

## 5A. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

### LONG RANGE PLANNING

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

- Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan study began July 1, 2023. The study team has developed a draft alternative to be presented at the January 30, 2024, Steering Committee meeting.
- Washington Avenue Corridor study began October 1, 2023. The study kick-off meeting was held in December. The first Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for April 2024.
- Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The first Steering Committee meeting was held on February 27, 2024. The study team presented the existing conditions and received feedback on where the mobility issues were in the study area.
- FM 518 Corridor study began November 1, 2023. The first Steering Committee was held on January 23. This meeting was a joint meeting with the Pearland Mobility Study. The study team is preparing for the first public outreach event scheduled for April 6, 2024, at the Pearland Spring Fest.
- Pearland Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The first Steering Committee will be held on January 23. This meeting was a joint meeting with the FM 518 Corridor Study. The study team is preparing for the first public outreach event scheduled for April 6, 2024, at the Pearland Spring Fest.
- Cemetery Road Corridor Study began March 1, 2024. The first Steering Committee will be May 2024.
- Friendswood's Parkway Corridor study is currently being procured. This project is included in the 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2024.

#### 2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee (GHFC) meeting was held on February 28, 2024. The next meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2024.
- The 2023 Regional Goods Movement Plan (RGMP) has ended. The next step is to present the study findings to TPC at the March 22, 2024, meeting, with the final adoption of the plan by TPC in April 2024. For more information visit: [www.engage.h-gac.com](http://www.engage.h-gac.com)
- 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. Two groups have been developed as working groups of HART.
- The Grants Group was developed in June 2023 to assess the readiness of regional partners for upcoming grant submittals and provide letters of support to demonstrate regional support for projects. From July 2023 to December 2023, the priority list representing the regional issues seen at grade crossings was submitted to TxDOT for inclusion into their Phase 2 Rail Study.

- The Unfunded Needs Group was developed in September 2023 to identify unfunded regional needs and align the region for future Rail Relocation Funds. From September 2023 to February 2024, the unfunded needs group began discussing the methodology and criteria needed to begin the assessment.
- The HART working group meets monthly following TPC. H-GAC staff continues to provide meeting support and regional coordination. The next meeting is planned for March 22, 2024.

### 3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- H-GAC 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 February 1, 2024, at Houston TranStar.
- H-GAC staff conducted a Traffic Incident Management meeting at Houston TranStar. The meeting had representatives from TxDOT, HCSO, HPD, AECOM, Hazmat, SH288 and the Towing Industry on February 5, 2024.
- H-GAC staff conducted a Traffic Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) subcommittee meeting virtually on February 8, 2024.
- HGAC Staff conducted a co-applicant meeting on the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant to provide an updated status of the grant and answer questions.
- H-GAC staff attended weekly Statewide TIM calls.
- Media Buys were input into the H-GAC procurement system to start the Tow and Go Public Awareness Campaign.
- An amendment was executed with the contract with the City of Houston to expended uncommitted funds on CSJ 0912-00-558.
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- An item to conduct a Hurricane Preparedness and Awareness Campaign for 2024 will be on the February H-GAC Board Consent Agenda.
- H-GAC staff worked on executing a contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates for the Regional Intelligent Transportation (ITS) Architecture and Website.
- "Tow and Go" performed 2,689 "No Cost Tows" in January 2024. January's average clearance time was 15 minutes and 39 seconds.
- In January 2024, early results for the 8-county region reported 39 traffic fatalities based on data from the TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS) generated the first week of February 2024, which is a 40% decrease when compared to 2023 which recorded 65 traffic fatalities for January.
- In January 2024, early results for the 8-county region had 220 Serious Injuries based on data from the TxDOT CRIS, which was a 41% decrease when compared to 2023 which had 375 Serious Injuries.

### 4. Environmental Planning

- Staff are updating the land use\landcover base map of the Eco-Logical tool based on recent aerial photography. Further enhancement of the tool will include links to existing environmental assessment and final environmental impact statements for roadway projects within the planning H-

GAC region. 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 continue to follow local Environmental Justice news as they relate to the H-GAC Title VI Nondiscrimination Program and will inform the triennial update to the regional Title VI Program Update and report on activities in furtherance of Environmental Justice.

#### 5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff submitted a Planning Grant application for a Regional Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan through the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program submitted in August 2023. <https://www.h-gac.com/resiliency-planning>
- Staff coordinated letters of support for regional partners PROTECT Grant Program applications.
- 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)

#### 6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) subcommittee provides guidance and oversees the progress of the RTP. The committee must meet quorum and meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month. The next meeting is March 13, 2024.
- The 2045 RTP Update was approved by TPC in April 2023. The final report and 33 associated appendixes are available online: <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate>
- Staff and the RTP Subcommittee are developing the RTP Project Development Process, which will evaluate projects submitted for inclusion on the RTP Fiscally Constrained List.
  - RTP Subcommittee Meeting on 11/8/23 - Vote for approval
  - TAC and TPC approved the RTP Project Development Process in February 2024.

#### 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.
- Work is ongoing towards the update of the Language Access Plan (LAP). The Language Access Plan identifies the language needs in the minority population and specifies policies and strategies the agency will employ to enable individuals who do not speak English proficiently to enjoy meaningful participation in agency programs and activities. Efforts to update the LAP includes a survey to gather information about regional language use and factors that impact the level of public involvement in agency activities. Other related activities include the community roundtables which are aimed at opening a dialogue with advocates, representatives, and

members of the different racial and ethnic minority groups and other underserved populations in the greater Houston metropolitan region, to help H-GAC understand how best to engage with these communities and encourage their participation in the civic planning decision-making that affect their lives, health, and environment. Information gathered will assist the update to the Language Access Plan (LAP) and the triennial update to the H-GAC Title VI Plan. The community roundtable events will commence in February with meetings with the Korean Community and Chinese Communities. The roundtables will continue through March 2024.

- Staff are beginning the planning process for a February 2024 webinar event commemorating the anniversaries of the passage of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The webinar is presented under the Title VI and Environmental Justice Awareness Initiative with a goal to event will educate staff and stakeholders on vital Title VI/Equity issues relevant to MPOs, municipalities, and other recipients of federal financial assistance.

## SHORT RANGE PLANNING

### 1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated 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 completed the project selection process for the Carryover Balance projects. These are projects that can be ready for implementation within the next 2 years. The effort included the selection of over \$335 M in surface transportation projects identified for project development activities and construction. Over the spring, staff will work to program these projects into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Staff completed and the TPC approved projects for the Regional Goods Movement investment criteria. Over \$150M in regional projects that encourage the safe and efficient movement of goods in the region. These projects will be submitted into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program in the Spring of 2024.
- 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 2022. 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

- Staff are continuing to work with the Data Analytics department to update the Regional Bike Network Map. Larger communities that have submitted their data are now live on the Regional Bike Network map. Staff have started the process of updating the Sidewalk data layer.

- The consultant selection process for the Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept study continues with execution of consultant contract and ILA by April 2024.
- The scope of work was refined for the Memorial Drive study as it enters the procurement process for consultant selection.
- The scope of work was refined for the City of Friendswood Master Trails plan as it enters the procurement process for consultant selection.
- The Bay Area Ped Bike study is ongoing. A series of focus groups for key stakeholders were held in February, as well as an event for Johnson Space Center employees. A set of Walk/Bike Audits will be completed in March working alongside the project task force.
- Staff attended various meetings such as the City of Houston Bicycle Advisory Committees, Texas Pedestrian Coalition, Houston Safety Task Force, etc.
- Staff worked with Procurement to publish a request for proposal for counter installation work, which closed on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Staff confirmed that mobile counter activities are also eligible for inclusion in the contract. Staff are working to confirm if the budget for this expanded contract may necessitate board of directors approval.

### 3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee's next regularly scheduled meeting is April 11, 2024.
- The contract for the US 90A Corridor Transit Study has been executed. A project kick-off meeting was held on Marh 12, 2024.
- Funding for the RFP for the Dayton Transit Study and negotiations for a finalized contract are underway with the selected consultants.
- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis draft was completed and is under review by the Transportation staff. We are extending our review of alternatives to examine additional options for delivering transit service based on feedback from the City of Pearland.
- Community public meetings on the Pearland Service Alternatives are scheduled for the third week of March 2024. The meetings will discuss and receive feedback on possible transit service alternatives for the City of Pearland.
- The Board of Directors approved two years of funding for Microtransit pilot service in the City of Sugar Land. It represents the first microtransit pilot that will be funded under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Transit Pilot program. Service is expected to begin midyear.
- CMAQ Commuter pilot service provided by Fort Bend Transit began on March 4 with initial ridership numbers exceeding expectations. A formal ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for March 18.
- Staff are working with METRO and regional transit partners to continue implementation of the Regional Transit Connectivity Project. Harris County Transit and Fort Bend Transit have gone live with Mobile Ticketing under the new partnership project. H-GAC and METRO are currently working to integrate all partners into the Regional Data Management System.
- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee approved a new methodology for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan's Transit Need Index in January 2024. Staff have reached out to the region's transit agencies to gather necessary data to implement this methodology.

- Data collection for Transit Asset Management performance measures is underway. Staff have contacted all agencies & have updated plans from all agencies. Staff began presenting the results to internal subcommittees in February. Staff will present to TAC & TPC for information in March.

#### TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Planning for the following projects is currently underway or were completed recently:
  - Tow & Go – Media Buying
  - Commute Solutions
  - Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II
  - Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan
  - Air Quality – Climate Change Engagement for MPO's Collar Counties
  - Title VI – Connecting Communities
  - Language Access Plan Update
  - Best Workplaces for Commuters
  - MPO 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
  - Bay Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan

#### COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions finalized the development of a shared data agreement between UHD and Commute Solutions. This agreement will be a template used for partners moving forward.
- Commute Solutions continues to work with the H-GAC Data & Analytics Research team and the Air Quality teams in planning efforts for Ozone Action Month.
- Commute Solutions worked with Communications to promote the Fort Bend Transit route from Sugar Land to Downtown Houston. This included social media posts, newsletter articles, and the creation of a video highlighting the new service.
- Commute Solutions and Houston ConnectSmart continued planning efforts with Rice University to launch the campus carpool program. The campus will undergo a soft launch and pilot beginning in April with plans to fully launch next fall.
- Commute Solutions continued planning efforts for a 2024 Kickoff campaign and drawing closer to launching a pilot during Earth Month (April)
- Commute Solutions met with two of this year's Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) which included TEI Planning and Design and Rice University, to co-coordinate marketing and will be working with our partners this Earth Month and Bike Month to continue announcing the designation.
- AECOM, the contractor executing the evaluation and recommendations for Commute Solutions, continued with the project plan by summarizing the findings of the focus group interviews and presenting it in a draft. Also submitted was a draft of the Congestion Management Process Analysis which reviews the 2021 CMP for H-GAC.
- Commute Solutions expanded its employer outreach with meetings to organizations such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, UT Health-Houston, Dow Chemical, Marathon Oil, and others.

#### CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continue to work on a project to reassess the availability of Buy America compliant vehicles suitable for inclusion as part of the Clean Vehicles Program. Staff is continuing to work to reach out to manufacturers of vehicles and electric vehicle charging equipment to discuss Buy America

requirements and the availability of compliant equipment. Staff are also working to review recent revisions to federal Buy America rules and understand how agency programs can best comply. This work is ongoing.

- Staff worked with grant recipients with pending vehicle deliveries to prepare for and undertake the vehicle acceptance and invoice process. For vehicles that have been recently delivered, staff has been working to process invoice materials and move those through the invoicing process.
- Staff continued to monitor post-delivery projects that have not yet met the contractually required emission reductions based upon subrecipient performance. This monitoring effort ensures that grant recipients' usage of vehicles remains within grant requirements and that vehicle use and mileage commitments are met. Historically, this monitoring effort has occurred through a mix of subrecipient self-reporting and automated GPS monitoring. Staff is currently working with subrecipients to completely transition to automated monitoring. This effort is ongoing, but nearly complete.
- Staff continued to process contract closeouts for projects meeting minimum contracted requirements for all project vehicles and is working to complete this closeout process when possible. In the last month, staff processed and released five vehicle replacement contracts for project partners that had successfully completed their grant requirements.

#### GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- H-GAC continues to administer \$1 million in planning funds through the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). In September, staff worked to gain H-GAC Board of Directors approval to access the awarded funding and enter into interlocal agreements with project partners. This process is ongoing. Three of the four interlocal agreements are still in the approval process and will likely be completed in January. Staff have completed the approval process on the fourth agreement with the Houston-Advanced Research Center (HARC), the technical consultants for this project. With that process completed, the team is beginning to develop project materials to satisfy project deliverables. Included in this work, staff opened a call for projects process to gather information about implementation projects that may be included as part of the Priority Climate Action Plan or as part of Phase II implementation portion of this effort.
- 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.
- 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 modeling technical support to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), and other traffic and travel related data developments within the H-GAC MPO region that supports sub-regional and corridor studies for both TxDOT and other H-GAC member agencies projects such as: the Fort Bend County Call for Project, City of Houston's Midtown one-way to two-way conversion on Fannin and San Jacinto, HCTRA's Westpark Tollway Capacity Optimization Study, Pearland mobility study, continual update of the Pearland Transit benefit cost (BC) table with changes as per Transportation Dept staff request, TxDOT Houston District's on-going regional PEL Study project that includes all major PEL studies in the region, Brazoria county SH 288 Toll Project, Generation Park management district study that assess the impact of the North Lake Houston Road, etc.
- Staff continues with the on-going review, update and processing of the H-GAC traffic count and recount from various traffic data collection within the H-GAC region, Update VisionEval model with updated software, and continue with the review and QA/QC of the traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) split to support new growths in certain H-GAC MPO areas.
- Staff continues to meet and seek professional advice from the TTI to come-up with recommendation of methodology, goals and objectives to TxDOT TP&P and Cambridge Systematics (CS) with the Household Survey expansion within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region, and working with the TxDOT TP&P on conducting University and Community Colleges Surveys of University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG), and the Galveston College two campuses in Galveston county, continues to review both the executive summary and general reports of the Airport Survey, and in a process of amending the ETC Airport Survey contract to allow for the development of the optional task #6 (airport sub-model development) of the original scope of work, continues review, refine the scope of work, cost and the timing for the Active Transportation (bike & ped) Survey.
- Staff Conducted a comparison of OD trip tables between Replica and Streetlight data.
- Staff continues with the Activity-Based-Model (ABM) model troubleshooting and completed a test run on DAR07 workstation that compares the outputs of the four-step model and ABM using the same 2023 and 2045 networks from the 2023 Conformity.
- Staff continues to develop Travel Demand Model QA/QC process, supplied 13-county VMT data for the CPRG from TTI, continues to support Transportation's CPRG project, and continues working on new template for conformity process