



Joint Policy Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of July 21, 2006 Held at 10:00 AM in the MetroCenter Auditorium, Oakland

Attendance:

ABAG Members:

Mark Green
Scott Haggerty
Steve Rabinowitsh
Gwen Regalia

BAAQMD Members:

Chris Daly
Mark DeSaulnier
Jerry Hill
Patrick Kwok
Pamela Torliatt
Gayle Uilkema

MTC Members:

Steve Kinsey
Sue Lempert
Jon Rubin, Ch.
Shelia Young

ABAG Staff:

Gillian Adams
Marisa Cravens
Paul Fassinger
Henry Gardner
Patricia Jones
Janet McBride
Christy Riviere
Jonathan Strunin

BAAQMD Staff:

Jean Roggenkamp

MTC Staff:

Frank Harris
Steve Heminger
Therese McMillan

Other:

Moira Birss, Housing Leadership Council
Eloise Bodine, Bay Area Monitor
Linda Craig, League of Women Voters
Jean Finney, Caltrans, District 4
Richard Hedges, EDAC
Bruce Kern, East Bay EDA
Steve Lowe, WOCA
Peter Lydon, SPUR
Andrew Michael, Bay Area Council
Bob Planthold, MTC Advisory Council
Allison Quaid, Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable
Communities
John Rudolph, WCCTAC
Bill Sandbrick, Fremont Chamber of Commerce
David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF
Jeff Schwob, City of Fremont
Leslie Stewart, Bay Area Monitor

JPC Staff:

Ted Droettboom

1. Call to Order

Chair Rubin called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Joint Policy Committee Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2006

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Bay Area Regional Position on CEQA Reform

Ted Droettboom summarized the staff report.

In discussion, committee members noted that CEQA fulfilled many important functions, particularly providing an essential forum for public involvement in projects at the local level. While acknowledging CEQA's benefits to environmental protection and public process, others noted that the process was not perfect and that there were some opportunities for streamlining and improvement. There was a general recognition that the issue was complicated and multi-faceted and, therefore, not susceptible to simple solutions. Any meaningful improvement to CEQA had to be thoughtful and comprehensive. The Committee was willing to participate in working through a careful, comprehensive review, but it was loathe to suggest partial patches.

The benefits of integrated regional and local planning processes in working through consequential physical and social environmental issues prior to project-specific CEQA were noted. Improved, strengthened and integrated planning was cited as the most promising avenue for exploration. Further use of exemptions was generally not favored.

The Committee directed the Regional Planning Program Director to draft a letter reflecting its discussion for consideration at the JPC's September meeting.

4. One-year Interim Evaluation of MTC Resolution 3434 TOD Policy and Industrial Land-use Conflicts (attached)

Doug Kimsey presented the staff report. He noted that, while completion of station-area plans is still a year away for most corridors, it should be possible to meet the required housing thresholds. In addition, research is confirming that increased housing within one-half mile of stations will have a substantial impact on transit ridership.

He further noted that the corridor approach to thresholds made it possible to achieve housing objectives without compromising industrial uses. It

was proving feasible, for example, to protect NUMMI at the Warm Springs station, by directing housing development to other stations on the BART to San Jose corridor. A representative of the City of Fremont confirmed that the city's plans would not impact NUMMI, though flexible infrastructure would be in place to accommodate alternative uses should NUMMI change its own plans in the long-term future.

It was also confirmed that, even with an emphasis on housing thresholds for Resolution 3434 stations, on a system-wide basis, jobs would continue to outnumber households at station areas by several fold. In at least one committee member's jurisdiction, achieving the housing threshold had involved the loss of some commercial uses, but the member judged the compromise to be a net benefit.

Committee discussion concentrated on the one-half-mile radius around stations to which the housing threshold is applied. While the greatest increment in ridership will come from the half-mile area, higher density housing within a mile can also contribute, particularly if walk and transit connections are easy and convenient. TOD policy will continue to emphasize the one-half-mile radius, but complementary guidelines and incentives may be useful in encouraging appropriate development and connections beyond the threshold area.

The Committee requested that a future JPC meeting include a presentation from the City of Dublin on what it is doing around its present and future BART stations.

5. Focusing Our Vision (FOCUS) Progress Report

Ted Droettboom reported that the FOCUS program had entered a technical phase during which regional staff, together with the Technical Advisory Committee, would use a layering analysis of spatial data to identify first-draft priority development areas. These draft areas would provide a starting point for collaboration with local governments.

Mr. Droettboom then made a presentation on four recent reports which dealt with topics related to the FOCUS program. A copy of the presentation is on the JPC website. The Greenbelt Alliance clarified the purpose of its reports, noting that the purpose was not to halt greenfield development but to ensure that it happened in an efficient, resource-conserving way. A housing advocate worried that we were not doing enough to provide housing for those with very low incomes, who cannot even qualify for inclusionary housing. It was suggested that more public subsidies, perhaps shared among jurisdictions, were required.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Public Comment

The Committee was asked to agendize a discussion on doing more to improve air quality, noting that recent improvements may have been the result of ephemeral job reductions and climatic conditions. The Chair so directed.

The Committee was invited to attend the meeting of Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities meeting on September 21st. That meeting will review best practices for sustainable development and discuss how State legislation and incentives could contribute.

8. Adjournment