

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



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MEETING OF THE

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE

Please Note New Time
Monday, June 9, 2008
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

SCAG Offices
818 W. 7th Street, 12th Floor
Conference Room – Riverside B
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 236-1800

Video Conference Location
SCAG, Riverside Office
3600 Lime Street, Suite 216
Riverside, CA 92501

If members of the public wish to review the attachments or have any questions on any of the agenda items, please contact Deby Salcido at 213.236.1993 or salcido@scag.ca.gov

Agendas and Minutes for the Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force are also available at:

www.scag.ca.gov/rcp/rcptaskforce.htm

SCAG, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will accommodate persons who require a modification of accommodation in order to participate in this meeting. If you require such assistance, please contact SCAG at (213) 236-1868 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to enable SCAG to make reasonable arrangements. To request documents related to this document in an alternative format, please contact (213) 236-1868.

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE

AGENDA

June 9, 2008

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Honorable
Pam O'Connor, Chair

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the public desiring to speak on an agenda item or items not on the agenda, but within the purview of the Committee, must fill out and present a speaker's card to the Assistant prior to speaking. A speaker's card must be turned in before the meeting is called to order. Comments will be limited to three minutes. The chair may limit the total time for all comments to twenty (20) minutes.

3.0 REVIEW and PRIORITIZE AGENDA ITEMS

4.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

4.1 Minutes of April 14, 2008 1

5.0 ACTION ITEMS

None

6.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1 RCP Program Update Attachment Jacob Lieb 3 15 Minutes
SCAG

Staff will provide an update of the revised RCP Program Schedule.

6.2 RCP Workshops and Outreach Attachment Jacob Lieb 4 10 Minutes
SCAG

Staff will review the workshop held on April 25, and discuss the upcoming events.

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force
of the
Southern California Association of Governments
April 14, 2008
Minutes

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE. AUDIO CASSETTE TAPE OF THE ACTUAL MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING IN SCAG'S OFFICE.

The Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force held its meeting at the Southern California Association of Governments, downtown Los Angeles. The meeting was called to order by Paul Nowatka, Member. There was a quorum.

Members Present

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Feinstein, Mike | Ex-Officio |
| Miller, Michael | Ex-Officio |
| Nowatka, Paul | Torrance |
| Parks, Linda (Phone) | Ventura |
| Young, Toni | Port Hueneme |

Members Not Present

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Cook, Debbie | Huntington Beach |
| Fesmire, Melanie | Indio |
| Garcia, LeeAnn | Grand Terrace |
| McCallon, Larry | Highland |
| O'Connor, Pam | Santa Monica |

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Hon. Paul Nowatka, Member, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No Public Comment

3.0 REVIEW AND PRIORITIZE AGENDA ITEMS

4.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

4.1 Minutes of March 10, 2008

The Consent Calendar was approved as submitted.

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5.0 ACTION ITEMS

None

6.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1 Revised Program Schedule

Jacob Lieb, SCAG Staff, provided an update on the overall program schedule for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Since there have been changes to the schedule for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), it has become necessary to adjust the RCP schedule as well. Adoption of the RCP should take place the early part of November.

6.2 RCP Environmental Documentation

Jennifer Sarnecki, SCAG Staff, provided information on the proposed approach and content of the environmental documentation for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Supervisor Linda Parks questioned if the cities and counties will be preparing anything separately in adopting either the RTP EIR or the RCP EIR because there could be benefits achieved if they have an overriding EIR document that could be integrate into new documents that the cities prepare. She also asked if these cities would need to adopt the RTP EIR in order to incorporate the document into theirs.

This will be looked into by the legal staff.

6.3 RCP Public Workshops and Outreach

Jacob Lieb, SCAG Staff, reported on the previous workshops and draft agenda for the workshop on April 22. He also provided information on scheduled presentations and proposed enhanced outreach.

7.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

8.0 STAFF REPORT

9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

10.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. The next meeting of the RCP task force is to be determined.

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MEMO

DATE: June 9, 2008

TO: Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force

FROM: Jacob Lieb, Program Manager, (213) 236-1921, lieb@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Revised Program Schedule

BACKGROUND:

This item serves as an update on the overall program schedule for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The Community, Economic and Human Development Committee (CEHD) approved a schedule upon the release of the draft plan in December. Since that time, changes in the schedule for the Regional Transportation Plan have necessitated adjustments in the RCP schedule as described below.

The Task Force received an update at its April 14 meeting that included a timeline for environmental review, and an anticipated adoption of the RCP in November 2008. It should be noted that the Regional Council, at the request of several members, will be discussing the environmental review approach for the RCP at its June 5 meeting. As such, the approach and overall schedule is subject to change. Additionally, in light of this pending discussion by the Regional Council, staff has not issued a Notice of Preparation for the anticipated RCP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). This alone will necessitate a delay in adoption of the RCP, given the current approach, for one month. At the RCP Task Force meeting on June 9, staff will provide the Task Force with up to date information on the program schedule and approach, and will seek feedback and discussion at that time.

For the Task Force's information, the staff report provided to the Regional Council, which also covers several related issues including SCAG's potential programming for global warming issues, is attached.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Information only at this time. Regional Comprehensive Plan is included in the current Overall Work Program (08-035)

MEMO

DATE: June 9, 2008
TO: Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force
FROM: Jacob Lieb, Program Manager, (213) 236-1921, lieb@scag.ca.gov
SUBJECT: RCP Public Workshops and Outreach

BACKGROUND:

This report serves as a regular update on outreach activities related to the development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP).

Current Outreach Activities

Workshops

Two RCP workshops have been held to date. The second of these, held on April 22 in Huntington Beach, was subsequent to the last RCP Task Force meeting. As such, staff will seek discussion and feedback on this session. The session was successful both in terms of attendance (approximately 50 people) and in feedback and discussion on the RCP. The workshop featured presentations from Michael Freedman of Freedman Tung & Bottomley on retrofitting urban strips and from John Reekstin of the Olson Company on trends affecting the development industry and urban infill projects in Orange County.

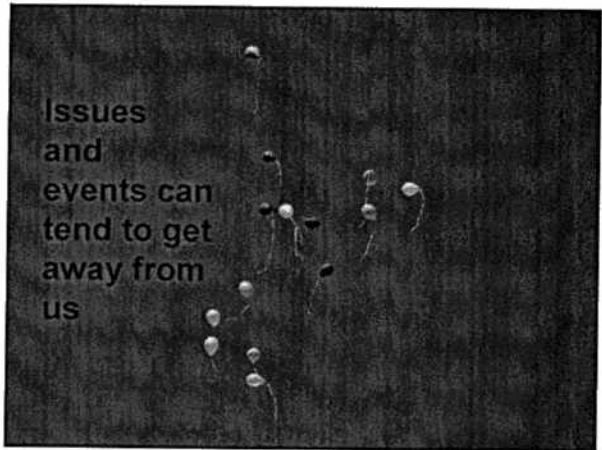
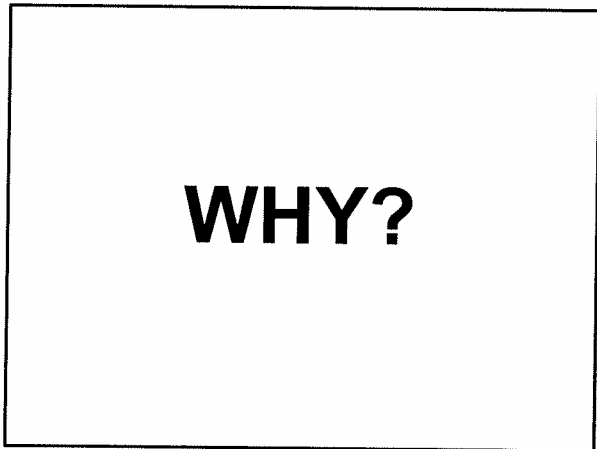
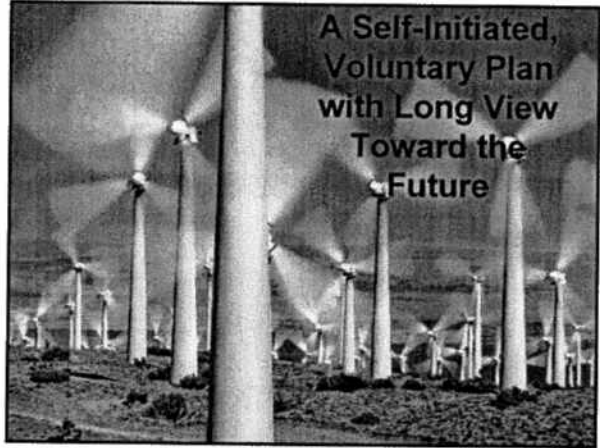
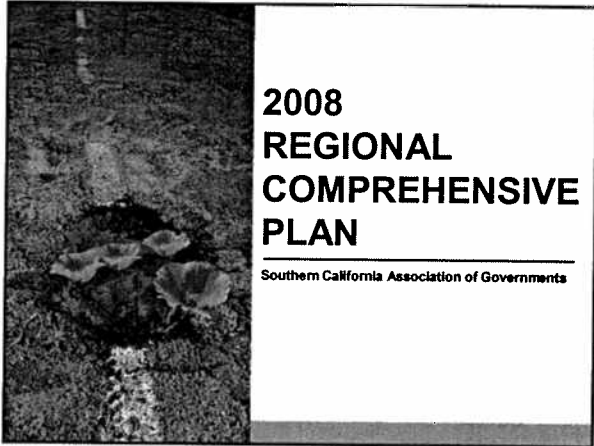
Participants asked questions and commented on various items from the presentations. In relation to the RCP itself, one commenter suggested that RCP policies should not be tied to any funding programs, and that certain policies included in the draft document should be better defined.

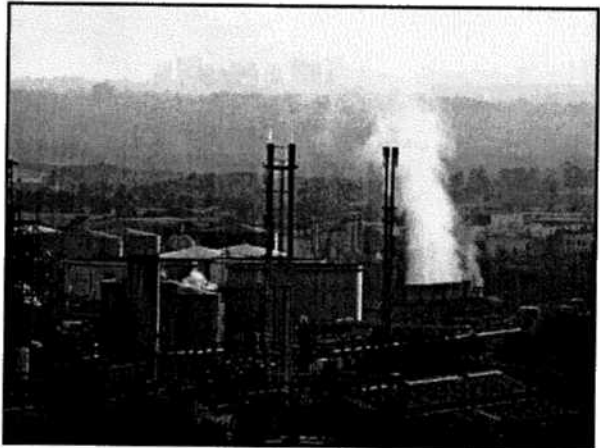
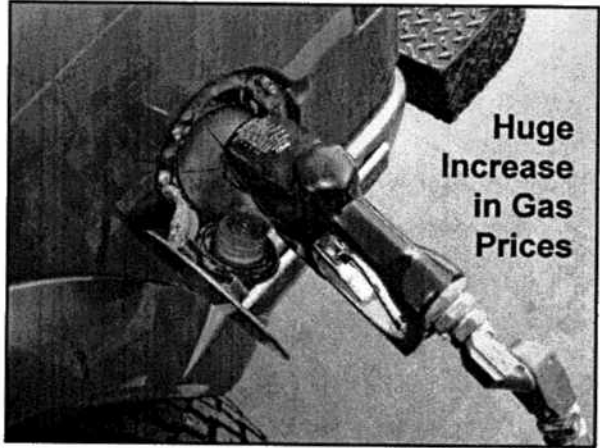
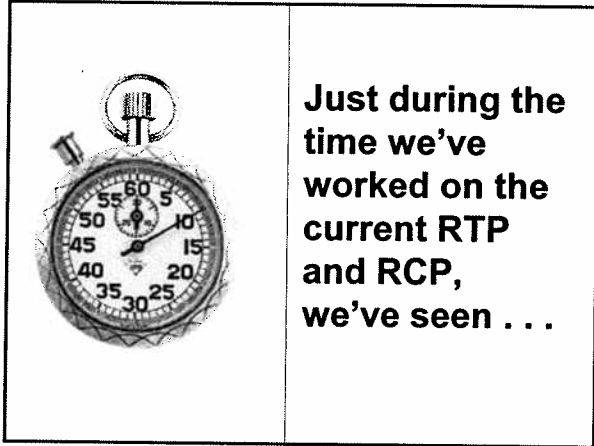
Future Workshops

At present, staff is planning two additional workshops, and is in the preliminary phase on identifying dates, topics and speakers. Staff will provide a verbal update on future workshops at the June 9 meeting.

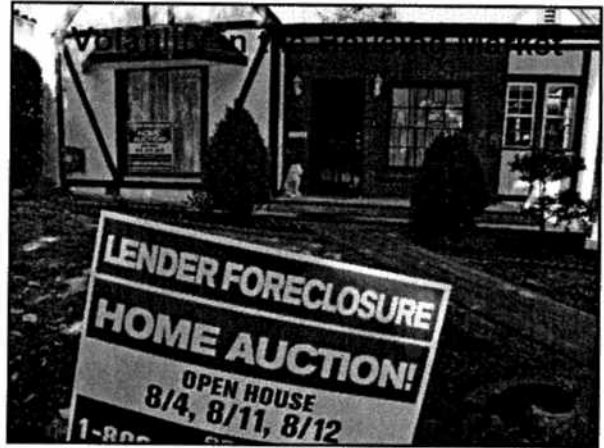
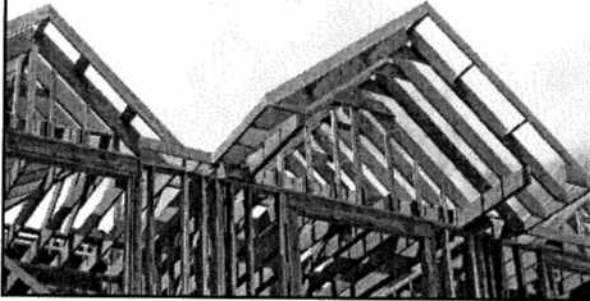
Public Presentations

Staff has overhauled the presentation intended for use in public presentations. A copy of the new draft presentation is attached. Staff will seek comments from the Task Force at its June 9 meeting.





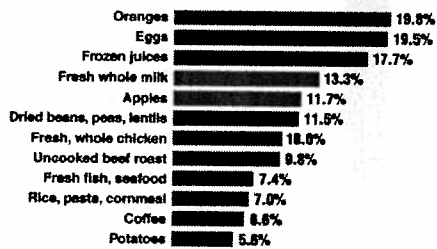
Immense Land Consumption and Conversion to Urban Uses



Volatility in the Food Market

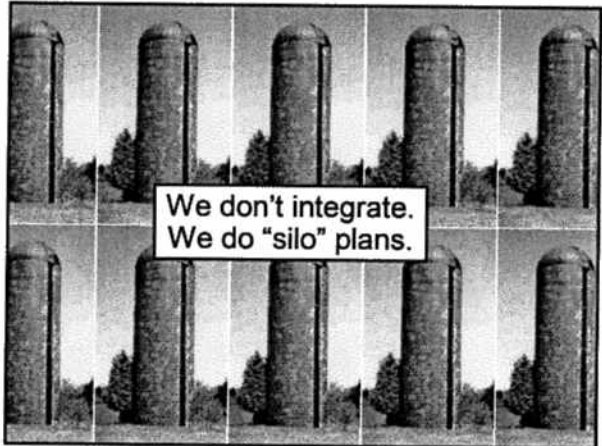
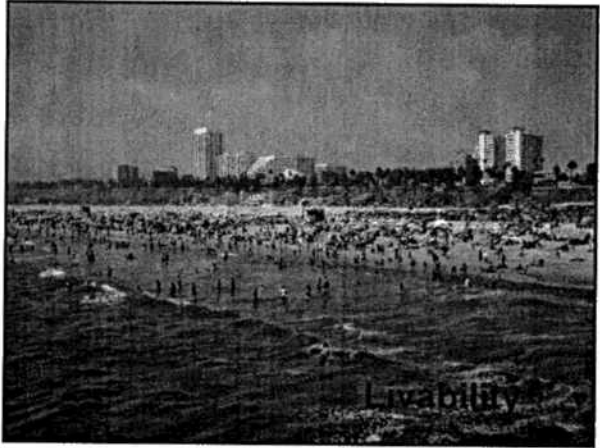
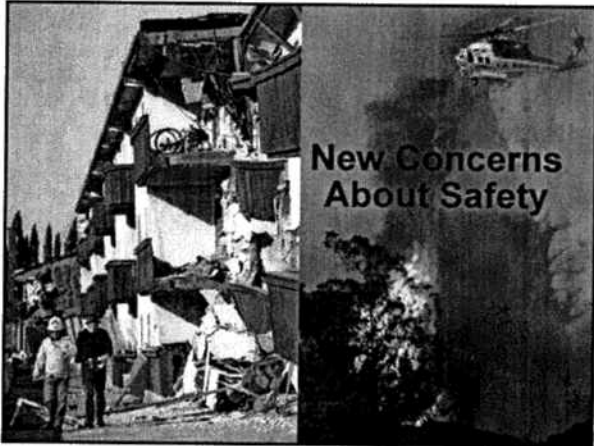
Food prices on the rise

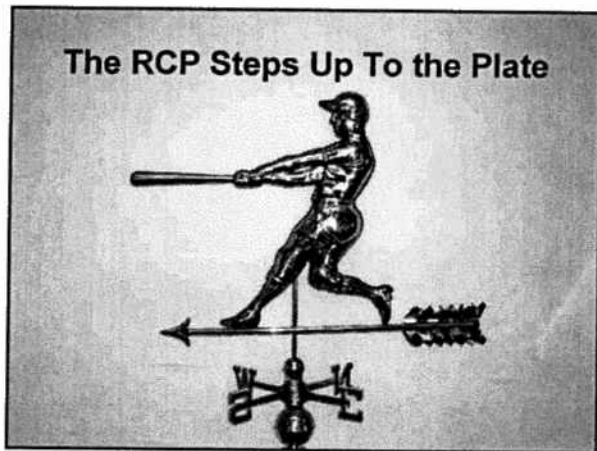
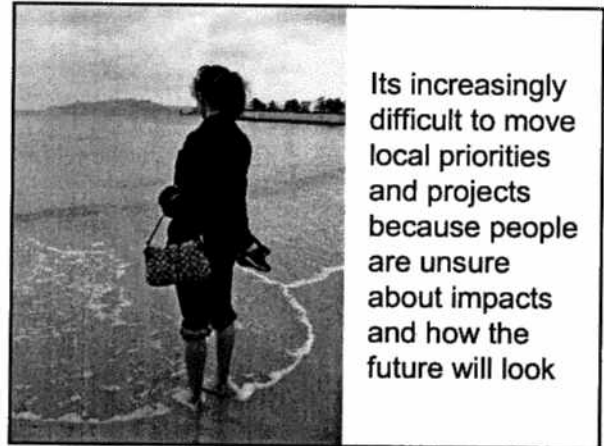
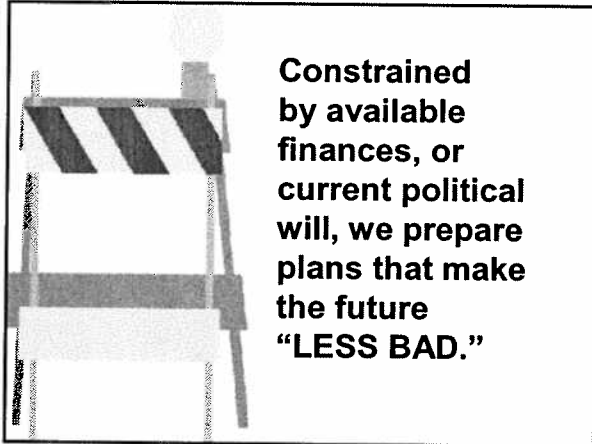
Percent change in prices for some common food items, June 2006 to June 2007:

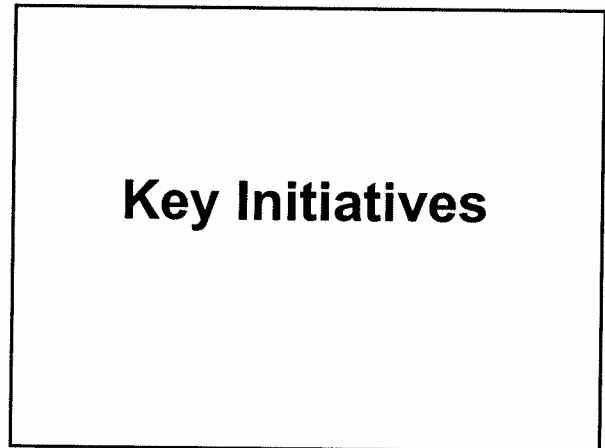
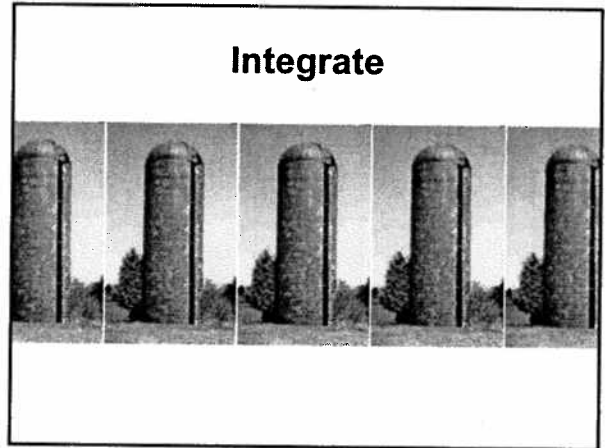
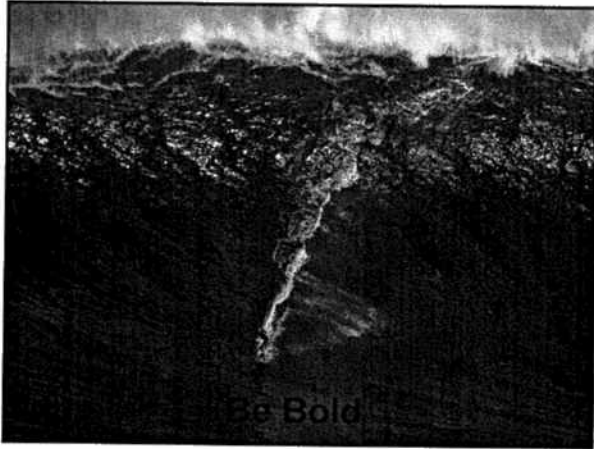


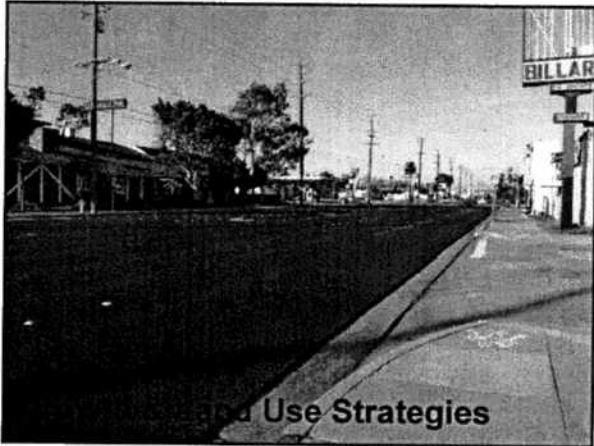
Source: U.S. Commerce Department Graphic: Angela Smith, Judy Tieble © 2007 MCT







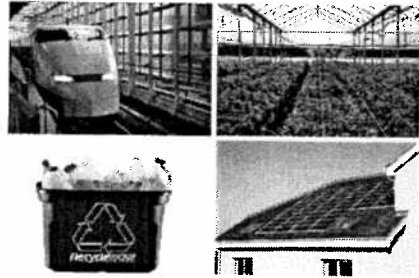




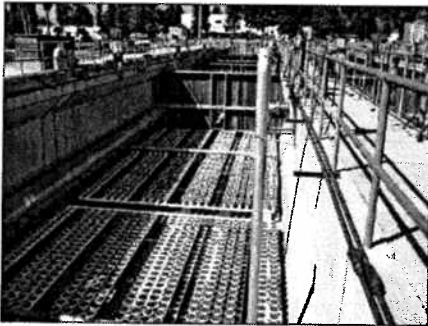
Green Economy



Green Economy



Regional Self-Sufficiency




LA-Glendale Water Reclamation Plant

How the RCP Helps Local Implementation

- Tiering
- Regional sustainability "seal of approval"
- Regional identity/ "fair share" competition for funding and resources


Southern California Association of Governments



Schedule

- Date

Southern California Association of Governments



Comments?

Southern California Association of Governments

MEMO

DATE: June 9, 2008

TO: Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force

FROM: Jacob Lieb, Program Manager, (213) 236-1921, lieb@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Future Comprehensive Planning and Sustainability Activities at SCAG

BACKGROUND:

The Regional Council, President, on the advice of the policy committees, will consider the program priorities for SCAG, within the next month, and will also potentially alter the task force and working group structure for the agency. This is likely to result in different task force responsibilities for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. This report serves as background and describes the ways in which sustainability and comprehensive planning activities might proceed at SCAG.

Potential Future Task Force Structure

The Energy and Environment Committee has recommended to the President and Regional Council the creation of an integrated environmental and sustainability task force. This task force would assume the roles of all of the groups currently reporting to EEC. It is possible that this new group would also take on the current role of the RCP Task Force, in that likely future work on the RCP will focus on sustainability policies, mitigation activities, and greenhouse gas programming. Like the current RCP Task Force, the new group would be interdisciplinary (composed of members of all 3 policy committees), but it would report to the EEC, as opposed to the Community, Economic and Human Development Committee (CEHD).

Reporting

The CEHD will have purview over the RCP until its completion. Should the RCP Task Force be absorbed into a new group, that group would still report to the CEHD committee on matters related to the RCP, regardless of its other reporting responsibilities.

Potential Program Emphases

Greenhouse Gas

SCAG staff is currently preparing preliminary program descriptions for regional greenhouse gas activities in response to AB32. A report was provided to the Regional Council and EEC Committee at the June 5 meetings to begin dialogue on this topic. It is likely that some substantial program will emerge for SCAG in responding to AB 32 mandates, both in terms of technical and policy guidance to local member agencies, and in terms of technical planning activities. In any event, actions developed in the Regional Comprehensive Plan can be used as a starting point for further analytical and policy development.

On-going environmental resource areas

SCAG will continue to provide an information exchange and discussion forum for resource areas included in the RCP, including open space, solid waste, and energy.

MEMO

RCP identified initiatives

At the direction of the Regional Council, SCAG staff may pursue future activities identified in the Draft RCP. These activities are likely to include greenhouse gas planning and mitigation activities as described above. Additionally, future efforts are likely to focus on policy areas that mitigate impacts associated with the RTP. As such, identification of regional open space resources, further energy planning work, especially related integrating energy supply information into planning, water supply and water quality issues are likely to be treated by future SCAG planning activities in some way.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Information only at this time. Regional Comprehensive Plan is included in the current Overall Work Program (08-035)

MEMO

DATE: June 5, 2008

TO: Regional Council, Energy and Environment Committee

FROM: Jonathan Nadler, Air Quality Program Manager, nadler@scag.ca.gov; 213/236-1884
Jacob Lieb, RCP Program Manager, lieb@scag.ca.gov; 213/236-1921

SUBJECT: Climate Change and the Regional Comprehensive Plan

BACKGROUND:

Due to the numerous Federal, State and regional actions (legislation, policies, and other actions) regarding the issue of climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, this issue has become front and center of the comprehensive planning efforts of many State, regional, and local agencies. The myriad of sectors affected by GHG considerations include, but are not limited to, transportation, land use, energy, waste, and water resources. The planning and implementation of programs and projects in these and other sectors are being altered by the GHG requirements set forth by federal and state law and policies.

California's major initiatives for reducing GHG emissions are outlined in Assembly Bill 32 (signed into law in 2006), a 2005 Executive Order (Executive Order S-3-05) and a 2004 Air Resources Board (ARB) regulation to reduce passenger car GHG emissions (Assembly Bill 1493). These efforts aim at reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 - a reduction of about 25 percent - and then an 80 percent reduction below 1990 levels by 2050.

SCAG staff is tracking these and other potential GHG requirements, programs, and initiatives to better understand and to help shape potential requirements, and ultimately to provide the Region with workable approaches to meet GHG goals. SCAG is well-positioned to serve as the Region's policy and technical clearinghouse. With adequate funding and effective partnerships, SCAG could provide critical member service in the form of planning protocols and technical assistance. Current efforts throughout the State could be leveraged to provide a toolbox approach to potential local actions to reduce emissions. Some of these efforts, such as the Compass Blueprint, are already assisting cities to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

This report seeks to provide the Regional Council with context to GHG issues and facilitate a dialogue on SCAG's approach at a regional level. The report presents an overview of the numerous GHG reduction efforts underway and the implications for SCAG and its member agencies. Included in this discussion is the important role that the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), currently in draft form, can become as part of SCAG's response and preparations for GHG programming. In addition to providing a starting point for policy development under emerging GHG programs, the RCP positions the region to potentially secure funding from the State and other sources.

The first part of this report describes policy implications of the on-going efforts to control GHG emissions and the promising role of the RCP, followed by background information on AB 32 and related GHG efforts.

MEMO

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The implications of AB 32 and other GHG requirements for California are enormous. Issues of special concern to SCAG and regional stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Roles and responsibilities among regional stakeholders (e.g., SCAG, CTCs, local governments, etc.)
- Reduction requirements for transportation and land use sectors
- Calculating regional emissions
- Calculating potential emission reductions from transportation and land use programs and measures

Any State implementation effort with a regional component will likely be built around a specific GHG reduction target for the region. There are many potential forms such a target could take, such as a mandatory reduction tied to activities under the regional agency's authority (transportation projects, for example). Alternatively, the State may assign targets for all activity in a region, but require only that the region address those targets through advisory measures and policies. The interrelation with other programs and activities, such as Blueprint planning, the Regional Transportation Plan, and potential legislation should be considered as part of developing any such regional emission reduction target.

The ARB, U.S. EPA, the Climate Action Registry, local air districts, and others stakeholders are developing standardized methodologies for emission inventory reporting and quantification of control measure effectiveness. There is also on-going discussion of how to account for measures that are difficult to quantify, such as land use policies. Over the last few years, SCAG has developed and continues to refine a methodology to quantify the effects of SCAG's Compass Blueprint program at the regional level. SCAG's continuing effort in this area will play critical role as the State and others work through the technical approaches to account for potential GHG control measures affecting the local land use agencies and the transportation community.

Regional Comprehensive Plan

The RCP, currently in draft form, can become an important part of SCAG's response and preparations for greenhouse gas programming. The RCP is not a GHG emissions reduction plan, nor can it be used to implement various pieces of legislation or emerging regulations from the State level. It can, however, provide the region a starting point by putting forward a list of potential policies and measures that can reduce emissions. Some of these measures are direct actions that can be undertaken by SCAG. Some are new approaches that can be applied to SCAG's core planning functions, particularly in transportation. The remaining measures and policies are purely advisory and put forward for the consideration of local governments in their own planning processes. The RCP is truly comprehensive, in that it includes recommended approaches for all facets of planning and development, including land use, water, energy, solid waste, among others. Should the RCP policies be considered GHG emissions reduction measures as part of a regional effort, they would be subjected to additional quantification techniques and public process, particularly among SCAG's partners in the region and elsewhere in the state.

In addition to providing a starting point for policy development under emerging GHG programs, the RCP positions the region to potentially secure funding from the State and other sources, per discussions at the Regional Council. Currently, SCAG is tracking legislative and grant-based opportunities that seek to build on on-going regional Blueprint planning efforts and further develop their potential to address GHG issues.

MEMO

According to the most recent published schedule, SCAG staff had anticipated releasing a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the RCP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) during the month of May 2008. This would allow the Regional Council to consider adoption of the plan in November 2008. However, to allow the Regional Council to further discuss the approach for environmental review of the RCP, the NOP will be released following the June Regional Council meeting. A June release of the NOP will allow the RCP to be considered for adoption by the Regional Council in December 2008. This schedule should address the RC's direction to staff to expedite the completion of the RCP after the RTP's adoption.

As a reminder, staff had initially anticipated preparing a combined PEIR for both the RCP and the Regional Transportation Plan, and adopting both plans on the same schedule. At its November 2007 meeting, the Regional Council directed staff to prepare separate environmental documents and to bifurcate the schedule for the two Plans, in light of concern that the combined approach might tend to endanger the RTP process and schedule and not allow sufficient time to focus on potential issues raised by the RCP. At that time, the Regional Council was advised by SCAG staff and legal counsel that the RCP is a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and that it requires the preparation of a PEIR, though it should be noted that other parties offered differing opinions. The Regional Council directed the preparation of a separate PEIR for the RCP, and allocated funding for that purpose. Much of the analysis already completed for the RTP PEIR can be applied to the RCP PEIR as both Plans have similar time frames, scopes, assumptions, and complementary policies. As such, staff believes that the RCP PEIR can be completed in the coming months with a moderate effort and expense.

GREENHOUSE GAS OVERVIEW

The following provides a brief summary of some of the more relevant state and federal GHG reduction requirements, programs, and activities.

AB 32, Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

In 2006, California signed into law the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, referred to as AB 32. It is the first greenhouse gas (GHG) law in the US with mandatory emissions reductions. It requires a reduction in California's GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, a decrease of approximately 25% from 'business as usual' emissions projections. The impetus for the bill came from the Governor's Executive Order S-3-05, which also stated that California would reduce its emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

AB 32 tasks the ARB with creation of the implementing rules and regulations, and specific implementing mechanisms; of particular significance is the decision of whether to implement a statewide cap-and-trade system. ARB would have responsibility for designing and enforcing such a system. ARB is currently developing a Scoping Plan, a draft of which will be completed in early summer; the final plan will be adopted in January 2009.

SCAG's Environmental staff has been tracking AB 32 implementation, especially the development of the Scoping Plan, which will lay out state policies and actions to meet the GHG reductions targets in AB 32. There are eleven multiagency subgroups that are providing recommendations to the ARB's Scoping Plan. One of those groups, the Land Use Subgroup of the Climate Action Team (LUSCAT) is tasked with identifying and coordinating climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in cross-cutting areas that are crucial to meeting the state's GHG emissions reduction goals related to local government and land use activities.

MEMO

The most compelling recommendations of the draft LUSCAT report include:

- Developing new funding sources for local and regional agencies to address climate change
- Setting regional emission targets
- Expanding of Blueprint planning to include GHG quantification
- Including of GHG goals in transportation planning and programming

California Attorney General Activity

The California Attorney General has sent comment letters to various municipalities, agencies and companies regarding their CEQA analyses. Generally, these comments state that the projects did not adequately address GHG emissions under CEQA, which requires that state and local agencies disclose and evaluate the significant environmental impacts of proposed projects, and adopt all feasible measures to mitigate those impacts. According to the Attorney General, this includes cumulatively significant impacts such as increased GHG emissions. One example in our region is San Bernardino County. The Attorney General filed a complaint based on the county's failure to analyze increased GHG emissions that would result from the county's proposed general plan amendment. That case resulted in a settlement agreement in which the county agreed to adopt a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Pursuant to Senate Bill 97 (Chapter 185, 2007) the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is in the process of developing CEQA guidelines "for the mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions." OPR is required to "prepare, develop, and transmit" the guidelines to the Resources Agency on or before July 1, 2009. The Resources Agency must certify and adopt the guidelines on or before January 1, 2010.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) has recently initiated a working group to facilitate the development of GHG significance thresholds to be used for projects subject to CEQA. The first meeting of the working group included representatives of the California Attorney General's office, OPR, the Air Resources Board, as well as other public agencies and representatives from industry and environmental organizations. The stakeholders applauded AQMD for taking the lead on this effort. Nevertheless, it was discussed that there may be other similar efforts (at a state or regional level) that supplement or possibly override any threshold that may be developed by AQMD.

SB 375

SB 375 provides one potential mechanism for the implementation of AB 32 at the regional scale, and for the transportation sector. The bill is complex and problematic in a number of areas. Nevertheless, it lays out the categorical parameters that would likely emerge from any regional GHG program. These parameters include

- Establishing a regional GHG target
- Mandating a regional plan to achieve the target
- Assigning some portions of a regional GHG plan into existing regional responsibilities, especially the RTP
- Assigning remaining portions of a regional GHG plan into new plans or processes (currently lacking implementation mandates).

MEMO

- Defining analytical methods and tools
- Determining the degree to which transportation projects should be consistent with the regionally developed GHG strategy
- Establish coordination with other regional planning efforts, especially the RHNA
- Establishing incentives for local consistency with the regional strategy, especially CEQA streamlining.

SCAG has participated in SB 375 negotiations from the bill's inception. Per the Regional Council's direction, SCAG initially supported the bill, but changed to a neutral position as amendments altered the bill's original intent. The Regional Council heard a report on SB 375 from Senator Steinberg's staff at the May 8, 2008 meeting, along with comments from the California Building Industry Association. As part of that item, the Senator's staff committed to working through issues with SCAG and other regional and local stakeholders, and committed to attending a future Regional Council meeting. The Senator's staff has also pledged to work for separate legislation that would fund regional efforts around GHG and Blueprint Planning. Members of the Regional Council and CEHD Committee have expressed on numerous occasions a desire to revisit SCAG's position on the bill (currently neutral) as the negotiations play out.

RTP Guidelines

In January 2007, Senate President Pro Tempore Don Perata requested that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) review its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Guidelines to incorporate climate change emissions reduction measures and requested that RTPs begin to utilize models that accurately measure the benefits of land use strategies aimed at reducing vehicle trips. The CTC developed an addendum to the updated RTP Guidelines to address climate change and submitted them to President Pro Tempore Perata on January 11, 2008. The RTP Guidelines were adopted by the California Transportation Commission on September 20, 2007. The addendum only serves as guidance but MPOs and RTPAs are strongly encouraged to adhere to it. The guidance includes the following activities:

- **Smart Growth/Land Use:** emphasize transportation investments in areas where VMT reductions would occur
- **Investment Strategies:** consider shifting transportation investments towards improving and expanding urban and suburban core transit, encouraging alternative modes
- **Pricing Strategies:** consider the use of alternative mode programs, congestion pricing, toll roads and parking strategies
- **Land Use Strategies:** encourage that where there is a Blueprint, the planned land use base for the RTP is consistent with the Blueprint
- **Modeling:** enhance modeling and analytical techniques to better inform decision-makers and the public regarding how options would affect trip making, choices of travel modes, VMT, major land use development decisions, and quality of life issues

Clean Air Plans

In April 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the EPA has the legal authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide as air pollutants. This may eventually lead to the

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requirement to develop GHG air plans as is currently done for criteria pollutants (e.g., ozone, PM, etc.) pursuant to the Clean Air Act.

Air districts have begun considering the implications of GHG emissions in their air quality planning functions. The ARB and air districts are seeking to quantify concurrent emission reductions from GHG programs that can be credited in their air plans for other criteria pollutants (e.g., ozone, PM, etc.). Air districts are also investigating the potential effect that higher temperatures will have on pollution formation (higher temperatures can lead to greater ozone formation).

Western Climate Initiative

The Western Climate Initiative (WCI) is a multi-state collaboration launched in 2007 by the Governors of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington. Its goal is to identify, evaluate, and implement cooperative measures for reducing GHG in the western US. Since its inception, WCI has been joined by Utah, Montana, British Columbia, and Manitoba. The regional goal is an aggregate reduction of 15% below 2005 levels by 2020. The WCI aims to complete the design of a market-based mechanism for reducing GHG emissions by August 2008.

Federal Efforts

In a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision, the court found that GHGs were air pollutants, and could therefore be regulated by EPA. The court also ruled that EPA must determine whether GHGs were a threat to public health and welfare. If the EPA determines that they are a threat (called an 'endangerment' finding), then it must regulate them. The court did not mandate any time period for making such a finding, and the EPA has indicated that it will take some time in making the determination.

The EPA has recently completed an inventory of U.S. GHG emissions, and is currently developing GHG emissions reporting rules. A draft of these rules is expected in September 2008, and the final rules are scheduled for release in summer 2009. California has an existing set of voluntary reporting protocols, and ARB will also be determining reporting standards as part of AB 32 implementation. There is cause for concern that EPA, or other Federal agencies or legislation, could preempt regulations established by AB 32. EPA is aware of the issue, and has indicated it will attempt to avoid preemption.

There is significant federal legislative activity related to GHG (as of March 2008, nearly 200 climate-related bills, amendments, and resolutions), mostly related to the establishment of a national emissions cap-and-trade system. Some of the other issues addressed are national security implications, carbon taxation, technology, energy policy, agriculture, and transportation.

Conclusion


SCAG staff will continue to track GHG requirements, programs, and initiatives and inform the Regional Council. The Draft Regional Comprehensive Plan can have an important role as a starting point for policy development under emerging GHG program and help position the region to potentially secure funding from the State and other sources.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with this task is included in the current year overall work program (08-020.SCGS1, 08-025.SCGS1, and 08-035.SCGS1 and in FY 08-09 under 09.020 and 09-025).

Reviewed by:


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