

TRANSPORTATION AIR QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 – 10:00 A. M.
Houston- Galveston Area Council of Government
Offices Virtual Teams Meeting

MEMBER PRESENT

Port of Houston – Kenneth Gathright
Harris County Transit – Ken Fickes
Port of Houston – Kenneth Gathright
Evolve Houston – Casey Brown
Citizens Transp. – Dexter Handy
HARC – Meredith Jennings
METRO – Edmund Petry
Fort Bend County – Perri D’ Armond
H-GAC – Andrew DeCandis
City of Houston – Traci Donatto
CTC – Carol Caul
TCEQ – Jamie Zech
Baytran – Amy Skicki
University of Houston – Bruce Race
City of Houston – Brandon Mosley
The Woodlands Township – Ruthanne Haut

ALTERNATE PRESENT

Air Alliance – Harrison Humphreys
TSU Center for Transportation – Gwendolyn Goodwin
University of Houston – Bruce Race
METRO – Vincent Sanders CEER – Stefania Tomaskovic
Harris County Transit – Thien Cao TXDOT – Charles
Airiohudion TXDOT – Jason Hightower
The Woodlands Township – Nicole Mathews

OTHERS PRESENT

CEER – Paolo Guarano

STAFF PRESENT

Houston-Galveston Area Council – Karen Owen
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carrie Evans
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Allie Isbell
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Shamala Scott
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlene Mullins
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Craig Raborn
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Lucinda Martinez
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Sydney Ligons
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Qun Zhao
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Chris Whaley
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Veronica Waller
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Ben Finley
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Pharr Andrews
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Gloria Brown
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Caroline Bailey
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Adam Beckom
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Carlos Lugo

BRIEFING

Overview

- a. The TAQ Subcommittee Members and Alternates were presented with no action’s items; discussion items were presented; and the meeting concluded with agency reports and no 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

Harrison Humphreys called the meeting to order members and alternates introduced themselves.

ITEM 1B. Approval of Meeting Summary (6-21-2023)

Meeting Summary approved.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 2A. None

DISCUSSION

ITEM 3A. Conformity Update (Andrew DeCandis, H-GAC)

Andrew gave an update to the members on air quality conformity. Discussion continued with our previous air quality and conformity expired on August 2. Our conformity and Regional Transportation Planning (RTP) were not approved by federal highway administration. Instead, FHWA, initiated conformity lapse grace period. This allows projects in the current TIP and RTP to advance, but no amendments to documents are allowed currently. It was further discussed that we will continue to work on conformity, and we have met all deadlines. As well as responded to all comments.

Finally, we are waiting for our draft concurrence letter from TxDOT and further comments from FHWA. Staff noted areas have a one-year grace period before lapse begins. During twelve months grace period, only transportation projects in the most recent conformity RTP and TIP can be funded or approved. Stronger restrictions on projects imposed during a conformity lapse.

ITEM 3B. Travel Demand Management Workgroup Update (Andrew DeCandis, H-GAC)

Staff gave the members an overview for the workgroup that is comprised of three different subcommittees: Transportation Air Quality (TAQ), Pedestrian Bicyclist Subcommittee, and Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee. Discussion continued that the purpose is to shift travel behavior to help better utilize our transportation network. The goal is to learn best practices, facilitate coordination among stakeholders, and help guide the TDM efforts of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), both in planning and projects. Andrew DeCandis and Jamila Owens co-staff this workgroup. First meeting was held on August 29th. The next meeting will be December 12th at 1p.m. Additional members are welcome to join.

ITEM 3C. Carbon Reduction Program (Adam Beckom, H-GAC)

Adam Beckom gave an overview on Carbon Reduction which was created through infrastructure investment and jobs ACT. They help to provide funding for projects that reduce carbon dioxide emissions from on road resources. Discussion continued that the funds allocated was approximately 6.4 billion for FY 2022 through FY 2026. Staff mentioned the funds will be made available through TPC for selection of projects through our region. Finally, the carbon reduction program also requires the state to develop a carbon reduction strategy in consultation with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. This will help to reduce traffic congestion and promote vehicles and modes of travel and assist construction of transportation.

ITEM 3D. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update (Pharr Andrews, H-GAC)

Pharr Andrews gave an update to the members on climate pollution reduction act program some of the benefits of the program and how the region can benefit from implementing this program. Discussion continued with the primary goal for this program is to reduce greenhouse gases while supporting the creation of jobs, delivering cleaner air, and

lowering energy costs for families. As well as looking into emissions produced from buildings and energy production industry, agriculture, and waste. The program will be implemented in two phases by the EPA. There are many benefits to incorporating this program in our region. It was further discussed this program will strengthen regional collaborations and help build a platform to have conversations about climate related issues. Also, we can accelerate existing planning efforts by mirroring strategies in this planning process.

In closing, the end is to get ahead so these projects will help to build resiliency in our workforce development and stimulate the economy.

OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 4A. Agency Announcements

- None

ITEM 4B. Member s Announcements

- None

Next meeting: December 06, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 A.M.