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MTC PLANNING COMMITTEE/ABAG ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
July 13, 2012
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Vice Chair Halsted called the MTC Planning Committee meeting to order at 9:42 a.m. Planning Committee members in attendance were: Commissioners Green, Haggerty, Liccardo, Mackenzie and Mullin. Commission Chair Tissier was present in her ex-officio voting member capacity. Other Commissioners present as ad hoc non-voting members of the Committee were Campos and Wiener.

ABAG Administrative Committee members in attendance were: Directors Gingles, Gioia, Green, Haggerty, Liccardo, and Luce.

CONSENT CALENDAR: a) Minutes of June 8, 2012

Commissioner Mackenzie moved approval of the Consent Calendar, Commissioner Liccardo seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

PLAN BAY AREA: Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Feedback and Alternatives

Ms. Ashley Nguyen stated that during late June and early July MTC and ABAG hosted five public outreach meetings and received a wealth of comments as well as hundreds of letters and emails. She touched on four key themes on what staff heard during the scoping process: 1) Significant concerns expressed by the public about the legitimacy, the impacts and influence of Plan Bay Area; 2) The EIR analysis needs to assess the feasibility of some of the earlier vision-based land use forecasts; 3) A wide range of alternatives should be analyzed incorporating the feedback particularly from the Business, Equity, and Environmental groups; and 4) CEQA's streamlining will support the envisioned growth patterns proposed by the Plan and will be beneficial to local jurisdictions, but it must be considered carefully.

Ms. Nguyen commented that the scoping process has been helpful in refining staff's thinking on the preliminary alternatives as well as getting stakeholders' direct input on crafting two of the five alternatives.

She also stated that over the past year and a half, staff has conducted two rounds of scenario planning. She noted that as staff moves forward with the EIR, staff proposed to use a policy-based approach, that will describe the land use and transportation policies to be tested within each alternative.

Ms. Nguyen explained the integrated land use/travel modeling systems to be used in defining and assessing the EIR alternatives. UrbanSim is an economic/land use model created in partnership with University of California, Berkeley and MTC's activity-based travel model has been developed over the past few years. She also explained the specific land use and transportation policies to be tested within each of the five proposed EIR alternatives, which are 1) No Project; 2) Jobs-Housing Connection Project; 3) Transit Priority Focus; 4) Enhanced Network of Communities, which was defined by the business community; and 5) Environmental, Equity and Jobs, which was defined by the equity and environmental communities. She recommended that the joint committees refer the five alternatives for final approval at the July 19th special joint meeting of the Commission and ABAG Executive Board.

Committee comment:

- Supervisor Luce stated that he doesn't know if staff can label any of these alternatives – other than the ones that are already based an existing land use policy – as realistic alternatives. Ms. Nguyen stated the committee needs to look at the five alternatives and determine which elements of those alternatives may be called into question in terms of feasibility and consider advancing those that they believe pass the feasibility test. Mr. Heminger also stated that the committee can mix and match individual elements of each of the alternatives.
- Supervisor Gioia asked if the legal analysis in the EIR will be sufficient enough if the committee mixes and matches individual components. Ms. Tina Thomas, Thomas Law Group, stated that yes, the committee can pick and choose amongst the elements, and if the committee picks a hybrid, staff will make sure the EIR covers elements points and prepare findings accordingly.
- Commissioner Liccardo commented on Alternative 3 and asked why staff would scale back the Regional Express Lanes if the goal in that alternative would be an improvement of an environmental impact? Ms. Nguyen stated that the Regional Express Lanes Network is largely intact because it does include both the HOV lane conversions as well as all the gap closures. Overall, while this alternative does scale back widenings for express lanes on I-80 and I-580, the feasibility and viability of Regional Express Lane Network as a whole remains because the main elements of the network are still there.
- Commissioner Haggerty stated that it seems the assumption is the Express Lane Network will become growth inducing. Mr. Heminger stated that the question staff has heard from various commenters is whether the express lane network should focus just on the core of the system and largely on conversion or should it contemplate the fact that the network will eventually connect into the adjoining region's network. He stated that what staff is proposing is to look at the alternative – it's not a suggestion that the alternative be endorsed.
- Commissioner Mackenzie asked if the UrbanSim model is being programmed to test two different population and job growth projections. Ms. Nguyen stated that there are two different regional growth forecasts being tested. All alternatives will use the regional growth forecast used by ABAG with the exception of Alternative 4 which will test a different regional growth forecast that provides a housing opportunity for every employed resident. The UrbanSim model takes those regional growth forecasts as inputs into the model – it does not make variations in any of the forecasts itself while it's going

through the simulation process. Commissioner Mackenzie also questioned CEQA's streamlining and asked if it's the opinion of MTC's legal counsel that what staff is proposing is consistent with the statute. Ms. Thomas responded yes. She also stated that an exemption is one way to streamline, and the other way is what's called a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA), which is the most likely tool to be used for qualifying projects.

- Commissioner Green stated that there will most likely be an Alternative 6 which will be a weaving of the best elements of the other five alternatives. He also noted that the Alameda County Transportation Commission sent a letter to MTC expressing their concerns, which he summarized, and asked staff if they had a chance to look at these concerns. Ms. Nguyen stated that staff is sorting through all the comments received and will take them into consideration during the EIR process.
- Supervisor Gioia stated that all the different alternatives really came out of discussions from the past meetings, input from organizations and advocates, and is pleased that staff is studying these alternatives. He also asked that if the analysis is less thorough on some of the alternatives, then how does that impact staff's ability to pull from that into a preferred scenario. Ms. Thomas stated that there will be a slightly lesser degree of analysis on the alternatives, but will be sufficient enough so the Committee members can pick and choose.
- Commissioner Mackenzie questioned if staff creates an Alternative 6 will there be any benefit of having it run through the UrbanSim process. Ms. Nguyen stated that staff will fully assess the alternative and make sure it's adequately covered in the EIR. He also suggested that Commissioners would benefit from a classroom-style briefing on the workings of UrbanSim. Ms. Nguyen said that staff will make those arrangements.
- Commissioner Campos commented on Alternative 5 and asked if the modeling will give the Committee all the information that will be needed. Ms. Nguyen stated that staff feels confident that they will get results across the board equally for all the alternatives.
- Commissioner Luce stated that staff needs to go in with their eyes open and scrutinize what they are doing and ask themselves if this really makes sense, and if it is politically viable.

Public comment:

- Ms. Linda Best, Contra Costa Council, urged the committee to include in the EIR assessment the alternative 4 that she had submitted in a letter to staff.
- Mr. Paul Campos, Building Industry Association, agreed with Ms. Best's comments, and also thanked staff for reaching out to the Building Industry community in creating a wide range of EIR alternatives. He expressed his support with including Alternative 4.
- Mr. Manolo Gonzalez-Estay, TransForm, expressed his support for the mix-and-match of alternatives. He commented on the public participation of the scoping process, and noted that it was unfortunate that four of the five public scoping meetings were held during the middle of the day.
- Ms. Catherine Lyons, Bay Area Council, stated the Bay Area Council looks forward to continuing to work with MTC and ABAG on potentially increasing streamlining opportunities and identifying and reducing impediments to this kind of development to make sure that the Plan can be fully implemented.

- Mr. Rob Means questioned whether this Plan is going to reduce the CO2 emissions by 19% eight years from now, and by 55% within 25 years. He suggested that when staff looks at transit portion that they consider automated transit networks - consider advanced transportation options.
- Ms. Parisa Fatehi, Public Advocates, stated that the Draft EIR should analyze the distribution of the environmental impacts to ensure that they are fairly distributed across all segments of the populations. She encouraged staff to make sure that the models/tools that are being used for analysis in the EIR are sensitive to the differences not only in behavior but in policy impacts on vulnerable communities.

Commissioner Mackenzie, MTC, moved that these alternatives go forward to the full Commission for their approval. Commissioner Liccardo seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Gioia, ABAG, moved that these alternatives be referred to the ABAG Executive Board for approval. Mr. Gingles seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 14, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.