

SB 375 AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: CLIMATE CHANGE, ECONOMY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Wednesday, April 1st, 2009 Ontario, California

Summary

Session 1 –

Southern California, Climate Change, and the Federal Stimulus: What's Behind SB 375?

Introduction:

Hasan Ikhata, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

- We shouldn't need SB 375.
- Make land use and transportation linkages to meet growth needs.
- SB 375 is not seen as a planning bill but an environmental bill; it's not written well, it's confusing. Fix-it legislation is coming and will help improve the ability regional agencies to respond constructively.

Gary Gallegos, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

- Is SB 375 a GHG bill, or a VMT bill? It's a GHG bill. It doesn't have to be just about VMT. It really can help to better align economic, environmental and other policy goals for the region.

Rick Bishop, Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG)

- Sustainability is something that we all want for our communities.
- It is a logical premise to improve land use and link them to transportation systems.
- WRCOG has been working with SANDAG on the Inter-Regional Partnership to improve strategies for reducing inter-regional trips.

State Panel:

Jim Bourgart, California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency

- We need to take a lesson from the depression-era WPA and build projects with lasting benefit.
- Environmental opportunities that help the economy will take priority.
- California is well positioned to receive a large portion of the \$8 billion high speed rail funds. We need to collaborate on a Regional Economic Plan to better compete for federal funds and show why our region is the most qualified for funds

Lynn Jacobs, California Department of Housing and Community Development

- Blueprint laid the groundwork for SB 375 and is doing something very important in our communities – bringing people together to plan for the future.
- Jobs/housing balance is the key to economic success

Session 2 –

A Regional Wake-up Call: Where is SB 375 Taking Us?

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Steve Messner, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)

- Climate change is the challenge of our lifetime
- California is on the leading edge of efforts to address climate change
- There are 2 sides to addressing climate change: mitigation of greenhouse gases, and adaptation to climate change impacts
- The San Diego region is uniquely at risk because of temperature and geography
- The San Diego Foundation commissioned a science-based report to identify climate risks, develop a vision, and generate a sense of urgency
- Primary question of this Focus 2050 Study: What will our region look like in 2050 due to climate change, if current trends continue?
- Major findings – in 2050, if current trends continue:
 - San Diego's climate will be hotter and drier
 - Sea level will be 12-18 inches higher
 - We will face a severe water shortage
 - Wildfires will be more frequent and intense
 - Public health will be at risk, especially among our elderly and children
 - Native plant and animal species will be lost forever
 - We will not be able to meet our energy needs
- Full summary report, technical assessment, and other relevant information is available at the San Diego Foundation website: www.sdfoundation.org

Bob Leiter, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

- California legislation at the forefront of the climate change discussion
 - Executive Order S-3-05
 - AB 32 (Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006)
 - SB 375 (2008)
- SB 375 is an extension or formalization of the long-range regional planning we've been doing in the SANDAG region for some time
- In San Diego, about 40% of regional greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation sector (cars and light trucks)
- Three main strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and corresponding related legislation:
 - Vehicle Technology – AB 1493/Pavley Standard
 - Fuels – Low Carbon Fuel Standard
 - Vehicle Use /Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) – SB 375
- SB 375 – 5 main provisions
 - Creates regional targets for greenhouse gas emissions
 - Requires regional planning agencies create Sustainable Communities Strategy

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- Connects regional housing allocation planning with Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Requires regional transportation funding decisions be consistent with RTP
- Streamlines and creates new CEQA exemptions for certain projects
- SANDAG will be the first MPO in the state to implement an RTP update consistent with SB 375

Michael Woo, City of Los Angeles Planning Commission

- This is a global issue that's coming home.
- There are things we can do better. Our Commission could reduce VMT more, e.g., through reducing parking for discretionary projects
- Use SB 375 for more sustainable communities in Southern California. Local government retains land use decisions. There is no one-size-fits-all.
- We need to link climate policy to economic recovery, social justice and local aspirations.
- AB 32 and SB 375: "What you need to know"
 - Emissions measured in MMTCO₂E, or million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
 - 2020 target for emissions (1990 levels) = 427 MMTCO₂E
 - 2020 emissions based on "business as usual" = 596 MMTCO₂E
 - Transport sector is largest single source of GHG emissions
 - Total reduction target for this sector ("Regional transportation-related GHG targets) = 5 MMTCO₂E
- City Planning in LA
 - Legacy of a weak department beset by politicized process; today, a department in resurgence
 - Strategy is to concentrate new density near transit stations and corridors, sparing existing low-density neighborhoods
- Climate Plan partnership – <http://www.climateplanca.org>

Session 3 –

Economic Development and the Future of So California: Housing, Infrastructure, and Business

Mary Lee, PolicyLink

- "Equity" is not the same as "equality"
- SB 375 provides an opportunity to address regional equity
- Use a regional equity framework to make EJ and social justice central to regional development

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- We can do good while doing well by promoting housing development that meets a range of needs, preventing displacement and connecting jobs with housing
- Mixed-income development received a favorable response during a PolicyLink listening session
- Engage the community and avoid jargon
- Maximize development near transit
- Link SB 375 with other initiatives
- Integrate transit, affordable housing, open space access

Wallace Walrod, Orange County Business Council

- Missing piece of SB 375 – analysis of economic impacts of the bill
- Do we have the right tools to assess benefits and costs of SB 375 decisions?
- Potential for unintended consequences; economic competitiveness must remain at center of discussion
- How do we use SB 375 to create jobs? What kind of jobs do we want to create?
- Is there the political will for more housing? (i.e., Irvine and Anaheim have the will)
- Market forces and political will are both needed to inject more housing in key areas

Steve Doyle, Brookfield Homes

- The biggest issue for developers is understanding and measuring risk.
- Positives of SB 375 (reducing risk):
 - Brings together major land use policy processes (RTP, RHNA, comprehensive plans, zoning)
 - Extends anti-NIMBY protections for affordable housing and high-density development
 - Brings zoning and general plans into consistency
 - CEQA streamlining
- Big concern – infrastructure deficiencies in older neighborhoods that will be densified
- Infrastructure is a big concern; it will create problems to increase density on transit corridors that have aging, deficient infrastructure
- There's a shift in buyer acceptance, a change in housing desires, toward more attached product.
- Master Plan communities are now probably passé. Include commercial, industrial, city uses.
- SB 375 has benefits.
- SB 375 looks at land use plans for the next 30-50 years, well beyond the current economic cycle.

Andrew Poat, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation

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- We are in the 3rd generation of planning that focuses on communities
- Infrastructure funding can help create political will for land use/development changes
- Plans need to harness and capitalize on market forces
- The housing solution will be a private sector solution
- The power of market forces trumps good planning
- SB 375 needs to add certainty to the development process

Steve PonTell, La Jolla Institute

- Things to consider when addressing SB 375:
 - (1) Fiscalization of land use – need to understand the local fiscal structure and dynamics of local government operations
 - (2) How local economic areas interact with each other and with the region; county boundaries versus logical regional areas
 - (3) Market forces are important: % of housing that is high density varies by region (65% in LA, 50% in OC, 35% Inland Empire)
 - (4) Local diversification of communities must be maintained – communities with the most life stage choices and opportunities will be most complete
 - (5) Until 2006, liability for construction defects was a disincentive for attached housing products—lawsuits were the mechanism. As of 2006, developers can address construction defects of attached products through settlements before going to trial.

Session 4 –

Southern California's Local Government Response to AB 32 and SB 375

Richard Katz, Board Member, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

- Commuters understand the issues, they voted for Measure R
- We need to move beyond parochial winners and losers
- Jobs-housing balance is not attainable; need to look at the regional nature of solutions
- Prop 13 (caps taxes at 1% of property's assessed value) and Prop 98 (dedicates 40% of state general fund to schools) need to be on the table

Mayor Lori Holt Pfeiler, City of Escondido

- Visions are hard to come by and progress takes time, but regional comprehensive planning in the San Diego region is making real progress
- Elected officials need to sit at the table and take the time to get it

Bob Johnson, Assistant City Manager, City of Temecula

- SB 375 is a gift; embrace it and take advantage of it
- There are opportunities for affordable housing that are part of SB 375

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- During an economic downturn, NIMBYism goes away
- There are a lot of dollars out there, but we need to coordinate and re-focus
- Identify goals and priorities, consolidate and work as a unit

Supervisor Linda Parks, Ventura County

- Citizens get it, elected officials take more time
- SB 375 forces us to think regionally and can get COGs and regional transportation agencies working together
- We need to focus on cities, nodes, and food security – protect the open spaces and agricultural lands
- Ventura County has an urban growth boundary to help use land use patterns to reduce GHG emissions

Mayor Ron Loveridge, City of Riverside

- The 21st century is the century of regions
- We need to change our mental map of the U.S. – consider as a “metro nation”
- AB 32/SB 375 ask us to integrate planning areas that have always operated separately on parallel tracks
- Embrace SB 375 as an opportunity and as a process for a conversation
- Read the CARB AB 32 Scoping Plan:
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/psp.pdf>
- Read *Changing Metropolitan America* (Hudnut 2009)
- We need to leverage economic stimulus funds to do good, coordinated planning
- Success will be measured by what happens on the streets

Session 5 –

Luncheon Speaker and Audience Response

Dr. Kofi Sefa-Boakye, City of Compton Redevelopment Agency

- Sudden economic resurgence in central cities
- Internal institutional transformation part of the solution

Councilmember Carl Morehouse, City of Ventura

- Ballot initiatives are often a reaction to issues not addressed by government
- Housing is not built by cities because it doesn't generate enough funding via sales tax
- Why do we continue to waste taxpayer dollars on wildfires and other national disaster rescue for unsustainable, high-risk land use development patterns?
- In order to get people interested in any endeavor, you first have to identify the incentives for them to participate