

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 fourth Steering Committee meeting was held on August 6, 2024. The Committee members reviewed and commented on the final Thoroughfare Plan draft, proposed policy updates and draft cross-sections. The final Thoroughfare Plan, and street cross-sections will be presented at a public meeting that will be held in September/October.
- Washington Avenue Corridor study began October 1, 2023. The study team is developing alternatives to improve traffic flow along the corridor. The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for October.
- Old 6th Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility study began November 1, 2023. The study team hold the third Steering Committee meeting on August 22, 2024. The study team will be presenting the draft recommendations for the committee to review and comment.
- 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 will be held in mid-September.
- 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 Steering Committee meeting will be held in mid-September.
- Cemetery Road Corridor Study began March 1, 2024. The first Steering Committee was held June 17, 2024. The first public outreach event will be held August 22, 2024, at Runge Park (4605 Peck Ave., Santa Fe, TX) from 5:30-7:00pm.
- 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 July 18, 2024. The meeting presentations and recording are uploaded to the HGAC Freight planning webpage. The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2024.
- Staff continue 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 August 23 at 1:30 pm.

3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations

- H-GAC in partnership with TxDOT have started planning efforts for a SHRP2 Train-the-Trainer training August 26/27.
- The Tow and Go Public Awareness Campaign is live with educational information streaming on radio, through digital and social media, and billboards across the region.
- Hurricane Preparedness and Awareness Campaign for 2024 is live.
- Staff attended the Houston Traffic Safety Coalition Meeting.
- H-GAC staff conducted two meetings with the consultant on the regional ITS Architecture project. They will present to TSMO Subcommittee in August.
 - Consultant is contacting local stakeholders to take stock in local ITS inventory and future ITS planning activities.

4. Environmental Planning

- 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

- 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 August 14, 2024.
- 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 will close the application portal on August 7. This process will result in a new RTP project listing.

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 underway to update the Language Access Plan (LAP). The LAP examines the need for language assistance by individuals with limited proficiency in the English language (LEP) within the MPO region and specifies what services will be offered to overcome the language barriers. Efforts to update the LAP include a survey to gather information about the non-English languages spoken around the region. Information gathered through the survey will help updates to the Language Access Plan (LAP) and the triennial update to the H-GAC Title VI Program. Related activities include the community roundtables, which are aimed at opening a dialogue and creating long-term partnerships with advocates, representatives, and members of the racial and ethnic minority groups and other underserved populations.
- Work is also underway to update the Title VI Program as required by the Federal Transit Administration.

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.

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 next meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee will be held on Thursday, August 15, 2024. This meeting was rescheduled from July 11, 2024, due to the aftereffects of Hurricane Beryl.
- The US 90A Corridor Transit Study began on March 12, 2024. Staff is launching a website for the study in partnership with the consultant. The second Steering Committee meeting and first Stakeholder Committee meeting are currently being scheduled.
- 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 could 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 Board of Directors, at their June 2024 meeting, authorized H-GAC to enter a contract with the preferred consultant. The project will kick off once a contract has been signed.
- The Pearland Transit Study Alternatives Analysis draft was completed, and preparation of the third draft of the Final Report is underway. We are extending our review of alternatives to examine additional options for delivering transit service based on feedback from the City of Pearland. Presentations to the Pearland City Council, TAC, and TPC are to be scheduled soon.

- The Board of Directors approved two years of funding for Microtransit pilot service in the City of Sugar Land. The City of Sugar Land agreed to enter into an agreement. Service is expected to begin in the Fall.
- The Dayton Transit Study contract is in Internal Audit. A City of Dayton-H-GAC interlocal agreement is also under approval review,. The study is expected to begin by October
- 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. H-GAC and METRO are currently working to integrate all partners into the Regional Data Management System. A meeting was held in June to discuss next steps for distributing operations support to the partner agencies.
- 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
 - Hurricane Preparedness Campaign
 - Safe Streets 4 All
 - EJ/Title VI – Awareness Initiative (Connecting Communities)
 - Language Access Plan Update
 - Washington Ave Corridor Study
 - Tow & Go – Media Buying
 - Commute Solutions (Connect Smart Pilot Program)
 - Pearland Public Meetings – Phase II
 - Chambers County Thoroughfare Plan
 - Bay Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan
 - Friendswood Parkway Corridor Study
 - Cemetery Road Corridor Study
 - US 90A Transit Corridor Study
 - Old Sixth Ward/TIRZ 13 Mobility Study Corridor Study
 - MPO 50th Anniversary
 - Air Quality – Climate Change Engagement for MPO's Collar Counties
 - Best Workplaces for Commuters

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

- Commute Solutions continues to work with the multiple transit partners across the region in preparation for the Commute Solutions Month Celebration/Ozone Action Month Pilot September 2024.
- Commute Solutions and ConnectSmart continued their outreach planning with Rice University including the upcoming student orientation and Amazing Race, a transit adventure requiring students to navigate town using ConnectSmart.
- Love to Ride is gearing up to launch the Biketober campaign and has submitted the final marketing toolkit. Biketober will take place throughout the month of October and Love to Ride and Commute Solutions will encourage riders of all levels to download the app, ride, and encourage others to join.
- AECOM submitted an updated scope, schedule, and budget for the implementation tasks of the TDM Redesign project. A few tasks include developing a sales & outreach strategy guide, structured onboarding plan, behavioral interventions, and the creation of an employer recognition plan. The tasks are expected to be completed early 2025.
- The evaluation for the Regionwide Emergency Ride Home Program was completed and all vendor responses were uploaded for review.

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 technical 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. These include modeling support for: I-45 from Hardy Toll Rd to north of Rayford/Sawdust Rd in Montgomery County, City of Houston MTP amendments, I-610 S Feasibility & Schematic, TxDOT Roundabout Feasibility Analysis phase 2 (FM2855), SH 36A Feasibility Study.
- Staff finalizing the development of the scope of work and the best methodologies with TxDOT TP&P and the TTI for the forthcoming commercial vehicle survey in the H-GAC MPO region by reviewing the Household Expansion table review, identifying special generators/distribution centers, continue to coordinate with H-GAC website team to develop a data and survey website for H-GAC completed and on-going surveys, edited the traffic count site GIS file to match modeling network, reformatted the traffic count to reflect by class as per Harris County request, updated Pearland transit cost benefit table based on new changes, updating traffic count with after Covid count volume changes, create count infographic.
- Staff continues to review with TxDOT TP&P, the ETC Institute and Cambridge Systematics (CS) the expansion results and reports of the Household Survey data collected within H-GAC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region, held project kick-off meeting RSG Consultants under the ETC Institute Survey contract for development of the Airport sub-model, working with the Procurement team with the evaluation/scoring of the responses received for the Travel Model Development RFP and contractor procurement, continue to work with the procurement team for the development of the procurement documents for the Active Transportation Survey (Bike &

Pedestrians data collection) within the H-GAC MPO region and continue providing technical support for the PM3.

Safety Outreach Program

- Staff met with Children's Hospital to develop scope of work for conducting the 2025 Youth Traffic Safety Program.
- Staff met with compliance coordinator and finance to review, learn and discuss the Texas Children's contract process, reviewing the workflow to ensure we are on the right track.
- Staff attended meetings including Transportation Systems Management and Operations Subcommittee Meeting and the Transportation Improvement Program Subcommittee.
- Staff continues to work on the background Paper for the Board of Directors for the Youth Traffic Safety Program.