

Rapid Fire Regional Council Innovations

Executive Directors Conference

2014-2016

AGING

- **Texas Association of Regional Councils (2015):**
 - Works with AAAs since all Texas councils are AAAs
 - Texas has gone to a managed care model and they have sought opportunities for AAAs to assist corporate insurance objectives
 - Texas Association of Regional Councils is helping to maintain enrollment
 - Also helping to maintain more evidence based modeling
 - Home delivered meals; care following the person models

JOB ACCESS

- **Mid-America Regional Council (2014):**
 - Received a TIGER planning grant to strengthen transit services between employment centers and residential areas

BROADBAND ACCESS

- **Boonslick Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Leading efforts for broadband services to assist first responders in the region
- **Green River Area Development District (2015):**
 - Built and own broadband for some of their rural communities – 4,200 customers
 - Built 57 towers after getting some seed money
 - Was a pioneer in the delivery of broadband services in rural Kentucky. Now, the state is experiencing a significant expansion associated with the SOAR initiative
 - Their start up endeavor has been sold to a private company

COALITION BUILDING

- **Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (2014 & 2015):**
 - Currently working with 26 MPOs. They developed a common set of guidelines on long-range plans together with a university transportation center looking at the cost of restoring purchasing power instead of using a large aggregate number
 - Unites the MPOs across the state to represent them at the state and federal levels
 - Helps them gain additional funding from Florida and the federal government
 - Developed a very popular weekend training for elected officials serving on the board
 - Now developing a two-hour online course; will also develop a training for Florida DOT employees to help Florida DOT relations
- **Fort Wayne (2016):**
 - Regular contact between Indiana MPOs and important partners, coordinated by the Indiana MPO Council
- **North Central Illinois Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Convenes county board chairs, zoning managers, and GIS officials for quarterly meetings
- **Wasatch Front Regional Council (2016):**
 - Bringing in a trusted organizational consultant to help bring issues to the table that may exist between Wasatch Front Regional Council and Utah DOT

COALITION BUILDING (CONT.)

- **Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (2015):**
 - The largest city in the region is Yakima, WA. The Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) currently gets no involvement from the city. YVCOG is now doing what they can to draw them back in

COLLEGE DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- **Mid-America Regional Council (2014):**
 - Currently working with Lumina Foundation on post-secondary attainment and the development of an action plan with local community colleges

CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT

- **Centralina Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Identified corridors for development in rural areas, making sure that housing options are closer to the newly identified transit corridors
- **San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Rather than following the initial option of widening at capacity highway, they are seeking a sustainable community strategy by undertaking a highway corridor study to identify comprehensive approaches for the corridor between Los Angeles and San Francisco
 - They will be looking at volume/capacity ratios, multimodal options, transit, bikes, cost/benefit ratios, TDM, local road connectivity, and operational improvements throughout the corridor to determine viability of approaches with reliability as the baseline

DISASTER PLANNING

- **Deep East Texas Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Worked on a disaster recovery and case management plan with FEMA
 - Created a database for areas impacted by hurricanes
 - Developed a pilot project for case managers who deal with disaster relief, which was used for the Hurricane Sandy response
- **Indian Nations Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Administered a disaster recovery program block grant for one county
- **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Established an emergency response system together with law enforcement using GIS notification and reverse 911 to cover schools, high rise buildings, and parking lots

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Atlanta Regional Commission (2014 & 2016):**
 - Established the Atlanta Aerotropolis Alliance, a non-profit consisting of businesses, local governments, and other stakeholders to leverage economic potential for seven communities, two counties, and major corporations near the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
 - Spurring development and workforce initiatives in the area
 - Took over a staffer and programming from a regional arts agency to help promote a vibrant region and thriving economy
 - Six-point regional arts program

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

- **Deep East Texas Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Received \$20 million in hurricane funds from HUD
 - Deep East Texas Council of Governments took \$5 million and created a forgivable loan program so businesses could apply for a loan
 - \$50,000 in loans forgiven for every job created if they provided employment for two years. HUD gave them the flexibility to work with the borrower
- **East Central Iowa Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Announced several new RLF programs focused on microloans of \$5,000 or less
 - A focus has been placed on partnership (with several agencies involved) and process, including the use of local public libraries to assist with intake
- **Eastgate Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Developed the Youngstown Business Incubator program with the local university in a former steel mill
 - Now working with high tech
 - Successful companies are coming out of incubator, including manufacturing companies
 - Working closely with the program on EDA grants
- **Greater Portland Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Starting a food cluster with funding from the Department of Commerce
 - Supply chain creation
 - They are considering what assets they need and are writing grants
 - Crane at their port; beer lab; food fork lab
- **Green River Area Development District (2014):**
 - Helped bring the culture of regional cooperation throughout the counties in their region to be designated as a “work ready” region
- **Lake Agassiz Development Group (2015):**
 - Offers small business lending for those unable to get conventional bank loans
 - They are working with North Dakota to develop a fifth phase of the state’s grant program to help push funds out
- **Maricopa Association of Governments (2015):**
 - The impact of the recession on region was huge, so they focused on economic development as a key benefit of transportation (transportation was their primary focus for 30 years)
 - Created an economic development committee with elected officials, businesses, and other stakeholders
 - Took elected officials on trade missions to Mexico; also spent \$250,000 on a freight study for an inland port and discovered the business was in Mexico
 - Now building an International Economic Development Network with 800 businesses signed up. The network is helping these businesses find matches to facilitate trade between Canada, the US, and Mexico
 - This program is helping to facilitate movement across borders
 - They used federal transportation dollars since the purpose of transportation is to stimulate economic vitality

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

- **North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (2015):**
 - Received a grant from the EDA to do statewide comprehensive economic development policy
 - All seven state COGs are working together using a project tracking software program to develop statewide CEDS. They are helping bring together various entities that have key roles in economic development to get them all working together
 - Identified key issues and developed criteria to help rank projects based on seven factors, which allows them to make investment decisions based on economic development for organizations of all sizes
 - Organizations can provide data online and in real time; this feeds directly into a relational database where they can pull data
 - Seven state agencies are interested; \$30,000 investment with EDA funding
- **Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (2015):**
 - Renewed focus on securing EDA and DRA funding for projects in their region
 - Projects they want to fund: renovating a community kitchen; the expansion of infrastructure for a local industry; and the reopening of a rail spur in the region
- **Sacramento Area Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Prepared a regional blueprint using state of the art scenario planning, research, and tools to study economic development for their six-county region
 - Initial research was urban based; now looking at rural-urban connection strategies
 - Topics they are currently studying: the urban edge; farm to market; region-wide cropping maps; what kind of marketing tools they need; looking at price of water and how that impacts the kind of crops they grow; ways to preserve rural areas; working with the landscape to see how to preserve habitats; and the impact of climate change
- **San Diego Association of Governments (2014 & 2015):**
 - Building new international border crossing at the cost of \$1 billion, coordinating with Mexico and 40 agencies on the other side of the border to energize the business community
 - Have authority to toll and bond the route
 - Took on this project because the region is missing out on \$6 billion in economic opportunity
 - Need a federal partnership; coordinating with 100 agencies at local, state and federal level in both countries
 - Chamber of Commerce has been a huge booster of the project, which is a big undertaking for an agency such as the San Diego Association of Governments to be working with Mexican counterparts
 - Currently in the process of working out revenue sharing agreements with Mexico
- **Wasatch Front Regional Council (2014):**
 - Resulting from concerns about the preservation of mountain ranges, they have brought stakeholders together to plan and focus on economic development
- **Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (2014):**
 - The bi-state MPO is bringing all neighboring MPOs and COGs, as well as the states they are in, together for workshops with FHWA on border freight issues. They are linking transportation and economic development to increase economic vitality in the region

ENVIRONMENT

- **Alamo Area Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Alamo Area Council of Governments is the largest community still in ozone attainment; they have developed a chemical modeling program with a grant from the state
 - The program allows users to identify the impact of specific changes in the community (such as no idling) and what that does to air quality
- **Association of South Central Oklahoma Governments (2015):**
 - Received funding for asbestos clean-up
 - Has had a hard time with a revolving loan fund, but they did a successful assessment program with the funding
 - Has a contract in place for their eight counties to do asbestos mitigation. They can give a price so the counties can budget for it
 - Association of South Central Oklahoma Governments charges a fee
- **California Association of Councils of Governments (2016):**
 - Western Riverside County project to help encourage HERO energy efficiency
- **Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (2014):**
 - Runs a regional marketing program for smaller towns, including regional grants, for storm water and planting trees
 - Works with DOE to reduce energy in municipalities
- **Indian Nations Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Working together with tribes in the area, they developed an energy revolving loan program to provide lower interest rates and gives preference to local governments
 - Also provides training and technical assistance for EPA storm water management for cities in region
- **Metro Area Planning Agency (2014):**
 - Initiated project for ozone awareness
 - With CMAQ funds, they instituted the “Little Steps, Big Impact” campaign, advertising and coordinating with the local transit authority, county health department, and electric utilities
- **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Taking Root tree planting project
 - Aims at planting 2 million trees by 2020; has engaged the entire region
- **Rio Grande Council of Governments (2015):**
 - They are the regional water planning group, administering the program, access, and administration
 - Developing a water management strategy
- **Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (2016):**
 - Waukesha applied to use Great Lakes water as their water supply
 - Approved in 2016
 - Worked with USGS and others to map groundwater resources
 - Waukesha is a straddling county (not in the great lakes basin), so their review was a little different and they needed unanimous approval
 - All water diverted must be returned to the basin
 - Now seeking permits to put their plan into action

ENVIRONMENT (CONT.)

- **Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (2016):**
 - Green Workplace Challenge, Sustainable Pittsburgh
 - Formed a green team
 - Hosted Green Casual Friday (raised \$1,000 so far)
 - Bike to work days; air quality updates
- **Stanislaus Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Worked on the reduction of greenhouse emissions by creating linkages with other agencies

FUNDING INITIATIVES

- **Brazos Valley Council of Governments (2015 & 2016):**
 - Created a public facilities corporation. This allows them to borrow money and the banks do not have to pay tax on the interest they charge - an opportunity to make smaller projects cheaper, plus it is faster than a bond issue
 - Banks get community reinvestment credit for these loans
 - Funds can be used for any public purpose
 - They have done their first deal with a local non-profit; they have also been approached by a community college that is interested in expansion
- **Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (2016):**
 - Have two ½ penny sales taxes on the ballot
 - Apennyatwork.com
 - Has maps showing exactly what they are going to build where, info about each project, and contact information for each project
 - Includes ads and other public outreach as well
- **Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (2016):**
 - Is faced with the challenge of incentivizing rural members to stay involved
 - \$50,000-100,000 in dues funding for a competitive process
 - Coordinating with public works directors on funding initiatives
- **Metro Area Planning Agency (2016):**
 - Worked statewide to get funding from legislation for some rural COGs; working with EDA to secure funding as well
- **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (2014):**
 - An innovative financing project will borrow from revolving loan fund to fix interchange by 2016 with OKI repaying in 25 years
- **San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (2016):**
 - California funding has plummeted
 - Working on a self-help funding source: ½ cent sales tax
 - 35/40 elected officials have endorsed the tax
 - Need 2/3 vote to approve
 - Opposition has been from local taxpayer groups; facing additional pressure because of the national picture

HOMELESSNESS

- **Indian Nations Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Together with the state, they developed a program for homeless veterans
- **Yakima Valley Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Members have identified homeless programs and emergency services as potential COG functions by assuming responsibility for administering the county programs

HOUSING

- **Brazos Valley Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Involved in single family housing lending
 - Financing developments of multi-unit senior apartments that they will own and rent out - total of about 120 units
- **Indian Nations Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Members working with IBTS and sponsoring a service line warranty that property owners can buy into if the lines break down
 - Received tremendous public response
 - Indian Nations Council of Governments receives an administrative fee while IBTS provides building permitting services directly to local governments on a case-by-case basis
- **Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Has a program to rehabilitate foreclosed homes in the region to help get them back on the market

JOINT PURCHASING

- **Bi-State Regional Commission (2014):**
 - Iowa and Illinois joined together for multiple joint purchasing initiatives: joint aerial photographs; a joint purchase transit planner; and a joint purchase municipal code enforcer and bicycle engineer
- **East Texas Council of Governments (2014 & 2015):**
 - Affordable healthcare procurement with an outside company to reduce costs and offer managed benefits packages
 - Saved \$100,000 in the first year
 - Purchasing cooperative is close to launching
 - They have an advisory team of officials from two counties and four cities in the region
 - Starting small and hope to grow over time. It is an additional service they can provide for their members and will help bring in local money for the region

MILITARY PARTNERSHIP

- **City of Bellevue, NE (2015):**
 - There is an US Air Force Base in their city; they are working to develop new ways to highlight and partner with it
 - Potential plans include a soldier identification project
- **Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (2014 & 2015):**
 - Partners with Department of Defense offices in the region
 - Wright Patterson Air Force Base keeps the economy stable and allows opportunity for diversifying the regional economy

MILITARY PARTNERSHIP (CONT.)

- **Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Department of Defense grant funding to consider encroachment issues related to their bases
 - Has helped them branch out from just considering transportation issues; they are now thinking about schools and other community issues

OUTREACH

- **Alamo Area Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Alamo Area Council of Governments has been holding events in all of their counties – twelve counties in twelve months
 - Wrote op-eds for board members to publish in their local papers each month
- **Atlanta Regional Commission (2016):**
 - Used social media to put out factoids about region, which has garnered a lot of attention
- **Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (2015):**
 - Focused on better communications with members and the media; hired a communications manager; built internal capacity for communications
 - Developed performance measures with a HUD sustainability grant
 - Doing a monthly series on performance measures and creating infographics that are shared with the board and the media
 - The media now comes to the MPO as a resource and the MPO gets to control the message
 - Hold a speaker series 6-8 times a year and brings in speakers from outside the region
 - Partnered with the Urban Land Institute and state departments; AICP credits help get people to come to the sessions
- **Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (2015 & 2016):**
 - Turned documents that they were producing into marketing materials to revive the image of their organization and sell their ideas to lawmakers
 - After two years, both counties agreed to give them an additional \$100k each
 - Undertaking comprehensive rebranding
- **Madison County Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Cell phone usage for travel surveys
- **Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (2016):**
 - Had a long overdue website relaunch
- **New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (2016):**
 - Seeking to maximize their public outreach and use of social media
- **North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (2016):**
 - Using paid Facebook ads as a targeted way to reach folks on their pedestrian education campaign
- **Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (2016):**
 - Working with local NPR station to highlight their long-range transportation plan
- **Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (2014):**
 - As they began the process to update their comprehensive regional plan, they are seeking greater public engagement and participation of more young families
 - Looked at other platforms and distribution methods including DVDs, use of Mind Mixer, Twitter, and Facebook; trying to reach new participants at off-hours

OUTREACH (CONT.)

- **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Ditched their former approach of having a meeting in each of their eight counties
 - Spent \$250,000 to get the views of very few people
 - Decided to use social media instead
 - Got a lot more input from the community using this method
 - Helped push bike/pedestrians input in particular
- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (2014):**
 - Did online survey to get public reaction and were thrilled to receive 700 responses in seven languages
- **Red River Regional Council (2015):**
 - Completed a comprehensive stakeholder outreach program, which has led to a renewed focus on marketing the region
 - Has developed infographics and a data workbook of projects to highlight the return on investment by county
 - Enhanced their CEDS process with more than 250 people involved in the planning process
- **Spokane Regional Transportation Council (2015):**
 - Working to update their long-range plan and focus on community outreach on a \$850 million state highway improvement project
 - They are getting useful information from the community outreach efforts and are working to get new people involved
 - People really want the information that the agency has
 - People across the state are reading their Twitter Ninja and are using their resources to find construction on the map
- **Stanislaus Council of Governments (2014 & 2016):**
 - With a population of 500,000, public outreach has been a challenge
 - Using “clicker” technology with their board, adopting a sustainable communities strategy, offering translation services, and using social media, they achieved a 30% response rate
 - They are utilizing the power of social media, especially related to their ½ cent sales tax
 - Stanislaus-localroadsfirst.com
- **Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (2014):**
 - Undertaking an effort to get the public more involved through data sharing and information
 - Rolled out a website with a new indicators dashboard to stress stewardship perspective; engaging residents and the business community by focusing on how they can help preserve the environment rather than need for more regulation

PLANNING INITIATIVES

- **Atlanta Regional Commission (2015):**
 - They are working on the region's long-range plan and are looking to engage more audiences through their New Voices Campaign
 - Began with a series of exploratory discussions with millennial leaders and set up an advisory panel
 - Challenged millennials to host events, to post on social media, and to create op-eds
 - Eight major themes emerged, which they have tried to move into actions
 - New Voices Global Atlanta is next with planned outreach to Mexican, Brazilian, Chinese, and Korean populations in the region
- **Centralina Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Focused on planning initiatives for freight, transit, workforce development, and development of a water resource plan
 - Working on Plan 2040 and trying to improve public involvement
- **Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (2016):**
 - Conducted a strategic plan; as a result, they:
 - Discovered their planning program is a popular program
 - Formed a best practices group
 - They now have a database on their website of projects
- **Indiana Association of Regional Councils (2016):**
 - Doing infrastructure/utility inventories
 - Received funding to have conversations with their utilities
- **Madison County Council of Governments:**
 - The state of Indiana has done very little long-range planning
 - They are working in this space and it is becoming a revenue center
- **Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Completed a seven-year planning process through a collaborative effort
 - The work plan for the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission is to continue working on their assessment tools and utilize their new implementation tools
 - Used five planners; they provided members with address ranges, mapped it, and reported back on progress
 - Loaned staff to the region to help expand their capacity
- **Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Holding land use and transportation listening sessions together for regional transportation priorities planning
 - In the tri-state region, they expect a 25% population increase and a 35% job growth and 141 activity centers, creating a typology of six different place type categories and four opportunity types
- **New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (2015):**
 - Working on Plan 2040 and trying to improve public involvement
 - Contracted with member agency on plan development
 - With 2,400 square miles to cover, getting people interested has been a challenge
 - Used Mind Mixer Platform (now called My Sidewalk) developed by planners and held ten public workshops in each of the ten counties to bring people in
 - Received 400 comments from the outreach and engaged a whole new group of stakeholders

PLANNING INITIATIVES (CONT.)

- **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (2014):**
 - Utilized sustainable communities grant for mini grants to non-profits that improve participation in planning for underserved populations
 - Projects include local art studio programming to expose at-risk kids to placement of public art in downtown Lansing
- **Tulare County Association of Governments (2015):**
 - Advocating for a different time-period for required updates of their regional plan
- **Wasatch Front Regional Council (2015):**
 - Working on the Envision Utah project. 50,000 people participated in an online survey, which translated into a long-range plan focusing on land use and transportation
 - Created a local planning resource program and provided tools and resources to local communities
 - Helped 30 communities with a wide range of projects, including the use of scenario planning at the neighborhood level
 - They are coordinating with NARC on this

PUBLIC HEALTH

- **Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Working on the intersection of public health and planning in partnership with the University of Wisconsin, the regional MPO, and the City of Madison
 - Using an electronic medical record data set to create an active living index (customized version of walk score) and how that translates into health outcomes and impact on specific populations
 - Next step will determine how walking, biking, transit, and other active lifestyles translate into health outcomes and how that can be quantified in terms of health costs
- **Deep East Texas Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Had a successful Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services pilot program called paratransition funded by a \$4 million grant. It helped get patients out of hospitals faster and gave incentive funding to accomplish this
- **FIVCO Area Development District (2015):**
 - Several Kentucky ADDs provide Medicaid services through AAAs via contracts
 - ADDs are adapting to indirect cost interpretations, but are also using the opportunity to redefine the services of districts and to work with the state to understand regional service delivery systems
- **Green River Area Development District (2015):**
 - Working directly with area hospitals after CMS ended their grant
 - Hired a regional health planning director after all hospitals came together to fund it

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has gotten involved in a domestic violence prevention program through a grant program, providing police training among other things
 - The program directly saved the life of at least one victim of domestic violence

RECYCLING EFFORTS

- **Southwest Colorado Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Helped communities expand recycling services to specifically address cardboard recycling and composting
 - Helped bring recycling infrastructure to its rural communities by way of mobile eight-bin containers
- **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (2014):**
 - Developed “eHarmony” style match events for connecting those with excess materials, byproducts, and waste products with projects needing those products

RESILIENCE

- **North Jersey Transportation Planning Agency (2015 & 2016):**
 - Developed a regional plan for sustainable development with several partners, including Rutgers University using a HUD sustainability grant
 - Together New Jersey included 100 cities within a thirteen-county region to strengthen the economy. It included several demonstration projects that went beyond transportation, including creating a regional CEDS for the entire region, a complete street implementation check list, health policy livability, how to support an art district, and improve resiliency
 - Focused on a pedestrian safety initiative and created a “street smart campaign,” which is available on the website and free for others to use
 - Twelve communities are currently using the toolkit developed by the project
 - They are doing work with neighboring agencies to consider what the impact of sea level rise will be
- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (2016):**
 - Massachusetts has a Global Warming Solutions Act that passed five years ago; they have taken steps to position themselves relative to this space
 - They provide technical assistance to help communities achieve clean energy designation and help them take the next steps once they get the designation
 - Regional bike share
 - CMAQ money was used to build the core
 - They are building it out over time
- **Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (2014):**
 - Received a NOAA resiliency grant to bring together engineering, professional communities, and scientists to focus on sea level rise and other impacts of changes in the weather. At the end of the grant, they will identify coastal hazard mitigations that members can adopt
- **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (2016):**
 - Urban Sustainability Accelerator – a Portland, Oregon-based program
 - Peer-to-peer learning program
 - Brings in board members, community members, staff members, and business leaders
 - Over the course of a year, 30 people from their region have gone to different parts of the nation to learn best practices and share other ideas
 - “Cooperative Coercive” in Michigan

RESTRUCTURING

- **Capital Area Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Launched a study of why they were experiencing a lot of turnover and were losing employees to the state government
 - Conclusions: Their website was not selling their story to recruit employees; days off were another issue
 - Solutions: Increased management salaries to help create a closer working environment and retain staff; Added personal days
- **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (2014 & 2015):**
 - Focused on retaining staff; asked employees for suggestions on benefits in lieu of higher salaries
 - Responses included more flexibility, transit values, and maternity/paternity leave
 - Received Sloan Award for making recommended changes
 - Also working on financial procedures for cost savings. They have developed a process to help employees drive activities to become more efficient
- **Sacramento Area Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Restructured the agency by doing the following:
 - Assigned a task force to examine how SACOG did business
 - Moved to a team-based management structure to manage teams
 - Pushed decision-making to lowest possible level with 60 employees

RURAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Central Nebraska Economic Development District (2015):**
 - Participated in the Rural Futures Initiative at the University of Nebraska and focused on creating opportunities in rural America
 - Region recently hosted a career fair to help attract young adults to rural communities
- **Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (2014):**
 - Developed grant program for agencies to develop long-range community plans for sustainability and to invest in downtown areas
 - Distributed three grants to communities this year

SOFTWARE AND TOOLS

- **Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (2014 & 2016):**
 - Developed online interactive urban development decision-making tool to show the impact of different variables; used for planning exercises
 - Public safety is a primary issue for them, so they are developing an app for first responders to have detailed mapping on their phone, even in rural areas (Emergency Locator App)
- **Capitol Region Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Celebrating its 10th anniversary of a web-based regional GIS system, which can be used on a mobile phone – it is free for schools and libraries in the region
 - Region now has 38 towns on ten-gigabyte network; has a public cloud server with five major projects on it, including a document management system; they can webcast meetings at 60% the cost of doing it commercially
 - ERP will be the software offered as a service

SOFTWARE AND TOOLS (CONT.)

- **Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (2014 & 2016):**
 - Created a system of counters that track how many people are using trails/bike paths in the region via a phone app
 - Took on a region-wide effort to identify biking needs by working with a community “hacker” group to develop an app about bike trips
 - 40,000 data points so far
 - Developed a “Show us your sidewalk” app to move towards a crowdsourced sidewalk plan
- **Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (2014):**
 - Developed a long-range transportation plan with the Envision Tomorrow scenario planning tool
 - It took the political process and made it more planner-friendly
- **Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Works closely with small communities and villages that need GIS training and products
 - Does mapping for small communities at no cost
- **Green River Area Development District (2015):**
 - Helping provide IT services to their counties and cities; has developed a full-service app to provide information about their services to the public
- **Mid-America Regional Council (2014):**
 - Preparing an online toolkit for communities on “age in place” policies
- **Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (2014 & 2015):**
 - Collaborates with members on a joint GIS tool
 - Created eleven implementation tools and are working on assessment tools
- **MetroPlan Orlando (2014):**
 - Established a three-county transportation law enforcement collaborative to provide additional funding for technology investments
- **Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Developed many smart apps for GIS/IT, including evacuation route planning
- **Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (2016):**
 - Has a web-based tool called CrowdGauge. This tool allows the public to prioritize transportation modes and projects by assigning coins from a “wallet” to various transportation improvements
- **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Participates in Raven 911, Regional Asset Verification & Emergency Network, an internet-based mapping system that allows users to interact with the map during an emergency and facilitates quick response to any regional incident
 - A phone call into the system will notify all the affected areas in IN, OH, and KY
 - Creates a map of the schools (which will go to lockdown), a map where the roadblocks should be set up, and routes transit
 - The system can predict health outcomes and can pull out individual information such as locations of seniors, youth, etc.
 - If incident is a chemical spill of a train, they can immediately identify chemicals, wind direction where dangerous plume might be, and notify schools of impending danger
 - Uses Twitter to track incidents in real time and get information out to citizens

SOFTWARE AND TOOLS (CONT.)

- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (2014 & 2015):**
 - Launched the Roads Partnership with a shared internal data platform for planning and economic development
 - Is a common regional data platform for data sharing – organizations are self-funding to realize this project and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is the anchor
 - The online data portal will allow the public to access the data
- **Southwest Colorado Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Active in working with local and state agencies to share software and promote the use of virtual machines instead of laptops
- **Spokane Regional Transportation Council (2014):**
 - Established seven new guiding principles to measure their performance with a “Horizon 2040” implementation toolkit to quantify performance measures. They have also developed evaluation tools and a performance report card to monitor progress
- **Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (2015):**
 - Partnered with another regional council and Salisbury University; each put in \$15,000 for a regional GIS cooperative to help small communities
 - Provides the data to communities for free
 - Also does lower cost services for communities
- **Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (2014):**
 - Looking to form a regional GIS

TOURISM

- **Boonslick Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Focused on the Missouri River with the possibility of a new port and increased tourism with new wineries moving into the region
- **North Central Florida Regional Planning Council (2014 & 2015):**
 - Developed a regional tourism promotion program to promote natural resources in northern Florida, including the abundant natural springs and underwater cave diving
 - Established a website, tours with travel writers, and promotional materials including bike and trail maps
 - Formed a regional tourism commission funded with a small share of each county’s tourism tax with big dividends
 - Leveraged dollars and have \$350,000 per year to attempt to attract tourism to region
- **Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (2014):**
 - Bi-state MPO Region has 2-3 million tourists a year, including those using the Mexican border to access medical services. Yuma MPO has worked with others to try and develop the economic vitality of the region

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

- **Atlanta Regional Commission (2016):**
 - Using their “State of the Region” report as a leverage to get the state to provide transit funding

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT (CONT.)

- **Ark-Tex Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Offers transit assistance and scheduling software
 - Does everything but routing, which they are seeking to integrate
 - Much cheaper than any similar program they could find (web based, with an iPad on every bus)
- **Boonslick Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Adding a Mobility Coordinator to help manage the more than 700 annual calls for people who need transportation assistance
- **Capitol Region Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Has Gold Standard Bus Rapid Transit with a fully dedicated right-of-way; it is already 30% above ridership estimates and has already been expanded by the state
- **California Association of Councils of Governments (2016):**
 - Contra Costa – developing a test track for AVs
- **Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (2015 & 2016):**
 - Had to create a plan for the Pope’s visit to Philadelphia
 - Coordinated with transit, New Jersey DOT, and Pennsylvania DOT on closing roadways
 - Transit agencies were going to run express stops
 - Secret Service wanted to shut down I-95, but the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission kept it open while closing all exit ramps on I-95
 - Tour buses came through with stations throughout the area. Some had to walk four miles to get to the mass transit
 - Developing a system so that users without a credit card can access bike share
- **Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (2014):**
 - Implemented a rail port study that included recommendations for the site
- **East Central Intergovernmental Association (2014):**
 - They formed a partnership with the City of Dubuque, Iowa, IBM Research, and the State of Iowa to study traffic patterns. Together they analyzed data to improve roadways/bus systems
- **Houston-Galveston Area Council (2015):**
 - This region is the crash capital of the US, with a disproportionate number involving trucks
 - A regional safety group used the analytic capability of the MPO to examine crash stats, which resulted in drinking while intoxicated enforcement funded by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC)
 - Many trucks are in poor condition, so HGAC is also funding engine or truck replacement

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT (CONT.)

- **Indian Nations Council of Governments (2015 & 2016):**
 - Creating a biking/pedestrian master plan for the region
 - Looking at the feasibility and business plan for a bike share program
 - Also looking at using GARVEE bonds with STP dollars for a major expansion of transit into suburban communities
 - Converted an old bus to help spread the word about their transit planning activities and to expand public engagement
 - Helped lead to the approval of a taxpayer-supported funding source for transit
- **Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Wanted to extend commuter rail further east
 - Transit bridge is a major project (\$1 billion) needed
 - State law requires marina access, so the bridge needs to open
 - They inventoried boats and most boats could fit under the bridge. This allows them to justify more closures of the bridge, thereby allowing more transit
 - Worked with Amtrak, DOT, the state, and others to make this happen
- **Metro Area Planning Agency (2016):**
 - Heartland 2050 has led to a greater focus on bike/pedestrians and transit in their region
 - Atlanta Regional Commission's comments about using universities as hubs for economic development spurred them to do the same in their region
 - Starting some transit lines connecting the universities as a starting point for transit innovation
- **MetroPlan Orlando (2014):**
 - Working to bring sheriffs and police chiefs together to coordinate public safety activities on the regional rail transit system, which does not have its own police force
- **Metropolitan Area Planning Council (2016):**
 - Working with Transportation for Massachusetts to develop a white paper about positioning regional organizations ahead of the curve on AV issues
 - October timeframe
- **Michiana Area Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Indiana MPO Conference
 - Bike share is also of great interest in the region; they have emerged as the local champion
- **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Worked with a special improvement district on pilot project to improve downtown Columbus transit ridership
 - Commercial properties taxed themselves and have experimented with giving free passes to downtown employees to help with overcrowded downtown parking
- **New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (2015 & 2016):**
 - Working with NJPTA on a regional household travel survey
 - Transportation Information Gateway to allow for the access to transportation data

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT (CONT.)

- **North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (2016):**
 - Princeton University recently opened an AV test center
 - Working with locals to develop readiness plans for alternative fuel vehicles
 - Guidebook that any municipality can use
- **Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (2014):**
 - With Cleveland welcoming the Republican Convention in 2016, they focused on upgrading their road network
 - Issued GARVEE bonds through the Port Authority to update roads
- **Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (2015):**
 - Has the only commuter line in the region, and bikes could not be taken on the trains
 - Funded a study of the issue after years of no progress; there is now a pilot in place that allows bikes on trains
- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (2014):**
 - Working to publicize additional transportation funds and new evaluation criteria adopted by state legislature, which include health impacts
- **Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (2015):**
 - Branching out into the business sector to raise the profile of transportation funding and to get more funding
 - Holding six events with various chambers of commerce for this purpose
 - At each event, they are looking at new projects and problem areas, followed by a more formal hearing the next day
 - They are working with the chair of the state transportation committee both to sell the idea to lawmakers and to get the business community involved
- **San Joaquin Council of Governments (2014 & 2016):**
 - As a self-help county, they have devoted more resources to transit, including a new maintenance facility specifically for transit
 - Spent \$300 million on four major capital projects on the state highway system and recently issued \$55 million in sales tax revenue bonds
 - Seeking a solution to provide accessibility for some residents that have a hard time getting to services
- **Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (2016):**
 - Bringing sound information to educate voters about how access will improve if they fund a transit initiative
- **Stanislaus Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Worked to coordinate transit issues and planning with Consolidated Transportation Service Agencies for those with transportation challenges, including veterans
- **Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (2015):**
 - Working on transit implementation
 - State wide meeting of MPOs with Arizona DOT to help move things forward and to help deal with challenges
 - Just started doing this with their mobility program

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT (CONT.)

- **Tulare County Association of Governments (2015):**
 - Working with the College of Sequoia to increase transit ridership
 - Many students were not using the bus system since they could not afford it
 - Added \$5 to tuition and gave them unlimited ridership on transit in the region; also helping youth with after-school activities
 - Now hundreds of students are going to college who could not afford it otherwise and ridership has doubled
- **Wasatch Front Regional Council (2014):**
 - A statewide unified transportation plan and investment in highways and transit has resulted in an integrated approach and political support for projects
 - The region anticipates their population doubling; they have opened four commuter rail lines
- **West Indiana (2016):**
 - Created a test site for AVs
- **Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (2014):**
 - Held a rural summit on the development of a rail corridor
 - Bringing all MPOs, COGs and states together for workshops with FHWA on border freight issues and linking transportation to economic development

WORKFORCE

- **Buffalo Trace Area Development District (2015):**
 - Working with the state to redefine roles because of changes to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
 - Implemented business service teams to work with industry leaders and private sector employers with a focus on “soft skills” training
 - Also expanded RLF programs to agricultural industries
- **Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (2015):**
 - Offered two training courses with Youngstown University to teach them GIS skills
 - 50-60 people attended each training session
 - They expect to have more GIS training courses in the future
- **Houston-Galveston Council of Governments (2014):**
 - Focused on workforce quality and the loss of educated workforce
 - Created 1,300 private/non-profit summer youth jobs and remediation together with private sector
 - 92% returned to school or entered community college; remediation participants gained 1+ years of school

WORKFORCE (CONT.)

- **Mid-America Regional Council (2014 & 2016):**
 - Convening region around transportation and EDA-funded workforce strengthening
 - Worked with the Brookings Institution to focus on strengths and challenges faced by the region, including global competitiveness and building human capital
 - “Prosperity at the Crossroads” report with Brookings spawned a “KC Rising” initiative to encourage greater development of human capital
 - KCrising.com
 - Kinetic-kc.org
 - Universities and companies are helping fund an effort to establish whether they are educating their students appropriately for the jobs they have and want in the region
- **Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (2014):**
 - In partnership with school districts, community colleges, and the business and labor communities, they focused on job training for “soft skills”
 - Working with labor unions on skill traits; they put training videos on state websites and developed apprenticeship programs to fill the STEM pipeline as people retire

Appendix A: List of Acronyms

| | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------|--|
| AAA | Area Agency on Aging | GIS | Geographic Information System |
| ADD | Area Development District | HERO | Home Energy Renovation Opportunity |
| AICP | American Institute of Certified Planners | HUD | Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| AV | Autonomous Vehicles | IBTS | Institute for Building Technology and Safety |
| CEDS | Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy | IT | Information Technology |
| CMAQ | Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement | MPO | Metropolitan Planning Organization |
| CMS | Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services | NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| COG | Council of Governments | NPR | National Public Radio |
| DOE | Department of Energy | RLF | Revolving Loan Fund |
| DOT | Department of Transportation | SOAR | Shaping Our Appalachian Region |
| DRA | Delta Regional Authority | STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics |
| EDA | U.S. Economic Development Administration | STP | Surface Transportation Program |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency | TIGER | Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery |
| ERP | Enterprise Resource Planning | TDM | Travel Demand Management |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency | USGS | United States Geological Survey |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration | | |
| GARVEE | Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles | | |