



2008 Progress Report

Houston-Galveston Area Council

A Letter from the Transportation Director

Houston-Galveston Area Council

2008 was a turbulent year for the region. Despite some successes like the completion of the Katy Freeway, the Galveston Causeway, and the US 90A project, the widespread damage caused by Hurricane Ike and a “storm” in transportation funding, wreaked havoc on the state’s ability to build infrastructure projects. Last year was one of the worst years in the history of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in terms of projects scheduled to go to contract compared to those actually let to contract. Approximately \$257 million in projects went to construction, less than half the amount originally scheduled.

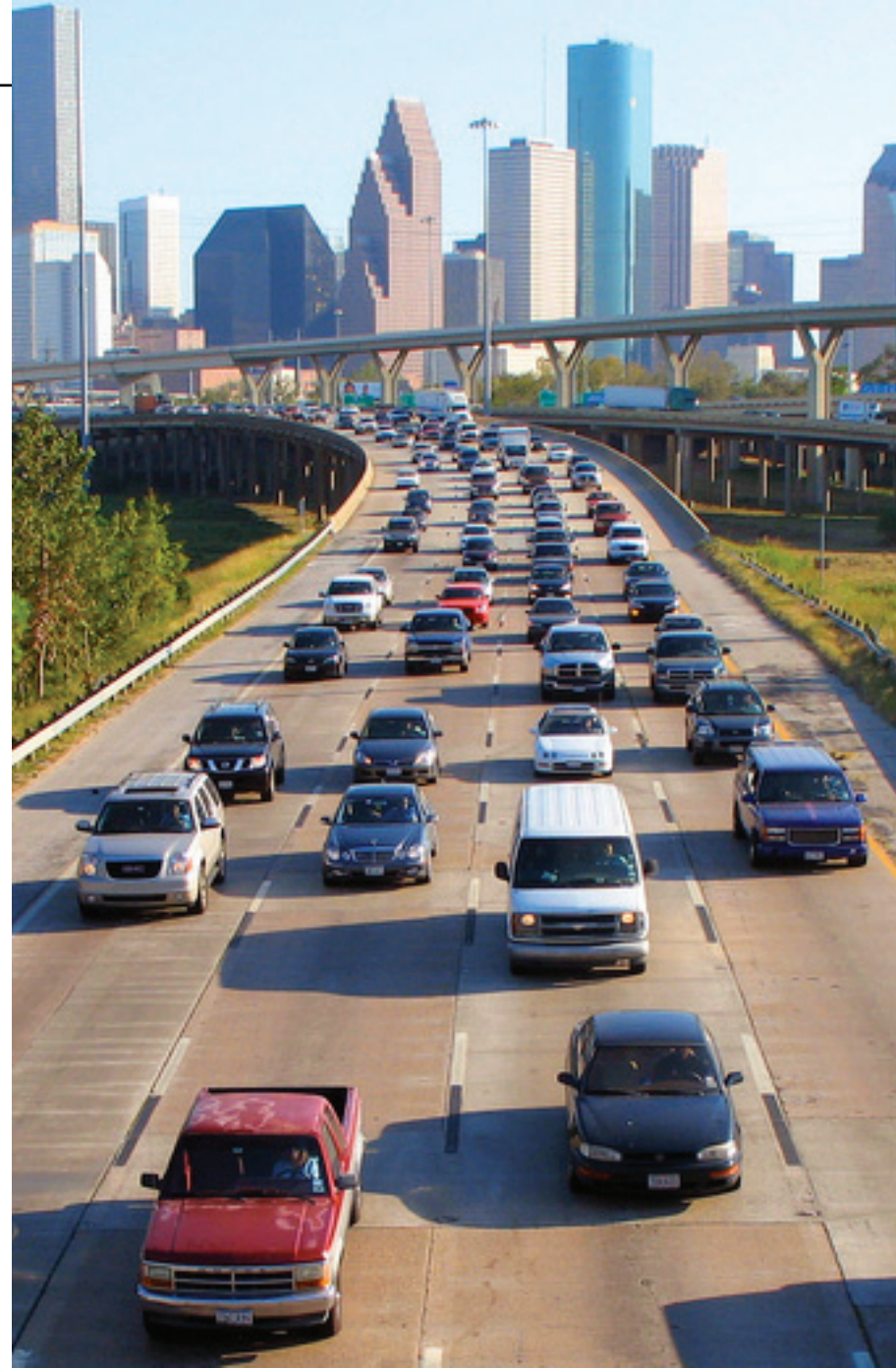
TxDOT found itself in a difficult cash flow position due to the convergence of several factors. For the last several years revenues from the federal and state motor fuels taxes have been flat while the costs for construction have risen sharply. As gasoline and diesel fuel prices reached record levels in 2008, the vehicle miles traveled on our highways declined, further reducing both State and Federal fuel tax revenue. Although fuel prices abated the second half of the year, the general economic decline continues to suppress growth in vehicle miles traveled. Federal transportation revenue to the states was also hit in 2007 and 2008. Federal fuel taxes declined at an even greater rate than the State’s, leading Congress to rescind State spending authority.

This funding crisis led the State to delay or suspend projects for both highway maintenance and construction. The loss of State investment in highway infrastructure was compounded as local governments committed to matching or supplementing planned State expenditures were unable to do so. The most obvious storm to hit the region in 2008 was Hurricane Ike. However, the “perfect storm” affecting transportation has been the loss of expected State and Federal transportation dollars.



Alan C. Clark

Transportation Director
Houston-Galveston Area Council



Project Development Update

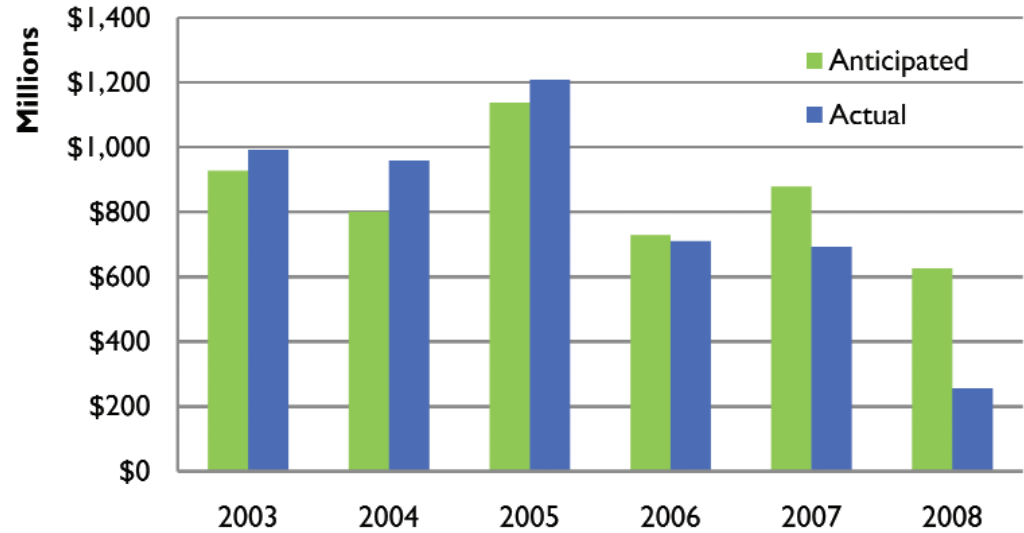
In 2008, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) announced a severe funding shortfall facing the agency. To reconcile contract lettings* with available revenue, TxDOT significantly reduced the number of transportation projects statewide. In the Houston region, the result was a 63 percent decrease in contract lettings for 2008 from the previous year.

Although 2008 shows the sharpest decline, contract lettings have been on a downward trend since 2005. The graphs on this page depict TxDOT Houston District project lettings from 2003 to 2008.

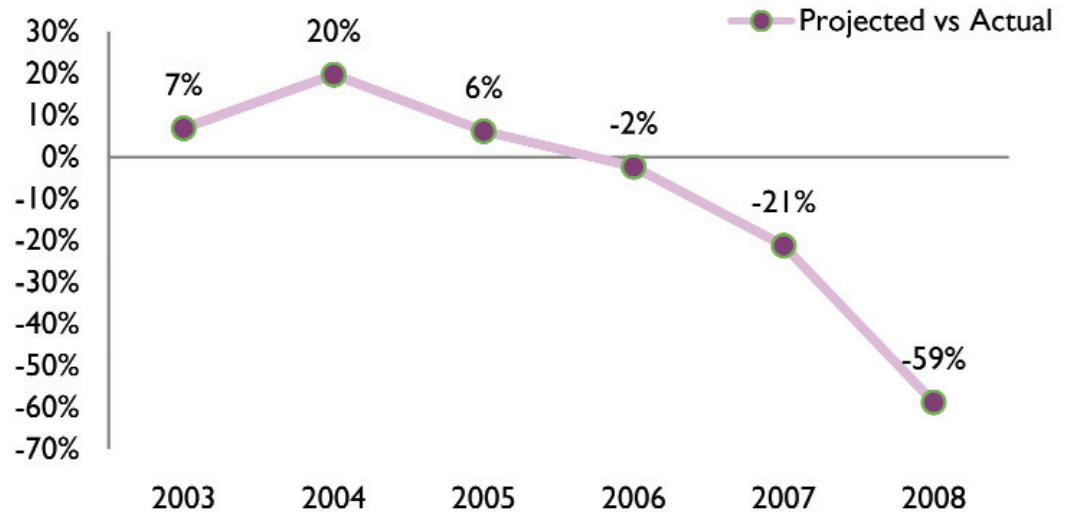
1. The top graph shows that anticipated (green bars) and actual letting amounts (blue bars) peaked in 2005 and declined thereafter. The severity of the decrease in actual lettings is pronounced. Actual contract lettings in 2008 decreased 79 percent from the 2005 peak.
2. The purple line in the bottom graph indicates the percentage difference between TxDOT's anticipated and actual dollars of lettings. The positive numbers indicate that TxDOT exceeded its own expectations from 2003 to 2005, while it fell short its expectations from 2006 to 2008. Higher prices for construction materials that increased costs for transportation projects played a significant role in the reduction in contract lettings.

* "Letting" signifies that all preparatory work on a project is complete, and it is ready to be let for construction to a contractor.

TxDOT Houston District Letting Performance



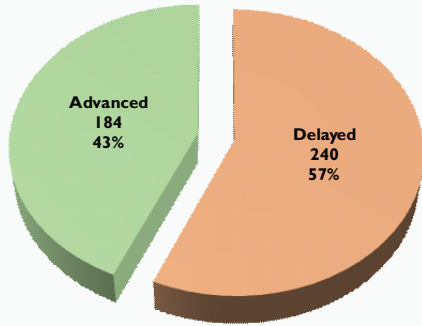
Anticipated Vs. Actual



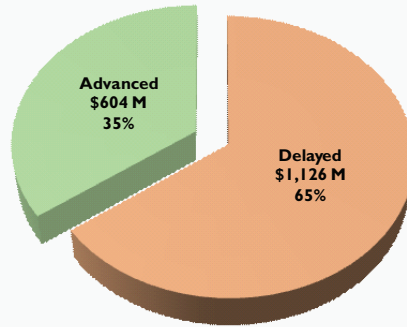
The charts on this page show the status of projects programmed in the 2008-2011

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by source, program, and sponsor.

424 Projects



\$1,731M Dollars



Source	Advanced	%	Delayed	%	Total
100% Local	\$148	18%	\$678	82%	\$826
State and Federal	\$457	50%	\$448	50%	\$905
Grand Total	\$604	35%	\$1,126	65%	\$1,731

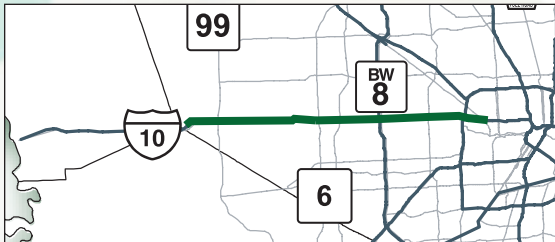
Program	Advanced	%	Delayed	%	Total
Program 1	\$308	33%	\$624	67%	\$931
ROADWAY	\$298	33%	\$604	67%	\$902
MISCELLANEOUS	\$9	32%	\$20	68%	\$29
Program 2	\$37	67%	\$18	33%	\$55
AIR QUALITY	\$16	100%		0%	\$16
PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE	\$21	54%	\$18	46%	\$38
Program 3	\$77	45%	\$94	55%	\$171
ROADWAY	\$8	18%	\$38	82%	\$47
TRAFFIC FLOW	\$66	55%	\$55	45%	\$121
MISCELLANEOUS	\$2	67%	\$1	33%	\$3
Program 4	\$183	32%	\$391	68%	\$574
TRANSIT	\$146	30%	\$345	70%	\$491
MISCELLANEOUS	\$37	45%	\$46	55%	\$84
Grand Total	\$604	35%	\$1,126	65%	\$1,731

Sponsor	Advanced	Delayed	Total
Brazoria County		\$24,430,000	\$24,430,000
City Of Baytown		\$3,080,015	\$3,080,015
City Of Bunker Hill Vlg		\$2,370,000	\$2,370,000
City Of Freeport	\$1,455,253		\$1,455,253
City Of Galveston	\$8,635,206	\$2,781,169	\$11,416,375
City Of Houston	\$35,644,754	\$78,502,210	\$114,146,964
City Of Lake Jackson		\$275,913	\$275,913
City Of League City		\$425,000	\$425,000
City Of Missouri City	\$8,046,000	\$640,000	\$8,686,000
City Of Pasadena	\$27,302,000	\$7,100,000	\$34,402,000
City Of Pearland		\$45,208,366	\$45,208,366
City Of Piney Point Vlg		\$7,300,000	\$7,300,000
City Of Richmond	\$358,386		\$358,386
City Of Rosenberg		\$1,243,750	\$1,243,750
City Of Stafford		\$950,000	\$950,000
City Of Sugar Land		\$24,769,521	\$24,769,521
City Of Tomball	\$2,844,192		\$2,844,192
Colorado Valley Transit		\$142,000	\$142,000
Downtown Mgmt Dist		\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000
Fort Bend County	\$4,936,941	\$14,224,255	\$19,161,196
Greater SE Mgmt Dist	\$7,926,020		\$7,926,020
Gulf Coast Center	\$4,276,206		\$4,276,206
Harris County	\$39,874,636	\$116,206,425	\$156,081,061
HCTRA		\$43,000,000	\$43,000,000
H-GAC	\$20,127,285		\$20,127,285
Island Transit	\$4,479,444		\$4,479,444
METRO	\$129,501,092	\$328,044,532	\$457,545,624
Midtown Mgmt Dist		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Montgomery County	\$32,235,450	\$19,110,189	\$51,345,639
Port Of Galveston		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Texas Parks & Wildlife		\$8,736,000	\$8,736,000
Brazos Transit District	\$4,458,739	\$13,814,480	\$18,273,219
TxDOT Beaumont Dist	\$17,707,475		\$17,707,475
TxDOT Houston Dist	\$247,509,671	\$346,504,068	\$594,013,739
Un-sponsored (TBD)		\$8,254,274	\$8,254,274
Uptown Houston Dist	\$7,089,250	\$2,364,694	\$9,453,944
Grand Total	\$604,408,000	\$1,126,476,861	\$1,730,884,861

Katy Freeway Opens Ahead of Schedule

Local, State, and Federal officials gathered on the Beltway 8 northbound overpass in Houston on October 28, 2008 to celebrate the early completion of the \$2.8 billion Katy Freeway Reconstruction Program. Construction on the project, which expanded the roadway from 11 to 18 lanes, began in June 2003 and was expected to take at least 10 years. The Katy Freeway Reconstruction Project is the largest ever undertaken by the TxDOT Houston District, involving the renovation of 23 miles of Interstate freeway, and implementation of managed lanes in each direction. The \$2.8 billion project was undertaken and funded through a tri-party agreement between TxDOT, Harris County, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Before its reconstruction, the IH 10 Katy Freeway was one of the most congested highways in the country. It was built in the 1960s and was designed for approximately 60,000 vehicles per day. By the early 2000's, typical weekday traffic was four times that amount. The improvement project involved the complete reconstruction of approximately 23 miles of freeway and approximately two miles of IH 610, including the IH 10/IH 610 interchange. The roadway was widened from 250 feet to 410 feet and has four general purpose lanes, two toll/managed lanes, and three frontage road lanes in each direction. The capacity of the IH 10 Katy Freeway corridor has been expanded to meet current safety standards and address traffic demand through the year 2020.





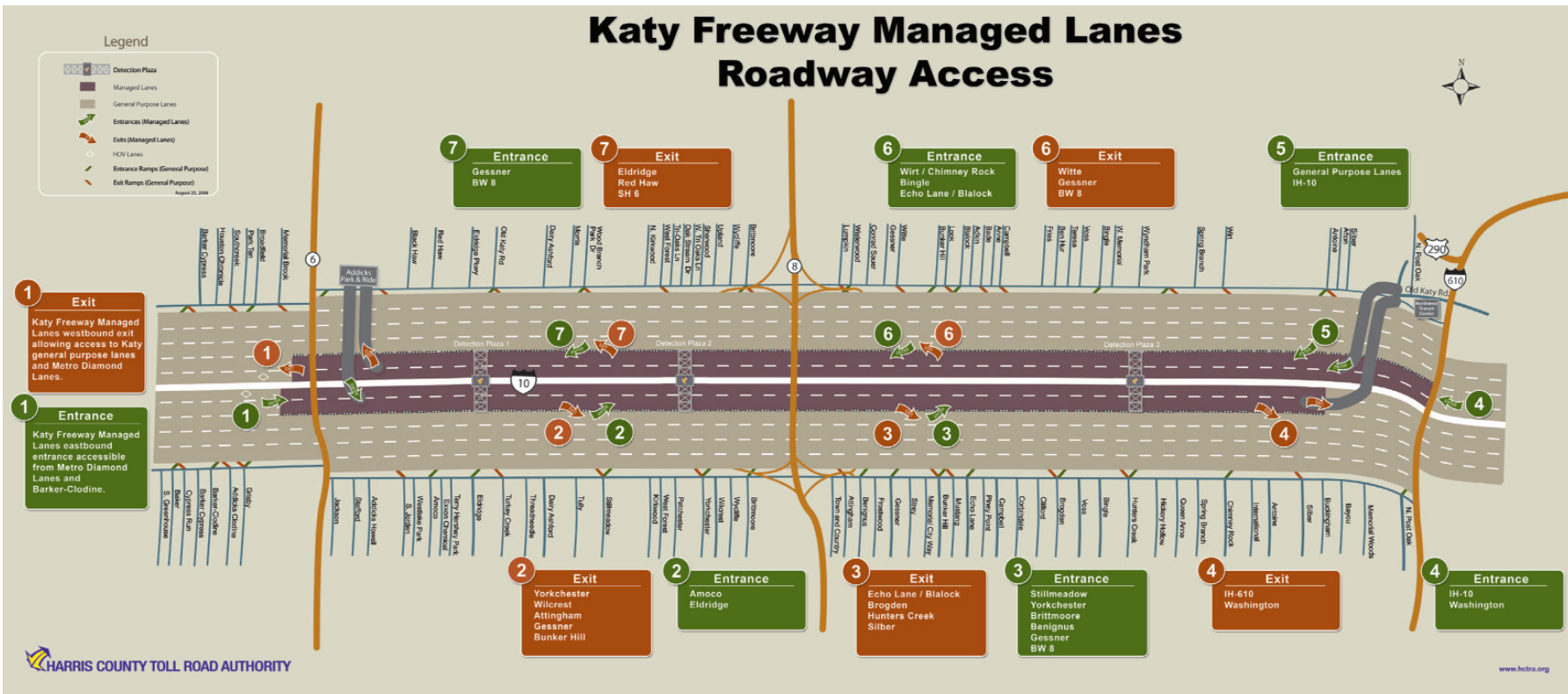
The new Katy Freeway Managed Lanes offer an innovative approach to maximizing roadway capacity and more effectively managing congestion. Two multi-purpose lanes in each direction replace the single, reversible HOV lane to serve METRO buses

and HOV riders, as well as drivers willing to pay a toll. These lanes opened for initial operations on October 29, 2008 as part of the newly reconstructed Katy Freeway and should be fully operational in Spring 2009.

During the first phase of operations, from October 29, 2008 until Spring 2009, the lanes will operate as a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and mass transit facility ONLY. During this period, capacity of the managed lanes and the general purpose

lanes will be studied to determine the safest and most effective way to open the lanes to Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) and commercial vehicles.

By Spring of 2009, Harris County Commissioners Court will establish toll rates for non-peak hours and for possible SOV use during peak hours based on available lane capacity. For regular updates related to the Katy Freeway Managed Lanes visit www.hctra.org/katymanagedlanes.



Galveston Causeway

Completed: North and South bridges — \$162 million

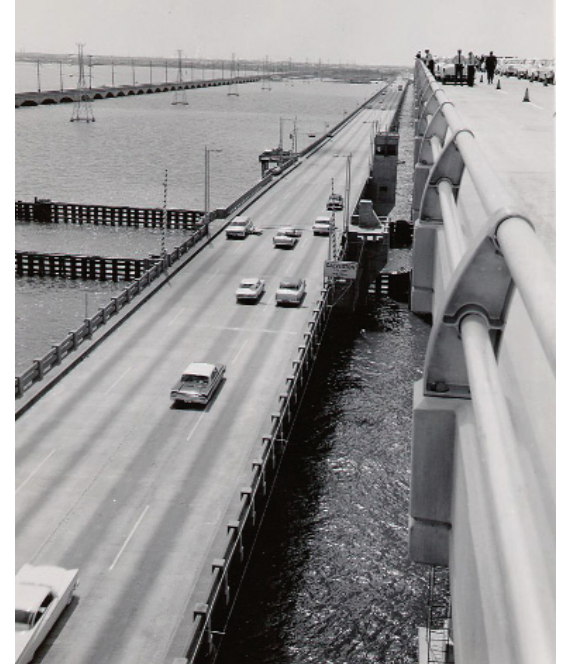
On October 13, 2003, the State began a \$135 million bridge project to replace the aging Galveston causeway. The northbound lanes, originally opened in 1938 with a drawbridge, were redesigned in 1964. In 1961, the southbound lanes were opened with a high clearance bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway. As part of this latest reconstruction effort, both structures (northbound and southbound) of the

old causeway were demolished and entirely removed to three feet below the mud line.

The new bridge features eight traffic lanes on a 148-foot wide deck. The main span over the Intracoastal Waterway is a cast-in-place concrete box girder with a span of 300 feet. Each side of the bridge has three main travel lanes with one alternate lane. The alternate lanes exit south at Harborside Drive and north at Tiki Island. There are also two emergency lanes in each direction, giving stranded motorists the opportunity to exit traffic lanes both on the right and left 12-foot wide shoulders. The old causeway spans were 40-foot wide; the new ones are 75 feet wide.

Although the Texas Department of Transportation expects final construction on the 2.3-mile bridge to be finished in early 2009, it was opened to traffic in October 2008.

Right: Photo taken from the top of the just-completed 1961 span, with the 1938 span to its left and below.
Bottom: New Causeway under construction to the right of the 1961 and structure.

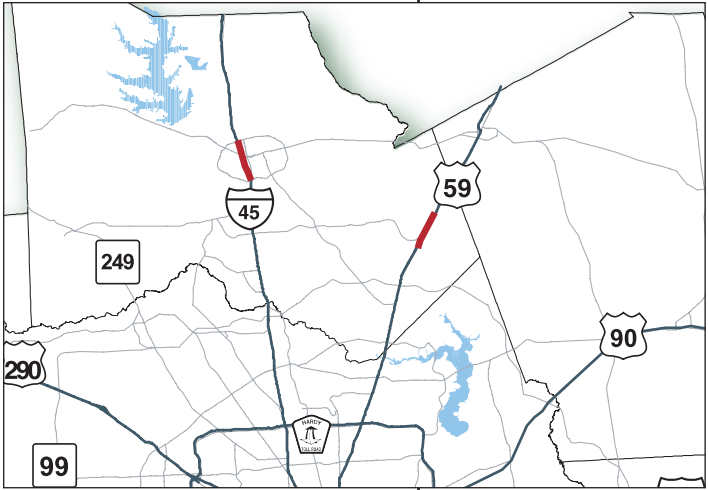


Mobility Projects

IH 45N

Currently the most expensive project under construction, work continues on the expansion of I-45 North, inside Loop 336. The south bound lanes are complete while construction on the northbound lanes continues. The project widens I-45 to eight main lanes with two three-lane frontage roads, ramps and grade separations. The estimated completion date for the project is November 2009.

Under Construction: I-45N S Loop 336 to N Loop 336 \$285.7 million



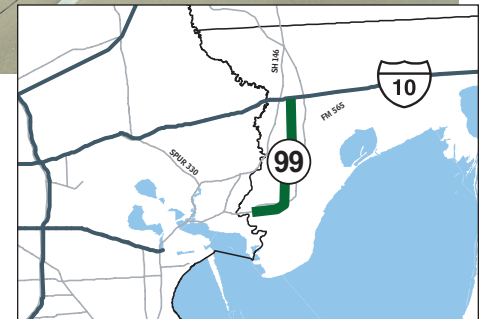
Under Construction: Northpark Dr. to Roman Forest — \$150 million

US 59N

New Caney residents will enjoy easier commutes with the expansion of the US 59 Eastex Freeway from North Park Dr. in Kingwood to Roman Forest. This 7.5-mile project widens the freeway to eight main lanes, building upon the previous work from the Harris County line. Future expansion will continue north through Splendora up to the Liberty County line.

Grand Parkway/SH 99 Update:

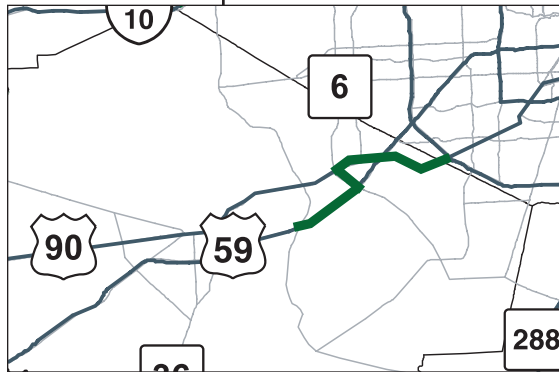
On February 19, 2008, a ribbon-cutting celebration commemorating the completion of the first phase of Segment I-2 (IH 10 to FM 1405) was held, and the segment was opened to traffic on March 25, 2008. Phase 2 of Segment I-2 (FM 1405 to SH 146) is currently under design. TxDOT initiated a corridor study of the eastern half of Segment B of the Grand Parkway, from SH 35 to I-45 S in June 2008. The \$8.3 million study includes preliminary engineering and environmental analysis along the 20-mile corridor. Environmental work continues on the remaining segments C, E, F, F-1, F-2, G, H, and I-1.



US 59S

The reconstruction of US 59 South, from SH 6 to SH 99/Grand Parkway was completed in 2008. The project widened the freeway to eight main lanes, bridging Sweetwater Blvd, University Blvd, and SH 99 (Grand Parkway). In May 2008, two additional main lanes in each direction were constructed, providing motorists with a total of four lanes in the southbound direction and five lanes in the northbound direction across the Brazos River. A new entrance ramp to US 59 northbound, south of SH 99 (Grand Parkway), opened in May 2008, benefiting motorists from Williams Way, Greatwood and SH 99. The intersection of SH 99 and US 59 was completed in the fall of 2008.

Completed: SH 6 to SH 99/Grand Parkway: \$195 million



SH 6

SH 6 was widened from four lanes to six lanes, between First Colony Blvd. and the Sugar Land Regional Airport, bridging University Blvd and US 90A and the Union Pacific railroad.

US 90A

Construction on US 90 A, from US 59 to Brooks St. was completed in 2008, widened from four lanes to eight lanes. The project included the construction of an underpass to connect Stafford Road with Staffordshire, an underpass at FM 1092, and an overpass at US 90A over Dulles/Kirkwood. To enhance safety and reduce noise levels in adjacent neighborhoods, new wayside horns were installed at Union Pacific railroad intersection crossings.

Completed: BW 8 to SH 6: \$135 million



Livable Centers

This year has been a hallmark year for H-GAC's Livable Centers program. It began with the Livable Centers Advisory Committee finalizing metrics for use by potential program applicants. This process helped to define the goals of the program which are to:

1. Create multi-modal travel choices by facilitating a range of transportation mode opportunities;
2. Create quality, walkable, mixed-use places;
3. Improve environmental quality; and to
4. Promote economic development

H-GAC worked with local sponsors to kick off three Livable Centers studies in 2008. Studies for Houston's East End, the City of Tomball, and the City of Waller are currently underway. Although three of these studies are in different settings, from rural to urban, they all share the goals of the Livable Centers program and are intended to improve the quality of life in the study areas. These studies will be completed in the upcoming months.

H-GAC has also published a new Livable Centers best practices guide, "More Choices, Great Places." The guide provides information to local governments interested in understanding and implementing the essential components of Livable Centers.

The guide is available for download at www.h-gac.com/livablecenters.

The goal of the Livable Centers program is to reduce dependence on the automobile by investing in transportation improvements with the potential for increasing transit usage, walking and bicycling trips. Examples of these projects include technology upgrades and design upgrades such as synchronized signals and dedicated turning lanes as well as improved infill street connections, pedestrian amenities, and on-street parking facilities.

City of Galveston

- Downtown/Strand Intermodal Terminal at SH 275 and 25th St. - \$5.7 Million

Uptown Houston District

- Design and construction of Uptown pedestrian/transit improvement program on Westheimer, from Loop 610 to Post Oak Blvd. - \$5.3 million

Houston, Midtown Management District – pedestrian and transit access improvements in:

- Baldwin Park neighborhood - \$922,000
- Livable Communities Initiative Phase II, Gray and Alabama streets - \$2.5 million
- Livable Communities Initiative Phase III, Elgin - \$2.7 million

The Woodlands Town Center

- Engineering and construction of transitway, waterway and pedestrian amenities - \$13.6 million

In addition to the projects that were implemented as part of the Livable Centers program, a number of studies were initiated in 2008 as the first step in the development of pedestrian and transit friendly centers in the following areas:

Midtown Houston Transit-Oriented Development

- Ensemble/HCC Station - \$200K
- Proposed Transit Corridors - \$200K
- Code Enforcement Center (3300 Main St.) - \$360K
- Gillette St. MUD/TOD (Allen Parkway and Gillette St.) - \$360K

East Harris County, Greater East End Management District Pedestrian Improvement Plan

- Navigation/S. Jensen - \$150K

City of Waller Town Square Implementation Plan

- Historic Downtown Waller - \$120K

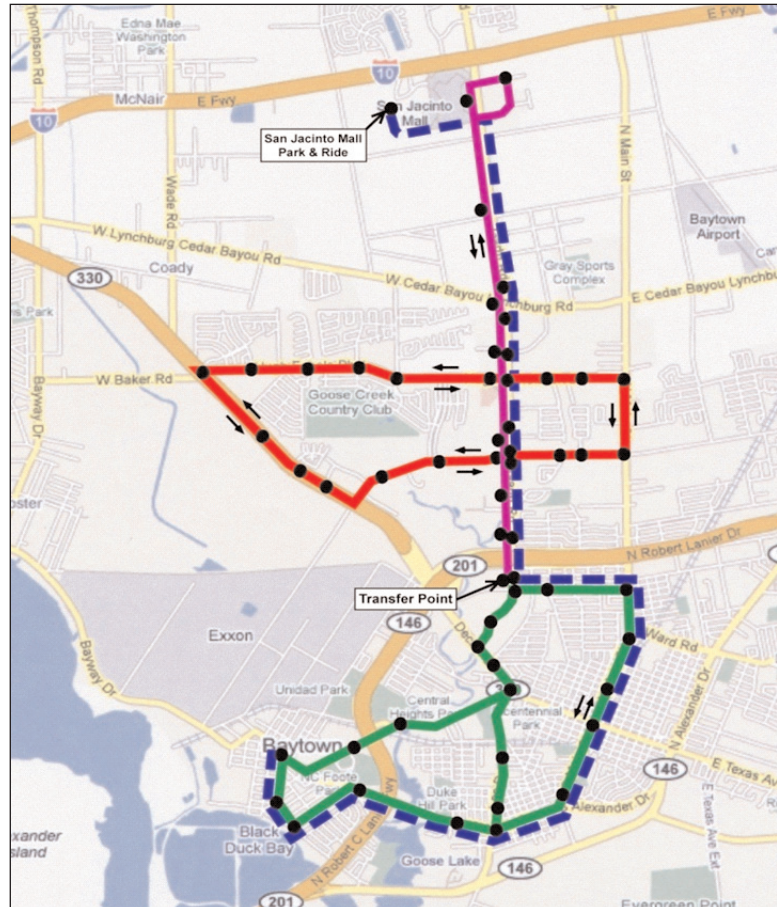
Transit Initiatives

Baytown Express Park & Ride Service

The Baytown Express Park & Ride Service, providing commuter park-and-ride service from the San Jacinto Mall to downtown Houston, opened on October 1, 2007. As of November 2008, it has achieved a total ridership of more than 914,967 passenger miles and 32,500 boardings. The service has been well received by commuters, businesses, residents and those within the Baytown Area. The Baytown Express Park & Ride Service has had the additional benefit of increasing regional interconnectivity through the provision of the infrastructure necessary to set up the newly opened Baytown Fixed Route Service. A request for authorization to execute a second-year funding agreement with Harris County Community Services Department to continue implementation of park and ride service was approved by the H-GAC Board of Directors in August 2008.

The Baytown Circulator

For a long time, Baytown residents have requested more public transportation. Their request was at last rewarded in July 2008 by implementation of the Baytown Fixed Route Bus Service. The bus service connects the transit dependent population with shopping



and work destinations, hospitals and doctors' offices, social service agencies and educational opportunities. The Baytown service was introduced on a free ride basis for the first two weeks as an incentive, with more than 1000 riders during the first week. Even though the start-up service was expected to be slow, the enthusiastic response from the community exceeded all expectations. The Baytown Circulator now services more than 120 riders per day.

Fort Bend County Express

Fort Bend County introduced a new commuter bus service, the Fort Bend County Express, for residents traveling to the Texas Medical Center campus. Fort Bend County residents took advantage of this cost-saving service for no charge during the first week of service from September 2, 2008 to September 5, 2008. Since its inception on that date, the program now has a ridership of almost 1,200 trips.

For more information, call 1-866-751-TRIP. The new schedule effective as of December 1, 2008 can be accessed on the following link: http://www.co.fort-bend.tx.us/upload/images/public_transportation/Fort_Bend_Schedule.pdf.

METRO Solutions - Phase 2

East End Corridor

In June, 2008, METRO held a ceremony to launch construction of light rail in the East End corridor. Utility relocation work began the next month and is continuing along Harrisburg Boulevard, between Milby Street and Lockwood Drive. The transit authority reiterated its commitment to building the 3.2 mile East End light-rail line east to the Magnolia Transit Center. METRO has agreed to partner with the Gulf Coast Freight Rail District, City of Houston and UPRR to fund a grade separation at the 6200 block of Harrisburg to go over the existing UPRR tracks. The planned overpass at this location will allow rail and vehicular traffic (as well as pedestrians) to cross without interference from the freight rail line. Enabling an overpass at this intersection is at the top of the list for these partnering entities.

Southeast Corridor

METRO reached another critical milestone in the build-out of the METRO Solutions Phase 2 plan: the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) granted its final approval of the Southeast Corridor Supplemental Final Environmental Statement (SFEIS) through a document known as a Record of Decision (ROD).

The FTA made its decision in July, 2008 based in part because the project would be a permanent invest-



ment, and therefore "this new transit system has the potential to positively influence economic development in the Southeast Corridor consistent with community plans."

METRO plans to begin construction in this corridor in 2009.

North Corridor

The FTA also granted a Record of Decision in July 2008 for the North Corridor light-rail project. RODs are a key step toward obtaining federal funding, as they establish that the project satisfies the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act and other legal requirements. The RODs also document the many opportunities afforded to the community to provide input.

METRO is seeking federal funds for three of the five light-rail expansion lines. In addition to the North and Southeast Corridors, the agency will seek federal funds for the University Corridor. The three federally supported light rail lines, together with the Uptown and East End lines, are scheduled to be completed in 2012.

Uptown Corridor

Engineering work on the Uptown light rail corridor is, at the outset of 2009, more than half complete. METRO is working out an agreement with the Uptown

Authority/TIRZ to partner in the design and construction of project elements for a segment of the Uptown light rail line. Additionally, the Uptown District has been actively engaged with METRO in planning design concepts and implementation.

University Corridors

In October, 2008 the METRO Board of Directors approved a revised alignment for the eastern side of the University Line. An Open House and Public Hearing to receive comments on the new alignment was held in early November at the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. As 2008 came to a close, METRO continued its work with the Federal Transit Administration on completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is expected to be published in the spring of 2009.

For more information visit www.metro-solutions.org.



Rail Crossing Improvements

As part of an ongoing effort to improve safety, TxDOT is improving railroad crossings at 14 locations in Brazoria , Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery, and Waller counties. The projects will upgrade the railroad signal and warning equipment at each crossing. Completion dates for each project may vary.

Brazoria

- Wayne Rd.

Fort Bend

- Herman Sulak St. in Sugar Land

Galveston

- Avenue F. in Hitchcock
- Mustang Rd. in Agoa

Harris

- Edgewood St. in Houston
- Hughes St. in Houston
- Van Hut Rd.

Montgomery

- 2nd St. in Conroe
- Magnolia Dr.
- Old Plantersville Rd.
- Pleasant Valley Rd.

Waller

- Blinka St. in Waller
- E. Waller Rd. in Waller



Pedestrian Bicycle Projects

More than \$20 million in pedestrian and bicycle projects were let to construction over the past year. The projects sponsored by the City of Houston, Greater Southeast Management District, METRO and Missouri City will add 49 miles to the regional pedestrian bicycle network.



- MKT/SP rails to trails from Shepherd Dr. to Houston Ave. - \$3.5 million
- Columbia Tap rails to trails from Dixie Dr. to Polk St. - \$3 million
- Phase II of West Houston on-street bikeway - \$1.4 million
- Little White Oak Bayou 12-foot wide concrete shared use path from Calvacade to Sylvester St. - \$1.3 million
- Columbia TAP-Union Station Trail 12-foot wide concrete shared use path with bicycle lane from Polk St to Texas Ave. - \$965K
- Third Ward pedestrian/bicycle trail - \$780K
- Elgin, Ennis and Alabama pedestrian improvements - \$224 million
- Holman pedestrian improvements from Delano to Ennis - \$135K
- Missouri City pedestrian/bicycle plan - \$7.3million

H-GAC Regional Safety Program

The Regional Safety Council (RSC) continued to work with local government agencies and community advocacy organizations to assess and remediate safety issues throughout the region. Through the



development of new partnerships and the receipt of long-awaited new crash data, the program is expected to grow in interest and success.

Fatality Crash Reduction Campaign: Aims to raise awareness of impaired/aggressive driving issues through an aggressive city-wide media campaign and increase traffic safety enforcement through the use of mobile toxicology labs, unmarked and stealth patrol vehicles, and other tactics.

NO-ZONE Campaign

As part of this campaign, H-GAC will be incorporating its NO ZONE campaign to promote safe driving around commercial vehicles. The NO ZONE campaign is meant to inform drivers of the “blind” areas around trucks where other drivers should not linger. The campaign will include the proliferation of large decals to be placed on trucks to serve as mobile reminders where not to “hang out” around commercial vehicles, as well as PSA’s and billboards.

Statewide Traffic Safety Conference: H-GAC partnered with the Texas Transportation Institute’s Center for Transportation Safety to put on the first Statewide conference in November. The two-day conference, which attracted 240 attendees, addressed 16 different traffic safety topic areas ranging from DUI prevention to Freight Safety to Legislative Issues.

Child Safety

Staff is working with AAA-Texas to promote proper child safety seat use through the distribution of medical outreach kits to area pediatricians. Through a newly-developed partnership with Safe Kids of Greater Houston, staff developed informational posters and materials for the region’s 2,000 daycare facilities regarding child seat regulations in Texas.



Over **2,600 UNRESTRAINED** Children were killed in the U.S. in 2006

Children under **5 YRS OLD** & less than **36 INCHES HIGH** must be in a **SAFETY SEAT**

Violations can cost up to **\$200**

BUCKLE UP YOUR CHILD



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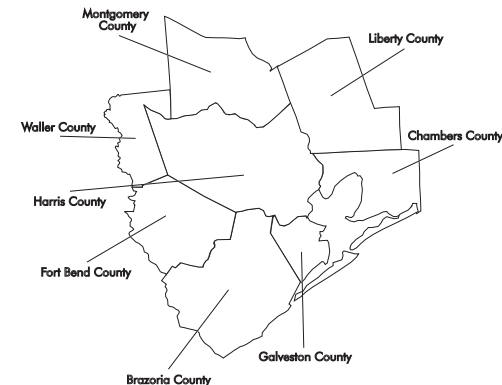
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HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

Alan C. Clark
MPO Director

Planning Our Region's Transportation Future

Since 1974, H-GAC has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the eight-county Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area (TMA). The TMA includes Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties. H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council approves the region's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and three-year implementation program known as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).



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