

7. UPDATE ON BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN COUNTER PROGRAM

Background

Since 2013 H-GAC has maintained permanent counting equipment manufactured by Eco-Counter for measuring the number of trail users each day. All sites are located within the City of Houston and happen to be along off-street shared use paths. This effort began with two counters in 2013, with the latest expansion in 2017 when two additional counters were added. These counters offer the ability to separate traffic by mode and to automatically transmit data to a cloud-based interface. They can differentiate users by using two separate sensors, an infrared sensor that detects differences in ambient heat to capture pedestrian traffic and pressure sensitive inductive loops to capture bicycle traffic.

H-GAC also purchased six mobile counters in 2012 intended for short duration counts (no longer than one month) to measure both bike and pedestrian traffic at the desired location. The mobile nature of the temporary counters allows flexibility to ensure coverage of counts throughout the region and the ability to respond to partners' projects. This equipment is available to any interested government or non-profit organization in the eight-county area, as well as internal use by H-GAC staff. In the decade since their purchase, they have been used by multiple governmental entities and non-profits around the region. These devices require manual retrieval of the data as well as a complex installation process.

H-GAC currently receives regular requests for both historical data from permanent counters and use of the mobile counting equipment. Several organizations have even begun conducting counts at regular intervals throughout the year. With this interest and growth H-GAC is expanding the counter program.

Current Situation

H-GAC has received Board approval to purchase additional permanent and mobile counters for the regional pedestrian and bicycle planning program. Staff also solicited and received community input on where new permanent counters might be needed in the region. The expansion of the program to more up-to-date mobile counters and installation of the new permanent counters at more locations throughout the region is set to begin this year.

Action Requested

Information only.