

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Tuesday, July 24, 2012 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Blueprint Houston, Joe Webb and Martha Murphree
Center for Houston's Future, Donna Rybiski
City of Galveston, Lori Feild Schwarz
City of Houston, Mike Kramer
City of Huntsville, Chandra Steinback
Fort Bend County, Ron Drachenberg
Greater Houston Builders Association, Kathryn "Toy" Wood
Gulf Coast Economic Development District, Chuck Wemple
Harris County, Christy Lambright and Mayra Bontemps
H-GAC, Jeff Taebel and Cheryl Mergo
Houston Tomorrow, David Crossley
Houston Wilderness, Richard Cron
METRO, Monique Ward and Shaida Libhart
Montgomery County, Joanne Ducharme
NCI, Emiliano Herrera
UTMB, Alexandra Nolen
Waller County Economic Development Partnership, Harvey Laas

Also in attendance (based upon sign-in sheet available at the meeting and meeting participation)

Sungmin Lee, Anna Sedillo, and Laura Spanjian, City of Houston; Jared Briggs, Toni Candis, and Kelly Opot, Harris County; Miles Arena, Amy Boyers, Meredith Dang, Kelly Porter, Andrea Tantillo, Amanda Thorin, and Chelsea Young, H-GAC; and Suhag Kansara, UrbanCore Collaborative.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

2. Certify Quorum

At least 51% of the member entities were present, constituting a quorum.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

4. Approval of June 26, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Donna Rybiski, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, to approve the meeting minutes.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes as presented.

5. Revised Objectives (Multiple Actions)

Meredith Dang presented updated objectives based on comments received from the Coordinating Committee during the June meeting.

Objective #4 under People Goal #3: Encourage water conservation across agricultural, commercial and residential sectors to decrease water demand and maintain existing water supplies (to replace original 'Encourage use of native plants/vegetation in landscaping to decrease water demand')

Discussion

Encourage use of native plants/vegetation in landscaping to decrease water demand will be included as a strategy.

Objective #4 under Prosperity Goal #5: Encourage development in locations that are most resilient to environmental and natural disasters (to replace original ‘Reduce or discourage development in vulnerable areas’)

Discussion

Who determines what is “most resilient?” Without metrics this objective is useless. (Texas A&M has metrics they can provide that addresses this question.)

The City of Galveston recently worked with Texas A&M on a resiliency project and can provide a presentation at a future Coordinating Committee meeting.

This objective should address existing development as well as new development and should include strategies for developing or re-developing in areas that might be considered vulnerable.

How does this objective provide protection for vulnerable areas? (We are creating a plan that will be a guidance document for local governments. Nothing in the plan will prohibit or permit a project. Everything in the plan will go to local jurisdictions to implement.)

Jurisdictions only have the authority that states give them.

For the following objective, upon additional review staff recommends eliminating the objective because the concepts/intent of the objectives is captured in other objectives.

Objective #1 under Places Goal #1: Original wording ‘Encourage use of green infrastructure’ – objective addressed in:

- Objective #2, Places Goal#2: Preserve protect and restore vital ecosystems and prime agricultural land
- Objective #1, Places Goal #4: Increase the use of green construction practices and renewable energy sources

Discussion:

The term “green infrastructure” should be included in one of the other objectives.

Action: Motion by David Crossley, seconded by Joe Webb to re-word Objective #2, Places Goal#2 to “Preserve, protect and restore green infrastructure, vital ecosystems and prime agricultural land”

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

For the following objective, upon additional review staff recommends eliminating the objective because the concepts/intent of the objectives is captured in other objectives.

Objective #4 under Places Goal #2: Original wording ‘Promote more efficient land use patterns’ – objective addressed in:

- Objective #2, Places Goal#2: Preserve protect and restore vital ecosystems and prime agricultural land
- Objective #1, Places Goal #1: Coordinate infrastructure planning, construction and maintenance to optimize system performance and realize cost savings to taxpayers
- Objective #2, Places Goal #2: Remove barriers to development in areas with existing infrastructure networks

Discussion:

“Promote efficient land use patterns” is important to sustainability.

We are already stating it more succinctly in other objectives. (It isn’t fully stated in other objectives)

There is concern about objections to land use patterns and how that concept might be perceived by county governments.

There is a difference between what we think is politically feasible and what sustainability should be.

Action: Motion by David Crossley, seconded by Joe Webb to keep Objective #4 under Places Goal #2 as originally worded – “Promote more efficient land use patterns.”

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion

6. Fair Housing Equity Assessment (Action)

Amy Boyers, H-GAC staff, presented the results and recommendations of the Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) evaluation team. The team met and reviewed the three consultants who proposed to work on the FHEA. The FHEA is a required deliverable from HUD for the grant. The evaluation team scored the consultants in the following rank order:

BBC Research & Consulting
Texas A&M University
DC Planning Consultants & Associates, Inc.

Action: Motion made by Donna Rybiski, seconded by Joanne Ducharme, to accept the recommendations of the evaluation team. Jeff Taebel amended the motion to indicate that H-GAC staff would request approval from the H-GAC Board of Directors to negotiate with the consulting firms in ranked order.

Discussion:

Will the H-GAC Board approve the ranked order negotiations since the top firm is from out-of-state?

The top firm has extensive experience in Texas and is currently working with on the state's Analysis of Impediments to fair housing.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

7. Case Studies (Action)

Meredith Dang, H-GAC staff, reported that the Case Studies evaluation team met and reviewed 18 applications that were received for possible funding. The team selected the top scoring proposals with each transect for funding (total \$800,000). The team also selected an alternate for funding in case one of the top scored project's contracts cannot be executed. A second alternate was also identified but would only be selected if the first alternative's contract cannot be executed.

Case Studies Schedule

- July 24, 2012: Coordinating Committee to vote on Selection Subcommittee recommendations
- July 25- 31, 2012: Work with selected case study partners to finalize scope and budget
- August 1- 6, 2012: Procure consultants to conduct case studies (at this time we anticipate the majority of consultants can be procured either through Plan Source or sole sourced)
- August 20-24, 2012: Interview and select consultants
- September 19, 2012: Request H-GAC Board of Directors approval
- October 2012: Case studies kick off
- April 2013: Complete case studies

Case Studies Recommended

- City of Houston , Houston: A Framework for Urban Areas
- City of Galveston , Galveston Sustainable Action Plan: Return on Investment Analysis
- Harris County , Harris County Eastern Corridor Sustainability Case Study
- Brazoria County , Brazoria County Coastal Habitat and Infrastructure Master Plan
- City of Huntsville , Housing as an Economic Development Tool in Huntsville, Texas: Nimbyism, Affordability, and Economic Development
- Bay City CDC , Bay City, Texas From Rails & Rice to Residential
- Houston Parks Board , Houston Bayou Greenways Initiative (First Alternate)
- Cypress Creek Greenway Project, Sustainable Solutions to Create the Cypress Creek Transportation Corridor and Preserve and Enhance the Greenway (Second Alternate)

Action: Motion made by Joe Webb, seconded by Monique Ward, to accept the recommendations of the evaluation team.

Discussion:

Project sponsors will need to demonstrate support of the projects from their elected officials and communities.

Will all transects be covered, even if we have to drop to one of the alternates? (Yes)

This is a good list of projects and represents activities that local governments around the region are currently pursuing or are interested in pursuing.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

8. Executive Committee (Action)

Victoria Herrin, Second Vice Chair of the Coordinating Committee, is no longer with Houston Wilderness. Since the position on the executive committee is associated with the member and not the member organization, Coordinating Committee members needed to select a new Second Vice Chair. The person selected will serve through the end of the calendar year.

No nominations were received from the floor. Members present were asked to write in their choices on a provided ballot. Members on the phone were asked to e-mail their choices to Meredith Dang.

H-GAC staff counted the votes and Emiliano Herrera received the most votes.

Action: Motion by David Crossley, seconded by Joe Webb to elect Emiliano Herrera as the Second Vice Chair.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

9. Green Office Challenge (Presentation)

Laura Spanjian with the City of Houston Office of the Mayor offered a presentation on the city's sustainability initiatives, including efforts to provide energy audits and energy-efficient retrofits on homes in the city and the Green Office Challenge.

10. Updates

Meredith Dang gave an update on the Governmental Advisory Committee meeting on July 17, 2012. During the meeting, Meredith Dang presented the alternatives. The GAC was interested in how the survey questions will be constructed. The GAC will review the survey questions and provide feedback before the survey is launched for public participation. The GAC also asked for other plans around the nation for comparison. Dang reported our region was part of the first round of funding for plan development, and other regions have not completed their plans yet either. Other regions across the country have developed similar plans, but ours will be unique to our region.

Chelsea Young presented the existing conditions report update. Coordinating Committee members provided feedback on the draft report, and the feedback was incorporated into the document. The original report was to be organized by "People," "Places" and "Prosperity," mirroring the goals of the plan. However, upon further review, the report is now being organized by "Competitive," "Livable," and "Efficient." H-GAC is working to complete a draft of the report that tells the region's story. A new draft is scheduled to be available by the August Coordinating Committee meeting.

Amanda Thorin presented the public engagement update. The OurRegion.org website now includes slide shows from the summer events we are attending. A link to the slide shows is prominent on the front page of the site. From the first two events, we have gathered 221 impressions (people who have stopped by our booth for a conversation) and 68 actions (people who have participated in the "Our Region is My Region Because..." sign project). 40 of the people who participated agreed to let us use their pictures with their signs. Nine of the 12 planned summer events are scheduled, including a health fair, a Dynamo game and the Houston Press Awards and Festival. We have community trainings scheduled the first week of August. A notice about those trainings was sent to Coordinating Committee members with a request to forward it to their contacts for participation. New questions have been added to the MindMixer site.

Meredith Dang presented the monthly financial report, showing expenditures, balance and match.

11. Other Business and Announcements

No other business was presented.

12. Future Meeting Dates

No announcements were made.

13. Future Meeting Dates

August 28, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

September 25, 10AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

October 23, 10AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

14. Adjourn

Following a motion by Joanne Ducharme and multiple seconds, the Coordinating Committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC

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