

**Regional Transit Coordination (RTC)
Subcommittee Meeting
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Online Meeting/Conference Call
Thursday April 9, 2020
9:30-11:00 AM**

Agenda

1. Introductions and Certification of Quorum (8) – Vernon Chambers, Harris County Transit, Chair
2. Public Comments
3. Action Items:
 - Adoption of Agenda
 - Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Summary of January 9, 2020
4. Information Items: (15 minutes or less each)
 - 4.1 ConnectSmart Update – Brenda Bustillos, Texas Department of Transportation
 - 4.2 Mobility Links Interactive Database Update – Ashley Seals, H-GAC
 - 4.3 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act – Alan Rodenstein, H-GAC
 - 4.4 Survey of Coronavirus Effects on Regional Transit Providers – Thomas Gray, H-GAC
 - 4.5 Performance Measures (Asset Management and Public Transportation Safety Plans) – Alan Rodenstein, H-GAC
 - 4.6 Regionally Coordinated Transit Plan (RCTP) Update – Alan Rodenstein, H-GAC
 - 4.7 METRO Regional Fare System Update – Thomas Gray, H-GAC
 - 4.8 Ozone Action Update – Jamila Owens, H-GAC
5. Agency Reports (5 minutes or less each)

RTC Subcommittee Upcoming Quarterly Meetings: July 9, 2020, October 8, 2020

REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, January 9, 2020 – 9:30am – 11:00am

Houston-Galveston Area Council

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Valerie Marvin – City of Pearland
Perri D’Armond – Fort Bend County Transit
Vernon Chambers – Harris County Transit
Steve Atchison – American Red Cross

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Jason Jones – Houston Center for Independent
Living
Ken Fickes, Harris County Transit
De’Andre J. Guinn – City of Conroe

OTHERS PRESENT

Travis Madison - TxDOT
Paula Haley Polk- TxDOT
Dana Green – TxDOT
Janis Scott – LINK Houston
Reggie Brown - METRO
Shekeylia Douglas – Harris County Rides
Sean Middleton – Connect Transit/GCC
Michael Copeland – CDM Smith
Michael Conklin – Evolve Houston

H-GAC STAFF PRESENT

Kari Hackett
Jamila Owens
Lydia Abebe
Alan Rodenstein
Deborah Mayfield
Trenece Bailey

BRIEFING

Overview

The RTCS Members and Alternates were presented with the following information and updates on the following: Commute Solutions Update, Metro Regional Fare System Update, Updates on the Interactive Database Workgroup and the Google Transit Coordination and Regional Transit Fare System. Also, Non-Emergency Medical Transportation System Gaps, Barriers and Potential Solutions was discussed.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 2A. – Adoption of Agenda

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

Action Item Motion: There was no quorum present.

ITEM 2B. – Approval of Meeting Summary

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, Harris County requested a motion to approve the RTC Meeting Summary for the July 11, 2019 and October 10, 2019 meeting were presented.

Action Item: There was no quorum present. This item was deferred until the April 9, 2020 meeting.

ITEM 3. – Public Comment

There were no public comments presented to the subcommittee.

INFORMATION ITEMS

ITEM 4.1 – Commute Solutions Updates- Deborah Mayfield, H-GAC and Jamila Owens, H-GAC

Ms. Deborah Mayfield, H-GAC, briefed the subcommittee on the revamping of the Commute Solutions Program. The workplan will be a comprehensive plan that will provide outreach and education on alternative modes of transportation. The initiatives will examine and coordinate ways to improve transportation, mobility for commuters, employers and transit agencies now and in the future. Ms. Mayfield also mentioned, the Commute Solutions program is a one stop resource that promotes commute alternatives which consist of transit, carpooling, van pooling, pedestrian-bicycling and telework. The overall goal is to reduce vehicle miles traveled in the region. Also, the Employer Partners Program and several campaigns such as Earth Day, Bike to Work, Commute Solutions Month, Ozone Action, Bike-Walk to School Days will be implemented in the future.

Ms. Jamila Owens, H-GAC, gave an overview of **Agency Partners Program** which facilitates communication with H-GAC staff, transit agencies and private partners to work together to increase ridership in the region. She mentioned the collaboration with the City of Conroe. Ms. Owens also updated the subcommittee on the **Ozone Action Program**. This campaign will have transit at the heart of it. The program was first initiated in the 90's with METRO and included half-price fares for a month. They plan to do it again in 2020 and would like to work with METRO and any other interested transit agency. Ms. Owens concluded her presentation on the **Emergency Ride Home Program**. In other regions, Emergency Ride home covers anyone that participates in any clean commute behavior. We want to expand Emergency Ride Home in our region. Ft. Bend and The Woodlands have a program in place. We would like for everyone who uses transit and qualifies for the service be able to take advantage of it. There would be limits on its use. Let us know if you want to participate.

A short question and answer period followed the presentation.

ITEM 4.2 – METRO Regional Fare System Updates– Reggie Brown, METRO

Mr. Reggie Brown, METRO, updated the subcommittee on the METRO Regional Fare System. Mr. Brown mentioned that this has been in process for the last couple years. An RFP went out in late 2018 and they received proposals back early 2019. The plan was to go the METRO Board in November 2019 to ask for permission to contract but it was pushed back. In December 2019, it was presented to the Board, a fare free option was discussed. The Regional Fare System is on the METRO Board Agenda for January 2020.

Discussion followed the presentation.

ITEM 4.3 – Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RTCP) Updates:

Interactive Database Workgroup – Mobility Links

Mr. Kari Hackett, H-GAC, updated the subcommittee on the Interactive Database Workgroup. The workgroup has met and working with H-GAC's Communications staff. The database will be called **Mobility Links** (One call – One Click.) There will be a soft launch in January and February and a formal launch in the Spring. There is a workgroup scheduled for the January 27, 2020. An update of the Communication plan and a draft of the public outreach campaign will occur at a later meeting.

Google Transit Coordinate and Regional Transit Fare System

Mr. Hackett continued his presentation and updated the subcommittee on the Regional Transit Trip Planner on the Google transit platform. They are in the process of doing a quality assessment review with Google Transit for Harris County transit and Conroe connections and have started working with Island Transit and Colorado Valley and other transit providers. Mr. Hackett also gave an update of the Seamless Fare project which was approved by the H-GAC Board and allows staff to set up an intergovernmental agreement with METRO. The agreement is under review by METRO staff and legal team. It should be complete this month. The Memorandum of Understanding which will include all transit providers will agree to maintain all equipment and fees. This MOU is voluntary. It should be ready for signature by the end of month.

ITEM 5. – Discussion Topic – Non-Emergency Medical Transportation System Gaps, Barriers and Potential Solutions.

Mr. Kari Hackett, H-GAC, gave an update on request for non-emergency medical transportation calls that H-GAC has been receiving. Mr. Hackett said H-GAC is not a service provider but will try to refer customers to transit providers or agencies in the area. This is a regional challenge. We need to try to develop strategies to mitigate these calls.

Mr. Hackett asked the subcommittee to discuss this item and subcommittee members participated.

ITEM 6. – Agency Reports

Ms. Vernon Chambers, Chair, Harris County, invited subcommittee members to briefly give updates on their agency efforts. Updates were provided by several transit providers and agencies.

Next RTCS Quarterly Meeting – April 9, 2020 (Tentative) H-GAC, 2nd Floor, Conference Room B/C

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am

Mobility Links Campaign Brief

Campaign Overview

Raise awareness of new Mobility Links resource website for mobility managers who provide services for disabled persons in the Houston-Galveston region. Also, soft direct marketing and outreach to disabled audiences.

Goal

Primary goal: Awareness – raise awareness of availability of website

Secondary goal: Conversion – drive target audiences to visit website

Target Audiences

Primary audience: Mobility managers and services providers to persons with disabilities in the Houston-Galveston region

Secondary audience: Persons with disabilities in need of mobility transportation information and resources in the Houston-Galveston region

Message Strategy

Main Takeaways:

- The Houston-Galveston Area Council has a new Mobility Links website for persons with disabilities in need of transportation services in their community.
- Mobility managers have a new easy-to-use, one-stop hub to find providers of medical transport, commute assistance, taxi and shuttle services, meals on wheel, and more for disabled residents in their community.
- Our user-friendly search tool contains directory information, hours of operation, costs info, and more on hundreds of mobility service providers throughout the 13-county region.
- Results can be broken down by county service area, service type, passenger type, and organization name.
- H-GAC's Mobility Links helps connect our disabled residents with the services they need to remain active and independent in their community.
- **CTA:** Go to www.h-gac.com/mobility-links to try for yourself.

Go to Market Strategy

Channels: Print, outreach (more channels TBD)

Sample Pieces:

See attached document(s)

Mobility Links Launch

PROJECT NAME

Mobility Links Launch

PREPARED BY

Communications Department

Week of:	6-Apr	13-Apr	20-Apr	27-Apr	4-May	11-May	Notes
Development of flyer	3-Apr						Crystal
Development of social media graphics		13-Apr					Crystal
Intranet announcement				30-Apr			Lauren
Regional Focus Newsletter announcement					5-May		Lauren
Insider Newsletter announcement					7-May		Lauren
Region View Newsletter announcement					12-May		Francis
Social media postings (1xweek)				30-Apr		15-May	Lauren
Flyers for internal partners to distribute (Community Orgs, Aging Agency)				30-Apr			Francis

Start Task

End Task

One-Time Task

mobilitylinks



The Houston-Galveston Area Council has a new Mobility Links website for persons with disabilities in need of transportation services in their community.

It's easy as 1, 2, 3

Our user-friendly search tool contains directory information, hours of operation, costs info, and more on hundreds of mobility service providers throughout the 13-county region. Results can be broken down by county service area, service type, passenger type, and organization name.



CHOOSE YOUR COUNTY

Choose any of the 13 counties in the H-GAC region.



SELECT SERVICE TYPE

Select the service type you want to use.



SELECT PASSENGER TYPE

Select the passenger type that best represents you.

Go to h-gac.com/mobility-links



Houston-Galveston
Area Council

2020 CARES ACT INSTANT UPDATE

Alan Rodenstein
April 9, 2020 RTC Subcommittee
Agenda Item 4.3

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1

TRANSIT PART OF \$ 2 TRILLION PACKAGE

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- Transit gets \$25 billion nationwide
- Annual allocation ~ \$10 billion
- Full reimbursement (100% money!) for administration, operating and capital expenses for all agencies
- Need to file requests for reimbursement

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2

ALLOCATIONS (IN MILLIONS)

- Houston UZA – \$258.6 (METRO is designated recipient)
- Conroe/The Woodlands UZA – \$9.5
- Galveston UZA – \$4.7
- Texas City UZA – \$4.3 (Plus Galveston County rural allocation)
- Lake Jackson/Angleton UZA – \$3.3 (Plus Brazoria County rural allocation)
- Fort Bend County – METRO Suballocation TBD (Plus Fort Bend County rural allocation)
- Harris County Transit – METRO Suballocation TBD
- Colorado Valley Transit (25% of rural allocation for Waller County)

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3

CAPITAL FUNDING AND TIP/STIP

Do projects have to be in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?

A: It depends. CARES Act funds used to pay for operating expenses do not need to be included in the TIP/STIP. CARES Act funds used to pay for capital expenses for emergency relief do not need to be included in the TIP/STIP unless the projects are for substantial functional, locational, or capacity changes. 23 CFR §§ 450.326(e)(5), 450.218(g)(5). Accordingly, capital projects to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 that involve substantial functional, locational, or capacity changes must be included in the TIP/STIP.

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NEXT STEPS

- Cover operations and stay afloat first
- Consider existing unmet capital needs
- Consider expansion that is sustainable post CARES Act



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Questions?



6

Coronavirus Survey for Regional Transit Agencies

The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as efforts to combat it (e.g. social distancing guidelines and “Stay at Home” orders), have had a dramatic effect on the region. The Houston-Galveston Area Council is documenting and studying the full range of the pandemic’s effects – social, economic, environmental, transportation and public safety – in order to provide a meaningful analysis of impacts to our region, mitigate damage and identify opportunities for resiliency and recovery.

As part of this effort, H-GAC has created a survey to record and track the pandemic’s impacts to the region’s transit providers as well as their patrons. This short survey is intended to track changes in ridership brought on by the pandemic as well as the changes in service and other measures agencies have implemented as a response.

This survey will be sent to regional transit providers on a monthly basis over the course of the pandemic. It is available at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9TNTTWH>

We know this is a busy and difficult time for regional transit providers, so your cooperation in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Thomas Gray at thomas.gray@h-gac.com or at 832-681-2545.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES (ASSET MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY PLANS)

Alan Rodenstein
April 9, 2020 RTC Subcommittee
Agenda Item 4.5

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1

Who Needs to Report to FTA

- METRO
- The Woodlands Township
- Fort Bend County Transit
- Island Transit
- Connect Transit
- Harris County Transit
- Brazos District
- Conroe Connection

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2

Transit Asset Management (TAMS)

- All agencies submitted numbers to H-GAC except Colorado Valley
- H-GAC uses weighted average of all agencies
- Need existing plans even if you already sent them to:
alan.rodenstein@h-gac.com
- Look at existing numbers and transit assets and do you need to update
- Prefer update by May 15 if you have changes
- Cares Act may affect transit assets
- Public comment period will be needed

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3

PTASP Program

- Public Transit Agency Safety Program
- Due by July 20, 2020 (at this time)
- Need to set targets and share with H-GAC
- Must develop a safety plan
- Small agency Template is available at FTA website
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/regulations-and-programs/safety/public-transportation-agency-safety-program/147941/sample-asp-small-public-transp-provider-20200226.p>

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4

Agencies Must Set Targets and Share with MPO

- We need to come up with regional average for all,
- Tier 1 (METRO)
- Tier 2 (All regional agencies)
- Deadline July 20

5

Questions?

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GULF COAST RCTP 2022-2026 UPDATE

Alan Rodenstein
 April 9, 2020 RTC Subcommittee
 Agenda Item 4.6

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1

RCTP BACKGROUND

- TxDOT Mandate for all Planning Regions starting in 2006
- Harris County Rides is signature regional accomplishment of RCTP
- Human service supplement or sole service for community
- Five year RCTP updates have been required
- 2011 update began process for common fare media in region
- RTCS has been regional community partner in developing plan

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2

RCTP UPDATES

- Comprehensive update
- Three deliverables required by TxDOT:
 - Comprehensive Transit – Human Service Provider Inventory
 - Assessment of Needs, Gaps and Overlaps
 - Developments of Five Year Plan
- Supplemented by Regional Survey and Focus Groups in 2016

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3

ACHIEVEMENTS 2016 UPDATE

- Same core elements of report ongoing
- Mobility Links – One Call One Click resource
- GTFS Data – Google Maps
- Common fare media efforts with transit agencies
- Continued expansion into other counties and communities with Harris County Rides
- Meeting of Transit Gaps – Harris County Transit routes (Channelview)

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4

CURRENT PLAN UPDATE

- New Team and Project Manager
- Project Manager worked on other regions' 2006 plans and 2016 Gulf Coast update
- 25+ years transit experience in planning, consulting and in transit operations and administration
- Plan to be largely prepared in-house Sept 1, 2020 – Feb 28, 2022
- Focus groups and survey will be contracted
- Look to use wide range of in-house expertise – new tools



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5

NEW DEVELOPMENTS EXPECTED

- Will add innovative providers to transit/human service inventory
- Greater sophistication in analysis of needs and gaps
- Consideration of needs and gaps for rural counties and suburban counties and Harris County
- Rural only 5% of region population but needs focus



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NEXT STEPS

- Application Due Tomorrow
- Develop Goals and Objectives for 2022-2026 (Revised from Application)
- RTCS Steering Group on Plan - Meeting Quarterly
- Quarterly Reports on Progress on Plan
- More comprehensive updates annually
- Expected annual presentations to TAC and TPC
- Final report to RTCS, TAC, and TPC and other organizations upon request



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Questions?



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