

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

January 14, 2025– 2:00 P.M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

Virtual

MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Benz, P.E.– Texas A&M Trans. Institute
Bruce Mann– Port of Houston
Ken Fickes– Harris County
Jason Smith– Montgomery County Constable
Melody Galland– TxDOT

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Kathryn Vogelsang– East End District

STAFF PRESENT

Cassandra Marshall – H-GAC
Catherine Gray– H-GAC
Ben Finley– H-GAC
Francis Rodriguez– H-GAC
Ayo Jibowu– H-GAC
Vinny Polignano– H-GAC
Chris Whaley– H-GAC
Carlene Mullins– H-GAC
Andrew DeCandis– H-GAC
Pharr Andrews– H-GAC
Eric Pacheco– H-GAC
Carlos Lugo– H-GAC
Jamila Owens– H-GAC
Karen Owen– H-GAC
Qun Zhao– H-GAC
Stephen Keen– H-GAC
Sydni Ligons– H-GAC
Diane Domagas– H-GAC
Monique Johnson– H-GAC

OTHERS PRESENT

Dominic Mazoch
Eglantine Pauvarel-Moss

ITEM 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

ITEM 2. Public Comments

- Dominic Mazoch raised concerns about pedestrian safety in downtown Houston, particularly regarding bicycles on sidewalks and the speed of battery-powered scooters. He shared a personal experience of nearly being hit by a cyclist and emphasized that the current situation undermines the goal of zero accidents. Mazoch suggested that law enforcement should impose fines for traffic law violations and advocated for better education for delivery services regarding sidewalk regulations.

ITEM 3. Approval of August 27, 2024, and October 29, 2024, Meeting Minutes Summary

- Held for Quorum

Discussion

ITEM 4. 2025 Safety Performance Measures (Stephen Keen)

Stephen Keen presented the 2025 safety performance measures, highlighting that while the total number of fatalities and serious injuries in 2024 did not meet targets, the rates were achieved due to increased vehicle miles traveled. He reiterated the Vision Zero goal of eliminating fatalities by 2050 and mentioned ongoing safety initiatives.

ITEM 5. Safety Action Plans: Update (Stephen Keen)

Staff detailed various safety initiatives at HGAC, including the Hurricane evacuation program and regional safety campaigns. He announced an update to the safety action plans, funded through planning funds, set to begin in February 2025 and last for 18 months. The update will involve a revised plan and 11 joint applicant safety action plans, with the Transportation Safety Committee receiving bi-monthly project status updates.

ITEM 6. State of Safety Report: Discussion (Stephen Keen)

The discussion then shifted to the state of the safety report, with Keen explaining its purpose in summarizing crash data and analyzing contributing factors for the region.

ITEM 7. Electric Vehicles Safety and Security Discussion (Vinny Polignano)

Vinny Polignano presented on safety and infrastructure planning for zero-emission vehicles, focusing on electric vehicles in Texas. He highlighted the air quality benefits of transitioning to non-emitting vehicles and discussed a staff-led study on EV registration trends and infrastructure needs. Polignano reported that the Houston region accounts for 25% of Texas's total EV registrations, with a significant increase noted.

He addressed safety concerns related to the weight of electric vehicles and their impact on crash dynamics, as well as the risks associated with EV fires, emphasizing the need for specialized firefighting techniques. The meeting concluded with a dialogue on zero-emission vehicles, where Polignano sought input from attendees and acknowledged the agency's commitment to incorporating electric vehicle safety training into first responder programs.

Announcements

1. Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC)-January 15, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. (In person)
2. Transportation Policy Council (TPC)-January 24, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. (In-person)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Meeting Adjourned at 3:16 p.m.