

Houma – Thibodaux
Metropolitan Planning Organization

South Central Planning and Development Commission Office
5058 West Main Street, Gray, LA 70359
985-851-2900

M E E T I N G S U M M A R Y

CHSTP Committee Meeting

Date: October 28, 2009 9:00 AM

Meeting Location: SCPDC's Pelican Room, Gray, LA.

In Attendance

Committee:	Peggy Krieg, Lafourche ARC Rose Grabert, Lafourche ARC Linda Pertuit, Lafourche COA Lester Adams, Lafourche Special Education District No. 1 Diana Edmundson, Terrebonne COA Darrel Waire, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government Kelli Cunningham, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government Wendell Voisin, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government Darla Cantrelle, Terrebonne COA Sheila Clayton, St. James Parish Government
Staff:	Leo Marretta, SCPDC Joshua Manning, SCPDC Scott Leger, SCPDC
Others in Attendance:	Mike Watts, LA DOTD Harold Beck, LA DOTD

Call to Order

S. Leger called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

Agenda Item # 1
Introductions

Members of the committee, staff and others introduced themselves.

Agenda Item # 2
LPTA Conference – December

S. Leger stated that a lot of people will be attending the LPTA conference. Small discussion on the conference.

Agenda Item # 3
Transportation Service Form

S. Leger stated he is hoping to have a Transportation Service Fact Sheet created, printed and laminated before the next meeting. He added that it should also be placed on the SCPDC website for convenient downloading and printing.

L. Marretta stated that they were also thinking of making it available for the DOTD Transit Section so they could update their resource directory and website as well.

Agenda Item # 4
Urban/Rural Boundaries

S. Leger states he has been working on this for the past 6 months. There are issues concerning the urban and rural boundaries in Terrebonne Parish, where they are located and who can and cannot provide transit service inside the urbanized area.

M. Cazaubon stated that this also involves Assumption and Lafourche Parishes. She stated that Ms. Rosa Lou Molaison from the Assumption COA was not able to attend this meeting because she was attending another meeting.

S. Leger directed the committee's attention to the map on the wall and also a handout map. The orange section is the 2000 census designated urbanized area. It is the urbanized area that the census draws up using the 2000 census data based on the new population in this area. The green section is the smooth urbanized area. S. Leger's understanding is that this is the area they smoothed out to remove all the jagged ends and outs of all of the pieces of the urbanized area in the orange zone. This was done to give more continuity for transportation planning. The problem comes in when the rural transit providers are only allowed to provide transit outside this area and the urban transit providers only provide transit inside this area. Someone spoke of the funding. S. Leger stated that the funds are suppose to be allocated based upon the population of the urbanized area. Everyone has been using the orange urbanized area to determine whether a trip is in or out of the urbanized area. In 2003 our MPO adopted the map and created the new smoothed urbanized area. Since this time no one knew we were supposed to switch from the old orange urban boundary to the new green urban boundary for the purpose of determining urban and rural transit trips.

L. Marretta directed everyone to the emails in the back of the packet. These emails were sent back and forth from SCPDC to DOTD. DOTD has been trying to determine why funding has been interrupted in this service area. He also stated that the general public would not have knowledge, when calling for a ride, of the difficult task of figuring out who the provider should be.

M. Cazaubon spoke about the River Parish Transit Authority (RPTA) as an example. RPTA includes St. James, St. Charles and St. John Parishes. Shelia Clayton is the transit supervisor for St. James Parish which has a very large rural 5311 program. The other two parishes wanted a rural program as well. St. John Parish is considered rural. St. Charles Parish is mostly urban when going by the smooth urban area which S. Leger spoke of earlier. There is one service for these two parishes and what they are doing is billing to the grant where the rider is being picked up. They use trip logs to record where a passenger is picked up and dropped off and because it is a demand-response service this can be tracked. She believes that the problem with the urban service in Terrebonne Parish is because it is a fixed route. There is no tracking system. It is working in the

River Parishes because of the tracking log. The issue comes up again with the little piece of Assumption Parish that is in the urban area. What do you do there? Lafourche Parish is trying to figure it out. The City of Thibodaux is trying to develop a fix route service while Lafourche Parish is applying for 5311 funds to implement a rural service. This will get complicated because the urban area cuts out the middle of the parish. So how do you address that issue?

S. Leger explained how they address this problem in Terrebonne. The Terrebonne COA which provides the rural transit service needed a method to figure out what their trips were going to be. About 4 years ago, SCPDC created a list of streets that fell in the orange urban area and provided the list to the COA. When the COA received a call they could check the address and if the street was on the list then they could provide the service. If the street was not on the list they couldn't. The problem was that it was an all or nothing determination for the street. The boundaries of the old orange urban area did zig and zag across streets. The best they could do at that time was to determine if the street was on the list and assume that the addresses for that street were either all urban or all rural. But this is really not how it works out if you look at a detailed address map of each and every address along a street.

L. Marretta stated in the conversation that we needed to take the urban/rural boundaries maps and our concerns to a higher level because although they look great and may work for other departments it doesn't help the transportation planners. He suggested that we take this issue to the LPTA conference and see if we could get an answer.

S. Leger stepped out of the meeting to calculate the numbers on the population in the new and old urban areas.

M. Cazaubon discussed the needs assessment surveys. She stated that we spoke about getting a survey together at the last meeting. She provided an example of a telephone survey which was used for a prior project. We are trying to determine what kind of transportation services the community is in need of. We are not necessarily looking for what types of services they are looking for but where they want to go. What time of the day, what day of the week, etc. She feels it is a good start because most of the other surveys are focusing on the delivery of social services. She asked everyone to skim through the example and tell her what to add or remove. The sample survey was executed by a graduate student program at NSU as a class project. Once we get down the questions we want to ask, we will go back to NSU and see if we can get some pro bono assistance with this project. Denise Hughes had told her about Professor Simpson who does this and we contacted him but never got a reply.

L. Marretta asked if the telephone list that they were using was just from the white pages.

M. Cazaubon stated that it was coming from prior directories.

L. Marretta stated that it is people who ride transit as well as people who don't.

M. Cazaubon stated that this was done in an area that has no transit service, not even a taxi service and therefore not every question will be appropriate but she thought it was a good starting point. The end result of this is to determine what information we need to ask for in the survey such as zip codes. The first question might be, are public transit

services available in your area? The second might be, do you use public transit? Other questions might be, what form of transit do you use? Where do you need to go? Some small discussion went on about the questions. M. Cazaubon simplified that discussion by saying, if you had a transportation service where would you like to go? She stated that we might need community names for this question.

S. Clayton spoke about transportation to and from hospitals in Baton Rouge and Houma.

L. Marretta stated that this is a great demonstration about what Coordinated Human Services Transportation meetings are supposed to be about.

M. Cazaubon spoke about how the river parishes coordinate their pickups. The two dispatchers, field dispatcher and RPTA dispatcher, get on the phone and schedule the rides together. They pick out a location for the transfer of services. She stated that this can be done with the demand-response system. She discussed more about the river parishes transit system.

There was some discussion about the need for transportation for dialysis patients. This transportation would have to be every other day.

M. Cazaubon stated that she has the number for First Transit which she checked into a while back, however she didn't have a list of all the providers. She stated that there are only three parishes in the state that have no transit service at all. These parishes are St. Charles, St. John and St. Helena. There are no medicare providers in these three parishes. She will call and check into it again and see if anything was updated. We also need to add to that list, a list of cab services. The next question on the survey is what would be a fair price to pay? We may want to reconsider this and include metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge. We can also ask, between two parishes what are people willing to pay to get there? We know there are no longer Grey Hound bus services. A discussion took place on the next couple of questions. Would they support a tax if the need for transit is there? What do you think is important about the image of a public bus system? Do we need to add sheltered bus stops? What do you think of a public bus system in your area?

Martha stated that she would work on the survey and contact NSU.

S. Leger stated the total population of the green urban area is 150,624 and the orange urban area is 125,932. That is a difference of 24,692. Just Terrebonne would be; green urban area 91,875 and orange urban area 77,537. That is a difference of 14,438.

L. Marretta stated that about 25,000 people will not be able to be provided transit service using one map versa the other.

M. Cazaubon stated this spreads the 5311 services thinner because it spreads the service area apart. LA Hwy 1 goes in and out of the rural area as well as LA Hwy 308 and US Hwy 90 and a few other main highways. Using the orange urban area makes it hard to determine who receives service and who doesn't. How do you say you can pick up someone on this side the highway and not on the other?

L. Marretta asked how you can explain that to someone asking for transit service. They won't understand.

A simple solution is that you don't pickup anyone in that area. Discussions went on about this solution.

L. Marretta stated that all he can do is advise the committee on what the rules are as he understands them and that he can't make the decision.

L. Marretta stated that it might be better to do it and apologize as opposed to asking for permission.

To provide service you have to go through some of these areas to get to the areas you can serve. If we are going to do this maybe we can designate a certain day(s).

S. Leger stated that the question is what can we do about it? Who can we ask?

What if we are going in the orange urban area to pick up someone for dialysis? You don't want to put too much into it because they will turn us down. We are not the only area with urbanized and rural together. What are the other MPOs doing in this situation?

S. Leger stated that they took all urbanized areas and did this. In other areas it might not be as drastic but they did it to all urbanized areas.

It was suggested that we follow the orange zone.

S. Leger stated that no one person did this urbanized area adjustment. A computer calculated it. We will check with other MPOs and let you know what we find out.

You said earlier THEY smooth it out. Who is they?

M. Cazaubon stated that it is based on census blocks.

It was asked if we should just stay away from the green zone?

L. Marretta stated that we will be willing to back the committee in whatever is decided to do.

Agenda Item # 5
Discuss Objective

Objective 1.1: Improve our ability to determine need for transit services
Strategies: Needs Assessment and Solicit Public Input

Objective 2.1: Develop communication between providers
Strategies: Meet quarterly, develop shared definitions, build dialogue skills

M. Cazaubon stated in our last meeting that one of our goals was to come up with common definitions because we come from different agencies. So we found this glossary on FTA website. If we stick to this glossary when we get together, we won't be talking in code. Another thing we wanted to do and haven't gotten far enough along with

is the united we ride program. We identified 6 or 7 entities that fund transit on the federal level and we want to go through each of those and identify who funds what. We want to know what is available in Louisiana. An example is transit is an eligible item under the Community Development Block Grant but is not eligible in Louisiana through the rural competitive program because their priorities are other items. So we want to go through and pick them apart.

Agenda Items # 6
Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be on December 9, 2009 at 9:00 am.

Upcoming tentative dates are:

March 10, 2010

June 9, 2010

September 8, 2010

December 8, 2010