

**APPENDIX A**

**WILLIAMSON COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
COORDINATION ISSUES**

***BRIEFING PAPER***

# APPENDIX A WILLIAMSON COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION ISSUES

## *BRIEFING PAPER*

### INTRODUCTION

The Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS), Williamson County, and participating municipal jurisdictions in Williamson and Travis Counties initiated a study of the feasibility of improved public transit services. This study focuses on all of Williamson County except Round Rock and Leander, but does include the City of Pflugerville in Travis County. The City of Leander already receives transit services, since it is a member of the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro). The City of Round Rock is independently studying transit alternatives for implementation.

One of the most important issues that must be addressed in this study is the urbanization of Williamson County. As Williamson County continues its rapid growth, the level and type of services historically provided by CARTS will no longer meet the needs of this rapidly growing suburban population.

As part of the urbanized region surrounding Austin there are a wide range of planning activities underway that could affect CARTS and the study area; the consultant team believes that it is essential to devote a task to coordination of these planning efforts. Therefore, the first substantive task of this study is to identify the various planning activities within the county and the region and determine how they fit together. There are many entities and individuals both in the county and outside the county that have a stake, or at the very least, an interest in public transportation in Williamson County. The first major task of this study includes:

- identifying the key participants that may be affected by the study,
- reviewing issues related to coordination of the study with other entities and studies within the region, and
- identifying state and Federal transit programs.

## COUNTY AND REGIONAL KEY PARTICIPANTS

For purposes of study organization, key participants have been classified as county and regional participants. The county participants include organizations and individuals based or residing in Williamson County. These include CARTS, local governments, Williamson County government, and human service agencies. Regional participants include those entities outside the study area that may have an impact on Williamson County service, such as Capital Metro and the City of Round Rock. The list of participants was selected by the consultants, CARTS, and other key participants. Meetings were held with each of the identified participants. The primary purpose of these meetings was to understand the framework in which this study is conducted. That is, what are other organizations doing that may have an impact on this study.

### County Participants

Following are the list of county participants - organizations and persons interviewed.

1. **CARTS** - Met with Dave Marsh, Executive Director, Paul Hamilton, Planning Director, Pearl Jackson, Director of Operations, and Carole Zachary, Dispatch Supervisor.
2. **Town of Bartlett** - Mayor Janice Atkinson.
3. **City of Cedar Park** - Councilman Duprey, Jane McAdams, Planning Director, Duane Smith and Jeff Thiel.
4. **City of Georgetown** - Mayor Gary Nelon.
5. **Georgetown Chamber of Commerce** - Mel Penland, Director.
6. **City of Pflugerville** - Steven Jones - City Manager.
7. **City of Taylor** - Frank Salvato, City Manager, and Robert VanTil, Community Development Director.

8. **Williamson County and Cities Health District** - Marge Tripp, Community Health Promotion Division Director, Jason Townes, VISTA and Paula Ferrigno, GIS Coordinator.
9. **Williamson County Commissioners Court** - Introduction to the Judge and Commissioners.
10. **Williamson County Commissioner Limmer** - Separate meeting.
11. **Williamson County Planning Department** - Nancy Ledbetter, Director of Planning.

## Regional Participants

The regional participants included the following organizations, and the individuals we spoke with.

1. **Capital Metro** - Capital Metro is a Chapter 451 transit authority. Its jurisdiction includes the cities of Austin, Jonestown, Lago Vista, Manor, and San Leanna in Travis County and the Leander in Williamson County. Capital Metro's territory also includes the northwestern portion of unincorporated Travis County. Capital Metro collects a one percent sales tax in addition to federal grants to support its operations and fund its capital programs. Capital Metro also contracts with CARTS to operate several fixed-route and demand-response services, primarily those in less urbanized areas of Travis County. Staff: Rob Smith, Director of Planning, Annette Polk, Planner, and Jan Johnson, Manager of STS.
2. **Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)** - CAMPO is the official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Austin metropolitan area. CAMPO is governed by a Policy Advisory Committee comprised of state and local officials. CAMPO's jurisdiction includes all of Travis County and the portions of Hays and Williamson Counties that are within the city limits and extraterritorial jurisdictions of Austin and Round Rock. Effective February 2003, CAMPO includes all of Williamson County. In total, over 19 cities and Capital Metro are included within CAMPO's boundaries. CAMPO coordinates the transportation planning activities and Federal transportation funds for all of these jurisdictions, as well as Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) improvements within its boundaries. Staff: Michael Aulick, Executive Director, Alison Schulze, Assistant Director, and Daniel Yang, Planner.
3. **City of Round Rock** - While Round Rock is within the county, it is considered regional for study purposes due to the city's separate planning process. Staff: Tom Word, Chief Traffic Engineer.

4. **Texas Department of Transportation District Office** - collaborates with CARTS on rural public transportation issues, provides funding in rural areas, and is leading the efforts to develop HOV facilities in the study area. One of the consultant team attended a public meeting regarding HOV lanes.

## **County Participants - Coordination Issues**

There were a wide variety of county participants that the consultants talked to for the purposes of coordinating activities. Most of these persons are representatives of cities and towns. In addition there were human service agency representatives as well as county government staff. The first part of this discussion reviews each participant's planning activities and coordination issues. This will be followed by a summary of county activities.

### **1. Town of Bartlett**

Mayor Janice Atkinson met with the consultants. The Mayor stated that most of the community transportation needs are fulfilled by family and friends. Employment transportation is not a major problem according to the Mayor. Travel internal to Bartlett is also fulfilled locally. The Mayor is aware that CARTS serves the area, and states that there are persons that need transportation to go shopping, although she added that Brookshire's - a local small grocery store chain - is considering opening a store in the town, which would reduce the needs. She further indicated that they have no specific transportation plans at this time.

### **2. City of Cedar Park**

Cedar Park is very interested in the outcome of this study, and is an active participant. Cedar Park previously was part of Capital Metro, but recently the voters decided not to continue with that relationship. State law however requires Capital Metro to continue providing paratransit for persons with disabilities if desired by Cedar Park. Currently Capital Metro is providing paratransit for persons residing in Cedar Park to go to any destination in the Capital Metro service area. Cost to Cedar Park is \$14.25 per one-way trip (half Capital Metro's actual cost).

One of the issues facing the study team is to determine the best fit for Cedar Park. Should Capital Metro continue to provide service for Cedar Park or should CARTS provide the service? The consultants met with Planning Director Jane McAdams, Planner Duane Smith, and Council Member Phil Duprey. The staff gave the consultants a copy of the *Cedar Park Comprehensive Plan*.

### **3. City of Georgetown**

The Mayor met with the consultant team and expressed interest in public transportation. He stated that Georgetown is conducting a transportation study, but that its focus is exclusively on roads. Mayor Nelson indicated that the city's primary priority is on roads. The recently approved half cent 4B funds will allow the city to fulfill its roadway obligations. He believes that the city should study transit, but the fiscal priority will be roads. Mayor Nelson stated that he was unsure of whether there is a transit need, especially since much of the affordable housing was outside the city limits.

In a separate conversation with Mary Louise Poquette, a board member of Georgetown's 4B Economic Development Corporation GTech, Georgetown is coming out with a Request for Proposal (RFP) for roads and transit. The consultants told her that the CARTS study is doing the same thing, and we have agreed to coordinate our activities.

### **4. Georgetown Chamber of Commerce**

The consultants met with Mr. Penland, Executive Director, who expressed significant support for transit, as he and the Chamber of Commerce have led the push for transit in the city. Mr. Penland believes that local support for transit can be "mustered." He discussed some of the successes of nearby transit systems in comparable cities, and we discussed local growth issues. The current population is estimated to be 33,000, compared to 29,000 in the 2000 Census.

Mr. Penland explained that the City has been very proactive in economic development in terms of marketing its water, wastewater, and electric capacity. While there is a significant push toward economic development and growth, the City does want to maintain its historic character, and he believes that transit could be vital to the continued success of the downtown area. Mr. Penland believes that downtown could be Georgetown's "mall" and has a vision of transit oriented development.

Georgetown was named the most walkable small city in America, and the city is pushing hike-and-bike trails interconnected through a series of parks. The City is also adopting a new Unified Development Code that should help cluster retail and commercial uses at major intersections. Mr. Penland believes that there is a need to think of a long-term, regional vision for transportation and transit.

The short-term focus, however, should be on building a local transit system. SH 130 will make a significant difference in regional mobility as well, but that may lower demand for any sort of commuter service. Local transit needs are significant when considering that Georgetown Independent School District follows the 2-mile rule. Some Southwestern University students also do not have cars and need

transportation to work and local activities. There may be matching funds available from GISD and Southwestern University. Sun City may also be able to provide funding, provided that any of the transit options meets their needs.

Seniors like to make trips and socialize in groups, and a transit system may allow them to meet some of their trip needs, especially if they could charter buses for local shopping and events. Mr. Penland noted that Georgetown passed a 4B Economic Development Authority with a half cent sales tax. Much of the focus of those funds would be on transportation, and he felt that there was room to fund a transit operation with \$85,000 to \$90,000 a year operations cost.

## **5. City of Pflugerville**

The consultant team met with City Manager Steve Jones about the City of Pflugerville's transportation needs. Mr. Jones acknowledged that there may be a need for transit in Pflugerville, but he felt that the services provided by Capital Metro did not meet Pflugerville's local needs. Even though Pflugerville withdrew from Capital Metro, most residents are still able to use the park-and-ride services provided on the border of Pflugerville and Austin.

Pflugerville's transit needs are focused on Round Rock and north Austin. Mr. Jones noted that his community has more in common with Williamson County than with Travis County, yet Capital Metro's services focus only on Austin. Pflugerville's transit needs would be better served if it had local connections to Capital Metro's existing park-and-ride services and service to new destinations in Round Rock, such as Dell and La Frontera.

Pflugerville is not opposed to public transportation, and the City would like to consider options for implementing a local service that meets the needs of Pflugerville's residents. Pflugerville will eventually come to a settlement agreement with Capital Metro, and any funds returned to Pflugerville may be able to provide start-up funds for a local transit system. The City is open to the idea of using Economic Development funds to support transit, and the City is also open to the concept of a partnership with cities in Williamson County.

## **6. City of Taylor**

The consultants met with the City Manager and the Director of Community Development, both of whom are very supportive of transit and of the proposed multi-modal facility being planned by CARTS. They believe there is need for fixed-route service within Taylor and would like to combine the transit planning with the economic development planned for the community, in particular the downtown area,

which the City Manager would like to revitalize. There is also a large regional park planned for the east side of Taylor that should be served as well.

## **7. Williamson County and Cities Health District**

The Health District has conducted health related needs assessments throughout the County for the health component of the Comprehensive Plan, holding meetings across the county. One of the key findings was a need for more transportation, particularly on the east side of the county, where there is more poverty. The Health District also supports increased bicycle usage with bikeways and bicycle racks on buses.

## **8. Williamson County Commissioners Court**

The consultants were introduced to the Commissioners Court. A brief review of the study was presented, followed by questions related to the need for public transportation. The consultants discussed the internal and regional issues. Two commissioners expressed a need for fixed route type services. An update was promised in the future.

## **9. Williamson County Commissioner Limmer**

Commissioner Limmer stated that he supports public transportation; however he feels that the door-to-door nature of the service is unproductive. He would like to see fixed-route service both within the Taylor area as well as service to Austin (since most of the residents commute to the Austin area).

Commissioner Limmer discussed the idea of getting private business involved; pointing out that the HEB on the north side of Taylor is one of the company's most profitable stores in its entire chain. He also cited the need for summer buses for children, weekend service, and recreation buses, as specialty services. The Commissioner also discussed the need to get churches and volunteer groups involved in transportation.

## **10. Williamson County Planning Department**

The study team spoke with Ms. Ledbetter. Her perspective was that transit would need to be in the future, more along the lines of the regional commuter rail project and light rail to Leander. As part of the County's transportation plan, there is substantial focus on corridor preservation. The County's population will double by

2015 and again by 2025, and the County does not want to be in the position of buying right-of-way as projects are developed. The County is instead buying right-of-way and preserving corridors where longer term thoroughfare improvements will be needed, such as along Parmer Lane and US Highway 79, both of which could become six lane urban arterials. Even though US Highway 79 is not a priority project, Williamson County is preserving access on the facility for long-term improvements.

## 11. CARTS

In a meeting with CARTS operations staff responsible for taking trip reservations, scheduling, and dispatching service, staff discussed the need for more service in the county. They stated that dialysis transportation to Round Rock is overwhelming the service. Most of the local service consists of standing rides for medical needs, which are typically dialysis.

CARTS management stated that they are developing plans for multi-modal public transportation hubs in Georgetown and Taylor for CARTS service, intercity service, and Amtrak.

## REVIEW OF COUNTY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

There are a number of planning efforts taking place that merit the attention of this study. These are:

1. Georgetown 4B Transportation Study - Georgetown's 4B corporation, GTech is preparing to conduct a transportation study that will focus on roads. However, a city planner stated that the study includes transit. This effort, to the degree that it looks at transit, should be coordinated with the Williamson County study.
2. Previous Planning for Transit in Georgetown - The KFH Group developed a set of routes in Georgetown for CARTS in 1998. This plan will be reviewed and updated as needed.
3. Williamson County and Cities Health District - The Health District has conducted detailed assessments of needs for all areas of the county. Transportation access to medical care is a highly rated need. The study team will use this document in the needs component of the study.
4. Economic Development Efforts - Many of the cities are using their economic development funds for a variety of needs. In some cases this will include some funding for transit. Taylor, Georgetown, Cedar Park, and Pflugerville

are all looking at economic development and transportation is a component of that effort.

5. Transit Multi-Modal Centers - CARTS is preparing to develop plans for transit centers in Georgetown and Taylor.

## **Regional Participants**

The regional participants will have a significant impact on transportation in Williamson County. This clearly demonstrates the regional nature of public transportation in the region.

### **1. Capital Metro**

Capital Metro Planning Department staff are actively seeking to expand their park and ride capabilities adjacent to Pflugerville and Cedar Park. Mr. Smith, the Planning Director, stated that Capital Metro's goal is to provide service on 10 - 15 minute peak headways in the IH-35 corridor, and 15 minute headways on the US Highway 183 corridor. Capital Metro is purchasing six 45 foot MCI over-the-road coaches that will hold 57 passengers each. Capital Metro believes that capacity in these two corridors is constrained by the lack of parking. Plans are underway for new greatly expanded park and ride lots in each corridor.

In the IH-35 corridor a new park and ride lot will be developed just south of the current HEB stop, between Parmer and Howard Lanes. The new lot in the US Highway 183 corridor will include 500 spaces and will be located off the northeast corner of US Highway 183 and R.M. 620, east of Lakeline Mall, and just south of Cedar Park. These new lots will be convenient for many residents of the study area in Pflugerville, Round Rock, Cedar Park, and Liberty Hill. Staff state that most of the riders at these locations are from Williamson County. Mr. Smith stated that he welcomes and encourages this ridership. Staff expressed a desire to work with CARTS to develop a coordinated commuter operation in both service corridors.

The Special Transit Services (STS) Manager discussed their service in Cedar Park and Pflugerville. He stated that the average trip length system wide is nine miles, while service in Pflugerville and Cedar Park averages 18 miles. He stated that he believes if Pflugerville service were oriented towards Round Rock, then most of the riders would want to go there. They have numerous requests for service to Dell and La Frontera in Round Rock.

The STS Manager stated that Pflugerville and Cedar Park are charged half of the 1998 cost for service (\$28.50). That cost is \$14.25. He expects that with the new audit, the cost per trip will go up to approximately \$17. He expressed a desire to

cease service in that area and turn it over to CARTS. He stated that CARTS can orient the service toward Williamson County and allow for shorter, less expensive trips.

## **2. Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

CAMPO conducts a variety of planning functions within their study area which includes parts of southern Williamson County adjacent to the Austin area. They have a variety of data that will be useful to this study and have given the consultants most of that information already. This includes: trip tables by traffic activity zone (TAZ), population projections, and mode split models. They are currently working on a vision plan for economic development and land use.

CAMPO is working closely with TxDOT on the development of HOV capacity in the Mopac, US Highway 183, and IH - 35 corridors. These issues are discussed in more detail in the TxDOT section below.

## **3. Capital Area Planning Council (CAPCO)**

CAPCO is the regional council of governments of which Williamson County is a part. CAPCO has recently formed an unofficial rural planning organization, akin to CAMPO but in the rural portions of the CAPCO region. This organization- Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CARTPO) exists to serve as a catalyst for transportation planning and projects implementation, with an emphasis on roads. CARTPO stakeholders include primarily local and county governments. At this time, the organization is just getting started and has yet to formulate any plans.

## **4. City of Round Rock**

The City of Round Rock has recently initiated a public transportation study. This study is similar to the Williamson County study in that it is reviewing a variety of service options both for county and commuter service. The study approach is similar, and the scope appears to include the same or similar tasks. The Chief Traffic Engineer stated that he is interested in including Pflugerville and Cedar Park in his study, but has not yet approached those cities.

In regard to funding, Round Rock has ruled out dedicating funds, but may still fund it through their half cent sales tax (just not dedicated). They are exploring the possibility of securing a transit district (also similar to what is being done for this study). The need to coordinate studies was agreed to by the consultants and the engineer.

## **5. Greater Austin - San Antonio Corridor Council**

The Greater Austin - San Antonio Corridor Council is a non-profit organization made up of governments and businesses that have an interest in the Austin-San Antonio corridor. The Council is involved in a number of efforts including looking at the feasibility of commuter rail from San Antonio, through Austin to Round Rock, with possible future service to Georgetown. Initial plans have been developed, but as of yet no extensive planning has been conducted.

## **6. Texas Department of Transportation District Office**

TxDOT held a meeting in Round Rock in early May, 2002 to discuss the HOV planning activities. The proposed improvements to IH 35 include additional general purpose lanes throughout the CAMPO study area. A large portion of the project includes one lane, reversible HOVs that would operate during peak periods in the peak direction to the Austin CBD. A two lane, reversible HOV is included after a connector ramp merges from US Highway 290 East westbound to IH 35 southbound.

The north HOV section ends approximately at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., while the south HOV section ends near Cesar Chavez Street. Both HOVs terminate onto the frontage roads in the Austin CBD using "wishbone," or Y ramp designs. The general purpose lanes in the Austin CBD include the frontage roads, a series of collector-distributor lanes, the freeway mainlanes, and various interconnecting ramps.

The HOV lane is designed predominately for carpooling commuters. The design does not include provisions for transit, except for one future park-and-ride lot in the vicinity of Round Rock/Pflugerville. This facility is shown to have a T-Ramp, allowing connecting buses and carpools access between the park-and-ride and HOV facilities.

The outer terminal HOV entrances are slip ramps, allowing direct access from the freeway mainlanes. Three outer HOV terminal locations are on IH 35 North, IH 35 South, and US Highway 290 East. Intermediate HOV access is provided by wishbone ramps with access from the IH 35 frontage roads on the north HOV section, giving adequate HOV access for commuters from Round Rock and Georgetown.

Future transit services by CARTS and others in Williamson County could provide a superior bus connection on the HOV into downtown Austin, University of Texas, and the State Capitol Complex, as it is currently designed. CARTS and Round Rock would need to determine where park and ride lots would be located and ensure access between park and ride lots and the HOV facility.

## REVIEW OF REGIONAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES

There are a number of very important studies and planning activities involving regional participants. These activities will have a major impact on public transportation in the county. These planning efforts are as follows:

1. Capital Metro - Capital Metro is very actively expanding their capacity in the two major Williamson County corridors. New, expanded park and ride lots are being planned as is expanded commuter service that will afford many Williamson County commuters an excellent option to their auto. Any commuter service or feeder network should be closely coordinated with Capital Metro.
2. City of Round Rock - Round Rock is conducting its own parallel study to that being conducted for the county. It is very important that these studies be coordinated, all parties stated that they will work together.
3. CAMPO - This organization conducts planning activities and develops demographic and travel data for its service area which includes parts of Williamson County. They are also actively involved in planning activities related to the HOV lanes.
4. TxDOT - TxDOT is leading the HOV planning activities. It will be important to coordinate activities to ensure that proper park and ride facilities are planned for in the study area. While HOV lanes may be in the future, park and ride planning and acquisition needs to start soon.

## OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PROGRAMS

As part of this overview of coordination activities, the study team reviewed current federal and state public transportation programs. The following funds are made available by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by a competitive grant process to regional, state, and local transportation providers.

### Overview of Federal Public Transportation Programs

#### Section 3037

Section 3037 program funds are appropriated through the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute program and provided to local governments and non-profit entities. Jobs access grants are intended to provide new transit services to assist welfare

recipients and other low income individuals in getting to jobs, training, and child care. Reverse commute grants are designed to develop transit services to transport workers to suburban job sites.

### **Sections 5303- 5306**

Sections 5303-5306 includes FTA's metropolitan planning grants program. Funds are made available to state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations for establishing a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas.

### **Section 5307**

Section 5307 is FTA's urbanized area formula grant program. Funds are made available to designated recipients in urbanized areas of 50,000 or more in population and may be used for planning, engineering, and evaluation of transit projects; capital investments in bus systems; and capital investments in rail vehicles, equipment, and track. Capital Metro is the region's designated Section 5307 recipient.

### **Section 5308**

Section 5308 is FTA's clean fuels formula grant program designed to accelerate deployment of low emission vehicles into the mainstream of the nation's transit fleets.

### **Section 5309**

Section 5309 is FTA's discretionary grant program for bus and bus related capital projects, fixed guideway modernization, and new starts projects. These funds are available for acquisition of buses and rail vehicles for fleet and service expansion, replacement vehicles and equipment, maintenance and operating facilities, guideways and HOV lanes, transit and transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride facilities, passenger amenities, and miscellaneous equipment.

### **Section 5310**

Section 5310 is FTA's grant program for transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities. States apply for these funds on behalf of local non-profit agencies and public providers who meet certain criteria and provide specialized transportation services that meet the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities.

## **Section 5311**

Section 5311 is FTA's non-urbanized area formula grant program, often referred to as the rural transit program. Funds are made available to designated recipients in non-urbanized areas of less than 50,000 in population and are designed (1) to enhance access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation; (2) to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas; (3) to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through coordination of programs and services; (4) to assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and (5) to provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible. The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) is also funded through this program. CARTS operates as a Section 5311 transit provider and receives its federal funding allocation through the state's designated recipient, the TxDOT's Division of Public Transportation.

## **Section 5313**

Section 5313 is FTA's statewide planning and research program. Funds are made available to state departments of transportation to supplement metropolitan area planning funds and to provide planning support for non-urbanized areas.

## **Overview of State Public Transportation Statutes**

Texas transit systems are organized under one of several state statutes under the Texas Transportation Code that govern the creation and operation of transit agencies.

## **Chapter 451**

A Chapter 451 metropolitan transit authority is a regional entity that may collect up to a one percent sales tax and consist of multiple cities and unincorporated jurisdictions. Capital Metro is a Chapter 451 metropolitan transit authority. Chapter 451 authorities also operate in Corpus Christi, Houston, and San Antonio. The central city of an urban region may create a Chapter 451 authority, provided that it has a population of at least 230,000, and surrounding jurisdictions may participate in the authority. Another city within the urban region of an existing Chapter 451 authority and with a population of at least 60,000 may operate an independent Chapter 451 authority; provided that the central city of the region has a population of at least 1.2 million (applies only to the Houston region).

## **Chapter 452**

A Chapter 452 regional transit authority is similar to a Chapter 451 authority, except that two authorities may exist in one region where there are two central cities (specifically applies to Dallas/Fort Worth). The states' Chapter 452 authorities operate in Dallas and Fort Worth. Chapter 452 also provides for the creation of sub-regional authorities by one or more cities with contiguous boundaries to the principal municipality of a Chapter 452 regional authority.

## **Chapter 453**

A Chapter 453 city transit department operates under a single municipality and functions as a city department. A city transit department may collect up to 0.5% sales tax. Examples of city transit departments organized under Chapter 453 include those in El Paso and Laredo.

## **Chapter 454**

A Chapter 454 municipal mass transportation system operates under a single municipality and functions as a city department. Unlike a Chapter 453 city transit department, a Chapter 454 municipal mass transportation system does not collect a transit sales tax. Numerous municipal transit systems in Texas operate under Chapter 454, including those in Brownsville, Beaumont, Port Arthur, Amarillo, and Lubbock.

## **Chapter 455**

Chapter 455 identifies the responsibilities and authority of the TxDOT's Division of Public Transportation.

## **Chapter 456**

Chapter 456 identifies state funding of public transportation. Most transit systems are eligible for state assistance, but state funding is not provided to transit authorities, except Chapter 453 authorities with less than 200,000 in population.

## **Chapter 457**

A Chapter 457 county transit authority may be created from an existing Chapter 453 city transit department by resolution from the City Council, County Commissioners Court, and approval by voters from outside the existing Chapter 453 city. A Chapter 457 county transit authority may collect up to 0.5% sales tax. No

Chapter 457 authority currently exists, and only an existing Chapter 453 authority with a population of 500,000 or greater is authorized to create a Chapter 457 authority (applies only to El Paso).

### **Chapter 458**

A Chapter 458 governs the creation and operation of rural and urban transit districts. Rural and urban transit districts do not collect dedicated transit sales taxes and may cover multiple county and municipal jurisdictions. CARTS is a rural transit district.

### **Chapter 459**

Chapter 459 provides the framework for the coordination of transportation services in the state.

### **Chapter 460**

A Chapter 460 coordinated county transportation authority may be created in any county adjacent to a county with a population of more than one million people. The authority may collect any local tax rate, provided that the authority does not exceed the maximum local option sales tax in any portion of its service area. The authority may contain one or more cities and all or part of the unincorporated area of a single county. Chapter 460 authorities generally apply to counties adjacent to Bexar, Dallas, Harris, and Tarrant counties, but no Chapter 460 authorities have been created.

### **Article 6550c-1**

Article 6550c-1 of Vernon's Civil Statutes defines the creation of an inter-municipal commuter rail district. Inter-municipal commuter rail districts may be created between two municipalities, each of which has a population of greater than 450,000 and are not located farther than 100 miles apart. The commuter rail district collects and retains all local option sales taxes on property owned by the district, but has no other dedicated funding source. This legislation is generally available to the Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin-San Antonio regions, but no inter-municipal commuter rail districts have been created.

## Opportunities

The framework for regional coordination exists for implementation of transit services within the project's study area. Any options must address both funding and operation of a new transit provider. There are no provisions to create a transit authority with a dedicated funding source within the study area, but minor modification to existing legislation could allow creation of an authority.

Ultimately, the type of system and governance structure for transit will depend on the transit needs identified in the study area. There is likely to be a wide diversity in the need for services in different portions of the study area, and solutions to these diverse needs may result in implementation of different types of services in each portion of the study area.