What choices should we make when planning for the future of our region?

Forecasts by the Houston-Galveston Area Council predict that by the year 2040, our region will:
- Grow by 3.5 million people
- Gain 1.9 million jobs
- Become a “majority minority” population

For this survey, please consider three possible futures for the region. Each represents one of the top three areas residents indicated were important during a survey conducted in early 2012 - Less Time on the Road, Greener Region, Competitive Workforce. As a baseline when thinking about these three alternative futures, please consider the Current Course, or what the future may look like if we don’t make any changes to our current growth, environmental and educational trends.

2040 Current Course
- Existing trends continue
- No major policy changes
- Most of growth occurs outside of existing towns and cities
- Traffic congestion increases

2040 Alternative Future: Less Time on the Road
- Reduction in travel times, costs
- Most of growth occurs in existing places
- More jobs and housing located closer together
- Some new housing is smaller sized, in walkable areas
- More investment in sidewalks, bikeways, public transportation
- Better air quality

2040 Alternative Future: Greener Region
- Air and water quality improved
- Development reduced in flood and storm surge vulnerable areas
- Best natural areas preserved
- New businesses, workers, tourists attracted by natural areas
- Greener practices adopted by local governments

2040 Alternative Future: Competitive Workforce
- Increase in education attainment of residents
- Community factors, such as poverty and crime, addressed
- Highly skilled workforce
- Competitive economic region
- Good jobs and job training opportunities
In this alternative, most of the growth occurs outside existing towns and cities. This helps keep housing prices down, but does not create long-term value for most homeowners, as older cities, suburbs and towns decline with the continuous movement of people to newer communities.

The distance between jobs, housing, and activities also continues to increase, meaning that driving remains the option for almost all the trips people make. Despite major upgrades in roads and freeways, traffic congestion keeps increasing, as the number of new drivers grows faster than the funds available for road improvements and maintenance.

EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Most growth occurs outside of existing communities.

92% of the population lives in existing communities

53% of the population growth occurs in existing communities

2010

2040
Less Time on the Road

In this alternative, most of growth takes place in cities and towns—particularly in activity centers and other areas where housing, jobs and activities are located closer together. New development strengthens the local tax base in these places, enabling them to improve maintenance and services without raising taxes.

Transportation strategies are less focused on widening freeways and major roads and more on public transportation—buses, light rail and commuter rail—and improvements to interstates and highways. Local plans, codes and incentives are

EXISTING COMMUNITIES

This alternative promotes more growth in existing communities where infrastructure and services already exist.

53% of the population growth occurs in existing communities

Rural

Suburban

Urban

Traditional downtowns can accommodate residential above retail while maintaining their character.

New or redeveloping suburban areas can create vibrant districts with 3-5 story buildings mixing housing and retail.

Urban areas can be both job and housing centers, accommodating growth while creating areas to live, work, learn and play.

76% of the population growth occurs in existing communities
In this alternative, the region has made a major effort to preserve its best natural areas—wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines—and to reduce air and water pollution. Suburban growth trends continue, with the exception that development is greatly reduced in those areas most vulnerable to flooding and hurricane storm surge—which are also some of the region's best wildlife habitat.

Public and private funds are used to preserve many prime natural areas and provide access to residents and visitors for outdoor recreation. These efforts increase the quality of life for residents and enhance the region's ability to recruit new business and skilled workers and to attract tourists.

This alternative preserves high-quality natural areas.
Competitive Workforce

In this alternative, the region makes a major effort to increase the educational achievement of its residents, improving high school graduation rates, particularly in low-income communities where dropout rates are high, becomes a priority. The focus is not only on improving schools, but also addressing community factors such as poverty, crime, and substandard housing that can negatively affect educational outcomes.

These efforts are coordinated with increased educational enrichment, including preschool, after-school tutoring and mentoring, and English language skills programs. Additionally, improved opportunities for vocational training, adult education, and counseling and support for small business owners are provided throughout the region.

Benefits to More Education

- $45.4 billion
- $34.9 billion
- $1.6 billion

Earnings, Spending, GDP, Sales Tax

More Quality Jobs

Higher H.S. & College Attainment Rates + More Diversity = Larger % Graduates

Fixed H.S. & College Attainment Rates + More Diversity = Smaller % Graduates

Region-Wide H.S. & College Attainment

Current Course

Goal

Attainment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 Today</th>
<th>2040 Goal</th>
<th>More Diversity (Changes in Population 2010 - 2040)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>29% - 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>17% - 36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>36% - 44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>7% - 10%</td>
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Win Gift Card

amazon.com

Terms and Conditions
Getting the Word Out

Survey Distribution Methods:

- Online
- E-blasts
- Targeted presentations
- Community meetings
- iPad surveys
- Kiosks
Six Languages

- Take the survey in English
- Conteste la encuesta en español
- Làm thăm đồ bảng tiếng Việt
- 한국어로 설문조사를 실시하십시오
- 填写问卷
- 填寫問卷
Map of Responses

Citizens from throughout the Houston-Galveston region responded to the survey, representing rural, suburban, urban, and coastal communities.
Geographic Summary

Total Survey Respondents: 7,677

- Urban: 2839
- Suburban: 4159
- Rural: 447
- Coastal: 240
Demographic Summary

- **Gender**
  - Male: 46.1%, Female: 53.9%

- **Age**
  - 35 and Below: 52.6%
  - 35-44: 17.9%, 14.4%
  - 45-54: 24.0%, 14.0%
  - 55-64: 26.4%, 10.3%
  - 65+: 13.8%, 8.7%

- **Race**
  - African American: 8.3%, 17.1%
  - Asian: 5.2%, 6.5%
  - Hispanic: 9.1%, 35.8%
  - White: 67.1%, 40.6%
Demographic Summary

**Income**

- **Less than $49,000**: 15.9% (Survey), 45.9% (Region)
- **$50-99,000**: 32.0% (Survey), 29.7% (Region)
- **$100-149,000**: 24.7% (Survey), 13.5% (Region)
- **More than $150,000**: 27.4% (Survey), 10.9% (Region)

**Education Level**

- **High School or Less**: 4.6% (Survey), 44.7% (Region)
- **Some College**: 18.7% (Survey), 27.2% (Region)
- **Bachelor**: 39.1% (Survey), 18.6% (Region)
- **Masters or Higher**: 37.6% (Survey), 9.5% (Region)
Less Time on the Road

From where you live, how difficult/easy is it for you to get to the places you want to go?

- Very easy: 9.9%
- Easy: 22.1%
- Not that difficult: 46.3%
- Difficult: 18.2%
- Very difficult: 3.5%
Do you think it will be easier or more difficult in the year 2040 for people to reach the places they want to go than it is today?

- A lot easier: 2.4%
- Easier: 10.7%
- About the same: 13.5%
- More difficult: 38.0%
- A lot more difficult: 35.4%
Less Time on the Road

From where you live, which of the following could you reach in 10 minutes or less comfortably by bicycling or walking?

- Work: 11.0%
- School: 26.6%
- Park/Natural Area: 57.7%
- Shopping/Errands: 37.9%
- None: 21.8%
Significant Variations

From where you live, how much time does it usually take for you to reach the following destinations? Park/Natural Area

(Choices: Less than 10 minutes, 10 - 30 minutes, 30 - 45 minutes, 45 to 60 minutes, More than 60 minutes, and I don’t go there)

**Choice:** Less than 10 minutes

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<td>Above $50K</td>
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Less Time on the Road

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

- Other: 6.9%
- Open Space: 10.2%
- Size of House I Can Afford: 12.3%
- Quality of Schools: 13.3%
- Close to Employment: 18.1%
- Close to Activities: 18.5%
- Safety: 20.8%
If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

(Choices: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance), Size of house I can afford, Open space, Close to employment, Quality of schools, Safety, and Other)

**Choice:** Open Space

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<td>34.3%</td>
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**Choice:** Close to Activities

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<td>4.4%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
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Significant Variations

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

(Choices: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance), Size of house I can afford, Open space, Close to employment, Quality of schools, Safety and Other)

Choice: Close to Activities (Walking/Bicycling Distance)

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<tr>
<td>65 years and older</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
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Significant Variations

If you could live anywhere in the region, which of the following would be the most important factor in your decision?

(Choices: Close to activities (walking/bicycling distance), Size of house I can afford, Open space, Close to employment, Quality of schools, Safety and Other)

**Choice:** Quality of schools

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<tr>
<td>65 years and older</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
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Less Time on the Road

As our region continues to grow, which of the following would you like to see in the area where you live?

- None. It's fine the way it is. 42.9%
- More Jobs 35.9%
- More Housing 9.8%
- More Retail 25.2%
Significant Variations

As our region continues to grow, which of the following would you like to see in the area where you live?

(Choices: More Jobs, More Housing, More Retail, None, It’s fine the way it is).

**Choice:** None. It’s fine the way it is

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Significant Variations

As our region continues to grow, which of the following would you like to see in the area where you live?

(Choices: None. It’s fine the way it is, More Jobs, More Housing, and More Retail)

**Choice:** None. It’s fine the way it is

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Less Time on the Road

What is the best way to accommodate future growth?

- Build New Suburban Areas: 10.7%
- Redevelop Existing Cities and Towns: 41.1%
- Redevelop Some Cities and Towns and also Build Some New Suburban Areas: 44.4%
By the year 2040, our region will need to build new housing, shops, and workplaces for more than 3.5 million additional residents. Which would be the best way to accommodate that growth?

(Choices: Build New Suburban Areas, Redevelop Existing Cities, Redevelop Some Cities and Towns and Build New Suburban Areas and No Opinion/I Don’t Know)

**Choice:**
Redevelop existing cities and towns to build new housing and shops where streets and city services already exist

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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
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Less Time on the Road

What would you support to make this alternative a reality?

- Nothing, I Do Not Support: 6.1%
- Other: 5.5%
- Carpooling: 28.9%
- Live in a Smaller House: 32.1%
- Live Closer to Job: 39.4%
- Increased Public Transit Options: 41.9%
- Take Public Transportation: 48.7%
- More Funding to Alternative Transportation: 51.0%
- Planning by Local Governments: 57.3%
Less Time on the Road

How the region would spend $100 to improve the region’s transportation system

- Building New Roads and Highways ($14)
- Fixing Existing Roads and Highways ($25)
- Sidewalks and Bikeways ($13)
- Public Transportation ($26)
- Planning and Coordination ($10)
- Improving Design and Safety ($11)
As we grow, steps should be taken to preserve our region's wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines.

95.5% AGREE
Greener Region

How do you think the quality of the region's air, water and natural areas will be in the year 2040 compared to today?

- A lot better: 2.8%
- A little better: 8.8%
- About the same: 19.6%
- A little worse: 28.0%
- A lot worse: 37.2%
What is the most important reason to step up efforts to preserve our region’s wetlands, forests and prairies?

- Other: 7.0%
- Provide recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, and water sports: 12.3%
- Make our region a more attractive destination for businesses, skilled workers, and tourists: 14.6%
- Provide habitat for plants, animals and fish: 32.7%
- Store flood waters and filter pollutants from the water and air: 33.4%
Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about strategies for preserving the region's wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines.

Preserving these areas is not a high priority for me. We don't need to do anything

We can do a good job preserving these areas through voluntary actions and contributions to conservation groups, we don't need any more public spending, regulations or policies

I don't support stricter regulations on private land, but would support limiting public investments, such as road construction, in these areas

I would support stricter regulations to prevent development in these areas, even if it meant there would be less land available for new housing and businesses

I would support the use of public funds to buy and preserve these areas for public use, even if it meant higher taxes or fees
Significant Variations

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about strategies for preserving the region’s wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines:
I would support the use of public funds to buy and preserve these areas for public use, even if it meant higher taxes or fees.
(Choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree)

**Choice:** Strongly Agree

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<td>13.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
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</table>
Greener Region

Rate your level of agreement with the following strategies for cleaning up our region’s air and water.

Cleaning up the region's air and water are not high priorities for me, we don't need to do anything

- Strongly Agree: 2.0%
- Agree: 3.4%
- Neutral: 8.4%
- Disagree: 36.1%
- Strongly Disagree: 50.0%

We need to have a balanced approach that includes voluntary measures and some regulations, as long as the costs are not too high

- Strongly Agree: 4.2%
- Agree: 10.8%
- Neutral: 14.1%
- Disagree: 19.0%
- Strongly Disagree: 51.9%

We can do a good job through voluntary education and incentive programs for businesses and residents to reduce pollution, we don't need stricter rules or enforcement

- Strongly Agree: 9.0%
- Agree: 15.3%
- Neutral: 23.3%
- Disagree: 35.8%
- Strongly Disagree: 35.1%

We need stricter rules and enforcement on air emissions, wastewater discharges, and runoff pollution, even if they would result in higher costs to residents and businesses

- Strongly Agree: 7.6%
- Agree: 16.1%
- Neutral: 16.5%
- Disagree: 24.7%
- Strongly Disagree: 35.1%
Rate your level of agreement with the following strategies for cleaning up our region’s air and water:
We need stricter rules and enforcement on air emissions, wastewater discharges, and runoff pollution, even if they would result in higher costs to residents and businesses.
(Choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree)

**Choice:** Strongly Agree

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<td>Percentage</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
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Greener Region

How the region would spend $100 to improve the environment

- Conserving Wetlands, Prairies, Forests (Purchasing Land) ($26)
- Education about the Environment ($10)
- Expanding Recycling Programs and Centers ($17)
- Weatherizing Homes to Improve Energy Efficiency ($15)
- Water Quality Planning ($18)
- Air Quality Initiatives (Telecommuting, Engine Replacement, etc.) ($15)
I think the opportunities for getting a good education in my community are:

- Excellent: 35.7%
- Good: 41.4%
- Fair: 17.4%
- Poor: 5.4%
Are there factors in your community besides the quality of schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

Yes: 67.3%
No: 22.0%
I Don't Know/No Opinion: 10.8%

Which factors in your community (besides the quality of the schools) make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

Crime/Safety: 65.1%
Substandard Housing: 46.5%
Unhealthy Environment: 37.9%
Lack of Transportation: 32.6%
Other: 27.9%
Lack of Libraries: 23.6%
Lack of Internet: 23.3%
Significant Variations

Are there factors in your community besides the quality of the schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?  
(Choices: Yes, No, and I Don’t Know/No Opinion)

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<td><strong>Choice:</strong> Yes</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
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Significant Variations

Are there factors in your community besides the quality of the schools that make it a poor environment for getting a good education?

(Choices: Yes, No, and I Don’t Know/No Opinion)

Choice: No

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<td>10.9%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
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Competitive Workforce

Do you have an interest in learning a new skill that will improve your job prospects and earning potential?

- Yes: 37.2%
- Maybe: 26.7%
- No: 36.1%
Significant Variations

Do you have an interest in learning a new skill that will improve your job prospects and earning potential?

(Choices: Yes, Maybe, and No)

Choice: Yes

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<th>Income Range</th>
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Significant Variations

Do you have an interest in learning a new skill that will improve your job prospects and earning potential?

(Choices: Yes, Maybe and No)

**Choice:** Yes

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<td>60.8%</td>
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Competitive Workforce

How would you rate the opportunities for learning new job skills where you live?

- Excellent: 15.9%
- Good: 43.7%
- Fair: 29.1%
- Poor: 11.3%
Significant Variations

How would you rate the opportunities for learning new job skills where you live?

(Choices: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor)

Choice: Good

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<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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Competitive Workforce

Why do you think your opportunities for learning new job skills are fair or poor?

- Training programs are not available near where I live: 36.7%
- Programs don't teach the skills I'm looking for: 29.9%
- Programs are available but not at convenient times: 27.2%
- Programs are available but I can't afford them: 22.7%
- Other: 10.3%
Significant Variations

Why do you think opportunities for learning new job skills are fair or poor?

(Choices: Training programs are not available near where I live, Programs are available but I can’t afford them, Programs are available but not at convenient times, Programs don’t teach the skills I’m looking for, and Other)

Choice: Training programs are not available near where I live

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<td>%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
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Competitive Workforce

Do you currently have or have you considered starting a small business?

- Yes: 45.2%
- No: 54.8%

How would you rate the opportunities available where you live to get training and support to make your business successful?

- Excellent: 14.4%
- Good: 39.6%
- Fair: 32.3%
- Poor: 13.6%
How would you rate the opportunities available where you live to get training and support to make your business successful?

(Choices: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor)

**Choice:** Poor

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Competitive Workforce

How the region would spend $100 to improve the region’s community factors that impact education and training opportunities:

- Improving Housing Conditions ($11)
- Improving Safety/Crime ($29)
- Libraries and Community Centers ($15)
- Educational Enrichment Programs ($15)
- Improving Internet Access ($10)
- Improving Transportation Access ($19)
What Can We Learn?

Less Time on the Road

- Not a burning issue today, but a future concern.
- Support for planning.
- Support for balanced investments.
- Demographic, geographic differences.
- People concerned about density?
- Influence of school districts overstated?
What Can We Learn?

Greener Region

- **Strong** support for conservation and environmental stewardship, least variation.
- Conserving natural areas had highest support.
- Support for public expenditures and regulations, skepticism about entirely voluntary approaches.
- Rural attitudes differ significantly.
What Can We Learn?

Competitive Workforce

- Majority satisfied with training opportunities, but satisfaction lowest in rural areas.
- More non-whites, lower income people interested in learning new skills.
- Community factors perceived as detrimental to learning environment, particularly among non-whites.
Think 2040 Survey Results

Click the links below to see survey results, including results from the expenditures preferences questions. Each link will open in a new window. Click here for background information about the survey.

Survey Results

The alternatives survey contained a series of questions about the tradeoffs involved in pursuing various futures in the region. Click on each link below to see how respondents answered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Region</th>
<th>By County</th>
<th>Coastal vs. Inland</th>
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Expenditures Preferences

The survey asked respondents how they would spend $100 on the region’s transportation system, the environment, and community factors. Click on each link below to see how respondents answered.

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Houston-Galveston Area Council

Contact Us!
ourregion@h-gac.com
(713) 627-3200

www.ourregion.org