Houston-Galveston Area Council

Regional Transit Framework Study

Future Planning Needs

The Regional Transit Framework Study provides four conceptual scenarios that provide alternative visions for how the region can address rapidly growing regional public transportation needs. These scenarios, summarized in Fact Sheet #4, were developed through community input and a comprehensive research process designed to identity existing and future public transportation needs.

The scenarios provide a framework for considering alternative approaches for meeting the Houston-Galveston area's long-range transit needs. To advance the scenarios from a conceptual framework to implementation, additional planning and prioritization at the regional level is necessary. The key elements for scenario advancement and implementation priorities are outlined below.

Scenario Advancement

Elements related to advancing the scenarios range from identifying preferred corridor specific transit modes and corridor alignments to regional funding and system governance.

- **Analysis of Alternatives** - The alternatives analysis process will help identify a preferred technology for each corridor and identify more specific corridor alignments.
- **Dedicated Funding** - The availability of funding will need to be addressed to ensure adequate revenues to support new investments in transit operations and capital.
- **Governance** - Determining an appropriate governance structure (including the existing structure) is important to help determine implementation responsibilities, specific project priorities, detailed implementation schedule, and other relevant transit implementation considerations.
- **Operations and Maintenance Facilities Master Planning** - Depending upon governance model, the need for a comprehensive operations and maintenance facilities master plan could be highly effective in helping understand pre-implementation capacity and strategies to maximize the use of existing facilities based on geographic proximity.

Additional Regional Transit Implementation Considerations

The four regional transit scenarios present alternative visions for an integrated regional public transportation system in the Houston-Galveston area. Each scenario includes core elements essential to provide quality equitable service for the region's community members. These core elements include the development of a comprehensive regional high capacity transit network, providing access to public transportation services, and developing infrastructure to support existing and expanded transit operations.

- **Infrastructure to Support Existing and Expanded Operations** - In terms of regional mobility, a comprehensive regional high capacity transit network can enhance regional connectivity and provide higher speed travel opportunities, which are two of the regional transit needs identified in the study. In terms of prioritization, all four scenarios include transit services within the corridors identified in the METRO Phase II high capacity transit (HCT) element. While these investments expand the region's existing HCT network, from a regional long range perspective (year 2040) with potentially significant residential and population growth beyond current transit service areas, additional HCT investments, such as those defined in scenarios 3 and 4 warrant consideration

- **Access to Public Transportation Services** - To increase transit access to a greater percentage of the region's growing population in currently un-served and underserved areas the following short-range investments should be considered:

  » expand operations capacity of existing public demand response services provided in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery, and Waller counties;

  » new public demand response service in Chambers and Liberty counties; and,

  » new regional connector\fixed route bus service in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery, and Waller counties.

  Mid- and Long-range investments relative to improving access to transit should include further expansion of demand response service capacity throughout the region and the expansion of regional connector and fixed routes bus service to better meet the transportation needs of new growth areas as previously documented.

- **Infrastructure to Support Existing and Expanded Operations** - The level of support infrastructure defined for each scenario varies; however, all four scenarios accommodate basic support infrastructure investments. Since support infrastructure is intricately related with service levels, the implementation priorities are directly related to service investment priorities. For example, new park-and-ride capacity should be developed in conjunction with new or expanded express bus service or HCT Peak Period service. Likewise, transit vehicle operations and maintenance capacity must be expanded as necessary to accommodate service expansion by mode and geographic area.