



San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council

c/o Merced County Association of Governments – 369 W. 18th St. – Merced, CA 95340
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Chair
Mayor Bill Spriggs
City of Merced

Vice-Chair
Supervisor Allen
Ishida
Tulare County

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Fresno County
Governments

Kern Council of
Governments

Kings County
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San Joaquin
Council of
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Stanislaus Council
Of Governments

Tulare County
Association of
Governments

REGIONAL POLICY COUNCIL

Executive Minutes

Thursday, October 7, 2010

1:30 pm

Double Tree Hotel
1150 Ninth Street
Grand Ballroom, 1st Floor
Modesto, California 95354

Members Attending:

Sid Criaghead, Mayor, City of Avenal, KCAG
Judy Case, Supervisor, County of Fresno, Fresno COG
Mike Nelson, Supervisor, County of Merced, MCAG
Frank Bigelow, County of Madera, MCTC
Bill O'Brien, Supervisor, County of Stanislaus, StanCOG
Paul Boyer, Councilmember, City of Farmersville, TCAG
Allen Ishida, Supervisor, County of Tulare, TCAG
Amarpreet, Dhaliwal, Mayor, City of San Joaquin, Fresno COG
Bill Spriggs, Mayor, City of Merced, MCAG
Jim Ridenour, Mayor, City of Modesto

List of Other Attending: Appendix A

1. Approval of Minutes

- A. Action: Introductions – Bill Spriggs, Chair, opened the meeting.
- B. June 25, 2010 Policy Council minutes approved by consensus.

2. Approval of Greenprint Planning Process

Ms. Barbara Steck, Fresno COG, updated the group about the valleywide Greenprint component of the Prop 84 grant application they were authorized to submit (enclosure provided). The grant application was submitted in time for the August 31st deadline. Jesse Brown, MCAG, asked who would perform the work.

Ms. Steck informed the group it would most likely meet the following break down:

Mapping: UC Davis
Publications: Consultant
Public Outreach: Consultant

Paul Boyer, City of Farmersville, made a motion to accept the process as outlined by Ms. Steck and pursue it if awarded the grant.

10/19/2010

Amarpreet Dhaliwal seconded the motion and it passed.

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3. Sustainable Communities – Prop 84 & HUD Application Update – Tom Webster

Ms. Steck informed the group that an application was submitted for \$2.5m for the SJV COGs. The Prop 84 application for the COGs will assist with local government agencies on their General Plans and Sustainable Community Strategies. It is anticipated that the cities will hear back from their HUD application later in October and the Prop 84 application sometime in November.

4. California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley – INFORMATION – Stacie Dabbs

Ms. Dabbs reported on the progress between the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, the Policy Council, and the Directors in place of Mike Dozier. The Partnership's next meeting will take place December 3rd in Madera. She informed the group of the proposal to reorganize the Transportation and LUHA (Land Use, Housing and Ag) working groups. The new formation of the Land Use/Transportation Work Group still leaves the need for a strategy for the Housing and Ag portion of LUHA. Housing might likely form its own work group. Ag is currently being discussed in multiple work groups and could be a component of all the work groups. A further refined proposal will be conducted and submitted to the Partnership Executive Committee on December 3rd. There were no questions.

5. Blueprint Update – INFORMATION – Barbara Steck

Ms. Steck gave a brief update on the Blueprint noting Mr. Jim Harnish's update at the SJV Regional Planning Agencies' Fall Policy Conference that most of those in the room were able to hear. Ms. Steck noted that Mr. Harnish will continue to put together the final parts of his work and move into the implementation phase of the Blueprint.

6. High Speed Rail Update – INFORMATION – C. Bowen

Mr. Boren spoke on the issue as Carrie Bowen was not present and the directors had been updated on Tuesday. He noted they have been moving forward on the environmental work and will be prioritizing the segments for ARRA funding shortly. The criteria of prioritizing the segments are not yet clear as they are currently working on it. No other directors gave comment.

Mr. Paul Boyer noted Hanford's disinterest in the project and Mr. Boren acknowledged that they were aware.

7. Short Haul Rail Update – INFORMATION – T. Smalley

Supervisor Allen Ishida updated the group on the latest developments of Short Haul Rail in their region. He noted they have pulled the 30 mile segment south of Kern and that it may have been more expensive to rebuild. They have received calls from interested parties in rebuilding the section. He went on to note the benefits of short haul rail and the amount the County is sending per week. They are encouraged that Delano is adding an additional two miles for more cars. Current indications have shown that short line is supposed to be profitable, especially the Fresno to Strathmore section. They are entering into negotiations with Union Pacific on the 30 miles that have been pulled.

Supervisor Case asked if they have quantified this rail line, what the rail road owns outright, and what would be acquired to maintain the rail. She noted that it would be beneficial to know what needs to be purchased and what could be acquired through continuance of the rail lines.

Supervisor Ishida stated that it is reversionary if the lines are taken out. If the land owner does not respond in a certain amount of days they lose their right to it and a title search is currently underway on all the properties and are going through their due diligence to check the status of the land. As long as the rails are in the land it stays in the right of way, but if the rails are removed the situation gets more complicated.

Supervisor Bigelow asked if it was in the group's interest to put in their scope to identify rail corridors or potential corridors. He pointed to the outcomes of Item 2 as including targeted acquisitions and that it stayed blank at that point. He asked if it was appropriate to include this in the scope so they could clearly identify these rail corridors and potential rail corridors.

Supervisor Ishida responded that there's a need to look at it. He also noted that most of the county's have bought all the CNG buses they need, and they really need to look at the air quality issues. Freight rail and goods movement is a great way to address some of those air quality issues. Mayor Bill Spriggs asked Ms. Steck to include the identification of short haul rail corridors, potential corridors, and implications of reversion in the Greenprint scope and she agreed. Mr. Robert Phipps noted that Kern is doing an extensive study of rail right of way and ranking of grade crossings in their county, and to the best of his knowledge it has been confined to Kern County.

8. VLAC Update – Information – Robert Phipps

Mr. Phipps updated the group on VLAC's work. He noted in September HUD issued an additional \$1b and roughly \$30m was received by the valley for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The next trip to Sacramento is scheduled to be February 2nd and 3rd and asked for the members to get back to him on the dates. A tentative Fall trip to Washington D.C. is being set. The reauthorization bill may not be completed for some time. A September time frame is being set for the Washington D.C. trip and the members should respond to their COG directors. Senator Boxer stated that reauthorization is not on the horizon despite the reauthorization package proposal.

A package has been put together of 24 different economic development projects submitted and 15 had not been submitted for an appropriation project or grant funding. There was not much for them to do at the time as not all channels had been exhausted for funding. The Air Quality Empowerment Zone was introduced by Representatives McNerny, Costa, and Cardoza - HR 5296. Senator Boxer introduced SB 3373. Legislation was introduced to increase total economic development to \$1B but was increased to \$500m. This year's EDA budget is \$293m. The budget request for 2011 stood at \$286m. The House mark was \$317 and the Senate was \$280. The latest on the state budget has resulted in the state asking the federal government for \$5B to help fill the gap.

Supervisor Ishida noted the potential problem of reaching staff is the problem of them being potentially replaced. Mr. Phipps responded that the trip may potentially move to a focus of agencies and members instead of staff as there would not be as much a focus of advocacy in the fall as compared to framing and reintroducing ourselves to the agencies. Kern County will be taking the lead on Sacramento's trip and Fresno will be taking care of Washington D.C.

ITEM 11 WAS MOVED UP ON AGENDA

11. State Route 99 Bond Savings Proposal – INFORMATION – T. Boren

Mr. Boren opened the item with a general overview of the \$1B Prop B fund and the business plan the COGs put together for it. Cost savings of approximately \$154 million were identified and they worked with Caltrans to identify the appropriate projects to fund. Four projects were identified with one in the bull pen. Late breaking information came out that the CTC decided to pull the item from the November CTC agenda because they were unsure of the total savings, unsure of the use of Bond funds for right of way use, and they have informed the directors that they want the project to go in June.

Ms. Sharri Bender-Ehlert stated that they can use the \$150m to go for reprogramming purposes and will continue conversations and conference calls to discuss the issue. Mr. Vince Harris asked when it will go to the CTC and Ms. Bender-Ehlert stated they will shoot for January but it is not critical and they need to have more conversations with the directors. Mr. Dana Cowell asked if the two STIP amendments are still on the agenda and Ms. Bender-Ehlert responded that they were.

9. Update on Director's Discussions for Regional – DISCUSSION – T. Boren Organization in the Valley

Mr. Boren opened the item by stressing that moving too fast on this issue has the potential of splitting the group up. He cited the benefits of advocacy, the Blueprint planning process, and SB 375 as points that have brought everyone closely together. The consultants, Mintier Harnish, are working to develop a white paper on some of the possibilities. He noted the concerns of some of the small COGs losing their voice while the large COGs are worried about being unable to act.

Supervisor Bigelow voiced his concerns about moving too fast as well. He noted the challenges at CSAC and that a weighted vote was a huge problem. He acknowledged that in certain areas they have been very successful. He recommended not forming a strong alliance.

Mayor Bill Spriggs responded that it was necessary to form a stronger alliance especially with the demise of CALCOG. Supervisor Bigelow felt that it was critical to craft our common grounds first before moving quickly. Councilmember Dhaliwal noted that the supervisors point was well taken by the group and that we need to focus on the commonalities.

10. CARB GHG Emission Targets for the Valley – DISCUSSION – T. Boren

Mr. Boren informed the group that on the week of the September 23rd, the California Air Resources Board did not take the valley's advice and set other place holder values and ignored the technical analysis of the MPOs throughout the valley. Given a 6% target reduction for 2035, they came back with 10%. He informed the group of the desire to convey their concerns with air district staff and their board voted 7-1-1 (7-yes, 1-no, 1-abstain). The representative from our air district did not represent the Board's vote and furthermore, this representative was not an elected official who is beholden to the public.

Supervisor Case recounted the history behind how the makeup of the board was created. The SJV had been originally structured to have elected representatives from each county. The environmental community lobbied hard to have a representative on the board and get an appointed position. Dr. Telles was appointed to the board. The CARB has representatives from the different larger districts, which includes one from the SJVAPCD. The representative from the SJV area did not really represent the voice of the valley and the board to which they were appointed. With the Governor appointing this position the group cannot change him and there is no public accountability.

A letter to the Governor from the Policy Council was drafted and circulated at meeting. A motion was made to have the chairman send the letter. It was seconded by Councilmember Boyer and passed. Supervisor Case asked that the letter be proofread further.

ITEM 11 WAS MOVED UP ON AGENDA

12. CALCOG Reorganization – DISCUSSION – T. Boren

Mr. Boren informed the group of the situation with CALCOG pulling out of advocacy. Citing the diverse nature of the state, it was very difficult for CALCOG to effectively advocate and faced many challenges. Instead, they will refocus on policy instead of advocacy which will free up dues for advocacy.

Mr. Ted Smalley asked to put together a plan to set up advocacy for a valleywide effort. Mayor Spriggs noted the pertinence of having a representative for the valley all the time and Mr. Boren noted that the directors will put it together.

13. Regional Energy Planning – DISCUSSION – F. Abousleman

Mr. Absouleman was not available for the item and Mr. Boren took the lead on it. According to Mr. Absouleman, there is money available from DOE from a national level. The Policy Council could serve as a catalyst to put together a regional energy plan for the valley as a whole. The example of Charlotte and the surrounding region is the major example he cited.

Councilmember Boyer noted the need for partnership on this type of endeavor and utilizing the Clean Energy group to explore this with the Air District. Mr. Tom Jordan noted that the Air District and the Clean Energy organization applied on behalf of 37 places, that the valley is behind the state in terms of energy consumption. Supervisor Ishida saw that the enclosure noted land use and transportation planning and this group ought to step up and do something about it.

Councilmember Dhaliwal noted from a business perspective, his business has made changes to be green but has not seen a bottom line change. This may be a tough challenge to overcome without the right incentives. Jesse Brown asked for the approval to look into this more and Mayor Spriggs said it was fine.

14. Other Items

Councilmember Boyer noted an item for the next meeting. As his city has gone over one of the thresholds for USDA rural guidelines, the local congressional representative has sought to work on this. Their ineligibility for USDA rural monies in this fiscal time makes things extremely challenging and the congressman would like to include the entire valley in the proposal. Mayor Spriggs said it was fine to include the valley in the proposal to be seen at the December Policy Council meeting.

Ms. Steck introduced Lee Ayers who was involved in the Greenprint portion introduced earlier in the meeting. Mr. Michael Sigala thanked Mr. Vince Harris for hosting the conference and congratulated him on have such a successful experience. Mr. Bruce Abanathie noted that an evaluation should be sent out to help the host plan for next year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Boren
Chair, SJV Regional Planning Agencies' Directors' Committee

Others Attending:

Marjie Krin, MCAG
Stacie Dabs, CA Partnership
Lori Flanders, MCAG
Jesse Brown, MCAG
Tom Jordan, SJVAPCD
Jim Harnish, Mintier Harnish
Ted Smalley, TCAG
Wanda Ishida, TCAG
Barbara Steck, Fresno COG
Bill Higgins, League of California Cities
Richard Lyon, CA Building Industry Association (CBIA)
Ken Baxter, Caltrans
Christine Cox-Kovacevich, Caltrans
Dana Cowell, SJCOG
Bruce Abanathie, KCAG
Patricia Taylor, Madera CTC
Sid Craighead, KCAG
Andrew Chesley, SJCOG
Tanisha Taylor, SJCOG
Dan Hubbard, Parsons Brinkerhoff
Carlos Yamzon, StanCOG
Rosa Park, StanCOG
Michael Sigala, SJV Coordinator/Sigala Inc
Nathan Wahl, SJV Coordinator/Sigala Inc
Tony Boren, Fresno COG
Jesse Brown, MCAG