Our Region is the 13 counties and 134 cities and towns within the 12,500-square mile Houston-Galveston Area Council service area. It is the place that more than 6 million of us call home. By 2040, forecasts predict that we will add another 3.7 million residents to this total, along with 2 million more jobs.

Our Region excels by many important measures – a robust economy, diverse population, abundant natural assets, and a variety of distinctive communities. But there are also concerns—some immediate and some longer term—that we will need to address if we are going to be a Great Region in 2040.

What can we do today to ensure an even better tomorrow?
Our Great Region 2040

Our Great Region 2040 is a high-level plan whose aim is for Our Region to be one of the world’s greatest places to live, work, and succeed, as defined by measurable goals, by the year 2040.

It is the result of the efforts of hundreds of organizations and thousands of people from across H-GAC’s 13-county service area.

It is based on research, analysis, and extensive public input, along with the knowledge and expertise of local leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, spanning Our Region’s urban, suburban, rural, and coastal areas.

Its recommendations build on many successful local initiatives, as well as new ideas generated during the plan’s development. Some entail regional collaboration; others can be pursued by local communities, now, or in the future. All are entirely voluntary; so the success of this plan will be up to us.

Hitting these marks will require a concerted effort, including efficient public investments and stewardship of taxpayer dollars, an engaged private sector, and the active participation of community-based organizations and individuals that reflect the diverse voices of Our Region.

Our Great Region 2040 offers a road map to make sure we are a great region in 2040, including the following Big Ideas:

- **Economic Development**
  Strengthening our economic competitiveness through an educated and skilled workforce

- **Environment**
  Securing a clean and ample water supply

- **Healthy Communities**
  Cultivating places where people can lead active, healthy lives

- **Housing**
  Providing balanced housing choices near jobs, services, and transportation options

- **Transportation**
  Achieving a world-class transportation network

- **Resiliency**
  Increasing our resiliency to disaster and a changing environment
Our Region’s Communities

Our Region is made up of a variety of communities, including coastal, rural, suburban, and urban areas. Participants from all these areas helped ensure the strategies and recommendations in Our Great Region 2040 can be tailored to the unique needs of each of these areas. Important considerations in moving forward on the plan’s initiatives are maintaining local autonomy and citizen involvement in decision-making and the protection of private property rights.

Case Studies

Our Great Region 2040 includes six case studies that highlight ways the plan’s strategies can be implemented in Our Region’s communities.

The case studies were selected from a variety of entities and examine overarching issues of regional importance. Together, they provide a tool box of actions and practices that can be used by other communities across Our Region as they respond to similar challenges and opportunities.

Beginning on page 6, the six Big Ideas of the plan are explored by topic area. Each section contains voluntary strategies to help advance the concepts of the plan as well as a local example of advancing implementation in the case study. More detailed information about the strategies is found beginning on page 22.

Goals for Our Great Region 2040

The 15 goals of the plan are organized around the framework of “People, Places, and Prosperity.” The public helped shape these goals through an extensive public engagement process. These goals allow us to help measure our progress and success toward achieving the vision of a great region.

People

- Residents have access to education and training opportunities to allow them to realize their full potential
- Residents live in safe, healthy communities with transportation options, including walking, biking, transit, and driving
- Our Region enjoys clean and plentiful water, air, soil, and food resources to sustain healthy future generations
- Residents are physically and mentally healthy and are able to lead healthy lifestyles
- Our Region provides choices for individuals and for local communities to fulfill their needs
Places

- Our Region coordinates infrastructure, housing, and transportation investments, creating areas of opportunity and enhancing existing neighborhoods
- Our Region values and preserves its unique ecosystems, working landscapes, parks, and open spaces, and the ecological benefits they provide
- Communities have a range of quality housing choices that meet the diverse needs and preferences of all residents
- Our Region efficiently uses, reuses, and conserves its natural resources by managing waste
- Communities are strengthened by strong social ties, local gathering places, and residents who participate in social, civic, service, and faith organizations

Prosperity

- Our Region has a diverse economy and skilled workforce that support businesses, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- Residents have access to job opportunities that support a good quality of life and financial stability
- Transportation infrastructure promotes effective goods movement and is well-connected to other global destinations
- Our Region embraces its rich multicultural, historical, and natural assets to ensure our communities retain their unique character
- Our Region is resilient and adaptive to economic downturns and environmental or natural disasters
Economic Development

BIG IDEA
To be a great region in 2040, we should strengthen our economic competitiveness through an educated and skilled workforce.

A strong economy not only means having diverse, good-paying jobs, but also being able to attract new types of employment that will keep Our Region competitive and thriving, providing more opportunities for all to prosper.

What?

Our Region has one of the most robust economies in the nation with major economic assets including the energy, agriculture and medical industries; international ports; and new plant expansions. However, our workforce is aging and our schools are not producing enough skilled workers to keep pace with the growing economy. Continuing Our Region’s economic success depends on keeping and attracting businesses, creating diverse job choices, and providing access to technology to all areas of Our Region. Continued success also depends on having a competitive workforce. Early career and technical education, expanded apprenticeships, job training centers, and community college programs will strengthen the employment base and ensure the competitiveness of Our Region.

Why?

- A skilled and educated workforce will enable us to “locally source” the jobs that our employers need to fill, improving their competitiveness and raising workers’ incomes as well as attracting new businesses.
- An educated, employable workforce will reduce unemployment and poverty in Our Region, lowering public costs for housing and other social programs.
- Residents employed in jobs that provide financial security will have a better quality of life and will add to Our Region’s economy by spending money at local businesses.

Strategies

This section emphasizes how Our Region can maintain a competitive economy, support thriving businesses, and develop a prepared workforce.

- Improve the opportunities for lifelong learning by scaling up and coordinating efforts, from quality early childhood education to GED and community education programs to skills training for seniors.
- Expand programs to improve job and financial skills and promote self sufficiency.
- Increase availability of information on job skills needed by employers to educational institutions, allowing them to better tailor their course and training offerings.
- Promote business attraction and retention efforts through multi-jurisdictional coordination and financial incentives.
- Increase availability of high speed data connections and broadband Internet across the region, especially in rural areas.
- Institute a “buy local, make local, grow local” campaign to support local businesses.

More information for these strategies is on pages 22 - 23 or online at www.ourregion.org.
Additional Resources

Measuring Our Progress

Achieving the goals and Big Ideas in the plan will take time. We can measure Our Region’s progress by tracking key indicators. Often referred to as performance metrics, the indicators need to be meaningful and based on quantifiable data.

Examples of metrics that can be used to measure progress toward the Economic Development Big Idea include:

- High school completion rate
- Number of skills training and workforce programs
- Rate of job growth

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board’s Workforce Report Card is a successful example of using performance metrics. This annual report evaluates Our Region compared to other similar regions in the U.S. and considers industries, jobs, quality of life, education and overall well-being. The report also assesses the Houston-Galveston region in the context of a larger, global economy.

Visit www.ourregion.org to learn more about the performance metrics included in the Our Great Region 2040 plan.

Bay City North Downtown Plan

New manufacturing facilities will bring an additional 900 jobs to Bay City in Matagorda County over the next five years. However the city currently lacks the housing options and retail amenities to accommodate a growing workforce, particularly younger workers.

This case study presents a master plan for a 40-acre, primarily vacant area, north of Bay City’s historic downtown. Today, this area is unattractive to residents and visitors, but it also represents a potential site for a quality mixed-use development, offering a range of housing choices that can respond to the emerging market demand and add to the city’s tax base.

The study recommends a phased approach to redeveloping this area, funded by a combination of public and private investments. The four-year plan includes projects such as building demolition and site clearing on city-owned properties; infrastructure upgrades; enhancements to waterways, parks, and trails; and streetscape updates, including sidewalks and plazas. Incentives and public-private partnership techniques are outlined to encourage private development, including apartments, townhomes, patio homes, traditional single-family homes, and mixed-use projects offering commercial and residential space.

This local example examines local implementation of strategies focusing on:

- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Environment
- Housing
To be a great region in 2040, we should secure a clean and ample water supply.

Our Region’s 16,000 miles of waterways and coastlines, along with our 3,000 parks and natural areas, are among our greatest assets. Having clean air, water, and outdoor recreational opportunities will be crucial to Our Region’s future health, quality of life, and economic vitality.

Why?

- Having clean and ample water is a primary economic factor for continued growth and directly impacts an appreciable portion of our current economy.
- Reducing water pollution can lower the cost of treating our drinking water and unlock the recreational potential of our waterways.
- Designing development that takes advantage of natural systems can reduce infrastructure costs and help conserve water.
- Preserving natural areas, especially along waterways, can reduce runoff pollution and provide other benefits, such as floodwater storage, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Strategies

This section emphasizes how Our Region can protect the quality of the environment, improve how we manage resources, and increase awareness of the value of ecological benefits.

- Work together on long term structural solutions to increase water storage and distribution capacity.
- Create watershed protection plans to protect recharge zones and water sources, as well as waterways and wetland buffer areas.
- Establish alliances to coordinate water conservation and protection efforts across Our Region, including sharing data and best practices, developing financial incentives, and implementing public awareness programs.
- Increase awareness of the economic benefits of environmental systems.
- Conserve natural assets through multi-benefit green infrastructure projects and designing with nature, such as Low Impact Development and expanding Our Region’s network of open space and trails along waterways.
- Develop a regional plan to conserve high quality natural areas.
- Promote efficient resource management, including energy, solid waste, and water.

More information for these strategies is on pages 24 - 25 or online at www.ourregion.org.
Additional Resources

Strategy Playbook

The Strategy Playbook describes more than 80 voluntary strategies individuals, organizations, and governments can use to implement the vision, goals, and objectives of Our Great Region 2040. The playbook includes a suite of funding sources, tools, and successful examples used in Our Region and elsewhere.

Examples of environmental strategies described in the Strategy Playbook include:

- Create a regional forestry management plan.
- Promote voluntary efforts showcasing private innovation in reducing industrial emissions.
- Develop a model program to promote the reuse of construction and demolition debris.

Visit www.ourregion.org to download the Strategy Playbook and additional resources.

Brazoria County Plan for Public Parks and Sustainable Development

Brazoria County’s coastal ecosystem contains some of the highest quality natural areas in Our Region. Its bottomland forests, rivers, bayous, bays, and coastline provide wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

This case study lays out a coastal master plan for the Brazoria County Parks Department that contains a new set of management practices to protect the county’s coastal natural resources, along with strategies for accommodating new growth in ways that take advantage of the natural landscape. Major recommendations include phased expansion of the public parks system and other public lands and improving access and providing amenities such as trails, kayak launches, and educational displays. Conservation design techniques, such as preserving wildlife habitat within new developments, using native plants in landscape, and using natural systems to help buffer storm surges and store flood waters, are also detailed.

This local example examines local implementation of strategies focusing on:

- Environment
- Healthy Communities
- Economic Development
Healthy Communities

To be a great region in 2040, we should cultivate places where people can lead active, healthy lives.

Our Region is home to a world-class medical center, but our rates of some preventable diseases are higher than national averages.

What?

Our Region’s overall wellness could be improved and healthcare expenditures could be reduced by cultivating healthy communities - places where people have better access to parks, bikeways, and safe routes to school. Unfortunately, almost half of the people in Our Region live more than 10 minutes from a park or natural area. Active mobility and outdoor recreation can reduce obesity and the associated health care costs, as can strategies to provide access to healthy food in communities where it is lacking. Many of the strategies for cultivating healthier places can be achieved through better planning and community design, as well as investing in facilities.

Why?

- As Our Region becomes healthier, people will spend less time and money on healthcare, while improving their overall quality of life.
- Illness leads to reduced wages and job loss, hurting our economy through lost taxes and less disposable income.
- With adequate mental healthcare choices, Our Region can prioritize resources, ensuring people have access to the help they need.
- Many healthcare concerns, such as some forms of diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol, and heart disease, are preventable.
- Walkable and bikable communities with ample green space and access to healthy food make Our Region healthier, more livable, and economically competitive.

Strategies

This section emphasizes how Our Region can promote healthy lifestyles, increase access to healthy foods, and improve access to care.

- Establish regional infrastructure and distribution mechanisms to support farmers markets, local agriculture, and other means to provide fresh, healthy food to residents across Our Region.
- Increase current funding and identify innovative funding sources to develop and maintain sidewalks, bikeways, bikeshare infrastructure, and parks/open space that promote more active lifestyles.
- Create a regional task force that works across multiple disciplines (health departments, public safety) to address mental health issues.
- Foster neighborhoods that put an emphasis on health, incorporating elements that promote active living, social interaction, and healthy eating, and allow for aging in place.
- Identify and promote existing and emerging community resources for mental health services.
- Expand availability of community health services and trauma care, particularly in low-income and rural areas.

More information for these strategies is on pages 26 - 27 or online at www.ourregion.org.
Building on Success

The success of Our Great Region 2040 will depend on the support and participation of many in Our Region. However, we are not starting from scratch. Local governments, organizations, and individuals across Our Region are already taking part in activities that promote the goals, Big Ideas and strategies of this plan.

Several of these efforts support Healthy Communities and are highlighted in a video series on www.ourregion.org, including:

- Environmental education and energy-efficient schools
- Pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly streets
- Farmers markets and community gardens

The project website, www.ourregion.org, also includes a Guidebook for Local Governments, highlighting strategies similar to those found in Our Great Region 2040 that have been successful in other areas across the country, and a Community Resource Guide, connecting residents with state and local programs available in Our Region.

Case Study

Cypress Creek Greenway

The Bayou Greenway Initiative aims to develop a network of parks and trails along the major bayous that flow across multiple jurisdictions, spanning many diverse communities in and around Harris County. Once complete, this greenway network will provide significant environmental, health, and quality of life benefits, along with the increased property values that are associated with recreational amenities.

This case study looks specifically at the necessary steps for creating the Cypress Creek Greenway, including funding sources and financing strategies. The study also addresses vehicles for promoting coordination among local jurisdictions including Harris County, municipal utility and other special districts, non-profit organizations, schools, neighborhood groups, and businesses.

This local example examines local implementation of strategies focusing on:

- Healthy Communities
- Economic Development
- Transportation
Housing

To be a great region in 2040, we should provide balanced housing choices near jobs, services, and transportation options.

Everyone in Our Region should have the opportunity to have safe and healthy housing choices that offer access to opportunities and amenities.

What?

Our Region’s residents live in dense urban centers, rural towns and suburban communities, near forestlands, on open farm or ranchland, and along the coast. We have a thriving housing market and some of the most affordable housing in the country. However, homeownership is below the national average and housing options for some in Our Region are unsafe, unhealthy, or have poor access to transportation, employment, and services. We need coordinated strategies to improve code enforcement and encourage rehabilitation of older housing, along with policies that encourage development of new housing in underdeveloped areas where there is existing infrastructure, jobs, schools, and services, or where costs and complications are high, such as in urban areas.

Why?

- Our Region’s residents can save time and money by living closer to where they work or living closer to public transportation. Reducing combined housing and transportation costs can help ensure residents do not go without other basic needs, such as healthy foods.
- A variety of housing types offers Our Region’s residents the opportunity for independence at various stages of life, including aging in place.
- Adequate housing choices will be an asset to companies looking to relocate or expand in Our Region.
- Efficient and healthy housing choices can lead to both utility and healthcare cost savings.

Strategies

This section emphasizes how Our Region can help support a thriving housing market, provide housing choices to meet diverse needs, and provide quality housing that is both safe and healthy.

- Develop local housing plans to accommodate future growth.
- Provide financial incentives, such as tax foreclosure property programs or property lien dismissals, for developers to build diverse housing types near jobs, transit centers, and services, including mixed-use developments and housing at a variety of price points.
- Develop incentives and a toolkit for matching and maintaining local housing stock to meet economic development needs, bringing greater access to opportunities.
- Identify gaps and opportunities in the quality and supply of the regional housing stock, including housing for seniors or aging in place.
- Develop and enforce local housing codes and standards to ensure owner-occupied and rental housing is safe and healthy.

More information for these strategies is on pages 28 - 29 or online at www.ourregion.org.
Additional Resources

Existing Conditions Report/County Profiles

The Existing Conditions Report provides a snapshot of what Our Region looks like today and provides a benchmark that we can use to measure our progress in implementing Our Great Region 2040.

Example existing conditions for housing include:

- Single-family homes represent 71% of the built housing in Our Region, and multi-family residents (two or more families in the same building) account for 29% of the housing units.
- The percent of owned housing units versus rented units in Our Region is 62%.

While the Existing Conditions Report looks at Our Region as a whole, the County Profiles examine the different attributes that make each of our communities unique.

Visit www.ourregion.org to explore information about your county.

Harnessing Huntsville’s Potential

Huntsville is seeking to diversify its jobs base and its housing stock. Making progress has proven difficult on both of these fronts, and the city has large amounts of land owned by the state and federal governments that is not available for development.

This case study outlines a strategy for the city to capitalize on development opportunities where land is available, especially in the area between downtown Huntsville and Sam Houston State University. It includes recommendations for improved sidewalks, bikeway connections, additional greenspace, and related economic development strategies to create positive branding for the city to use in attracting new businesses and residents.

The study provides a clear framework for addressing other priority issues, such as creating affordable housing options; increasing and diversifying the labor pool; and promoting business development, retention, and expansion. This case study is built on studies and plans the city has already completed and will serve as a guide to prioritize actions identified through these efforts.

This local example examines local implementation of strategies focusing on:

- Housing
- Environment
- Transportation
To be a great region in 2040, we should achieve a world-class transportation network.

Whether it’s moving people or goods, an efficient transportation system is an essential part of how well we live our daily lives.

What?  
To achieve a world-class transportation network, at a cost we can afford, Our Region needs to set clear priorities in our planning and investment.

We need to reduce the time spent in traffic. This will require investment in both roadway capacity and alternative modes such as transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure. We must also focus on getting more out of our existing system.

Why?  
- Increasing the efficiency of goods movement will let us maintain and build on our status as an international trading hub.
- Congestion management techniques are less expensive than adding capacity.
- Having more transportation choices can reduce transportation costs and travel time and add to our quality of life.

Strategies  
This section emphasizes how Our Region can help maintain an efficient network, increase transportation choices, and improve planning and coordination.

- Improve the efficiency of freight movement by investing in projects that improve connections between ships, trains, and trucks.
- Optimize existing transportation network through a ‘Fix it First’ strategy and by using technology and improved incident management to maximize system capacity.
- Create a regional framework for expanding transit across Our Region.
- Develop and implement policies to improve transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access between and within activity centers, connecting residents to job centers.
- Provide counties with tools to better coordinate land use and transportation planning in unincorporated areas.
- Include economic, safety, quality of life, and environmental costs and benefits of transportation projects in funding prioritizations.

More information for these strategies is on pages 30 - 31 or online at www.ourregion.org.
Additional Resources

Think 2040 Survey

Used to help develop and prioritize the strategies in Our Great Region 2040, the Think 2040 Survey gauged public opinion on different aspects of Our Region’s future.

More than 8,000 residents from all 13 counties took part in the Think 2040 Survey.

The survey revealed many interesting results, including the following transportation-related survey results:

- Nearly 40% of respondents travel 30 minutes or longer to get to work.
- More than 70% think traveling around Our Region will be more difficult in 2040.
- Differences based on age were found in how respondents answered the following question: If you could live anywhere in the region what would be the most important factor in your decision?
  - Being close to activities was the most important factor for those under age 34 (at 31%). This factor also rated as highly important for those age 65 and older (at 19%).
  - Quality of schools was the most important factor for those age 35-44 (at 29%). For those age 65 and older, only 4% rated it important.

The survey results were used to help develop and prioritize the strategies in Our Great Region 2040.

Visit [www.ourregion.org](http://www.ourregion.org) to view the results of the survey.

City of Houston Framework for Urban Development

Houston is experiencing a redevelopment boom, but current development codes are not generally geared toward creating dense and walkable urban places where multimodal transit can be supported between concentrated areas of activity.

This study provides a framework that explores a series of opt-in tools and policies the city can use to encourage developments that provide more pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly environments and promote a variety of commercial and residential uses. Such practices are intended to support existing centers, as well as stimulate emerging urban centers along transit corridors.

Key issues addressed by this study include pedestrian safety, parking, and urban design, along with strategies for promoting affordable housing. Recommendations include flexible opt-in development regulations, incentives, and market-based approaches that Houston, as well as other cities, can use in strengthening their regulations to achieve more walkable and transit-supportive development patterns.

This local example examines local implementation of strategies focusing on:

- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Development
Resiliency

To be a great region in 2040, we should increase our resiliency to disaster and a changing environment.

Our Region has a strong tradition of fortitude in the face of adversity, bouncing back stronger from natural and man-made disasters.

What?

Our Region is vulnerable to hurricanes, flooding, drought, erosion, subsidence, and wildfires. We have bounced back from such disasters in the past, but know that the threat remains constant. Reducing our vulnerability, where possible, to these events and speeding the rate of recovery will improve our safety and quality of life, as well as our ability to attract new residents and businesses.

Structural solutions—like dikes, flood gates, and drainage improvements—will be needed to protect key assets, but their cost means this approach must be carefully targeted. Using the natural landscape to store floodwaters and storm surge and being wiser about how and where we build to reduce our vulnerability are approaches that can be applied more broadly.

Why?

● Taking steps to prepare for future events at a regional, local, and personal level, can help Our Region’s neighborhoods, businesses, and people recover more quickly after events.
● Coordinating disaster response and recovery among levels of government and other organizations has the potential to save lives, property, and taxpayer dollars.
● Increasing resiliency can help protect infrastructure investments as well as ensure Our Region maintains its economic competitiveness.

Strategies

This section emphasizes how Our Region can better prepare for future events, adapt to changing conditions, and recover when events do occur.

● Develop an integrated regional storm defense system, which includes both structural and non-structural elements.
● Develop a rapid recovery plan to help people and businesses return as quickly as possible.
● Enhance coordination of evacuation planning and preparation efforts, particularly to address the needs of vulnerable populations.
● Improve regional air quality and reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by offering alternative modes of transportation, improving energy efficiency, and effectively managing resources.
● Support innovative adaptation strategies that help communities prepare for potential environmental changes, such as severe weather events and sea level rise.
● Create education programs on wildfire, flooding, drought, and other risks.

More information for these strategies is on pages 32 - 33 or online at www.ourregion.org.
Galveston continues to move forward on rebuilding efforts following the devastation of Hurricane Ike in 2008. To prepare for the future, the city seeks to better evaluate future public investments, based on financial considerations as well as social and environmental impacts.

This case study focused on developing a Sustainable Return on Investment calculator to assign monetary value to benefits and costs that are traditionally not included in such calculations, such as impacts related to greenhouse gases, safety, mobility, livability, water conservation, and waste reduction. This will act as a comprehensive cost-benefit tool for proposed city investments and initiatives.

The analysis was performed on three projects: building a million-gallon-per-day water reuse facility; streetscape and safety improvements for two streets near downtown; and creating a curbside recycling program. The results showed that curbside recycling would be beneficial and the streetscaping improvements would nearly break even. The water reuse facility project did not show a positive return on investment. The tool is available as an Excel-based model for other communities to use on similar projects.

This local example examines local implementation of strategies focusing on:

- **Resiliency**
- **Environment**
- **Economic Development**
- **Transportation**

**Case Study**

**Galveston Sustainable Return on Investment**

Galveston, Texas

Overarching Issues for Our Region

**Aging Population**

Many communities are struggling to meet the needs of an aging population.

How can strategies in *Our Great Region 2040* help?

- Providing housing options in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods accessible by transit allows seniors to maintain their independence, and a well-developed pedestrian network gives seniors a safe, affordable way to exercise and socialize.
- Offering lifelong learning programs helps seniors remain mentally active.
- Providing transportation choices can help seniors reach critical services such as health care as well as provide vital options during hurricane evacuations or other emergencies.

**Air Quality**

Parts of Our Region fail to meet national air quality standards.

How can strategies in *Our Great Region 2040* help?

- Cutting emissions from vehicles, industries, and other sources reduces the amount of ozone in the air and any negative impacts greenhouse gases may have. Housing choices near jobs, services and transportation options reduce vehicle trips.
- Protecting our forests, prairies, and wetlands improves air quality, allows natural processes to filter the air and reduce “heat island” effects.
- Utilizing energy-efficient practices reduces emissions.

**Public Safety/Criminal Justice**

Reducing crime is a priority for all communities in Our Region.

How can strategies in *Our Great Region 2040* help?

- Incentivizing reinvestment in existing neighborhoods encourages the removal of blight and abandoned buildings, havens for criminal activity.
- Improving access to mental health services reduces the likelihood that those with mental illness will become repeat criminal offenders.
- Utilizing community design techniques reduces crime by maximizing visibility, making inappropriate behavior more noticeable.
- Providing transportation choices, including transit services, can improve access to job training and education opportunities that may help prevent criminal activities.
Equity

Ensuring all residents in Our Region have the opportunity to prosper and enjoy a good quality of life will be crucial to the future success of Our Region. Promoting equitable opportunity for all people in Our Region is a thread that runs through every topic and strategy in Our Great Region 2040. Two additional studies, the Fair Housing Equity Assessment and An Equity Profile of the Houston-Galveston Region, were prepared to help inform and supplement this plan by looking at equity issues more closely.

Fair Housing Equity Assessment

The Fair Housing Equity Workgroup, made up of local governments, housing programs, non-profit organizations, and advocacy groups, worked with consultants and academic partners to develop the Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA). This baseline assessment of fair housing conditions and plans in Our Region includes indices of employment and education, housing affordability, community assets and challenges, and poverty and income integration.

The purpose of the FHEA was to identify baseline conditions for fair housing, equity, and opportunity across Our Region. The report examined regional conditions, but specific analysis was also conducted at the county and municipal level for the selected jurisdictions in Our Region’s urban, suburban, rural, and coastal areas. The FHEA showed Our Region’s population has become more diverse during the past decade, especially outside the core urban areas. However, the dissimilarity index—a measure of segregation—indicates that segregation persists in a number of Our Region’s counties.

Subsidized and affordable rental housing is largely lacking in high opportunity areas near jobs and services. The residents of Our Region’s highest poverty Census tracts are mostly racial and ethnic minorities and are disproportionately impacted by limited access to job training centers, homeownership opportunities, areas free from environmental hazards, and affordable housing.

The FHEA recommends increasing employment and building self-sufficiency of residents living in poverty-concentrated areas and promoting balanced housing stock where subsidized and affordable housing stock is lacking. The FHEA also recommends revitalizing disadvantaged communities and increasing income diversity, while preserving their cultural heritage and minimizing displacement of current residents. Additionally, the FHEA includes best practices for addressing a number of issues, including NIMBY (not in my backyard), a common barrier to advancing housing issues.

An Equity Profile of the Houston-Galveston Region

PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE), both technical assistance providers for the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities program, worked with the Coordinating Committee to evaluate conditions and make recommendations to improve equity in Our Region.

PolicyLink and PERE developed An Equity Profile of the Houston-Galveston Region. According to the report, “Equity – ensuring full inclusion of the entire region’s residents in the economic, social, and political life of the region, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, neighborhood of residence, or other characteristic – is essential for creating successful plans.”

The profile indicates Our Region has some age, income, and race disparities that necessitate that the strategies in Our Great Region 2040 are considered through an equity lens. Recommendations of the profile include bridging the racial generation gap, connecting unemployed and low-wage workers to careers in high-growth industries, identifying educational pathways, creating healthier communities, and expanding transportation choices and mobility.
Who Developed Our Great Region 2040?

Our Great Region 2040 was developed based on an extensive public and stakeholder-driven process. The general public, local government officials, and committees comprised of local, community, and business leaders were actively engaged throughout the entire planning process.

Coordinating Committee
24 partner organizations provided oversight and drafted goals, metrics, and implementation strategies.

Government Advisory Committee
Elected officials provided feedback about needs and desires of Our Region’s communities.

Local Leaders
Local community, business, and government leaders, as well as local and regional advisory groups, reviewed and refined draft strategies.

Regional Workgroups
More than 200 subject matter experts and representatives from different geographic areas provided a reality check on the differing needs of Our Region’s communities.

The Public
The public has been continuously engaged throughout the process of developing this plan through public meetings and other events, including an online survey and ideas forum. Input from the public shaped Our Great Region 2040, including the goals and strategies.

Major steps in the planning process include:

Vision and Goals
Spring 2012
The Coordinating Committee drafted goals under the framework of “People, Places, and Prosperity.” The public offered comments on the draft goals.

Objectives and Metrics
Summer - Fall 2012
Workgroups developed and prioritized objectives and metrics to measure the progress toward achieving the plan’s goals.

Existing Conditions
Fall - Winter 2012
H-GAC published an Existing Conditions Report highlighting baseline conditions in Our Region, including opportunities and challenges pertaining to the plan’s topic areas.

Alternative Futures
Fall 2012
The Coordinating Committee developed four alternative futures - “Current Course,” a baseline alternative; “Less Time on the Road;” “Greener Region;” and “Competitive Workforce.”

Alternative Futures Survey
Fall 2012
More than 8,800 residents responded to the Think 2040 survey, which gauged public attitudes about the tradeoffs associated with the alternative futures.

Fair Housing Equity Assessment
Fall 2012–Spring 2013
The Fair Housing Equity Workgroup developed the Fair Housing Equity Assessment which examines linkages between housing, socioeconomic, and demographic factors across Our Region’s rural, suburban, and urban communities.

Case Studies
Winter 2012 – Spring 2013
H-GAC and partners conducted six case studies to demonstrate ways the goals and strategies can be applied to issues at the local level.

Regional Equity Report
Winter 2012 – Spring 2013
PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity worked with the Coordinating Committee to evaluate conditions and make recommendations to improve equity in Our Region.

Voluntary Strategies
Spring 2013
The Coordinating Committee and workgroups used H-GAC’s analysis of the “Think 2040” survey responses to draft voluntary strategies considered for inclusion in Our Great Region 2040.

Priority Strategies
Spring - Summer 2013
Local leaders and advisory groups met in strategy sessions to weigh in on the draft strategies and to identify priorities.

Review and Comment
Fall 2013
The public provided comment on the draft plan online and at open house events.
Benefits of Our Great Region 2040

Coordination
In addressing Our Region’s challenges and opportunities, we will need to build on Our Region’s successful history of collaborations and partnerships between the public, private, and non-profit sectors. We will also need to take a holistic approach to problem solving, as most of the big issues we face are interrelated. Our Great Region 2040 provides an overall framework for coordinating our efforts to address overarching issues, instead of dealing with them individually.

Learning from Others
The plan identifies best practices under way around the nation, Texas, and Our Region, so we don’t have to reinvent the wheel if there are proven solutions.

Telling Our Story
Our Region includes unique places, diverse voices, and strong traditions. Our Great Region 2040 is a chance to tell our story by highlighting our values and our vision for the future.

Public Involvement
Our Great Region 2040 is based on public input, and sustained public involvement will be necessary to achieve its goals. Many of its recommendations address ways to increase public awareness and participation in the decision-making that will be necessary to make the plan a success.

Fiscal Efficiency
To be a great region in 2040, we will need to use taxpayer dollars wisely. Financial sustainability and fiscal efficiency are advanced through the plan’s recommendations. This plan can serve as a guide to ensuring our public investments will pay off in the long run.

Want to Know More?
This document is an introduction to the goals, Big Ideas, and strategies that can help us become a greater region. Additional documents are available as part of Our Great Region 2040 online at www.ourregion.org. Additional supporting documents online include:

- the Existing Conditions Report, containing baseline regional data
- the County Profiles, containing baseline information for each of the 13 counties
- the Community Engagement Report, detailing the public engagement process and feedback
- the Best Practices Report, exploring how other communities are addressing similar challenges
- the six local Case Studies (Bay City, Brazoria County, Cypress Creek, Galveston, Houston, Huntsville), exploring how local communities are moving toward implementation
- the Community Resource Guide, providing information to help navigate services in your community
- the Fair Housing Equity Assessment, containing baseline conditions for fair housing, equity, and opportunity across Our Region
- An Equity Profile for the Houston-Galveston Region, a report completed by PolicyLink and PERE addressing how to advance equity in Our Region
- the Strategy Playbook, containing more than 80 voluntary strategies and more detailed information, including costs, ease of implementation, measures of progress, and successful implementation examples from communities in this region and elsewhere

The Strategy Charts, beginning on page 22, offer a snapshot of the information found in the larger Strategy Playbook.

Next Steps

The recommendations in Our Great Region 2040 can be implemented through partnerships, priorities, and flexibility without sweeping new government programs.

**Partnerships for Implementation**

Implementation of Our Great Region 2040 will require the commitment of many partners. The best solutions will result from many of us working on the same problems together. Building implementation networks, locally and regionally, can be the first step toward sustained collaboration.

**Priorities**

Longer term strategies need to be broken down into action steps. This will require setting clear priorities for short-term efforts. Support for the Big Ideas and plan strategies, at both the regional and local level, will determine short-term efforts.

As near-term efforts begin they may take different shape in different parts of the region. Our Great Region 2040 is intended to be utilized by local communities in the manner that best suits their needs. It is not a one-size-fits-all approach but rather a tailored, flexible approach.

**Flexibility**

Our Great Region 2040 is a roadmap to a vision for a great region based on what we know today. Unknowable events, innovations, and trends will unfold over time, causing us to alter the route. That is why long-range plans and strategies must be flexible and updated regularly, based on current challenges and opportunities.

**Measuring Success**

In the early stages of implementation, the most important measurements are level of effort and short-term results. Knowing what has been tried, what worked, what did not, and why, will help us build our knowledge base so that successful practices can be replicated or scaled up. Celebrating these successes can also create momentum and help bring in new partners.

Longer term, measuring outcomes will become more important to make sure we are moving forward toward our goals. Our Great Region 2040 includes metrics – quantifiable data points that can be tracked over time. Each of the strategies has recommended metrics for measuring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of efforts. The metrics can be found in the Strategies Playbook online at www.ourregion.org.

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**Call to Action**

Are you a representative for an organization or local government that would like to partner on moving a strategy forward?

Would you like to pledge your support for Our Great Region 2040?

Let us know. Please visit www.ourregion.org.
### Economic Development Strategies

**Type(s)**

- **Program**
- **Education**
- **Program**
- **Partnership**

**Implementers**

- School Districts
- Colleges and Universities
- Non-Profits
- Regional Workforce Board

**Implementation Tools**

- Pre-K Programs
- Apprenticeship Programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Programs
- Community College Vocational Training Programs

**Possible Funding Sources**

- Early Head Start Program
- Head Start Program
- Social Services Block Grant
- Child Care and Development Fund
- Title I Grants
- Bernard Osher Foundation
- Employment and Training Administration YouthBuild Grants

**Cost**

- $-$$$
- $-$$$
- $-$$$

**Ease of Implementation**

- Moderate
- Moderate
- Easy - Difficult

**Model Policies/Helpful Programs**

- City of Houston: After School Achievement Program
- City of Houston: Youth Councils
- H-GAC Workforce Solutions
- Houston ISD: East Early College High School
- State of Oklahoma Universal Pre-K Program
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes
- Neighborhood Resource Center of Greater Fulton (Richmond, VA):
  - Montessori Preschool
  - Educational & Creative Arts After-School Programs
  - Educational & Health Programs for Adults

- University of Houston: Program for Financial Literacy
- H-GAC Workforce Solutions
- Bank on Houston
- LISC Financial Opportunity Centers
- Project Quest
- Generation E Institute
- Center for Employment Training
- MoneySKILL

- H-GAC Workforce Solutions: Targeting High-Skill High-Growth Jobs
- Bayer Material Science: Production Technician Internship Program
- Ohio Skills Bank
- Strategic Compass
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Program</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Agencies ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Non-Profits ● Economic Development Corporations ● Economic Development Districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing Campaigns ● Technical Assistance to Local Governments and Businesses ● Economic Development Alliances ● Low-Interest Financing ● Grants ● Tax Breaks ● Land Assembly ● Infrastructure Improvements ● Waived/Reduced Permitting Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Enterprise Fund ● Texas Product/Business Fund ● Texas Industry Development Loan Program ● Industrial Revenue Bond Program ● Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure Development Program ● Main Street Improvements Program (TXDA) ● Real Estate Development Program (TXDA) ● Texas Leverage Fund ● Texas Enterprise Zone Program ● New Markets Tax Credit Program</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase availability of high speed data connections and broadband Internet across the region, especially in rural areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institute a “buy local, make local, grow local” campaign to support local businesses.</td>
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<th>$-$$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy - Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost and complexity vary, depending on incentives offered</td>
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<td>Easy - Moderate</td>
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<td>Cost and complexity vary, depending on the tools used</td>
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<td>Easy - Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hire Houston First ● City of Houston: City Hall Farmers Market ● Urban Harvest ● GO TEXAN ● Buy Local First (Clinton County, OH) ● Think Local – Buy Local – Be Local (Northwest WA)</td>
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</table>
# Environment Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type(s)</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
<th>Implementation Tools</th>
<th>Possible Funding Sources</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Ease of Implementation</th>
<th>Model Policies/Helpful Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>State Agencies ● Counties ● Cities ● River Authorities ● Groundwater Conservation Districts ● Utility Providers</td>
<td>Inter-organizational Partnerships and Coordination</td>
<td>Regional Facility Planning Grant Program (TWDB) ● Regional Water Planning Group Grant Program (TWDB) ● Water Research Grant Program (TWDB) ● Water Infrastructure Fund (TWDB) ● State Water Implementation Fund of Texas ● State Water Implementation Revenue Fund of Texas</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>Region H Water Planning Group ● Bay Area Regional Desalination Project ● North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership ● Jordan Lake Regional Water Supply Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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- Work together on long term structural solutions to increase water storage and distribution capacity.
- Create watershed protection plans to protect recharge zones, water sources, as well as waterways and wetland buffer areas.
- Conserve natural assets through multi-benefit green infrastructure projects and designing with nature, such as Low Impact Development and expanding Our Region’s network of open space and trails along waterways.
- Increase awareness of the economic benefits of environmental systems.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Agencies</strong> • H-GAC • Regional Water Planning Groups • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Utility Providers • River Authorities • Groundwater Conservation Districts • Subsidence Districts • Non-Profits</td>
<td>State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Non-Profits</td>
<td>State Agencies • H-GAC • Regional Water Planning Groups • Counties • Cities • Municipal Utility Districts • River Authorities • Groundwater Conservation Districts • Subsidence Districts • Non-Profits</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-Organizational Partnerships and Coordination</strong></td>
<td>Strategic Planning • NatureServe VISTA (Land Use Decision Support Tool) • Eco-Logical</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Water Planning Group Grant Program (TWDB)</strong></td>
<td>National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (USFWS) • Coastal Impact Assistance Program (USFWS) • North American Wetlands Conservation Act Small Grants Program (USFWS) • Landowner Incentive Program (USFWS) • Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (USDA) • Cooperative Landscape Conservation &amp; Adaptive Science Grants (USFWS)</td>
<td>ENERGY - Innovative Energy Demonstration Grant Program (SECO) • Building Efficiency &amp; Retrofit Program • LoanSTAR Revolving Loan Program (SECO) • Weatherization Assistance Program (DOE) • Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction • State Energy Program Competitive Awards • SOLID WASTE - H-GAC Solid Waste Management Program • Solid Waste Management Grant Program (USDA) • WATER - Agricultural Water Conservation Grants (TWDB) • WaterSMART Grants (Bureau of Reclamation) • Environmental Education Regional Grant Program (EPA) • Water Infrastructure Fund (TWDB) • State Water Implementation Fund of Texas • State Water Implementation Revenue Fund of Texas</td>
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**Establish alliances to coordinate water conservation and protection efforts across Our Region, including sharing data and best practices, developing financial incentives, and implementing public awareness programs.**

**Develop a regional plan to conserve high quality natural areas.**

**Promote efficient resource management, including energy, solid waste, and water.**

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<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Plan</th>
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<td><strong>State Agencies</strong> • H-GAC • Regional Water Planning Groups • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Utility Providers • River Authorities • Groundwater Conservation Districts • Subsidence Districts • Non-Profits</td>
<td>State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Non-Profits</td>
<td>State Agencies • H-GAC • Regional Water Planning Groups • Counties • Cities • Municipal Utility Districts • River Authorities • Groundwater Conservation Districts • Subsidence Districts • Non-Profits</td>
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## Healthy Communities Strategies

### Type(s)

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<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>H-GAC</td>
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<td>Federal Agencies</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
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### Implementation Tools

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<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm-to-School Projects</td>
<td>Farm-to-Hospital Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)</td>
<td>Local Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Working Group/Task Force</td>
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### Possible Funding Sources

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<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)</td>
<td>Transportation, Community &amp; System Preservation Program (FHWA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention and Public Health Fund (USHHS)</td>
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### Cost

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<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
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### Ease of Implementation

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<th>Policy</th>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
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</table>

### Model Policies/Helpful Programs

- City of Houston: City Hall Farmers’ Market
- Plant It Forward Farms
- Western North Carolina Regional Livestock Center
- Georgia Organics
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments: Rural-Urban Connections Strategy
- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
- GrowFood Carolina
- City of Houston: Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Connections to Transit
- Houston B-cycle
- Bayou Greenways Initiative
- Atlanta BeltLine
- Burlington County Community Health Improvement Plan (Burlington County, NJ)
- Connecticut Prevention Network: Regional Action Councils
Foster life-long neighborhoods that put an emphasis on health, incorporating elements that promote active living, social interaction, and healthy eating that allow for aging in place.

Identify and promote existing and emerging community resources for mental health services.

Expand availability of community health services and trauma care, particularly in low-income and rural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H-GAC Counties Cities Towns Villages Local Housing Authorities Neighborhood/Homeowners’ Associations Developers Non-Pros Health Care Providers</td>
<td>State Agencies Counties Cities Towns Villages Local Mental Health Authorities Healthcare Providers Non-Pros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Gardens Pocket Parks Multi-Use Trails Vacant Lot Clean-Up Programs Traffic Calming Features Complete Streets Policies Standards, Requirements, and/or Incentives for Sidewalks, Street Trees, Bicycle Parking, Street Interconnectivity and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)</td>
<td>Online Database Resource (e.g. Network of Care Website) Mental Health Services Directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program Transportation, Community &amp; System Preservation Program (FHWA) People’s Garden Grant Program (USDA)</td>
<td>Substance Abuse &amp; Mental Health Services Administration Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facility Grants (USDA) Distance Learning &amp; Telemedicine Loan &amp; Grant Program (USDA) Rural Health Network Development Planning Program (USHHS) New Access Points Grants (USHHS)</td>
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Montgomery County (TX) Network of Care for Mental/Behavioral Health

Legacy Community Health Services (Houston) Hidalgo Medical Services: Lifestyle & Values Impact Diabetes Awareness (LaVIDA) University of Mississippi Medical Center: Telehealth Program
### Housing Strategies

**Develop local housing plans to accommodate future growth.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type(s)</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Management Districts ● Local Housing Authorities</td>
<td>Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Management Districts ● Local Housing Authorities ● Non-Profits</td>
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</table>

**Implementation Tools**

| Housing Plan ● Housing Needs Analysis ● Transformation Plan | Tax Incentives ● Expedited Permitting Process ● Design Guidelines ● Property Lien Dismissals ● Tax Foreclosure Property Program ● Public-Private Partnerships (Infrastructure Improvements, Land Acquisition, etc.) ● Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) ● Other Value-Capture Programs |
| Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants (HUD) ● Community Development Block Grants (HUD) | Mortgage Revenue Bonds ● Multifamily Housing Bonds ● Community Development Block Grants ● HOME (HUD) ● Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program ● Rural Single-Family Housing Grants & Loans (USDA) |

**Possible Funding Sources**

- Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants (HUD)
- Community Development Block Grants (HUD)
- Mortgage Revenue Bonds
- Multifamily Housing Bonds
- Community Development Block Grants
- HOME (HUD)
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program
- Rural Single-Family Housing Grants & Loans (USDA)

**Cost**

| $\$\$ | $\$\$-$\$\$

**Ease of Implementation**

| Moderate | Cost and complexity vary, depending on the tools used |

**Model Policies/Helpful Programs**

- Loudoun County (VA): Five-Year Fair Housing Plan ● Des Moines, IA: Municipal Housing Agency Plan ● College Park, MD: Housing Plan ● Seattle (WA): Consolidated Plan for Housing & Community Development ● Center for Neighborhood Technology: Housing and Transportation Affordability Index
- San Antonio (TX): Center City Housing Incentive Policy ● Austin (TX): S.M.A.R.T. Housing Policy Initiative ● Massachusetts Housing Development Incentive Program ● Local Assistance: Housing Trust, Local Funding, and Indirect Support (MA) ● San Luis Obispo (CA): Affordable Housing Incentives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants (HUD) ● Community Development Block Grants (HUD) ● HOME (HUD) ● Good Neighbor Next Door Program (HUD)</td>
<td>Community Development Block Grants (HUD) ● Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants (FEMA) ● Community Development Block Grants (HUD)</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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**Develop incentives and a toolkit for matching and maintaining local housing stock to meet economic development needs, bringing greater access to opportunities.**

**Identify gaps and opportunities of the quality and supply of the regional housing stock (including housing for seniors or aging in place).**

**Develop and enforce local housing codes and standards to ensure owner-occupied and rental housing is safe and healthy.**


- Texas Statewide Rural Housing Analysis ● Three-County (Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster) Regional Housing Needs Assessment (NY) ● Bear Creek Valley Regional Problem Solving Project: Housing Needs Analysis (Ashland, OR)

## Transportation Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type(s)</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
<th>Implementation Tools</th>
<th>Possible Funding Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>State Agencies ● Metropolitan Planning Organization ● Counties ● Cities</td>
<td>Regional Transportation Authority</td>
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<th>$$ - $$$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Implementation</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate - Difficult</td>
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</table>

| Model Policies/ Helpful Programs | Houston Region Freight Study ● H-GAC Regional Goods Movement Study ● Chicago Region Environmental & Transportation Efficiency Program ● Puget Sound Regional Council (WA): Regional Freight Mobility Roundtable ● Puget Sound Regional Council (WA): FAST Corridor Partnership | Houston (TX): Geographic Information and Management System (GIMS) ● Houston (TX): Consolidated Transportation Planning Tool ● New Jersey: Fix-it-First Program ● Oklahoma Department of Transportation: Geographic Resource Intranet Portal ● Utah Department of Transportation: UPLAN ● Florida Department of Transportation: Efficient Transportation Decision-Making Process ● Delaware Department of Transportation: Information Network for Online Resource Mapping | Regional Transportation Authority (Chicago, IL) ● Sacramento Regional Transit District |

**Improve the efficiency of freight movement by investing in projects that improve connections between ships, trains, and trucks.**

**Optimize existing transportation network through a ‘Fix it First’ strategy and by using technology and improved incident management to maximize system capacity.**

**Create a regional framework for expanding transit across Our Region.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop and implement policies to improve transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access between and within activity centers, connecting residents to job centers.</th>
<th>Provide counties with tools to better coordinate land use and transportation planning in unincorporated areas.</th>
<th>Include economic, safety, and quality of life costs and benefits of transportation projects in funding prioritizations.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
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## Resiliency Strategies

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<th>Type(s)</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
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<th>Possible Funding Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td><strong>Federal Agencies</strong> • State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Flood Control Districts • School Districts • Colleges and Universities • Non-Profits</td>
<td><strong>Marketing/Public Outreach Campaigns</strong> • Workshops</td>
<td><strong>Emergency Management Performance Grants (FEMA)</strong></td>
<td>$-$-$</td>
<td>Easy - Moderate</td>
<td>Harris County Flood Control: Flood Education Mapping Tool • Medford (OR): “Ready, Set, Go” Personal Wildfire Action Guide • Edmonton (Alberta, Canada): Flood Prevention Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td><strong>Federal Agencies</strong> • State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Utility Providers • Non-Profits</td>
<td><strong>Floodgates</strong> • Dikes • Leveses • Wetlands and Riparian Zone Protection • Stormwater Detention • Hurricane-Resistant Building Codes • Repetitive Loss Buyout Programs • Land Development Regulations</td>
<td><strong>Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA)</strong></td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>A Stronger, More Resilient New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td><strong>State Agencies</strong> • H-GAC • Counties • Cities • Villages • School Districts • Transit Authorities • Healthcare Providers • Employers • Media</td>
<td><strong>Evacuation Studies</strong> • Disaster Preparedness Plans • Emergency Communication Plans • Emergency Shelter Planning • Public Education</td>
<td><strong>Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA)</strong> • Emergency Management Performance Grants (FEMA)</td>
<td>$2 - $2</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Houston-Galveston Region: Together Against the Weather • Houston, Texas: Ready Houston • Texas: Ready or Not? Have a Plan • Texas Emergency Management Executive Guide • North Central Texas Council of Governments Emergency Preparedness Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a rapid recovery plan to help people and businesses return as quickly as possible.</td>
<td>Improve regional air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by offering alternative modes of transportation, improving energy efficiency, and effectively managing resources.</td>
<td>Support innovative adaptation strategies that help communities prepare for potential environmental changes, such as sea level rise and severe weather events.</td>
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<td>Plan</td>
<td>Policy/Program</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<td>Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA) ● CDBG Disaster Recovery Assistance (HUD)</td>
<td>Innovative Energy Demonstration Grant Program (SECO) ● LoanSTAR Revolving Loan Program (SECO) ● Climate Showcase Communities Program (EPA) ● Weatherization Assistance Program (DOE) ● MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program (FHA)</td>
<td>Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA) ● Climate Showcase Communities Program (EPA)</td>
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<td>Moderate - Difficult</td>
<td>Moderate - Difficult</td>
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</table>
Acknowledgements

In 2010, 24 local governments and organizations formed a partnership to develop a long-range plan to accommodate Our Region’s expected growth, while enhancing the economic opportunity and quality of life available to our people.

Coordinating Committee

Bay City Community Development Corporation
Blueprint Houston
Center for Houston’s Future
Chambers County
City of Galveston
City of Houston
City of Huntsville
Fort Bend County
Greater Houston Builders Association
Gulf Coast Economic Development District
Harris County
Houston Advanced Research Center
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Houston Tomorrow
Houston Wilderness
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO)
Montgomery County
Neighborhood Centers Inc.
Port of Houston Authority
Texas Southern University
United Way of Greater Houston
University of Texas Medical Branch
Waller County Economic Development Partnership

More than 200 individuals and organizations also supported the development of this plan, including elected officials, community leaders, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and research agencies, through participation on regional workgroups and advisory committees. More than 15,000 members of the public also played a significant role in shaping the goals and strategies in this plan.

Disclaimer

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The development of *Our Great Region 2040* was funded, in part, by a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The grant is part of the federal government’s Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which brings the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Department of Transportation together to coordinate the agencies’ programs addressing affordable housing, transportation, and environmental protection and the intersection of all three. Based on input from the public and stakeholders, *Our Great Region 2040* also considers healthy communities, economic development, and resiliency to be priority issues.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities

The *Our Great Region 2040* goals support the broader Livability Principles established by the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The Livability Principles are:

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies and leverage investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods