

5A. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan study began July 1, 2023. The study team has updated the Thoroughfare Plan and is now analyzing the major intersections to determine where additional ROW is needed in the future.
- Washington Avenue Corridor study began October 1, 2023. The first public meeting was held on May 11, 2024. The public provided feedback at the event and through the online survey. The study team is analyzing the survey results and is starting to develop alternatives to improve traffic flow along the corridor.
- Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The study team held the second Steering Committee meeting on May 16, 2024, and is currently developing alternatives to address the issues identified through public input, steering committee and existing conditions analysis.
- FM 518 Corridor study began November 1, 2023. The study team held the second Steering Committee meeting on May 30, 2024, where they presented the existing conditions, identified issues and the survey results from the April 6, 2024, public outreach event.
- Pearland Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The study team held the second Steering Committee meeting on May 30, 2024, where they presented the existing conditions, identified issues and the survey results from the April 6, 2024, public outreach event.
- Cemetery Road Corridor Study began March 1, 2024. The first Steering Committee was held June 17, 2024. The first public outreach event will be held in July/August 2024.
- Friendswood's Parkway Corridor study is currently being procured. This project is included in the 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2024.

2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee (GHFC) meeting was held on April 18, 2024. The next meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2024.
- The 2023 Regional Goods Movement Plan (RGMP) has concluded and was approved at the May 2024 TPC. The next step for the plan is to begin implementing the program and policy recommendation from the plan document.
- Houston Area Rail Transformation (HART) and HGAC hosted The Rail Grants 101 workshop on June 11th at Houston TranStar. Presenters included the Federal Railroad Administration, Houston-Galveston Area Council, The Goodman Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad, TranSystems, and Texas North Western Railway. Please contact Sydni Ligons at sydni.ligons@h-gac.com to request presentations materials. The HART working group meets monthly following TPC. H-GAC staff continues to provide meeting support and regional coordination. The next meeting is planned for June 28, 2024.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- H-GAC staff conducted a Tow and Go Operations meeting with the Harris County Sheriff Office (HCSO), Houston Police Department (HPD), AECOM, TxDOT, and the Towing industry at Houston TranStar.
- H-GAC staff conducted a Traffic Incident Management meeting at Houston TranStar. The meeting had representatives from TxDOT, HCSO, HPD, AECOM, Hazmat, SH288 and the Towing Industry.
- The Tow and Go Public Awareness Campaign is live with educational information streaming on radio, through digital and social media, and billboards across the region.
- H-GAC Staff is working on a Hurricane Preparedness and Awareness Campaign for 2024.
- H-GAC staff finalized and distributed the Hurricane Maps – Hurricane Evacuation and Zip Zone maps.
- “Tow and Go” performed 3,614 “No Cost Tows” in May 2024. May’s average clearance time was 15 minutes and 24 seconds.
- H-GAC staff conducted two meetings with the consultant on the regional ITS Architecture project. They will present to TSMO Subcommittee in August.
 - Consultant is contacting local stakeholders to take stock in local ITS inventory and future ITS planning activities.
- Staff traveled to Austin for the 2024 TxDOT TSMO Summit to present on ITS planning and programs.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff are updating the land use\landcover base map of the Eco-Logical tool based on recent aerial photography. Further enhancement of the tool will include links to existing environmental assessment and final environmental impact statements for roadway projects within the planning H-GAC region. Staff will coordinate with TxDOT and consultants working on local Planning and Environmental Linkages studies to examine the application of Ecological tools on those studies.
- Staff continue to follow local Environmental Justice news as they relate to the H-GAC Title VI Nondiscrimination Program and will inform the triennial update to the regional Title VI Program Update and report on activities in furtherance of Environmental Justice.

5. Resiliency Planning

- H-GAC’s MPO was one of the 80 recipients that will receive funding from the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program. The program awarded \$829.6 million in grant funding to fund projects to improve the resilience of the surface transportation system.

H-GAC will receive \$1.1 million to develop a Regional Resilience Improvement Plan for the surface transportation system of an eight-county region that experiences repeated extreme weather events, natural disasters, and hazardous flooding conditions. The project will fine-tune previously developed strategies, identify gaps in planning, create a list of priority improvements that can be implemented in the short- and long term, and include a risk-based assessment of vulnerabilities to roadways, culverts, ditches, medians, and other transportation assets.

- Staff coordinated letters of support for regional partners PROTECT Grant Program applications.
- Staff completed work on the Resilience & Durability Pilot project as part of the FHWA program to develop transportation-specific resiliency best practices and strategies. The draft report has been finalized and accepted by FHWA. Staff has completed an update of the Foresight Panel on Environmental Effects report with outcomes from the Pilot project. For more information visit: www/h-gac.com/resiliency-planning

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) subcommittee provides guidance and oversees the progress of the RTP. The committee must meet quorum and meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month. The next meeting is May 8, 2024.
- The 2045 RTP Update was approved by TPC in April 2023. The final report and 33 associated appendixes are available online: <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtpupdate>
- Staff has finalized the RTP Project Development Process and online portal for project intake.
- The RTP Project Sponsor Workshop was held on May 15th, 2024. The workshop has 40 attendees (20 in-person and 20 virtual). The agenda included: overview of RTP Project Development Process, how to submit a project online, and presentations on publicly available, free to use data applications to enhance project submission.

7. Other Planning Activities

- Staff continued to monitor regional travel impacts of COVID-19. Regional travel volumes were monitored through StreetLight data. Transit ridership numbers are now reported quarterly from transit agencies in the region. Permanent pedestrian/bicyclist counters provide updates on counts along regional pedestrian/bicyclist facilities. Staff have developed an online [COVID-19 Regional Traffic Impacts App](#) which displays vehicular, active, and transit transportation patterns during the Pandemic.
- Work is underway to update the Language Access Plan (LAP). The LAP examines the need for language assistance by individuals with limited proficiency in the English language (LEP) within the MPO region and specifies what services will be offered to overcome the language barriers. Efforts to update the LAP include a survey to gather information about the non-English languages spoken around the region. Information gathered through the survey will help updates to the Language Access Plan (LAP) and the triennial update to the H-GAC Title VI Program. Related activities include the community roundtables, which are aimed at opening a dialogue and creating long-term partnerships with advocates, representatives, and members of the racial and ethnic minority groups and other underserved populations.

SHORT RANGE PLANNING

1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated the amendments to the 2023-2026 TIP document. Staff coordinated with TxDOT and local governments on the proposed amendments to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Staff met with local sponsors as part of the quarterly TIP monitoring efforts.

- Staff worked on the development of project selection criteria for the next Call for Projects and coordinated with various subcommittees.
- Staff completed the project selection process for the Carryover Balance projects. These are projects that can be ready for implementation within the next 2 years. The effort included the selection of over \$335 M in surface transportation projects identified for project development activities and construction. Over the spring, staff will work to program these projects into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Staff completed and the TPC approved projects for the Regional Goods Movement investment criteria. Over \$150M in regional projects that encourage the safe and efficient movement of goods in the region. These projects will be submitted into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program in the Spring of 2024.

2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Staff are continuing to work with the Data Analytics department to update the Regional Bike Network Map. Larger communities that have submitted their data are now live on the Regional Bike Network map. Staff have started the process of updating the Sidewalk data layer.
- The consultant selection process for the Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept study continues with execution of consultant contract and ILA by June 2024.
- H-GAC Board of Directors approved entering in to contract negotiations with TEI Planning + Design for the Memorial Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian safety study.
- City of Friendswood solicitation ended 6/13/24. Proposal evaluation ends 7/8/24.
- The Bay Area Ped Bike study is ongoing. An open house was held on June 5 to share proposed recommendations with the public. Recommendations are currently being finalized.
- Staff attended various meetings such as the City of Houston Bicycle Advisory Committees, Texas Pedestrian Coalition, Houston Safety Task Force, etc.
- Staff continue to work with Procurement to publish a request for proposal for counter installation work, which closed on January 11th. Staff confirmed that mobile counter activities are also eligible for inclusion in the contract. Staff are working to confirm if the budget for this expanded contract may necessitate Board of Directors' approval.

3. Transit Planning

- The next meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee will be held on Thursday, July 11, 2024.
- The US 90A Corridor Transit Study began on March 12, 2024. The Steering Committee met on May 30, 2024 to review data collected so far and discuss public outreach strategies.
- Staff is developing the Regional Bus Study, which will examine the feasibility of bus services connecting outlying communities to each other as well as the urban core. This AFA-funded study could be supplemented by an additional TxDOT grant to cover the entire 13-county H-GAC service area, which is recommended by the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan.
- Procurement has completed for a consultant for the Transit Information Study, and the H-GAC Board of Directors, at their June 2024 meeting, authorized H-GAC to enter into a contract with the preferred consultant. The project will kick off once a contract has been signed.

- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis draft was completed, and preparation of edits to the first draft of the Final Report is underway. We are extending our review of alternatives to examine additional options for delivering transit service based on feedback from the City of Pearland. Presentations to the Pearland City Council, TAC, and TPC are scheduled for July.
- The Board of Directors approved two years of funding for Microtransit pilot service in the City of Sugar Land. Potential minor revisions of the interlocal contract are under review. Service is expected to begin in the Fall.
- CMAQ Commuter pilot service provided by Fort Bend Transit began on March 4 with initial ridership numbers exceeding expectations. Monthly commuter ridership exceeded 3,300 in March 2024. Service with the Woodlands township was adjusted to allow the expense of administrative costs. The pilot project should conclude at the end of the year.
- The Dayton Transit Study contract is in Internal Audit. A City of Dayton-H-GAC interlocal agreement has been prepared. The study is expected to begin by August
- Staff are working with METRO and regional transit partners to continue implementation of the Regional Transit Connectivity Project. Harris County Transit and Fort Bend Transit have gone live with Mobile Ticketing under the new partnership project. H-GAC and METRO are currently working to integrate all partners into the Regional Data Management System.
- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee approved a new methodology for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan's Transit Need Index in January 2024. Staff are working with the region's transit agencies to gather necessary data to implement this methodology.
- Data collection for Transit Asset Management performance measures is complete. Staff have contacted all agencies & have updated plans from all agencies. Staff began presenting the results to internal subcommittees in February. Staff presented to TAC & TPC for information in March. Staff presented to TAC for recommendation of FY 2026 targets & to TPC for approval of these targets in April. H-GAC staff are exploring options to reimagine the structure & data used in reporting these performance measures in the future. Staff will meet with NCTCOG in early July to discuss their process for collecting and analyzing this data.

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- A Provider Summit for providers of Paratransit and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation services will be held on June 25, 2024, at H-GAC offices, from 11 AM to 2 PM. The event will include small group discussions, a networking hour, and a panel discussion. The event is free, and a light lunch will be provided.
- Planning for the following projects is currently underway or were completed recently:
 - RTP Project Submission Process
 - Hurricane Preparedness Campaign
 - Safe Streets 4 All
 - EJ/Title VI – Awareness Initiative (Connecting Communities)
 - Language Access Plan Update
 - Washington Ave Corridor Study
 - Tow & Go – Media Buying
 - Commute Solutions (Connect Smart Pilot Program)
 - Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II
 - Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan

- Bay Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan
- Friendswood Parkway Corridor Study
- Cemetery Road Corridor Study
- US 90A Transit Corridor Study
- Old Sixth Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility Study Corridor Study
- MPO 50th Anniversary
- Air Quality – Climate Change Engagement for MPO's Collar Counties
- Best Workplaces for Commuters

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions continues to work with the multiple transit partners across the region in preparation for the Ozone Action Month Pilot September 2024.
- Commute Solutions and Love to Ride promoted the Bike Month Challenge through social media, newsletters, press releases. The Bike Month Challenge was also promoted by partners throughout the region with materials provided by Love to Ride
- Commute Solutions and ConnectSmart continued its outreach planning with Rice University and will be participating in a series of staff professional development events and graduate student resource events.
- Commute Solutions participated in the New Employee Orientation events at MD Anderson and is coordinating with Conroe Connections, ConnectSmart, Woodlands Express, Fort Bend Transit, and METRO to represent the transit needs for the TMCs commuters. The transit partners are also pursuing opportunities throughout the TMC with agencies such as UT Health – Houston and Texas Children's, and Memorial Hermann.
- Commute Solutions and FitHouston, Houston's Healthy Cities initiative, began coordinating with other advocacy groups and agencies on solutions to make bike programs more accessible. The group discussed several community needs including ride audits, education, civic engagement, and advocacy. Commute Solutions will be providing a demonstration of how the Bike the Gulf site may serve as the hub for these efforts.

CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continue to work on a project to reassess the availability of Buy America compliant vehicles suitable for inclusion as part of the Clean Vehicles Program. Staff are continuing to work to reach out to manufacturers of vehicles and as well as electric vehicle charging equipment to discuss Buy America requirements and the availability of compliant equipment. Staff are also working with in-house council to review federal Buy America rules and assess processes that agency programs can use to comply with these regulations. This work is ongoing and is anticipated to conclude no later than Q4 of 2024
- Staff worked with grant recipients who have recently received vehicle deliveries to support ongoing grant activities and process invoice materials for ongoing projects. Staff is currently not have initiating any new vehicle replacement grants while efforts are underway to resolve ongoing Buy America issues.
- Staff continues to monitor post-delivery projects that have not yet met the contractually required emission reductions based upon subrecipient performance. This monitoring effort ensures that

grant recipients' usage of vehicles remains within grant requirements and that vehicle use and mileage commitments are met. Staff is currently monitoring 145 project vehicles.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- H-GAC continues to administer \$1 million in planning funds through the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). With the completion and submittal of the Priority Climate Action Plan and the \$162 million CPRG Phase II implementation grant proposal, staff have been working to lay the groundwork for the portion of the CPRG planning grant. Staff is working with project partners to gather data and plan for the development of the upcoming Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.
- H-GAC continued to work on regional efforts to support the Department of Energy sponsored Houston-Galveston Clean Cities Coalition. Under this program, staff worked with regional fleets to foster economic, environmental, and energy security by working to advance affordable, domestic transportation fuels, energy efficient mobility systems, and other fuel-saving technologies and practices.
- Staff have been working since late last year to develop a regional project for TCEQ's Rider 7 project. This funding is available to near nonattainment area to provide funding for projects that could assist with the development of the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Our region is eligible for the PM_{2.5} portion of this program and has been awarded approximately \$450m in project funding. The H-GAC Board of Directors has approved H-GAC acceptance of this funding, and staff is developing a scope of work to support this effort.
- Staff continues to administer two separate Environmental Protection Agency-funded Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grants from the 2018 and 2019 Calls for Projects to deploy all-electric yard tractors at local freight warehouses. Staff have been working with IKEA to replace two existing diesel yard tractors at their Baytown facility with all-electric models.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING & FORECASTING

- Staff continues to provide travel demand and forecasting modeling technical support to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), and other traffic and travel related data developments within the H-GAC MPO region that supports sub-regional and corridor studies for both TxDOT and other H-GAC member agencies projects. These include: support for the TxDOT CMP US 90 Widening and US 90 improvement, TxDOT CMAQ NOx and VOC reduction estimations, I-10E PEL Phase 2 model runs, SH 36A Feasibility Study model runs, TxDOT Roundabout Feasibility Analysis, City of Houston MTFP, TxDOT 36A Project (Cemetery Road study), the US 90A Transit study, Friendswood Parkway Corridor Study, SH 146 Feasibility/Schematic Study that prohibits truck restriction on certain segments of the roadway, the Regional PEL Study, the I-610 South feasibility study, the Tomball Comprehensive Plan and UDC Update, AADT reviews for TxDOT for the 2022 truck percentage
- Staff continues to work with TxDOT TP&P and the TTI in developing the scope of work and the best methodologies for the forthcoming commercial vehicle and special generator surveys

(Galveston County) in the H-GAC MPO region, completed the stratification table for sample targets and reviewed survey questions, provided technical support in data analysis and visualization, reviewed scenario planning tool SOW, traffic count final data processing and reviewed TXDOT 2023 AADT and submit comments, continue to coordinate with H-GAC website team to develop a data and survey website for H-GAC completed and on-going surveys collection, coordinate with the contract and procurement teams for renewal and acquisition of various licenses used with the Data Analytics Department for analysis.

- Staff continues to coordinate with the TxDOT TP&P, the ETC Insitute and Cambridge Systematics (CS) for the expansion of the Household Survey data collected within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region, and continues to work with ETC Institute and RSG for the development of the Airport sub-model, working with the Procurement team for the Active Transportation Survey for the Bike & Pedestrians data collection within the H-GAC MPO region and in procurement process for the H-GAC traditional 4-step model (TDM) update.
- Staff reviewed and compared the 2022 and 2023 NPMRDS INRIX network, lane miles, and VMT at regional and corridor levels, reviewed and analyzed the 2022 and 2023 raw data, calculated travel time reliability measures based on the raw data at regional and corridor levels to quantify the impact of HOV/HOT/Managed lanes, checked existing and after-improvement Travel Time Index for 77 operational improvement projects.