

5B. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan study began July 1, 2023. A public meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 22, 2024, from 5:30-7:00pm at White Park in Wallisville. The proposed Thoroughfare Plan, and street cross-sections will be presented at a public meeting for the public to view and comment on.
- Washington Avenue Corridor study began October 1, 2023. The study team is developing alternatives to improve traffic flow along the corridor. A steering committee meeting was held on October 9th and the next steering committee meeting is planned for October 30th. There is a focus group meeting planned for November.
- Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The study team presented draft recommendations for the public to review and comment on October 1, 2024, at the First Ward Civic Club National Night Out, located at The Art Alley at Sawyer Yards, 1502 Sawyer Street, Houston 77007 from 6:30-8:30pm. The study team is working on the final draft report.
- FM 518 Corridor study began November 1, 2023. The study team has identified the needs along the corridor and is developing alternatives to address those issues. The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for October 23. An Old Town resident meeting is planned for November 20 and a public meeting is planned for early December.
- Pearland Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The study team has identified the needs in the City of Pearland and is developing alternatives to address those issues. The next public outreach event will be held in mid-November. The final Steering Committee meeting will be held in January 2025.
- Cemetery Road Corridor Study began March 1, 2024. The study team held a Pop-Up event on October 12, 2024, at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church's Fall Fest and is planning a focus group meeting for November.
- Friendswood Parkway Corridor Study began September 1, 2024. The study team will hold the first Steering Committee meeting in November.

2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee (GHFC) meeting is Tentatively scheduled for January 16, 2025. This meeting will be held virtually. Please contact Sydni Ligons at Sydni.ligons@h-gac.com to be added to the meeting invite.
- Staff continues working to implement the policies and programs from the approved Regional Goods Movement Plan (RGMP).
- Staff continues to leverage public and private funding opportunities for regional railroad projects through the Houston Area Rail Transformation (HART). The next HART meeting is scheduled for October 25th at 1:30 pm.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- In the month of September, Tow and Go successfully assisted 3,373 motorists by removing their stalled vehicles from busy freeways to a safe location. Safe locations are the next exit and are typically a gas station or parking lot.
- H-GAC in partnership with TxDOT and Houston TranStar are in the planning stages to host a Transportation Incident Management Training in celebration of First Responders Safety Week. The free 4-hour training will be held on Tuesday, November 19 at Houston TranStar and will kick off at 8:00 am.
- The Tow and Go Public Awareness Campaign is on-going with educational information streaming on radio, through digital and social media, and billboards across the region.
- Hurricane Preparedness and Awareness Campaign for 2024 is on-going.
- H-GAC Staff presented hurricane preparedness information to a Houston Independent School District Refugee group. The group attendees are primarily from the Republic of Congo. A language interpreter was available to assist Swahili speakers.
- Staff attended the Houston Traffic Safety Coalition Meeting.
- Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan is undergoing procurement process. All evaluations have been completed. Still undergoing procurement process. The tentative contract start date is February 2025.
- Safety Activity Report will be presented periodically at both TAC and TPC. Goals are to promote safety initiatives, request tasks for the Transportation Safety Committee, and fill Committee membership.
- ITS Architecture and Website Update has completed all interviews to understand existing inventory. H-GAC will host an ITS workshop on December 5, 2024, conducted by the Consultant. Goal is to frame H-GAC's role in ITS within the region and convey to local stakeholders how to use H-GAC's ITS Infrastructure to their benefit.
- The Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) subcommittee meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2024. This meeting will be held virtually. Please contact Francis Rodriguez at Francis.rodriguez@h-gac.com to be added to the meeting invite.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff continues to follow local Environmental Justice news as they relate to the H-GAC Title VI Nondiscrimination Program.
- H-GAC has completed the 2024 triennial update to the regional Title VI Program.
- Staff is working towards updating the basemap of the Eco-Logical web-application and improving the tool's overall functionality.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff will be attending an in-person FHWA MPO Peer Exchange Workshop on Resiliency in Atlanta, Georgia on October 24, 2024.
- Staff is working on finalizing the grant agreement.

- H-GAC's MPO was one of the 80 recipients that will receive funding from the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program. The program awarded \$829.6 million in grant funding to fund projects to improve the resilience of the surface transportation system.
- H-GAC will receive \$1.1 million to develop a Regional Resilience Improvement Plan for the surface transportation system of an eight-county region that experiences repeated extreme weather events, natural disasters, and hazardous flooding conditions. The project will fine-tune previously developed strategies, identify gaps in planning, create a list of priority improvements that can be implemented in the short- and long term, and include a risk-based assessment of vulnerabilities to roadways, culverts, ditches, medians, and other transportation assets.
- 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 next meeting is October 9, 2024, at 1:30 PM.
- 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 has finalized the RTP Project Development Process and online portal for project intake.
- The RTP Project Sponsor Workshop was held on May 15th, 2024. The workshop has 40 attendees (20 in-person and 20 virtual). The agenda included: overview of RTP Project Development Process, how to submit a project online, and presentations on publicly available, free to use data applications to enhance project submission.
- The RTP Project Development Process (PDP) closed the application portal on August 7. Internal evaluations have been completed, and fiscal constraint is now being implemented. This process will result in a new RTP project listing.
- Staff is meeting with all sponsors who submitted projects to the RTP PDP before presenting new project list.
- Staff anticipates the presentation of the new fiscally constrained RTP project list in November

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; data for the third quarter of 2024 is currently being collected. 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.
- Staff Completed the Language Access Plan and Title VI Program Update.

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 completed evaluation criteria scores and is in the process of completing draft scoring and ranking of the projects submitted for consideration in five categories (Major Projects, High Growth Area Needs, Operational Improvements and Congestion Management, Resiliency, and State of Good Repair, and Transit).
- 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.

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. Staff have started the process of updating the Sidewalk data layer.
- The consultant selection process for the Connecting Buffalo Bayou East Design Concept study continues with execution of consultant contract and ILA by July 2024.
- Staff entering into contract negotiations with TEI Planning + Design for the Memorial Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian safety study. Project is estimated to begin by September 1, 2024.
- City of Friendswood proposal evaluation will continue with Proposer interviews anticipated end of July 2024.
- The Bay Area Ped Bike study is ongoing. An open house was held on June 6th to share proposed recommendations with the public. Recommendations are currently being finalized. The final meeting of the Task Force is being scheduled for the week of July 29th. H-GAC staff have reviewed slides from the contractor for this meeting & are also reviewing a draft of the final report.
- Staff attended various meetings such as the City of Houston Bicycle Advisory Committees, Texas Pedestrian Coalition, Houston Safety Task Force, etc.
- Staff continue to work with Procurement to publish a request for proposal for counter installation work, which closed on January 11th. Staff confirmed that mobile counter activities are also eligible for inclusion in the contract. Staff are working to confirm if the budget for this expanded contract may necessitate Board of Directors' approval.

3. Transit Planning

- The regular quarterly meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee was held on Thursday, October 10, 2024.

- The US 90A Corridor Transit Study began on March 12, 2024. Staff has launched a website for the study in partnership with the consultant and alternative alignments are currently being evaluated. The first Stakeholder Committee meeting was held on October 4, 2024.
- Staff is developing the Regional Bus Study, which will examine the feasibility of bus services connecting outlying communities to each other as well as the urban core. This AFA-funded study will be supplemented by an additional TxDOT grant to cover the entire 13-county H-GAC service area, which is recommended by the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan.
- Procurement has been completed for a consultant for the Transit Information Study, and the H-GAC staff is developing a contract with a projected start date of November 1.
- The Pearland Transit Study Final Report is awaiting the City of Pearland's final comment by October 18. We anticipate the Final Report to be completed by October 25. The report and study are expected to be presented to the Pearland City Council, TAC, and TPC for November.
- The Board of Directors approved two years of funding for the CMAQ Microtransit service in the City of Sugar Land. An interlocal contract has been executed. Sugar Land has received multiple bids for a turnkey project. Service is expected to begin in early 2025.
- The Dayton Transit Study contract ILA was executed with Dayton. We are awaiting the consultant's signature for the project agreement. The study is expected to begin November 1.
- Staff is 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. H-GAC and METRO are currently working to integrate all partners into the Regional Data Management System. A standing monthly meeting has been scheduled to discuss next steps for distributing operations support to the partner agencies, and METRO staff updated the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee at its October 10, 2024 meeting.
- Data collection for Transit Asset Management performance measures is complete. Staff have contacted all agencies & have updated plans from all agencies. Staff began presenting the results to internal subcommittees in February. Staff presented to TAC & TPC for information in March. Staff presented to TAC for recommendation of FY 2026 targets & to TPC for approval of these targets in April. H-GAC staff are exploring options to reimagine the structure & data used in reporting these performance measures in the future. Staff met with NCTCOG in early July to discuss their process for collecting and analyzing this data.
- The contract for research tasks by Texas Southern University (TSU) on phase II of METRO's autonomous vehicle pilot linking the campus of TSU & The Eastwood Transit center is in progress. All internal approvals have been completed and it is awaiting signature from TSU.

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Planning for the following projects is currently underway or were completed recently:
 - RTP Project Submission Process
 - Safe Streets 4 All
 - Commute Solutions (Ozone Action Campaign)
 - Commute Solutions (Bike Month)

- Commute Solutions (Connect Smart Pilot Program)
- Tow & Go – Media Buying
- Hurricane Preparedness Campaign
- EJ/Title VI – Awareness Initiative (Connecting Communities)
- Language Access Plan Update
- Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II
- US 90A Transit Corridor Study
- Air Quality – Climate Change Engagement for MPO's Collar Counties

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- The Commute Solutions team, in collaboration with H-GAC's Communications and Outreach team, developed partner-specific marketing collateral and messaging for the Ozone Action Month campaign, Breathe Easy. Participating transportation partners included Fort Bend County Transit, The Woodlands Express, Conroe Connections, and Harris County Transit. The partners collaborated on the promotion at a number of events in the region. A summary of the campaign's outcomes will be developed to demonstrate the campaign's effectiveness and will be shared in a comprehensive report.
- ConnectSmart participated in a number of planning meetings with Rice University Sustainability. Additionally, the team engaged with ECO Rep students for the launch of the ConnectSmart Student Ambassador Program, an initiative to encourage students to use and promote the app to friends and classmates. Together, Rice and ConnectSmart will be promoting the application during the campus Sustainability Day on Oct. 1, 2024.
- AECOM was granted an extension to complete implementation assistance tasks and apply the findings of the research. H-GAC is evaluating the request for additional funding to carry out the subtasks to support the evaluation and implementation.
- Love to Ride increased the pre-campaign promotions for the Biketober campaign. The team hosted an info session for employer champions, developed marketing materials, and finalized the social media schedule. The project manager will continue working with the marketing and design team to craft collateral, as needed. The engagement also included outreach efforts to employer champions and local group rides. The Biketober campaign will include email, social media, app messages, newsletters, and a press release.
- The evaluation for the Regionwide Emergency Ride Home Program was completed and a vendor has been selected.

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 are continuing to work to reach out to manufacturers of vehicles and as well as electric vehicle charging equipment to discuss Buy America requirements and the availability of compliant equipment. Staff are also working with in-house council to review federal Buy America rules and assess processes that agency programs can use to comply with these regulations. This work is ongoing and is anticipated to conclude no later than Q4 of 2024.
- Staff are continuing to limit the initiation of new vehicle replacement grants while efforts are underway to resolve ongoing Buy America issues. Once these issues are resolved, staff anticipate resuming awards for new applications.

- Staff are continuing to work with grant recipients who have recently received vehicle deliveries to support ongoing grant activities and process invoice materials for ongoing projects. These efforts are nearly complete and should wrap up within the next couple of months.
- Staff continue 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. Staff are currently monitoring 132 project vehicles.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- H-GAC continues to administer \$1 million in planning funds through the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). Staff are working with project partners to gather data and plan for the development of the upcoming Comprehensive Climate Action Plan. Staff will also hold an informational workshop for H-GAC members on August 15th at 10:00am to provide information about the CPRG program as well as an update on the effort to date.
- 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 have been working since late last year to develop a regional project for TCEQ's Rider 7 project. This funding is available to near nonattainment area to provide funding for projects that could assist with the development of the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Our region is eligible for the PM_{2.5} portion of this program and has been awarded approximately \$450m in project funding. The H-GAC Board of Directors has approved H-GAC acceptance of this funding, and staff are working to finalize contract details. Staff are continuing to develop a scope of work to support this effort and anticipate quickly receiving approval from TCEQ.
- Staff continues to administer and Environmental Protection Agency-funded Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant 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.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING & FORECASTING

- Staff continues to provide travel demand and forecasting modeling supports 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. These include modeling support for TxDOT and non-TxDOT projects such as: Congestion Mitigation Analysis for SH 35 and the SH 99 frontage roads using projected traffic demand, the SH 99 (Grand Parkway Segment A) TxDOT project modeling alternatives for the new-build freeway in Grand Parkway Segment A, the FM 3345 Corridor Study (TxDOT) project in Missouri City,

Texas, the northern Brazoria county/Pearland subregional mobility studies for the support of the subregional plan, TxDOT I-10E PEL Study, Waller County BPMS - FM 529, FM 1486 corridor study Montgomery County project, Benefit cost review for 5 categories consisting of: the major projects, high growth area needs projects, operational improvements and congestion management projects, resiliency and state of good repair project and transit projects requested by Transportation Department, and HCS2023 model run for SH35 vs SH99 frontage road CMA.

- Staff Tested ATOM 3 (V8) with 2045 model and compared results with ATOM 2, Conducting sensitivity analysis for ATOM 3 (V10), continues Updating existing model input files from the TAZ 5217 structure to the new TAZ 5808 structure, Reviewed benefit cost analysis for 84 projects for the Transportation Department, assisted in Setting up VisionEval production environment.
- Staff continues to work with TxDOT TP&P and the TTI for the forthcoming commercial vehicle and Galveston special generator survey in the H-GAC MPO region, continue to coordinate with H-GAC website team to develop a data and survey website for H-GAC completed and on-going surveys,
- Staff continues to coordinate with RSG Consultants under the ETC Institute Survey contract for development of the Airport sub-model, working with Cambridge Systematics and her team of sub-contractors for the Travel Demand Model Update and Maintenance tasks, continue to work with the TTI on the development of the scope of work and survey instrument of the eight major Universities surveys outside the Texas Medical Center.

Safety Outreach Program

- Staff continues to work on Scope of work for Teen Driver Safety and will go to procurement for bidding process.
- Staff continues to work on Scope of work for Youth Traffic Safety and will go to procurement for bidding process.
- Staff attended meetings including TxDOT Research Overview Web Series, Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee Meeting, Transportation Improvement Program HGAC Subcommittee Meeting and Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Staff continues to work on the background Paper for the Board of Directors for the Safety Regional Campaign and upload to Novus.