

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Tuesday, August 23, 2011 10 a.m. to Noon
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Jay Blazek Crossley, Houston Tomorrow, Alternate
Ron Drachenberg, Fort Bend County
Joanne Ducharme, Montgomery County
DC Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation
Lori Feild Schwarz, City of Galveston
Victoria Herrin, Houston Wilderness
David Hitchcock, Houston Advanced Research Center
Mike Kramer, City of Houston
Christy Lambright, Harris County
Sherry McKibben, City of Huntsville
Curtis McMinn, United Way of Greater Houston
Cheryl Mergo, Houston-Galveston Area Council, Alternate
Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future/ Joe Webb, Blueprint Houston
Jeff Taebel, Houston-Galveston Area Council
Amanda Timm, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Monique Ward, METRO
Charles Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development District

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

Meredith Dang, H-GAC; Garrett Dolan, Rice University; Gina Mitteco, H-GAC; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Kelly Opot, Harris County; Diana Ponce De Leon, City of Houston; Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; Andrea Tantilto, H-GAC; Amanda Thorin, H-GAC; and Nicholas Williams, H-GAC.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. Certify Quorum

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

3. Public Comment

No public comments were provided.

4. Approval of July 26, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Mike Kramer, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, to approve the meeting minutes with the following change.

Correct Charles Wemple's affiliation to "Gulf Coast Economic Development District."

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

5. Governmental Advisory Committee

Meredith Dang presented an updated version of the charge to the H-GAC Board of Directors for the appointment and make-up of the Governmental Advisory Committee as follows:

Background

Charge of the Committee:

The Governmental Advisory Committee will provide local government policy guidance for the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, including guidance on implementation strategies recommended during preparation of the Plan.

Appointment and Composition

This committee, to be comprised of elected City and County officials, will be appointed by the H-GAC Board of Directors; with membership that is representative of the 13-county region including appropriate representation from urban, suburban, rural and coastal areas. The Governmental Advisory Committee should be no larger than 20 members, with at least one representative from each county and one-half of the members representing cities. The City of Houston should have two representatives and two should be from Harris County.

Discussion:

Each of the 13 counties in the region should be represented, but can be represented by a city from within the county.

Harris County and Houston will each be represented by two members based on population.

Every incorporated place in the region is considered a “city.”

Action: Joe Webb made a motion to use the language provided, adding “or jurisdiction within” following “with at least one representative from each county,” for clarification to give to the H-GAC Board to appoint the Governmental Advisory Committee. Mike Kramer seconded the motion.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

6. Workgroups Discussion

Meredith Dang presented a re-cap of the August 5 Workgroup Kickoff Event and presented a proposal for next steps for the workgroup meetings. H-GAC staff is in the process of compiling the notes from the breakout sessions and will provide the notes, a roster of workgroup members, and an overview of the challenges, definitions and opportunities each group developed. These results will be posted online at www.gosustainablenow.org and will be e-mailed to workgroup and Coordinating Committee members. The introductory PowerPoint presentation, delivered by Jeff Taebel at the Kickoff Event, is available online.

H-GAC staff will also reach out to workgroup members who did not attend the kickoff event.

Proposed next steps: Meredith Dang offered the following next steps for the Coordinating Committee's consideration:

The next goal of the workgroups will be to establish metrics

Two meetings are tentatively scheduled for the workgroups in November and February

The meeting times and dates will be staggered in case workgroup members or Coordinating Committee members would like to attend more than one

A webinar can be scheduled a week before the first meeting to make sure everyone is on the "same page" in terms of what metrics are and the goals of the metrics exercise

H-GAC staff is hoping to go into the November meeting with a starting point for the workgroups, for example, a draft of the metrics for the groups to review and provide feedback on

Discussion:

Bringing a draft of the metrics to the November meeting may be premature and might give the impression that the workgroups will not participate as much as anticipated on the planning effort.

We need to make sure everyone is using the same language and everyone is working off of a similar framework.

During the kickoff meeting, the urban group was comprised mostly of architects and planners, not many representatives from cities. Therefore that group (as represented at the kickoff meeting) may not be fully representative of the region's urban transect.

Workgroup invitations were sent to more than 5,000 city representatives.

Specific recommendations for potential workgroup members who H-GAC should reach out to should be forwarded to Meredith Dang. Any potential workgroup members will need to complete the workgroup interest form.

Workgroup members at the event participated in a dot exercise which will help the Coordinating Committee identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps in membership on the workgroups.

Members of the transect groups should be invited to attend the technical advisory group meetings and vice versa.

The Conservation Fund has asked the Environmental Transect Group to give feedback as they move forward with their mapping projects.

Coordinating Committee members should consider what they want their role(s) to be within the workgroups, such as participating as members, facilitators or scribes.

The first meeting should be to determine what we want to measure, what we can measure and what we should measure, and to get everyone on the same page.

The Urban Group could react to the Rice University students' recently published Sustainability Indicators.

Workgroups could also consider the Center for Houston's Future's Quality of Life Metrics studies.

Metrics can be updated and amended as needed throughout the process.

7. Joinability Discussion

Meredith Dang explained that "Joinability" is the ability of additional members to be included in the Coordinating Committee to fill gaps. The Coordinating Committee bylaws and Memorandums of Agreement generally address this issue, but a process is still needed to determine if there are any gaps and how the gaps will be filled.

Discussion:

Management Districts are doing planning and are not sitting at this table.

The Coordinating Committee may need to brainstorm at a future meeting to determine who needs to be added to the Committee, like the Development Community.

Business participation is needed.

Foundation participation is needed.

The Coordinating Committee needs to keep balance in mind when selecting new members.

An ad hoc committee might be needed to analyze gaps and make recommendations for additional members to the whole Coordinating Committee.

Action: Joanne Ducharme made a motion, seconded by Joe Webb, to form an ad hoc committee discuss the following:

- How to assess if the composition of the Coordinating Committee has gaps
- How to process requests for becoming Coordinating Committee members
 - Do we want to have an evaluation committee?
 - Do we want to have an application?
- Timing of joinability frequency

The Coordinating Committee approved this motion.

Follow up:

By a show of hands, the following Coordinating Committee members expressed interest in being a part of the ad hoc committee:

- Monique Ward
- Joanne Ducharme
- Donna Rybiski
- Mike Kramer
- Christy Lambright
- Chuck Wemple
- Amanda Timm
- Cheryl Mergo
- Joe Webb

This committee is charged with meeting before the next full Coordinating Committee meeting and reporting back its recommendations. H-GAC staff will provide a current summary of attendance for Coordinating Committee members for further evaluation.

8. Public Engagement Consultant Selection Process

Chuck Wemple provided the following re-cap of the status of the Public Engagement Consultant selection:

- The Coordinating Committee recommended that the H-GAC Board of Directors negotiate a contract with its top ranked firm.
- The H-GAC Board voted to negotiate a contract with the second ranked firm, AECOM.
- The Coordinating Committee followed up by sending a letter to the H-GAC Board, sent a delegation of representatives to meet with the H-GAC Board officers, and gave a presentation at the July 2011 H-GAC Board meeting.
- At the August 2011 H-GAC Board meeting, the Board opened discussion to reconsider their previous action item. Following a vote, the Board maintained its first decision that AECOM would be the preferred Public Engagement Consultant.
- The Board has instructed H-GAC staff to negotiate with AECOM as the Public Engagement Consultant.

Discussion:

Some H-GAC Board members have contacted some Coordinating Committee members to indicate that the H-GAC Board had expected the Coordinating Committee delegation to inform them of a technical error that occurred in terms of their original vote. The Coordinating Committee instead asked the Board to change their mind.

The Coordinating Committee will need to work to build trust with the Board of Directors.

The Coordinating Committee may need to re-evaluate how it works with the H-GAC Board, including understanding the boundaries and how information should flow between the Committee and H-GAC staff.

Who represents the Coordinating Committee on behalf of H-GAC staff is important to ensure the H-GAC Board receives all of the relevant information for making decisions that impact the work of the Coordinating Committee.

- Moving forward, the Coordinating Committee will need to work together on a scope of work for the Public Engagement Consultant. H-GAC staff offered a draft timeline for developing the scope:
 - H-GAC will send AECOM’s proposed scope of work to Public Engagement Subcommittee members and other interested Coordinating Committee members for review and comment by August 26, 2011.
 - Comments will be due back to H-GAC staff by September 7, 2011.
 - H-GAC staff will compile the comments and send a revised scope to Committee and Subcommittee members by September 12, 2011.
 - The Subcommittee can meet as a group to further discuss the scope. The meeting is set for September 13, 2011.
 - From that meeting, staff and Subcommittee members will compile a draft working scope to send out to the full Coordinating Committee for review and approval at the September Coordinating Committee meeting on September 27, 2011.

9. Updates

Potential FEMA Partnership

FEMA has added sustainability and resiliency to one of the primary goals of mitigation. They are not part of the formal partnership with HUD, EPA, DOT, but are interested in finding ways to flange up how to reduce property damage and loss of life with the sustainability effort. They are looking at risk assessments and methods for reducing risk through drainage efforts and helping prevent shoreline erosion. FEMA may come to the Coordinating Committee to make a presentation in November to discuss their efforts. The goal would be to align the multiple hazard mitigation plans from across the H-GAC region with the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

Fair Housing Equity Assessment Information

HUD is providing more clarification of the Fair Housing Equity Assessment portion of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. We are not going to be required to complete a separate Analysis of Impediments (AI) as part of this effort because there are several AIs across the region for different entities, plus the state recently completed one for the Ike-impacted areas. However, HUD will want us to look at several things that might affect fair housing, including looking at places where there might be high concentrations of minority and poverty populations and where access to areas of opportunity are limited. More details will be provided by HUD.

10. Other Business

None.

11. Announcements

The Policy Link Equity Summit is the first week of November. There’s still an opportunity for a Houston delegation to attend.

All Coordinating Committee member agencies should have provided signed Memorandums of Agreement and letters identifying representatives and alternates.

Community Challenge grants are due September 9, so the Preferred Sustainability Status group may need to review applications for designation in the near future.

The November Coordinating Committee meeting, originally scheduled for November 22, will be re-scheduled to November 29.

12. Next Meeting Dates

Tuesday, September 27, 2011, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

November 29, 2011, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

13. Adjourn

Action: The meeting adjourned at 11:39 AM

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC

713-993-2443

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