



RTAP SUBCOMMITTEE

Kickoff Meeting

Thursday May 26, 2022

LRGVDC Valley Metro- Conference Room

AGENDA ITEM I
CALL MEETING TO ORDER

AGENDA ITEM II

ROLL CALL

AGENDA ITEM III
PUBLIC COMMENT

AGENDA ITEM IV

DISCUSSION OF

2022 FIVE-YEAR REGIONAL PUBLIC

TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION

PLAN

- **Needs Assessment**
- **Gap Analysis**
- **Recommendations**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

“Findings”

- “Low-income individuals often rely on public or social service transportation due to a lack of access to a vehicle.”
- “There are numerous locations and individuals that are not adequately or effectively served by fixed-route or paratransit/demand-response service.”
- “There is a need for more bus stops as well as bus stops that are more accessible to persons using mobility devices.”
- “There is a limited knowledge regarding public transportation, including which entity provides services and how to schedule rides.”

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

General Needs

- Low-income individuals often rely on public or social service transportation due to a lack of access to a vehicle.
- Spanish-language service information for all public transit providers that is readily accessible (e.g., not requiring access to the internet). While nearly 84 percent of households are considered proficient in English, there is a relatively high degree of limited-English proficiency in the project area.
- Dial-a-ride/demand-response service for seniors in the San Benito area.
- Dial-a-ride/demand-response service for seniors in the area outside Harlingen.
- Bus passes discounted for veterans.
- Improvements to streets in Brownsville.
- Improved connectivity between routes and services.
- Improved awareness of general public dial-a-ride service in Willacy County.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

General Needs

- Improved frequency and headways for transit throughout.
- Improvement to sidewalks and bus stops so they are accessible to everyone, including those using mobility devices.
- Automated stop announcement systems on buses.
- A regional call center to offer coordinated information. This not only addresses the needs of those who must travel between transit service areas, but can also direct callers to appropriate social service transportation providers.
- More appropriate service delivery in low-density areas. This could mean additional flex routes/deviated fixed routes or new micro-transit service areas.
- Bus stops near clinics.
- Regular, ongoing travel training available to organizations. There is a demonstrated knowledge gap regarding transit, both in terms of where it operates and how to use it. Creation of a full-time travel trainer position by a regional entity could provide multiple travel training sessions each week, with a specific focus on seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and areas where transit use is low.
- Recruitment of sufficient drivers to reliably cover transit demand, especially in areas served by demand-response service. While current staffing issues are likely related to the nationwide driver shortage, maintaining a full roster of drivers will enhance reliability for customers. This has likely led to the perception by some that dial-a-ride service in Willacy County is unreliable.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Specific Needs

- A bus stop closer to the Veteran Services Office in McAllen (located at 10th Street & Yale Avenue). This location is not served by McAllen Metro Routes 2 or 3 or by McAllen Metro paratransit, which only extends three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route (the office is 1.43 miles from the nearest transit route).
- B-Metro Dial-A-Ride/paratransit service that extends to the city limits, not three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route. This limitation results in some areas of the city not having access to bus service.
- Expand service between Primera and Harlingen. Currently service between Primera and Harlingen is provided via Valley Metro Route 44, which offer flex route service one-half mile from the route alignment. This includes some locations in eastern Primera, but not the central portion of the community, which is located more than two miles from Hwy 77.
- Add a bus stop at the Horizon Montessori III school, located at 2802 South 77 Sunshine Strip in Harlingen. The school is served by Valley Metro Route 42.

GAP ANALYSIS

by Demographic Cohorts

- 1. Disabled transportation**
- 2. Inter-county transportation**
- 3. Low-income individuals**
- 4. Rural transportation**
- 5. Senior transportation**
- 6. Urban transportation**
- 7. Veteran transportation**
- 8. Youth/student transportation**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short Term (Up to 18 mos.)

- Recommendation 2: Synchronize future service changes.
- Recommendation 5: Implement recommendations presented in the 2030 Transit Development Plan.
- Recommendation 6: Improve schedule coordination thereby reducing wait-time.
- Recommendation 8: Link South Texas College campuses in McAllen and Weslaco.
- Recommendation 15: Expand public awareness (promote) Valley Metro's Flex route service feature.
- Recommendation 16: Provide more detailed transit service information.
- Recommendation 17: Expand public access to transit service information.
- Recommendation 18: Implement a travel training program.
- Recommendation 21: Improve access to public transit information via senior centers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mid Term (Between 18-36 mos.)

- Recommendation 1: Work with social service organizations to subsidize the purchase of multi-ride fare media.
- Recommendation 3: Provide regional trip planning via Google Maps.
- Recommendation 4: Develop partnership with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to address mobility needs outside regular service hours.
- Recommendation 7: Improve service frequency for inter-county transit service.
- Recommendation 11: Expand local service in San Benito.
- Recommendation 12: Expand transit service to include neighborhoods around Harlingen.
- Recommendation 13: Realign Edinburg transit routings.
- Recommendation 14: Produce a regional transit guide.
- Recommendation 19: Evaluate practicality of joint recruitment and training of drivers.
- Recommendation 22: Improve local bus stops.
- Recommendation 23: Prepare a Bus Stop Improvement Plan for each operator.
- Recommendation 24: Increase capital (vehicle) funding for non-profit operators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Long Term (Between 3-5 yrs.)

- Recommendation 9: Evaluate transit service delivery in Willacy County.
- Recommendation 10: Introduce service to McAllen Veteran's Service Office.
- Recommendation 20: Implement a one-stop (transportation information) call center.

AGENDA ITEM V

**STATUS OF PRIOR
RECOMMENDATIONS**

STATUS OF PRIOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table cites the status of the recommendations from the prior Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan as provided by the RTAP.

Activity	Status	Description	Outcome
Year 1			
Mobility Management	Complete	Stakeholders will organize work groups, seek funding, and determine who will perform which functions.	LRGVDC hired a Mobility Manager.
Conduct Regional Planning and Funding Activities	Incomplete	Secure funding and implement a regional short range transit planning process.	Program will be initiated in the future.
Mainline Regional Service	Incomplete	Initiate coordination planning.	Coordinated connection with other Transit providers of the region. (RGV Metro Express)
Rideshare/Vanpool Service	Complete	Implement planning for rideshare program	Discontinued in favor of micro-mobility programs established by both Metro McAllen and Valley Metro.
Implement various low/no cost coordination activities	Ongoing	Human service vehicle sharing, technical support to human service agencies	Human service coordination on training activities was completed. Other programs may be initiated in the future.
Sponsorship Program	Incomplete	The program should be designed and planned in the first year.	Program was never initiated.

Activity	Status	Description	Outcome
Year 2			
Mobility Management	Incomplete	One stop information center – Apps, website and telephone support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer marketing and education – Coordinated • Develop uniform fare structure • Shopper shuttle – Seek partners for service (e.g., HEB or Walmart) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional call center has been developed for LRGVDC Valley Metro Transit Service which includes the RGV Metro Express connecting Brownsville to McAllen. • Each Transit Agency has developed their own fare structure.
Human service coordination	Ongoing	Initiate activities of training, maintenance, and vehicle utilization.	Human service coordination on training activities was completed. Need to reassess activities on training.
Complete regional planning process	Ongoing	None provided in plan	Coordination is ongoing with RTAP members.
Main Line	Complete	Implement coordinated service. This is the essential element of regional connectivity, but will ultimately be dependent to some degree on local first mile, last mile service.	Transition of Metro Connect to Metro Express.
Untitled	Partially implemented	Implement revised Brownsville – South Padre Island service and implement Harlingen – South Padre Island service.	Service has been implemented to connect Brownsville to South Padre Island. Discussions are ongoing to connect Harlingen-Rio Hondo-South Padre Island.
Fixed-route/feeder service	Not implemented	Continue planning and funding efforts and secure arrangements for operators and commitments from leaders.	Planning discussion continues on Fixed-Route service.
Procure vehicles	Ongoing	Consideration should be given to purchasing more fixed-route buses with two doors and at least 30-foot buses. These buses should be heavy duty in nature.	Procurement discussion continues on Fixed-Route buses.
Fixed-schedule service	Not implemented	Implement in selected areas in place of paratransit.	N/A
Sponsorship program	Incomplete	This program should be implemented in Year 2	Program was never initiated.

STATUS OF PRIOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Activity	Status	Description	Outcome
Year 3			
Mobility Management	Incomplete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement uniform fare structure • Conduct other functions as appropriate • Monitor all service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Regional call center has been developed for LRGVDC Valley Metro Transit Service which includes the RGV Metro Express connecting Brownsville to McAllen. • Each Transit Agency has developed their own fare structure.
Untitled	Ongoing	Initiate education campaign for a dedicated funding base for a regional service including all urbanized areas in Hidalgo and Cameron County.	Discussions with RTAP members will continue on educational campaign.
Untitled	Ongoing	Implement Raymondville service and flex-route service throughout rural portions of the service area.	Ongoing discussion on Transit service.
Year 4			
Mobility Management	Incomplete	Ongoing activities.	
Fixed-route	Incomplete	Implement fixed-route services as funding allows.	
Shopper shuttle	Complete	Seek additional opportunities for service.	Several Valley Metro routes go through shopping locations in different service areas.
Untitled	Ongoing	Continue working toward dedicated funding.	
Local service	Ongoing	As funding allows, routes should be implemented based on priorities developed in the short-range plan.	
Fixed Schedule Service	Not implemented	Implement all other areas outside of fixed-route and feeder areas (as funding is available).	Planning discussion continues on Fixed-Route service.
Year 5			
Mobility Management	Ongoing	Implement new planning initiative for the next five years.	
Public Transit	Ongoing	Continue to implement service as funding comes available.	
Untitled	Ongoing	Continue working toward dedicated funding.	

AGENDA ITEM VI

PROJECTS TO MEET NEEDS/RECOMMENDATIONS

AGENDA ITEM VII

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETING DATES

- **Virtual**
- **In Person**
- **By Area**

AGENDA ITEM VIII

ADJOURN