



# Freight Grade Separation Planning Program Timeline Update





# Freight Grade Separation Studies

**New freight program: Freight Grade Separation Planning program.**

- 2-year program under the New UPWP
- Open a call for projects
- 100% funded through H-GAC planning funds

## **Purpose**

Conduct planning-level feasibility studies for rail and road crossings.

- Ensure regional coverage for rail crossing efficiency and safety
- Helps develop a starting point to continue the project development process. Compete for additional funding opportunities

# Eligible Applicants



Projects must be within H-GAC's 8-county MPO planning area: Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Waller counties

| Eligible Project Sponsors  | Projects  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local government agencies (City/County)</li><li>• Public Transit Operators*</li><li>• Toll Road Authorities</li><li>• Ports</li><li>• Special Districts *<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management Districts</li><li>• Redevelopment Authorities</li><li>• Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones</li></ul></li></ul> | <p>H-GAC-led studies are anticipated to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Feasibility of grade crossing improvement recommendations</li><li>2. Corridor operational improvement recommendations (corridors only)</li><li>3. Rough order of magnitude (planning level) Benefit-Cost Analysis</li><li>4. Preliminary concepts</li><li>5. Preliminary funding sources for consideration</li><li>6. Implementation strategy</li></ol> |

\*Transit operations and special districts must co-sponsor with local government agency/ROW owner

# Call for project timeline

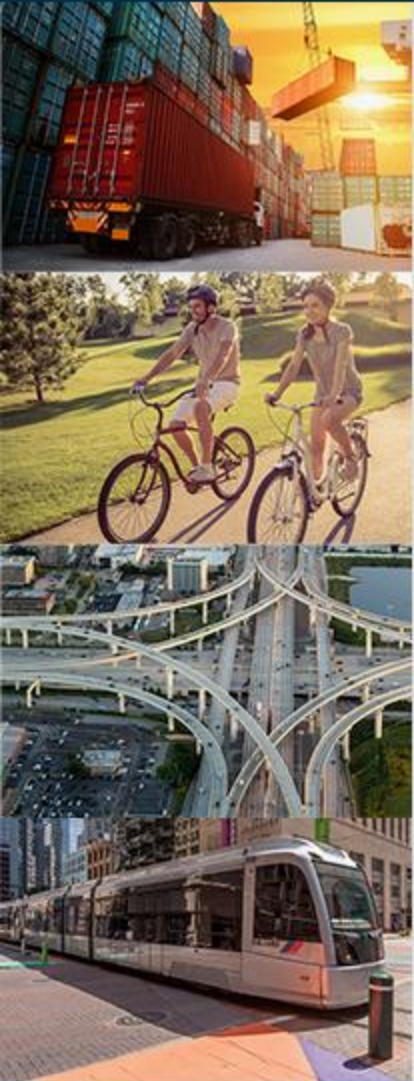


| Milestone                           | Timeline                              |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Call for Projects Submission Period | January 15, 2026 – February 13, 2026, |
| Reviewing and Scoring               | February 21, 2026 – March 2, 2026     |
| Selection of Projects               | Tentative March 6, 2026               |
| RFP and consultant selection        | January 2026                          |
| Feasibility Study Initiation        | June 2026                             |



# Application Process

- Internet-based application
  - Communication to be sent out about the application link and important milestones before the call opens.
- Applications will ask for the Project Evaluation criteria
  - Criteria questions can be found on the H-GAC Freight webpage (<https://www.h-gac.com/freight-planning>)
- Deadline for application submissions Feb 13, 2026 (tentative)

A screenshot of the H-GAC Freight website. The navigation bar includes links for PROGRAMS & SERVICES, ABOUT H-GAC, CALENDAR, FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES, and H-GAC. The main content area features a section titled "Past Regional Goods Movement Plans (5)" with a dropdown arrow. Below this is the "Railroad Grade Separation Pilot Program" section, which includes a description of the program's goals and a link to the "Draft Evaluation Criteria for Railroad Grade Separation Pilot Program". Another section titled "Ports Area Mobility Study" is also visible, with a description of the study's purpose and a link to the "Request for Proposals (RFP)".

**PROGRAMS & SERVICES**   **ABOUT H-GAC**   **CALENDAR**   **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES**   **H-GAC**

**Past Regional Goods Movement Plans (5)**

### Railroad Grade Separation Pilot Program

The HGAC region faces significant safety and efficiency challenges with approximately 1,200 at-grade public crossings clustered around key freight corridors, ports, and historic urban neighborhoods. These crossings not only pose safety risks but also cause traffic delays. Past initiatives, such as the Houston-Beaumont Freight Rail Study, have highlighted the urgent need for infrastructure improvements, specifically recommending grade separation solutions that can significantly enhance safety and streamline movement.

The Railroad Grade Crossing Separation Pilot Program will establish a structured approach, ensuring that projects can continue through the development pipeline by conducting planning-level feasibility studies that will assess necessary improvements at rail crossings throughout the H-GAC region.

The pilot will run for two years under the 2026-2028 Unified Planning Work Plan (UPWP), where up to 10 crossing locations and/or a small corridor will be studied. An evaluation criterion has been developed to aid in the selection of locations for the pilot program and is linked below. Once the crossing locations have been selected, this page will be updated with the list of pilot program projects.

**Railroad Grade Separation Pilot Program Documents (1)**

Draft Evaluation Criteria for Railroad Grade Separation Pilot Program

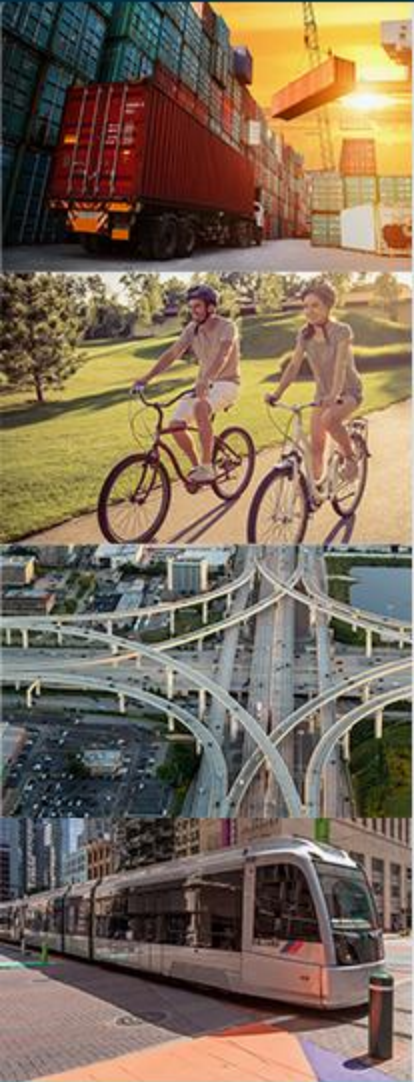
### Ports Area Mobility Study

The Regional Goods Movement Plan, completed in 2012, recommended a follow-up study to analyze supply chain connections between the region's four deepwater ports and emerging markets without having to traverse the dense urban core. This need was also cited in previous TxDOT IH 69 corridor studies, the I-69 Advisory Committee report, and the TxDOT Texas Freight Mobility Plan.

After significant outreach with stakeholders and further coordination with port representatives, H-GAC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in May 2016 for the Ports Area Mobility Study. The purpose of the study is to better understand the supply chains linking the four deepwater ports in the area and identify some locally approved improvement alternatives.

The Ports Area Mobility Study will establish a stronger future for the region's freight economy by recommending improvements that will better connect the four deepwater ports with emerging population and employment centers.

# Contact



*Action:* For information only

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