

## REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

### A. H-GAC LONG RANGE PLANNING

- The 2018 Call for Projects draft listing was presented to TAC and TIP Subcommittees in March, and TAC has recommended 2018 call for Projects rankings to the TPC approval. Staff continues to hold debriefing meetings with project sponsors to explain the benefit/cost analysis process for this effort and to point out project improvements for future calls. Application materials for all projects is available at <http://www.h-gac.com/2018-call-for-projects/application-list.aspx>.
  - Work continues on the development of the 2045 RTP document. Staff hosted an RTP Workshop on March 1<sup>st</sup> to introduce some of the elements in the upcoming RTP. A copy of the presentation is available online at <http://www.h-gac.com/taq/transportation-committees/TAC/2019/03-mar/documents/2045-RTP-Workshop-March-2019.pdf>
  - For more information on 2045 RTP public outreach opportunities please visit <http://2045rtp.com/>.
1. Subregional Planning Initiatives (SPI)
    - Staff Coordinated on the SH 225 Subregional Study and conducted a coordination meeting with local governments to discuss the scope of work. Staff coordinated to develop scopes of work for the Subregional studies in Montgomery and Liberty Counties.
  2. Safety/Operations Planning
    - Safety: Staff is working with partners to set up agreements for FY19 Selective Traffic Enforcement Program.
  3. Freight Planning
    - Staff continued to work with consultants and stakeholders on the Ports Area Mobility Study.
    - Staff compiled a list of all freight data to develop a data governance strategy and freight data portal.
  4. Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning
    - Staff have completed the draft Active Transportation Plan and presented to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.
    - Staff have completed a regional sidewalk layer and have made this data available to the public upon request.
    - Staff continued to work on the Special Districts Study with Spring Branch.
    - Staff continued to work on the Bicycle Safety Trainer Program.
  5. Regional Incident Management
    - Staff conducted a meeting with Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff Office on operational issues with the Tow and Go Program.
    - There have been 4,697 “No Cost” tows conducted in January and February of 2019.
    - Staff met with the Texas Department of Transportation, Houston Police Department and Houston Fire Department to discuss a Quick Clearance Pilot Project for Minor-No Injury Crashes on Freeways in the City of Houston.

- Staff held a Traffic Incident Management meeting with Transportation staff and first responders.
- The Public Outreach Contract with Newman and Newman, Inc. ended on January 31, 2019.
- A presentation was made to the Greater Heights Chamber of Commerce on February 14, 2019 on Tow and Go. Approximately 50 people were present.
- Two-four hour SHRP2 Traffic Incident Management Training courses were held on February 15, 2019. 61 Law Enforcement, Department of Transportation and Rescue and Recovery Responders were trained.
- The Agreement to expand the Tow and Go program on the Freeways in Harris County outside the City limits of Houston is on the March 12, 2019 Harris County Commissioners court agenda

6. Eco-Logical Update Project

- Staff continued to coordinate with the project advisory committee on the proposed methodology for this project. The second Advisory Committee meeting will be held on March 26th, at H-GAC offices.

**B. H-GAC SHORT RANGE PLANNING**

1. 2019-2022 TIP Development Update

- Modifications to the 2019-2022 TIP document were brought to the TPC for preview and presented for final action. Modifications that require a change to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) will be submitted to TxDOT. The final document can be found online at <http://www.h-gac.com/taq/tip> .
- The 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for H-GAC was approved as part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. Staff continues to work on resolving all outstanding exceptions in coordination with TxDOT, FHWA, and project sponsors.
- Staff is in the process of testing the MOTION project tracking and amendment software from EcoInteractive and building the web interface for public use.

2. Transit Planning Update

- Development of the Regional Online Interactive Transportation Resource Database is continuing. Refinements to the contacts and service related information for regional transportation providers are in process with completion anticipated by the end of March 2019.
- Refinements to the General Transit Feed Specifications (GTFS) input files for the Regional Transit Trip Planner using the Google Transit Platform are continuing. Staff is continuing the preview process for the Pre-Launch Checklist with several transit operators. Current plans are to initiate the Quality Assurance checking by Google Transit by March 2019 contingent upon concurrence from the regional transit operators.
- Staff is beginning to collect and organize information to be included in the annual Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) State Metrics Report which is due to TxDOT-PTN in April 2019.

- The Service Concepts Workgroup of the High Capacity Transit Task Force met on December 14, 2018. The Innovative Finance and Economic Development Workgroups are expected to meet in January.
- The next meeting of the full High Capacity Transit Task Force is February 15, 2019.
- Staff continues work on the 2045 "Vision" and "Priority" service networks, high-level cost estimates, and economic impact analysis for the High Capacity Transit Task Force.

## **C. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

### **1. Transportation Planning Activities**

- The public comment period for the 2018 Call for projects concluded on February 28. Staff received more than 1,000 public comments which included comments received at public meetings, through the 2018 Call for Projects website, comments submitted via US Postal Service, emailed comments, and comments submitted through the public comment voicemail telephone line. Click [here](#) to view the comments received.
- Staff will continue to prepare for the final round of public meetings which are currently tentatively scheduled for April 10.
- Staff participated in a Public Involvement Working Group Webinar on March 11. The webinar was hosted by AMPO, with presentations on Outreach Performance Measures provided by the Area Alamo Metropolitan Planning Organization.

### **2. Commute Solutions Activities**

- Staff participated in a REMI webinar on February 20 called “The Storm to Remember: The Economic Impact of Hurricane Harvey” that was presented by Joyce E. Jauer, MPSA, Senior Revenue Analyst of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Office.
- Staff attended the Texas Medical Center (TMC) Strategy and Operations Council meeting on February 21 at 6550 Bertner, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Houston, TX 77030. METRO staff presented the METRONext Plan.
- Commute Solutions and Multimodal Transportation staffs met on February 22 to discuss the Transit Awareness Program for Elected Officials and Business Leaders. The goal of the program is to increase awareness of transit services in the Houston-Galveston region by engaging the support of elected officials and public and private sector employers as “Champions” to help promote public transportation among their constituents and employees as well as other commuters. Staff participated in a follow-up meeting with the same group of employees on March 13 to discuss implementing a Public Outreach Campaign for Elected Officials and Businesses to promote transit and other modes of transportation.
- Staff participated in a 2-hour webinar of the MPO TDM Peer Exchange Group on February 27. The webinar was facilitated by Nicholas Ramfos, the TDM Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). About 20+ people from MPOs and TDM

programs as well as transit and vanpool providers participated in the webinar. Speakers and presentations included:

- Ruth Reiman with the PAG, Tucson, Arizona, who briefed the group on an updated annual Travel Reduction Employee Survey which gathers data on commuter trips.
- Peter Williamson, SLOCOG, Santa Barbara, California lead a group discussion on their upcoming Bike to Work Day (BTWD) planning activities. H-GAC staff also shared ideas on BTWD events that are being planned by H-GAC staff, and the cities of Houston and Sugar Land during Bike Month in May 2019.
- Daniel Sheehan, MWCOG, Washington, DC, lead a discussion on how MPOs that operate vanpool programs report to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the National Transit Database (NTD). Group members were encouraged to identify best practices and determine acceptable metrics (e.g. fare revenues per mile).
- Industry updates were given by participants on TDM activities associated with other organization.
- Staff attended the monthly Super Neighborhood Alliance evening meeting on March 11 at the Houston City Hall Annex. The presidents of more than 60 Super Neighborhood community groups were present. Commute Solutions staff distributed a total of 71 flyers promoting the 2045 RTP Public Meetings to be held on April 10 at H-GAC. Staff also encouraged the community groups leaders at the meeting to contact her to give a Commute Solutions presentation at their monthly Super Neighborhood meeting.

#### **D. CLEAN VEHICLES/DRAYAGE PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

##### **1. Clean Vehicles Program**

- Staff responded to incoming phone calls and email requests for program information.
- Staff reached out to prospects, applicants and grant sub-recipients regarding CMAQ grants.
- Staff updated forms to improve usability for applicants and grant sub-recipients.
- Staff compiled a mailing list of Clean Vehicles contacts to invite to the November 14 Clean Cities Technologies Conference. The invitations were issued by Air Quality Program staff.
- Staff emailed a follow-up invitation to all grant sub-recipients with active projects.
- Staff phoned a few grant sub-recipients whose email invitations bounced, and then reissued their conference invitations.
- Staff worked on developing an online compliance reporting tool for active projects.

##### **2. Drayage Program**

- Staff responded to incoming phone calls and email requests for program information.
- Staff reached out to prospects, applicants and grant sub-recipients regarding drayage loans and CMAQ grants.
- Staff updated forms to improve usability for applicants and grant sub-recipients in English and Spanish.
- CMAQ funds totaling \$301,903.59 were disbursed to replace three vehicles whose contractor loan amounts had been paid previously.

- Staff compiled a mailing list of Drayage Program contacts to invite to the November 14 Clean Cities Technologies Conference. The invitations were subsequently issued by Air Quality Program staff.

#### **E. GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Air Quality staff was informed that H-GAC will receive an EPA grant under the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) program. This grant will provide over \$500,000 in funding to replace diesel cargo handling equipment working in regional warehouse operations with all-electric models.
- Staff is working to prepare an additional grant application for EPA's 2019 DERA Request of Applications. The proposed project will work with additional regional fleets to help electrify freight operations within the region. It is anticipated that the final proposal will be submitted at the end of March 2019.
- At the request of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), staff is currently working to document Weight of Evidence measures for the upcoming Houston- Galveston- Brazoria 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Serious Classification Attainment Demonstration SIP Revision. This Weight of Evidence measures reports local initiatives that are already being voluntarily implemented within the region and help to provide additional evidence that our region will be able to meet its emissions requirements. This list makes no commitments to any emissions reductions projects - it merely reports those already in progress.
- Staff has received a one-year funding extension for the Houston-Galveston Clean Cities Coalition. The \$32,500 in funding that was awarded for 2019 activities will allow H-GAC to continue activities for an additional year.
- Staff is continuing development of the annual Air Quality Initiatives report to cover regional air quality improvement programs administered with the assistance of H-GAC during 2018.
- Last year, Air Quality staff worked with regional local governments and other stakeholders to develop comments and respond to a Volkswagen Settlement Draft State Beneficiary Mitigation Plan as developed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The final plan was issued by TCEQ on November 16, 2018 based on feedback recommended by stakeholders throughout the State of Texas as well as our own region including H-GAC. There will be \$31.8 million in funding available within our region for vehicle and equipment replacement. It is anticipated that the first funding availability based on this program will be available in the first half of 2019.
- Staff is continuing development of an alternative infrastructure plan for the H-GAC region. This project is in the initial stages and expected to progress over the next several months.

#### **F. TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING**

- Staff continues to provide travel demand modeling technical supports and assistances to support H-GAC's member agencies and their transportation planning studies.
- Modeling support continues for air quality projects including management of technical studies conducted both by the staff and consultants.
- Staff continues the development of an advance Activities Based Model (ABM).
- Staff continues to develop a dynamic travel demand model for use in corridor analyses.