



## JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting of November 16, 2007 Held at 10:00 AM in the MetroCenter Auditorium, Oakland

#### Attendance:

<u>ABAG</u>	<u>BAAQMD</u>	<u>BCDC*</u>	<u>MTC</u>
Jane Brunner	Chris Daly	Jim Bourgart	Tom Bates
Dave Cortese	John Gioia	Geoffrey Gibbs	Jim Spering
Scott Haggerty	Jerry Hill	Larry Goldzband	Ken Yeager
Rose Jacobs Gibson	Mark Ross, Chair	Anne Halsted	
Gwen Regalia	Pamela Torliatt		
	Gayle B. Uilkema	*non-voting	

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Ross called the meeting to order.

#### 2. Approval of the Joint Policy Committee Meeting Minutes of September 21, 2007

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

#### 3. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)—Policy Choices

Ted Droettboom provided an introductory slide presentation. The presentation reported the results of a region-wide public-opinion poll, outlined the staff analysis of the effectiveness of various transportation investment and strategy packages relative to provisional plan targets, and summarized comment received at the ABAG General Assembly / MTC Transportation Summit held on October 26<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the presentation is available on the JPC website:

[http://www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy/jpc\\_presentations.htm](http://www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy/jpc_presentations.htm).

Discussion covered a number of topics as follows:

#### Targets

All agreed that it would be helpful to base the next plan on performance objectives, against which progress could be overtly gauged. There were, however, two positions on how ambitious our targets should be. Some argued that we needed to set very aggressive (“stretch”) objectives in order to genuinely recognize and be relevant to the magnitude of the issues—particularly climate change—facing the region and the world over the period of this plan. One member expressed it this way: “If you don’t

go out on a limb, you won't get the fruit." Others argued that the targets should be shorter-term and clearly achievable; unrealistic aspirations would frustrate us and make the progress we do make seem less relevant, trivial, and even unnecessary. Those in favor of less aggressive targets also observed that we would be unlikely to receive legislative support for more aggressive targets, noting that the Legislature's own business-as-usual actions seemed to be contradictory to its notionally ambitious objectives.

Both sides of the issue acknowledged that performance measures implied accountability and that the threat of law suits challenging our inability to achieve targets was real. However, the targets and our response to them could be structured in such a way as to minimize the possibility of misguided, frivolous and vexatious litigation. One way of structuring targets, which responded both to the need to avoid litigation and the need to make measurable progress, would be to set short-term achievable objectives within the context of more ambitious long-term targets. The short-term goals might be ratcheted up over time as success is achieved and as the imperative to be more aggressive increases.

### Pricing

Transport pricing, like targets, was another idea that could, and probably should, be implemented incrementally, starting modestly and ramping up as political support grows, as viable alternatives to automobile travel become available, and as households are able to adjust to higher prices through new location and travel choices.

Equity is of paramount concern in any pricing regime, and if we are not careful we could simply turn moderate income people into low-income people with little tangible change in travel behavior. To be effective in reducing travel and to also be equitable, pricing requires the provision of convenient alternatives (walking, biking and transit) to single-occupant vehicle trips. Pricing revenue needs to support these alternatives.

Before implementing pricing, it will be important to test the attitudes and coping reactions of different strata and segments of the population to ensure we can get the desired behavioral shifts without inequitably burdening particular groups.

### Encouragement for PDAs

Committee members expressed general support for using transportation funds to support Priority Development Areas, but some committee members were opposed to doing this at the expense of the present level of funding for rural and suburban areas. These members argued that we need to encourage good planning of greenfield areas as well as infill areas. Using programs like TLC in areas of less-intense development can help educate developing areas about regional objectives and how good local development can contribute to the achievement of these objectives. While it makes sense to push development back to the urban core, we cannot abandon the suburbs either. We need to find common ground for various parts of the region to come

together around common objectives, and this may require a sub-regional (i.e., county-level approach. One suggestion was for appropriate suburban job creation to complement urban housing creation and improve jobs/housing balance throughout the region, and particularly at the boundaries with adjoining housing-rich-job-poor regions.

A JPC member representing an urban-core city, indicated that it was willing to accept as much new housing as the market would bear, but that it will require assistance in providing the infrastructure that this new housing will require. In addition to capital funding, incentives are required for planning and engaging communities in the planning process so that existing residents can help shape positive growth compatible with local quality-of-life objectives.

#### Criteria for Transportation Infrastructure Investment

Discussion on this topic was limited, but there was a suggestion that all projects ought to be evaluated relative to CO<sub>2</sub> and that this might require some hard choices even relative to already “committed” projects.

There was a general sentiment that regional priority ought to continue for transit investments, though the priority among alternative transit modes and technologies was less clear. Some argued for extensive regional rail investments to the edges of the region and beyond. Others argued for improving local bus services within existing developed areas in association with complementary pedestrian and bike improvements. Greater coordination among transit services was also urged. Services should support one another rather than being duplicative.

Transit convenience and breaking down the income and class schisms characterizing transit usage, particularly for bus services, were urged as regional priorities. There was acknowledgement that our transit investments to this point had failed to live up to their promises and that we needed to do more to encourage transit use. Committee members argued that we needed to create quality transit that people wanted to take. One member referenced the work his community was doing to exploit the connection between transit usage and land-use intensity.

#### Technology

Several committee members expressed confidence that new technology would play a big role relative to our provisional environmental targets; i.e., that there was significant potential for alternative fuels and for high-efficiency and zero-emission vehicles. Incentives for research were suggested. Improvements in our technology for modeling travel behavior were also advocated.

### Leadership

The need and public desire for forward-thinking, long-range regional leadership was emphasized. Leadership is required to advocate and pursue currently unpopular but potentially necessary ideas, to bridge the gap between state and local objectives, to show the way for the rest of the nation and the world, and to break from past business-as-usual practices which will not continue to work into the future. Leaders are also required to fulfill their traditional role of reminding us that the common good is not simply an aggregation of individual interests and to help us turn potential problems into opportunities for economic growth and positive social change.

### Substantive Consideration of Policy Issues

Noting the significance and difficulty of many of the issues driving the current RTP, some members suggested that more in-depth and segmented discussion was required of the questions before the JPC and the MTC. Major policy should be the subject of more focused discussion, less superficial discussion.

### 3. Public Comment

Most of the public comment was received relative to the above specific agenda item and is incorporated in the summary of that item. In addition, a concern was raised about the spread of contagions through use of public transit.

### 4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at Noon.