

Date: September 14, 2007
To: Joint Policy Committee
From: Ken Kirkey, ABAG Planning Director
Subject: Planned v. Potential Priority Development Area Determinations

Overview

The FOCUS Program received applications from more than 50 jurisdictions that encompass over 100 Priority Development Areas (PDAs). FOCUS staff has been meeting with a Working Group composed of local-government staff and stakeholders to assist us in evaluating these applications and in developing the implementation program following from the application phase.

As an initial step in determining the eligibility of these areas for incentives, the PDAs have been separated into Planned and Potential areas. The primary difference between these two designations is that a planned PDA has both an adopted land use plan and resolution of support from the city council or county board. In general, these categories relate to readiness for funding: Planned PDAs would be eligible for capital infrastructure funds, planning grants, and technical assistance while Potential PDAs would be eligible for planning grants and technical assistance, but not capital infrastructure funds. With this initial categorization complete, FOCUS staff will work with Working Group members to define the criteria for evaluating applications for grants and assistance.

At the August 2nd FOCUS Working Group Meeting, members were presented with policy-related issues regarding the designation of PDAs as Planned or Potential and an initial set of staff recommendations for PDA designations, based on the policy-related issues. FOCUS staff has made policy interpretations based upon comments from Working Group members and the FOCUS program goals. This memo provides an outline of the policy discussions and determinations, and provides recommendations for PDA designations.

Many Working Group members brought up issues relating to transit quality and accessibility, density, and the amount and affordability of housing as factors that should go into determining whether a PDA was Planned or Potential. Staff recognizes that these and other issues are tremendously important in promoting development that is regionally and locally supportive, equitable, and environmentally responsible. However, staff believes that it is better to defer to jurisdictions at this entry-level stage of the process, and that these issues will best be addressed through the incentive process, which the Working Group will help to form. As the Working Group moves forward in concentrating on the goals, criteria, and structure of the planning and capital grant programs, these issues can be considered in determining a PDA's competitiveness for funds and assistance.

Planned and Potential PDA Determinations

Transit Criteria-Proposed v. Existing Transit Service

The policy question presented to the Working Group concerned whether a PDA needed existing transit to qualify as Planned or whether planned transit improvements, identified through MTC's Resolution 3434 Program, would qualify a PDA as Planned. These improvements include new Capitol Corridor, ferry, eBART, SMART, and Dumbarton Rail Stations. Most Working Group members expressed support for

including PDAs as Planned if there were planned transit improvements through the 3434 Program. Projects identified in Resolution 3434 are judged sufficient to categorize a PDA as Planned.

Transit Headways

Working Group comments on what constituted bus service that was “comparable” to fixed transit varied widely, from comprehensive standards for transit service (based upon headways, accessibility, and service times) to having a minimal standard for bus service in the PDA. PDAs will qualify as Planned as long as there is a minimal amount of bus service. This determination is based upon the argument that a certain level of transit-friendly housing must be in place before transit operators will be financially able and willing to increase transit availability, and areas that are planning for more housing may not yet have sufficient bus service in place. However, those areas that meet only a minimal transit level will be “flagged” as having relatively limited transit service in comparison to other areas. These areas will need to demonstrate a commitment to providing sufficient housing and to working with transit providers to support increased transit service. It should be noted that an analysis of bus service headways for the proposed PDAs indicates that the vast majority of the proposed areas have headways of 20 minutes or better during morning peak hours.

Transit Area Geography

The policy issue presented to the Working Group addressed whether areas outside a half-mile buffer from a transit station or area of high bus service would be designated differently from areas within the buffer. Many Working Group members stressed flexibility in applying the designations to the PDAs based upon proximity to transit. To this end, staff has categorized an entire PDA with the same designation, unless a significant portion of the PDA was not near transit (for example, the Concord Naval Weapons Station). This decision was made in deference to local neighborhood definitions.

Land Use Plan Geography

In certain PDAs, part of the area has an adopted specific plan, and other parts are covered in the General Plan only. Working Group comments varied as to whether these PDAs should be split into Planned and Potential or whether the entire PDA should be given one designation. Similar to the transit geography issue above, staff opted to defer to local jurisdictions and categorize an entire PDA as Planned *if* the majority of the area has an adopted specific plan or a detailed general plan.

The exceptions to this rule are the PDA applications submitted by the Congestion Management Agencies, which will be broken up into contiguous sections within jurisdictions and categorized as Planned or Potential based upon the existence of a specific or detailed general plan within that jurisdiction’s section of the corridor. If a jurisdiction’s specific plan covers only a portion of the corridor, the jurisdiction will have the option of designating its entire section of the corridor as Planned.

Planned vs. Built Housing

Working Group comments as to whether PDAs could be designated as Planned if they recently built a significant amount of housing but were not planning for more also varied. The majority of members, however, felt that recently built housing should qualify a PDA as Planned, either completely or with further detail based upon such issues as the density and affordability of the recently built homes. Staff’s belief is that FOCUS should promote complete communities, not just new housing, and allowing PDAs that have recently built new housing to apply for money for streetscapes, urban parks, and other amenities, will help to foster these kinds of communities. Therefore, jurisdictions that have recently built significant amounts of new housing will qualify as Planned PDAs.

The City of Newark has objected to the categorization of PDAs into planned and potential categories. The City's letter is attached to this memorandum.

Transitioning PDAs from Potential to Planned

FOCUS staff believes that the transition from a Potential PDA to a Planned PDA should be as simple as possible. We recommend that staff be empowered to move an area from Potential to Planned as soon as the reason for their classification as Potential is addressed. For example, in many cases, PDAs are in the Potential category because they are awaiting completion or adoption of a land use plan. Ideally, a PDA in this situation would immediately transition to Planned status, and be eligible for capital grants, once the plan is adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Joint Policy Committee endorse the list of planned and potential PDAs for presentation at the ABAG/MTC Fall Forum on October 26th and for adoption by the ABAG Executive Board on November 15th.
- B. THAT the Joint Policy Committee endorse a recommendation to the ABAG Executive Board that staff be empowered to move a PDA from the potential to planned category immediately upon the completion of the applicable plan and resolution.

Alameda

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
Alameda County, Urban Unincorporated	Potential	Awaiting adoption of land use plan
Berkeley, Adeline Street	Potential	Needs a land use plan
Berkeley, Downtown Berkeley	Planned	
Berkeley, San Pablo Avenue	Planned	
Berkeley, South Shattuck	Planned	
Berkeley, Telegraph Avenue	Potential	Needs a land use plan; planned 3434 transit
Berkeley, University Avenue	Planned	
Dublin, Town Center	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
Dublin, West Dublin BART	Planned	BART station under construction
Dublin, Dublin Transit Center	Planned	
Fremont, Centerville	Planned	
Fremont, Central Business District	Planned	
Fremont, Irvington District	Planned	Planned 3434 transit
Hayward, The Cannery	Planned	
Hayward, Downtown	Planned	
Hayward, South Hayward BART	Planned	
Livermore, Downtown	Planned	
Newark, Dumbarton Transit	Potential	Planning process underway; planned 3434 transit
Newark, Old Town	Potential	Needs a land use plan; flagged for limited transit
Oakland	Potential	City will identify specific planning areas for assistance
Pleasanton, Hacienda	Potential	Planning process underway
San Leandro, E14th Street	Planned	Planned 3434 transit
San Leandro, Bay Fair BART	Potential	Planning process underway
San Leandro, Downtown	Planned	Planned 3434 transit
Union City, Intermodal Station District	Planned	Planned 3434 transit

Contra Costa

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
Contra Costa County, Pittsburg/Bay Point	Planned	
Contra Costa County, Pleasant Hill BART	Planned	
Contra Costa County, El Sobrante	Potential	Specific plan in process
Antioch, Hillcrest eBART	Potential	GP designation requires further specificity
Antioch, Rivertown Waterfront	Potential	GP designation requires further specificity
Concord, Community Reuse Project	Potential	Specific plan in process
El Cerrito, San Pablo Avenue	Planned	GP designation specific enough, Specific plan in process
Hercules, Central Hercules	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
Hercules, Waterfront District	Planned	Planned 3434 transit
Lafayette, Downtown	Planned	
Martinez, Downtown Martinez Intermodal	Planned	
Moraga	Potential	Specific plan in process
Oakley, Employment Focus Area	Potential	Specific plans in process, not planned for much housing
Oakley, Downtown Focus Area	Potential	Specific plan in process
Oakley, Potential Planning Area	Potential	
Pittsburg, Downtown	Planned	GP designation is specific enough, Flagged for limited transit
Pittsburg, Railroad Avenue eBART	Potential	Specific plan in process
Pleasant Hill, Buskirk Avenue Corridor	Potential	
Pleasant Hill, Diablo Valley College	Potential	
Richmond (joint with CCC), North Richmond	Potential	In unincorporated area, land use moratorium until GP amendment completed. Richmond undergoing GP update
Richmond, Central Richmond/Transit Village	Planned	
Richmond, South Richmond	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
San Pablo Avenue Corridor (WCCTAC)		
El Cerrito	Planned	Area consistent w/ El Cerrito application
Richmond: South of Montalvin Manor	Potential	Need land use plan
Richmond: San Pablo Avenue	Potential	Specific plan in process
McDonald Avenue	Planned	Area consistent with Richmond application
San Pablo (including 23 rd Street)	Planned	Specific plan in place for 23 rd St, GP designation is specific enough
Montalvin Manor	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
Pinole, Downtown	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
Hercules	Planned	Planned 3434 Transit
Rodeo	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
San Ramon	Planned	
Walnut Creek	Planned	

Marin

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
Marin County, Unincorporated		
101 Corridor	Potential	Will become planned on adoption of Countywide Plan in October and pending resolutions from cities affected through Sphere of Influence (SOI)

San Francisco

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
Bayview Hunters Point/Candlestick	Planned	
Balboa Park/Market & Octavia	Potential	Market + Octavia will be adopted in next few weeks
Downtown Neighborhoods/Transit Infill	Planned	
Eastern Neighborhoods	Potential/ Planned in SOMA	Scheduled January 2008 adoption
Executive Park/Schlage Lock/Visitacion Valley	Potential	Awaiting EIR approval by Board
Mission Bay	Planned	
Port of San Francisco	Planned	Residential land use specified
Transbay	Planned	
Treasure Island	Planned	

San Mateo

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
C/CAG		
Menlo Park	Potential	Proposing plan for area
Redwood City	Planned	Specific Plan impacting ECR
San Carlos	Planned	Specific Plan impacting ECR
Belmont	Potential	Specific Plan impacting ECR; Waiting for resolution
San Mateo City	Planned	Specific Plan impacting ECR
Burlingame	Potential	Specific Plan impacting ECR; Waiting for resolution
Millbrae	Potential	Specific Plan impacting ECR; Waiting for resolution
San Bruno	Planned	Potential south of 380, Planned North of 380 (Crossings Site Specific Plan)
Colma	Potential	Specific Plan built out?
San Mateo County	Potential	Waiting for resolution
South San Francisco	Potential	Specific Plan impacting ECR; Waiting for resolution
Daly City	Potential	
Daly City, Bayshore	Potential	No adopted land use plan
Daly City, Mission Street Corridor	Potential	No adopted land use plan
Menlo Park	Potential	Proposing plan for area
Millbrae, Transit Station	Potential	
Redwood City, Downtown	Potential	Waiting for resolution
San Bruno	Planned/Potential	Potential south of 380, Planned North of 380 (Crossings Site Specific Plan)
San Carlos, El Camino Real	Planned	
San Mateo City, Downtown	Planned	1995 Downtown Plan valid
San Mateo City, El Camino	Planned	Within rail corridor
San Mateo City, Rail Corridor	Planned	

Santa Clara

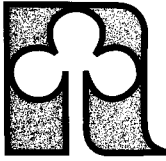
Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
VTA, Cores, Corridors & Stations	Potential	Pending confirmation of land use plans for local areas
Campbell, Central Redevelopment Area	Planned	
Palo Alto, California Avenue	Planned	General plan identifies area for development, overlay district and zoning support
San Jose, Central & North San Jose	Planned	
Evergreen	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
Communications Hill	Planned	Flagged for limited transit
Mountain View, Wishon Station	Potential	Specific plan in process

Solano

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
Fairfield, Downtown South, Jefferson Street/Union Avenue	Planned	General Plan designation is specific
Fairfield, Fairfield/Vacaville Train Station	Potential	Specific plan in process
Fairfield, West Texas Street Gateway	Potential	Master plan in process
Fairfield, North Texas Street Core	Potential	Master plan in process
Vallejo, Waterfront & Downtown	Planned	

Sonoma

Area	Recommended Designation	Notes
Cloverdale, Downtown/SMART Transit	Potential	General Plan update in process
Petaluma, Central, Turning Basin/Lower Reach	Planned	Planned 3434 Transit
Rohnert Park, Sonoma Mountain Village	Potential	Specific plan in process
Santa Rosa, Downtown Station Area	Potential	Specific plan in process
Sebastopol Nexus Area	Potential	Specific plan in process



CITY OF NEWARK, CALIFORNIA

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September 13, 2007

FOCUS Joint Policy Committee
P.O. Box 2050
Oakland, CA 94604-2050

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Newark City Council to express our objections to the proposed division of Priority Development Areas (PDA) into "planned" and "potential" areas. Newark's two proposed PDAs meet all the stated criteria for inclusion: The areas are within the existing incorporated boundaries of Newark, they are within a half mile of proposed fixed rail or comparable bus service, and they presently have land use designations that will yield additional housing. Furthermore, efforts to evaluate higher density housing in the areas are now underway. However, both of our proposed areas have been categorized as "potential" and would thus be precluded from infrastructure funding that we hope will be available to address regional problems.

We urge you to reject the division of the PDA applications for the following reasons:

- The categorization is based only on the status of land use planning for the area and thus ignores numerous issues of critical importance to the viability of a transit oriented development, such as density, walkability, and market feasibility.
- The categorization raises significant technical issues and requires many judgment calls without adequate scrutiny. For example, based on the proposed determinations, some areas next to an existing or fully funded rail transit station are considered "potential" because the land use planning to allow more housing is not yet complete, while other areas adjacent to transit project with little identified funding are considered "planned."

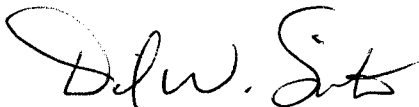
- The categorization concept is disconnected from characteristics of funding sources and project timelines. The stated intention of the categorization is to direct planning resources to the “potential” areas and reserve infrastructure funding to the “planned” areas. The real world is not so clear cut -- planning activities and infrastructure grant applications often occur simultaneously. The creation of a “potential” category and excluding it from infrastructure grant funding will retard transit oriented development in the region.
- The impact on project viability of transit oriented development could be even more severe if federal, state, or regional agencies utilize the categorization to direct other resources; in effect backing into a ranking of transit oriented development opportunities with no real analysis and no recognition that the categorization was based purely of the status of land use planning for the area.
- The process was unfair. The published criteria for establishment of a PDA required only that the area is within an existing community, is near existing or planned transit, and that the area is planned or planning for additional housing development. Although the criteria for inclusion were seemingly straightforward, after the applications were received new criteria previously unstated were used to divide the PDA applications. This sets a negative precedent for future regional planning efforts.

The Newark City Council urges you to reject the categorization of the PDAs and accept all of the applications that meet the criteria in the Application Guidelines as Priority Development Areas.

Newark’s two proposed PDAs meet all the stated criteria for inclusion: The areas are within the existing incorporated boundaries of Newark, they are within a half mile of proposed fixed rail or comparable bus service and they presently have land use designations that will yield additional housing. Efforts to evaluate higher density housing are now underway.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns. If you have questions please contact Newark’s Community Development Director, Terrence Grindall at 510-790-7208. He will also be in attendance at your September 21st meeting to address questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. W. Smith".

David W. Smith
Mayor