

#2



August 3, 2009

The Honorable Judge Anderson
Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Attention: Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

The 2008-09 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury recently released its report entitled “SBCAG—A Road Not Taken.” The report names the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) as an affected agency and requires that SBCAG provide responses to the relevant findings and recommendations. SBCAG’s responses are included in this letter and the attachment.

Finding 1a

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments has authority to do regional land use planning through its Joint Powers Agreement.

Response – Agree

SBCAG has authority in the Joint Powers Agreement, which all member agencies have signed, to address “area planning and mutual concerns.” SBCAG does have all of the powers outlined in Government Code Section 65060 et seq. and therefore, SBCAG has the power to create a true Regional Plan, if the Board so ordered.

Finding 1b

The staff has developed recommendations for regional land use planning approved by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

Response – Agree

Over the years staff has brought, in response to state law and board direction, many recommendations related to regional planning. Among these include policies in the Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Growth Forecast, Job–Housing Balance studies in 1989 and 1995, State--funded Interregional Partnership for Jobs–Housing Balance, among others that address regional land use issues.

Finding 1c

The regional land use planning recommendations adopted by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments have not been implemented.

Response – Partially Disagree. The Grand Jury finding does not identify the specific recommendations it is referring to. Some of the regional land uses planning recommendations, adopted by the SBCAG board, have been implemented. See analysis of response to individual report recommendations in Attachment 1.

The Blueprint Pilot Project has initiated the development of countywide data useful in addressing regional planning issues.

Recommendation 1

Recommendation: That the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and each respective jurisdiction implement already adopted recommendations that deal with regional land use planning.

Response – The recommendation has been partially implemented. As noted under Finding 1c, some of the recommendations regarding regional planning adopted by the SBCAG board have been implemented. Many of the recommendations cannot be implemented unilaterally by SBCAG, but require the consent and cooperation of SBCAG’s member local agencies.

The SBCAG board has expressed concerns about involving itself in matters that impact local land use decisions. In addition, SBCAG does not have the authority to implement many of the recommendations since they are more appropriately addressed in the local General Plans. Local agencies have to continue to actively participate in this process, to use the growth forecasts prepared by SBCAG, to consistently evaluate their jobs housing relationship and address imbalances, among other issues. Many of these issues require local commitments and strong regional political and public support to further their development. However, many of these issues lack a strong regional planning constituency and are lightning rods for opposition. For example, affordable housing projects frequently receive strong public opposition.

Despite these challenges, the Board and local agencies will have to revisit these issues of regional development, environmental protection, and land use impacts on transportation as SBCAG develops the Community Sustainability Strategy under SB 375.

Finding 2

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments has not developed a fully integrated regional plan coordinating jobs, housing and transportation that includes all the County’s jurisdictions.

Response – Agree with finding

Recommendation 2

That the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments develop a fully integrated regional plan.

Response – The recommendation will be implemented. Over the next several years, SBCAG will be involved in responding to the state’s regional land use planning requirements imposed by SB 375. The SBCAG board authorized implementation of SB 375 in SBCAG’s FY 2009/10 Overall Work Program adopted in April 2009. This legislation will require SBCAG to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that will address the linkage between land use, housing, and transportation. The SCS must be incorporated as the land use element of the SBCAG Regional Transportation Plan. The SCS must also address the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan, part of SBCAG’s existing responsibility under State Housing Element Law. Although it will take some time to develop SBCAG will be developing an integrated regional plan to the extent required by SB 375.

Finding 3

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments refused to apply for state funds for comprehensive regional planning.

Response – Partially Disagree with finding

Funds for the Regional Blueprint Planning Grant Program were first included in the FY 2005-06 state budget. On March 16, 2006, the board considered and unanimously rejected the recommendation to include the development of a Regional Blueprint Plan in the SBCAG FY 2006-07 Overall Work Program. Board members expressed concerns about regional and state agencies becoming involved in local land use planning.

However, following a discussion of the Blueprint work in San Luis Obispo County, in October 2006 the board unanimously agreed to sign a letter of support for an application for State Blueprint Planning Grant funds in 2007 by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), for a pilot study of the Santa Maria Valley. The grant was awarded and the study is now underway. SBCAG is a subcontractor to SLOCOG on the grant.

Recommendation 3

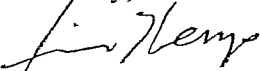
That Santa Barbara County Association of Governments aggressively pursue funding for comprehensive regional planning.

Response – The recommendation will be implemented.

Complying with the new regional planning requirements mandated by the state under SB 375 will require significant additional staff time by SBCAG and local agencies. The state has not yet provided the funding to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) to meet these mandates. Regrettably, due to the state budget crisis, funding may be unavailable. However, the Governor's Strategic Growth Council is considering partial funding of MPO's statewide to develop the Community Sustainability Strategy required by SB 375. The Council could tap regional planning funding made available from Proposition 84. In addition, legislation was introduced this year (SB 406--DeSautinier) that would give regional agencies the authority to raise vehicle registration surcharge of up to \$2.00 to fund the development and implementation of regional plans to comply with SB 375. The SBCAG board has taken no position on this bill. SBCAG will pursue funding opportunities to offset the costs of complying with SB 375.

If you have any questions regarding SBCAG's response, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Jim Kemp
Executive Director

cc: City managers and County Executive Officer
Attachment

Attachment 1

SBCAG Status Report on Regional Planning Recommendations in SBCAG Regional Publications

Appendix IV, Grand Jury Report cites “Relevant SBCAG Regional Publications.” Specific regional land use recommendations in the subject report are highlighted and a status report is provided on their implementation.

1992 SBCAG Regional Housing Needs Study

Comment: One of the key provisions of California Housing Element Law is that each jurisdiction has the responsibility to provide housing opportunities for all income groups. State law also recognizes that the issue of affordable housing is not a process that can be accomplished by each jurisdiction in isolation. Rather, due to economic and environmental factors, and community goals this responsibility is best carried out cooperatively on a regional basis. The requirement for a Regional Housing Needs Plan is designed to bring about this cooperation at the local level.

Recommendation: Table 4, Page 13 of the report provides the local proportion of the countywide housing need. The allocation is based on addressing regional issues such as farmworker and homeless housing needs, and households overpaying for housing. The housing need is then allocated by income level, from very low, low, to moderate and above moderate.

Status: Implemented - The Regional Housing Needs allocation is developed every five years for use in the local jurisdictions housing element. The allocation is accommodated by local agency housing elements through potential land use and zoning modifications.

1995 SBCAG Jobs/Housing Study

Comment: It is important to recognize the regional impacts of local land use decisions. Local actions that influence the development of housing and employment can impact the regional transportation network. This land use-transportation connection is being recognized at the local and regional level as having impacts on urban form and our quality of life.

Recommendation: Page 46 - Continued effort is needed at developing a consistent means of evaluating the relationship in local and regional plans. Local jurisdictions will cooperate with SBCAG in the preparation and examination of alternative land use and transportation scenarios that reduce commute trips and vehicle miles travelled. This issue will be an ongoing research activity of SBCAG with the development of its transportation model.

Status: The jobs housing issue has been addressed in a number of later studies and local jurisdictions have developed policies and language addressing it in housing elements and general plan updates. However, many commuters who live in Ventura County and northern Santa Barbara County commute to the south coast for jobs.

Tri County Socioeconomic Monitoring and Mitigation Program, June 2000

Comment: Most recommendations address the methodology and implementation of assessing and mitigating the socioeconomic impacts of oil and gas development. However, one recommendation does relate to regional land use planning.

Recommendation (pages 107-108): Phasing of resource development activities must be used as a tool to lessen the magnitude of socioeconomic impacts since infrastructure development requires a long lead-time.

Status: Implemented - By and large, the County of Santa Barbara has served as the lead local agency in addressing the overall onshore impacts of oil and gas development. The County has consistently supported the phasing policy.

2002 SBCAG Regional Housing Needs for Santa Barbara County

Comment: The discussion of regional housing needs revolves around a number of issues that address land use and cooperation between agencies. While land use decisions are the primary responsibility of local cities and the county, many of them have regional consequences. While some of these regional impacts are positive, some can be detrimental to the region. The regional housing needs plan illustrates some of these challenges by addressing the fair share allocation of housing of all economic segments of the community. Some of these policy challenges were addressed in the development of the SBCAG Regional Growth Forecast, some will grow out of the discussions about this Regional Housing Needs Plan. The issues that have arisen in the discussions among city, county, and SBCAG planning staff are outlined below. Actions to address some of these issues were accepted by SBCAG when it adopted the Regional Growth Forecast.

Recommendations: Page 22

1. The Cities of Santa Barbara and Carpinteria, UCSB, and the County should continue to address the regional implications of additional employment in the South Coast area on the regional housing market and cities in the South Coast and north county area. The region needs to examine the impacts of high housing costs and aging workforce on the ability to sustain employment growth and accommodate increasing long distance commutes. Local jurisdictions should consider concurrent phasing of new commercial, retail, industrial development with residential development to be consistent with a balance of jobs and housing.

Status: Partially addressed – The South Coast Housing Task Force meets quarterly to address and coordinate affordable housing projects. The cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta have policies to address phasing of commercial development and housing. Based on local review, the new UCSB Long Rang Development Plan is deficient in addressing issues related to increased enrollment and employment on local communities. UCSB needs to become involved in the South Coast Housing Task Force Group.

2. Local agencies with excess commercial and industrially zoned land should evaluate their General Plans to consider the correspondence of local job development potential with regional and local resource capacity, e.g., water and housing sites, to support job growth.

Status: Local agencies should respond

3. North county jurisdictions should use housing availability as a marketing tool in economic development and consideration should be given to working with south coast agencies and businesses that cannot expand due to environmental constraints or lack of affordable housing.

Status: Implemented, but limited success – North county jurisdictions Chamber of Commerce, Cities Economic Development Departments and their general plans economic development elements promote housing availability as an incentive to attract new employment growth. However, these agencies have had limited success in attracting south coast employers.

4. There are large institutions in the County that generate housing needs that impact local jurisdictions. UCSB, VAFB, Lompoc Federal Correctional Institute, and the Community Colleges in Santa Barbara, Lompoc, and Santa Maria are large institutions that need to address the housing impacts of their development decisions and work closely with local agencies to address the housing needs of their development. In addition, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Casino development has the potential for generating housing need.

Status: *Not Implemented* – Most of the large institutions have not worked with local agencies in addressing their housing impacts on local jurisdictions. However, as agencies consider expansion, most of the impacts have been considered in environmental review.

Agricultural is a vital part of the economy. To ensure it retains its viability the agricultural industry needs workers. However, many agricultural workers live in cities in search of affordable housing and urban services. The responsibility for addressing the housing needs of agricultural workers needs more attention in the unincorporated area, as that is where most of the agricultural jobs are located.

Status: Partially Implemented: – Issue of agricultural worker housing addressed in Santa Barbara County Housing Element. Ongoing tension remains between County and local cities over allocation of responsibility to address farmworker housing need.

5. The pattern of development must incorporate provisions for open space, recreation, public services, housing and other elements in a manner that protects scarce resources, such as prime farmland, and ensures the efficient delivery of urban services. Should the pattern of development grow up, with higher densities, or spread out with lower density development pattern? These challenges can only be addressed by increased cooperation among all member agencies.

Status: Not Implemented – Density issues among the most challenging in local planning for housing and land use. Trade offs involved in as preserving the rural lands, Gaviota Coast, etc., with more dense urban development are greeted with great skepticism. Development patterns are dictated by local jurisdictions. LAFCO encourages efficient service delivery.

6. Local agencies are encouraged to use techniques to improve inter-jurisdictional coordination. Such techniques may include, but are not limited to joint city-county planning commission meetings, joint city-county specific plans, and regular referral of environmental reports and plans to adjoining agencies.

Status: Partially implemented – Referral of reports generally occurs. However, in general there are few joint planning commission or city council and County meetings to address border issues.

7. The SBCAG Board should consider addressing growing fiscal inequities on a regional basis and range from simply monitoring state legislative proposals to mediation of disputes between member agencies such as jobs housing balance issues.

Status: Not implemented

2003 Congestion Management Plan, November 2003

Comment: CMP Policy Recommendations, Chapter IV, Land Use Analysis Program, pages IV-9 and IV-10, address the land use/transportation connection:

Local Jurisdictions

1. Ensure that the scope of any traffic analysis performed for the environmental review process required under CEQA must include project impacts on the CMP system if total trip generation exceeds 50 peak-hour or 500 daily trips. If trip generation exceeds these CMP impact thresholds, the local agency must use the Intersection Capacity Utilization method (as specified in Appendix D) to measure signalized intersection LOS. Analysis of state highway segments should be based on the Highway Capacity Manual for two-lane, multi-lane, and basic freeway segments.

Status: Local agencies regularly comply with this recommendation

2. Consistent with the Caltrans Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies, local agencies must consult with Caltrans on the application of the ICU method when CEQA traffic analyses involve state facilities. The Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) Operations Method will continue to be used for Project Study Reports (PSRs) and to evaluate proposed mitigation projects on state facilities.

Status: Local agencies regularly comply with this recommendation

3. EIRs, EA, and NDs prepared for land use projects which do not generate more than 50 peak hour or 500 daily trips, local agencies should use the Intersection Capacity Utilization method (as specified in Appendix D) to compute intersection volume/capacity and determine the intersection LOS.

Status: Local agencies regularly comply with this recommendation

4. Local agencies must amend their current procedures for environmental assessments, as needed, to evaluate the impacts of projects on the CMP system.

Status: Local agencies have complied with this recommendation

5. Submit documentation on proposed traffic models for the review and approval of SBCAG based on the guidelines presented in Chapter IV and Appendix F.

Status: Local agencies have not generally complied with this recommendation

6. Project, program, and general or specific planning environmental studies must be forwarded to SBCAG by the local agencies if they exceed the above mentioned thresholds.

Status: Local agencies generally comply with this recommendation

7. Each jurisdiction must submit in digital format where feasible an accounting of building permits it has issued on a semi-annual basis to neighboring jurisdictions and SBCAG for their use in assessing cumulative traffic impacts consistent with the CMP Land Use Data Submittal Form. Information requested includes the location (i.e., Santa Barbara Travel Model Traffic Analysis Zone) and number of residential units approved by type (single-family, multi-family, etc); and the location and square footage (and proposed use) of commercial and industrial land uses permitted within the previous six month period. A copy of the CMP Land Use Data Submittal Form is provided in Appendix G.

Status: Local agencies regularly comply with this recommendation

8. The CEQA cumulative project analysis of traffic impacts to the CMP system must include the recently approved building permit information from the adjacent jurisdictions as well as recently approved projects in the local jurisdiction.

Status: Unknown

9. Local agencies must require project applicants to collect data to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of project conditions or mitigations associated with impacts on the CMP system.

Status: Unknown

10. Local agencies must submit environmental assessments to affected transit agencies when proposed projects or proposed mitigation measures could affect transit service.

Status: Local agencies generally comply with this recommendation

11. The cities and the county will involve SBCAG in the development of traffic models having regional significance. The jurisdictions will submit these models to SBCAG for its review and approval. SBCAG will review these models using guidelines in Appendix F.

Status: Local agencies have not generally complied with this recommendation

12. Local agencies must circulate environmental reports to adjacent jurisdictions when impacts of land development on the regional CMP system in other jurisdictions have been determined in the traffic analysis performed for the environmental report. Local agencies must actively consult with adjacent jurisdictions to identify and mitigate impacts of development. The CMA (SBCAG) will require the permitting jurisdiction to demonstrate good faith efforts to coordinate and mitigate impacts on adjacent jurisdiction.

Status: Local agencies have generally complied with this recommendation

Congestion Management Agency, SBCAG

1. Staff will review the CEQA analysis for consistency with significance criteria outlined in Chapter IV and provide comments to the jurisdiction.

Status: SBCAG has analyzed DEIRs consistent with this recommendation

2. SBCAG will specify guidelines for monitoring project conditions and/or mitigations to ensure impacts on the regional road system are mitigated.

Status: SBCAG has analyzed DEIRs consistent with this recommendation

3. SBCAG will prepare travel demand forecasts to identify future deficiencies on the CMP system.

Status: SBCAG has prepared forecasts for the RTP and specific projects

4. SBCAG will monitor adequacy of regional CMP system impact assessment and mitigation as part of the determination of conformance of jurisdictions with the CMP.

Status: SBCAG has produced annual CMP Conformance Reports for SBCAG Board approval

The Inter-Regional Partnership for Jobs, Housing, and Mobility, July 2004

Comment: This report provides a framework to identify, evaluate and recommend strategies to improve jobs and housing imbalances in the Ventura-Santa Barbara study area. The report suggests ways to collaborate at local, regional and state levels to encourage more housing choices in areas rich in jobs and

job creation and location ways to take better advantage of local skills and human resources in areas rich in housing.

This report also serves as a roadmap for future public and private leadership, collaboration and action. It focuses on collaborative regional initiatives and state legislative advocacy, as well as on common-sense local strategies that can complement existing policy and local initiatives. The strategies outlined within this document recognize that public leaders cannot accomplish this goal on their own, but can make a difference by recognizing the strengths, diversity and interests of other communities within the region.

This report also outlines next steps with regard to implementation of its recommendations and sets forth a “Framework for Action” for initiating region-wide collaboration, communication and leadership. The final section provides a roadmap for change – specific “Next Steps” that should be taken to build upon the momentum created by this process and the working relationships that have emerged between community leaders and elected officials in the region.

Recommendations: Recommendations detailed on Pages 17-24 are based on seven core policies:

1. Integrating regional thinking into job creation and economic development
Status: Unknown, up to local redevelopment agencies.

2. Advanced housing policy that reflects regional priorities
Status: Partially implemented – Some local housing elements address regional issues.

3. Public education and involvement opportunities
Status: Partially implemented – Local agencies have complied with this recommendation through the public workshop process and other means of outreach in the development of specific plans, community plans and general plan updates.

4. Legislative advocacy
Status: Some local agencies have complied with this recommendation

5. Support ongoing programs to address congestion
Status: Local agencies have generally complied with this recommendation through compliance with the SBCAG Congestion Management Plan and project specific environmental reviews

6. Permit processing improvements and streamlining
Status: Unknown, Up to local agencies

7. Inter-Regional communications and collaboration
Status: Local agencies have generally complied with this recommendation through participation on TPAC, the submittal of project proposals to other agencies, participation in affordable housing groups, and maintaining an open process in the development of community plans and general plan updates.

2030 Travel Forecast for Santa Barbara County, September 2004

Comment: The travel forecast is the document that estimates increases and change in travel demand over the long term. The forecast was integrated into the SBCAG RTP. However, as indicated above in the CMP review, local agencies have not consistently submitted their travel models for SBCAG review.

2007 Regional Growth Forecast

Comment: The purpose of the Regional Growth Forecast is to provide a consistent countywide forecast to the year 2040 for use in long range comprehensive planning. The forecast serves as input towards the development of: traffic forecasts, air quality impact analysis, housing demand for Housing Elements of General Plans, and demand estimates for sewer treatment plants and other facilities. In addition, the forecast assists in making the State Department of Housing and Community Development Regional Housing Needs allocations to the subcounty level. The housing needs by income level are required as part of each jurisdictions housing element of their general plan. Also important is the use of the forecast as a database for social service agencies, marketing studies, and for analysis of growth related issues. Recommendations are made on Page 17 of the executive summary.

Recommendation:

1. The Regional Growth Forecast 2005-2040 should be endorsed and used by SBCAG and local jurisdictions as a baseline forecast, subject to review and revision as necessary.

Status: Partially implemented – Some local agencies use the SBCAG forecast, others do not.

2. SBCAG should take a more active role in facilitating discussion of regional growth forecasts, its issues, and if desired, policies.

Status: In the development of the Regional Growth Forecasts, the Regional Housing Needs Allocation and the Blueprint pilot project, discussions of forecasts and their issues occurred. However, generally the SBCAG board is reluctant to engage in a discussion of regional growth issues beyond those directly related to transportation.

3. Local agencies with excess commercial and industrially zoned land should evaluate their General Plans to consider the correspondence of local job development potential with regional and local resource capacity, e.g., road capacity and housing sites, to support job growth.

Status: Unknown, Local agencies should respond

4. The Cities of Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Goleta, UCSB, and the County should continue to address the regional implications of additional employment in the South Coast area on the regional housing market and cities in the South Coast and north county area. The region needs to examine the impacts of high housing costs and aging workforce on the ability to sustain employment growth and accommodate increasing long distance commutes.

Status: Partially addressed – The South Coast Housing Task Force meets quarterly to address and coordinate affordable housing projects. The cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta have policies to address phasing of commercial development and housing. Based on local review, the new UCSB Long Rang Development Plan is deficient in addressing issues related to increased enrollment and employment on local communities. UCSB needs to become involved in the South Coast Housing Task Force Group.

5. Due to the long term jobs-housing imbalance, local and state jurisdictions in the South Coast should consider concurrent phasing of new commercial, retail, industrial development with residential development to be consistent with a balance of jobs and housing.

Status: Partially addressed: Only, the Cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta have policies to address phasing of new commercial development and housing. However, some jurisdictions have varying definitions of what a balance of jobs and housing entails.

6. The County should study the implications of winery and greenhouse agricultural development on the housing needs of cities and unincorporated areas.

Status: Partially Implemented: – Issue of agricultural worker housing addressed in Santa Barbara County Housing Element. Ongoing tension remains between County and local cities over allocation of responsibility to address farmworker housing need.

7. Local agencies are encouraged to use techniques to improve inter-jurisdictional coordination. Such techniques may include, but are not limited to joint city-county planning commission meetings, joint city-county specific plans, and regular referral of environmental reports and plans to adjoining agencies.

Status: Partially implemented – Referral of reports generally occurs, and occasional joint planning. However, in general there are few joint planning commission or city council and County meetings to address border issues. However, TPAC provides additional forum for inter-jurisdictional coordination.

8. The ability of local government to accommodate forecast growth has recently become more problematic due to income shifts between the state, local government, and special districts. These income shifts result in reduced incentives to approve development, which does not generate sales tax. This may result in increased competition for those uses that generate sales taxes. The SBCAG Board should consider addressing these growing fiscal inequities on a regional basis and range from simply monitoring state legislative proposals to mediation of disputes between member agencies such as jobs housing balance issues.

Status: Fiscal issues have not been generally addressed

SCAG Final Ventura/Santa Barbara Rail Study Report, March 2008

Comment: This rail report was prepared under the auspices of the Southern California Association of Governments at the request of the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC). SBCAG served on an advisory committee and provided input into the technical reports and the draft and final report. The study examined potential options for initiating/improving interregional peak passenger service between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. The study had four recommendations:

- Continue coordination among key stakeholders to advance and refine the service concept

Status: SBCAG continues to work with VCTC and SCAG through LOSSAN and the development of the Congestion System Management Plan for the Highway 101 corridor

- Refine schedule to optimize arrival and departure times and minimize train delays

Status: SBCAG has requested Caltrans Division of Rail to examine the schedule and adjust the train schedule so it is more “commuter friendly”

- Identify top tier projects based on LOSSAN North Strategic Plan

Status: Additional sidings are needed between Ventura and Santa Barbara. Engineering work is needed to identify the priority location. Funding is within the RTIP to allow Caltrans Division of Rail and Union Pacific to address this issue.

- Assemble financial resources required for implementation

Status: SBCAG is developing a Measure A Strategic Plan that will identify the use of \$25 million in local option sales tax funding that is available to support enhanced rail. SBCAG is pressing Caltrans Division of Rail to include a Santa Barbara Rail Siding project in the California application for federal rail stimulus funds, among other efforts.

2008 Transit Needs Assessment

Comment: The Transit Needs Assessment is a report that documents SBCAG's annual assessment of regional transit needs as required by the California Transportation Development Act. There are no comprehensive regional land use policies associated with this document.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan 2007-14, June 2008

Comment: The discussion of regional housing needs revolved around a number of issues that address housing, employment growth, land use and cooperation between agencies. While land use decisions are the primary responsibility of local cities and the county, many of these local decisions have regional consequences. While some of these regional impacts of local decisions are positive, some impacts can be detrimental to the region. The regional housing needs plan illustrates some of these challenges by addressing the fair share allocation of housing of all economic segments of the community. Some of these policy challenges were addressed in the development and update of the SBCAG Regional Growth Forecast, some will grow out of the discussions about this Regional Housing Needs Plan.

Recommendations: Policy challenges are discussed and include the relationship between jobs and housing, institutional growth issues, low wage agricultural employment relative to housing costs, preservation of agricultural land and conflicting state policies that on one had determine the regional housing needs allocation but without recognizing the state restricted development in the coastal zone.

Status: The Regional Housing Needs Allocation process required local jurisdictions to address these issues in responding to their allocation of regional housing need. The regional allocation is currently being integrated into local housing elements and in some cases may require potential land use and zoning modifications.

Vision 2030: 2008 Regional Transportation Plan, September 20, 2008

Comment: The RTP is a long-range plan (covering a twenty year planning period) to improve our region's state highways; local streets, roads, and bikeways; airports and marine facilities; transit, paratransit, and passenger rail services. A guide for the development of these facilities, the RTP describes the priorities for making investments in our region's transportation system. Some recommendations in the RTP address the connection between land use and transportation.

Recommendation: Another emerging issue the County must address is integrating land use and transportation planning (Executive Summary, p. 3).

Status: Transportation and land use planning are not currently integrated in Santa Barbara County. SBCAG is currently examining the tools to better quantify the relationship between land use and transportation. Over the next several years, SBCAG will integrate transportation and land use planning as mandated by Senate Bill 375.

Recommendation: When projects have both local and regional transportation impacts, the planning process requires regional coordination. Therefore, there is a need for increased regional coordination in land use planning among local jurisdictions (p. 2-7).

Status: Aside from the Santa Maria Valley Blueprint Planning study, there has been little to no systematic regional coordination among local jurisdictions in land use planning. Information sharing does occur at quarterly meetings of the Technical Planning Advisory Committee.

Recommendation: Goal 1 – Provide for a comprehensive, coordinated, and balanced multi-modal transportation system that is safe, cost-effective, and environmentally sound, and that meets the mobility needs of individuals and business, while being consistent with the social, economic, and land use goals of the region (p. 3-1).

Comment: This goal is one of six plan-level goals that establish the guiding principles for the RTP as well as a framework for decision-making. Regional projects and programs are developed, funded, and implemented based on these guiding principles.

Status: SBCAG, working with local jurisdictions, strives to meet this goal.

Recommendation: Goal VI – Encourage local land use decisions that shape demand for transportation services such that the services support community vitality and environmental sensitivity for current and future generations (p. 3-1).

Comment: This goal is one of six plan-level goals that establish the guiding principles for the RTP as well as a framework for decision-making. Regional projects and programs are developed, funded, and implemented based on these guiding principles.

Status: Local agencies have maintained local control over land use decisions, but SBCAG is able to share information with the agencies at Technical Planning Advisory Committee meetings.

Recommendation: Goal 1 – Promote a coordinated and equitable multi-modal system designed to serve the travel requirements of the region, integrating elements of systems management, technology, and land use (p. 3-2).

Comment: This goal is one of eight specific goals that address the six different transportation systems (roadway, bikeway, transit, rail, air, and pedestrian) as well as systems integration and funding. This goal, Goal 1, and Policies 1.1 – 1.12, some of which are listed below, address systems integration.

Status: SBCAG, working with local jurisdictions, strives to meet this goal.

Recommendation: Policy 1.1 – The planning, construction, and operation of transportation facilities and of the system as a whole shall be coordinated with land use planning and be consistent with other regional policies (p. 3-2).

Status: Transportation and land use planning are not currently integrated in Santa Barbara County. SBCAG is currently examining the tools to better quantify the relationship between land use and transportation. Over the next several years, SBCAG will integrate transportation and land use planning as mandated by Senate Bill 375.

Recommendation: Policy 1.6 – Emphasize the importance of land use decisions on the transportation system and include recommendations to local agencies to:

- Make land use decisions that adequately address regional transportation issues and adopt policies that are consistent with the RTP
- Require mitigation of traffic impacts of new land development through on-site and related off-site improvements for all modes of transportation, including incentives to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes
- Promote better balance of jobs and housing to reduce long distance commuting
- Consider transit availability and accessibility as an integral element prior to new development intended to serve the disabled, elderly, or other communities that may be transit dependent (p. 3-3)

Status: Local agencies have maintained local control over land use decisions, but SBCAG is able to share information with the agencies at Technical Planning Advisory Committee meetings. However, one key

component of the SBCAG Congestion Management Program (CMP) is the application of CMP impact thresholds in the CEQA review process for development projects. This has been a significant achievement in addressing the link between transportation issues and land use decisions. Local agencies have now “mainstreamed” reviews of potential regional traffic impacts into their planning processes.

Recommendation: Policy 1.7 – Encourage the use of Transit-Oriented Development land use planning to facilitate walking, biking, and transit ridership by:

- Designing walkable streets that connect high-usage origins and destinations
- Concentrating residencies and commercial centers near urbanized rail stations, transit centers, and along transit development corridors (p. 3-3)

Status: Local agencies have maintained local control over land use decisions, but SBCAG is able to share information with the agencies at Technical Planning Advisory Committee meetings.