

## DISCUSSION NOTES

**EGPR / Implementing AB 857 Regional Dialogue – San Diego Region**  
with the Governor’s Office of Planning & Research  
Sponsored by San Diego Dialogue and the California Policy Reform Network  
August 8, 2003

### **I. OPPORTUNITY: Implementing AB 857 and the EGPR**

- Following the passage of AB 857 in 2002, OPR began developing a new Environmental Goals and Policy Report (EGPR) that is consistent with the three AB 857 planning priorities. All state departments and agencies must comply with the goals and policies of the EGPR and plan in a manner consistent with the three new planning priorities laid out in AB 857 (see description of AB 857 priorities at [www.opr.ca.gov/EnvGoals/EnvGoals.shtml](http://www.opr.ca.gov/EnvGoals/EnvGoals.shtml)).
- OPR is engaged in the most comprehensive revisiting of state planning practices in the past 25 years. This is “The Year of the Planner.” In addition to the EGPR, OPR is working on:
  - a. The latest iteration of General Plan Guidelines.
  - b. New LAFCO guidelines, the first ever developed by the state. This is running behind by a year, but should be issued in the fall.
  - c. Amendments to the CEQA guidelines, in conjunction with the Resources Agency.
  - d. Providing input on the 5-year state water plan, the first-ever state energy plan, and the state transportation plan.
  - e. Participating in the development of CALEPA’s new environmental justice strategy.
- The coincidence that all of these documents are being developed at the same time is fortunate because it gives OPR and the Governor the opportunity to reshape state planning practices.
- The EGPR will be used to develop checklists of criteria for state departments to meet before they get their funds from the state. In the document itself, OPR will develop broad policy statements that will have to be incorporated into state agency programs. The Dept. of Finance is working with OPR to develop the EGPR and further define the terms that will be used in agency five-year capital plans and other functional plans. The Dept. of Finance is mandated to tie these five-year plans to the priority areas set forth in the EGPR.

- As an example of policy and practice innovation, the state’s Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank ([www.ibank.ca.gov](http://www.ibank.ca.gov)), is a state financing authority that helps to provide low-cost, tax-exempt financing to qualified manufacturing companies, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies. The concept for the bank was first proposed in the 1978 EGPR

## II. HIGH-PRIORITY NEEDS: What Can the State Do?

- What the region might need most is “political cover” from the state to allow local officials to make tough decisions. This cover could come most effectively through incentives and disincentives.
  - ⇒ OPR: The EGPR won’t contain mandates for local governments, but will help to unify state policy direction and goals. These goals will determine what local projects get funded and supported. We’re going to give planners at the local level a better sense of where the state is going.
- Dependable revenue streams and state-local fiscal reform are the most important things that the state can provide to facilitate smart growth. If local government could have secure funding, we could go into our existing neighborhoods and provide the necessary infrastructure for increased density.
- In planning efforts, there is often limited consideration of how citizens are going to be engaged in the process. The civic engagement piece needs to be incorporated and emphasized in the planning process if the plans are going to be effective. Effective collaborative planning requires intensive community outreach that demands resources (staff and money).
- The state has created a huge challenge for San Diego in the conflict between the mandate and funding for new schools and the system that is in place for siting schools and affordable housing. We are losing thousands of housing units each year, as they are demolished to put up school buildings. There is no requirement for school districts to work with planning officials – districts can put schools wherever they want.
  - ⇒ **BEST PRACTICE:** The city, school district, the housing commission, etc. have created a Joint Powers Authority to replace housing lost to school construction with a mix of new market-rate and affordable units. San Diego is building schools that are more vertical and efficient. The key has been cooperation and communication between planning departments, the school districts, and community groups.
- The state has a number of standards in different agencies that don’t really implement smart growth. We must break down the “silos” that state agencies keep themselves in. We also need guidance for local agencies and cities to work together. Specifically, the State Architect needs to be included in the school-siting process to align regional plans with the efforts of school districts.

- Historically, there are often conflicts between state goals and our regional goals. How do we bridge those gaps, especially if the EGPR lays out policies that conflict with what our region wants? For example, we could adopt regional plans for land use, while at the same time, certain state agencies are working under opposed policies and programs. Is there a role for OPR in helping state agencies to follow the lead in regions where planning is collaborative and consistent with AB 857?
  - ⇒ OPR: AB 857 calls for a conflict resolution mechanism for handling inter-agency conflict. However, the pre-emptive approach is to promote understanding of the EGPR ahead of time and encourage agencies to include the EGPR values into their operational plans.
- San Diego has done better than most regions in meeting its state housing goals. But, there is no sanction from the state for those communities that refuse to meet them. This puts the burden on communities that are “smart growth” but not “no-growth.” The state could use its resources to better encourage communities to build housing.
- You can’t talk about environmental justice without talking about social equity. Much of our workforce is in the service and tourism industry, whose wages and benefits are inadequate in our high-cost region. It should be a goal in the EGPR to support economic strategies that look at the quality of those jobs and guidance for the service sector, not just high-tech and biosciences.
- San Diego is currently going through a formal process of regional airport planning, which is critical to our long-term plans. What can the state do to facilitate regional airport planning, while considering local environmental impacts? For example, three or four possible sites are in the hands of or next to military areas.
  - ⇒ Rail should also be part of our planning for airport needs; LAX is the real international connection right now for residents of our region. New rail capacity to Los Angeles could make that trip easier.

### **III. CONSIDER THIS: Suggestions and concerns to keep in mind**

- The MSCP (Multiple Species Conservation Plan - [www.sannet.gov/mscp](http://www.sannet.gov/mscp)) was a model of regional planning here. Sacramento and its view of the process was a critical part of that effort. The Resources Agency and Dept. of Fish & Game put a representative at the table who built relationships with the locals. Then, this representative was able to talk to the Resources Secretary and the Governor to get the deals done. Having that conduit to the Administration, to the federal government, and between jurisdictions was very important.
- San Diego’s relationship to the military is unique. As communities grow, encroachment issues have become critical. The Nature Conservancy is

facilitating discussion between three counties – San Diego, Riverside, and Orange - and environmental groups to discuss buffer zones on military lands.

⇒ OPR: We currently have a contract with the military to develop planning guidelines for their land use.

- The EGPR is supposed to look 20-30 years ahead. Why shouldn't we look even further out regarding the infrastructure we'll need, especially so that we don't have to take away open space later even though we've reserved it now?
- Will this document incorporate San Diego's close relationship with Tijuana and related border issues? We are connected across the border in some ways more than we are to the rest of Southern California – water, air, etc.
- We have too many special districts that waste resources. Our land-use system is really hobbled by all of these entities, which too often operate in a vacuum.
- One of the issues that this region has not been able to solve is greatly rising housing prices. The Housing Action Network brings people together to advocate for more housing development. It looks at the dynamics of housing and transportation. How can the EGPR encourage state agencies to work closely with this kind of community-based organizing and support?
- Design and aesthetics is a critical component of efficient development, especially in the acceptance of density by the community. The General Services Administration has guidelines for design – this is one area to raise the standards and implement them.
- Spraying of pesticides on open space land is an overlooked issue in San Diego. The EGPR should consider the interaction between open space and the use of pesticides.
- The EGPR should consider how to promote “green communities” and innovative development ideas. Sustainable community development is happening in other Western states, but not as much in California, or as much as we'd like in San Diego. Developers say that the state has the capacity to help locals move these types of projects forward. Here, local NIMBYs have the advantage over regional interests.
- There is a gap between transit planning and other planning in the region. The stated intentions of many transit plans often look good, but the actual plans often contain many major errors and inconsistencies. For example, on the Mid-Coast corridor study, the alternatives to light rail were poorly conceived, operating cost estimates were wildly off, and many other key aspects of the study ignored well-documented facts about busway capacity and operating efficiencies. There needs to be far greater state oversight of local transit planning, especially cost audits and tracking of cost figures used to justify projects. Ridership might be high on some projects such as the San Diego

Trolley, but most of those riders are transit-dependent – we should make sure that we are also achieving the goals of congestion mitigation and growth management in these projects.

- There is a conflict between fire departments’ safety demands (such as wide road and intersection dimensions for their large engines) and transportation priorities of traffic calming and pedestrian safety (both important aspects of smart growth). The problem is not one of absolute safety concerns, but is driven in part by the Fire Department's desire to use larger, as opposed to smaller, trucks. Perhaps State leadership in helping push Fire Departments to acquire more appropriate equipment could help improve neighborhood quality of life and pedestrian safety
- Do we need an additional freeway corridor to accommodate regional shipping (especially to/from Mexico), or can we accommodate it through regional rail, etc. Even if we have low-emission cars, freeways still cover a lot of surface area.
- High-speed rail should not stop in San Diego, but should connect our entire region, including south of the border. The EGPR should consider the role of Mexico and border dynamics as part of its long-term vision.

#### **IV. NEXT STEPS: Incorporating San Diego values and perspectives**

- August 14: EGPR Stakeholders Advisory Group Meeting to review draft of opening sections of the EGPR - introduction, context, and a vision for the future / guiding principles
- August 20 – September 1: Regional input on draft EGPR sections released by OPR (coordinated through San Diego Dialogue)
- September 1-15: Opportunity to review draft “Commentary from the Regions” (developed by CCRL – coordinated through San Diego Dialogue)
- September 19: “Commentary from the Regions” sent to OPR from CCRL