

# *Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development*

**October 29, 1998; 8:30 a.m. - noon**

**PG&E**

**77 Beale Street, San Francisco**

**MINUTES**

Dick Clarke, CEO-retired of PG&E, and Mary King, President of the Association of Bay Area Governments, provided introductory remarks. Dick reiterated the connection between the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development and the President's Council on Sustainable Development. He also expressed his enthusiasm with today's opportunity to discuss for the first time the substantive recommendations of the working groups -- the initial step in formulating the Regional Compact for Sustainability.

Mary King observed the interdependence of all the groups at the meeting. She noted with gratification the return from the PCSD of Dick Clarke and Michelle Perrault of the Sierra Club with their "arms linked." Only with cooperation between the environmental community, the business community and the social equity community will the Bay Area progress towards sustainability. Mary stated that the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development is on the vanguard of regional sustainable development efforts. She underscored the need for equity and social groups to be involved in any sustainability effort, and congratulated the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development along these lines. She also noted that elected officials have been participating in the working groups. Although ABAG has publicized the efforts of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development in its newsletters, she challenged the participants to increase the outreach to local officials to ensure their buy-in and their focus on the issues at the level of application. Public education and outreach is a key component.

Peter Melhus of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development laid out the expectations for the meeting citing the primary focus as one of getting feedback on the working groups' preliminary recommendations from the member organizations. To facilitate the comprehensive understanding and compilation of feedback, forms were provided to all attendees so their comments could be left and added to the record if the attendees weren't able to articulate them orally. The comments will be used to further refine the recommendations that will then be developed into the first draft of the Regional Compact for Sustainability. Copies of the working groups' reports were made available at the meeting.

## **Working Group Discussions:**

### Sustainable Development Indicators Working Group

Donna Liu from the Natural Resources Defense Council and Working Group co-chair provided the preliminary recommendations from this Working Group. Donna pointed out that the preliminary recommendations and the comments received at the meeting today would be used as input for a community indicators workshop to be held on December 3 in San Francisco facilitated by Maureen Hart, an internationally recognized expert on community indicators. She also reiterated the two components of the Working Group's charge -- to develop a small set of broad indicators

and, with input from other working groups, a more comprehensive set of indicators reflective of the recommendations to be included in the Regional Compact for Sustainability. The Working Group recommended the following small set of broad indicators to measure sustainability in the Bay Area:

*Economic*

- percent change in Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)<sup>1</sup>

*Environmental Quality*

- number of violations of federal/State air and water quality standards
- vehicle miles traveled per capita
- ecological footprint<sup>2</sup>

*Social Equity*

- hours of work needed to meet basic needs<sup>3</sup>
- percent of households who can afford the median price house
- access to critical services ("critical services" to be defined)

A number of comments were received from the attendees including:

- Refer to the Sustainable San Mateo indicators report, an excellent report.
- There seems to be a problem with a skew towards environmental issues and the lack of the integration of the environment, the economy, and social equity. Indicators are never "value free."
- We need to measure gentrification impacts. People are being displaced.
- There needs to be more input on the economy.
- There are more traditional measures of the economy that should be considered.

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<sup>1</sup> The Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) is a modified version of Gross National Product/Gross Domestic Product, which attempts to address the commonly accepted critique of GDP. Rather than treating environmental remediation and other socially negative costs, i.e., costs of treating environmentally-related diseases, costs of divorce, etc., as positive (as GDP does), GPI subtracts these costs from the indicator. Similarly, rather than ignoring the value of household labor and other value added services not captured in the monetary economy (and therefore not captured in GDP), GPI adds these values to the indicator. While not yet utilized at the regional level, we propose to work with Redefining Progress (the San Francisco-based organization which developed GPI) to utilize the concept for the Bay Area.

<sup>2</sup> The ecological footprint, developed by Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, is the calculated area of biologically productive land and water occupied to produce the resources consumed and to assimilate the wastes generated by a particular population, using prevailing technology. While it is most often used as a comparison among nations, we propose to use it to compare changes over time for the Bay Area.

<sup>3</sup> Wider Opportunities for Women identified monthly costs in the San Jose area in 1996 for housing, child care, food, transportation, medical care, taxes, and miscellaneous, offset by earned income and child care tax credits. This sum was divided by the average number of working hours per month to calculate the "hourly self-sufficiency wage" in order to be able to meet these costs. The calculation was done for a single adult, an adult with a school age child, an adults a school age child and an infant, and two working adults, an infant and a preschooler. We propose a similar measure for the sub-regional economies comprising the Bay Area economy and aggregating these measures for the Bay Area.

- This is a good start on developing an appropriate matrix for measuring sustainability. Move deeper into the literature and draw from the experience of others, both at the sub-regional level within the Bay Area and outside the Bay Area.
- There are genuine differences in measures of air and water quality between the state and federal regulatory agencies. How will this be reconciled?
- Congratulations on this set of indicators. Sustainability requires new concepts and we need to educate the public about these concepts. We need to more indicators for the economy -- one for market pricing of auto transportation and one for regional competitiveness in the global economy."

#### Best Practices Working Group

Joanne Tippet from Holocene Design and Catherine Bullock Theuriet from the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California led the discussion on the recommendations of this Working Group. Their report focuses on the strategy concepts associated with the compilation of best practices and suggests the development of a database and education tool to be used by the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development. The Working Group plans to facilitate a best practices workshop focusing on creating best practices tools, criteria for assessment, and a database of best practices. The next meeting of the Working Group is November 10 at the offices of the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California.

Comments on the draft best practices identified in the report and in the report itself included (note the report indicated that the list of best practices is not comprehensive and is meant to be a starting point for further research):

- There seems to be a lot of practices focusing on the environment and some on the economy but very few on equity. The Alliance must balance its bias towards the environment if it is to be viewed as anything more than an environmental effort.
- We should reconsider the concept of "best" within "best practices." Normal behavior drives "best" to the maximum. We want to keep open to creative ideas, not just the best concepts.
- There are an enormous number of best practice databases already available. We need to identify how this effort will add to what is already available.

#### Housing, Jobs and Access Working Group

Rachel Peterson of Urban Ecology provided the report for this Working Group. She cited the primary focus of the Working Group as the identification of broad outcomes, operating principles, strategies and actions to allow the Bay Area to meet its housing demands and improve its transportation system in order to maximize access to economic resources, i.e. jobs, while minimizing harmful impact on our bio-region. Specifically, the Working Group is focusing on transforming the Bay Area's uncoordinated growth trends into more sustainable pattern.

Comments from the meeting attendees included the following:

- It was noted that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission made a key policy shift on Oct. 28 to put \$375 million to local public transit and approved a Smart Growth plan for the region's entire transportation system.
- There seems to be a conflict in recommending both inter-modal transit and express transit service. Pursuing one decreases the likelihood for success of the other. There's also a question if inter-modal transit will work.
- There's a question of time scale. If we looked at 2010, inter-modality may be possible due, at least in part, to technological improvements. It's important to focus on short-term strategies now with an eye towards longer-term time horizons.

- Pricing issues are key component here. (It was recognized that the Tax/Fiscal Policy Working Group has not yet been launched but will consider transportation pricing issues.)
- It may be more appropriate to talk about a "seamless transit system" rather than using the term "inter-modality."
- Water transit, e.g., ferry systems on the Bay, is a critical component of an inter-modal transit system. Bus and other feeder systems need to work with the ferries for this component to be effective.
- More indicators for jobs are necessary. The goals and not what is easy to measure should drive the indicators.
- It seems many people talk about affordable housing but few are doing anything about. Housing and land-use are the most critical issues and, specifically, financing affordable housing from federal, state and local sources. It seems that we pass bond issues for almost everything except affordable housing. The Alliance should push very hard for a bond issue for this purpose.
- A cautionary note: we talk about doing the best and the most efficient things, but often lose sight of what is sustainable. At some point we need to come to grips with this divergence. In the interim, we need to recognize that these are steps in the right direction.

#### Environmental Quality and Biodiversity Working Group

Michelle Perrault of the Sierra Club provided the report for this Working Group. The report focuses on several general issues: the limited amount of the land available to meet human and biodiversity needs; the inadequate amount of resources to assess, acquire, protect and monitor important land and water resources; the need for better integration of economic, environmental and equity concerns throughout the Bay Area; the need to better consider environmental impacts on all populations in the Bay Area, with particular attention on low income communities.

Comments received from the meeting attendees included:

- Recommending that air quality meet standards in all neighborhoods implies that it will be measured in all neighborhoods. This may be an inefficient use of resources. There are a few areas within the Bay Area that are accepted as a proxy for the air quality throughout the Bay Area.
- There is a compelling need to intimately align the regulatory agencies that are responsible for these issues by formally working with them and asking for their specific input. (It was noted that ABAG has facilitated meetings of the five regional agencies; this may help them incorporate some of these recommendations into their work plans.)
- A more compelling introductory paragraph for the protection of biodiversity is in order.
- This may be an opportunity to bring Bay Area jurisdictions together as partners for regional planning process to create a Bay Area regional "footprint." (It was noted that the Working Group is trying to generate an approximation of the jobs-housing footprint over the next 20 years and compare this to the overlay of biodiversity suggestions to determine where there is consensus/disagreement, based on jurisdiction.)
- Coordination is critical here to ensure that multiple efforts are going in the same direction and are not being redundant, in particular with respect to mapping.
- A fundamental challenge is for individuals to integrate the concerns of the economy, equity, and the environment simultaneously rather than focus on them as competing.
- Many of these goals all are objectives rather than goals. Goals should be quantifiable and objectives more tactical. We need to put more teeth into these recommendations by being more specific.

### Public Education/Outreach Working Group

Jean Matsuura provided the report for this working group. She emphasized the importance of the Alliance translating its vision into local and individual actions and to ensure engagement of all sectors of the Bay Area community. The Working Group has received significant services on a pro bono basis from Laura Noss, a public relations professional.

With time running short, oral comments were limited and attendees were encouraged to submit their comments on the feedback forms provided. It was pointed out that the Alliance cannot continue to rely on pro bono and volunteer efforts to the extent that has. Funding must be secured.

### **Next Steps:**

Feedback forms should be sent back by Nov. 5. The working groups will take the feedback provided at this meeting and through the forms and consider it as they refine their recommendations. These refined recommendations will be the basis of the Regional Compact for Sustainability. The Compact Integration Team will meet to reconcile differences among the recommendations. The draft compact will be circulated prior to the January meeting (now scheduled for 2/1/99) of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, at which it will be discussed and hopefully endorsed.

People interested in working on the Tax/Fiscal Policy Working Group should let us know.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Alliance will be on February 1, 1999 in the auditorium of the MetroCenter, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland (at the Lake Merritt BART station)

### **Public Comments:**

- Before pursuing the outreach strategy we need to be clear what the messages are, and how to translate the various strategies we're dealing with into actions. We should focus on a small set of principles that we agree on.
- Sprawl is pejorative term, rather we should look at individual responsibility.
- We continue to lack in the social equity component.
- On behalf of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, Andrew Michael recognized and thanked Chris Bui for all his volunteer work.
- We need to recognize that we all represent special interest groups. Because people fear change, we need to skillfully address our objectives and process and define how the changes will benefit people.
- The general thrust of the recommendations is on government. We need to pay more economic attention to pricing and Howard affects behaviors and decisions.

### **Attachments:**

Attendance List

If you would like a copy of any of the working group reports, contact Ceil Scandone at ABAG