

**LRT AS THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
FOR METRO SOLUTIONS**

Background

The 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) as adopted on August 24, 2007 and amended on October 26, 2007 contained “bus rapid transit – convertible” as the interim Locally Preferred Alternative (technology) for the North, Southeast, East End, and Uptown transit corridors. BRT was chosen as the initial implementation technology for those corridors because light rail did not meet the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) cost-benefit and ridership projections for the New Starts process at the time of submittal in 2006. Since then, the FTA has changed its criteria to include a “rail bias” that can be used when estimating ridership. The result of the criteria change is that light rail transit now meets FTA’s cost-benefit and ridership requirements.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) has conducted considerable analyses of the North, Southeast, East End and Uptown transit corridors and demonstrated that light rail technology in those corridors will now meet the FTA New Starts criteria.

Current Situation

On October 18, 2007, the METRO Board approved a resolution (attached) adopting light rail as the locally preferred alternative for the North, Southeast, East End, and Uptown transit corridors. The METRO resolution also asks for TPC concurrence. The 2008-2011 TIP and 2035 RTP now also need amending to make them consistent with METRO’s environmental documents

Action Required

Staff requests approval of light rail transit as the locally preferred alternative (technology) in the North, Southeast, East End, and Uptown transit corridors.