

V. STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED GAPS AND NEEDS

To begin to meet the needs and reduce the gaps identified in the preceding sections, the following strategies have been developed:

1. Continue “Ride for Five”

In the Basic and Emergency Needs Coalition’s *Strategic Plan for Meeting Basic and Emergency Needs and Moving People to Self-Sufficiency*, the following strategy was identified and is also incorporated into this plan:

Strategy: Support the continuation and expansion of “Ride for Five” bus passport program.

- Educate City Council members about the program and advocate for its continuation including a coordinated letter writing and e-mail campaign to continue and increase funding for “Ride for Five”.
- Inform and educate Coalition members about “Ride for Five”.
- Work to increase income guidelines from 100 percent of poverty to 150 percent.
- Work to increase the number of “Ride for Five” providers and riders, and increase the geographic spread of outlet sites, by working with Volunteer Partners for site requirements.

Besides the actions above, identified in the *Strategic Plan*, additional actions include:

- Work to simplify “Ride for Five” for its users by eliminating the need to verify income every month; instead, work towards establishing a semi-annual or annual certification process.
- Improve availability by increasing the hours of some outlets to enable purchasing of “Ride for Five” tickets beyond the current limited hours.
- Work to develop alternate sites and means for purchasing tickets such as at grocery stores, by mail, and through the use of a scan card.

2. The Transit Development Plan provides recommendations for improving the route network as follows:

- Create a new network that is revenue neutral based on current service hours with no additional service hours in the near-term proposal.
- Maintain service coverage to most locations in the City.
- More efficiently match demand and supply.
- Provide service where service is needed.
- Be operationally efficient.
- Allow for most routes to operate on the hour, with 30 minute service during peak periods and 60 minute service during off-peak periods.
- Examine the potential for new service to areas with anticipated increased demand.
- Maximize an integrated system approach to the service plan.

- Remove duplication of service.
- Reduce transfers by combining routes through downtown.

Also included in the Transportation Development Plan (TDP) are a number of future year proposals for improving services. All future recommendations are contingent on funding. A list of future year recommendations is included in Appendix C.

3. Promote use of vanpools, carpooling, or other innovative transportation services to provide transportation when StarTran is not available or an option.

Fixed-route transit service cannot serve all people at all times that transportation is needed. Innovative regular-route approaches may be one solution. This may include smaller vehicles, route deviation schedules, paratransit-to-fixed-route connections or other innovative techniques. Vanpools and carpools may be another appropriate solution. Vanpools may also be used to link directly to agencies working with under- or unemployed people. Vanpools operated by employers may be another viable option.

4. Expand availability of specialized transportation services to accommodate needs of the elderly and disabled.

Expand hours of operation of HandiVan and other special transport services and provide services beyond the currently mandated ADA-requirements. This would improve the access for persons with disabilities to employment, medical treatment, recreation, and other needs.

5. Encourage human services agencies to expand education efforts to their clients on using StarTran.

StarTran currently markets to human services agencies about how to read a schedule and determine correct routes; however, many agencies are unaware of this service. Agencies should be educated on the availability of this StarTran service. In addition, agencies should be encouraged to contact StarTran to help educate people by sponsoring innovative programs such as a “ride for free day” to help people learn to use StarTran. Programs could then further educate people about Ride for Five.

6. Develop and fund voucher program(s) for low-income people to purchase rides for work.

This may include mileage reimbursement as part of a volunteer driver program, a taxi trip, or trips provided by a human services agency. Innovative programs that are not currently available should be considered as alternatives to help people get to work at all times throughout the day.

7. Support of a service, or the purchase or lease of a vehicle, by a nonprofit or public agency to shuttle low-income people between their residence and a place of employment, job training, or for education.

Various options could be available such as providing a supplementary fixed route that stops at residences at predetermined times to provide transportation to places of employment, job training or education. Other innovative options should be explored.

8. Support volunteer driver and aide programs for elderly and disabled people.

The definition of “aide” according to the FTA, is quite broad and left to local interpretation. For example, it could be someone who assists a new rider to the bus system on how to use the system. StarTran does not have a program currently in place. The League of Human Dignity, through contract with StarTran, has a staff person to assist in “travel training” for persons who may not be ADA-eligible for Handi-Van service but need assistance in using the bus system.

9. Support collaboration and coordination of nonprofit agencies that provide transportation services and programs.

Agencies that provide transportation services should coordinate to the greatest degree possible. This could include sharing of services between agencies, coordinating like services, purchasing transportation services from one another, or other innovative means of coordinating services or programs between agencies.