

## **10C. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **A. LONG RANGE PLANNING**

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

- Strategies and recommendations are under development for the Southeast Harris County Subregional Study. Public comments were solicited through the new Engage H-GAC website – <https://engage.h-gac.com/>.
- Analysis and refinement of initial recommendations for the Liberty County Mobility Study are underway. H-GAC and consultant staff met with the Liberty County Judge and County Engineer on Monday, December 6, 2021 to seek feedback on some of these initial recommendations. Individual meetings with the cities of Cleveland, Dayton and Liberty are also planned. A second round of public involvement to present these recommendations to the public will occur in early 2022.
- The study analysis and the recommendations are under development for the Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Study. Public comments were solicited through the H-GAC website – <https://engage.h-gac.com/>.
- Staff are developing methodology for a Transit-Oriented Development analysis of the 8-County H-GAC region.
- H-GAC staff are developing a scope of work for a regional Connected and Automated Vehicle Strategy.

#### **2. Freight Planning**

- The second Steering Committee meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan update is scheduled for February 24, 2022.
- The first Stakeholder Committee meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan was held on November 17, 2021.
- The December Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting was rescheduled for January 6, 2022.

#### **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 Fort Bend County to perform Intersection Safety Assessments. Staff and the consultant also coordinated with Waller County staff to make intersection safe audits.
- The 2021 Zip-Zone and Hurricane Preparedness Campaign is continuing through the end of November.
- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as “Pay the Price” is continuing.

- The quick clearance pilot project with the City of Houston is continuing. The program is investigating removing minor crashes requiring a tow truck to remove the autos with by an officer at Houston TranStar.
- Staff coordinated with the Texas Department of Transportation on the next Advance Funding Agreement for the Tow and Go Program.

4. Environmental Planning

- 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 study.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff began development of a Low Impact Development tool to examine how to cost-effectively integrate low impact development into transportation projects in the Houston 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 are completing 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.
- Staff facilitated a monthly RTP Subcommittee Meeting on December 8, 2021.
- 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 reported monthly 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.

**B. 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 over the course of the fiscal year 2020. 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 updated data on H-GAC website for Mobile Counters program. Staff processed requests for Ped/Bike counter data and is working towards procurement of new mobile and permanent ped/bike counters.
- Staff continued to work with the America Bicycle Education Association to track the online safety course called CyclingSavvy. Staff is developing a marketing plan for the online course. Staff continued to collaborate with the American Bicycle Education Association to identify potential in-person bike handling courses. Bicycle Friendly Driver presentations in Waller County are being scheduled.
- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee, AMPO work groups, and Texas Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Staff is coordinating with Ped/Bike Subcommittee to revise the 2045 Active Transportation Plan.
- Staff is planning and coordinating kick off activities associated with Ped/Bike Subcommittee workgroups to revise the regional bike network GIS data and to develop an active transportation focused travel demand modeling solution.
- Staff continued to collaborate with project sponsors to develop schedules and general project planning regarding UPWP approved active transportation projects.
- Staff continued to work across departments to plan active transportation focused regional air quality model.
- Staff continued procurement process of new bike/pedestrian counters. Staff continued coordination with communities and internal planning in anticipation of program expansion.

3. Transit Planning

- Staff planned for the next meeting of Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee to be held on January 13, 2022.
- Staff continued to refine the scope of work for the High-Capacity Transit Task Force Phase II effort. This effort is envisioned to consist of individual studies of corridors and service concepts recommended by the HCTTF Priority Network.
- The City of Pearland Transit Feasibility Needs Assessment and Study is underway. The project will focus on specific suburban transit needs and challenges with robust community engagement. The website and Engage Houston community outreach sites for the study are being developed. A Working Paper on existing conditions is being developed
- Staff coordinated with the City of Dayton to develop a Transit Study in the Liberty County community with regional implication as well as local significance. A scope of work is under development along with continuing meeting with the City of Dayton.
- A fourth year of the Conroe Commuter Pilot project was approved by TxDOT to continue Park and Ride service with Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic an additional year for the pilot project was deemed warranted.
- 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 is slated to begin on January 4, 2022 to coincide with significant number of employees that will return to work in the Energy Corridor starting at the beginning of the year.
- Planning and implementation for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan is on-going. An analysis of a set of focus groups conducted for this project in October has been completed. The final pieces of the RCTP update document, including a Gaps Analysis and Financial Analysis, are well underway, and compilation of the final plan has begun.
- 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. The Inter-Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by H-GAC and METRO and is now in effect. A separate Intergovernmental Agreement between H-GAC and METRO regarding funding for this effort has also been signed and executed.

**C. TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH**

- Media buy agreements and advertising with local vendors for Hurricane Preparedness were completed for the 2021 hurricane season. Planning for 2022 will start in April.
- Staff are currently coordinating a series of public meetings on transit needs for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) and digital survey for the 2045 RTP (Regional Transportation Plan) update.

- A month-long awareness campaign will begin in early 2022 about incorporating Environmental Justice into planning for our region.

**D. COMMUTE SOLUTIONS**

- Staff held monthly coordination meeting with TxDOT's ConnectSmart team.
- Staff continued to meet with AECOM for telework planning coordination with area companies and local governments.
- Staff will begin telework training sessions with the Harris County Judges Office.
- Staff met with NASA Space Center and ConnectSmart to discuss the ConnectSmart App.
- Staff is working with the H-GAC Communications and Marketing to create a Commute Solutions Year End Thank You and What's Coming in 2022 video to air in mid-January 2022.
- Staff is coordinating with MD Anderson to participate in their yearly "Live Your Best Life Wellness Fair" in January 2022.
- Staff participated in a joint Lunch n Learn with METRO and ConnectSmart at the Galveston Wharves Port of Galveston.
- Staff solidified a new Commute Solutions Partnership with Workforce Solutions.
- Staff attended the United Methodist Church Central South District DEI Meeting on November 13.
- Staff presented "Partnership Perks: A Guide to Becoming a Commute Solutions Partner" as a vendor spotlight at an HR Houston Annual Meeting on November 18.

**E. CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- During last month, staff continues 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 continues 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.

#### **F. GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee (RAQPAC) meeting was held on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and included presentations about a project to assess community health impacts at Port of Houston, an update on the Harris County Community Air Monitoring Program (CAMP), and an overview of air quality related aspects of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- During the last month, staff submitted this year's PM2.5 Path Forward Report to EPA. This report, developed with the Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee (RAQPAC), shows the region's efforts to voluntarily reduce PM2.5 emissions within our region. This report was approved by RAQPAC and will be submitted to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as fulfillment of our region's participation in the PM Advance Program. The final report as submitted to EPA can be found [here](#).
- The Regional Bus Survey has been completed and submitted to for approval. Staff completed developing an inventory of all types of buses that operate within the H-GAC region. The final report has been completed and is currently being reviewed by MPO leadership. This report will be available for public distribution soon.
- 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 meetings with stakeholders who may have an interest in either all-electric or hydrogen technology.
- 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. In addition to the usual efforts to develop educational programs related to alternative fuel topics.
- 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. H-GAC staff has received approval for a one-year no-cost extension for this project and staff is working with IKEA to extend the sub-recipient agreement between our two organizations. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by the end of 2022. For the 2019 DERA project, staff is working with new project partner, Hirschbach Motor Lines. Following approval from the H-GAC Board of Directors to enter into a contract with

Hirschbach, staff is working to develop contracting materials. It is anticipated that project activities under the revised scope and timeline will begin in earnest in Q1 2022.

- Staff is working with representatives from the South-Central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource to develop a roundtable 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. Anticipated speakers at this roundtable will include Dr. Bruce Race from University of Houston and Chris George from EVolve Houston. This workshop will be held on April 14, 2022.

#### **G. TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING**

- Staff continued to provide travel demand modeling and GIS technical supports and assistances to support H-GAC's RTP, TIP, the Regional Air Quality conformity process, other H-GAC's planning work. Staff created a website 'RTP Viewer' to assist H-GAC's member agencies for their various corridor and sub-area transportation planning and studies. Staff continued to work with TxDOT to utilize Streetlight data.
- Staff continued to test-run the H-GAC's newly developed Activity-Based Model (ABM) and the truck models with new available data.
- Staff continued to develop the AIMSUN Meso and Micro modeling for the three sub-areas: Montgomery County, SE Harris and Liberty Counties studies, and continues to evaluate other modeling software with better Meso and Micro capabilities.
- Staff continued to work with a Steering Committee for the Transit On-board Origin-Destination (O-D) Transit Survey. The actual data collection will be conducted in Spring of 2022.
- Staff working with the City of Houston Airport staff for the joint effort of the regional commercial airports (IAH & Hobby) ground access count to the airport surveys. The survey data collection is scheduled for Summer or Fall of 2022.
- Staff continued to process INRIX speed data in relation to the H-GAC traffic count project and updating the Regional Economic Model using REMI software, reviewed REMI 10-region features, and developed scope of work for Economic Analysis tool.
- Staff continued to develop emission factors for the METRO for Harris and Fort Bend counties.
- Staff coordinated with Conformity Partners on the Air Quality Conformity Process.