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Executive Director

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Deputy Executive Director, Policy

Andrew B. Fremier
Deputy Executive Director, Operations

MTC PLANNING COMMITTEE
March 13, 2015
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Chair Spering called the MTC Planning Committee meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. Planning Committee members in attendance were: Commissioners Aguirre, Azumbrado, Giacomini, Haggerty, Liccardo, Mackenzie and Pierce. Commission Chair Cortese was present in his ex-officio voting member capacity. Commissioner Bates, Luce, Tissier, and Worth were present as ad hoc non-voting members of the Committee.

ABAG Administrative Committee members in attendance were: Cortese, Eklund, Gupta, Haggerty, Liccardo, Luce, Mar, Pierce, and Spering.

Note: Commissioner Cortese and Luce were deputized at the start of the meeting to make a quorum of the MTC Planning Committee.

CONSENT CALENDAR: a) Minutes of February 13, 2015; b) Priority Development Area (PDA) Assessment Update

Commissioner Mackenzie moved approval of the Consent Calendar and Commissioner Luce seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

STATE OF THE REGION REPORT AND VITAL SIGNS INITIATIVE (Phase 2: Land, People, and Economic)

Ms. Cynthia Kroll provided an overview of ABAG's recently released State of the Region report and Ms. Kristen Carnarius presented a preview of the new webpages included in the next phase of MTC's Vital Signs performance monitoring initiative.

Committee discussion:

- Commissioner Aguirre stated that people are moving out of the region because of wages, displacement and high rents and asked staff if this report takes that into account. Ms. Kroll stated that they are starting to look at the nuances of movement of people into and out of the region. Staff analysis of migration trends shows that when people move, they are most likely to move to another home in the same county, but their next most likely destination is someplace completely beyond the region, rather than to another Bay Area county.
- ABAG Administrative committee member Gupta commented that the data is not completely current – some of it is annual data with 2013 being the most recent year available, so that some of the conditions such as affordability may be getting worse because prices are continuing to rise. Ms. Kroll concurred with

this, but also pointed out that wages are beginning to rise, and the number of middle wage jobs is increasing once again. These trends could help with affordability. She commented that nevertheless with rising interest rates and home prices, staff may be at a low point for homeowner affordability.

- Commissioner Sperring asked staff what they mean by “current”. Ms. Carnarius stated that the website will typically include the most recent data available. She explained that sometimes there is a lag between when data is collected by the original source and when it becomes available to the public.
- Commissioner Sperring also asked if staff hopes to have housing permit data in real time. Ms. Carnarius mentioned that it is not part of this release.
- Commissioner Worth commented that it would be helpful to know what the job levels are – how the report measures low, medium and high wages – and whether these are “fully loaded” jobs (do they include health benefits or pensions, for example). She also would like to see how all of this relates to housing affordability by age groups. Ms. Kroll stated that in terms of wages, high wage jobs are those jobs paying 30 percent above the average or higher, low wage jobs that pay 30 percent below the average or less. Middle measures used in the report were from the Bureau of Labor Statistics occupation employment series and do not include benefits.
- Commissioner Worth also asked if staff can track those wages with median income and how this relates to the cost of living. Ms. Kroll stated that they would have to use a different data source to go into detail at the county level, as this data source is at the more aggregate metropolitan level.
- Commissioner Haggerty commented on the Port of Oakland, and noted that the boundaries of the mega region are much greater than what we acknowledge. He stated that staff should acknowledge data outside of the region. Ms. Kroll stated that this is certainly something they have in mind and noted that staff met with San Joaquin and Modesto counties. Ms. Carnarius also pointed to the Traffic Volumes at Regional Gateways page on the Vital Signs website as an example of monitoring traffic entering and exiting the Bay Area.
- Commissioner Haggerty stated that it is important that San Joaquin and Modesto be incorporated into our work, and asked if the federal government recognizes Tracy and Modesto as part of this region, isn’t there a way that we would do the same? Mr. Heminger noted that the question bears some investigation, and that staff is working on it.
- Commissioner Liccardo asked if the commute mode share data is self-reported or based on transit agencies. Ms. Carnarius responded that the commute mode share data comes from the American Community Survey and is self-reported. She noted that data from the American Community Survey is subject the Census Bureau’s data quality standards and is commonly used.
- Commissioner Bates stated that the income issue is a major problem, and asked if the analysis has started as to how the region will sustain economic growth if income levels continue to lag. Ms. Kroll noted that they are looking at how job growth, population growth, incomes and housing prices are inter-related. The longer answer is that this is not a simple relationship. If jobs are growing but lower wage workers cannot afford housing here, they may take on long commutes to work in one part of the region but live in another part of the region or outside of the region. She commented that the Vital Signs team has discussed

whether it is possible to develop a housing plus transportation affordability measure but that this is difficult to do with the data available. Nevertheless, they are very aware of these concerns in their analysis and research.

- Commissioner Spring asked if staff can measure the impacts of seniors staying in the workforce longer. Ms. Kroll referred to the Public Policy Institute of California report that states there will be a skilled labor force shortage. This labor shortage will counterbalance some of the concern with seniors delaying retirement and the effect on opportunities for younger workers. In fact, she said, the focus should be on training people to move into middle wage jobs so that they will be available when the openings occur through retirement. Commissioner Spring clarified that his concern was with people not having the senior professional and manager opportunities as older workers stayed longer in those positions. Ms. Kroll replied that is indeed a different concern that merits further attention.

PLAN BAY AREA PUBLIC OUTREACH UPDATE

Ms. Ellen Griffin and Mr. Brad Paul provided an overview of the approach to the first round of Public Workshops and related outreach efforts for Plan Bay Area.

Committee discussion:

- Commissioner Spring asked if there is a plan to meet with MTC Commissioners and ABAG board members prior to the outreach meetings. Ms. Griffin stated that staff can do this.
- Commissioner Pierce stated that ABAG's Administrative Committee had a presentation from Barbary Coast Consulting, under contract to assist with public engagement communications, and asked consultants from that firm who were in attendance to provide an overview of the importance of using nontechnical language that most residents can understand. Ms. Amber Shipley and Mr. Jaime Ross of Barbary Coast spoke of the tasks they are working on to assist staff to create clear and compelling materials for the upcoming open houses.
- Commissioner Haggerty stated that the only outreach that is in Alameda County is in Oakland, which is too far away for people in the eastern part of the county to have a comprehensive discussion on how the Plan could support them.
- Commissioner Mackenzie asked staff how the comments and suggestions will be recorded and addressed. Ms. Griffin stated that staff hopes to have the meetings in May so that they can report back in June with a summary of key comments heard.

Public comment:

- Mr. Matt Vandersluis, Greenbelt Alliance, noted that the open house formats work very well.
- Mr. Rich Hedges noted that he attended many of the Plan Bay Area meetings and there is an organized effort against regional planning. Staff need to enlist people who can help articulate the importance of Plan to Bay Area to local communities.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ken Bukowski noted that staff need to find ways to capture money for transportation. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 10, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.