

## 15B 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](http://www.engage.h-gac.com)
- The Liberty County Mobility Study has been completed. For more information visit: [www.engage.h-gac.com](http://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](http://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 6<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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 10<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://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/2045rtupdate>
- 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/2045rtupdate> 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 are ongoing and will close out in April. The last class will be held in Pearland on Saturday April 22.
- 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 studies. Bay Area Bike and Pedestrian Safety Plan is undergoing a Pre-audit check. Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept is preparing for RFP release. Staff had meetings or sent email updates to other AFA project local sponsors.
- Staff coordinated with internal and external members to prepare Pedestrian and Bicyclists Subcommittee April meeting presentation.

### 3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee met on April 13, 2023.
- The updated Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Commuter (CMAQ) and Transit Pilot Program Call for Partners draft is under early review for a new Call for Projects in 2023.
- The RFPs for the Dayton Transit Study and the US 90A Transit Corridor Study are scheduled for release in late April
- Preparations are underway for the May 16, 18 and 23 Pearland Transit Needs Assessment Study public meetings. The study Technical Memorandum of Existing Conditions should be published and posted on the [engage.h-gac.com](https://engage.h-gac.com) website by early May
- A meeting of the Paratransit/Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Advisory Workgroup took place on March 15, 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/2045rtpupdate> 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

- Solutions in partnership with multiple organizations across the region are working together on the development of 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 began coordinating a series of regional commuter education events with METRO to engage, educate and entice potential riders to try vanpooling. Commuter Fest is a region wide effort and will run from May through September 2023. 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 has submitted a proposal to be a speaker at this year's HR Houston Symposium. The proposal has been accepted, and we have been formally invited to present "Making Flexible Work, Work for Everyone" in July 2023.
- Staff presented a short presentation at the Waller County EDC breakfast, the purpose of this was to educate local business owners on the Commute Solutions program and how we can work together.
- A Spotify ad promoting the Woodlands Township route to the Energy Corridor is live! This ad is geo-targeting people that live in the Woodlands or surrounding areas and commute to the Energy Corridor for work.
- 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.

- Commute Solutions began its collaboration with Love to Ride and will launch in May with Bike Month.
- 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.

#### 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

- 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 received a one-year extension and additional funding as part of our DOE Clean Cities contract. Additionally, staff worked to complete and submit the Clean Cities Annual Report as well as the Quarterly Fuel Price Report.
- 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 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, and other traffic and travel related data developments and modeling supports.
- Staff continues to provide on-going Geographic Information System functionality of the Cube Voyager to review and correct various scenario highway and transit networks from the multi-year H-GAC regional highway network kept in the ARC/GIS environment both for the RTP, TIP, sub-regional and corridor studies used as inputs into the H-GAC regional travel demand and forecasting modeling model.
- Staff continues to provide on-going travel demand and forecasting modeling support to various TxDOT corridor studies such as: SH225 PEL, Hempstead Corridor Feasibility, Gulf Fwy PEL Studies, SH 146 Study/Schematic and some H-GAC member agencies corridor studies such as: Pearland Mobility Study, and the Houston Regional Project for a county level 2040 VMT and Vehicle Population for the eight Counties.
- Staff continues to provide on-going modeling support to the H-GAC Transportation Department on Ozone Action Month Campaign that includes running scenarios for the regional transit providers that have agreed to participate in “if fare was free scenarios” on either Mondays or Fridays during the campaign, provided congestion mitigation and level of service analysis/calculations for the US 90 widening in Waller, continues to coordinate with the RTP team on Appendix 5 updates for the 2045 RTP plan update and documentation with more recent travel demand outputs to support the level of mobility, VMT, VHT, delays, and travel times tables and reports, publication on the H-GAC website, and presentations to RTP subcommittee, TAC, the public meeting, and the TPC, coordination on the development of the bike/ped scope of work.
- Staff continues working with Bentley (Cube Voyager new Owner) in the transition and update of the Cube Voyager to the 23 version, continues with the Activity-Based-Model (ABM) and the traditional 4-step model sensitivity testing that examines and compares the model results from the trip-based and tour-based models to help determine where further development of the ABM is needed.
- Staff continued to coordinate the efforts of the Origin-Destination Survey Steering Committee team, the prime and sub-contractors to produce comprehensive reports that includes comparisons to the 2017 O-D Survey data collected, before and after the COVID analysis, the secondary expansion documentation and response to the FTA request.
- 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, TxDOT Houston District and the H-GAC Procurement Team and the Board of Directors 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, work with TxDOT Houston District in the review of the 2022 traffic counts collected on the

State Systems, completed REMI data request of extracting REMI regional control total of population by race, age and county, employment by industry by county for years 2018, 2020, 2030, 2045, and 2050 for social economic modeling group, continues updating Vision Eval Tract level model 12 inputs files, continues to perform measure bridge and pavement (PM2) 2022 annual rating calculation and target setting.

- Staff coordinating with the METRO Transit Authority on the H-GAC regional Model Transfer User to METRO for METRO's project planning and evaluation.