**EXPLORING THE BARRIERS TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: THE CASE OF CAPITAL METRO**

by

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Abstract

Public transportation is a necessary public service for thousands of people who are transit dependent. Expectation of a reliable transportation system is as normal as expecting running water and electricity every morning. Public involvement in transportation policy decision making is an essential mechanism to provide quality service to the transit dependent as well as to choice riders.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the perceived barriers to community involvement in public transportation from the perspective of the minority community in Austin, Texas which is served by the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The study develops two working hypotheses and sub-hypotheses from the literature to identify barriers to community involvement and alternatives to the barriers. Focus groups and surveys of current and potential Austin area minority community transit riders are the methodologies used in the study. Descriptive statistics of percentages and modes are used to describe the survey responses. The results indicate that the minority community is aware of barriers to involvement and is receptive to alternatives adopted to increase minority community involvement such as information sharing in multiple languages through churches, radio and television advertising.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Purpose

"Urban transit systems in most American cities… have become a genuine civil rights issue-and a valid one-because the layout of rapid-transit systems determines the accessibility of jobs to the African-American community. If transportation systems in American cities could be laid out so as to provide an opportunity for poor people to get meaningful employment, then they could begin to move into the mainstream of American life."- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.[1]

Dependency on public transportation systems is an everyday reality for millions of people. Transportation policies adopted after World War II have had inequitable effects on minority and low-income populations. In many cases, restricting their ability to social and economic opportunities, including job opportunities, education, health services, places of worship and even grocery stores (Sanchez et al 2003, vi). With the exception of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Freedom Rides of the 1960s, public involvement with respect to transportation policy has had a problematic history (Grossardt et al 2003, 1).

Austin is the capital of Texas and Capital Metro, the transit system serving the area, has a service area of approximately 500 square miles. The population of Austin has nearly doubled in the last 20 years according to reports given by Envision Central Texas. With population growth, the transit system is also expected to grow to meet the transportation needs of the community. Like the rest of the nation, minorities combined make the largest percentage of riders in the Capital Metro system. Historically,

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[1] Quoted from a 1968 statement given by Dr. King found on page 3 of Sanchez, Stolz and Ma.

minorities do not often attend public hearing or community meetings as it relates to transportation planning and policy.

This study looks at community involvement processes and explores alternatives to increase minority community participation.   Community involvement is a challenge faced by transit properties throughout the nation and in particular by transit properties serving large minority populations.   According to the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas, the immigrant Spanish speaking population increased by 50% from 2000-2004 compared to a 16% increase nationally. This study looks at Austin, Texas in particular because of the population growth experienced especially in the minority community.

This study has two research purposes. The first is to explore the minority community's assessment of community involvement efforts made by Capital Metro, the public transit system in Austin, Texas, from the point of view of the minority community. The second purpose is to explore the barriers to the community involvement processes and to explore alternative ways to engage the local minority community in the Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the local minority community[2].

Benefits of Research

The current study is important for two reasons. First, the research provides data on the ways to improve outreach and communication with the Austin minority community. In particular, this research project gathers information on how best to meet the transportation needs by communicating with people with Limited English

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[2] For the purpose of this research, minority community includes the Asian, African-American (Black) and Latino (Hispanic) communities. The term African-American and Black, as it applies to race, is used interchangeably throughout this study. The term Latino and Hispanic, as it applies to ethnicity, is used interchangeably throughout this study.

Proficiency (LEP). Compliance with LEP was mandated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) in 2001 for federally funded agencies such as transit systems and State Departments of   Transportation[3]. Second, it provides preliminary data on the transit needs of the minority community who rely on Capital Metro services by identifying the minority community's preferences for outreach options.

Transportation Policies

In the 1990s, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) mandated increased public involvement in State and regional transportation planning. TEA-21 also helped establish grant programs to help serve the transportation needs of minority and low income communities (Sanchez et al 2003, vi). TEA-21 strengthened the opportunities for public involvement and required greater responsiveness to the concerns of minority and low income communities in transportation (Sanchez et al 2003, 6). State Departments of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organizations are responsible for planning transportation in a way that achieves the greatest efficiency for the system. These agencies are required to seek and consider the needs of low income and minority households. However, effective mechanisms to ensure compliance with this requirement are not currently in place. Some legal protections for minority communities who may be faced with discriminatory transportation policies are provided under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Sanchez et al 2003, ix).

Capital Metro Background

The Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) is the public transit system currently serving the greater metropolitan area of Austin, Texas. Capital Metro is a corporate body and political subdivision of the State of Texas, created by a

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[3] Schachter, Hindy Lauer and Rachel Liu. 2005. Policy Development and New Immigrant Communities: A Case Study of Citizen Input in Defining Transit Problems. *Public Administration Review*, 65(5): 616

referendum on January 19, 1985 in accordance with Chapter 451 of the Texas Transportation Code. Capital Metro commenced operations on July 1, 1985[4].

Nine areas initially voted to participate in Capital Metro, including the cities of Austin, West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, San Leanna, Cedar Park, Leander, Lago Vista, Pflugerville, and the Anderson Mill area of Williamson County. Since its inception, Travis County Precinct 2, Jonestown, Manor, as well as the jurisdictions of Volente and Point Venture, have joined the service area[5]. Between 1987 and 2000, the cities of Rollingwood, Cedar Park and Pflugerville voted to withdraw from the Capital Metro service area. These cities opted to use the sales tax revenue for purposes other than transportation.

The Capital Metro service area extends over 500 square miles with approximately 737,000 residents. Service area communities participate in the one percent (1%) sales tax[6] funding support that contributes to approximately 80% of the revenue received by Capital Metro. Capital Metro is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors (Board) which has policy making responsibilities. In 1997, the Texas legislature passed a bill that resulted in the dissolution of the Board and appointment of all new Board members[7].

Prior to 1985, public transit was a function operated by the City of Austin under the Austin Transit Company which served the Texas capital city since 1940. From 1875 to 1940, Austin public transit was operated by the Austin Street Rail Company which operated mule drawn rail cars from 1875 to 1891. From 1892 to 1940, electric street cars were operated on various Austin city streets which included Congress Avenue, 6th Street, 1st Street and 7th Street. All street rails were removed between 1940 and 1942.

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[4] Capital Metro website http://www.capmetro.org/news/history.asp
[5] See Service area Map on Appendix C
[6] Capital Metro approved Fiscal Year 2005 Budget, p. 5
[7] In accordance with Section 451.5021 of the Texas Transportation Code.

On the last day of streetcar operations in 1940, then Austin Mayor Tom Miller told a host of dignitaries that they were gathering to "witness the change from the old to the modern, the change from streetcars to buses." Then, with a phrase that today's rail advocates may rally around, Mayor Miller predicted that Austin's bus system will "remain in operation until some other better means of transportation takes its place."[8]

Capital Metro Community Involvement

Capital Metro seeks community involvement from the general and minority communities as a continued effort to improve the efficiency of the local transit system. Currently, Capital Metro has a community involvement team structure of four staff members. The service area has been divided into four quadrants; Northwest, Northeast, Southeast and Southwest. Each Community Involvement staff member is responsible for community outreach in one of these quadrants. Community meetings are currently promoted through electronic newsletters, neighborhood association e-mail information, bilingual flyers and bilingual newspaper advertisements.

For the past twenty years, Capital Metro has used community involvement techniques as a way to be responsive to the community it serves. Also, these efforts are intended to ensure that the transportation system is meeting community needs, as well as comply with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations. Feedback from minority transit riders is important in Capital Metro's policy and decision making. In particular feedback from minority riders can affect the bus stop placement, transit oriented development (TOD), route schedules and placement of other amenities, such as benches and bus shelters. Despite community outreach attempts, minority community

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[8] http://www.austinchronicle.com/issues/dispatch/2000-07-21/pols_feature5.html

representation at Capital Metro sponsored public meetings, has typically been low.[9]

This is problematic because the low income and minority community are the most transit

dependent.

Transit Dependency

Nationally, public transportation users are disproportionately minorities with low

to moderate incomes.   According to a 1992 report by the American Public Transit

Association (APTA), the breakdown of public transportation users by race and ethnicity

is: 45% white, 31% African-American, 18% Hispanic and 6% other (Sanchez et al 2003,

13). **Figure 1.1** details these percentages.   Due to higher poverty rates, minorities have

higher public transportation dependency rates for travel to work. **Figure 1.2** shows that

12% of African- Americans, 10% of Asians, 9% of Hispanics compared to only 3% of

whites are dependent on the transit system to work related transportation.   In fact, the

percentages of households without a car (**Figure 1.3**) are highest in African-American

households (24%), followed Hispanic households (17%).   In urban areas, African-

Americans and Hispanics make up 54% of public transportation users which translates to

62% of bus riders, 35% of subway riders and 29% of commuter rail riders (**Figure 1.4**

details these figures).

Figure 1.1:
Public Transportation Users Nationally

Other
6%

Hispanic
18%

White
45%

African-
Americans
31%
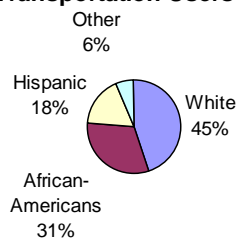
Source: Sanchez, Stolz and Ma, 2003 p. 13

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[9] Based on sign-in sheets taken from Capital Metro community meeting on February 4, 2006. Out of 200
attendees, 5 were African-Americans , 5 Hispanics and 4 Asians.

Figure 1.2:
Transit Dependency to Travel to Work
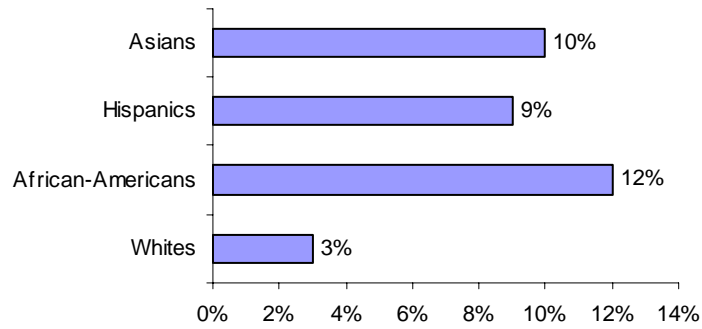
Source: Sanchez, Stolz and Ma, 2003, p. 9

Figure 1.3:
Households Without a Car
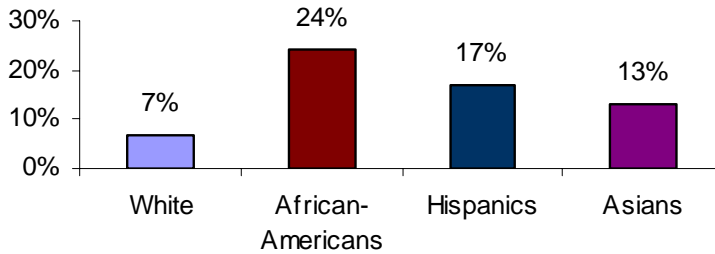
Source: Sanchez, Stolz and Ma, 2003, p. 9

Figure 1.4:
Minority Use of Transit in Urban Areas
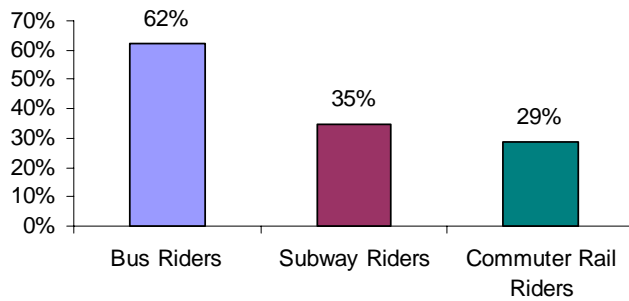
Source: Sanchez, Stolz and Ma, 2003, p. 9

Income Disparity

The disparity in poverty levels between whites and minorities is evident. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, in 2003, the poverty rate for whites was 8.1% compared to 22% for African-Americans, 21% for Hispanics and 10% for Asians. Income levels generally correlate with people's ability to own a car and the type of transportation used (Sanchez et al 2003, 9). Disparities in wealth and income have increased faster in the United States than in Canada, France, Germany, Italy and nearly all other advanced industrial democracies. By 1998, the share of income accruing to the very rich was two or three times higher in the U.S. than in Britain and France. Disparities are particularly striking when it comes to race. Since the Civil Rights era, the absolute levels of income and wealth enjoyed by African-Americans and Hispanics have risen, but income and wealth continue to remain far behind levels from white America (APSA Task Force 2004, 653). Income disparity is important to highlight because it is a barrier that prevents community involvement. Low income individuals are less likely to attend public meetings because their work hours may not allow them.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two provides an overview of the scholarly literature used for this research project to help develop the conceptual framework for the research and data collection. The working hypotheses conceptual framework used in this research project is detailed in **Chapter Three**. In **Chapter Four** the methodology used for the data collection is outlined. It discusses the survey instrument and focus group questions as well as the sampling methods used. **Chapter Five** examines the data and results obtained from the surveys and focus groups. Lastly, **Chapter Six** summarizes the findings and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Purpose

This chapter examines the scholarly literature in the areas of community and public involvement. This examination demonstrates the importance of community participation and input in publicly funded projects and policy adoption. The review also serves as a foundation to explore the barriers to community involvement and alternative ways Capital Metro, the Austin, Texas public transit system, can communicate with its minority constituency.

A Brief Overview of Community Involvement

Community involvement is a way for public agencies to obtain feedback on issues which affect the public's interest, and it provides the means by which citizen input is integrated into local decision-making (Raffray 1997, 10). In past practices, the results of the community involvement process became tools used by public agencies to justify decisions that were already made before the public was asked for feedback (Raffray 1997, 8). In other words, public involvement was sought to ratify decisions rather than to help make decisions. An honest process of community involvement is also a form of participatory democracy and therefore linked to long standing and is cherished (Shields, 2003).

Types of Participation

John Dewey (1939) captured the notion of participatory democracy when he stated: "… democracy is a personal way of individual life; that it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life" (Dewey 1939, 341). Citizen participation in the

electoral process, in the judicial system and in public meetings are examples of participatory democracy.

Electoral Participation

Voting

Voting is a form of citizen participation used to elect individuals to public office who will represent a community's interests, an example of representative democracy. Elected officials in turn vote to approve ordinances, referendums or amendments to current laws. Only about half of the registered American voters exercised their right to vote in the 2000 presidential election (Green 2004, 61). The 2000 election brought issues to the surface in Florida's election practices concerning racial profiling of minorities at the polls reminiscent of the days of Jim Crow[10] laws. Allegations surfaced that names of individuals, mainly of minorities were added to lists of ex-convicts without proper verification. Consequently, law abiding minority citizens were not allowed to cast their vote because their name appeared on a list of ineligible voters (Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002, 143).

The controversial vote recount in the 2000 presidential election may have served as the catalyst for the increased voter turnout of the 2004 election. In Travis County, Texas, the voter turnout in 2004 was 64% compared to 53% turnout in the 2000 election (**Table 2.1**). Nationally, 55.3% of registered voters cast their ballots. The voter turnout had not been this high since 1972, and was only higher during three elections of the

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[10] The Jim Crow era in American history dates from the late 1890s when southern states began systematically to codify (or strengthen) in law and state constitutional provisions the subordinate position of African Americans in society aimed at separating the races in public spaces (public schools, parks, accommodations, and transportation) and preventing adult black males from exercising the right to vote. http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/history/creating2.htm

1960s when voter turnout ranged from 60.8% to 63.1%. Therefore, the trend shows that prior to a voter controversy, the voter turnout had remained around 50% (**Table 2.2**).

Table 2.1 – Travis County, Texas Voter Turnout 1996-2004[11]

Year	Voter Turnout %	
2004 General Election	*64%*	*Presidential Election*
2002 General Election	*41%*	
2000 General Election	*53%*	*Presidential Election*
1998 General Election	*35%*	
1996 General Election	*54%*	*Presidential Election*

Table 2.2   National Voter Turnout in Federal Elections: 1960-2004[12]

Year	Voting-age population	Voter registration	Voter turnout	Turnout of voting-age population (percent)
2004	221,256,931	174,800,000	122,294,978	55.3%
2002	215,473,000	150,990,598	79,830,119	37.0
2000	205,815,000	156,421,311	105,586,274	51.3
1998	200,929,000	141,850,558	73,117,022	36.4
1996	196,511,000	146,211,960	96,456,345	49.1
1994	193,650,000	130,292,822	75,105,860	38.8
1992	189,529,000	133,821,178	104,405,155	55.1
1990	185,812,000	121,105,630	67,859,189	36.5
1988	182,778,000	126,379,628	91,594,693	50.1
1986	178,566,000	118,399,984	64,991,128	36.4
1984	174,466,000	124,150,614	92,652,680	53.1
1982	169,938,000	110,671,225	67,615,576	39.8
1980	164,597,000	113,043,734	86,515,221	52.6
1978	158,373,000	103,291,265	58,917,938	37.2
1976	152,309,190	105,037,986	81,555,789	53.6
1974	146,336,000	96,199,020[1]	55,943,834	38.2
1972	140,776,000	97,328,541	77,718,554	55.2
1970	124,498,000	82,496,747[2]	58,014,338	46.6
1968	120,328,186	81,658,180	73,211,875	60.8
1966	116,132,000	76,288,283[3]	56,188,046	48.4
1964	114,090,000	73,715,818	70,644,592	61.9
1962	112,423,000	65,393,751[4]	53,141,227	47.3
1960	109,159,000	64,833,096[5]	68,838,204	63.1

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[11] Results obtained from Travis County, Texas http://www.co.travis.tx.us/county_clerk/election/results.asp

[12] "National voter turnout in federal elections: 1960-2004." Infoplease. © 2000–2005 Pearson Education, publishing as Infoplease. 28 Jan. 2006 <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781453.html>.

Participatory Democracy

Problems

Unfortunately low voter turnout can weaken the tie between representative democracy and the effectiveness of elected officials to reflect the needs of the citizens they serve. Even at its best representative democracy works at the policy level. A problem with voting for candidates even if the turnout is high is that it does not provide government leaders with concrete information about specific problems in policy implementation. Questions about where best to build a library or place bus stops cannot be answered by voting. At best, citizens can vote for candidates that supports more libraries or an expanded bus system. Policy implementation is left to bureaucracies and public administrators. Agencies are facing the challenge of learning the preferences of the future and current users. There has been a historical reliance on "experts". Even ethical, well qualified experts would be likely to make poor decisions without some mechanism to judge the preferences of future users. New mandates seek community involvement for good reasons. However, representative democracy is suited to serve the majority and, thus, minority needs may be missed.

Election trends show that it is the privileged and elderly populations who turn out in larger numbers to the polls (Blackwell et al 2002, 24). According to the American Political Science Association (APSA), the privileged participate more than others and are increasingly well organized to press their demands on government. In turn, public officials are much more responsive to the privileged than to average citizens and the less affluent (APSA Task Force 2004, 651).

Participatory democracy entails citizen participation at public meetings, taking part in community surveys and attending public hearings to provide public comment on rules to

be adopted or updated. Dewey (1939, 341) points out "[d]emocracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature…That belief is without basis and significance save as it means faith in the potentialities of human nature is exhibited in every human being irrespective of race, color, sex, birth and family of material or cultural wealth". Every person is different and regardless of race and gender has a contribution to society if participation is granted. Dewey also wrote: "the democratic faith in human equality is belief that every human being independent of the quantity or range of his personal endowment, has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development of whatever gifts he has" (Dewey 1939, 341).

Involvement with Political Party

Involvement with a political party is also a form of participatory democracy. By definition, a political party is a group of politically active individuals organized to influence the nomination and election of officials (Lemay 2002, 57). Political party affiliation has allowed the voices of American citizens to be raised and heard (APSA Task Force 2004, 651). In 1992 and 1996, the Democratic Party was successful in getting its registered members to the polls and eventually electing William Jefferson Clinton as the 42nd President of the United States. In 2000 and 2004, the Republican Party reached out to its members and undecided voters, which resulted in the election and re-election of George Walker Bush as the 43rd President of the United States. Both political parties have courted the minority vote, minorities have played an important role in elections in the last four national elections.

Traditionally, minorities have supported the Democratic Party (Blackwell et al 2002, 66). In Texas, a large percentage of the minority vote has shifted to the Republican Party. Hispanics, in particular, played a key role in the Texas gubernatorial race of 1998

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in which George W. Bush captured 49% of the Hispanic vote and 27% of the African-American vote[13]. Since the 2000 election, the Republican Party has changed its approach and has become more active in seeking minority involvement within the Republican Party (Blackwell et al 2002, 66).

Community Engagement

The most fundamental of American's negative feelings about government is that "government has nothing to do with them, and in turn, citizens' feelings of disconnection from government produce an apparent apathy " (King and Stivers 1998, 11).   According to Nalbandian (2005, 312-313) the forces of civic engagement and citizen participation are characterized by:

> ➢ Recognizing neighborhoods as the base unit of the community;
>
> ➢ Engaging citizens in administrative processes;
>
> ➢ Acknowledging expressions of direct democracy;
>
> ➢ Increasing jurisdictional accountability and transparency with citizens
>
> ➢ Increasing two-way communication with citizens about policy;

According to Nalbandian, the driving force behind this trend is the desire for identity, connection, and at least some measure of control over one's life.   An example of community engagement at Iowa State University involves two professors, Dr. Ho and Dr. Coates, who are engaged in a statewide project designed to promote citizen-initiated performance assessment of municipal services including public safety (Nalbandian, 313). "The goal is to develop citizen driven measures that matter to residents as residents understand them."   Another example is the Mid America Regional Council (MARC), which acts in a brokering role providing an inter-jurisdictional bridge for networks

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[13] http://www.multied.com/elections/georgewbush.html

involving regional planning, transportation, and homeland security (Nalbandian 2005, 318).

Building community and building trust has become part of a public administrator's role and responsibility. For example, "city managers are seen as community builders and enablers of democracy and with those goals, they have become skilled in facilitative leadership and in building partnerships and consensus" (Nalbandian 1999, 187). According to Nalbandian, many have argued that reconnecting citizens to government requires a government oriented toward citizen involvement rather than control by professional elites. A crucial component of this capacity is to develop a sense of responsibility among citizens to participate in and obligate themselves to a collective decision. The obligation stems from an understanding that certain tasks require collective and public action rather than private, individual decisions (Nalbandian 1999, 189). Nalbandian points out that "the challenges to the call for community building are the long term social, political and economic trends that have fragmented society and insufficient transferable knowledge of how exactly to build and maintain a sense of community" (Nalbandian 1999, 190).

According to Nalbandian (2005), "The more bridges, the stronger the local community's capacity to chart its future, the fewer bridges, the more likely the community will divide politically with attendant delay in dealing effectively with difficult issues…"   and "… equally important is fostering effective citizen investment that create the public good through engagement" (Nalbandian 2005, 323).

Minority Participation at public meetings

The results of a study conducted in 1995 by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) showed that local government officials and citizens

disagree regarding available opportunities for citizen participation in government. According to the study, less than half of the citizens responding thought that their local government leaders are willing to share leadership and decision-making with constituents (Raffray 1997, 2).   Minorities are the least likely to take part in citizen participation even as America undergoes a dramatic demographic change. In 2002, just over 70% of Americans are white, which is down from well over 80% in 1970 (Blackell et al 2002, 21).   It is worth noting that: "African-Americans have been the most numerous minority group in this country … [but] Latinos are now virtually tied in number with African-Americans posing a historic shift in minority group dynamics" (Blackwell et al 2002, 21). The Asian community is another minority group that is quickly becoming a strong stakeholder. "Asians are the fastest growing share of the U.S. population. It is projected that by 2050, the U.S. will be nearly a majority-minority country and the Latino population will exceed all of the other minority populations combined" (Blackwell et al 2002, 22).

Community Involvement in Public Transportation

While transportation issues were a vital part of the civil rights movement of the 1960s with the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Freedom rides, the consequences of transportation policies were not addressed until nearly 30 years later with the passage of TEA-21 (Sanchez et al, vi). The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) basically forced increased public involvement in State and regional transportation planning. In addition, TEA-21 helped establish grant programs to help serve the transportation needs of minority and low income communities (Sanchez et al, vi). TEA-21 strengthened the opportunities for public involvement and required greater

responsiveness to the concerns of minority and low income communities in transportation (Sanchez et al 2003, 6).

The issue of community participation in public transportation has been the focus of various scholarly works. Citizen participation is an essential part of democratic self government (Raffray 1997, 8). Schachter and Liu's (2005) study revealed that early citizen participation benefits the public processes because it introduces new knowledge and ideas and new ways to meet public needs (Schachter and Liu 2005, 615). Often times, in an area of technical complexity such as transportation, public administrators limit citizen's input in policy development roles (Schachter and Liu 2005, 614). When communities have a chance to give input on technological issues, agencies have already defined the problem and, therefore, the absence of citizen involvement during the issue-framing stage affects the nature of the concerns that are considered (Schachter and Liu 2005, 614).

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

An issue that can further compound the need for community involvement is the clash that exists between the experts and the community that has limited English proficiency, when the "experts" are monolingual English speakers. Another issue to consider is the marginalization of the new immigrant communities which may lead agencies to discount community perspectives (Schachter and Liu 2005, 615). Improved communication with clients that have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) was mandated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) in 2001. Federally funded agencies such as transit systems and State Departments of Transportation must develop plans to provide LEP individuals equal access to information and communication (Schachter and Liu 2005, 616). Some public agencies struggle to obtain community

input from the minority community as well as the LEP members they serve and often take incorrect approaches. For example, a "federal railroad agency surveyed its employees, instead of LEP clients, to identify equal-access problems for people with limited English proficiency." (Schachter and Liu 2005, 615)

Summary

This chapter examines scholarly literature on community involvement and public participation. It discusses community involvement and types of participation. The literature is helpful in understanding the importance of community participation in the development and implementation of policies and procedures by agencies that are publicly funded. The review serves as a foundation for the conceptual framework used to develop the working hypotheses of this research discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

Purpose

This chapter examines the conceptual framework used in this applied research project.   Based on the scholarly literature, two exploratory research purposes were developed. First, this research project explores the barriers to community involvement processes at Capital Metro. Secondly, this project explores alternative ways to engage the local minority and Limited English Proficient (LEP) community in Capital Metro decision making processes. Working Hypotheses are the type of conceptual framework used to address these issues. The hypotheses are an organizing mechanism for data collection (Shields 1998, 57).

Barriers

As discussed in Chapter Two, citizen participation is an essential part of democratic self government (Raffray 1997, 8).   Schachter and Liu's (2005) study revealed that early citizen participation benefits the public processes because it introduces new knowledge and ideas and new ways to meet public needs (Schachter and Liu 2005, 615). In an area of technical complexity such as transportation, often times, public administrators limit citizen's input in policy development roles (Schachter and Liu 2005, 614).   Public involvement with respect to transportation planning has been problematic largely because of the lack of access to an organized and coherent method for communicating with the public (Grossardt et al 2003, 1).   Often when communities have a chance to give input on technological issues, agencies have already defined the problem. Unfortunately, the absence of citizen involvement during the issue-framing stage can affect the nature of the concerns that are considered (Schachter and Liu 2005, 614).

Public notices may be posted or printed in unread publications or do not allow sufficient notice and time for the public to attend. These procedures may result in a handful of attendees at a meeting or, perhaps, none at all.   The end result may be the elimination or changes to a route that many riders depend on.

Therefore one would expect:

Working Hypothesis 1 (WH1): The public recognizes barriers to its involvement in public transportation planning.

Outreach Approaches

The barriers to community involvement are comprised in the limited English proficient (LEP) community. Monolingual English "experts" may be both unable and unwilling to seek input from the LEP community. In addition, the marginalization of the new immigrant communities may lead agencies to discount community perspectives (Schachter and Liu 2005, 615). Some public agencies struggle to obtain community input from the minority community, as well as the LEP members they serve, and often take incorrect approaches. For example, a federal railroad agency surveyed its employees instead of LEP clients to identify equal-access problems for people with limited English proficiency (Schachter and Liu 2005, 615). This situation has arisen because transportation professionals do not have a concise method for communicating with the public. In addition, principles of public involvement well known to community outreach professionals have yet to be recognized or internalized by transportation professionals (Grossardt et al 2003, 1).   Grossardt et al (2001, 2) point out that it is important to avoid technological limitations to drive and shape the public involvement process.

Therefore one would expect:

> ***Working Hypothesis 1a (WH1a): Public transportation agencies have utilized incorrect approaches to community outreach, which has discouraged public involvement and input.***

Limited Bilingual Communication

Asian and Hispanic immigrant populations with English as a second language have increased significantly since the 1990s. Census figures show that in cities such as Los Angeles, California, the combined minority population has surpassed the white population. (Blackwell et al 2002, 50) Thus, public agencies wishing to communicate with the public they serve should avoid an "English Only" mentality. Language barriers in transportation affect social and economic opportunities because they limit the ability of a person to travel as well as their ability to communicate with the governing bodies imposing transportation changes (Sanchez et al 2003, ix).

Therefore one would expect:

> ***Working Hypothesis 1b (WH1b): English-only communication hinders public participation by community members with LEP.***

Cultural Sensitivity

As a whole, the minority community very seldom participates in public forums. Even protests, which might appear to demand little in the way of skills or money, are more prevalent among whites (APSA 2004, 656). Since many immigrants are not asked to take part in a democratic process in their home countries, their tendency is towards non-participation. Therefore, this group does not participate once they arrive in the United States.   In a national study, Blackwell et al (2002, 22) found that Hispanic

representation in public meetings to be very low. Cultural sensitivity to the diverse

populations served by public administrators is critical to understanding the needs of the

community.

Therefore one would expect:

Working Hypothesis 1c (WH1c): Cultural mores (customs, traditions, etc.)
hinder participation from Asian, Black and Hispanic communities in public
meetings.

Literacy and Education

Most public information is communicated through some form of written

document or sign. When the public is unable to read the notices, then logically, the

notices are not communicating their message. The minority community often has limited

educational backgrounds (Blackwell et al 2002, 53). The Hispanic immigrant population

lacks formal education and therefore has low literacy (Blackwell et al 2002, 56).

Literacy issues were brought to the forefront during the 2000 presidential election when

many minority individuals were requested to take literacy tests prior to voting (Blackwell

et al 2002, 143).   In Texas, the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas found that

immigrants in Central Texas who speak only Spanish typically have higher incidence of

illiteracy even in their own language. According to the Coalition, this immigrant

population increased 50% from 2000-2004 in the Austin Central Texas region[14].

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[14] While conducting outreach at transit centers, I encountered Hispanic transit riders unable to read
literature in Spanish.   Although documents were translated into Spanish, distributed and posted at transit
stops. In fact, when given the literature, one transit rider held the flyer upside down.

Therefore one would expect:

> *Working Hypothesis 1d (WH1d): Illiteracy is a deterrent to public participation among Asian, Black and Hispanic communities.*

Summary of Working Hypotheses

Table 3.1 summarize the working hypotheses used to investigate barriers to community

involvement at Austin's Capital Metro. The hypotheses are linked to the literature. The

hypotheses dealing with alternatives are developed in the next section.

TABLE 3.1 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE 1

Research Purpose 1: Explore the barriers to the Capital Metro community involvement processes

Working Hypothesis	Literature
WH1: **The public recognizes barriers to its involvement in public transportation planning.**	**•Grossard Bailey and Brumm, 2003** **•Raffray, 1997** **•Schachter and Liu, 2005**
WH1a: **Public transportation agencies have utilized incorrect approaches to community outreach ,which has discouraged public involvement and input.**	**• Grossard, Bailey and Brumm, 2001** **•Grossard Bailey and Brumm, 2003** **• Schachter and Liu, 2005**
WH1b: **English-only communication hinders public participation by community members with LEP.**	**• Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **•Pastor, Dreier, Grigsby and Garza, 2000** **• Sanchez, Stolz & Ma, 2003**
WH1c: **Cultural mores (customs, traditions, etc.) hinder participation from Asian, Black and Hispanic communities in public meetings.**	**•APSA Task Force 2004** **•Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **• Sanchez, Stolz & Ma, 2003** **•Schachter and Liu 2005**
WH1d: **Illiteracy is a deterrent to public participation among Asian, Black and Hispanic communities.**	**•Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **• Sanchez, Stolz & Ma, 2003** **•Schachter and Liu 2005**

Alternatives

The barriers identified in community involvement were discussed in the previous section and the alternatives to address these barriers are discussed in this section. Non-minority individuals are more inclined to participate in community involvement and press their demands on government (APSA Task Force 2004, 651). A 2004 report titled "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality" explained differences in community involvement levels between minorities and non-minorities. The report found that citizens with low or moderate incomes do not speak loudly enough for the ears of inattentive government. It appears that the more financially advantaged speak louder, clearer and with more consistency and, therefore, policy makers are more likely to listen (APSA Task Force 2005, 651). As stated before, information sharing with the community is an important component of outreach. Challenges arise when the information is not properly shared (Alyman 2000. 38). Inequitable transportation policy decisions are often made because low income individuals and minority communities are unable to learn about transit options or have little voice in transportation planning because of language barriers or lack of information. (Sanchez et al 2003, ix)

Therefore one would expect:

Working Hypothesis 2 (WH2): Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the minority community increases if information is provided and promoted.

Bilingual Information

Nalbandian (1999) states that arguments have been made "that reconnecting citizens to government requires government oriented toward citizen involvement rather than control by professional elites" (Nalbandian 1999, 189) Thus, if government provides information in other languages, it would be making a much needed step to reconnect with

the public it serves. Language barriers can diminish social and economic opportunities

by placing a limit on a person's ability to mobilize because of their inability to

communicate to policymakers and planners about transportation needs (Sanchez et al

2003, ix)

Therefore one would expect:

***Working Hypothesis 2b (WH2b): Participation in Capital Metro public
meetings from the limited English Proficiency (LEP) community increases if
information is provided in both English and their native language.***

Information Accessible in Churches

Religion plays a major role in the lives of minority community members. In fact,

churches have been considered an intricate part of civic heritage. During the 1950s and

1960s, churches played a major role in the civil rights movement (Boyte 2005, 538).

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a preacher who took his role as a community leader to

demand fairness for the black race. Thus, community information shared by churches

would reach targeted minority communities.

Therefore one would expect:

***Working Hypothesis 2b (WH2b): Providing information through churches
increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.***

Advertising Public Information

According to Grossardt et al (2003) public administration practitioners have faced

challenges in their efforts to promote community involvement and, in particular,

involvement in the area of public transportation. One of the challenges faced is the

changing culture and the dynamic of the need for two-way communication. The public

must be involved early in the communication process (Grossardt et al 2003, 2).

Providing information about community involvement using channels of communication

which members of the minority community are already using, such as radio and
television, would be an ideal way to outreach. The information could be shared in the
form of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or as a targeted advertising piece during
prime time programming. This would allow the ability to reach a broad-based audience,
using a process that would be inclusive of all stakeholders. This practice is already
widely used in the English speaking community by Capital Metro but has not been
implemented to the fullest extend possible in other languages.

Therefore one would expect:

> ***Working Hypothesis 2c (WH2c): Multi-lingual media advertising increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.***

Summary of Working Hypotheses

Table 3.2 on the next page summarizes the working hypotheses used to explore
alternatives to community involvement at Capital Metro in Austin, TX. The hypotheses
are linked to the literature.

TABLE 3.2 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE 2

Research Purpose 2: Explore alternative ways to engage the community in Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the local minority and LEP community.

Working Hypothesis	Source
WH2: **Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the minority community increases if information is provided and promoted.**	**•APSA Report 2004** **•Alyman 2000** **•Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **•Schachter and Liu 2005** **• Sanchez, Stolz and Ma, 2003**
WH2a: **Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the limited English Proficiency (LEP) community increases if information is provided in both English and their native language.**	**• Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **• Nalbandian 1999** **• Sanchez, Stolz and Ma, 2003** **•Schachter and Liu 2005**
WH2b: **Providing information through churches increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.**	**•Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **• Boyte, 2005** **•Schachter and Liu 2005**
WH2c: **Multilingual media advertising increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.**	**•Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor 2002** **•Grossard Bailey and Brumm, 2003** **•Schachter and Liu 2005**

Summary

This chapter examines the conceptual framework (working hypotheses) used in this applied research project. The working hypotheses and sub-hypotheses were developed using the literature discussed in Chapter Two. The conceptual framework is a used mechanism that organizes data collection. The next chapter discusses how the data was collected.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Purpose

This chapter describes the methodology used to explore 1) the minority community's assessment of community involvement efforts made by Austin's Capital Metro. 2) The barriers to community involvement processes and 3) the alternative ways to engage the local minority community in the Capital Metro decision making processes.

This research project is a case study on Austin's Capital Metro. Information collected will be presented to Capital Metro to better assist the agency in community outreach efforts and planning. In order to have greater confidence in the results, this case study used two methods of data collection; focus groups and surveys. The focus groups added depth to the study and the surveys provided breadth. This case study used a triangulation method by using both survey and focus group research to achieve the research purpose. Triangulation is the process of using multiple sources of evidence in research projects. This process has strength because it helps to validate the findings of the research (Yin 2003, 97).

The questions used in the focus groups and surveys were developed from the working hypotheses and in some cases overlapped. For example, focus groups were conducted prior to survey distribution. This allowed for the survey instrument to be further refined to capture better results. Using both focus groups and surveys reinforced the responses. Tables **4.1** and **4.2** show how the two working hypotheses (WH1 and WH2) are operationalized into focus group and survey questions and measurable response categories.

Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Table 4.1 Research Purpose 1: Explore the barriers to the Capital Metro community involvement processes.

Working Hypothesis	Focus Groups	Survey Item
WH1: **The public recognizes barriers to its involvement in public transportation planning.**	*What do you think about attending Capital Metro public meetings?*	*1) I am aware of Capital Metro services.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5 *12a) My opinion of Capital Metro is:* *1) Positive 2) Negative 3) Neutral*
WH1a: **Public transportation agencies have utilized incorrect approaches to community outreach which has discouraged public involvement and input.**	*What do you think about Capital Metro community outreach?*	*2) Capital Metro does not outreach to my community about community meetings.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5 *11) Over the past 12 months, I have participated in public meetings about:* *__1) 5 times or more 2)__ 3-4 times __ 3)1-2 times ___ 4) Not at all* *12) Some of the public meetings were about Capital Metro.* *1) Yes 2) No 3) Unsure*
WH1b: **English-only communication hinders public participation by community members with LEP.**	*What do you think about having public information only in English?*	
WH1c: **Cultural mores (customs, traditions, etc.) hinder participation from Asian, Black and Hispanic communities in public meetings.**	*How do you feel about participating in Capital Metro public meetings only for your community?*	*4) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the agency was sensitive to my culture* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5 1*3) Please circle your race/ethnicity* *__Asian __Black __Hispanic __other*
WH1d: **Illiteracy is a deterrent to public participation among Asian, Black and Hispanic communities.**	*What do you think about Capital Metro just providing written information about meetings?*	*5) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if I could read about the issues.* *SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5* *14) Please circle your level of education: 1) Elementary – 8th grade 2) High School 3) Some College 4) College Degree*

Table 4.2 Research Purpose 2: Explore alternative ways to engage the community in Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the local minority and LEP community.

Working Hypothesis	Focus Groups	Survey Item
WH2: **Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the minority community increases if information is provided and promoted.**	*What do you think about the way Capital Metro promotes attending public meetings in the minority community?*	WH2: *6) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was provided at least 3 weeks in advanced.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5 *10) Please rank the following methods of outreach 1-5 in order of importance* *__Television __Radio__ Newspaper __Flyer and __Bus Advertising.*
WH2a: **Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the limited English Proficiency (LEP) community increases if information is provided in both English and their native language.**	*What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides information about public meetings in multiple languages?*	WH2a: *(3) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was provided in my language.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5
WH2b: **Providing information through churches increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.**	*What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides public meetings information through churches?*	WH2b: *(7) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was shared through my church.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5
WH2c: **Multi-lingual media advertising increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.**	*How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on the radio in your language?* *How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on television in your language?*	WH2c: *(8) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was promoted on the radio in my language.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5 *(9) I would participate in Capital Metro Community meetings if the information was promoted on television and in my language.* SA= 1 A= 2 N= 3 D= 4 SD= 5

Focus Groups

Focus groups contributed valuable input to this research project. Morgan (1997, 17) states that focus groups can be conducted on topics that permit participants the opportunity to actively and easily participate. The issue of community involvement in the minority community meets this assessment. A noted strength of focus groups is that they provide the ability to produce precise data on the topic of interest (Morgan 1997, 13). In comparison to individual interviews, Morgan (1997, 13) suggests that focus groups have the ability to obtain data efficiently because group interaction provides insights into participant's opinions and experiences. Thus, conducting two focus groups can potentially yield the same amount of ideas as conducting four times as many individual interviews (Morgan 1997, 14). A weakness of focus group research is that it is driven by the researcher's interests and there can be some uncertainty about the accuracy of what is said by the participants (Morgan 1997, 14). Another weakness is that a dominant member of the group can monopolize the floor if most group members choose not to speak (Schachter & Liu, 617). To address the weaknesses, the focus group discussions in this study remained focused on the questions developed from the working hypotheses and all participants of the focus groups had an equal opportunity to speak by taking turns.

Focus groups are structured either using a pre-existing agenda and questions or more exploratory techniques using less structure (Morgan 1997, 39). For example, the focus groups for this research project used pre-determined questions derived from the conceptual framework (see Operationalization **Tables 4.1** and **4.2**). The author conducted four focus groups from February 24 to March 2, 2006 with the Asian, Black and Hispanic communities. One focus group with minority college students included

representatives of all three minority groups. In focus groups conducted by Schachter and

Liu (2005, 618) members were more willing to share anecdotes in groups made up of

their own language and culture. According to Schachter and Liu (2005, 617) in order for

focus groups to have validity, a variety of subgroups or neighborhoods need to be

included to cover a diverse community.   Morgan also recommends segmentation of some

groups to control group composition and match categories of participants (1997, 35).

According to Morgan (1997, 35), homogeneity in the focus groups allows for free

flowing conversations.

Focus groups participants for this case study were recruited with the assistance of

community organizations such as the Brooke Elementary School Parent Teacher

Organization (PTO), Eastside Church of Christ and the Network of Asian American

Organizations (NAAO)[15]. In addition, a group of minority students from Huston-

Tillotson University in East Austin also participated. These organizations have close ties

to their respective communities. Participation was contingent upon subjects having past

experience or desire to use Capital Metro services.

Homogeneity allowed for discussions to remain honest and free flowing. For

example, participants shared personal anecdotes of their experiences using the transit

system and their lack of knowledge on services. In particular, the Hispanic focus group

was conducted entirely in Spanish and participants were at ease in sharing opinions and

suggestions and were grateful that their opinions were requested. For a brief overview of

the four focus groups, refer to **Table 4.3.** The focus groups were recorded in their

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[15] These groups were asked because of their close community ties. Brooke Elementary is located across
the street from the Capital Metro main building and has been a good neighbor to Capital Metro. The East
Side Church of Christ, in East Austin, has high African-American membership. The NAAO includes 15
Asian organizations and therefore is inclusive of multiple Asian countries and cultures.

entirety and transcripts are provided in **Appendix B: Focus Group Responses** for this research project.

According to Morgan (1997, 25) focus groups are recommended as a means to construct questionnaires because there are three basic ways that focus groups can contribute to the creation of survey items: (a) by capturing all the domains that need to be measured in the survey, (b) by determining the dimensions that make up each of these domains, and (c) by providing item wordings that effectively convey the researcher's intent to the survey respondent.

In this research project, the first two focus groups were instrumental in fine tuning several questions on the survey instrument (second technique used). A preliminary survey instrument had already been developed using the conceptual framework for this applied research project and the focus group feedback was instrumental in providing item wordings on several questions to better convey the intent of the questions.

Table 4.3: Overview of Focus Groups

	Combined Group*	Black Community	Asian Community	Hispanic Community
Date	2/24/2006	2/24/2006	3/1/2006	3/2/2006
# Participants	5	3**	5	5
Male vs. Females	1 v.4	2 v. 1	2 v. 3	0 v. 5
Taped Group	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notes Taken	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Combined Group included 1 Black male, 1 Black female, 2 Hispanic females and 1 Asian female.
**Two participants invited for the black community focus group did not show up and in respect to those who were present, the focus group was conducted with only three participants.

Survey Research

      A survey is the second research technique used in this case study. The research purpose of this study explores the assessment of barriers and alternatives and survey research is a method that allows for this type data collection. Survey research has high reliability of results, but, according to Babbie, it can be susceptible to challenges of validity (Babbie 2003, 275). Thus using two research techniques helps to address these challenges.

      The intent of the survey instrument was to capture data related to knowledge of Capital Metro service, Capital Metro meetings and current or potential future community involvement participation. The survey questions used on the survey instrument were derived from the conceptual framework which was obtained from the literature review and refined with feedback received in the focus groups. For example, focus group participants stated that they were not aware of the different methods of outreach used to invite members to community meetings. This prompted the addition of the question and the ranking of the five most widely used methods of outreach used by Capital Metro. Focus group participants stressed the need to receive advance meeting notification. Therefore, a question was added that asked if community meetings would be attended if notification was given with at least three (3) weeks advance notice. Participants of the focus groups repeatedly expressed their personal opinions of Capital Metro, thus, a question was added to the survey to capture these opinions from those surveyed.

      Minority transit riders were surveyed to assess their level of participation or lack of participation in the community involvement process. Given that Spanish is widely spoken in Austin, Texas, surveys were offered in English and Spanish. Questionnaire items assessed barriers to community involvement addressed by the study's working

hypothesis and sub- hypotheses. The questions were finalized after focus groups were

conducted to ensure that emerging issues from focus groups were addressed in the

surveys[16]. To address weaknesses associated with survey research, several steps were

taken. First, to prevent poor survey participation, surveys were conducted at transit

centers and major bus stops and collected the completed surveys upon distribution.   This

prevented the potential of surveys being lost or not being returned. Survey subjects were

selected from the various locations. Secondly, the survey instrument was pre-screened by

individuals with experience in public involvement and survey research to avoid the

potential of biased questions or issues with the response scales.

Survey Distribution

Capital Metro minority transit riders were surveyed. Two hundred and twenty-

three (223) surveys were distributed and collected at major transit centers and other major

bus stops within the Capital Metro service area. The surveys were distributed the first

week of March 2006. Capital Metro allowed for five interns from Huston-Tilletson

University to assist the author with survey distribution.   The locations surveyed (see

Figure 4.1) were:

1) North Lamar Transit Center: (Located off North Lamar and Highway 183 in

North Austin) this location has a high traffic volume of minority riders who

transfer to cross-town routes.

2) Pavilion Park & Ride: (Located off Highway 183 North and Oak Knoll) this is the

northernmost location surveyed within the Capital Metro service area.

3) Hong Kong Super Market: (Located off Highway 183 and Peyton Gin Road)

this is a bus stop used by large numbers of Asian bus riders.

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[16] Survey questions took into account knowledge gained from the focus group and the author allowed for
the flexibility of adding questionnaire items for issues that emerged from focus group discussions.

4) East 7th Street and Pleasant Valley Transfer Center: (Located at the corner of 7th Street and Pleasant Valley Drive) this bus stop is located in East Austin and is widely used by many minority riders who transfer to major routes within the Capital Metro service area.

5) 6th Street and Brazos Street: This is a major transfer stop in the downtown area.

6) South Transfer Center: (Located in South Austin at the corner of William Cannon and Bluff Springs Road) this transfer center is located in South Austin and is widely used by many minority riders (primarily Hispanic) who transfer to major routes within the Capital Metro service area.

Figure 4.1: Map of Stops
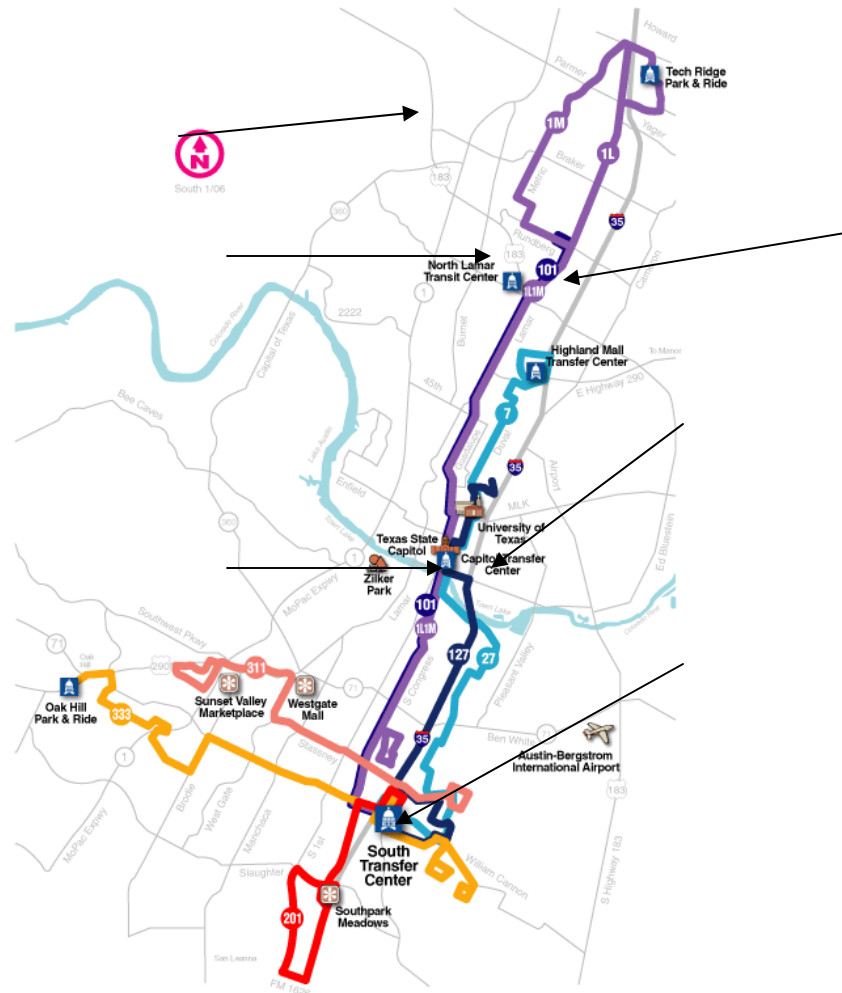
Sampling Method

Due to the nature of this research, purposive (judgmental) sampling was used. Purposive (judgmental) sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the unit observed is selected on the basis of judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative (Babbie 2004, 183). Babbie states that sometimes it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study (Babbie 2004, 183). Since the purpose of the paper was to get attitudes of minority transit riders only minority descent riders were surveyed at the transit locations. These riders were asked to participate in the survey. A number of survey participants were bi-racial or non-minority and they were captured in the category of "other" under the survey section requesting race and ethnicity information.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of minority transit riders in a system. Capital Metro reports daily passenger trips of 130,000[17]. In the transit industry, ridership is captured by the number of boardings and thus one rider can be counted multiple times throughout the day if the trip involves a round trip and transfers[18]. The current population of Austin, Texas according to the most recent census figures is 680, 899. The ethnic breakdown is, 30.5 percent Hispanic, 9.8 percent African American, 4.7 percent Asian and 2.1 percent other. The population in the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area is approximately 1.3 million. [19]

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[17] http://www.capmetro.org/news/cafr.asp
[18] Capital Metro website www.capmetro.org.
[19] http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/citymgr/basicfac.htm

Out of the 223 surveys collected, 212 listed their race and ethnicity as follows: 17 Asians (8%), 82 Blacks (39%), 90 Hispanics (42%) and 23 Other (11%). Hopefully, enough riders were surveyed to ensure representation of the larger minority population in Austin, Texas. Due to the nature of the population surveyed, there is a possibility of bias since the Asian community was under-represented despite many of the attempts made by the researcher to obtain participation from the Asian community.

Table 4.4 provides a comparison of the percentages of minorities surveyed and the total minority population of Austin. The percentages might imply that the Black population was over sampled. It is important to understand that the transit riders may not necessarily represent the minority population of a city. As indicated in Chapter One of this study, minorities make over 54% of the nation's transit riders with Blacks having the largest minority transit ridership with 31%.

Table 4.4 – Minorities Surveyed Compared to Minority Population in Austin

Self Report Race/Ethnicity	%	*Minority % in Austin
Asian	8	4.7
Blacks	39	9.8
Hispanic	42	30.5
Other	11	2.1

**Source: City of Austin*

Statistics

        The research questions are exploratory and descriptive in nature hence, descriptive statistics such as percent distribution and modes are appropriate. Once surveys were collected, a coding sheet was used to organize the data. Microsoft Excel software was used to tabulate the results using the statistical commands and formulas. The Spanish speaking respondents were tabulated in the total group and also were tabulated separately to obtain a picture of their responses as a stand alone group given the language barriers. African-Americans were not tabulated separately because language was not an identified barrier for this group. The complete survey results are provided in **Appendix A: Survey Results**.

Human Subjects Protection

This research project used data from human subjects in focus groups and surveys to collect data. The Texas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the research prospectus of this project and issued an exemption under the Human Subjects Protection (HSP). The number issued to the project by the IRB was HSP 302365. Participation on this research project was strictly voluntary and described below.

<u>**Focus Groups**</u>

The focus group participants were asked to sign a consent statement[20] which explained the purpose of the research project. The statement disclosed that participation was voluntary, refusal to participate would not involve any penalty, and the subject could discontinue participation at any time. Participants of the focus groups were told they

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[20] Consent Form can be found on Appendix B: Focus Group Responses

would be identified by their ethnicity/race, gender and that identities would be kept

confidential.

Surveys

Surveys were distributed by six individuals (the author and five student interns

from Huston-Tillotson University) from March 1 – March 3, 2006. The surveys were

directly distributed to transit riders awaiting their bus at major transit centers, bus stops

and Park & Ride locations in the Capital Metro service area located in Austin, Texas (See

Figure **4.1**). The majority of the surveys were filled out by the individuals. Most of

limited English speaking respondents and those with literacy issues had the surveys filled

out for them[21]. Surveys did not collect any personal data that could be used to track

individuals. All surveys are anonymous. The surveys included the following statement:

(See **Appendix A**: Survey Instrument)

"Thank you for your help.
This survey is part of a research project for Texas State University- San Marcos Master
of Public Administration Program. Participation is strictly voluntary.
If you have any questions, please contact Aida Berduo Douglas at (512) 369-6200."

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[21]   I am bilingual in English and Spanish. Three of the interns were bilingual, two in English and Spanish
and one in English and Chinese.

Summary

This case study of Austin's Capital Metro community involvement used two methodologies. First, focus groups were conducted and participants were asked questions developed and guided by the literature review. The focus groups served two purposes, they helped refine the questions used on the survey instrument used for data collection and provided unique insights and more depth to the study. Secondly, survey research was used to obtain the perception about Capital Metro community involvement from the perspective of the minority community. A total of 223 transit riders were surveyed at bus stops and transit centers in the minority community. Chapter Five discusses the results of the survey and focus groups.

Chapter 5: Results

Purpose

A summary of the comments from the focus groups and the survey results are presented in this chapter. The results are organized using the Working Hypotheses (WH). Four focus groups were conducted between February 24 and March 2, 2006. The focus group summary will not include any type of statistical analysis. Capital Metro minority transit riders completed the surveys during the first week of March 2006. Percent and frequency distribution are the main statistical analysis used for the survey findings.

Community Involvement Barriers and Alternatives

The first research purpose of this project is to explore the barriers to Capital Metro's community involvement process. The second purpose is to explore alternative ways to engage the minority community in Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the minority community. Two working hypotheses (WH1 and WH2) and sub-hypotheses for each were developed from the conceptual framework in order to obtain data and present results.

WH1:
The public recognizes barriers to its involvement in public transportation planning.

WH2:

Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the minority community increases if information is provided and promoted.

<u>**Barriers**</u>

Working Hypothesis 1a (WH1a):

Public transportation agencies have utilized incorrect approaches to community outreach which has discouraged public involvement and input.

Low public involvement from the minority community at Capital Metro community meetings is concerning to the agency. Using two methods of data collection was helpful in validating the responses from both methods of data collection.

Focus Groups

Focus group participants were consistent in their responses to questions related to working hypothesis 1 (WH1) and working hypothesis 1a (WH1a). It was apparent that participants did not have knowledge about Capital Metro community meetings. For example several participants seem surprised and stated "…I did not know that Capital Metro held community meetings…that is good to know." Another respondent asked how to find out about the meetings.   The Hispanic community participants felt disengaged and uninvited by Capital Metro, in particular those who live just several blocks from the agency's East Austin offices.   Focus group responses supported WH1 and WH1a. **Table 5.1** summarizes some of the responses captured for questions related to WH1 and WH1a.

(See **Appendix B: Focus Group Responses**)

Table 5.1- Focus Group Questions Addressing WH1 and WH1a

Questions related to WH 1 & WH1a	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
WH1: What do you think about attending Capital Metro public meetings?	- How does it benefit me? - Maybe with one month notice - Alert of consequences of NOT attending	- Would attend it time and location convenient - If vested interest and awareness of meeting - Would attend with incentives	- How do you know about the meetings? - Willing if time allowed - If interpreter provided and trusted	- Would attend if had knowledge of meeting. - If interpreters provided to understand entire meeting
WH1a: What do you think about Capital Metro community Outreach?	-Not aware of meetings. - Need to advertise more.	- Can improve on - Take same one-on-one approach as when service changes.	- Current outreach is minimal	- Have not felt invited. - Target better the opinion of Hispanics

Surveys

Survey questions addressing WH1 and WH1a (**Table 5.2**) were more direct in addressing the awareness of Capital Metro services. The survey also addressed the opinion respondents had of Capital Metro and their perception of Capital Metro community outreach as well as the actual participation in community meetings of those who responded. WH1 and WH1a were supported in the survey responses.

Table 5.2- Survey Questions Addressing WH1 and WH1a

Survey Questions WH1	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree/	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
(1) I am aware of Capital Metro services.	223 (all)	7%	50%	32%	6%	5%	*Strongly Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers*)	7%	31%	35%	15%	11%	*Agree*
Survey Question	**N**		**Positive**		**Negative**	**Neutral**	**Mode**
(12a) My opinion of Capital Metro is:	212 (all)		65%		10%	25%	*Positive*
	52 (*Spanish speakers*)		70%		6%	25%	*Positive*
Survey Questions WH1a	**N**	**Neutral**	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Mode**
(2) Capital Metro does not outreach to my community about community meetings.	221 (all)	19%	24%	27%	18%	11%	*Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers*)	2%	30%	39%	17%	13%	*Agree*
Survey Question	**N**		**5+**	**3-4**	**1-2**	**Not at all**	**Mode**
(11) Over the past 12 months, I have participated in public meetings about: (times)	213 (all)		5%	2%	10%	82%	*Not at All*
	53 (*Spanish speakers*)		4%	0%	6%	90%	*Not at All*
Survey Question	**N**		**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**		**Mode**
(12 Some of the Public Meetings were about Capital Metro	206 (all)		9%	45%	46%		*Unsure*
	54 (*Spanish speakers*)		0%	58%	42%		*No*

As shown on **Table 5.2,** 82% of the overall respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they were aware of the Capital Metro services. A strong majority, 65% of all

respondents and 70% of Spanish speaking respondents have a positive opinion of Capital Metro. When asked about community outreach, however, the table shows that over half (51%) of overall respondents felt that Capital Metro does not outreach to their community. An even greater percentage (almost 70%) of the Spanish speaking respondents felt that Capital Metro did not outreach to their community about community meetings. The data presented by the focus groups and the surveys strongly supports the working hypothesis (WH1) that the public recognizes barriers to its involvement. The fact that over 80% of the respondents are aware of the services offered by Capital Metro and more than half believe that Capital Metro does not outreach to them about community meetings supports the working hypothesis (WH1a) that public transportation agencies have utilized incorrect approaches to community outreach which has discouraged public involvement and input.

Working Hypothesis 1b (WH1b):
English-only communication hinders public participation by community members with limited English Proficiency (LEP).

The data collected supported that communication only in English may prevent public participation of community members that speak limited English. This question was directly addressed in focus group discussions and not directly in the survey.

Focus Groups

The focus groups captured the essence of the question behind this working hypothesis. The focus groups supported that having information in multiple languages would better serve the community to be informed. In particular, the Spanish speaking Hispanic group felt that English only is not helpful. One participant noted:

"Try to have the meeting in multiple languages. We want to have it in our language. It is not the same just to have a portion in our language, I would not feel good."

Focus group responses support WH1b.   **Table 5.3** summarizes points made regarding English only communication.

Table 5.3- Focus Group Questions Addressing WH1b

Questions related to WH1b	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
WH1b: What do you think about having public information only in English?	- Written not a good idea for Hispanics, many don't like to read. (lazy readers)	- Need to provide information in other languages and BE DIRECT. - Many minorities use the bus system.	- Information should be provided in multiple languages.	- Would not feel comfortable only in English -English only is NOT helpful Support having information in multiple languages

Working Hypothesis 1c (WH1c):

Cultural mores (customs, traditions, etc.) hinder participation from Asian, Black and Hispanic communities in public meetings.

Cultural sensitivity was addressed in this study in both focus group and survey questions. Culture was brought up in several occasions as a participation issue in the focus groups and was highlighted in the surveys.

Focus Groups

In the focus groups the question did not specifically use the word "culture" but rather asking participants about holding public meetings only for "your community". Participants in the Black focus group felt that tailoring to a specific group was ideal. One member noted "…*it is good to target the group of reach without being stereotypical*…" The issue of culture continued to surface throughout the conversation. Focus group participants stated that members of the Hispanic community want to be specifically invited by Capital Metro to a community meeting or by friends aware of the meeting content. Attending a meeting without an invitation is not done and does not often occur. The Hispanic group also stated that by having a meeting with a specific group, it would better target the opinions of that group.   Responses from the focus groups support WH1c. (**Table 5.4**)

Table 5.4- Focus Group Question Addressing WH1c

Questions related to WH1c	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
WH1c: How do you feel about participating in Capital Metro public meetings only for your community?	- Need an individual approach to reach Asians, Blacks and Hispanics	- Tailoring message to specific meetings - Target the group of reach without being stereotypical	- Addressing neighborhoods is helpful - It is good if already a rider	-Not Aware community meetings existed but this would better target the opinions of Hispanics. -Translation would be helpful.

Surveys

The surveys addressed the issue of culture by specifically asking respondents if participation in public meetings was contingent on Capital Metro being sensitive to their culture. **Table 5.5** shows the survey responses to this question as well as the race and ethnicity breakdown of the survey respondents.

Table 5.5- Culture Sensitivity

Survey Question WH1c	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
(4) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the agency was sensitive to my culture.	220 (all)	22%	27%	33%	7%	9%	*Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers)*	4%	41%	39%	6%	11%	*Strongly Agree*
Survey Question	**N**		**Asian**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**Other**	**Mode**
(13) Please circle your race/ethnicity.	212 (all)		8%	39%	42%	11%	*Hispanic*

Working hypothesis 1c is overwhelmingly supported by the survey results in **Table 5.5.** A large majority (60%) of the overall respondents and 80% of the Spanish speaking participants indicated that they would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the agency was sensitive to their culture. Typical Capital Metro riders who

were from a minority community indicated on their survey results that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the issue of cultural sensitivity is an important driver to community involvement. Both research methods supported this working hypothesis.

Working Hypothesis 1d (WH1d):

Illiteracy is a deterrent to public participation among Asian, Black and Hispanic communities.

Literacy was a delicate issue raised in this study. It was addressed indirectly in both focus groups and surveys. The results are noted in **Tables 5.6** for the focus group comments and **5.7** for survey results respectively.

Focus Groups

The focus groups supported having written information but for this not be the only type of outreach. Several of the groups suggested the person to person approach to also address those in the community that may not be able to read and, thus, get the information verbally as well as in their language. A Hispanic female from the combined minority group stated:

" I hate to say it but [Hispanics] they're just lazy [about reading]... I think it's a cultural barrier. ... not necessarily lazy, but they don't know how to read, or they don't.... you know. They don't like, maybe they won't,...The ideas that are suppose to be portrayed ....in the paper. They won't really grasp the concepts, and I think it may be more of a learning or educational thing. Not really that easy".

Focus group comments support WH1d. **Table 5.6** has a synopsis of comments.

Table 5.6- Focus Group Question Addressing WH1d

Questions related to WH1d	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
WH1d: What do you think about Capital Metro just providing written information about meetings?	- Just written not a good idea for Hispanics - Use Hip-Hop and R&B Stations, BET - Use Restaurants - Use students to talk to bus riders.	- Need more talking one-on-one in multiple languages - Should use Public Service Announcements - Make public understand that my feedback is valued.	-Reading is helpful -Basic Communication - Asians like to read - Provide large print publications	- Should use radio and television - Use translation of written - Use the schools to distribute information - Use door-to-door approach and talk to people in their language.

Surveys

The surveys approached the issue of literacy by asking indirect questions of attending public meetings if respondents could reach about the issues. The results may not necessarily reflect the level of literacy of the individuals. The survey does address the level of education of respondents and this question is helpful in determining the level of literacy respondents may have.

Table 5.7 - Read about issues and Education Levels

Survey Question WH1d	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
(5) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if I was able to read about the issues.	219 (all)	17%	33%	33%	7%	8%	*Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers*)	*2%*	48%	31%	4%	15%	*Strongly Agree*

Level of Education	All (N= 209) Mode: High School	Spanish Speakers (N= 53) Mode: Elem. – 8th Grade
Elementary – 8th grade	14%	51%*
High School	42%	30%
Some College	30%	15%
College Degree	15%	6%
***** *3 respondents reported verbally that they had never attended school but taught themselves to read and write.*		

Table 5.7 on survey responses shows that large portion (66%) of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed they would take part in Capital Metro community meetings if they were able to read about the issues. The Spanish speaking respondents were closer to 80%. The survey did not directly address if the participant could actually read. The researcher felt strongly that if the question would be asked directly the participant might not provide an accurate answer. A question about the level of education was added to the survey and **Table 5.7** also details the data. The highest percentage of all those surveyed (42%) indicated that high school was the highest level of education. In the Spanish speaking group, more than half (51%) indicated that elementary to 8th grade was their highest level of education. In fact, three Spanish speaking respondents reported that they had never had formal education and that they had taught themselves to read and write. The data collected in **Tables 5.6** and **5.7** partially supports working hypothesis 1d that literacy is a deterrent to public participation in the minority community.

Alternatives

Working Hypothesis 2 (WH2):

Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the minority community increases if information is provided and promoted.

As previously indicated, the second purpose of this study is to address alternatives to the perceived barriers to community involvement. Working hypothesis 2 (WH2) addresses information sharing and promotion to increase minority community participation.

Focus Groups

Focus group discussion revolved around public meeting promotion to increase minority participation. In general, focus group participants stated they were unaware of community meetings. Participants began to offer alternatives to promotion within their respective communities. The Asian community participants stated Asians can read English, but promoting meetings in a Chinese paper would help bring Asians to meetings. The subject of using free bus rides to meetings was brought up in Asian group and the African American group. Focus group responses support WH2. A summary of responses on **Table 5.8** captures highlights of the focus group discussions.

Table 5.8- Focus Group Question Addressing WH2

Questions related to WH2	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
WH2: What do you think about the way Capital Metro promotes attending public meetings in the minority community?	- Feels like things have already been decided - Language barrier - Establish a connection to a company representative - Get bilingual staff including Chinese	- Was unaware of community meetings - Can improve - Use the bus stops - There is a mistrust in Government - Interest in communal and not individual - Outreach can be a double edged sword - Provide incentives	- Need to provide free rides to public meetings - Advertise in Asian publications - Asians can read English but prefer their own language - Advertise in Asian markets and restaurants and smaller markets of specialty foods	- Never heard of community meetings - Promote on the Radio on La Lupe 1560 AM. - Promote during evening Spanish news. - Speak directly to the people. - Make meetings convenient

Surveys

The surveys addressed information sharing and promotion by asking about advanced notification to meetings as well as asking respondents to rank five different outreach methods. Both of these questions were added after focus group discussions. The ranking of community outreach methods proved to be a good addition. This information is valuable for community outreach efforts planned in the future. Working

hypothesis 2 (WH2) explores that minority participation increases if information is provided and promoted. **Table 5.9** includes the survey responses supporting that individuals would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if notification was provided at least three (3) weeks in advance as well as the rankings of community outreach methods.

Table 5.9 – Advanced Notification

Survey Question WH2	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
WH2: (6) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was provided at least 3 weeks in advanced.	221 (all)	18%	34%	30%	9%	9%	*Strongly Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers)*	4%	46%	31%	6%	13%	*Strongly Agree*

Preferred Method of Outreach	All		Spanish Speakers	
Television	(1) 53%	N= 190	(1) 49%	N= 49
Radio	(2) 31%	N= 187	(2) 41%	N= 49
Flyer	(3) 29%	N= 184	(3) 38%	N= 48
Newspaper	(4) 26%	N= 189	(4) 29%	N= 49
Bus Advertising	(5) 24%	N= 187	(5) 29%	N= 48

A strong majority (64%) of the overall respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would attend community meetings with this length of advance noticed. The Spanish speaking community had the highest percentage response with 77% indicating they would attend. **Table 5.9** also summarizes the rankings provided by respondents to the five methods of outreach they would liked used. The rankings were similar among all participants, including the Spanish speaking participants. Based on the percentage for each type of outreach, television ranked first, radio ranked second, followed by the use of

information flyers which ranked third, newspaper ranked fourth and bus advertising

ranked fifth. Among Spanish speakers, newspaper and bus advertising had identical

percentage rankings. The data in **Tables 5.8 and 5.9** strongly support working

hypothesis 2.

Working Hypothesis 2a (WH2a):
Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the limited English Proficiency
(LEP) community increases if information is provided in both English and their native
language.

WH2a provides as an alternative to provide information in English and other

languages to increase minority community participation. Both the focus groups and the

surveys collected data related to this hypothesis.

Focus Groups

The focus groups discussed information sharing in multiple languages in several

instances of the sessions.   A specific question was asked to obtain data on this but

participants continued to raise the issue throughout discussions. The Hispanic focus

group felt very strong about providing information in multiple languages. One of the

participants stated…"You need to use technology like they use in the United Nations to

translate the entire meeting through headsets"… "Translating parts of a meeting is not

helpful… it feels like you have missed the whole meeting..".. In **Table 5.10,** focus group

responses are summarized in relation to the specific question asked regarding providing

information in multiple languages. The focus groups strongly supported WH2a.

Table 5.10- Focus Group Question Addressing WH2a

Questions related to WH2a	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
Wh2a: What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides information about public meetings in multiple languages?	-Definitely would help. - More people would be informed. - We are more likely to respond to something that we are use to or related to.	- Would definitely help - Especially Spanish	- Good idea - Beneficial - Chinese would be nice. - Provide Chinese interpreters	- Provide translation technology like they use in the United Nations with headsets. - Transportation is used by all races and it needs to be in many languages

Surveys

The survey captured data related to multiple languages by asking participants if they would take part in community meetings if the information was provided in their language. **Table 5.11** depicts the survey results for this question.

5.11– Information provided in native language.

Survey Question WH2a	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
(3) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was provided in my language.	221 (all)	20%	28%	32%	9%	10%	*Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers)*	2%	44%	41%	4%	9%	*Strongly Agree*

Table 5.11 shows the majority of all respondents (60%) and 85% of Spanish speaking respondents agreed or strongly agreed they would participate in Capital Metro public meetings if information was provided in both English and their native language. The surveys and focus groups supported WH2a.

Working Hypothesis 2b (WH2b):

Providing information through churches increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.

Dissemination of information through churches was an alternative presented in both focus groups and surveys. In both scenarios, the questions were direct in inquiring about dissemination of information via churches.

Focus Groups

Focus group participants had strong opinions about using churches as channels for distributing information. The majority of respondents supported this method with the exception of some members of combined minority group and the African-American focus group. Several of the focus group participants felt strong about the separation of church and State. A member of the combined group stated:

"Well, when you go to a service I believe in the separation of Church and State, and I don't think that the Government should consummate through the Church. I don't think that the Government should do things through the Church, myself personally. Its effective to get information out through churches, but I don't believe that; I think when I'm in Church that I don't feel like I want to be announced, or lectured to, or told about things that don't deal with GOD. I mean that's GOD. "

There was a mixed support for using churches as a way to promote meetings, therefore the focus groups partially supported WH2b. **Table 5.12** includes highlights from the focus group discussion.

Table 5.12- Focus Group Question Addressing WH2b

Questions related to WH2b	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
Wh2b: What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides public meeting information through churches?	-Definitely would help especially in Asian community - Use Church announcements - There should be a separation of church and State.	- Would be beneficial - Does not believe this is a good idea. There should be a separation of church and State. - Depends on mentality of church leadership	- Helpful if information was provided through churches	- Churches okay but not best way as many do not go to church - Other ways may be better.

Surveys

The question related to information sharing through churches was directly addressed in the survey. **Table 5.13** details the percentages from respondents.

Table 5.13 – Information Distribution by Churches

Survey Question WH2b	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
(7) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was shared through my church.	221 (all)	29%	21%	32%	11%	6%	*Agree*
	54 (*Spanish speakers)*	24%	20%	33%	9%	13%	*Agree*

The alternative of using churches to provide information was supported with agree and strongly agree by over half (53%) of the respondents in the survey. Both the overall group of respondents and the Spanish speaking respondents supported this outreach method. Based on the results of **Table 5.13**, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with distributing meeting information through churches and, therefore, working hypothesis 2b is supported. The author observed that Spanish speaking respondents, nearly a fourth (22%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this method of information sharing. As they were completing the surveys, many respondents cited that they did not attend church on a regular basis.

Working Hypothesis 2c (WH2c):
Multilingual media advertising increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.

Media advertising on the radio and television is among the proposed alternatives to increase minority community involvement. These alternatives were often brought up by focus group participants even before the question was presented. The surveys also addressed this directly.

Focus Groups

Promoting public meetings using radio and television was highlighted by most to the focus groups. The Spanish speaking group in particular went as far as giving call letters of radio stations that had a large audience in their estimation. One Hispanic member of the combined group stated:

"Maybe it's a cultural thing, but when we're cooking we have the radio on.. When we're working outside we have the radio on. When we're doing a barbeque we have the radio on. We always have the radio on."

Below is an Excerpt of the Hispanic focus group on this question:

Researcher: When we first started this meeting, you mentioned about having announcements on the radio. That is my next question. What do you think about having information about community meetings on the radio in your language?

Participant: Yes, play it in all Spanish stations because there are different styles of music. 104.9 and La Lupe 1560, that is what we listen to all the time. It plays the oldies love songs we grew up with. Rocio Durcal and those like her.

Researcher: What about television?.

Participant: Yes, during the evening news during commercial breaks. Not during Soaps (novelas), we don't pay attention and not all of us watch them. On the news is best, we are attentive and we sit down and listen.

Table 5.14 includes comments related to the use of radio and television to promote public meetings

Table 5.14- Focus Group Question Addressing WH2c

Questions related to WH2c	Combined Group	African American Group	Asian Group	Hispanic Group
WH2c: How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on the radio in your language? WH2c: How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on TV in your language?	- Buy Airtime, PSAs not effective - Promote on news scrolls on bottom of screen	- Radio is a good idea and legitimate expense. - Create a "Rap" for high school and college age riders - Radio remote during drive time at Wal-Mart	- Helpful if information was provided on the radio	- Promote on radio, TV and bus banners - Promote on ALL genres of Spanish radio - La Lupe 1560 - Promote during the evening news in Spanish

Surveys

Outreach via radio and television was directly addressed on the surveys.

Participants had the opportunity to provide feedback on this method of outreach. **Table 5.15** includes the response percentages for these survey questions.

Table 5.15- Community Meeting Information Using Media Advertising

Survey Question WH2c	N	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mode
I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if:	222 (all)	17%	26%	36%	11%	9%	*Agree*
(8) the information was promoted on the radio in my language.	54 *(Spanish speakers)*	4%	35%	48%	2%	11%	*Agree*
(9) the information was promoted on television in my language.	222 (all)	15%	31%	38%	9%	7%	*Agree*
	54 *(Spanish speakers)*	2%	39%	44%	6%	9%	*Agree*

Focus groups supported the use of radio and television for information sharing. The idea of having meeting information advertised on radio stations they listen to was very well received by all focus group participants. The Spanish speaking group highly recommended having meeting information advertised during the news but not during the time Spanish soap operas (novelas) were being broadcast. According to **Table 5.15,** respondents surveyed agreed that they would participate in community meetings if the information was promoted in their language on the radio and television. Overall, respondents supported (agreed or strongly agreed) radio as a means for information sharing by 62% and television was supported (agreed or strongly agreed) by nearly 70% of the respondents. Among Spanish speaking respondents, both methods (use of radio and television) were supported (agreed or strongly agreed) by over 80% of the respondents. Based on the data collected, information distribution using radio and television was widely supported by both methods and therefore, working hypothesis 2c was supported.

Summary

Chapter Five has provided the results for the two-fold research purpose of this applied research project. The two research purposes were exploratory with working hypothesis and multiple sub-hypotheses regarding the barriers to community involvement in the minority community and the alternatives needed to address the barriers. Chapter Six gives concluding remarks, research limitations and recommendations for further research regarding community involvement in the minority community.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The final chapter of this applied research project summarizes the information and results presented. This project had a dual research purpose. The first was to explore the barriers to Capital Metro's community involvement process. The second purpose was to explore alternative ways to engage the community in Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the local minority and limited English proficient (LEP) community. Focus groups and surveys were conducted to address the question.

Barriers

The barriers to community involvement processes in the minority community are summarized below:

➢ **Incorrect outreach approaches**

Respondents were fully aware of the services offered by Capital Metro but overwhelmingly felt that Capital Metro did not outreach to their community. Some respondents were completely unaware that community meetings were held for public input.

➢ **Monolingual communication**

Respondents supported having information available in languages other than English. Some participants felt the majority of the information that is distributed in English and it is very wordy and not easy to understand. Simple and direct bilingual information using words that are easily understood would be desirable by the minority community.

➢ **Cultural differences among minority community**

Respondents agreed that they would take part in community meetings if Capital Metro was sensitive to their culture. The minority community seldom takes part in community

involvement because often times their daily work schedules or child care issues do not permit them to attend meetings.

  ➢ **Level of literacy and education among minority community**

Survey results demonstrated that participants would attend a community meeting if they could read about the issues in their native language. The actual question of literacy was not specifically asked but the level of education of each respondent was gathered by the survey. Most of the survey respondents had a high school education but among Spanish speaking respondents, elementary school was the highest education achieved.

Alternatives

The alternative ways recommended for engaging the community in Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the local minority community were:

  ➢ **Increase promotion of community meetings among minority community**

Minority community attendance at community meetings would increase if information was promoted through key channels of communication used by minorities. Respondents indicated that television and radio were most effective outreach methods.

  ➢ **Provide community meeting information in multiple languages**

Information urging attendance at community meetings should be provided in multiple languages. Respondents stressed that meeting content in multiple languages is also critical. This can be achieved by providing interpreters at meetings or using simultaneous translation via headsets.

  ➢ **Provide community meeting information through churches and religious gatherings.**

Sharing community meeting information through church bulletins or church announcements was widely supported by the research participants.

  ➢ **Provide bilingual community meeting information on radio and television.**

65

The minority community rated television and radio as the highest methods of community outreach. Spanish speakers preferred television outreach during the evening news. Respondents stressed that the more information provided on the importance of attending a meeting, the more inclined they would be to attend.

Table 6.1 identifies research evidence and recommendations based on the research findings.

Table 6.1 – Research Evidence and Recommendations

Working Hypothesis 1	Evidence Supports	Recommendation
WH1: **The public recognizes barriers to its involvement in public transportation planning.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Increase one on one outreach to promote community involvement.*
WH1a: **Public transportation agencies have utilized incorrect approaches to community outreach which has discouraged public involvement and input.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Target community outreach using the following methods in order of priority:* *1) television 2) radio 3) flyers 4) newspaper and 5) bus advertising in multiple languages.*
WH1b: **English-only communication hinders public participation by community members with LEP.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Provide all communication using simple words, multiple languages and with the use more pictorials.*
WH1c: **Cultural mores (customs, traditions, etc.) hinder participation from Asian, Black and Hispanic communities in public meetings.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Provide cultural sensitivity training for all levels of staff* ➢ *Provide training for staff with constant customer interaction.*
WH1d: **Illiteracy is a deterrent to public participation among Asian, Black and Hispanic communities.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Partial*	➢ *Provide cordial invitation to events/meetings* ➢ *Provide more one on one interaction in the minority community.*
Working Hypothesis 2		
WH2: **Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the minority community increases if information is provided and promoted.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Promote meeting information using a three (3) week notice and a one (1) week follow-up.*
WH2a: **Participation in Capital Metro public meetings from the limited English Proficiency (LEP) community increases if information is provided in both English and their native language.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Provide all communication using simple words, multiple languages and with the use of more pictorials.*
WH2b: **Providing information through churches increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.**	*Focus Groups- Partial* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Disseminate meeting information through the Interfaith Alliance and other such groups* ➢ *Purchase advertising space in church bulletins.*
WH2c: **Multi-lingual media advertising increases minority community participation in Capital Metro public meetings.**	*Focus Groups- Yes* *Survey – Yes*	➢ *Purchase airtime on radio and television stations with high minority audiences.*

Overall, research findings show that there is a lack of relevant community outreach in the minority community. The minority community has a willingness to participate if they believe they are genuinely invited to be part of the process. This means that an effort from the transit agency must be made to reach out to the public it serves. Placing a public notice in a newspaper is not the best way to get people to a meeting. The public wants the ability to have one on one interaction with staff. This type of outreach is similar to the outreach done when a service change is made. Transit staff is deployed to major stops to ensure that passengers are aware of new route changes. The community wants this type of individualized outreach which is tailored to their specific needs and interests.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research project has provided only a beginning for understanding what strategies will allow minority community members to participate in public processes intended to allow them to voice their concerns. Because this research project is exploratory in nature, future research on minority community involvement should be done. This research has found that members of the minority community are willing to attend community meetings but that the circumstances enhancing their ability to participate have not addressed. For instance, the question of when it would be the best time to hold a meeting was not addressed in the survey or the focus groups. This question would help public agencies in planning meetings seeking community involvement and input. Furthermore, the issue of child care which was raised in the focus group held in the Hispanic community would be another area to further study. Obviously, this is an area of concern and may be another barrier to this community's participation in the public involvement process. The issue of Limited English

Proficiency (LEP) needs to be further expanded to address issues of particular interest that can help address the need to meet federal requirements.

In conclusion, research is a never-ending process.   This study has identified additional areas where future studies can be done. There are many questions that have not been answered which can be explored in a follow-up applied research project. For example, if Capital Metro adopts several or all the recommendations from this applied research study, how can results be measured to determine if progress in enhancing public involvement has been made? Clearly, this is a question worth exploring in the future.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Survey - Please circle the best response.

SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree N= Neutral D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree

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1) I am aware of Capital Metro services.

SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

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2) Capital Metro does not outreach to my community about community meetings.

SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

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3) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was provided in my language.
SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

---

4) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the agency was sensitive to my culture

SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

---

5) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if I was able to read about the issues.

SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

---

6) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was provided at least 3 weeks in advanced.
SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

---

7) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was shared through my church.
SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

---

8) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was promoted on the radio in my language.
SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

---

9) I would participate in Capital Metro community meetings if the information was promoted on television and in my language.
SA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   SD= 5

10) Please rank the following methods of outreach in order of importance to you. (1 – 5 with 1 being the most important.)

___ **Television** ___ **Radio** ___ **Newspaper** ___ **Flyer** _____ **Bus Advertising**

11. Over the past 12 months, I have participated in public meetings about:

      5 times or more   3-4 times   1-2 times   Not at all

12 . Some of the public meetings were about Capital Metro.

      Yes= 1   No= 2   Unsure = 3

12a. My opinion of Capital Metro is:

Positive= 1   Negative= 1   Neutral= 3

13. Please circle your race/ethnicity (circle all that apply)

      Asian   Black   Hispanic   Other

14.   Please circle your level of education (circle one)

Elementary – 8th. grade   High School   Some College   College Degree

15. Circle your gender: Male   Female

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your help.
This survey is part of a research project for Texas State University- San Marcos
Master of Public Administration Program. Participation is strictly voluntary.

If you have any questions, please contact Aida Berduo Douglas at (512) 369-6200.

Encuesta (Español)- Por favor circule la mejor respuesta

CA= Completamente de acuerdo A= de acuerdo N- Neutral D= Desacuerdo CD= Completamente de Desacuerdo

---

1)   Yo estoy informado/a acerca de los servicios de Capital Metro.

CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

2) Capital Metro no informa a mi comunidad sobre juntas comunitarias.

CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

3) Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si la informacion fuera disponible en mi idioma.
CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

4) Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si la agencia fuera sensible a mi cultura.

CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

5) Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si yo pudiera leer acerca de los temas.

CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

6) *Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si la informacion fuera compartida por lo menos con 3 semanas de anticipacion.*

CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

7) *Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si la informacion fuera compartida por medio de mi iglesia.*
CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

8) Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si la informacion fuera anunciada por la radio en mi idioma.
CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

9) Yo participaria en juntas comunitarias de Capital Metro si la informacion fuera anunciada por la television en mi idioma.
CA= 1   A= 2   N= 3   D= 4   CD= 5

---

10) Porfavor ponga en rango los siguientes metodos de publicidad publica en orden de importancia para usted.   (De 1 – 5 con 1 siendo el mas importante.)

___ Television   ___ Radio   ___ Periodicos   ___ Volantes   ____ Anuncios en buses

11. Sobre los ultimos 12 meses, participe en juntas publicas como:

      5 veces o mas   3-4 veces   1-2 veces   Para nada

12. Algunas de las juntas publicas eran acerca de Capital Metro.

      Si   No   No se

12a. Mi opinion sobre Capital Metro es:

      Positiva= 1   Negativa= 2   Neutral = 3

13.   Por favor circule su raza/ethnicidad (circule todos los que apliquen)

      Asiatico   Raza Negra   Hispano   Otro

14. Por favor circule su nivel de educacion (circule uno)

      Primaria – 8vo. grado   Secundaria   Alguna Universidad   Universitario/a

15. Circule su sexo: Masculino   Femenino

Comentarios Adicionales:

Gracias por su ayuda.

Esta encuesta es parte de un proyecto de la Universidad Texas State University-San Marcos como parte del programa para la Maestria de Administracion Publica. Participacion es estrictamente voluntaria.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor comuniquese con Aida Berduo Douglas al (512) 369-6200.

Survey Results – All Respondents

Awareness		
1=	112	50%
2=	71	32%
3=	15	7%
4=	13	6%
5=	12	5%
	223	
Outreach		
1=	53	24%
2=	61	27%
3=	42	19%
4=	40	18%
5=	25	11%
N=	221	
Language		
1=	63	28%
2=	71	32%
3=	44	20%
4=	21	9%
5=	22	10%
N=	221	
Culture		
1=	61	27%
2=	74	33%
3=	50	22%
4=	16	7%
5=	19	9%
N=	220	
Read		
1=	74	33%
2=	74	33%
3=	38	17%
4=	15	7%
5=	18	8%
N=	219	
3 wks		
1=	75	34%
2=	66	30%
3=	41	18%
4=	20	9%
5=	19	9%
N=	221	
Church		
1=	47	21%
2=	71	32%
3=	64	29%
4=	25	11%
5=	14	6%
N=	221	

English	76%	
Spanish	24%	

Rankings		
TV	Mode: 1	
1	101	53%
2	42	22%
3	13	7%
4	12	6%
5	22	12%
N=	190	
Radio	Mode: 2	
1	38	20%
2	58	31%
3	34	18%
4	31	17%
5	26	14%
N=	187	
Newspaper	Mode: 3	
1	26	14%
2	33	17%
3	49	26%
4	42	22%
5	39	21%
N=	189	
Flyer	Mode: 4	
1	17	9%
2	23	13%
3	42	23%
4	53	29%
5	49	27%
N=	184	
Bus Ads	Mode: 3	
1	33	18%
2	24	13%
3	44	24%
4	43	23%
5	43	23%
N=	187	

Participation		
5+	10	5%
3-4 times	5	2%
1-2 times	22	10%
Not at all	176	82%
N=	213	

CMTA Mtgs	N=	206
Yes	18	9%
No	93	45%
Unsure	95	46%

Television	53%
Radio	31%
Flyer	29%
Newspaper	26%
Bus Ads	24%

Survey

Results – All Respondents

Radio

1=	59	26%
2=	81	36%
3=	37	17%
4=	24	11%
5=	21	9%
	222	

TV

1=	69	31%
2=	85	38%
3=	33	15%
4=	20	9%
5=	15	7%
	222	

CMTA Opinion

Positive	138	65%
Negative	21	10%
Neutral	53	25%
N=	212	

Race

Asian	17	8%
Black	82	39%
Hispanic	90	42%
Other*	23	11%
N=	212	

Education

Elem- 8th *	29	14%
High School	87	42%
Some College	62	30%
Post College	31	15%
N=	209	

*= 3 listed education as none.

Gender

Male	126	59%
Female	87	41%
N=	213	

Survey Results - Spanish

Rankings

Awareness

1=	17	31%
2=	19	35%
3=	4	7%
4=	8	15%
5=	6	11%
N=	54	**100%**
Mode:	2	

NO Outreach

1=	16	30%
2=	21	39%
3=	1	2%
4=	9	17%
5=	7	13%
	54	
Mode:	2	

Language

1=	24	44%
2=	22	41%
3=	1	2%
4=	2	4%
5=	5	9%
	54	
Mode:	1	

Culture

1=	22	41%
2=	21	39%
3=	2	4%
4=	3	6%
5=	6	11%
	54	
Mode:	1	

Read   Mode: 1

1=	26	48%
2=	17	31%
3=	1	2%
4=	2	4%
5=	8	15%
	54	

Television   N=49

1=	24	49%
2=	15	31%
3=	5	10%
4=	2	4%
5=	3	6%
Mode: 1	49	100%

Radio

1=	9	18%
2=	20	41%
3=	8	16%
4=	4	8%
5=	8	16%
Mode: 2	49	

Newspaper

1=	6	12%
2=	5	10%
3=	10	20%
4=	14	29%
5=	14	29%
Mode: 5	49	

Flyer   N=48

1=	4	8%
2=	5	10%
3=	12	25%
4=	18	38%
5=	9	19%
4	48	

Bus Ads

1=	6	13%
2=	4	8%
3=	14	29%
4=	10	21%
5=	14	29%
Mode: 5	48	

Participation

5+ times	2	4%
3-4 times	0	0%
1-2 times	3	6%
Not at all	48	91%
	53	

> Television 49%
> Radio   41%
> Flyer   38%
> Newspaper 29%
> Bus Ads 29%

Surveys – Spanish Results

CMTA Mtg

Advanced Notice

1=	25	46%
2=	17	31%
3=	2	4%
4=	3	6%
5=	7	13%
Mode:	1	

Yes	0	0%
NO	31	58%
Unsure	22	42%

Opinion

Positive	37	70%
Negative	3	6%
Neutral	13	25%

Church 54

1=	11	20%
2=	18	33%
3=	13	24%
4=	5	9%
5=	7	13%
Mode:	2	

Hisp=3	52	98%

Education

*Elementary	27	51%
High School	16	30%
Some College	7	13%
College Grad	3	6%
	53	

*Note: 3 listed education as none

Radio 83%

1=	19	35%
2=	26	48%
3=	2	4%
4=	1	2%
5=	6	11%
Mode:	2	100%

Gender

Male	23	43%
Female	29	55%

*S197 3

Television

1=	21	39%
2=	24	44%
3=	1	2%
4=	3	6%
5=	5	9%
		100%

Appendix B: Focus Group Responses

Exploring the Barriers to Community Involvement in Public Transportation:

The Case of Capital Metro

The purpose of this research is to identifying barriers and alternatives to community involvement in the minority community. Specifically as it applies to minorities with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

We ask that you read this document and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The Texas State University- San Marcos, Master of Public Administration Program Applied Research Project.

Background Information:

To explore the minority community's assessment of community involvement efforts made by the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) from the point of view of the minority community. The main objective will be achieved by two approaches: 1) Explore the barriers to the community involvement processes and 2) explore alternatives of ways to engage the community in Capital Metro decision making processes from the point of view of the local minority and LEP community.

Procedure:

Participate in a focus group and provide feedback in response to emerging issues or answer a survey with information related to community involvement issues and alternatives.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has the following risks:

There are no risks involved by being part of this research project.

Participants identity will be kept confidential. Participants of focus groups will only be identified by their ethnicity/race plus gender for data reporting purposes only. Participants of surveys will be asked race and gender questions for the same purpose. Other identifying information such as name, address or phone numbers will not be requested.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships with:

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Texas State University - San Marcos

Contacts and Questions

Aida Berduo Douglas, Candidate
Master of Public Administration - Spring 2006

You may ask any questions you have now.

(512) 369-6200

You may contact Dr. Patricia Shields, Director of the Master of Public Administration Program and Supervising Professor for this Applied Research Project at (512)245-2143.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature_____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator or Person Obtaining Consent_____
Date _____

Focus Group Questions – English and Español

What do you think about attending Capital Metro public meetings? *Que piensa usted acerca de asistir juntas publicas de Capital Metro.*
What do you think about Capital Metro community outreach? *Que piensa usted acerca del alcanze comunitario que hace Capital Metro?*
What do you think about having public information only in English? *Que piensa usted acerca de solo tener informacion publica en Ingles?*
How do you feel about participating in Capital Metro public meetings only for your community? *Que piensa usted acerca de participar en juntas publicas de Capital Metro solo para su comunidad?*
What do you think about Capital Metro just providing written information about meetings? *Que piensa usted si Capital Metro solamente distribuye informacion escrita sobre juntas comunitarias?*
What do you think about the way Capital Metro promotes attending public meetings in the minority community? *Que piensa usted de la forma que Capital Metro anuncia el asistir las juntas publicas en la comunidad minoritaria?*
What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides information about public meetings in multiple languages? *Que piensa usted que pasaria si Capital Metro provee informacion sobre juntas publicas en idiomas multiples?*
What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides public meetings information through churches? *Que piensa usted que pasaria si Capital Metro provee informacion sobre juntas publicas por medio de inglesias?*
How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on the radio in your language? *Que piensa usted acerca de obtener informacion sobre juntas publicas por el radio en su idioma?* *How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on television in your language?* *Que piensa usted acerca de obtener informacion sobre juntas publicas por la television en su idioma?*

Focus Group Responses

Asian	Black	Hispanic*	Combined
What do you think about Attending Capital Metro public meetings? What do you think about Capital Metro community outreach? What do you think about having public information only in English? How do you feel about participating in Capital Metro public meetings only for your community? What do you think about Capital Metro just providing written information about meetings?			
- How do you know about the meetings? - Willing if time allowed - If knowledge of meeting willing to go on website for information - Promote on bus - Issue if going before Board but would go if interpreter provided and trusted - Current outreach minimal - Promote on Daily Texan, many Asians work for UT Meeting knowledge but neighborhood may not be served by buses. - Reading is helpful - Addressing neighborhoods in written format - Basic communication - Communication is multiple languages - It is good if already a rider - Printing schedule books 2x a year is wasteful of money - Provide larger print publications - Drivers NOT courteous to passenger - Drivers DO NOT wait for riders to sit down before driving off.	- Would attend if specific times after 5 pm and mtg. location - Would attend if route was targeted - Vested interest and awareness of meeting - Dissemination of information an incentives - Free bus passes to attend - Greencapping is good, use it to encourage meeting attendance - Get businesses involved - Schools are an untapped resource - Provide information in other languages, Spanish - Doing so would encourage participation - Multiple languages and BE DIRECT - Talking ONE on ONE in different languages - Public Service Announcements (PSAs) - Tailoring messages to specific meetings - FOOD is a DRIVER - Target the Group of Reach - Announce 3 weeks for save the date and 1 week reminder - Urgency would be a factor to attend - Scheduling conflicts a deterrent to attend - Making Public understand feedback is valued. "My input is important".	- Would assist as long as knowledge of mtg. - Have never felt invited - Would attend if invited by friends - English Only NOT helpful - Not inviting - Translation would be helpful - Target better the opinion of Hispanics - Never have been invited and didn't know community meetings existed - What is the new building on 624 Pleasant Valley? - Need to invite the East Austin community to see it "Open House" we're your neighbors - Support having information in multiple languages - Not using school age kids *** = Focus Group conducted entirely in Spanish.**	- How does it benefit me? - Maybe with one mo. Notice. - Advertise on buses - Advertise on radio - Advertise on e-bus - E-mail meeting info. - Promote @ grocery stores and not on paper - Promote on Riverside Dr. where there are minorities - Promote on church announcements - Written not a good idea for Hispanics, lazy readers - To reach Blacks, promote on Hip Hop R&B stations, Soul Stations, BET - Promote on KLBJ - Promote in restaurants - To reach Asians need an individual approach, through international organizations - Alert of consequences of NOT participating

Focus Groups Responses

Asian	Black	Hispanic*	Combined
What do you think about the way Capital Metro promotes attending public meetings in the minority community? What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides information about public meetings in multiple languages? What do you think would happen if Capital Metro provides public meetings information through churches? How do you feel about obtaining information about public meetings on the radio in your language? How do you fell about obtaining information about public meetings on TV in your language? Provide ideas on how Capital Metro can increase community meeting participation?			
➢ Provide FREE rides to CMTA public meetings ➢ Helpful if information was provided through churches. ➢ Helpful if information provided on radio ➢ Provide information in print ➢ There is a language barrier but will go to meetings if know, WHEN, WHERE and HOW ➢ Most Asians can read English ➢ Advertise in Capital News Asian Newspaper ➢ Advertise in restaurants and Asian markets, smaller markets with specialty foods	➢ Never heard of community meetings ➢ Use the bus stops info boards! ➢ Use internal placards ➢ There is a mistrust of government, historical and hysterical ➢ Interest in communal and not individual ➢ Outreach can be a doubled edged sword ➢ Research and due diligence of government entity ➢ Go to area that is affected ➢ Use door hanger postcards with pre-paid postage ➢ NO information sharing through churches, separation of Church and State. ➢ Depends on mentality of church leadership ➢ Radio a GOOD idea and a legitimate expense ➢ Create a Rap for high school and college bus riders ➢ Radio remote during drive time with free Bus Passes at Wal-Mart ➢ Public announcements via the bus enunciator ➢ Bus drivers need culturally sensitivity training ➢ Bus drivers want to Drive and not pick up people.	➢ Promote on the radio on ALL stations, LA LUPE/ 1560 ➢ Promote in Spanish TV during the news show. ➢ Speaking directly to people, one on one is important ➢ Offer food and give aways ➢ Make meetings convenient ➢ Provide subtitles ➢ Promote on Radio, TV and bus banners ➢ Provide Food, entertainment and Mariachi music ➢ Entertainment is an attraction to meetings ➢ Provide Child Care during community meetings ➢ Provide translation technology through headsets like United Nations ➢ Use Flyers but door to door ➢ Verbal communication is best when one on one *** = Focus Group conducted entirely in Spanish.**	➢ Feels like things have already been decided. ➢ Language barrier ➢ Establish a connection to a company representative ➢ Get bilingual in Chinese ➢ More people will relate ➢ Church announcements ➢ Separation of Church/State ➢ Congregation identifies announced meetings ➢ Buy airtime, PSAs not effective ➢ Promote on news scrolls on bottom of screen ➢ Drivers are nice and fare is nice ➢ Waiting for bus an issue ➢ Intoxicated passengers appreciate e-bus ➢ E-bus is positive ➢ Stigma that bus takes long ➢ Promote location, fare and time ➢ Have a community fair in a Parking Lot as Rally ➢ Go straight to source, advertise in buses ➢ One on One best approach- hire interns for an "undercover" positive plug ➢ Tell people what the benefit is ➢ Outreach at work place "Community outreach @ work" ➢ Reach the schools, children tell the parents

Researcher: Today is Friday, February 24, 2006, and we are here at Capital Metro offices at 2910 E. 5th Street, with five members of the community to explore and answer questions regarding public transportation in Austin.

There is one male and four females of various ethnic backgrounds.

First of all, I want to ask how many of you here have used Capital Metro's services in Austin before, if I can have a show of hands. Okay, so we have five out of the five members of our focus group have used public transportation in Austin.

Has any of you attended public meetings at Capital Metro?

Focus Group Member: No.

Researcher: Has any, have any of you heard about meetings that Capital Metro hosting in any way?

Focus Group Member: No.

Researcher: If you would of heard about a meeting seeking public input, would you have attended?

Focus Group Member: No, most likely not.

Researcher: Black Female Focus Group Member, can you tell me why not?

Black Female Focus Group Member: Um, I think I would need to know how it would benefit me, not that I use Capital Metro very often. And if you can't prove its importance to me then I probably wouldn't go.

Researcher: So, basically you are saying you would want to know how it would benefit you?

Black Female Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: For it to have any, for you to give any of your time in order, you would have to get something out of it?

Black Female Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: Okay, anybody else is more of a rider on a regular basis? Sue, you said you use Capital Metro a lot?

Sue: Yeah, mostly, yeah.

Researcher: So, if you found out that Capital Metro is about to change your route that you use everyday, and they are trying to get input from the community, would you participate?

Focus Group Member: Yeah, you could, I suppose say some suggestions. I'm not sure but some suggestions. If I go to work here is it very easy for me? I go up, if I'm here, it's too more close, it's too more close to my home? Depends, the time I got to go here. I have to, I have to transfer, and I have to uh makes the schedule on time. Sometimes I maybe, takes me thirty, three hours to wait.

Researcher: Three hours?

Focus Group Member: Thirty minutes

Researcher: Thirty minutes?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: So...

Focus Group Member: Sometimes I take my car, takes oh about a minute. When I ride the bus, sometimes an hour.

Researcher: If, so if you received information one of the routes that you take to go to school, its going to be taken away, especially the one that goes by your house. If you find out that we're holding a public hearing, Capital Metro wants to know from you, the bus riders, why we shouldn't remove the bus route? Would you go to a public meeting to let people know "don't take that route away cause I need that route to go to school'. Would you do that?

Focus Group Member: Yeah, yeah sure.

Researcher: You would?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: What would it take for you to go? Would you have to know about it?   How far in advance would you have to know for you to go to that meeting?

Focus Group Member: At least one month.

Researcher: At least a month?

Focus Group Member: Yeah, because I need to get some information. Maybe I told the riders about this information. And I will have the supervisors check the schedule.

Researcher: Okay, so basically like a one month notice. Does anybody else want to add as far as a notification, how much notification?

Focus Group Member: Probably a week. Yeah.

Researcher: A week? Okay.

Focus Group Member: So that way that can still be pressure amongst your minds putting that up there that week.

Researcher: Okay. Okay, well maybe we can start, oh a month ahead of time with this coming.

Focus Group Member: Uh, hum, absolutely.

Researcher: And then make it more heavy a week before the event.

Focus Group Member: Uh hum.

Researcher: Okay, absolutely, absolutely.

Focus Group Member: What is the primary form of advertising? You know, where do you publicize these for like these meetings?

Researcher: Typically what has been done; is they'll buy an ad in the Austin American Statesman on a Sunday. And they will, maybe, do an announcement on a radio station, perhaps not a station that might be

widely listen to by minorities, and right now we're talking about minority outreach. So, that's what we're focusing on. So this is why I'm doing the study.

So finding out where's the barriers? And then how to overcome. If we say, you know what? I think you need to have an ad in 105.9, or an ad...

Focus Group Member: Or in the college's window or college's paper?

Researcher: Exactly, exactly. Especially who the target is? We're trying to reach people that normally use, rely on public transit, that are college students. But we have several, I mean the minority community is composed of different segments, not just college. And um, the primary thing that we are trying to find out is especially our limited English proficient customers, and just necessarily limited English, but also those people that are not literate. There's some members of our community that have literacy issues and us putting a ad in the paper or a flyer may not necessarily do the job.

Focus Group Member: I have a suggestion that would probably be beneficial as far as advertising goes. Why not just put a sign up on the bus. Cause if these people are riding everyday, why not advertise on the buses? You know they spend their time on a daily basis, they're going to see the advertisement, they'll know "hey this meeting's coming up...let me tell my friends", you know. And don't they have a screen that flashes the new rides, something like that? Is that an option? Or like the audio thing? Couldn't they can play it out loud if they can't read it?

Researcher: That might work. But remember we still have the literacy issue.

Focus Group Member: I mean the radio stations.

Researcher: Right, okay....okay. So far we've established that since you all have been riding the bus, you really have not seen much community outreach from Capital Metro?

Focus Group Member: Not really. I'm not sure what you mean by community outreach. Is that like helping out?

Researcher: No, like information.

Focus Group Member: Well what I've noticed as I ride the bus is that people pretty much just got on and off and did what they need. I mean there was really nothing to interact with, I mean as far as...like maybe if we actually had somebody, a surveyor, where you could actually hire people to handout flyers on the bus. I think its real important to do it on the bus.

Researcher: Right. Well what I'd like to find out right now is what we have done? Or haven't done? What have you seen? Have you seen anything? Have you seen any Capital Metro flyers, posters?

Focus Group Member: I've seen Capital Metro banners out there, like at Kmart. I've seen like they've been places, I just didn't know what they were doing.

Focus Group Member: No.

Researcher: Yeah. .So you haven't seen any. One person out of the group has seen for the MLK March and that's not a Capital Metro event so, but you seen it.

Focus Group Member: Right, uh..hm.

Researcher: Did you see that the MLK March that Capital Metro was having free shuttles or just about the event itself?

Focus Group Member: Oh yeah, about the shuttles, your right. Okay, free shuttles yes. I didn't realize, yeah.   I have another question, the E-Bus I've heard about that a lot.

Researcher: The E-Bus?

Focus Group Member: Yeah, amongst lot of the college students, you know they'll say, "hey catch the E-Bus, you don't have to drive". You don't' to worry about it, you won't have to drive anymore.

Researcher: Okay, but you've heard about it not through Capital Metro but from others

Okay, now going back to the question that I was asking Sue. Say you all rode the E-Bus and there was a threat that the E-Bus was going to be taken away.

Focus Group Member: That would be bad.

Focus Group Member: What is it?

Focus Group Member: Oh, its basically an after hours bus line that allows college students to go downtown to 5th Street and not have to worry about drinking and driving and that.

Focus Group Member: How come I haven't heard about this?

Focus Group Member: Because they don't go to H.T. I think if they went to H.T. that would be very beneficial as well, like, but they go to other Riverside apartments that's on the….

Focus Group Member: U.T. area?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Focus Group Member: Oh.

Focus Group Member: But they go straight downtown and they pick you up at 3:00 a.m. in the morning and take you home, yeah.

Focus Group Member: You appreciate it.

Researcher: Uh, hum.

Focus Group Member: Yeah, but the only thing is you do have to wait awhile for it. Like you don't know when its going to come you just kind of have to go and wait..

Researcher: There's like a, I think there's like 20 minute intervals depending on.

Focus Group Member: Oh, okay.

Researcher: Yeah, it just depends when you stood by the bus stop you know.

Focus Group Member: You get there like and got 19 minutes…

Focus Group Member: Yeah, I think we get impatient and just want to drive.. But it would be a good idea to know exactly when its coming.

Researcher: Now that everybody knows what the E-Bus is, say its going to be taken away and that was your transportation mode to go to 6th Street. Okay, how would you…first of all, do you think that

information about those meetings; for them to tell you, "okay we're taking it away but we want to hear from you".

We're looking at…I think right now we're representing two different thing; your representing yourself as a college student; and your also representing yourself as a member of the minority community.. So I want you to think with both hats about this question. When or how would information be received by you for you to take initiative to say, "I don't want that E-Bus to be taken out, I want them to say no. We need that E-Bus because its going to protect, whatever its going to protect".

Email, okay, email. An email how?

Focus Group Member: It's going to be kind of hard to do that.

Researcher: Yeah, cause if I don't know that your riding the bus, how am I going to know that you want me to send you an email.

Focus Group Member: Maybe the local grocery store or something, just places that people go. Not like as colleges, we don't necessarily read the paper everyday. Its hard for us to read that plus everything else that we have to read…so.

Focus Group Member: Yeah The bookstore or places where college students would go. The bus stop or on campus, put up flyers, the newspaper.

Researcher: Newspaper?

Focus Group Member: Gas station.

Researcher: Okay, okay. Gas stations? Bus stops? Now you thinking like college students right now, okay?

Focus Group Member: Yeah, from the Riverside area where there's also a lot of minorities.

Researcher: Okay, now how do we face the issue that some minorities can't read?

Focus Group Member: Then that's when you would target the Spanish radio stations.

Researcher: Tell me about that. Why do you think the Spanish radio stations are something we may need to consider?
Focus Group Member: Maybe it's a cultural thing, but when we're cooking we have the radio on.. When we're working outside we have the radio on. When we're doing a barbeque we have the radio on. We always have the radio on.

Researcher: And you're talking about from a Hispanic community perspective, or from a Minority perspective?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Focus Group Member: The general Minority perspective I would say.

Researcher: Okay, so Minorities tend to listen to the radio when we're doing stuff.

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: Okay

Focus Group Member: Even something we could read from the church. Like a piece discussing your service.

Researcher: So church would be something for the Asian community perhaps. And also...

Focus Group Member: Any community really. Because there's always have the announcements of the concerns of the congregation.   People who ride the bus definitely have a congregation of concerns.

Researcher: So from a Minority perspective, church announcements being set out by the Church itself.

Focus Group Member: And everybody's there listening at one time and everybody's there and would learn about it.

Researcher: Uh, hum.

Focus Group Member: Yeah, Minority people go to Church, there's no doubt about it.

Researcher: Okay, so if Capital Metro decided we're just going to do things in writing. We're just going to do signs and flyers. What would you think about that?

Focus Group Member: That's fine.

Focus Group Member: Well, when you go to a service I believe in the separation of Church and State, and I don't think that the Government should consummate through the Church. I don't think that the Government should do things through the Church myself personally. Its effective to get information out through churches, but I don't believe that; I think when I'm in Church that I don't feel like I want to be announce, or lectured to, or told about things that don't deal with GOD. I mean that's GOD.

I think it's a good conduit to use your like for your flyers and stuff like that. I mean I think the "Black Church" is always a good thing. I mean we could put the flyers there and maybe the people who wouldn't get it anywhere else, would get it at that Church.

I think part of it depends on the mentality of the leadership of the Church.

Focus Group Member: It wouldn't reach the community. As a Minority I know many people, I know many people that would not want to pick up the newspaper and read., would not even bother to read a billboard or an ad, because you couldn't read it.

Researcher: Uh, hum. So, people, some people think reading is kind of a....
Focus Group Member: I hate to say it but they're just lazy.

Focus Group Member: Yeah, I think it's a cultural barrier.

Focus Group Member: Yeah, not necessarily lazy, but they don't know how to read, or they don't, you know. They don't like, maybe they won't, The ideas that are suppose to be portrayed you know in the paper. They won't really grasp the concepts, and I think its made me more of a learning or educational thing. Not really that easy.

Like put in the Spanish newspaper?

Yeah, yeah.   La Prensa, El Mundo, and stuff like that, Their not very old.

I think the Spanish people community reads them a lot.

Researcher: Black Female Focus Group Member, I want you to think like an "African-American female". Think about what we're representing. You know like sometimes I'm asked, you know from my "Hispanic female perspective", or "not only my age group but others". Like when I think of my mother or my aunt.

Sometimes we get a lot of complaints from the African-American community, but when it comes time for me to say, "give me a solution, I don't have any so what do you think would be a good way for Capital Metro to reach the market of African-American females of the age between 24 and 40?

Focus Group Member: Well, first I think you have to be in their community. After that they'd be going shopping or they have the grocery store, maybe have something on the cart or something that they have to push, or something like that, or at the checkout right there.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: Maybe the radio.

Researcher: Okay and the radio, is there like a specific station? Is it like an "oldies" station, is like uh, mum…

Focus Group Member: It would probably be like a pop-variety station.

Researcher: Okay, so it would be like "hip-hop".

Focus Group Member: Uh, huh.

Researcher: In that, okay.

Focus Group Member: People listen to the "oldies".
Focus Group Member: Do we have one? I don't think we have one right now?

Researcher: Well, right now 105.9 is considered an "oldies" station, but that's stuff that's between the 90's. And to me that's when I was in college, you know that's not "oldies".

Focus Group Member: To me that's unfortunately how it is once your established and you're thinking, "Oh, that's when I was in college, how do you know that's the oldies?" Once you're in college currently, not you but much older.

Researcher: How old do I look?

Focus Group Member: Not real old but you never can tell about that.

Focus Group Member: Definitely the radio, like "R&B" and maybe an "oldies" station or like that.

Focus Group Member: I don't know what's the majority that listens to KLBJ. Its on AM. It's a 24-hour news station.

Researcher: Uh, hum.

Focus Group Member: And they always have…its like, I think it's a 24-hour station where their talking about something and you can call and say what you feel like and you're talking to a person over the phone. Its on all the time.

Researcher: That unfortunately, has the tendency for the market to listen to that, is not strongly a Minority.

Focus Group Member: Yeah, well see I wasn't sure.

Researcher: Yeah.

Focus Group Member: That's why I was asking that, I wasn't sure. We listen to it but like I wasn't sure if it was a…

Researcher: Like when you say "we", who are you talking about "you and your family", or.?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: Yeah, and who they are, yeah.

Focus Group Member: But you don't like though?

Focus Group Member: No.
Researcher: But it's okay.

Focus Group Member: You seem a little out of order there?

Researcher: KLBJ, okay.

Focus Group Member: Um, maybe the Carver Library, the older guys there. All down on, what is that? Is that Rosewood? Like the restaurants, the "soul food" restaurants, the older guys there.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: From the "African-American" perspective, I think the language is not as much of a barrier as it is with the "Hispanic or Asian" community at times.

So, switching gears, and maybe, and I want you to think like an, oh, member of the "Asian" community. Um, from your experience and I don't know how long have you've been, how long have you've been in Austin?

Focus Group Member: Almost a year.

Researcher: So, about half a year?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Researcher: A year and a half? Okay, do you think that Capital Metro can do more to communicate better with the "Asian" community? As far as, I know in the "Asian" community there is a lot of different languages. So we have tried to translate things. I think Chinese, Vietnamese and some of the members of the "Indian" community also identify themselves as "Asians".   Um, and that sometimes is a challenge because you know, how do we reach them?

Focus Group Member: I think uh, close to the rural organizations is better. Can you get a video?

Researcher: Video?

Focus Group Member: Individuals.

Researcher: Video?

Focus Group Member: Individuals.

Researcher: Okay, okay..
Focus Group Member: Because of the "Asian" people that worry their job and worry about a lot of stuff within the different things, like in the bad things. Yeah, so its an organization, the group where you have one, some people have bus. Yeah.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: For it's the person that says…I mean, for example, you get rider and ask if I come to a meeting. And I'm not sure, yet you've risen from the door and maybe you think about the consequence.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: Okay, so maybe I did it wrong but…

Researcher: Okay, so basically the consequences of attending a meeting?

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

* Researcher: Is also something that,' cause I'll tell you one thing in New Jersey, there was a huge, I guess, outpour of, from the "Russian" community. Because many people assumed certain things about the "Russian" community, a focus group was done. When all these things started coming out. You know saying that they feel discriminated against, although they look like, when you first see them. The minute they speak with a different accent, they start being discriminated against; according to them. Not only by the drivers or by different people, and so they were afraid to say anything. Like you were saying, what are the, if I say something, maybe this may happen to me. Especially people that come from other countries here. um, some people think that perhaps they um…*

Focus Group Member: They are not sure.

Researcher: It's already been decided, in other words. But you know.

(To Black male):..Now I want you to think as an "African-American" male. As far a member of the community. Do you think there's fear in the community of participating, or there's just no interest. People just think things are going to happen because their going to happen? What do you think?

Black Male: I feel most likely that a lot of the times that people think things have already been decided, and that there's being something done effectively. And a lot of the times if you don't where to go, either invest your interest in something. Your not going to take the action to do it. If you don't feel you're going to have an effect when still finally done.

Researcher: When do you give up?

Black Male: Me personally or as?
Researcher: No, as a member?

Black Male: Oh, as a member of the community?   Oh, not too much before I'd probably before I even try, because I just feel it's not going to work.

Researcher: what do you think? (to Hispanic female)

Hispanic Female: In what perspective do you feel of that majority?

Black Malel: As a Minority.

Hispanic Female: Okay, I guess pretty much the same way. Especially if you have your language barrier. Even if you do have an opinion, how are you going to communicate that, you know? How are you going to make them understand that you know, that's you're only way of getting around is taking the bus. You know a lot of people have other options, but for the most part, you know.

Researcher: So what, what in your opinion, can you give Capital Metro an idea? Of someone, who's a single mother who speaks mostly in Spanish, and her English is not very good, and she uses the bus to go clean buildings downtown or something like that. And the bus is going to pick her up from her residence. It's going to change routes. How can Capital Metro welcome someone who speaks a different language to come to us, and make them feel welcomed.

Focus Group Member: I think a lot of the, you know, what could be the connection between the Minority, the community and the company itself; is to have somebody who is a Minority go out there and represent the company as well as the Minority community. Be able to you know relate to them and speak Spanish. And I think having bilingual people.

Researcher: Company Representative?

Hispanic Female: Right.

Researcher: Bilingual?

Focus Group Member: Yes.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: For example, like I go shopping at the HEB and I see people who speak Chinese. Like myself, I am more likely to buy stuff.

Right.

Researcher: Uh, hm.. So in your language. So, that leads me to my next question. Uh, hm, and we already addressed that. Actually, that's one of my questions. What would happened if Capital Metro provides information about public meetings in multiple languages?

Focus Group Members: Definitely help.

More people would be informed.

I think as the people of venue actually, we are more likely to respond to something that we are use to or related to.

Researcher: Uh, hm.

Foscus Group Member: And if you can't feel related to something you would just soon as avoid it. For out of the fear of discrimination or out of the fear of self-pity of it all. People like, they long to fit in. And its hard to come to an organization where you feel they don't listen up to you, or no one's going to be appreciate your opinion.

And then what's your opinion because their automatically going to do the "oddball". And nobody likes to be the "oddball".

Researcher: Do you think that's true? Do you think that people don't like to be the "oddball"?

Focus Group Member: Uh, hm. Especially, you know, if their struggling as it is. They don't want to do anything else to be a hindrance to them. You know, they want to be able to do whatever it is they want to do and succeed.

Researcher: Hmmn. Let's go back to the idea that I think Sue had about providing information through our churches. Lets say real things we can talk about that, maybe as an announcement before Church starts or Mass as starts, you know, whatever type of religion it is.

What about the bulletins that are sometimes printed at churches. Do you think having an ad in one of those bulletins is a good use of money, or do you think that just having the announcement made verbally to everybody would have bigger impact than someone just buying and paying $200.00 for an ad in a bulletin that some people just throw away anyway?

Focus Group Member: Definitely verbal.

Researcher: Okay.

Focus Group Member: Its better to just do flyers?

I wouldn't.

Well, when you go to a service....

Like how often do you even keep the flyer anyway?

Never.

Exactly.

No, but other churches. Not just the Catholic Churches..

Researcher: Or Baptist.

Focus Group Member: Yeah.

Everyone has a program and use the program to get out their concerns.

Researcher: So if the Priest, the Pastor, or the Bishop makes the statement. The impact might be greater.

Focus Group Member: The congregation already looks up to that person and knows that person as their Pastor and their Mentor or whatever. You know, their going to see that "Oh, this persons' concerned of the public's issue, so maybe this is something that I should start thinking or planning about as well.

Researcher: So if the Pastor or Priest says, "If you really care about this ride that's about to be moved. I suggest you go to Capital Metro's offices and tell them that's my route".. So that statement is made in kind of like in those words.

Focus Group Member: And he can ask them, "Well, if there is going to be something going on, on this day, you know, at this time? Because a big plus I think is that everybody's there and in everybody's mind.

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And everybody's comfortable.

Researcher: Okay, alright. And I think we kind of already address this one. How do you feel about obtaining information on radio in your language? Are there Asian language radio stations in Austin, that you know of?

Focus Group Member: I'm not sure. I never listen to it. But in California, there are many radio stations.

Researcher: So say there was a Chinese station. Do you think that would be a good idea to have announcements on that station?

Focus Group Member: You mean, if we had a Chinese station in Austin? Yes.

Researcher: So having the information in Chinese... okay... and then of course in Spanish like we just discussed. For people who listen to the radio a lot.

Okay... What about TV?

Focus Group Member: I think that a commercial will be better.

Researcher: You mean as far as buying the time or having a Public Service Announcement, for the community?

Focus Group Member: It depends on the way that it is presented and given in a positive way

Researcher: Well, that would mean that the stations have to believe in what we're doing? That is where the challenge comes in...

For example in the recent possibility of a strike... How did you hear about the strike?

Focus Group members: On the news.

Researcher: If you were Capital Metro.. let me ask you this. When you didn't know what Capital Metro stood for and you just came to Austin... What did you think of Capital Metro?

Did you have a positive, negative or neutral perception of Capital Metro?

Focus Group Members:
African- American Male: Neutral
Asian Female: Positive- nice drivers and its cheap and Ozone Action Days.
Hispanic Female: at first it was difficult but after looking at frequency it was better
Hispanic Female: It was hard to see and ride with the homeless people and drunk people on the bus.

Researcher: Do you think that was difficult?

Hispanic Focus Group Member: It was a bit uncomfortable at first, but it was better when I was assured that it was safe and that there was surveillance.

Researcher: So if Capital Metro promoted the safety of riding the bus knowing some of the riders may be homeless, you think it would help and people would still ride it?

Focus group members: We know it is difficult to control who gets on the bus.

Researcher: Absolutely, after the Civil Rights Act, we cannot prevent anyone from getting on the bus. Its your right.

Focus Group Member: I like the E-Bus. I think it is a great move by Capital Metro. We don't have that in San Antonio. Capital Metro service is better than in San Antonio.

Researcher: Just to let you know, Capital Metro operates on a full penny sales tax and San Antonio operates on ½ a penny. What I mean by that is that the most of the revenue comes from the sales tax that is collected in the area that is served.

Female African-American Focus Group Member: I don't like riding the bus. I don't like transferring.

Researcher: So, if you lived in a city like New York, you still would not use the transit system?
Female African American Focus Group Member: Austin is not New York. They have a subway system and other options.

Researcher: Austin is soon to have a commuter train option to well.

Okay, let's move forward… if you were running Capital Metro public involvement, tell me one thing that you would do to increase participation from the minority community?

African American Female: Have a Capital Metro Community Fair at a Park & Ride or a grocery store parking lot. About one month before an event.

Hispanic Female: Go straight to the source. Promote inside the buses

Hispanic Female: Focus on One on One.. by talking to someone. Hire someone to talk to people. Undercover to promote good things about Capital Metro. Hire college students to promote Capital Metro.

Asian Female Focus Group: Tell people attending the public meeting what is in it for them. Go to where people work. Outreach at the worksite.

Researcher: "Community Outreach @ work" ! That is a good one…

African-American Male: Outreach at schools and have a children's' day.

Researcher: Ok. Any other comments…? Well, this is the end of our time. Thank you very much for your time.

Researcher: *Today is February 24th, 2006 and we're conducting a focus group with the African-American Community.*

We'll start by asking, each of you how you feel about public meetings, in particular Capital Metro public meetings. We usually have one meeting, public hearings or large community meetings. This question applies to every type of meeting that Capital Metro has. We'll go around the table.

Female Focus Group Participant: Well, I don't have a problem with attending, it will have to depend on the hours and the time they hold the meetings and location.

Researcher: So you would attend if it was convenient for you?

Female Focus group participant: Yes.

Researcher: Okay, and when you say convenient, are referring to after hours? Or it specific weekends?

Female Focus Group participant: Probably not weekends but some time after 5 pm. and location.

Researcher: Would the topic interest you? Say you were a user of public transit and it had to do with your route being changed drastically or totally eliminated

Female Focus Group participant: oh, most definitely.

Male Focus Group Participant: I would think it would have to depend on what routes. If it was in northeast Austin or eliminating routes in southwest Austin

Researcher: Okay, most important is the vested interest of the meeting that will be driving force then? Okay.

Male Focus Group participant: I guess I would attend the meeting but there needs to be a better method of dissemination. My issue is the lack of knowledge. Not knowing when and what the meeting is about and I mean I suppose there are some other incentives and reasons. Maybe a vested interest but maybe those who show up will have a free bus ride for a week or something. Some sort of incentive to get people, get me to come. I don't even know if I'd attend if the route change affected me personally. But I would go if I knew there was going to be some type of end result. Even if I knew the result was going to be worth it.

Researcher: In many cases, and just to add, historically, in public agencies a flyer is sent out. Or a notice is placed and stating "there is going to be a service, change and it is going to affect route, such and such.." and we advertise a public meeting and nobody shows up and then it is assumed that because nobody showed up, everyone likes the changes. Basically, one of the things we're trying to find out is, "why are they not attending?"… It doesn't really mean that everyone likes the changes but perhaps we picked the wrong day and or the wrong time.

Specifically, about Capital Metro community outreach, do you have any thoughts about what is currently being done, If you are a current or potential bus rider, do you think what Capital Metro is doing, through the flyers, ads or tv and such. Is it something that you think Capital Metro is doing okay or is it something that it can improve on.

Male participant: I definitely think you can improve on. Getting the awareness out there. I don't think I've ever seen…. One thing I can say is that right before you changed the North Lamar , the 1L and 1M, at the Lamar Transfer Center, I don't know who they were staff or contractors, or who they were, but people were going up to people as people were getting off the buses to let them know of the new routes. I thought that was very creative. I don't know if they were doing surveys or asking questions but sometimes I see a surveyor on the bus and that's really good too.

Researcher: It is called "Greencapping" so you think that is a good method of outreach then?

Male participant: Yes, I think so. I think that people on the bus are willing to answer questions just the fact 'that they're on it. If there is a change, they'd want to know about it. If you're trying to do some route planning, you may want to do the same thing. If you let people know on the bus about the public meetings, it would encourage them to go and they may feel committed to go.

Researcher: So Greencapping to invite people to the actual meeting?

Male participant: Yeah, I think that would be good.

Researcher: okay. That's interesting

Female participant: Get your local businesses and schools involved. That is always a good thing.

Researcher: Businesses along a specific route perhaps?

Female participant: Yes.

Male Participant: That is a good point too because if people are using the bus to get to their job and businesses are affected by a route and their customer as well, then they'd be interested in taking part in it.

Male Participant; I think that schools are an untapped resource.

Researcher: That came up in an earlier meeting as well...

Male participant: Sometimes I would pass by a bus stop and see kids on the bus. If Capital Metro is having something, they can pick up a flyer and take it home.

Researcher; This many not directly apply to the African American Community per se. But what are your thoughts about having public information only in English? Information just being disseminated in the English language.. any thoughts?

Female Participant: I think it definitely needs to be in other languages, especially Spanish. Especially if you're trying to be effective.

Researcher: Okay

Male Participant: I think in doing so, the public will see that the agency has taken a step and extending to the community.

Researcher: Okay. Does anyone want to add to that?

Male Participant: I think that whatever language, the message needs to be very clear. Needs to be very clear, concise and very direct. By doing that, you have a 50-50 chance that a person will look at it understand it and maybe take action.

Researcher: What do you think about the segment of our population that may not be able to read and write. What do you think would be a way for Capital Metro to outreach and communicate? Because a very direct flyer can be good but what about for those who may not be able to understand and read it?

Female Participant: That goes back to what we said earlier, getting out there.

Researcher: So basically going out there, one on one? Like the example that was given. Talking to people.

Male participant: Yes, the greencapping, then you don't have to worry about them not getting the information.

Researcher: So basically, the greencapping and also in various languages

Male Participant: Yes

Male Participant: I would also say on the radio, not as much as television but on the radio maybe as a public service announcement.

Researcher: What do you think about the public service announcements being offered at 1 am or 2 am?

Male Participant: I don't think that is very effective. But maybe 8 pm or 6 am but try to get it on a time that people can actually hear it.

Researcher: What do you think about having communication, spefically targeting a community? Tailored for each segment of our community? Do you think that would be a good way for Cap Metro to try to outreach?

Male Participant: I think that each of the cultures is different and they receive these messages, so if you're using a message made for one community in another community, that may be the reason why the message is not being effective in getting people. Again, at best you have to understand from the cultural issue and make the message that each culture understands. Get some fried chicken and I'll go! (laughter)

Researcher: So you think having an incentive such as food, in addition to a free bus pass.

Female Participant: Food will always bring people. You don't say come for the food, it will be there.

Male Participant: Food is a big meeting draw.

Male Participant: I think that every advertising agency understands target marketing, and I don't know why government agencies seem like we're behind in understanding that in order to reach a certain group of people you'll need to target a certain group of people. And to balance that balance between target marketing and then trying to stereotype, you'll have to be sensitive as you're not offending people. It is only smart to tailor a message for an audience.

Researcher: ok. I think we have talked about this in a way, but providing written information. I think we touched on it when we stated that we can provide written information as long as the information is not wordy or direct. So are we saying, less is better?

Male Participant: It depends on the topic. If you're trying to explain something to someone, you have to explain it. But if you're trying to be directive, then you need to say it direct. There is no reason why government cannot be like that and be effective to get people to come to meetings. Even for stakeholders, it has to communicate to them.

Researcher: Is there anything else to add? I was going to target based on that comment.. we talked about disseminating information, but one of the things that is missed is the time frame in which the information is released.   Because you can have the best flyer ever, but if you don't release it until 2-days before the meeting, then people cannot get there. So, what is an ideal time frame for a public agency to target?

Female Participant: I would say a week and follow up with a reminder. A week gives me time to plan.

Male Participant: I was thinking three weeks with reminders.

Researcher: So do a three week as put this on your calendar and then a week saturate to remind. Do you think that there is an issue that affects someone so dramatically that even getting the information a day before would attend? Do you think that would have something to do with it? Say that it gets through word of mouth? Do you think the time frame has an impact showing up or going back to what's in it for me?

Male Participant: The urgency would make me try harder. If I already paid money to go see a UT Basketball game. I'm not skipping the game to go hear about route 1 being changed. I make look for other alternatives to offer my input. Call Customer Service or email me.

Researcher: And complain because we had the meeting on a night of a UT Basketball game? (laughter)

Male Participannt: Scheduling conflicts will occur, that is the whole idea of sending the save the date card and then reminding. That is outreach. You're saying we're having special transit just to get you the meeting. This is not about Capital Metro is doing, this is about you, giving your input about what Capital Metro is doing.

Female Participant: Is about them thinking that their opinion is valued. People think, me? I'm not going to make a difference.

Researcher: Making the public understand that their opinion is wanted and valued. Alright.

What do you think about the current way Capital Metro promotes attending public meetings in the minority community? Have you heard of any?

Male Participant: I've never heard of any.

Female Participant: Me either.

Male respondent: I definitely think it can be improved.

Male respondent: you need to start using the bus stops. Like in most countries, they use the bus shelters as information boards. Use the inside of your buses. That can be extremely effective. Especially if you have an incentive. Those who are really concerned will be there, those who are not, you're not going to get them anyway.

Researcher: That is a very good point. Do you think that is some cases, in general, the minority community might feel that decisions have already been made, that it is just a process. Especially the immigrant community, when in their countries their opinions were not really valued and here they are in a country that is not theirs feeling, if they didn't care about me in my country, maybe they don't want my opinion. And when you think of it in those terms, is there something that comes to your mind for Cap Metro to do to emphasize that we do want your opinion even though you're not from here but you are here, so what are your thoughts about that? I am asking because the African American community is not just made up of African American from the U.S. but people from other parts of the world.

Male Participant: I just think that there is a mistrust in government and a lot of it is historical and a lot of it is hysterical but I think is more so historical especially when you're talking about African-Americans, the government has not done African Americans right since we got off the slave ship, that deep seed mistrust, especially of the people making the decisions and they don't look like us. It is difficult to trust people when historically people have proven that they can't be trusted.

Male Participant: Sometimes interests aren't communal. They're individualized I don't think people associate every time they buy something, they're helping pay for the bus system. Also, it isn't just the mistrust, it is the mutual respect.

Researcher: What do you think would happen if Capital Metro started providing information in multiple languages? We discussed that earlier. Do you think that would also be the one on one we were looking for? You look like me, you speak like me…

Male Participant: We don't want to stop the process. We want to get some feedback.

Female Participant: Some people look for immediate feedback. If it takes three weeks to get information back, I may not want to participate again.

Researcher: Timely information,… okay. Going back.. something that was said that triggered a thought. In many cases, you have community leaders, self proclaimed, community leaders who are saying they are looking for the best interest of a certain minority community and they don't want this bus stop here or this item here and appear to be speaking for the majority when in fact they are the speaking for the minority and sometimes that can be a double edged sword because the public agency may go along with what was perceived to be what the community wanted and removed a bus stop and then the community comes back asking why the stop was moved after the fact. What are your thoughts when the minority is represented and not the majority?

Male Participant: I think that is when research from a government agency is important and not get information from only one source. It takes me be willing to go out to the actual neighborhood to see what the people really feel.

Male Participant: You could also use a returnable door hanger that has the survey in there and you can get the feedback in that neightborhood.

Researcher: So it can be a doorhanger with a tear-off that can become a postcard?

Male Participant: Yes and you get the feedback directly from that neighborhood.

Researcher: That is a great idea. The other idea, what would you think would happen if Capital Metro provides public meeting information through churches? That is something that has not been typically done. Maybe churches that provided pre-service or post-service announcements. Do you think that may be received well or do you think that may be received the wrong way? If that was one of the avenues that was pursued?

Male Participant: I believe in the separation of church and State and I don't think the government should do things through the church. I believe that information may be given out through churches but I don't believe that when I'm at church I should be lectured or told about things that are not about God.

Female Participant: I think if its to pass out flyers there, I always see flyers there. There is people who wouldn't get the information anywhere else but church.

Male Participant: I think that some church leaders don't disseminate messages but their own. Depending on the relationship that the church and the government agency have because if there is some members of the church that work for an agency and they don't believe that they have been treated right then if you say that Capital Metro is having a public meeting, they may show up just to cause havoc at the meeting.

Researcher: I guess from the perspective that there was a bus stop at a church, a bus route that people who attended church use to get to church and there was a chance that due to low ridership during the week, the bus route may be removed but on Sunday it had maximum use. Do you think this type of

information should be distributed through churches? You need to let Capital Metro know that our stop is being used and not remove it. Do you still think that it requires a separation of church and state?

Male Participant: I believe that there are other avenues to distribute information and the church should not be used for this.

Male Participant: I would say that transit agencies have an obligation to contact all the affected parties, so if you use the door hanger, the same we talked about, can also go to the manager of the corner store and get the information out to the interested parties.

Researcher: Moving on. How do you feel about obtaining information on the radio in your specific language? And that can be any language. Specific stations targeting communities? Not just PSAs but actually buying time. Do you think that is a useful way of Capital Metro funds?

Male Participant: I definitely think so. I think that Capital Metro should use all media, that is what media is for, to share information and to inform people. All media should be used every time. If it costs money then it cotss money. That is a legitimate expenditure. That is good public policy.

Female Participant: Maybe they can come up with a youthful wrap. Something quick and they can make it spiffy. Short spiffy and to the point.

Researcher: Make it hip-hop then?

Male Participant: Are you talking about airing the board meeting on the radio?

Researcher: No, I'm referring to making the announcement about the meeting.

Male Participant: I still think there should be some chicken! It works! Food is very effective.

Researcher: Like the radio, we were also thinking of using television this way. Tailoring it to that community. I'd like to ask each of you, if you were in charge of a community outreach effort for Capital Metro for the minority community, and you had to give an idea to Capital Metro, what would it be?

Female Participant: Mine would be a music wrap and I would target the young bus riders. High school as well as college.

Male Participant: I would say, radio remotes from the radio station. Everyone listens to stations.

Male Participants: I think that the enunciators on the buses can be used a bit more effectively. Also, Capital Metro hires drivers that like to drive but they don't like picking up people.

Researcher: I really appreciate your time.

Researcher: What do you think Alice? If there was an interpreter available so people could give the comments in their own language, and is someone could interpret them for the board of Directors do you think people would be willing to do that?

Focus Group Participant: I don't think language is the problem. It's the service.

Say capital metro had a meeting, to say how can we make this service better? And we want to hear from you…and people are real shy about coming to capital metro meetings, you are told you can speak in your language, and we'll have an interpreter help you. You think that would benefit?

Focus Group Participant:
Yes then would we be able to trust the interpreter?

Researcher: ok that's a good question…service, trust the interpreter your right. Because you might be saying one think and the interpreter could be saying something else.

Researcher: What do you think about the current outreach that capital metro is doing? What kind of job is capital metro doing about minority community outreach?

Older Man:
I haven't seen any outreach.

Focus Group Participant: I feel that still its not close to my neighborhood. I still have to take another method of transportation to go home. SO I think it would be much better if you can get more routes to reach the neighborhood. That would be more effective. I still have to walk 3 or four miles to go home from my buses stop.

Researcher: So if capital metro went to your area of your neighborhood to tell you…"come and tell me about your problem." If we were to advertise a meeting for you, What good a job are we doing for you to know that we are having a meeting first of all.

Focus Group Participant: Like put it in the newspaper?

Researcher: Do you think we are doing that?

Focus Group Participant: Put it in the Daily Texan, that can reach a lot of people here. I mean another thing is…you know there is a meeting, but I don't have any method of transportation.

Researcher: Ok you are like many other riders, you may know about the meeting, but you don't have any method of transportation.

Focus Group Participant: I have a comment. The thing is it seems like routes to different neighborhoods is a completely valid point because I think a bus and a municipalities in Austin serves the major Downtown and urban areas..sure…and of course major traffic areas. But, when you get out to the neighborhoods like northwest Austin or northeast, or somewhere in those outlaying areas, especially those small streets, its tough. There's two theories that are at odds: one is that you want to promote environmentalism, but then, you have the opposing point where you don't have bus stops in places where people who might harbor that view would like to ride. That sort of defeats the purpose.

Researcher: So you can have community all you want, but if you are not serving the areas that need to be served, it's a mute point. Is that what I'm hearing?

Focus Group Participant: yes.

Focus Group Participant: I haven't seen anything about community outreach.

Researcher: So if we advertised in "Mundo", do you think that would be a good idea?

Researcher: Now what do you think about having information about meetings? Public information about what we do and outreach that we want to do, only in English. If we said we were only doing it in English.

Researcher: We have some demographic information, but the hard thing is...its hard to know about the different languages that are out there so my question is...Do you think Capital Metro should not just do things in English? That we should do multi-languages? And of course we are going into the whole issue of what languages do you pick?

Focus Group Participant: I feel that in this city there are a lot of Koreans.

Researcher: Koreans. Ok.

Researcher: How do you feel about participating in Capital Metro community meetings only for your community? If it only impacted your neighborhood Prudence, you would go, but if it was something about downtown Austin would you go?

Focus Group Participant: No.

Focus Group Participant: I'm in agreement with that. It's just that I think we need to handle the fact that we are not putting the routes where people that do harbor environmental use, would like to ride them.

Focus Group Participant: So putting neighborhoods in clumps...? If cap metro just provided information it wouldn't run? Just a sign or flyer; what do you think about that? Right now that's the question.

Focus Group Participant: What are other choices?
Researcher: Do you think that's a good way of just doing something and it would form?

Focus Group Participant: I guess there would be questions.

Focus Group Participant: So we should have basically, options over the phone such as for English press one...

Researcher: In addition we should also have information over the phone in multiple languages.

Focus Group Participant: Sure...an advisor...for each

Researcher: I need you to be honest when you answer this question...Why do you think about the way capital metro promotes to the minority community in general?

Focus Group Participant: Really it's good that you have it in writing...signs...if you're trying to learn...when I go to HEB...other wise...

Focus Group Participant: For me I feel that you offended my...twice a year...it's very expensive...wasting a lot of money on this. Perhaps a sign like at HEB so that people can just see...because when you take the bus you can see...but when I get this route full I feel its very expensive every half a year...and I feel we can save that money.

Focus Group Participant: I think you're entirely right because at major points such as grocery stores where a lot of people gather and congregate, it's really vital to have things in big print where people can see.

Focus Group Participant: You spend lots of money for a new schedule.

Researcher: That's good to know.

Focus Group Participant: Is the bus driver. They don't allow the passengers to sit down on their seats before driving off. I'm not 18 anymore.

Researcher: Basically have drivers be a little more patient

Focus Group participants: Yes

Researcher: Driver Courtesy

Focus Group participants: yes
Researcher: What do you think if Capital Metro adopts your suggestions and we start offering information in multiple languages about what we're doing.

What do you think would happen about people attending public meetings. Do you think participation would increase or do you think or do you think no matter how many languages [we] put the information up we many not get the response that we're looking for?

Focus Group participant: If you publish the information about the meetings and offer free rides to the meetings you may get more people to attend

Researcher: That is a great idea. Basically, how would we know that you're going to the meeting? You would just tell us?

Focus Group Participant: You would offer one ride to those going to the meeting.

Focus Group Participant: You make a great point. There is one thing. How do you get there and what routes take you there.

Researcher: What routes take you there?... Good point.

Now, what do you think about having the information available at churches? Say Capital Metro gave the information to all churches stating that we're looking at expanding or cutting a route?

Focus Group Participant: I don't know if they would be willing to have a meeting....
I would think is a matter of marketing the meeting

Researcher: I'm not saying having a meeting at the church, I'm saying passing out information about a meeting that will be taking place. Let's assume that people would be willing to go to a meeting... The question we're trying to ask is if Capital Metro were to give information about a community meeting through churches, do you think there will be a response?

Focus Group Participant: I would think so..

Researcher: You think so?

Focus Group Participant: Yes, also have information on your meetings on your website

Researcher: Info. On website about meeting schedules... okay..

Researcher: There are two questions about promotion using radio and television in multiple languages.

Focus Group Participant: Definitely a plus.

Researcher: Okay.... So having a radio station targeting specific groups.... You think that would be a good move for Capital Metro?

Focus Group Participant: Especially if you use the AISD access channels... I know they provide information 24 hours.

Researcher: Well, thank you so much for your time.

Focus Group Participant: One last comment will be that drivers need to slow down when loading for safety

Researcher: I'm going to close by asking you, if Capital Metro was to hire you and asked you "Give me the best way to outreach to the minority community ... to the Asian community... this is the best way to do it.. Give me your idea.

- *Not everybody goes to church but everyone cares about food so markets would be a good way.*
- *Not just the language barrier, there is also the barrier that most Asians are not willing to sacrifice so if they have to ride 2-3 buses to get to a meeting, they probably won't go. But if they only knew, What, When ,How and Where...*
- *Many Asian like to read*
- *Remember Family*
- *Capital News in Chinese and put information in Asian markets and specialty food markets*
- *Have information in Fiesta Mart as well*

Thank you very much...Again, I appreciate your time for this project and apologize for having a difficult time getting here.

Researcher: Today is Thursday, March 2, 2006 and we're conducting a focus group with the Hispanic community in Austin.

First of all, I would like to ask you what you think about attending Capital Metro public meetings.

Participant: How often are the meetings?

Researcher: When they are scheduled. They are not often but there are from time to time. What do you think about attending them.

Participant: If they let us know and communicate with us, we can attend. They can let us know by providing signs at HEB.

Participant: If they let us know ahead of time too. Sometimes we like to plan ahead.

Researcher: Okay. What do you think about the community outreach that Capital Metro is currently doing?

Participant: This is the first time that we've ever heard of attending meetings and we have been approached by someone from Capital Metro.

Researcher: Technically, I am a student right now and not representing Capital Metro. Have you heard about community meetings about Capital Metro?

Participants (all)- No. We have never been invited.

Researcher: In the way you think, how would you feel invited by Capital Metro? Many times, when we get invited to a party but we don't get the invitation but if we're invited by someone who received the information, would you feel that you were not involved and should not go? How can Capital Metro appear like they are inviting everyone.

Participant: Like you did in this case. You told the parent coordinator about this meeting and she told us and invited us as the parent coordinator. I was not offended because you didn't invite me directly.

Participant: I would also feel invited if someone else tells me or if I saw a flyer inviting me or on television during the newscast.

Researcher: So what do you think about only having public information available only in English?

Participant: I don't like just to see information only in English. I don't find out about things like they are…and then you think, if I went to the meeting, is there going to be a translator?

Researcher: And if the information was available in Spanish and Capital Metro said we'll have translators so if you'd like to address the Board and you knew a translator would be available, you would attend?

Participant: Yes, if there were translators, I would attend.

Participant: And if it was all in Spanish, would be better!

Researcher: Okay. Let's go to the next one. What do you think about participating in Capital Metro public meetings just for your community? … for example, if we said, this is just for the Hispanic community and we will speak Spanish. We will talk about all the Capital Metro themes.

Participant: It would be much better if it was all Hispanics because then it would be the opinion of the Hispanics.

Researcher: What do think about the way that Capital Metro announces public meetings in the minority community?... Currently, you told me you did not know about meetings.

Participant: We have never been invited or communicated with us.

Participants: We didn't know Capital Metro had public meetings or community meetings.

Participants: Sometimes we want to find out of things. For example, you have just built an Annex next to HEB (on E. 7th) and I walk by and ask myself, what is that? I live in this community and I'd like to know.

Researcher: Okay. So if Capital Metro does something or builds something, you'd like be informed. Maybe be invited to an open house for the community to see the building?

Participant: Exactly. What types of other services do you offer. Besides bus service, I don't know what other services Capital Metro offers. I have heard about the service for the elderly and disabled but I don't know how it works.

Participant: I also saw that the building Annex is a daycare. I was wondering about that. Will we be able to use that? Or it only for people who work at Capital Metro?

Researcher: I believe that it will be for Capital Metro employees and possibly if space permits, they may allow others but I'm not completely sure.

Participant: That is excellent, it should be applauded. There is no daycares in this area, the closest one is on Tillery and one would feel better if the daycare is run by a public agency and recognized like Capital Metro.

Researcher: What would you think if Capital Metro provides information about public meetings in multiple languages?

Participant: That would be good so that way the whole community would be informed.

Participant: That is what should be done, transportation is used by all races.

Participant: We're in the U.S. and there are many cultures here.

Researcher: Ok. What do you think if Capital Metro provided information about community meetings through churches?

Participant: I think churches and schools, places with many people.

Participant: I think schools are better. There is more community reach through the schools. Weekly bulletins are sent to school. At church, not all people may read the bulletin.

Participant: Church is good, not all people have children so you may be able to reach those people who attend church but don't have children.

Researcher: What about you back there, you have been a bit quiet, What do you think?

Participant: I think that people would attend if the information is given. I don't use the service now but I would use it if it was convenient.

Participant: I used public transit a lot when I was younger.
Participant: I really would like to. I would like to know the routes. I'm interested.

Participant: I learned all I know about Austin because of Capital Metro. I used the bus and got on just to see the city when I first moved here. I would go Downtown and other places.

Researcher: When we first started this meeting, you mentioned about having announcements on the radio. That is my next question. What do you think about having information about community meetings on the radio in your language.

Participant: Yes, play it in all Spanish stations because there are different styles of music. 104.9 and La Lupe 1560, that is what we listened to all the time. It plays the oldies love songs we grew up with. Rocio Durcal and those like her.

Researcher: What about television.

Participant: Yes, during the evening news during commercial breaks. Not during Soaps (novelas), we don't pay attention and not all of us watch them. On the news is best, we are attentive and we sit down and listen.

Researcher: Ok. I'd like for you to give me an idea. If Capital Metro contracted you because you have the expertise in the Hispanic community, I'd like for you to give me an idea of how Capital Metro can announce/promote public meetings, especially if we're planning the largest community meeting in the history of Capital Metro and it will be soon. Give me one idea on how we can bring people from the Hispanic community to attend.

Participant: I would communicate via the parents of schools and talking to the parents at schools. Talking to person to person and in groups; Also offering gifts, foods and goodies.

Participant: I would tell everyone that is convenient for us to listen for our own progress and be well informed and it will also be in our language, which is most important.

Researcher: Okay, the meetings itself would have to be in your language, not translated? Or subtitles?

Participant: I would use the radio, television and street banners and provide food and entertainment for the family. Sometimes we want to go out and we don't have anyone to watch the children.

Researcher: What would you think if there was a public meeting that has child care?

Participants (all): That would be good.

Participant: Try to have the meeting in multiple languages. We want to have it in our language. It is not the same just to have a portion in our language, I would not feel good.

Researcher: Okay. So would want to have a meeting in Spanish, one in Chinese like that?

Participant: No, it would be the same meeting but use simultaneous translation with headsets, like they do in the United Nations. (ONU)

Participant: We can use the children to tell the parents. I prefer to listen to information.
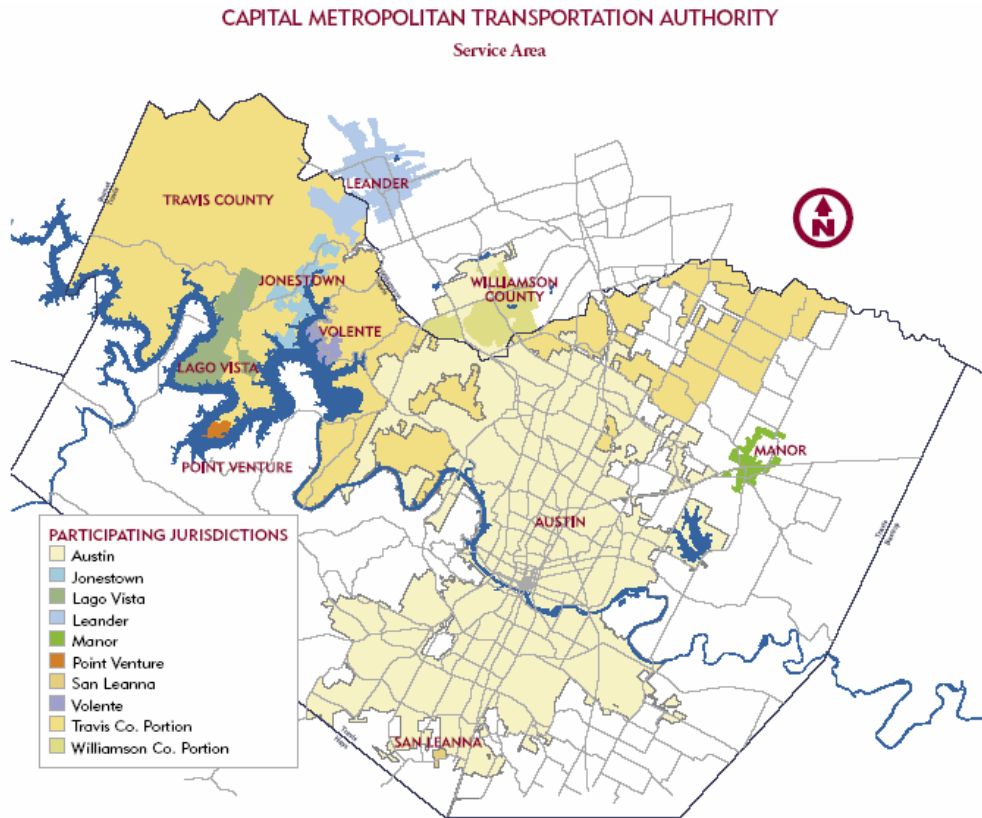
Participant: I would use flyers. I would do door-to-door flyers.

Researcher: I have heard that in the Hispanic community there are some people that cannot read. Many don't admit they cannot read. How can Capital Metro distribute the information without offending those who cannot read.
Participant: Use one-on-one, door-to-door. Use words not written information.

Researcher: Anything else? Well, we have finished this meeting. Thank you.

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Appendix C: Capital Metro Service Area

CAPITAL METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
Service Area

PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS
- Austin
- Jonestown
- Lago Vista
- Leander
- Manor
- Point Venture
- San Leanna
- Volente
- Travis Co. Portion
- Williamson Co. Portion

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