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Transportation Transformation

Innovation & Reform in Washington DC's National Capital Area and the San Francisco Bay Area

Case Studies Prepared by MZ Strategies, LLC

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Introduction

With the decline of vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and the rise in popularity of urban living, Americans are increasingly seeking vibrant, pedestrian friendly urban regions with transportation options that provide easy access to work, school, and shopping. In the past decade, regions across the country have transformed their transportation systems with innovations like bike and car sharing, bike lanes and complete streets, variable pricing, transit-oriented development, new bus rapid transit, and light rail lines. The changes can be seen in cities of varying populations and across regions of varying political, fiscal, and geographic landscapes. Changing consumer preferences, shifting demographics, growing market demand, and stronger awareness of the linkage between health, mobility and urban design are all factors contributing to this transformation. So too, is a transformation occurring in how planning decisions and investments are prioritized with improved analytic tools, more transparent decision making, performance metrics and new engagement strategies that bring a broader set of voices to the table.

Transportation innovation is meaningful to residents of all income levels. Over the past decade, the Great Recession accentuated income inequality and fiscal strife nationally and in most regions, creating an environment where transportation equity and affordable housing are increasingly crucial to building livable cities. At the same time, employers are recognizing that quality of life and regional sustainability matter to their bottom line whether in attracting and retaining workers or moving goods and ideas.

This case study report is part of a year-long “Transportation Transformation Project” undertaken by MZ Strategies, LLC in collaboration with the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities (TFN) and funded by the Ford, Surdna, and Rockefeller Foundations and TransitCenter. The project seeks to accelerate transportation-related reforms in regions through improved understanding of the key ingredients that comprise the “Pathway to Reform.” This includes a better understanding of the role that collaboration, leadership and innovation play in regional transportation innovation; and how philanthropy and national advocacy partners are best suited to contribute

To inform this work, MZ Strategies created a Project Advisory Group comprised of our project funders and transportation leaders from several national and regional organizations. Two regions were selected to serve as case studies in large part as both are frequently cited for their innovation on a number of transportation-related efforts. Interviews were conducted with San Francisco Bay Area and the National Capital Region transportation leaders, and MZ Strategies convened strategy sessions with advocates, spoke with local and regional funders, and performed a literature review. The case studies are not intended to be comprehensive in detailing all of the accomplishments that have been advanced by these regions, but rather to highlight some of the key areas of reform and the ingredients that led to their adoption. While we have done our best to capture these key elements, our apologies in advance for the important work by groups that may be overlooked or not given sufficient credit. Other, more exhaustive research has been done to try and capture some of this work and we’ve provided a few references of those that were most helpful for this report.

During spring 2014, MZ Strategies also conducted a nationwide survey in parallel with these case studies to map the field of transportation-related advocacy work.¹ A final project report (forthcoming

¹ A separate May 2014 MZ Strategies memo is available with high-level findings from the nationwide survey. Results of survey and broader project findings, including these two case studies, will be shared at Rail Volution in September 2014 and in the final project report anticipated for December 2014.

December 2014) will be shared with the project sponsors to help inform future grant making and improve local and national advocacy coordination that promotes regional transportation innovation in a broad array of American communities.

Case Study Region Selection

In a decade of recession, housing crisis, and fiscal restraint, several regions of the U.S. have managed to accelerate transportation innovations. This report seeks to learn from these regional accomplishments and provide lessons learned for other regions.

The Greater Washington DC metropolitan area (referred to in this report as the National Capital Region) and the San Francisco Bay Area were chosen for their demonstration of innovative policy and market tools in implementation of several transportation and equity reforms. While the two regions have vastly different political cultures, funding mechanisms, industries and geography, each has a developed regional transit network and long history of advocacy focused around transportation. The Regional Profiles (Figures 2 and 3) highlight some of the key demographic and modal characteristics for each region.

Market strength, political leadership, resident diversity, and local advocacy capacity were also factors in their selection. Both regions have ranked highly in recent surveys and studies. For example, a recent national study from Smart Growth America ranked both regions in the top of the country for walkability. Of the 30 largest U.S. metropolitan areas, the National Capital Region ranks first, while the Bay Area ranked fourth in walkability.²



Figure 1. Emerging Innovation Regions. Word size indicates the number of mentions the region received. (Source: MZ Strategies 2014 Transportation Innovation survey)

The Bay Area and National Capital Region were both strongly recommended by respondents of a recent MZ Strategies survey (see Figure 1). The national survey to map the transportation reform field was conducted in April-May 2014 and had 229 respondents. The Bay Area received the top ranking in the survey question regarding

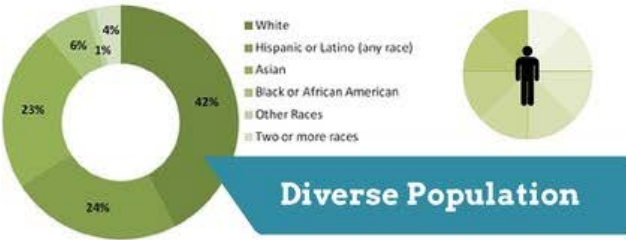
² Leinberger, Christopher B., and Lynch, Patrick. "Foot Traffic Ahead: Ranking Walkable Urbanism in America's Largest Metros," Smart Growth America, 2014. Web. 17 June 2014.

The Bay Area at a Glance

Growing Population



5.4% Population Growth
2000: 6,783,760
2010: 7,150,739



Diverse Population

10% Public Transit Mode Share



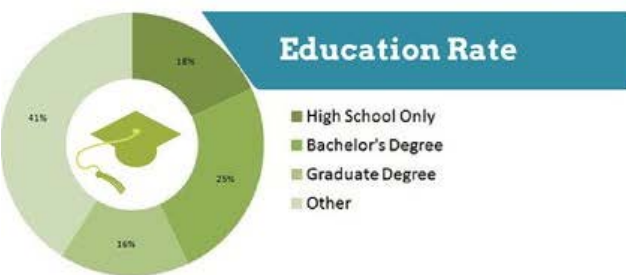
3.4% Bicycling Mode Share



9.7% Poverty Rate



Education Rate



Median Income \$75,989



Figure 2: The Bay Area at a Glance (Source: 2010 American Community Survey)

what US regions or communities respondents felt were leaders for transportation innovation. Next were New York City and Portland, while the National Capital Region (including Washington D.C. and Arlington, Virginia) ranked fourth.

Survey respondents provided rationale for why they chose a region as an emerging place for innovation. Reasons for nominating the Washington D.C. region included "mayoral and DOT leadership," "bike share and car share systems," and "innovative equity programs." Likewise, survey results pointed to Bay Area innovation drivers including "the presence of strong nonprofit groups," and "culture of entrepreneurship and innovation among universities," "parking pricing," and "technology and shared use mobility."

Regional Profiles

The **San Francisco Bay Area** is a large, complex growing urban market with a broad range of racial and demographic profiles. From 2000-2010, the population grew 5.4% from 6,783,760 to 7,150,739. At the same time, the region shifted demographically with a 5.6% decrease in white residents and an increase of 4.3% in Asian residents.³

The median income of \$75,989 is one of the highest in the nation, but the region continues to struggle with an increase in poverty from 8.6% in 2000 to 9.7% in 2010. The Bay area population, on average, is highly educated, with a 16% graduate degree rate.⁴

Ten percent of the regional population uses transit while 3.4% commute by bike. The region has 25 different transit agencies with three operators: MUNI, BART and AC Transit collectively carrying more than 75% of the

³ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06075.html>
⁴ <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/bayarea.htm>

The National Capital Area at a Glance

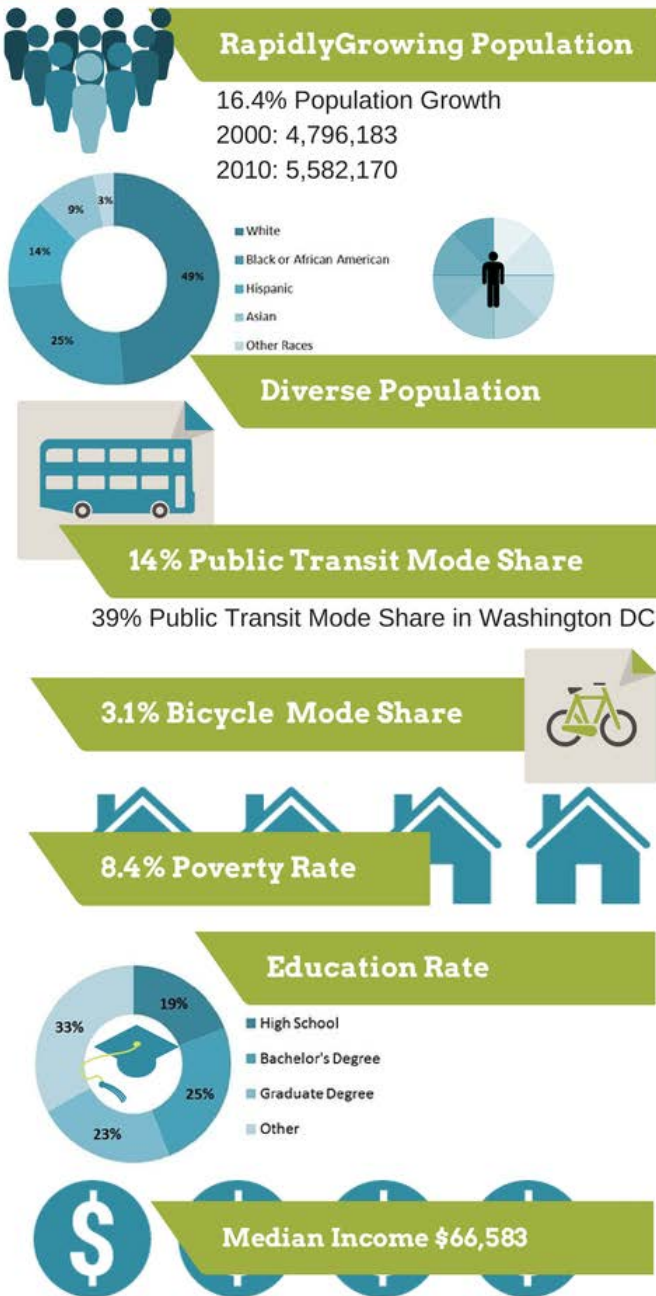


Figure 3: The National Capital Area at a Glance. (Source: 2010 American Community Survey)

Region's 1.4 million weekday transit passengers.⁵ The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is responsible for regional transportation planning while the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible for broader regional planning. The MTC is considered by most in the transportation field to be among the most progressive and innovative MPOs in the country. Its senior agency leadership has attracted a deep bench of talented young staff through its willingness to push the envelope and transform traditional views of transportation planning.

The **Washington DC National Capital Region** experienced dramatic shifts from 2000 to 2010 with suburbanization and changes to the racial and ethnic make-up. The population increased 16.4% from 4,796,183 in 2000 to 5,582,170 in 2010, with steady increases in the urban core and more rapid increases in the suburbs.⁶ The region also became majority-minority during that time, with the white population dipping to 49%. The Hispanic population grew the fastest, growing from 9% to 14% of the population, while the Black and African American and Asian populations remained steady.⁷

The transportation mode split differs greatly between Washington DC and its suburbs. DC's public transit mode split is 39%, while the overall region has a 14% split.⁸ The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is the regional transit provider and metropolitan planning is performed by the Metropolitan

⁵ http://www.mtc.ca.gov/library/statsum/StatSumm_2012.pdf

⁶ <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1150000-washington-Dc>

⁷ http://cra.gmu.edu/pdfs/research_reports/recent_reports/Population_Change_in_the_Washington_Metropolitan_Area.pdf

⁸ www.mwcog.org, <http://bikeleague.org/WhereWeRide>

Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). Residents on average, are highly educated and highly paid, with a quarter of residents completing a bachelor's degree and a median income of \$66,583.

Key Findings

Through the case study research and outreach process, several notable observations emerged. As shown in the Regional Snapshots, both regions stand apart in terms of being relatively affluent with a highly educated and very ethnically and racially diverse populations. This factor is not insignificant in that the population itself brings expertise and resources that are important for local advocacy organizations to tap into whether to provide technical capacity, political leverage, or donor funding. Minority populations have now become the majority population in both regions bringing important implications for creating new avenues for engagement and leadership by communities of color.

The market strength of both regions is also notable, each being metro areas that are ripe for testing new ideas in the marketplace, be it transit-oriented development (TOD), bike sharing or new mobile phone apps. Private investment is strong in both regions, and for somewhat different reasons the technology sector is also a major employer for both. The flip side is that both regions also have very high numbers of people living in poverty, and regional economic disparities threaten their long-term resiliency. The Brookings Institution, National Housing Conference and other organizations analyzing equity trends have written extensively about both regions.⁹ Each also appeared at the top of the list in recent studies as having the least affordable housing markets in the nation.¹⁰

Major Recent Reforms

The transportation-related reforms noted in this report focus on roughly the past 15 years. However, it is important to note that these efforts evolved from a much longer history in both regions of building local capacity, public awareness around the importance of transportation to the region, and significant environmental activism. Recent reforms build upon this past work, and in fact, the successes of today would likely not have occurred without the leadership, involvement and vision of former advocates, public leaders and philanthropic support.

Figure 4 provides a snap shot of key reforms that have occurred during this time followed by an overview of common reform elements, factors contributing to success and differences in approach between the two regions. Some of these noted reforms may not seem as relevant to broader goals of social equity or climate change but taken together they create a tapestry by which the interplay between public and private, land use and transportation, and community and mobility are interwoven. Parking policy for example, while not much of an equity pillar, can be a financial deal breaker for affordable housing or multi-use projects; it is a lightning rod in many neighborhood discussions regarding infill or complete streets projects; and can be a drain or bone to local tax revenues if not properly priced or managed.

⁹ <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/02/cities-unequal-berube>

¹⁰ <http://www.zillow.com/blog/2014-real-estate-predictions-140202/>

Bay Area	National Capital
Bike Share	Bike Share
Car Share	Car Share
Transit system expansion	Transit system expansion
MUNI Youth Fare free pass	Transit Oriented Development
Equitable TOD	Inclusionary Zoning (MD)
Parking Policy	Tysons Corner Redevelopment (VA)
Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing Fund	Affordable Housing Trust Fund
SB375/ SB535	Mobility Lab (Arlington)
Livable Communities Program	Region Forward/Activity Centers
Livable Streets Program (San Fran)	Livable Communities Program (Regional)
Sustainable Communities Strategy	Great Streets Program (DC)
Performance Based Planning (RTP)	DC Sustainability Plan
One Bay Area Grant Program	

Figure 4. Major Recent Transportation-Related Reforms in Case Study Regions

Common Transportation Reform Elements

Multi-Modal. Heavy rail systems were introduced in both metro areas in the late 1970s (BART and WMATA cars look eerily similar) serving as the backbone of the regional transit network and providing an important alternative in two regions that also have some of the worst traffic congestion levels in the country. In recent years, the introduction of other transit modes including light rail (LRT) in San Jose and San Francisco; streetcar plans for Arlington and DC, and bus rapid transit (BRT) in both regions is creating new energy and debate around the role transit plays in community development, access to jobs, and housing affordability.

Shared Mobility. Both regions recently introduced car share and bike share programs with a few stops and starts along the way. These new mobility choices were supported by strong local advocacy groups, for instance the Washington Area Bicycle Alliance pushed for expanding city bike infrastructure which was critical to bike share’s success, and City CarShare in the Bay Area was launched as a non-profit to support car service especially for low-income families. City transportation agencies have been leading the way, and creating national models in the process.

Parking Innovation. San Francisco and Washington DC are exploring the way parking can be priced, managed and provided. Technology is being used to support this work, including more transparent data sharing to support new mobile apps. Real estate developers in Arlington are asked to consider shared parking in their buildings and in both regions, public agencies work with private developers and employers to maximize the opportunity for providing transit passes, shared parking, and other transportation demand strategies.

Comprehensive Planning. Plan Bay Area was adopted in 2013 as the federally-required regional transportation plan and state-required sustainable communities strategy and represents one of the most comprehensive regional planning documents in the country. This framework is an outcome of statewide legislation (SB375) that requires coordination of housing and transportation, but goes further in its strong adoption of social equity goals including transit operating, workforce development, and

public health. The Washington Area’s “Region Forward” long-range plan and the Sustainable DC Plan also include a broader, comprehensive look at how the economy, environment and equity come together within the region and are shaped by transportation.

Transportation + Housing. The processes are different, but given affordable housing pressures in both regions they have come to recognize that transportation and housing are inextricably linked. Housing affordability is also threatened by increase demand for living near transit. The Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Fund (TOAH) in the Bay Area was created to meet this challenge. Montgomery County, MD was one of the first in the nation to approve inclusionary zoning, while Arlington VA and the District of Colombia have developed new tools to support affordable housing.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Arlington, VA is often held up as a model of TOD having made the decision in the early 1960s to rebuild its dying commercial corridor around the promise of transit. More recently, other regional suburban peers (i.e. Fairfax, VA and Silver Spring, MD) are taking a page from their playbook. In the Bay Area, Fruitvale Transit Village became a national model of equitable TOD. The Great Communities Collaborative (GCC) is a national best practice for collaboration between philanthropy, non-profits and public sector partners to promote and build public support for equitable and sustainable TOD in key transit zones. WMATA and BART were also among the first transit agencies in the nation to have a TOD Policy, and the MTC was the first MPO to fund TOD planning and projects.

Livable Communities. While widely different in scope, funding and ambition, both regions have a Livable Communities Program funded by the MPO. The MTC was the first in the nation to use federal transportation funds to support local planning and capital projects that supported regional livability goals for infill housing, TOD, and transportation alternatives. MWCOG established a regional Transportation and Livable Communities program later to provide small planning grants to local communities to support similar goals.

Priority Development Areas. Regional planning agencies in both regions have established specific areas of the region with significant density and/or employment levels and extensive public infrastructure that are prioritized for where future growth should be accommodated to support regional goals to reduce urban sprawl and make more efficient use of the transportation network.

Common Factors Contributing to Success

Collaboration. Deep, broad and sustained coalitions have been essential to reform success in both regions. The Coalition for Smarter Growth in the National Capital Region and the Bay Area’s 6 Wins for Social Equity Network are just two among many that have made significant impact and represent a diversity of regional perspectives. Through sustained philanthropic support and strong non-profit leadership, the Bay Area has had a steady and evolving collaborative table. Regional coalitions came together in the late 1990s on transportation, environmental and land use issues and have expanded to include collaborative efforts between NGOs and foundations, with conservations, health advocates and equity partners and business leaders.

Follow the Money. Advocacy leaders in both regions recognized early that transportation represents billions of dollars invested in the region, significantly impacting development patterns, economic competitiveness, and public health, to name just a few. Transportation became a frame for influencing

these broader goals and required getting a seat at the transportation decision making table. Building and sustaining the capacity of groups like Greenbelt Alliance in the Bay Area and the Piedmont Environmental Council have helped to unpack the complex planning process to influence it at needed times and in needed ways.

Technical Expertise. Transportation is a highly technical field with acronyms, modeling and travel forecasts, and detailed federal regulations that govern the process. Effective advocacy requires getting technically proficient. This can be done through building in-house expertise found in groups like the Bay Area's TransForm which has had a significant impact on shaping regional transportation plans (RTP), and through working with national organizations on specific issues, tapping into a pool of consultants and technical experts, and leveraging specific coalition members who bring this expertise.

Political Power. At critical times, advocates in both regions had to flex their political muscle before they were viewed by the regional power brokers as a force to be taken seriously. In DC this happened when advocates came together to lobby against a Northern Virginia tax measure being championed by the Governor. This was followed up by spending time to nurture relationships with future gubernatorial candidates to demonstrate the voting constituency who cared about smart growth strategies and repairing political relationships that were tested. In the Bay Area, this happened in the late 1990s when environmental, equity and land use advocates came together as the Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition (BATLUC and later TALC) to activate hundreds of low-income residents to protest at public meetings for greater transit investment in the RTP. In 2013, 6 Wins went further, visiting MTC and ABAG decision makers in their home districts in all nine Bay Area counties a month before the final vote on Plan Bay Area.

National Advocacy Partners. Seminal events in both regions stemmed from the involvement of The Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP) when it operated a state campaign network. Local chapters of larger environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense Foundation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have played key roles. Other national organizations like Enterprise Community Partners, Smart Growth America, and PolicyLink were also mentioned as providing key technical expertise to supplement local efforts, communications and messaging support, and in some instances grants to support local community organizing.¹¹

Public Health Emphasis. Increased awareness regarding obesity, asthma and heart disease and their connection to transportation have brought in new partners, funders, and messaging that has been important to broader transportation reforms. Environmental justice advocates and federal guidance also provide important leverage points, such as when Public Advocates filed an administrative complaint against BART's Oakland airport connector resulting in FTA's withdrawal of \$70 million in federal stimulus funds from the project.

Communications. Without a good narrator, even the most exciting story fails to move the audience. Both regions have developed strategies to make their reforms accessible and compelling. The Six Wins Network (6 Wins) early on developed a video using community of color voices, pictures and people to tell their own story about transportation's impact. In Virginia, the conservative voice of "Bacon's

¹¹ Two former national non-profits: Surface Transportation Policy Project and Reconnecting America were also frequently mentioned as playing seminal roles in both regions.

Rebellion” has helped to build bi-partisan bridges necessary to impacting change in a Purple state. Communication strategies need to be authentic, easy to grasp and motivate action. This is essential to successful community organizing.

Open Data. Public agencies in both regions, notably Arlington’s Mobility Lab and The San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency (SFMTA)’s customer focused information sharing through its website and mobile apps, have created new private sector partners, supported tech entrepreneurialism and greater public awareness and support for the transportation system. Open data is a major push for advocates in both regions as a concrete step that public agencies can do to improve transparency. Foundations have supported some of this work including developing performance measures, scenario planning and other tools that bring data, engagement and performance based decision making.

Differences in Approach

While similarities exist, there are important leadership, strategic, tactical, and funding differences in the pathways the Bay Area and the National Capital Region have taken to achieve reform.

Equity + Environment v. Economy + Sprawl. The Bay Area frames its work – from who is at the table, to what they are advocating, to how they make their case – around equity and environment. From the beginning, Urban Habitat focused its regional work around improving the condition of low-income communities of color. California is a global leader on climate change where state mandates and public support make it a powerful frame. Environmental groups have worked over many years to build public support, elected leadership, and coalitions that demand positive environmental outcomes from transportation.¹² In contrast, advocates in the politically more conservative National Capital Region use an economy and urban sprawl frame to organize. The region's equity policy work is limited, as small community foundations have focused scarce funds more on direct services. The economy and sprawl connection lends itself to partnering on occasion with the business community and developers.

Politically Strategic. Maybe it’s inevitable, but advocacy groups in the National Capital Region are first and foremost political animals. Getting strategic about who ultimately has the political power to drive change or hold it up, understanding what political levers exist or are needed, and at what point political pressure should be applied were repeatedly mentioned as being key to reforms that have occurred in the National Capital Region. Rather than building a groundswell of grassroots support, this approach is more tailored in execution. Advocates would like to have the grassroots network, but with limited funding they utilize a much more strategic, inside-game to influence the system. Recognizing that community members focus on local issues, organizations like CSG target local grassroots advocacy. Advocates have been a voice of opposition over the years but they were equally proud and had just as many examples to share of when they organized to be in favor of efforts by local officials or TOD projects being proposed by local developers. They felt that demonstrating their ability to stand up for good development and provide political support for progressive leaders was critical to building relationships and demonstrating their political relevance. Of course Bay Area advocates have also used political strategy, especially to advance state legislative reforms, but the weight given to this approach and how it was executed appear to be different between the two regions.

¹² For instance, the Greenbelt Alliance was formed in 1958 to address regional urban sprawl issues and protect open space. It helped to found a number of other coalition and advocacy efforts including TransForm. <http://www.greenbelt.org/>

Public Sector Leaders. A notable contrast between the regions was the repeated importance given to individual public leaders as reform agents in the National Capital Region. This may be an outcome of the above topic, but change appears to strongly correlated to having someone in a position of influence who is a visionary leader willing to innovate and who can bring along others. Washington DC's Harriet Tregoning or Gabe Klein illustrate this on the staff level while Anthony Williams or Chris Zimmerman represent elected officials. In both regions, however, interviews highlighted the importance that peer exchanges played in building public sector leadership of elected officials and of staff. Given the changing demographics of both regions, it would seem important going forward to build leadership among communities of color to continue to shape and influence future transportation reforms.

Regional v. Local. The Bay Area story is much more regionally focused, while the reforms in the National Capital Region are more local. Both regions are incredibly complex places with the National Capital Region consisting of two states and the District of Columbia and the Bay Area home to three central cities and 101 communities divided by land and water. So, it's not just a factor of governmental complexity - though metro DC's three divergent state frameworks and cultures present considerable challenges. Rather, it may be a reflection of the MPOs. In the Bay Area, the MTC fully utilizes its considerable planning and funding leverage while in metro DC, MWCOG does not even exercise its sub-allocation authority provided under federal transportation law. The impacts are profound with MTC being among the few MPOs in the nation to fund local station area planning and land acquisition for affordable housing, or to adopt performance measures that include strong housing and equity metrics, or to establish a multi-million dollar livable communities planning program that evolved into the OBAG grant program, to name just a few. While MWCOG has adopted several of these strategies it has been more limited in effect. This may be a factor of leadership, but is probably fairer to say it reflects the much smaller amounts of funding that the regional agency can directly influence.

Litigation. Several Bay Area advocacy groups – both conservative and liberal - filed lawsuits against ABAG and the MTC to formalize complaints against Plan Bay Area regarding housing and transportation spending elements.¹³ At the time of this report it is unclear how most of the lawsuits will be settled. It is unclear as well the longer term impacts of this advocacy approach. On the one hand, this is a powerful means to hold public agencies accountable and demand stronger reforms. On the other hand, interviews uncovered a concern that agency staff do not feel adequately supported for the reforms they have promoted within challenging bureaucratic and political climates nor that enough pressure is applied to local jurisdictions who ultimately are responsible for the actions that will determine successful RTP/SCS implementation such as inclusionary zoning, capital budget spending, or land use regulations and codes.

Differences in Philanthropy

In both regions the involvement of philanthropy was repeatedly referenced by those interviewed as playing an essential role. Whether funding a key study, providing outside technical expertise, supporting community organizing, or funding collaborative tables, philanthropic support is essential. When that support is sustained and focused on systems change, which by definition looks more broadly than at a single issue, its impact is maximized and can leverage deeper reform.

¹³ <http://news.theregistrysf.com/plan-bay-area-settlement-doesnt-stop-challenges/>

In the Bay Area, the influence of a deep, sustained and engaged philanthropic community is notable and likely explains the greater impact that advocates have had on broader system changes including a strong equity component in both process and outcomes. National funders such as Ford, Living Cities, and Rockefeller, to name a few of the more frequently cited, are involved both as grant makers and as active members of regional collaborations. This sustained involvement has helped to build the technical capacity of the non-profit sector, and perhaps even more importantly has been critical to funding on the ground community organizing work. Community organizing is time intensive and the impacts may take longer to realize making it sometimes challenging to maintain.

The Great Communities Collaborative (GCC) has funded over 30 different groups working directly and indirectly on station area planning and has played an important role in both pushing and support public sector policy leadership to link equity, economic and environmental outcomes for neighborhoods served by transit.¹⁴ GCC supported a number of different coalitions working to develop alternative platforms to the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy being developed by MTC and ABAG and has convened formal and informal meetings between the MPO, transit agencies and NGOs to talk through issues.

In the National Capital Region, philanthropic support has been much more episodic, dependent upon local philanthropy and targeted to specific jurisdictions (with the greatest emphasis on Washington DC) or issues (particularly affordable housing, water quality, and conservation). One notable exception is the Prince Charitable Trust who have played a key role in sustained work by several regionally significant advocacy organizations.

To date, DC-area philanthropic involvement has largely been limited to grant making, rather than playing a major convening or collaboration role focused on systems change. There is no comparable funders collaborative to the GCC in the region. It is surprising that given the political attention DC brings as a test bed for Congress to touch and feel transportation reform and as a hot real estate market ripe for TOD and experiencing explosive housing cost escalation and suburbanization of poverty that there is almost no presence by national funders who are active in other regions on these issues. Somewhat ironically, DC is viewed as having sufficient resources, when in fact the region doesn't benefit from a large philanthropic presence so local advocates operate with relatively small budgets and staff relying on local donors which reinforces the need to build relationships with the business community, elected leaders and progressive developers.

Discussions are beginning to see if there are ways that philanthropy could support work by local groups to ensure equitable TOD and community benefits along the proposed Purple Line LRT corridor that will begin construction in the coming year. It is too soon to see if these discussions will culminate in a changed approach and greater philanthropic involvement. For affordable housing, smart growth and transit advocates this is a critical moment for community organizing and advocacy.

¹⁴ <http://www.greatcommunities.org/>

San Francisco Bay Area Case Study

Bay Area Background and Context



Figure 5. The San Francisco Bay Region – Urbanized Area and Transportation Network (Source: Plan Bay Area, MTC and ABAG, 2013)

The San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area) is regarded by much of the country as a national leader on a variety of issues including (a) innovative transportation planning and practice supporting a full range of modal options from bike sharing to trolleys, light rail and heavy rail knitting the many communities around the Bay; (b) regional and state leadership on addressing air quality and climate change; and, (c) regional equity advocacy focused on improving access to affordable housing, economic opportunity, revitalizing low-income and minority neighborhoods. As one advocate noted, this legacy of innovation and movement-building is part of the region’s DNA which is defined by the movement of people discovering the region as explorers, immigrants and migrants, and of the earth itself.¹⁵

The Bay Area is the world’s 21st largest economy and home to some 7 million people. It is a complex region consisting of 101 cities and nine counties

Solano and Sonoma. Unlike most metro areas it has three central cities: Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco.

separated by geography: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara,

The region is served by 25 different transit agencies including BART- the regional heavy rail system, MUNI – serving the City of San Francisco with a combination of transit modes, AC Transit – serving Oakland and surrounding cities in western Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority providing bus and light rail service in San Jose, and Caltrain which provides intercity commuter rail. Corporate shuttles between San Francisco and Silicon Valley like Google bus are receiving attention (positive and negative) as a new type of transit service provided by the private sector to connect employees to corporate campuses.

¹⁵ Paloma Pavel, Breakthrough Communities, Bay Area Stakeholders Meeting, June 7, 2014.

The Bay Area is known for strong regional planning advanced through its council of area governments (ABAG) and its metropolitan planning organization (MTC), and a network of high capacity advocacy and non-profit organizations who have shaped transportation and environmental policy not only for the Bay Area but also the state and nation. Social equity voices including faith-based and grassroots community organizing groups, are actively involved in these discussions, embedding equity goals within transportation policy transformation.

A Look at the Players

Advocacy Community

Among the greatest assets to the region are the breadth and depth of high capacity advocacy and non-profit organizations who work on a myriad of issues related to transportation reform. These groups include national organizations such as the Natural Resources Defense Council, PolicyLink, the Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and Enterprise Community Partners who over the years have provided technical assistance, financial resources and political power through their local presence in the region to help advance regional and complimentary state policy objectives such as the passage of SB-375, state climate change legislation that fundamentally transformed how regions plan, grow and prioritize transportation and housing investments.¹⁶

The most significant work though has been by local organizations such as TransForm, Urban Habitat, Public Advocates, and Greenbelt Alliance who bring a long track record of successful policy advocacy. Grassroots and faith-based organizing groups such as Causa Justa, Alliance for Californians for Community Empowerment and Genesis have also become important players in recent years. Small scale campaigns have been utilized to build trust among partner organizations and set the table for bigger collective impact. Over the past 15 years, coalitions have formed and tactics adjusted to respond to the evolving regional landscape and push the public sector to embrace deeper reforms particularly to integrate across equity, environmental, transportation and economic objectives. This has allowed for relationships and trust to build, leadership to grow across organizations and from within communities of color and public sector agencies, and an increase in local technical capacity all of which influence broader systems change.

Notable among these organizations is the evolution of a reform model that bridges policy partners who bring deep subject matter knowledge, analytic skills, and data with base-building partners who bring an extensive network of local very low-income voices and strong campaign experience. Sometimes these groups work together formally while at other times they have pursued different, parallel paths reinforcing a broader reform agenda. In 2010 for instance, over 30 social justice, faith, public health, and environmental justice organizations came together and formed the 6 Wins for Social Equity Network (6 Wins) to influence the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), a new state requirement established by SB375.¹⁷ Environmental and land use groups such as Greenbelt Alliance and TransForm, which had established credibility with regional agencies based on past transportation advocacy work, were specifically not invited to be part of 6Wins but instead developed alternative RTP Platforms. They also played an important role in facilitating

¹⁶ The former national non-profit Reconnecting America was frequently mentioned for its work on equitable TOD that significantly helped advance efforts such as MTC's TOD policy and the Great Communities Collaborative.

¹⁷ <http://www.urbanhabitat.org/tj/campaigns/sixwins> for information on 6 Wins grassroots members and Plan Bay Area campaign efforts

information sharing between the different “SB375 Partner” networks. Philanthropy supported these parallel efforts and worked to forge areas of common ground.¹⁸

“We envision a society where all people live in economically and environmentally healthy neighborhoods. Clean air, land and water are recognized as fundamental human rights. Meaningful employment honors a worker’s right to dignity and a living wage with benefits. Effective public transportation and land-use planning connect people to the resources, opportunities and services to thrive. Affordable housing provides a healthy and safe home for all. And quality education prepares visionary leaders to strengthen our democracy with new ideas, energy and commitment.” – Urban Habitat

A somewhat unique, but transformative element of the region’s advocacy framework, is that early on several groups were formed specifically to work at the *regional* level. For instance, Urban Habitat is a regional leader on social and environmental justice issues through building power in low-income communities and community of color through education, advocacy, research and coalition building.¹⁹ Its founder,

Carl Anthony, embedded these principles in the founding of the Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition (which evolved into “TALC” in 2002) when it was formed in 1997 by Urban Habitat, Greenbelt Alliance, Stuart Cohen and Jeff Hobson with funding from the Hewlett Foundation to the Surface Transportation Policy Project, a Washington DC-based national transportation advocacy group.²⁰

TALC became TransForm in 2008 and has consistently focused its efforts on shaping regional transportation plans (RTP) through deploying deep technical expertise, coalition building, communications and advocacy tactics and demystifying the complicated transportation planning process.²¹ The results have been impressive as shown in Figure 6 depicting the increased investment in transportation alternatives, climate and equitable smart growth.²²

Since the late 1990s, regional groups have recognized the interdependency between transportation, environment, equity and development. They focused considerable attention on regional public agencies as the target for their advocacy work, reflecting in large part the fact that unlike other metro areas, the Bay Area

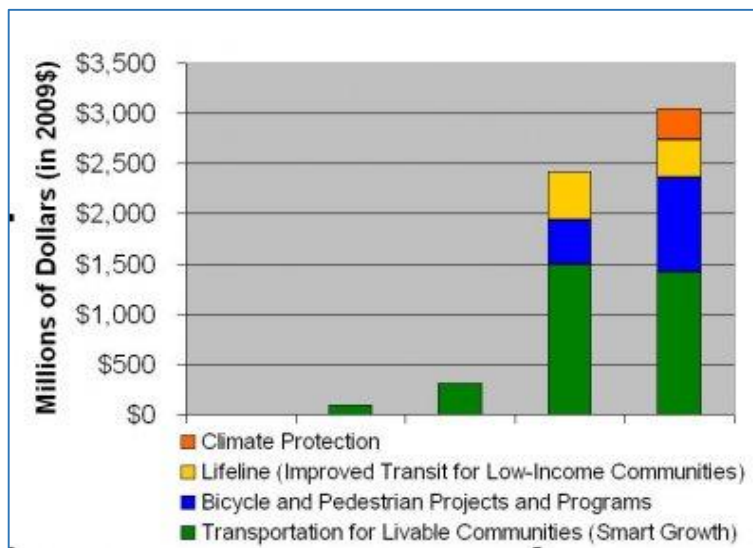


Figure 6. Key Reforms Advanced Over Five Regional Transportation Plans: 1998 - 2009 (Source: TransForm)

¹⁸ Paraphrased summary from interviews with Greenbelt Alliance, Public Advocates, San Francisco Foundation and TransForm.

¹⁹ For more information on Urban Habitat, <http://urbanhabitat.org/uh/newfront>

²⁰ Forward by Carl Anthony in the forthcoming publication, *Climate Justice: Frontline Stories from Groundbreaking Coalitions in California* by M. Paloma Pavel (editor) and Breakthrough Communities.

²¹ TransForm’s approach and programs available at: <http://www.transformca.org/landing-page/our-approach>.

²² *Plan Bay Area* merges the TLC grants and bicycle/pedestrian funds into the new OBAG program so including 2013 RTP is a tough comparison.

contains several regional agencies with decision-making responsibilities that influence billions of dollars in transportation spending.

Philanthropy

Given the rich non-profit and community advocacy tapestry that exists in the Bay Area, it is no surprise that it is also home to several important community foundations and has benefitted from support by national funders such as Ford, Surdna and Rockefeller Foundations over many decades. This sustained level of philanthropic engagement is notable, and partially explains the deep technical expertise that advocacy groups have built and the strong equity voice that has evolved as both a political and policy making force. In most regions, equity is downplayed or treated as an afterthought especially in transportation discussions, but that is now far from the case in the Bay Area.

Among the most visible local philanthropic players in the transportation arena are the San Francisco Foundation and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, both of whom support regional work to link environment, urban sprawl, workforce development, affordable housing and community development.²³ The Great Communities Collaborative (GCC) was established as a funder network of community, local and national foundations to coordinate efforts and provide long-term vision, strategic direction and priority setting to influence equitable TOD plans and policies.²⁴ This included funding faith-based organizing groups, local bike coalitions, and related efforts tied the SCS/RTP development previously mentioned.²⁵

Public and Private Sector Leaders

The Bay Area benefits from a progressive culture of innovation that permeates private and public sector leaders. Silicon Valley draws internationally the best and brightest, not only to work in the region's technology industries but also creative talent who value the quality of life, natural and civic environment, and cultural scene that defines the Bay Area. Technology is at the heart of regional innovation both through the rise of new apps, data and mapping tools and public engagement methods that all contribute to new mobility options such as bike share and car share services such as Lyft and Uber. Ridesharing has a long history in the region through casual carpooling to cross the Bay bridges and more formally through services such as Carma.

Major regional employers such as tech company Google, with far flung suburban headquarters poorly served by transit, are also making an imprint. With large numbers of its highly-paid employees preferring to live in the city, Google operates a private shuttle to serve their commuting needs inciting significant protest from low-income residents and commuters.²⁶ In response to local pressure, Google recently provided San Francisco with financial support for the second year of a pilot for free MUNI Youth Transit Fare Passes, a program that advocacy groups had been pushing the city to implement since 2011. Nationally, Google has transformed access to transportation data through their on-line transit mapping and information programs which are a backbone for many open data systems and mobile apps.

²³ The East Bay Community Foundation was an active player in the creation of the Great Communities Collaborative and early regional equitable TOD work but currently is engaged in other types of grant funding beyond transportation.

²⁴ A significant factor leading to the GCC's creation was the adoption of a TOD Policy by the MTC which would influence how millions of dollars in funding would be allocated and required a greater need for collaborative station area planning along existing transit communities.

²⁵ For more information on the Great Communities Collaborative, <http://www.greatcommunities.org/>

²⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/25/us/backlash-by-the-bay-tech-riches-alter-a-city.html?_r=0

Several regional bodies have jurisdiction over different aspects of regional planning, which itself adds a layer of complexity. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serves as the federally-recognized metropolitan planning organization (MPO) responsible for transportation planning and programming. California, unlike other states, directly sub-allocates transportation funding to MPOs so the MTC brings considerable resources to the regional table including operating the transbay bridges. Regional coalition efforts over the past 15 years work with and push the MTC to adopt more progressive policies towards transit funding, land use and housing in its RTPs.²⁷

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) was created in 1961 as a Council of Governments (COG) to serve as the regional planning agency and decision-making forum governed by an Executive Board comprised of locally elected officials from across the region.²⁸ The Joint Policy Committee (JPC) coordinates the regional planning efforts of ABAG, MTC, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Senior public sector leadership includes some well-known national transportation leaders such as Grace Crunican, BART General Manager; Steve Heminger, Executive Director of the MTC; and Tim Papandreu, Director of Strategic Planning & Policy at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. All three have a history of redefining the role of transportation.

Also important to the Bay Area story is the presence of nationally-recognized planning, design and smart growth firms and universities working directly with community organizations to address social justice and other transportation-related reforms.²⁹ For instance, the Center for Regional Change at UC Davis have been funded to prepare technical analyses used by a number of area non-profits pushing for RTP reform.³⁰ The University of California at Berkeley not only hosts some of the nation's premiere planning academics but is an on-going talent incubator providing opportunities to supplement data, modeling, planning practices and community organizing directly as a partner on specific projects and in training future generations of advocates, practitioners and policy makers.

Pathways to Reform

The Bay Area has a long history of reform including those related to transportation. The sidebar on the following page highlights some of the key overall lessons learned from advocacy work in the Bay Area over the past 15 years that may be applicable to other regions pushing for reform – at a regional or local level. This case study focuses on efforts since 1998 during which time several notable achievements occurred. Three are discussed in detail that have received considerable national attention and are being replicated by other regions:

- 1) The transformation of the regional transportation plan into a comprehensive sustainable communities strategy – a direct outcome of the passage of California Senate Bill 375;
 - 2) The explosion of new mobility options and services from both the public and private sectors;
- and,

²⁷ 1997-2010 Timeline of TransForm's regional transportation work provided by Stuart Cohen

²⁸ For more information on ABAG: <http://www.abag.ca.gov/overview/overview.pdf>

²⁹ A good discussion of this is provided by Manuel Pastor, Rachel Rosner, Juliet Eillis, and Elizabeth Tan in "Bridging the Bay: University-Community Collaborations (San Francisco Bay Area)" from *Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis*, edited by M. Paloma Pavel (MIT Press: 2009).

³⁰ See for instance, http://www.publicadvocates.org/sites/default/files/library/uc_davis_comparison_of_draft_pba_with_eej_alternative_summary.pdf

- 3) The coordinated public-private efforts to support equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) across the region.

Transforming the Regional Transportation Plan

Beginning in 1997, regional advocates recognized the importance of collective efforts to shape the regional transportation plan which directed how billions of dollars in transportation money would be spent across the region. Environmentalists and smart growth advocates worked to shift investments away from auto-dominated projects that contributed to urban sprawl and dangerous air quality levels. The Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition (later named TALC and eventually TransForm) was created to influence the 1998 RTP. At stake was a growing transit funding deficit that was likely to result in fare increases and service cuts, with particular impacts on low-income communities and communities of color who were most dependent on transit. At the same time, the RTP was proposing \$10 billion be spent on new road and highway projects.

In response, new alliances were formed. BOSS joined TALC to push for “100% funding for transit.”³¹ Other social justice groups joined and led the organizing drive, attracting major media attention and engaging hundreds of voices new to the transportation debate who could put a personal face on the impact of proposed transit cuts. The new alliance marked an important turning point. TALC, who brought significant technical skills and relationships with public sector professionals, had to adjust to the louder and more confrontational style of its social justice allies. As noted by TALC/TransForm founders, Stuart Cohen and Jeff Hobson, “In an arena in which nearly all the players – agency staff, decision makers, lobbyists, and environmental advocates – are white, the vocal presence of people of color had a powerful impact.”³² The results were impressive, the MTC commissioners rejected the staff recommendations for the

Key Lessons Learned

- *Community Organizing + Technical Capacity = Reform.* Linking technical expertise with grassroots organizing enables sustained, flexible and multi-prong approaches that integrate transportation with broader community-driven goals.
- *Small Scale Campaigns Used to Build Trust and Impact.* Authenticity & ownership are reinforced while building trust and relationships among diverse stakeholders to celebrates wins and recalibrate after losses.
- *Sustained & Consistent Funder Investment Key.* The influence of having philanthropy remain at the table via local, community and national foundations is critical to accelerating systems change, especially around equity issues.
- *Follow the Money.* Technical expertise has built local capacity to influence decision making process and pressure points through data & tools.
- *Health Creates a Powerful Reform Lever.* Public health issues bring in important new partners, resources and messaging.
- *Institutionalize Collaboration.* Coalitions evolved applying strategic leverage of different policy and community organizing group assets.

³¹ The specific grassroots organizations involved in community organizing around transportation issues have changed over the years with new groups coming in and other groups becoming less active. This is a function of both funding support and competing priorities these groups are balancing with typically small staffs and budgets.

³² Stuart Cohen and Jeff Hobson, “Transportation Choices in the San Francisco Bay Area” from Robert D. Bullard’s *Highway Robbery: Transportation, Racism and New Routes to Equity*. (South End Press, 2004)

RTP and instead voted unanimously to favor TALC's proposal that called for fully funding transit capital replacement needs.

This initial campaign set the stage for other coalitions between environmentalists and social justice groups – sometimes working together and sometimes in parallel -- that were continually refined over a series of campaigns to support increased transit, bicycle and pedestrian funding, affordable housing and open space protection. This was put into practice in 1998 just after a failed transportation ballot measure in Alameda County that had divided social justice groups who supported public transit funding and environmental groups who opposed it because of included highway funding. TALC brought together the opposing sides to craft a joint agenda and stand together to demand more transit and fewer highways. This created more opportunities to build relationships and trust necessary to stay effective during negotiations with external players. The result was a "Better Measure B" spending plan approved in 2000 that included \$186 million more for alternative transportation than the 1998 version, and with consensus support was approved by 81% of the voters.³³

Future efforts that brought together new coalitions and broadened TALCs engagement included California's game changing "Safe Routes to School" legislation, the first in the country, to dedicate \$20 million per year out of the highway safety budget to create safe streets and paths to community schools.³⁴ Advocates also took on transit itself, which was difficult dynamic for coalition members pitting environmental and social justice advocates. At issue was the proposal for a \$4.3 billion extension of BART to San Jose which threatened local bus service to low-income communities of color. A report by TALC, "No Justice, No Tax" was instrumental in providing analysis that showed the potential negative impacts of this project. The report received major media attention and changed the nature of the debate but ultimately failed to stop passage of the "Measure A" transit proposal which was strongly backed by Silicon Valley's high-tech companies who were desperate for improved transit options for workers.³⁵

Similar efforts by a number of coalitions were used over the past 15 years with advocates translating complex transportation planning and policy issues into digestible reports and communication efforts that were then used to gain media attention, mobilize community organizing efforts, and influence elected leaders. Each RTP campaign built upon lessons learned and relationships built from previous attempts to "follow the money." TransForm's 2009 RTP Platform, "Fighting Climate Change and Winning a Better Bay Area" reflected input by the coalition's more than 100 activists and organizations and many of its priorities were reflected in the adopted RTP but a strongly outcome-based focus was still sought in the 2013 RTP/SCS.³⁶

Another example of a new and powerful coalition developed in response to the influx of federal transportation funding in the Obama stimulus in 2009. When MTC decided to allocate \$70 million of its share of federal transit formula funds into a proposed BART extension to the Oakland Airport, TransForm, Urban Habitat, and Genesis, a faith-based organizing group, made the case for using those

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ It is instructive to note that the California Safe Routes to School campaign was organized and lead by James Corless who was the STPP state representative at the time, demonstrating a successful national-local advocacy coordination model with staff embedded at the local level that has not been replicated by national transportation advocacy groups.

³⁵ Stuart Cohen and Jeff Hobson, "Transportation Choices in the San Francisco Bay Area" from Robert D. Bullard's *Highway Robbery: Transportation, Racism and New Routes to Equity*. (South End Press, 2004)

³⁶ "Fighting Climate and Winning a Better Bay Area: TransForm's 2009 Regional Transportation Plan Platform"

funds to support existing bus and rail service in the face of recession-driven cuts and fare increases. When that advocacy failed to change MTC's decision, Public Advocates filed an administrative Title VI complaint on behalf of the three groups against BART with the Federal Transit Administration.³⁷ The complaint alleged that BART had failed to conduct the required equity analysis of the project, and that MTC had falsely certified that all federal requirements had been met. The outcome of this advocacy was a ruling by FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff in February 2010 withdrawing federal funding from the BART project and ordering MTC to reallocate to existing transit systems, as the advocates had originally requested.³⁸ Rogoff's announcement attracted national attention, and led to Title VI reforms at FTA.



Figure 7. Six Win Networks coalition members speak out for Environment, Equity and Jobs (Source: Breakthrough Communities, 2013)

At the same time, a growing constituency was organizing around affordable housing and reframing it as a transportation and environmental issue. The Bay Area holds the distinction of being one of the least affordable housing markets in the nation.³⁹ The severe lack of housing options has led to over 170,000 people commuting into the region every day.⁴⁰ Increasing housing supply, without further degradation to the region's environment and

quality of life became a rallying cry for the business community, environmentalists, faith groups, low-income advocates and the building trades. Housing advocacy focused on "fair share housing" allocations by ABAG and a statewide legislative push to more strongly link housing and transportation.

In 2008, ABAG and MTC created a regional initiative called FOCUS that prioritized investments in existing communities, especially those near transit. Local governments identified Priority Development Areas where new development and infrastructure projects are targeted and Priority Conservation Areas, regionally significant open spaces targeted for long-term protection. Advocates played an important role in shaping both, while MTC has evolved a set of performance measures and implementation programs and established a comprehensive regional transportation plan that went beyond traditional mobility factors.⁴¹ This work was advanced through subsequent RTPs that coalitions such as TransForm, Urban Habitat and Greenbelt Alliance had directly influenced creating a shift in regional transportation funding, new programs such as FOCUS, Safe Routes to Schools and the Transportation for Livable Communities Program and MTC's TOD Policy.

³⁷ http://www.publicadvocates.org/sites/default/files/library/fta_titlevi_complaint_09109final.pdf

³⁸ http://www.publicadvocates.org/sites/default/files/library/feb_12_bart_mtc_letter.pdf

³⁹ In the Bay Area, homes are currently selling for 13.8 times the local average family income according to ZipRealty, <http://www.ziprealty.com/blog/ziprealty-releases-list-most-affordable-housing-markets-2013>

⁴⁰ Stuart Cohen and Jeff Hobson, "Transportation Choices in the San Francisco Bay Area" from Robert D. Bullard's *Highway Robbery: Transportation, Racism and New Routes to Equity*. (South End Press, 2004)

⁴¹ MTC 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/2030_plan/index.htm

In parallel, a number of key regional NGOs were also working to reform state level policies and funding decisions affecting transportation. Transportation, environmental and housing efforts combined in 2008 with the passage of “Senate Bill 375, The California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act,” or SB375, which transformed regional planning by requiring each of the states 18 metro areas to plan future housing, job growth, and transit investments together to reduce driving and meet climate targets.⁴²

The 6 Wins Network came together in 2010 to influence the regional plan and ensure that low-income communities of color benefitted from the new policy framework which directs how \$240 billion will be spent over 30 years.⁴³ Public health advocates also became important allies and helped to broaden the platform and coalition which grew to over 40 organizations from across the Bay Area region.⁴⁴ Other active smart growth and environmental coalitions were also working to shape the 2013 RTP/SCS and alternative scenarios were put forward including a specific conservation component (or “Greenprint”) championed by Greenbelt Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, the Bay Area Open Space Council and American Farmland Trust.⁴⁵ While distinctions existed between the coalitions, a collective progressive message shaped public opinion and priority setting of ABAG and MTC. Public health advocates spoke with a distinct voice, in addition to equity voices, conservation coalitions, affordable housing advocates, and bicycle and pedestrian stakeholders. Most of these coalitions had some members who were part of 6 Wins and many members who were not.

Several strategies were used by the many different coalitions to provide rigorous analysis and concrete suggestions for improving the regional plan and process. First, constructive comments were submitted at every stage of the process from the Public Participation Plan to the development of goals and performance measures to the draft Plan itself. National and local foundations provided strong financial support for much of this work, and convened coalitions to help find common ground.⁴⁶ A loose-knit information sharing effort (the SB375 Partners) was coordinated by Greenbelt Alliance and TransForm. Philanthropy coordinated its efforts so that national foundations could bridge programmatic restrictions on local and community foundation money. Funding from the Ford Foundation and Living Cities, for instance, was used to fill gaps and hire consultants.⁴⁷ Gradually, funding was provided for base building groups in communities of color.⁴⁸ This was instrumental to the community-driven process adopted by 6 Wins that resulted in an alternative plan known as the “Equity, Environment and Jobs Scenario” (EEJ).

⁴² The story regarding the passage of SB375 has been captured by many others including several groups referenced in this document so this report will not give it the sufficient time and attention it deserves.

⁴³ Marcantonio, Richard and Bob Allen. Interview. May 19, 2014.

⁴⁴ Bay Area Stakeholders meeting, June 7, 2014.

⁴⁵ “Draft Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Supplemental Chapter: Conservation Lands and Livable Cities.” (2013). Written by a consortium of Bay Area conservation organizations led by Greenbelt Alliance, the Bay Area Open Space Council and The Nature Conservancy.

⁴⁶ Marcantonio, Richard and Bob Allen. Interview. May 19, 2014.

⁴⁷ Information shared during Local Funders Stakeholder Session, June Berkeley, CA

⁴⁸ It was noted during interviews that foundation support allowed smaller advocacy partners to build capacity. This was important for community organizing groups who are traditionally under-funded. Going forward there is concern that in funding only a few coalition members creates winners and losers, undermining the coalition itself.

The EEJ focused on improved levels of transit service and reduce fares, more affordable housing in transit-connected suburban job centers, and protections against displacement due to TOD.⁴⁹

Plan Bay Area was adopted as the joint RTP/SCS in 2013 by MTC and ABAG as the RTP and SCS influences where the region's new housing, including affordable homes, will be built.⁵⁰ The collective advocacy of 6 Wins, TransForm, Greenbelt Alliance and the many hundreds of coalition partners resulted in the following wins, among others.⁵¹

Collective Advocacy Reforms Achieved in the 2013 RTP/SCS

- 87% of funding (\$253 billion) to maintain and operate the current transportation network, and only 5% designated for new roads
- Cities that approve and produce affordable homes will be rewarded with transportation funding under the One Bay Area Grant Program (OBAG) which will allocate roughly \$800 million over four years.
- At least 25% of new cap and trade funding will benefit disadvantaged communities
- A new comprehensive strategy for local transit operating support
- The first-of-its-kind conservation grant program for protecting natural and agricultural lands
- 10 quantifiable outcome goals, including health, equity and environment by which all major projects are assessed.

The OBAG program conditions grants to local cities on their adoption of a state-certified affordable housing plan. Funding is based on a formula that includes transportation and housing measures, with additional funding allocated for jurisdictions that have higher percentages of affordable housing and plans in place for preservation, promote investments into PDAs and open space conservation, and that support multi-modal investments. The explicit linkage of allocating transportation funds based on housing plans and need is the first of its kind in the nation.⁵²

New Mobility Region

Occurring at the same time were important local transportation innovations. The City of San Francisco was transforming how it approached transportation resulting in an explosion of new mobility choices – everything from bike lanes and bike share programs to innovative use of new technologies to provide consumers with more real, time information and the introduction of car share services. This transformation was the result of years of public advocacy by groups like TransForm and the Bay Area Bicycle Coalition and voter dissatisfaction with how poorly transportation services were coordinated within the city.

Established by voter proposition in 1999, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) was created to oversee both the Municipal Railway (Muni) and the Department of Parking and Traffic.⁵³

⁴⁹ The EEJ scenario championed by the 6 Wins Network and other coalitions was included as a Plan alternative in the environmental impact report. www.prrac.org/pdf/JanFeb2014PRRAC_Marcantonio-Karner.pdf

⁵⁰ TransForm blog on adoption of final RTP: <http://www.transformca.org/trblogpost/putting-together-plan-bay-area-puzzle>

⁵¹ <http://www.sff.org/we-won-plan-bay-area/>

⁵² <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/funding/onebayarea/>

⁵³ <http://www6.sfgov.org/index.aspx?page=118>

Since that time, the City has lead the nation in demonstrating how new technologies can improve safety, public health, mobility and living without a car. The SFMTA structure is unique in bringing together all elements of the city's transportation system from planning and operations to safety and taxi regulation.



Figure 8. San Francisco's Pride Ride Bike (Photo: T. Papandreu via Twitter, June 2014)

Located less than an hour north of Silicon Valley and home to thousands of start-ups, tech incubators and venture capitalists, it is no surprise that San Francisco has led the new mobility revolution. Most regions do not benefit from these same ingredients. However, the willingness of the public sector to invite innovation and collaboration

is something that others can replicate. One example of this is the 2012 "Unhackathon #1: The Taxi and Transit Challenge" the City sponsored to

invite programmers, designers, academics and corporations to address challenges to better utilizing the existing taxi fleet and better real-time transit information.⁵⁴

Over the past 15 years the City has pioneered livable streets programs, electric fleets, parking pricing and bike-sharing. It plays a leadership role in the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). The City's willingness to innovate and collaborate with neighborhood advocates, community groups and the private sector to try new things has attracted national talent to its public sector agencies, leading to further innovations. Philanthropy has supported many of these efforts, including being an early funder of City CarShare.

San Francisco has become a civic test bed demonstrating the blurred lines regarding technology as a force for good⁵⁵, or a source of conflict especially for those concerned with equity.⁵⁶ Media attention has focused on the City's recent ban of mobile apps that sell parking spots, its debates with private taxi service providers such as Lyft and Uber who want to share MUNI stops, and the impacts of Google bus.⁵⁷

Criticism of Google bus spans from claims that their buses block bike lanes and traffic to the larger concern that money companies sink into the lines could instead be spent on improving existing public transportation for everyone.⁵⁸ On the flip side, City CarShare was launched in 2001 by area non-profits to provide an alternative to car ownership and targeted East Bay and lower-income residents.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ <http://opensource.com/business/12/7/accelerating-innovation-city-san-francisco>

⁵⁵ A good overview of the various innovations being promoted by SFMTA: <http://www.sfmta.com/about-sfmta/our-history-and-fleet/history-sfmta>

⁵⁶ The SFMTA's website is a great example of using data and technology to provide greater transparency and customer service <http://www.sfmta.com/>

⁵⁷ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/jun/26/cities-struggle-to-regulate-new-apps-based-service>

⁵⁸ <http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/11/tech/innovation/google-bus-protest/index.html>

⁵⁹ <https://citycarshare.org/about-us/>

No doubt the City’s work to expand mobility options deserves the national attention it has received. However, across the region a majority of the other jurisdictions have not kept pace in replicating these types of innovative policies, programs or open data tools.

Equitable TOD

Today it feels hard to believe, but 15 years ago few metro areas or housing advocates saw the value to locating housing near transit. Through sustained advocacy, data development and research, and a growing list of successful projects, TOD has become a recognized practice. The Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) was founded in 2004 to raise awareness of potential demand for this “new” housing market. Two of its key partners – Reconnecting America and Strategic Economics were based in the Bay Area and were actively engaged in shaping regional TOD policy emerging at that time. The region is also home to a sophisticated network of affordable housing finance intermediaries and non-profit developers. As growing concerns were raised regarding TOD’s very real potential for low-income people to get pushed out of their neighborhoods, coalitions began to coalesce to tackle the challenge.

The Bay Area has become a national leader on promoting equitable TOD. Given both the extensive existing transit network and skyrocketing housing prices, this is perhaps not a surprise. Yet the innovation and collaboration formed around the issue continues to forge new territory and inform broader thinking on strategies to support a range of TOD housing choices. The Fruitvale Transit Village opened in 2003 and quickly became a national model of equitable TOD and community building. Fruitvale’s transformation involved an impressive list of partnering organizations and approximately 30 different funding sources.⁶⁰

Notable to the Bay Area are the leadership roles played by philanthropy and the public sector. BART was one of the first transit agencies in the nation to establish a TOD policy to guide redevelopment of its existing real estate assets and has continued to refine its approach.⁶¹ The MTC in 2005 also adopted a TOD Policy, a unique step for an MPO, with the goal of “stimulating construction of at least 42,000 new housing units along the region’s major new transit corridors...”⁶²

This decision was in response to a campaign led by Greenbelt Alliance, TransForm and the Non-Profit Housing Association to ensure that land use policies leveraged the multi-billion dollar transit investments the region was making. MTC backed it up with more planning and implementation grants to corridors that weren’t meeting policy thresholds.

⁶⁰ Bruner Foundation, 2005.

⁶¹ http://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/TOD_Policy_Adopted_07-14-05.pdf

⁶² Metropolitan Transportation Commission (Adopted July 2005), “MTC Resolution 3434 Transit Oriented Development Policy for Regional Transit Expansion Projects”.

The regional FOCUS program established by ABAG and MTC identified areas to target growth through TOD and sponsored a station area planning grant program specifically to sponsor neighborhood planning efforts around future transit stations, many of which were located in communities of color. As the region was recognizing the value of TOD, many became concerned at the growing loss of affordable housing for those most dependent on transit. Program officers at The San Francisco Foundation (TSFF) and East Bay Community Foundation (EBCF) were making separate grants to local and regional organizations for TOD, housing and equity work. Staff recognized the value of collaboration and creating a pool of funds to be more proactive and effective in delivering equitable TOD. Simultaneously, several



Figure 9. Fruitvale Transit Village (Photo: Eric Fredericks, neighborhoods.org, Creative Commons license)

regional nonprofit organizations including CTOD, Urban Habitat, TransForm, Greenbelt Alliance, and the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California were also talking coordination. TSFF and EBCF got together with nonprofits to launch the Bay Area Livable Communities Initiative, later called the Great Communities Collaborative in 2006.⁶³

GCC began as a regional effort to engage community groups in land use planning near transit to advance community development that integrates transportation, equity and environmental goals. Eight years later, other regional, state and national funders are actively

engaged and GCC has supported involvement in nearly 3 dozen station area planning processes. A major accomplishment was the creation of a \$50 million “Transit Oriented Affordable Housing (TOAH) Fund” in 2011. The fund is managed by a consortium of six Community Development Finance Institutions and the MTC invested a \$10 million seed grant as lead equity for the fund.⁶⁴ This MPO involvement is unprecedented nationally and represents strong public leadership willing to invest in a new model that was strongly supported by community and philanthropic voices who did the necessary research to demonstrate the feasibility and need.

Priorities Moving Forward

While much has been achieved over the past 15 years that sets the Bay Area apart from other regions, regional voices have ambitious plans for continuing reforms. With the Plan Bay Area adopted in 2013, the region is now at work to implement the plan. Groups are already beginning to think about areas to improve or strengthen in updates to the RTP/SCS as well. The 6 Wins Coalition has structured work groups to correspond to each of the 6 Win campaign areas.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, among the many priorities advocates identified for moving forward, nearly all have to do with money – getting more of it & improving how it’s spent:⁶⁵

⁶³ April 2012 Memo from Heather Hood, Enterprise Community Partners, on the creation of the Bay Area Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Fund.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Priorities identified by local and regional stakeholders at the June 7, 2014 meeting convened by Public Advocates and Urban Habitat and facilitated by Mariia Zimmerman of MZ Strategies.

- **Transit Operating.** Plan Bay Area commits MTC to adopt a "comprehensive strategy" with a focus on local transit operating support. An example of such a "comprehensive strategy" is the Regional Transit Operating Program which 6 Wins is proposing that MTC pursue by adopting a Regional Transit Operating Program, similar to the Regional Transit Expansion Program adopted in 2001. Ballot funding measures will continue to be important venues in which to pursue critical funding for public transit operations. The 2014 ballot has a \$7.8 billion Alameda County measure and a \$0.5 billion San Francisco measure. The 2016 election season is likely to see billions more from several counties and possibly from transit agencies such as BART and AC Transit.
- **Bus Rapid Transit.** The Bay Area has plans underway for 6 BRT corridors: Alum Rock, El Camino Real, and Stevens Creek in the South Bay, Van Ness and Geary in San Francisco, and International Boulevard in Oakland and San Leandro. All have drawn strong support from social justice, environmental, planning, and bike-ped groups. Now that agencies are starting construction (or about to start) along several corridors, groups are pivoting to make sure that the projects bring promised community benefits especially to the many low-income communities of color they serve. Advocates are working to ensure cities have appropriate requirements in place, including tenant protections and other means of stabilizing vulnerable communities. Local funders have identified the need for research to better understand the development and community impact of BRT, and advocacy to ensure that BRT promotes equitable transit-oriented development without displacement.
- **New Resources.** The Bay Area is beginning a paradigm shift regarding highways through its regional express lane network plan. Express lanes let carpools and buses get out of traffic – and then if the lanes aren't full, allow solo drivers to use them for a fee. The big question is whether the Bay Area will use the express lane concept as a way to fund hundreds of miles of new highways, or create express lanes from existing road capacity and use the revenues for public transit and low-income mitigations. There is a tremendous opportunity to shift the region's highways from being consumers of tax receipts to becoming a generator of revenues that supports a seamless transit network. Pursuing this will require new thinking by advocates and agencies alike. To achieve victories for justice and the environment, advocates will have to figure out how to use a market mechanism to pursue economically-progressive transit funding.
- **Transit Preservation.** With the Bay Area now planning to devote 87% of its funds to maintaining and operating the existing system, the region has to focus more than ever on how to make the most cost-effective use of that system. The largest transit operators, BART, Muni, and AC Transit are responsible for the vast majority of the unmet needs to keep transit rolling. Securing the needed funds will require that advocates continue to "follow the money" (see above) and also that advocates work to ensure these agencies keep a strong focus on how to keep those systems in good repair and how to avoid allowing political pressures for expansion to cause those systems to increase their needs even more.

Conclusion

The Bay Area is stunning example of how in utilizing a "systems approach" to transportation reform, the process and the outcomes for transportation are transformed to be about much more than just mobility. Sustained support by philanthropy both through its grant making and convening powers has been crucial. Nearly every conversation circled back to at least one example stakeholders could provide of where philanthropic involvement was critical to success. Formal collaboration is utilized to build authenticity and shared ownership of the process and policy goals.

Successful collaborations leverages the different strengths that members have, working to ensure that the comprehensive impact is greater than that of individual groups. This requires everyone with a stake in the outcome to be at the table talking, even when they may not always be in agreement. It also

requires support for those who may not be well-resourced or traditionally at the table, particularly grassroots groups that bring affected residents of under-served communities in a powerful way.

The region's advocacy is notable for its effective two-prong approach that combines technical proficiency and community organizing. Advocates have "followed the money" by understanding the complex planning process, ensuring community voices have a seat at the decision making tables, and providing rigorous analysis using data to help inform elected officials, public agency staff and the media. Setting the region apart is its effective elevation of the voices of low-income people and people of color to offer policy solutions. Advocates have set a high bar for the public sector to reach. Going forward, it will be equally important for coalitions to support public policies and agencies who are willing to go the distance. Recent Tea Party opposition in the Bay Area threatens local implementation of regional plans. So too, work is needed to create more effective linkages with the private sector who continually show its prowess at generating innovation.

Greater Washington D.C. Case Study

National Capital Region Background and Context

The National Capital Region encompasses a complex web of geographic, political, and population diversity. The region is comprised of Washington D.C. and the nearby Virginia and Maryland suburbs.



Those suburbs include the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William and Fauquier Counties in Virginia, and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland, as well as incorporated cities within the counties. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), is the principal regional transportation body encompassing Metro Rail, MetroBus, and Metro Access. WMATA was created in 1967 to build, finance and operate the National Capital Region regional transportation system. WMATA service jurisdictions the District of Columbia, Maryland, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Fairfax County, and Falls Church contribute to WMATA's operations. A number of local public and private transit providers also serve suburban communities. The District of Columbia operates a rapid bus circulator and Capital Bikeshare, in coordination with Arlington County. MARC and VRE provide important commuter service linking Maryland and Virginia communities outside of the immediate metro area.

A Look at the Players

Advocacy Community

The National Capital Region benefits from a number of advocacy organizations that bring deep technical capacity on specific issues. Environmental organizations such as the Environmental Defense Fund, National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Sierra Club have engaged their national and local staff on regional issues related to conservation and air quality. More recent environmental work is focused on issues related to the Chesapeake Bay, which has shifted advocacy and funding away from transportation.

Two critically important regional groups are the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) and the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). Both play a major role on regional transportation and land use issues bringing technical expertise and community organizing to broaden coalition partnerships. They also work on statewide issues and policies important to supporting regional smart growth goals. CSG was created after the defeat of a Disney-proposed theme park which galvanized a diverse coalition of interests who

realized the need for a sustained organization to proactively address the region's growing urban sprawl.⁶⁶

At this time there were some important synergies occurring between regional and national groups such as the STPP and Reconnecting America both who developed seminal reports for the region to reshape policy debates. Today this appears to be less the case despite the large presence of national non-profits located in the region. STPP also sponsored peer exchanges for local elected officials and provided additional strategic counsel. Several key STPP staff and Board members were local advocacy and public sector leaders such as Chris Miller who was STPP Policy Director and later became PEC Executive Director, and Sarah Campbell the founding director of STPP who spent time in DC government.

Much of the region's advocacy community work on single issues or in specific geographies like the Purple Line Coalition or Arlington Streetcar NOW. There are a number of strong affordable housing organizations who tend to work primarily at the local or state level. Recent discussions have emerged to try and forge a regional housing advocacy strategy given the growing housing affordability crisis and regional economic disparities.⁶⁷ CSG, who merged with the Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities in the early 2000s brings a strong equity voice to the smart growth advocacy.⁶⁸ They have worked to build relationships with elected leaders from across the region and to recognize good development projects and developers who support affordable and infill housing. CSG holds walking tours of smart growth neighborhoods, offering close-up community learning opportunities around planning issues like parking and affordable housing.

In recent years, the National Capital Region's technology-based advocacy has grown steadily. Arlington has been an innovator in transportation demand management (TDM). With the launch of Mobility Lab in 2010, the Arlington County transportation think tank has pioneered data-driven transportation research and gained visibility for the region measuring impacts of Arlington's TDM services. Mobility Lab serves the greater region with research, education and collaborative programs like Transportation Camp bringing together programmers to build open data transportation apps.⁶⁹ Arlington also uses transportation data to promote the county and its amenities. For example, the County was able to demonstrate that due to TDM measures, the county population was able to grow by 40,000 in the past decade without an associated increase in traffic congestion. Mobility Lab has also become an important national voice on new mobility issues and supporting information and policy exchanges across regions.⁷⁰

Founded by tech entrepreneur David Alpert, the Greater Greater Washington (GGW) blog serves as an online gathering place for citizen planning advocates.⁷¹ The former Google employee started GGW in 2007, and the site now logs upwards of 140,000 unique visitors with 300,000 visits per month. The blog plays an influential role in shaping broader media attention and inspiring debate on transportation-related issues. Despite its tremendous popularity, GGW operates on a shoestring budget funded by Alpert, reader contributions, and some assistance from CSG.

⁶⁶ <http://www.smartergrowth.net/>

⁶⁷ D.C. stakeholder meeting convened by Coalition for Smarter Growth and Piedmont Environmental Council, June 10, 2014 (facilitated by Mariia Zimmerman, MZ Strategies, LLC)

⁶⁸ <http://www.smartergrowth.net/regional/inclusive-communities-affordable-housing/>

⁶⁹ <http://mobilitylab.org/>

⁷⁰ Mobility Lab was an active participant in the 2014 Innovations in Mobility Summit held in Washington DC.

⁷¹ <http://greatergreaterwashington.org/>

Philanthropy

Philanthropic support for regional advocacy efforts has been largely episodic but plays a vital role in building local capacity and supplementing technical expertise. The Prince Charitable Trust has been a sustained and instrumental funding partner for groups like CSG. Recent investment by Rockefeller Foundation supported advocacy and research in Montgomery County to craft a BRT plan for this fast growing part of the region. It brought together new allies and has generated considerable public support. In addition, Ford, Rockefeller and Surdna funding to SGA was shared with transportation reform groups throughout country, and CSG provided the local support to ensure stimulus funds were used to support smart growth and equitable outcomes in the National Capital Region. The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation and other area regional funders are supporting work by groups such as Casa de Maryland who is working in communities along the proposed Purple Line to support equitable TOD.

Area funders have not established any formal collaboration similar to that in other regions such as Denver, the Twin Cities or San Francisco to support equity goals around existing and planned transit.⁷² Groups like Enterprise Community Partners and Montgomery Housing Partnership wear multiple hats in the region providing funding support but also helping to advocate and build local capacity among affordable housing advocacy groups.

There is no major community foundation dominating the philanthropic landscape such as Kresge in Detroit, or Annie E. Casey in Baltimore. Most of the area foundations have smaller portfolios and tend to respond to funding requests rather than driving a specific agenda or pushing for systems change. With a few exceptions, notably the 2010 Rockefeller grant, national funders have not been deeply engaged.

Public and Private Sector Leaders

The region's elected and appointed leaders have been instrumental in building support for smart growth and multimodal transportation infrastructure. Individual elected leaders and senior agency staff have been fundamental to moving the region forward. While their work has largely focused on their individual jurisdictions, the impact is felt regionally and collectively makes the metro area a leader on many fronts. D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams set the stage for participatory community transportation planning with the 2002 passage of the Budget Act Master Plan and sparked an urban renaissance. In Maryland, Gov. Parris Glendening championed smart growth during his 1995-2003 tenure through priority funding areas and land conservation measures. Through the educational work and political advocacy by the Coalition for Smarter Growth and Piedmont Environmental Council, Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine signed into law a 2007 transportation funding and planning plan tying together funding and land use reforms. In Arlington, County Board Member Walter Tejada championed affordable housing and TOD, leading a plan for the Columbia Pike Corridor's streetcar with a goal of 100% preservation of affordable housing.

⁷² A June 23, 2014 meeting was convened by the Prince Charitable Trusts and the Consumer Health Foundation to learn more about these funder collaborative efforts and their relevance for the Purple Line which begins construction in 2015.

The region also benefits from highly-skilled citizen involvement given the presence of the federal government. Leading transportation reform thinkers such as Mort Downey, Rob Puentes, and Tom Downs, to name just a few, serve on advisory boards and commissions for both public sector agencies. Area non-profits benefit from a citizenry that is not only educated but whose technical and political prowess can also be leveraged.

Universities are an important part of a region's innovation advocacy ecosystem. The leadership role played by the University of Maryland on the Purple Line is a great example of this type of collaboration, and Virginia Tech's Urban and Regional Planning Program which has worked closely with local jurisdictions and the Northern Virginia Planning Commission. Even more untapped is the region's largest employer: the federal government. Its presence creates both substantial opportunity and challenges. Major federal research, defense and agency facilities have profoundly influenced growth, traffic and the economy. The federal workforce itself is an important resource both through the involvement of highly trained individuals as volunteers and advocates on regional issues, but also in strategies to try and engage agencies like GSA and Treasury to consider becoming a funding partner similar to how anchor institutions in other regions engage.

On the other hand, the heavy Federal government presence may dissuade private sector innovators and investors from participating in regional transformation. The National Capital Region ranks 10th in the nation in venture capital investment⁷³, but has not experienced the capital infusion into mobility seen in high-tech areas like Silicon Valley. Mobility startups like Uber, Lyft, and Sidecar have captured millions in venture capital, while the D.C. regional planning technology scene remains stagnant.⁷⁴ According to Tom Fairchild of Mobility Lab, the belief that "government works" in the region may lead funders to think their help is not needed.⁷⁵

Key Lessons Learned

- *Data Defeats Prejudice.* Research, analysis, and effective communication efforts educate the population, inform public debate, and promote transportation reforms by showing measurable progress.
- *Make Bloggers Key Allies.* Social media creates new opportunities to reach a diverse constituencies while giving authentic voices to people of color, advocates from different political backgrounds, or geographies.
- *Build, Leverage and Support Political Leadership.* Time spent to educate political candidates, build relationships and vocally support progressive policies and leaders is time well spent.
- *Visionary Leaders are Reform Catalysts.* The DC region demonstrates the power of individual elected or appointed leaders to drive change.
- *Pilot projects and University Partnerships Build Innovation.* Regional advocates are building alliances with universities and the private sector to pilot new approaches.

⁷³ Florida, Richard, "Startup City: The Urban Shift in Venture Capital and High Technology" The Martin Prosperity Institute, http://martinprosperity.org/media/Startup%20City_14-03-14.pdf, March 2014.

⁷⁴ Hebbert, Frank. OpenPlans.org. Interview. May 21, 2014.

⁷⁵ Fairchild, Tom. Mobility Lab, D.C. Stakeholders Meeting. June 10, 2014.

Pathways to Reform

The National Capital Region’s transportation transformation can be traced to parallel but differing trajectories in the city of Washington D.C. and the outer suburbs. In almost every case, political leadership was the catalyst for reform. The advocacy community used community-driven plans and visions to shape regional debate and create frameworks for transforming transportation and land use. The sidebar on the previous page highlights some of the key overall lessons learned from advocacy work in the region over the past 15 years that may be applicable to other regions pushing for reform – at a regional or local level. This case study focused on three major areas of transportation transformation in the National Capital Region:

- 1) Multimodal Networks
- 2) Regional Smart Growth Framework
- 3) Suburban Retrofits



Figure 10. Capital Bike Share has expanded across the DC Region (Photo: M. Zimmerman 2013)

Multimodal Networks

Over the past 15 years, the National Capital Region's multimodal, multi-pronged approach linking transportation, economic development, and land use helped to transform and revitalize the region. In the late 1990's, Washington D.C. was still experiencing the physical and economic decline resulting from the 1968 riots after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and decades of suburban flight. Elected in 1999, Mayor Anthony Williams kick-started the city's economic and transportation renaissance with his leadership in transportation, land use, and economic development. Williams' administration created strong partnership and cross pollination of ideas between the Office of Planning and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). Established in 2002, DDOT was an "Enterprise Agency" that for a limited time was granted the authority to generate revenues that could be reinvested into agency projects.

Working with WMATA, the D.C. Office of Planning and DDOT identified performance objectives for a high-quality "third transportation option" to expand the geography of tourist dollars while servicing the business community along corridors like the congested K Street area.⁷⁶ This "Premium Transit" vision became the successful Circulator Bus system, providing frequent service with an integrated fare structure. The Williams administration was also responsible for the *H Street Revitalization Plan*, and *D.C.'s Transit Future*, which created transportation corridor performance objectives and paved the way for the D.C. streetcar and neighborhood economic development.

⁷⁶ Ricks, Karina. Telephone interview. June 25, 2014.

Political and appointed leadership played a key role in the region's bicycling transformation. In the past decade, D.C. built more than 100 miles of on-street bicycle facilities. At the same time, bicycle commuting rates have more than doubled from 1.2% in 2000 to a current 3.1%, and D.C. ranks seventh in bicycling among cities with populations over 200,000.⁷⁷

Mayor Williams' Bicycling Coordinator oversaw the 2005 D.C. Bicycling Master Plan, creating a coordinated bicycle facility strategy for the city. In later years, Mayor Adrian Fenty's appointment of DDOT Director Gabe Klein was also instrumental in building multi modal infrastructure. The city paved miles of bike lanes, including the 2010 iconic protected lanes running through the middle of "America's Main Street," Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House to the U.S. Capitol. These lanes fulfilled a local commuting need while providing highly visible support for bicycling infrastructure as an example for visitors to take home to their local communities.

Bike share also played an important role of the National Capital Region's transportation renaissance. Using bus shelter advertising revenue and sponsorship from Clear Channel, DDOT launched the country's first bike sharing program, Smart Bike D.C., in 2008 under Mayor Williams. While Smart Bike was not large enough to succeed, it demonstrated a market and paved the way for Capital Bikeshare, the nation's first multijurisdictional bike sharing system. Partnering with Arlington County, the system used Virginia Department of Rail and federal CMAQ funds to launch 300 bikes in 2010. Capital Bikeshare has grown to 2500 bikes at 300 stations.⁷⁸ Alexandria joined the system in 2012 with eight stations, and in 2013 Montgomery County installed the first Maryland Capital Bikeshare stations. Capital Bikeshare's phenomenal success is due in large part to it being seen as part of the larger transportation system.

As a former Zip Car employee, Gabe Klein also expanded point-to-point car sharing, bringing Car2go to D.C. in 2011, and championing pay-by-phone parking. Harriet Tregoning was appointed by Mayor Fenty to head D.C.'s office of Planning in 2007 and stayed under Mayor Gray until 2014. Tregoning's work aligned with smart growth principles and integrated DC's transportation options with affordable housing, climate change, open space, and economic development issues.⁷⁹

Regional Smart Growth Framework

In the outer suburbs, the transportation transformation trajectory includes several pivot points in the shift from sprawl to compact development and multi-modal transportation. Regional transportation advocacy can be traced to 1993 when the Walt Disney Company announced plans to build a theme park in Haymarket, VA about 50 miles west of Washington D.C..⁸⁰ Warrenton-based PEC built a coalition of historic preservation and environmental groups to fight the plan. The coalition successfully swayed public opinion against the development, calling I-66 "Disney's Parking Lot." Facing unprecedented opposition, Disney pulled out of the project a year later.

Energized by its success, the groups formed the Coalition for Smarter Growth, a partnership that continues today to organize against projects that contribute to urban sprawl like the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) proposed Bi-County Parkway and additional Potomac River

⁷⁷ American Community Survey 2014.

⁷⁸ <http://www.capitalbikeshare.com/>

⁷⁹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/capital-business/wp/2014/02/05/what-harriet-tregoning-meant-to-washington/>

⁸⁰ Richard Moe has an excellent chapter on the advocacy against Disney in his book, *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in an Age of Sprawl*, written with Carter Wilkie (1997).

bridge crossings. The 2002 defeat of the Virginia sales tax measure designed to fund highways tapped into the region's concern about sprawl. Despite backing by then-Gov. Mark Warner and a host of regional leaders, the measure lost by a 10 point margin. The defeat demonstrated that smart growth could garner broad political support and that CSG and environmental groups had the strength to change the political dynamic. Regional advocates built upon this political victory and worked to establish relationships with the future gubernatorial candidates to educate them early about the opportunities for promoting smart transportation and growth policies. They also built partnerships with progressive developers and architecture and planning firms to support and promote smart growth developments."

Relationships were also nurtured with fiscal conservative groups, including James Bacon who writes the

blog "Bacon's Rebellion" that has provided a different voice and set of arguments against urban sprawl that resonates particularly well with outer suburban stakeholders.⁸¹

Progressive regional visions spearheaded by CSG, PEC, and partners are still demonstrating an ability to shape the region. In 2002, CSG, PEC, and STPP presented the *Blueprint for a Better Region: Putting Development in the Right Places*.⁸² The Blueprint provided examples of how development patterns

Washington Plans Streetcars to Fill in the Gaps



affect traffic levels, and offered solutions for specific neighborhoods in the region including urban revitalization and TOD. It demonstrated fiscal and transportation benefits of dense development at

Metro stations with illustrations of Arlington's successful Rosslyn Ballston corridor and strategies to gain public input and support.

In 2005, the local Urban Land Institute chapter and CSG conducted the *Washington D.C. Reality Check* - a pivot point for regional transportation planning.⁸³ The visioning event brought together business

⁸¹ A recent example of the kind of smart growth voice that is featured on Bacon's Rebellion: <http://www.baconsrebellion.com/2014/06/who-needs-to-own-a-car-when-you-can-subscribe-to-mobility-services.html>

⁸² <http://www.slideshare.net/betterdcregion/blueprint-for-a-better-region>

⁸³ <http://www.sgalliance.org/ImplementingRealityCheck.htm>

leaders, elected officials, affordable housing, transportation and environmental groups to build a growth vision for the region. Reality Check resulted in regional principals of protecting open space, development near transit, balance of jobs and housing, and development along transportation corridors. The principals proved premature for immediate action, but the effort set the groundwork for future progress.

MWCOG endorsed a regional vision in 2010 called *Region Forward*.⁸⁴ The plan was designed by community officials and leaders over two years with input from planners and residents. The vision encompasses the goal categories of land use, transportation, the environment, climate and energy, the economy, housing, education, health, and public safety. A Region Forward Coalition was created to put the goals and vision into practice in the future. The plan places priority on a transit-oriented future with future growth focused around existing transportation networks and activity centers. MWCOG also established a Transportation and Land Use Connections (TLC) in 2007 as a pilot program to provide local technical assistance to catalyze or enhance integrated planning.⁸⁵ It has since been expanded and continues to provide support to local communities.

Not every political battle was a success for regional advocates. In 2002, voters in Maryland failed to approve funding for the proposed Purple Line while the state legislature approved the controversial and costly outer beltway segment known as the Intercounty Connector, a state toll highway that has failed to attract large numbers of users and strained the state's transportation fund. The Purple Line has since been revived and is scheduled to break ground in 2015. Efforts are underway to build a coalition of diverse advocates to leverage the \$2.3 billion project to support broader community goals.⁸⁶ The University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG) is an important leader in this coalition building effort, serving not only as the convener but bringing considerable technical and data skills.⁸⁷

Suburban Retrofitting

The National Capital Region is also experiencing a transformation through suburban redesign and the expansion of its regional transit system with the recently opened Silver Line in Northern Virginia and the Purple Line LRT beginning construction in Maryland the following year. Advocates are also pursuing bus rapid transit for Montgomery County. These efforts have tended to be corridor specific, but have the potential collectively to reshape how the region grows and to retrofit the expansive suburban footprint. One of the major catalysts for transformation is the extension of Metro via the Silver Line through Tyson's Corner in

"By 2050, Tysons will be transformed into a walkable, sustainable, urban center that will be home to up to 100,000 residents and 200,000 jobs. Tysons is envisioned to become a 24-hour urban center where people live, work and play; where people are engaged with their surroundings; and, where people want to be." – Fairfax County, "Transforming Tysons"

⁸⁴ <http://www.regionforward.org/>

⁸⁵ <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/>

⁸⁶ <http://smartgrowth.umd.edu/plcc.html>

⁸⁷ Gerrit Knapp, Director of NCSG has developed extensive metrics and presentations to highlight the economic, social equity and affordable housing needs and opportunities along the line.



Figure 12. The Silver Line is Catalyst for Redevelopment of Tysons Corner (Source: M. Zimmerman, 2014)

Fairfax County. Transportation advocates and business leaders fought a nearly 40 year battle to get the line built. The jury is still out, but the plans are ambitious.⁸⁸

The County amended its Comprehensive Plan in 2010 to create the new Tysons Urban Center to transform Tysons Corner from an auto-oriented suburban strip style shopping and office area to a connected, multi-modal city with an infusion of housing and complete streets.⁸⁹ CSG was instrumental in advocating the re-

planning of Tysons Corner to take advantage of the four planned Metro stations, and Fairfax County's then-Chairman (now Congressman) Gerry Connolly subsequently spearheaded the redevelopment of Tysons from a national example of urban sprawl into a model for suburban retrofit.

The plan was the result of substantial public input over a number of years, and has received national attention from smart growth, urban planning and TOD advocates. Connolly also supported proposals advanced by affordable housing advocates to include provisions to fund and build affordable housing as part of the redevelopment process.

Other suburban communities are planning to expand the transit network with the introduction of streetcar and BRT corridors. Montgomery County, MD is preparing for the Purple Line LRT and advocacy groups like the Sierra Club and CSG have also worked with local leaders to promote rapid transit to complement and extend transit.⁹⁰

Arlington, VA is a national model for smart growth and transit oriented development. Beginning in the early 1960s when it decided to construct Metro's Orange Line under its commercial corridor (now the Rosslyn Ballston corridor) and created their "bulls-eye" plan for the Metro stations, Arlington has transformed itself from a weak market inner-ring suburb into a top urban community for millennials. Today, Arlington boasts 50 million square feet of transit-oriented development in the Rosslyn Ballston corridor alone and has done so without increasing automobile traffic. The land in their two Metro corridors occupies just 11% of the county, but provides 50% of the property tax base. In the Rosslyn Ballston corridor, 39% of trips are made by transit, walking, and bicycling.⁹¹ Arlington County has engaged in a decade long effort to introduce streetcar to its Columbia Pike and Crystal City neighborhoods.

Among the innovative tools used to shape development along these corridors, the County was an early pioneer of form-based codes to create more mixed-use and compact development while incentivizing good design and a more predictable process for developers. County Board Members Chris Zimmerman

⁸⁸ Numerous articles appeared debating this question after the July 26 opening of the Silver Line. Among them was a provocative piece by Yonah Freemark in the TransportPolitic: <http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2014/08/04/what-kind-of-tod-can-occur-around-dulles-metro/>

⁸⁹ <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/tysons/>

⁹⁰ <http://www.smartergrowth.net/maryland/montgomery-county/>

⁹¹ <http://www.smartergrowth.net/virginia/arlington/>

and Walter Tejada have provided sustained and visionary leadership, not only to garner public support for transit but to ensure that affordable housing strategies are included in corridor redevelopment.

Affordable housing is a major issue for the County, which now boasts one of the hottest housing markets in the region, and is limited by state law in terms of the tools it has available to address the issue. Local non-profit affordable housing partners, like the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, have worked closely with County leaders to craft and pilot innovative approaches and hosting forums to share best practices and raise awareness of financing gaps.⁹²

Arlington conducts an annual assessment of its affordable housing production and preservation and measures its progress against defined goals and targets. To help meet these targets, the County established an Affordable Housing Investment Fund, which offers revolving, low-interest loans and tenant assistance to housing providers, and an Affordable Housing Ordinance, which requires affordable housing contributions from all new residential and commercial developments. Arlington also features a Live Where You Work home ownership subsidy for those who work in the County to motivate car-free commutes and strengthen its community fabric.⁹³

Priorities Moving Forward

Despite a decade of transportation advances, the National Capital Region faces continued political challenges and rising fiscal constraints. Arlington and Fairfax County's planned Columbia Pike Streetcar is facing unprecedented opposition by proponents despite positive value capture studies. The D.C. Streetcar is facing delays, cost overruns and a funding crisis. The Silver Spring Transit Station is \$80 Million over budget and two years behind schedule due to structural issues, with no opening date in sight.

The following are among the priorities moving forward:⁹⁴

Money. Regional advocates are working to support these projects and continue to be a voice for public accountability but face funding challenges without sustained philanthropic involvement. The splintered governance and lack of a regional agency with broad planning or funding authority weakens the ability to pursue regional reform goals. Given the strong housing market and limited public resources, affordable housing finance is a particular challenge especially for equitable TOD in the region.

Equitable TOD. While individual jurisdictions are working to develop strategies to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing, skyrocketing prices and growing demand for urban living far outstretch available tools. Greater coordination and support is needed for comprehensive strategies targeted at new financing tools, grassroots organizing, advocacy and research to address the challenges of Equitable TOD that face every jurisdiction served by transit currently, or with plans for future streetcar, BRT or LRT.

⁹² <http://www.apah.org/lk/APAHInnovativeToolsForum.pdf>

⁹³ <http://www.smartergrowth.net/virginia/arlington/>

⁹⁴ Priorities identified during the June 10, 2014 DC stakeholders meeting convened by Coalition for Smarter Growth and Piedmont Environmental Council and facilitated by Mariia Zimmerman of MZ Strategies.

Regional Disparities. To build upon and sustain innovation, the National Capital Region will need to address equity and poverty issues. A regional equity vision or collaborative framework is lacking. The nationwide suburbanization of poverty brings new urgency to issues of affordable transportation, equity and housing in the National Capital Region. In order to grow and innovate as a region, the National Capital Region needs to address equity issues, especially in the suburban jurisdictions where poverty rates are growing. This will require greater involvement by philanthropy and the public sector to support needed research, the development of innovative finance tools, and policy reforms to better address equity in mobility and housing.

Conclusion

The region has become a national transportation and smart growth model and transportation despite the political and fiscal challenges it faces. Many regions across the country face similar challenges. The National Capital Region case study can be instructive in how local advocates can leverage available resources. Regional advocates have worked to refine their message and approaches to reflect regional values particularly around economic prosperity and environmental quality to engage the public. They have cultivated and leveraged key public sector leaders and developers who are willing to promote smart growth concepts.

Limited philanthropic support has required building the donor base and continually working to find new ways to engage regional funders and be seen as relevant to the public. This has involved both strong advocacy against bad projects and policies, but also proactive support for good ideas. It has also required a tailored communication and political strategy. Building relationships with fiscal conservative groups and educating the public and elected officials through blogs, peer exchanges and walking tours are among the many strategies deployed by DC area advocates to make a big impact given staff and budget constraints. Without a strong regional public agency that controls large amounts of funding, the focus has been at the local level. This level of advocacy can be easier to galvanize the public, engage funders and the media and build a resources base from individual donors. The down side is that coordination and synergies across the region are sometimes lost and regional disparities increased.