



Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) Steering Committee Meeting

Friday, May 1, 2015
10:00am – 12:00pm

Merced County Association of Governments
369 W. 18th Street, Merced CA

AGENDA

1. Welcome Adam Cox, Chair

 2. Public Outreach Strategy Stacie Dabbs/Matt Fell
 - Outreach Partnerships
 - Survey Tool

 3. Comments/Questions from Committee or Public

 4. NEXT MEETING – Friday, June 5th @ 10am, MCAG
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MEETING SCHEDULE

Advisory Committee Meeting	June 5, 2015 10am-12pm, MCAG
Advisory Committee Meeting	July 10, 2015 10am-12pm, MCAG
Advisory Committee Meeting	August 7, 2015 10am-12pm, MCAG
Advisory Committee Meeting	Sept 4, 2015 10am-12pm, MCAG

COMMITTEE ROSTER

California Rural Legal Assistance	Marisol Aguilar
Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability	Veronica Garibay/Phoebe Seaton
Valley Land Alliance	Jean Okuye
American Farmland Trust	Dan O'Connell
League of Women Voters	Kenra Bragonier
Merced Bicycle Coalition	Lisa Kayser-Grant
Sierra Club	Rod Webster/ Gary Lasky/Craig Breon
Building Healthy Communities	Isai Palma, Co-Chair
Golden Valley Health Centers	Mary-Michal Rawling
Merced County Department of Public Health	Stephanie Nathan
Construction/Builders Exchange, and Citizens Advisory Committee	Adam Cox, Chair
Small Business, and Citizens Advisory Committee	Dan Caris
At Large, and Citizens Advisory Committee	Pamela Toconis

Alternative Planning Strategy (APS)

PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN

GOALS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Effectively engaging the public in developing the Alternative Planning Strategy will ensure the document considers public preferences and priorities. The goal is to receive broad public input from diverse audiences by utilizing creative tools and partnerships with community organizations. The principles guiding the APS public outreach efforts include:

- *Go Where the People Are* – explore outreach opportunities where people are already gathering, such as regular community organization meetings and events.
- *Say it Simply*: avoid technical jargon, acronyms and communicate in clear, compelling language.
- *Make it Relevant*: people are more apt to engage when they feel they have a stake in the issue. Conduct public outreach in a way that brings the issues home for people.
- *Look Beyond Traditional Meetings*: E-participation can be an effective way to hear from many voices and enhance a traditional public outreach strategy.
- *Remove Barriers*: Provide information and outreach opportunities in multiple languages and in various formats. Web access is not universal; therefore it is critical to continue with traditional methods for involving the public beyond the internet.

APPROACH

The public outreach plan is comprised of two phases: 1) facilitating a survey tool in the region to solicit public input on preferences and priorities for growth and transportation investments that will inform the development of the APS; and 2) providing opportunity for review and comment on the draft APS document. However, throughout the APS development process members of the public are invited to engage in the conversation, ask questions and provide input by any number of avenues including, but not limited to, email, phone, one-on-one meetings, and at the public meetings of the Steering Committee and MCAG Governing Board. In addition, the MCAG website will serve as a repository of information and updates on the APS process.

Phase One (May-June 2015)

- Utilize a brief survey tool to solicit input from broad range of stakeholders from throughout the region on preferences and priorities for future growth and investments. This tool will be presented by Steering Committee Members and/or MCAG staff with the option of a brief overview presentation of the APS process and purpose, as needed. (See “*Target Groups for Survey*” below)
- An e-survey will be available via the MCAG website, social media accounts (MCAG, the Bus, YARTS) and through the MCAG website listserv. The link can also be shared with community partners for social media distribution (ex; Merced Sun Star)

Phase Two (July – August 2015)

- Hold two public hearings to provide the MCAG Governing Board and the public with a clear understanding of the issues and policy choices.
- Circulate the draft APS for a 30 day public comment period.
- Hold an informational meeting for the purpose of presenting the draft APS and solicit input and recommendations from the MCAG Governing Board and members of the public.

TARGET GROUPS FOR SURVEY

During the months of May and June, MCAG staff and Steering Committee members will attend various meetings throughout the region to facilitate the completion of the survey with targeted stakeholders and members of the public. A brief presentation will be made available as needed for interested audiences. The following is a draft list of potential audiences for the outreach effort:

Local Government:

- Dos Palos City Council (May 19/June 2/June 16)
- Gustine City Council (May 19/June 2/June 16)
- Los Banos City Council (May 20/June 3/June 17)
- Merced City Council (June 1)
- Livingston City Council (June 2)
- Atwater City Council (June 8)
- Merced County Board of Supervisors (May 20/June 3/June 17)

Municipal Advisory Councils:

- Planada (May 7/June 4 @ 7pm)
- Delhi (May 14/June 11 @ 7pm)
- Winton (May 19/June 16 @ 7pm)
- Franklin-Beachwood (May 27/June 24 @ 6pm)
- Snelling (May 13/June 10 @ 7pm)
- Hilmar (June 22 @ 6pm)
- Le Grand (May 4/June 1 @ 7pm)
- McSwain (May 28/June 25 @ 7pm)

Business:

- Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce
- Los Banos Chamber of Commerce
- Atwater Chamber of Commerce
- Livingston Chamber of Commerce
- Merced Downtown Association
- Gustine Chamber of Commerce

Youth:

- UC Merced student body (clubs, organizations, classes)
- Merced High School
- Atwater High School
- Dos Palos High School
- Los Banos High School
- Other opportunities: Livingston, Hilmar, Gustine, Le Grand High Schools

Agriculture:

- Merced County Farm Bureau
- American Farmland Trust (Groundswell)

Other:

- MCAG Citizens Advisory Committee (June 5)
- MCAG Technical Review Board (June 10)
- MCAG Technical Planning Committee (June 4)
- Merced County Association of Realtors (May 29/June 26)

APS Steering Committee Membership Meetings/Events

- California Rural Legal Assistance
- Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability
- Valley Land Alliance
- American Farmland Trust
- League of Women Voters
- Merced Bicycle Coalition
- Sierra Club
- Building Healthy Communities
- Golden Valley Health Centers
- Merced County Department of Public Health

SURVEY: How can your Transportation and Lifestyle choices affect Climate Change?

What we are doing and why?

The State of California has set goals for reducing the greenhouse gases which lead to climate change. To achieve these goals, the state is promoting a number of efforts including cleaner electricity, more efficient buildings, and cleaner cars and trucks. As part of this effort, regions across the state have been asked to develop strategies that demonstrate how we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by driving less. This means taking a look at our region's transportation system and plans for community growth.

How can we meet the goal?

We can only meet the goal by driving less (per person) than we do now. And to do that we have to make changes to the way we get around and the way our communities grow. On the next page there are several choices which we could make which would result in less driving and less greenhouse gases. For these things to work, they need enough people to make a different choice, and that's why we are asking you:

What choices would YOU be willing to make?

Comment box:

STAY INFORMED!

To receive email updates about this project, please provide your name and address below:

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please visit www.mcagov.org for more information about Merced County Association of Governments, the Alternative Planning Strategy and more!



CONTACT US!

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1. Are you concerned enough about climate change to change your behavior? ...how you get around and where you live, work, shop, and go to school?

YES

NO

There are many benefits achieved when we drive less and grow more compactly: better air quality, better health, less obesity, less congestion, the preservation of farmland and the conservation of water and energy!

If you are willing to make changes in your life and in your community, which choices would you personally make? Below is a list of actions that research has shown contribute to reducing greenhouse gases. Points have been given to each action based its effectiveness in reducing greenhouse gases.

INSTRUCTIONS: Review the list of actions listed below. Choose as many actions that you would personally do or support and then add up the points for your choices. Please make sure your total **adds up to at least 10.**

Would you...	Points	I would DO and/or SUPPORT this
2. Ride a bus instead of drive? Assume buses every 15 minutes which take you where you want to go	2	
3. Ride a bus instead of drive if it was free?	1	
4. Ride an express bus instead of drive? Just as an example: between downtown Merced and Merced College	1	
5. Rideshare / Carpool / Vanpool to work or school? If you got a significant cash incentive to do so	3	
6. Ride a bike to work/shopping/school? Assume safe bike paths are plentiful and connect places you want to go	1	
7. Walk to work/shopping/school? Assume safe sidewalks and crossings are everywhere you need them	1	
8. Drive an electric car instead of a gas-powered one? Assume it is affordable and charging stations are where you need them	1	
9. Pay more for gas-powered cars, to subsidize cleaner cars?	1	
10. Ride a train to work? Assume a train to Turlock, Modesto, and places north	2	
11. Pay (more) for parking, almost everywhere? To discourage driving and to subsidize reducing greenhouse gases	2	
12. Shop and work in areas with less parking, to discourage driving?	1	
13. Live in a small(er) house or apartment, with a small yard / lot?	2	
14. Live in a town center or compact community? Assume most or all new growth to be in the walkable core or central parts of communities	6	
Other choice:		
Other choice:		
YOUR TOTAL =		
<i>(Should add up to 10 or more)</i>		

Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) Steering Committee – Meeting Notes

Friday, April 3, 2015

ACRONYMS

APS - Alternative Planning Strategy

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan

SCS – Sustainable Communities Strategy

ARB – Air Resources Board

GHG – Greenhouse gas

QUESTIONS – CLARIFICATIONS

The APS isn't part of the RTP?

- The APS is based on the existing RTP but is a separate document. The APS will look to bridge the gap in GHG reductions that was not achieved in the 2014 RTP/SCS.
- ARB has not specified a timeline for the APS process.

Will there be a valleywide or tri-county-wide 2018 SCS?

- This is yet to be determined. The regional approach of aggregating the Green House Gas reductions on a valleywide basis was the original plan for the 2014 SCS until direction was provided by the ARB in December 2013 that required targets to be met on a county by county basis.

Did the combined approach meet the 2020 and 2035 targets?

- Yes, the valley would have met the targets collectively.

Why isn't the SCS/APS considered a land use plan?

- The document includes land use assumptions but it is not a land use plan. MCAG has no land use authority. Land use authority remains at the local jurisdiction level.

Are we ineligible for cap and trade funding because we didn't meet the targets in our SCS?

- Under current guidelines, eligible applicants are required to be included in a region that has an adopted SCS but it did not have to meet the targets.

Why didn't staff offer a scenario that met the law?

- The law provides the option of pursuing an APS if you are unable to meet the targets within the constraints articulated in regards to funding and consistency with general plans. Options A, B, C met those constraints but didn't achieve the target reductions. Option D was discussed but not considered as it didn't stay within the constraints set by federal law that we base our plans on the most recent and reasonable planning assumptions.

What happens to the APS after it is submitted to the state?

- ARB will review the document and determine, if implemented, would it meet the target reductions. This process has taken about 6 months for SCSs. If we submit the APS in September 2015, we would hope to hear a response in early 2016 in order to help inform the next RTP process.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Two primary phases:
 - 1) Survey roadshow: May-June, 2015
Use a simple survey tool to receive community input on preferences for investments, priorities and changes needed in order to reduce GHG emissions. The survey will be available electronically, on the APS webpage, via social media, and will be facilitated at meetings of various community groups and organizations. Staff will facilitate the survey, and will ask committee members to do the same. A draft survey and a proposed list of organizations will be made available for review prior to the May meeting.
 - 2) Public comment period: July-August, 2015
Members of the public will have an opportunity to provide comment at every steering committee meeting and at Governing Board meetings as updates are being provided monthly. Once a draft is released, hearings will be held with opportunities for public comment. Comments can also be received by email, and via the website.
- The MCAG website will host an APS page that will serve as a repository of information for the public and the committee.
- Staff will be available by phone, email or for one-on-one meetings throughout the process for committee members and the general public.

SUGGESTIONS/IDEAS

- During the next update of the RTP/SCS, update the SCS/GHG slide in the presentation to include more information; it is oversimplified and should reflect the plans behind the numbers, and details such as where the jobs/housing are located; Voting on growth scenarios alone is too simplified
- Utilize community events for outreach purposes –*Stacie indicated this will be a key part of the outreach strategy*
- Present information in survey as tradeoffs/choices
- Provide the survey in multiple languages (Spanish/Hmong) – *Isai offered to identify translation services*
- Reach out to high schools with survey
- Consider funding community based / non-profit organizations to assist with outreach
- Survey suggestions:
 - Ask respondents to prioritize options (not likely – very likely)
 - Ask “what are you willing to do?”

- People would be willing to bike to work/school but there are obstacles including safety – what would it take to make it a viable option for people? Would they be willing to do it once a week? Seasonally?
- Include carpooling, vanpooling
- Avoid yes/no questions and provide comment box
- Ask a questions that gets to the issue of investing in existing communities or subsidizing development on farmland
- Getting people to change their behavior is the key
- Ask about preferences in regard to proximity to schools, services, jobs, etc
- Provide examples of what other areas have done
- When possible, provide the opportunity for small group dialogue before you ask people to complete the survey
- Ask about signal synchronization in Merced

ACTIONS TAKEN

- Approved the APS Steering Committee Governing Procedures
- Selected a committee chair (Adam Cox) and vice-chair (Isai Palma)

HOMEWORK

- Staff will provide notes, draft survey and next agenda by April 24th via email
- Committee members will provide ideas of events, groups, organizations, etc that can be included in the public outreach effort (May/June) – *submit by email or at 5/1 meeting*