

Meeting notes Workshop #1

TERC Sustainability Subcommittee – Sustainability Framework



The first workshop in the TERC Sustainability Framework project was held on Thursday, September 16, 2010 at 9:00 am at the Colorado Department of Transportation Office in Golden, Colorado. 17 people representing 11 agencies attended. A sign in sheet is attached. The following summarizes the first workshop. Meeting handouts and results of workshop exercises are included as attachments to these notes. Any corrections or additions to the meeting notes should be directed to Jessica Myklebust at Jessica.myklebust@fhueng.com or 303-721-1440.

Welcome and Introductions

After the TERC subcommittee members and consultant team introduced themselves and their roles, Yates Oppermann (CDOT) provided an overview of the purpose of the sustainability framework project. He explained that the project was in response to the needs for:

- Collaboration among agencies
- Increase organization to work more effectively together
- Agree on a common framework for sustainability, building from the nine principles previously developed by the TERC subcommittee. Yates noted some confusion on the part of some of the TERC members when the principles were initially presented but that confusion was limited to member agencies that had not been as involved in crafting the principles.

Stan Szabelak (RTD) asked who Yates was referring to as “we” when he discussed the goals. Did “we” include local agencies, and how far was the committee going to go to bring in locals? Yates responded that the focus is on the TERC agencies but could expand to others, particularly with the clearinghouse, which would provide information that could be shared with locals and others beyond the TERC members.

Stan asked about the purpose of the clearinghouse. Yates responded that the clearinghouse would be “everything you wanted to know about sustainability.” It would include grants, programs, and other materials. The current plan is to discuss the Clearinghouse Proposal at Workshop #6. Yates reminded the group that the clearinghouse would not be developed during this task but the clearinghouse proposal is a major outcome of the sustainability framework project.

Jessica Myklebust, Project Manager Felsburg Holt and Ullevig (FHU), provided a schedule for future meetings and asked for feedback about the dates and preferred times as soon as possible. Most agreed that Thursdays are fine and that mornings are preferred. However, based on current schedules the October 21 meeting will be held in the afternoon. Jessica also asked that each committee member designate a delegate that could participate if the primary committee

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member is not available. She explained that the workshops would cover a lot of material and would be most successful if each agency participates fully.

Holly Buck, FHU, introduced herself in the role of facilitator. She described the format of the workshops and introduced the materials that the committee would see at each meeting. She explained that her role was to help the group get through the agenda for each workshop. Because of the compressed schedule and breadth of information to get through, it is important to stay on task and she will make sure that this occurs.

Introduction to the Sustainability Framework

Sam Seskin, CH2M HILL, provided an overview of the language utilized in sustainability. He explained that the goal was to have the TERC framework use terms that are similar to those used by other national and international organizations. He presented the six primary terms (principle, category, aspect, target, strategy, measure) and explained where the nine TERC principles fit into these groupings. Generally, the three main principles (bullets) would be principles, and the words under the bullets would be either categories or aspects. These three terms are used very commonly in other frameworks, and he encouraged the committee to consider breaking up the nine principles to fall into these groupings. By doing this, the clearinghouse would be easier to navigate, and the TERC framework would easily translate outside of Colorado. Using a standard language will allow the TERC to communicate about sustainability universally.

Bill Haas, FHWA, stated that he did not like the term “category” and suggested “sub-principles” would be easier to understand. Joshua Proudfoot, Good Company, explained that the three terms, particularly the higher order terms, are very common and discouraged the group from deviating from these terms. He explained that these were nearly universal principles and described them as legs to a stool. Other members questioned where “goals” and “objectives” would fit in because their organizations used these terms more frequently. Joshua said that the three lower groupings (target, strategy, and measure) were also commonly used terms but that “goal” could be substituted for “target” and “objective” could be substituted for “strategy”. So the definitions that the TERC committee shall move forward with included: principle, category, aspect, goal, strategy/objective, and measure.

Larry Squires, FTA, asked the purpose of the exercise. Since the consultants already had reviewed frameworks, why couldn't the TERC just adopt a recommended framework? Why do we need to go through a strategic planning exercise to get there? Joshua explained that the team was responding to the proposal request and that we could skip this step of readjusting the framework but wanted everyone to be comfortable with the outcome. If the members don't

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agree with the terms and way data are organized, it will be hard for individual agencies to see how the framework applies to their agency.

Steve Eggleston, HUD, asked how the principles and guiding framework will be approved and mentioned that the incorporation of them might be hindered by 'politics'. Yates discussed that he would like to present the principles to the TERC during their regularly scheduled meetings – October, February, or June.

Bill brought up the HUD/EPA/DOT Livability Principles and how these are benefitting these three agencies. He mentioned that institutionalizing the principles locally was difficult but they were clearer with a pilot project that HUD and FHWA teamed on to make the principles more local.

After some discussion, the group agreed on the three principles (environmental stewardship, community well being, and economic vitality and quality).

Sustainability Categories and Aspects

The group then began an exercise of assigning categories under the principles. It was explained that the categories were derived using elements from the TERC existing principles. Each category had one dot which committee members could use to vote to indicate which categories belonged beneath which principles. Josh explained that 5 to 7 was a common number of categories under each of the three principles. Ten categories and an "other" dot were provided. The group discussed the categories and for most agreed on a principle that the category fell under. The group provided a few 'other' categories such as energy emissions, climate change, best business practices, and affordable housing. Additionally, the group felt that several categories, belonged under more than one principle such as energy and emissions, land use, and affordable housing. Based on a comment by Lauren Evans, ACEC representative, the group also agreed to separate energy and emissions. The exercise results from Workshop #1 are included in attachments to these minutes

The workshop ended with a group exercise discussing aspects under the categories. Three groups representing the three principle categories (community well-being, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality and quality) were formed; agencies were asked to participate in a group where their agency had many interactions. The groups transcribed their notes prior to leaving the Workshop. The consultant team announced that they would finish the transcription, assign some homework related to the exercise, and pick up the discussion at the start of Workshop #2.

Workshop ended at approximately 11:45 pm.

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