

## 14D. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

### LONG RANGE PLANNING

#### 1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan study began July 1, 2023. The first public outreach event was held on October 23 in Mount Belvieu. The first round of Stakeholder Meetings was held on November 7 and November 15 in Chambers County.
- Washington Avenue Corridor study began October 1, 2023. The study kick-off meeting will be held in December. The first Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for January 2024.
- Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The study kick-off meeting will be held in December.
- FM 518 Corridor study began November 1, 2023. The project kick-off meeting will be held in December. The first Steering Committee will be held in February 2024.
- Pearland Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The project kick-off meeting was held in November. The first Steering Committee will be held in February 2024.
- Cemetery Road Corridor study scope of work development is currently underway. The project is scheduled to begin Winter 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 Spring of 2024.

#### 2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee (GHFC) meeting was held on October 16, 2023. The next meeting is scheduled for February 2024.
- The 2023 Regional Goods Movement Plan (RGMP) has ended. Next step is to present the study findings to TPC at the December 2023 meetings with final adoption of the plan by TPC in December 2023. For more information visit: [www.engage.h-gac.com](http://www.engage.h-gac.com)
- The Houston Area Rail Transformation (HART) was presented to TAC and TPC in December of 2022 as a working group formed to coordinate and prioritize regional freight infrastructure to seek grant funding opportunities. The Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD) formalized the working group as a GCRD committee on January 17, 2023. From January 2023 – July 2023 a priority list was developed that represents the regional issues seen at grade crossings. In June 2023, the Grants Group was developed to assess the readiness of regional partners for upcoming grant submittals and provide letters of support to demonstrate regional support for projects. 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 December 15, 2023.

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 on December 1, 2023, at Houston TranStar.
- H-GAC staff worked with the City of Houston on their new Tow and Go Vendor Contract.
- H-GAC staff attended weekly Statewide TIM Calls during the month of October and November.
- "Tow and Go" performed 3,091 "No Cost Tows" in October 2023. Average Clearance Times was 16 minutes and 15 seconds.
- In September 2023, the 8-county region experienced 64 traffic fatalities based on data from TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS), which was a 25% decrease when compared to 2022 which recorded 88 fatalities.
- In September 2023, the 8-county region experienced 379 Serious Injuries based on data from TxDOT CRIS, which was a 2% increase when compared to September 2022 which recorded 370 Serious Injuries.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff are updating the landuse\landcover basemap 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 area. 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/Environmental Justice report.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff submitted a Planning Grant application for a Regional Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan through the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program submitted on August 18th, 2023. <https://www.h-gac.com/resiliency-planning>
- 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](http://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 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/2045rtupdate>

- Staff and the RTP Subcommittee are developing the RTP Project Development Process, which will evaluate projects submitted for inclusion on the RTP Fiscally Constrained List.
  - RTP Subcommittee Meeting on 11/8 - Vote for approval
  - TAC and TPC in December for informational purposes, January for approval

#### 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 ongoing towards the update of the Language Access Plan (LAP). The Language Access Plan identifies the language needs in the population and specifies policies and strategies the agency will employ to enable individuals who do not speak English proficiently to enjoy meaningful participation in agency programs and activities. Efforts to update the LAP includes a survey to gather information about regional language use and factors that impact the level of public involvement in agency activities. Other related activities include the community roundtables which are aimed at opening a dialogue with advocates, representatives, and members of the different racial and ethnic minority groups and other underserved populations in the greater Houston metropolitan region, to help H-GAC understand how best to engage with these communities and encourage their participation in the civic planning decision-making that affect their lives, health, and environment. Information gathered will assist the update to the Language Access Plan and the triennial update to the Title VI Plan.
- Staff are beginning the planning process for a February 2024 webinar event commemorating the anniversaries of the passage of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The webinar event will educate staff and stakeholders on vital Title VI/Equity issues relevant to MPOs, municipalities, and other recipients of federal financial assistance.

### 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.

#### 2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Staff are continuing to work with the Data Analytics department to update the Regional Bike Network Map. City of Houston (COH) data layer is live, and The Woodlands data is nearing the end of data review. Staff are in the process of collecting data from remaining communities.
- Proposals have been evaluated for the Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept study and the consultant selection process is nearing completion.
- Staff provided additional information for the Ped Bike Bundles regarding the Advanced Funding Agreement.
- The scope of work is being re-evaluated for the Memorial Drive study as it enters the procurement process for consultant selection.
- The scope of work is being re-evaluated for the City of Friendswood Master Trails plan as it enters the procurement process for consultant selection.
- The Bay Area Ped Bike study is underway with the first steering/stakeholder committee held on 10/13/23 and the first public meeting scheduled for 10/18/23. The study area is adjacent to the study area for TxDOT's SH 225 and I 610 PEL Study
- Staff attended various meetings such as the City of Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee, Texas Pedestrian Coalition, Space City Cycling and numerous TxDOT project meetings covering PEL studies.
- Staff hosted an in-person mobile counter training at H-GAC offices on Monday October 30<sup>th</sup> from 10 A.M to 11:30 A.M. 23 RSVPs were received & 13 people attended.

### 3. Transit Planning

- The next meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee will occur on January 11, 2024.
- Staff continues consultant contract negotiations for the US 90A Corridor Transit Study, with a start date expected in early 2024.
- The RFP for the Dayton Transit Study closed on June 15, and is scheduled for the November 21 Board of Directors for approval.
- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis 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. A draft of service alternatives is expected by late Fall 2023.
- Staff are working with Metro and regional partners 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 projects. Additional coordination meetings are taking place with the other regional transit agencies.
- Staff are working to update elements of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, most notably the Transit Need Index.
- Staff is working with TXDOT to secure a no-cost extension of AFA 476 to allow use of the remaining funds on the AFA to fund two new pilot projects and the final year of the Woodlands Township to Energy Corridor pilot.
- An updated service plan for a commuter bus pilot from Fort Bend to Downtown Houston was received in October.

- Data collection for Transit Asset Management performance measures is underway. Staff have contacted all agencies & anticipates having updated plans from all agencies by the end of December.

#### TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Planning for the following projects is currently underway or were completed recently:
  - Tow & Go – Media Buying
  - Commute Solutions
  - Bay Area Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety
  - Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II
  - Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan
  - Airport Ground Access Survey
  - Air Quality – Climate Change Engagement for MPO's Collar Counties
  - Motorist Assistance Program (MAP) 1,000,000
  - Hurricane Preparedness
  - Mobile Counter Training
  - Language Access Plan Update

#### COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions began working with the procurement and contacts team to begin working on the development of a shared data agreement between UHD and Commute Solutions.
- Commute Solutions participated in UHD's Hungry and Homelessness Resource Fair.
- Commute Solutions coordinated a Transit Adventure Workshop with Movability from Austin, TX. Participating partners included UHD and Houston METRO.
- Commute Solutions presented an update on the Pilot Telework Program to the Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Commute Solutions continued planning efforts for a 2024 Kickoff campaign.
- Commute Solutions attended the 2023 ACT TDM Forum in Los Angeles
- Commute Solutions continued facilitating the application process for several partners' consideration for this year's group of Best Workplaces/Universities/Worksites for Commuters. An announcement of the accepted applicants will be announced early 2024.
- Love to Ride concluded all activities for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and final bike encouragement campaign, Biketober, of this contract cycle last month and the team will now begin evaluating the campaigns during this cycle and begin preparations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> contract cycle, expected to begin March 1, 2024.
- Commute Solutions provided a recap of the bike encouragement campaigns to a national group of TDM programs and fielded questions and recommendations for the next campaign cycle.
- AECOM continued evaluating the Commute Solutions program as it relates to the region's needs and began planning a series of collaboration meetings with area partners with the purpose of gaining insights about the program that will contribute to AECOM's recommendation.
- Houston ConnectSmart and Commute Solutions continued to collaborate on development of the region's multi-modal trip planning application.

## 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 is continuing to work to reach out to manufacturers of vehicles and electric vehicle charging equipment to discuss Buy America requirements and the availability of compliant equipment. Staff are also working to review recent revisions to federal Buy America rules and understand how agency programs can best comply. This work is ongoing.
- Staff worked with grant recipients with pending vehicle deliveries to prepare for and undertake the vehicle acceptance and invoice process. For vehicles that have been recently delivered, staff has been working to process invoice materials and move those through the invoicing process.
- Staff continued 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. Historically, this monitoring effort has occurred through a mix of subrecipient self-reporting and automated GPS monitoring. Staff is currently working with subrecipients to completely transition to automated monitoring. This effort is ongoing, but nearly complete.
- Staff continued to process contract closeouts for projects meeting minimum contracted requirements for all project vehicles and is working to complete this closeout process when possible. In the last month, staff processed and released five vehicle replacement contracts for project partners that had successfully completed their grant requirements.

## GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- H-GAC has been awarded \$1 million in planning funds through the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). This four-year program will help develop greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans for the 13-county H-GAC region. In September, staff worked to gain H-GAC Board of Directors approval to access the awarded funding and enter into interlocal agreements with project partners. Staff continue to work with those same partners to finalize project work scopes. The results of these efforts will enable our region to apply for an anticipated \$4.6075 billion in grants this Spring as part of Phase II of this effort.
- 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. This month, staff hosted a webinar focused on the national renewable fuel tax rebate with specific details about how to apply for and receive this credit.
- 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. Supply chain issues

have resulted in IKEA reaching out to a new vehicle manufacturer, it is hoped that despite this change, the vehicles will still be delivered in 2023. For the 2019 DERA project, staff are continuing to prepare a Request for Applicants to find at least one new partner to complete the project. It is anticipated that the Request will be published sometime during the current quarter.

## TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING & FORECASTING

- Staff continues to provide travel demand and forecasting modeling 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 such as: SH 288 Toll Road Extension Level 2 T&R Project, Regional PEL Study, US 290 (N of Spring Cypress Rd – S of Barker Cypress Rd), and the Hardy Toll Road Extension Study, provided model run support for league city mobility plan which involved the modification of the demographic data and network according to the League city requirements.
- Staff continues to update and process October traffic count video and radar data files, updated and added 10 more TAZs to the 2023 TAZ split project with regards to a list of roadway project, continues to Customize VisionEval Visualizer with HGAC TAZ shape file and model result, and continues to run REMI and summarize benefit cost analysis for Pearland Transit Projects.
- Staff with consultant, Nancy Edmonson, made Power-Point slide presentations to the H-GAC TAC and METRO's Board of Directors for updates on the status of the O-D Survey on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.
- Staff continues to coordinate with TxDOT TP&P on the on-going Household Survey within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region, completed the data collections on the Houston two major airports (IAH & Hobby) while data collected are going through QA/QC and post data collection processing, continues discussion with other departmental staff and consultant for developing cost, scope of work and timeline for the Active Transportation Survey, examining data for Houston METRO on homeless people near bus stops to be used to ensure that vulnerable populations that rely on non-motorized modes are taken into consideration for inclusion in the Active Transportation survey, continues reviewing Replica bike and pedestrian data to identify link level utilization.
- Staff continues to coordinate with TxDOT to better understand the big data (Replica, Wejo, and Inrix) data purchased for Texas, continues working to collect data for the development of the Volpe RDR resiliency tool for the Activity-Based-Model (ABM), and continues the on-going discussion with consultant for the Activity-Based Model update, the airport sub-model development, determined and resolved issues with the truck model and now processing and comparing outputs of both the trip-based and tour-based models.
- Staff continues working on refining the cost/benefit analysis for the Pearland Transit Needs Study to account for other benefits that were not previously considered.
- Staff continues to develop Travel Demand Model QAQC process and worked with IT department to install HCS2023 on workstation.