Bus Rapid Transit
Texas Style- A Tale of Two Cities
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Presentation Overview

» Summary of BRT Efforts in San Antonio and Austin
» The Five “C”s
  » Contrasts
  » Commonalities
  » Comments about BRT and relationship to traffic engineering
  » Conclusions
  » Questions
Why Is VIA Choosing BRT?

» The Voters Have Spoken
  - Light rail referendum defeated in 2000

» Fits the Budget
  - VIA collects only 5/8 cent sales tax from a smaller tax base than Dallas or Houston

» Fits the Community
  - Basic approach: start with BRT in one corridor, prove the value, build upon success
What is VIA’s Project?

» Almost 10-mile corridor
» Connects two largest employment centers in the region (Downtown and Medical Center)
» Fredericksburg Road is primary arterial with more than 10,000 transit boardings per day
» Conceptual design is 50% exclusive ROW, 50% mixed-traffic
» Current Cost Estimate: $95M
» Timeline: Initial Service Operational by 2012

Station Concept
(from MPO NW Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study)
Vehicle Branding Concept
(from MPO NW Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study)

Marketing/Branding Concept
(from MPO NW Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study)
San Antonio Efforts To Date

» September 2002 BRT workshop
» VIA analysis indicates potential on Fredericksburg Road
» MPO Study identifies ROW (2005)
» Project listed for federal funding in SAFETEA-LU
» Consultant team approved by Board in June 2006
» Development of vision statement, funding and public involvement plans Fall/Winter 2006
» MPO programs $29M in STP-MM funds for project in January 2007

What is...
What could be...
Figure 6-4: Recommended BRT Priorities
Background: 2030 Households/Employment per Acre - Census Tract

**Phase I**
- San Pedro
- W. Commerce
- Nogalitos
- E. Commerce / S. New Braunfels

**Phase II**
- I-10 Corridor
- US 281 Corridor
- Culebra
- Military
- Old Hwy. 90 / Marbach

Legend:
- Metro Bus Facility
- Local Bus Facility
- Managed Lanes
- Phase I
- Phase II
- Alternatives explored
- Alternative Mode
- Metrorail
- Metro BRT
- Metro Paratransit

Source: TTI Metropolitan Transit

Austin
What is *Rapid Bus*?

» A form of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
» Sometimes called BRT-Lite
» Offers faster, more convenient and attractive service within existing roadway rights-of-way
» Other attributes comparable to BRT systems elsewhere

Why *Rapid Bus*?

» Cost effective way to provide faster transit service
» Quick implementation time
» Limited ROW in preferred corridor
» Attracts new riders to transit
» Proven successful
» Potential for incremental service enhancements
» The right mode for this corridor at this point in time
Rapid Adds Corridor Capacity

A “Sexy” Vehicle...
One Piece of a Comprehensive Program

Austin Efforts to Date

» 2000 - Light rail referendum
» 2004 - All Systems Go-effort resulted in selection of Rapid Bus for the Lamar – South Congress corridor
  » More than 10,000 citizens
  » Plan provides comprehensive mobility for major corridors system-wide
  » Clear preference for Rapid Bus in corridor
  » All Systems Go referendum approved in November 2004
» 2006 - Preliminary engineering of stations and TSP
» 2007 - Plan implementation underway
Rapid Corridor Project Status

» Rapid Bus planning and development efforts to date
  » Route development complete
  » Stop and station work 90% complete
  » Transit Signal Priority design work 90% complete
» Transit signal priority system designed in collaboration with City’s Chief Traffic Engineer
» Vehicle selection process underway
» Service initiation planned for 2010

The Five C’s

» Contrasts
» Commonalities
» Comments about BRT and relationship to traffic engineering
» Conclusions
» Questions
Contrasts

» Underlying community characteristics
» Fit within system
» Success with federal funding
» Community involvement

Commonalities

» Recognition of need to improve ‘Plain Old Bus’ system
» Selection of highest ridership corridor
» Challenges with federal funding
» Complete and unquestioning buy-in from traffic engineers
Comments About BRT and Relationship to Traffic Engineering

» Engage early
» Find common ground
» Bring some $$$
» Know your stuff
» Listen to their perspective
» Patience and perseverance

Conclusions

» BRT has an important role to play in Texas mobility
» Fit the solution to the problem
» BRT will not just happen
» Partnerships are essential
» Funding is a challenge, but BRT can compete well
» Transit agencies must establish and maintain credibility and be active in regional planning efforts
Questions?

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