

**Regional Transit Coordination (RTC) Subcommittee
Houston-Galveston Area Council**

**Thursday, July 9, 2026
9:30-11:00 AM**

Agenda

1. Introductions and Certification of Quorum (9) – James Oliver, Island Transit, Chair
2. Public Comments
3. Action Items:
 - 3.1 Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2026
4. Information Items:
 - 4.1 2027-2031 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Bennie Chambers and Kareem Heshmat, H-GAC
 - 4.2 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP) Update – Bennie Chambers and Kareem Heshmat, H-GAC
 - 4.3 Regional Transit Performance Metrics: Transportation Asset Management (TAM) and Public Transportation Action Safety Plan (PTASP) – Kareem Heshmat, H-GAC
 - 4.4 Amendments to High-Capacity Transit Planning Grant – Thomas Gray, H-GAC
 - 4.5 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Pilot Call for Partners – Emanuel Andrews, H-GAC
- 5 Transit and Human Service Agency Reports (5 minutes or less each)

2026 RTCS Meeting Dates (All Meetings Begin at 9:30 AM)

September 2026 (Special Call TBD)

October 8, 2026

REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 9:30-11:00am
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

James Oliver (Chair) – Island Transit (Galveston)
Melanie Beaman – City of Sugar Land
Brian Crimmins – City of Houston
Thomas Holstein – Baker Ripley
Perri D’Armond – Fort Bend County Transit
Ruthanne Haut – The Woodlands Township
Tatyana Lutenschlager – METRO
Vernon Chambers – Harris County Transit
Claudia Wicks – Colorado Valley Transit
Ted Ross – Gulf Coast Transit District

OTHERS PRESENT

Travis Madison – TxDOT
Paula Polk – TxDOT
Carolina Lopez-Herrera – TxDOT
Bridgett Hlavinka
Michael Jackson – Energy Corridor District
Huey German-Wilson – Super Neighborhood 48
Pamela LaBrane – Fort Bend Transit
Frederick Johnson – City of Conroe
Lisa Kay Schwyer
Taylor Cross – City of Houston
Sarah Jane Kleber – Kimley-Horn

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Wilson Calvert – City of Houston
Christina Cabral – Transportation Advocacy Group
Andres Montes – Alvin ISD
Nicole Mathews – The Woodlands Township
Donald Hughes – METRO
Jo Marlow – Brazos Transit District

H-GAC STAFF PRESENT

Jamila Owens
Marcus Tucker
Thomas Gray
Bennie Chambers
Kareem Heshmat
Keehren Baah
Alan Rodenstein
Florence Buaku
Ayo Jibowu
Robyn Egbert
Catherine Gray
Madeline Statkewicz
Karen Owen
Carlos Lugo
Yetunde Oyewale
Ebrahim Eslami
Pamela Grady

OVERVIEW

RTCS Members and Alternates met virtually by teleconference. At this regular meeting, the Subcommittee received a presentation on the Regional Public Transportation Coordinated Plan (RPTCP) update effort. Other presentations concerned the preparations underway for the upcoming FIFA World Cup by H-GAC’s Commute Solutions team as well as other regional transportation providers.

INTRODUCTIONS AND CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM

ITEM 1 – James Oliver, Chair, City of Galveston, called the meeting to order at 9:35 am. Roll was called by H-GAC staff and a quorum was confirmed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ITEM 2 – There were no public comments presented to the Subcommittee.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 3.1 – Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2026

Mr. Oliver requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2026 special call meeting of the Subcommittee.

Action Item Motion: moved by Vernon Chambers, seconded by Ruthanne Haut. Action Item approved.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 4.1 – Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP) Update – Bennie Chambers and Kareem Heshmat, H-GAC

Kareem Heshmat and Bennie Chambers provided an update on the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan. They reported that the community survey has reached approximately 26% of its goal of 1,000 responses. Staff noted the need to improve participation among transit-dependent populations, individuals without vehicle access, and non-English speakers to reduce potential bias.

Staff also reported ongoing outreach efforts across multiple counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend, and North Harris County, as well as participation in workforce and resource events. Initial findings identified key transportation gaps, including connections in North Harris County, access to medical services in Brazoria County, and the need for enhanced coordination between transit providers.

The first six chapters of the plan were submitted to TxDOT ahead of the March 31, 2026 deadline. These chapters included agency overview, engagement strategy, transit needs assessment, and provider inventory. Staff confirmed the project timeline remains on track, with draft completion expected by the end of June, followed by review and finalization by August 30, 2026.

A case study was presented regarding transportation access challenges to Christ Clinic in Katy, Texas, located near the triple border of Harris, Fort Bend, and Waller counties. Discussion among Subcommittee members and staff followed and focused on the difficulty of coordinating services across jurisdictional boundaries.

It was noted that Harris County Rides may provide service for eligible riders originating in Harris County, while Fort Bend and Waller County services may provide limited coverage depending on origin and service boundaries. Coordination between agencies was identified as a potential solution. Additional discussion highlighted the possibility of pilot programs or microtransit solutions to address service gaps. It was furthermore noted that, ideally, human services and non-profits need to think about transit availability when they site their facilities. However, issues such as real estate availability and cost are usually a bigger factor in site decisions.

Ruthanne Haut suggested to H-GAC staff that they set up a table at the three Woodlands Express park and ride facilities to interact with riders regarding the RPTCP.

ITEM 4.2 – Commute Solutions Update – Robyn Egbert, H-GAC

Robyn Egbert provided an update on Commute Solutions initiatives related to the upcoming FIFA World Cup. She highlighted anticipated congestion challenges due to the increased number of visitors and major events occurring concurrently.

Efforts include employer outreach, commuter education, and development of communication toolkits. A pilot program proposing additional transit service on match days is scheduled for board consideration. Staff emphasized the importance of reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips and promoting alternative transportation options.

Ruthanne Haut thanked Robyn and her staff for their effort and voiced her approval of the Commute Solutions website and marketing. Perri D'Armond agreed, noting preparations for the FIFA World Cup were above and beyond the normal work of regional transit agencies. She added that METRO has received funding for this effort and that Fort Bend County has submitted requests for METRO for funds to add additional service.

ITEM 4.3 – FIFA World Cup Scenario Planning Update – Thomas Gray, H-GAC

Thomas Gray provided a comprehensive overview of regional mobility planning efforts for the FIFA World Cup. Houston is expected to host seven matches, with significant impacts on traffic and transit systems. Scenario planning conducted by H-GAC's consultant Arcadis, evaluated congestion impacts, incident management, and mitigation strategies. Regional coordination efforts include increased transit service, traffic signal optimization, and interagency collaboration through Houston TranStar.

METRO, The Woodlands Township, the City of Houston, and other agencies are implementing operational plans to support increased travel demand, including expanded rail, bus, and park-and-ride services.

There were no questions or comments from the Subcommittee.

TRANSIT AND HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY REPORTS

Thomas Gray announced that the first quarter 2026 ridership survey will be distributed to transit providers in the coming week.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Oliver adjourned the meeting at 10:44 am.

Next RTCS Meeting – 9:30 AM on Thursday, July 9, 2026



Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

***Bennie Chambers III, MCD
Kareem Heshmat, AICP, CNU-A***

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What is the *MOU*?



- Documents each organization's commitment to participate in the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee (RTCS)
- Establishes the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of RTCS members
- Supports continued regional coordination among transportation providers and partner organizations
- Required as part of the TxDOT Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP) Guidebook
- Will be reviewed by participating organizations before finalization

Key Components of the MOU



A.2. Memorandum of Understanding Template

Houston-Galveston Area Council's Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee or its successor standing committee

Mission Statement

The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee or its successor's standing committee's purpose is to:

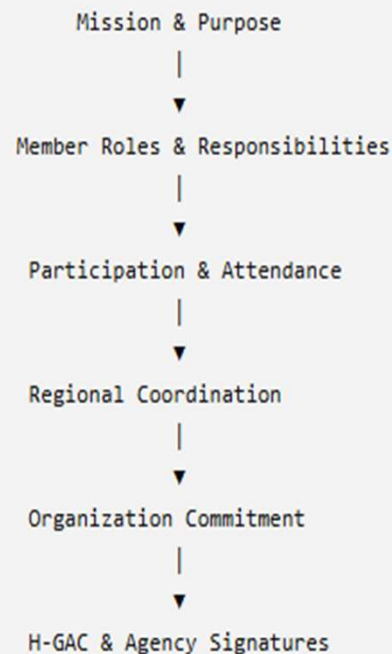
- *Provide guidance related to the implementation of regional transit coordination pilot projects that were identified in the regional transit coordination action plan*
- *Assist with tasks related to the development of regional transit planning initiatives that focus on identifying opportunities for expanding transit services in the region for all, as well as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the current regional transit system*
- *Promote regional coordination among existing and future public and private transportation providers, social service, and health and human service agencies.*
- *Foster and sustain improvements in a regional and coordinated community transportation network for older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low income, veterans, and other target communities in the Gulf Coast Region 16.*

Memorandum of Understanding

WHEREAS the Gulf Coast Region 16 includes 13 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Waller, Walker, and Wharton

WHEREAS the term *community transportation* means any public transportation service or human service agency transportation service or program, whether it be provided by a public or private entity, that focuses on transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals

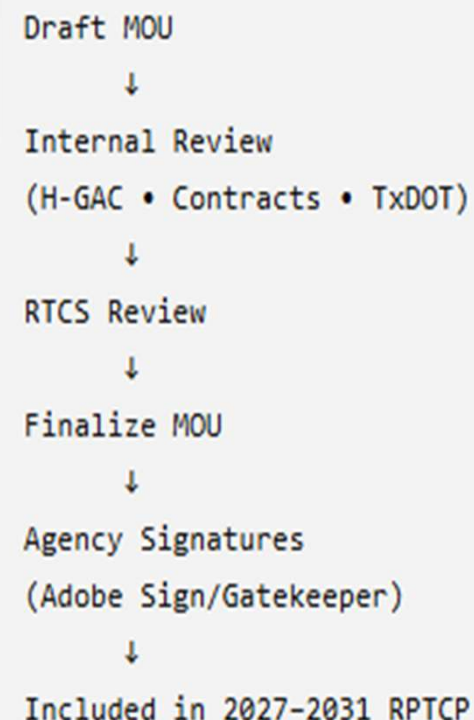
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



MOU – Next Steps



- Collect RTCS feedback on the draft MOU
- Incorporate comments from H-GAC leadership, the Contracts Team, TxDOT Public Transportation, and RTCS members
- Finalize the MOU following completion of the committee structure review, as applicable
- Upon final approval, the MOU will be distributed for organizational signatures using Adobe Sign (Gatekeeper)
- The fully executed MOU will be included as an appendix to the RPTCP



Thank You!



Bennie Chambers III, MCD

Senior Planner

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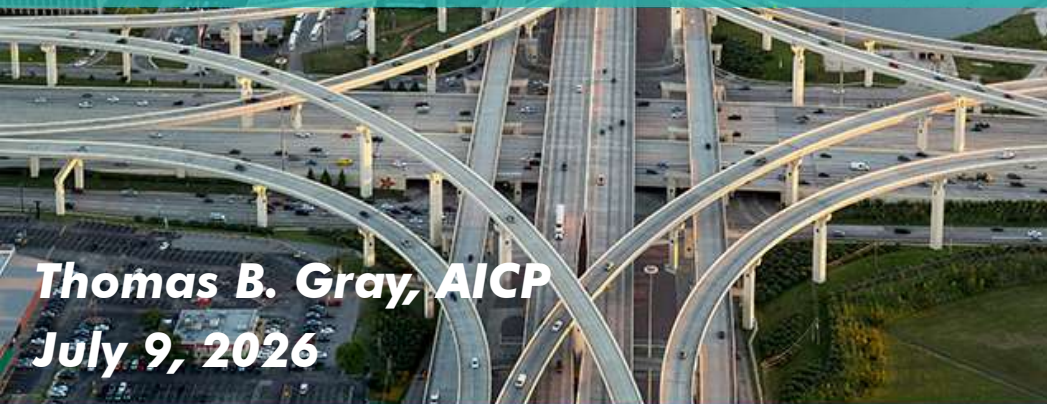
Kareem Heshmat, AICP, CNU-A

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Amendments to High Capacity Transit Planning Grant



Thomas B. Gray, AICP
July 9, 2026

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Background

- TxDOT and H-GAC entered into an Advance Funding Agreement (AFA) in 2024 to further study recommendations of the High-Capacity Transit Task Force:
 - **Regional Bus Study:** Currently underway
 - **Outer Westpark Study:** Has been deferred
 - HCTRA conducting their own study of the Westpark corridor
 - METRO shelved the University Line BRT project that this study would have explored extending
- H-GAC needs to amend the AFA to re-program the funds (\$625k) set aside for Outer Westpark

Potential Replacement Tasks

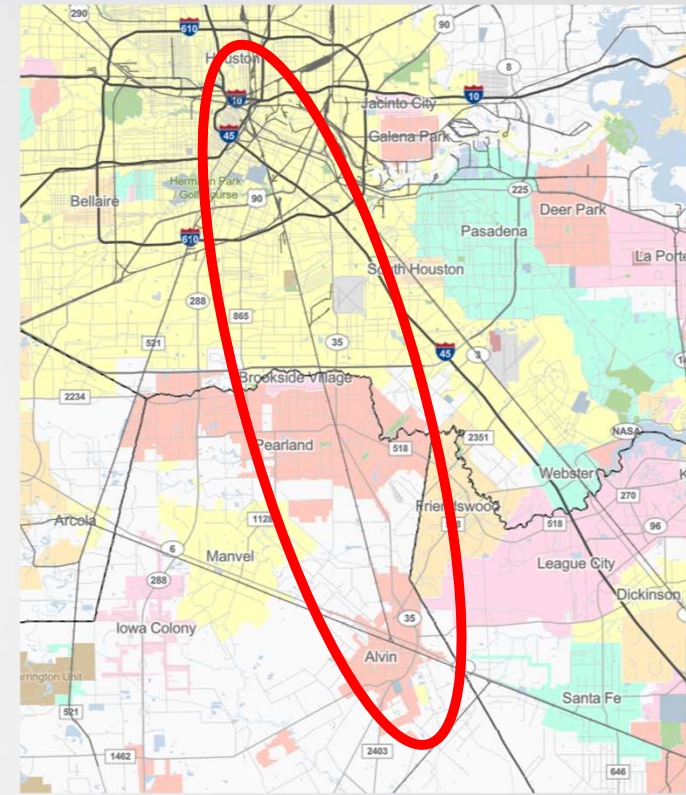
- SH 35 Transit Corridor Study
- Katy Small Area Transit Study
- Bay Area Small Area Transit Study
- Operator Recruitment and Retainment Study

There may be enough funds for more than one study. Any changes to task are subject to TxDOT approval.

SH 35 Transit Corridor Study

Would consider high-capacity transit service along SH 35 corridor linking Alvin and Pearland to Houston

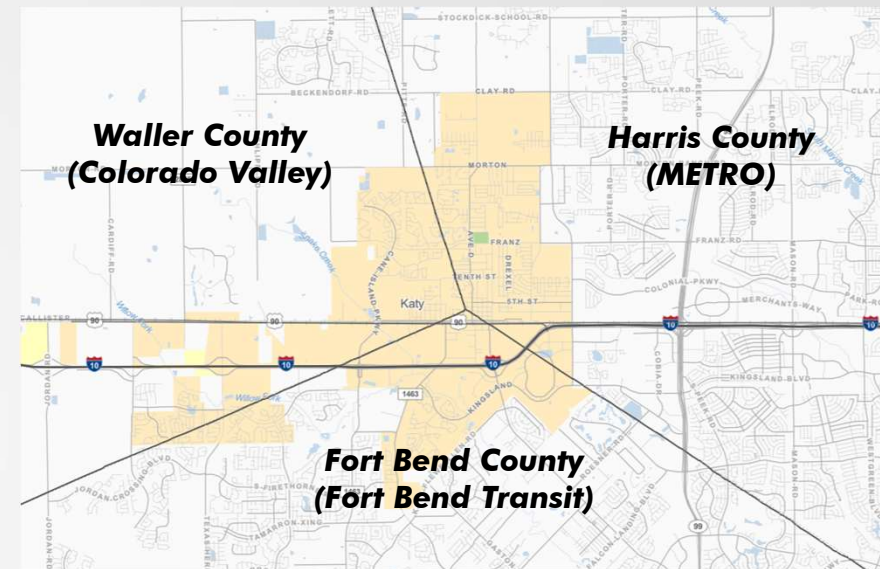
- 2007 TxDOT corridor study identified commuter bus or rail as potential transit options
- Significant residential growth within corridor; proximity to Hobby Airport
- TxDOT extending Spur 5 past 610 and preparing to build SH 35 bypass around Alvin as part of Grand Parkway Segment B-1



Katy Small Area Transit Study

Transit plan focused on area where a gap is known to exist

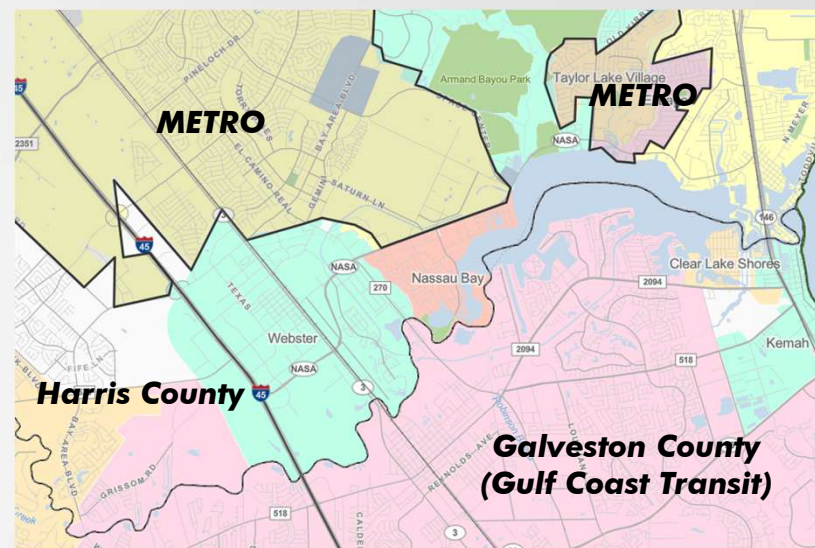
- Katy area came up during RPTCP public outreach process
- Katy itself is part of METRO, but unincorporated surroundings served by multiple providers
- Study would consider new services, coordination, connectivity to park and rides, and funding



Bay Area Small Area Transit Study

Transit plan focused on area where a gap is known to exist

- Large medical provider in Nassau Bay reached out during RPTCP public outreach process
- Webster and Nassau Bay located between METRO and GCTD service areas, no transit service aside from Harris County Rides
- Study would consider new services, coordination, connectivity to park and rides, and funding



Operator Recruitment and Retainage Study

Study to consider strategies and best practices for helping find, train and keep operators

- Regional transit providers have reported difficulties in recruiting and keeping bus operators, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Operator shortages affect service provision for all transit modes from paratransit to high-capacity
- Would consider experiences and practices from providers in other parts of the country that have faced the same issues

We Need Your Feedback

- SH 35 Transit Corridor Study (est. cost: \$425,000*)
- Katy Small Area Transit Study (est. cost: \$300,000*)
- Bay Area Small Area Transit Study (est. cost: \$300,000*)
- Operator Recruitment and Retainment Study (est. cost: \$350,000*)

Are there other potential tasks you would like H-GAC staff to explore?

*All estimates preliminary; based on similar studies H-GAC has recently procured

Next Steps

- H-GAC staff will work with TxDOT to reprogram funds based on Subcommittee feedback
- In addition to reprogramming Outer Westpark funds, AFA will be extended (currently expires January 2027)

THANK YOU!



Commuter and Transit Pilot Program Call for Partners Guidance



Emanuel Andrews (H-GAC)
July 9, 2026

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Goals Overview



- Address congestion and air quality challenges in the Houston-Galveston Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)
- Support pilot transportation projects with measurable air quality benefits
- Maximize number and breadth of pilot projects to impact regional congestion and air quality
- Demonstrate effectiveness and impacts on sustainability

CMAQ Call for Partners – At a Glance



- **What:** CMAQ Commuter and Transit Pilot Program
- **Who:** Local Government & Transit agencies, and Nonprofits
- **When:** Fall/Winter 2026-Spring/Summer 2026
- **Frequency:** Annual Call for Partners
- **How Much:** Total \$6.8M
 - \$2 – \$2.5 million per project (\$3.5M Maximum)
 - Standard Funding Scenario (3 Years)
 - Extended Funding Scenario (3-5 Years)

Matching Requirements



- 10% contribution of net operating costs required
 - Contributions go towards the Regional Excellence Fund
 - This fund supports education, outreach, and other activities in the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program
- Net Operating Costs: total eligible operating expenses minus fare revenue or subscription revenue generated by the service.
 - The traditional 20% local match is not applicable for this Call for Partners

Funding Scenarios | Standard



The **Standard Funding Scenario** serves as the baseline for CMAQ-funded commuter and transit pilot projects. This approach involves projects designed to operate as a pilot for up to three years:

- Year 1: 100% Federal
- Year 2: 100% Federal
- Year 3: 100% Federal

10% contribution of net operating costs required

Funding Scenarios | Extended



The **Extended Funding Scenario** is a structured step-down model. This approach allows projects to continue beyond the standard three-year period, up to a maximum of five years.

Example	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
A	\$300	\$300	\$200	\$50	\$50	\$900
B	\$300	\$300	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$900
C	\$100	\$400	\$200	\$100	\$100	\$900

These examples illustrate a declining federal share after Year 3, while keeping Years 3–5 at or below the initial funding levels.

Proposals | Eligible Projects



- Operating Pilot Projects that improve regional mobility, reduce congestion, and produce measurable air quality benefits.
- Examples:
 - Commuter bus services
 - Micro transit or on-demand transit services
 - First-mile/last-mile shuttle services
 - Regional vanpool programs
 - Intracity or rural connector transit services
 - Mobility services supporting access to employment centers

Proposals | Requirements



- Applicants should be coordinated with transit agencies and local governments
- Reducing emissions and regional vehicle miles traveled is essential
- Proposals must include:
 - How the program aligns with the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan
 - How it meets the stated goals and objectives of the Commuter and Transit Pilot Program

Proposals | Requirements, Cont'd.



- Additional Proposal Requirements
 - Service Plan
 - Marketing Plan
 - Project Feasibility
 - Accessible Transportation
 - Multiagency and Project Partnerships
 - Identification of Funding Sources
 - Project Cost Items
 - Air Quality Requirements (Vehicle information)

Proposals | Evaluation Criteria



- Project Justification (5 points)
- Project Concept and Approach (20 points)
- Air Quality and Congestion Reduction (30 points)
- Financial Sustainability (30 points)
- Additional Considerations (15 points)
 - Partnerships
 - Replicability
 - Economic Development potential

100 Points Total

Call for Partners: Key Milestones



Event	Date
Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee Information & Feedback	7/9/2026
Pre-bid meeting for interested agencies	10/5/2026
Call for Partners Opens	10/5/2026
Close Call for Partners	11/13/2026
Project Review & Just In Time Requests	11/30/2026
Special RTCS Project Selection Recommendations	1/5/27 (Tentative)
TAC & TPC Recommendations	2/17/2027 & 2/26/2027
Board Award Recommendations	3/16/2027

Next Steps



Action Items for Committee

- Review and provide comments on Call for Partners guidelines (2-week comment period)
- TAC/TPC approval of guidelines (Summer 2026)
- Promote opportunity to eligible agencies
- Prepare for project recommendation (Fall/Winter 2026)

Questions & Discussion

Contact Info



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