

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

**SPECIAL CALL MEETING**

**Thursday, March 12, 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 January 8, 2026
4. Information Items: (10 minutes or less each)
  - 4.1. Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP) - Bennie Chambers and Kareem Heshmat, H-GAC
  - 4.2. Regional Transit Information Study – Bennie Chambers, H-GAC
  - 4.3. 2025 Regional Transit Ridership Survey – Thomas Gray, 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)**

April 9, 2026

July 9, 2026

October 8, 2026

# REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

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## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 6, 2026 – 9:30-11:00am  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Virtual Meeting

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### MEMBERS PRESENT

James Oliver (Chair) – Island Transit (Galveston)  
Melanie Beaman – City of Sugar Land  
Amy Skicki – BayTran  
Brian Crimmins – City of Houston  
Angel Ponce – City of Houston  
Miriam Guzman – Community Health Network  
Perri D’Armond – Fort Bend County Transit  
Ruthanne Haut – The Woodlands Township  
Tatyana Luttschlager – METRO  
Vernon Chambers – Harris County Transit

### OTHERS PRESENT

Travis Madison – TxDOT  
Brenda Bustillos - TxDOT  
Alan Clark – METRO  
Reggie Brown – METRO  
Alberto Ponce - METRO  
Michael Jackson – Energy Corridor District  
Pamela LaBrane – Fort Bend Transit  
Frederick Johnson – City of Conroe  
Sarah Jane Kleber – Kimley-Horn, Inc.

### ALTERNATES PRESENT

Donald Hughes – METRO  
Jo Marlow – Brazos Transit District  
Joseph Bolletino – City of Conroe

### H-GAC STAFF PRESENT

Jamila Owens  
Marcus Tucker  
Thomas Gray  
Alan Rodenstein  
Bennie Chambers  
Kareem Heshmat  
Robyn Egbert  
Stephen Keen  
Monique Johnson  
Rodeny Sigua  
Yetunde Oyewale  
Pamela Grady

### OVERVIEW

RTCS Members and Alternates met virtually by teleconference. At this regular meeting, the Subcommittee received presentations on the status of the regional fare effort, METRO’s recently-conducted park and ride license plate survey, the Commute Solutions strategy to support the upcoming FIFA World Cup, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for project descriptions in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process, the Regional Public Transportation Coordinated Plan (RPTCP) update effort, and a recap of coordinated public transportation activities overseen by the Subcommittee in 2025.

### INTRODUCTIONS AND CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM

**ITEM 1** – James Oliver, Chair, City of Galveston, convened the meeting at 9:33 AM. Roll was called by H-GAC staff. There was not initially a quorum present, so the Subcommittee moved to the first information item on the agenda. While that item was being presented, additional Subcommittee members joined the meeting and a quorum was reached. The Subcommittee then returned to Item 3.1 for action and proceeded with the remaining agenda in order.

## 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 October 9, 2025**

Mr. Oliver requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2025 meeting of the Subcommittee.

*Action Item Motion: moved by Brian Crimmins, seconded by Amy Skicki. Action Item approved.*

## INFORMATION ITEMS

### **ITEM 4.1 – Regional Fare Update – Thomas Gray, H-GAC and Reggie Brown, METRO**

Reggie Brown provided an update on the regional fare program and progress on key components, including mobile ticketing, regional data management (GTFS feeds), and automated fare collection (AFC). METRO “soft-launched” the new system last December, including validators, new fare boxes, and partial ticket vending machine deployment. Open-loop and closed-loop payments are supported. METRO has expanded customer service access and retail reload locations and released updates to the mobile app and fare website. Next steps include continuing public rollout, onboarding ride sponsors/institutions, expanding ticket vending machine installations, formalizing a partner integration strategy, executing MOUs/ILAs, revisiting funding and budget needs with H-GAC/FHWA, and establishing maintenance/support approach.

Thomas Gray added that H-GAC and METRO are currently working on future budgeting and task issues and will hopefully have something to present to the Regional Fare Workgroup in February. H-GAC's aspirational goal is to get validators ordered for at least one non-METRO agency in 2026.

Vernon Chambers asked what are ride sponsors. Reggie explained they are companies that provide transit benefits to their employees.

### **ITEM 4.2 – METRO Park and Ride License Plate Survey – Alberto Ponce, METRO**

Alberto Ponce presented findings from METRO’s Park & Ride customer origins study. METRO surveyed 27 Park & Ride facilities and collected 6,805 user origins, enhanced with demographics, ridership, and schedule data. The study used GIS and automated processes to capture plates, retrieve registration address information, and apply spatial/demographic analysis to identify trends and catchment areas. Key points included travel distance patterns, utilization analysis, multimodal access, corridor-level demographic differences, and density-based catchment analysis.

Thomas Gray added a link to the study report to the meeting chat and noted the significant advancements in technology since he manually did these park and ride surveys as a METRO employee 25 years ago.

Brenda Bustillos asked what measures METRO was taking to ensure Personally-Identifiable Information (PII) privacy. Alberto explained that info returned from DMV is scrubbed of as much PII as possible. Tatyana Luttenschlager added that METRO had internal controls as well to protect safety and privacy while they were doing these surveys. Suggestions included truncating/aggregating map points and blurring plate details in shared materials.

### **ITEM 4.3 – FIFA Commute Gameplan Campaign – Robyn Egbert, H-GAC**

Robyn Egbert provided an overview of H-GAC Commute Solutions planning to support the FIFA World Cup event. The program focuses on reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips through transit, carpool/vanpool, and

employer strategies. Planning includes workshops, employer toolkits, commuter outreach, and a centralized information hub.

Melanie Beaman suggested clarifying messaging to emphasize choosing alternative transportation to driving alone, noting some audiences may already be transit users.

#### **ITEM 4.4 – Transit Standard Operating Procedure for Project Descriptions – Stephen Keen, H-GAC**

Stephen Keen presented draft SOP guidance for transit projects submitted to TIP/RTP to reduce delays related to project description issues and STIP approvals. The draft focuses on FTA formula funding categories 5307, 5310, 5337, and 5339 and includes use of ALI (Activity Line Item) descriptions (as applicable), funding category, and apportionment year. The SOP is intended as a live document subject to updates. Feedback was requested by February TIP Subcommittee meeting (Wednesday, Feb. 4).

James Oliver noted that there were some additional FTA requirements not included in H-GAC's presentation that needed to be addressed. Vernon Chambers asked about using the ALI codes in the FTA's TrAMS database. Stephen Keen responded that that was a question staff would want to bring to the FTA next time they meet.

#### **ITEM 4.5 – Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan Update – Bennie Chambers, H-GAC and Kareem Heshmat, H-GAC**

Bennie Chambers provided an update on the 2027–2031 RPTCP effort, a federally- and state-mandated five-year plan guiding coordination and funding eligibility. Plan elements include vision and goals, provider inventory, needs assessment, gaps analysis, and public outreach. The interim plan deadline was moved to March; public workshops are planned for spring/summer; the final plan is due October 30, 2026. Staff noted the plan will be developed in-house.

Kareem Heshmat discussed the Mobility Links database and asked for Subcommittee feedback on a transit rider survey and a transit service provider inventory as well as help with circulating these surveys between now and May of 2026. Subcommittee members were asked to share engagement opportunities as well, especially if they involve transit-dependent populations.

There were no questions or comments from the Subcommittee.

#### **ITEM 4.6 – H-GAC Transit Year in Review – Thomas Gray, H-GAC**

Thomas Gray summarized 2025 coordinated public transportation accomplishments and upcoming work, including completed studies, ongoing planning efforts, regional ridership recovery trends, FIFA World Cup coordination, the 2050 RTP public transportation component, and potential work group activities. Staff introductions and key project contacts were provided.

There were no questions or comments from the Subcommittee.

#### **TRANSIT AND HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY REPORTS**

There were no agency reports.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Oliver adjourned the meeting at 11:02 am.

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



# Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan 2027-2031 Update



**Bennie Chambers, MCD**  
**Kareem Heshmat, AICP, GNU-A**



Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



# Agenda

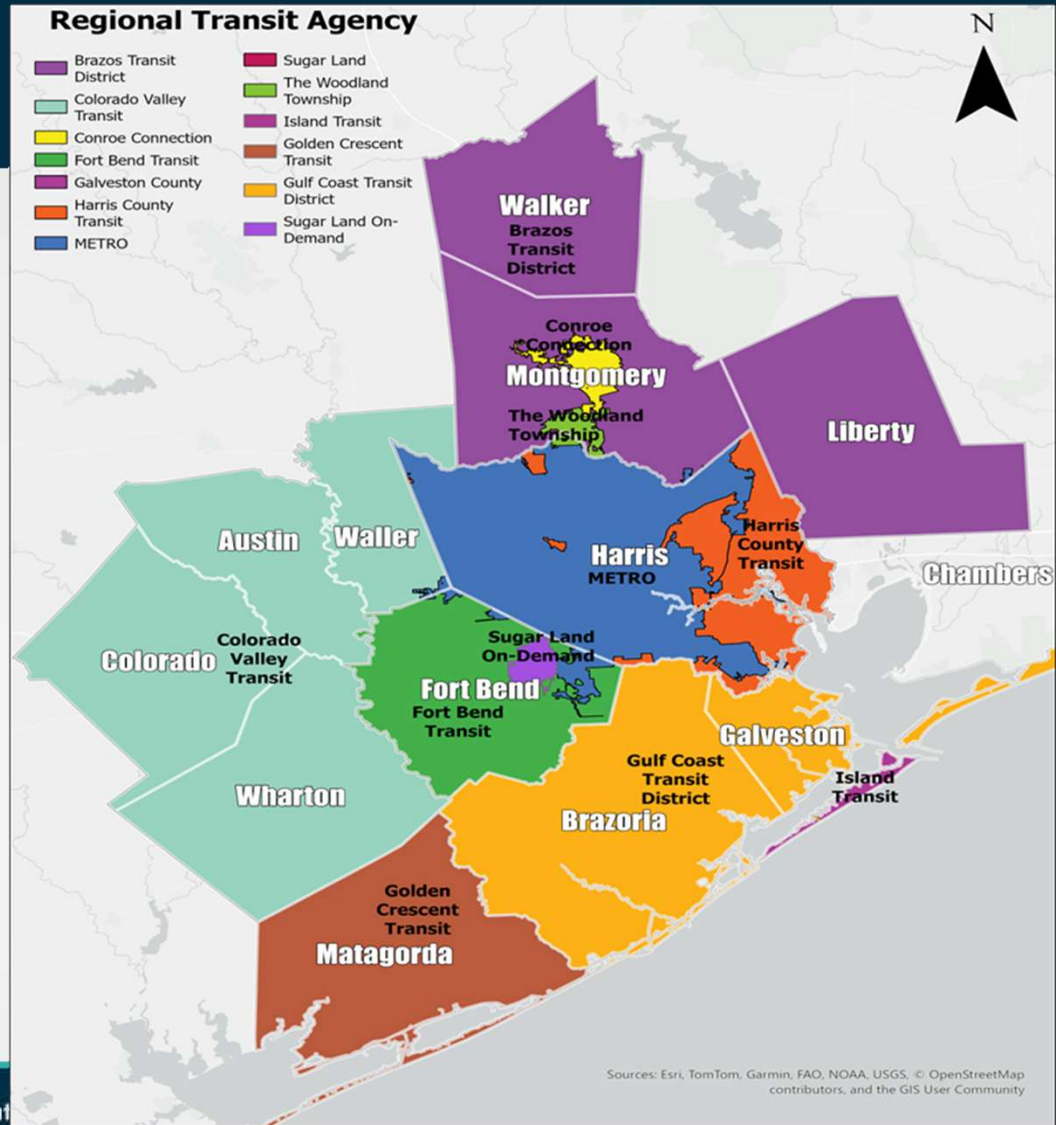


- Plan Overview
- Transit Need Index
- Public Engagement
  - Community Survey
  - Service Provider Survey – Mobility Links
  - Upcoming Events
- Support Needed
- Conclusion

# What is the RPTCP?



- Federal and state-mandated plan (5yrs)
- Guides public and human service coordination:
  - Improve mobility access
  - Assess unmet needs
  - Facilitate engagement
  - Recommend projects
  - Align with TxDOT requirements
- Supports funding eligibility for programs such as FTA Section 5310



# *Project Vision*

“To build a coordinated, transit-for-all, and efficient regional public transportation system that connects people to jobs, healthcare, education, and essential services across the 13-county Gulf Coast region.”

# Plan Elements



Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Provider Inventory

Needs Assessment

Gaps Analysis

Public Outreach



## **Coordination Plan Guidebook**

Step by Step Instructions for Updating and Maintaining Regional Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plans

Authors:  
Will Rodman, Suzie Edrington, James Cardenas,  
Tina Geiselbrecht, and Ross Peterson

Prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation

February 2025

# RPTCP Creates Real Improvements



## Prior Recommendations Included:

- **Expanded Mobility:** Fort Bend Transit Park & Ride and Sugar Land Microtransit pilots expanded regional access to jobs and services.
- **Access for All:** RPTCP and RTIS work together to improve public transportation for everyone, with a special focus on seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, low-income residents, and individuals with limited English proficiency.
- **Funding Alignment:** Support for studies and pilots such as the Regional Transit Information Study (RTIS) and CMAQ-funded initiatives through RTP/TIP alignment.
- **Community Impact:** Mobility Links — created through the RPTCP process — continues to connect residents to available transportation options across the region.

# Timeline & Deliverables



## Background & Data Analysis

- Existing conditions study
  - Transit Need Index (TNI)
  - Demographic patterns
  - Locating spatial gaps
- August 2025 → Ongoing

## Public Engagement & Outreach Sprint

- Transit rider survey
- Provider inventory
- Community events
- Public workshops
- Focus groups
- Outreach

January → June

## QAQC & Plan Adoption

- Draft recommendations
- Internal proofread
- Stakeholder buy-in
- Plan adoption
- Turnover to TxDOT (10/30)

August → October

# Transit Need Index



## **About**

- Data-driven spatial tool
- Identifies areas with the highest demand for transit based on socioeconomic factors

## **How RTCS Can Help**

- Validate geographic 'hot spots'
- Share feedback on where demand may be changing
- Tell us about gaps or overlaps that may be missed by data alone
- Identify future investment

# Public Engagement



- Community Survey
- Service Provider Survey – Mobility Links
- Upcoming Events



# Community Survey is Live!

- ~20 questions
  - Identify service and need gaps
  - Where to place additional resources

Access via website:

[https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp\\_2027-2031](https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp_2027-2031)

Help Shape the Future of Regional Public Transportation!

Drop a Pin on the Map

## Help Shape the Future of Regional Public Transportation!

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is preparing the 2027-2031 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP). This is where YOU come in!

By sharing your experiences and observations, you'll help H-GAC better connect communities across our 13-county region:

- **Identify the gaps:** where do buses, trains, and other transit need to go?
- **Allocate funding wisely:** make sure resources go to the areas that need them most
- **Connect communities:** help people reach work, education, healthcare, and essential services

This survey is 20 questions long and should take less than 10 minutes. Your answers are **confidential** and will be used only to guide future transportation planning.

Thank you for sharing your experiences and ideas!

# Service Provider Survey is Live!

- ~50 questions
  - Identify services provided, schedules, funding sources, etc.
  - Hear directly from providers
  - Feeds into Mobility Links

Fillable PDF hosted on website:

[https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp\\_2027-2031](https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp_2027-2031)



**Organization Characteristics and Services Provided**

A. Organization and Contact Information

1. Identification of organization:

a. Organization name: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_

c. City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e. Name of individual responding to survey: \_\_\_\_\_

f. Email of respondent contact: \_\_\_\_\_

g. Title of respondent contact: \_\_\_\_\_

h. Agency website: \_\_\_\_\_

**Find a Transportation Service Provider**

Search for transportation service providers in the Houston-Galveston region by using any of the following search criteria.

**County Service Area**

<input type="checkbox"/> Austin County	<input type="checkbox"/> Galveston County	<input type="checkbox"/> Walker County
<input type="checkbox"/> Brazoria County	<input type="checkbox"/> Harris County	<input type="checkbox"/> Waller County
<input type="checkbox"/> Chambers County	<input type="checkbox"/> Liberty County	<input type="checkbox"/> Wharton County
<input type="checkbox"/> Colorado County	<input type="checkbox"/> Matagorda County	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Bend County	<input type="checkbox"/> Montgomery County	

**Service Type**

<input type="checkbox"/> All Trip Purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> General Public
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Emergency Medical Trips	<input type="checkbox"/> Disabled/Elderly
<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping/Recreational/Other Trips	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Veteran, Youth)

**Organization Name**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reset** **Search for Providers**

# Engagement and Outreach



## ***Presentations and Meetings***

- **Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee (RTCS)**
  - April
  - July
  
- **H-GAC**
  - Board – Tues 3/17
  - TAC – Weds 3/18
  - RAQPAC – TBD

## ***Upcoming Outreach Events***

- **Area Agency on Aging**
  - 5 county roadshow thru May
  
- **Apr**
  - METRO Park & Rides, Ride Store and downtown area
  - Ft. Bend Transit
  
- **TBD**
  - In Person at H-GAC
  - Virtual hosted by H-GAC
  - On-site at transit providers

# How Can You Help? – Survey Distribution



- Share the community survey through your websites, newsletters, social media, and community networks.
- Forthcoming toolkit from Comms team
- [https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp\\_2027-2031](https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp_2027-2031)



# How Can You Help? – Workshops & Events



- Help us coordinate outreach events at your transit centers and common areas.
- Either tagging along for existing events or standalone public forums at your transit center.



# How Can You Help? – Share Future Plans



- Share complaint tickets, 311 submittals or feedback forms help us identify service gaps
- Share your expansion plans, service extensions, capital investments, etc. so they can be reflected in Plan recommendations



# Thank You!



**Bennie Chambers III, MCD**

Senior Planner

[Bennie.Chambers@h-gac.com](mailto:Bennie.Chambers@h-gac.com)

**Kareem Heshmat, AICP, CNU-A**

Senior Planner

[Kareem.Heshmat@h-gac.com](mailto:Kareem.Heshmat@h-gac.com)

Project website:

[https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp\\_2027-2031](https://engage.h-gac.com/rptcp_2027-2031)





# Regional Transit Information Study (RTIS) Update

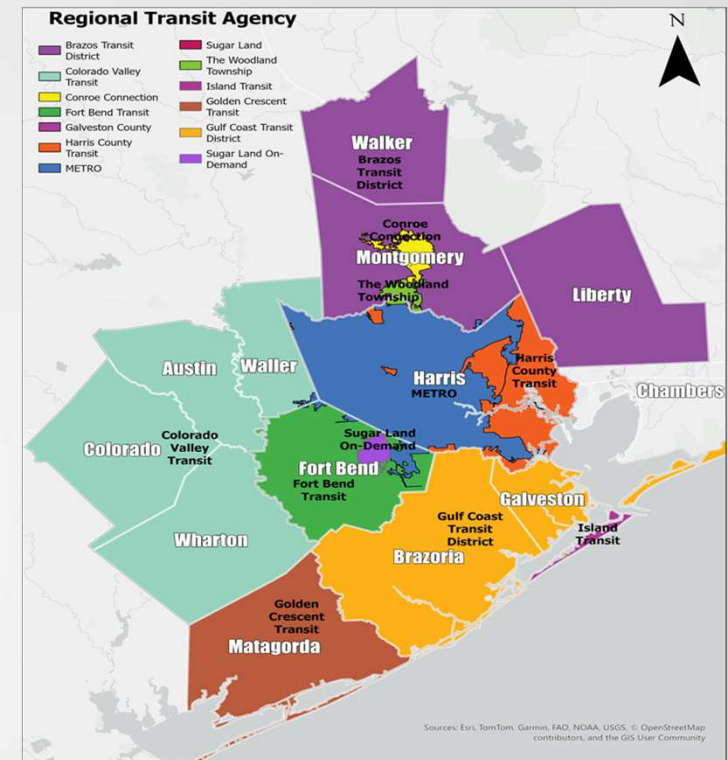


Bennie Chambers III, MCD  
March 12, 2026

# What is the RTIS?

RTIS is a regional initiative to improve how transit information is shared and accessed across the Houston-Galveston region.

The study evaluates how riders currently receive transit information, identifies gaps across agencies, and develops strategies to improve coordination, accessibility, and communication for all users.



# Why RTIS Matters

- The region includes 11 transit providers across the 13-county region
- However, riders often experience challenges when trying to find and use transit information
- Common challenges include:
  - Difficulty finding reliable transit information
  - Inconsistent information across agencies
  - Limited real-time updates
  - Lack of coordination between providers
- Goal: Improve how transit information is delivered to riders across agencies

# What The Study Examines

- RTIS evaluates how riders receive and use transit information
- The study focuses on:
  - What information riders need most
  - How transit information is currently provided
  - Where gaps exist across agencies
  - Opportunities to improve regional coordination
- The project ultimately aims to develop clear, actionable strategies to improve communication across transit providers

# Key Findings So Far

- Research and peer agency review identified several themes
- Riders need:
  - Clear route and schedule information
  - Accurate real-time updates
  - Easy-to-understand fare information
  - Wayfinding and transfer guidance
  - Accessibility information
- Priority groups include:
  - Seniors
  - People with disabilities
  - Limited English proficiency (LEP) riders
  - Riders without smartphones

These groups require simple, multilingual, and accessible information options

# Next Steps

- The RTIS will develop recommendations to improve transit information regionwide
- Upcoming work includes:
  - Transit agency coordination
  - Stakeholder and Steering committee engagements
  - Development of best practices
  - Regional recommendations for information sharing
  - Best Practice Guide for the region
- Outcome:
  - A set of strategies to improve accessibility, coordination, and usability of transit information across the region

# Thank You!

***Bennie Chambers III, MCD***

Senior Planner

[bennie.chambers@h-gac.com](mailto:bennie.chambers@h-gac.com)



Project website:

<https://engage.h-gac.com/regional-transit-information-study-rtis>



# Regional Transit Ridership Update



**Thomas B. Gray, AICP**  
**March 12, 2026**

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# Background

- During the pandemic, H-GAC staff conducted a monthly survey of the effects of COVID-19 on regional transit agencies
  - Service adjustments
  - Mitigation efforts
  - Ridership
- Survey was ended at end of 2021 at agencies' request
- Subcommittee still saw value in monitoring regional ridership trends
- Current survey is conducted quarterly, collects monthly ridership as well as information about major service changes

# Key Findings

- Regional ridership (all modes) continues to recover, albeit at a slower rate than previous years:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Boardings	90,109,785	53,844,212	47,641,830	61,139,810	72,215,552	78,071,798	79,759,583
Share of 2019	100.0%	59.8%	52.9%	67.9%	80.1%	86.6%	88.5%

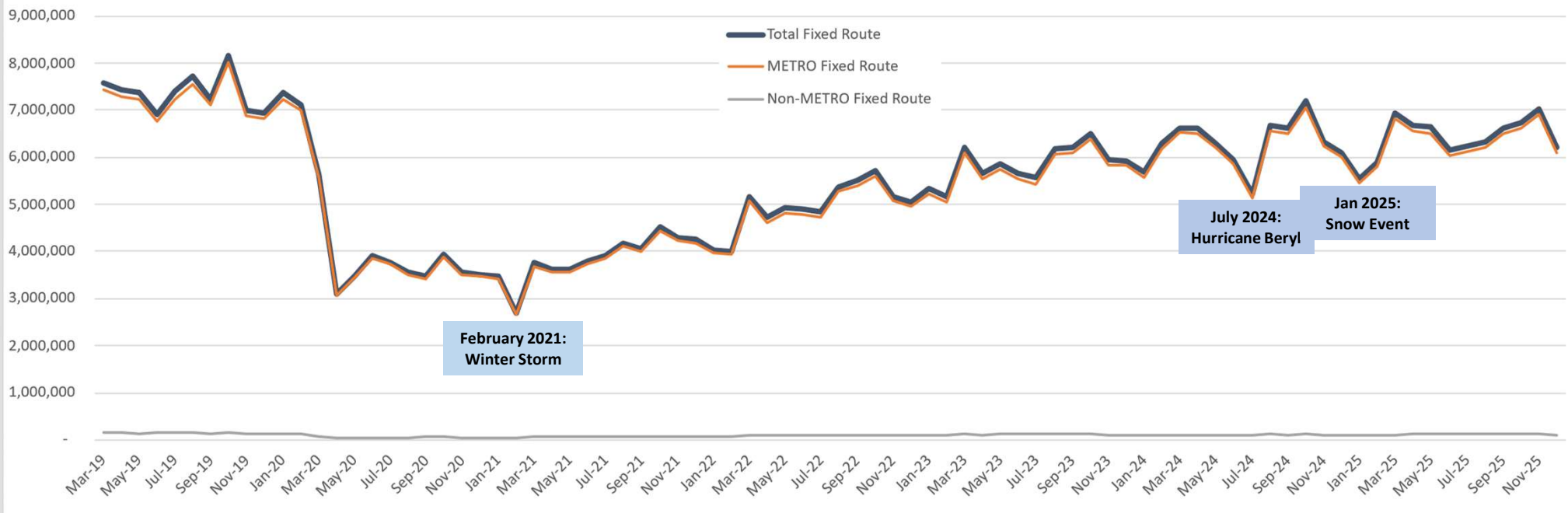
- Demand response and local bus continue to show the most recovery; park and ride shows the least
  - 2025 Regionwide demand response = 122% of 2019 ridership
  - 2025 METRO local bus = 99% of 2019 ridership
  - 2025 METRO park and ride = 53% of 2019 ridership

# Noteworthy for 2025

- Non-fixed route ridership set new record in October 2025
    - New and expanded microtransit services by METRO and Sugar Land
  - Fort Bend Transit experienced 42% increase P&R ridership
    - Westpark Park and Ride; new service to Energy Corridor
  - Harris County Transit experienced 19% increase in local bus ridership
  - METRORail ridership decreased by 6.6%
  - GCTD introduced regional bus routes
    - Ex.: “Splash” bus route from Galveston to Texas City
- (Standard Disclaimer: Ridership is closely tied to service provision!)
- Driver and vehicle availability have been issues since pandemic

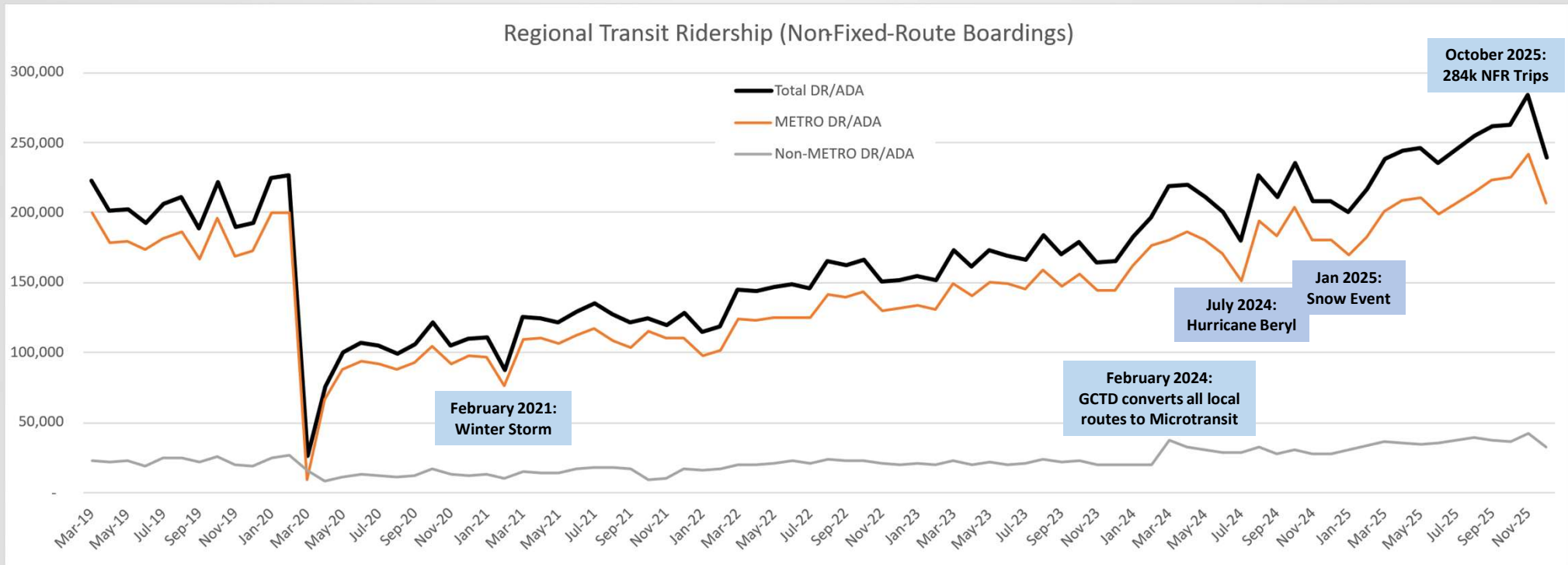
# Regional Fixed-Route Ridership Trends

Regional Transit Ridership (Fixed Route Boardings): March 2019 through December 2025



METRO carried 97.7% of the region's fixed-route ridership in 2025 (was 98.3% in 2024)

# Regional Non-Fixed-Route Ridership Trends



METRO carried 85.1% of the region's non-fixed-route (e.g. ADA paratransit, demand response, microtransit) in 2025 (was 86.1% in 2024)

# Next Steps

- H-GAC staff will continue to conduct survey in 2026 on quarterly basis
  - Will be sending out survey for Q1 2026 shortly
  - Please remember to report major service changes, too!
- We know your staff is busy and we appreciate your continued help!

***THANK YOU!***



# Safe Systems Workshop



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# Safety Action Plan Purpose

- The purpose of the H-GAC Safety Action Plan project is to **develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes** throughout the region.
- The project will identify **recommendations** which are
  - Actionable,
  - Data-driven,
  - Informed by public input, and
  - Guided by the Safety Task Force (STF)



# Safe Systems Workshop Overview

- Who: H-GAC Subcommittee members, H-GAC Transportation Safety Committee, and the Regional Safety Task Force
- What: Breakout groups
- When: April 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00
- Where: H-GAC office
- Why: The goal of the workshop is to prioritize safety recommendations for each emphasis area