



## DISCUSSION NOTES

**EGPR / Implementing AB 857 Regional Dialogue**  
***Setting Policy to Support Sustainable Growth in the San Fernando Valley***  
with the Governor's Office of Planning & Research  
Sponsored by Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley and  
the California Policy Reform Network  
May 9, 2003, 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

### **I. Introduction by Nick Bollman, President & CEO, California Center for Regional Leadership**

- Regional collaboration is essential if the San Fernando Valley is going to maintain economic competitiveness, quality of life and equal access to opportunity for all.
- The purpose of today's session is to identify the "hot button issues" in the San Fernando Valley with regard to planning and land-use and to encourage the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to incorporate the unique conditions facing the San Fernando Valley into the Environmental Goals and Policy Report (EGPR) and the implementation of AB 857.
- Why does coordination of regions and state planning matter?
  - The state of CA is declaring its policies and goals through the EGPR, which will be presented to the Governor in December, 2003.
  - Clarifying the state's intentions with regard to land use and planning will prompt better communication between the state and its regions, and better more cost-effective and efficient outcomes for communities.

### **II. Hon. Bob Hertzberg, Speaker Emeritus, California Assembly**

- The state's role is not to operate government at the local level.
- Since the passage of Proposition 13, everyone is trying to figure out ways to deliver services to local communities, while the nexus of power has shifted to Sacramento.
- The progressive movement passed the Separation of Sources Act, which operated without interruption from 1910–1978. All property tax was collected by the state and shared with locals. Since Proposition 13 passed in 1978, local government has operated with a high level of insecurity. Strings are now attached to every dollar disbursed to local government from public safety to land use planning.
- The relationship between the state and local/regional government is dysfunctional. We are dealing with the symptomatic outcomes of a

dysfunctional system. We need to operate at a structural level, not the human level, if we are going to have sustainable change.

### **III. Terry Roberts, Chief Planner from the Governor's Office**

- OPR is the policy and research arm of the governor's office. The main land use policy areas that OPR is currently working on include:
  1. Assistance with the development of local land use plans; issuance of General Plan Guidelines.
  2. Guidance for Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCO) who are responsible for approving city incorporations and annexations and determining the boundaries of cities' spheres of influence.
  3. CEQA guideline amendments.
  4. EGPR. The Environmental Goals and Policy Report (EGPR) is not just about the natural environment, but about how the state will grow in a sustainable and equitable way into the future. The EGPR must be updated every four years, and its goals and policies must be consistent with three new state planning priorities (from AB 857):
    - i. Supporting urban infill and equitable development
    - ii. Preserving environmental and agricultural resources
    - iii. Promoting efficient land use patterns wherever development occurs.
- The state wants to hear from its regions what strategies will be effective for implementing the EGPR. The state wants to avoid conflict between regional and statewide planning activities. In the event conflict arises involving the State, there will be a process in place to resolve conflicts through a formalized, state-sanctioned conflict resolution process. Preventing conflict is the preferred option and is a goal of the EGPR.

### **IV. Bob Scott, Civic Center Group**

- There are areas in the San Fernando Valley, such as the northeast area, that are underserved by both local and state government, and they lack the resources that are necessary for the high quality-of-life standards that are part of the future vision of the Valley.
- As I read AB 857, it has loop holes that are big enough to drive a truck through. More constructively stated, AB 857 is open to good interpretation and not-so-good interpretation. The point of today's dialogue is to figure out how to execute effective infill development projects and smart growth efforts in a manner that are sanctioned by the state.
- Part of the solution for establishing a common vision for the future of the Valley is to bring a wide range of people to the table – from Calabasas to San Fernando. This regional perspective is the work of the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley. If AB 857 is going to be effective, it is best to keep the bill

from becoming politicized, and rather to keep the discussion in the civic realm where common interests and common ground are the basis for discussion.

## **V. Questions and Answers with Terry Roberts and Anya Lawler**

*Does the state have the resources to clearly define the three priority areas outlined in the bill?*

OPR is hosting a series of inter-agency advisory group meetings. Educational outreach among leaders of state agencies is a critical component of the EGPR process. A checklist that maintains consistency with the three priority areas and goals for all state agency land-use activity will be critical to the successful implementation of the EGPR. "Context sensitive solutions" is a policy currently being promulgated by Caltrans to make state agencies more accountable to local needs.

*Where is the continuity for a policy document such as the EGPR when there is a change in the Administration?*

Pressure is coming from the outside to push the Administration to maintain the EGPR and AB 857. The 3 new state planning priorities set forth in the EGPR are intended to guide the Department of Finance and all state fiscal decisions. Civic organizations play a role in reminding state agencies to maintain their priorities.

*What happens if the state goes bankrupt? With the current fiscal crisis, there may be no resources available to implement any land use planning. Shouldn't OPR concentrate on the current fiscal crisis now, rather than concern ourselves with long range planning issues?*

Scarce resources are a condition that we should all get used to. Now, more than ever we need to use land more efficiently.

*The driving factors threatening the quality of life for all Californians may very well be addressed through the EGPR, but there are terms in the document that need further definition.*

The definitions of terms like equity and infill are currently being worked out by OPR and the state and will be critical for avoiding mediation and arbitration and in the future. We need your ideas and suggestions.

## **VI. Concerns / Suggestions**

- San Fernando is absorbing the hit of massive building in Valencia and Almond Park, and the Valley is not prepared to handle the associated regional challenges of increased traffic congestion, pollution, and increased road maintenance costs. There needs to be a better mechanism to handle increases in stress on transportation infrastructure.
- AB 857 needs further definition. Words like equity and environmental justice need clarification if they are going to be upheld in the courtroom.
- Rightsizing government and government services is the essential issue of AB 857. Who is best suited to do what services and at what level? Why should LA

County provide services that locals are currently providing? What might the statewide mandate for transportation plans look like?

- Counties are an arbitrary jurisdiction and different local regions will define things like infill and density differently. Therefore, decisions should be made on a regional scale. The notion of home rule should be a regional, not local, concept.
- Super-regional issues like the placement of airports affect us all. Therefore, reality-based planning requires not only five-year plans, but twenty-year plans as well. And we need leadership from the state on the list of issues that locals can not resolve.
- Glendale is completely built out. There is no room for more residents, yet we know there are more people coming. How do we handle these questions? Where will the money come from? Public education is critical but not in and of itself.
- Redevelopment is all that is left in the San Fernando Valley. Development of hillsides is very expensive, both because of CEQA and structural challenges associated with this type of building. There does not seem to be enough communication between Sacramento and the regions about the reality of the development crisis in the Valley.
- Jobs are another critical issue for sustainable development. Without a sound economy none of this is possible! What economic strategies will make sure that jobs go where the housing is?
- Training staff from city councils and planning and transportation departments will be critical to the successful implementation of the EGPR. If there is limited ownership among elected officials for how to interact with businesses, then the values of the EGPR will fall flat. Regional leaders need to be included with the training of county and local government about how to interact with local businesses and how to incorporate safety and transportation policy into government activities.
- Regional work is now easier because of communication improvements. Structures in Sacramento are too large!
- Enforcement of Sacramento policies relies on personalized structures that are neither bureaucratic nor alienating.
- California needs to be clear about the water priorities of the state, and water now drives development decisions. Unless the state approaches the federal government with a unified voice, we are at risk of losing our share of the Colorado River altogether.
- Equity regarding the disbursement of planning resources needs to be kept in mind if we are going to have a sustainable state.
- The strength of this state depends on wealth creation and the raising of capital which relies on a supportive business climate. Phasing out the Trade and Commerce Department will not save money but will cost greatly in the long run.
- Good land use planning is an economic issue and not just a land use issue.

## **VII. Best Practices: Examples of Regional Collaboration**

- The San Fernando Valley Transportation Strike Force was created by a regional collaboration that grew out of a transportation summit held three years ago.
- Regional cooperation was helpful for signal synchronization across jurisdictions in the Valley.
- The City of Los Angeles created the Business Tax Advisory Committee to evaluate the state's method for taxing small businesses. The process of developing the objectives of the task force included City Council members and a really diverse array of players. This effort to assemble a truly representative cadre of locals is critical for successful implementation of state policy. The state could follow this methodology at a regional level with planning – incorporating varying planning and growth requirements.
- There are examples of collaborative planning and the fact that the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley exists is the type of thing that will be critical to solving regional problems. The earthquake and a bad economy helped start the Economic Alliance, but crisis prevention is a far more effective way of doing business.