

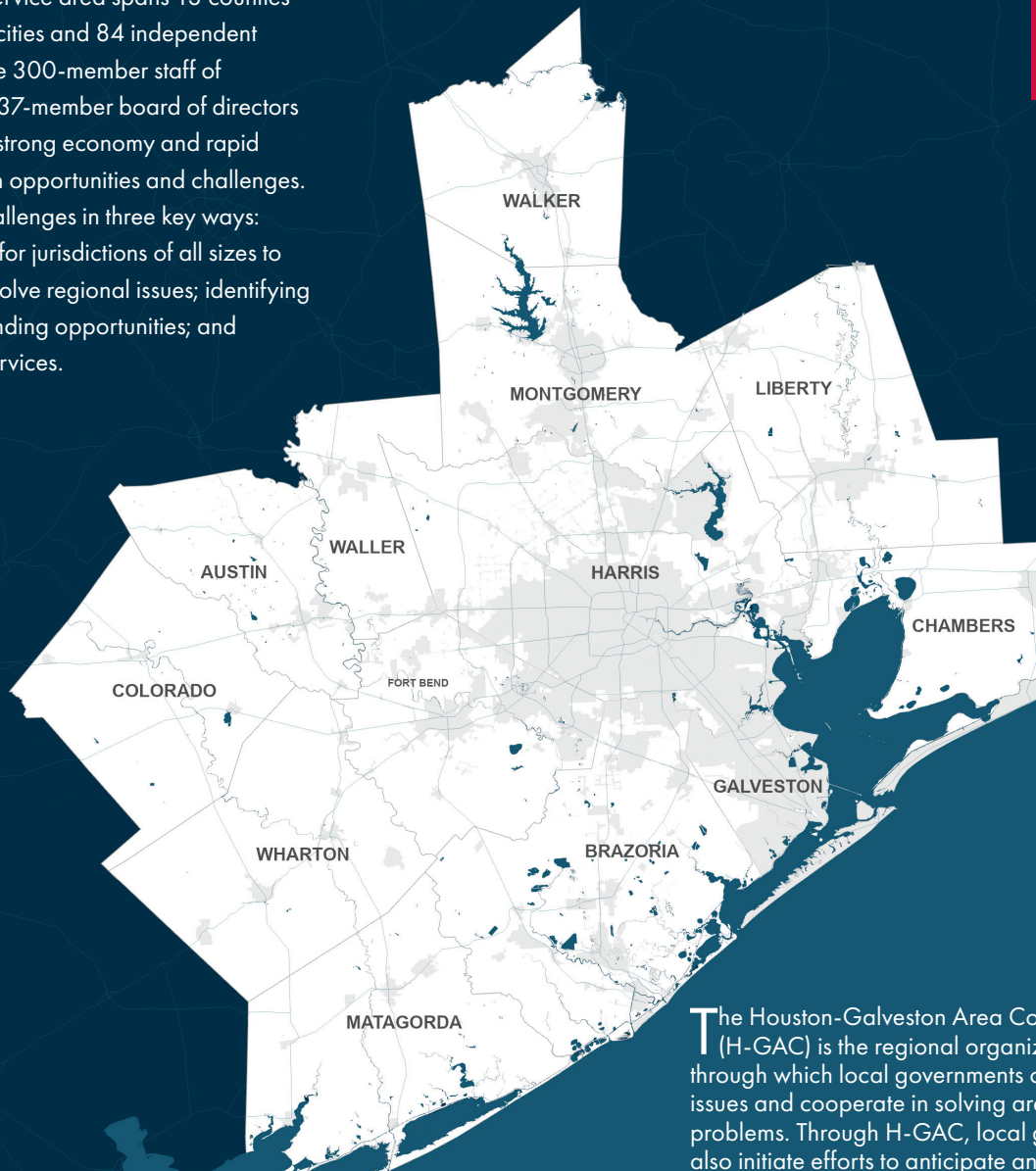


Houston-Galveston
Area Council

THE YEAR OF SERVICE



The Houston-Galveston Area Council is one of the largest regional planning commissions in the country. Our service area spans 13 counties and includes 177 cities and 84 independent school districts. The 300-member staff of professionals and 37-member board of directors understand that a strong economy and rapid growth brings both opportunities and challenges. We meet these challenges in three key ways: providing a forum for jurisdictions of all sizes to come together to solve regional issues; identifying and prioritizing funding opportunities; and providing direct services.



The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is the regional organization through which local governments consider issues and cooperate in solving area-wide problems. Through H-GAC, local governments also initiate efforts to anticipate and prevent problems, saving public funds.

The 13-county H-GAC service region is growing, becoming more diverse, and constantly changing. To address the needs of citizens and businesses, local governments provide leadership to guide regional development wisely and manage change constructively.

With a commitment to serve all its voluntary member governments fairly and equitably, in October 2023, the H-GAC Board of Directors and Transportation Policy Council initiated committees to review the voting structures and representation by all participating members and recommend any bylaw changes.



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! Welcome



TREY DUHON
Board Chair

FROM OUR CHAIR

As we begin 2024, it's not unusual for many of us to approach the new year with optimism and hope. It's also a time for us to reflect on our accomplishments as well. It is with this in mind that I am delighted to present our 2023 Annual Report. This document serves as a testament to the collective strides we have taken as an organization, staff and board included. As I reflect on our journey and accomplishments over the past year, the positive impact we have had on our communities in the face of unprecedented challenges is striking, and our resilience and dedication have not only steered us through uncertain times, but it has produced tremendous growth and innovation as well.

Throughout this report, you will discover the narrative of our achievements, initiatives, and the meaningful collaborations that serve to define H-GAC. Together, we have navigated uncharted territories, adapted to evolving landscapes, and embraced opportunities for positive change, and the unwavering support and commitment of each and every one of you has been instrumental to our success.

As you browse these pages, I encourage you to recognize and celebrate the milestones achieved, acknowledge the strength derived from collaboration, and realize the potential that lies ahead. Our shared journey is a testament to the power of our community and our region. Thank you for being an integral part of this chapter, and I look forward to our continued partnership as we write this year's chapter towards an impactful and successful future!!!



CHUCK WEMPLE
Executive Director

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Each day we build the story of our agency. We take on challenges and find solutions that help make life in our region better than it was the day before. Some days it might be helping our elders with home repair or training young people on basic job skills for new careers. Other days it's about fixing traffic congestion and reducing car crashes by establishing priorities for investing in our region's transportation network. Sometimes we help fund new law enforcement and public safety equipment, expand recycling centers, take care of our region's waterways, and help small businesses achieve their dreams. Throughout our work, we remain excellent stewards of the federal and state tax dollars invested into our care. We do this together with our members and community partners. We do this by pulling together and rolling up our sleeves. And we've gotten even better at listening.

Throughout this annual report, you will see how listening to our members share their insights has been the bedrock of our success, guiding tailored programs that change lives, ensure a thriving region, and create opportunities out of our greatest challenges. We look forward to doing even more work in 2024 and I ask that you continue sharing your thoughts and ideas with us as we work together to build a better future. We've made engaging with us even easier by updating our website and ensuring our team is ready and able to quickly respond to your request. Visit us at h-gac.com or stop by our office and attend one of our many planning events, workshops, and committee meetings.



H-GAC WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS



In 2023, H-GAC gained four new members. Join us in welcoming the cities of Ames, Montgomery, and Roman Forest, and the Village of Pleak. Pictured above (L to R): Cynthia Jones, H-GAC Intergovernmental Relations manager; Shauntil Cox, Roman Forest court clerk; Stan Donaldson, Montgomery councilmember; Sara Countryman, Montgomery councilmember; Montgomery Mayor Byron Sanford; and Rick Guerrero, H-GAC chief Outreach and Governmental Affairs officer.

AMES

With its home in Liberty County, the city of Ames is located at the junction of FM 160 and U.S. Hwy. 90 with a population of 937.* With the median age of residents standing at 36, 28.6 percent of the population is 18 and younger. Ames is served by the Liberty County Independent School District.

MONTGOMERY

The city of Montgomery is located in Montgomery County and serves as the county seat. It is known as the birthplace of the Lone Star Flag. In 2020, the city had a population of 1,948* with a median age of 38.6. The majority of the population (27.5 percent) are aged 45 to 64, with the under-18 age range a close second at 26.7 percent. Montgomery is served by the Montgomery Independent School District.

PLEAK

Pleak is located in Fort Bend County on Hwy. 36, just 4.5 miles south of Rosenberg, with a population of 1,213* approximately equally distributed across all age ranges. The median age is 38 years. The Village of Pleak is part of the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District with a small portion in the Needville Independent School District.

ROMAN FOREST

Also located in Montgomery County, the city of Roman Forest has a population of 1,781* with a median age of 43.6. The largest portion of the residents are aged between 45 to 64 (32.5 percent) and the 18 and under population accounts for 23.3 percent. The New Caney Independent School District serves Roman Forest.

*According to the U.S. Census, 2020



ANNIVERSARIES & RECOGNITION

1 YEAR LATER: Centralized Intelligence For Intelligent Decision-Making

April 2023 marked the first anniversary of the Data Analytics and Research Department. Born from organizational restructuring, the department has become a central information hub for all departments within the organization as well as local governments, planning agencies, research institutions, and the public seeking data-driven insights about the 13-county region.

The department has been instrumental in critical planning activities, providing invaluable data for economic forecasting, growth projections, identifying public service needs, transportation, housing, environmental planning, and air quality research. Its impact extends to strategic community outreach as well.

Accessible to all, many of the department's research projects and reports are available online and presented through interactive mapping applications and digital storyboards. In just one year, the Data Analytics and Research Department has evolved into an indispensable resource, contributing significantly to informed decision-making and planning across the region.

Reimagining Rail in the Region



Amit Bose, administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation, pictured at left, visited H-GAC on February 23, 2023, marking the inaugural Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program. This federal initiative aims to address crucial railroad intersections. Bose's presence underscores the significance of acknowledging challenges local communities face and the need to foster collaboration for a transformative rail experience in the Houston-Galveston region. Learn more about the railroad in our region on page 20.



Visit H-GAC's Regional GIS Data Hub to explore available resources.

Workforce Receives Convener Grant

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board received a Tri-Agency Convener grant from the Texas Education Agency to enhance collaboration among the workforce system, public education, higher education, community organizations, and employers. This grant supports the development of a comprehensive strategy for high-quality career and education pathways in targeted industries across the region, aligning with the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative's goal of strengthening connections between education and industry for Texas's economic growth. Successful completion of the grant requirements will qualify the Gulf Coast Workforce Board for inclusion in the Texas Regional Planning Network.



Attendees at the 2023 GIS Day, held on November 16, talk with H-GAC team members and learn about how the organization uses GIS to geolocate its data to create meaningful impact.

Tow and Go Marks Five Years



Celebrating its fifth anniversary in May of 2023, the Tow and Go program has performed more than 160,000 tows, with an average response time of 16 minutes, helping drivers in the cities of Houston, Baytown, Bellaire, Deer Park, Humble, Jersey Village, La Porte, Pasadena, Webster, and Unincorporated Harris County.

H-GAC's Livable Centers Receives Planning Award

H-GAC and Livable Centers study sponsors, Harris County Precinct 2 and Consor Engineers, earned recognition as part of the 2023 American Planning Association Houston Planning Awards Program. Completed in 2023, the Cloverleaf Livable Centers Study was selected to receive a Silver Award in the Advancing Diversity and Social Change category. The study included an inclusive public engagement process resulting in community-driven placemaking recommendations.

Established in 2008, H-GAC's Livable Centers Program works with local communities to reimagine auto-focused infrastructure, policies, and programs to be more multi-modal friendly. Since the programs's inception, H-GAC has completed 43 Livable Center studies.

Learn more about livable centers and H-GAC's Livable Centers Program

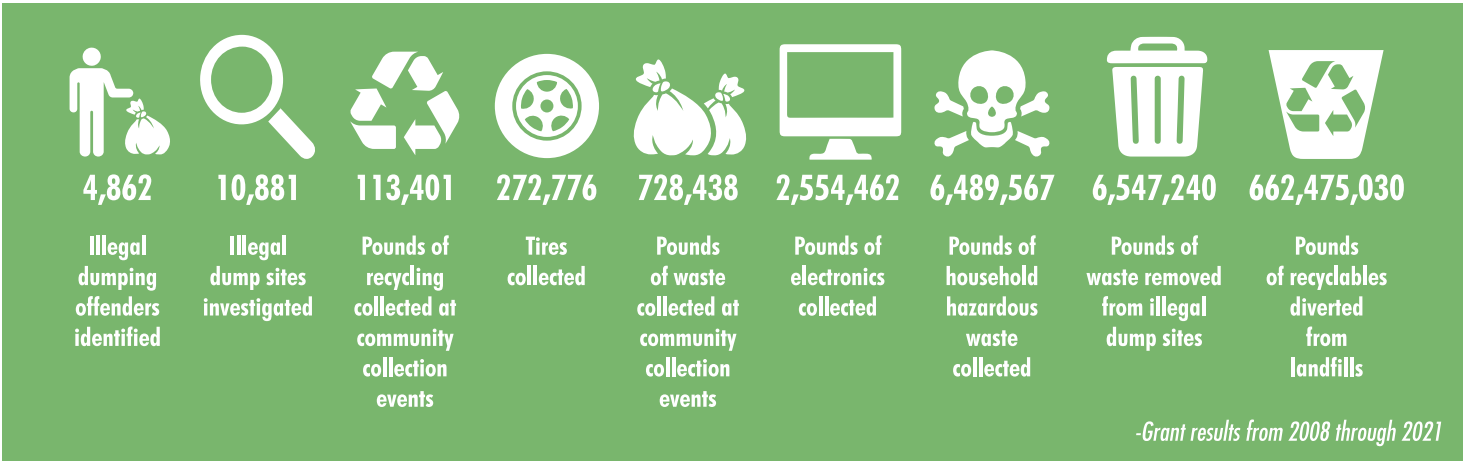


Four Decades of Solid Waste Management

H-GAC's Solid Waste Management Program, established in 1983 by the Texas Comprehensive Municipal Solid Waste Management Resource Recovery and Conservation Act, marked its 40th anniversary in 2023. H-GAC provides technical assistance to local governments on solid waste management issues, manages the solid waste grants program, and provides continuing education opportunities for local governments and solid waste professionals.



Read the solid waste anniversary report.



ii. **5** BIG Priority Areas





H-GAC Hosts First Board Retreat

On January 13, 2023, H-GAC hosted its first board retreat. For one full day, the newly minted 2023 board of directors discussed and set H-GAC's "5 BIG" priority areas for the next three to five years. They include:

1 HEALTHCARE

Addressing capacity and access to healthcare, including mental healthcare and telemedicine, with particular emphasis on the rural areas of the region as well as the homeless population.

2 WATER RESOURCES

Improving water quality, addressing flooding, and improving water and wastewater capacity as the region's population continues to grow.

3 HOUSING

Ensuring access to starter homes, affordable housing, and the missing middle housing.

4 BROADBAND ACCESS

Providing equitable opportunity to combat challenges associated with lack of internet access, including learning loss and access to telemedicine.

5 CUSTOMER SERVICE & OUTREACH

Serving communities and individuals, including the traditionally underserved and vulnerable populations who depend on and benefit most from H-GAC's services.

1 HEALTHCARE

"H-GAC stepped in as a steadfast ally, helping raise Chambers County's voice in the competitive grant arena."

-ROBERT A. PASCASIO
Chambers Health CEO

AAA 2023 Services

362,525

Home-delivered meals

166,421

Congregate meals at local senior centers and places of worship

1,010

Trips to local senior centers, medical visits, and errands

2,814

Attended evidence-based health classes

427

Served through health education/caregiver classes

123

Caregivers provided in-home respite care services

209

Persons provided home repairs



Ms. Ruby Rodgers, a senior citizen in Kendleton, Texas, received a home modification in 2023 from the AAA to create a safe home where she can continue living independently. Watch to hear her story.

The Area Agency on Aging provides high-quality services to older adults aged 60 and over. Through a community-based delivery system, AAA is focused on meeting the needs of seniors at the local level by engaging local community partners, organizations, and a network of volunteers to ensure older persons maintain their dignity and remain independent in their homes and communities.

Priority is given to seniors who:

- Are members of low-income and underrepresented groups
- Have limited communication and/or speaking abilities
- Reside in rural areas
- Are disabled
- Live with dementia, including Alzheimer's Disease
- Are informal caregivers



Learn more about H-GAC's AAA.

Contact the Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-437-7396 to explore our service options in more detail or to request services.

A Caring Alliance

In the heart of Chambers County, a partnership has been transformative for the healthcare of the rural population. Chambers Health, determined to secure grant funding, faced the daunting challenge of competing with bigger entities in Harris County and Houston, where success often hinges on population size.

Through their collaboration with H-GAC, Chambers Health leveraged new grant funds to lead impactful projects, from the hospital and wellness center to expanding their clinics in Anahuac, Dayton, and Mont Belvieu.

The partnership and funding proved crucial when it came to disaster planning. The county allocated funds to ensure individual healthcare sites could weather any storm by linking them to one another, enabling Chambers County to deliver essential care during critical moments.

Beyond healthcare, Chambers Health has taken on the nutrition and transportation programs in Chambers County as a team effort with H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging. This program has become a symbol of community service, reflecting the county's commitment to residents' well-being. Grants have also supported programs encouraging senior socialization—a powerful antidote to various health issues, including dementia.

Chambers County's story is one of resilience, collaboration, and a community thriving thanks to generous grant funds.

A Partnership Focused on Healing

UTMB-Galveston partners with the H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging to improve seniors' health.

Charlene, a woman in her 70s, faced mobility challenges due to a car accident in her teens that had a lasting impact on her ability to walk and perform everyday tasks. Her doctor referred her to Stay Active and Independent for Life (S.A.I.L.), an evidence-based strength, balance, and fitness program for older adults. Charlene had noticed her increasing difficulty getting up from a chair, leaving her feeling vulnerable and afraid of falling.

Charlene's doctor, who is part of UTMB's Network Physician Referral program, recognized the value of the program and referred her to it. UTMB had partnered with H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging to provide evidence-based classes for seniors to enhance their mobility and quality of life.

Charlene embraced the class led by Misty, a compassionate and knowledgeable instructor. She learned that strength, balance, and posture were key to functional fitness. With determination, Charlene attended each class and practiced exercises at home to enhance her leg strength, balance, and coordination. The supportive group environment and dedicated instructor motivated her to push herself further, resulting in a noticeable transformation.

The classes included fall prevention education and routines involving warm-up, aerobic activity, balance exercises, and stretching. Charlene appreciated the practical movements they learned, like taking high steps to get in and out of a tub, stepping over obstacles, and practicing carrying a tray and pivoting.

As Charlene's physical abilities improved, so did her confidence. She regained her independence, no longer needing assistance to stand or hesitating to engage in daily activities. Charlene's journey demonstrated that it's never too late to improve oneself, and sometimes, a seemingly simple class can make a profound difference.



FACTS ON FALLS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among adults aged 65 and older. In 2020, more than 1 million, or 30 percent, older residents in Texas reported falling.

Source: cdc.gov/falls

Early this year, H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging and the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston's (UTMB-G) Osher Lifelong Learning Institute partnered to provide evidence-based fall prevention programming for adults aged 60 and older. Physicians refer patients to the Stay Active and Independent for Life (S.A.I.L.) fall prevention program led by a certified S.A.I.L. instructor from H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging.

37 Older adults have benefited through the AAA/UTMB-G partnership. Of those:

- 80% demonstrate overall improvement
- 20% remained the same
- No participants measured a further decline in fitness

H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging operates in 12 counties including Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Matagorda, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties. Harris County operates its own Area Agency on Aging.

Overcoming Barriers: Justice for Elder Abuse Victims

H-GAC's Elder Justice Program began in mid-2018 to help families and communities address the rising tide of elder abuse. Three program attorneys provide seniors who have been victims of crime with crisis support, resource referrals, and help navigating the criminal and civil justice systems. Free legal representation is offered in civil matters to help stop the abuse and/or safeguard the victim's physical or financial health.

If you or someone you know needs help, call us at 346-500-4620.



Learn more
about H-GAC's
Elder Justice
Program.

Elder Residents Assisted in 2023

390

Were victimized by crime

377

Were victims of elder
abuse/neglect

354

Were victims of financial
abuse, including identity
theft and romance scams

32

Were victims of
family violence

23

Were victims of physical
abuse by a non-family
member, typically
a caregiver

3

Were victims of
sexual assault

H-GAC's Elder Justice program is funded by a
Victims of Crime Act grant awarded by the Texas
Public Safety Office, Office of the Governor.



H-GAC Fights Against Elder Abuse

Sharon and her husband had worked diligently throughout their lives, but tragedy struck when they lost their adult children and their grandsons drifted away. Following her husband's passing in 2020, one of her estranged grandsons offered assistance with her finances. When Sharon fell seriously ill with COVID-19 and spent weeks in the hospital, her grandson placed her into assisted living without her consent, claiming it was temporary.

Sharon's grandson initially appeared devoted but was actually emptying her savings, checking, and retirement accounts. His deception first came to light when a payment to her assisted living facility bounced.

Seeking answers, Sharon enlisted a cousin to drive her to her house, only to discover the interior gutted and all of her belongings missing. Going next to her bank, Sharon learned that her checking and savings accounts were overdrawn, and her retirement investments were nearly depleted, squandered on frivolous purchases. Calls to her grandson went unanswered.

H-GAC's Elder Justice Program helped Sharon regain control of her accounts and safeguard \$300,000. Staff assisted her in selling her home and truck to regain financial stability while also helping her report unauthorized expenditures to reclaim some of her misappropriated savings from credit card issuers and retailers.

Throughout the tumultuous two-year journey, Sharon's physical and emotional well-being deteriorated, leading to profound isolation and a suicide attempt. Our team provided unwavering support during this challenging time. Initially hesitant to press criminal charges, Sharon changed her mind as the extent of the theft became clear. After a year of investigation by the Brazoria Sheriff's Department, the case is currently under review by prosecutors.

Sharon now strives to rebuild her life with the continued support of H-GAC's Elder Justice Program.



Emergency Response and Access to Care

The Arrival of NextGen 9-1-1 in the H-GAC Region

H-GAC, home to the Gulf Coast Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District (District), made a giant leap this year as it prepares to rollout NextGen 9-1-1 services to its eight participating counties in 2024.

The District focuses on boosting public safety and optimizing efficiency by maintaining 9-1-1 answering point equipment, working with county and city partners as well as wireless carriers ensuring accurate caller location and telephone number data, and providing technical support for mapped automatic location data and 9-1-1 mapping in rural areas.

With a goal of NextGen readiness in 2023, the District standardized data to National Emergency Number Association Standards, offered ongoing GIS software training, conducted field tests for Wireless Network Performance, and acquired NextGen technology.

NextGen 9-1-1 revolutionizes emergency response by seamlessly integrating cutting-edge technology, real-time data, and precise location accuracy. Dispatchers gain comprehensive information for faster responses. Live video feeds and exact coordinates enhance emergency understanding, creating a swift and accurate connection between technology and response, saving lives, and providing reassurance during critical moments.

The eight participating counties in the program's region include Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Liberty, Matagorda, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties.

The Gulf Coast Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District promotes public safety and emergency communications and service efficiency for the communities within Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Liberty, Matagorda, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties. In all, eight counties, 23 public safety answering points, 224 emergency service providers, and numerous telephone companies collaborate to provide infrastructure and support ensuring functionality for the regional 9-1-1 system.



Learn more about the Gulf Coast Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District.



Watch to learn about the Austin County tower project.



In 2023, H-GAC financially supported the construction of the Tri-County Communications Tower to serve and connect Austin, Colorado, and Wharton counties ensuring a seamless connection between mutual aid systems in times of emergency. H-GAC's Public Safety program works with local governments to enhance community resilience, emergency preparedness, and law enforcement capacity through a variety of funding opportunities and technical services.

ACCESSING RURAL CARE

In 2023, H-GAC's Data Analytics and Research Department contributed to the agency's healthcare work by devising the Regional Health Accessibility Analysis. The project examined and visualized driving distances to evaluate people's access to rural hospitals and behavioral health centers throughout the 13-county region.

The resulting Healthcare Accessibility Tool encompasses key demographics, including the population in poverty, non-Hispanic and non-white minorities, Hispanic minorities, limited English proficiency, disabled families, elderly, carless households, and single mothers with children. This tool is now widely available online for healthcare professionals to gain insights into healthcare accessibility gaps and potential avenues for enhancement.

Explore H-GAC's healthcare accessibility data. Geospatially fueled by H-GAC.



2 WATER RESOURCES

"Water is going to be a big issue we need to address sooner rather than later."

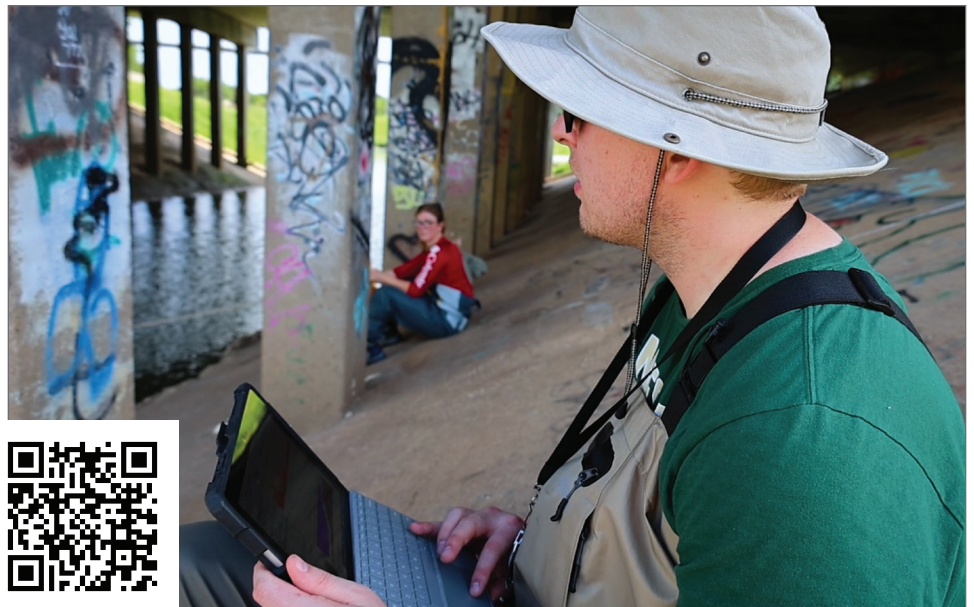
- JUDGE JAY KNIGHT
Liberty County

The Community and Environmental Planning Department at H-GAC is focused on devising and implementing strategies to promote sustainable and resilient communities, such as urban and regional planning, public safety, environmental protection, community development, and elder justice.

In addition, the organization is pivotal in managing water issues in the Houston-Galveston region by collaborating with stakeholders on strategies for water quality, watershed management, and flood mitigation. As a common concern voiced in many of H-GAC's pop-up meetings with local governments, in 2024, H-GAC and its Water Resources Committee will focus on a broader discussion of water supply challenges to ensure a resilient and sustainable water future for the region.

Regional Strategy to Flood Mitigation

H-GAC promotes a regional approach to planning and response for flooding and natural disasters through collaboration, technical services, and funding development. Through direct staff support and facilitation of its Regional Flood Management and Water Resources Committees, H-GAC identifies best practices for regional flood resilience, prioritizes projects for potential funding opportunities, supports local communities in developing Hazard Mitigation Plans, leads regional emergency preparedness programs, and ensures federal and state funding for flood risk mitigation is prioritized throughout the 13-county H-GAC region.



Watch to learn about Clean Rivers.

Improving Our Region's Water Quality

Since 1991, H-GAC has coordinated the Clean Rivers Program in the region. Coordinating with seven local partners, H-GAC manages water quality data collection at 408 sites in four river basins. Accredited labs analyze samples under a regional plan, ensuring high-quality, comparable data.



Explore the 2023 Basin Highlights Report to learn about the water quality of our bays. Geospatially fueled by H-GAC.

In 2023, H-GAC collaborated to identify and reduce bacterial sources in local water bodies, exemplifying effective environmental stewardship. Using the water quality data collected, H-GAC offers a variety of watershed planning activities and assistance to local communities in support of their efforts to reduce threats to the public.



Watch to learn about the Columbus water plant project.

In 2023, H-GAC helped local governments apply for \$62 million in disaster mitigation project funding from an allocation by the Texas General Land Office's Regional Mitigation Program. H-GAC and its local partners pursued five regional priority projects to enhance our region's storm resilience, which include a wastewater treatment plant relocation, wastewater line rehabilitation, Brazos River erosion mitigation, a wetland mitigation bank, and a flood warning system for the Colorado and San Bernard rivers.



3 HOUSING

"Affordable housing is something you always need to think about. As employers come to the area, they need a workforce, and that workforce needs housing."

- JUDGE TREY DUHON
Waller County

In 2023, the Community and Environmental Planning Department began an initiative to expand its role in housing beyond past efforts related to disaster recovery and fair housing policy. Adequate housing across all economic situations is a fundamental need to ensure the continued prosperity of our region. As one of our priority areas, our work began with an update to the Regional Housing Plan, which will be released in 2024. In addition, H-GAC will continue to foster conversations and efforts to increase housing capacity in the region and support efforts to enhance the community context that affects it, in its Livable Centers, Bringing Back Main Street, and Regional Conservation Initiative programs.



Explore H-GAC's housing publications to learn more.

Strategies for Addressing Displacement

The workshop, "Paving the Path to an Equitable Future: Strategies for Addressing Displacement," took place in late 2023 and explored equitable development methods, featuring expert speakers and real-world solutions for creating inclusive communities without displacement. The event engaged urban planners, community leaders, policymakers, and developers in addressing this critical issue.



Watch to learn about tree planting.

H-GAC is one of many partners in a multi jurisdictional team, which includes local governments, nonprofit partners, and community organizations, and is led by the Texas A&M Forest Service. Tree plantings occur in local communities with a focus on tree equity, heat island impacts, water quality, and flood mitigation benefits.

H-GAC Supports Resiliency and Quality of Life Through Conservation

H-GAC's Regional Conservation Initiative actively supports the conservation and enhancement of natural areas in local communities by identifying funding, performing technical analyses, facilitating partnerships, and providing educational opportunities. When considering the community context with access to transit and career centers and services, the natural infrastructure of a community can go a long way to ensure housing initiatives are successful. Natural infrastructure is also key to improving public health, environmental conditions, and disaster resiliency as well as creating a sense of place for those who live, work, and raise their families in the community.

In 2023, H-GAC hosted several workshops, led community tree-planting events in Kashmere Gardens and the Cypress Creek watersheds, conducted several urban forest analyses for local cities, led a successful rails-to-trails project, and helped partners identify and pursue funding for a large number of projects designed to provide functional benefits and natural beauty in the places where we live.



Learn more about H-GAC's Regional Conservation Initiative.

H-GAC Hosts Livable Centers Workshop

The workshop featured insights into implementing Livable Centers projects across the region, emphasizing elements beyond aesthetics, such as safety, economic development, and environmental impact. Local sponsors, including representatives from H-GAC, Angleton, East End District, Near Northwest Management District, East Aldine District, and UltraBarrio shared their experiences and efforts in the realm of placemaking. The event was notable for its accreditation, offering three certification management credits from the American Planning Association, and drew 72 in-person attendees. These sessions provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and inspiration for sustainable community development.



Learn about H-GAC's Livable Centers Planning Studies including future RFP opportunities.

4 BROADBAND ACCESS

"We have urban as well as rural communities, and broadband is necessary to connect our residents to services for doctor's appointments and schooling."

-CHRIS WHITTAKER
City Manager, Angleton

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law on November 15, 2021, allocated \$42 billion to broadband infrastructure. Texas is slated to receive \$3.3 billion of this total in 2024 through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program. Regional leaders understand that broadband is a critical service for businesses, organizations, and residents. Its void was made more pronounced during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when people needed it for work, telemedicine, and schooling for their children.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Broadband technology is rapidly evolving into a fundamental utility, playing a crucial role in enhancing individuals' quality of life and economic opportunities, spanning healthcare, education, employment, services, news, and entertainment.

Recognizing this, the federal government and the state of Texas have made historic investments in broadband infrastructure and access programs. H-GAC, home to the Gulf Coast Economic Development District, has emerged as a regional leader, ensuring communities within our region are equipped with updates, data, and support to position themselves for funding and active participation in the rapidly changing digital economy.

2023 Key Achievements and Initiatives

\$400,000 GRANT FUNDS

Awarded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration to conduct deep research and analysis into the region's broadband needs, focusing on rural and disadvantaged communities, and to develop an action plan addressing those needs.

CONVENING THE EXPERTS

The first Regional Broadband Summit included featured speakers from the National Telecommunication and Information Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, the Texas Broadband Development Office, technology companies, internet service providers, and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

BROADBAND MAPPING

H-GAC's Data Analytics and Research Department has supported the project by developing a tool to help better visualize the region's broadband needs.

COALITION BUILDING

The Dallas Federal Reserve and other regional partners objectively address broadband needs and challenges, leveraging expertise in understanding needs, identifying opportunities, and building best practices.

COLLABORATING REGIONALLY

The Texas Association of Regional Councils and other government councils across Texas are fostering a united voice and a collaborative approach to working with the Texas Broadband Development Office and communities within their respective regions.

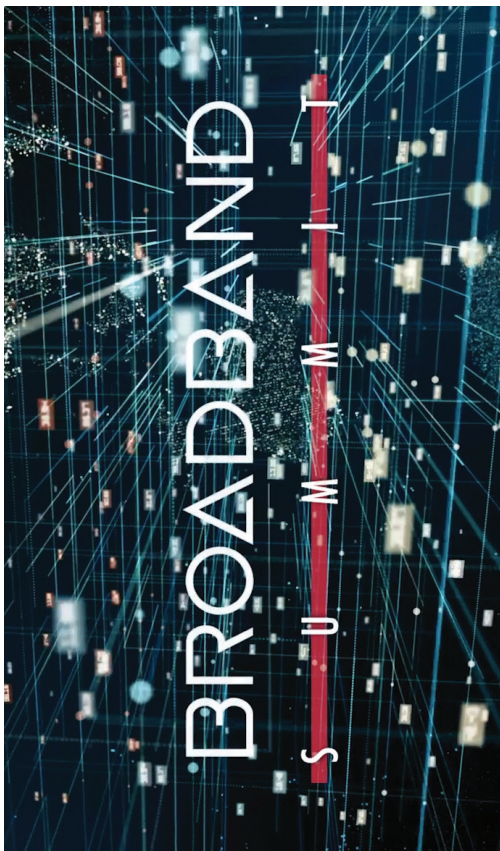
H-GAC is leading the conversation for more statewide collaboration and planning through a mega-broadband summit in 2024, for the four major Texas regions: Houston, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. This summit aims to explore cross-regional partnerships, cost efficiencies, economies of scale, and extended infrastructure and access across multiple jurisdictions.



Watch to learn about the Broadband Summit hosted by H-GAC.



View the region's broadband map. Geospatially powered by H-GAC.



5 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND OUTREACH

"We're a small community, and growth is bringing a change to our way of life. We're experiencing the traffic and all the changes that growth brings. We want to hold on to our small-town feel, but also be part of the change by benefiting from the planning and coordination throughout the region. We can't complain about the change if we don't try to be part of it."

- MAYOR JOE GARCIA
Pattison, Texas

In 2023, H-GAC embraced the theme of "Year of Service" by embarking on a journey to enhance its support of stakeholders, members, and the communities they represent.

Throughout the year, H-GAC has hosted regional conversations with board members, General Law and Home Rule cities, and member counties and their partners in the communities we serve. These conversations have provided valuable feedback on the region's successes and most pressing challenges.

This is what we heard.



Watch to learn more about our pop-ups.



What activities in your communities encourage you?

TOP RESPONSES:

- #1. Growth and Development
- #2. Transportation Improvement Investments
- #3. Grant Funding Opportunities

Our cities and counties are excited about the growth in their communities, but excitement is tempered due to concerns ranging from local road improvements to utility upgrades for wastewater treatment, access to drinking water, and broadband, and ensuring the small-town history and culture remain intact.

100%

of all challenges voiced during recent pop-up meetings focused on accommodating growth.

What challenges are you facing in your communities?

TOP RESPONSES:

- #1. Upgrading Utilities to Meet the Rate of Growth
- #2. Investments in Transportation Improvements and Safety
- #3. Water Resources from Drinking Water to Local Drainage and Flood Mitigation

Cities and counties throughout the region are tackling the challenge of managing growth, which is hindered by infrastructure costs, inflation, and limited federal funding. In addition, recent major flooding events have spurred these communities to search for additional resources to acquire necessary flood prevention equipment and assess the cost-effectiveness of flood mitigation efforts.



Watch to learn about the growth challenges in our region.



Team H-GAC celebrated a day of thanks and giving at the Houston Food Bank on November 6, 2023. H-GAC staff sorted, sanitized and packed six pallets of food for the Houston Food Bank, providing close to 3,000 meals for families in the Houston-Galveston region.



iii. The Year of Service





LEGISLATIVE OUTCOMES FOR SERVICES AND PEOPLE SERVED

During the 88th Texas Legislative Session, the legislature passed a number of bills that will enhance the services H-GAC already provides to the people of our region. At the federal level, with the passage of the American Inflation Reduction Act, seniors and other vulnerable populations on Medicare are expected to benefit in multiple ways.

Public Safety

TX Senate Bill 1852 mandates 16 bi-annual ALERRT training hours for certified peace officers, with a two-year compliance deadline. In response, H-GAC, a supporter of this training since 2013, purchased and distributed extra ALERRT kits at no cost to local law enforcement agencies.

Jobs & Education

TX House Bill (HB) 8 overhauls the state's method of financing community colleges, shifting toward an outcomes-focused, industry-aligned model. It offers new scholarships to support high-demand industries and provides funding to increase student support.

TX HB 1755 provides funds to educational institutions and nonprofits for performance-based workforce training programs. Supported providers must coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission and employers to ensure programs align with the state's workforce needs.

TX HB 1615 amends Texas Government Code §2308.256, mandating workforce boards to include a childcare workforce representative. The bill also instructs the Texas Workforce Commission to collaborate with the Texas Education Agency to enhance pre-K program availability and offers professional development scholarships for childcare workers pursuing degrees in relevant fields or apprenticeship programs.



Medicare & Pharmaceuticals

TX HB 25 creates the "Wholesale Prescription Drug Importation Program." The state's Health and Human Services Commission is able to contract with Canadian drug wholesalers and suppliers to bring safe, eligible prescription drugs to Texas consumers at prices far less than U.S. wholesalers.

The American Inflation Reduction Act allows Medicare to negotiate the price of certain prescription drugs, bringing down the price beneficiaries pay for their medications. Medicare recipients will have an annual out-of-pocket prescription drug cost cap starting in 2025.

The act also extends Affordable Care Act Subsidies through 2025, instead of expiring at the end of this year. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nearly three million Americans could lose their health insurance if these subsidies were not extended.

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income payments will increase by 3.2 percent for 71 million older Americans. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by more than \$50 per month beginning in January 2024.



SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Comprehensive Strategy for Regional Growth

A first opportunity for the public to help define a vision that could bring grant dollars to our region.

H-GAC and the Gulf Coast Economic Development District have achieved a milestone by seeking public input for the first time in developing a Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). CEDS provides a shared vision of the Houston-Galveston region for the next five years.

During the summer and into late 2023, CEDS workshops were held throughout the region to encourage active, diverse participation. This effort marks a significant step toward creating an informed and responsive economic development strategy for the entire 13-county Houston-Galveston region. The community's shared vision strategically aligns with the needs and aspirations of stakeholders, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the regional economy and growth vision.

Based on the identified needs, H-GAC aims to secure federal funding to support small businesses, education institutions, and communities, fostering collaboration and alignment with the envisioned goals.

New H-GAC Energy Members Experience Cost-Savings

Specializing in electricity procurement for government entities in Texas' ERCOT (De-Regulated) regions, the H-GAC Energy Program employs a network of providers to offer a range of quotes, ensuring access to the most advantageous options, including a commitment extended to providing exceptional member support and services throughout a contract. H-GAC Energy Program finalized electricity contracts with several new members, including the city of South Houston and the city of Bunker Hill Village. Totalling more than 200 members, H-GAC Energy Program members are able to bypass resource-intensive events such as pre-proposal conferences and proposal openings, capitalizing on a real-time, competitive procurement process to select their retail electricity provider. Substantial overcharges were also detected, amounting to tens of thousands of dollars for a large water processing plant. H-GAC Energy Program acted promptly to champion the situation, resulting in necessary restitution.

HGACBuy Set to Surpass \$1.5 Billion in Sales in 2024

Helping Governments Across the Country Buy (HGACBuy) extended its services in 2023 by adding more than 400 new members to its roster, totaling 9,800 members. In 2024, the program expects to process over 3,100 orders to surpass \$1.5 billion in sales through its government-to-government procurement service. HGACBuy serves its members by streamlining the acquisition of diverse products and services through competitive solicitations, allowing member governments the flexibility to make purchases using interlocal agreements.

2023 Service Highlights

190,000

Residents received employment services through Workforce Solutions

\$246M

In transportation projects funded to improve mobility

\$58M

In HGACBuy member purchases reducing costs for local governments in the region

\$34M

In criminal justice grant awards

7,200

Senior residents received meals and transportation services

4,800

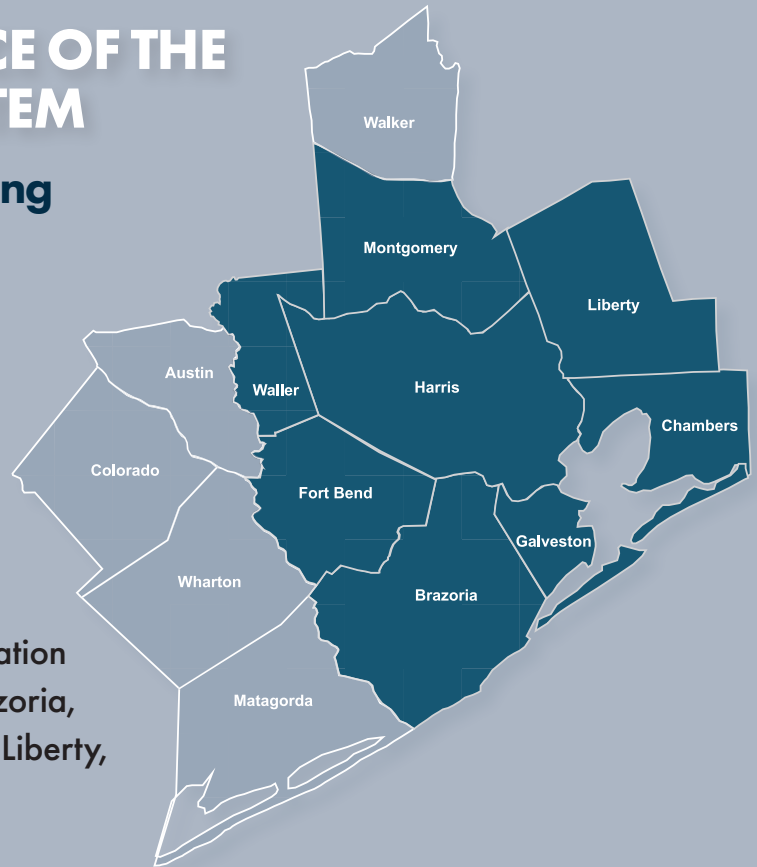
Law enforcement officers trained through grant program



IMPROVING THE SERVICE OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making organization. Introduced by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, MPOs are comprised of local elected officials and transportation authorities to ensure regional cooperation in transportation planning. Our local MPO consists of Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties.



H-GAC Contributes to Houston Rail Transformation

The Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors approved the Houston Area Rail Transformation (HART) stakeholder group as one of its official committees on January 17, 2023.

Comprised of representatives from Class 1 railroads, Gulf Coast Rail District, city of Houston, Port Houston, Harris County, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, H-GAC, and the Texas Department of Transportation, this committee of partners is working together to increase the efficiency of Houston's unique rail network.

H-GAC's contributions to HART during 2023 include:

- Developed H-GAC regional priority rail crossings list
- Contributed 10 locations to Phase 2 of the Texas Department of Transportation – Houston Rail Study Project



Watch the video to learn about rail issues in our region.



Visit the Gulf Coast Rail District site to learn more about the HART initiative.

2045 Regional Transportation Plan Update Reaches Millions

In early 2023, the MPO, a program of H-GAC, engaged the community and sought feedback on an update to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The current 2045 RTP Update recommends transportation investments totaling approximately \$109 billion and includes more than 750 unique projects sponsored by 63 local planning entities. The 2045 RTP Update was approved and adopted by H-GAC’s Transportation Policy Council on April 28, 2023.



11 Million

Impressions reached through community engagement



17

Public meetings in person and virtual



2,000+

Responses to the regional visioning survey



Learn more about the 2045 RTP Update.



Bay Area Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Plan

H-GAC, in collaboration with Harris County Precinct Two and Commissioner Adrian Garcia, began the development of the Bay Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan in the summer of 2023. When complete, the plan will guide short- and long-term priorities for non-motorized activity. Robust public engagement is presently underway with visioning activities, public meetings, and feedback from area residents.

Bike-Ped Outreach*

50

Meeting attendees

134

Survey responses

438

Comments received

3,150

Project website views

*As of December 2023

Learn more about the plan, view the area, and learn how to get involved.



Commute Solutions Impact*

9,739,830

Fewer miles traveled

8,760,700

Pounds of carbon dioxide emissions reduced

\$5,753,650

Saved by commuters

*As of December 2023

H-GAC Commute Solutions Charts a Better Route to Work

Commute Solutions, a program of H-GAC, provides alternative transportation resources in the Houston-Galveston region for commuters and employers. The initiative aims to reduce peak period commuter trips and vehicle miles traveled, improve traffic mobility, and improve regional air quality by reducing ozone-forming vehicle emissions.

Commute Solutions wrapped up a flexible work pilot program with several employers this year to help them and their workers find better ways to get to work. Some of these employers include public service organizations, such as the city of Houston, and private companies like Oncology Consultants.

This is what they have to say:

"The City of Houston went from a non-telework environment to a hybrid-telework environment by partnering with the Houston-Galveston Area Council's Commute Solutions team. Through the use of their experts, the city of Houston was able to implement a sustainable long-term telework program that works and benefits the business operations, managers, and employees. Our employees are more productive and engaged as a result of our hybrid telework program. We look forward to working with the Houston-Galveston Area Council on more projects in the future."

- ALISA M. FRANKLIN-BROCKS
City of Houston

"Our experience with Commute Solutions has been outstanding. Their services helped align our flexible work policies to fit our nurses' needs and help with retention. Commute Solutions' expertise, guidance, professionalism, and patience are what our company needed to shift our leadership to adopt more flexible work schedule options."

- DESIREE JOHNSON
Oncology Consultants

Learn more about
Commute Solutions by
reading our case studies.



Intersection Safety Work Continues into 2024

In the summer of 2021, H-GAC contracted with Kimley-Horn to perform intersection safety audits, which took place from late 2021 to early 2022 at 58 intersections in the region. Remaining funds in the grant led to contract amendments for additional work, including analyzing the Crash Record Information System for the top five dangerous intersections in each county, developing an intersection safety audit course, and auditing additional intersections along Crosstimbers from Yale to Hirsch in Houston. The intersection/road safety audit pilot training occurred in August 2023, and a scheduled intersection/road safety audit training is set for February 2024.



WORKFORCE PUTS THE REGION TO WORK

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions-Gulf Coast, a program of H-GAC, is the public workforce system for the 13-county region. The board sets the strategic direction and focus for the public workforce system in our region and serves to elevate the economic and human potential of the Gulf Coast region by fulfilling the diverse needs of businesses and individuals. The board has identified objectives to achieve and performance measures to judge progress toward those results. This enables the board to effectively engage employers, help workers find jobs, and maximize funding. The board uses its funds to ensure our region has competitive employers, an educated workforce, more and better jobs, and higher incomes.

Operating at 30 locations throughout the Houston-Galveston region, Workforce Solutions works in tandem with the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network to maintain the state's largest job-match database: WorkInTexas.com.

611 Youth Earn While They Learn

The Summer Earn and Learn Program, a collaboration between the Gulf Coast Workforce Board/Workforce Solutions and Texas Vocational Rehabilitation Services, successfully placed 611 young adults with disabilities, aged 14 to 22, into paid work experience opportunities. Four participants even secured full-time employment at the start of their work experience (two at CVS Pharmacy, one at Gimme a Bark, and one at Taco Cabana).

This year, CVS hosted 100 worksites for 209 students, and Goodwill provided 34 worksites for 101 students. Taco Cabana, Houston Zoo, West Houston Alliance Ministries, Houston Independent School District (I.S.D.), Aldine I.S.D., Klein I.S.D., and Walgreens each hosted 10 or more students.

- 611 Young adults aged 14 to 22 were placed in paid work experience for the summer.
- 550 Youth with disabilities completed at least five weeks of paid work experience.
- 256 Worksites participated in the Summer Earn and Learn Program.



Watch to learn more about the event.

Workforce Solutions hosts a free family night at the Houston Children's Museum to help young people explore career possibilities.

2023 Workforce Solutions Impact

48,300

People employed throughout the region

31,000

Employers served to help meet their human resource needs

50,000

Children provided childcare scholarships so their parents can remain employed or receive training

17,900

Adults educated through Adult Education and Literacy Services

19,600

Youth and young adults provided workforce services



iv. Inside H-GAC

WHAT'S NEW AT H-GAC

COLLABORATION **SERVICE**
LEADERSHIP
INNOVATION **INTEGRITY**
COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY
HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

Team H-GAC Discovers What Connects Them

In the fall of 2022, H-GAC embarked on a transformative day, establishing core values that reshaped its identity and reinforced employee bonds. Staff moderators led discussions to develop these values, and Chuck Wemple, H-GAC executive director, facilitated a comprehensive all-staff dialogue. These core values, a product of H-GAC's diverse staff, now guide every aspect of the organization, reflecting shared principles.

SERVICE: We answer the call to public service.

We fulfill our calling by delivering excellent customer service to our members, partners, communities, and the people we serve; listening for opportunities to help; and taking action to improve the quality of life for all.

COLLABORATION: We come together to move forward.

We believe in diverse perspectives and in the collective strength of each other, our members, and our partners to create a region where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

ACCOUNTABILITY: We own our actions.

We build public trust by honoring our commitments, demonstrating good stewardship of our resources, and fostering a culture of transparency in our actions, intentions, and the results of our efforts.

LEADERSHIP: We guide regional change.

We exist to guide, inspire, and support our region toward a bright and productive future by understanding the needs, challenges, and issues facing our ever-growing and changing region.

INNOVATION: We empower each other to be bold and creative.

Advancement drives us as individuals and as a team to deliver intelligent and effective solutions and to keep the spirit of discovery and progress alive at our agency.

INTEGRITY: We are a culture of transparency, honesty, and credibility.

We are all part of and invested in this region and the people within it; we believe in keeping our promises and commitments, holding fast to our values, and treating everyone with respect and dignity.

COMMUNITY: We are stronger together.

We create and explore opportunities for interaction and collaboration to ensure we are listening to and considering the needs, concerns, and feedback of our communities and cultivating an atmosphere where all people feel included, seen, heard, and valued.





RICK GUERRERO
Chief Outreach and
Government Affairs Officer

H-GAC Welcomes Our New Leadership Team Members

RICK GUERRERO, the chief outreach and government affairs officer, leads the newly formed Outreach and Government Affairs department uniting the Communications and the Intergovernmental Relations departments.

CHRISTINA ORDONEZ-CAMPOS is the organization's chief financial officer and is responsible for H-GAC's finances and financial reporting. She and her team assess risks and opportunities and help set and track financial goals, objectives, and budgets.

JUSTIN BOWER is the director of Community and Environmental Planning. He and his team are responsible for natural resource planning, urban planning and sustainable development, public safety and elder justice, and solid waste management programs.

KRISTINA KOLLAJA, the director of Procurement and Contracts, and her team are responsible for H-GAC's purchasing and solicitation processes.

TERI RAMSEY joined H-GAC in the fall as the director of Human Resources. She and her department are responsible for developing recruitment and retention strategies, overseeing major employee operations, and ensuring compliance.

MIGUEL SEGURA, director of Communications, joined H-GAC in December. He and his department are responsible for public education, information, and involvement for H-GAC and its programs.



CHRISTINA ORDOÑEZ-CAMPOS
Chief Financial Officer



JUSTIN BOWER
Director of Community
& Environmental



KRISTINA KOLLAJA
Director of Procurement
and Contracts



TERI RAMSEY
Director of
Human Resources



MIGUEL SEGURA
Director of
Communications





Improved Calling Customer Experience

H-GAC has embraced Ring Central, integrated with Microsoft Teams, as its telecommunications platform. Ring Central, a cloud-based service, enhances phone accessibility in our hybrid and mobile work environment, offers customization for future projects, and provides robust metrics for improved program performance visibility. As of November 6, 2023, approximately 450 phone numbers and 25 calling groups have seamlessly migrated to Ring Central, ensuring a smooth transition.

Streamlined for Efficient Performance

In 2023, Data Services championed the implementation of Asana for advanced project management and collaboration, centralizing tasks and plans. Originally designed for 100 users, the project has surpassed expectations with more than 313 active staff using the platform and 53 external members for 1,175 projects and 72,901 tasks. Leveraging Asana's features has streamlined operations, improved internal collaboration, and enhanced customer experience initiatives, leading to improved external customer interactions.



Connecting People to Services

H-GAC will launch a redesigned website in January 2024. Crafted with the user experience in mind, the new website is accessible, engaging, and visually appealing as it educates, informs, and connects visitors to the programs and services available at H-GAC.



Beyond Our Walls: Expanding Communication and Outreach Services

Representing a pivotal step towards enhancing our capabilities and fostering meaningful collaborations, H-GAC's outreach and government affairs team worked with the Texas Association of Regional Councils to produce a video commemorating its 50th anniversary featuring interviews with members from various councils of government. This project holds particular importance as it marks the team's inaugural external request for work. H-GAC is working to expand its resources and extend services to member governments.



FINANCIALS AND AUDITING

H-GAC's unified budget for 2023 is presented below. This summary provides an overview of the funding streams and anticipated expenditures by program area. Budget documents and audit reports can be viewed at h-gac.com. In addition to the independent annual audit, H-GAC routinely undergoes monitoring and evaluation by funding partners and the internal auditing department. The internal auditing staff conducts pre-award assessments, contracts compliance inspections, and works with agency departments to identify process improvements.

EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

Aging	\$12,906,670
Community & Environmental	\$7,173,619
Data Services	\$6,385,198
Workforce	\$427,832,172
Public Services	\$9,748,202
Transportation	\$17,641,001
Shared Services	\$6,808,122
Local Activities	\$214,850
Capital Expenditures	\$4,566,058
TOTAL	\$493,274,892

FUNDING SOURCES

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	\$200,000
U.S. Department of Agriculture	\$13,411
Commission on State Emergency Communication	\$2,814,924
Texas Department of Emergency Management	\$960,043
Texas Department of Transportation	\$23,102,133
Texas Criminal Justice Division	\$1,336,276
Texas Workforce Commission	\$429,094,322
Texas General Land Office	\$131,830
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	\$3,903,734
Texas Health and Human Services Commission	\$10,549,938
Other Public Agencies	\$8,902,680
Local Contracts	\$6,931,723
Fund Transfers	2,000,000
Houston-Galveston Area Council Funds	\$3,333,279
TOTAL	\$493,274,892

For the 30th consecutive year, H-GAC's Finance department has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. Awarded for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021, this prestigious recognition underscores H-GAC's commitment to transparent financial communication, meeting the program's rigorous standards.



CHRISTINA ORDOÑEZ-CAMPOS
Chief Financial Officer



JEAN MAHOOD
Director of Finance



CHARLES HILL
Director of Internal Audit

H-GAC'S 2023 LEADERSHIP



CHAIR

**THE HONORABLE
TREY DUHON**

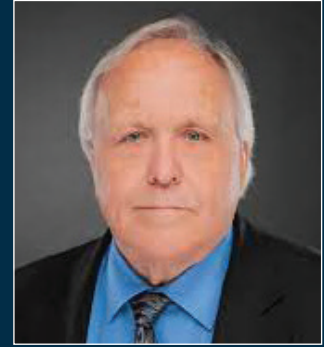
County Judge
Waller County



CHAIR ELECT

**THE HONORABLE
SALLIE ALCORN**

Councilmember
City of Houston



VICE CHAIR

**THE HONORABLE
JAY KNIGHT**

County Judge
Liberty County



On October 17, 2023, H-GAC hosted a leadership class from the Matagorda Independent School District.. The students attended the monthly board meeting and spent the afternoon learning from H-GAC's leadership team about the organization and its services as well as the fulfillment of working in public service.

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Houston-Galveston Area Council Board of Directors is composed of 37 elected officials representing 13 counties, 111 cities, and 11 school districts. The board leads collaborative efforts with local governments that consider regional issues and fosters cooperating in solving area-wide challenges.

AUSTIN COUNTY

The Honorable Tim Lapham
County Judge

BRAZORIA COUNTY

The Honorable Stacy Adams
Commissioner

CHAMBERS COUNTY

The Honorable Tommy Hammond
Commissioner

COLORADO COUNTY

The Honorable Ty Prause
County Judge

FORT BEND COUNTY

The Honorable K.P. George
County Judge

GALVESTON COUNTY

The Honorable Darrell Apffel
Commissioner

HARRIS COUNTY

The Honorable Lina Hidalgo
County Judge

LIBERTY COUNTY

The Honorable Jay Knight
County Judge

MATAGORDA COUNTY

The Honorable Bobby Seiferman
County Judge

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Honorable Mark Keough
County Judge

WALKER COUNTY

The Honorable Brandon Decker
Commissioner

WALLER COUNTY

The Honorable Trey Duhon
County Judge

WHARTON COUNTY

The Honorable Phillip Spenrath
County Judge

CITY OF ALVIN

The Honorable Martin Vela
Councilmember

CITY OF BAYTOWN

The Honorable Laura Alvarado
Councilmember

CITY OF CONROE

The Honorable Howard Wood
Councilmember

CITY OF DEER PARK

The Honorable Bill Patterson
Councilmember

CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD

The Honorable Sally Branson
Councilmember

CITY OF GALVESTON

The Honorable Craig Brown
Mayor

CITY OF HOUSTON

The Honorable Sallie Alcorn
Councilmember

The Honorable Amy Peck
Councilmember

CITY OF HUNTSVILLE

The Honorable Andy Brauning
Mayor

CITY OF LAKE JACKSON

The Honorable Gerald Roznovsky
Mayor

CITY OF LA PORTE

The Honorable Chuck Engelken, Jr.
Councilmember

CITY OF LEAGUE CITY

The Honorable John Bowen
Councilmember

CITY OF MISSOURI CITY

The Honorable Jeffrey Boney
Councilmember

CITY OF PASADENA

The Honorable Dolan Dow
Councilmember

CITY OF PEARLAND

The Honorable Kevin Cole
Mayor

CITY OF ROSENBERG

The Honorable Kevin Raines
Mayor

CITY OF SUGAR LAND

The Honorable Joe Zimmerman
Mayor

CITY OF TEXAS CITY

The Honorable Jami Clark
Commissioner

GENERAL LAW CITIES

The Honorable Joe Garcia
Mayor, city of Pattison

The Honorable Nancy Arnold
Councilmember, city of Waller

HOME RULE CITIES

The Honorable Johnnie Simpson Jr.
Mayor Pro Tem, city of Dickinson

The Honorable Joe Compian
Mayor Pro Tem, city of La Marque

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Honorable Rissie Owens
Trustee, Huntsville I.S.D.

EX-OFFICIO, NON-VOTING

Vacant

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COUNTIES

Austin
Brazoria
Chambers
Colorado
Fort Bend
Galveston
Harris
Liberty
Matagorda
Montgomery
Walker
Waller
Wharton

CITIES OVER 25,000

Alvin
Baytown
Conroe
Deer Park
Friendswood
Galveston
Houston
Huntsville
La Porte
Lake Jackson
League City
Missouri City
Pasadena
Pearland
Rosenberg
Sugar Land
Texas City

HOME RULE CITIES

Angleton
Bay City
Bellaire

Cleveland
Clute
Dayton
Dickinson
El Campo
Freeport
Fulshear
Galena Park
Hempstead
Hitchcock
Humble
Iowa Colony
Jacinto City
Jersey Village
Katy
La Marque
Liberty
Manvel
Mont Belvieu
Nassau Bay
Palacios
Prairie View
Richmond
Richwood
Santa Fe
Seabrook
Sealy
Stafford
Sweeny
Tomball
Webster
West University Place
Wharton
Willis

GENERAL LAW CITIES

Ames
Anahuac

Arcola
Bayou Vista
Beach City
Bellville
Brazoria
Brookshire
Brookside Village
Bunker Hill Village
Clear Lake Shores
Columbus
Daisetta
Danbury
Eagle Lake
East Bernard
El Lago
Hedwig Village
Hillcrest Village
Holiday Lakes
Hunters Creek Village
Jamaica Beach
Jones Creek
Kemah
Kendleton
Magnolia
Meadows Place
Montgomery
Morgan's Point
Needville
New Waverly
Oak Ridge North
Old River-Winfree
Oyster Creek
Panorama Village
Pattison
Piney Point Village
Pleak
Riverside
Roman Forest

San Felipe
Shenandoah
Shoreacres
South Houston
Southside Place
Splendora
Spring Valley Village
Stagecoach
Surfside Beach
Taylor Lake Village
Thompsons
Tiki Island
Waller
Wallis
Weimar
West Columbia
Weston Lakes

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Alief
Columbia-Brazoria
Deer Park
Fort Bend
Hempstead
Hitchcock
Huntsville
Magnolia
Needville
Pearland
Waller



ADVISORY COMMITTEES & AFFILIATE GROUPS

Advisory committees and their affiliated groups are an essential part of H-GAC's work. The leadership and knowledge of the volunteers that serve on these committees is the key to their success. Many of H-GAC's advisory committees are appointed by the board, based upon nominations from individual board members and other groups.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Aging and Disability Advisory Committee

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on needs, services, and programs for older citizens in 12 H-GAC counties (all but Harris).

Mallory Freitag Heijja, Administrator
Mallory.Freitag@h-gac.com
1-800-437-7396 (main line)
713-993-4535 (direct)

Clean Rivers Program Basin Steering Committee

Serves as the primary forum for discussion of water quality issues and advises the H-GAC Board of Directors on all administrative matters related to the Clean Rivers Program.

Todd Running, Water Resources Manager
Todd.Running@h-gac.com
713-993-4549

Criminal Justice Advisory Committee

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on law enforcement and criminal justice issues.

Madeline McGallion, Public Safety Manager
Madeline.McGallion@h-gac.com
713-993-2427

Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors and staff on environmental and natural resources issues.

Rachel Windham, Senior Planner
Rachel.Windham@h-gac.com
713-993-2497

Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors and, as appropriate, Transportation Policy Council on air quality issues.

Andrew DeCandis, Manager
Andrew.DeCandis@h-gac.com
832-681-2589

Regional Flood Management Committee

Assists and advises H-GAC Board of Directors on issues related to all aspects of flood management in the region.

Amanda Ashcroft, Planner
Amanda.Ashcroft@h-gac.com
713-993-4545

Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Council

Assists and advises H-GAC Board of Directors on matters related to regional homeland security issues.

Justin Riley, Principal Public Safety Planner
Justin.Riley@h-gac.com
832-681-2548

Solid Waste Management Committee

Assists and advises H-GAC Board of Directors on issues related to solid waste management in the region.

Cheryl Mergo, Senior Manager
Cheryl.Mergo@h-gac.com
713-993-4520



Learn more about
H-GAC's advisory
committees.

AFFILIATE GROUPS

Area Emission Reduction Credit Organization

Promotes coexistence of air quality improvement and economic development by generating and trading emission reduction credits and receiving/dispersing funds from local Supplemental Environment Projects and Clean School Bus Program donations.

Carlos Lugo, Program Coordinator
CleanVehicles@h-gac.com
832-681-2560

Energy Purchasing Corporation

Acts as an agent to negotiate the purchase of electricity on behalf of participating political subdivisions.

John Ferro, Energy Project Manager
john.ferro@h-gac.com
832-381-2604

Gulf Coast Economic Development District

Assists and advises elected officials on issues related to economic development and provides oversight to H-GAC economic development planning programs.

Darryl Briscoe, Planner
Darryl.Briscoe@h-gac.com
713-499-6686

Geographic Data Workgroup

Consortium of regional area geographic users involved in collectively sharing, distributing, and acquiring digital geospatial data.

Thushara Ranatunga, Principal Data Analyst
Thushara.Ranatunga@h-gac.com
832-681-2551

Gulf Coast Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District

Promotes enhanced public safety and increased fiscal and service efficiencies in the administration of emergency communications for the municipalities and counties of Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Matagorda, Walker, Waller, and Wharton.

Kim Ward, Senior Manager
Kim.Ward@gulfcoast911.org
713-993-2459

Gulf Coast Workforce Board

Provides policy guidance, planning, oversight, and evaluation for the Texas Gulf Coast region's public workforce system.

Juliet Stipeche, Director of Human Services
Juliet.Stipeche@wrksolutions.net
713-993-4524

Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation

Implements Small Business Administration Section 504 loan program; provides long-term, moderate interest loans to eligible small businesses.

Omar Fortune, Public Services Senior Manager
Omar.Fortune@h-gac.com
713-993-2409

Transportation Policy Council

Provides policy guidance and overall coordination of transportation planning activities within the H-GAC eight-county metropolitan planning area; selects/approves federal funding for highway and transit projects in the eight-county MPO region.

Craig Raborn, Director of Transportation
Craig.Raborn@h-gac.com
713-993-4585



IN MEMORIAM



TOM REID

TOM REID **Pearland Mayor Emeritus**

The Houston-Galveston Area Council proudly commemorates the life and dedicated service of Tom Reid, the esteemed Pearland mayor emeritus, and the city's longest-serving mayor. His legacy is one of unwavering commitment and visionary leadership that spanned several decades.

Tom Reid's remarkable journey began in 1973 when he assumed the role of a city council member, eventually becoming Pearland's mayor in 1978. His tenure extended until 1990, and he returned to serve the city from 1993 to 2020, providing steadfast leadership during Pearland's transformation and rapid growth.

Reid's influence reached beyond the city's borders. He became a member of the H-GAC board of directors in 1973, representing Home Rule Cities in the region. In recognition of his visionary leadership, he was granted a seat on the board from May 2001 to May 2021. Actively participating in various committees, he left an enduring impact on regional affairs.

Additionally, he served as the secretary of the Transportation Policy Council, advocating for improved transportation infrastructure, enhanced water and air quality, and overall economic prosperity. His dedication aimed to enhance the lives of Pearland's residents and uplift the Gulf Coast region.

In 1983, Tom Reid's remarkable leadership led to his appointment as the chair of the H-GAC board of directors. He also contributed his expertise to the Texas Association of Regional Councils, underscoring his commitment to regional collaboration and public service. In honor of his extraordinary qualities, H-GAC introduced the Tom Reid Excellence in Regional Leadership Award, recognizing individuals who exemplify his remarkable leadership.

We express our deep gratitude to Tom Reid for his steadfast commitment to public service, his forward-looking vision for regional progress, and his invaluable contributions to Pearland and the broader community. May his enduring legacy continue to inspire us all.



BRIAN SIMS

BRIAN SIMMS **Sr. Environmental Planner**

All of H-GAC mourns the loss of a beloved family member. Brian Sims, our senior environmental planner and Clean Rivers Program laboratory contract manager, passed away unexpectedly on April 3, 2023. Brian was held in high regard by all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

Brian may have been reserved, but he possessed an extraordinary wit and an infectious sense of humor. His talents extended beyond the ordinary, encompassing technical expertise, exceptional writing skills, and a remarkable eye for graphic design. Brian's reports weren't just accurate; they were visually captivating, as he was in the final stages of preparing his latest masterpiece.

Yet, it was his immense heart that truly set him apart. Brian managed the Homeowner's Wastewater Assistance Program at H-GAC, aiding numerous families in repairing or replacing their onsite sewage facilities. He earned their trust, handling sensitive information with care and making the process as seamless as possible. Brian's deep commitment to fairness and inclusivity was evident in his dedicated participation in H-GAC's equity and inclusion group.

We are all enriched for having known Brian. His colleagues at H-GAC consider themselves fortunate to have worked alongside him for the past five years. Both professionally and personally, we will deeply miss him, but the impact of his work and the legacy he leaves behind will endure for years to come.





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