with Hays County Emergency Services to host the first Regional

Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) Congress with more than 100 CERT volunteers attending. It taught the volunteers about local threat identification and reporting, enhanced their disaster response knowledge, and strengthened their support networks.



28 Training courses were offered to emergency management personnel.



468

468 People participated in homeland security training courses.

Being a part of CAPCOG has provided me the opportunity to meet and train with public safety professionals from around the 10-county region. This training has increased my knowledge and my own preparedness greatly, and in turn I can pass this on to others in my community.

**–Division Chief Mark Bridges
Austin Fire Department**

The Aging Services Division operates as the Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area (AAACAP) and the Aging and Disability Resource Center of the Capital Area (ARDC). It serves and supports older adults, their caregivers, and those with disabilities with information and referral to resources, nutrition assistance, health and wellness programming and more. The division partners with local governments and nonprofits to help people age in a place of their choosing.

17,286

Hours of in-home assistance through respite & homemaker services.



1,244
People were assisted by benefit counselors with Medicare & legal issues.



18,441
One-way trips were provided to older adults to doctor appointments & other tasks such as shopping.

803

Visits to nursing homes & assisted living centers were made by ombudsmen to provide advocacy for older adults.

The Aging Services Division continued to reflect the grassroots focus of the Older Americans Act by tailoring its programs and services to meet the unique needs of the residents in each county across CAPCOG’s 10-county region. This super-local approach will continue in the upcoming year.

In 2023, the Aging Services Division provided community living support to rapidly increasing numbers of older adults and their caregivers. The division experienced increased numbers of individuals seeking nutrition program services, benefits counseling, connections to basic needs assistance, and information and connections to low-cost

in-home support and caregiver services. The agency responded to the increased volume with a continued person-centered approach and quality customer service that focused on advocacy, streamlining processes, increasing the ability to serve, and strengthening community partnerships to meet growing needs.

Program innovations, such as the St. David’s Foundation CAPABLE Program and Changing Care Conversations grants helped the agency and broader service network build capacity to support successful aging-in-place and effective caregiver support interventions. The division also expanded its Health and Wellness Program with many events



Rhonda Thompson, Aging Services Health and Wellness Program Manager, and Rayna Hanson, Aging Services Program Coordinator, work the registration table during a caregiving event in March 2023.



964,424
Home delivered & congregate meals were paid for with AAACAP funds.



577
People received support from caregiver support or care coordination programs.

taking place in eight counties and workshops being offered in Spanish; it also developed plans to provide workshops to the deaf community. The ombudsman program facilitated the creation of family councils at assisted living facilities throughout the region, so families could strengthen their own advocacy through

collaborative discussion and learn more about when and how ombudsmen intervene to advocate for their loved ones. To increase self-preparedness among older adults and their caregivers, the division started providing emergency preparedness information and education at all outreach and caregiver training events.



141
Outreach events were conducted to teach older adults & their caregivers about AAACAP Services.



211
People were helped with utility bills through AAACAP & ADRC programs.

A thousand thank yous and a big hug will never repay all that AAACAP has done for this 65-year-old lady trying to raise these kids on a little of nothing. The emergency help... was like a dream come true.

**—Cheryle Perkins
Grandmother, Care Provider**

The Regional Planning and Services (RPS) Division manages programs benefiting the region’s environment and community and economic development. It provides support services on mapping, demographic, and economic data for local jurisdictions and CAPCOG’s other programs.



13

Data and EDA grant technical assistance requests were fulfilled.



Criminal justice grant applications were reviewed requesting \$15.6 million of the region’s \$10.7 million budget estimate.

Attending (Economic Development) quarterly meetings provides a unique platform for collaboration, connecting us with organizations... that understand the distinct needs of our local businesses. Through CAPCOG’s role as a regional convener, we gained valuable insights and secured vital support for our small businesses....

**–Mayor Jane Hughson
San Marcos**

The work of the RPS Division is always diverse. In 2023, it strengthened its data collection to support two major program areas — 9-1-1 mapping and air quality, while it continued to provide grant administration services for numerous local economic development grant projects and streamlined the application process for its criminal justice and solid waste grant programs with the goal of ensuring as many projects could receive funding as possible.

The GIS Program began more frequent updates to the region’s aerial imagery at a greater resolution, which provides better accuracy and helps to keep up with the region’s growth; the effort supports 9-1-1 emergency call routing and responder dispatching. The program also took a major step toward full compliance with Next Generation 9-1-1 by updating its streets and address databases to the latest National Emergency Number Association’s standards; it developed

programming scripts to automate many of the tasks required for the conversion, so CAPCOG’s county partners could concentrate on updating data.

Using grants received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Air Quality Program purchased particulate matter monitors and began selecting sites in the five-county metropolitan statistical area that will be used to collect data on the air pollutant. Particulate matter is the region’s second largest air pollutant, and the collected data will be used to understand its formation and circulation throughout the region. Understanding and reducing ground level ozone remains the focus of the program, and to further its data collection, the division conducted mobile monitoring for the first time and finished placing two new air quality monitors in Kyle and Taylor. Ten monitoring sites now collect ozone data to support studying the region’s ozone levels.



A mobile air quality monitoring laboratory sits in the CAPCOG parking lot before it tours a portion of the metropolitan statistical area collecting data.



26,880
New address points were added and verified for emergency communications maps.



New road centerlines were added and verified for emergency communications maps.

The RPS Division also began drafting its latest transportation and economic development plan for Lee County by organizing meetings with a local steering committee to determine transportation goals and challenges faced in the county. The plan should be concluded in mid-

2024. Other planning measures and studies that were completed during 2023 included the 2023-2042 Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy update, and a Housing and Jobs Balance Analysis.



2.6 Million advertising and social media impressions were obtained through air quality outreach efforts.



163
Tons of material were collected using solid waste grant program funds in 2022 & 2023.

Through CAPCOG’s solid waste grants that Fayette County has received, we have been able to create a local accessible household hazardous waste drop-off and recycling program for generations of Texans to use.

**–The Honorable Paul Zapalac
Justice of the Peace, Pct. 4
Fayette County Recycling Manager**

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Commissioner David Glass, Bastrop County
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Commissioner Thomas Weir, Blanco County
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Commissioner Joe Don Dockery, Burnet County
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Commissioner Lon Shell, Hays County
Commissioner Alan Turner, Lee County
Commissioner Richard Wagner, Lee County
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Director Ken Snipes, Austin HSEM
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Division Chief Kevin Parker, Austin-Travis County EMS
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EMC Derek Marchio, Burnet County
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Executive Director Douglas Havron, CATRAC
EMC Angela Hahn, Fayette County
Fire Chief Scott Kerwood, Hutto Fire Rescue
Chief David Gilbreath, La Grange Police Department
EMC Amanda Fairchild, Lee County
EMC Gilbert Bennett, Llano County
Fire Chief Randy Jenkins, Lockhart Fire Rescue
Executive Director Johnny Campbell, Marble Falls Area EMS
Chief Jason O'Malley, Pflugerville Police Department
Roger Dees, Region 13 Education Service Center
District 12 Coordinator Robbie Barrera, TDEM
Chief EMC Eric Carter, Travis County OEM
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 Kate Wolf, Williamson County
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From Around the Region



From the Front Cover: Red: Emergency management personnel participate in an exercise during an all-hazards course.
Light Blue: Peace officers from Basic Peace Officer Course No. 98 sit at their graduation ceremony waiting to cross the stage.
Dark Blue: Members of the Aging Services Division pose for a photo during an outreach event at St. Edwards University.

To the left: A sculpture of a cat curls up in the median of Main Street in downtown Marble Falls.

A Texas size guitar stands an alley way in Lockhart near the back door of a music venue in downtown.



From the Back Cover: Gray: CAPCOG planning staff lead a criminal justice grant workshop.

Light Blue: Peace officers share a celebratory hug after graduating from Basic Peace Officer Course No. 98.

Gold: A nearly complete new call-handling station sits in the CAPCOG Regional Back Up Center, showing the difference in monitor sizes and more between the old systems and new.



To the left: A sculpture of a child reading a book sits in San Marcos' Discovery Children's Park. (Photo credit: Visit San Marcos.)



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