

**Regional Transit Coordination (RTC)  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd Floor, Conference Room B/C  
Thursday April 11, 2019  
9:30 -11:00 a.m.**

**Agenda**

1. Introductions and Certification of Quorum (8) – Vernon Chambers,  
Harris County Transit, Chair.
2. Action Items:
  - Election of Officers
  - Adoption of Agenda
  - Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Summary of January 2019
3. Public Comments
4. Information Item(s):
  - Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) Update—Ken Fickes Harris  
County Transit (10 minutes).
5. Agency Reports (5 minutes or less each)
6. New Member Orientation

Next RTC Quarterly Meeting- July 11, 2019, (Tentative) H-GAC Conference Room B/C.

# REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

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## MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, January 10, 2019 – 9:30am – 11:00am

Houston-Galveston Area Council

3555 Timmons Lane, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Houston, Texas 77027 (Meeting Held in Room B/C)

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### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Valerie Marvin – City of Pearland  
Shawn Johnson – City of Conroe (Phone)  
Paulette Shelton – Ft. Bend County  
Vernon Chambers – Harris County  
Kenneth Brown – METRO  
Jason Jones – Houston Center for Independent Living  
Steve Atchinson – American Red Cross

TxDOT Ex-Officio – Travis Madison

TxDOT Ex-Officio – Darla Walton

### **ALTERNATES PRESENT**

Rick Ramirez – City of Sugarland (Phone)  
Sarah Santoy – Brazos Transit District  
Susan Jaworski - METRO  
Vincent Morrison – Harris County Community Services

### **H-GAC STAFF PRESENT**

Kari Hackett  
Greg Seal  
Lydia Abebe  
Thomas Gray  
Alan Rodenstein  
Veronica Baxter-Lamb  
Lucinda Martinez

### **OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES**

Kevin Thompson – Ft. Bend County  
Perri D'Armond – Ft. Bend County  
Ruthanne Haut – The Woodlands Township  
Randy Frazier – METRO (Phone)  
Sean Middleton – Connect Transit  
Paula Haley Polk - TxDOT  
Dorian Cockrell – United Way  
Kari Banta, TxDOT, Public Transportation Division (Presenter by phone)  
Vidya Menon, Fort Bend County

### **BRIEFING**

#### **Overview**

The RTCS Members and Alternates were presented with the following information and updates on the following: Harris County RIDES Video presentation, Regional Fare Collection Procurement and Planning presentation, Job Candidate and Employee Transportation (JET) Pilot Project, High Capacity Transit Task Force Update, Update on Listening Sessions for Enhanced Transportation for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, Regional Online Interactive Database Update and an update on the Gulf Coast Regional Transit Trip Planner using the Google Transit Platform.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **ITEM 2A. – Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, Harris County, requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

*Action Item Motion Passed*

**ITEM 2B. – Approval of Meeting Summary**

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, Harris County requested a motion to pass the RTC Meeting Summary for the September 6, 2018 meeting as presented.

*Action Item Motion Passed*

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

**ITEM 3A. – Harris County RIDES (video presentation)**

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, Harris County, introduced a video describing the Harris County RIDES program to the members of the subcommittee. After the subcommittee viewed the video, Ms. Chambers provided an overview on the RIDES program and informed the subcommittee on how far the program had come since its inception in 2003 with little funding and a lot of heart and looked forward to improving the program in the future.

Mr. Kari Hackett, H-GAC, also informed the committee on how the program started as a Pilot Project more than 15 years ago and is based on a model called a Public-Private partnership. This model involves different organizations and agencies and hopes the subcommittee will hear more of these partnerships in the future due to it being a sustainable model that can be expanded beyond Harris County and become a Regional program.

**ITEM 3B. – Regional Fare Collection System Procurement and Planning (Randy Frazier, METRO)**

Mr. Randy Frazier, METRO, provided an update on METRO’s Regional Fare Collection System Procurement and Planning. Mr. Frazier told the committee that a request for proposals was sent out and several proposals were received. The reviewing and scoring of proposals should take two to three months. Once a vendor is approved, this project will move on to the next phase.

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, also asked Mr. Frazier about the Regional Fare Collection Mobile Ticketing App. Mr. Frazier informed the committee that the app was put on hold because METRO had to find a new vendor. The new vendor is Byte Mark. Vendor should come on board in 4-6 weeks. The new vendor will create the new app and vendor will begin migration from old app to new app. Fare collection will begin after that process.

Ms. Susan Jaworski, METRO, informed the committee that METRONext is a long-range 20-year plan that will develop a Regional Transit Plan with a vision through 2040 in Houston/Harris Region. She also mentioned METRO would be holding a series of Public Meetings that are listed on the METRONext.org website to receive public comments.

**ITEM 3C. – Job Candidate and Employee Transportation (JET) Pilot Project (Dorian Cockrell, United Way of Greater Houston)**

Mr. Dorian Cockrell, United Way of Greater Houston, briefed the committee on an effort by the Houston-Galveston Area Council Commute Solutions, Workforce Solutions and The United Way to develop a collaborative model with regional transportation organizations. The pilot project was designed to help people to discover and connect with various transportation services and assist employers by attracting, obtaining and retaining more qualified candidates and enable access to more employment opportunities. Several mobility options were available. This effort was supported by various transit providers, Social agencies, religious organizations, and Workforce Solutions offices across the Houston-Galveston region. This project was implemented from January 2018 through September 2018 with 997 referrals from the different agencies with 132 connections with no funding during this period. There were 582 referrals during May 2018 and August 2018

A meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2019 at 10:00am at the United Way of Greater Houston offices to discuss strategies to improve the program in the future

A short question and answer period followed this presentation

**ITEM 3D. – High Capacity Transit Task Force (Mr. Thomas Gray, H-GAC)**

Mr. Thomas Gray, H-GAC provided a brief background and update on the status of the High Capacity Transit Task Force and its workgroups (Economic Impact Workgroup, Funding Opportunities Workgroup and the Service Concepts Workgroup) findings and recommendations for the 2045 Regional Transit Plan. Mr. Gray gave the committee an overview of a Vision Network Map which includes the types of transit services and its financially unconstrained elements to provide High Capacity Transit to the region.

Mr. Gray informed the subcommittee that to develop this network or implement any portion of the network, new revenue streams must be developed. Also, it is necessary for the region to speak with one voice when requesting funding in Austin or Washington. All portions of this region have a transit need.

The next meeting of the High Capacity Transit Task force is scheduled for January 25, 2019 at 1:00pm. The Vision Network Map will be presented to the Transportation Policy Council (TPC) and the TPC will then finalize what elements will be included in the Vision Network Map and it will then be included into the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.

A short question and answer period followed this presentation.

**ITEM 3E. - Listening Sessions for Enhanced Transportation for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310) (Kari Banta, Texas Department of Transportation -Public Transportation Division, (by phone)**

Ms. Kari Banta, TxDOT-PTN, briefed the subcommittee on a Public Workshop held by TxDOT on December 5, 2018 in Galveston, Texas on the Enhanced Transportation for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310) program to follow up on what updates had occurred after the adoption of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan and to hear directly from the riders and members of the public regarding their service concerns. Ms. Banta informed the committee that this workshop was supposed to focus on the strategies and goals of the coordinated plan, but the conversation shifted and focused on the service needs in the area and the challenges faced by citizens attending the workshop.

Individuals from Dickinson, Hitchcock and Santa Fe were present. Ms. Banta also said participants expressed concern about limited service in Texas City. Most participants depend on Mounting Horizons, but this provider has a limited ability to provide these services. Participants showed interest in resuming the Connect Plus service. Biggest challenges included the following:

- Ability to get to medical treatment or to Dialysis and commuting to work and school.
- The need for one-week notice made it difficult for the public to schedule with Connect Transit.
- Dickinson residents expressed concern about safety and accessibility of crosswalks, lack of amenities such as sidewalks and shelter and flooding issues at the stop.
- Participants also voiced a concern with Connect Transit's lack of ability to inform the public of route changes and cancellations.

Mr. Sean Middleton, Connect Transit, provided a response to the issues expressed by the participants in this presentation. Mr. Middleton said that Connect Transit does provide extensive demand response services but some of those issues mentioned were outside Connect Transit's service area. Mr. Middleton mentioned that Connect Transit did listen and are working toward improving their response.

**ITEM 3F - Regional Online Interactive Database and Google Transit Platform Update (Kari Hackett, H-GAC)**

Mr. Kari Hackett, H-GAC, provided the subcommittee with an update regarding the Regional Online Interactive Database. Mr. Hackett began his presentation by describing a handout that listed Potential Pilot Projects that were previously approved by the subcommittee. According to Mr. Hackett, these Potential Pilot Projects have been delayed

due to the updating of the Regional Transportation Plan and other higher priorities. Mr. Hackett requested members of the subcommittee review the list and to prioritize these projects according to what the subcommittee members considered most important. Mr. Hackett requested the subcommittee members to email their responses by January 18, 2019. Mr. Hackett also emphasized the need for a bipartisan effort in moving projects forward to enable projects to be sustainable. Mr. Hackett informed the subcommittee about the Regional Transit Trip Planner on the Google Transit Platform. This project has completed Phase 1 and all static routes or “fixed routes” have been incorporated. Testing and debugging is now underway for the General Transit Feed Specifications (GTFS) files. All significant errors must be corrected before making the information available to the public.

Mr. Hackett requested the assistance of the subcommittee members in completing this process. Transit providers will need to take ownership of the information for their specific service areas. Some of the transit operators use Ride System Software which can export the GTFS files directly in the format needed for the Google Transit Platform. If a transit provider does not use this software, technical support will be necessary to access this information and to keep the process moving forward. The testing phase will be completed within the next two months and work will continue to make the trip planner available to the public. Phase 2 will include further refinements in detail and bus stop coding.

#### **ITEM 4A. – Agency Reports**

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, Harris County, invited committee members to briefly give updates on their agency efforts. Updates were provided by several agencies and included the following highlights:

- The TxDOT Semi-Annual Transit Operators Meeting will be in Austin, Texas on January 23, 2019
- Ruthanne Haut, announced that she replaced Chris LaRue on the RTC subcommittee.
- METRO February Service Changes are upcoming.
- A series of Public Meetings for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan are scheduled between January and April 2019.
- The Houston Center for Independent Living (HCIL) is partnering with the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) to coordinate housing vouchers for individuals with disabilities who are homeless, contact (713) 974-4621 for details.
- Discounted toll road tags are available to disabled and other eligible veterans locally in Harris and Fort Bend counties. More Information is available through The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority at [www.mobilityauthority.com/veterans](http://www.mobilityauthority.com/veterans). Additional information was provided after the RTC meeting about the METRO Pass for disabled veterans which provides free rides on METRO buses and rail lines.
- The Brazos Transit District was recently awarded a Build Grant to purchase new transit vehicles.

Next RTCS Quarterly Meeting – April 11, 2019 (Tentative) H-GAC, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Conference Room B/C  
**Meeting adjourned at 11:10am**