

12B. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Southeast Harris County Subregional Study has been completed. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- H-GAC staff have received the final deliverables for the Liberty County Mobility Study. A presentation of the study's recommendations was made to Liberty County Commissioners' Court on February 14, 2023. The project is complete. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Plan study team presented the final recommendations at the last Steering Committee Meeting on September 29, 2022. The final document is being drafted. A presentation of study's recommendations was made at the Greater Magnolia Chamber luncheon on February 23, 2022. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- Staff developed Advanced Funding Agreements (AFA) for regional planning studies included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The AFA's have been submitted to TxDOT for approval.
- Staff is procuring six (6) subregional plans: Four (4) have recently completed procurement and are in the initial phase of contract development including FM 518 Corridor Study, Pearland Mobility Study, Washington Ave. Corridor Study, and Old 6th Ward, planning study. Two additional studies are anticipated to be procured in 2023 and include Cemetery Road Corridor study and Friendswood's Lake Boulevard Corridor study. All these projects are included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Work on these studies will begin when the Advanced Funding Agreements are approved by TxDOT.

2. Freight Planning

- The next Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting was held on February 15, 2023. Topics presented include Regional Goods in the Project Selection, an update on the Regional Goods Movement Plan, the TxDOT Freight Parking Study, and priorities for the current Texas legislative session. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 2023. Date and time to be announced.
- The Regional Goods Movement Plan's (RGMP) last Steering Committee meeting was held on December 1, 2022 followed by a Stakeholder meeting January 12, 2023. From November 2022 – February 2023 12 one-on-one interviews were held with stakeholders in the region to listen to hear their concerns and feedback regarding freight. A freight-industry meeting took place on February 20, 2022 and provided a forum to learn from the commercial freight industry perspective. Next steps for plan development include recommendations for projects, policies, and programs. Ideas being discussed are centered around the study's 5 primary goals which reflect the provided goals of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan and associated 2045 Plan Update currently in development. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFC) were identified as part of the Regional Goods Movement Plan. More than 140 corridors were evaluated using the Federal Highway Administration

guidance for CUFC selection and the additional freight related criteria. The corridors were presented to the RGMP Steering and Stakeholder committees, the public as well as the GHFC. In conclusion, 27 corridors were designated as Critical Urban Freight Corridors. The CUFC's received endorsement from the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and approval from the Transportation Policy Council (TPC) in August of 2022.

- 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. HART working group started meeting bi-weekly in October of 2022 and anticipated to continue this pattern in the near future. H-GAC staff continues to provide meeting support and regional coordination. The next meeting is planned for March 10th, 2023.
- The U.S. Department of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) railroad administrator, Amit Bose, visited H-GAC offices on February 23, 2023. HART was introduced to FRA and provided a brief presentation including intent of the working group.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- The Transportation Safety Committee met on February 28, 2023.
- Staff presented on the SS4A grant on February 28, 2023 at H-GAC's Transportation Safety Committee meeting as well as the City of Houston's Monthly Vision Zero task force meeting
- 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 March 1, 2023 at Houston TranStar.
- 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, and the Blue Ridge Transportation Group on February 3, 2023.
- Staff met with Kimley-Horn and Associates Staff to discuss the Intersection Safety Contract Task 4 activity during January and the future work plan.
- Staff attended weekly Statewide TIM Calls during February and March.
- Tow and Go performed 2,779 "No Cost Tows" in February 2023. Average Clearance Times was 17 minutes and 52 seconds.
- In January 2023, the 8-county region experienced 63 traffic fatalities based on data from TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS), which was an 23% decrease when compared to 2021 which recorded 82 fatalities.
- In January 2023, the 8-county region experienced 369 Serious Injuries based on data from TxDOT CRIS, which was an 18% increase when compared to 2021 which recorded 314 Serious Injuries..

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff are updating the Eco-Logical tool to 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 are continuing to work on an update to the regional Environmental Justice report.

5. Resiliency Planning

- 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
- Staff is starting initial preparation for the development of a Resiliency Plan, a recommendation resulting from the Resiliency & Durability Pilot project.
- Staff participated in a WTS Diversity Panel on November 17, 2022 where the Resilience and Durability Pilot and associated evaluation of critical and vulnerable transportation networks were discussed as was associated impact on vulnerable populations as associated with H-GAC Vulnerable Population Index.
- Staff continues to track the PROTECT Resiliency Grant opportunity. <https://www.h-gac.com/resiliency-planning>

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) subcommittee provides guidance and oversees progress of the RTP. The committee must meet quorum and meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month. The next RTP subcommittee meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2023.
- The RTP consists of three (3) phases of public outreach. The visioning phase were conducted from May through July 2022 to understand the public's needs through surveying. The Prioritization Phase followed with public meetings in October through December 2022. This Phase gathered feedback on the big ideas and investment strategies to address what we heard during the Visioning Outreach. More information on the upcoming meetings can be found at: <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtpupdate>
- The third and final round of public outreach is the Public Review Phase and kicks off with a public review period from March 15th through April 17th 2023 to allow the public to review the draft document and provide comment prior to the RTP being approved by the Transportation Policy Council on April 28, 2023. Staff will present at H-GAC subcommittee, provide notification of outreach to area partners, including meeting-in-a-box materials, as well as provide presence at up to 8 festivals anticipated to take place within the region during the associated public comment period to better address equitable access to this process. Please see <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtpupdate> for more information.

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.

- Staff submitted a scope of work for updating the Congestion Management Process for internal review to help move forward that project and guide the work of the workgroup.

SHORT RANGE PLANNING

1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated on 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 finalized the Annual Project Listing of Obligated Projects that provides project-level details on the use of federal funds for highways, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation projects over the course of the fiscal year 2021. H-GAC staff develops the annual report in cooperation with TxDOT and local public transportation providers and is available on the [H-GAC website](#).

2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Adult Bicycle Safety Program - Train Your Bike classes have been completed in Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, and Waller counties. Due to staffing, the bike handling safety class targeting TAC and TPC members will be postponed. The next class will be held in Mont Belvieu on Saturday March 18th.
- Online introductory courses for bike riding (e.g. CyclingSavvy) are available free of charge to anyone in the eight county MPO area. More information can be found here - <https://www.h-gac.com/pedestrian-bicyclist-planning/bike-safety>
- Staff moving forward with UPWP funded local active transportation study- Bay Area Bike and Pedestrian Safety Plan to contracting phase. Staff coordinated with contract specialist to prepare paperwork needed for internal audit. Staff meeting with consultant to finalize the scope of work and completing form-60.
- Staff updated the scope of work using the new template and submitted procurement application for Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept. Staff is awaiting an assigned procurement coordinator and will move forward project to release RFP. Staff had meetings or sent email updates to other AFA project local sponsors.
- Staff drafted proposal for Safe Route to School Feasibility Study and sent to the management team to review.
- Staff created outline and draft for Active Transportation Planning Toolkit and sent to Active Transportation Team for feedback. Staff met with web team to discuss the timeline and designs for Active Transportation Planning Toolkit webpage.

3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee met on February 9, 2023, to endorse regional transit safety targets and receive updates on other transit planning efforts. The Subcommittee's next meeting will occur on April 13, 2023.
- Staff is working on developing an updated Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Commuter (CMAQ) and Transit Pilot Program Call for Partners
- Staff is preparing the release of the RFPs for the Dayton Transit Study and the US 90A Transit Corridor Study.
- A meeting is scheduled with the Pearland Transit Needs Assessment Steering Committee on March 7, 2023, to discuss Draft Technical Memorandum on existing conditions, results of resident transit preferences survey and setting of Round 1 of public meetings in May 2023.
- Staff discussed contract closeout procedures with the City of Conroe CMAQ grant. They indicated commuter service from Conroe to Houston Downtown and the Texas Medical Center would continue after completion of the pilot program on March 31, 2023.

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- The third and final round of RTP Update is the final public review of the draft plan to be March 15 and run till April 17. Outreach will consist of one large virtual public meeting, as well as attending up-to eight (8) festivals throughout the 8-county region. Presentation material will be recorded and made available to the public to watch at their own leisure. Please see <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate> for more information.
- Planning for the following projects is currently underway:
 - Pearland Transit Study
 - Bike Safety Training Courses
 - Title VI/Environmental Justice Awareness
 - TIRZ 13 Mobility Study – Phase II
 - Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan
 - 2023 Commute Solutions Digital Marketing Plan
 - Regional Goods Movement Plan Update
 - Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Plan
 - Language Assistance Plan Update
 - Hurricane Preparedness

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions in partnership with multiple organizations across the region met to discuss the 2023 Ozone Action Campaign. This Campaign would consist of a regional fare reduction for participating transit agencies to promote transit during a month with high ozone levels.
- Staff is meeting on a bi-weekly basis with the ConnectSmart team on February 14, 2023 concerning outreach and new features regarding the application.
- Staff began coordinating a series of regional commuter education events with METRO to engage, educate and entice potential riders to try vanpooling. The coordination team is currently identifying potential community events and becoming familiar with locations and common thoroughfares where the target audience is likely to use to travel.

- Commute Solutions is continuing to work with ConnectSmart to further develop features and capabilities of the application. There is also an effort to develop employer-specific outreach strategies including materials that encourage mode shift.
- Staff collaborated with METROStar Vanpool to present transportation options and commute solutions to the employees of the US Army Corps of Engineers in Galveston.
- Staff introduced Commute Solutions to Fort Bend County EDC and explored options that would attract employers to reduce commute times for current residents of Sugar Land.
- Staff is assembling a steering committee to provide support for the upcoming regional bike encouragement campaign. The committee will include various agencies representing private, nonprofit, city management, recreational, etc.
- Staff began collaborations with Rice University's Administrative Center for Sustainability and Energy Management (ACSEM) to administer a survey for students to better understand the current commuting experience. The survey will be conducted during the class registration period.
- Commute Solutions staff members are exploring existing options to reduce VMT amongst Houston Christian University students.
- Commute Solutions staff presented program updates during the recent TAQ subcommittee meeting.
- Staff are also working with the Woodlands Township and Energy Corridor District to develop a Spotify ad promoting the new route from the Woodlands to the Energy Corridor.

CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continued to monitor current projects and calculate emission reductions based upon Subrecipient performances. Staff continued to monitor grant recipients' usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- Staff continued to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses, and Pasadena ISD for grant funding for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. Additionally, Staff continued to work with two SEP-funded contracts; Danbury and Lamar Consolidated ISD's.
- Staff continued to examine and develop the parameters needed to establish an electric charging infrastructure component to the Clean Vehicles Program.
- Staff continued to process closeouts for projects meeting minimum contracted requirements for all project vehicles.
- Staff participated in a variety of internal and external meetings and met with other local government agencies to discuss projects utilizing Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff has completed updates to our region's annual PM_{2.5} Path Forward report. Staff completed this activity by working closely with regional stakeholders throughout 2022 to review and update the annual PM_{2.5} report. The final version of this report was approved by RAQPAC at the committee's January meeting. The information included in this report will be submitted to EPA in fulfillment of the region's commitments to this program. The final 2022 version of this report can be found [here](#).

- 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. During the most recent month, the Coalition hosted a hybrid webinar focused on the EPA Clean School Bus Program as well as providing assistance in planning an anticipated autumn event focusing on the transition to zero-emission vehicles.
- Staff is continuing 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 has been working with IKEA to replace two existing diesel yard tractors at their Baytown facility with all-electric models. IKEA has installed EV charging equipment at the host facility to facilitate the vehicle purchases. 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 is continuing to prepare a Request for Applicants to find at least one new partner to complete the project.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING & FORECASTING

- Staff continues to provide travel demand and forecasting support to various in-house and outside H-GAC planning processes that includes sub-regional and corridor studies, Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Programs, Air Quality and Conformity determination, REAL 2 data and TxDOT Statewide Model (SAM) development data and modeling supports.
- Staff continues to provide on-going Geographic Information System technical support for the highway Geographic Information System networks development and reviews for the Regional Transportation Plan through the Travel Demand Modeling project database conversion into Geographic Information System lawyers for base year and future scenario years planning, project mapping and review for 2023 Transportation Improvement Program projects, sub-regional and corridor studies that included League City Master Plan data and modeling support, Texas Department of Transportation Houston District Option C traffic forecast modeling, SH225 PEL study that includes model runs for 8+ alternatives, and 2045 scenario model run for the Hempstead Corridor Feasibility Study, and the various scenario years model runs for schematic/environmental evaluation of I-610 South for Texas Department of Transportation, .
- Staff continues to provide on-going modeling support to the H-GAC Transportation Department on the Regional Transit Fare Reduction Study using Regional Economic Modeling tool.
- Staff continues to coordinate with the RTP team on the 2045 RTP plan update and documentation, ran the travel demand model to generate various travel related data (level of mobility, VMT, VHT, delays, travel times etc.) reports, tables and maps for the RTP document modeling Appendix.
- Staff continues tweaking, enhancing and querying for the data needs for the Regional Activity Based Model calibration to a newer base year, and documentation of the forecasting tools.
- Staff continued to coordinate the efforts of the Origin-Destination Survey Steering Committee team and the prime contractor as the draft reports on the main survey and the tour base survey, review

of secondary expansion data and report continue, coordinate with METRO and contractor to generate FTA request of the Survey data and reports.

- Staff continues to follow-up with the Steering Committee for the on-going Household Survey with Texas Department of Transportation – Austin District in the H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization region and continues to coordinate with the Steering Committee and the H-GAC Procurement Team to procure the Prime Contractor for the Airports (Hobby & IAH) Ground Access Survey.
- Staff continued to coordinate with Prime contractor for H-GAC traffic count project on State off system, updated VisionEval files and carried out Traffic Analysis Zone model run, develop REMI TIP model procedure, and develop report to show what are the inputs, outputs, and procedures for conducting project benefit costs analysis.