

List of Public Comments and Responses on the Draft 2022-2023 Unified Planning Work Program

Comment 1. Submitted by Glenn Venables. H-GAC staff responses are in blue.

Subtask 3.5 Evacuation Planning:

Add bullet task to “Coordinate with state, county, and city law enforcement entities (e.g. police) to facilitate their roles and responsibilities during evacuations.” (e.g. traffic control on major routes to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow at bottlenecks such as traffic lights).

H-GAC Response: H-GAC staff coordinate with state, county, and city governments in planning evacuation routes and provide assistance through a web-based tool on traffic flows. H-GAC staff do not directly facilitate local government staff roles and responsibilities during evacuations.

Add the following planning tasks to the document, wherever they best fit:

1. Determine how to reduce disruptive impacts to traffic caused by Transportation Improvement projects that create huge traffic bottlenecks, take too long to complete, and contribute to many vehicle accidents.

H-GAC Response: The implementing agencies such as Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) or local governments typically prepare a Transportation Management Plan that has different strategies to manage work zone impacts of a project. The following website includes some examples of the type of strategies included in Traffic Management Plans:

https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/resources/final_rule/tmp_examples.htm. Houston-Galveston Area Council does not implement or manage the construction of a transportation infrastructure projects. All projects are implemented/constructed by TxDOT or a local governments that own facilities and are responsible for maintenance of the transportation infrastructure. All federally funded projects are designed and built to federal standards TxDOT is also responsible to provide oversight of project design and implementation. This comment will be shared with Transportation Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Council, which includes TxDOT and local governments.

a. Determine what Transportation Improvement project contract language and payment milestones should be used to incentivize contractors to reduce project durations to minimize traffic disruptions. {Too many major projects take years to complete with many weeks and months where there is no visible progress but the public must endure wasteful and dangerous traffic disruptions.}.

H-GAC Response: Federally funded transportation infrastructure project implementation contracts are prepared and administered by TxDOT. Many major transportation projects also include local governments as sponsors. This comment will be shared with Transportation Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Council, which includes TxDOT and local governments.

2. Determine criteria for evaluating Transportation Improvement projects so they are appropriately designed for future expandability and improvement. {Too many TXDOT projects seem to have a short useful life of <10 years where everything is torn down and then re-built from scratch. Too many Gulf Freeway overpasses have been built, torn down, and re-built with a completely different design).

H-GAC Response: Houston-Galveston Area Council staff works with a Transportation Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Council to develop project evaluation criteria for selecting projects to be funded and programmed in Regional Transportation Plan, 10-Year Plan or the Transportation Improvement program. All projects are implemented/constructed by TxDOT or a local government that owns and is responsible for maintenance of the transportation infrastructure. All federally funded projects are designed and built to federal standards TxDOT is also responsible to provide oversight of project design and implementation. This comment will be shared with Transportation Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Council, which includes TxDOT and local governments.

3. Determine criteria for evaluating Transportation Improvement projects so engineering designs consider a range of traffic loads from light to heavy. (Roads/freeways seem to be designed with merge/zipper lanes that work fine with light traffic, but are bottleneck and safety disasters when traffic is heavy. There are many examples of this on I45.)

H-GAC Response: All federally funded projects are designed and built to federal standards. TxDOT is responsible to provide oversight of project design and implementation of roadways on the State's system. Local governments receiving federal funds are required to design and build roadways to federal standards. This comment will be shared with Transportation Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Council, which includes TxDOT and local governments.

Thank you for considering my comments, as a public citizen of Harris County.

Glenn Venables