

5A. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan study began July 1, 2023. The study team has developed a draft alternative to be presented at the January 30, 2024, Steering Committee meeting.
- Washington Avenue Corridor study began October 1, 2023. The study kick-off meeting was held in December. The first Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for February 2024.
- Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The first Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for March 2024.
- FM 518 Corridor study began November 1, 2023. The first Steering Committee was held January 23. This meeting was a joint meeting with the Pearland Mobility Study.
- Pearland Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The first Steering Committee will be held January 23. This meeting was a joint meeting with the FM 518 Corridor Study.
- Cemetery Road Corridor study scope of work development is currently underway. The project is scheduled to begin Spring 2024.
- Friendswood's Parkway Corridor study is currently being procured. This project is included in the 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2024.

2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee (GHFC) meeting was held on October 16, 2023. The next meeting is scheduled for February 2024.
- The 2023 Regional Goods Movement Plan (RGMP) has ended. The next step is to present the study findings to TPC at the February 2024 meetings, with the final adoption of the plan by TPC in February 2024. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- 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. Two groups have been developed as working groups of HART.
- The Grants Group was developed in June 2023 to assess the readiness of regional partners for upcoming grant submittals and provide letters of support to demonstrate regional support for projects. From July 2023 to December 2023, the priority list representing the regional issues seen at grade crossings was submitted to TxDOT for inclusion into their Phase 2 Rail Study.
- The Unfunded Needs Group was developed in September 2023 to identify unfunded regional needs and align the region for future Rail Relocation Funds. From September 2023 to December 2023, the unfunded needs group began discussing the methodology and criteria needed to begin the assessment.
- The HART working group meets monthly following TPC. H-GAC staff continues to provide meeting support and regional coordination. The next meeting is planned for February 23, 2024.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- H-GAC 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 February 1, 2024, at Houston TranStar.
- H-GAC staff conducted a Traffic Incident Management meeting at Houston TranStar. The meeting had representatives from TxDOT, HCSO, HPD, AECOM, Hazmat, SH288 and the Towing Industry on February 5, 2024.
- H-GAC staff conducted a Traffic Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) subcommittee meeting virtually on February 8, 2024.
- HGAC Staff conducted a co-applicant meeting on the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant to provide an updated status of the grant and answer questions.
- H-GAC staff attended weekly Statewide TIM calls.
- Media Buys were input into the H-GAC procurement system to start the Tow and Go Public Awareness Campaign.
- An amendment was executed with the contract with the City of Houston to expended uncommitted funds on CSJ 0912-00-558.
- An amendment was executed with the contract with the Harris County to expended uncommitted funds on CSJ 0912-00-556.
- An item to conduct a Hurricane Preparedness and Awareness Campaign for 2024 will be on the February H-GAC Board Consent Agenda.
- H-GAC staff worked on executing a contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates for the Regional Intelligent Transportation (ITS) Architecture and Website.
- "Tow and Go" performed 2,689 "No Cost Tows" in January 2024. January's average clearance time was 15 minutes and 39 seconds.
- In January 2024, early results for the 8-county region reported 39 traffic fatalities based on data from the TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS) generated the first week of February 2024, which is a 40% decrease when compared to 2023 which recorded 65 traffic fatalities for January.
- In January 2024, early results for the 8-county region had 220 Serious Injuries based on data from the TxDOT CRIS, which was a 41% decrease when compared to 2023 which had 375 Serious Injuries.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff are updating the land use\landcover base map of the Eco-Logical tool based on recent aerial photography. Further enhancement of the tool will include links to existing environmental assessment and final environmental impact statements for roadway projects within the planning H-GAC region. 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 they relate to the H-GAC Title VI Nondiscrimination Program and will inform the triennial update to the regional Title VI Program Update and report on activities in furtherance of Environmental Justice.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff submitted a Planning Grant application for a Regional Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan through the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program submitted in August 2023. <https://www.h-gac.com/resiliency-planning>
- Staff coordinated letters of support for regional partners PROTECT Grant Program applications.
- 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

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) subcommittee provides guidance and oversees the progress of the RTP. The committee must meet quorum and meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month.
- The 2045 RTP Update was approved by TPC in April 2023. The final report and 33 associated appendixes are available online: <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate>
- Staff and the RTP Subcommittee are developing the RTP Project Development Process, which will evaluate projects submitted for inclusion on the RTP Fiscally Constrained List.
 - RTP Subcommittee Meeting on 11/8/23 - Vote for approval
 - TAC and TPC in January for informational purposes, February for approval

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.
- Work is ongoing towards the update of the Language Access Plan (LAP). The Language Access Plan identifies the language needs in the minority population and specifies policies and strategies the agency will employ to enable individuals who do not speak English proficiently to enjoy meaningful participation in agency programs and activities. Efforts to update the LAP includes a survey to gather information about regional language use and factors that impact the level of public involvement in agency activities. Other related activities include the community roundtables which are aimed at opening a dialogue with advocates, representatives, and members of the different racial and ethnic minority groups and other underserved populations in the greater Houston metropolitan region, to help H-GAC understand how best to engage with these communities and encourage their participation in the civic planning decision-making that affect their lives, health, and environment. Information gathered will assist the update to the Language Access Plan (LAP) and the triennial update to the H-GAC Title VI Plan. The community

roundtable events will commence in February with meetings with the Korean Community and Chinese Communities. The roundtables will continue through March 2024.

- Staff are beginning the planning process for a February 2024 webinar event commemorating the anniversaries of the passage of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The webinar is presented under the Title VI and Environmental Justice Awareness Initiative with a goal to event will educate staff and stakeholders on vital Title VI/Equity issues relevant to MPOs, municipalities, and other recipients of federal financial assistance.

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 completed the project selection process for the Carryover Balance projects. These are projects that can be ready for implementation within the next 2 years. The effort included the selection of over \$335 M in surface transportation projects identified for project development activities and construction. Over the spring, staff will work to program these projects into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Staff completed and the TPC approved projects for the Regional Goods Movement investment criteria. Over \$150M in regional projects that encourage the safe and efficient movement of goods in the region. These projects will be submitted into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program in the Spring of 2024.
- 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 2022. 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 are continuing to work with the Data Analytics department to update the Regional Bike Network Map. Larger communities that have submitted their data are now live on the Regional Bike Network map.
- The consultant selection process for the Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept study continues with initial Board expected in January 2024.
- The scope of work was refined for the Memorial Drive study as it enters the procurement process for consultant selection.

- The scope of work was refined for the City of Friendswood Master Trails plan as it enters the procurement process for consultant selection.
- The Bay Area Ped Bike study is underway. The existing conditions report is nearing completion and work has begun on a prioritization framework. A series of focus groups for key stakeholders will be held in late winter or early spring.
- Staff attended various meetings such as the City of Houston Bicycle Advisory Committees, Texas Pedestrian Coalition, Houston Safety Task Force, etc.
- Staff worked with Procurement to publish a request for proposal for counter installation work, it is expected to close on January 11th. Once it is closed H-GAC will coordinate with partners to complete the work in the RFP based on the responses received.

3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee held a Special Call meeting on February 1, 2024. The Subcommittee's next regularly-scheduled meeting is April 11, 2024.
- The contract for the US 90A Corridor Transit Study is currently circulating for signatures. An update on the status of the study was given to the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors on February 13, 2024.
- The RFP for the Dayton Transit Study closed on June 15, 2023, and negotiations for a finalized contract are underway with the selected consultants.
- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis was completed and is under review by the Steering Committee. We are extending our review of alternatives to examine additional options for delivering transit service based on feedback from the City of Pearland.
- Community public meetings on the Pearland Service Alternatives are scheduled for the third week of March 2024.
- An extension was received for CSJ 476. This extended funding agreement between TXDOT and H-GAC will allow for a third year of the Woodlands to Energy Corridor District pilot transit project, as well as the first year of the Fort Bend Transit to Houston Downtown commuter service pilot.
- Staff are preparing to take the City of Sugar Land Microtransit pilot project to the H-GAC board of directors in February 2024 for funding approval.
- Staff are working with METRO and regional transit partners to continue implementation of the Regional Transit Connectivity Project. Harris County Transit and Fort Bend Transit have gone live with Mobile Ticketing under the new partnership project. An amendment to the MOU which governs the project is being developed, to account for the additional funds allocated to the project by the Transportation Policy Council.
- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee has approved a new methodology for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan's Transit Need Index. Staff will work to implement the new methodology starting in January 2024.
- Data collection for Transit Asset Management performance measures is underway. Staff have contacted all agencies & have updated plans from all agencies except Fort Bend Transit. Staff plan to begin present the results to internal subcommittees beginning in February.

- Planning for the following projects is currently underway or were completed recently:
 - Tow & Go – Media Buying
 - Commute Solutions
 - Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II
 - Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan
 - Air Quality – Climate Change Engagement for MPO's Collar Counties
 - Title VI – Connecting Communities
 - Language Access Plan Update
 - Best Workplaces for Commuters
 - MPO 50th Anniversary

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions continues to work with the procurement and contacts team to begin working on the development of a shared data agreement between UHD and Commute Solutions.
- Commute Solutions and Houston ConnectSmart began collaborating with Rice University to plan the launch of the campus' carpool program.
- Commute Solutions continued planning efforts for a 2024 Kickoff campaign and will be launching a pilot this spring.
- Commute Solutions celebrated the announcement of this year's Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) which included TEI Planning and Design, NASA-Johnson Space Center, and Rice University.
- Love to Ride is evaluating the campaigns of 2023 and preparing a workplan for the 2nd contract cycle, expected to begin March 1, 2024.
- AECOM, the contractor executing the evaluation and recommendations for Commute Solutions, continued with the project plan by conducting interviews and gathering information to develop the recommendations for the program's future.

CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continue 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 is continuing to work to reach out to manufacturers of vehicles and electric vehicle charging equipment to discuss Buy America requirements and the availability of compliant equipment. Staff are also working to review recent revisions to federal Buy America rules and understand how agency programs can best comply. This work is ongoing.
- Staff worked with grant recipients with pending vehicle deliveries to prepare for and undertake the vehicle acceptance and invoice process. For vehicles that have been recently delivered, staff has been working to process invoice materials and move those through the invoicing process.
- Staff continued to monitor post-delivery projects that have not yet met the contractually required emission reductions based upon subrecipient performance. This monitoring effort ensures that grant recipients' usage of vehicles remains within grant requirements and that vehicle use and mileage commitments are met. Historically, this monitoring effort has occurred through a mix of subrecipient self-reporting and automated GPS monitoring. Staff is currently working with subrecipients to completely transition to automated monitoring. This effort is ongoing, but nearly complete.

- Staff continued to process contract closeouts for projects meeting minimum contracted requirements for all project vehicles and is working to complete this closeout process when possible. In the last month, staff processed and released five vehicle replacement contracts for project partners that had successfully completed their grant requirements.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- H-GAC continues to administer \$1 million in planning funds through the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). In September, staff worked to gain H-GAC Board of Directors approval to access the awarded funding and enter into interlocal agreements with project partners. This process is ongoing. Three of the four interlocal agreements are still in the approval process and will likely be completed in January. Staff have completed the approval process on the fourth agreement with the Houston-Advanced Research Center (HARC), the technical consultants for this project. With that process completed, the team is beginning to develop project materials to satisfy project deliverables. Included in this work, staff opened a call for projects process to gather information about implementation projects that may be included as part of the Priority Climate Action Plan or as part of Phase II implementation portion of this effort.
- 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.
- 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 the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), and other traffic and travel related data developments within the H-GAC MPO region that supports sub-regional and corridor studies for both TxDOT and other H-GAC member agencies projects such as: SH 146 study, Kirby Drive Extension, model support for Waller County FM 362/ FM 359 Schematic-Environmental Project, TxDOT project that includes all major PEL studies in the region, TxDOT's US 290 traffic study of the hurricane evacuation route, the Grand parkway segment B and C studies of the Austin toll revenue project, etc.
- Staff continues to review, update and process H-GAC traffic count and recount from various traffic data collection within the H-GAC region, develop new VisionEval scenario, and continue with the

traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) reviews and new TAZ split to support new growths in certain H-GAC MPO areas, and continues to Update the Pearland Transit Benefit Cost analysis table with changes as per Transportation Dept staff request, and Set up REMI TDM import feature for version 5.1 and continues effort towards model updates of the H-GAC Activity-Based-Model (ABM) and the traditional 4-steps model.

- Staff continues to coordinate with TxDOT TP&P on the expansion phase of the Household Survey within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region and working with the TxDOT TP&P on conducting University and Community Colleges Surveys of University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG), and the Galveston College two campuses in Galveston county, continues to process the passenger and employees survey data collected from the two airports (IAH & Hobby), continues review, refine the scope of work for the Active Transportation Survey and discussion with staff of the Transportation Dept and consultant for the review of the developed sample size, cost of the Survey.
- Staff worked with consultants for the Bay Area Study to gain better understanding of the downloaded Replica bicycle and pedestrian data to resolve questions about the link level versus the Origin-Destination trip tables.
- Staff continued testing of the Activity-Based Model (ABM), developed tables of initial findings comparing the four-step model and ABM using the same 2023 and 2045 networks from the 2023 Conformity.
- Staff continues to develop Travel Demand Model QAQC process, demoed H-GAC CPRG call-for-projects eval portal, submitted evals for 37 CPRG projects, provided VMT data for 13-county region to the HARC team, in collaboration with Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), familiarizing with new TTI conformity template and working towards a comprehensive crosswalk document from 2023 conformity to new template