

**Regional Transit Coordination (RTC) Subcommittee  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Special Call Online Meeting/Conference Call  
Thursday, November 2, 2023  
9:30-11:00 AM**

**Agenda**

1. Introductions and Certification of Quorum (9) – Ruthanne Haut, The Woodlands Township, Chair
2. Public Comments
3. Action Items:
  - 3.1 Approval of RTC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of October 5, 2023
4. Information Items: (10 minutes or less each)
  - 4.1 Coordinated Planning
    - 4.1a Transit Asset Management Update – Chris Whaley, H-GAC
    - 4.1b RCTP Transit Needs Index – Sandy Klanfer, H-GAC
  - 4.2 Partner Updates
    - 4.2a TxDOT Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan – Michael Dietz, TxDOT
5. Transit and Human Service Agency Reports (5 minutes or less each)

Tentative 2024 RTC Subcommittee Meeting Dates:

January 11, 2024

April 11, 2024

July 11, 2024

October 10, 2024

# REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

---

## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 5, 2023 – 9:30-11:00am  
Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Virtual Meeting

---

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Ruthanne Haut (Chair) – The Woodlands Township  
Sharon Moses-Burnside – City of Houston Planning  
Melanie Beaman – City of Sugar Land  
Philip Salerno – Greater Inwood Super Neighborhood  
Thomas Holstein – BakerRipley  
Lanny Brown – Community Health Network  
Vernon Chambers – Harris County Transit  
De’Andre Guin – City of Conroe  
Claudia Wicks – Colorado Valley Transit  
James Oliver – Island Transit

### ALTERNATES PRESENT

Huey German -Wilson – Northeast Houston  
Redevelopment Council  
Ashley Newell – Mounting Horizons  
Tatyana Luttenschlager – METRO  
Shekeylia Douglas – Harris County Transit  
Sarah Coulter- Fort Bend County Transit  
Kaitlyn Mock – Brazos Transit District

### OTHERS PRESENT

Brenda Bustillos – TxDOT  
Arnold Vowles – TxDOT  
Carol Crapanzano – TxDOT  
Bul Mabil - TxDOT  
Denise Wendler – METRO  
Reggie Brown – METRO  
Stephanie Albertson – Harris County Transit  
Shekeylia Douglas – Harris County Transit  
Jennifer Garcia – City of Houston

### H-GAC STAFF PRESENT

Jamila Owens  
Thomas Gray  
Chris Whaley  
Sandy Klanfer  
Alan Rodenstein  
Karen Owen  
Eric Belmar  
Lucinda Martinez  
Veronica Waller

### BRIEFING

#### **Overview**

RTCS Members and Alternates met virtually by teleconference. At this meeting, the Subcommittee received updates on Transit Asset Management (TAM) plans, proposed changes to the RTCP’s Transit Need Index (TNI), the Regional Transit Connectivity project (including a demonstration of the Q Ticketing fare app), and Harris County Transit’s microtransit service centered around Generation Park.

### INTRODUCTIONS AND CERTIFICATION OF QUORUM

**ITEM 1** – Ruthanne Haut, Chair, The Woodlands Township, convened the meeting at 9:32 AM. Roll was called by H-GAC staff and a quorum was certified.

### 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 July 13, 2023

Ms. Haut requested a motion to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2023 meeting of the Subcommittee.

*Action Item Motion: moved by Vernon Chambers, seconded by Sharon Moses-Burnside. Action Item approved.*

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **ITEM 4.1a – Transit Asset Management Update – Chris Whaley, H-GAC**

Chris Whaley provided an overview of the Transit Asset Management process, which is designed to ensure a State of Good Repair for the region's transit providers. Whaley described the performance measures used for each asset category and presented a history of the region's TAM performance (targets and actuals) by year. He noted that today's presentation was for information only; he would be reaching out to agencies to collect individual TAM plans and would be coming back with additional data for the Subcommittee to review at next month's Special Call meeting. The RTCS is expected to endorse the TAM targets in January.

Philip Salerno asked why the proposed Facilities targets for 2024 and 2026 were lower than the target set in 2022. Whaley explained that targets were based on actual achieved performance. H-GAC staff clarified that federal funding for the region is not tied to meeting targets at this time.

### **ITEM 4.1b – RCTP Transit Needs Index – Sandy Klanfer, H-GAC**

Sandy Klanfer presented the Subcommittee with a proposal to revise the Transit Need Index being used for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, based on public comments received regarding "met" and "unmet" need. The proposed new TNI would focus on transit availability by frequency and get away from the concept of "met" and "unmet" need. Klanfer showed the Subcommittee a series of maps that showed what the new TNI might look like, while acknowledging limitations in the data such as the size of census block groups used for analysis, especially in rural areas.

Klanfer also discussed a public request to look more closely at regional connectivity. H-GAC staff performed a "regional mid-day trip evaluation," which analyzed weekday mid-day (i.e. off-peak) trips to major activity centers such as Downtown Houston and the Texas Medical Center. Most of the mid-day trips to and from these activity centers start or end in Harris County, although enough trips are generated to or from Montgomery, Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties to warrant additional study.

Ashley Newell noted that transportation barriers are greater in rural areas and suggested that the poverty rate might need to be a larger percentage of the rural TNI calculation. She also suggested that unhoused and transient populations may be "invisible" to the data being used for the TNI. James Oliver noted that the TNI incorporated a lot of data and that upcoming changes to the region's UZA boundaries could affect this analysis.

Tatyana Luttschlager noted that METRO is conducting an environmental analysis of a two-way HOV facility on IH-69 to accommodate all-day service and asked if it would be helpful to the regional mid-day trip evaluation. She will send Klanfer the project manager's contact information. Sharon Moses-Burnside expressed a desire to see data for all trips to and from outlying areas like Montgomery County, not just mid-day ones.

### **ITEM 4.1c – Regional Transit Connectivity Update and Mobile Ticketing Demonstration – Vernon Chambers, Harris County Transit, and Reggie Brown, METRO**

Reggie Brown of METRO provided an update on the Regional Fare System, including its mobile ticketing, regional data management, and fare collection system components. He discussed the findings of the preliminary assessments with all of the region's transit providers, including the fact that all agencies expressed interest in participating in a regional fare program. Brown also noted that, as of September 14, Harris County Transit and Fort Bend County Transit were participating in METRO's Q Ticketing app. Brown discussed the current status of the fare collection system and presented next steps.

Discussion followed. Sharon Moses-Burnside asked if METROLift would be included in the fare collection system. Brown answered that it would be and that METRO is currently working on marketing and communications plans for that

transition. Vernon Chambers asked about ADA and demand response integration for regional partners as well; Brown answered that the goal is to have a standardized fare format regardless of service. Ashley Newell asked about how tickets are purchased by provider, as she wanted to be able to explain to her customers how the new fare system works.

Vernon Chambers introduced Stephanie Albertson of Harris County Transit, who demonstrated the Q Ticketing app to the Subcommittee. There were no questions or comments.

#### **4.2a Generation Park Microtransit – Vernon Chambers, Harris County Transit**

Stephanie Albertson presented Harris County's microtransit service, which is branded as Transit Plus. The on-demand service operates around the Sam Houston Tollway in northeast Harris County and is anchored at the Generation Park development. Albertson discussed the passenger, dispatch and operator interfaces used by the service as well as its analytics dashboard. Ridership averages 13 trips per day but is trending upward over time.

There were no questions or comments.

### **AGENCY REPORTS**

#### **ITEM 5 – Transit and Human Service Agency Reports**

Ms. Haut invited Subcommittee members to briefly give updates on their agency efforts. She began by announcing that The Woodlands Express ridership is trending upward such that additional runs needed to be added.

Sarah Coulter announced that Fort Bend County Transit had completed service concepts outreach for its planned Westpark Park and Ride service and was now conducting surveys in downtown Houston.

Eric Belmar introduced himself to the Subcommittee as H-GAC's newest Transportation Manager.

Thomas Gray announced that the ridership survey for the third quarter of 2023 would be distributed to transit providers soon and thanked them for their cooperation in completing it.

Stephanie Albertson reported that Harris County Transit has a new vendor for automated passenger counters and audio announcements on their buses.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Haut adjourned the meeting at 11:02 AM.

**Next RTCS Meeting – 9:30 AM on Thursday, November 2, 2023 (Special Call)**



# Transit Asset Management Performance Measures Update

Chris Whaley  
November 2, 2023

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



7

## Transit Asset Management (TAM)



- **Purpose: Ensure State of Good Repair**
- **Overview:**
  - **Each transit agency has a Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan**
  - **Each MPO sets regional targets**
  - **H-GAC sets the regional targets (biennially) for asset management using the information in each Agency's TAM Plan**

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



8

## Transit Asset Management (TAM)

| Asset Category        | Performance Measure   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Rolling Stock</b>  | <b>Age</b> - % of Revenue Vehicles exceeding their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)                          |
| <b>Equipment</b>      | <b>Age</b> - % of Non-revenue Vehicles exceeding their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)                      |
| <b>Facilities</b>     | <b>Condition</b> - % of Facilities with a condition rating below 3 on the TERM scale (Marginal or Poor) |
| <b>Infrastructure</b> | <b>Performance</b> - % of Rail track segments, signals and systems with performance restrictions        |

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



10

## Transit Asset Management (TAM)



- **Current Process:**
  - **Use updated agency TAM Plans to calculate current performance**
  - **Use current performance to set next targets**

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



11

## Regional TAM Performance

| Performance Targets and Actuals by Year         |          |         |         |          |         |         |          |         |         |                  |
|---|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|------------------|
| Asset Category                                  | 2018     | 2020    |         |          | 2022    |         |          | 2024    |         | Proposed Targets |
|   | Baseline | Targets | Actuals | Achieved | Targets | Actuals | Achieved | Targets | Actuals | 2026             |
| Rolling Stock (revenue vehicles)                | 11%      | 11%     | 10%     | ✓        | 10%     | 10%     | ✓        | 10%     |         | 10%              |
| Equipment (non-revenue vehicles)                | 46%      | 46%     | 46%     | ✓        | 46%     | 46%     | ✓        | 46%     |         | 46%              |
| Facilities (buildings and structures)           | 55%      | 55%     | 55%     | ✓        | 54%     | 45%     | ✓        | 45%     |         | 45%              |
| Infrastructure (rail tracks, signals & systems) | 0%       | 0%      | 0%      | ✓        | 0%      | 0%      | ✓        | 0%      |         | 0%               |

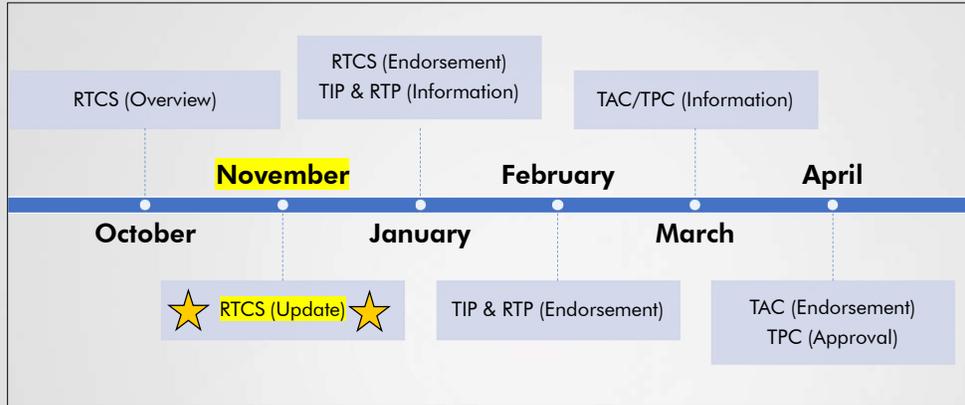
12

## Current Status of Reports

| Agency                         | Status  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Brazos Transit District        | N/A – Unable to separate performance measures for H-GAC TMA |
| Colorado Valley Transit        | N/A – Repots directly to TxDOT                              |
| Conroe Connection              | Plan in development   |
| Galveston Island Transit       | Sent updated plan   |
| Gulf Coast Transit District    | Sent updated plan   |
| Fort Bend Transit              | Plan in development   |
| Harris County Transit          | Sent updated plan   |
| METRO                          | Awaiting plan   |
| The Woodlands Township Transit | Sent updated plan   |

13

# Timeline



RTCS - Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee  
RTP - Regional Transportation Plan Subcommittee  
TAC - Transportation Advisory Committee

TIP - Transportation Improvement Program Subcommittee  
TPC - Transportation Policy Council



Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility

16

# Questions?



[christopher.whaley@h-gac.com](mailto:christopher.whaley@h-gac.com)



Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility

19

# Transit Need Index Revisions

November 2023

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility

21

## Purpose and Need

- Last year, received a public comment on the transit need index
  - Concerned that we labeled areas with only 1-2 buses per hour as having their transit needs “met”
  - Also asked us to look more closely at regional connectivity
- We used this opportunity to revisit the work we did to see if we could address these concerns

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



22

## New Analysis

- We looked at a variety of different options for how we might re-examine the idea of transit need and transit quality
  - LinkHouston’s “Where Affordable Housing and Transportation Meet in Houston”
  - TCRP Transit Capacity and Level of Service Manual
- Encountered many limitations
  - Data availability
  - Properly weighting various factors

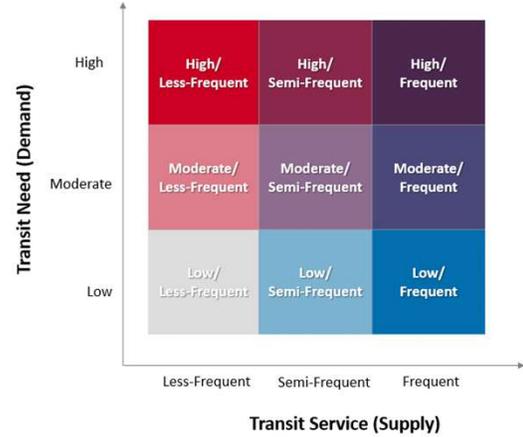
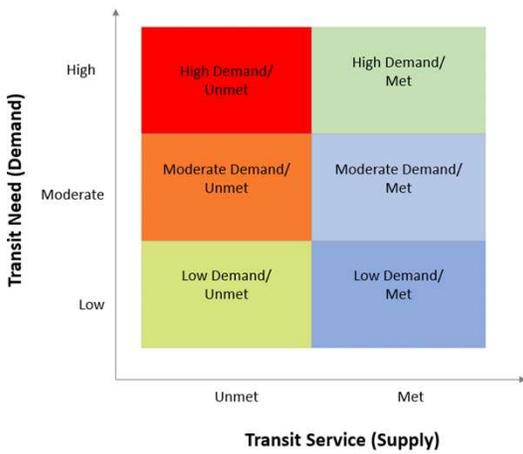
23

## New Analysis

- The core problem: we were trying to deem transit need “met” or “unmet” in each block group based on limited data and limited public input
- We resolved this by turning away from the concept of “met” or “unmet” transit need and instead using a frequency-based transit availability metric

24

# New Analysis



Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



25

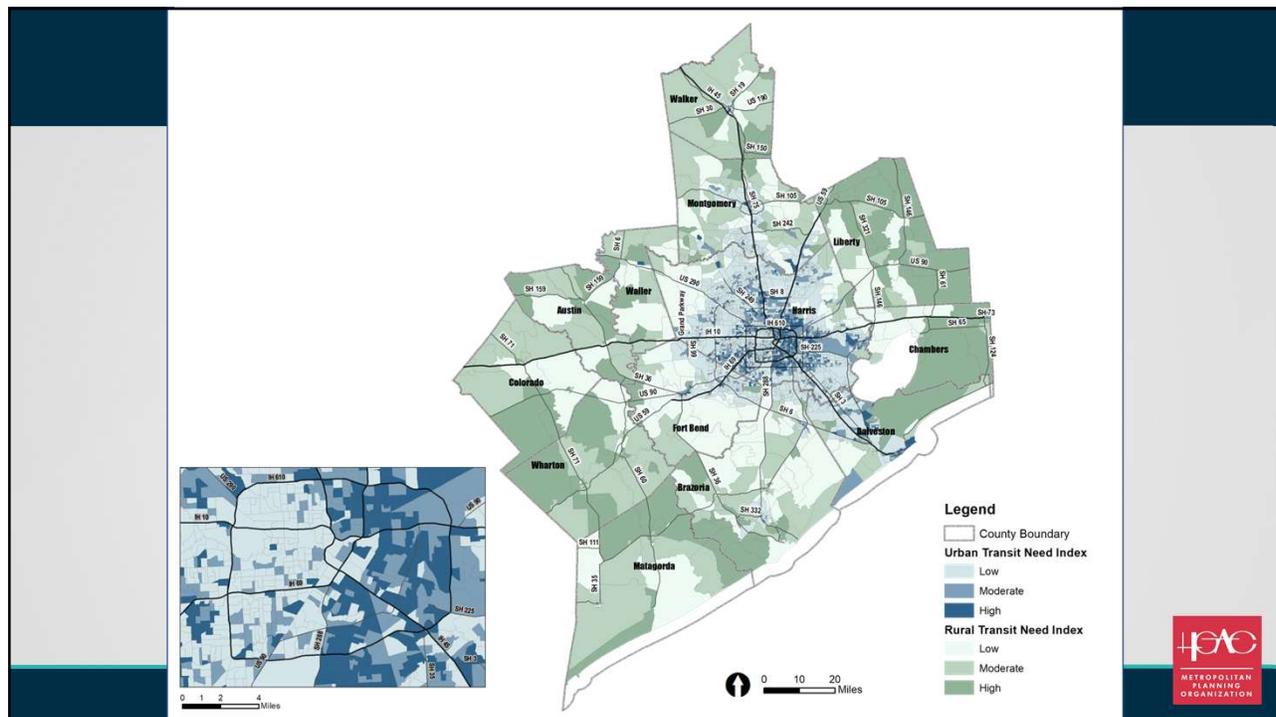
# Transit Need Index

| Factor  | Urban Weight | Rural Weight |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Population Density                                    | 20%          | 10%          |
| Percent of Households with Zero Automobiles           | 20%          | 10%          |
| Percent of Population Over 65 Years of Age            | 15%          | 25%          |
| Percent of Households with an Adult with a Disability | 15%          | 25%          |
| Percent of Population Between the Ages of 6 and 17    | 10%          | 10%          |
| Poverty Rate  | 20%          | 20%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>100%</b>  | <b>100%</b>  |

Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility



26

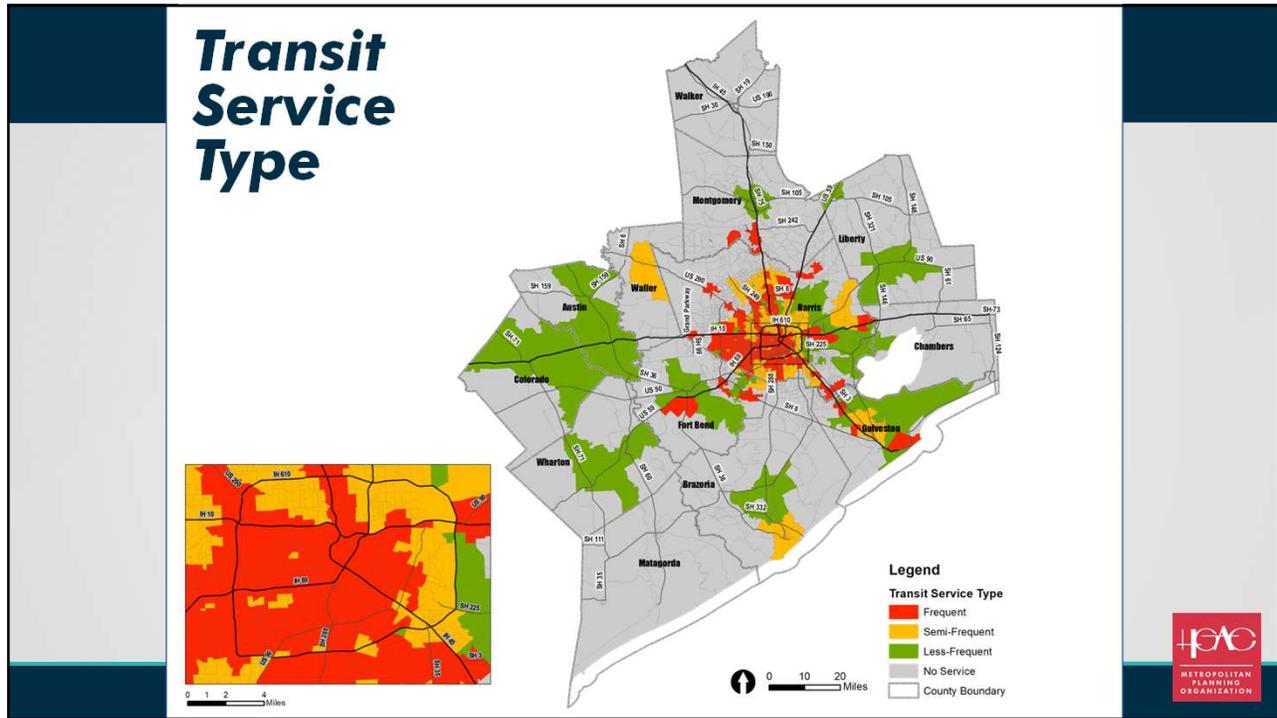


27

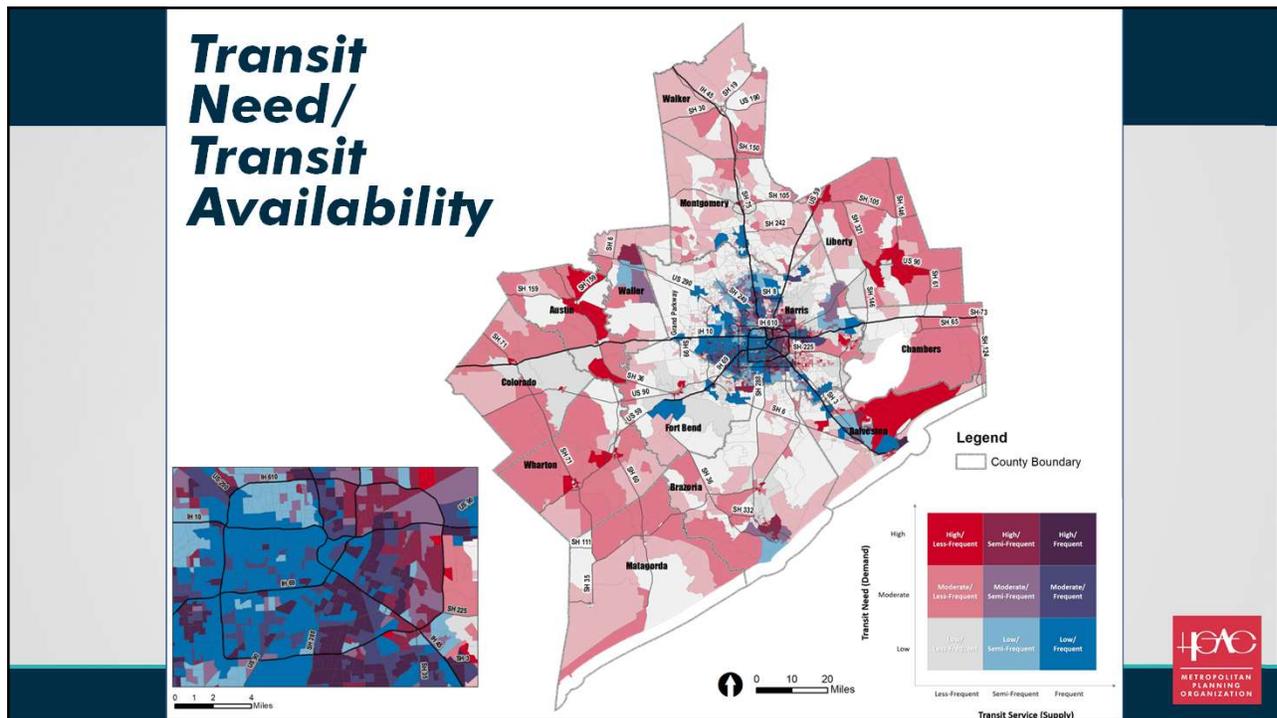
## Transit Availability Matrix

- **“Frequent”**
  - High-Capacity Transit, including all Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail (LRT) services
  - Limited-stop express buses, including commuter-focused park and ride services
  - Local bus services with off-peak headways of 15 minutes or less
- **“Semi-Frequent”**
  - Local bus services with off-peak headways between 16 and 30 minutes
- **“Less Frequent”**
  - Flex zone (demand-response)
  - Local bus services with off-peak headways greater than 30 minutes

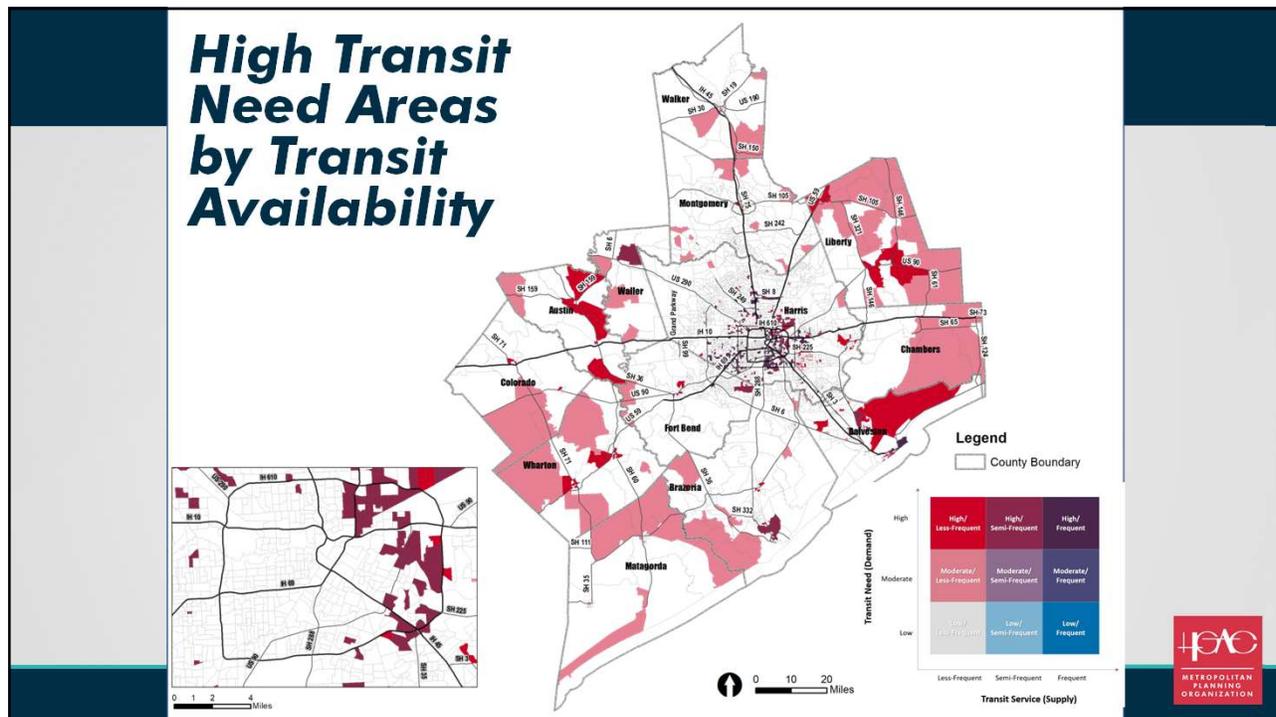
28



29



30



31

## Key Takeaways

- Change to frequency-based availability metric better highlights places where transit is limited relative to need
  - Northeast, Southeast, Southwest Houston
  - La Marque/Texas City area
- These key opportunities for expanding transit access not highlighted by density-based metric
- Limitation: census block groups are quite large in rural areas, may need further study

32

## Regional Mid-Day Trip Evaluation

- Currently, there is limited regional service that crosses county lines to and from major activity centers
  - Peak-hour, peak-direction only
- New analysis, would like input
- Used H-GAC's origin-destination data to analyze the number of weekday mid-day trips (9 AM-3 PM) to and from the two biggest regional activity centers
  - Downtown Houston
  - Texas Medical Center
  - These were the destinations most commonly cited



Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility

33

## Regional Mid-Day Trip Evaluation

- This data showed the demand for travel to and from these destinations during these periods.
  - Serves as a starting point for understanding demand for bus service specifically
- Daily averages:
  - 32,967 trips to downtown Houston
  - 37,079 trips from downtown Houston
  - 20,612 trips to Texas Medical Center
  - 22,722 trips from Texas Medical Center



Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility

34

## Regional Mid-Day Trip Evaluation

- The vast majority of these trips both start and end within Harris County
  - 91.8% of trips to Downtown Houston
  - 90.2% of trips from Downtown Houston
  - 85.1% of trips to Texas Medical Center
  - 84.1% of trips from Texas Medical Center
- Some counties (Liberty, Chambers, Waller) see very few trips to/from these destinations at mid-day

35

## Regional Mid-Day Trip Evaluation

- Some counties generate enough demand to/from these activity centers to warrant additional study:
  - 957 trips (2.6%) to Montgomery County from Downtown Houston
  - 982 trips (4.3%) to Brazoria County from Texas Medical Center
  - 1,455 trips (7.1%) from Fort Bend County to Texas Medical Center
  - 1,160 trips (4.3%) from Fort Bend County to Downtown Houston

36

## ***Regional Trip Evaluation***

- This analysis serves as a starting point for determining where demand for all-day regional service may exist
- Further study would be needed to determine feasibility
  - H-GAC is planning a regional bus study, expected to start in 2024

37

## ***Action***

- Information only, will take action at next meeting.

38



## Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan (SMTP)

H-GAC RTCS Meeting

40

### What is the SMTP?



First-ever Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan in Texas

- Long-range plan for statewide transit
- Planning horizon of 2050
  - Periodically updated every 4-5 years
- Builds upon foundation laid by existing plans
- Identifies key policies and strategies to support public transit across Texas
- Provides a framework for prioritizing investments

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

41

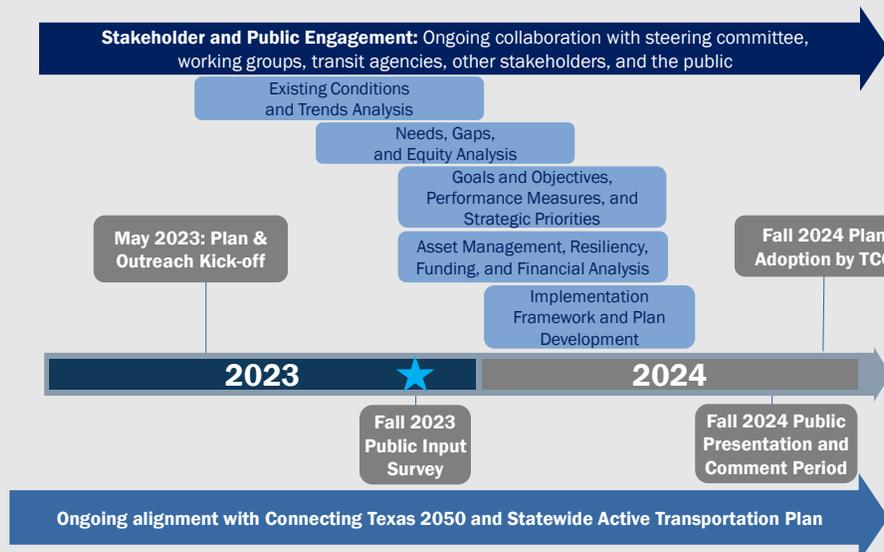
## Why and Why Now?



- Demographic trends
- Establish transit’s role in the transportation network
- Identify policies and strategies to address the following:
  - Access
  - Connectivity
  - Safety
  - Congestion Relief
- To align with other long-range plans
  - Connecting Texas 2050
  - Statewide Active Transportation Plan
- Support regional and local public transportation plans and priorities
- Capitalize on historic levels of investments in public transportation

42

## Texas SMTP Timeline



43

## Technical Work – Current Status

- Data Collection and Analysis
- Existing Conditions
- Transit Benefits
- Trends and Impacts
- Existing Plan Review

**Technical Memorandum #1**

November 7, 2023

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

44

44

## Engagement Activities

- Participated in the semi-annual Transit Operators Meeting
- Met with MTAs
- Held First Steering Committee meeting
- Developed website & social media content
- Launched public survey and in-person outreach efforts

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

45

45

## Outreach Strategy Components

**Steering Committee**



**In-person outreach**

- Pop-up events in regions throughout the state
- Coordination with local agencies



**Direct outreach to stakeholders**

- Emails
- Presentations



**Online outreach**

- Social media
- Video
- TxDOT newsroom
- Engagement site



**Community sharing kit for community businesses and organizations**

- Fact sheet
- Email/social media copy for sharing with networks
- Community survey

**Topical Working Groups**



**Media outreach**

- Press release
- Coordination with TxDOT

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

46

46

## Stakeholder Engagement - Priorities, Challenges, and 2050 Visioning

**If funding were not an issue, what are your agency's top three transit service priorities over the next 30 years?**

**What are your agency's biggest challenges in meeting your service priorities?**

**What are the top three things transit must do, or have in place, by 2050 to play a larger role in solving Texas' mobility challenges?**

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

47

47

## Initial Input from Key Stakeholder Groups

**JULY 13, 2023**

**Semi-Annual Operators Meeting**

**Top Priorities**

- Improving frequency on current service
- New/renovated facilities
- Increasing service hours on existing service

**Challenges**

- Workforce
- Local match funding
- Facilities and fleet

**2050 Visioning**

- Establish a fixed network of intercity service connections
- Expand mobility options
- Leveraging technology

**AUGUST 31, 2023**

**Metropolitan Transit Authorities Meeting**

**Top Priorities**

- Improve frequency on current service
- Increase accessible hours/increase hours on existing services
- Additional service coverage

**Challenges**

- Workforce
- Policy/public perception
- Funding

**2050 Visioning**

- Expand mobility options in congested corridors
- Revise institutional and legal frameworks supporting governance, operation, and financing of public transportation in Texas
- Increase access to services and ensure safe, reliable, and efficient operation of transit vehicles
- Improve economic opportunities and quality of life

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

48

## Steering Committee Input on SMTP

Remember that achieving transit goals often requires updating or re-thinking infrastructure

Make sure the plan fits the needs of Texans and is not a template

Acknowledge funding concerns and limitations

Explain how transit benefits our state's continued economic competitiveness – make a business case for transit

Define public transportation

Share that transit is the safest mode of travel

Address the impacts of climate change on transit and its users

Consider partnerships with private sector providers

Acknowledge the different needs of rural and urban communities

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023

49

## Next Steps





**Confirm  
Vision**



**Conduct Public  
Awareness  
Campaign &  
Transit Needs  
Survey**



**Complete  
Existing Conditions  
& Trends Tech  
Memo**



**Identify Topical  
Working Groups  
and  
Participants**

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023 50

50

## How Can You Help?




---



**How Can You Help?**

---

- What are we missing?
- Take the [Community Survey](#)
- Follow along by referencing our [project website](#)
- If you have suggestions, send them to us!

H-GAC RTCS Meeting – November 2, 2023 51

51



# Thank you!

Michael Dietz, TxDOT  
SMTP Project Manager  
[Michael.Dietz@txdot.gov](mailto:Michael.Dietz@txdot.gov)  
(512) 298-8946

Sharon Terranova, CDM Smith  
SMTP Project Manager  
[terranova@cdmsmith.com](mailto:terranova@cdmsmith.com)  
(860) 856-0254