

## Houston-Galveston Area Council

## 2025 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Call for Projects Program Guide **V2**

### *[SUMMARY OF CHANGES]*

**Jan 22, 2026**

- Removed applicant requirement to use H-GAC's benefits calculators for BCA phase.
- Updated Appendix B to add sample question for "Impact on Natural/Cultural Resources Criteria."

### **Overview**

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) opens the project selection cycle (call for projects) for active transportation projects within the 8-county H-GAC MPO planning area to be selected for Category 9: Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funding. Selected projects will be programmed into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the 10-Year Plan, and the Regional Transportation Plan.

### **-Timeline**

Milestone	Date
H-GAC staff announces call for projects open at TAC and TPC Meetings	Nov 2025
Window to submit Statement of Project Interest (SOPI) forms	Nov 10-Jan 23, 2026
H-GAC staff publishes evaluation criteria and opens online questionnaire	Feb 9, 2026
Questionnaire Workshop/Webinar	Mid-Jan 2026
Deadline for requesting GIS technical assistance or data from H-GAC staff	Mar 6
Deadline to submit questionnaires	Mar 27
H-GAC staff completes questionnaire screening and scoring	May 8
H-GAC notifies select sponsors to submit benefit-cost information and project readiness information	May 11
Deadline to submit BCA and project readiness information	Jun 5
H-GAC staff completes BCA scoring and project readiness determination	Jul 17
H-GAC staff completes ranked list of projects	Aug 7
TAC Action to approve ranked list*	Aug 19 / Sep 16
TPC Action to approve ranked list*	Aug 28 / Sep 25
H-GAC staff submits amendments to TIP/RTP to program approved projects	TBD
TAC Action to approve amendments	TBD
TPC Action to approve amendments	TBD

\* Tentative.

### **Eligibility**

#### **-Eligible Project Areas**

8-county metropolitan planning area (MPA): Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Waller.

#### **-Eligible Project Sponsors**

Includes: TxDOT-Houston and Beaumont Districts, local government agencies (City/County), Public Transit Operators, Ports, Toll Road Authorities, Management Districts, Redevelopment Authorities, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ).

Projects sponsored by special districts—management districts, redevelopment authorities, TIRZs, etc.—must be supported by the local governmental entity(ies) in which they are located. Such projects are required to have letters of support confirming local government concurrence with the proposed project. Multijurisdictional projects (projects crossing multiple city/county boundaries) should provide support letters from all jurisdictions (city and county). Projects that include TxDOT ROW or have a direct effect on an existing TxDOT-maintained facility must have a letter from the TxDOT District Engineer offering consent for the proposed project. All right-of-way (ROW) must be acquired prior to submission.

Projects proposing to construct facilities along or through railroad ROW must include documentary evidence from the railroad granting a right of entry or an executed encroachment agreement. Letters from railroads saying they will review plans is not sufficient.

Independent School Districts (ISDs), although eligible under federal guidelines, are constricted to their property boundaries. Since the transportation alternatives set-aside program is for projects that increase overall connectivity and benefit the public, H-GAC recommends ISDs coordinate with their local government agency and request their project be added to a larger application.

#### -Eligible Projects

H-GAC's TASA program funds environmental, preliminary design, engineering, and construction of transportation projects focused primarily on active transportation. Includes:

- Sidewalks
- Shared-use paths
- Separated bike lanes
- Protected intersections and crossing improvements
- Pedestrian and bicycle signalization, signage, and wayfinding
- Bicycle parking
- Pedestrian-bicycle count equipment
- Sponsors seeking funds for active transportation planning studies are encouraged to apply through our future Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) call for projects.

Bicycle/Pedestrian infrastructure must be principally for transportation and NOT purely recreational; contribute to a safe, contiguous, accessible, integrated walking/bicycling network; benefit the general public.

#### -Ineligible Projects and Activities

- Promotional activities
- Routine maintenance and restoration
- Non-transportation recreational and park facilities (ex: playground equipment)
- Planning studies (sponsors should request through UPWP)
- Software applications
- Bikeshare, shared micromobility, and e-bike equipment/operations
- Automobile parking lots
- Roadway projects primarily for automobile travel
- Right-of-way acquisition

### **-Project Funding**

Sponsors may request TASA funds for all project phases except for conducting planning studies. Active transportation planning studies are encouraged to apply through H-GAC's Unified Planning Work Program call for projects.

- Minimum award per project: \$150,000.
- Maximum award per project: \$10,000,000.

Awarded funds are provided on a cost reimbursement basis only. A 20% local match is required for all projects; submissions must include a local match funding commitment letter. All sponsors requesting transportation development credits (TDCs) must submit a TDC application with their questionnaire. Incidental construction activities—such as minor utility adjustments and drainage modifications, landscape placement/restoration, etc.—and approved amenities may not exceed 30% of the project's construction budget.

### **Application Process; Project Evaluation and Scoring-10 Step Process**

The TASA Call for projects follows H-GAC's 10 Step Project Selection Process (call for projects) as detailed below. Project sponsors are responsible for Steps 3, 5, and 7.

#### **1. H-GAC Staff announces Call for Projects.**

The call begins with H-GAC Staff announcing the TASA call for projects opening and the program timeline at the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Transportation Policy Council (TPC) monthly meetings. After the announcement, eligible sponsors will be able to submit potential projects for consideration by submitting Statements of Project Interest (SOPI). H-GAC staff will review basic project information and screen out projects that do not fit the active transportation (AT) investment category. SOPIs previously submitted for the AT investment category and currently unfunded will also be reviewed.

#### **2. H-GAC Staff publishes evaluation criteria and online questionnaire.**

At the end of the SOPI submission window, H-GAC staff will publish the TASA online questionnaire. Projects are given a score of up to 100 points based on questionnaire responses. Evaluation criteria are split into three sections as described below. Review Appendix C for detailed evaluation criteria.

**Investment Category Focused Criteria (55 Points):** Evaluation criteria focused on active transportation.

**Benefits to Other Categories (15 Points):** Criteria focused on how well a project benefits other investment categories. The TASA call evaluates benefits to the High Growth Area Needs, Operational Improvements and Congestion Management, and Transit investment categories.

**Planning Factors (30 Points):** All projects considered for selection are evaluated for six planning factors: Access/Connectivity, Impact on Vulnerable Populations, Impact on Natural/Cultural Resources, Innovation, Safety, and Resiliency.

#### **3. Sponsors submit questionnaires.**

The online portal for submission opens for a minimum of 45 days. TDC applications, local match funding commitment letters, jurisdictional letters of support (if applicable) and other attachments are to be submitted with questionnaires.

4. Staff screen questionnaires.

Staff will review all questionnaires, and score based on the published evaluation criteria.

5. Sponsors submit benefit-cost information.

Projects with a minimum score of 50/100 points will be invited to submit Benefit-Cost information. Staff will consider total monetary benefits for potential crash, delay, and emission reduction in 2022-dollar values. Benefits/total cost ratios (B/C) for all projects advanced to this will be compared. A distribution of these B/C ratios will be used to score from 0-100: projects with higher B/C ratios will score higher points. Staff will exclude outliers before assigning a distribution curve to assign points. H-GAC staff will provide the following tools:

Excel-based benefits calculators for crash reductions, delay reductions, and emission reductions.

Excel-based budget worksheet to allow sponsors to indicate the federal funding amount they are seeking and the local matching funds they will contribute for each phase of the project.

6. Staff validate scores and BCAs.

Staff will validate and combine evaluation criteria and BCA scores. Total possible points will be weighted at an 80/20 split between evaluation criteria and BCA scores. Sponsors will have the opportunity to challenge scores and request debriefing of scoring during this step.

7. Sponsors provide readiness information.

Projects that score a minimum 50/100 points on their BCA score will move forward to the project readiness assessment. Sponsors will be invited to fill out an additional questionnaire.

8. Staff determines project readiness for scoring.

Project readiness questionnaire responses will be used to determine when projects will potentially be ready for letting (begin construction for roadways/transferred to FTA for transit).

9. Staff develops ranked list.

H-GAC staff will develop a final ranked list of projects based on the total score (200 possible points). Total scores and project readiness will determine recommendations for funding and timing/programming of selected projects. Staff will provide the final list to the TAC and TPC for approval.

10. TIP/RTP Amendments.

H-GAC staff will propose amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to program approved projects. If necessary, staff will conduct conformity determination for projects requiring it prior to programming.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Sample Statement of Project Interest

Appendix B – Sample Questionnaire

Appendix C – Evaluation Criteria

Appendix D – Sample Budget Template

Appendix E – Active Transportation Emissions Benefits Template







## Active Transportation Questionnaire

### Administrative Questions

1. Agency Name
2. Point of Contact
3. Project Title
4. If the local jurisdiction or ROW owner (city, county) is not the project sponsor, do they approve of this project?

### Investment Category-Focused Criteria

1. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) to explain how the proposed project provides connectivity to nearby destinations. You may submit a map to provide additional details. Examples: community destinations (parks, libraries, clinics); economic destinations (jobs, employment centers, businesses); academic destinations (schools, universities, training centers)
2. Pedestrian/Cyclist Crashes
  - a. Using H-GAC's Regional Crash Dashboard, what is the existing ped-bike crash rate within a quarter mile of the proposed project location? H-GAC staff will provide assist with calculating the crash rates upon request.
  - b. How many crashes in the proposed project location resulted in pedestrian or cyclist death or serious injury?
3. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the project reduces physical barriers (ex: bridges without bikeways, railroad crossings, freeways, limited access roads, thoroughfares, bayous) and/or non-geographic barriers (such as lack of shade in high temperatures) to walking or bicycling.
4. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining a critical gap in the existing bike/ped infrastructure network and how the project closes that gap. Level of Traffic Stress can be used as a methodology to explain gaps. If Level of Traffic Stressed is used in justification, utilize definitions in TxDOT's Traffic and Safety Analysis Procedures Manual
5. Project Readiness
  - a. Does the project have environmental clearance (is all necessary environmental documentation completed and approved by TxDOT or FHWA)?
  - b. Is all necessary right-of-way (ROW) secured, and temporary construction easements (if applicable) acquired?
  - c. Utility Adjustments
    - i. Are utility adjustments or relocations needed
    - ii. If so, are impacts identified and relocation agreements in place?
  - d. Has public involvement occurred, with outreach documented and results incorporated into project development?
  - e. Is the project sponsor ready and able (has experience managing federally funded projects and is prepared to proceed) to let the project for bid upon funding?
6. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining the level and amount of stakeholder engagement (ex: public meetings, plan participation, meetings with property owners along alignment) done in coordination with the proposed project.

### Benefits to Other Investment Categories

1. Benefits to High Growth Area needs

- a. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the proposed project benefits high growth areas. Within the narrative explain if the proposed project improves or provides access to new residential developments, retail stores, or other land uses.
- b. -OR-
  - i. Using H-GAC's Activity-Connectivity Explorer (ACE) Tool, what is the Activity Index in the proposed project area?
  - ii. What is the Connectivity Index?
- 2. Is the project located on or connects to a transit route (local, express, signature, commuter) and/or provides first/last mile connection?
- 3. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the proposed project reduces conflict points between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users (pedestrians and bicyclists) (ex: intersection improvements, crossings, grade separation)

### Planning Factors Criteria

1. Safety
  - a. What is the existing fatality crash rate at the project location? Regional crash data is available online on the crash data viewer. H-GAC staff will assist with calculating the crash rates upon request.
  - b. What is the existing serious injury crash rate at the project location?
  - c. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the proposed project reduces expected fatality and serious injury crashes. Narrative must include specific improvements (work types) included in the project scope. Crash reduction factors associated with specific work types can be found in the safety benefits calculation template. H-GAC staff will assist with gathering the crash reduction factors upon request
2. Resiliency
  - a. Select the vulnerability to flooding score at the project location based on the Regional Resiliency Tool. H-GAC staff will assist with the regional resiliency tool upon request.
  - b. Select the criticality score at the project location based on the Regional Resiliency Tool. H-GAC staff will assist with the regional resiliency tool upon request.
  - c. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the proposed project reduces vulnerability to flooding. The narrative must include specific improvements such as drainage improvements such as drainage improvements that are included in the scope.
3. Access/Connectivity
  - a. Enter the household population located within a quarter mile buffer of the project location:
    - i. Low-Income
    - ii. Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Minorities
  - b. Does the proposed project improve or provide new connectivity to a medical facility within a quarter mile buffer of the project location?
  - c. Does the proposed project improve or provide new connectivity to a school/college/university within a quarter mile buffer of the project location?
  - d. Does the proposed project improve or provide new connectivity to a social services facility within a quarter mile buffer of the project location?
4. Impact on Vulnerable Populations

- a. Using H-GAC's Regional Equity Tool, enter the household population located within a quarter mile buffer of the project location. H-GAC staff will assist with gathering data upon request.
  - i. Low-Income
  - ii. Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Minorities
  - iii. Disabled Persons
  - iv. Elderly Persons
  - v. Limited English Proficiency
- b. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the proposed project provides benefits to vulnerable populations. Benefits include safety improvements, construction of or improvements to ped/bike facilities, or improvements to transit stops. Write N/A if not applicable.
- c. Provide a narrative (250-300 words) explaining how the proposed project avoids or mitigates adverse effects to vulnerable populations. Write N/A if not applicable.

5. Impact on Cultural/Natural Resources

- a. Does the project avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to natural (flood plains, wetlands) and/or cultural (historic and archeological sites) resources?
- b. If yes, explain (300 words or less)
- c. Does the project reduce NOx (nitrogen oxides) and/or VOC (volatile organic compounds) emissions?
- d. If yes, explain (300 words or less)

6. Innovation

- a. Does the project implement new infrastructure or technologies intended to enhance accessibility, mobility, multimodalism, resiliency, reliability, or traffic operations?
- b. AND/OR Does the project install new technology such as autonomous/connected vehicle technology?
- c. If Yes, explain

# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION EVALUATION CRITERIA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE 2025 C4P

*Updated Criteria (As of 07/17/2025):*

Investment Category Focused Criteria (55 Points)	Points Up To
<b>Project improves or provides connectivity to destinations</b>	<b>15</b>
Project provides access to community destinations (parks, libraries, clinics), economic destinations (jobs, employment centers, businesses), schools, transit, etc.	15
<b>Project addresses existing high-crash spots for pedestrians/cyclists</b>	<b>10</b>
Project is along corridor(s) with bike/ped fatality and serious injury crash rate higher than regional average	10
Project is along corridor(s) with bike/ped fatality and serious injury crash rate at regional average	7
Project is along corridor(s) with bike/ped fatality and serious injury crash rate lower than regional average	3
<b>Project removes physical barriers to walking/bicycling</b>	<b>10</b>
Project reduces physical barriers (bridges without bikeways, railroad crossings, freeways and limited access roads, bayous, non-geographic barriers such as lack of shade in high temperatures) to walking and/or bicycling	10
<b>Project fills a critical gap in the existing bike/ped network</b>	<b>10</b>
Explain a critical gap in the existing bike/ped infrastructure network and how the proposing project closes that gap. Level of Traffic Stress can be used as a methodology to explain gaps	10
<b>Project Readiness</b>	<b>10</b>
Ability to obligate funds and initiate construction quickly (within 3 years)	5
-AND- Level of community and stakeholder engagement already conducted	5
Benefits to Other Categories (15 Points)	Points Up To
<b>Project benefits high growth area needs</b>	<b>5</b>
Project provides and/or improves access to development of residential, retail, or other land uses	5
-OR- Project is in a high activity/low connectivity area as defined by the H-GAC ACE Tool	5
<b>Project improves traffic conditions for transit users</b>	<b>5</b>
Project is located on or connects to transit route (local, express, signature, commuter) and/or provides first/last mile connection	5
<b>Project improves daily traffic operations</b>	<b>5</b>
Project reduces conflict points between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users (peds and bikes) (i.e. intersection improvements, crossings, grade separation)	5
Planning Factors (30 Points)	Points Up To
<b>Access/Connectivity</b>	<b>5</b>
# of low-income and minority households within a 1/4 mile of project	2
-AND- Project improves or provides new connectivity to medical facilities within 1/4 mile of project boundary	1
-AND- Project improves or provides new connectivity to schools/colleges/universities within 1/4 mile	1
-AND- Project improves or provides new connectivity to social services facilities	1
<b>Impact on Vulnerable Populations</b>	<b>5</b>

# of vulnerable populations within 1/4 mile of proposed project (full points are awarded if vulnerable population = 0; if >0, two below criteria will be used)	5	
Project provides benefits (safety, bike/ped facilities, improves connectivity to transit stops) to vulnerable populations	3	
-AND- Project avoids or mitigates adverse effects to vulnerable populations	2	
<b>Impact on Natural/Cultural Resources</b>	<b>5</b>	
Project avoids or mitigates adverse impacts to natural (flood plains, wetlands) and cultural (historic and archeological sites) resources	3	
-AND- Project reduces NOx (nitrogen oxides), VOCs (volatile organic compounds)	2	
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>3</b>	
Project implements new infrastructure or technologies intended to enhance accessibility, mobility, multimodalism, resiliency, reliability, or traffic operations. Installation of new technology such as autonomous/connected vehicle technology	3	
<b>Safety-Existing Conditions</b>	<b>3</b>	
Project is in a location with a fatality and serious injury crash rate higher than the regional average	3	
Project is in a location with a fatality and serious injury crash rate equal to the regional average	1	
Project is in a location with a fatality and serious injury crash rate lower than the regional average	0	
<b>Safety-Crash Reduction Narrative Scoring</b>	<b>4</b>	
All work types together reduce total potential crashes by (consolidated crash reduction factor) > 50%	4	
All work types together reduce total potential crashes by (consolidated crash reduction factor) = 30-50%	3	
All work types together reduce total potential crashes by (consolidated crash reduction factor) = 10-30%	2	
All work types together reduce total potential crashes by (consolidated crash reduction factor) < 10%	1	
<b>Resiliency-Existing Conditions</b>	<b>2</b>	
High vulnerability to flooding score on regional resiliency tool	1	
-AND- High criticality score on regional resiliency	1	
<b>Resiliency-Flooding Vulnerability Reduction Scoring</b>	<b>3</b>	
Project scope includes drainage above and beyond minimum federal standard	3	
Project includes drainage to a minimum federal standard	1	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		<b>100</b>