

## **The Southern California Regional Government and the Search For Alternatives**

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper evaluates possible alternatives to the current form of regional government in Southern California. Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is unable to develop land-use regional plans and policies. As a result, their authority and role in coordinating and influencing regional planning is limited. We investigate four other forms of regional governments in North America, to determine which form of regional government would be a sufficient alternative to SCAG.

We begin by explaining the current function of SCAG and the limitations that exist. SCAG provides information to influence and shape the decisions of local and county governments. However, SCAG does not have actual land-use authority to force implementation of their policies. They are therefore seeking this additional authority, so they may have direct power over regional land use and planning in Southern California.

An assumption is made that Smart Growth is the overall agenda we are striving for. "The common thread among different perspectives of smart growth is development that revitalizes central cities and older suburbs, supports and enhances public transit and preserves open spaces and agricultural lands. Smart growth is not no growth; rather it creates communities that are more livable by developing efficiently within the already built environment."<sup>1</sup> This basis of smart growth is used to determine the evaluation criteria that will be utilized in measuring the various alternatives.

The evaluation criteria are Community and Stakeholder Collaboration, Fostering a Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place, Environmental Protection/ Preserving Open Space, Strengthening and Directing Development Toward Existing Communities, Political Viability, and Administrative Operability. Each criterion is explained in detail regarding its relationship to the different regional government alternatives and has been operationalized into three measures. To analyze the various alternatives against the established criteria, we determine how many of the three measures each alternative meets. The highest score reflects the alternative form of government that best meets the criteria of smart growth, political viability, and administrative operability. Two different forms of scoring/ranking were used to verify the result. Finally, monitoring of the preferred alternative is discussed.

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## PROBLEM DEFINITION

This policy analysis describes our agenda to develop feasible recommendations for a current planning problem. The problem that we are exploring is Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG's) inability to implement land use regional plans and policies. SCAG is limited in its role as a leader for vision and progress.<sup>2</sup> According to a report by the Metro Investment Report, "The problem with SCAG is there's been a lot of attention to policy and far less attention to administration."<sup>3</sup> Unlike SCAG's directives for creating transportation plans and policy, the agency lacks land use influence over local governments and authorities. Our role as advisors to SCAG, are to offer alternatives for its members to gain more influential authority over their constituents' decisions. The alternatives that will be developed through this analysis process will aid SCAG members to develop viable economic and legislative influences that advance beyond SCAG's existing planning and policy recommendations for land use.

This project offers an opportunity to experience an ex-ante policy analysis process. This process includes defining and investigating an existing problem, creating rational alternatives, and developing evaluation criteria for policy implementation. Through this process, we hope to create beneficial opportunities for both SCAG and the region.

For projects to be considered and to receive state, federal or local funds, it must adhere to the goals and guidelines of SCAG. However, SCAG does not have land use authority. Instead, it provides information to shape the decisions of others in regards to growth, housing, jobs, and transportation. The foundation SCAG has achieved at the state and federal levels will be beneficial in addressing lack of power as the reason for the problem of SCAG's inability to directly implement regional plans. Furthermore, this relationship and the work SCAG has already done will be useful in demonstrating and obtaining agreement on the need for more power.

It can be argued that for these plans to be successful, SCAG needs to have the authority to make decisions in regards to these regional issues. Individual cities do not have the scope or resources to adequately determine what affects their actions in terms of transportation and the environment have at a regional level. Furthermore, balancing housing and job issues along with other coordinated social issues are in need of a regional perspective. The issues of housing are not limited to a community or city and affect all areas. As a result, a regional plan with the power to implement its plans is an area that SCAG should explore.

Our analysis makes an assumption that Smart Growth is the agenda we are striving for. As a result, SCAG needs to have the power and authority to achieve this agenda. Therefore, our evaluation will determine how effectively different regional planning organizations achieve this agenda. There is not a single specific definition of smart growth. However, "the common thread among different perspectives of smart growth is development that revitalizes central cities and older suburbs, supports and enhances public transit and preserves open spaces and agricultural lands. Smart growth is not no growth; rather it creates communities that are more livable by developing efficiently within the already built environment."<sup>4</sup> To operationalize this definition, we focus on specific principles that can assist in achieving smart growth. Different cities or regions may focus on various aspects of smart growth, depending upon their needs. For our purposes we are focusing on specific principles of smart growth that are necessary for any community to achieve a successful smart growth agenda. These principles will be used as our evaluation criteria as we discuss and evaluate the various alternatives. It is necessary to note that these principles do not completely address all aspects of smart growth. However, for the purposes of this paper we have chosen to limit the number of principles due to time and information constraints. We have selected principles that are key factors to smart growth and can effectively be used as criteria to evaluate the alternatives. We will also evaluate the alternatives based on whether or not they are feasible both politically and administratively. The evaluation criteria are:

Community and Stakeholder Collaboration  
Foster a Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place  
Environmental Protection/Preserving Open Space  
Strengthen and Direct Development Toward Existing Communities  
Political Viability  
Administrative Operability

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

In this section we will discuss in detail the evaluation criteria being used to evaluate the alternatives. The criteria are based upon specific and measurable principles of smart growth, as well as the feasibility of the alternatives in terms of political viability and administrative operability.

### **Community and Stakeholder Collaboration:**

Communities have different needs and views of how their own community should grow. As a result the focus on specific smart growth principles may vary across communities. Although all aspects of smart growth need to be addressed within a specific area in order for it to succeed, some areas have already successfully implemented several of these principles. Regardless of the focus, the idea of smart growth “is that the needs of every community and the programs to address them are best defined by the people who live and work there.”<sup>5</sup> Citizen and stakeholder collaboration are necessary for plans and policies developed to sustain and be successful. To measure the existence of community and stakeholder collaboration in the various forms of regional governments being measured, the following criteria will be considered:

1. Are public workshops with local stakeholders and community members held to develop their views and preferences regarding future needs and changes in the community?
2. Are the community members and stakeholders notified regarding specific plans and policies being considered that would change their community?
3. Do the community members and stakeholders have access to meetings wherein final decisions are being made, and if so do they have influence in those final decisions?

### **Foster A Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place:**

One important element of “Smart Growth” is the idea of creating a distinctive sense of place. This principle describes a joint community vision of identity and values, “It seeks to create interesting, unique communities which reflect the values and cultures of the people who reside there, and foster the types of physical environments which support a more cohesive community fabric” (Smart Growth Network). The Los Angeles region, unlike other regional areas such as San Francisco or New York, lacks an identity that supports a “cohesive community fabric” (Smart Growth Network). Los Angeles is broken into individual community or city identities and lacks a regional unity that is distinctively known as Southern California. William Fulton (1992) describes the disassociation of a regional identity by examining the growth patterns in Southern California; “Southern Californians simply ceased to be citizens in the larger sense and withdrew into their subdivisions” (Fulton, 1992:18). The ideal of Smart Growth is to create a coordinated effort among smaller groups of cities or even individual citizens. This does not suggest that we ignore the multi-cultural and diversity of Los Angeles, but rather create a joint comradeship for the region. As Fulton describes, “Many felt disconnected not only from the teeming and volatile metropolis of which they were a part, but also from their own small cities...Their sense of community shrunk to include only their tract” (1992: 18).

In order to evaluate “Foster Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place” as a criterion, there are three factors that need to be considered:

1. Ability to set standards for development to foster a distinctive regional identity that responds to community values.
2. Creates a “cohesive community fabric” by using natural and man-made boundaries to reflect and define the values and cultures of the Los Angeles region.
3. Encourages new development to create a “strong sense of place” by emphasizing physical orientation and its relationship on a greater regional scale.

### **Open Space Preservation:**

The smart growth network defines “open space” as “natural areas both in and surrounding localities that provide important community space, habitat for plants and animals, recreational opportunities, farm and ranch land, places of natural beauty and critical environmental areas.”<sup>6</sup> As a criterion for evaluating the performance of different regional government, the following factors are to be considered:

1. Presence or absence of regional mechanisms such as tax breaks and other incentives, for farmers to maintain their properties as farms rather than sell to developers.
2. Rate of farmland conversion within the scope of the regional government.
3. Mechanisms of preserving open space as stated on the general plan of the regional government, such as urban growth boundaries, specific requirement for set aside open space for projects, land banking, etc.

### **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities:**

Smart growth aims to direct development towards existing communities for a more efficient use of land by reducing the need of infrastructure expansion, utilizing existing neighborhood assets and conserving open space.<sup>7</sup> To measure the performance of a regional government in meeting this goal, the following criteria would be considered:

1. Disincentives in developing the urban fringe. (What policies are in place to discourage sprawl and how are they implemented)
2. Presence of regional tools that curbs leap frog development and other sprawl inducing developments.
3. Direction of redevelopment policies and momentum of redevelopment programs. Vitality of the region’s inner cities. (What role is the regional government playing in revitalizing the region’s inner cities)

### **Political Viability:**

Political Viability looks at whether or not an alternative would be acceptable and feasible among politicians, decision makers, and voters. Political support is necessary to evaluate because no action can be adopted without electoral backing, “If a policy will not be supported by decision makers, officials, or voters, then it has little chance of being adopted or, if adopted, implemented” (Patton et al.: 214). In determining whether or not the various forms of regional government are politically viable, the following criteria would be considered:

1. Does the alternative have the flexibility to accommodate preferences of the current political system?
2. Is the alternative easily acceptable to the current stakeholders involved or will these groups need to be receptive to new and radical policies?
3. Will further analysis be needed to obtain support for the alternative or is the alternative definitive?

### **Administrative Operability:**

Administrative operability evaluates the ability of implementing the organizational structure of the alternatives. This evaluation criterion examines the existence of authority, institutional commitment, capability, and organizational support needed to execute each

alternative, “Is existing administrative system capable of delivering the policy or program? How much control does the client have?” (Patton et al.: 218). In determining whether or not the various forms of regional government are operationally feasible, the following evaluation criteria will be considered:

1. Does SCAG have the authority to enforce land use policy under each alternative?
2. What staffing requirements in terms of cooperation and experience are necessary to implement new land use policy?
3. Are there sufficient equipment and physical facilities/infrastructure to support new land use policy?

## ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives being considered are: no change in the existing system, giving more authority to SCAG in the form of having local governments submit their land use plans for SCAG to determine if they are consistent with SCAG’s overall land use plan, or giving SCAG more authority in terms of SCAG having direct participation in local land use plans through a representative at a sub-regional level. This person would be responsible for overseeing multiple cities and ensuring the implementation of SCAG’s land use plans and policies. Other alternatives would be a system of a regional government only, with no local governments or a regional government that is elected. Finally, a separate organization that deals only with land use issues will be considered.

### Alternative I: Do Nothing (Existing Southern California Association of Governments)

The existing Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a regional entity that is responsible for the nation’s second largest metropolitan area.<sup>8</sup> The agency’s legislative powers derive from the State Government Code 65060-65060.8, “The Legislature finds and declares that the people of California have a fundamental interest in the orderly development of the urban regions of the State in which large segments of the State’s population are concentrated.” SCAG’s concerns with land use are to create a vision of future growth that “promotes prosperity, social equity and environmental sustainability.”<sup>9</sup> Within the department of Sub-regional Publications and Plans, SCAG addresses issues of land use and smart growth by commissioning regional planning consultants. These consultants are specialized in the different areas of Southern California such as Ventura County, Orange County, and West Los Angeles. By directing issues of Smart Growth and Land Use to consultants, SCAG influences on these issues are based on reports of trends, rather than policy implementation.



Figure 1: SCAG planning Region (www.scag.ca.gov)

### **Community and Stakeholder Collaboration**

SCAG's approach to Community and Stakeholder participation is to assist in collaboration efforts rather than initiating workshops, "The mission of the Growth Visioning Subcommittee is to develop a process that assists local, sub-regional, and regional officials in developing strategies to accommodate growth that results in a preferred regional growth scenario."<sup>10</sup> SCAG's efforts to create an atmosphere of stakeholder collaboration are limited to meetings with committee members who are either council members or city mayors.<sup>11</sup> The implications of the meetings are unclear as the purpose is not a decision making process, but rather a forum for political discussion, "It starts through an informed civic dialogue; it begins with a Growth Visioning process that serves consensus and cooperation."<sup>12</sup> SCAG promotes a visioning process of joint discussion of stakeholders, yet it does not have the power to implement changes.

### **Foster A Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place**

In terms of creating a "distinctive and strong sense of place" and to reflect the values of Southern California, SCAG is extremely limited in defining its goals. Its ability to set standards or to respond to community values is restricted by the mere size of its membership. SCAG also does not have limitations or boundaries to manage suburban sprawl. Rather, SCAG takes the approach of accommodating the growth by balancing new development with the existing communities, "This report discusses the challenges to both new and older communities in Orange County for accommodating continued growth and for maintaining the current "quality of life."<sup>13</sup> SCAG is also limited to facilitate ideas of "strong sense of place" for the region by merely focusing on providing information. Their principles for future Smart Growth and land use are designated as goal oriented rather than implementation. SCAG focuses more on "sustaining" and "prosperity" rather than creating a unique and distinctive identity for Southern California.

### **Open Space Preservation**

SCAG's approach to preserving open space is not designed at a regional level, but rather relies on individual cities or jurisdictions to make their own boundary decisions. SCAG uses general recommendations to characterize open space preservation and is unspecific with their goals, "Livable communities require open spaces that serve the entire community." During an interview conducted by the Metro Investment Report<sup>14</sup> (MIR) with Mark Pisano, Executive Director of SCAG, SCAG's role in Southern California policy-setting are questioned. MIR wanted a precise description SCAG's approach to housing needs and other regional policies. Pisano responds by supporting SCAG's efforts to create plans that inform several counties in Southern California of the regional needs. For this evaluation criterion, there are no mechanisms that guide open space preservation under the existing SCAG.

### **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities**

SCAG's response to redevelopment of infill areas is similar to its approach to open space preservation. There are many goals oriented to the revitalization of the region's center, yet there are no specific policies to guide its progress. SCAG acknowledges the region's land use varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. SCAG is only able to create general goals for vacant land infill and designates the responsibility of Smart Growth onto the cities, "One conclusion that can be drawn for virtually every city is that within the next 20 years, they will be faced with decisions as to whether to expand onto valuable prime agricultural land, or attempt to contain their growth within existing boundaries."<sup>15</sup> During the interview with Mark Pisano, he was asked, "What policy leverage does SCAG have with local agencies that are tasked with transportation and housing responsibilities?" (MIR, 2000<sup>16</sup>). Pisano's response is limited to the guidelines provided by State requirements, "For any transportation project to be constructed with State, federal or local funds, it must be incorporated into our Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

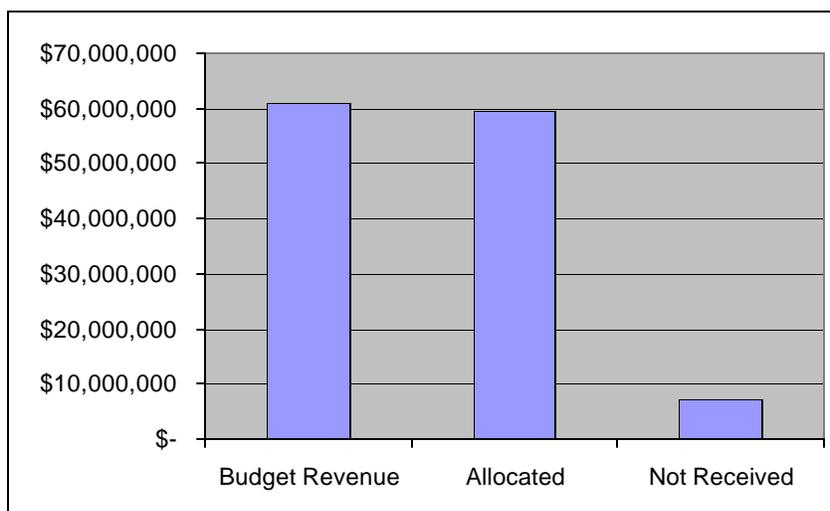
Furthermore, it needs to be approved through our air quality conformity process as helping to meet air quality goals.” Other than the general State requirements, SCAG has no authority over revitalization efforts within its region. Once again, SCAG is limited to suggestions rather than implementation, “A community is strengthened by an economically healthy town center or downtown combining commercial, cultural, civic and recreational use. The centers should be linked to both local and regional systems.”<sup>17</sup>

### Political Viability

SCAG’s current political endorsements are highly valued and extensively involved. SCAG’s members are either appointed or elected political figures from cities and counties. SCAG’s committees and subcommittees that address Smart Growth and Livable Community are also politicians. SCAG is an easily acceptable political forum because it promotes Smart Growth through the agenda of these members. Because SCAG has no direct control over land use plans of individual cities and jurisdictions, SCAG policies are flexible allowing for these political variations, “These efforts must be broad and inclusive and address the full range of community concerns<sup>18</sup>.” SCAG’s existing Smart Growth policies aim towards a joint vision, yet the goals must first be politically acceptable, “Without a common community vision about how to promote livable communities, planning and development proceeds in a piecemeal fashion. Codes and practices that discourage livability reinforce existing patterns and trends.”<sup>19</sup>

### Administrative Operability

SCAG’s current administrative structure and performs functions of finance, budgeting, information systems, and operations. SCAG’s budget and expenditures are accounted through SCAG Operations, SCAG Consultants, and Sub-regions. According to SCAG’s Preliminary Fiscal Year 2000-2001 Year End Report, the anticipated revenue estimate approved in April 2001 is \$61,054,359, yet the revised revenue estimate as of July 2001 is \$53,697,557, approximately 88% of what was projected.<sup>20</sup> In terms of expenditures, \$29,051,222 or 53.7% of the anticipated revenue has been expended, yet there is also an unexpected balance of \$30,561,086. This unexpected balance is explained by SCAG as an increase of final billings from consultants and sub-regions as well as invoices received towards the end of the fiscal year. SCAG also explains the over allocation of funds due to revenue that is forecasted; yet not received (see graph 1).<sup>21</sup>



Graph 1: FY 2000-2001 SCAG Revenue (www.scag.ca.gov)

## **Alternative II: Municipal Merger/Consolidation to form Regional Government (The City of Toronto)**

The new City of Toronto was created in 1998 through the merging of the regional government of Metropolitan Toronto and six municipalities.<sup>22</sup> Due to the infancy of the new government, studies or data regarding the performance of its new programs and policies are not yet readily available. The analysis that follows is an evaluation of the City's "Official and Strategic Plans"<sup>23</sup> instead of an evaluation of implemented programs. It is our assumption that the direction of the plans and the process in which it is being created will give us a good idea of the success of their implementation.

### **Stakeholder Collaboration**

The City of Toronto uses advisory committees as one direct way for resident participation. "Special reference groups of citizen volunteers"<sup>24</sup> have provided advice and direction for new Plan policies in areas such as transportation, heritage, the downtown, and arts and culture. The City has also run "open houses and workshops"<sup>25</sup> to inform citizens of the plan's progress and hear their views about key directions for the new plan. The city has also convened a "Special Official Plan Council reference group"<sup>26</sup> that meets monthly to share information and guide the direction of the Plan. City staff has involved residents, consultants, and other stakeholders in identifying problem areas. Although the intention of its Official Plan is to involve all the stakeholders in the City, some have claimed that it is "wiping out local democracy."<sup>27</sup>

### **Foster Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place**

The City of Toronto initiated the Campaign for Beautiful Places in its new strategic plan. It aims to "improve the overall look and feel of the City through better urban design, art in public places, new public spaces, stewardship for parks, and conservation of historic sites and architectural treasures."<sup>28</sup> The City, with its central planning agency is in the ideal position to create an identity for the region.

### **Environmental Protection/Preserving Open Space**

The City of Toronto Environmental Task Force (ETF) prepared a comprehensive Environmental Plan called: "Clean, Green and Healthy: A Plan for an Environmentally Sustainable Toronto." The Plan focuses on four key areas towards attaining sustainability such as, transportation, energy use, economic development, education and awareness. As a statutory document under the Planning Act, all new development needs to conform to the policies found in the Plan. The Plan provides a solid foundation to address the following environmental issues:

(1) Acquiring, enhancing and connecting natural areas; (2) creating partnerships with landowners, school boards and community groups for the stewardship of natural areas; (3) protecting significant landforms such as ravines, the ancient Lake Iroquois shoreline and the existing Lake Ontario shoreline; (4) planting more trees and encouraging green roofs.<sup>29</sup>

### **Political Viability**

Under Canada's parliamentary system, provincial governments can easily merge governments. But under U.S. laws, mergers require broad and rarely achieved consensus. According to the surveys conducted by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, ninety percent of Southern Californians oppose consolidation of municipalities into a regional

government.<sup>30</sup> Among all the different form of regional government in the survey, consolidation of municipalities is the least desirable form of government for Southern Californians.

### **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities**

The new Official Plan designated Reinvestment Areas where major reinvestment and development will be initiated. These areas will be given a new array of creative tools to start and facilitate change, including: “tax increment financing, priority processing, and the focusing of civic and other governmental infrastructure funds.” The plan also calls for the “Campaign for A Dynamic Downtown” which seeks to improve the competitiveness and quality of life of the Downtown area by investing in public transportation, building more housing, investing in arts and culture, improving the look and feel of the Downtown, and creating a positive environment for development.<sup>31</sup> A centralized planning department is in an ideal position to coordinate and direct developments throughout the region. The City’s Plan has identified inner city areas as well as older neighborhoods and targeted them for revitalization.

### **Administrative Operability**

The Canadian experience of merging the Toronto region municipalities has been surprisingly smooth. One of the factors that made transition easier was majority of municipal services were already being delivered by the existing regional government.<sup>32</sup> Although the total number of government workforce was reduced, the new government absorbed most of them. Unfortunately, the existing structures of governments in Southern California do not lend to an efficient transition from the fragmented local governments to a single regional government. (From hundreds of municipalities, six counties, and several single purpose regional governments to one regional government.) Toronto reached this form of government only after several decades of having a strong regional government. It took more that a decade after the regional government was formed in 1953 before the original thirteen municipalities in the region were consolidated into six, and then it took another three decades before those six municipalities were consolidated in 1998 to form the New City of Toronto.<sup>33</sup> SCAG is far from the ideal administrative condition to be able to run a mega city like Toronto.

### **Alternative III: Smaller Council of Government with More Authority: (San Diego Association of Governments)**

Under California state law, regional planning in the state can exist either through the creation of a “regional planning district” or the creation of an “independent planning agency” through “joint power agreement.”<sup>34</sup> The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) was created through a formal joint powers agreement among eighteen municipalities and the County of San Diego. A Board of Directors composed of an elected official from each member municipality and the County governs SANDAG. The U.S. Department of Defense, Caltrans, San Diego Unified Port Authority, County Water Authority, and Tijuana/ Baja California are also represented in the board as advisory/non voting members.<sup>35</sup>

Agency/Plan Authority	Authority	Current Plan <sup>36</sup>
<p>San Diego Association of Governments</p> <p>Regional Growth Management Strategy (1993)</p>	<p>Joint Powers Agreement (1990)</p>	<p>Issues:                      Quality-of-life standards and objectives, Holding capacities, Growth rate policies, Growth phasing                      Regional land-use distribution, Growth monitoring                      Open space preservation, Regional arterials.                      Transportation system and demand management,                      Siting and financing regional facilities, Fiscal abilities and responsibilities, Consistency of regional and local plans, Regional growth management strategy.                      Strategies:                      Standards, objectives, and recommended actions for air quality, transportation/congestion management, water, sewage disposal, sensitive lands and open space preservation and protection, solid and hazardous waste management, housing, and economic prosperity.                      Local and regional consistency checklist</p>

Table 1: SANDAG Profile (Source: www.sandag .org)

### Stakeholder Collaboration

Like SCAG, one of SANDAG’s missions is to serve as a regional resource for its region. It does this through its Regional Information System (RIS) and through the non-profit corporation, Source Point.<sup>36</sup> Stakeholders collaboration only occurs through The Board of Directors’ meetings and at several committee meetings, including citizens advisory committees. Public participation in these committee or board meetings is limited to public comments for each item discussed in the committee/board agenda. The purpose of these committee hearings is to present proposed plans and policy to the public as well as to formalize their adoption. Unlike Portland or Toronto, workshops for residents during the preparation of plans and policies are not part of SANDAG’s standard operating procedure.

### Foster Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place

There are two elements in SANDAG that help foster distinctive and strong sense of place for the region. First is its ability to achieve consistency between “the strategy and policies, plans and regulations of local jurisdictions and regional agencies.”<sup>37</sup> Its self-certification process ensures that the municipalities develop a character that ties the whole region. Second its efforts to promote livable communities throughout the region by investing in regional preserves (open space/natural habitats) and regional transportation (buses, commuter rail, trolley). These projects coherently connect the different cities in the region.

### Political Viability

Any effort to extend the role of a regional government will face resistance at the local level. Several researches by Mark Baldassare and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research show that Southern California voters and municipalities are particularly more resistant to regional governments. He found that Southern Californians support regional government only “when the circumstances and roles fit their self-interest and when they are not too fearful about losing local control.”<sup>38</sup> Baldassare found that most residents oppose city-county consolidation, have negative view about regional government, and about seventy percent are not in favor of multi-county regional government. Its limited scope, i.e. fewer members, and its

joint powers agreement with municipalities, has made the SANDAG format the most acceptable form of a regional government for Southern Californians.

### Administrative Operability

Administration of a smaller council of government only requires minor adjustment from the current form of SCAG. Existing sub-regional divisions within SCAG can serve as framework for the formation of smaller government. Transition from the current structure of SCAG to a one or two county council of government will most likely require additional staffing and resources to be more effective. Administrative roadblocks are not foreseen in adopting a smaller council of government since it would only require already existing division within SCAG to function as separate entities. Staffing, leadership, and infrastructure may eventually be expanded or provided, and existing ones can be readily used without major conversion.

### Environmental Protection/ Preserving Open Space

SANDAG, has been responsible in coordinating the region's conservation planning areas. It assists municipalities in identifying areas for purchase, mitigation, or dedication. The region has adopted several conservation plans; among them the Multiple Species Conservation Plan. (MSCP) (See Map this page.) The plan calls for the preservation of 172,000 acre. Conservation is achieved through dedication of public lands, federal/state/municipal purchase, or private mitigation. To date, MSCP has conserved 22,000 acres of the targeted 52,000 acres in the city of San Diego.<sup>39</sup> Regional conservation plans such as MSCP serve as frameworks for cities to develop their own implementation of the plan.

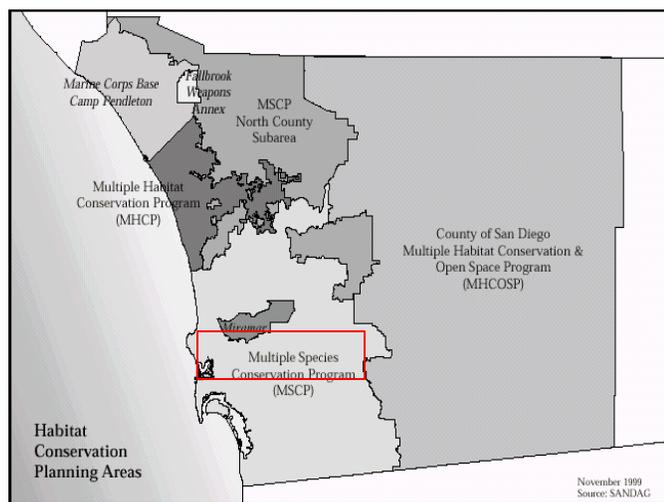


Figure 2: SANDAG Region (Source: www.sandag.org)

### Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities

The 1993 "Regional Growth Management Strategy" of SANDAG outlines growth management for the region. One of its distinctive features is a "self certification process for determining consistency between local and regional agencies."<sup>40</sup> Member government agencies are required to submit a checklist that monitors their progress in implementing regional objectives set by SANDAG. SANDAG objectives include: revitalization of downtowns, encourage mixed uses, and transit oriented developments. SANDAG's role has been to encourage cities to revitalize their downtowns by providing expertise, research, and other planning assistance. It has also made these developments possible by coordinating the provision of public transportation to center i.e. City of San Diego and connecting it to the core of surrounding cities.

**Alternative IV: More Authority through Land Use Approval  
(Metro: Portland, Oregon)**

Metro is the only regional government in the United States directly elected by voters. It covers approximately 460 square miles of the urban portions of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties in northwestern Oregon. There are twenty-four cities in service area.<sup>41</sup> The Metro was established when voters approved a home-rule charter authorizing a regional government that would be responsible for land-use and transportation planning. Metro has established a framework that addresses regional issues such as open space, transportation, water quality, and the environment. It also manages the urban growth boundary for the Portland metropolitan area. The objectives of Metro are to:

- \* Plan and promote the efficient use of urban land
- \* Improve the efficiency of public facilities and services
- \* Preserve prime farm and forest lands outside the boundary "<sup>42</sup>

Metro is divided into different departments. The Regional Planning Division has three sections: community development, long-range planning, and regional transportation planning. Metro continually promotes the involvement and input of the community into its planning process.

Agency/Plan Authority	Authority	Current Plan <sup>44</sup>
Metro (Oregon) 2040 Framework (expected 1997)	1992 Metro Council Charter	Regional transportation and mass transit systems Management and amendment of the urban growth boundary Protection of lands outside the urban growth boundary for natural resource future urban or other uses Housing densities Urban design and settlement patterns Parks, open spaces and recreational facilities Water sources and storage Coordination of policies Planning responsibilities mandated by state law

Table 2: Portland Metro Profile (Source: www.multnomah.lib.or.us/metro.html)

**Stakeholder Collaboration**

Citizen involvement is an important aspect of the Metro government. Metro is involved in issues affecting local governments, residents, neighborhoods, businesses, and civic organizations. As a result, they encourage cooperation of the Metro government, local governments, and the citizens. "Metro believes that effective citizen involvement is essential to good government."<sup>43</sup> Metro has adopted principles to guide their involvement with the community and other stakeholders. Specifically The Metro Committee for Citizen Involvement was established under Metro's home-rule charter in 1992. The purpose of the committee is to assist with the development, implementation, and evaluation of Metro's citizen involvement program and to involve residents in regional planning activities.<sup>44</sup> Meetings are held on each month and are open to the public.

**Foster Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place**

Metro has a regional planning division that addresses land-use, while working with local governments and residents to plan for the future. Their responsibility is to provide regional coordination and regional standards. This allows for a local cities and counties to be more coordinated in their planning. The Metro acknowledges that plans and policies in one area will

inevitably affect another area. They utilize and encourage the ideas and input of the community and as a result seek a high level of coordination that will lead to a more distinctive and strong sense of place.

### **Environmental Protection/Preserving Open Space**

The State Land Conservation and Development Commission reviews each proposed city and county plan to determine whether it properly implements these goals. If the local government's plan satisfies the state requirements, the commission "acknowledges" or certifies the plan. If it does not, the commission requires that it be revised and resubmitted. The commission has the power to force local governments to fulfill their responsibilities by identifying corrective action to be taken and suspending local authority to issue building permits or approve land subdivisions. Metro established and maintained the urban growth boundary for the Portland region following passage of the state's land-use law.<sup>45</sup>

The state set aside lottery revenue to acquire open spaces, parks, and watershed lands and maintains the existence of a growth boundary that preserves farmland and open spaces outside the boundary. Metro is also responsible for the Oregon Zoo, regional parks, solid waste transfer stations and hazardous stations, the Oregon Convention Center, and Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center.<sup>46</sup>

### **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities:**

Metro worked with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to rehabilitate Brownfield sites. To date, the federal agency has provided more than \$800,000 for several cleanup projects. They used the Metropolitan Area Express or MAX light rail system to secure economic investments that encouraged mixed uses, compact development, pedestrian orientation, and creation of neighborhood focal points. Since the program began, nearly \$2 billion has been invested along the transit system's Eastside and Westside light rail corridors.<sup>47</sup>

### **Political Viability:**

The Oregon Legislature originally organized Metro under a grant of authority. However, this limited the powers of Metro. As a result, in 1990 the Legislature referred a constitutional amendment to the voters. This would allow the creation of a home-rule regional government. With the approval of the amendment, Metro became the nation's only elected regional government and serves more than 1.3 million residents. The Metro is directly accountable to the citizens of the region. Metro became responsible for regional land-use and transportation planning, as well as the owner and operator of many other facilities.<sup>48</sup>

### **Administrative Operability:**

Metro was originally formed as a result of a merger of a council of governments that had land-use and transportation planning responsibilities with the Metropolitan Service District, which provided regional services. This merger was possible because of the authority given by the voters. The combined council was elected. Since it combined two already existing government departments, there was not a large shift in the needs that already existed in regards to financing, staff, and infrastructure. Gradually, the voters, reaffirming their overall approval with the government, gave new responsibilities to Metro.

### Evaluation of Alternatives Against Criteria (0-3 scale)

As stated earlier, each evaluation criteria has been operationalized into three measures. In this particular evaluation, the various alternatives are rated according to how many of the three measures for each criterion was met. There are four possible scores for each alternative a score of either zero (0), one (1), two (2) or three (3). A zero (0) would indicate that the alternative does not meet any of the three measures and a three would indicate that it met all three measures. Unlike the preceding method, an alternative's score is not compared to the other alternatives. The score is solely based on its individual performance of each measure per criteria. The scores are added for each alternative to determine which form of regional government receives the highest score. The highest score reflects the alternative form of government that best meet the criteria of smart growth, political viability, and administrative operability. As shown on Table 4, Portland received the highest score at 17 points with a maximum possible 18 points; Toronto, SANDAG and MTC tied at 14 points to receive the second highest points, while SCAG is last at only 7 points. The only criterion Portland did not meet was one of the political viability measures. Southern California residents are not very receptive of elected regional government. Otherwise, Portland met all of the measures of smart growth and administrative operability. The result of this independent scoring method mirrors another rating system (see Table 4) where each alternative was rated in relation to the other alternatives. We therefore recommend the Portland alternative.

	Do Nothing (SCAG)	Eliminate Local Authority (toronto)	Smaller COGs (SANDAG)	More Authority with Land Use Approval (Portland)
Community and Stakeholder Collaboration	0	3	2	3
Foster a Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place	1	3	2	3
Open Space Preservation	0	3	2	3
Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities	0	3	2	3
Political Viability	3	0	3	2
Administrative Operability	3	2	3	3
TOTAL	7	14	14	17
Rating: 0 = Non-performance on all criteria 1 = Performance on at least one criteria		2 = Performance on at least two criteria 3 = Performance on all criteria		

Table 3: Alternative rating on a 0 - 3 scale

	Do Nothing (SCAG)	Eliminate Local Authority (Toronto)	Smaller COGs (SANDAG)	More Authority with Land Use Approval (Portland)
Community and Stakeholder Collaboration	☆	☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆☆☆
Foster a Distinctive and Strong Sense of Place	☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆☆☆
Open Space Preservation	☆	☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆☆☆
Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities	☆	☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆☆☆
Political Viability	☆☆☆☆	☆	☆☆☆	☆☆
Administrative Operability	☆☆☆☆	☆	☆☆☆	☆☆
This evaluation determines each alternative based on a rating of one star (☆) through four stars (☆☆☆☆). Four stars indicate best performing alternative and one star indicates worst performance amongst the specific evaluation criteria.				

**Table 4: Alternative Rating Against Other Alternatives**

### MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTED POLICY

In order to determine if the policy is successful, we need to monitor its implementation and analyze if it is having the desired impact. The type of evaluation we recommend is a Before-and-After Comparison. This would allow us to compare the pre-existing regional government of SCAG, against the chosen alternative, Metro, after it has been implemented as the new form of regional government. This form of evaluation is dependent upon data being obtained from the pre-existing regional government structure so that those findings can be directly compared to the data collected from the new government. However, we must also control for unanticipated consequences that may occur and affect our evaluation of the chosen alternative. We want to ensure that any changes that have occurred are a direct result of the new form of government and its ability to make land-use decisions. Examples of issues that need to be considered are major events, such as earthquakes, war, and recessions. We would also look at political changes, such as election results and possible changes of power. Federal, State, and local policy changes will also need to be reviewed to determine if the implementation of the new regional government was successful.

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