

15C. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan study began July 1, 2023. The consultant team is collecting data to present at the first Steering Committee in October 2023.
- Four studies, Washington Avenue Corridor Study, Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility Study, FM 518 Corridor Study and Pearland Mobility Study are currently in the pre-contracting phase. These four studies are tentatively scheduled to begin the Fall 2023. Cemetery Road Corridor study is scheduled to begin Winter 2024.
- Staff is procuring one (1) subregional plan, Friendswood's Parkway Corridor study. 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 June 15th, 2023. Topics presented include Regional Goods in Project Selection, an update on the Regional Goods Movement Plan, the TxDOT Freight Parking Study update, Elevated Freight Technologies Freight Shuttle presentation and presentation of the TxDOT REAL plan. The next meeting is scheduled for October 16th, 2023, at 10am.
- The 2023 Regional Goods Movement Plan (RGMP) has ended. Next step is to present the study findings to TAC and TPC at the Oct. 2023 meetings. For more information visit: 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 October 27, 2023.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- Staff conducted a Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Meeting at Houston TranStar with TxDOT, Houston TranStar Staff, Harris County Sheriff Officer (HCSO), Houston Police Department (HPD), AECOM, the Blue Ridge Transportation Group, Harris County Toll Authority, and towing industry on October 12, 2023.

- 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 October 2, 2023, at Houston TranStar.
- A new Tow and Go Agreement was sent to Harris County to execute the agreement will go through December 31, 2024.
- The H-GAC Board of Directors on September 19, 2023, approved Kimley-Horn as the contractor for updating the Regional ITS Architecture and TSMO plan.
- Staff attended the City of Houston Vision Zero Implementation Group meeting on September 26, 2023.
- Staff attended weekly Statewide TIM Calls during the month of September and October.
- Staff attended the Virtual Texas Department of Transportation Short Course October 9-11, 2023.
- "Tow and Go" performed 3,091 "No Cost Tows" in July 2023. Average Clearance Times was 17 minutes and 13 seconds.
- In August 2023, the 8-county region experienced 70 traffic fatalities based on data from TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS), which was a 19% increase when compared to 2022 which recorded 59 fatalities.
- In August 2023, the 8-county region experienced 360 Serious Injuries based on data from TxDOT CRIS, which was a 16% increase when compared to August 2022 which recorded 309 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 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

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.

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 LAP specifies the policies and strategies the agency will utilize to enable individuals who do not speak the English language proficiently to participate in agency programs and activities in their language of choice. The initiative includes a survey about language use and the engagement of the population with the activities of the agency.

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 anticipated to be live by the end of the month. The Woodlands data is under review. Staff are in process of collecting data from remaining communities.
- Evaluations of proposals submitted in response to the RFP for Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept has been completed.
- Staff provided additional information for the Ped Bike Bundles regarding the Advanced Funding Agreement.

- 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 and the Texas Pedestrian Coalition.
- Staff prepared to host an in-person mobile counter training at H-GAC offices in October. Equipment to demonstrate the installation & removal has been ordered & received, space has been reserved & an Eventbrite event have been created. Staff is also in the process of submitting documentation needed to offer APA CM credits to attendees of the event. The training is scheduled for Monday October 30th from 10 A.M to 11:30 A.M.

3. Transit Planning

- A Special Call meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee will occur on Thursday, November 2, 2023.
- Staff has received Board of Directors approval to begin consultant contract negotiations for the US 90A Corridor Transit Study.
- The RFP for the Dayton Transit Study closed on June 15, and preparing a request for the November Board of Directors for approval. for approval.
- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis is underway. A draft of service alternatives is expected by Fall 2023.
- Staff are working with Metro and regional partners to begin implementation of the Regional Transit Connectivity Project. Initial Assessments are now complete and agencies that have not already done so are moving forward to create interlocal agreements with Metro.
- Staff are working to update elements of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, most notably the Transit Need Index.
- An application for on-demand Microtransit services in the City of Sugar Land was received in late May 2023 under the Call for Partners for the Commuter and Transit Pilot Program and is under evaluation. Departmental action is pending.
- An updated application from Fort Bend Transit for Downtown Houston should allow CMAQ pilot service to begin by early 2024.

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
 - Biketober Love to Ride

- Mobile Counter Training
- Language Access Plan Update

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions held an employer webinar series. Topics included becoming a Best Workplace for Commuters, Houston ConnectSmart technology, Advocating for Vanpool, and Biking as Transportation.
- Commute Solutions attended the TDM Summit hosted by the Association of Commuter Transportation Red River Chapter in Austin, TX.
- Commute Solutions finalized the Oncology Consultants case study. The case study will be shared with executive leadership at Oncology Consultants
- Commute Solutions attended the League City Eco Fest where we talked to community residents about sustainable commuting options and Biketober.
- Commute Solutions provided a review and feedback of a US DOT's telework tool during beta testing.
- Commute Solutions met with an employer partner to discuss plans for a selected few staff members to test the Vietnamese translations in the Houston ConnectSmart app.
- Commute Solutions continue planning efforts for the Drive Less, Live More campaign.
- Commute Solutions and ConnectSmart met with representatives from Rice University, Texas Medical Center, and provided updates to representatives at UHD regarding the establishment of a mega carpool.
- Love to Ride hosted the 8th Bike the Gulf steering committee meeting on September 21, 2023, the final before launching the region's first Biketober campaign.
- AECOM continues to develop an inventory to begin evaluating the Commute Solutions program as it relates to the region's needs to recommend the direction for Commute Solutions program including TDM activities, tools, organizations, and services currently provided.
- Commute Solutions is working with Houston ConnectSmart to help with coordination of the anniversary events.
- Commute Solutions is finalizing its list of candidates to sponsor for the Best Workplaces for Commuters nomination. Applications will be submitted by November 30th. The shortlist includes Rice University, TEI Planning, University of Houston-Downtown, BP, Energy Corridor District, NASA, and others.

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. This work is ongoing.
- Staff worked with grant recipients with pending vehicle deliveries to prepare for the acceptance and invoice process.
- Staff monitored projects with completed vehicle deliveries and calculated emission reductions based upon subrecipient performances. This monitoring effort ensures that grant recipients' usage of vehicles remains within grant requirements and that vehicle use and mileage commitments are met.

- Staff continued to process closeouts for projects meeting minimum contracted requirements for all project vehicles and is working to complete this closeout process when possible.

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 as part of a later stage of this program.
- 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 attended in the National Clean Cities Summit in McLean, Virginia as well as the 2023 Clean Cities Training Workshop. Work also began to develop a strategic plan for the coalition as well as to prepare for future events that will occur throughout the remainder of the year, such as a co-led webinar focused on tax issues related to renewable natural gas.
- 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 support the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), and other traffic and travel related data developments and modeling supports, continues to provide support in response to the TCEQ and FHWA comments regarding the 2023 Air Quality conformity analysis and re-determination.
- Staff continues to provide on-going travel demand and forecasting support to other in-house and outside H-GAC planning processes that includes sub-regional and corridor studies that support both TxDOT and other H-GAC member agencies such as: I-10 San Jacinto River Bridge IAJR diversion future forecast and analysis, SH 288 Brazoria County Toll Road Extension Level 2 T&R Project, SH 146 Study/Schematic – Preliminary TDM Support for base and future years model runs, I-610 South SCH six conceptual alternatives model runs, I-10 East PEL Study from I-69 in

central Houston to SH 99 east of Baytown within Chambers County, I-10 model runs to support feasibility Study from SH 71 near Columbus in Colorado County to SH 73 near Winnie in Chambers County, Polaris Travel Demand Modeling support to help create POLARIS-supported inputs that can simulate travel through the activity-based agent-based framework, LOSPlan analysis on CMP on a SH 36 from US 59 to FM 2218 widening project, etc.

- Staff completed additional benefit/cost analyses for the Pearland Transit Needs Assessment and continues to evaluate and review, split the H-GAC current regional 5000 Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) for some very large TAZs
- Staff finalized the reviewing with Nancy Edmonson (a METRO appointed consultant to support the O-D Survey) the 2022 On-board Origin-Destination Transit Survey (O-D Survey) PowerPoint slide presentation for the METRO Board and the H-GAC TAC. The survey collected datasets and the associated reports and infographics have all been sent to the regional fixed transit route provider that participated in the survey, staff continues to coordinate with TxDOT TP&P on the on-going Household Survey within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization region (MPO), continues to coordinate with the contractor and other H-GAC partners such as TxDOT Houston District, and the City of Houston (HAS) in the planning of the Airport Ground Access Survey, continues developing, reviewing the logistics for the survey, data collected during the site visits, pilot survey, count location, badging process, staffing and oversight plan for the survey, continues discussions and scope of work development and reviews for Bicycle and Pedestrian, the Active Transportation Survey, TNC and Autonomous State Preference Survey.
- Staff coordinating with TxDOT to download Replica data on pedestrian and bicycle usage, examining the Replica data to see how it can be used to support survey efforts.
- Staff resumed the traffic counts collection this fall on the Off-State facilities with the Prime contractor (C.J Hench), 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 development of the Activity-Based Model with the truck model component of the model on-going, continues model testing and development of the ABM by testing the TDM output conversion to REMI.