Houston TranStar

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Houston TranStar expands mobile site to include west Houston streets
Bluetooth™ helps mobile web users reap immediate benefits on the west side, with expansion to follow

Houston TranStar has expanded its mobile website to include traffic conditions on local streets in addition to freeways. Users can now visit the website to view real-time speeds and travel times on streets like Westheimer, Richmond and Highway 6. The traffic information on the streets is collected using cutting-edge *Bluetooth™* sensor technology, a cost-effective method of gathering information that can be used to estimate average speeds and travel times. The information can be viewed on Houston TranStar's mobile website at http://mobile.houstontranstar.org/westhouston or on the regular website at http://traffic.houstontranstar.org.

"Houston TranStar has been providing traffic information on freeways for more than 15 years. The use of *Bluetooth™* traffic sensors now lets us provide information on streets as well," said Houston TranStar Director John R. Whaley. "This technology is inexpensive and can be widely deployed in a short amount of time. Yet its reliability and data quality rivals any other method of estimating speeds and travel times."

The City of Houston, a TranStar agency partner, recently installed sensors covering 62 square miles on Houston's populous west side, where local roads carry about 12.7 million vehicle miles each day. With traffic volumes on these streets rivaling or surpassing those on freeways in other areas, the area was a natural candidate for expanding the traffic data collection system.

Funded by the City of Houston, the *Bluetooth™*-based AWAM (Anonymous Wireless Address Matching) sensor technology was researched and developed by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), a part of the Texas A&M University System. The *Bluetooth™* sensors installed along the roadways collect anonymous information from electronic devices such as mobile phones, GPSs and in-vehicle navigation systems. The information collected by the sensors is encrypted upon receipt, is not associated with a specific user, and does not contain any personal data that could be used to track an individual. The speeds and travel times generated by the system are posted to the Houston TranStar Website for public use, and are also used by engineers to monitor and measure the operations of the roadway network.

Houston TranStar is a group of four government agencies that coordinate and enhance transportation and emergency management services in Southeast Texas. The agencies include: the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Harris County, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) and the City of Houston. Check us out on the Houston TranStar Facebook and Twitter pages.

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