

11F. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Strategies and recommendations have been developed for the Southeast Harris County Subregional Study and have been reviewed by the Steering and Stakeholder Committee members. A public meeting was conducted on March 28, 2022. For more information visit www.engage.h-gac.com.
- Refinement of recommendations for the Liberty County Mobility Study are underway. A Steering Committee meeting was held on March 10, 2022 to present the recommendations. A second round of stakeholder meetings are scheduled for the third week in April, and a second round of public involvement outreach will occur in May. The consultant is also beginning to prepare final deliverables.
- Draft study recommendations have been developed and are under analysis for the Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Study. The next Steering Committee will be held in April to present the study recommendation analysis. The next public meeting is being planned for mid-summer.
- H-GAC staff are developing a scope of work for a regional Connected and Automated Vehicle Strategy.
- Staff have developed draft Advanced Funding Agreements (AFA) for regional planning studies included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Staff have developed draft Requests for Proposals for the regional planning studies included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and are coordinating with local partners on project scopes of work.

2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting was conducted on March 3, 2022. The Committee's next meeting will be held in June 2022.
- The second Steering Committee meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan was held on March 10, 2022. The first public meeting was held on March 31, 2022. For more information visit www.engage.h-gac.com.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- Staff continued coordination with the Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff Office on operations with the Tow and Go Program.
- Staff and the consultant made site visits to intersections in Liberty County to do Intersection Safety Assessments (ISA).

- A meeting was held with the City of Galveston to prepare for ISA site visits in February for Liberty County and March for the City of Galveston. The ISA project is on schedule to wrap up in the summer of 2022.
- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as “Pay the Price” is continuing through the August 31, 2022.
- Staff attended the City of Houston Vision Zero Implementation Group Meeting.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff is developing a process and worksheet to assess and document the environmental justice issues associated with proposed transportation projects and planning decisions. The worksheet is part of the initiative to integrate Title VI and environmental justice requirements in the planning process and will ensure that non-discrimination and equity issues are examined and understood prior to TAC and TPC consideration.
- Staff is 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 tool on those studies.
- Staff is continuing work on an update to the regional Environmental Justice report.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff continues the development of a Low Impact Development tool to examine how to cost-effectively integrate low impact development into transportation projects in the Metropolitan Planning Area.
- 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.

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- Staff worked on the scope of work, outreach activities, and schedule for the development of the update of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- The RTP Subcommittee Meeting was conducted on March 9, 2022.
- Staff are developing an initial poll to kick-start public involvement and outreach for the next RTP update.

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 being reported on a quarterly basis from transit agencies within 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 is working on the CMP update planning and first evaluation report. A workgroup is under formation to assist with the update. Volunteers have come from the TIP and RTP subcommittees and will meet later this month.

SHORT RANGE PLANNING

1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated on the amendments to the 2021-2024 TIP document. Staff coordinated with TxDOT and local governments on the proposed amendments to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- 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 and bicycle and public transportation projects. H-GAC staff developed 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

- Staff collected data from permanent ped/bike counters and prepared reports for distribution and posting on H-GAC's website.
- Staff are in the process of finalizing recommendations for installation and maintenance in preparation for deployment of the new counters.
- Staff are preparing for a social media and digital campaign for the Adult Bicycle Safety program. Staff finalized locations for the Train Your Bike (in-person bike handling) courses. Staff are identifying locations to host the Bicycle Friendly Driver program in Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties.
- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee and Texas Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Staff are preparing the scope, budget, and timeline in anticipation of procuring a consultant to revise the 2045 Active Transportation Plan.
- Staff continue to hold monthly meetings to advance Ped/Bike Subcommittee workgroups. One workgroup will revise the regional bike network GIS data and the other workgroup will

develop an active transportation focused travel demand modeling solution. Staff continue research of best practices for the travel demand modeling and bike network update workgroups. Staff continues to refine the SharePoint sites for the subcommittee workgroups to enhance engagement.

- Staff are in the process of developing “how to” videos showing how to use and interact with various types of bicycle infrastructure.
- Staff had monthly meetings with local sponsors for the Local Active Transportation Studies. Staff discussed public engagement process and received input on other information that needed for scope of work and project budgets.

3. Transit Planning

- The next regular meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee is scheduled for April 14, 2022.
- Staff continued to refine the scopes of work for High-Capacity Transit feasibility studies. This effort consists of individual studies of corridors and service concepts recommended by the High-Capacity Transit Task Force Priority Network. The first such study will focus on the US 90A corridor and will be conducted in partnership with the Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD), and H-GAC staff is working with GCRD staff to refine that study’s scope of work.
- The City of Pearland Transit Feasibility Needs Assessment and Study public engagement site was released on March 8, 2022. A resident survey of transit perceptions was released concurrently as well. Response to date has surpassed 2,000 residents with several hundred comments., A Technical Memorandum with existing conditions and peer analysis will be prepared for distribution in April 2022. Public meetings are expected in June to be presented to TAC and TPC in July.
- Staff is completing a scope of work for the City of Dayton transit study and met with city staff iMarch to review the project, which will be developed to examine both local and commuter transit services.
- The Woodlands – Energy Corridor contract for the first suburb to suburb commuter service in the Houston-Galveston Region was approved and executed by The Woodlands Township. Service began on January 4, 2022, with service to the Energy Corridor. Extensive marketing efforts are underway to increase the level of ridership. The decline in COVID cases and the increase in gas prices along with the marketing efforts is expected on significantly increase ridership in March,
- Development of an Action Plan for implementing Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan recommendations is underway.
- Coordination continues between H-GAC, METRO and other regional transit agencies regarding the Regional Transit Connectivity Project, including the Seamless Fare System, regional trip planner, data management system, and related efforts. Initial assessments to determine agencies' needs and capacity are underway.

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Staff completed outreach and promotion of public meetings for TIP 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Update, Southeast Harris Subregional Study, and Regional Goods Movement program at the end of March and beginning of April.
- Staff surveys to stakeholders in Pearland to gain feedback for the Pearland Transit Study. To date, more than 2,000 responses have been received.
- The March edition of the transportation focused newsletter, Region View, was released on March 22nd.
- A bike safety class awareness plan was developed in February and will be implemented in March and April with the goal of increasing attendance at in-person and virtual classes.
- Planning for Earth Day, Bike Month, and a new Environmental Justice awareness campaign occurred as well.
- Planning and coordination are underway for the launch of media buys and advertising with local vendors for Hurricane Preparedness, Tow and Go, and Commute Solutions.

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- H-GAC met with Alamo Area MPO Commute Solutions' team for a peer exchange. The two teams discussed outreach strategies, TDM education efforts, and best practices for Commute Solutions.
- Staff prepared to launch the Earth Month Transportation Resource Fair hosted through Easy Virtual. The team worked with multiple partner agencies and created virtual booths that supply links, downloadable documents, images, and videos.
- Staff and the AECOM team closed out the Future of Work Survey. The purpose of this survey is to have a better understanding on what organizations are returning to the office, implementing hybrid schedules, or continuing to work remotely. The survey garnered about 200 survey responses from employers across the MPO region. H-GAC will perform an analysis to share with TAC and TPC.
- Staff continued to make progress on telework policy development and implementation with employer partners.

CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- During last month, staff continued to work with several ISD's in the Houston-Galveston region to replace older school buses. An application was received from Rice University for a new electric bus. Staff continued to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses.
- Staff continued to examine and develop the needed parameters to establish an electric charging infrastructure component to the Clean Vehicles Program. Staff worked on creating a new application specifically for electric vehicle chargers.
- Staff continued to monitor grant recipient's usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- 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. Staff met with TxDOT and discussed electric vehicles and charging stations as projects for CMAQ funding.

- Staff met with representatives from Lion Electric to hear about their new buses and discuss working together on potential projects.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continued to work with air quality team from the North Central Texas Council of Governments to meet with stakeholders to develop Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) corridor plan for Interstate 45 between and within the two MPO's service areas. Staff are continuing to hold discussions with stakeholders who may have an interest in either all-electric or hydrogen technology. H-GAC staff anticipate future stakeholder events upcoming in the next several months.
- 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 is working to complete our annual survey of alternative fuel usage within the 8-county region. Additionally, staff has received an additional year of funding to continue these activities through early 2023. Currently underway is planning for this upcoming funding year which began on April 1st. It is anticipated that staff will present a series of webinars and other alternative fuel events as well as continuing our ongoing podcast series.
- 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 is currently installing EV charging equipment to facilitate the vehicle purchases and it is anticipated that the entire project will be completed by the end of 2022. For the 2019 DERA project, staff is preparing a call for projects to find a new partner to complete the project.
- Staff is working with representatives from the South-Central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource to develop a workshop for local governments to discuss transportation and energy resiliency in our region. This workshop will focus on vehicle electrification and issues related to equity of the upcoming transition as well as how vehicle electrification can help improve energy efficiency. Anticipated speakers at this roundtable include Dr. Bruce Race from University of Houston and representatives from EVolve Houston. This workshop will be held on April 14, 2022. Further details will be available in future updates.

TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING

- Staff continued to provide travel demand modeling to support various sub-regional and corridor studies such as evaluating eight other various alternatives for the METRO BRT and Managed Laned within the Inner Katy study areas, the Montgomery County Precinct – 2 (MP2) network development and 3 scenarios model runs. Staff provided travel demand forecasting support to AECOM for the TxDOT Study and to the CDM Smith for the Grand Parkway studies. Staff conducted model runs for the SE Harris, Liberty Counties studies, the 2045 Regional Air Quality conformity, and other sub-area and corridors studies within the region to support H-GAC’s planning processes.
- Staff continued to provide GIS technical support for the RTP, TIP, the Regional Air Quality conformity process, to create the New-Regional Bikeway Networks Updates, and the creation of the web app for Active Transportation Viewers.
- Staff continued to enhance the capabilities of the website and dashboard for RCTP, RTP viewing that assists H-GAC’s member agencies to view their various corridor and sub-area transportation planning and studies. Staff continue to work with TxDOT to utilize Streetlight data, and in the Household Survey planning process.
- Staff continued to run and enhance H-GAC’s Activity-Based Model (ABM) and carry out model runs for the Regional Goods Movement Study using the ABM model, review outputs with HDR consultants.
- Staff continued to enhance the AIMSUN Meso- and Micro- modeling for the three sub-areas: Montgomery County, SE Harris and Liberty Counties studies, and continued to evaluate other modeling software.
- Staff continued to work with a Steering Committee and the Contractor (ETC Consulting) for the Transit On-board Origin-Destination (O-D) Transit Survey. The survey is on-going and about 5,000 samples have already been collected. Staff continue to support the bike/pedestrian project for the forthcoming active transportation modeling efforts and continues to work with the H-GAC Procurement Team and the TTI Consultants for the Airport Ground Access Survey.
- Staff continued to process INRIX speed data in relation to the H-GAC traffic count project. RFP for the traffic data collection is completed. Data collection will commence in September 2022.
- Staff continues to assist NCTCOG with the alternative Fueling Stations Project on the IH-45, utilizing streetlight data to help planners see traffic counts in Pearland, and assist METRO with streetlight tools so that they can use it for their planning needs.
- Staff coordinated with Conformity Partners on the Air Quality Conformity process and documentation for milestone years 2020, 2030, 2040, 2045.
- Staff continued to run the H-GAC VisionEval scenarios model to support transportation planning activities.