

Consideration of an Urban-Rural Transit District Within Galveston County, Texas

Background

Over the past 18 months, there has been considerable expansion of new transit services and other transit initiatives within Galveston County. Transit implementation efforts, capital projects, and planning studies that have been kicked off or are underway include:

- Texas City Fixed Route
- La Marque Fixed Route
- Mall of the Mainland Park and Ride
- UTMB - Victory Lakes (League City) Park & Ride (Under Development)
- Galveston Island Transit Regional Maintenance Facility (March 2010 Construction)
- Galveston - Houston Mobility Corridor Alternatives Analysis (Underway)

With the growing demand in Galveston County for public transit services, Galveston County Commissioners met to consider the creation of a County wide Urban and Rural Transit District, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 458 of the Texas Transportation Code. Creation of such a District would better facilitate improved countywide transit coordination, provide a decision making framework to address unmet transit needs, provide an inclusive forum for discussing federal and state funding availability, and a better organized structure for developing regional transit services such as commuter bus and rail.

In accordance with Galveston County Commissioners Court action, representatives of twelve (12) cities within the County met on April 13th in a “Public Transportation Conference” and voted unanimously to hold a Public Hearing to take place on Thursday, June 3, 2010, to explore public support for creation of a Countywide Urban-Rural Transit District. It was agreed to hold the Public Hearing at the Wayne Johnson Community Center in Carbide Park in La Marque.

Why create a countywide Transit District?

- Current public transportation services are limited.
- Improve capacity to provide transit access to employment as well as access to goods and services, including medical services.
- Forum and framework for new services to fill gaps
- Percentage of senior citizens in Galveston County over the next decade will increase transit demand.
- Insure citizens their fair share of federal and state transit dollars which now go to Houston Metro
- Countywide Transit District could play a strategic role in developing commuter rail to serve the Galveston County

What will it cost? Will it create a new tax?

- Creation of the Transit District does not authorize any new tax and no costs are proposed.
- If a member community would like to receive transit services, the city will have to pay its fair share of local costs to support the service.
- If a member community does not want transit services, no local share funds will be required of the city.

When and how would the Transit District be created?

The Conference has voted to convene a public hearing on Thursday, June 3, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the Wayne Johnson Community Center in Carbide Park in La Marque. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Conference may, by majority vote, resolve to create and establish the boundaries of the proposed Transit District.

City Membership in District

Within 60 days of the creation of the Transit District, each City's governing body will determine if the City will be a member of the Transit District. They will become a member of the Transit District by City Council Resolution. In Galveston County each member City will select a representative to serve as an elected officer of the Transit District governing body.

Can a City “opt” out of the Transit District after its creation?

Yes - at any time by a similar Resolution moving to opt out of the District.

Can a City that does not join the District initially “opt” into the Transit District later?

Yes – By Resolution and selection of a City representative to the Transit District governing body.