

Summary of Comments
Joint Meeting of the
Ventura & Santa Barbara Cities & County Planners
February 10, 2005
DRAFT
10:00 a.m. to Noon
Ventura County Government Center, Hall of Administration
800 South Victoria Blvd.
Ventura, CA 93009

Representatives present from:

Ventura: Simi Valley, Fillmore, Oxnard, Camarillo, Ventura, County of Ventura, VCTC, VCOG

Santa Barbara: Santa Maria, Buellton, Santa Barbara City, County of Santa Barbara, SBAPCD, SBCAG

Minutes prepared by Jacki Bacharach (VCOG) and Michael Powers (SBCAG)

Introductions from - Jim Kemp, Executive Director, SBCAG and Jacki Bacharach, Executive Director, VCOG.

Presentation by Michael Powers, SBCAG on

Ventura/Santa Barbara County Jobs/Housing/Transportation Recommendations.

Summary of Comments during discussion:

- Rail
 - There is a high level of commuter rail interest in Santa Barbara and some comments that it was too expensive for what it can provide. In addition, there were suggestions that existing densities are not appropriate for rail to be feasible.
 - SCAG will be funding a SB/Ventura Rail Study in 05-06 OWP for \$100,000
 - Bus feeder services are extremely important for successful commuter rail
 - Dollars would not be available for implementation for many years

- Bus Transit – VISTA Coastal Express has 10 buses/7 days/wk with 67% farebox recovery. 50/50 funded by VCTC and SBCAG.
 - Should be marketed better – ex. Flashing signs on the fwy, more identifiable transit centers with circulators like jitneys and community vehicles
 - Densities in this region are very low for transit to work effectively
 - Bus transit would be more marketable if there was a dedicated lane bypassing the congested areas of the 101.

- Jobs/Housing
 - Can't force jurisdictions to provide housing because of negative tax consequences – HCD says growth is never finished but there is an upper limit.

- Balance between jobs and housing within the county (Ventura) doesn't equate to less traffic and people living where they work. People pick their jobs and their housing for many different reasons and there are often 2 job holders splitting the difference.
- Can't solve jobs/housing imbalance; driven by market forces – can only address the problems it creates such as transportation?
- Need statutory authority to enable housing for local workers.
- More housing near jobs can serve to reduce congestion
- Need to build complete neighborhoods that include basic shopping and other services to reduce autotrips Look at codes that facilitate live/work/walkable communities.
- Cities won't destroy what it is that gives them their identity and they are already built.
- These coastal communities are attracting those that want 2nd homes and less density.
- This is the post growth era with unending market demand.
- Downtown Santa Barbara has mixed use and has become mondo condos, not work force. Much more attractive than anticipated and not affordable. (12% of their housing is permanently affordable)
- Specific program ideas
 - Ventura County looked at General Plan amendment to levy fee against job providers for required housing. Where \$s generated would go was not decided. Bay Area has these types of ordinances.
 - Communities that don't want to grow would tax themselves for those that would grow – like a transfer of growth right
- Other Comments
 - Create a JPA for both counties and cities with legislative authority to levy a head tax on all employers to finance housing and transportation strategies.
 - There should be a model state ordinance for local communities to adopt or the state can overlay it.
 - Need new tools to address unending market demand...how much is enough? How do we get HCD to recognize this.
 - Planning Directors from Counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo are meeting quarterly and working on:
 - Joint Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to submit to the federal government
 - Finding low cost capital for workforce housing and commercial enterprises

Possible Next Steps

- Work together to educate the public re: impacts of jobs/housing imbalance and how they can be addressed as well as the benefits of higher density development.
- Enhanced Joint marketing of the Coastal Express

- Identify local nodes that would be transit centers for the Coastal Express in both counties
- Seek statutory ability to require local preference housing
- Work together to create united front against the State
- Create Bi-County (Regional) Matching Service to match people with jobs and closer to homes
- Continue information sharing and communications between the 2 counties' governments.

Summary of Priority Next Steps

- Establish united front to the state
- Work together on transportation strategies
- Explore ways to allow for local preference housing
- Meet quarterly