



JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of May 18, 2007 Held at 10:00 AM in the MetroCenter Auditorium, Oakland

Attendance:

ABAG

Mark Green
Scott Haggerty
Rose Jacobs Gibson
Gwen Regalia

BAAQMD

Chris Daly
John Gioia
Jerry Hill
Mark Ross, Chair
Pamela Torliatt
Gayle B. Uilkema

BCDC*

Jim Bourgart
Geoffrey Gibbs
Larry Goldzband
Charles McGlashen
Dena Mossar
Sean Randolph

MTC

Tom Bates
Jim Spering

*non-voting

1. Call to Order

Chair Ross called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of the Joint Policy Committee Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2007

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Defining the Vision for the 2009 Regional Transportation Plan

Ashley Nguyen presented the staff report for this item, and both Ashley and Doug Kimsey responded to questions.

The law requires that the region update its twenty-five-year transportation plan every four years and that projects planned for construction during the planning period have a realistic expectation of funding (i.e., that the capital plan be “financially constrained”). However, the plan may also contain an unconstrained “vision:” a what-if expression of need or desire or an identification of a more optimal end state based on the assumption that funds or statutory authorities are less limiting.

Unlike the past, the current plan cycle will not start with the financially constrained portion, but will begin with definition of a vision against which the financially constrained plan and other alternatives can be compared. The vision will be accompanied by an identification of investments and policies required to make it happen; and the vision will help identify priorities for the financially constrained plan.

As with past plans, the 2009 update will continue with three principal themes: adequate maintenance, system efficiency, and appropriate expansion. The plan will address eight goals, including two new ones: on security and emergency management and on global warming. There will also be a focus on equity issues across all goals.

The vision will be developed from the comparative evaluation of alternative investment scenarios: one based on freeway performance improvements, one based on an HOV/HOT/Bus improvement strategy, and one emphasizing rail and ferry improvements. Each scenario will be tested against aggressive performance targets for congestion relief, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) decrease, and emissions reductions (PM and CO₂) and will include sensitivity analysis to complementary policy initiatives in land-use distribution, congestion pricing, and gas pricing. The sensitivity testing recognizes that infrastructure investments alone will not achieve the targets and that changes in policy will also be required. The best performing features of each scenario will be combined along with required policy modifications in a preferred scenario or vision.

The vision will likely not be achievable within realistic financial and policy assumptions, but will provide valuable information on what it would really take to get at the targeted future which many have advocated. We can then select constrained investments and policies with better knowledge as to how they contribute to this desired future. The vision and its policy guidance will be considered at a broad-based ABAG General Assembly / RTP Summit in the fall.

In discussion, a number of points and counterpoints were put forward:

- Congestion pricing needs to be considered on a region-wide basis, not just for certain areas;
- While it is important to consider new plan ideas, it is also important to keep promises relative to projects included in previous plans;
- The plan-making process should not be prescriptive and staff-driven; there needs to be more dialogue among elected officials about what we need to see in the RTP and more elected-official input from the onset;
- There needs to be a clear connection between transportation and economic development; access to jobs is a key indicator of transportation success, and economic vitality is an important, unstated goal;
- Scenarios need to be evaluated against a broad range of performance measures, not just the illustrative targets in the handout and slideshow;
- Evaluating the plan against aggressive targets will provide very important messages both here and to the administration and legislature in Sacramento;

- The relationship to smart-growth and FOCUS PDAs needs to be integral to this plan; we need to find out what it requires to support PDAs;
- Targets related to health and non-automobile mode split (transit, walking and biking) are also important, and we need to identify ways of incentivizing non-automobile modes;
- The climate-change goals and targets should be paramount and we need to plan aggressively beyond the state's 2020 targets to the 2050 targets, which call for an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions;
- The PM target needs to be more aggressive;
- Everything should go through the lens of climate change;
- There needs to be recognition that the current plan does not fund critically important projects that contribute to a full range of transportation and environmental objectives; these projects need to get at least on the vision list;
- Outcomes need to be equitable, particularly for the transit-dependent;
- In preparing their project submissions, CMAs need to clearly understand that this is not a business-as-usual plan; this message has not been clearly communicated to the Congestion Management Agencies;
- It should not be assumed that projects approved in past plans are relevant to current goals;
- There is a conflict between congestion relief and climate change targets; less congestion will encourage people to drive more; VMT and CO₂ will continue to go up;
- While induced demand is an issue, some congestion relief can have a positive impact on CO₂ by facilitating transit and high-occupancy vehicles and by allowing more optimal, less polluting vehicle speeds;
- Public perception will be key to success with new non-business-as-usual policies, particularly those related to pricing; to contribute to a more positive perception we need to start thinking about and communicating information about total transportation cost; people will be more receptive to pricing strategies if they are linked to improvements which contribute to lower transportation cost overall;
- Pricing strategies need to be accompanied by equity analyses;
- The financially constrained plan needs to provide some seed funding for more innovative approaches;

- The limitations of the present travel model, particularly in modeling the effects of land-use change, need to be fixed;
- We need to improve the measurement of VMT;
- Changing driving behavior is key;
- Floating cities could solve both our land and transportation problems;
- Local governments need to be encouraged to identify missing uses in their communities and encourage their development so as to reduce the need to travel long distances to find goods and services; we need to emphasize complete, sustainable cities.

4. FOCUS: Priority Development Area Evaluative Criteria; Priority Conservation Area Adoption Process

Ken Kirkey presented his memo and noted that the deadline for resolutions in support of PDA applications had been extended to September 7th.

Discussion called out the need to explicitly emphasize health, safety, climate-change and sea-level-rise concerns in the feedback description of Priority Development Areas. We were also cautioned to ensure that the review committee was selected through a defensible, open process and was broadly representative of the region.

Discussion also clarified that specific incentives are still unidentified and await continuing discussions in Sacramento about the allocation of bond funds and discussions in the Bay Area about the possible redirection of some regional transportation money, including TLC, HIP, and capital expenditures on maintenance and expansion.

In response to an express concern, it was emphasized that the five questions to be asked of Priority Development Area Plans would not affect PDA designation. They were intended to help jurisdictions prepare for later competitive incentive applications by providing early feedback on some of the considerations that would come into play when ranking applications for funding. There would be no competitive scoring of initial PDA applications. The questions effectively provide an agenda for a continuing discussion about merging local and regional objectives.

The recommendations in the memo were approved.

5. Bay Area Regional Agency Climate Protection Program

There was insufficient time to discuss and act upon this item. It was deferred to the meeting of July 20, 2007.

6. Public Comment

All public comment was received relative to specific agenda items and is incorporated in the summary of those items.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at precisely 12:00 Noon.