

9D. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

A. LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- The vision, goals, and priority areas were finalized by the study’s Steering Committee in January 2021. The first public meeting for the Southeast Harris County Subregional Study was held on April 15, 2021. Public comments were solicited through the new Engage H-GAC website – <https://engage.h-gac.com/> – through May 14, 2021. Stakeholder Meetings were held with Municipal and Civil, Public Safety, School and Residential, and Industrial Business groups on May 4th and 6th. The development of options to address safety, congestion, and mobility issues identified to date is underway.
- The first public meeting for the Liberty County Mobility Study was held on April 29, 2021. Public comments were solicited through the new Engage H-GAC website (<https://engage.h-gac.com/>) through May 14, 2021 and are currently being analyzed. A meeting was held with the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce on July 7, 2021 to discuss bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access and safety issues in the Cleveland area.
- The first Public Meeting for the Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Study was held on April 22, 2021. Public comments were solicited through the new Engage H-GAC website – <https://engage.h-gac.com/> – through May 14, 2021. The study analysis and the development of recommendations are underway.
- 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 Board of Directors has authorized H-GAC to negotiate a contract to assist with preparing the plan.
- 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.

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.
- A contract extension amendment with the City of Houston for Quick Clearance Crash Pilot Project was executed in June.
- The H-GAC Board approved a resolution to execute a contract with the City of Houston for the Tow and Go from October 2021 to May 2023.
- Staff has been working with the H-GAC Communications department on organizing tow operator training material for the Tow and Go program.
- The Safety Committee met on June 29th.
- 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 will be held on July 22nd.

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 continue 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 reviewed, 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 May 12th and June 9th. Staff also continue to coordinate the public review efforts for the proposed amendments to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.

TxDOT continued their series of presentations describing the scope of requested RTP amendments, including IH 10 West (Inner Katy), IH 610 W, SH 288, and SH 36A. The public review period for the amendments was from March 26, 2021 to April 28, 2021 with a [public meeting on April 8, 2021](#).

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](#).

8. Performance Measures

H-GAC is required to set regional performance targets for seven (7) Public Transportation Agency Safety measures: the number and rate of fatalities, injuries, safety events, and system reliability. Regional targets will be based on the target data from region's public transportation agencies. In the previous four months, H-GAC subcommittees reviewed the draft targets and made recommendations. In May, the draft targets were presented as informational items, and in June, the draft targets will be presented for action. Information related to the Public Transportation Agency Safety draft targets can be found in the [2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program, Appendix B – Draft Update on Transit Safety](#).

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 completed coordination efforts on the H-GAC 10-year Plan.

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.
- The Year 2 contract with the City of Conroe Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) Commuter Pilot Project was extended to December 31, 2021 from March 31, 2021. 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 are currently working on two public meetings to discuss updates to the Title VI Environmental Justice Program and Unified Planning Work Program. Both will be 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 celebrated Telework Week from June 21-25 by conducting an informative webinar including social media, newsletters, and recognition of Telework Champions.
- 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.
- Staff met with METRO for Emergency Ride Home Pilot Expansion Scope Review, June 15.
- Staff met with Baker Ripley to discuss commuter survey and partnership opportunities on June 16.
- Staff conducted a joint presentation with METRO Ridership for Chase Bank on June 29.

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 possible 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 NCTCOG to help them visualize their Streetlight Origin-Destination by Geography data for the placement of a hydrogen refueling station along IH 45 North.
 - Working with the Consultant for both SE Harris County and Liberty County sub-area studies understand the current and future highway volumes
- Staff worked on the following Air Quality Conformity related activities:
 - Worked on Conformity timeline and history of RTP amendments
 - Provided answers to public comments for air quality conformity
 - 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 for the data collection scheduled to be collected in 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.
- 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. Writing methodology for final report.
 - d. FHWA Multimodal Network Connectivity METRO- Pilot joint project with METRO creating online interactive maps, Storyboard, Dashboard of ped/bike studies, Route Directness Index. Writing methodology for final report.
 - e. 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.
 - f. Safe Routes to School- Creating online interactive maps, Safe Route to School Layer, and storyboard. Developing the criteria for Safe Routes to School Layer.
 - g. Mobility Master Plan City of Sugar Land- Providing GIS support with data and guidance in creation of new GIS Layers.