

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

January 27, 2006

Panel Presentation:

Transportation, Land Use and Regional Collaboration:

Southern California Experiences

Summary Remarks

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In the next five minutes, I will share with you what I've learned since coming to Southern California over 30 years. Let me just note that when I started in my job, this region had 10.2 million people in it. Today, it has 18.6 million people. So in three decades, we've added eight million people. We did that on a Proposition 13 environment, two-thirds votes. Very difficult to raise public revenues.

Let me share another perspective, and that is the main insight that I can suggest with respect to the framework of theory that we are developing on how we intersect this issue of governance in our regional collaboration. Let me just say that there's a book that I suggest all of you read. It's called, "The Shield of Achilles," by Phillip Bobbitt. And it's a book about where the globe is going. And there's a major conclusion that he comes to, and that is the era of the nation state. It's not that they are going to go away, but it's over, and the era of the market state is now upon us, and how the nation state frames and guides the market will determine who the successful winners will be in the century that we are now entering. And with a flat world, don't think that we are not in a true global market competition.

How does that apply to the subject that we are talking about today? Very simply. You've heard about the 2 percent. Stan Oftelie described our 2 percent better than I could, and that is the 2 percent is not everybody doing everything the same way.

What we are basically saying is that if 50 or 60 of our jurisdictions modify and change their general plans, minor and slight modifications transform the way this region operates and behaves both in terms of mobility, air quality, housing costs, and energy consumption. You name the public policy issue. We will, in fact, improve this region.

How did we arrive at that solution? By doing what Stan said. We listened. We created techniques that enable 5,000 individuals and community groups and all the -- and, Stan, I think you even participated in those. I know Rick did. The people in this region crafted that plan. Not my staff and not a consultant. Don Fregonese and Peter

Calthorpe helped us figure out how to listen. We came forth with a vision that's based on goals.

What are those three goals? The first is we've got to increase the income of the individuals in this region. The second is we have to increase the livability. And the third is the equity.

Let me just say what is the fundamental linchpin analysis of our Compass program?

The linchpin analysis was that we have the capacity -- and I'm sorry that Mike isn't here, Mike McKeever, because he developed a lot of these tools. Using analytical tools, we now are able to look at the planning and policy issues through the lens of the return on investment both to the individual -- or to the developer and to the community. It's a return on investment strategy, pure and simple. Nothing more and nothing less.

And, furthermore, it does one other thing. And it's the issue that we haven't yet successfully accomplished in Southern California. You have to join planning and zoning issues with finance and implementation issues. We haven't yet been able to really make that marriage. We have had a lot of experimentation. We now know what the increased appreciation and value of real estate will be. We also know what share the developers can participate so that when we put linkage fees on, we don't have a housing cost that just goes through the roof. I mean, we have to be able to solve these in an integrated way, but the insight of our Compass Program is a return on investment strategy that allows the private sector coupled with public policy to build the communities that the communities in our region want.

That's what the 2 percent is all about.

And, furthermore, you don't have to go out and change the whole lifestyle of Southern California. We can have a pattern that is truly amenable to the demographics that we'll have in our region.

And let me just end with one statistic. In the next 30 years, 80 percent of all the housing units in our region will be nontraditional families. And if you don't think that that's going to be a difference in the product, guess again. And every major builder/developer in this region now has an infill development unit that complements their family units.

Now, if the marketplace can guide us and we create the framework -- and Tridib described it correctly. What we do at SCAG is we don't want to be the governmental entity. We don't want to have taxing. All we want to do is to be able to help and frame and deal with experimental partners like Rick, Stan, and others. And if we do that, we'll solve Tridib's Tieboutian Space dilemma.