



Strategic Plan

A Vision for Air Alliance Houston in 2020

Air Alliance Houston has a vision: A city with clean air where our economy, quality of life, and children thrive. We are working toward a Houston in which no one's health or quality of life is adversely impacted by air pollution. To get there we must reduce pollution emissions, minimize exposure in neighborhoods nearest pollution sources, and promote economic growth that doesn't add to pollution. These ambitious goals provide our organization with a long-term vision for the region. We set and work toward short- and mid-term goals that will have the greatest impact, for which we can measure our performance, and which can serve as stepping stones toward achieving our vision.

To ensure that our resources and attention are focused where we can have the greatest impact, in 2014 the Board of Directors of Air Alliance Houston created a Long Range Planning Committee. The Committee began with several questions. How should Air Alliance Houston set long-term goals? How does our mission fit into the work done by other non-governmental organizations in Houston? How do we prioritize activities to maximize the use of our resources? Are we focused on areas where we can have the greatest impact and on things we do best?

As these questions were discussed and potential metrics for goal setting were considered, a common theme emerged. While reduction in pollution emissions, compliance with air pollution standards, and minimization of public health impacts of air pollution are our ultimate goals, our focus must be on short-term, measurable goals within our program areas.

Our mission is to reduce air pollution in the Houston region and protect public health and environmental integrity through research, education, and advocacy. We have organized our goals around these three tenets and it is in these areas we can make the greatest contribution to improving air quality in Houston. Central to our success will be expanding and diversifying our funding resources.

Research

Research is essential to understanding the relationship between air pollution and public health. This understanding is necessary for effective advocacy by us and by our allies. In order to provide the research needed for advocacy, Air Alliance Houston has two broad goals:

- (1) Empower citizens with research tools that allow them to gather their own data and become their own advocates.
- (2) Advance the field of research regarding air pollution and its public health impacts in Houston.

First, we empower citizens by providing research tools and the expertise to use them. In 2014, we completed our first large-scale community based participatory research project in the environmental justice community of Galena Park, Texas. We spent two years completing a community health survey, a

mapping workshop, and a yearlong air monitoring project. In 2015 we begin the second of these two-year projects in Pasadena. We have also undertaken smaller, ad hoc community based participatory research projects as needs and funding have allowed. We will continue to bring these projects into environmental justice communities in Houston using programmatic grants from funders such as the Houston Endowment, the Kresge Foundation, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

We will help communities by providing access to other research tools and data. The City of Houston, Harris County, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and the EPA have these resources available for communities. We will help community members access these tools and use them effectively. This means both connecting community members to resources and providing them with the training and education needed to interpret research results and use them for advocacy. Over the next several years, we will expand local access to these resources and conduct community trainings into their use.

We will also advance research by partnering with local governments, our peers in advocacy, academics, and other experts on local projects. When environmental and health researchers in Houston need a community partner, Air Alliance Houston should be their first choice. For the next five years, we will participate in a major research partnership into the metal recycling industry with the City of Houston, Rice University, and the UT School of Public Health. We also have other research partnerships with the City of Houston and Harris County, and with our nonprofit peers including Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), and Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (t.e.j.a.s.).

Second, we will advance the field of research into air pollution and its impacts on health in Houston. We will also analyze, using solid science and data, the effectiveness of current air quality regulations and enforcement and investigate new or improved regulations. We will both conduct research and disseminate research by others. Over the next two years we will increase our research funding at academic institutions in Houston. By 2017, we plan to hire a full-time, in-house Research Director. In taking these actions we will renew our reputation as a local research leader earned by our predecessors the Galveston-Houston Association for Smog Prevention (GHASP) and Industry Professionals for Clean Air.

We will also advance research in Houston by serving as a disseminator of research and a catalyst for objective conversations about air quality and public health. Our goal is to become a recognized authority and sought after resource for community members, professionals, and lawmakers. Beginning in 2018, we will host quarterly research colloquia to give local researchers a forum to share their work with their peers and the public. By 2020, we will be the source for the best available research into air quality and public health in Houston.

Finally, we will position ourselves at the cutting edge of personal monitoring technology. Many organizations and individuals across the nation are researching innovative, inexpensive ways to put air monitoring technology into the hands of individuals. We will stay abreast of this research and bring new tools to Houston when they are ready for public use, exploring partnerships with researchers who create affordable and easy-to-use air monitors.

Education

Education is the link between research and advocacy. Our mission to educate begins with Houston's youth. Each year, we reach more than 5,000 students with **Ozone Theater**, a kindergarten through eighth grade education program. We plan to grow this program by reaching new schools and expanding into new geographic areas, and by setting aggressive targets that push us to reach new schools and teachers.

For example, Ozone Theater only has one lesson for each of three age groups: grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. In the coming years, we plan to add new lessons in order to visit elementary and middle school students more than once each year, and to expand into high schools with new curricula that introduce scientific tools to high school students. Ozone Theater is currently supported via unrestricted funds. We plan to seek small grants for future funding of Ozone Theater, including grants for curriculum development and to serve students in under resourced schools. By 2020, our objective is to have two curriculum offerings for each of the age groups we serve, a total of eight Ozone Theatre offerings.

Earth Day Houston (EDH) is an Air Alliance Houston program that presents an annual opportunity to reach thousands of Houstonians who care about environmental sustainability, but who may or may not know about Air Alliance Houston. With the goal of bringing more brand awareness and supporters to Air Alliance Houston, we will continue to grow the festival and add value to our sponsors, exhibitors, and guests. Earth Day Houston is now the City of Houston's official Earth Day festival, with the event held in an official city venue, Sam Houston Park, in 2016.

The Earth Day Art Contest (EDAC) and EDAC Tour are two programs that raise public environmental awareness by inviting artists in the third through twelfth grades to make and exhibit art with environmental themes. We plan to grow EDAC, bringing more schools and tour venues into the program.

Our education programs also work to raise public awareness of Air Alliance Houston. Our goal is for average Houstonians to recognize Air Alliance Houston as an integral part of the effort to make Houston a clean, desirable city in which to live. To do so we also engage in a variety of public outreach events and educational opportunities to bring attention to our issues and our work.

We hold an annual educational luncheon known as **State of the Air**. We collaborate on the **Houston Green Film Series**, a monthly event that provides ongoing opportunities for the public to learn more about environmental issues.

Another means of public education is to put resources, such as data gathered through scientific research, into the hands of advocates. **The Houston Clean Air Network (HCAN)** takes publicly available data about ozone air pollution and translates it into a form that is easily understood and usable by the public. We will work with the University of Houston to expand this tool into the **Texas Clean Air Network (TCAN)**, eventually bringing maps of ozone, and potentially other pollutants as well, to all major Texas cities. We also plan to create similar tools for other public data sets, such as emission event reports and enforcement actions. We plan to partner with other organizations in Texas to collaboratively fund this educational program, such that by 2020 TCAN will serve cities throughout Texas, and grow to include more features and data visualizations.

We also make ourselves available for educational talks, panels, and other public engagements at events that further our mission. By 2020, we intend to be a sought-after resource by laymen and experts alike for educational opportunities in air quality and public health.

Advocacy

Our advocacy tools include the public participation process, direct legislative and regulatory advocacy, and litigation. Advocacy occurs at the local, state, and federal levels. We must focus our advocacy efforts where they will be most effective and adapt them as our advocacy targets change over time.

Locally, we will increase our role as a key influencer of decisions about Houston's future. We will advocate for smart, sustainable expansion at the Port of Houston. We will encourage Houston to manage growth and transportation needs in ways that minimize impacts and promote efficiency. In 2015, we were instrumental in getting an ordinance passed to limit heavy-truck idling in the City of

Houston. Similar ordinances have been passed with our help in Galena Park and Jacinto City. We will leverage these anti-idling ordinances to encourage other cities around the region to do the same. We will seek to influence decisions about when and where air monitoring resources are deployed. Backed by solid research, we will advocate for enforcement of laws and regulations necessary to protect public health.

At the state level, we will serve as a watchdog over the TCEQ, calling attention to any efforts to erode public health regulations, diminish pollution standards, or limit public participation. We will strive to maintain professional relationships with the TCEQ staff to ensure timely access to its valuable public data. We will continue to look for areas where we can be more proactive with our legislative allies, even though we recognize that the current political environment may not be conducive to the type of legislative change for which we would advocate.

At the federal level, we will continue to support important rulemakings by the Environmental Protection Agency. In future presidential administrations, we will advocate for a strong EPA that will provide needed public health protections. We will advocate before other branches of the federal government on related air quality issues such as chemical safety and security and energy infrastructure. We will engage in litigation when necessary, to settle or advance lawsuits that further our mission. By 2020, our advocacy voice will be heard and trusted at every level of government.

Resource Development

This work requires funding. As a 501c3 charitable organization we will grow our ability to carry out our mission by increasing and diversifying our funding sources. We will bring in more individual donors by building our network of supporters—calling on our board to lead this effort. We will expand opportunities for individuals, business and civic leaders, experts and educators to engage with and sustain our mission via participation in board-level councils. In 2016, we will create four such councils: a Sustainable Business Council, Advisory Council, Education & Outreach Council, and a Community Council.

We will grow our corporate and business connections in ways that resonate with our mission and donors' business interests. We will renew existing grant relationships and find new grant opportunities. We will increase our profile in the community and make our brand and mission a known and trusted nonprofit resource, worthy of financial support. By 2020, a significant portion of our funding will come from new sources of donations, small and large.

Summary

We do not expect to have achieved clean air and a healthy future for all Houstonians by 2020. But we will make progress on the goals laid out in this plan. We will research our issues, educate people, and advocate for public health. We will collaborate to reach our goal of Houston being cleaner and healthier than it was in 2015. We will improve the quality of our air to improve our quality of life.

In 2020, Houstonians will see clean air as essential to quality of life. They will value Air Alliance Houston's role as the leading advocate for air quality and public health in Houston. They will share a passion for our vision: clean air so our economy, quality of life, and children can thrive.