

**PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF DECEMBER 12, 2008
MINUTES**

ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Spring called the Planning Committee meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Other members in attendance were Commissioners Azumbrado, Chu, Dodd, Giacopini, Haggerty, Lempert, Worth and Yeager. Commissioner Bates and Tissier also attended.

CONSENT CALENDAR: Minutes of November 3, 2008 and November 14, 2008

Commissioner Worth moved approval, Commissioner Lempert seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION 2035: a) Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Overview

Ms. Ashley Nguyen presented a PowerPoint presentation on the T2035 EIR. Ms. Nguyen also summarized the potential impacts that the T2035 Plan would have in the areas of transportation, air quality and climate change compared to existing conditions (2006) and future conditions (2035). When compared to the No Project alternative in 2035, she explained that the T2035 Plan performed better in all transportation and air quality emission issue areas.

Ms. Nguyen also reported on the analysis of potentially feasible alternatives to the Draft T2035 Plan – No Project alternative, Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection Emphasis alternative, Heavy Maintenance Climate Protection Emphasis + Pricing alternative, and Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection Emphasis + Land Use alternative. She noted that the Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection Emphasis + Pricing alternative and the Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection + Land Use alternative performed the best amongst the alternatives in terms of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person; they also decrease all of the criteria pollutants as well as reduce CO2 emissions. She stated that the reason that these two alternatives are the best performers amongst alternatives evaluated is: 1) pricing strategies increase the cost of driving and in turn reduce auto trips and increase transit, walk and bike trips; therefore there is less VMT per person that result in lower emissions across the board; and 2) the land use strategy calls for a more balanced allocation of jobs and housing; locating jobs and housing near transit helps reduce the number and the length of auto trips and also increases transit, walk and bike trips.

Ms. Nguyen also noted that the Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection Emphasis + Pricing alternative was identified as the environmentally superior alternative, primarily because it has fewer construction impacts; demonstrated superior performance in energy and climate change areas; has potential flexibility to adjust pricing controls to current needs; and pricing can be implemented in the nearer-term so that environmental benefits can be realized sooner than land use changes.

In conclusion, she stated that staff will release the Draft EIR, along with the Draft T2035 Plan, on December 19, 2008. The 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR starts on December 19, 2008 and ends on February 2, 2009. Though a public hearing is not required by CEQA for the EIR, staff welcomes written and oral comments during the public hearings on the Draft

T2035 Plan that are slated for the January 28 Commission meeting in Oakland and for the January 27 public hearing/workshop in San Francisco. Adoption of the T2035 Plan and Final EIR is slated for March 13, 2009 Planning Committee and March 25, 2009 Commission meetings.

Commissioner Lempert asked if the Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection alternatives include the same assumptions. Ms. Nguyen stated that the Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection alternative serves as a base for the other two alternatives where one adds pricing strategies and the other alternative adds land use strategies. Commissioner Lempert expressed her interest in exploring the feasibility of pricing mechanisms particularly in light of the recent actions taken by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

Commissioner Worth suggested that staff provide information on commute patterns to help understand the nature of future travel and trends. She also commented that there are opportunities to address land use when we move forward with SB 375, and commented on the lessons learned from Contra Costa County's work on Shaping the Future. She observed that cities must be more intimately engaged in upcoming land use discussions.

Commissioner Azumbrado asked if the public would be able to see the formulas and assumptions within the plan or is it within a software package? Ms. Nguyen stated that staff will include several tables and descriptive narratives explaining the data in the EIR. She noted that more detailed data will be included in various RTP supplemental reports. Commissioner Azumbrado asked if there was an evaluation of high speed rail impacts on encouraging growth in the Central Valley? Ms. Nguyen stated that high speed rail was not evaluated in the EIR.

Commissioner Yeager requested staff to think about how to engage the cities in the public review process since so much of the projected land use changes are going to be in the cities general plan and will determine what projects they approve. He also asked how staff will incorporate the CARB green house gas emission reduction strategies. Mr. Steve Heminger stated that to date most of the progress staff has made on criteria pollutants have been technological, which have been driven by CARB and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He stated that infrastructure doesn't matter a whole lot when it comes to VMT, and emission reductions - pricing and land use matter a whole lot more. Staff is making quite a bit of progress on the ground with changes in land development in the region. He noted that they have not made as much progress on pricing.

Commissioner Spring called for public comment:

- Mr. David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF, stated that this EIR could be challenged in court next year resulting in a conformity lapse. He noted that the Transportation 2035 Plan will result in increases in vehicle miles traveled, and thus CEQA has heightened relevance. He stated that staff rejected the scoping comments from his organization as well as the Attorney General's, including re-examination of "committed projects". He observed two specific problems with the EIR: (1) the No Project alternative included projects not yet in construction but which the Commission has discretion over, and (2) no maximum emission reduction alternative is included.
- Ms. Carli Paine, TransForm, stated that it's good that heavy maintenance and climate protection alternatives were evaluated, and would have liked to have seen an alternative that combines pricing and land use with this alternative. She also noted that it is

important to recognize that the aggressive pricing proposal is for modeling purposes only, and that the findings should not preclude pursuing new pricing strategies.

b. Equity Analysis

Mr. James Corless introduced the T2035 Equity Analysis, and noted that the purpose of the analysis is to evaluate whether low-income and minority communities share equitably in benefits of the T2035 Plan investments without bearing disproportionate share of burdens.

Ms. Jennifer Yeamans summarized the findings, and preliminary results. In conclusion, she stated that there are higher RTP expenditures for low-income households than other households; similar or greater absolute benefits accrue to communities of concern than the remainder of the region. The Plan helps close the "accessibility gap" between auto and transit for both communities of concern and the remainder of the region - but overall autos still provide greater access to jobs and other activities than transit. There are also greater benefits for communities of concern and the remainder of the region that come from more compact land use than transportation investments alone, and combined housing and transportation affordability measures proved difficult to forecast, and may be more relevant as a shorter-term measure broken down neighborhood by neighborhood.

Commissioner Spring called Mr. Carlos Castellanos, Minority Citizens Advisory Committee (MCAC) Chair, to provide equity analysis comments to the Planning Committee. Mr. Castellanos stated that the Committee feels the T2035 Equity Analysis does not give an accurate reflection of how the proposed projects will affect communities of concern. He stated that they strongly believe that MTC should continue its work with the MCAC to develop new methodologies in order to create a new and better analytical framework for performing an equity analysis in the next long-range transportation plan. He stated that it would be more helpful if the financial analysis could be broken out by transit mode and/or project type, as well as by county. He also commented that they would like to see the emissions analysis disaggregated into smaller geographic areas, possibly by zip code or minimally by concentrated communities of concern. Regarding affordability, MCAC believes the assumptions made regarding future housing costs are faulty, as they do not take into account the natural volatility of the housing market. Mr. Castellanos mentioned that while the Land Use scenario seems to offer greater benefit to communities of concern than the other alternative, the specific policy assumptions behind this scenario have not been made clear to the committee; MCAC recommended that a "snapshot" analysis might help give a more complete picture of the state of mobility within communities of concern by focusing in greater depth on current demographic, economic, and transportation data.

Commissioner Chu stated that it would be helpful to separate the analysis between the low-income in the region vs. minority populations within the region. He also stated that it would be interesting to know see what the population is as the percentage of the general population within these zones.

Commissioner Bates stated that it would be helpful to align the data and follow what's happening with the communities of concern with what the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is working on with its CARE Program.

Commissioner Haggerty expressed his concern with the communities of concern, and asked staff how they pick the boundary for a community of concern? Ms. Yeamans stated that is they are

based on travel analysis zones, similar in size to a census tract. Commissioner Haggerty stated that the communities of concern analyses need to be drilled down even further - looking at a census tract is too big. He noted that being low income in Livermore is much harder than being low income in Oakland because Oakland residents have access to transit, county hospitals, clinics, etc. Mr. Heminger stated that staff ought to reconceptualize what they are doing with the equity analysis. He noted that one big constraint is that the current regional travel demand model does not do a good job of analyzing small projects in small geographic areas; staff would need to look for other tools to assess localized issues

Commissioner Worth requested data that assesses the demographic analysis by mode.

Commissioner Azumbrado commented on affordability, and expressed interest in how this could be used with the goal to reduce the combined housing and transportation cost by 10%.

Commissioner Spring called for public comment:

- Ms. Lindsay Imai, Urban Habitat, submitted a letter which entails how to improve upon the existing analysis. She was glad to see that the financial analysis is included, and sees improvement in the metric used for the emissions analysis. She noted that the equity analysis does not consider any alternatives to the project, which could be improved between now and the final equity analysis.
- Mr. David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF, stated that there still isn't a working definition of equity and is impossible to have working metrics without that. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the equity analysis.
- Ms. Carli Paine, TransForm, stated that she is aware of a new proposed snapshot analysis that would document existing transportation conditions in communities of concern and be updated regularly to look at things like accessibility, affordability, environment and air quality and safety. This analysis would be more appropriate.
- Ms. Diana Dorinson stated that a combined pricing and land use alternative would be the most powerful tool to influence transportation outcomes in the region, but those particular scenarios would tend to have a very negative impact on communities of concern and low-income people. She suggested staff to further develop regional programs that support these communities.

Commissioner Spring agreed with Mr. Heminger on staff looking at this analysis differently. He would like to see more separation between poverty/low-income and minorities, and have a discussion with the committee to get input. Mr. Heminger agreed, but did state that the committee needs to be mindful that there is a fairly elaborate legal artifice around minority questions with federal civil rights and environmental justice requirements. There is much less of one around low-income populations.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 9, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.

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