

9. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT 2025 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

BACKGROUND

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a required document describing all anticipated planning activities for the Metropolitan Planning Organization; It includes a description of tasks and budgets for the Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 to September 30). The UPWP describes the regional transportation plans and programs carried out in the 8-county Metropolitan Planning Area:

- Development of all required planning products or activities (primarily the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Congestion Management Process, etc.);
- Continuous and one-time planning activities related to safety, freight, transit, subregional areas, corridors, active transportation, air quality, data and modeling, and livable centers; and
- Special planning activities (e.g. Safe Streets and Roads for All, PROTECT resiliency planning, and development of grant-funded plan development).

The UPWP includes descriptions of major planning activities, responsible parties, expected products, and a summary of the funding to be used. The UPWP includes five priority areas as described below:

- TASK I – Administration and Management; which are activities that provide administrative support to the transportation planning process for the region.
- TASK II - Data Development and Maintenance; which has the purpose to collect, update, model, and maintain basic data and tools for executing planning activities.
- TASK III - Short Range Planning; are efforts that focus on continued coordination and development of transit and travel demand management projects, maintenance of intelligent transportation systems, improvement of traffic safety in the region, the development of the Transportation Improvement Plan, sub-regional or county-level mobility studies, transit feasibility studies, and operations planning.
- TASK IV - Metropolitan Transportation Planning; activities include the development and maintenance of the Regional Transportation Plan, activities related to air quality planning, regional bicycle and pedestrian planning, and transportation performance management.
- TASK V - Special Planning Projects; are ongoing planning activities relating to safety and congestion management, livable centers, air quality, resiliency, and one-time planning studies for corridors and individual projects.

CURRENT SITUATION

The 2025 UPWP needs to be completed, adopted, and initiated to start on October 1, 2024. Multiple projects in the current 2024 UPWP are still underway or will start in the next few months; these projects will carryover into 2025. As a result, the 2025 UPWP will be mostly unchanged from the current 2024 UPWP. Below are the substantive changes from the 2024 UPWP:

- Total work program funding increases from \$33.5 million to \$38.4 million. Budgets for tasks and subtasks are updated to reflect inflation, changing staff costs, etc.

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- Shifts funding for approximately \$5.5 million of planning activities from Surface Transportation Block Grant Funds to Metropolitan Planning Funds provided to the MPO.
 - Funds the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program using \$2.5 million of Metropolitan Planning Funds, rather than a discretionary grant from the USDOT.
 - Adds the \$1.1 million PROTECT resiliency planning grant recently awarded to the MPO.
 - Expands funding available for the MPO staff extension consultant work in order to increase and speed completion of planning activities.
 - Adds a Thoroughfare Plan project for Liberty County.
 - Adds four local partner active transportation studies using TxDOT-awarded funds. (Studies will be conducted by local agencies but are required to be included in the MPO's UPWP.)

Other than those additions or changes, the 2025 UPWP contains the same studies and content as the current 2024 version.

Once projects are underway and the MPO's staffing levels are restored or expanded, development of the 2026 UPWP will return to a two-year format. Staff also anticipates a significant number of new corridor- or project-level studies that will be identified as part of the Project Selection Process, and those will need to be included in the UPWP as they are identified.

The complete Draft 2025 UPWP will be provided prior to the TPC meeting and also made available for review online (<https://www.h-gac.com/unified-planning-work-program>).

ACTION REQUESTED

No action requested.



Item 9: 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development



Transportation Policy Council
July 26, 2024

UPWP Basics

- The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) documents regional transportation planning activities and programs
 - Must address multiple federal requirements
 - Focuses on MPO, but technically for all significant planning activities
 - Establishes budget for all planning funds
 - May be one- or two-year
 - May be amended as needed
- The current UPWP was adopted by the Transportation Policy Council (TPC) on September 8, 2023 and ends on September 30, 2024

UPWP Required Structure

Task I: Administration and Management

Task II: Data Development and Maintenance

Task III: Short Range Planning

Task IV: Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Task V: Special Planning Studies

Each Task includes:

- Multiple Subtasks
- Summaries of previous, current, and future planning activities
- Budget summaries

Current UPWP Progress Status

- 11 plans or studies completed (2024 – 4; 2023 – 7)
- 18+ plans, studies, or activities underway (6 started in 2024)
- 5 studies in procurement
- 8 studies under development
- 9 planned activities will wait until new staff extension

- ~2/3 of budget will carryover
 - Delays with some Funding Agreements and procurements
- Staffing shortages: 49 FTEs; 13 vacant
 - Implementing staff extension plan

2025 UPWP Overall Summary

- One-year work program
- Minimal changes to 2024 content
- Focus on completing carryover and ongoing tasks from 2024 version
- Approximately \$44.3 million total budget
 - \$27.4 million MPO Planning
 - ~\$10 million MPO Programs and Operations
- Utilizes more federal planning funds (reduces Cat 7)
- Opportunities to add activities or studies through amendment

2024 New Task IV Description

Task IV – Metropolitan Transportation Plan describes long-range planning for development and maintenance of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which includes all regional and subregional long-range planning activities, reflecting the needs-based planning activities of urban, suburban, and rural communities. These activities include identifying and addressing transportation needs in high-growth areas.

- *Agreed by TPC in September 2023*

Retained new elements from 2024 version

- Page 6-7: Glossary of Key Terms
- Page 13: Milestone Tasks and Activities (updated for 2024-2028)
- Page 14: RTP Elements and Expected Updates
- All Tasks: Table showing anticipated consultant activities
 - Carryover and New activities identified
- Budget Summary Section (p. 117): New tables added
 - Different budget summaries to fully present funding picture
 - Table showing expected software purchases (TxDOT request)

Updates/changes from 2024 UPWP

- Adds new study: Liberty County Thoroughfare Plan
- Adds discretionary PROTECT grant plan (\$1.1 million)
- Minor clarifying edits (responses to FHWA comments)
- Removes Grant-Writing (Not eligible use of federal funds)
- Updates costs and funding amounts
- Shifts about \$7.4 million from Cat 7 to “Metropolitan Planning” funds
 - May change: still assessing optimal balance between funding sources
 - Will request reassignment of any unused Cat 7 towards NEW support activities for project delivery and implementation (e.g., environmental, design, engineering)
- Funds Safe Streets for All planning with “Metropolitan Planning”
 - \$5 million total over two years; no local match

2025 UPWP Budget Detail

2025 UPWP FUNDING SUMMARY (Table 6.3)							
Subtask	Activity	Responsible Agency	Transportation Planning Funds (TPF) ¹	Other Federal Funds ²	FTA Section 5307 Funds	Local ³	TOTAL FUNDS
			FY 2025	FY 2025	FY 2025	FY 2025	
Task I	ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT	H-GAC	\$8,020,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,020,000
Task II	DATA DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE	H-GAC	\$5,650,000	\$650,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,300,000
Task III	SHORT-RANGE PLANNING	H-GAC	\$2,815,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$3,065,000
Task IV	METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN	H-GAC	\$5,300,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,300,000
Task V	SPECIAL PLANNING PROJECTS	H-GAC; Partner Agencies	\$5,625,000	\$11,150,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$16,875,000
	<i>TOTAL</i>						
	TOTAL (excluding non-planning MPO activities and non-HGAC activities)	H-GAC (2024)	\$27,410,000 (\$14,441,000)	\$11,800,000 (\$18,495,000)	\$250,000 (\$250,000)	\$100,000 (\$287,500)	\$39,560,000 (\$33,473,500)

Budget Detail – Transportation Planning Funds

	FY 2025	
	Allocation	Programmed
FHWA (PL-112)		
<i>TPF Programmed in UPWP</i>		\$27,441,000
Carryover from FY2024 (Estimate)	\$16,994,000	\$16,994,000
New FY2025 Allocation (Estimate)	\$13,778,000	\$10,416,000
Total TPF	\$30,772,000	\$27,410,000
Carryover to FY2026		\$3,362,000



Timeline

UPWP Development Task	Timeframe
MPO Team Identification of New/Changed Requirements	March 2024
MPO Team Status Assessments of Current Projects	May 2024
Preview to TAC/TPC	July 2024
Draft to TxDOT	July 2024
Final Draft Completed & Posted	July 2024
Public Comment Period (<i>ends 8/16</i>)	July-Aug 2024
Final Draft To TAC/TPC for Action	August 2024
Transmit to TxDOT	August 2024
UPWP Activities Start	October 2024

Future updates and activities

- Potential amendment to update UPWP after TPC Bylaws revision
- Identify and add more subregional planning activities:
 - Rural areas
 - High-growth areas
- Develop and add project delivery support
- Add planning studies derived from Project Selection Process
- Nov-Dec staff extension starts
- Preparations for summer 2025 Certification Review

Discussion

For Information and Discussion

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UPWP Structure: Task I & II

Task I: Administration and Management

1.1	Program Support/Unified Planning Work Program
	1.1.a Program Support and Administration
	1.1.b Unified Planning Work Program Development
	1.1.c Public Policy and Governmental Affairs
1.2	Public Involvement and Outreach
	1.2.a Public Involvement

Task II: Data Development and Maintenance

2.1	Travel Demand Modeling
	2.1.a Travel Demand Forecasting
2.2	Transportation Data Development
	2.2.a Travel Data Collection and Surveys
2.3	Socioeconomic Data and Models
	2.3.a Socioeconomic Data
	2.3.b Socioeconomic Models
	2.3.c Information Services and Analytical Support

UPWP Structure: Task III

Task III: Short-Range Planning

3.1	Transportation Project Programming
	3.1.a Transportation Improvement Program
	3.1.b Project Evaluation and Prioritization
	3.1.c Project Information and Transparency
	3.1.d Project Tracking, Monitoring and Support
3.2	Planning Support for Transit Service Implementation
	3.2.a Transit Coordinated Planning
	3.2.b Regional Transit Agency Coordination
3.3	Air Quality Planning
	3.3.a Air Quality Planning
	3.3.b Air Quality Conformity
	3.3.c Emissions Reduction Planning
3.4	Evacuation Planning
	3.4.a Regional Evacuation Planning

UPWP Structure: Task IV

Task IV: Metropolitan Transportation Plan

4.1	Regional Transportation Plan and Project Planning
	4.1.a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Development
	4.1.b Financial Planning
	4.1.c Project Development and Mitigation Planning
4.2	Multimodal System Planning
	4.2.a Thoroughfare Planning
	4.2.b Freight Planning
	4.2.c Sub-Regional Planning
4.3	Transportation Performance Management
	4.3.a Performance Measures and Targets
4.4	Transit Planning
	4.4.a Regional Transit Planning
	4.4.b Local Area Transit Studies
4.5	Active Transportation
	4.5.a Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning
	4.5.b Pedestrian/Bicycle Data Collection, Mapping, and Reporting
	4.5.c Pedestrian and Bicycle Local Plans
	4.5.d Pedestrian and Bicycle Outreach

UPWP Structure: Task V (part 1)

Task V: Special Planning Studies

5.1	Safety Planning
	5.1.a Regional Safety Planning
	5.1.b Safe Streets and Roads for All
	5.1.c Safety Performance Measures, Analysis, and Reporting
	5.1.d Safety Outreach
5.2	Congestion Management Planning and Operations
	5.2.a Congestion Management Process
	5.2.b Development of Travel Demand Management Strategies
	5.2.c Intelligent Transportation Systems
	5.2.d Regional Incident Management Planning
	5.2.e Travel Demand Management Operations
	5.2.f Regional Incident Management Operations
5.3	Livable Centers
	5.3.a Livable Centers Planning and Technical Support
	5.3.b Livable Centers Planning Studies

UPWP Structure: Task V (part 2)

Task V: Special Planning Studies

5.4	Emerging Transportation Technologies and Alternatives
	5.4.a Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
5.5	Air Quality Management and Operations
	5.5.a Air Quality Initiatives for Fleets
	5.5.b Air Quality Initiatives for Consumers and Communities
	5.5.c Clean Cities
5.6	Resiliency Planning
	5.6.a Regional Resiliency Planning
5.7	Corridor, Project-Level, and Special Studies
	5.7.a Corridor Planning
	5.7.b Project-Level Planning
	5.7.c Complete Streets Planning
	5.7.d Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning
	5.7.e Partner Agency Planning Activities