

Transit Empowerment Fund (TEF) Senior Mobility Solutions Summit

September 20, 2024, 8:30am-Noon

St. David's Foundation

Participants: Suzanne Anderson, AGE of Central Texas; Faith Lane, Alzheimer's Association; Elsa Bui, Elderwheels; Kelly Maltsberger, COA Parks and Recreation; Tina Porter, CapMetro; Johanna Mandel, Capital City Village; Carla Young, Drive a Senior, NW; Erwin Cuellar, Chariot; Nicole Howe, Austin Public Health; Miguel Alvarez, COA Parks and Recreation; Louise Friedlander CapMetro; Octavio Hinojosa, Chariot; Mike Stubblefield, Chariot; Halana Kaleel, City of Austin

TEF Board: Kathleen Baireuther, Martin Kareithi, Andrew Levack, Gretchen Flateau

Support: Diane Miller, Sam Woollard, Kelley Abell

Welcome:

- Andrew Levack welcomed everyone to St David's Foundation
- Kathleen Baireuther provided an overview of TEF and recapped the aims of the meeting:
 - Purpose: To explore current challenges and opportunities for senior mobility and envision new solutions for connecting seniors to critical programs, services, and social opportunities.
 - Objectives:
 - Understanding Our Current Context – gain clarity on current trends, stakeholder roles, and offerings
 - Exploring Challenges and Opportunities – discuss the scale and scope of 'pain points' and potential areas for innovation
 - Envisioning Collaborative Solutions – identify how we might work together to develop new solutions and next steps for moving forward

Agenda:

- Diane reviewed the agenda and discussion agreements

Introductions:

Participants introduced themselves asking: What big question do you bring to this gathering? What do you hope to get from and give to this group? Some common themes: need for inventory, coordination and need for a hub.

Understanding Our Current Context:

Gretchen Flatau provided an overview of recent demographic data from the City of Austin: Age of Change report and recommendations from the Age Friendly Austin Action Plan and AGE of Central Texas Senior Transportation Research Report.

Diane shared the results from the survey conducted with event registrants before the summit.

Survey Question: *"How has the delivery of transportation services for older adults changed over the past five years?"*

Respondent Themes:

- Increased senior population, increased demand
- Limited resources, funding has not increased even though demand has
- Lack of volunteers, especially after COVID
- Some improvements to services (larger service area, improved metro access responsiveness, more van fixed routes)
- More tech savviness
- Increased use of rideshare
- More traffic
- Increased chronic health issues

Survey Question: *“Relevant to transportation services, how has Austin’s growing older adult population changed how you deliver your services?”*

Respondent Themes:

- Increased need and demand for services
- More focus on fixed route rides/group rides versus individual rides
- More strain on volunteer base
- Increased use of rideshare or paid drivers

Discussion:

- Big population that does not know how to access electronic based services
- Extremely challenging to communicate with older adults – don’t answer phone, hard to let them know of new opportunities via text or email
- CapMetro moved away from fixed routes but there seems to be a trend back to fixed route
- Many have moved outside of Austin but still need to get to metro area for services
- Crossing transit jurisdictions is a big challenge for coordination
- More tollways which increase costs for nonprofits and small businesses and not using tollways adds time in transit

Stakeholders Exercise

Participants posted responses to the following questions:

- **Who does your organization serve?**
- **What services do you provide?**
- **Have you been engaged in collaborative efforts in the past and, if so, what?**

Organization	Who served	Services	Collaborative efforts
AGE of Central Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Older adults and family caregivers. We specialize in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult day care• Early memory loss program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For transportation services, we

	dementia services through our Adult Day Cares and other programs – 6 programs of direct support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver education Navigation services Technology learning lab Caregiver support groups Durable medical equip. lending 	have a contract with Family Eldercare to pick up folks at their HACA properties and take them shopping.
Alzheimer's Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Texas (21 counties), older adults, caregivers, professionals and those impacted by Alzheimer's and all forms of dementia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Outreach and support for those effected by dementia Professional training for first responders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entire model of service is based on community collaboration. <i>No specific transportation collaboration. Do not have vehicles.</i>
Austin Public Health Age-Friendly Austin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin's older adult community age-friendly program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age-friendly does not provide direct services More information about services and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specifically around transportation. I do work closely with the Commission on Aging – Transportation Domain and the Aging Services Council
Chariot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60+ adults (non-driving) who require transportation to essential services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual and group transport for seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing realization of shared/common issues and needs; collaboration initial conversations with the city, city council funding groups and other similar orgs
City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults 50+ living in the City of Austin 10 Council Districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer senior transportation Congregate meal sites Senior recreational activity centers Varsity games, outreach Daily rides to COA facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Commission on Aging for domain work No collaborative efforts for transportation but lots of

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve older adults with means, medical rides, private rides for shopping • Group rides for private events (field trips) 	collaborative efforts for programs
City of Austin Senior Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Council Districts of the City of Austin Seniors 60 and older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation to Recreation Centers that partner with the Congregate meal program. • Individual rides to doctor appointments and others (have to apply) 8-9 routes (70-80 people) and 7-8 individual rides for medical appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No
CapMetro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capmetro service Austin and other jurisdictions • OMM services Austin and surrounding counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource for transportation (OMM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMM has collaborated with many organizations – CARTS, City of Austin, etc.
CapMetro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone in the CapMetro service areas/Central Texas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed-route, commuter rail • Demand response • Ride Share • Bike Share • Paratransit • Commuter bus • Mobility management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEF, ATP, City of Austin • Transit planning and capital projects delivery • Food delivery • Vaccination appointments • Central Texas Food Bank
Capital City Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members (all 55 years or older; oldest is now 102/youngest 64) living anywhere with an Austin address. • Membership is based on a sliding scale making it possible for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer transportation • Educational programs/presentations (in-person/online) • Computer and device assistance • Minor home maintenance • Yard clean-ups through Young Men's Service League of NW Austin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, our organization is a member of the Aging Services Council of Central Texas Steering Committee • Member of ADRC at the Area Agency on Aging in CAPCOG.

	<p>incomes to participate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for eligibility 55 or older and living independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care calling to members living independently 	
Chariot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior rides in the Austin area 60+ adults (non-driving) who require transportation to essential services (doctors, grocery, community events) Central, west, south Income less than \$50,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free transportation to essential services / individual and group Opportunity to socialize via community rides to planned outings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with senior apartment complex Partnered with senior activity centers Work with other drive a senior groups as needed to facilitate rides for seniors Growing realization of shared/common issues and needs Collaboration, initial conversations with the city, city council, funding groups and other similar orgs
Drive a Senior Northwest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors 60+ living in 125 square miles of Northwest Austin (Great Hills, Steiner Ranch, etc), Cedar Park, Leander 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free transportation Handy man help Friendly visits/calls 2x month social and lunch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, over the past 30 years with the other volunteer driver programs in Central Texas – loose collaboration with them for sharing best practices, etc
Elderwheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people (mostly 55-85 yrs) and their care advocates (family, case managers, social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible assisted transport in wheelchair accessible ramped vehicles Toileting / transfer assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via Greater Austin Asian American Chamber of Commerce

	workers) who have an accessible transport (wheelchair/walker) need via private pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note taking and advocacy as needed during medical appts. 	Conference on Aging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informally with AGE, CapMetro Access, Cap. Area PanAsian's Society on individual client needs
Transit Empowerment Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low income transit riders and others in community that benefit from other transit options Non-profits/gov serving 150% Federal Poverty level in / around CapMetro service territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discounted passes Demonstration / planning grants Money, expertise, introductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, Drive A Senior Collaborative Mergers of drive programs Aging Services Council Demonstration projects

Discussion:

Asked participants to place sticky dots on organizations they work with most often. Top choices were AGE of Central Texas (8 dots) and CapMetro (11 dots).

Asked participants what other groups they work with, or that have a role in this system, that are not here today:

- Senior Services of Austin (private for profit)
- CARTS
- Faith in Action Georgetown
- Senior Access
- Drive a Senior ATX
- CAMPO's RTCC – bridge human service and public transportation
- Sendaride (private for profit)
- Ameri Solutions (private for profit)
- Z Trips (private for profit)
- Star Senior (Buda)
- Round Rock on Demand (private for profit)
- Non-emergency medical transportation ie, diabetes
- Senior living often have transportation for upper income
- Affordable housing developers – focus on moderate to low-income housing as mostly do not provide transportation:
- Foundation Communities
- Housing Authority sites

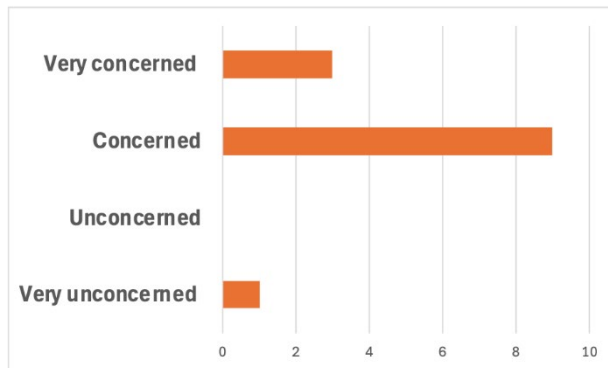
- Fetch
- ETA Transportation
- Best Neighbor Transportation (private for profit)
- G and J Transportation (private for profit)
- Uber Kyle (private for profit)
- Lone Star
- Central Health
- Capital Area Parkinson's Society
- Central Texas Food Bank
- Family Eldercare
- Meals on Wheels Central Texas
- HEB/Walmart/Target
- South Asian Immigrant Volunteer Association (SAIVA)
- Austin Freenet
- Community Tech Network
- Social workers and discharge planners at hospitals
- LGBTQ Community

Exploring Challenges and Opportunities

Diane shared the results from the survey conducted with event registrants before the summit.

Survey Question: *“To what degree are you concerned about current trends related to meeting the mobility needs of Austin's seniors?”*

Respondent answers:



Survey Question: *“What are your top three barriers related to the transportation/mobility needs of seniors and connecting them with critical programs, services, and social opportunities?”*

Respondent Themes:

- Need additional funding
- Lack of volunteers
- Awareness of services
- Understaffed
- Need for door to door services

- Traffic
- Lack of options in some areas (especially rural)
- Technology barriers and issues with scheduling
- Cost for users
- Large service areas
- Connection to wrap around services
- Fleet coordination
- Safety concerns
- Wait lists
- Need more accessible parking spaces

Discussion: added the following barriers.

- Increased cost for providing services (insurance/vehicles/tolls/vehicle repair and maintenance)
- Competitive/fragmented landscape
- Wheelchair accessible transportation
- Training for providers / volunteers
- increase in population with mild to moderate dementia which complicates transportation – often requires family member – need to train workers in identifying dementia and mental health
- Communication – cognitive issues
- Deterioration of family and social networks
- Fewer young people getting their driver's license

Stakeholders Exercise

Of the barriers, what would you personally want to see overcome and why is that important to you?

Participants reported out on what they want to address and why:

- Education and awareness – want to help seniors find available resources and need to learn about how they want to receive information
- Fleet coordination – what could happen if there was coordination? Lots of improvements in system
- Improve communication with seniors – want to serve them better and would save money, time, resources
- Awareness of services – have to tell folks more than once, has to be drilled and remembered, have to be financially, emotionally sound to stay independent. Needs coordination and complementary services. Need connection and community.
- Volunteerism – increasing aging population but volunteerism is a challenge and people don't want to help
- Driving complexity – deterrent for older people to drive because of complexity / congestion
- How to package / explain all the transportation options and how to navigate in once place
- A lot of old models are based on an old Austin – accessible senior centers, volunteers – need to figure out how to serve highly complex, sprawling metropolis. A lot of older adults

falling through the gaps. A lot of new residents who aren't connected or aren't familiar with areas.

- Lack of representation for groups.
- Lack of family. Families don't have time or are not available – need to create community to support.

Note: there is a Senior Transportation Ride Guide – need to make more available and translated

Envisioning Collaborative Solutions

Diane shared the results from the survey conducted with event registrants before the summit.

Survey Question: *“Describe any current or future trends in senior transportation that make you feel optimistic.”*

Respondent Themes:

- More awareness for seniors and their needs, especially with aging baby boomer population
- Government, companies, and nonprofit orgs motivated to find solutions
- Focus on social isolation as an issue area
- Larger senior population in Austin
- More work in rural areas
- Potential for innovation
- Increased tech savviness
- Medicare reimbursement/coverage for transportation, rideshare vouchers, and senior-focused programs

Stakeholders Exercise

Themes from question “If this work of improving senior mobility lived up to its fullest potential, what do you envision is possible?”

- Connection – how do we connect in cities and between cities/jurisdictions
- Centralized something – entity that takes calls so that people in neighborhoods can support each other
- Awareness for seniors about services and for the rest of the world to know that there is a need for senior mobility options
- Benchmarking from other cities
- Coordination, collaboration
- Technology
- Older adults at the table around decision making and planning – meaningful and intentional community engagement
- GPS systems on vehicles, proactively stopping in client home if not heard from them
- Coordinated system that is simple for people to use – person makes one call and they get a ride

Moving to Action

Big Takeaways

- Convene and connect is helpful but move to action
- Disperse some funds for pilot
- Fund a technology solution for connecting, i.e. dispatch
- Convene and gather again
- Gather information from seniors on how they see the barriers
- Get all Senior Drive programs into one organization that covers the whole region
- Connect service providers together
- Find ways to subsidize rides for more free or low cost options i.e. vouchers
- Hold accountable - how have recommendations been put into action and discussion about what has been tried and not worked – transparency in communication
- Time to come together and talk about what are we going to do – who is going to do what

Each participant identified specifics that TEF can do and actions they're willing to take.

What Can TEF do to help support ongoing exploration and action?	Participant/Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Get stakeholders together to work on solutions➤ Gather info from seniors on challenges and barriers or work with other groups to do this	Gretchen Flatau / TEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Continue bringing organizations together to coordinate and collaborate. It's not a call out, it's a call in.➤ Look at previous recommendations. How are they being put into action or why were they not put into action	Halana Kaleel / APH-AFA Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Continue to host these group meetings.➤ Coordinate shared resources (discounts on tolls, etc.)➤ Public talks (educational)	Erwin Cuellar / Chariot
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Funding for small business to be able to provide discounted prices (grant) so that private pay prices don't increase as inflation worsens and be able to pay quality healthcare drivers	Elsa Bui / Elderwheels
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Consider offering funding for transportation providers outside the CapMetro service area➤ Funding for tolls, money for gas gift cards provide to volunteer drivers➤ Help us connect to other funders if not TEF	Carla Young / Drive a Senior, NW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Convene and connect➤ Money and intros➤ Creative execution / efficient execution➤ CTRMA grants	Kathleen Baireuther / TEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I have been saying for many years why are there no pilot /funding/grants that can help with funding of providing reasonable transportation for the senior community. There seems to be grants for everything but rarely hear of anything for senior focused on transportation.	Tina Porter / CapMetro

➤ Try to connect service providers	Miguel Alvarez / COA Parks and Recreation
➤ Finding ways to connect all driving organizations to reach more participants	Kelly Maltsberger / COA Parks and Recreation
➤ Find ways to subsidize rides to provide more free or low cost choices for seniors, possible vouchers ect.	

What actions are you willing to commit to as a result of today's discussion?	Participant/Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend and participate in meetings ➤ Make connection with Commission on Aging and their efforts 	Gretchen Flatau / TEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Any assistance or guidance needed on community engagement, I can help. ➤ Figuring out how to include older adults in decision making practices about their programs, services, etc. 	Halana Kaleel / APH-AFA Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue personally working with TEF ➤ Explore more tech solutions, shared GPS ➤ Bring in more volunteers 	Erwin Cuellar / Chariot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further meetings to brainstorm ➤ Open minded sharing of ideas, solutions, problems ➤ Out of the box thinking 	Elsa Bui / Elderwheels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Willing to serve on a task force or provide input on ideas and data for research 	Carla Young / Drive a Senior, NW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lead TEF with these in mind 	Kathleen Baireuther / TEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I would like to be a part of further discussions on how to tackle the transportation issues for the seniors in Austin and surrounding communities 	Tina Porter / CapMetro
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reach out to other service providers and try to connect to provide a better service new 	Miguel Alvarez / COA Parks and Recreation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to be part of the conversation ➤ Use our program population to extract thoughts, ideas or to test projects 	Kelly Maltsberger / COA Parks and Recreation

Parking Lot:

- Approach toll authority regarding getting a discounted rate for organizations serving seniors

Final reflection: What's something you're taking away from today?

- Everyone on the same page
- Being in the room and making connections is important