California Transportation Commission
Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines
SB 375 Work Group Meeting
July 1, 2009

Goal for the Work Group:

To provide guidance to update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Guidelines in a manner that will increase the successful implementation of the requirements of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375).

Introductions and Background:

Bimla Rhinehart, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission (Commission)

- California statute requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to adopt and submit an updated RTP every four years if in air quality attainment or every five years if in an air quality non-attainment region.
- The Commission is authorized under statute to prepare the RTP Guidelines, in cooperation with MPOs, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), Caltrans, the Air Resources Board (CARB), and other stakeholders.
- The RTP Guidelines promote an integrated, statewide approach to the transportation planning process.
- The RTP Guidelines set forth a uniform transportation planning framework throughout the state that identifies federal and state requirements for RTPdevelopment.
- The Commission adopted a RTP Addendum in 2008 to promote best practices in response to Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.
- To address SB 375, the Commission, in consultation with Caltrans and CARB intends to update the RTP Guidelines through the formation of and input from the SB 375 Work Group.
- The SB 375 Work Group includes but is not limited to staff of the Assembly and Senate, MPOs, RTPAs, state and federal agencies, environmental interest groups, the building industry, and city and county associations.
- The RTP Guidelines update is expected to provide, but not be limited to, guidance with respect to sustainable communities strategies.
- Estimate that the draft RTP Guidelines will be ready for consideration by the Commission in December 2009. Hearings on the draft RTP Guidelines are anticipated in January and February 2010.
- The Commission plans to form two subcommittees, Modeling and RTP Guidelines Update, to develop technical guidance. The subcommittees will meet every other week, starting on July 14, 2009.

- Rusty Selix, Executive Director, California Association of Councils of Governments, will facilitate the RTP Guidelines Update Subcommittee.
- Ron West, Senior Associate, Cambridge Systematics, will facilitate the Modeling Subcommittee.

Dale Bonner, Secretary, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

- The majority of California's transportation system was planned 50 years ago, for very different needs.
- The SB 375 Work Group is engaged in a historic process, one that will set the stage for the next 50 years of planning.
- California is leading the nation in addressing the issues of climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the Federal government is now moving in the same direction as California.

Panel 1 – State Agency Perspectives/Key Comments:

Joan Sollenberger, Chief, Division of Transportation Planning, Caltrans

- Four state agencies have a role in the implementation of SB 375 and an understanding of their perspective is critical to the work of the SB 375 Work Group.

Lynn Jacobs, Director, Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD)

- HCD is working closely with Caltrans on the implementation of SB 375.
- SB 375 introduces a new approach to planning – linking housing needs, jobs creation, and development and operation of the transportation system to the effort to reduce GHG emissions.
- The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is focused on providing adequate and appropriate housing in the right place.
- Housing should be planned in conjunction with transportation planning and job development efforts.
- Adequate and appropriate housing is key to economic development in California.

Martin Tuttle, Deputy Director, Planning & Modal Programs, Caltrans

- The Blueprint Planning Process will be a key element in the implementation of SB 375.
- Seventeen of the 18 MPOs currently have Blueprint Planning projects underway.
- Given the institutional barriers in many communities, it can be difficult to have RTPAs involved in land use planning. However, when land use planning and transportation planning are linked, the result is a more integrated modal system, a more efficient transportation system, and greater use of transit.

Cynthia Bryant, Director & Deputy Chief of Staff, Governor's Office of Planning & Research

- The implementation of SB 375 will help California accomplish great things.

- Focus on the integration of land use, housing, and transportation to fight GHG emission and address congestion and urban sprawl.
- SB 375 provides a framework; the challenge for the state and its partners is to make it work.
- The RTP Guidelines need to provide clear guidance on sustainable communities strategies.
- Blueprint Planning provides a good tool for sustainable communities strategies.
- Need to move quickly to revise the RTP Guidelines to enhance the implementation of SB 375 as the infrastructure decisions being made right now will impact GHG reductions in the future.
- One of the largest transportation projects in the state (High Speed Rail) has the potential to provide the greatest benefits to the effort to reduce GHG reductions.
- Critical that we keep our eye on the goal – a high quality of life for our citizens, a healthy economy and to be the best California we can be.

Lynn Terry, Deputy Executive Officer, California Air Resources Board

- SB 375 provides an opportunity to meet the goals of reducing GHG emissions.
- Integrated planning is at the heart of making SB 375 happen.
- California needs a healthy economy and sustainable communities.
- The successful implementation of SB 375 will help meet the 2020 emission reduction goals.
- Land use matters.
- The Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) will advise CARB on targets. The methodologies may not be status quo. Want to use the newest technology available.
- Clear public health connection to emissions reduction and sustainable communities. Important to integrate programs to address all types of air pollution. Children's health is particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. Livable and walkable communities provide enormous health benefits including weight reduction and lower blood pressure. Important to recognize the value of green space and children's behavior.
- The regions need to step up and plan excellent communities.

Panel 1 – State Agency Perspectives/Questions & Answers/Public Comments:

David Schonbrunn, Transdef
Question: To what extent are state agencies telling the Governor to move faster?
Lynn Terry and Martin Tuttle
Answer: The Governor instructed us to move fast. We are moving as quickly as possible.

Bill Davis, Southern California Contractors Association
Comment: Need to improve the transportation system in the state. The building industry is ready to help improve the transportation system.

Irvin Dawid, Palo Alto Resident

Question: Could you please comment on the recent Attorney General's lawsuit against the City of Pleasanton which indicates the disdain local government shows for housing issues.

Linda Wheaton, Assistant Deputy Director, Housing Policy Development, HCD

Answer: The jobs/housing imbalance in Pleasanton is severe. It is a tough challenge getting the public to understand the underlying issues, that increased density and transit availability could alleviate the housing crunch.

Martin Tuttle

Answer: Given that land use decisions rest with local government, better data and modeling will drive better land use decisions.

Lynn Terry

Answer: There has been a lot of discussion in the RTAC about models, what policies we want to see, what good communities look like.

Paul Marx, Director of Planning, Sacramento Regional Transit

Comment: SB 375 puts California at the forefront of adaptation rather than mitigation. Technology is not the only answer. Changes in lifestyle are needed.

Panel 2 – Regional Agency Perspectives/Key Comments:

Mike McKeever, Executive Director, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)

- Current RTP Guidelines provide a good platform to take planning to the next level.
- Policy is focused on the regions; need to expand the state role.
- Need to expand the RTP Guidelines to address interregional travel and corridor system management plans.
- The amendments to the RTP Guidelines should be focused on what the 18 MPOs will need to do to implement and comply with SB 375.
- The RTAC is two-thirds of the way through its process and the RTP Guidelines could address areas that need clarification:
    1. How to determine when a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is not feasible and should use an Alternate Planning Strategy (APS).
    2. CEQA only applies to the SCS or APS that meets the targets. Need models that provide parcel specific information.
    3. How to address the jobs/housing imbalance.
- Important to recognize that California regions and the state are leaders with respect to land use, housing and transportation decisions to reduce GHG emissions. We need to maximize the strategic planning that has been completed to date to influence Federal regulations and funding to be positive and proactive.

Steve Heminger, Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

- See attached PowerPoint presentation.

- What CARB will do is needed but will not be enough. Cannot just coast along expecting technology to solve the GHG problem.
- Setting targets is a huge undertaking. The real question – is VMT data reliable?
- Location and price matter more than infrastructure. Policies are important, especially policies that focus on growing better communities.
- SB 375 SCS are in tension with one another – accommodating all growth in regional housing demand and achieving CO2 reduction targets while not undermining the Federal planning requirement for realistic demographic and revenue assumptions and not interfering with local land use authority.
- Need to figure out how to manage expectations. Proponents think that reductions will be achieved fairly quickly. This is only a modest attempt for improvement. There are changes in the short term that will provide long term impacts, such as parking policies, carbon taxes/road pricing.

Art Leahy, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Commission (LA Metro)

- Southern California has a more cautious view.
- Southern California is big and complex – there are five counties in the SCAG region. It will be a challenge for Southern California to comply with SB 375.
- Believe that there needs to be better linkage between actions and outcomes.
- Implementing SB 375 needs a bottom up approach.
- The focus should be on emissions reduction not VMT reduction.
- There is a troubling discontinuity in the mandate to implement SB 375 at the same time the state is discontinuing transit assistance funding. Southern California is facing extensive cuts to transit funding ($200 million) at a time that increases to transit are critical.
- Pricing is critical. When faced with significant market incentives (for example, last summer's increase in the price of gas) people make different decisions about where they drive, work and live.
- The positives are that Southern California has a made major investments in transit, implemented congestion pricing projects, and already have Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) in place.
- SB 375 needs to require a full accounting of where we are today and where we need to be in the future.

Gary Gallegos, Executive Director, San Diego Association of Governments (Sandag)

- Sandag is cautiously optimistic about implementing SB 375.
- San Diego is already doing much of what will be required to implement SB 375, including developing a Regional Energy Strategic Plan and a Regional Growth Strategy.
- There is some concern that the state is not in a healthy position. Also concerned with the state telling the regions what to do. Believe that the implementation will be more successful by allowing the MPOs/RTPAs to work with local officials.
- Need to develop an energy strategy, including how we power vehicles, and not focus solely on VMT.

- There is a connection between land use, transportation, energy, and VMT.
- Sandag will be the first large region to update its RTP under the new standards (2011). As such, Sandag is anxious to see the targets and how the RTP Guidelines are updated as these will define the rules of the game.
- One key issue is that the local general plans do not go out to 2050 despite the fact that the RTP is expected to.
- Need an economic impact study of the RTP. The economy matters – need to understand the economic impacts the RTP and the tradeoffs in the plan.
- Key points to emphasize:
    1. Build on successes, such as the Blueprint Planning Process.
    2. Build in flexibility and develop options for transportation (car, transit, nonmotorized).
    3. Recognize geographic diversity and complexity.
    4. Do not lose sight of how we fund transportation in California. Local funding is now the major funding source in many regions. In San Diego, 65% of transportation investments are local funds.

Jesse Brown, Executive Director, Merced County Association of Governments

- See attached PowerPoint presentation.
- A key challenge for the region is that there is no formal JPA in the San Joaquin Valley.
- The San Joaquin Valley is the third most populous region in California and includes the fifth largest city in the state, Fresno.
- The jobs/housing balance is a key issue for the San Joaquin Valley.
- Need multijurisdictional solutions to transportation issues. The existing regional boundaries are outdated. There are many issues that cross interregional boundaries, such as, how housing in the San Joaquin Valley supports jobs in the Bay Area and Southern California. Need shared solutions to shared problems.

Huasha Liu, Director, Planning Methods, Assessment & Compliance, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

- SCAG sees implementing SB 375 as an evolving process.
- Implementing SB 375 is an opportunity to contribute to the long term sustainability of communities.
- The benefits of implementing SB 375 go beyond just GHG reductions, such as energy savings.
- Critical to facilitate, not dictate. Must work closely with the local agencies and understand the needs of individual communities.

Tom Jordan, Senior Policy Advisor, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

- The San Joaquin Valley is a large, growing region (population is expected to triple by 2050) with significant air quality challenges.

- Challenges for the region in implementing SB 375 include the large number of government agencies involved in decision making and the varying quality of analytical tools available.
- The AQMD is the only entity that encompasses the entire region.
- Modeling tools need significant improvement.
- The AQMD has an indirect source rule that encourages developers to reduce criteria pollutants and will include GHG pollutants.

Kathryn Mathews, Executive Director, El Dorado County Transportation Commission & Chair, Rural Counties Task Force

- Focus should be on the 18 MPOs with respect to targets but also need to address the needs of the 26 rural counties in developing RTPs.
- Should see increased guidance and plan for complete streets, TDM, transit, corridor system management plans, park/ride master plans, vanpooling, teletransportation modes.
- Need to encourage decision makers to fund GHG efforts that in their policies they have said are important.
- Environmental documents will focus on GHG emissions with global impacts but will also tailor to local impacts and perspectives.
- Difficult to obtain funding for GHG strategies such as transit, facilities for non-motorized transportation, and teletransportation.

Linda Parks, Supervisor, Ventura County Board of Supervisors

- The eyes of the nation are looking to California and we want to ensure that we are successful in implementing SB 375.
- How to implement SB 375:
  1. The policies need to be understandable.
  2. The policies need buy-in.
  3. Bottom up approach.
  4. Flexibility with incentives.

Panel 2 – Regional Agency Perspectives/Questions & Answers/Public Comments:

Kurt Brotcke, Director, Planning, Orange County Transportation Authority
Question: How do you address SCS given financial constraints?
Mike McKeever
Answer: This is the critical part of SB 375. If a region only has so much funding, the SCS may not meet the target. Then the region can go to the APS.
Gary Gallegos
Answer: San Diego built different revenue scenarios into the RTP.
Huasha Liu
Answer: Sees this as independent from SB 375. Need to get state and Federal funds for implementation of SB 375.
Linda Parks
Answer: Need to do what we can to make the SCS work instead of the APS.

Cindy Van Empel, Senior Planner, City of Modesto
Comment: The Blueprints will fall short of the requirements of AB 32. Need to analyze transportation/land use impacts. Rural counties do not have the resources to develop models, the state needs to develop models for the rurals.

Patricia Chen, Project Manager, LA Metro
Question: Do sales tax projects approved prior to 2008 need to be amended into the FTIP?
Huasha Lui
Answer: Will get clarification.

Julie Snyder, Policy Director, Housing California
Question: Concerned with land use decisions and the impact of SCS on low income communities. Have you looked at the impact of SCS on low income communities and the ability of low income individuals to live near jobs? How can you mitigate the effects of land use decisions on low income individuals?
Steve Heminger
Answer: The goal is to achieve consensus, but there are clearly tradeoffs. TODs will often lead to gentrification. There are all sorts of affordable housing laws and requirements but there is also market supply and demand.
Mike McKeever
Answer: Smart growth does not necessarily lead to affordable housing but the bill is clearly pro housing. SCS requires affordable housing. The notion that living far from your job is cheaper is not true, especially when transportation costs overwhelm housing costs.
Art Leahy
Answer: If you take a broad look at TODs you will see various impacts. Some are positive with respect to housing.
Gary Gallegos
Answer: Need to look at the region/subregion balance. More housing choices at the subregional level.

Panel 3 – Land Use, Environmental & Building Industry Perspectives/Key Comments:

Amanda Eaken, Policy Analyst, National Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

- See attached PowerPoint presentation.
- Need more housing near transit, need more housing near jobs.
- Changing demographics will have a significant impact on housing needs. Large lot housing will exceed demand by 2030.
- True challenge is to get 80% reduction in GHG by 2050, especially given the increase of 23 million in population.
- The stunning benefits of SB 375 are worth the challenges.

Bill Higgins, Legislative Representative, League of California Cities

- SB 375 does less and more than what everyone thinks.
- SB 375 provides a framework and involves real planning. Eisenhower said that "plans are nothing, but planning is everything."
- If local leaders spend time understanding GHG, it will influence the implementation of SB 375.
- Local problem solvers need an SCS as a vision document that is driven by local planning assumptions, LAFCO, and the General Plan. The SCS will be limited by reality.
- FHWA states that you cannot develop Regional Transportation Plans without the General Plan.
- Local General Plans are not all up to date. Funding is a key issue at the local level. If planning does not have a dedicated funding source, it must compete against other local programs that have clear community support (police, fire department, etc.)
- If you want General Plans to change, you need to think about how planning needs to change and how this change will be resourced.
- Need to look at how we fund infrastructure and how this will need to change.
- An example of a real life scenario was provided: Ventura wanted to build a mixed use infill project, but the project could not move forward because the sewer system could not handle the additional capacity. Not feasible to ask the developer to pay for the new sewer system, nor was it politically feasible to ask the existing residents to pay for an upgraded sewer system simply to accommodate the proposed mixed use development. Similar funding issues come into play with other local services and infrastructure such as police, parks, schools, walkable sidewalks, etc.
- Mass transit and redevelopment funds have been used in recent years to balance the budget. Need to address this issue if you want to make a difference in communities.

Richard Lyon, Senior Legislative Advocate, California Building Industry Association (CBIA)

- In order for SB 375 to be successfully implemented, it must be based in reality.
- Need to have accountability for decisions, use of metrics and tools.
- Cannot expect land use and transportation policies to change quickly. Transportation changes will be much slower than other changes in the AB 32 scoping plan.
- Housing needs are reduced due to the downturn in the economy. In 2006, housing needs in California were 250,000 units per year. Current estimates for 2009 are 40,000 units. It will take the housing industry in California almost a decade to recover.
- The downturn in housing also impacts jobs and estimated trips (VMT).
- Need regulatory reform, CEQA reform/streamlining.
- Have CEQA reform for housing projects and will not have to reinvent CEQA because GHG analysis was done at the programmatic level RTP EIR.

- In the Bay Area, San Francisco has declining enrollment in its school district. Surrounding areas have increasing enrollment. How can we impact lifestyle changes to make San Francisco more livable?
- SB 375 is not about reducing VMT. It is focused on reducing vehicular traffic as a result of land use decisions. RTPs and SCS' need to accommodate reasonable amounts of growth in VMT.
- Even modest improvements in existing houses can provide tremendous improvements in GHG.
- Strategies to provide incentives for nonmotorized transportation need to be addressed.

Sande George, Executive Director & Lobbyist, American Planning Association, California Chapter

- Planning needs to address all trips. May encourage transit for commute but not address other trips such as taking kids to school or activities.
- Need to consider models versus policy based ways to reduce GHG and how to measure results.
- Plugging planning into transportation models does not work.
- The RTP Guidelines need to address what things work, what planners can do and how, what regions can do to bring all parties to the table.
- Need to determine how local agencies can work with the MPOs/RTPAs to implement SB 375.
- RTP Guidelines need to translate at the local level. How do we measure benefits and reductions?
- Planners want a tool box.

Panel 3 – Land Use, Environmental & Building Industry Perspectives/Questions & Answers/Public Comments:

Cindy Van Empel, Senior Planner, City of Modesto
Comment/Question: The Valley is mostly traditional suburban development. Need to be able to communicate to politicians what SB 375 implementation means. Need a more graphic interface to show what smart growth looks likes, what it costs, what are the benefits. Have these issues been considered?
Amanda Eaken
Answer: Strategic Growth Council funding should be able to help with this. The Vision California Project will help visualize what smart growth does.
Bill Higgins
Answer: The funding for these tools is a challenge. There is a CARB toolkit and they are looking at a calculator for this.

Michael Endicott, Sierra Club California
Comment: It is about VMT. Until transit is at a level equivalent to vehicular transportation, VMT will be the driving force. There was a proposal to use a vehicle license fee to fund local planning for SCS. The argument against this fee was that we want to sell more cars.

Amanda Eaken
Comment: Reducing VMT is one of the most cost effective ways to reduce GHG.

Closing Comments:

Bimla Rhinehart closed the meeting by thanking the speakers and attendees for their participation and announcing that sign-up sheets for the subcommittees were at tables just outside the room. The first subcommittee meetings are scheduled for July 14, 2009.