

## Appendix 15

Interagency Conformity Consultation  
Committee

# **Conformity Conference Call 12/6/06**

## **Meeting Summary**

### **1. Participants**

Catarina Cron (Harris County), Charles Airiohuodion (TxDOT), , Dmitry Messen (H-GAC), Chris VanSlyke (H-GAC), Beth Webster (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Michael Onuogu (H-GAC), Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC).

Via Phone: Jose Campos (FHWA), Edmund Petry (METRO), Edie Lowery (METRO), Dennis Perkinson (TTI), Peggy Wade (EPA), Paul Tiley (TxDOT), Emily Barrett (TCEQ), Margie McAllister (TCEQ), Kim S (METRO)

### **2. H-GAC PRE-ANALYSIS CONSENSUS TEMPLATE**

Dr. Graciela Lubertino reviewed the document titled “HGAC Pre-Analysis Consensus Template.” The following are questions/corrections that arose during this review.

Page 1, Demographics: H-GAC is using an in-house developed model for the regional econometric forecast instead of using the REMI model.

Page 3, The motor vehicle emission budgets were wrong, here is the correction: VOC: 89.99 tpd, NOx: 186.13 tpd

Page 6, under Project Listing, FHWA asked to divide the list of adding capacity projects into their respective years. Idem for CMAQ, non-federal and exempt projects.

### **3. DEMOGRAPHIC MODELING**

Dr. Dmitry Messen of H-GAC provided a summary of the demographic modeling.

H-GAC uses two modeling sources for these forecasts. The first is an in house developed regional econometric model. This model considers the economic interaction between the region as a whole and the rest of the nation. This model also looks at how each county’s demographic profile will change with time. This model was used to develop forecasts of county-level growth in population, employment, and households. The second source is the UrbanSim model, developed at the University of Washington. This model is designed to help metropolitan areas study interactions between land use and the transportation

network. UrbanSim was used to allocate the county-level results to smaller units of geography.

The most recent demographic forecasts were prepared in February 2006. The forecast covers the eight-county nonattainment area. The horizon year of the forecast is 2035.

The Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area is expected to add an additional 3.5 million residents by the year 2035 (Table 1). Approximately 2 million of those additions will be in Harris County. Fort Bend and Montgomery will be the fastest growing counties in the region.

**Table 1:** Forecasted Growth

	Households	Jobs	Population
2005-2035	1.4	1.5	3.5

*Note: Results are in millions*

There were no issues raised with the demographic modeling performed for the conformity.

#### **4. METRO's Questions**

METRO had several questions regarding the projects that can move forward during a conformity freeze and a conformity lapse. The committee had agreed to address these questions on a separate phone call between METRO, FHWA, FTA and H-GAC.

#### **5. Discussion**

It was agreed that this meeting signified the beginning of the conformity analysis, as the travel demand modeling and the emission factor development had started.

Next meeting: Travel Demand Modeling, Regional Significant Projects and preliminary AQ results (if possible)

## **Conformity Conference Call -1/03/07- METRO/FHWA/FTA/H-GAC Summary**

**People attending the call:** Jose Campos (FHWA), Edie Lowery (METRO), Edmund Petry (METRO), Peggy Christ (FTA), John Sweek (FTA), Bryan Jackson (FTA), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC)

This conformity conference call was to address METRO's questions in regards of what projects could move forward in the event of a conformity freeze and or lapse.

It was stated by FHWA and FTA that:

- During a freeze all the projects that are on the first 3 years of the TIP can go forward (start or continue), four year TIP issues are not resolved yet. Grant modifications can be made in order to fund projects on the TIP in the full funding grant agreement (money can be added but the scope of the projects can not change). Regional significant local projects are never eligible for reimbursement, but they can proceed. In a freeze the TIP/plan and conformity are still in place, the timing is important if you are in the third year of the TIP. Letters of no prejudice are okay during a freeze. Cannot use local projects to match federal project funding.
- During a lapse the TIP/plan and conformity are lapsed, only exempt projects on the TIP (not a new list) can go forward and TCMs in an approved SIP. Letters of no prejudice are not useful during a lapse. Regionally significant locally-funded projects could be challenged if continued. Regionally significant locally-funded projects cannot connect to federally funded infrastructure. Bus projects can proceed if they are exempt. The exempt projects that can proceed are the ones in the "exempt TIP", which needs to be created for the lapse period, the approval process is same as the regular TIP. Exemptions could include bus/fleet purchases; not construction. Cannot use local projects to match federal project funding.
- A freeze will happen first and we will have time to prepare for a lapse.

## **Conformity Conference Call 2/1/07 Meeting Summary**

### **6. Participants**

Charles Airiohuodion (TxDOT), Chris VanSlyke (H-GAC), Beth Webster (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Michael Onuogu (H-GAC), Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC)

Via Phone: Jose Campos (FHWA), Edmund Petry (METRO), Rhonda Boyer (METRO), Dennis Perkinson (TTI), Peggy Wade (EPA), Paul Tiley (TxDOT), Kim Slaughter (METRO), Vijay Mahal (METRO), Roben Armstrong (METRO), Mark Hodges (TxDOT), Koy Howard (TCEQ), Brandon Smith (TCEQ)

### **7. OVERVIEW OF H-GAC TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING**

Mr. VanSlyke expressed that the 2035 networks were done, and that his team is QA/QC the networks. He also expressed that METRO and TxDOT will have the chance to check the networks. The networks will be delivered to the Air Quality Team in a couple of weeks.

### **8. Timeline**

Dr. Lubertino went over the timeline which will most likely be shifted by a couple of weeks since the Air Quality group will not have the networks available for processing at the beginning of February. Since the networks will instead be available some weeks later, it may not be possible to reach the end of the process by the June deadline. In that case, H-GAC has started the process of complying with SAFETEA-LU by doing the RTP, TIP and current conformity which will be required starting on 1 July.

### **9. Book-keeping**

Dr. Lubertino went over the corrections done on the Pre-Analysis Consensus Template due to the discussions from the previous conference call.

### **10. Regional Significant Projects**

Dr. Lubertino presented the definitions for these types of projects and it was agreed to continue the discussion during the next conference call.

### **11. Discussion**

A discussion arose due to the fact that there is no need to conform to the ROP/RFP budgets since there are no budgets for the 2009 attainment year. For 2007 there is an ROP/RFP budget; however there is no need to conform to that since the ROP/RFP budget is much higher than the 2007 attainment demonstration budget, and also its calculation is not as accurate.

Next meeting: Regional Significant Projects

## **Conformity Conference Call 2/13/07 Meeting Summary**

### **12. Participants**

Charles Airiohuodion (TxDOT), Chris VanSlyke (H-GAC), Beth Webster (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Michael Onuogu (H-GAC), Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC), Lynn Spencer (H-GAC), Michael Onuogu (H-GAC)

Via Phone: Jose Campos (FHWA), Edmund Petry (METRO), Dennis Perkinson (TTI), Peggy Wade (EPA), Paul Tiley (TxDOT), Chris Kite (TCEQ), Peggy Thurin (TxDOT), John Sweek, (FTA), Mark Hodges (TxDOT), Koy Howard (TCEQ), Brandon Smith (TCEQ), Mary McGarryBarber (TCEQ)

### **13. Regional Significant Projects**

An analysis was made of every point of the document, and it was agreed that the MPO will further circulate this document internally. Due to this recirculation, the document was modified as is in the attachment.

### **14. Discussion on oxygenate fuel parameters to use in RFG**

Currently for 2007 the oxygenate in use for the Houston region is ethanol, an according to TCEQ (Guy Hoffman) the RVP is 6.8. Please read email below:

Graciela,

On the RVP issue with RFG, the refiners produce a "sub"-RVP RFG gasoline for ethanol blending in order to meet the 6.8psi requirements for summer blend RFG. Although EPA does allow a 1psi waiver for ethanol blended gasoline, the waiver does not apply to RFG areas. In addition, Texas rules do not allow any waivers for exceeding RVP requirements.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks,  
Guy Hoffman  
(512) 239-6338

The use of ethanol as the oxygenate with the RVP of 6.8 will lower the VOC emissions. But since 2007 is still consider a future year because its fuel properties have not been published yet by EPA, then TCEQ requested to model reformulated gasoline using the performance standard or higher.

Then, according to this discussion it was agreed that 2007 and all the other future years will be modeled using MTBE as the oxygenate using the RVP of 6.8.

Next meeting: Regional Significant Projects  
Air quality results

## Conformity Conference Call 4/5/07 Meeting Summary

### 15. Participants

Charles Airiohuodion (TxDOT), Chris VanSlyke (H-GAC), Beth Webster (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Michael Onuogu (H-GAC), Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC), Kari Hackett (H-GAC), Alan Clark (H-GAC)

Via Phone: Jose Campos (FHWA), Dennis Perkinson (TTI), Peggy Wade (EPA), John Sweek, (FTA), Mark Hodges (TxDOT), Margie McCallister (TCEQ), Karl Pepple (City of Houston), Jackie Ploch (TxDOT), Rhonda Boyer (METRO), Robin Armstrong (METRO)

### 16. PRELIMINARY AIR QUALITY RESULTS

Dr. Lubertino started the presentation showing the air quality preliminary results, which are shown in the table below:

Year	NOx (tpd)	VOC (tpd)	VMT (miles)
Budget	186.13	89.99	
2007	175.58	92.54	138,881,743.2
2009	146.48	81.31	145,828,483.5
2019			
2025			
2035			

She indicated that for the year 2007, VOCs are over the budget by approximately 2.5 tpd. The year 2009 does not show a problem, since both VOCs and NOx are under the budget. Other calculations were made to try to see if the 2007 VOC emissions could be reduced. One of these calculations was the use of a reduced waiver rate which applies for the vehicles that don't pass the inspection and maintenance program but they are still in use as waivers. The waiver rate used for these calculations was 0.155% which was the average waiver rate in the Houston-Galveston area for the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006, instead of the 3% used by default. The use of this waiver rate gave a reduction of 0.26 tpd in VOC emissions and of 0.25 tpd in NOx emissions. Other calculation that we tried was to use ethanol as the oxygenate for RFG instead of MTBE, we used it in conjunction with RVP of 6.8 psi, which represented a reduction of 0.65 tpd in VOC emissions. H-GAC is requesting to be able to use ethanol as the oxygenate with an RVP of 6.8 for the year 2007, for all the other future years MTBE could be used. Also, another calculation was done using 50% ethanol and 50% MTBE as the oxygenates for the year 2007, which gave a reduction of 0.25 tpd in VOC emissions. This last calculation was done in case H-GAC could reach a compromise with TCEQ regarding the use of ethanol as the oxygenate. Anyway,

none of these calculations give H-GAC the emission reductions that are needed in order to conform for 2007. The VMEPs represent only approximately 0.6 tpd for VOC emissions reductions.

Then, it was discussed if there was any possibility not to calculate 2007, but in order to do it the conformity determination needs to be submitted on January 2008 which will create a problem for FHWA on the conformity of the STIP.

## **17.Regional Significant Projects**

Please refer to the attached regional significant project documentation.

Next meeting: Air quality results  
Regional Significant Projects  
Revised timeline

# Conformity Conference Call 4/25/07

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Participants

Charles Airiohuodion (TxDOT), Chris VanSlyke (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC)

Via Phone: Jose Campos (FHWA), Dennis Perkinson (TTI), Peggy Wade (EPA), Mark Hodges (TxDOT), Margie McCallister (TCEQ), Karl Pepple (City of Houston), Rhonda Boyer (METRO), Robin Armstrong (METRO)

### 2. PRELIMINARY AIR QUALITY RESULTS

Dr. Lubertino started the presentation showing the air quality preliminary results, which are shown in the table below:

Year	NOx (tpd)	VOC (tpd)	VMT (miles)
Budget	186.13	89.99	
2007	171.35	88.09	133,887,822.8
2009	150.51	80.56	147,063,386.3
2019	49.59	45.99	185,972,898.7
2025	39.25	42.14	212,208,041.4
2035	40.27	48.14	242,688,307.6

She indicated that since the error in the networks were fixed, the NOx and VOC emissions are under the budget and H-GAC can pass conformity without problems. Then, Chris Van Slyke clarified that it was not a network error, but it was a model set up error because the wrong production rates for trip generation were used. Also, he clarified that the HPMS factor used for this conformity was 1.00, this calculation was done by Andy Mullins from Parsons Brinckerhoff using the data provided by TTI for the calculation, and the seasonal adjustment factor used was 0.95942 (this calculation was done by TTI). Also, Graciela Lubertino indicated that these air quality results have already been adjusted for idling, air conditioning, TxLED and motorcycle rule. The VMEPs and TCMs will be documented in the conformity documentation, but there is no need to apply them since the 2007 year is much below the budget. The CCC agreed with that.

### 3. Regional Significant Projects

There was a discussion on points 1e and 1f. Please refer to the attached regional significant project documentation for final agreement.

### 4. Revised Time-line

Dr. Lubertino showed the revised time-line (please refer to attached document),

and she indicated that at this moment H-GAC has finished with all the calculations, will finish with the documentation by the middle of May, the comment period will be from the beginning of June until the beginning of July, and it will go for TPC approval by the end of August. CCC agreed with the time-line.

## **5. General Discussion**

Chris Van Slyke indicated that he will submit shape files with the project listing and link listing, and that the project listing will have potential letting date and completion date.

Shelley Whitworth mentioned that H-GAC is planning a conformity workshop by the end of May in the evening, and it is planning to invite state and federal agencies to participate. Peggy Wade and Jose Campos indicated that they are available.

## Conformity Conference Call 7/27/07 Meeting Summary

### 18. Participants

Charles Airiohuodion (TxDOT), Chris VanSlyke (H-GAC), Beth Webster (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC), Kari Hackett (H-GAC), Tonya Winkler (H-GAC)

Via Phone: Jose Campos (FHWA), Dennis Perkinson (TTI), Peggy Thurin (TxDOT), Theo Costa (TCEQ), Jackie Ploch (TxDOT), Robin Armstrong (METRO), Paul Tiley (TxDOT)

### 19. Air Quality Revisions due to project changes

During the conference call it was discussed the following:

1) The omission in our modeling network of the widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes on BW 8 from 59 to 288 (MPOID: 13657). This project was described correctly in our project listing for conformity.

2) Plus the change due to TXDOT request of:

The widening from 10 lanes to 12 lanes on 290 from Senate to Eldridge (MPOID: 11576, CSJ: 0050-08-086). This project was described correctly in the environmental section of the TIP and in the project listing for conformity.

These 2 projects will affect the calculations for 2019, 2025 and 2035 for which we have re-done the air quality calculations. The results and their difference with the previous calculations are following:

Year		Old Results	New Results	Budget
2019	NOx (tpd)	51.89	51.90	186.13
	VOC (tpd)	46.14	46.16	89.99
	VMT	185,972,898.7	186,549,856.4	
2025	NOX (tpd)	40.70	40.79	186.13
	VOC (tpd)	42.36	42.42	89.99
	VMT	212,208,041.4	212,570,201.6	
2035	NOX (tpd)	43.71	44.40	186.13
	VOC (tpd)	50.90	51.72	89.99
	VMT	256,612,727	260,976,886.2	

Please notice that these numbers have not been adjusted for idling, air conditioning and TxLED.

Since the US 290 project description provided in the 2035 RTP indicated the construction of 10 main lanes and 2 auxiliary lanes while the revision proposes the construction of 12 main lanes (and no auxiliary lanes?). This change while likely not significant with respect to conformity is a change to the RTP that would normally require public involvement (i.e., a change in project scope).

FHWA believes that additional consideration/discussion concerning how to process this change is warranted (i.e., process as a change now prior to Policy Committee adoption of the RTP, TIP and Conformity Determination or process as an amendment to the RTP, TIP and Conformity Determination after adoption by the Policy Committee and action by FHWA/FTA).

The conformity documentation will be changed to reflect the changes in the air quality modeling calculations and modeling network.