Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Subcommittee Meeting
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Online Meeting\Conference Call
Wednesday December 1, 2021
1:30 PM

AGENDA

1. **Subcommittee Roll Call**

2. **Previous Meeting Summary** (*A summary of the December 1, 2021 Meeting is Posted on H-GAC Website*)

3. **Call for Project Development Update**

    Staff will continue the update on the development of the next call for projects with a highlight of the urban and rural definitions, funding set-asides, and project readiness requirements.

4. **Comments and Discussion**.

5. **Announcements**
    • TAC Meeting – December 8, 2021, 9:30 a.m., Teleconference (Zoom)
    • TPC Meeting – December 17, 2021, 9:30 a.m., Teleconference (Zoom)
    • TIP Subcommittee Meeting – January 12, 2021, 1:30 p.m., Teleconference (Zoom)

6. **Adjourn**

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, December 1, 2021 – 1:30pm
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Online Meeting (Teams Platform)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Veronica Chapa-Gorczynski – East End District

David Douglas– Liberty County

Loyd Smith – Harris County

Monique Johnson – City of Sugarland

Shashi Kumar– City of Missouri City

Veronica Davis – City of Houston-PW

Sherry Weesner – TIRZ 5/Memorial Heights

Bruce Mann – Port Houston

Andy Mao – TxDOT-HOU

Scott Ayres – TxDOT-BMT

Ruthanne Haut – The Woodlands Township

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Alan Clark – METRO

Vernon Chambers – Harris County

Item 1: Subcommittee Roll Call

The meeting started with a roll call to determine the members and\or alternatives present.

Item 2: Previous Meeting Summary

Members were encouraged to review the November 2021 meeting summary posted on the H-GAC Website and forward any questions, comments, or updates to staff as they thought necessary.

Item 3: Call for Projects Development Update

1. Craig Rayborn began this presentation by highlighting options considered to characterize the region as rural or urban for the purpose of instituting a rural\urban set-aside project funding program purposed to achieve geographical equity.

    (a) The "**Activity-Population Density**" framework is based on the H-GAC Activity Connectivity Explorer (ACE) tool. Under this framework, graduated scores would be given to projects within low and medium density (rural) zones over projects within high-density (urban) zones.

    (b) The "**Urbanized Area Boundary**" framework is based on either the urbanized area map created by the U.S. Census Bureau or the "adjusted" or "expanded" map of the contiguous built-up area, prepared by staff. Preference was voiced for the adjusted\expanded map because it was considered more representative of the urbanized region and less subject to periodic changes inherent in the census determinations.

    Based on the selected definition of the urbanized area, a funding set-aside 'bucket' program is proposed for eligible projects within rural and urban settings. Rural projects would be scored relative to other rural projects and urban projects would be scored relative to urban projects. County entities would be given the ability to assign 'boost' points to select projects based on their assessment of local priorities and needs. It is envisaged that the final recommendations would be made after consideration of these issues by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).

    [*The issue of whether to distinguish suburban districts from the urbanized area and create a related funding set-aside for suburban projects was deferred to a future date*].

2. Vishu completed the presentation on the Call for Projects Development Update with a detailed description of the existing set-aside programs and a review of the programming and project readiness criteria.

    (a) The new call continues the set-aside programs launched in the 2018 call at the same funding levels but only for a 5-year period: FY 2023 - 2027. Programs include Safety, Regional ITS (TranStar), Regional Incident Management, Clean Vehicles Program, TDM Marketing\Outreach, Regional Vanpool, Pilot\Commuter Transit Operations, and Planning. **Total Set-Aside $31mill**.

    (b) The programming and project readiness criteria discussion among other things restated that: (1) proposed projects must be consistent with the regional vision; (2) There should be interagency coordination for multi-jurisdictional projects; (3) Project readiness (including environmental review, right of way acquisition, utility relocation, railroad and USACE agreements) should be demonstrated within specified time limits prior to project letting.

    (c) Information on start and end dates of the different project development phases will be required in the first stage of the application process and must be input on the budget template.

Item 4: Comments and Discussion

Questions\Comments raised for consideration:

- Considering that freight movement constitutes a significant portion of the local economy, it might be desirable to create a set-aside category just for freight projects.

- Care should be taken to verify that the desired distribution outcome would be achieved before efforts are made to create all the different funding buckets.

- Set asides should probably be considered minimum investment levels rather than as a ceiling.

- There may be challenges to implementing the boost points at the county level because of the reality of disparate local interests each competing for project support. Some refinement to this proposal may be needed.

- It may be expedient to think of the boost points on a broader, more comprehensive frame such as encouraging the county to support projects submitted by other entities like by TXDOT or METRO.

- Safety appears to be different from the other set-aside categories as it might involve capital expenditure. This would need further clarification.

- Are Safety set-aside funds currently in the program or are they new, and what kind of projects would be eligible for this program?

- 'when it is active.

- Consider splitting the set-aside programs into the following categories for clarity:
  - "Continuing Programs" – *recommended to continue*;
  - "Previously Designated Projects" – *recommended to continue*; and
  - "New Proposed Set-Aside" – *recommendation.*

- Safety problems arise from a combination of infrastructure and behavioral issues. Fifty percent of the crashes are behavioral in nature (alcohol and speeding). Education and other controls would factor into a safety response.

- The goal to demonstrate that a project is part of a regional vision is great, but many local agencies have not consistently put medium or smaller sized projects in the RTP because of the overhead burden. The questions about listing in 2045 RTP or another plan would be better combined into one enquiry rather than two separate questions.

- Right of Way completion at least 24 months prior to letting is highly unusual. As practiced locally, ROW acquisition is typically the last activity in the project critical path.

- There are several types of USACE permits that each take different times to process. Some further distinctions may be needed if applying this as a screening criterion.

- The only action that sponsors can control in the Railroad Agreement process is initiating the request. This fact should be considered in the language designating it is a screening criterion.

Item 5: Announcements
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Item 6 Adjourn
The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.