

**MEETING OF THE RTP SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL
TELECONFERENCE PARTICIPATION VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

December 9, 2020

1:30 p.m.

Minutes

Member Attendance:

Primary Member	Present	Alternate	Present
Maureen Crocker, Chair	Yes	Jennifer Ostlind	No
Perri D'Armond, Vice Chair	Yes	Stacy Slawinski	No
Monique Johnson	Yes	Krystal Lastrape	Yes
Ruthanne Haut	Yes	John Powers	No
Clay Forister	No	Karen McKinnon	No
Adam France	Yes	Chris Bogert	No
Christopher Sims	No	Chad Tressler	No
Ricardo Villagrand	Yes	Francisco Carrillo	No
Loyd Smith	Yes	Bryan Brown	Yes
Nick Woolery	No	Frank Simoneaux	No
Yancy Scott	Yes	Bobby Pennington	No
Charles Airiohuodion	Yes	Jeffrey English	Yes
Lisa Collins	No	Scott Ayres	Yes
Alberto Lyne	No	Priya Zachariah	Yes
Ken Fickes	No	Vernon Chambers	Yes
Harrison Humphrey	Yes	Stephanie Thomas	No
Jonathan Brooks	Yes	Bakeyah Nelson	No
Elijah Williams	Yes	Irma Sanchez	No
Bruce Mann	Yes	Rohit Saxena	No
Roger Rees	No	Brett Milutin	No
Janis Scott	Yes	Paulette Wagner	No
John Tyler	No	VACANT	-
Bill Zrioka	Yes	David Leslie	No

Others Present:

Andrew Mao, Michelle Canton, Jim Dickinson, David Fink, Ben Finley, Stephan Gage, hixin Gao, Brandy George, Thomas Gray, Donte Green, Veronica Green, Sandra Holliday, Allie Isabell, Susan Jaworski, Ayo Jibowu, Sharon Ju, Megan Kennison, Neely Kim, Justin Kuzila, Vishu Lingala, Carlos Lugo, Patrick Mandapaka, Deborah Mayfield, Sharon Moses-Burnside, Carlene Mullins, Karen Owen, Patrick Gant, Kathryn Vo, Veronica Waller, Gilbert Washington, Christopher Whaley

Staff Participating:

Adam Beckom and Mike Burns

1. Call to Order
Maureen C called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Mike B read a statement of how the meeting would be conducted via remote participation and the ground rules for any discussion.

Mike B conducted the roll call for attendance and confirmed a quorum was present.

Maureen C confirmed a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Maureen C asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting.

Jonathan B made a motion, seconded by Janis S, to accept the minutes.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion of Requested RTP Amendments:

a. Hempstead Highway

James Koch of TxDOT provided an update on the proposed Hempstead Corridor project and next steps as part of a series of future presentations to discuss projects requested to be amended into the Regional Transportation Plan. Originally, the Hempstead project was part of the 290 FEIS and included managed lanes and tolls from SH99 to I-610. Level of service along Hempstead was at 'D' with a projected level of service of 'F'. HCTRA rescinded toll road concept. US290 was reconstructed with HOV/HOT lanes and without improvements to Hempstead Road. The Texas Central High Speed Rail project proposed straddling Union Pacific Railroad and Hempstead Road. Current evaluation preserves the original managed lane concept between SH99 and Beltway 8, and proposes new concepts between Beltway 8 and I-610 to reduce right of way impacts, preserve tax base, and consider existing and future transit operations. Original FEIS typical section included 100' Union Pacific right of way, 50' high speed rail right of way within the 100' Hempstead Road right of way, and required an additional 124' of right of way for elevated toll, HOV lanes, and frontage road lanes. The proposed inner Hempstead with transit component concept includes the 100' Union Pacific right of way, 100' Hempstead right of way with express lanes staked on transit and frontage lanes in the corridor, 50' elevated high speed rail corridor straddling the Union Pacific and Hempstead rights of way, and an additional 30' right of way for the Hempstead corridor, which is 25% of the original right of way requirements described in the FEIS. The proposed inner Hempstead with additional frontage lanes concept includes same right of way without dedicated transit lanes and with additional frontage lanes. Feedback was requested on needs and constraints.

Priya Z mentioned MetroNext's proposed service expansions in the 290 corridor and would consider potential use of the Hempstead corridor to improve mobility options and efficiency of transit operations.

James K responded that the typical section includes elevated high speed rail and potential elevation of Hempstead express lanes, which would need to cross near the Northwest Mall high speed rail end of line station. If a parking facility was included at the Mall location, it could be developed into a multimodal center to accommodate transfers between high speed rail, Metro, and other services.

Maureen C asked about the process and opportunity to review alternatives.

James K responded that this current effort is collecting and evaluating constraints, impacts of elevated facilities, and identifying other constraints and opportunities.

Jonathan B asked about the outer section between SH 99 and Beltway 8.

James K responded that section only included express lanes as described in the FEIS.

Jonathan B had concerns with stormwater runoff and supports adding to Regional Transportation Plan if it includes fully developing and evaluating alternatives to accommodate all modes.

James K responded that Hempstead was originally developed as a rural highway and challenges include railroad crossings, adding turn lanes, and improving overall traffic flow.

Brian B mentioned that the current corridor was designed for different era. It doesn't accommodate current demand for access or through movement. And suggested safety improvements in the short term.

Maureen C would like an alternative developed that did add another high speed corridor next to 290. And asked if TxDOT will be doing more planning activities or will be pursuing environmental review.

James K responded that TxDOT will pursue a public outreach strategy to review alternatives, including original FEIS concept. The HOV lanes originally proposed for Hempstead were included as part of the 290 corridor, which reduced capacity of the corridor. Alternatives should accommodate future demand, including Metro operations. Maureen C asked about integration with I-610W and accommodating truck traffic.

James K responded that the original FEIS concept is in the RTP and includes a toll road that connected with I-610W. The current proposal changes the concept to include a series of elevated regional express lanes within a "box" network of I-10, I-610, and I-69 to accommodate more efficient movement of freight and transit for the region over the next 20 to 30 years.

Maureen C mentioned that the "box" concept will be the base for regional network and that vision and the repercussions of it have not been discussed, and appreciates the presentation and insight on the vision and how it would work.

Jonathan B mentioned that there is changing behavior from COVID-19 and that the FEIS is outdated and this new effort should be based on new modeling of current behavior.

James K responded that TxDOT is reaching out to understand what people want to see and avoid developing the concept in a vacuum. This is an opportunity to look at the corridor again and noted that the HOV lane on 290 is reversible and can change to accommodate demand, which would impact Metro operations. Hempstead could address Metro operational concerns and improve access to abutting land uses. And mentioned the "box" concept improves access to existing major activity centers in the region.

Maureen C noted the City of Houston supports dedicated transit lanes, even if they are grade separated, as they align with High Capacity Transit goals. Glad TxDOT is incorporating it.

Mike B noted that there will be another presentation in January.

Patrick M noted that feedback from the presentation would be summarized to clarify need and purpose for the proposed amendment and presented at the next meeting. Additional considerations could be suggested for TxDOT to incorporate into their evaluations.

Maureen C mentioned that the toll/non-toll was briefly discussed and current best practice in congestion management is to include pricing as a tool. Removing tolling would constrain options available for congestion management.

James K responded that local governments could provide support for tolling to their representatives at the state legislature.

Adam B mentioned that public comment is on-going for this and other requested amendments, and feedback will be shared at future meetings.

Loyd S mentioned Hempstead is divided into two sections and have two different impacts. Inside the Beltway is a reconstruction project, and outside the Beltway is more of a greenfield-type project. The different impacts should be considered.

No action was taken

4. Regional Transportation Plan Amendment Process

Adam B presented the proposed process for future amendments to the RTP. A three-pronged approach included administrative modifications, level 1 amendments, and level 2 amendments. Administrative modifications are minor and includes clarification of project description, limit changes, cost changes less than 25% or \$5M (whichever is less), and these would be presented to TAC/TPC the following month. Level 1 amendments require TPC approval and includes changes to RTP document language or to projects that do not affect conformity and are either currently in the RTP or add projects that are formula-funded transit, federal grant projects, or project funded through TPC call for projects. Level 2 amendments require TPC approval and includes existing or projects that impact air quality conformity determination. Level 2 project sponsors will need to provide project description details for conformity process. Level 2 amendments would start conformity 18 months after latest determination and take about 6-9 months for H-GAC to conduct conformity determination and public outreach.

Loyd S asked if ferry funds would be included in the level 1 amendment as FTA or FHWA formula funds.

Adam B agreed that should be clarified and included.

Maureen C asked if an inadequate funding ceiling ever impacts an amendment.

Adam B responded that there is a limit to available funds and an illustrative list is being created that would include projects not included in the RTP funding schedule.

Charles A asked if level 1 amendments would include projects that are not subject to conformity.

Adam B responded that projects not subject to conformity are included in level 1.

Loyd S suggested projects eligible for formula funding be included RTP to avoid the amendment process.

Adam B agreed. And noted that next steps include a larger update to the Public Participation Plan to include this RTP amendment process in that document.

No action was taken.

5. Announcements

- Next RTP Subcommittee Meeting – January 13, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. (Teleconference)

Maureen C mentioned the next meeting date and requested that the next TxDOT project be included on the agenda to ensure participation by interested members.

Harrison H asked if the Congestion Management Process would be presented at the next meeting to submit comments.

Mike B mentioned it would be added to the next agenda to provide opportunity to comment on the draft document before the February TPC meeting.

Patrick M confirmed TPC action on the CMP in February.

Maureen C suggested the CMP should be added to the TAC agenda in January and the RTP Subcommittee should only include an item for comments or questions in January.

6. Adjourn

Maureen C declared the meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Mike Burns