

On October 13, 2009, SCAG hosted its first steering committee meeting for Comprehensive Regional Goods Movement Plan & Implementation Strategy. Hasan Ikhata, Executive Director, and Rich Macias, Director of Regional & Comprehensive Planning, opened the meeting with welcome notes. The meeting was intended to provide the committee members with the study background, including briefing on 2008 RTP goods movement objectives and strategies, the study goals, objectives, and approaches, and then receive preliminary input to guide the study progress.

The membership of the Committee comprises representatives from local Caltrans Districts, County Transportation Commissions, Air Quality Districts, railroads, and supply chain service users and providers.

Summarized here are the study purposes and status, as well as comments, suggestions, and concerns received during the meeting.

Study Goals and Approaches

- Refine the strategies identified in the 2008 RTP.
- Further the goals of the RTP through collaborative work with stakeholders.
- Build on the work completed in the MCGMAP, and fill any gaps remaining from that effort. The findings of MCGMAP have been incorporated into the 2008 RTP Goods Movement elements.
- Widen the traditional view of goods movement in the SCAG region to include domestic traffic, manufacturing, and industrial goods movement.
- Further define projects, refine strategic objectives, cost estimates, and create a financing and implementation plan.

Study Tasks and Status Report at October Meeting

- Expert Panel has reviewed the proposed HDT model development plan
- Work efforts to date have focused on:
 - Improvements to the Heavy Duty Truck (HDT) model
 - GPS truck data collection, establishment survey underway
 - Classification counts
 - Supply chain surveys to gain a better understanding on secondary and tertiary truck trips
 - Warehousing/Intermodal facility demand forecast
- New tasks added to the scope will focus on several components of goods movement:
 - Integrating the port models into the regional HDT model
 - Building a port competitiveness tracker
 - Congestion pricing
 - Goods movement and land use, including SB 375

- Port gate surveys
- Approaches for new technology for line-haul: The study will conduct analysis on new technologies in a regional context while leveraging all the findings from existing studies, e.g., I-710 EIR/EIS, and Ports' zero-emission goods movement systems.

Comments and Clarifications

- Understanding market segments and market needs is a crucial first step to implementation of any alternative technologies.
- Port gate survey is scheduled to start once contract modifications are finalized.
- The port competitiveness tracker will include a package of various indicators, including trade volumes, developments in the Panama Canal and Seattle-Tacoma, connectivity and demand, congestion, etc. West coast gateways will be the initial focus, though East coast ports will be included.
- Coordination with other entities that have completed or are underway with truck GPS studies (UC Santa Barbara, etc) should be ensured to save resources and maximize on the amount of data collected.
- Third-Party Logistics representatives should be present at the steering committee meetings for they are knowledgeable of supply chain strategies and costs incurred. They are absent at this meeting, however, as they are members of the committee, SCAG will reach out to them to ensure an active participation.

Moving Forward

- Four areas for considerations moving forward, while expanding on goods movement elements and concerns identified in 2008 RTP:
 1. Implementation plans for international trade oriented strategies
 2. Develop strategies for other elements of goods movement within the region - need for better understanding of other elements such as domestic manufacturing, local distribution, and types of issues related to these elements to be addressed.
 3. Land use strategies and integration with goods movement (with developments such as SB 375)
 4. Uncertainty for the future - economic, environmental, energy prices, and global climate change initiatives.

Discussion Points on Suggested Strategic Objectives

Suggested Strategic Objectives

- Ensure SPB Ports competitiveness and robust NAFTA trade
- Ensure efficient and reliable connectivity between the local manufacturing base and the domestic supplier and markets
- Ensure efficient distribution system in the region at a reasonable cost

- Ensure the connection between efficient land use and goods movement system to minimize adverse impacts and promote smart growth objectives

1. Are these the right objectives?

- The study should clearly state its commitment to public health, as well as the expectation that all strategies developed during the study reflect the best interests of public health and the region's quality of life. It would be helpful to have health standards/criteria as part of the environmental mitigation.
- Large portion of emissions come from transportation system. Therefore, any regional reduction in emissions must come from changes in the transportation system. This plan needs to reflect long term regional air quality needs and conformity standards. The study should include policies to reduce regional green house gases, or foreign oil dependency.
- Many of the new environmental regulations will be coming online within the next few years (by 2012) - this plan needs to include short term actions to meet these accelerated goals.
- Public Outreach Plan should be made available for potential effort sharing with other groups such as Gateway Cities COG.
- Existing constraints need to be "drilled down" to a more project specific level, involving specific infrastructure, bottlenecks, capacity constraints, and issues. There has been enough high-level policy discussion.
- Taking the parallel approach to conceptual planning process and data collection efforts is a positive step to take.
- The strategic objectives are the same as in 1998 and 2008 RTPs and previous regional goods movement study objectives. Perhaps this study should focus on impediments on not moving forward with implementation. This study could focus on implementation strategies, including identifying potential partners, funding sources, and political champions to lead specific projects.
- Passenger rail stakeholders, Metrolink and Amtrak, should be included in the discussion especially on the rail investment strategy.

2. What are the critical issues that need to be developed in each category?

- Third Party Logistics, Beneficial Cargo Owners, and other stakeholders who can provide recent, relevant information on rapidly changing supply chain strategies should be included in the discussion.
- The physical planning aspect, i.e., available land, of the projects and strategies should be recognized. For example, without a practical framework, it is unreasonable to assume the California High Speed Rail would be built through Gateway Cities.
- Need to understand that prosperous communities and well-paying blue collar jobs are important. Providing certain jobs in certain geographical areas may override other community concerns about alignment or environmental health.

- Need to clarify that grade crossings do not help capacity enhancement or throughput increase. They are rather quality of life enhancements. As such, the railroads are not natural partners, although they sometimes participate.

3. Have strategies been defined to support each objective? What questions need to be answered?

- Combining freight corridors with utilities is a possibility to be further explored. It may help to solve the right of way issues for new project.
- Intelligent Transportation Strategies (ITS) appear to be absent in the plan discussion thus far. ITS could provide significant efficiency gains with minimal new infrastructure needs or physical footprint.
- Passenger rail movements (Amtrak and Metrolink) need to be considered as well as freight railroad movements.
- Study needs to address aviation needs.
- The MCGMAP did not identify all the projects such as how to move goods from the ports to inland ports.
- Study needs to reflect and coordinate the timelines of other ongoing regional plans.
- The study need to make clear statement that this region wants its fair share of Federal funding for freight. The picture created by this plan should be compelling at the national level and reveal coordinated and engaged stakeholders.
- A question on whether to be proactive about land use recommendations such as freight industry clusters, logistics park locations, etc. need to be discussed.
- Warehousing survey will gather information including the use of the warehouse, how often it is used, turn-over rates, etc. The data will help better understand the warehousing sector and how the space is used.
- Need to make sure that seasonality of warehousing is recognized.
- AB 32 has changed business in California, and what the business can and cannot do. This and SB 375 needs to be explored in this study.

4. What are the critical obstacles to implementation?

- There is still no consensus on regional priority projects after years of efforts on regional goods movement planning while low hanging fruit has been identified through the TCIF / Prop 1B process. Discussion needs to include what is missing to achieve consensus on regional priorities.
- Lack of understanding of secondary & tertiary movements creates the belief that goods movement issues are all tied to port traffic. The first leg of port traffic moving goods from the Ports to the first stop is a small part of the region's traffic, but receiving a significant amount of focus.
- The recession has put many capital enhancement projects on hold.

- SB 375 work has not yet identified the Goods Movement sector as part of their development of a regional Sustainable Community Strategies.
- There is an uncertainty to who would be responsible for mitigation fees especially in response to AB 32 and other policies that will raise the costs of moving goods in the region.

Action Items

- SCAG to provide the original scope of work upon request. The amended scope will be available as it gets completed.