

**City of Austin  
Transportation Department**



**Smart Trips Austin  
Newcomers Project Plan**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the project plan is to provide guidance in facilitating the Smart Trips Austin (STA) Newcomers project.

**Project Structure**

Since 2015, The STA Neighborhood Navigators program has brought community members and partners together to participate in program events and learn about transportation options. The program strives to strengthen and build community bonds and prioritizes a new community in Austin each year. The goal of STA is to encourage communities within Austin to use transportation options such as walking, biking, riding transit, and sharing rides, rather than driving alone. Historically, this program has reached established residents in the neighborhoods where they live.

In 2018, the City of Austin was awarded a federal grant for the STA program. This new funding source will be used to expand the STA program by planning for and piloting the Newcomers project during 2020-2022. The audience reached by this project are residents recently relocating to or within the City of Austin. By targeting new movers or community members who have made a big life change, the fresh-start effect will leverage people's desires to distance themselves from status quo habits and take actions which support new, positive travel habits. In addition, it will familiarize new residents with all transportation options available before they develop a habit.

The key elements of the Newcomers project include:

- directly mailing new residents to the urban core or those who have moved a significant distance within the urban core.
- Providing newly relocated residents with a welcome packet, either hard copy or electronic, that will include information, maps, and free transportation resources.

EXHIBIT 1  
RFP 2400 CTE3005

In addition to mailers, we will be reaching new movers through community connection points such as universities, schools, employers, and apartment buildings. Those who opt in to participate will be asked to take a survey which collects baseline information on their rates of driving alone, use of active and shared mode types, and their comfort and familiarity of using each mode type. Throughout the program period participants will receive monthly newsletters with messages segmented to meet their current needs and where they exist on the stages of change scale. They will also be invited to join existing Smart Trips Austin programming from the Neighborhood Navigator program. Once the pilot project is over, participants will be asked to take the same survey so the project team can detect behavior change and modeshift.

Implementation of the project will require several phases, including:

- planning and development,
- outreach and marketing to the key audience,
- data collection and reporting on project objectives and outcomes,
- collateral and events planning to the key audience,
- project launch and wrap-up.

**Welcome Packet**

Once a resident opts in to participate, they will receive a welcome packet with transportation resources such as maps, safety information, promo codes for bike/scooter shares, and a free bus pass. Some of these materials already exist though the Smart Trips Austin Neighborhood Navigator program but may need to be customized to meet the specific needs of the audience.

In previous Neighborhood Navigator programs, the packet was delivered by community ambassadors directly to the participant's door. During this exchange the ambassadors utilized motivational interviewing as a tool to encourage residents to reflect on their current commutes and the desire to change. This process was eventually dropped by the program due to low door open rates, stolen packets, and the large amount of time and resources it took to pack and deliver. Since 2019, the program has shifted to a digital delivery method where participants receive all materials online through an email. Any tangible items, such as printed maps, bike lights, water bottles, and other travel gear can be collected at Smart Trips tabellings and events.

The development of the Welcome Packet should include:

- A Welcome/ Thank you Letter mapping out the process of participation
- Transportation resources and brochures for all modes available in Austin
- Transportation incentives such as free bus passes and bike share passes
- Branded incentives such as bike lights, fanny packs, phone wallets, etc.
- Other incentives such as discounts at local businesses

Contract firm may determine additional details of the welcome packet as they see fit, as well as determination on how the welcome packet is distributed.

EXHIBIT 1  
RFP 2400 CTE3005

**Contributions from Smart Trips Austin Team**

The City of Austin and Capital Metro can provide existing informational materials such as:

- City of Austin Bicycle Map,
- Capital Metro System Map,
- Commute **Solutions** Brochure,
- My TX Ride Brochure,
- Walk Smart Brochure.

In addition, the Smart Trips Austin team will work with transportation suppliers to provide the following incentives in the welcome packet:

- A digital bus pass,
- A B-Cycle Day Pass
- Promo codes for micro-mobility options like scooters and dockless bikes

Other customized collateral and new incentives that would help create modeshift are recommended. The City will provide GIS shapefiles and existing Smart Trips Austin design files to the contractor. Capital Metro and City Staff will also be available to answer technical transportation questions and provide guidance during one on one support sessions with the public.

**Timeline**

The project is expected to begin as early as Fall 2020 or the first quarter of 2021 at the latest. Success of the project includes a strong and well-coordinated project launch, so that residents can get excited about what the project offers and possibly tell others.

**Planning and Development**

Comprehensive planning and development are key to implementing a strong project. Planning includes the creation of this written project plan. The project plan will be finalized by July 2020 and supplied to TxDOT as a grant deliverable. If time and budget allow, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) staff may assist in hosting focus groups to help inform the project plan. The focus groups will aim to gather more information from residents in the target area, such as:

- Types of resources needed to use public transit and active transportation options (maps, free passes, classes, events, one on one training, bike buddy/ carpool matching programs, other incentives – restaurant coupons, etc.),
- How motivated people are to try other modes when first moving to town or relocating,
- Appropriate time in which to contact someone who has just moved (before they move, first week, first month), and
- Connection points in the community that can help promote the program and mission (universities, schools, apartment complexes, employers, coffee shops, parks, churches, health centers, gyms, grocery stores, etc.).

**Project Team**

EXHIBIT 1  
RFP 2400 CTE3005

Development includes hiring a contract firm to implement the project. Hiring a contract firm may take several months.

The contract firm could convene and manage a project team that may include:

- data services group,
- media group,
- printer,
- engagement team,
- outreach ambassadors to conduct community outreach,
- and volunteers, among others.

Individuals already working on the STA program may be included as a part of the project team. A key initial step of the contract firm is to refine and finalize this project plan.

**Project Location**

The contract firm will determine the program area according to their program approach and budget constraints with the expectation that the program area will include areas accessible by sustainable transportation options.

The proposed geographic area that will be reached by this project is within the following zipcodes:

- 78701 through 78705,
- 78721 through 78723,
- 78741,
- 78751 and 78752,
- 78756 and 78757.

**Audience**

The audience of residents recently relocating to or within the City of Austin will be contacted by direct mail and through new employee, student, or resident orientations.

Outreach will be a tiered approach that increases in intensity to on the ground engagement when needed. For instance, employers and apartment complexes will be reached if there is a low response via direct mail. These additional approaches may require more budgetary resources and possibly the hiring of additional ambassador staff.

City of Austin will lead as an example employer by providing information at New Employee Orientation and online. Coordination with Movability may take place to reach Movability members that are large employers. Additionally, outreach may take place at universities, schools, new developments, and apartment complexes.

**Outreach and Marketing**

EXHIBIT 1  
RFP 2400 CTE3005

Outreach and marketing are essential to achieving the goals of the project. The contract firm will develop and implement a communications plan that outlines the key outreach and marketing tasks and milestones for the project. The communications plan, when final, will be an addendum to this project plan.

Key communication touch points include:

- Initial contact and sign up,
- Receive welcome packet explaining program process and services,
- Attendance of first event or use of transportation incentive,
- Mid-program check-in on progress of modeshift and feedback on the program,
- Final push to use incentives, attend event, modeshift encouragement,
- Post program survey delivery, and
- Thank you and recommendations of other transportation resources including neighborhood-based programming.

Key tasks include:

- Development and implementation of communications plan,
- Graphics, print/electronic materials, website and/or app, in-person and electronic outreach, events planning,
- Development and implementation of a strategy for identifying new or relocated residents, and
- Measurement of the effectiveness of strategies implemented.

### **Data Collection and Reporting**

Data collection and reporting are important for tracking the progress and success of the project. We expect the contract firm to partner with myCommuteSolution.com to gather and report data. The contract firm will develop and implement a data strategy plan that will include specific data collection and evaluation strategies. When final the data strategy plan will be an addendum to this project plan.

Reporting project progress to TxDOT will be completed monthly. Other data collection and reporting will be completed mid-way through the project, at the end of the project, and as agreed upon with the contract firm. The contract firm shall maintain overall project performance in a database or similar tool.

The Newcomers project has specific **quantitative goals** that align with the STA program.

- 5-10% participation rate. This is determined by the number of households contacted at the beginning of the program.
- 5-10% decrease in single occupant vehicle use.
- 5-10% increase in active and shared modes.

The Newcomers pilot project is expected to meet the following **qualitative goals** :

- maximize traveler choices by promoting sustainable travel options,
- increase user comfort and confidence in using active and shared modes,
- move participants further along the stage of change scale,
- reduce trip generation, reduce local parking needs, and

EXHIBIT 1  
RFP 2400 CTE3005

- maintain regional air quality.

**Surveying**

The contracted firm will conduct project evaluations, likely through surveys with survey reminders but other mechanisms of evaluation may be used. Evaluations should measure project impact on rates of driving alone and active/shared mode shifts..

Key milestones include:

- Collection of baseline modeshare, stage of change, and comfort data from participants (potentially sociodemographic information),
- Collection of mid year project feedback on program services (potentially modeshift),
- Collection of end of project modeshift, stage of change, and comfort data from participants in addition to overall feedback on the program.

Key tasks include:

- Development and implementation of a written data management plan with reporting structure and other elements, such as, baseline data collection, further defining/collecting project metrics, collecting qualitative data, identification of software applications for data collection and database management,
- Development and implementation of participation analysis strategy document and analysis tools.

Whenever possible, it is recommended that the proposed data collection method and survey align with the existing Neighborhood Navigator data methods and survey. This will allow for a direct comparison of each program when most variables remain constant.

**Collateral and Events Planning**

Providing residents with quality events and program materials strengthens engagement with residents and is expected to increase behavior change.

The contracted firm will accomplish several activities, including:

- Identify and distribute any existing collateral materials that might be donated from other agencies or organizations (e.g. transit maps) or from prior Smart Trips Austin Neighborhood Navigator Program projects that can be used,
- Obtain and distribute discounted or free incentives from local vendors (e.g. discount coupons),
- Purchase and distribute high-quality incentive items (e.g. bike lights, pedometers, tote bags),
- Develop, print, and distribute informational pieces (e.g. neighborhood maps, stroll maps, walk/bike safety brochures), and
- Coordinate community events in conjunction with Smart Trips Austin Neighborhood Navigator. If the Newcomers pilot is successful then other high-quality community-based events may be planned and promoted, such as guided walks, bike rides, scooter tours, and transit adventures.

EXHIBIT 1  
RFP 2400 CTE3005

**Wrap-Up**

Smooth wrap-up of the project will help bring to light the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with continuing in to a permanent phase. This information will also help other governmental entities decide if they want to undertake a similar project.

During the wrap-up phase of the project the contracted firm will conduct project evaluations, likely through post-survey with survey reminders. The firm will also prepare and deliver thank you notes to project participants, staff, and volunteers

Additionally, the contracted firm and City of Austin staff will work together to create and deliver a final project report and one-page fact sheet documenting major steps of the project, successes, lessons learned, results of data collection, project metrics, and recommendations.

Finally, the contracted firm shall host a post-project debrief meeting with City staff prior to delivering the final project report document.

**Attachments**

- TxDOT reporting template
- Contract firm outreach, marketing, and advertising strategies
- Contract firm data collection and evaluation strategies