

MEETING NOTES
CAPITAL AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION COMMITTEE (RTCC) MEETING

One Texas Center, Room 325
505 Barton Springs
Austin, Texas

November 9, 2010– 2-4 PM

Attendees:

Committee Members

Mayor Bill Hamilton, City of Rollingwood - Chair
Dave Marsh, CARTS – Vice-Chair
David Bartels, City of Round Rock
Ed Collins, TxDOT-Austin District
David Fowler, CAPCOG (alternate for Betty Voights)
Carline Geiger, Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services
Stevie Greathouse, CAMPO
Paul Hamilton, Texas State University
Meredith Highsmith, Capital Metro (alternate for Linda Watson)
Joyce Lauck, Austin Groups for the Elderly
Jackie McLaughlin, Health and Human Services Commission
Vanessa Owens, TxDOT-PTN
Beth Ann Ray, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
Vanessa Sarria, Community Action Network
Jeanie Teel, Faith in Action Caregivers – West Austin

Others in Attendance

Daniel Gold, Texas State University
Ken Hosen, KFH Group
Bennett Powell, KFH Group
Celia Israel, Alliance for Public Transportation
Kathy Kuehner, Bluebonnet Trails Community Services
Becky Hubik, Bluebonnet Trails Community Services
Elizabeth Prestwood, TxDOT
Alex Kone, CAMPO

Dave Marsh, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:15 PM. The group took up Item #1, Introductions, first.

1. **Nominate and Approve New Committee Member(s).** Carline Geiger was nominated to fill the vacant committee member position for the category 'Agencies that Funds Transportation for Clients' within the Human Service Providers group. Beth Ann Ray was nominated to fill the vacant committee member position for the category 'Business Community' within the Other Transportation group.

Jeanie Teel moved approval of the new committee members. Jackie McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **Approve upcoming meeting dates, including special December meeting and 2011 Quarterly Meetings.** Stevie Greathouse informed the committee that Room 325 at One Texas Center is frequently booked and it is difficult to book a recurring time for RTCC meetings. She stated that the room is available on the second Monday of every month from exactly 3-5 PM. Other options,

including utilizing Capital Metro's boardroom could be considered; however, if the CapMetro board calls an unscheduled meeting at the same time then the RTCC would be bumped from the room. Stevie also stated that the May meeting will be a field trip so the committee would be looking for nominations.

Next, Stevie sought the committee's input for selecting a date for the special December meeting. She said that meeting's primary focus would be to review deliverables and plans for further planning work from KFH Group. Ken Hosen, KFH Group, said that he would be able to attend any day between the 13th and the morning of the 15th.

Mayor Bill Hamilton arrived at 2:20PM

Meredith Highsmith moved approval of the December meeting for Tuesday, the 14th, at 1PM, room to be determined. Beth Ann Ray seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

David Bartels asked to clarify whether Carline Geiger would be filling a vacant committee position under the category of 'Health and Human Service Agencies that Fund or Purchase Transportation for Clients' within the Client Transportation group or under the category of 'Agencies that Provide Services for Clients Who Need Transportation' within the Human Service Providers group. Carline stated that the Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services primarily funds transportation services as opposed to directly providing them for clients.

Dave Marsh motioned to approve Carline Geiger for the Health and Human Service Agencies that Fund or Purchase Transportation for Clients committee slot instead of for Agencies that Provide Services for Clients Who Need Transportation. Joyce Lauck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Review and Approve Accomplishments Report.** Stevie Greathouse stated the goal of the report is to detail the accomplishments relative to the approval of the previous Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan was completed in 2006.

Dave Marsh stated that CARTS has actually been operating commuter service from Bastrop for over 20 years, contrary to the text of the report. It is not a new addition since 2006. He said that the report probably intended to refer to the recent connections with Smithville and Del Valle that were a merging of JARC routes. He suggested that 'enhanced daily service' would be the preferred wording in the report or 'launched daily connecting service from Bastrop to CapMetro park and ride route 271.'

Dave Bartels stated that the intermodal facility in Round Rock will not be completed until spring 2011. Stevie Greathouse suggested that the worded be revised to say 'began construction'

Jeanie Teel noted that the computer purchase funded through the RTCC supported the not one but rather the collaboration of ten volunteer driver organizations.

Mayor Hamilton asked the committee what it intended to do with the report. Stevie Greathouse said that it would be posted online and that it is the first step of next plan. Mayor Hamilton suggested that it serve as a benchmark for future planning efforts.

Joyce Lauck moved approval of the Accomplishments Report. Dave Marsh seconded the motion.

Discussion – Vanessa Sarria said that she would like to see the Accomplishments Report on the RTCC website.

The motion passed unanimously, Beth Ann Ray abstained.

- 4. Transportation Solutions Training Initiative Update.** Stevie Greathouse said that members of the committee went to training in August 2009. They attended to learn best practices to be able to help the RTCC provide a one-stop shop with a comprehensive set of information regarding transportation services to social service case managers. Since 2009, RTCC members have produced a geodatabase of service providers within the ten-county region. She said that the RTCC has received survey results from case managers. CAPCOG has finishing database and CapMetro is developing an online map format to display the information. The next step is to solicit outside review and feedback on the database. The goal is to move towards having a curriculum on transportation services for case manager training.

Meredith Highsmith said that she is waiting for a status update from the IT department at CapMetro. Mayor Hamilton asked Meredith to provide an update to the committee at its December meeting. Stevie Greathouse said that she will email blast out the link to the online map to get feedback when it is ready. She stated that there will be no action on the geodatabase until it is vetted, most likely at the February meeting.

- 5. Selection of Planning Services Consultant.** Stevie Greathouse informed the committee that a motion to select a planning services consultant for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan was approved by the CAMPO Transportation Policy Board at its meeting on November 8th. She stated that the CAMPO Executive Director would negotiate the final terms of the contract, and that the consultant would be under contract in advance of the December RTCC meeting. The consultant work would be completed by the end of fiscal year 2011.

Ken Hosen introduced himself and Bennett Powell to the committee. Vanessa Sarria said that she would like to hear more about KFH, its experience and approach. Ken stated that he will be the Project Manager. Ken stated that his experience in transit began when he was the Medicaid manager for Region 6 comprised of 30 counties of Central Texas in the late 1970's. He later managed Special Transit for Capital Metro. Since then, he has been consulting with KFH Group and has completed plans from Texarkana to Laredo within Texas and nationwide. Currently, KFH Group is doing 7 plans in Idaho. He stated that his interest is moving beyond simply planning and more towards implementation and solutions for operations. He said that he would be available to meet with groups for meetings upon request.

Dave Marsh asked what the first phase of the project would be. Stevie replied that it would be developing a public involvement strategy and a scope, timeline and outline of initial reports. There would be three rounds of public involvement. A survey would be released in December or January. The second round would take place in late spring and the third would take place in the summer of 2011. These would be decided upon at the December meeting.

David Bartels stated that the timeline for the plan is longer than the timeline for work by the consultant. Stevie Greathouse replied that the consultant work completed in November 2011 will be presented at the December 2011 RTCC meeting.

Ed Collins arrived at 2:42.

- 6. Website Overhaul.** Stevie Greathouse stated her desire to open the floor for suggestions on the content or structure of the RTCC website. She said that the RTCC received money from TxDOT for the purpose of reworking the website. Capital Metro staff is willing and ready to help out revise RTCC site.

Meredith Highsmith stated that the first RTCC website was administered by AISD. At that time, the organization was still getting off the ground and setting its direction. This website has established

its brand in 2007 and there is no need for revising the branding and logo. She said that Capital Metro has a new staffer that focuses on marketing and web content.

Stevie Greathouse suggested that at a minimum the website add a tab for news updates regarding the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Also, she recommended that there be a page for case-worker training curriculum and links to service providers.

Meredith Highsmith noted that adding links to single webpages are a simple and quick task; however, restructuring the website would take additional time. She also suggested that agendas should be posted on the website in advance of meetings as well.

Ed Collins asked how many hits are there on the website. Meredith Highsmith replied that she will look into that question. She said that the website's traffic is monitored with Google Analytics that can provide that and other figures.

Stevie Greathouse said that CAMPO will put a link on its website that links to the RTCC website. Beth Ann Ray added that she will send out a Twitter message to get responses. Mayor Hamilton suggested that the committee have an agenda item at the December meeting to recap and discuss. Stevie said that she will include a request for responses in the next RTCC newsletter and will also announce the start of planning.

The website changes, Stevie Greathouse said, should be implemented by February 2011. Meredith Highsmith noted that the web team at Capital Metro can make simple additions like adding agendas and links now, rather than February. She also said that she would like to see more information in 'About Us' section, for example a 1-2 sentence blurb from each agency on the committee. Mayor Hamilton stated that these changes will bring the website up to the maturity level of this organization.

Vanessa Sarria stated that people are always looking for transportation services. She suggested that a link to training template in its current form be added to the website for now. Then, she asked if the work plan for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan go under the 'About Us' section.

- 7. Transportation Needs Survey.** Stevie Greathouse stated that for the first round of public involvement KFH Group will create summary of needs. The last survey was completed as part of the 2006 planning work. The format of that survey was open ended and the responses were hard to sort through and were not easy to categorize.

The new survey, Stevie suggested, should be a consumer-based needs survey that provides feedback on their needs, service gaps and opportunities. She shared with the committee an example of a five-question survey from the Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle). First, staff will compile this and other survey input from KFH Group. Second, the surveys will be discussed amongst the Executive Committee and revised for the RTCC. Third, the survey will be brought to the RTCC for final review and approval.

Joyce Lauck asked whether the survey should be tailored for each county. Stevie Greathouse replied that the survey could add a zipcode field.

Dave Marsh asked for KFH Group to share some of their previous surveys.

- 8. Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures.** Stevie Greathouse asked the committee to review existing goals and objectives in light of the upcoming process to update the Coordinated

Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. She asked the committee to determine if there are performance measures that can track them.

Mayor Hamilton said that having dealt with budget and performance measures it is necessary to find a way to measure goals, so that goals are not merely paid lip service. If it cannot be measured, he added, it may be needed to revisit those goals.

Vanessa Sarria said that she wanted to get KFH's opinion since they did a TRB report on this subject. She questioned whether metrics should be population-based or VMT-based. She wants to use metrics to inform community about progress being made by the RTCC.

Mayor Hamilton asked what the RTCC was being held accountable to by TxDOT. Vanessa Owens said that the RTCC has set up a work plan with TxDOT and monitors itself to see how far progress is made with the funding provided to it. Stevie Greathouse added that metrics are up to discretion of the committee and are not mandated by the State.

Vanessa Sarria said that she wants to see a report card for how transportation is heading in the region.

Mayor Hamilton asked if KFH group would be taking part of facilitating this conversation. Stevie Greathouse replied that it is not part of their scope of work. Ken Hosen added that they will share their expertise where relevant.

Stevie Greathouse requested responses by Thanksgiving in order to compile for the December meeting. She said that the committee will have to approve the list by August.

- 9. Presentation on Round Rock Area Needs (Texas A&M Health Science Center Nursing Students).** Four community nursing students (Ashlee Duggen, Amy Mirem, Stacy Kovan, and Marcie Maube) from Texas A&M presented their findings to the committee regarding a research project for community transportation issues they completed in Round Rock.

The students completed a windshield survey of transportation conditions in Round Rock and completed key informant surveys with random individuals as well as specific organizations. They also interviewed users of facilities to assess their transportation needs.

The results of their surveys indicated that there is a high-level of auto-dependency in Round Rock and that there is a need for transportation options for non-elderly users.

Dave Marsh stated that CARTS does not actually operate their typical community transportation service in Round Rock but serves as a contractor for the City of Round Rock. He added that CARTS is going to use distinct Round Rock buses to distinguish the contracted local service from CARTS own rural services.

David Bartels said that the Round Rock service was intended as a safety net and that the City of Round Rock was doing the best it could with limited funds. The City of Round Rock is working together with CARTS as its contractor to maintain the current services.

Beth Ann Ray reiterated the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce's call for a regional transit vision.

Dave Marsh stated that the RTCC is filling some of that void although it is s mostly geared towards client- and para-transit.

10. Other Business.

Dave Marsh shared a coordination success story, the Bell County V.A., with the committee. It is one of four nationwide demonstration projects by the V.A. It has launched a special transit system for veterans and created a new dispatch software. Jackie McLaughlin stated that there is a similar type of service for veterans serving Bryan to Temple.

Meredith Highsmith noted a Capital Metro service change for the first service expansion to Cedar Park.

Beth Ann Ray brought to the committee's attention a new state-wide organization, Transportation Advocates for Texas. It has launched a new website and campaign. She also issued an invitation for all to attend the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce's 2010 Economic Forecast, December 9th.

11. **Public Comment.** There was no public comment.
12. **Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 pm. Joyce Lauck motioned. Ed Collins seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Next Meeting: December 14, 2010, 1 PM, TxDOT Austin District, Hearing Room, 7901 N IH 35, Austin, TX 78753