

Joint ABAG MTC Governance Committee

Initiating Discussion on Governance: Setting The Table

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

1) WHAT'S ON THE TABLE?

A. What are we going to eat?

To set up a simple dining metaphor, one starts with the basic question- what food should be on this table— and in what portions. At core, these “courses” should be:

- Issues of truly regional scale
- Issues where MTC and ABAG separately; OR under a combined governance should
 - A) Lead; or
 - B) Partner
- It is crucial to clarify Lead or Partner roles
- It should not be the baseline assumption that a current or revised MTC ABAG domain leads on every regional scale issue, including the ones below

Key Regional “main courses”

A) Transportation

B) Land Use

C) Housing

D) Economic Development

E) Resilience

Who else may be ordering these up (regional agency partners/ local government?)

Are there other courses that should be in the menu?

B. “How do we eat it?”

Continuing the dining metaphor, this can be imagined as the table settings—dishes, cutlery, glasses, serving utensils— everything needed to serve and consume the meal deftly, cleanly, and with some measure of satisfaction. These include:

➤ Authority

- The assignment to carry out the responsibilities and attendant tasks involved: most definitively established through Legislation, but can also be achieved (or arise) through other legal means (MOUs, contracts, litigation settlement etc.)

➤ Financial Resources

- Funding in the amounts, and with the requisite control and stability required to carry out responsibilities associated with vested authority.

B. “How do we eat it?” (continued)

➤ Technical Capacity

- While often determined in step with financial resources, this is the institutional “wrap around” of knowledge, staffing, process and procedure required to successfully implement the vested authority.

➤ Public and Political Support

- While less quantifiable than the other elements (Authority, Financial Resources, Technical Capacity), this element can be equally determinative of success— and critically prerequisites for accessing the other three.

2. HOW MANY CHAIRS ARE AROUND THE TABLE (and who is sitting in them)?

A. Importantly, this question should only be asked after addressing “What’s on the Table”

- In many cases, the answers may be easy and pre-determined; for example clear statutory authorities are assigned to transportation (MTC) and land use (ABAG), which jumpstart a determination of “lead” versus “partner” roles.
- However, in many other areas that is not as clear cut
 - Even within transportation and land use, much has changed over 40 years, i.e. new arenas such as development and regulation of new/innovative transport technologies are not as clearly aligned to existing statutory roles.

B. The task of governing in a lead or partner role should pivot on current and future requirements— not historical assignments.

- A thorough inventory of questions and their follow-up answers will reaffirm the viability of any prior roles that need to advance.
- Likewise, an honest assessment of current successes as well as shortcomings of MTC and ABAG in addressing the table of issues— while considering the table setting tools available to the agencies today— should determine the number and nature of governing chairs around the table of the future.

FOR CONSIDERATION

The Governing Committee should first outline the questions, or families of questions, that need to be asked. Among other things, these questions will assist the Committee in evaluating resource material now available or sought going forward that could help answer those questions.