

13F. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)

- Strategies and recommendations have been developed for the Southeast Harris County Subregional Study and have been reviewed by the Steering and Stakeholder Committee members. The next public meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2022 at 6:00pm. For more information visit www.engage.h-gac.com.
- Analysis and refinement of initial recommendations for the Liberty County Mobility Study are underway. A Steering Committee meeting was held on March 10, 2022 to present the recommendations. A second round of public involvement outreach will occur in late Spring.
- Draft study recommendations have been developed and are under analysis for the Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Study. The next Steering Committee will be held in April to present the study recommendation analysis. The next public meeting is being planned for mid-summer.
- H-GAC staff are developing a scope of work for a regional Connected and Automated Vehicle Strategy.
- Staff have developed draft Advanced Funding Agreements (AFA) for regional planning studies included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Staff have developed draft Requests for Proposals for the regional planning studies included in the 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and are coordinating with local partners on project scopes of work.

2. Freight Planning

- The Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting was conducted on March 3, 2022. The Committee's next meeting will be held in June 2022.
- The second Steering Committee meeting for the Regional Goods Movement Plan was held on March 10, 2022. The first public meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2022. For more information visit www.engage.h-gac.com.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- Staff continued coordination with the Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff Office on operations with the Tow and Go Program.
- Staff and the consultant made site visits to intersections in Liberty County to do Intersection Safety Assessments (ISA) on February 23 and 24.
- A meeting was held with the City of Galveston to prepare for ISA site visits in February for Liberty County and March for the City of Galveston. The ISA project is on schedule to wrap up in the summer of 2022.

- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as “Pay the Price” is continuing through the August 31, 2022.
- Staff conducted a Transportation Safety Committee Meeting on February 22, 2022.
- Staff attend the City of Houston Vision Zero Implementation Group Meeting.
- Staff was interviewed by ABC13 Elisa Rivas about the Tow and Go Program and what to do if stranded on the roadside. A ride along with a Tow and Go wrecker.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff is developing a process and worksheet to assess and document the environmental justice issues associated with proposed transportation projects and planning decisions. The worksheet is part of the initiative to integrate Title VI and environmental justice requirements in the planning process and will ensure that non-discrimination and equity issues are examined and understood prior to TAC and TPC consideration.
- Staff is updating the Eco-Logical tool to include links to existing environmental assessment and final environmental impact statements for roadway projects within the planning area. Staff will coordinate with TxDOT and consultants working on local Planning and Environmental Linkages studies to examine the application of Ecological tool on those studies.
- Staff is continuing work on an update to the regional Environmental Justice report.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff continues the development of a Low Impact Development tool to examine how to cost-effectively integrate low impact development into transportation projects in the Metropolitan Planning Area.
- 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.

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- Staff worked on the scope of work, outreach activities, and schedule for the development of the update of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- The RTP Subcommittee Meeting was conducted on March 9, 2022.
- Staff are developing an initial poll to kick-start public involvement and outreach for the next RTP update.

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 being reported on a quarterly basis from transit agencies within 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.
- A 2021 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Annual Report is being developed by staff to discuss progress made in implementing the CMP.

- **SHORT RANGE PLANNING**

1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated on the amendments to the 2021-2024 TIP document. Staff coordinated with TxDOT and local governments on the proposed amendments to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Staff worked on the development of project selection criteria 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 and bicycle and public transportation projects. H-GAC staff developed 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 collected data from permanent ped/bike counters and prepared reports for distribution and posting on H-GAC's website.
- Staff received and logged new permanent and mobile bike/pedestrian counters. Staff is revising the recommendations for installation and maintenance in preparation for deployment of the new counters.
- Staff continued to work with the America Bicycle Education Association to track the online safety course called CyclingSavvy. Staff is working on a marketing campaign for the online course. Staff performed site visits and are finalizing potential locations for the in-person bike handling courses.
- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee and Texas Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Staff continues the process to procure a consultant to revise the 2045 Active Transportation Plan.

- Staff continue to hold monthly meetings to advance Ped/Bike Subcommittee workgroups. One workgroup will revise the regional bike network GIS data and the other workgroup will develop an active transportation focused travel demand modeling solution. Staff are performing research of best practices for the travel demand modeling and bike network update workgroups. Staff continues to refine the SharePoint sites for the subcommittee workgroups to enhance engagement.
- Staff prepared draft Advanced Funding Agreements (AFAs) after collaborating with project sponsors for four of the UPWP approved active transportation projects.
- Staff has coordinated with multiple service area partners (e.g. bicycle advocacy groups, bike share, etc.) to help new personnel at each organization understand H-GAC active transportation functions, services, funding opportunities, etc.

3. Transit Planning

- The next regular meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee is scheduled for April 14, 2022.
- Staff continued to refine the scopes of work for High-Capacity Transit feasibility studies. This effort consists of individual studies of corridors and service concepts recommended by the High-Capacity Transit Task Force Priority Network. The first such study will focus on the US 90A corridor and will be conducted in partnership with the Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD).
- The City of Pearland Transit Feasibility Needs Assessment and Study public engagement site was released on March 8, 2022. A resident survey of transit perceptions was released concurrently as well. A Technical Memorandum with existing conditions and peer analysis will be prepared for distribution in April 2022.
- Staff is working on a scope of work for the City of Dayton transit study and will meet with city staff in mid-March to review the project, which will be developed to examine both local and commuter transit services.
- The Woodlands – Energy Corridor contract for the first suburb to suburb commuter service in the Houston-Galveston Region was approved and executed by The Woodlands Township. Service began on January 4, 2022, with service to the Energy Corridor. Extensive marketing efforts are underway to increase the level of ridership. The decline in COVID cases and the increase in gas prices along with the marketing efforts is expected on significantly increase ridership in March,
- A draft of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan 2022 update has been completed. Final approvals were provided in February from RTCS, TAC, TPC, and the Board of Directors. The development of an Action Plan for implementing RTCP recommendations has begun.
- Coordination continues between H-GAC, METRO and other regional transit agencies regarding the Regional Transit Connectivity Project, including the Seamless Fare System, regional trip planner, data management system, and related efforts. A Regional Fare

Workgroup meeting was held on March 10, and initial assessments to determine agencies' need and capacity are underway.

- **TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH**

- Staff is preparing for the public meetings in March for TIP 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Update and Southeast Harris Subregional Study.
- Surveys will launch in March and April to gain feedback from the public on the RTP 2045 Update and Pearland Transit Study.
- The February edition of the transportation focused newsletter, Region View, was released on March 22.
- Planning and coordination are underway for the launch of media buys and advertising with local vendors for Hurricane Preparedness, Tow and Go, and Commute Solutions.
- A bike safety class awareness plan was developed in February and will be implemented in March with the goal of increasing attendance at in-person and virtual classes.
- Staff is planning for an Environmental Justice awareness campaign to occur during summer of 2022.

- **COMMUTE SOLUTIONS**

- Staff held monthly coordination meeting with TxDOT's ConnectSmart team. Staff submitted the Data Sharing and Access Request to ConnectSmart.
- Staff continued to meet with the consultant for telework planning coordination with area companies and local governments.
- Staff met with the City of Houston to finalize their new telework policy and discuss the mayor's support and next steps.
- Staff met with Oncology Consultants to review employee survey analysis (survey gained feedback from employees to gauge the level of staff interest in teleworking and compressed work schedules) and discuss next steps for the development of a flexible work schedule policy.
- Staff met with Energy Corridor and the Woodlands Express to plan marketing and outreach strategies to promote the new route (Woodlands to the Energy Corridor District).
- Staff launch the Future of Work Survey, an 8-county region emp Staff met with the City of Houston to finalize their new telework policy and discuss next steps.
- Staff met with Oncology Consultants to review employee survey findings and discuss next steps for the development of a flexible work schedule policy.
- Staff launched the Future of Work Survey to identify what the future of work looks like for companies and highlight areas of opportunity for new partnerships.
- Staff met with attended a Black History Month event at University of Houston Downtown and discussed travel options and current challenges students face with their commute to school.

- **CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- During last month, staff continues to work with several ISD's in the Houston-Galveston region to replace older school buses. An application was received from Rice University for a new electric bus. Staff continued to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses.
- Staff continues to examine and develop the needed parameters to establish an electric charging infrastructure component to the Clean Vehicles Program. Staff worked on creating a new application specifically for electric vehicle chargers.
- Staff continued to monitor grant recipient's usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- Staff participated in a variety of internal and external meetings and met with other local government agencies to discuss projects utilizing Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. Staff met with TxDOT and discussed electric vehicles and charging stations as projects for CMAQ funding.
- Staff met with representatives from Lion Electric to hear about their new buses and discuss working together on potential projects.

- **GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Staff continued to work with air quality team from the North Central Texas Council of Governments to meet with stakeholders to develop Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) corridor plan for Interstate 45 between and within the two MPO's service areas. Staff are continuing to hold discussions with stakeholders who may have an interest in either all-electric or hydrogen technology. H-GAC staff anticipate future stakeholder events upcoming in the next several months.
- 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. This month, staff is working to complete our annual survey of alternative fuel usage within the 8-county region. Additionally, staff has applied for an additional year of funding to continue these activities through early 2023. Currently underway is planning for this upcoming funding year which will begin in April. It is anticipated that staff will present a series of webinars and other alternative fuel events as well as continuing our ongoing podcast series.
- 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 is currently installing EV charging equipment to facilitate the vehicle purchases and it is anticipated that the entire project will be completed by the end of 2022.

For the 2019 DERA project, staff is working with new project partner, Hirschbach Motor Lines. Staff has received approval from EPA to continue this project with the new partner and the contracting process is underway. The project is anticipated to begin in Spring 2022.

- Staff is working with representatives from the South-Central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource to develop a workshop for local governments to discuss transportation and energy resiliency in our region. This workshop will focus on vehicle electrification and issues related to equity of the upcoming transition as well as how vehicle electrification can help improve energy efficiency. Anticipated speakers at this roundtable include Dr. Bruce Race from University of Houston and representatives from EVolve Houston. This workshop will be held on April 14, 2022. Further details will be available in future updates.

- **TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING**

- Staff continues to provide travel demand modeling to support various sub-regional and corridor studies such as looking at various alternatives for the METRO BRT and managed Laned within the Inner Katy study areas, the Montgomery County, carrying out model runs for the recommended scenarios for the SE Harris, Liberty Counties studies, the RTP, TIP, the 2045 Regional Air Quality conformity process, to support the 2022 ND 2045 Grand Parkway project, and other H-GAC's planning studies.
- Staff continues to provide GIS technical support for the RTP, TIP, the Regional Air Quality conformity process, to create the New-Regional Bikeway Networks Updates, and the creation of the web app for Active Transportation Viewers.
- Staff continued to enhance the capabilities of the website and dashboard for RCTP, RTP viewing that assists H-GAC's member agencies to view their various corridor and sub-area transportation planning and studies, create "General Transit Specification Feed (GTFS) for transit agencies within the H-GAC region. Staff continue to work with TxDOT to utilize Streetlight data, and in the Household Survey planning process.
- Staff continued to enhance H-GAC's Activity-Based Model (ABM) and carry out model runs for the Regional Goods Movement Study using the ABM model.
- Staff continued to develop the AIMSUN Meso- and Micro- modeling for the three sub-areas: Montgomery County, SE Harris and Liberty Counties studies, and continued to evaluate other modeling software.
- Staff continued to work with a Steering Committee and the Contractor (ETC Consulting) for the Transit On-board Origin-Destination (O-D) Transit Survey. The survey is on-going and scheduled to last till December 2022. Staff continue to support the bike/pedestrian project for the forthcoming active transportation modeling efforts.
- Staff working with the City of Houston (Airport staff) for the joint effort of the regional commercial airports (IAH & Hobby) ground access count to the airport. The survey data collection is scheduled for Fall of 2022. The ILA between H-GAC and the City of Houston is at its final stage of review.

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- Staff continued to process INRIX speed data in relation to the H-GAC traffic count project. RFP for the traffic data collection is completed. Data collection will commence in September 2022.
- Staff continue to assist NCTCOG with zero Emission Vehicle Grant; provided streetlight data to help determine where alternative fueling stations for trucks will be placed.
- Staff and H-GAC Procurement team released Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Regional Economic Model (REMI) software and now waiting on response from potential contractor to the RFP.
- Staff continued to develop emission factors and coordinated with Conformity Partners on the Air Quality Conformity Process, developed memo on different strategies and outcomes for the 2045 RTP amendments, and SEE software and model contract.