

**TO:** ABAG/MTC TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** JOHN FREGONESE, DON BLUBAUGH  
**SUBJECT:** REVIEW OF NOTABLE REGIONAL PROCESSES  
**DATE:** 09/15/03

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The following is a compilation of some notable regional entities that have engaged in some form of regional visioning or strategies. They were selected because they are notable, and also because we have had first hand experience working in them at either the regional or local level.

We have included in the matrix some links to web pages of the various agencies. If you open this electronically, you should be able to visit the sites simply by clicking.

### **Regional Vision Implementation Ideas**

After compiling the matrix, we have some suggestions for strategies for implementation.

One of the key elements of success is already underway with quite a bit of vigor, the development of the 2030 RTP that is used to further the regional vision. MTC and ABAG have already proven that they can cooperate in the development of a key strategy and are working on a important implementation element. However, it is apparent that the Committee believes that more can be done. Our review of other successful projects shows some ideas that may be adaptable to the Bay Area. Some concepts that may work here are:

- 1) The vision should be followed by either a more specific strategy or a comprehensive plan that commits the agency (and local governments) to specific activities and sets specific goals. The advantage of a strategy is that it can be developed and implemented quickly. A comprehensive plan would take years to develop, but the results are theoretically more complete.
- 2) A set of benchmarks or indicators of success that the agencies are striving to achieve needs to be defined. While they take various

forms, the successful regional plans set measurable goals and measures progress toward these goals through benchmarks.

- 3) Defining what exemplary action is has been mentioned by several committee members – some kind of objective measurement of actions, or general plans that show alignment with the regional vision. This can be by measuring general or specific plans or by an awards program for exemplary achievements. See the Puget Sound program here: <http://www.psrc.org/datapubs/pubs/view/0403.htm> - Three
- 4) Specific actions local governments can take to support the plan or vision could be detailed, and their impacts or benefits are documented. For example, in Portland, Denver and the Puget Sound working with local governments to define urban centers, changing plans to implement them, and monitoring their success, is a major effort of the vision.
- 5) Specific negotiated performance measures for local plans, specifically relating to key policy areas (e.g. urban centers, urban growth boundaries, transit areas, local plan build-out capacities, housing accommodation, etc.) for example, in Portland and Denver each city was assigned the amount of growth it was expected to accommodate, and the various centers and corridors had to be recognized in the local plan (while the details are left to the local government, the local plans cumulative impact is what is judged by the regional government). The ABAG 2030 policy forecast could be used for this, with the performance measures comparing what the general plans permit and what the 2030 forecast envisions.
- 6) Specifically tying RTP improvements to land use goals. In many of these regions, the TIP is specifically oriented to supporting land uses desired in the vision.
- 7) Better coordination of the “story” – the key messages regarding the regional vision and how it is being implemented. This is not additional planning needed, but a communication strategy, and an appreciation of the larger picture and how this vision fundamentally changes the approach the two agencies take toward their mission, and ways to support the other agency’s projects. Note, for example, the mutual links that exist between the vision and the RTP in the other websites, and the cross referencing of regional transportation policies with growth management vision that occur.
- 8) Encouraging the widespread coordination and cooperation at a county or subregional level in the Bay Area – a remarkable and spontaneous effort of regional thinking and cooperation that is a

wonderful resource for regional action. In our recent experience in developing Contra Costa's "Shaping our Future" project, ABAG staff was extremely cooperative and helpful, but there was little formal coordination with policy makers and the Smart Growth Strategy. Since these were developing contemporaneously, this is to be expected. Nevertheless, our experience suggests that ABAG and MTC could be greatly assisted in reaching their goals by actively encouraging and cooperating with these subregional activities, even to the extent of delegating some tasks (e.g. housing allocation, benchmark setting and monitoring, and being a resource to sub regional efforts).

- 9) There needs to be an ongoing effort to implement the vision. This requires identification of an annual work program and consistent, significant levels of funding for the implementation, monitoring and updating of the regional vision. The identification of funding for this task, and the joint approval of the work program by the MTC and ABAG boards may be an important way to ensure that the Vision is effectively implemented.

**Regional Visions or Plans--Summary Matrix (draft)**

Metropolitan Area/ Agency/ General Description	Key Responsibilities	Structure/Staffing	Visioning	Planning and Strategies	Notable Features	Comments/ Additional Resources
<p><b>Portland, Oregon/Metro</b> A directly elected regional government serving the Portland, OR, three-county metropolitan area.</p>	<p>Primary responsibility under its charter is land-use planning. As MPO, it performs short- and long-range transportation planning. It also operates a solid waste disposal system, regional facilities such as a zoo and convention center, and management of regional parks and open spaces.</p>	<p>Governed by a 7-member Council President elected regionwide and six Councilors elected by district. A Chief Operating Officer carries out the policies approved by the Council.</p>	<p>Required by charter to create a regional vision, adopted in 1995. The vision is little used and rarely referred to today. A separate process, Region 2040, which focused on land use and transportation issues within the UGB was more influential.</p>	<p>The charter also required a regional framework plan, adopted in 1997. The framework plan led to adoption of a regional functional plan, which sets performance standards for local plans. The RTP and TIP are specifically targeted to implement the 2040 plan.</p>	<p>Metro’s planning function has been controversial locally and both praised and criticized nationally. Nevertheless, it has proven stable as issues are debated and resolved through the political process – land use and transportation planning is often a key platform of local elected officials. The public is widely aware of basic land use and transportation strategies.</p>	<p>Metro has specific performance standards for local governments plans and a monitoring system of regional benchmarks. Regional Plan. <a href="http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=231">http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=231</a> <i>(Check the publications listed to the left of the screen under “More on this topic”.)</i></p> <p>The “Nature of 2040” is the best summary of the regional plan. <a href="http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=422">http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=422</a></p> <p>RTP Website <a href="http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=137">http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=137</a></p>

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<p><b>Denver, Colorado/ DrCOG (Denver Area Council of Governments).</b> The regional planning agency serving the Denver region governments.</p>	<p>Responsibilities revolve around a number of regional issues. They are the primary agency working on aging, regional planning, regional growth and development, transportation, and water services. DrCOG is the MPO for the Denver region.</p>	<p>Consists of a voluntary association of 50 county and municipal governments in the greater Denver area. Through the COG, local governments work together to address issues of regional concern. In addition to promoting regional cooperation and coordination among local governments, the COG resolves common problems, performs regional planning and provides services to its members.</p>	<p>The major vision is called Vision 2020, adopted in 1997. It combines previously separate plans for growth, development, transportation, and water quality management into a single integrated plan, Metro Vision (MV) which serves as a comprehensive guide for the future development of the region.</p>	<p>Six core elements – constrained urban development; open space; complete communities; balanced, multimodal transportation system; urban centers; environmental quality – are to be focused on a voluntary basis to maintain local control of implementation. The MV 2020 is integrated into other regional implementation mechanisms, including the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). DrCOG also collaborates with other regional governing entities, working together to achieve common goals to benefit the region..</p>	<p>The Mile High Compact is a major implementation achievement. Nearly all the governments in the Denver region have agreed to it. The agreement contains many elements of the statewide planning programs in California, Oregon, and Washington. The Denver area governments, however, self-impose the elements of the accord.</p>	<p>Website for DrCOG <a href="http://www.drcog.org/">http://www.drcog.org/</a></p> <p>Metro Vision 2020 <a href="http://www.drcog.org/reg_growth/mv2020.htm">http://www.drcog.org/reg_growth/mv2020.htm</a></p> <p>Website about the MV 2020 update <a href="http://www.drcog.org/Metro_Vision_Update/overview.html">http://www.drcog.org/Metro_Vision_Update/overview.html</a></p> <p>Mile High Compact <a href="http://www.drcog.org/pub_news/releases/mhcompact_rel.htm">http://www.drcog.org/pub_news/releases/mhcompact_rel.htm</a></p> <p>Website for the DrCOG RTP. <a href="http://www.drcog.org/transportation/Reg_Tra ns_Plan.htm">http://www.drcog.org/transportation/Reg_Tra ns_Plan.htm</a></p>

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<p><b>San Diego, California/ San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)</b> The comprehensive and transportation planning agency for the region that includes 18 cities and San Diego County.</p>	<p>SANDAG's responsibilities include planning for transportation, land use and regional growth, economics and finance, the environment, and housing.</p>	<p>The agency is governed by a 20-member Board composed of mayors and council members from each of the local governments, and a county supervisor. Voting is based on membership and the population of each jurisdiction.</p>	<p>A regional vision was mandated by a 1988 ballot initiative. A Regional Growth Management Strategy was developed and adopted in 1993. In 1998, an effort to update the document commenced as the Region 2020 process. It became apparent, however, that the process needed an improved foundation. A new and improved effort is underway as the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP).</p>	<p>SANDAG is currently developing a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) – a retooling of previous efforts to develop a regional growth strategy. A draft of the RCP is expected in December 2003 with a final version to be completed by June 2004.</p>	<p>In January 2003, a new state law consolidated all of the roles and responsibilities of SANDAG with many of the transit planning, programming and construction functions of the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) and the North San Diego County Transit Development Board (NCTD).</p>	<p>Regional Plan Website <a href="http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=1&amp;fuseaction=projects.detail">http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=1&amp;fuseaction=projects.detail</a></p> <p>RTP Website. Look especially at the land use section of the RTP <a href="http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=197&amp;fuseaction=projects.detail">http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=197&amp;fuseaction=projects.detail</a></p>
<p><b>Seattle, Washington/ Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)</b> The transportation and land use planning agency in the central Puget Sound region of encompassing King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. It is designated under state law as a Regional Transportation Planning Organization.</p>	<p>PRSC's key responsibilities include: creating a regional vision, distributing federal transportation funds, conducting transportation and land use planning, insuring consistency of regional and local transportation plans, and providing technical assistance to local governments and businesses.</p>	<p>Governed by a large General Assembly, and a 26-member Executive Board made up of elected officials appointed by member jurisdictions. The Growth Management and Transportation Policy Boards advise the Exec. Committee. The agency has about 67 staff.</p>	<p>State laws, in particular the Growth Management Act (GMA), mandate the central Puget Sound region to have a regional growth management, economic and transportation strategy. "VISION 2020" is the integrated strategy for the region. It contains eight (8) parts which constitute the policies for the multicounty planning requirements for the state's GMA.</p>	<p>The policies in VISION 2020 represents the broad directions agreed to by member jurisdictions and agencies. They are not meant to convey regional responsibility for implementation. Many of these policies will be implemented through local and state plans and other regional efforts. For example, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) provides the explicit transportation direction of VISION 2020.</p>	<p>Cited for "MPO Best Practices" by the American Assoc. of MPOs. Considered as an effective MPO across a wide range of criteria in a recent report to Congress.</p>	<p>The state has enacted a Growth Management Act. In spite of having an MPO considered as very effective, the region is one of the most traffic-congested areas in the nation.</p> <p>Basic Vision 2020 website <a href="http://www.psrc.org/projects/vision/vision2020.htm">http://www.psrc.org/projects/vision/vision2020.htm</a></p> <p>The Implementation section is interesting <a href="http://www.psrc.org/projects/vision/2020implem.htm">http://www.psrc.org/projects/vision/2020implem.htm</a></p> <p>RTP website <a href="http://www.psrc.org/projects/mtp/index.htm">http://www.psrc.org/projects/mtp/index.htm</a></p>

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<p><b>Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada/ Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)</b> A partnership of 21 municipalities and one electoral area. (This agency is like an MPO but is not one because it is in Canada.)</p>	<p>A key responsibility of the GVRD is development of the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP). It also has responsibility for air quality, regional development, regional parks, sewerage, recycling and garbage, water and housing.</p>	<p>The GVRD's 35-member Board is comprised of mayors and councilors from the member municipalities, on a representation-by-population basis. Under the umbrella of the GVRD, there are a number of separate legal entities: the Greater Vancouver Water District; the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District; and the Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation.</p>	<p>The LRSP was adopted by the Board with the formal support of all municipalities in 1996. The Province of B.C. has recognized the plan under the Growth Strategies Act. The plan's primary goal is to help maintain regional livability and protect the environment in the face of anticipated growth. Four main objectives include: Protect the Green Zone; build complete communities; achieve a compact metropolitan region; increase transportation choice.</p>	<p>The LRSP is used by all levels of government as the framework for making regional land use and transportation decisions. Other agencies, the private sector and residents also use the plan in order to understand and contribute to Greater Vancouver's vision for its future development.</p>	<p>GVRD appoints 12 of TransLink's 15-member board, ratifies its strategic transportation plan, and approves its tax increases. TransLink's transportation plans and funding must be in accordance with GVRD's strategic plan for the region.</p>	<p>Livable Region Strategic Plan website <a href="http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/lrsp.htm">http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/lrsp.htm</a></p>

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<p><b>Salt Lake City, Utah/ Envision Utah</b> A public-private partnership in charge of the “Envision Utah” planning effort in the Salt Lake City “communtershed,” comprising 89 cities in 10 counties – containing over 1.6 million people spread over 320 square miles.</p>	<p>Major responsibilities include overseeing the bottom-up development of growth scenarios for the region and championing the preferred regional development scenario. While Envision Utah has no authority to implement plans (it is not an MPO), it cooperates with the State and two MPOs (the Wasatch Front Regional Council and to Mountainland Association of Governments) to implement the vision. EU plays a key role in bringing together a myriad of “players” involved in the growth of the Salt Lake City metropolitan region. EU facilitates the dialogue necessary to achieve broad consensus on quality regional growth.</p>	<p>Envision Utah is a non-governmental organization working in partnership with citizens, business leaders and policy-makers, cooperating to create a strategy that will preserve critical lands, promote water conservation and clean air, improve our region-wide transportation system, and provide housing options for all residents.</p>	<p>In January 1997, Envision Utah was formed to help guide the development of a broadly and publicly supported Quality Growth Strategy – a vision to protect Utah's environment, economic strength, and quality of life.</p> <p>Process included: baseline analysis; values survey; visualization exercises; scenario development; public education campaign; selection of preferred growth strategy; development of implementation toolbox.</p>	<p>The Preferred Growth Strategy and the Implementation Toolkit have been two very powerful products as a result of this process. Envision Utah is currently in the process of finding out what individual cities have implemented as a result of their efforts. Cities that haven't updated their General Plans in years are planning conservation-oriented subdivisions and open space preservation. Cities that had fought with each other are now writing coordinated plans.</p>	<p>Envision Utah was a bottom up effort at growth visioning in a region where a top-down solution had no chance of survival. Through thorough data development, careful framing of the issue, persistence, and innovation, EU was able to navigate a particularly tricky political minefield and produce a vision for future growth that has a better chance of long-term survival than most.</p>	<p>Envision Utah website <a href="http://www.envisionutah.org/">http://www.envisionutah.org/</a></p>

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<p><b>Dallas, Texas/ The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)</b></p> <p>A voluntary association of, by and for local governments, and was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development.</p> <p>NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered around the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. NCTCOG has over 230 member governments including all 16 counties, numerous cities, school districts, and special districts.</p>	<p>NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.</p>	<p>Each member government appoints a COG voting representative from its governing body. These voting representatives make up the General Assembly, which annually elects the Executive Board. The <a href="#">Executive Board</a>, composed of 13 locally elected officials, is the policy-making body for all activities undertaken by the COG – including program activities and decisions, regional plans, and fiscal and budgetary policies. The Board is supported by technical, study, and policy development committees and a professional staff.</p>	<p>NCTCOG was created on January 20, 1966 by state enabling legislation. NCTCOG exists to serve the local governments of this region. By promoting intergovernmental cooperation and coordination and by carrying on regional planning programs—in transportation, community services, environmental resources, workforce development, regional infrastructure information, and emergency preparedness—NCTCOG both complements and supplements local governments. In November 1999, the Executive Board of the NCTCOG adopted the <a href="#">Strategic Plan for 1999-2003</a>. The plan identified over 30 issues in which NCTCOG could offer services and programs to assist in strengthening the region it serves. Its success initiated the Geared for the Future: Strategic Plan for 2003-2007.</p>	<p>NCTCOG is a political subdivision of the State of Texas, but has no regulatory power or other authority possessed by cities, counties or other local governments. It is however, the MPO for regional transportation planning in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC), comprised primarily of local elected officials, is the independent regional transportation policy body associated with NCTCOG.</p> <p>NCTCOG's decisions are not binding on member governments, but are considered and adopted as members' needs require. As a political subdivision, NCTCOG is subject to state laws governing open meetings, access to public records and conduct of public officials.</p>	<p>NCTCOG is the first organization of its kind in Texas.</p>	<p>NCTCOG website <a href="http://www.dfwinfo.com/about.html">http://www.dfwinfo.com/about.html</a></p> <p>Strategic Plan 2003-2007 <a href="http://www.dfwinfo.com/strategicplan/">http://www.dfwinfo.com/strategicplan/</a></p>

Other Selected Regional Agencies

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<p><b>New York/New Jersey/Connecticut Regional Planning Association (RPA)</b></p> <p>The RPA is an independent regional planning organization working to improve the quality of life in the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan area.</p>	<p>The RPA brings together an assembly of over 500 private and public sector leaders to address quality-of-life issues in the Tri-State Metropolitan region.</p> <p>The RPA produces long-term comprehensive plans and promote their implementation beyond political boundaries. It recommends policy initiatives and investments on physical and human infrastructure.</p>	<p>The RPA is governed by a 60-member Board of Directors, primarily from the private sector, which, with the assistance of advisory committees, sets overall policy and priorities. The Board selects RPA's president to oversee the day-to-day operation of the Association.</p>	<p>The Committee on A Regional Plan of New York and its Environs was formed in 1922 to address the needs of a growing metropolis and published its landmark Plan in 1929. At that time, the RPA was incorporated as a permanent body to implement the blueprint for the transportation and open space network outlined in the Plan and to prepare new regional plans as they became necessary. The Second Regional Plan in the 1968 called for restoring the deteriorated mass transit, preserving threatened natural resources and revitalizing urban centers, and now the Third Regional Plan, released in 1996, "A Region at Risk," offered proposals on land-use transportation, open space preservation, economic development and social issues.</p>	<p>The RPA works cooperatively with with local, state, and federal governments, and also private and non-profit entities to implement its vision adhering to the principles set forth in the "Third Regional Plan" (1996).</p> <p>RPA takes positions on major current public policy issues and works constructively and cooperatively on a non-partisan basis with public and private sector interests to advance its agenda.</p>	<p>Regional Plan Association has been the nation's most influential independent regional planning organization for more than 80 years.</p> <p>Most recently, RPA has convened the <a href="#">Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York</a> to create a civic agenda for the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan in the aftermath of 9/11.</p>	<p>RPA website <a href="http://www.rpa.org/">http://www.rpa.org/</a></p>