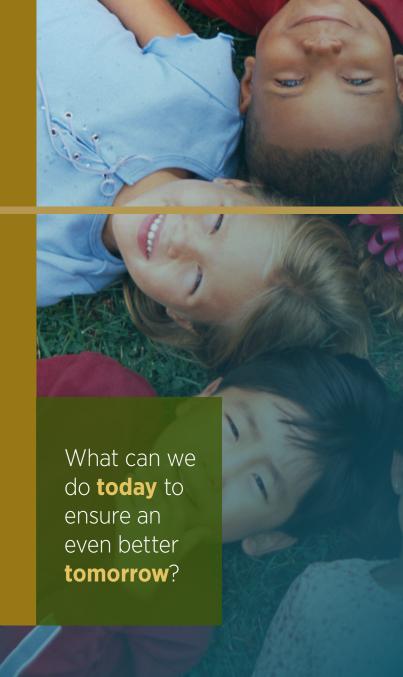


Our Region, A Great Region

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.





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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.









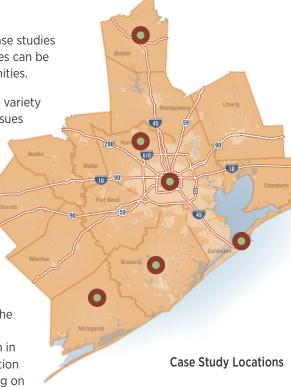
Case Studies

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





- 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



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.**

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.

Case Study

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 mixeduse 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:





Transportation





Housing

Environment



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.

What?

As Our Region grows in population, our water demand will also increase for irrigation. agriculture, business and industry, recreation, and drinking. But our water supply is finite and is reduced in times of drought. The quality of our water is also a concern—most waterways in Our Region do not meet state water quality standards for recreation. Ensuring that our water is clean, not only for drinking, but also to maintain healthy fisheries and recreational opportunities, is an important part of securing our water future. Developing new supplies, increasing water conservation and reuse, and protecting water quality will be crucial to ensuring we have adequate resources in the future.

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.

Case Study

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:









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**.

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.

Case Study

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.



The coverage and efficiency of our transit system needs to be broadened to better serve existing customers and attract new ones. The number of shorter vehicle trips can also be reduced by building more bikeways and safer sidewalks, especially around activity centers.

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**.

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** to view the results of the survey.

Case Study

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.

Austin Walker

Walker

Walker

Walker

Walker

Walker

Walker

Galvesjen

Metagorda

Houston, Texas

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**.

Case Study

City of Galveston Sustainable Return on Investment

Galveston continues to move forward on rebuilding efforts following the devastation of Hurricane lke 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

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 welldeveloped 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

Galveston, Texas

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.

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*.

Additional regional planning documents, including the *Regional Transportation Plan*, *Regional Solid Waste Management Plan*, and the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, are available on H-GAC's website at www.h-gac.com.

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.



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**.



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

Improve the opportunities for lifelong learning by scaling up efforts, from quality early childhood education to GED and community education programs to skills training for seniors.

Health Programs for Adults

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.

Type(s)	Program	Education Program	Partnership
Implementers	School Districts • Colleges and Universities • Non-Profits • Regional Workforce Board	School Districts • Colleges and Universities • Non-Profits • Regional Workforce Board	School Districts Colleges and Universities Regional Employers Regional Workforce Board Non-Profits Economic Development Corporations
Implementation Tools	Pre-K Programs ● Apprenticeship Programs ● Senior Community Service Employment Programs ● Community College Vocational Training Programs	Apprenticeship Programs • Community College Vocational Training Programs • Financial Literacy Programs • Soft Skills Programs • Career Counseling	Inter-organizational Partnerships and Coordination ● New and Expanded Workforce Education 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	Pathway to Financial Success (Discover) FINRA Investor Education Foundation Opportunity Texas: Innovation and Investment Fund National Financial Educators Council Skills Development Program (TWC) Apprenticeship Training Program (TWC)	Veterans Workforce Investment Program (DoL) Skills Development Fund: Pre-Employment Training for New Jobs (TWC) Environmental Workforce Development & Job Training Program (EPA) Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College & Career Training Grant Program (DoL) KnowledgeWorks Foundation Lumina Foundation Parallel Pathways to Success Grant Program (TXDA)
Cost	\$\$-\$\$\$	\$\$-\$\$\$	\$-\$\$\$
Ease of Implementation	Moderate	Moderate	Easy - Difficult Cost and complexity vary, depending on incentives offered
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 &	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

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.
Partnership Program	Program Policy	Program
State Agencies • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Non-Profits • Economic Development Corporations • Economic Development Districts	H-GAC Counties Cities Towns Villages Non-Profits Economic Development Corporations Economic Development Districts Businesses Utility Providers	H-GAC ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Non- Profits ● Economic Development Corporations ● Economic Development Districts ● Businesses
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	Assessment of High-Speed Data Connections Internet Skills Training Public/Private Partnerships	Local and Regional Marketing Campaigns ● Technical Assistance to Local Governments and Businesses
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	Community Connect Program (USDA) ● Farm Bill Broadband Loan Program (USDA) ● Distance Learning & Telemedicine Loan & Grant Program (USDA)	GO TEXAN Partner Program ● Sustainable Community Innovation Grants (Southern Rural Development Center)
\$-\$\$\$	\$-\$\$\$	\$\$-\$\$
Easy – Moderate Cost and complexity vary, depending on incentives offered	Easy – Moderate Cost and complexity vary, depending on the tools used	Easy - Moderate
Harris County Tax Abatement ● Harris County Green Building Tax Abatement for New Commercial Construction ● Greater Houston Partnership ● City of Houston: LEED Tax Abatement ● City of Houston: Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) ● University of Minnesota Extension: Business Retention & Expansion Program	City of Houston: WeCAN (Wireless Empowered Community Access Network) ■ Connected Texas Florida Rural Broadband Alliance	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)

Environment Strategies	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.
Type(s)	Partnership	O Plan	Policy Program	Education
Implementers	State Agencies Counties Cities River Authorities Groundwater Conservation Districts Utility Providers	State Agencies H-GAC Counties Cities Towns Villages Subsidence Districts Flood Control Districts River Authorities Utility Providers	State Agencies Counties Cities Towns Villages Municipal Utility Districts Flood Control Districts Non-Profits Developers Private Landowners	H-GAC ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Non-Profits
Implementation Tools	Inter-organizational Partnerships and Coordination	Watershed Protection Plans • Total Maximum Daily Loads (TDML) and Implementation Plans	Conservation Easements Purchase of Development Rights Transfer of Development Rights Land Acquisition Development Agreements Local Development Regulations Conservation Subdivision Design Low Impact Development Techniques Density Bonuses/ Other Development Incentives Tax Breaks/ Incentives Design Guidebooks	Public Education Campaigns ● Sustainable Return on Investment (SROI) Framework
Possible Funding Sources	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	Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (TWDB) ● Non-Point Source Grants (TSSWCB)	Recreation Grant Programs (TPW) Landowner Incentive Programs (USFWS) Texas Farms & Ranch Lands Conservation Program National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants (USFWS) Green Infrastructure Community Partnerships Program (EPA) Strategic Conservation Guidance Program (The Conservation Fund) Nonpoint Source Grants (TCEQ/TSSWCB) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Grants (NPS) Community-Based Restoration Program (NOAA)	Environmental Education Regional Grant Program (EPA) Environmental Literacy Grants Program (NOAA) Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (NOAA)
Cost	\$\$\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$
Ease of Implementation	Difficult	Moderate	Moderate - Difficult	Easy
Model Policies/ Helpful Programs	Region H Water Planning Group Bay Area Regional Desalination Project North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership Jordan Lake Regional Water Supply Partnership	H-GAC Watershed Protection Plans City of Austin: Save Our Springs Ordinance City of Wilmington, DE: Source Water Protection Plan Handbook for Developing Watershed Protection Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters (EPA)	Harris County Low Impact Development & Green Infrastructure Design Criteria for Stormwater Management • Bayou Greenways Initiative • Local Land Trusts (Bayou Land Conservancy, Katy Prairie Conservancy) • Travis County (TX): Conservation Design Manual • San Diego County (CA): Low Impact Development Handbook • Prairie Crossing (Grayslake, IL)	Galveston Sustainable Return on Investment Case Study Return on Investment: The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania Wildlife Habitat Benefits Estimation Toolkit

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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.
Partnership	O Plan	Policy Program Education
State Agencies • H-GAC • Regional Water Planning Groups • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Utility Providers • River Authorities • Groundwater Conservation Districts • Subsidence Districts • Non-Profits	State Agencies ● H-GAC ● Counties ● Non-Profits	State Agencies ● H-GAC ● Regional Water Planning Groups ● Counties ● Cities ● Municipal Utility Districts ● River Authorities ● Groundwater Conservation Districts ● Subsidence Districts
Inter-Organizational Partnerships and Coordination	Strategic Planning • NatureServe VISTA (Land Use Decision Support Tool) • Eco-Logical	OVERALL - Facility Audits ● Public Education Campaigns ● Incentives (Low-Cost Loans, Grants, Tax Breaks, Reduced Permitting Fees, Expedited Permit Review) ● Awards/Certification Programs ● ENERGY - Weatherization Programs ● Energy-Efficient Vehicle Fleets ● SOLID WASTE - Recycling Facilities (Drop-Off Centers, Buy-Back Centers, Curbside Pickup, Recycling Transfer Hubs, Dual Collection Vehicles, Organic Waste Management Programs, Building Material Reuse Centers) ● WATER - Water Recycling Programs ● Water Conservation Plans
Regional Water Planning Group Grant Program (TWDB)	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 & Adaptive Science Grants (USFWS)	ENERGY - Innovative Energy Demonstration Grant Program (SECO) ● Building Efficiency & 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
\$\$	\$\$	\$-\$\$\$
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnerships • Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN)	Cumberland Voices: A Conservation Vision for the South Cumberland Region • Vision Plan for Open Space Conservation and Trail Connectivity in the Mid-Columbia Region	ENERGY - Houston Green Office Challenge ● Houston Residential Energy Efficiency Program (REEP) ● Houston Green Transportation Initiative ● Austin, TX: Energy Conservation Audit & Disclosure Ordinance ● New Jersey Clean Energy Program: Local Government Energy Audit Program ● Kansas City Regional Energy Efficiency & Conservation Strategy Initiative ● SOLID WASTE - Houston Green Waste Diversion Program ● San Antonio, TX: Multi-Family Recycling Ordinance ● Regional Recycling Transfer Hubs (GA) ● WATER- Austin Water: Rainwater Harvesting Rebates Program ● Austin Water: ICI Audit Rebate Pilot Program ● San Antonio, TX: Recycled Water Delivery System ● Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority: Free Water Audits Program ● Portland Water Bureau: Commercial Water Efficiency Survey Program

Healthy Communities Strategies	Establish regional infrastructure and distribution mechanisms to support farmers markets 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, bike-share infrastructure and parks/open space that promote a more active lifestyle.	Create a regional task force that works across multiple disciplines (health departments, public safety, etc.) to address mental health issues.
Type(s)	Policy Program	Funding	Partnership
Implementers	State Agencies ● H-GAC ● Economic Development District ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Non-Profits	State Agencies ● H-GAC ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Management Districts ● Non-Profits	Federal Agencies • State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Local Mental Health Authorities • Healthcare Providers • Non-Profits
Implementation Tools	Farm-to-School Projects Farm-to-Hospital Projects Regional Food Hubs Regional Food Processing Facilities Technical Assistance to Food Producers and Farmers Markets Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Program (USDA) I-PLACE3S Software (Econometric Agricultural Output Model)	Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Local Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) Tax Increment Financing Adopt-a-Path Programs Impact Fees Federal/State Grant Programs	Interdisciplinary Working Group/Task Force
Possible Funding Sources	Specialty Crop Block Grants (USDA) Farmers' Market Promotion Program (USDA) Community Food Projects Competitive Grants (USDA) Sustainable Agriculture Grants (Sustainable Agriculture Research) Rural Business Enterprise Grants Rural Business Opportunity Grants Rural Business Opportunity Grants Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grants Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (USDA) Agricultural Loan Guarantee Program (TXDA) Texans Feeding Texas: Surplus Agricultural Products Grants	MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) ● Transportation, Community & System Preservation Program (FHWA) ● Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program	Prevention and Public Health Fund (USHHS)
Cost	\$ - \$\$\$	\$ - \$\$\$	\$
Ease of Implementation	Moderate	Moderate	Easy
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.
Policy Program	S Assessment	Program Program
H-GAC ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Local Housing Authorities ● Neighborhood/Homeowners' Associations ● Developers ● Non-Profits ● Healthcare Providers	State Agencies • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Local Mental Health Authorities • Healthcare Providers • Non-Profits	State Agencies • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Healthcare and EMS Providers • Non-Profits
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)	Online Database Resource (e.g. Network of Care Website) • Mental Health Services Directory	Telemedicine ● Low-Cost Healthcare Clinics ● Healthcare Education Programs ● Community Health Workers
MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program ● Transportation, Community & System Preservation Program (FHWA) ● People's Garden Grant Program (USDA)	Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Grants	Community Facility Grants (USDA) ● Distance Learning & Telemedicine Loan & Grant Program (USDA) ● Rural Health Network Development Planning Program (USHHS) ● New Access Points Grants (USHHS)
\$ - \$\$\$	\$	\$\$\$
Easy - Medium	Easy	Hard
Houston B-cycle • Houston Department of Health & Human Services: Community Garden Program • Healthy Kids Houston • City of Houston: Urban Grows Initiative • Houston Public Works & Engineering Department: Neighborhood Traffic Management Program • Houston Bikeway Program • LISC Great Opportunities (GO) Neighborhoods • Bayou Greenways Initiative • Pittsburgh, PA: Edible Gardens Program • Charlotte, NC: Urban Street Design Guidelines • Madison, WI: Bicycle Parking Requirements • Virginia Beach, VA: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design - General Guidelines for Designing Safer Communities	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.	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 that has a variety of price points.
Type(s)	© Plan	Program
Implementers	Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Management Districts • Local Housing Authorities	Counties Cities Towns Villages Management Districts Local Housing Authorities Non-Profits
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
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

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.
Policy Program	S Assessment	Policy Program
Counties Cities Towns Villages Management Districts Local Housing Authorities Non-Profits	Federal Agencies ● State Agencies ● H-GAC ● Counties ● Cities ● Local Housing Authorities ● Non-Profits	Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages
Jobs-Housing Balance Analysis • Tax Incentives • Expedited Permitting Process • Design Guidelines • Public-Private Partnerships (Infrastructure Improvements, Land Acquisition, etc.)	American Housing Survey • Opportunity Mapping • Housing Gap Analysis	Local Building Code ● Property Maintenance Code ● Dangerous Building Ordinance ● Code Enforcement
Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (HUD) HOME (HUD) Good Neighbor Next Door Program (HUD)	Community Development Block Grants (HUD) MacArthur Foundation Grants	Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants (FEMA) ● Community Development Block Grants (HUD)
\$\$-\$\$\$	\$\$-\$\$\$	\$-\$\$\$
Moderate	Difficult	Moderate
City of Houston Case Study: Urban Houston Framework • University of Chicago: Employer Assisted Housing (EAH) Program • Rochester (NY): Home Buyer Services • American Planning Association Policy Guide: Job/Housing Balance	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)	Sugar Land (TX): Building Regulations Friendswood (TX): Regulations for Substandard Buildings Dallas County (TX): Residential Building Code Code Enforcement Association of Texas Sacramento (CA): Department of Housing & Dangerous Buildings

Transportation Strategies	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.
Type(s)	Policy Program	Policy Program	Partnership
Implementers	Federal Agencies • State Agencies • Metropolitan Planning Organization • Counties • Cities • Port Authorities • Railroads • Trucking and Logistics Companies	State Agencies • Metropolitan Planning Organization • Counties • Cities	State Agencies • Metropolitan Planning Organization • Counties • Cities • Transit Agencies
Implementation Tools	Improved IT Systems • Recommendations from H-GAC Regional Goods Movement Study	Transportation Improvement Plans • Condition Inventories • Infrastructure Asset Management Systems • Transportation Planning Capacity-Building Peer Program • Programmatic Agreements • 3D Modeling for Construction Means and Methods • Intelligent Compaction • Accelerated Bridge Construction • Design Build • Geospatial Data Collaboration	Regional Transportation Authority
Possible Funding Sources	Surface Transportation Program (FHWA) Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Small Starts Program (FTA) Metropolitan & Statewide Planning Programs (5303, 5304, 5305) (FTA) America's Marine Highway Grants (Maritime Administration)	Metropolitan & Statewide Planning Programs (5303, 5304, 5305)(FTA) ● Transportation, Community & System Preservation (TCSP) Program ● Every Day Counts Initiative (FHWA)	Small Starts Program (FTA) Urbanized Area Formula Funds (5307)(FTA) Clean Fuels Grant Program (5308)(FTA) Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Job Access & Reserve Commute (JARC) Program (FTA)
Cost	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$ - \$\$\$
Ease of Implementation	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Difficult
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	Regional Transportation Authority (Chicago, IL) Sacramento Regional Transit District

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, and quality of life costs and benefits of transportation projects in funding prioritizations.
Program Program	Program Program	Policy Program
Metropolitan Planning Organization • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Management Districts • Municipal Utility Districts • Transit Agencies	State Government • Counties	State Agencies Metropolitan Planning Organization Counties Cities
Roadway Design Manuals • Complete Streets • Streetscaping • Livable Centers Program • Subdivision Ordinance, Parking Ordinances & Other Land Use Policies	State legislation allowing all counties to utilize a greater variety of land use and transportation planning tools, such as access management standards, impact fees, and concurrency and adequate public facilities ordinances.	Strategic Prioritization Process
Metropolitan & Statewide Planning Programs (5303, 5304, 5305)(FTA) Urbanized Area Formula Funds (5307)(FTA) Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas (5311)(FTA) Transportation, Community & System Preservation (TCSP) Program Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Surface Transportation Program (FHWA)		Metropolitan & Statewide Planning Programs (5303, 5304, 5305)(FTA) ● Urbanized Area Formula Funds (5307)(FTA) ● Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas (5311)(FTA)
(IIIWA)		
\$\$	None	\$
	None Difficult	\$ Moderate

Resiliency Strategies	Create public education programs on wildfire, flooding, and other risks.	Develop an integrated regional storm defense system, which includes both structural and non-structural elements.	Enhance coordination of evacuation planning and preparation efforts, particularly to address the needs of vulnerable populations.
Type(s)	Education	Infrastructure	Partnership Program
Implementers	Federal Agencies State Agencies H-GAC Counties Cities Towns Villages Flood Control Districts School Districts Colleges and Universities Non-Profits	Federal Agencies State Agencies Counties Cities Towns Villages Utility Providers Non-Profits	State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • School Districts • Transit Authorities • Healthcare Providers • Employers • Media
Implementation Tools	Marketing/Public Outreach Campaigns Workshops	Floodgates Dikes Levees Wetlands and Riparian Zone Protection Stormwater Detention Hurricane-Resistant Building Codes Repetitive Loss Buyout Programs Land Development Regulations	Evacuation Studies • Disaster Preparedness Plans • Emergency Communication Plans • Emergency Shelter Planning • Public Education
Possible Funding Sources	Emergency Management Performance Grants (FEMA)	Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA)	Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA) ● Emergency Management Performance Grants (FEMA)
Cost	\$-\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$ - \$\$
Ease of Implementation	Easy - Moderate	Difficult	Moderate
Model Policies/ Helpful Programs	Harris County Flood Control: Flood Education Mapping Tool • Medford (OR): "Ready, Set, Go" Personal Wildfire Action Guide • Edmonton (Alberta, Canada): Flood Prevention Program	A Stronger, More Resilient New York	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

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Develop a rapid recovery plan to help people and businesses return as quickly as possible.	Improve regional air quality and reduce 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 sea level rise and severe weather events.
© Plan	Policy/Program Infrastructure	Policy Program
State Agencies • H-GAC • Counties • Cities • Towns • Villages • Transit Agencies • Local Housing Authorities	State Agencies ● H-GAC ● Counties ● Cities ● Towns ● Villages ● Utility Providers ● Transit Agencies ● Non-Profits	Federal Agencies State Agencies H-GAC Counties Cities Towns Villages Flood Control Districts Non-Profits
Rapid Housing & Business Recovery Plans Business Continuity Plans	Bicycle Facilities Pedestrian Facilities Increased Transit Opportunities Weatherization Programs Incentives for On-Site Renewable Energy Production & Energy-Efficiency Improvements (Low-Cost Loans, Grants, Tax, Breaks, Reduced Permitting Fees, Expedited Permit Review) Land Use Regulations Supportive of On-Site Renewable Energy Production Energy-Efficient Vehicle Fleets Public Education Campaigns Awards/Certification Programs	Technical Assistance Programs Interorganizational Partnerships and Coordination Water Conservation Plans Tree Planting Programs Heat Wave Management Plans Hurricane-Resistant Building Codes Green Building Programs Local Adaptation Plans
Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA) ● CDBG Disaster Recovery Assistance (HUD)	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)	Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants (FEMA) ● Climate Showcase Communities Program (EPA)
\$\$	\$-\$\$\$	\$-\$\$\$
Moderate - Difficult	Moderate - Difficult	Moderate
Beaufort County (SC): Disaster Recovery Plan ■ Florida Business Disaster Survival Toolkit Leon County (FL) Disaster Housing Strategy: Local Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan Housing Guide	Houston Green Office Challenge Green Houston Emissions Reduction Plan Houston B-cycle Houston Residential Energy Efficiency Program Houston Green Transportation Initiative METRO STAR Rockport (TX): Wind Powered Systems Ordinance Portland (OR): Streamlined Building Permits for Residential Solar Systems Solarize Portland	Ready Houston • Louisiana Comprehensive Plan for a Sustainable Coast • Punta Gorda (FL): Adaptation Plan • Collier County (FL): Sea-Level Rise Impact Assessment Requirements • Los Angeles County (CA): Green Building Program

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 Houston-Galveston Area Council

Blueprint Houston Houston Tomorrow

Center for Houston's Future Houston Wilderness

Chambers County Local Initiatives Support Corporation

City of Galveston Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO)

City of Houston Montgomery County

City of Huntsville Neighborhood Centers Inc.

Fort Bend County

Port of Houston Authority

Greater Houston Builders Association

Texas Southern University

Gulf Coast Economic Development District

United Way of Greater Houston

Harris County University of Texas Medical Branch

Houston Advanced Research Center 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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Partnership for Sustainable Communities

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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



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