

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/>.
- The Steering Committee for the Liberty County Mobility Study met on September 7, 2021 to review and provide feedback on initial recommendations. Analysis and refinement of these initial recommendations are currently underway.
- H-GAC staff updated the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce on the progress of the Liberty County Mobility Study at the Chamber's luncheon meeting on October 7, 2021.
- The study analysis and the 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.
- H-GAC staff are developing a scope of work for a regional Connected and Automated Vehicle Strategy.

2. Freight Planning

- The kick-off meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan update was held in September 2021. Staff are working with the consultant team to develop the Steering Committee and Stakeholder Committee membership and schedule.
- Staff held the Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting on September 23, 2021. The meeting program centered around freight safety, including presentations on the following topics: H-GAC's State of Safety Report, Safety Leadership, Professional Driver's View of Safety, and Technology Improvements to Increase Safer.

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 2021 Zip-Zone and Hurricane Preparedness Campaign is continuing thru the end of November.
- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as "Pay the Price" is continuing.

- The quick clearance pilot project with the City of Houston was restarted in late August. The program is investigating removing minor crashes requiring a tow truck to remove the autos with by an officer at Houston TranStar.
- Staff held virtual Traffic Incident Management Meeting.
- Next Tow and Go Contract with City of Houston was executed.
- Staff with working with the Texas Department of Transportation on the next Advance Funding Agreement for the Tow and Go Program.
- Board approve was received to enter in the next Tow and Go Contract.
- Staff is working on the agenda for Transportation Safety Committee scheduled for the end of October.

4. Environmental Planning

- 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 consultants working on local Planning and Environmental Linkages studies, to examine how the Ecological tool can assist their efforts.
- Staff completed the 2021 update to the H-GAC Title VI Program. The updated program was approved by the TAC\TPC as well as by the H-GAC Board of Directors and has been submitted to the FTA.
- Staff is continuing work on an update to the regional Environmental Justice study.

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, with project completion anticipated for October 2021.
- 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)

Staff worked on the scope of work, outreach activities, and schedule for the development of the next Regional Transportation Plan. Staff coordinated and presented to the RTP Subcommittee.

Staff are developing an initial survey to kick-start public involvement and outreach for the next RTP update.

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.

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 worked on the development of project selection criteria 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 develops 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 is working towards procurement of new mobile and permanent ped/bike counters.
- Staff continues to work with the America Bicycle Education Association to track the online safety course called CyclingSavvy. Staff is coordinating with Communications to develop a marketing plan for the online course.
- Staff continues collaborating with the American Bicycle Education Association to identify potential in-person bike handling courses.
- Staff is coordinating Bicycle Friendly Driver presentations in Waller County.
- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee and Texas Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Staff has been working on materials for the Ped/Bike Subcommittee scheduled for October 2021.

- Staff is coordinating with Ped/Bike Subcommittee to revise the 2045 Active Transportation Plan.
- Staff is coordinating with the Ped/Bike Subcommittee to update the regional bicycle network GIS layer.
- Staff has been providing recommendations and additional analysis as requested by TIP Subcommittee regarding the Active Transportation TIP Evaluation Criteria.
- Staff is collaborating with project sponsors to develop schedules and general project planning regarding UPWP approved active transportation projects.

3. Transit Planning

- Staff prepared materials for the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee on October 14, 2021.
- Staff continued 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.
- H-GAC staff met with staff from METRO, TxDOT, Fort Bend County Transit, Harris County Transit and the Gulf Coast Rail District on September 27, 2021 to discuss potential projects and a timeline for the High Capacity Transit Task Force Phase II effort.
- 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. A Steering Committee meeting was held on September 28 in which the background, scope, goals and objectives and next steps were discussed. A Project Engagement Committee will also be formed.
- 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.
- Planning and implementation for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan is ongoing. The regional transportation inventory and needs assessment are near completion, and a Gaps Analysis is ongoing. Phase I outreach, including a set of virtual interactive outreach events and public survey, has been completed and the results have been analyzed. Phase II outreach, including a set of eight focus groups, will take place in the last two weeks of October.
- 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 Inter-Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding this effort is awaiting signature by H-GAC and METRO. The MOU has been signed by all of the region's other transit providers. A separate Intergovernmental Agreement between H-GAC and METRO regarding funding for this effort has been signed and executed.

C. TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Media buys and advertising with local vendors for Hurricane Preparedness and the Regional Safety Campaign all launched during the summer months and are currently in progress.
- Staff are currently conducting a series of focus groups to gain feedback on transit needs for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) update. There will be a total of six focus groups ending by the end of this month.

D. COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Staff and regional partners kicked-off Commute Solutions Month's 27th year to celebrate the efforts and successes of the program.
- Staff held monthly coordination meeting with TxDOT's ConnectSmart team.
- Staff continues to meet with AECOM for telework planning coordination with area companies and local governments.
- Staff is planning telework training for the Harris County Judges Office to prepare for telework policy implementation.
- Staff met with the Wisconsin DOT, the Council of Governments for the Washington D.C. area, and Commuter program for South Florida to learn more about their Emergency Ride Home Programs and how they are working with Lyft and Uber to provide services.
- Staff met with Love to Ride to learn more about that program that focuses on behavior change in relation to increasing bicycle ridership.
- Staff met with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County to discuss Emergency Ride Home program and ideas from various MPOs working with Lyft or Uber, etc.
- Staff met with the Port of Galveston to plan for virtual company-wide Lunch n Learn.
- Staff completed the University of Houston Downtown Student Commute Survey with a total of 68 survey responses.

E. 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.
- Staff continues to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses.
- 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 CMAQ funds.
- Staff met with Clipper Creek a manufacturer of electric chargers to hear about their product and to access the likelihood of working with the Clean Vehicles Program.

- Staff met with the Communications Department to assist with the coordination of outreach and marketing activities for the new CSJ 643.

F. GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- During the last month, staff requested approval of this year's PM2.5 Path Forward Report from RAQAPC. This annual report shows the region's efforts to voluntarily reduce PM2.5 emissions within our region. This report was approved by RAQPAC and will be submitted to EPA as fulfillment of our region's participation in the PM Advance Program. The final report can be found [here](#) and will be submitted to EPA in October.
- 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 developing the analysis and final report. Work on this report should be completed within the next month.
- 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.
- H-GAC continues to work on 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. In addition to the usual efforts to develop educational programs related to alternative fuel topics, this month staff interviewed Chris Powers from Houston Biodiesel for the Fuel for Thought Podcast and this episode should be available for listening soon.
- 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. After previous delays, staff is working with IKEA to request a grant extension from EPA as well as to explore OEM alternatives with IKEA. It is anticipated that this project will wrap up by the end of 2022. Staff is working with a new project partner, Hirschbach Motor Lines, and are currently seeking H-GAC Board of Directors approval to enter into a contract with Hirschbach.
- Staff is working with representatives from the South-Central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource (SPEER) to develop a roundtable to discuss transportation and energy resiliency in our region. This workshop will be held on April 14, 2022.

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 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 member agencies consultants on modeling needs for the three sub-area studies, assists periodically with the ongoing development of the regional Activity Based Model.
- Staff continued to test-run the H-GAC's newly developed Activity-Based model and the Truck model with new available data.
- Staff continued to develop highway networks as input for the AIMSUN Meso and Micro modeling for three sub-areas: Montgomery County, SE Harris and Liberty Counties studies, and continues to evaluate other modeling software with better Meso and Micro capabilities.
- Staff continued to work with the Steering Committee and in partnership with METRO and the consultant for the Origin-Destination (O-D) On-board Transit Survey; the evaluations of the responses to the RFP from potential contractors are on-going. The actual data collection will be conducted in Spring of 2022.
- Staff working with the City of Houston Airport staff for the joint effort of the regional commercial airport (IAH & Hobby) ground access count to the airport surveys. Scope of work continues to be under development while the actual data collection is scheduled for Summer of 2022.
- Staff continued to update websites and data dashboards for various Sub-regional studies such as Montgomery County (Precinct-2) and Southeast Harris and Liberty Counties.
- Staff continues to process INRIX speed data in relation to the H-GAC traffic count project and updating the regional economic model using REMI software.