



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 3/2/2011
Agenda Placement: 10A

Napa County Planning Commission Board Agenda Letter

TO: Napa County Planning Commission
FROM: John McDowell for Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning
REPORT BY: Hillary Gitelman, Director - 253-4805
SUBJECT: Intro to the Sustainable Communities Strategy Process & NCTPA

RECOMMENDATION

INTRO TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY & NCTPA

Staff presentation regarding the regional planning process underway to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and presentation by Paul Price, executive director of the Napa County Transportation & Planning Agency (NCTPA) on the mission and activities of that agency.

Staff Recommendation: This is an informational presentation and discussion item; no action is requested at this time.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) are working to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the region in conformance with SB 375. The SCS will be adopted as part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and will involve outreach and input to/from local jurisdictions through their councils of governments and planning agencies like the Napa County Transportation and Planning Agency (NCTPA). County staff has been following the regional planning process and will offer a summary of that process and the somewhat related process to develop a "subregion" for purposes of the next Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The executive director of NCTPA will offer a summary of his agency's mission and activities.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Following adoption of AB 32 in 2006, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted a scoping plan aimed at achieving AB 32's goal of reducing total green house gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, or about 15% below 2005 levels. In California, an estimated 40% of GHG emissions are from transportation, and the State has taken a three pronged approach to addressing transportation emissions: (1) cleaner vehicles (AB 1493, Pavley); (2) cleaner fuels (low-carbon fuel standard); and (3) more sustainable communities (SB 375, Steinburg).

SB 375 is currently the subject of a regional planning effort being undertaken by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The effort involves regular meetings of local agency representatives as well focused agenda items at meetings of the MTC Commission and the ABAG Executive Committee. In summary, the SB 375 directs the CARB to develop GHG transportation-related emission reduction targets for use in preparing a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) in each region in California, including the Bay Area. Specifically, SB 375:

- | requires that an SCS be developed as an element of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that is prepared and adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC);
- | requires preparation and adoption of a separate Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) if the SCS does not meet the GHG emission reduction targets established by CARB;
- | provides a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining incentive for projects that are consistent with the adopted SCS/APS; and
- | requires coordination between the SCS and the Association of Bay Area Government's (ABAG's) Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process.

The Bay Area's regional planning agencies, including MTC, ABAG, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) all play different roles in the region, and are all participating to some extent in preparation of a SCS for the Bay Area, with MTC and ABAG taking the lead. These agencies have been hosting a series of meetings for local agency planning staff and elected officials, providing input to CARB, and beginning the forecasting, modeling, and public outreach work that will be needed to develop and adopt an SCS. According to the agencies' current schedule, an initial "vision scenario" for the SCS will be available on March 11, 2011, and will then be refined during the course of the year at the same time that ABAG begins the RHNA process. The "preferred" SCS scenario will be incorporated into a Draft RTP and the RHNA will be adopted (by ABAG) in 2012, followed by adoption of the RTP/SCS by MTC in 2013. (An APS will only be prepared in 2013/14 if necessary after RTP/SCS adoption.)

While some members of the Board of Supervisors are familiar with the regional planning efforts underway because of their membership on the regional boards/commissions or because of their participation at the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), members of the Commission and other interested parties may not be fully aware of these efforts. Template presentation materials made available by ABAG have been attached

for the Commission's information.

Local Outcomes

At the big picture level, the regional planning effort dictated by SB 375 will affect local agencies through the same mechanisms -- transportation funding and RHNA allocations -- as past planning efforts, and it is incumbent on local agency representatives to participate fully in order to maximize benefits and minimize untenable mandates. Based on specific provisions of SB 375, County staff believes that Napa County will benefit in some ways from the legislation, but will still face greater challenges than ever in meeting the RHNA mandate. Specifically, Napa County has nominated -- and ABAG has designated -- agricultural areas of the County as a "priority conservation area," and the SB 375 offers some protection to farmland and priority conservation areas. Also, land use changes anticipated as part of the SCS will tend to increase densities in urban areas (San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose) in lieu of suburban and rural areas. This tendency, and SB 375's protections for resource areas and farmland, will likely mean that Napa County will continue to get a small share of the region's housing allocation.

On the other hand, SB 375 extends the seven year RHNA cycle to be consistent with the eight year RTP cycle, so even a small share of the region's housing allocation, may involve higher RHNA allocations than in the past. Napa County is also likely to continue to get a small share of the region's transportation funding, although SB 375 specifically calls on MTC to "consider financial incentives for cities and counties that have resource areas or farmland... for the purposes of, for example, transportation investments for the preservation and safety of city street or county road system and farm to market and interconnectivity transportation needs." It is unclear how this provision of the law will be addressed by the SCS and RTP.

County staff is participating in the regional planning process via monthly Regional Advisory Working Group meetings, and will continue to monitor activities related to the SCS and the RHNA process. In addition, the County and all incorporated jurisdictions have joined with NCTPA to form a "subregion" for purposes of allocating the RHNA locally.

As the Commission is aware, the RHNA for each housing element cycle is generally assigned to individual cities and counties in our region by ABAG, which receives a lump sum from HCD and is responsible for allocating it between member jurisdictions. ABAG's methodology is generally adjusted in each housing cycle, and starting with the 2007-2014 cycle, must take into account "factors" such as the absence of municipal sewer and water service, the amount of protected open space and policies protecting agricultural lands (CGC Section 65584.04(d)).

In early 2011, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) initiated discussions at a regional level regarding the next RHNA process via a "methodology committee" which will help determine the method for allocating the region's housing needs to each local jurisdiction for the period 2014-22. However agencies which collectively form a "subregion" may receive a lump sum allocation from ABAG and determine their own internal allocation methodology. This process involves the same steps as the ABAG process, but with more local control. NCTPA is coordinating the Napa County "subregional" process, which will be initiated this month with data collection and analysis related to the "factors" identified in the State statute. The deadline for agreeing on a methodology for the subregion is mid-July. Once the methodology is accepted, there is another deadline for completing the allocation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . SCS Powerpoint from ABAG
- B . SCS Template Staff Report
- C . Summary of "Subregional" RHNA Process

Napa County Planning Commission: Approve

Reviewed By: John McDowell