Friendswood Active Transportation Plan

Executive Summary

The Friendswood Active Transportation Plan establishes a long-term vision for creating a safer, healthier, and more connected community where residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can comfortably walk, bike, and roll to everyday destinations. Developed through a partnership between the City of Friendswood and the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), the Plan provides a strategic roadmap for investing in active transportation infrastructure that improves mobility, enhances safety, supports economic vitality, and strengthens quality of life while preserving Friendswood's unique character.

Over the past several decades, Friendswood has experienced steady residential growth while maintaining its identity as a family-oriented suburban community. As the population is projected to approach 50,000 residents by 2050, the need for a connected multimodal transportation network will continue to increase. Children walking to school, older adults aging in place, residents accessing parks and commercial areas, and visitors exploring the community all benefit from infrastructure that provides safe and convenient alternatives to driving.

The Friendswood Active Transportation Plan was developed through a year-long planning process beginning in spring 2025 and concluding in spring 2026. The planning process combined technical analysis with extensive public and stakeholder engagement to ensure recommendations reflect both community priorities and objective transportation needs. **The City of Friendswood adopted the Active Transportation Plan on June 1, 2026.**

The project followed four major phases:

- Existing Conditions Assessment
- Public and Stakeholder Engagement
- Opportunity and Needs-Based Analysis
- Recommendations and Implementation Strategy

Understanding Existing Conditions

The planning process began with a comprehensive assessment of Friendswood's existing transportation system, demographic characteristics, natural environment, land use patterns, and safety conditions. The analysis evaluated existing sidewalk, trail, and bicycle facilities, traffic safety, health indicators, and connections to schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial districts, and other community destinations.

The assessment found that Friendswood possesses many of the building blocks needed to support active transportation, including well-established neighborhoods and extensive park system. However, these assets are often disconnected by gaps in sidewalks, creek crossings, and barriers created by major roadways. While newer neighborhoods generally include sidewalks, older areas frequently lack continuous pedestrian infrastructure, limiting safe access to destinations throughout the city.

The safety analysis identified opportunities for targeted improvements along key corridors. Between 2020 and 2024, the majority of pedestrian and bicyclist crashes occurred near destinations such as schools, churches, grocery stores, and commercial corridors, highlighting the importance of improving crossings, visibility, and network connectivity. Demographic trends, including a large youth population and growing number of older adults, further reinforce the need for a transportation system that safely serves users of all ages and abilities.

Community-Driven Planning

Public participation was a key component to development of the Plan. Throughout the planning process, residents, businesses, partner agencies, and community organizations helped shape the vision and recommendations through multiple engagement opportunities, including:

- Three Steering Committee meetings
- Two Stakeholder Committee meetings
- Community pop-up event during the Friendswood Fourth of July Celebration
- Public open house
- Stakeholder walk audit
- Two online surveys
- Interactive mapping tool
- Dedicated project website

More than 200 survey responses were received, while approximately 60 residents participated during the Fourth of July pop-up event and another 50 community members attended the public meeting. Participants consistently identified safety, connectivity, and access to parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial destinations as the community's highest priorities.

Participants expressed a desire for continuous sidewalks, additional trail connections, safer crossings of major roadways, more shade, and infrastructure that allows people to comfortably walk or bike for both recreation and transportation. While many respondents regularly walk for health, recreation, and community interaction, most indicated that biking and walking throughout Friendswood remain difficult because of disconnected infrastructure and safety concerns.

From Community Priorities to Project Recommendations

Community input was combined with detailed technical analysis to create the Primary Active Transportation Network (PATN) - a citywide framework identifying the corridors that will serve as the backbone of Friendswood's active transportation system.

The project team evaluated existing infrastructure along the PATN to identify missing sidewalks, trail connections, bicycle facilities, and crossing improvements. These gaps became the basis for developing project recommendations.

To ensure project recommendations are objective and data-driven, the project team developed a comprehensive needs-based prioritization methodology evaluating projects across six weighted categories:

- Safety
- Mobility
- Connectivity
- Access
- Environmental considerations
- Public input

Using 22 measurable evaluation criteria, each proposed project was scored and ranked according to community need while incorporating stakeholder feedback and City priorities. This process provides Friendswood with a repeatable decision-making framework that can be updated as future projects are developed.

Recommendations and Implementation

The Friendswood Active Transportation Plan recommends a comprehensive program of infrastructure, policy, and implementation actions that work together to create a connected multimodal network.

The Plan includes:

- Five priority projects advanced to conceptual-level development, including planning-level cost estimates, implementation considerations, and potential funding opportunities.
- Twenty targeted sidewalk gap infill projects that improve connectivity to the network.
- Fourteen priority active transportation projects along the Primary Active Transportation Network.
- Policy recommendations that strengthen development standards, improve sidewalk design requirements, enhance ADA accessibility, support street tree planting, and encourage connected site development.

Recognizing that implementation will occur over many years, the Plan organizes projects into logical implementation packages and identifies potential funding partners,

grant opportunities, and responsible agencies. This phased approach enables the City of Friendswood to pursue improvements incrementally while coordinating with other planned or programmed roadway projects, development activity, utility work, and regional transportation investments.

A Vision for Friendswood's Future

The Friendswood Active Transportation Plan is a long-term investment strategy for creating a safer, healthier, and more resilient community. Implementation of the Plan will expand transportation choices, improve access to schools, parks, businesses, and neighborhoods, reduce barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists, support healthy lifestyles, and strengthen connections throughout the city. By combining community priorities with data-driven analysis and practical implementation strategies, the Plan positions the City of Friendswood to pursue competitive funding opportunities and make strategic investments that will benefit residents for decades to come. As Friendswood continues to grow, this Plan provides the framework needed to build an active transportation network that reflects the community's values while enhancing safety, mobility, connectivity, and quality of life for current and future generations.