



March 2014



*Commissioner Grady Prestage's*  
**PRECINCT 2 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

"Commissioner's Corner" (March Edition)



Click the link to watch the March edition of Commissioner's Corner:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81E2Q8NnvGE>

## Fort Bend County Continues Fight to Keep Transit Dollars



According to the National Association of Counties Transportation Policy Brief, counties play a critical role in the nation's transportation system. They are responsible for building and maintaining 230,690 bridges and 45 percent of all public roads (compared to the 32 percent of public roads owned by cities and townships, 19 percent by states, and 3 percent by the federal government), and are involved in a third of the nation's transit systems and airports that connects residents, communities and businesses.

In Fort Bend County, residents are able to enjoy bus service by appointment to any location in the County for a minimal cost. The Fort Bend County Transportation Department offers three express fixed-route commuter services to Greenway,

## Fifth Street Area Market Study Community Presentation



Commissioner Grady Prestage giving his insight for the Market Study presentation.

Community leaders, developers, and residents attended the Fifth Street Neighborhood Plan & Market Study Presentation on March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Fifth Street Community Center, located at 3110 5th Street, Stafford, Texas 77477. The study led by Fort Bend County Commissioner Grady Prestage was a culmination of nearly a year of stakeholder meetings, neighbors talking with neighbors, and a community survey/needs assessment.

Commissioner Grady Prestage, in partnership with the University of Texas' Center for Sustainable Development (CSD), commissioned the market study to attract new development, improve the environment, and build upon the community's unique character and heritage. Fort Bend County Community

Galleria/Yorktown, and the Texas Medical Center.

While these operating services are a great benefit to County residents, they're continued use is threatened by the language of a federal two-year surface transportation bill that was signed into law in 2012 called the "MAP 21 Act" (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). Fort Bend County currently participates in the U.S. Surface Transportation Program (STP), which is a program funded in part by the Highway Trust Fund, which collects revenue from the federal motor fuels tax.

Funds from the STP are distributed to state and local governments by Congress for public transportation purposes. Under the current Surface Transportation Program, each urbanized area is allocated funds using a formula based upon bus revenue miles, bus passenger miles, fixed guide way revenue miles, fixed guide way route miles, population and population density. In 2012, Congress included vehicle revenue hours (Hours when the bus is in active service to pick up and drop off passengers) to the expense formula in addition to the aforementioned parameters.

With the inclusion of the language added by Congress, the Transportation Department is experiencing a major reduction in its allocation. Currently, MAP-21 is set to expire on September 30, 2014. In addition, the Highway Trust Fund is expected to hit a major fiscal cliff

Development with a block grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded this initiative.



A map of what Fifth Street could potentially look like with modern development of housing, retail shops, a medical facility, and grocery store.

Attendees received a full summary report on the progress of the market study by Andrea Roberts, Project Manager for the Fifth Street Market Study. The report summarized the need for new "green" business; how to fulfill demands for new housing such as apartments and low-income dwellings; developing incentive packages that are not only targeted to large developers and corporations, but also to small business; explore land reassembly, community land trust, and alternative methods of making land available for development.

The discussion also focused on the final neighborhood plan and how it will be used to market the community to charitable foundations. Commissioner Prestage provided valuable insight on the goals and progress of the Fifth Street Area Project and pledged his continued support in seeing this come to fruition.

...and is expected to face major needs in the next year. Although the Fort Bend County Transportation Department continues to operate, the impact of the lack of funding will erode the current level of programs & services provided.

Fort Bend County officials are continually urging Congress to fix the Highway Trust Fund and pass a long-term multi-year surface transportation bill that provides sufficient funding to meet the country's infrastructure needs as well as revising the language of the bill that is adversely affecting transit operations.

"Congress is currently in session trying to find an adequate resolution to the MAP-21 Act and it is my sincere hope they are able to make the necessary changes before its set to expire later this year," says Paulette Shelton, Fort Bend County Transportation Director. "It is also important that our federal elected representatives hear from tax payers and not just county officials on how important this piece of legislation is."

For more information, contact the Fort Bend County Transportation Department at [281.633.7433](tel:281.633.7433).



Project Manager Andrea Roberts presenting her findings from the Market Study.

Fifth Street Census Designated Place (CDP), named after a street of the same name, is a community in east Fort Bend County near Houston. Still semi-rural and unincorporated, Fifth Street has roots that stretch back to the founding of the County. Once home to self-reliant former slaves, Imperial Sugar Refinery workers, business owners, musicians, activists, and sharecroppers. The Fifth Street Project will build upon the community's rich and diverse heritage.

For more information on the next steps and how to get involved, contact:

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