



Capital Area Rural Transportation System

ACTION ALERT

The service provided by Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) in its nine-county district of Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Travis and Williamson counties is supported by fares and contracts, local funds and state and federal transit funds. The transit funds are administered by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT).

House Bill 3588 enacted by the 78th Legislature set aside statutory formulas for distributing funding that previous legislatures had enacted, and provided TXDOT the authority to distribute state and federal funds subject to the sole discretion of the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC).

The funding formula for the state and federal transit funds proposed by the TTC will reduce CARTS funding by 30% over the next 3 years.

This funding formula, now going through adoption in the state administrative code, will reduce already minimal CARTS service levels even more, and prevent any growth in services to meet increasing demands in our rapidly growing District.

Among other things, the TTC formula freezes allocations by population at 2000 levels. 4 of 10 fastest growing counties in Texas are in the 9-county district served by CARTS, yet credit for new populations are not allowed under the rules proposed. Other parts of the formula are also flawed and inconsistent with industry standards, and some of the data used is suspect. No analysis of current services provided by the 38 rural transit districts affected was conducted.

In addition, the TTC has choices, as federal funding for rural transportation will increase markedly over the next several years. They do not have to cut services to re-distribute money, yet they have chosen to do so.

The comment period for the proposed rulemaking ends next week. **CARTS is requesting your assistance providing written comments against the proposed adoption.** Information on the proposed rulemaking is available at <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/ptn/geninfo.htm/>. An excerpt follows:

Written comments on the proposed amendments may be submitted to Bobby Killebrew, Interim Director, Public Transportation Division, 125 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483. All written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on May 16, 2005.

The CARTS message is simple. Do not reduce funding. Do not take away rides. Adequate funding is available to TXDOT to increase funding in some parts of the state without making cuts in existing services.

TXDOT should do the necessary research and analysis to do a "real" formula instead of the hodge-podge of measures that do not reflect any industry standards for measuring performance.

TXDOT should establish a uniform way of reporting and collecting data if it is to be used to measure performance and distribute funding, and should Inventory existing services to see what is now provided, and needed, prior to re-distributing funding.

Need additional info? Contact David Marsh at dave@ridecarts.com or by phone at 512/708-5515.

May 9, 2005

Bobby Killebrew, Interim Director
Public Transportation Division
125 East Eleventh St
Austin, TX 78701-2483

- SAMPLE -
DRAFT

RE: Proposed Rulemaking
Transit formula programs

Dear Mr. Killebrew:

This jurisdiction is served by the Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS). The services provided by CARTS are an important part of the safety net that serves the general welfare of the citizens in this jurisdiction, and any reduction of these services will have a detrimental effect on the day-to-day lives of some of our most fragile groups; the elderly and the poor.

We urge that amendments be made to the proposed rules that prevent any reductions in funding below the already minimal funding now available to CARTS. CARTS now provides minimal service levels and it is clear that more, not less service is needed.

We also urge that an analysis be done by the Texas Transportation Institute on the inventory of services now available at all of the 38 rural transit districts prior to adopting a formula, so that a scientific approach to meeting needs across our state guides such an important decision as re-distributing funding. This analysis should also establish demographic, performance and other measures that could be used to distribute funding and set out a process to ensure that services are not disrupted in any part of the state.

CARTS is an important element in the overall infrastructure for the region it serves. Please do not take any action that would lessen its ability to continue the services it provides, or grow services to our community as needed.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,