



JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of September 21, 2007
Held at 10:00 AM in the Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco

Attendance:

ABAG

Dave Cortese
Mark Green
Scott Haggerty
Rose Jacobs Gibson

BAAQMD

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

BCDC*

Jim Bourgart
Charles McGlashen
Dena Mossar

*non-voting

MTC

Tom Bates
Bill Dodd
Sue Lempert
Jon Rubin
Jim Sperring
Ken Yeager

1. Call to Order

Chair Ross called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of the Joint Policy Committee Meeting Minutes of July 20, 2007

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and pricing policy

Steve Heminger provided a slide presentation which updated the Committee on the RTP targets and introduced the policy issue of congestion pricing. His presentation is available on the JPC website: http://www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy/jpc_presentations.

A rich discussion covered a number of ideas:

- There is a need to get beyond abstract concepts to tangible demonstration projects so that people can judge through real experience whether pricing works or not. Fear of the unknown contributes to a reluctance to change. The Alameda Hot Lanes project and the Doyle Drive toll project were cited as near-term opportunities to prove the concept. Spare the Air days were suggested as temporary opportunities to increase tolls for good purpose, and the possibility of a pilot project leading to a regional referendum was identified.
- The equity issue is critical. There needs to be discounts, exemptions, or exceptions for low-income people as well as the provision of plentiful alternative choices (e.g. more close-in housing and more transit).

- A complete pricing policy will have a number of complementary elements: hot lanes, cordon pricing, parking surcharges, fuel fees, and perhaps even general road usage charges. The most effective of these will vary by time of day or level of congestion to motivate behavior which makes most efficient use of a finite shared resource.
- In addition to pricing to moderate peak period daily commutes, we need to recognize that localized weekend congestion is a growing problem. Pricing to influence discretionary leisure travel is also required, and may be effective in reducing some of the traffic concerns which lead people to oppose additional residential development.
- Capacity will be a limiting factor in making congestion pricing truly effective. At some point we may have to seriously consider converting mixed-flow lanes to HOT lanes in order to maximize person-moving capacity within confined corridors, to extend the benefits of congestion pricing throughout the region and balance traffic demand among corridors.
- The perception that pricing is just another revenue grab is a pervasive one, so the intrinsic benefits of pricing need to be crystal clear. It may be possible in some cases demonstrate how pricing and delay avoidance could contribute to overall lower costs.
- Prices need to keep pace with inflation and it may be appropriate to build COLA into the pricing regimen from the beginning. Some guarantee against outrageous price increases may also be helpful in gaining support for the concept, but we need to be cautious about absolutely capping increases in case significant new revenue is required to deal with, for example, emergency reconstruction.
- It may be very difficult to get a total pricing schema that works if we have to piecemeal it through individual *ad hoc* legislative authorities. We should seek general legislative authority to pursue a pricing strategy in the Bay Area.

4. FOCUS: Priority Development Area (PDA) Designations

Ken Kirkey summarized the staff report on the PDAs. He noted that about fifty jurisdictions had submitted PDA applications, totaling over 100 actual areas. Together the PDAs are conservatively estimated to accommodate about 400,000 housing units, or about 45 percent of the projected regional growth to 2035. He also noted that PDA implementation would require assistance; capital budgets submitted with about two-thirds of the PDA applications total \$24 billion.

During public comment, a representative of the City of Newark objected to the implied tiering of PDAs into “planned” and “potential.”

After discussion, it was moved and seconded, and it was the decision of the Committee:

- A. THAT the Joint Policy Committee endorse the list of planned and potential PDAs for presentation at the ABAG/MTC Fall Forum on October 26th and for adoption by the ABAG Executive Board on November 15th.
- B. THAT the Joint Policy Committee endorse a recommendation to the ABAG Executive Board that staff be empowered to move a PDA from the potential to planned category immediately upon the completion of the applicable plan and resolution.

5. FOCUS: Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Nominations

Ken Kirkey brought the Committee up to date on the PCA process, which is proceeding in parallel but slightly behind the PDA process. Priority Conservation Areas are intended to be short-term priorities for acquisition or easement. Nominations have been received for over 100 PCAs, though this number may decline significantly with the application of eligibility criteria.

Discussion focused in particular on a nomination in San Mateo County: the Redwood City Bayfront Tidal Plain. Committee members and speakers during the public comment period criticized the process which led to this area's nomination and its inclusion on the list of nominated areas. Among the concerns were the lack of a clear definition for the "consensus" criterion, the acceptance of nominations from groups other than governmental entities, an inadequate public notice of the nomination procedure and meetings at which the nominations were vetted, and inadequate respect for uncompleted local planning processes currently underway. Staff reminded the Committee that staff will be evaluating each nomination relative the criteria, which will be interpreted conservatively, and that many nominations will likely not be recommended for PCA status.

Committee members also suggested that:

- PCAs adjacent to urban growth boundaries ought to be accorded special priority status;
- Some areas already protected by zoning do not require acquisition or easement to protect;
- Sea-level rise should be a consideration in coastal areas considered for conservation;
- The conservation objective needs to be explicitly weighed against the region's affordable housing objective. We should not be conserving areas at the expense

of housing affordability or pushing housing demand into even more sensitive areas surrounding the region.

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 12:20 PM.