



SMITHVILLE PLANNING GAME WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

1. Welcome/Introductions/Planning Game Overview – 9:00-9:20
2. Planning Game Workshop – 9:20-10:30
3. Discussion/Wrap Up/Review of Goals – 10:30 -11:00

Overview

- The Planning Game for CATA is a tool to get ideas for transit on paper and quickly understand the costs associated with those ideas.
- The Game is intended for several groups, with 5-8 members of the Coordinating Committee and Strategic Planning Committee per group. Each group will be assigned a facilitator and a recorder.
- The goal of each group is to reach consensus on the design of a transit system that fits within CATA's financial limitations and consider opportunities for a service design that could be put in place with more funding.
- Although ideas generated during this Planning Game may end up in the final plan, the Game's primary objective is to build consensus on how CATA should strike a balance between various competing service design goals and determine priorities for this strategic planning process.

Your Role in the Planning Game

You and your teammates are charged with sketching a *basic weekday network* of transit services in Central Arkansas. You don't have to worry about issues like whether service will run on weekends or the costs associated with complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Resolution of these issues is built-in to the Planning Game assumptions. For now, your goal is to focus on what type of services you think should operate and where they should operate on weekdays.

Resources

You have a limited budget (resources). We assume CATA will continue to provide about 150 hours of service each day, although part of this planning effort is to see how more resources can guarantee future funding levels for transit in Central Arkansas. We assume River Rail will continue to operate as is for now.

The Bus-Day

Contrary to popular belief, the size of the bus is not that important because the biggest part of operating costs is the cost of the driver. For this game we've simplified planning units into a **bus-day**: one bus running approximately 15 hours per weekday, with some (proportionally less) service on weekends. We're going to assume the transit agency currently provides 50 bus days worth of service.

Your Tools

Working with a map, markers, a facilitator and a recorder (using a laptop with a spreadsheet tool installed), you and your team work together to lay out service by drawing lines on a schematic map of the area.

PLANNING TOOLBOX

The Planning Game map shows:

- Major roads (and approximate travel times between intersections, based on average speeds of 12.5 mph for streets and 30 mph for highways, and 45 mph for freeways)
- Population/employment densities
- Major destinations
- CATA facilities

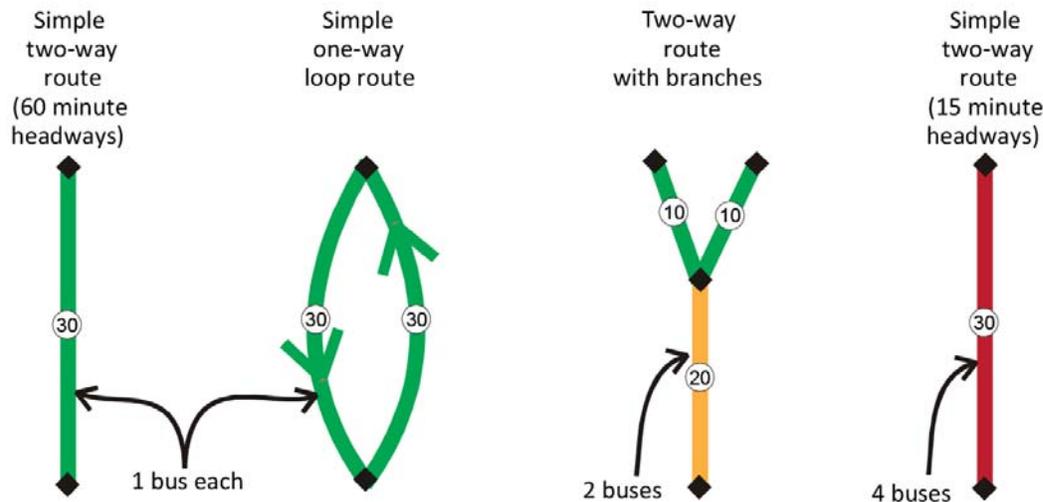
The colored pens you use indicate the frequency of service – that is, how often a bus comes. The numbers on the map show how long it takes to cover each segment of street or freeway. You can draw routes connecting these segments however you like. The cost will be determined by how long the route is (that is, how many minutes it takes to complete) and how frequently you want it to run. Once you draw a route, your recorder will figure out how many bus days you’ve spent, using the table on the next page.

The facilitator and recorder will help you keep track of the routes you define and how much of your budget it takes.

Table 1 Planning Game Service Options and Their Costs

Line Color / Style	Service Level Represented	One Bus day covers:
Red	Every 15 minutes all day	A segment 7.5 minutes long
Orange	Every 30 minutes all day	A segment 15 minutes long
Green	Every 60 minutes all day	A segment 30 minutes long
Blue	Every 90 minutes all day	A segment 45 minutes long
Line with one-way arrow (must form complete loop) 	One-way service	Twice the time covered by two-way service (see above)
Dotted Line (any color) 	Rush hours only at the frequency indicated by the color (see above)	½ the cost of all day service.
Solid Line + Dotted Line Representing The Next Higher Service Level 	Service all day at the lower frequency, plus service during peak hours at the higher frequency	1.5 times the cost of all-day service at the lower frequency.

Examples of how various service alternatives might be represented on the map are shown below:



Things to Think About

The way you use your resources will be based on what you think transit is for, **but members of your group may not all agree on this.** You'll need to work out a balance among group members.

The most difficult balancing act is usually between the goal of **Coverage** (serving everyone in the area) and the goal of **Productivity** (maximizing ridership).

At the end of the workshop, we'll ask you to consider this policy tradeoff in more general terms, and recommend how the transit agency should strike a balance between these competing goals. We'll also ask about how you value intercity service vs. local service, and how you feel about transferring.

You may also want to think about the need for "Park-and-Ride" services, and suggest locations for them. If you run express services to major destinations that are hard to drive to, people will often park near bus stops, even if you don't create an official Park-and-Ride facility. Often, a church or cinema parking lot can be used for this purpose, because these facilities tend not to fill their parking lots during the business day. Perhaps you know of some other location where parking could easily be provided? Otherwise, people will park in the neighborhood surrounding an express stop, unless the city prohibits this.

Finally, you'll find that by making routes connect with each other, you'll be able to take people further and more frequently than if you try to run direct routes from every possible origin to every possible destination. You should assume that these transfers will be timed, so that the delay is only five minutes or so. However, you still have to decide for yourself whether even a timed transfer is too much of a disincentive.

Transit agencies have to strike a balance between competing goals:

Coverage Goal – "Respond to needs"

Spread out service to all parts of the area, even those where ridership will be low, in order to meet the needs of all citizens.

Productivity Goal – "Respond to intense demand"

Concentrate service in the markets where it will carry the most people, thereby getting more cars off the road. This usually means providing no/very limited service to areas where demand is low.