# Overview of Fare Integration for Fort Bend County Downtown Service Options January 30, 2013

## Background

FBC is starting a procurement to purchase a smart card fare collection system. The vendor believes that METRO's Q Card readers will also be able to read FBC's smart cards, but this assumption is not yet verified. The options below assume that FBC has purchased its new system and that interoperability with METRO's Q Card system is possible.

Under the current Fare Collection System, passengers pay two separate fares—a \$1.00 fare on the FBC portion of the trip and a Zone 2 fare on the METRO portion of the trip, which results in a \$3.93 per trip fare with METRO's regular rider discount. Once FBC has installed its smart card fare collection system, passengers would then need two smart cards (one for METRO and one for FBC) under a non-seamless system. The total fare would be the same as it is under the current system.

### Service Option 1 - Current configuration but with seamless fare

To achieve a seamless fare (one fare instrument) for riders of the current service, smart card readers would be needed on all FBC buses used for Uptown and Greenway services. The entire fare would be collected on the FBC buses with their smart cards. Passengers transferring to the 265 West Bellfort would tap their FBC cards and the transfer would then be free.

FBC would need to establish what the total fare for the trip would be. How much of these fares would be allocated to METRO and FBC would require negotiation.

Another option would be to treat the first part of the trip like a local bus trip, wherein a transfer to an upgraded service only requires paying the differential. In that case, \$1.00 would be deducted at the FBC lots when a passenger boards and the difference between Zone 2 and \$1.00 (\$2.25) would be deducted when the transfer made. In this case, the total fare would be \$3.25 per trip.

#### Service Option 2 – Shuttle between FBC lots and a METRO P&R lot

*Service Description* - Service from FBC to downtown would be provided by a transfer between FBC buses and METRO buses at either the 265 West Bellfort or the 262 Westwood P&R lot.

Seamless Fare Collection – Seamless fare collection would require smart card readers on all FBC buses used to provide the shuttle service. Again, fare levels and revenue allocation between METRO and FBC would need to be determined.

# Service Option 3 – Extension of METRO's 262 Westwood P&R route to FBC lots

*Service Description* - Service from FBC to downtown would be operated with METRO buses by extending the 262 Westwood P&R route out to the FBC park and ride lots. No transfer would be needed. This alternative would operate much as the 236 Maxey Road/Baytown service does.

Seamless Fare Collection – Since this service option uses METRO buses which already have Q Card readers, passengers would simply pay with a Q card. The agencies would need to negotiate fare levels and revenue allocation.

# **Option 4 – Service Non-Stop to Downtown from FBC lots with FBC Buses**

*Service Description* - Service from FBC would be provided non-stop from FBC lots to downtown Houston using FBC buses. Since no transfer or interconnection with METRO service is needed, no fare system interoperability is required. FBC would need to establish what fare it would charge from each lot and how it planned to collect the fares.

*Seamless Fare Collection* – FBC would use its own smart card fare collection system to collect fares.

## **Option 5 - Service Non-Stop to Downtown from FBC lots with METRO Buses**

*Service Description* - Service from FBC would be provided non-stop from FBC lots to downtown using METRO buses. This service option is similar to what METRO is proposing to operate from the park and ride lot under construction in Pearland to the Texas Medical Center. No transfer is needed.

Seamless Fare Collection – Since this service option uses METRO buses which already have Q Card readers, passengers would simply pay with a Q card. The agencies would need to negotiate fare levels and revenue allocation.