

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Subcommittee
Call for Projects Workshop I**
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Wednesday March 9, 2022
1:00 PM

AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
2. **Call for Project Development Update (contd.)**
Staff will highlight the 2022 TIP\RTP amendment schedule and highlight critical deadlines for amendment requests
3. **Rural Funding Allocation**
Staff will seek the recommendation on the Rural Funding Allocation and present the final elements of the next call for projects.
4. **Comments and Discussion.**
Open comment and discussion from workshop participants.
5. **Announcements**
 - TAC Meeting – March 16, 2022, 9:30 a.m., Teleconference (Zoom)
 - TIP Call for Projects Workshop II – March 17, 2022, 1:00 pm. In person
 - TIP Public Meeting – March 22, 2022, 2:00 pm. And 5:30pm (Virtual)
 - TIP Call for Projects Workshop III – March 24, 2022, 1:00 pm. In person
 - TPC Meeting – March 25, 2022, 9:30 a.m., Teleconference (Zoom)
 - Call for Projects Workshop IV – March 31, 2022, 1:00 pm. In person
 - TIP Subcommittee Meeting – April 6, 2022, 1:30 p.m., Teleconference (Zoom)
6. **Adjourn**

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE

CALL FOR PROJECTS WORKSHOP I

Wednesday, March 9, 2022 – 1:00pm
Houston-Galveston Area Council
In-Person Meeting

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Veronica Chapa-Gorczyński – East End District	Jonathan Brooks – LINK Houston
Billy Combs – Chambers County	Natalie G. Lopez – Chambers County
Frank Simoneaux – City of Baytown	David Wurdlow – City of Houston-PW
Loyd Smith – Harris County	Catherine McCreight – TxDOT-HOU
Monique Johnson – City of Sugarland	Alan Clark – METRO
Robert Upton PE – City of Pearland	Scott Ayres – TxDOT-BMT
Shashi Kumar – City of Missouri City	Andy Mao – TxDOT-HOU
Stacy Slawinski – Fort Bend County	Bruce Mann – Port Houston
Veronica Davis – City of Houston-PW	Michael Shannon – Galveston County
Mike Wilson – Port Freeport	Zachary Vogler – Chambers County
Robert Winiecke – City of Galveston	

Item 1: Introductions

The workshop began with personal introductions by the participants and general instructions by the Chair, Veronica Chapa-Gorczyński on procedures and expectations for workshop participants and the floor observers.

Item 2: Call for Projects Update (contd.)

Vishu Lingala continued his presentation on planning factors from the March 2, 2022 TIP subcommittee meeting.

- (1) Environmental\Ecological planning factors assess impact to natural and cultural resources (floodplains\wetlands and archeological\historical sites).
 - (a) Applicable only to added capacity projects and projects in the major investment category.
 - (b) A priority in the TPC guidance and must be included in the criteria.
- (2) Multi-Modal Accommodations.
 - (a) Applicable to freeways and to non-freeway s (bike\ped and transit improvements)
 - (b) One of the TPC recommended priorities.
- (3) Transit Projects
 - (a) Connectivity, multimodal accommodations, technology improvements at bus stops, park and ride lots, and on transit vehicles.

Item 3: The Rural Funding Allocation

Vishu Lingala reopened the discussion on the scoring options for rural v. urban area projects, and with hypothetical numbers demonstrated how the scores for rural projects would differ under the separate rural scoring criteria and the combined rural\urban scale. Underlying the decision to have a rural allocation is the fact that the priorities set by the TPC for the 2022 call for projects would seem to favor urban projects over rural ones, creating a concern that did not exist in the previous call.

Reset – After three hours of deliberations, the chair, Veronica Chapa-Gorczyński called for a reset in the discussions and directed for a fresh consideration of the adjusted urban\rural map. At issue, among other things, was the propriety of a separate allocation or separate criteria for suburban projects.

The general meeting adjourned early while a select group of the workshop participants stayed behind to deliberate on the appropriate course to take to move the call for projects program forward.

Item 4: Comments and Discussion

Questions\Comments raised for consideration:

- The Environmental criteria put coastal communities at a huge disadvantage. Jurisdictional wetlands are not clearly defined. An archeological site a quarter mile away would probably suffer no impact from a project.
- Bridge projects by definition involve the floodplain and would likely count as a major investment. Channels of rivers and creeks are often jurisdictional.
- Right of way acquisition should be the key consideration in evaluating project impact on resources. Replacing a bridge or roadway within the existing footprint would not impact additional resources.

- Limits to the amount of information available during the application process may constrain the effective application of the environmental\ecological criterion.
- The environmental process is in place to do the trade-off analysis that determines the final project design. This may be the appropriate detail on which points are given or taken off.
- The state goes to great length to leave the environment equal or better than before – through mitigation. To penalize a project because it could impact a natural resource without considering the potential benefits of mitigation would run counter to the intent of preservation.
- The math on the ecological\environmental resources evaluation table is not clear.
- The goal of the scoring process is to differentiate between projects that may otherwise be functional equivalents. A scale that starts with “zero” and is stair-stepped, whether it be by quartiles or deciles, would help to distinguish between projects.
- Unless you know the range of projects in an investment category, it may be difficult to assign a ranking scale.
- The key word in the TPC guidance on environmental\ecological resources is “Impact” not just the proximity of a facility to the natural resources.
- Some environments impede two-way sidewalks, example facilities with a railroad on one side.
- How would a multi-use path which is 10 ft on one side and 5 ft on the other side be evaluated?
- A 10 ft multi-use path is physically less friendly to pedestrians than a 5 ft sidewalk on both sides of a road. There needs to be a global analysis of the facility.
- The multimodal criteria for roadway projects are different from active transportation criteria.
- There is need to differentiate between the mere presence of a bus route and the presence of stops and shelters, when considering the positive impact of transit.
- Define “other points of interest” for greater clarity.
- The quarter mile buffer should be distance from point of interest to a transit stop. Just because a destination is within a quarter mile of the route does not mean it is walkable from the next stop.
- The element of accessibility (for sidewalks, transit vehicles) will not a differentiate between two new construction projects because the codes and federal law already require it. A project that is not ADA compliant does not qualify for federal funds.
- We might want to think through how the technology improvements on transit are categorized as some speak to safety, but most safety considerations are in terms of vehicle crashes.
- The scoring history suggests that the 2018 criteria actually made rural projects more competitive on a regional scale, when they were not separated. Efforts to increase the ability to score rural projects by a customized scale does not seem to be helping those projects in terms of how they score overall.
- The direction from the TPC subcommittee was to level the playing field between the urban and the rural. It is almost an impossible task to get the scoring criteria even.
- What is created has not helped the rural areas. Taking 2018 (which we felt was not a level playing field) and trying to score rural projects using urban criteria, they score lower. Even though the 9% is called a floor, it actually works like a cap. We need to score the projects separately - there is no way rural projects can compete on volumes of jobs, crashes, etc.
- Consider a separate allocation or separate criteria for suburban projects so the smaller suburban cities are not competing unfavorably with the City of Houston.

Item 5: Announcements

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Item 6 Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.