

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

Livable Communities Working Group

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

New Location

**South Bay Environmental Services Center
20285 Western Ave., Suite 100**

Agenda

I. Welcome & Introductions

Attendees: Eric Haaland (MB), Stacy Kinsella (PVE), Otis Ginoza (Lawndale), Rebecca Cutting (Torrance), Kelly Thom (RHE), Leza Mikhail (RPV), Liz Sinclair (LACO), Grieg Asher (SCAG), Jacki Bacharach, David Magarian, Wally Siembab, Rosemary Lackow (SBCCOG).

II. Minutes for March 21, 2012 – Received and Filed, no changes.

III. Metro's Draft Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy

Alexandra Oster, Transportation Planner II
Metro

Wally introduced Alexandra (Alex) from Metro, and briefly summarized the sustainability tool project being prepared. Emphasizing what a difficult task this is, Wally encouraged all present to give Metro their feedback and perspectives from South Bay cities, while keeping in mind Metro's enormous challenge.

Alex proceeded with a power point, explaining this is a tool that is in the process of being developed – however they hope after a lot of outreach and consideration of input, to have it adopted in July.

Presentation main parts:

- 1) Policy Overview
- 2) Technical Analysis: Planning Framework
- 3) Next Steps

Main Presentation points:

Policy Overview

- 1) Purposes of the policy: to establish a framework to integrate sustainability, support cities and foster collaboration
- 2) Process: starting fall 2011, currently policy being reviewed, and final adoption in July, 2012
- 3) Policy Elements – Key Concepts: transportation and land use integration; context sensitive design; “bundling” for greatest impact; network optimization, thinking regionally and acting locally.
- 4) Planning Framework: main focus is not on making all locations the same, but providing “best fit” strategies that respond to a community’s land-use conditions and aspirations.

Technical Analyses of Planning Framework

- 1) Original data, mapped for LA County
- 2) Accessibility Index (9 values created reflecting residential density and employment centrality)
- 3) Clusters represent four types of areas in LA County relative to accessibility: “Moderate”, “Mixed”, “Strong”, and “Very Strong”

Next Steps

- 1) Outreach to cities and local agencies will continue to June,
- 2) Planning tools development will occur to mid-June
- 3) Final deliverables readied
- 4) Adoption: July

Group Discussion

Part way through the presentation, while viewing a slide with a matrix”Policy Elements: Implementation & Impacts” Wally paused and called for the group’s reaction to the matrix.

Reactions were varied – some felt the matrix was easy to understand and welcomed this as a tool, others were concerned that cities may think there will be a lot of meetings, and rehashing of prior material, while another was concerned that some words (e.g. “conserve”) may be ambiguous, but the AI (accessibility index) will be very interesting to discuss.

Alex (Metro): noted they are actually updating a prior approach – hope this will be more fine-tuned and streamlined through the call for projects process; she will provide the link for the source document - this will help.

Continuing with the slides, Alex explained: re the Planning Framework: Data Analyses explored relationships between built environment and transportation performance. DMV captures data from registration process and VMT (mileage from smog check businesses).

With the slide up on the average annual VMT for Los Angeles typical household, it was asked: was data taken by census tract or zip code, and did it take into account where they work and how long it takes to get there?

Alex explained that the Accessibility Index clusters represent 4 different types of areas across the County: including Moderate, Strong, Very Strong, and Mixed. For example a Very Strong area has an AI of 10 and rates “high” on residential density as well as “job centrality” matrices. A great deal of discussion ensued with the slide that showed 3 graphs indicating that while the “strong” and “very strong” areas occupy a small percentage overall of LA County land area, they have about 2/3 of the county’s jobs and population.

The relationship between density and jobs was noted - the strong and very strong categories are strong in population and jobs, while the mixed category is big in acres.

Clarification was asked: regarding the AI values: is data taken County wide data inclusive of rural as well as inner city areas? Alex: Yes.

Wally made the point that what’s exciting about this is that Metro didn’t used to have a Sustainability Manager, but now they do - -this is an index of interest in this overall topic and Metro is trying to work it all out.

Wally steered discussion toward “Universal Strategies”, which are candidate strategies for universal implementation, and are found in detail in Section 3.2 of the Draft 2012 Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy document. Going to bullet one, and using the map on page 9 as a visual reference: he asked, referring to one policy strategy to “create small blocks” - how do we talk to our cities about this?

It was asked: should there be something in the policy about established areas being different? The response was this is suggested policy. For example, a universal value is to provide shorter connections. It was noted that “strategies” are not too helpful - when people say (to cities) “this is what you should do”, they don’t realize the existing condition is already established – cities are not working with a blank canvas.

It was asked: what is the horizon for this?

Alex: some take place over time, some are shorter term.

It was suggested that Metro give examples of how to use, or apply Universal Strategies, eg. for cities to get grant funds.

It was suggested - maybe call the policy something different?

Wally: referred to another bullet: “Establish minimum density standards suitable to context”. An example was suggested: if you have 1 du per acre for standard (very low density) then it’s not advisable to go to Metro and ask for high level of transit service (e.g. a subway)

More discussion ensued on how the suggested strategies could relate to south bay cities (e.g. encourage grid not cul-de-sacs, promote location of major institutions and regional attractions, and support grocery retail delivery programs).

It was noted that SCAG had received a funding request to replace a parking space with bike racks and this is an example of a transportation enhancement. Alex noted that funding as such may be supportable if it is seen as encouraging public spaces.

Discussion wound down and Wally noted that to some extent this may not be connecting with existing built out areas.

Final suggestions to Alex:

The following were suggested from the group: that the document provide some examples of these strategies, this would especially be helpful for “low-low” category cities. Caution was expressed that this policy will one day be institutionalized and formalized. For long-range plans excitement is that here’s some examples where this is working in our region – this will be helpful to sell a policy. It was asked: how will this be updated? Alex stated they know that new more relevant case studies will be available – they will pull these into the document.

Wally noted that this is an opportunity to affect what is “sustainable” – South Bay should get input in asap, and this would be a stepping stone to the RTP. Originally he had problems with technical stuff, and is wondering if Metro is using way too gross data. When our group did our study it was more granular, and we came up with different conclusions, solutions. He feels this should be addressed in this document. He also suggested it would be good to break this document down by subregion as this would make it more relevant, and useful. It was suggested that an analysis of density by acreage be included because if you see at the subregion level, it will show a lot. It was suggested Metro provide some practical guidance with recommended next steps. Wally cautioned that care has to be taken to not tread on city rights.

Alex advised people should keep in mind that this is not a mandate. At the end – it’s a city’s decision. It provides a menu of options; you can draw on universal strategies and best fit clusters, and given your funding and constraints, determine what makes best sense for your city.

Wally thanked Alex and she reiterated she was looking for feedback. Wally noted we will be looking at this again and from other perspective.

IV. Review of major projects about to begin:

Wally Siembab
SBCCOG

- Regional and Sub-Regional PEV Readiness Planning: opportunities: EV S26 is coming up to LA \$5 gate fee international conference every three years in US; Also

we were notified by SCAG we are grant winner- sometime before June 1st first work product will be a market forecast of supply and demand by the Luskin Center. At an upcoming Livable Communities meeting Wally will provide an update. Next Tuesday is the kick-off meeting.

- Compass 2012: Neighborhood Oriented Development Feasibility Study – kickoff meeting is May 3rd (got notice to proceed). Consultant Proforma Associates with Marlon Boarnet (who did the economic analysis on Lawndale Marine Avenue segment). This project will take same logic and apply to three areas: in Gardena, Rosecrans at Normandie; Inglewood Avenue near Century in LA County; PCH in Hermosa, approx. 1.25 mile section (area with car lots). Otis talked about a grant opportunity for a TOD Ordinance would involve three cities around the green line station; cities are Hawthorne, Lawndale and Redondo Beach – will be a joint application for a joint station area analysis.
- EVSE Vendor Workshop: planned for May 24 prior to the regular COG board meeting - vendors are being very aggressive marketing, COG wants to educate cities to get the “big picture”; noted opportunity to use LA County Purchase Order that is being developed.
- UC Davis has contacted us, regarding web based tools at “front end”; we are talking about vehicles and how to collect data, and on “back end”, getting data on travel patterns that will augment our data already. We would be a test site.
- Daimler has rolled out a car sharing service called “Car2Go” in Portland, Vancouver and Austin. They have contacted the COG to engage in a market analysis, and will provide vehicles for car sharing. We are interested in this - will start with the Smart Car, rent by the minute, cars can be reserved. Jacki noted that the most significant thing is they have come to us for assistance. We would be a unique Daimler program as we will be using multiple jurisdictions.

V. Updates

Wally Siembab, David Magarian

- BEV AQMD Proposal – we have proposal due May 17th we should have 5 vehicles, one will be a BMW, series one.
- SBCCOG Caltrans Community Based Transportation Planning Grant Application – turned in, now we wait and see.
- Complete Streets Conference and upcoming Toolbox Tuesday – went and so did Eric Haaland, and it was great, better than Luskin one. Learned that cost can be in the 100 thousands per mile.
- LUV Extension – report David – we are collecting data - got the vehicles.

VII. Other Business

Jacki is going to go to the COG Board and ask for a work item on economic development. She also asked: would it be helpful for cities if they can get data from educational institutions? Otis and Rebecca: not sure because waiting for Economic Development repercussions and proposed legislation shake-out.