



## **HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL**

3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120

Houston, TX 77027

[www.h-gac.com](http://www.h-gac.com) | @HouGalvAreaCog

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **H-GAC PARTNERS WITH CYCLINGSAVVY TO INCREASE SAFETY, CONFIDENCE IN BIKING THROUGH THE REGION**

**HOUSTON, TX** – Countless studies have touted the health and economic benefits of bicycling more and driving less. Local governments and developers are also recognizing these benefits and investing more resources into multimodal, bike- and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. However, many residents in the Houston-Galveston metropolitan region hesitate to take up biking due to concerns about safety or lack of awareness of bicycling road rules. The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), in partnership with CyclingSavvy and the American Bicycling Education Association, aims to change that.

H-GAC is offering area residents a free, online course by CyclingSavvy, to instill confidence and comfort with biking in the region. The course is divided into 14 self-paced video modules covering two key areas: 1) essential knowledge of traffic rules and behaviors that make bicyclists more predictable on the roads and reduce the risk of crashes, and 2) how to ride defensively and handle unexpected situations. It is designed to cover situations that are especially relevant to the Houston-Galveston metropolitan region and is open for bicyclists at all levels. Residents can register by going to [Houston.cyclingsavvy.org](http://Houston.cyclingsavvy.org) and entering their home zip code.

“There’s a lot of new bike-centered infrastructure popping up in the region. On one hand, it’s a great thing, but it can also be confusing, especially if it’s something like bidirectional protected bike lanes that hasn’t been seen locally before,” said Susan Jaworski, senior transportation planner at H-GAC. “These courses are meant to instill confidence and comfort when biking in our region – whether it’s in a major metropolitan area, a rural road, along bike lanes in the park, or around your neighborhood.”

Additionally, H-GAC will hold free on-the-bike training classes that allow residents to take what they’ve learned in the online course and practice it in a real-world setting. The classes will occur on Saturdays and Sundays starting on April 30 for adult residents in Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller counties. Plans to offer the classes to Harris County residents are still in the works. If successful, they would likely be offered in the fall of 2022. Up to 15 people over the age of 18 can sign up per class, and participants must be able to

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H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials from the 13-county Gulf Coast planning region, which includes an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 7 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars; serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local governments; and helps analyze trends and conditions affecting the region. For more information, visit [www.h-gac.com](http://www.h-gac.com).



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supply their own bike, helmet, and water. Completing the online CyclingSavvy course is a prerequisite to participating in the in-person classes. As with the online course, the classes are open to bicyclists at all experience levels.

“There are quite a range of benefits to biking over driving. In addition to health and economic benefits, there are air quality benefits. If you can replace just one or two short trips on a bike, you can have real meaningful impact on air quality,” said Jaworski. “Another benefit that’s frequently overlooked is community cohesion. When you’re bicycling, you tend to be more aware of your surroundings, and it allows for more interaction with people in your community and encourages people to be more involved in what’s happening.”

In addition to the bike safety partnerships, H-GAC works closely with local governments in planning and securing funding to improve and increase infrastructure that supports not only bicyclists but all modes of travel in a cohesive, connected multimodal way. More information about H-GAC’s bicycling and pedestrian planning programs is available at [www.h-gac.com/pedestrian-bicyclist-planning](http://www.h-gac.com/pedestrian-bicyclist-planning).

“It is very important to have a wide variety of infrastructure so that everyone of all skills and abilities can get out and enjoy it,” said Jaworski. “We’re not just supporting infrastructure for people to bike directly to an office and back. Sometimes, it’s just a matter of making it easy for them to bike to a park and ride or to the nearest transit connection – and that’s enough to open up whole groups of people living in the region to new employment opportunities, education opportunities, and so forth.”

For more information and to sign up for CyclingSavvy, the online bike safety course, visit [Houston.cyclingsavvy.org](http://Houston.cyclingsavvy.org). To register for the in-person bike safety classes, visit [www.h-gac.com/pedestrian-bicyclist-planning/bike-safety](http://www.h-gac.com/pedestrian-bicyclist-planning/bike-safety).

Residents and stakeholders can also stay up to date on H-GAC events and happenings by viewing our online calendar of events at [www.h-gac.com/calendar](http://www.h-gac.com/calendar).

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