

Blueprint - Valley Planner's Workgroup

Meeting Notes from October 7, 2009

1. John Wright welcomed the group and introductions were made.
2. Tom Webster gave an update on the 4th Year Blueprint Tasks. Mr. Webster reported that the proposals for the Valleywide document and toolkit were currently being evaluated. Mike Bitner gave an update on the model improvement plan and referenced the Prop 84 funds. He reported that \$2.5 million will be distributed to the Valley COGs and that the 2014 RTP will be SB 375 compliant. Kristine Cai discussed Fresno COG's approach to developing GHG targets prior to the March 1, 2010 deadline. Rob Ball commented on the recently finalized RTAC document and highlighted the key role that the local agencies will play in the development of both the SCS and APS. COGs have until March 1, 2010 to work with ARB on the GHG targets.

Nate Roth reviewed the density white paper and described how the each was defined. He fielded questions from the group. Mr. Wright suggested a park ratio to define common perimeters for a small community and a large urban city. Greg Gatzka asked for further clarification on how the density white paper and Uplan were to be used in complying with Blueprint policies. The white paper was meant primarily to define terms and not intended as a policy position. Mr. Wright agreed that this was an important distinction.

An update on current activities was given by each of the 8 COGs. Many of the COG representatives commented on the RTP efforts. Barbara Steck reported that a Community Image Survey with a variety of housing types and densities is currently being developed by the Local Government Commission and will soon be distributed to the COG Project Managers.

Mr. Wright announced the Blueprint Award recipients and congratulated them. Bruce O'Neal mentioned that the APA Planning Awards for 2010 would be announced in February and encouraged the Valley Planner's to submit their local projects.

Mrs. Steck led the group in a discussion regarding the major constraints to Blueprint implementation. Immediately identified was the substantial costs of a General Plan update, roughly half a million for a small jurisdiction and ranging upwards of two million for a large urbanized area. Discussion followed about the costs of updating the General Plan specific to the Blueprint or SB 375. Also identified was the need to connect water with the Blueprint and SB 375 efforts.

As to how the Councils of Government can be of assistance, it was noted that the COGs can provide assistance through running traffic models and coordinating mandated efforts for compliance such as AB 170 and the Housing Elements.

3. Kasey Lizon, Senior Planning with SACOG gave an overview of the Blueprint process that took place in the Sacramento region and indicated that the primary purpose of the Blueprint was to provide information to the electeds. Thus, the Blueprint would facilitate better tools for decision making. Mrs. Lizon elaborated that the SACOG implementation has consisted of assisting local governments, tracking progress over the five year period, and providing information for the RTP. Direct local assistance has included technical support, modeling tools, and training. A form-based code workbook was developed using 4 local case studies as examples. Mrs. Lizon stated that education seminars, planning 101 events for electeds, and a community design grant program have also been a significant part of the SACOG implementation effort.

Civic engagement tools have included educational videos, photo-simulations, land- use and transportation photo database, and 3-D visual simulations. Every SACOG newsletter has a section on Blueprint implementation focusing on a local community.

Mrs. Lizon reviewed the tracking system and highlighted the change in housing product mix over the previous five years. The system also provides data on vehicle miles traveled that can be further connected to climate change. Additional information can be found at www.sacog.org or www.sacregionblueprint.org .

A question and answer period followed with discussion by the group.

4. Rollie Smith provided an update and distributed handouts regarding the sustainable valley project. Mr. Smith commented that the Obama administration has set the stage for urban renewal and sustainable cities.

Katie Stevens updated the group on the recent activities on the Partnership for the SJV. She reported that an application for the federal high speed rail funds was submitted by California and gave an overview of recent legislation.

5. As Georgiena Vivian, VRPA was unable to attend the meeting; Tom Webster gave a brief update on the Blueprint toolkit. Mr. Webster clarified that the toolkit project that VRPA was working on was part of an existing contract between Fresno COG and VRPA and that Mrs. Vivian had begun work on making the transition between the Blueprint Principles and the ultimate toolkit. He also suggested that everyone take some time and review the links from the website www.sjvblueprinttoolkit.weebly.com to determine what kinds of tools would be helpful to the local planners.
6. Mr. Wright opened the discussion about AB 170 and invited Dan Barber from the SJVAPCD to provide additional information. Mr. Barber stated that an additional information source has been added to the SJVAPCD AB 170 information website. Mr. Wright asked the group if an AB 170 template would be helpful and the group indicated that it would be. Mr. Barber expressed that the SJVAPCD would be happy to review a template document.
7. Mr. Wright gave a progress report on the City and Regional Planning Master's Program at CSU Fresno through a partnership with Cal Poly. A survey will be distributed in the upcoming weeks to document the interest in the program and local jurisdictions are encouraged to fill out the survey. Classes are anticipated to begin in the Fall 2010 session, beginning in the continuing education program. As funding becomes available, the program will transfer into the regular university.

Mr. Wright asked the group what the frequency of the Valley Planner's Workgroup meetings should be and what time frame worked best for everyone. The group agreed that the 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. time frame was preferable and that meetings should be held on the first Wednesday every four months. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at Fresno, COG.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:25 PM.