

Workshop Proceedings for the FOCUS Equity Forum:  
July 26, 2007  
1:30-3:30 PM  
Facilitators: Marisa Cravens, JoAnna Bullock

Welcoming Remarks

Marisa Cravens, Regional Planner  
Association of Bay Area Governments

Ms. Cravens welcomed participants, described the Focusing Our Vision program (discussing both the Priority Development Area and the Priority Conservation Area concepts), outlined the criteria that must be met in order to qualify as a PDA and explained the regional map that illustrates the areas that are currently being considered for PDA designation. Marisa explained that the agencies involved with FOCUS were eager to hear from stakeholders concerned with equity, specifically with regards to:

- Issues/ Desired criteria for considering PDAs,
- Technical Assistance and
- Best Practices

Once the stakeholders' questions regarding FOCUS were answered, participants began to provide feedback to agency staff. Key points made by stakeholder participants during this discussion included:

- Equity will not happen by accident. Equity must be deliberately infused and fully ingrained into all processes and policies associated with FOCUS if equity is to be addressed. This is necessary to counteract the natural flow of development that -by design- does not address equity.
- Do not plan TO a community. Equity considerations should impact how decisions are made about available funding. Do not reinforce inequity that already exists. Community voices need to be heard, not just developers
- Language used by local jurisdictions and regional agencies must be sensitive to the communities directly impacted by projects associated with FOCUS. These communities may not be familiar with the terminology and planning processes that may take place. When outreaching to these communities, the language used must be carefully chosen to ensure that it explains plans in a way that is understandable to the community. Plans also need to be presented in an acceptable way.
- There must be a strong commitment from the private sector to partner with the public sector. This sort of investment is essential.
- Criteria associated with FOCUS should include various thresholds that relate to city size/population/etc... This will ensure that big cities and little cities (with different overall capacities) are not competing with each other, creating an unfair advantage to larger cities.
- Criteria associated with FOCUS should consider the rate of population representation per capita to measure under-representation of certain communities (within local government, local planning bodies, transit boards, etc...).
- Community groups need technical assistance including staff assigned to work with the community. There needs to be a way for the community to maximize the use of the resources available to them. Technical assistance from staff will ensure that the community does not miss out on opportunities to do so.

The following reflects additional comments made by the forum attendees' in response to the questions put forth during the forum:

## **I. Issues and Criteria:**

### *Outreach:*

- Regional Agencies should formalize outreach efforts to cities without resources and less ability to raise money. They need to take part in this program and may not have the resources to participate unless encouraged to do so.
- **All** communities/income levels that are being impacted by FOCUS funded projects and subsequent development must be considered. If inclusionary housing/zoning is implemented, who does it serve? It can't be the moderate income/working poor only. The Environmental Justice community and those those below the poverty level must also benefit.
- Stakeholders/communities should be a part of continuous and meaningful participation in both the FOCUS program and local community planning processes. Fund meaningful community involvement/empowerment. Provide for ongoing community involvement in the process, not just a few community meetings.
- Regional Agencies should not shy away from the power they have to distribute funding. Do not let the cities get away with not addressing equity.
- Funding needs to support outreach. Take the time to ensure proper translation (both into non-planner speak and other languages).

### *Criteria:*

- Jurisdictions should demonstrate active, ongoing outreach to community.
- Most disenfranchised communities are usually the least represented: In order to ensure participation from underrepresented/unrepresented communities, active, ongoing outreach to these communities about FOCUS and local planning/infrastructure/development projects must be employed.

### *Planning:*

- There is a lack of funding for community planning in Oakland.
- Communities that don't have input into private developers' plans gets left behind.
- In El Sobrante, planners tried to get a plan adopted that would have increased densities. Citizens turned the plan down because they feared displacement of those on fixed incomes who owned land.

### *Criteria:*

- In communities like East Oakland, require community planning processes and updates that ensure continuity among city-wide plans (general plan) that are currently not in agreement.
- The community must determine the direction of a community plan. It must not just "support" the plan.

### *Open Space:*

- Communities need access to urban parks that can accommodate growing populations.
- Maintenance of and upgrades to existing parks is essential.

*Land Use:*

- What does commercial mean? How is it zoned differently from industrial? If there is a shift in land use, what does that mean to the community in terms of jobs, etc..
- Encourage private home-ownership
- Value mixed income and housing types (owners and renters)

Criteria:

- Density bonuses should be encouraged to help make affordable housing more feasible.

*Community Displacement/Impacts:*

- Displacement in some cases may mean large multigenerational families living in homes owned by an elderly family member. When that family member dies and if the property is sold, where does this family go? If this was the only affordable way for low-income families to remain, how do we deal with this sort of displacement.
- The social, economic and physical infrastructures (roads, schools, lack of jobs) of outlying suburbs and cities are being overwhelmed by those being displaced from the center of the region.

*Community Needs:*

- There is no capacity within local community groups to address very immediate issues, not to mention long-range planning
- Fund programs that the community is already working on.
- We must create a mix of development strategies, designs and configurations that allow populations to live in comfort.
- Small scale businesses are necessary in order to make neighborhoods thrive. Efforts must be made to attract businesses which translate into jobs and local economic development, otherwise no matter how much housing is provided, people will resort to activity they wouldn't normally take part in (criminal activity) just to survive/support their families.
- There is a high demand for housing for people in crisis situations (homeless, those in abusive relationships, etc)
- Youth programs must be implemented. We can't ignore kids' needs.

*Why TOD?*

- TOD translates into "the Ghetto." Who wants to live near a BART station? It is too loud. Families want single family homes with backyards. TOD is for singles and ultimately leads to gentrification.
- Rapid transit is being opposed by the community along San Pablo Avenue but the plan is being forced through by planners and electeds no matter what.
  - Actually, there were many who supported the plans for San Pablo but they weren't as vocal as the opponents.

Criteria:

- Jurisdictions should have to prove demonstrations of density

*Fears Associated with Past Redevelopment:*

- Regional Planning is the equivalent of Redevelopment that took place in the 50s and 60s. Regional plans lead to upzoning that displaces local, low/fixed-income residents who live in the areas slated for PDA development.
- **R**edevelopment (as was done in the 50's and 60s) does not mean the same thing as current redevelopment or community development efforts (i.e. streetscape/façade improvements, etc...)

*Affordable Housing:*

- When developers are given the right set of subsidies, they can build affordable housing.
- **A**ffordable **H**ousing (government housing programs) does not mean the same thing as affordable housing/affordability (addressing affordability means addressing the needs of a larger cohort than affordable housing)

Criteria:

- Jurisdictions that have adopted inclusionary housing/zoning policies should get preference. There needs to be a mechanism that requires/incentivises an inclusionary housing/zoning policy. Enforcement of inclusionary housing/zoning policies must also be prioritized.

*Social/Environmental Equity:*

- Local jurisdictions have little control over tenure (rental/owner-occupied) of newly built housing units.
- Affordable housing is difficult to finance. There is so much subsidy required to build affordable units.
- Look for ways to raise funds to address issues associated with equity. For example, polluters should pay fees for permits to emit said pollution. These funds pay for public health initiatives.
- Provide services that support self-sufficiency among CalWorks recipients and others attempting to become self-sufficient (quality jobs).
- Public health problems (air quality, auto fatalities, etc..) are obvious indicators of inequity.

Criteria:

- Public agencies/bodies addressing issues associated with equity (ex: transportation) must include representation from communities that face inequity who can call attention to associated needs.
- Applicants should provide information related to the rate of loss of open space.

*Regional Planning:*

- Employment centers (like Silicon Valley) are drawing workers to them and drawing jobs away from other areas in the region. Regional planning needs to leverage the value of some of its infrastructure (for instance, the port) and support job creation where they are not being created on their own.

*Public Transportation:*

- Public Transportation needs to be affordable, fast and efficient.
- Congestion pricing should fund public transportation incentives
- City of Berkeley's Ecopass provides free AC Transit access for students/city workers who rely on public transit. This program is funded by development fees charged by the city.

*Program Implementation In the Context of Applicant Jurisdictions*

- How do small cities compete with larger cities for FOCUS funding/technical support? ABAG should take into consideration the constraints (infrastructure, lack of established community groups) associated with smaller/newer cities.
- Small cities may have an advantage marketing their city and attracting business (ex. Tuscaloosa, Alabama for Mercedes)
- Keep in mind the amount of subsidy spent on commuters from the outerlying suburbs who use BART to commute to work in the central region (similar to the amount spent on an person receiving public assistance)
- ABAG should use both incentives (carrots) and enforcement/evaluations (sticks). While proposals related to FOCUS may promise the world, what is really being accomplished? How are actual outcomes evaluated?

Criteria: (Questions that should be answered as future FOCUS related funding applications/proposals are developed/considered)

- What is the overall intent of the proposed plans?
- What is being funded?
- Amount granted should be connected to the actual need and amount of effort.
- Cost-effectiveness of funding (Cost of bringing commuters from Pittsburgh on BART to work is equal to supporting someone on public assistance)

**II: Technical Assistance Needs:**

- ABAG could provide services (outside facilitator) to sort out local controversies regarding planning efforts where there is significant but not overall support for a proposed PDA plan.
- There should be a connection between FOCUS and the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)

**FOCUS Equity Forum – July 26, 2007**  
**Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Steve Belkin	MTC EDAC
Barbara Rhodes	MTC EDAC
Tahuti	Community
BC Capps	BAOSC
Suzanne Beahrs	BAOSC
M. Ababio	PMC World
Joan Malloy	Union City
Dawn V. Love	MCAC Member
Bob Allen	Urban Habitat
Maricynne L. Mellander	Save El Sobrante
Pam Willow	Alameda Co. Public Health Dept.
James. L. McGhee	SF/MCAC
Iris Obregon	Oakley
Carli Paine	TALC
Nadine Wilmot	BAAQMD
Joel Ramos	TALC
Catalina Alvarado	MTC
Roy Nakadeqava	Indx
Elena	East Side Arts Alliance
Shayaam Shabaka	Organic Gardens Org.

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