

## **11D. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **A. LONG RANGE PLANNING**

#### **1. Sub-regional Planning Initiatives (SPI)**

- Strategies and recommendations are under development for the Southeast Harris County Subregional Study. Public comments were solicited through the new Engage H-GAC website – <https://engage.h-gac.com/>.
- The Steering Committee for the Liberty County Mobility Study met on September 7, 2021 to review and provide feedback on initial recommendations. Analysis and refinement of these initial recommendations are currently underway.
- The study analysis and the development of recommendations are under development for the Montgomery County Precinct 2 Mobility Study. Public comments were solicited through the H-GAC website – <https://engage.h-gac.com/>.
- Staff are developing methodology for a Transit-Oriented Development analysis of the 8-County H-GAC region.

#### **2. Freight Planning**

- The Regional Goods Movement Plan’s consultant selection process was completed, and a contract with the selected contractor is under approval process.
- Staff held the Greater Houston Freight Committee meeting on June 10, 2021. A panel discussion on the future of freight rail was discussed among Union Pacific, Burlington Northern & Santa Fe, Kansas City Southern Railways, and the Gulf Coast Rail District. A presentation by TxDOT rail division was given on the findings of the Houston-Beaumont Rail Study. Staff prepared materials and coordinated for the upcoming Freight Committee meeting on September 23, 2021.

#### **3. Regional Incident Management, Safety, and Operations**

- Staff completed the 2020 State of Safety Report.
- Staff continued coordination with the Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff Office on operations with the Tow and Go Program.
- Staff is coordinating with local government partners to conduct Intersection Safety Audits.
- The 2021 Zip-Zone and Hurricane Preparedness Campaign started in June and is underway.
- The Public Outreach Campaign for Driver Safety known as “Pay the Price” started in June and is underway.
- Staff is developing tow operator training materials for the Tow and Go program.

4. Environmental Planning

- Staff has completed the “Quick User Guide” to the Eco-Logical tool which is designed to teach a new user how the tool works in several short steps. The guide is going through the final edits before publication. Staff have also begun coordination with a contact in the Houston Independent School District to discuss the prospect of students using the Eco-Logical tool within the environmental science or social studies curriculum.
- Staff worked on an update to the H-GAC Environmental Justice Report as well as the Title VI/Non-discrimination Annual Workplan and Accomplishment Report. Staff received public comments and prepared responses. The report was presented to TAC and TPC and will be presented to Board of Directors for approval.

5. Resiliency Planning

- Staff began development of a Low Impact Development study to examine how to cost-effectively integrate low impact development into transportation projects in the Houston area.
- Staff completed work on the Resilience & Durability Pilot project as part of the FHWA program to develop transportation-sector specific resiliency best practices and strategies across the country. The draft report has been finalized and accepted by FHWA. Staff are completing an update of the Foresight Panel on Environmental Effects report with outcomes from the Pilot project.
- Staff have developed a strategy to integrate results from the Resilience & Durability Pilot project into ongoing transportation planning and studies. Sub-regional results from the pilot project will be presented to each sub-regional project steering committee.

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Staff worked on the scope of work, outreach activities, and schedule for the development of the next Regional Transportation Plan. Staff coordinated and presented to the RTP Subcommittee.

7. Other Planning Activities

Staff continue to monitor regional travel impacts of COVID-19. Regional travel volumes are monitored through StreetLight data, transit ridership numbers are reported monthly from transit agencies within the region, and permanent pedestrian/bicyclist counters provide updates on pedestrian/bicyclist counts along regional pedestrian/bicyclist facilities. Staff have developed an online [COVID-19 Regional Traffic Impacts App](#) which displays vehicular, active, and transit transportation patterns during the Pandemic and a report on the [Regional Travel Impacts of COVID-19](#).

**B. SHORT RANGE PLANNING**

1. Project Programming

- Staff coordinated on the amendments to the 2021-2024 TIP document. Staff coordinated with TxDOT and local governments on the proposed amendments to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Staff worked on the development of project selection criteria and coordinated with various subcommittees.

2. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Planning

- Staff updated data on H-GAC Website for Mobile Counters program.
- Staff processed requests for Ped/Bike counter data.
- Staff completed data entry and coordination with METRO regarding the multimodal network connectivity pilot project grant from Federal Highway Administration.
- Staff continues to work with the America Bicycle Education Association to track the online safety course called CyclingSavvy.
- Staff continues collaborating with the American Bicycle Education Association to identify potential in-person bike handling courses.
- Staff participated in meetings with the Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee and Texas Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Staff is coordinating with Ped/Bike Subcommittee to revise the 2045 Active Transportation Plan.
- Staff coordinated with the Ped/Bike Subcommittee TIP Workgroup and transmitted their recommendations encompassing new and revised Active Transportation TIP Evaluation Criteria (e.g. planning factors and Benefits Cost Analysis) to the Ped/Bike Subcommittee. Staff has been providing recommendations and additional analysis as requested by TIP Subcommittee.
- Staff is working on developing scopes for upcoming call for regional/sub-regional active transportation plans.
- Staff is collaborating with project sponsors to develop schedules and general project planning regarding UPWP approved active transportation projects.

3. Transit Planning

- The next meeting of the Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee is scheduled for October 14, 2021.
- Staff continued to conduct a monthly survey regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on regional transit providers. This survey will continue during the course of the pandemic.
- The City of Pearland Transit Feasibility Needs Assessment and Study was started in August. The project will focus on specific suburban transit needs and challenges with robust community engagement.

- Planning and implementation for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan is on-going. The regional transportation inventory and needs assessment are near completion, and a Gaps Analysis is ongoing. Phase I outreach, including a set of virtual interactive outreach events and public survey, has been completed and the results are currently being analyzed. Phase II outreach, including a set of eight focus groups, is currently being planned, and is scheduled to take place in mid-to-late October.
- Coordination continues between H-GAC, METRO and other regional transit agencies regarding the Regional Transit Connectivity Project, including the Seamless Fare System, regional trip planner, data management system, and related efforts. The Inter-Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding this effort is currently being circulated to regional transit agencies for signature. A separate Intergovernmental Agreement between H-GAC and METRO regarding funding for this effort has been signed and executed.

#### **C. TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC OUTREACH**

- Public Outreach staff assisted the Commute Solutions Team in launching its first music streaming ad on Spotify and coordinating virtual fairs to celebrate Commute Solutions Month.
- Media buys and advertising with local vendors for Tow and Go, Hurricane Preparedness, and the Regional Safety Campaign all launched during the summer months and are currently in progress.
- Staff are currently working on coordinating a series of focus groups to gain feedback on transit needs for the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan update.
- Media interviews with ABC 13 and KHOU were coordinated by staff regarding hurricane preparation.
- The 2021 Safety Report was finalized and approved

#### **D. COMMUTE SOLUTIONS**

- Staff and regional partners kicked-off Commute Solutions Month's 27th year to celebrate the efforts and successes of the program
- Staff held monthly coordination meetings with TxDOT's ConnectSmart team.
- Staff continues to meet with AECOM for telework planning coordination with area companies and local governments.
- Staff is planning telework training for the Harris County Judges Office to prepare for telework policy implementation.

#### **E. CLEAN VEHICLES PROGRAMS PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Staff continues to work with several ISD's in the Houston-Galveston region to replace older school buses.
- Staff continues to coordinate with Cy Fair ISD for grant funding of electric buses.
- Staff worked with several grant recipients to finalize contracts and complete invoicing.

- Staff continued to monitor grant recipient’s usage of vehicles to assure grant requirements for vehicle use and mileage are met.
- Participated in a variety of internal and external meetings and met with other local government agencies to discuss projects utilizing CMAQ funds.
- Staff facilitated the quarterly AERCO meeting and provided updates for the Clean School Bus program funding.

**F. GENERAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

- Air Quality staff's Regional Bus Survey is underway. Staff is working to develop an inventory of all types of buses that operate within the H-GAC region. Staff has completed the collection of data and project work is developing the analysis and final report. Work on this report should be completed within the next month.
- Staff continues to work with air quality staff from NCTCOG to meet with stakeholders to develop zero emission vehicle (ZEV) corridor plan for Interstate 45 between and within the two MPO's service areas. Staff members are continuing to hold meetings with ZEV stakeholders as well as reaching out directly to non-ZEV stakeholders who may have an interest in either all-electric or hydrogen technology. H-GAC staff continues work to reach additional stakeholders within the Southern portion of the corridor.
- H-GAC continues to assist with regional efforts to support the Department of Energy sponsored Houston-Galveston Clean Cities Coalition. Under this program, staff works with regional fleets to foster economic, environmental, and energy security by working to advance affordable, domestic transportation fuels, energy efficient mobility systems, and other fuel-saving technologies and practices. As part of this activity, staff continues to work to develop educational programs related to alternative fuel topics, development of an alternative fueling podcast, and outreach to stakeholder fleets within the H-GAC region to advise on alternative fuel transitions.
- Staff is continuing to administer two separate Environmental Protection Agency-funded Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grants from the 2018 and 2019 Calls for Projects to deploy all-electric yard tractors at local freight warehouses. For the 2018 project, staff has been working with IKEA to replace two existing diesel yard tractors at their Baytown facility with all-electric models. It was anticipated that the new vehicles would be delivered in Q3 2021, but this has been delayed until Q4 2022 due to OEM supply issues.

**G. TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING**

- Staff continues to provide travel demand modeling and GIS technical supports and assistances to support H-GAC’s Regional Transportation Planning (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the 2020 Regional Air Quality conformity process, other H-GAC’s planning work and H-GAC’s member agencies such as TxDOT and METRO, for their various corridor and sub-area transportation planning and studies. Staff continues to work with TxDOT to determine studies and uses for Streetlight data.

**Agenda Item 11D**  
**TPC Meeting Packet – 9/24/21**

- Staff continues to provide Travel Demand Forecasting technical supports to various H-GAC member agencies in support for various corridor and sub-regional studies such as:
  - Working with member agencies consultants on modeling needs for the three sub-area studies, assists with the development of existing conditions transit analysis for the Pearland Transit Needs Assessment, assists with a request from the City of Houston to update the greenhouse gas emissions inventory, assists periodically with the ongoing development of the regional Activity Based Model (ABM), assists with the development of the Regional O-D Transit Survey and Airport Survey, coordinated the modeling support work for Montgomery County Thoroughfare Plan, continues with the Cube Network editing.
- Staff continued to test-run the H-GAC's newly developed Activity-Based-Model (ABM) model and the Truck model.
- Staff continued to develop highway networks as input for the AIMSUN Meso and Micro modeling for three sub-areas: Montgomery County, SE Harris and Liberty Counties studies, attended a traffic simulation software training, and continues to evaluate other modeling software with better Meso and Micro capabilities.
- Staff continued to work with the Steering Committee and in partnership with METRO and the consultant for the Origin-Destination (O-D) On-board Transit Survey. RFP is issued and the data collection will be conducted in Spring of 2022.
- Staff working with the City of Houston Airport staff for the joint effort of the regional commercial airport (IAH & Hobby) ground access count to the airports surveys. Scope of work is under development and data collection is scheduled for Summer of 2022.
- Staff continued to update websites and data dashboards for various Sub-regional studies such as Montgomery County (Precinct-2), Southeast Harris and Liberty Counties.