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MEMORANDUM

To: Working Committees

Date: October-November 2010

From: Bob Dean, Principal Regional Planner
Pete Saunders, Senior Planner

Re: Implementation of *GO TO 2040*: Technical Assistance

With the adoption of *GO TO 2040* on October 13, CMAP will now begin to focus on the plan's implementation. A number of the plan's recommendations rely on actions by local governments, and will require CMAP to work closely with willing local partners. *GO TO 2040* recommends supporting local planning through *technical and financial assistance*.

While CMAP currently does offer technical assistance, the completion of the plan allows more resources to be devoted to this important activity. *GO TO 2040* also recommends coordinating efforts closely with existing technical assistance providers, including both government and nongovernmental organizations. Due to the increased emphasis that will now be placed on technical assistance, developing an overall "philosophy" for how CMAP should approach it will be useful. The purpose of this memo is to describe initial ideas in this area, and it includes:

- Descriptions of case studies from other regional planning organizations that offer technical assistance
- A definition of technical assistance and categorization of different types of activities
- Thoughts how to coordinate technical assistance offered by CMAP with that offered by other organizations

Please note that technical assistance is not the only way in which the plan will be implemented, though it is a major one. Other types of implementation activities (such as research, policy development, legislative activities, and many others) will also be discussed with committees at upcoming meetings.

Case studies from other regional planning organizations

As a starting point, technical assistance programs of other regional planning organizations in major metropolitan areas nationwide were reviewed. Several organizations offer robust technical assistance programs to local governments. Others offer financial assistance programs for planning directed to local governments. Most other regional planning organizations have more limited programs, and many do not have structured technical assistance programs at all. Even in the case of the above organizations, offering extensive technical assistance appears to be a relatively recent emphasis.

Attached to this memo is a brief summary of several of the more advanced programs offered by other regional planning organizations. These are summarized below:

- The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which serves the Los Angeles region, began a technical assistance program after the completion of their long-range regional plan in 2005. SCAG conducts an annual request for proposals and selects projects to receive assistance based on their consistency with the long-range plan.
- The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), which serve the San Francisco region, offer complementary programs focused largely around transit oriented development (TOD). Also in that region, the Great Communities Collaborative, a group of nonprofits and philanthropic organizations, provides additional resources to support and ensure diverse participation in TOD projects.
- The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) directs infrastructure funds to projects that facilitate compact and mixed-use development. This is not a true technical assistance program but still relevant for the purposes of plan implementation.
- The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) provides grants on a competitive basis for planning projects that are consistent with regional goals. Additional funds are also set aside for infrastructure investments that support these planning projects.
- Portland Metro is in a unique position for a regional agency, as it is directly elected and has some responsibility for land use regulation. Metro also provides technical assistance to local governments through a variety of tools.

Many of the above examples could provide models for CMAP's approach to plan implementation. The SCAG program is quite comprehensive and may serve as the single best model for using technical assistance to implement a regional plan. The intensive involvement of nonprofits and philanthropic organizations in the ABAG/MTC programs through the Great Communities Collaborative appears unique, and may provide a good model for engaging these groups. The SANDAG and ARC infrastructure investment programs, while they are not really technical assistance, can be useful for plan implementation; also, the ARC planning grant program is a nationally-recognized model for how regional financial assistance programs can function. Finally, although Portland Metro has broader authorities than any other regional organization and its approach cannot be replicated elsewhere, its specific technical assistance tools are relevant and can be applied in other areas.

Types of technical assistance

Technical assistance can take many forms, so developing a consistent definition is important. The overall term technical assistance is used broadly throughout this memo. Below are some initial ideas for classifying technical assistance activities into “types”:

- Direct vs indirect. This differentiates based on specificity of geography. Direct technical assistance involves working with an individual community (or group of communities) to provide assistance to that specific geographical location. For example, working with a municipality to update their comprehensive plan would be direct. Indirect technical assistance involves producing materials that are not geographically specific, such as model ordinances which can be adapted for use in a variety of communities.
- General vs targeted. This differentiates based on specificity of topic. General technical assistance involves providing services that would benefit planning “generalists”; this would include holding Planning Commissioner workshops, for example. Targeted technical assistance involves working at a higher level of technical detail, such as assisting with review and modification of parking requirements in a downtown area.
- Reactive vs proactive. This differentiates based on how technical assistance projects are selected. Reactive projects involve responding to a request by a community for assistance; proactive projects are those identified by the technical assistance provider. For example, responding to a request to review a comprehensive plan would be reactive, while identifying communities without recent comprehensive plans and seeking to assist them would be proactive.
- Financial vs non-financial. Financial assistance is offered through grants, which communities typically then spend to hire consultants to prepare plans or studies. Non-financial assistance is offered through contributing staff time or other resources of the technical assistance provider. Financial assistance is defined somewhat narrowly here to include only grants for planning purposes; for example, grants for infrastructure investment (through the CMAQ program, for example) are certainly important but are not really a form of technical assistance.

Some projects may not fit neatly into these classifications. It is useful to think of each classification as a continuum, rather than a simple black-and-white choice; some projects can be easily classified as either general or targeted, for example, but others are in between. Also, it is not likely that CMAP will choose one “end” of a continuum to the exclusion of the other; our ongoing technical assistance will likely include projects of all of these types.

The purpose of creating this classification system is to help prioritize where CMAP’s resources can best be devoted. What should be the balance of direct versus indirect technical assistance offered? To what degree should the agency react to requests for assistance versus work proactively to find communities that can most benefit from it? Generally, where on each continuum should we seek to be? These are not simple questions to answer, but will need to be worked out over the coming months.

Coordination with other technical assistance providers

A variety of organizations in the region already offer technical assistance. While CMAP now has an increased focus on technical assistance, this should not assume that the region is a blank canvas. Building from past work by other organizations, coordinating on ongoing work, and avoiding duplication will be important.

As a first step in coordination, CMAP is currently working to catalog existing technical assistance programs and similar ongoing efforts by other organizations. This will catalog technical assistance provided by government and nongovernmental organizations, but will likely not include consulting firms or other fee-for-service organizations. Further efforts to ensure coordination will certainly be necessary, but identifying existing efforts is an important first step.

Relationship to Regional Planning grant application

On behalf of a broad regional consortium, CMAP applied in August for funding through the Regional Planning grant program, which is part of the federal Sustainable Communities Initiative. The application focused on technical assistance, and if successful, would further increase the resources that CMAP could devote to this activity. An abstract of the application is available at: <http://www.goto2040.org/uploadedFiles/RCP/Involvement/1-abstract.pdf>

It is uncertain when a funding announcement will be made. If successful, this grant funding would *supplement* planned technical assistance activities; CMAP will be devoting resources to technical assistance regardless of the success of this grant.

Conclusion

Considerable work is still needed to turn the ideas described in this memo into an actionable program of technical assistance to communities. However, input from CMAP's stakeholders at this early stage is still welcome and useful.

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion.

Land Use Technical Assistance Programs Provided by MPOs Prepared by CMAP staff – October 12, 2010

This document contains an analysis of the types of land use technical assistance programs and services offered by the MPOs serving the 21 largest metropolitan areas in the United States (excluding the Chicago region). This analysis highlights the approaches that other MPOs are using to promote sound planning in their respective regions, and the type of education and capacity building work they are providing to their member municipalities. This has implications on how CMAP can develop an effective land use technical assistance program.

Methodology

The websites for 21 MPOs around the country were examined, and the programs and services identified as technical assistance for municipalities were reviewed. In cases where the website did not provide clarity, calls were placed to the MPOs for additional information.

Findings

MPOs vary greatly in the kinds of technical assistance offered to municipalities. Generally, offerings by the MPOs can be placed in five categories, and the MPOs identified for the various categories are listed in the tables below.

Level 1: **The MPO offers a full spectrum of direct technical assistance to municipalities, usually through a coordinated technical assistance program.** The technical assistance can range from project-specific assistance on a development project, or it could also be more general assistance that builds the capacity of the municipality to support sound planning efforts. In some cases, municipalities must apply to the MPO for this assistance.

Level 1: The MPO offers a full spectrum of direct technical assistance to municipalities, usually through a coordinated technical assistance program		
MPO	Region	Program Name
SCAG	Los Angeles	Compass Blueprint
ABAG	San Francisco/ Oakland	FOCUS
Metro	Portland	Urban Growth Boundary/ Community Reinvestment Strategy

Typical projects in this area include SCAG’s production of the Citrus Station TOD Concept Plan for Azusa, CA, and the Downtown Burbank Development Design Standards for Burbank, CA.

Level 2: **The MPO provides indirect technical assistance through its financial support of a full spectrum of planning services to municipalities.** The technical assistance provided in these instances is similar to that among Level 1 MPOs, but is usually provided by consultants rather than MPO staff, and is supported

through resources acquired by the MPO. Municipalities may also apply to the MPO for this assistance.

Level 2: The MPO provides indirect technical assistance through its financial support		
MPO	Region	Program Name
SANDAG	San Diego	TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Program
ARC	Atlanta	Livable Cities Initiative
Metro Council	Minneapolis/St. Paul	Local Planning Assistance Loans/ Livable Communities Grants

SANDAG utilizes a portion of its resources from a half-cent regional sales tax toward TOD, mixed-use development, and transit-supportive infrastructure projects. ARC is budgeting \$1 million annually between 2000 and 2012 to provide resources to municipalities for similar activities. The Metro Council provides loans to municipalities to support planning work, as well as grants for specific projects that lead to the development of affordable housing.

Level 3: The MPO acts as a gatherer or facilitator of information on sound planning techniques such as TOD, mixed-use development, sustainability, and other “hot topics”. MPOs that operate at this level usually convene a series of workshops and seminars that highlight sound planning within their respective regions, but leave the planning, development and implementation work to municipalities.

Level 3: The MPO acts as a gatherer or facilitator of information on sound planning techniques		
MPO	Region	Program Name
NYMTC	New York	--
MWCOG	Washington, D.C.	--
PSRC	Seattle	--
East-West Gateway Council	St. Louis	--

The MPOs cited above frequently convene and host workshops on topics of interest to municipalities, and support best practices in the field.

Level 4: The MPO offers fee-based technical assistance to municipalities, either by the MPO itself or through a consortium of consultants. In this rare case, the MPO offers land use technical assistance to municipalities at a reduced cost, retaining planning consultants who can be contracted out to municipalities.

Level 4: The MPO offers fee-based technical assistance to municipalities		
MPO	Region	Program Name
H-GAC	Houston/Galveston	PlanSource

Houston’s MPO is alone in offering land use technical assistance, while requiring municipalities to pay.

Level 5: The MPO acts as a gatherer or facilitator of information specifically about its region, and disseminates the information to municipalities. Several MPOs gather land use data about their regions, with little context on how the information relates to sound planning techniques.

Level 5: The MPO acts as a gatherer or facilitator of information specifically about its region		
MPO	Region	Program Name
DVRPC	Philadelphia	--
BRMPO	Boston	--
SEMCOG	Detroit	--
NCTCOG	Dallas	--
MDMPO	Miami	--
MAOG	Phoenix	--
NOACA	Cleveland	--
DRCOG	Denver	--
HCMPO	Tampa	--
SPC	Pittsburgh	--

This is the most common role for MPOs – data gathering on matters such as transportation, transit, housing, open space and other elements, all on a regional scale. The MPOs in this area usually remain silent on the implementation of best planning practices, and leave it up to municipalities to implement such practices.

Selected MPO Technical Assistance Case Studies

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Los Angeles, CA

Compass Blueprint Program

www.compassblueprint.org

Compass Blueprint is the technical assistance/planning services outgrowth of SCAG's 2004 Compass Growth Vision Report. The Compass Report was the product of a rigorous planning process initiated by SCAG in 2000, engaging local jurisdictions, residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Four foundational principles were identified in the Report:

- Increase mobility
- Foster livability
- Enable prosperity
- Promote sustainability

Several implementation strategies and implementation tools were identified, including offering planning assistance to local jurisdictions in the form of pilot projects, partnerships and shared information. After the release of the Compass Growth Vision Report in 2004, SCAG established the Compass Blueprint Program in 2005.

To receive assistance through Compass Blueprint, projects must be submitted to SCAG for approval as a Demonstration Project. SCAG conducts an annual request for proposals and makes its selections based upon evaluation criteria derived from the Compass Growth Vision Report. Cities, counties, subregions and Councils of Government are eligible to apply as a Demonstration Project; non-governmental organizations may apply in partnership with a local jurisdiction or other public agency. Partnerships are encouraged; many projects are joint efforts between municipalities and non-profit technical assistance providers.

Compass Blueprint selects Demonstration Projects using the following evaluation criteria:

- Transportation and Land Use Planning Integration (20 points)
- Infill, Redevelopment and Density (20)
- Land Use Mix and Housing (15)
- Infrastructure and Resource Efficiency and Sustainability (15)
- Project Logistics and Need (30)
- SCAG membership (Y/N; project approval is contingent upon SCAG membership)

Compass Blueprint's Demonstration Projects are categorized generally in the following way by SCAG:

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- Land Use Planning and Design (general and specific plans, code analysis, scenario planning, infill analysis and strategies)
 - Market Feasibility Analysis (development prototypes, ROI analysis, economic development strategies)
 - Transportation and Parking (transit planning, parking analysis and strategies, bike and pedestrian planning)
 - Sustainability Services (carbon footprinting, green building guidelines, open space planning)
 - Visualization (photo-morphs, video fly-throughs, GIS assistance)
 - Outreach and Engagement (workshops, charrettes, focus groups, visual preference surveys)

Services are delivered in one of four ways – 1) directly by SCAG staff; 2) by consultant, identified by the selected Demonstration Project or by SCAG; 3) by non-profit technical assistance provider; or 4) local jurisdiction staff. To date, SCAG cites 69 completed Demonstration Projects since the program’s inception in 2005. SCAG is now accepting proposals for 2011 Demonstration Projects, which are due October 13, 2010.

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
San Francisco Bay Area
FOCUS Program

www.bayareavision.org/initiatives

FOCUS is a regional planning initiative spearheaded by the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, in coordination with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. It is partially funded by a Blueprint Grant from the State of California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency. Its distinction from other similar MPO-initiated activities is that it is not the outgrowth of an MPO-led planning effort, nor is it specifically the technical assistance program offered to municipalities. The program is an effort to develop strategic plans that align with the agency’s overall goal of promoting more compact development throughout the Bay Area.

ABAG and MTC developed a unique process for the implementation of the FOCUS program. The agencies elected to direct financial and technical assistance to designated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs).

PDAs are locally identified, infill development opportunity areas near transit. They are generally areas of at least 100 acres where amenities and services can be developed to meet the day-to-day needs of residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit. PCAs are regionally significant open spaces for which there exists a broad consensus for long-term protection. The PCAs represent opportunities for land conservation within the next five years,

and regional agencies are working with state agencies and funding entities to protect PCAs through purchase or conservation easements with willing landowners. Bay Area municipalities nominated 104 sites as PDAs, all of which were adopted by the ABAG Executive Board in November 2007. A total of 98 PCAs were adopted by the ABAG Executive Board in July 2008.

To access technical assistance through the FOCUS program, municipalities must participate in a competitive application process for projects in already-designated PDAs. ABAG has chosen to exclusively support TOD projects at this time, providing support to projects will utilize transit locations throughout the region. Also, ABAG does not provide direct service; it directs resources to municipalities to hire consultants or other parties to complete the project.

ABAG selects projects based upon the following criteria:

- Location in a designated PDA (10 points; ABAG will grant 5 points if the site is a potential PDA)
- Project Performance and Impact (15)
- Local PDA Plan Commitments and Community Support (20)
- Implementation Outcomes (40)
- Regional Innovation and Replicability (15)

ABAG is in the process of receiving proposals for its second cycle of the FOCUS program. Four projects were selected for 2010, each with a downtown, transportation or TOD component. Proposals for the second cycle are due on November 1, 2010.

In addition to and somewhat independent of the FOCUS Program, the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has operated its Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Program since 1998. This forerunner of the FOCUS program has awarded over \$80 million dollars to more than 80 local projects that support multimodal travel, more livable neighborhoods and the development of jobs and housing in existing town centers. Successful projects improve walking and bicycle access to public transit hubs and stations, major activity centers and neighborhood commercial districts as a way of fostering community vitality. The program provides technical assistance and capital grants to help cities, neighborhoods, transit agencies and nonprofit agencies develop transportation-related projects fitting the TLC profile.

The FOCUS and TLC programs are further supported by similar efforts coordinated by the Bay Area's non-profit community. The Great Communities Collaborative is a cooperative relationship between four Bay Area nonprofit organizations – Greenbelt Alliance, the Nonprofit Housing Association of Northern California, TransForm, and Urban Habitat – and the national nonprofit Reconnecting America. The East Bay Community Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, and The Silicon Valley Community Foundation are also part of the collaborative.

Members of the collaborative are combining their respective expertise and working with partners around the region to:

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- Shape plans for specific transit-oriented developments in Bay Area communities and encourage resident participation in planning for those developments
 - Create tools that will help community leaders make better decisions about transit-oriented developments across the Bay Area and help citizens better understand, participate in, and influence plans for TOD
 - Secure increased private and public funding that will help to catalyze sustainable and equitable transit-oriented development in the Bay Area.

Collaborative members have close working relationships with a wide array of stakeholders on TOD issues in the Bay Area. While the Collaborative has worked closely with regional agencies such as ABAG and MTC, as well as with local governments, it appears they have placed greater emphasis on soliciting and coordinating the involvement of actors such as community-based nonprofits, other foundations, developers, planning experts, and the business community.

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

San Diego, CA

TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Program

www.sandag.org

SANDAG does not have an overall broad technical assistance program offered to local governments, but it does offer a specific program that performs a critical role. The TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP) funds transportation and transportation-related infrastructure improvements and planning efforts that support smart growth development. The program was initiated in 2009. SGIP is supported by TransNet, the half-cent sales tax for local transportation projects that was first approved by voters in 1988, and then extended in 2004 for another 40 years. The SGIP will award two percent of the annual TransNet revenues (approximately \$4.8 million in FY 2009) for the next 40 years to local governments through a competitive grant program.

The goal of the TransNet SGIP is to fund public infrastructure projects and planning activities that will facilitate compact, mixed use development focused around public transit, and that will increase housing and transportation choices. The projects funded under this program will serve as models for how modest investments in infrastructure and planning can make smart growth an asset to communities around the region.

Fourteen projects were funded in the first cycle of SGIP in 2009. Funded activities included:

- Streetscape improvements to allow enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access and provisions for public markets and civic events;
- Improved bus stop area and pedestrian crossings near two urban schools;

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- An economic analysis of development potential for projects that would support future bus rapid transit (BRT) activity; and
 - A focused mobility and land-use master plan adjacent to a light-rail line.

SANDAG utilizes a complex, 300-point evaluation scale to select its capital and planning projects. More points are awarded if the proposed project is expected to lead to development that will exceed minimum development density by certain percentages, and greater weight is given to projects that are located in identified metropolitan, regional and community centers.

What distinguishes SGIP from other programs is that it is supported by a dedicated funding source that can be expected to grow as the region itself grows. SANDAG anticipates that it will solicit proposals for projects for FY2010 and FY2011 beginning in December 2010, with proposals accepted through sometime in February 2011.

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

Atlanta, GA

Livable Centers Initiative

www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative

Similar to SANDAG in the San Diego region, ARC in Atlanta offers a targeted program designed to promote increased livability. The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program that awards Planning grants on a competitive basis to local governments and non-profit organizations to prepare plans for the enhancement of existing centers and corridors consistent with regional development policies. The primary goals of the program are to:

- Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices
- Provide access to a range of travel modes within the study area
- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders.

LCI was established in 1999. The ARC Board has approved \$13 million in study funds - \$1 million annually - for use in years 2000 to 2012. The ARC Board also approved an initial allocation of \$350 million for priority funding of transportation projects resulting from Livable Centers Initiative studies. An additional \$150 million was approved for these projects in the 2030 RTP, for a total commitment of \$500 million dedicated to transportation projects resulting from completed LCI studies.

Since 1999, 102 communities in the Atlanta region have been the recipient of \$8.5 million in LCI funding for planning studies. In addition, \$140 million in funding for local transportation projects has been spent in LCI communities as a direct result of LCI studies.

To qualify for LCI funding, an LCI study area must be one of four development types:

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- Town Center
 - Activity Center
 - Corridor
 - “Emerging” center or corridor

ARC’s LCI program is not a competitive grant process with strict program guidelines, nor is there a timeframe for LCI applications. Local governments simply apply to ARC for funding of a potential LCI project at any time, and ARC will evaluate the project on the merits of its potential to achieve smart growth development goals. ARC will approve projects pending the availability of funds in a given year.

Portland Metro

Portland, OR

Urban Growth Boundary/Community Investment Strategy/Community Investment Toolkit

www.metro-region.org

As the nation’s only directly elected regional government, Metro has a unique relationship with its municipalities. Unlike the programs undertaken by the MPOs listed above, Metro does not have a dedicated, branded, technical assistance program offered to municipalities; the assistance they provide is integrated into the everyday work of the agency, and they have authority over specific development projects that no other MPO holds.

Perhaps the strongest technical assistance tool offered by Metro is the administration of its Urban Growth Boundary. Since the Boundary’s adoption in 1979, Metro has been responsible for the management of growth in the region. Specifically, Metro is responsible for establishing a boundary that will allow for a 20-year supply of projected residential and job growth within its environs. Metro regularly reviews growth patterns and projections, and adjusts the Urban Growth Boundary annually.

The Oregon State Legislature also granted Metro several specific land-use planning powers including:

- coordination between regional and local comprehensive plans as they relate to Urban Growth Boundary
- requiring consistency of local comprehensive plans with statewide and regional planning goals
- planning for activities of metropolitan significance including (but not limited to) transportation, water quality, air quality and solid waste.

Because the Urban Growth Boundary puts a special emphasis on infill, redevelopment and transit-oriented development activities, Metro complements the Urban Growth Boundary with supportive data and information regarding activities such as:

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- Urban revitalization through the identification and management of centers and corridors
 - TOD
 - Brownfield recycling
 - Housing choice and affordability
 - Nature-friendly development.

Metro coordinates the production and distribution of information to municipalities through its Regional Framework Plan, completed in 1997 and amended in 2005. That document is currently being updated through a new process Metro calls its Community Investment Strategy, scheduled for approval and release in 2011.

Metro further provides direct assistance to municipalities through its Community Investment Toolkit, an inventory of financial assistance programs that are either offered directly by Metro to municipalities, or statewide programs that are coordinated by Metro.

The tools outlined include:

- **Vertical housing incentives** that encourage development of dense, mixed-use projects in specific areas through the provision of targeted tax abatements
- **Transit-oriented tax exemptions** that promote the construction of transit-oriented, multiple-unit housing developments in urban centers in order to improve the balance between the residential and commercial nature of those areas
- **Brownfields assessment and cleanup funds** that enable local governments and property owners to identify and clean up polluted or contaminated sites and make them suitable for redevelopment
- **Urban renewal and tax increment financing** that can stimulate private investment in targeted areas and provide a source of equity to make capital improvements and development projects financially viable
- **Improvement districts** that can fund physical and visual improvements in centers, corridors and employment areas and attract more private investments to make these areas vibrant and healthy
- **Impact-based system development charges** that can more accurately reflect the costs of infrastructure development, determine charges based on the impact of different development patterns, and serve as a financial incentive for more effective provision of facilities and services.

Again, Metro has a unique relationship with Portland region municipalities that has developed over the nearly 40 years that some form of Metro has been in existence. Indeed, Metro appears to work with developers as closely as planners from area municipalities do. This allows Metro to have an unprecedented role in coordinating development on a regional scale.