

**TO:** ABAG/MTC TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** JOHN FREGONESE, DON BLUBAUGH  
**SUBJECT:** DRAFT PROBLEM STATEMENT, OUTLINE OF FINAL REPORT  
**DATE:** November 15, 2003

The Meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup> was a breakthrough – it was the first emergence of a possible consensus position. However, we still have some critical details to be added to the final solution. Just as a reminder, this is what was described as the goals from the original workplan:

*Fifth meeting: Reach Consensus*

- a. *Work the list of solutions into a series of logical options, based on the facilitators' review and evaluation by the panel.*
- b. *At the close of the meeting or soon after, develop a set of options for resolving the issues and achieving success.*

**Principles of Consensus**

It appears that there are some unstated principles that are underlying the emerging consensus. To articulate them, they are as follows:

- 1) There needs to be some structural changes in how the two agencies work together – while both ABAG and MTC are laudable in their individual endeavors, truly effective regional progress depends on a more collaborative effort with the appropriate structure and resources to support it..
- 2) The merger of the two agencies is not supported by enough board members from both agencies to be implemented at this time, although some members think that this may evolve over time.
- 3) There is support for a substantial and effective regional implementation strategy based on information, partnerships, incentives, and disincentives. There is not widespread support on the committee for seeking the authority to override local general plans when they conflict with regional interests.
- 4) There is substantial agreement on a list of activities that should be undertaken, although the final action list should be a follow on activity formed by the new joint policy committee. It is important that the committee view the activities as

strong suggestions, but that they have the flexibility to prioritize and restructure as necessary to be effective.

### **Vision, Strategy, or Plan**

One of the key issues left on the table is around the nomenclature of what the activity should be – we have discussed three terms – Vision, Strategy, and Plan.

While there is not general agreement on what these three terms mean, we would like to offer some thoughts and a suggestion for how to characterize the kinds of activities, and the usefulness of each. I have included a dictionary definition for each as well.

#### **Vision: A mental image produced by the imagination, a vivid mental image, the power of imagination**

In recent regional work, a vision has come to mean a common understanding of how the region *should* develop. These usually involve widespread public or stakeholder involvement, a relatively ideal solution that elicits broad support, and a statement of principles that support the vision. Of course, you have already accomplished this effort with the Smart Growth Vision recently adopted by both agencies.

#### **Strategy: A plan of action intended to accomplish a specific goal, an elaborate and systematic plan of action.**

Interestingly, some dictionaries said that the word Plan was a synonym. Strategies and plans have much in common, but as commonly used strategies are less analytical and focused on short term actions related to goal.

As applied to regional work, strategies are action oriented plans that direct activities to accomplish a goal. They can be quickly developed, and often involve activities where the agency does not have direct control, such as influencing another party to support a desired outcome.

#### **Plan: A scheme devised; a method of action or procedure expressed or described in language; a project; as, the plan of a constitution; the plan of an expedition, a series of steps to be carried out or goals to be accomplished.**

**Plan can also be a verb, as in: to have the will and intention to carry out some action; make a design of; plan out in systematic, often graphic form; "design a better mousetrap"**

As used in regional work, a plan is more analytical and comprehensive, and is focused on solving a specific complex problem or set of issues. The distinguishing feature of a Plan and a Strategy is the level of detail, and that the agency will have some direct control in carrying out the plan. For example, MTC develops the Regional Transportation Plan, and ABAG could develop a plan for Housing (because of the delegated HCD housing activities) or other

issues in its jurisdiction. It may be problematic to develop a “Comprehensive Plan” for an area where neither ABAG nor MTC have direct responsibilities (such as water supply or air quality). A larger coalition of agencies would have to be developed, a difficult task. However, assuming that ABAG and MTC will develop a joint policy commission, a regional comprehensive plan could be developed that involves the responsibilities of both agencies.

*Our recommendation is that the ABAG/MTC joint policy committee first develop a regional strategy in the short term (first year), and then begin efforts to coordinate and evaluate other regional plans dealing with transportation, land use, housing, water quality and social equity, with the view of coordinating revisions and updates to coincide with the 2008 RTP.*

### **Organizational Structure**

The following is a description of the organizational structure of the joint ABAG/MTC planning activity

**Regional Land Use and Transportation Planning.** A permanent joint standing committee, consisting of representatives of the ABAG and MTC Boards would be created. This standing committee would focus its efforts on periodically updating the regional vision, and outlining implementation strategies, for consideration by ABAG and MTC. Countywide agencies should be extensively involved in helping to update the Vision and creating the strategies. The Joint Standing Committee would have the authority to comment on and review any substantial regional plans or strategies that are devised by either agency, and shall report directly to the Board of each agency. The Joint Standing Committee shall have its own dedicated staff resources to implement a work plan of its creation devised to advance integrated regional planning for the Bay Area.

### **Staffing:**

At the conclusion of the last meeting the Task Force requested that the two Executive Directors provide comments on staffing for the proposed Joint Standing Committee. The Directors have met and then worked with the facilitators to put forth the following staffing proposal.

It is our belief that a separate and distinct “core staff group” be created to perform the work tasked to the Joint Standing Committee. The leader of this group should initially be retained as a contract employee and chosen by the two executive directors with significant advice from the two agency leaders serving on the Joint Standing Committee.

The organizations currently have very distinctive cultures. It is important that the leader of this staff be committed to bridging this difference and lead the staff in a way that respects both cultures and yet serves the needs of the Joint Standing Committee.

Until a detailed work program is established, it is not clear how many additional permanent core staff members would be assigned to this work group. It should be kept small with the notion of adding staff from the two agencies and from other entities depending on the nature and amount of workload.

The Joint Standing Committee and the Executive Directors of the two agencies should develop a proposed work program and budget inclusive of the staff and other necessary resources and present the proposal for review and approval to the boards of MTC and ABAG.

### **Programmatic Activities**

The Policy Committee would be charged with implementing the following activities:

The Joint Policy Committee should take lead responsibility for the development of a regional vision and strategy that brings together land use, transportation, housing, economic development, jobs, social equity, environmental, energy and water quality issues and resolves conflicts among these issues.

The implementation strategy should:

- Focus on incentives
- Focus on education and information sharing
- Build consensus of local government agencies through education
- Encourage the use of sub regional (countywide) entities (like CMA's) thus allowing for a bottom's up approach to development of strategies with a regional perspective.
- Include a benchmark and monitoring program for measuring success of implementation efforts
- Include a component that provides information to local agencies on the regional implications of land use decisions that are being made locally
- Include other matters that might arise as the strategy is developed

ABAG and MTC should actively cooperate and contribute staff and funding toward this effort and actively support its implementation. (As a practical matter MTC is going to have to offer more than ABAG if it is to be funded from existing sources.)

The Joint Standing Committee should also make specific implementation recommendations to MTC and ABAG that would lead to the following;

### **Legislative Agenda**

1. ABAG & MTC should jointly sponsor legislation providing for statutory authority for Bay Area comprehensive regional planning with the Joint Standing Committee designated as the lead.
2. ABAG and MTC will develop and jointly sponsor legislation that will seek adequate funding for the Joint Standing Committee and its work program.

3. ABAG and MTC will work with other interested parties in the state to support legislation that will change the local government finance system to discourage fiscal land use planning.

### **Other Programmatic Activities**

1. ABAG and MTC should review existing best management practices, including model codes, financial strategies, and work with willing local agencies to implement these.
2. ABAG and MTC should lead the development of cooperative economic development policies to reduce damaging local competition for businesses.
3. ABAG and MTC should affirm the protection of existing stable neighborhoods, especially in light of more infill and density with smart growth.
4. ABAG and MTC should affirm local government land use authority and reject any intent to limit this authority through regional plans or strategies.
5. ABAG and MTC should develop an extensive list of incentives to encourage local government implementation of regional strategies

### Other Issues:

The Problem Statement should be finalized in the next meeting.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The San Francisco Bay region and its surrounding interregional counties are developing in ways that are eroding the region's quality of life, when measured by environmental, economic, and social indicators. Root causes of this situation include the State financing structure for local government, the absence of a broadly accepted strategy to offset growth impacts, and the ineffectiveness of addressing regional problems through the independent actions of local jurisdictions.

Existing regional agencies have been ineffective in reversing the decline as a result of limited regulatory authority, limited coordination of individual planning efforts, a lack of resources to counteract state fiscal policies, and the absence of a shared regional development strategy. Institutional issues of proportional representation, equitable funding, and coordination of effort have been identified as weaknesses with the current structure. There is no incentive to provide a comprehensive regional perspective to local decisions.

**NOTES FROM MEETING OF THE ABAG/MTC TASK FORCE  
OCTOBER 18, 2003**

**Combine programmatic suggestions (from the facilitators report) 2, 5, 8, and 12 into one which would read as follows:**

2. ABAG should take lead responsibility for the development of a regional vision and strategy that brings together land use, transportation, housing, economic development, jobs, social equity, environmental, energy and water supply issues and resolves conflicts among these issues.

The implementation strategy should:

- Focus on incentives
- Focus on education and information sharing
- Be built upon consensus of local government agencies through education
- Be developed through the work of sub regional (countywide) entities (like CMA's) thus allowing for a bottom's up approach to development but with a regional view
- Include a benchmark and monitoring program for measuring success of implementation efforts
- Include a component that provides information to local agencies on the regional implications of land use decisions that are being made locally
- Include other matters that might arise as the strategy is developed

MTC should actively cooperate and contribute staff and funding toward this effort and actively support its implementation.

### **Organizational Suggestions**

There was considerable discussion about the three organizational models outlined in the facilitators' report. There emerged from these discussions a fourth model which seemed to be widely but not unanimously accepted. More work needs to be done on the "fourth" model, and staff has been asked to provide feedback at the next meeting on implications of implementing this approach.

This model is described as follows:

Improved alignment. A permanent policy group, consisting of representatives of the ABAG and MTC Boards would be created. This Policy Group would focus its efforts on developing a regional vision and implementation strategy for consideration by ABAG and/or MTC. Countywide agencies would be extensively involved in helping create the Vision and the strategies. As the Vision touches other than land use and transportation, representatives from those regional bodies responsible for such matters would be added to this Policy Group.

A staff team to support the work of the Policy Group would be created with contributions of planning staff members from ABAG and MTC. Other regional agencies would provide staff when needed or appropriate.

This staff group could be established in three possible ways.

1. Create a permanent staff work group from the two agencies

2. Use the Task Force approach assigning personnel from the two agencies as needed and in numbers needed to perform task work
3. A combination approach where there is a core staff permanently assigned to work on the regional vision and strategy effort. This core staff is supplemented by additional personnel from the respective agencies as needed.

All options would involve the assignment of staff from other than ABAG and MTC when dealing with issues of other regional agencies

Implications of these alternative staffing arrangements and the recommendations of the ABAG and MTC Executive Directors were requested for Task Force review at the next meeting.

Funding for this arrangement has to be determined.