

South Main Alliance

Recommendations for METRO Long-Range Planning 2011

The South Main Alliance Board makes the following recommendations to the METRO Long-Range Planning 2011 that are of importance to the South Main Alliance area and members:

1. METRO should devise an overall strategy for the Wheeler-Blodgett station area where the Red Line and University Line will cross to address pedestrian, automobile, bus and light rail needs for this multimodal transfer location and make highest and best use of this important site in the corridor. That strategy should include grade separation for rail as was agreed to in an earlier meeting between METRO and South Main Alliance as well as a comprehensive development plan for the area in concert with major stakeholders in the region.
2. As METRO designs future transportation programs to major activity centers from outlying areas, investments should be made in designing and constructing efficient and effective circulator services in those areas, such as the downtown, Texas Medical Center, Reliant Stadium Complex, and the Museum District/Hermann Park as an important component of comprehensive transit service.
3. METRO must address capacity limitations on the Red Line (Main Street) that are already acute at peak times and will continue to pose a challenge as the entire system expands to include the linkage of commuter rail and other services into the light rail lines. All transit routes and intersections should include well thought through strategies for pedestrians and other vehicle crossings, not just at transit stations.
4. METRO should develop specific transportation strategies to link academic campuses in the region, including the University of Houston (main campus, downtown campus), Texas Southern University, Houston Community College-Central, Headquarters and John B. Coleman Campuses, Rice University, University of St. Thomas, the Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions and the many institutions of higher learning in the Texas Medical Center to the rail and circulator systems which will serve the more than 60,000 students on these campuses.
5. METRO should devise comprehensive service, simplified pricing, tailored marketing and information strategies for cultural destinations such as the Museum District, Reliant Stadium complex, the Theater District and Hermann Park for

- access from the greater Houston area and for visitors, including enhanced services from major hotels.
6. METRO should partner with cities and local governments to address the pedestrian realm surrounding METRO transportation stops and stations including sidewalks to and from stations and other amenities integral to effective transit service. These partnerships should provide integrated strategies for the mobility funds that are provided to local governments for this intended purpose.
 7. METRO should develop the ongoing capacity to address special and ongoing event transportation needs in ways that minimize congestion and enhance the success of programs and regular events that are important for Houston's economy and community such as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the Houston Marathon, the Museum District Day, and special events such as the NCAA Final Four Basketball tournament.
 8. METRO should devise and implement simplified pricing plans that are easy for riders to understand especially as the system becomes more complex, involving transfers and diverse modes of travel. The pricing system should be able to accommodate the needs of regular travelers as well as visitors who are unfamiliar with the transit options and programs in the area.
 9. METRO should extend Signature Services to augment light rail service, particularly for the travel needs of all of the major activity centers, including the Galleria/Greenway Plaza area, Downtown and the Texas Medical Center.
 10. METRO should advance light rail connections to both Intercontinental and Hobby Airports as a high priority to enhance the ability of travelers to reach the major activity centers in the area. As an interim step, airport express bus service should be expanded to major activity centers including major hotels and in the Galleria/Greenway Plaza area, downtown and the Texas Medical Center.

Sent to Kimberly Slaughter on August 16, 2011