

Press Release

December 13, 2011

Planning is under way to improve access to public transportation for seniors and people with disabilities in the Bexar County-San Antonio Metropolitan area.

The Alamo Area was among 10 communities from the U.S. selected to participate in the Accessible Transportation Coalitions Initiative (ATCI) offered by Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA). Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration, ESPA promotes collaborative efforts between transportation providers and the disability community to increase mobility for all people under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Bexar Area Agency on Aging (BAAA), a department of the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), was the primary applicant for this grant. However, the competitive process required a strong, broad-based commitment to participate from local government, nonprofit and for-profit transit providers as well as consumers and advocates.

Participants came from a cross section of community stakeholders to attend the two-day Alamo Area Accessible Transportation Coalition event facilitated by ESPA staff held on November 15-16 2011. Coalition participants included county and regional governments, transportation providers, transit users, aging and disability advocates, social services agencies, and urban planners. “The event was designed to bring our community together to develop a plan that incrementally strengthens the availability and accessibility of transportation for seniors and people with disabilities,” said Dr. Martha Spinks, BAAA Director. “An important way to do that is through a cross-agency approach that also involves transit users, and we intend to continue coalition efforts and subsequent outreach to seniors and people with disabilities.”

Current plans will focus on improvements in several areas, ranging from a dialysis transportation study to help inform referring physicians, transit providers, and patients of the benefits of using centralized clinics; using ADA right-of-way design and scoping guidelines to encourage improvements for new and replaced sidewalks on arterial and collector streets with bus routes; and developing a subcommittee focusing on the needs of people with disabilities and seniors in underserved areas within Bexar County.

Additional stakeholders will be invited to join established subcommittees to build expertise for problem analysis and solutions. Coalition members are committed to working together for a minimum of one year to implement established accessible transportation improvements.

For more information on the Alamo Area Accessible Transportation Coalitions Initiative (AAATCI), please contact Isa Fernández, the BAAA Mobility Specialist, at 210-362-5227 or isafernandez@aacog.com.