



Capital Area Rural Transportation System

## Proposed Georgetown Fixed Route Business Plan

### **Business Overview**

The fixed route service for the City of Georgetown will allow residents and visitors to move through the City safely, reliably, efficiently, and affordably. This business plan accounts for the diversity of the City by addressing the transit needs for both business and residents. Citizens will be able to travel to work, medical facilities, and for other city business activities. The Georgetown fixed route service will make connections between population hubs to businesses, recreational activities, medical facilities and other places the City's residents may wish to travel to and from.

The following business plan is based on the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Transit/Fixed Route Working Group, and from public input received during the public comment period.

### **Service Description**

#### **Service Hours & Day**

The fixed route would operate from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Optional Saturday service would operate from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Service would not operate on major holidays.

#### **Routes**

Six routes are designed to meet the needs of a wide range of persons and businesses. Route maps are included as attachments showing that service is provided throughout most of the city. Compromises based on financial considerations were made to serve areas that the consultants determined would generate the most ridership, or to meet the greatest need based on demographics.

Five (5) routes are 1/2 hour in duration. Four (4) of the routes are paired—meaning that upon arrival at the downtown transfer hub they become another route outbound from the hub. The fifth route—the shopper shuttle--operates continuously between the hub and popular retail business destinations. The sixth route, Sun City, because of its length requires an hour to complete, and will arrive at the hub once an hour.

**Transfer Hub:** A strategically positioned transfer point will be located in the downtown area to allow for a person to transfer between routes as necessary to complete their trip. Transfers are free. The routes have been designed for all of the buses to meet at the same time for the convenience of the customer so they will not have to wait.



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CARTS will work with the City to determine the exact location of the transfer hub, which will be designed for up to 4-5 buses to stage in a row to allow passengers to transfer easily and allow for the buses to pull in and out of traffic safely. The hub would be roofed so passengers could move bus to bus under cover, and be equipped with benches for waiting passengers.

### **Bus Stops – Shelters and Benches**

Key stops at major origin and destinations will be made only where the bus can pull safely off the road. More frequent designated stops where the bus stops to pick up customers on the street, momentarily stopping traffic will be located along each route. With proper signaling and lights, this is a relatively safe maneuver, and stops are typically placed 1/4 mile apart. A limited number of posted stops with flag stops will be permitted for those that live in between stops. Bus stop signs will be placed where customers have access to crosswalks and placements on high speed or busy roads will be limited.

Shelters and benches will be placed a high ridership stops, such as retail hubs, entrance to private developments, and major attractions. CARTS will work with the City to determine and identify where to place the appropriate bus stops, signage, shelters and benches, and to determine the design and look of these items.

The construction of the transfer hub and the erection of the shelter, benches and signage necessary for the service will be the first activity required in preparation of the service implementation.

### **Paratransit (Curb-to-Curb)**

Federal regulations require Americans with Disability Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service for all areas within three-quarters of a mile from fixed-routes, operating the same time and days as the fixed routes that affords this specialized service to individuals who for reason of a disability are unable to access the fixed route system. An ADA plan is required to be submitted to FTA, which CARTS will need to prepare and submit in advance of the service initiation. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

CARTS now operates one paratransit route within Georgetown, and also provides additional routes with service into Austin, Round Rock, and Temple. The paratransit routes in Georgetown would continue to provide service to citizens who could not otherwise utilize the fixed route service, but will require added hours to coincide with the hours and days of the fixed route service.

### **Vehicle Requirements**

Five buses will be required. This plan calls for four buses to be operated in daily service, and one spare vehicle will be needed per FTA regulations. CARTS will utilize currently identified federal funding to purchase these vehicles. We will use small 25-foot buses to begin the service, but will plan on acquiring larger low floor buses as the system matures. These first buses will be light duty vehicles designed to last five years, and have a standard transit entry door, will be accessible to persons with disabilities, and powered by clean-burning fuel (propane). All will have bike racks that carry up to two bikes.



## Vehicle Storage/Maintenance

CARTS has 2 vehicle maintenance centers where all vehicles are maintained and serviced. Minor repairs and oil changes will be done locally. CARTS will need to establish a local bus yard for the service in Georgetown that will include propane fueling facilities. CARTS has a contractor that provides its fueling infrastructure and fuel that will install the fueling facility. Initially we can use the CARTS Round Rock facility if needs be, but ideally we would have a facility located and prepared for service start-up located in Georgetown.

## Fares

Fares will be \$1.00 per one-way trip, with free transfers. Half fare will be offered to senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and students and children. Monthly passes and multi-ride tickets will be available. Electronic fare media is now under development and will be introduced in Georgetown once it is completed.

## Budget

CARTS budget estimates are based on its historical operating costs in increments of vehicle hours operated. This rate is calculated annually based on total hours of service and the total costs to provide service as determined by its annual financial statements prepared by an independent auditor. Breakdown of the categories of expense are provided. Detailed cost estimates by budget categories can be provided on request.

Number of operating (vehicle) hours:	14,664
Cost per hour (includes all operation & administrative costs):	\$50
Total Operating Expense	\$733,200

### Expense Categories

Driver Salary and Fringe	\$246,355
Vehicle Operation	\$322,608
Insurance/Safety/Training	\$20,000
Management/Overhead/Facility	\$144,237

### Estimated Total Start-up and first year Operating Expenses

Annual Operating Cost Fixed Route	\$ 733,200
Annual Operating Paratransit (4134 hrs)	\$ 186,030
Capital - Vehicles	\$ 500,000
Capital – Benches/Shelters, Signs	\$ 103,000
Capital-Transit Hub	\$ 35,000
Total	\$ 1,557,230

### Revenues

Buses CARTS Federal/State	\$ 400,000
CARTS bus match	\$ 100,000
CARTS paratransit	\$ 186,030
Farebox Estimates	\$ 87,984
Unidentified	\$ 783,216



## **Funding Issues**

The State of Texas provides funding from its general revenues and allocates rural transit funds from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 program to eligible entities, like CARTS, through the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). State funding for transit has declined in recent years, and the State has initiated a formula to distribute both federal and state dollars that has essentially made service expansion dollars unavailable.

Given the existing fiscal climate, it may prove a challenge to obtain any significant amount of state or federal funds to start this service. CARTS will explore every available opportunity to apply for additional funding for this service, and will enlist the assistance of the City in making the case for the efficacy of TxDOT investing discretionary dollars to this project.

## **Implementation**

It is anticipated that the implementation will require a minimum of 6 months to deploy the needed infrastructure and complete final implementation planning, marketing and system start-up activities. This period will allow for several items to be undertaken or developed at the same time, including the installation of signage, shelters, hiring and training drivers, marketing, and the production of route maps.

What are the steps we will need to take?

1. Begin funding activities with the Texas Department of Transportation.
2. Determine location and design transfer hub.
3. Determine location and design shelters, benches and bus stop signage.
4. Continue interaction with the public as the system is prepared for initiation, and work with businesses that may participate financially or otherwise.
5. Determine system identification and look. Develop graphics and route maps.
6. Establish marketing plan for service.
7. Determine bus yard location.
8. Prepare buses for Georgetown service
9. Fine tune routes and timings.
10. Construct and install hub, shelters, benches and signage.
11. Set opening day.
12. Open

CARTS will serve as the facilitator, but the service is the City's. That will be our outlook and encompasses all of our business practices. The "art" of transit is an arcane and specific exercise that we are practiced in, and while it requires us to deal with a great deal of red tape and bureaucracy to implement new service, central to our efforts is always the knowledge that its success is entirely determined by public acceptance and use. This is your city and you know best, and what will work, and what won't.

We have enjoyed great cooperation and assistance from City staff and the Committee members in completing this initial planning. If you choose for us to continue development of this service that aspect of the process will be ever more essential if we are to be able to provide the City the product that we together expect—the best.

