

To: City Council

From: Vivianna Nicole Andres, Assistant to the City Manager

Date: February 25, 2025

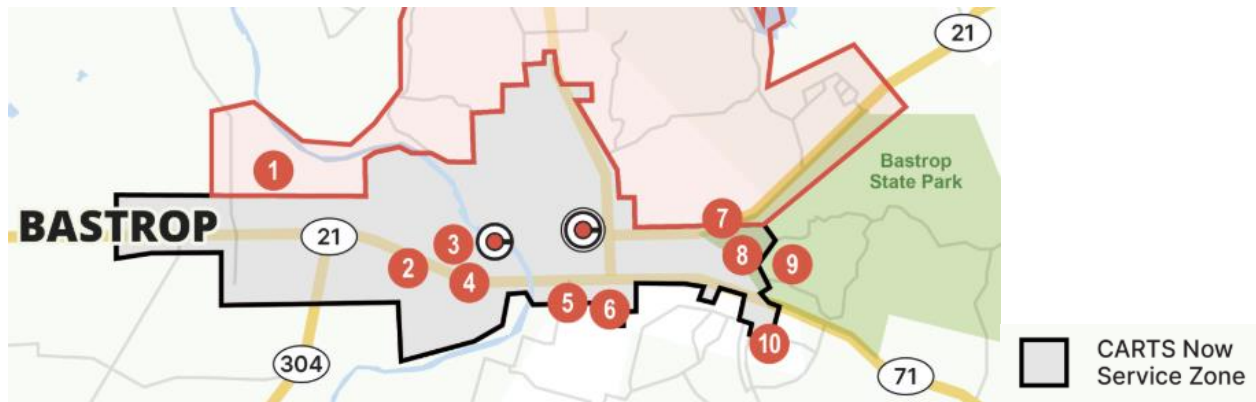
Subject: UPDATE on the Ridesharing Program feasibility for the City of Bastrop



=====

On February 11, 2025 Staff presented to the Council a presentation that discussed the possibility of the City of Bastrop pursuing a Ridesharing Program for its citizens.

To recap, it was discussed that Rideshare is the concept of utilizing private Transportation Network Companies as part of a public transit resource. Rideshare programs can reduce the reliance on buses and other underutilized assets by providing an economical alternative that does not rely on fixed assets, drivers, and insurance. Additionally, a Ridesharing Program is an on-demand interaction between a service provider and a customer seeking to utilize a transit service. It was also noted during the presentation that the City's only available transit system is currently provided through CARTS (Capital Area Rural Transportation System), which provides on average over 100 daily trips. CARTS also offers an on-demand program called CARTS NOW. Still, the program is not accessible to the entire city limits of Bastrop and has limited operating hours (Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.).



After the presentation, the Council requested Staff research the following topics and bring back any additional pertinent information as an update:

1. Are there any other cities similar in size to the City of Bastrop operating a Ridesharing Program?

Staff researched this matter and determined that most of the cities utilizing a Rideshare Program are larger in size and are oftentimes a more urbanized area. This means the City of Bastrop would be one of the first cities of its size to utilize a Ridesharing Program for its residents.

2. What is the current utilization rate of Uber/Lyft within the City of Bastrop?

Staff sent email correspondence to both Uber and Lyft directly, and only Uber was responsive in getting back to Staff. Staff was able to set up a meeting with Uber and obtain the following information:

1. Uber has a rating system of A-C with an “A” rating meaning there is a 90% or above completion rate for trips being requested by customers, a “B” rating is an 80% or above completion rate, and a “C” is an approximately 70% or less completion rate.
2. The City of Bastrop is currently rated at a “B” with Uber (80% completion rate) with a 5–15-minute ETA for customers requesting a ride.
3. Uber was awarded a contract for an RFP issued by the Equalis Group; the RFP by the Equalis Group was issued to select a TNC that could offer its services nationwide through the contract. Because Uber was awarded the nationwide cooperative agreement contract from the Equalis Group, this means the City can enter directly into a Ridesharing Program with Uber (known as Uber for Business) without having to go through the procurement process.
  - a. Cooperative agreements allow state and local governments to access advantageous pricing, save time on procurement processes, and take the place of the governmental body/agency having to issue an RFP and hire a consulting firm.
4. Through this cooperative agreement, the City of Bastrop could set up a voucher campaign with Uber, which would be accessed through Uber's dashboard. This voucher campaign would allow the City to determine the number of vouchers, the subsidy amount per ride, and even certain ride restrictions.
  - a. The city would only pay for the used rides, and Uber would send a monthly bill for the previous month's usage.
  - b. The City could deactivate vouchers anytime and terminate the Uber for Business account with a 30-day notice.
5. The City of Frisco is one of the first cities in Texas to utilize the Uber for Business cooperative agreement. Staff will be meeting with them to obtain their feedback on their experience with the program thus far.

The most crucial issue that Staff is working on understanding is the incorporation of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) into this program option with Uber in order to satisfy ADA and Title II requirements. Staff has spoken with Uber about this concern, and Uber has committed to contacting CARTS to see if a partnership opportunity is available since CARTS has access to WAV.

Staff will follow up with another update to the Council once more information becomes available.