

Goal 3: Transportation Choices That Meet the Needs of All City Residents Now and in the Future

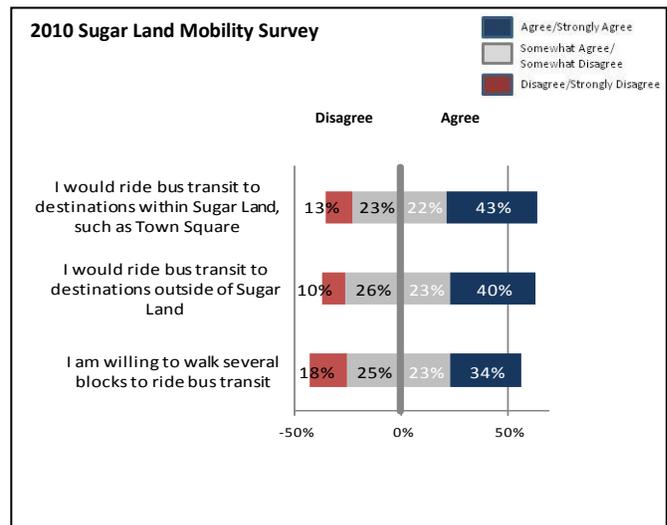
While automobiles provide the principle mode of transportation in Sugar Land, some transit services do exist. Fort Bend County provides both Park and Ride commuter service and demand response transit service in the County, including the City of Sugar Land, however these services are limited and do not effectively meet the needs of all the residents. Moreover, many residents are not aware of the available service or how to access the transit service. In order to achieve Superior Mobility in Sugar Land, residents need to be informed about available transit opportunities and viable transportation options for the City. There are a number of transit options that exist or can be implemented to meet the diverse and growing needs of the community and the aging population. Improved transit service in Sugar Land provides mobility choices for both the commute trip and the intracity trip. Together with the private sector and regional partners, multiple transit options, both on a small and large scale, can be implemented to effectively respond to the needs of the residents.

Residents express strong desire for greater transportation choices in the City

Repeated comments during stakeholder interviews and from the MAC meetings suggested that there should be transportation choices that do not require using the automobile. Input received revealed a desire to connect major attractions in the Sugar Land area (e.g. Town Center/Town Square, future ballpark and redeveloped Imperial Sugar site, future Entertainment and Cultural Arts Center, special events, etc.) without having to deal with traffic or parking. Survey results suggest that providing transportation choices is the third most important goal to be achieved in the Sugar Land Comprehensive Mobility Plan. Sixty-seven percent of the on-line survey respondents felt that Sugar Land should focus on developing transportation choices.

A 2009 study conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) recognized that there was a desire and an opportunity to connect locations within the City. The TTI study addressed the option of providing a transit circulator service and developed a series of intracity circulator routes that could effectively serve the Sugar Land area, connecting multiple area attractions. The study concluded that there are opportunities for the successful implementation of circulator service in the Town Center area, given the right set of variables are in place to support implementation of the service.

Increased mobility choices are viewed as critical to the future economic growth and long term success of the City of Sugar Land. Many in the community are choosing to age in place and the provision of a local transit circulator/shuttle would support the mobility needs of the aging Sugar Land community. Being able to travel within Sugar Land without depending on a car is becoming an increasing important concern to the community.





Strategy #1: Promote and Expand Existing Transit Choices

Currently transit services are provided by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department to support the multiple mobility needs of the Sugar Land population. These services include the commuter TREK Express and FBC Express with direct routes to the Galleria, Greenway Plaza and the Texas Medical Center and a connection to METRO with service to Downtown from the West Bellfort Park & Ride Lot. Fort Bend County also provides Demand Response service, pre-scheduled door to door transit service in Fort Bend County and to regional medical facilities for all residents of the County. The Houston-Galveston Area Council, in conjunction with METRO Star, sponsors the Commute Solutions program which promotes vanpool services and shared ride opportunities.

Sugar Land residents do take advantage of these available transit options, but the services are underutilized. The Fort Bend County Demand Response provides an average of 60 daily Sugar Land trips to and from local destinations and area medical facilities. A number of the riders are senior citizens and are more apt to use alternative transportation options, instead of driving a single passenger auto. Commuting via park and ride services and vanpooling are also options Sugar Land residents take advantage of, but there is evidence that there is growing demand for more park and ride service and vanpool connections. A recent survey of Downtown Houston employees conducted by Central Houston, Inc. indicated that Sugar Land zip codes represent the greatest number of origins of the surveyed workers; the survey represented approximately 39 percent of the Downtown workers. Sugar Land residents currently use the TREK Express and METRO park and ride services for their work trip, however the potential demand for commuter transit service is considerably greater than the current patronage would suggest. A key to creating transportation choices for all residents in the City is to continue to market and build upon the existing services with a focus on growing those services to attract more users and respond to the needs of all residents.

Initiative 1A – Continue education and/or marketing programs designed to increase ridership on existing demand responsive and commuter transit services offered by Fort Bend County Public Transportation and other related services

While transit services are available in Fort Bend County and Sugar Land, it appears that the services are not well advertised and residents are not familiar with the services. Both in stakeholder interviews and in talking with County representatives, it was felt that greater marketing efforts were needed to inform and educate the residents about available transit services. A marketing and education program will bring greater awareness to the community about the transit opportunities and benefits that are currently offered in Sugar Land. Greater familiarity with the transit programs will result in residents willing to be participants. Promotions for free trials and rider appreciation days can also increase awareness. Offering free rides and special promotions will attract more patrons to the service and create a loyal following of commute ridership.

In addition to making residents aware of the transit services, the marketing program should include coordination with major employers to solicit their support and advertise the service to their employees. While some employers already offer ticket promotions or subsidies for commuters, greater employer participation in a commuter subsidy program may encourage more people to take advantage of the service.

The existing demand response service is available for all residents in Fort Bend County, providing door to door service to points throughout Fort Bend County and to and from medical facilities in Harris County. Approximately twenty percent of all the Fort Bend County demand response service either originates or



terminates in Sugar Land. The service is limited to operating Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. In addition, daily capacity is limited and the service is provided on a first call, first serve basis requiring a reservation at least 24 hours in advance. Residents in the City of Sugar Land currently generate greater demand for the service than the other communities in the Fort Bend County. Increased marketing will create a greater awareness of the service and most likely result in even greater demand. The City of Sugar Land should work with Fort Bend County to promote the program and expand the service as needed to meet community demands.

TREK Express and Fort Bend County Express commuter bus routes attract a number of Sugar Land residents with services to the Galleria, Greenway Plaza, and the Texas Medical Center, however it appears many residents have limited knowledge about the service. There is sufficient capacity on the commuter buses to effectively accommodate a greater number of area commuters. An aggressive marketing program should attract more commuters to the service. Fort Bend County recently initiated a marketing effort to promote the County's park and ride program. The City of Sugar Land plans to partner with the County in implementing this new marketing and advertising campaign. As a result, there may be greater demand for service and for additional parking spaces at the two existing leased Park and Ride lots in Sugar Land. Increased ridership will require coordination between the City of Sugar Land, Fort Bend County and the property owners to provide more parking spaces for commuters and potentially long term or permanent lot locations.



In addition to marketing the Fort Bend County transit services, residents in Sugar Land also need to be informed about vanpooling and other alternative commuting options. Greater marketing and dissemination of information regarding Commute Solutions and vanpooling opportunities will help encourage residents to consider sharing rides and take advantage of other transit and commuting alternatives. The marketing and education program would be a joint effort between the City of Sugar Land and the FBC Public Transportation Department.



TRANSIT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUGAR LAND RESIDENTS

Type of Service	Type of Service/ Hours of Operation	Service Provider	Estimated Average Daily Ridership (Sugar Land area)	Notes
Demand Response ¹	M/F 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Fort Bend County	57 daily trips	Sugar Land has the greatest # of users
TREK Express to Greenway/Galleria ²	M/F 5:10 – 8:10 AM 3:15 – 6:40 PM	Fort Bend County/TREK	382 riders	
TREK Express to West Bellfort P&R ²	M/F 5:10 – 8:10 AM 3:15 – 6:40 PM	Fort Bend County/TREK	90 riders	Connection to METRO service to Downtown
FBC Express to Texas Medical Center ³	M/F 5:25 – 8:10 AM 3:40 – 7:20 PM	Fort Bend County	40 riders	Service originates at FBC Fairgrounds
West Bellfort P & R to Downtown	M/F 5:00 – 8:30 AM 2:55 – 6:55 PM	METRO	N/A	SL residents use service from Houston P&R
Sugar Land Area Vanpoolers ⁴	AM and PM peak periods	METRO Star Vanpool Program	650 riders from SL 36 riders to SL	Over 3000 SL residents interested in vanpooling

Funding for the transit operations are primarily the responsibility of Fort Bend County. Currently, there is minimal marketing of either the Demand Response or Commuter services, though Fort Bend County has recently initiated a marketing program for the services. TREK markets the TREK Express commuter service to employers and employees at the work place, but only limited marketing has been conducted in the community. Sugar Land and Fort Bend County should coordinate the marketing program, with the City taking the lead in developing the best strategy for communicating with residents.

The first action in providing more mobility choices in Sugar Land is to develop an aggressive marketing program directed at the residents of Sugar Land. This marketing program would be the shared responsibility of the City of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County and the cost for the marketing program would be minimal. Sugar Land should assume an annual budget of \$15,000 to market and educate the community about transit and the available services. Marketing and educating residents about transit service should be a continuing program to reinforce the opportunities and benefits of the available transit services, therefore the transit marketing/educating will be a recurring expense.

With greater knowledge and understanding of transit and the available transit services to Sugar Land residents, more people should take advantage of the services and use transit as a viable transportation choice. Greater use and reliance on existing transit services in the area will result in some reduction in traffic volumes, particularly during peak periods, and will generate increased support for transit. A better understanding of transit will support improved transit services and Superior Mobility in the City.

¹ Fort Bend County Public Transportation Dept., FY 2010, Trip Count by City of Origin

² TREK Express, Galleria and Greenway Plaza Ridership 2010

³ Fort Bend County Public Transportation Dept., Memo, Hwy 36 Passenger Count, February 2011

⁴ Sugar Land Area Vanpool, METRO Star Vanpool Summary, August 2010

**Initiative 1B – Work with Fort Bend County (FBC) Public Transportation to plan and provide for future demand**

Greater awareness and support of transit services (both commuter and demand response) will foster greater demand for transit services and establish transit as integral element of the transportation fabric in Sugar Land. In order to continue to attract and maintain ridership, the service needs to be responsive to patron demand. Therefore appropriate budget and equipment must be allocated to meet projected demand and the City of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County should be prepared to meet increased demand.

The key partner with Sugar Land is Fort Bend County and the FBC Public Transportation Department. Fort Bend County currently provides public transit service and should be expected to continue to expand the existing service, consistent with budget and demand requirements. Associated costs will include additional operating and maintenance costs for providing increased service. The current transit operations are primarily funded by Fort Bend County, which receives federal funding subsidies for a portion of the transit capital and operating costs. Fort Bend County is taking delivery of new equipment and should be able to provide the service with no additional capital costs. It is assumed that Fort Bend County will continue to fund the operating costs for the service and any marginal service increases as a result an aggressive marketing and education program.

The City of Sugar Land currently provides \$70,000 annually to Fort Bend County to support the operation of the existing transit services. The City may also need to participate in funding additional services and allocate more funds to support an expansion in the level of service provided. An increase of one bus operating 10 hours a day would have an approximate annual operating cost of \$110,000. Some federal funding may continue to be available to support the increased service, including CMAQ funds, Formula 5307 funds, and specific funds for special needs and services.

The more transit service offered to the residents of Sugar Land enhances the City's commitment to provide mobility choices for all residents. In addition, increased transit use will result in a reduction in traffic during peak traffic periods and some improvement in regional air quality.

Initiative 1C – Partner with FBC Public Transportation to develop direct commuter service to Downtown and/or a simplified connection to Downtown, i.e. combined FBC/METRO fare

As shown in **Figure 6.1**, many Sugar Land residents commute to Downtown for employment. Considering the high number of residents commuting to Downtown, transit ridership from Sugar Land is minimal. Findings from the Stakeholder interviews, public meeting and on-line survey indicated that residents would prefer direct service from Sugar Land to Downtown Houston or at a minimum an easier connection between the Fort Bend County TREK service and the METRO service at the West Bellfort Park & Ride lot. Currently the rider has to pay separately for the TREK service and the METRO service. A single fare for the trip would be more convenient and possibly less expensive than the current system. In addition, the connection between METRO and the TREK services in the PM peak could be improved to reduce the travel time to Sugar Land by reducing the headways of the TREK buses from the West Bellfort Park and Ride lot. Initially, the two seat ride on TREK and METRO could be streamlined by implementing a single fare and more timely transfer connections which also would attract more Sugar Land commuters to transit.

Central Houston, Inc. recently conducted a survey of home zip codes of Downtown employees. Of those surveyed, over 1,300 employees reside in zip code 77479 (in the Sugar Land area), which is more than any other zip code in the Houston region. Previous Census Journey to Work data also indicated that Downtown Houston



was the largest employment destination for Sugar Land residents.⁵ Work trips from Sugar Land to Downtown were significantly greater than work trips to other employment destinations. Direct park and ride service from Sugar Land to Downtown would be an optimal solution and would reduce transit travel time and attract more riders, which in turn would reduce peak period congestion on the major thoroughfares.

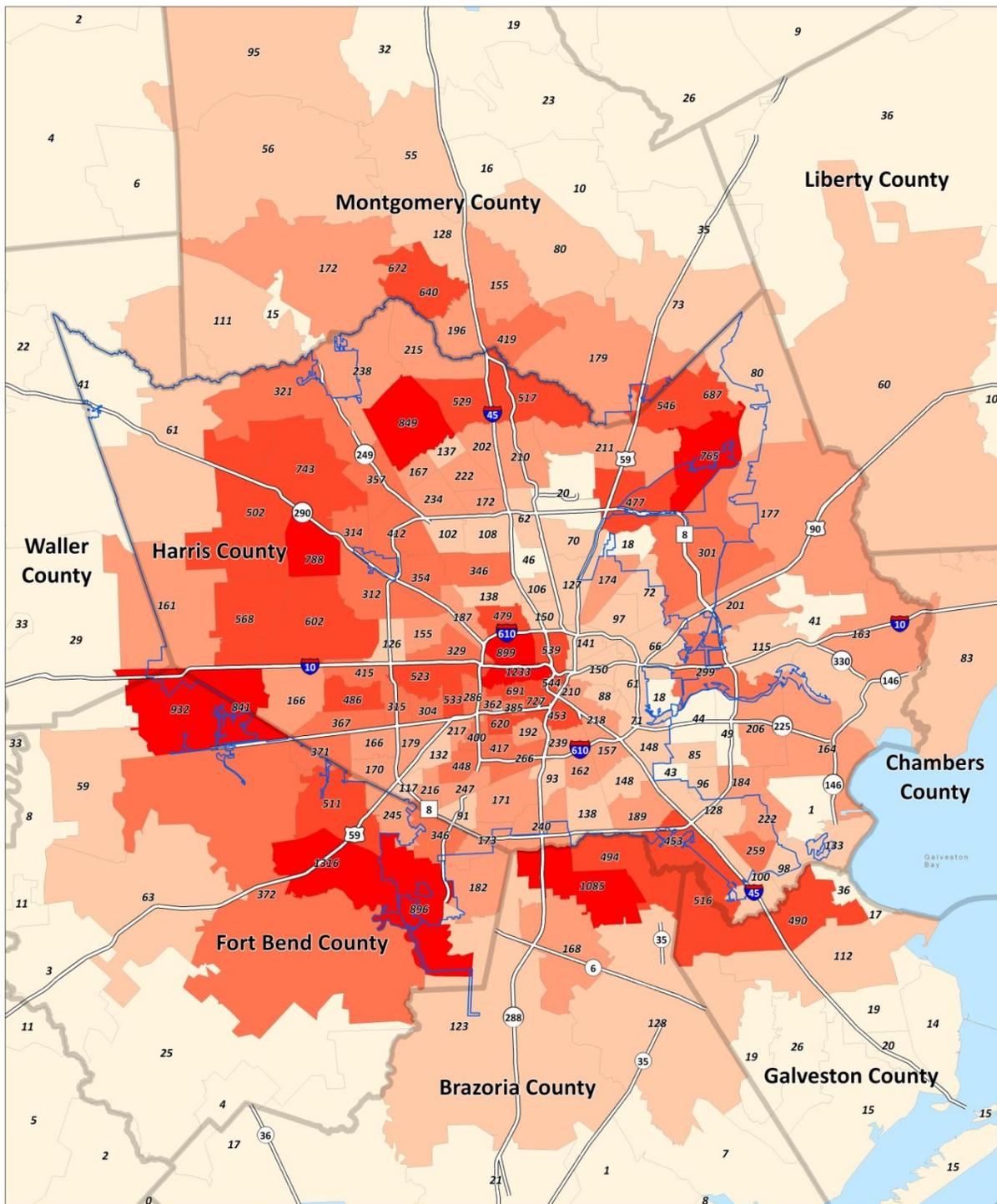
Streamlining the connection to Downtown from Sugar Land would require coordination between Fort Bend County and METRO, in an effort to offer a single fare for the total trip and to improve better time connections between the two services. METRO and Fort Bend County would be partners in coordinating a single fare for the two seat ride offered by the two separate service providers. Fort Bend County would continue to be the key partner with the City of Sugar Land to implement direct commuter service from to Downtown, though METRO might also be a partner in providing the service.

The ultimate goal is to provide a direct park and ride trip from Sugar Land to Downtown. The implementation of the new direct service would have both capital and operating costs implications. Based on the existing commuter service provided by Fort Bend County, approximately six (6) 32-passenger buses would be required to provide the Downtown commuter service. The aggregate cost of the new buses is approximately \$800,000. The annual operating and maintenance cost required to operate the service is estimated to be \$512,000. Currently, there are a few federal funding options that Fort Bend County and the City of Sugar Land may pursue in order to receive funds for a portion of both the capital and operating costs.

⁵ 2000 Census, H-GAC, November 2020



Figure 6.1 – Downtown Houston Home Employee Zip Codes



Employees per ZIP Code



Downtown Employees Home ZIP Codes

Source: Central Houston, Inc - January, 2011



The implementation of direct commuter bus service from Sugar Land to Downtown Houston would attract additional transit riders and help to establish a strong transit base. The increased transit ridership would relieve traffic congestion during the peak periods and would justify continued development of transit improvements, eventually leading to the implementation of high capacity transit services, such as BRT and commuter rail operations.

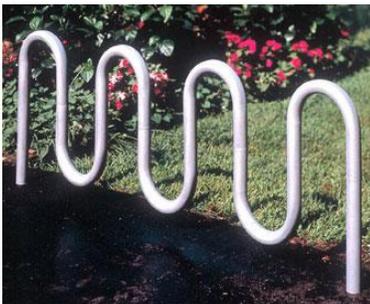
Initiative 1D – Ensure transit facilities and vehicles accommodate bicycles and pedestrian, e.g. bicycle/pedestrian connections, bike racks on buses and bike racks at facilities

A key to introducing mobility choices in the City of Sugar Land is providing accommodations to support access by bike riders and pedestrians to transit facilities. Bike racks should be installed at all park and ride locations and on the commuter buses. Sidewalk connections should be constructed from area neighborhoods and activity centers to the Park and Ride lots and other transit facilities. Lockers at transit facilities may also be installed at transit facilities to encourage cyclists to use their bike for a portion of the trip. Bike racks installed on the buses provides cyclists the opportunity to ride their bicycles from their home and to their final destination, using transit to provide the line haul portion of their trip.



Source green-wheels.org

Bicycle racks range in price from around \$200.00 to \$500.00 depending on style, composition, size, and number. Storage lockers also vary significantly in price depending on style, size, composition, number and installation. A typical bicycle locker ranges in cost from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per individual unit. By providing accommodations for bikes and pedestrians at transit facilities residents are able to leave their cars at home and use alternative transportation options for their entire trip. By providing bicycle and pedestrian amenities at transit facilities helps to establish a new culture for non-auto travel for multiple purposes.



Sample Bike Rack



Sample Bike Lockers at Transit Facility

Strategy #2: Implement Transit Circulator Service During High Demand Periods

During the stakeholder interviews and the public meetings, and from the findings from the on-line survey, many residents stated their desire to be able leave their cars at home and use some form of transit or alternative transportation mode to travel around Sugar Land. Due to the traffic congestion on the major thoroughfares in the City particularly during holiday season, at special events, and on weekends, a circulator would attract riders who want to avoid the stress of traffic congestion and parking.



Initiative 2A – Create public private partnership between the City and businesses to provide circulator transit service, e.g., Holiday Circulator or special events

The goal is to adeptly address the challenges faced by residents and visitors particularly during high demand times such as holidays or special events. Congestion, already a regular occurrence at key major intersections, is exacerbated during special events and holidays. During these occasions, parking spaces are harder to locate, requiring drivers to circulate the lot and search for a space. Transportation engineers essentially note that at 80% of capacity, users perceive the lot as full because individual spaces are disparately located and difficult to find. Also, vehicles not properly positioned in the parking spaces render some spaces unusable. A small side annoyance is sometimes locating the car when the shopping or event has ended. Another benefit of the circulator service is that it takes vehicles off the road that are moving from one shopping location to another. For instance a person stopping at the Whole Foods store, then traveling to the First Colony Mall, and making a final stop at an eatery in Town Square drives the vehicle on the road with each leg of the trip, possibly traveling through the Highway 6/US 59 intersection twice.

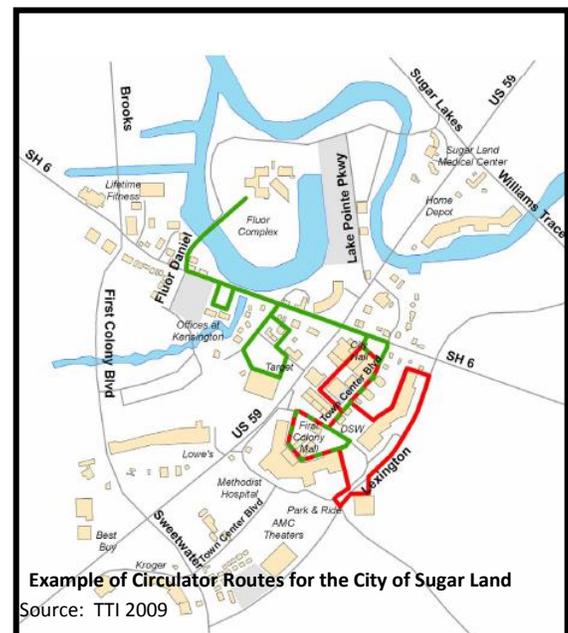
Circulator service available during these special times has the potential to alleviate pressure from the parking lots and relieve congested intersections by providing an alternative to having every trip made by passenger vehicles. Parking space requirements at area activity centers could also be reduced with the implementation of a circulator service; reducing parking requirements is another strategy identified as important to achieving Superior Mobility. Specific focus for the circulator service includes, but is not limited to:

- First Colony Mall and other high volume shopping areas
- Sugar Land Town Square for the 4th of July or other festivals
- Future baseball stadium site

The option is especially attractive because Sugar Land can implement the service independently without regional partners.

An initial initiative in implementing an intracity circulator is to create a public private partnership between the City and Town Center and other area businesses to provide circulator service during peak demand periods connecting major attractions. The objective of this initiative is to work with area businesses and developers to develop and fund a community supported transit service for residents to access area businesses without traffic or parking hassles. The circulator service would benefit both the area businesses and the City by improving access to the Town Center area while removing vehicles from the roadways during heavily congested times. The public private partnership will serve as a marketing tool for the area businesses and the

City will be able to serve as a liaison/coordinator for the service while minimizing expenses. This would be a low cost way of initiating circulator service in Sugar Land and would serve as the first phase of the transit operation. As ridership grows and more destinations in the City come on line, the service can be expanded. The greatest challenge will be coordinating participation of the Town Center and other local businesses and obtaining the funding to initiate the service. The City of Sugar Land would most likely serve as the program coordinator and





would be responsible for managing the circulator service, creating the partnership with the private interests, developing the budget for the service, and soliciting for funds for the service.

The key partners for the circulator service are the City of Sugar Land, Town Center area or other local businesses and interests. Other partners may also include the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department, Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Sugar Land Department of Economic Development.

The cost of the service will depend on the amount service proposed to be implemented and the terms of the partnership agreement. At a minimum, one or two vehicles will be required to provide the service. Initially, the vehicles may be leased and maintained from a variety of local sources. A new 24 to 26 foot bus (seating for 12+) would cost approximately \$75,000, though cost will vary based on the procurement approach and the vehicle used. The operating costs would be dependent on the number of days and the amount of service to be provided, including the daily hours of operation and the frequency of the service. The costs would be approximately \$500 a day for one bus operating 10 hours. There also would be an operating cost for advertising and marketing the service, which would average around \$10,000. This cost would depend on the level of marketing and participation and pro bono support provided by partners.

Examples exist around the country of communities collaborating with businesses to improve circulation in areas with challenged mobility by reducing the volume of passenger vehicles. The circulators limit the need for parking spaces and ease people's need to move a vehicle around the area. In Emeryville, California, private businesses underwrite the funding by way of a tax assessment for two circulator routes that traverse the business and residential communities and link with the BART and Amtrak stations. One route has 18 stops and covers most of the City. The other route is shorter with 5 stops and is primarily perpendicular to the longer route. The non-profit Emeryville's Transportation Management Association exists to improve mobility and alleviate congestion.



McKinney, Texas' Collin County Area Regional Transit (CCART) operates five fixed routes in McKinney Monday through Friday. Patrons access vehicles by directly requesting them, (termed demand responsive) on Saturday and Sunday. The CCART extends the demand responsive service to Frisco. Private services also operate in Frisco providing airport transportation, buses for corporate outings,

doctor's appointments and McKinney and Frisco Independent School Districts. Mesquite, Texas allocated \$300,000 for a shuttle from their Rodeo complex to the nearest DART line. There is no specific timeline to begin these services, but funds are available in case suitable arrangements are made with DART.

As the service becomes established and the community takes advantage of the service, it will lead to the acceptance and expansion of transit service and encourage businesses and developers to be proactive in accommodating future transit improvements and providing financial support to continue the service. This foundational service will be a core that can be expanded for special events or as ridership and development growth warrant.



Initiative 2B – As additional activity centers are constructed (Imperial Sugar/Baseball Stadium, Entertainment, Tract 5, etc.) expand public private partnerships to include circulator service between the activity centers.

With the completion of new developments, the circulator service will move into the next phase of operation by connecting multiple attractions and destinations in the City. The transit service can be expanded incrementally to new developments over time to provide the service connections when needed. During periods of lower demand, schedules and routes may be reduced to most efficiently meet rider needs. The public private partnership would remain intact and be amended to include new partners and additional funding opportunities that may be needed to support and fund the service expansion. Fort Bend County Public Transportation may also become a partner as the service expands and new destinations are added.

As more activity centers come on line in Sugar Land, the City and the private partners will expand the circulator route and operation to service more area attractions. Most likely the service will operate on a regular schedule with more frequent headways between trips. An intracity circulator connecting Town Center, the baseball stadium, the concert venue and other activity centers in the City would be a viable mobility choice and will be part of the transportation network in the City. The greatest challenge will be to work with area businesses and developers to provide the amenities and funding for the intracity circulator. A key to the successful continued provision of service will be establishing a dedicated fund and committed funding source for the service.

Additional buses will be required as the service is expanded and demand increases. With a longer circulator trip and reduced headways, a minimum of two buses will be required and possibly more as the service attracts more riders and new routes or service variations are introduced. One 12+ passenger bus costs approximately \$75,000 and an appropriate budget to cover capital costs would range from \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually. Federal funding may be available to assist in purchasing new buses. In addition to deployment of more buses, transit amenities such as bus stops, shelters, benches, trash cans, etc. should also be budgeted. It is recommended that the transit amenities be integrated in the design and construction of new activity centers, such as at the baseball stadium, the cost of which would be assumed by the private developers. At bus stop locations at existing developments, the City or the private developer would be responsible to installing appropriate amenities. The above mentioned annual capital budget includes provisions for amenities.

Operating costs would be dependent on the duration and frequency of service, and level of private partnership in the expansion of service. The operating budget will also include a small allocation for a marketing effort. An estimate of annual operating costs ranges from \$50,000 to \$150,000. There may be specific federal funding programs that could be applied to operating costs, though that is difficult to assess at this time without more details about the service, partners and the demand for services.

Implementation of Phase 2 Intracity Circulator would provide an effective mobility choice to residents, employees and visitors for accessing major destinations in Sugar Land. Use of the circulator would help reduce congestion at major attractions during peak travel times. Integration of circulator service as part of the new activity center development may reduce parking needs at these developments. The circulator would connect a number of activity centers and would support the economic vitality of the City. The expanded Circulator service would lead to the operation of additional circulator routes to serve multiple activity centers in the Sugar Land area.



Strategy #3: Develop Innovative Strategies to Encourage Transit Use

There are a number of transit alternatives that can be promoted in Sugar Land that are not the traditional form of transit provided by a public agency. Throughout the country private transit providers are providing innovative means of offering transportation and shared ride options. A jitney is a transit mode comprised of owner operator cars or vans operating on fixed routes (sometimes with minor deviations) as demand warrants without fixed schedules or fixed stops. In Houston, private jitney operators provide transit service in heavily congested entertainment centers. The Wave is a jitney service that operates along Washington Avenue and in a number of entertainment activity centers within Loop 610. The service is privately funded and operated. Additional buses are continually being added to the route in response to the demand for the transit service to connect patrons to a number of venues within a small area. Many patrons park at a specified parking lot located along the route and then get on and off the jitney all along the route. Riders pay for the ride or can buy a monthly pass. The Rev Eco Shuttle offers a similar jitney service in the Midtown area.

The Sugar Land Town Center area has potential to be a great location to introduce jitney service or shared taxi to help transport residents to key destinations located in heavily congested areas, particularly near the intersection

of US 59 and SH 6. A jitney service could connect destinations on either side of US 59 and help relieve congestion in the area. Patrons could park at one location and use the jitney to access nearby locations.



The Wave



The Rev Eco Shuttle

City ordinances, restrictions and/or permitting may need to be modified or approved to support the service, but the cost of the operation would be assumed by the private provider. As the jitney movement is gaining popularity and apparently lucrative in the Houston area, the City of Sugar Land could look for interested providers to offer the service in the Town Center area.

Another option that is used in other communities is to work with a private operator to offer shared ride contract service to students for a door to door ride to and from home, school and outside activities. In Frisco, Texas a contract shuttle service is offered to students to provide the daily trip between home and school. This is a safe option for students and helps reduce congestion around school facilities, particularly in the peak periods.



Sugar Land could contract with any private bus company to supplement available options to and from school. The cost for the service could be fully paid by the parents/users or some form of subsidy from either Sugar Land or other agency could be provided as an incentive. There are a number of local service providers, even in Sugar Land that would be interested in providing the contract shuttle service. Support from Sugar Land may be needed to coordinate the service and help with administrative details.





Contract shuttle service could provide a reliable service that residents will feel comfortable using on a regular basis. Through a subscription or contract service, the service provider can better schedule and provide capacity to meet demand. Residents can regularly plan trips to Town Square and other area destinations and know the shuttle service is available. Based on input from residents, survey results and discussions with the Mobility Advisory Committee, a market exists for this service. Working with private contractors and resident users, the service would be self-sustaining and require only limited resources from the City.

METRICS

Improved transportation and quality of life are important to Sugar Land residents and would be realized by increased mobility choices for all residents. Tangible metrics are needed to determine the effectiveness of more transportation choices in and around Sugar Land. Several options are available as follows:

Ridership: Target ridership projections at specific intervals (i.e. 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc.) should be established in order to assess the service and possibly facilitate refinements to enhance ridership or be more responsive to demand. Benchmarking can be established over the current level of no service with percent increases measured annually. New service will require a reasonable period of maturation. In the early stages, residents must become aware of available services and gain confidence of its use. Any new service needs a period of time to become established and allowing the service to get started, early issues to be worked out, and a patron base to develop.

User Satisfaction: An additional metric would also be the input received by residents regarding the service through the City's Citizen Survey conducted every two years. If there are requests for expanded or additional transit services, then that would imply the community supports the transportation program and views it as a viable transportation alternative. If a considerable amount of complaints are lodged against the service, then the service choices need to be reassessed and modified to more effectively meet the needs of the community.