MEETING OF THE RTP SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL
TELECONFERENCE PARTICIPATION VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
September 13, 2023
1:30PM
Minutes

Member Attendance:

Primary-Name	Present	Alternate-Name	Present
Joe Cutrufo	NO	Nikki Knight	N0
Bill Zrioka	NO	Marcel Allen	NO
Elijah Williams	YES	Elizabeth Whitton	NO
Peter Eccles	YES	Dexter Handy	YES
Harrison Humphreys	YES	Amy Skicki	YES
Monique Johnson	NO	Marcus Snell	YES
David Fields	YES	Ian Hlavacek	NO
Kimberly Judge	NO	Shashi Kumar	NO
Timothy Smith	NO	Jay Knight	NO
Todd Stephens	YES	Ruthann Haut	YES
Morad Kabiri	NO	Jildardo Arias	NO
Cara Davis	NO	Christopher Sims	YES
Jameson Appel	YES	Yolci Ramirez	YES
Perri D'Armond	YES	Stacy Slawinski	NO
Katherine Parker	YES	Katherine Summerlin	NO
Bruce Mann	YES	Rohit Saxena	NO
Mike Wilson	YES	Jason Miura	NO
Charles Airiohuodion	YES	Jeffrey English	YES
Lisa Collins	NO	Arnold Vowles	YES
Ken Fickes	YES	Vernon Chambers	YES
Sean Middleton	YES	Vacant	
Alberto Lyne	NO	Rachel Die	YES
Brian Alcott	YES	Vacant	

Others Present: Veronica Waller, Daniel Brassil, Gloria Brown, Carrie Evans, Qun Zhao, Jean Mann, Allie Isbell, Megan Kennison, Thomas Gray, Eliza Paul, James Koch, Karen Owen, Carlene Mullins, Lucinda Martinez, Sydni Ligons, Christopher Whaley, Stephen Gage, Catherine McCreight.
Staff Participating:
Stephen Keen, Vishu Lingala, Craig Raborn

1. Call to Order
    a. Chair Perri D'Armond calls the meeting to order at 1:30 PM
    b. Chair confirms quorum.
2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from August 9, 2023.
    a. Mike Wilson moves for approval.
    b. Sean Middleton seconds the motion for approval.
    c. Minutes are approved as presented.
3. RTP Project Evaluation Process (Stephen Keen presenting)
    a. RTP Subcommittee Charge: Reminder

a) Staff reminds the RTP Subcommittee that their charge is to develop this Process with solely the RTP in mind. The RTP Project Development Process is different from the Project Selection Process.
b) No Questions or Comments

b. What we heard: August 2023
a) Staff addressed three requests/comments from the August RTP Subcommittee.
- The Subcommittee requested that an emergency process be established within the RTP Project Development Process. Staff incorporated this in the draft proposal.
- The Subcommittee requested that the RTP be updated more frequently. Staff responded that the RTP will continue to be updated every four years as federally mandated.
- The Subcommittee asked if the MPO had a resource for local project sponsors that shows how projects flow through the MPO Process. While staff mentioned during the August meeting that this resource is under development, staff wanted to reiterate it here.

c. RTP project Development Process: Proposal
a) General Overview
- Staff has developed a draft proposal for the Subcommittee. Staff encourages feedback from members, and states that the proposal should ultimately be modified to best fit the vision of the Subcommittee.
b) Step-by-Step
- The RTP Project Development Process will follow a five-step process. The steps are as follows: Access, Submission, Evaluation, Recommendation, and Presentation.
- **Step 1: Access.** The project portal will offer an online only application. It will be open for 60 days to allow project sponsors to do necessary public outreach, receive administrative approvals, and gather pertinent data for the submission. The process will occur every two years. Staff encourages feedback on the timing aspects of this step.
- **Step 2: Submission.** The project sponsor will submit the following information in their submission: applicant information (name, email/phone number, and organization), project information (name, description/scope of work, limits, cost, and demonstration of need), documented public outreach and either supporting documentation or an explanation of why there was no public outreach, presence in previous studies or plans and if so, the name of the study/plan with link attached, if the project is regionally significant, and finally, if the project addresses the RTP goals. The application will ask five questions, each address one of the five RTP goals. Project sponsors will be required to give supporting information, whether that be data-drive, narrative-driven, or both.
- **Step 2, Question 1: Improve Safety.** The application will pose the following questions: Does this project decrease fatalities on the transportation network? Does it decrease serious injuries? Staff will score the projects by looking to the verification information provided by the sponsor. Staff will score the project solely on this information. For example, the project sponsor could submit a map that shows fatalities

and serious injuries within the project limits and complete the narrative that states fatalities and serious injuries are present and will be addressed by the project with an explanation on how it will do so.

- **Step 2, Question 2: Achieve and Maintain a State of Good Repair.** This application will pose the following question: does the project help achieve and maintain good condition for affected roads, bridges, and transit facilities and/or equipment? To verify these answers, staff will look to supporting information provided by the sponsor. For example, the project sponsor could provide current conditions of the road, bridge, and/or transit facilities/equipment and provide a narrative explaining why the road, bridge, and/or transit facility/equipment needs to be replaced or revived.

- **Step 2, Question 3: Move People and Goods Reliably and Efficiently.** The application will pose the following questions: Does the project increase or maintain travel time reliability? Does it decrease annual peak hours of excessive delay? Supporting information examples can include, but are not limited to, calculating travel time reliability and providing a narrative explaining how this project increases travel time reliability or how this project positively effects the movement of people and goods reliably and efficiently.

- **Step 2, Question 4: Strengthen Regional and Economic Competitiveness.** The application will pose the following: how does the project help achieve reliable freight movement? How does it offer alternatives to driving alone to combat traffic congestion on the roadways? Supporting information examples can include, but are not limited to, calculating truck travel time reliability, and providing a narrative identifying reasonable improvement that promote alternatives to driving alone.

- **Step 2, Question 5: Conserve and Protect Natural and Cultural Resources.** The application will pose the following: does the project mitigate impacts to the natural environment? Does it mitigate impacts to the project boundaries? Supporting information can include, but is not limited to, providing a map that identifies historical sites, archeological sites, flood sites, wetlands, etc. within the project limits, providing quantitative information on how this project contributes to emission reduction, and a narrative explaining how this project addresses the conservation and protect of natural and cultural resources that maybe effected.

- **Step 3: Evaluation.** Staff will evaluate the project based on the information submitted by the project sponsor. Projects will either meet the criteria or not, so scoring will be binary. Because of that, sponsors must provide clear project information. The RTP goals questions must be answered with supporting documents, data, and/or a narrative that clearly conveys that the projects address **at least three RTP goals to be considered for the RTP project list.**

- **Step 4: Recommendation.** This slide shows the three types of recommendations that a project can be selected for once staff evaluates it: Selected for the RTP Project List, selected for further refinement, or selected for the Illustrative List.

- **Step 5: Presentation.** Before presentation to TAC/TPC, the RTP Project list will undergo fiscal constraint and undergo an Air Quality Conformity Determination Process. Once these processes have been completed, the new RTP project list will be brought to TAC/TPC for informational purposes. The following TAC/TPC meetings, members will vote on approving the RTP project list. Once TPC approves the List, the air quality conformity determination documents will be sent to our state and federal partners for review.
- **RTP Project Development Flowchart.** This slide conveys the three different types of recommendations a project can receive once evaluated by staff: selected for the RTP, selected for further refinement, or selected for the Illustrative List.
  c) Questions/Comments
- Mike Wilson wants to see a line of demarcation on the flowchart that distinguishes between the pre-recommendation and post-recommendation.
    a. Chair Perri D'Armond agrees and asks for the last two blue boxes to change to green for clarity purposes.
    b. Vice-Chair David Fields asks that the end of the yellow line connect to the beginning of the blue.
    c. Staff will modify the presentation to reflect each comment.
- Peter Eccles asks if the emission reduction criteria include greenhouse gas emissions. He asks for them to be included.
    a. Harrison Humphreys seconds Peter's comment
    b. Staff will modify the presentation to reflect the comment.
- Chair Perri D'Armond mentions that the binary scoring is the best way forward to not be concerned about criteria being weighted. This is to ensure that the RTP goals are being met when considering projects.
- Charles Airiohuodion asks to define the Illustrative List and asks how long it would take for funding to be attached to those projects?
    a. Staff says that the Illustrative list are not part of conformity project list. Staff will check with FHWA if projects on the Illustrative List go through conformity and get environmental clearances.
- Jameson Appel says that the Yes/No binary outcome for criteria is subjective and asks how is that determination supposed to be made objectively?
    a. Staff says the goal is to allow flexibility for local agencies to provide supporting information.
- Mike Wilson says that the Yes/No binary outcome is favorable.
- Eliza Paul asks what is the Illustrative List?
    a. Staff says that the Illustrative List is a list of projects that are not part of the fiscally constrained list. These projects meet the criteria for inclusion into the RTP, but additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan need to become available before they can be included in the fiscally constrained RTP project list.
- Charles Airiohuodion asks if this is part of the appendix in the RTP?
    a. Staff says we do have a placeholder for the Illustrative List in the 2045 RTP Update.

- Chair Perri D'Armond asks if a project falls off the fiscally constrained list, could a project from the Illustrative List move in?
  a. Staff says yes.
- Bruce Mann asks about a project is needed that may be unable to meet at least three RTP Goals. His example is building a container terminal and build access to it.
  a. Vice-Chair David Fields demonstrates that this type of project can address three RTP goals.
- Charles Airiohuodion asks to clarify regionally significance.
  a. Staff says the definition is in the RTP and TIP.

d) Emergency Process
- The RTP Project Development Process will be open to projects that address natural disasters. These projects are exempt from Air Quality Conformity based on 23 CFR 93.126. This process would be four steps: 1.) submit to the year-round portal, 2.) provide a narrative explaining what the natural disaster is, how it is affecting the network, and how the project will address the problems, 3.) Staff will evaluate the application and recommend it for the RTP, refinement, or the illustrative list, and 4.) the project will be presented for TAC/TPC approval.
- Questions/Comments
  a. Harrison Humphreys asks what kind of projects may fall under natural disasters? He would object to evacuation routes being part of this.
    i. Staff will provide a definition for natural disasters. These projects are going to be reactive rather than be proactive. Proactive projects are resiliency projects. This emergency process is for unforeseen disasters.

d. RTP Project Development Process: Example Project
  a) Staff has developed a fake project submitted from a fake sponsor. This project will be described in three different scenarios: selected for the RTP, selected for further refinement, and selected for the Illustrative List.
  b) **Selected for the RTP.** The project sponsor is Normal County. There project is a Normal County Commuter Rail that will be 30.5 miles long. The cost is $5 billion. Normal County conducted a survey that showed public interest and need in commuter rail and believes it will increase multimodal travel, reduce roadway congestion, reduce fatalities and serious injuries, and increase travel time reliability for both private and freight vehicles. The sponsor submitted the survey in the public outreach section and submitted documents that showed it was presented at Commissioner's Court. The project is regionally significant and is present in a previous study. The sponsor answered that the project addresses each RTP goal and provided a mix of data-driven and narrative-driven information to support their responses. The submission would be selected to the RTP, where project development activities such as design and ROW may be funded and programmed in advance of construction.
  c) **Selected for Refinement.** The project has the same sponsor and project information, but does not demonstrate need. They did not explain why public outreach was not conducted. In the application response, the project sponsor answered that the project meets all five RTP goals. However, they did not

provide any supporting information, neither data nor narrative. Based on the information in this application, the project does not address any RTP goals, the project need was not demonstrated, and no public outreach was conducted with no explanation included. This project would be selected for further refinement and will not be eligible for the fiscally constrained project list.

    d) Selected for the Illustrative List. The project is very similar to the first project, except the amount of rail line goes from 30.5 to 140.5, therefore, the project will cost $20 billion instead of $5 billion. The project sponsor answered that the project addresses each RTP goal and provides ample supporting information for staff verification. The project addresses each RTP goal, submits supporting information, demonstrates project need, and conducted public outreach with supporting documents. Because it is a project with a high cost, additional funding will need to be identified before it can be put on the fiscally constrained list. Therefore, it will be placed on the Illustrative List until additional funding resources are identified.

    e) Questions/Comments
- Mike Wilson believes this presentation does a good job showing what it is like in the pre-RTP process.
- Charles Airiohuodion asks if it is possible to phase projects into three constructability phases and add phase 1 to the RTP and have phases two and three to the Illustrative List.
  - a. Staff says they will get back to Charles with an answer.
- Mike Wilson says the final governor is how much money we can spend each year.
- Jeffrey English asks if the regionally significant question about the type of work such as widening or the functional classification of the road the work is being done on?
  - a. Staff says that it has to do with the functional class or the road or the type of service that the road provides.

e. Going Forward
- a) Staff requests Subcommittee feedback between 9/13 and 10/11. The October Subcommittee meeting's purpose is for Subcommittee feedback. The final proposal will be presented at the November Subcommittee meeting with an approval vote. Staff asks for Subcommittee to email their feedback at: stephen.keen@h-gac.com
- b) Questions/Comments
  - Charles Airioduodion asks about the RTP conformity lapse.
    - a. Staff says TxDOT has finished its review with an acceptance letter. Staff is waiting for FHWA comments. There is no timetable.

4. Announcements
   a. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
      - a) Next meeting: October 18, 2023, at 9:30 AM (Hybrid)
   b. Transportation Policy Council (TPC)
      - a) Next meeting: September 29, 2023, at 9:30 AM (Hybrid)
   c. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Subcommittee
      - a) Next meeting: October 11, 2023, at 1:30 PM
5. Adjourn
   a. Chair Perri D'Armond calls for adjournment at 2:38 PM