

## Summary of Bay Area Business Coalition/Joint Policy Committee Meeting December 3, 2012

On December 3, 2012, nine representatives<sup>1</sup> from the JPC agencies met with nine members<sup>2</sup> of the Bay Area Business Coalition at the office of BCDC in San Francisco. The meeting had two purposes: first, to give the business community an opportunity to provide early input on its goals and concerns as the Joint Policy Committee works to prepare the Bay Area for climate change impacts; and second, to learn the views of the business community on what elements should be included in a regional economic development strategy. The Joint Policy Committee has not yet decided what role, if any, it should play in the formulation of a regional economic development strategy.

### Climate Change

Mr. Wunderman acknowledged that the business community will be greatly impacted by climate change, and particularly sea level rise, but climate change is not the top issue for the business community. Nevertheless, the business community should be involved from the outset in deciding what research is needed, what realistic adaptation options are available, how these options will be evaluated, and which options will be selected. The work being done in other regions should be investigated. In response to a request from Mr. Goldzband, Mr. Wunderman agreed to provide a list of business leaders who are engaged in climate change.

Mr. Campos agreed that the business community needs to be involved in the formulation of a regional climate strategy. He stressed that the overall goal of the strategy should be to proactively get something done to deal with climate change rather than to mitigate climate impacts or to make it more costly or difficult to carry out economic development. Studying the impacts of climate change planning may be as important as studying the impacts of climate change. He added that the focus of climate change planning should be on resilience now and in the future.

Mr. Mielke said the business community finds it difficult to deal with impacts of climate change that may not be experienced until 50 years from now. Therefore, individual businesses are not actively engaged with climate adaptation. On the other hand, storm surge and flooding at high tides is a problem now. He recommended that a list of priority projects for dealing with these problems be formulated.

Ms. Engel noted that there is no monolithic "business community." Rather, there are different actors, interests, and organizations. The business development organizations play important roles in determining options for investment and setting regional priorities and in organizing collective actions. Mr. Campos recommended that the JPC should contact local chambers of commerce to gain a broader perspective on the views of the business community. Ms. Engel

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<sup>1</sup> Diana Bautista, San Mateo County Economic Development Association; Linda Best, Contra Costa Council; Paul Campos, Building Industry Association of the Bay Area; Karen Engel, East Bay Economic Development Alliance; Genevieve Herreria, Bay Area Council; Catherine Lyons, Bay Area Council; Mike Mielke, Silicon Valley Leadership Group; Ariel Stephens, Bay Planning Coalition; and Jim Wunderman, Bay Area Council.

<sup>2</sup> Miriam Chion, ABAG; Ann Flemer, MTC; Steve Goldbeck, BCDC; Larry Goldzband, BCDC; Ken Kirkey, MTC; Joe LaClair, BCDC; Jeff McKay, BAAQMD; Bruce Riordan, JPC; and Will Travis, JPC.

agreed and recommended that local businesses also be involved and that geographic representation is also important.

Other input from the business representatives:

- When developing a sea level rise strategy or other action on climate adaptation, all options should be placed “on the table” for discussion.
- To get business community involvement in climate adaptation discussions, the focus should be how this directly relates to economic development.
- The business community will be more inclined to participate if the discussions are focused on actual projects; if it is clear that something will actually happen.
- Developing a compelling and science-based “story” on Bay Area climate impacts, strategies and barriers will be helpful for getting business participation. The story should focus on threats to things we depend on for Bay Area economic success. Group members indicated their interest in helping to review the draft story and providing comment.
- Work with sub-regional business groups (North Bay Council, Contra Costa Council, SAMCEDA, East Bay EDA, etc.) to identify possible individual business leaders as participants in the adaptation planning process.
- The business community can help the public agencies to engage with experts on financing strategies, insurance and other related adaptation topics.

### **Economic Development Strategy**

Ms. Engel said there is broad consensus in the business community that a regional economic development strategy is needed, and the strategy should be developed by the business community. The strategy should be built from the subregional work that is already being undertaken by a business advisory council to the JPC. The Bay Area Council Economic Institute, which as representatives from business, academia, government and community organizations on its board of trustees, provide a good structure for such a council. The advisory council should provide input to the JPC on actions government can take to advance the regional economic strategy. Thus, the strategy would be a partnership between the JPC and the business community, but the business community should have the lead role in this partnership.

Mr. Campos added that the regional framework provided by the Bay Area Council Economic Institute is a good starting point, but that the strategy should not limit itself to dealing with regional issues. He cited immigration reform as a national issue that has significant impacts in the Bay Area. Therefore, the regional strategy should address issues such as this.

Ms. Best noted that for any regional economic strategy to be effective, it must have detailed local actions rather than just broad regional policies.

Mr. Kirkey said the work that is already being done, such as the prosperity plan being developed under the HUD grant, should not be ignored. Ms. Chion agreed and said the challenge will be figuring out how to put the pieces together.

Mr. Mielke stated that the economic development strategy and the climate adaptation/resilience strategy should be coordinated and synced.

Ms. Engel noted that all three E's (Equity, Environment and Economy) need to be addressed. She recommended that the HUD grant should focus on Equity, the Climate and Energy Resilience Project should focus on the Environment, and the business community should focus on the Economy. The three efforts should be integrated before they are implemented. She opined that in order for this process to be effective, it will be expensive and funding for this effort will have to be identified.

In response to a question from Ms. Flemer about the cost of such an effort, Ms. Lyon said the Bay Area Council Economic Institute has estimated it would cost about \$500,000 to formulate a regional economic development strategy over a one year period.