

# Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Meeting Minutes

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## **DRAFT July 11, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

Council Members present: Chair Ken Alex, Director, OPR; Vice-Chair Bob Fisher, Public Member; Secretary John Laird, California Natural Resources Agency; Secretary Matt Rodriguez, California Environmental Protection Agency; General Counsel Jerry Scribner, Health and Human Services Agency; Secretary Brian Kelly and Deputy Secretary Brian Annis, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

### **Call to Order**

*Chair Alex called the meeting to order.*

### **Approve May 10, 2012 Minutes (Action Item)**

*Secretary Laird moved to approve the minutes. Vice-Chair Fisher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Agenda Item: Executive Report**

Executive Director (ED) Heather Fargo reviewed the agenda for the meeting, updated the action summary for the strategic plan and introduced two new staff members, Adrienne Orilla (Executive Assistant) and Emilio Balingit (Intern).

SGC has received numerous applications for Associate Governmental Program Analyst position and will be conducting interviews later this summer. Funding for SGC staff has been approved through June 2014.

ED Fargo attended the following meetings; 1) the launching of the Tahoe Collaborative – delivered the keynote address, this project was funded by the SGC in round 1 and 2; 2) UC Berkeley and UCLA held a seminar on the future of infill that featured Senator Darrell Steinberg; 3) Air Resources Board held a cap and trade workshop and talked about the significance of funding local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; 4) Caltrans held their Interregional Blueprint meeting; 5) Smart Valley Places group met in Modesto; 6) MPO / State Agency working group meetings; 7) League of Cities regarding barriers to infill; 8) Resources Legacy Group to possibly work with SGC; 9) HCD's Catalyst grantees workshop to talk about barriers to infill; 10) California State Board of Food and Agriculture to discuss the SGC's role with farmland preservation; 11) Conference call with the Funder's Network to present the top grants that the SGC was not able to fund; and 12) Local Government Commission, SACOG, and Fresno COG, regarding modeling for San Joaquin Valley.

Lastly, ED Fargo announced that she will be leaving the SGC upon the selection of her successor. Council Members recognized her accomplishments as Mayor of Sacramento and Executive Director of the SGC.

### **Presentation: Ray Tretheway from Sacramento Tree Foundation**

Mr. Tretheway stated that on behalf of the SGC, the Sacramento Tree Foundation will plant two fruit trees in a park in Natomas to recognize the career of Heather Fargo.

**Agenda Item: Update on CDPH – Office of Health Equity**

Dr. Ron Chapman, Director of the California Department of Public Health, explained that the new Office of Health Equity is a consolidation and integration of five areas: 1) Office of Women’s Health; 2) Office of Multi-cultural Health; 3) Office of Multi-cultural Services in the Department of Mental Health; 4) Health in All Policies work; and 5) Healthy Places team.

Dr. Chapman explained that the Office of Health Equity will have a Governor-appointed, Senate-confirmed position of Deputy Director that will report to the Director. The structure includes a Policy Unit, Community Engagement and Development Unit, and Health Services Research Unit. Dr. Chapman introduced the incoming head of the new Policy Unit, Dr. Connie Mitchell.

Chair Alex acknowledged Health in All Policies’ success in integrating health issues across agencies.

Secretary Rodriguez would like to put Dr. Mitchell in contact with staff in his office who are working on a cumulative impacts report and are looking to identify those areas in the state that they feel are overburdened or disadvantaged by certain environmental factors, including health.

**Presentation: Dr. Richard Jackson – Building Healthy Communities Video Series**

Dr. Richard Jackson presented the council with the DVD of a four hour series titled “Designing Healthy Communities,” and which has been televised in over 10 million homes via PBS.

**Agenda Item: Strategic Plan Action 1: Coordinate State Programs**

ED Fargo stated that she has met with SGC Key Staff and they had agreed on some efforts that would benefit from SGC involvement, including: 1) environmental mitigation; 2) agricultural preservation; and 3) coordination around SB 375. Given the opportunity presented by High Speed Rail (HSR), SGC could coordinate mitigation for farmland and habitat impacts of the HSR project.

Chair Alex emphasized the importance of these efforts, especially in the Central Valley given the location of early HSR construction. He stated that he sees an opportunity to integrate HSR, transit, preservation of farmland, growth that avoids sprawl, and economic development in the Central Valley. He stresses the importance of close coordination with the California High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA).

Deputy Secretary Annis commented that on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the State Senate committed \$2 billion to support rail projects across the state, and this leveraged another \$4 billion dollars in federal and local funds totaling a \$6 billion initial investment in the Central Valley and High Speed Rail. This represents another \$6 billion that is going towards creating more sustainable communities across the state.

Secretary Laird raised the fact that the Williamson Act is no longer funded, creating a demand for a new approach to agricultural preservation. He also brought up the Regional Advanced Mitigation Planning program (RAMP) and asked, given that it is a pilot, how it can be applied to other projects either regionally or at the project level. He asked for recommendations regarding how RAMP can be applied in other projects and how the SGC can provide direction and leadership to continue these processes.

Mark Nechodom, Director of the Department of Conservation, addressed Secretary Laird’s questions about the SGC’s potential role and responded that since the state and local governments do not view working land value in the same way, there must be a balance to attract more capitalization to increase the value of working lands.

Gregg Albright, Deputy Director of HSRA, emphasized that the SGC can add value with more than just mitigation. From a social equity standpoint, HSR can enhance transit and non-motorized mobility at all levels.

Secretary Laird asked Albright if their vision is that HSR can enhance sustainability and is more than just a means of transportation. People can see it not just as a mitigation process but also can recognize what it could do for their city. Albright agreed and would like to present the HSRA’s station area planning program to the SGC at a future meeting.

Liz O'Donoghue, Director of Infrastructure and Land Use for The Nature Conservancy explained that RAMP looks at a strategic vision of a region, conservation priorities, and mitigation needs together, and that this requires coordination, communication and solving difficult problems. RAMP currently has a pilot in the Central Sacramento River Valley and is looking at other areas. O'Donoghue explained that the RAMP program is facing some problems including state rules regarding sharing money, procurement, and coordination with locals, but she remains hopeful and believes that it will become a model for mitigation. She expressed her belief that using HSR to address some of these issues could be very helpful, but she reminded the Council that it does require upfront investment of resources to have long term results.

Chair Alex directed staff to coordinate with HSRA, the Department of Conservation, the Nature Conservancy, and the Resources Agency on the issues that have been raised and to make recommendations at the next Council meeting. Secretary Rodriguez asked staff to also consider environmental justice issues in their research. Secretary Rodriguez also expressed concern that local concerns, especially from disadvantaged communities, could be drowned out by regional planning.

Chair Alex asked that each Council Member assign a staff member to work on these large issues.

*Chair Alex opened the floor for public comment.* Karen Klinger, real estate broker, spoke in opposition to the Council's priorities. Connie Gallippi, Conservation Strategies, spoke in favor of the Council's proposed focus for this action item.

**Agenda Item: Health in All Policies—Symposium with UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools**

ED Fargo introduced Jeff Vincent, Deputy Director of the UC, Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools, and Jason Spencer, Senior Policy Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Vincent reminded the Council that in 2010 the SGC partnered with the Center for Cities and Schools in hosting a roundtable on school siting. He explained that the 2010 roundtable ultimately led to an upcoming CDE policy report. Spencer and Vincent asked that the Council continue their collaboration by being an official sponsor of an upcoming symposium on the role of K-12 schools in supporting sustainable communities. They also requested that the Council utilize its Health in All Policies Task Force to convene a series of cross-agency meetings leading up to the symposium.

**Agenda Item: Outreach & Engagement – Sustainable Communities Learning Network**

ED Fargo introduced Karen Beardsley, UC Davis Information Center for the Environment, and Steve Sanders, Institute for Local Government. Beardsley presented an overview of UCD's work with SGC's outreach efforts. She discussed the CARES inventory and a baseline survey that will be used to measure the performance of the outreach efforts. Sanders presented the Sustainable Communities Learning Network (SCLN), and explained how it can work with the SGC to: 1) support collaborative sustainability efforts; 2) bring priority state issues and resources to the attention of local officials and staff; and 3) highlight innovative local sustainability practices to help inform the work of state agencies and departments.

Chair Alex discussed how the State can benefit from getting data from a local level. He also expressed the value of using a web based system (as the SCLN does) because of the collaborative opportunities it presents.

**Agenda Item: Barriers to Sustainable Communities**

Vice-Chair Fisher updated the Council on his and staff's efforts to identify and resolve barriers to infill development (through Strategic Plan Action #2). Staff has made requests to a broad set of stakeholders to provide statements summarizing key barriers to infill development from their perspective. This group of stakeholders has included local and regional governments, builders and environmental and social justice groups, County Supervisors, Councils of Government, the League of Cities, and others. Through a series of meetings with stakeholders, Vice-Chair Fisher hopes to hear first-hand accounts of what works, what barriers exist, and what role the State can play in resolving those barriers. In the next few months, more contact will be made with additional stakeholders seeking their perspective. Council staff has begun to connect with the infrastructure bank and GoBiz to identify opportunities to work together towards common goals of good investments in infrastructure and urban development.

Vice-Chair Fisher introduced Janet Myles, Department of Housing & Community Development, who discussed the June 27<sup>th</sup> forum they held with Catalyst Program recipients. The forum discussed the barriers faced by the Catalyst Projects. Some of the barriers include: 1) inadequate infrastructure; 2) infill development versus greenfield development and the associated costs; 3) project funding; 4) regulatory and timeframe issues between agencies; 5) high impact fees; 6) CEQA process; and 7) loss of redevelopment agencies.

Vice-Chair Fisher concluded by emphasizing that the State has much work to do to make the process easier for the local government, and that the State needs to come up with solutions to facilitate. Vice-Chair Fisher stated that he would come back to the Council with more information at its next meeting.

**Agenda Item: General Public Comments**

Chair Alex opens up the floor for public comment.

Ashley Setoudeh from Townsend Public Affairs spoke, representing the cities of Aliso Viejo, Dinuba, Hayward, San Jacinto, and San Pablo. She recommended that Round 3 of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program focus the eligible applicants to only cities and counties because of the limited funds remaining. Chair Alex stated that it would still be a couple of months before staff opens up the grant guidelines.

Karen Klinger, real estate broker, spoke in opposition to the Council's priorities.

Robert Ogilvie, ChangeLab Solutions, commended the Council for its action plan and suggested that the Council take an integrated approach to its Strategic Plan implementation.

Sarah Mercer, CA Pan-Ethnic Health Network, expressed her organization's interest in seeing the SGC work closely with the new Office of Health Equity in CDPH. She also expressed support for the SGC's involvement in the school infrastructure planning work previously discussed by Jason Spencer and Jeff Vincent.

Amanda Eaken, Natural Resource Defense Council, commended the Council on its progress and encouraged the Council to honor its Strategic Plan, including the prioritization of its action items. She specifically called out the Strategic Plan's Action 8 (MPOs and SB 375) and spoke to the Council's opportunity of making progress on this action. She suggested that the Council ask MPOs to set voluntary goals toward sustainability objectives.

Vice-Chair Fisher stated that he would like to hear more from staff about the infrastructure planning action and the MPO/SB 375 action. He also expressed his wish that a Council Member volunteer to be the executive champion for Action 4 (infrastructure planning). Vice-Chair Fisher suggested that in the future, those members serving as champions for various action items should report on the progress of those items.

Secretary Kelly offered to serve as the executive champion for Action 4 (infrastructure planning).

**Closed Session: Personnel**

The Council held a closed session and reported no action.

Chair Alex adjourned the meeting.