

CALL FOR PLANNING STUDY PARTNERS

FY2021-2024 Livable Centers Studies

DUE: January 21, 2020 2:00 p.m. CST

(This is not a request for proposals from consulting firms.)

Background

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is seeking proposals from local governments or other eligible project sponsors to conduct Livable Centers planning studies.

The objective of the Livable Centers planning studies is to reimagine auto-focused infrastructure and to help create quality, walkable, mixed-use places, create multi-modal travel choices, improve environmental quality, and promote economic development and housing choice. Study recommendations will ideally lead to locally sponsored Livable Centers projects for possible inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and future Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP).

To date, H-GAC has worked in partnership with local sponsors to complete 29 Livable Centers planning studies in the 8-county Transportation Management Area (TMA) with the average cost per study being \$200,000 – \$250,000.

For more information on the Livable Centers program and to view completed studies, please visit www.h-gac.com/livablecenters.

Eligibility

1. This call for planning study partners is limited to local governments, management districts, municipal utility districts, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ), and other entities that can receive federal transportation funding and implement transportation projects.
2. The proposed study must be located within H-GAC's eight-county TMA, which includes Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties. (Study areas adjacent to the TMA may be considered under special conditions.)
3. If the applicant is not the primary owner of the streets and sidewalks in the study area, the applicant must provide a letter of support from the owning agency (i.e., the city or county that owns and maintains the streets and sidewalks).

Funding Availability

H-GAC anticipates identifying several locations for new Livable Centers studies to recommend for funding during fiscal years 2021-2024. The total funding level available will be determined by H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council. As such, **a successful recommendation from this application process does not guarantee funding and may be altered based on Council's direction.**

Project sponsors must indicate their estimated costs for completing the study. Project sponsors are not limited to applying for one study but must submit a separate complete application for each proposed study.

H-GAC reserves the right to negotiate final budget amount for each study based on the study scope and available funding levels.

Local Funding Match

Livable Centers: Sponsoring agencies must demonstrate a financial commitment to provide not less than a 20% local match for the proposed studies plus an additional 3.5% TxDOT fee. The 20% local match is calculated based on the total funding level of the study (**federal funding level plus local match**) and the 3.5% TxDOT fee is calculated based on the local match amount.

Local match must be in the form of cash match. Generally, local match commitment is demonstrated by a letter from the highest local elected official that explicitly commits to the local match (this can be included in the letter of support). H-GAC reserves the right to negotiate the final funding amount depending on the specifics of the project and available funding levels.

Project Evaluation and Selection

Proposals will be evaluated by a project selection committee comprised of H-GAC staff and representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation and former study partners. The selection committee recommendations will be submitted to the Transportation Policy Council for potential funding award. Upon identification of funding levels, the recommendations will be submitted to the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval. H-GAC reserves the right to make all final decisions and to withdraw this call for planning study partners.

Application Deadline

All submittals must be received by H-GAC no later than **2:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 21, 2020**. Any submissions received after this deadline will not receive further consideration.

Pre-Submittal Q&A Meeting

A pre-submittal meeting for potential sponsors will be held at H-GAC on **Tuesday, November 12, 2019**, at 10:00 a.m. in H-GAC's Training Room (2nd Floor), at 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX. Sponsors are *not* required to attend this meeting. The meeting will be an opportunity to have any questions answered regarding this call for partners.

Notice of Intent to Apply

Applicants *are required* to notify H-GAC of their intent to apply no later than **Friday, December 6, 2019**, at 2:00 p.m. Intent to apply must include proposed study area location. Intent to apply should be submitted online at www.h-gac.com/livablecenters.

Application Submittal

Project applications must be submitted directly to H-GAC via the online application website: www.h-gac.com/livablecenters. Submit your completed online application by **2:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 21, 2020**. No late applications will be accepted.

If electronic submittal is not feasible, please contact:

Ms. Anita Hollmann
Principal Planner
Houston-Galveston Area Council
3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120
Houston, Texas 77027
Phone: (713) 993-4587

Part I: Application Form

The application form is available online at www.h-gac.com/livablecenters

General Project Information:	
Sponsoring agency:	_____
Contact person:	_____
Mailing address:	_____
Phone number:	_____
Email address:	_____
Title of Proposed Project:	_____
Study area location and boundaries (Please include a map):	_____
Proposed Funding Contributions:	
Amount of funds requested from H-GAC:	_____
Amount of local match funds provided by sponsoring agency (see requirements):	_____
Other contributions and sources of funding:	_____

Part II: Application Narrative: The application narrative should be submitted in typed format using the general outline provided below. Exhibits such as maps, charts, and photographs are not required, but may be included as separate attachments, or, preferable for large files, as links.

A. Description/Scope (20% of total score): The potential impact of the study will be determined based on the project description. The project description should describe the goals and vision of the project and how these goals relate to local/regional planning efforts. This description should discuss the need and purpose of the project as well as the desired outcomes. The project description should include a description of the study area location and boundaries, including a map of the proposed study area.

The area of interest, project scale, and regional significance of the study will also be considered.

Please indicate the area of interest that best describes the Livable Centers project study area:

- High density area with mixed land uses and a traditional street grid system, such as Urban Core areas.
- Regional Centers: areas of concentrated employment or other major trip generators.
- Town or Village Centers: concentration of housing, retail/office and civic destinations within walking distance of a community gathering place and a good pedestrian network.
- Transit-Oriented Development: high density mix of uses within walking distance of, and with good access to, a transit facility.
- Corridor: roadways that are classified as major collectors or higher that increase multi-modal accessibility and connectivity to major centers or transit facilities and communities that would be significantly impacted by planned roadway expansions.
- Emerging Centers or Corridors: those areas that are experiencing strong growth and could develop as regional centers.

B. Fulfilling Program Goals (60% of total score):

For each Livable Centers program goal below, please describe how the proposed study will help fulfill the indicated goals and objectives.

Create multi-modal travel choices by facilitating a range of transportation mode opportunities (30%):

- Project has the potential for air quality improvements from mode shift.
- Project will improve connectivity with existing neighborhoods and developments.
- Project will provide an accessible pedestrian/bicyclist environment.
- Project will strengthen accessibility to transit.
- Project will improve pedestrian/bicyclist safety.

Create resilient quality places (10%):

- Project has the potential to positively transform a project area.
- Project seeks to integrate green space and preserve natural resources.
- Project seeks to incorporate last mile connection within property adjacent to the public roadway.

- Project incorporates flood recovery, mitigation and other resiliency elements.

Promote economic development (10%):

- Project efficiently uses existing infrastructure.
- Project has potential to serve as a catalyst for investment and development.
- Project will promote pedestrian and transit-oriented development practices within property adjacent to the public roadway.

Promotes equitable and resilient infrastructure (10%):

- Project wholly or partially located in an Environmental Justice community (areas where the share minority and low-income populations, as well as other indicators of disadvantage such as limited English proficiency, senior citizens, limited educational attainment carless households, and female headed households, exceed the TMA average). More information on indicators of community disadvantage can be found in H-GAC’s Environmental Justice report at <http://www.h-gac.com/title-vi-program/documents/H-GAC-environmental-justice.pdf>
- Project will facilitate or incentivize an improvement in the range of housing options in the project area.

C. Ability to Implement (20% of total score): The ability to implement the project will be measured by the level of commitment demonstrated, including: the sponsor’s ability to successfully complete the project in the allocated time, stakeholder involvement, prior TIP implementation record, and the ability of the sponsor to track the implementation of study recommendations by type and funding amount after the completion of the study.

Please describe or document the support of the sponsoring agency and potential project partners. Demonstration of local/community support may include but is not limited to:

- Description of staff and/or departments of the sponsoring agency that will be involved in coordinating the overall study effort.
- Description of support from key sponsor officials (such as city council, management district board, agency head, etc.). Please list names, titles, and entity.
- Letters of support from community or neighborhood groups, partner agencies, local businesses, or other stakeholders (please include in Part III Attachments).
- Local plans or other studies that have identified livable center program goals as a community or neighborhood priority (i.e., local visioning exercise, comprehensive plan, or other study).

Part III: Attachments

A. Letters of Support

Please attach letters of support from the sponsoring agency and other project partners. *If the sponsoring agency is not the primary owner of the streets and sidewalks in the study area, the application must include a letter of support from the owning agency (i.e., the city or county that owns and maintains the streets and sidewalks). Application will not be considered eligible if this requirement is not met.*

B. Letter of Support – Texas House of Representatives

A letter of support from the State Representative for the area represented by the proposed study area is **required**. If the study area encompasses multiple Texas House Districts, a letter is required from each Representative.

C. Local Funding Match

The project sponsor must document its commitment to provide the required local funding match + 3.5% TxDOT fee. This commitment can be demonstrated by a letter from the highest local elected official (or key sponsor official) that has the authority to commit to the local match.