

12C. 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
- The Liberty County Mobility Study has been completed. For more information visit: 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 the study's recommendations was made at the Greater Magnolia Chamber luncheon on February 23, 2022. For more information visit: 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 6th 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
- 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 10th, 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 June 17, 2023.
- 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 June 29, 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 July 13, 2023.
- Interviewed by Houston Landing on Hurricane Evacuation.
- Interviewed by Houston Chronicle with Hazard Material Crashes.
- Staff met with Kimley-Horn and Associates Staff and the City of Houston to discuss the Intersection Safety Pilot Training and a safety audit of Crosstimbers.
- Staff attended weekly Statewide TIM Calls during June and July.
- Tow and Go performed 3,580 "No Cost Tows" in June 2023. Average Clearance Times was 15 minutes and 13 seconds.
- In May 2023, the 8-county region experienced 58 traffic fatalities based on data from TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS), which was an 8% decrease when compared to 2022 which recorded 63 fatalities.
- In May 2023, the 8-county region experienced 335 Serious Injuries based on data from TxDOT CRIS, which was a 13% decrease when compared to May 2022 which recorded 385 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 continue to follow local Environmental Justice news as it relates to the Title VI Nondiscrimination Program and the update to the regional Title VI/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.
- Work is ongoing towards the update of the Language Access Plan (LAP). The LAP specifies the policies and strategies the agency will utilize to enable individuals who do not speak the English language proficiently to participate in agency programs and activities in their language of choice.

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 coordinated with thirty-five (35) local government sponsors to create forty-one (41) letters of support for forty-seven (47) project applications to TxDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program Call. The TA Program provides funding to plan for and construct a variety of alternative transportation projects that improve safety and mobility for non-motorized travelers.
- Staff is continuing its work with H-GAC subcommittees for review, input, and recommendations of the pavement and bridge performance measures and target setting. Reporting of progress and setting future targets was approved by the TAC on July 19 and will be considered for approval by the TPC on July 28 to meet the federal August 9th deadline.

2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Staff are continuing to work with the Data Analytics department to update the Regional Bike Network Map. Data is being incorporated from the City of Houston to test the new attributes.
- The RFP for Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept, is planned for release in early July. Staff is coordinating with Procurement on preparing RFP and pre-proposal conference.
- Staff received a draft Advanced Funding Agreement for the Ped Bike Bundles and is preparing feedback.
- Sr. Planner, Shirley Li's last day occurred in late June. She will be moving to Austin.
- Interviews were conducted for the Principal Planner position for active transportation.
- The Bay Area Ped Bike study contract was executed with Halff Associates so work can begin in July.
- The Pedestrian and Bicyclist Subcommittee's next meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2023.

3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee met on July 13, 2023.
- The RFP for the US 90A Corridor Transit Study closed on June 22 and the consultant evaluation/selection process is underway.
- The RFP for the Dayton Transit Study closed on June 15 and the consultant evaluation/selection process is underway.
- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis is underway. A draft of service alternatives is expected by early Fall 2023.
- Staff are working with Metro and regional partners to begin implementation of the Regional Transit Connectivity Project. Initial Assessments are now complete and agencies that have not already done so are moving forward to create interlocal agreements with Metro.
- Staff are working to update elements of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, most notably the Transit Need Index.
- Staff discussed contract closeout procedures concerning 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.
- An application for on-demand Microtransit services in the City of Sugar Land was received in late May 2023 under the Call for Partners for the Commuter and Transit Pilot Program and is under evaluation.
- An updated application from Fort Bend Transit for Downtown Houston should allow service to begin as early as January 2024.

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Planning for the following projects is currently underway or were completed recently:
 - Tow & Go – Media Buying
 - Commute Solutions
 - Bay Area Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety
 - Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions attended the Gulf Coast Symposium on HR Issues, hosted by HR Houston. Our team participated in the exhibition hall and had the opportunity to present two speaker sessions on “Making Flexible Work, Work for Everyone.”
- Commute Solutions is preparing for Commute Solutions Month. Our team is securing presenters for a speaker series that will be held once a week throughout the duration of the month.
- Commute Solutions finalized the Oncology Consultants case study. The case study will be shared with executive leadership at Oncology Consultants.
- Commute Solutions revamped the [telework resource section](#) on yourcommutesolution.org. Organizations now have access to free self-implementation documents that can be used when implementing a telework or hybrid work model.
- Commute Solutions and ConnectSmart are working to establish a “mega carpooling group” that serves the employees traveling to the Energy Corridor.
- Commute Solutions and Love to Ride met with the Bike the Gulf steering committee to announce the upcoming Biketober campaign.

- Commute Solutions' project with AECOM is set to begin with the purpose of evaluating and delivering recommendations that will shape the future of the Commute Solutions program.
- Commute Solutions and Workforce Solutions will collaborate to assess the transportation needs of applicants at a series of job recruiting events. The results will be used to proposed benefits that would make commuting to their workplace easier for their personnel.
- Commute Solutions is working with ConnectSmart to celebrate its anniversary. September will be one year since Metropia launched the region's premier trip planning and ride matching application.

CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continued 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 has met with peer organizations working on vehicle replacement from several other regions. Staff is also working to reach out to vehicle and electric vehicle charging equipment manufacturers to discuss Buy America requirements and the availability of compliant equipment. This work is ongoing.
- 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. Cy Fair ISD received an order of ten new battery electric school buses to replace existing models that were funded through the Clean Vehicles Program. It is anticipated that the invoicing and reporting process will begin in August.
- 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.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff completed development of a regional application for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program (CPRG) with project partners from City of Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County, along with other regional stakeholders. This application was submitted to EPA on May 30. This four-year program will bring \$1 million in planning funds to our region to help develop greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans for the nine-county Houston-The Woodlands-Sugarland Metropolitan Statistical Area. The results of these efforts will enable our region to apply for an anticipated \$4.6075 billion in grants as part of a later stage of this program. Staff has not yet been informed of the success of the application, however a positive response on this noncompetitive award is anticipated within one to two months.
- Staff held a meeting of the Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee (RAQPAC) on June 29th. This month's meeting included updates on agency activities from EPA, TCEQ, and the TERP

program as well as an update on regional air quality. Attendees also received a wrap-up update regarding the 88th session of the Texas Legislature by Philip Martin of the Environmental Defense Fund.

- 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 participated in a redesignation webinar that included staff from the Department of Energy's Clean Cities Program as well as support from regional stakeholders. Staff is proud to report that the Coalition's bid for redesignation was successful. Finally, staff is working to prepare for future events that will occur throughout the remainder of the year.
- 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 support to support the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), Air Quality and Conformity determination, and other traffic and travel related data developments and modeling supports.
- Staff continues to provide on-going travel demand and forecasting support to other in-house and outside H-GAC planning processes that includes sub-regional and corridor studies such the 10+ alternatives model runs for the Gulf Fwy PEL Study, call for Projects, development of the Regional Goods Movement (RGM) projects for 2023, 2030 and 2045 scenario year alternatives, the Pearland Transit Needs Assessments, etc.
- Staff continues to provide support in response to the TCEQ comments regarding the 2023 Air Quality conformity analysis, etc.
- Staff concluded the Origin-Destination Survey, received deliverables and issued a closeout letter to contractor that concludes the project, continues to follow-up TxDOT TP&P Project Manager for the on-going Household Survey within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization region, plan to give a status update of the survey in the September H-GAC TAC meeting, had a kick-off meeting with the contractor of the Airport Ground Access Survey, continues developing and reviewing the plans and scope of work to further refine a draft scope of work for the upcoming Bicycle and Pedestrian and other Active Transportation Survey.
- Staff continued to coordinate with Prime contractor (C.J Hench) for H-GAC on-going traffic count project on off-State system, continues to coordinate with TxDOT to better understand the big data

(Replica, Wejo, and Inrix) data purchased for Texas, continues working to collect data for the development of the Volpe RDR resiliency tool for the Activity-Based-Model (ABM), and continues model testing and development of the ABM by conducting modeling validation of the ABM and the TDM models.

- Staff assisted the Transportation Department in the review of the congestion analysis along the US 90
- Staff just started reviewing the 5000 zones of the eight-county regional modeling network in an effort to split the Traffic Analysis Zones for better trip distribution.