



**Capital Area
Council of
Governments**

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September 30, 2006

Kelly Kirkland
Planning and Support Section Director
TxDOT, Public Transportation Division
125 E 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Kirkland,

On behalf of the Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination Committee (RTCC), I would like to thank the Texas Department of Transportation and the Austin District office for your continued support throughout this planning process.

Please see the attached interim report describing barriers and constraints to coordinating public transportation within the Capital Area Region. As requested, the attached report identifies a list of prioritized barriers with proposed action items and estimated cost.

The preliminary list of legislative/regulatory action items are taken from a larger list of actions items that the RTCC has drafted for the Capital Area. To provide context, I have included the complete list of action items that support the RTCC's goals and objectives. This matrix indicates specific actions required to coordinate public transportation. The attached table lists each project along with the benefit/cost, the type of change required to implement, and the RTCC goals satisfied. In essence, these action items represent the synthesis of our entire planning process.

As of current, we are finalizing the list of action items and are on schedule to submit the transit coordination plan prior to the December 1st due date. Should you have any questions or require additional information please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bill Hamilton
RTCC Chairman

cc: Commissioner Hope Andrade
RTCC
RTCC Technical Subcommittee

Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination Committee (RTCC)

Regional Coordinated Public Transportation Plan
Contract Number: 51-06XXF7012

Barriers & Constraints Report
September 2006

Barriers & Constraints

This planning process required the identification of barriers and constraints to public transit coordination within the region. Our efforts involved a wide variety of individuals and agencies. First, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) performed a state-wide survey concerning opportunities and barriers to transit coordination. Secondly, a number of stakeholder public meetings were conducted throughout the Capital Area Region as part of the study process. One of these events specifically asked participants to express their opinion of barriers that limited coordination opportunities. A third source involved a survey of transit providers (agencies) who were asked to identify primary barriers to transit service coordination. Due to the great number of comments concerning barriers received, a distillation of everything from these sources arrived at a list of nine preliminary barriers that were most prevalent and applicable to the Capital Area Region. This list of barriers will be finalized upon completion of the plan. The identified barriers have been prioritized and are listed as follows:

1. Jurisdictional and Boundary Issues - Region 12 (the Capital Area Region) includes jurisdictional boundaries for three statutory transit providers that, in some instances, create barriers to achieving a seamless public transportation system. Removing jurisdictional and boundary issues will make Health and Human Services and transportation services uniformly available throughout the region.
2. Communications (Intra-agency, Public and Private) – Transportation customers, particularly in complex urban areas, are often unaware of the transportation services available to them.
3. Funding Silos - Competing and exclusionary regulations and procedures exist across both federal and state agencies allocating transportation service funding.
4. Client Eligibility - Different eligibility criteria and trip purpose limitations limit the effective (coordinated) use of transportation resources.
5. Cross-agency Concerns and Lack of Trust – Variations, perceived or real, in the quality of service that will be provided to individual agencies customers, creates a level of confidence that inhibits coordination.

6. Service Gaps – Geographical and temporal gaps in services exist within the region. These service gaps may not be immediately evident to transportation providers or their customers.
7. Differing Driver Requirements - Different providers have different minimum requirements for their drivers (e.g. age, driving record, background, CDL requirements). Providers also have different training programs and may have different drug and alcohol testing protocols. This tends to limit the coordination of human and transportation resources between multiple transportation providers.
8. Cost Allocation - The methodology to determine fully allocated service costs varies among transportation providers thereby creating difficulties to coordinate services in an equitable manner that meets the funding agency's requirements.
9. Reporting and Data Requirements – Not all public transportation providers collect and report the same data. Lack of common reporting and data requirements can inhibit coordination.

In addition to the barriers listed above, participants in our public meetings identified service gaps in the areas of customer access, expanded hours of service, frequency of service, and expanded routes. To increase levels of service can be very costly and is under funded. However, additional services would address many of these service gaps. Our Legislators and TxDOT must realize that public transportation, which encompasses transit agencies, health and human agencies, and workforce boards, is a viable and integral part of the state infrastructure with equal importance to highways and other modes of transportation. Without that recognition at the state level, it will be very difficult to implement the needed changes that will lead to our goal of creating a seamless transit system that achieves efficiencies, eliminates duplication, increases coordination and addressed service gaps.

Action Items

Identifying coordination opportunities and associated barriers has been a crucial step in this planning process. Utilizing that analysis, the RTCC developed a list of action items to overcome transit coordination barriers. Each action item described below requires legislative or regulatory changes to support implementation. Cost estimates are for initial implementation and do not include ongoing maintenance/support.

1. Consider and Recommend Mechanisms to Overcome Jurisdictional and Boundary Issues of Transit Services - An interagency workgroup (IWG) should analyze how to best overcome the jurisdictional barriers through local work-around solutions and/or legislative remedies such as enabling local jurisdictions to exceed the local sales tax cap or pursue alternative taxing options to assist in making transit services uniformly available throughout the region. Low Cost – less than \$500,000.

2. Remove Funding “Silos” and Restrictive Requirements - Review, coordinate and/or consolidate definitions, regulations, and requirements for transportation services among the various state transportation providers involved. Low Cost – less than \$500,000.
3. Develop State-Funded Program for Continuation and Enhancement of Coordination Activities – Many of the proposed coordination efforts will require additional resources to implement. Grant or qualification-based funding should be made available through the state to provide incentives for regional transportation providers to implement identified coordination programs and activities. High Cost – greater than \$1,000,000.
4. Review and Revise Regulations and Requirements for Client Eligibility Across State Agencies and Programs - This action item addresses conflicting legislative and regulatory requirements of the various state transportation providers. Low Cost – less than \$500,000.
5. Review Transportation Rules, Regulations, and Policies Across All Involved State Agencies – We recommend a legislative mandate to identify the applicable rules, regulations and policies of all state transportation providers involved in the transport of customers with the goal to eliminate unnecessary conflicting and exclusionary regulations that inhibit or effectively prohibit coordination of transit services within the region. Low Cost – less than \$500,000.
6. Develop Requirements for and Implement and Inter-Operable Data Collection Program Involving All Transit Agencies/Providers – Determine needs and implement a state-wide transit data collection program that promotes public transportation coordination. Data collection is a crucial part of transit coordination. This project would identify common data elements and systems that support transportation coordination. Medium Cost – between \$500,000 - \$1,000,000.
7. Streamline the Requirements and Elements of a Data Collection and Reporting System for Coordination Across all Public Transportation Providers - A process should be initiated to define and create a single reporting system that collects and distributes transportation related data. Low Cost – less than \$500,000.

At this point in time, prior to the reporting of Transit Coordination activities and needs by all 24 regions, the RTCC is assuming that no form of additional governance is being advanced by the state. Given that assumption, a local/regional mechanism will need to serve as the leader and advocate for Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination. The RTCC is the most logical and acceptable venue.

Additionally, the RTCC, while maintaining representation of the agencies and organizations currently identified, should form an *executive committee*, empowered to act on behalf of the entire RTCC. Consisting of RTCC members, the executive

committee would direct and coordinate activities with the assistance of local and regional transit stakeholders.

The current effort is being funded as a TxDOT project in response to the legislative mandate of HB 3588. There are no firm plans for continuance of the funded program beyond the current efforts at this time.

The RTCC is currently being support by a Technical Subcommittee composed of representatives from most of the transit operating agencies, the regional planning agencies and several other providers and advocates. This appears to have worked well and is recommended to continue under very similar structure during implementation. It should be noted, this proposed Technical Subcommittee will involve existing agency/organization staff performing duties of technical support of the RTCC in addition to their regular duties.

Formation of Interagency Work Groups (IWG) has also been suggested as a means to begin coordination, particularly with the sharing of information. As individual projects or efforts continue, the Technical Subcommittee would be assisting the efforts of these working groups.

While the Capital Area Council of Governments has led the planning effort, the RTCC is recommending that the Capital Area MPO lead the implementation effort. As such, it might be expected that a minimal amount of support, primarily administrative, would be provided by the MPO.

It is important to note that loaned existing staff will have relatively limited time to devote to the needs of this implementation effort. The likely result will be to prolong or delay implementation efforts of the initial efforts. Additional resources made available through existing agencies (i.e. CAMPO, TxDOT, etc.) will have the effect of enhancing the implementation plan.

Action Item	Priority	BENEFIT / COST		IMPLEMENTATION CATEGORY				GOALS							
		Benefit	Cost	NO Local Policy or Funding Changes Required	Local Paradigm Change Required	Local Policy and/or Funding Change Required	Legislative/Regulatory Relief Required	1 Preserve and expand transportation services for the public	2 Maintain and improve the quality of transportation services for the public	3 Secure formal state and local agency agreements	4 Reduce the duplication of transportation services for the public	5 Increase efficiencies in transportation support services for the public	6 Increase public awareness of mobility/improve access to transportation	7 Address funding, regulatory, programmatic and geographic barriers	8 Further the state's efforts to reduce air pollution
Funding Agreements	Remove Funding "Silos" and Restrictive Requirements	4	■	▪					✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Develop State-Funded Program for Continuation and Enhancement of Coordination Activities	6	■	■				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	Consider and Recommend Mechanisms to Overcome Jurisdictional and Boundary Issues of Transit Services	1	■	▪					✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Funding Administration	Review and Revise Regulations and Requirements for Client Eligibility Across State Agencies and Programs	6	■	▪				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Develop and Implement a Uniform Cost Allocation Model for Agencies and Providers in the Region	16	▪	■								✓	✓	✓	
	Review Transportation Rules, Regulations, and Policies Across All Involved State Agencies	10	■	▪				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tech. & Business Practices	Implement and Expand the Use of Automated Fare Card System	10	▪	■					✓			✓	✓		✓
	Develop Requirements for and Implement an Inter-Operable Data Collection Program involving all Transit Agencies/Providers	10	▪	■					✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Streamline the Requirements and Elements of a Data Collection and Reporting System that Supports Coordination Across all Public Transportation Providers	18	▪	▪						✓		✓			
Operating Practices	Investigate Feasibility of Single Point Consumer Access	2	■	▪				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Customer Education and Marketing Program for the Region	6	■	■				✓				✓	✓		
	Expand Network of Shared Stops, Transfer Points and Park-n-Ride Opportunities	2	■	▪				✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Identify and Implement Opportunities for Shared Ride and Flexible Trip Scheduling	15	■	▪				✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
	Include Transit Coordination as an Element of the Regional Transportation Planning Process	10	■	▪				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Utilize Existing Available Information to Identify Geographical and Temporal Gaps in Services within the Region	14	■	▪				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
	Develop Standardized Driver Requirements for "Special Needs" Transit Drivers	16	▪	▪					✓			✓			
	Coordinate Formal Rural Transit and Intercity Bus Interline Relationships	4	▪	▪				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Create Regional Standards of Customer Care in Coordination with RTCC and HHS Representatives	6	■	▪					✓	✓				✓		

ATTACHMENT A - Table X Program Action Items by Implementation Category - DRAFT