

Regionalism: Points of View

California Planning Roundtable
November 10, 2013

Good morning to the California Planning Roundtable. And welcome to the Mission Inn, an extraordinary historic hotel.

A couple of footnotes--Mission Inn docents will tell you that Richard Nixon was married in what is now called the Presidential Lounge. And they will indicate that Ronald Reagan spent the first night of his honeymoon with Nancy Davis in the Mission Inn. He was on his way to Phoenix where the Davis family lived. That night, Lawrence Welk was performing at our Municipal Auditorium.

Thank you to Al Zelinka for the invitation to speak. And kudos to his outstanding work as the City of Riverside's Community Development Director.

Also, let me call out Mark Rhoades. Mark is a graduate in political science from UCR who made the choice to become a planner rather than a lawyer.

About ten years ago after a morning talk, Knox Mellon, the State's first Historic Preservation Officer, said what makes Loveridge different than other local electeds is that he reads books.

I will highlight eight books this morning. These books made important differences in how I view regionalism.

To begin however, let me emphasize five ideas about regions.

1) The 21st Century is the century of regions.

Lesson One from David Rusk in *Cities without Suburbs*, "The real city is the total metropolitan area--city and suburb."

2) Regions are the economic centerpieces of the global marketplace.

3) Regions are where most of us live, work, and play.

I remember coming back one evening from a meeting in Lake Elsinore. When I reached Corona, what I saw was a sea of lights, not separate jurisdictions. We live in the same place, share much the same future.

4) California is a state of regions. California Forward hosted a statewide economic conference this past Thursday and Friday in Los Angeles. California Forward divides the State into sixteen regions.

The important point--California regions are not the same! And as many emphasize, there are stark differences between Inland California and Coastal California--it is a tale of two Californias.

To wit, Inland Southern California has the highest unemployment rate in the nation for a region with more than one million people--higher than even Detroit.

5) A sustainable future is closely tied to the three E's--economy, environment, and equity. Yet, this future cannot be separated from regional solutions to issues of air, water, land/open space, transportation, and energy. We need an integrated vision of sustainability!

Now to the eight books....

First, Benjamin Barber has recently written, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*. Please note that the title does not say If Planners Ruled the World.

A political scientist, Barber is a senior research scholar at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

His argument: Barber cites the unique qualities that cities share worldwide: pragmatism, civic trust, participation, indifference to borders and sovereignty, and a democratic penchant for networking, creativity, innovation, and cooperation. He demonstrates how mayors, singly or jointly, are responding to transnational problems more effectively than nation-states mired in ideological infighting and sovereign rivalries. Barber makes the case that the city is democracy's best hope in a globalizing world, and many mayors are already proving that this is so.

Mayors are pragmatic rather than ideological; they are interested in results.

A contrast with national politics--let's shut down a city and see what happens.

One lesson for planners--work with mayors. I would encourage you to support/staff their regional assignments, involvement.

My take on the shared governance relationship between the mayor and the city manager. This is my conversation--I want to be the best mayor I can. You want to be the best city manager you can. Let's work together.

The call out to planners, work with electeds, work together to make good things happen.

It is time for mayors to step up. Collaboration should be the new competition. For example, Hickenlooper did so in Denver. He set up what has become a very effective mayor's council for the Denver metro region.

In Southern California, I look to Eric Garcetti to take the lead. Except for a funeral, there never was a sighting of Mayor Antonio Villargosa in Inland Southern California, nor was there a formal invitation to come to Los Angeles.

Second, when I was first elected Mayor in 1994, perhaps the most important book I read was by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy*. Moss Kanter is a Harvard Business Professor.

She emphasized that success depends on the ability to compete in the global marketplace. Success will come only to those companies--large and small--whose goods and services meet world class standards.

The world is now a giant shopping mall in which we can buy anything at any time.

Moss Kanter presents a detailed action agenda for communities and businesses. It is worth a close read.

She writes, "Cities need their own foreign policy. They must be world-ready, foreign-friendly, globally skilled, and partnership oriented in order to attract resources to enhance local quality of life. They must strengthen their infrastructure for collaboration--the linkages that produce civic engagement and unity of purpose. An action agenda for cities starts with core local strengths as the foundation for a global vision, a vision that embraces the opportunities of a new century and builds bridges to help people reach them."

One lesson from Moss Kanter--regional planning must look globally as well as locally.

Third, one of my favorite city books is Edward Glaeser's *Triumph of the City*. It is subtitled: *How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*.

It is a great hammock book to read. Glaeser is a Harvard Economics Professor.

Using many examples, Glaeser persuasively argues that our success as a country and as a people depends on the health and wealth of cities.

Cities are the wealth of nations. They are where economic development takes place and quality of life is experienced.

He writes, "The strength that come from human collaboration is the central truth behind civilization's success and the primary reason why cities exist....Above all, we must free ourselves from our tendency to see cities as their buildings, and remember that the real city is made of flesh, not concrete."

And Glaeser concludes with this final judgment about the future of cities, "I suspect in the long run, the 20th century fling with suburban living will look, just like the brief age of the industrial city, more like an aberration than a trend. Building cities is difficult, and density creates costs as well as benefits. But those costs are well worth bearing...our culture, our prosperity, and our freedom are all ultimately gifts of people living, working, and thinking together--the ultimate triumph of the city."

Fourth, one of the best known and most widely read of the academics writing about cities is Richard Florida. His major, and best book, is *Rise of the Creative Class*. I strongly recommend you read the revised, 10th anniversary edition.

Richard Florida is a Professor at University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and a Senior Editor for the Atlantic.

Florida introduced all of us to the creative class--his key to explaining economic success and to what has transformed our economy and our culture.

He further observes that the Creative Age has ushered in a new found respect for livability and sustainability.

Perhaps more importantly for planners, Florida writes, "It is often been said that in this age of globalization and modern communication technology, "geography is dead," "the world is flat," and place

no longer matters. Nothing could be further from the truth. Place has become the central organizing unit of our time.”

Noteworthy, prosperous places says Florida are distinguished by a new model of economic development that takes shape around the 3 T's--technology, talent, and tolerance.”

And based on extensive comparative data, Florida concludes that most successful and prosperous metros, or regions, excel on all three T's.

My guess is that the fifth book has been read by very few here this morning--it is titled, *The Economics of Place: The Value of Building Communities Around People*.” I was introduced to this book in 2011 as the Immediate Past President of the National League of Cities.

It is an inspiring, best practices book written by a number of nationally renowned writers for the Michigan Municipal League. They focus on the cutting edge of innovation, identifying real, and timely, choices for all cities and regions. The book begins with this quote from Abraham Lincoln, “The best way to predict your future is to create it.”

Listen to the language of the foreword: “Place shapes us. Place defines us. Place is what forms our identities, our attitudes, and our relationships. No longer is it sufficient to build places that are merely functional and safe. Our place making aspirations must be as high and as grand as our economic goals because they are bound together.”

Daniel Gilmartin, Michigan's Municipal League Director, concludes, “How individual neighborhoods, communities, and regions attempt to deal with these issues is only limited by their willingness to pioneer solutions for implementation....Swapping entrenched sacred cows for innovative strategies, creating new delivery methods for delivering traditional government services, and fostering effective community engagement should be the measuring stick for which we all live by.”

In my view, this book should be carefully read, and discussed, by elected and appointed officials, and especially as we ponder and plan for our regional future. It is full of promising ideas to advocate and to translate into policy choices.

There is also a changing role for planners. As Mitchell Silver, President of the American Planning Association explains, “Planning is economic development...new planning concepts such as ROI--”return on investment”--are changing how planners look at managing growth and change in a fiscally responsible way. Planners are discovering a renewed sense of purpose. Preparing for trends, planning for people and making the economic case for planning are all gaining traction.”

The sixth book is Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need A Green Revolution--And How It Can Renew America*. Writing for the NY Times, Friedman is arguably America's most respected columnist. A four times Pulitzer Prize winner, Friedman has also written other bestselling books, including *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, *The World is Flat*, and *That Used To Be Us*.

Hot, Flat, and Crowded is a powerful call for green action. As Friedman explains, “It is a great challenge but also a great opportunity, and one that America cannot afford to miss. Not only is American leadership the key to the healing of the earth, it is also our best strategy for the renewal of America.”

When first interviewing EPA candidates for his cabinet in 2008, President elect Obama told Mary Nichols that he was going to focus first on health care because there was such widespread agreement. After health care, Obama said his next focus would be on sustainability, of going green. I sometimes wonder what would have happened if he had reversed these two priorities.

Friedman interviews the world's top experts. As we consider regional initiatives, Friedman's section called *How We Move Forward* offers important ideas and directions--it should be closely read.

In my lifetime, AB 32 and SB 375 are the two most important regional policies that the State of California has approved. They are closely aligned with the aspirations and strategies identified and highlighted in *Hot, Flat and Crowded*. California is the nation's greenest state, and regional planning in California should be likewise.

Friedman closes with this comment, "The decisions Americans make about sustainable development are not technical decisions about peripheral matters, and they are not simply decisions about the environment. They are decisions about who we are, what we value, and what kind of world we want to live in, and how we want to be remembered."

The seventh book is Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom, *Urban Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America*. It is the primary text I use when teaching a local leadership class at UCR. Now in its 8th edition, Judd and Swanstrom is a widely used textbook. They offer an excellent history of American cities and especially the relationship of cities to Washington.

Both political scientists, Judd teaches at University of Illinois at Chicago and Swanstrom at University of Missouri-St Louis.

They organize their city politics book around three themes or what they call urban imperatives: politics of growth, politics of governance, and politics of defended space.

The politics of growth centers on the quest of cities for economic prosperity.

The politics of governance analyzes how and why cities allocate goods and services, how and why city officials arbitrate and negotiate among complex and competing demands.

And the politics of defended space is where different governments defend their role and standing, or their silos. The regional result is what Judd and Swanstrom call the fractured metropolis.

There are approximately 90,000 governments in the United States. And you know in California, there are 58 counties, 482 cities, 1,200 school districts, and about 5,000 special districts. You name a service and we have created a special district! They include air, water, fire, flood, vector, sewer, cemetery, transportation, et cetera.

Judd and Swanstrom note, "The extreme fragmentation of urban regions makes it difficult to find solutions to problems that are truly regional in scope."

They document that past efforts to approve metropolitan governments have gone down in flames, with Dade County and Louisville-Jefferson County as notable exceptions.

The current regional reform efforts focus on regional governance and not regional government.

Judd and Swanstrom then point to three kinds of emerging metro reforms that you are familiar with, namely new regionalism, smart growth, and new urbanism.

However, their overall conclusion is what I would describe as pessimistic conventional wisdom; listen to what they write, “Local control of land use, economic development, and local taxes and services gives people a sense that they are masters of their destiny. Governmental fragmentation will continue to be a fixture of the American metropolis, as will sprawl and its attendant problems. This is why the art of muddling through will continue to define the regional policy agenda.”

Our challenge/your challenge--will the art of muddling through continue to define regional planning, and the future form and dynamics of metropolitan areas of California?

The eighth and last book is by Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley, *The Metropolitan Revolution*. Listen closely to its subtitle: *How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*.

Published in 2013, it is a compelling and powerful look at what is happening in metropolitan regions across the country. It is a must read!

I am challenging electeds, appointed folk, and colleagues to read *The Metropolitan Revolution*. In my view, if read and followed, the book can be a game changer!

Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley are well known urban scholars in the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Their argument--across the nation, cities and metropolitan areas, and the networks of pragmatic leaders who govern them, are taking on the big issues. They are reshaping our economy, and fixing our broken political system. This revolution is happening, and every community and region can benefit.

Katz and Bradley make the signature point that cities and regions can no longer look for help from Washington, or from the states. *We/they* are on our own.

I like the comment of the incoming President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Scott Smith. He says, “Through real-world examples, the *Metropolitan Revolution* brings to life how American cities and suburbs drive innovation to solve problems and seize opportunities. The book is a call to action beyond Washington, where metro leaders join together and simply get stuff done.”

In their final chapter, called *A Revolution Realized*, Katz and Bradley identify five essential steps to bring the metropolitan revolution to life. They say, “Building a unique metro is an intricate, deliberate, and, at its best, exhilarating act of economy shaping and place making.”

The five essential steps are “build your network, set your vision, find your game changer, bankroll the revolution, and sustain the gain.”

Let me quote from their final paragraphs:

“The metropolitan revolution has emerged in a period of deep economic crisis and political dissatisfaction that has sparked a fundamental reassessment of roles and responsibilities in our 21st century system. It is being led by networks of individuals who share a deep commitment to their communities and a sense of

common purpose and vision. And it is a revolution with deep and profound consequences for the shape and structure of our society and our governmental institutions.

Power, in short, is shifting again in our country. We are, in the end, not a nation beholden to the 537 elected officials in the federal government, no matter how high the office. Nor are we a nation in thrall to almost 8,000 elected officials in state governments. Rather, we are powerful, growing nation of 315 million people, with tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of individuals playing active, participatory leadership roles in their communities and metropolitan areas.”

Before I close my talk this morning with a brief video of *The Metropolitan Revolution* on the PBS News Hour, let me make some final observations.

First, for all of us in Southern California, SCAG is now the only recognized, and respected, regional public forum. It is led by an extraordinary leader and public servant, Hasan Ikrata.

Adopted unanimously in 2012, SCAG’s Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategies is the best plan ever adopted for the region of Southern California. The overarching challenge at hand is to implement the Plan, to make its recommendations happen, to connect regional planning, land use, and transportation. Hasan will shortly give you an update.

On an Air Resources Board trip to Bakersfield, I personally liked the strategies framed by 30 groups in the San Joaquin Valley that identify ways to create a more healthy, prosperous, and equitable region while reducing air pollution and greenhouse gasses. Drawing on the Valley’s RTP and SCS, they call their recommendations, Seizing the Opportunity.

Second, Sacramento, and especially the Governor, has not been a recent friend of cities or metros. However, looking outside of California, I would encourage you to review what Oregon calls Regional Solutions.

As explained on its web site, “Regional Solutions is an innovative, collaborative approach to community and economic development in Oregon. The state, in partnership with Oregon colleges and universities, established Regional Solutions Centers throughout Oregon. Each take a bottom-up approach to development projects--working at the local level to identify priorities, solve problems, and seize opportunities to complete projects. These centers integrate state agency work and funding to ensure that projects are complete in the most economical and streamlined process possible.”

Do they work? Here is what the Executive Director of the League of Oregon Cities, Mike McCauley, said in answer to an inquiry by Chris McKenzie, Executive Director of the League of California Cities:

“Regional solutions teams are distributed around the state and have team members from the major departments that interact with local government. Their charge is to assist local government and cut through silos and find solutions--and they have been successful in many instances. The regional solutions is real and very worthwhile. We have a good partnership with the Governor’s office on this. We did regional meetings and regional solutions was widely praised as very helpful. I just returned from two regional small cities meetings where we involve the regional solutions staff--golden. We supported funding in this past legislative session and grant funding that will be very flexible administered by regional solutions. The regional solutions really does deliver assistance and problem solving and silo busting. This (regional solutions) is the best state local government thing I have seen.”

I was particularly struck by the last sentence: “the best state local government thing I have seen.”

Third, where do I look for the best information, the best ideas on regional matters?

Governing is the best general editorial magazine covering states, counties and cities. There is a particularly good article on what they call Disruptive Technologies in the October, 2013 issue.

Neal Peirce used to have a great weekly column, Citiwire.net; however, he just retired. Many of his back columns are worth a careful read.

I would strongly encourage you to read an on line service called Newgeography.com--Economic, demographic, and political commentary about places. Many of the articles/columns offer important regional ideas and or highlight major studies.

Among others that I have read, Joel Kotkin has recently written several significant columns on the revitalization of Southern California. He puts the emphasis for economic development on this region's ethnic networks, tech industrial base, and cultural complex.

Kotkin writes, “Once a region that epitomized our country's promise, the area still maintains enormous competitive advantages, if it ever gathers the wits to take advantage of them....Taken together, these sectors--ethnic business, sophisticated manufacturing, and culture--could provide the basis for a renaissance in the local economy....More than anything, though, they require an understanding on the part of both government and business that their success remains the best means to reverse decades of relative decline.”

Also, I would encourage you to go on line and review California Forward's Summit Playbook. It is subtitled, “Created by California's Regions Committed to Advancing the Triple Bottom Line.”

It was prepared for the California Economic Summit, held November 7th and 8th, 2013 in Los Angeles. The Playbook proposes policy approaches to workforce, infrastructure, regulations, advancing manufacturing, working landscapes, capital, and housing.

And fourth, as UCR's Director of the Center for Sustainable Suburban Development, or CSSD, I am working with others to reframe a 21st century vision for Inland Southern California. We need a vision that focuses on our assets. We need a vision that integrates economy, environment, and equity.

In the words of Katz and Bradley, “All transformative innovations begin with a vision, often one bold enough to redefine the identity and image of the metropolis....Visions clarify. Visions inspire. Visions catalyze. Visions matter. Successful visions are grounded in evidence, developed through the accumulation of relevant data and information, accompanied by smart analysis, experience, and intuition.”

The most far reaching, environmentally friendly, and most successful regional planning effort in the U.S. is in the reddest state, Utah. The public-private partnership, Envision Utah, is a national model for creating the green city of the future, grappling with how to ease congestion, stopping sprawl, and cleaning the air.

The advantages, the assets of Inland Southern California are many. We are a complex place--rich and poor, rural and urban, diverse, growing, and large in population and geography. We are still defining our

urban form. Riverside County will become in the next 40 years, the second most populous county in California.

Already the 12th largest metro in the country--larger than half the states in America, our advantages, our assets include mountains and deserts, 51 quite different cities, 16 colleges and universities--including UCR and CSUSB, over 40 hospitals--including several that are nationally renowned, more golf courses than the counties of LA and Orange, national center for renewable energy--wind and especially solar, destinations points such as Palm Springs, Temecula, and downtown Riverside, Santa Ana River and its 70-mile bike path, extensive open space for recreation, high levels of community of faith, more casinos than any other area in the state, two cities with higher media family incomes than Beverly Hills, et cetera, et cetera.

The bankrupt City of San Bernardino is not the marker or the future vision for Inland Southern California.

I would offer, and underscore, my kudos to the San Bernardino County vision process, superbly led by the County CAO, Greg Devereaux.

One brag of a former Mayor--in 2012, the City of Riverside was selected as the Intelligent Community of the Year by the Intelligent Community Forum, a policy think tank located in New York City. We competed against the best in the world, some 435 cities. We were selected by an international panel of judges coupled with an intensive on site visit. The final seven cities were Riverside and Austin, Texas, three from Canada, and one from Finland and one from Taiwan. Riverside was the first U.S. city ever selected as the Intelligent Community of the Year.

Final message--the art of muddling through should not define the regional policy agendas of California. There should be a metropolitan revolution to make us once again the Golden State.

God speed to the work of the California Planning Roundtable.

Thank you for your attention.