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Edward J. Blakely
Center for Sustainable
Suburban Development

TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES:

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING IN CALIFORNIA REGIONS

Information Center for the Environment, University of California-Davis
"Collaborative Planning Case Studies and Social Network Analysis"

Prepared for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
Division of Transportation Planning, Collaborative Planning Branch

The Edward J. Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development

The Edward J. Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development at the University of California Riverside (CSSD) is a multidisciplinary institution established in 2003 and dedicated to research and policy analysis on all of the issues confronting growing suburbs around the world. The Center was created with a $2 million gift from Ali Sahabi, president of the development firm SE Corporation. The Center is named after Edward J. Blakely, the developer's mentor while he was attending the University of Southern California.

CSSD Research Agenda

Of necessity, the Center's work is multidisciplinary because research on the suburbs touches all aspects of human experience – from interactions with species, through the planning of communities to meet all human needs, to the questions of how to govern and finance communities and their futures. All of these issues are ripe for research, teaching and policy analysis – the key missions of the Center and the University of California Riverside.

The Center's research agenda encompasses five distinct but often overlapping areas:

- Environmental and Resources Stewardship
- Social and Cultural Environments
- Regional Connections and Institutions
- The Built Environment and Infrastructure Systems
- Comparative Suburban Analysis

2007-08 CSSD Advisory Board

Transcending Boundaries:
Collaborative Planning In California Regions

Edward J. Blakeley Center for Sustainable Suburban Development
University of California-Riverside

Jonathan Davidson (Project Manager)
Jean E. Eisberg
Tim Sullivan
Quinn Tang
Jeffrey Brian McLaughlin
Joel Carbonell

Martin Johnson, Assistant Professor of Political Science,
University of California-Riverside (Survey Analyst)

Juliann Allison, Associate Professor of Political Science,
University of California-Riverside (Principal Investigator)

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Executive Summary

There is a new movement in California rising from the grass roots that has the potential to reshape our state in the twenty-first century. In communities across California, civic entrepreneurs are emerging to address the challenges and opportunities facing our economy and society. They are engaging in a new collaborative approach to solving regional problems. On the basis of a common set of values rooted in inclusiveness, collaboration, and trust, civic entrepreneurs are building comprehensive economic strategies that are essential for prosperity and quality of life.[1]

Recent initiatives in California illustrate that collaborative planning can transcend accepted legal, economic, and substantive boundaries for regional governance. This report presents five responses where persistent leadership realistically addressed areawide growth concerns. Each program links transportation planning to environmental protection and land use guidance. They also provide examples of cooperation throughout stages in the planning process: information exchange for technical analysis; extensive public involvement in formulating goals and selecting future land use scenarios, and intergovernmental financial agreements to support transportation projects and habitat protection.

This study addresses individual and common elements in these diverse planning initiatives. The capital region includes urbanized Sacramento and rural portions of Placer County. Merced County's long-standing character as an agricultural region faces increasing development pressure from the Bay Area and the new state university. Further south, Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside County form part of the Southern California Association of Government "mega region," in which nearly half of all Californians live. Riverside County has experienced intense growth pressures from Los Angeles and Orange County residents seeking more affordable housing. . San Diego County predicts that growth pressures will create a significant jobs-housing imbalance in the coming decades.

While diverse in setting and scope, these remarkable initiatives were led by persistent civic entrepreneurs. Their influence led to cooperative acceptance that present means could not adequately respond to inevitable growth impacts. These regional leaders garnered coalitions willing to pursue unprecedented planning, regulatory, and fiscal strategies.

- The Sacramento Area Association of Governments' Land Use Blueprint maps a vision to guide regional growth toward mid-century. This preferred scenario and its accompanying Smart Growth policies are linked to the agency's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Observers indicate that local governments and private developers have already seen benefits in Blueprint-compatible mixed-use development.
- The Merced County Association of Governments prepared it 2004 Regional Transportation Plan as a pilot agency for the Federal-State Partnership for Integrated Planning (Caltrans, EPA, and the Federal Highway Administration). MCAG planners met extensively within communities and with interests that are often underrepresented in policy decisions. At focus group workshops, they asked participants to consider cost estimates for each proposed plan alternative. Observers credit MCAG's extended

[1]Dennis A. Collins & Nick Bollman, *Introductory Letter*, in CALIFORNIA REGIONS TAKE ACTION: THE EMERGENCE OF CALIFORNIA CIVIC ENTREPRENEURS (The James Irvine Foundation, May 1998). http://www.calregions.org/pdf/598Report.pdf (available November 2007).

outreach and fiscal realism as influences when member cities adopted transportation impact fees allocated to regionally defined projects.

- The Riverside County Integrated Project is based on a set of Consensus Planning Principles negotiated by environmental, development, and governmental stakeholders. These interests reached agreement on programs to plan comprehensively for habitat protection, to improve community and environmental acceptance for transportation projects, and to bring greater certainty to County General Plan policies. Its unprecedented implementation agreements include:
  - A Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) supported by local, regional, state, and federal agencies;
  - A Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process for transportation projects;
  - A Certainty System with the Riverside County General Plan to improve predictability in applying its land use policies;
  - Interlocal agreements in the county's western sector to adopt Development Mitigation Fees to support a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan; and
  - An agreement among local governments in western Riverside County to collect Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees that support regional projects.
- The Southern California Association of Governments Compass Blueprint serves as a long-term growth vision based on guiding principles of mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability. The agency's six-county region includes Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties, and houses nearly one-half of California's population. Its 11 subregions provide an essential collaborative link with its 193 local government members. A key premise in the Compass strategy is that jobs and housing needs through 2030 can be accommodated using only 2% of remaining developable land within the region. The agency provides consultation for local initiatives that encourage mixed-density development that is accessible to transportation.
- The Regional Comprehensive Plan adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments provides a policy framework for development decisions by local governments and others. The plan's impressive scope links transportation, land use, housing, environment, and other elements into a coordinated growth vision toward 2030. Its Smart Growth Implementation Program offers financial assistance for transit-oriented projects.

Framework and Methodology

The report describes collaborative elements in these five initiatives within a rational comprehensive planning framework. This widely accepted model follows sequential steps: collecting and analyzing data, defining goals, developing and selecting among growth scenarios, plan implementation, and monitoring performance. "Collaborative planning" often refers to processes that involve citizens in setting goals or selecting a preferred development scenario. The term is also used to describe cooperation among agencies and governments. In this report, collaborative planning refers to the ***dynamic synergies that emerge when two or more stakeholders perceive benefits from convening on matters of common policy interest.*** Benefits may be subjective perceptions such as better understanding of issues and processes, improved relationships, or feeling involved in determining policy outcomes. They can also be

measured by objective outcomes ranging from informal information-sharing to complex intergovernmental structures for plan implementation.

The Evolving Context for Regional Governance and Planning

Regional governance in California reflects the national pattern of dependence on federal and state assistance and interlocal cooperation. Council of Governments (COGs) are voluntary associations that convene for transportation planning, housing, environmental, and other area-wide issues. Observers note both the inherent weakness in this form of regional authority and its opportunities for collaborative initiatives.

Current regional planning is a patchwork of transportation mandates, environmental compliance, affordable housing allocations, and limited-purpose programs. COGs plan for transportation infrastructure and rely on local government cooperation in exercising land use authority. Affordable housing needs are determined regionally and addressed locally. Federal, state, and sub-state agencies implement laws to improve air and water quality, and evaluate environment impacts. Within this context, stakeholder dialogues have led to new partnerships, innovative institutional arrangements, and potential for integrative comprehensive planning.

Project Case Studies

In the capital region, the **Sacramento Area Council of Governments** (SACOC) incorporated a wide spectrum of stakeholder interests before adopting a **Land Use Blueprint** toward the year 2050. This preferred development scenario informs the Council's current transportation plan update. SACOG also provides economic support for local projects that demonstrate Blueprint smart growth principles. Though not legally binding, observers note that local governments are encouraging mixed-density transit-oriented development. Developers also see rewards in Blueprint-compatible projects. SACOG used a similar involvement process for its recent M**etropolitan Transportation Plan update**. Stakeholders convened in sub-regional meetings and in a area-wide teleconference to recommend how and where to allocate transportation funds.

The **Merced County Association of Governments** (MCAG) conducted its **2004 Regional Transportation Plan** as a pilot agency for the Federal-State **Partnership for Integrated Planning**. This agreement among Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency assisted with data analysis, and scenario building. These agencies also met separately and forged new relationships and information-sharing agreements. When initial public meetings met minimal attendance, MCAG staff adapted their public involvement strategy by reaching out to interests that are traditionally underrepresented in public policy processes. Planners met regularly with focus groups representing seniors, youth, agriculture, business and education, environmental and education, and within Hispanic and Southeast Asian communities.

The **Riverside County Integrated Project** (RCIP) emerged from intense negotiations among environmental, development, and property-based interests. Stakeholder representatives agreed on Consensus Planning Principles that the County Board of Supervisors adopted to guide RCIP development. A Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), revised procedures to gain community and environmental acceptance for transportation projects, and a Certainty System within the County General Plan comprise the three RCIP program elements. The habitat plan implementing agreement includes local, state, and federal agencies. Interlocal agreements

provide for Development Mitigation Fees to support the MSHCP and Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees allocated to transportation improvements in western Riverside County.

The six-county **Southern California Association of Governments (**SCAG) region adopted a **Compass Blueprint** in June 2004 as a strategic growth vision for sustainable development. It focuses on coordinating transportation, land use, and open space policies to direct future growth to 2% of developable land within the region. Compass workshops challenged stakeholders to consider whether adapting density standards in local zoning codes could foster both local economic growth and regional Compass objectives. SCAG offers consultant services for local projects that encourage mixed density adjacent accessible to transportation nodes.

Its neighboring **San Diego Association of Governments** (SANDAG) adopted a **Regional Comprehensive Plan** (RCP) in 2004. SANDAG's federally-required Metropolitan Transportation Plan is one element within a broader framework that includes urban form, public facilities, housing, environment, economic, and social equity. The RCP acknowledges its limitations by offering to serve as a non-binding guide for local government land use and transportation decisions. SANDAG aligns its capital budget with RCP priorities. The agency also sets aside a portion of its discretionary budget for a Smart Growth Incentive Program to support local transit-oriented projects.

Common Insights from Uncommon Case Studies

The collaborative initiatives in this report combine regional leadership with local acceptance. The following observations may be instructive for integrating transportation, land use, and environmental planning with public involvement in other regions:

- *Collaborative planning initiatives benefit from precursor efforts.*
- *Effective leadership for collaborative planning combines realistic understanding with undeterred optimism.*
- *Acknowledging regional trends and governance capacity are threshold requisites for collaborative success.*
- *Active stakeholder involvement can improve plan acceptance and implementation.*
- *Transportation-based regional planning benefits from early contact with environmental interests.*
- *Collaborative planning links transportation planning to land use, housing, and other functional areas.*
- *Labels (e.g., Blueprint, Compass) provide a focus for collaborative planning initiatives.*
- *GIS -based planning exercises assist planners and participants in evaluating goals and alternative scenarios.*
- *The collaborative planning initiatives in this report combine regional leadership with local acceptance.*
- *While limited in scale and authority, these planning initiatives are models for collaborative accomplishment.*

The case studies in this report show what can be accomplished through cooperative influence within regions. Currently, the CALTRANS Regional Blueprint Planning Program provides essential support for comprehensive areawide programs. The Governor's Environmental Goals and Policy Report for 2003 states that achieving goals and policies for sustainable development "...will require collaborative planning at and among all levels of government, with the State taking the lead at times, and acting as a partner at others."[2] It is hoped that this report adds to the foundation of Executive and legislative support for regional blueprint initiatives.

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[2]*See* Governor's Office of Planning and Research, GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND POLICY REPORT [2003] at 2.

CHAPTER 1

AN EVOLVING REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

This report presents case studies of recent California initiatives that transcend accepted legal, economic, and substantive boundaries for regional planning. It describes collaborative programs in the Sacramento area; in Merced and Riverside Counties, and by Councils of Governments serving the six-county Southern California and San Diego County.[1] Each initiative linked transportation planning to land use guidance and environmental protection. In combination, they illustrate stakeholder involvement through various phases of the planning process. Local, state, and federal agencies cooperated on data collection and analysis. Regional planners brought citizens into goal-setting and future-scenario selection. Collaborative implementation measures include local-regional transportation impact fees and a multi-species habitat plan supported by Federal and State agencies. The success of these programs can be traced to persuasive leaders who conveyed the benefits of comprehensive planning and cooperative regional governance.

In the capital region, a wide spectrum of stakeholder interests participated in a land use visioning process to guide regional growth toward the year 2050. The Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOC) adopted this Preferred Blueprint Scenario and accompanying smart growth principles in December 2004. The approved map provides the basis for future development scenarios in the Council's 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. SACOG provides assistance for transit-oriented projects consistent with Blueprint objectives. Observers noted that local government officials see benefits in encouraging mixed-density land uses. Developers also expressed that they found profitability in building Blueprint-compatible projects.

At about the same time, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) prepared its 2004 Regional Transportation Plan as a pilot agency for the Federal-State Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). Under this agreement, Caltrans, Federal Highway Administration, and EPA Region 9 staff assisted in data analysis and other technical matters. The PIP process also improved relationships and information sharing among these agencies. MCAG's resourceful planning staff adapted their public involvement strategy to meet directly within underrepresented communities and stakeholder interests. Focus group workshops provided participants with cost estimates before selecting a preferred future land use scenario. Observers referenced this fiscal realism and extensive public involvement as persuasive forces for member governments enacting transportation impact fees for regionally-defined projects.

Further south, the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) emerged from intense negotiations among environmental, development, and property-based stakeholders. These representatives agreed to fifteen Consensus Planning Principles that were adopted by the County Board of Supervisors to guide this initiative. A Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), revised procedures to facilitate acceptance for transportation projects, and more predictable policies within the County General Plan comprise the three primary RCIP program elements. The implementing agreement for the habitat plan includes local governments, special

districts, and state and federal agencies. An interlocal agreement provides for local Development Mitigation fees to support the MSHCP. Another RCIP-based agreement allocates funds from fourteen local Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees to projects administered by the Western Riverside Council of Governments and county-wide Transportation Commission.

A broader based organization, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), also adopted a strategic growth vision for sustainable development in June 2004. This Compass Blueprint focuses on coordinating transportation, land use, and open space policies to accommodate long-term population and economic growth. SCAG's six-county region includes Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties, and accounts for nearly half of the state's population. A key element in its Compass strategy is to direct future growth to 2% of remaining developable land within the region. Compass workshops challenged stakeholders to map a development pattern that would accommodate growth projections through 2030.[2] According to observers, many participants realized that adapting zoning density standards codes could foster both local and regional growth objectives. SCAG offers consultation services to local governments willing to encourage mixed density projects accessible to transportation nodes.

Its neighboring San Diego County Association of Governments (SANDAG) adopted a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) in July 2004. SANDAG incorporates its Metropolitan Transportation Plan within a framework that includes urban form, public facilities, housing, environment, economic, and social equity. The RCP acknowledges its limited authority by offering to serve as a non-binding guide for local land use and transportation decisions. SANDAG aligns its capital budget with RCP priorities. A portion of its discretionary budget is designated for the Smart Growth Incentive Program. This competitive funding initiative supports local transit-oriented projects that promote regional planning objectives.

I. Project Methodology

In developing the case studies, project staff began by reviewing primary and supplemental documents for each regional initiative. Literature review included planning theory and practice, legal and political analyses of regional governance, and comparable case studies within in the United States. Initial stakeholder interviews were conducted on-site with agency principals or other persons identified as central to their respective initiatives. Follow-up meetings with interest-based stakeholders (for example, environmental, development, and governmental representatives) were conducted on-site, by telephone, and via e-mail exchange. Primary interviews with contacts for under-represented interest groups were conducted on-site. The report does not refer to observers/participants by name, nor does it provide context that could reveal their observations. As project interviews, documentation, and research meetings shaped understandings of each initiative, project staff selected the widely accepted rational comprehensive planning model as an effective framework for describing collaborative elements within each initiative.

II. Rational Comprehensive Planning as a Framework for Collaborative Initiatives

The case studies in this report are presented within a rational comprehensive planning framework.[3] This widely accepted model begins with analysis of population, economic, and other trends. Setting goals is followed by developing and selecting among future land use scenarios. Plan adoption leads to implementation measures. Progress toward stated goals is monitored and incorporated into the next planning cycle.

The rational planning process begins with analysis of area trends. Forecasting population and economic growth leads to estimating demands for land development, public infrastructure, jobs and housing, and potential stresses on natural systems. This information provides a basis for establishing goals and objectives. Next, the sequence generates alternative future development scenarios. The planning entity (e.g., local government or Regional Transportation Planning Agency) then selects a preferred strategy and monitors progress toward attaining its established goals. The adopted plan may establish a time frame for implementation (e.g., twenty years) along with shorter-term actions that can be reviewed periodically. This rational model is reflected below in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan Guidelines (Figure 1) and the FHWA/FTA Briefing Notebook on the metropolitan planning process (Figure 2).

Figure 1: OPR Diagram:
Preparing and Amending the General Plan[4]

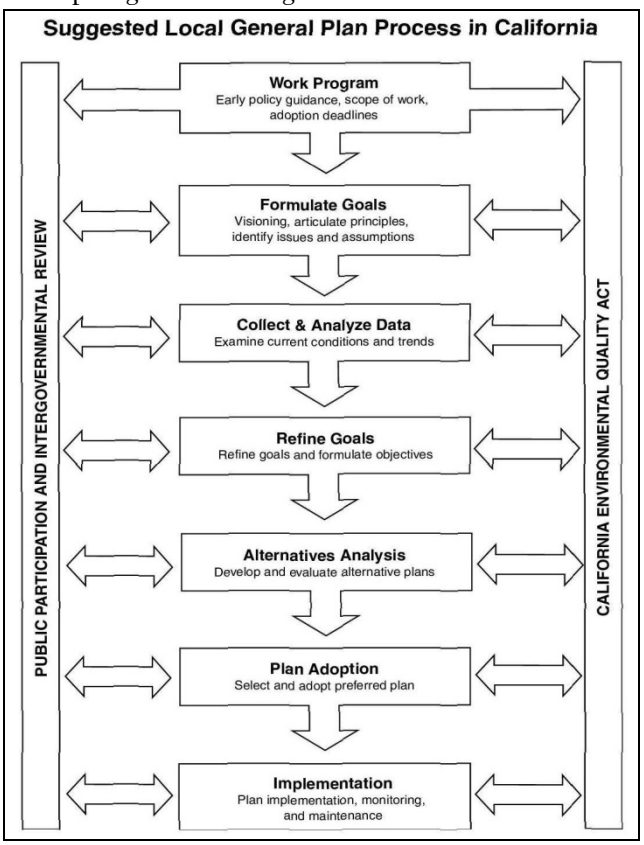
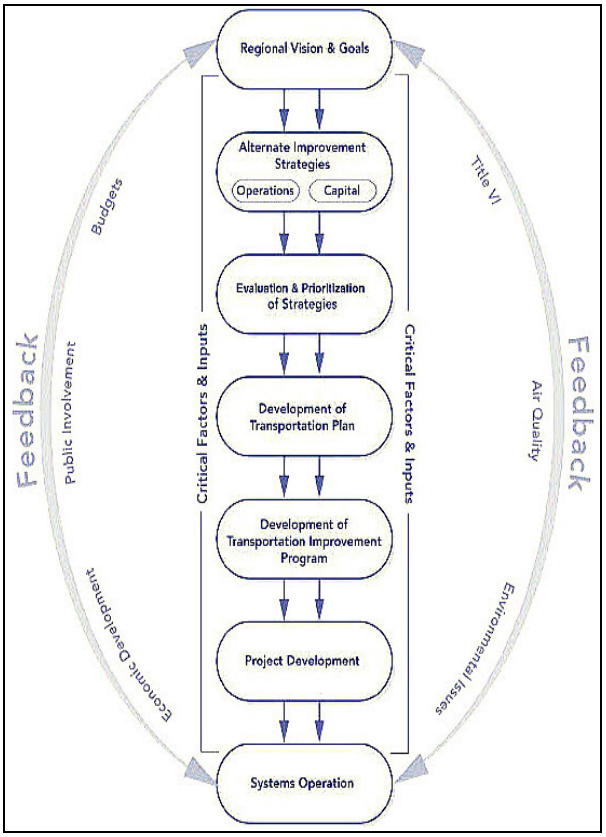


Figure 2: FHWA/FTA Diagram:
Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process[5]



The OPR guide recommends a maximum five-year cycle for preparing and amending local government general plans.[6] Federal and state regulations require that regional transportation plans be updated at least every four years.[7] Both models integrate public involvement and environmental compliance throughout the planning process.

A major critique of the rational planning model is that it does not account for underlying values.[8] If efficient transit provision is a primary regional goal, implementation strategies will reflect this intent. If that goal is modified to incorporate "smart growth" or "sustainable development," actions will strive to integrate transportation with land use, environmental, and other planning areas. If these functions are divided among governing authorities, cooperative strategies become necessary components. Compliance with state and federal environmental laws also affects planning decisions. When determining land use and transportation patterns involves multiple stakeholders, the resultant plan will reflect their commitment to implementation. A comprehensive regional plan loses effectiveness when implementation is persistently modified by local land use decisions. For instance, a strategy focused only on transportation will suffer if environmental impacts remain unconsidered.

III. Defining Collaborative Planning and Processes

Collaborative planning rests on the premise that public policy should be determined cooperatively through active stakeholder involvement.[9] Participants may represent established interests such as environmental protection, economic development, or social equity. Governments or their agencies are stakeholders when representing their respective authorities.[10] Stakeholder involvement may also proceed outside established processes as responses to perceived gaps in governance capacity.[11]

In the public involvement context, collaborative planning brings participating citizens into formulating goals or determining preferred implementation scenarios.[12] It can be compared to a "top-down" approach, in which planners determine the elements directly for elected officials.[13] Citizen input may be deferred until well after policies and a strategy have been formulated. Even then, participation may be limited to brief comments at required public hearings.[14] By comparison, a collaborative approach consults directly with community stakeholders on planning goals and determining alternatives for future development. This involvement can bring perceived benefits via shared information, strategic insights, redefined relationships, or commitment to plan implementation. A particular outreach challenge is to bring under-represented stakeholder interests into planning decisions.[15]

For project purposes, collaborative planning refers to the ***dynamic synergies that emerge when two or more stakeholders perceive benefits from convening on matters of common policy interest.*** Benefits may be subjective perceptions such as better understanding of issues and processes, improved relationships, or feeling involved in determining policy outcomes.[16] These perceived gains are not necessarily reciprocal. Citizens who are asked to select among planning scenarios may be satisfied that their interests are acknowledged. A planner who is conducting that workshop may see effectiveness in preparing a hybrid alternative that reflects perceived consensus.[17] Collaborative benefits can also be measured by objective outcomes. This may range from a basic agreement to share environmental data to a complex intergovernmental structure for plan implementation.

A central paradox in defining collaborativeness based on perceived benefits is that it identifiable only during or after a particular process. A meeting structured to foster productive

communication would not meet this threshold until participants and/or observers register respective gains. Thus, convening workshops with persons or groups identified as stakeholders does not automatically qualify as a collaborative planning process, nor does a consensus-seeking process perceived as unsuccessful necessarily indicate a flawed approach.[18] This view of collaborative planning is derived from project interviews, analysis of planning practices and associated documents in case study regions, and from published research and reports.

IV. Collaborative Planning Elements in Project Case Studies

Collaborative elements in the project case studies are presented within a rational comprehensive planning framework. At the initial stage of data collection and analysis for Blueprint, SACOG staff worked with local planners to establish projections for the "base case" 2050 scenario. Merced planners interacted with Caltrans, and with the Federal Highway Administration and Environmental Protection Agency. Agency representatives in the Federal-State Partnership for Integrated Planning cited improved relationships and data sharing agreements as respective benefits from this pilot program.

Participants in each case study also saw benefits in collaborative goal-setting. Diverse stakeholder interests in Riverside County negotiated guiding objectives that formed the bases for the integrated plan. Initiatives within SCAG's governing board led to Compass guiding principles and a strategy to direct land development to 2% of remaining sites with the region. SACOG's Blueprint process selected a preferred development scenario toward mid-century by convening community-based stakeholder workshops. MCAG staff met extensively with focus groups to develop regional transportation goals. SANDAG revised its planning vision based on citizen preferences expressed in community meetings.

Collaboration in choosing planning strategies is also well represented in the case studies. MCAG, SACOG, SCAG, and SANDAG sought consensus on goals and future scenarios at their community workshops. MCAG planners included cost estimates associated with each future development scenario. Observers considered this economic tie-in as a contributing influence in local government decisions to adopt transportation impact fee ordinances. SACOG, in partnership with Valley Vision, convened interactive community workshops to determine its preferred Blueprint scenario. The agency conducted a comparable process for its regional transportation plan update. This included mapping and selecting among alternative investments (e.g., road construction, light rail, bridges) within allocated budgets.

As part of its Compass initiative, SCAG planners conducted a "chips game" simulation exercise that brought attention to local low-density zoning patterns in relation to regional planning objectives. At the outset, participants were allocated chip sets that reflected development types and associated densities. As the exercise progressed, many participants chose to "trade in" low-density chips for higher-density options that would permit transit-oriented development. This brought acknowledgements that the Compass strategy could stimulate local economic development while furthering regional development objectives. SANDAG planners continue to meet regularly with its Technical Working Group comprised of local planners and managers.

Collaborative implementation measures, while limited, offer the most viable results in these five initiatives. They are particularly impressive when considering that Councils of Government depend on member consensus to adopt a Blueprint, Compass, or Regional Comprehensive Plan. For example, observers suggested that SACOG's Blueprint has encouraged local governments to promote mixed-use projects consistent with regional smart growth objectives. The Riverside County Integrated Project transformed a negotiated agreement into unprecedented intergovernmental agreements for multi-species habitat planning, and for cooperative local-regional impact fees to support this program and transportation improvement projects. SCAG offers cooperative consultation to local governments willing to adapt land use regulations and provide incentives for compatible transit-oriented development. Comparably, SANDAG applies comprehensive plan criteria in allocating grants for its Smart Growth Implementation Program.

Table 1 (below) provides an overview of collaborative elements in project case studies within a rational comprehensive planning framework.

TABLE 1: COLLABORATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN A RATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FRAMEWORK					
	Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)	Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)	`Riverside County Integrate Project (RCIP)	Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)	San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)
Precursors and Instigation	Metro Study (1989) and 1995 MTP sought land-use linkage. Transportation Roundtable (2002) recommended land use planning prior to MTP update.	Federal/state initiative selected MCAG as pilot agency for Partnership for Integrated Planning.	Environmental, development and other stakeholders negotiated to break litigation gridlock.	An internal growth vision subcommittee formed and initiated four visioning principles.	Regional growth planning initiatives date to late 1980s. Legislative directive to prepare regional plan.
Functional Planning Areas	Land Use (visioning); transportation.	Regional transportation plan integrated environmental and land use planning concerns.	Environmental Protection, transportation, and comprehensive plan.	Growth visioning; transportation, comprehensive plan.	Comprehensive regional planning.
Public Involvement Strategy	Interactive workshops to establish a regional Land Use Blueprint vision. MTP used similar format. Both used innovative GIS technology.	Planners met directly with stakeholders, - including under-represented interests. GIS and voting technology assist process.	Planners held community meetings throughout the county. RCIP integrated governmental and stakeholder interests.	Workshops sought consensus for Compass vision and for mixed-density transit-oriented development. Subregions coordinated many events.	Staff conducted series of stakeholder workshops to develop regional vision and test planning principles.
Data collection and analysis	Cooperative data collection and analysis with local governments for Blueprint "base case" scenario and MTP.	Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) assisted with data collection and analysis. PIP also enhanced information-sharing among EPA, FHWA, and Caltrans.			
Goals, Policies, and Criteria	Broad-based community involvement to establish a Land Use Blueprint for long-term growth guidance. Use Blueprint as land use basis for current MTP update.	Meet transportation needs; minimize environmental impacts; bring new interests into MTP update.	Goals and strategies in RCIP reflect Consensus Planning Principles: General Plan Certainty System, Multiple Species Habitat Plan, and CETAP for corridor planning.	These reflected principles for Compass approach developed by SCAG staff and board members. Compass seeks sustainable development for the region.	Comprehensive "smart growth" policies include transportation, land use and housing. **Regional Comprehensive Plan** offers guidance for local decisions.
Generating and Selecting Alternatives	"Blueprint" workshops generated alternative land scenarios and selected one to guide land use, transportation and other policies to 2050.	Outreach meetings gained included fiscal element in selecting among alternate scenarios.	Transportation projects and multi-species habitat areas were designated through respective RCIP committees.	Compass workshop "density chip exercise" highlighted local benefits from mixed-density transit-oriented development.	Planners actively involved stakeholder and community groups in developing a regional vision and guiding principles.
Plan Implementation and Impacts	Actions by local governments and developers consistent with Land Use Blueprint; more integration between local land use and regional transportation planning.	Collaborative implementation through local impact fees for regionally-defined projects. Improved relationships with local governments and Caltrans, EPA and FHWA.	Collaborative local, state, and federal implementation for MSHCP. Interlocal agreements for Development Mitigation Fee and Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees.	SCAG provides technical assistance for localities willing to adapt land use policies consistent with Compass objectives and 2% Strategy.	Smart Growth Incentive Program funds local transit-oriented projects consistent with regional goals. Stakeholder and technical working groups continue meeting on implementation.

V. The Evolving Framework for Regional Governance

A. Current Structure and Functions:

At present, regional governance [19] in California reflects the national pattern of dependence on federal and state assistance and cooperative arrangements among general purpose local governments. With notable exceptions of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency[20] and California Coastal Commission,[21] the prevalent structure is the council of governments (COG). COGs are voluntary associations of area local governments that convene for transportation planning, housing, environmental, and other area-wide issues. These agencies evolved from limited roles as clearinghouses for federal grant programs to primary transportation planning agencies. Councils of Government, however, continue to rely on the cooperation and influence of their members to achieve policy consensus. Observers note both the inherent weakness in this form of regional authority[22] and its opportunities for collaborative initiatives.[23]

B. Realigning Legal Boundaries with Governmental Services

One potential source for regional collaboration is the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000.[24] This law directs Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) within each county to further the state policy of encouraging orderly growth and development by considering

> ...the logical formation and determination of local agency boundaries... in promoting orderly development and in balancing that development with sometimes competing state interests of discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open-space and prime agricultural lands, and efficiently extending government services.[25]

It prompts LAFCOs to consider "...regional growth goals and policies established by a collaboration of elected officials."[26] However, the law is comparably clear that local commissions have no added authority to establish growth goals and policies.[27] This revised intent for LAFCOs incorporates recommendations from the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century.[28] One that is not included concerns state incentives for coordinated planning among local authorities "to encourage an integrated approach to public service delivery and overall governance."[29]

C. Regional Governance: Stewardship and Collaborative Initiatives

Collaborative initiatives fill the gaps between present realities and the needs for increased governance capacity.[30] Regional stewards[31] are civic entrepreneurs who see connections among economic, environmental, and demographic trends. They "connect the dots" to create opportunities for their regions.[32] These stewards provide coherence on problems that supersede the scope of local governments, existing advocacy organizations and civic alliances.[33] They confer with other area leaders to identify common concerns and potential means for responding proactively. Dialogues may develop into collaborative initiatives characterized by "dynamic and flexible institutional structures, the mobilization of stakeholders from diverse perspectives, and a regional scope."[34]

D. Collaborative Planning in the Case Study Regions

Each regional planning initiative could be traced to a threshold acknowledgement that growth demands were outstripping governance capacity.[35] Leaders saw that that transportation and land use are interconnected[36] and that present responses were inadequate.[37] In learning the stories of how these processes began, the research team was struck (and sometimes amazed) by the modest persistence among persons considered central to each initiative.

In the mid-1990s, Riverside County population was increasing dramatically, road construction was backlogged, and habitat areas were being threatened by land development. Environmental and development interests were mired in court challenges. Amid this gridlock, persistent negotiations brought established adversaries to seemingly basic agreements: first, that "putting environmental concerns first" lessens the chance of being sued later; and second, that people moving into the County will impact natural environments regardless of how political structures respond. This led to common consensus on the respective needs that were identified: (a) to fund land acquisition and planning for a multi-species habitat area; (b) to finance needed transportation infrastructure; and (c) to provide greater "certainty" for policies set out in the County General Plan.

Once respective needs were indentified, the Riverside Integrated Project sought means to implement these multiple objectives. As with other collaborative initiatives, participants knew that established structures could not respond adequately. Project initiators were told repeatedly that what they sought could not be accomplished. Despite the pessimistic attitude, positive changes began to be effected. Local governments in the County's western sector agreed to collect impact fees to support a multi-species habitat plan. This plan is managed by a newly established conservation authority. The implementing agreement for the habitat plan includes local governments, special districts, and state and federal agencies. A separate interlocal agreement established development fees for transportation improvements subject to environmental and community acceptance. Revisions to the County General Plan promise relative certainty that parties who pay those exactions can move forward under current planning and land use controls.

Project interviews revealed similar stories in other case study regions. Observers indicated that Merced's exceptional community outreach helped gain cooperative agreements for local transportation impact fees. MCAG's pilot role in the Federal-State Partnership for Integrated Planning improved intergovernmental and interagency communication and led to information sharing agreements on mapping environmental resources.

Additionally, SACOG adopted a regional Blueprint toward 2050 that contrasts with continuing existing development trends. One might criticize this as an idealized future view lacking in implementation, but it can also be seen as a critical step toward coordinated regional transportation and land use planning. Observers noted that communities are adapting regulations to encourage higher density transit-oriented development and that developers are

finding success with consistent "smart growth" projects. Further, the Sacramento region has a land use vision supported by consensus of COG members and citizen participants in the Blueprint project.

SCAG's Compass initiative began within its regional board. Its Growth Visioning Subcommittee met extensively with staff and consultants before offering guiding principles. Workshops helped stakeholders evaluate whether modifying land use codes to permit higher-density development could further local interests as well as regional goals for sustainable development. This was consistent with an emerging strategy to direct growth to 2% of remaining developable land within the region. Local governments have benefitted from SCAG's consultation services for demonstration projects that promote Compass principles (mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability).

Further south, the San Diego Association of Governments built on cooperative precedents over two decades to adopt a Regional Comprehensive Plan. That plan clearly acknowledges that SANDAG may influence, but not direct local land use decisions. It also provides an area-wide vision that includes housing, transportation, the regional economy, and relations across national and county borders. SANDAG has initiated a Smart Growth Incentive Program to support transit-oriented projects consistent with regional plan criteria. As with the other initiatives, one could either focus on its limitations or see the promise of its innovative planning, long-term visioning, smart growth incentives, and intergovernmental cooperation.

VI. Regional Planning in California- The Quest for Comprehensiveness

Current regional planning in California is a patchwork of transportation mandates, environmental compliance,[38] affordable housing allocations,[39] and limited-purpose programs.[40] For instance, planning for transportation infrastructure is conducted through voluntary councils of government. Land use regulation and planning, on the other hand, are reserved for local governments, while affordable housing needs are determined regionally and addressed locally. An array of federal, state, and sub-state agencies implement laws to improve air and water quality, and to evaluate environmental impacts from proposed projects. Furthermore, regional economies can be affected dramatically by resource scarcities and worldwide trends.

Obstacles to comprehensive regional planning include the absence of consistent area-wide political authority,[41] fiscal constraints,[42] and reliance on local government land use decisions to implement regional objectives.[43] Despite these constraints, dialogues among governmental and other stakeholders have led to new partnerships, innovative institutional arrangements, and promise for integrative comprehensive planning.

A. Regional/Metropolitan Planning for Transportation

In California's urbanized regions, Councils of Government have primary authority for regional transportation planning. Their "alphabet soup" of designations includes concurrent roles as Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that prepare metropolitan transportation plans (MTPs).[44] Non-urban sectors of the state also prepare regional transportation plans.

Since 1991, Federal legislation has significantly expanded planning responsibilities for COGs. Environmental regulations[45] and disclosure laws[46] overlay these processes. Beginning with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), regional planning agencies were charged with preparing holistic and integrated regional policy plans. Supportive data and consensus-building methods are required before selecting projects.[47] ISTEA affirmed the collaborative "3C" process of "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive" planning.[48] In 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) further enhanced MPO capacities to plan and allocate funds within their regions.[49] The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)[50] was enacted in 2005. Its provisions require regional planning and projects to actively consider consistency with local and state growth policies.[51]

Federal law also requires a state transportation plan[52] that considers land use impacts and "consistency between transportation decisionmaking and the provisions of all applicable short-range and long-range land use and development plans."[53] California Transportation Plan 2025, effective April 2006,[54] recognizes that land use and transportation decisions must be coordinated:

> ...The 58 counties and 477 cities will need to collaborate on a regional basis to plan, manage, and operate infrastructure to maximize resources and sustain their economy, environment, and quality of life.[55]

Regional agencies must also rely on their capacity to influence constituent local governments to act in regional interests. California Transportation Plan 2030 will update the 2025 plan to incorporate compliance with SAFETEA-LU standards.[56]

Furthermore, federal standards direct regional planning agencies to ensure "[e]arly and continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process."[57] They must also seek out and consider the needs of traditionally underserved populations such as low-income and minority households.[58] However, federal planning guidelines do not specify outreach methods beyond "providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information"[59] and "time for public review and comment at key decision points."[60]

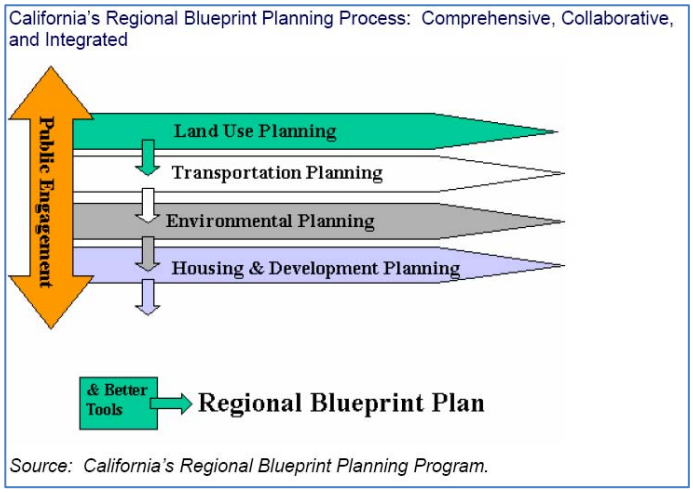
B. Blueprint Planning: Small but Significant Steps Toward Comprehensiveness

In California, "blueprint planning" refers to regional planning that willingly exceeds minimum federal and state standards to be eligible to receive pass-through transportation funds. It provides a comprehensive framework for relating regional transportation planning to other areawide plans (e.g., habitat protection and integrated water management) and to local general plans.[61] As stated in the draft California Transportation Plan 2030:

> Regional Blueprint Planning typically consists of scenario planning; extensive public involvement, including those who are traditionally underserved; the innovative use of visioning tools; the incorporation of environmental and socio-economic data as part of the visioning process; and performance measures.[62]

Blueprint planning accepts that land use authority rests with local jurisdictions. However, it reframes its relationship with regional transportation planning:

> ...Reorienting land use policy to promote regional transportation and environmental objectives inverts the traditional planning relationship, and requires much closer coordination between transportation agencies and local officials and planners[63]



[64]

With Caltrans and other financial support, councils of government exercise their cooperatively-based structure and influence

> ... to coordinate metropolitan growth planning across policy areas – land use, infrastructure, and environmental protection – that have become highly fragmented among myriad single-purpose agencies and among different levels of government (the state, counties, and cities).[65]

This report illustrates the challenges in expanding the boundaries of regional planning using cooperative influence as the primary means for implementation.

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[1] Prior case studies on these initiatives include: Elisa Barbour & Michael Teitz, BLUEPRINT PLANNING IN CALIFORNIA: FORGING CONSENSUS ON METROPOLITAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT 18-23 (2006) (describing SANDAG, SCAG, and SACOG initiatives)) [Public Policy Institute of California, Occasional Paper]; Elizabeth G. Hill, SANDAG: AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS ROLE IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION (March 2006) (Legislative Analyst Office report) http://www.lao.ca.gov/2006/sandag/sandag_033006.pdf (available November 2007); California Center for Regional Leadership, GROWTH- THE CALIFORNIA STORY, BETTER PLANNING AND INVESTMENT FOR BETTER CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES 11-13 (2004) (Sacramento Region Blueprint and SCAG Compass Growth Vision), http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/op/OP_606EBOP.pdf (available November 2007); Federal Highway Administration, Planning and Environment Linkages, RIVERSIDE COUNTY INTEGRATED PROJECT, http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/integ/case_riverside.asp (available November 2007); Frank Bracaglia, MONITORING, ANALYZING, AND REPORTING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL STREAMLINING PILOT PROJECTS 46-66 (2005) http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_w79.pdf (available November 2007); National Cooperative Highway Research Program, PROJECT NO. 25-24 (2002-2004), http://itre.ncsu.edu/nchrp/state_projects/projects_california1.asp; Wilbur Smith Associates, *Southern California Association of Governments: Creating Livable Places-Growth Visioning Presentations*, in NOTEWORTHY MPO PRACTICES IN TRANSPORTATION-LAND USE INTEGRATION 31-35 (2004); Federal Highway Administration, SANDAG'S MULTIPLE SPECIES/HABITAT CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (1998).

[2] This exercise is described at pages V-7 to V-8.

[3] *See* Charles Hostovsky, *The Paradox of the Rational Comprehensive Model of Planning*, 25 JOURNAL OF PLANNING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH 382 (2006). "The rational comprehensive model takes a scientific/rational approach to problem solving and, in its purest application, would result in a full analysis

of all possible factors affecting a given set of circumstances and of all possible alternatives to resolving the problem under study." *Id.* at 392; Connie P. Ozawa and Ethan P. Seltzer, *Taking Our Bearings: Mapping a Relationship Among Planning Practice, Theory, and Education*, 18 JOURNAL OF PLANNING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH 257, 258 (1999) (rational planning model is the dominant model for planning practice and theory); George A. Boyne, Julian S. Gould-Williams, Jennifer Law, & Richard M. Walker, *Problems of Rational Planning in Public Organizations, An Empirical Assessment of the Conventional Wisdom*, 36 ADMINISTRATION & SOCIETY 328, 329 (2004) ("Rational approaches to strategy formulation in the public sector are difficult, if not impossible.").

[4] Governor's Office of Planning and Research, GENERAL PLAN GUIDELINES (2003), http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/PDFs/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf (available November 2007). These guidelines are being updated . *See* http://www.opr.ca.gov/gpg.html (available November 2007).

[5] Federal Highway Administration & Federal Transit Administration, Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS: KEY ISSUES, A BRIEFING NOTEBOOK FOR TRANSPORTATION DECISIONMAKERS, OFFICIALS, AND STAFF 3 (2001). http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/BriefingBook/BBook.htm (available November 2007).

[6] *See* Office of Planning and Research, GENERAL PLAN GUIDELINES at 48.

[7] *See 23* CFR section 450.322(c) (requiring MPOs in non-attainment regions to update their RTP and every 4 years and MPOs in attainment and non-urban RTPAs to be updated every 5 years).

[8] *See, e.g.*, Alan Black, *The Chicago Area Transportation Study: A Case Study of Rational Planning*, 10 JOURNAL OF PLANNING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH 27, 35 (1990); Ozawa and Seltzer, *Taking Our Bearings: Mapping a Relationship Among Planning Practice, Theory, and Education*, 18 JOURNAL OF PLANNING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH at 258-260; Boyne, Gould-Williams, Law, & Walker, *Problems of Rational Planning in Public Organizations, An Empirical Assessment of the Conventional Wisdom*, 36 ADMINISTRATION & SOCIETY at 333-334.

[9] *See e.g.*, Lawrence Susskind & Merrick Hoben, *Making Regional Policy Dialogues Work: A Credo for Metro-Scale Consensus Building*, 22 TEMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL 123, 128 (2004) (ensure participation by all relevant stakeholders at the beginning); Thomas I. Gunton & J.C. Day, *The Theory and Practice of Collaborative Planning in Resource and Environmental Management*, 31 ENVIRONMENTS 1 (2003) ("The essence of ...[collaborative planning] is to delegate responsibility for planning to multistakeholder groups that engage in face-to-face negotiations to reach consensus agreements."); David E. Booher, *Collaborative Governance Practices and Democracy*,93 NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW 32, 34 (2004) (identifying four key practices "based on collaboration, deliberation and dialogue:" public policy consensus building, community visioning, consensus rule making, and collaborative network structures.").

[10] *See* E. Franklin Dukes & Karen Firehock, COLLABORATION: A GUIDE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES 3 (2001) [University of Virginia, The Wilderness Society, and National Audubon Society]. "[P]articipants may include environmental advocates, federal and/or state agency staff, resource users (farmers, ranchers, miners, timber users), tourism-based business owners, recreationists, citizens, and civic leaders" *Ibid.* Caltrans defines collaborative planning as:

> "...multi-agency, inter-jurisdictional planning that integrates land use and infrastructure planning to meet the community's needs while addressing economic development, environmental protection and equity. Collaborative planning includes community involvement to ensure that development meets the vision and needs of the residents of the region. It involves early involvement of stakeholders and sharing of data.

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/Collaborative_Planning.htm (available November 2007).

[11] *See* Judith E. Innes & David Booher, *Consensus Building as Role Playing and Bricolage, Toward a Theory of Collaborative Planning*, 65 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION 9, 11 (1999). Booher and Innes focus on "processes in which individuals representing differing interests engage in long-term, face-to-face discussions, seeking agreement on strategy, plans, policies, or actions." *Ibid.* They liken collaborative planning processes to creative "role playing and bricolage," where participants work together

with whatever tools are at hand." *Ibid.* "Center for Cooperative Solutions, University of California-Davis, INLAND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA REGION COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ASSESSMENT 15 (2005) (project interviews indicated that community members tended to focus on collaborative planning as "...a process every person, family, organization, and community conducts, and people with professional expertise inform the community discussion.").

[12] *See, e.g.*, National Association of Regional Councils, WORKING TOGETHER ON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING: AN APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING 1 (Office of Policy, Federal Transit Administration 1995) (defining "collaboration" as "joint planning efforts, where an MPO works with community residents, special interest groups, elected officials, and other agency representatives as true partners in the planning process"); Richard H. Bradley, *Managing Major Metropolitan Areas: Applying Collaborative Planning and Negotiation Techniques*, 20 MEDIATION QUARTERLY 45, 52 (1988) (case study findings emphasize importance of all major stakeholders being present or represented).

[13] *See, e.g.*, American Planning Association, "Neighborhood Collaborative Planning/Overview," http://www.planning.org/casey/summary.html?project (available November 2007). "The traditional practice of planning, in which a municipal planning department plans for the physical future of the entire jurisdiction from city hall, often fails to provide effective planning for the full range of community components...." *Ibid*; Center for Cooperative Solutions, University of California-Davis, INLAND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA REGION COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ASSESSMENT 15 (2005) ("Interpretation of the phrase 'collaboration' varies as does interpretation of the phrase "collaborative planning.")

[14] This may be legally sufficient if citizens have one or two formal opportunities to comment before officials vote on its enactment. *See e.g.*, CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE § 65351 (citizen involvement may be "through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate")'49 UNITED STATES CODE § 5303(4) (MPO process must allow a "reasonable opportunity to comment on the plan in a way the Secretary of Transportation considers appropriate"); Judith E. Innes & David E. Booher, *Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century* 5 PLANNING THEORY & PRACTICE 419, 419 (2004) (criticizing legally required methods of public participation that "do not achieve genuine participation").

[15] The case studies that follow address agency outreach to interests that are typically underrepresented in public planning processes.

[16] *See* Richard D. Margerum, *Evaluating Collaborative Planning: Implications from an Empirical Analysis of Growth Management*, 68 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION 179 (2002). Margerum identifies the following qualitative criteria for evaluating collaborative planning processes: inclusiveness of stakeholder groups; public participation and involvement; support and facilitation of the process; establishing a common problem definition or shared task; process organization; engagement of participants; and whether agreement is reached by consensus. *Ibid* at 183; Thomas I. Gunton, J.C. Day, & Peter W. Williams, Evaluating Collaborative Planning: The British Columbia Experience, 31 ENVIRONMENTS 1, 5 (2003). Criteria include "creat[ing] new personal and working relationships, and social capital among stakeholders" and " a network of relationships among diverse parties that allows for continued information exchange, understanding, cooperation, and trust." *Ibid.*

[17] Center for Cooperative Solutions, University of California-Davis, INLAND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA REGION COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ASSESSMENT at 15. Based on interviews, this study noted that planners tend to view collaborativeness "where community voices inform those with planning expertise." *Ibid.*

[18] *See* Judith Innes and Jane Rongerude, COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL INITIATIVES: CIVIC ENTREPRENEURS WORK TO FILL THE GOVERNANCE GAP 38 (Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley 2005) "...[C]RIs must be understood as ongoing experiments, which are bound to have false starts and mistakes. The important thing is for a CRI to keep trying things while continually reflecting on its performance, adjusting, and learning in preparation for the next initiative." *Ibid.* .

[19] Doug Henton, John Melville, Kim Walesh, Chi Nguyen, & John Parr, REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP: A COMMITMENT TO PLACE (Monograph, Alliance for Regional Stewardship, 2000) at p. 4 (defining "governance" as "the informal process of business, government, and community collaboration that shapes decisions and actions in a region).

[20] The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was established by Congress in 1980 as an interstate compact with jurisdiction over the California and Nevada region surrounding Lake Tahoe. *See* Public Law 96-551 – (Dec. 19, 1980), 94 Stat. 3234 to 3253. The agency was granted powers to "adopt all necessary ordinances, rules, and regulations to effectuate the adopted regional plan." Article VI(a), TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING COMPACT, 94 Stat. 3239.

[21] CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE §s 3000 to 30900. The Coastal Commission certifies local government coastal programs so they may regulate coastal development in 74 cities and counties. Each local program "includes a land use plan and measures to implement the plan (such as zoning ordinances)." *See* California Coastal Commission, *Local Coastal Programs*, http://www.coastal.ca.gov/lcps.html (available November 2007).

[22] *See* David Rusk, *Growth Management: The Core Regional Issue*, in REFLECTIONS ON REGIONALISM 78, 101 (Bruce Katz, editor, 2000). Rusk notes that board members' primary loyalty to their home government makes it "difficult to achieve an overall regional perspective." *Ibid* at 101; William W. Buzbee, *Urban Sprawl, Federalism, And The Problem Of Institutional Complexity*, 68 FORDHAM LAW REVIEW 57, 92-94 (1999) (deference to traditional dominant local role in land use decision-making in federal transportation law and Clean Air Act amendments). "The mismatch between regional development and numerous independent municipal or county governments means that no single government unit has an incentive to take the lead and suggest measures to address sprawl's harms. [footnote omitted] Similarly, no local government has authority to impose any region-wide sprawl policies." *Ibid* at 95.; California Center for Regional Leadership, THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S REGIONS 2001: A REPORT ON THE NEW REGIONALISM IN CALIFORNIA 6 (2001) "the thinking and the action (with respect to those questions)-must take place at the geographic level where the issues have interconnected and merged."*Ibid*; Barbour & Tietz, BLUEPRINT PLANNING IN CALIFORNIA, at 59.

[23] *See* Stephen M. Wheeler, *The New Regionalism: Key Characteristics of an Emerging Movement*, 68 Journal of the American Planning Association 267 (2002); Samuel Nunn & Mark S. Rosentraub, *Dimensions of Interjurisdictional Cooperation*, 63 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION 205, 217-18 (1997) (citing benefits of regional forums for interlocal issues); Nicholas P. Bollman, *The Regional Civic Movement in California*, 93 NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW 3 (2004); Todd Goldman and Elizabeth Deakin *Regionalism Through Partnerships? Metropolitan Planning Since ISTEA*, 14 BERKELEY PLANNING JOURNAL 46, 53-54 (2000).

[24]CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §56001.

[25]*Ibid* §56001.

[26]*Ibid* §56668.5.

[27]*Ibid* §56668.5.

[28] Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century, GROWTH WITHIN BOUNDS, PLANNING CALIFORNIA GOVERNANCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (January 2000). *See* Assembly Committee on Local Government, GUIDE TO THE CORTESE-KNOX-HERTZBERG LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION ACT OF 2000 6 (December 2006).

[29] Commission on Local Governance, GROWTH WITHIN BOUNDS, at 23.

[30] *See* Judith Innes and Jane Rongerude, COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL INITIATIVES: CIVIC ENTREPRENEURS WORK TO FILL THE GOVERNANCE GAP 2-3 (Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley 2005).

[31] *See* Doug Henton, John Melville, Kim Walesh, Chi Nguyen, & John Parr, REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP: A COMMITMENT TO PLACE 3 (Monograph, Alliance for Regional Stewardship, 2000). These authors

describe regional stewards as "…integrators who cross boundaries of jurisdiction, sector, and discipline to address complex regional issues such as sprawl, equity, education, and economic development. *Ibid* at 3.

[32] *Ibid* at 3.

[33] "Collaboratives are able to fill this need through intraregional engagement and inter-regional cooperation. They are capable of providing credible reports and developing strategies to enlighten local leaders—using their statewide networking capacity to focus attention and resources on important regional issues." California Center for Regional Leadership, CALIFORNIA REGIONAL NETWORK 18 (2003); Barbour & Tietz, BLUEPRINT PLANNING, AT 6-7.

[34]Innes and Rongerude, COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL INITIATIVES, at iii.

[35] *See* California Center for Regional Leadership, CALIFORNIA REGIONAL NETWORK at 2 ("…the long-term challenges facing California's communities do not always conform to arbitrary political jurisdictions and bureaucracies"); Judith E. Innes & David E. Booher, THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ON GOVERNANCE CAPACITY 6 (2003) ("new forms of collaborative dialogue, policy making, and action are filling the gaps left as our formal institutions of government are failing to carry out their responsibilities or where no agency has jurisdiction"); Barbour & Tietz, BLUEPRINT PLANNING, AT 6-7.

[36] Wilbur Smith Associates, NOTEWORTHY MPO PRACTICES IN TRANSPORTATION-LAND USE INTEGRATION, at 6-8; United States Environmental Protection Agency, OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS, A TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY 79 (2001). "Strategies that minimize negative environmental impacts include compact development, reduced impervious surfaces and improved water detention, safeguarding environmentally sensitive areas, mixed land uses, transit accessibility, and support for pedestrian and bicycle activity." *Ibid.* In combination, these practices "can reduce vehicle travel, which in turn reduces emissions of local, regional and global concern." *Ibid.*

[37] Citizens contacted through the project survey were similarly aware of growth impacts independent of familiarity with or participation in regional planning processes. *See* Table 1. Severity of infrastructure and growth issues, by region at App-2 (increased traffic congestion, affordable housing, an infrastructure costs as high concerns).

[38] *See* Steve Winkelman, Greg Dierkers, Erin Silsbe, Mac Wubben, and Shayna Stott, AIR QUALITY AND SMART GROWTH: PLANNING FOR CLEANER AIR 5 (Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities 2005). 1990 amendments to Federal Clean Air Act requires that "transportation plan, programs, and projects will contribute to the timely attainment of healthful air quality and thus conform to the CAA air pollution emission targets." *Ibid*; National Association of Regional Councils, WORKING TOGETHER ON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING: AN APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING 8 (U.S. DOT Report No. FTA-DC-26-6013-95-1. 1995); Committee for the Conference on Introducing Sustainability into Surface Transportation Planning, INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS 4 (2005) ("no effective national policy with regard to the sustainability of transportation").

[39] California law requires regional agencies to provide estimates of housing needs and prepare a The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), which allocates cities and counties their "fair share" of the region's projected housing needs for each of four household income groups. Local governments, in turn, can use their predicted share to update the housing element in their general plans and consider sites and housing typologies for new residential construction. These regional projections are non-binding and are not quotas stipulating what must be built in each locality. *See* Paul G. Lewis, CALIFORNIA'S HOUSING ELEMENT LAW: THE ISSUE OF LOCAL NONCOMPLIANCE 4-5 (Public Policy Institute of California 2003) (2002 survey indicated that 1/3 of California's cities and 22% of county governments were not in compliance with regional housing need allocations); Thomas W. Sanchez and James F. Wolf, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND TRANSPORTATION EQUITY: A REVIEW OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS 18 (2005 Brookings Institution) (encouraging transportation agencies to "improve outreach processes and strategies to identify

culturally diverse groups and facilitate their involvement"). *See also* John A. Powell, *Race, Poverty, and Urban Sprawl: Access to Opportunities Through Regional Structures,* 28 FORUM FOR SOCIAL ECONOMICS 1 (1999).

[40] *See generally* Henry Richmond, *Metropolitan Land-Use Reform: The Promise and Challenge of Majority Consensus*, in REFLECTIONS ON REGIONALISM 9, 11 (Bruce Katz, editor, 2000) "A vast array of federal, state, and local laws ostensibly unrelated to land use affect metropolitan regions and supercharge the sprawl proclivity of municipal zoning, taxation, and housing laws." *Ibid.*

[41] *See, e.g.,* Janice C. Griffith, *Regional Governance Reconsidered*, 21 Journal of Law and Politics 505, 519 (2005) (strong history of local home rule in the United States militates against the transfer of power to regional governments"). *See also* Gregory R. Weiher, THE FRACTURED METROPOLIS: POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION AND METROPOLITAN SEGREGATION 2-3 (1991).

[42]*See* Mark Baldassare, Christopher Hoene, & Dean Bonner, PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL AND STATE FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN CALIFORNIA: SURVEYS OF CITY OFFICIALS AND RESIDENTS 3 (Public Policy Institute of California, Occasional Paper 2006) ("Nine in ten (89%) city officials say that the California system of public finance is in need of either major (45%) or minor (44%) changes."); California Center for Regional Leadership, GROWTH- THE CALIFORNIA STORY, BETTER PLANNING AND INVESTMENT FOR BETTER CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES 8 (2004) "The ability of state and local governments to raise revenues and make public investments is constrained by several tax and spending limitations passed by the voters, including Proposition 13 limiting property taxes to one percent of assessed value...." *Ibid* at 8. *See generally* Trip Pollard, *Follow the Money: Transportation Investments for Smarter Growth*, 22 Temple ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL 155 (2004).

[43] The split between regional transportation planning and local land use is widely referenced as a limitation for effective coordination at the regional level. *See, e.g.,* Pillsung Byun, Brigitte S. Waldorf, & Adrian X. Esparza, *Spillovers and Local Growth Controls: An Alternative Perspective on Suburbanization* , 36 GROWTH AND CHANGE 196, 196-97, 216 (2005) (restrictive zoning and adequate facilities standards in suburban Los Angeles and San Francisco create spillover sprawl impacts in other localities); ICF Consulting, HANDBOOK ON INTEGRATING LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS INTO TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS TO ADDRESS INDUCED GROWTH 2-3 (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials 2005); Kevin Krizek & David Levinson, *Teaching Integrated Land Use–Transportation Planning,* 24 JOURNAL OF PLANNING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH 24 304, 315 (2005).

[44]*See* Robert Puentes and Linda Bailey, IMPROVING METROPOLITAN DECISION MAKING IN TRANSPORTATION: GREATER FUNDING AND DEVOLUTION FOR GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY, (The Brookings Institution Series on Transportation Reform, October 2003) at pp. 3-4. *See also* Andrew R. Goetz, Paul Stephen Dempsey, & Carl Larson, *Metropolitan Planning Organizations: Findings and Recommendations for Improving Transportation Planning,* 32 PUBLIUS: THE JOURNAL OF FEDERALISM 87, 89 (2002) (ISTEA reflected a general policy of "devolution" of federal authority to states, regions, and local governments); Hank Dittmar, *A Broader Context for Transportation Planning*, 61 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION 7, 8 (1995) (noting the shifting emphasis from highway construction to an intermodal planning framework).

[45] *See* , *e.g.,* 33 UNITED STATES CODE § 33 U.S.C. (The Clean Water Act regulated point-source and non-point source pollution); 16 U.S.C. 7 U.S.C. 460 *et seq.* (Endangered Species Act).

[46]*See* CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE §21000 (California Environmental Quality Act). CEQA requires agencies to prepare an environmental impact report " to provide public agencies and the public in general with detailed information about the effect which a proposed project is likely to have on the environment..." *Ibid* § 21061. The report must "list ways in which the significant effects of such a project might be minimized; and ... indicate alternatives to such a project" *Ibid* § 21061. (Environmental impact report); 42 U.S.C. 4321-43 (National Environmental Policy Act of 1969); 40 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS §1502) (EPA regulations requiring environmental impact statements for Federal projects).

[47] *See* Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-240); 23 Code of Federal Regulations § 134(a)(4) ("continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs that consider all transportation modes."); James F. Wolf and Mary Beth Farquhar, *Assessing Progress: The State of Metropolitan Planning Organizations under ISTEA and TEA-21*, 28 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 1057 (2005).

[48] *See* 23 Code of Federal regulations § 450(c) requiring MPOs to have a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs that consider all transportation modes). *See also* Robert W. Gage & Bruce D. McDowall, *ISTEA and the Role of MPOs in the New Transportation Environment.* 25 PUBLIUS 133, 138-140 (ISTEA decentralized transportation policy to MPOs); Robert Jay Dilger, *ISTEA: A New Direction for Transportation Policy*, 3 PUBLIUS 67, 74 (1992) ("$9 billion of the surface transportation block grant… passed directly through to MPOs).

[49] Goetz et al. at 90.

[50] PUBLIC LAW 109–59 (August 10, 2005) (MTP must consider projects and strategies that "promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns." SAFETEA LU 23 United States Code § 134(h)(1)(e)(scope of the planning process). *See* Jenna Musselman, *SAFETEA-LU's Environmental Streamlining: Missing Opportunities for Meaningful Reform*, 33 ECOLOGY LAW QUARTERLY 825, 868-69 (2006) (SAFETEA-LU benefits from increased intergovernmental coordination but does not address problems underlying project delay).

[51] § 5213(e)(3). *See* Conference Report at 1041-42. *See also* Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration, THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS: KEY ISSUES, AT 26 (FHWA-EP-03-041 2004) FHWA/FTA regulations state that the MTP process should consider "the likely effect of transportation policy decisions on land use and development and the consistency of transportation plans and programs with the provisions of all applicable short- and long-term land use and development plans…" *Ibid.*

[52] 23 *See* 23U.S. Code § 135; Code of Federal Regulations §§450.210 to 214.

[53] *Ibid* §208(a)(14). "To achieve this end goal, federal and state policy, funding programs, and regional and local land use and transportation plans all need to be integrated to improve and reflect the connections among air quality, land use, and transportation." Winkelman et al, AIR QUALITY AND SMART GROWTH: PLANNING FOR CLEANER AIR at 17.

[54] *See* California Government Code §§ 65070 to 74.

[55] CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN, at 13. "Uncoordinated decisionmaking, single-use zoning ordinances, and low-density growth planning have resulted in increased traffic congestion and commute times, air pollution, greater reliance on fossil fuels, loss of habitat and open spaces, inequitable distribution of economic resources, and loss of a sense of community. *Ibid.*

[56] *See* CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2030 (draft, 10-24-2007).

[57] *Ibid* § 450.212(a)(1). This includes "proactive and complete information, timely notice, and full access to key planning decisions." 23 Code of Federal Regulations § 450.212

[58] *Ibid* § 450.212(a)(6).

[59] *Ibid* § 450.212(a)(3).

[60] *Ibid.* § 450.212(a)(4).

[61] *Ibid.* at 16.

[62] CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2030 (draft, 10-24-2007) at 15-16.

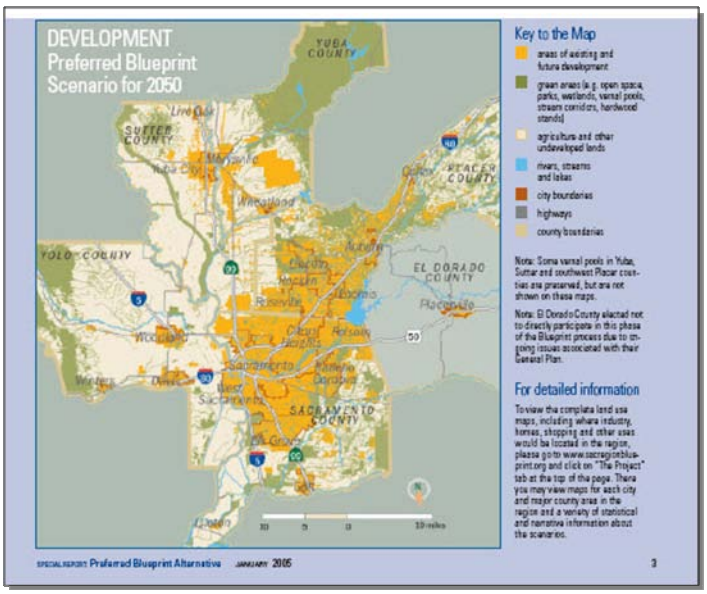
[63] *Ibid.* at 10.

[64] *Ibid.* at 16.

[65] Barbour & Tietz, BLUEPRINT PLANNING IN CALIFORNIA, at 5-6.

CHAPTER 2

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES IN THE SACRAMENTO REGION: INTEGRATING LAND USE VISIONING WITH TRANSPORTATION PLANNING



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Regional planning in Sacramento combines consensus-based land use visioning with innovative transportation processes. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) leads both of these efforts. In December 2004, its board adopted a Preferred Blueprint Scenario that envisions development patterns toward the year 2050. This followed an extensive public involvement process conducted in partnership with Valley Vision, a nonprofit community organization.[1]

In turn, the SACOG Blueprint Map served as the basis for land use projections in the 2006 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP 2035). This process included multiple community meetings followed by a region-wide videoconference. Blueprint and MTP workshops used innovative geographic information system (GIS) technology and hand-held "clickers" to provide rapid feedback on citizen preferences. The regional transportation plan and land use Blueprint combine to guide predicted growth for the Sacramento area. Observers express optimism that these sequential processes will encourage more integrated planning at the regional level.

This case study explores SACOG's recent land use and transportation initiatives within a rational comprehensive planning framework. It begins with a review of the current community context and demographic trends affecting land development, housing needs, and natural resources. It then reviews SACOG's jurisdictional authority and general planning functions. Descriptions of the land use Blueprint and Metropolitan Transportation Plan focus on how public outreach influenced these processes.

The SACOG Blueprint brought together a range of citizen viewpoints into one preferred long-term development scenario. MTP 2035 integrates extensive public involvement using advanced GIS technology to help select cost-effective planning alternatives. This chapter concludes with observations on challenges of integrating regional transportation planning with land use goals for the Sacramento region.

I. Area Character and Trends

This section details demographic trends within the SACOG region. This includes El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. (See Diagram 1) Currently home to approximately two million people, the Sacramento area population is expected to double to nearly four million by 2050. This anticipated growth will place additional burdens on existing land, water and energy resources. It will also require additional public infrastructure, economic growth, and housing.

Diagram 1: Map of Sacramento Area Six-County Region[3]

Overall, approximately 90% of SACOG area residents live in urban areas. However, this varies across the region. For instance, while Sacramento County is considered 98% urban, over one-third of Placer County residents live in rural areas. Based on 2000 Census data, the median household income ranged from $30,460 in Yuba County to $57,535 in Placer County. Approximately 64% of the population is Caucasian. Hispanic residents constitute 16%. African-American residents comprise 8% and 7% are Asian.[4]

Census statistics also indicate how residents travel to work and how long it takes them to arrive there.[5] Throughout the region, nearly 90% travel to work by car including 15% who carpool. About 7% use public transportation, or travel by motorcycle, bicycle, walking or other means, and 4% work at home. These patterns are fairly consistent throughout each of the counties. An exception is Yolo County, where more than one-tenth of its residents walk or bike to work. Among adults working outside their home, 83% can reach their employment in fewer than 40 minutes. For 14% of workers, commuting takes between 40 and 90 minutes. Only 3% of workers endure a commute of more than 90 minutes. SACOG estimates that there will be a 53% increase in travel by 2027. This suggests a significant increase in traffic problems for the region.[6]

Substantial debate preceded SACOG's acceptance of growth projections that anticipate over three million citizens by 2030, and nearly four million by 2050. (See Table 1) This determination led the agency to choose a timeline for its inaugural Blueprint project that reaches forward to 2050. This anticipated doubling in population brings a proportionate demand for jobs and associated commuter trips. Agency consultants also projected an increase in citizens over the age of 65 from 11% of the population in 2000 to 21% in 2050.[7]

Table 1
SACOG Approved Demographic Characteristics Projections, 2030 and 2050

	Year			% Change
	2000	2030	2050	2000-2050
Characteristic				
Population	1,948,700	3,232,589	3,952,098	103%
Jobs	920,265	1,445,137	1,800,211	96%
Median Household Income (1999 $)	$45,267	$65,700	$83,481	84%
Race:				
White	1,261,821	1,716,348	1,867,808	48%
Black	147,219	295,928	394,147	168%
Asian	224,525	419,283	544,073	142%
Hispanic	307,234	736,540	1,067,228	247%

[8]

Current development patterns in the Sacramento area include many low-density suburbs. Growth trends indicate that a shift from the City of Sacramento as major urban and employment hub toward more intensive suburban economic development. Planning experts claim that residents do not travel from outer localities to Sacramento for employment. Rancho Cordova and Roseville are becoming increasingly important job centers. Development pressures are also increasing in Sutter, Yuba, and Yolo Counties. According to SACOG surveys and 2000 Census data, employment in the region is concentrated in office, retail and a large "other" sector. Manufacturing, education and medical professions each comprise 8% of the region's workforce.[9]

II. SACOG's Jurisdictional Authority and Planning Functions

According to its joint powers agreement with member cities and counties, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments serves as a forum to address area-wide issues. These include transportation, air quality, water quality, land use, housing and employment.[10] SACOG also serves as a data clearinghouse, provides technical assistance to member cities and counties, and creates plans in "close consultation" with them.[11] The agency's Board of Directors includes elected officials from each county and city in the region. Its operating budget for the 2005-2006 fiscal year was $15.3 million.[12]

A. SACOG's Role as a Regional Transportation Agency

SACOG serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) for its six-county region. As an RTPA, it is required by federal law to adopt an MTP with a minimum timeline of twenty years.[13] This plan also allocates funds to operate, maintain and improve the region's roads and transit networks in accordance with its designated development scenario. The MTP also enables local governments to qualify for state and federal transportation funding. Federal law requires that the MTP conform to air quality standards (as defined in the State Implementation Plan), be fiscally sound, and undergo public review. This plan must be updated every three years as long as the Sacramento area is an air quality nonattainment area.[14] Federal Environmental Impact Statements are required for projects. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)[15] mandates Environmental Impact Reports for plans as well as for projects.

B. SACOG's Role in Land Use Guidance and Planning

The SACOG Land Use Blueprint provides a long-term vision for regional development. It also serves as a non-binding guide for local planning and development decisions. The agency also functions as the airport land use commission for Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties. This role involves preparing comprehensive land use plans "...to protect public health and safety and ensure compatible land uses in the areas around each airport."

C. SACOG's Role in Regional Housing Policy

In addition to its focus on transportation planning and land use guidance, SACOG prepares regional housing needs assessments and allocations pursuant to state laws. These activities are not directly linked to transportation, save in providing access to housing through roads and public transit.

D. Areawide Planning for Air Quality Compliance and Water Resources

Regional planning for air quality in the Sacramento region is divided among five separate agencies that correspond to designated nonattainment areas for compliance with federal emission standards.[16] These areas overlap local jurisdictions and do not coincide with SACOG boundaries. Regional watershed planning encompasses more than 400 miles within the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins.[17] Primary authority for land use planning and regulation rests with local governments.

III. Precedent for Transportation-Land Use Integration in the Sacramento Region

A. The Metro Study (1989)

Precedent for integrating transportation and land use planning in the Sacramento region dates back to at least 1989. At that time, SACOG developed a plan called the Metro Study that proposed three alternatives, including one for a light rail system with concentrated development around it. Accounting for land use in this way projected a reduction of 15 to 20% in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The SACOG Board approved this plan and presumably the idea of integrated land use and transportation. However, subsequent MTPs did not include such a land use component.

B. The 1995 MTP Update

As part of the MTP developed in 1995, SACOG attempted again to consider land use as a key component in transportation planning. However, the agency did not engage local governments and their planners. Representatives from member cities and counties criticized that SACOG's presentation of possible scenarios as lacking key contextual elements (e.g. identifying a toxic site as just a vacant site, implying that it may be appropriate to build there). Observers noted that this oversight cost SACOG some credibility. It also led to a realization that the agency had to actively engage member governments in order to come up with a realistic plan.

C. The Transportation Roundtable (2002).

For the MTP 2025 (completed in 2002), SACOG established a Transportation Roundtable as an advisory group to draft goals for a plan. With outreach assistance from Valley Vision, the Roundtable convened fifty-five diverse stakeholders from the private sector, community and interest groups, and public agencies. This group met thirteen times between 1999 and 2002. The Transportation Roundtable recommended goals, guiding principles, study alternatives and a draft MTP to the SACOG Board of Directors. Its report also recommended that as much as one-third of transportation dollars should pursue "community design projects to support smart growth, clear air, bicycle/pedestrian and demand management projects."[18] It suggested further that improving transit access for commuters, seniors, youth and disabled persons should be a priority.[19]

According to one interviewee, the Roundtable urged SACOG to pursue the land use planning component before trying to complete another transportation plan. It was also suggested that the SACOG Board of Directors may have considered the Roundtable's recommendations overly broad. It was also suggested that this combined land use and transportation study was precipitated by environmental litigation initiated in 2000. That case challenged the MTP's lapse in conformity with air quality standards established in the State Implementation Plan. The Blueprint and MTP processes discussed below include substantial public involvement. They also link transportation planning with land use and environmental mitigation measures.

IV. Overview of the SACOG Blueprint & Metropolitan Transportation Processes

Current regional planning in Sacramento involves successive efforts to envision preferred land use patterns in relation to transportation priorities. In 2000, the SACOG Board of Directors directed the staff to seek financial support to conduct a land use study. This study led to the Blueprint Initiative that was adopted in 2004. This long-term development vision was adapted to meet Federal regulatory requirements for current transportation planning cycle (MTP 2035 to be completed in 2007). This will be the first plan in the region to link land use and transportation planning.

This section describes the Sacramento Blueprint and MTP processes within the framework of the rational planning model described in Chapter 1. Initial steps established planning goals consistent with projected population, economic, and other forecasts. These are followed by the development of alternative scenarios and the selection of one as a guide for transportation and land use decisions within the region. As the driving force, SACOG sought to integrate feedback from elected officials, local planners and residents, stakeholders representing pre-defined interests, and civic-minded individuals who attended the Blueprint and MTP workshops. The collective visioning process and development of alternative scenarios may be classified as collaborative planning. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: SACOG Planning Process for Land Use and Transportation Planning[20]

	Steps	Description
Blueprint Initiative	1. Collecting and analyze land use data to establish a "Base Case"	SACOG staff developed demographic projections (e.g. population, jobs) and a 50-year projection map of development based on continuing current trends.
	2. Blueprint Land Use Workshops	SACOG and Valley Vision conducted 38 neighborhood, city, county and regional level meetings with stakeholders, public, and elected officials. These workshops sought community preferences for a preferred development scenario for 2050.
	3. Communication with Local Elected Officials & City Planners	SACOG planners maintained contact with 22 city councils and six county boards. This is a continuing communication process.
	4. Regional Electronic Town Hall Meeting	SACOG reconfigured alternative land use scenarios using feedback from steps 2 and 3. Participants voted for their preferred Blueprint alternative with auto-feedback clickers.
	5. Adopt Preferred Blueprint Scenario	Land use map and guidelines were approved by the SACOG Board in December 2004.
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	1. Data Collection & Analysis to Establish Existing Conditions and Transportation Project Scenarios	SACOG staff developed technical growth models and projections of transportation factors using Blueprint map and input from local planners and officials.
	2. MTP Transportation Workshops	SACOG, with Valley Vision, held city, county and regional level meetings with stakeholders, the public, and elected officials to develop transportation options consistent with the approved Blueprint land use map.
	3. Communication with Local Elected Officials & City Planners	SACOG met with 22 city councils and six county boards (ongoing) and held a summit of elected officials.
	4. Regional Electronic Town Hall Meeting	SACOG reconfigured alternative transportation scenarios using feedback from steps 6 and 7. Participants voted for their preferred MTP alternative with auto-feedback clickers.

A. The SACOG Blueprint: Envisioning Alternatives for Long-Term Growth

The Blueprint Initiative is the first public involvement process to envision long-term growth in the Sacramento region. In partnership with Valley Vision, SACOG conducted public workshops with stakeholder participants. Participants included elected officials, local planners, developers, environmentalists, social equity advocates, public utilities employees, transportation planners/advocates, educators and other interested persons. The agency also sustained coordination with planners and local elected officials.

As adopted by the SACOG board, the Blueprint Initiative is a set of smart growth principles ("blueprint principles") and a complete regional land use map carrying through to mid-century. The expectation from SACOG and participants is that the Blueprint map and principles will be used by member cities and counties as guidelines for how development should proceed. The regional land use map's preferred blueprint scenario also provides a base for SACOG members and MTP workshop participants to overlay transportation plans. Observers expect that SACOG will continue this cycle of land use policy development and regional transportation planning. This section discusses the process of engagement with member cities and counties and the strategic partnership with a community outreach organization.

For SACOG, implementing Blueprint is a two-pronged strategy. First, it refers to using the land use map as a base upon which to develop transportation plan alternatives. Second, implementation success depends on individual cities and counties creating development projects, specific plans and general plans that are consistent with Blueprint principles. Local implementation is interrelated with developers proposing mixed use and transit-oriented development projects consistent with Blueprint principles and the vision map.

B. MTP 2035: Integrating Land Use with Transportation Planning

MTP 2035 represents the first Sacramento region-wide plan that integrates land use and transportation. The plan covers a time frame through 2035. Its expected budget is approximately $30 billion. Specific projects will be identified through coordination among local transportation authorities, air quality management districts, transit service providers, local planning departments, community organizations, public participation workshops and SACOG.

The most recent transportation plan update was the MTP 2025, adopted in 2002 after a three-year public involvement effort. Although the MTP is usually updated every three years, an out-of-date implementation plan in the Sacramento Air Basin delayed MTP review pending EPA approval of a new state implementation plan for air quality. Only projects that have no effect on air quality, such as pedestrian or bike projects could be approved.[21] In the meantime, SACOG adopted a series of interim plans, most recently the MTP 2006, adopted in March 2006. The MTP 2006 builds on the MTP 2025 and has a proposed budget of $27.5 billion to maintain, operate and expand the region's transportation network.[22]

C. Valley Vision as a Strategic Partner for Public and Stakeholder Outreach

SACOG has a goal of engaging with the general public, stakeholder groups and local officials as part of their Community Input Plan.[23] To assist in this public involvement, the agency partnered with Valley Vision for both Blueprint and the MTP update. Its established non-partisan role on regional issues was seen as instrumental in bringing a cross-section of business, governmental, agricultural, environmental, community and other interests to SACOG workshops.

Valley Vision staff used a "connector model" to bring stakeholders into the Blueprint and transportation planning processes. For example, they would ask one known developer to provide names of ten others and ask to use their name as a reference. As this communication process developed, Valley Vision asked local residents and leaders what type of outreach would work in their community. In one rural area, requests to participate were enclosed in utility bills. In other areas, volunteers dropped flyers on doorsteps or held informal lunch meetings to brief residents on the project and ask for their participation. Another strategy used e-mail to contact potential participants. RSVPs were accepted via phone, paper and the Internet. They were then entered onto a web interface database that tracked respondents by affiliation. This information was used to advise recruitment volunteers on how many more individuals would be needed to ensure balanced representation among stakeholder groups.

According to one observer, SACOG served as the content expert and Valley Vision "got people to the table." At Blueprint workshops, participant names and logos were side-by-side on

all literature and credits. The Irvine Foundation provided additional funds to improve representation from under-resourced groups. These were allocated to the following organizations to encourage attendance from their members: Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), the Lung Association, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), and the Northern Legal Services Corporation.

V. Steps in Developing the Blueprint Initiative

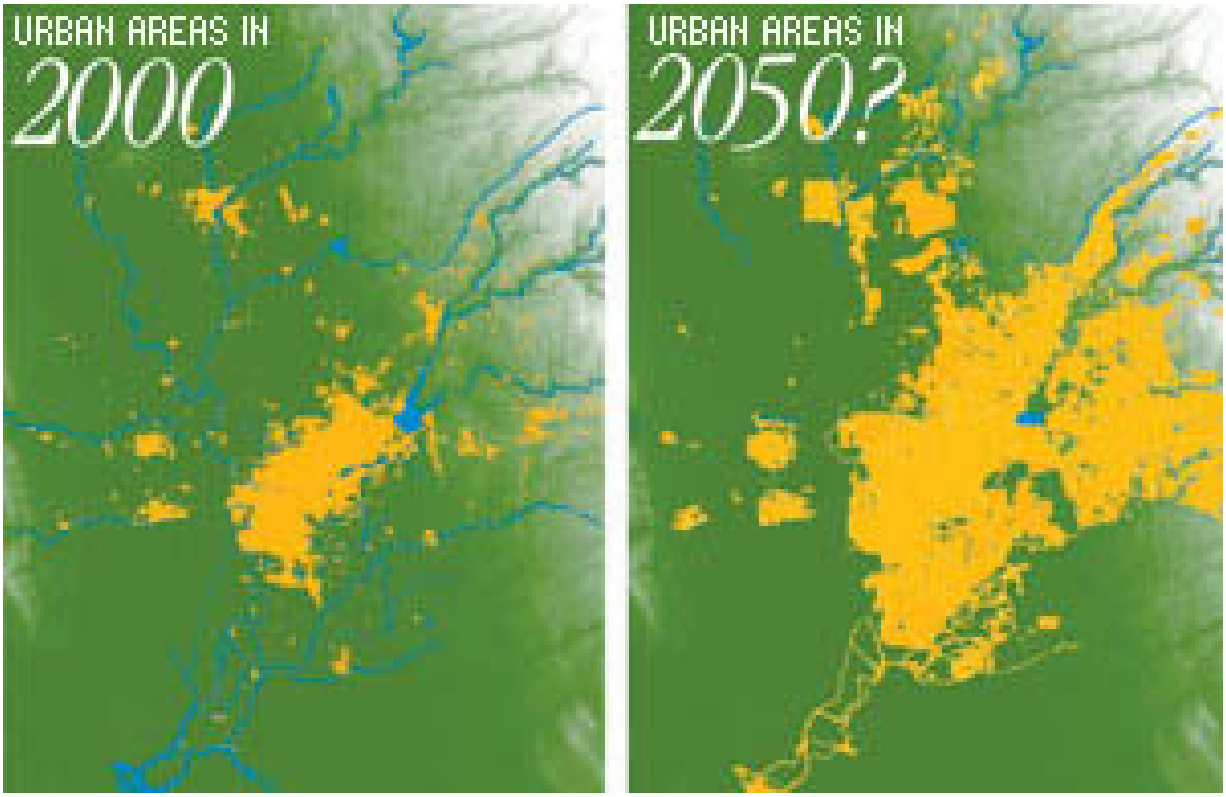
A. Establishing the "Base Case": Data Collection and Analysis

SACOG planners used the following method to come up with a base case scenario for how growth would unfold without intervention. First, staff analyzed development approvals in approximately 800 parcels in the region over a four-year period (1998-2001) to determine how much development was taking place. They then extended those development trends forward over several decades. The base case map, also known as Blueprint Scenario A, showed that given the population and housing units projected, current growth patterns could not be sustained. In other words, city and county general plans did not have enough land set aside to accommodate regional trends in land and resource consumption. Diagram 2 shows the dramatic increase in urban areas that would result in 2050 if current growth patterns are not altered. These images and the realization that current growth patterns could not be sustained resonated with participants, planners and elected officials.

Diagram 2

Urban Areas in the Sacramento Region if Development Trend Continues, 2000 to 2050

Current Land Uses: 2000 **The Base case 2050 Scenario**



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B. Blueprint Land Use Workshops

An estimated 5,000 people participated in thirty-eight public workshops over about a one-year period. Thirty workshops focused on city or neighborhood-level areas, seven workshops that looked at the county-level plans and one final region-wide workshop. All of the meetings followed a similar process. When participants walked in the door of the workshop, they were asked to choose an affiliation: real estate development, business, elected office, education, the environment, social equity, neighborhood association, or public utilities. Participants were provided name-tags indicating their group affiliation and assigned to a table of eight with one member from each group affiliation. SACOG and Valley Vision intended to allow for a diverse set of viewpoints at each table. Participants from different backgrounds observed that personal opinions and emotions often trumped professional interests.

These stakeholder meetings began with an introductory video and PowerPoint presentation to introduce the agenda, process, and issues at hand. There were one or two facilitators at each table—typically SACOG staff members or local planners. Facilitators initiated discussions, input participants decisions (see below) and generally helped move along conversations, by asking questions and suggesting issues for consideration.

At the neighborhood/city level meetings, participants focused on small case study areas in their locality. Sometimes these were current redevelopment projects that could provide results useful to the local planners. There was a computer at each table running a software program called Planning for Community, Energy, Environmental and Economic Sustainability (PLACE^{3}S).[25] The program contains data on all 75,000 parcels of land in the region. Participants made land use changes on a large map using stickers that corresponded to roughly twenty-five different development types (e.g. small lot single family residential, neighborhood retail, park, etc). Next, the facilitator input the table's decisions in the software program, which then processed the information in a remote server. PLACE^{3}S then gave feedback on these decisions in the form of approximately thirty outcomes, including air quality, energy consumption, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and economic performance data.

In county-level workshops, participants were asked to choose from four land use alternatives to start their planning. *Scenario A* was the "base case" map that SACOG had developed. *Scenarios B, C,* and *D* were created out of the local workshops and represented increasing degrees of "smart growth" planning. Factors included density, diversity in housing stock (increased percentage of attached units), whole community growth (jobs/housing balance), growth through reinvestment (infill), jobs and housing near transit, decrease in outdoor water use, increase in walking and transit trips, decrease in vehicle miles and minutes, reduced emissions, and decreased transit capital costs. *Scenario B* called for the greatest growth at the outer edges of the region, *Scenario C* at the inner ring of Sacramento County, and *Scenario D* in the center of the region along transit corridors. Each scenario accommodated the same population, jobs and housing units, but differed in their population concentration in Sacramento County and land consumption.

C. Communication with Local Elected Officials & City Planners

After the series of Blueprint workshops, SACOG representatives met with each local government (twenty- two city councils and six county boards). Staff asked for feedback on the results, and whether SACOG had accurately projected the number of residents, employees, dwelling units, etc. The councils offered their feedback and SACOG adjusted its planning accordingly.

D. Regional Electronic Town Hall Meeting

Next, in the summer of 2004, SACOG organized a summit of elected officials from across the six counties in an effort to reach some consensus around the plan. Approximately 80 out of 144 elected officials attended. They provided immediate feedback on various scenarios using clickers to place their votes. By the fall of 2004, SACOG had developed a preferred Blueprint scenario map and principles reaching out to 2050. Once again, SACOG returned to each of the city and councils to ask for more feedback on the map and principles.

E. Adopt Blueprint Preferred Scenario

SACOG received unanimous approval from the local councils for Blueprint's land use visioning. Its Board of Directors adopted the preferred scenario in December 2004. The Blueprint workshops and subsequent analysis produced a "Preferred Blueprint Scenario." This land use map was accompanied by a set of seven Blueprint principles representing common smart growth strategies: (1) housing choice and diversity; (2) use of existing assets; (3) compact development; (4) natural resource conservation; (5) design for quality; (6) mixed use development; and (7) transportation choices.

The land use map is intended as a conceptual framework that illustrates Blueprint growth principles and offers suggestions which interested localities could utilize to guide regional and local land use policies. To illustrate the way that Blueprint principles might look in built form, SACOG explained how life for the region's residents might change if the plan were carried out:

> Typical residents living in a future typical of the Preferred Blueprint Scenario in 2050 would probably live in a house on a smaller lot, in a neighborhood with some larger houses and some attached row houses, apartments and condominiums. They would drive to work, but the trip would be shorter than today, and the time needed to get there would be about the same as today. Sometimes they might take the train or bus. Most of their shopping and entertainment trips would still be in a car, but the distances would be shorter. And some of these shopping trips might be taken by walking or biking down the block to a village or town center that has neighborhood stores with housing on top of them, and a small park or plaza.[26]

Nonetheless, several interviewees noted that some constituents took the conceptual map quite seriously and called their local planning department to find out whether there were zoning changes in their residential neighborhoods.

F. Observations from Blueprint Participants

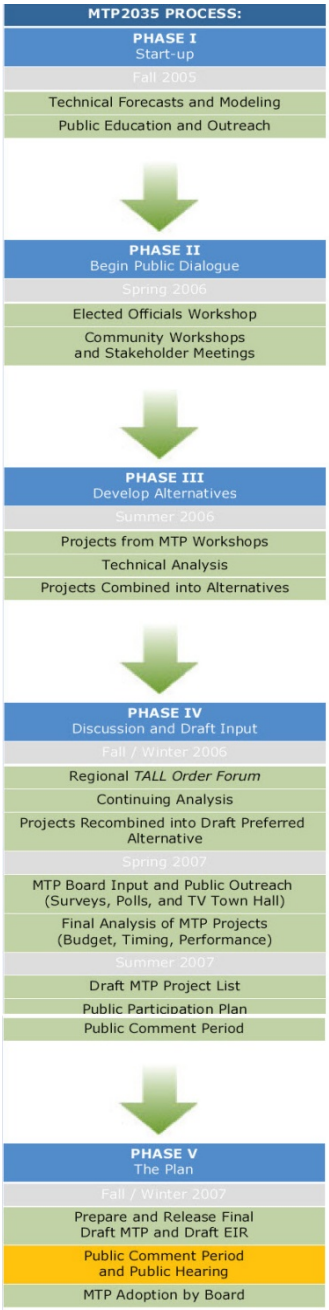
Participants in the Blueprint process reached substantial consensus. Their choices tended toward *Scenario C* but included some elements of *Scenario D* (slightly higher density and intensity). Citizens realized that they could not build single-family homes throughout the region and attain sufficient return on their investments. Rather, they needed to build at higher density in some areas. One observer called these realizations among participants "pop ups" meaning that an individual would get excited and stand up after a sudden idea or realization. A planner commented that at the end of each of the workshops, it became clear that people wanted pedestrian friendly districts, transit oriented development (TOD), abundant open space, bike paths. Higher density should only be located near major corridors.

Although there was clear consensus around the Blueprint Preferred Scenario, project interviewees shared criticisms and suggestions for improvement. The following are representative comments:

- It was difficult to break from the momentum and consensus surrounding Scenario C, both for participants who may have thought otherwise and for the elected officials who felt the need to agree with constituents and "go with the flow."
- With only four scenario choices, participants were led to certain conclusions.
- The Blueprint land use map instilled fear in some residents who accepted the map at face value and called their local planning office concerned that the land uses in their neighborhoods were being changed.
- There were important topics that were not covered in workshop discussions. These included: infrastructure (except transportation), public finance, tradeoffs among objectives and project choices, affordable housing, and equity.
- Population projections should be broken down by income level and/or jobs by salary range, in order to answer the question, "who are we planning for?"
- The planning process was place-based, not people-based.
- Participants were not accurate representatives for their region. At one regional meeting, 80% of participants had household incomes at or above $100,000.
- Improve participation rates through greater outreach to under-resourced communities.
- It is unfair to grant money to some organizations and not to others in order to increase their representation at the meetings
- Demographics and other data collected about the characteristics of workshop participants should be disseminated to the public.

VI. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan

MTP 2035 Process and Timeline[27]



SACOG's current MTP effort (MTP 2035) began by establishing a technical advisory committee with local land use planners, transportation planners and public works employees, which began strategizing about content for a regional land use plan and public outreach campaign. They recognized that local control over land use was sacrosanct, but that SACOG could guide localities toward a coherent plan that could be accepted across the region. Moreover, this plan would include smart growth-type strategies that would respond to the projected growth needs in the region. Again, SACOG and Valley Vision led the process.

A. Collection and Analysis of Transportation Data

SACOG staff built technical growth models and completed projections of transportation outcomes (e.g. vehicle miles traveled, levels of congestion, etc.) in order to set goals for the planning process. Planners used results from the Blueprint land use study and information gathered from local planners on transportation plans (both current or in development). Active partners in and contributors to the MTP data collection and planning process included: Caltrans, El Dorado County Transportation Commission, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, Sacramento Regional Transit District, Sacramento Transportation Authority, and Yolo County Transportation District.

SACOG developed two sets of maps for the MTP. The first set depicted existing transportation infrastructure and possible future projects overlaid on a 2035 version of the Blueprint land use map.[28] This included three maps for each county: one for transportation projects serving short distance trips (1-3 miles), another for medium distance trips (3-10 miles) and a third map indicating longer trips (over 10 miles). For example, road improvements might be prioritized for longer trips, while bike paths might be the focus of shorter distance trips. The maps were intended as starting points from which participants could add or remove transportation projects.

The second set of maps showed relative levels of congestion on highways, arterials and other major roads by county. Congestion was categorized as: heavy stop and go, mild stop and go, or slow traffic. The first map showed the current situation and the next three maps depicted congestion for each trip distance: short, medium and long. The latter three maps reflect the potential road congestion if the transportation plans on the respective distance maps were

implemented. For example, road improvements in the longer distance scenario leads to a slight improvement in vehicle miles traveled in heavy congestion. Transit and pedestrian improvements in the shorter distance scenario reduced use on vehicle travel and increased use of other modes.

B. MTP Transportation Workshops[29]

SACOG conducted sixteen workshops during the winter/spring of 2006. The outreach and format was similar to the Blueprint Initiative, with Valley Vision leading up the outreach component and SACOG developing the content. The affiliation groups represented are also similar to the groups identified for the Blueprint, save for the addition of transportation advocates and the removal of the public utilities constituency.

MTP workshops began with a video that presented transportation planning issues, reintroduced the Blueprint principles, and described the purpose of the MTP. Participants were charged with deciding how to control traffic congestion and meet clean air goals in their county(s) through various transportation improvement options. The challenge for SACOG's planners was to convey planning and transportation techniques to a diverse audience. Second, workshops groups needed to identify fiscally sound transportation planning options within a two-hour early evening session.

Following the introductions and presentations, facilitators at each table presented the first set of maps showing various trip distances. Participants chose a scenario to work with as their starting point (short, medium or long distance trips) upon which they would make transportation improvements. Once a table picked a short, medium or long distance scenario, its next step was to identify possible improvements, additions or deletions. As mentioned, a second set of maps depicted congestion levels if the transportation plans were implemented "as is." These maps helped participants identify areas that needed improvement and confront the tradeoffs between new transit infrastructure and road improvements.

To simulate a "real world" situation, each type of road improvement or transit service was given a price tag. As an example, adding one new freeway lane in each direction cost $20 million per mile, and a new bus rapid transit line cost $5 million per mile for fifteen years (capital and operating expenses). Participants could choose to make tradeoffs on the existing maps. For example, they could eliminate a proposed light rail line and redirect those funds into a road improvement on a nearby highway and a new bike/pedestrian bridge.

Alternatively, participants could choose to raise money through a bond measure so they would not have to confront the tradeoffs so severely. However, they were asked to be mindful that these tradeoffs would bring differing effects such as vehicle miles traveled per day in heavy congestion, percent of commute trips by car, and budget impacts. Participants were encouraged to reduce road congestion, meet air quality goals and complete these goals within budget.

At some of the tables, a second facilitator used the PLACE^{3}S software to input participants' decisions about where to build or improve roads, bridges and transit infrastructure. PLACE^{3}S creates a model of these choices and outputs feedback on outcomes such as road conditions,

congestion and VMT. Towards the end of the workshops, each table was asked to share its top three ideas and to state whether or not they used the bond money and stayed within the budget. The models created by the tables using PLACE^{3}S software were then presented, which allowed participants to see the potential effects of their choices.

C. Continuing Communication with Local Elected Officials and Planners

The MTP used the same engagement process with local governments as for the Blueprint component. These meetings included assurances that there would be a summit for elected officials to vote on preferred scenarios. SACOG staff continues to meet regularly with city councils and county boards throughout the region to address concerns and gain consensus.

D. Regional Electronic Town Hall Meeting

After the meetings with elected officials and public workshops, SACOG created four possible scenarios for the MTP. The agency held a town hall meeting in late 2006 in order to solicit feedback on these alternatives and update the plan accordingly. Using contact information from previous meetings, SACOG asked participants to attend this regional meeting.

E. Environmental Impact Review and Plan Adoption

A Metropolitan Transportation Plan is considered a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR discloses potential impacts. It also identifies mitigation strategies and alternatives to the proposed plans in the following areas: population, housing, land use, mobility/access, air quality, noise, water and biological resources, cultural/historical resources, aesthetics/views, utilities, energy consumption, hazardous materials transport, social and economic factors. SACOG finalized its EIR for the 2025 MTP in 2002. The EIR for MTP 2035 is scheduled for SACOG Board review in late 2007.[30]

VII. Implementing Regional Planning Consensus

The SACOG Blueprint has great potential impact on the MTP and its infrastructure projects and on smart growth land use decisions local governments and developers. According to SACOG and local planners, true implementation of Blueprint will be achieved when communities have examples of Blueprint-consistent projects and when their General Plans and land use laws align with smart growth principles. To facilitate this, SACOG encourages Blueprint implementation by offering technical assistance, supporting related projects before city councils, and providing financial support for local Blueprint-consistent projects.

A. Continuing Regional-Local Contacts

During the Blueprint process, SACOG maintained close communication with its member city councils and county boards. While observers noted that this was an essential element in achieving consensus approval, these interactions required substantial investment of time and staff resources. While initially costly and time-consuming, these established relationships and common interests in collaboration could facilitate the engagement process in future planning at the regional level.

While SACOG does have the power to allocate federal transportation dollars, it is aware that local officials can be wary of this authority. SACOG does not have the power coerce its

member cities and counties into agreement or compliance. Observers indicated that such an approach would be inconsistent with its operating policies. Rather, efforts focus on persuasion and incentives to engage the localities and to gain their trust and support for the plan.

The City of Roseville adopted a series of implementation strategies in May 2005 that align with the SACOG Blueprint principles. Interviews revealed that the city has always been pro-growth and has proved to be a very successful place for developers. According to city-sponsored surveys, residents are satisfied with their lives and development patterns. Until recently, the culture of the city equated smart growth with low growth. However, that mindset has changed in the last few years due to a confluence of factors: increasing congestion on Highway 80, escalating housing prices and the Blueprint initiative. Observers believe that the Blueprint initiative allowed Roseville residents to think more critically about how alternative transportation and varied housing types could alleviate these problems. After reviewing SACOG's base case, Roseville revised its land use policies toward achieving a smaller footprint.

Like Roseville, other communities and interviewees suggest that the Blueprint principles are in tune with area trends. An aging population provides a market for smaller and more accessible housing options. High land costs and increasing congestion problems provide additional reasons for Sacramento area residents, developers, and local governments to rethink development patterns and transportation behavior. In many communities, "Blueprint" has become an adjective for a project that adheres to smart growth principles. Developers have recognized benefits in referencing projects to the SACOG Blueprint. There are also indications that planners and elected officials seem more likely to encourage and approve such projects. Furthermore, SACOG staff members have on occasion been asked to testify in front on city councils in favor of projects that are consistent with the Blueprint principles.

Not all member cities and counties were amenable to the Blueprint planning principles. Some stakeholder interests were resistant to the Blueprint and MTP or did not agree with the outcomes. One city has shown reluctance to reconcile its recent General Plan update with regional land use goals. Conversely, one county did not participate in Blueprint, but was active in the next round of MTP workshops.

Developers involved in the Blueprint and MTP workshops have shown acceptance for alternative projects. Several interviewees noted that major developers now have "infill" development branches seeking properties in existing communities, which are usually higher density and have access to existing infrastructure. Other observers noted the success of such developments. Local governments have also shown receptiveness to higher density transit-oriented development projects.

B. Funding Initiatives to Promote Blueprint Principles

SACOG initiated a competitive regional funding program to promote the Blueprint principles and the goals set out in the MTP 2025. The program provides grants in four planning areas: air quality, community design, bicycles/pedestrians, and transportation demand management projects, and offers nearly $1.1 billion over a twenty-three-year period.[31] Agencies are usually required to match at a rate of 11.47% of a project's total cost.[32] Interviewees from SACOG and local planning agencies expressed hope that on-the-ground development examples made possible through these grant programs will further convince residents that Blueprint types

of projects will benefit their localities. For example, the City of Folsom recently received a grant to fund the design, engineering and initial construction of the Folsom Railroad Block Public Plaza. This public-private partnership development will include retail, office space, residential units, an amphitheater, a historic railroad turntable and a public parking garage, exemplary of the type of mixed-use development advocated by the Blueprint principles.[33]

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[1]See http://www.valleyvision.org. Valley Vision is described as an "...objective, nonpartisan "action tank" committed to regional problem-solving as well as impartial research for sound decision-making." http://www.valleyvision.org/organization/index.html (available November 2007).

[2] Sacramento Region Blueprint Transportation-Land Use Study, *Preferred Blueprint Alternative, Special Report*, at 3 (revised June 2007)

[3] *See* Sacramento Area Council of Governments, ABOUT SACOG. http://www.sacog.org/about/index.cfm (available November 2007).

[4]*See* http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=&geo_id=05000US06115&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US06%7C05000US06115&_street=&_county=yuba+county&_cityTown=yuba+county&_state=04000US06&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=050&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2006_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&qr_name=null&reg=&_keyword=&_industry= (available November 2007).

[5] Sacramento Area Council of Governments. METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2027 3 (Adopted July 2005).

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Levy and Doche-Boulos, PROJECTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, POPULATION, HOUSEHOLDS, AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE SACOG REGION FOR 2000 – 2050 26 (Adopted by SACOG Board September 15, 2005).

[8] *Ibid.* at 2.

[9] *Ibid* at 13.

[10] *See* JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT FOR THE SACRAMENTO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, Article III a., adopted July 2003, (http://www.sacog.org/about/jpa.pdf, available November 2007).

[11] *Ibid.* at 10.

[12] About $9.4 million of this funding comes from the federal sources that include the Federal Highway Administration, Surface Transportation Program / Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Federal Transportation Administration. Local governments contribute $4.7 million, most of which comes through the Transportation Development Act (derived from general sales tax and the gas tax), county transportation and air quality districts and membership dues. State and in-kind funds represent the remaining revenues sources, each supplying about $500,000. *See* Sacramento Area Council of Governments. "Summary of Revenue and Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2005-2006, at 1-2. http://www.sacog.org/publications/Final%20Budget%202005.pdf (available November 2007).

[13].23 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS § 450.322(a).

[14]*Ibid.* § 450.322(a) (transportation plans are required to be updated every five years, or every three years in air quality nonattainment areas).

[15] CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE §21000 (California Environmental Quality Act).

[16] Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (lead), El Dorado County Air Quality Management District, Feather River Air Quality Management District, Placer County Air Pollution Control District, and the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. *See* http://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/sip/sacrop05/sacrop05.htm (California Air Resources Board, Sacramento Regional Nonattainment Area) (available November 2007).

[17] The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region is responsible for the water quality control plans covering the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River basins.

[18] Sacramento Area Council of Governments, 2006 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN 9 (Adopted March 16, 2006) http://www.sacog.org/mtp/pdf/MTP2006/2006%20MTP%203-16-06.pdf (available November 2007).

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] These are the steps as identified by SACOG. The Blueprint portion was finished and adopted in December 2004. As of May 2006, SACOG was engaged in the public transportation workshops (step 7) and continued communication with local planners and officials (step 8).

[21] *See* Sacramento Area Council of Governments. 2006 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN, at 1-2 (referencing air quality nononconformance in MTP).

[22] *Ibid. at* 5.

[23] Sacramento Area Council of Governments. "Community Input Plan: For Public Participation in Regional Transportation Planning," adopted June 17, 2004.

[24] *See* Sacramento Region Blueprint Transportation-Land Use Study, *Base Case*, http://www.sacregionblueprint.org/sacregionblueprint/the_project/base_case.cfm.

[25] This program, supported by the state energy offices in California, Washington and Oregon helps communities develop plans that cut costs, save energy, attract jobs and development, reduce pollution, ease traffic congestion and conserve open space. It demonstrates how different growth scenarios affect quality of life for up to 50 years. http://www.energy.ca.gov/places/ (available November 2007).

[26] Sacramento Area Council of Governments "Preferred Blueprint Alternative" January 2005: 3.

[27] *See* http://www.sacog.org/mtp/2035 (available November 2007).

[28] Before submitting the land use scenario into the MTP process, SACOG reconfigured the land use maps (projecting out to 2050) to maps projecting only to 2035, the planning period of the MTP.

[29] Synthesis of MTP workshop process is based on conversations with SACOG and Valley Vision staff and project observations at Sacramento County meetings.

[30] *See* MTP 2035, " http://www.sacog.org/mtp (available November 2007).

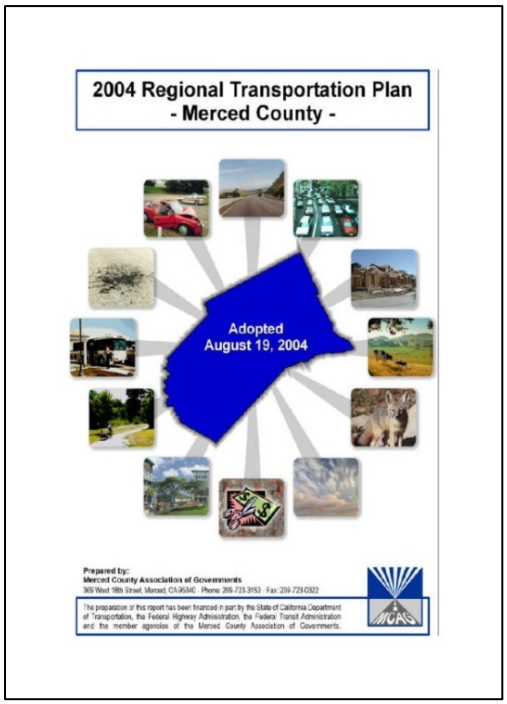
[31] Sacramento Area Council of Governments, BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FUNDING PROGRAM, 2005-2006 & 2006-2007 at 3 (September 2005).

[32] *Ibid.* at 4.

[33] Sacramento Area Council of Governments. "Community Design Funding Program." http://www.sacog.org/regionalfunding/fundingprograms_commdesign.cfm (available November 2007).

CHAPTER 3

THE MERCED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND PARTNERSHIP FOR INTEGRATED PLANNING



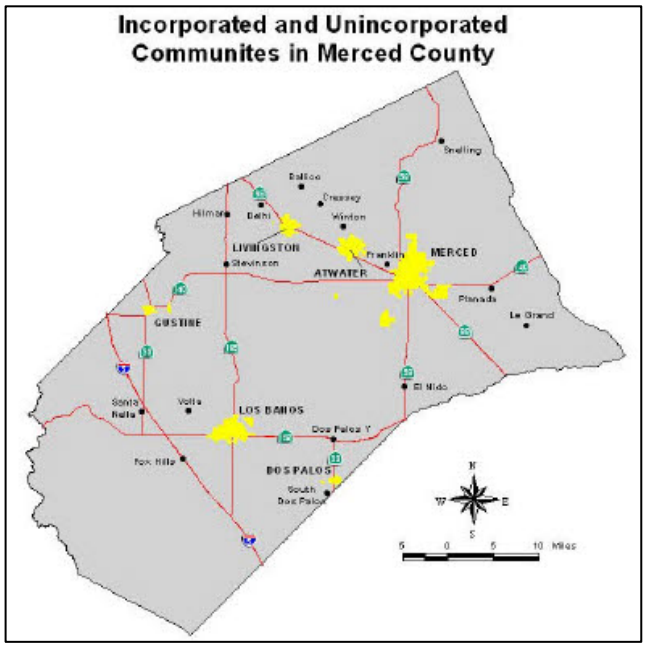
The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) prepared its 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) as a pilot agency for the Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). This agreement among Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and EPA encourages continuing relationships with local transportation planning agencies. Beyond this interagency collaboration, MCAG staff reached out to stakeholder interests that had not generally been involved in the planning process. At community workshops, citizens were asked to consider estimated costs as they selected a preferred development scenario. Observers felt that these MCAG initiatives were significant influences as five cities adopted local impact fees to finance regionally-defined transportation projects.

I. Area Character and Trends

Merced County, located within the San Joaquin Valley, is situated between Sacramento and Bakersfield. The county is connected to the rest of the San Joaquin Valley by two main, parallel freeways: Interstate 5 in the west and State Route 99 in the east. These freeways are also joined to each other by a web of two-lane highways. Of the five study areas, Merced County is the only one that is predominantly rural; urban uses account for only 4% of total county land. Merced County comprises nearly 2,000 square miles.[2] While Merced is its largest city, it is joined by five other municipalities: Atwater, Los Banos, Livingston, Dos Palos, and Gustine.

Merced County's 2005 estimated population of 237,000 reflects a 12.8% increase from 2000.[3] MCAG anticipates county population to

Figure 1: Merced County Map[1]



increase 75% to 417,000 residents by 2030.[4] This population expansion will affect the county's already wide ethnic and economic diversity. Approximately 51% of Merced County's residents claim Latino heritage, 7% Asian, 4% Black or African-American, and 18% as "Some other race."[5] In the City of Livingston, for instance, 71% of residents are Latino and 12% are East Indian. The county also has one of the nation's largest communities of Hmong refugees from Southeast Asia, estimated at over 14,000.[6] Recent Census estimates indicate that one-half of Merced County's population speaks a language other than English at home or does not speak English "very well."[7] Eighteen percent of County households are below the poverty level.[8] Bringing so many diverse groups together is a continuing challenge to effective community involvement in planning.

Other growth-related trends are also affecting the county's economy. Merced County includes some of the United States' best agricultural land, and this sector still accounts for eighteen percent of county jobs.[9] At the same time, planners estimate that full development of the University of California's new Merced campus will add 50,000 new residents[10] while community leaders are promoting the retired Castle Air Force Base as a venue for industry.[11] As one observer noted, sites within the county are attractive to companies looking for inexpensive land.

Residents and policymakers expressed concerns that inefficient sprawl development will overtake agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. The transplanting of city dwellers to agricultural areas is an increasing source of conflict, especially in the eastern part of the county. "These are people who don't understand ag," one official says. "They complain about things that are a natural part of ag life." On "ranchettes" and in new subdivisions, there are conflicts between residential uses and agricultural uses. For example, dust from new development could be problematic in the almond orchards or, conversely, livestock could intrude on the newcomers' social events. Others worry about losing land use control to the state via the new university. Local governments have different approaches to growth and cooperation. Gustine has imposed a 3% per year growth limit. Livingston often acts independently from MCAG and other municipalities.

Environmental concerns are also at the forefront. Merced County is part of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, which is a "serious" quality nonattainment area for ozone. Other problems include agricultural runoff into the watershed and development's impact on wetlands and vernal pools. These pressures all point to the need for coordinated land use and transportation planning.

II. MCAG's Jurisdictional Authority and Planning Functions

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) was the central agency in the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan process and the Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). MCAG was established by a joint powers agreement among the county's local jurisdictions in 1967. Its governing board includes all five supervisors of Merced County and one elected representative from each of the county's six incorporated cities. In 1972, the state designated it the county's Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA). Over the next 20 years, MCAG took on additional responsibilities and authorities. It serves as:

-the Federal Areawide Clearinghouse responsible for local review of proposed federal financial assistance, direct federal development activities, environmental documents, and state plans;

-the State Census Data Affiliate Center for the county, responsible for maintenance and dissemination of the Census Bureau's reference and statistical data for Merced County;

-the Congestion Management Agency for Merced County;

-the Local Transportation Authority for Merced County; and

-the official Metropolitan Planning Agency for Merced County once Merced was designated an Urbanized Area and a Metropolitan Statistical Area in 1986.

MCAG also acts as a facilitator, coordinator and information clearinghouse among local, state and federal agencies. Increasing urbanization has brought the agency to take a more proactive role, including its willingness to participate as a PIP pilot agency.

While MCAG has limited implementation authority, agency planners use reason and influence to educate county residents about the connections between transportation infrastructure and quality of life. In turn, citizens exercise local will through municipal enactments for a regional transportation impact fee. MCAG's cooperative leadership and willingness to accept intergovernmental assistance are reflected in its 2004 Regional Comprehensive Plan.

III. The Mare Island Accord and Partnership for Integrated Planning

The kernel of the MCAG's collaborative approach is the partnership agreement signed by Caltrans, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (Region 9) and the Federal Highway Administration in July 2000. This "Mare Island Accord" [12] is intended to improve interagency communication and understandings on intersecting transportation system and environmental protection matters. By improving "the quality and timeliness of planning data" and addressing environmental issues "early in the transportation process," these agencies intend to avoid major delays during project delivery.[13] A key commitment of the Mare Island Accord is to gather together senior managers from each agency on a quarterly basis to discuss what they called, the "big picture issues."

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
"Mare Island Accord"

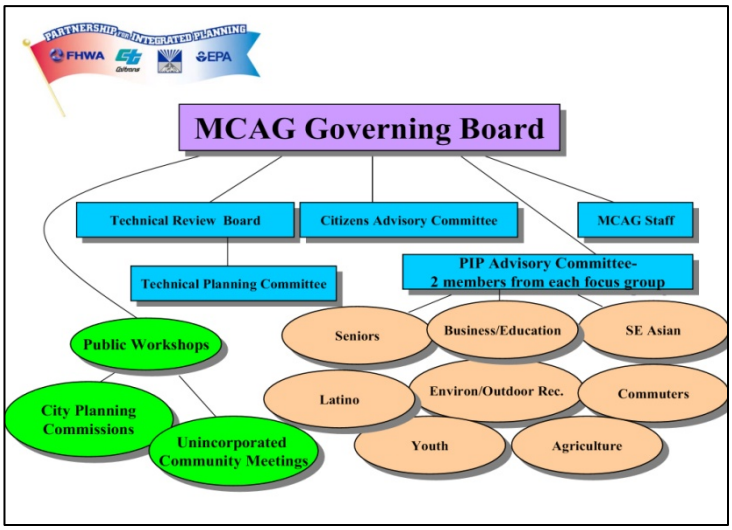
Between

THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region 9
and
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration, California Division
and
THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The next step for the Mare Island Accord was to put these collaborative ideas into action through a program that became the Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). At that stage, PIP felt that input from federal and state agencies fed into the transportation plan governing county road projects would engender less opposition from various agencies. With input at the start, projects would take less time and would be more cost effective. Furthermore, due to an increased knowledge base and better communication, other agencies would be less

likely to object to projects at later stages. An equally important component of the PIP was the early involvement of the public. Soon after the interagency partnership was established, officials began looking for a region in which to apply these ideas.

In 2002, Caltrans selected MCAG as a pilot for the Partnership for Integrated Planning program. EPA was already closely involved with the county's pollution problems, as well as with its agricultural and wetlands issues. Caltrans appreciated the agency's experience in spearheading regional initiatives like the Yosemite Area Rapid Transit System (YARTS), and the Yosemite Area Travel Information Project. MCAG was already working with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, and was the lead agency in a San Joaquin Valley-wide GIS project. One official said MCAG was "savvy enough to bridge the gap between locals and agencies." Experience with multi-agency planning and willingness to look beyond "single focus planning"[14] were added determining factors. Altogether, PIP was designed to both provide planning lessons in ways to flag environmental issues *before* project development and to serve as a model throughout California.[15]



In the past, issues like these had caused federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers to delay road projects because they had become involved at the project stage, rather than during the preceding planning process. Citizen-initiated lawsuits have had comparable effects. For instance, a case to stop the City of Merced from providing access to sewer and water systems to the new UC-Merced campus added costs and delayed that process. Merced area officials expressed frustration that, because these agencies had not been involved in the planning process, they were now perceived as uncooperative. In previous plans, however, the public process consisted of a several meetings with a handful of participants representing active stakeholder interests.

Another reason for MCAG to increase public involvement in the planning process concerned limited funding for roads and road improvement. In November 2002, Proposition M, which would have raised the sales tax by ½% and netted $285 million over thirty years, garnered 61% approval, - but did achieve the necessary two-thirds majority for adoption. Therefore, officials emphasized the importance of involving the public in setting transportation priorities and the costs necessary to provide transportation improvements. MCAG staff wanted to expand public involvement significantly in updating its transportation plan.

IV. Collaborative Data Collection for the Regional Transportation Plan

One of the most basic ways to do collaborative planning in terms of agencies and jurisdictions as well as the public is through the compilation of data. Caltrans, the Federal

Highway Administration and EPA seized upon this opportunity with the agency portion of the PIP process. Similarly, MCAG worked with the public to learn its perceptions of Merced County and its individual communities. Collecting data collaboratively provides more raw data and brings together more members of the community to analyze it. As these various interest groups begin to work together, relationships among the various organizations and agencies grow stronger. The data-collecting phase also allows for other types of collaboration amongst transportation, land use, natural resources, and other realms of interest.

A. Agency Collaborative Planning Through Data Collection: GIS

Computer-based mapping applications such as GIS can be good pools in which to collect data. GIS makes data visual and organizes it into a single framework so that many agencies can contribute layers to the collection. Initially, MCAG used GIS as an organizing tool for federal and state agencies. Later in the planning process, GIS helped communicate scenarios and potential tradeoffs regarding land use decisions to elected officials and members of the public.

MCAG used a GIS program known as UPlan, which was custom-developed by UC Davis's Information Center for the Environment (ICE) for the PIP process. It projects land development patterns according to assumptions about density, environmental constraints and local land use plans, and can assess the effects of road and transit projects. MCAG obtained data layers for UPlan from several sources. Resource agencies were invited to provide rankings to help MCAG know these agencies' priorities in evaluating planned road building projects. This was a new way to bring resource agencies into the transportation planning process. Effects generated by the GIS models were also presented in the Environmental Impact Report.

MCAG also used HePlan, a habitat evaluation and planning model that predicts the occurrence of habitat areas. This allows users to relate their conservation preferences to potentially affected habitats. HePlan can be used with UPlan to suggest areas where development should not occur according to user preferences.

Originally, MCAG wanted to use these GIS models with the public through the focus group meetings, but they decided that the software would be too complicated. However, they did use UPlan and HePlan with the resource agencies such as EPA and Fish and Game. Sharing the technology with MCAG helped these agencies feel more comfortable with this process of data sharing. It was one of the few positive outcomes of the agency portion of the process. The shared information, in turn, helped create more sophisticated maps.

B. Collaborative Planning Through Citizen Questionnaires and Surveys

Just as MCAG wanted state and federal resource agencies' perspectives on natural resource through GIS layers, it also wanted the public's perception of Merced County. Planners began this learning process by asking citizens how they saw Merced County as it is and what they would like it to be. "Help us spend $1 billion wisely (over the next 10 years)" became MCAG's slogan.

An initial step was to conduct a telephone survey with 400 registered voters in November 2002.[16] This included asking questions about people's values, important issues, transportation

needs and long-term goals for Merced County. Responses showed that road conditions and lack of transit were the most prevalent transportation concerns. Similar to this project's survey findings,[17] 83% of those contacted ranked traffic congestion as a top-level concern that would "continue to worsen."[18]

Other comparable responses showed unfamiliarity with the RTP and relative unwillingness to participate. One survey comment stated: "More residents might attend if meetings were convenient and lots of $$ were involved." This could be interpreted in several ways. For instance, the respondent might have been suggesting that people would become more active in the program as the substantial funding needs for transportation infrastructure become more pressing or, perhaps the surveyed individual felt that being paid to attend public policy meetings would encourage attendance.

C. Collaborative Outreach to Interest-Based and Community Stakeholders

MCAG planners also sought direct public involvement in defining transportation issues and goals. Their initial format was to schedule community "brainstorming" meetings at city halls. The sparse attendance at these sessions was confirmed by a staff comment, "We arrived with two dozen donuts and went home with two dozen donuts."

What began to set the 2004 MCAG process apart from previous years was the agency's decision to approach stakeholders directly, instead of trying to convince stakeholders to come to them. When MCAG could not get people to come to special meetings in each town or community, planners began contacting existing committees and civic groups. At these meetings, planners handed out questionnaires asking participants to describe both their broad visions for the county and their particular priorities for transportation projects. This format provided MCAG staff with a better picture of what residents thought of their community, as well as what they wanted for it.[19]

These questionnaires began at the most elemental level: word associations. The most popular word associations with "Merced County" were "Agriculture/Farms," "Growing," "High Unemployment," and "Poor." When asked to describe the county's six cities, Merced was most often associated with, "Growing." Atwater was generally linked with "Castle Airport," Dos Palos was "Small" (though four people thought it had a "Good football team"). Gustine was associated with "Cows/Dairy" and Highway 33 congestion, Livingston was overwhelmingly "Foster Farms Chicken," though seven people equated it with "Crime/Gangs/Drugs" and one called it a "Wannabe." Los Banos was clearly "Growing," though several respondents pointed to its "Silicon Valley Commuters." Workshop participants associated Merced County with "High Unemployment," "Cultural Diversity," Poverty," "Affordable, " "Hard work," (38) and "Conservative." Fewer people associated the county with "Clear objectives," "Fun," "Educated," "Wealth," "Pursues excellence," and "Liberal Minded."

Respondents were also asked if Merced County were a person, who would it be? The most popular responses described someone who was neglected but was also hard-working, conservative, but corrupt and lazy. It was also seen as a teenager who needs to grow up. These responses illustrate Merced County's residents' conflicting feelings about their home. Many

noted negative attributes such as poverty, unemployment and crime, and a sense of inferiority, while others expressed pride and expressed hopeful attitudes towards growth and the continuing strength of agriculture.

These feelings carried into the next part of the questionnaire, which asked respondents to predict the county's future. Common themes found in this section were growth and urbanization without social changes or higher wages. Some forecasted Fresno-style sprawl. "Everything will be too high," one person predicted. "Cost of living will be high and poverty will go up. There still won't be jobs." Participants also expressed hope for opportunities from UC Merced, Castle AFB, high-speed rail, and preserved agricultural land. Another person commented, "Growing and becoming a UC community," another person wrote. "The city will have the look and feel of a college town. Unique shops, bars, apartments, and other businesses catering to a younger age group. Hopefully, we'll see more activities for everyone."

Finally, the questionnaire attempted to focus on transportation priorities and concerns "Road quality/maintenance" and Bus system" ranked highest, while "Traffic" and "Air quality" garnered several responses, as did more specific problems such as "Crossings at RR grade," "UC campus access," and "Highway Widening." Other opinions included: developers should pay for growth, life should remain affordable, environmentalists should be less adamant, and the interests of UC-Merced should not interfere unduly with the local communities. One comment, which would become a popular refrain throughout the process was "...getting lost in the shuffle if UC Merced commands all the attention." These responses reflect a tension that observers noted throughout the planning process between identifying specific problems and addressing broader issues.

MCAG distributed similar follow-up questionnaires at meetings during the next second quarter of 2004. The agency used the questionnaire responses for several purposes. The information went to the individual cities and county governments, to -as one official put it- "show what a depressing picture people had of themselves." Along the same lines, MCAG used the responses in presentations the county's cities on the need for better public relations. Mostly, however, MCAG used the questionnaire responses within the focus groups and among MCAG staffers to formulate potential goals for the next stage of the process.

V. Collaborative Planning To Formulate Visions and Goals

MCAG continued to work collaboratively in this second phase of the planning process. Interaction with federal and state agencies was maintained through the Cumulative Impacts Panel. Public involvement intensified with the formation of focus groups. These concurrent processes brought greater attention to the ways that transportation planning relates to land use, environmental and economic impacts. At this stage, MCAG, the agencies and the public were all working together to envision a holistic picture of Merced County that cut across conventional planning boundaries.

A. Cumulative Impacts Panel

As part of the PIP process, MCAG assembled a Cumulative Impacts Advisory Panel.[20] This approach began with the recognition that most impacts are regional in nature. Promoting

interaction among federal and state agencies with particular charges leads toward the PIP goal of communication during the planning stages to save costly conflicts and delays during project implementation. This panel consisted of officials from MCAG, Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, EPA, Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Fisheries Service, and Army Corps of Engineers.

Panel members met in facilitated workshops to learn from one another and reach agreement on how to document and analyze the cumulative impacts of the RTP. According to MCAG's PIP report, it soon became clear that a workshop format would not work effectively with a large group and its various presentations. The panel needed smaller groups and a conversational, interactive format, so Caltrans, UC-Davis ICE and MCAG arranged to hold smaller meetings among high-level staff of key agencies. ICE convened a total of eight meetings at the UC Davis Information Center for the Environment.[21]

While staff from the three agencies met and collaborated often, the scope of these interactions was usually limited. Representatives often lacked authority to bind their agencies. State managers did not often interact often with their federal counterparts. When senior managers met regularly, they often discussed issues undertaken between lower-level staff members, specific project problems or bigger-picture concerns. "What we have is an increased knowledge about what it is EPA is concerned about," said one official.

For the most part, PIP meetings and public meetings were kept separate. Agency officials said they did not want to interrupt the balance that MCAG had worked to create, and it was too far to travel. EPA was aware of the regional planning effort in Riverside County that was driven by stakeholders and elected officials. Merced's approach was described as "more administrative," which, they felt, would provide process advantages to better understand of data and technical expertise. "MCAG had a feel for who was doing this stuff," one official said. Federal representatives also responded positively to MCAG's public outreach, which had included less traditionally responsive groups like Southeast Asians, Hispanics and Youth.

PIP meeting topics included discussions on the necessary forms of environmental review, the relative merits of various systems, means of generating public involvement, and a continuing dialogue on ways to fill in data gaps. Data sharing became a major issue in the Merced agency collaboration. Officials agreed that a major accomplishment of the PIP process was the ability to pool information from different agency sources. For instance, EPA was able to supplement its baseline data, and thus, GIS layers, from agencies like Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife to indicate wetlands, species, vernal pools and soils. This led to a "common understanding of where the important agricultural lands are, where growth is happening, where the species are."

Some agencies were more willing to share their data than others. The State Historic Preservation Office, for example, had an interest in protecting its most valuable archeological resources. Other problems observed by participants included unclear assumptions made by various agencies, such as requirements for transit in road projects or plans; and the termination of the pilot project as soon as the regional transportation plan was approved.

Observers noted as well that the agency part of the process did not go as smoothly as the public portion. Although the panel agreed that it was important to use modeling tools and GIS data in analyzing cumulative impacts, some agencies did not participate even though they had indicated willingness. The Cumulative Impact Panel found that agencies were often unfamiliar with each other's jurisdictions. Another expressed concern was that agencies would "send someone" who could not express agency policy or opinions. Overall, one participant said, "The group got along really well. It allowed for a more informal dialogue and some increased understanding of agency roles. The benefits of consensus building aren't that concrete, but they're there."

Reported observations from PIP indicate its strengths as well as its limitations. Communication successes included improved trust, idea exchange, and breaking down long-standing barriers among agencies.[22] Information exchange was another breakthrough area. This was true among federal and state agencies, and with MCAG's ability to get additional data that was likely due to the Cumulative Impact Panel's participation.[23] Panel experience also heightened awareness of the "dynamic between a regional agency's data limitations and resource agencies' desire for more information."[24]

B. Staff Outreach to Establish Focus Groups

To structure its eighteen-month outreach process, MCAG created focus groups that would be the basis for public participation. Planners sought to invite previously unrepresented groups into the process. In late 2002, six focus groups were created: Political, Agricultural, Youth, Hispanic, Asian, and Commuters. A few months later, three more were added: Business and Education, Seniors, and Environmental. MCAG planners went well beyond simply advertising these focus groups in local newspapers; they actively attended various interest group meetings, went to schools, aired them on the radio and placed flyers around town. Primarily they used the "snowball" method (also used by Valley Vision with SACOG). This involved calling people, urging them to call others, and so on.

MCAG documented the coalescing of the focus groups, some of which came together more easily than others. Planners thought initially that the Southeast Asian group would be difficult to assemble because of cultural barriers. They soon learned that the tight organization of the Hmong community made the group-formation process easier. Meanwhile, the commuter/driver group, which the agency thought would be the easiest to gather, proved to be one of the hardest to convene. MCAG had to shuffle the focus group identities around, creating new ones, combining groups, separating others. The following is a summary of how each focus group came together based on interviews with MCAG staff and various focus group members:

Agriculture: MCAG staff began by interviewing several farmers and others in the agricultural community in the summer of 2002. Planners also contacted the local Farm Bureau office, the Community Alliance of Family Farmers, and the local Cattleman's Association. Ultimately, this stakeholder group totaled twelve members.

Business/Education: This was intended originally to be two separate groups, but limited resources led a decision to combine them. The agency started by asking local Chambers of Commerce to send representatives. Then, MCAG staff contacted affiliation groups including the Building Industry Association, the Apartment Association, Merced County Association of Realtors, MCEDCO, Castle Airport Development Center, and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. To include the opinions of the academic community, MCAG contacted school districts, the College of Merced and UC Merced, each of which sent a representative. This combined interest group included seventeen participants.

Environmental/Outdoor Recreation: This diverse stakeholder group included fourteen individuals affiliated with, but not necessarily representing, the following organizations: the Sierra Club, Merced National Wildlife Refuge, Merced River Stakeholders, Ducks Unlimited, the Merced Horsemen's Association, environmental educators, and the National Rifle Association.

Commuters/Professional Drivers: As stated earlier, this was a difficult group to assemble. Extensive efforts to contact commuter interests were not successful. However, several representatives from the county's public transit system and a police representative shared their interest-based concerns.

Hispanic: This group of ten included representatives from the Hispanic Network, Boys and Girls Club, and the Central Valley Occupational Center. MCAG also made extensive efforts to reach those who had linguistic, cultural and legal barriers to transportation.

Southeast Asian: As with the Hispanic group, MCAG wanted to reach out to a large population that might feel marginalized: in this case, Merced County's community of Hmong, refugees from Laos and Vietnam that aided American Forces during the Vietnam War. MCAG started by contacting the director of a Family Community Center. Through intra-cultural contacts, community leaders brought a group of twenty participants to share their interests and concerns with planning representatives.

Seniors: MCAG was able to meet periodically with senior interests during scheduled meetings at the Area Agency on Aging. This umbrella organization included representatives from each senior organization (Meals on Wheels, Alzheimer Association, Veterans Services, general public). MCAG also invited agencies not represented in that organization: AARP, Day Out Adult Health Care, Center for Independent Living, Merced County Community Action Agency, and Experience Works

Youth: After creating the seniors group, planners decided to extend its recognition of age-based interests to young persons who might also be underrepresented in the public process. Staff contacts with school districts, the Boys and Girls Club, Girl Scouts, Future Farmers of America, the Hispanic Network, and a Youth Steering Committee group led to representation from each of these organizations.

MCAG's limited staff of planners had already gone far beyond the efforts of past public participation processes. Instead of assuming the public would come to them, the agency went

to the public. They actively looked for people with representative interests for the groups, and even used personal connections to find and get them to the meetings. Staff planned a more comprehensive and complex process that involved a more nuanced view of the public. This approach also required a bigger commitment from participants.

C. Initial Meetings with Focus Groups to Establish "Vision Themes"

The focus groups were active by the first quarter of 2003. MCAG had developed several ways to organize focus group participant views. One method involved a clicker technology that allowed respondents to click on a choice. For instance, it allowed them to register a favored solution to a problem or to rank an issue's relative importance. This enabled attendees to voice their opinions without being confrontational. A more rudimentary version of the clickers was the "dot" method. At the first meetings, MCAG planners asked participants to explain why they were there and to list their concerns regarding transportation. Focus group members voiced their priorities, MCAG wrote them down, and then gave participants dots to put on the ideas that they liked. "[Staff] ran the show," said one participant. "They always had a program for us, moving from point A to point B. They'd done a lot of work."[25]

One common thread among focus group participants emerged: they joined the process to further their own interests or the interests of their neighborhood. For many, the planning process boiled down to petitioning for a road upgrade. Sometimes, as with the environmental group, these interests did not relate directly to the scope of the plan but to a general agenda. Staff also learned of many localized and personal issues: road improvements, traffic control, and pedestrian issues. "The main thing people wanted to know or say at the meetings was, what are you going to do in my area?" said one participant.

These early meetings were intended to set "vision themes" for the planning process that would transcend individual agendas and projects. Group participants said MCAG planners, while listening to people's grievances, tried to steer the focus group toward the bigger vision. One participant noted: "From a professional standpoint, they could see the whole picture, while everyone else had tunnel vision."

MCAG used the first round of over thirty focus group meetings in February and March 2003, and then another round of meetings in May 2003, to set six "vision themes," which were approved by the agency's board of directors. The finalized themes were: preserving agricultural land, supporting clean air, keeping a well-maintained road system, supporting full-time employment with livable wages, encouraging orderly and planned growth, and supporting an integrated, viable transit network. MCAG then picked a PIP Advisory Committee with two people from each focus group plus MCAG representatives and a Caltrans representative that met quarterly. Eventually, MCAG claimed to have held approximately one hundred public workshops as opposed to the seven meetings held during the 2001 planning process.

D. Follow-up Meetings to Identify Specific Transportation Issues

The next goal of the process, after formulating the vision themes, was to identify specific transportation issues. During public meetings in August 2003, MCAG asked citizens to assume roles as transportation planners. Staff followed up by categorizing participant comments into

themes, then using these themes to build different scenarios of funding, building, and roads-mass transit.

E. Outreach to Underrepresented Stakeholders

One goal of MCAG's process was to include segments of the county's population that had not previously been reached in regional planning processes. The most prominent examples were two of the county's main ethnic groups, Southeast Asians and Hispanics. As with the other focus groups, MCAG was tenacious in tracking down community members to participate in the planning process. Although they had worked with the City of Merced to improve the "southside," Southeast Asian community leaders had not been involved in previous county planning efforts.

The outreach effort described above yielded fifteen to twenty participants at each meeting. Most of them were older immigrants, because, as one participant said, "...the younger generation does not have as much interest in community affairs." According to the participant, people in the Hmong, Mien and Lao communities had the same hopes for Merced County as other segments of the population. Participants were taken with the idea of planning several decades ahead. "It's something we are interested in. It's something we think about, that this road should be improved, but we are not the government. [...Many elders] have ideas but they can't speak the language." Concerns enumerated by Southeast Asian focus group participants included employment, roads, and housing. "I learned a lot," said the participant. "I spoke to mainstream people and now they know who I am."

Likewise, there was not a history of strong participation among the Hispanic population in regional transportation plans. Because almost half of the county claims Hispanic heritage, this segment of the population is complex and layered, geographically and culturally, with splits in different parts of the county and between an "old guard" and new immigrants. An observer commented that MCAG did a good job addressing this large, previously underrepresented population. Thus, committee addressed general transportation issues as well as those unique to persons traveling to and from agricultural areas.

F. Visions Expressed by Focus Group Participants

Overall, the visions of the public focused on "full-time employment with living wages," "preserve ag land" and "smart growth and planning," each of which garnered at least 100 mentions—the next closest category get only 68 mentions. Other popular mentions were clean air and water, strong public transit system, good road system and affordable housing. Despite the limited scope of the plan, these visions were extending to jobs, housing and the environment, although transit and roads were part of it. The following breaks down the vision priorities for each focus group:

> Business/Education: Well-planned smart growth, trained and educated workforce, business friendly; Transportation-related: strong public transit system.
>
> Environmental: Teach ecology in all grade levels, Innovative Planning including transit; vital, intact neighborhoods; Transportation-related: Innovative Planning including transit.

Hispanic: More jobs with livable wage, affordable housing; Transportation-related: Better transit, planned transportation corridors.

Southeast Asian: More business and jobs, affordable housing, improved transit, more nightclubs, all our kids go to UC Merced.

Seniors: Full-time employment with livable wages, road signs for seniors, affordable housing, clean air, responsible elected officials, reliable transit, better transit, airports, more lanes in highways.

Commuters: Better pay and benefits, affordable housing, a North-South bypass, people using transit.

Agricultural: Profitable agricultural industry, balance of uses, transparent government, living centers, comprehensive general plan.

Each group also identified transportation problems and possible solutions:

Business/Education:	*Problem:* Highway 99 substandard, railroad crossings, lack of alternatives. *Solutions:* Mass transit, improved walking/bicycling.
Environmental:	*Problem:* Lack of alternatives to car travel, County roads falling apart, Highway 99 substandard. *Solutions:* mass transit, walking/bicycle.
Hispanic:	*Problems:* Getting kids to school safely, South Merced is neglected, Railroad backs up, County roads in disrepair. *Solutions*: High Speed Rail.
Southeast Asian:	*Problem*: South Merced is neglected, railroad backs up. *Solutions*: Walking/Bicycle improvements.
Seniors:	*Problem:* Lack of alternatives to car travel, People lack road courtesy, unsafe crossings at 99, railroad crossings, lack of funds. *Solutions:* high speed rail.
Commuters:	*Problems*: Highway 99 substandard, railroad crossings, County roads are falling apart, unsafe crossings at grade on Route 99, railroad backs up for miles. *Solution:* use gas tax as originally intended.
Agricultural	*Problems*: air pollution, lack of alternatives to car travel, lack of funding for roads. *Solutions*: mass transit, high speed rail, use gas tax as intended.

G. The Working Paper

By summer of 2003, MCAG and PIP Advisory Committee members had finished a "Vision and Goals Working Paper." The eighteen-page document first summarized the six-month process so far, and then went into detail about the six goals identified in public workshops:

-Provide a good system of roads that are well-maintained, safe and efficient, and meet the demands of people and freight.

-Develop a viable transit system.

-Support full-time employment with livable wages.

-Encourage preservation of productive agricultural land/maintain a strong agricultural economy and the quality of life that goes with it.

-Preserve clean air and water and avoid, minimize or mitigate negative impacts to the environment.

-Stimulate orderly or planned growth that enhances the integration and connectivity of various modes of transportation.

The working paper also listed several benefits of the PIP process thus far and provided the next steps for the RTP. It helped MCAG officials create the five scenarios discussed in the next section. MCAG's step in formulating visions and goals was collaborative in all three ways noted above: MCAG solicited the input of both the public and concerned agencies (albeit separately and for different aspects of the plan), and the visioning, which crossed over into different planning realms.

VI. Collaborative Planning To Select Development Scenarios

While the previous steps in the 2004 RTP process involved a high degree of all three types of collaboration, the third step in the rational model, defining a set of alternatives, saw collaboration drop off. Although the regional planning agencies can collect data and participate in a visioning process, the often-limited scope of their powers hinders them from any effective use of those processes.

For MCAG, collecting data and visioning were useful exercises in pushing the planning process toward a more regional scope. However, the agency's power was only focused on prioritizing roads in the county. As a result, collaboration with the public and agencies dropped off.

A. Presenting Alternate Scenarios Along With Their Associated Costs

In November 2003, MCAG presented five scenarios of plans to the focus groups, and in other community meetings in Hilmar, Atwater, Le Grand, Merced, Planada, Livingston, Gustine, Delhi, Franklin, Winton, Los Banos and Dos Palos. Over twenty-three meetings were held, which attracted about 285 people. The scenarios were as follows:

A: "No Build:" this option was limited to basic road maintenance and transit; and would save approximately $200 million.

B: "Roads:" this would retain the current policy, add some expenditures, provide for minimum transit; and includes seven major improvements to highways.

C: "Some Changes:" included three major highway improvements, bike improvements, three additional highway improvements; 30-minute transit frequencies in urban areas and 60-minute frequencies between areas. This option would cost an additional $170 million.

D: "Alternate modes:" this scenario had the same cost as current policy. However, it shifted monies from improving roads to pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and higher bus frequencies (15 minutes in urban areas; 30 minutes between areas). This is the only scenario with different land use assumption than the county and city general plans (e.g., higher density, transit-oriented development).

E: "Ultimate:" this was the inclusive option, and would require approximately $1 billion in extra costs.

Each of the five scenarios was further divided by eight key elements: Roads and Highways, Local Road Maintenance, Transit, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Aviation, Passenger Rail and Land Use Assumption. Participants were asked to vote on the plan elements they liked with clickers. There was a cost associated with each .

In each workshop, MCAG linked each scenario to the funding necessary for implementation. This staff decision helped familiarize workshop respondents with the costs associated with transportation improvements. Toward these objectives, MCAG asked participants to vote on whether they would/would not support a variety of funding programs. These included: a Regional Transportation Impact Fee, to be paid by developers on new business and residential development; a variety of sales tax percentages; gas tax increase; local vehicle registration fee; and/or a special road maintenance district.

B. Public Preferences for Land Use Scenarios

Overall, the public voted most heavily toward the "Some Changes" elements. There was also significant support for the "Alternative Modes" high-density land use model. A March 2004 MCAG memo describes the results in more detail.[26] For roads and highways, the "Some Changes" scenario was chosen most often. For the "Current Policy" scenario, some participants preferred to see the current seven projects completed, while other wanted to see more projects added. A majority of participants also indicated that they did not want fewer road projects. Some of those who voted for fewer road projects inserted, on the voting sheet, additional projects of concern to their communities. This increased the total number of projects.

Adding funds for road maintenance was a near unanimous choice. Participants voted for a new countywide maintenance program where efforts and funds were better coordinated. Almost an equal amount of votes was cast for the "Fix It First" program under the Alternative Modes scenario. Three groups, Business/Education, Commuters/Drivers of County Vehicles, and Gustine, voted for the Ultimate System in this category. Only two groups, Merced County Planning Commission and Dos Palos, voted for maintenance at existing levels.

Almost three times as many groups chose substantially more transit support than existing levels. Ten groups chose the options listed under Some Changes as their first choice and nine chose even greater bus frequencies under the Alternative Modes scenario. Ten groups also prioritized pedestrian transportation, with the proviso that jurisdictions be encouraged to require pedestrian-friendly development. Five more groups voted for financial incentives to

jurisdictions entailing walkable and transit-friendly communities. Four groups felt pedestrian transportation should be kept as a local issue.

Connectivity was a key word for those choosing an improved bicycle system. Fifteen groups wanted to see options that include more bike paths, bike-friendly communities, and construction of the regional bicycling system. Six groups favored bicycle improvements, but only via grants. Gustine, Dos Palos and the Agriculture focus group were the only three groups who voted for no bicycle projects. Fourteen groups wanted to see rail promoted for commuting purposes, while seven groups voted for no rail projects. The majority of groups (16) wanted to see air service significantly increased, while four groups chose not to increase air service.

According to MCAG, participants voted two-to-one in favor of a half-cent sales tax, and many supported a full-cent sales tax. Raising the gas tax was unpopular, and votes were split on charging a $4 local vehicle registration fee. From the original five scenarios, based on the response from the public, MCAG in Spring 2004 developed hybrid scenarios that were based on the choices of the public, adding two more options:

C2: "More changes:" This option enhances the "Some Changes "option that was proposed in scenario C. It included most regional transportation improvements, new highway facilities, improved bus frequencies (30 min in city, 60 min between areas), and expansion of air service. C2 would require $456 million in additional funding.

D2: "Alternate Modes and Roads:" This option expands choices as in D ("alternate modes"), but not at the expense of roads.

A and E were discarded by focus groups and MCAG. PIP Advisory Committee members also seemed wary of selecting a scenario as long as funding was still unclear (for example, the ½% sales tax increase and the regional transportation impact fee). One issue that caused contention among PIP committee members was bike paths—one member criticized another's suggestion that developers pay for bike paths in new developments, calling it a "lifestyle change" that would take money away from roads. Members voted to approve the scenarios, though the vote was not unanimous.

In late spring of 2004, MCAG held a large open house with posters and clickers so people could see the issues and ask questions, and then it organized three big final public meetings in Merced, Hilmar and Los Banos. All meetings were held on Saturdays. Sixty individuals attended in Merced, thirty people in Hilmar, and forty were present at the public meeting in Los Banos. The results were similar to the earlier round: most favored one of the new scenarios. C2 "More Changes," was the most popular while D2 "Alternative Modes and Roads" came in second. Scenario C was third, with B and D farther behind. D2 and D were popular in Los Banos but not in Livingston, which preferred B. The regional transportation impact fee was supported in these meetings, 67 to 9, and the half-cent sales tax was supported 55 to 20.

C. The Regional Transportation Plan and Local Land Use Controls

Land use was a fundamental part of the conversations between MCAG and the focus groups. It was closely tied into the issues they had raised about growth, agriculture, air quality and the new university. In preparing the Regional Transportation Plan, MCAG planners had to

assume the land use scenarios set forth by the cities and the counties. In some cases, local plans had not been updated since the early 1990s. Since planning is a general fund activity, many of these cities do not have planning offices of their own since planning is not an integral part of their everyday workings. This kept the regional transportation plan from proposing options such as transit-oriented development. MCAG is starting to work more regionally, on a Blueprint project to do the PIP process in the eight counties of San Joaquin Valley. The Great Valley Center is also encouraging more regional land use planning throughout the whole San Joaquin Valley.

D. Environmental Impact Report

In the summer of 2004, the environmental impact report (EIR) was completed on the RTP, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Caltrans assisted MCAG with the cost of the report, which looked at potential impacts of the RTP in terms of agricultural lands, endangered species and habitats, cultural resources, growth related impacts, traffic congestion, flood zones and air quality. At this point, MCAG had focused on scenario C2, which involved the most improvements for both roads and transit. Interestingly, the EIR found that scenario C2 had the most impacts on agricultural land (18 % of total), riparian habitat and wetlands but also reduced congestion by the most (67%). In the plan's cumulative impacts, scenario C2 had mixed results. The report stated that cumulatively, it would impinge upon the least amount of farmland, but would impact more vernal pools and riparian habitat than other scenario. Ironically, scenario C2, which proposed that the government build more roads, could actually help preserve farmland and wetlands, as it could direct growth along these roads rather than requiring developers to build their own.

E. Adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan

On August 19, 2004, after several public hearings, the MCAG board voted to approve the plan known as scenario C2. A senior staff member calling it "the most robust transportation plan ever adopted in Merced County." Planners also indicated that the board had been aware and informed throughout plan development. Members also expressed confidence that constituents were actively involved and favored plan adoption. The Merced County Association of Governments board adopted the 2004 Regional Transportation unanimously.

Despite this apparent unanimity, observers expressed concerns whether MCAG's process was truly collaborative at this stage. One criticism was that the RTP had focused on road construction prioritization and, to a limited extent, on transit. There was also expressed disquiet that its provisions no longer involved land use or natural resources and that there was minimal opportunity for public involvement at this stage of the process. Other observers noted as well that federal and state agencies were not noticeably present at plan adoption.

Despite these objections, it was evident that MCAG was still collaborating to a limited extent with the public and its member governments, whose representatives were the ones who had actually approved the plan. Still, it is clear that the collaboration in the MCAG process was heavily weighted toward the beginning of the process. This intensive collaborative planning at the beginning paid dividends at the end.

VII. The Impact of the Partnership for Integrated Planning

According to its regional transportation plan, MCAG's participation as a pilot for Partnership for Integrated Planning was instrumental in broadening public awareness and participation. It also referenced the program's impact on state and federal coordination and planning. The RTP also acknowledged the following elements as evidence of PIP impact:

- A 30% increase in public awareness of the Regional Transportation Plan
- An 800% increase in public participation in the transportation planning process
- PIP led to a planning process among state and federal resource agencies
- New issues brought to the surface from county groups who had not previously participated in the process
- Steps for the future to streamline the project delivery process
- Better relationships at the county and city level[27]

VIII. Plan Implementation and Related Fiscal Measures

In preparing the 2004 RTP, MCAG planners estimated that an additional $181.4 million would be necessary to implement its provisions. Two significant external measures were related to meeting this gap. Many observers attributed the plan's exceptional collaborative influence leading to five cities voluntarily adopting development impact fees that would be allocated toward implementing regional transportation projects. Others attribute near success toward passage of a sales tax increase ($250 million over twenty-five years) to the influential impact of this regional planning initiative.

A. The Regional Transportation Plan and Local Government Impact Fees

In Spring 2005, five of the county's six cities agreed to a development impact fee (Livingston being the exception), which will fund regional projects serving new growth. This includes an MCAG-approved impact fee study in January of 2005 of $1375 for a new single family home and $805 for a multifamily unit. This is far less than the $9,415 per dwelling unit Monterrey County's regional transportation impact fee ordinance, and the $2,500 (single-family) and $1,500 (multifamily) fees proposed by neighboring San Joaquin County. Although each city approved the RTIF program, MCAG is administering the program.

Participants and observers shared opinions that the RTIF's success was due in large part to the agency-led communication with the public during the RTP process. Two key factors were specifically referenced. First, the development and selection of alternative planning scenarios required public participants to consider implementation costs associated with each option. Another significant shared observation correlates MCAG's initiatives with citizens gaining a sense of ownership in the planning process and transportation infrastructure.

B. Regional Transportation Needs and Sales Tax Ballot Measures

MCAG has also had an ongoing role in seeking passage of a sales tax measure that could raise an estimated $446 million over thirty years. The tax, planners argue, is helpful because it is one of the only self-help mechanisms available to Merced County. It would also enable

MCAG and other jurisdictions to use local funds as leverage for additional federal and state assistance. Considering the long public process, some agency representatives expressed disappointment that the public did not choose the alternative with the least impacts on natural resources. "Because of all this great data, we saw that the one they picked isn't the one with the least impact," one official said.

Yet agency officials say there have been instances in which the Merced collaborative process helped them and achieved the goals set forth in the Mare Island Accord. In a recent Los Banos interchange project, for instance, EPA officials already had familiarity with the resources in the area through the collaborative process. One observer pointed out that "because we had been part of the process in identifying GIS layers, when the project got proposed we saw that it had some impacts, but also that it avoided impacts elsewhere. If we hadn't participated, that wouldn't have gone as smoothly."

IX. Concluding Observations

As noted above, MCAG's 2004 RTP process was heavily collaborative in its first few steps, and, perhaps necessarily, less collaborative in later steps. The agency engaged in a detailed, tenacious public involvement process that included stakeholders not formally consulted in earlier plans. With limited staff resources, the agency was able to reach hundreds of county residents - including many who never participated in a regional planning process. Further successes emanate from its practical decision to connect costs with selecting scenarios for future development and using technology such as GIS to increase collaboration among agencies.

Evidence that cohesion built through interactive planning transmitted to other processes is reflected in support for the regional transportation impact fee (RTIF). Developers, city leaders, and involved citizens helped approve this measure in five of six cities. MCAG's efforts helped persuade local governments to administer a local program to generate funds for regionally-planned transportation needs identified generating funds for roads since development can "pay for itself." Observers praised RTP process for making stakeholders see the connection between new development, money and new roads and, perhaps more importantly, enfranchise stakeholders into the public process. The high amount of support received by the RTIF idea within the PIP workshops could be seen as a harbinger of its formal adoption later. As one official said, "They may not remember what they voted on, but they remembered they got to vote."

The process also helped further the goals set out in the Mare Island Accord. Federal and state agencies pooled their information to create a common data source that each agency, MCAG, and member governments can reference. Participants indicated that the PIP exercises seemed to make more of an impact on non-transportation-related cohesive regional development than the more limited focus of the current transportation plan. Additionally, MCAG is at work on a San Joaquin Valley-wide Blueprint process for which it will serve as the lead agency.[28] Overall, the 2004 RTP process likely helped empower the public to join in MCAG's long-term goals for regional management of the area's rapid growth.

Merced's experience also illustrates recurrent issues in California's regional planning processes. The RTP's limitation to a single functional area confines the plan primarily to road-building issues with some augmentation of transit, and general goals regarding bicycles, environmental mitigation and land use. Its lack of direct authority over land use, housing, environmental regulation, and decisions frustrate more integrated efforts. Even with partnership assistance from Caltrans and federal agencies, the county faces unclear impacts from the new university's presence.

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[1]See Merced County Association of Governments, 2004 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN – MERCED COUNTY 9 (adopted August 19, 2004).

[2] *Ibid* 2004 RTP at 10

[3] *See* United States Census Bureau, MERCED COUNTY, CALIFORNIA POPULATION AND HOUSING NARRATIVE PROFILE: 2005. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US06047&-qr_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_NP01&-ds_name=&-redoLog=false (available November 2007).

See MERCED COUNTY, CALIFORNIA POPULATION AND HOUSING NARRATIVE PROFILE: 2005, *supra* note 2.

[4]2004 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN at 14.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] The 2000 Census estimated 6,148 residents. Merced (6,148). However, analysts agree that this is a significant undercount. Miriam E. Warner & Marilyn Mochel, *The Hmong and Health Care in Merced, California*, 2 *Hmong Studies Journal* 1, 21 (1998) (estimating Merced's Hmong population at 14,000); Mark E. Pfeifer & Serge Lee, *Hmong Population, Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Educational Trends In The 2000 Census*, at 3, in HMONG 2000 CENSUS PUBLICATION: DATA AND ANALYSIS (2004) http://hmongstudies.com/2000HmongCensusPublication.pdf (available November 2007).

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

[9]*Ibid* at 12. The agricultural sector was valued at $1.7 billion in 2001. This includes dairy, poultry, almonds and cotton.

[10] *See* University of California Merced, LONG RANGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, 4.22-2 (January 2002).

[11] *See* Castle Airport, Aviation and Development Center, *Castle ABC*, http://www.castleabc.com (available November 2007)

[12] *See* Partnership Agreement ["Mare Island Accord'] Between the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 and the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, California Division, and the California Department of Transportation, July 14, 2000. "The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to support concerted, cooperative, effective, and collaborative work among the three agencies in the transportation and environmental planning processes." *Ibid.*

[13]EPA already had a model for interagency collaboration. In 1994, it and other agencies had created the NEPA/404 memorandum of understanding. That agreement sought, in many cases successfully, to address the requirements for Clean Water Act section 404's "dredge and fill" wetlands permits early in the planning process. PARTNERSHIP FOR INTEGRATED PLANNING (PIP) MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS PILOT PROJECT, FINAL REPORT- Summer 2005.

[14] PARTNERSHIP FOR INTEGRATED PLANNING (PIP) MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS PILOT PROJECT, FINAL REPORT- SUMMER 2005 at 1.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *See* Evans/McDonough Company, MERCED COUNTY TRANSPORTATION (November 2002) (public opinion survey prepared for MCAG).

[17] *See* Appendix A.

[18] Evans/McDonough Company, MERCED COUNTY TRANSPORTATION at 6.

[19] Merced County Association of Governments, *Visioning Questionnaire, First Quarter, 2003* (unpublished).

[20] PARTNERSHIP FOR INTEGRATED PLANNING (PIP): MERCED PILOT CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ADVISORY PANEL REPORT, 2002-2004.

[21] *Ibid* at 5-6.

[22] *Ibid* at 12.

[23] *Ibid* at 12.

[24] *Ibid* at 12.

[25] *See* Jesse Brown, *Blueprint Implementation Strategies, Partnership for Integrated Planning* 12 (August 2005), http://calblueprint.dot.ca.gov/0506_grant_info_files/Blueprint_Implementation_Strategies2.pdf (available November 2007).

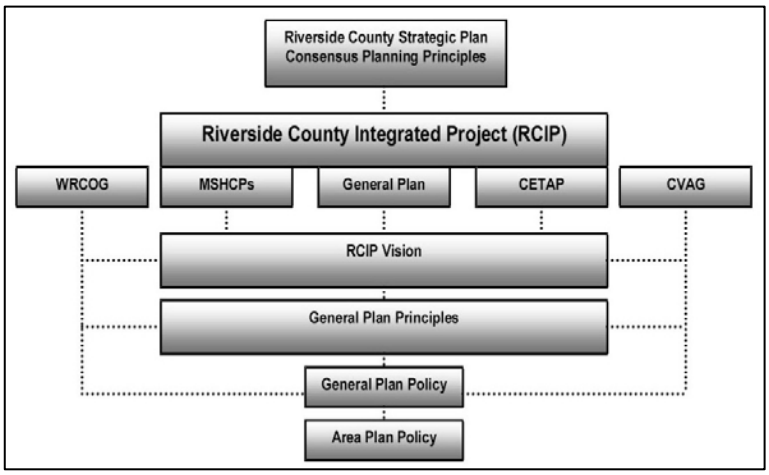
[26] Merced County Association of Governments, *Community Workshops Discussion of Merced County Transportation Scenarios* (March 2004 Working Paper).

[27] 2004 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN at 5.

[28] Following its experience in creating the 2004 RTP, MCAG is assuming a leadership role now wants to spread the PIP process throughout the San Joaquin Valley. In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger created the 26-member California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley to research issues of economic development, public education, transportation, air quality, agriculture, and health services in the valley and to develop legislative recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY INTEGRATED PROJECT
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, AND HABITAT PROTECTION



The Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) emerged from a negotiated agreement among environmental, building industry, agricultural, and property owner interests. The County Board of Supervisors adopted these Consensus Planning Principles in October 1998. The RCIP's three primary elements reflect this initial balancing of interests. They include a [1] Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for over 150 species; the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP),[2] designed to minimize transportation project delays; and County General Plan amendments (adopted 2003), which established a Certainty System to improve predictability for developers and property owners.

The unique structure of the RCIP reflects an overriding acceptance that a coordinated growth strategy can strike a balance among individual stakeholder concerns. In the past, litigation over protecting habitat for a single species had placed severe restrictions on potential development sites. Transportation backlog was compounded by regulatory delays and increasing costs. Environmental advocates recognized that growth from Los Angeles and Orange Counties would continue regardless of the way that Riverside County addressed it. After RCIP's suggestions began to take root, it was felt that developers would accept added fees for habitat planning and transportation improvements if they could expect greater certainty in County land use policies. The negotiated balance would reserve areas to protect plant and animal habitats, address community and environmental concerns before proceeding with transportation projects, and clarify land use policies in the County General Plan. These stakeholders chose a proactive response over the incapacitating effects of "business as usual." [3]

Following Riverside County's adoption of the Consensus Planning Principles, the RCIP established working committees that paralleled identified needs for transportation, habitat protection, and plan update.[4] These committees worked closely together and with consultants. They also worked apart from public processes through formative phases of the project. While internal coordination led to noteworthy program integration, it also brought major criticism that the RCIP excluded essential public and government involvement.

RCIP's sustaining three-part structure is a federation of planning and regulatory controls. The 2002 Riverside County General Plan (adopted October 7, 2003) incorporates RCIP

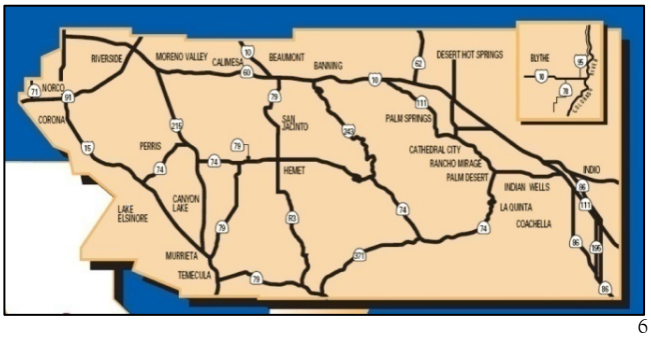
elements and recommendations from countywide workshops. Its Certainty System establishes a detailed structure that provides time frames for when the plan can be modified[5] within unincorporated areas of the county. The implementing agreement for the MSHCP includes local governments and special districts, state and federal agencies. It is managed by the Western Riverside County Conservation Authority and supported by Development Mitigation Fees from participating local governments.

The Riverside County Transportation Commission uses the CETAP in planning transit corridors. The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) supports projects in the western sector of the county using funds from the RCIP-based Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program. Comparable to the MSHCP Mitigation Fee, participating governments agreed to transfer funds collected under their respective TUMFs to the WRCOG for area transportation projects. The Coachella Valley Council of Governments has comparable programs and interlocal impact fee agreements in the eastern sector Riverside County.

What follows in this chapter is an analysis of the RCIP as a collaborative process. It reviews precursor events, the negotiation and committee phases, and its regulatory and planning elements. From inception through implementation, this needs-driven program offers insights for environmental/transportation coordination and local-regional cooperation.

I. County Growth Trends

Riverside County, encompassing 7,300 square miles, is comparable in size to the State of New Jersey. It lies east of Los Angeles and Orange Counties and extends to the Arizona border. San Diego and Imperial Counties are to the south. Riverside and its neighboring San Bernardino County are often referred to together as the Inland Empire.



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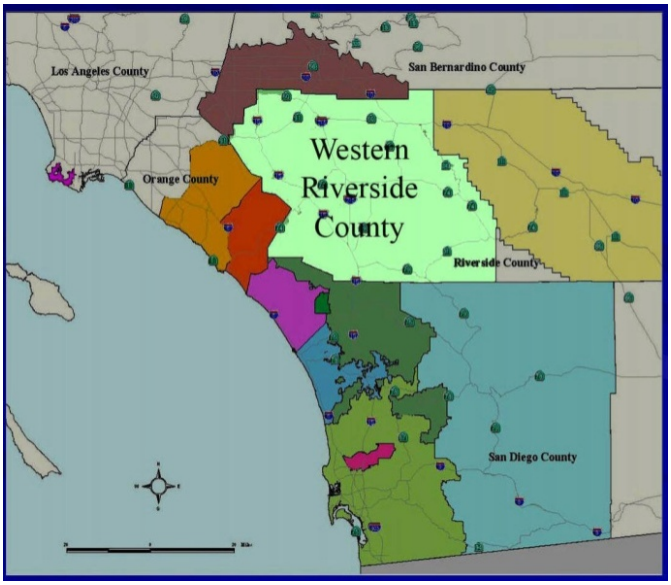

From 1990 to 2000, countywide population increased 32% from 1,170,000 to over 1,500,000. Census figures show another dramatic population increase to 2,026,803 million in 2006 (a 31.2% jump).[7] The California Department of Finance (2004) projects that county population will exceed 3 million by 2030 and 4 million by 2050.[8] The western sector has experienced most of the intensive growth in recent years. The Coachella Valley in eastern Riverside County is also growing rapidly.

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The Riverside area economic base is linked to its proximity to major ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach. In 2004, over 100 million metric tons of freight passed through the County. This represents a 58% increase from 1997.[10] Regional leaders express optimism for future growth in logistics for goods movement and alternative energy production. Approximately 30% of the county's working residents are in retail and service; 12% are in manufacturing, and 11% in construction.[11] Among these workers, over 75% drove to work alone; 16% carpooled; and only 1% used public transit.[12] The combined Census category of educational services, health care and social assistance provides 17% of current employment. At the same time, however, an estimated 11% of Riverside County's residents live below the poverty line.[13]

The county's diverse geography includes deserts, mountains, forest, and productive agricultural lands.[14] This provides habitat for a variety of rare plants and animals including the slender-horned spineflower, Stephen's kangaroo rat, and coastal California gnatcatcher.[15] Rapid land development is extending eastward into the County's Coachella Valley region.

II. County Planning and Development Prior to the RCIP

A. The County General Plan Before RCIP

When RCIP negotiations began, there was no strong and coherent document to guide growth and its demands on infrastructure and resource capacity. The County General Plan had not been updated since 1987. This document faced criticism for the general land use guidance that allowed wide discretion for development decisions and the lack of a countywide map. As a result, between 1987 and the 2002, this plan was amended over 300 times.[16] The Board of Supervisors had also approved eleven Community Plans that did include maps, policies, and zoning. Four comparable plans for other areas were also in progress.[17]

B. Environmental Impasse: Rats to All!

When the federal government listed the Stephens Kangaroo rat as an endangered species in 1988, residential and commercial construction was thriving in western Riverside County. In that year alone, the County issued 35,000 residential building permits. When it was determined that this area held most of the remaining habitat for that species, development was effectively halted. In 1990, only 10,000 County-issued residential permits were issued. This number remained below 15,000 annually through 1998.[18]

The County responded to the federal designation by establishing the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Authority. Its interim Stephens Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan was approved by the Federal Fish & Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game in 1990.[19] The plan protected 565,000 acres and established nine "study areas" within an additional 78,000 acres where development was restricted. It also included a Stephens Kangaroo rat mitigation fee. By mid-2001, this impact fee had generated $34 million. The Conservation Authority also spent $30 million in the acquisition of habitat lands while defending seven ongoing lawsuits over the interim plan with costs approaching $1 million.[20]

In 1992, the county habitat conservation agency joined with the regional parks and open space district and WRCOG to develop a multiple species plan for the western county region.[21] This effort was motivated in part by indications that the coastal California gnatcatcher would be designated as another federally endangered species.[22] By the mid-1990s, there was growing consensus among stakeholders that a comprehensive regional approach to preserving endangered habitats would better serve county interests.

C. Growing Beyond Infrastructure Capacity

The mid-1990s were also marked by major demands for housing and transportation infrastructure. The ability to build new roads quickly to accommodate regional growth and freight traffic became focal points for stakeholder discussions. Transportation needs were so important that one observer saw the road building capacity of the RCIP as its chief component.

III. Pre-RCIP Stakeholder Talks: From Impasse to Consensus Planning Principles

Amid contention over outdated land use guidance, habitats, and highway backlogs, an unlikely group of stakeholder advocates agreed to explore alternative approaches. Representatives from the building industry, agriculture, and environmental organizations persisted toward agreement on fifteen planning principles.[23] Observers noted a critical threshold was passed when negotiators acknowledged together that development would occur whether or not there was effective planning within the County.

A second major shift occurred when discussions toward understanding the primary interests of each stakeholder. Development interests sought greater certainty that land use planning and regulation would be consistent: added costs could be acceptable if they were predictable and fair. Agricultural and property owners also sought plan certainty. In the same manner, advocates for transportation infrastructure concluded that environmental issues must be addressed before any project planning takes place, and environmental interests recognized that habitat protection would fare better in a coordinated regulatory and planning system.

During this negotiation phase, each interest showed willingness to identify issues and interests. Environmental representatives acknowledged that finding viable solutions to habitat concerns *before* development begins was preferable to after-the-fact challenges. Property rights advocates, concerned about the imposition of new zoning maps, could focus on a positive and stable set of rights for developable land. Similarly, farming interests in Riverside County could place greater reliance on current regulations and find a more predictable time frame in which to decide whether or not to sell their land for development purposes.

Ultimately, stakeholder representatives reached agreement on 15 Consensus Planning Principles that focused on the County General Plan as the primary integrating force:

1. A comprehensive new General Plan based on an overall vision of the future should be created, rather than piecemeal Community Plan updates and project-specific General Plan amendments.
2. The new General Plan must assure sufficient measures of certainty providing for a high quality of life, including reasonable accommodation of future growth, housing, biological and multiple species resources, agriculture, watersheds and scenic landscapes.

3. The General Plan must acknowledge the rights of private property owners and offer just compensation according to the Constitutional, federal and state law for private property reserved for public purposes.

4. General Plan policies and derivative regulations should include, where appropriate, positive economic and regulatory incentives.

5. General Plan policies must establish that public benefits and improvements serve the entire community and must be funded proportionately by the entire community. New development must bear its share of increased infrastructure costs.

6. The General Plan should base community development on a balanced, sustainable, and integrated set of mapped land uses, including policies promoting the continued viability of agricultural lands.

7. The location of areas mapped for development should be determined with consideration of the following factors:
* avoidance of resource and hazard areas
* opportunity for redevelopment
* availability of infill sites
* proximity of existing infrastructure
* proximity of existing municipal spheres of influence
* conformance with the policies of communities of interest
* placement of appropriately sited new towns and villages

8. The new General Plan must coordinate, to the maximum extent possible, with planning within the incorporated areas and encourage mutually reinforcing actions by the cities and LAFCO, as appropriate. Furthermore, the new General Plan should coordinate with larger regional planning efforts.

9. The General Plan should plan for and encourage the development of diverse and distinctive communities.

10. A goal of the new General Plan is to create a more compact urban form, resulting in a reduction in land consumption per capita compared to current modes of development.

11. The General Plan should plan for and encourage economic development with emphasis on employment opportunities situated within or nearby existing and future communities.

12. The new General Plan must be fully integrated with transportation planning, so that Land Use and Circulation Elements reinforce each other. Transit/rail corridors should be fully examined by CETAP and incorporated into the new General Plan to the maximum extent possible.

13. The General Plan should plan for and encourage a wide range of housing choices suitable for residents of all economic means.

14. The new General Plan should integrate a comprehensive Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

15. Existing community plans should be updated as part of this process to bring them into conformance with revised General Plan policies. New community plans, if any, and consistency zoning should be delayed until the new General Plan is completed.[24]

Stakeholders clearly rejected a fragmented approach and recommended that preferred development areas and patterns be designated along with associated land use maps. The planning principles also stated that the proposed transportation acceptance process and multiple species habitat conservation plan would be specifically referenced to the General Plan. The revised plan must also acknowledge property rights and "assure sufficient measures of certainty providing for a high quality of life, including reasonable accommodation of future growth...."[25]

By the time the RCIP was officially instigated, the workgroup (which evolved in the General Plan Advisory Committee) had agreed upon these fifteen guiding principles that would balance interests among primary stakeholder participants. The ability of these well-informed and politically active groups to discuss a *balanced* perspective for growth was remarkable. An outside observer might conclude that agreement was attained by hard bargaining among these stakeholders. One observer familiar with these negotiations refined this perception by referring to its dynamics as "soft bargaining."

IV. From Principles to Practice: The RCIP Committee Process

Within the framework of adopted principles, the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) began as an official process in early 1999. Three working committees were formed to address needs for updating the General Plan, improving acceptance for transportation projects, and providing a more holistic approach to habitat protection. The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) played a central coordinating role in selecting consultants and overseeing committees for the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) and Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

RCIP collaboration remained intentionally separated from official governmental processes. This allowed negotiators to avoid the requirements of California's public meeting and "Sunshine" laws. Meetings for the general plan workgroup began approximately eighteen months before the County officially implemented the legal process needed to adopt a new General Plan. As one interviewee stated, the RCIP avoided "messy democracy."

The decision to begin committee work with minimal governmental participation had negative consequences as well. One individual pointed out that this decision brought about a plan with little buy-in from County planning staff. This exclusion affected later communication with county officials. For instance, when RCIP participants sought commitment from county management and planning officials, an observer noted that there were few persons who could "understand or appreciate the plan."

The original RCIP process called for the General Plan Advisory Committee to oversee the entire plan development process. Its membership included persons selected by County Supervisors, area builders, and representatives of environmental, property owner, economic and social equity organizations. Public sector representation included selected local governments, WRCOG, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The GPAC committee met monthly. At key intervals, a subcommittee met weekly with consultants and county staff.[26]

The CETAP Advisory Committee was relatively diverse. It was responsible for interacting with consultants for the General Plan circulation element, considering transit options, and designating four new transportation corridors. The MSHCP committee addressed the scope and necessary structure for managing natural habitats.

Virtually unseen in the RCIP, the role of consultants was important in coalescing the visions of various public and governmental actors. At approximately $30 million in cost, they worked on

the body of the RCIP, coordinated citizen outreach, and lent technical support to the process. By any scale, the RCIP was a substantial and lengthy process: the background assistance of a large consultancy staff was noted by many interviewees in this analysis.

While the Riverside Planning and Transportation Agency played an important coordinating role, county planners were not initially included in the process. The RCIP planning groups maintained direct oversight of a variety of consultants who drafted the plan. No planning director attended a GPAC meeting. In the latter development stages, it was noted that state and federal agencies with approval authority over certain RCIP elements refused to deal with the GPAC. Nonetheless, the power of the original stakeholder group cannot be underestimated in the RCIP process. One observer estimated that the GPAC committee received approximately 90% of what it wanted (policies and plan focus) and that the Transit and Environmental groups received about 75% of what they desired.

V. Collaborative Implementation for RCIP Elements

The Riverside County Integrated Project strikes a balance between infrastructure to support growth and realistic plans to preserve natural habitats. It reflects a realization among environmentalists that a zero-growth policy would not, and could not, occur in Riverside County. The RCIP also shows acceptance among development interests that building cannot be done without greater costs to the region. Further, transportation project planning recognizes that while meeting with community and environmental interests involves substantial effort, it should lead to greater acceptance and more cost-effective and timely construction.

RCIP planning and governance differs substantially from the other case studies. For example, one can navigate to http://www.rcip.org, but there is no physical "Office of RCIP." The General Plan is a county function while CETAP and MSHCP roles are allocated among local, regional, state, and federal authorities. These latter elements apply only to the western sector of the county. Riverside County and its local governments are also members of the Southern California Association of Governments. Within the county, there are two subregional COGs. The Western Riverside Council of Governments area covers approximately 2,100 square miles and is home to three-fourths of the county's 2 million residents.[27] The Coachella Valley Association of Governments has separate transportation and habitat planning as well as other regional programs in the remaining eastern portion of the county.

The complex implementation structure for RCIP reflects the initial balance of stakeholder interests. Developers gained predictability and accepted impact fees for habitat protection and transportation projects. Environmental interests attained a landmark multiple species habitat plan with financial support from local impact fees. Transportation planners agreed to focus primary initial attention on environmental and community concerns. While this extends the preliminary planning process, it reduces the potential for costly project delays.

A. The 2002 General Plan: RCIP and Development "Certainty"

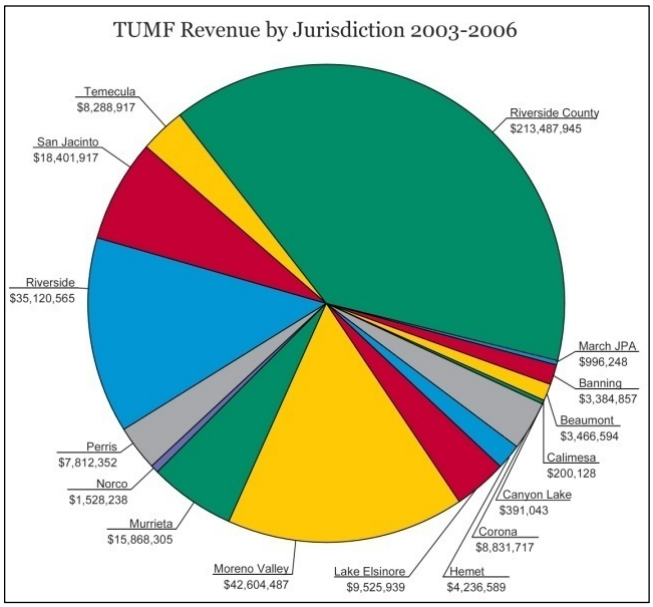
The 2002 General Plan replaced an inefficient and skeletal system with a document that would assure growth at a nominally higher cost in exchange for tools to preserve natural

habitats and would require transportation planners to consult with communities and with environmental regulators and interests. Analogous to challenges facing COGs, the county relies on cooperation with the twenty-five municipalities and ten Tribal Councils for land use, transportation, and other planning functions. The county's Local Agency Formation Commission has oversight functions concerning service areas and municipal boundaries.

Riverside County administers the General Plan and its Certainty System for unincorporated areas within its 7,000 square miles. The Certainty System is a key RCIP component designed to protect developers, property owners, agricultural interests, and others affected by the plan. It is intended to clarify how the plan will apply to ongoing decisions and when it may be modified. It is structured to provide those affected by the plan with a "high level of confidence" and "reasonable expectations" regarding its impact…."[28] The Certainty System includes four elements: Presentation, Interpretation, Monitoring, and Amendment. Policy, principle, and boundary changes are limited to five-year intervals unless there are exceptional circumstances. Decisions to change agricultural designations follow a cycle of two-and a-half years.

B. CETAP Planning and Fiscal Support

Implementation of the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptance Process (CETAP) is divided primarily between the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG). The RCTC is charged with planning and funding improvements countywide. The agency conducts the primary community and environmental contacts in selecting alternatives for transportation corridors. The RCTC is also responsible for required environmental reporting. However, ultimate decisions on road locations involve Caltrans, the FHWA, and regulatory agencies at the state and federal level.[29]



[32]

RCTC also administers Measure A, a ½-cent countywide sales tax program for transportation services and improvements. It was authorized initially in 1989 as a 20-year program by 78.9% of county voters. In 2002, 69.2% of those voting approved a 30-year extension for Measure A along with a revised fiscal plan.[30]

As part of the RCIP, the Western Riverside Council of Governments administers the Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) in collaboration with participating local governments. It is "the largest multi-jurisdictional fee program in the nation."[31] The program's 2006 annual

report refers to fourteen completed projects, eight in construction phases, and seventy-seven more in progress.[33] WRCOG cites an additional 139 TUMF-funded projects scheduled for the upcoming five-year period at nearly $900 million.[34]

Local governments participate in the TUMF program by adopting the model Western Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee Program Ordinance.[35] This provides that fees collected for residential and non-residential projects will be directed to projects in the Regional System of Highways and Arterials plan developed by WRCOG members. A key supportive finding in the model ordinance is that: "[s]uch development will benefit from the Regional System improvements and the burden of such development will be mitigated in part by the payment of the TUMF."[36]

The common fee structure for the TUMF is prepared by WRCOG in cooperation with the fifteen participating municipalities, the County, and the March Joint Powers Authority.[37] While local participation is voluntary, the TUMF Administrative Plan states that: "Non-participating jurisdictions will be ineligible to vote on any TUMF Program item and to receive their share of an estimated $970 million in road maintenance funds that will be allocated from the Reauthorized Measure A."[38] A local government that does not transmit these funds to the WRCOG will not be considered a "participating jurisdiction."[39]

C. The Multi-Tiered MSHCP Structure

The Western Riverside County Conservation Authority was established in 2004 as a joint powers authority for the MSHCP. Its implementing agreement was signed by the County, fourteen municipalities; countywide flood control, parks, and waste management districts, Caltrans, the state Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Fish and Game; and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.[40] The MSHCP identifies approximately 1.26 million acres within an overall area of nearly 2,000 square miles. 843,500 acres are in unincorporated areas and approximately 372,700 acres within municipal authority.[41]

The MSHCP conservation strategy is linked directly to the RCIP transportation element. In addition to "conserving species and their associated habitats," the habitat plan is charged with "coordinating, streamlining, and planning [d]evelopment."[42] This paradoxical approach to regional conservation planning presumes that "the MSHCP will result in much greater and more biologically effective habitat and species conservation than a project-by-project approach could produce."[43]

The Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan also establishes a Cooperative Organizational structure for local administration and "effective coordination with state and federal partners."[44] There are specific obligations for the county flood control, parks, and waste districts, and for the RCTC.[45] Participating localities are directed to adopt Development Mitigation Fee ordinances that are substantively similar to those developed by the TUMF process.[46] The County development mitigation fee for unincorporated areas must "specifically provide for habitat acquisition pursuant to the MSHCP."[47] The Habitat Plan is also to be incorporated within the County General Plan.

Locally proposed infrastructure projects that could affect "connectivity of habitat within the Criteria Area" are required to meet with Authority staff at the "pre-design stage regarding the size, location and configuration of wildlife crossings."[48] If a project fails to comply with adopted Implementation Mechanisms, other MSHCP requirements, or compromises the viability of the MSHCP Conservation Area, the permittee must "Meet and Confer" with Authority staff.[49] If matters are not resolved through this process, an Elected Officials Ad Hoc Committee meets openly to seek feasible solutions.[50] If none emerge, the Conservation Agency notifies the permittee and wildlife agencies within fourteen days.

At this point, another process requires Wildlife Agencies and State Permittee representatives to review and exchange information.[51] A Reserve Management Oversight Committee comprised of federal, state, and local representatives is assigned an intermediary role between the "on the ground" MSHCP activities conducted by the Reserve Managers and others and the decision-making function of the RCA."[52]

VI. RCIP in the Rational Planning Framework

A. Data Collection and Analysis

Necessary data for RCIP transportation and habitat protection elements came from a variety of sources. For example, transit information for the Circulation Element came from the County Planning Department, Riverside County Transportation Commission, SCAG, WRCOG, and CVAG. Residents also provided neighborhood and area-based information used in considering roads and traffic improvements. Information sources for multi-species habitat planning came from environmental regulatory agencies, university studies, and knowledgeable citizens.

B. Visioning and Goals

As with planning and regulation, collaborative visioning for the RCIP reflects compromise among stakeholders defining the process. The 2002 General Plan recommends interpreting the RCIP vision as "a consolidation of many legitimate agendas within which balanced response is expected."[53] Even the vision's definition of "quality of life" notes contending interests reflected in the plan: "It is a balancing of competing priorities that do not enjoy universal support throughout the County.[54]

C. Outreach and Participation Strategy

Public outreach for the RCIP was primarily achieved through General Plan workshops throughout the County. One of the tools that planners used was to go into a community the day before an RCIP information meeting was to be held in order to answer questions. Furthermore, planners set up a kiosk outside meeting sites several hours before adjournment to answer individual questions and cull out concerns that were tangential or not connected to the RCIP. Local elected officials and their staffs were consulted before each meeting. All areas in the county had three to four public meetings regarding the RCIP. As noted below, this was an exceptional accomplishment when considering the size of Riverside County.

Convening over 200 community workshops within a 7,000 square mile area was a logistical challenge. An observer noted that it was not uncommon for residents of cities within the county to be unaware of one another. Public input ranged from individual neighborhood concerns to a desire to preserve the character of rural communities. Insights from these meetings led to establishing a Rural Community Foundation Component and associated land use designations in the General Plan.

VII. Challenges for Collaborative Planning in Riverside County

The most striking feature of the RCIP as a collaborative process is that opposing and politically powerful groups came together to negotiate its existence. It was driven by the need to streamline environmental review for major infrastructure projects. It was advocated and guided by active stakeholders who saw a need to negotiate a realistic response to unprecedented growth. The revised County General Plan reflects all these elements: more predictable planning procedures, a CETAP, and a MSHCP. The integration of environmental elements into the RCIP might not have been possible in a more disbursed planning process. It was meant to be forged apart from the administrative process in order to maintain its vision. This led to a curious disconnect between the County Planning Commission and the planning staff.

The RCIP sought a process for environmental and permit review that would be both efficient and stable within a guaranteed framework of developmental rights. Builders agreed to a plan structure that would ensure their rights in exchange for added costs for transportation and habitat protection. Environmental proponents agreed to limit development opposition provided that road projects would consult the environmental interests early and that private development would help purchase sensitive habitat lands. These acceptances enabled extraordinary cooperative planning for multiple species habitats and interlocal finance for this as well as for the transportation element of the RCIP. While the 2002 General Plan is limited to unincorporated areas of the county, it is the integrating document for the RCIP initiative.

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[1] COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE GENERAL PLAN LU 7 (adopted October 7, 2003) [hereinafter 2002 GENERAL PLAN.] This document is also referred to as the Riverside County Integrated Plan.

[2] U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, - Planning and Environment Linkages Case Studies, "Riverside County Integrated Project," http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/integ/case_riverside.asp (available November 2007). Courtney Wood, *Riverside County Integrated Project, The Importance Of Urban Management In California* 4 (2004) (collaboration and coordination among governments).

[3] *See* James E. Sullivan & Thomas A. Scott, *The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan: A Study in the Evolution of HCPs*, 17 ENDANGERED SPECIES UPDATE.28, 31 (2000) (litigation over the habitat conservation plan for the Stephens kangaroo rat was the "longest, most litigious HCP process on record").

[4] The initial program structure included a Special Area Management Plan for the San Jacinto and Santa Margarita watersheds but the complexities in integrating this element led participants to concentrate on the above areas. *See* Frank Bracaglia, MONITORING, ANALYZING, AND REPORTING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL STREAMLINING PILOT PROJECTS 46 (2005) [prepared for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program].

[5] COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE GENERAL PLAN at LU 69.

[6]2002 GENERAL PLAN at LU-7.

[7] U.S. Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06065.html (available November 2007). *See also* Kristen M. Crossett, Thomas J. Culliton, Peter C. Wiley, & Timothy R. Goodspeed, POPULATION TRENDS ALONG THE COASTAL UNITED STATES: 1980-2008 (2004).

[8] State of California, Department of Finance, *Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity for California and Its Counties 2000–2050*, Sacramento, California, May 2004.

[9] *See* Jim E. Bartel, *Integrating Endangered Species Conservation and Regional Transportation Planning in Western Riverside County, California*, http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/ADC10/PDFs/SummerWorkshop06/Riverside_Habitat_Conservation_Plan.pdf.

[10]Riverside County Transportation Commission, FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM at 2 http://dev.rctc.org/about/pdf/Brochure-LegislativeFederal.pdf (available November 2007).

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] United States Census Bureau, *American Fact Finder, Riverside County, California, Population and Housing Narrative Profile: 2005* http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US06065&-qr_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_NP01&-ds_name=&-redoLog=false (available November 2007).

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] 2002 GENERAL PLAN at LU-3.

[15] The Federal Bureau of Land Management web site provides the following examples of rare species within the Inland Empire: "Munz's onion, slender-horned spineflower, least Bell's vireo, Stephen's kangaroo rat, coastal California gnatcatcher, arroyo toad, and possibly Quino checkerspot butterfly." United States Depart of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, "Inland Empire." http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/inland_empire.html (available November 2007). *See also* Riverside County Integrated Project Consultant Team, *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report, Hemet To Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor*, Volume 1 (July 2002) http://www.midcountyparkway.org/admin/uploads/EIS-EIR_summary.pdf (available November 2007); James E. Sullivan & Thomas A. Scott, *The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Plan:* 17 ENDANGERED SPECIES UPDATE at 28.

[16] 2002 GENERAL PLAN at I-5.

[17] *Ibid* at I-5.

[18] *See* Sullivan & Scott, *The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan*, 17 ENDANGERED SPECIES UPDATE at 31. *See also* Tom Mullen, Supervisor, 5th District County of Riverside, "Testimony Before The House Committee On Resources Relating To Title VII of the "Conservation And Reinvestment Act" June 20, 2001.

[19] *Ibid. See also* Paola Bernazzani and Jeff Opperman, *Riverside County Stephen's Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan*, http://sunsite.utk.edu/ncedr/casestudies/hcp/western.htm (available November 2007).

[20] *See* Rochelle Williams, *Riverside County, Calif., Links Progress With the Environment*," THE BOND BUYER, Friday, September 29, 2000 (indicating that the county spent over $42 million on habitat lands for this species between 1987 and 2000). *See also* Sullivan & Scott, *The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan*, 17 ENDANGERED SPECIES UPDATE at 31 ("The ESA can stop a development project at any stage, regardless of local permits and agreements.").

[21] WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN 1 1.2.3 (2003).

[22] *Ibid.* 1.2.3

[23] *See* note 1, *supra.*

[24] *See* Riverside County Strategic Plan, Attachment C, *Consensus Planning Principles*, http://www.countyofriverside.us/portal/page?_pageid=133,1356445&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (available November 2007)

[25] Consensus Planning Principle 2, *supra* note 1.

[26] 2002 GENERAL PLAN at I-5

[27] *See* Western Riverside Council of Governments, WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY 5 (2006).

[28] 2002 GENERAL PLAN at LU 69.

[29]*See* Riverside County Transportation Commission, *Frequently Asked Questions for CETAP*, http://www.rcip.org/pdf_files/CETAP_FAQ_04_14_03.pdf (available November 2007).

[30] Riverside County Transportation Commission, *Measure A*, http://www.rctc.org/measureA/index.asp (available November 2007).

[31] *Ibid.* at 6.

[32] Western Riverside Council of Governments, TRANSPORTATION UNIFORM MITIGATION FEE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 2006 11 (2006).

[33] *Ibid.*, at 7.

[34]*Ibid.*, at 7.

[35] Western Riverside Council of Governments, ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN FOR WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION UNIFORM MITIGATION FEE (TUMF) PROGRAM (revised September 11, 2006) at 5.

[36] *An Ordinance Of The City Of [Insert City Name] Amending And Superseding Ordinance No. [Insert Ordinance No.] Authorizing Participation In The Western Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee Program* (Model Ordinance for TUMF Participation) Section 1 http://www.wrcog.cog.ca.us/downloads/010106%20City%20Ordiance%20F6L601!%20_3_.pdf (available November 2007).

[37] *See* TUMF/WRCOG, TRANSPORTATION UNIFORM MITIGATION FEE 2005 UPDATE FEE CALCULATION HANDBOOK SECTION 1.0 (2005). "The fee calculations are based on the proportional allocation of the costs of proposed transportation improvements based on the cumulative transportation system impacts of different types of new development." *Ibid.*

[38]Western Riverside Council of Governments, ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN FOR THE WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION UNIFORM MITIGATION FEE (TUMF) PROGRAM 6 (2006).

[39] *Ibid* at 5.

[40] Parties to the implementing agreement for the MSHCP include: the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority, County of Riverside, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Riverside County Regional Parksand Open Space District, Riverside County Waste Management District, Riverside County Transportation Commission, City of Banning, City of Beaumont, City of Calimesa, City of Canyon Lake, City of Corona, City of Hemet, City of Lake Elsinore, City of Moreno Valley, City of Murrieta, City of Norco, City of Perris, City of Riverside, City of San Jacinto, City of Temecula, California Department of Transportation, California Department of Parks and Recreation, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish And Game.

[41] IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENT FOR THE WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN/NATURAL COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN 3 (2003).

[42] *Ibid.* at 16.

[43] *Ibid.* at 16.

[44]WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN Section 6.61

[45] *Ibid.* Section 6.16.

[46] *Ibid.*, at 23-24.

[47] *Ibid* at 24.

[48] *Ibid.* Section 6.62 E. 2.

[49] *Ibid* . Section 6.62 E. 3.

[50] *Ibid* . Section 6.62 E. 3.

[51] *Ibid.* Section 6.62 F. 1.

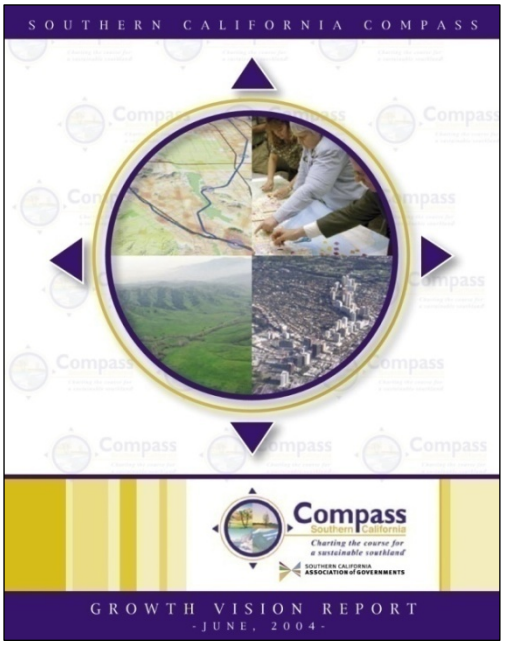
[52] *Ibid.* Section 6.64 A.

[53] 2002 GENERAL PLAN at V-9.

[54] *Ibid.* at V-9-V-10.

CHAPTER 5

THE SCAG COMPASS BLUEPRINT
CHARTING A COURSE FOR A SUSTAINABLE MEGAREGION



Mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability[1] are the guiding principles for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Compass Blueprint, which began as an initiative within its Regional Board's Growth Visioning Subcommittee.[2] The agency conducted surveys, workshops, and regional dialogues before adopting the Southern California Compass Growth Vision and Implementation Program in June 2004.[3] Its primary implementation strategy is to promote transit-oriented development using only 2% of compatible land within the region. This cooperative policy could accommodate regional population and economic growth through 2030. SCAG assists local demonstration projects consistent with Compass objectives.

The Compass program was designed to balance sustainable ideals with collaborative challenge. SCAG leadership worked intensively with staff to develop the initial guidance framework. Consultants assisted by proposing a sequence of actions to engage citizen involvement. After surveying public views on growth and regional issues, planners conducted workshops that asked participants to map a development pattern that would accommodate growth through 2030. This "chips exercise"[4] offered options ranging from low-density residential zoning to concentrated mixed- use categories. As this exercise progressed, nearly all groups traded lower density residential chips for ones that could concentrate development in transit-accessible locations. Later workshops with civic leaders, referred to as the Southland Dialogues, highlighted the role of SCAG subregions and local governments in implementing Compass objectives.

This chapter describes collaborative elements in three phases of the Compass visioning process. It reviews the initial interactions among regional leaders, staff, and consultants to develop guiding principles. The following sections describe the processes leading to official adoption. This includes workshops, scenario development, and coordination with subregions. Finally, it addresses ongoing strategies that encourage transportation-oriented development consistent with Compass priorities. For instance, SCAG offers assistance to member governments willing to adapt land use policies that meet local economic objectives as well as the 2% strategy for accommodating regional growth.

I. Area Character and Trends[5]

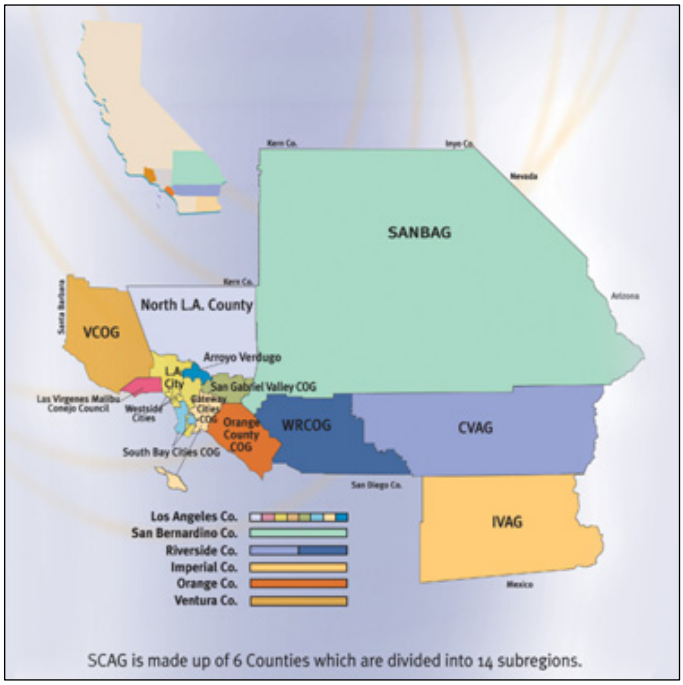
The 38,000 square mile SCAG region includes coastal, desert, and mountain areas. Regional population grew from 11.5 million in 1980 to 16.5 million in 2000.[6] By 2006, it increased by 10% to 18.2 million. This is nearly half of California's total population. Over 70% live or work in the Coastal Basin of Los Angeles and Orange counties and in the San Fernando Valley.[7] The Compass report (2004) estimated that 6.3 million more people would be living in the region by 2030.[8]

Increased housing costs in coastal counties have stimulated an eastward development boom. In 2005, 48% of area growth was concentrated in the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties).[9] As a result, residents travel an average of 19.2 miles one-way to work. Approximately 77% drive alone and 6.4% use public transit (bus or Metrorail). Average commuting time in 2005 was 38 minutes. In fact, Southern Californians spend more than 1.8 million vehicle hours in congested traffic daily.[10]

Land Supply is a major concern in the Southern California region. The coastal area is already intensely developed. Mountains, environmentally sensitive areas, and large land areas owned by the state and federal governments limit potential sites.[11] SCAG estimates that approximately 10,500 out of 38,000 remaining acres are developable.[12] Single-family detached homes make up 60% of the region's housing stock.[13] The Compass report estimated that local general plans would provide for only 238,000 new detached homes in undeveloped areas, or 29% of estimated growth through 2030.[14]

Development trends also intensify environmental concerns. All four air basins within the region are non-attainment areas for ozone[15] and three basins do not meet current quality standards for particulate matter (PM_{10}),[16] SCAG staff refers to this as "protecting the lungs of the region." Energy consumption raises both environmental quality and economic issues. The impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the global climate is an added concern.[17] Reliance on oil and natural gas [18] makes Southern California particularly vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply shortages.[19] The region also imports 75% of its water supply, primarily from the Colorado River.[20]

II. Governance in the SCAG Region and Subregions



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The Southern California Association of Governments was established in 1965 as a joint powers authority.[21] In 1992, SCAG created fourteen subregions, which also operate as Councils of Government. Its six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura) and 187 cities meet annually at a General Assembly. The 77-member Regional Council meets monthly to address ongoing concerns. The Council refers policy matters initially to its Committees on Transportation and Communication; Energy and Environment; or Community, Economic, and Human Development (CEHD). The CEHD Growth Visioning Subcommittee oversees development of the Compass program.

As SCAG's transportation planning responsibilities expanded, the agency restructured its internal governance by establishing fourteen subregional COGs. These subregions act interdependently with SCAG and with local governments. They provide essential data, and coordinate public involvement, finance, and projects for the metropolitan transportation plan.[23]

COG subregions often serve as intermediaries within each region. As one local official indicated, nearly all regional planning interactions are through the local COG. However, this overlay structure can also be confusing. For example, Riverside County includes two sub regional COGs (Western Riverside and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments) and is a SCAG member.

SCAG's governance challenge is highlighted in its 2004 Regional Transportation Plan. The action plan for the preferred Growth Vision Alternative includes fostering new partnerships with its subregions and local governments:[24] It has been noted that "SCAG cannot implement the Growth Vision alone. Its realization is dependent on the efforts and collaboration of literally thousands of leaders."[25]

III. Developing the Compass Vision

A. Precursors to the SCAG Compass Project

In April 1996, SCAG adopted a Livable Places initiative under direction of the CEHD Committee.[26] This program created seven community profiles that balanced land use and transportation-sensitive development.[27] Cathedral City, adjacent to Palm Springs, redeveloped its downtown from a blighted area to a pedestrian-friendly environment.[28] When the city's

visioning process for the downtown was inconsistent with a state highway, officials were successful in removing that designation.[29] Huntington Beach[30] created a downtown specific plan to encourage mixed-use commercial and residential infill development: its $26.2 million in public investment stimulated over $200 million in private development.[31] Leimert Park Village also exemplifies this kind of transit and pedestrian-oriented redevelopment initiative.[32] Long Beach has a redevelopment area centered around a Downtown Transit Mall.[33] In Pasadena, "tenacious advocacy by leaders representing property owners, merchants, preservationists and city officials"[34] was a key element in forwarding its community vision. Community activism and volunteerism were also central elements as Redlands worked to protect its historic downtown character.[35] These pedestrian-oriented mixed-use developments also served as examples for reducing automobile travel. In October 1999, the SCAG Regional Council directed the CEHD to use findings from the Livable Places program to begin a regional growth visioning process.[36]

B. Leadership from Within: The Council Growth Visioning Subcommittee

On January 19, 2000, the CEHD established a Growth Visioning Subcommittee to provide policy guidance for growth forecasts, alternative land use scenarios, sustainable development, and environmental issues.[37] The five Mayors and ten Council members adopted a subcommittee mission "to develop a process that assists local, subregional, and regional officials in developing strategies to accommodate growth that results in a preferred regional growth scenario."[38] On April 26, 2001, the Growth Visioning Subcommittee identified the following priority areas influential in determining the scale and location of future growth within the region:[39]

1. Housing: keep affordability and direct the market toward higher-density single-family and moderate-density attached units.

2. Land Use and Urban Design: infill development, brownfields reuse, adequate public facilities, and growth policies to limit development pressures on outlying lands.

3. Physical Infrastructure: Make additions to Metrolink, construct truck lanes, consider "Smart shuttle," airport and high-speed rail growth policies, ; work to develop "actual and geographic expansion of job opportunities, job training and higher education.

4. Political/Fiscal: Sustain availability of financing for building or maintaining infrastructure and for assisting housing construction, inter-jurisdictional collaboration, and suggest tax reforms to discourage "fiscalization of land-use."

5. Natural Resources/Ecological Systems: Avoid severe shortages of energy sources (oil, natural gas, electricity) and water; promote advances in energy conservation; air quality.

6. Technologic Innovations: Keep abreast of breakthroughs in alternative fuels and power generation; encourage expansion of telecommunication, e-commerce, etc.[40]

Observers noted that past planning policies and strategies were not adaptable in meeting the varied needs across a six-county region. Organizationally, SCAG needed to create synergy among transportation, land use, and open space proponents. Integrating these planning areas would provide efficient planning and resource management. To be effective across the six-county regions, SCAG would need to provide local governments with local strategies to assist

them during the urbanization process. Initial subcommittee dialogues led to eleven guiding principles for the visioning process:

Principle 1: Link Land Use and Transportation Better

Principle 2: Focus Development in Urban Centers

Principle 3: Support the Preservation of Stable, Single-Family Neighborhoods

Principle 4: Locate New Housing Near Existing Jobs and New Jobs Near Existing Housing

Principle 5: Encourage Transit-Oriented Development

Principle 6: Create Walkable Communities

Principle 7: Promote Travel Choices

Principle 8: Promote Affordable Housing

Principle 9: Conserve Rural, Agricultural, Recreational and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Principle 10: Ensure that Education is not a Barrier to Achieving Balanced Growth

Principle 11: Increase Quality of Life for All Residents[41]

Further dialogue among member, staff, and consultants consolidated these into the four guiding principles for the Compass program.

Principle 1: *Improve **mobility** for all residents.*

Principle 2: *Foster **livability** in all communities*

Principle 3: *Enable **prosperity** for all people*

Principle 4: *Promote **sustainability** for future generations.*[42]

These principles would be applied in community surveys, Compass workshops, and regional transportation plan scenarios.

The Compass growth visioning process was designed to engage stakeholders in understanding areawide trends and interdependent local and regional strategies. A consultant report in mid-2001 outlined a three-year cycle of events to test and refine the original eleven draft Growth Visioning Principles. Outreach included citizen surveys, stakeholder workshops, and interaction with SCAG subregions. At the same time, analysts were developing transportation/land use scenarios. These would be evaluated for consistency with evolving Compass principles. This phase concluded with adoption of interim growth vision in June 2004.[43] A second, longer-term process objective is to "marshal the vast resources of this Region into a long-term sustainability and livability based in a deliberate vision."[44]

The Planning Center report to the Growth Visioning Subcommittee highlighted the delicate balance in SCAG's leadership role. SCAG's strength is easily demonstrated. It represented the associated interests of local governments for twenty-five years (1966-2001). At the same time, "...a SCAG-dominated program is vulnerable to challenge, apathy or both by those who can help make the vision a reality if they are not involved in shaping the vision."[45] With the Compass initiative arising from within the Regional Council, clearly, outreach strategy is critical to program success.[46] The adopted Compass vision reflects this merging of Subcommittee principles, public involvement, and planning analysis:

> ...By definition, a successful Growth Vision must be driven by a wide array of input from the public and from various stakeholder groups. Such a process involves gathering a broad range of participants and stakeholders to gradually sculpt a consensus vision for the region.[47]

IV. Bringing Compass to the Region

The Growth Visioning Subcommittee played a continuing leadership role in communicating draft principles. They also integrated survey and workshops findings back into the Compass vision. The Subcommittee was also the conduit for citizen surveys and workshops, coordinating with the subregions, and integrating the PILUT transportation/land use scenarios. At this stage, the project identified six components for developing its growth vision:

> (1) Encourage public participation from residents and community leaders using surveys, the Compass workshops, and Southland Forums;
>
> (2) Create Scenarios to illustrate growth dynamics associated with land use and transportation alternatives.
>
> (3) Promote testing and evaluation of scenarios through use of modeling techniques
>
> (4) Define a growth vision for the SCAG region.
>
> (5) Outline and implement strategies based on the defined Compass vision
>
> (6) Establish benchmarks and a monitoring system to measure progress and adjust strategies as necessary.[48]

Strategic planning for land use, transportation, and open space required integrative collaboration at multiple levels. Observers noted that planning typically viewed these as separate functions. Participants also recognized the challenge of developing a common vision among diverse subregions. Local officials emphasized the value of diversity within their own cities. Furthermore, cities, counties, and stakeholders with primarily local concerns provided input at the subregional level.[49] Participants in the visioning process stressed the importance of paying close attention to the needs and differences of the localities. The Compass initiative sought participation from member governments, other agencies, interest-based stakeholders, and through public workshops.

A. The Growth Vision Survey

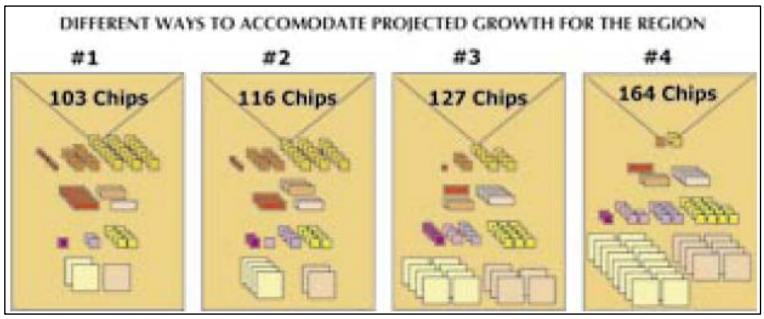
An initial survey of citizen attitudes showed significant concern about regional growth trends. Overcrowded schools (46%), traffic congestion (38%), housing costs, and air pollution (34%) were priority issues.[50] In transportation, 30% of the respondents favored freeway improvements. They also indicated that approximately 37% of transportation funds should to be distributed to public transit as a means of improving traffic congestion.[51]

Survey responses indicated other areas of potential support for Compass principles. Over 60% responded that they were somewhat or very concerned about urban sprawl;[52] and 56% felt that it was "somewhat" or "very desirable" to place environmental protection before economic growth.[53] However, there were indications that attitudes differed from expectations. As an example, 43% of respondents favored future growth within existing cities while only 25% considered that a likely pattern for regional development.[54]

B. The Compass Workshops: Reconciling Local Land Use with Regional Growth

The Compass workshops provided opportunities for nearly 1,300 residents and stakeholders to express their concerns about regional land use, transportation, economics, and environmental and political issues. Participants were also challenged to accommodate the projected addition 6 million people and 3 million jobs in the next 25 to 30 years.[55] The workshops used a chips game simulation exercise adapted from Envision Utah[56] to engage citizens as regional planners.

For the "chips game" exercise, participants were divided into groups of 8 to 12. They included representation from environmentalists, developers, students, seniors, immigrants and Californian natives." Staff and consultants sought a "give and take" dynamic that would encourage intergroup trade-offs. The small-group and collective challenge was to allocate jobs and housing for anticipated growth through 2030 by choosing among various growth patterns. These were represented by combinations of density chips.[57] Initially, each group selected three to four "starter-sets" of chips reflecting fourteen patterns of development within the Southern California region.[58] These chip sets ranged from the prevalent pattern of separate-use (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial) automobile-oriented patterns to mixed-use pedestrian-oriented patterns. The choice of starter chips reflected group preferences concerning the scale and quantity of development and redevelopment for their future scenario.[59]



Density chips allotted total acreage for each development type and the amount of homes and jobs it would accommodate. For example, an **Urban Center** chip used 160 acres and would accommodate 100 households and 320 jobs per acre.[60] A **High Intensity Corridor** chip

combined housing, office, and retail. One set of those chips covered 480 acres, of land, and provided 65 households and 95 jobs per acre.[61] An **Activity Center** linked large-scale retail and office uses with multi-family housing. At 640 acres, participants could allocate 15 households and 15 jobs per acre.[62] A **City Neighborhood** density chip was also 640 acres. It would accommodate 20 households and 6 jobs per acre.[63] In contrast, an **Industrial** Chip offered 20 jobs and no housing on 640 acres.[64] A single-family detached **Residential Subdivision** chip was also 640 acres. It would allow 10 households per acre and made no allowance for employment.[65] A **Large-lot Subdivision** or **Rural Housing** chip was 5,760 acres. Subdivisions allowed two households and no jobs on each acre, while[66] Rural Housing allotted .2 houses per acre.[67]

Groups were provided a "base map" identifying existing land uses, existing and planned transportation infrastructure, and environmental constraints.[68] The initial step was to identify areas where growth should not occur. Then, residents and stakeholders had to negotiate (as a group) where to accommodate the population growth and jobs in their detailed region. They could trade chips if their preferences changed, but the plan had to accommodate expected households and jobs in 2030.[69] The scenario could also integrate planned transportation improvements with density allocations. At the conclusion of each workshop, each group could present their vision and growth map. Most participants supported "infill" development and "a strong preference for development in mixed-use centers and corridors."[70] The exercise also showed that encouraging economic growth and environmental protection required varied housing types and mixed-use centers.[71] Observers noted that those participants in the workshops demonstrated intuitive understanding of regional planning and development issues. For SCAG, the workshops demonstrated challenges and opportunities in Compass visioning principles.

C. The PILUT Scenarios: Compass Principles in the Regional Transportation Plan

SCAG coordinated the Compass initiative with its 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update.[72] The RTP team used detailed land use modeling techniques to assess impacts of future development patterns on "congestion, vehicle trips, transit use and air pollution."[73] The Planning for Integrated Land Use and Transportation (PILUT) program developed two "bookend" scenarios. PILUT 1 concentrated jobs and housing growth in existing centers and corridors throughout the region.[74] Its compact form would require policy changes to encourage infill in existing areas, transportation corridors, and areas with effective transit service.[75] PILUT 2 would also encourage compact development along with transportation investment to encourage economic growth in the High Desert area. PILUT 2 would allocate an increasing growth share to newer cities.[76] Both PILUT scenarios rely on effective integration of higher density housing development and mixed uses with accessible transit or highways. They are also consistent with the four Compass guiding principles of mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability.

D. The Southland Dialogues: Re-testing the Compass Vision and Strategy

In March 2004, the Compass program presented its Growth Vision and Growth Vision Scenario through five subregional Southland Policy Dialogues. These programs were directed toward local and subregional government, civic, business, and neighborhood representatives. Participants in all five regions saw the biggest barrier as an "under-informed general public, media and other key institutions." The second greatest barrier was "local control over land use

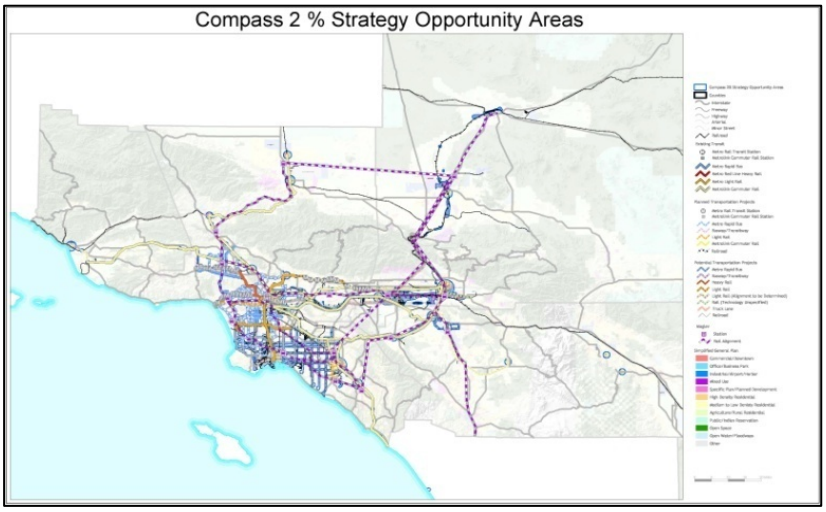
decisions and competition between municipalities drives land use decisions."[77] They also cited the need to "[p]lan from the bottom up, and recognize and value the particular needs of subregions and localities."[78] A summary report indicated appreciation for SCAG's outreach and doubt about the capacity of Compass to influence regional growth patterns.[79] The report noted that there was little overlap in participation at these Dialogues and at the Compass workshops.[80] Regarding strategy, participants prioritized a "targeted public education campaign, developing a "best practices database," and fostering public-private partnerships.[81] Local leaders also expressed appreciation for SCAG valuing its subregions as partners in growth management.[82]

V. Implementing the Compass Vision

As a voluntary Council of Governments, SCAG relies substantially on information and influence as tools for implementing the Compass Blueprint. The 2% strategy offers a compelling basis for local governments to adapt elements of their land use codes to encourage mixed-use development. SCAG offers free consultant services to assist such efforts. The agency is developing a Regional Comprehensive Plan that reflects Compass principles.

A. Growth Visioning Principles and the 2% Strategy

The 2% Strategy integrates the four Compass visioning principles (mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability) into policy objectives within the targeted southern California region. Using information from the PILUT scenarios and citizen input, SCAG has mapped opportunity areas where higher density development with transportation access promote Compass principles.[83] These mapped Compass 2% Strategy Opportunity Areas include Metro centers, city centers, rail transit stops, bus rapid transit corridors, airports, ports, industrial centers, and infill areas.



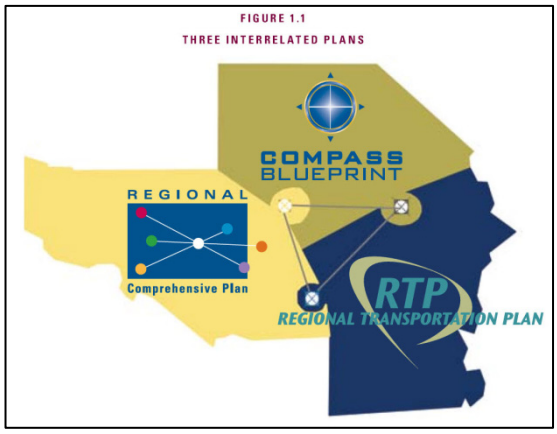
Under the Compass program, SCAG offers consulting assistance to local governments for transportation-oriented demonstration projects. These include visioning, planning, policy, economic, and marketing assistance. Proposals are evaluated according to the following criteria: Transportation & Land Use Planning Integration (20 points), Infill, Redevelopment & Density (20 points), Land Use Mix & Housing (15 points), Infrastructure & Resource Efficiency & Sustainability, (15 points), and Project Logistics & Need (30 points).[84]

Compton carried out an extensive public involvement process that resulted in a citywide vision. There were more targeted concept maps for the Artesia and Compton Metro station

areas.[85] In Corona[86] and Riverside,[87] planning studies with substantial collaborative input focus on creating "transit villages "around Metrolink stations. These reports recommend adapting zoning codes and providing financial incentives to attract developers for mixed-use projects. A preliminary study for a 2,600-acre undeveloped site addresses the potential for creating a major urban center.[88]

B. The SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan

In October 2004, the SCAG Regional Council voted to begin preparing a regional comprehensive plan.[89] Its elements include Transportation, Land Use, Housing, Air Quality, Economy, Energy, Water, Habitat and Open Space, and Solid Waste. Its November 2007 preliminary draft incorporates the four guiding Compass principles of mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability within its strategic vision "[t]o foster a Southern California region that addresses future needs while recognizing the interrelationship between economic prosperity, natural resource sustainability, and quality of life."[90] For each element, the proposed plan identifies strategic initiatives along with short-term policy recommendations for stakeholders to consider. These "constrained policies"[91] are detailed in the chapters for each plan element.



The November 2007 draft sees the comprehensive plan as integrating SCAG roles in transportation, land use, and air quality planning.[92] It furthers Compass Blueprint policies in environmental mitigation and recommends that future regional transportation plans "better promote transit projects that can serve the Compass Blueprint focus areas that have or are anticipated to see population and job growth."[93] The plan is scheduled for adoption in 2008.

VI. Collaborative Challenges for Regional Policy Integration

SCAG representatives and city officials noted that a persistent barrier to collaborative planning is the lack of a strong link between SCAG's planning principles and local government policies and practice. One city official noted that local governments are not bound to the policies and authority of SCAG. Nonetheless, SCAG's fourteen subregions provide a critical communication link between the Regional Board and member governments. The challenge is to foster an integrated vision with compelling reasons for localities to accept regional sustainable development goals. Toward these ends, SCAG has two primary tools. The first lies in its continuing support of demonstration projects. The second rests in the promotion of its 2% strategy to provide local benefits while remaining consistent with Compass principles.

SCAG's Compass, Regional Transportation Plan, and proposed Regional Comprehensive Plan face collaborative challenges in substance and process. The preliminary draft comprehensive plan incorporates the Compass strategic vision and sets out a range of short-term discretionary actions for SCAG and others. This will require coordination with fourteen

subregions, six counties, one hundred eighty-seven local governments, state and federal agencies, organized stakeholders, active public citizens, and outreach to under-represented interests. Half of California's population lives in this Southern California region. Further, projections indicate that future growth will be a primary challenge for Southern California developers and planners.

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[1] *See* Southern California Association of Governments, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMPASS GROWTH VISION INTERIM REPORT 6 (2004) [hereinafter GROWTH VISION REPORT]. *See also* Report from the Community, Economic, and Human Development Committee to the Regional Council, *Southern California Compass Growth Vision and Implementation Program*, May 13, 2004

[2] *See* GROWTH VISION REPORT at 6-7. http://www.scag.ca.gov/committees/pdf/rc/2004/june/rc060304fullagn.pdf (available November 2007).

[3] *See* Southern California Association of Governments, *June 3, 2004 Minutes* at p. 6 http://www.scag.ca.gov/committees/pdf/rc/2004/august/060304min.pdf (available November 2007).

[4] *See* http://www.envisionutah.org/ (available November 2007); Peter Calthorpe & William Fulton, THE REGIONAL CITY 126-38 (2001); Harvard Law Review Association, *Old Regionalism, New Regionalism, and Envision Utah: Making Regionalism Work*, 118 HARVARD LAW REVIEW 2291 (2005).

[5] Southern California Association of Governments, STATE OF THE REGION 2004 3 (2004).

[6] GROWTH VISION REPORT at 9.

[7] Approximately 71% of residents and 77% of the jobs are in these areas. *Ibid.* at 17.

[8] *Ibid.* at 9.

[9] Southern California Association of Governments, STATE OF THE REGION 2006 9-10 (2006).

[10] *See* Strategic Consulting and Research, 2006 STATE OF THE COMMUTE REPORT 2006 i (2006).

[11] Joseph Carreras, CONSTRAINTS ON FUTURE GROWTH AND PRIME AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2 (2002).

[12] Southern California Association of Governments, REGIONAL POCKET GUIDE 2007 2 (2007).

[13] GROWTH VISION REPORT at 17.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.* at 101.

[16] *Ibid.* at 106.

[17] *Ibid.* at 120-21.

[18] Southern California Association of Governments, STATE OF THE REGION 2006 100 (2006).

[19] *See Ibid.* at 127. *See also* California Energy Commission, INTEGRATED ENERGY POLICY REPORT 11 (2005).

[20] *See* SCAG, STATE OF THE REGION 2006 at 108.

[21] When SCAG was established, it included 5 counties and 56 cities. *Ibid.* at 5.

[22] Southern California Association of Governments, YOUR GUIDE TO SCAG 2006-2007 12 (2006).

[23] *See* DESTINATION 2030: MAPPING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S TRANSPORTATION FUTURE 29 (2004) [regional transportation plan adopted April 2004]. " SCAG develops the RTP in coordination and consultation with the county transportation commissions, subregional councils of governments (COGs), transit operators and other transportation stakeholders." *Ibid.*

[24] *Ibid.* at 188.

[25] *Ibid.* at 189.

[26] CEHD Committee report at 78.

[27] The profiled communities were Cathedral City, Huntington Beach, Leimert Village, Pasadena, Redlands, and Temecula. *See* CEHD Report to SCAG June 04, at 78.

[28]Coachella Valley Association of Governments, *Downtown Cathedral City: Vibrant, Compact, Urban Oasis in the Coachella Valley*, Fall 1998 at pp. 1, 4 (SCAG Livable Places Profiles).

[29]*Ibid.* at 9.

[30] Southern California Association of Governments, *Huntington Beach's Main St. Catches Wave of Mixed-Use Revitalization* (1996)

[31] *Ibid.* at 2.

[32] Southern California Association of Governments, *Leimert Park Village, Livable Places Profile* 3-8 (1999).

[33]Southern California Association of Governments, *Long Beach, Livable Places Profile* (1998).

[34] Southern California Association of Governments, *Livable Places Profiles, Old Pasadena, Pasadena, California* 4 (1996).

[35] Southern California Association of Governments, *Livable Places Profiles, Downtown Redlands, Redlands, California* 2-4 (1996)

[36] CEHD staff report at 78.

[37] Growth Visioning Subcommittee, Final Report to the Community, Economic, and Social Development Committee, May 6, 2004.

[38] *See* Frank E. Hotchkiss, GROWTH VISIONING FOR SUSTAINING A LIVABLE REGION 1 (2001).

[39] *See Memo From Community Development Staff to Growth Visioning Subcommittee, May 24, 2001*, at 1-2.

[40] *Ibid.* at 1-2.

[41] Hotchkiss, GROWTH VISIONING FOR SUSTAINING A LIVABLE REGION 1 (2001).

[42] Compass Growth Vision Report at 6-7.

[43] The Planning Center & Southern California Transportation & Land Use Coalition, GROWTH VISIONING FOR SUSTAINING A LIVABLE REGION iii (2001). The overall goal of this series of events would e to "gain endorsement of some form of regional compact: a means of capturing a commitment to the common ground reflected in the preferred growth scenario." *Ibid.*

[44]*Ibid.* at iii.

[45]*Ibid.* at 7-1.

[46] The report emphasized that accomplishing common understandings and a vision among vastly diverse interests must actively engage participants. *Ibid.*at iii. "The concept is simple; its accomplishment is not.... And, since no mandate to implement a vision exists, other than what is endorsed by the participants in this process, it is desirable to engage as many interests as possible in this program. That is a critical part of the process design as well." *Ibid.*

[47] GROWTH VISION REPORT at 2.

[48] *Ibid.* at 2.

[49] *Ibid.* at 7.

[50] *Ibid.* at 21.

[51]*Ibid.* at 21-22.

[52] *Ibid.* at 22-23.

[53] *Ibid.* at 23.

[54] *Ibid.* at 23.

[55] *Ibid.* at 24.

[56] *See* note 4.

[57] GROWTH VISION REPORT at 26.

[58] *Ibid.* at 26.

[59] *Ibid.* at 26.

[60] *Ibid.* at 65.

[61] *Ibid.* at 68.

[62] *Ibid.* at 71.

[63] *Ibid.* at 75.

[64] *Ibid.* at 74.

[65] *Ibid.* at 76.

[66] *Ibid.* at 77.

[67] *Ibid.* at 78.

[68] *Ibid.* at 25.

[69] *Ibid* at 26.

[70] *Ibid* at 26.

[71] *Ibid* at 24.

[72] *Ibid.* at 29.

[73] *Ibid.* at 29.

[74] *Ibid.* at 31.

[75] *Ibid.* at 32.

[76] *Ibid* at 31.

[77] *See* California center for Regional Leadership, REPORT OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMPASS PROJECT SOUTHLAND POLICY DIALOGUES 7 (2004).

[78] California Center for Regional Leadership, REPORT ON THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMPASS PROJECT SOUTHLAND POLICY DIALOGUES 3 (2004).

[79] *Ibid.* at 4, 5.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.* at 7.

[82] *Ibid.* at 5.

[83] *See* POST-2010 COMPASS 2% STRATEGY OPPORTUNITY AREAS at 1. http://www.compassblueprint.org/files/opportunity_report.pdf (available November 2007).

[84] SCAG, *Proposal Review Criteria*, September 2006 (approved by CEHD May 5, 2005).

[85] *See* SCAG, A VISION FOR THE CITY OF COMPTON (2006), http://www.compassblueprint.org/tools/existingprojects (available November 2007).

[86] *See* The Planning Center, FROM TRANSIT STATION TO TRANSIT VILLAGE, A RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT FOR THE NORTH CORONA MAIN STATION (November 2006) http://www.compassblueprint.org/tools/existingprojects (available November 2007).

[87] *See* FROM TRANSIT STATION TO TRANSIT VILLAGE, A RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT FOR THE DOWNTOWN RIVERSIDE STATION (November 2006) http://www.compassblueprint.org/tools/existingprojects (available November 2007).

[88] Southern California Association of Governments, *Draft Chino Basin Collaborative Strategy*, http://www.compassblueprint.org/tools/existingprojects (available November 2007).

[89] *See* Memo From Jacob Lieb, Acting Lead Regional Planner to the Community Economic and Human Development Committee, November 4, 2004.

[90] *See* Southern California Association of Governments, (PRELIMINARY DRAFT) REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 8 (November 2007). These are "…recommended near-term, feasible policies that stakeholders should consider for implementation." *Ibid.* at 7-8.

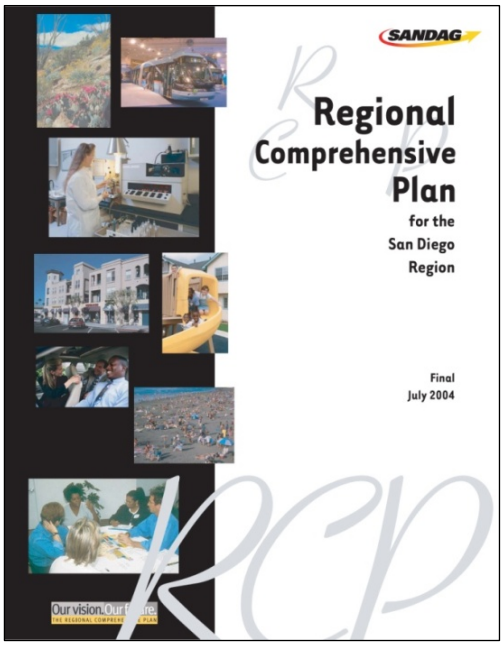
[91] *Ibid.* at 7-8

[92] *Ibid.* at 4.

[93] *Ibid* at 11.

CHAPTER 6

THINKING REGIONALLY, ACTING LOCALLY: COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL PLANNING IN SAN DIEGO



In July 2004, The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) adopted a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) to encourage a long-term vision for county-wide growth and development. Its impressive scope links transportation, land use, housing, environment, and other elements into a coordinated growth vision toward 2030. Acknowledging the need for member government collaboration, the SANDAG plan proposes a "regional framework for local action."[1] Its implementation strategies focus on connections between regional transportation and land use planning and encouragement of local development projects consistent with the plan's "smart growth" policies.[2]

The California Legislature provided specific enabling authority for SANDAG's comprehensive plan initiative in 2003. Assembly Bill 361[3] found that no single agency or plan was considering transportation in relation to land use, water and air quality, and natural resources.[4] The bill directed SANDAG to "engage in a public collaborative planning process."[5]

As a Council of Governments (COG) and Regional Transportation Planning Agency, SANDAG acknowledges that primary land use powers are seated in local governments. As such, it proposes a strategic vision that could guide both regional and local actions.[6] The planning document integrates the agency's Metropolitan Transportation Plan as a chapter within the overall regional comprehensive plan.[7] Other elements address land use, housing, social equity, environment, urban form, and border policies.

At the organizational level, SANDAG established three groups with complementary responsibilities and goals: a regional planning committee, a technical advisory group with local government planners and managers, and a stakeholder group composed of twenty-five members of varied backgrounds and affiliations. Agency planners conducted workshops throughout the county to test and revise the plan's vision. This chapter explores the process SANDAG undertook to ensure that its Regional Comprehensive Plan provides an ongoing framework to guide transportation, land use, housing and environmental protection decisions for the next thirty years and beyond.

I. Overview of the San Diego Region

The SANDAG region coincides with San Diego County's borders. Orange and Riverside Counties adjoin it on the north, and Imperial County is on its eastern perimeter. Baja California, Mexico, lies next to San Diego County on the southern border, and the Pacific Ocean is to the west. Within SANDAG's extensive jurisdictional area, there are eighteen incorporated cities and seventeen unincorporated communities. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: The SANDAG Region and its Local Governments[8]

A. Current Population and Trends

The United States Census Bureau estimated that San Diego County's total population in 2005 was 2.8 million.[9] Of this total, 71% were White, 5% Black, 11% Asian, and 12% some other race.[10] Thirty percent of area residents are of Hispanic origin (independent of race). Most of the population lives in urban areas (96%). The median household income in 2005 was $56,335, with 11% of residents living below the poverty level.[11]

Between 1980 and 2005, the North County sub-region experienced dramatic population growth. In the South County sub-region, the largest growth spurt occurred in the 1980s, with the most notable population increase seen in Chula Vista (61%), Coronado (41%), and San Diego (27%). The City of San Diego is expected to grow 35% by 2030. Other trends show the South County sub-region exceeding 2 million residents by 2030. The East County area is expected to grow by 20% to 272,354 people. Nearly 78% of SANDAG area residents drive alone to work, 11% carpool, while only about 3% take public transportation. The average commuting time in 2005 was about 25 minutes.[12]

B. The San Diego Regional Economy

Defense spending has contributed greatly to the economic growth of the San Diego region. In 2001, this sector included over $10 billion in direct expenditures from the United States Department of Defense. Manufacturing is the largest contributor to the county's GRP, accounting for $25 billion in 2002.[13] The trade sector comprises approximately 20% of the region's employment.[14] High technology industries (including biomedical, software, telecommunications and security) provide 10% of the region's total economic output and are the fastest growing sectors for employment.[15] Other key industries include agriculture, international trade, tourism, and services.

II. Establishing Institutional Authority for Regional Planning

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) was created in 1966 by a state-authorized joint powers agreement. Its membership includes the County and eighteen cities. Advisory members include regional and state transportation organizations; the U.S. Department of Defense; the San Diego County Water Authority; the San Diego Unified Port District; and officials representing Baja California, Mexico. SANDAG's mission includes providing a forum for regional decision-making, consensus building, and strategic planning.[16] The agency became the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, Airport Land Use Commission, and Areawide Clearinghouse for federal/state grant reviews in 1971. Member governments designated it as the Regional Planning and Growth Management Review Board in 1989 and the Congestion Management Agency in 1991.[17] SANDAG also acts as the Regional Transportation Commission and the Integrated Waste Management Task Force.

In 2002, Senate Bill 1703[18] consolidated regional transit planning, programming, project development, and construction responsibilities within the agency. This act authorized SANDAG to oversee the Metropolitan Transit Development Board and the North County Transit Development Board.[19] It also defined agency powers to conduct "planning," "programming," "construction," and "project development." This was an important step in strengthening SANDAG's institutional capacity as a comprehensive agency.

Senate Bill 1703 reflects California's ambivalence between regional needs and local controls. On the one hand, it declares the need for an agency with "sufficient land-use authority to implement an efficient regional transportation system...."[20] At the same time, the law is also clear that SANDAG has no direct authority "over local land use decisions."[21] Still, the agency's multi-faceted role provides a substantial base to conduct comprehensive regional planning.

III. Precursor Regional Initiatives in San Diego County

Well before AB 361 was enacted, SANDAG engaged in activities to promote public interest in developing a regional comprehensive plan. These earlier efforts to publicize a regional planning vision provided a base of community support that SANDAG would build on in preparing the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

A. Regional Growth Management Strategy (1988-1992)

In 1988, voters passed Proposition C, which called for preparation of a Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS).[22] Pursuant to this mandate, a Blue Ribbon Committee recommended that SANDAG serve as the Regional Board. The agency established a Regional Planning and Growth Management Review Board to prepare a strategy. SANDAG members approved a sixty-eight-page revised version of this growth strategy in February 1992 and recommended its approval by member jurisdictions.[23] It identified "quality of life" factors: air quality, transportation/congestion management,

water, sewage disposal, sensitive lands and open space, solid waste management, hazardous waste management, housing, and economic prosperity. The RGMS used a self-certification process for local jurisdictions to determine their compliance with the strategy. Critics of this approach noted that there were no serious penalties for noncompliance.

B. The Region 2020 Report (1995)

A second precedent for the RCP was a 1995 document called Region 2020. This report outlined five areas of concern: habitat preservation, transportation, land use, housing, and state/local tax reform. Staff initially sought support for this vision by presenting it to environmental groups, planners, transportation engineer groups, rotary clubs, and community-based organizations. Agency staff gave out pledge cards to individuals as signs of support. Presentations to every city council led to adopted resolutions in support of the Region 2020 plan.

IV. Adopting the *Regional Comprehensive Plan* (2003-2004)

On September 24, 2003, the Governor of California signed Assembly Bill 361 (AB 361) authorizing SANDAG to prepare a regional comprehensive plan (RCP). The San Diego Association of Governments adopted its Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) in July 2004. This 429-page document declares intent to establish a planning framework for the region and present a vision for ideal growth over the next thirty years. The RCP integrates the regional transportation plan with elements on urban form, housing, natural habitats and resources, economic prosperity, and public facilities. Sections also cover social equity issues and the region's relationship with bordering counties and Mexico. Implementation measures include an integrated regional infrastructure strategy, performance monitoring, and a Smart Growth Incentive Program.[24]

A. Legislative Authority

AB 361 specifies the scope and process for SANDAG's preparation of the regional comprehensive plan:

1) The plan is to be based on "local general and regional plans," and integrate "land uses, transportation systems, infrastructure needs, and public investment strategies, within a regional framework, in cooperation with member agencies and the public."[25]

2) The consolidated regional agency will "engage in a public collaborative process" that includes "opportunities to participate in decisions affecting formulation of the plan."[26]

3) The comprehensive plan must be compatible with the regional transportation plan.[27]

4) In allocating transportation resources, SANDAG is "to consider the extent to which each jurisdiction's general plan implements land use policies recommended in the RCP."[28]

5) SANDAG must establish "realistic measurable standards and criteria" in the RCP and monitor plan implementation.[29]

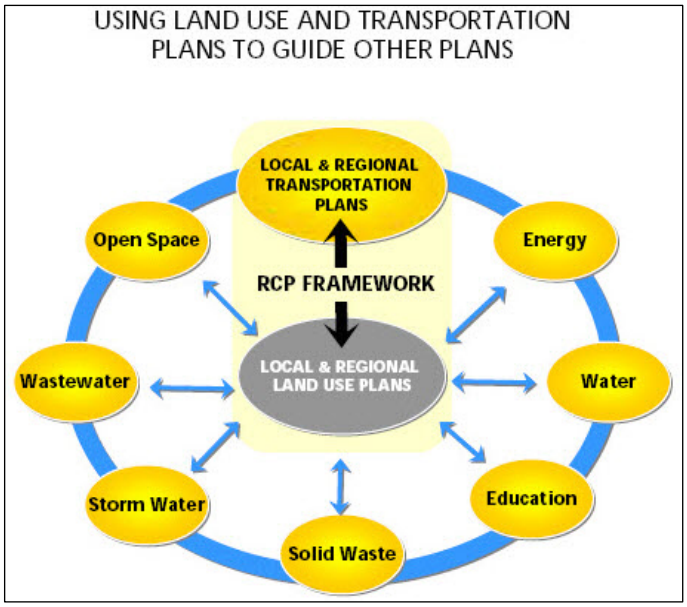
AB 361 also provides that a regional plan shall be "advisory only" and "shall have no binding effect" on the region's cities and counties.[30] Nonetheless, it provides direct legal authority for SANDAG to plan comprehensively for its region.

B. Regional Growth Trends and Local Land Use Policies

Based on its projections, the SANDAG Regional Comprehensive Plan finds that the current land use plans for the nineteen local jurisdictions will not accommodate regional growth expected by 2030.[31] It estimates that about three-fourths of future residential development will occur on vacant land, with the remainder in redevelopment or infill areas. Ninety percent (90%) of residential development is expected to have densities of less than one home per acre, while only 7% is planned for multifamily densities.[32] The plan also recognizes that a continuation of current growth patterns would lead to reduced open space, an imbalance between affordable housing and jobs, and environmental degradation.[33] While population is projected to grow by 37% by 2030, housing capacity falls short by 30%.[34] These trends led SANDAG to conclude that the region and its governments need to change current plans and policies.

C. Acknowledging the Limits of Regional Authority

SANDAG's Plan acknowledges a central paradox for regional planning initiatives in California. If regional trends continue unabated, there will be more costly and less varied housing, continuing jobs-housing imbalance, less open space, and increased environmental degradation.[35] However, the RCP also acknowledges that many vital implementation steps rely on land use decisions by local government members. Given these limitations, the Plan offers a "[r]egional [fr]amework for [l]ocal [a]ction..."[36] that "builds upon the best elements of our existing local general plans and regional infra-structure plans and provides a blueprint for where and how we want to grow."[37] The plan proposes a growth management framework for "promoting more and better-connected housing, transportation, and employment choices for [an] increasingly-diverse and aging population."[38]



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D. The RCP and "Smart Growth"

The RCP strategy reflects adherence to Smart Growth[39] principles. This approach favors compact, mixed-use developments, and housing options for all income levels.[40] Implementation includes creating an integrated and reliable transportation system, promoting collaboration among governments, and offering incentives to implement planning goals and objectives. A major premise is that improving connections between local and regional land use planning will guide other planning within the region.[41]

V. SANDAG Strategies for Citizen Involvement in Preparing the RCP

In developing the Regional Comprehensive Plan, SANDAG established three working groups and processes for community input. The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) was part of the SANDAG Board. A twenty-five-member Stakeholders Working Group (SWG), and a Technical Working Group (TWG) with local planners and managers played respective roles. SANDAG staff also conducted extensive community workshops at three stages in plan development.[43] This section explores agency efforts to gain support through representative stakeholders, technical advice, and broader public involvement.

A. Stakeholders Working Group[44]

The Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) for the RCP included twenty-five members representing different areas of interest.[45] Some had previous working relationships with SANDAG through involvement in regional issues such as transportation, housing, or natural resource conservation. All members were chosen for their active participation on key issues in their respective communities.

At monthly SWG meetings, SANDAG staff made presentations on the ongoing progress of the RCP and led discussions on topics related to plan development. These included the plan's vision and core values, elements that would be included, and the modeling used to predict regional growth. The SWG established sub-groups that met separately to discuss different RCP issues: advocacy, agriculture, borders, building, business/economy, environment, equity, housing, professional, redevelopment/infill, and transportation.[46] Stakeholder group recommendations were brought to the Regional Planning Committee for consideration in the development of the Plan.

The Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) represented one of the opportunities for public involvement in planning decisions. Most members who were interviewed believed that their participation affected the plan.[47] One stakeholder representative commented that sections of the plan "were rewritten to accommodate opinions, and sections were tossed out – based on SWG opinions in the early months."[48] Another observed that the staff were "good listeners and found ways to accommodate most, if not all, of the recommendations within a common sense context." Where opinions were not included, they were at least "considered."[49] It was also noted that staff was receptive and accessible outside of meeting times.[50]

Members of the SWG also noted that their diverse perspectives raised difficulties in reaching consensus on controversial issues. One observer stated that comments would sometimes "cancel each other out" and that "ideas get watered down, and lose their meaning and force."[51] Another stakeholder stated that opinions were "blended rather than raw," and that "the more extreme or unrealistic visions were not represented in the final document."[52] While noting that SANDAG staff was receptive, a third SWG member expressed frustration that "there were some opinions that did not get a chance to be heard."[53]

While the SWG was established to bring different perspectives to the planning process, not every stakeholder involved felt that this was the case. One view was that

SANDAG had already decided in advance what it would do, and that the SWG was put together "for show."[54] Another noted that SANDAG's lack of enforcement powers could not ensure that development takes the public's interest into account. A further expressed concern was that staff focused more on whether people were positive toward the plan than getting deep into the policy issues.[55] Other criticisms included the belief that the SWG lacked representation from some regional stakeholder groups, such as those representing the interests of the "urban core, low-income communities, and communities of color"[56] or did not get sufficient input from "those committed to sustainable environmental concepts and programs."[57] However, it was observed that within the stakeholder group, "[n]o one well-funded interest group dominated."[58]

Stakeholder group members suggested that input could be improved by providing more time to review and discuss the plan. One member believed that more attention should have been given to "review recommendations coming forward on the policy discussions," than to "visioning discussions."[59] Another stated that the process should have been organized to allow more time at the "detailed phase of the review, like specific policy actions."[60] Also, drafts of the various plan sections were not provided until the process was "50-75% along the way." One SWG interviewee said more should have been devoted to discussing plan implementation.[61]

Other suggestions focused on having appropriate and diverse participants in the stakeholder group. One member believed that though SANDAG "did a good job of trying to get a broad cross-section of interests, you can only get people who are interested, not those who aren't." [62] Another expressed frustration that SWG members were representing civic or political entities with "clearly marked positions that need to be defended … Using the SWG formalized the kinds of folks who [usually] show up to give input anyway."[63]

SWG members also acknowledged the difficult nature of regional planning and SANDAG's lack of enforcement powers. A representative sentiment was that "any process seeking community input in planning is labor-intensive," and would have to involve "thousands of people at the front end." Another noted that SANDAG did "the best they could" under the circumstances, and that "more time and funding" would improve the effectiveness of the process. An ironic critique considered the SWG to be "as effective as such a cumbersome, politically-laden, public policied, land use process can be."[64] It was also perceived that the process was "as effective is it could be given the fact that SANDAG has no authority to implement most of it."[65]

Even with these challenges, the majority of the stakeholders who responded believed that the RCP process opened the dialogue for regional planning in San Diego. Members recommended a continuous "educational process or campaign" where regional issues are continually discussed with the community[66] and that SANDAG should keep a liaison in the community so that "people can know where to go to express their opinions."[67] There was also consensus that SANDAG staff exerted great efforts to engage SWG participation and consider their recommendations in preparing the Plan.

B. Community Workshops[68]

As SANDAG moved forward in the development of the RCP, it conducted a broad-based outreach effort to achieve community input and support for its Plan. Between 2003 and 2004, the agency conducted seven sub-regional workshops in three phases. The first series occurred at the initiation of the RCP planning process. Residents were asked to share their vision for the region's growth. The second workshops occurred a year later when the goals and policy objectives of each of the Plan's sections were already developed. The third set was held to receive comments on the draft plan and its environmental impact report.[69] During the entire process, newsletters updated the public about the plan's development. Drafts were posted on the agency's website and encouraged public comment. Citizens were also encouraged to submit comments, questions, and feedback via email, fax, or mail during the November 2003 – July 2004 period.

1. Spring 2003 Workshops- Vision, Core Values, and Concerns

From January through March 2003, SANDAG held the first of three rounds of public workshops for the RCP. The goal of these initial meetings was to gather input on the visions and values that should be reflected in a comprehensive plan and to determine what concerns the community had for the region's development. Seven workshops were held around the county. All but two were held in the early evening.

These initial workshops had two major activities. The first was designed to draw out participant ideas for actions that could potentially addressing regional issues. The second sought community responses to the draft regional vision and core values proposed for the RCP. During the first activity, called the "Game of Visionary," participants were broken up into small groups and asked to list challenges in the region related six different topics. They were then asked to determine three possible RCP responses to address the challenges. The topics were housing, borders, economy and public facilities, urban form, transportation, healthy ecosystems, and a "wildcard" open category.

A comparative survey of responses showed that citizens attending workshop meetings in the seven different geographical areas had similar views on the topics posed to them. In every sub-region, there was support for development and/or expansion of a viable and cost-effective public transportation system; mixed-used development, more affordable housing; zoning and regulatory reforms; increased water management/conservation, greater cross-regional coordination; and more education to galvanize a home-grown workforce.

Despite the overall agreement, some opinions reflected sub-regional differences. For example, North County residents favored more secured borders while South County residents called for a more open border. Participants from the North County wanted to expand the definition of the "region" to include Riverside in terms of housing availability, but South County respondents indicated that more homes needed to be built. Other areas expressed more concern for protecting natural habitats and promoting healthy ecosystems. South County concurred, but also recommended that more attention needed to be paid to the urban core. Overall, the visioning exercise revealed general public agreement with the RCP's focus on smart growth principles. It also showed that the sub-regions had particular concerns that needed to be addressed. The responses below are composites of what was expressed at these initial sub-regional meetings:

Table 1: Composite of Responses from Round 1 Workshop Visioning Game

Topic	Suggested Actions
Housing	Redevelop older communities. Provide incentives for infill and mixed-use projects; develop multi-family units; provide more variety in housing types. Implement zoning and regulatory reforms. Streamline the permitting process to address the housing shortage. Include incentives to communities that want more affordable housing; more flexible building codes and creative planning. Implement universal design standards for more access and service. Pursue regional standardization to achieve uniformity in permit-processing and zoning. Continue urban planning. Enforce zoning laws. Put public transportation closer to shopping to support areas of higher population and density and tie development to growth. Change attitudes about housing. (Living in a multi-story building in a downtown area *is* part of California.) Educate public about good high-density housing. Implement regional system for housing the homeless. Implement rent control and encourage salaries closer to the cost of living. Make housing more affordable; regulate housing according to income. Define population targets and development levels. Expand the idea of the region – look for solutions in Riverside. Cluster affordable housing closer to job centers; address jobs-housing balance. Educate consumers regarding housing matters. Develop partnerships between government and private employers to assist first-home buyers. Build more homes.
Borders	Promote public education and awareness of culture of Mexico and the region. Create carpool incentives, increase the number of entry and exit points to the carpool lanes, and expedite crossing times. Increase coordination with Mexico, especially with the maquiladoras, to protect the environment. Institute cross-regional mediation as a way of resolving local and subregional issues. Improve intergovernmental cooperation. Develop more uniform regulations between counties and countries. Advocate for better trolley connection to Baja Enhance regionalization of public services and coordinate medical care. Remove the border checkpoint in Riverside, and spend the money more effectively. Develop a regional transportation plan with surrounding counties and Mexico. Make border security a high priority.
Economy /Public Facilities	"Grow our own" educated workforce. Promote education with more schools that prepare students for higher-paying jobs; develop career education and attract businesses that match careers. Cluster industries within the region. Attract and draw in quality businesses and industries; diverse industries, new businesses. Seek water and energy independence. Decrease energy consumption. Encourage use of alternative energy sources. Promote renewable resources. Reduce regulations on costs of doing business.
Urban Form	Encourage mixed-use development and redevelopment. Support increase in density. Create jobs in housing-rich areas. Research alternatives like desalination, solar power, hydrogen fuel cells, and alternative energy sources. Investigate ways that other communities have dealt with sprawl. Provide a better balance of green spaces/recreation spaces in urban areas. Institute urban growth boundaries. Address funding sources/find other funding mechanisms. No more freeways – they create sprawl.
Transportation	Promote awareness of public transportation. Locate housing and jobs closer to transit systems. Link land use to transportation. Lobby for/find more/new funding (capital and operating). Provide incentives to local governments to adhere to regional transportation guidelines. Create a more accessible, cost-effective, affordable public transit network; more transit stops. Diversify methods to increase mass transit use, like toll roads, van pools. De-emphasize freeways. Ask corporations to alternate employees' work schedules. Implement an integrated transportation system to avoid the "last-mile problem" of no adequate connections. Leave system as is, creating more motivation to use public transportation.
Healthy Ecosystems	Increase government responsibility to enforce codes and development agreements already on the books; comply with state environmental standards. Develop a proper management plan for publicly-owned open space; clearly define areas of key importance to regional ecosystems for preservation. Educate the public on the importance of environmental protection. Increase watershed and ground water management; promote water conservation; improve water quality for beaches and streams. Increase greenways and parks, restore natural areas like wetlands; restore and monitor ecosystems. Explore urban growth boundaries; keep development in already-developed areas. Implement better planned transportation systems. Use green infrastructure, build green homes (e.g., natural retention basins v. cement basins). Institute gas tax. Find funding to acquire natural habitats. Pay attention to the urban core.

The second workshop activity used an interactive polling technology to collate responses to questions about the plan's proposed vision and core values. Hand-held clickers allowed participants to anonymously rank their preference for issues that were projected on a large screen.[71] SANDAG staff focused on reactions and suggestions concerning the plan's mission statements. Did participants agree with the statement "Make the San Diego Region a better place to live, work, and play, with a healthy natural environment and an outstanding quality of life for everyone" as the vision for the RCP? Potential responses included five options ranging from "Just right" to "Really dislike it." Participants were asked to comment on what changes could be made to the vision statement to elicit a "just right" response. They were then given a set of prospective core values to rank from being "Not at all important" to being "Critically important." The values proposed by SANDAG were:

- Unique and dynamic place to live, embracing cultural diversity and promoting interregional understanding (Cultural Diversity)
- Focus future growth in our existing communities, and preserve rural and agricultural areas (Reduce Sprawl)
- More mixed uses and better urban design (Mixed Land Uses)
- Greater selection of housing types and more affordability (More Housing Choices)
- Coordinated transportation system that better links our jobs and homes, provides more transit, walking, and biking opportunities, and efficiently transports cargo and goods (More Transportation Choices)
- Healthy ecosystems. Clean water and air. Open space and habitat conservation systems that are preserved and maintained (Healthy Environment)
- Variety of jobs, with the workforce to meet the demand for these jobs, and the wages to sustain our standard of living (Jobs and Educated Workforce)
- Infrastructure systems that function appropriately, so that our quality of life is measurably better (Infrastructure Systems that Work)
- Fair and equitable planning, and active and honest communication, with our Native American Tribal governments, our neighboring counties, Mexico, and our military (Intergovernmental Coordination) [72]

A total of 494 individuals attended the seven regional workshops. [73] Responses to the initially proposed vision statement showed that 35% believed it was "just right;" 42% liked the statement, but thought it could be better; 17% indicated a "so-so" response; and 3% stated that they didn't like it or "really" didn't like it. Participants also recommended adding core values to the plan, including:[74]

- Availability of Water
- Accessible Health Care
- Citizen Participation in Planning Process
- Safe Neighborhoods and Schools
- Preserve Natural Topography
- SANDAG Members Commit to Implementing Regional Planning
- Architectural Quality
- Supporting Neighborhoods
- Strict Code Enforcement

Taken together with the nine topics of core values provided by the meeting organizers, the "availability of water" and "a healthy environment" were identified as most important. Participants also ranked accessible schools and more transportation choices as priority values.

After considering comments received from the community workshops, the SWG, the TWG, and email correspondences, the Regional Planning Committee revised its vision statement to the following:

> Preserve and enhance the San Diego region's unique features – its vibrant and culturally-diverse communities, its beaches, deserts, mountains, lagoons, bluffs, and canyons, and its international setting – and promote sustainability, economic prosperity, and an outstanding quality of life for everyone.[75]

The original statements of underlying values were expanded and modified as follows:[76]

- Cultural Diversity and Resources: Maintain the uniqueness of the region as an international border community, embracing ethnic and cultural diversity and promoting a wide variety of cultural resources.
- Livable Neighborhoods: Create livable, walkable, safe, and healthy neighborhoods that include a mix of housing, parks, schools, jobs, health care facilities, and shopping opportunities, emphasizing redevelopment and infill in urban areas along transit corridors. Provide a variety of housing and transportation choices at various price ranges. Preserve and maintain our open spaces and agricultural areas.
- Healthy Environment: Strive for a sustainable region. Promote healthy ecosystems and a healthy built environment. Ensure clean water, air, soils, water bodies, and coastlines. Protect our open space and habitat conservation systems, and preserve our natural topography.
- More Housing Choices: Provide more opportunities for apartments, condominiums, and single-family homes in all price ranges and closer to jobs and transit.
- More Transportation Choices: Provide a transportation system that better links our jobs, homes, and other major activity centers; ensures more transit, walking, and biking opportunities; efficiently transports people and goods; and provides effective transportation options for people of all ages and abilities.
- Jobs and Educated Work Force: Attract and retain a variety of jobs with competitive wages that contribute to a robust economy with secure, balanced jobs, and educate the local workforce to meet the demand for these jobs. Locate new jobs in housing-rich areas and locate new housing in job-rich areas to secure a better balance between jobs, housing, and our transportation systems.
- Water Availability: Ensure a diverse water supply that meets the region's present and future water needs, respects the environment, and emphasizes water conservation and re-use.
- Schools as Community Assets: Provide good, safe schools for our children that provide a quality education and can serve as focal points for our neighborhoods.

- Infrastructure Systems that Work: Provide infrastructure systems in both existing and new communities that work for all residents in the region. Strive for energy self-sufficiency.
- Fiscal Responsibility: Institute a fiscal structure that provides an equitable distribution of burdens and benefits, promotes efficiency of resource use, and provides clear incentives for achieving plan goals.
- Citizen Participation in the Planning Process: Promote broader participation in the planning process and the allocation of resources.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: Enhance planning and coordination among local jurisdictions within the region, with our local school districts, Native American Tribal governments, neighboring counties, Mexico, and military communities.

2. Fall 2003 Workshops- Goals, Policies, and Community Feedback

The second round of workshops was held from September 2003 to October 2003,[77] drawing over 400 participants. Attendees at these six workshops included local elected officials, members of the Stakeholders and Technical Working Groups, and the public. These workshops consisted of two activities. A "Blue Dot" exercise was designed to evaluate the draft goals and policy objectives of the RCP. Second, the "Community Feedback Form" was designed to assess the value of proposed actions related to transportation, housing and urban form, public facilities and economic prosperity, and healthy environment.

For the Blue Dot exercise, eight draft goals and thirty-one policy objectives were set up on boards at the front of the room.[78] The six major themes covered by the draft goals and policy objectives were: 1) Urban Form; 2) Healthy Environment; 3) Housing; 4) Transportation; 5) Economic Prosperity; 6) Public Facilities. Each participant was given fifteen blue dots and asked to place the dots on the board next to their top fifteen most important goals and policies. Post-it notes allowed participants to write comments. An example of how goals and policy objectives were formulated is presented here for the Housing theme:[79]

Goal: Provide a variety of affordable and quality housing choices for people of all income levels and abilities.

Policy Objectives:

- Increase the supply and variety of housing choices, especially multifamily housing, for residents of all income levels.
- Integrate or link housing to jobs, transit, schools, recreation, and services, creating more livable neighborhoods.
- Provide safe, healthy, environmentally-sound, and accessible housing, for all segments of the population.
- Minimize the displacement of lower income and minority residents as housing costs rise or redevelopment occurs.
- Maintain, preserve, and rehabilitate the existing stock of housing.

During the "Community Feedback Form" portion of the workshop, attendees were asked to rank the importance of prescribed actions in four topics: Transportation, Housing and Urban Form, Public Facilities and Economic Prosperity, and Healthy

Environment. The room was separated into four workstations, each staffed by a SANDAG facilitator who guided a discussion on the topic at the station. Attendees were asked to participate in at least two workstations. Facilitators provided a "Community Feedback Form" with action items related to the station topic. The list of action items reflected what could be done in that area of interest to improve the development of that aspect of the region. For example, under Transportation, action items included:

- Synchronize regional highway and transit networks with local transportation and land use plans.
- Develop a network of fast, convenient, high-quality transit services that are competitive with driving alone during peak periods.
- Develop and implement programs to improve pedestrian and bicycle access in existing and new communities, and support a linked system of trails.
- Develop a regional airport that meets long-term demand for air travel and is integrated with the regional highway and transit networks.

Participants at each station were asked to rank action items on a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being "no opinion, 1 being "not at all effective," and 5 being "very effective"), and to write comments on the action items. They were also asked to offer other actions that they thought would be important towards achieving the region's objectives in that respective area.[80]

Evaluations of the second round of workshops[81] included positive responses on the workshop format, the effectiveness of breaking into small discussion groups, the quality of the presentations and visual aids, and the informative/educational value of the experience. Constructive suggestions included providing more concrete examples of successful redevelopment and smart growth efforts, and greater involvement of stakeholder organizations. There was also disappointment over the way the small group discussions were run. Feedback indicated that sessions did not allow sufficient time for comments and that topics such as education, preservation and cultural resources were not included in the discussions.

Following the second round of workshops, participant input and comments were shared and discussed in the Regional Planning Committee,[82] Stakeholders Working Group,[83] and Technical Working Group[84] meetings. A summation of the "Blue Dot" exercise results indicated "that the participants placed a particularly high priority on resolving transportation and environmental issues in conjunction with addressing urban form and housing issues."[85] This summary also concluded that "participants placed a particularly high priority on resolving transportation and environmental issues in conjunction with addressing urban form and housing issues."[86] The summary report on the "Community Feedback Form" showed "overall validation of the proposed actions by the workshop participants...."

3. Spring 2004 Workshops- The Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Report

A final round of workshops was held in April 2004 to gather feedback on the draft RCP (submitted to the SANDAG Board in December 2003) and a draft of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).[87] Attendance at these six totaled approximately 100 participants. Participants included local elected officials, members of the Technical

and Stakeholders Working Groups and the public.[88] Unlike the relatively structured nature of earlier meetings, this third set of workshops were conducted in an informal "open house" style.

To guide participants to their area of interest, SANDAG staff set up four stations, - each with comment cards available and a court reporter present to capture oral statements made by participants. The four stations consisted of:

1) "ABCs of RCP". This station offered general information about the RCP to participants unfamiliar with the organization.
2) "Vision for the Future" provided an overview of topics covered by the RCP and described ways that said issues would be addressed by the Plan.
3) "How Do We Get There?" focused on how the Plan would be implemented.
4) "EIR" answered questions and received comments about the draft Environmental Impact Report.

Approximately 70 comments were received at the workshops. Additional comments via email, fax, or letter through the public comment process (November 2003 – July 2004) were summarized and compiled in a matrix.[89]

C. Extended Community-Based Outreach

To extend its outreach effort, SANDAG established five focus group meetings described as "working class," "senior," "youth," and a "mixture of seniors and working class." Each focus group meeting had about fifteen to twenty-two participants recruited through the placement of flyers in the community, emails, and word of mouth.[90] SANDAG also provided mini-grants[91] to five community-based organizations (CBOs) to further its community outreach: Able-Disabled Advocacy,[92] All Congregations Together,[93] Barrio Station,[94] North San Diego County NAACP, and Union of Pan Asian Communities.

The five CBOs conducted public workshops, small group meetings, computer-based surveys, and other activities from June to October 2003 that resulted in feedback from more than 1,100 residents throughout the region.[95] For example, one group used the funds to distribute survey questionnaires, conduct focus group interviews, and provide transportation to and from the remaining regional workshops, for those who have limited transportation options.[96] In terms of its focus group efforts, there were five focus group meetings in the central San Diego sub-region, over a period of three months.

SANDAG provided guidance for topics to address at the meetings,[97] but each organization tailored its questions to the needs of the community. The sessions were described as "very productive." Participants were able to express their opinions in an open yet intimate forum. Feedback received from the focus group meetings indicated that participants appreciated their involvement in an ongoing engagement with government. It enabled them to contribute to the regional planning process by attending the regional workshops, as well. Previously, there had been a sense that citizen input in governmental issues was often disregarded. Comments underscored the importance the community participants place on feeling that government is responsive to their concerns.

D. Impact of Public Outreach Efforts

This assessment of the effectiveness SANDAG's public outreach efforts involves two questions. 1) Did the outreach efforts draw a fair and inclusive representation of the views of the population in the San Diego region? 2) Did public involvement influence the plan's development?

1) Fair and inclusive representation: Information from the first workshop indicated that the North County-Coastal area workshops were the most successful at drawing participants. The greatest percentage of attendees also resides in this sub-region (32%). Four out of the five cities in this sub-region have median household incomes greater than $64,000. This stands in contrast to the 8% of participants who identified the South Bay (South County cities of Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach, and National City) as their place of residence. Amongst the South Bay cities, the median household income for three of the four cities is below the median income for the region, with the lowest being $29,980 (National City).[98] A second notable point is that the workshops were most successful at drawing older and wealthier citizens of the San Diego region. Fifty percent (50%) of those attending were in the 41-65 age bracket. These numbers point to a need to conduct more outreach to younger adult and youth populations.

Notwithstanding the skewed attendance results from the first round of workshops, SANDAG should be credited for its efforts to reach lower-income communities and under-represented interests via the community-based outreach grants. As some stakeholders suggested, SANDAG could be more accessible on an ongoing basis since the relationship with the community was already in place. This would, however, require additional agency resources. It is interesting to note that the early round of workshops drew a relatively more impressive turn-out than the later workshops.

One CBO representative had suggested that SANDAG staff could improve outreach by relying on the organizations that work most closely with community members. The five community-based organizations reached more than 1,100 citizens over a four-month period.[99] Clearly, Able-Disabled Advocacy, All Congregations Together, Barrio Station, North San Diego County NAACP, and Union of Pan Asian Communities share close connections with their constituents.

2) Did public involvement influence the plan's development? Following the third round of workshops, SANDAG staff developed a summary report of key recommendations from the original draft RCP that remained in the revised working draft. They also tracked key proposed changes to the RCP and presented this report to the RCP, SWG and TWG.[100] These proposed changes fell into two types – those that had been planned when the Draft RCP was released, and those developed in light of "technical clarifications" or comments from the public. Changes based on work called for in the draft RCP occurred primarily in the Urban Form, Performance Monitoring, and Implementation chapters. Alterations based on technical clarifications or public comments ranged from requesting a more clearly articulated local land use authority and additional information on housing element law, etc., to adding a section on natural fire

ecology.[101] Issues raised by the public that were not incorporated into the RCP included: education, family planning, systemic poverty, economic opportunity, recreation, Countywide Quiet Zones for railways, a replacement airport site, a demonstration test line for a personal rapid transit system, and identification of a dedicated source of revenue for storm water infrastructure[102]

E. Technical Working Group Member Perspectives[103]

One of the measures for RCP effectiveness is its impact on planning and development of cities in the San Diego region. In light of this, perspectives of members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) were gathered.[104] The members included planning directors or community development directors, and/or planning staff from the member-entities of SANDAG (for instance, cities, the county) and interested regional agencies (as in Air Pollution Control District). The TWG is a standing working group of SANDAG. On the occasion of the development of the RCP, it also served as one of the three working groups consulting on the development of the Plan.

As a RCP working group, the TWG's role was to provide technical advice for the Plan's development, based on the planning expertise of its members, to confirm that the document was "of value for the region."[105] Based on participant comments, the process was painstaking. First, they "reviewed and discussed the entire [RCP], its policies and goals from beginning to end."[106] Next, TWG provided recommendations to the Regional Planning Committee, assisted in the process to "educate local constituents about the regional planning efforts,"[107] and helped SANDAG "develop, write, and refine policies"[108] in the Plan. Most importantly, to offer greater assurance of Plan implementation, the group "provide[d] the local government perspective," [109] to verify that the Plan was "something [the city] could live with."[110] As another participant noted, SANDAG "will have to rely on local governments to carry out the Plan."[111] As one member put it, "the final product would not have been able to be adopted by SANDAG's Board without all of the local input during the development process."[112]

Technical Working Group members expressed positive views regarding plan development and its ultimate content. Members commented on the value of learning the planning issues in other cities and of seeing the bigger picture for the San Diego region. One observer noted that everyone got "pulled out of their cocoons"[113] and was able to put the Plan together "with the greater good in mind."[114] The TWG also represented a move towards creating a common language for planning within the region. One member stated that SANDAG had "accomplished the completion of a major regional tool for San Diego County to build on in the future."[115]

Other concerns surfaced when TWG members commented on the planning process. One member noted that it was helpful to have representatives from regional entities present, since such representatives are not beholden to city councils or resident groups.[116] This member indicated that often, representatives from regionally-based entities had to counter the views of representatives reflecting the interest of their respective cities. The individual added that that was not positive for the regional

welfare.[117] Another member commented that the RCP has created a new layer of bureaucracy that favors the "big dogs" in the region and works against smaller cities that do not have a lot of resources.[118] One member pointed out the "potential for the implementation [of the Plan] to be disconnected from the words of the Plan." The respondent felt that this could lead to the marginalization of cities with fewer resources, since they "cannot compete on the same playing field as other cities."[119]

Some TWG members stated that the RCP smart growth approach was either already in action in their cities or was moving in that direction. For example, one member stated that the city was "already ahead of the game," since it had prepared a specific plan for the downtown area in the early 1990s that reflected appropriate mixed uses, density levels, and other elements that were aligned with the ideas found in the regional plan.[120] Others indicated that the RCP has made them more cognizant of regional concerns in their day-to-day decision-making. In the words of one member, they "are trying to keep in mind the goals and policies [of the Plan] and apply the principles where possible."[121]

On a practical level, the programs growing out of the development of the Plan have created incentives for smart growth thinking in local planning. As one member explained, "If a city doesn't have an example of an area, they won't be a part of the [Smart Growth Concept Map], and won't be eligible for funds for development – so this is an incentive."[122] Several members indicated that they have already seen a direct benefit from the Plan, since they had been able to receive funding from the Pilot SGIP for projects in their cities.[123] One participant expressed concern that there could be plans to tie smart growth monies to the local housing element. Cities that have been built out do not have available new housing sites. Even though they are interested in producing new housing, they will have a difficult time qualifying for smart growth funds. According to this observer, this created a classic "chicken and egg" dilemma.[124]

Members were asked what trends they see with respect to the implementation of the Plan and regional planning in San Diego. The most common sentiment was that the Plan is critical in increasing the awareness of problems related to an uncoordinated growth pattern in the region. Further, it "gave the region focus and direction to put things together for regional efforts,"[125] has fostered "increased cooperation among jurisdictions,"[126] and is helping to increase support for smart growth.

There is, however, a sense of precariousness. As one member expressed it, "I feel that the RCP was an initial step, on a formal basis, for the jurisdictions in San Diego County to coordinate land use and transportation planning."However, that same observer argued that

> [L]ocal parochial interests will always sabotage regional interests without some sort of State-level incentives or requirements that compel the jurisdictions to participate on a regional level. It is very difficult to demand trade-offs from jurisdictions that are basically in competition for resources with each other."[127]

Another member, thinking about the Plan's implications, remarked that the San Diego region will just have to "wait and see."[128]

VI. Strategies for RCP Implementation

The three main strategies described in the RCP as tools for ensuring the implementation of the Plan are the Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy (IRIS),[129] ongoing performance monitoring,[130] and the Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP or "the Program").[131] The first strategy provides the foundation for implementing the Plan by identifying the process for a plan of action; the second serves as a form of status monitoring to ensure that progress is being made; and the third serves as the implementation action.

A. The Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy (IRIS)

IRIS, as its name implies, is an investment and financing strategy for planning infrastructural developments in the San Diego region that are aligned to achievement of the goals outlined in the RCP. As stated in this document, its primary objectives are to:

1. Provide a framework to strengthen the relationship between local and regional plans and policies.
2. Link capital improvement programming and land use decisions that support the urban form and design goals envisioned in the RCP.
3. Determine if capital improvement programs and plans can be better integrated to support the smart growth urban form and design goals in the RCP.
4. Create a flexible, incentive-based process, so each community has the opportunity to implement smart growth within the framework established by the RCP.[132]

IRIS was completed in a four-step process. First, an infrastructure inventory and evaluation procedure gathered data to provide a snapshot of San Diego's infrastructural landscape. Next; a needs assessment identified ways that infrastructure needs are being met and planned.[133] Third, the development of financing and public policy options that could be used to support the urban form goals described in the RCP. Finally, the integration of public policy and financing options for an infrastructural development scheme was designed to contribute to the achievement of RCP goals.[134]

B. Performance Monitoring

Assembly Bill 361, the RCP's enacting legislation, requires that SANDAG "monitor its progress through realistic measurable standards and criteria, which must be included in the [Plan] itself and made available to the public."[135] Accordingly, SANDAG developed a set of performance indicators to monitor progress towards achieving the RCP goals and published a baseline monitoring report to be the benchmark from which progress can be measured. Indicators were developed for the following subject areas: Urban Form/Transportation; Housing; Healthy Ecosystems; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities; and Borders.[136]

C. Smart Growth Incentive Program

The Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP) is the key program for tying transportation funding to RCP land use policies.[137] This program grew out of SANDAG's obligation to develop and fund alternative transportation projects, as provided by the *TransNet* tax measure.[138] The SGIP merges SANDAG's dual interest in successful implementation of the RCP and the 2030 Transportation Plan. SGIP funding areas include affordable housing developments, projects that enhance connectivity between transit networks, and streetscape enhancement projects that make public places more pedestrian-friendly.

In September 2005, SANDAG granted $19 million in funding to fourteen local projects as part of the Pilot Smart Growth Incentive Program. The grant review process focused on project characteristics to assess how well they reflect the smart growth development principles outlined for different "place types," described in the SGIP Guidelines (for instance, metropolitan center, urban center, town center, community center, transit corridor, special use center, rural community).[139] Evaluation criteria focused on "constructability, the qualities and characteristics of the existing or planned land uses and transportation facilities in the project area, the qualities of the project itself, and available matching funds."[140] In terms of "qualities" of the project, smart growth characteristics being sought were described as "mixed use, higher intensity, walkable development that is associated with an existing or planned regional transit facility or transit corridor."[141]

Another effort to ensure smart growth development involves the Smart Growth Concept Map as called for in the RCP.[142] SANDAG is working on a Concept Map reflecting current or potential smart growth areas in the San Diego region.[143] The Concept Map, created as a planning tool, serves to communicate future smart growth areas. Furthermore, it would help develop the SGIP, as it would allow for the visioning of smart growth "opportunity areas." Therefore, a locale's inclusion in the Concept Map is clearly beneficial for future SGIP funding opportunities. The Concept Map currently contains over 200 existing, planned, or potential smart growth locations and involves the input of transportation and planning professionals, as well as members of the public.[144]

VII. Cooperative Implementation: The Key to RCP Success

The San Diego Association of Governments chose a comprehensive planning approach that is openly dependent on local and private will within its region. This audacity invites easy criticism concerning its realistic prospects for implementation. It also reflects the manner in which the agency directs its authority and influence toward established goals. Success in implementing the Regional Comprehensive Plan depends on effective working relationships between agency and local governments –primarily on transportation and land use decisions.

SANDAG strategies have shown effectiveness in coordinated approaches to transportation, land use, and other functional planning areas. By consolidating transportation and land use planning activities within its agency, SANDAG reinforced its

credibility as a regional planning authority. Senate Bill 1703 strengthened the agency's institutional capacity in transportation. Planners could also build on precedent from the Regional Growth Management Strategy (1988-1992) and the Region 2020 report (1995).

In preparing the Regional Comprehensive Plan, SANDAG planners engaged citizens representing diverse interests and communities. Extensive public involvement that included issue identification and defining a regional vision provided a basis for region-wide support in the implementation stage. This included three rounds of public workshops, directed community outreach to underrepresented interest groups, and ongoing interaction with local government planners, managers, and officials.

The Smart Growth Incentive Program is a significant tool in implementing the Regional Comprehensive Plan. The SGIP encourages projects that link transportation to land use along with other smart growth criteria. Similarly, the Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy links capital improvements funding to RCP goals. Though SANDAG's planning process has its challenges and flaws, as discussed in this report, it does represent a good example of a regional planning initiative that drew upon diverse strategies to accomplish the lofty task of planning the future of a region.[145]

[1] San Diego Association of Governments, REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE SAN DIEGO REGION 1 (2004) [Hereinafter SANDAG RCP].

[2] *Ibid* at 4-5.

[3] Chapter 508, Statutes of 2003 (AB 361, Kehoe).

[4] AB 361 Section 1(b)(1), 1(b)(2) (September 8, 2003) (introduced by Assembly Member Kehoe).

[5] CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE § 132360(c) (Adoption and Administration of a Regional Comprehensive Plan).

[6] SANDAG RCP at 1.

[7] *Ibid.* § 132360.2.

[8] *See* SANDAG, DEMOGRAPHIC AND OTHER DATA- FAST FACTS, http://www.sandag.org/resources/demographics_and_other_data/demographics/fastfacts/index.asp (*available* October 2007).

[9] United States Census Bureau, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, POPULATION AND HOUSING NARRATIVE PROFILE (2005), http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US06073&-qr_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_NP01&-ds_name=&-redoLog=false (*available* October 2007).

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *See* San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, ABOUT SAN DIEGO – FAST FACTS, http://www.sdchamber.org (*available* October 2007); SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS, *Ibid.*

[14] *See* San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, ABOUT SAN DIEGO, http://www.sdchamber.org .

[15] San Diego also has the third largest concentration of biotechnology companies in the country, with an estimated 500 companies within the county's borders. Local biotech firms produce 9% of all drug sales and revenues in the United States. *Ibid.*

[16] San Diego Association of Governments, FY 2007 SANDAG BUDGET 1-1 (2006).

[17] *See* San Diego Association of Governments ABOUT SANDAG-HISTORY, http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?fuseaction=about.history (*available* October 2007).

[18] SB 1703, http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/01-02/bill/sen/sb_1701-1750/sb_1703_bill_20020920_chaptered.html (*available* October 2007).

[19] SB 1703, *codified as* CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE Sections 132353-13253.4.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE Section 132354.6.

[22] Judith E. Gruber and Michael Neuman, *San Diego Regional Growth Management Strategy*, in COORDINATING GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT THROUGH CONSENSUS BUILDING 89-92 (1994).

[23] *Ibid* at 94.

[24] SANDAG, REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, at 53-54.

[25] *Ibid* Section 132360(a)

[26] *Ibid* Section 132360(c).

[27] *Ibid* Section 132360.2.

[28] CALIFORNIA A.B. 361, Section 1(b)(5) (2003).

[29]*Ibid*, Section 1(b)(7) (2003).

[30] CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE Section §65060.8.

[31] At 3.

[32]*Ibid* at 39-46.

[33]*Ibid* at 3.

[34]This anticipated imbalance will negatively affect four present regional trends: 1) high housing costs; 2) low vacancy rates; 3) more persons per household; and 4) increases in long-distance interregional commuting. *Ibid* at 45.

[35] SANDAG RCP at 3.

[36]*Ibid* at 2.

[37]*Ibid* at 2.

[38]*Ibid* at 46.

[39] The RCP defines "Smart Growth" as "a compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive pattern of development that provides people with additional travel, housing, and employment choices by focusing future growth away from rural areas and closer to existing and planned job centers and public facilities, while preserving open space and natural resources and making more efficient use of existing urban infrastructure." *Ibid* at 25.

[40] The county's high housing prices, coupled with its relatively low wages, make it the sixth least affordable area in the country. *See* San Diego Housing Commission, SAN DIEGO'S HOUSING CRISIS - STATISTICS AND TRENDS, http://www.sdhc.org/giaboutus2.shtml (available October 2007).

[41] SANDAG RCP at 4.

[42] *Ibid* at 52.

[43] SANDAG RCP, at iii.

[44] Information in this subsection came from interviews conducted with members of the Stakeholders Working Group (SWG), as well as SANDAG documents available on the SANDAG website http://www.sandag.org. The documents include meeting agendas and minutes, as well as agency bulletins and information sheets.

[45]The original stakeholder group included members with interest and experience in regional issues. It included representatives from business, environmental, neighborhood, Tribal, military, and binational interests. *See* SANDAG, "Membership of the Regional Planning Stakeholders Working Group," http://www.sandag.org/uploads/committeeid/committeeid_59_4689.pdf (available October 2007).

[46] For a breakdown of the individual stakeholders who were designated as representatives for each of these areas of interest, see Regional Planning Committee Meeting Agenda, SANDAG (May 2, 2003) at 16, http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_384_1901.pdf (available October 2007).

[47] The views summarized here represent the views of the 12 stakeholders, designated as Stakeholders A-L, who granted interviews/corresponded by phone/email.

[48] Stakeholder G emailed response, May 3, 2006. Stakeholder I (phone interview May 4, 2006) had specific examples of areas of concern that were influenced by the SWG, including the social justice section and to a lesser extent, some environmental issues "were expanded by stakeholders."

[49] Stakeholder B phone interview March 8, 2006.

[50] Stakeholder I.

[51] Stakeholder F, phone interview April 28, 2006. The stakeholder also expressed that this is, oftentimes, the "necessary evil of the consensus process."

[52] Stakeholder L, emailed response May 23, 2006.

[53] Stakeholder H, emailed response May 3, 2006.

[54] Stakeholder A, phone interview February 24, 2006.

[55] Stakeholder B.

[56] Stakeholder B.

[57] Stakeholder H.

[58] Stakeholder L.

[59] Stakeholder B.

[60] Stakeholder C.

[61] Stakeholder I.

[62] Stakeholder F. This stakeholder did note the inherent challenge in trying to involve more people but still keep the group at a workable size of 25-30 people.

[63] Stakeholder G.

[64] Stakeholder G.

[65] Stakeholder J, emailed response May 8, 2006. Stakeholder A also lamented the lack of legal enforceability of the Plan.

[66] Stakeholder F, citing Envision Utah! as one regional planning initiative which represents a good model of this.

[67] Stakeholder D, phone interview April 26, 2006.

[68] *See* SANDAG Land Use and Regional Growth website, http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?classid=12&fuseaction=home.classhome (available October 2007).

[69] Materials at the workshops were provided in English and Spanish; at the workshops located in the South County area, which has a greater Latino representation, workshops were simultaneously interpreted.

[70] Workshop summaries for each of the meetings and other documentation are available at http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=218&fuseaction=projects.detail (available October 2007).

[71] *See* "Defining the Region's Vision and Values – Questions for the Interactive Survey." http://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_218_1770.pdf (available October 2007).

[72] See DEFINING REGION VISION/VALUES, at 3.

[73] The results of this first round of workshops were compiled and published in a report by Strategic Initiatives, the consulting firm that provided the interactive technology used in the meetings. The report, entitled "Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) Regional Workshops – Round One; Results from Interactive Polling Sessions, http://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_218_1915.pdf [hereinafter STRATEGIC INITIATIVES REPORT] (available October 2007).

[74] STRATEGIC INITIATIVES REPORT, at 8.

[75] 4/12/03 RPC AGENDA, at 16; see also "Regional Planning Committee Agenda," SANDAG (May 2, 2006), Attachment 2, at 15, http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_384_1901.pdf (available October 2007).

[76] 4/12/03 RPC AGENDA, at 16-21. The agenda also includes a summarization of the general comments received for each core value.

[77] *See* SANDAG webpage for Round 2 workshops, with links to workshop-related documents, http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=220&fuseaction=projects.detail (available October 2007).

[78] Description based on second round workshops "User's Guide," SANDAG 10-21 (Fall 2003) at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_220_2442.pdf. (available October 2007).

[79] *See Ibid* at 11-21 for a full list of the eight goals and thirty one policy objectives used in the "Blue Dot" exercise, and a list of the action items used in the "Community Feedback Form" exercise.

[80] For a summary of participant rankings of the four areas, *see* http://www.sandag.org/programs/land_use_and_regional_growth/comprehensive_land_use_and_regional_growth_projects/WorkshopsII/feedback-form_tallied-results.pdf (available October 2007).

[81] See "RCP Workshops Round 2 – Summary of Evaluation Forms," http://www.sandag.org/programs/land_use_and_regional_growth/comprehensive_land_use_and_regional_growth_projects/WorkshopsII/evaluation_summary.pdf (available October 2007).

[82] Regional Planning Committee Agenda, SANDAG (Oct. 3, 2003), Agenda Item 6-A at pp. 23-26, http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_498_2263.pdf (available October 2007); Regional Planning Committee October 3, 2003 Meeting Minutes, SANDAG (Nov. 14, 2003) http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_498_2467.pdf (available October 2007).

[83] Stakeholders Working Group Agenda, SANDAG (Sept. 23, 2003), Item 5, http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_483_2241.pdf (available October 2007).

[84] Technical Working Group Agenda, SANDAG (Oct. 9, 2003), Item 5, http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_499_2282.pdf (available October 2007).

[85] RPC Agenda (Oct. 3, 2003), at 24.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *See* SANDAG webpage for Round 3 workshops, with links to workshop-related documents, http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=233&fuseaction=project.detail (available October 2007).

[88] Regional Planning Committee May 7, 2004 Meeting Minutes, SANDAG at 2 (July 2, 2004) http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_719_3261.pdf (available October 2007).

[89] SANDAG, "Comments and Responses on Draft Regional Comprehensive Plan," (July 22, 2004) http://www.sandag.org/programs/land_use_and_regional_growth/comprehensive_land_use_and_regional_growth_projects/RCP/comments-responses_0704.pdf (available October 2007).

[90] Seniors and youth were also recruited through the help of sign-ups made at senior housing facilities and youth centers respectively.

[91] These $5,000 awards were through an Environmental Justice/Social Equity grant from Caltrans.

[92]This is a non-profit group that provides occupations skills training to the disabled community in San Diego County). *See* http://www.abledisabledadvocacy.org (available October 2007).

[93] All Congregations Together is an inter-faith organization that provides community social services. *See* http://www.act-sd.org (available October 2007).

[94]Barrio Station provides youth mentorship and development programs to the predominantly Latino Barrio Logan community. *See* http://www.barrio-station.org (available October 2007).

[95] *See* http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=220&fuseaction=projects.detail (available October 2007). For a summary of the feedback SANDAG received from the community-based outreach efforts, *see* "Results of Community Based Outreach for Regional Comprehensive Plan," http://www.sandag.org/programs/land_use_and_regional_growth/comprehensive_land_use_and_regional_growth_projects/WorkshopsII/community_based_outreach_summary.pdf (available October 2007).

[96] Interview with office manager, May 1, 2006.

[97] These topics correspond with those used for the visioning exercise in the Round 1 Workshops: i.e., housing, borders, economy and public facilities, urban form, transportation, healthy ecosystems, and a "wildcard" open category.

[98]The median household income for the City of Coronado was $67,335.

[99] SANDAG, "Regional Comprehensive Plan - Fall 2003 Workshops," http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=220&fuseaction=projects.detail (available October 2007).

[100] SANDAG, "Joint Meeting Between the Regional Planning Committee and the Technical and Stakeholders Working Groups," (Agenda, May 24, 2004), Agenda Item 3 at 5-10 [hereinafter SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES TO RCP], http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_667_3100.pdf (available October 2007).

[101] SANDAG, "Joint Regional Planning Committee, Technical Working Group and Stakeholders Working Group Discussion and Actions – Meeting of Monday, May 24, 2004," (Meeting Minutes, dated June 25, 2004), at 7-8 http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_667_3216.pdf (available October 2007).

[102] SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES TO RCP, at 9. This list was quoted from the document.

[103] The technical working group member views summarized in this subsection represent the views of the 11 TWG members who granted interviews/corresponded by phone/email; they are designated as Members A-K.

[104] The TWG is composed of 26 representatives. The member views summarized in this subsection represent the views of the 11 members, designated as Members A-K, who granted interviews or corresponded by email.

[105] Member D, phone interview May 5, 2006.

[106] Member C, emailed response May 12, 2006.

[107] Member E, phone interview May 1, 2006.

[108] Member K, emailed response May 19, 2006.

[109] Member A, phone interview May 1, 2006.

[110] Member D.

[111] *Ibid.*

[112] Member J, emailed response, May 3, 2006. This member noted that SANDAG's Board is composed of mayors and council members of the SANDAG member-cities. A plan that is out of touch with the cities' interests would have had a hard time passing the Board's vote.

[113] Member D.

[114] Member C.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Member I, phone interview May 3, 2006.

[117] This member was surprised to hear that some city planners did not see housing as an equity issue. In this case, the member felt the need to remind cities that affordable housing is indeed an equity issue that impacts the region since the decisions the group made regarding planning for housing would impact who could or could not live in the San Diego region.

[118] Member G, phone interview May 1, 2006. According to the SGIP GUIDELINES:

> Matching Funds points are awarded to projects based on the amount of matching funds provided by the local jurisdiction from either public or private sources. ... Points are awarded by multiplying the percentage of matching funds times a weighting factor of 20, up to a maximum of 15 points. The percentage of matching funds is the ratio of the matching funds to the total SGIP project cost.

SGIP GUIDELINES, at 4.

[119] *Ibid.*

[120] Member E.

[121] Member C.

[122] Member D.

[123] Member F, phone interview May 1, 2006; Member H, phone interview May 1, 2006.

[124] Member G.

[125] Member D.

[126] Member H, phone interview May 1, 2006.

[127] Member J.

[128] Member G.

[129] SANDAG RCP at 307-348. (Chapter 7).

[130] *Ibid.* at 349-353 (Chapter 8).

[131] *Ibid*, at 355-393 (Chapter 9).

[132] *Ibid.* at 310.

[133] The process included the evaluation of eight infrastructure areas: transportation; water supply and delivery system; wastewater; storm water management; solid waste collection, recycling, and disposal; energy supply and delivery system; education; and parks and open space. *Ibid* at 309.

[134] *Ibid*, at 310-311.

[135] Cal. A.B. 361, §1(b)(7) (2003); SANDAG RCP at 349.

[136] *See* "Table 8.1: Annual Indicators for Monitoring the Regional Comprehensive Plan," SANDAG RCP, at 351.

[137] For more information on the SGIP, *see* "Smart Growth Incentive Program" webpage, http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=264&fuseaction=projects.detail (available October 2007) This web page also includes the "Pilot Smart Growth Incentive Program Guidelines."

[138] In 1987, San Diego county voters approved a measure providing for the creation of a ½-cent transportation sales tax. This created *TransNet*, a $3.3 billion program that has historically been apportioned three ways to fund highway, transit, and local road construction and improvements projects. Though the program was set to expire in 2008, voter approval of Measure A means that the ½-cent sales tax will be extended for another forty years. Two percent (2%) of this fund was earmarked for the SGIP – creating a minimum of $280 million over forty years (or $7 million/year).

[139] The SGIP Guidelines charts characteristics for these seven distinct "Smart Growth Area Classifications," broken into land use, land use intensity, transportation system, and public transit service characteristics; it also provides examples of existing areas that represent each type of area classification. SGIP GUIDELINES, Attachment 1, at 5-13; *see also* RCP, at 81-88.

[140] SGIP GUIDELINES, at 2.

[141] *Ibid.*

[142] SANDAG RCP, at 19, 80.

[143] *See* SANDAG, "Smart Growth Concept Map," http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=296&fuseaction=projects.detail (available October 2007). A copy of the map can be found at http://www.sandag.org/programs/land_use_and_regional_growth/comprehensive_land_use_and_regional_growth_projects/RCP/region.pdf (available October 2007).

[144] SANDAG completed a series of public workshops related to the development of the Concept Map in April, 2006.

[145] Impacts of local on regional AB 361, Section 1(b)(5).

CHAPTER 7

LEARNING FROM COLLABORATION; LEADING WITH BLUEPRINT

The collaborative initiatives in this report combine regional leadership with local acceptance. They integrated transportation planning with land use, environmental, housing, economic, and other substantive planning areas. Intergovernmental cooperation, active stakeholder involvement, and outreach to underrepresented citizens also mark these programs. In combination, these case studies illustrate cooperative data analysis, visioning and scenario planning, innovative finance, and unprecedented regulatory agreements.

These initiatives benefitted from initial collaboration among governments. SACOG and local planners combined efforts to project a base case scenario for the Blueprint project. The Federal-State Partnership for Integrated Planning also assisted MCAG in interpreting land use and transportation information, and the PIP program also established new processes for information-sharing among FHWA, EPA, and Caltrans. Pre-project communication became a cornerstone of the RCIP Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process. SCAG tested its PILUT transportation-land use scenarios for compatibility with cooperatively developed Compass principles. SANDAG's Technical Working Group ensures ongoing communication among regional and local planners.

Success rests on local willingness to encourage mixed use and transit-oriented development. SACOG, MCAG, SCAG, and SANDAG brought citizens into the vision-creating process, SACOG and MCAG planners asked stakeholders to select their preferred development scenarios, and SACOG staff met extensively with local officials throughout Blueprint and its Metropolitan Transportation Plan update. Merced's regional transportation planners also communicated extensively with established and under-represented interests while SANDAG planners revised the Regional Comprehensive Plan vision statement based on consensus among those attending its workshops.

These programs also extended their planning scope beyond transportation to land use, environment, and other functional areas. The SACOG Blueprint and SCAG Compass linked land use policies directly to regional transportation planning. The RCIP necessarily balanced environmental, transportation, and land use polices in the County General Plan. SANDAG added natural habitats and resources, economic prosperity, public facilities, social equity, and border policy elements to its Regional Comprehensive Plan.

As stated in the first chapter, this report does not prescribe a specific method for collaborative planning. A public involvement model would account for SACOG's interactive Blueprint and MTP processes, MCAG staff's extensive outreach, and for the SCAG and SANDAG workshops to develop comprehensive regional visions. The RCIP provides impressive examples of collaborative implementation. Its Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan includes local governments and special districts along with state and federal agencies. Supporting impact fees for the MSHCP and for transportation projects include fourteen local authorities and two regional agencies. SCAG Regional Board members, staff, and consultants collaborated within

agency bounds before proposing Compass. It then designed a process that would engage local stakeholders through the workshop "chip exercise" and consultant assistance.

Project interviewees also referred to intergovernmental, interagency, and even intra-agency collaborative planning. Caltrans describes collaborative planning broadly as

> multi-agency, inter-jurisdictional planning that integrates land use and infrastructure planning to meet the community's needs while addressing economic development, environmental protection and equity. Collaborative planning includes community involvement to ensure that development meets the vision and needs of the residents of the region. It involves early involvement of stakeholders and sharing of data.[1]

Caltrans also defines its own stakeholder priority: "to expedite transportation project delivery by streamlining the environmental review and permitting process."[2] This involves bringing resource agencies more closely into the transportation planning process and integrating habitat and conservation planning (as the RCIP did). Influencing local land use planning and regional jobs/housing imbalances are also within this inclusive description.

I. The Potential for Collaborative Comprehensive Regional Planning

In total, these case studies illustrate collaborative data collection and analysis, goal formulation, development and selection of scenarios, and plan implementation techniques. SACOG staff developed initial projections for the Blueprint base case scenario with assistance from local planners. MCAG's formal relationship with Caltrans, FHWA, and EPA enhanced its information base (along with benefits gained within the PIP agencies). The multi-government multi-species habitat plan for Western Riverside County established a comprehensive alternative to case-by-case responses to individual designations and SCAG's Compass workshops provided important input for its transportation planning projections. SANDAG meets continually with its technical advisory group of local planners and managers. Information needs and sharing are among the subjects addressed.

These programs also provide examples of effective public involvement. SACOG and its nonprofit partner Valley Vision convened multiple workshops that engaged citizens in setting land use and transportation priorities. While Merced planners showed that exceptional outreach can be accomplished with limited resources, SCAG's workshops challenged citizen participants to allocate jobs and housing needs with developable land over the next twenty-five years. SANDAG planners also extended public involvement to test and revise a vision for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Clearly, however, these efforts taxed both agency and personal resources.

The RCIP's array of participating local, state and federal participants can serve as a model for collaborative implementation. These related initiatives conveyed the reciprocal benefits of protecting natural habitats, providing transportation facilities, and offering relative surety to developers on land use policies. Its interlocal impact fee agreements also proved useful to development of Merced's transportation impact fee program. The SCAG Compass 2% strategy has a compelling premise: that adapting regulations to encourage compatible transit-oriented projects can promote the local economy along with further regional objectives.

However, these program descriptions do not provide step-by-step guidance toward regional consensus. The next section shares observations on how these initiatives gained understandings of regional trends, brought stakeholder interests together to consider options, and chose strategies that responded to present realities.

II. Common Insights from Uncommon Case Studies

Common elements in these case studies might be instructive for integrating transportation, land use, and environmental planning in other regions. Some are clear: the importance of precedent; acceptance of growth trends; comprehensiveness; and that active stakeholder involvement improves prospects for collaborative implementation. The elements of regional leadership are more elusive. They must convey realistic acceptance of overlying regional issue while deflecting criticism for innovative responses. However, persuasion has its limits. Regional transportation planning cannot yet take precedence over competing local land controls. Despite significant statewide bond issues, lack of funding remains a major limitation.

1. Starting From Somewhere: The Importance of Precedent

Collaborative planning initiatives benefit from precursor efforts. Observers in San Diego, Sacramento, SCAG, and Merced referenced the importance of prior regional efforts to current program effectiveness. SACOG observers also noted that Blueprint benefitted significantly from earlier attempts to link transportation planning with land use, which included the 1989 Metro Study and 1985 MTP update. Its 2002 Transportation Roundtable recommended land use planning as a prerequisite for the upcoming SACOG transportation plan. MCAG's prior efforts included coordinated transit planning with local governments, state, and federal agencies to Yosemite Park. The RCIP emerged as a contrast to unguided development, and costly interim planning to protect habitat for a single species while SCAG had already been promoting "livable cities" and integrated planning before Compass. San Diego adopted a Regional Growth Management Strategy in 1988, and SANDAG promoted a Region 2020 vision in the mid-1990s that included habitat preservation, transportation, land use, housing, and state/local tax reform.

2. Accepting Regional Realities: Growth Trends and Governance Capacity

Acknowledging regional trends and present governance capacity are threshold requisites for effective collaborative planning. This easily overlooked step was integral to progress in case study initiatives. SACOG planners created a Blueprint "base case" scenario by analyzing development approvals over a four-year period (1998-2001) and extending these trends forward to 2050. With convening assistance from Valley Vision, the agency conducted thirty city or neighborhood-level workshops, seven that focused on county-level plans, and a region-wide workshop to select the preferred Blueprint scenario. The SACOG Board approved this land use vision unanimously.

Negotiations to establish the RCIP passed a critical threshold when builders, property owners, agricultural, and environmental advocates acknowledged that growth would occur with or without an integrated response. That acceptance provided leverage for stakeholders to could reach consensus on strengthening the County General Plan, a local-state-federal partnership for habitat protection, and local development fees to support environmental and transportation initiatives.

SCAG Compass workshops confronted participants with regional realities and trends. For example, the 38,000 square mile SCAG region includes approximately 10,500 square miles of remaining developable land. Area population is expected to grow from over 18 million (nearly half of the state's population) to nearly 25 million by 2030. Workshop organizers challenged stakeholders to "do the math" using GIS maps and chips representing density mixes to consider how future growth could be accommodated within the region.

3. Regional Leadership: "Don't Say No!"

Regional leadership for collaborative planning combines realistic understanding with undeterred optimism. This third observation is not a formal project finding, but it does reflect leadership qualities noted in project interviews with key participants. These initiators could accurately recite regional trends. Many referenced the gap between regional transportation planning and local land use authority. They also cited fiscal constraints and environmental compliance issues. Some openly acknowledged the resistance they encountered. Direct and cross-interviews revealed qualities of persistent persuasion among these program initiators. They would not equate lack of precedent with incapacity. In other words, these regional stewards would not accept "you can't do that" when, in fact, they could.

4. Addressing Environmental Concerns Early and Often

Collaborative regional planning with transportation as a primary element benefits from early contact with environmental interests and regulatory agencies. Each initiative prioritized transportation planning. All except the Riverside project are charged with planning for regional transportation needs. These plans must comply with Federal Clean Air Act emission standards, habitat protection laws, and other regulatory requirements. Noncompliance could halt or seriously delay planned projects. The Partnership for Integrated Planning began as a Federal-State partnership with early and continuing communication as a primary objective. MCAG's participation enabled regional planners to include environmental and resource constraints in its early planning stages. The RCIP sought to restructure planning for transportation corridors by consulting with communities, and with environmental interests and regulators, before proceeding with project design. Early consultation on environmental compliance may also lead to generating more acceptable project alternatives.

5. Integrating Transportation Planning with Land Use and Other Plans

Collaborative planning extends beyond single function transportation planning to include land use, environment, housing, and other functional areas. These plan initiatives connected transportation, land use, environmental, and other planning functions. SACOG's current transportation plan incorporates future land use choices from its adopted Blueprint vision. The MCAG RTP process brought environmental planning and regulatory concerns into the earliest planning stages. The RCIP linked habitat planning, environmental and community acceptance, and County General Plan amendments. SCAG's Compass Blueprint seeks sustainable development by coordinating transportation, land use, and open space planning. The SANDAG Regional Comprehensive Plan sets transportation as a co-element with urban form, housing, natural habitats and resources, economic prosperity, public facilities, social equity, and relationships with bordering counties and Mexico.

6. Recognition: "What's in a Name?"

Labels help define a regional planning initiative. The terms Blueprint, RCIP, Compass, and provide a focus for collaborative planning initiatives. Project interviewees in Sacramento and for SCAG indicated that Blueprint and Compass respectively had become almost synonymous with "smart growth." In Merced, Measure A (the ½-cent sales tax for transportation) was associated with meeting regional transportation needs. The SANDAG Regional Comprehensive Plan is well-known, and the RCIP is recognized for its enhanced transportation approval process and multi-species habitat planning.

7. Stakeholder Outreach: Business Not as Usual

Active stakeholder involvement in planning decisions can improve implementation prospects. Several observers suggested that staff outreach was important during the preparation of the MCAG Regional Transportation Plan. It was referenced as a key influence to five of six municipalities adopting transportation impact fees to meet region-wide needs. Planners recognized early in the process that traditional public meeting formats were ineffective. MCAG staff reoriented its public outreach by meeting with representative stakeholder groups and within underrepresented communities. This proved effective: participants shared positive responses about being consulted on goal-setting and scenario preferences.

At SACOG MTP workshops, participants were asked to allocate expected funding among infrastructure alternatives (for instance, light rail, lane expansion, and new roads). Then, each proposal was evaluated with respect to impacts on vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Some observed that this approach was "too real" because it pointed clearly to funding inadequacies. It also allowed frustration to be directed toward SACOG staff as they conducted these workshops. Whether or not it leads to funding innovations, the debate over funding priorities has altered.

8. "Can You Hear Me Now?": GIS and Clickers as Collaborative Tools

"New graphic techniques for displaying the results of land use decisions enhance community involvement and integrated planning."[3] As Caltrans suggests here, GIS-based plan exercises inform agency planners and workshop participants by projecting the impacts of decisions in mappable form. The SACOG Blueprint process pictured the Sacramento region in 2050 based on a continuation of existing development trends. This "base case" scenario provided a vision that could be altered by adapting land use and transportation policies. These alternative "blueprints" could also be shown as mid-century land use patterns.

SCAG Compass workshops followed a similar theme, but confronted participants more directly with allocating land uses that would accommodate long-term growth. Participants had a base map and an initial set of density chips. As discussed in Chapter 5, many working groups chose to trade their lower density chips (representing single-family larger acreage lots) for higher-density chips that could be allocated to development with major transportation connections (highways or rail). These scenario choices helped participants see graphically how anticipated growth could be effectively limited to 2% of developable land if closely linked to transportation infrastructure. The SACOG MTP workshops allowed participants and planners to see shorter-term impacts on road usage from proposed combinations of projects in the upcoming budget cycle.

These map-based scenarios or calculated traffic impacts also allowed participants to see the projected impacts of their choices within minutes or days rather than months or years. On another level, it challenged community participants and government officials to think in different contexts. Instead of "where's my traffic light?" (or in addition to that sort of local concern), discussions focused on larger regional transportation issues. When asked to accommodate growth for the next quarter century, participants saw the impact of their scenario choices on a regional map.

9. Collaborative Planning Leads to Collaborative Implementation

Collaborative planning that shows respective benefits for regional and local interests improves prospects for innovative implementation measures. Using cooperative influence as a primary tool, these initiatives met remarkable successes in plan implementation. The agreement establishing the RCIP multi-species habitat plan includes the County, fourteen municipalities as well as local districts for flood control, parks, and waste management. Caltrans, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Fish and Game are state-level parties to this agreement, as is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Separate interlocal agreements provide financial support for the habitat plan and RCIP transportation element. Local Development Mitigation Fees are directed to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority for the MSHCP. Proceeds from fourteen local Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee programs are managed by the Western Riverside Council of Governments. Similarly, the Merced County Association of Governments allocates locally-administered transportation impact fees toward regionally-defined projects.

The SCAG Compass program assists local government members willing to encourage mixed density transit-oriented developments. Public workshops helped demonstrate that reliance on low-density zoning can impede prospects for attracting compatible development projects. This realization has encouraged member governments to adopt more flexible land development codes. It also illustrates how promoting local economic objectives can support the Compass strategy to direct development to 2% of available land within its region. SANDAG offers competitive grants to local transit-oriented development projects under its Smart Growth Incentive Program. Its technical working group meets regularly to exchange information and planning strategies.

For SACOG, SCAG and SANDAG, promoting smart growth represents far more than idealized vision. In particular, the SCAG Compass workshops offer realistic development alternatives that promote Compass principles. As development is guided toward SCAG's 2% Opportunity Areas, there are correlated reductions in mobile source emissions. Taken as a whole, the Compass Demonstration Projects, SANDAG Smart Growth Incentive Program, and SACOG competitive grant program to promote Blueprint principles offer "on-the-ground" examples for the programs they represent.

10. Beyond Influence and Carrots: Collaborative Planning Needs More Tools

Regional planning initiatives in California are limited in scale and authority. While these programs are impressive accomplishments, they rely on governmental and other stakeholders to see benefits in cooperation. SACOG can raise the dialogue and influence public and private land

use practices, but it cannot sanction inconsistent local actions. MCAG's impressive outreach and fiscal influence has not yet persuaded voters to approve a sales tax measure to support transportation improvements. The RCIP is a necessary but limited response to overwhelming growth impacts and SCAG's Compass can point and wait for local governments to select sustainable and self-serving growth policies. The exemplary SANDAG regional comprehensive plan admits at the outset that it relies on municipal cooperation for success. The agency can offer financial incentives for smart growth projects; it cannot condition or withhold funding for inconsistent local actions.

III. Leading Through Learning: The State Role in Collaborative Regional Planning

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) remains at the center of state-level support for integrated regional planning. Its Blueprint Planning program currently provides $5 million in grants to regional agencies.[4] Blueprint planning is also seen as a supplemental strategy for implementing the $19.9 billion allocated to transportation in the Governor's Strategic Growth Plan.[5] That plan references a proposed law to direct investment to "projects that produce the most congestion relief, safety, pollution reduction, and improvement of system operation."[6] However, the Growth Plan does not refer to Blueprint planning.

Caltrans also coordinates the Blueprint Learning Network[7] (BLN) in cooperation with the Resources Agency, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, the California Center for Regional Leadership, and the University of California at Davis. Network workshops focus on "on overcoming the challenges and obstacles to effective regional blueprint planning."[8] One primary objective is to provide a common planning and analytic framework for land use, transportation, housing, and environmental factors. The BLN is also intended as an opportunity for state-regional partnerships to implement regional blueprint plans. The third primary BLN objective is to "[l]earn together as the regions undertake their planning processes in the real world."[9] By referring to workshops as "learning" events, Caltrans shows collaborative intent to guide regional blueprint initiatives.

Other laws and programs have potential to assist regional blueprint planning. A 1976 legislative provision finds that the Governor's Office of Planning and Research as the most appropriate agency to implement a statewide land use planning function.[10] Legislation also requires the Governor to prepare a comprehensive State Environmental Goals and Policy Report.[11] This mandate gives top priority to "the development of statewide land use policy."[12] Accompanying planning standards include using land efficiently,[13] locating development in areas "appropriately planned for growth,"[14] and "served by adequate transportation and other infrastructure."[15] An initial report was transmitted to the Legislature in November 2003. It stated that achieving goals and policies for sustainable development through state government actions "will require collaborative planning at and among all levels of government, with the State taking the lead at times, and acting as a partner at others."[16] Integrating state-level land use authority with regional Blueprint support will be a collaborative planning initiative.

[1] Caltrans, Transportation Planning, Collaborative Planning Branch, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/Collaborative_Planning.htm (available November 2007).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] State of California, Department of Transportation, News Release, *State Announces $5 Million in Blueprint Planning Grants*, November 30, 2006.

[5] *See* Caltrans, Transportation Planning, Regional and Interagency Planning, *California Regional Blueprint Planning Program*, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/orip.htm (available November 2007). *See also* THE CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN, January 10, 2007, at 16; GOVERNOR'S BUDGET SUMMARY, 2007-2008 (2007) at 66-71.

[6] THE CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN at 19.

[7] Caltrans, Transportation Planning, Blueprint Learning Network, http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/BLN.htm (available November 2007).

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.* § 65035. 'The Legislature finds that it is necessary to have one agency at the state level which is responsible for developing state land use policies, coordinating planning of all state agencies, and assisting and monitoring local and regional planning.' *Ibid.* A 1970 law calls for functional plans by state units responsible for water development, transportation, natural resources, economic development, human resources, and other areas using "common assumptions and forecasts of statewide growth and development." *Ibid.* § 65036.

[11] *See* California Government Code § 65041.

[12] California Government Code § 6504.1. Governor's Office of Planning and Research, GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND POLICY REPORT, November 10, 2003. *See also* California Planning Roundtable, PLANNING AT THE EDGE OF THE MILLENNIUM: IMPROVING LAND USE DECISIONS IN CALIFORNIA 6 (2000) (recommending a statewide planning strategy).

[13] California Government Code § 65041.1(c)1.

[14] *Ibid.* § 65041.1(c)3.

[15] *Ibid.* § 65041.1(c)4.

[16] *See* Governor's Office of Planning and Research, GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND POLICY REPORT [2003] at 2.

APPENDIX A

CITIZEN OPINIONS ON REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

The project survey asked citizens in four project areas for their opinions on regional planning issues and the effectiveness of public involvement strategies. A total of 961 interviews were conducted in Merced County (236), the Sacramento region (258), Riverside County (253), and San Diego County (214). Questions focused on knowledge of planning issues, problem evaluation, meeting involvement and notification, interest and participation in transportation and land use decisions, and awareness/evaluations of regional planning initiatives. The survey also identified differences in participation and notification by economic status and race/ethnicity.

- Respondents in all regions rated "increased traffic congestion" as the most problematic issue (See Table 1). "Lack of affordable housing" and "high cost of building new roads and water lines" were identified as the second and third biggest problems.
- Approximately 30% of all respondents indicated significant interest in local growth and land use decisions. This percentage varied from 33.33% in the Sacramento area to 26.64% in San Diego County (See Table 2).
- When asked about their level of personal involvement in community land use and growth issues (meetings, petitions, or letters), 7.28% of all respondents answered "a lot." This ranged from 8.91% in the Sacramento area to 5.53% in Riverside County (See Table 3).
- Respondents indicated far greater participation in school boards (38.61%) than in planning and zoning (23.2%) or transportation planning (18.52%) meetings (See Table 4).
- The survey compared meeting participation by groups of people that are historically either well-represented or under-represented using income levels and race/ethnicity as indicators.
  - While higher-income respondents were more frequently involved in transportation planning than lower income respondents (under $20,000 per year), the "participation gap" ranged from 13.2% in the Sacramento region (29.2% higher-income; 16% lower-income); to 1.1% in Riverside County (14.5% higher-income participation and 13.4% lower-income participation) (See Figures 1 and 2).
  - The participation gap in transportation planning meetings between white and non-white respondents was 15.1% in Merced County (27.4% and 12.3%) and 7.5% in the Sacramento region (25.2% and 17.7%) (See Figures 3 and 4).
- Respondents indicated that they learned about upcoming public meetings (of any kind) most frequently by "some kind of newspaper notice" (56.61%), a flyer sent to their home (46.2%), or from a friend or co-worker (38.19%) (See Tables 5-7).
- Most respondents (56.5%) were familiar with the term "urban sprawl," 33% recognized the term "smart growth" and 20% were aware of the regional planning initiative in their area (See Table 8).
- In San Diego, 36% of those interviewed were aware of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Those expressing opinions were somewhat more negative (24.6% favorable and 31.17% unfavorable). Sacramento area respondent opinions of the SACOG Blueprint were more favorable (32.5%) than unfavorable (25%). In Riverside County, 19.6 % were familiar with the RCIP. Opinions were positive when expressed (42.86% favorable and 12.24% unfavorable). Merced County respondent opinions of the regional transportation plan were highly favorable (55.56% to 7.41%). However, each of these opinion groups was small (See Tables 9 and 10).

I. Infrastructure and Growth Problems

Respondents rated 14 problems involving infrastructure and growth. They were asked to rate each problem on a 7-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (not a problem) to 7 (severe problem). The average scores for each of these issue and region are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Severity of infrastructure and growth issues, by region (all respondents)

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
a. Lack of affordable housing	**5.32**	**5.45**	**5.33**	**5.67**	**5.44**
b. Air pollution	5.36	4.96	4.94	4.68	4.99
c. Loss of open space, such as parks & nature preserves	4.13	4.45	4.24	4.52	4.33
d. Loss of farm land	4.74	4.77	4.87	4.31	4.69
e. High cost of building new roads and water lines	**5.37**	**5.36**	**5.26**	**5.40**	**5.35**
f. The growth of cities & suburbs	4.60	5.00	5.08	4.88	4.90
g. Crowded neighborhoods	3.95	4.50	4.05	4.18	4.18
h. Water pollution	4.32	4.49	4.45	4.79	4.50
i. High property taxes	**5.03**	**5.30**	**5.10**	**5.15**	**5.15**
j. Overcrowded schools	**5.30**	**5.30**	**4.98**	**4.83**	**5.11**
k. High crime rates	5.20	4.93	4.75	4.77	4.91
l. Increased traffic congestion	**5.37**	**6.23**	**5.89**	**5.86**	**5.84**
m. Loss of animal habitat	4.24	4.52	4.60	4.46	4.46
n. Inadequate water supply	3.81	3.92	3.76	4.14	3.90

The most uniformly problematic issue included in the survey is **increased traffic congestion**, which rates an average score of 5.84 among all of respondents on this 7-point scale. It is also perceived to be the most severe problem (or tied for this distinction) in each region as well. It also appears that increased traffic congestion is most problematic in Riverside County, where survey respondents rate it 6.23 on average.

The second and third biggest problems are the **lack of affordable housing** and the **high cost of building new roads and water lines**. While the lack of affordable housing appears to be perceived as a slightly more severe problem, the difference between these two is minimal. The fourth and fifth overall most severe problems included on the survey list are **high property taxes** and **overcrowded schools**. Overcrowded schools are of particular concern to survey respondents in Merced and Riverside Counties, but perceived as less problematic in the other areas.

II. Interest and Participation in Local Land Use and Growth Decisions

The survey asked respondents to indicate both their interest in land use decisions, as well as their personal involvement in these processes. Table 2 reports the cross-tabulation of responses to the interest in land-use question with region of respondent. Respondents could indicate that they have a lot of interest, only some, very little or no interest in local growth and land use decisions. The table allows the reader to compare the percentage of respondents in each category for each community.

Table 2. How interested are you in local growth and land use decisions in your city or community—a lot, only some, very little, or nothing?

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
A lot	30.08 (71)	33.60 (85)	33.33 (86)	26.64 (57)	31.11 (299)
Only some	38.14 (90)	39.53 (100)	44.57 (115)	43.46 (93)	41.42 (398)
Very little	22.46 (53)	17.39 (44)	15.12 (39)	20.56 (44)	18.73 (180)
Nothing	8.47 (20)	8.70 (22)	5.81 (15)	8.88 (19)	7.91 (76)
Don't Know	0.85 (2)	0.00 (0)	1.16 (3)	0.00 (0)	0.53 (5)
Refused	0.00 (0)	0.79 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.47 (1)	0.31 (3)
Total	100.00 (236)	100.00 (253)	100.00 (258)	100.00 (214)	100.00 (961)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

Riverside and Sacramento-area residents appear to be most interested in local growth and land use decisions (in both places, more than 33 percent of respondents said they have "a lot" of interest in these decisions). Merced respondents ranked second (30.1 percent said "a lot"), and San Diego residents indicated the least interest (26.6 percent said "a lot"). Table 3 reports the cross-tabulation of responses to the involvement in land-use question with region of respondent.

Table 3. How often have you been personally involved in local land use and growth decisions in your city or community—such as attending meetings, signing petitions, or writing letters to officials—a lot, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
A lot	**7.20** **(17)**	**5.53** **(14)**	**8.91** **(23)**	**7.48** **(16)**	**7.28** **(70)**
Sometimes	31.36 (74)	29.25 (74)	32.56 (84)	29.61 (64)	30.80 (296)
Hardly ever	24.15 (57)	23.72 (61)	25.58 (66)	22.43 (48)	24.04 (231)
Never	36.86 (87)	40.71 (103)	32.95 (85)	39.72 (85)	37.46 (360)
Don't Know	0.42 (1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.10 (1)
Refused	0.00 (0)	0.79 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.47 (1)	0.31 (3)
Total	100.00 (236)	100.00 (253)	100.00 (258)	100.00 (214)	100.00 (961)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

There was more self-reported participation in local land use and growth decisions in the Sacramento area than elsewhere (with 8.9 percent of respondents indicating they are involved "a lot"). Participation levels in San Diego and Merced Counties are lower and similar to each other with just over 7 percent indicating they are regularly involved in local land use decisions (7.5 and 7.2, respectively). Self-reported involvement is even lower in Riverside, with 5.5 percent of respondents indicating they are involved in these decisions with great frequency.

III. Meeting Participation by Meeting Type

Table 4 presents the total and regional percentages of reported participation in various kinds of public meetings. The cell entries represent the percentage of respondents who indicated that they did participate in a given type of meeting.

Table 4. Participation in meeting by type and region (all respondents)

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
a. Transportation planning	19.92 (47)	14.62 (37)	22.09 (57)	17.29 (37)	18.52 (178)
b. Planning and zoning	22.46 (53)	21.47 (55)	24.42 (63)	24.30 (52)	23.20 (223)
c. City Council	**35.17 (83)**	**29.64 (75)**	**30.62 (79)**	**30.37 (65)**	**31.43 (302)**
d. County Commission	19.49 (46)	11.86 (30)	15.89 (41)	12.62 (27)	14.98 (144)
e. School board	**45.76 (108)**	**30.43 (77)**	**40.31 (104)**	**38.32 (82)**	**38.61 (371)**
f. Other public meetings	19.92 (47)	20.95 (53)	29.84 (77)	21.03 (45)	23.10 (222)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

Survey participants were more likely to have said that they participated in School Board meetings than any other type of meeting, with 38.6 percent of all respondents indicating that they had participated in School Board meetings. City council meetings were second in participation (31.4 percent). Participants were more likely to have participated in planning and zoning meetings (23.2 percent) and transportation planning meetings (18.5 percent) than they were to have participated in County commission meetings (15.0 percent). Just under one-quarter of respondents indicated they participated in other kinds of meetings (23.1 percent). However, this survey does not include an analysis of these other meeting types.

There also appears to be regional variation in participation in transportation planning that is worth noting. There appears to be more reported participation in transportation planning meetings in the Sacramento and Merced areas than in either Riverside or San Diego. Only 14.6 percent of Riverside respondents (where traffic congestion is rated as the most severe) said they participate in transportation planning, while more than one-fifth of Sacramento-area respondents (22.1 percent) said they participate in transportation planning.

IV. Participation Among Members of Underrepresented Groups

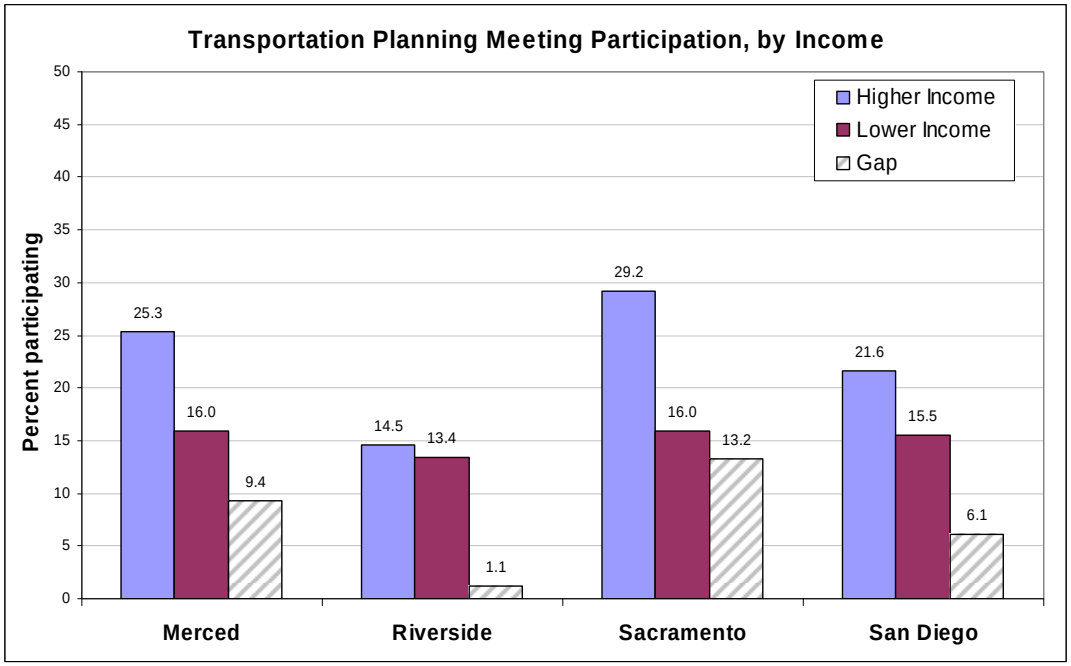
The survey also compared the participation of groups of people who are historically well-represented and under-represented. This is examined with reference to income and race/ethnicity, focusing on participation in transportation and planning and zoning meetings.

A. Income

The survey respondents to identify their household income using 10 categories starting with "under $20,000 per year" and nine other categories in $10,000 increments, ending with more than $100,000 per year. The median category for the survey was the fifth category, so it was divided the sample into groups with lower income, defined as a self-reported household income under $50,000, and higher income, defined as self-reported household income over $50,000 annually.

Figure 1 shows the rates of participation for higher income respondents, lower income respondents, and the participation gap between these groups for each region in transportation planning meetings.

Figure 1. Transportation Planning Meeting Participation by Income

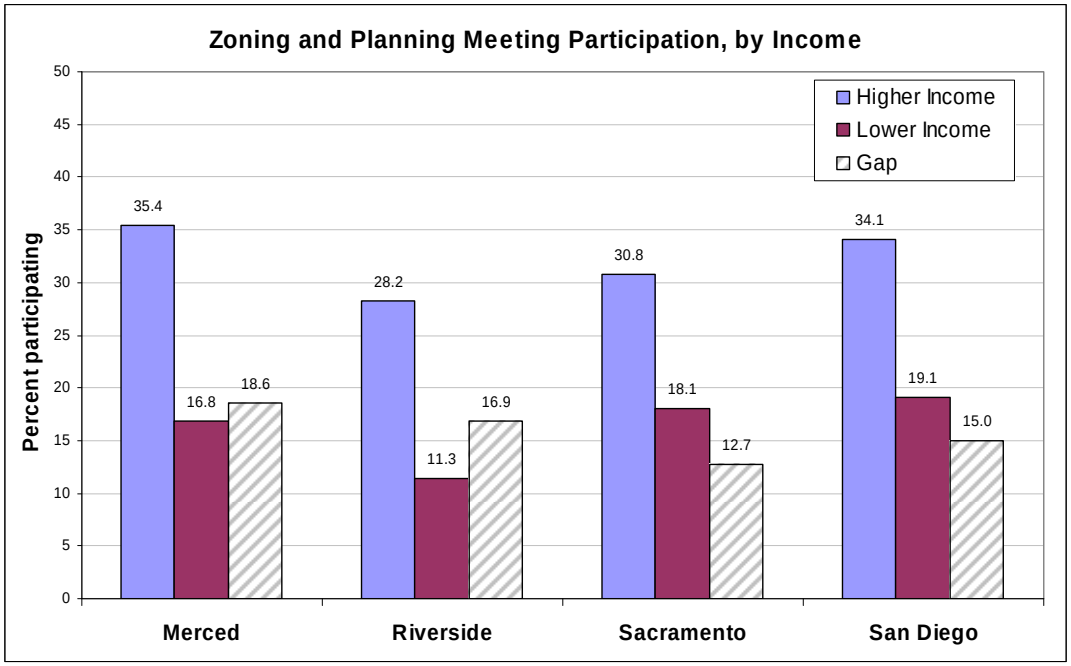


In Merced, 25.3 percent of higher income respondents said they participate in transportation planning meetings, while 16 percent of lower income respondents said they participate. This produces a 9.4 percent participation gap between higher income and lower income respondents. In Riverside County, the participation gap appears to be much smaller (1.1 percent), with 14.5 percent of higher income respondents indicating they participate in transportation planning meetings and 13.4 percent of lower income respondents indicating they participate in these meetings. Importantly this reduced gap appears to be due more to lower participation among higher income people than higher participation among lower income residents. The largest income-related gap appears to affect the Sacramento area, with a 13.2 percent difference between the rate of participation among higher and lower income residents. Here this does appear to be due to a particularly strong rate of participation among the higher income people who responded to the survey, with 29.2 percent indicating they participate in transportation

planning meetings. The participation rate of lower income respondents in Sacramento (16 percent) is more consistent with their participation in other regions. Finally, San Diego residents experience a 6.1 percent participation gap with 21.6 percent of higher income respondents indicating they participate in transportation planning meetings and 15.5 percent of lower income respondents saying they participate.

Figure 2 compares rates of participation in zoning and planning hearings by income levels.

Figure 2. Zoning and Planning Meeting Participation by Income

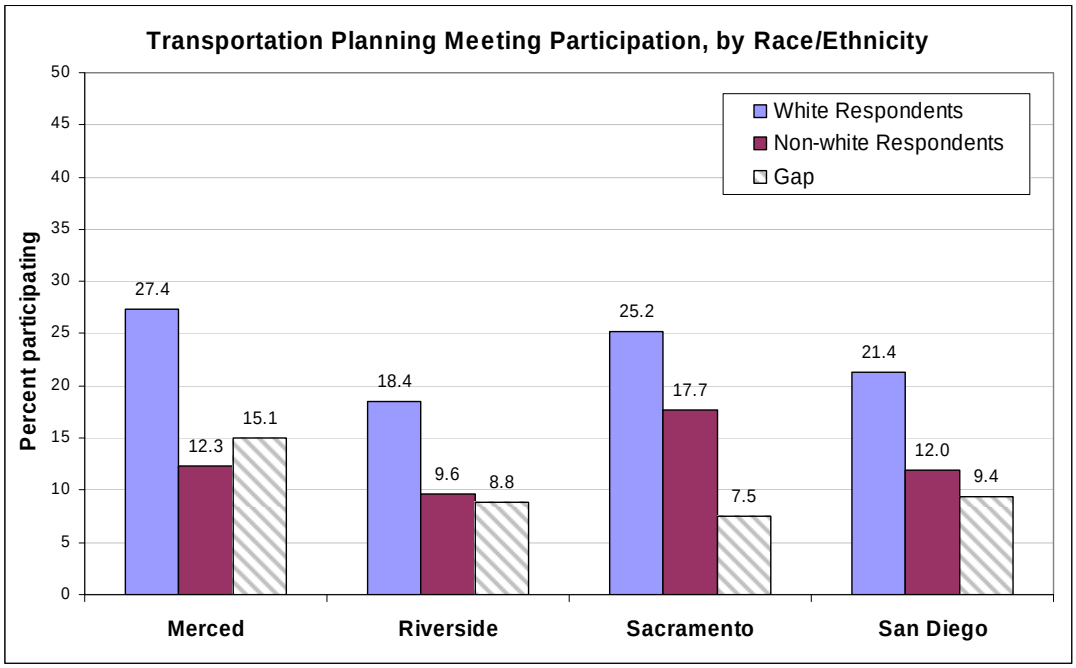


Higher income respondents reflect more participation, as lower income respondents report similar levels of participation leading to larger participation gaps. The largest gap is in Merced, where 35.4 percent of higher income respondents said they participate in zoning and planning meetings, but 16.8 percent of lower income respondents said they participate, producing an 18.6 percent participation gap between higher income and lower income respondents. In Riverside County, the participation gap is similar: 28.2 percent of higher income respondents indicating they participate in zoning meetings and 11.3 percent of lower income respondents indicating they participate– a 16.9 percent participation gap. In San Diego County, 34.1 percent of higher income residents said they participate in these meetings, while 19.1 percent of lower income residents participate, producing a 15 percent gap. The lowest gap is in the Sacramento area (12.7 percent), with 18.1 percent of lower income respondents saying they participate in zoning meetings and 30.8 percent of higher income respondents indicating participation.

b. Race/ethnicity

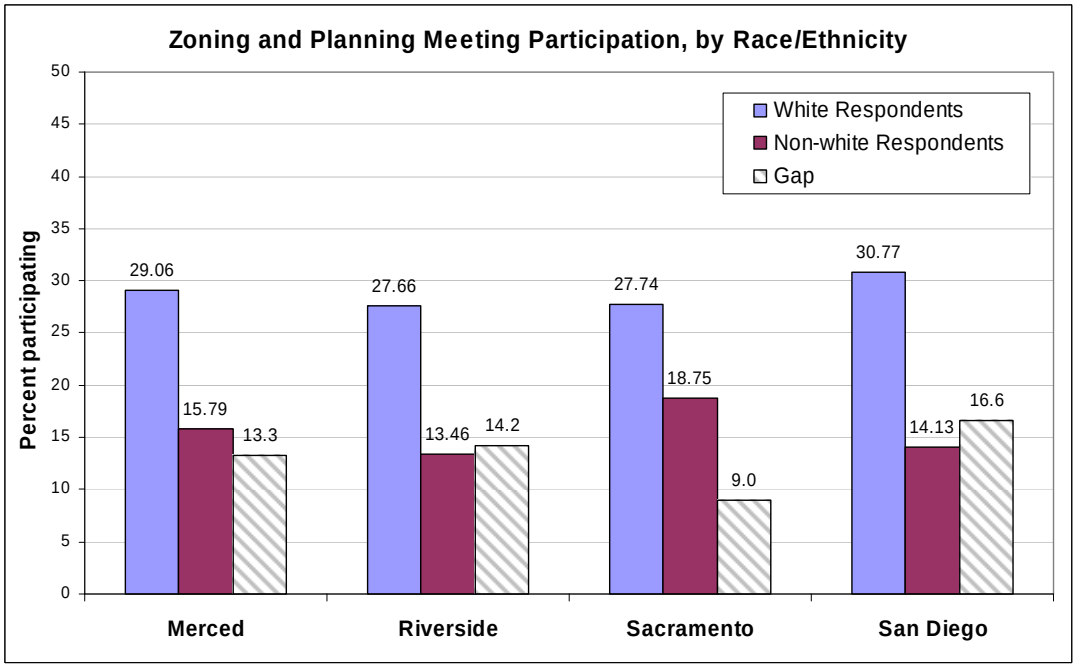
The survey also divides respondents by race and ethnicity, computing similar gaps in participation between white (non-Latino) and non-white respondents (including Latino respondents). In all four regions, and for both transportation and zoning/planning meetings, white non-Latino respondents are more likely to report participating in these public meetings than non-white respondents (including Latinos).

Figure 3. Transportation Planning Meeting Participation by Race/Ethnicity



For transportation planning meetings, shown in Figure 3, the largest participation gap across racial/ethnic lines appears to affect Merced County, with 27.4 percent of the Anglos reporting that they participate in transportation planning meetings, and 12.3 percent of Latino, Black, Asian-American, and American Indian respondents indicating they participate. This produces a 15.1 percent participation gap. The smallest gap is in Sacramento, with higher participation among non-white and Latino respondents (17.7 percent) and 25.2 percent participation among white respondents.

Figure 4. Zoning and Planning Meeting Participation by Race/Ethnicity



For zoning and planning meetings, the participation gaps are larger, due to increased self-reported participation among white non-Latinos. Again, the smallest gap is observed in the Sacramento area, with 27.7 percent of Anglos reporting that they participate in zoning meetings, and 18.8 percent of underrepresented group members indicating they participate. This produces a 9 percent participation gap. The largest gap here is in San Diego County, with higher participation among whites (30.8 percent) and lower participation among non-white and Latino respondents (14.1 percent), producing a 16.6 percent gap.

V. Meeting Notification

Table 5 shows the percentages of respondents – total and by region – who indicated the various ways that they were notified about public meetings. The most common methods involved some kind of newspaper notice. More than half of all respondents (56.6 percent) said they read about public meetings in a newspaper. The second most prevalent form of notice was a flyer mailed to the respondents (46.2 percent). This was particularly important in the Sacramento area sub-sample (51.9 percent).

Table 5. Meeting notification by region (all respondents)

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
a. Was a flyer sent to your home?	**42.08 (101)**	**43.08 (109)**	**51.94 (134)**	**46.73 (100)**	**46.20 (444)**
b. Did you see a posted public meeting notice?	**33.05 (78)**	**31.23 (79)**	**32.17 (83)**	**29.91 (64)**	**31.63 (304)**
c. Did you hear about it on the radio?	25.00 (59)	15.81 (40)	22.09 (57)	24.30 (52)	21.64 (208)
d. Did to hear about it on television?	**32.63 (77)**	**24.90 (63)**	**34.11 (88)**	**40.19 (86)**	**32.67 (314)**
e. Did you receive an e-mail notice?	11.44 (27)	9.09 (23)	15.89 (41)	12.62 (27)	12.28 (118)
f. Did someone call you on the telephone?	22.03 (52)	17.39 (44)	30.23 (78)	20.09 (43)	22.58 (217)
g. Did you read about it in the newspaper?	**61.86 (146)**	**47.83 (121)**	**60.47 (156)**	**56.54 (121)**	**56.61 (544)**
h. Did you hear about it from a public official?	22.46 (53)	14.23 (36)	22.87 (59)	14.02 (30)	15.52 (178)
i. Did you hear about it from your neighbors?	27.54 (65)	24.90 (63)	29.84 (77)	29.91 (64)	27.99 (269)
j. Did you hear about it from an organization ...?	24.58 (58)	21.47 (55)	30.62 (79)	30.84 (66)	26.85 (285)
k. Did you hear about it from a friend or co-worker?	**44.49 (105)**	**32.41 (82)**	**36.82 (95)**	**39.72 (85)**	**38.19 (367)**
l. Was there some other way you found out about a public meeting?	12.71 (30)	13.44 (34)	13.57 (35)	14.95 (32)	13.63 (131)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

Social communication appears to be important in disseminating the word about public meetings, with 38.2 percent of respondents indicating they heard about public meetings from friends and co-workers. Television notice (32.7 percent) and posted meeting notices (31.2 percent) rounding out the top five on this question.

The survey respondents who said they saw posted meeting notices to tell us where they saw these meeting notices posted. There were 259 responses to this open-ended question. Comments included: "They're posted at the school," and "In my car – It was posted at the entrance to my street." Table 6 lists those responses grouped into broader categories and ranked.

Table 6. Sites where respondents saw posted meeting notices

Grocery store, supermarket, or other shop	36
Public street, including while driving	36
Government office, including City hall, County building, courthouse, state office	32
School, college, or university building	26
News media, including Internet	18
Recreational or community center	18
Place of work	13
Library	11
Neighborhood	10
Post Office	10
Mail	9
Town square or main street	9
Home	7
Church	3
Newsletter	3
Transportation (such as on a bus)	3
Medical facility	2
Message board	2
At the site of another meeting	2
Miscellaneous	7
Does not recall	2
Total	259

The most easily recalled specific place for meeting notices is the grocery store or other shop (36 respondents, about 14 percent of respondents who recalled a specific meeting posting location). However, an equal number of respondents indicated they had seen a meeting notice while driving or on a public street. A smaller, but similar number (32, about 12 percent) of respondents noticed a meeting post in a government office. A large number of respondents (26, 10 percent of those recalling a posted meeting notice) said they saw the notice at a school or other educational facility. Rounding out the top five recalled meeting notice locations, 18 respondents (7 percent) saw a meeting notice in a news media source (repeating one of the structured response categories), and the same number saw a posted notice at a recreational or community center.

Finally, respondents were asked if they heard about a public meeting in a manner other than those specified in the list of potential communication venues. The survey does not break these down by region because of the relatively small numbers of responses in each group. There were 130 responses from people about other ways they found out about public meetings. These are

broad, open-ended statements, such as "Just email and they still send it constantly," as one respondent said. Table 7 groups these responses into categories to provide a better sense of the kind of responses received, and ranked them by the number in each general response group.

Table 7. Alternative ways people found out about public meetings

Mail, including message in a bill	21
Spoke with friends and coworkers	21
Internet and websites	19
School, college or university	13
Newsletter	10
Media	8
Saw a sign	4
Grocery store, supermarket, or other shop	4
Made or received a telephone call	4
Visit to respondent's home	4
Church	3
Through an organization	3
Recreational or community center	3
Spoke with spouse	3
Transportation (such as on a bus)	2
Miscellaneous	8
Total	130

The top five responses to this question involve receiving a notice by mail (21 responses, or 16 percent of respondents who recall learning about public meetings from another source), learning about it from friends and coworkers (also 21 respondents), seeing a notice on the Internet (19 responses, 15 percent), seeing a posting at an educational facility (13 responses, 10 percent), or receiving a newsletter (10 responses, 8 percent).

VI. Knowledge of Terms

Finally, the survey asked whether respondents recognized terms related to local land use and transportation decision making, and the planning projects studied in the case studies of this Caltrans project. Table 8 shows the percentage of respondents overall and in each region who said they were familiar with each of these terms. Again, this allows comparison of responses across terms as well as across regions. Not surprisingly, more respondents said they recognized the terms that were used in the survey than those used prevalently in their region.

Table 8. Familiarity with land-use and planning terms

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
Q26. Heard of "urban sprawl"	47.88 (113)	49.01 (124)	68.99 (178)	59.81 (128)	56.50 (543)
Q27. Heard of "smart growth"	28.81 (68)	23.32 (59)	41.47 (107)	38.79 (83)	32.99 (317)
Q28. Heard of regional planning project	11.44 (27)	19.37 (49)	15.50 (40)	35.98 (77)	20.08 (193)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

The majority of respondents have familiarity with "urban sprawl" (56.5 percent said they had heard of urban sprawl). Fewer respondents said they were familiar with "smart growth" (33.0 percent). Even fewer respondents said they had heard of the regional planning project (i.e., Sacramento Blueprint, Merced Transportation Plan, RCIP, and San Diego Regional Comprehensive Plan) included on the survey (20.1 percent). Again, this demonstrated regional variation, with Merced (11.4 percent) and Sacramento (15.5 percent) residents indicating less familiarity with their planning projects than respondents in Riverside (19.4 percent) and San Diego (36.0 percent).

However, these numbers represent a soft knowledge of the planning projects. When asked whether they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the planning project, 4 out of ten respondents who said they were familiar with the project said they did not know enough about the project to evaluate it. In all, these responses do not represent a high level of familiarity with these planning documents.

Table 9. Awareness and Opinion of land-use/planning project

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	**San Diego**	All Respondents
Favorable opinion of regional planning project	55.56 (15)	42.86 (21)	32.50 (13)	24.60 (19)	35.23 (68)
Unfavorable opinion of regional planning project	7.41 (2)	12.24 (6)	25.00 (10)	31.17 (24)	21.76 (42)
Don't know	33.33 (9)	44.90 (22)	42.50 (17)	44.16 (34)	42.49 (82)
Refused	3.70 (1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.52 (1)
Total	100.00 (27)	100.00 (49)	100.00 (40)	100.00 (77)	100.00 (193)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

Members of the public have a greater familiarity with the terms "urban sprawl" and "smart growth," with a low opinion of sprawl (16.4 percent said they have a favorable opinion of sprawl) and more favorable reaction to "smart growth" (63.7 percent said they have a favorable opinion of this term). Table 10 reports these reactions for all respondents and by region.

Table 10. Opinions of planning terms

	Merced	Riverside	Sacramento	San Diego	All Respondents
Q26a. Favorability toward "urban sprawl"	18.58 (21)	12.90 (16)	16.29 (29)	17.97 (23)	16.39 (89)
Q27a. Favorability toward "smart growth"	66.18 (45)	61.02 (36)	65.42 (70)	61.45 (51)	63.72 (202)

Note: In each cell, the top number is the percentage of respondents giving this response in the geographic area. The bottom number in parentheses is the number of respondents providing a given response in the geographic area.

Information Center for the Environment, University of California-Davis

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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Edward J. Blakely
Center for Sustainable
Suburban Development

Caltrans