

11D. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

LONG RANGE PLANNING

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Southeast Harris County Subregional Study has been completed. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- H-GAC staff have received the final deliverables for the Liberty County Mobility Study. A presentation of the study's recommendations was made to Liberty County Commissioners' Court on February 14, 2023. The project is complete. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Plan study team presented the final recommendations at the last Steering Committee Meeting on September 29, 2022. The final document is being drafted. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com
- Staff developed Advanced Funding Agreements (AFA) for regional planning studies included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The AFA's have been submitted to TxDOT for approval.
- Staff is procuring 5 subregional plans: FM 518 Corridor Study, Pearland Mobility Study, Washington Ave. Corridor Study, Chambers County and Old 6th Ward, planning study. Two additional studies are anticipated to be procured in the first quarter of 2023 and include Cemetery Road Corridor study and Friendswood's Lake Boulevard Corridor study. All these projects are included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Work on these studies will begin when the Advanced Funding Agreements are approved by TxDOT.

2. Freight Planning

- The next Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting will be held in February 2023. Date and time to be announced.
- The last Steering Committee meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan was held on December 1, 2022 followed by a Stakeholder meeting January 12, 2023. For more information visit: www.engage.h-gac.com

The Houston Area Rail Transformation (HART) working group continues to meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss rail crossing issues. The next meeting is planned for January 20, 2023.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- Staff held a Traffic Incident Management Meeting at Houston TranStar with TxDOT, Houston TranStar Staff, Harris County Sheriff Officer (HCSO), Houston Police Department (HPD), AECOM, and the Blue Ridge Transportation Group on February 9, 2023.
- Staff met with Baytown Police Department and HCSO to discuss expansion of Tow and Go to freeways in the City of Baytown.
- Staff met with Kimley-Horn and Associates Staff to discuss the Intersection Safety Contract Task 4 activity during January and future work.

- Staff conducted a Transportation Systems Maintenance and Operation (TSMO) Meeting on February 2, 2023.
 - Staff attended weekly Statewide TIM Calls during January and February.
 - Tow and Go performed 2,817 “No Cost Tows” in January 2023. Average Clearance Times was 15 minutes and 57 seconds.
 - In 2022, the 8-county region experienced 838 traffic fatalities based on data from TxDOT Crash Record Information System (CRIS), which was a 1% decrease when compared to 2021 which recorded 849 fatalities.
 - The number of traffic crashes recorded in CRIS in the 8 County Area was 177,565 for 2022, a 1% increase when compared to 2021 which recorded 176,184 crashes.
4. Environmental Planning
- Staff are 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 TxDOT and consultants working on local Planning and Environmental Linkages studies to examine the application of Ecological tools on those studies.
 - Staff are continuing to work on an update to the regional Environmental Justice report.
5. Resiliency Planning
- 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
 - Staff is starting initial preparation for the development of a Resiliency Plan, a recommendation resulting from the Resiliency & Durability Pilot project.
 - Staff continues to track the PROTECT Resiliency Grant opportunity. <https://www.h-gac.com/resiliency-planning>
6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Phase 2 of the RTP public outreach was completed in 2022. .and included virtual and in-person public meetings around the region from October to December 2022. This outreach included sharing and requesting feedback specific to the Visioning outreach results along with the investment strategies to address safety, reliability, and other identified needs. More information on the upcoming meetings can be found at: <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate>
 - The third and final round of public outreach will occur March to April 2023. These meetings are to present and receive comments on the draft 2045 RTP Update. Updates regarding the public outreach process are anticipated in February 2023. Please see <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate> for more information.
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.
- Staff submitted a scope of work for updating the Congestion Management Process for internal review to help move forward that project and guide the work of the workgroup.

SHORT RANGE PLANNING

1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated on 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 finalized the Annual Project Listing of Obligated Projects that provides project-level details on the use of federal funds for highways, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation projects over the course of the fiscal year 2021. H-GAC staff develops the annual report in cooperation with TxDOT and local public transportation providers and is available on the the [H-GAC website](#).

2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Adult Bicycle Safety Program - (1) Staff scheduled a series of in-person adult bicycle handling classes (e.g. Train Your Bike) in all the counties surrounding Harris County. Train Your Bike classes have been completed in Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, and Liberty counties. Staff organized and is preparing a bike handling safety class for TAC and TPC members.
- (2) Online introductory courses for bike riding (e.g. CyclingSavvy) are also available free of charge to anyone in the eight county MPO area. (3) Bicycle Friendly Driver classes are in process of being scheduled. Staff organized and is preparing a Bicycle Friendly Driver class for TAC and TPC members.
- More information can be found here - <https://www.h-gac.com/pedestrian-bicyclist-planning/bike-safety>
- Staff continues participation in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee and Houston Traffic Safety Committee. Staff serves as technical and data resource for both committees.
- Staff has sent the scope of work of City of Friendswood Master Trail Plan to Communications reviewing the public engagement portion and in process of scheduling meeting with Transportation directors to review the scope of work.

- Staff created draft for an Active Transportation Plan webpage and sent to Active Transportation team for internal review. Staff will incorporate the input and get a final draft to work with the Web team.
- Staff created work plan for Safe Routes to School and sent for manager and active transportation to review.
- Staff continues to work with the Pedestrian/Bicyclists Subcommittee and associated workgroups to advance solutions beneficial to the region. Establishing priorities for calendar year 2023 are in process. Staff has spoken with numerous individuals who want to become involved as interested parties for the subcommittee.
- The GIS Network Update Workgroup coordinated short term implementation of GIS data revision using information provided by communities to H-GAC (Ped/Bike and Data Analytics and Research Departments). The initial short-term data update within GIS has started for bike facilities. Staff have begun coordinating with smaller communities to obtain and create data (as necessary) that displays bike facilities within GIS. Workgroup continued identifying long range bike data needed for inclusion into GIS, developing a crowdsourcing plan to identify and incorporate ancillary bike facilities for inclusion in GIS, and develop standardized quality/functional criteria for bike facilities. The workgroup has also begun identifying and establishing parameters for a standardized format needed for an update of the regional sidewalk GIS layer.
- The Active Transportation Modeling Workgroup continues to coordinate with Data Analytics and Research Department. The Active Transportation Traffic Survey scope of services is in process and entering the initial technical review in collaboration with Data Analytics and Research Department.
- Staff has begun developing a scope of services to revise and update the Regional Long Range Active Transportation Plan.

3. Transit Planning

- The Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee met on February 9, 2023 to endorse regional transit safety targets and receive updates on other transit planning efforts.
- Staff conducted two focus groups with Transit Provider and Transportation Stakeholders in January to assist in the development of a revised Call for Partners for the CMAQ Commuter and Transit Pilot Program.
- Staff are in the early stages of developing a new Advanced Funding Application for the Call for Partners to extend funding beyond August 2024.
- Year 2 service began on the Woodlands – Energy Corridor commuter pilot project.
- The Interim Report for the Pearland Needs Assessment is nearing completion and the Steering Committee is scheduled to review the report in early March.

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Phase 2 of the RTP public outreach was completed in 2022. .and included virtual and in-person public meetings around the region from October to December 2022. This outreach included sharing and requesting feedback specific to the Visioning outreach results along with the

investment strategies to address safety, reliability, and other identified needs. More information on the upcoming meetings can be found at: <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate>

- The third and final round of RTP public outreach will occur March to April 2023. These meetings are to present and receive comments on the draft 2045 RTP Update. Updates regarding the public outreach process are anticipated in February 2023. Please see <https://engage.h-gac.com/2045rtupdate> for more information.
- Planning for the following projects is currently underway:
 - Pearland Transit Study
 - Bike Safety Training Courses
 - Title VI/Environmental Justice Awareness
 - TIRZ 13 Mobility Study – Phase II
 - Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan
 - 2023 Commute Solutions Digital Marketing Plan
 - Regional Goods Movement Plan Update
 - Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Plan
 - Language Assistance Plan Update
 - Hurricane Preparedness

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Staff attended the University of Houston-Downtown's Week of Welcome to discuss transportation options with students. A Student Commute Survey for the Spring semester was also launched.
- Commute Solutions staff presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the East End District. The presentation was held at the January Board Meeting.
- Commute Solutions in partnership with multiple organizations across the region met to discuss the 2023 Ozone Action Campaign. This Campaign would consist of a regional fare reduction for participating transit agencies to promote transit during a month with high ozone levels.
- Staff consulted the development and launch of the ConnectSmart application and will continue to work with the ConnectSmart development team to continue with the improvements
- Staff is coordinating with METRO on a co-promotional campaign that will introduce new technology and promote alternative modes to driving a alone in a series of events throughout 2023.

CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff continued to monitor current projects and calculate emission reductions based upon Subrecipient performances. Staff continued to monitor grant recipients' usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- Staff continued to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses, and Pasadena ISD for grant funding for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. Additionally, Staff continued to work with two SEP-funded contracts; Danbury and Lamar Consolidated ISD's.
- Staff continued to examine and develop the parameters needed to establish an electric charging infrastructure component to the Clean Vehicles Program.
- Staff continued to process closeouts for projects meeting minimum contracted requirements for all project vehicles.

- Staff participated in a variety of internal and external meetings and met with other local government agencies to discuss projects utilizing Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.
- Staff continues to meet with electric charger manufacturers to verify Buy America compliance and program interest.

GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Staff is working with partners Environmental Defense Fund, Port of Houston, and Evolve Houston to develop a Commercial Zero Emission Vehicle Event that will include presentations on topics related to zero emission vehicles of all types as well as a ride & drive event that will feature a variety of light and heavy duty electric and hydrogen powered vehicles. The event will be held at NRG Center on November 30th from 8:30am to 5:00 pm. This event is free. You can reserve your spot [here](#).
- Staff attended the American Planning Association Texas Chapter's Annual Planning Conference on October 19-21. Staff participated in a panel on equity considerations in transportation electrification.
- Staff is working to update our region's annual PM_{2.5} Path Forward report. Staff has been working closely with regional stakeholders over the past several months to review and update the annual PM_{2.5} report. It is anticipated that the draft report will be brought to RAQPAC for discussion at the December meeting and for approval at the committee's January meeting. The 2021 version of this report can be found [here](#).
- 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. During the most recent month, the Coalition hosted a hybrid webinar focused on the EPA Clean School Bus Program as well as providing assistance in planning an anticipated autumn event focusing on the transition to zero-emission vehicles.
- 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. IKEA has installed EV charging equipment at the host facility to facilitate the vehicle purchases and it is anticipated that the vehicles will be delivered in 2023. For the 2019 DERA project, staff is continuing to prepare a Request for Applicants to find at least one new partner to complete the project.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING & FORECASTING

- Staff continues to provide travel demand and forecasting support to various in-house planning processes that includes sub-regional and corridor studies, Regional Transportation Plan, Air Quality and Conformity determination.

- Staff continues to provide Geographic Information System technical support for the highway Geographic Information System networks development for the Regional Transportation Plan through the Travel Demand Modeling project database conversion into Geographic Information System layers for base year and future scenario years planning, project mapping and review for 2023 Transportation Improvement Program projects, sub-regional and corridor studies that included SH 87 and SH225 PEL on behalf of Texas Department of Transportation – Houston District.
- Staff provided Modeling Support to the Transportation Department on the Regional Transit Fare Reduction Study, support of these studies using Regional Economic Modeling model is also on-going.
- Staff finalized preparing networks for the 2023 Air Quality Conformity Analysis, ran each model year of analysis in support to the Air Quality Analysis team.
- Staff continues tweaking and enhancing Regional Activity Based Model, and the familiarization and documentation of the forecasting tools.
- Staff continues participating in the ERG Consultant audit review for the Spatial Emission Estimator tool testing with the Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator veraion3, processed vehicle miles travel data for inputs into the air quality model for the base and future years, prepared input files for conformity runs for all years and received pre-analysis consensus plan for conformity approved by the conformity partners
- Staff continued to coordinate the efforts of the Origin-Destination Survey Steering Committee team and the prime contractor as they reviewed and edited the draft reports of the Origin -Destination Survey, the 2nd expansion and the Tour Base survey. Staff follow-up with the Steering Committee for the on-going Household Survey with Texas Department of Transportation – Austin District in the H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization region and coordinates with the Steering Committee and the Procurement Team for the 2nd attempt to procure the Prime Contractor for the Airports (Hobby & IAH) Ground Access Survey, held interview with the prime contractor and coordinating with the Procurement Team and the prime contractor for Best and Final Offer.
- Staff continued to process INRIX speed data in relation to the H-GAC traffic count project, approved weekly CJ Hench Consultant traffic work schedule, updated VisionEval files and carried out Traffic Analysis Zone model run.