

DISCUSSION REPORT
CAPITAL AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION COMMITTEE (RTCC)

Regional Public Transportation Forum on Urban Service Delivery

September 26, 2008

Steps Already Being Taken at the Local and Sub-Regional Level

Participants identified the actions they are already taking at the local level to meet urban public transportation service needs.

- Round Rock and CARTS coordination for existing transit services in Round Rock
- Round Rock and Capital Metro discussion about several new initiatives
- Round Rock plans for early transit trips and express transit service to Tech Ridge
- Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) service to employment in Round Rock
- Round Rock discussions with Capital Metro about accessing federal funds for transit and investigation of possibility to be named designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Urbanized Area Funds
- Proposal by City of Round Rock to implement connections to urban commuter rail corridor and possible extension of rail line
- Round Rock is interested in possible FTA Section 5309 earmark for central business district (CBD) transit center – also developing trail system to CBD
- Capital Metro and Texas State University TxTram discussions to share local stops in Capital Metro service area and to publicize Austin to San Marcos service
- Capital Metro and CARTS continue building opportunities to work together
- Capital Metro Board recently adopted a new policy to provide service outside jurisdiction if the service if cost is funded by others
- Capital Metro sponsors vanpool program
- Capital Metro new urban rail service on Red line will open March 2009
- San Marcos and CARTS coordination for existing transit services in Round Rock
- San Marcos and TxTram discussing consolidation of public and university transit
- San Marcos interest in freight rail relocation to improve overall transportation
- Buda beginning to look at tie-in opportunities
- West Lake Hills formed a transportation committee to consider opportunities
- Travis County interested in exploring MoKan right-of-way opportunity for Green line – possible discussion with Manor and Elgin to help shape land use
- City of Austin has appointed a new director of transportation (Rob Spillar) who is very interested in developing regional coordination for urban transit services
- City of Austin and Capital Metro have committed to a high level of communication
- CAMPO is developing the 2035 Transportation Plan along with all regional partners with a focus on ways to integrate land use and transportation
- CARTS working with local cities and communities to develop scheduled regional routes
- Georgetown is working closely with CARTS
- Hays County has initiated discussions with Capital Metro about possible extension of service under new policy to provide service outside Capital Metro jurisdiction
- Rollingwood is interested in discussing coordination with Capital Metro under new policy
- RTCC developed a transit service guide for human and health service agencies
- TxDOT supportive of regional transit coordination and the work of the RTCC
- Jonestown is interested in opportunities for connections to urban commuter rail and travel to medical, etc.
- Several attendees are members or actively follow the Austin-San Antonio (ASA) Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District

Regional Strategies

Participants brainstormed about strategies that could be pursued at the local and regional level to ensure adequate, equitable, and efficient provision of urban public transportation services.

Strategy: Develop Regional Transit Services

- "Connector" services and infrastructure
- Services that provide connections and not barriers urban - rural
- Connections between Austin and San Antonio
- Regional rail
- Multi-modal projects
- Express bus service and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes
- Transit oriented design standards for roadway design and new developments

Strategy: Research Regional Governance Options for Transit

- Regional agency
- Set regional priorities for allocation of funds using "decision tree"
- Breakdown silos
 - Organizational silos
 - Geographic silos
 - Funding silos
- Joint powers agreements
- Planning for a long-term model for transit planning, delivery, financing
- Land use authority/ economic development opportunity

Strategy: Identify Additional Funding Opportunities for Regional Transit

- Possible sources of funding other than local option sales tax
 - Gas tax: Sales tax on motor fuels or Excise tax on motor fuels
 - Vehicle registration fee
 - Motor vehicle sales tax distributed to local
 - Tolling/congestion pricing
 - Development impact fees
 - Transportation impact fees
 - Tax incremental financing (TIF)
 - Public improvement districts (PID)
 - Local funds and general fund priorities
 - Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) transit component (dollars for new construction)
 - Funds generated from investment in transit
- Challenges to be Addressed
 - Regional funding mechanisms (find a mechanism to generate local funds for transit outside of Capital Metro)
 - Restriction on use of FTA Section 5307 funds for capital (need flexibility to use funds for operating)

Strategy: Develop Communications Tools to Improve Understanding of How to Use and Benefit from Transit

- Public education/ travel training
- Community understanding of agencies/roles
- Branding opportunities
- Promote a regional vision for transit

Other Strategies

- Research policies for land use – transportation linkages
 - Densification/land use
 - Transit oriented development policies and best practices
- Treat transportation as a system
 - Transportation demand management
- Economic development (benefits of connectivity)
 - Transit oriented development
- Strategies for response to impacts of 2010 Census

RTCC Priorities

Participants discussed and prioritized the strategies. The priorities according to the consensus of the Forum participants are as follows:

- 1. Identify Additional Funding Opportunities for Regional Transit**
- 2. Research Regional Governance Options for Transit**
- 3. Develop Communications Tools to Improve Understanding of How to Use and Benefit from Transit**

And continue the dialogue among regional partners as reflected in the discussions during this Forum.