

Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Meeting Minutes

California Strategic Growth Council



May 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

Council Members Present: Chair Ken Alex, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research; Vice-Chair Bob Fisher, Public Member; Secretary John Laird, California Natural Resources Agency; Secretary Matt Rodriguez, California Environmental Protection Agency; Secretary Diana Dooley, California Health and Human Services Agency; Deputy Secretary Brian Annis, California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

Call to Order

Chair Alex called the meeting to order.

Approve February 15, 2013 Minutes

Secretary Laird moved to approve the minutes. Secretary Dooley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item: Executive Director Mike McCoy

Executive Director McCoy addressed the following topics:

1. At the February Council meeting, the Council provided authorization to encumber funding for two contracts. The first hires a contractor to coordinate the 18 MPOs' self-assessments of their respective Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs). Mintier Harnish Planning Consultants has been selected as the contractor for this project. The second contract will lead to recommended methods of infill development financing and will conduct a quantitative assessment of test cases that emulate California-specific infill projects. Updates on both contracts will be provided at the August Council Meeting.
2. Executive Director McCoy is representing the SGC on the California Transportation Infrastructure Priorities Workgroup, a multi-stakeholder group with representation from each of the SGC's member agencies. This group has been convened and will begin defining state transportation infrastructure spending priorities for the future. Executive Director McCoy would welcome any comments from agencies.
3. BTH and Caltrans have organized a group, including representation from all SGC agencies and many departments, to decide what type of performance measures

California will use to report progress to the federal government regarding the use of funds from the new federal transportation reauthorization law, MAP-21.

4. The SGC holds a seat on the State Agency Steering Committee for the California Water Plan Update 2013. Vice-Chair Fisher and Secretary Laird expressed further interest in connecting with partners researching and working with the state's water-energy nexus.
5. Regarding Urban Footprint, SGC staff has reviewed and accepted all technical documentation, peer reviews summaries, and the model itself. The model has been adopted by three of the four largest MPOs in the state, and SACOG is working with the authors to develop it further and increase its usability for local governments. Chair Alex requested that SGC staff draft a document listing ways that the model can be useful to SGC member agencies and others.
6. An SGC-funded vegetation mapping program was recently completed in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This project mapped the northeastern quadrant of Central Valley, encompassing approximately 1.7 million acres. This represents an important addition to the State's mapped vegetation, but there are still many areas of the state that have not been mapped, and in most cases funding has not been identified to do so.
7. Over 180 Concept Proposals have been received for the Urban Greening Grant program's third round of funding; a number of applications are requesting funding for the implementation of plans created with funding allocated during the program's first round. Staff at the Natural Resources Agency are reviewing those Concept Proposals now.
8. High Speed Rail Authority Chairman Dan Richard has asked a group including Executive Director McCoy to draft a proposal that looks at planning, studying, and implementing a program for cities in close proximity to rail stops for attracting new businesses and developing wage-appropriate housing/transportation, while preserving nearby natural resource systems and agricultural productivity.

Agenda Item: Comments from the Chair and Council

Chair Alex commended SGC staff for its integration and collaboration with OPR.

Secretary Rodriquez remarked that Cal/EPA had recently released the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) to identify communities that are both burdened by high environmental pollution and are vulnerable to that pollution because of demographic and socioeconomic factors. His agency is looking to refine the tool and recommend its use for prioritizing funds in State grant programs. The screening tool may also potentially be used for other purposes, such as education or enforcement, and Cal/EPA plans to use the tool with the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to promote business opportunities in disadvantaged areas. Secretary Rodriquez asked to give a presentation on the CalEnviroScreen tool at the Council's next meeting.

Secretary Rodriquez also stated that in conjunction with the Air Resources Board and Department of Finance, Cal/EPA has submitted its Cap and Trade Auction Proceeds Investment

Plan, which proposes funding for Sustainable Communities Strategies and other initiatives to reduce GHG reductions, though this funding will not occur in the 13/14 fiscal year.

Deputy Secretary Annis thanked Executive Director McCoy for his participation as the SGC representative on the California Transportation and Infrastructure Priorities Work Group. He also mentioned Caltrans's recently released report regarding the Department's efforts and methods of reducing GHG emissions, as well as opportunities for partnership with other organizations in many of these efforts. Caltrans welcomes comments and suggestions from the Council for further possible partnerships in any of the Department's efforts.

Agenda Item: Health in All Policies Task Force, Update on Implementation

Dr. Connie Mitchell, Public Health Medical Officer with the Department of Public Health, provided the Council with an overview of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force's purpose, goals, and key elements. The HiAP Task Force seeks to promote health and equity in California communities by collaborating across a number of sectors and engaging external stakeholders to achieve goals and co benefits desirable to many of its partners. Broad collaboration within state government provides a strong example to local governments establishing similar approaches, and is necessary to resolving "sticky issues" that are lasting problems to many areas of government.

Among the Task Force's recent achievements are the establishment of the Farm to Fork Office to facilitate local access to farm foods; providing health input into the General Plan Guidelines being updated by OPR; helping to align school district and city planning processes; creating an informal food procurement network between a number of state agencies to provide healthy food choices at state meetings, vending machines, etc.; and supporting environmental design like urban greening, active transportation, and walkable streets, to encourage safer and healthier communities. Further, HiAP staff has been involved in developing a guide that will be published in the near future that provides information relevant to implementing HiAP goals. The Task Force has been testing strategies for assisting local governments with using and understanding the guide.

The Task Force also faces a number of challenges to implementation, and would appreciate the Council's thoughts on these, including (1) the balance between current HiAP plans and the identification of new ideas and projects; (2) shifting toward a new paradigm of constant communication and streamlining of participation across multiple sectors; (3) welcoming participation from many new local and state government actors that wish to collaborate with the Task Force; and (4) securing sufficient staffing and resources to form permanent solutions.

Carla Sanchez, Legislative Manager from the Department of Food and Agriculture, provided updates on HiAP implementation from her Department's perspective, beginning with the successful creation of the Farm to Fork Office, a collaborative effort between the Departments of Food and Agriculture, Education, and Public Health. Completion of HiAP Work Plan tasks and objectives is progressing steadily with greater collaboration between member agencies.

Further, a new Farm to Fork website is currently being developed, which will bring attention to discussions and programs that promote access to locally produced foods.

Garth Hopkins of Caltrans spoke about his Department's contribution to the HiAP Task Force through inter-departmental communication and cooperation in encouraging active transportation, including through the Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School Programs. Caltrans welcomes the inclusion of further areas of state government that are able to enhance the efforts of the HiAP Task Force, even if they are not necessarily within the explicit scope of the SGC.

John Melvin, State Urban Forester and CAL FIRE staff, stated that involvement in the Task Force's urban greening efforts has been greatly beneficial to his Department; the formal connection between urban forestry and greening to health-related topics within HiAP has led to useful and meaningful connections with other agencies to positively impact the health of California communities. He also emphasized the important and valuable role played by HiAP staff in enabling the work of the Task Force.

Dr. Mitchell then invited questions from the Council.

Chair Alex asked Dr. Mitchell for her perspective of the HiAP Task Force's goals and funding in the future, to which she responded that the Task Force could soon be prepared to plan for further implementation goals, but that neither the Task Force nor the Council has defined this process. She explained that future funding is very uncertain, as the Task Force's current staff funding is through annual grants from the California Endowment to the Public Health Institute. Although these foundation partners have been very generous to date, this funding was never intended to be permanent.

Chair Alex expressed his strong support for the Task Force and his hope that it will continue. He stated that the SGC should be considered a partner and potentially a future contributor to the Task Force's resources.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked how much funding is necessary to continue staffing the Task Force. The Task Force's Project Manager Julia Caplan responded that approximately \$400,000 per year is necessary.

Vice-Chair Fisher commended the work of the Task Force. He noted that these interagency funding challenges are not unique to the HiAP Task Force, and that finding a cross-agency approach to funding would benefit many of the Council's programs.

Chair Alex and Vice-Chair Fisher encouraged Executive Director McCoy to consider a proposal to present to the Department of Finance to explore alternatives to the agency-by-agency funding structure. They acknowledged that the organization of state budgeting is a structural barrier to cross-agency work.

Secretary Dooley commended the HiAP staff for their current work and progress. She stated that HiAP and the Council should pursue two avenues: (1) look for ways to cross-subsidize among agencies; and (2) look for other sponsors and engage the foundation community.

Jeanie Ward-Waller spoke on behalf of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership to state support for the HiAP Task Force's work with Safe Routes to School and the implementation of complete streets. Ms. Ward-Waller expressed her appreciation that the SGC is represented on the Transportation Infrastructure Priorities Work Group, but she suggested that the HiAP Task Force staff also be invited to participate to increase the group's representation of public health.

Agenda Item: Program Review of Round 1 Planning Grants

Liz Grassi, Policy Analyst to the Strategic Growth Council, presented the findings of the program review of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants and Incentives Program's first round. She provided an overview of the 2010 grant process and a summary of the planning activities that received awards. SGC staff recently conducted an online and phone survey of round one Planning Grant recipients' experiences with the grant application and distribution processes and to learn about awardees' progress to date. Ms. Grassi presented the survey results; including the identified need for indicators to measure progress, the difficulty of measuring each grant's percentage "complete," and grantees' success in leveraging SGC grant funding to receive additional funding from other sources.

Chair Alex suggested that the Council staff think about ways to identify recipients' next steps to turn their SGC-funded planning into implementation, and then partner with other funding sources to help realize these next steps.

Chair Alex, Vice Chair Fisher, and Secretary Laird asked Ms. Grassi if in her review, or in the upcoming Round of grant awards, it was the case that the SGC attaches a requirement or poses any question to grant recipients regarding the leveraging of additional funding, or intentions to implement plans created with SGC funding. Ms. Grassi responded that although these requirements were not present in the first round of awards, SGC staff is already exploring methods of introducing such questions or requirements into future rounds of the program.

Agenda Item: Indicator Initiatives and Coordination

Allison Joe, Deputy Director, outlined the status of various indicator projects: the Environmental Goals and Policy Report (EGPR), Regional Progress Report, SANDAG Statewide Performance Monitoring Indicators, and Healthy Communities Indicators.

Louise Bedsworth, Senior Researcher at OPR, spoke about the EGPR. She explained that OPR is in talks with the California Technology Agency about developing a web portal for accessing indicator data from a number of state agencies. Additionally, there is the hope of linking these indicators to OPR's upcoming General Plan Guidelines. Both the State of Maryland and the city of Boston have created similar resources, and they contain a broad array of indicators relating to topics such as job growth and education. This possible California web portal could also be the

nesting location for many indicator initiatives, like the Regional Progress Report and Healthy Communities Indicators, which could then be accessed by the public and by State Agencies.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked if the indicator portal would be focused on environmental measures, or if it would include broader measures as the Maryland example does. Ms. Bedsworth responded that the goal is to measure the many values of environmental progress, including job creation, but that there is a focus on the environment, broadly defined. Chair Alex also responded to Vice-Chair Fisher's question, stating that OPR's upcoming Environmental Goals and Policy Report recognizes that there are many ways to think about the environment, which includes measuring the economy, crime, obesity, and more. However, the State as a whole is not looking to pull together all of its indicators in the way Maryland has done; though if this work on environmental indicators is successful, that may change.

Secretary Laird expressed his concern that the action of aggregating data does not necessarily lead to implementation; the Council should not aim to make this tool a goal itself, but the Council should focus on using it to achieve its sustainability objectives. He emphasized that measurements should be tied to explicit goals, and that paths to implementation are identified. Dr. Bedsworth replied that making linkages to implementation is a priority for the Environmental Goals and Policy Report. Chair Alex also responded to Secretary Laird's comments by stating that the EGPR being discussed contains two parts: one section composed of goals and a second composed of indicators that, while difficult to form with such a large amount of relevant data, must necessarily be tied to the first. Further, there may be a use for collecting large amounts of data for the sake of future needs: indicators without an identified use today may be relevant and useful at some point. Secretary Laird concurred, and stated that the SGC can best play a leadership role on this issue by being concise and pointing to specific goals for fundamental indicators rather than being diffuse and unclear.

Secretary Rodriguez suggested Dr. Bedsworth talk with the Boards, Departments, and Offices within Cal/EPA to create a single document that identifies the goals stated in statutes, and the many indicators created by State agencies. With such a compilation, it would be possible to synthesize all of this information and address any gaps in the State's sustainability goals.

Trish Kelly, Project Director of the Regional Progress Report, spoke about her project's progress to date. In the last two years, the project's scope has come to focus on three main topics, including the coordination of major state planning efforts like the EGPR, EnviroScreen, and Healthy Community Indicators; involvement in the research and identification of new indicators and methodologies; and the coordination of regional planning efforts like the SANDAG Performance Monitoring Indicators Technical Group.

Both SANDAG and the Regional Progress Report project have identified several challenges to the measuring and monitoring of indicators, such as a lack of targets to help judge how much progress is being made toward state and local goals. Additional challenges include gaps and low availability of data, deciding what needs to be measured in larger regions versus smaller urban

regions, and agreeing upon methodologies and standards to be used in the measuring and monitoring of indicators.

Ms. Kelly stated that the Regional Progress Report project has created a draft set of indicators that includes Council Member and stakeholder input. In late June, the working group will use this to make a recommendation to the Council regarding the next version of the Progress Report. Also, the group has taken steps to identify partners and funding sources that can be of assistance to the development of the 2013 Progress Report.

Chair Alex asked Ms. Kelly if she planned to make the regional indicators she had discussed accessible online, as the Council planned to do with the EGPR, to which she responded that this might take the form of a report including a core set of indicators in addition to an online resource that included a broader set.

Deputy Director Joe presented a number of recommended action items to the Council for consideration. These items include supporting and endorsing OPR's efforts with the EGPR indicator work, directing SGC staff to continue supporting the coordination of indicator projects and data, and directing SGC staff to develop a work plan and funding strategy for the 2013 Regional Progress Report and implementation. Regarding this final recommendation, Deputy Director Joe explained that previous versions of the Regional Progress Report were funded by a mix of sources, including MPOs, CalTrans, and private foundations.

Secretary Laird stated that because the Council found the indicator efforts valuable, he was unsure what a Council motion would contribute to the pursuit of funding. Explicit Council approval is not necessary to try to fund the project because the Council members have, in the past, agreed on the importance of continuing the Progress Report.

Chair Alex agreed, stating that Deputy Director Joe had the authority to seek additional funding for something that was clearly in the Council's Work Plan.

Deputy Director Joe acknowledged the Council's input and assured the Council that staff would keep it informed of the project's funding status. Further updates would be presented at the next SGC meeting in August.

Mark Fenstermaker spoke on behalf of the Nature Conservancy to express his organization's appreciation for the Regional Progress Reports and their role in promoting sustainability. He stated that land conservation is an integral part of measuring sustainability, and the Nature Conservancy is willing to participate in related dialogues. Further, his organization appreciates the SGC's planning grant program and its role in promoting compact development and regional greenprints. The Nature Conservancy suggests using the planning grant program to encourage the creation of greenprints for the entire state.

Will Barrett spoke on behalf of the American Lung Association of California to relay at organization's appreciation for the SGC's commitment to public health, and its work with

indicators and Urban Footprint to give policy makers the ability to make more informed decisions. He looks forward to future opportunities to work with the SGC to promote public health with these tools.

Chair Alex replied that OPR will be holding an extensive public process regarding the EGPR, in part to tie the developed indicators to meaningful goals, as Secretary Laird had earlier mentioned.

Agenda Item: Overview of Housing Framework in California

Claudia Cappio, Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA), presented to the Council the current work being done at CalHFA and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). These agencies are currently working together on the realignment of affordable housing in the state through planning, health and safety, and finance related efforts. To support these efforts, CalHFA is leading a number of collaborations, like a study managed by CalHFA and its partners that seeks to understand why affordable housing costs continue to rise; managing the shared assets between CalHFA and HCD, including approximately 96,000 affordable housing units; and elevating the housing discussion to include topics like energy, water, infrastructure, jobs, and immigration policy.

Recently, CalHFA has made a policy transition from assessing housing needs in the state to engaging discussions regarding how housing plays a crucial role in a number of other issues like the economy, public health, and energy use. With this mindset, CalHFA is moving in a direction toward outcome-based strategies based on evidence and measurements. With this approach, CalHFA looks to achieve a number of objectives, the key to which will be continuing to develop relationships and gateways across departments for collaborative efforts beneficial to many parties involved.

CalHFA and HCD have taken an intergovernmental focus to achieve a coordinated set of objectives, centered on the Sustainable Communities Strategy concept. Important to their efforts are transit oriented development, infrastructure and infill grants, zoning improvements, and other urban planning tools.

Additionally, CalHFA continues to run the Mental Health Services Act Program and Section 811 Rental Assistance Program for those requiring specific accommodations or rental assistance. It is estimated that the successful management of these two programs to date has saved millions in Emergency Room bills.

Also, in the past seven years, CalHFA has distributed approximately \$1 billion dollars in multiple family housing, and infill infrastructure grants, to communities along transit lines.

After the conclusion of the presentation, Secretary Rodriguez asked Ms. Cappio what the Council can do to assist CalHFA's efforts and to assist successful policy efforts at the regional level.

Ms. Cappio responded that the current work of the Council is very important, as it encourages a more extensive thought process of how to incorporate other state agencies and their work into housing issues. She believes that the Council should continue to support its successful programs and ask that these initiatives provide some evidence or results relating to their end products. Ms. Cappio expressed her belief that at the local level, tools to incentivize infill development need to evolve further, and that while the SGC's planning grant program was very helpful to communities seeking to promote infill, further action could be considered.

Chair Alex mentioned the possibility of future ex-officio membership for housing on the Council, given the reorganization of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, to which Ms. Cappio responded that HCD and CalHFA would like continued representation on the Council, and there are additional opportunities to ensure housing-related issues remain present in the Council's vision.

Deputy Secretary Annis thanked Ms. Cappio for her work recognizing opportunities for infill development near HSR stations. Vice Chair Fisher thanked Ms. Cappio for her work with infrastructure and finance, relating to the Council's work identifying barriers to infill development.

Linda Wheaton, Assistant Director for Intergovernmental Affairs at HCD, introduced Holly Wunder Stiles, Housing Program Manager from Mutual Housing California. Assistant Director Wheaton explained that the following case study is also an example of the type of work HCD hopes to enable through the Health in All Policies Task Force, as was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Wunder Stiles presented an example of her organization's affordable housing projects: the New Harmony apartments, located near Interstate 80 in Davis. Funding for the project came from the City of Davis and low-income housing tax credits. She explained how this development exemplifies well-designed and sustainable infill development that considers the health and safety of its residents while remaining affordable. Despite close proximity to the freeway, well-planned design and construction offset the health hazards typically associated with living near a polluted area, and contributed significantly to providing rent costs well below market level.

Bill Higgins, Executive Director of the California Association of Councils of Government, remarked that there is a need for ongoing participation from HCD in the work of the SGC, as affordable housing is vital to MPOs' Sustainable Communities Strategies and meeting the SGC's goals.

Chair Alex stated his agreement.

Agenda Item: Public Comments

Kamyar Guivetchi of the California Department of Water Resources and a member of the Executive Committee of the California Biodiversity Council, informed the Strategic Growth Council that the Biodiversity Council recently adopted a resolution to strengthen agency

alignment for the advancement of natural resource conservation in the state. Also, the Department of Water Resources is working on the 2013 update of the California Water Plan. Three themes have become clear from the process: increased reliance on integrated water management will be necessary; state agencies will need to work together; and investment in innovation and infrastructure, both green and gray, will be crucial. Mr. Guivetchi requested that the Council share and endorse the Biodiversity Council's agency alignment resolution.

Agenda Item: Meeting Adjourned

Chair Alex adjourned the meeting