

Meeting Summary
H-GAC REGIONAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

April 16, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Penny Goode (Brazoria County); Michael D. Talbott (Harris County); Andrew Isbell (Walker County); Kevin Byal (Baytown); Carole Ellinger (City of Houston); Scott Elmer (City of Missouri City); Sara Metzger (City of Pasadena); Ed Kharbat (Conroe); Steve Stacy (Huntsville)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sandra Vrablec (Austin County); Sidney Lewis (Chambers County); Mark Vogler (Fort Bend County); Mike Fitzgerald (Galveston County); Ed Schulze (Matagorda County); Mark J. Mooney (Montgomery County); Monica Martin (Wharton County); Dale Rudick (City of Sugar Land); Cathy Dominguez (Brazos River Authority); Mark Jordan (Lower Colorado River Authority); Reed Eichelberger (San Jacinto River Authority); Doug Kneupper (Pearland) ; Daniel Wong (Sugar Land)

VACANCIES: Colorado County; Liberty County; Waller County; Galveston; Trinity River Authority; Lower Neches Valley Authority

H-GAC STAFF PRESENT: Carl Masterson; Rachel Powers; Jeff Taebel; Robert LaBarbera

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Grounds (Grounds Anderson); Shashi Kumar (Sugar Land); Juling Bao (Fort Bend County); Amber Knapp (Huntsville); Daya Dayananda (Pasadena);Debbie Cahoon (Texas Water Development Board)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m. Jeff Taebel welcomed the Council, followed by self-introductions.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MEETING SUMMARY

There was no quorum, so the January Meeting Report was not considered.

PRESENTATION ON THE VARIOUS FACETS OF THE GIS PORTION OF THE H-GAC WEBSITE

Robert La Barbera, the Data Services GIS Program Manager at H-GAC, led this discussion about H-GAC services and products including GIS training, aerial imagery, the Gulf Coast LiDAR dataset, and a few GIS data sets that end-users can download for free.

The Data Services Program serves internal H-GAC staff, H-GAC member organizations, and the public. The program focuses on the provision of data, as opposed to the generation of maps (although they can do that, too). Robert brought up the H-GAC website onto the screen and went to the Regional Data & GIS Services page (www.h-gac.com/rds/) and then to the GIS products page (www.h-gac.com/rds/gis/default.aspx). He then reviewed the five categories of information described on the page: Aerial Imagery, STAR*Map, GIS Data Clearinghouse, LiDAR, and GIS Training. There is also a general overview of GIS on the page.

Q: Why are only some of the counties included in the STAR*Map transportation layer (Matagorda, Colorado, Walker Counties are not included)?

A: H-GAC is working to develop this data, although it is not yet complete.

Q: What can we do to facilitate this task?

A: Attend the Geographic Data Committee (GDC) meetings. The GDC identifies needs of the region and collects data from other organizations.

Q: Walker County has provided 911 data. Is that being incorporated?

A: Yes. H-GAC is working to incorporate it and the other 911 counties.

Q: Is money needed?

A: Just time. H-GAC is incorporating the 911 counties. Furthermore, STAR*Map is being incorporated into the statewide 911 system.

Q: Can agencies that are contributing data get STAR*Map data without paying the \$2500 fee?

A: I can't answer that right now. Let me get back to you. I'd be happy to come back and talk to this group more about this policy at a later time.

Q: What counties are included in the LiDAR data?

A: The coastal counties: Matagorda, Brazoria, Harris, Galveston, and Chambers.

Q: What would we need to do to expand the aerial and LiDAR coverage? That has been a question of this council for a while.

A: Through the GDC and other means, H-GAC coordinates cost-share acquisition of this data and oblique images from Pictometry. No new areas will be flown over for the current round of aerial or LiDAR, although agencies can buy in to the current round. This data was funded entirely by government agencies without grant funding.

Q: When is the next opportunity for governments to join in and expand the coverage?

A: Aerial images should be flown again in about 1 ½ years; it will be important to attend the GDC meetings in Jan/Feb of 2009 to participate in the next round. LiDAR may not be flown again for several years, as Harris County Flood Control District anticipates limited need to evaluate changes in land elevations (the land isn't moving much).

Q: Does anyone know of any grant funding for this?

A: H-GAC and others have looked extensively, but no grant sources have been found. (*Note: Later in the meeting, the Water Development Board was identified as a potential funding source.*)

Q: Is there still a fee to join the GDC?

A: Yes, \$1000 annually.

Q: How do you get around the Open Records Act, since the fees that can be charged for open records requests would not cover the participation cost?

A: I don't know.

Q: Do you have school district information for the region?

A: Yes, school districts in the statewide set of data, and individual school locations for the region.

Q: What facilities for training are available? I find it astounding that I have to send my staff to San Antonio or San Diego to get training, when we are in the third largest city in the country.

A: H-GAC has a 12-seat training room and offers training in the spring and fall, and more often as required.

Q: Is training restricted to GDC members?

A: Priority is given to H-GAC staff, GDC members, and then the public.

Comment: Please consider adding a level of priority for H-GAC member organization.

Q: How do we keep up-to-date on trainings that are available?

A: Attend the GDC meetings or check this website.

REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE RE: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The committee has met and decided to create a handbook & electronic document to address regulations, planning, mitigation, and funding. It is to serve as a reference book and a guideline for best management practices. A mock-up of a Flood Management Handbook for Local Governments of the H-GAC Region and a timeline for development were presented. The goal is to finish the handbook and provide a ½ day workshop to introduce it by the end of the year.

Q: Who is on the subcommittee?

A: John Grounds (Grounds Anderson); Shashi Kumar (Sugar Land); Scott Elmer (City of Missouri City); Burton Johnson (HCFCD); Penny Goode (Brazoria County); Debbie Cahoon (TWDB); Andrew Isbell (Walker County).

Q: How will the draft materials be percolated up to the committee?

A: Drafts of each chapter will be provided by e-mail to committee members for comments. Comments will be tracked and incorporated as appropriate. Comments and changes will be provided to the committee as part of the process.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION BY MEMBERS

John Grounds introduced Debbie Cahoon, the state's National Flood Insurance Program representative for the Houston area from the Texas Water Development Board.

Q: Would acquisition of LiDAR or other data be eligible for grant funding from WDB?

A: Possibly. The recent reorganization of statewide coordination of the NFIP may make money available. Debbie will find out more.

C: H-GAC would be available to consider coordinating a regional application for WDB funds.

Q: Could TWB provide a presentation to the committee regarding the program?

A: Yes.

Q: When will HCFCD be pursuing a new set of LiDAR data?

A: It may be a while. HCFCD paid about 90%, or about \$1.9 million, for the latest acquisition. It may be five or more years.

Q: Is LiDAR available through open records request?

A: Yes, I think so.

Q: Is anyone going through remapping or have an update?

A: Juling Bao (Fort Bend County) expects maps in June 2008. Everything has been done except the Brazos River.

A: Brazoria County is still working on the coastal part, which will be submitted to Baker in June. From then until maybe December, small areas will be looked at. The preliminary map should be ready in January 2009.

A: Walker County is spending about \$350,000. The map is scheduled for completion by the end of 2008. Street centerline data will be correlated to FEMA data and USGS 10-foot contours. There is a disagreement regarding different sources of base map data.

Q: Is Baker doing both the study/mapping and the QAQC?

A: Yes, although they are different offices.

Q: Is anyone getting any detailed studies?

A: Sugar Land and Fort Bend County joined together to fund LiDAR acquisition (~\$1.3 million) so that special studies could be done of the two flooding streams: Oyster Creek and Brazos River in Fort Bend County.

Comment: The remapping is costing almost exactly the same that LiDAR and processing would have taken. Unfortunately, we're getting the remapping without the updated data.

Q: City of Houston is working on a mobility plan and recently announced a drainage plan. Can Carole Ellinger provide more information?

A: The mobility has been underway for a while. The drainage plan is actually a drainage planning tool to be used to prioritize capital improvements on an annual basis. A call for consultants is being developed. The previous 'plan' was actually a list of deficiencies.

Comment: Fort Bend is working on a similar project with Sugar land and is doing a presentation next week.

Comment: Perhaps Fort Bend could provide that presentation to this group.

OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Texas Floodplain Administrator's Spring Conference will be from April 19 to May 2.

Q: Are there representatives on this Council from all the counties and river authorities?

A: Yes. There are vacancies from Colorado County, Liberty County, Waller County, City of Galveston, Trinity River Authority, Lower Neches Valley Authority, and one at-large appointment.

The Texas Quick Guide is now on the [TFMA website](#).

NEXT MEETING DATE

Next meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2008.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:10 PM.