

Needs Assessment Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, April 9, 2015

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Place: COG Sequoia Conference Room

2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201

Attendees:

Lynne Ashbeck, Community Medical Centers
Renee Mathis, City of Clovis
Brian Burnett, City of Clovis
Roseann Galvan, City of Selma
Sean Brewer, City of Coalinga
Chad McMullen, City of San Joaquin
Harpreet Kooner, County of Fresno
Mohammad Khorsand, County of Fresno
Steve Delsid, County of Fresno
Mary Savala, League of Women Voters
Stephenie Frederick, League of Women Voters
Veronica Garibay, Leadership Council for Justice & Accountability
Christine Barker, Fresno Metro Ministry

Nick Paladino, Fresno Cycling Club
Moses Stites, Fresno County Rural Transit Agency
Heather Dumais, American Lung Association
Jeff Roberts, Granville Homes
Scott Bier, Fresno County Public Health Department

Fresno COG staff:

Kristine Cai
Mike Bitner
Lindsey Chargin
Seth Scott
Peggy Arnest
Angela Yang

Ms. Lynne Ashbeck called the meeting to order at 2:10 PM.

- I. Public Presentation
No presentations.
- II. Information and discussion items
 1. Welcome and Introductions
Ms. Ashbeck welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation to the committee and the Fresno COG staffs' valuable input. Ms. Ashbeck briefly noted that the purpose of today's meeting was to approve the definition of the disadvantaged community and to refine the scope of the work.
 2. Approval of Meeting Notes
Meeting notes were approved with consensus by the committee.
 3. Finalizing "the Disadvantage Community" in Fresno
Ms. Kristine Cai briefly reviewed the past efforts on defining the Disadvantaged Community. The proposed definition was presented as:

“For the purpose of the Needs Assessment study by Fresno COG, Disadvantaged Community refers to a community with an annual median household income less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income, or communities that are designated as the top 25% worst performing census tracts defined by the Cal EPA’s CalEnviroScreen 2.0. The Disadvantaged Community includes both incorporated and unincorporated communities in Fresno County. The disadvantaged unincorporated community refers to a fringe, island or legacy community that meets the above criteria. An unincorporated fringe community is an inhabited territory within a city’s sphere of influence; an unincorporated island community is the inhabited territory that is substantially surrounded by city limits/cities; an unincorporated legacy community is the inhabited territory that is geographically isolated but has existed for at least 50 years.

If a project applicant believes a project benefits a disadvantaged community but the project does not meet the aforementioned criteria, the applicant must submit for consideration a quantitative assessment of why the community should be considered disadvantaged.”

Ms. Cai explained the definition and showed a Fresno County Disadvantaged Community map, which was created based on the proposed definition.

Ms. Ashbeck mentioned the proposed definition was from the discussion that took place at the last meeting and additional considerations included the Water Codes, SB 244 and other factors. Ms. Ashbeck asked the committee for any corrections.

Mr. Mohammad Khorsand asked what the top priority was in defining the Disadvantaged Community. The concern was expressed on the necessity of determining the percentages and methodologies for the definition.

Ms. Veronica Garibay answered that the definition could help the jurisdictions have a good methodology to define the Disadvantaged Community. It could help the public understand the methodology of defining “being disadvantaged”.

Ms. Ashbeck confirmed Ms. Veronica’s comments that a well-defined methodology was needed.

Mr. Moses Stites commented that it was good to include the legacy community in the definition.

Mr. Chad McMullen commented that this definition would make some communities not able to achieve the threshold.

Ms. Renee Mathis said there were a lot of definitions out there for different communities.

The committee discussed the purpose of the Disadvantaged Community definition.

Ms. Ashbeck asked whether everyone agreed with the Disadvantaged Community definition proposal presented by Ms. Cai.

The committee approved the proposed definition.

4. Defining the Scope of Work.

Ms. Ashbeck briefly overviewed the scope bullets which were discussed in the last meeting.

Ms. Cai introduced the purpose of the March subcommittee meeting, which was to narrow down the scope.

Ms. Cai went through the subcommittee's recommendations on the scope:

1. Collect ADA plans (sidewalk) and bike plans from the cities and the County. If jurisdictions don't have such plans, the ATP efforts that are currently on-going at Fresno COG will help fill the gap.
2. Build an inventory for **existing** sidewalk and bike/trail facility based on the data/plans from the cities and the County; create a GIS database for **planned** bike & ped facilities. It would be done by the COG staff.
3. For cities or jurisdictions that do not have such existing data, contract with Fresno State's Regional Planning Center to fill the data gap using Google Earth or do field check by Fresno state. The COG GIS staff has already looked into the feasibility of this task.
4. Overlay the sidewalk/bike inventory maps with the transit stops. It would be done by COG staff.
5. Collect health related data, and overlay the health data map with sidewalk, bike/trail and transit stop maps. The Fresno COG would work with the County Public Health Department.
6. Overlay sidewalk, bike/trail & transit stop maps with the Disadvantaged Communities map.
7. Contract with a consulting firm to conduct two main analyzes:
 - 7.1 Regional gap analysis for bike and trail facilities (sidewalk is not included in the gap analysis because sidewalks are considered local)
 - 7.2 Transportation connectivity/accessibility analysis for major employment centers and regional health facilities (such as hospitals). All modes (roads & streets, transit, bike & ped) are included in this connectivity analysis. A list of major employment centers was distributed. The list was a reference; the project was open to other employment center recommendations. Due to a limited budget and a more efficient analysis effort, it was recommended to narrow the whole list down to a small amount of the employment centers.

Ms. Ashbeck asked the committee for any comments.

For the bullet #1, the committee members asked how to get the bike plan, and how to deal with the situation that some circulation plans may not include the bike ways. **Ms. Cai** answered that the COG staff would ask the cities for the plans. If there was no such data, the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) project could help the cities with developing such plans. **Ms. Lindsey Chagrin** confirmed that the ATP project will share the work with the committee.

For the bullet #3, **Ms. Cai** pointed out that the study area would be the entire county.

Mr. Khorsand was concerned about the feasibility of filling the sidewalk data gap by using Google Map.

Ms. Cai said the plan was to see what was out there. If the sidewalk can be clearly seen by Google Earth, it can be coded into GIS. If the sidewalk can't be seen, the students will be sent out to do a field survey to.

Ms. Ashbeck suggested checking the ground truth first. **Ms. Cai** confirmed it could be done by giving students the training.

Ms. Ashbeck asked the committee to determine the definition of sidewalk. **Mr. Paladino** suggested that the shoulder couldn't be the sidewalk. The sidewalk would be the path separated from the road way. **Ms. Ashbeck** suggested that sidewalk should be defined as paved walking surface.

For the bullet #5, the committee asked what kind of the health data was needed in this project.

Ms. Ashbeck suggested that the health data decision should be left to the experts at the County Public Health Department.

For the bullet #6, after the committee exploring the Disadvantaged Community map and discussing some jurisdictions almost all painted as the Disadvantage Community area, **Ms. Ashbeck** suggested the committee to think about where to begin and what to do.

Mr. Paladino asked whether the Disadvantaged Community definition would influence the RTP fund. **Ms. Cai** answered that COG's Programming Committee will work on the project scoring criteria. The definition for the Disadvantaged Community was developed for the purpose of this Needs Assessment study.

For the bullet #7.1, **Mr. Paladino** asked how to deal with the timing of bike plans. Mr. Paladino mentioned that he was currently participating in the bike plans updating process for the cities of Fresno, Clovis and the County. **Ms. Cai** answered this scope of work was going to focus on the connection between cities. **Ms. Kooner** mentioned the County was also considering the connectivity issues. **Ms. Ashbeck** suggested focusing on the current gap.

Mr. Paladino suggested linking all unincorporated communities, since the communities were on the way when linking bike paths between the cities. **Mr. Khorsand** said the connectivity study is regional, which means connecting the cities, but not the unincorporated communities. It was pointed out that the farming industry may not welcome the idea of building bike lanes, since it would attract more bike traffic, which might have conflict with pesticides applications. **Ms. Kooner** mentioned the County's bike plan included the unincorporated communities. The committee discussed whether to connect the unincorporated communities.

For the bullet #7.2, the committee discussed the major employer center list which was passed out at the meeting. **Ms. Cai** recommended the committee look at the locations, but not just the employment numbers. The list was a reference. There was no threshold for the "major employer centers." **Ms. Cai** encouraged the committee to provide the recommendation locations/places.

Ms. Ashbeck asked the committee to think about adding clinics, hospitals, community education centers, retail centers, food related business, farming operations, food processing, and manufacturing places. **Mr. Khorsand** mentioned that the light industry hire employees seasonally. **Mr. Steven Delsid** suggested considering the day care and school locations.

Mr. Seth Scott said the technique staff used could track the customers, instead of the employee number. The committee discussed the traffic generation data would be a good source to determine the locations. **Ms. Cai** pointed out that the goal was to improve the service for the basic needs. Reducing traffic is not the only consideration in this project. The committee discussed to identify the destinations where attracted a lot of people and provided the daily needs. **Ms. Ashbeck** recommended conducting another meeting to look into the list of locations.

Mr. McMullen mentioned that Caltrans may have the data that could help identify the locations.

Ms. Christine Barker mentioned the Anchor Institution may have helpful data too.

Ms. Ashbeck proposed to determine five categories for the location selection, and then selecting two to three locations in each category. **Mr. Scott**, from a GIS technical perspective, said it is possible to score categories and get to know people's needs of different areas. It was suggested by looking at the geography and scoring the places first; then drawing the specific thresholds for different areas, since the residents' needs may be different from city to city. Mr. Scott mentioned these could be done in GIS.

Mr. McMullen said some cities may know where people are going. **Ms. Cai** mentioned that the study won't be just mapping and collecting data. The transit and traffic engineering sides would also be involved. Ms. Cai suggested conducting another meeting to talk about the locations, destinations, and categories.

The committee discussed and agreed to go with five categories.

Mr. Scott recommended an idea of selecting a location, which was drawing 5/10/15 minutes travel time intervals to the targeted locations. **Ms. Cai** said she would discuss the technical ideas with Mr. Scott after the meeting, and the ideas would be presented to the committee.

The committee agreed that another committee meeting was needed.

Ms. Delsid asked the COG staff to overlay the population density on data.

Ms. Ashbeck asked for any comments regarding the scope. **No more comments from the committee.**

5. Other Items: RFP, FCHIP, etc.

Ms. Cai summarized it for the next steps: discussing with Mr. Scott, then sending the ideas to everyone. Another committee meeting may be needed in May to discuss whether a consultant is needed.

Ms. Cai would send out today's meeting notes to everyone.

Ms. Ashbeck thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 3:56 P.M.