

# 2009 Annual *Mobility* Report

Since 1974, H-GAC has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the eight-county Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area (TMA).

The TMA includes Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties. H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council approves the region's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and near term implementation program known as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The greater Houston region, encompassing 8,000 square miles, is one of the nation's most economically vibrant areas. Investments in the transportation network have been instrumental in developing the region's complex economy and diverse society. Unquestionably, the region's system of highways, transit, rail, ports, and airports has provided residents with exceptional access to jobs, recreation, education, health care, and the many other aspects of life that make this area uniquely attractive.

The transportation system is an asset that needs care and investment. In the coming decades, a projected growth in population of 3.5 million new residents will test an infrastructure system that is already struggling to keep pace with demand. This report highlights what is being done today to meet these transportation demands. It highlights the roadway and transit projects initiated or completed last year, the impact of the federal stimulus program and the sustainable mobility initiatives that are underway. Perhaps more importantly, this report details the transportation funding shortfall facing the region as well as possible funding solutions.



## A Letter from the Transportation Director

Houston-Galveston Area Council



Alan Clark is the Director of Transportation Planning for the Houston-Galveston Area Council. He is the Director for H-GAC's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is responsible for development of the region's multimodal transportation plans.

The MPO's Transportation Policy Council approves the programming of all federal highway and transit funds in Harris and the adjacent seven counties. Mr. Clark's responsibilities also include coordinating the Houston-Galveston area's response to mandates contained in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

"Good riddance" was my first thought as the clock chimed midnight on December 31st. In retrospect though, it could have been worse. Compared to much of the nation, the Houston region weathered the economic downturn relatively well. In the area of transportation, a number of critical projects were undertaken due in large part to funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly referred to as the "stimulus bill." The Houston region received close to \$500 million in funding for highways and over \$100 million in transit improvements. That translates into 50 major mobility projects that would not have otherwise been undertaken. Close to \$70 million was spent on maintenance and preservation work including the reconstruction of segments of the North Loop and IH 10 inside the Loop. Pavement in those segments was close to 30 years old. ARRA funds also advanced new transit services, upgrades to the network of HOV lanes, and 3 livable centers projects.

In addition to ARRA funded projects, this report describes a number of other important initiatives undertaken or completed in 2009. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) has made significant strides in the development of the region's light rail trunk system. The agency broke ground on two light rail corridors, North and South East. Those corridors are tangible evidence of progress in delivering new and expanded transit options to the region. Along those lines, communities in Galveston County launched an alternatives analysis to determine if commuter rail might have a future in the IH 45/SH 3 corridor.

If there is a message in the 2009 Annual Mobility Report, I believe it is that in spite of the economic and financial difficulties it faces the Houston region continues to move forward with transportation infrastructure improvements that serve its residents and businesses. Our state and local governments have learned to make the most of the resources they have at hand, to work together to accomplish mutual goals and to be respectful stewards of the public's money. This report describes your tax dollars at work. I invite you to read it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan".

**Alan C. Clark**

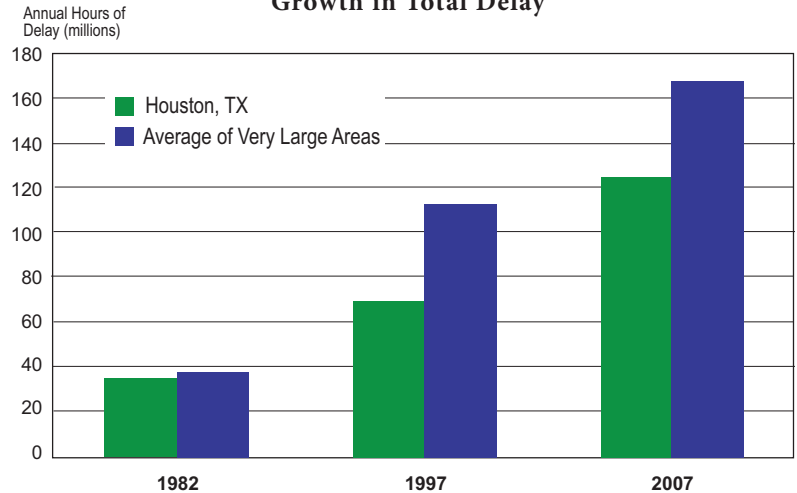
Transportation Director  
Houston-Galveston Area Council

# State of the System

## Congestion

According to the 2009 Urban Mobility Report, the Houston region ranks 4th in the nation for congestion. Travel delay and fuel consumption cost the region almost \$2.5 billion annually. “Rush hour” now lasts close to 8 hours daily with the total vehicle hours of delay up 220% over the past 15 years. While those statistics are sobering, the good news is that the growth in congestion has been slower in our area than in other urban areas of similar size. While no one would suggest that the region’s congestion problem has been solved, the statistics suggest congestion growth has been mitigated by strategic investments in added capacity, public transportation and operational improvements. Management strategies include freeway incident management, freeway ramp metering, arterial street signal coordination, arterial street access management and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

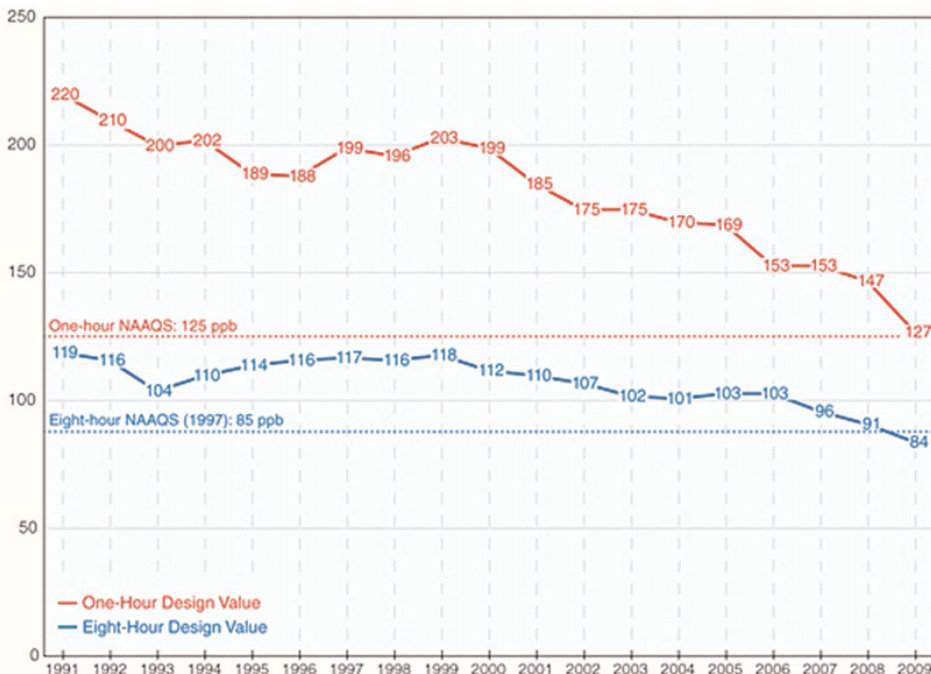
**Growth in Total Delay**



Source: 2009 Urban Mobility Report, Texas Transportation Institute

## Air Quality

### Ozone Design Values for the HGB Area



2009 data is as of October 6, 2009, and is subject to change.

#### 2007 Travel Costs Saved by Public Transportation

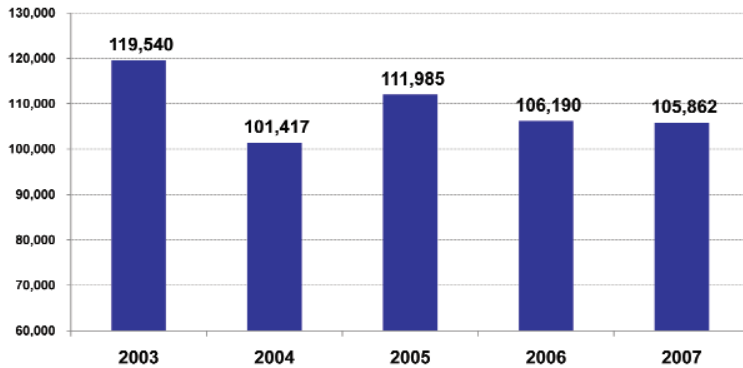
- ♦ 5.9 million Hours (total) in delay reduction
- ♦ \$103,000,000 in reduced travel costs

#### 2007 Travel Costs Saved by Treatments

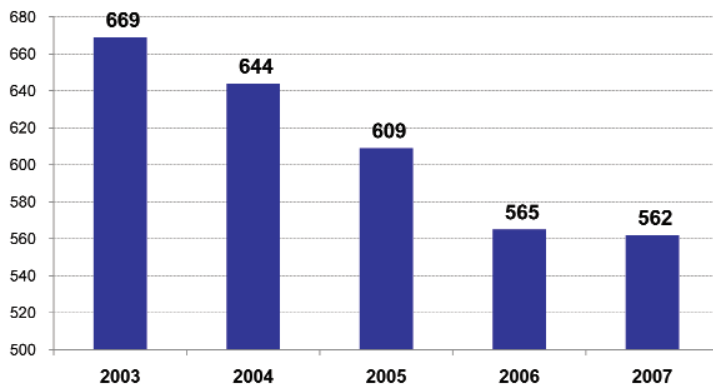
- ♦ 15,201,000 hours of delay reduction
- ♦ \$300,800,000 in reduced travel costs

The region's air quality improved significantly in 2008 and 2009. Last year, the region achieved the existing 8-hour standard for ground level ozone, almost a decade sooner than predicted. In fact, ozone levels have been trending downward since 2000. The 8-hour ozone design values decreased by 25 percent from 2000 to 2009. 2009 data indicates that the Houston region reached a design value of 84 parts per billion (ppb), which is below the 1997 ozone standard.

### Total Regional Crashes



### Total Regional Fatalities



### Safety

The 2009 State of Safety in the Region report released in June 2009 contained the first comprehensive analysis of regional motor vehicle crashes in recent years, using newly-available crash records from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT.) This new data come with promising news. Serious motor vehicle crashes (defined as involving an injury, fatality, or at least \$1,000 in damage) has declined over the five-year period. This is a trend that is playing out nationwide as well. Regionally, serious crashes dropped from 119,540 in 2003 to 105,862 in 2007, a 11.4% decrease. This included a 16.0% decline in fatalities, and a 25.7% decline in injuries during the same period. The decline in serious crashes is considerable over this five-year period, especially taking into consideration the increased amount of vehicle travel. H-GAC estimates that vehicle travel increased from 133 million vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) in 2003 to 150.2 million vehicle-miles traveled in 2007, a 13.0 % increase. The resulting regional annual crash rate, which shows the number of crashes per 100 million VMT annually, fell 21.7 % from 264 to 207 crashes per 100 million VMT. In addition, the fatality rate declined from 1.5 to 1.1 deaths per million VMT. The decline in fatalities is partly attributable to improvements in emergency response times and capabilities across the region. To view the entire 2009 State of Safety in the Region report, visit <http://www.h-gac.com/taq/planning/info/default.aspx>.





On Feb. 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) as a direct response to the economic crisis.

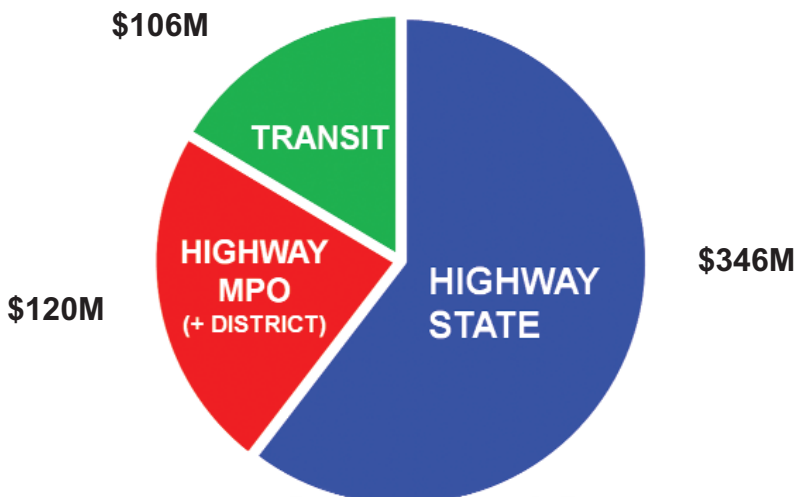
The Recovery Act provided almost \$106 million to transit providers in our region through federal grants or contracts with TxDOT.

ARRA provides funding for Enhancement projects that promote environmental quality and enhance roadway aesthetics.

[www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov)

The most significant transportation event in 2009 was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). It included almost \$600 million for transportation infrastructure improvements in the eight-county Houston region. This one-time funding bonus allowed the state and many of our local governments to move forward with long-delayed projects such as the rehabilitation of sections of IH 610 and IH 10. The region's transit providers benefited from the ability to purchase buses and rail cars to enhance existing service. In addition, \$15 million was allocated to Livable Centers projects to promote pedestrian-oriented development in three urban areas.

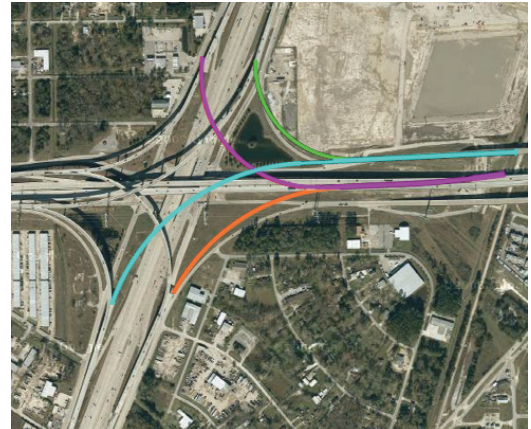
### ARRA Funded Projects (Let/Awarded or Approved For Letting)



## **Roadway Projects**

### **BW 8 at US 59 N-\$50,000,000**

The direct connectors from BW 8 to US 59 are a vital component to the Sam Houston toll road system that the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) is completing in the northeast portion of the region. This will serve approximately 2.5 million residents in northern Harris and southern Montgomery counties. The toll road system and direct connectors will safely facilitate goods movement to and from the Port of Houston.



### **IH 610 - East of Ella to IH 45N-\$43,000,000**

IH 610 is the urban circumferential roadway linking major employment centers of the Houston area, including the Port of Houston and the Galleria. The facility operates at capacity with 116,300 cars per day. An even greater demand of 142,000 cars is expected by 2035. The section between Ella and I-45N is one of the last remaining sections of IH 610 needing rehabilitation. The current roadway is in desperate need of new pavement. The 3.5 mile segment of IH 610 will be reconstructed in approximately 18 months.



### **IH 10 - White Oak Bayou Bridge to US 59 - \$11,000,000**

This section of IH 10 is located east of IH 45 to US 59. This project will reconstruct and rehabilitate the original pavement. It is the last remaining segment to be rehabilitated in the IH 10 urban corridor. The total cost is \$27 million.

### **FM 2004 - SH 288 to BS 288 - \$21,608,000**

Expansion of FM 2004 from Highway 288 to Highway 288-B in Lake Jackson and Richwood began Oct. 15, 2009 and is scheduled to continue for 18 months. The expansion will increase the number of lanes to four and will include an overpass over Old Angleton Road and the railroad.

### **IH 45 N - Loop 336 to Calvary - \$105,000,000**

This work continues the reconstruction and widening of IH 45 from LP 336 in Conroe to Calvary, a distance of 8.5 miles. The project continues the reconstruction and expansion work already underway in Montgomery County. Upon completion, it will significantly mitigate travel delay in both directions for county residents and visitors.

In addition to ARRA funded projects, a number of important initiatives and projects were undertaken in 2009 using traditional funding methods.

### **BW 8 - Sam Houston Tollway - East Section: \$550 million**

The final segment of the HCTRA's Sam Houston Tollway is under construction and scheduled for completion in the spring of 2011. The 13-mile Sam Houston Tollway Northeast project stretches from Old Humble Road near George Bush Intercontinental Airport to

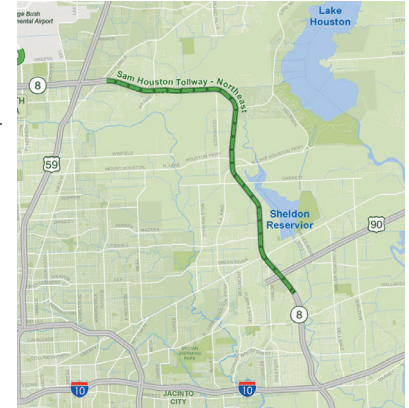


just south of US 90A. The toll road will consist of three lanes in each direction and will be flanked on each side by existing frontage roads.

The roadway is expected to serve a growing population of residential and business development in the region. The project is also expected to reduce congestion on the

region's freeway system, especially IH 10, Loop 610, and US 59. Designers expect the new segment will be used by motorists to bypass the central part of Houston.

The completion of the Sam Houston Tollway finishes a process that began more than 50 years ago. The idea of an outer loop highway system that would encircle the city at an average distance of about 12 miles from downtown Houston and connect to the radial freeways dates back to 1953.



## **Transit Projects**

### **METRO Solutions: \$121 million**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) gave METRO permission to enter into Final Design on Houston's North and Southeast light rail lines on August 17, 2009. The approval authorizes METRO to undertake construction preparation activities such as utility relocation, right-of-way acquisition, development of detailed specifications and preparation of final construction plans.

In July, METRO issued a \$121 million work order for the North and Southeast lines, including initial utility relocation work. The work order is part of a larger contract that calls for the initial spending of \$632 million on the North, Southeast and East End light rail lines. Small and local businesses are expected to receive \$300 million to \$385 million in eligible contract work by the time four lines, including Uptown, are completed. The overall project is expected to generate 60,000 direct and indirect jobs.



Visit [www.metro-solutions.org](http://www.metro-solutions.org).

## **Park & Ride Service Linking Mainland and Galveston**

Mall of the Mainland Park and Ride offers service to:

- ♦ University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB)
- ♦ Downtown Galveston
- ♦ Shearn Moody Plaza @ 25th Street and The Strand
- ♦ ANICO
- ♦ Galveston City Hall
- ♦ Island Transit Transfer Stop- Broadway & 53rd Street

Mall of the Mainland is located at 10000 Emmett F. Lowery, Texas City, TX. The Park

and Ride designated parking lot of 200 spaces is at the northwest corner of the mall near Sears Department Store. Passengers can ride the commuter service dubbed “Island Connect” to Galveston and let professionals deal with the traffic while they read, work or rest on the commute to and from Galveston. The transit service provides commuters with an inexpensive alternative to get to work on Galveston Island as both employment and traffic congestion increase.

For more information visit

[www.islandtransit.net/newparkandrideservice.htm](http://www.islandtransit.net/newparkandrideservice.htm) or  
[www.mallofthemainland.com](http://www.mallofthemainland.com).



## **Pasadena Park and Ride, 3rd Baytown route**

The Pasadena Park & Ride began operation April 6, 2009. The park and ride is located on the northern side of the Pasadena Town Square Mall. The County has contracted with Metro to provide the services for this project, and the Houston Central Business District drop off points are the same as that of the Metro route 244 which serves the Metro Park & Ride located at Monroe and IH-45. The fare structure is \$3.75 per one way trip. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday, with morning departures from 5:48 am - 7:23 am and return trips from 4:57 pm - 6:50 pm.

For more information visit [www.harriscountytransit.com/pasadena\\_pr.html](http://www.harriscountytransit.com/pasadena_pr.html).



The following transit projects have been initiated with ARRA funding.

**Brazos Transit District**, The Woodlands: \$1.7 million to construct a bus maintenance facility to accommodate 30 vehicles, a water taxi maintenance facility to accommodate six water taxis, and a washing station.

### **The Gulf Coast Center**

- Lake Jackson: \$371,160 to construct 11 bus passenger shelters, concrete pads, sidewalks, ramps, and kiosks.
- League City: \$2.4 million for the construction of a park-and-ride lot at the new UTMB facility.



**Fort Bend County:** \$2.7 million for the purchase of eight buses, construction of a park-and-ride lot, and miscellaneous equipment.

**The Harris County Community and Economic Development Department:** \$922,000 to purchase shelters and fare collection equipment, as well as to pay for the capital costs of contracting and operating assistance.

Brazos Transit District  
[www.btd.org](http://www.btd.org)

The Harris County Community and Economic Development Department  
[www.csd.hctx.net](http://www.csd.hctx.net)

City of Galveston  
[www.cityofgalveston.org](http://www.cityofgalveston.org)

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County  
[www.ridemetro.org](http://www.ridemetro.org)

**City of Galveston:** \$1.6 million for the completion of two maintenance facilities for Island Transit.

For local TxDOT information visit  
[http://www.txdot.gov/local\\_information/houston\\_district/default.htm](http://www.txdot.gov/local_information/houston_district/default.htm)

**Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County**, Houston, Texas:

- \$2.3 million to purchase and install signal, communication, and other improvement systems for Houston's Main Street light rail car line.
- \$87.2 million for major renovations including 19 light rail cars for expansion purposes to be used on the Main Street Line as well as purchasing and installing 40 bus passenger shelters.

High Occupancy Toll lanes will be installed in the Houston area along with new pavement and

signage toll equipment.

A new gate traffic control system will also be replaced to improve safety.





**Projects >\$10M  
Under Contract >\$10M  
by Projects**

**Projects Under Contract >\$10 Million**

County	Street	From	To	Description	Cost (\$millions)
Brazoria	FM 865	Harris county line	FM 518	Widen to 4-lanes divided roadway and shared use path	\$12.9
	SH 332	This Way St	Main St	Construct grade separation and two 2-lane frontage roads	\$34.5
	SH 35	Harris county line	FM 518	Widen to 6-lane divided	\$18.9
Fort Bend	Oilfield Rd	University Blvd	SH 6	Construct 4-lane roadway	\$11.5
Galveston	FM 646	IH 45	FM 517	Widen from 2 lanes to 4-lane divided	\$16.5
Harris	BW 8	Old Humble Rd	US 90	Construct 6 main lanes and direct connectors	\$294.9
	IH 10 E	Magnolia St	Spur 330	Replace pavement and partial widen	\$20.2
	SH 146	At Red Bluff		Construct grade separation	\$12.4
	FM 2978	Montgomery county line	FM 2920	Widen to 5-lanes	\$11.5
Liberty	SH 105	SH 105 west of Cleveland	2.1 miles east of Loop 573	Construct 2-lanes of relief route	\$43.3
	SH 146	US 90 in Dayton	Chambers county line	Widen from 2 lanes to 4-lanes	\$24.8
Montgomery	FM 1314	SH 242	Loop 494	Widen to 4-lane divided rural road	\$36.8
	FM 1484	FM 3083	FM 2432	Widen to 4-lane divided	\$44.2
	FM 1488	FM 149	FM 2978	Widen 2-lanes to 4-lanes divided	\$23.6
	FM 1488	SH 242	IH 45	Widen 2-lanes to 4-lanes divided	\$11.4
	US 59 N	Liberty county line	FM 2090	Widen to 6 main lanes, grade separations	\$31.4

**ARRA Mobility Projects**

County	Street	From	To	Description	Cost (\$millions)
Brazoria	FM 2004	SH 288. At CR 288 and UPRR	BS 288	Widen to 4-lane divided suburban. Construct railroad grade separation	\$10.5
Chambers	IH 10	2 miles west of FM 1724		Construct new rest area	\$13.7
Fort Bend	US 59	Wharton county line	FM 360	Overlay concrete	\$6.4
	SH 6	At FM 1092 and Glen Lakes Blvd		Reconfigure and upgrade traffic signal system	\$0.3
	FM 359	Farmer Rd US 90A	Farmer Rd US 90A	Widen from 2-lanes to 4-lanes rural	\$11.8
	FM 1092	At Cartwright		Reconfigure and upgrade traffic signal system	\$0.97
	FM 1464	Shiloh Lakes Dr	SH 99	Widen from 2-lanes to 4-lanes rural	\$13.6
	Staffordshire Rd	BW 8	5 <sup>th</sup> St	Widen to 4 lanes	\$4.5
	Galveston	FM 1764	At Willow St extension		Construct grade separation
Harris	IH 10	IH 45N	US 59	Reconstruct roadway	\$18.1
	IH 10	Washington Ave	Taylor St	Reconstruct roadway and bridges	\$46.1
	Loop 610	Ella	IH 45	Reconstruct roadway	\$28.9
	BW 8	At US 59N		Construct 4 direct connectors	\$29.6
	BW 8	At Vista, Spencer, Pasadena Blvd and Red Bluff		Turn radius improvements at various locations	\$2.3
	SH 288	At BW 8		At grade TSM improvements	\$0.6
	IH 10	At SH 99		Construct 2 direct connectors	\$30.0
	SH 146	At Spur 330		Construct 2 direct connectors	\$4.1
	Gosling Rd	Kuykendahl	FM 2920	Construct 2-lane asphalt road with turn lanes	\$1.6
	Little York	Airline	Hardy Toll Rd	Widen to 4-lane divided	\$8.5
Montgomery	IH 45	Loop 336	FM 830	Widen to 8 main lanes, reconstruct frontage roads	\$51.2
	IH 45	Calvary	FM 830	Widen to 6 main lanes and replace existing overpasses	\$53.8
Waller	FM 1098	Old US 290	US 290	Widen to 4-lane divided	\$2.5

Description	Cost (\$millions)
Widen to 4-lane divided, replace and install highway bridges	\$33.6
Construct 4-lane divided roadway	\$25.8
Widen to 4-lane divided urban section	\$18.9
Widen to 4-lane	\$21.2
Construct and overlay of existing main lanes and shoulders	\$15.4
Construct direct connectors and braided ramp	\$16.2
Construct frontage roads, retention ponds, drainage channel	\$51.7
Construct grade separation	\$18.5
Widen to 8-lane, reconstruct frontage roads	\$59.7

# **Bicycle – Pedestrian Projects**

## **City of Houston Bikeway Program**

2009 was a banner year for the City of Houston Bikeway Program with the opening of five new hike and bike trails. The new trails add 15 miles to the City's 300-mile bikeway network of on-street bikeways and shared use paths completed with the assistance of federal funding since 1999. The City will start construction of 5 more trails in 2010.

2009 City of Houston Trail Openings include:

- Halls Bayou Trail
- Columbia Tap Trail
- West Houston Trail Phase II
- Little White Oak Bayou
- MKT Hike and Bike Trail



Above - Ribbon cutting ceremony in May, 2009 for the opening of the West Houston Trail Phase II.

## **H-GAC's Pedestrian-Bicyclist Special Districts Program Summary**

H-GAC's Pedestrian-Bicyclist Special Districts Program identifies districts within the region where there are significant opportunities to replace vehicle trips with pedestrian or bicycle trips and to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. An initial study completed in 2004 identified priority areas for strategic investments in improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the region. These areas or "special districts" have an opportunity to partner with H-GAC to complete a more detailed pedestrian and bicycle master plan. The plans provide specific recommendations that can be implemented with funds in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

## **Completed Studies**

Studies are completed in partnership with local entities. Each study has a total budget of \$100,000 with H-GAC contributing 50 percent of the match. The sixth study was completed in March 2009 with the seventh nearing completion.

- Airline Improvement District, March 2009. The Airline Improvement District is located in unincorporated Harris County and contains a concentration of flea markets along Airline Drive. The flea markets attract between 30,000 and 40,000 patrons on a typical weekend day. This activity generates significant traffic congestion along Airline Drive as well as high levels of pedestrian activity. Sidewalks in the area are narrow, and many roadways lack sidewalks altogether. Priority improvements include adding sidewalks throughout the study area and constructing a median on Airline Drive to serve as a pedestrian refuge and minimize conflict points. Improved access to transit and bus shelter improvements were also recommended.



Below - Cyclists ride the newly opened Halls Bayou Trail



# Livable Centers

The goal of H-GAC's Livable Centers Program is to help create walkable, mixed-use places that provide multi-modal transportation options, improve environmental quality and promote economic development. Livable Centers are gaining momentum throughout the Houston-Galveston region, with study and implementation projects under way throughout the eight-county region. A recent call for new studies solicited 15 new applications from suburban, rural and urban areas.

Through the Livable Centers Planning Studies project outcomes may include proposed future land uses, transportation facilities, street design and pedestrian improvements, and parking plans. Studies also include a fiscal feasibility analysis and a proposed implementation plan. Implementation projects aim to foster travel choices by creating safe environments for walking, bicycling and using transit.

## Greater East End

The goal of the Greater East End study was to create a plan to make walking, bicycling and accessing transit more feasible by identifying strategic transportation investments within the study area. Located adjacent to downtown Houston, the East End has a rich cultural heritage and is currently experiencing a large amount of redevelopment. It will also be the home to the future METRO light rail line along Harrisburg Avenue. Transit usage within the study area is well above the average for the Houston region, but many of the transit stops are relatively inaccessible due to a lack of pedestrian infrastructure, including basic amenities and safety features such as sidewalks and crosswalks. The identified improvements focus on pedestrian improvements within the current bus transit corridors of York/Sampson, Navigation and Canal.



### City of Tomball

The Tomball Livable Centers study was an outgrowth of an H-GAC Access Management Study conducted for FM2920, a major corridor that connects IH-45 to US 290. A major issue identified during the course of the Access Management Study was the fact that FM 2920, as it runs through downtown Tomball, creates a hostile pedestrian environment. The Livable Centers study evaluated parking and wayfinding solutions as well as building upon



the recommendations of the access management study to identify improvements in the pedestrian realm to help make downtown Tomball a truly pedestrian-friendly and pedestrian-safe area in which to live, work and play. The study has generated wide public interest and the support of community and city leaders.

### City of Waller

The goal of the City of Waller Livable Centers Study is to revitalize downtown Waller by

focusing on streetscaping and pedestrian improvement projects, specifically improvements on the potential for future connectivity to commuter rail along BR 290. Waller has a traditional, grid-based downtown with potential for great pedestrian usage and connectivity to commuter rail. The study focuses on how the city can prepare for future commuter rail by investing in transportation improvements to make the area more transit-ready and transit-supportive. This includes visualizations of what the area could be transformed into, as well as market research into how much development the area can sustain.





### **The East End: \$5 million**

- Upgrade transit stops (shelters, benches, signage, lighting, waste receptacle, pavement)
- Install/repair sidewalks, curbs, and ramps in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements at intersections, driveways, and alleys as needed
- Install pedestrian-oriented lighting, street furniture, signage and landscaping

### **Uptown Houston: \$5 million**

- Pedestrian-transit access streetscape improvements
- ADA-compliant ramps at intersections, pedestrian-scale lighting
- Installation of landscape barriers/shade trees, pedestrian-friendly signalized intersections/crosswalks



In January 1988, property and business owners in the neighborhood gathered together to figure out who they were, what they wanted to look like and what they wanted to become. The result: the Upper Kirby District was created.

Throughout the years, residents, property owners, businesses, and institutions have focused on beautification, community outreach, special events, identity and transportation. They have succeeded in turning a “no-name” neighborhood into a vibrant residential and commercial destination in the heart of Houston’s inner city, where neighborhoods and businesses work together to enhance the quality of life in the Upper Kirby District.

### **Upper Kirby District: \$5 million**

- Sidewalk improvements throughout the district, addressing curb deficiencies
- Improving wheelchair ramp deficiencies
- Driveway reconstruction
- Pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, lighting, street furniture, and bus shelters, as well as bicycle amenities such as bike racks at destinations

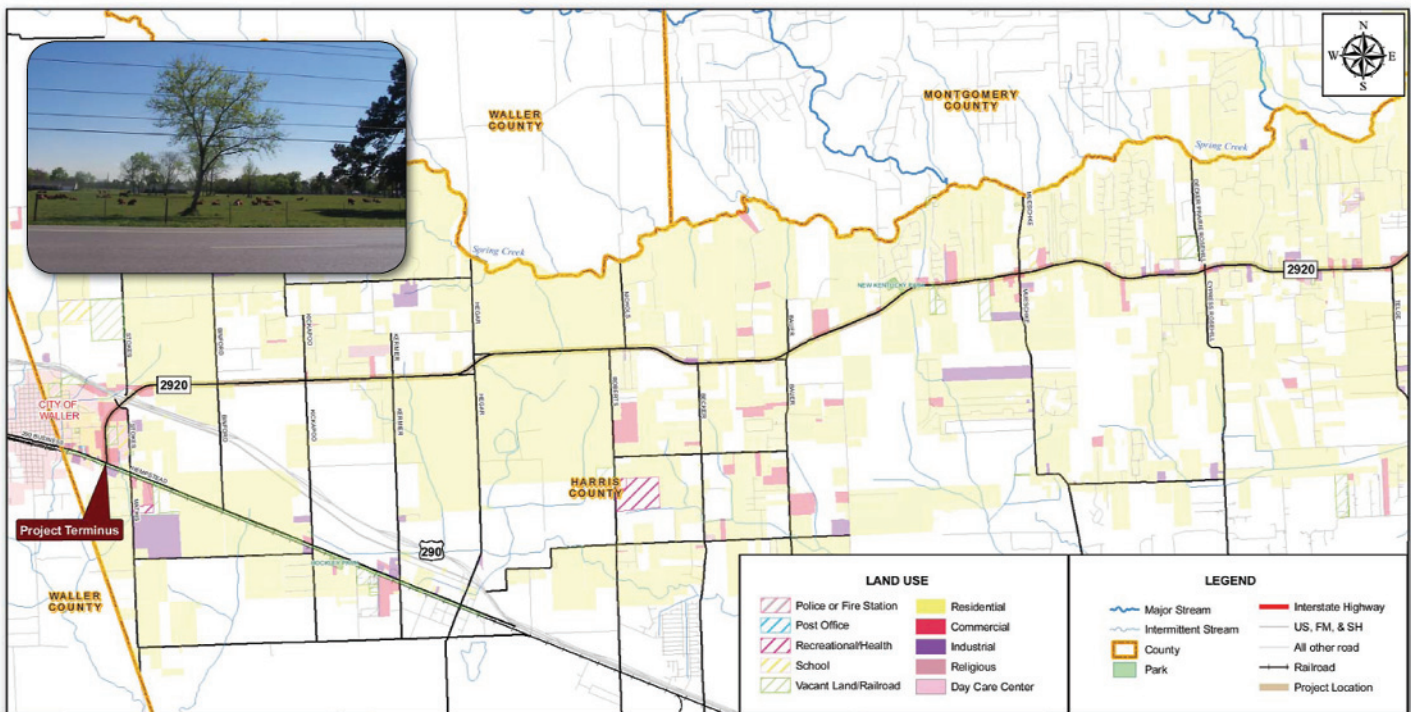


# Access Management Studies

Access management is the harmonizing of access to land with the traffic mobility needs of the roadway. It includes a set of tools that help protect public investments in roadways and improve safety. Primary access management tools and techniques include the position, spacing and design of intersections without signals (cross streets and driveways), raised medians and median openings, signalized intersections, and acceleration/deceleration lanes. Access management is chiefly discussed in the perspective of the non-freeway environment, although freeways (limited access facilities) can also benefit from appropriately spaced exit and entrance ramps.

## FM 2920 Access Management

H-GAC identified access management improvement techniques for the FM 2920 corridor from Hempstead Road (west of US 290) to Lexington Road (east of IH 45). This



### RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENT CATEGORIES

- Signalized intersection improvements
- Non-signalized intersection improvements
- Roadway improvements
- Tomball downtown area improvements
- Bicycle route improvements

study has developed a plan that identifies and addresses short-to medium-term solutions for implementation to improve mobility, reduce traffic delays, and improve safety.



# Financial Outlook for the Houston-Galveston Region

By 2035 the Houston region will be home to 8.8 million people and will support over 4 million jobs; that is a growth of 3.5 million people and 1.5 million jobs. A safe and reliable transportation system is an integral component of all future growth and prosperity. However, current funding forecasts indicate that the transportation system will not keep pace. According to the most recent forecasts, many of the major mobility projects contained in the 2035 RTP will not have sufficient funding for implementation.

In order to understand the funding crisis facing the region, it is necessary to look back on events in the recent past.

Over the last decade, contract lettings by the six-county Houston District of TxDOT varied from a high of more than \$1.2 billion in 2005 to a low of \$257 million in 2008, with a yearly average of \$653 million.<sup>3</sup> Much (but by no means all) of the lettings in 2003-06 was associated with expansion of the Katy Freeway (IH 10 West).

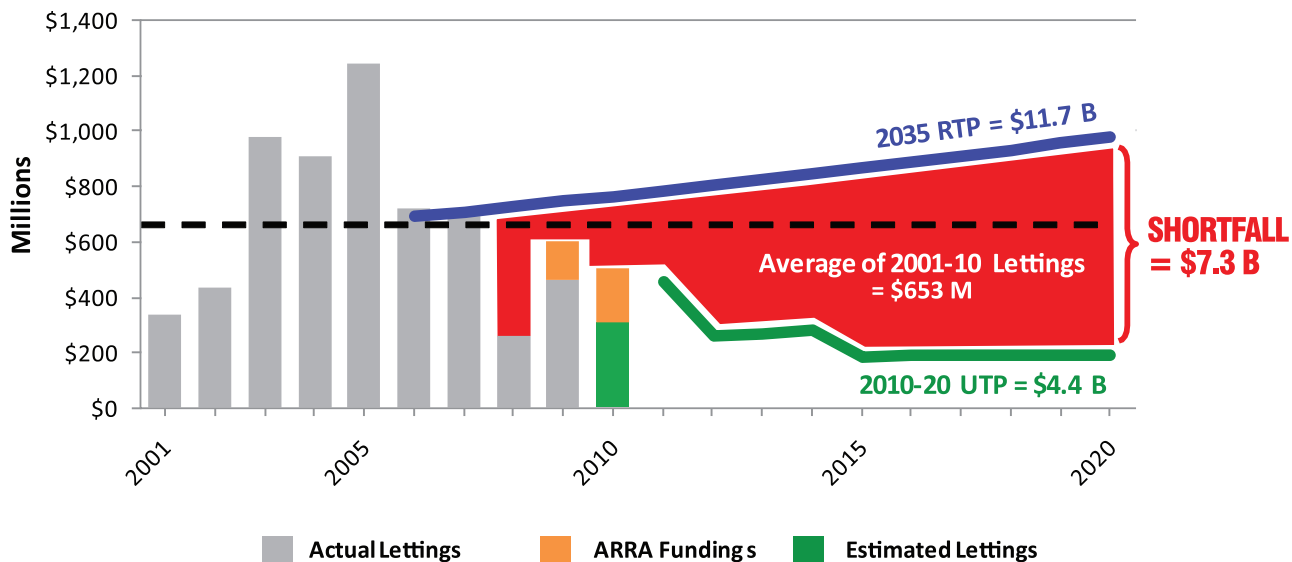
## Proposition 12 bond funds

The Special Session of the Texas Legislature led to the issuance of \$2 billion in Prop 12 bonds.

\$1 billion of the bond proceeds will be used to fund the State Infrastructure Bank.

The remaining \$1 billion will be used by the State to reimburse payments up to \$1.85 billion in new state highway construction.

TxDOT Construction Fundings: Past vs Future



<sup>1</sup>Proposition 14 Funds of \$40 million in 2009 and \$2 million in 2010 are included.

<sup>2</sup>Proposition 12 Bonds adds a one-time additional \$270 million to the UTP in 2011 for a total of \$452 million, as shown.

<sup>3</sup>Contract lettings represent money obligated to specific projects that have been “let” for construction. The TxDOT letting schedule ([http://www.txdot.gov/insdtdot/orgchart/cmd/cserve/let/2010/lethou.htm#let\\_stat](http://www.txdot.gov/insdtdot/orgchart/cmd/cserve/let/2010/lethou.htm#let_stat), e.g., for 2010) includes all contracts for construction and maintenance. It does not include other costs such as engineering, utility relocation, or acquisition of right of way.

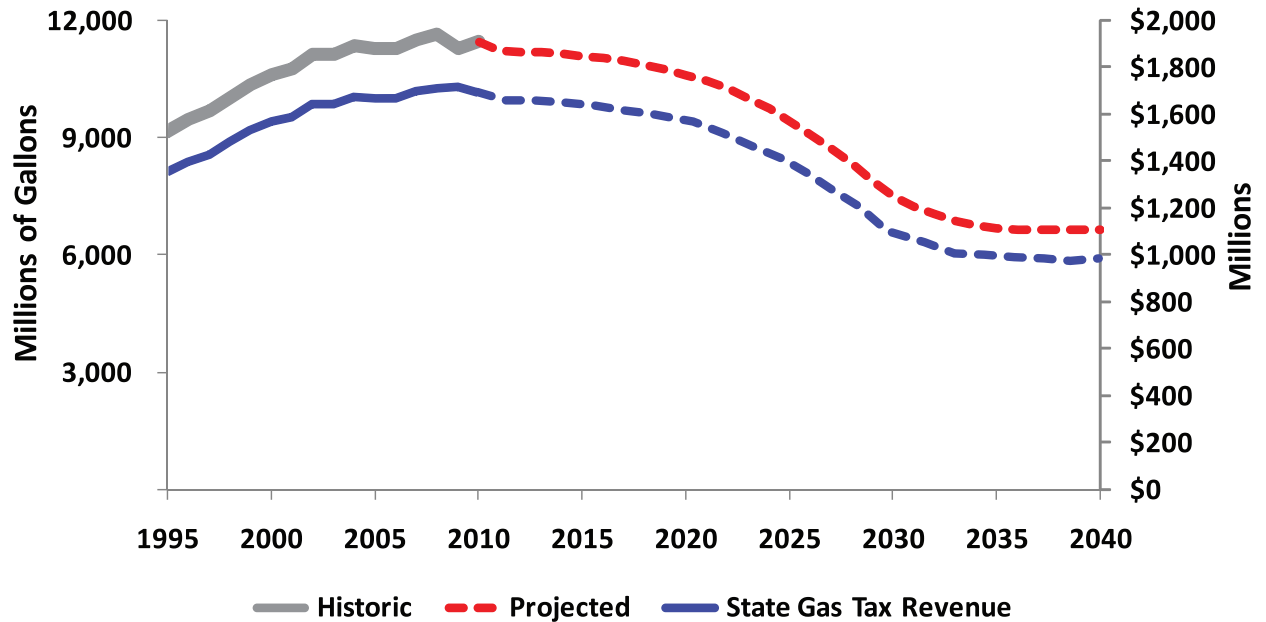
## 2009 Annual Mobility Report

In 2009-10 the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) injected an unexpected \$434 million for roadway projects into the region, decreasing the project backlog. However, contract lettings for 2009 and expected lettings for 2010 are still below historical levels.

In 2008 TxDOT found itself in a difficult cash flow position statewide for several reasons: a spike in fuel prices decreased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) which, in turn, decreased federal and state motor fuels tax revenues; the largest of several rescissions of federal highway funds reduced federal funding to states; and TxDOT discovered that it had overestimated the revenue available for its contract obligations. As a consequence, TxDOT “froze” almost all new contract lettings in the Houston District and across the state for much of 2008.

Beyond 2020 TxDOT forecasts a net decline in gas tax revenue due to expected increase in the average fleet fuel economy. Although the State is expected to have significant growth in population, employment, and vehicle miles traveled, cars and trucks will travel far more on each gallon of fuel. TxDOT predicts that all state and federal transportation dollars will be needed to maintain the state transportation network whose condition is expected to decline.

### Gasoline Consumption and Fuel Taxes



## Options for Transportation Funding

In recent years H-GAC's Policy Council and local governments have used several strategies to increase transportation funding including the development of the region's toll roads.

Other strategies will require actions of the State or Federal legislature, including those listed in the chart below.

### Potential Revenue Effects of State Legislative Action

Strategy	Statewide		Houston Region	
	2011-20	2021-40	2011-20	2021-40
<b>Eliminate Fund 6 Diversion</b>	<b>\$8,995</b>	<b>\$21,626</b>	<b>\$1,799</b>	<b>\$4,325</b>
<b>Increase Motor Fuels Tax</b> (\$.01/gal)	<b>\$1,569</b>	<b>\$2,752</b>	<b>\$314</b>	<b>\$550</b>
<b>Index Motor Fuels Tax to Inflation</b> (3%)	<b>\$3,949</b>	<b>\$25,844</b>	<b>\$790</b>	<b>\$5,169</b>
<b>Increase Vehicle Registration Fee</b> (50%)	<b>\$5,921</b>	<b>\$17,720</b>	<b>\$1,184</b>	<b>\$3,544</b>
<b>Adopt Vehicle Miles Traveled Fee</b> (\$.01/mile)	<b>\$28,846</b>	<b>\$77,045</b>	<b>\$5,769</b>	<b>\$15,409</b>
<b>Total (Millions)</b>	<b>\$49,279</b>	<b>\$144,987</b>	<b>\$9,856</b>	<b>\$28,997</b>

### Policy Options

The Houston metropolitan planning organization must submit a fiscally constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to the state in June 2010. Given TxDOT's funding forecast as described in the preceding pages, the region has limited options for addressing the funding shortfall and meeting the federally mandated requirement for fiscal constraint. Each policy option will require a reassessment of regional mobility goals and priorities. They include:

1. **Pay as you go.** Develop and implement projects as current funding allows. Projects will be developed and funded based upon the availability of funds from identified sources including local toll revenues.
2. **Commit to enhanced statewide and local funding strategies** such as those described above. Revenue from new sources would be dedicated to specific project development and implementation activities.
3. **More aggressive local tolling strategies.** Increase toll rate closer to "market rate" (the point at which increased toll revenues are offset by diminished toll traffic) to increase the number of toll viable projects and revenue for investment in transportation infrastructure.



3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120  
P.O. Box 22777 • Houston, TX 77227-2777  
Telephone 713-627-3200 • Fax 713-993-4508  
[www.h-gac.com/transportation](http://www.h-gac.com/transportation)

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Houston, TX  
PERMIT NO. 1855