Planning for sustainable communities:
Regional incentives and local policy under SB375

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SB 375:
Sustainable Communities & Climate Protection Act (2008)

- isolation
- dispersion
- automobility
- impacts
- access
- density
- alternatives
- sustainability
Land use component of regional transportation plans

Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)

Sacramento

San Diego

Los Angeles

S.F. Bay Area
SB375: Significant change, considerable challenge

San Diego region

Conventional vision for 2020

Post-SB375 vision for 2050
General plans in California

- Constitution for future development
- Required under state law
- Seven basic elements
- Zoning consistency requirement
- Updates not mandated, infrequent

SB375 affirms local land use authority
Implementation depends on local governments
How to get local governments on board?

State policy

Regional planning & policy

Local planning & policy

Outcomes
Motivation

access
density
alternatives
sustainability
Investigations

1. How can regions encourage local governments to adopt policies supportive of SB375?

2. Are local governments using such planning policies right now?
1. How can regions encourage local governments to adopt policies supportive of SB375?

   *Innovative use of available funding, targeted investments with geographic focus, support for implementation orientation.*

2. Are local governments using such planning policies right now?

   *How we can assess that. Yes, but not nearly as much as they could be.*
1: Regional models for nudging local land use

How have regions MPOs nudged local governments to make regionally-supportive land use decisions?
## MPO-driven smart growth initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPO Region</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Est.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.F Bay Area</td>
<td>Transportation for Livable Communities Program</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>Community Design Program</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Pilot Smart Growth Incentive Program</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California</td>
<td>Compass/Blueprint Demonstration Grant &amp; Green Incentive Programs</td>
<td>2005</td>
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</table>
SF Bay Area: Transportation for Livable Communities

- Infrastructure and planning program; mostly federal $
- Investments in transportation choices
- Focus on infill development, TOD housing, transit stations

• Evolution:
  → **planning** grants
  → **capital** grants (bike-, ped-, TOD-enhancements)
  → **housing** oriented improvements, near transit
  → **station area** grants
## Research approach

**Looked at:**
- Program materials
- Funding applications and criteria
- Regional spending program
- Data on funded projects
- Program evaluations
- Staff interviews

**Looked for:**
- Program genesis & formalization
- Funding sources
- Planning vs. capital eligibility
- Project activities
- Implementation readiness
### Key Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>San Diego</th>
<th>Los Angeles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Started</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>Funding Source(s)</td>
<td>STP, CMAQ, TE</td>
<td>STP, CMAQ, TE</td>
<td>STP, CMAQ, TE</td>
<td>Federal Planning Grants, Metro PL, State Planning</td>
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<td>Target Growth Areas</td>
<td>Priority Development Areas, Transit Priority Areas, Centers &amp; Corridors, Smart Growth Opportunity Areas</td>
<td>Priority Development Areas, Transit Priority Areas, Centers &amp; Corridors, Smart Growth Opportunity Areas</td>
<td>Priority Development Areas, Transit Priority Areas, Centers &amp; Corridors, Smart Growth Opportunity Areas</td>
<td>Priority Development Areas, Transit Priority Areas, Centers &amp; Corridors, Smart Growth Opportunity Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Favored target growth areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Projects</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>

- Use federal $ creatively to drive center-focused capital investment and planning.
- Used federal $ to leveraged local $.
- Federal-local swaps for planning & non-transport infrastructure.
- Favored target growth areas.
Local planning: From vision to implementation

Vision
- Public workshop, charette
- Community vision process
- Design study/scenarios
- Concept plan
- Revitalization study
- Feasibility study
- Parking study
- Corridor study
- Plan update analysis
- Transit station plan
- Design guidelines

Implementation
- Zoning ordinance
- General plan
- Specific plan
- Construction docs
Majority of efforts fund late stage planning

SCAG Compass Blueprint Demonstration Grants (Planning)
(Projects completed as of June 2012, Total=82)

- Vision Planning: 17%
- Planning Study: 33%
- Site or Area Planning/Analysis: 26%
- Formal Plan/Planning Tool: 24%
Observations

1. Innovative use of funds: compliance by incentives

2. Interventions support established communities and non-auto modes
   - key corridors & streetscapes
   - bicycle and pedestrian travel
   - transit station areas

3. Planning for implementation

4. What’s next?
Part 2: Local planning assessment

1. Are local governments planning for SB 375-supportive outcomes in the built environment?
1. Develop general plan assessment tool
   (Baer, Berke, Conroy, Godschalk, Manta)

2. Select study cities

3. Collect General Plan elements (unit of analysis)

4. Isolate policies (unit of observation)

5. Score policies using evaluation tool
City selection

Sampling frame
• population > 20,000
• in metropolitan planning area boundaries
• key plan elements updated 2008 or later

Sampling strategy
• random sample
• stratified by population size
Plan assessment: Evaluation tool

Tool components

A. SB375 Planning Principles

1. Strengthen existing communities
2. Reduce auto dependence
3. Provide housing variety
4. Mix land uses
5. Equity
6. Responsible regionalism
7. Preserve open space
Plan assessment: Evaluation tool

Tool components

A. SB375 Planning Principles

B. Implementation Strategies

- Residential mixed-use project
- Inclusionary zoning ordinance
- Bicycle master plan
- Support ride sharing/carpooling
- Density bonuses
- Connect transit to jobs/housing
- Concentrate services
- Increase street connectivity
- Support infill development
- Limit open space development
- Reduce parking supply
- Support increased densities
Plan assessment: Evaluation tool

Tool components

A. SB375 Planning Principles
B. Implementation Strategies
C. Score assignment

O = Not used
1 = Used, low detail
2 = Used, high detail, implementation oriented
## Redwood City: Land Use Element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPLES</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Total Policies</th>
<th>Normalized</th>
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<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Policy 2...</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible regionalism</td>
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<td>1 1</td>
<td>0.143</td>
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</table>

Score Sum of Strategies: 0 0 5 3 1 2 15 10 3 4 1 0
Overall performance

All cities, all elements, all principles

Total Normalized Score for All Cities by Principle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Normalized Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preserve open space</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen existing communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible regionalism</td>
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<td>Reduce auto dependence</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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Strategies

All cities, all elements.

Top 15 Implementation Strategies

- Street design standards
- Coordinate l.u., transp., hsng. agencies
- Increase public transit
- NMT infrastructure
- Permit housing variety
- Support affordable housing
- Support mixed-use
- Rehab/reuse existing structures
- Increase TOD
- Create jobs-housing balance
- Create affordable housing
- Connect transportation modes
- Support increased densities
- Reduce parking supply
- Limit open space development

Policies Employing the Strategy
Results

- Dispersion of high, medium, and low scoring cities
Top scoring cities

South Lake Tahoe
Tracy
Goleta
San Pablo
Rancho Cucamonga
Chico
Stanton
Lancaster
South Lake Tahoe: Changing direction?
Low scoring cities

Apple Valley
Laguna Beach
Hesperia
Santa Paula
Santa Rosa
San Diego
Murrieta
Lodi
Apple Valley: Committed to ultra-low density
Recap & conclusions for policy and planning

1. California regions squarely in the **Twilight Zone** but steering built environment & land use change.

2. Local governments: room for improvement


4. Need to institutionalize evaluation in SB 375 framework:
   -- of plans (general, specific, amendments) and subsequent entitlements
   -- of projects and policies (before and after)
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