Regional Transit Coordination (RTC) Subcommittee Houston-Galveston Area Council Online Meeting/Conference Call Thursday, October 10, 2024 9:30-11:00 AM

Agenda

- 1. Introductions and Certification of Quorum (9) De'Andre Guin, City of Conroe, Chair
- 2. Public Comments
- 3. Action Items:
 - 3.1 Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2024
- 4. Information Items: (10 minutes or less each)
 - 4.1 Coordinated Planning
 - 4.1a Regional Transit Connectivity Update Reggie Brown, METRO
 - 4.2 Other Efforts
 - 4.2a New Fort Bend Transit Services Perri D'Armond, Fort Bend Transit
 - 4.2b Bay Area Ped/Bike Study Susan Jaworski, H-GAC
 - 4.2c US 90A Transit Corridor Study Update Thomas Gray, H-GAC
- 5. Transit and Human Service Agency Reports (5 minutes or less each)

REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 15, 2024 – 9:30-11:00am Houston-Galveston Area Council Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ruthanne Haut (Chair) – The Woodlands Township Brian Jackson-Taylor – City of Missouri City Melanie Beaman – City of Sugar Land Eleni Pappas – City of Houston Philip Salerno – Greater Inwood SN Ashley Newell – Mounting Horizons, Inc. Miriam Guzman – Community Health Network Perri D'Armond – Fort Bend County Transit Vernon Chambers – Harris County Transit James Oliver – City of Galveston/Island Transit

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Danielle Fain – City of Missouri City Angel Ponce – City of Houston Nicole Mathews – The Woodlands Township Kaitlyn Mack – Brazos Transit District Marcus Alexander – Gulf Coast Transit District

OTHERS PRESENT

Travis Madison – TxDOT Nancy Peron – TxDOT Carolina Lopez-Herrera - TxDOT Brenda Bustillos – TxDOT Bul Mabil – TxDOT Muxian Fang - METRO

H-GAC STAFF PRESENT

Thomas Gray Chris Whaley Alan Rodenstein Robyn Egbert Ayo Jibowu Lucinda Martinez Diane Domagas

BRIEFING

Overview

This meeting was rescheduled from July 11, 2024, due to the aftereffects of Hurricane Beryl. RTCS Members and Alternates met virtually by teleconference. At this regular meeting, the Subcommittee elected a new Chair and Vice-Chair. The Subcommittee then received presentations regarding Subcommittee purpose and duties, a status report on transit projects listed in the current UPWP, the recent Paratransit/Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Provider Summit, Commute Solutions and Ozone Action Month, and the H-GAC Language Access Plan.

INTRODUCTIONS AND CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM

ITEM 1 – Ruthanne Haut, Chair, The Woodlands Township, convened the meeting at 9:32 AM. Roll was called by H-GAC staff and a quorum was certified.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ITEM 2 – There were no public comments presented to the Subcommittee.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3.1 – Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of April 11, 2024

Ms. Haut requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2024 meeting of the Subcommittee.

Action Item Motion: moved by Perri D'Armond, seconded by James Oliver. Action Item approved.

ITEM 3.2 – Election of Subcommittee Officers

Ms. Haut, who had reached her maximum of two one-year terms as Chair, presented her slate of suggested Subcommittee Officers, which included nominations of De'Andre Guin for Chair and James Oliver for Vice-Chair. Ms. Haut asked for either a motion on her slate or nomination of alternative candidates.

Action Item Motion: moved by Perri D'Armond to accept Ms. Haut's slate and elect De'Andre Guin as Chair and James Oliver as Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee. seconded by Vernon Chambers. Action Item approved.

Because Mr. Guin was not in attendance, Ms. Haut yielded direction of the Subcommittee meeting to Mr. Oliver.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 4.1a – Review of Subcommittee Purpose and Duties – Thomas Gray, H-GAC

Mr. Gray explained the purpose and duties of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee, which included duties common to all TAC Subcommittees as well as duties specific to the RTCS. He also discussed the various transit planning activities and responsibilities being undertaken by H-GAC staff.

James Oliver mentioned new program standards regarding 5307, 5310, and 5339 FTA grants that could effect H-GAC's TIP process.

ITEM 4.2a – UPWP Transit Projects Status Report – Thomas Gray, H-GAC

Mr. Gray provided the Subcommittee with an update on transit projects in the 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which will expire at the end of September. Of the transit projects in the UPWP, eight are ongoing or being implemented, three are still in the predevelopment stage, one has been completed and two have not yet started. Projects that have not yet been completed will be rolled over into the 2025 UPWP.

There were no questions or comments from the Subcommittee.

ITEM 4.2b - Paratransit/NEMT Provider Summit Recap - Alan Rodenstein, H-GAC

Mr. Rodenstein presented a recap of the Paratransit and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Provider Summit that was held at H-GAC on June 25, 2024. Approximately 35 people were in attendance, including representatives from transit agencies, local advocates and other transportation providers. The Summit included small group discussions as well as a panel featuring representatives from METRO, Harris County Transit, TxDOT and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. Key takeaways included ongoing staffing issues being experienced by providers, demand for trips continuing to outpace supply, the ongoing need for better rider information/education and potential benefits from ongoing networking and peer-to-peer opportunities. H-GAC staff will seek future opportunities to bring paratransit and NEMT providers together.

James Oliver suggested reaching out to the Texas Transit Association regarding their efforts related to paratransit/NEMT coordination and training.

ITEM 4.2c - Commute Solutions/Ozone Action Month Update - Robyn Egbert

Ms. Egbert provided the Subcommittee with a preview of events planned for Commute Solutions Month in September. Historically, September is one of the worst months for ozone levels in the Gulf Coast region; a "Breathe Easy" campaign will occur that is designed to bring awareness to the region on how residents can lower their ozone emissions during the month of September. Furthermore, there will a "Free Fare Fridays" marketing partnership with The Woodlands Express,

Conroe Connection, Harris County Transit, and Fort Bend Transit whereby riders can ride for free on selected routes on Fridays. Ms. Egbert encouraged Subcommittee members to spread the word about Commute Solutions Month.

Ashley Newell asked if the Commute Solutions outreach effort included local businesses. Ms. Egbert responded in the affirmative.

ITEM 4.2d – H-GAC Language Access Plan – Ayo Jibowu, H-GAC

Mr. Jibowu presented the Subcommittee with an update on the H-GAC Language Access Plan (LAP). He explained that, of the 7.1 million residents in the H-GAC region, more than 1.2 million are identified as Limited in English Proficiency (LEP). Language barriers restrict access to public services and benefits and vital information and prevent meaningful participation in H-GAC programs and activities. The LAP contains policies and procedures to facilitate meaningful access for stakeholders with LEP. The LAP is expected to be adopted in September 2024.

Ashley Newell noted that many of the issues Mr. Jibowu shared are very similar to those her organization experiences when working with the disability community and other marginalized groups, including a high rate of adults in the region who are functionally illiterate even though they are native English speakers. She asked about partnership opportunities with local groups. Mr. Jibowu responded that creating partnerships is one of H-GAC staff's goals and that he will follow up with her.

AGENCY REPORTS

Item 5 – Transit and Human Service Agency Reports

Chris Whaley of H-GAC provided an update on performance measures evaluation. The current performance period has ended and H-GAC staff is considering the use of National Transit Database (NTD) data in future reporting and target-setting.

James Oliver asked if every agency in the region does an NTD report. Thomas Gray responded in the affirmative. Perri D'Armond suggested getting a group together to discus NTD data and how the region can more efficiently use it. Ruthanne Haut agreed, noting small changes in NTD reporting requirements. James Oliver offered to participate as well.

Thomas Gray of H-GAC provided the results of the regional transit ridership survey through the second quarter of 2024. Regional fixed-route ridership through the first six months of 2024 is 11% higher than the same period in 2023 but only 87% of ridership during the same period in 2019. He thanked providers for their prompt response to the quarterly survey.

Perri D'Armond of Fort Bend Transit announced that she was recently elected to the Texas Transit Association Board of Directors and encouraged Subcommittee members to reach out to her if she can be helpful. She reported that TxDOT funds are now being used for new service to the Needville community south of Rosenberg; the funding should last for two years. She also reported that ridership on FBT's new commuter service to downtown has been very strong (250-300 riders/day), and suggested more regionwide marketing for P&R.

Ruthanne Haut of The Woodlands Township is researching AI and transit as part of a management class she is taking; she needs to do a survey as part of her classwork and asked if the region's transportation providers could assist her. Thomas Gray said he would distribute the survey to the region's transit providers on her behalf.

Muxian Fang of METRO provided an update on commuter services to the West Bellfort P&R and said she would be happy to work with FBT to boost ridership in region.

Travis Madison of TxDOT announced that Statewide Active Transportation Plan and Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan meetings would occur in Houston in October. Brenda Bustillos provided links to both planning efforts in the meeting chat.

Ashley Newell of Mounting Horizons said her organization was negotiating with transportation providers and is no longer providing service directly.

James Oliver announced that he was a member of the TxDOT PTAC committee and would be happy to take any concerns from the Subcommittee to TxDOT on their behalf.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Oliver adjourned the meeting at 10:51 AM.

Next RTCS Meeting - 9:30 AM on Thursday, October 10, 2024



Project Components

- Mobile Ticketing
 - Harris County and Fort Bend County Transit live since September 2023
 - Additional integrations suspended until new fare system goes live
- Regional Data Management
 - Partners are combining their GTFS schedules and alerts in METRO's system allowing coordinated trip planning in the region
 - Harris County and Fort Bend County feeds are available in Google
 - Will be reaching out to other agencies for updates
- Automated Fare Collection System
 - Centrally managed system that will allow Partners to consolidate fare structures and manage customer accounts
 - Equipment upgrades planned include validators, TVMs and fareboxes



Regional Assessment and Planning

- Completed preliminary partner assessments and provided feedback in 2023
- All agencies expressed general interest in the regional program
- Funding was approved to support the integration of the system backbone and vehicle validators
- Need to conduct follow-up meetings with each agency to confirm current position and identify future considerations
- Need to discuss a partner integration strategy and maintenance and support model with INIT



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Fare Collection System

Current Status:

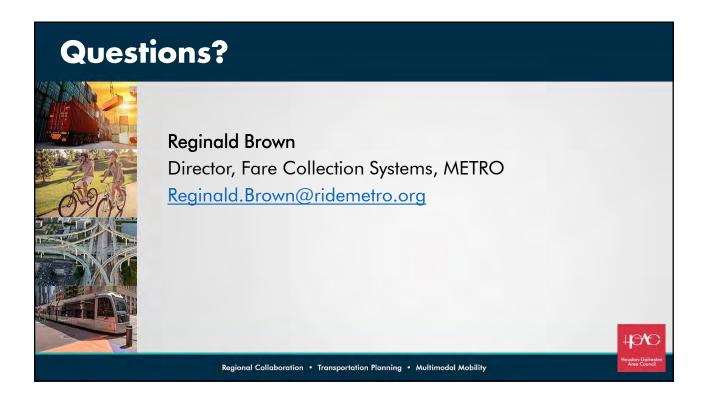
- Completed design of backend software and equipment
- Completed installation of validators on METRO's (1192) fixed route buses
- Currently installing METROLift and curb2curb fleets approx. 40% complete
- Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) manufactured. Integration testing Q4-2024. Installation planning underway.
- Fareboxes and software design and manufacturing nearly complete. Delivery has begun, installation scheduled to begin late 2024
- Q Card media replacement design complete (RideMETRO card). Planning for printing and proofs. Planning retail network implementation
- Preparing for System Integration Testing and Pilot testing in early 2025



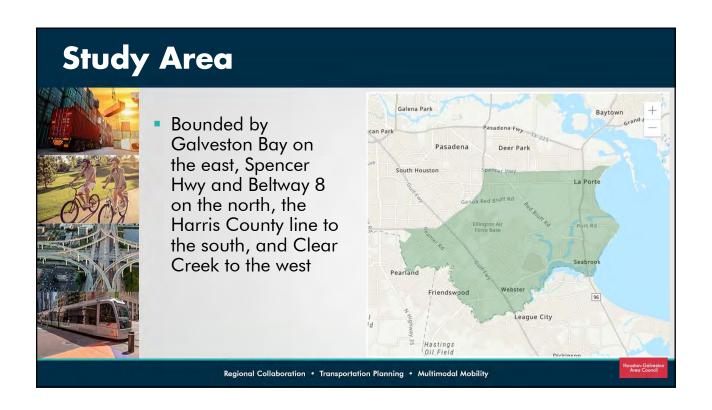
Next Steps

- Short Term
 - Complete development and integration testing of the system and METRO go-live
- Mid Term
 - Formalize strategy to integrate regional partners into desired system components
 - Regional Data Management
 - Mobile Ticketing
 - Automated Fare Collection
 - Revisit MOU and ILAs between METRO and regional partners
 - Recommend a maintenance and support strategy for partners and INIT
 - Purchase, install and integrate bus validators for partners (requires infrastructure for network communications and backend integration)
- Long Term
 - Reassess need for additional equipment (TVM and fareboxes) after the initial rollout
 - Assess feasibility and desire for a regional fare



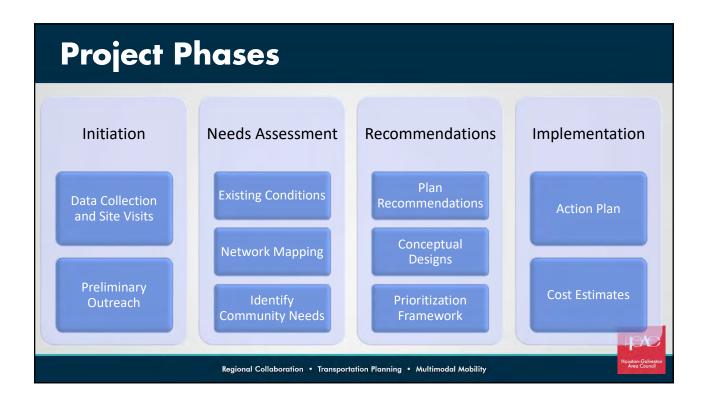


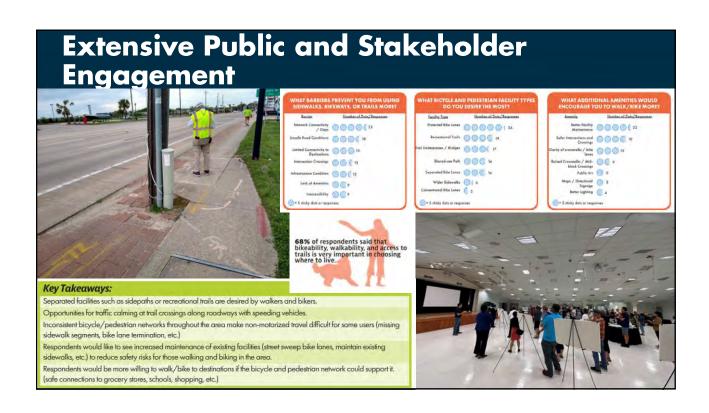




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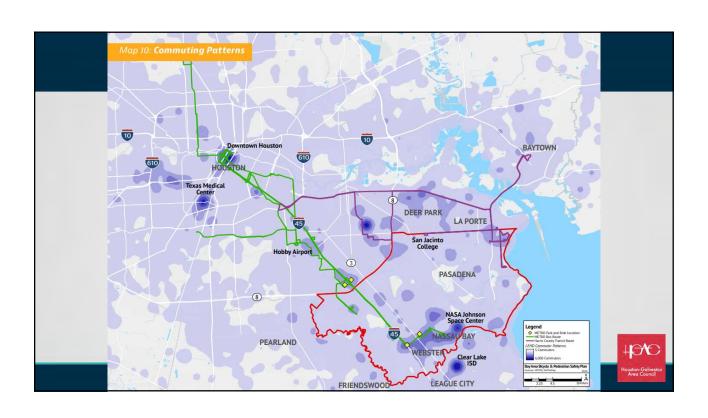
Existing Conditions



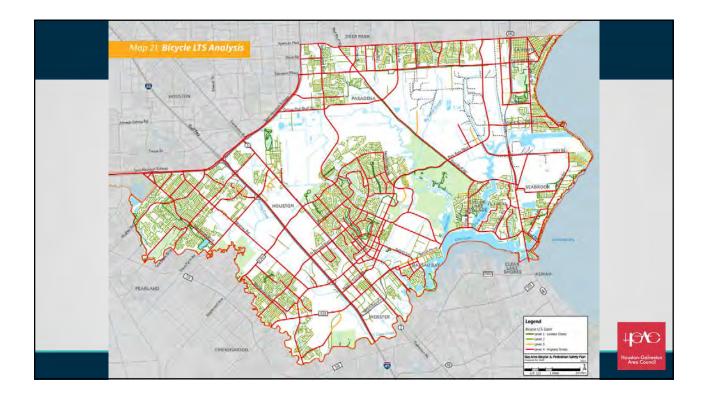
- Plan and Policy Review
- Demographics
- Land Use and Transportation
- Current Active Transportation Use (REPLICA data)
- Crash Analysis
- Walk Audits

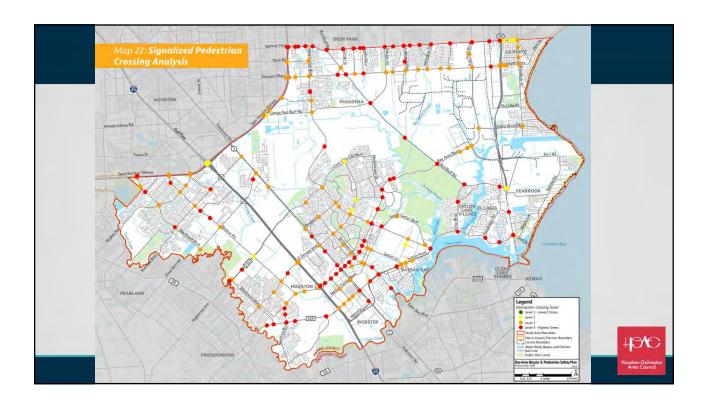
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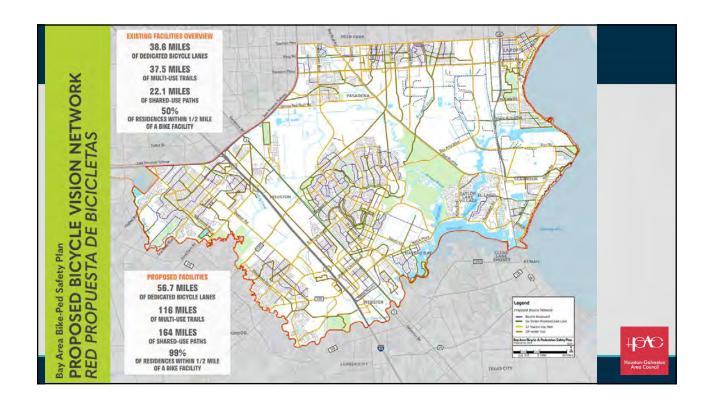


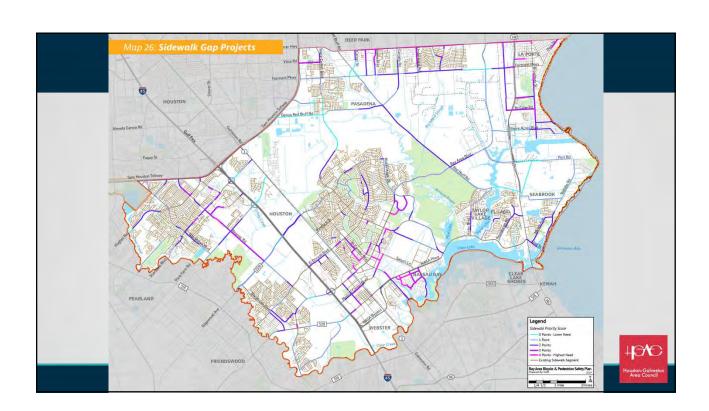
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Infrastructure Improvements Mobility Toolbox Bicycle Vision Map Sidewalk Gap Projects Top Crash Locations, Intersection, On and Off Street Projects Program and Policy Opportunities Trail Oriented Development End of Trip Facilities Design Manual Maintenance and Operations Complete Streets Educational Opportunities





Prioritization

- Safety
 - Does this project address a high crash corridor or intersection?
- Connectivity
 - Does this project close a gap in the existing network?
 - Does it provide access to school/park/local destination?
 - Does this project serve a high-volume, short-trip zone?
- Feasibility
 - Ease of project construction? Right-of-way requirements?
- Community
 - Does this project serve an area identified as having concentrations of vulnerable populations?
 - Does this project address a location identified by public?
- Health
 - Would implementation of this project improve health outcomes for the community?



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For More Information



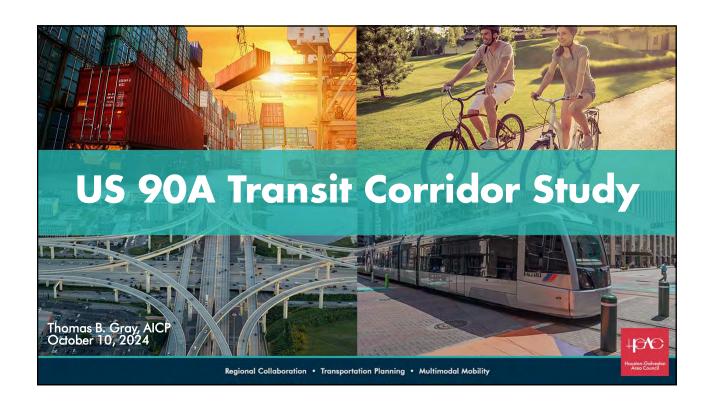
H-GAC Project Manager Chris Whaley

Christopher.Whaley@h-gac.com

Harris County Precinct 2 Jorge Bustamante, P.E.

Jorge.Bustamante@pct2.hctx.net





Study Background



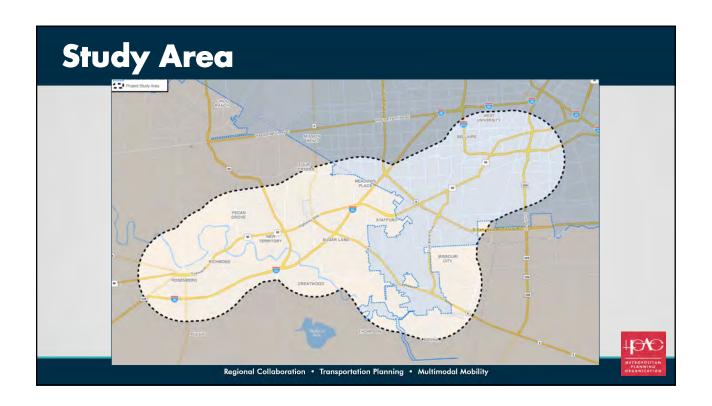
- US 90A corridor connects Fort Bend County with Texas Medical Center
- Corridor has been studied extensively in the past, with much focus on commuter rail using UP Glidden Subdivision parallel to US 90A
- Union Pacific has ruled out implementation of commuter rail on their right-of-way
- Recent legislation allows GCRD to consider technologies other than commuter rail



Study Goals

- Identify one or more high-capacity transit alternative(s) for the US 90A corridor that is technologically and economically feasible and could have significant benefits to mobility with the region.
- Alternative(s) can then by advanced by GCRD into more detailed study and analysis, with an eye towards implementation.





Existing Conditions

Demographics & Land Use

- 696,000 residents
- Generally balanced in ethnic representation
- ■399,000 jobs
- 249,000 households (93% with 1+ vehicles/household)
- Spread of suburban and rural communities
- Primarily residential (35%) and vacant/developable land (27%)

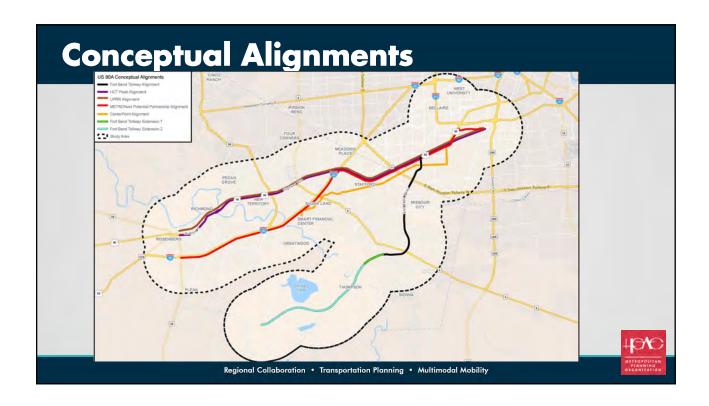
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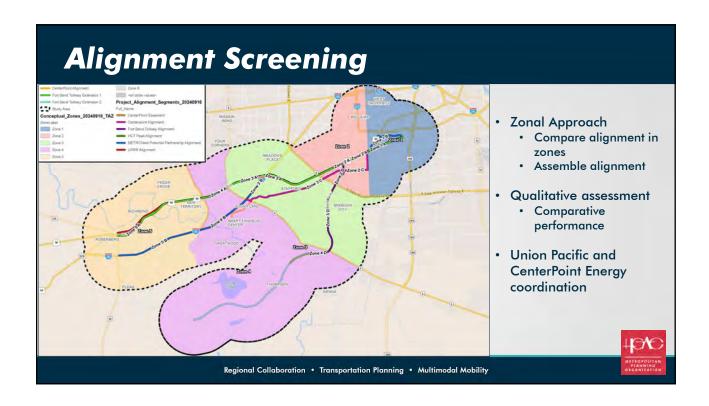
Existing Conditions

Study Area Mobility

- 3/4 of daily trips Texas Medical Center, downtown Houston, Westchase District
- 1/4 of daily trips Uptown Galleria and Greenway Plaza
- Transit provided by Houston METRO and Fort Bend Transit
- IH69/US59 and Sam Houston Tollway have 100,000+ vehicles daily
- Average daily traffic varies significantly across different segments of US 90A
- Roadway geometry varies most along US 90A (2 to 4 lanes in each direction) while IH69/US59 has a consistent profile as 8-lane divided highway - four in each direction



Population o	& Em	ployr	nent l	Proje	ction	15	
Commant		Populatio	n	Jobs			
Segment	Existing	2045	% Growth	Existing	2045	% Growth	
US 90A: Fannin South to IH 69/ UPRR	71,734	139,225	94%	71,037	92,973	31%	
US 90A: IH 69 to Rosenberg/ UPRR	81,464	117,751	45%	59,557	71,621	20%	
IH 69: US 90A to Rosenberg	68,211	100,409	47%	36,817	54,530	48%	
Fort Bend Toll Road: Existing	47,199	77,835	65%	5,680	12,500	120%	
Fort Bend Toll Road: Extension	23,531	148,192	530%	2,589	11,802	356%	
Source: H-GAC Regional Growth Fore	cast, 2018					# a c	
Reş	gional Collaboration	Transportation	Planning • Multimode	al Mobility		HETROPOLITAN FLANNING ORGANIZATION	



Quantitative Criteria	Performance Measure				
Segment Length	Miles of alignment in each zone				
Environmental Constraints	Percentage of the segment is within the 100-year floodplain or wetland area				
	Number of hazardous material (TCEQ LPSTs and Superfund) sites within 0.1 miles of the segment (#/mile)				
Sensitive Receptors	Number of sites qualifying for protection (schools, medical facilities, places of worship, and identified cultural resources) within 0.1 miles of the segment (#/mile)				
	Existing and projected population density within 2-mile buffer (people/mile)				
Ridership Potential	Existing and projected employment density within 2-mile buffer (jobs/mile)				
Qualitative Criteria					
Right-of-Way (ROW) Availability	Availability, usability, and cost of potential right-of-way				
Stakeholder Support	Feedback/support from community and agencies.				

	HCT Peak (US 90A) 1 (mi) 27.8 miles.		Union Pacific Rail Road 27 miles		METRONext Potential Partnership (US 90A to IH 69) 28.5 miles		CenterPoint (CenterPoint Easement to IH 69) 28.4 miles		Fort Bend Tollway (US 90A to Fort Bend Tollway)	
Length (mi)									25,6 miles	
	Score	Description	Score	Description	Score	Description	Score	Description	Score	Description
Environmental Factors	•	2.9 mites in 100-year floodplain; high numer of inazardous material and protested sites, particularly in Segment 5	0	1.5 miles in 100-year floodplain; high numer of hazardous material and protected sites	0	8 miles in 100-year floodplain; high number of hazardous material sites and moderate number of protected sites	•	2.1 m les in 100-year floodplain; moderate number of hazardous material sites and minimal number of protected sites	0	5.1 miles in 100-year floodplain, minimal hazardous material sites and no protected sites
Ridership Potential	0	Stronger population and employment density in eastern segments-	•	Stronger population and employment density in eastern segments	0	Stronger population and employment density in eastern segments	٠	Lower existing and future employment density than other alignments	•	Lowest existing and future population and employment density
Right-of-Way (ROW) Availability	0	Entire alignment location along US 90A (TXDOT) ROW with pinchpoints in Segment 5	0	Nearty entire alignment is located along Union Pacific Rail Road ROW with pinchpoint in Segment 5		Majority of alignment is located along IH 69 (TxDOT) ROW	0	Alignment is split between CenterPoint ROW and IH 69 (TXDOT) ROW	9	Majority of alignment is located along Fort Bend Tallway (Fort Bend County Toli Road Authority)
Stakeholder Support	0		Ō		٥		0		0	
Rank										

Mode	Description	Station Spacing	Vehicle Capacity (seated/standing)	Capital Cost (per mile)	O&M Cost (per hour)
Commuter Rail		2-5 miles	100/225	\$10M (assumes use of UPRR track)	\$250-\$300
Light Rail Transit (LRT)		0.25-1 mile	72/148	\$120-\$180M	\$250-\$300
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)		0.25-1 mile	60/60	\$25-\$65M	\$100-\$150
Commuter Bus		0.25-0.50 mile	50/30	\$600-800k (per vehicle)	\$150-\$250

Operating Scenarios

- Commuter Service
 - Stops every 3-5 miles
 - Faster travel time
 - Limited benefits along alignment
- Express Service
 - Stops every 2-3 miles
 - Slower travel times
 - Serves more people and connections





- Operating costs dependent on
 - Travel time
 - Number of vehicles
 - Vehicle maintenance/type
 - Layover and deadhead



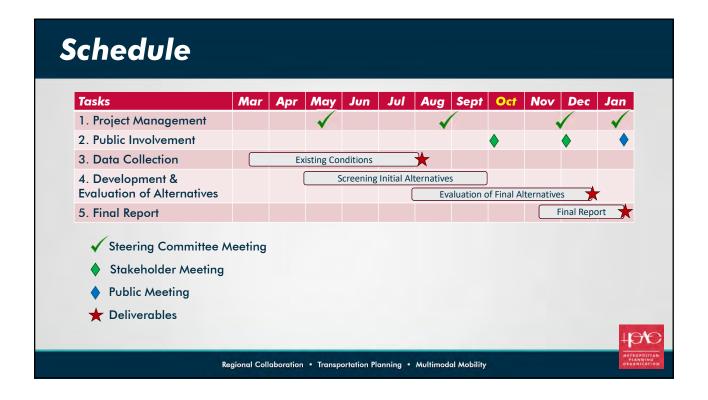
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Key Issues

- Participation by Union Pacific Railroad and CenterPoint Energy
- Connection to METRO service
 - Interlining METRORail Red Line track capacity
 - Transferring Platform and vehicle capacity
 - Route extension Alternative alignment into TMC
- Right-of-way impacts
- Service Concepts Commuter v. Express







2025 RTCS Meeting Dates

January 9
April 10
July 10
October 9

All meetings begin at 9:30 am