

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Tuesday, June 25, 2013, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Bay City Development Corporation, D.C. Dunham
Blueprint Houston, Joe Webb and Martha Murphree
Center for Houston's Future, Nanette van Gend
Fort Bend County, Ron Drachenberg
City of Galveston, Dustin Henry
City of Houston, Mike Kramer
City of Huntsville, Sherry McKibben
Gulf Coast Economic Development District, Chuck Wemple
Houston Advanced Research Center, David Hitchcock
Harris County, Jared Briggs
Houston-Galveston Area Council, Jeff Taebel and Cheryl Mergo
Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Amanda Timm
METRO, Monique Ward and Shaida Libhart
Montgomery County, Joanne Ducharme
Neighborhood Centers, Inc., Tanya Makany-Rivera
Texas Southern University, Dr. Carol Lewis
United Way of Greater Houston, Curtis McMinn
Waller County Economic Development Partnership, Harvey Laas

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

Anita Hollman and Anna Sedillo, City of Houston; and Miles Arena, Meredith Dang, Kelly Porter, Josh Owens, Andrea Tantillo, Amanda Thorin, Bill Tobin, Chelsea Young and Travis Young, H-GAC.

1. Regular Business – Call to Order

Joe Webb, Coordinating Committee First Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. Certify Quorum

More than 51% of the member entities were present. There was a quorum of members at the meeting.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

4. Approval of April 23, 2013, Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion made by Chuck Wemple, seconded by Ron Drachenberg, to approve the meeting minutes.

Discussion: Local Initiatives Support Coalition should be changed to Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

The Coordinating Committee approved the minutes as corrected.

5. Priority Strategies

Meredith Dang reported on the progress of developing strategies for inclusion in the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. She reminded Coordinating Committee members of the tiered approach for producing the plan:

Executive summary – Designed for elected officials, this will be 4 to 5 pages including an overview of the plan and the big ideas.

Medium Length Plan – Designed for broad use, this will be 35 to 40 pages and included a more comprehensive overview of the plan, big ideas, strategies, and overviews of the case studies, FHEA and Equity Profile.

Long Plan – Designed specifically for HUD, this will be a comprehensive document including all content from the Executive Summary and Medium Length Plans, as well as all other HUD deliverables.

For the past 6 months, H-GAC staff met with Focus Groups including more than 100 community leaders across the region to discuss the 80 strategies that were developed by the Coordinating Committee and the workgroups over the past two years. Through this Focus Group effort, H-GAC staff distilled tiers of strategies.

The big ideas are core principles that will be included in each subsection of the strategy session of the Medium Length Plan. The big ideas will include information about the what, why and how of each big idea.

Priority Strategies are the strategies that emerged as the most relevant in the region through the focus group process.

Long Plan Strategies remain important but did not emerge as top priorities during the focus group process. All strategies will be included in the Long Plan.

All strategies will include:

- Ease/Difficulty rating
- Implementation information, including who could be responsible for implementation
- Examples of BMPs within the region or in other communities
- Associated goals, objectives and metrics
- Consistency with HUDs Livability Principles

The big ideas and draft strategies are presented in the framework of “What would our region need to have in 2040 to be great?”

Big Ideas:

To be a great region in 2040, we should:

- Strengthen economic opportunity through an educated and skilled workforce
- Cultivate places where people can lead healthy, active lives
- Create a world-class transportation system
- Provide a balance of housing near jobs and services
- Improve resiliency to disaster and environmental change
- Secure future water resources

Discussion:

Can you see yourself presenting the list of big ideas to your CEO?

The big ideas and the strategies generally line up with topics and issues several of the Coordinating Committee agencies have been considering the past few months, and all need to be addressed at the regional level.

Question: Will the draft go back to H-GAC committees, such as the TPC, for further review?

Answer: Pending approval, the big ideas and strategies will be the framework for the draft plan. H-GAC staff will bring the draft plan back to the Coordinating Committee review before public review.

Question: Can we replace “world-class transportation system” with a definition or planner terms that are accessible to the public?

Question: What does “create a regional transportation authority” mean? Where did it come from?

Answer: Our Region doesn’t have a mechanism for a 13-county network. This strategy is not prescriptive, but a place to start the conversation.

Question: Are these really big ideas if they are already broadly acceptable to everyone?

Answer: If they aren’t broadly acceptable, it’s hard to see them yielding a regional coalition. These are the ideas that keep coming up at meetings. If everyone is talking about them, they probably are big ideas. But the term big or great can mean different things to different people, and we can consider different phrases to describe the concept in the plan.

The what, why and how presented with the big ideas is very simple and easy to understand.

With the proper framework, this plan will not be a static document, but rather a living and changing document.

Question: Over the next month should we talk with our networks to get a feel for if we’re on the right track with these strategies?

Answer: We saw the spring focus groups as an opportunity to vet the ideas and strategies.

Generally the verbs “strengthen,” “improve” and “cultivate” are better than “create” or “develop” because they indicated that it’s something that already exists in the region and can be built upon.

We need to make sure there is adequate equity language in the strategies to include opportunities for everyone in the region. H-GAC staff can work with PolicyLink to ensure equity language is reflected in the plan.

Question: What are the next steps regarding equity inclusion in the plan?

Answer: H-GAC will give PolicyLink a short timeframe to review the draft and ensure we’ve expressed equity. If we need to include a new big idea for equity, we may need to call a meeting of the whole Coordinating Committee or the equity group for a discussion. If PolicyLink recommends adding language to the existing draft, we can circulate the new language for discussion through e-mail.

Action: Motion made by Ron Drachenberg seconded by Mike Kramer, to approve the use of the big ideas and priority strategies in the draft plan.

The Coordinating Committee approved the motion.

6. Case Studies (Presentation)

Anita Hollman, DC Dunham, Sherry McKibben, and Dustin Henry offered presentations on the case studies completed in the City of Houston, Bay City, Huntsville and Galveston, respectively. Meredith

Dang provided presentations for the case studies completed in Brazoria County and as part of the Bayou Greenway Initiative. All reports are available online at www.ourregion.org

City of Houston:

- 14,000 people responded to engagement efforts
- Vision to create urban centers where people could live, work and play
- Implementation can include developer incentives
- Develop a toolkit that can be used by other cities with similar zoning and ordinances
- Next phase includes implementation and possibly mapping and creating opt in options for areas not included in the original study area

Bay City:

- Small, rural area looking at creating walkable spaces in a primarily industrial area
- Specific 40-acre area
- Property is mostly city-owned
- Study looks at considering multi-housing in the downtown area

Huntsville:

- Study looks at how housing impedes or helps economic development
- Developed 10 priority projects, (some from existing plans and some new)
- Study includes implementation information and information about results of doing nothing
- Both the city and Walker County will adopt the plan developed as part of the study

Galveston:

- Sustainable Return on Investment Calculator to assess not only economic impacts of a project but also ecological and sustainable impacts
- Study considered gray water reuse, streetscaping and curbside recycling
- Tools are available as spreadsheets for other communities to use
- The city's comp plan also includes some of these ideas

Brazoria County:

- Study looks at current and potential park connectivity in Brazoria County
- Developed a coastal management plan
- The Brazoria County Parks Board will use the plan to decide where to purchase more parklands
- Study recommends an overall awareness campaign for increasing park usage

Bayou Greenway Initiative:

Study along the Cypress Creek Corridor

- Plan to implement the Bayou Greenway Initiative in an area with 98 MUDs
- Developed sample MOAs included in the Plan
- 18 MUDs have signed MOAs to support and participate in the initiative

7. Timeline and Next Steps (Discussion)

Meredith Dang presented the next steps. The draft plan will be ready for Coordinating Committee review and approval at the August meeting. The plan will be available online and will be released online for public comment in September. Open houses to solicit public comment will be scheduled in October. H-GAC staff will work to incorporate all comments into a final plan in November. The final plan will be ready for the Coordinating Committee to consider for approval in the December. The Governmental

Advisory Committee will hear a presentation on the plan in December. H-GAC staff will present the plan to the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval and support in January and February. The grant period ends in February.

Draft plan engagement strategy:

- Five open house-style public meetings across the region
 - Stations with the draft plan content for consideration
- Target outreach to underrepresented populations and groups
- Updated website with integrated commenting system
- Four-week public comment period

A final plan will be published online and will indicate how public feedback was incorporated.

Discussion:

Question: Will the presentations be made in other languages?

Answer: We will have Spanish and possibly Chinese translators available at the open houses and may consider having the executive summary and medium length plan drafts available in other languages.

The big ideas and the strategies generally line up with topics and issues several of the Coordinating Committee agencies have been considering the past few months, and all need to be addressed at the regional level.

The Coordinating Committee members are requested to consider helping by volunteering to man stations and for getting the word out about the meetings and online commenting to your networks.

Question: Can staff be available to give presentations to groups about the plan?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Will the draft be available for Coordinating Committee members to post on our websites?

Answer: We will be able to provide a link.

Question: Will you coordinate the public open houses with Coordinating Committee members to ensure best possible participation?

Answer: Yes. We are looking at scheduling all of the meetings in one week.

8. Post-Plan Involvement of Coordinating Committee Members (Discussion)

Chelsea Young presented a draft of conversation starters for ways the Coordinating Committee can remain involved in moving the plan forward once the grant period ends.

Ideas include:

- Aligning organizational policies with the goals, objectives and strategies of the plan (for example, the GCEDD has updated the CEDs to reflect the goals of the RPSD)
- Forming partnerships to further the goals of the RPSD
- Planning promotion and marketing, including putting links on websites and sending e-mail notices to networks
- Developing programs or supporting strategies that promote sustainability
- Capitalizing on community momentum
- Continuing the activities of the Coordinating Committee, occasionally meeting to review the plan and implementation of the strategies.

Discussion:

H-GAC should add a column to the TIP and other projects to ensure their strategies are aligned with the RPSD.

We need to engage policy makers and highlight our successes with them.

We also need to find a way to get buy-in on the plan from all of the Coordinating Committee boards.

For the Huntsville City Council, we could have a workshop to show how agencies and organizations are implementing the plan.

We could provide a list of projects that support the plan.

We should ask AECOM to provide us with some photos, graphics and presentations we can use to promote the plan?

We also need to promote the plan in the private sector.

We should continue to engage the community, and should find existing grass roots organizations to forward the messages and the plan elements.

We will meet with the Governmental Advisory Committee before we meet with the H-GAC Board regarding the plan. The tentative plan for engaging the GAC would be to provide the draft and show them how we have incorporated feedback from the Coordinating Committee and the public.

9. PolicyLink Houston-Galveston Regional Equity Profile (Discussion)

Meredith Dang discussed the Equity Profile developed for the H-GAC Region by PolicyLink and asked Coordinating Committee members to help spread the word about the availability of this profile.

Discussion

We can put links to the profile on websites.

This is a final document, so it can be distributed or presented at area Lions Club and Rotary Club meetings.

This document provides real data to support our work.

We will include a call out blurb in the medium length plan about the profile.

10. Updates

Financial Report

Meredith Dang presented the monthly financial report, showing expenditures, balance and match. She informed the Coordinating Committee that we still have \$860,200 to spend down in the grant, and we need to show \$533,281 in match during the grant period.

11. Other Business

No other business was presented.

12. Announcements

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

October 22, 10 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

14. Adjourn

Following a motion by Ron Drachenberg, the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC

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