

**Regional Transportation Coordination Forum  
Recommended Next Steps for Capital Area  
August 12, 2008**

**Summary:** Several next steps were identified during the Regional Transportation Coordination Forum that took place in Belton, TX on June 12, 2008. These next steps are briefly summarized on page 19 of the transcription notes from the forum, and are described in more detail, below.

**RTCC Action:** Next Step #1, Land Use would require work beyond what is included in the 2008-2009 RTCC work plan, and forum participants are seeking action from the RTCC before moving forward on this step.

**Next Step 1: Land Use**

**Discussion Overview:** The break-out group identified as an issue the fact that social services, subsidized housing, and other publicly funded services geared toward transit dependent clients are often sited without consideration of the existing network of available public transportation services. This can result in a) costly extensions to existing bus service, b) social service agencies providing transportation services or c) clients with challenges getting to the housing/services they rely on. The group generally supported the idea of providing more educational support to ensure that these services were sited based on an awareness of the existing network of public transportation, and perhaps working toward requiring transportation to be a component in siting decisions/grant decisions.

**Recommended Action:** CAMPO staff work with Capital Metro staff to develop an informational piece for endorsement by the RTCC that could be disseminated to social service agencies and others. This piece would include policy support for siting social services with transit in mind.

**Point of Contact:** Stevie Greathouse, CAMPO

**Next Step 2: Smart Card**

**Discussion Overview:** The group was presented with an overview of the CARTS RideCARTS Fare Card project. The smart card technology is a credit card-sized plastic fare card to improve convenience of riders, collection of fares, and for gathering ridership data. When boarding the bus, passengers swipe their card, and fares are deducted automatically along with capturing ridership information. Consumers can manage their accounts and cards on-line. This technology is available to meet the needs of both public transit customers and human service agencies. The RideCARTS card will allow Health & Human Service and other agencies to purchase cards to pay for fares, provide greater capability to track and audit trips and transactions, and to help budget their transportation dollars.

**Recommended Action:** CARTS and the Capital Area Agency on Aging will implement the RideCARTS card technology for the Title III-b funded program to begin October 1, 2008.

**Point of Contact:** Dave Marsh, CARTS

### **Next Step 3: Transportation Options**

**Discussion Overview:** The group discussed several barriers to rural transportation, particularly for non-medical trips including:

- Many senior citizens living in rural areas are able to drive in their local communities, but find it difficult to navigate the more congested urban areas. Oftentimes trips into Austin can be dominated by medical destinations and allow little time for seniors to go into Austin and being able to access a wider array of metropolitan goods and services not available in rural areas.
- Connectivity on the fringes of the urban area can be challenging because of the interagency coordination required, and the lack of seamless transfers. Rural transit often spends resources traveling into Austin, which can take resources that could be used to meet additional needs in the rural area.

**Recommended Actions:**

- CARTS is planning to implement a Senior Freedom Route from Fayette County into Austin specifically designed for senior citizens to go shopping or for other recreation needs. This route would consist of several pickup locations in Fayette County and provide service into popular shopping and recreation areas.
- CARTS, Capital Metro, and other transportation providers will continue to coordinate to provide additional park-and-rides and intermodal facilities on the fringe which will allow CARTS and other providers outside of the Capital Metro service area to provide a seamless feeder service, rather than traveling into Austin for all trips that cross into the urbanized area.

**Point of Contact:** Dave Marsh, CARTS; Meredith Highsmith, Capital Metro

### **Next Step 4: Downtown Homeless Transportation Services**

**Discussion Overview:** Several social service providers including the Downtown Cluster of Congregations have expressed interest in developing specialized public transportation services that can help homeless clients more easily reach scattered sites they need to access to apply for services related to seeking financial and employment assistance, as well as to reach employment sites.

**Recommended Action:** Capital Metro will continue to coordinate with the Community Action Network and area social service agencies to identify a cost-effective solution, which may lead to an application for JARC funding during the upcoming call for projects.

**Point of Contact:** Meredith Highsmith, Capital Metro; Vanessa Sarria, CAN