

San Marcos Transit Systems

City Council Work Session
April 17, 2018



Purpose

- Provide an overview of current San Marcos transit systems
- Define Direct Recipient (DR) status and discuss the process to become a DR
- Explore common interests/best practice models to achieve a seamless transit system
 - Benefits of a collaborative approach
 - Consultant – concepts/recommendations
 - Baseline for future direction
- Plan moving forward / Next steps

Texas State University: 2017 - 2027 Master Plan

- Manage University transportation and movement of people to further the mission of the campus. Primary goal is for students/faculty to reach class on time.
- Provide a campus that is conveniently and safely accessible by foot, bicycle, automobile, and bus.
- Recognize the University is a member of the regional community and consider its impact on its neighbors and their access to the campus.
- Provide parking, conveniently located, or served by bus.

TX State Bobcat Shuttle: Current Operations

- 10 Shuttle Routes / 40+ Shuttle Stops
 - 3 On-campus routes / 7 Off-campus routes
 - 27,000 Riders per day
 - 45 Buses
- Service Span
 - Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 10:20 p.m.
 - Friday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 - Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 - Operational days based on class schedules

TX State Bobcat Shuttle: Current Funding

- **Student fees provide approximately \$7.5 million dollars annually** for transportation services, which include parking & Bobcat Shuttle services.

Context & History: SM Transit System

- Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) operates transit system in SM utilizing federal rural transit grant funds – 1996 to February 2013
- 2010 U.S. Census determines population of San Marcos, Martindale, & Redwood constitute an urbanized area (UZA) affecting Federal funding allocations

Context & History: SM Transit System (cont.)

- City authorized CARTS to become **FTA Direct Recipient** of the UZA in March 2013
 - Provided access to Federal urban transit grant funds
- CARTS created an **Urban Transit District (UTD)** in March 2013
 - **Provided access to State transit grant funds**
- Completed a 5 Year Strategic Transit Master Plan in August 2014

SM Public Transit: 5-Year Strategic Master Plan

- **CARTS contracted w/ Consultant to develop City's 5-Year Strategic Transit Master Plan in 2014**
 - Master Plan recommendations approved by City Council same year
- **Operational Restructure Implemented in 2015**
 - System changed from “Hub & Spoke” to “Networked” Route Structure
 - Focused on Rider Destinations
 - 19 Transfer bus stop locations

SM Public Transit: 5-Year Strategic Master Plan (cont.)

- **Capital Improvement Recommendations**
 - Replace/Modernize Fleet
 - Install Bus Stop Signage, Bus Stop Shelters & Benches
 - Real-Time Arrival Systems
 - Online Trip Planning

SM Public Transit: Current Operations

- **7 Fixed Bus Routes / 109 Bus Stops**
 - 5,078 avg. Riders per Month
 - Senior Shopper Route on Tuesday & Thursday / 300 avg. Riders per Month
 - 12 Fixed Route buses
- **Complementary Para-transit Service**
 - 1,003 avg. Riders per Month
 - 3 Paratransit vehicles

SM Public Transit: Current Operations (cont.)

- **Service Span**
 - Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 - 250 Annual Operational Days
 - Over the last two years, a Federal Grant funding program was used to extend normal service hours by 2 hours longer. These grant funds are not permanent.

SM Public Transit: Current Funding

- **2010 US Census Data – SM Urbanized Area**
 - Population: 52,826
 - Land Area (square miles): 26.58
 - Population Density (people per square mile): 1,987
- **Federal Transit Administration Funding**
 - **FTA 5307**
 - Provide Operating and/or Capital Improvement funds
 - **Allocations based on population and population density only**

SM Public Transit: Current Funding (cont.)

- **FTA 5339**
 - Purchase of buses, bus-related facilities & related technologies
 - **Competitive funding allocations** based on need
- **FTA 5307 STIC**
 - “Small Transit Intensive City” funds are **competitive funding allocations** to small urbanized areas who exceed the performance measure averages of large urbanized areas
 - 6 performance metrics evaluated, each exceeded metric yields \$191,000 (Student ridership could earn a maximum of \$1,146,000)

SM Public Transit: Current Funding (cont.)

- Federal Transit Funding requires Local funds or “Match”
 - Operating assistance match requirement
 - 50% Federal to 50% Local
 - Capital Improvement assistance match requirement
 - 80% Federal to 20% Local
- City of San Marcos Local Match Contributions
 - FY 2017-2018: \$450,000
 - Same “Local Match” for last 3 years

SM Public Transit: Current Funding (cont.)

- **State Transit Funding**
 - FY 2017-2018: \$175,000
 - TxDOT apportions State Transit Funding to Urban Transit Districts (UTDs) that are small UZAs
 - State Transit Funds can be used for Federal match requirements

Council Strategic Initiative: Public Transit

- City becomes the Direct Recipient for Federal & State transit funding allocated to the San Marcos UZA
 - **Direct Recipient** – is an eligible entity authorized by a Designated Recipient to receive FTA urbanized area transit funds (FTA 5307, 5339, & STIC). The Direct Recipient is responsible for the financial and technical capacity of a public transit system which utilizes federal, state, and local funds.

Council Strategic Initiative: Public Transit

- Urban Transit District (UTD) – is a local governmental body or political subdivision of the state that operates a public transportation system in an urbanized area. In Texas, the UTD is the mechanism that **allows state transit funds** to be allocated to the UZA for the purpose of providing public transportation.
- City researches benefits & challenges of creating an integrated, seamless transit partnership between the City & regional partners.

Process for Becoming a DR

- **City Council Resolution** declaring the City as the Direct Recipient
- **Request formal concurrence** of Council's Resolution
 - CAMPO, TxDOT, & FTA
- **City Council Resolution** creating an Urban Transit District

Outcomes of Becoming DR

- Exercise more local control
- Ensure more operation transparency
- Financial control
- Better position the City to explore a transit partnership

Transit Partnerships & Model Options

- **Explore transit partnership models** based on the selected consultant's expertise that historically have been accepted by the FTA & TxDOT
 - **Direct Recipient enters into Inter-Local Agreement**
 - Inter-Local Agreement defines Federal Fund Sharing & Public Transit Services for the San Marcos UZA

Transit Partnerships & Model Options

- **Direct Recipient with Subrecipient**
 - Direct Recipient allocates Federal Funds to Sub-Recipient & both Organizations coordinate Public Transit Services for the San Marcos UZA
- **Assess the operating and financial alternatives** for coordinated transit services
- **Evaluate the benefits** of a transit partnership
- **Evaluate the challenges** of a transit partnership

Timeline and Next Steps

- **Next Steps**

- Joint participation with TX State for RFP process for Coordinated Transit Plan
- Future Council work session on critical decision points
 - Direct Recipient Status
 - Model & Partnership Structure

- **Timeline**

- 3 to 6 months-final coordinated Transit Plan Study
- 4 months—Review ILA with CARTS

Questions & Answers