

Meeting Summary of the Senate Bill 375
Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC)

Tuesday, April 07, 2009
Suite 300
Sacramento Area Council of Governments
1415 L Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Discussion Highlights

ARB Chairman Mary D. Nichols addressed the RTAC panel and made the following observations:

- The adoption of the Scoping Plan identified SB 375 as the primary mechanism for achieving the land use and transportation changes that California needs to meet its 2020, 2035, and 2050 goals.
- The ARB Board called for ambitious and achievable regional targets when adopting the Scoping Plan. RTAC's recommendations will be critical to the Board's deliberation on what ambitious and achievable targets are.
- The benefits from ambitious and achievable targets, when added to those ARB is getting from vehicle fuels and technology, will enable California to get the reductions it needs from the transportation sector.

Staff Work Product Update

Staff provided an update on the following work efforts initiated on behalf of the RTAC:

- The Sacramento Area Council of Government staff is coordinating with Caltrans on the additional model assessment work from the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to help provide more consistency. This is anticipated to be discussed at the May meeting.
- ARB staff is constructing a panel to gather and evaluate empirical data related to the impact of land use, transportation, and pricing strategies on vehicle use.

RTAC members discussed the following:

- How consistency, elasticity, regional specificity and social and economic inequities should be considered in model assessments.
- The ability of smaller regions, with limited resources to complete model assessments and upgrades necessary for meeting targets.
- Mike McKeever outlined his view of the 3 steps the RTAC should follow:
 - Decide on the metric. (What is the measuring stick?)
 - Decide how far each region should go. (How far up the measuring stick to go?)
 - What kind of validation does ARB need to evaluate the MPO plans?

- RTAC members requested more information on interregional travel. ARB staff suggested Caltrans can begin the discussion in May when the MPO Model Assessment survey comes back to the RTAC.

Presentations on Economic Factors Influencing the Magnitude of Change in the Land Use and Transportation Sectors

Randall Lewis of Lewis Group of Companies provided his perspective on climate friendly communities and the economics involved in providing them. He stated that smart growth is possible and can be a more profitable market. He provided examples of how smart growth could be achieved effectively, while also stating some of the potential barriers this type of planning could face. RTAC members posed questions regarding market driven incentives, appropriate development of suburbs, efficient use of land, and prospect of VMT decreasing over time with implementation of smart growth planned communities.

Professor Elizabeth Deakin of UC Berkeley presented a perspective on transit oriented development and alternative transportation infrastructure. Her research shows that transit oriented development will be most efficient when built within a network that is mutually supportive; proper linkages are necessary. Professor Deakin also identified possible barriers to transit oriented development. RTAC members discussed the correlation among ethnic diversity and high density living; consideration of tipping points; overcoming the barriers of pre-existing conditions; the opportunities in replacement housing; building along edges, skipped over land and “land banks”; and potential strategies when creating transit ready communities.

Potential Approaches to Target Setting

Staff presented a potential target setting approach and introduced six questions suggested by the RTAC Chair to begin the discussion on target setting metrics. RTAC discussion focused on establishing goals that lay out what needs to be accomplished, the development of scenarios, and the ability to test these scenarios with various metrics. Staff clarified questions about the relationship between the land use and transportation estimate included in the AB 32 Scoping Plan and the targets set under SB 375. Implementation of SB375 will result in regional targets which, when viewed in aggregate, would replace the estimate in the Scoping Plan.

RTAC also requested the following:

- Provide information which shows varying growth rates among regions and the varying assumptions used in modeling.
- Describe the pros and cons of each of the six metric questions, and include scenarios for each at the May meeting.
- Discuss ARB staff preferences with regards to potential approaches to target setting.
- Provide information about what we know about current VMT estimates.

- Add an additional question to the “Target Setting Metric”: “Should the target be uniform across the state, or set by region?”
- Provide background materials in advance of the April 22nd meeting.
- Allow technical staff to join the next RTAC discussion.

Members present:

Chesley, A.

Devereaux, G.

Doyle, S.

Eaken, A.

Gallegos, G.

Heminger, S.

Katz, R.

Leahy, A.

Libicki, S.

McKeever, M.

Parkinson, P.

Parks, L.

Pastor Jr., M.

Rawson, M.

Wallerstein, B.

Walters, J.

Whiteside, C.

Woo, M.

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