



Commenting on the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

What is the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)?

- The H-GAC is the Houston region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). An MPO is a federally mandated and funded organization charged with coordinating regional transportation. All projects within the 13 county region that receive federal funding must go through the H-GAC.

What is the Transportation Policy Council (TPC)?

- The TPC is the H-GAC's executive committee over transportation planning. Made up of a number of elected officials and representatives of major transportation interests in the region, this body has final approval over H-GAC planning processes and project development.
- The TPC is not required to proportionally represent the region. Currently, despite the vast majority of the region's residents residing in the City of Houston and Harris County, these two entities have 5 total votes on the TPC; small and rural counties and cities collectively have 17 votes. This has resulted in a very conservative transportation outlook in the region.

What is the Regional Transportation Plan?

- **The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a federally required document that broadly outlines the region's goals for its transportation system.** From the 2045 RTP: The RTP will set investment priorities for the multimodal transportation system that connects people to places where they live, work, play, and efficiently moves goods from, to and through the region. Includes:
 - Assess demographic trends and transportation demand
 - Forecast future demand for regional mobility
 - Estimate available funding
 - Track progress towards system performance targets

How often is the RTP updated?

- The RTP must be updated every 5 years; the numbered year of the plan represents the vision for 25 years in the future (i.e. 2045 RTP was released in 2020, 2050 RTP in 2025).

What does it have to do with climate change?

- The largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the United States is transportation. According to the City of Houston CAP, in Texas and in Houston, transportation accounts for roughly [47% of GHG emissions](#). A majority of these emissions come from passenger vehicles.
- Currently, neither the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) nor the H-GAC track GHGs emitted from mobile sources. Climate change, particularly as it relates to transportation, is rarely mentioned at the H-GAC, much less actively accounted for within major planning documents.
- Rapidly cutting mobile GHG emissions is essential to combating climate change. Our transportation infrastructure must become more sustainable. This will not happen unless climate action is a central tenet of our local, regional, and statewide planning processes.

What should the 2050 RTP say about climate change?

- The RTP should contain:
 - An acknowledgement of the reality of climate change, its devastating impacts on the region, and commitment to reducing mobile source emissions in line with recommendations from the 2021 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report.
 - A commitment from the H-GAC to align planning practices, project evaluation, and funding distribution with the goal of GHG reduction.
 - A comprehensive plan to work with local governing bodies, like the City of Houston and Harris County, in achieving shared climate goals.