The Regional Planning Committee meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Committee Chair Lori Holt Pfeiler (North County Inland). The attendance sheet for the meeting is attached.

Chair Holt Pfeiler thanked and welcomed all for attending today’s meeting.

1. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

   Action: Councilmember Peters (City of San Diego) moved and Vice Chair Davis (South County) seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2005 meetings.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBERS COMMENTS**

   None.

3. **CHAIR’S REPORT**

   3. **URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI) “SMART GROWTH WORKS” SYMPOSIUM (INFORMATION)**

   Bill Anderson (Regional Planning Stakeholders Working Group) announced that on Friday, June 10, 2005, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) will be holding a “Smart Growth Works” Symposium at the Joan Kroc Center at the University of San Diego. This all-day Symposium will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will focus on the mechanics of making Smart Growth projects work from economics, regulatory, infrastructure, and community values perspectives. He added that the audience will be included in the discussion. Mr. Anderson encouraged all Committee members to attend.

4. **SHOWCASING LOCAL SMART GROWTH PROJECTS: SMART GROWTH PLANS IN ESCONDIDO (INFORMATION)**

   Charles Grimm, Community Development Director for the City of Escondido, provided the Committee with a presentation of smart growth efforts in downtown Escondido. Downtown Escondido was the hub of North County from 1890 to 1962. From 1962 to the 1980’s, Escondido experienced a series of setbacks but managed to attract new
developments including the Village Mall, North County Faire Mall and the Promenade Center. In the early 1990's, the Escondido City Council created a new vision for downtown Escondido incorporating smart growth concepts. The vision promoted retaining the character of downtown Escondido, providing a balance of land uses, and promoting taller buildings in key locations. The City Council directed staff to develop a plan to implement the vision. Cornerstones were identified to help re-vitalize the downtown area, including a downtown theatre, a quality hotel and Conference Center, additional residential units, and dining and entertainment. The dilemma was one of whether downtown Escondido had the ability to attract high quality retail and residential uses. Currently, downtown Escondido has a 1950's feel. There were some statues and art pieces strategically placed throughout the area, a new City Hall was built as well as the Escondido Center for Performing Arts. More office buildings have been built and residential development projects in the downtown area are in progress. Mr. Grimm showed examples of proposed smart growth projects in downtown and noted that they all have an urban feel to them. The purpose is to promote walking and discourage driving in the downtown area. In addition, a hotel will be built in downtown, between City Hall and the Performing Arts Centre.

Councilmember Peters (City of San Diego) mentioned that the advantage of pursuing smart growth in downtown is that this is a redevelopment area, but cautioned that cities' redevelopment funds are vulnerable to the status of the state's budget.

Chairwoman Holt Pfeiler noted that all of the city's redevelopment funds have been allocated to the Center for the Performing Arts. Other projects within the redevelopment area will have to acquire funding from other sources.

Councilmember Peters asked if there was a height limit in downtown. Mr. Grimm responded that the height limit is 45 feet in the downtown area, which the city is currently working on getting adjusted. Most people have accepted more height.

Chairwoman Holt Pfeiler stated that most citizens are comfortable with 7 stories; they are not sure about 9 stories.

Councilmember Peters asked why there is a height limit. Mr. Grimm replied that the height limit is based more on tradition than anything else.

Supervisor Horn (County of San Diego) asked if downtown Escondido is exempt from Proposition S. Mr. Grimm replied yes, that downtown is exempt from Proposition S.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall (North County Coastal) asked if the plans for some of the proposed projects that were highlighted showed 100 units per acre. Mr. Grimm responded that the plans are more like 30-40 units per acre.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall questioned how the public has received the project proposals. Chair Holt Pfeiler indicated that the proposals, thus far, have not a problem. In fact, the public has been enthusiastic because the proposed buildings are not near any existing residential areas.
Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked if Escondido has a Business Improvement District (BID) and if it does, who created it. Mr. Grimm replied that the City of Escondido does have a BID but it is not affected by this project.

Chair Holt Pfeiler added that the business community established the Escondido BID in 1988.

Bill Anderson (SWG) asked how the parking situation is being approached. Mr. Grimm stated that parking is an issue. There is a separate parking standard for the downtown area but it has not been applied. A big fear for a lot of the merchants is that there will not be enough parking. The City is currently trying to convince the merchants that bringing higher densities into this area will provide opportunities for people to walk, bike, and take transit to their businesses.

Chairwoman Slater-Price (County of San Diego) congratulated Chair Holt Pfeiler on this project. The proposed projects look visionary and Proposition S may have had a positive effect in focusing higher-intensities into the downtown area. Regarding the parking issue, she suggested that the planners for this project visit Santa Barbara and see what they've done with their parking. Parking structures are behind the buildings and are unnoticeable, which allows the quaint Spanish style architecture to be the focus of the landscape. In addition, the parking is affordable. They've been able to eliminate a lot of surface parking and create a major walking district. She cautioned, however, that regardless of all the transit put into downtown areas, most people still want to drive.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones (East County) requested that this presentation be made available to the Committee members on compact disk or via the SANDAG Web site.

SANDAG staff briefed the Committee members on the Escondido Rapid Bus/Transit Priority Concept Study. The study will evaluate transit priority measures along a 6-mile existing transit corridor in the City of Escondido. The goal is to improve transit trip times and reliability, while not adversely impacting local traffic. Staff is working in conjunction with the City of Escondido and NCTD on the study. SANDAG and NCTD are sharing the cost. An FTA discretionary grant received from Caltrans is helping to finance the study. Through evaluating a number of existing corridors, NCTD and SANDAG gave Route 350 priority for continued study. MOBILITY 2030, the current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), identified this corridor for improvements to current services, evaluation of Rapid Bus service in the mid-term, and extension of the Sprinter LRT service in the long-term. Staff provided the Committee with a photo tour of the corridor which included the Escondido Transit Center, the County's portion of the route along Sunset Drive and turning west along Bear Valley Parkway, and termination of the route at North County Faire. Once the appropriate priority measures are identified, their impacts will be evaluated. Potential station changes will also be evaluated in terms of both existing service and future rapid bus service and the plans will be integrated with local land use plans. Major milestones for the study include agency and public involvement, which will be ongoing; hiring a consultant; screenings, evaluation and traffic simulations; cost estimates; conceptual designs; study completion; and advanced planning.
Chairwoman Slater-Price asked if the buses were being coordinated with the school system. Staff replied that NCTD has adjusted its schedules to accommodate the students when school is out.

Supervisor Horn asked why the Sprinter isn’t being extended to North County Faire. Chair Holt Pfeiler indicated that a lot of the right-of-way for the Sprinter has been saved to go to North County Faire. However, at the time the project was being developed, they couldn’t afford to extend it that far.

Councilmember Druker (NCTD) commented that the Sprinter line to the North County Faire was one of the projects on the list that has been earmarked for future funding.

Chair Holt Pfeiler stated that this project is a good example of how land use and transit can be implemented together.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones indicated that he was glad to hear that the study is considering the impacts of transit improvements to the overall transportation flow within the downtown area.

Other Comments

Chair Holt Pfeiler noted that the local American Planning Association (APA) Awards Ceremony was held last night. She noted that SANDAG received an award for the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), which the Chairman accepted on behalf of SANDAG, and that she received a Distinguished Leadership Award for her work on the RCP. She mentioned that these awards were received as a result of cooperative efforts of all members of the Committee and SANDAG staff. Chair Holt Pfeiler thanked all for their hard work.

REPORTS

5. STATUS REPORT ON THE SMART GROWTH CONCEPT MAP (INFORMATION/COMMENT)

Chair Holt Pfeiler stated that a key piece to implementing the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) is to link land use and transportation through the Smart Growth Concept Map.

Staff provided the Committee with an overview of the status of the Smart Growth Concept Map. One of the key goals of the RCP is to identify opportunities for smart growth and place a higher priority on directing transportation facility improvements toward those areas. When preparing the RCP, a lot of time was spent defining several place types for smart growth, reflecting that smart growth occurs at different scales in different places within the region. A smart growth matrix, with seven place types ranging from the Metropolitan Center to Rural Villages, was developed. The Smart Growth Concept Map will include existing and planned smart growth areas and potential smart growth areas by place type. The concept map will be used in the RTP update (including the evaluation of differing land use scenarios for environmental analyses and the update of the transportation project evaluation criteria) and the TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Program. The general
approach for developing the map is to connect the smart growth place types and the existing and planned regional transit corridors. SANDAG staff has been working with local planning staffs to gain input and identify potential smart growth areas. Schedule and milestones include the Draft Concept Map in June/July 2005; Public Workshops scheduled for September 2005; and the Final Concept Map in November 2005. Staff recognized Gail Goldberg and Bill Anderson from the Technical and Stakeholders Working Groups, and invited them to add comments from their respective groups.

Mr. Anderson (SWG) asked if parcel size is a criteria? Staff noted that currently, parcel size is not a criteria, but rather residential and employment intensities within the defined areas or the ¼ mile radius from the transit station will assist in verifying the areas.

Mr. Anderson asked whether single-family lots within the smart growth areas would have to meet the minimum density thresholds. Staff responded no, that individual parcels would not be affected, and that the minimum thresholds apply to the overall average net residential densities within the defined areas, not to individual parcels.

Mr. Anderson stated it is important to make that clear when the Map is created.

Gail Goldberg (Planning Director for the City of San Diego and TWG Chair) noted that local agency staffs have worked together with SANDAG staff on this project, and have put significant time into it. The Committee should be comfortable in knowing that the staffs have worked hard to make this Map as accurate as possible.

Councilmember Peters cautioned that the City of San Diego issued a map that they thought the public would approve of, which ended up being just the opposite. The City wanted to present something to the public that provided an artful presentation as well as diagram where more housing could be built. The City Council deleted the extra densities off of the map - which in retrospect was a mistake. He encouraged the Committee to not be too shy on what needs to be done. Some upset with the public is inevitable, however, that needs to be worked through.

Ms. Goldberg added that it is interesting that after the fact and over time, communities own more and more of the City of Villages plan, literally. Re-developing takes time and communities needs to be assured that they have some say in the process - that way, communities will have buy-in.

Staff commented that it is also important to point out to the public that their opinions are valued and that incentives will be provided. When the call for projects is sent out, the communities need to be on board and prepared to move forward.

Chair Holt Pfeiler reiterated staff’s comments.

Staff stated that the preliminary draft Smart Growth Concept Map will be brought to the Committee next month.

Action: The Regional Planning Committee accepted this item for information.
6. INDEPENDENT TRANSIT PLANNING REVIEW (INFORMATION/COMMENT)

Staff noted that this presentation was made to the Transportation Committee on May 6, 2005 and felt it was necessary to bring it to the Regional Planning Committee for their information and comment. Staff stated that this report is part of a continuing series of presentations on the Independent Transit Planning Review study, with today’s focus on the results of the first peer review meeting held last month. The aim of this review is to evaluate the regional transit system in light of global best practices. It will be a two-faceted approach, including a consultant study and a Peer Review Panel, designed to provide a capable, strong, and balanced assessment. This process is not designed to produce a new Regional Transit Vision (RTV), but to offer a critique to be used in the RTP Update.

Staff provided information on the Peer Review Panel members and noted that the Peer Review Panel was provided with an overview of SANDAG’s RTP and RCP, and was taken on a tour of key transit corridors. The focus of the meeting was to refine the issues list. A key comment received from the panel was the need to better articulate the transit/land use connection in the RTV. The Peer Review Panel then took staff’s initial issues list and modified its framework to focus the issues on strengthening the relationship of the transit plans and projects to the existing and planned land uses. This will require staff to establish thresholds and standards for transit development related to land use that can be applied to each corridor.

Staff reviewed and revised the issues list. The revisions included strengthening the transit/land use connection in the RTV and developing a series of problem statements to refine the guiding principles for our transit plan and evaluate the tradeoffs between differing strategies for transit services and facility design. This information would then use the information to refine the current Yellow/Red/Blue/Green Car transit concepts to reflect the range of corridor applications. The next issue would determine service type, network, and operating strategies to better define land use and service thresholds for transit concepts. This issue would also sharpen the definition of BRT features. Modeling would incorporate market research insights into ridership forecasting. Finally, developing a methodology or model for establishing operating costs for BRT would allow staff to adequately estimate and compare costs of BRT service proposals. Staff mentioned that obtaining BRT operating cost information from other areas has been challenging.

Staff indicated that the next steps will be to hire a consultant in June 2005 and conduct a second round of Peer Review meetings on June 20 and 21st. The consultant study will begin by the end of June 2005, and should conclude in December 2005.

Councilmember Peters stated that it was his understanding that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has done a lot of work on costs of BRT. Staff replied that there have been conversations on the subject but there are no hard, fast numbers or details on that issue.

Councilmember Peters asked if the selected consultant will be from somewhere other than San Diego. Staff responded that one of the requirements in the Request for Proposals is that the consultant’s experience be from an area other than San Diego.
Councilmember Peters questioned if the results from the Peer Review will be incorporated into the RTP and RCP. Staff replied in the affirmative, and stated that we are requesting direction from the consultant on how best to do that.

Councilmember Peters asked what is the purpose of hiring a consultant. Staff noted that the consultant will help design and provide future transit and BRT improvements as well as provide staff with key issues and approaches to consider. This is an independent assessment.

Mr. Anderson mentioned that the SWG had a lengthy discussion regarding technology and what technological changes may take place over the next few years.

Chair Holt Pfeiler indicated that the Committee is looking forward to hearing this information.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Regional Planning Committee is scheduled for 12 to 2 p.m. on Friday, July 1, 2005.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Holt Pfeiler adjourned the meeting at 1:17 p.m.
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