

**Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development**  
**December 5, 1997; 9:00 a.m. - noon**  
**Association of Bay Area Governments;**  
**Metro Center; 101-8th St. Oakland**

**Minutes**

After introductory remarks by Carl Anthony, self introductions were made around the room. The attendance list is attached.

I. Business

Inventory/Web Site: John Wise (EPA) reported on the inventory of ongoing activities in the Bay Area related to sustainable development and reiterated the reasons for developing the inventory: to help the Alliance develop its own work plan; to help organizations with similar goals find each other; and to leverage resources within the Bay Area around this effort. EPA and ABAG have been conducting the survey to develop this inventory the last several months and have almost completed the task.

Sustainable Development actions survey: drawing from the work already gone by Urban Habitat, ABAG, the Bay Area Partnership, the East Bay Conversion and Reinvestment Commission, PCSD, the San Francisco Estuary Project, and others, ABAG culled some 80 recommendations and surveyed people to determine their perceptions of the most important of these recommendations to the Bay Area and for the Alliance to work on. The eight of most importance were:

- develop indicators of progress toward regional sustainable development goals and regularly report on these indicators to the public;
- create solutions to multi-jurisdictional issues such as traffic congestion, affordable housing, economic health, and environmental protection through collaborative sub regional and regional planning;
- support transit, bicycling, car-pooling, ferries and other alternative modes of transportation;
- make urban, dense neighborhoods desirable through good design, e.g., integrate new development into established patterns, allow a mix of uses, preserve local history, create or preserve density at scale that makes pedestrians comfortable, invest in parks;
- protect and increase transit service through support of land-use along transit corridors;
- create fiscal and tax policies that support sustainable goals and regional initiatives such as a shift in funding from automobile-based infrastructure to transit-based infrastructure and revenue-sharing;
- re-develop existing urban areas before developing new land far from the urban core;
- strengthen existing partnerships between business, area school districts, and community colleges, and expand job-training programs to ensure that students graduate with the skills needed by employers both now and in the future.

The point was emphasized that this survey was not intended to “lock in” the work that the Alliance would pursue; rather it would just identify the surveyed individuals’ choices of important issues. This is intended to be an initial cut only.

Sustainability Program Roundtable: James Nixon and Tom Hinman convened a meeting of administrators/executive directors of the city/county-sponsored sustainable development programs throughout the Bay Area, a meeting which complemented the ongoing inventory process. The meeting was seen as productive; several people reported that there had never before been such a meeting. Areas of commonality as well as diversity were substantiated. Since the time of the meeting, several people have exchanged phone calls, recognizing the synergies of their efforts. Nixon reported that common indicators would be helpful for a number of the programs ongoing. The group might also find barriers that are common as well as ways to transcend the barriers. A concern was expressed that the definition of sustainable development was being imposed on the participants rather than allowing the participants to take on the responsibility for defining it themselves. There was agreement that the group should get together for at least another meeting or two.

Meeting of the Regional Agencies: Dick Clarke reported on the meeting convened by the Alliance of the five regional regulatory agencies in the Bay Area: the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Regional Water Quality Board, ABAG, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. This is apparently the first time the leaders of these five agencies have met together in this manner. The “historic” nature of the meeting was noted. There has been some sharing of data between the agencies in the past but there hasn't been significant integration of actions resulting from the sharing of those data. This meeting could lead to a new way of working together in the future. There was sufficient interest to meet again (this will be scheduled in January). One of the participants raised a concern about the Alliance -- whether it has a hidden agenda for establishing a regional government similar to that envisioned by Bay Vision 2020 in the early 1990s. It is incumbent upon the Alliance to ensure that everyone understands that its agenda consists of facilitating a multi-stakeholder collaborative process to develop a "regional compact for sustainability" over the next 12-18 months with recommended actions to move the region toward sustainability; and that this compact will be presented to the governmental entities throughout the region for their endorsement, adoption, and implementation. There is no predetermined intent of establishing or even recommending a regional government of any sort. Active regional regulatory agency involvement is a critical component of the Alliance’s proposed process and its ultimate results.

II. Environmental Panel -- Michele Perrault led the panel discussion which included five panelists. She opened the discussion by noting the exciting dialogue that has occurred to date. Members of the environmental community have shared their perspectives and indicated their openness to discussing their perspectives within the framework of the Alliance in order to find areas of commonality related to solutions and/or direction. She also noted that working openly

and collaboratively with people with different views creates significant potential for substantial progress.

Rachel Peterson of Urban Ecology (UE), briefly described UE and its mission: to build cities in balance with nature; cities where many people walk or bike to work or shopping, or walk to public transportation to get them where they want to go. She described UE's Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area, which is being used by city planners, neighborhood activists, environmental organizations, and even some private developers. The Blueprint discusses major urban planning areas and includes natural resources, housing, transportation, cohesive neighborhoods, and working and shopping areas. The subjects are viewed through the following seven principals: choice, accessibility, nature, conservation, justice, context, and community.

Peterson suggested the following as barriers to sustainable development at the community level in the Bay Area:

- mixed-use development is prohibited in favor of single-use buildings, e.g., a piece of land can only be developed as offices, or single-family housing, or retail areas;
- low height limits keep buildings to one or two stories;
- houses and businesses must be set back to certain distance in the street;
- houses or apartments must have at least two parking spots per unit, and office buildings at least five per 1,000 square feet;
- secondary units behind houses or "granny flats" are illegal in many areas, thus preventing people from living more densely, and restricting low income people from buying their own homes;
- housing construction has to be placed a certain distance away from noise sources, which prevents the building on housing close to public transportation nodes;
- live-work spaces are often prohibited by code;
- public perception (or misperceptions): NIMBY, density leading to increased noise, pollution in traffic, opposition to multi-family affordable housing.

John Holtzclaw, of the Sierra Club, discussed the economy, land-use, and transportation together, focusing on location-efficient mortgages, which the Sierra Club is working on with its partners: the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Center for Neighborhood Technologies, and the Surface System Transportation Project. He stipulated that density is correlated with pedestrian/bicycle friendliness, and access to mass transit. Holtzclaw utilized data from several studies which demonstrated the correlation between a community's density, its number of cars, the number of trips in the cars and the vehicle now miles traveled. He closed with the encouraging expectation that the first location-efficient mortgage will be offered in the Chicago area in February, 1998 and the expectation that they will be in California shortly thereafter.

Matt Nichols, from the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) described ICLEI as an association of municipal governments, with current membership at about 300 governments worldwide and ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection campaign. Fifty cities in the U.S. and 200 worldwide are members of this campaign, including Berkeley, Oakland, San

Francisco, and San Jose. The campaign uses a combination of energy use and waste as a proxy for greenhouse gas emissions and progress towards community sustainability. He cited the primary obstacle to further progress in this campaign as the false economies of energy, e.g. externalities not captured in the price.

Jim Sayer, of the Greenbelt Alliance, opened his comments with an observation of a new pragmatism in the environmental movement -- the environmental community is seeing the advantages of multi-stakeholder collaboration; people both within and outside the of the environmental community are moving toward urban containment.

He cited several specific policies/preferences which have led us to the position of having to plan more actively for more sustainable future:

- the single-family home has been the development of choice for the last fifty years;
- support in fiscal/investment policies -- the lack of ability of local governments to generate resources for public projects and even to maintain infrastructure;
- governance -- in the Bay Area we are still living with the same government that we've had for 100 years. A rhetorical question posed was what kind of local control does local government really have?

Sayer suggested a number of policies/actions that the Alliance should consider: infill development, smart growth initiatives, and trying to overcome some of our Puritan preferences. He also suggested that each sector in this multi-stakeholder collaborative deal a lot of hard questions, e.g., the environmental community needs to look at CEQA and whether it should be weakened in transportation corridors (should we stimulate development where it's needed and stop it where it's not); banks need to improve lending policies to discourage development in the fringe and encourage it in the inner core; the economic community also needs to question the assumption that job growth is necessarily an authenticated goal, particularly in areas like Silicon Valley with its infrastructure and affordable housing already strained.

#### Panel Discussion Period

- as we consider infill development and other options, we need to keep our standards high to avoid gentrification of low income neighborhoods resulting in existing residents being unable to afford their own homes.
- The Alliance should focus on changing institutions and behaviors.
- Greenhouse gas emissions is an indicator that should be included among the Bay Area indicators that the Alliance adopts.
- The "rubber meets the road" at the planning commissions. The Alliance could have significant impact by supporting certain projects that it believes in, e.g., infill, high-density.
- One of the biggest issues is educating communities that are not normally "at the table." How do we frame these issues so that existing communities understand what the benefits of a particular project are to them, in addition to the benefits to the region.

Public Comment Period

- There is a clear need for regulatory staff, those which review proposals for development, to be educated with respect to sustainable development. The Alliance should work with those in the community to ensure that this education occurs.
- The Interfaith Coalition representative expressed a "feeling of great great joy." It is important to quantify efforts and apply them to multidisciplinary problems. The importance of indicators is critical; "if you pick the wrong ones you'll get bad policy."
- The Greenlining Institute representative noted a clear overlap in objectives but recognized that "we may be using different language." He also cited that several incentives for investment in inner cities are deteriorating.
- The central nature of transportation process/policy comes through all of this and it may be the common theme. If Brownfields are to be re-developed, we will need a high-quality database. Environmental mapping is currently spotty at best due to the ability of a landowner to deny permission for environmental testing. There is currently neither a state nor a federal law requiring landowners to allow environmental testing.
- There was encouragement that the Alliance recognizes that the issues it faces will be framed by State law. At some point the Alliance will need to engage Sacramento.

Next steps:

A fruitful discussion ensued with several commentators agreeing that topics that the Alliance faces are huge. The issues raised connect well with a social justice issues raised at the last meeting and probably will connect well with the economic discussion due at the next meeting. A cautionary note was raised as to who is in the room and who is not. A number of suggestions were made for further development by the Alliance:

- Identify the inter-relationship between the issues raised today and during the social equity discussion, e.g., gentrification, infill, job growth, etc. What the strategies? -- 275,000 people are currently on public assistance and 235,000 jobs are being created;
- link together economic development, social equity and transportation;
- look into subsidies detrimental to the environment and true-cost accounting (aka full-cost pricing) of land-use patterns and consumption, and infrastructure development; focus on the quality of life and lowering the expectations of material consumption; look at our ecological "footprint;"
- follow through on getting environmental mapping information; address the restoration of that which has already been damaged
- discuss CEQA reform; explore zoning changes, especially with respect to infill development and density changes; create institutional change
- do not deny the existing forces of environmental vs. economic;
- the Alliance should look it what steps should be taken to promote "green" jobs;
- sustainable development indicators and progress against them are critical; include an indicator on climate change
- places of worship should be viewed as an environmental resource;
- land consumption and where we place community facilities is also a critical issue for the Alliance.

Next Meeting: January 30, 1998