California
Strategic Growth Council

California Strategic Growth Council

2013 Annual Report

to the Legislature

July 1, 2013

California Natural Resources Agency

California Health & Human Services Agency

California Environmental Protection Agency

Table of Contents

Letter from the Executive Director 1

I. Summary & Contact Information 2

II. About the Strategic Growth Council 3

III. A Year of Progress 4

A. Coordinate State Programs to Achieve Sustainability Objectives 4

Mitigate and Remove Barriers to Infill Development 4

Health in All Policies Task Force 4

Land Use, Schools, and Health 5

Sustainability in State Infrastructure Spending 6

Other State Agency Collaboration 6

B. Provide Local Assistance 6

Urban Greening Grants for Sustainable Communities 6

Sustainable Communities Planning Grants & Incentives Program 8

Modeling Incentive Awards 9

Funding Wizard 10

Outreach and Education Program 11

C. Fund and Distribute Data & Information 11

UrbanFootprint 11

Vegetative Mapping in the East Sacramento Valley 12

Parcel Data and Protocols 13

California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) and Protocols 13

Indicator Initiatives 14

D. Recommend Policies Advancing Sustainable Communities 15

IV. Looking Ahead 16

California
Strategic Growth Council

July 1, 2013

Members of the California Legislature:

Enclosed is the Strategic Growth Council's 2013 Annual Report. Pursuant to Public Resources Code §75125(e), this report discusses the status of our local assistance grant programs, through which we have awarded more than one hundred million dollars to local and regional governments, agencies, and organizations across the state to help them achieve sustainability outcomes in their communities. Though we are tremendously proud of these grant programs and the local projects they make possible, they represent just one piece of the SGC's broader mandate to integrate the policies and investments of state agencies in an efficient manner supporting a sustainable future. This report provides an overview of our work efforts on behalf of these goals: more than a dozen major projects, each one of which represents a complex plan for interagency work in its own right.

What is not made apparent by looking at the enclosed summary of projects is that the Strategic Growth Council has a very small staff. How has such a lean organization made progress on the many fronts described here? The answer is that we rely on leveraging our staff to engage staff from our member agencies and departments to help carry forward the SGC work plan of integrated interagency action. At the core of the Strategic Growth Council is the belief that for the State to efficiently and effectively achieve its sustainability goals, collaboration must become standard practice at all levels of government. Climate change observes neither the boundaries between political jurisdictions nor the boundaries between governmental departments. At the Strategic Growth Council, we try to model this collaboration in everything we do, down to how we staff our projects.

This is my first Annual Report with the Strategic Growth Council—I took the position of Executive Director in October 2012—but I have watched the Council carefully since its inception. Since its first public meeting in 2009, the Council has steadily increased its clarity of mission, efficiency in the use of its resources, and focus on measureable achievement. I believe that the next year will be critical for the Council's continued success. As described in this report, the 2013/2014 year will see substantial improvement to one of the Council's flagship grant programs; it will see the culmination of two critical contracts that will elucidate paths for good infill development; and it will see Council action explicitly incorporating sustainability into the infrastructure spending decisions of our member agencies.

I am always eager to hear from you regarding the needs of our local communities and the integration of our agency missions. If you are interested in discussing this, or if you have any questions regarding the work of the Strategic Growth Council, please let me know. I look forward to working with you to create resilient, sustainable communities across California.

Sincerely,

Mike McCoy
Executive Director
Strategic Growth Council

I. SUMMARY & CONTACT INFO

This *Annual Report to the Legislature* provides a summary of the Strategic Growth Council's major work efforts, including its local assistance grant programs.

Public Resources Code §75125(e) requires that this report include, at a minimum, certain information about the Strategic Growth Council's grant programs, including a list of any applicants for and awards of financial assistance. However, since the publication of the last annual report (June 29, 2012), there have been no such applications or awards. This twelve-month reporting cycle happens to fall entirely between cycles of both of the Council's ongoing grant programs. However, pursuant to §75125(e), this report does provide information regarding the status and remaining balance of funds for the Council's grant programs:

- Urban Greening Grants for Sustainable Communities (pages 6-7)
- Sustainable Community Planning Grants and Incentives Program (pages 8-9)
- Modeling Incentives Awards (pages 9-10)

For complete lists of funded and unfunded applicants from prior years, and for the additional requirements and priorities considered in those funding decisions, please see the annual report from that year:

- 2012 Annual Report to the Legislature: http://sgc.ca.gov/2012report.html
- 2011 Annual Report to the Legislature: http://sgc.ca.gov/2011report.html

---

For questions or to request a copy of this *2013 Annual Report to the Legislature*, contact:

Adrienne Orilla
Strategic Growth Council
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 322-1028
adrienne.orilla@opr.ca.gov

The full report can be downloaded at http://sgc.ca.gov/2013report.html

II. ABOUT THE STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

The Strategic Growth Council (the Council, or SGC) was created in 2008 by Senate Bill 732 (Steinberg). As of July 1, 2013, the Council is comprised of the following members:

- Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research
- Secretary for Natural Resources
- Secretary for Environmental Protection
- Secretary for Transportation
- Secretary for Health and Human Services
- Secretary of Business, Consumer Services, and Housing
- A public member appointed by the Governor

The Council's mission is to help make California's communities more sustainable. In keeping with its broad membership, the Council defines sustainability holistically:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve air and water quality
- Improve protection of natural resources and agricultural lands
- Increase the availability of affordable housing
- Improve public health
- Improve transportation
- Encourage sustainable land use plans and greater infill development
- Revitalize urban and community centers in a sustainable manner

To accomplish this mission the Council has adopted the following four strategies that are based closely on its enabling statute:

a. Coordinate State Programs to Achieve Sustainability Objectives
b. Provide Local Assistance
c. Fund and Distribute Data & Information
d. Recommend Policies Advancing Sustainable Communities

The projects described on the following pages are organized by these four strategies. As is noted in project descriptions, these strategies are not entirely discrete: the boundaries are blurred, and many projects apply more than one of these strategies.

III. A YEAR OF PROGRESS

A. COORDINATE STATE PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

Mitigate and Remove Barriers to Infill Development

Overview

Promoting and enabling sustainable infill development is a principal objective of the Strategic Growth Council because it is explicitly included in the State's Planning Priorities and because it furthers the goals of all of the Council's member agencies. Focusing growth toward infill areas takes development pressure off conservation lands and working lands; it increases transit ridership and reduces vehicle trips; it requires less per capita energy and water use than less space-efficient development; it improves public health by promoting active transportation and active lifestyles; and it provides a more equitable mix of housing choices, among other benefits. Thus, the SGC has been investigating actions that can be taken to improve the ability of local governments and private developers to successfully plan and build good infill projects.

Progress in the Past Year

After meeting with a broad set of stakeholders around the state, the SGC adopted an infill action plan that includes: (a) adding infill development policy to the update of the General Plan Guidelines; (b) developing data and tools to better inform infill policy decisions and implementation; (c) investigating new and amended methods to finance larger infill projects; and (d) working with regional planning agencies to identify actions to support stronger Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs) and local implementation, including infill development.

In recent months, the Council has also solicited and received bids for two infill-related contracts. One contract will provide resources to help regional planning agencies assess the first round of SCSs. In the coming months, this contract will lead to regionally derived recommendations for State action to help improve the accuracy and efficiency of future SCSs. The second contract will fund the study of innovative local infill financing mechanisms and will apply those mechanisms to several actual infill development projects, yielding recommendations for improved infill finance strategies.

Health in All Policies Task Force

Overview

The Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force operates under the auspices of the Strategic Growth Council and is facilitated by the Department of Public Health. The HiAP Task Force brings together eighteen state agencies, departments, and offices to promote health, equity, and environmental sustainability through interagency collaboration. The Health in All Policies approach is based on the concept that health and prevention are impacted by policies that are managed by non-health government and non-government entities, and that many strategies that improve health will also help to meet the policy objectives of other agencies.

Progress in the Past Year

The HiAP Task Force has made impressive progress on its eight SGC-endorsed implementation plans, which carry out a variety of ambitious recommendations such as incorporating health and health equity criteria into state grant programs and leveraging existing government spending to support healthy food procurement. For example, one such product of the HiAP Task Force's collaboration is the new interagency Farm-to-Fork office. In the past year, staff from the Department of Food and Agriculture, Department of Education, and Department of Public Health have launched this office and have hired dedicated staff to expand the availability of affordable and locally grown produce in California. This objective touches the work of several agencies, and by bringing together these agencies to attain common goals, this effort is emblematic of the Health in All Policies approach.

At the request of local governments across the state, the HiAP Task Force staff has increasingly engaged in more direct local assistance to help interested organizations implement a HiAP approach in their jurisdictions. Additionally, HiAP staff have worked with the American Public Health Association, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the California Department of Public Health over the past year to develop "Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments."

Land Use, Schools, and Health

Overview

The Strategic Growth Council, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the Department of Education, and the Department of Public Health have established an ongoing collaborative based on a shared understanding that schools play a critical role in a healthy, sustainable community; and that the two are inextricably linked. When a city and a school district plan collaboratively, all parties' goals can be better served. For example, safe routes to school can ensure the safety of the student body while also helping to attain public health, air quality, and climate change goals. Similarly, joint use of facilities can reduce costs while also conserving natural resources. The aforementioned state agencies are working to encourage and enable this type of local collaborative planning.

Progress in the Past Year

In December 2012, the Strategic Growth Council co-sponsored a policy symposium with the University of California, Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools, the Department of Education, and the Department of Public Health. This symposium convened more than 150 of California's education, community development, and public health leaders to share their stories and discuss collaborative planning. Participants learned from the successes and challenges of others, and the event was designed to cultivate lasting professional connections among participants. The SGC and the other partners of the event are currently developing educational materials to help school districts and local government planning agencies identify and address opportunities for local collaboration.

Sustainability in State Infrastructure Spending

Overview

The California 2013 Five Year Infrastructure Plan estimates that nearly $55 billion of State funds will be allocated for infrastructure and capital assets over the next five years, and these investments will have a lasting effect on the location, size, and pattern of urban development. Existing law requires that these apportionments demonstrate consistency with the State's Planning Priorities and the Environmental Goals and Policy Report. Further, the Strategic Growth Council's enabling legislation mandates that the Council review its member agencies' funding programs that may be coordinated to achieve sustainability objectives.

Progress in the Past Year

In February, the Strategic Growth Council initiated a project to integrate the State's Planning Priorities and the Environmental Goals and Policy Report into state agencies' infrastructure investment decision-making processes. The Council is developing a guidance document that assists with the incorporation of these priorities into future State infrastructure investment decisions within normal activities and coordination efforts. This will support state agencies in establishing a more robust framework for how they contribute to the planning and development of sustainable communities: strengthening the economy, ensuring social equity, and enhancing environmental stewardship.

Other State Agency Collaboration

In addition to the aforementioned efforts that are progressing with SGC leadership, the Council also plays an active role in a variety of interagency projects relating to climate change and the SGC's other sustainability objectives. These include the California Water Plan, the Climate Action Team and a number of its subgroups, the Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Investment Plan workshops, the AB 32 Scoping Plan update workgroup, the MPO/State Agency SB 375 Implementation Working Group, the Housing Siting/Air Quality Working Group, and transportation research coordination. In these efforts and others, the SGC ensures that the diverse sustainability objectives of its member agencies are represented in a way that will assist California's local governments.

B. PROVIDE LOCAL ASSISTANCE

Urban Greening Grants for Sustainable Communities

Overview

Because of the built-out nature of California's urban areas, the Urban Greening Grant Programs provide funds to preserve, enhance, increase or establish community green areas such as urban forests, open spaces, wetlands and community spaces. To date, the Council has awarded 92 grants totaling more than $41 million for urban greening projects and plans. The program has prioritized funding for disadvantaged communities, and eligible applicants include cities, counties, nonprofit organizations, and special districts. Urban greening has multiple benefits including energy savings, air quality improvement, stormwater control, improved public health outcomes, and increased property values. The greening projects and plans funded through this program incrementally create more viable and sustainable communities throughout California. For example:

- Amigos de los Rios was awarded a grant for the *Emerald Necklace Multi-Benefit Park and Greenway Demonstration Project*. This project has transformed the Madrid School (in the City of El Monte) with new trees, native plantings, and vegetated bioswales. The project includes an exercise path constructed of a permeable surface, interpretive signs, and, using matching funds, exercise stations that are used in the school's physical education curriculum. When completed, this Urban Greening Project will connect four additional schools along 2.25 miles of the San Gabriel River, enhancing public access to the existing regional bike trail.

- The City of San Francisco received an Urban Greening Grant for its *Cesar Chavez Street Low Impact Development Greening Project*, and construction is underway. This $1 million grant enhances a much larger, separately-funded multi-modal project by adding stormwater planters, bulb-outs, trees, and landscaping together with resting areas along roughly one mile of Cesar Chavez Street in the city's highly urbanized Mission District. The larger public works project reduces the number of vehicle lanes from 6 to 4 and builds a green median with safer crosswalks to local schools, hospitals, churches, and residences.

- The Council for Watershed Health received a grant for the *Sun Valley Neighborhood Retrofit: Elmer Paseo*. Located in this disadvantaged neighborhood of Los Angeles, this project converted a paved pedestrian alleyway into a sustainable green space that infiltrates approximately four acre-feet of storm water into the San Fernando Valley Groundwater Basin. While the primary purpose of the project was to more effectively capture groundwater, additional benefits include water conservation, public education and community awareness about their watershed, and improved neighborhood connections, including a safe route to schools.

For the complete list of Urban Greening Grant awards in Rounds 1 and 2, see the Strategic Growth Council's 2011 Annual Report to the Legislature and 2012 Annual Report to the Legislature.

Urban Greening Program Status and Remaining Balances

Proposition 84 (2006) funds are being awarded in three funding cycles and are administered by the Natural Resources Agency on behalf of the Strategic Growth Council. The first round of funding was awarded in 2010, and recipients are in various stages of implementation. Second round awards were made in spring 2012, and grant agreements with recipients are currently in development. Program staff work with designated representatives for each project through the term of the agreement in order to ensure the successful implementation of the greening project or plan. The third and final round is in progress with awards anticipated in the spring of 2014.

Grant Funds		
Amount **allocated** for grants:	$	63,050,000
Amount **awarded** (combined Rounds 1 & 2):	$	41,517,079
Amount **expended** to date:	$	3,727,673
Amount **remaining** for award (allocated - awarded):	$	21,532,921

Sustainable Communities Planning Grants & Incentives Program

Overview

SB 732 (2008) created the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants program with funding authorized in Proposition 84 (2006). This program funds local governments and regional agencies to develop and implement plans that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve other sustainability objectives. The program has prioritized funding for disadvantaged communities. To date, the Council has awarded 93 grants totaling more than $50 million, funding targeted general plan updates, climate action plans, specific plans, infill plans, zoning ordinances, infrastructure planning, and Sustainable Communities Strategies.

In spring 2013, SGC staff conducted a review of the program's first funding cycle (2010). This review found that despite some unanticipated changes that impacted the funded programs of work, such as the dissolution of redevelopment agencies and local staffing changes, grantees have made early, notable accomplishments using SGC grant funds. For example:

- The City of Richmond was awarded a grant to develop a Form-Based Code to guide the transformation and revitalization of three major commercial corridors within Richmond (Macdonald Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and South 23rd Street). The City found that current zoning for the corridors is inadequate to fulfill the community's vision of vibrant, mixed-use, higher density pedestrian and transit-oriented corridors. This Form-Based Code will remove those barriers and will incentivize sustainable development. This code will help implement the City's innovative General Plan, further supporting the Metropolitan Planning Organization's regional plans, which identify these three corridors as priority development areas.

- Stanislaus County received a grant to develop a Regional Sustainability Toolbox in partnership with the cities of Ceres, Hughson, Modesto, Newman, Oakdale, Patterson, Riverbank, Turlock, and Waterford. The County and the nine cities are each developing a separate component of the toolkit, based on their respective needs and local planning projects. For example, one city is producing model housing element policies and implementation measures; another a fiscal assessment of greenfield vs. infill development. The toolbox's ten products will then be shared throughout the region, providing all with a broad suite of local models of sustainable community planning.

- The City of Dana Point was awarded a grant to create the Doheny Village Land Use Plan. Doheny Village is historic community that City officials and residents agree is in need of revitalization, as indicated by commercial vacancies, underutilized properties, and lack of major investment in more than forty years. The area's primary land uses include a mobile home park, churches, a bus storage yard, and assorted commercial establishments. Once complete, the Doheny Village Plan will incentivize new investment in the area, including necessary market rate and affordable housing, and will improve connectivity with other areas of the City.

For the complete list of Sustainable Communities Planning Grant awards in Rounds 1 and 2, see the Strategic Growth Council's 2011 Annual Report to the Legislature and 2012 Annual Report to the Legislature.

Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program Status and Remaining Balances

Proposition 84 (2006) funds are being awarded in three funding cycles and are administered by the Department of Conservation on behalf of the Strategic Growth Council. The first round of awards was selected in December 2010 and a second round of awards was selected in May 2012. All Round 1 recipients and most Round 2 recipients are working toward completion of their work programs. Some Round 2 recipients are still completing the grant agreement process before starting work. Department of Conservation program staff work with designated representatives for each funded project through the term of the agreement.

The Department of Conservation intends to solicit applications for Round 3 in November 2013. Prior to this, SGC staff and Department of Conservation staff are leading a public process to revise the program's guidelines, per the direction of the Council. This public process begins in early July 2013 and includes four public workshops across the state, an agenda item at the August Strategic Growth Council meeting, a 30-day comment period, and proposed Council adoption of the new guidelines in November. This update is necessary because the status of sustainable community planning in California has changed significantly since the program guidelines were first drafted in 2009. The 2013 update aims to increase the program's connection to the implementation of SB 375 (2008) and will increase opportunities to evaluate grant outcomes, among other goals.

Grant Funds		
Amount **allocated** for grants:	$	66,407,000
Amount **awarded** (combined Rounds 1 & 2):	$	50,673,260
Amount **invoiced** to date:	$	9,382,000
Amount **remaining** for award (allocated - awarded):	$	15,733,740

In 2010, before any grants were awarded, the Council allocated a $4.4 million dollars from this program to fund data and outreach projects that help potential grant applicants meet the goals of the grant program. The remaining balances of outreach allocations are as follows; data allocations are listed in Section C:

Outreach/Coordination Project Funds		
Amount **allocated**:	$	1,925,000
Amount **encumbered**:	$	1,440,000
Amount **remaining** (allocated - encumbered):	$	485,000

Modeling Incentive Awards

Overview

The 2009/2010 State budget made funds available for data gathering and model development necessary to comply with SB 375 (2008). The Strategic Growth Council designated two funding objectives: one to increase the modeling capacity of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for direct SB 375 implementation (five-sixths of the money was allocated for this purpose), and a second to support statewide model development and data collection (receiving one-sixth of the funds). These 2009 awards came at the right time to enable all the MPOs to make the needed improvements to prepare compliant Regional Transportation Plans. All are now better equipped to comply with SB 375, with new and improved tools that can help decision makers assess the effects of their policy decisions. For example:

- The San Diego Association of Governments used their Modeling Incentive Award to (a) expand and improve how they use GIS in their new activity-based model, which will be used for their next RTP/SCS update; (b) conduct a focused cross-border travel survey, improving their model's consideration of how the region's transportation interacts with Mexico; and (c) conduct a market analysis to improve pricing and management of transportation infrastructure.

- For the eight San Joaquin Valley MPOs, these Modeling Incentive Funds contributed a major role in the largest modeling project in the Valley's history. All eight regions now have state-of-the-art transportation models. Fresno County and the three-county region of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced now have activity-based models. Perhaps most significantly, the eight MPOs in the region have created collaborative processes and common data that can lead them to standardization that will greatly facilitate coordination throughout the region.

For the complete list of Modeling Incentive Awards, see the Strategic Growth Council's 2011 Annual Report to the Legislature.

Program Status and Remaining Balances

Proposition 84 Modeling Incentive Funds were allocated to the Natural Resources Agency and the SGC. Due to Caltrans' existing administrative relationship with the state's 18 MPOs, Caltrans is administering the MPO funds on behalf of the Natural Resources Agency and the SGC. A majority of the MPOs have finished the work funded through these awards, and Caltrans is currently working with the four remaining MPOs whose projects are being extended into the 2013/2014 fiscal year. These were one-time awards in 2009, and there will not be additional rounds of funding through this program.

Modeling Incentive Funds		
Amount **allocated** for grants:	$	10,980,000
Amount **awarded**:	$	10,980,000
Amount **expended** to date:	$	10,542,723
Amount **remaining** for award (allocated - awarded):	$	0

Funding Wizard

Overview

The California Funding Wizard is an online tool that helps local governments, business, and individuals quickly search a database of hundreds of federal, state, and utility grant programs and financial incentives for sustainability. The Air Resources Board developed the Funding Wizard as part of its Cool California website, and it helps make disparate funding opportunities far more accessible to applicants.

Progress in the Past Year

The Strategic Growth Council and the Air Resources Board began a two-year, SGC-funded work plan to further develop the Funding Wizard. The tool was originally focused solely on programs that fund direct climate action, and the SGC funding that has taken effect this year has already expanded the Funding Wizard to encompass the SGC's broader sustainability objectives. This brings even more funding opportunities to the fingertips of local governments and other users. This work plan also includes maintenance and upkeep of the database, to make sure the information is current; and enhancements to the user interface, to ensure that the tool is easy to use.

Outreach and Education Program

Overview
The Strategic Growth Council pursues a many-faceted outreach and education program to support its grantees, other local governments, and other regional agencies by connecting them to state resources and to one another. These efforts ultimately result in increased local capacity and increased adoption of sustainability practices among California's local governments and regional agencies.

Progress in the Past Year
One component of this program is the Sustainable Communities Learning Network (SCLN), a platform for direct peer-to-peer exchange managed by the Institute for Local Government. With SGC funding, the SCLN has provided its more than 2,000 participants with case studies, webinars, best practices, and tools for direct interaction regarding sustainable practices at the local level. Also in the past year, the Information Center for the Environment, at University of California, Davis, analyzed a survey of local governments that it conducted with funding from the Strategic Growth Council. More than 200 local governments responded to the survey, which examined the extent and progress of local government action to increase community sustainability. The results provide valuable insight into what types of initiatives are and are not progressing at the local level, what local factors contribute to their success, and what state resources are useful to these efforts. These recommendations will shape the Council's future investments.

C. FUND AND DISTRIBUTE DATA & INFORMATION

As explained in Section B, the Council allocated funds from the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants program to fund projects that provide data to potential grant applicants. The remaining balances of these funds are as follows:

Data Project Funds		
Amount **allocated**:	$	2,510,000
Amount **encumbered**:	$	2,365,000
Amount **remaining** (allocated - encumbered):	$	195,000

UrbanFootprint

Overview
The Strategic Growth Council funded the initial development of the UrbanFootprint land use scenario planning tool through a 2009 Modeling Incentives grant to the California High Speed Rail Authority. The tool and its analytical engines are intended for public use to identify impacts of land use scenarios relative to land consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, building energy use, building water use, transportation, public health, household costs, and local fiscal impacts. The UrbanFootprint tool provides a comprehensive framework for long-range land use planning, including support for data development and organization, scenario development, and analysis. UrbanFootprint also provides a web-based user interface that provides a means for meaningful public participation and outreach. Additionally, UrbanFootprint is developed on a suite of open

source software platforms and tools, requiring no proprietary software or licenses for users. The nature of open source software allows for improvement and customization of the tool to meet the users' evolving needs.

Progress in the Past Year

The Strategic Growth Council received the UrbanFootprint 1.0 software deliverable in July 2012, including supporting data and scenario outputs for five regions (San Joaquin Valley, Sacramento, San Francisco Bay Area, Southern California, and San Diego). UrbanFootprint has been reviewed by the California Technology Agency for its technological soundness and has provided the appropriate technical documentation and peer review summaries. An initial user community has convened to discuss technical and ongoing governance needs. SGC has continued to facilitate and provide a forum for state, local, regional, nonprofit, foundation, and university users. The SGC's ongoing review and discussion with the interested user community recognizes the potential for UrbanFootprint and similar tools to enhance the technical and policy relevance of land use planning scenarios contributing to Regional Transportation Plans / Sustainable Communities Strategies. Such tools also have possible applicability to statewide infrastructure plans, local general planning processes, and land use scenario impact analysis.

Vegetative Mapping in the East Sacramento Valley

Overview

Vegetation mapping is the critical base layer for all successful local and regional conservation planning processes and has been one of the principle basic information goals since the formation of the Strategic Growth Council. Vegetation mapping can help answer specific questions of how to balance the use of the land between smart growth, natural resource conservation, and sustainable landscapes. When done in a standardized fashion, vegetation mapping projects can be aggregated and their edges matched to provide seamless coverage of larger areas. A total of 30% of the state has been mapped to the National Vegetation Classification System standard. Although these mapped areas represent valuable progress in gathering a unified picture of California's natural resources, the need for vegetative mapping is far from satisfied.

Progress in the Past Year

An SGC-funded vegetative mapping project, conducted by the Geographical Information Center at CSU Chico in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, was completed this spring. This 1.47 million acre mapping effort filled a critical data gap in the Great Valley portions of Sacramento, Placer, Butte, and Sutter Counties. After only a few months, the maps have already been used by regional planning agencies, state agencies, conservation nonprofit organizations, and applicants to state grants in order to model wildlife corridors, update plans, and identify potential priority areas for conservation and restoration.

Parcel Data and Protocols

Overview

Parcel data (shape files and attributes) collected by counties are difficult for the State to use because accuracy standards, land classification and zoning systems, and boundaries vary among counties. These data then, when aggregated for regional or statewide uses, do not form a clear or accurate picture. Improved parcel data, including consistent boundaries, common attribute fields, and spatial accuracy standards, would enhance the State's ability to analyze and protect natural resources, deliver emergency services (fire, flood, earthquake), identify tax fraud, and more accurately perform policy assessments.

Progress in the Past Year

The SGC funds a Parcel Data and Protocols project that is being managed by the Information Center for the Environment, at University of California, Davis. A second year of parcel data has been collected from counties and processed into a consistent database available for State uses through the California Geoportal. Progress was made in developing a standard land use classification system that can be used to consolidate multiple counties' individual land use classifications into a common set of attributes for regional and state uses. Progress was also made on building the software to automate the extraction and translation of parcel data from a county system into a central state database. When this project is complete, the products will improve the value and access to county parcel data for State and regional users, including the planning required for Sustainable Community Strategies.

California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) and Protocols

Overview

Geospatial data describing California's protected areas are essential for land use planning efforts at the local, regional, and state levels. These data are needed to form long-range planning scenarios, assess environmental effects of proposed projects, and to better understand the value of proposed polices. Applications of protected areas data include area-wide assessments of biodiversity conservation; analysis of recreational needs; siting of energy, transportation, and other major facilities; and improving public health through active living opportunities. The collection and access to these data can be complicated because protected lands are held in both public and private ownership. Developing the common database and protocols will help to resolve these issues and provide easier access to more complete and accurate data.

Progress in the Past Year

The first of four major CPAD data releases was published in spring 2013 and included major improvements to the protected lands data and structure that were made possible by SGC funding. CPAD is now available in the new www.CALands.org web site, with many new features including the revamped MapCollaborator for tracking submitted changes and more complete documentation of the source and features of the data. Also, protected lands data are now hosted on the new California Geoportal. A series of monthly webinars have been established to inform the public about the availability and uses of CPAD. The contractor is currently working on resolving easement data issues to expand those data sharing agreements for access via CPAD.

Indicator Initiatives

Overview

The Strategic Growth Council supports the development and coordination of performance measures and indicators to help local governments, regional agencies, and state agencies track progress toward meeting statewide sustainability goals and objectives. The use of indicators at all levels of government informs decision-making and engages policy makers, managers, planners, and residents in taking action to improve outcomes. The measurement of indicators also allows the public to hold their government accountable. SGC involvement with these projects is not just to support its mandate to provide data and information to local governments; it's also because the SGC's cross-agency structure situates the Council to coordinate and synchronize indicator use across multiple agencies. Most importantly, through these indicators, the SGC can support a conceptual framework to measure state and regional progress in addressing statewide sustainability objectives.

Progress in the Past Year

This spring, the Strategic Growth Council and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) began work on a statewide indicator framework as part of OPR's Environmental Goals and Policy Report. This statewide indicator framework is complementary to SGC's mission and goals and will allow the State to coherently track its progress toward achieving the State's environmental goals.

In addition, the SGC is funding a pair of integrated efforts regarding indicators at the regional level. One of these is the 2013 California Regional Progress Report, which presents a set of integrated place-based indicators measuring regional progress toward the State's sustainability goals in light of new regional responsibilities implementing SB 375 (2008). Recommendations for the 2013 indicators were recently completed, and they will serve as a resource to both regional and state decision makers. Secondly, SGC funded the San Diego Association of Governments to develop a commonly agreed upon set of transportation-related performance monitoring indicators that are available for use by all regional planning agencies. This effort was completed in June 2013, and this timing aligned with California's need to present transportation measurement metrics to the federal government regarding MAP-21 requirements.

Finally, the SGC is also funding a collaboration between the California Department of Public Health and the University of California, San Francisco focused on Healthy Community Indicators for the local level. Primary tasks of this project are to identify a standardized, core set of indicators that define a healthy community; design methodologies to support those indicators; and develop a multi-agency plan for coordination of selected indicators. A standardized, core list of 56 indicators that define a healthy community have been identified and pilot projects to refine the use of these indicators are currently underway.

D. RECOMMEND POLICIES ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

One goal of the Strategic Growth Council, originating in its enabling statute, is to "recommend policies and investment strategies and priorities to the Governor, the Legislature, and to appropriate state agencies to encourage the development of sustainable communities." However, this goal isn't manifested in the form of detached projects that simply develop recommendations; rather, this cross-cutting goal is realized through almost all of our initiatives. For example, the Barriers to Infill Development project (page 4) has led to explicit recommendations for how the State can remove or mitigate those barriers. Similarly, the Parcels Data and Protocols project (page 13) will yield specific recommendations regarding how parcel data should be collected, maintained, and made available with consistent land use attributes.

As various projects lead to recommendations that encourage the development of sustainable communities, the Council delivers those recommendations to the bodies most appropriate to act on those recommendations.

IV. LOOKING AHEAD

The Strategic Growth Council anticipates an exciting and productive year ahead. The following is a sampling of the Council's expected milestones and stepping-stones for the 2013/2014 year:

- Complete MPO SCS self-assessment and consider resulting recommendations for State actions to support the RTP/SCS process
- Complete infill financing study and consider resulting recommendations regarding improved infill finance strategies
- Develop guidance to help member agencies more explicitly consider the Council's sustainability objectives in infrastructure investment decision-making
- Create and disseminate educational materials to school districts, cities, counties, and MPOs regarding local collaboration opportunities relating to school facility planning, particularly in relation to the State's SB 375 objectives
- Receive applications, review applications, and award $21.5M for Urban Greening Grants, and continue monitoring performance of the existing $41.5M of awards
- Adopt new, improved program guidelines for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program that focus funding on measurable planning activities that support the implementation of SB 375
- Receive applications, review applications, and award $15.7M for Sustainable Communities Planning Grants, and continue monitoring performance of the existing $50.7M of awards
- Collaboratively identify, among a variety of users, a public governance structure to support the implementation of the UrbanFootprint land use model
- Develop recommendations for, and take action regarding, long-term protocols for maintaining consistent, accessible parcel data
- Develop recommendations for, and take action regarding, long-term protocols for maintaining accurate, accessible data describing California's public and private protected areas
- Publish a statewide indicator framework and work with state agencies to incorporate their programs into this framework

Because the Council's work plan responds to newly-surfaced opportunities for interagency collaboration, the Strategic Growth Council's next twelve months will also be shaped by unanticipated projects and accomplishments. However, all of these efforts will work toward a common goal: coordinating State action to assist local communities in achieving sustainability.