Metro, a regional governing body with popularly elected councilors, has successfully influenced development patterns in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region.

In This Issue

Partnerships and Planning for Impact

Communities face a host of challenges and opportunities for action — deepening levels of inequality and opportunity disparities, a lack of affordable housing near employment, climate change, and the threat of natural disasters, among others — that transcend local jurisdictional boundaries and often can be addressed more effectively through regional approaches. These problems also cut across traditional policymaking silos, requiring collaboration among federal, state, and local governments; their various agencies and departments; nonprofits; private sector entities; and other stakeholders. The limited availability of public funds is another impetus for pursuing public-private partnerships that align and leverage resources from multiple sources to tackle these pressing challenges and for seizing opportunities to plan, adapt, and build for a more sustainable future.

Why Regional Planning?

Regional planning aims to facilitate collaboration among local governments and foster cross-sector approaches

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

PD&R

Message from the Assistant Secretary

This issue of *Evidence Matters* examines the many opportunities and challenges inherent to planning on a regional scale. It profiles communities that have joined together to think more holistically about their housing, transportation, environmental, and economic needs and goals as well as the processes they used to engage community members and overcome disagreements. This issue also explores how the federal government, through interagency efforts such as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and program offices such as HUD's Office of Economic Resilience, uses grantmaking and the dissemination of best practices to support and institutionalize regional planning.

In the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), we're deeply aware of the need to work across agencies, levels of government, and sectors to solve cross-cutting problems. Our team members provided early assistance for the development of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and helped create and sustain the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, a partnership among 14 federal agencies that works directly with local governments around the country to foster economic development and resilience and make existing federal funds stretch further.

Because PD&R supports policy development throughout HUD, we've been especially engaged in the agency's recently completed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, which will have important implications for regional planning. The rule, which clarifies obligations established in the Fair Housing Act of 1968, is a critical affirmation of HUD's commitment to fair housing and equality of opportunity. The rule streamlines the planning process that communities use to set goals and analyze challenges to fair housing choice. It also provides tools to help communities use local and regional data in their assessments and encourages stakeholders to form partnerships to develop regional fair housing plans.

Housing markets are regional in nature, and the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule aims to equip communities with the data and overarching process to ensure that residents can access affordable, quality housing in neighborhoods of opportunity with access to employment and social connectedness — the types of communities that regional planning seeks to create. Indeed, the collection of HUD's efforts to promote fair housing and economic and environmental resilience truly work hand in hand to give regions and metropolitan areas the tools needed for long-term, inclusive growth.

Yet, there is no question that working together regionally to address economic and environmental issues will continue to be a tremendous challenge for communities nationwide. Maintaining momentum for regional partnerships can be extremely difficult after the events that spur collaboration — whether a federal grant or a moment of crisis such as a natural disaster — recede into the past.

That is why learning from existing efforts is so important. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities and the Office of Economic Resilience, in partnership with their grantees, are building the body of evidence and research; through this community of practice, regional partnerships can share their results and help other communities recognize and seize opportunities to build resilience. Although regional planning must ultimately develop at the local level, these efforts demonstrate the important role the federal government can play in promoting innovation.

— Katherine M. O'Regan, *Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research*

Editor's Note

This issue of *Evidence Matters* discusses regional planning and how communities can collaborate successfully on important and connected challenges, especially those related to housing, transportation, and sustainability. In HUD's 50 years as a federal agency, regional planning in the United States has evolved substantially, with more metropolitan and rural areas recognizing the benefits of partnership. Federal efforts have played a key role in this change, ranging from early programs such as the Section 701 Comprehensive Planning Assistance grants to today's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants, managed by our Office of Economic Resilience. Throughout this issue, you'll see the interplay of federal funding and assistance and local decisionmaking.

The lead article, "Partnerships and Planning for Impact," presents an overview of the key concepts underpinning regional planning and of recent efforts to use regional planning to bolster economic and environmental resilience. The Research Spotlight piece, "Strategies for Regional Collaboration," examines challenges and opportunities for implementing and evaluating regional partnerships. Finally, the In Practice article, "Moving Toward a Sustainable Future: Three Models of Regional Planning," looks at how three regions — Northeast Ohio, Western North Carolina, and Puget Sound in Washington — have worked to address issues that exceed the reach of individual jurisdictions.

We hope this edition of *Evidence Matters* provides a helpful overview of this complex topic. Our next issue will focus on the many connections between housing and health. Please provide feedback on any of our issues at **www.huduser.gov/forums**.

— Rachelle Levitt, *Director of Research Utilization Division*

Highlights

- Regional planning facilitates collaboration among local governments and fosters cross-sector approaches to regional challenges, creating a foundation to pursue equitable economic growth and sustainable development.

- Bodies of literature on many topics of concern to regional planners, such as affordable housing, transportation, climate change, and resilience, suggest that many of these challenges require solutions at the regional level.

- Other research attempts to assess the efficacy and impact of regional planning, but these studies generally fall short of establishing causality in linking regional planning with particular outcomes.

- A renewed federal push for multidimensional regional planning has resulted in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which coordinates federal investments and policies in housing, development, transportation, and environmental protection, guided by six "livability principles."

to regional challenges, creating a foundation to pursue more equitable economic growth and sustainable development that improves opportunities and outcomes for current and future generations alike. Regional approaches traditionally have focused on managing growth. Increasingly, however, planners are pursuing environmental protection and social equity along with growth, guided by the bedrock principle of sustainability — meeting present needs without compromising future needs.[1] Kathryn Foster, former director of the University at Buffalo Regional Institute, advances a wide-ranging list of issues of concern to regional planners: "[c]limate change, homeland security, public health, shrinking regions, broadband access, economic globalization, immigration influxes, obsolescent infrastructure systems, the suburbanization of economic insecurity, and emerging challenges of megaregional development… environmental quality, transportation mobility, housing choice and affordability, and growth management."[2]

Regions can be defined according to the geographic boundaries that correspond to the issue being addressed, whether it be a commuting shed, a housing market, or a river basin.[3] U.S. regions vary widely in their land use patterns and economies, from predominantly rural to heavily urbanized, and a region often contains a mix of both. Approximately 80 percent of the U.S. population lives in metropolitan areas, and 10 "megaregions" — interconnected networks of regions that encompass patterns of daily activity and major systems such as transit, utilities, or stormwater management — are expected to absorb more than 70 percent of the population growth projected by 2050. Interventions at these scales can have an increased impact because they affect so many people.[4] Similarly, because approximately 80 percent of the nation's land area can be classified as rural,

regional approaches there can have a significant impact over an expansive area.[5]

Rural areas are crucial to addressing issues such as food and energy security and biodiversity that are also vitally important to people in urban and suburban areas.[6] Rural areas face a diverse set of problems and circumstances, but, as in metropolitan areas, climate change, economic resilience, housing, jobs, and transportation are central concerns. Even more so than in the sprawling suburbs of many metropolitan areas, housing, jobs, and services in rural areas can be spread far apart, increasing

ecosystem may encompass hundreds of these local jurisdictions. As Seltzer and Carbonell write, "[W]e are stuck between two clear and compelling notions: on one hand the allegiance of individuals, communities, economies, and cultures to the jurisdictional status quo; and on the other the logic of better matching planning and governance to the actual scale of activities."[8] Because regional boundaries vary according to the issue being addressed, the territory of regional governmental entities often does not match the area of concern for a particular regional problem. For example, the relevant region for transportation

primarily toward transportation planning, although they may also undertake regional visioning and scenario planning.[14] Both COGs and MPOs have been criticized for having a suburban bias; because each local government has one vote, the suburban governments tend to outnumber the central/urban ones.[15] Some organizations overcome this problem through a weighted voting structure based on population.[16] A handful of scholars have argued that the apparent weakness of limited formal power can in fact be a strength. Montgomery, for example, suggests that independence from the structures of government has fostered greater "creativity, diversity, and inclusiveness" than would otherwise have been possible, and Fishman concludes that "American planning today is most effective and comprehensive precisely when it eschews all-embracing powers and works instead within the limits of the pluralistic systems that actually define the American-built environment."[17] Though exceptional, Envision Utah, a regional planning organization in the Salt Lake City region, has shown success despite having limited formal power. In her evaluation of the "Utah model," Scheer points to years of consensus building through collaborative planning, public engagement, and education to explain the region's trend toward greater density and transit-oriented development.[18]

Effective regional approaches can bridge the needs of interdependent rural, suburban, and urban areas while addressing the challenges unique to each.

the need for transportation networks, especially for households that cannot afford a car. Although small towns may lack the administrative capacity to serve as de facto regional job and service centers, this deficit can be overcome in part by regional collaboration to pool resources.[7] Effective regional approaches can bridge the needs of interdependent rural, suburban, and urban areas while addressing the challenges unique to each.

Even though regional approaches make intuitive sense on many levels, several factors work against forms of regional governance. Although transit systems, housing markets, and ecosystems function regionally, people experience these systems on a smaller scale — their commute, their home, and their neighborhood. Existing governing structures are rarely coterminous with functional regions, covering geographies that are either too small (cities or even counties) or too expansive (states) to effectively tackle regional issues. Most of the land-use decisions that affect regional planning are made at the local level, yet the functional boundaries of a regional economy or

purposes might not correspond entirely with that for coastal resilience.[9]

With a few exceptions — notably Oregon Metro and the Metropolitan Council in Minnesota's Minneapolis-St. Paul region — regional governing entities have little real power; they lack the authority to compel constituent actors to adhere to plans, relying instead on voluntary participation.[10] Research shows that weak governing structures limit the effectiveness of regional planning to shape outcomes such as development patterns.[11] The most common structures of regional governance are councils of government (COGs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), which are typically advisory associations composed of local entities.[12] COGs are voluntary associations of local governments often established by state law; they can include Economic Development Districts, which have planning authority through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration.[13] MPOs, which were first established through the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, are oriented

Perhaps the most vexing challenge for a regional planning framework is to balance the central goals of environmental protection and preservation, economic growth, and equity.[19] Although planners are increasingly attentive to these competing priorities and actively attempt to resolve them, the underlying tension persists, says Karen Chapple, professor of city and regional planning at the University of California, Berkeley. Chapple points to land preservation in areas that need land for affordable housing and growth policies that might displace residents in a tight rental market as examples of the ongoing challenge to reconcile these priorities.[20] Competition among local jurisdictions may also

impede cooperation at the regional level. Foster writes that regional entities seek greater equity in economic development and environmental sustainability by encouraging civic engagement and participation during planning processes, but she acknowledges that even then, tradeoffs are inevitable.[21]

The Research Basis for Regional Planning

Bodies of literature exist on many topics concerning regional planners, such as affordable housing, climate change and resilience, and intraregional equity. In many cases, the research that establishes the existence of a regionwide challenge also suggests a regional solution. There is considerable evidence, for example, of intraregional disparities in resources and opportunity throughout the country, as summarized by Pastor et al. "[H]ousing is segregated… [and] issues of spatial mismatch still limit opportunities to access viable employment. Some neighborhoods are clearly places of choice; others are saddled with high levels of toxic contamination, dilapidated housing, poor schools, and crime."[22] Recent studies show persistent levels of racial segregation and increasing income segregation, and the geography of poverty has shifted, notably increasing in suburban areas.[23] The nature of these problems has led some scholars and policymakers to conclude, as Pastor and Benner put it, that "the remedies cannot be purely the inward-looking asset building of traditional neighborhood development, but rather require a broad attempt to change the rules of the game via regional tax sharing, fair-share housing requirements, and improved public transit systems."[24]

Other research attempts to assess the efficacy and impact of regional planning, primarily through case studies and comparisons. These studies generally fall short of establishing causality in linking regional planning with particular outcomes. Knaap and Lewis, for instance, review six case studies in regional planning — Portland; Denver; Sacramento; Chicago; Washington, DC; and Salt Lake City — and find "in almost every case the evidence of successful influence on development patterns is weak," indicating that regional bodies may require greater power for implementation.[25] Jones notes that assessing the economic benefits of regional planning is difficult because so few powerful regional entities are available to study and because there is no consensus measure of success to compare across regions. Ultimately, Jones concludes that "[although] it seems reasonable to assume that good regional planning results in improved economic performance…hard evidence of this effect is scarce."[26] A handful of studies find a firm link between specific regional programs and intended outcomes. Research published in 2011 found that the Minneapolis–St. Paul region's tax-base sharing program reduced tax-base inequality among 7 counties and 192 municipalities by about 20 percent.[27] In addition, research has found that Portland Metro's urban growth boundary, a mandatory regional planning program, has effectively shaped land-use patterns, confining development into designated areas and limiting sprawl.[28] Beyond these examples, however, few rigorous studies of regional planning programs offer definitive evidence on whether or how well particular programs are working, although both mandatory and voluntary planning programs have demonstrated some level of success.[29]

Envision Utah

Envision Utah's original Quality Growth Strategy called for the creation of more multimodal transit options, which led to more bus and rail transit, bike paths, and walkable centers along the Wasatch Front.

Chapple suggests that in addition to evaluating planning programs, taking a broader look at the policies and market dynamics that are already increasing sustainability, such as infill development that preserves or increases density, could yield evidence to inform more deliberative planning approaches.[30]

Transit-oriented development (TOD) has shown promise as a strategy to address the central goals of regional planning. TOD can reduce dependence on cars, thereby lowering greenhouse gas emissions. TOD can also promote economic growth by connecting workers to jobs and creating clusters of economic activity. In addition, TOD that includes affordable housing can increase lower-income households' access to schools, jobs, and other opportunities, resulting in greater social equity. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey, the average household spent 51.2 percent of its income on housing and transportation in 2013.[31] Reductions in housing and transportation costs can lead to improved economic outcomes, particularly among low- and moderate-income households, for whom these costs are especially burdensome.[32] Metropolitan areas with meaningful public transit options are best able to reduce household transportation costs, and TOD is a crucial mechanism for expanding transportation choices regionwide. In addition to increasing the use of public transit, TOD reduces traffic and increases physical activity, with concomitant environmental benefits.[33]

Sustainable Communities Initiative Grants

Building on the evidentiary basis for regional planning, HUD has renewed its support for the regional and integrated planning approaches that were prominent at the department's founding but had since waned.[34] As early as 1954, HUD's predecessor, the Housing and Home Finance Agency, awarded urban planning grants to regional and metropolitan entities under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 reaffirmed and expanded this authority, making HUD responsible for comprehensive planning to address problems "resulting from the increasing concentration of population in metropolitan and other urban areas and the out-migration from and lack of coordinated development of resources and services in rural areas."[35] The act designated metropolitan and regional planning agencies as eligible grantees and urged planning that, as much as possible, "cover[ed] entire areas having common or related development problems."[36] These Section 701 planning grants supported the coordination of transportation systems, consideration of regional housing needs, and the development of economic and natural resources and were "the primary mechanism through which HUD pursued its policy of locating lower income housing on a metropolitan-wide basis," according to Marando.[37] In its early years, HUD also took an integrated approach to metropolitan problems, focusing not only on housing but also a range of interrelated urban issues. The Model Cities program, aimed at improving housing, health, education, and job opportunities in poor urban areas, was emblematic of this approach, although it was short lived.[38]

HUD's multidisciplinary, metropolitan approach peaked during George Romney's tenure as HUD Secretary from 1969 to 1973. Romney defined the "Real City" as the entire metropolitan area, not just the fragmented jurisdictions therein, and he pursued a more equitable, regionwide distribution of lower-income housing that accounted for the increasing suburbanization of employment and education opportunities.[39] Under the "Open Communities" initiative, HUD also sought to combat racial exclusion from suburbs. Like the Model Cities program, this initiative was curtailed before it had a chance to have much impact, ending in the early 1970s at President Nixon's insistence.[40] Later in the 1970s, the Areawide Housing Opportunity Plan and the Regional Housing Mobility Program sought to desegregate and deconcentrate federally assisted housing at the regional level, but these short-lived programs, along with Section 701 grants, came to an end in the early 1980s.[41] Charles Orlebeke, former assistant secretary of HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, writes that the

Regional transit systems, such as the Denver area's Regional Transportation District (RTD) Eagle P3 project, lower greenhouse gas emissions and better connect low-income households to schools, jobs, and other amenities.

Through the Clean Water Partnership, private-sector partner Corvias Solutions will install and maintain bioretention, stormwater detention, and other technologies to help Prince George's County, Maryland meet its Clean Water Act obligations.

implementation of such planning efforts was hampered both within HUD and by local communities, where "regional planning bodies lacked the institutional and political levers that had a chance of transforming a regional housing plan into anything like reality."[42]

A renewed federal push for multidimensional, regional planning crystalized in 2009, when HUD, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Transportation formed the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to coordinate federal investments and policies in housing, development, transportation, and environmental protection, guided by six "livability principles." The six principles were to provide more transportation choices; promote equitable, affordable housing; enhance economic competitiveness; support existing communities; coordinate and leverage investment; and value communities and neighborhoods. Through collaboration, the agencies seek to align and target federal resources more efficiently.[43] Similarly, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will promote regional planning and partnerships through its recently announced Regional Development Priority (RDP) policy. Under RDP, multijurisdictional applicants for USDA infrastructure and development programs can receive priority status based on the extent to which their proposals support existing

regional plans and pursue collaboration and leveraging of other funding sources.[44]

A cornerstone effort of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities is the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI). Administered by HUD, SCI manages two grant programs: Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants and Community Challenge Planning Grants. The regional grants support locally led efforts to foster regional collaboration among diverse stakeholders to coordinate housing, workforce, infrastructure, and economic development (see "Moving Toward a Sustainable Future: Three Models of Regional Planning," p. 18). Since 2010, HUD has awarded $165 million in Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants to 74 regions. Community Challenge Planning Grants are more narrowly targeted to corridor, neighborhood, citywide, and station area planning. In two rounds of funding, 69 communities received Community Challenge Planning Grants totaling $70 million.[45] A smaller, supporting grant program jointly funded by HUD and EPA awarded a total of $10 million in capacity building grants to 8 national and regional intermediaries to provide SCI grantees with technical assistance.[46]

As grantees complete their plans and begin to implement regional approaches to various issues, HUD will identify

and disseminate best practices from early experiences. The HUD Exchange website (**www.hudexchange.info**) hosts the SCI Resource Library, a clearinghouse for relevant information, including grantee planning documents, case studies, and reports, that are organized by category (such as climate and resilience), and subtopic (such as green infrastructure).[47] A 2015 report available from the SCI Resource Library, "Green Infrastructure and the Sustainable Communities Initiative," summarizes some of the lessons learned though SCI about cost-effective infrastructure investments that enhance resilience and sustainability. The report summarizes 30 grantee projects and finds that green infrastructure is most effective when coordinated at a regional scale, when efforts to increase infrastructure capacity are combined with efforts to reduce usage, and when green infrastructure investments are leveraged to gain other community benefits such as additional recreational space or increased property values.[48]

Looking at the range of SCI grantees' activities, Office of Economic Resilience senior advisor Dwayne Marsh writes that collective impact strategies have reaped benefits. Defined by Marsh as "building a common agenda, creating shared measurement systems, identifying mutually reinforcing activities, promoting continuous communications, and supporting backbone organizations," collective impact strategies bring together various levels of government and public and private stakeholders.[49] Identifying lessons learned thus far, Marsh notes that grantees have found that they need to integrate housing and transportation, stress economic resilience, include workforce development, incorporate traditionally underrepresented groups in planning, plan for equity, and align diverse issues such as health and housing.[50]

Consistent with the goals embedded in the program's design, grantees are seeking to leverage other public and private investment. SCI grant programs require that other sources match at

least 20 percent of the requested funds. In practice, most grantees have far exceeded this threshold.[51] From the 143 SCI grants totaling nearly $240 million in FY 2010 and 2011, grantees have leveraged more than $185 million from private investment and local partners. This investment included philanthropies supporting grantees through the application process and businesses offering in-kind staffing, training, and technical assistance.[52] For example, the Twin Cities region in Minnesota received a $5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant and $8.9 million from community partners and local governments along with $15.7 million in grants and loans from Living Cities.[53] Such leveraging not only increases the resources available for planning and implementation but also increases stakeholder buy-in, says Marsh.[54]

Chapple and Mattiuzzi write that although it is too early to assess the full impact of SCI, signs indicate that grantees — and even applicants who were not awarded funds — are building regional planning capacity, and many are incorporating sustainability and social equity goals.[55] Evidence suggests that SCI is helping to break down traditional policy silos. A review by Pendall et al. based on five case studies found that regional planning grantees have had some success with de-siloing at the federal and regional levels through new collaborative structures, policies, and approaches to problems; however, "unclear federal legislative commitment may undermine local de-siloing" if participants revert to old practices when these programs end.[56]

These successes notwithstanding, Chapple and Mattiuzzi conclude that "it will take a more effective set of carrots and sticks to foster a comprehensive approach to development — particularly to avoid making equity an afterthought in sustainability planning."[57] Lisa Alexander of the University of Wisconsin Law School cautions that "when you have public-private partnerships with lots of stakeholders with their own sets of incentives and goals,

it can be easy to have the goals and objectives of marginalized groups sublimated in the discussion."[58] Alexander argues that the most aggressive responses to regional inequities might be excluded in the interest of bringing together a broad consortium, and she suggests that participants must include structures to ensure that traditionally marginalized groups have "real, meaningful participation that leads to long-term outcomes that are good for that group."[59] Recipients of Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants were required to conduct a Fair Housing Equity Assessment, and, although not in effect during SCI planning, HUD's recent Final Rule on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing addresses concerns about intraregional equity through its provisions to "encourage and facilitate regional approaches to address fair housing issues."[60] Under the rule, HUD will provide regional data on integration, racial and ethnic concentrations of poverty, and other relevant conditions.[61]

> The Partnership for Sustainable Communities has developed a number of tools to measure progress and evaluate sustainability programs.

Marsh says that grantees have generally done a good job of engaging a range of stakeholders, including groups traditionally marginalized from mainstream planning processes, and that participants now have concrete expectations about the results of planning efforts, which acts as an internal accountability mechanism.[62] The Bay Area Regional Prosperity Plan, for example, included an "Equity Collaborative" working group

to engage underrepresented and disadvantaged groups throughout the planning process.[63] Chapple and Mattiuzzi found that more than 60 percent of SCI grant applicants proposed two-way public participation strategies rather than one-way, top-down engagement strategies such as public education.[64]

Although the extent to which such participatory processes result in more equitable outcomes remains to be seen, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities has developed a number of tools to measure progress and evaluate sustainability programs. The Location Affordability Index provides data on combined housing and transportation costs for eight different household profiles for every census block group nationwide, allowing policymakers to evaluate how land use and transportation planning decisions can affect household budgets.[65] The Sustainable Communities HotReport is a web-based tool that pulls data from public sources on selected transportation, housing, equity, economic development, and income sustainability indicators for a locality, allowing residents and community leaders to compare and measure progress. Finally, the Sustainable Community Indicator Catalog identifies a number of additional quantifiable indicators that can be used to measure a community's success in meeting sustainability goals.[66]

The second and final round of SCI grants was awarded in 2011, but their impact continues as grantees begin to implement plans forged under the grant. As more stakeholders adopt a regional lens and new, successful partnerships form, SCI will continue to influence the way regions implement sustainability projects. Marsh says that SCI grant managers "tried to orient [grantees] toward thinking of these as the run-up toward implementation versus just doing a planning exercise." He notes that several grantees built implementation into their plans through demonstration projects. HUD's ongoing capacity-building efforts have

The Southeast Florida Regional Partnership brought together more than 200 stakeholders from 7 counties to collaborate on long-range planning for economic growth and climate resilience.

also focused on moving grantees into the implementation phase.[67] Chapple observes that the SCI grant programs sparked an infusion of energy and interest around regional planning, creating an awareness that in at least some cases "seems to continue to resonate well after the grant period is over."[68]

Federal Initiatives on Infrastructure and Systems Investment

Common areas of concern for SCI grantees, and regional planning entities generally, are infrastructure elements such as highways, transit systems, and stormwater and sewer systems that typically correspond to a commute shed or watershed rather than conforming to jurisdictional boundaries. Aging infrastructure needing maintenance, population growth in remote areas, the decline in public spending on infrastructure, and technology changes all contribute to an "infrastructure deficit" in which the current condition and investment level in a region's infrastructure is out of step with present and future needs. Several federal financing programs — including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

program, the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Program, the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program, the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program, and Private Activity Bonds — can contribute to infrastructure and systems development.[69] Only some of these programs explicitly incorporate or conform to regional planning goals, but all of them could be more fully aligned with regional plans. Even federal programs such as HUD's Housing Choice Voucher program can adopt a regional approach. In one demonstration program, eight Chicago-area public housing agencies have pooled resources to facilitate mobility to high-opportunity neighborhoods.[70] In addition, various federal funding streams can be leveraged together as demonstrated by the 14 SCI community challenge grantees for fiscal year 2010 who also received TIGER Planning grants.[71]

At current levels, these public funding sources, although critical, are insufficient on their own. Federal initiatives such as the Build America Investment

Initiative, which was launched in July 2014, call on federal agencies to facilitate infrastructure investment through public-private partnerships that leverage additional funding sources. The Build America Transportation Investment Center provides expertise and support to state and local governments that are partnering with private entities to develop infrastructure and connects these partners with existing federal funding streams such as TIFIA. An estimated $10 in loans, loan guarantees, and lines of credit can be leveraged for every $1 of TIFIA funding.[72] To date, public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure development have been concentrated in a handful of states; 20 states had no PPPs as of July 2014, and the 5 states with the highest number of PPPs have nearly twice the amount of per-capita project value as the next 20 states combined. The Build America Transportation Investment Center seeks to share best practices from high-performing states and broaden the impact of PPPs nationwide.[73] The Interagency Infrastructure Finance Working Group, a group co-chaired by the secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Treasury and Transportation as part of the Build

Denver's Union Station serves as a central hub to a regional transit system, connecting the city core with the surrounding suburbs.

America Initiative, distilled some of those best practices into the following recommendations:

- increase resilience,

- employ "dig once" coordination of infrastructure projects to maximize efficiency and minimize disruption,

- increase predevelopment funding,

- reform state laws to accommodate public-private partnerships,

- improve permitting processes,

- encourage pension fund investment,

- standardize PPP contracts,

- share risks effectively, and

- bundle smaller projects to make them more attractive to institutional investors.[74]

Eagle P3, a regional transit infrastructure project that will add 36 miles of electric commuter rail lines to the Denver metropolitan area, advances regional sustainability through a public-private partnership. The Regional Transportation District of Denver has contracted with Denver Transit Partners, a consortium of investors and private-sector partners, to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the system for 34 years. Financing for the $2.2 billion project includes $1.1 billion in federal funds and $450 million in private funds.[75] Eagle P3 is now a focal point of regional planning for sustainability. The Denver Regional Council of Governments received an SCI planning grant to further develop its Metro Vision regional plan, which will channel investment toward three "catalytic projects" — one along each of three transportation corridors. The Metro Vision plan will also ensure that the region capitalizes on the potential benefits of TOD that will lower combined transportation and housing costs, connect residents of all income levels to employment opportunities, and reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.[76]

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy says that EPA's Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center, another part of the Build America Investment Initiative, can encourage innovative public-private partnerships such as the Clean Water Partnership, an agreement between Prince George's County in Maryland and Corvias Solutions, a Rhode Island firm. As part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, Prince George's County has an obligation under the Clean Water Act to reduce stormwater runoff into the bay.[77] Under the terms of the partnership, Corvias will design, retrofit, and maintain 2,000 previously untreated impervious acres over 3 years, with an option to increase this amount to 4,000 acres, and will provide long-term maintenance over 30 years. To merge sustainability goals with economic development, the partnership will also employ local, small, and minority-owned businesses for at least 30 to 40 percent of the total project activities. The county will independently retrofit impervious acres, offering an opportunity to evaluate and quantify the efficiencies gained by the partnership.[78]

As the Clean Water Partnership demonstrates, tremendous opportunity exists for regional infrastructure investments to improve resilience to natural disasters and climate change. At the federal level, policies and initiatives such as the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy and the Rebuild by Design competition are encouraging communities to adopt regional approaches to climate and disaster-related challenges. Building on the success of Rebuild by Design, HUD launched the National Disaster Resilience Competition, which will award $1 billion in CDBG disaster recovery funds to communities developing resilient infrastructure projects. The competition's stated objective is to identify opportunities for regional collaboration.[79] Climate change mitigation is a responsibility of policymakers at all levels of government, but decisions made at the regional level are particularly relevant. Every day, localities make land use and infrastructure decisions, with or without regional collaboration, that can either aggravate or mitigate climate change. For example, in communities that encourage sprawl but lack sufficient public transit options, residents will become

Seven50: Southeast Florida Prosperity Plan, for example, combines planning for regional climate and economic resiliency across a seven-county region. Led by the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils and the Southeast Regional Partnership, the effort, which was supported by a 2010 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, unites more than 200 stakeholders from the public and private sectors.[81] Tools such as the "equity profile" by PolicyLink and the University of Southern California's Program for Environmental and Regional Equity offer planners the information they need to ensure that all southeast Floridians, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, or class, share in both the processes and positive outcomes of planning for the region. Among the relevant considerations in this regard, researchers find that African American and Hispanic households have driven much of the region's recent and projected population growth and that income inequality as well as racial disparities in income and opportunity threaten the region's future prosperity.[82]

require extensive collaboration among all interested stakeholders. Public resources alone will not adequately support the investments necessary for comprehensive infrastructure improvements, climate change adaptation and disaster resilience, and sustainable housing development, among other urgent needs. Federal policy in this area is focused on trying to foster integrated approaches that cut across traditional policy silos and facilitate partnerships. Public-private partnerships that most efficiently align and leverage various funding sources are vitally necessary to have a wide impact. Pursuing these goals equitably and sustainably will remain an ongoing challenge — one that will best be met through robust, inclusive, representative civic participation and rigorous research and evaluation to identify and disseminate the most promising practices. EM

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9 Foster, 57.

10 Ibid., 62–3.

11 Gerrit-Jan Knaap and Rebecca Lewis. 2011. "Regional Planning for Sustainability and Hegemony of Metropolitan Regionalism," in Seltzer and Carbonell, 205–6.

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13 Ibid.; 13 C.F.R. Ch. III, pts. 303, 304.

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16 David Y. Miller and Raymond W. Cox, III. 2014. *Governing the Metropolitan Region: America's New Frontier*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 188.

> At its best, regional planning can incorporate consideration of climate and disaster resilience along with economic development and equity.

more dependent on cars, which in turn will increase greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, communities that encourage development with multimodal transit options will reduce those emissions. Regional planning can also help preserve ecological resources such as forested lands and limit development in floodplains or coastal areas vulnerable to rising sea levels and storms.[80]

At its best, regional planning can incorporate consideration of climate and disaster resilience along with economic development and equity. The

The Promise of Planning and Partnerships

A compelling case can be made for adopting regional approaches to many of the pressing issues facing communities across the country. More research is needed to understand which regional planning structures, policies, and practices work best and to evaluate the impact of federal funding and guidance such as SCI on planning processes and outcomes. Such research will become possible as more regional entities implement plans. What is certain is that both planning and implementation will

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59 Ibid.; Lisa T. Alexander. 2011. "The Promise and Perils of 'New Regionalist' Approaches to Sustainable Communities," *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 38, 673.

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Strategies for Regional Collaboration

"*In the end, local action over time is what actually ratifies regional plans and determines their success or failure.*"[1]

Highlights

- Traditional regional thinking and planning focused largely on structural changes to address the challenges of providing public services.

- Contemporary regional planning increasingly emphasizes forming cooperative relationships among local governments and stakeholders to collaborate on complex challenges unconstrained by political, geographical, racial, ethnic, and economic boundaries.

- Cross-jurisdictional planning and problem-solving places new demands on local governments to develop the capacities necessary for successful collaborative governance.

In the United States, policymakers and stakeholders are increasingly reaching across local jurisdictional boundaries to resolve common problems in the provision of public services and to achieve shared goals.[2] Thinking regionally to address these issues is not new, but it has differed in focus over time. In 1909, architect and city planner Daniel Burnham drafted the Plan of Chicago that extended beyond the city's borders to include planning for the development of the surrounding region. This was one of the earliest instances of regional planning in the U.S. and illustrates the city center-outward character of community planning early in the twentieth century (fig. 1).[3] The nation also has a long history of local jurisdictions gaining some degree of regional planning authority through annexation or by expanding jurisdictional boundaries in anticipation of growth and larger tax bases. For example, the population of Sugar Land, Texas, grew 150 percent from 1991 to 2006 through a series of annexations that has furthered development in the Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown metropolitan area.[4]

Attempts have also been made to resolve common problems within a region, such as fragmented governance, with local government consolidations. In 1970, for example, the city of Indianapolis and adjoining Marion County, with its 60 city, county, township, and special-purpose governments, were combined by state legislative action into a single jurisdiction, UniGov.[5] The fact that the United States has seen only 40 such consolidations is attributed to the enormous amount of time and energy necessary to manage the political challenges of implementation.[6] These structural-change solutions fall under what some label "old regionalism," in contrast with solutions that emphasize forming cooperative relationships to work on regionally shared mutual interests, such as the regional tax-base sharing program adopted by the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.[7]

Figure 1. Major Waves of Regionalism in U.S. History

Early 20th Century

Planning strategy originated from central city power and extended outward to surrounding area.

1960s – 1970s

Planning strategy originated at the top; federal policies encouraged regional focus.

1990s – Present

Planning strategy develops within voluntary cross-sector coalitions to tackle multi-jurisdictional issues.

Source: Julie Cencula Olberding. 2002. "Diving Into the 'Third Waves' of Regional Governance and Economic Development Strategies: A Study of Regional Partnerships for Economic Development in U.S. Metropolitan Areas," *Economic Development Quarterly* 16:3, 251–72.

Today, there is less public support for using structural changes to local government to achieve cost reductions and savings, broader tax bases, and increased efficiency while delivering services, and evidence suggests these actions may not achieve the intended outcomes or may have mixed results.[8] In its periodic surveys of local governments, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) finds an increasing interest in addressing common issues and problems through interlocal and regional partnerships and collaborations.[9] In ICMA's 2012 survey of local governments, city and county managers reported choosing to deliver at least some services collaboratively to achieve better outcomes (81%), leverage resources (84%), build relationships (77%), improve processes (69%), and because it's "the right thing to do" (86%).[10]

In 2013, 8 out of 10 local governments were participating in regional councils of governments, metropolitan planning organizations, or regional planning agencies. Although initially established

to meet federal funding requirements and state mandates, many of these groups have shifted their attention beyond regional comprehensive planning to addressing members' local service delivery needs.[11] ICMA reports that in 2013, the issues most often at the top of the planning agenda for these multijurisdictional organizations were roads and highways, economic development, and public transit. Participation in such regional planning organizations was greater in larger urban localities, such as metropolitan Denver, than in smaller, less-populated areas.[12] Metropolitan Denver's Regional Council of Governments consists of more than 50 local city and county governments that work collaboratively on growth management, transportation, traffic congestion, and air and water quality issues of concern throughout the region.[13] By contrast, the eCityGov Alliance, a smaller, regional initiative, makes government services and municipal amenities available online to residents of nine cities in Washington's Puget Sound region.[14] Such intergovernmental collaboration is the most common form of partnership now used to plan and provide for public services.

This trend toward regional thinking and collaboration (fig. 2) corresponds to the evolution of increasingly complex challenges that are unconstrained by political, geographical, racial, ethnic, and economic boundaries (see "Partnerships and Planning for Impact," p. 3–4). Today's immediate challenges to local communities and regions stem from the effects of the Great Recession, demographic changes, diminishing tax bases and revenues, shrinking federal resources, new and greater demand for services, and the expansion of metropolitan economic regions that contain numerous local governmental entities, resulting in uneven and fragmented service delivery.[15] Contextual conditions such as these, in tandem with motivations such as those named in the ICMA survey and other drivers, give rise to cross-jurisdictional collaboration.[16]

The participants in multiorganizational and interlocal government networks vary with the task at hand. Each actor brings applicable interests, assets, knowledge, and skills to the table. Typical actors include local governments, chambers of commerce, local development corporations, utilities, special districts, neighborhood associations, foundations, and private industry councils.[17] This "public policy decision making and management that engage[s] people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished" is broadly described as collaborative governance.[18]

The increasing reliance on multigovernmental, multijurisdictional, and multisectoral approaches to challenges places new demands on local governments; the capacities required to collaborate are quite different from those needed to manage a single organization.[19, 20] To help local jurisdictions plan collaborative action, the Enhanced Partnership of ICMA, along with the Alliance for Innovation and the Center for Urban Innovation at Arizona State University, introduced an evidence-based Collaborative Services Decision Matrix Tool in 2014. This tool is designed to help users determine the assets, contract specification and monitoring requirements, labor, capital, costs, management competencies, and administrative stability needed for a collaborative effort. The tool also helps stakeholders weigh community factors that could affect outcomes, such as potential partners, council orientation and political environment, fiscal and economic health, unions, and public interests. Grounded in a synthesis of the literature and case study research, the tool also offers a rough estimate of the likelihood that a collaboration will be successful.[21] The Enhanced Partnership contends that a comprehensive discussion of these factors allows the stakeholders to understand the soft and hard costs as well as the benefits involved in a plan

City and county governments work together on mutual issues of concern, including transportation, traffic congestion, emergency services, and air and water quality.

to deliver public services collaboratively. At the same time, the tool begins the process through which relationships, mutual trust, and a capacity to problem-solve together grow.[22]

Similarly, the National League of Cities and the Alliance for Regional Stewardship provide an evidence-based guide to help local officials who, through collaboration, are "[seeking] cost savings and new efficiencies…[as well as] improving service delivery, achieving social equity, empowering disaffected groups, and addressing regional-scale problems more successfully." When deciding whether to deliver a service directly or through regional collaboration, local leaders are counseled to choose regionalism when economies of scale can be achieved, when spillover is big, or when cross-jurisdictional

coordination is necessary, among other factors. The guide identifies and discusses 17 regional collaboration options ranging from easy to difficult to implement (table 1).[23]

As local leaders decide to collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries, says Brookings Institution Visiting Fellow and regional governance expert Kathryn Foster, they face three big questions about the authority to plan and implement, how planning will be implemented and by whom, and in what territory. Because these relationships do not depend on legal authority to ensure that the goals are met, collaborative arrangements must rely on other forces and skills to create the cohesion necessary to achieve objectives — that is, there must be a transition from government to governance. Foster points to the importance in regional

governance of having participants with political legitimacy, the authority to back policies, and respect for local jurisdictional decisions on policies with local impact. Also important to the process is "developed authority," which can emerge from the synergy of all the elements of collaboration —"professional staff, ample expertise, high social capital with public entities, and policy sway resting in the persuasive powers of agency leaders and board members."[24]

Feedback from local government officials about their experiences with collaboration emphasizes the importance of thinking regionally, building on existing relationships, being as inclusive as possible, involving the right partners with the needed expertise or authority, and being flexible.[25] Members of an expert panel of practitioners

consulted by the *State and Local Government Review* about interlocal collaboration also stressed the importance of preexisting relationships. In addition to the trust and confidence that are built over time in relationships, the transaction costs are lower if there is mutual recognition of problems and of opportunities to work together, as one panel member noted. Transaction costs rise with the need to convince and persuade an organization to collaborate.[26]

Whether governmental collaborations and partnerships can be deemed successful requires careful study. Success stories are commonly reported, but failed experiments are mentioned less often. More research that extends beyond case studies is needed (see "Partnerships and Planning for Impact," p. 5). Reviews and analyses of case study literature reveal a large emphasis on the collaborative process itself, rather than policy or management outcomes, although some studies do have this focus. Bel and Warner analyzed available research on cost savings from intermunicipal cooperation for service delivery and found a few instances of services,

> Stakeholders must understand the soft and hard costs as well as the benefits involved in a plan to deliver public services collaboratively.

such as solid waste management, in which economies of scale permitted reduced service costs, although this finding might be of greater benefit to smaller municipalities than to larger ones. Bel and Warner also noted that the transaction costs of collaborative governance were likely to rise with the number of actors involved.[27] In another analysis of a diverse set of 137 case studies of collaborative governance, Ansell and Gash discovered a lack of common language, missing data, very few evaluations of outcomes, and no comparisons

with outcomes from other forms of governance. By identifying the most frequent and common findings from the sample of collaboration cases, these scholars found four types of variables frequently discussed in their sample of studies: starting conditions, institutional design, leadership, and the collaborative process. The overarching conclusion of this meta-analysis was that the success of collaborative governance depends on adequate time for the process as well as on trust and interdependence among the participants.[28]

A focus among case studies on the complex collaborative process may in itself be significant because it is both hard to do and "inherently fragile."[29] The diversity of needs, skills, and interests brought to collaboration requires whatever time and synergy it takes to construct a space in which mutual understandings and commitments are reached, thus producing public value. It is this product, McGuire et al. propose, that should be viewed "not simply a means to an end, but as an end [in] itself."[30] As these hypotheses are tested and research and experience

Table 1. Collaborative Options for Local Government: Easier to Harder	
Easier to Implement	**Harder to Implement**
1. Informal Cooperation	10. Local Special Districts
2. Interlocal Service Contracts	11. Transfer of Functions
3. Joint Powers Agreements	12. Annexation
4. Extraterritorial Powers	13. Special Districts and Authorities
5. Councils of Government	14. Metro Multipurpose Districts
6. Federally Encouraged Single-Purpose Regional Bodies	15. Reformed Urban County
7. State Planning and Development Districts	16. Regional Asset Districts
8. Contracting	17. Merger/Consolidation
9. Regional Purchasing Agreements	

Source: John Parr, Joan Riem, and Christiana McFarland. 2006. *Guide to Successful Local Government Collaboration in America's Regions*, Washington, DC: National League of Cities.

Public transit is one the highest priorities on the planning agendas of multijurisdictional organizations.

with regionalism and collaborative governance accrue, what constitutes a successful arrangement for delivering particular services in unique local conditions and how to weigh the actual costs and benefits of collaboration will become increasingly clear. **EM**

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2 William R. Barnes and Kathryn A. Foster. 2012. "Toward a More Useful Way of Understanding Regional Governance," paper presented at conference of the European Urban Research Association, Vienna, Austria.

3 M.J. Breheny and P.W.J. Batey. 1981. "The History of Planning Methodology: A Preliminary Sketch," *Built Environment 7:2*, 111–14; Greg Hise. 2009. "Whither the Region? Periods and Periodicity in Planning History," *Journal of Planning History* 8:4, 295–307.

4 John Parr, Joan Riem, and Christiana McFarland. 2006. *Guide to Successful Local Government Collaboration in America's Regions.* Washington, DC: National League of Cities, 27–8.

5 Jeff Wachter. 2014. "40 Years After Unigov: Indianapolis and Marion County's Experience With Consolidated Government," Baltimore, Maryland: the Abell Foundation (**www.cgr.org/consensuscny/docs/CaseStudies_ec-unigov514.pdf**). Accessed 19 October.

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7 Lisa Benton-Short. 2014. *Cities of North America: Contemporary Challenge in U.S. and Canadian Cities*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 184–91.

8 See Stephen Calabrese, Glenn Cassidy, and Dennis Epple. 2002. "Local Government Fiscal Structure and Metropolitan Consolidation," Project Muse, Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs; Joseph N. Heiney. 2012. "Can State & Local Government Consolidation Really Save Money?" *Journal of Business & Economics Research* 10:10, 539–46; Joseph Martin and Eric A. Scorsone. 2011. "Cost Ramifications of Municipal Consolidation: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management* 23:3, 311–37; Frank Gamrat and Jake Haulk. 2005. "Merging Governments: Lessons from Louisville, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia," Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Allegheny Institute for Public Policy.

9 Cheryl Hilvert and David Swindell. 2013. "Collaborative Service Delivery: What Every Local Government Manager Should Know," *State and Local Government Review* 45:4, 242.

10 Ibid., 245.

11 National League of Cities. 2012. "Metropolitan Councils" (**nlc.org/build-skills-and-networks/resources/cities-101/city-powers/metropolitan-councils**). Accessed 19 October 2015.

12 International City/County Management Association. 2013. "Regional Solutions to Regional Problems" (**transformgov.org/en/Article/103634/Regional_Solutions_to_Regional_Problems**). Accessed 14 September 2015.

13 Denver Regional Council of Governments. 2009. "With One Voice" (**transformgov.org/en/knowl-edge_network/documents/kn/Document/305307/With_One_Voice**) Accessed 14 September 2015;

14 David Swindell and Cheryl Hilvert. 2014. "Contemplating Collaboration." *PM Magazine* (August) (**www.icma.org/en/press/pm_magazine/article/104725**). Accessed 15 September 2015; eCityGov Alliance. 2014. "About Us" (**www.ecitygov.net/Pages/Services.aspx**) Accessed 15 September 2015.

15 Michael Abels. 2014. Strategic Alignment for the New Normal: Collaboration, Sustainability, and Deliberation in Local Government Across Boundaries," *State and Local Government Review* 46:3, 211–18; Government Finance Officers Association. 2007. "Alternative Service Delivery: Shared Services."

16 Kirk Emerson, Tina Nabatchi, and Stephen Balogh. 2012. "An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 22:1, 1–30.

17 Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire. 1998. "Multinetwork Management: Collaboration and the Hollow State in Local Economic Policy," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 8:1, 67–91.

18 Emerson et al.

19 Michael Abels. 2012. "Managing through Collaborative Networks: A Twenty-First Century Mandate for Local Government," *State and Local Government Review* 44:S, 30S–43S; Kathryn A. Foster. 2010. "Challenges ahead for US regional planning governance," *Town Planning Review* 81:5, 485–503.

20 Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire. 1998. "Multinetwork Management: Collaboration and the Hollow State in Local Economic Policy," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 8:1, 67–91; Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire. 2003. *Collaborative Public Management: New Strategies for Local Governments,* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

21 Enhanced Partnership of the ICMA, the Alliance for Innovation, and the Center for Urban Innovation at Arizona State University. 2014. "The Collaborative Service Delivery Matrix: A Decision Tool to Assist Local Governments," "A Summary of the Research Behind the Decision Matrix Tool," and "Bibliographic Resources on Collaborative Service Delivery Arrangements" (**icma.org/en/results/management_strategies/resources/documents_articles#collaborative-service-delivery**). Accessed 19 October 2015.

22 Swindell and Hilvert 2014.

23 Parr et al.

24 Kathryn A. Foster 2010, 499.

25 Parr et al. 47–52.

26 Bruce J. Perlman. 2015. "Trust and Timing: The Importance of Relationship and Opportunity for Interlocal Collaboration and Agreements," *State and Local Government Review* 47:2, 116–26.

27 Germà Bel and Mildred E. Warner. 2015. "Intermunicipal cooperation and costs: Expectations and evidence," *Public Administration* 93:1, 52–67.

28 Chris Ansell and Alison Gash. 2007. "Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18, 43–71.

29 Ann Marie Thomson and James L. Perry. 2006. "Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box," *Public Administration Review* (Special Issue: December), 20–32.

30 Michael McGuire, Robert Agranoff, and Chris Silvia. 2011. "Putting the 'Public' Back into Collaborative Public Management," paper presented at the Public Management Research Conference, Syracuse, NY, 1-4 June.

Also notable, the DRCOG provides resources for its member governments through technical assistance, high-quality digital aerial photography services to help with mapping and planning, training, centralized firefighter testing, elevator/escalator safety inspection, and aging services for the metropolitan area's elderly residents.

Moving Toward a Sustainable Future: Three Models of Regional Planning

Regional planning seeks to integrate the policies of neighboring communities to address issues that exceed the purview of a single jurisdiction, such as transportation systems, housing markets, and natural ecosystems. The ability of a community to collaborate successfully across jurisdictional boundaries to plan for change influences not only its economic competitiveness but also its residents' quality of life and access to opportunities. Through the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program, HUD supported the voluntary coordination of long-term housing, land use, economic development, and infrastructure decisions by local jurisdictions and planning agencies to address regional challenges (see "Partnerships and Planning for Impact," p. 1).[1] This article examines three regions — Northeast Ohio, Western North Carolina, and Puget Sound in Washington — that received Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants. In each example, a lead grant applicant brought together local stakeholders, including underserved or historically marginalized groups, to systematically study the current conditions of the shared region and develop a long-term vision and policy framework that integrates the needs of all residents and communities. Although crafted to serve the unique circumstances of a particular region, each framework promotes economic development, creating a range of transportation options, focusing new development in existing communities, and preserving ecologically important areas.

Highlights

- The Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium, a coalition of local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, and nonprofit advocacy groups, produced a regional plan for the 12-county Northeast Ohio region. Their Vibrant NEO 2040 plan encourages greater integration of Northeast Ohio's employment centers through inclusive economic and land use policies and a cohesive transportation plan.

- The Land of Sky Regional Council in Western North Carolina is working with a consortium of governments, businesses, and nonprofits called GroWNC to balance expected population growth with the region's existing natural assets by promoting smart infrastructure investments, diverse economic development strategies, and farmland and environmental preservation.

- Washington's Puget Sound Regional Council launched the Growing Transit Communities planning initiative to support equitable and efficient transit-oriented development in its growing region.

Changing the Trajectory of Northeast Ohio

The northeast corner of Ohio has faced years of economic decline and population loss. Where growth does occur, it is typically on undeveloped land in suburban and exurban communities that absorb residents from legacy cities. This population movement contributes to disinvestment in legacy cities; places Northeast Ohio's natural resources in jeopardy; and enervates the fiscal health of cities, counties, and the region.[2] To reverse this trend, a coalition of local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, and nonprofit advocacy groups launched the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC), which crafted a coordinated approach to land use, transportation, and housing policy for the 12-county region. Using a $4.25 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, NEOSCC produced Vibrant NEO 2040, a vision and framework that encourage greater integration of Northeast Ohio's employment centers (the cities of Cleveland, Akron, Canton, and Youngstown) through inclusive economic and land use policies and a cohesive transportation plan.[3]

Northeast Ohio's Structural Challenges

NEOSCC predicts that continuing current development policies would force all 12 counties in Northeast Ohio into a fiscal no-win situation, forced to either raise taxes or cut services to pay for their increasing financial obligations. NEOSCC measured fiscal health as the ratio of tax revenue to government spending on infrastructure and services. The region, which has a mix of counties with positive and negative ratios, has an overall ratio of –0.3, meaning that spending slightly outweighs revenues. By 2040, however, NEOSCC projects that every county in Northeast Ohio will have a negative ratio and the region will have an overall ratio of –33.7. Furthermore, the financial situation of the healthiest county in 2040 will be worse than that of the sickest county in 2010.[4]

Northeast Ohio's declining fiscal health is driven by two interrelated and compounding forces: the region's overall loss of population and jobs and the movement of people and jobs from central cities to suburban and exurban communities. The region's population was 3.8 million in 2010, 7 percent lower than its 1970s peak and well below the 5 to 6 million that demographers once predicted would live in the region.[5] As the region's population declined, the average number of residents per acre decreased from 5.43 to 4.18 between 1979 and 2006. During the same period, 4 to 5 percent of undeveloped land was developed, increasing the region's footprint.[6] Bethia Burke, director of grants and emerging

initiatives at Fund for Our Economic Future, the organization that paid for the initial grant work to create the consortium, identifies this pattern as "growth without growth."[7] The region now has more housing, roads, sewer lines, businesses, and office buildings despite the falling population.[8] NEOSCC found that "funds available for transportation infrastructure construction and maintenance are declining," meaning that local governments will need to either raise taxes to meet their maintenance responsibilities or allow their roads to deteriorate.[9]

Modeling What the Future Holds

NEOSCC does not have the power to compel jurisdictions to implement its recommendations; instead, it relies on its ability to persuade. The organization operates as a forum for local officials and stakeholders to discuss and debate ideas that they can take back to their communities. NEOSCC's view is that "a shared vision for Northeast Ohio's future developed through a robust engagement process can give communities a reason to align their planning and resource allocation decisions to build a healthier, more economically and socially equitable region."[10]

This robust engagement process was predicated on building widespread community support, explains Frederick Wright, chief executive officer of Akron's Urban League and chair of NEOSCC's Communication and Outreach workgroup. Because some residents had reservations about regionalism, Wright says, NEOSCC focused on explaining the benefits of aligning local goals and stressed the voluntary nature of the recommendations to assuage fears.[11] NEOSCC held scenario-planning workshops in all 12 counties and launched ImagineMyNEO, an online game that challenged residents to build their preferred future.[12] Scenario planning extrapolates possible futures given current conditions, a set of growth assumptions, and different policy objectives. These tools serve the dual purpose of providing information to residents in a digestible format and making it easier for residents to comment on regional values and preferred development alternatives.[13] Wright reports that nearly 6,000 residents participated in crafting the regional vision.[14]

NEOSCC first tested a business-as-usual or *Trend* scenario, which assumed that migration patterns and job creation will remain constant and jurisdictions will continue their current development policies. Under the *Trend* scenario, NEOSCC found that abandonment will not only increase in Northeast Ohio's four main cities but will also spread to smaller towns and first-ring suburban
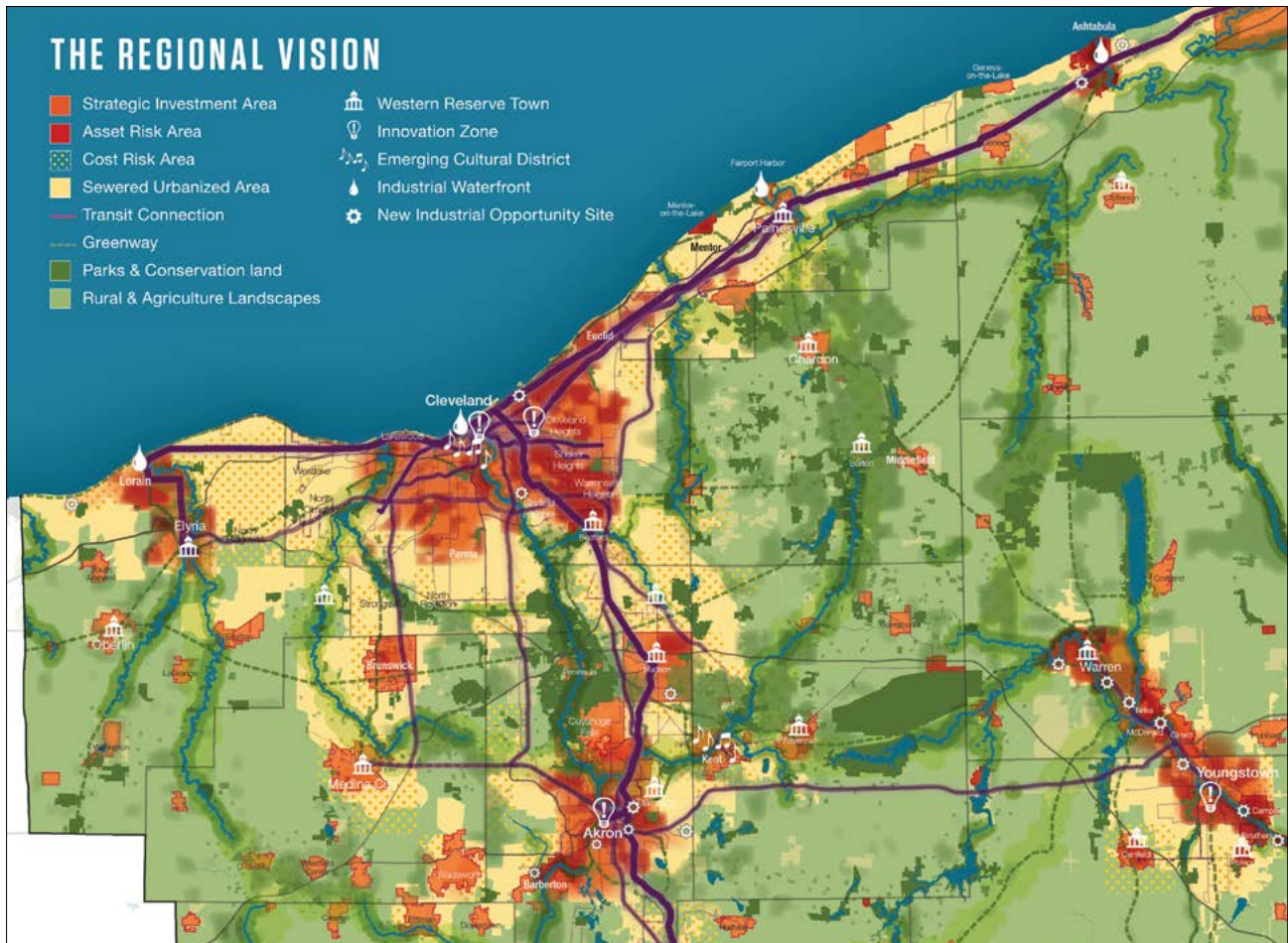
NEOSCC's Regional Vision calls for stitching together Northeast Ohio's communities by increasing transit connections and prioritizing investment in urban areas.

The Warehouse District in downtown Cleveland has seen increased investment in recent years, resulting in new residents, businesses, restaurants, and entertainment.

communities such as Ashtabula, Alliance, and Massillon. Currently, 86,000 abandoned homes are in the region, a number projected to grow to 175,000 by 2040.[15]

Believing that the outcomes of the *Trend* scenario are unsustainable, NEOSCC tested three alternative scenarios to determine the effect of different policy considerations. The scenarios considered what would happen if population and employment growth remained constant but local government implemented the Vibrant NEO framework (*Do Things Differently*), population and employment growth improved but jurisdictions made no policy changes (*Grow the Same*), and growth improved and Vibrant NEO was implemented (*Grow Differently*).[16]

Implementing the framework would have a significant and positive impact on Northeast Ohio. *Do Things Differently* would double the amount of parkland conserved, reduce lane miles by 77 percent, lead to 155,000 fewer abandoned homes, and consume 82 percent fewer acres of land and 84 percent fewer acres

of prime farmland. Residents would also have more transportation options, with 50 percent of jobs and 35 percent of residents located near transit (compared with 41 percent and 25 percent, respectively, under the *Trend* scenario). Most important, the region's fiscal outlook, as measured by the ratio of the cost of government services and infrastructure to tax revenue, would improve from its current –0.3 to 10.4.[17]

After testing the growth scenarios, which assumed 875,000 new residents and 500,000 new jobs, NEOSCC found that Northeast Ohio cannot simply hope that new development will ease its fiscal difficulties.[18] Under the *Grow the Same* scenario, the region would have a negative cost-to-revenue ratio of –6.4, and rural and sparsely developed communities, which currently pay the least for public services, would see the worst future fiscal outcomes. *Growing Differently*, however, would be a boon to the region. Its cost-to-revenue ratio would be 13.8, and more than half of the region's jobs would be located near transit.[19]

The Vibrant NEO Framework

NEOSCC did not see its role as deciding on a precise "plan" for the region's future; rather, it facilitated a coherent regional vision that local governments and stakeholders could voluntarily implement. Residents of Northeast Ohio said that they aspire to build a region that is "competitive, growing, and fair."[20] According to Hunter Morrison, executive director of NEOSCC, "What we heard broadly is that people wanted to do things differently. People want more choices: more housing choices, more transportation choices, a clean environment, and good jobs."[21] Vibrant NEO promotes choice and a competitive region and supports existing communities by renewing investment, increasing transportation options within and between cities, preserving natural areas, and promoting local government collaboration.[22]

The Vibrant NEO framework is a collection of 9 recommendations and 41 initiatives to realign infrastructure, housing, and land use incentives to promote long-term economic growth.[23]

The framework created a "menu of initiatives that local governments can decide to implement," says Grace Gallucci, chair of NEOSCC and executive director of the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), a metropolitan planning organization and the lead applicant responsible for tracking NEOSCC's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant.[24] Some of the initiatives include developing a regional network of job centers connected by multimodal transportation, remediating and redeveloping abandoned parcels, encouraging more mixed-use development, and preserving natural areas for future generations.[25] Burke notes that these strategies are mutually reinforcing: "If you don't prioritize urban infill, you lose the green space. If you don't prioritize the green space, it becomes difficult to find the funding to do infill."[26]

Outcomes and Implementation

Morrison identifies the conditions and trends data, scenario mapping, and development strategies as significant outcomes of Vibrant NEO. "What we've collected," Morrison says, "is a rich and robust set of pilots and best practices that other communities can learn from."[27] NEOSCC also created a regionwide land use map and a zoning map by aggregating and digitizing information from every jurisdiction in Northeast Ohio. Such tools and digital information are important to local communities because they allow officials to understand what would happen if "we just let things go on autopilot," says Donald Romancak, the community development director of Lorain County. Romancak explains that NOACA and NEOSCC broke out the county-specific data for Lorain, which is helping the county's towns and cities determine how to balance development pressure while preserving their identity. "We are working with our local communities, talking to them about different possibilities. We're not just out there preaching [that] we've got to change.… [I]t's a lot easier to accomplish things

when people ask you to help them do something they want." For example, Romancak and his staff are working with three cities and their mainstreet organizations to identify strategies from the Vibrant NEO toolbox that will help create and maintain an "active and robust downtown."[28]

Vibrant NEO empowered local officials and residents to discuss regionalism and sustainability in a way that was previously difficult, says Gallucci. She contends that convening such a diverse group of stakeholders to talk about the region's problems and then achieving a consensus on a vision was a huge accomplishment. Seventy-four percent of NEOSCC survey respondents said that their future depended on the economic success of the region.[29] Although Northeast Ohio and its communities face daunting challenges, the ubiquity of those challenges may help build a cohesive region. Wright compares the

region's situation to that of a boat with a hole at one end, letting in water. For years, the hole was seen as only the problem of the people getting wet. But that leak, which is worsening, threatens to sink everyone. Vibrant NEO is working to change the atmosphere in which decisions are made, marking the first step of a larger conversation to improve the trajectory of Northeast Ohio.

Preserving Western North Carolina's Distinct Character

Land of Sky in Western North Carolina, a rural region of forests, farmland, and small towns nestled between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky mountain ranges, expects to add 176,000 new residents over the next 30 years – an amount equivalent to twice the size of the region's current largest city. The Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC), a planning body with representatives from 4 counties and 15 municipalities,

GroWNC calls for expanding small-scale wind farms in rural areas such as Madison County's Wind for Schools project, which installed three wind turbines in local schools.

Farming is a pillar of the Western North Carolina economy, but the amount of farmland has shrunk over the past 50 years.

predicts that this rapid growth could jeopardize the natural assets and rural communities that make the area attractive and drive important economic sectors.[30] With a $1.6 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, LOSRC gathered a consortium of 2 counties; 9 municipalities; 8 state and local agencies; and 52 nonprofits, businesses, and trade groups to develop GroWNC, a voluntary policy framework that promotes smart infrastructure investments, diverse economic development strategies, and farmland and environmental preservation.[31]

Challenge and Opportunity

LOSRC predicts that 630,000 people will call Land of Sky home by 2040, a 40 percent increase over the region's 2010 population.[32] According to Justin Hembree, executive director of LOSRC, residents and businesses are attracted to the region because of its natural environment.[33] Sitting in the heart of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the region boasts an eclectic mix of river valleys; swift streams; forests of dogwood, birch, maple, oak and pine; mountain views; and rich soil. Farming is one of the region's largest industries; in 2007, Land of Sky boasted more than 180,000 acres of prime farmland generating $135 million in market value.[34] Tourism is another pillar of the area's

economy — many people come to enjoy the region's biodiversity and unique microclimates.[35]

Hembree explains that "growth issues and sustainability need to be a major factor, because if we are not able to sustain and protect our natural environment, we are going to lose out in terms of fueling our economic engines."[36] Over the past few decades, some of the area's assets have become threatened. For example, the percentage of farmland under cultivation fell from 50 percent of the region in 1950 to 16 percent in 2007. LOSRC attributes this decline in part to the limited amount of buildable land; the mountainous topography of the region often forces new development onto farmlands and forests.[37]

GroWNC Scenario Planning

GroWNC is the region's first comprehensive vision developed with input from local residents and officials from all jurisdictions. According to Jeff Staudinger, assistant director of community and economic development with the city of Asheville and a contributor to GroWNC, "we asked first and foremost how and where do we want to grow, what are the attributes of that growth, and what is irreplaceable if it were lost?"[38] More than 5,000 people participated through

workshops, online forums, and surveys. Residents and local business owners were placed in leadership roles. A major component of GroWNC's outreach and analysis was scenario planning. Unlike Vibrant NEO, which tested different growth assumptions for two policy frameworks, LOSRC's scenario planning assumed consistent job and population growth and tested four development frameworks — *Business as Usual, Economic Prosperity, Resource Conservation,* and *Efficient Growth* — to help residents understand policy tradeoffs. LOSRC also created an online mapping program, GroWNC MapViewer, which allowed residents to visualize current conditions, change over time, and the outcomes of the four different scenarios.[39]

Business as Usual represents a probable future based on the continuation of existing policies. Currently, 47 percent of the region is classified as "natural," meaning that it contains less than 1 dwelling unit (DU) per 20 acres. If trends continue, by 2040 the acreage of natural land would drop by 9.1 percentage points. Low-density development (0.25 to 1 DU and fewer than 60 employees per acre) and moderate-density development (0.25 to 5 DU and more than 60 employees per acre) would consume much of the natural land.

Low- and moderate-density development would increase by 3.9 and 3.3 percentage points, respectively. *Business as Usual* would increase the number of dispersed homes and businesses, leading to increased vehicle miles traveled and the inefficient extension of municipal services.[40]

The *Efficient Growth* scenario tested land use and transportation outcomes in which future development was concentrated in existing communities and vacant properties were redeveloped. In this scenario, the amount of natural land would still decrease by 2040, but by only 6.2 percentage points, and low- and moderate-density development would be 2.2 and 1.3 percentage points lower, respectively, than the *Business as Usual* scenario. The *Resource Conservation* scenario, which tested land use policies that limited development in areas of natural or cultural importance, would retain the highest acreage of natural land at 41.6 percent, a loss of only 5.4 percentage points. Under the *Economic Prosperity* scenario, policies would encourage brownfield redevelopment and conservation of prime agricultural land, leading to 2.2 percentage points more natural acreage and 1.7 percentage points less low-density development than the *Business as Usual* scenario.[41]

Downtowns and main streets, such as in Brevard, North Carolina shown above, benefit from regional policies that promote renewed investment in developed areas.

Residents voted on the important scenario elements and outcomes, and those results were aggregated to create a *Preferred* scenario. Across socioeconomic groups, local residents expressed a desire to preserve the region's natural resources and rural communities and identified areas already served by infrastructure as "consensus growth areas" appropriate for development.[42] The *Preferred* scenario is seen not as a prescriptive plan but rather as a collection of suggested steps to achieve a common vision. It encourages new roads, homes, and businesses in existing communities by supporting the redevelopment of brownfields, industrial sites, and old retail centers and preserves farmland and natural areas. Critical watersheds are protected, as are ecological corridors that connect natural areas. The *Preferred* scenario improves water and air quality over *Business as Usual* as well as conserving more land, providing more transportation options, and concentrating more development within existing communities.[43]

Implementation

GroWNC is a voluntary decisionmaking framework that includes recommendations, best practices, and a searchable strategies toolkit that local governments and agencies can use to find policy ideas. For those that participate, GroWNC is a "fantastic resource" that highlights successful projects within the region from which others may learn, says Cynthia Barcklow, a planner with Buncombe County. Barcklow states that planners can use the information and analysis to pursue projects and grants that previously may have been too difficult to attempt; in addition, the collaborative atmosphere that pervaded the process makes the framework accessible.[44]

Barcklow cites Asheville's East of the Riverway Multimodal Neighborhood Project as an example of a local sustainability project working in concert with GroWNC.[45] Funded in part by an $850,000 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, planning for the East of the Riverway project occurred in tandem with GroWNC.[46] "These were highly synergistic processes, with many of the same players involved," says Staudinger. "The policies developed for GroWNC were shared with the East of the Riverway and vice versa."[47] The project area contains more than 1,000 acres of ecologically, economically, and culturally important sites between the French Broad River and downtown Asheville. The project integrates existing transportation, greenway, revitalization, and energy plans adopted by the city to foster a multimodal transportation network and the redevelopment of old industrial sites along the French Broad River. Using $1 million in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants to Asheville and LOSRC, the city remediated nine brownfield sites in the project area. One of those remediated sites became the $175 million expansion of the New Belgium Brewery, which is expected to open by the end of 2015.[48] One of New Belgium's stated reasons for choosing the riverfront location was to avoid consuming undeveloped farmland.[49]

Hembree explains that GroWNC serves as a "super workplan" that supports and informs all other regional projects,

Regional Equity Network encouraged and financially supported resident participation in the Growing Transit Communities planning process.

providing "a huge library of data as well as a framework for developing more specific plans."[50] For example, the agricultural needs and strategies identified during GroWNC were used as the basis of WNC AgriVentures, a LOSRC project that received $1.63 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other institutions and was a winner of the Obama administration's Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge in 2012. WNC AgriVentures promotes job creation and a stronger agricultural cluster in the region by filling in the gaps in the local farming production chain.[51] GroWNC helps move these types of project forward, says Hembree, because "we know these are regional priorities — they were identified through this very comprehensive process."[52]

Lessons Learned

Early in the planning process, governments and residents expressed concern that GroWNC was an extension of Agenda 21, a set of nonbinding policy recommendations created by the United Nations in 1992 to support sustainable development that some have come to see as undermining local authority. One county eventually pulled out of the process, causing officials to refocus outreach efforts and stress the voluntary nature of the GroWNC framework to gain the support of local governments. The purpose was not "to dictate to our local governments from up-high policies, procedures, or ordinances that they needed to enact to comply with our plan," says Hembree.[53]

Instead, GroWNC began a two-way conversation with residents. GroWNC contracted with a firm to create a professional, branded look and conduct outreach, which Barklow and Hembree say was important for explaining that local residents retained control over the region's future and that their local governments would not cede land use authority.[54] Barklow, Hembree, and Staudinger expressed their belief that more voices — especially dissenting voices — enhanced the overall project because its success depends on convincing a large and diverse group of stakeholders that building a sustainable region is in everyone's best interest.[55]

Equitable and Efficient Transit-Oriented Development in Puget Sound

Over the past decade, voters in Washington's Puget Sound have approved $25 billion in new transit improvements, including a 55-mile light rail system. To ensure that the region realizes the full potential of these investments and that the new transit system serves equity and sustainability goals, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) launched Growing Transit Communities (GTC), a planning initiative funded by a $5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The initiative brought together representatives from 10 cities and counties, 14 agencies, and 17 nonprofit organizations to align land use and transportation policy in Puget Sound's 3 new transit corridors.

The Opportunities and Challenges of a Growing Region

Puget Sound has seen tremendous growth in recent years; its population increased by 19 percent between 2000 and 2015. Total employment in the region increased by 7 percent between 2000 and 2013, driven by high-tech industries such as information technology, which grew by 38 percent, and aerospace, which grew by 7 percent.[56] As a growing region, Puget Sound is able to support new transit investments, such as a 3.1-mile extension to its existing 15.6-mile Link light rail system. After Puget Sound approved the extension in 2006, voters agreed in 2008 to expand the system by 36 miles along three corridors: north and east of Seattle and south of Sea-Tac Airport.[57] Eventually, the system will stretch from Tacoma to Lynnwood in Snohomish County and Redmond in King County. Residents of Seattle, King County, and Snohomish County have also recently voted to expand their transit systems and enact improvements.[58]

One consequence of this growth, however, has been the rising cost of housing, which has forced families to move farther away from jobs, transit, and other amenities; Seattle's real (inflation-adjusted) housing prices increased by 20.6 percent from 1998 to 2012.[59] Recognizing these new investments as a historic opportunity to improve equity, regional leaders launched GTC, a planning initiative spearheaded by PSRC. GTC is the implementation component of Puget Sound's existing plans, Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040, which are mandated under Washington's Growth Management Act, a law that requires local governments to create comprehensive plans consistent with a regional plan.[60] The Vision 2040 framework concentrates population and employment growth over the next 25 years in designated growth centers, primarily metropolitan areas and core cities.[61] GTC supports this framework through its three main goals: attracting more housing and job growth around

transit stations, promoting affordable housing near transit, and fostering greater opportunity for residents through transit.[62]

Making Transit Serve the Needs of All Residents

According to Tony To, executive director of HomeSight and vice chair of GTC, early plans lacked financial support to communities, which was a major impediment to robust engagement. Although officials were paid for their time, says To, "community members and individuals from voluntary organizations were expected to take time off of work," and as a result,

"the community could never expect to be fully engaged."[63] During GTC, underserved and traditionally marginalized populations were encouraged to participate through the Regional Equity Network, which was formed in partnership with Impact Capital. The Regional Equity Network provided funding to help residents conduct their own outreach, meet with officals, and create recommendations to influence the plan. In total, the Regional Equity Network administered $550,000 in grants to community organizations to facilitate resident involvement in the planning of the transit corridors, which grantees leveraged for

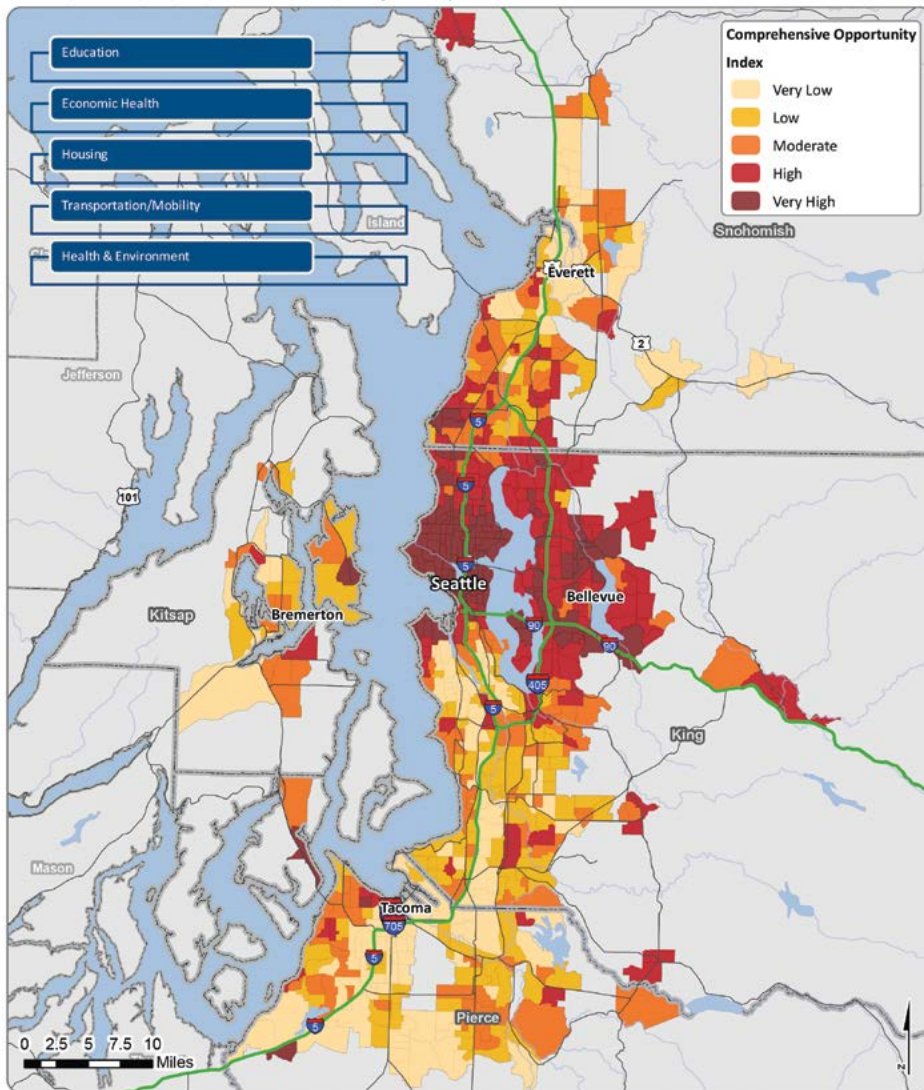an additional $574,500 in community resources.[64]

To help ensure that the benefits of transit investments are equitably distributed, the Regional Equity Network worked with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University to measure and map access to opportunity in the region. Kirwan analyzed the conditions of neighborhoods (defined by census tracts) using education, economic, transportation, housing, environmental, and health indicators. These indicators, which Kirwan developed based on input from the GTC's Fair Housing subcommittee, PSRC planning staff, members of the Regional Equity Network, and other stakeholders, were aggregated to create an overall opportunity score, and neighborhoods were sorted by opportunity level: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high. "Equity" was defined as allowing all people to "have access to the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and let them reach their full potential."[65]

The opportunity mapping "allowed us to see how opportunity is physically located" and the "communities that are underinvested," says To. The Regional Equity Network found that 57 percent of African Americans, 54 percent of Hispanics, and 53.7 percent of American Indian or Alaska Native populations lived in areas of low or very low opportunity. Whites and Asians, on the other hand, were much more likely to live in areas of high or very high opportunity (42.5% and 43.5%, respectively).[66] Most HUD units (51.6%) are in areas of high or very high opportunity, but only 33.8 percent of housing choice voucher holders live in such areas. The opportunity mapping was incorporated into GTC station area planning and made available to affordable housing developers, local government officials, and transportation planners to guide investment in areas of low opportunity and strengthen connections to high-opportunity neighborhoods.[67]

Map 1.1 Comprehensive Opportunity Map
Puget Sound Urbanized Area

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY | Kirwan Institute
Many Differences **One Destiny**

Sources: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2011; Environmental Protection Agency, 2010; Washington Dept. of Ecology, 2011; ESRI Business Analyst, 2010; American Community Survey, 2006-2010; U.S. Census, 2010; Tetrad, Inc. PCensus Dbx, 2010; Washington State Report Card, 2010-2011

Education
Economic Health
Housing
Transportation/Mobility
Health & Environment

Comprehensive Opportunity Index
Very Low
Low
Moderate
High
Very High

Kirwan Institute for the Puget Sound Regional Council

Areas of high opportunity tend to be north of Seattle in predominantly white neighborhoods, whereas minority communities south of the city tend to have lower opportunity.

Growing a Sustainable Future in Central Florida

In 2008, residents of the Central Florida region — seven counties in the Everglades between Miami and Orlando — embarked on a visioning process to determine how their region should develop over the next several decades. Bolstered by a $1.6 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from HUD, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) launched Heartland 2060, a data-driven regional plan that calls for preserving and protecting natural areas, agriculture, and wildlife; supporting healthy communities; and ensuring a vibrant economic and social life for residents. The

U.S. EcoGen's plantation will use the variant *grandis*, a species of eucalyptus that produces a woody biomass and grows quickly in sub-tropical climates.

challenge for Heartland 2060's supporters is how to accommodate growth and provide employment opportunities in the predominantly agricultural region, which is expected to add about 870,000 residents over the next 50 years, doubling its current population. All seven counties assisted in formulating the plan, which provides a toolkit of development strategies and information to empower local leaders to make informed decisions.[1]

Central Florida's rural character and dependence on agriculture are two of its defining characteristics, says Shannon Brett, program director at CFRPC.[2] Heartland 2060 declares that agriculture is "a foundation of the past, present and future." Along with mining and retail services, agriculture-related employment is a pillar of the regional economy.[3] As a result, agriculture shapes Central Florida's emissions and energy use. A report completed under the auspices of the planning grant found that most greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions result from agriculture, with the largest portion emanating from livestock; methane makes up a much larger share of emissions for the Central Florida region than for the state as a whole. On the other hand, the region's energy consumption per person is lower than the state's per-person average.[4]

Agriculture will continue to be an important component of the regional economy. A surprising, but interesting, outcome of the planning process, says Brett, was the compatibility of renewable energy with agriculture. "We found that we have the land area to grow crops that can be used for renewable energy." Brett cites eucalyptus plantations being developed by U.S. EcoGen in Polk County as an example of an economically productive marriage of energy and agriculture.[5] Eucalyptus trees are among the fastest-growing hardwood trees and can be converted into biofuel to generate power. Eucalyptus plantations can also reduce GHG emissions. Florida's subtropical climate is ideal for eucalyptus, mirroring the species' native home of Australia.[6] The Polk County plantation is expected to produce enough fuel to generate 180 megawatts of electricity, which should provide power to 50,000 residential customers by 2019.[7]

CFRPC sees the energy industry as an emerging sector that promises significant positive outcomes for the region.[8] Although many current renewable energy projects are small, Brett argues that supporting incipient projects is important for diversifying the regional economy and positioning Central Florida to take advantage of new sources of employment and economic growth.[9]

[1] Central Florida Regional Planning Council. 2014. *Heartland 2060: Building a Resilient Region*, 19, 39; Central Florida Regional Planning Council. "Heartland 2060: 5-Year Strategic Plan," Heartland 2060 website **(heartland2060.org)**. Accessed 27 July 2015; EcoAsset Solutions. 2013. "Florida Heartland Energy Baseline and Greenhouse Gas Inventory," prepared for Central Florida Regional Planning Council, ES1–ES15.

[2] Interview with Shannon Brett, 24 July 2015.

[3] Central Florida Regional Planning Council 2014, 4, 7, 14.

[4] EcoAsset Solutions, ES1–ES15.

[5] Interview with Shannon Brett; U.S. EcoGen. "USEG Polk Plantation" **(www.usecogen.com/projects/)**. Accessed 27 July 2015.

[6] Jesse Daystar, Ronalds Gonzalez, Carter Reeb, Richard A. Venditti, Trevor Treasure, Robert Abt, and Steve Kelley. 2014. "Economics, Environmental Impacts, and Supply Chain Analysis of Cellulosic Biomass for Biofuels in the Southern US: Pine, Eucalyptus, Unmanaged Hardwoods, Forest Residues, Switchgrass, and Sweet Sorghum," *BioResources* 9:1, 396, 418–20.

[7] Bruce Dorminey. 2013. "Florida Innovates with Its Eucalyptus and Citrus for Biomass Production," *Renewableenergyworld.com,* 11 January **(www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2013/01/florida-innovates-with-its-climate-and-citrus-for-biomass-production.html)**. Accessed 27 July 2015.

[8] Central Florida Regional Planning Council 2014, 26; Central Florida Regional Planning Council. 2014. "Heartland Economic Futures," 3–7.

[9] Interview with Shannon Brett.

Implementation: The Northgate Catalyst Project

GTC performed most of the "on-the-ground analysis of the existing and potential station areas to see what opportunities will exist," says Ben Bakkenta, a program manager at PSRC who worked on the project. The analysis and opportunity mapping were used to create a framework of 8 development approaches for the 74 transit communities that will help local governments decide how and where to guide development around transit stations. The eight approaches considered not only market forces but also the social dynamics of each community. As Bakkenta explains, "Who is impacted? Who has the potential to benefit? Alongside the market analysis, [the answers to] these questions give you a much richer knowledge of a particular station area or community."[68]

Using this framework is ultimately the responsibility of each local government, which controls infrastructure investments, permitting, and zoning. PSRC is currently working with 16 local jurisdictions, 9 public agencies, and 17 nongovernmental organizations that have signed a regional compact to carry out the GTC strategies.[69] To demonstrate the feasibility and best practices of transit-oriented development (TOD) in the region, PSRC launched catalytic projects in each corridor. Along the north corridor, PSRC, Seattle, King County, and Sound Transit are collaborating on the Northgate Catalyst project, which uses the neighborhood's new light rail extension to shift the area from auto-oriented development to TOD.[70] Northgate was designated a regional growth center in Vision 2040 and is one of Seattle's "mixed-use centers."[71]

The 4.3-mile north corridor extension will be composed of three new stations: U District, Roosevelt, and Northgate.[72] Sound Transit's tunnel-boring machines are currently digging the underground portions of the line that add onto the University of Washington extension, which is nearing completion.[73] Work on the north corridor is expected to

be finished by 2021. The site of the Northgate station is currently anchored by a suburban mall, Seattle Community College, and one of the largest medical and office centers outside of downtown Seattle. The area also includes a bus transfer center operated by King County Metro Transit and serviced by 13 King County bus routes and 2 Sound Transit regional bus routes.[74]

PSRC and Seattle expect the Northgate neighborhood to absorb substantial residential and employment growth over the next 25 years.[75] To guide Northgate's transformation into a mixed-use, transit-friendly community, GTC funded the creation of the station's urban design framework, a collection of design concepts that address the neighborhood's look and feel, incorporate recommended streetscape improvements, and identify areas within the neighborhood that are appropriate for development.[76] GTC also funded the planning for a pedestrian bridge to connect Seattle Community College to the new station.[77]

PSRC has designated the Northgate station as an "expanding housing choices"

community, which indicates a high risk of displacement for lower-income populations. To help offset this risk, PSRC and its partner organizations are creating tools to build affordable housing. PSRC used part of its Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to research best practices for a revolving loan fund to support the acquisition of land for affordable housing near transit stations. In partnership with Enterprise Community Partners and Impact Capital, PSRC completed a business plan for the fund and is working to secure an initial $5 million. To date, the fund has received $2.5 million from the city of Seattle, King County, and a consortium of cities in King County, and the remaining $2.5 million was recently approved by the Washington state legislature, according to Bakkenta.[78]

Lessons Learned

Partnerships and collaboration are central to GTC's goal of building equitable and sustainable communities around transit stations. The responsibility of the Northgate station area, for example, is spread among several agencies and jurisdictions. The primary catalyst for pursuing TOD is Sound Transit's light

The Puget Sound Regional Council carried out subarea planning for the neighborhood around Tacoma's Dome Station, once the southern terminus of the Sounder regional rail south line and home to the Tacoma Link.

rail investments in the neighborhood. The city of Seattle controls zoning and permitting within the station area; although PSRC may have helped create the station area plans, the city must decide whether to implement them. King County controls a significant amount of land in the area, including the bus transfer center, and operates a number of local bus routes. Without King County and Sound Transit's investments, a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly community as envisioned by both Seattle and GTC would not take hold. Residents must also support TOD at Northgate for it to be effective. Residential and community buy-in is possible, To says, where

"agencies and jurisdictions support the equity components" such as affordable housing and protection for local businesses. He argues that "balancing equity and growth benefits everyone because it ultimately reduced the cost to the public through more effective solutions and [by] minimizing disparities" among the residents.

Puget Sound's communities have a long history of supporting projects such as GTC, says Bakkenta, because of the institutional change brought about by Washington's Growth Management Act. Under the act, PSRC reviews and certifies that local plans are consistent

with regional plans and can withhold infrastructure funding from jurisdictions with inconsistent plans. The act also empowered Puget Sound's jurisdictions to use urban growth boundaries (UGB), a tool that limits development and services such as roads and sewers outside of established communities. Since the launch of the Growth Management Act, 85 percent of new growth in Puget Sound has occurred within the UGB.[79] Bakkenta argues, however, that although the act gives regional plans a certain amount of heft, its true value was in institutionalizing regional planning. GTC's policies and recommendations still needed widespread support because PSRC could not simply compel jurisdictions to think regionally, and PSRC still needs to "walk a tightrope between local government and regionalism," says Bakkenta. As a result, PSRC is using voluntary tools such as the nonbinding regional compact and local workplans to implement the GTC framework.

Conclusion

Vibrant NEO, GroWNC, and GTC each work to make their respective regions more sustainable and equitable. NEOSCC focused on the growing cost of infrastructure obligations and the financial impacts of dispersed land use patterns. LOSRC sought to protect Western North Carolina's economically, culturally, and aesthetically valuable assets. PSRC coordinated Puget Sound's historic transit investments to expand access to opportunity. Although some details differ, the three consortiums used collaboration, robust engagement, and sound data analysis to introduce policies that are regarded as beneficial to the entire region as well as to individual communities.

In all three regions, the data these organizations compiled were essential for convincing officials and residents of the benefits of coordinated investments. Romancak explains that "at the end of the day, it's very hard to argue with the data. It's hard to look at how things have gone and allow that scenario

Map 5.4 Light Rail Overlays (North Corridor)
Puget Sound Urbanized Area

Sources: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2011; Environmental Protection Agency, 2010; Washington Dept. of Ecology, 2011; ESRI Business Analyst, 2010; American Community Survey, 2006-2010; U.S. Census, 2010; Tetrad, Inc. PCensus Dbx, 2010; Washington State Report Card, 2010-2011; HUD User, 2008
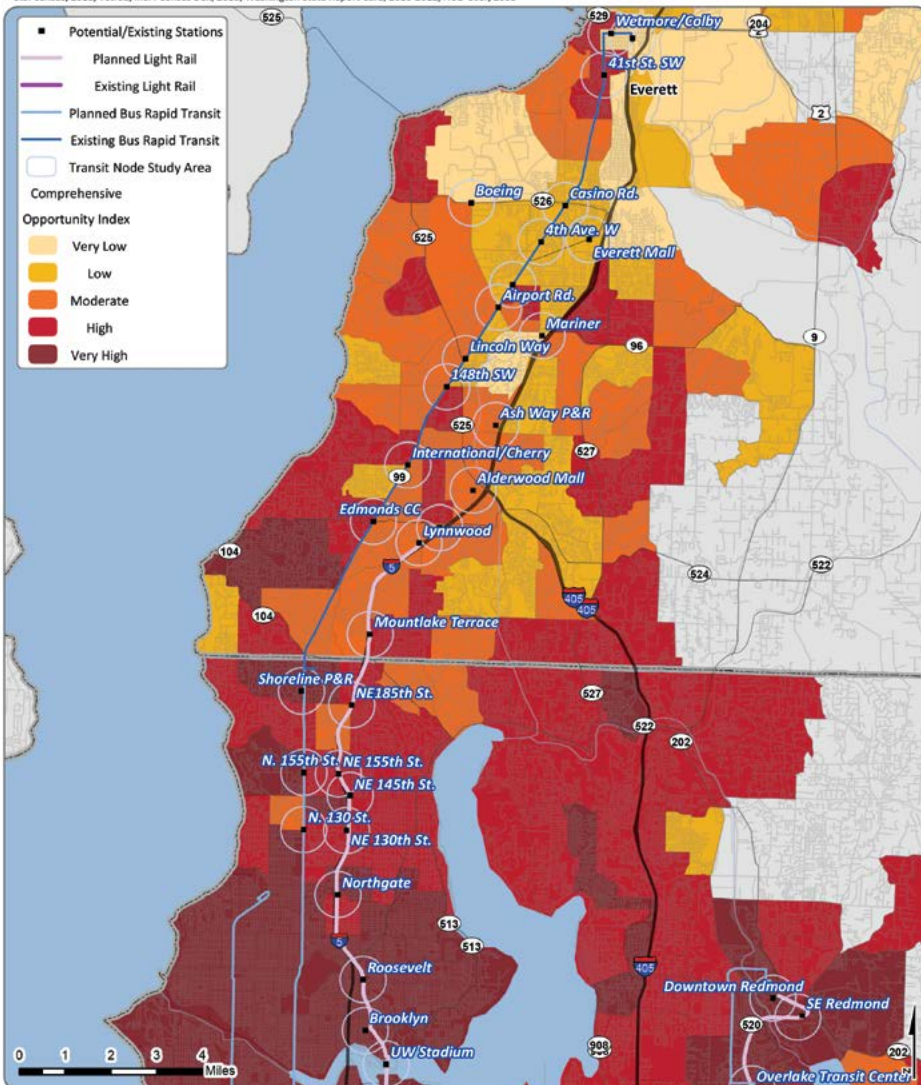
PSRC hopes to use Puget Sound's new light rail lines to connect all residents to areas of high opportunity.

Kirwan Institute for the Puget Sound Regional Council

to continue to play out and think that anyone in this area could be considered a winner."[80] Staudinger similarly explains that although an "urban-rural tension" persists, GroWNC showed that "Asheville and rural communities have a symbiotic relationship" by demonstrating "how neighboring communities benefit from what Asheville is doing" and how Asheville depends on the economic activity of surrounding communities.[81]

Using a common set of indicators helped move the conversation away from the "raw politics" of winners and losers, says Morrison of NEOSCC, making agreement easier.[82] The collaborative process and the voluntary frameworks were broadly seen as essential to developing cohesive plans and as integral to successful implementation. Widespread support among officials and buy-in among residents are necessary for both political and practical reasons. Land use, housing, and infrastructure decisions are spread among city, county, and state actors and metropolitan planning organizations that are reluctant to relinquish authority. In Western North Carolina, even the rumor of diminishing local government power caused some participants to pull out. Residents are also more likely to support a plan that they have helped craft. To explains that providing resources to include community voices in the process encourages residents to "actually support growth," which "saves governments a lot of money, because they don't have to fight a lot of unnecessary battles."[83]

The emphasis on collaboration and voluntary frameworks, although helpful during the planning process, has created difficulties when translating the plan into action. According to Burke, "part of the work ahead of us is to reconstitute the board to have more [of an] implementation focus, [but] that transition has been a challenge." Because local governments and private organizations are ultimately responsible for implementing regional visions and

because the consortiums have limited funds to support projects, tying any specific change, policy, or project back to the regional vision is difficult. Some ongoing projects in Northeast Ohio are furthering the aims of Vibrant NEO but are not funded by NEOSCC. For example, the Thriving Communities Institute is mapping vacant properties in Cuyahoga County, a step that furthers the Vibrant NEO initiative to "coordinate existing land bank efforts to acquire, assemble, manage, and dispose of vacant property" but is not financially supported by NEOSCC.[84]

In Puget Sound and Western North Carolina, the preexisting regional planning bodies have made transitioning to implementation easier because they can incorporate GTC and GroWNC into their other projects. Hembree notes that whenever LOSRC begins a new project, "one of the first questions we ask is, 'How does this tie into the GroWNC plan?'" LOSRC is currently translating elements from GroWNC to add to the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which will guide economic development policies in the coming years.[85] PSRC created a board within their organization focused specifically on integrating TOD into other projects, and most local jurisdictions have signed a regional compact in which they agree to employ GTC.[86] Both Hembree and Bakkenta, however, acknowledge the necessity and difficulty of sustaining a high level of engagement with local partners during the transition to implementation.[87]

Despite these challenges, Vibrant NEO, GroWNC, and GTC precipitated an important, but difficult to measure, shift in how individuals view regional concerns, empowering people to think

Partnerships and collaboration are central to building equitable and sustainable communities around transit stations.

about issues that often are pushed into the background. Bakkenta argues that, in part because of GTC, "the whole notion of equitable development as a regional conversation has become elevated."[88] Changes in how people think about and discuss their region, however, are subtle and can take years. "These are difficult conversations," says Morrison. "It takes numerous negotiations over time. But it's the direction of the conversations that matters… and on that, we are making progress."[89] EM

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Additional Resources

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- "Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America" (2011), by Adie Tomer, Elizabeth Kneebone, Robert Puentes, and Alan Berube, investigates transit coverage and access to employment in the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas. **www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2011/5/12-jobs-and-transit/0512_jobs_transit.pdf**.

- *The Just City* (2011), by Susan S. Fainstein, applies theories of justice to urban planning processes and plans. **www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100737740**.

- *Just Growth: Inclusion and Prosperity in America's Metropolitan Regions* (2012), by Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor, explores possible explanations for why and how some regions achieve equitable growth while others do not, including seven detailed case studies. **www.routledge.com/products/9780415517812**.

- "Revisiting Equity: The HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative" (2013), by Lisa K. Bates and Marisa Zapata, reviews the equity component of the plans of 13 Sustainable Communities Initiative grantees. **pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1083&context=usp_fac**.

- The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations website hosts a topically organized library of resources and publications containing best practices for regional transportation planning. **www.ampo.org/resources-publications/best-practices/**.

- *Working Across Boundaries: People, Nature, and Regions* (2009), by Matthew J. McKinney and Shawn Johnson, discusses strategies for regional collaboration. **www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/1674_Working-Across-Boundaries**.

- *Inside Game Outside Game: Winning Strategies for Saving Urban America* (1999), by David Rusk, argues that state legislatures should create regional revenue sharing to reduce fiscal disparity among communities, develop regional housing policies to eliminate concentrations of poverty, and use coherent regional land-use planning and growth management to control urban sprawl. **www.brookings.edu/research/books/1999/savamr**.

- Living Cities is a consortium of 22 foundations and financial institutions focused on developing strategies that change the physical and human landscape of cities to improve the lives of low-income people, focusing on affordable housing in transit corridors, reimagining education to build cradle-to-career systems, and reducing youth recidivism. The Living Cities website hosts resources related to these and other relevant topics. **www.livingcities.org/resources**.

- Smart Growth America supports the creation and maintenance of healthy communities that have a range of housing, transportation, employment, and retail options through cutting edge research, policy development, and coalition building. **www.smartgrowthamerica.org/**.

- *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*, by Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley, highlights metropolitan areas that are taking it upon themselves to develop successful economic strategies that address 21st century challenges. **metrorevolution.org/**.

- *American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality* (2002), by Myron Orfield, addresses issues of intraregional inequity by analyzing the 25 largest metropolitan regions in the United States as well as detailed case studies and mapping. **www.brookings.edu/research/books/2002/american-metropolitics**.

For additional resources archive, go to **www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/additional_resources_2015.html**.

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