

9. TRANSPORTATION AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY STATUS UPDATE

BACKGROUND

H-GAC is required to ensure that the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and amendments thereto are consistent with the region's air quality goals. This determination is referred to as Air Quality Conformity and involves the modeling of emissions produced by vehicles within the 8-county Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) Nonattainment Area.

The current transportation conformity determination for the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria region received federal approval on November 4, 2022. However, every four years the Houston-Galveston Metropolitan Planning Organization is required to adopt a new Regional Transportation Plan, and each new RTP requires a new conformity determination. The Transportation Policy Council adopted the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan in April 2019, and the federally-approved conformity determination for that RTP expired on August 2, 2023. Since that time, H-GAC staff have been working with the conformity consultation partners to reach adoption of the conformity determination.

CURRENT SITUATION

A new conformity determination was approved by the Transportation Policy Council on April 23, 2023, as part of adopting the 2045 RTP Update. This conformity analysis for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Update demonstrated compliance to the latest motor vehicle emissions budgets identified for the HGB region in the air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the 2008 8-hr Ozone Standard.

This conformity determination was submitted to FHWA and the H-GAC conformity consultation partners on May 1, 2023. During this time, H-GAC staff worked to respond to corrections and clarifications requested by the consultative partners. Staff received final concurrence from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on November 1, 2023.

With this concurrence, our region's conformity lapse grace period has ended.

ACTION

For discussion and possible action.