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American Planning Association **Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division**

Making Great Communities Happen

May E-News

**A Review of RIPD Sponsored
Events at the National
Conference**



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Second Annual Regional Livable Communities Forum

Background: On Friday, April 17, some 35 people met in the board room of the Puget Sound Regional Council in downtown Seattle for the second annual Regional Livable Communities Forum. The Forum lasted from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM and was led by Dan, Reuter, the Division's Chair. Participants came from the federal and state governments as well as from 14 regional planning/MPO agencies. The regional planning/MPO agencies represented are at the "leading edge" of Regional Livable Communities programs across the country. The purpose of the Forum was to facilitate the peer exchange of knowledge and concepts concerning Regional Livable Communities. The term "Regional Livable Communities" can be defined as "the planning and implementation of urban centers and corridors that encourage mixed use, walking, rapid transit which can include TOD's, roadways supporting livable communities, housing at various income levels, and good urban or community design."

Federal and State Participation: After introductions, a brief explanation of the upcoming editorial review of the Division's APA-contracted *Emerging Trends in Regional Planning* was given by Bob Leiter and Rocky

Piro, former Division Chairs. The first panel, moderated by Mariia Zimmerman, the Division's Vice Chair for Metropolitan and Regional Planning, featured leading federal officials from the Pacific Northwest including Richard Krochalis, Regional Administrator for the Federal Transit Administration; Donna Batch, Deputy Regional Administrator for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development; Dan Mathis, Division Chief for the Federal Highway Administration, State of Washington; and, Vicky Salazar, U.S. EPA's Regional Sustainability Officer. Topics centered around the [Federal partnership between regional agencies](#). Included were discussions of a consolidated local plan for a TOD in Seattle, similar arrangements for a mixed use housing project in Portland, Oregon, and a place-based project in Bremerton, Washington which HUD originally identified and which the U.S. EPA then supplemented with program actions. The panel also stressed the importance of federal efforts concerning federal resiliency actions and dollars which, in the future, will deal at least in part with the planning for and the effects that might occur because of climate change.

Three Regional Livable Communities Programs: The second morning panel was moderated by Lee Schoenecker, a Division past Chair. Panelists included, Ken Kirkey, the Planning Director for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) of the Bay Area; Ty Warner, Executive Director of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC); and, Patrick Mandapaka, a Project Manager for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). Mr. Kirkey focused on the experience to date of the One Bay Area Grant which, in the last two years, grew out of a consolidation of numerous livable communities programs, formerly administered by the MTC, into one grant. The resulting [One Bay Area Grant](#) was then decentralized to each of the nine Bay Area counties as the perceived best way to implement California enacted law, SB 375. The latter law is perhaps the most advanced regional planning state law in the nation as it includes new planning requirements relating to addressing climate change, land use including affordable housing, and transportation.

Mr. Warner laid out the NIRPC process for incorporating the concepts of livable communities into the [2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan](#) which won the APA National Burnham Award in 2013. He also presented on the 2014/15 implementation of the Livable Centers Initiative through seven planning grants to varying cities and communities. The planning grants will lead to implementation. Mr. Mandapaka discussed the NCTCOG livable centers program which they call "[The Sustainable Development Funding Policy](#)" and has been in existence since 2002. A unique feature of this program is the swap of federal funds for state toll road funds to allow for more administrative flexibility for the Sustainable Funding Policy. Mr. Mandapaka also distributed copies of the 12-page "[Regional Mobility Initiatives: A Regional Approach to Sustainable Development](#)" which is an excellent, illustrated document explaining how the NCTC Sustainable Funding Policy program works.

Open Discussion on Regional Livable Communities: The next session, led by Mariia Zimmerman, was a free flow of peer exchange ideas on Regional Livable Communities. One of the questions involved social equity. Marlene Nagel, who is heading up the Regional Livable Communities program recently launched by the Mid American Regional Council in the Kansas City area spoke about efforts to reach out to different groups for equity concerns which were traditionally under represented. This effort was funded by PolicyLink. Robin Mayhew of the Puget Sound Regional Council spoke about the Council's efforts to define one regional measure for equity and their related question: how do you do this as related to transit including Transit Oriented Development? Mark Vanderschaff of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities discussed the benefits of a [National Association of Regional Council study](#) which dealt with regional industry cluster analysis and how this might help to develop Regional Livable Communities. Marco Anderson of the Southern California Association of Governments talked about how they tend to fund a lot of planning requests for livable communities from the scores of local governments in the Southern California Region of 17-

18 million people. And while this may possibly seem to run counter to overall, concentrated regional development, nevertheless, these planning grants tend to focus local communities on the concept of developing regional centers and corridors. Other commentators in this session included Becky Bradley of the Lehigh Valley Regional Planning Commission in Pennsylvania, John Williams of Portland Metro, Patrick Mandapaka of the North Central Texas Council of Governments, and Ken Kirkey of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Next Steps: The last session of the Forum was led by Division Chair, Dan Reuter. This session focused on the question of "where we go from here" in terms of possible future Regional Livable Communities peer exchanges. The first step was to send a report to all those present, and this E-News to the Division membership is one part of that first report. Another next step which received the most pointed attention at the Forum was the formation of an ad hoc or even more permanent standing committee of people from the various regional planning/MPO agencies which have Regional Livable Communities programs. Such a group might provide overall guidance for future Regional Livable Communities peer exchanges. Other potential program ideas included the future identification of other regional planning/MPO agencies which have or about to get underway with Regional Livable Communities Programs and the development of webinars. Also to be explored would be the possibility of holding another two-day session with various regional planning agencies and MPO's similar to what was done in August of 2010 in Atlanta via the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. DOT's Volpe Center, with the Volpe Center subsequently authoring a detailed report. And finally, the possibility of a third annual Regional Livable Communities Forum, either before, after, or during the next National APA Conference in Phoenix Arizona in April of 2016 will also be explored.

Facilitated Discussion on “Emerging Trends in Regional Planning”

Over 100 planners attended the Facilitated Discussion sponsored by the Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division (RIPD) on “Emerging Trends in Regional and State Planning” during the APA National Conference in Seattle. This session highlighted some of the research and analysis that is coming out of our forthcoming APA Planning Advisory Service (PAS Report) on this subject.

The panelists at this session included:

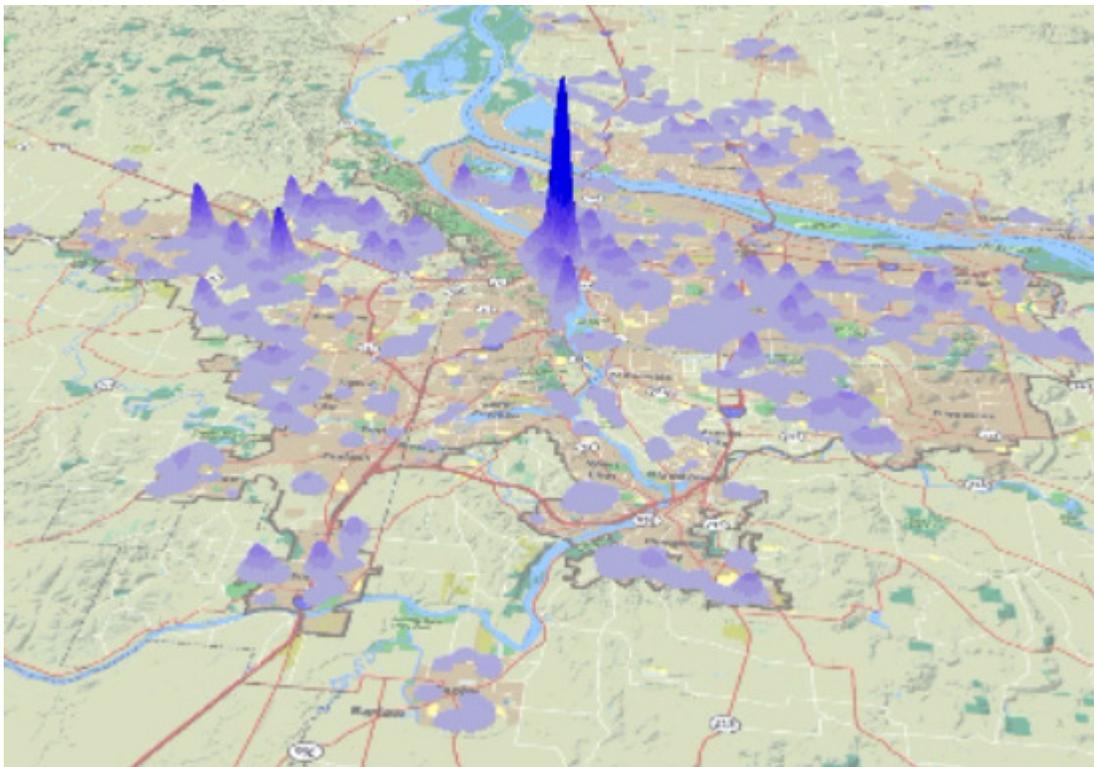
- Mark VanderSchaaf - Director of Regional Planning at the Metropolitan Council (Minneapolis – Saint Paul Area)
- Jennifer Raitt - Assistant Director of Land Use Planning at Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Boston Area)
- Ben Bakkenta – Program Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle Area)
- Elisa Barbour – PhD Candidate at UC Berkeley and formerly Policy Analyst with the Public Policy Institute of California.

The discussion was facilitated by Bob Leiter, former Board Chair for RIPD, who is currently serving as co-editor along with Rocky Piro, for the forthcoming PAS Report that will be published in Fall 2015. Immediately prior to the start of the conference, Bob and Rocky held a meeting with several of the report authors to discuss the status of the report and to identify some of the cross-cutting themes in the draft report.

Each of the speakers discussed their experience and research in one of the key topic areas that are being covered in the PAS report. Mark VanderSchaaf discussed the regional parks and trails system in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, and the Metropolitan Council’s recently updated Regional Parks Policy Plan. Jennifer Raitt talked about the regional policy framework for affordable housing and fair housing in the Boston metro area, and how MAPC has taken a

leadership role in this arena. Ben Bakkenta discussed the integrated regional planning program that has been undertaken by PSRC for the Seattle – Puget Sound metro area, and how it relates to PSRC’s responsibilities under the State of Washington’s Growth Management Act. Elisa Barbour talked about the experience of the four largest Metropolitan Planning Organizations in California under SB 375, the state’s pioneering legislation that links regional transportation planning to targets for reduced greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles.

Our thanks go out to our panelists and to the other participants in this lively discussion!



Portland: New residential development 1998-2014

Managing Urban Growth: Urban Growth Boundaries

The Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division hosted a session at the 2015 American Planning Association Conference on regional approaches to urban growth boundaries. Three urban regions were featured: Portland, Seattle, and Denver. Approximately 300 people attended the session. While each system seeks to achieve contiguous and orderly growth, the approaches do vary.

Lessons from Portland

Ted Reid, principal planner with Metro in Portland, explained that state legislation dating to the 1970s provides a foundation for protecting farms and forest lands, while managing growth. Metro is a directly elected regional government with land use planning authority in the 3-county Portland metropolitan area. The urban growth boundary is determined based on the evaluation of four factors.

- Efficient accommodation of identified needs
- Orderly & economic public facilities & services
- Environmental, energy, economic, & social consequences
- Compatibility with nearby agriculture & forestry

Over the past 15 years, approximately 94 percent of the region's residential development has occurred within the designated urban growth boundary. Reid pointed out that many existing urbanized areas are experiencing infill and redevelopment, creating more compact communities that can support transit and services. Interestingly, a number of new areas on the edges that have been brought inside the urban growth boundary have yet to develop.

Lessons from Seattle

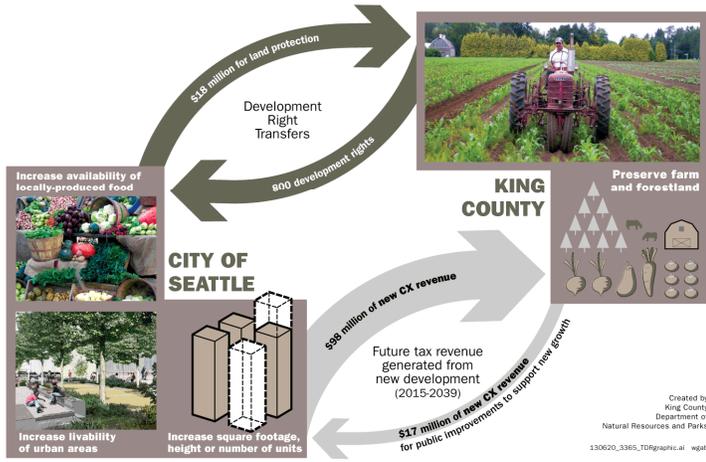
Karen Wolf, AICP, senior policy analyst with King County, and AICP Commissioner for the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest states, shared the evolution of the urban growth area strategy in King County and the central Puget Sound region of Washington state. King County first adopted an urban growth area in 1985 as part of its comprehensive plan. The growth area was initially designated primarily to protect key resource lands and agricultural areas from urban encroachment.

In 1990, Washington state revised its land use and planning legislation with the adoption of the Growth Management Act. Many of the provisions in the Act reflected growth management concepts in King County's comprehensive plan, including a requirement to designate urban growth areas. Comprehensive planning was now required in populated and fast-growing counties and their municipalities, including King County and its neighboring metropolitan counties in central Puget Sound.

With the new state planning framework, the designation of the King County urban growth area became more sophisticated. Not only were resource areas to be protected, but the land designated for urban use was to be based on forecasts of population and job growth and an analysis of "buildable" land. In effect, the County ended up reducing the area of land it had previously identified for urbanization. Another concept in the state's Growth Management Act is the importance of retaining rural areas for their unique character and land uses.

Wolf pointed out that 98 percent of population growth in King County is going into the designated urban growth area. While the Washington state process would in theory allow for new lands to be added to the urban growth area as in Portland, King County has opted to limit such additions. Wolf noted that King County is using additional tools to reinforce the urban growth area boundary, including a county-to-city transfer of development rights program and open space set-asides along the boundary. Cities are not allowed to annex lands beyond the boundary. She concluded with information from a recent study that the existence of the urban growth boundary over the past 30 years has resulted in more than a dramatic reduction of housing units built in rural areas – almost two thirds fewer homes (or 17,000 fewer units) that would likely have located outside the urban growth area if the growth boundary and supporting strategies did not exist.

KING COUNTY – SEATTLE
2013 Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Agreement



Lessons from Denver

Andy Taylor, AICP, senior planner with the Denver Regional Council of Governments, provided an overview of a voluntary approach to designating an metropolitan urban growth area. While Colorado had passed growth management legislation in the early 1970s, the law was subsequently weakened and made optional. The 1990s was a period of rapid growth in the Denver region, and rather than seek a state solution, members of the Denver Regional Council of Government opted to create “bottom-up” approach to guiding urban growth. Through the Mile High Compact, a multi-party intergovernmental agreement signed by the majority of the Council’s member cities and counties, the Council establishes a policy framework for the urban growth area, and allocates growth amounts to member jurisdictions. Staff at the Denver Regional Council of Governments compiles local jurisdiction commitments for forecasting and planning for growth and also tracks development and annexations that occur.

The original 750 square mile urban growth area (2002) was adjusted to include 25 additional square miles for the 2030 horizon year. Taylor noted, however, that some of that land expansion is the result of a portion of an additional county – Weld County – having formally become part of the Denver Regional Council of Government’s planning area. Taylor provided information that further adjustments

by the Council's Board in the past five years have now added 200 square miles to the urban growth area. He pointed out that as with Portland and Seattle, the Denver region is experiencing infill and redevelopment in existing urbanized areas.

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