

**Regional Public Transportation Coordination
IMPLEMENTATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

Meeting Summary

Thursday, August 9, 2007

10:00 am– 12:00 pm

American Red Cross-Conference Room A

ATTENDEES: Donna Shea(TxDOT), Kelly Buchanan(Liberty Co.), Lyle Nelson(Brazos Transit District), Becky Jasso(United Way/Bay Area Transportation Partnership), Paula Warren (for Rose Hernandez, Harris Co. Judge's office), John Blackman (American Red Cross), Martha Mayes (American Red Cross), Yvonne Feder(representing Dr. Lelita Sen, Texas Southern University), Vernon Chambers (HC RIDES), Jane Bavineau (Care for Elders), Jose Ramirez, Jr. (MHMRA of Harris County), Gwen Goodwin (TSU). H-GAC Staff: Kari Hackett, Ashby Johnson, Ursula Williams, Lucretia Hammond.

- I. Becky Jasso welcomed the group and asked for self-introductions and announcements. Announcements on services/changes:
- Lyle Nelson announced that The District will begin a daily (5 days/wk) shuttle from east Texas to the VA Hospital in Houston. They are providing a full size bus with coach seating and wheelchair access. Service is expected to begin Aug. 13th.
 - Vernon Chambers indicated that Harris Co. RIDES has received funding from H-GAC WorkSource for transporting Katrina/Rita evacuees until October 31st.
 - Gwen Goodwin announced that TSU is working on a Regional Guidebook for Transportation Coordination; it should be available at the end of September.
 - Leticia Hammond introduced herself and stated she was working with H-GAC on Workforce Services Transportation.
 - Kari Hackett announced that the Technical Advisory Committee has approved the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. The Transportation Improvement Program is being considered by the Transportation Policy Council (TPC).
- II. Rural and Small Urban JARC and New Freedom Funded Projects: Donna Shea, TxDOT, announced she was filling in for Lucy Lapaglia, who was unable to attend. TxDOT funded one JARC project for FY 06. They will have a statewide video conference Sept. 11 for JARC 07 funding. New Freedom Funds projects have been reviewed and two projects selected statewide.
- III. TxDOT Continuation of Funding for Coordination Grant: Kari distributed the work-plan submitted to TxDOT for the funding received to continue the coordination process. This included working to implement action plans for pilot projects related to public information and referral and training programs(211 & regional training curriculum); filling gaps identified during the planning process(Montgomery, Liberty & Chambers Co; Seamless Regional Fare system; continuing planning of coordination) and providing technical assistance to applicants for JARC/NF grants.
- Lyle indicated that there may be some need for adjusting the proposal based on changing opportunities, as there has been discussion at TxDOT of reviving the Rural Transportation Assistance Program. This would meet the training needs identified. Vernon noted that RIDES is meeting with METRO to discuss the status of the Q Card as a Seamless Fare Card. RIDES is hoping to be able to use that technology once it's tested.

IV. Advancing Proposed Pilot Projects, H-GAC Staff and Project Sponsors

- Liberty, Montgomery, Chambers Counties/Sam Houston State University (SHSU) Shuttle: Lyle indicated he has been meeting with City of Huntsville regarding providing funds for this project. The Montgomery Co. Task Force is working on a transportation plan. Steve Sumner chairs that committee, which was originally appointed by the County Judge to address transportation issues.
- Prairie View transit expansion project: no action
- Transportation Mobility Manager/2-1-1 Transportation Specialist: The NF project proposed by Harris Co. Rides will call for direct transfer of 2-1-1 callers to the HC RIDES consumer mobility program, instead of housing a transportation specialist at 2-1-1. The project also calls for Ambassadors that can provide door-to-door assistance. The Fort Bend proposal is also expected to address the Ambassador issue. Training on special needs populations is included in the proposal.

The group discussed some of the problems faced in traveling independently by older individuals and persons with cognitive impairments. The proposed projects will address those passengers on shared ride vehicles. Jose Ramirez noted that assistance is also needed for parents that transport children in their own cars. Martha Mayes shared special pamphlets developed by United We Ride that provide guidelines on issues faced when transporting special needs passengers.

HGAC staff cautioned members present that there was potential for conflict of interest for HGAC staff present at this meeting that might be involved in the RFP review and that HGAC would have to address that concern when they set up the staff review.

- Liberty County: Kelly Buchanan requested that that the minutes reflect that she is representing Liberty Co., rather than just the Goodman Corporation. Kelly expressed concern that Liberty Co.'s transportation needs seem to have fallen off the agenda, despite the community support for transportation projects.

This raised the issue of other rural areas in the region where there is no service and lack of leadership to mobilize the governmental units to pursue transit options.

The committee discussed the possibility of using TxDOT Video-Teleconferencing Centers to allow members in outlying counties to participate more readily in the Coordination process. Another option was to rotate the meeting sites to outlying counties.

- V. Other Business: Ashby Johnson reported on communications with TxDOT regarding restoration of funds for the Public Transportation Grants. Lyle noted that failure to do so could result in 30% reduction of rural services.
- VI. Next Steps for Subcommittee: Ashby Johnson noted that Alan Clark had hoped to attend the meeting to address the members concerns about the continuity of the Coordination Process and the status of the Subcommittee. Unfortunately, he was unable to do so at the last minute. The group requested that H-GAC clarify the status of the Implementation Subcommittee and provide direction on how this group can help H-GAC continue to meet the mandate of HB 3588.

Next Meeting: September 13th, 10 am-12 pm., H-GAC-Conference Room C (2nd Floor)