

11C. 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/>.
- A meeting was held with the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce on July 7, 2021 on Liberty County Mobility Study to discuss bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access and safety issues in the Cleveland area.
- The study analysis and the development of 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.

2. Freight Planning

- The Regional Goods Movement Plan’s consultant selection process was completed, and a contract with the selected contractor is under approval process.
- Staff held the Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting on June 10, 2021. A panel discussion on the future of freight rail was discussed among Union Pacific, Burlington Northern & Santa Fe, Kansas City Southern Railways, and the Gulf Coast Rail District. A presentation by TxDOT rail division was given on the findings of the Houston-Beaumont Rail Study. Staff prepared materials and coordinated for the upcoming Freight Committee meeting on September 23, 2021.

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.
- The Road Safety Contract was executed with Contractor Kimley-Horn. Intersection Safety Audits should begin in August 2021.
- The 2021 Zip-Zone and Hurricane Preparedness Campaign started in June.
- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as “Pay the Price” started in June.
- A contract extension amendment with the City of Houston for the current Tow and Go contract was approved by City Council in June and is being circulated for signature.
- Staff has been working with the H-GAC Communications department on organizing tow operator training material for the Tow and Go program.
- Staff prepared materials for the The Safety Committee meeting on August 24th.

- Staff developed the State of Safety Report.
- Staff held a Traffic Incident Management Meeting on July 8th.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff has completed the “Quick User Guide” to the Eco-Logical tool which is designed to teach a new user how the tool works in several short steps. The guide is going through the final edits before publication. Staff have also begun talks with a contact in the Houston Independent School District to discuss the prospect of students using the Eco-Logical tool within the environmental science or social studies curriculum. The initial talks have revealed an apparent interest in introducing the tool to the classroom.
- Staff is working on an update to the H-GAC Environmental Justice Report as well as the Title VI/Non-discrimination Annual Workplan and Accomplishment Report. A draft report was prepared and a public meeting was held on July 22nd. Staff received public comments and prepared responses. The report was presented to TAC, and will be presented to TPC and Board of Directors for approvals.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff began development of a Low Impact Development study 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-sector specific resiliency best practices and strategies across the country. 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.
- Staff have developed a strategy to integrate results from the Resilience & Durability Pilot project into ongoing transportation planning and studies. Sub-regional results from the pilot project will be presented to each sub-regional project steering committee.

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Meetings of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Subcommittee was held on July 14th. Staff discussed the development of 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

7. Other Planning Activities

Staff continue to monitor regional travel impacts of COVID-19. Regional travel volumes are monitored through StreetLight data, transit ridership numbers are reported monthly from transit

agencies within the region, and permanent pedestrian/bicyclist counters provide updates on pedestrian/bicyclist 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 and a report on the [Regional Travel Impacts of COVID-19](#).

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 completed the effort to develop performance measures and targets to comply with federal requirements. A mid-point progress report was developed and is available on the H-GAC website.
- Staff worked on the development of project selection criteria and coordinated with various subcommittees.

2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Staff updated data on H-GAC Website for Mobile Counters program.
- Staff processed requests for Ped/Bike counter data.
- Staff worked on data entry and coordination with METRO regarding the multimodal network connectivity pilot project grant from Federal Highway Administration.
- Staff worked with the America Bicycle Education Association to track the online safety course called CyclingSavvy.
- Staff continues collaborating with the American Bicycle Education Association to identify potential in-person bike handling courses.
- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Procurement is almost complete for permanent and mobile bike/ped counters. The request to proceed with procurement was approved by the Board of Directors. Awaiting approval from TxDOT.
- Staff is coordinating with the Ped/Bike Subcommittee on the upcoming bike network GIS layer update.
- Staff coordinated with the Ped/Bike Subcommittee TIP Workgroup and transmitted their recommendations encompassing new and revised Active Transportation TIP Evaluation Criteria (e.g. planning factors and Benefits Cost Analysis) to the Ped/Bike Subcommittee.
- Staff is working with the chair to coordinate a priority list for the Ped/Bike subcommittee, including revising the Active Transportation Plan.

3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee held their regularly quarterly meeting on July 8, 2021.
- Staff continues to conduct a monthly survey regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on regional transit providers. This survey will continue during the course of the pandemic.
- Due to the reduced service provided and funding used as a result of the pandemic. Ridership is slowly improving. One daily morning and evening run will be expanded to a second midday run in August primarily to service essential workers in the Texas Medical Center and Central Business District. Year 3 of the contract is slated to encompass Calendar 2022.
- Implementation of The Woodlands Township - Energy Corridor Commuter service is scheduled to start in February 2022. A contract will be developed between the Woodlands Township and H-GAC for the first year of service.
- An updated application of CMAQ Pilot service for the Fort Bend Transit -Houston Central Business District service was received in October. The project was approved by the Board of Directors on March 16, 2021. Documentation has been received and has was to be presented to Internal Audit for Pre-Award review in May 2021. However, due to delays in bus manufacturing, the project is delayed to August 2022.
- The City of Pearland Transit Feasibility Needs Assessment and Study has begun. Oriented towards its specific suburban needs and challenges with robust community engagement, it is schedule to last eighteen months. A presentation on the study was provided to TPC in June and TAC in July. The study will be conducted entirely in house. The first staff kickoff was held on July 7. The external Steering Committee is scheduled to meet in early August.
- Planning and implementation for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan is on-going. The regional transportation inventory and needs assessment are near completion, and a Gaps Analysis is ongoing. A Request for Proposals for assistance with a set of focus groups scheduled to take place in Fall 2021 has been released, and planning for outreach activities is near-complete, with a public survey and a set of virtual interactive events scheduled for July and August of 2021.
- 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 Regional Transit Connectivity Workgroup, consisting of transit agency representatives and other interested parties, has been formed to provide input to the overall program and last met on May 13, 2021 to finalize the Inter-Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This document is being finalized and will be distributed to regional transit agencies for signature. A separate Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between H-GAC and METRO regarding funding for this effort is also being processed.

4. North Houston Communities Transportation Priorities Plan

- Staff continued to work on the scope of work for procuring a consultant for this project.

C. TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Awareness campaigns surrounding Commute Solutions' Telework Week were conducted at the end of June.
- Media buys and advertising with local vendors for Tow and Go, Hurricane Preparedness, and the Regional Safety Campaign all launched in June and are in progress.
- Staff conducted two public meetings to discuss updates to the Title VI Environmental Justice Program and Unified Planning Work Program. Both were held on July 22nd.
- Staff began work on the 2021 Safety Report, the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, and Commute Solutions Month.

D. COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Staff held monthly coordination meetings with ConnectSmart team.
- Staff continues to meet with AECOM for telework planning coordination with area companies and local governments. There is still room to work with six more organizations.
- Staff began series of focus groups for Harris County to conduct SWOT analysis with several departments over several days.

E. CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continued to work with several ISD's in the Houston-Galveston region to replace older school buses.
- Staff continues to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses.
- Staff worked with several grant recipients to finalize contracts and complete invoicing.
- Staff continued to monitor grant recipient's usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- Participated in a variety of internal and external meetings and met with other local government agencies to discuss projects utilizing CMAQ funds.

F. GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Air Quality staff's Regional Bus Survey is underway. Staff is working to develop an inventory of all types of buses that operate within the H-GAC region. Staff has completed the collection of data and project work is continuing with the analysis and reporting portions of the effort. This work will continue through the remainder of the summer and it is anticipated that staff will complete analysis and consultation with stakeholders no later than end of Q3 2021. It is anticipated the results will help staff better understand how bus operations contribute to regional air quality as well as to help inform future emission reduction efforts

undertaken by the MPO. Staff is continuing to develop the annual Air Quality Initiatives Report for 2021.

- Staff continues to work with air quality staff from NCTCOG 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 members are continuing to hold meetings with ZEV stakeholders as well as reaching out directly to non-ZEV stakeholders who may have an interest in either all-electric or hydrogen technology. H-GAC staff continues work to reach additional stakeholders within the Southern portion of the corridor.
- Air quality staff has been developing emissions-related materials for the upcoming TIP Call for Projects. In the last month staff completed work on revising the air quality benefits cost analysis (AQBCA) spreadsheet for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Additional work has been completed on AQBCE spreadsheets for other project categories and staff will be available to assist as needed as the agency approaches the next TIP Call for Projects.
- H-GAC continues to assist with regional efforts to support the Department of Energy sponsored Houston-Galveston Clean Cities Coalition. Under this program, staff works 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. As part of this activity, staff continues to work to develop educational programs related to alternative fuel topics, development of an alternative fueling podcast, and outreach to stakeholder fleets within the H-GAC region to advise on alternative fuel transitions.
- Staff is continuing to administer two separate Environmental Protection Agency-funded Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grants to deploy all-electric yard tractors at local freight warehouses. With a completed contract in place for the IKEA project, IKEA has placed orders for project vehicles with final delivery and deployment anticipated within the next several months.

G. TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING

- Staff continues to provide travel demand modeling and GIS technical supports and assistances to support H-GAC's Regional Transportation Planning (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the 2020 Regional Air Quality conformity process, other H-GAC's planning work and to H-GAC's member agencies such as TxDOT and METRO, for their various corridor and sub-area transportation planning and studies. Staff continues to work with TxDOT to determine studies and uses for Streetlight data.
- Staff continues to provide Travel Demand Forecasting technical supports to various H-GAC member agencies in support for various corridor and sub-regional studies such as:
 - Working with the Consultant for both SE Harris County and Liberty County sub-area studies understand the current and future highway volumes
 - Worked on the EJ modeling analysis for the 2045 RTP environmental Justice document update

- Conducted modeling runs for the Pearland Transit Project
- PTV VISSIM/VISUM software testing
- Vision-Eval customization
- Liberty County demographic data analysis
- REMI software evaluation and the VE automated vehicle scenario discussions
- Staff worked on the following Air Quality Conformity related activities:
 - Worked on Conformity timeline
 - Participated in the review of the Greenhouse gas recommendations from UN-IPCC
 - Participated in the introduction to MOSERS (TTI) workshop
 - Participated in resolving modeling issues regarding the calculation of electric vehicles in MOVES model
 - Participated in Meeting, update on Electric Vehicles and its effects on Ozone
- Staff continued to text-run the H-GAC's newly developed Activity-Based-Model (ABM) model and the Truck model with the Cambridge Systematics (CS) Support Technicians in completing the validation and calibration of the two models.
- Staff continues to participate in discussion with the staff of the REMI model to discuss H-GAC's REMI model land Use parcel level results.
- Staff continues to develop highway networks as input for the AIMSUN Meso and Micro modeling for Montgomery County Precinct – 2 subarea study and for SE Harris County sub-area studies and continues to evaluate other modeling software with better Meso and Micro capabilities.
- Staff continued to work with the Steering Committee and the consultant for the Origin-Destination (O-D) On-board Transit Survey. RFP for the Survey scheduled to be released in August 2021 while the data collection is scheduled for the Spring of 2022. In coordination with the METRO, staff continues updating the Inter-local Government Agreement between H-GAC and METRO for the funding of the survey and to reflect the new survey data collection schedule of Spring 2022.
- Staff working with the City of Houston Airport staff to approve the Inter-Local Government Agreement (ILA) between and H-GAC and the City of Houston for the joint effort of the regional commercial airport (IAH & Hobby) ground access count travel survey. The ILA is now complete on the H-GAC's side but awaits the City of Houston's approval. Conference call meeting between the staff of the City and H-GAC was held on August 12th.
- Staff continues to update websites and data dashboards for various Subregional studies such as Montgomery County (Pct-2), Southeast Harris and Liberty Counties.
- Staff continues to provide mapping and GIS technical supports for:
 - a. Creating storyboard webpage to house all information/data for North Houston Communities planning project.
 - b. Creating GTFS feed for web mapping local transit agencies.
 - c. FHWA Multimodal Network Connectivity City of Sugar Land- Creating online interactive map, Storyboard, Dashboard for Ped/Bike study in Sugar Land.

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- d. Developing ped/bike regional bikeways online app/map on H-GAC website. Creating the templates for the following: Bikeway Layer, Amenities, Intersections, Permanent Structures, Signals, Parks, Playground Equipment to be used by H-GAC region.
- e. Safe Routes to School- Creating online interactive maps, Safe Route to School Layer, and storyboard. Developing the criteria for Safe Routes to School Layer.
- f. Mobility Master Plan City of Sugar Land- Providing GIS support with data and guidance in creation of new GIS Layers.