Occasional Papers

Blueprint Planning in California: Forging Consensus on Metropolitan Growth and Development

Elisa Barbour
Michael Teitz

A background report for the Blueprint Learning Network, an ongoing working group convened by the California Department of Transportation. A presentation based on this report was given to the group on May 12, 2006.

June 21, 2006

Public Policy Institute *of* California

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private operating foundation established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Institute is dedicated to improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC's research agenda focuses on three program areas: population, economy, and governance and public finance. Studies within these programs are examining the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns: California in the global economy; demography; education; employment and income; environment, growth, and infrastructure; government and public finance; health and social policy; immigrants and immigration; key sectors in the California economy; and political participation.

PPIC was created because three concerned citizens – William R. Hewlett, Roger W. Heyns, and Arjay Miller – recognized the need for linking objective research to the realities of California public policy. Their goal was to help the state's leaders better understand the intricacies and implications of contemporary issues and make informed public policy decisions when confronted with challenges in the future.

David W. Lyon is founding President and Chief Executive Officer of PPIC. Thomas C. Sutton is Chair of the Board of Directors.

Summary

For the past decade, California's cities, counties, and regional agencies have been engaged in a remarkable, if largely unheralded experiment in the governance of metropolitan urban growth. Although California has been developing rapidly for more than a century, certain eras comprise turning points in the state's approach to planning and investment for growth and development. The 1990s saw such a turning point. The existing planning system proved unable to address urban growth problems effectively, and what has become known as "blueprint planning" emerged as one result. The results of this experiment are still not entirely clear, but it is now advanced enough to merit serious examination. That is the purpose of this paper.

Blueprint planning emerged by the late 1990s as a means for local governments and regional agencies within metropolitan regions to coordinate long-range plans for transportation investment, air quality, and land use.[1] Regional transportation planners faced a practical imperative to meet air quality mandates and address congestion problems with scarce resources – and they turned to land use as one lever for improving outcomes, promoting, for example, denser "infill" development near transit to increase ridership. Growing market interest in more compact housing development facilitated their efforts.

Blueprint planning has represented a way to reconcile "pro-growth" and "anti-growth" forces and attitudes, such as concerns about the need for housing production and regional economic development, on the one hand, and resistance to community change and environmental disruption, on the other. It has appealed to many local governments as a means to build the local economic base and improve quality of life through coordination with neighboring governments. The blueprint process has provided a venue for broad-based regional "visioning" and consensus-building about preferred growth scenarios for the future.

We studied the blueprint planning process in the four major metropolitan regions of California – Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Diego – originally in response to a request from the California Resources Agency to assess best practices in multi-jurisdictional, multi-issue planning for growth and development, and subsequently in conjunction with both the California Center for Regional Leadership and the State Department of Transportation (CalTrans).

During and after the late 1990s, "visioning" processes were organized in each of the four regions to devise "preferred scenarios" for growth and development – land use projections that

[1] The term "blueprint planning" was adopted by the state in 2005 with establishment of CalTrans' California Regional Blueprint Planning Program. The program provided $5 million for grants for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) "to conduct comprehensive scenario planning that results in consensus by regional leaders, local governments and stakeholders on a preferred growth scenario - or 'blueprint' - for a twenty-year planning horizon… It is anticipated that the regional blueprint planning grants will build capacity for regional collaboration and integrated planning that will in turn enable regions to plan to accommodate all their future growth, thereby reducing need for sprawl" (program website). The governor's current state budget proposal would renew funding for the program in the upcoming fiscal year.

would then lay a basis for regional transportation investment and air quality plans. These processes involved multiple stakeholders – local elected officials; regional and local planners; representatives from interest groups such as homebuilders, environmentalists, and affordable housing advocates; and members of the public. They have enabled more coordinated, deliberative, and strategic growth planning than has been possible through most other governmental decision frameworks in the state in recent years. Most regions envision expanding the blueprint scope to include multiple infrastructure areas (energy, water supply) and environmental areas (habitat planning, parks). This expansion could turn the blueprints into truly comprehensive regional growth plans.

The potential of blueprint planning to articulate consensus and improve decisionmaking on growth policy is promising, but the blueprint process entails certain weaknesses. Ironically, in spite of the comprehensive, deliberative nature of blueprint planning, it is undertaken by governmental agencies with no independent authority – namely, Councils of Governments (COGs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). COGs, established in most urban areas in the state, operate as voluntary forums for local governments to consider matters of common concern. They generally coincide with MPOs, which are designated under federal law for developing long-range plans for regional transportation investment.

COG/MPOs have been the institutional nexus for blueprints because they bring together regional systems-level planning functions (for transportation and air quality, in response to state and federal mandates) and the community-level land use authority of local governments (cities and counties). But COG/MPOs have no actual land use authority; they can only influence local policy through identifying funding incentives from their own resources, or through peer pressure, advice, or technical assistance. This lack of direct authority presents a difficult challenge for implementing blueprint land use objectives – that is, for translating the merely advisory "preferred scenarios" into reality on the ground. Currently, in the four regions we studied, blueprint planners are engaged in the implementation phase.

Our review of blueprint processes identified the following major components and best practices that may help ensure more effective outcomes.

1) Identifying goals and objectives

In each of the four regions, a first step was articulating smart growth goals and objectives to help focus blueprint visioning. The importance of the goal-setting stage was in allowing participants to exchange views and define shared values, ultimately translating them into quantifiable objectives and performance measures for modeling such regional outcomes as transportation mobility, environmental quality, and jobs-housing balance.

At this stage, one "best practice" is to include among blueprint objectives regional jobs-housing balance, in other words "housing our own," by accommodating all housing growth associated with projected job growth *within* the region, rather than allowing commuting from other areas to function as an escape valve. Two regions failed substantially in meeting this objective in recent blueprint efforts. As metropolitan development extends beyond existing COG/MPO boundaries, and sometimes spills over to neighboring regions, jurisdictional boundaries may need to be changed and inter-regional planning frameworks strengthened. In

any case, planning processes that fail to integrate anticipated housing and job locations with mobility strategies for metro residents cannot be considered fully comprehensive or effective.

2) Creating an effective decision process for blueprint development

Another key to success is gaining widespread support for goals and objectives, given that the whole process is largely voluntary. Leadership needs to be fully integrated across governmental and non-governmental boundaries, and across the COG/MPO and regional and local divides.

Although most COG/MPOs are coincident in California, a few are not, and the two entities actually reflect a fundamental tension between equally important tasks – to facilitate interaction and consensus-building among localities (broad participation), on the one hand, and to facilitate processes that identify clear regional objectives for transportation, the environment, and other functional regional systems, on the other. Combining these capacities is much easier in smaller regions. Devolving planning to sub-regional entities can help, but only if the same two capacities remain integrated.

Extra-governmental stakeholders have been an important stimulus for blueprint planning in most cases. Experience suggests that blueprint processes need to fully integrate governmental/non-governmental participation, or outcomes may be disappointing. Strong leadership from the COG/MPO governing board is critical to success, but extra-governmental actors also add an important element, sometimes acting as "honest brokers" able to mediate long-standing inter-governmental political conflicts – even helping to rejuvenate COG/MPOs in the bargain – and sometimes pushing blueprint planning to tackle and integrate new policy areas.

Best practices we identified in governance arrangements include, first, establishing a regional policy committee of local elected officials that reports to the COG/MPO governing body and is responsible for overseeing blueprint development, and second, establishing other working committees of local planners, public works officials, and extra-governmental stakeholders to help implement the project at all stages.

3) Developing blueprint "visions"

The visioning stage of blueprint planning involves public outreach through workshops offered throughout a region. At these workshops, invited stakeholders and members of the public work together to test outcomes of alternate land use scenarios in relation to local and regional growth and quality of life indicators, such as traffic congestion, air quality, housing affordability, jobs-housing balance, transit use, and preservation of open space. Preferred scenarios from local workshops are then compiled and synthesized, and a small number of regional alternative scenarios are developed for final consideration.

An important best practice at the visioning stage is the use of urban simulation computer modeling, such as PLACE^{3}S, which allows participants to visualize future land uses and gain immediate feedback in testing key indicators measured both regionally and locally. Such modeling educates participants on the impact of development choices; it may also facilitate conflict resolution by focusing on measurable outcomes.

Another best practice is to hold a workshop in each jurisdiction in the region, ensuring that elected officials play a key role and engaging local planners from all jurisdictions in helping synthesize workshop results into final alternative scenarios. These tasks are more difficult in very large regions of the state, and finding effective sub-regional coordinating mechanisms has proved to be a challenge. Below the metropolitan regional scale of the MPO, there are generally few institutions that act as "mini-COG/MPOs" – that is, by integrating both the functions.

4) Selecting and adopting a "preferred scenario"

The blueprint development phase culminates with the selection of one "preferred" land use and related population and employment scenario, often at a large regional workshop. A principal goal of the process has been for the COG/MPO subsequently to adopt the preferred scenario as its official projected regional land use pattern, which forms a basis for regional long-range transportation investment and air quality plans. Three of the four COG/MPOs did adopt land use projections reflecting "smart growth" scenarios that diverged from current local policies.

COG/MPO projections are estimates of likely population and employment patterns looking ahead a minimum of twenty years; they are not actual plans or mandates. So-called "policy-based" projections (those that envision "smart growth" development patterns that differ from existing local plans and policies) must be translated into local development choices to be realized. The regions with adopted policy-based projections face a fairly short (less than ten-year) window of time in which to ensure that the smart growth scenarios are actually implemented in local government land use policies, or they risk losing federal approval of the scenarios as the basis for transportation and air quality plans. One region reverted to using current land use policy as the basis for its transportation plan after recognizing that localities had failed to alter land uses to conform to a desired smart growth scenario.

Experience suggests that the gap between current and preferred land use practice in the scenarios might be wide enough to provide a push toward new planning and resource allocation strategies. However, this gap should be narrow enough to be realizable in the medium as well as the long term.

The definition of what is "realistic" may well be a bone of contention, considering the unpredictability not only of market forces but also of state and federal policy. However, achieving a widely-supported compromise (if not a uniform consensus) on a desired outcome is a critical objective for blueprint processes; without such agreement the momentum needed for implementation is less likely to be achieved. Because COG/MPO land use projections are updated continually on a four-year basis (in air quality non-compliance areas), blueprint visions need not be viewed as static and unchangeable. Rather, COG/MPOs are learning how visioning can be incorporated into iterative, ongoing processes for transportation, land use, and environmental planning.

5) Implementing the vision

The basic blueprint implementation task is to realize the region's preferred growth vision by supporting local communities in undertaking and approving development projects, zoning and general plan changes, and other measures aimed at closing the gap between the preferred scenario and current practice. In the four regions studied, implementation strategies

generally identify priority development areas and determine criteria for targeting resources to support projects in those areas. Resources range from basic technical assistance in updating local plans to funding development projects.

In general, best practices combine outcome-oriented performance objectives, flexible implementation, and incentives for participation. A common best practice is to devote a portion of regional transportation funds (either state and federal funds programmed by the COG/MPO or local funds raised through county sales tax measures) to incentive grants for localities that support regional objectives. Benefits of this competitive process include incentivizing better local planning proposals, creating "smart growth development examples" for the region, allowing the best ideas to float to the top, and retaining a voluntary participation framework. However, these grant programs also face pitfalls and challenges, in particular, a difficult trade-off between concentrating resources on fewer projects with greater impact and spreading resources more widely to maintain political buy-in.

Two MPOs adopted policies that go a step further, declaring that the extension of transit stops in their regions would be contingent on localities adopting supportive land use policies. Decisions about whether and how to bring this hammer to bear will test the voluntary COG/MPO governance model.

Organizational strategies are another key element of implementation; again, best practices establish stronger connections between regional and local objectives for transportation and land use, combining performance criteria, flexible implementation, and incentives. Programs organized at the scale of transportation corridors provide good examples; this scale brings localities together around a shared resource. Another organizational best practice is iterative "blueprint-style" transportation and land use modeling. In such a process, mutually supportive land use and transportation policies are developed, tested, and retailored. Increasingly flexible transit strategies being pursued in many regions facilitate such processes.

Finally, in multi-county regions an important organizational strategy involves engaging county-level transportation agencies. County transportation agencies control substantial transportation funding choices, but few have pursued integrated transportation-land use planning. Until their leverage is brought to bear, blueprint planning will not achieve its full potential.

Environmental Planning Issues

Environmental planning is sometimes called the third – and shortest – leg of the blueprint stool. Although regional environmental planning is a goal of each COG/MPO we studied, incorporating it into blueprint planning has not advanced as far as transportation or housing. However, a fully comprehensive regional plan requires more than designating priority areas for *more* concentrated development. The counterpart is designating natural resource and working landscape lands that are *off-limits* to development. Only through adding in this piece of the puzzle can political consensus be fully achieved between regional environmental and economic development goals. With most development in the state still occurring at the suburban and rural fringe of metropolitan areas, focusing only on infill

development while failing to address how development proceeds in "greenfield" areas may doom blueprints to failure.

In general, the state has established few planning requirements that link environmental mandates to local land use in regional frameworks. One significant exception provides a useful model for blueprint plans. The Natural Communities Conservation Planning Program (NCCP) was established in the early 1990s to create multi-species habitat preserves at a bioregional scale through cooperation among state, federal, and regional agencies; local governments; landowners; environmentalists; and other stakeholders. It exemplifies the same recipe for success described earlier, combining clear outcome-oriented standards with flexible implementation techniques. By streamlining environmental review and mitigation at the project scale, this program provides a model for a blueprint approach to environmental planning.

The State's Role

What, if anything, should the state government do to support blueprint planning? Insofar as it provides a promising venue for resolving long-standing growth concerns, blueprint planning warrants state support. Without further support, blueprint planning may well prove ineffective. The state establishes the framework of regulatory and fiscal incentives and mandates that local governments face when they make land use choices, and to the degree that the current framework does not support smart growth principles, blueprints may be working against the tide.

Blueprints are fundamentally about re-distributing resources to promote certain objectives, and unless mutual benefits are very obvious to participants, policy consensus may be prone to collapse if some jurisdictions feel cheated. In general, when it comes to policies that redistribute resources, state action is likely to be necessary.

However, shifting resources to promote new outcomes requires some degree of consensus on desirable goals and objectives. Although smart growth strategies may not work well without state support, their success depends equally on gaining local support. For these reasons, the consensus-building aspect of blueprint planning could be very valuable to the state, which might mean the state government itself would choose to engage in blueprint planning as more participant than arbiter. State policies can support blueprint planning in certain basic ways: Supporting local smart growth activity, coordinating state growth policies, coordinating planning processes, and linking state goals and actions to blueprints.

Many blueprint participants advocate that the state provide incentives to localities that adopt smart growth strategies – in particular, building the capacity of local governments in inner urban areas to support infill housing production and associated infrastructure and services. The legislature took a big step in support of local smart growth activity in the spring of 2006 by passing a multi-billion dollar bond proposal to be placed on the November ballot. It includes, among other things, $300 million in assistance for transit-oriented development and $850 million largely for grants for capital outlay related to infill development. As of this writing, it remains up to the voters whether blueprint development objectives get this substantial boost in state support.

Another useful step would be for the state to provide direct support for local planning. Proactive community planning helps residents understand, evaluate, and obtain potential benefits of smart growth, for example by supporting long-term local development strategies to improve amenities, infrastructure, and services that new development could help finance.

However, many blueprint practitioners argue that the state needs to do more than reward local smart growth activities. They contend that the state should clarify and coordinate its growth goals, objectives, and policies to help ensure that its programs and investments do not work at cross-purposes. In this view, for example, it makes little sense for the state to direct either mandates or subsidies to locals to support housing production while state fiscal policies, particularly related to property taxes, serve to deter that production. Similarly, if the state wants to promote efficient development patterns and resource use, it might make sense to situate new university campuses in built-up urban areas with transit access rather than in greenfield locations, in spite of higher initial construction costs.

Many blueprint practitioners also believe the state could do more to align planning processes and to support *ongoing* planning coordination. A practical step would be to coordinate planning cycles, such as those for local government general plans, the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), and Regional Transportation Plans. Given the extreme contentiousness of RHNA in recent years, it also might make sense to devolve its implementation to the more flexible strategies encompassed by blueprints.

Another important aspect of planning coordination will be for the state to consider how to strengthen sub-regional and intra-regional blueprint planning – for example, how to build stronger linkages between county transportation agencies and regional blueprints, and between COG/MPOs in areas where development has spilled across jurisdictional boundaries and now overlaps substantially. Ultimately, the state must consider how to promote inter-connected, nested planning at multiple scales.

How and whether to explicitly link state growth goals, objectives, and resources with blueprints is a complicated issue. At a minimum, a useful step would be continuing – or increasing – the state budget allocation of $5 million, provided annually for the last two years in the governor's budget, for grants to support regional blueprint planning.

Some blueprint practitioners argue the state should go much further and conform its policies and resources to blueprint plans and their objectives. Others counter that it is more important for the state to clarify and align its own goals, objectives, and programs. Those can then work in tandem with regional and local strategies when and where appropriate.

Perhaps a middle ground would be for the state to determine whether a blueprint advances a few key, clearly-defined performance goals (such as promoting jobs-housing balance and housing affordability, improving air and water quality and species preservation, maintaining working landscapes and open space, and reducing vehicle miles traveled compared to a projected business-as-usual scenario) and then direct resources to support the plan's strategies and objectives. This approach would exemplify the practices outlined above – establishing performance-oriented objectives and encouraging flexibility in implementation.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank Mark Baldassare and Max Neiman at PPIC for their assistance and support for the project. Lynette Ubois provided expert editorial guidance, and Jeremy Patfield provided dedicated research assistance. We are also very grateful to Michael Chrisman, Karen Scarborough, and Sandra Ikuta of the California Resources Agency for the wonderful opportunity over the past year to work with them and the Advisory Group on Housing, Land Use, and CEQA, and to undertake this project in relation to their ongoing policy discussions. Nick Bollman and Seth Miller of the California Center for Regional Leadership, and Gary Binger of the University of California, Berkeley, provided invaluable support at every stage. We also thank Jonathon Davidson of the Edward J. Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development at the University of California, Riverside, for sharing preliminary findings from his center's study of regional blueprint processes. Finally, we thank our interview respondents for giving us their time and allowing us to benefit from their rich experience and insight. Nonetheless, any errors of interpretation or fact are our own.

Introduction

What is blueprint planning? The very idea is new in California. Our definition aligns with the one used by CalTrans for its California Regional Blueprint Planning Program, established in 2005, to fund efforts by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) "to conduct comprehensive scenario planning that results in consensus by regional leaders, local governments, and stakeholders on a preferred growth scenario - or 'blueprint' - for a twenty-year planning horizon" (program website).[2]

MPOs are regional agencies that for decades have helped compile plans that coordinate federal, state, and local capital investment for transportation facilities. By the late 1990s, many of the state's MPOs were developing a new planning approach now recognized as "blueprint planning"; the CalTrans program acknowledges, systematizes, coordinates, and extends this work rather than initiating it.[3]

Blueprint planning seeks mainly to coordinate long-range regional and local plans for transportation investment, air quality, and housing, although in some cases such policy areas as energy and habitat planning are also incorporated. It came about as a response to a constellation of forces that by the late 1990s created a need for greater coordination in growth policymaking in urban regions. The strain on infrastructure systems created by urban growth, a lack of affordable housing, government fiscal constraint, widespread resistance to negative consequences of new growth, and persistent conflicts between environmental and economic development goals in the state were among those motivating forces. In response, so-called "smart growth" planning strategies took shape across both the nation and the state and provided models for blueprint planners. Meanwhile, market and demographic forces also had begun to favor the compact, mixed-use development options advocated in smart growth scenarios.

This paper describes the evolution and current state of blueprint planning in California's four largest metropolitan regions and assesses strengths, weaknesses, and best practices as a guide for policy.[4] As the most ambitious regional multi-issue planning processes in the state in terms of geographic and policy scope, blueprints deserve such research attention. They are also the subject of scrutiny from state policymakers interested in targeting infrastructure funds,

---

[2] The CalTrans program provided $5 million in grants for MPOs starting in 2005, and the governor's state budget proposal would renew funding in the upcoming fiscal year.

[3] The generic term "blueprint planning" reflects the inception of the CalTrans program. Each regional planning process we studied developed its own unique title; the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) was the only one to use the word "blueprint."

[4] This paper is a response to a request by the state Resources Agency, in connection with the work of the joint Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency/Resources Agency Advisory Group on Housing, Land Use, and CEQA, for an evaluation of best practices in multi-issue regional planning for growth and development in California, and for research into how the state government might advance such planning. We participated in the Resources Agency's CEQA Improvement Advisory Group – a stakeholder discussion process about practices under the California Environmental Quality Act – from its inception in January 2005. In October, 2005, the Advisory Group was expanded to become the joint effort by the two agencies listed, and renamed as noted above.

streamlining environmental review of development projects, and coordinating growth policy objectives across levels of government.

Each regional story is different, so no generic blueprint process exists per se. But we see certain common elements across our case studies. A basic goal was to develop more carefully coordinated and "smarter" long-range land use and housing projections as the basis for regional transportation and air quality plans. This required a broad-based decision process involving multiple stakeholders – local officials and planners, regional and sub-regional planners, interest group stakeholders, and the public. Essentially, a consensus-building exercise was needed to define a preferred course of future development and to create the momentum necessary to support policy changes needed to realize the desired outcome.

In each case, regional planning agencies organized a coordinated multi-year process with outside partners – in particular, interest group stakeholders and technical consultants – to develop a "preferred scenario" for regional development. Preparatory steps included establishing shared values, goals, objectives, and performance measures. In three cases, a structured "visioning process" allowed participants to develop and test alternative land use scenarios in relation to desired outcomes for a variety of factors, including transportation mobility, air quality, and housing affordability. After a preferred scenario was selected, regional agencies then considered whether to adopt it as the official basis for long-range transportation investment and air quality plans. If the process was effective, the blueprint plan then defined and executed implementation measures to translate the preferred scenario into reality by supporting necessary policy changes by local governments.

One participant we interviewed from the Sacramento area described the purpose of the blueprint process this way:

> The blueprint is really an information-based, bottoms-up democratic process. It really is honestly based on the assumption that if people have better information about the short- and long-term impacts of their land use choices, that they will make better choices. And better is a value-laden word, but people seem to agree that reducing long single-occupancy car trips in this region would be a good thing, and polluting less out of the tailpipes would be a good thing, and using less land for development and saving more land for open space and natural resources would be a good thing. So there's really a lot of commonality across the political spectrum on what constitutes good development practice in the region.

Our paper starts with an overview of the historical and institutional context from which blueprint planning emerged in the late 1990s. That section will be useful to readers unfamiliar with basic functions of regional planning agencies. The subsequent three sections describe the principal phases of the blueprint process for each of the four regions: 1) defining goals and decisionmaking structures; 2) undertaking visioning processes; and 3) defining and carrying out implementation strategies. Throughout, the paper considers achievements, obstacles, and lessons learned. A final section provides a conclusion and assesses actions the state government might take to strengthen blueprint planning.

The paper relies on three main sources of information. First, we conducted interviews with 60 individuals familiar with the blueprint processes in the four regions – staff from COG/MPOs, local elected officials, representatives of advocacy organizations, and staff people from state agencies. Their names are listed in Appendix A. Second, we conducted a mail survey of 301 city planning directors within the COG/MPO jurisdictions, 52 percent of whom responded.[5] (A paper presenting complete results from the survey is available from the authors on request.) Finally, written materials from the COG/MPOs and other sources also informed the report.

[5] The response rate was higher from the Sacramento and San Diego areas, at 65 and 67 percent, respectively, and lower from the San Francisco Bay (48%) and Los Angeles areas (52%). This is not undesirable as the two smaller regions have fewer cities, so it is useful that they be adequately represented. To determine whether the sample of cities was representative of all surveyed cities, characteristics of respondent and non-respondent cities were compared using data from the 2000 U.S. Census. In general, respondent cities were reasonably representative. Central cities were slightly over-represented in the respondent sample (15% of respondents compared to 11% of all potential respondent cities) while suburban cities were slightly under-represented (75% of respondents compared to 78% of all potential respondent cities). Respondent cities were slightly poorer (with slightly lower median household incomes), slightly less Democratic and more Republican (measured in terms of the share of the electorate registered by party), slightly whiter (lower share of the population made up by non-whites and Hispanics), with slightly lower median home values and homeowner shares of the population. Respondent cities were also considerably more likely to be job centers, with higher ratios of jobs located in the city to the number of residents of the city that worked.

Why Did Blueprint Planning Emerge?

Motivations for Blueprint Planning

Blueprint planning is both an evolution of California's traditional regional planning practices and a transformation of them. Blueprint planning practice evolved from efforts among transportation planners to develop land use strategies to help meet federal air quality mandates and address congestion problems – with scarce resources. In this sense, blueprint planning is an evolution of traditional transportation planning.

But considering land use policy regionally is a radical step, one that turns the traditional practice of transportation planning on its head, because general land use authority has traditionally been vested at the local government level. California has a long tradition of respecting the "home rule" authority of local governments – cities and counties (the latter in unincorporated areas) – over land use matters. A serious re-evaluation of local land use policy, done in a regional context, required more motivation than the advocacy of transportation planners alone, especially because transportation agencies have no direct control over land use.

Blueprint planning gained momentum because of its potential for reconciling conflict between "pro-growth" and "anti-growth" forces in the state and for improving quality of life through a more coordinated approach to planning; the transportation planning process served as a vehicle for this process. By the late 1990s, many state leaders in California were calling for more investment to address current and future growth needs. The 1980s had been a decade of very rapid population growth, during which public investment in building and maintaining infrastructure – schools, highways, and water supply systems – did not keep pace with new demand (Hanak and Baldassare, 2005). By the 1990s, water shortages during droughts, traffic congestion, and overcrowded schools alerted Californians to these issues. Concern arose also about the health of regional economies, such as that of the LA area after its deep recession of the early 1990s. Worries about educational quality entered the mix, along with concern about a lack of affordable housing. Environmental issues such as persistent air pollution only added to worries about California's quality of life.

However, no broad consensus existed in the state about whether or how to address these growth issues. Many Californians remain very wary of growth and its consequences. A strong environmental movement in the state helps ensure that development proposals are strictly scrutinized, and especially in rapidly developing areas where new housing encroaches on dwindling natural habitat, such scrutiny has led to much conflict and litigation. Even as demographic and market forces have made higher-density, "infill" multi-unit development more attractive to the homebuilding industry, many older, developed areas lack adequate infrastructure to support such development, and new development proposals are met with resistance in many local communities.

Blueprint planning aims to develop broad-based consensus "visions" for regional development so as to overcome such conflicts and promote more efficient use of scarce resources. The governance approach of blueprint planning – utilizing the collaborative COG/MPO structure – takes account of the political reality of respect for local home rule in the

state. But at the same time the approach seeks 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).

An interviewee from one regional agency described how the blueprint process aims to address concerns about growth by attempting to accommodate it effectively:

> The agency itself has probably done five or six studies since the mid-seventies about stopping growth and each time…we've said you can probably slow it, but you can't stop it… Everybody wants the quality of life to continue to grow. The question is, what path do you go down?… Do you stop the number of people who can actually work here, or do you … try to do experiments with smart growth?... Each time we've come up against that – "let's implement no growth s strategies" – the region has decided to go a different direction. And when it's headed in that different direction, you also have to have a plan or strategy that is designed to achieve the same goal and maintain quality of life.

Another interviewee – a local official engaged in blueprint planning in Southern California – described the motivation this way:

> What changed? More people, and we haven't planned for them. We went along saying we can put off building the transportation systems we need to build. We know there are more people coming, but if we just close our eyes, stick our head in the sand, it won't happen. People were in denial…
>
> [But] our constituents are screaming about traffic… [and] people aren't stupid. If you have a good conversation, and you say, "We have traffic. Why is that?"" They understand there isn't enough housing near business. That was the start, jobs/housing balance. Then people started to look at land use. How are we planning for the future? Is it sustainable?...So it's like all the stars aligned…
>
> [Before], everything was compartmentalized. You did your RTP [regional transportation plan]. You did your air quality kind of mixed in. You did your housing through RHNA [Regional Housing Needs Assessment process]. That was separate. We were never asked to link them together. Again, because we put that off for so long and because we haven't invested in our infrastructure in California, it all came to a head, a crisis. We said, "We've got to do this differently."…
>
> [At the same time] we started to see [infill and redevelopment] projects you could hold up in different places and say, "These could work. Not everywhere, but they could work." Like I said, the stars were really aligned.

Regional Planning in California: Fragmented Authority

Blueprint planning seeks a comprehensive approach, one that reintegrates planning functions that are highly fragmented in California. This fragmentation traces back to the post-

World War II era, when the state government took over the job of providing large-scale infrastructure systems – highways, water supply, universities – through single-function, top-down planning and facilities-building agencies, but left land use authority to local governments. This system helped facilitate rapid post-war development, but also gave rise to a public backlash by the 1970s, as the negative consequences of growth became more apparent. These consequences included community disruption, environmental degradation, congestion, and rising housing costs in urban areas.

Public backlash took a number of forms, some of which enhanced local "veto power" in relation to state policies and programs. For example, local communities became far more vocal in responding to state projects affecting their neighborhoods. Negotiating public acceptance of large-scale projects can substantially improve outcomes but it also increases time and costs. In addition, the rise of the "fiscal constraint movement" exemplified in passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and subsequent voter measures that constrained government revenue-raising ability and discretion over expenditure, was another sign of public concern over growth and its consequences. These fiscal measures reshaped urban development in possibly unintentional ways, such as by privileging local development options that generate sales taxes.

The environmental movement of the 1970s was yet another response to negative consequences of growth. The movement helped ensure passage of new state and federal legislation, including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Bureaucracies established to administer these environmental laws generally used a top-down regulatory approach, for example through permitting for industrial facilities (Mazmanian and Kraft, 1999).

By managing growth policy through single-function, top-down agencies, the environmental regulatory bureaucracies paralleled the state and federal approach to managing large-scale infrastructure investment. Thus, institutionalization of environmental values tended to reinforce the state's "stovepipe" planning system, which remained largely disconnected from local land use practice.

An exception is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) – California's version of NEPA. This law calls for submitting to environmental review every proposed development project subject to government action, to determine potential adverse environmental effects. Because of its wide applicability, CEQA has major influence on local land use planning practice and provides an effective "veto" tool for opposing undesirable local development projects (Barbour and Teitz, 2005).

California's basic regional planning institutions reflect the general approach described above: The state traditionally has administered large-scale infrastructure investment and environmental regulation and local governments control land use. Traditionally, regional agencies have been, on the one hand, arms of single-function state bureaucracies or implementers of their mandates (for example, CalTrans districts, air and water pollution control districts) or, on the other hand, voluntary forums for local governments. Councils of Government (COGs) were formed in the 1960s and 1970s in urban areas in response to federal mandates requiring their input for various urban renewal and investment programs (there are now 29 COGs in California). They operate as voluntary associations of local governments, often making decisions on a one-government, one-vote basis.

A regional transportation planning system, also established in response to federal mandates of the 1960s and 1970s, has been interwoven with the COG structure. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) were established in urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more to provide input on regional transportation investment plans. Most MPOs in California coincide with COGs, a notable exception being the agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area.

State programs have vested planning responsibilities in county-level transportation agencies, which complicates responsibilities and relationships in multi-county areas. For example, county agencies oversee state planning requirements for congestion management, and they compile long-range investment plans that feed into MPO plans in multi-county regions.[6] In 1987, the county role was enhanced further when counties were authorized to adopt half-cent sales tax increases for packages of transportation improvements placed before voters. Subsequently, nineteen counties passed such measures.

In spite of considerable transportation authority vested at the county level, county governments have generally not been able to serve as de facto regional (or sub-regional) governments. That is because, when it comes to land use, counties function more like competitors with city governments, rather than as coordinators. County boards of supervisors control growth policy – land use and local transportation investments, in particular – only in unincorporated areas. Furthermore, in multi-county areas, many growth issues and problems (such as traffic congestion or smog) cross county lines. Such cross-county issues must be addressed through agencies organized at a larger scale, one which recognizes the ways regional social and environmental systems – housing and labor markets, air basins and watersheds – interact.

Two functions assigned to COG/MPOs have come to dominate their work and role vis-à-vis local governments. First is the compilation of an ongoing, periodically updated, long-range regional transportation plan (RTP) for submission to the California Transportation Commission. However, for decades, these plans were more likely to resemble an aggregation of desired projects of local governments rather than plans crisply focused on regional objectives (Wachs and Dill, 1999).

The second main function of COG/MPOs has been to implement on behalf of the state government the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process. Since 1937, cities and counties in California have been required to adopt "general plans" to guide development. However, only one of the seven elements required of general plans is reviewed by the state – the housing element. Since 1980, housing elements have been required to accommodate the locality's "fair share" of the projected regional need for housing for all income levels. To help satisfy this requirement, COGs play an intermediary role, allocating a target production number of housing units among all jurisdictions in regions, with the target traditionally established by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The jurisdictions then must update their general plans, zoning, and other policies to support the required units.

---

[6] In most regions of the state, the county planning agencies that compile plans feeding into MPO plans for multi-county areas are called Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs). The Los Angeles Area is an exception, where county agencies were provided greater authority and are called County Transportation Commissions (CTCs). See Barbour, 2002.

Thus, in the state's planning framework, COG/MPOs act as an interface between local governments and state and federal programs. COG/MPOs have no independent authority as such. As voluntary associations of local governments, they are not accountable to voters. Rather, maintaining membership is key to their success, and COG/MPOs must devise policies that can gain broad support from their local member governments.

The COG/MPOs' structure provides unique advantages and disadvantages in relation to coordinating growth policy. As collaborative institutions, they facilitate coordination among governments and functions. Ideally, they combine a systems focus (MPO transportation planning) with broad participation by local governments (the COG function), bringing transportation and land use planning closer together at a regional scale than any other institution. Policies adopted through COG/MPOs may have the distinct advantage that they truly represent consensus across multiple agencies and jurisdictions, which could help ensure compliance.

However, the voluntary, collaborative nature of COG/MPOs makes it difficult to develop plans and programs with a strong regional systems focus. Their structure has instead sometimes fostered a "lowest common denominator" approach to policymaking, based on horse-trading or aggregating individual government objectives, that steers away from controversial policies that could create winners and losers among local government members. COG/MPOs face a strong structural incentive to use a "peanut butter" approach to allocating benefits (such as transportation funds) and mandates (such as fair share requirements) – that is, they tend to spread benefits and mandates equally and thinly across jurisdictions. And in relation to land use, COG/MPOs cannot actually mandate any policies, they can only advise.

Institutional Reforms of the 1990s

Governance reforms of the 1990s helped set the stage for the emergence of blueprint planning. Regional agencies gained new authorities and responsibilities, especially in transportation, while innovative regional environmental programs provided models for coordinating local land use policy.

The build-up to these reforms was long in coming. By the late 1980s, the "big planning solutions" of the past no longer seemed to be working. The highway building boom of the 1960s had been cut short by local resistance, higher construction costs in built-up areas, fiscal constraint, environmental concerns, and arguments about "induced demand" (which suggests that given high levels of demand for roadway capacity, any expansion of supply will quickly be used up by travelers shifting from other routes or modes or times of day). Consequently, transit expansion became a priority, but this solution provoked its own backlash by the 1990s because of cost over-runs and disappointing ridership levels (Hanak and Barbour, 2005). In the highways versus transit debate, both sides seemed to be losing.

In response, planners sought methods to use existing facilities more efficiently, through solutions tailored to needs of specific regions, sub-regions, and transportation corridors – solutions harder to apply in a uniform, one-size-fits all way from the top down. Rather than rely mainly on expanding the supply of facilities (transit and roads), the new strategies often emphasized techniques to manage demand. For example, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

lanes were introduced to accommodate carpools, flexible forms of transit (such as bus rapid transit), and, sometimes, single-occupant vehicles willing to pay a variable "congestion fee". And in part because research had demonstrated that higher job and residential density near transit stations increases ridership, so-called "smart growth" land use policy changes were also advocated for more efficient use of resources and environmental benefits.[7]

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. In traditional planning models, population projections and housing growth decisions were based on land use plans of local governments taken *as given*. Smart growth planning involves a very different modeling and decision process – one in which land use *alternatives* are considered and adopted in light of their impact on environmental, transportation, and other outcomes both locally and regionally. This new approach is a key defining characteristic of blueprint planning.

State and federal reforms of the 1990s paved the way for blueprint planning – they helped foster a planning framework more conducive to achieving integrated planning solutions. The federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), passed in 1991, directed about one-fifth of federal funds for California to MPOs, and required them to take the lead in developing long-range regional transportation plans (RTPs). The plans were also required to be "fiscally constrained," or in other words, to be based on realistic funding prospects. Multiple policy objectives were established, including energy conservation and efficient use and maintenance of facilities. Flexibility for programming funds across modal categories was increased. In addition, transportation plans were required to conform to regional air quality plans, effectively establishing a "pollution budget" in non-attainment areas.

In 1997 the state completed its own form of devolution through passage of SB 45, which gives regional agencies authority to program all long-range state and federal capital investment funds for metropolitan regions in the state. These state and federal planning reforms allow transportation plans to be tailored more easily to the needs of specific regions and sub-regions, and they facilitate a better connection to local land use policymaking by placing transportation decisions in the hands of COG/MPOs.

Meanwhile, institutional innovations in environmental planning also helped set the stage for blueprints. A particularly important model was the state's Natural Communities Conservation Planning Program (NCCP), established in 1991 to help overcome legal conflicts over endangered species. The NCCP program develops bioregional, multi-species habitat preserves through cooperative agreements among federal and state agencies, local governments, environmental and homebuilder groups, and others. The initial focus of the program has been Southern California (Murphy, 1999; Pollak, 2001a , 2001b; Rempel et al., 1999).

NCCP plans provide more certainty both for landowners and for the status of the environment through coordinated mitigation and regulatory relief for landowners. The program demonstrates how economic development and environmental goals might be

[7] For overviews of literature on the relationship between travel behavior and urban form see Burchell et al., 1998; Badoe and Miller, 2000; Crane, 2000; and Ewing and Cervero, 2002.

reconciled through collaborative land use planning. The connection between environmental planning and local land use was also strengthened in recent years when the federal and state governments stepped up regulation of "nonpoint source pollution control," such as urban stormwater runoff, and water quality requirements affecting bodies of water (Ruffolo, 1999). Watershed planning initiatives have proliferated in California in response.

The Immediate Context: Converging Pressures and Opportunities

By the late 1990s, COG/MPOs were poised for change. In relation to their traditional role as transportation planning agencies, COG/MPOs had gained greater authority. As one local planning director put it:

> I think the state has…[created] a structure where if a local jurisdiction bails, they're going to have a heck of a time getting transportation dollars. So there is the fact that a lot of the transportation dollars can only be funneled through [the COG/MPO] and if you're not a member, you're not a player and you're not there to receive the money. So in some ways I think there is a little more leverage to make jurisdictions be players… the real leverage that [the COG/MPO] has is who they give money to.

But with their new authority, COG/MPOs were also facing difficult responsibilities. RTPs were projecting dire scenarios. For example, the 1998 RTP by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) – the MPO for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area – projected that by the year 2020, there would be an increase of 249 percent in time spent by vehicles sitting in traffic delay, in spite of planned transportation improvements. In its 2001 RTP, the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) – the COG/MPO for the Los Angeles region – projected a multi-billion dollar shortfall to maintain, let alone improve, its transportation system. "The future transportation system is expected to be overwhelmed by new demand," the plan stated (Shuit and Rabin, 2000). The 2002 RTP for the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) projected an increase of 50 percent in traffic congestion by 2025, even after making new investments; traffic on nearly all freeways and surface routes would be at or over capacity.

Air quality was also a persistent concern. SCAG's draft 2004 RTP noted, "There are only a few years remaining to identify and achieve the emissions reductions required for attainment…To put it bluntly, the region is starving for emissions reduction strategies, and there is an urgent need for new and innovative solutions" (p. 77). As it developed its 2002 RTP, SACOG faced possible sanctions for air quality non-compliance by 2005. One of our interview respondents noted, "The (SACOG) board was really frustrated in 2002, when they adopted that version of the MTP, that they couldn't find a future that worked."

Other factors also were propelling the blueprints. In the southern part of the state, the development of NCCP plans in some areas served to establish *de facto* urban growth boundaries, which turned attention toward considering land use policy in a regional framework. Further, by the late 1990s, housing affordability was a major issue statewide. Observers complained in particular about low production rates for multi-unit housing. Research indicated that city governments strongly disfavored such housing as a local land use

option (Lewis and Barbour, 1999). Explanations included resident opposition to change in community character, difficulties in providing needed infrastructure and services for new development, and the state's fiscal policies.[8]

Concern about housing affected COG/MPOs directly in their second principal role – as RHNA enforcers. During the 1990s, RHNA had been suspended because of budget constraints. In 1999, HCD began a statewide RHNA update that turned into a fierce battle in many regions, with some COG/MPOs mired in lawsuits. In response to the difficulties, RHNA was reformed through AB2158 passed in 2002, which created a more open negotiation process on RHNA allocations, allowed trade-offs of allocations among jurisdictions within counties, and made it possible to align RHNA planning cycles with RTP planning cycles. Such reforms moved RHNA in the direction of blueprint planning. At the same time, the conflicts over RHNA helped motivate the blueprint approach by encouraging COG/MPOs to seek more flexible methods for engaging local governments in addressing regional housing objectives.

Summing up many of these underlying factors motivating COG/MPOs to develop blueprints, one respondent remarked:

> There was a recognition that making better connections between land use and transportation plans was important and that there needed to be a more focused approach to that. It came out of our most recent update of our regional transportation plan – the work that we were doing on that pointed out that as we were moving toward greater use of transit, the location of land use in relation to transit was very important, and the RTP wasn't really the best place to figure that out. We really needed to look at a comprehensive plan similar to the way cities look at land use and circulation together. And there was also recognition that a lot of planning activities at [the COG/MPO] in a lot of different areas really weren't all that well coordinated.

The impulse toward blueprint planning also was strengthened by a growing national "smart growth" or "sustainable development" movement that promotes integrated planning for land use, infrastructure, and the environment. A number of states, including Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, and Florida, passed new or modified growth management legislation with smart growth themes during the 1990s. Thus, California regions had models to learn from and resources on offer such as when San Francisco Bay Area stakeholders galvanized their blueprint effort to gain a sustainability grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and when Bay Area and Los Angeles area COG/MPOs retained the services of Fregonese Calthorpe, a team that has designed a number of well-known regional visioning projects elsewhere in the U.S., including in Utah, Oregon, and Illinois.

Concerned about how quality-of-life factors such as traffic congestion and housing affordability were affecting the state's ability to attract and maintain a high-quality workforce, many business leaders became smart growth advocates by the late 1990s, and their support also helped propel blueprint planning. The president of the Bay Area Council, a group of 275 large

[8] Since Proposition 13 drastically reduced local property tax revenues, other revenue sources such as sales tax became more important to cash-strapped localities. Thus local governments favor land uses like big box retail stores that are more fiscally lucrative.

employers in the San Francisco Bay Area, articulated such concerns in 2001, when he noted, "The intensity of concern around transportation and housing suggests we've got this brewing collision…We really view this as reaching crisis proportions and we've got to get these problems solved in the region, or it's going to be a threat to the economy" (Hendrix, 2001). Business activism helped advance so-called "collaborative regional initiatives" in many areas, which bring multiple stakeholders together to develop growth-related planning and advocacy campaigns.[9] By the early 2000s, various state-level commissions, research studies, and policy briefs from business groups called attention to the need for new state infrastructure investment and better strategic planning.[10]

One interview respondent made the connection between blueprint planning and economic competitiveness in this fashion:

> Just as the state's policies for transportation planning and air quality pulled blueprints, the business climate and quality of life pushed them. Jobs and affordable housing were a big part of the motivation for the blueprint. The local business community worried that the private sector might not find enough workers, and job expansion would go somewhere else. The timing eventually became right when the push and the pull got somebody moving.

Finally, blueprint planning emerged not only in response to challenges or threats, but also to opportunities. Across all four regions our interview respondents explained that by the mid-2000s, the housing market increasingly favored mixed-use, compact development. Said one from the Sacramento region,

> The market right now is really helping the success of blueprint style growth. The housing market is starting to shift here to higher-density housing products…We've gone from about less than 1 percent of the for-sale product being attached as recently as 12 or 18 months ago to 20 to 25 percent...I think traffic is in there [as a motivation for blueprint planning], but I don't think it's the main driver. Once you break this down to a neighborhood and project level, it never will be. If [residents] are not convinced that smarter blueprint style growth is better for their community and makes it a better place to live… they're not going to do it. They're not going to do it as some bitter medicine they have to take at the local level for the betterment of the regional good. It has to be better at the local level.

Local jurisdictions have varying reasons for interest in smart growth strategies. Urban cities may be interested in redevelopment to support needed reinvestment. Exurban towns being swallowed by suburban sprawl may see the potential for maintaining a "sense of place" and preserving a greenbelt. Suburban localities may see the potential for capturing market interest in more compact transit-oriented development, strengthening the city's center and relieving transportation pressures.

---

[9] These regional initiatives are championed by the California Center for Regional Leadership, whose website provides information on their activities.

[10] See Barbour and Lewis, 2005, about these activities.

One interviewee from a Los Angeles area city noted:

Our city did a lot of this [sort of planning] before the [blueprint] strategy, and I can tell you one of the reasons why it made so much sense to me was because we had done it here. I could see the difference that it made. I could see that if you give people something that works in their lives, they'll make changes…such as not using their car all the time or walking to the grocery store…

We had a downtown where nothing was working. We tried all kinds of different things to try and make it go, and it didn't. So we finally turned to redevelopment, and did something that was really unheard of at the time – a "charette" – and asked people to come and tell us what they wanted. We had people from throughout the community…

This is a suburban community, and people don't like the word "density." But [in promoting new commercial and compact housing development] we said, "Look. It's eyes on the street. Twenty-four hours you're going to have eyes on the street in the downtown. It will make it safer, and people will enjoy it. They'll like it." We had for-sale housing, and we had apartments. They sold like hotcakes, and rented like hotcakes.

A Bay Area respondent commented,

What's going to sell this ultimately is good examples of communities that work. There's a huge confluence of regional objectives and local objectives around quality of life issues. That's about being able to have all those urban amenities within [a short distance from home or work], about enjoying the resources that get provided by an urban development form. It is about beginning to make places like downtown Oakland places where people want to be, which supports the fiscal aspirations of Oakland, and supports the existing neighborhoods, which would also like to have a better environment than they currently enjoy. Coincidentally, that pays off to the regional transportation system and to the preservation of open space resources in Napa County.

Blueprint Goals and Organizational Strategies

By the late 1990s, COG/MPOs had been given more responsibility and authority to address regional transportation and air quality needs. They turned to land use as one policy lever to improve outcomes; this is a key element of blueprint planning. But doing this effectively required a far more broad-based planning process than COG/MPOs had previously undertaken. For this reason, blueprint planning has been more than just an evolution of traditional regional transportation planning, it has required instead something more like its transformation, in order to develop new techniques to improve planning collaboration and consensus-building.

Basic Goals and Strategies of Blueprint Planning

Blueprint initiatives arose specifically to develop "policy-based" land use projections for COG/MPOs' transportation investment and air quality plans - projections which reflect regional as well as local objectives and sometimes differ from localities' current policies.[11] The logic driving this strategy is that the projections, which look ahead a minimum of twenty years, lay the basis for transportation investments that can substantially affect the course of development. Investments based on uncoordinated or inefficient land use may reinforce the same pattern. Blueprint planners seek to reorient regional investment to support more coordinated, efficient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

Land use projections are the focus for blueprint planning because they are the central nexus between local land use policy and regional transportation policymaking. At the same time, they are both flexible and yet also not just hypothetical. Because the projections do not require detailed specification of implementation procedures, they provide a relatively unconstrained venue for considering future development preferences, so long as market and policy forces can be reasonably expected to conform to the preferred land use scenarios in the future. But when local governments adopt a blueprint land use scenario through the COG/MPO as a basis for regional investments and environmental plans, they are also presumably committed to implementing it, at least eventually. Purely fantastical projections could result in investment choices out of line with local conditions and needs.

COG/MPOs cannot develop or implement regional land use strategies "from the top down," but only through facilitating coordination among local governments. To evaluate and reorient land use interactively with transportation investment, in a regional framework that also considers environmental, equity, and other factors, requires a far more broad-based, interactive, and sustained planning effort than COG/MPOs have traditionally been responsible for. Thus, blueprint planners faced the challenge of organizing consensus-building processes to define a preferred course of future development in their regions.

This section of the paper considers the developmental or preparatory stage for the consensus-building process in each of the four regions. Certain common elements are apparent.

---

[11] Although in many cases COG/MPOs seek to incorporate other policy areas into blueprint plans – habitat planning, public utilities, and economic development, for example – the transportation-land use nexus has so far been the main focus.

COG/MPOs partnered with interest group stakeholders and/or technical consultants to launch a coordinated, multi-year "visioning" process to develop a preferred regional land use scenario. In preparing for the visioning stage, smart growth goals or principles were first identified to provide focus, and related performance measures and data were developed to permit testing of land use alternatives in relation to desired objectives. From the start, these blueprint visioning initiatives were deliberately organized separately from RHNA so that they would note be perceived as defining new mandates.

In spite of the commonalities, each regional story is also different. This section considers the particular institutional factors and issues that motivated and constrained each regional effort. Although many basic motivations were similar (as described earlier), each regional story also reflects a different history of growth and development, a different institutional framework, and different regional planning antecedents.

This section also pays special attention to governance – or decisionmaking – arrangements adopted in each region. These arrangements differed substantially among the regions, also in response to historical and institutional factors. Initial choices about how to organize decision processes would later prove to be critical in determining outcomes.

San Francisco Bay Area: A Fractured Process

The San Francisco Bay Area was the first to launch a growth visioning initiative. The preparation phase was somewhat fractured institutionally, foreshadowing problems that would be encountered later, during and after the visioning stage.

The region has had a long history of efforts by extra-governmental stakeholders to prod regional agencies to undertake more coordinated planning, and the blueprint visioning initiative repeated this historical pattern (Barbour, 2002). The Bay Area is the only region in which the COG and MPO functions are split between two separate agencies, and thus the transportation planning imperatives that helped drive the visioning processes elsewhere were felt less acutely by ABAG's governing body. This institutional factor helps explain why extra-governmental stakeholders mounted an effort to prod ABAG and MTC to adopt more coordinated strategies (and also why they have tried in the past to force a merger of the agencies). However, as in the case of previous stakeholder-led initiatives to improve planning coordination in the region, the visioning campaign never proved fully capable of pulling together its diverse interests.

The Bay Area blueprint process combined two existing projects – the first a consensus building and advocacy effort by an extra-governmental interest group coalition, and the second a project undertaken by five regional agencies to develop policy-based land use projections. The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development (now known as the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities), a coalition of about 45 Bay Area advocacy organizations and regional and state planning agencies, was launched in 1997 "to develop and implement an action plan that will lead to a more sustainable region" (BAASC website). The Alliance's first project was a years-long effort to develop a mission statement. This statement, the *Compact for a*

Sustainable Bay Area, was released in final form in 2003 and outlines 10 sustainability principles.[12] These principles would then form the basis for the subsequent visioning process.

The Alliance hired consultants to present the *Draft Compact* to city councils and county boards of supervisors; ultimately, 66 cities and all nine counties took some action toward "supporting the work of the Bay Area Alliance and the process of developing the *Draft Compact*" (BAASD, 2003). However, the *Compact* was often endorsed "in principle" or with caveats. Many jurisdictions sought to clarify that signing the document did not imply they were giving up local control in any way (Innes, 2004).

In 2000, the Alliance merged its *Compact* implementation campaign with the Smart Growth Strategy, a project by the five major Bay Area regional planning agencies[13] to develop policy-based land use projections (Innes, 2004).[14] A visioning campaign was launched with staff support from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) – the COG for the Bay Area responsible for devising the land use projections. Funding of about $1.5 million came mainly from within the region – a large share from MTC.

As a hybrid created from the Alliance's and the regional agencies' projects, the Bay Area blueprint visioning process never completely integrated the interests of its constituencies.[15] In the other regions, participants noted the importance – tracing back to the preparatory stage – of the COG/MPO governing board's and regional planning policy committee's leadership in driving the blueprint processes. However, in the Bay Area, a number of respondents explained that ABAG's governing board and regional planning committee were not actively engaged in directing the process; rather, that was done through a joint BAASC/regional agency Steering Committee.

---

[12] The ten goals or "commitments to action" were 1) Enable a diversified, sustainable, and competitive economy to continue to prosper and provide jobs in order to achieve a high quality of life for all Bay Area residents; 2) Provide housing affordable to all income levels within the Bay Area to match population increases and job generation; 3) Target transportation investment to achieve a world-class, comprehensive, integrated, and balanced multi-modal system that supports efficient land use and decreases dependency on single-occupancy vehicle trips; 4) Preserve and restore the region's natural assets – San Francisco Bay, farmland, open space, other habitats; 5) Improve resource and energy efficiency, reduce pollution and waste; 6) Focus investment to preserve and revitalize neighborhoods; 7) Provide all residents with the opportunity for quality education and lifelong learning to help them meet their highest aspirations; 8) Promote healthy and safe communities; 9) Support state and local government fiscal reforms; 10) Stimulate civic engagement (www.bayareaalliance.org/compact.html).

[13] The five agencies were ABAG, MTC, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

[14] Several inter-related goals were identified: 1) to create a smart growth land use vision for the Bay Area to minimize sprawl, to provide adequate and affordable housing, improve mobility, to protect environmental quality, and to preserve open space; 2) to identify and obtain the regulatory changes and incentives needed to implement this vision, and 3) to develop 20-year land use and transportation projections based on the vision that will in turn guide the infrastructure investments of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and other regional agencies.

[15] Judith Innes notes that the split was reflected in the cumbersome name of the visioning exercise – the "Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project" (Innes, 2004).

One *Compact* goal would ultimately prove to be particularly contentious – "Provide housing affordable to all income levels within the Bay Area to match population increases and job generation." Providing enough housing to match projected job growth *within* the nine-county regional boundaries was of paramount interest to business representatives on the Alliance (Innes, 2004). However, as the blueprint process evolved, reconciling this objective with, on the one hand, local government concerns about increasing density, and, on the other, environmentalists' concerns about reducing sprawl on the suburban or rural fringe, proved difficult.

The *Compact* language is general enough to appeal to many interest groups without having to consider the "devil in the details" of implementation (Innes, 2004). Other regional blueprint initiatives also developed broadly conceived – even vague – principles to guide their efforts. In the Bay Area, however, the guiding principles were developed by an extra-governmental group rather than the COG. Consensus on the housing goal would eventually fray because of differing views about what was realistic as well as desirable – and the breakdown of consensus ultimately traced back to a lack of adequate initial involvement and commitment from local governments. As one observer noted, "The *Compact* basically involved one group of people getting together and figuring out what some other people ought to do" (Innes, 2004, p. 33).

In reflecting on outcomes much later in the process, a number of respondents confirmed that in hindsight the failure to effectively engage local elected officials was a key shortcoming. As one respondent put it,

> The ABAG board was never in the decision-making process for smart growth. It was the Steering Committee of the Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project… ABAG's Regional Planning Committee was never involved… ABAG board members wouldn't make a decision because…nobody wanted to offend anybody… Many local government representatives gave lip service to smart growth, but ultimately, they were local and elected officials answerable to the voters in their own cities and counties.

The breakdown of consensus that would occur during the visioning stage over a key initial goal that all stakeholders had adhered to, at least in principle, at the start, provides a useful example of the importance – again tracing back to the preparatory stage – of fully integrating decisionmaking across COG/MPO leadership and among regional stakeholders. Not coincidentally, legislative efforts to force a merger of the Bay Area COG and MPO would follow shortly after the visioning process came to a close.

San Diego Area: SANDAG Under Fire

In contrast to the Bay Area experience, political coherence made regional coordination somewhat easier in the San Diego region. The region comprises only one county and eighteen cities – one of which, San Diego, contains more than 40 percent of the population. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) combines functions that are divided elsewhere – COG, MPO, the county congestion management agency, and the administrator of the county's sales tax measure for transportation improvements, among others.

The San Diego blueprint process presents a different picture than the other three where the objective was to jumpstart smart growth policymaking through a broad-based "visioning process" to define a preferred pattern of regional development. Instead, the San Diego blueprint process evolved in an incremental fashion toward the development of a regional comprehensive plan – a set of policies and strategies rather than a map of preferred land uses.

Especially during the past two decades, the San Diego region has faced substantial growth pressure, experienced within more constrained boundaries (natural and political) than in other parts of the state. In 1993, the SANDAG board ratified a Regional Growth Management Strategy that called for more compact development but local government adoption of the proposed housing and land use policies proved problematic. By the late 1990s, SANDAG analysts called attention to the fact that current land use plans and policies in the region were unable to accommodate projected growth and were inconsistent with the Growth Management Strategy because of the low density of planned development (SANDAG, 1998; 1999; 2000).

An intensive, three-year long debate on regional governance arrangements ensued. In 1999 state legislation was introduced that would have replaced SANDAG with a new regional agency subsuming six existing agencies, to be governed by a directly elected board. Instead, Senate Bill 1703 passed in 2002, moderately strengthening SANDAG's authority by transferring to it planning responsibilities from the county's two transit agencies, and altering its governing arrangements.[16] The following year, Assembly Bill 361 passed, stipulating that SANDAG complete a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) by 2004 that must incorporate public input, use the agency's authority over regional transportation funds to further the goals of the plan, and monitor progress through "realistic measurable standards and criteria" to be included in the plan.

Thus, as was true elsewhere, the San Diego process was undertaken in response to pressure on the COG/MPO, but in this case in the form of state legislative bills that would have established a new regional institutional structure to manage growth. This prospect served as a goad for SANDAG to prove that its voluntary, collaborative decisionmaking model could be effective in implementing integrated regional growth policies. According to one respondent, "There was a lot of motivation to prove that we could do it – that the region was strong enough and that the local elected officials could set aside their interests and come together regionally and approve a plan."[17] Another respondent, commenting on the rationale for SANDAG's

[16] An additional vote on the governing body was awarded to the City of San Diego and population-weighted votes were required in addition to the traditional jurisdiction-based voting scheme. A new committee structure was designated to include a committee with broad responsibility for transportation oversight and another for regional planning.

[17] In addition to external pressures, some of SANDAG's earlier activities helped lay the basis for the RCP. In the late 1990s the agency had developed a streamlined growth management strategy called Region 2020 that addressed multiple concerns and obtained resolutions of support for it from all member jurisdictions. SANDAG's 2003 RTP also helped by shifting from a traditional modal focus to a more integrated travel systems strategy, employing criteria to rank and compare projects. A pilot Smart Growth Program was launched through the RTP that committed $25 million as competitive grant funds for localities, to support development projects with transportation benefits. Finally, plans to place the

approach, described advantages that may apply generally to COG/MPOs as a locus for blueprint planning:

> There were people who would rather change the governing structure to an elected group like a county board of supervisors or something like that… But if you went towards that form of governance, you'd lose the land use component. What we're saying is that by locking together the land use component with the transportation funding component, you can move a lot further down the road towards a structure that's going to be successful with carrying out planning strategies…

Development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) was launched in 2002 with the help of a grant from CalTrans, considered "fortuitous" by one respondent who noted that "Without [the CalTrans grant] it would have taken twice as long and in the planning process if you don't have the resources to get in and get it done and adopted, those kind of things can languish." The CalTrans grant formed about one half of the $2.5 million spent on plan development.

SANDAG's Regional Planning Committee (RPC), which consists of local elected officials, was made responsible for guiding the process, collecting input from working groups, and reporting on progress to the governing board. This governing arrangement was a key to successful process according to a number of interview respondents. Two additional working groups provided input: a Regional Planning Technical Working Group made up of the region's planning and community development directors, and a Stakeholders Working Group. A draft vision and set of core values were developed for use in regional workshops to gain public input for the RCP.[18]

Thus, SANDAG's blueprint process emerged in an evolutionary fashion from previous work by the agency. SANDAG brought outside stakeholders into a highly structured process to define a plan, rather than a preferred land use vision as in the other regions. The particular external pressure SANDAG faced – the legislative imperative to prove itself capable of producing an effective plan – also shaped the process. In the other regions, blueprint processes were organized to jumpstart a new approach to land use policymaking, but in the San Diego area the legislative mandate was pressure enough to force local governments to coordinate planning. The legislative mandate helped ensure that SANDAG member governments were invested in – and sought to maintain tight control of – the outcome.

Los Angeles Area: Responding to Federal Mandates

In contrast to the Bay Area and San Diego regions, outside pressure groups did not play a major role in prompting the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) – the COG/MPO for the Los Angeles region – to undertake its blueprint process. Unless, that is, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is seen as an outside pressure group. According to one interview respondent, SCAG's decision to launch a blueprint process first emerged in response

---

county sales tax measure for transportation improvements, called TransNet, on the 2004 ballot created a high-intensity political context for considering transportation priorities.

[18] See draft vision principles at www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_218_1770.pdf.

to internal modeling exercises suggesting that changes in land use policy could provide substantial benefit in helping to solve some tough challenges facing the agency, in particular air quality non-conformity of its RTP.

SCAG may not have faced the same external pressure from outside stakeholders as did Bay Area and San Diego area regional agencies, but SCAG's challenges were hardly less daunting. The vast size of the Los Angeles region helps account for the relative lack of coordinated external pressure; there are few organizations of regional scale of any kind. Planning functions are fractured among myriad agencies and SCAG's authority and resources are diminished as a result. County transportation agencies in the Los Angeles region have more power to allocate resources vis-a-vis SCAG as MPO than in other multi-county metropolitan regions in the state. SCAG delegated planning to fourteen sub-regional COGs during the 1990s; however, few of these COGS coincide with county transportation agencies, and few took a lead role in promoting blueprint-style planning.

SCAG's challenges were confirmed in results from our survey of city planning directors. More than half of respondents from the San Diego and Sacramento areas indicated that they "often" rely on data and information from their COG/MPO, and nearly half of Bay Area respondents. However, only nine percent of Los Angeles area respondents did so. Furthermore, Los Angeles area respondents were most likely to consider the geographic scale of the COG/MPO too large to form an effective basis for integrated growth planning, and they were least likely to indicate that growth-related policies have been coordinated effectively at the metropolitan regional scale. (Survey results are presented in detail later in the paper.)

Nonetheless, SCAG established a Growth Visioning Subcommittee in 2000 "to conduct an extensive and intensive program to lead to a refined vision as basis for the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan" (Hotchkiss, 2001). The first stage was an approximately year-long discussion within SCAG and with its fourteen sub-regional bodies to define a proposed set of Growth Visioning Principles.[19] SCAG also partnered with outside groups, but mainly for technical assistance. In particular, SCAG worked with analysts from the Urban Land Institute and the University of Southern California for help in developing a regional map with consistent land use designations that would form a basic tool for a visioning process. SCAG also commissioned a study of visioning processes across the U.S. and ultimately contracted with the team that led the well-known Envision Utah effort, Fregonese Calthorpe Associates, to lead its visioning exercise.

Alongside initiating the blueprint process, SCAG was also developing a regional goods movement strategy, seen both as a means to address mounting congestion problems from trucks and trains, and as an economic development strategy for the region. These needs emerged after the region's severe recession of the early 1990s,which featured a deep loss in federally supported aerospace jobs, led to economic restructuring.

Thus, the blueprint process came about in response to the federal air quality mandate as well as to mounting transportation concerns. However, it also responded to economic

[19] The broad principles adopted were 1) Improve mobility for all residents, 2) Foster livability in all communities, 3) Enable prosperity for all people, and 4) Promote sustainability for future generations. Specific policy and planning strategies were also developed for each principle.

development aspirations of local communities and for the region as a whole. These motivations strengthened the role of SCAG as regional planner, a traditionally tenuous position in such a vast area.

Sacramento Area: Responding to Rapid Change

In the Sacramento area, the influence of outside pressure groups on the COG/MPO's decision to implement a blueprint process was also little less blunt than it was in the Bay Area and San Diego area. Outside stakeholders played a critical role in the Sacramento areas, but their involvement was organized within the COG/MPO itself. In this case, rapid growth in the region itself constituted pressure for a unified response; the metro area's population grew by one-fifth during the 1990s, and is projected to grow again by half from 2005 to 2025 (Johnson, 2002; 2005).

The decision to pursue a blueprint process emerged during the development of the region's 2002 RTP. Calling itself the "first truly regional plan" in terms of identifying priorities to guide investments, the RTP relied on a broader-based planning process than in the past. In developing the RTP, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) created a "Transportation Roundtable," a 55-member stakeholder advisory group representing the private sector, community and interest groups, and public agencies. This group, convened over more than two years, recommended goals, guiding principles, implementation measures, and performance indicators for the RTP. An overarching goal was to improve "quality of life." The group also recommended that a land-use study be conducted to resolve conflicts and concerns that arose in developing the RTP, and this recommendation kick started the blueprint process.

SACOG partnered with Valley Vision, an area non-profit organization, to implement a blueprint visioning process intended to consider land use projections that would guide the region's next RTP. Valley Vision calls itself a "neutral convener" engaged with a cross-section of the region's leadership in efforts to address growth concerns using a regional approach. A set of smart growth principles was identified as a yardstick for considering land use options in the blueprint process.[20]

The governing process adopted for the blueprint exercise was a somewhat risky, open-ended one. One respondent explained:

> I think probably one of the most difficult and very subtle things that we had to work through was that the process was not governed by any sort of stakeholder group of citizens – instead, it was decision-making by almost a grassroots method where you basically laid out the facts, laid out a process, and allowed ideas to converge up to the top …The whole premise of saying that we were going to try to create convergence in the region with thousands of people and nobody really guiding that in terms of a central stakeholder group was a really

[20] They were 1) Provide a variety of transportation choices; 2) Offer housing choices and opportunities; 3) Take advantage of compact development; 4) Use existing assets; 5) Mix land uses; 6) Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, through natural resources conservation; 7) Encourage distinctive, attractive communities with quality design (see www.sacog.org/regionalfunding/betterways.pdf).

> weird concept for people to get their hands around at first. But the weaknesses of doing it the other way had been pretty well demonstrated…
>
> There was a small team that guided the project, but it was literally process-guiding. The team determined things such as where the next workshop should be and how many we should have. The aim was to replace a stakeholder process with a huge public outreach process and then let the results fall where they would. Frankly, on the part of really everyone – including the elected officials that had to let this happen and the many stakeholder groups – it took great trust that people given good information would come up with good decisions.

As later sections will make clear, SACOG's willingness to trust in this open-ended process, investing considerable resources in spite of an unpredictable outcome, would pay off well in the visioning stage.

Conclusion: Structuring Collaboration

All the regions were experiencing pressures of urban development and all regional agencies were attempting to maneuver within the same federal mandates for air quality and transportation planning and expenditure. At the same time, each blueprint process emerged as the outcome of a unique regional history of urbanization, with a particular evolution of governance structures, and a particular political and social composition. Given the differences among the regions, substantial convergence in the timing and style of the blueprint experiments is all the more remarkable.

Two key elements in the developmental stage of the blueprint processes were establishing goals and principles, on the one hand, and a governance structure, on the other. The regions differed most in relation to the latter. In each region, considerable effort went into the initial, preparatory stage, in which smart growth goals and principles were articulated, but generally the principles adopted were broadly-focused and desirable enough to gain widespread support. The main value of goal setting may have been in engaging participants in dialogue, mutual education, and establishing a shared sense of purpose necessary to build momentum for the visioning and implementation stages.

The regions differed more markedly in the governance models pursued for the blueprint exercises. These range from an extra-governmental effort allied somewhat tenuously with the COG and MPO (Bay area), to a COG/MPO-led top-down model with an integrated planning committee structure (San Diego area), to a COG/MPO-led effort that engaged outside stakeholders mainly as technical consultants (Los Angeles area), and finally a COG/MPO-stakeholder joint convener model with an open-ended process eschewing a formal decision hierarchy (Sacramento area).

The governance model used seems critical in influencing outcomes. In particular, as the following sections will demonstrate, local government engagement from the leadership level of the COG/MPO seems to have been absolutely vital to ensure that the process was more than a theoretical exercise. But broader engagement with outside stakeholders also has been important – reflecting the fact the blueprint processes were often undertaken in response to

outside pressure. In developing a consensus vision, fully integrating stakeholder and local government participation seems ideal. Structures like SANDAG's and SACOG's, which integrate input and leadership from elected officials, stakeholders, and planning and public works directors, may help avoid unpleasant surprises that can arise if any major constituency is excluded. Furthermore, these models allow relationships among colleagues in a region to flourish, which can also build support for common efforts.

However, a fully integrated structure is difficult to achieve in larger and more complex regions such as Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay Area. It was much easier in the Sacramento and San Diego regions for the COG/MPO to convene *a single regional conversation about growth*, engaging local and regional stakeholders and the public. In the two larger regions, such an integrated conversation was virtually impossible. The blueprint discussions took place mainly at the "30,000 foot level," involving the COG/MPO with regional stakeholders and consultants. The conversation could not easily be devolved to engage each locality, as it could be in the smaller regions. Furthermore, available sub-regional institutions were generally not well suited for leading sub-regional visioning efforts.

In the larger regions, there are few sub-regional mini-COG/MPOs – entities that combine both the functions. There are plenty of sub-regional agencies addressing one function or the other: county-level transportation planning and financing agencies, transit-system planning and operating agencies, and county and sub-regional COGs, for example. But rarely do these agencies combine the COG and MPO functions.[21] Although SCAG and ABAG worked with sub-regional COGs in their blueprint efforts, only some were very actively engaged throughout the process, according to some interview respondents. Most county-level transportation agencies were hardly engaged at all.

[21] Sub-regional blueprint style planning has in fact occurred in spite of the institutional obstacles. The Riverside County Integrated Plan and Contra Costa County's Shaping Our Future Initiative – both multi-year processes undertaken in the early 2000s -- are perhaps the two most ambitious and well-known examples. In the Riverside case, the institutional nexus was the county government and county transportation agency, because the project was intended to coordinate a county general plan update, a long-range transportation investment plan, and an NCCP plan affecting mainly unincorporated territory. City governments were less extensively and effectively engaged, however, according to a number of our interview respondents. The Contra Costa case was an ambitious blueprint visioning process culminating in commitment among most jurisdictions in the county to a platform of smart growth principles. However, dissension over the coordination of an urban limit line for development in the county ultimately led to a breakdown in the process. The experiences suggest that institutional obstacles can substantially hamper blueprint-style planning in a county context.

The Visioning Stage

The early, developmental stage of blueprint planning described in the previous sections set the terms that would guide visioning exercises. The visioning stage was broadly similar in most of the regions; it was a structured, broad-based decision process, building from the local level up to the regional scale, to develop a preferred scenario for future development, informed by "scenario modeling" of projected outcomes of alternative land use patterns – outcomes for transportation mobility, air quality, and housing affordability, among other things. Ultimately, a preferred regional development scenario was selected to inform the COG/MPO governing board's choice of official land use projections for its RTP.

Visioning is an interactive decision process that has been enabled by and has fostered the development of technical resources and methods, such as parcel-based maps and data, which can model land use and transportation interactions at a finer level of detail and with more sensitivity to localized pricing impacts than traditional methods. These new techniques have assisted blueprint planners in responding to the current challenges they face – to consider policy trade-offs and options comprehensively and interactively. These technical capacities are expensive to ramp up and require local government cooperation if data is to be kept current. However, their use also enabled more meaningful participation in several of the regions studied.

Organizing Visioning Workshops

During the visioning stage in each region, a series of public workshops was organized over a year or more for targeted stakeholders and the public. In general, workshops started at the local level, either for a single jurisdiction or for sub-areas of the region. Participants were invited through outreach efforts targeted to stakeholder organizations, local governments, and the public; invitations were offered, for example, through ads in local newspapers.

The smaller regions had a distinct advantage in building project visibility and momentum. The Sacramento area initiative, for example, gained substantial momentum in the press and among stakeholders – more than many project planners had expected. About twice as many workshops were held for the Sacramento effort than for other regions, and more than twice as many participants attended overall.[22] However, the greater momentum achieved was not just directly proportional to the number of workshops. Rather, it was the depth and breadth of the effort that really mattered. A first-stage workshop was held in each jurisdiction, and the fact that it was even *possible* to do that – a much more difficult prospect in the larger regions with their hundreds of cities – was a huge advantage.

[22] In the Bay Area, after an initial series of kick-off meetings with local planning directors in 2001, two rounds of daylong Saturday workshops were held in each county in the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002, with total attendance of over 2,000. Between 2003 and 2004, SANDAG conducted about 20 public workshops around the region in three stages geared to different points in RCP plan development, with total attendance of about 1,000 people. SCAG held public workshops, sub-regional review sessions and policy dialogues during 2003 and 2004. About 1,300 members of the public attended 13 workshops. In the Sacramento region 38 staged workshops were held in 2002 and 2003; in all, more than 5,000 people participated.

That approach allowed Sacramento organizers to engage local officials in a way that helped build momentum considerably. Local officials were asked to identify invitees and to speak at the events. According to one project leader, by encouraging local elected officials to take key roles at the workshops,

> We gave them a visible opportunity to lead on growth issues, which was useful – both to them and to us…They ended up getting very involved and engaged … Not everyone right away – instead, for some it seemed to be like that thing that's probably happened to all of us at one point in our life where we've participated in something that at first we were not at all sure of…and then pretty soon we find ourselves doing it because people identify us with that and it is positive. Now I think elected officials, for the most part, are doing it happily because it's working.

In general, the first-stage visioning workshops in all regions began with an educational component about regional growth challenges and a discussion of smart growth principles as a guide for future development. Then, using interactive technology, participants were guided in developing a consensus vision on a preferred regional development pattern.

In three cases, this guided process involved mapping exercises in which teams of participants – selected for diversity of viewpoints – proposed and tested alternative land use scenarios in relation to local and regional indicators, such as transportation mobility, air quality, and housing affordability. Conducting these mapping exercises required the development of detailed regional land use maps that designated constraints at a parcel level – with greater detail and comprehensiveness than many COG/MPOs had previously employed in their transportation and land use modeling.

Different regions relied on different mapping exercises to build alternative scenarios. One of the regional projects – in the Los Angeles area – employed a mapping technique based on a "chip game," a technique used in Envision Utah. This method emphasizes the trade-offs and choices required in accommodating projected regional employment and population growth. Each table team received a base map with existing land uses, existing and planned highways and transit lines, and environmental constraints. Participants first identified areas where they felt growth should not occur, and then attempted to accommodate the area's projected growth in housing and jobs using combinations of game pieces, or chips. Each chip type represented a unique development or redevelopment pattern, number of households and jobs, density, and combination of retail, office, and residential space (SCAG, 2004a).

In choosing a starter chip set, groups indicated the quality and quantity of development and redevelopment they wanted on their map. As they pursued the exercise, teams could then trade in chips for higher or lower density pieces. According to one interview respondent, most teams traded in for higher densities. At the end of each workshop, the groups presented their consensus map vision.

Two other regional visioning efforts – in the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento areas – employed another technique that is gaining adherents nationally: The use of PLACE^{3}S, an urban simulation computer modeling package that provides visual simulations of potential development scenarios and tests the performance of alternatives in relation to fiscal,

environmental, transportation, and other measurable outcomes. PLACE^{3}S is less a modeling innovation than a new planning tool. Traditional MPO models are complicated and cumbersome. PLACE^{3}S relies on many of the same data inputs, but because of its rapid speed and user-friendliness, it facilitates more flexible scenario modeling in settings such as the visioning workshops with local users. The benefits of using PLACE^{3}S noted by our interview respondents included allowing participants to visualize compact development in ways that sometimes challenge pre-conceived notions, facilitating recognition of policy trade-offs through immediate feedback on multiple performance outcomes, and helping "dissolve arguments" about preferred scenarios by relying on measurable indicators of performance.

In the Bay Area first-stage visioning workshops, held in each county, participants designated areas on the map for different types of development in 2020, selecting among predefined options. Then project staff at each table provided feedback from PLACE^{3}S on the impact of their decisions on the county's housing supply, open space, transit accessibility, and other measures. Participants were able to adjust their maps accordingly. In the Sacramento workshops, held in each jurisdiction, participants considered development strategies for two or more case study sites chosen by local planners – one on an already developed site and another in an undeveloped area. Participants modeled the outcomes of various alternatives using PLACE^{3}S, with the intent to define aspirations and core values, rather than to produce maps of desired scenarios.

The San Diego process differed from the three other regions. Instead of developing a map of a preferred development scenario, in San Diego public outreach was undertaken instead to gain input for SANDAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan. This effort did not involve visioning workshops with public outreach, mapping, and modeling of alternative scenarios. Although the San Diego process incorporated all these elements, they were not combined in one package as in the other cases.

As in the other regions, SANDAG conducted public workshops around the region in stages to develop a regional consensus on a preferred path for growth. But these stages corresponded to different points in plan development, rather than different geographic scales in considering land use alternatives. The first round of SANDAG workshops was aimed at developing a regional vision on issues and core values.[23] The second tested goals and policy objectives identified for the draft RCP. The RCP aimed to provide a planning framework "which pulls together the various local and regional plans from throughout the region, in a structure much like that of local general plans, and establishes… an organizing framework and guidance document for the myriad existing plans in the region" (SANDAG, 2004c, p. 48). It included eight policy areas: Urban form, transportation, housing, environmental health, economic prosperity, public facilities, and borders.[24] A third round of workshops was organized after the draft RCP was publicly released, to gain comments.

---

[23] Participants emphasized the importance of a healthy environment, water availability, good accessible schools, and transportation choices (Strategic Initiatives, n.d.).

[24] Participants emphasized "resolving transportation and environmental issues in conjunction with addressing urban form and housing issues" (SANDAG, October 3, 2003, p.24). The principles guiding the RCP were revised to incorporate input from the workshops, and a Draft Regional Vision was written: To "preserve and enhance the San Diego region's unique features – its vibrant and culturally diverse

Modeling Alternative Regional Scenarios

Across the regional visioning processes, an important, consistently reported result was that most workshop participants supported denser, more compact growth scenarios for future development. In a process described in one case as "part collaboration, part art form, and part politics," first-stage workshop results were then distilled by project staff, consultants, and, sometimes, local planners, into alternative land use scenarios for an entire region (Innes, 2004, p. 46).

In the Sacramento area and Bay Area processes, an intermediate step involved distilling county-level alternatives and holding a second round of workshops at the county level before developing regional alternatives. In Sacramento the task was assigned to teams of local planners from each jurisdiction. Just as for the first-stage strategy that engaged local officials in helping lead the workshops, this second-stage strategy helped ensure buy-in and built momentum. In fact, SACOG had convened local planners in regular meetings for a full year before the visioning exercises began, to gain their help in preparing maps, data, and other material. Not only did this ensure they were engaged from the start, but it built a regional perspective by fostering personal relationships and providing opportunities to learn about needs and constraints in neighboring communities.

In each of the three map-based visioning processes – in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and Sacramento – three smart growth regional scenarios were developed that represented a range in intensity of infill redevelopment – from an extreme case that funneled most growth into existing urban centers to more moderate scenarios that still represented a shift from current local plans. These alternatives were modeled, along with a "base case scenario" that represented projected development consistent with current local general plans, in relation to multiple measurable regional outcomes.[25] SCAG and SACOG planners also met with local planners and officials to reality-test the proposed land use changes and adjust them based on feedback. Ultimately, a "preferred regional scenario" was selected – in every case the middle of the three smart growth options. In the Bay Area and Sacramento areas, the preferred scenario was selected first at regional public workshops before it was presented for consideration to the COG/MPO board, a step not taken in the Los Angeles region.

SANDAG planners also had modeled projected outcomes of three alternative smart growth scenarios and compared them to an "existing trends base case," but this step was taken prior to the blueprint visioning process.[26] With a legal mandate to develop a comprehensive

---

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." After refinement through the workshop process, the core values became: 1) Citizen Participation in the Planning Process, 2) Cultural Diversity and Resources, 3) Fiscal Responsibility, 4) Healthy Environment, 5) Infrastructure Systems that Work, 6) Intergovernmental Coordination, 7) Jobs and Educated Workforce, 8) Livable Neighborhoods, 9) More Housing Choices, 10) More Transportation Choices, 11) Schools as Community Assets, and 12) Water Availability (www.sandag.cog.ca.us/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_864_1921.pdf).

[25] For modeling results see Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project, 2002a and b; SCAG 2004a and b; SACOG/Valley Vision, 2004; and SACOG, 2005a, b, c, and d.

[26] See SANDAG, 1998 and 1999.

plan – an onus not faced in the other regions – SANDAG focused on achieving consensus on plan goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, rather than on a map of preferred development.

In their modeling, the Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Bay Area visioning processes employed neither the same performance measures nor the same timeframe, making direct comparisons of results difficult. [27] Table 1 includes a sample of modeled performance outcomes from these three regions, comparing the "current trends base case" scenario to the preferred smart growth alternatives.

In general, projected benefits from the preferred alternative were most substantial in the Sacramento region – but in part this reflected the much longer (50-year) timeframe for that exercise. All the preferred smart growth scenarios projected a shift away from auto use, although this was only slight in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles areas. The smart growth alternatives also promised some savings in travel time and daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Projected reduction in VMT was smallest in the Los Angeles area; nevertheless, one interviewee explained that the reduction was comparable to what could be expected by spending almost $200 billion in transportation investments.

Modeled trade-offs among the three regions reflected particular regional needs and challenges. For example, reduction in vehicle hours delayed in the Los Angeles area helped produce projected air quality benefits; according to one interviewee, without the benefits of the proposed land use pattern, SCAG would have been hard pressed to develop an RTP capable of meeting air quality conformity requirements. Projected air quality benefits in the Sacramento area were also substantial, but less so in the Bay Area.

The Sacramento modeling exercise projected a substantial decrease in the share of homes that would be single-family detached, and this projection made for a substantial improvement in jobs-housing balance when comparing the base case to the preferred alternative. The Bay Area results on jobs-housing balance were less impressive – but as for other factors measured, that largely reflected the fact that the preferred scenario incorporated considerably more people living within the region. The Bay Area was the only one to also model jobs-housing match – factoring in housing affordability in relation to employment growth.

Both the Sacramento and Bay Area exercises projected a substantial reduction in acres of land converted to urbanized use (this was not modeled for the Los Angeles area). The open space preservation projected for the Bay Area was all the more remarkable given that the preferred alternative also accommodated an extra 265,000 households in the region – the number needed to match projected regional job growth. The attention in the Bay Area exercise to in-commuting reflected one of the project's original principles: To accommodate all housing growth to match projected employment growth *within* the nine-county region.

---

[27] One benefit of the new CalTrans Blueprint Planning Program is a requirement to use certain standardized performance measures. However, the program also allows for regional variation, which facilitates innovation.

Table 1.
Selected Modeled Performance Outcomes for the Preferred Land Use Scenario Versus Current Trends Base Case, for San Francisco Bay, Los Angeles, and Sacramento Areas

	SF Bay Area			LA Area			Sacramento Area		
	Base Year (1998)	2020 Base-line	Pref-erred Scenario	Base Year (2000)	2030 Base-line	Pref-erred Scenario	Base Year (2000)	2050 Base-line	Pref-erred Scenario
Modal Split (total trips)									
% Transit	6%	6%	7%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%
% Auto	84%	82%	81%	88%	89%	87%	92%	94%	84%
% Bike and Pedestrian	10%	12%	12%	8%	8%	9%	7%	6%	13%
Transit Access (walking distance)		23%	46%						
Housing Growth Near Transit (1/4 mile)								2%	38%
Average Trip Duration (minutes)	18.2	18.4	17.9	13.6	15.2	13.5			
Daily Vehicle Hours of Travel (per hh)				1.9	2.0	1.7	1.1	1.4	1.1
Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled									
Per Household	54	62	55				42	47	35
Per Capita				22	22	21			
Vehicle Hours Delayed (millions)				1.5	3.5	2.1			
Carbon Dioxide (CO2)	473	609	599						
Particulates (PM10)	64	84	82						
Per Capita Carbon Dioxide and Small Particulates Vehicle Emissions (compared to baseline)									85%
Percent Single-family Housing (plus rural residential for Sacramento)				54%	52%	52%	71%	75%	65%
Percent of Population in Areas With Acceptable Jobs-Housing Balance*		57%	50%					26%	53%
Acceptable Jobs-Housing Match**		9%	64%						
Additional Square Miles Urbanized Land Through 2050								661	304
Greenfield Development Within Region (1,000s acres converted)		83	4						
New In-commuters From Other Regions (1,000s)		265	0						
Average per Household Water Consumption (gallons)		300	250						
Residential Water Demand (acre-feet/year per unit)								0.86	0.50
Infrastructure Cost (water, sewer, roads, flood control, drainage, other utilities, in $ billions)								32.4	25.8
Mitigation Land									
Acres (thousands)								144	66
Total Cost ($ billions)								13.0	5.9
Housing Growth Within 200 Year Floodplain (units in 1,000s)									
Infill								76	199
Greenfield								116	92

Sources: Smart Growth Strategy/ Regional Livability Footprint Project, 2002a and b; SCAG 2004a; SACOG, 2005a, b, c, and d.

* For the Bay Area exercise, fifteen overlapping commute areas were analyzed, each centering on an existing job center and extending to include housing within about a half-hour commute or less. An acceptable jobs-housing balance was defined as a sufficient number of jobs within the area for at least 85% of households.

** Jobs-housing match assesses the match of pay scales and housing costs for new employment and new housing development only.

After completing the visioning process, SACOG staff extended scenario modeling exercises in 2005 to address additional issues, including water demand, infrastructure costs, and flood danger. The results are instructive in relation to potential benefits of smart growth. The infrastructure cost model suggested overall savings from the blueprint scenario would be $14 billion. However, SACOG noted that, "For many reinvestment sites, the Preferred Alternative is more expensive than the Base Case because existing infrastructure capacity is less than what is needed to accommodate the levels of reinvestment envisioned" (SACOG, 2005e). This analysis confirms the common complaint that infrastructure costs of infill development can be prohibitive, especially in older areas, presenting complex local/regional trade-off in costs and benefits.

The Sacramento region's levee system also raised unique concerns, and by late 2005, the example of Hurricane Katrina made flood planning an urgent issue. SACOG's modeling suggested that although the preferred alternative would substantially reduce the number of undeveloped acres needing flood protection, higher development densities would also result in more individuals requiring flood protection. But funneling new development to areas with adequate current flood protection would produce more sprawl and other environmental impacts, and furthermore, new development in unprotected infill areas could help pay for the needed protection. Facing these difficult trade-offs, SACOG began developing a flood control strategy in consultation with other agencies.

These projected trade-offs among development alternatives provide a useful example of the value of blueprint scenario modeling. Although often it is depicted that way, smart growth is not always a win-win scenario. Modeling should help inform decisions – the tough ones, not just the easy ones. If SACOG had put flood protection on the table more explicitly during the visioning exercises, some of the tough choices about flood protection might have been dealt with earlier in the process.

Research suggests that important trade-offs may be at stake in considering smart growth – trade-offs that modeling can help evaluate. For example, a fact not always recognized about smart growth strategies is that more compact development is at least as likely to exacerbate congestion as to alleviate it (Taylor, 2002; Wachs, 2002). Indeed, increasing congestion is the mechanism by which higher density may encourage more walking and transit use and less car use. One large-scale national study suggested that public savings in land conversion, infrastructure (roads and sewers), per-capita public service costs, and housing and personal travel costs from more compact development were at least partly offset by overall costs in terms of congestion, more expensive family housing at the periphery with smaller lots, and less variety in community settings (Burchell et al., 2002). Many of the noted benefits accrue to individuals, while many of the costs are spread across communities or regions.

The modeling phase of the visioning process helps to illustrate community trade-offs clearly; one Sacramento respondent noted that it provides "multiple answers to multiple policy questions," adding:

> In one community, transportation may become the big issue first because they're in a congested place. In some other community, it may be preservation of open space and they are trying to avoid $500 million for a sewage treatment plant

expansion. It is a really compelling notion to bring all these things together [in modeling exercises].

Adopting the Preferred Alternative

The final objective of the visioning stage was for the COG/MPO to adopt the preferred alternative as its official projections, forming the basis for the region's RTP and air quality plans. This objective proved to be easier to reach in some cases than others.

The process was eased in the Los Angeles region by a decision to ensure that no city was assigned new development amounting to more than a 10 percent increase in relation to the development already accommodated in existing plans. The preferred alternative, called the Compass Growth Vision, was designed for local land use policy changes to advance from a 2010 base year, creating six years for the adoption of new policies. In 2004, SCAG's governing board adopted the Growth Vision as the basis for its RTP.

In the Sacramento area, SACOG's governing board also ratified the regional preferred alternative in 2004. Because of the care taken in involving local officials and planners, no last-minute resistance emerged. Furthermore, because of the broad engagement with the public and interest group stakeholders, as well as the impressive potential benefits demonstrated in the modeling of the preferred scenario, it had become increasingly difficult for local officials to ignore the results. One interviewee noted,

> In between all those workshops and adoption by the SACOG board, I think SACOG probably won some regional or national or statewide award every month for 15 or 16 months. There was an editorial or some gushing article about the blueprint all the time, and so there was a huge amount of positive feedback and validation. That would have made it difficult for a local jurisdiction to not hop on board.

There was not complete unanimity on the blueprint vision, and ultimately its effectiveness can only be judged by what actually occurs in development over the coming years. One city in the region elected that its current general plan should form the basis for 2050 land uses, for example. Also, an effort was successfully mounted during the visioning period to have the SACOG board declare that the blueprint would not be used to cut off money to any jurisdiction based on its land use choices.

Still, in the Sacramento area most jurisdictions' future development would be different – sometimes significantly so – under the blueprint scenario.[28] The project's acceptance was built on reassurances that results were only advisory. Although the process resulted in a parcel-based map depicting a desired land use scenario, it is not the same as an adopted zoning map that could really influence development outcomes. SACOG member governments understood that in adopting the blueprint preferred scenario, they were committing to general plan updates

[28] Seventy-nine percent of Sacramento city planning directors who responded to our survey indicated that the blueprint targeted their jurisdiction for land use changes, and of these cities, 91 percent indicated that achieving the blueprint objectives would necessitate changes to their General Plans. That share was higher in the Sacramento area than for the other regions.

that would strive to meet the numerical and performance targets and smart growth principles of the preferred scenario. However, they were not committing to any specific parcel-based activity. One interviewee noted,

> We worked carefully with local governments to make sure they understood the benefits of this. It was very clearly part of the strategy that we would never get out ahead of where they were… [After the first round of workshops] we had quite a bit of momentum and some people were starting to go whoa, what is this thing? Where's this going? Is it going to be regional land use and what's going on? Then we had to just very carefully move it up to the county level. By the time we got to the final forum…a lot of people were vested in it. It just became hard to ignore. By the time we were done, we had a map that had many hands in the making, everybody was familiar with and loved, and we had never once said to anyone: You have to do this.

The outcome in the Bay Area was less harmonious. Although the COG adopted "policy-based" land use projections that envision more compact development than in current general plans, those projections differed from the preferred scenario adopted in the workshop process. That left some participants frustrated that a consensus vision was not achieved.

What went wrong? By the time that the preferred alternative was selected at the culminating Bay Area regional workshop, and the ABAG board was slated to consider adopting it as the official projections, consensus among project leaders had frayed. Leaders in the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development – the extra-governmental stakeholder group that helped lead the project – disagreed about how realistic the preferred alternative was. Business and developer interests viewed it as unrealistic in the current framework of state regulatory constraints and incentives affecting local land use choices. The preferred alternative depended on infill, and it was not clear there were enough sites (Innes, 2004). Business leaders in the Alliance strongly supported the originally endorsed principle that all projected Bay Area workers should be housed *within* the region, and in their view that translated into a need for more suburban development than the preferred scenario called for. However, many suburban officials in ABAG's leadership balked at higher local densities. For their part, environmental activists balked at new development on greenfield sites. Thus, the original consensus on goals unraveled when it came time to figure out how to accommodate them. As one participant noted,

> [Leaders representing regional business interests] argued how this was all wrong because these numbers won't work. You're going to need numbers on the edge. I kept saying, "From a practical point of view, you're probably right, but we need to effect change and we need to show where growth can occur, and we need to incentivize it so it does occur." That was the big disconnect – incentives. There were no incentives.

The dissension about what was realistic may be traced in large part to a lack of adequate involvement from local governments in the process. Participants we interviewed concurred that the inability to gain enough local government buy-in was the biggest stumbling block. The COG leadership was less vested in the process than it was in other regions, and with limited

resources, the project also failed to gain enough momentum from the public or the press to overcome local government doubts or resistance. One participant told us,

> The process of developing these workshops was very methodical… We convened two meetings of the Bay Area Planning Directors Association very early on to let them know about the project and to get their feedback on the process, maps and other workshop tools...There was a real effort to bring elected officials and planning directors to the workshops, and they did come. But, at the end of the day, the planning directors who attended had a very hard time with the process because it was dependent on thinking beyond local general plans and the constraints within which they're written.

In 2003, ABAG adopted official land use projections for MTC's next RTP. In terms of infill objectives, they were somewhere in between the "current trends base case" and the preferred alternative endorsed through the visioning workshop process. They accommodated housing for about 40% of the new in-commuters that the smart growth scenarios had aimed to fully accommodate within the region, and provided for more suburban development. But even to justify to federal authorities the basis for assuming the densities in the projections, ABAG planners had to assume new state incentives would be provided promoting the desired development patterns and commit to monitoring local government progress toward the envisioned policy changes.

The breakdown of consensus in the Bay Area over the preferred scenario cannot be chalked up simply to regional agency resistance to smart growth. Rather, the Bay Area's long history of organized and aggressive extra-governmental pressure about regional planning concerns, and the institutional divide between the COG and MPO functions reflected in the ABAG/MTC split, are factors that better explain why the process was less consensual and the outcome more disputed in this region.

In other regions, MPO responsibilities motivated the blueprint process (e.g., air quality conformity), while MPO dollars enticed local governments to consider land use changes to enhance regional outcomes. But the split in the COG/MPO functions in the Bay Area meant that ABAG members did not feel that same onus. Furthermore, as noted earlier, projected air quality benefits to the region from the preferred alternative were quite small. Thus, exporting housing growth could help satisfy certain interests (preserving suburban character and open space, for example) without posing an immediate threat to regional transportation goals.

The smaller benefits from the preferred alternative in the Bay Area modeling, compared with the Sacramento region (the area with the most dramatic projected benefits from its smart growth modeling) were in part the result of the choice in the Bay Area to accommodate almost 10 percent more households within the region compared to the base case scenario. This decision reflects an institutional problem hampering effective regional planning in the Bay Area and other regions in which COG/MPO boundaries no longer fully encompass regional labor and housing markets (and where air pollution and other problems likewise cross regional jurisdictional lines). In its last projections, SANDAG also ended up exporting a large share of projected new housing growth needed to match employment growth (about one-quarter) outside the region rather than accommodating it internally (SANDAG, 2004a). In such cases,

the effectiveness of the COG/MPO planning framework starts to break down. Action from the state government may be needed to establish new planning frameworks in these cases.

In one sense, the divisiveness in the Bay Area process was just a continuation of the region's long history of conflict and debate about regional planning concerns, with well-organized stakeholders helping to ensure that debates are brought out in the open. But there was a cost to the divisiveness. Interview respondents noted that after the adoption of its 2003 projections, momentum died down within ABAG to promote the local policy changes needed to translate the envisioned land use patterns into reality. The breakdown of consensus in the Bay Area jeopardized a continuing commitment to implementation, and that was the real cost of the fractured process. As one respondent noted,

> We spent a lot of money and I'm not sure what we got out of it. The [blueprint visioning process] was a two-million-dollar investment and we don't have, as a region, a sense for where growth ought to be happening and not happening. That was the goal.
>
> That said, if I look at it as just one piece in the puzzle of moving toward better planning and more responsible growth, it may have helped to get the current MTC transit-oriented development policy in place. That's a positive step. It may have helped to get ABAG and MTC actually talking to one another, as they are doing now. That's been a fairly positive step. It may have helped bring the social equity and environmental community closer together. That's a positive step. Though none of those were the goal of this thing…
>
> The decision-making level on the blueprint effort was not thought through enough to anticipate the problem that we ended up having. As a region we should have been anticipating that and designing the process in a way to address it. I think from the beginning we needed to have an honest discussion, and maybe ABAG could have hosted this, that included the elected officials in the communities that are the fastest growing, to say, how do we keep you whole in this process...

Best Practices for the Visioning Process

Blueprint scenarios developed in visioning processes are not land use plans. At best they are representations of a shared set of goals and objectives for regional development, visualized in geographical terms. A critical objective during the visioning stage is to ensure that the preferred scenario is widely and enthusiastically supported, so it is not just a hypothetical "map of good intentions" or a representation of the aspirations of only a few interests or perspectives. That requires a broad-based outreach and education effort.

What can we conclude about best practices during visioning processes? The SACOG experience in particular demonstrates that by carefully integrating a broad public outreach effort (an "outside" strategy) with consistent engagement with local officials and planners (an "inside" strategy), a lot of momentum can be achieved. That momentum is critical because the preferred scenario is only advisory. A well-organized visioning effort can build peer pressure, a sense of shared purpose, public support, regional identity, camaraderie among public leaders,

and other somewhat intangible factors likely to be crucial in ensuring that voluntary regional planning coordination is actually implemented in practice. However, such engagement may be far more difficult in larger and more complex regions, a conclusion underscored in results from our mail survey of city planning directors.

The Issue of Scale: Blueprint Planning in Large and Small Regions

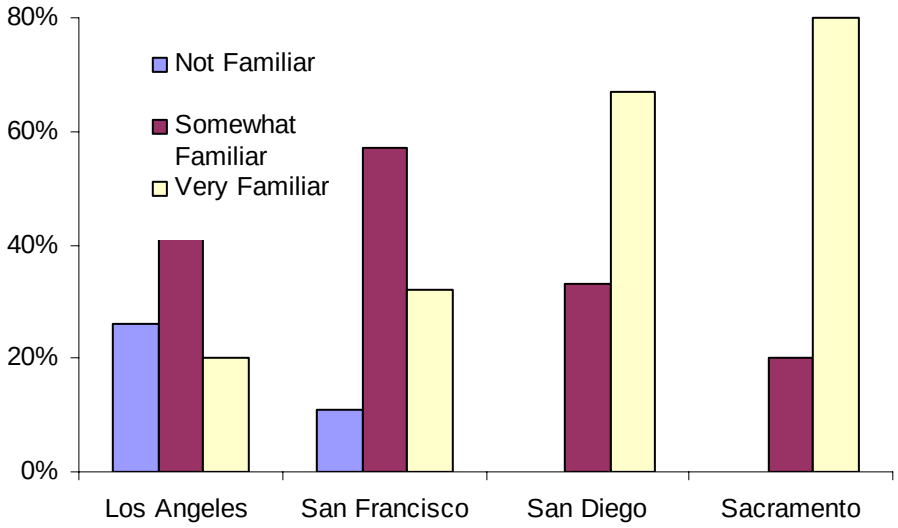
The problem of scale alluded to several times above also emerges in the results from our survey of local planning directors in the four regions; survey respondents from the smaller regions were more likely to have engaged in the blueprint planning process and to be familiar with it, and more likely to rate as effective the visioning process and the COG/MPO's regional planning and coordinating ability generally.

Sacramento planners were most likely to consider themselves "very familiar" with the regional blueprint land use vision – 86 percent indicated so (Figure 1). This clearly reflects SACOG's extensive outreach effort. San Diego area respondents were next most likely to consider themselves "very familiar." In these two smaller regions, no respondent indicated that he/she did not know whether his/her city was targeted for land use changes in the blueprint vision. However, over one-quarter (27%) of Los Angeles area respondents, and 14 percent of San Francisco area respondents, did not know. Survey respondents in the smaller regions also were more likely to have engaged in the blueprint planning process. [29]

[29] All respondents from the San Diego area, and most from the Sacramento region (87%), indicated they helped develop the blueprint through participation in a COG/MPO committee. However, only 16% in the Los Angeles and San Francisco regions indicated they had done so. While 87% of respondents in the Sacramento region indicated that they helped organize or co-hosted a workshop on the blueprint in their community, 64% in the San Diego region, 16% in the San Francisco region, and 14% in the Los Angeles region had done so. While 92% of respondents in the San Diego region attended a workshop on the blueprint, 80% in the Sacramento region, 62% in the San Francisco region, and 56% in the Los Angeles region had done so. Reflecting differing governing structures of the COG/MPOs, 77% of Sacramento area respondents indicated they had ratified the blueprint as a member of the COG governing body, but only 33% in the San Diego region, 9% in the San Francisco region, and 7% in the Los Angeles region had done so.

Figure 1. Regional Familiarity with Blueprint Planning

"How familiar are you with the [blueprint vision/ strategy] developed by [COG/MPO name]?"[30]



Respondents in most regions were lukewarm when it came to assessing effectiveness of the blueprint visioning processes (Table 2). However, they were more positive in the two smaller regions; in the Sacramento and San Diego areas, respondents indicated that the blueprint process was generally effective in building consensus among jurisdictions in the region on a preferred path for growth, incorporating public input, and modeling regional implications of local choices. However, in relation to the other effectiveness measures, only Sacramento area respondents were more positive than negative overall.

[30] Surveys were tailored to reflect the COG/MPO and blueprint initiative name for each region. For surveys to San Francisco Bay Area city planners, the "COG/MPO name" was "ABAG/MTC" and the "blueprint vision/strategy" was "Smart Growth Vision/ABAG's policy-based projections." For Sacramento area surveys, these were "SACOG" and "Blueprint Preferred Scenario," for Los Angeles area surveys, "SCAG" and "Compass Growth Vision/2% Strategy," and for San Diego area surveys, "SANDAG" and "Regional Comprehensive Plan."

Table 2. Assessments of the Effectiveness of Blueprint Planning

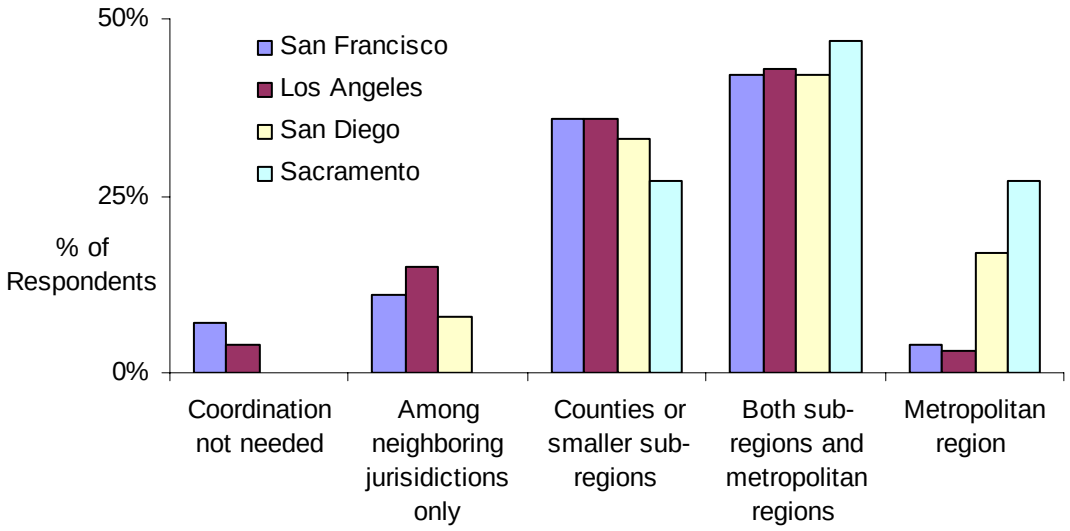
"In your opinion, how effective has the [blueprint vision/strategy] planning process been in achieving the following objectives? (Circle a number between 1, meaning "not at all effective," and 5, meaning "very effective.")"

Average Score	SF Bay	Sacramento	LA	San Diego	Total
Gaining and incorporating public input for regional growth planning	2.5	4.1	2.5	3.4	2.8
Modeling future impacts of local land use choices on regional outcomes					
For transportation	3.1	3.8	2.9	3.4	3.1
For housing	2.8	3.5	2.7	3.3	2.9
For the environment	2.8	3.6	2.5	3.4	2.8
Enabling your city's planners to assess regional impacts of local land use choices	2.4	3.4	2.4	2.6	2.5
Enabling your city's residents to assess regional impacts of local land use choices	1.9	3.1	1.8	2.1	2.0
Improving your city's ability to coordinate land use and transportation objectives	2.6	3.4	2.5	2.9	2.7
Promoting dialogue in your community about the community's future	2.6	4.1	2.1	2.5	2.6
Incorporating and reflecting your city's needs and constraints in the final plan	2.2	3.5	2.3	2.8	2.5
Improving planning coordination between your city and neighboring cities	2.2	3.1	2.2	2.8	2.3
Building consensus among jurisdictions in the region on a preferred path for growth	2.3	3.6	2.3	3.6	2.6
Providing adequate incentives to ensure implementation of plan objectives	2.1	2.6	1.8	2.8	2.1
Defining and applying performance measures to assess progress toward regional goals	2.1	2.5	2.2	3.2	2.3

The relatively more positive attitudes about visioning processes in the smaller regions were reinforced by (or translated to) positive attitudes about the COG/MPO planning role generally. Respondents were asked for their view on the best institutional scale for coordinating growth planning. Among five options presented, the most popular approach (43%) among respondents from all regions was for plans to be coordinated at both sub-regional and metropolitan regional scales (Figure 2). This option formed something of a middle path among those presented. Regional differences were noticeable on either side of this middle path, however. Among respondents from the larger regions, the shares asserting that counties, sub-regions, or smaller, voluntary frameworks are the most appropriate scale for planning coordination were higher, while among respondents from the smaller regions, the shares asserting that the metropolitan region forms the most appropriate scale (as opposed to a combination of metropolitan scale and sub-regional planning) were much higher.

Figure 2. Optimal Planning Scale

"Which of the following statements best reflects what you believe is the most effective geographic scale or scales at which coordinated regional plans for land use, infrastructure, and environmental protection should be developed? (Please check one of the following responses.)"



Note: Survey response options are abbreviated in the figure.[31]

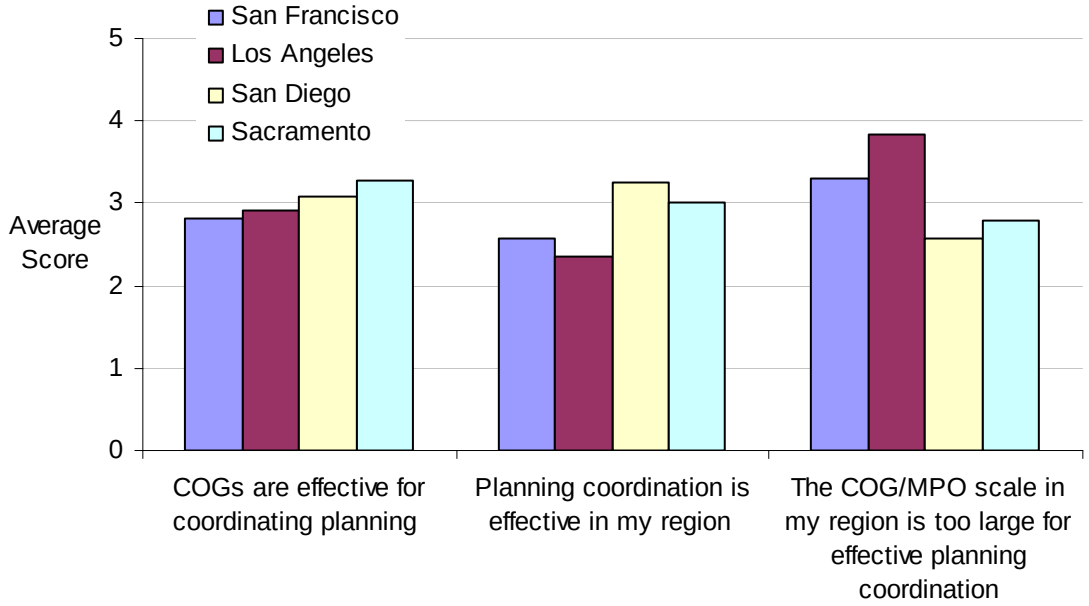
Regional differences were also evident when respondents were asked directly about COG/MPO effectiveness (Figure 3). Respondents from the two smaller regions were more likely to agree that COGs form an effective vehicle for integrating regional and local growth planning, and that planning integration in their region is done effectively, compared to respondents from the two larger regions. Respondents from larger regions were more likely to agree that the geographic scale of their COG/MPO is too large to form an effective basis for integrated growth planning.

[31] The five options presented to respondents for this survey question, in the order shown in Figure 2, were: 1) Each local jurisdiction should integrate its own growth-related policies, but planning coordination among multiple jurisdictions and state and regional agencies is not needed; 2) Although small numbers of neighboring jurisdictions might choose to coordinate plans, efforts to coordinate at a wider scale become too unwieldy; 3) Counties or smaller sub-regions are the most useful scale at which to coordinate growth plans among local governments and state or regional agencies; larger metropolitan regional plans are too unwieldy; 4) Plans should be coordinated at both sub-regional and metropolitan regional scales among local governments and relevant state and regional agencies; and 5) The metropolitan regional scale is the most appropriate for growth planning coordination among local governments and state and regional agencies.

Figure 3. COG/MPO Effectiveness for Coordinated Planning

"Please indicate on a scale from one to five how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree")."

Note: Survey wording is abbreviated in the figure.[32]



How can COG/MPOs in larger regions address problems related to scale? Visioning processes work when they inform real decisionmaking, and so the key is to consider strategies that delegate visioning processes to venues that connect transportation and land use authority (as in a COG/MPO), and where participants have incentives and capacity to coordinate outcomes. The next section on implementation techniques includes examples of what we consider to be promising strategies for devolving visioning to a more manageable scale in larger regions.

[32] Actual survey wording for the statements shown in Figure 3 was: 1) Councils of Government are an effective vehicle for integrating regional and local growth planning; 2) Within the metropolitan region covered by (COG/MPO name), growth-related policies for infrastructure, conservation of natural resources, and land use are coordinated effectively at the metropolitan regional scale; and 3) The geographic scale of (COG/MPO name) is too large to form an effective basis for integrated growth planning among local jurisdictions;

Implementation Strategies and Activities

Blueprint processes depend on effective implementation strategies because preferred development scenarios are only advisory. Local governments must adopt policy changes to translate them from visions into reality. For the most part, it is still too early to see whether plan implementation in the four regions is actually working out on the ground. However, all regions are actively engaged in implementation processes, and their strategies are the principal focus of this section.

Implementation strategies aim to institutionalize a stronger connection between regional transportation objectives and local and regional land use objectives – the driving imperative of blueprint planning. In the four regions, implementation involves COG/MPO staff working with local jurisdictions targeted for land use changes in the blueprint preferred scenarios. One goal is just to coordinate expectations – to understand how local and regional objectives coincide and can be aligned. Policy-based projections are not land use plans; even when preferred alternatives are mapped, these maps have never been intended to designate actual land uses on a parcel-by-parcel basis. But policy-based projections must be translated into local policy to be realized. In regions that have adopted policy-based projections, the coordination step is critical to demonstrate to federal regulators that they are realistic.

At stake is translating such broad objectives as building certain densities near transit into real development projects. To create the link between general objectives and specific projects, many of the COG/MPOs have worked to define priority development areas that meet established criteria – areas to which regional and local (and possibly state) resources can be funneled. Then local and regional planners and officials can coordinate resources and plans in mutually supportive ways. This basic recipe is key to effective blueprint implementation – combining clear regionally and sub-regionally focused policy objectives with flexibility in implementation in locally appropriate ways.

Implementation strategies need to provide incentive for local actions that support regional objectives. One strategy is to provide technical assistance to local governments interested in smart growth development. Another is to allocate a share of the region's transportation dollars to a competitive grant program to reward local projects that support the blueprint objectives. Two regions have gone further still by conditioning investment in new transportation facilities on supportive local land uses.

To allocate regional resources to support blueprint objectives, it is necessary to identify the appropriate qualifications for development projects. That can be a contentious process because it creates winners and losers. It is this step that translates the visioning process from a warm and fuzzy consensus on a far-off regional future to a new, concrete basis for understanding how best to allocate scarce regional resources. This stage most severely tests the voluntary COG/MPO model in terms of its effectiveness in maintaining focus on regional – not just local – objectives.

Federal-style governing systems have generally demonstrated a strong tendency to allocate resources using some sort of "fair share" or "return to source" approach (such as the formula traditionally used for allocating highway funds, which is based on population and road

miles). Smart growth programs require that COG/MPO member governments devise new criteria for judging fairness. An important question is whether participants believe mutual benefits are possible through trade-offs. Blueprint processes address this question by starting with goal-setting and modeling outcomes using neutral performance measures. The COG/MPOs produce annual or biannual "regional indicators" reports that may be helpful in evaluating plan performance. But ultimately, participants will not simply sacrifice local advantages for "the regional good." Smart growth strategies using the COG/MPO model will work only so far as local governments believe they are beneficial locally.

This creates an interesting dilemma for COG/MPOs that use transportation dollars to reward land use changes. On the one hand, is it better to concentrate funds to support fewer projects with more overall impact, or on the other, to spread resources thinly to maintain widespread support for the regional strategy and help make sure each jurisdiction contributes and remains engaged?

Implementation strategies also need to devise means to encourage neighborhood resident support (and overcome resistance) to smart growth projects. In some cases, regional stakeholders have stepped in to support contested projects at community meetings, reminding residents of the wider context of local decisions. Also, regional planners emphasize the need for good urban design criteria for smart growth projects, so that good development examples are produced that others will seek to emulate. Regional planners are supporting community planning with various resources – an important step in strengthening regional-local connections. Proactive community planning helps residents understand, evaluate, and obtain potential benefits of smart growth locally, for example by supporting long-term local development strategies to improve amenities, infrastructure, and services that new development could help finance.

Finally, implementation relies on organizational strategies that institutionalize a stronger transportation-land use connection. Such strategies include planning for transportation corridors – a useful scale for sub-regional blueprint planning because it brings local governments together around a common shared resource. Corridor planning programs may provide excellent opportunities to combine systems focus and performance criteria with flexible implementation – a recipe for success in blueprint implementation. Another strategy is to provide PLACE^{3}S modeling capacity to localities and to enhance two-way regional-local information sharing and scenario testing capacity. Still another strategy is to develop an iterative, coordinated process for updating RTPs, land use projections, RHNA, and other regional and local planning components of what ultimately could begin to look like a regional comprehensive planning process. Finally, COG/MPOs in the multi-county regions have also taken steps to strengthen organizational ties with county-level transportation agencies. This move is critical because until the considerable resources of county agencies – for programming state and federal funds and for overseeing county sales tax measures – is brought to bear, blueprint planning cannot achieve its full potential.

Los Angeles Area: A Tool Kit

In the Los Angeles area, with relatively fewer resources than other multi-county MPOs and daunting challenges in coordinating regional policymaking, SCAG provides a strong

example of how to implement a streamlined approach to blueprint planning. It was especially important in this case to target areas for prioritizing resources. The main approach for implementing the region's preferred land use alternative (called the Compass Growth Vision, it was adopted in 2004 as the basis for SCAG's RTP) is called the 2% Strategy; it was given that name because the "strategic opportunity areas" identified for denser development comprise about 2 percent of the region's urbanized area. Many of the nearly 100 jurisdictions that contain these identified areas are along transportation corridors.

Because SCAG has less control over transportation funds than most other MPOs in multi-county regions, its implementation strategy relies mainly on technical assistance. The 2% Strategy calls for SCAG to work with jurisdictions to promote changes to their general plans consistent with the Growth Vision blueprint. Two main methods are being used: the so-called "Suite of Services" and demonstration projects. In the Suite of Services program, jurisdictions receive short-term technical assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. Services include financial tipping point analysis, photorealistic visualizations, and video fly-throughs, as well as assistance with strategies for redevelopment, economic development, urban design, public outreach, and development code amendments.

These services are mainly geared as economic development tools, reflecting both SCAG's conviction that smart growth strategies can appeal to many localities on that basis, and the need to rely on the interest of localities given SCAG's scarce resources. One long-time observer of planning in the region (and nation) commented on the rationale for SCAG's approach:

> The "2% Strategy" might seem pretty far-fetched at first, but it's really just an acknowledgment of the great urban design defect of Southern California, which is a lack of what might be called "centeredness." Unlike elsewhere in the country, sprawl is not many problems but just one problem: a lack of strong downtowns and town centers…How do we find and strengthen those city and town cores that serve as the focal point of the region's growth in the future?...
>
> The problem of centeredness is, in a word, a problem of housing…Although the single-family [home] figure statewide has remained constant at 74 percent, multifamily construction has increased rapidly in the land-starved coastal areas of Southern California... In L.A. County, multifamily projects constituted 10 percent of the net housing increase during the 1990s; according to Department of Finance estimates, that figure rose to 50 percent for the years 2000-2003… When we talk these days about creating vibrant town centers by building housing…we are talking about a revolution – inserting housing into districts that, historically, were used exclusively for offices and stores…
>
> Most [2% Strategy Opportunity Areas] are located in exactly the places where growth is flowing anyway—the affluent areas where the political battle is worth it to the developers and the working-class locations where the population is growing. The 2% Strategy will work if we let growth flow where political and economic forces are driving it anyway, but focus it tightly on centers that hold the potential for truly urban living (Fulton, 2004).

SCAG's demonstration projects funnel money and extensive technical assistance to a smaller set of 10 to 15 jurisdictions. To implement these projects, SCAG once again contracted with the Fregonese/Calthorpe team that developed the Compass Visioning effort. SCAG directed that half of the $2.6 million contract be allocated to the local governments selected to participate. Of the $1.25 million state Blueprint Planning Program funds SCAG received this year, half was allocated to local cities in demonstration projects. The funds are for consultant assistance and are not monetary awards.

Another long-term implementation strategy is the development of a Regional Comprehensive Plan to provide a framework for coordinating regional policies on land use and housing, solid and hazardous waste, energy, air quality, habitat and open space, economy and education, water, transportation, security and emergency preparedness, and finance – a tall order. SCAG also expanded the plan objectives in 2005 to include using the plan as a possible basis for streamlining local environmental review required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Each plan chapter will include performance standards usable by local governments to determine whether development projects conform to regional CEQA goals.

For SCAG, this CEQA approach provides another way to build local support of regional objectives with limited resources – but in this case the strategy is aimed at addressing sources of local resistance to development. Developing this CEQA objective – also a daunting task – would place SCAG in the forefront of a strategy that many people we interviewed consider a critical long-term goal for blueprint planning. Frustrated that the CEQA review of development projects often serves as a vehicle for neighborhood resistance to the local impacts of development – even for projects with beneficial regional impacts on the same indicator, for example traffic congestion – many people we interviewed suggested that CEQA should be reformed to streamline review for infill projects and promote review at the level of plans – both regional and local – rather than mainly at the individual project level.

SCAG also plans to explore a pilot project with a County Transportation Commission (CTC) in the region to link transportation funds to land use. This strategy is especially critical for SCAG to be able to leverage more transportation funds to support its land use objectives. A number of people we interviewed suggested that the CTCs have tended to ignore land use issues, and that better coordination between SCAG and CTCs is both long overdue and a major concern in the region for improving integrated planning. Finally, SCAG is developing a monitoring program for the Compass objectives. This step is critical because they must demonstrate by 2010 that they are making progress to be able to continue to claim air quality credits. (In the Bay Area, ABAG/MTC is under a similar constraint.)

SCAG has adopted an implementation approach geared heavily – by necessity – toward understanding and responding to motivations (both negative and positive) of local jurisdictions regarding smart growth, so that it can maximize effect with limited resources. The approach raises the question: What is the balance between negative and positive local reactions to smart growth strategies, and how does this balance influence outcomes? In our survey of local planning directors, 18 percent of Los Angeles area respondents indicated that residential growth issues were almost always controversial (a lower share than in the other regions), and 22 percent said that they were often controversial. Multi-family residential development was

considered much more controversial than single-family development by 42 percent of Los Angeles area respondents – a higher share than elsewhere. Nevertheless, nearly half (49%) of Los Angeles area respondents indicated their city was increasing densities, including 40 percent of the cities in which residential projects were considered almost always controversial. These results suggest that SCAG's approach matched the reality the localities were themselves dealing with. (A full discussion of the survey results is presented at the end of this part of the report.)

Bay Area: Resurrecting the Preferred Alternative

As in the Los Angeles area, blueprint implementation in the Bay Area also reflected the institutional constraints of the COG/MPO. But in the Bay Area, the constraints were very different. MTC has greater autonomy and authority compared to other MPOs in the state – a contrast to SCAG. MTC's status, and its separation from ABAG – the regional COG – reflect the Bay Area's history of conflict and tension over strengthening regional planning power (Barbour, 2002). A price paid for MTC's (relatively) strong systems focus has been narrower scope, however. Because of these unique institutional arrangements, the Bay Area forms an interesting case for considering a major argument of this paper – that effective blueprint planning and implementation require close institutional connections between the transportation planning function of MPOs and the broad-based participatory function of COGs.

The Bay Area was the first of the four regions to organize a broad-based visioning process that resulted in the adoption of policy-based land use projections. But then momentum flagged – at least for coordinating implementation between ABAG and MTC. In fact, MTC moved steadily in recent years to expand a portfolio of programs linking transportation and land use. In 1998, MTC established the Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Capital and Planning Program to support community-based transportation projects that enhance amenities, provide for a range of transportation choices, support connectivity between transportation investments and land uses, and are developed through an inclusive community planning effort. In 2001 funding was tripled to $27 million annually. As part of TLC, MTC also established the innovative Housing Incentive Program (HIP) in 2001 to reward communities that promote high-density housing near transit with transportation-related capital funding (MTC, 2004).

In an assertive move, MTC established a transit oriented development (TOD) policy in 2005, conditioning allocation of discretionary funding for new transit expansion on supportive local land use plans and policies. The conditions apply to the $11.8 billion in priority transit projects adopted in 2001 through MTC's Regional Transit Expansion Policy (Resolution 3434). In a related move, MTC adopted new measurable transportation corridor objectives, performance criteria, and project evaluation screening criteria for use in its 2005 RTP.

MTC's TOD policy is among the very strongest examples in the state of how smart growth planning can be carefully implemented. MTC's considerable resources and its systems focus help account for the clarity of its approach. But at the same time, these factors help account for the policy's fundamental weakness.

The TOD policy contains three key elements. First, it establishes corridor-based performance measures quantifying minimum levels of housing development around transit

stations. Second, it requires station area planning for jobs and housing, station access, design standards, parking and other amenities. About $2 million annually for five years will be provided for this purpose. Third, it calls for the creation of corridor working groups, to be coordinated by county congestion management agencies (CMAs), to bring together local government staff, transit agencies, and other stakeholders to help develop the station area plans to meet the corridor-wide land-use thresholds. This provides some flexibility among participating jurisdictions in collectively determining how to achieve overall standards. Affordable housing units earn a 50 percent bonus in meeting the thresholds.

To help support its TOD goals, MTC established the Transportation Planning and Land Use Solutions (T-PLUS) program, with annual grants totaling $1.35 million for Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) that agree to help coordinate the TLC/HIP, 3434, and TOD programs, to help with smart growth policy development and program implementation, and to help implement environmental mitigation programs (Bay Area Monitor, 2003). In conjunction with MTC's TOD policy, T-PLUS creates stronger institutional links between MTC, ABAG, and the CMAs, and between regional and local transportation and housing goals.

Together, these programs embody the key recipe outlined earlier for success in coordinating regional planning – that is, combining clear regionally and sub-regionally focused policy objectives with flexible and locally appropriate implementation. MTC has made a lot of these opportunities.

However, the weakness in the program is that MTC's TOD policy applies only to transit extensions, and would affect only 11 percent of the housing growth projected in the original preferred alternative (called the Network of Neighborhoods alternative). For its part, ABAG is also pursuing a corridor program to influence the 23 percent of housing growth projected in the preferred alternative to occur near *existing* stations. Three corridors are targeted (ABAG, 2005). But because it does not have "the power of the purse" like MTC, ABAG's corridor strategy faces substantially tougher obstacles. It depends on gaining voluntary agreement among multiple jurisdictions to coordinate policies based on a perception of mutual interests, but without any stick or carrot. And as in most of the regions, the bulk of housing development projected to occur in areas nowhere close to transit just isn't getting much attention.

Two external factors have recently spurred closer coordination between MTC and ABAG. State legislation in 2002 proposed a merger of the two agencies – a move that has been tried before but has always been met with resistance. Instead – as in the case of the San Diego area legislation that prodded SANDAG into action on its RCP – the two Bay Area agencies' response has been to resist formal institutional change and agree instead to undertake a more concrete work program to coordinate planning. In 2004, a Joint Policy Committee was established to coordinate the RTP, RHNA, and regional clean air plan, all by pursuing the original preferred development alternative adopted in the culminating regional workshop during the visioning process, called the "Network of Neighborhoods" (ABAG/BAAQMD/MTC Joint Policy Committee, n.d.).

A joint work program was developed prioritizing housing planning and production. Tasks include establishing twenty-year and five-year local housing targets by jurisdiction and sub-region, identifying priority areas for local specific-planning assistance, funding for specific plans and plan-level environmental review, corridor planning, and convening a multi-sector

task force on housing. The plan also envisions a corps of "extension agents" who would assist local jurisdictions in accomplishing the program.

One interviewee explained the decision to focus on housing:

> If you're going to achieve this regional strategy in California where local governments are king on land use, then you've got to have something that has some meaning to them, and housing affordability is it. It is a public priority. It is something that local governments can do something about. More housing in the right places is one of those synergistic variables: It has some transportation impact, and infill housing development helps you conserve environmental resources. So housing at this moment in time is a key variable…If you can combine the development aspiration with the access to some additional resources, maybe from the state, maybe from the development community that's beginning to have an increased interest in this, then there's a synergy there that can create better communities and a better region.

CalTrans' Blueprint Planning Program provided further support for the agencies' joint effort by stipulating that program applicant MPOs must coordinate with the COG. The choice to revive the "Network of Neighborhoods" development objective also may be traced to the state's program; qualifying blueprint planning processes must, among other things, "accommodate a sufficient housing supply within the region (and within each sub region and jurisdiction to the extent possible) to accommodate the projected population and workforce needs for the full spectrum of the population" (program website: *Program Criteria*).

For its 2005 grant application, ABAG and MTC proposed a joint strategy to promote housing development through "intensive consensus building with local governments and stakeholders to achieve 'on the ground' implementation of a transit- and pedestrian-oriented pattern of housing development" (ABAG/BAAQMD/MTC Joint Policy Committee, 2005, p. 1). The funded strategy outlines three main initiatives: MTC's TOD program, ABAG's multi-modal corridor program, and work to establish regional Priority Development Areas where housing planning and production can be focused.

The envisioned new Development Priority Areas will be based on the principles of the Network of Neighborhoods scenario. However, rather than focus on numbers, project leaders intend to engage in discussing values – in essence, to reconvene the visioning process in a different form that now engages local government officials and planners. One respondent noted,

> One of the things that we realized we need to do is to make the case – and I don't think it is very clearly understood – that the future development pattern resulting from the vision would be a more desirable outcome for many of those areas that are most concerned about growth. Encouraging infill near transit and around the Bay Plain reduces development pressures on greenfields and reduces the overall growth forecasts for the North Bay counties (which tend to have more concerns about growth and protecting open space and agricultural land), compared to business-as-normal trends.

According to a project description, "the result will be a set of maps that identify the parts of the region meriting incentives and other special assistance to achieve the desired level of development. We will also use a similar process to demarcate those areas where development is clearly inappropriate and where the region might focus its conservation efforts. Development priority areas and their negative complement will constitute the core of a basic, first-cut regional plan" (ABAG/MTC, 2006).

Thus, in a somewhat convoluted and incremental fashion, and in response to external pressure and incentives, Bay Area agencies have returned to its blueprint, the Network of Neighborhood vision, as a focus for coordinating programs and developing a comprehensive regional plan. In this sense, the visioning process and preferred alternative have, in the end, helped provide a common focus among regional agencies in spite of the continuing institutional fractures in the region. And defining a common purpose remains an important goal, because even though MTC's TOD policy provides a very impressive example of how to articulate a clear implementation strategy for blueprint objectives, its narrowness violates a basic tenet of blueprint planning – comprehensiveness.

San Diego Area: Putting All the Pieces Together

SANDAG's development of its Regional Comprehensive Plan forms a strong contrast to Bay Area blueprint planning. The San Diego region has pursued smart growth just as long and with as much debate about institutional change as the Bay Area. But SANDAG's institutional coherence contrasts with the fractured governance of the Bay Area. Regional planning challenges in the San Diego region *should* be more tractable given its institutional coherence and smaller size. If the MTC/ABAG split in the Bay Area serves as an cautionary tale about the value of the MPO/COG connection, then SANDAG's RCP in San Diego is a test case for how such a connection might work.

SANDAG was actually the first among the four COG/MPOs to adopt a smart growth land use vision (though not pursuant to a broad-based visioning process); it did so in accordance with its 1993 Regional Growth Management Strategy. However, by the early 2000s, SANDAG had adopted a more pragmatic approach after it became clear that the envisioned development patterns were not being accommodated on the ground. That is a telling lesson for others to heed on the pitfalls of blueprint implementation.

At that point, SANDAG developed the RCP as a strategic framework for planning coordination and a basis for directing regional resources to promote desired outcomes. Through the RCP, blueprint planning in the San Diego area is becoming an iterative process in which local and regional plans are consecutively updated and coordinated.

The RCP emphasizes three main themes which effectively distill what blueprint planning is all about: Connecting land use and transportation plans, using land use and transportation plans to guide other plans, and implementing strategies based on incentives and collaboration.

A key implementation recommendation of the RCP was to identify Smart Growth Opportunity Areas (SGOAs) – areas with compact, higher density, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development, or where such development is planned or could be developed – and to

direct transportation and other infrastructure improvements to those areas. The RCP identified seven distinct development area types, ranging from the metropolitan center to town centers to rural communities, to use in creating a regional map of SGOAs. The SGOA map is intended to help guide local government and private investment of development resources to further regional objectives.

After passage of the RCP, SANDAG worked with individual local governments to develop a draft Smart Growth Concept Map by the spring of 2006. The map is intended to form a basis for modeling alternative scenarios for the next RTP, as one basis for the next RHNA update, and for designating areas where Smart Growth Incentive Funds should be directed.

This where the rubber really hits the road in blueprint implementation – developing consensus on redefining criteria for allocating regional resources. After considerable debate on criteria for designation, about 200 SGOAs were identified in the final Draft Concept Map, which denotes smart growth opportunity areas in every jurisdiction.

Implementation of the RCP relies on collaboration and incentives, in particular, through strategically allocating the region's transportation funding. This approach resembles MTC's, but SANDAG's scope is broader. SANDAG's 2003 RTP included a $25 million, five-year, pilot incentive program to provide grants to local governments for transportation-related improvements supportive of smart growth goals – similar to MTC's TLC program. The RCP consolidated this incentive strategy. Unlike MTC, SANDAG administers the county sales tax measure for transportation – called TransNet – giving the agency an additional source of discretionary revenue to direct toward regional objectives. When the sales tax was up for renewal on the ballot in November 2004, SANDAG folded this resource into the RCP strategy.

The ballot measure (which passed) set aside two percent of revenues for SANDAG's Smart Growth Incentive Program for projects in SGOAs that further RCP goals, to be funded on a competitive basis. Over the 40 years of the measure, this will generate approximately $280 million, and leverage more because it requires matching federal, state, local, and private funds so as to maximize improvements. With this in mind, the TransNet extension also permits local jurisdictions to use their formula funds for projects to support smart growth development.

Interview respondents noted benefits of competitive funding as an implementation strategy. One said, "The two integral components – incentives and competition – work together, allowing you to push the envelope on smart growth. It's amazing what jurisdictions will do in order to win relatively small amounts of money in the development process. You can go a long way toward implementing smart growth strategies." Competitive grant programs fuel innovation and also allow some jurisdictions to opt out. However, a disadvantage of such a voluntary approach alone is that by directing attention only to certain areas and willing participants, inefficient development patterns may persist elsewhere.

Although tensions have already surfaced in developing criteria for the pilot incentive grant program and the SGOAs, some of the toughest decisions still lie ahead. Next steps include defining final criteria for allocating TransNet incentive grant funds, and revising transportation project evaluation criteria for the upcoming RTP. The RCP proposed that transportation funding criteria should include facilitating subregional planning, considering regional and local mobility objectives in planning and approving new land uses, considering

the level at which existing and future development in smart growth opportunity areas is served, and aligning the timing of related transportation and land use development.

Depending on how these criteria are implemented, the objectives could move SANDAG in the direction of MTC's TOD policy – using transportation funds as a lever to promote supportive land uses. The RCP states that "decisions regarding priorities for future regional transit, arterial, and highway corridor projects should be based, in part, on how well local communities have planned for smart growth land uses that facilitate a wide set of transportation choices that, in turn, increase mobility" (SANDAG, 2004c, p. 54).

Some respondents in both the Bay Area and in San Diego questioned whether, when push comes to shove, MPOs will carry through with threats to withhold funds from jurisdictions unwilling to adopt proposed land use changes. "I don't believe the MPO would actually withhold funds for a major transit project; political negotiations would take place to weaken the policy before that would actually happen," said one.

However, another respondent noted that although there might be little flexibility in altering the proposed location of a major facility such as a rail station, new transit strategies such as "rapid bus service" are more easily "customized and directed" to and from smart growth areas – in fact such transit strategies actually necessitate more iterative land use and transportation planning.

The RCP envisions just such an iterative process, in which the Land Use Concept Map will inform the upcoming RTP, which in turn will help define needed refinements to the concept map, "creating a dynamic process where transportation and land use planning adjust to each other over time" (SANDAG, 2004c, p. 80). The RHNA process is viewed as another iterative step in RCP development.

Furthermore, although the RCP focuses mainly on the land use-transportation connection, it integrates other plans and policy objectives more explicitly than do the regional blueprint processes in other regions we studied. The RCP contains, for example, an Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy (IRIS) to apply "market-based financial and public policy incentives within a competitive capital improvement programming framework to implement the urban form and design of the RCP" (SANDAG, 2004c, p. 331). Additionally, the RCP provides a basis for integrating regional environmental plans – such as for watershed quality, habitat preservation, and stormwater runoff – as "green infrastructure" alongside the other plan elements.

This move to incorporate environmental planning was solidified in the TransNet ballot measure, which designated $850 million for environmental mitigation. Of that total, $200 million was designated to acquire sites needed to complete the region's habitat preserve system developed through the NCCP program. Like MTC's HIP program, this required creative use of funds legally limited to transportation purposes. In the TransNet case, the money was allocated based on the estimated economic benefit derived from purchasing the land in advance of need at lower cost (essentially a borrowing strategy).

Other smart growth incentives identified in the RCP include providing technical assistance and planning grants to local jurisdictions to implement general plan amendments,

community plans, specific plans, and development regulations that facilitate smart growth development; prioritizing regional funding other than for transportation for localities that develop policies supporting smart growth; and developing a manual of urban design best practices.

SANDAG stands as good a chance as any COG/MPO in the state – maybe the nation – of making voluntary regional planning coordination work, because of the region's institutional coherence. But some hard lessons have already been learned about failure to implement even agreed-upon regional smart growth policies. The growth problems in the region raised enough concern to hold SANDAG's feet to the fire to prove it could meet the challenge.

The RCP was SANDAG's response, and it defines a coherent and pragmatic approach – identifying a clear strategy and resources to support it. But given the inherent weaknesses in the COG/MPO model for implementing concerted strategies that create new winners and losers – weaknesses that plague even a relatively strong COG/MPO such as SANDAG – the jury is still out on whether the RCP can succeed. As debates on defining criteria for allocating resources continue in the region, implementing the RCP will be a real test of the voluntary COG/MPO model.

Sacramento Area: Visioning Continues

The Sacramento blueprint effort is relatively new, but in a short time it has gained considerable momentum and attention. It provides an excellent opportunity for considering the challenges and opportunities that arise in translating momentum from a very successful visioning stage into ongoing implementation measures, in a relatively small region without a long history of coordinated regional planning.

The major SACOG activity following the adoption of the preferred alternative in 2004 (called the Preferred Blueprint Scenario) has been preparing the next RTP (called the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or MTP). Input from the blueprint visioning process will allow more careful consideration of transportation alternatives tailored to land use strategies than was possible before. This iterative approach – similar to the one being pursued in the San Diego area – reflects the importance of coordinating land use with new transit strategies common to both regions. Both are considering various "light" transit options that render their planning needs quite different from those driving MTC's BART extension policy. In a sort of chicken and egg fashion, Sacramento and San Diego area planners are considering how to fashion land use and transit service strategies to be mutually supportive.

In a unique exercise, SACOG is replicating the blueprint visioning process for its MTP update, partnering again with Valley Vision to organize a similar 18-month outreach effort. During the blueprint visioning process, planned transportation investment was held constant while land use scenarios were modeled; the MTP workshops reverse this process. Participants select one of three scales to consider (short, medium, or long distance) and then model transportation alternatives. A new feature to be added this time is an electronic, televised town hall meeting as the culminating regional workshop.

SACOG is breaking new ground by using a visioning process for MTP development. Given the momentum of its blueprint process, it is easy to understand why they would seek to

sustain it. However, one might ask how long such a visioning model can be pursued, given the cost and effort involved. When the blueprint preferred scenario was adopted, SACOG explicitly argued that it was not static; rather, the principles and map should be updated "annually when feasible, and no less frequently than the update cycle for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan" (SACOG, 2005a, p. 12).

Thus, SACOG seeks to direct the energy from the visioning effort toward a continuous long-term planning process. But how to institutionalize visioning over the long run? SACOG is experimenting with some methods, such as developing an online tutorial for the interactive PLACE^{3}S software to assist local planners in developing general plans, grant program applications, and other uses.

An institutional strategy for consolidating more planning coordination has been to form closer relationships with partner county transportation agencies. As in the Bay Area and Los Angeles Area, SACOG is an umbrella transportation planning agency incorporating input from county-level agencies (SANDAG is unique among the MPOs we studied in being virtually the only venue for that region's transportation planning). A year ago, SACOG reached an agreement with the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency and the El Dorado County Transportation Commission to be full partners in developing the MTP based on the blueprint. The county agencies develop county plans for long-range transportation capital investment that SANDAG then incorporates into the MTP – traditionally without substantial alteration. This time, the county agencies not only are helping to organize the visioning workshops, but they are also prepared to amend their own plans if the regional process indicates that it would be appropriate.

The increased level of coordination of land use planning with county transportation agency partners is an important achievement. It parallels MTC's effort to build closer ties with CMAs through its T-PLUS program. Comparing the two, SACOG's effort is more ambitious, but less concrete. MTC's approach is narrower in scope but carefully conceived, with criteria and incentives in place.

Because the time frame of the MTP is shorter than for the 50-year blueprint scenario, SACOG has been working with local governments to produce land use projections for the MTP that reflect blueprint objectives. SACOG intends that MTP projections to reflect all actions taken by local governments and "any future actions they indicate they are likely to take" to support blueprint objectives (SACOG, 2005a, p. 11). To this end, localities have been encouraged to take such actions as adopting resolutions of support stipulating local action to promote blueprint objectives; providing guidelines for considering blueprint principles in local planning decisions; changing decisionmaking procedures; amending general plans and codes; and using the regional database and modeling tools in community planning processes. Starting in March 2005, SACOG included feature-length stories in its newsletter on nine cities and counties implementing blueprint principles in projects or plans, including some of the largest in the region (e.g. City and County of Sacramento).

To provide incentives, SACOG initiated a competitive grant program in its 2002 MTP, similar to those in the San Diego and Bay areas. Called the Community Design Program, it allocates about $12 million annually for capital and planning projects consistent with the

blueprint. Interviewees noted concerns about establishing funding criteria similar to those raised in San Diego. Said one,

> I think that there's too much political pressure to spread the money around. While we still believe in these blueprint issues, everyone still wants their money. I understand political realities clearly. I understand why you don't want to throw the whole baby out with the bathwater. If all the money just went to the City of Sacramento, this program will go nowhere. But I also want to make sure the jurisdictions are putting in good projects. I want to make sure the money is spent properly to really carry out and achieve the benefits of the blueprint. But that's tough politically. The parochialism starts to come through with jurisdictions when you start to do that.

Other implementation strategies include developing a monitoring system of regional indicators; working with localities to maintain and enhance data and modeling tools; providing technical assistance to develop plans and projects consistent with the blueprint; developing a tool-box of best planning and development practices; implementing a blueprint awards system; and holding monthly seminars on various smart growth planning topics.

As flood control issues emerged in the region by late 2005, SACOG leaders were growing more concerned about environmental aspects of the blueprint. With two counties developing habitat plans, SACOG announced it was compiling a regional natural resources inventory (McKeever, 2005). SACOG's Board Chair noted, "We must get serious about the 'green' parts of the blueprint map… This is the most vexing problem any growth management system must address" (Fargo, 2006). However, in spite of these pronouncements, environmental planning is still not a top priority for SACOG – any more than for the other COG/MPOs we studied.

Thus, although SACOG has taken a few steps toward implementing its blueprint, much remains to be done. In particular, it is not clear whether and how the momentum that propelled the region to take an impressive leap toward increased coordinated planning and a new direction for the region can be sustained, institutionalized, and translated into action. In that sense, SACOG faces the same challenges as the other regional agencies we studied. In facing those challenges, SACOG has the benefit of being able to look to the rich variety of regional planning models and strategies – to the accomplishments and lessons learned – in the other California regions.

Implementation: The Local View

Our survey of city planning directors in the four regions confirms that there is substantial local interest in the sort of development projects advocated in the blueprint scenarios, and substantial local engagement with COG/MPO staff to coordinate blueprint objectives. However, it also confirms that residential growth issues are controversial locally. Blueprint processes provide forums in which competing views on local growth and development can be aired and possibly reconciled.

Nearly half (48%) of respondents indicated that residential growth issues were "often controversial" or "almost always controversial" in their cities. The share was especially high in

the Bay Area (64%) and San Diego area (50%). It was higher in central cities than in suburban cities. Proposals for multi-family housing development were considered much more controversial than proposals for single-family housing development in 41 percent of cities and somewhat more controversial in 38 percent.

In spite of the controversy, more than half (56%) of respondents indicated that their city primarily has been pursuing planning strategies to increase land use densities during the past five-year period. San Francisco area cities were most likely to be doing so (70%), followed by Sacramento area cities (67%), Los Angeles area cities (49%), and finally San Diego area cities (36%). Central cities were far more likely to be increasing densities (77%) than suburbs (53%).

More than half (58%) of respondents claim their city's development policy encourages all sorts of residential and commercial growth. Only 6 percent of respondents claim that their city discourages development; that share was highest in the Bay Area (13%) and San Diego area (8%). Los Angeles area cities were most likely to have policies that encourage most commercial growth, but are less receptive to multifamily or "affordable" projects; twenty nine percent of Los Angeles area respondents claim such policies, compared to 20 percent of Sacramento area, 17 percent of San Diego area, and 15 percent of Bay Area respondents.

Just over half (52%) of respondents believe the assumptions, projections, and policies in their region's blueprint plan are compatible with their own city's land use policies (Table 11). The share was highest in the Sacramento region (71%), followed by the San Diego region (67%), the San Francisco Bay region (53%), and lowest in the Los Angeles region (44%). Los Angeles area respondents were most likely to consider the blueprint not compatible with local plans and policies. Cities in which respondents viewed blueprint goals as compatible with local policies were more likely to be populous cities, central cities, to have higher shares of registered Democrats, and lower non-white population shares.[33]

[33] Analysis of survey responses in relation to city characteristics is based on logistic regression (ordered logit for Likert scores) using the following city characteristics in 2000, based on U.S. Census data: city type (central city, suburb, and rural), (natural log of) population, (natural log of) population density, non-white population share (includes non-white and Hispanic), share of population less than 18 years old, share with a college degree, percent homeowner in population, (natural log of) median home value, median year housing was built, (natural log of) ratio of jobs in the city to the number of residents who worked, share of homes that were single-family detached, and average commute time of resident commuters. The (natural log of) the share of the city's electorate registered Democratic as of the last election was also included. Four variables measuring change in key indicators from 1990 to 2000 (based on Census data) were also included: percent change in population density from 1990 to 2000, percent point change in non-white share from 1990 to 2000, change in jobs-to-residents ratio from 1990 to 2000, and (natural log of) percent change in average commute time from 1990 to 2000. Dummy variables indicating respondents' region were added to control for regional effects. The city type variable was constructed as follows: central cities are those designated by the U.S. Census as such (59 of them in 2000), suburbs are other cities that fall within urbanized portions of metropolitan areas, and rural cities are all other cities. Results discussed are based on a standard measure of significance of variables in the regressions ($p<.05$).

Table 3. Compatibility of Blueprints with City Land Use Policies

"How compatible are the assumptions, projections, and policies of the [blueprint vision/strategy] with those of your city's land use policies and regulations?"

(%)	San Francisco	Sacramento	Los Angeles	San Diego	Total
Generally Compatible	53	71	44	67	52
Somewhat Incompatible	32	21	24	33	27
Not Compatible	3	0	14	0	8
Don't Know	12	7	19	0	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

More than half (57%) of cities have strategies in place to promote both residential and commercial development near transit stations or bus corridors – the principal smart growth strategy at the heart of most blueprint plans. This practice is far more common in San Diego area cities (83%) and Bay Area cities (73%) than in Los Angeles or Sacramento area cities (46%). It is also a good deal more common among central cities (73%) than in suburbs (54%).

In spite of existing smart growth-oriented strategies, nearly two-thirds (65%) of those cities targeted for changes to land use policies under the blueprints would need to modify local general plans and zoning to achieve blueprint objectives, according to respondents. This share was highest in the Sacramento region (91%), followed by the Los Angeles region (69%), the San Francisco Bay Area (55%), and finally the San Diego area (50%).[34]

Overall, 35 percent of respondents indicated that they or other planners in their city had worked with, or were currently working with, staff from the COG/MPO to coordinate the city's land use policies with blueprint objectives. While 92 percent of respondents in the San Diego region had done so, 79 percent in the Sacramento region, 31 percent in the San Francisco region, and 16 percent in the Los Angeles region had done so. Respondents from nearly half (47%) of cities targeted for land use changes in the blueprints indicated that they or other local planners had been working with COG/MPO staff to coordinate policies.[35]

[34] No San Diego or Sacramento area respondents indicated they did not know the answer to this question, but 6% of Los Angeles area respondents and 5% of San Francisco respondents did so. Response to the question about modifying local general plans was contingent on respondents having replied "yes" to a prior question about whether the city was targeted for land use changes in the blueprint process. Overall, 61% of respondents indicated their city was targeted in the blueprint for land use changes to promote regional goals (92% in the San Diego area, 79% in the Sacramento area, 59% in the Bay Area, and 52% in the Los Angeles area). Over one-quarter (26%) of Los Angeles area respondents responded that they did not know whether their city was targeted for land use changes, and 14% of San Francisco area respondents. Cities targeted for land use changes in blueprint plans (at least according to survey respondents) were more likely to be populous cities that experienced more rapid increases in non-white population share and jobs-to-resident ratio from 1990 to 2000.

[35] In terms of assistance received from the COG/MPO "to help in coordinating your city's development policies with objectives of the (blueprint name)," technical assistance was most commonly cited (26%), followed by planning grants (23%) and then capital grants for transportation-related improvements (20%). The share of respondents that received technical assistance was highest in the San Diego area

How do growth policies and resident attitudes by city relate to engagement with blueprint implementation strategies? Respondents' views on whether blueprints are compatible with local plans, and on whether development is considered controversial locally, do not seem to be strongly related to the likelihood that the city's planners were working with COG/MPO staff on blueprint implementation. A higher share of respondents who indicated that their current local land use policies were "somewhat incompatible" with blueprint objectives (47%) as the share who said their policies were "generally compatible" (45%) also indicated that they or other local planners had been working with COG/MPO staff to coordinate policies with blueprint objectives. However, no respondents from cities where blueprint objectives were considered "not compatible" were working with COG/MPO staff.

The likelihood that residential growth policies were controversial in a given city did not strongly determine the chance that the city was working with the COG/MPO on achieving blueprint objectives. While 41 percent of cities in which residential growth policies were deemed "almost always" controversial were working with the COG/MPO, 25 percent of cities in which they were "often controversial," 43 percent of cities in which they were "sometimes controversial," and 30 percent of cities where growth policies were not considered controversial were working with the COG/MPO.

After controlling for other city characteristics, the factors most likely to predict that a city's planners were working with the COG/MPO were a large population, a high Democratic voter registration share, a high jobs-to-resident ratio, and a rapid rate of increase in the job-to-resident ratio from 1990 to 2000.

Table 4 shows how influential respondents consider blueprint planning processes to have been in relation to some basic local planning functions and responsibilities. Overall, respondents did not deem blueprints very influential on any local planning function. The blueprint process in one region – the Sacramento area – stands out as having been more influential than in the others, however.

Table 4. Blueprint Influence

"How influential has the [blueprint vision/strategy] process been in affecting timing, goals, analysis, and/or outcomes for the following planning functions and objectives in your city? (Circle a number between 1, meaning "not at all influential," and 5, meaning "very influential.")"

(Average score)	San Francisco	Sacramento	Los Angeles	San Diego	Total
General Plan update or amendment	2.2	3.3	1.8	2.1	2.1
Specific plan development	2.2	3.3	1.7	2.0	2.0
CEQA review	1.8	2.5	1.5	1.7	1.7
Transportation choices	2.2	2.9	1.9	2.8	2.2
Commercial/housing development	2.2	3.0	1.9	2.5	2.2
Open space/habitat preservation	2.0	2.8	1.6	2.3	1.9

(67%) and the Sacramento area (57%). Bay Area respondents were most likely to have received a planning grant (41%), and San Diego area respondents a capital grant (67%). The effectiveness of capital grants was rated higher than the effectiveness of other types of assistance.

What were the potential obstacles to the development envisioned in blueprint plans? Respondents ranked opposition to increased density, fear of change or loss of community character, and opposition because of a likely increase in traffic congestion, as among the most significant obstacles. Inability to raise funds for infrastructure and services was also rated as a fairly significant obstacle; lack of interest from private developers was not considered a very significant obstacle.

In connection with local attitudes and actions on development proposals, our survey probed local CEQA activity. According to survey respondents, 13 percent of development proposals reviewed under CEQA during the prior three-year period (on average 12 proposals) had provoked comments from members of the public challenging the review.[36] The most common subject of challenge was a proposed development project's potential impact on transportation and traffic. On average, 5 projects per year per city were challenged on this ground.[37] The next most common topic of challenge, on average, was public services, followed by aesthetics, recreation, and population growth and housing displacement effects. Considered for the median case (rather than on average), noise was the second most common topic of challenge after transportation and traffic effects. Important to note is that these common topics of challenge are "quality of life" concerns more than strictly environmental quality concerns. This finding lends credence to complaints that in the absence of effective community planning processes in some communities, CEQA review may have come to substitute for such processes as a means for local residents to address planning concerns (Barbour and Teitz, 2005).

Across regions and city types, respondents tended to agree that the CEQA review process is effective in identifying adverse local environmental impacts of proposed development projects, but somewhat less effective when it comes to identifying cumulative regional impacts (a required aspect of project review). Respondents moderately agreed (average score of 3.6) that clearer regional environmental policies and standards are needed in order to make identification of cumulative impacts under CEQA easier. Transportation and traffic impacts were most commonly cited; almost a quarter (24%) of respondents indicated that clearer regional standards for transportation and traffic impacts of development projects would help in carrying out cumulative regional impacts review. Over a third (34%) indicated that coordinated mitigation strategies in this area would be useful. The next most commonly cited topic was air quality, followed by water quality, population growth and housing issues, and habitat planning. Respondents also mildly concurred (average score of 3.2) that regional impacts should provide a basis for determining whether a project is approved so long as local impacts could be compensated (mitigated).

---

[36] According to survey respondents two-fifths (38%) of reviewed proposals resulted in negative declarations with no mitigation required. More than half resulted in mitigated negative declarations, and 8% culminated in more detailed review through development of an Environmental Impact Report. Only 3% resulted in legal challenge.

[37] There were small discrepancies between survey responses on the total number of reviews in the past three-year period that raised public challenges or complaints, and responses about complaints by category (the average number of complaints cited by respondents for transportation and traffic actually exceeds the average number of total reviews that raised any challenge or complaint.) It may be that some respondents misread the question on complaints by topic to mean number of complaints by topic (possibly from multiple sources) rather than number of reviews that raised a complaint.

Conclusion

Few Californians have ever heard of a COG/MPO. Yet as the venue for blueprint planning these organizations have been engaged in a remarkable experiment to try to resolve some of the most pressing concerns in the state today. Although each regional story is different, the fact that blueprint planning has emerged in the state's four largest metropolitan regions indicates there are common challenges and opportunities.

City planning directors that we surveyed indicated generally favorable attitudes toward blueprint planning strategies. In particular, large majorities agree that a portion of regional transportation funds should support local policies that further regional goals; that support should be provided to local governments willing to adopt policies with local costs but regional benefits; and that local land use policies should be oriented to help support regional goals for transportation investment whenever possible.[38] At the same time, however, a majority also indicates that land use policy is better left to local governments to manage as they see fit. Although respondents tend to support the need for structured regional planning processes, they also tend to disagree that policy objectives ratified in plans adopted by Councils of Government should be binding on local government general plans.

These views suggest that respondents generally concur with the COG/MPO voluntary collaborative approach to coordinating growth policy. As collaborative institutions, COG/MPOs provide an appropriate framework for helping to forge a new consensus among Californians regarding preparation and planning for growth and development. At a time of considerable conflict and worry over growth and its consequences in the state, providing an effective forum for collaborative dialogue and decisionmaking is extremely valuable. COG/MPOs provide one of the few available frameworks for reintegrating basic regional growth management functions that have been fragmented in California for decades – planning for infrastructure, land use, and the environment.

At the same time, COG/MPOs are somewhat ungainly institutions for charting a deliberate course of action. Their very value as inter-governmental forums is also a weakness. When it comes to the basic blueprint objectives – integrating transportation and land use planning in an iterative fashion in a regional framework – COG/MPOs face an enormous stumbling block. They have no actual authority to mandate land use changes to achieve blueprint objectives, and their resources, though influential, are constrained. COG/MPOs have had to think creatively about how to use transportation funds as leverage to influence land use.

Blueprint planning is a bold attempt to reshape metropolitan growth patterns, and we heard from participants across the state that the process has been empowering for COG/MPOs, their local government members, and stakeholders, providing some optimism and greater confidence about the future.

[38] More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents scored the first of these statements as "4" or "5" on a scale in which "1" indicated strong disagreement, and "5" indicated strong agreement with the statement; 80% scored the second statement as "4" or "5"; and 62% scored the third statement as "4" or "5."

One interviewee noted,

> We want to control the change that's going to happen. Again, being an old city…[many residents] did not want to see change…but most said, "If it's going to change, then I want to have control of the changes." Most communities will do that, and those that won't are going to wake up later and wish they had…
>
> You need to keep things up. Change is inevitable. You can either make change happen in a positive way, or you can resist change until it finally happens and maybe not in a way that you care for at all.

At the same time, we heard skepticism and worry about the ability of COG/MPOs to carry through on their objectives. One interviewee said,

> Now, we don't do the investment that makes the blueprint happen. That investment is done by the private development sector guided by local government. If the private sector or local government or both fail to perform, then we are building the wrong transportation system because we're building for a city that doesn't get built. A blueprint transportation system grafted into a sprawling city doesn't work, but if you build a transportation system that supports sprawl you certainly won't get a blueprint city. Both have to go together. Will local government and the development market build the blueprint land use for us? That's a huge open question.

The blueprint decision process is a shared responsibility, a democratic process among governments. COG/MPOs can create ongoing learning techniques so as to take corrective action if necessary. One respondent noted,

> We're a voluntary council of governments… We're trying to make every tool available to locals that we can to help them make better decisions… I believe that's part of what has made it effective because we're not perceived as developing some future land use scheme in the ivory tower and then trying to ram it down everybody's throat… We developed something with our cities and counties that's really theirs. We're just giving them the tools and showing them the benefits, but they're developing it and their citizens are developing it. They come to these meetings by the thousands saying, "This is what we want for the future." Those are the things that give it its strength.

However, COG/MPOs are not accountable to voters; in fact, they have been criticized as undemocratic for that reason. And their job is far more difficult without effective state support. When it comes to growth planning, the state government has abdicated a strong role in recent decades, and COG/MPOs have filled the breach. Conflicting and uncoordinated state growth policies seriously hamper the chances of success for blueprint planning. Without stronger support from the state, smart growth strategies may not work. One respondent commented,

> The housing market has been so hot, we're having trouble bringing stuff to market fast enough in the infill and the inner greenfields areas, and so it's threatening to skip over further and further out... And one of the things I fret

about is building bedroom communities. We can't afford to build roads, let alone extend train lines out there…

And that's where the open space issue comes in. I think there's a growing consensus that we really need sort of a green print to go with our blueprint. We've got lots of green in our maps, but we don't really have a coherent strategy for making it real. But it's clear that we need [to add] a serious open space conservation piece to the puzzle in order to make all this work.

So, even as blueprint planners forge new territory in helping Californians redefine how they collectively view and respond to growth challenges, they also see formidable challenges ahead. Even as growth pressures and opportunities compel more comprehensive planning, the task can seem overwhelming or overly ambitious. In this light, it is important to consider the value of blueprint planning as an ongoing process rather than a means to define a static vision for development. The transportation planning system has served as a vehicle for such a process because it is among the oldest and best-articulated systems for ongoing, continually updated, collaborative intergovernmental planning. Extending the planning framework to incorporate new policy areas is the frontier now facing blueprint planners.

Some may feel cynical or skeptical about the willingness and ability of local governments and communities to participate effectively in regional processes such as those described in this paper. Evidence suggests that cynicism is not unwarranted. For example, although SANDAG – the state's institutionally strongest COG/MPO – has worked for more than a decade to promote smart growth strategies among member jurisdictions, progress has been slow.

Nonetheless, for California, blueprint efforts now underway do constitute an unprecedented and important set of innovations in urban and metropolitan governance. People in California's metropolitan regions are making a major effort to achieve change. Furthermore, there are some reasons to believe that the prospects for blueprint planning may improve. For example, growing market interest in compact housing has already bolstered blueprint efforts in many areas. Also, the state government has started to show interest in supporting smart growth and blueprint planning, and if the state provides a stronger framework of incentives, blueprint planning may bear more fruit. We conclude by considering the state's potential role in supporting blueprint planning.

The State's Role

What if anything should the state government do to support blueprint planning? Insofar as it provides a promising venue for resolving long-standing growth concerns, blueprint planning warrants state support. Without such support, blueprint planning may well prove ineffective overall. The state establishes the framework of regulatory and fiscal incentives and mandates that local governments face when they make land use choices, and to the degree that this framework does not support smart growth principles, blueprints may be working against the tide.

Blueprints are fundamentally about re-distributing resources to promote certain objectives, and unless mutual benefits are very obvious to participants, policy consensus may be

prone to collapse if some jurisdictions feel cheated. In general, state action may be necessary to impose mandates or institute policies that redistribute resources.

However, shifting resources or responsibilities to promote new outcomes requires some degree of consensus on desirable goals and objectives. Although smart growth strategies may not work well without state support, their success depends equally on gaining local support. For these reasons, the consensus-building aspect of blueprint planning could be very valuable to the state, and the state government may choose to support blueprint planning more as participant than arbiter.

In general, state policies can support blueprint planning in certain basic ways: Supporting local smart growth activity, coordinating state growth policies, coordinating planning processes, and linking state goals and actions to blueprints.

Support for Local Efforts

Many blueprint participants advocate that the state provide incentives to localities that adopt smart growth strategies. In particular, building the capacity of local governments in inner urban areas to support infill housing production and associated infrastructure and services is called for. COG/MPOs have learned in their implementation efforts that even a small amount of funding can go a long way in a context of local fiscal constraint. In the words of a respondent,

> If the state could put some more carrots on the table …even if it's not a huge amount of money, it would make a big difference …linking at least some portions of the infrastructure money to these regional growth strategies and local governments that are serious about implementing them would yield huge beneficial impacts.

However, state support for local smart growth would not necessarily require any explicit link to blueprints. The state could, for example, reward localities that promote infill housing located near transit stops, without making any explicit reference to the provisions of blueprints.

The legislature took a big step in support of local smart growth activity in the spring of 2006, by passing a multi-billion dollar bond proposal to be placed before voters the following November, which includes, among other things, $300 million in assistance for transit-oriented development and $850 million, largely for grants for capital outlay related to infill development. As of this writing, it is now up to the voters whether blueprint development objectives get a substantial boost in state support. If the measure does pass, the legislature will need to develop criteria for allocating the funds – and how or whether regional blueprint plans would be addressed remains a question.

Coordinating State Growth Policies

Many blueprint participants argue that the state must do more than just reward certain smart growth activities. It should clarify and coordinate growth goals, objectives, and policies to help ensure that resources, investments, and programs do not work at cross-purposes.

In this view, for example, it makes little sense for the state to direct mandates or subsidies to locals to support housing production while state fiscal policies, particularly related to property taxes, serve to deter such development. Similarly, if the state wants to promote efficient development patterns and use of resources, it might make sense to situate new university campuses in built-up urban areas with transit access rather than in greenfield locations, in spite of higher initial construction costs.

State smart growth policy goals were codified in 2002 in AB 857; this legislation requires that state agency plans and budgets be consistent with the goals of 1) promoting infill development and equity; 2) protecting open space and working landscapes; and 3) encouraging compact and efficient development patterns. However, AB 857 has yet not been translated into explicit implementation measures (although the new bond measure may change that). One respondent complained:

> Here's what I don't understand: 857 has a set of objectives that are all place-oriented and (yet) there was an unwillingness on the part of state agencies to, in fact, make findings that what they were doing was consistent with regional strategies.

Coordinating Planning Processes

Many blueprint practitioners believe the state also could do more to align planning processes. At a practical level, coordinating planning cycles would be beneficial, such as for updating local government General Plans, RHNA, and RTPs. As one respondent put it:

> We ought to be coordinating the scheduling of RTP updates, growth forecast updates, and RHNA updates. And have it organized so that those all happen in sync with each other, probably like once every five years. The federal government regulates the timing of RTPs. The state regulates housing elements. And we do growth forecasts supporting both of them…more often than we need to, just to support those different efforts.

Meshing these processes more explicitly would help promote blueprint goals. Going further, it might make sense to devolve some of the implementation to the more flexible strategies encompassed by blueprints, given the extreme contentiousness of RHNA in recent years. RHNA reforms in 2002 took a step in that direction by allowing a sub-regional allocation of "fair share" housing requirements between cities and a county or counties.

The more fundamental concern about coordinating planning is for the state to support and participate in an *ongoing* process. One respondent commented,

> You don't turn a region around with a plan; you turn a region around with a persistent perseverance around a core set of ideas that you pursue for decades… I think what the state could do…is encourage [planning] with some sense of continuous funding [and] with some general objectives about what it wants to achieve as a state. We have to have some accountability. But it's not about producing plans; it's about building a continuous and persistent planning process that allows regions to persevere in the pursuit of good ideas.

Another important aspect of planning coordination will be for the state to consider how to strengthen subregional and intra-regional blueprint planning – for example, how to build stronger linkages between county transportation agencies and regional blueprints, and between COG/MPOs in areas where development has spilled across jurisdictional boundaries and now overlaps substantially. Ultimately, the state must consider how to promote inter-connected, nested planning at multiple scales.

Linking State Goals and Actions to Blueprints

How and whether to explicitly link state growth goals, objectives, and resources to blueprints is a complicated issue. At a minimum, continuing – or increasing - the state budget allocation of $5 million, provided annually for the last two years in the governor's budget on a competitive basis for regional blueprint planning, would be a useful step. The program has already done much to help clarify blueprint goals and objectives and to support implementation.

Some blueprint practitioners argue the state should go much further and conform its policies and resources to support regional objectives as identified in blueprint plans. One respondent noted:

> If I had to outline the next… steps... it would be to have the state officially say "We're going to comply with these blueprints…we're going to make our park investments and…our school investments and prison and water supply investments and everything else on the basis of these regional land use and investment plans…" That would go a long way to achieving the outcomes of the regional plans directly, but also reinforce the ethic of fidelity to those plans by all the other players, including local government.

It is a somewhat radical notion to expect the state to "comply" with a collaborative regional planning process. Others counter that it is more important that the state clarify its own goals and objectives, and align policies and programs to further them. Those can then work in tandem with regional and local strategies when and where appropriate.

Perhaps a middle ground would be for the state to determine if blueprints advance a few key, clearly-defined performance goals (such as for promoting jobs-housing balance and housing affordability, improving air and water quality and species preservation, maintaining working landscapes and open space, and reducing vehicle miles traveled, as compared to the "base case" scenario) and then direct resources and policies to help support a qualifying plan's objectives. This would be another example of the principle outlined in this paper as an effective recipe for regional planning coordination – establishing performance-oriented objectives, and encouraging flexibility in implementation.

References

Association of Bay Area Governments, *Draft Projections 2005 Monitoring Report*, Oakland, California, November 2004.

Association of Bay Area Governments, *Implementing the Bay Area's Vision: Regional Corridor Planning*, Oakland, California, October 21, 2005.

Association of Bay Area Governments/Bay Area Air Quality Management District/Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Joint Policy Committee, *Grant Application to the State of California Regional Blueprint Planning Program*, Oakland, California, September 30, 2005.

Association of Bay Area Governments/Bay Area Air Quality Management District/Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Joint Policy Committee, *Making Regional Planning Work for the Bay Area*, Oakland, California, n.d.

Association of Bay Area Governments/Metropolitan Transportation Commission, *Focusing Our Vision: Collaborative Planning for the Bay Area,* Oakland, California, April 2006.

Badoe, Daniel A., and Eric J. Miller, "Transportation – Land Use Interaction: Empirical Findings in North America, and Their Implications for Modeling," *Transportation Research Part D*, Volume 5, 2000, pp. 235–263.

Barbour, Elisa, *Metropolitan Growth Planning in California, 1900-2000*, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 2002.

Barbour, Elisa, and Paul G. Lewis, *California Comes of Age: Governing Institutions, Planning, and Public Investment*, Occasional Paper, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 2005.

Barbour, Elisa, and Michael Teitz, *CEQA Reform: Issues and Options*, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 2005.

Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, *2003 Draft Compact*, San Francisco, California, 2003.

Bay Area Monitor, League of Women Voters, Oakland, California, October/November 2003.

Burchell, Robert W., George Lowenstein, William R. Dolphin, Catherine C. Galley (Rutgers University), Anthony Downs (Brookings Institution), Samuel Seskin, Katherine Gray Still (Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc.), and Terry Moore (ECONorthwest), *Costs of Sprawl 2000*, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., 2002.

Burchell, Robert W., Naveed A. Shad, David Listokin, Hilary Phillips, Anthony Downs, Samuel Seskin, Judy S. Davis, Terry Moore, David Helton, and Michelle Gall, *TCRP Report 39: The Costs*

of Sprawl – Revisited, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 1998.

Crane, Randall, "The Influence of Urban Form on Travel: An Interpretive Review," *Journal of Planning Literature*, Volume 15, Number 1, August 2000, pp. 3–23.

Ewing, Reid, and Robert Cervero, "Travel and the Built Environment: A Synthesis," *Transportation Research Record 1780*, Paper Number 01-3515, 2002, pp. 87–113.

Fargo, Heather, "Message from the Chair of the Board," *Regional Report*, Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento, California, February 2006.

Fulton, William, "Is the 2% Strategy a Solution for Southern California?", *The State of the Region 2004*, Southern California Association of Governments, Los Angeles, California, 2004.

Hanak, Ellen, and Mark Baldassare, editors, *California 2025: Taking on the Future*, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 2005.

Hendrix, Anastasia, "Traffic, Housing Are Simply Madness, Poll Confirms," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 4, 2001.

Hotchkiss, Frank E. , *Growth Visioning for Sustaining a Livable Region: Possible Visions: Southern California – 2025*, Urban Possibility, (on SCAG website), July 17, 2001.

Innes, Judith, *Taking the Three 'E's Seriously: The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities*, Institute of Urban & Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley, December 1, 2004.

Johnson, Hans P., "California's Population in 2025," in Hanak, Ellen, and Mark Baldassare, editors, *California 2025: Taking on the Future*, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 2005.

Johnson, Hans P., *A State of Diversity: Demographic Trends in California's Regions*, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 2002.

Lewis, Paul G., and Elisa Barbour, *California Cities and the Local Sales Tax*, Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, July 1999.

Mazmanian, Daniel A., and Michael E. Kraft, "The Three Epochs of the Environmental Movement," in Daniel A. Mazmanian and Michael E. Kraft, editors, *Toward Sustainable Communities: Transition and Transformation in Environmental Policy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999.

McKeever, Michael, "Message from the Executive Director," *Regional Report,* Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento, California, October 2005.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission, *Transportation for Livable Communities: Works in Progress*, Oakland, California, July 2004.

Murphy, Dennis D., "Southern California Natural Community Conservation Planning: Case Study," *Bioregional Assessments: Science at the Crossroads of Management and Policy*, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1999.

Pollak, Daniel, *Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP): The Origins of an Ambitious Experiment to Protect Ecosystems*, California Research Bureau, Sacramento, California, March 2001a.

Pollak, Daniel, *The Future of Habitat Conservation? The NCCP Experience in Southern California*, California Research Bureau, Sacramento, California, June 2001b.

Rempel, Ron, Andrew H. McLeod, and Marc Luesebrink, "Southern California Natural Community Conservation Planning: Policy Review," in K. Norman Johnson, Frederick Swanson, Margaret Herring, and Sarah Greene, eds., *Bioregional Assessments: Science at the Crossroads of Management and Policy,* Island Press, Washington, D.C.,1999.

Ruffolo, Jennifer, *TMDLs: The Revolution in Water Quality Regulation*, California Research Bureau, Sacramento, California, 1999.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, *Special Report: Preferred Blueprint Alternative*, Sacramento, California, January 2005a.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, *Infrastructure Cost Analysis, Draft Results*, Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Agenda, Sacramento, California, May 2, 2005b.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, *Item #06-5-5*, Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Agenda, Sacramento, California, May 1, 2006c.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, *Blueprint 2050 Water Demand Analysis*, Regional Planning Partnership Meeting Minutes, Sacramento, California, October 20, 2005d.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, "The Cost of Growth: Initial Blueprint Infrastructure Cost Analysis," *Regional Report*, Sacramento, California, October, 2005e.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments/Valley Vision, *Tall Order: Regional Forum 2004, Regional Scenarios: Statistics by SubAreas,* Sacramento, California, 2004.

San Diego Association of Governments, *2020 Cities/County Forecast Land Use Alternatives*, San Diego, California, 1998.

San Diego Association of Governments, *2020 Cities/County Forecast for the San Diego Region*, *SANDAG Info,* San Diego, California, September/October 1999.

San Diego Association of Governments, *2020 Regional Transportation Plan*, San Diego, California, April 2000.

San Diego Association of Governments, *Regional Planning Committee Agenda*, San Diego, California, October 3, 2003.

San Diego Association of Governments, *Final 2030 Forecast Process and Model Documentation*, San Diego, California, April 2004a.

San Diego Association of Governments, *Info: 2030 Regional Growth Forecast*, San Diego, California, June 2004b.

San Diego Association of Governments, *Regional Comprehensive Plan*, San Diego, California, 2004c.

Southern California Association of Governments, *Southern California Compass: Growth Vision Report*, Los Angeles, California, June 2004a.

Southern California Association of Governments, *2004 Regional Transportation Plan, Appendix C: Performance Measures,* Los Angeles, California, 2004b.

Shuit, Douglas, and Jeffrey Rabin, "Coming at Transit From 2 Directions," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 2000.

Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project, *Shaping the Future of the Nine-County Bay Area, Alternatives Report for Round Two Public Workshop Participants and Other Bay Area Residents,* 2002a.

Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project, *Technical Appendix: Regional Transportation Indicators, Bay Area Smart Growth Study,* March 2002b.

Strategic Initiatives, *Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) Regional Workshops – Round One; Results from Interactive Polling Sessions*, January 23, 2003 – March 25, 2003.

Taylor, Brian Deane, "Rethinking Traffic Congestion," *Access*, Volume 21, Institute of Transportation Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Fall 2002.

Wachs, Martin, "Fighting Traffic Congestion with Information Technology," *Issues in Science and Technology*, Fall 2002.

Wachs, Martin, and Jennifer Dill, "Regionalism in Transportation and Air Quality: History, Interpretation, and Insights for Regional Governance," in Alan Altshuler, William Morrill, Harold Wolman, and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Governance and Opportunity in Metropolitan America*, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 1999.

Appendix A. People Interviewed for the Project

William Anderson
Director of Planning and Community Investment
City of San Diego

Shiloh Ballard
Director, Housing & Community Development
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Michael Beck
San Diego Director
Endangered Habitats League

Katie Benouar
Senior Transportation Planner
Office of Regional and Interagency Planning, Division of Transportation Planning
California Department of Transportation

Gary Binger
University of California, Berkeley

Rick Bishop
Executive Director
Western Riverside Council of Governments
Riverside

Nick Bollman
President and CEO
California Center for Regional Leadership
San Francisco

David Booher
Center for Collaborative Policy
California State University, Sacramento

Don Brackenbush
Principal
Public Private Ventures / Goodell Brackenbush
Pasadena

Mark Butala
Senior Regional Planner
Southern California Association of Governments

Christopher Cabaldon
Mayor
City of West Sacramento

Mickey Cafagna
Mayor
City of Poway

Dan Carrigg
Legislative Director
League of California Cities
Sacramento

Stuart Cohen
Executive Director
Transportation and Land Use Coalition
Oakland

Rick Cole
City Manager
City of Ventura

Marney Cox
Chief Economist
San Diego Association of Governments

Tim Coyle
Senior Vice President/Governmental Affairs
California Building Industry Association
Sacramento

Cathy Creswell
Deputy Director
Division of Housing Policy Development
California Department of Housing and Community Development

Gregory Devereaux
City Manager
City of Ontario

Ted Droettboom
Regional Planning Program Director
ABAG/BAAQMD/MTC Joint Policy Committee
Oakland

Victoria Eisen
Principal
Eisen | Letunic
Berkeley

Janet Fairbanks
Senior Regional Planner
San Diego Association of Governments

Susan Frazier
Chief Executive Officer / Managing Partner
Valley Vision
Sacramento

John Fregonese
Principal
Fregonese Calthorpe Associates
Portland

Bill Fulton
Publisher
California Planning & Development Report
Ventura

Carol Galante
President and CEO
Bridge Housing Corporation
San Francisco

David Gatzke
San Diego Alliance for Habitat Conservation
San Diego

Gail Goldberg
Planning Director
City of Los Angeles

Carolina Gregor
Senior Regional Planner
San Diego Association of Governments

Pete Hathaway
Director of Transportation Planning
Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Steve Heminger
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Lori Holt Pfeiler
Mayor
City of Escondido

Ken Hough
Director of Community Planning & Operations
Sacramento Area Council of Governments

John Husing
President
Economics & Politics, Inc.
Redlands

Sandra Ikuta
General Counsel
California Resources Agency

Kim Kawada
Principal Regional Planner
San Diego Association of Governments

Bob Leiter
Director of Land Use and Transportation Planning
San Diego Association of Governments

Ron Loveridge
Mayor
City of Riverside

Janet McBride
Planning Director
Association of Bay Area Governments

Mike McCoy
Co-Director
Department of Environmental Science & Policy
University of California, Davis

Mike McKeever
Executive Director
Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Tom Mullen
Interim Executive Director
Western Riverside County Conservation Authority
Riverside

Pam O'Connor
Councilmember
City of Santa Monica

Beverly Perry
City Clerk
City of Brea

Mark Pisano
Executive Director
Southern California Association of Governments

Gerry Raycraft
Child Care Facilities Development Coordinator
Children's Network of Solano County
Fairfield
(Formerly ABAG Planning Director)

Gwen Regalia
Councilmember
City of Walnut Creek

Terry Roberts
State Clearinghouse Director
Governor's Office of Planning and Research

Janet Ruggiero
Community Development Director
City of Citrus Heights

Rob Rundle
Principal Regional Planner
San Diego Association of Governments

Sharon Scherzinger
Acting Chief
Division of Transportation Planning
California Department of Transportation

Ty Schuiling
Director of Planning & Programming
San Bernardino Associated Governments
San Bernardino

Tom Scott
Executive Director
San Diego Housing Federation
San Diego

Dan Silver
Executive Director and CEO
Endangered Habitats League
Los Angeles

Tom Steinbach
Executive Director
Greenbelt Alliance
San Francisco

Jeff Tayman
Director of Technical Services
San Diego Association of Governments

Dennis Turner
Chief of Regulatory Planning
Department of Planning and Land Use,
County of San Diego

Jim Whalen
Principal
J. Whalen Associates, Inc.
San Diego

Linda Wheaton
Assistant Deputy Director
Division of Housing Policy Development
California Department of Housing and Community Development

Bill Yeates
Board Member
Planning and Conservation League
Sacramento

PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA
500 Washington Street, Suite 800 • San Francisco, California 94111
Phone: (415) 291-4400 • Fax: (415) 291-4401
www.ppic.org • info@ppic.org