Study Impetus

- Houston region contains 39 of the top 100 congested roadway segments in Texas¹

- Regional growth expected to outpace expansion of highways and transportation infrastructure

- Congestion further exacerbated by construction along corridors

Combating congestion by reducing the number of single occupancy vehicles driven by commuters during peak hours is critical.

Roadway State Ranking
45  9, 11
290  17, 31
59  3, 6, 22

¹http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/100-congested-roadways.html
H-GAC received TxDOT SPR funding to conduct a public survey to:

- Establish a baseline level of current commuting practices and preferences, including participation in alternative commute options such as transit, vanpool, carpool, and telecommuting.

- Analyze how financial incentives and service enhancements might impact participation levels in alternative transportation modes.
State Planning and Research (SPR) Study

H-GAC worked with Texas A&M Transportation Institute to survey commuters and employers across the region.

- Survey remained open for 67 days from Oct- Dec 2014
- Over 70 partner organizations promoted the survey
- Organizations were provided unique survey links, flyers, social media blurbs, email, and print (English and Spanish)
Survey Participation

Participation from around the region:

- 43 unique survey links
- 10,813 hits
- 7,249 complete commuter responses
- 225 complete employer responses (61 unique employers)
Survey Participation

Respondent Experience:

• Average completion time: 18 minutes

• 9% of respondents used a mobile device

• 84% of respondents indicated the surveys were user-friendly

• 4,550 volunteered to participate in a follow-up survey
Commuter Practices

In a typical week:

- 56% of respondents only drive alone
- 25% of respondents use a combination of driving and commute alternatives
- 18% of respondents use only commute alternatives
- 37% have no other viable commute option if their current mode was not available tomorrow
Impacts and Transportation Investments

Scenario having the greatest impact on commute in the next five years:

- 47% Construction delays
- 43% Fuel topping $5 per gallon
- 10% Downturn in local economy
Impacts and Transportation Investments

Preferred Transportation Investments

- Maintain existing highways (15%)
- Expand or build new highways (30%)
- Improve transit, walking or biking (55%)
Interest in Employer Policies for Commuters

Respondents were asked to rate their interest in four commute-related employer policies:

- **21%** preferred parking for carpool/vanpool
- **27%** parking cash-out
- **58%** alternative work schedules
- **67%** teleworking or telecommuting
## Motivating Factors: Financial Incentives and Service Enhancements

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<td>Lower car insurance cost</td>
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<td>Lower tolls on HOT lanes</td>
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<td>Free/discounted transit pass</td>
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<td>Reward for not parking</td>
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<td>Prize drawings</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous rewards/coupons</td>
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- Alternatives only
- Drive and Alternatives
- Drive alone

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<td>Transit closer to me</td>
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<td>Alternative work schedule</td>
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<td>More reliable transit service</td>
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<td>Better or easier access to park &amp; ride lots</td>
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<td>Help finding dependable car or vanpoolers</td>
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<td>Better, safer bike routes with amenities</td>
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<td>Better, safer walking routes</td>
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<td>More informational materials</td>
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- Alternatives only
- Drive and Alternatives
- Drive alone
Employer Findings

• **57%** of employer respondents do not provide commute-related benefits or information

• **23%** of employer respondents provide employees with information about commute options

• **20%** of employer respondents provide benefits AND information about commute options
Employer Findings

• **60%** of employer respondents agreed with the following statement:

  *Government and non-profit organizations should offer programs and incentives to facilitate commuters using a commute mode other than driving alone.*

• **65%** of employer respondents agreed with the following statement:

  *Businesses should provide programs and incentives to facilitate employees using a commute mode other than driving alone.*
Role of Employer

Responsibility of employers, government, property managers, and commuters to implement or encourage commute alternatives and incentives.

Employer representatives felt the region benefits from alternative commute modes because of:

- **Reduced traffic congestion**
- **Reduced family expenses**
- **Improved air quality**
Next Steps

• Meet with partner organizations to discuss survey results relevant to their organization and/or area

• Assist employers that are interested in developing commuter programs/incentives for employees

• Early 2016: send a brief follow-up survey to the panel of 4,550 commuters who volunteered to receive an invitation

• Follow-up survey will inquire about:
  • METRO’s New Bus Network (August 2015 roll-out)
  • METRORail Green Line (opened May 2015)
More Information

Project website: www.ghcommutes.com

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