CONTINUITY AND INNOVATION IN THE H-GAC PILOT PROJECTS

Alan Rodenstein
Houston-Galveston Area Council, December 12, 2019
For RAQPAC

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility
METRO & Regional Transit Systems

- 9 total transit providers
- 6 now provide Commuter Bus/Park and Ride
- Regional Transit is non-METRO
The CMAQ Commuter and Transit Pilot Program

- Part of federal program established in early 1990’s
- Mostly commuter projects in last decade
- Many regional services started and thrived
- Congestion mitigation (Vehicles miles travelled)
- NOx reductions
Commuter Bus Service

- Flexible transit mode at a relatively low cost
- In Houston, commuter bus benefits by extensive barrier separated HOV/HOT network
- Best for areas of moderate suburban demand
- Increasing demand in Houston
- Viewed positively by “optional” riders
Commuter Bus Service in the Region
Key Regional Challenges

- Regional population growing rapidly and outward
- Inadequate commuter bus expansion in fastest growing area(s)
- No source of dedicated local funding for any regional transit services
- Region falling further behind in transit commuter share
- Implementing projects and enhancing connectivity
Problem Approach

- Work closely with transit agencies and municipalities
- Develop forward looking concepts in CMAQ Request for Applications
- Increase revenue – Advanced Funding Agreements
- Intensive outreach and preapplication meetings
- Once application received and approved - partner closely with transit provider
Collaboration and Innovation

- Provider situations are different
- Most involve CMAQ funding
- All involve coordination with H-GAC and transit providers
- Many are innovative and all meet regional needs
- Emphasis on more distant transit services
The 1st Conroe Bus Going Into Revenue Service
Commuter Projects

- **Conroe** – Implemented April 1 with innovative Intergovernmental Agreement with METRO

- **The Woodlands – Energy Corridor** – Suburb to suburb service (still seeking local funding)

- **Pearland** – Private *for profit* commuter transit service (tentative July 8)

- **Fort Bend County** – Service to Downtown Houston (2021)
Moving Outside The Commuter Model

- New services available - microtransit and micromobility
- New companies with exciting new mobility products
- Zero emissions/electric vehicles
- Electric scooters
- E-bikes
- Autonomous vehicles or AV
- Can still reduce emissions as First mile/Last mile
## What are the Private Companies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uber</th>
<th>Lyft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIA</td>
<td>Zipcar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime</td>
<td>Spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump</td>
<td>Bcycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimi</td>
<td>Ridecall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getaround</td>
<td>Goin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripshot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Promise of First Mile/Last Mile

- Problem linking people to/from:
  - Rail stations
  - Commuter bus
  - Transit centers

- Can create trips that would not occur otherwise

- Link to longer trips

- Especially attractive with zero emissions

- Many companies can provide service
The Challenge of First Mile/Last Mile

- It is new to Houston
- Regional transit agencies slow to embrace
- Each pilot must have public or nonprofit project sponsor
- Non transit agencies have long term funding challenges
- Proving air quality savings essential
H-GAC Approach to First Mile/Last Mile

- Consider successful pilots to demonstrate viability
- Look for sustainable projects
- Outreach to METRO(Next), cities and Management Districts
- Networking with providers regarding services
- Develop private provider contact matrix
Next Steps

- Work with regional agencies on commuter services
- Encourage first mile/last mile pilot projects where appropriate
- Foster private public partnerships on first mile/last mile
- Utilize additional Advanced Funding Agreements if warranted
- Use the program for enhanced congestion mitigation and improved air quality
Questions?