

Workshop Proceedings for the FOCUS Environment Forum:

July 23, 2007

1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitators: Marisa Cravens, Doug Johnson

Welcoming Remarks

Ken Kirkey, Planning Director

Association of Bay Area Governments

Mr. Kirkey welcomed participants; described the FOCUS program, including both the Priority Development Area (PDA) and the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) concepts; outlined the criteria to qualify as a PDA; and explained the regional map that illustrates the areas currently being considered for PDA designation. Ken explained that the regional agencies involved with FOCUS were eager to hear from stakeholders concerned with environmental issues, specifically related to:

- Issues/desired criteria for evaluating PDAs
- Technical assistance to PDAs and PCAs
- Best practices

After stakeholders' questions about FOCUS were answered, participants provided feedback to agency staff. Key points made by stakeholder participants during this discussion included:

I. Issues and Criteria:

- It is important to plan for an entire neighborhood, instead of looking only at an individual project. To ensure neighborhoods function well, planning should consider issues such as livability, including proximity between homes and jobs; walkability; access to parks and environmental features such as air, light, and views; school capacity; and traffic impacts.
- FOCUS should consider green spaces within PDAs, not just the larger green areas encompassed by PCAs. It is important to think about the connections between PDAs and PCAs, and any areas of potential overlap.
- When adding housing, it is important to also include affordable options.
- The FOCUS Program needs to consider how to address the potential land use conflicts with infill as new housing is directed to areas that were traditionally industrial and to areas that are near major transportation routes.
- When identifying PDAs, it is important to think about potential threats to development in these areas, such as natural hazards (floods, earthquakes, fires, etc.) and potential impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise.
- More needs to be done to understand and address the needs of families to encourage them to live in infill areas and in high-density housing. Surveys should be done to find out why they generally leave these areas and what it would take to get them to stay.
- FOCUS should encourage more self-sufficient communities in terms of energy, water, and waste. This should include incentives for clean energy generation and distribution.
- Need to ensure that the transit capacity in PDAs can meet the transit needs of current and future residents.
- Evaluation of the transit in PDAs needs to consider a wide range of issues, including the availability of funds to maintain and operate it; potential funding mechanisms; how to ensure sufficient ridership to make it financially viable; and how to ensure transit lines are reliable, timely, and accessible to a variety of people (elderly, disabled, etc.).

- Local governments need to engage the community early in the planning process and, ideally, co-plan areas with community members.
- Local and regional agencies should consider the 3Es (environment, equity, and economy) in planning and development
- As the region's population grows, new utility plants developed to serve them should be prohibited from locating in conservation areas.
- Brownfield sites are prime sites for development, since they are generally located in existing communities, offer the benefit of cleanup, and help reduce development pressure on "greenfield" sites.
- In distributing incentives, it is important to decide whether they should be given to areas that will serve as regional models or to places where the money will really help the right type of development along.
- The 5-year time frame for PCAs is too short because it is important to consider long-term regional priorities. This short period puts conservation and development in conflict.
- Participants emphasized the importance of coordinating FOCUS with other state efforts, including AB 32, SB 375, CTC, and the Energy Commission (particularly as they relate to issues such as Climate Change).
- The FOCUS Program should develop incentives that encourage green building standards and practices, using LEED, LEED ND, Greenpoint, LISC, and Build It Green as guides.

II. Technical Assistance Needs:

- More money for planning.
- Incentives for land acquisition and operating funds to create more urban green spaces.
- Assistance in solving land use conflicts between housing and industrial uses/goods movement.
- Information and design ideas about how to make an area or neighborhood work in an integrated way.
- Develop materials that demonstrate the environmental benefits of infill and transit-oriented development (reducing CO2 emissions, conserving green spaces, etc.). MTC also needs to update its models to show the benefits of smart growth and should update the ITS model.
- Information and strategies for managing parking and implementing parking alternatives.
- A list of existing funding sources.
- Information on job locations.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration among different agencies and stakeholders.

III. Best Practices:

- Seattle's community planning process.
- Successful strategies for encouraging affordable housing include areas in San Francisco (Downtown, Nob Hill, and the Tenderloin) and in Dublin.
- CEQA and LOS exemptions
- New Jersey
- El Cerrito
- Dublin BART TOD (includes a 1-acre park in the midst of high-density housing)

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Attendees

Name	Organization
Adam Briones	Greenlining Institute
George Nesbitt	STAND Land Use Task Force
Zelda Bronstein	Berkeley Planet
Linda Craig	LWVBA
Suzanne Beahrs	BAOSC
Marshall Loring	MTC EDAC & 19 th Ave. HOA
Richard Hedges	MTC EDAC
Janet Abelson	MTC EDAC
Jane Kramer	STAND
Marnie Nuccio	City of Dublin
Tina King	Sustainable San Mateo Co.
Allison Quaid	BAASC
Amanda Eaken	Natural Resources Defense Council
Gary Knoblock	GBM Foundation
Nadine Wilmot	BAAQMD
Tahuti	
Andy Katz	Breathe CA
Bob Planthold	
Laura Tam	SPUR

FOCUS Staff encourage broad participation and invite those interested to attend future meetings.