

TRANSPORTATION AIR QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, August 04, 2021 – 10:00 A. M.
Houston-Galveston Area Council of Government Offices
Virtual Teams Meeting

MEMBER PRESENT

Fort Bend Transit – Perri D’ Armond
Baytran – Amy Skicki
TCEQ – Jamie Zech
TXDOT – Charles Airiohuodion
HARC – Meredith Jennings
Metro – Edmund Petry
Harris County Transit – Ken Fickes
H-GAC – Andrew DeCandis
H-GAC – Susan Jaworski

ALTERNATE PRESENT

City of Sugarland – Shahid Ali
Harris County Transit – Vernon Chambers
METRO – Vincent Sanders
City of Houston Planning – Peter Eccles
CenterPoint Energy – Michael Conklin
TXDOT – Jered Simpson
TXDOT – Brenda Bustillos

STAFF PRESENT

Houston-Galveston Area Council – Karen Owen
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Graciela Lubertino
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Jamila Owens
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cameron Stawicki
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Stephan Gage
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Deborah Mayfield
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Shixin Gao
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Justin Kuzila
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlene Mullins

BRIEFING

Overview

- a. The TAQ Subcommittee Members and Alternates were presented with actions items; discussion items were presented; and the meeting concluded with agency reports and member announcements.
- b. Visit <http://www.h-gac.com/taq/transportation-committees/TAC/transportation-air-quality-subcommittee/agendas.aspx> to view the meeting materials for this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

ITEM 1A. Introductions

Ken Fickes, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order members and alternates introduced themselves.

ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summaries (08-12-2020)

Meeting minutes held until the next meeting

ACTIONS ITEMS

ITEM 2A. Election of Officers (Acting Chairman Ken Fickes)

The committee members voted and approved the new TAQ officers:

TITLE	2021-22 MEMBER
Chair	Amy Skicki
Vice-Chair	Edmund Petry

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 3A. Active Transportation TIP Call for Project Recommendations (Susan Jaworski, H-GAC)

Staff discussed updating TIP Project criteria. It was identified to revise evaluation criteria as part of 2045. As well as to make the evaluation criteria conducive to active transportation projects as well as the anticipation of active transportation projects becoming eligible for CMAQ funding. It was an extremely short timeline. During this time, the Ped/Bike subcommittee made their final recommendations to the TIP subcommittee in June 2021. In turn, TIP subcommittee submitted them to the TAC and TPC in July /August 2021. In further discussion, the scoring split planning factors was 50% and Benefits Cost Analysis 50%. that at least 65% of the TASA Category 9 funds are designated solely for active transportation infrastructure projects.

As discussion continued, if the CMAQ funds are less than \$45million, than at least 15% set aside for active transportation projects. On the other hand, CMAQ funds greater than \$45million than at least 20% set aside for active transportation projects. The members were made aware that this is a unique project because the actual funds are unknown at this time. The actual planning factors themselves were updated and the benefits cost analysis was revised.

Then the next factor to be considered, in order to compare project scoring we took a hand full of projects and did a side-by-side comparison to see how they would score and across the board with the 80/20 percent they noted the stand-alone active transportation project were competitive with the projects that had only active transportation components. It was pointed out to the members that it captured what we were looking for.

Discussion continued with proposing planning factors, which includes a sliding scale of points for multiple planning factors, and it was consistent for multiple available tools. The planning factors were divided into five components. The components include connectivity, safety, equity, barrier elimination and innovation. For this, the old delay benefits template was removed, it really wasn't capturing anything to help decide to prioritize applications and the 2018 safety benefits template was recommended to be revised. The 2018 emission benefits template was recommended to be replaced with a current revised version.

Some other factors to consider, using the ACE tool will provide VMT, new bicycled commuters and pedestrian commuters as well. Also, this will help them prioritize applications they want to submit. In further discussion, it will be safety focused as well. They will submit crash data tool. The most current 5-year crash data . The prior years it was 3 years current data. Since it's GIS based the location specific crash data based on your current project year. Instead of coming up with a current average. It is going to be more Ped Bike crash only. It was pointed out that it will only include relevant information to the current area.

ITEM 3B. H-GAC Commute Solutions Program Update (Deborah Mayfield)

Deborah gave an update on how Commute Solutions help to improve air quality. In order to achieve these goals, they promote shared and active transportation which includes car sharing, biking, walking and etc. Discussion continued that this is done to reduce peak period traffic congestion and to reduce vehicle miles traveled and the main goal is to reduce air quality in our region. In further discussion the regional employer survey that was done December 7 through January 6, 2021 was completed to focus on the impact that COVID-19 had on our work sites within our region. Our H-GAC partners distributed this survey, and this gave us 237 work sites participants. This year, the goal is to get more involvement and reach more businesses.

A few events that were mentioned, Gulf Coast Regional bike month celebration. They were able to work with nine of our transportation agencies and were able to participate in several activities that took place throughout the region. It was for 2022. Also, in June they held a telework week which ran through June 21-June 25. Employers were given suggestion for new resources from the commute solutions website. It contained information for employers to build or improve their current telework program. They have developed a three series webinar; one took place on June 24 and it focused on leveraging telework during the return to the office. As well as promoting the connect smart launch in September. Later on, we will continue working on the emergency ride home expansion pilot in fall 2021.

ITEM 3C. H-GAC Regional Transportation Plan Guidance Consideration (Mike Burns & Graciela Lubertino)

Staff gave an overview of the regional transportation plan for our region that is updated every four years. In further discussion described a physically constraint program for the next twenty years. Discussion continued with TXDOT graphic showing the relationship with not only statewide plans, but the regional plans long term and short-term program document. It was mentioned that this can also be referred to as the long-range transportation plan. It was made known that most are familiar with the state ten-year unified transportation plan. Also, might be familiar with the four-year TIP plan and statewide SIP transportation plan. These are intended to describe the project pipeline.

As discussion continued the graphic is intended to show the interrelationship of our regional programming documents that describe for the public transportation task that are undertaken for the region. The regions investment that are included in the transportation improvement program are: evaluation of the transportation system or project measures and the visioning component. It was pointed out that a prerequisite for inclusion for a project in the TIP is the initial inclusion in the RTP. As well as many of the smaller studies evaluation and outreach are programmed in the UPWP and most of the need identified is carried out through the performance monitoring. Finally, the discussion of the next step would be a needs assessment phase followed by a scenario phase before finalizing the plans content and recommendation for approval and the conformity determination.

Graciela Lubertino gave an overview to the committee how conformity is a link between air quality and transportation plan because our region is in nonattainment of the ozone standard. Actually, two ozone standards for the 2008 eight-hour 75ppb, and 2015 eight-hour 70ppb. It was further discussed that non-attainment for these standards, we need to show that the emissions coming from the transportation plan are not higher than the budget established in the air quality plan to obtain the standard. The committee was informed, it is ensured that the transportation plan do not delay the attainment of the national ambient of the air quality standard. Discussion continued that U.S. is the second admitter for greenhouse gas, Texas is the first admitter for greenhouse gases. Staff pointed out the idea to start doing greenhouse gas inventory for our region. We need to be calculated for the transportation sector. In 2018, the United Nation intergovernmental panel climate change came out with a report. This report is to try to fight against climate change, support sustainable development and support efforts to eradicate poverty.

OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 4A. Agency Announcements

Andrew notified the members that they are in the process of developing a regional bus survey and have already been in contact with several businesses that have already given a lot of data. As the discussion continued anyone who has not received information was encouraged to reach out to Andrew. In closing, the members were made aware the project would be completed by the end of September.

ITEM 4B. Member Announcements

Amy Skicki gave an overview to the members that she is the new executive director of Bay Tran which is a member driven organization. They manage and transport needs of Bay Area Houston. As discussion continued, they were made aware the first in person event will be held on August 18, 2021 at the Marriott Hobby Airport. This will be a State of the Ports. Port of Galveston, Port Houston, and Freeport have confirmed. The members were notified Texas City was unavailable.

Brenda Bustillos notified the members that she is currently a Deputy Project Manager for TexSmart, and they will be supporting TDM and other agencies with in person and virtual Connect Smart events. In further discussion they are in Transportation Air Quality Subcommittee

the process of developing an app for alternate modes of travel in terms of commute solutions. The Beta app is currently being tested and hope to have a full launch in September 2021.

Next meeting: October 06, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:39 A.M.