

SOUTH EAST TEXAS AREA

REPORT ON BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO COORDINATION

FOR

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN



SEPTEMBER 2006



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INTRODUCTION

Public transportation is an integral component of a region's multimodal transportation system offering tangible transportation benefits, including transit service for the elderly, the disabled, and people lacking access to autos. Public transit also offers additional benefits to society as a whole; increased transit use promotes clean air and various other environmental initiatives. Coordination of these services will allow for greater efficiency, transportation connectivity, and increased awareness and support for transit.

Chapter 461 of House Bill (HB) 3588 mandates statewide coordination of public transportation services. Under this provision, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) must identify overlaps and inefficiencies in service by the transportation service providers. TxDOT has directed local public transportation providers to agree on the allocation of specific services and service areas. The South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC) was designated as the lead agency in southeast Texas for these efforts.

Transportation Coordination is about doing more with available resources in order to enhance the quality of the experience for the customer. The southeast Texas area, defined by the SETRPC boundaries (Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin Counties), is committed to working towards a seamless system of public transportation. This commitment is strengthened through the *Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan* (RPTCP). The RPTCP was developed to set identify steps to be taken towards seamless coordination between transit providers in the region.

A crucial element of the RPTCP is identifying the barriers and constraints to coordination. SETRPC identified these obstacles and factors limiting coordination through the evaluation of existing transportation services, results of the Transit Services Survey, interviews with providers, input from the Steering Committee, and through a series of meetings held from March to August 2006.¹ This report documents the identified barriers and constraints and potential opportunities for coordination.

TRANSIT SERVICES SURVEY

Southeast Texas public transportation systems include both fixed route and demand response transit services. In order to form a better understanding of the obstacles and experiences of transportation services and providers in the southeast Texas region, the Transit Services Survey was conducted as part of the data collection phase of the RPTCP. Appendix A in this report shows the

¹ As discussed in the July 2006 Interim Report, the Steering Committee consists of people ranging from public transportation providers, interested organizations, local officials, and state agencies.

survey instruments used and Appendix B documents the results of the Transit Services Survey.

BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS

The process for identifying the barriers and constraints to coordination in southeast Texas included compiling existing transportation service information and working with transportation providers through a series of meetings and interviews, as well as, working with the Steering Committee. Table 1 shows the priority barriers and constraints to transportation coordination facing southeast Texas. By addressing these barriers and constraints, there would be significant positive impacts on the customers, the providers, and the region. Although difficult to quantify the positive impact with a dollar amount, the elimination of these barriers and constraints would lead to better service and productivity. The barrier and constraints in the region are identified in the following table along with discussion of potential beneficial impacts from addressing these issues.

Table 1. Priority Barriers and Constraints for Southeast Texas

Item	Description of Obstacle	If Addressed, Impact on Coordinated Transportation
Barriers		
Funding	<p>State and Federal funding is inadequate to bridge service gaps. Transit providers are utilizing all available funds to pay for operating costs and often have little money for maintenance of aging vehicles or addition of drivers. There is concern about the ability of transit providers to maintain current service levels due to increased costs. In the future, more buses, vans, and drivers will be needed to provide dependable transportation in an expanding market.</p> <p>In addition to preserving services, the funding barrier is compounded with definition and restructuring of US Census Bureau boundaries. Rural and urban areas qualify for different funding programs, and the change in classification of an area (for example, from rural to urban) according to the US Census effects program eligibility.</p>	<p>The transit network will continue to serve existing and future clientele without needing to reduce trips or services. The transportation providers will have a greater success rate at maintaining drivers and vehicles.</p> <p>If programs are allowed to continue funding existing services for a transition period, then rural service programs that become urbanized could continue in for a short time. The community will benefit because the community would have an opportunity to continue the service with different funding, but would have time to look for alternate funding.</p>

Jurisdictional – Rural/Urban Boundaries	<p>The urban and rural boundaries dictate the extent of public transportation in many cases. Urban transportation providers cannot go beyond urbanized area boundaries; whereas rural transportation providers can transport into the urbanized area, but cannot start trips within the urbanized area.</p> <p>The US Census boundaries for urban and rural areas effect the transportation services offered.</p>	<p>The providers would be coordinating the services for the client, instead of the client trying to coordinate different transit options.</p> <p>If the existing rural service in a newly defined “urbanized area” was grandfathered, it would avoid the elimination of service to a specific population group and geographic area. There is also potential that the population shift continually receiving these transportation services would result in additional opportunities for employment or medical services.</p>
Promote Alternative Fuel Vehicles	<p>In southeast Texas, there are limited suppliers of propane, as well as, a limited number of local mechanics to work on AFVs. When vehicles require service, they are often sent to Houston, which results in significant down time.</p>	<p>The AFV regulations, enforced by TxDOT, could be expanded to promote the building of refueling infrastructure and locally qualified mechanic service centers. These changes would greatly enhance the promotion of and ability to use AFV.</p>
Constraints		
Lack of Awareness	<p>There are a variety of entities involved; however, each provider abides by rules established for individual programs – they are not connected for continuity in the transportation system. The agencies do not communicate with each other, and they are not able to provide optimal service for the client.</p>	<p>The transit users will benefit if the agencies are more aware of the other services offered and are able to assist those clients in finding transportation services. Through working with a Transportation Outreach Coordinator, the sharing of knowledge will help spread awareness among all providers.</p>

Lack of Support	Some of the transportation services being offered overlap with services offered by another provider. Providers should work together to establish the most efficient service for clients.	By working together, the transportation providers will be able to provide services more efficiently and serve their clientele more completely. The ridership will benefit because agencies that do not have adequate service can funnel those riders to programs or agencies that can assist them. A Transportation Outreach Coordinator position will enable these agencies to cooperate on various opportunities for supporting each other.
Lack of Organized Coordination	The transportation agencies are interested in coordination and achieving a seamless system of transportation throughout the region. There should be regional guidelines instructing agencies on what they <i>need</i> to do in order to work with the other agencies and produce a higher quality service.	Through the position of a Transportation Outreach Coordinator, the agencies will have a direct contact who maintains a clearinghouse of services offered throughout the region. In addition, the RPTCP initiates a foundation of coordination and spending awareness among transportation providers. Since this plan should be a living instrument, continuing meetings with key providers and interested stakeholders will continue to guide them on coordination efforts.

Barriers

In the context of regional service planning, a barrier would be considered a statute, agency regulation, or funding policy that hinders transportation coordination. These barriers could be enforced at the Federal, State, or Local level and are recognized as being *written* into a contract, statute, code, or regulation.

The following barriers were identified:

- **Funding** – State and Federal funding is inadequate to bridge service gaps. Transit providers are utilizing all available funds to pay for operating costs and often have little money for maintenance of aging vehicles or additional drivers. There is concern about the ability of transit providers to maintain current service levels due to increased costs of fuel, workers

compensation, vehicle insurance, and other operational costs. In the future, more buses, vans, and drivers will be needed to provide dependable transportation in an expanding market. In addition to preserving services, the funding barrier is compounded with definition and restructuring of US Census Bureau boundaries. Rural and urban areas qualify for different funding programs, and the change in classification of an area (for example, from rural to urban) effects program eligibility according to the US Census.

- Jurisdictional (Urban / Rural trip boundaries) – The southeast Texas region includes both urban and rural areas. The urban and rural boundaries dictate the extent of public transportation in some cases. Urban transportation providers cannot go beyond the urbanized area boundaries; whereas rural transportation providers can transport into the urbanized area, but cannot start trips within the urbanized area. In addition, as described above, the US Census boundaries for rural and urban areas may determine the amount of services provided.
- Promote Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) – In southeast Texas, there are limited suppliers of propane, as well as a limited number of local mechanics qualified to work on AFVs. When vehicles require service, they are often sent to Houston, which results in significant down time. The AFV regulations, enforced by TxDOT, could be expanded to promote the building of refueling infrastructure and locally qualified mechanic service centers. These changes would greatly enhance the promotion of and ability to use AFV.
- Client Circumstances – Each agency has different eligibility criteria for clients and often has trip purpose limitations. These client circumstances indicate a barrier to coordination between providers since not all clientele will meet the criteria or trip purpose that may be required by a different provider.
- Medicaid Transportation Rules – The 10-minute rule, which requires vehicles to wait for a minimum of 10 minutes for a scheduled Medicaid client before leaving, creates time constraints and produces restraints on following a set schedule. In addition, there are no consequences for no-show riders, which causes hardship for provider to serve other clients efficiently.

Constraints

A constraint in the context of regional service planning may be considered historical practice, misinformation, transportation myths, reaction to a perceived barrier, excuses, assumptions, institutional conflicts, or personality conflicts. Constraints are recognized as challenges or problems that cannot be tied to a specific barrier, such as not being codified or written into regulation.

The following constraints were identified:

- Lack of Communication Between Transportation Agencies – Each provider abides by rules established for individual programs. Little or no communication between agencies occurs regarding services offered; therefore, the agencies are not aware of other agencies' services. Due to this lack of communication and knowledge of other services, the agencies are not able to provide optimal service for the client. Before coordination can take place, communication and awareness are essential.
 - ❑ The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) gives clients transportation funds for the trip, Coordination and awareness of services offered by other providers could produce a more efficient use of funds. If DHHS were aware of available public transportation services, DHHS could direct the client to an existing service, instead of the current method.
 - ❑ The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) provides incentives for clients by rewarding them for job longevity. If a client has a job opportunity and the TWC provides the details of the transportation system on how the client can get to work on time the incentive is focused on making sure employees have a ride to work. The TWC can use their incentive funds, previously used for retail gift cards or reimbursing a person for taking the client to work, towards purchasing a bus pass.
- Lack of Interagency Support – Some of the transportation services being offered overlap with services offered by another provider. When this occurs, providers should work together to establish the most efficient service for clients.
- Lack of Organized Coordination – The transportation agencies are interested in coordination and achieving a seamless system of transportation throughout the region. There needs to be regional guidelines instructing agencies on what they *need* to do in order to work with the other agencies and produce a higher quality service.
- Transportation Network Attitude – Local ownership and a mindset of “this is how we have always done it” presents a constraint to coordination. This attitude limits regional service planning by keeping providers from understanding what services are provided by each agency or organization.
- Ownership and Territorial Concerns – There are concerns by transportation providers about guarding their clientele. Cooperative ventures require some agencies to turn their clients over to another agency for transportation. The main concern is whether clients will continue to receive the same level and quality of service. Agency staff may feel vulnerable that their jobs would be at risk if cooperation occurred.

- Lack of Public Awareness – There is little awareness of public transportation services available and little knowledge of how to use the services or the locations of routes, etc.
- Limited Transportation Services – There are limited transportation services in the southeast Texas region. In particular, there are limited transportation options for employment and business purposes (i.e. trips to and from the airport); most trips are designated as medical or shopping in purpose. No service exists between the two major cities of the region (Beaumont and Port Arthur). There are limited evening services, and no unified transportation pass that would allow a user to travel throughout the region without being required to coordinate with multiple transportation providers and purchase multiple trips.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The southeast Texas transportation system can not be all things to all people; however, a difference can be made through sharing resources, responsibilities, and activities of various agencies for the overall benefit of the community. Greater transportation coordination can be achieved through reducing the above identified barriers and constraints. Through the RPTCP, these barriers and constraints can be overcome.

The results of the Transit Services Survey, the input from the Steering Committee, evaluation of the data collected, and the barriers and constraints identified distinguish two key issues preventing coordination of transportation services and achieving the goal of working towards a seamless transportation network. These issues are awareness and connectivity.

Awareness

Most meetings and interviews came back to the issue of lack of awareness by potential transit users and transit providers. The need for awareness extends beyond educating the public and providers on what is available in the transportation network. The existing 2-1-1 Program does provide transportation information, such as a telephone number for a provider, but it does not help the client plan a trip, nor is it fully committed to understanding the transportation network and details of service throughout the region.

A solution for creating awareness among the public and providers would be to hire someone (a Transportation Outreach Coordinator) who would coordinate and understand the regional transportation system and extend that knowledge to others involved. As discussed in the Jefferson-Orange–Hardin-Regional Transportation Study (JOHRTS) area Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Transportation Study, creating a position (such as the Transportation Outreach Coordinator) that provides knowledge of transportation services is critical to building awareness of public transportation for job seekers, employers, transportation providers and community leaders.

Connectivity

The lack of connectivity between the rural and urban systems, as well as between urban centers, presents an opportunity for improving the regional transportation system. Connectivity can be improved through coordination between the rural and urban transportation providers. A function of the Transportation Outreach Coordinator position, as described above, could be to maintain the knowledge of the rural and urban systems so that a rural system could coordinate with the urban system when a client is in town for an appointment. The urban system could be used for interurban trips, and the rural system could provide transportation to and from the rural/urban area.

Service between Beaumont and Port Arthur is not possible at this time; however, service is needed. It is recommended that an additional study be conducted to determine how to solve this problem.

APPENDIX A

TRANSIT SERVICES SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX A - TRANSIT SERVICES SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Transportation Provider Survey Instrument

BUS through Transportation Coordination

Building **U**nifying **S**ervices

The South East Texas Regional Planning Commission serves as lead agency to develop our region's public transportation coordination plan for southeast Texas. This Plan is in response to aspects of House Bill 3588 which propose widespread changes to public transportation in the State.



Please help us by completing this survey we are conducting among the public transportation providers and agencies to learn about obstacles to coordination, services provided, and available resources.

1. Name of Agency/Provider: _____
2. What types of clients do you serve?
 - a. General public
 - b. Elderly
 - c. Persons with disabilities
 - d. Students
 - e. Welfare to work
 - f. Other _____
3. Where are your transportation service area limits? _____
4. What is the trip purpose(s) that your transportation services meet?
 - a. Medical
 - b. Education
 - c. Employment
 - d. Transportation to group meals
 - e. Recreation
 - f. Shopping/ Personal Business
 - g. Other _____
5. Have you ever denied ridership? (Yes / No) Why? _____

6. At what level of capacity (percentage) does your transportation service operate? _____
 7. What transportation service modes do you operate?

a. Fixed route	b. Flexible route
c. Subscription service	d. Demand response
e. Ridesharing	f. Other _____
 8. What are your hours of operation? _____
 9. What time of day is transportation service the most frequent? _____
Less frequent? _____
 10. What are your busiest transit routes? _____ Least busy transit routes? _____
 11. Do you require advance reservations for transit service? (Yes / No)
What notice must be provided? _____
 12. How do you determine the rates you charge for your transit service? _____
 13. What methods do you use to educate or notify others of your transit service? _____
 14. What federal funding categories do you qualify for? _____
 15. What federal funding assistance do you receive? _____
 16. What do you see as the main obstacle that prevents transit coordination?

a. Funding
b. Jurisdictional
c. Policy
d. Regulatory
e. Other _____
 17. What can be done to better serve the transportation needs in your community? _____
 18. What service methods or processes have you seen or done that work well in transit coordination? _____
- Additional Comments: _____



This survey is a project of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission. For progress on this project, please provide information below.

Contact _____ Email _____
Phone _____

Public Survey Instrument

**We are Rolling up our Sleeves to meet
your Transportation Needs!**

**Please help us by completing this Public
Transportation Survey**



1. Are public transportation services available in your area? (Yes / No)

2. Who provides this transportation service? _____

3. How do you know about this service/provider? _____

4. What types of transit/transportation do you use in your community?
 - a. Beaumont Municipal Transit b. Port Arthur Transit
 - c. South East Texas Transit d. Medicaid transportation
 - e. Carpool/Vanpool f. Other _____
 - g. None

5. What do you most often use this transportation for?
 - a. Medical b. Education
 - c. Employment d. Transportation to group meals
 - e. Recreation f. Shopping/ Personal Business
 - g. Other _____

6. Have you experienced difficulty in trying to use transit services? (Yes / No)

7. What is this difficulty related to?
 - a. Route
 - b. Time of day for service provided
 - c. Limited accessibility at stations or on vehicles
 - d. Denied ride from provider
 - e. Other _____

8. In your opinion, what transportation service is most needed in your community?
 - a. Medical
 - b. Education
 - c. Employment

- d. Transportation to group meals
- e. Recreation
- f. Shopping/ Personal Business
- g. Other _____

9. What time of day is the transportation service referred to in question #8 most needed? _____

10. Do rates have any affect on your decision to use public transportation? (Yes / No) If so, how?_____

11. What would make you use public transportation more often? _____

Additional Comments:_____



This survey is a project of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission.

For progress on this project, please provide information below.

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

APPENDIX B

TRANSIT SERVICES SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX B - TRANSIT SERVICES SURVEY

The Transit Services Survey was done in two parts. The first part was a survey of the transportation providers. This survey interviewed providers about their services and requested the provider's suggestions for coordination. The second part was a public survey. The public survey was focused on gaining knowledge from the public on their experience working with transit services and transportation agencies and organizations. Survey content was discussed at the General Meeting on March 3, 2006. The surveys were created and finalized by April 4, 2006 in order to have them for the public meetings. The surveys were conducted from May through July 2006.

The responses from the Transit Services Survey established a framework for developing the barriers and constraints prohibiting transportation coordination in the southeast Texas region. The Transportation Providers Survey acknowledged what the transportation providers view as the main obstacles for coordination. The Public Survey identified the main inconveniences and difficulties with using the existing transportation system.

Transportation Provider Surveys

The transportation provider survey was designed to obtain input from transportation providers and agencies. The objective of the provider survey is to learn about obstacles to coordination, determine services provided, and gain insight on available resources.

The provider survey involved a written instrument of 18 questions (See Appendix A-1 to A-3). The questions were a combination of open-ended and multiple-choice. The questions included an inventory of clients served, service area, trip purpose, and hours of operation. The survey also focused on operation capacity levels, procedures for notification of services, and whether there are funding categories that restrict ridership. There are several open-ended questions that required the provider to think of what efforts can be done to better service the transportation needs in the community. The providers were also asked about service methods or processes that have been previously attempted to assist or work with transportation coordination.

The provider surveys were conducted from May through July 2006 as phone interviews with transportation providers in Hardin, Orange, and Jefferson Counties. The requirement for being interviewed as a provider included any agency or organization which provided public transportation, as stated in HB 3588.

Transportation Provider Survey Results

The Transportation Providers who responded to the survey include:

- ABC Transit;
- Hardin County Health and Welfare;

- Medical Transportation – Beaumont Association for Senior Citizens (BASC) (Service provider ended services May 31, 2006, ABC Transit took over contract);
- Orange County Transportation (Orange);
- Orange County Transportation (Vidor);
- Family Services of Southeast Texas, Inc.;
- Jefferson County Health and Welfare #2;
- Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program – Nutrition and Services for Seniors (NSS);
- Beaumont Transit Services (BMT and Special Transit Services);
- Port Arthur Transit (PAT); and
- South East Texas Transit (SETT).

There are two fixed route services (BMT and PAT), nine demand response operations, one flexible route operation (ABC Transit), and one subscription service (ABC Transit) operating in the regional area. The majority of those service operations are limited to staying within a county, staying within city limits, or providing direct transportation to a specific location (such as medical trip to a district facility in Galveston or Houston). Clients served include the general public, elderly, persons with disabilities, and welfare to work. Over 50 percent of those clients are using the transportation services for medical trips. All of the surveyed providers use the newspaper or doctor's offices/clinics to notify others of their services.

Capacity and frequency of services depended on the time of day for many providers. Thirty percent of the providers surveyed (ABC Transit, Orange County Transportation – Orange, Jefferson County Health and Welfare #2, Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program, and Beaumont Special Transit) admitted to denying ridership due to overcrowding or unavailable vehicles at the time of requested service. Half of the providers consider themselves to be at full capacity, operating at 80 to 100 percent. The mornings proved to be the busiest time for requested service, with most demands for service lessening during mid-day. Only one provider (BMT) offers services after 7:00 PM on weekdays, and these services are limited to the Beaumont area. There are only three providers that offer service on Saturdays (BMT, NSS and ABC Transit), and only one provider in the three-county region offers service on Sundays (ABC Transit); however, the trip must be non-medical.

In response to inquiring what can be done to better serve the community's transportation needs, the replies varied. Responses included: more advertising, such as putting provider's phone number on vehicles (Orange County Transportation – Orange); pay drivers more so they may retain their position

longer (Orange County Transportation – Vidor); provide Sunday service (Family Services of Southeast Texas); provide better customer service (Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program); and achieving better regional connectivity through the services provided (BMT, ABC Transit, and Family Services of Southeast Texas). PAT suggested working with the perception or attitudes toward public transit by changing the type of service offered. The suggested changes included providing designated carpool operations. The provider commented that Federal and State legislation would need to be revised in order to obtain funds for carpool operations, but that it would be desirable.

The providers shared what they viewed as the main obstacles that prevent transportation coordination. BMT cited jurisdictional and regulatory obstacles as the largest issues, such as the law which prohibits operating outside of city limits or determines the extent of trips. This causes significant problems for trips originating outside of the city limits or within a neighboring county. This is one circumstance that would require coordination between rural providers and the urban providers in that a rural system could bring the riders from the county to the city limits, the riders would then be transported by the urban providers. Coordination for this type of service is imperative given the need for efficient and quality customer service.

Funding was also recognized as a significant barrier. Through the interviews, it was unanimously agreed that one provider should not bare considerable financial burden over another provider to achieve coordination. For instance, BMT receives part of its funding from local tax payers of Beaumont, and it would be an unfair burden on the Beaumont residents if that service were to be used outside those jurisdictional boundaries. Questions were also raised regarding how the funding would be divided among the various providers if a regional pass were to be implemented since no two providers charge the same fare. There is also a concern about the ability of transit providers to maintain current service levels due to increased costs of fuel, workers compensation, vehicle insurance, and other operational costs.

Other obstacles identified included communication, location, not having enough vehicles, maintaining drivers, and territorial issues. One provider felt that the territorial issues were the most significant constraint to achieving coordination. This provider shared that the other providers in the region were guarded and not willing to share clientele. In addition, there was a sense of exclusiveness to whether or not other providers would share or coordinate.

Public Surveys

The public survey was conducted May through July 2006. It involved distributing survey forms and conducting interviews with individuals of the general public in Jefferson, Hardin, and Orange Counties. During this time, 163 survey forms were completed plus an additional 17 from an unidentified source were received by the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission. Based on the review

of these 17 forms, it is presumed that these participants are from Beaumont in Jefferson County.

The public survey was designed to obtain input from current users of public transportation as well as non-users. The objective of the public survey is to determine the awareness of existing transportation services; to obtain an assessment of the user's transit service experience; and to reveal barriers/gaps with the existing public transportation service.

The public survey included a written instrument of 11 questions (See Appendix A-4 to A-5). The questions were a combination of open-ended and multiple-choice. The questions require the provider to think about public transportation service on a personal and community level.

Public transportation service providers and agencies with clientele that use or may need public transportation were contacted to identify meeting locations where survey participants could be solicited. The public survey was conducted at various sites within the three county region, including:

- The Beaumont Municipal Transit transfer station (12 participants);
- The Port Arthur Transit transfer station (six participants);
- The Texas Workforce Commission facility in Port Arthur (five participants);
- Five offices of the golden triangle Department of Health and Human Services (Beaumont – 44 participants, Port Arthur – 26 participants, Vidor – 20 participants, Orange – 12 participants, and Silsbee – 11 participants);
- The Bridge City Senior Citizens Center (seven participants);
- Orange County Retired Senior Citizens Association monthly meeting (18 participants); and
- Public meeting attendees (two completed surveys).

The public survey was conducted as in person surveys and general distribution surveys to target groups. The in person survey allowed for a dialogue between the participant and the surveyor with the opportunity to obtain additional useful information. The general distribution involved handing out the survey questionnaire to attendees of an agency-sponsored workshop, training session, or social activity.

During the survey interviews, it was determined that the survey questions were more appropriate for a public transportation rider; therefore, the surveyor would engage dialogue to identify "what could be done to have you use public transportation?" Some participants provided suggestions; however, most would not even consider being without a personal vehicle.

Public Survey Results

Public survey results show that public transportation services are not well known except by service users. Those that are not users have seen the various vehicles, but they may not know what the vehicles are or what services are available. A Beaumont participant, who is a newcomer to the area, now takes the bus to Lamar University for school and then to work. Another participant had moved to Orange County and is using the Medicaid contracted transportation service; however, this participant stated that she used Beaumont and Port Arthur transit systems daily when she lived in those communities.

Another survey participant stated that service hours to accommodate night classes are needed. Beaumont Municipal Transit operates after 6:00pm and may accommodate Lamar University and Lamar Institute of Technology, but Lamar College campuses are also located in Orange and Port Arthur where night transit services are unavailable.

Although some survey participants stated that higher gas prices would make them more likely to use public transportation, a price threshold was not determined nor does it mean that public transportation would be available to those potential riders.

Senior citizens prefer independence but welcome being informed of an alternative mode of transportation. Seniors sharing transit success stories may eliminate some of the fears of transit use.

In general, it seems that the majority of the municipal transit riders participating in the survey have adapted their lifestyle to the transit schedule. Those that are not flexible may find another ride or perhaps walk.

Medical transportation was the most selected need for transportation service, but it was not necessarily the reason that the survey participants used public transportation.