



# Public Transportation Advisory Committee

Meeting will begin at 10:05 am



April 22, 2025

## Agenda

1. Call to order.
2. Guidance on virtual meeting participation.
3. Approval of minutes from January 23, 2025, meeting. (Action)
4. TxDOT Public Transportation Division Director's report to the Public Transportation Advisory Committee regarding public transportation matters.
5. Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan Update. (Discussion)
6. Upcoming Rulemaking: CFR updates and Section 5310 Grant Program. (Discussion)
7. Future PTAC Meeting Schedule. (Discussion)
8. Public Comment
9. Propose and discuss agenda items for next meeting; confirm date of next meeting. (Action)
10. Adjourn. (Action)

Please mute yourself upon joining the meeting.

It is important to enter your name when joining the meeting – if you didn't do that, please exit the meeting and rejoin.

To comment on an agenda item, use the meeting's chat feature to let Theo know – he will let you know when to unmute your line.

Please don't place this meeting on HOLD – we'll all hear your hold tone.

# Agenda Item 3

Approval of minutes from  
January 23, 2025, meeting.

### MINUTES FOR ADOPTION

Public Transportation Advisory Committee – Teams Meeting

January 23, 2025 - 10:00 A.M.

#### **Committee Members Participating via Zoom:**

John McBeth

Jim Cline

Dietrich Von Biedenfeld, Vice Chair

#### **Participating in person:**

Ken Fickes, Chair

James Oliver

JR Salazar

Eric Gleason, Director, Public Transportation Division, PTN

Bonnie Sherman, Section Director, Statewide Planning and Program Development, PTN

Theodore Kosub, Strategic Programs Development Manager, PTN

Robbi Smith, Public Involvement Specialist, PTN

Frederico Rodriguez, Government Affairs Analyst, GOV

#### **AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to order.**

Chair Fickes calls the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 2: Guidance on virtual meeting participation.**

Kosub gives meeting guidance for those participating virtually.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3: Approval of minutes from November 21, 2024, meeting. (Action)**

**Motion:** Jim Cline

Recommends approval of minutes from the November 21, 2024, meeting.

**Second:** James Oliver

Members vote unanimously in favor of the motion. 10:07 A.M.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4: TxDOT Public Transportation Division Director's report to the Public Transportation Advisory Committee regarding public transportation matters. (Discussion)**

Director Gleason gives an update on upcoming Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) June awards for the service expansion program totaling just over \$2 million dollars to 9 rural transit districts. He notes that the division has flexibility for fine tuning service expansion budgets without having to return to the TTC for approval. Furthermore, he notes that FY 2025 rural and urban funding and FY 2024 federal rural funds will be awarded to Gulf Coast Transit District. He mentions the next round of large funding awards will be reviewed by the TTC in June or July if full year apportionments become available later in the year. This includes potential formula awards in June and discretionary 5310 funds in July.

Director Gleason touched on the Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan status and indicates that an update will occur at the next regular PTAC Meeting.

An update on potential rulemaking activities on the program side was discussed as a possibility later in 2025. Updates would be required due to circular changes and CFR updates. The existing 5310 program could also be examined for potential allocation updates.

As the final topic of the Director's Report, Gleason highlights the current Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Call for Projects. He suggests transit districts might partner with local communities on potential projects. Preliminary applications are due on February 21, 2025.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 5: Statewide Active Transportation Plan Update. (Discussion)**

Jeff Whitacre provides an update on the Statewide Active Transportation Plan (SATP) status. He details the plan's past outreach approach, engagement statistics and highlights the next round of outreach scheduled for Summer 2025. Whitacre details the top 16 challenges the SATP has identified and mentions an upcoming steering committee meeting.

Member Cline highlights the importance of pedestrian safety in the transit environment and in first/last mile connections. The intersection of active transportation modes and traditional transit modes should be considered in terms of pedestrian use and safety.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6: Federal Reauthorization Priorities (Discussion)**

Frederico Rodriguez of TxDOT's Government Affairs Division gives an update on happenings in congress and department reauthorization priorities. He notes the status of the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress and ongoing coordination with the new administration. He mentions the next federal fiscal year will begin on October 1, 2025.

Rodriguez notes the current Infrastructure Bill, the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA), is set to expire in 2026. The department is working with our representatives in both Houses of Congress to identify a path forward. He notes the IIJA created a slew of discretionary grant programs, and notes the department generally sees that approach as dividing the funding pot unnecessarily. The use of formula program funding is preferred over discretionary grant programs. The department is interested in receiving more funding as a fast-growing state, but not necessarily with all the strings attached as they were in the IIJA. Specifically, unfunded mandates and overreach are being examined.

Another area of priority for the department is looking at the Build America Buy America (BABA) Act. This Bill has created practical headaches for procuring different materials, some of which are not necessarily manufactured in America. There is interest in BABA waivers which would allow for purchases of materials that are not necessarily manufactured or sourced in the United States.

The department is also examining the withdrawal of FHWA greenhouse gas rulemaking which added several reporting items and reviewing recent FTA rules which can be potentially burdensome.

Rodriguez mentions the department continues to work with partners and national organizations when looking at the next surface reauthorization bill and provides an update on which Texas representatives hold positions on various committees.

Member Oliver asks what the advisory committee can do to push these department federal reauthorization priorities.

Director Gleason mentions that this is a discussion item, but that members can act if they wish. He also encourages committee members to engage with associations and advocacy groups to solidify a simple message for Congress.

Chair Fickes mentions his interest in improving NTD data collection requirements. Much of the data that is asked for keeps increasing and is a challenge for providers to keep up with escalating data requirements.

Director Gleason mentions that the Council on Public Transportation likely has a recommendation to reduce data collection requirements. He also notes that if the committee has specific concerns or areas of interest, they should send them in as individuals, and this item could be reconsidered in a future meeting.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7: Service Expansion Program. (Discussion)**

Director Gleason clarifies that the Service Expansion Program (SEP) has funds over two years totaling \$12 million. Currently, \$10 million of the two-year total has been allocated, but an additional \$2 million will be reallocated at a future date. He also provides an update on the initial performance measures coming out of the service expansion program. Though in the initial stages, the performance metrics will be useful in determining the success of the service expansion program and may determine if funding would be maintained as part of an agency's budget.

Director Gleason notes September 2025 will mark a year of active service expansion program activities, so the department will have a better handle on how successful the program has been and will be able to tweak or modify services to make sure the SEP can stay in place.

Chair Fickes expresses interest in examining the fare structure associated with service expansion projects. He mentioned that SEP fare collection for modes like microtransit may be similar to current fixed route services, but it would be interesting to see a future date.

Member Cline appreciates receiving service expansion updates and would like to examine future opportunities for service expansion. The updates and metrics could be used as an argument for more expansion funds, but also to sustain current service.

Director Gleason mentions that another SEP update will be provided in the Summer of 2025.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8: PTAC Appointment Process. (Discussion)**

Director Gleason gives an overview of the PTAC appointment process and history. He notes the current process uses appointment by the Executive Branch for PTAC members. The difficulty with the current process is timely appointment to the committee and the inability to have a complete committee. Currently, PTAC has six members with three vacancies.

Chair Fickes asks about the current process and wonders if an interested party could join the committee.

Director Gleason responds there is not a current formal process, but an interested party could work with the executive offices (Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House) to express their interest. At the moment, this is the best avenue of success given the structure of governing statute.

Member McBeth mentions the current difficulty of getting people appointed to PTAC. He expresses an interest in having appointments reserved for only public transportation providers and transportation users. He notes the difficulty of filling the three committee spots reserved for members of the general public.

Member Biedenfeld agrees with the predicament of getting people appointed to the committee, challenges of recruitment and issues associated with the appointment process.

Director Gleason agrees to provide any updates at the next PTAC meeting.

Member Oliver supports a membership comprised of providers and users because they are the ones who directly benefit from transit. He supports leaving the appointment process as is within the executive branch but suggests better defining member types. He expresses support for more provider membership, especially for rural and providers of West Texas, but notes that adding Metro system members to the committee would not be beneficial.

Director Gleason mentions that department staff take advisory committee appointments seriously and do a thorough job of vetting. This vetting includes geographic balance, but PTAC is currently determined by statute and not similar to other department advisory committees.

Member Cline states the importance of considering that people who pay for public transit generally are not the ones using it, so a broad perspective is important and valuable to keep on the committee.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9: Public Comment**

Chair Fickes asks if there are any public comments, Kosub responds there is one comment.

Member of the public Buffa asks about an item in the federal reauthorization slides. Specifically, he asks why the department would be in favor of rescinding certain rules surrounding worker safety and minimum safety inspection programs.

Director Gleason responds that some of programs go beyond what is practical and necessary given the existing commitments to safety. The rescinding concern is typically from and focused on the opinion of Metropolitan systems. As smaller scale example, Galveston operates a single rail line but must respond to additional requirements that are already being covered and new regulations come with extreme reporting requirements.

So, this is not a reflection of diminished focus on safety, rather the current federal requirements are sufficient and additional requirements create a burden for operators.

Member Oliver agrees and mentions there is an issue of overreach and mission creep.

**AGENDA ITEM 9: Propose and discuss agenda items for next meeting; confirm date of next meeting. (Discussion)**

Chair Fickes suggests Thursday, April 24, as a potential next PTAC meeting date.

A potential conflict for members of the committee is identified for that specific date.

Director Gleason states that week in April will be examined as the next meeting date and staff will work to identify the best date for getting committee quorum.

**AGENDA ITEM 10: Adjourn. (Action)**

**Motion:** JR Salazar

**Second:** James Oliver

Members vote unanimously in favor of the motion. 11:37 A.M.

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 A.M.

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Theodore Kosub  
Public Transportation Division

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Ken Fickes, Chair  
Public Transportation Advisory Committee

# Agenda Item 4

## Director's Report

## Commission Actions: April 2025 – July 2025

- **May:**

- Allocations for Transit District Boundary Changes
- Allocations for Lead Planning Agencies

- **July:**

- FY 26 State Funding to Urban and Rural Transit Districts
- FY 25 Rural Area Formula Funding for Rural Transit Districts
- First Year Funding for Upcoming 5310 Program Projects

## Transportation Alternatives Set-aside (TA) Program

- Program Call for Projects
  - 311 eligible preliminary applications (Round 1)
  - Detailed application opportunity effective April 16 (Round 2)
  - Over \$1.1 billion in total funding requests/estimate \$260 million available

## **Bus and Bus Facilities Section 5339 Discretionary NOFO**

- 5339 Discretionary Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) within 30 days of Appropriations
- 5339 Discretionary Application Development Timeline TBD
- Anticipated Scope: Fleet Replacement & Facility Construction

## PTAC Appointment: 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session Update

- SB 1922 – Senator West
- HB 5295 – Representative Paul (Companion to SB)
- Current Status:
  - SB 1922 - 03/17/2025 Referred to Senate Transportation Committee
  - HB5295 - 04/07/2025 Referred to House Transportation Committee

## Legislative Appropriations Request – PTN

- Current Status of Exceptional Item Requests

# Agenda Item 5

# Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan Update

# Texas SMTP 2050 Development Timeline



# Identifying Challenges, Strategies, and Groupings



**Gathered feedback on challenges** from public outreach, working groups and other stakeholders



**Identified 250+ strategies** informed by stakeholder input and then narrowed down strategies to **12 key recommendations**



**Sought additional public input** on 18 challenges and aligned 12 potential strategies



**Summarized and aligned strategies** with goals, needs, gaps, and challenges to form **5 key groupings**

# Developing Priority Implementation Steps



**Gathered additional feedback** from fall public outreach on 18 challenges and 12 key recommendations



**Summarized and aligned strategies** with goals, needs, gaps, and challenges



**Developed potential actions and corresponding steps** toward implementation



**Identified priority steps** to get started

## **Develop a statewide transit network and hub plan.**

**TxDOT will work to develop a plan that connects transit regions and provides Texans with an accessible way to reach all parts of Texas without a car. The network and hub plan should identify:**

- Key corridors needed to connect transit focal points statewide.
- Key hub locations providing local, regional, and first- and last-mile connections.
- Transit emphasis corridors within each region where improved transit treatment should be considered in the planning process and aligned with local transit agency plans.

## **Develop flexible statewide transit planning and design guidelines.**

**Every transportation project team should ask the following questions:**

- Is the project in an area with existing transit or along a corridor planned for additional transit?
- Is transit currently in, or planned to be, part of the project?

**If the answer to either question is “yes,” project teams should assess how transit can be integrated throughout the project development process.**

**Convene a team to share responsibilities, provide leadership, and bring a focused commitment to supporting small urban and rural transit district funding and workforce needs.**

**The assembled team focused on this Priority Step would prioritize fostering collaboration and partnerships.**

**Activities should include:**

- Development of a Community of Practice and creating a foundation for transit services.
- Increased cross-agency and multimodal collaboration.
- Collaboration on procurement needs and opportunities.
- Enhanced TxDOT Division and TxDOT District coordination.

# **Develop success metrics, enhance and broaden data collection, and develop consistent reporting.**

**Building on current reporting methods, TxDOT (with partner support) would lead the effort to streamline reporting structure, including providing additional information on performance and future needs.**

## **Activities should include:**

- Create metrics focused on “movement of people” for use in transportation planning projects.
- Further develop metrics that focus on the impacts of transit on business and the Texas economy.
- Using the latest technology, streamline current data reporting while adding additional metrics.
- Update the reporting structure to broaden the story of transit in Texas.

## **Improve flexibility of existing funding sources and identify new and innovative funding sources.**

**Moving forward, funding needs to be more flexible so agencies can invest in emerging technologies and new types of transit services. TxDOT will identify one or more existing (non-TxDOT) entities to lead a team that:**

- Works with key agencies to help reduce or remove funding restrictions that prevent transit agencies from leveraging their funding to the highest and best use.
- Identifies/develops new sources of funding—including non-traditional and local funding—at all levels to diversify the revenue supporting transit.

## Formalize a plan for regular outreach.

**Proactively engaging with Texans on how transit fits into the overall transportation network and addresses critical transportation needs will help build support for long-term investment in transit infrastructure and operations.**

**Activities TxDOT can use to build upon the SMTP's public awareness campaigns and outreach efforts include:**

- Continue to collect rider, operator, and business transit stories, especially of how transit expands access to opportunities.
- Utilize existing tools and develop new ways of measuring how transit benefits the statewide economy and local communities.
- Share information with the public and local governments via newsletters, social media, and partnership building.
- Craft messaging kits, customizable social media templates, and a repository of transit stories, data, and communications assets to share with transit providers and organizations.

## Upcoming Outreach & Engagement – June/July 2025



**10 in-person public meetings** across the state as well as live virtual meetings (with SATP)



**Presentations to SMTP contributors** and key Transit stakeholders on the final plan



**Public survey** on priority implementation steps and opportunities to comment on the plan



**Social media campaign** and sharing kits about the SMTP

### Outreach Goals

- Close the feedback loop with the public and with key stakeholders
- Raise awareness of TxDOT's work on the future of transit in Texas
- Galvanize support from transit champions for implementation steps

# Agenda Item 6

## Upcoming Rulemaking

### CFR updates and Section 5310

### Grant Program

## Texas Administrative Code Updates

- **Required** - due to recent changes in CFR and Program Circulars  
Examples include:
  - Asset disposition threshold
  - De minimus threshold
  - Procurement thresholds(Note: Updates already made to State Management Plan, March 2025 )
- **Potential** - 5310 funding distribution  
Explore alternative funding methodologies for the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program to ensure the most effective use of funds. **Goal of improving mobility** for target populations by more accurately reflecting statewide transit needs and allowing subrecipients to plan beyond a single year.

# Texas Administrative Code Updates

## General Timeline\*:

- Rule Concept/White Paper: May 2025
- Drafting of Rule Revisions: June-July 2025
- Commission Rule Proposal: September/October 2025
- Public Comment Period: TDB
- Commission Final Adoption: TBD 2026

\* Estimated timeline, subject to revision.

# Agenda Item 7

## Future PTAC Meeting Schedule

## Future PTAC Meeting Dates

- CY 2025
  - July 24, 2025 (hybrid)
  - Oct 23, 2025 (in-person)
  
- CY 2026
  - TBD

# Agenda Item 8

## Public Comment

# Agenda Item 9

Propose and discuss agenda items for next meeting;  
confirm date of next meeting

# Agenda Item 10

## Adjourn