

# **Assisting Austin-Area Seniors Gain Access to Transportation: AN OPPORTUNITY REPORT**



**Prepared for the Austin Council on the Aging  
by Leadership Austin Action Team on Aging  
Class of 2003/2004**

The Leadership Austin Action Team, CAN, Capital Metro and other community groups are working together on an ongoing basis to address the services needed for individuals with mobility impairments as outlined on page 12 of this report. Progress will be reported as it occurs. If you are interested in being involved in this work, please contact the CAN offices at 512 414-8203.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2000, almost 35 million Americans were over age 65, comprising 12.4% of the nation's total population. In the next twenty years, this group of seniors age 65 and older will grow by almost 80 percent, swelling to 62 million. As baby boomers reach their 60s, 70s, and beyond, more seniors are going to require alternative methods of transportation, placing exponentially greater demands on existing services. Is our community currently providing an adequate response to the existing transportation needs of seniors? Is our community ready to respond to this dramatic demographic shift that will result in even greater and more complex needs?



This report identifies the existing needs and gaps in transportation services for seniors in the City of Austin in order to answer these questions. The report is the work of the 2004 Leadership Austin Action Team on Aging, with the assistance and support of the numerous individuals and agencies listed in the acknowledgements section.

First, some background: The Action Team on Aging partnered with the Community Action Network (CAN), beginning in the Fall of 2003, to develop a project that would help address the challenges facing the growing senior population in Austin and Central Texas. In our quest to narrow the scope of our project, we spent two months educating ourselves about the challenges facing seniors in our community. Because our Action Team was composed of a group of volunteers and had a short timeline to complete the project (our deadline was May 2004), we needed to work on a project with discrete and tangible outcomes. We also decided we wanted to develop a project that targeted seniors with the greatest needs, that would be valued and utilized by senior organizations, and that would have a long-term impact on seniors in the Austin Area.

After meeting with many agencies and individuals who have dedicated a large part of their careers to providing services to seniors, a common theme emerged: the pervasiveness of transportation challenges faced by seniors. We heard many stories about disabled seniors stranded in their homes or left standing on the curb for hours waiting for a ride. At the same time, we heard stories from the service providers about vans sitting vacant in parking lots due to lack of insurance, drivers not being able to help disabled seniors because of liability concerns, and duplication of services because of lack of coordination among providers.



There were three overarching needs we identified in our discussions: (1) the need for comprehensive and up-to-date information about transportation services for seniors, especially gaps in existing services; (2) the need for a dialogue among different transportation providers to identify areas for collaboration and action; and (3) the need for heightened community awareness about the issue of transportation for seniors.

This report is Part One of our project. In March and April 2004, our Action Team on Aging conducted a survey of the existing transportation system in Austin. This report discusses the results of the survey and provides information about the different transportation providers in Austin. Related to Part One of the report is the recent release of a comprehensive booklet by the West Austin Caregivers, *Ride Guide: Senior Transportation Options in the Greater Austin Area*, which lists information about the different transportation providers in the Austin Area. The Action Team on Aging provided updates to the booklet and secured funding for its printing. The booklet is available by contacting the West Austin Caregivers at 472-6339.

Part Two of our project takes place on May 13, 2004, with the convening of the first annual senior transportation summit: Assessing Senior Citizen Mobility Needs. The summit will bring together each of the senior transportation providers and other stakeholders in Austin to facilitate a dialogue about the gaps in services and other needs identified in this report. It is our hope that this dialogue will lead to an on-going discussion about how the providers and the community at large can partner together to address these needs.

And then there is Part Three: the need for heightened community awareness about the needs of the seniors in our community to access more efficient and effective transportation services. Transportation for seniors is an issue that affects our entire community: If our community does not ensure that seniors are able to be productively involved in our community, we all lose out. If you are reading this, please pass this report on to others you know in the community. Tell your employer and colleagues about the importance of this issue; tell the media, your friends, and your elected officials. For additional copies of the report, you may contact Leadership Austin at 512-322-5601; [info@leadershipaustin.org](mailto:info@leadershipaustin.org).



—2004 Leadership Austin, Action Team on Aging

## OVERVIEW OF NEEDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Transportation is a critical issue for the majority of older adults. The availability of adequate transportation impacts whether or not older adults can meet their needs such as going to the doctor, going grocery shopping or attending events at the senior center. The inability to access transportation threatens the ability of older adults to maintain their independence and meet their basic needs. Additionally, it increases the likelihood that they will become isolated and inactive. Inadequate transportation is also a problem for family members who must miss work and rearrange schedules to accommodate the transportation needs of older adult family members.

—Community Action Network, *Aging Services Environmental Scan* (February 2001)

### Who are Our Seniors?<sup>i</sup>

An estimated 54,333 (7%) of Travis County residents are age 65 or older. Here are some facts about these seniors in our community:

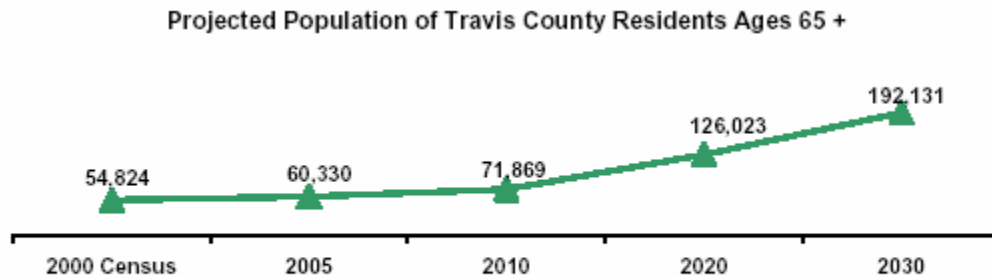
- More than 20,000 of these seniors in Travis County have a disability.
- An estimated 20% of all Travis County households are caring for older adult relatives.
- Living arrangements of seniors are connected to income levels, health status, and the availability of caregivers. Older adults who live alone are more likely to have health and financial problems than are older adults who live with a relative (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics, 2000). In 1998, nearly 75% of older males in the United States lived with a spouse, while 40% of older females lived alone.
- Texas currently has the second largest senior Hispanic population in the nation, second only to California, and the third largest senior African-American population, following New York and California. Currently, three-fourths of the senior population is Anglo.
- Females comprise 57% of the senior population, while males make up 43%.
- The poverty rate among Texas seniors exceeds the national average. Texas has the fifth highest poverty rate for older adults in the nation (AARP, 1999). An estimated 6.1% (3,300) of Travis

County residents age 65 and older live at or below the federal poverty line (\$719/month for an individual and \$906 a month for a two-person household).

- In 1998, the national median annual income for older men was \$18,000, while the median income for older women was just over \$10,000. Only 9% of elderly Anglos were below the poverty level in 1998, while 26% of elderly African-Americans and 21% of elderly Hispanics were below the poverty level.
- For older Americans who lived alone or with non-relatives, 21% were below poverty, while 6% of older Americans living with relatives were considered poor (AARP, 1999).
- The major sources of income for older Americans in 1996 were Social Security (reported by 91% of older Americans), income from assets (63%), public and private pensions (43%), earnings (21%), and public assistance (6%).
- Most seniors experience a decrease in personal mobility, regardless of the presence or absence of a disability.

## A Demographic Explosion

In the next twenty years, as the baby boomers grow old, the number of seniors in our community is going to explode. By 2020, the number of Texans older than 65 will increase 81%. By 2040, senior Texans will comprise almost one-fourth of the total Texas population. As the total number of seniors grows, so will the number of “senior seniors”—the number of seniors age 85 and older will increase nearly 250% in the next four decades. The Austin-San Marcos Metropolitan Area will experience the largest percent growth of seniors in the State. By 2030, the number of seniors age 65 or older in Travis County is expected to increase from 7% to 20% of the total population.

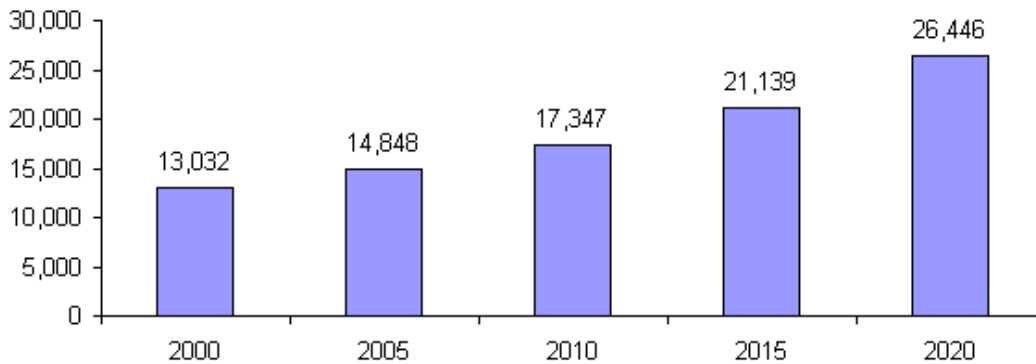


*(Source: 2000 Census, US Bureau of the Census as compiled by the Texas State Data Center)*

The faces of seniors will also change. The number of older adults with disabilities that affect their “activities of daily living” will more than double by 2020, and nearly triple by 2040. Similarly, the racial and ethnic composition of the elderly population is going to change. While Anglos currently comprise 71% of the elderly population in Texas, ethnic and racial minorities are growing rapidly. By 2030, ethnic and racial minorities will constitute a majority of all senior Texans, with Hispanics comprising 31 percent.

These dramatic changes in population will have profound implications for public policies relating to transportation for seniors and present our community with a unique set of challenges. If the community is not doing what it needs to be doing now to address the transportation needs of seniors, then responding to these demographic shifts will present even greater challenges.

Estimated Travis County Population (Ages 65 and Older) with Disabilities Who Have Some Difficulty with Activities of Daily Living - 1990 to 2020



(Source: Texas Health and Human Services Commission)

## The Transportation Needs of Seniors<sup>11</sup>

**More than one in five persons in the United States age 65 and older do not drive.** According to *Aging Texans: Stranded Without Options*, compiled by the Just Transportation Alliance (April 2004), there are 2.1 million seniors in Texas who are “transportation disadvantaged.” The reasons for so many seniors not driving includes:

- Declining health, eyesight, physical or mental abilities;
- Concern over safety (self-regulation);
- No car or no access to a car; and
- Personal preference.



For older persons who do not drive, alternative means of transportation include family members or friends with cars, public transit, taxi cabs, and nonprofit transportation providers. Of seniors surveyed in a study conducted for the Texas Office of Community

Transportation Services (OCTS), 25% are always dependent on family or friends to provide transportation for non-emergency needs such as trips to the grocery store, trips to church and synagogues, and social outings.

**Older non-drivers have a decreased ability to participate in the community and the economy.** Compared with older drivers, older non-drivers in the United States make:

- 15% fewer trips to the doctor;
- 59% fewer shopping trips and visits to restaurants;
- 65% fewer trips for social, family and religious activities.

Most seniors are unlikely to use fixed route bus services to meet their transportation needs. The reasons many seniors do not utilize fixed route bus services include physical and health problems and lack of information about how to access services. Health problems such as “arthritis, respiratory conditions, reduced stamina, fatigue, reduced muscle strength, and/or other

serious disabilities ... vastly complicated their use of available transportation options. For example, while a senior might live in a community with excellent transit services, they often experienced difficulty walking the distance needed to access a transit stop, waiting for the bus to arrive, and/or transporting goods or packages safely and comfortably while traveling.<sup>iii</sup>

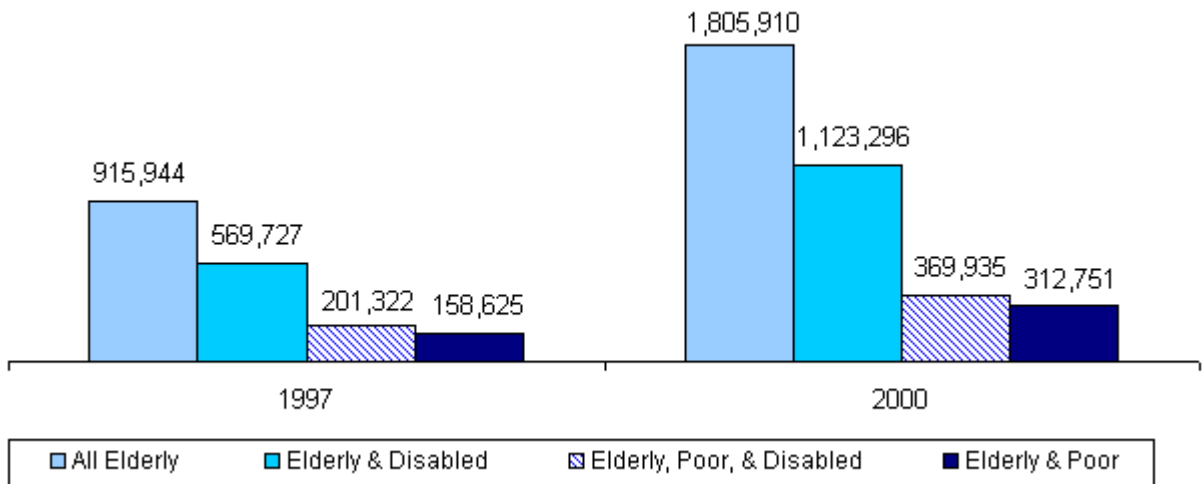
When reliable and accessible transportation options are unavailable, seniors face significant isolation and quality of life challenges. More than 50% of non-drivers 65 and older stay home on any given day. The impact of unreliable transportation resources can be harsh: In the study conducted for OCTS, **13% of seniors surveyed had gone without food during the past year for one or more days due to lack of transportation.** Nearly a quarter reported they had missed one or more medical appointments during the previous year.

As individuals age, if they own a car and know how to drive, they tend to drive less and limit the places they drive. They avoid peak driving times and stay closer to home. The decline in the use of a personal vehicle necessitates the reliance on other modes of transportation.

—Community Action Network, Aging Services  
Environmental Scan (February 2001)

**Seniors who belong to racial and ethnic minority groups are impacted the most harshly by the lack of transportation options.<sup>iv</sup>** Traditionally, these groups have experienced poorer health and lower socioeconomic status. Over a third of older African-Americans, older Asian Americans, and older Latinos stay home on a given day, while one in five (22%) of older anglos stay home on a given day. According to the Community Action Network, *Aging Services Environmental Scan* (February 2001), public transportation “does make a big dent in this problem: A fifth of older people in these minority populations use public transportation occasionally, compared to 10% of older anglos.” These ethnic and racial disparities are only likely to accelerate with the projected growth of elderly minority communities, especially Latinos.

**Number of Transportation Disadvantaged in Texas by Category - 1997 and 2000**



(Community Action Network, *Aging Services Environmental Scan* (February 2001))

## TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

In Austin, there are many transportation providers that serve seniors. The primary provider is Capital Metro. In addition to Capital Metro, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department also has an extensive service. Approximately 10 volunteer-based organizations provide transportation services to seniors in the Austin metropolitan area. All of these providers require advanced reservations, and some serve limited geographic areas or limited populations. Listed below are the major providers of transportation services to seniors in the Austin area. Additional details are available in the *Ride Guide: Senior Transportation Options in the Greater Austin Area*, compiled by West Austin Caregivers (512-472-6339).

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Primary Service</u>	<u>Phone</u>
<b>American Cancer Society Road to Recovery</b>	Transportation to medical appointments for cancer patients	512-919-1829
<b>Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area</b>	Information and referral service	512-916-6062 800-622-9111
<b>Capital Area Rural Transportation (CART)</b>	Transportation to and from rural locations	512-478-7433
<b>Capital Metro Transportation Authority</b>	General bus routes; buses are wheelchair accessible	512-474-1200
<b>Capital Metro Transit Store</b>	Senior ID Card for discounted bus rides	512-389-7454
<b>Capital Metro EasyRider</b>	Transport for groups of seniors (20+ riders)	512-389-7583
<b>City of Austin Parks and Recreation Dept (PARD)</b>	Various ride services including individual transportation and group rides for seniors	512-480-3012
<b>Far Northwest Caregivers</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-250-5021
<b>Georgetown Caregivers</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-868-9544
<b>Meals on Wheels &amp; More: Medi Wheels and Groceries to Go</b>	Transportation for clients for medical appointments and grocery shopping	512-476-MEAL
<b>North Central Caregivers</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-453-2273
<b>Northeast Caregivers of Austin</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-459-1122
<b>Northwest Dial-A-Ride</b>	Rides in Northwest Austin for seniors	512-478-RIDE
<b>Round Rock Caregivers</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-310-1060
<b>South Austin Caregivers</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-445-5552
<b>Special Transit Services (STS)</b>	Rides for the disabled, including disabled seniors	512-389-7480
<b>State of Texas Medicaid Recipient Transportation</b>	Transportation to medical appointments for certain Medicaid clients	877-633-8747
<b>United Way of the Capital Area</b>	Information and referral service	211
<b>West Austin Caregivers</b>	All-volunteer roundtrip ride service	512-472-6339

## SURVEY SUMMARY

### Methodology

The purpose of the survey was to assess transportation needs and opportunities for Austin's senior population. Survey findings are intended to be used to help aging service organizations and advocates for seniors in the Austin metropolitan area learn more about the needs and opportunities.

The survey is qualitative rather than quantitative. By design, it is intended to provide information concerning both organizational facts and perceptions of need. Interviews were conducted in person or by phone with Austin-based transportation service providers identified through the Aging Services Council.

Questions for the survey were developed based on input from key members of the Aging Services Council, a review of a similar 2001 survey conducted for the Harris County Transportation Coordinating Council, and with collective input from the Leadership Austin Action Team on Aging. The survey was limited to Austin providers; it did not include providers whose service areas are limited to the surrounding suburban and rural areas.

The Leadership Austin team decided to survey only service providers and not seniors. A mass quantitative survey of individuals was beyond the capacity of the volunteer action team, and the team determined that service providers would be able to offer the input required for a needs assessment. All stories and anecdotes pertaining to seniors were collected through the service organizations.

While the survey was limited in scope, the responses provide a good picture of what works and what is needed to assist seniors access more efficient and effective transportation options. It is our hope that the insights gleaned from the survey and this report, and the subsequent dialogue that they inspire among aging service providers in Austin, will provide room for new opportunities and resource sharing – ultimately serving the population in ways that enhance our quality of life.

"I appreciate the friendly volunteers who take my mother, to her doctor appointments. I know she is in good hands. This has proven to be a very helpful service to my mother & myself."

—West Austin Caregivers client

## Survey Participants

Below are the participants in our survey. The representatives from these organizations were generous with their time and displayed sincere care and concern for the plights of seniors in our community. Their accessibility and candor were instrumental in our conducting a successful survey.

<u>Senior Transportation Provider</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Austin Groups for the Elderly	Joyce Lauck
Austin Area Agency on Aging	Glenda Rodgers
Austin Capital Metro Easy Rider	Nancy Crowler
Capital Metro STS	Pauline Walton
Family Eldercare	Karen Langley
Far Northwest Caregivers	Laura Davidson
Meals on Wheels & More	George Wurzbach; Pat Maroney
North Central Caregivers	Jennifer Lucas
North East Austin Caregivers	Rita Handley
Parks and Recreation Dept (PARC)	Cynthia Owens; Jessie Colunga
Round Rock Caregivers	Jeannie McCrea
South Austin Caregivers	Sr. Madelyn Sophie Weber
West Austin Caregivers	Jean Teel

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## Survey Results

### Current Successes:

There are a large number of success stories and valuable benefits currently being provided by senior transportation providers in Austin. These successes include:

- **Large number of dedicated providers:** Austin has a large number of providers who are dedicated to serving seniors.
- **Demands met:** The providers appear to have been able to meet all of the requests for services from non-disabled seniors that have come through the door.
- **Dedicated volunteers:** The nonprofit agencies have an amazing pool of dedicated volunteers, allowing them to provide dependable personal services.

"Groceries to Go is a very convenient service and helpful for my welfare. It is a real blessing. Thank you for sending me this wonderful volunteer."

—Mrs. L, a Central Austin resident who has been utilizing the nonprofit service for more than two years.

"I had no way to go anywhere or do anything; this program is my connection to everything!"

—West Austin Caregivers participant

### **Services Needed:**

The survey participants identified the following as the most pressing transportation needs facing the senior population:

- Services for the disabled:** One of the largest gaps in services identified repeatedly in the surveys was the lack of effective transportation for the disabled with mobility impairments, especially disabled persons who need assistance out the door of their residences or assistance carrying items such as groceries. The transportation needs of this large group of seniors include: (1) access to vehicles which are accessible; (2) assistance getting out of their residences and accessing destination points; (3) assistance carrying items; (4) shorter timelines for requesting a ride; and (5) flexibility in timing. Many of the transportation providers surveyed do not serve the mobility-impaired disabled. The largest service provider for the disabled, STS, requires the longest advanced notice (up to 8 days) for a ride and has the least flexibility in services. STS also does not provide door-through-door service for the disabled and therefore cannot assist seniors who need help getting out of their residences. Seniors who are mobility-impaired but do not utilize wheelchairs have difficulty accessing programs such as the City of Austin's PARD program which relies in large part on vans and buses. For these seniors, programs which provide sedans (such as the volunteer caregiver programs) are the most accessible.
- More flexible timing:** There is a large need in Austin for transportation services that provide flexible timing for seniors. The largest transportation providers require clients to specify a set pick-up time. If a senior has scheduled an appointment (such as a doctor's visit), that goes beyond the scheduled pick-up time, the client can be left without a ride or have to wait several hours for another ride. Even when a senior is available at the designated time, long waits are not uncommon. Several survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the wait times for the STS program.
- Night and weekend options:** There are limited options available to seniors needing a ride after 5 p.m. or on weekends.

"I have seen a bus driver refuse to carry a disabled senior's groceries on board the bus because of fears of liability. The senior could not carry the groceries herself, so the groceries had to be left behind."

—anecdote relayed by a survey participant

- **Options for ‘nonessential trips’:** The transportation providers have put a priority on doctor-related trips; there is a need for more transportation options for non-medically-related trips.
- **Assisted living facilities:** Some assisted living facilities provide transportation as part of the living fee, but most services are inadequate. Assisted living residents do not meet the criteria for service of many providers because they have a viable transportation option. According to one survey respondent, many facilities have had to cancel transportation services due to recent insurance increases. Survey respondents said they have seen an increase in calls from assisted living residents needing additional transportation services.
- **Information about transportation resources:** With such a wide array of transportation resources available to seniors, it is currently difficult for an individual senior to identify which transportation service is the most applicable and available to meet his or her needs. There is a need for an easy-to-use resource that will match a transportation provider up with a senior based on the senior’s individual needs.

### **Barriers to Success:**

What is preventing the above needs from being met? The reasons identified by survey participants include:

- **Funding.** More funding is needed, across the board, for operational costs including paid drivers and vehicles.
- **Vehicles.** More vehicles are needed. Vans help with numbers but sedans and individual cars are easier for seniors to access. Meals on Wheels needs a wheelchair-accessible van and a vehicle for grocery delivery.
- **Volunteer drivers.** Most of the volunteer service providers identified the need for more volunteers to provide rides using personal vehicles. Many need volunteer drivers who have their own car and insurance.
- **Lack of Collaboration:** Although many providers would like to see more collaboration, it has proved difficult due to limiting charters or competing objectives. Some of the costs incurred by the providers, such as overhead costs, could be minimized if the providers would collaborate and consider combining operations and utilizing technology more efficiently. Even when partnerships exist, there are lots of inefficiencies that could be eliminated with more structured collaboration.
- **Insurance:** Insurance seems to be an issue for some of the nonprofit providers, but not all of them. Some of the nonprofit agencies rely on individual drivers providing their own insurance.
- **Funding Silos:** Providers are impeded by “funding silos” that limit the expenditure of certain funds and therefore restrict program flexibility.

**Excess Resources:**

- PARD has vehicles it is not utilizing at 100% capacity because of limited drivers.
- One nonprofit agency said it has a bus it not does utilize at 100% capacity because of insurance and liability issues.

**Trip Purpose:**

- The most common type of trip was for doctor visits (generally 80-90% of trips).
- The second most popular type of trip was for shopping, social, and general errands.

**Potential Opportunities:**

Here is the start of a brainstorm list of potential opportunities that could help bridge the gaps between senior transportation needs and available services:

- **Volunteer drive for drivers:** Many of the nonprofits have reached capacity on drivers. Providers should consider a coordinated campaign for more drivers, which would allow groups to pool marketing resources. A coordinated campaign would likely require centralized point of contact to field volunteer inquiries.
- **Common coding of volunteer drivers by location:** MediWheels codes its drivers to provide the most efficient matches. If all groups adopted common coding practice, sharing resources would be easier.
- **“Sunday Drivers”:** Due to a need for more weekend transportation options, providers that rely on volunteers could consider starting a weekend driver organization that can use the unused volunteer drivers over the weekend. If another organization (or co-op) ran weekend services, the excess volunteer resources could be combined.
- **Utilize technology:** Most caregiver programs seem to handle driver/client matching manually. A central database would improve efficiencies if all of the caregiver programs would participate. Some programs are doing this on a one-off basis but it is not ubiquitous.
- **Transportation service matrix:** To help seniors sort through the maze of transportation options, easy-to-read service matrix that shows hours, phone numbers, handicap accessibility, qualifications, etc., would be extremely useful.
- **Other community contributors:** Other community groups could help address the transportation needs of seniors, such as doctors offices (e.g., pay for volunteer parking) and grocery stores (e.g., neighborhood delivery services).
- **Centralized transportation number:** A centralized transportation number with all of the providers joining together to coordinate services would allow seniors to call one number to reserve a ride.

## CONCLUSION

The issue of how our community can best provide transportation services to seniors is a complicated one. While there are many excellent services available to seniors, there is a significant need in the community for improvements. Some of the most pressing needs include more services for the disabled and greater flexibility in services such as more weekend and night transportation options. These needs will grow dramatically over the next 30 years as the number of seniors undergoes a demographic explosion. Our community must start preparing now to meet these needs.

As our community works together to develop solutions to this issue, an important part of the analysis is defining what are the “best” solutions when it comes to transportation services for seniors.

One observation that arose from our data analysis was that there is a significant embedded dilemma in addressing the issue of how our community can “best” service the transportation needs of seniors. An embedded dilemma exists when two competing desirable values occur and a nonprofit or governmental agency focuses on one value at the expense of the other rather than attempting to create a solution that blends or combines the two competing values.

The embedded dilemma is as follows: “Effectiveness” is a desirable trait in transportation for seniors. The most effective services would provide door-through-door, on-demand services with no time and no trip limitations. “Efficiency” is also a desirable trait. The most efficient services would provide minimize costs per trip, limit overtime, and provide a central dispatch and combination of trips to established regions at common times. These two values often compete against each other. For example, having an individual provider offer on-demand services 24-hours a day is not very efficient. Yet, at the same time, to serve either value at the expense of the other creates a “less-than-optimal” solution. Focusing only on effectiveness leads to very high costs in funds and volunteer time, while a total efficiency focus leads to services that do not meet the needs of the clients. The question is, **“How can we provide effective services efficiently or efficient sources effectively?”**

This question will be the focus of the first annual transportation summit that takes place on May 13, 2004. We hope that this report serves as a launching point for an engaged dialogue in our community about how we can work together to provide effective transportation services efficiently to our seniors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### The Supporters

We are extremely appreciative of the tremendous support and sharing of information by all who participated with us during this project. We could not have completed this report without you:

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<b>Cindy Conger</b>	<i>UT School of Nursing</i>
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<b>Joyce Lauck</b>	<i>Austin Groups for the Elderly</i>
<b>Heather McKissick</b>	<i>Seton Healthcare</i>
<b>Al Perez</b>	<i>Seton Topfer CHC</i>
<b>Dan Pruett</b>	<i>Meals on Wheels and More</i>
<b>Ellen Richards</b>	<i>Travis County Health &amp; Human Services</i>
<b>Glenda Rogers</b>	<i>Area Agency on Aging</i>
<b>Sr. Mary Lou Stubbs</b>	<i>Catholic Charities of Central Texas</i>
<b>Jean Teel</b>	<i>West Austin Caregivers</i>
<b>Mary Teeters</b>	<i>Meals on Wheels and More</i>

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**Appendix 1**

Summary of findings from the Community Action Network *Aging Services Environmental Scan*, February 2001, relating to senior transportation.<sup>v</sup>

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Lack of centralized transportation coordination. To secure a ride, an individual may have to call several different transportation providers.</p>	<p>Centralized Coordination. Develop centralized transportation coordination that would allow individuals to call one number to reserve a ride.</p>
<p>Escort Service. Many older adults need escorted rides to help them enter and exit transportation vehicles and to reach the final destination once leaving vehicle. This service is not available with public transportation and some transportation providers charge for attendants who are traveling with older adults. Caregivers provide this service but cannot meet the demand. As the population grows older the need for this service will increase.</p>	<p>Develop formal escort policies and systems. Current public transportation providers should allow attendants or escorts to ride free. Another possibility is for public transportation providers to hire attendants to provide assistance to transportation users. Attendants would help users safely enter and exit vehicle and ensure that they arrive safely at their end destinations.</p>
<p>Require Advance Reservations. Transportation services for special populations require individuals to make advance reservations.</p> <p>Limited Availability. The current public system is not able to meet the needs of the population - there are not enough vehicles or drivers. This situation has resulted in a variety of social service agencies developing individual transportation programs to meet the needs of their clients. Limited availability causes difficulties for individuals, such as cancelled doctor appointments.</p> <p>Limited Destinations. Transportation services for special populations are only available for certain types of "essential" trips such as doctor's appointments. Focus group participants and survey respondents clearly indicated that transportation is needed to travel to social activities, religious services, the grocery store, or volunteer service opportunities.</p> <p>Long Wait and Travel Times. Public transportation often requires riders to wait for long periods for transport to arrive and then spend several hours traveling to and from destinations. This is not only inconvenient, but</p>	<p>Develop and implement a comprehensive transportation plan to meet the needs of the population.</p> <p>Develop Tiered system. A tiered system would have different transportation providers that are targeted to meet the needs of certain groups of individuals. For example, it could be tiered by destination or by level of ability/disability. Each transportation provider would be responsible for one tier, i.e. individuals who need to go to the doctor.</p> <p>Payment System. Implement a voucher system that would allow qualifying individuals to receive vouchers redeemable with the transportation provider based on choice and availability.</p>

<p>for frail older adults and individuals in wheel chairs, it may be beyond their physical capacities.</p> <p>Design not friendly to older adults. Public transportation often requires individuals to walk to a bus stop and wait without shelter for the bus - many bus stops do not have seating or protection from the elements.</p> <p>Limited Wheelchair Access. Few of the transportation providers can accommodate individuals who use wheelchairs.</p>	
<p>Heavily Dependent upon Volunteers. Much of the current transportation system is dependent upon volunteers to fill gaps in the public transportation system.</p>	<p>Strengthen Publicly Funded Transportation. Public transportation providers need to develop better services for this population rather than assuming that volunteers will do the job.</p>
<p>Volunteers Not Covered by Good Samaritan Law. State law does not protect volunteer transportation providers (individuals) from being sued by clients.</p>	<p>Lobby Texas Legislature to include volunteer drivers under the Good Samaritan Law.</p>
<p>Insufficient Data. More information is needed to understand the true magnitude of the problem.</p>	<p>Insufficient Data. More information is needed to understand the true magnitude of the problem.</p> <p>Develop Uniform Data Requirements. Work with service providers to collect the information necessary to develop the necessary level of knowledge about the problem. For example, # of unduplicated clients served, # of rides provided (by category), cost of providing a unit of service. Conduct additional study of the needs of rural residents.</p>

**Appendix 2**

Summary of findings from the Community Action Network *Aging Services Environmental Scan*, February 2001, relating to the senior population.<sup>vi</sup>

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
In the next 20 years, the older adult population is expected to increase approximately 123% in Travis County.	Develop a long-range comprehensive plan to address the needs of the growing population.
The population is growing older and the fastest growing portion of the population are individuals over 75 years of age. The needs of this group are likely to be greater in number and more complex.	Service plans and strategies should be designed to accommodate the growth of this group and the resultant greater demand in services.
In the next 30 years, racial/ethnic minorities will constitute a majority of the population. Traditionally, these groups have experienced poorer health and lower socioeconomic status.	Service plans and strategies should take into account the possible increase in need from populations who have less personal resources but greater levels of need.
The number of older adults needing help with ADLs is expected to increase.	Service plans and strategies will need to accommodate a rise in the need for community based, in home services.
Older adults are concentrated in certain geographic areas of the community.	Service plans and strategies can be designed to provide services more efficiently by considering the geographic distribution of the population.
Older women are more likely to be widowed, live alone, and have lower incomes than are men.	Service plans and strategies should take into account the fact that women are likely to have different needs given their circumstances.

<sup>i</sup> The demographics included in this section originate from the following sources: 2000 Census, Texas State Data Center; Community Action Network, *Aging Services Environmental Scan* (February 2001); Community Action Network, *The Aging and Elderly Population* (October 2003); *Texas Demographics: Older Adults in Texas* (April 2003), *Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options* compiled by Just Transportation Alliance in conjunction with AARP; Texas Department on Aging, and Office of Aging Policy and Information,.

<sup>ii</sup> The statistics included in this section originate from the following sources: Community Action Network, *Aging Services Environmental Scan* (February 2001); Community Action Network, *The Aging and Elderly Population* (October 2003); Just Transportation Alliance; *Texas Demographics: Older Adults in Texas* (April 2003), *Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options* compiled by Just Transportation Alliance in conjunction with AARP; Texas Department on Aging, and Office of Aging Policy and Information.

<sup>iii</sup> *Aging Texans: Stranded Without Options*, compiled by the Just Transportation Alliance (April 2004).

<sup>iv</sup> *Aging Services Environmental Scan*, Community Action Network (February 2001).

<sup>v</sup> For the full CAN report, see [www.caction.org/IssueAreas/AgingServices/Report/00AGINGSERVICESSCAN.htm](http://www.caction.org/IssueAreas/AgingServices/Report/00AGINGSERVICESSCAN.htm).

<sup>vi</sup> For the full CAN report, see [www.caction.org/IssueAreas/AgingServices/Report/00AGINGSERVICESSCAN.htm](http://www.caction.org/IssueAreas/AgingServices/Report/00AGINGSERVICESSCAN.htm).