EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RIDESHARE AUDIT #16-04

The RideShare Program has been operated by vRide, a contracted service provider, for two years. The goal of the program is to reduce the use of single occupant vehicles during peak travel times to reduce congestion and improve air quality. As of January 2016, there were 202 active vanpools operating in and outside the Capital Metro service area, a 21% increase over the prior year.

MANAGEMENT HAS AGREED TO:

- Establish a process by April 1, 2016 to ensure that the correct financial subsidy is paid to each vanpool group.
- Emphasize to all active vanpools quarterly, the importance of keeping their membership rosters updated.
- Reconcile vanpool accidents and incidents reported to both vRide and Capital Metro.
- Collaborate with vRide to create training on the drivers’ responsibilities for preventive maintenance on their assigned vehicle.

OTHER ISSUE NOTED:

- While the Strategic Plan includes three performance measures, there may be better metrics for evaluating the RideShare Program’s success. Associated performance goals have not yet been established.

Are the controls over the financial, ridership and safety functions of the RideShare Program effective and operating as intended?

Financial

- The RideShare service provider’s monthly invoices and the quarterly City of Austin (COA) billings for FY2015 were all properly supported and materially accurate.
- Due to a lack of documentation, Internal Audit was unable to verify whether the subsidies paid for In Service Area/Out of Service Area vanpool operations were correct.

Ridership

- In FY2015, the average vanpool occupancy was 4.69 riders. Vanpool ridership is self-reported by the drivers but is subject to an annual review by an external auditor. Vanpools must have a minimum of five riders and they must commute using the vanpool at least three times a week.

Safety

- Driver Approvals – A judgmental sample of Motor Vehicle Records for all vanpool drivers with “preventable” accidents in FY2015 confirmed that all (30) of the primary and back-up drivers had passed the required initial and bi-annual MVR driving history checks.
- Safety Education – All potential vanpool drivers must view a safety video, pass a safety test and sign a safety pledge as part of their application. Safety education is ongoing. The contractually required bi-annual safety training for all riders was completed in January 2016.
- Accidents, Incidents and Complaints – During FY2015, all accidents, incidents and complaints were investigated and appropriately followed-up on by vRide.
- There were discrepancies between vRide’s and Capital Metro’s records of FY2015 vanpool accidents and incidences; 9/45 (20%) of the accidents were missing from Capital Metro’s Risk Database.
- Vehicle Maintenance and Repair – In 9 of 63 (14.3%) vehicles sampled, there were missing or late preventative maintenance records, most likely resulting from drivers’ confusion regarding their maintenance responsibilities.

Is the current vanpool model financially sustainable?

- Management has the ability to make changes which impact fiscal sustainability, e.g., adjusting financial subsidies and capping the number of vanpools. Like most transit agencies, the RideShare Program budget is not significant, just over 1% of the total FY2016 operating budget. Funding decisions can be guided by performance indicators which are tied to the RideShare Program business objectives.