

RTCC Meeting Notes

11-16-21

Attendees:

Misty Hendon (HOTCOG)
Russell Devorsky (HOTCOG)
Rep Pledger (HOTCOG)
Gary Luft (HOTCOG)
Dan Dalton KFH Group
Ken Hosen (KFH Group)
Serena Stevenson (General Manager for Waco Transit Systems)
Annette Polk (Waco MPO)
Susan Baker (Bosque County Senior Services)
Debbie King (Executive Director Meals on Wheels for Falls and Hill counties)
Heather Travers (McLennan County)
Julie Talbert (HOT Workforce Board, Childcare Services Program)
Judge Jay Elliott (Falls County)
Debbie Tahiri (TxDOT)

Call to order @ 02:06pm

This meeting was posted in accordance with Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, as amended, known as the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Rep: During the previous meeting Judge Lewis inquired about the governance board for this meeting.

Russell: Previously Judge Lewis was the chairperson for RTCC and we can continue to have him as the chairperson until he's replaced. Judge Elliott was also a chairperson and can continue in that role.

Rep: Next thing on the list was discussion of names and groups that will be added as an addendum to accompany the bylaws. This was to have one person, Gary Luft, to be the voting member that represents the health and human services group.

Gary Luft: This is not so that I can vote in place of everyone. We will have a group of about 6 different social service providers that will vote as one particular component. We will meet and talk in advance of the regular meeting. The health and human service component will only have one vote made up of the 6 organizations we identify. We can add additional organizations as needed.

Currently we will have the following groups represented under the Health & Human Services vote:

Area Agency on Aging of the Heart of Texas (AAAHOT)
Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) – local Waco office representative
Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOC TIL)
Heart of Texas Region Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center (MH-MR)

Veterans Administration (VA)
Central Texas Senior Ministries
Others Identified as needed

Rep: Anyone have any others that need to be added.

Julie: Susan Wilson with EOAC should be on there.

Gary: Yes, we should add EOAC.

Rep: We will add her to the group. If any additional groups are needed, we can add them via addendum.

Group to be represented:

Area Agency on Aging of the Heart of Texas (AAAHOT)
Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) – local Waco office representative
Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOC TIL)
Heart of Texas Region Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center (MH-MR)
Veterans Administration (VA)
Central Texas Senior Ministries
EOAC
Others Identified as needed

Ken: Presentation of Gap Analysis, also called Needs Assessment. We're going back and looking at the demographics and see what services are out there now and then filling in the gaps. We don't just do it by looking at those things, we also had extensive outreach, which is listed in the report. We'll go over some of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. What's essential is having excellent public transportation. We've done a comprehensive operations analysis for HOT RTD.

Looking at weaknesses, a lot of what we see is that there's no brand for public transit. Our vehicles are plain white with a red stripe. We've seen other places with bright buses where they're recognized and everyone knows. We need a nice name, paint scheme, etc.

Not a lot of local funding. We've seen possible solutions working with Walmart, HEB, Target and other organization to get funds like other communities have done across the country. Paris Texas generated money from private sector and Walmart has opportunities for that as well

Significant duplication of services is another weakness which was discussed in the last meeting.

Final weakness is the service design.

*Ken's presentation was cut off.

Judge Elliott: Where are we at with the medicare money and Marlin needs?

Rep: We have met with Serena and Ken and looked at how we can coordinate and get it to where we need it to be. Medicaid, Ken is getting it to where HOTCOG can be set up and certified. Right now it's still Serena and Waco Transit. They are subcontractors to two different brokers. Once we get our number we will get certified and get into that list of subcontractors. It's important to note that the people that are doing the contracting are going to go with the lowest bid so it's still possible to see Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit to still have riders.

Judge Elliott: Just wants to make sure we're a part of it and we're doing what we're supposed to be doing.

Ken joined again

Ken: Reviewed opportunities and threats as outlined on the attached report.

Ridership – If you look at Limestone County, they have more riders annually than the other 4 counties combined. If you look at ridership per capita you can see the disparity between them. Limestone has far more than we would normally see. The other 4 counties have considerably less than we would normally see. Either Limestone is way over performing or the others are way underperforming or a combo of both. We aren't sure what's going on, but we can surmise from this that we can certainly see a gap in the other counties where the ridership per capita should be double what it is. This leads us to believe there's potential significant need.

The open houses we conducted resulted in a lot of comments which are also listed in the attached report.

Gap analysis covers a number of areas and the first is Geographic location. Most of the out-of-area needs continue to be in Waco and currently 67% of service is directed towards Waco in terms of ridership. We know that Temple draws residents from Falls County and a major destination is the VA. We heard from a number of Hill and Bosque County residents that need travel to Fort Worth for medical services. Freestone residents needed travel to Corsicana, which is something we already provide.

Intra-County services is still something that's continuing to be requested.

For times, late night and late shifts always seems to be an issue. We can look at van pools or carpools and combining services.

Population and ridership - Limestone is shining.

Transportation Service Type – mobility on demand, micro transit, vehicle coming within hour, bigger cities (Hillsboro and Mexia) could probably take existing vehicles in that area and deploy as on demand service and still get people door to door. We want to look at current routes and getting people to Waco – van pools and fixed service in rural service where they get certain rides in the week.

Branding – Solved without too much difficulty – when new vehicles are purchased, they will have new paint scheme and logos added at that time.

Overall outreach and marketing – putting schedule online so they can see when they can go so they can schedule to go together.

Making greater awareness of service – Painting of bus is best way to go with that – bright color bus where people notice, catchy name and phone number on the side.

Possibly address regional one call center – internally for HOTRTD or in combination with McLennan and Waco transit.

Technology – looking for that demand response service to on demand service – doesn't require much technology – number of companies with product availability.

Improved integration between service providers.

In terms of gaps in the need for funding, bringing the ENMT funding back to the region and perhaps looking at more opportunities with using the 5310 programs to procure additional vehicles and bring more money into the area.

Coordination of service – should be operating in own regions, but there's also room to work together. We're already use Waco Transit for maintenance and perhaps we could do joint training and future technology together.

Rep: Is there anyone that needs to add public comments. (no response)

Rep: There was a request to make the next meetings in person. How does everyone feel about that?

Ken: Available as needed.

Rep: We can still provide the virtual meeting at the same time. Misty will send an email to ask for feedback on when to hold the live meeting.

Ken: The strategies memo will be available in the next few days.

Open discussion on preferences of virtual versus in person.

Rep: We will do the next meeting in person and offer the option of virtual to those that would rather do that.

Meeting adjourned