

**CBA·NAU**  
College of Business  
Administration  
Northern Arizona  
University  
Box 15066  
Flagstaff AZ 86011

# **An Assessment of Regional Growth Management Activity in Central and Western States**

**Working Paper Series — May 2001**

**Ronald J. Gunderson**  
Professor of Economics  
College of Business Administration  
Northern Arizona University  
PO Box 15066  
Flagstaff, AZ 86011  
Tel: (520) 523-7358  
Fax: (520) 523-7331  
Email: [Ronald.Gunderson@nau.edu](mailto:Ronald.Gunderson@nau.edu)

**CBA·NAU**  
College of Business  
Administration  
Northern Arizona  
University  
Box 15066  
Flagstaff AZ 86011

# **An Assessment of Regional Growth Management Activity in Central and Western States**

Ronald J. Gunderson

Growth, and how to manage it, have become increasingly important subjects for discussion throughout many cities, counties and regions over the most recent decade. Economic growth, the protection of the environment, and social equity have emerged as three essential elements in achieving sustainable development in a rapidly changing global climate. A key factor in ensuring a successful future is the establishment of “a new collaborative decision making process that leads to better decisions; more rapid change; and more sensible use of human, natural, and financial resources” to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations (The President’s Council on Sustainable Development 1999).

For much of their history, many cities and counties survived without a comprehensive plan, and the idea of working with neighboring jurisdictions to plan for future growth was rarely in evidence. Nevertheless, using regional cooperation to address growth policies is becoming more common today and is considered a necessary and effective means to achieve sustainable prosperity. Cooperative planning activity at the state level is less than thirty years old. Vermont, Florida and Oregon were among the early leaders in developing plans that extended beyond the reach of the local community. Many of these early activities arose out of concerns for the environment. Today, the environment is still a predominant motivator; however, the preservation of open space, curtailment of urban sprawl, enhancing local infrastructure and a region’s ability to accommodate growth, are also important.

The Silicon Valley provides an excellent example of what it takes to succeed in today’s economy. A slump in sales in the high tech industry had the economy reeling. Traffic, rising prices, urban sprawl, mediocre education and conflict among the local governments all contributed to a sense of urgency that things were not right.

In 1992, leaders from government, business and the community announced the formation of the *Joint Venture*. The vision of Joint Venture is “to build a community collaborating to compete globally” and its mission is “to bring people together from business, government, education, and the community to act on regional issues affecting economic vitality and the quality of life” (Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network 2000).

In order to accomplish its mission, the region had to be redefined as the entire community with common problems and common goals. The venture has brought about changes in fundamental perceptions regarding how businesses, governments and individuals can work together to effect change. As a result, a common building code now exists for all twenty-nine local jurisdictions participating in the network. Actions have resulted in changes in the state tax code to promote manufacturing in the region as well as to reduce health care costs and to improve education.

This paper reviews the activities of similar organizations formed in the West and Midwest regions of the U.S. that have implemented similar policies or collaborative approaches to manage growth in their areas. Several regional planning and growth management organizations that have been founded in recent years are reviewed. The history and structure of these organizations are presented as well as a discussion of specific growth management and planning techniques, principles and strategies developed in each region. In each instance, the focus of planning activities is on the region as opposed to the individual community when addressing growth-related topics in these areas.

Many states and regions have adopted policies under the name “smart growth.” Although the organizations discussed here function under the smart-growth concept, many of these groups existed long before the smart-growth name became popular. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to review the smart-growth concept in order to determine how regional approaches to growth management are related to smart growth.

## SMART GROWTH

“Smart Growth” seems to appear everywhere. This phrase has become the focus of numerous conferences across the country. A smart growth network and web site (<http://www.smartgrowth.org>) have been formed to distribute information on the subject, and a National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education exists at the University of Maryland.

Smart Growth has been defined in numerous ways, with no common definition; however, smart growth policies are typically

- Environmentally smart -- activities that protect air and water quality while enhancing access to nature.
- Fiscally smart -- activities that pay for themselves while providing high-quality municipal services without the constant need to raise property taxes.
- Economically and socially smart -- activities that promote economic vitality, livability, resource efficiency, equity and a sense of place.

Oregon was the first state to adopt comprehensive land use planning at the state level. This program, adopted in 1973, is considered among the first smart growth initiatives in the nation. In 1985, Florida passed the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act that requires local comprehensive plans to be consistent with state and regional plans. Maryland passed Priority Funding Areas legislation in 1997. Under this program localities must designate Smart Growth Areas that will be the beneficiaries of most of the State’s spending for infrastructure, housing, and other economic development programs. Porter (1993) offers an excellent summary and review of state growth management activities through the early 1990’s.

More recently, Arizona adopted smart growth policies with the passage of two separate Growing Smarter Acts in 1998 and 2000. The Arizona Growing Smarter legislation involves reforming community planning and rezoning processes used in cities, towns and counties by requiring a growth-related component to be included in community plans, providing for increased public participation in the planning process and improving the coordination of State Trust Land planning with local community plans. A voter-approved match of state money to purchase State Trust Lands to conserve open space was also passed in 1998.

In Wisconsin, legislation from 1999 requires all local governments to adopt comprehensive plans for their regions by January 1, 2010. After that time, local programs and activities impacting land use must conform to the local government’s comprehensive plan. In addition, a smart growth dividend program was established that qualifies local jurisdictions for state aid providing they have a comprehensive program. The dividend is based on a combination of how many housing units are created on lots of one-quarter acre or less, and the percentage of these units that are designated as “affordable.” Affordable is defined as no more than 80% of the median sales price for new homes sold in that jurisdiction in the year prior to which the grant application is made. (Ohm 1999).

## COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN THE U.S.

Local leaders in numerous regions across the U.S. have undertaken concerted efforts to adopt a collaborative approach to address common issues within their jurisdictions. Collaboration was instrumental in the Silicon Valley, and was adopted for the following reasons (*Joint Venture Way 2000*):

- Collaboration yields creative solutions
- Collaboration builds commitment to implementing those solutions
- Collaboration allows for decision-making where multiple jurisdictions are involved and no single decision-making authority exists.

The major focus of this paper describes how selected agencies and organizations have approached growth-related issues in their respective areas. The jurisdictions are selected from various Midwestern and Western states, primarily California, Nevada, Utah and Idaho. In addition, a review of the approaches developed by the Rocky

Mountain Institute in Colorado and the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota is considered.

Ten separate organizations are reviewed in this paper:

- (1) The California Local Government Commission
- (2) The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
- (3) California Center for Regional Leadership
- (4) California Collaborative Regional Initiatives Network
- (5) The Sierra Business Council (Truckee, California)
- (6) California's Civic Entrepreneur Movement
- (7) Envision Utah (Greater Wasatch Area)
- (8) The Treasure Valley Partnership (Boise, Idaho)
- (9) The Rocky Mountain Institute (Colorado)
- (10) Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs (Minneapolis)

## THE CALIFORNIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

The California Local Government Commission ([www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)) encourages the efficient use of civic, environmental and economic resources by providing practical, innovative policies that address pressing local issues. LGC is a non-profit membership organization comprised of local staff and elected officials along with members of the interested public whose mission is:

to provide local elected leaders a forum for sharing ideas, receiving inspiration and providing technical support to create and implement innovative policies and programs that foster a sustainable environment, a strong economy and social equity through civic involvement.” (Local Government Commission 2000)

In June 1997, the Commission formally adopted the Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development. Today's communities have experienced numerous waves of economic development. The first was attraction of the manufacturing industry. The second wave was business retention and real estate development. The third wave involves an integrated approach that promotes regional collaboration rather than community-specific activity. Industry clusters are targeted over individual firms. Long-term competitiveness and diversification are emphasized over short-term growth and revenue projects, and there is emphasis on environmental responsibility along with generous investment in human capital to enhance the long-term quality of life in the region. The Ahwahnee Principles were developed in response to this latest wave of economic activity.

The Commission's approach was to consider economic, social and environmental characteristics of a region to generate a set of principles important to the creation of a “livable and prosperous community.” The principles are published in an implementation guidebook, *The Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development*, and consist of fifteen ideas designed to guide the development of a region composed of multiple communities facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Cole, et al. 1998). The Principles are briefly described in Figure 1.

---

**Figure 1**

### **THE AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES FOR SMART ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT :**

- 1. Integrated Approach**  
Design a collaborative effort among public, private and educational sectors to promote long-term investment that encourages local enterprise, stable employment and protection of the natural environment while enhancing social equity and competition in the global marketplace.
- 2. Vision and Inclusion**  
Solicit input from all sectors including those traditionally left out of the visioning, planning and implementation processes.

**Figure 1 continued**  
**THE AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES FOR SMART ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT :**

- 3. Poverty Reduction**  
Target the reduction of poverty through the promotion of jobs that mirror the skills of the existing workforce. Provide training to enhance the worker skills and insure quality and affordable childcare, transportation and housing.
- 4. Local Focus**  
Give priority to existing enterprises as the primary source of business expansion and local job growth.
- 5. Industry Clusters**  
Identify gaps in the local economic structure, and recruit industry clusters that match local resources.
- 6. Wired Communities**  
Invest in technology that supports local enterprise and promotes improved access to information and resources.
- 7. Long-Term Investment**  
Evaluate public investments and subsidies on their long-term impacts on the community. The investments should address environmental and social goals along with policies compatible with the local infrastructure to offer support services that promote the enhancement of all businesses, not just individual firms.
- 8. Human Investment**  
Invest in public education and lifelong training opportunities for the labor force in order to enhance the community's ability to compete in the information age.
- 9. Environmental Quality**  
Support and pursue policies that improve the quality of the region's environmental and public health.
- 10. Corporate Responsibility**  
Local enterprises should work as community partners to promote the economic health of the area by providing jobs with good pay, benefits and opportunities for advancement, while protecting the natural environment and subscribing to a healthful work environment.
- 11. Livable Communities**  
Encourage land use patterns that provide for a mix of uses and policies that promote alternatives to the automobile as a means to transport people and goods whenever possible.
- 12. Compact Development**  
Local and regional plans should establish policies that promote future development in already built-up areas as opposed to areas of open space in order to minimize the impact of development upon the region and its environment as well as to efficiently utilize existing resources and infrastructure.
- 13. Center Focus**  
The focus of commercial, cultural, civic and recreational activity should occur at the city center. Neighborhood centers should offer business activities that meet the daily needs of residents, while regional facilities should exist in urban areas that provide access throughout the area.
- 14. Distinctive Communities**  
Emphasize a strong "local sense of place" in order to promote an attractive quality of life and create an identity emphasizing the area's unique history and culture.
- 15. Regional Collaboration**  
Local communities and area businesses should jointly promote a structure that creates a regional basis for economic activity while respecting the local character of each entity within the region.

Source: *The Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development: An Implementation Guidebook*. Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities. Fall, 1998.

---

Principle fifteen, dealing with regional collaboration, is especially pertinent to the theme of this paper. The Local Government Commission's guidebook includes a detailed review of what we should expect from a regional cooperative approach and offers a series of tips for success in this process. These are summarized in Figure 2.

---

**Figure 2**  
**TIPS TO SUCCEED IN REGIONAL COLLABORATION**

- Build personal relationships with leaders of other communities in the region to establish trust among local leaders.
- Regional cooperation can be a slow process. Begin by addressing small issues before proceeding to bigger issues.
- Organize retreats to discuss issues of regional importance. Encourage local officials to address the issues from a regional standpoint.
- Let the private sector take the lead in this effort. Business and civic leaders have been responsible for establishing regional approaches in many localities.

Source: *The Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development: An Implementation Guidebook*. Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities. Fall, 1998. p. 69.

---

### **THE TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY (TPRA)**

In 1969, officials in California and Nevada approved a bi-state compact to establish the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The agency's mission is to lead "the cooperative effort to preserve, restore and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe region" (TRPA Goals and Policies 1986). The Tahoe Region is located on the California-Nevada border and is comprised of 501 square miles including 191 square miles of the lake itself.

The TRPA is dedicated to preserving the beauty of the Tahoe Basin, and is the first bi-state regional environmental planning agency in the U.S. The current regional plan was adopted in 1987, and emphasizes that the Tahoe Region has "unique and irreplaceable environmental and ecological values of national significance which are threatened with deterioration or degeneration." (TRPA Goals and Policies 1986) The agency's activities are designed to promote the wise use of the waters of Lake Tahoe while also protecting public and private investment in the region and preserving the social and economic climate of the area.

In order to accomplish its purpose, the agency is charged with the following:

- "Establish environmental threshold carrying capacities, defined as environmental standards necessary to maintain significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific, or natural values of the Region or to maintain public health and safety within the Region, including but not limited to standards for air quality, water quality, soil conservation, vegetation preservation, and noise;"
- "Adopt and enforce a Regional plan and implementing ordinances which achieve and maintain such capacities while providing opportunities for orderly growth and development consistent with such capacities;" and
- "Pursue such activities and projects consistent with the Agency purposes."

Thresholds establish the environmental standards appropriate for the Region and in the process also define the capacity of the Region to accommodate additional economic development. An Environmental Thresholds Study Report established the basis and rationale for the thresholds. The Regional Plan defines the limits and potential for new development within the guidelines established by the thresholds.

The findings made by the governments of Nevada and California as well as by the U.S. Congress regarding the Lake Tahoe Region are summarized in Figure 3.

---

**Figure 3**  
**FINDINGS REGARDING THE LAKE TAHOE REGION**

- The waters of Lake Tahoe and other resources of the region are threatened with deterioration or degeneration, which endangers the natural beauty and economic productivity of the region.
- The public and private interests and investments in the region are substantial.
- The region exhibits unique environmental and ecological values which are irreplaceable.
- By virtue of the special conditions and circumstances of the region's natural ecology, developmental pattern, population distribution and human needs, the region is experiencing problems of resource use and deficiencies in environmental control.
- Increasing urbanization is threatening the ecological values of the region and threatening public opportunities for use of the public lands.
- Maintenance of the social and economic health of the region depends on maintaining the significant scenic, recreational, education, scientific, natural and public health values provided by the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- There is a public interest in protecting, preserving and enhancing these values for the residents of the region and for visitors to the region.
- Responsibilities for providing recreational and scientific opportunities, preserving scenic and natural areas, and safeguarding the public who live, work in or visit the region are divided among local governments, regional agencies, the States of California and Nevada, and the Federal Government.
- In recognition of the public investment and multi-state and national significance of the recreational values, the federal government has an interest in the acquisition of recreational property and the management of resources in the region to preserve environmental and recreational values, and the federal government should assist the States in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- In order to preserve the scenic beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities of the region, there is a need to insure equilibrium between the region's natural endowment and its manmade environment.

*Source: Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin: Goals and Policies. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 1998. pp. i-ii.*

---

The Regional Plan serves as a guide in decision making for the growth and development of the Lake Tahoe Region. The plan's broad scope and approach impact numerous other governmental jurisdictions and service districts in the area. These entities were invited to participate in the development of the plan in order that individual and community needs were adequately addressed. The Plan is reviewed and evaluated every five years in order to provide a check on the status of the implementation procedures and to evaluate progress towards attaining the environmental thresholds.

### **CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR REGIONAL LEADERSHIP**

In 2000, a new regional leadership organization was formed in California. The California Center for Regional Leadership (CCRL) was established with funds from the James Irvine Foundation, and is a statewide nonprofit organization that seeks to "support California leaders and organizations that are using innovative regional strategies to address the state's most important challenges and opportunities" (CALREGIONS 2000).

CCRL's mission is to "promote innovative regional solutions for our major economic, environmental, and societal challenges, to help achieve a more sustainable California" ([www.calregions.org](http://www.calregions.org), Who Are We? 2001). A major focus of their activity is to work with the existing Collaborative Research Initiatives (CRIs) to assist with the development of regional strategies in local areas throughout the state. This network is described later in this paper.

The CCRL assists regions in many arenas and its Operating Principles provide an indication of the regional approach assumed by the organization through its collaborative, inclusive approach to development. These principles are shown in Figure 4.

---

**Figure 4**  
**OPERATING PRINCIPLES OF THE CALIFORNIA CENTER  
FOR REGIONAL LEADERSHIP**

- As a service organization, CCRL is committed to helping its primary customers, collaborative regional organizations, to achieve their fullest potential success in improving the economy, environment, and social equity of their regions. CCRL must always strive to understand clearly their needs and wants, and to deliver high-quality direct support, whether through information and other resources, technical assistance, training, brokering, or promotion.
- As a constituency-based organization, CCRL is committed to representing the interests of the network of regional collaboratives with the public sector, particularly the state government, and with other public interest organizations. In general, this involves advancing new policies and programs that support the goals and strategies of the regional organizations.
- As a leadership organization, CCRL is committed to the generation and promotion of new ideas, strategies, policies, and programs that will challenge the thinking and actions of the CRI network, and ourselves to that we might continue to learn and to improve our effectiveness.
- CCRL is committed to collaboration, inclusion, innovation, boundary crossing, accountability and continuous improvement.

Source: *Operating Principles*. California Center for Regional Leadership. [www.calregions.org/about/index/html](http://www.calregions.org/about/index/html)

---

**CALIFORNIA COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVES NETWORK**

The James Irvine Foundation also supports the CRIs. Approximately twenty CRI's currently exist, throughout California. These organizations represent regional partnerships that have emerged as outgrowths of the New Economy, and are based on the Joint Venture Silicon Valley model discussed earlier in this paper. The Foundation's CRI Network website, [www.civiconavigator.com](http://www.civiconavigator.com) provides detailed information on specific activities. The goals of the program are to "enhance economic vitality, increase social equity, and protect the natural environment of regional communities in California over the long-term through a strategic, collaborative response by business, community and government leadership" (California CRI Network 1996).

These agencies attribute their origins to one of four focus areas: economic vitality, environmental quality, social equity and civic engagement. Over time, however, they have tended to move toward an integration of the four topics, causing a convergence or blending of interests and emphasis.

The CRIs draw upon leaders from government, business and the communities who are "civic entrepreneurs" -- visionary leaders "who seek new ways to bridge political jurisdictions...and who rethink complex issues and want results" (California CRI Network 1996). The objectives of the CRI program are described in Figure 5.

---

**Figure 5**  
**OBJECTIVES OF THE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVES NETWORK**

- Create regional collaborative partnerships that engage a broad base of leaders who rise above narrow jurisdictional, sectoral and ideological interests and that develop integrated approaches to addressing regional challenges and opportunities. These approaches are based on empirical data, a community-wide vision, and leveraged resources.
- Enhance the civic infrastructure in each regional community through improved leadership, communication, information sharing, and positive inter-sectoral or inter-group relations.
- Build a statewide network of civic entrepreneurs and support their individual and collective efforts to learn and improve approaches to community problem-solving and to become more effective advocates locally and statewide for regional approaches to economic planning and development.

Source: The James Irvine Foundation Sustainable Communities Initiatives: Collaborative Regional Initiatives Network. [www.irvine.org/programs/sustainable\\_com/init\\_CRIN.htm](http://www.irvine.org/programs/sustainable_com/init_CRIN.htm)

---

## THE SIERRA BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Sierra Business Council was founded in 1994, and is one of the most successful CRIs in California. The SBC is a nonprofit association of more than 500 businesses from 12 counties in the Sierra Nevada region of California who are working to promote the economic and environmental health of the Sierra Nevada region. Leaders from both large and small businesses spearhead the effort, which includes research, policy analysis and advocacy. Specific information on the Council is available on their web site at [www.sbcouncil.org](http://www.sbcouncil.org).

This Council offers a regional, pro-active perspective, and operates with an economic vision that is attractive, achievable, profitable and ecologically sustainable. They reject the notion that communities must choose between the economy and the environment, and instead support the idea that environmental quality is the cornerstone of economic health. The basic tenets of their approach are to:

- Preserve historic assets
- Maintain agricultural lands
- Encourage compact town development

The Sierra Nevada region is already home to more than one-half million people and is expected to double in population by 2020. Its spectacular mountain range and the natural environment represent its primary assets, and tourism is the primary industry in the region. In 1997, the Council published a comprehensive guide for development titled *Planning for Prosperity* that presents its principles for sustainable growth along with selected case studies of communities that have been successful in using these planning tools (Sierra Business Council 1997).

This highly popular guide received the American Planners Association's esteemed Daniel Burnham Award for its demonstration regarding how to accommodate growth while protecting the environmental and lifestyle qualities of the Sierra Nevada region. The guide introduces ten primary principles for sound development for land use planning in the Sierra Nevada. These principles are briefly summarized in Figure 6.

---

### Figure 6 PRINCIPLES FOR SOUND DEVELOPMENT

1. Safeguard the rural character of the Sierra Nevada by maintaining a clear edge between town and country.
2. Preserve Historic Assets.
3. Build to create enduring value and beauty.
4. Enhance the economic vitality of our small towns through ongoing reinvestment in the downtown core.
5. Anticipate and address the housing needs of all community residents.
6. Conserve and showcase each community's natural assets.
7. Maintain the economic productivity of our region's agricultural lands and forests.
8. Do not place people and structures in harm's way (Do not build in the way of floods, landslides, avalanches and earthquakes).
9. Maintain the health of the natural systems which support life in the Sierra Nevada.
10. Expand local and regional transportation options to reduce traffic congestion and the intensity of public dependence on the automobile.

---

Source: *Planning for Prosperity*. The Sierra Business Council. Truckee, California. July 1997. pp. 13-38.

## CALIFORNIA'S CIVIC ENTREPRENEUR MOVEMENT

The California Civic Entrepreneur Movement also forms a part of the state's move to a regionally-based approach to economic development. Since 1997, the James Irvine Foundation has sponsored an annual summit for regional leaders involved with this movement. These Civic Entrepreneurs share their experiences and concerns regarding the enhancement of the social, economic and physical quality of life throughout California.

Portions of the organization's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual summit in San Diego in 1998 focused on creating sustainable regions and applying integrating approaches to regional development. The summit's report of proceedings is titled *Getting Results and Facing New Challenges*, and a section within the report titled *Ten Lessons Learned: Creating Sustainable Regions*, addresses issues concerning integrated approaches to regional development. These lessons are reproduced in Figure 7. They focus on the details necessary to bring diverse groups together in the planning process, and offer suggestions on how to proceed and whom to include in regional planning efforts (Civic Entrepreneur Summit 1998).

---

**Figure 7**  
**TEN LESSONS LEARNED:**  
**CREATING SUSTAINABLE REGIONS**

1. **Call to action.** Without a strong call to action, it is not possible to organize diverse groups for action around these complex, long-term issues.
2. **Focus on urgent issues.** To get attention, focus on urgent issues such as traffic congestion, housing affordability or air quality, and then move to identifying deeper causes.
3. **Remember that language matters.** How you define the issue and what you call it will determine whether you can rally a response in the community. How the region views sustainability or other key words matters.
4. **Engage major employers.** Getting things done in most regions requires engaging the major employers around cross-cutting issues that affect their employee's quality of life and their bottom line.
5. **Create an integrated approach.** Recognize the interdependencies of the economy, the environment, and the community, and create a more integrated approach to the region's challenges.
6. **Identify a shared vision.** Build on common values and concerns to create a shared vision that the region can mobilize around before moving to specific action.
7. **Use the vision to engage people.** The vision can be the means for engaging a broad group of people to address critical issues.
8. **Build unusual alliances.** Reach out to diverse groups to build new alliances around sustainability. Focusing on common values and a shared vision rather than on narrow policy issues can help in creating these unusual alliances.
9. **Hold a big vision; take small steps.** Take small steps that can help move toward the vision, and recognize that success will breed success. Initial wins are important to motivate people.
10. **Involve all stakeholders.** Involve all the right people from the start. If you leave stakeholders out at the beginning, they may try to block your efforts later on.

Source: Report from the 1998 Civic Entrepreneur Summit in San Diego, California. *Getting Results and Facing New Challenges*. California's Civic Entrepreneur Movement. 1999. p. 12.

---

## ENVISION UTAH

The Greater Wasatch Area (GWA) is located in northern Utah, and is comprised of 10 counties, 88 cities and additional special-service districts. Over 80 percent of Utah's population resides in this rapidly growing region of the state.

Envision Utah is a non-profit organization founded in 1997, with over 130 stakeholders. The agency's purpose as stated in its website ([www.envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org)) is "to create and be an advocate for a publicly supported growth strategy that will preserve Utah's high quality of life, natural environment and economic vitality" to 2020 and beyond.

The organization has identified six goals for the Greater Wasatch Area to consider as the region attempts to accommodate continued growth over the next 20 years (Envision Utah 1999). These goals are to:

- Enhance air quality
- Increase mobility and transportation choices
- Preserve critical lands, including agricultural, sensitive, and strategic open lands and address the interaction between these lands and developed areas
- Conserve and maintain availability of water resources
- Provide housing opportunities for a range of family and income types
- Maximize efficiency in public and infrastructure investments to promote the other goals.

In order to realize these goals, Envision Utah, its stakeholders, and the general public have developed a series of strategies that primarily draw upon market-based approaches, utilizing education and promotion, as opposed to regulation to achieve their means. Each of the six goals is analyzed in terms of these strategies, and the organization provides information that describes “Why” each strategy is important, “Who” will work to implement these strategies, and “How” each strategy will be accomplished. The specific strategies appear in Figure 8.

---

**Figure 8**  
**ENVISION UTAH STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN QUALITY OF LIFE**

- Promote walkable development by encouraging new and exiting development to include a mix of uses with a pedestrian-friendly design.
- Promote the development of a region-wide transit system to make transit more effective and convenient.
- Promote the development of a network of bikeways and trails for recreation and commuting.
- Foster transit-oriented housing and commercial developments that incorporate and encourage various forms of public transportation.
- Preserve open lands by encouraging developments that include open areas and by incentivizing reuse of currently developed lands.
- Restructure water bills to encourage water conservation.
- Foster mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable neighborhoods to provide a greater array of housing choices.

Source: *Envision Utah Quality Growth Strategy*. Envision Utah. Salt Lake City. November 1999.

---

Envision Utah’s role in this process is to determine the costs and benefits involved with these strategies while the primary roles are reserved for local and state governments, citizens, developers and others working through the free market. They recognize that issues pertaining to transportation, water, and air cannot be addressed solely by each local jurisdiction, but are best reviewed by regional partnerships. Envision Utah also provides resources to local units concerning the benefits of regional cooperation and seeks to build consensus among the stakeholders and beneficiaries in each area.

## **THE TREASURE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP**

The Treasure Valley Partnership was formed in Boise, Idaho, in June 1997. The non-profit partnership consists of mayors, council members and county commissioners from Ada and Canyon counties in Southwest Idaho. The Partnership was formed as a reaction to the rapid growth and increased traffic in the region, and is dedicated to regional coordination, cooperation and collaboration (Treasure Valley Partnership 1997). The Partnership Agreement acknowledges that:

- We are part of one region.
- We must maintain and value our individual community identities.

- Unless we work together, we will lose our unique community identities.
- We can maximize the benefits of growth while protecting our region and communities from costly sprawl.
- We already have some tools to address challenges, but we need to develop new tools.
- We will develop new collaborations while strengthening existing cooperative activities in the areas of transportation, open space, water supply and quality, air quality, public safety, and storm water drainage.
- We will establish a dialogue in our communities to make further regional progress.

Four major goals emerged from the initial meeting of the partnership. These goals describe areas where members of the organization agreed to work to meet the challenges and opportunities in the area. The goals are summarized in Figure 9.

---

**Figure 9**  
**FOUR MAJOR GOALS FROM THE TREASURE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP:**

- **Create Coherent Regional Growth and Development Patterns. :**
  - Jointly review individual comprehensive plans to provide a reality check.
  - Coordinate planning and investment in waste water treatment infrastructure.
  - Work together to manage storm water runoff.
  - Work together to conserve ground water reserves.
  - Explore options for local finance initiatives and regional revenue sharing.
  - Explore the possibility and impact of establishing growth boundaries.
- **Link Land Use and Transportation.**
  - Document unmet needs for regional transit service.
  - Improve the coordination of existing services to meet those needs.
  - Work with major employers to encourage transit use.
  - Create a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails.
  - Develop policies to coordinate street and highway design with adjacent land uses.
  - Prepare for additional transportation funds that may become available after the 2000 Census.
- **Reinforce Community Identities and Sense of Place.**
  - Work with the local communities to define a vision for the region's future.
  - Establish a "flagship goal" to serve as a focal point for regional planning and development.
- **Protect and enhance Open Space and Recreational Opportunities.**
  - Coordinate and promote existing activities and facilities.
  - Publicize and build upon existing cooperative efforts.
  - Encourage acquisition and preservation of interconnected and coordinated open space.

Source: The Treasure Valley Partnership Agreement. Boise, Idaho. June 19, 1997.

---

In order to promote and continue the work of the Partnership, the signers agreed to share this information with fellow political leaders. They further agreed to meet monthly to review progress and coordinate activities, and to issue a report to the local citizenry after six months in order to keep the community informed of their progress.

## **THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE**

The Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) was established in 1982 as a nonprofit research and educational foundation located in Snowmass, Colorado. The RMI's vision reaches across boundaries to seek ideas that transcend ideology to the problem-solving power of free-market economics. Its mission is to foster the efficient and sustainable use of resources as a path to global security (Rocky Mountain Institute 1998).

RMI is recognized for its positive approach to problem solving with the goal of enhancing the quality of life through means that cost less while promoting a sustainable environment. Their approach to problem solving emphasizes the free-market rather than bureaucratic coercion. They would rather assist someone to adopt new

strategies to meet a goal rather than confront or harass someone with an opposing attitude. As a part of this process, the RMI is creating a network of communities that are interested in economic renewal.

The following discussion is drawn from the *Economic Renewal Guide* published by Michael J. Kinsley, a former County Commissioner in Colorado, and more recently, a staff member with the economic renewal program at the RMI. Kinsley presents a methodology for use in establishing a collaborative process for sustainable community development. His focus is on “planning for action” with the knowledge that each community is unique. Sustainable development does not mean having to give up prosperity in order to slow expansion, but is rooted in the concept of *stewardship* – “the careful, economical, long-term management of land, community, and resources” (Kinsley 1997).

Kinsley describes the economic renewal process as one where local residents from all walks of life work together to identify and develop projects that strengthen the community and its economy. He proposes eight steps for communities to pursue on their path to economic renewal. These steps are described in Figure 10. This section concludes with a discussion of the successes in communities that have utilized this approach to economic renewal. Throughout this work, the term “community” is not meant to signify a single town or city, but may refer to any size region where its residents are drawn together by common elements including geography, economics or the environment.

---

**Figure 10**  
**EIGHT STEPS TO ECONOMIC RENEWAL**

**1. Mobilize the Community**

This important first step involves motivating the entire community to participate in the process. The viewpoints and perspectives of all parties need to be included in order to dispel distrust, controversy and litigation that may lead to delay and inaction later in the process. A well-publicized effort by the initial organizers of the economic renewal (ER) effort is important in order to enlist the broad support of the entire community.

**2. Envision the Community’s Future**

In an initial meeting, participants are asked to itemize what they really want in their community’s “preferred future.” The economic welfare of any community is built on a healthy business community with jobs available to those who want to work; however, this time is set aside to identify the context within which these activities take place. What do the residents want to “preserve” in their community that they don’t want to lose? This is followed by exercises where participants identify what they want to “create” or what they wish to change in the community as well as how they would like the community to look once the changes have been completed.

**3. Identify What you have to Work With**

This step involves compiling a factual inventory of what is available in the community. This involves an accounting of the problems, needs and assets of the following factors:

- Business environment
- Access to capital
- Infrastructure
- Quality of life
- The informal economy
- Natural resources
- Human resources

Other economic and demographic data can also be collected and presented in this stage in order that the community participants have a solid knowledge of what their home looks like. This information provides a foundation for further discussion in later steps.

**4. Discover New Opportunities**

This step begins with the dissemination of the efforts compiled in Step 3. The lists of problems with ideas how to address them are prominently posted so that participating members can “walk the halls” so to speak, to see what issues other groups have identified. This step provides opportunities to move around and exchange ideas based upon what they have seen and learned.

**Figure 10 continued**  
**EIGHT STEPS TO ECONOMIC RENEWAL**

**5. Generate Project Ideas**

Step 5 is devoted to the identification of additional projects that may be forthcoming based upon the interaction of the participants in the previous step. Furthermore, many participants will also be aware of similar issues in other communities, and these can also be brought to the center of the forum.

**6. Evaluate Project Ideas**

This step addresses the relative feasibility of the projects and ideas. Typically, more ideas have been identified than can be successfully addressed. In addition, some of the projects may be impractical for your particular community; others may be too risky or prove incompatible with community goals. Communities are formed to evaluate each project in light of criteria established regarding the practical and compatible aspects surrounding each. Those projects that best meet the participants' criteria are forwarded for consideration in the next step. Other projects may be set aside for future consideration.

**7. Select Project Ideas**

In the steps leading up to this stage, each project is considered on its own merits. In this step, projects are now compared to one another in order to narrow the choice of activities to those that appear most promising to the community in the current timeframe. There is no established number of projects that can be recommended for group approval. Each project is summarized for all to review and consider, and a consensus decision is used to determine which proposals are put forward for continuation. During this stage project development committees are established in order to create a permanent structure to enable the work to continue once the initial steps have been accomplished.

**8. Develop Project Action Plans**

The final step in the economic renewal process involves moving from a general mode of operation to specific project implementation. A public meeting is recommended to get the committees moving on the right track, after which they will begin working on their own.

Each committee needs to present a written action plan for each project that has been recommended. The plan should refine the original concept as well as consider how the project will be financed, what are the barriers to getting the project completed, what alternatives exist, and where to obtain assistance necessary to bring the project to conclusion.

Source: Michael J. Kinsley. *Economic Renewal Guide: A Collaborative Process for Sustainable Community Development*. Rocky Mountain Institute. 1997. pp. 101-207.

---

**What outcomes can you expect from the Economic Renewal Process?**

The process described by Kinsley is designed to involve large numbers of participants to work collaboratively to identify one or more projects for future development. The procedures outlined in the above steps are intended to provide participants with a better understanding of the local economy and the needs of its citizens. The steps should also enhance the willingness of various groups to work together to address issues of common interest. A successful outcome is more probable if a single project is picked for quick implementation in order to provide a quantitative measure of the group's success.

In the guide, Kinsley describes the outcomes for five regions that have adopted this process. Participants engaged in economic renewal in these areas agreed to the following changes:

**Snowflake, Arizona:** Establish a mentoring program to support local business, train local tour guides as a means to improve tourism, and support local farmers by establishing a co-op for specialty produce.

**Alamosa, Colorado:** Institute a flood-control program to save on insurance costs, revitalize the downtown, conduct a business-needs analysis, and develop a plan for a local conference center and initiate a community recreation program.

**Plateau Valley, Colorado:** Inventory historic structures, upgrade the fairgrounds, initiate a local newspaper and investigate the feasibility of alternative crops that could be grown in the region.

**State of Kentucky:** A regional planning association in the state used the economic renewal process in multiple regions in the state. Projects that emerged from the process included developing a farmer’s market, a co-op art gallery, small business assistance, a new value-added wood products enterprise and activities focusing on downtown improvements.

**Saskatchewan, Canada:** Develop a value-added processing facility and initiate a campaign to market the products of this facility.

**HUBERT H. HUMPHREY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

The Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, located at the University of Minnesota, is a highly recognized center for research on public policy issues. In an extensive report, titled *Emerging Principles in State and Local Economic Development: A Benchmarking Tool*, (1995) the Institute’s authors identify ten principles that can serve as the basis for planning and implementing a successful state, regional or local economic development program.

These ten principles are designed to provide a framework to improve performance in economic development efforts, and are based on the principle that these efforts should increase productivity to bring economic benefits to an area or region. Productivity is defined as the “economic output within an area relative to the cost of producing that output.” The study divides the ten principles into four categories – goals, scope, organization and process. The ten principles are shown in Figure 11, and a summary and interpretation of the principles follow.

---

**Figure 11**  
**TEN EMERGING PRINCIPLES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Goals:	(1)	Competitiveness
	(2)	Equity
Scope:	(3)	Global Economy
	(4)	Comprehensive Strategy
Organization:	(5)	Regional Collaboration
	(6)	Industrial Focus
Process:	(7)	Customer Orientation
	(8)	Partnerships
	(9)	Measurement and Evaluation
	(10)	Learning

---

Source: *Emerging Principles in State and Local Economic Development: A Benchmarking Tool*. Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. University of Minnesota. July 1995).

**Goals** relate to the underlying purpose of the economic development programs and include two principles *competitiveness* and *equity*.

Competitiveness – This is the environment needed to promote growth and prosperity for long-term, good-paying jobs for citizens.

Equity – This includes the distribution of economic benefits and the improvement of the production capabilities of those areas that lag behind the region and most need assistance.

**Scope** is defined as outlook that guides your actions. Two principles were included here: *global economy* and, *comprehensive strategy*.

Global Economy – Economic development organizations can assist businesses in the transition from meeting the needs of domestic markets to serving the international market.

Comprehensive Strategy – The economic health of a region requires that attention be devoted to numerous factors – education, housing, health care, transportation – and that each of these needs is addressed to maintain competitiveness in today's market.

**Organization** determines how economic development strategies are structured, and comprise two principles: *regional collaboration* and *industrial focus*.

Regional Collaboration – Scale economies from the larger region serve to strengthen local economies.

Industrial Focus – Economic development agencies should target their energies toward industry clusters appropriate to their region or area.

**Process** refers to how economic development strategies are implemented and contains the final four principles: *customer orientation*, *partnerships*, *measurement and evaluation*, and *learning*.

Customer Orientation – You must know who your customers are and how to meet their needs.

Partnerships – Economic development agencies need to develop partnerships with other stakeholders to establish priorities and develop future directions. These partners may include businesses, non-profit agencies and other organizations within the community and region.

Measurement and Evaluation – Organizations need to collect information about their activities in order to evaluate their performance and assess their impact on the communities they serve.

Learning – We live in a dynamic economy and organizations must improve their performance every day. This involves bringing in new information from outside sources and a willingness to redirect their efforts and activities based on this information.

In preparing the study, the Humphrey Institute researchers tested these principles with economic development leaders in several states and regions. Their conclusions provide valuable insight to others who plan to develop a regional approach to manage growth in their area. Five items surfaced from this study:

- Economic development strategies should be principle-driven. Policymakers should first agree on principles they will follow, then design their programs to reflect these principles.
- The ten emerging principles apply at all levels – state, region and local.

- A principle-driven approach allows states, regions and local organizations to benchmark their strategies against others.
- A self-assessment approach can help to establish priorities for states and regions. Sometimes, organizations try to do too much. By establishing priorities, critical issues can be addressed first, then other priorities.
- An inventory of strengths and weaknesses can be used to identify areas where improvement is needed and assist in deciding how to improve future strategies.

## **SUMMARY**

Residents in increasing numbers of communities across the nation have organized to form regional partnerships in order to address issues that are common to the communities and citizens that reside within them. This paper has focused primarily upon regional groups in the mountain and coastal states in the western U.S. This paper has provided summary information from ten separate entities emphasizing the principles that each upholds as a model for others to emulate. A strong emphasis is placed on including all stakeholders in an area as well as establishing a regional, collaborative approach to problem solving. These models emphasize the preservation of the past while proposing safeguards for the future as a means to direct the growth that is occurring in these regions while maintaining the quality of life for their residents.

## REFERENCES

- California Center for Regional Leadership. 2000. *CALREGIONS*. July. 1:1.
- California Center for Regional Leadership. 2001. *Who Are We?* [www.calregions.org/about/index/html](http://www.calregions.org/about/index/html). 1.
- California Civic Entrepreneur Movement. 1999. *Getting Results and Facing New Challenges*. Report from the 1998 Civic Entrepreneur Summit. San Diego, California. The James Irvine Foundation. 12.
- Cole, R., K. Trish, C. Judy, and S. Sprowls. 1998. The Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Economic Development: An Implementation Guidebook. *The Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities*. 7-9.
- Collaborative Regional Initiatives Network. 1996. *Sustainable Communities: Initiatives*. San Francisco, California. [www.irvine.org/programs/sustainable\\_com/init\\_CRIN.htm](http://www.irvine.org/programs/sustainable_com/init_CRIN.htm). 1-2.
- Envision Utah: A Partnership for Quality Growth. 1999. *Envision Utah Quality Growth Strategy*. Salt Lake City, Utah. [www.governor.state.ut.us/dea/qget/Envision\\_Utah](http://www.governor.state.ut.us/dea/qget/Envision_Utah). November. 1-2.
- Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. 1995. *Emerging Principles in State and Local Economic Development: A Benchmarking Tool*. University of Minnesota. Executive Summary. July.1-3.
- Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network. 2000. *The Joint Venture Way: Lessons for Regional Rejuvenation*. 2: 1,5.
- Kinsley, M. J. 1997. A Collaborative Process for Sustainable Community Development. *Economic Renewal Guide* Rocky Mountain Institute, Snowmass, Colorado. 7.
- Local Government Commission. 2000. *About the Local Government Commission*. [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org). Sacramento, California. 1.
- Ohm, B. W. 1999. *Some Key Points About Wisconsin's New Smart Growth Legislation*. University of Wisconsin, Madison. 14.
- Porter, D. R. 1993. State Growth Management: The Intergovernmental Experiment. Keynote Address. *Conference on Land Use Law Reform*. Pace University School of Law. White Plains, N.Y. 1-18.
- The President's Council on Sustainable Development. 1999. *Towards a Sustainable America: Advancing Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. vi.
- Rocky Mountain Institute. 1998. A Spaghetti and Meatballs Approach to Resource Issues. *RMI @ a Glance Annual Report*. <http://www.rmi.org>. Snowmass, Colorado. 3.
- The Sierra Business Council. 1997. *Planning for Prosperity: Building Successful Communities in the Sierra Nevada*. Truckee, California. July. 13-38.
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. 1986. *Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin: Goals and Policies*. Zephyr Cove, Nevada. i-ii.
- The Treasure Valley Partnership. 1997. *The Treasure Valley Partnership Agreement*. Boise, Idaho. June. 1-2.

## WEBSITES

- California Local Government Commission  
[www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency  
[www.trpa.org](http://www.trpa.org)
- California Center for Regional Leadership  
[www.calregions.org](http://www.calregions.org)
- California Collaborative Regional Initiative Network  
[www.civiconavigator.com](http://www.civiconavigator.com)
- Sierra Business Council  
[www.sbcouncil.org](http://www.sbcouncil.org)
- California Civic Entrepreneur Movement  
[www.calregions.org](http://www.calregions.org)
- Envision Utah  
[www.envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org)
- Rocky Mountain Institute  
[www.rmi.org](http://www.rmi.org)
- Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs  
[www.hhh.umn.edu](http://www.hhh.umn.edu)