

Regional Partnerships Provide Leadership

The whole is more than the sum of its parts. ~ Aristotle, *Metaphysica*

The current efforts of cities and counties to partner with others as they adopt sustainability policies and programs aptly epitomize this famous quotation. Such partnerships help cities and counties expand their information base and benefit from the expertise of collaborating partners, including other local and regional agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, the private sector and philanthropic foundations. In today's adverse budgetary and economic climate, collaboration takes on more importance and contributes to local efforts to avoid duplicative activities and leverage outside resources and expertise.

Partnerships among public, private and nonprofit groups are nothing new, and examples abound. However, innovative partnerships that build capacity to address sustainability, energy efficiency, climate change and reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are relatively new. Two examples illustrate the creativity and vibrancy of these efforts.

Philanthropic and Public Sector Leadership In the San Diego Region

The San Diego Climate Protection Network was launched in 2009 and provides a forum for regional stakeholders to address common issues related to sustainability and climate change. Participants include San Diego County and the 18 cities located there, San Diego County Water Authority, Port of San Diego,

San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, CleanTECH San Diego (a private nonprofit membership organization) and San Diego Gas & Electric Company. The San Diego Foundation provides financial support for the network. Examples of collaborative projects funded through the foundation include:

- Preparation of GHG inventories for 17 local agencies;
- Support for the Port of San Diego and its member cities to prepare for and manage the risks from sea-level rise; and
- Research by local scientists to identify the potential local impacts of global climate change and ways to reduce local GHG emissions and minimize climate change impacts.

The foundation convenes quarterly meetings of the network for agency staff, the University of San Diego's Energy Policy Initiatives Center, San Diego Gas & Electric and others to learn about resources and funding opportunities, share best practices and

discuss topics of common interest. The San Diego County Water Authority and local universities, with support from the foundation, are also working together to integrate climate change projections into planning for the region's future water supply and demand.

“This represents an unprecedented collaboration of philanthropy, business, local governments and public agencies,” says Emily Young, senior director of the Environment Program for the San Diego Foundation. “We believe that the region's leadership can serve as a national model for dealing with climate change.”

Stanislaus County Region Creates a Sustainability Toolbox

Like many Central Valley cities, the communities of Stanislaus County have experienced both the benefits and disadvantages associated with rapid growth. Recently the region has faced high unemployment and foreclosure rates, a loss of farmland, insufficient infrastructure, increased traffic, heavy dependence on automobiles, and public health challenges including high rates of asthma, diabetes and heart disease. Recognizing that they share complex challenges, the communities of Stanislaus County decided to leverage their local resources by developing shared planning principles that could be incorporated into their respective local plans, policies and ordinances.

The communities successfully applied for a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant from the Strategic Growth Council to develop a Regional Sustainable Toolbox. The toolbox will include 11 planning components that can be used to develop local projects that meet community needs while helping the region achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions. Working together, the partner jurisdictions are creating a local planning framework to achieve:

- Appropriate urban development;
- Increased conservation of their rich agricultural land base and water resources;
- Improved public health; and
- Broader prosperity for the region.

In keeping with the project's collaborative nature, each city is leading the development of one toolkit component and will provide training for the other partner jurisdictions on how to implement the new tools. The 11 components of the Regional Sustainable Toolbox and the local leader for each are:

1. Water-Efficient Landscape Guidelines and Standards — City of Ceres;
2. Model Climate-Action Plan — City of Hughson;
3. Downtown Form-Based Code — City of Modesto;
4. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and Policies — City of Newman;

5. Model Housing-Element Policies and Implementation Measures — City of Oakdale;
6. Sustainable Development Ordinance — City of Patterson;
7. Low-Impact Developments Standards and Specifications — City of Riverbank;
8. Fiscal Assessment of Greenfield Versus Infill Development — City of Turlock;
9. Urban Forest Plan, Valley Blueprint Compliance Matrix and California Environmental Quality Act Policies and Procedures — City of Waterford;
10. Countywide GHG Emissions Inventory — Stanislaus County; and
11. Coordinated Geographic Information System Central Database and GHG Tracking System — Stanislaus County.

Stretching Limited Resources

Local agencies can achieve goals that they might not otherwise be able to attain and stretch limited resources by partnering with other public agencies, nonprofits, foundations, colleges, universities and the private sector. In these difficult economic times, collaborating with others to leverage resources is a smart way to demonstrate leadership in promoting sustainability and enhancing economic development to benefit local residents.

Resources for Leaders

Collaboration provides opportunities to demonstrate leadership in reaching mutual policy goals and providing services to community residents. The Institute for Local Government offers resources on a variety of issues where collaboration can be beneficial. These issues include public engagement, intergovernmental collaboration and joint use of facilities as well as more focused collaborative activities surrounding sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

San Diego Regional Collaboration:

- [San Diego Foundation](#)
- [Climate change program activities](#)
- [Research commissioned by the Foundation](#)
- [University of San Diego School of Law Energy Policy Initiatives Center](#)
- [San Diego Regional Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Model: A Dynamic Decision Making Tool to Estimate the Impact of Policy Options](#)
- [CleanTECH San Diego](#)

Stanislaus County Regional Sustainable Toolbox:

- [Stanislaus County Strategic Growth Council Planning Grant Application for the Regional Sustainable Toolbox](#)
- [Stanislaus Council of Governments](#)
- [Strategic Growth Council Planning Grant Information](#)

Institute for Local Government Resources on Collaboration:

- [Intergovernmental Collaboration](#)
- [Public Engagement](#)
- [How to Harness the Power of Your Community to Address Climate Change](#)
- [Climate Leadership Stories on Civic Engagement](#)

Tell Us About Your Efforts

Does your agency collaborate with others to promote or undertake sustainability activities? Do you have a story to tell? Share your story with the Institute for Local Government by e-mailing sustainability@ca-ilg.org.

This whitepaper is a service of the Institute for Local Government (ILG) whose mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial, and easy-to-use resources for California communities. ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. For more information and to access the Institute's resources on sustainable communities, go to www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability. To access this resource online, visit www.ca-ilg.org/SustainabilityRegionalPartnership.

The Institute welcomes feedback on this resource:

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