

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Sustainable Communities Planning Grant**  
**Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium**  
**Tuesday, January 24, 2012 10 a.m. to Noon**  
**H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor**

**MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:**

David Crossley, Houston Tomorrow  
Ronald Drachenberg, Fort Bend County  
Joanne Ducharme, Montgomery County  
DC Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation  
Lori Feild Schwarz, City of Galveston  
Emiliano Herrera, Neighborhood Centers Inc.  
Victoria Herrin, Houston Wilderness  
Cheryl Hudec, Sam Houston State University  
Mike Kramer, City of Houston  
Christy Lambright, Harris County  
Curtis McMinn, United Way of Greater Houston  
Alexandra Nolen, UTMB  
Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future  
Jeff Taebel, Houston-Galveston Area Council  
Amanda Timm, LISC  
Monique Ward, METRO  
Joe Webb, Blueprint Houston  
Chuck Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development District  
Maggie Yancy, Greater Houston Builders Association

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

Charles Airiohuodion, Texas Department of Transportation; Miles Arena, H-GAC; Amy Boyers, H-GAC; Richard Cron, Houston Wilderness; Meredith Dang, H-GAC; Liz Drake, AECOM; Ellen Heath, AECOM; Sungmin Lee, City of Houston; Shaida Libhart, METRO; Angela Martinez, AECOM; Cheryl Mergo, H-GAC; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Diana Ponce De Leon, City of Houston; Hans-Michael Ruthe, H-GAC; Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; Janeen Spates, Harris County; Roland Strobel, H-GAC; Andrea Tantillo, H-GAC; Amanda Thorin, H-GAC; Nicholas Williams, H-GAC; Warden Wm, Harris County Precinct One; Chelsea Young, H-GAC; and Travis Young, Harris County.

**1. Regular Business – Call to Order**

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**2. Certify Quorum**

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

**3. Public Comment**

No public comments were provided.

#### 4. Approval of December 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes

**Action:** Motion made by Ron Drachenberg, seconded by Curtis McMinn, to approve the meeting minutes.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes.

#### 5. Goals and Metrics

Meredith Dang provided an update on the goals metrics development process. The Public Engagement Subcommittee met on January 12, 2012, and discussed the draft goals to be presented to the public for input. The draft goals will be used as a starting point for a dialogue with the public in upcoming public meetings. The goals are also on MindMixer. The draft goals have been e-mailed to the Coordinating Committee and members of the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect groups. Not discussed at the meeting on January 12 was the process moving forward. The draft process for moving forward with the goals is as follows:

- Draft goals approved for commenting/input purposes by the Coordinating Committee on January 12.
- Draft goals sent to workgroups for input on January 19.
- Goals are being used in the survey and public meetings through March.
- Will receive feedback from the Governmental Advisory Committee, during their meeting preliminarily scheduled for February 21.
- Feedback from workgroups, Governmental Advisory Committee and the public will be compiled and sent to the Coordinating Committee for review and revisions in March. A working group from the Coordinating Committee or H-GAC staff with guidance from the Coordinating Committee will develop the final goals based on all input received.
- The draft goals will be approved in the March Coordinating Committee meeting

##### *Discussion*

Concerned that the materials developed that aren't being used as part of the simplified goals won't get used. Is expert input really being used?

Concerns that the overall process is too fast and workgroup members feel rushed to develop goals and not really see how they relate to each other.

Need to add another month to the process to really allow the experts time to dig in and work with these goals.

Can send the Coordinating Committee and the workgroups the results of an exercise staff completed to ensure all elements of the original goals are reflected in the draft goals, along with information about what we've done so far and how we plan to build on that work.

Adding time to this process will delay other steps in the planning process, and we have a set deadline that this plan is to be completed. The whole process is going to be fast-paced, and if we add months to each step we may not have a plan at the end of two years.

We have people who want to participate. We need to communicate to our partners how they will be involved in the next steps, including further tweaking of the broad goals, developing specific metrics for meeting the goals. Past work will also inform future work.

Would like to schedule a meeting for workgroups to work on metrics. Right now we are working on matching up the draft metrics with the new draft goals. We will send this to the Coordinating Committee and the workgroups for feedback, including data sources that can be used, which direction is it suggesting, possible benchmarks. This meeting would start with everyone together and break out into non-siloed, smaller groups.

Concern that the Governmental Advisory Committee will see the goals and make changes.

The Coordinating Committee will make the final decision.

If we want to keep the workgroups engaged, we'll need to maintain transparency and the opportunity to really benefit from their engagement. We need to consider how can we have less structured meetings with the workgroups to regain credibility.

Documents will be posted online.

The process is in the wrong order. The traditional process is to have visioning, then develop goals and objectives, then strategies and then metrics and indicators.

Concerns that we are not stating equity in the goals, and we should get technical assistance from Policy Link on that.

We have scheduled a conference call with the HUD grant representative. We can find out if there's an official channel to link with capacity providers and how to link with them.

What is the group that this plan is trying to speak to? We need to have a translation of equity-based language that is palatable in a local context.

This is not going to be a plan written by experts. This group developed goals to start getting input.

With Blueprint Houston we saved every piece of paper because three years later we had a question about where one of the goals came from. It turned out it had come from one of the consultants and no one supported it.

Can we use this time to have the workgroups working on the indicators?

We are stalling out on the goals, which is just the first step in the process. We need to make sure we clearly communicate with our partners what our intent is.

If we have a joint workgroup meeting in early April, we could have final approval of the goals on the agenda for the April Coordinating Committee meeting. The timeline for having the indicators finalized would also be in April, but it may have to be in May if we break down the process into additional steps.

## **6. RTP Coordination**

Following a meeting of the Public Engagement Subcommittee and the Regional Transportation Plan subcommittee, the group agreed that the messaging may be confusing to people – particularly the omission of the word “sustainability.” The recommendation is to keep the logo the same and tweak the body of the message to refer to the plan as the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

### *Discussion:*

The press release that went out last week had to be re-written by one of the partners before that agency could forward it.

Removing “sustainability” was logo-specific and should not have extended to the body of the message.

Concern was the Coordinating Committee may not have approved all the messaging before it was distributed.

Every communication that has been distributed has been sent to the Coordinating Committee for review prior to distribution.

The Transportation Policy Council (the governing body of the MPO) is meeting and will have an agenda item on the update of the coordinated RPSD and RTP efforts.

## **7. Public Engagement**

Liz Drake from AECOM provided an update on the public engagement process.

An e-blast is scheduled to go out in the next few days. The goal of that e-blast is to link to additional documents, including the flyers and the FAQ, that committee members can download and forward and circulate to your networks.

MindMixer is up and running on the web site.

We are currently soliciting input on the goals through MindMixer, an online survey and public meetings. All of the draft goals are listed on MindMixer. The program works by having someone submit an idea and other users second it. The seconding continues, and the best ideas rise to the top. People can second their top five. We did that because people may second every goal they see, and that would not give us useful information.

Coordinating Committee members will be given the chance to complete and review the online survey before it is released to the public. The survey is based on the same idea of ranking the top five goals.

The public meeting format will be to interject more dialog than in the draft format. The draft format was vetted by the Public Engagement Subcommittee. People will dialogue in small groups within the room. All of the clusters of chairs and tables will be set up facing the stage. The draft goals are on the slides. The intent is to continue using the wireless response system so that people can select their options. Originally we identified the question as “which is the most important of the goals?” We’d like to retain that because it provides information that people are attaching to the goals. An alternative would be to show the goals separately and have people assess the goals individually – most important to least important. Another option is to better explore social equity by asking people which of the goals they thought would be the hardest to achieve. That would then set up a discussion within the smaller groups regarding identifying barriers to achieving goals.

*Discussion:*

The objectives of the meetings are to have the public shape the goals, and prioritizing draft goals is not playing a role in the development of the goals.

The slides preface the goals to explain they are draft goals developed by workgroups and that these are a starting point for dialog. In smaller groups, people will have the opportunity to discuss their own goals and add to the list.

There should be some capacity building before people are asked to select things to put the goals in context.

The agenda for the meeting is to have slides introduce the process and the goals and then have members of the public provide input on the draft goals.

Concerns that gathering a top 5 goals during the public meeting may be a mistake. Could instead considering giving a thumbs up or thumbs down to each goal because all of the goals need to be reviewed and commented on.

If scoring existing goals is a mechanism to start the conversations at the table, that’s a good thing. If scoring is to actually rank the goals, how will we rank new goals?

We will bridge the interactive goals selection to the dialog that will take place in the groupings. We will take the top goal that emerges in each category. The group would be asked to discuss what that goal means to them.

This plan is building off existing plans.

What are the options do people have who don’t understand the goal?

When people walk in the door, we are asking them to think about three words that come to mind when they hear “sustainability.”

It might be better to have something as simple as asking people what they like about their region when they walk in the door to help them engage with other people.

Facilitators for the meeting will be the consultants and sub consultants, as well as H-GAC staff and local officials. A conversation guide for the facilitators can be provided.

The intent is to tie the data back to the goals and the slides may need to be changed to reflect that.

We can use the interactive exercise to put people in the frame of mind of thinking sustainably. We can ask them to consider answering the questions as though they were their grandchild and how the goals will affect them.

We're going to spend a lot of time up front talking to people about how their local community fits into the bigger regional context for this plan. Then ask them to prioritize goals that will fit into a regional plan. How do we answer the question, "What if my community's #1 priorities isn't the top priorities the rest of the region decides on?"

The plan is going to include a menu of choices that communities can choose to implement or not as they see fit. That will reflect the diversity of priorities.

We will revisit with the same communities to look at metrics and scenarios. We will also have community meetings.

Photos could be used on the slides to make the information more relatable to the participants.

Deliverables: AECOM will revise the slides and re-distribute to the Coordinating Committee for additional review.

## 8. Center for Houston's Future Scenarios

Donna Rybiski distributed handouts for the Center for Houston's Future's "2040 Scenarios" and provided a brief overview of the project. The presentation will be re-scheduled due to time.

## 9. Updates

**Preferred Communications Methods: H-GAC received multiple requests from various Coordinating Committee members to reduce the number of 'reply alls' to emails.** Meredith Dang offered a suggestion for e-mails and replying to all. She recommended if just responding to a staff question, replying to the individual who sent the e-mail rather than replying all to avoid inundating the whole Coordinating Committee with unnecessary e-mails. For questions discussions or questions that multiple members are asking, reply all would be appropriate.

### *Discussion:*

If we don't reply to all, we need another vehicle for collaboration.

Engage site is available for collaboration.

**Financial Report:** Meredith Dang presented the financial report.

**Governmental Advisory Committee Appointments:** The Governmental Advisory Committee was ratified by the H-GAC Board of Directors at their regular meeting on December 20. Their first meeting is tentatively scheduled for after the H-GAC Board meeting on February 21.

#### **10. Other Business**

The Coordinating Committee applied for a Livability Principles Technical Assistance Grant, but we did not receive it.

#### **11. Announcements**

The Center for Houston's Future's Indicators Symposium, focusing on education, flyers are available.

We are in the public comment period for the hazard mitigation plan to reduce loss of life and loss of property after natural disasters. Public hearing will be January 31.

#### **12. Future Meeting Dates**

February 28, 2012, 10 AM  
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor  
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

March 27, 2012, 10 AM  
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor  
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

April 24, 2012, 10 AM  
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor  
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

#### **13. Adjourn**

Chuck Wemple announced that the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM

#### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:**

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC  
713-993-2443  
[meredith.dang@h-gac.com](mailto:meredith.dang@h-gac.com)