

# Linkages

Periodical of the Institute for Ecological Health

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## LAND, PEOPLE AND NATURE - A PARADIGM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

By John Hopkins

**I**t is time for a new paradigm that fundamentally changes the relationships between people, land and nature. This change is essential to avoid widespread degradation of human and ecological communities and the disappearance of agricultural economies during the 21st Century. The new paradigm has several key components, all based on the ethical treatment of people, land and nature and on the vision of a sustainable society and sustainable rural landscapes.

Under the prevailing paradigm, land has been a commodity, with local land use decisions usually driven by economic issues and a view that the highest and best use of rural land is conversion to buildings. Local government plans often treat farm and range lands and their wildlife habitat as areas for potential future development. This approach fails to give adequate recognition to the extremely important values of these rural lands, and to recognize that they are essential for a society that is sustainable over the long term.

The prevailing paradigm also fails to ensure sustainable metropolitan areas. Instead, it fosters an urban and suburban development pattern of separated uses, focusing on low density residential development plus office parks and shopping areas, all separated and served by a few arterial roads. This pattern ensures very inefficient use of land, automobile dependency and traffic congestion, deterioration of older communities, and continued sprawl across once-rural lands.

While this paradigm brought about much prosperity on the surface, the price has been huge. If we continue with this pattern through the next 50 to 100 years, our metropolitan areas will suffer extensive blight, we will lose huge amounts of farm and ranch

land, wildlife and habitat will be extensively harmed, and the ecosystems that support our civilization will become ever more degraded and unsustainable.

The new paradigm has five basic, inter-related, features.

- Recognize the all-important non-commodity values of land.
- Focus on providing a high quality life for all metropolitan residents in ways that curb sprawl.
- Protect family farms and ranches and their economic viability.
- Conserve and restore wildlife habitat and the full array of native species.
- Encourage rural land management that replenishes soil, safeguards water quality, and protects essential ecosystem processes.

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# News from IEH

## Views from the Board

In the next few issues of *Linkages* individual board members will explain why they are involved with IEH. Our directors come from a wide array of backgrounds, interests and views and these statements will help give our readers a better flavor of our organization.

### Dave Forrest, cattle rancher

I am a rancher in Stanislaus County. I have always enjoyed the outdoors and particularly enjoy being in it. That is one of the reasons I ranch. Over the years I have been frustrated with those who hold extreme opinions on either side, and are so unwilling to see the other side that they make things confrontational and rule out progress because it is their way or no way at all. I have been watching the proliferation of small ranchettes in the low foothills and am alarmed at the way that the new owners have no concept of what the land can handle.

When I came across IEH at a workshop in Modesto about 5 years ago, I was attracted to its approach. I found this was a group that was interested in long term fixes and was working toward bringing people from all sides to a place where they could collaborate and work out acceptable solutions that could be implemented while there is still something to save. I appreciate that IEH is willing to work in less than perfect situations because they recognize that if everyone walks away from the problem, no one will be there to be a voice of reason.

I feel strongly that we are to be good stewards of what God has given us. I am happiest when I am working to change the future for the better. Being on the board of IEH accomplishes this.

## Opportunities for Change

There are many avenues to achieve needed changes in land use planning, from state legislation to regional and local efforts, to lawsuits to ballot initiatives. IEH is especially interested in the potential of regional efforts but recognizes that it is hard for such approaches to make major progress without state goals and policies. While some states have made major progress in creating forward-looking growth management law, many others, including California, have not. Enactment of state goals and policies to manage growth requires a proactive approach, well before there is a sense of crisis. It is time for real leadership in California, to develop and enact those goals and policies.

## We Need Your Support

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Providing information on California land issues, including conservation biology, planning and economics, development, urban design, and agriculture. We explore the needs of different interests and creative solutions. We welcome articles, story ideas, and letters.

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## Non-commodity Values of Land

Both rural and metropolitan lands have a range of non-commodity values. In the countryside, the farming and ranching way of life, the long term health of the soil, wildlife habitat, maintenance of water quality in streams and rivers, and a variety of ecological processes are just a few important non-commodity values. City dwellers also value the open space and scenic vistas of nearby countryside. Rural separators between cities provide a sense of identity to the developed areas. Together, these values are essential for the long-term health of land, nature and human society.

## Quality of Life and Ending Metropolitan Sprawl

The standard pattern of suburban development consumes vast rural landscapes over time. It also results in the slow decay of many older suburbs and central cities. It creates an automobile dependent society and increasing traffic congestion, with its separation of uses and reliance on arterial roads. The overwhelming focus on new, large lot, housing subdivisions fails to provide an adequate range of housing choices.

If we continue this path for another 50 or 100 years we will have a landscape of huge, and ever expanding, doughnuts. The growing hole in the middle of the doughnut will consist of decaying cities and suburbs, the doughnut a ring of suburbs that consumes land at the outside edge and decays at the inside edge. This is obviously a totally unsustainable approach to development.

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**“Walkable town centers are what all the homebuyer surveys indicate people now want to live near or in” Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton.**

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The ideas of the Smart Growth movement and the New Urbanists provide a clear-cut alternative for development and past issues of *Linkages* have examined a number of these concepts. Reviving interest in urban life and the need for various types of housing is helping show the

housing industry that there are economically viable alternatives to large lot subdivisions. “Walkable town centers are what all the homebuyer surveys indicate people now want to live near or in” explain Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton in their new book *The Regional City : Planning for the End of Sprawl* (see review on Page 11).

There are ways to retrofit existing cities and suburbs, by redeveloping aging strip commercial areas, malls, and other business zones. A shift to mixed use development in these areas, and the creation of centers with high concentrations of jobs, housing and amenities provides a very high quality of life. It also provides the way to rescue declining communities, using design approaches that appeal to existing residents and improve neighborhoods. New developments at the urban fringe also can provide walkable communities through centers with higher densities and mixed uses.

Thinking regionally is a key part of this shift in growth patterns and the design of the urban-suburban fabric. Residents of the metropolitan Salt Lake City region provided a vivid demonstration in the recent Envision Utah project. Participants in community workshops showed a very strong interest in mixed used walkable development projects, together with a focus on transit corridors and the conservation of farmland and other open space. This interest resulted in the development of a regional Quality Growth Scenario that puts the majority of new housing and jobs into mixed use areas and protects open space.

## Protect Family Farms and Ranches

Conservation of both farm and ranch land is important to ensure domestic food production, protect wildlife habitat, maintain open space vistas and community separators and safeguard a treasured rural lifestyle. And it is important to include range lands, as well as crop lands, in this picture. Protecting the land from both metropolitan and rural sprawl-style development is one key factor. As we see in California, private rangelands are of immense importance for maintaining a variety of natural habitats and native species that do not occur on the public lands of the mountains and deserts.

This conservation of agricultural land requires more than protection from development. It also requires maintaining or restoring the economic viability of the agricultural industry - both the farms and ranches and the essential support industry. Development sprawling into agricultural areas erodes the economic viability of the

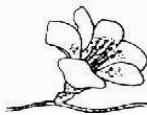
support industry and creates increasing “zones of conflict” for remaining farms and ranches. Low prices for many agricultural commodities challenges society to find ways to maintain economic viability.

## Conserve Wildlife Habitat

Conservation of wildlife habitat involves much more than protection of land from sprawling development, or conservation plans for endangered species. We must conserve the overall rural landscape and all its native species to avoid further declines in ecological health.

Both natural and field crop landscapes provide habitat for a wealth of wildlife. The natural landscapes are the remaining home for most of our native species and the complex ecosystems upon which they depend. The wealth of these lands ranges from rare plant populations to specialized habitats with unique plants and animals, to wide expanses of wood, grass, shrub and desert lands that provide the backbone of our biological systems.

Waterways and their attendant riparian vegetation are especially important in the American West. Even field crop landscapes provide for some native wildlife species, especially when managed in wildlife friendly ways and when areas of wetlands, riparian woodland and other native vegetation form part of the landscape. Natural areas in the urban landscape provide some biological value, as well as ensuring the all-important closeness to nature and a higher quality of life for cities and suburbs .



We have lost the vast majority of several habitat types and an ever-growing number of species are threatened with extinction. This requires active restoration efforts, especially of riparian areas and some other now rare habitats. And the wildlife values of many farm and ranch lands are far below their potential but have the promise of restoration and changes in agricultural practices.

loss of organic matter and soil organisms. There are a variety of ways of reversing such trends, depending on the locale. These are promoted by sustainable agriculture organizations like the Community Alliance for Family Farmers in California, by many government and university agricultural services, and by a number of Resource Conservation Districts. A key emerging issue is the protection and improvement of water quality, through control of nonpoint source pollution.

Ecological processes play a key role in maintaining natural and agricultural landscapes and ensuring viability of native species. These are necessary on private as well as public land. have altered or blocked many of these processes. Here are two examples. The connection of rivers to their floodplains and maintenance of periodic flooding is vital to the health of land and biota, yet many of our waterways are little more than channelized canals. Many of the habitats found in private rangeland are fire dependent ecosystems - periodic burns are necessary both for the health of the land and to prevent catastrophic wildfires. But as on federal lands, a century of fire suppression has halted this process and increased hazards.

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## Rural Land Management

How we manage our rural lands, at scales ranging from individual land ownerships to whole regions, is a vital issue for the 21st Century. In many areas certain agricultural methods have resulted in both the extensive loss of soil and the degradation of remaining soil through

## **Conclusion - a Land Ethic for Town and Country**

It is now over 50 years since the publication of Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*. For the first time, a leading writer and thinker spelled out the need for an land ethic affecting how individuals look after their lands. Today, while numerous individuals practice wise steward

ship of their land, many others do not. And our Society as a whole has failed to grasp the importance of a communal land ethic, its necessity in both the conservation of rural lands and the design of towns and metropolitan areas. Change is urgently needed, and is beginning to occur in isolated pockets. We will explore these issues and examine solutions in future issues of *Linkages* and continue to promote an overarching land ethic in our programs.

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## **REINVENTING LAFCO'S : THE CORTESE - KNOX - HERTZBERG LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION ACT OF 2000**

By Everett Millais

**F**orty years after a report by California's Governor Pat Brown's Commission on Metropolitan Problems, lawmakers approved the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 which became effective on January 1, 2001. This legislation is the most thorough update of the laws governing the little known, historically stodgy, operations of the state's Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) in the last 15 years.

In 1997 the state Legislature created the Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Commission was asked to assess governance issues and make appropriate recommendations, directing special attention to the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act of 1985, the 57 (now 58) local agency formation commissions governed by the act, and citizen participation in local government. The 15 member Commission held hearings throughout the state and spent hours listening to criticism and considering suggestions for improvements.

The Commission's final report, *Growth Within Bounds*, was predicated on four major points:

- The future will be shaped by continued phenomenal growth.
- California does not have a plan for growth
- Local government budgets are perennially under siege.
- The public is not engaged.

### **What is a LAFCO?**

In each California county there is a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) that draws all local government boundaries such as city spheres of influence or city annexations. LAFCO members are representatives of county and city governments, special districts, and the public.

With these points as background, the Commission presented eight major recommendations:

- LAFCOs' policies and procedures must be clarified.
- LAFCOs' must be neutral, independent, and provide balanced representation for counties, cities, and special districts.
- LAFCOs' powers must be strengthened to prevent sprawl and ensure the orderly extension of government services.
- The Legislature must strengthen LAFCOs' policies to protect agricultural and open space lands and other resources.
- The Legislature must comprehensively revise the state-local fiscal relationship.
- The Legislature must develop incentives to encourage coordination of local plans within each region.
- The Legislature must enhance communication,

coordination, and the procedures of LAFCOs and local governments.

- The Legislature must increase opportunities for public involvement, active participation, and information regarding government decision-making.

Most of the recommendations made by the Commission concerning LAFCOs were included in AB 2838, the legislation authored by Assembly Speaker Robert M. Hertzberg, that became the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (“Act”). The 58 LAFCOs in the state (one in each county including the newest LAFCO in the City/County of San Francisco) are now in the process of implementing the significant policy, procedural, and operational changes embodied in the law

## Policy Changes

The Act reiterates and emphasizes the Legislature’s policies of discouraging urban sprawl and preserving open space and prime agricultural lands. Among the many policy changes contained in the Act are the inclusion of additional factors LAFCOs must consider when acting on proposals for annexation and incorporation. LAFCOs must now consider the ability of an agency to provide services and the sufficiency of revenues for those services, the timely availability of an adequate water supply, and the extent to which a proposal assists a jurisdiction in achieving its fair share of the regional housing needs. Significantly, the Act allows, but does not require, LAFCOs to consider regional growth goals and policies.

The legislative intent of the Act is clarified to indicate that the Legislature’s policy should be “effected by the logical formation and modification of the boundaries of local agencies with a preference granted to accommodating additional growth within, or through the expansion of, the boundaries of those local agencies which can best accommodate and provide necessary governmental services and housing for persons and families of all incomes in the most efficient manner feasible.” While the Legislature’s policy is that a single multipurpose governmental agency, such as a city, “may be the best mechanism for establishing community service priorities especially in urban areas,” there is recognition that limited purpose agencies, such as special districts, play a critical role in the provision of services, especially in rural areas.

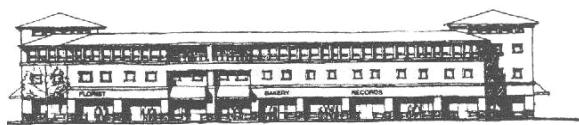
LAFCOs are now also required to review and update the

spheres of influence for cities and special districts every five years. This new mandate changes the concept of a sphere of influence from an ultimate growth boundary to areas where annexation and the provision of services are reasonably foreseen within a five-year time frame. Prior to, or in conjunction with, the sphere of influence reviews and updates LAFCOs must conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. This new service review requirement is to be based on guidelines yet to be developed by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. It will include such items as infrastructure needs or deficiencies, growth and population projections, financing constraints, government structure options and opportunities for shared facilities.

The Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century heard testimony alleging some LAFCOs implemented the law differently or were inconsistent or arbitrary in making decisions. To address these concerns, the Act now requires all LAFCOs to adopt written polices and procedures by January 1, 2002. This requirement is also tied to expanding public knowledge of LAFCO processes.

LAFCO actions result from delegated legislative authority and, importantly, the Act clarifies that LAFCO decisions are quasi-legislative in nature. They are, thus, different from the quasi-judicial proceedings typical of the exercise of the police power delegation for most land use actions by cities (e.g. zoning decisions). Any actions to review or overturn a LAFCO decision are limited to whether there was fraud or a prejudicial abuse of discretion.

To clarify policies, several new definitions have been added and prior definitions have been updated. One of the most significant definitional changes is the definition of prime agricultural land. A condition that irrigation be reasonably feasible has been added and the dollar amount of return from the land for the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production has been increased from \$200 to \$400 per acre annually. While at first glance this change seems to somewhat weaken the definition of prime agricultural land, it coincides with the Legislature’s intent for LAFCOs to attempt to channel growth away from the most productive agricultural lands whenever possible.



LAFCOs may, but are not required to, adopt policies, rules and regulations relating to disclosure of lobbying actions and contributions and expenditures made either for or against pending proposals. In fact nearly every LAFCO was required to hold a hearing prior to March 31, 2001 to consider adopting policies and rules regarding contribution and lobbying disclosure. Unfortunately, the Act does not give LAFCO any real power to enforce such disclosure rules.

## Procedural Changes

The Act makes a wide variety of changes in LAFCO procedures to encourage public involvement and make the law somewhat easier for the lay person to understand. These include better noticing and improved procedures for petitions and protests. There is a requirement for every LAFCO to have a web site by January 1, 2002. Once a LAFCO establishes a web site, the Act requires that all agendas and notices be posted on the web site. It will be interesting to see if this requirement becomes a part of other legislation affecting other public agencies, and whether or not the requirement to establish and maintain a web site is considered a state mandated program eligible for cost reimbursement.

## Operational Changes

In trying to understand the functions of any public agency it is always helpful to know the source of revenues. Since inception in 1963 LAFCOs were required to be funded by counties "at a reasonable level." Given the severe, continuing, pressures on county budgets, LAFCO budgets have been similarly constrained. Even though in theory LAFCOs were independent, the reality was that most LAFCOs functioned as county agencies or parts of county agencies. The staff for most LAFCOs were county employees and most were part time.

The Act now provides for LAFCOs to be truly independent agencies. They must adopt their own budgets, separate from a county, and hire their own executive officer and legal counsel. Funding is now mandated to be provided one third by a county, one third by the cities in the county and one third by the independent special districts in the county. The Act requires county auditors to apportion costs based on the budget adopted by each LAFCO and specifies how revenues are to be collected.

This dramatic change in the operations of LAFCOs will

be implemented as of July 1, 2001 with the start of the 2001-2002 fiscal year. While most LAFCOs will be contracting for staff, legal counsel, and other services with counties, some LAFCOs have severed ties with county government entirely. Many LAFCOs are now hiring full time staff.

## The Challenge

LAFCOs have been in existence for over thirty five years but have really only been a bit player in the state's growth management matrix.

In the absence of any state plan for growth, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 now places LAFCOs in a potentially prominent role in dealing with the phenomenal urban growth throughout the state and balancing the need to preserve agricultural and open space lands. While the role of LAFCOs remains limited, the Act is a giant step in enhancing LAFCOs authority and better involving the public in debates and decisions about growth, services, and resource protection.

The Legislature recognized the diversity of the state, however, and kept LAFCOs inherently local at the county level. It will now be up to each LAFCO to determine how well the broad legislative intent and policies are implemented at the local level. The ability of LAFCOs to truly become a proactive force in the decisions and trade-offs necessary to effectuate meaningful change will play out over time, county by county.

*Everett Millais is Executive Officer of the Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission.*

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# PLANNING FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

## Land /Human Values in Northern New Mexico

By Randall Fleming

Northern New Mexico has a long heritage of people and land relationships, with continuous occupation in the region beginning about 800 years ago. This land / human use heritage appears very much alive at both institutional and personal levels.

Several years ago, a group of us from the University of California were in the Rio Arriba County's Board Room, meeting with supervisors, the county manager, planner, and planning commissioners. We were there to discuss planning resources at UC Davis that could be made available to the County, should they wish.

Following the UC presentations, the Rio Arriba officials began talking about their County's needs and cultural context. Aspects echoed California's concerns about loss of agricultural lands to urban uses, ground water contamination from rural septic systems, population growth, lack of economic opportunity, and the need for affordable housing. But it was the weaving into these issues of their concern about the health of the land and the lifeways of people that was most striking.

Each official spoke in terms of their responsibilities to take care of the land and human use now and for future generations. They were aware that their planning context had shifted & they had to re-define land stewardship while keeping their land / culture values alive.

They were also very aware that new solutions could produce new problems. A story was told of a new high yield, low water requiring corn seed that was brought to the region by New Mexico State Cooperative Extension researchers as the ideal replacement for traditional corn. When harvested and used, it was discovered that the new corn would not make tortillas that held together, and the food fell apart while eating. Family life was disrupted, divorces occurred, and the traditional corn seed was planted the next season. In our work with the County, we paid attention to this corn.

It is fitting that the County's Design and Development Regulation System document begins with "We believe that Rio Arriba is a special place because of the close ties between water, land, and culture. We want to protect these resources and connections... change is inevitable. This plan does not attempt to stop change in its tracks. However, we do want to create an orderly manner of development within our county in order that our lands can be enjoyed by future generations."

*Randall Fleming is on the faculty of the Department of Environmental Design at the University of California, Davis. He is a member of the Institute for Ecological Health's advisory committee.*

## SMART GROWTH PROPOSALS ABOUND IN LEGISLATIVE AND BALLOT MEASURES

There has been an upsurge of state legislation and ballot initiatives around the country to curb sprawling developing in our cities and metropolises. During the 1999-2000 legislative session state lawmakers introduced over 1000 bills. In the November 2000 elections there were 94 growth management measures, five state-wide, and 257 open space preservation initiatives.

### State Legislative Activity

Several states, including Florida, Oregon and Washington, passed substantive growth management legislation some years ago. In 1997, the Maryland Legislature enacted Governor Glendening's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation program. The purpose was to use state

funding to curb suburban sprawl and promote growth in already developed areas, as well as to protect important agricultural lands. The law established Priority Funding Areas where infrastructure projects would receive funding priority. It delineated conservation areas where the state would spend land acquisition monies through a Rural Legacy program. The program is having positive impacts, even though it lacks growth control mandates.

In 1999, Georgia lawmakers established the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, which was promoted by Governor Roy Barnes in response to huge traffic congestion and air quality problems that resulted from incredible sprawl in the Atlanta region. The Authority has the power to override local development permits if the projects would overburden transportation systems.

The Pennsylvania legislature passed a bill promoting regional planning. It allows municipalities to jointly develop comprehensive plans, to share tax and impact fee revenue and to utilize transfer of development rights. This is not a mandatory law.

In 2000 the California legislature adopted a number of measures proposed by the new Smart Growth Caucus. These included funding for various types of affordable housing and infill development, a 55 percent tax credit to encourage protection of open space and major legislation affecting the Local Area Formation Commissions (p 5.).

## November 2000 Ballot Measures

The November elections saw 257 open space measures around the country, including 6 state-wide initiatives, with 78.2 percent passing. Both the state-wide measures passed, providing open space funding in Ohio and Rhode Island. There were also 94 growth management measures, including 5 at the state level and some that were in opposition to Smart Growth. Many of the growth management measures originated with citizens groups or special interests, while practically all the open space measures came from elected governments and provided funding for land conservation. In addition, there were measures addressing infrastructure and transportation, school construction, affordable housing, water quality and governance.

The state-wide growth management measures are particularly instructive. Measures in both Arizona and Colorado were heavily defeated by 30-70 percent votes, even though polls showed a high degree of voter support

## Smart Growth Caucus

In the spring of 2000, a group of California legislators formed the Smart Growth Caucus, chaired by Assembly member Patricia Wiggins of Santa Rosa. As of March 2001, there were 34 members of the Caucus, including 24 committee chairs. This year, Caucus members and other legislators introduced a variety of bills addressing numerous smart growth topics. Here are five useful bills now before the state legislature.

**SB221** (Senator Kuehl) requires local governments to determine there is an adequate water supply for any project with more than 200 residential units before approving the development. (See *Linkages* #10)

**AB 857** (Assembly Member Wiggins) requires the Governor to prepare a State Environmental Goals and Policy Report by June 2003, with a 20 year vision for the state and specific Smart Growth goals. The goals include maximizing protection of open space through compact and contiguous development and infill redevelopment to revitalize existing developed areas. The plan would provide policy guidance to state agencies and both regional and local governments.

**AB 1514** (Assembly Member Canciamilla) requires local governments' General Plans include an Urban Growth Boundary delineating urban services limits for the next 20 years, plus policies encouraging development within this boundary. Jurisdictions that establish boundaries before a specific date would have priority consideration for state Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank funding. Factors affecting positioning of the boundary would include important agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and scenic resources.

**AB 1398** (Assembly Member Florez) establishes a Working Landscapes Stewardship Fund. This fund would provide private landowners with grants to conserve or restore native plant and wildlife values, fence off riparian areas, or restore streams and rivers. The author's interest is in rangelands, but the bill's language includes all private lands. It would provide matching funds for federal programs such as the USDA's EQIP program. Grants would be limited to lands having some protection from development, such as lands under Williamson Act contract.

**SB 984** (Senator Costa) creates the California Grazing Land Conservation Program Fund. This would provide grants for conservation easements, land improvement and planning, and technical assistance.

You can obtain current information on all bills before the California State Legislature at:

[www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/acsfameset2text.htm](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/acsfameset2text.htm)

in the summer. In both cases, interest groups opposed to the Smart Growth ballot measures ran very intensive and expensive media campaigns to swing public opinion.

The Arizona *Citizen's Growth Management Initiative* was the latest step in an ongoing effort. Citizens proposed a similar ballot for the 1998 election and in response the state legislature passed the Growing Smarter Act. This required local governments to obtain voter approval of land use plans & allowed them to establish Urban Services Boundaries and incentives for urban redevelopment, as well as additional optional planning measures. Smart Growth proponents, seeing inadequate progress, placed the latest initiative on the November 2000 ballot. It required adoption of Urban Growth Boundaries and that developers pay the full costs of growth-induced public services. Initially the measure had 68 percent support according to the Arizona Republic, before a \$4 million campaign by real estate and construction interests reversed that support.

Colorado, another state with major problems from rapid growth, did not see any progress toward Smart Growth laws by the state legislature. The *Citizens' Responsible Growth Initiative* would have required municipalities to delineate growth areas which would need voter approval for their establishment and future modification. It would require governments to provide information on the impacts of growth. In June 2000 it had an overwhelming 78% support, despite the opposition of local governments. Opposing interest groups launched a \$6 million media campaign and there was a huge loss of public support.

Another example of the difficulties in changing growth patterns came from Oregon, where voters passed a takings measure that allows property owners to obtain payments from governments when state or local regulation restrict the use or value of their property. The measure specifically identified requirements to "protect, provide or preserve wildlife habitat, natural areas, wetlands, ecosystems, scenery, open space, historical, archaeological or cultural resources or low income housing."

Metropolitan residents opposed the measure, while rural residents gave overwhelming support and it passed by 53 to 47 percent. It would make it impossible to implement the state's land use laws. Opponents filed suit and a judge blocked the measure in December 2000. Pending monetary claims against governments include a restaurant regarding a smoking ordinance, a gravel company for denial of a mining permit, and an individual because of a restriction on the number of cats in a property

## California Ballot Measures

Growth management ballot measures have been popular in California city and county elections for many years. While the number dropped substantially during the 1990's economic downturn, it was up markedly in November 2000. William Fulton and colleagues have analyzed the measures from 1986 - 2000. These measures include both slow growth and pro growth. Last November, voters approved limits to growth in 66% of the cases.

Most of this ballot activity has been in the San Francisco Bay area and the Los Angeles - San Diego region. San Diego saw a big swing to ballot measures being pro-growth during the 1996-2000 period. But the main areas where voters favor pro-growth measures and give less support to slow growth are the Sierra Nevada and far northern California.

Since 1995 there has been a growing number of urban growth boundary measures. Most have been in Alameda, Sonoma and Ventura Counties, where they have met with a high degree of success. The notable exception to support is in San Luis Obispo, where two measures have been on the ballot and both were defeated.

November 2000 also saw a distressing result for Placer Legacy, an ambitious open space program. This County wide effort to protect open space, based on the 1994 General Plan, has been supported by a broad array of interests including environmental and business groups. With very rapid growth in South Placer county, and a burgeoning high tech industry, future quality of life is a major issue. In 2000, the Placer County Supervisors approved the details of a Placer Legacy program and put two funding measures on the ballot. One measure increased the county sales tax, with the proceeds going to the general fund (in order to avoid the 2/3 vote requirement.) The second measure called for spending of these new monies on implementation of Placer Legacy. While the latter passed, the sales tax measure got less than 30 percent of the vote, despite the broad support.

## Lessons From These Activities

Myers and Puentes drew a number of conclusions from their study of November 2000 ballot measures. They see a need to include provision of affordable housing in growth measures, to take a metropolitan rather than an individual municipality approach, and to align urban, suburban, and rural constituencies. "In order to fundamentally change growth patterns, citizens and

urban, suburban and rural constituencies. "In order to fundamentally change growth patterns, citizens and public officials need to think in broader terms than preserving or expanding green infrastructure or open space. Land preservation needs to be planned strategic-ally and, where possible, linked with suburban and central city revitalization." It is also apparent that supporters of Smart Growth and conservation of open space need to build much broader and deeper support, so that voters are not easily swayed by opposing media blitzes.



## Further Information

Fulton W et.al. (2000) *Trends in Local Land Use Ballot Measures, 1986-2000*. Solimar Research Group, Ventura, CA. [www.solimar.org](http://www.solimar.org)

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Myers P and Puentes P (2001) *Growth at the Ballot Box: Electing the Shape of Communities in November 2000*. The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, Washington, DC. [www.brook.edu/urban](http://www.brook.edu/urban)

## REVIEW : THE REGIONAL CITY

### *The Regional City : Planning for the End of Sprawl*

Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton  
Island Press (2001) [www.islandpress.com](http://www.islandpress.com)

This is perhaps the most important planning book to appear in many years. Everybody involved in land use issues, including elected officials, planners, developers and citizens, should read and ponder this book. It sets out an optimistic and inspiring vision of how to provide for the overall health of metro regions in 21st Century, how we can revitalize our cities and older suburbs, rethink new suburbs, protect open space, and address key issues of social inequity.

The authors examine the shortcomings of sprawl, defined as low densities, segregation of uses, and auto orientation. They believe "that the United States is in a transition to a new paradigm of growth." They propose a new strategy that focuses on regional and neighborhood scales.

**"The emergence of regionalism is clearly upon us"**

The basis of their regional strategy is a physical design for how the region should look, urban growth boundaries, and key actions to revitalize all parts of the region such as tax sharing, revived mass transit and affordable housing. It includes regional design for conserving agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas and community

separators - a demanding requirement under the best of circumstances, let alone the real world of competing views on land use and very imperfect understanding of the needs of Nature.

The future of cities, suburbs and neighborhoods all figure prominently in this work. There is a vision of revitalizing suburbs, moving them away from a world of big box retail and strip commercial served by congested arterial roads to a human scale of village and town centers. These centers would have concentrations of jobs and housing, and be walkable.

A significant portion of *The Regional City* examines efforts in various locales around the nation , including state efforts to further regionalism. The two most inspiring stories come from the Salt Lake City and Seattle metropolitan areas with the Envision Utah project (see page 3) and Vision 2020 respectively.

Around 1990, The Puget Sound Council of Governments developed Vision 2020 for the Seattle area. The state already required that environmental protection be the preeminent focus of local planning and had severely limited development in coastal areas. Also King County had lost 2/3 of its farmland between 1945 and 1975, county voters had approved a farmland protection bond measure in 1979, and in the mid 1980's these voters stopped downtown high rise construction

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In 1991 the state legislature set down four growth management goals for local planners, including a focus on Urban Growth Areas contiguous to existing urbanization, protection of important rural lands, and a requirement for a regional growth management plan for the three county Seattle area. The law aided implementation of Vision 2020, which became the regional plan. After 10 years there is a real shift toward a regional city and major changes in the pattern of development.

As with Calthorpe's earlier work *The Next American Metropolis*, this book benefits from a large number of color maps and design drawings, as well as a variety of compelling descriptions of how to change planning. And by proposing a shift from traditional comprehensive plans plus zoning systems to a system based on places and vision, they give us the possibility of extensive citizen involvement in delineating the future of our neighborhoods, towns and regions.

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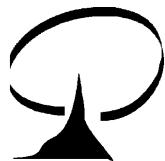
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