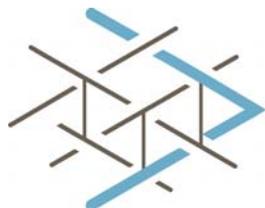


# A WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING: AN EXAMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES

**September 11-12, 2008  
Chicago, Illinois**



**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration**



**NARC**

*Building Regional Communities*

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# **About NARC**

The **National Association of Regional Councils** (NARC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization and public interest group, which advocates for building regional communities through the representation of multi-purpose, multi-jurisdictional Regional Councils (RCs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). These organizations serve local elected officials and community leaders in developing common strategies for addressing complex issues, in the areas of transportation, economic development, homeland security and environmental challenges.

A recognized authority and leading advocate for regional organizations and regional solutions, NARC is a unique alliance with representation from local elected officials, RCs and MPOs nationwide. NARC has an active membership, representing over half of the national network of RCs. Of the 39,000 local governments in the U.S. (counties, cities, townships, etc), 35,276 are served by RCs.

## **About the Event**

The workshop, hosted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), was geared toward developing the capacity of high-level community and transportation planning officials to integrate current and future trends in land use into their transportation plans, thereby creating more opportunity within varying regions. The workshop explored the impacts of goods movement, housing and development decision-making, financing and other key areas that interlink these two critical areas.

The workshop included an in depth look at the regional-level; land use decisions in the Chicago; a national, industry-focused session featuring speakers from Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and the Congress for New Urbanism, presentations on best practices from the Denver, Sacramento and Atlanta regions; and a site visit to Arlington Heights, Illinois to better illustrate the progress made in transit oriented development.

## **Acknowledgments**

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) gratefully acknowledges the Federal Highway Administration and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning for their support of this event.

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# Workshop Summary

The **National Association of Regional Councils** (NARC) brought together representatives, from both the public and private sector, to participate in an open and on-going discussion which addresses ways in which regional transportation planners may best integrate land-use decisions into their transportation plans. NARC, in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), hosted a two-day event, September 11-12, 2008, to examine the topic of “Integrating Land Use Decisions in Transportation Planning.”

Through this forum, NARC and the workshop participants reviewed current land use trends on the national level and how they may relate to on-going efforts by metropolitan planning organizations across the country. One session examined approaches and techniques from varying perspectives, ranging from locally implemented solutions, to alternative modeling technologies, to coordination between regions and federal level decision makers. Officials from Kane County, Illinois, discussed their success and challenges with road impact fees and the associated LEED ND discounting program. Professor Brian Deal from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana detailed his approach for modeling transportation data. The Federal Highway Administration also discussed the process and resulting recommendations of their report, *Eco-Logical: An Ecosystem Approach to Developing Infrastructure Projects*.

Additionally, the workshop looked at innovations from four different regions, all with varying degrees of land use complexity, political will and citizen commitment. Those regional organizations presenting included: the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Sacramento Association of Governments, the Denver Region Council of Governments and the Atlanta Regional Commission.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was formed in 2005 by merging the Chicago Area Transportation Study and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, with a specific mandate to integrate planning for land use and transportation in the seven counties of northeastern Illinois. The workshop provided a unique opportunity to examine the successes achieved and challenges faced thus far in its efforts. A review of CMAP’s long range transportation plan, along with an explanation of specific efforts and technological applications designed to more closely link the two topics and achieve local elected and community “buy-in” on specific recommendations were presented for discussion.

The Denver Region Council of Governments (DrCOG) gave an overview of their “urban growth boundary,” including the genesis of the concept and also the on-going efforts by DrCOG to maintain the effort. The Sacramento Council of Governments (SaCOG) presented their award-winning *Blueprint* transportation plan and their success in reducing vehicle miles traveled within their region. Finally, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) presented their Livable Centers Initiative which has been a central component in revitalizing underutilized community centers and directly influential in densifying regions which would not otherwise trend toward denser land use decisions.

The following session descriptions provide greater detail on the presentations and subsequent discussion included throughout the workshop.

# Session One: Chicago in Depth

## Planning, Operation and Capital Funding Programs

### Speakers:

Mr. Jay Ciavarella  
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### Summary:

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) provides planning, oversight and funding for the Chicago Transit Authority, which runs rail and bus service in Chicago and nearby suburban areas; Metra, which runs the regional commuter rail; and Pace, which runs suburban bus routes and paratransit operations for the entire region. The region currently has a need for capital, estimating that it would cost over \$7 billion to simply maintain the region for the next five years and over \$10 billion in order to make moderate improvements over the same period.

The new strategic plan also highlights the importance of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and defines it as “areas with compact development, higher densities and mixed use development that are walkable or bikeable, within one half mile of a transit station and accessible for regional connectivity.” While higher density is part of RTA’s definition of TOD, they take a case by case approach in terms of analyzing density and have not yet set a particular benchmark that qualifies as high density. A Regional TOD Working Group has also been established by RTA and its regional partners in order to discuss regional TOD initiatives, identify coordination needs and opportunities, and develop and prioritize action items.

Key elements of RTA’s TOD planning processes, as delineated by the new strategic plan, include: real analysis of residential, office and retail market opportunities; promoting public participation and community buy in to a plan; developing TOD concept plans and guidelines for new community projects; and developing circulation and access plans that make projects accessible for cyclists and pedestrians.

RTA and its partners have recently developed a new strategic plan in order to meet the area’s pressing needs. As a part of the plan, RTA has realigned its grant programs into four categories. Two are planning focused – the Community Planning and Subregional Planning grant programs, and two are capital and operation focused – the Job Access Reverse Commute/New Freedom and the Innovation Coordination and Enhancement grant programs. The new grant program format is simplified and coordinated, allowing for only one call for applications annually. In the first year of the new programs, over 60 applications were received.

The Community Planning grant program provides funds for communities to develop TOD plans, averaging around \$100,000 per plan. The program provides funding that requires a 20 percent match from the local community, with funds typically used to hire a consultant to develop the plan. Currently, the Community Planning program is funded entirely by RTA, while in the past federal funds were available.

**What is Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)?**

- Compact
- Higher Densities
- Mixed Use
- Walkable / bikeable
- Within ½ mile of transit
- Regional connectivity

Photos Credit: City of Chicago  
9/11/08 Funding Programs and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Initiatives 6

Due to limited staff and resources, RTA does have difficulty in guaranteeing that the plans are followed by all communities once they are developed, so much of the responsibility lies with the local communities. In some cases, developers are more willing to take the higher risks associated with following these plans, while in other cases communities' plans are challenged.

As a result of the new format, RTA's Community Planning grant program is both better fitted to support TOD and have established goals of increasing awareness of the benefits of TOD and developing a TOD plan or guide for communities and developers, as a part of the program. To date, RTA has worked with over 50 communities, resulting in policy changes and physical improvements in many communities.

## The Regional Indicators Project

### Speaker:

Andrew Williams-Clark  
Associate Planner  
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### Summary:

Throughout the summer of 2008, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) held ten "Regional Indicators" workshops with over 25 stakeholders attending each workshop as a part of CMAP's regional indicators project. CMAP seeks to identify comprehensive indicators describing the quality of life in the region. Generally, indicators fall under the broad spheres of the economy, society and culture, and the environment. For example, ideas like sustainability, poverty, diversity, opportunity, mobility and equity all may represent comprehensive indicators.

While the workshops allowed stakeholders to identify which indicators are important to them, indicators are required to be data sources that are reliably updated, have broad stakeholder agreement and are measurable throughout the region. The recent completion of the workshops yielded over 150 indicators that CMAP is currently considering. CMAP has developed a system in which data for each of the selected indicators will be collected manually initially and a computer program will continue to collect data as it is updated for the remainder of the indicators project, allowing CMAP to select a larger number of indicators for the project.

Although it is clear that not every indicator can be selected, the goal of this project is to involve the local communities in selecting the quality of life indicators that provide the most comprehensive picture. The indicators will be used to measure and track the progress that the region makes toward the goals described in the "Go To 2040" comprehensive regional plan, as well as to assist in scenario development.

The indicators project will eventually offer centralized raw data, as well as tabulation and mapping capabilities to the public through CMAP's website. The goal is that through access to regularly updated data and easy to use tools like Flex PDF, an interactive program integrating Flash and Adobe PDF, the indicators project will facilitate the job of local government officials'. The project's three main deliverables include the public data warehouse, progress tracking capabilities and scenario development improvement. To date, CMAP



[www.goto2040.org](http://www.goto2040.org)

has not set quantifiable goals for the indicators, but has been using a positive trendline as a benchmark. In order to prevent skewed data from indicators that can at times measure quality of life inconsistently, such as congestion, all data is regionally and topically aggregating, eliminating this issue.

Mr. Williams-Clark and Mr. Ty Warner of CMAP conducted a shortened version of the interactive portion of the Indicators Project Workshops held this summer for the attendees.

At each session, worksheets were distributed and participants were asked to identify six indicators that would provide the most assistance to them in conducting their job duties. Then each participant was asked to select the four themes that were represented the most often in the six indicators that he or she had selected. Potential themes participants selected from included: civic involvement, coordinated planning and government, culture, economic competitiveness, education, environment and natural resources/water supply, health, housing, reinvestment, safety and security and transportation.

Next, each participant was given four dots to place on a poster in the front of the room next to the four themes he or she selected; participants could place up to all four dots within the same theme if relevant. Once the main themes were identified, each participant was given five more dots to vote for specific indicators identified within each of the four themes. One of these dots was worth three votes, while all other dots were worth one vote. Then CMAP staff and participants would summarize and discuss the specific indicators with the most votes for each of the themes.

In the 10 workshops held throughout the summer, each with over 25 attendees, this process was repeated. Workshops were advertised to administrators and managers of municipalities; the goal was to draw in people with a broad range of concerns for their community rather than those focused on particular areas. In general, the top vote getters were environment, economic competitiveness, transportation and housing.

CMAP is producing an analysis of these workshops, which they intend to host on its website once it is completed. This analysis indicates that differences in the workshops' selected themes were based on the job function of attendees rather than the geographic location of the attendees, illustrating a common view of the regions needs throughout the region.

## CMAP's Go To 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan and How Land Use Factors are Integrated into the Long Range Transportation Plan

### **Speaker:**

Bob Dean

Principle Regional Planner

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### **Summary:**

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was formed through a merger of two organizations in 2005, and the enabling legislation that completed the merger required CMAP to develop coordinated land use and transportation plans. CMAP's long term plan, *Go To 2040*, includes not only land use and transportation plans, but also economic development, environment, housing and human and community development plans. The plan is currently on track to be completed and approved by CMAP's Board of Directors and the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board by the 2010 deadline. To date, both Boards have adopted the Regional Vision and will be asked to adopt the 150 indicators selected for the Indicator Project in November 2008.

Although CMAP is legally tasked with developing coordinated land use and transportation plans, the municipalities and counties, in the Chicago region, have final zoning control. The responsibility for roads in the region is also divided among the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Tollway, local municipalities and counties. This is one of the reasons CMAP has incorporated stakeholders into both the Indicators Project and the entire planning process. Once the *Go To 2040* plan is complete, the local jurisdictions will make the final decision regarding implementation.

Public communication throughout the development of the *Go To 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan* has been very important, and as such, CMAP has developed a separate website and blog for the plan and placed information and renderings of potential projects at public buildings and events throughout the region. In order to better communicate with and gather opinions from the public, CMAP created several scenarios to present to the public at upcoming meetings and events. The scenarios are thematic, with one scenario focusing on a baseline reflection of current trends in regional land use, one on preservation, one on infill and reinvestment and one on innovation. These scenarios are currently being developed to gauge the public's preferences through their reactions to each scenario.

The scenarios will be associated with their respective estimated price tags; CMAP plans to emphasize that the cost of the varying scenarios is significantly higher than the level of funding currently available. It was noted that all of the scenarios use the same projected cost for energy, which can be adjusted in order to identify the impacts of price increases on each scenario. Once the public reaction has been integrated, a final scenario will be developed for use in a fiscally constrained plan.

Additional discussion during this presentation raised the issue of the potential for increased flexibility in terms of “buy-in” time for financially constrained Long Range Transportation Plans. Ms. Kimberly Majerus, of FHWA, noted that with the new SAFETEA-LU requirements, consistency and “buy-in” is very important and a time period for gaining “buy-in” is not an option. Ms. Majerus also noted that she does see particular value in creating a “what if” plan as suggested; however, with the current SAFETEA-LU requirements, the plans that are submitted must be consistent and fiscally restrained.



## Full Circle Community Planning and Mapping Initiative

### Speaker:

Sef Okoth

Assistant Planner

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### Summary:

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Full Circle Community Planning and Mapping Initiative works to articulate neighborhood concerns, provide all communities with high-quality planning tools and provide a mechanism for continuous exchange between communities and planners. Local data generated through programs such as this one is essential because it is higher quality and more up-to-date than the



census data on which communities must typically rely. Participating in the collection and provision of data allows smaller communities to become more involved in the planning process and truly take ownership over development in their area.

The program uses Parcel Pointer, a web-based GIS tool that can collect physical and observational data through a wireless handheld data device connected to CMAP's servers. The technology allows for seamless data collection, mapping and data retrieval, all of which can be used by the communities to support Transit Oriented Development, zoning reviews, inventories of land use and businesses, and economic and downtown redevelopment projects. One of the key features of the Parcel Pointer system is that it has real time database querying capabilities and allows newly collected data to be directly integrated with previously collected data.

The demand for the program is currently much higher than the ability of CMAP to supply local communities with the technology. Program applicants are evaluated based on geographic focus, community mission and the availability of funds and volunteers to carry out the data collection portion of the project. Communities typically apply for the program with the intention of using volunteers or local university students to carry out the data collection work. Quality control for the volunteers' data collection is rarely an issue, as the local community members can typically identify any inaccuracies in the maps because of the familiarity they have with the area.

CMAP's Full Circle Community Planning and Mapping Initiative was funded with a \$675,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, covering three years of program staff and the cost of the servers. Each participating community must have at least a small staff in order to carry out the administration of the project on a local level.

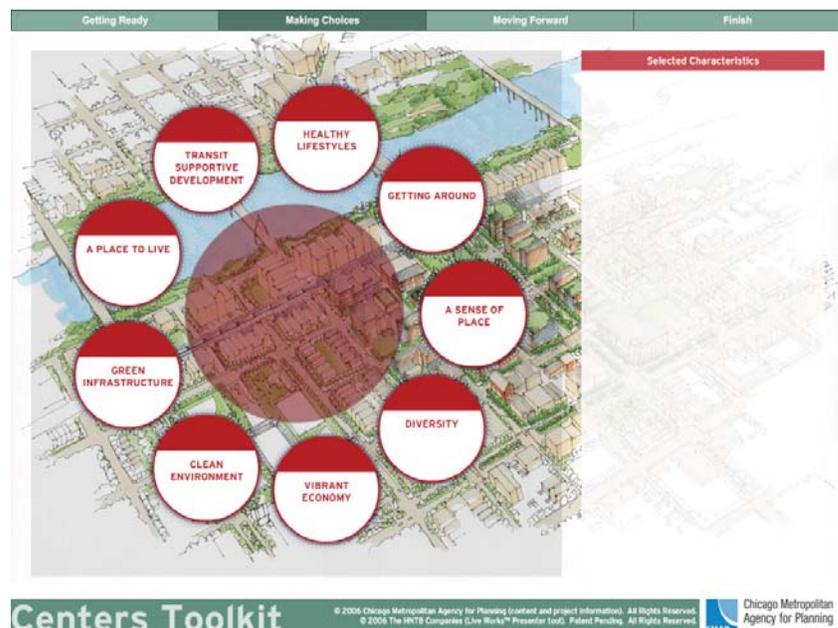
## Community Based Facilitation through CMAP's Centers Toolkit

### Speaker:

Ty Warner, AICP  
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### Summary:

CMAP's Centers Toolkit is an interactive toolkit used to assist communities in planning to deliver desirable physical and socioeconomic characteristics to centers within their communities. The guide includes case studies that help participant communities go beyond planning and actually implement their new goals. The toolkit emphasizes a four step process in which communities define their community center, envision their community's future, examine the existing conditions and plan to move forward.



The focus of the Centers Toolkit is on the concepts of both the previous and current *Go To 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan* that CMAP has developed. The Toolkit assists communities to identify broad center characteristics as well as specific center features, so that their plans will also meet CMAP's regional concepts and goals while fulfilling the community's unique needs.

The toolkit and accompanying CD help users digest and utilize information on topics like design for livability, multimodal transportation, bicycle and pedestrian friendly plans, compact mixed use growth and its relationship to transit, green infrastructure, other environmental concerns and many other social issues. It also provides opportunities for users to comment on potential plans and identify their community transportation and land use priorities, so that future processes may be improved and integrated into CMAP's interactions with local governments.

## **Session Two: National Trends and Innovations**

### **Impact Fees and LEED-ND**

#### **Speakers:**

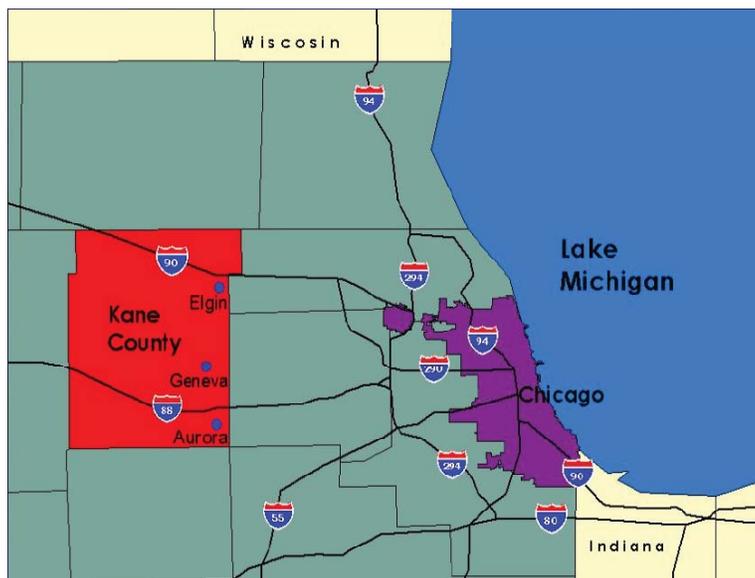
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#### **Summary:**

The Kane County Development Department in Kane County, Illinois, has made integrating their planning process into the Chicago area's regional transportation plan a priority. The greatest transportation planning need in Kane County relates to vehicular congestion and the County estimates they will need over \$3 billion for maintenance related activities through 2030, which is unavailable.

In order to establish a cost effective way to manage congestion and conform to the comprehensive regional plan, Kane County has established Road Impact Fees. The program requires developers to pay a fee in order to compensate the County for the additional traffic generated by their proposed development. This program is possible through enabling legislation passed by the state that allows similar programs to be developed in communities with over 400,000 residents.



The fees were initiated in 2007, however the initial implementation has created some unintentional effects and has consequently been recently updated. One issue concerned the fees in urban areas, because developments in urban areas would have a higher impact on the roads, urban areas would experience

higher impact fees and discourage infill development in the urban areas and encourage development in suburban and rural areas with lower fees. The other issue that arose in the first year was the realization that the Impact Fees were not high enough to sustain the infrastructure and pay for the true impact of the development on the roads.

As a result of these lessons from the first year, Kane County is now updating its Road Impact Fee program. One example of a change after the first year is the creation of a five-year implementation plan for the fees to fully cover the associated costs of a development's true impact on the roads. In the first year of the updated program, fees will total 32 percent of the calculated costs with the County paying the balance; each year the fees will increase by eight percent.

In coordination with the Road Impact Fees, Kane County has also developed a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) discount program, which extends standards similar to LEED building standards to entire neighborhoods. The LEED ND concept is currently under development by the United States Green Building Council and the National Resources Defense Council and seeks to integrate the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building with neighborhood design. Projects for this program must provide transit choice, significant trip generation, sufficient density and "walkability". Additional benefits are received by projects developed on infill sites and those with higher densities than required.

## The Integration of Complex Land Use and Transportation Models: Experiences from Chicago

### Speaker:

Brian Deal, Ph.D

Assistant Professor

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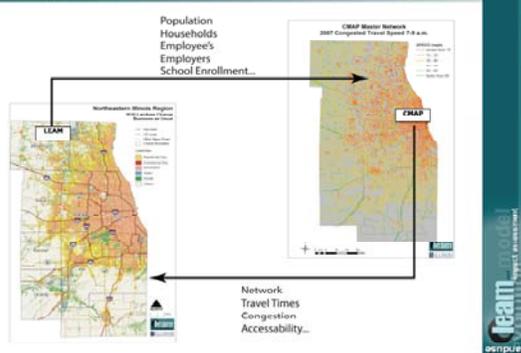
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### Summary:

Professor Brian Deal and his research team at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana have been working on the Land Use Evolution and Impact Assessment Model (LEAM), for modeling transportation data. One of the problems faced by transportation planners when working with transportation and congestion data is its circular nature. One way to address this problem is to make adjustments quickly and efficiently in order to utilize congestion data before people make adjustments themselves and congestion points change.

#### Transportation and Land-use Integration



The LEAM approach begins by dividing a region into 30 by 30 meter sections for evaluation. Each section is assigned a probability for becoming residential, commercial, open space or keeping the same use within the next year. Data for the assignments are found from patterns in historic data and models as well as talking to local planners. All of this information is then compiled and represented on a map that shows predictions for land use change over a period of time.

Another LEAM project involves mapping congestion by comparing recorded speeds and traffic levels versus posted speed limits. The difference between posted and actual speed presents an indication of the amount of congestion present. The team has made an effort to include transit speeds within these calculations; however, they are still in the process of decoupling the systems so that input and output are standard.

To date, the LEAM group works with specific regions in developing data collection and mapping systems. Eventually, they envision the regional planners utilizing this information via desktop software; however, only groups who have worked directly with the project would have access to this program. Dr. Deal's research team has identified limitations and nuances to both the data and models generated through the program that require special training and interaction with the LEAM team.

## Context Sensitive Solutions and the Housing and Transportation Index

### Speaker:

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### Summary:

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) has developed a report entitled "Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities," that includes major guidelines related to Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). The report seeks to aid in CSS, highlight CSS principles, create a design framework and present CSS criteria and guidance consistent with established practices. Beyond the report, seven fact sheets on related topics have also been distributed. With the comment period on the report coming to a close, ITE expects to release a final version of the report by December 2008.

### CSS: Bringing Place and Thoroughfare Design Together



The ITE report should assist in dispelling myths and misinformation about CSS that is found throughout the planning community. The goal of CSS is to have design and planning solutions within the context of land use, site design and building design. CSS should not be seen as a foreign or costly idea; the report and fact sheets demonstrate that CSS is simple and relevant to everyday transportation and land use planning solutions.

The Center for Neighborhood Technology has developed the Housing and Transportation Affordability Index as a tool for evaluating the true affordability of housing by taking transportation costs into account as the traditional housing cost. This calculation is becoming more important as transportation costs represented only three percent of household income in the early 20th century and has currently risen to between 15 and 35 percent of household income.

The index is calculated by adding housing and transportation costs and dividing by total household income. Currently, the index does not account for time involved in the transportation, although it is recognized as a

factor in the cost of transportation in reality. The index measures the affordability of a neighborhood and also highlights the transportation-related convenience of a neighborhood with lower transportation costs.

Currently, the Housing and Transportation Affordability Index includes data on 52 cities throughout the United States, providing a new opportunity for transportation costs to be taken into account in public policy decision making. The data contained within the index will become increasingly important for public policy as well as personal decisions as the cost of motor fuel increases.

## Eco-Logical: An Ecosystem Approach to Developing Infrastructure Projects

### Speaker:

Kimberly Majerus

Technical Analyst

Federal Highway Administration

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### Summary:

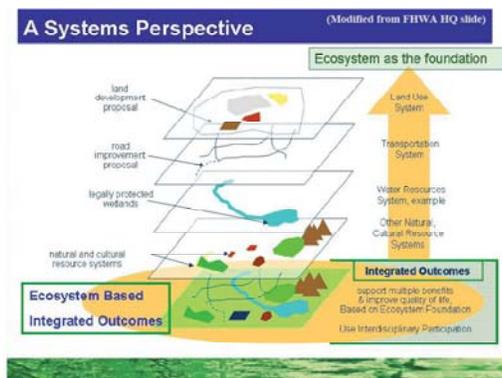
FHWA's Eco-Logical report is an interagency initiative, with eight different federal agencies signing the final report, including:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service;
2. Federal Highway Administration;
3. U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management;
4. Department of the Army;
5. U.S. Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
6. U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service;
7. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Federal Activities;
8. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds; and
9. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service.

Although the project was started before the last highway authorization (P.L. 109-53), many aspects of the report are helpful in following the SAFETEA-LU requirements in terms of environmental considerations, land use, use of natural and historic maps and inventories, comparison of transportation and conservation plans and consultation with environmental agencies and tribes.

The goal of the report is to integrate all of the information required by each agency into one place so that the information is accessible for project decision making. It helps to reduce unknowns and duplicative efforts,

limits jurisdiction issues and assists in hastening the approval process when project opportunities require timely action.



The Report takes a multi-level, multi-scale approach to systems, planning and land use. It seeks to meet and surpass all relevant statutes, as well as seeking to be non-prescriptive and useful at any time within project development and implementation. The Report is designed to be flexible and create values and processes that can be expanded from a site level to a broader, regional level. The Eco-Logical report allows those who use it to improve predictability, connectivity, conservation and transparency among all involved partners and stakeholders.

# **Session Three: Regional Responses to Transportation and Land Use Planning**

In this session, speakers from the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DrCOG), Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SaCOG) and Atlanta Regional Council (ARC) shared their experiences in integrating land use and transportation planning. All three regions represented have made significant advancements within their regions, with innovative new programs and experiences demonstrating both the importance of integrating land use and transportation planning, as well as the challenges that they have encountered to date.

In Denver, DrCOG has established a voluntary Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in an effort to maintain the aspects of their region valued by their residents, including the famous view of the mountains beyond the city limits. The UGB and related land use principles have been agreed to in the “Mile High Contract,” which was signed by the communities which represent over 90 percent of the region’s population. In addition to establishing the UGB, DrCOG has developed both its required, fiscally constrained transportation plan, as well as a transportation plan which illustrates DrCOG’s priorities if full funding were available for all projects. This second transportation plan allows DrCOG to build public understanding of the importance of additional transit projects such as FASTracks. Through these and other public outreach efforts, DrCOG has gained, and been able to maintain, the support of the residents resulting in a vote to approve a referendum increasing local sales taxes to fund additional transportation projects.

In the Sacramento region, SaCOG is faced with a variety of issues impacting their efforts to integrate land use and transportation planning, of which environmental concerns are most prominent. With California’s stringent pollution laws, SaCOG has needed to revamp its planning process, resulting in the 2004 publication of its *Blueprint: Transportation and Land Use Study*. Through the Blueprint, SaCOG has had success in demonstrating the need to transition from freeway projects and carpool lanes, to more pedestrian and bike projects. Although they faced some opposition on these changes, SaCOG successfully developed public support and alternative solutions that addressed the same issues without freeway expansions, allowing them to follow their plans for more pedestrian and bike projects and fewer highway projects. One of SaCOG’s biggest successes lies in the reduction of vehicular miles traveled to below 2002 levels through its integrated land use and transportation plan. In conjunction with the *Blueprint*, SaCOG has also been developing additional plans and projects related to land use and transportation planning for better connecting the region’s urban and rural areas.

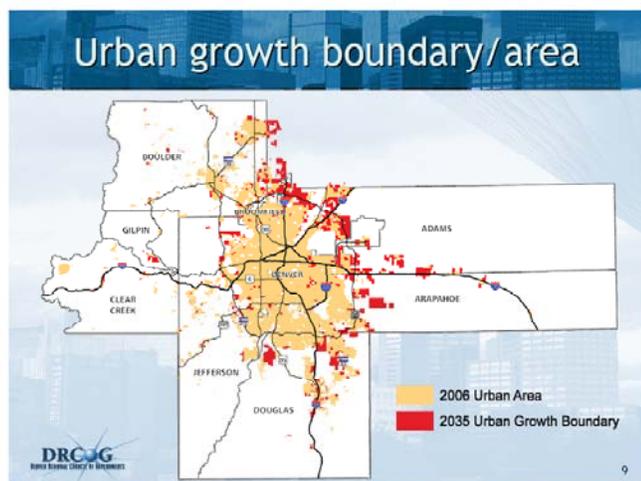
The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), established in 2000, is ARC’s successful program creating higher density centers with mixed use developments, multiple transportation modes and public involvement in the Atlanta region. Through LCI, ARC has been able to revitalize underused town centers and take advantage of existing transportation infrastructure, stimulating development in areas where it was previously stagnated. LCI requires that local communities develop plans and demonstrate their commitment to implementing them, before receiving an ARC sponsored matching grant. Through the program, over 94 plans were accepted in its first year and to date over 722 projects are in process, with 363 of them already completed. The program emphasizes the importance of the LCI principles of mixed use development, multiple transportation modes and public involvement in all areas, ranging from small communities to large urban neighborhoods. Since 2000, the program has resulted in an increase in population density, changes in housing, zoning and other community policies and made an impact on vehicular emissions and related greenhouse gas concerns.

## Transportation and Land Use Planning in the Denver Region

### Speaker:

Jill Locantore  
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### Summary:



The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DrCOG) strives to provide a place where local officials can work together to solve the region's problems. Covering over 5,000 square miles, and including 2.8 million people, there are many interregional issues to be addressed by DrCOG. DrCOG recently developed a framework for coordinating land use and transportation planning to facilitate their work called Metro Vision. Metro Vision serves as Denver's long range transportation plan and covers three planning topics – growth and development (land use), transportation and environment.

One unique approach taken by DrCOG to land use and transportation planning is its use of the self-imposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The region's UGB is set by the DrCOG Board of Directors, which is made

up of 56 members, one representing each community within the region. The Board first sets the maximum amount of growth that should occur within the region, then assigns an amount of growth to each community and each community then allocates growth according to its plans and priorities. The assignments of growth to each community are made based on the region's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The UGB that has been set is very ambitious and will require a large increase in density to meet its guidelines.

The Mile High Contract is a pledge signed by the communities within DrCOG's region, agreeing to adhere to the UGB and other relevant guidelines promoting healthy communities. Currently, 46 communities representing approximately 90 percent of the region have signed the contract.

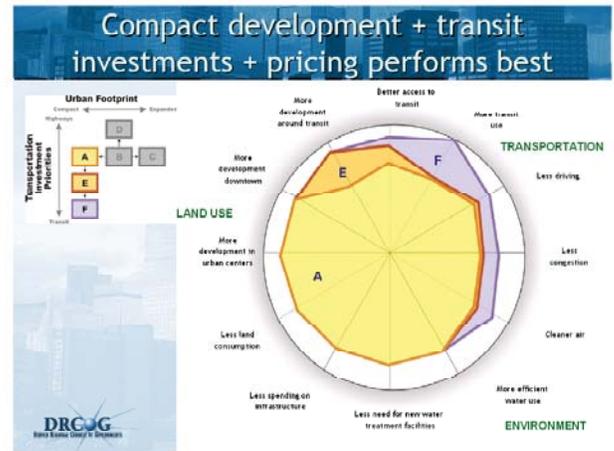
Metro Vision also identifies several "Preservation Focus Areas" in an effort to preserve the city's famous view of the mountains, as well as other outdoor recreation areas and open spaces.

Other issues facing DrCOG are an increasingly aged population and water and air quality pollution. By 2035, 25 percent of Denver's population will be senior citizens, requiring an increasing focus on barrier-free designs, senior-friendly transportation and housing options and accessible public spaces. In 2008, Denver was a non-attainment area for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the first time since the 1990s and as a result DrCOG is revising its air quality improvement strategy, which currently relies mainly upon reducing travel-related emissions by improving land use planning.

DrCOG has established both an ideal transportation plan and the mandatory fiscally constrained transportation plan, allowing them to present both an ideal plan for the future and the plan that is fiscally constrained. One result of having a successful public involvement process is that the region's residents recently voted to increase the taxes they pay in order to fund additional transportation projects that would not be available within the fiscally constrained plan. By state mandate, DrCOG reviews all proposed wastewater

treatment facilities, toll roads and “fixed-guideway” transit systems, generally approving only those that fall within the UGB and the regional vision.

DrCOG recently began developing scenarios for the future of the Denver area. These scenarios were ranked through a “spider diagram” illustrating the extent to which a scenario meets desired outcomes in 12 different issue areas, all of which fall under the broad categories of environmental, land use or transportation issues. First, DrCOG found that maintaining the 2030 UGB through 2035 would have the highest positive outcome on the diagram. When additional scenarios to account for transportation costs and preferences were developed, the scenarios in which additional transportation investment took place were two of the highest ranking scenarios. When the investment was focused on public transportation, the spider diagram illustrated the best overall results, having fewer issues with congestion and poor air quality.



The scenarios were developed for public viewing by MetroQuest, an interactive planning support tool, allowing DrCOG to select the best format for their data, which in this case was the spider diagram. DrCOG does not have the funding available to make all of the investments shown in the scenarios. However, through using the scenarios, DrCOG has found that the conversation has shifted and both their Board of Directors and the public are more willing to maintain a tighter UGB for the 2035 plans.

FasTracks is a planned transit program for the Denver region and is currently being severely impacted by the increase in transportation costs. As a result, DrCOG is evaluating whether they will continue the project, search for additional funding, limit or slow the project or address it in some other way. Despite the funding issues, the DrCOG Board of Directors is still committed to FasTracks, pledging \$120 million to the project.

DrCOG has also established a Transit Oriented Development Program where staff assists communities in taking advantage of the upcoming transit stations, as requested by their Board when FasTracks was passed. The program goal is to keep the local planners informed and facilitate opportunities for exchange and discussion, since DrCOG does not do land use planning. DrCOG has also developed a “Transit Alliance Citizen’s Academy” as well as digital resources available for local planners and the public, including FTA funding to develop additional Web 2.0 features to their website, that will teach community members so that they can inform their communities.

## Transportation and Land Use Planning in the Sacramento Region

### Speaker:

Matt Carpenter  
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Sacramento Area Council of Governments  
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### Summary:

In 2004, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SaCOG) developed a new growth strategy called the *Blueprint: Transportation and Land Use Study*. The new plan was developed in order to address problems

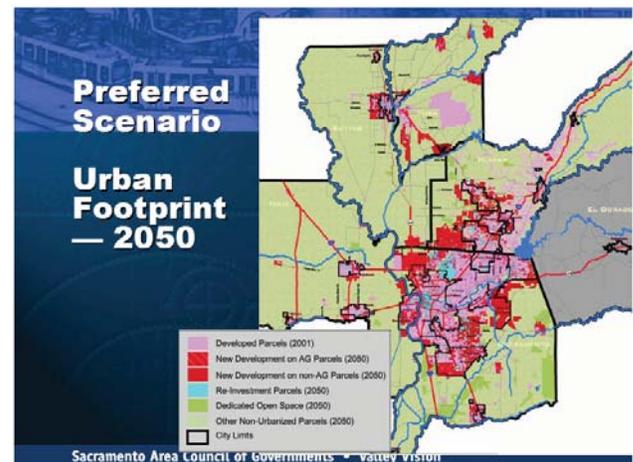
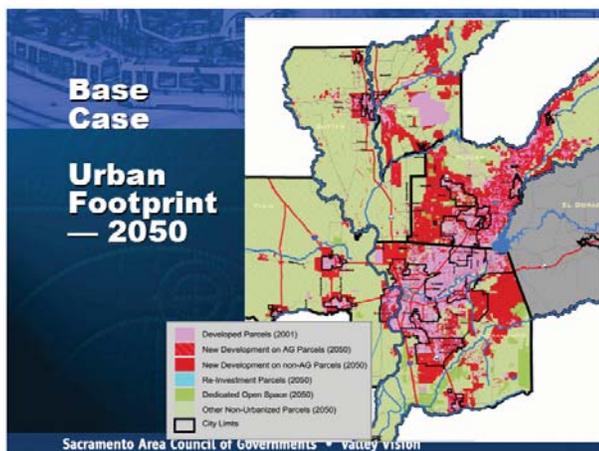
that arose during the 2002 transportation planning process and in order to illustrate how SaCOG could best manage the regions continuing growth.

SaCOG's 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) shows that if the Blueprint is carried out, the region's transportation plans will be very different in the future. It has assisted the SaCOG Board of Directors in shifting discretionary money toward non-traditional projects – for example, in the most recent budget the largest increases went toward bicycle and pedestrian projects. There were some issues caused by shifting resources away from freeway projects and road changes; however, having public support for the projects and illustrating how alternative projects could provide the same benefits were the key to resolving these issues. Many tradeoffs continue to be made due to financial constraints, but regardless of these issues, the overall vehicular miles traveled (VMT) in the Sacramento region is now significantly lower than it was in 2002.

One of SaCOG's biggest challenges has been clearly demonstrating the connection between air quality, land use and transportation planning. Since the California laws regarding pollution are very stringent, air quality is always taken into account when creating new plans and projects by both emphasizing changes in VMT and its effect on vehicular emissions and the use of alternative fuels and technologies. SaCOG has also begun to plan for a ten percent per household reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, although this may not meet the tightening standards for emissions in California. Similar measures for greenhouse gases have also been enacted in California, forcing SaCOG to react and include mitigation measures in their plans quickly. Along with these regulated issues, SaCOG is developing mitigation measures and policies for forest care, wildfire risk and water management.

While there are many challenges, SaCOG has also had success in several new programs. The region has made its rural-urban connections strategy a major focus with projects such as carbon sequestration, energy production and biomass opportunities, habitat conservation and support for "agrotourism". SaCOG uses the basic tenants of integrated regional planning in order to create better routes and meaningful connections between the urban and rural parts of the region.

In an effort to reach out to the public, SaCOG has worked with Valley Vision, a local nonprofit, and the local Chamber of Commerce to publicize stakeholder workshops and also build a base of solid public advertisements. An important factor in the success of the public workshops has been the *Blueprint* guide, which contains both in depth details such as performance measures and a broad overview, so that a variety of stakeholders can understand and appreciate the regional plan. Through information-driven planning and citizen input at public outreach workshops, SaCOG has been able to gain "buy-in" from local elected officials, which has been very helpful in implementing their plans.



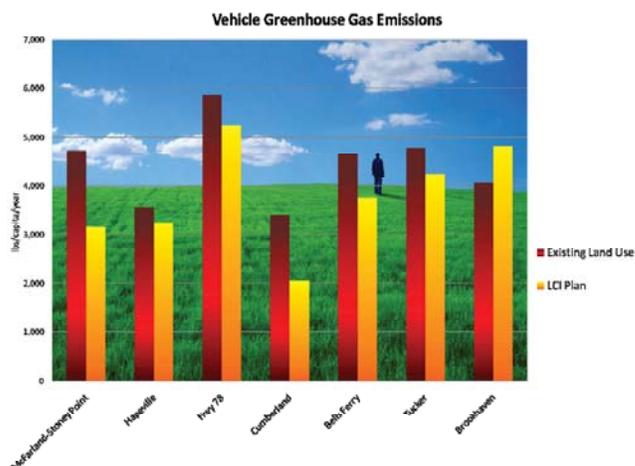
## Transportation and Land Use Planning in the Atlanta Region and the Livable Centers Initiative

### Speaker:

Tom Weyandt  
Department Director of Comprehensive Planning  
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### Summary:

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) developed the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) which furthers the goal of creating higher density centers with mixed use developments, multiple transportation modes and public involvement. Through ARC's experience in working with similar projects in the past, ARC recognized that this type of project could be developed in town centers in small communities as well as larger urban areas. In particular, several small town centers in the Atlanta area were identified as potential sites for this type of development, due in part to the existing transportation infrastructure.



The LCI program supports communities who are developing new plans around existing town or urban centers and carrying out related projects. The program requires that a community first complete a plan and demonstrate a commitment to implementing the plan in order to qualify for a matching grant, sponsored by ARC. While ARC is able to provide some technical assistance, the local community typically uses its funds to hire an outside consultant. In the first year, 94 plans were submitted and 11 projects were funded with an average grant size of \$85,000. Of the 94 plans, 78 were new plans developed with ARC funding and 16 were qualifying existing plans developed independently by individual communities. Participating communities are located throughout the region, ranging from downtown Atlanta to the outer edge of the suburbs, reflecting ARC's emphasis on the applicability of LCI ideals in all areas.

Applications for grants have primarily come from local governments and municipalities, and a few counties and nonprofit organizations. To date, 722 developments are proceeding according to LCI-approved plans. Of these developments, 363 are completed, 176 are planned and 150 are under construction. The projects contain over 62,000 residential units, 9,492 hotel units, 12 million square feet of commercial space and 40.2 million square feet of office space. These numbers illustrate the impact that LCI has made in the Atlanta region, mainly in areas that had previously been overlooked by developers. Between 2000 and 2005, LCI projects represented 3.7 percent of housing units, 10.5 percent of commercial development and 33.1 percent of office space constructed within the ARC region. LCI is making an impact in changing housing, zoning and other community policies, and LCI continues to make an impact on greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, according to recent studies.

Through LCI, ARC has learned several important lessons. First, it is possible to use federal transportation funds in order to create this type of program. The program has also allowed ARC to engage with local governments in offering detailed planning advice and direction in terms of Smart Growth in a new and relatively unobtrusive way. ARC has learned that regional change of the magnitude that LCI envisioned takes a significant amount of time. Through LCI, ARC has begun to work more closely with other nonprofits

and interested organizations, such as the Urban Land Institute, in order to promote and develop additional LCI activities.

The Atlanta region has now reached the point in which the requirements and guidelines provided through LCI are accepted as standard practice region-wide. The program is likely to be redesigned in the coming years, as most communities have submitted at least one plan and original plans are now becoming outdated. Over the years, the program transitioned from an alternative opportunity to shaping the regional land use plan, to become part of the scoring system for projects within the regional plans. At this point, it is likely that the guidelines set forth in LCI will be used for a statewide reinvestment program, further reinforcing its priorities throughout the state of Georgia.

# **Workshop Participants**

Mr. Eric Anderson, Maricopa Association of Governments  
Ms. Gabrielle Biciunas, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission  
Mr. Randy Blankenhorn, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Mr. Bob Dean, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Mr. Andrew Williams-Clark, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Mr. Ty Warner, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Mr. Sef Okoth, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Mr. Paul Reise, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Ms. Hala Ahmed, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
Mr. Mark Butala, Southern California Association of Governments  
Mr. Matthew Carpenter, Sacramento Area Council of Governments  
Mr. Charles Chappell, Wasatch Front Regional Council  
Mr. Jay Ciavarella, Regional Transportation Authority  
Ms. Heather Tabbert, Regional Transportation Authority  
Dr. Brian Deal, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana  
Mr. Tom Gerend, Mid-America Regional Council  
Ms. Eman Ibrahim, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission  
Ms. Jacky Grimshaw, Center for Neighborhood Technology and Congress for New Urbanism  
Mr. Steven Coffinbarger, Kane County Development Department  
Ms. Kai Tarum, Kane County Development Department  
Mr. Stephen Lawe, Resource Systems Group  
Ms. Jill Locantore, Denver Regional Council of Governments  
Ms. Kimberly Majerus, Federal Highway Administration  
Ms. Sharlene Reed, Federal Highway Administration  
Ms. Marta Perales, Illinois MPO Advisory Council  
Mr. Gerald Rowe, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments  
Ms. J. Page Scott, Yakima Valley Council of Governments  
Mr. Thomas Weyandt, Atlanta Regional Commission  
Ms. Erika Young, National Association of Regional Councils  
Ms. Jenee Kresge, National Association of Regional Councils

### **About The National Association of Regional Councils**

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), representing local elected officials and their regional planning organizations, serves as a national voice for regionalism by advocating for regional cooperation as the most effective way to address a variety of community planning, economic development opportunities, and infrastructure issues. NARC's member organizations are composed of multiple local governments that work together to serve American communities - large and small, urban and rural. In 2008, NARC launched the first of four public awareness campaigns – Green Regions, Mobile Regions, Build Regions and Secure Regions. For additional information, please visit [www.NARC.org](http://www.NARC.org).

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