

TRANSPORTATION AIR QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, May 14, 2019 – 9:30 A.M.

Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments

3555 Timmons Lane 2nd Floor, Conference Room A, Houston, Tx 77027

MEMBER PRESENT

Harris County – Ken Fickes, CCTM
METRO – David McMaster
TCEQ – Jamie Zech
The Woodlands Township – Todd Stephens
H-GAC – Clint McManus
H-GAC – Andrew DeCandis

ALTERNATE PRESENT

TxDOT-Houston – Brenda Bustillos
METRO – Edmund Petry
Air Alliance Houston – Harrison Humphreys

STAFF PRESENT

Houston-Galveston Area Council – Cassandra Marshall
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Brittany Flowers
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Alan Rodenstein

BRIEFING

Overview

- a. The TAQ Subcommittee Members and Alternates were presented with action items; a series of information items were delivered; 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.

ITEM 1. Call to Order

Member introductions.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 2A. Approval of Meeting Summary

Chairman Ken Fickes entertained a motion to pass the TAQ Subcommittee Meeting Summary for October 9, 2018.
Meeting summary approved

ITEM 2B. Election of Officers

There were not enough members present to meet quorum. Will defer until the next meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM 3A. Air Quality Background for the Houston- Galveston-Brazoria Nonattainment Area (Andrew DeCandis)

Andrew discussed on the Ozone issues that are related to the National Ambient Air Quality standards which are defined by the Clean Air Act. These are the bases for all air quality rules when the Clean Air Act was created back in 1970 Congress defined national air quality standards.

There are six criteria pollutants:

- Ozone-particulate matter
- Carbon Monoxide
- Lead
- Sulfur Dioxide
- Nitrogen Dioxide
- Ozone

The Houston-Galveston-Brazoria region has been in nonattainment for ozone since the standard has been in place. In the region, our issues are ozone related. The Clean Air Act defines a process for nonattainment regions to meet the standards. The process is called the State Implementation Plan (SIP). With the assistance of regional and local governments TCEQ develops a plan that shows the region will reduce emissions and eventually attain the standard. Regions are classified based on severity of nonattainment. Ranging from marginal to extreme. Deadlines are set to meet standards based on the severity. Actions are taken with regions who do not comply with reducing emissions.

At present, there are two different standards that the region does not attain:

1. *2008 Standard: 75 parts per billion (ppb) standard.* We were initially classified as marginal nonattainment but were not able to meet the standard by the 2014 attainment date. Reclassified to moderate. Unable to meet. Now, we will be reclassified as severe, likely sometime this summer.
2. *2015 Standard: 70ppb standard.* Currently, classified as marginal nonattainment with a 2021 deadline attainment date.

Based on the regional air quality trends, for the last twenty years, our region has been showing progress towards improving air quality. Most of emissions are made of NOx and Voc's, which is combined to make ozone. Specifically, our region tries to reduce NOx emissions.

ITEM 3B. Implementing Commuter Transit in the Houston Galveston Region (Alan Rodenstein)

Alan Rodenstein presented on commuter transit through CMAQ and other means. How commuter bus service has evolved. The changes to enhance services and the results of the changes. Also, the next steps to follow. The 2045 projected travel graph indicated how things will look this year.

Metro and Regional Transit Systems are comprised of, nine total transit providers, six now provide commuter bus/park and ride, and regional transit is non-metro. The commuter bus service route is flexible transit mode at relatively low cost. In Houston, commuter bus benefits by extensive barrier separated Hov vs Hot network. It will work best for areas of moderate suburban demand and high suburban demand. People will ride commuter transit, it is viewed positively by non-dependent riders.

Houston commuter bus service began forty years ago in 1978. It expanded rapidly in the 1980's and 1990's. The transit service grew even more in 2000 to 2013 then slowed down. Mainly, due to the distant areas served by regional providers between Beltway 8 and Grand Parkway. Also, the migration of large employers to suburban job centers within the last five years. Recently, commuter bus service added Conroe back in the region.

Under the guidelines of the CMAQ program, Houston Galveston Area Council served as local government with pilot programs since 1999. It was heavily used for regional commuter bus service in the last 15 years. As a non-attainment area, it needs to reduce NOx emissions. Some key problems were mentioned, for regional population growing rapidly and outward. Need to expand issues with growth, no commuter bus expansion in fastest growing areas. The region is falling further behind in transit commuter share. No congestion mitigation and air quality (CMAQ) program funding can be used. There is very little state and local funding that can be accessed. To generate applications, HGAC must work closely with transit agencies and municipalities. Also, develop forward looking concepts in CMAQ and increase revenue by developing outreach and preapplication meetings. Each situation is different, most involve CMAQ funding. All involve coordination with H-GAC and transit providers. Many are innovative and all meet regional needs. The emphasis is on more distant transit services within 25 miles or more.

The demand for commuter bus service is exploding. Conroe entered an intergovernmental agreement with Metro that was implemented on April 1. The Woodlands energy corridor, suburb to suburb service will not be meeting until August. Pearland's private for-profit commuter transit service is tentatively set for July 8. Fort Bend county service to downtown Houston should begin late this year or early next year.

The city of Conroe has a small fixed route ADA service. Conroe was unable to find a commuter service provider. This is Metro's first time contracting with Conroe as service provider. Conroe was successful in implementing northernmost service for forty-six miles.

The City of Pearland has struggled to establish commuter service in the growing suburban city. The need for the service is undisputed. The financial issues have been challenging. Pearland applied for CMAQ grant. But later decided to implement without federal participation.

Fort Bend is the largest suburban county in the region. Currently, there is no commuter service to Downtown Houston. Likely, implementation for new transit is early 2020.

The next steps in implementing commuter transit is working with Springwoods Village-Exxon Mobil consolidated campus. Expand commuter service in Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller Counties. Implement more outreach.

OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 4A. Agency Announcements (Ken Fickes, Chair)

No announcements

ITEM 4B. Member Announcements

Edmund Petry discussed the METRO Next Plan that will be presented to the board in June. They will make a decision as for as adoption in July. They plan to do some type of education in June once they have received permission to do so. In July, they will make a decision to adopt it and also decision to take it to referendum in November.

Ken Fickes asked, will this include Friendswood. It is proposed to the board and they have to approve it, which means it can't be taken out.

ITEM 4C. Next Meeting

August 7, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:57am