

11C. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Strategies and recommendations are under development for the Southeast Harris County Subregional Study. The Steering Committee will provide input on the initial round of recommendation at the next meetings January 25 and 26, 2022.
- Analysis and refinement of initial recommendations for the Liberty County Mobility Study are underway. H-GAC and consultant staff met with the Liberty County Judge and County Engineer on December 6, 2021 to seek feedback on some of these initial recommendations. Individual meetings with the cities of Cleveland, Dayton and Liberty are also planned. A second round of public involvement to present these recommendations to the public will occur in early 2022.
- Draft study recommendations were developed for the Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Study. The next Steering Committee will be held in February.
- Staff are developing methodology for a Transit-Oriented Development analysis of the 8-County H-GAC region.
- H-GAC staff are developing a scope of work for a regional Connected and Automated Vehicle Strategy.

2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting was conducted on January 13, 2022. The committee's next meeting will be on March 3, 2022.
- The second Steering Committee meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan update is scheduled for February 24, 2022. The first public meeting is scheduled for the end of March.

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.
- Staff and the consultant made site visits to intersections in Fort Bend County to perform Intersection Safety Assessments. Staff and the consultant also coordinated with Waller County staff to make intersection safe audits.
- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as "Pay the Price" is continuing through the August 31, 2022.
- The quick clearance pilot project with the City of Houston is continuing. The program is investigating removing minor crashes requiring a tow truck to remove the autos with by an officer at Houston TranStar.

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- An agreement was developed in coordination with Harris County to continue to fund the Tow and Go Program in Harris County.
- The Intersection Safety Assessment Contract has reviewed intersections in Fort Bend, Waller and Chambers County. Reports have been drafted on recommended safety improvements for those three Counties.
- Two SHRP2 Traffic Incident Management Trainings for First Responders were held December 21, 2021.
- Two SHRP2 Traffic Incident Management Trainings for first Responders are scheduled for January 24, 2022.
- The H-GAC Board of Directors approved funding for Tow and Go™ Public Outreach Campaign in December.
- The H-GAC Board of Directors approved funding for Hurricane Preparedness Public Outreach Campaign in January.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff is developing a worksheet to assess and document the environmental justice issues associated with proposed transportation projects and planning decisions. The worksheet is part of the initiative to integrate Title VI and environmental justice requirements in the planning process and will ensure that non-discrimination and equity issues are examined and understood prior to TAC and TPC consideration.
- Staff is 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 tool on those studies.
- Staff is continuing work on an update to the regional Environmental Justice study.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff began development of a Low Impact Development tool 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-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.

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- Staff worked on the scope of work, outreach activities, and schedule for the development of the update of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Staff facilitated a monthly RTP Subcommittee Meeting on January 19, 2022.
- Staff are developing an initial poll to kick-start public involvement and outreach for the next RTP update.

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 reported monthly from transit agencies within 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.

- **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 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 and bicycle and public transportation projects over the course of the fiscal year 2020. H-GAC staff developed 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 updated data on H-GAC website for Mobile Counters program. Staff processed requests for Ped/Bike counter data.
- Staff completed winter maintenance on the permanent Ped/Bike counters.
- Staff continued to work with the America Bicycle Education Association to track the online safety course called CyclingSavvy. Staff continued to develop a marketing plan for the online course and collaborate with the American Bicycle Education Association to identify potential in-person bike handling courses. Bicycle Friendly Driver presentations in Waller and Liberty Counties are being scheduled.

- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) workgroup, and Texas Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Staff is starting the process to procure a consultant to revise the 2045 Active Transportation Plan.
- Staff has scheduled kick-off meetings in January for Ped/Bike Subcommittee workgroups to revise the regional bike network GIS data and to develop an active transportation focused travel demand modeling solution. Staff coordinated internally to develop a SharePoint site for the subcommittee workgroups.
- Staff continued to collaborate with project sponsors to develop schedules and general project planning regarding UPWP approved active transportation projects.
- Staff continued to work across departments to plan active transportation focused regional air quality model.
- Staff continued procurement process of new bike/pedestrian counters. Staff continued coordination with communities and internal planning for the expansion of the counter program.

3. Transit Planning

- Staff planned for the next meeting of Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee to be held on January 13, 2022.
- Staff continued to refine the scope of work for the feasibility studies of the High-Capacity Transit Plan. This effort is envisioned to consist of individual studies of corridors and service concepts recommended by the High-Capacity Transit Priority Network.
- The City of Pearland Transit Feasibility Needs Assessment and Study is underway. The project will focus on specific suburban transit needs and challenges with robust community engagement. The website and Engage Houston community outreach sites for the study are being developed. A Working Paper on existing conditions is being developed
- Staff coordinated with the City of Dayton to develop a Transit Study in the Liberty County community with regional implication as well as local significance. A scope of work is under development along with continuing meeting with the City of Dayton.
- A fourth year of the Conroe Commuter Pilot project was approved by TxDOT to continue Park and Ride service with Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic an additional year for the pilot project was deemed warranted. The contract extension is being developed.
- The Woodlands – Energy Corridor contract for the first suburb to suburb commuter service in the Houston-Galveston Region was approved and executed by The Woodlands Township. Service began on January 4, 2022 with service to the Energy Corridor.
- A draft of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan 2022 update has been completed, and a 30-day public comment period is underway. A series of virtual open houses, taking

place in January 2022, will provide the public an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the draft plan.

- 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. Language for Inter-Local Agreements between METRO, H-GAC, and the other transit providers in the region is currently being finalized, and initial assessments to determine agencies' need and capacity will begin once that Interlocal Agreement with METRO is finalized.

- **TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH**

- Staff began preparations to launch an outreach campaign for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update and TIP 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Update and Performance Measures.
- The January edition of the Region View newsletter was prepared and distributed.
- Staff are currently conducting a series of three public meetings during the month of January to gain feedback on the recently updated Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP).

- **COMMUTE SOLUTIONS**

- Staff held monthly coordination meeting with TxDOT's ConnectSmart team.
- Staff continued to meet with AECOM (contractor) for telework planning coordination with area companies and local governments.
- Staff completed telework training sessions with the Harris County Judges Office.
- Staff met with NASA Space Center and ConnectSmart to move forward with next steps in promoting the ConnectSmart App at the NASA campus.
- Staff is working with the H-GAC Communications and Marketing to create a Commute Solutions video to air in mid-January 2022.
- Staff is coordinating with H-GAC internal GIS team, AECOM & Urban Trans (contractors) for the creation and implementation of an 8-county region employer survey to launch in February 2022.
- Staff met with University of Houston transportation manager to discuss commuter program plans for students and staff in 2022.
- Staff solidified a new Commute Solutions Partnership with Greater Northside Management District.

- **CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- During last month, staff continues to work with several ISD's in the Houston-Galveston region to replace older school buses. An application was received from Rice University for a new electric bus. Staff continued to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses.
- Staff continues to examine and develop the needed parameters to establish an electric charging infrastructure component to the Clean Vehicles Program. Staff worked on creating a new application specifically for electric vehicle chargers.
- Staff continued to monitor grant recipient's usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- 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. Staff met with TxDOT and discussed electric vehicles and charging stations as projects for CMAQ funding.
- Staff met with representatives from Lion Electric to hear about their new buses and discuss working together on potential projects.

- **GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee (RAQPAC) meeting was held on December 9, 2021 and included presentations about a project to assess community health impacts at Port of Houston, an update on the Harris County Community Air Monitoring Program and an overview of air quality related aspects of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- Staff continued to work with air quality team from the North Central Texas Council of Governments 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 are continuing to hold meetings with stakeholders who may have an interest in either all-electric or hydrogen technology.
- 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. In addition to the usual efforts to develop educational programs related to alternative fuel topics. This month, Clean Cities Staff are preparing to administer the annual alternative vehicle survey which will be sent out to coalition stakeholders prior to the end of January.

- Staff is continuing 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 has been working with IKEA to replace two existing diesel yard tractors at their Baytown facility with all-electric models. IKEA is currently installing EV charging equipment to facilitate the vehicle purchases and it is anticipated that the entire project will be completed by the end of 2022. For the 2019 DERA project, staff is working with new project partner, Hirschbach Motor Lines. Staff is continuing to develop contracting materials to support this project. The project is anticipated to begin in Spring 2022.
- Staff is working with representatives from the South-Central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource to develop a workshop for local governments to discuss transportation and energy resiliency in our region. This workshop will focus on vehicle electrification and issues related to equity of the upcoming transition as well as how vehicle electrification can help improve energy efficiency. Anticipated speakers at this roundtable include Dr. Bruce Race from University of Houston and Chris George from EVolve Houston. This workshop will be held on April 14, 2022. Further details will be available in future updates.
- **TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING**
 - Staff continued to provide travel demand modeling and GIS technical support for the RTP, TIP, the Regional Air Quality conformity process, and other H-GAC's planning studies. Staff continues to enhance the capabilities of the website for RTP Viewing that assists H-GAC's member agencies to view their various corridor and sub-area transportation planning and studies. Staff continues to work with TxDOT to utilize Streetlight data.
 - Staff continued to enhance the H-GAC's Activity-Based Model (ABM) and the truck models to a newer base year with updated data.
 - Staff continued to develop the AIMSUN Meso and Micro- modeling for the three sub-areas: Montgomery County, SE Harris and Liberty Counties studies, and continued to evaluate other modeling software with better Meso and Micro capabilities such as the Dynus-T (Meso modeling) and the Vissim (Micro modeling).
 - Staff continued to work with a Steering Committee for the Transit On-board Origin-Destination (O-D) Transit Survey. The survey is anticipated to begin by February 2022.
 - Staff working with the City of Houston (Airport staff) for the joint effort of the regional commercial airports (IAH & Hobby) ground access count to the airport. The survey data collection is scheduled for Fall of 2022. Scope of work and RFP are under development.
 - Staff continued to process INRIX speed data in relation to the H-GAC traffic count project.

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- Staff updated the Regional Economic Model using REMI software.
- Staff continued to develop emission factors and coordinated with Conformity Partners on the Air Quality Conformity Process.