

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Wednesday, May 23, 2012 2 p.m. to 4:00 pm
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Blueprint Houston, Joe Webb and Martha Murphree
City of Houston, Mike Kramer and Amar Mohite
City of Huntsville, Chandra Steinback
Fort Bend County, Ron Drachenberg
Gulf Coast Economic Development District, Chuck Wemple
Harris County, Mayra Bontemps and Kelly Opot
H-GAC, Jeff Taebel and Cheryl Mergo
Houston Tomorrow, Jay Crossley
Houston Wilderness, Richard Cron
METRO, Monique Ward and Shaida Libhart
Montgomery County, Joanne Ducharme
NCI, Emiliano Herrera
Port of Houston Authority, Dennis Bassinger
Sam Houston State University, Cheryl Hudec
United Way of Greater Houston, Curtis McMinn and Erin Trytten

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

Amy Boyers, H-GAC; Miles Arena, H-GAC; Meredith Dang, H-GAC; Kelly Porter, H-GAC; Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; Andrea Tantillo, H-GAC; Amanda Thorin, H-GAC; and Chelsea Young, H-GAC.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Chuck Wemple, Coordinating Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.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 April 24, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Ron Drachenberg, seconded by Dennis Bassinger, to approve the meeting minutes.

Discussion

Joanne Ducharme's name is misspelled on page 5.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes pending the spelling correction.

5. Fair Housing Equity Assessment (Action)

Chuck Wemple presented the scope and timeline for the Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) and RFP for a Fair Housing Equity Consultant.

The FHEA is required by HUD as a grant deliverable. It can be part of the final plan or a stand-alone piece, but it must inform the planning effort. It will look at fair housing in the region and racially-concentrated areas of poverty and how they relate to areas of opportunity. It's going to build off recent work that's been completed, so it's not a regional Analysis of Impediments (AI). It won't replace any existing AIs, but it will build off of them and other reports.

It will be a regional assessment with local detail and applicability. We will be looking at racially-concentrated areas of poverty, fair housing complaints, and other factors at the county levels. We will also look at entitlement cities, the large cities that receive funding directly from HUD and an additional one city per county, especially in the rural areas. We'll also be working with public housing authorities.

We'll be doing some opportunity mapping to put it in a graphical context. We'll be working with the Kirwan Institute, who will hopefully be available to us at no charge as part of the technical assistance available through the overall grant.

We'll also be working with a consultant to look at best practices, considerations and data that can be provided to the local jurisdictions and also build our capacity to better understand the housing issues. We have a \$200,000 budget, with an extra \$50,000 reserved. Private agencies, non-profits and institutes of higher learning are encouraged to apply.

The proposed timeline is to release the RFP for a consultant on May 25, with a pre-proposal meeting on May 31. We would like to have a consultant selected for approval by the July Coordinating Committee meeting and bring the selection before the H-GAC Board during the August Board meeting. The scope and the RFP was developed by an ad hoc committee of the Coordinating Committee member representatives with extensive housing experience.

Discussion

When we look at affordable housing in this region we should always look at the affordability of housing and transportation. The RFP should reflect that.

That will be part of one of the opportunity indices – such as the cost of housing, the cost of transportation and the proximity to transportation.

Action: Motion made by Joe Webb, seconded by Amar Mohite, to release the RFP for a consultant to work with the Coordinating Committee to develop the FHEA.

Discussion

ULI is forming a development and housing council and can help support this project. Monique Ward will serve on that council.

Once we get more data, we want to expand the ad hoc committee to a Fair Housing Advisory Group to work with the consultant. We would open that group up to members of the ULI council and others who have an interest in this.

Action: The Coordinating Committee approved the release of the RFP.

6. Case Studies (Action)

Meredith Dang presented a proposed method and timeline for selecting case studies. The proposal follows a meeting of a working group of the Coordinating Committee on May 15.

The intent of case studies is to work with partners across the region to develop strategies to implement elements of sustainability at a more local level than the RPSD will be.

The proposed timeline is as follows:

Call for partners released May 24 through July 6

Evaluation committee to meet the weeks of July 9 and July 16

Case study partners will utilize PlanSource to procure consultants

The case study consultants to be brought before the H-GAC board in September

Case studies will kick off in October and run through April 2013

Discussion

Will there be a mechanism for getting more information from applications with poorly written or incomplete proposals since we only have two weeks for review? We don't want to dismiss a good proposal because we only have two weeks to review them.

The way the questions in the criteria are as clear as possible of what we are looking for in their response. As far as additional information or clarification, such as match, we could get that information during the two week time frame. As far as poor or not enough information, that is covered in project impact and merit. If they are unable to articulate what they want to do in a particular case study, including what the needs and benefits are, the selection committee can take that into consideration.

H-GAC has some experience with a similar project – Livable Centers Partners. We received various levels of writing, but you could still tell what the proposal was and what its merits were.

Meredith presented the criteria, as developed by the working group. The working group proposed that each of four selection criteria topics be weighted at 25 points each. They are:

- Project Impact and Merit
- Fulfilling Sustainability Goals
- Ability to Implement
- Partner Entity Information (resources and match).

Discussion

How will we grade the 6 additional points that can be given in “Fulfilling Sustainability Goals” for how well the case study will advance the intent of the goals? How will we defend the method we use for assigning these points? This is subjective.

Two possibilities would be 1) assigning 2, 4 and 6 points based on how well the proposal responds (moderately addresses the goals, fairly addresses the goals, clearly addresses the goals) or 2) tie the additional points to the goals and objectives.

We could also consider assigning 3 points if they show moderate understanding of the goal and 6 points if they show strong understanding of the goal.

Evaluator forms should help eliminate some of those ambiguities. Harris County has experience in this and can help develop evaluator forms so everyone is considering the same things, including those extra points and how we would assign them.

We can go ahead and release the call and the workgroup develop some internal processes for how we will assign these points.

We need to make sure we don't develop something after the fact that alters the intent of the published RFP.

The goals are available, but the objectives won't be ready until the June meeting. That will be well into the time this call for partners is published.

On “Partner Entity Information,” we should re-allocate the 5 points for ability to meet the timeline, because if a proposer can't meet the timeline, they should be ineligible to participate with a case study.

What do we have in place to make sure we have a comprehensive sampling across the transects for case studies?

The workplan we have with HUD is that there will be one case study per transect; but we could have one case study that covers more than one transect. We could fund the top scoring proposal within each transect. If there was a transect that got no proposals, we could fund the second highest scoring proposal across all transects. We can include this funding process in the background information for the call for partners.

Should we allow supplemental information, such as maps or exhibits to help clarify the text? We should cap the supplemental information at some point, otherwise you'll get more information than you want.

We will have up to four case studies. The budget for this is \$750,000 with a minimum of \$100,000 per case study.

Action: Motion made by Joe Webb, seconded by Chandra Steinback, to approve the case study partner criteria as proposed with the following changes:

- Specifically detail that maps or attachments can be added under section A

- Under section B, the first bullet will explain that there are 3 extra points available for a proposal that moderately demonstrates understanding of the intent of the goals and 6 extra points for a proposal that strongly demonstrates understanding of the intent of the goals.
- Under section D, the timeline will be pulled out and added to the background as one of the requirements, and the 5 points will be allocated to the third bullet – leveraging existing partnerships.
- The background will also detail that we will choose the top scoring proposals in each transect and that each case study should be a minimum of \$100,000.

The Coordinating Committee approved the release of the call for partners.

7. Public Engagement (Action)

Meredith Dang gave a brief summary on the public engagement process since AECOM provided their progress report:

- 38 community meetings through May 10
- 1,076 attendees
- 230 attendees participated in a draft goal prioritization exercise
- 365 surveys were collected

Amanda Thorin gave an overview of the proposed scope of work for the second phase of the public engagement process.

The scope was developed by the public outreach subcommittee of the Coordinating Committee. The proposed scope will run from June 1 to January 2013. The first part will be a community engagement update. We are also looking at having a one-day meeting with AECOM, including another member of AECOM's staff who has done public engagement in other regions, to look at how we are doing.

June 1 – September will be ongoing education.

We will work with Ttweak to do creative messaging and packaging. This will include videotaped interviews with people around the region. They will package vignettes that we can use in various ways throughout the process.

We are planning to go out to various fairs and festivals to talk to people about the program. We found out that during the first phase of public engagement that a lot of people won't come to us, so we are going to go to them.

The scope includes a video contest allowing residents to create home videos to be uploaded to YouTube and either judged by everyone or by a panel of judges.

MindMixer will take on a whole new look in mid-June. We won't just be talking about the goals, but we'll have broader conversations around the topics we heard during public engagement.

Community Ambassador Team training will be offered between July 15 and August 15.

During the fall we will hold a large open house event in a central location, followed up by smaller versions of the open houses around the region. We will also hold additional community meetings. MindMixer will be updated to include conversations about scenarios.

Youth engagement will include development of age-appropriate participation materials and curriculum. We have already reached out to the HISD and Cypress regarding a student-contest. We are planning to work with administrators before they leave for the summer to ensure that we can present the program to teachers when they return for the fall service days before school starts.

Discussion

I would like AECOM to provide more concrete information about how they are going to reach out and who they are going to reach out to during this phase.

If we approve the scope today, AECOM will come back with an engagement action plan where they will specify timelines, meetings, and who they are going to approach. Approving the scope does not approve an action plan, but AECOM needs the scope to develop the action plan as part of our task-based contract.

Is there a conflict with Barbara Faga? Did we consider other consultants or reach out to HUD? What are Ms. Faga's credentials?

We are not asking for a critical assessment, but rather her impression of the process based on her experience. Hopefully she will help breathe life, where needed, into the next process by looking at where we were in the past. We can continue to ask HUD for assistance with someone who can complete an outside critical analysis of the process. Ms. Faga is an avid interactive blogger. Most of the topics include sustainable development and public engagement and education. She's written books. She can be found through a Google search.

AECOM is aware that there's an expectation that Phase 2 will be effective. When we asked for messaging and a creative arm, they came back with Ttweak. Every time we have asked for something, they have come back with resources. They know they should take this opportunity to come back with a successful summer and fall plan.

What kind of meaningful contacts can we have with people at a festival? Will we have a manned booth?

A big part of these contacts will be awareness and education. We will not have more than a couple of minutes, so we are looking for a fun, interactive way to talk about the process and what they like about the region. The booth or kiosk will be staffed.

There was significant resistance at the workgroup meeting about having an open house, and it was suggested that we leave that more open on the scope. We were most successful in the Phase 1 public engagement meetings when we went where people already were.

We do have to do some large-scale public engagement and let the public come to us and participate in the process. Open house formats are largely successful. This will not be a meeting, but rather a guided exercise based on data from the scenario groups. We would also like to have activities throughout the day to attract more participation. AECOM would also like to add Roberta

Burroughs and Associates to their team to because of her success with open houses during the community meetings and her experience reaching traditionally underserved audiences.

What is our goal for the number of people that will be touched by the second phase? How does our region compare to other grantees across the country?

We can ask HUD for these numbers.

We are the largest metro area involved in a Phase I grant, so there may not be another comparable HUD grantee. But we have looked at similar projects. In Chicago, they had 52 meetings with a total of 1,500 attendees. They had 35,000 participants on the web site or their kiosk programs. If we have a good, representative sample from the region, we don't necessarily have to have a numeric goal. Maybe we could see some metrics that the Coordinating Committee comes up with for representation and absolute number.

AECOM should let us know what an appropriate number is. Our standard should be if we are not embarrassed to say "these are the people we talked to," and we are comfortable with the people in our communities who we have reached out to.

The addition of Ttweak and the addition to Roberta Burroughs and Associates will not add to the original budget. They will be part of the original budget. AECOM will supplement their team with messaging and underserved population expertise. They will continue to facilitate the general outreach to the public.

Would it be fruitful to get into corporations and visit with their employees? Have we talked to Green Houston about the Green Building Challenge?

Our web presence, both ourregion.org and mindmixer, needs to be improved. Do we have to have a password to comment on MindMixer? The consultants need to do a better job on social networking.

MindMixer is a third party software.

Action: Motion made by Joe Webb, seconded by Dennis Bassinger, to approve the public engagement phase 2 scope as proposed with the following changes:

- Add a corporate element
- Change the description of the Open House event to be a Large Event with a format to be determined
- Target numbers for participation

The Coordinating Committee approved the public engagement phase 2 scope.

8. Goals (Discussion)

Meredith Dang presented new goals and a timeline for further development of goals, metrics and objectives. The proposed timeline is as follows:

May 28 – prepare goals for the workgroup open house

May 30 – Coordinating Committee comments on draft due

June 12 – Open House

June Coordinating Committee meeting - review and consider goals, metrics and objectives for approval.

A working group met on May 10 and looked at the three new goals that came out of public engagement. The group came to a consensus.

Discussion

Places goal number goal 5 is exclusive. Can we add “social” to places goal 5?

Can we add “access” people goal 5.

“Access” is included in other goals. This goal is specifically about providing choices. We can have an objective for this goal that deals with “access.”

8.1 Existing Conditions Report

Chelsea Young presented the existing conditions report update. H-GAC staff is working on creating an existing conditions report based on “People,” “Places” and “Prosperity,” then based on the goals.

H-GAC staff e-mailed the draft People section and will finish up the rest of the sections and e-mail them to the Coordinating Committee by next Tuesday. We are looking for feedback on whether or not this is telling the right story. Comments are due by June 6. Anticipating approval for this content during the June Coordinating Committee meeting.

Discussion

We wanted to form a baseline for the region. It’s being sorted in the form of goals. Will we easily be able to see where the region is today? The demographics are so different across the transect, maybe we need to make sure we show that stark contrast. We need to show our issues where we have work to do and where we have assets that we can build on.

We see the existing conditions report as a living document. We may be able to use design to highlight the existing conditions on a deeper level.

9. Updates

Financial Report: Meredith Dang presented the financial report.

Update on Technical Assistance: We have received preliminary indication from policy link that we can get help on social equity indicators and education on social equity training.

10. Other Business and Announcements

No other business was presented.

11. Future Meeting Dates

No announcements were made.

12. Future Meeting Dates

June 26, 2012, 10 AM

H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

July 24, 2012, 10 AM

H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

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

13. Adjourn

Following a motion by Monique Ward, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, the Coordinating Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC
713-993-2443
meredith.dang@h-gac.com