San Joaquin Valley Regional Dinner Forums

Co-hosted by Caltrans, Tulare County Association of Governments, the Great Valley Center, and the Local Government Commission

The Depot Restaurant: 207 E. Oak Ave, Visalia, CA 93291

Thursday September 18th

6:00 p.m.  Networking

6:30 p.m.  Welcome and Introductions
  • Mayor Jesus Gamboa, City of Visalia

6:45 p.m.  Economist Perspective
  • Janet Smith-Heimer, BAE

7:15 p.m.  Question and Answer

7:45 p.m.  Developer Perspective
  • Harvey May, Paloma Development

7:50 p.m.  State Perspective
  • John Barna, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission

7:55 p.m.  Discussion

8:55 p.m.  Closing Remarks
Visalia: SJV Dinner Workshop with Local Elected Officials
Notes; Regional Blueprint; September 18th, 2008

Participants
Approximately 25 local elected officials (names to be filled-in by LGC…)
Jesus Gamboa, Mayor of Visalia (host)
Janet Smith-Heimer, President BAE (economic perspective)
Harvey May, Founder, Paloma Development (developer perspective)
John Barna, Executive Director, CA Transportation Commission (state perspective)
Gregg Albright, Deputy Director, Caltrans (state perspective)

Themes
• Density
  o How do we grow while maintaining our quality of life?
    • Exploration of the possibility of higher-density living, due to
      • Aging demographics
      • Gas prices
      • Public interest
    • “Transportation is a quality of life issue.”
  o Developers won’t provide density on their own until people guarantee a market for it
    • Developers know people dislike density; there is a high risk associated with doing something unpopular
    • If density will happen, it will be in attractive, downtown, expensive areas
• We are concerned about the three E’s of sustainability
  o Economic vitality
    • Need for economic development and an educated workforce
  o Environmental quality
  o Equal opportunity
    • Affordable and workforce housing
    • What’s important to…
      • Residents?
      • Businesses?
      • Local governments?
• There is a significant amount of distrust of the state
  o An acknowledged fear that the state will pull transportation funding
  o “Blueprint project feels like there are evil state people holding a gun to my head unless we approve a 25% increase in density…”

Lessons Learned
• A panel of the right speakers sparks an honest discussion; i.e. Bay Area economist versus local developer
• John Barna was very effective in relaying the state’s perspective and urging consideration of blueprint goals and interregional cooperation.
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<th>Participant</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mayor Jesus Gamboa</td>
<td>• Proteus, 40 years, regionalism, Davis&lt;br&gt;• Regional perspective has been part of the Visalia world view for many years.</td>
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<td>• Farming communities required to share resources to survive. The workforce in the region crosses city and county boundaries and has taught local elected officials to coordinate.</td>
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<td>Janet Smith-Heimer</td>
<td>• BAE, Bay Area Economics&lt;br&gt;  o Ohio regional economic development specialist&lt;br&gt;  o BAE, Berkeley, 1986&lt;br&gt;  • Economic development&lt;br&gt;  • Redevelopment&lt;br&gt;  • Retail/mixed use/infill&lt;br&gt;  • Affordable and workforce housing&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td>• Manufacturers inclined to stay in California, but need an educated workforce close to their facilities and they need rail transportation to ship goods.&lt;br&gt;  o Tesla Motors (hiring 1000 auto builders in Silicon Valley)&lt;br&gt;  o Redwood City Bay Dredging Project (to bring ships closer to facilities and avoid transportation costs)&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td>• Housing choices and the possibility of living in a higher density community is being explored nationally – driven by aging demographics, gas prices, and public interest in living in a way.</td>
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<td>• Economic development = jobs and tax revenue&lt;br&gt;• Regional Planning = land use, transportation, housing, and environmental and resource management</td>
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<td>• Quality of life for: residents, businesses, local government&lt;br&gt;  o What’s important to these groups?&lt;br&gt;  o How do we grow while maintaining/improving our quality of life?&lt;br&gt;  o How can we plan for growth?&lt;br&gt;  • Have a strategy&lt;br&gt;  • Regional level</td>
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<td>Ricardo Nojuera</td>
<td>• Sustainable agriculture&lt;br&gt;• Agricultural sector has adapted, growing more specialized crops in the Valley – competing internationally on specialty products like almonds and dates, not on commodity products like grain and corn.</td>
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<td>Harvey May</td>
<td>• Palomar Development&lt;br&gt;  o Developer in Visalia for 25 years&lt;br&gt;  o People buy around park last – no social fabric&lt;br&gt; • “The only thing people don’t like more than sprawl is density.”&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<td>• Tulare minimum zone size for lots in 7000 square feet.&lt;br&gt;• People want single family homes and for the price (average home price as of June, 2008 was $220,000).</td>
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- If density is going to happen, it will happen in the attractive downtown area of Visalia.
  - But, planning commissions spend more time on apartment projects and specific requirements of child safety, parking, and developer fees.
  - All projects are “pay as you go” (Proposition 13) in California and there is no public funding to pay for infrastructure in existing downtown areas.
- The cost of development in downtown areas is much higher than one mile away in Greenfields. There is a premium cost for building downtown.

- “Roads in new developments are built for fire trucks and garbage trucks, not for bikes and pedestrians.”
- “Developers are lemmings. We don’t like risk.”
- Local government is not looking at manufacturing sector and the infrastructure improvements required for bringing new jobs; rather, retail that generates sales tax.

### John Barna

- Transportation is a quality of life issue, not an infrastructure issue.
  - Mobility is about people, not asphalt
    - Bakersfield just passed a 1% utility fee to pay for roads! Locals need resources to keep up with demand.
  - Business wants logistics, goods movement
    - Huge growth in goods movement in recent years – tension in port locations. Inter-modal facilities in Shafter and other SJV locations are going to be key in upcoming years.
  - Jerry Brown, AG, will sue you, Stockton cut a deal with AG, making a commitment to transit that they can’t afford
  - Valley must work together to deal with it, SJV Partnership and Blueprint Planning are the strongest defenses short-term and the greatest allies in the long term.

- Mobility is a utility – as space decreases, it will be perceived and valued as a utility more and more.
- SB 375 is conformity all over again. The Valley coalition needs to stay strong.

- Environmental concerns
  - Blueprint density – fear that state will pull transportation funding
  - SJV Collaborate needs to stay together; work together at corridor level
  - TCAG demand management creates incentives for Harvey

- CTC, Kirk Lindsey is an ally for Valley
  - Agricultural goods movement in Valley
    - Bonner, GMAP #1 focus on ports and trade
    - GMAP #2 cd. focus on agriculture, but Valley
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<th>Developer impact fees on transportation can be a problem</th>
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<td>- Find other ways to finance</td>
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<td>- Transportation revenues need to be realigned with uses</td>
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<td>- Some counties are using developers for everything</td>
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<td>- i.e. Bakersfield’s utility tax</td>
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<td>- Proposition 1C TOX very biased toward L.A. and the Bay</td>
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<td>- Area; predicated on existing transit</td>
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<td>- John, talk to Lynn Jacobs, second round for SJV</td>
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<td>Attorney General will sue local governments unless they are able to cut a deal and reduce GHG emissions.</td>
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| “Blueprint project feels like there are evil state people holding a gun to my head unless we approve a 25% increase in density or twice as many people per 2 acre lot.” |

| Move Highway 63 out of downtown Visalia. |

| Preserve a short-line rail line. |

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<td>CT, developer, partnerships, not your father’s Caltrans</td>
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<td>- Right now show 3 E’s outcomes and we’ll fund it; it’s cheaper to build what we don’t want to build</td>
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| Caltrans is still operating in the old way – must change. Need to scale transportation projects to human scale. |