

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Wednesday, December 19, 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, Martha Murphree
Chambers County, Sarah Cerrone
City of Galveston, Lori Feild Schwarz
City of Houston, Mike Kramer
City of Huntsville, Chandra Steinback
Fort Bend County, Ron Drachenberg
Gulf Coast Economic Development District, Chuck Wemple
Harris County, Christy Lambright
Houston-Galveston Area Council, Jeff Taebel and Cheryl Mergo
Houston Tomorrow, David Crossley and Jay Crossley
Houston Wilderness, Marc Reid and Richard Cron
Local Initiatives Support Coalition, Katy Atkiss
METRO, Monique Ward and Shaída Libhart
Montgomery County, Dr. Joanne Ducharme
Waller County Economic Development Partnership, Harvey Laas

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

Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; Jared Briggs, Toni Candis and Kelly Opot, Harris County; Amy Boyers, Meredith Dang, Andrea Tantillo, Amanda Thorin and Chelsea Young, H-GAC; Scott Howard and Carra Maroni, Houston Food Policy Workgroup.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

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

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2. Certify Quorum

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

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3. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

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4. Approval of October 23, 2012, Meeting Minutes

Meredith Dang noted a correction to the minutes that had been made during the review process by the Coordinating Committee members. The City of Houston sent the survey to 125,000 recipients through its CitizenNet. The minutes originally distributed indicated that the survey was sent to 12,500 recipients.

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Action: Motion made by Joanne Ducharme, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, to approve the meeting minutes with the noted correction.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes as presented.

5. 2013 Executive Committee

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Mike Kramer, representing the officer nominating committee, reported that there were a total of four nominees for the offices of Chair, First Vice Chair and Second Vice Chair for 2013. There had been five nominees, but one declined after the ballots were released. Coordinating Committee members voted through electronic ballot, and the nominating committee presented the following slate of officers based on the voting:

- Chair – Chuck Wemple
- First Vice Chair – Joe Webb/Donna Rybiski
- Second Vice Chair – Monique Ward

Action: Motion by Sarah Cerrone, seconded by Joanne Ducharme, to accept the slate of officers as presented.

The Coordinating Committee unanimously agreed to accept the slate of officers as presented.

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6. Houston Food Policy Workgroup (Presentation)

Scott Howard and Carra Maroni provided a presentation from the Houston Food Policy Workgroup.

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7. Alternatives (Discussion)

Jeff Taebel, H-GAC, presented an overview of the results of the Alternatives Analysis Survey.

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• Overall Results

- Methods of distribution online, by e-mail, at community meetings, on iPads and on kiosks
- 6,253 respondents

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• Less Time on the Road

- Most people said it is not that difficult to get around today, but that it could be a concern in the future
- If people could live anywhere, the most important factors would be proximity to activities and work, and safety
- People were split between wanting more jobs in the areas where they live and not having any change. People did want more housing in the areas where they live.
- More people were interested in redeveloping existing cities and towns or redevelopment in conjunction with new suburban areas than were interested in just building new suburban areas
- People saw public transportation and fixing existing roads and highways as the best ways to spend money to improve the region's transportation system (over half in the "how would you spend \$100" exercise)

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➤ Greener Region

- 95% of people agree that as we grow, steps should be taken to preserve our region's wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines
- The top reasons for wanting to preserve natural resources were because they provide habitat and have an ecological benefit to the region's air and water
- 50% of people don't think we can do a good enough job protecting natural areas with just voluntary actions and contributions to conservation groups
- 70% of people would support stricter regulations to prevent development in the areas
- 60% of people would support higher taxes and fees to use public funds to buy and preserve natural areas for public use
- People saw purchasing land, expanding recycling, water quality planning and air quality initiatives as the best ways to spend money to improve and protect the region's natural areas (almost 75% in the "how would you spend \$100" exercise)

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➤ Competitive Workforce

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- 70% of people believe the opportunities for getting a good education in their community are good or excellent
- People indicated crime and safety and substandard housing were factors that would lead to a poor environment for getting a good education
- About 70% of people were interested in learning a new skill, and 58% of people said the opportunity for learning the skill in their community was good or excellent
- 58% of people said they would support improving k-12 teachers and schools, even if it meant higher taxes and fees
- People saw improving safety and crime, improving transportation access, educational and enrichment programs, and libraries and community centers as the best ways to spend money to improve the region’s educational system (almost 80% in the “how would you spend \$100” exercise)
- **Analysis of Variations**
 - We ran crosstabs for all demographic/geographic respondent categories
 - Of the 4,000 possible comparisons, about 300 had statistically significant differences
 - Respondents identified as African American and respondents identified as under 34 years in age were more interested in seeing the areas where they live change with more jobs, more housing or more retail than other demographics
 - When asked if you could live anywhere, what would be the most important factor, people who lived in rural areas chose “open space,” compared to people who live in urban areas who chose “close to activities”
 - When considering the most important factor in where they would live if they could live anywhere in the region, respondents younger than 34 and older than 65 chose “proximity (walking/biking distance) to activities” as their most important factor. A higher percentage of respondents that were 35 to 44 years old chose “quality of schools”
 - 55% of urban residents indicated that redeveloping existing cities and towns would be the best way to accommodate growth compared to less than 40% of rural and suburban residents
 - More residents who make more than \$50K annually (64%) live within 10 minutes of a park than residents who make less than \$50K annually (45%)
 - More urban and suburban residents (30% and approximately 20%, respectively) would strongly support the use of public funds and stricter regulations to protect environmental resources than rural residents (13%)
 - About 45% percent of residents living in both suburban and urban areas said the opportunities for learning a new job skill were good compared to 28% of people in rural areas
 - Residents identified as white were less interested (34%) in learning a new job skill than residents identified as African American, Asian and Hispanic (each about 60%)
- **What can we learn?**
 - Less Time on the Road
 - Not a burning issue today, but will be a future concern
 - Respondents support planning and balanced investments
 - There are demographic and geographic differences
 - Are people concerned about safety?
 - Is the influence of school districts overstated?
 - Greener Region
 - There is strong support for conservation and environmental stewardship
 - Conserving natural areas had the highest support
 - There is support for public expenditures and regulations and skepticism about entirely voluntary approaches
 - Rural attitudes differ slightly
 - Competitive Workforce

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- The majority of people are satisfied with training opportunities, but satisfaction is lowest in rural areas
- More non-white, lower income people are interested in learning new skills
- Community factors are perceived as detrimental to the learning environment, particularly among non-whites
- Support for public investment in K-12 education and training programs

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8. Next Steps Strategy (Discussion)

Meredith Dang presented an overview of the tasks that have been completed, the tasks that are currently under way and the tasks that need to be completed regarding the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

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Tasks underway or completed

- Workgroups met on December 10 and started talking about strategies
 - Workgroup members discussed strategies already in plans and brainstormed gaps
 - Each group listed up to 10 top strategies, and the whole group voted on their top three
 - Workgroup members reviewed lists of potential focus group members and were asked to provide ideas for additional potential members
- H-GAC staff completed the Existing Conditions Report – a HUD deliverable.

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Tasks to be completed

- Coordinating Committee members should review the list of existing and plans and help identify any plans that are not included
- Coordinating Committee members should review the list of potential focus group members and provide additional potential members
- Focus groups (additional key stakeholders and technical experts who are not already engaged in the Coordinating Committee or workgroups or otherwise involved with the pan) will meet in January, February and March
 - Focus groups will discuss strategies, geographic differences and “the stories,” meaningful ideas developed from public engagement response

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9. Case Studies (Information)

Meredith Dang presented the following updates for the case studies:

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Bay City

- Project kickoff with listening sessions, open house, and joint meeting with City Council and CDC Board (November 1) to gain input and feedback on preliminary design concepts (October 31 through November 2).
- Next deliverables (around January 7) –Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan (draft for review) and Sustainability Gap Analysis-Section 1, Needs and Opportunity Assessment (draft for review).
- Advisory committee conference call – topics are Overview and discussion of the Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan; Sustainability Gap Analysis; and Section 1 (January 9).
- After the action plan and gap analysis the next step will be the vision and guiding principles and illustrative diagrams.
- Project website <http://www.northdowntownplan.com/>.

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Brazoria County

- Reviewing existing plans and studies that are related to habitat and the environmental aspects of the study area, including analysis regarding the six HUD livability principals.
- Reviewing the influence of storm surge inundation, salinity intrusion, hydrology of the Brazos River and the Brazoria County aquifers.
- Developing a natural resource inventory including the built environment and climate conditions.
- The TAC met on October 31 to discuss the project, survey, upcoming meeting, and project outcome.
- A needs assessment survey was sent out on November 28 and will remain open until February 8.
- Public meetings will be held on January 29 and 30 in Angleton (hosted by TAMU Extension Service) and Alvin (hosted by Brazoria County Precinct 3).
- The report of assessment needs should be completed by the end of February and the final report is expected to be completed by the end of March.

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Galveston

- Gathering preliminary information on the three SROI projects – (curbside recycling, complete streets, gray water re-use).
- Galveston – Stakeholder Meeting held November 13.
- Galveston – Stakeholder Advisory Meeting on January 23.

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Houston

- Reviewing information from the December 4 and 5 stakeholder an public meetings.
- Determining current and desired characteristics of small, medium, and large activity centers.
- Reviewing case studies of other applicable examples of activity centers from peer regions.
- Two meetings of the SAC, public meeting and focus groups on December 4 and 5.
- Stakeholder Advisory Meeting on January 10, Vision Workshop in Mid-February (13 and 14).

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Huntsville

- Reviewing comments from the November 2 focus groups and public meeting.
- SAC meetings in November, focus groups and public meeting November 29 and 30
- Stakeholder Advisory Meeting – Web meeting January 9

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Bayou Greenway Initiative – Houston Parks Board

- Working on public engagement strategy and existing conditions, including updating the benefits model for this bayou corridor (Cypress Creek)
- Kick-off meeting December 14 with robust stakeholder group with help of NW Chamber of Commerce.
- Stakeholder group reconvene to go over initial public engagement plan, vision, and ‘marketing’ materials (mid-January).
- Working with the individuals active in the Cypress Creek Flood Coalition

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10. Updates

Fair Housing Equity Assessment

Amy Boyers presented the Fair Housing Equity Assessment update. The fair housing advisory workgroup convened an inaugural meeting and met with the Kirwan Institute to discuss opportunity mapping. H-GAC has compiled HUD fair housing complaints; which will be reviewed as part of the FHEA. The communities in the FHEA (a HUD-required deliverable) will be a sampling of approximately 30 from across the region. The FHEA workgroup is made up for representatives from across the transect, as well as representatives from governments and universities. The workgroup will meeting in February to review preliminary results of demographic analyses.

Public Engagement

Amanda Thorin reported that round two of the public engagement is complete, and AECOM should provide a draft report before the holidays. We will also receive recommendations for the plan of action for rounds three and four. The video vignettes are almost complete and will be available for posting after the first of the year. They can be posted on YouTube and converted to any format needed for web posting.

Financial Report

Meredith Dang presented the monthly financial report, showing expenditures, balance and match and reminded Coordinating Committee members to complete their match forms and send them to Cheryl Mergo. She noted that if we don't meet the match that we committed to in the grant agreement, HUD could potentially reduce the amount of the award. She offered that H-GAC staff could meet with Coordinating Committee members to brainstorm and discuss ways of ensuring the match is met. She also thanked the Coordinating Committee members who have been turning in their match forms.

11. Other Business

No other business was brought before the committee.

12. Announcements

The overview of the MAP 21 workshop (transportation equity) will be available on the Houston Tomorrow website after the holidays.

13. Future Meeting Dates

Tuesday, February 26, 2013, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

Tuesday, April 23, 2013, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

14. Adjourn

Following a motion by Sarah Cerrone, seconded by David Crossley, the Coordinating Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:
Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC
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