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Regional Transportation and Land Use Decision Making in Metropolitan Regions

National Policy Consensus Center

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE DECISION MAKING IN METROPOLITAN REGIONS

RESEARCH FORUM PROCEEDINGS

SEPTEMBER 8 – 9, 2010

PORTLAND, OREGON

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SUMMARY

In 2010, an interdisciplinary team from the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University and the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the University of Oregon conducted a study examining the arrangements and mechanisms for integrating land use and transportation in metropolitan regions and assessing these arrangements based on current practice and future potential. The four case study regions were: Portland, Oregon; Puget Sound, WA; San Diego, CA, and Denver, CO.

The methods used in this study included a research forum held in September, 2010 in Portland, Oregon to share findings, discuss implications, identify lessons learned and develop best practices.

The Forum aimed to address or identify:

- New federal initiatives that are relevant to the research topic, including the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities
- The overall research findings and those from specific case study areas
- Lessons learned and possible 'best practices', including the implications for federal, state and regional programs and initiatives
- Appropriate next steps, further research needs and distribution of the research & forum products.

The 1.5 day Forum was attended by university researchers, policy makers, representatives from state and federal government agencies and representatives from the four case study regions. The first day was designed to share the results of the research and engage participants in small group discussions on the four main themes (Funding, Policy, Governance, and Coordination) of the project. The Forum opened with an overview of related federal government initiatives,

particularly the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and continued with a presentation of results by the project Co-PIs, a panel discussion with representatives from the four case study regions, and a Q and A with two members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Representative Peter DeFazio and Representative Jim Oberstar, on the reauthorization of the transportation bill. In the afternoon, participants divided into small groups to discuss lessons learned and best practices on funding, policy, governance and coordination.

The larger group reconvened on the second day of the meeting to hear reports from the small group discussions and to hear from a panelist of researchers on further research needs.

BACKGROUND

Across the United States, transportation and land use decision-making in metropolitan regions has produced growth patterns that have led to congestion, rapidly increasing infrastructure demand, air quality problems, greenhouse gases and loss of open space. Federal policy and some state policy have encouraged an increased focus on strategies to improve livability, sustainability and address the challenges of climate change through regional planning and decision-making. Regional transportation decisions are often not integrated with regional and local land use decision making, and many land use decisions fail to take into account the transportation impacts. Furthermore, many transportation patterns extend beyond the boundaries of regional agencies, creating large travel-sheds that cross metropolitan areas or extend into nearby cities and rural areas.

Both the study and the Forum examined arrangements and mechanisms for integrating land use and transportation in metropolitan regions and assessed these arrangements based on current practice and future potential. Some of the common issues facing regions relate to: regional transportation and commuting patterns, greenhouse gas emissions, regional land use coordination issues, and cross-jurisdictional coordination issues. The NPCC and UO research team focused on two key dimensions:

- **Regional governance**: the structures, authority and informal arrangements developed to address regional issues in multi-city metropolitan areas.
- **Coordination mechanisms**: specific tools or policies for encouraging coordination between land use and transportation decision-making; in particular, the financial incentives for local government.

The specific objectives of the study were to: (1) document and describe innovative case studies; (2) evaluate the case studies through interviews, an on-line survey, and document review; (3)

compare and contrast the findings; (4) analyze the findings to determine the lessons for practice and potential policy implications.

FORUM SPONSORS AND STAFF

The Forum was funded by the Federal Highway Administration STEP Research Program, the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC) the Oregon Department of Transportation, the University of Oregon and Portland State University. OTREC is a National University Transportation Center (UTC) created by Congress in 2005, and is a partnership between Portland State University, the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Institute of Technology.

This Forum was organized by Susan Brody and Gail McEwen of the National Policy Consensus Center. Shari Schaftlein, Team Leader of FHWA's Office of Project Development and Environmental Review, provided project oversight for the Forum.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Susan Brody, National Policy Consensus Center, Portland State University

Susan Brody welcomed participants to the Forum, reviewed the day's agenda, introduced members of the research team, thanked FHWA and OTREC for sponsoring the event, and introduced Shari Schaftlien of FHWA.

NEW FEDERAL INITIATIVES

Shari Schaftlein, FHWA Office of Planning, Environment and Realty

Ms. Schaftlein provided an overview of FHWA's initiatives related to land use and transportation planning. The Department of Transportation and FHWA define a liveable community as "one in which people have multiple, convenient transportation and housing options as well as destinations easily accessible to people traveling in and out of cars."

She highlighted the existing resources, policies and programs at FHWA that support livability and the HUD/DOT/EPA Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, particularly the use of Context-Sensitive Solutions / Design (CSS) in designing major thoroughfares for walkable communities. Ms. Schaftlein described the national dialogues held to serve as a catalyst for an ongoing exchange of ideas and to build momentum for wider implementation of CSS in the

transportation industry. The Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP) also provides SAFETEA-LU funds to conduct all FHWA research on planning and environmental issues to improve understanding of the complex relationship between surface transportation, planning and the environment. Ms. Schaftlein emphasized the principles guiding CSS:

- Strive towards a shared stakeholder vision to provide a basis for decisions.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contexts.
- Foster continuing communication and collaboration to achieve consensus.
- Exercise flexibility and creativity to shape effective transportation solutions, while preserving and enhancing community and natural environments.

Ms. Schaftlein also noted a history of livability as a national initiative over several recent decades and administrations, but the new concept behind livability is to bring all these initiatives together under one big umbrella.

In addition, Ms. Schaftlein provided an update on the Partnership's activities over its first year, which focused on targeting the three departments' resources to communities and removing federal barriers, such as contracting conflicts.

OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDY AREAS

Tom Kloster, Metro (Portland, OR Metro Council), Ben Bakkenta, PSRC (Puget Sound Regional Council), Coleen Clementson, SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments), Steve Rudy, DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments)

Rich Margerum described the study he and partners at NPCC had been working on over the past year on land use and transportation integration in four specific metropolitan regions. Representatives from the four case study regions then presented on the history, governing structures, and initiatives of the entities that oversee transportation and land use planning in their regions. See Appendix C for their presentation slides.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Rich Margerum, University of Oregon

Dr. Margerum provided a context for the study, explaining that metropolitan areas, as significant economic drivers that house 81% of the nation's population, face a series of challenges that demand coordination between transportation and land-use planning, including infrastructure costs, livability and quality of life, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. Margerum described the research team's methodology and selection criteria for the four regions.

Dr. Margerum noted that the research had limitations, as it was based on only four cases that were relatively new programs, contained limited sample sizes, and relied on the opinions of regional stakeholders. Given the differences among the four cases, it was difficult to compare data across them. Dr. Margerum also provided an overview of the study's findings, which fell into four categories: Governance, Transportation-Land Use Coordination, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Criteria, and Growth Centers Initiatives. The research team identified potential best practices in each of the four case study areas. See Appendix C for his presentation slides.

Potential Governance Best Practices

- DRCOG board manual
- Metro Bi-State Coordinating Committee
- PSRC involves neighboring counties in meetings
- SANDAG uses a two part voting system based on (1) number of jurisdictions and (2) population

Potential Coordination Best Practices

- Consistency requirements in Oregon and Washington between land use and transportation decisions
- PSRC land use and transportation boards meet periodically to discuss consistency issues
- SANDAG Transnet tax has funded significant open space acquisition, an additional growth management tool

Potential TIP Best Practices

- DRCOG awards points for projects in urban centers within the UGB area
- Metro allocates points for projects that support the Region 2040 Land Use Goals
- PSRC allocates points for projects that benefit centers defined in its Vision 2040 plan
- SANDAG allocates points to projects that support regional corridors or growth centers

Potential Growth Centers Best Practices

- SANDAG has allocated $280 million over 40 years for Smart Growth Incentive Program
- Metro's grant program is funded by construction excise tax
- PSRC has developed a design guidelines manual for urban centers
- DRCOG funds studies around light rail stations in coordination with the Regional Transportation District

Dr. Margerum concluded with the three major outcomes from the research:

- Mixed views on consistency between land use and transportation decision making
- Most believe their region is making more efficient use of land due to regional efforts

- Most believe their region is creating more transportation options due to regional efforts

For a detailed explanation of the findings and a discussion of those findings, please refer to Appendix D, the research report.

CONGRESSIONAL SESSION ON TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Hon. Rep. James Oberstar (MN), Chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Hon. Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR), Chair, House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

Rich Margerum welcomed everyone to the session, and introduced Jennifer Dill, OTREC Director. Ms. Dill introduced Representatives Oberstar and DeFazio and thanked them for their past support of OTREC.

Representatives Oberstar and DeFazio spoke to Forum attendees on the status of the National Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2010 (H.R. 4714, S. 2768). At the time of the Forum, the Act was awaiting action from Congress.

Following their remarks, participants discussed the key elements they would like to see in the reauthorization in the Policy breakout sessions and during the group discussion on the Policy Implications of the research. See sections VI and VII for the participants' comments.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Following the presentations on the research and the four case study areas, forum participants broke into four groups for facilitated discussions on the following topic areas: funding, coordination, governance and policy. In each topic-centered discussion, participants shared lessons learned and insights into possible 'best practices' in regards to funding, governance, coordination, and policy.

After the breakout sessions, participants came together to summarize and review the results of the sessions. The summary below reflects both the breakout sessions and the subsequent discussion.

FUNDING

Eight overall topics emerged from the breakout discussion on funding: congestion pricing, flexibility, revenue sharing / sub-allocation, eligibility, local taxes, planning assistance, design education / smart growth best practices, and fiscal transparency.

Participants acknowledged that because there will never be enough funding, funding priorities need to be established in order to use the available funds more effectively. However, participants expressed different views on what these priorities should be (maintaining the existing system, completing the system to support planned land uses, or to support smart growth (i.e., centers). Participants also mentioned a "mobility versus livability" conflict at state DOTs that needs to be resolved.

Congestion pricing also poses a significant challenge, including uncertainties about how thoroughly they as regional planning bodies are able to understand the land development economics and macro-economic issues and the political obstacles that come with implementing congestion pricing. While it is much easier to sell the idea of congestion pricing to fund new facilities, it is much more difficult to congestion price existing systems. Gas taxes will be a diminishing source of revenue. SANDAG has used congestion pricing to build new freeway lanes.

Participants identified local taxes as a 'best practice,' citing California, where most places have implemented a local sales tax for funding transportation. This "self-help" sales tax has been vital in ensuring a dedicated source of funding as part of an overall MPO strategy for helping a region achieve its goals. Participants thought this could be adopted more broadly.

Participants pointed out the challenges of revenue sharing / sub-allocation of federal funding. FHWA and other agencies have modeled themselves to pass funding to the state, and the burden of sub-allocation lies with the state. Some states (California) have passed legislation on sub-allocation. Having states allocate funds to regions rather than jurisdictions could result in better regional coordination of land use and transportation. A possible solution might be federal legislation that allows a direct funding allocation to the largest MPOs, but then the MPOs would need to be prepared to address federal requirements that can be burdensome. There can be an advantage in bundling smart growth and transportation funds and providing more flexibility to MPOs; however, caution is needed because not all regions have regional plans, and not all MPOs are on board with smart growth. Incentives should be provided to MPOs that use a smart growth framework or are addressing climate change. Dedicated funding is needed to help regions to plan for smart growth.

At all levels, participants noted that fiscal transparency is important, including full disclosure of what it takes to repair and maintain infrastructure (transportation/power/water/sewer) in a region. Transportation funding alone can't be used to solve a region's infrastructure problems; other infrastructure needs also go along with reducing greenhouse gasses or VMT.

COORDINATION

Participants noted that MPOs need a defined internal structure for coordination and sufficient staff resources to ensure that coordination occurs, including full time staff dedicated to coordination. The use of task groups and subcommittees improves coordination by providing for greater stakeholder involvement. In addition, implementing coordination efforts require follow up, such as performance measures and evaluation, to ensure that it is ongoing and becomes embedded as a practice. Performance measurement plays an important role in focusing efforts. Participants also pointed out that focusing on cross-boundary issues, which help establish dialogue and working relationships between MPOs and other entities, is key in that it creates the sense that all partners are working towards a common goal.

Fund allocation can also provide improved coordination. State or federal transportation legislation could increase the amount of funds allocated to MPOs or provide a direct sub-allocation to MPOs. Having fund allocation and planning as separate processes creates a disconnect between a good planning process and a project that gets funded. Suballocation could allow more planning to occur. More local control over funds enhances coordination by producing more involvement from stakeholders and advocacy groups. Participants suggested using incentives to encourage different ways of thinking about smart growth, shifting priorities, leveraging use of available funds, and pooling funds so there is regional allocation of funds in a more holistic approach (example of Massachusetts). Planning grants for cross-boundary coordination also help promote interregional partnerships and coordination.

Participants observed that integration of land use and transportation planning is promoted when a single agency is responsible for comprehensive land use planning and transportation planning. Consistency between state, local and regional policy, and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of state, regional and local governments also promotes coordination. The difficulty of coordinating land use and transportation in the absence of regional economic plans was also noted.

The integration of land use plans with plans for infrastructure other than transportation in order to achieve climate change goals emerged as a key need, and participants thought that the EPA/HUD/DOT Partnership was a step in this direction. Water utilities are key for smart growth; however, this is a big void in regional planning in terms of coordination. Portland Metro is using air quality sheds to try and link infrastructure planning better.

Participants also identified factors that create tension between state DOTs and MPOs. They include:

- Lack of coordination at all levels of the organizations. For example, coordination may be good at the staff level, but not at higher organizational levels.
- Communication barriers
- Competing interests and tension between programs, such as capacity vs. modes and systems vs. local programs and projects
- Allocation of funds is separate from the planning process, and states determine where the funds go
- State plans are more general; MPO plans have higher specificity; and local plans have the highest specificity

- Structural disconnect between the planning phase and the projects that are actually implemented

Communication tools are also vital to enabling coordination. Maps and other visualization techniques provide an easy way for regions to communicate regional vision to elected officials and the public. As the populations of the regions seem to be more visually oriented now, using maps aids in helping with local buy in, understanding and coordination. Using an outcome-based planning and performance measures can also improve coordination at a local technical staff level and provide a good communication tool for elected officials and the public.

Participants also noted that state legislation or a crisis could force a discussion on coordination within a region.

GOVERNANCE

While the governance systems of the four case study areas were all different in terms of MPO board composition and voting rules, participants agreed they were working reasonably well for their regions and might provide good models for other jurisdictions of the same size and scale. Federal regulations need not treat all urban areas the same; for example, larger MPOs should have more autonomy.

Participants discussed the leadership possibilities that the different governance structures presented. The case of the Portland Metro Council, which has elected leadership, led participants to note the role that suburban mayors or a Council of Mayors, such as in Minneapolis / St. Paul, have played as MPO leaders in some regions. The importance of having key elected officials that are willing to champion efforts was acknowledged. Participants noted that regionalism is promoted when urban leaders step back and allow champions from non-urban areas to assume a leadership role. It is also important to have governance systems that develop collaborative cross-jurisdictional relationships at a staff level.

Governance structures or mechanisms that facilitated integration of transportation and land use or promoted regional coordination were identified by participants, including: using Executive Councils to obtain broad representation; including representatives from ports, airports and transit districts on MPO boards; establishing consortiums of MPOs; and engaging in interregional partnerships between MPOs.

Participants discussed challenges relating to county participation in MPOs. For example, in Portland and Denver, only small portions of counties are within the MPO boundary. This presents both a governance challenge, as the county commissioner is less than a full stakeholder in the process, and a funding issue as the counties have facilities or rural roads that are handling urban traffic outside the regional boundaries with which they're concerned. In the Denver region, DRGOC is a membership organization, with dues paid to DRCOG used as a local match

for planning funds. When MPO boundaries were expanded in 2008, not all jurisdictions in the expanded boundary joined DRGOG. DRCOG appointed a member from the missing county and asks the county for matching funds in planning grants. SANDAG amended their governance structure to include additional representatives to address rural issues.

POLICY

In the discussion on policy, participants focused on the following policy issues that could be addressed in the transportation reauthorization bill: funding policy; transportation project design; partnerships; sprawl audits and incentives.

Participants noted that federal transportation funding should be woven into a broader transportation policy. Criteria for funding projects at a state and federal level should not be based on single criteria; instead, criteria should be based on multiple factors including environment, livability, safety, equity and economics. Participants noted that the federal government has different classification systems that the states have to respond to, and that this makes it hard to get a response to regional needs. Federal grant programs should have more flexibility. There should be opportunities for MPOs to receive direct federal funding, perhaps through the federal MPO certification process.

With respect to transportation project design, participants noted that Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) implementation is not always happening on a local level. Transportation project design should be based on multiple criteria. Building more flexibility into design criteria would reduce the need for exceptions.

Participants suggested that the reauthorization legislation acknowledge the "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" and expand the partnership to include Health and Human Services. There should also be a review of federal regulations that may promote sprawl. More incentives, including rewards for good planning, would contribute to the goals of the Partnership.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The group began by reviewing the outcomes from Policy breakout session and continued to focus on the need for new or modified policies on a federal or state level and particularly addressing policy issues as part of the National Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2010.

One of the key policy issues that reauthorization could address was funding. Participants observed that funding policy appears to be too narrow and recommended rethinking how funding occurs so that it is consistent with the issues MPOs deal with. The legislation could provide direct lines of funding to MPOs and both reward and encourage MPOs who are doing good

planning. In addition, funding streams should be directed towards urban development, not just transportation, and should be targeted to support smart growth (i.e. centers and transit funding). At the same time, the role of MPOs could be expanded to include other types of infrastructure. Participants also stressed the importance of identifying revenue sources that go beyond a gas tax. Revenue sources should be sustainable, and should not be in conflict with the desired outcomes of livable communities. More generally, the Act could simplify and consolidate programs and reduce earmarking.

The discussion also centered on how the Reauthorization Act could be used in support of the Sustainable Communities Partnership. Recommendations for doing so include:

- The Reauthorization Act should codify and institutionalize the EPA-HUD-DOT Partnership for Sustainable Communities.
- Expand the Partnership to include Health and Human Services. Implementing land use and transportation policies often impacts Health and Human Service needs or their ability to provide services.
- Agencies in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities should look at their own rules and regulations to see if they incentivize sprawl.

The discussion on policy implications from the research also raised the issue of establishing best practices for transportation project design. Participants suggested the following:

- Federal rules for transportation project design that allow consideration of multiple criteria and objectives, including livability and capacity;
- More use of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS);
- Best practices that go beyond looking at Level of Service (LOS) and instead examine what the needs are and use performance measures to identify solutions; and
- Exceptions to design standards that are part of a bigger toolbox. If this concept could be established at a federal level, state DOTs would be more inclined to broaden the use of exceptions.

FHWA provided information about ongoing efforts outside of the transportation reauthorization process that are addressing issues through existing programs, authorities and budgets. The HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities has been looking at all funding sources, and has been looking at their policies and investments to see if they reflect smart growth principles.

FHWA has also:

- Held peer exchanges and webinars on CSS that have included universities, MPOs, local governments, ASHTO and state Departments of Transportation;

- Produced products for communities like “Complete Streets” and “Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities;”
- Asked health organizations for their ideas on developing project checklists that can be worked into NEPA;
- Hosted a meeting with other federal agencies regarding the ecological work that FHWA does, and identifying the ecological programs of the other agencies to make people aware of cross connections that could leverage funding;
- Supported research on regional livability plans.

Participants discussed the importance of regional planning, and actions that could be taken at federal and state levels to promote regional planning.

- Identify best practices in regional planning.
    - The federal principles of sustainability and livability provide a good framework for discussing what elements of regional plans can be used to achieve sustainability and livability goals, and how to build capacity within regional planning agencies to implement plans.
    - A model “regional livability plan” would be an excellent framework for this discussion. Issues that would need to be discussed include:
        - The content of a regional plan
        - How a regional plan would be developed and used
        - What capacity does a regional planning agency need to implement the plan
        - What needs to happen at federal, state and regional levels of government to implement the plan.
    - Federal transportation reauthorization should provide funding for developing and implementing regional plans.
- It is important to work at a state level as well as a regional level. The extent to which the state has ownership in regional plans affects the state’s investment in the region, which affects implementation of the regional plans.
- It is important not to forget the importance of leaders in formulating and implementing regional approaches; however, there is no strategy for creating leaders and having them understand their importance.

Participants identified state policy level actions that are being taken to address issues raised by forum participants, particularly in the state of California. California created a “Strategic Growth Council” that includes the heads of the state environmental protection, transportation, health and human service agencies and adopted legislation (SB 375) to use regional planning to address climate change.

In addressing the issue of climate change, participants pointed out that the lack of state or federal mandates for greenhouse gas reduction can make it difficult for some regions to address this issue. Those who are not supportive question attempts to reduce greenhouse gas. On the other hand, there may be more ownership if entities adopt their own performance measures or goals for greenhouse gas and VMT reduction. More experience on the ground and more feedback to policy makers are needed. It would be helpful if the state or federal government could reward these efforts. Although MPOs are the obvious place to go for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the states also have a role as not all MPOs will be able to achieve the same level of reduction. MPOs need incentives and offset opportunities. There is an opportunity for states to be "brokers" by establishing an overall state budget for greenhouse gas reduction.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

Moderated by Rich Margerum, University of Oregon; Susan Handy, University of California, Davis; Bob Leiter, American Planning Association; Terry Moore, ECO Northwest

Participants on the panel identified future research topics and questions regarding integrating land use and transportation. The first researcher was Dr. Susan Handy, a professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at the University of California at Davis and director of the Sustainable Transportation Center. Dr. Handy highlighted additional research on tools development, performance measures, more local scale tools, the "state of the art" for developing trip generation rates, and visualization tools. She suggested that more multi-disciplinary input was necessary in determining what roles the above tools really play, what impact they have on the process, what role they have in decision making, and whether we are using the modeling results to explore what the options are or to justify the outcomes we want. In addition, Dr. Handy observed that the field required more program and policy evaluation, both internal and external evaluation, and more rigorous evaluation before and after CSS.

Both Dr. Handy and the second speaker, Bob Leiter, Chair of the American Planning Association's Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division, suggested looking at best practices, in both planning and in governance structure, as well as methods for giving regional planning agencies the resources to develop and implement regional plans. Mr. Leiter proposed creating a "best practices book" to examine what successful regional plans look like, how they are developed, how to get community input, and capacity planning. In conjunction with FHWA, participants could develop manuals and information for local governments on these best practices. The final presenter on the panel, Terry Moore, Vice President and Senior Planner at ECONorthwest, pointed out that existing information and research needs to be consolidated and put into a form that is more usable for MPOs and local governments (e.g., research on the "state of the art" for developing trip generation rates). Mr. Moore also mentioned the importance of

getting basic sketch level tools with standardized parameters to MPOs, and of compiling information on best practices in collaboration.

Panelists also discussed opportunities to improve transportation and land use research in general. They noted that research needs themselves can be identified through planning efforts. For example, an effort in California to develop an analysis of achievable targets for greenhouse gas reduction in each region led to research on the relationship between certain types of strategies (increased density, pricing) and the reduction of greenhouse gases and VMT. Transportation research tends to focus on topics with an immediate payoff (like research on traffic signals); instead, research ought to be approached from a different perspective and include building advocacy for more research on planning. Transportation models are either so simple that they fail to capture the complexity of the system, or so complicated that they can't be used in other areas. "Midlevel" models are needed. All regional planning visions tend to have the same urban form (i.e., centers, new towns, redeveloped historic towns, converted strips). There is a need think beyond these forms.

Rethinking grant programs and other programs to promote regional planning within a state or between states would also benefit future research. California's regional blueprint planning program is an example of an intra-state program that promoted regional planning through grants for regional planning and development of learning networks. More research partnerships need to be developed between state DOTs, University Transportation Centers UTCs and MPOs.

Other needed research, according to panelists and participants, would:

- Identify the impact of regional plans on local plans and local decision-making, and how regional plans affect growth allocations within the region;
- Identify best practices and strategies for reducing VMT;
- Explore the relationship between land use planning and regional housing needs allocations, and how this relates to climate change;
- Explore the relationship between state DOTs and MPOs and identify any institutional or policy barriers that exist;
- Develop collaborative decision support and decision management tools;
- Develop a "short course" for MPOs on how to expeditiously gather the information they need to make their decisions;
- Determine how well regions are doing in implementing their regional vision;
- Identify ways to make redevelopment happen at a local level;
- Determine the impact of long-range plans and transportation investments on Title 6 populations;
- Identify the incremental steps that can be taken to achieve a mode shift to transit and bicycling over time;

- Identify methods for leveraging private investment to achieve regional planning objectives;
- Identify ways to provide for more meaningful public involvement in regional planning efforts, particularly from low-income and minority communities; and
- Determine what elected officials need in their arsenal of knowledge so that they can understand what MPOs deal with.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A number of important observations emerged from the presentations and breakout discussions regarding the arrangements and mechanisms for integrating land use and transportation in metropolitan regions:

FUNDING

Revenue sources that go beyond a gas tax need to be identified. Revenue sources should be sustainable, and should not be in conflict with the desired outcomes of livable communities. Participants concluded that Local taxes for funding transportation are a 'best practice,' as evidenced in California, where most places have implemented a local sales tax for funding transportation. Funding streams should be directed towards urban development, not just transportation, and should be targeted to support smart growth (i.e. centers and transit funding). Incentives and dedicated funding should be provided to MPOs that plan for smart growth and use a smart growth framework or are addressing climate change. Reauthorization of the Transportation Act provides an opportunity to increase funding to MPOs and to redirect sub-allocation of federal funds directly to MPOs. In addition, the Act could provide funding for regional planning and developing interregional partnerships and coordination.

COORDINATION

MPO's need a defined internal structure for coordination and sufficient staff resources to ensure that coordination occurs, including full time staff dedicated to coordination. Using task groups and subcommittees improves coordination by providing for greater stakeholder involvement. Participants identified a need to integrate land use plans with plans for infrastructure other than transportation in order to achieve smart growth and climate change goals. One key finding was that regional planning provides an important mechanism for ongoing coordination, and federal and state governments can play a role in promoting regional planning. The next steps in that area are identifying best practices in regional planning and creating a model regional livability plan.

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Throughout the Forum, the Federal Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities emerged repeatedly as an example of and an opportunity for both coordination and policy. The Partnership is a step in the right direction of integrating land use policies with plans for infrastructure other than transportation in order to achieve climate change goals. Transportation reauthorization should acknowledge the "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" and expand the partnership to include Health and Human Services. The Partnership provides a model for other government entities, and some states are already making similar efforts. California created a "Strategic Growth Council" that includes the heads of the state environmental protection, transportation, health and human services agencies and adopted legislation (SB 375) to use regional planning to address climate change.

GOVERNANCE

The governance systems of the four case study areas were all different in terms of MPO board composition and voting rules, but were working reasonably well for their regions and might provide good models for other jurisdictions of the same size and scale. Participants agreed that no one model fits all metropolitan regions. Key elected officials who are willing to champion efforts (including regional planning efforts) is crucial; however, there is no strategy for creating leaders and having them understand their importance. Governance structures or mechanisms that facilitated integration of transportation and land use or promoted regional coordination were identified by participants, including: using Executive Councils to obtain broad representation; including representatives from ports, airports and transit districts on MPO boards; establishing consortiums of MPOs; and engaging in interregional partnerships between MPOs.

POLICY

While there will never be enough funding to accomplish all goals, funding priorities need to be established in order to use the available funds more effectively. No consensus on what those priorities should be emerged, and suggested priorities ranged from maintaining the existing system, completing the system to support planned land uses, to supporting smart growth (i.e., centers). Participants also identified a "mobility versus livability" conflict at state DOTs that needs to be resolved. Funding policy appears to be too narrow; we need to rethink how funding occurs so that it is consistent with the issues MPOs deal with and is woven into a broader transportation policy. Criteria for funding projects at a state and federal level should not be based on single criteria; instead, criteria should be based on multiple factors including environment, livability, safety, equity and economics.

Another key next step in the area of policy is the development of 'best practices' for transportation project design. Federal rules for transportation project design should allow consideration of multiple criteria and objectives, including livability and capacity, and encourage more use of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). The 'best practices' should go beyond looking

at Level of Service (LOS) and instead examine what the needs are and use performance measures to identify solutions. Exceptions to design standards are part of a bigger toolbox. If this concept could be established at a federal level, state DOTs would be more inclined to broaden the use of exceptions.

RESEARCH

Both broad and specific research questions targeted at metropolitan regions' land use and transportation integration emerged from the Forum. The list of research needs includes tools development (e.g. visualization), performance measures, more local scale tools, and the "state of the art" for developing trip generation rates. There was consensus that more program and policy evaluation, both internal and external, would benefit metropolitan regions, as would more rigorous evaluation before and after CSS. In terms of 'best practices,' participants identified an array of areas that research could examine, from 'best practices' in planning and governance structures to methods for giving regional planning agencies the resources to develop and implement regional plans to 'best practices' in collaboration. On a broader level, transportation research tends to focus on topics with an immediate payoff (like research on traffic signals); instead, research ought to be approached from a different perspective and include building advocacy for more research on planning. Existing information and research could also be consolidated into a form that is more usable for MPOs and local governments. Finally, participants encouraged re-thinking the very forms and models that research examines. Regional planning visions tend to have the same urban form (i.e., centers, new towns, redeveloped historic towns, converted strips), and research often neglects "mid-level" models.

APPENDIX A. PARTICIPANTS AND ATTENDEES

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APPENDIX B. AGENDA

RESEARCH FORUM: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE DECISION MAKING

University of Oregon White Stag Block
70 NW Couch Street
Portland, OR 97209

SEPTEMBER 8, 2010

8:00 am - Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30am - Welcome, Overview, and Introductions

8:45am - New Federal Initiatives

- Shari Schaftlein, FHWA Office of Planning, Environment and Realty
- Comments from other federal agency representatives

9:25am - Overview of Case Study Areas

- Tom Kloster, Metro
- Ben Bakkenta, PSRC
- Coleen Clementson, SANDAG
- Steve Rudy, DRCOG

9:50am - Break

10:05am - Presentation of Research Findings

- Rich Margerum, University of Oregon

11:15am - Keynote Remarks

- Hon. Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR), Chair, House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
- Hon. Rep. James Oberstar (MN), Chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

12:00pm - Lunch

1:00pm - Discussion of Research Findings

- Comments from Case Study Participants
- Facilitated Discussion

2:15pm - Breakout Sessions on Coordination and Funding

3:10pm - Break

3:30pm - Breakout Sessions on Governance and Policy

4:30pm - Wrap Up & Preparation for Day 2

4:45pm - Adjourn

5:00- 7:00pm - Reception

SEPTEMBER 9, 2010

8:00am - Continental Breakfast

8:30am - Agenda Review/Opening Comments

8:40am - Synthesis of Breakout Session Themes and Issues

9:10am - Policy Implications of Research Findings

- Federal & State Agency Comments
- Facilitated Discussion

10:15am - Break

10:30am - Panel Discussion on Future Research Needs

- Rich Margerum, University of Oregon
- Susan Handy, University of California, Davis
- Bob Leiter, American Planning Association
- Terry Moore, ECO Northwest

11:30am - Next Steps

12:00am - Adjourn

APPENDIX C. CASE STUDY AND RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTATIONS

Rich Margerum described the study he and partners at NPCC had been working on over the past year on land use and transportation integration in four specific metropolitan regions. Representatives from the four case study regions then presented on the history, governing structures, and initiatives of the entities that oversee transportation and land use planning in their regions:

- Rich Margerum, University of Oregon – "Regional Transportation and Land Use Decision Making"
- Coleen Clementson, SANDAG – "Regional Planning in the San Diego Region"
- Tom Kloster, METRO – "Portland Metropolitan Region Overview"
- Steve Rudy, DRCOG – "Regional Transportation – Land Use Decision Making"
- Ben Bakkenta, Puget Sound Regional Council – "PSRC and the Central Puget Sound Region"