

Meeting Summary of the Senate Bill 375 **RTAC Staff Workgroup**

February 19, 2009
Coastal Hearing Room
Cal/EPA Headquarters Building
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Discussion Highlights

MPO Modeling Assessments

Bruce Griesenbeck of SACOG presented a draft version modeling survey developed to assess the modeling capabilities of the state's MPOs, and determine where improvements in capabilities would benefit SB 375 implementation. Several points were made while discussing the survey:

- Participants, including RTAC members present, had differing opinions on the level of detail necessary for the survey. Opinions ranged from a desire to maintain the level of specificity found in SACOG's survey, to changing the survey to only assess a higher policy level discussion, to the opinion that the survey was unnecessary and distracts RTAC from its designed purpose of setting factors and methods.
- The numbered rating system was also discussed, some participants preferring each MPO to develop their own rubric for flexibility, and others hoping to keep the SACOG rating system to ensure consistency.
- Participants discussed whether the survey should include questions to gauge how sensitive, or scalable, models are (e.g. is a model sensitive to local policies for general plan development, neighborhood changes, or project level development).
- Participants discussed if there should be varying standards for SB 375 between regions (e.g. should an urban area's model, like MTC, need to be identical to a rural area model, like Butte CAG).

Economic Factors Discussion

Staff presented a list of possible economic questions that could help RTAC frame their ongoing factors and methods discussion with. The draft was intended to foster discussion within the group and was not exhaustive. Several points we made while discussing the list of questions:

- One area where most participants agreed is that the questions were too narrowly focused on "smart growth" development. Whereas RTACs efforts must encapsulate the entirety of market trends related to housing choices.

- Most participants agreed further discussion was necessary. Future discussions should center around overall outlook for the economy in the coming years and the housing market over the next few decades, discussion of where “smart growth” housing was successful and why, and also where smart “growth projects” have failed and why they did.
- Participants also noted that numerous factors affect housing choices that are often overlooked, such as the quality of surrounding schools.
- Several key ideas were discussed that many participants felt encapsulated the economic issues RTAC should consider:
 - Broad understanding and discussion of the overall housing, employment markets.
 - How SB 375 policies will impact the cost of building.
 - How development generally impacts property values.
 - Learn from examples where regions have had successes and failures with infill housing.
 - The market’s readiness for change and availability of financing and investment opportunities for infill and other forms of housing. Further, evaluate if some areas are “more ready” than others.
 - Explore business decisions such as what persuades job creators to locate in urban areas.
 - Determine if current market assessments should impact RTACs decisions, (i.e. should regions be planning for a market that will exist in the next 5 years or 30?)

Additional Comments

- As agendas are set and while in meetings, participants should keep asking themselves “How does what we are doing at the moment help RTAC eventually recommend factors and methods to ARB?”

Members Present

Chesley, A.	Parks, L.
Devereaux, G.	Rawson, M.
Eaken, A.	Walters, J.
Libcki, S.	<i>Wynot, J. (Substitute for: Wallerstein, B.)</i>

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