

The New Collaborative Region: Suburbs and Cities Working on the Future

January 27, 2006

Panel Presentation:

Transportation, Land Use and Regional Collaboration:

California Experiences

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I want to talk about something that is a real death-defying act: the tightrope of regionalism in California. We've heard of people from outside of California talking, I think, about visions that have been achieved over many, many years. And they are going on. Although Salt Lake City is more recent, it has still taken a long time. So this is a path that takes a long time to get started and there's a long way to go.

We in California started talking and dancing with regionalism quite a while ago. As a matter of fact, California is regionalism. Governor Wilson divided the state, for those of you who remember, into five regions. There was the Humboldt region, the Northern part of the state; an Inland/Shasta/Northern California region; a Bay Area region; a Central Valley region that covered basically from Stockton all the way down to Bakersfield; a coastal region; and then a Southern California region.

And each of these regions was bigger than most states, in terms of the number of people. But also, like most of the states, they had different cultures, different origins, as it were, different destinies economically.

So California has always been regional. But that regionality was more geographical, and didn't have the buttressing forces that we are talking about here today -- of vision, direction, and completeness with respect to quality of life.

Our first thoughts and attempts at regionalism in the state go all the way back to Hiram Johnson. And he felt that the state was naturally organized into regions for infrastructure purposes and to deliver water. If it hadn't been for Hiram Johnson and the notions of great water projects, none of us would be here.

And later on, Earl Warren felt that regionalism included something that was mentioned just a few minutes ago: education. And the education plan for the state -- which no state has really replicated, all the way from junior colleges, state colleges, and the university systems -- was part of a regionalization process that's now been completed with the new campus at Merced.

So California is planned regionally. More recently, Pat Brown had economic development and the notion of councils of government that are in place, and that was augmented in the Reagan administration with the reorganization of government. But also about the same time, the MPOs came on, Metropolitan Planning

Organizations that were required by the federal government. And California was involved in that. But these are all top-down regionalism, not bottom-up regionalism.

And what we are going to hear from today here in California is where the bottom-up regionalism is going. We are going to hear three examples of bottom-up regionalism, but there are others. We are going to hear about Silicon Valley and about Sacramento and Merced, but there are some other things going on. There's the Great Valley Project going on, and there's the regional project going on in San Diego that has lakes and so forth, of people coming together around the University of California at San Diego.

So there's a new spirit of regional design and development that we can take some lessons from. And I'm hoping that we will hear from our speakers what the base of that support is and how we can develop it here, what the structure of that support system is, how it exists, and what legs it has and what visions it has so it will inspire us to create a region here that will be better than any that have been done before.