

compact  
for a sustainable ventura county

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# Introduction

We are pleased to present the draft Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County. This Compact, a voluntary agreement to address county-wide issues, was developed in a multi-stakeholder collaborative process overseen and coordinated by the Ventura Council of Governments, Ventura Transportation Commission, Ventura County Civic Alliance, and the Southern California Association of Governments.

The local governments in Ventura County have overcome a number of county-wide growth-related issues in the past. By agreeing to work together toward shared goals we've grown in an orderly fashion, prevented further sprawl, and maintained our agricultural heritage.

However, challenges loom for us, among them:

- How do we do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to stabilize the world climate?
- Given the temporary status of many of our growth management tools, are we ready to effectively make the next round of growth management decisions?
- How do we ensure our residents and employees will be able to travel about the county and thus keep our economy strong if we experience one or both of two likely transportation challenges: 1) crippling congestion on major roadways, and/or 2) substantial increases or spikes in oil prices?
- Are we content with the transit system we have in place?
- How do we ensure our housing stock is in line with the buying power of our residents and the housing needs of our aging population?

This process to date has focused on developing a particular method to jointly address these and other challenges— a Compact voluntary agreement between local governments. However, before we engage in a Compact, we must decide if we are willing to engage in any form of more formal or structured collaboration than we currently do. A council of governments (COG) is useful for the range of business it currently addresses. But it may not be the best forum to work through issues that are controversial or need to involve non-governmental groups. This report looks at some platforms to collaborate that would complement our COG, both at example compact agreements and at other potential collaborative structures.

## THE OPEN DOOR OF THE COMPACT PROCESS

In a two-phase process, our sponsors have opened the door to ideas from all quarters about how to solve our serious long-term county-wide challenges, and explored through simulations how these various strategies might play out long term and affect our lives.

While the number of participants may not reflect county-wide sentiments, they represent a broad number of interests from across the county including many of the County's most actively engaged residents.

## WHY WAS A COMPACT EXPLORED?

A compact is a voluntary agreement to band together to address challenges that can't effectively be solved by just one or two local governments acting alone. A compact helps cities engage in the actions they want to pursue to help address county-wide challenges, but don't for a variety of reasons. For example, a city might not tackle an issue because:

1. The prospects of success are low, like maintaining the viability of Ventura County farming when nearby cities aren't keeping sprawl in check,
2. Because the issue simply can't be addressed by one city alone, such as creating a great county transit system,
3. Because strategies to address the issue might create local controversy, like choosing to grow more in the heart of a city instead of at the edge of town.

In response to these obstacles, a compact can 1) increase the prospects of success in addressing an issue by bringing more hands to do the work, 2) effectively tackle issues that simply require coordination, and 3) counterbalance local controversy with multiparty, county-wide support.

## WHAT'S IN THIS REPORT

This Phase II report of the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County is a companion to the Phase I document that outlines in detail some of the key regional challenges we face in Ventura County. This document has four sections:

1. **Exploring Alternative Futures** looks at a range of scenarios, simulations of the future of the County, that were introduced and explored in the open public process for the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County. What

might each scenario mean for long-term quality of life in the county, and which of the ideas conveyed in these scenarios did residents most favor?

2. **Setting the Table for Collaboration** explores best practices from across the country in which collaborative techniques were used to solve challenges similar to what we face in Ventura County.
3. **The Case for Ventura County-wide Collaboration** outlines some of Ventura County's key challenges and makes the case for collaborating to address these challenges. The companion Phase I report provides more detail on these and other key regional challenges.
4. **Next Steps toward a Regional Collaboration** is the conclusion to this report. It outlines recommended next steps for the Compact process and introduces the working Compact, a living document subject to change as it is considered by multiple jurisdictions and organizations.

## Draft Compact Agreement

The draft Compact agreement is under separate cover so it can be easily modified. The draft Compact agreement outlines a vision to address key regional challenges; asks organizations to advance the vision; engages partners in an effort to further understand growth, economic, transportation, environmental, and sustainability issues and how they might be better addressed through collaboration; and recommends a package of strategic commitments to meet those challenges and put Ventura County on a more sustainable path.

To improve the likelihood of county-wide consensus, the Compact's Phase II working group has endorsed the draft Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County voluntary agreement as a framework that should be modified to meet the needs of the collaborating parties.

## THE COMPACT, PHASE III?

More important than the Compact voluntary agreement are the questions we must answer about ongoing collaboration:

- Do we desire a new platform for collaboration that is appropriate for the challenges we are and will face?
- Do we want to build a coalition that reaches beyond government?

A new third phase of this effort will be conducted if there are some interests in the county that say yes to these questions. A third phase would focus more on the structure of a coalition than on the specific substantive language of the Compact. In short, the next phase would be a direct conversation with many of Ventura County's leaders about the role for regional collaboration in improving the county's future.

We encourage local government and other organizations to join this conversation about the role of a strong coalition of interests, and a new platform, in creating a more sustainable Ventura County. How can we shape the structure of a coalition and perhaps the final version of the Compact to be useful and effective enough that you will consider being a partner?

# Executive Summary

## 1) EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR VENTURA COUNTY

In a two-phase process, the sponsors of the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County have opened the door to ideas from all quarters about which long-term countywide challenges we should address collectively and how to solve them.

### Map-the-Future Workshops

In a series of mapping workshops, 350 residents brainstormed how the future of the county ought to unfold. At the start of the workshop participants—and respondents to an online questionnaire—were asked to name the top challenges faced in the county.

Their top three issues in order of importance are:

1. housing costs,
2. traffic congestion, and
3. loss of open space or agriculture.

Here are the key themes that emerged from the 47 group workshop maps that were produced by workshop participants:

- **Keep Our Growth Boundaries** - One of the clearest themes from the workshops was the desire to continue using growth boundaries in Ventura County
- **Grow Up, Not Out** - A majority of groups explored adding people and jobs in town—in existing downtowns or along commercial streets—in addition to exploring changes on currently vacant land.
- **More Moderately Priced Housing Choices** - Most groups explored a mix of homes that included more townhouses, condos, and apartments than what has been built recently in the county.
- **Expand Public Transportation** - A strong majority of workshop groups explored placement of more new public transportation routes rather than expanded or new roadways.
- **Center Our Growth** - A strong percentage of groups also placed areas which mix employment, shopping, and housing in a pedestrian-friendly setting on their maps. These were often placed near new or existing public transportation routes

### Scenarios

These themes and the range of ideas from the workshops were put together in three scenarios—alternate stories about how the future might unfold. The scenarios vary from each other as they explore a variety of ideas --their purpose is to present competing approaches to see what type of course changes residents favor.

The three scenarios range from having 60% to 35% of new housing in single-unit homes, 10% to 40% of development occurring in town, 25% of growth occurring outside existing growth boundaries to all growth occurring within our existing growth boundaries. Transportation ideas vary from a balance of road and transit investments to exploring a substantial increase in transit investment in the county.

### Summits

Some 280 residents participated in Sustainability Summits or via an online questionnaire held in April 2010, to review the three scenarios and how they might impact quality of life over the coming decades. A series of questions were posed to understand elements of the future most desired by participants. A majority of participants favored Scenario 3 as their overall preferred approach to the future of the county.

More important than this overall preference was how they responded to the variety of growth-related issues discussed in these meetings. Here are the key findings of the Sustainability Summits. Participants favored:

- Reusing land in town in order to maintain growth boundaries  
While an overwhelming 94% supported the continued use of growth boundaries, 69% also said growth boundaries should remain as they are. Participants acknowledged that more growth would need to be accommodated by infill and redevelopment to maintain existing boundaries. 79% also supported reducing major barriers to reusing land for new homes or jobs. Barriers include unnecessarily high parking requirements, restrictions on development intensity, long or uncertain planning review time frames, and restrictions on development near transit stations.
- A shift toward more small-lot single-unit homes, townhomes, and multiunit homes  
83% of participants favored a shift in housing development toward more small-lot, single-unit homes, townhomes, and multi-unit homes than what we currently build.

- Investing in fixed-guideway public transportation to bypass traffic congestion  
Participants favored bus rapid transit and rail -- forms of public transportation that bypass congestion, even if it meant fewer transit routes. 84% felt that there should be as much or more investment in public transportation than in roads.

- Supporting transit with appropriate near-transit development  
85% of participants favored a “substantial increase” in the intensity of offices and housing near transit to enable an expanded high-capacity public transportation system in Ventura County.

80% also supported the idea of a consolidated transit system where routes and service schedules are integrated to maximize transit ridership.

- Balance jobs with housing and housing with jobs  
86% agreed that housing options in each part of the county should match the needs of the people who work in that area. In addition, 42% would like to encourage job growth where housing already exists to reduce commuting.

- Coordinate open space efforts countywide  
66% said we should have an overall open space district that utilizes a dedicated revenue stream to achieve countywide open space goals. 62% would agree to some sort of tax increase for the purchase of open space.

- Further study improving efficiency of new buildings  
A minority of 37 percent supported efforts to require higher levels of efficiency for new buildings. However, 91 percent felt that the idea should be studied further to understand the costs versus the benefits.

## 2) SETTING THE TABLE FOR COLLABORATION

Perhaps more important than the strategies we choose to follow is how local governments and other parties interact with each other as we collaborate. As we consider how best to organize regional collaboration we must not infringe on the rights of local government to make their own decisions. And yet there are a variety of methods to improve formal collaboration between jurisdictions while maintaining local sovereignty. Further, a regional challenge with multiple dimensions may require not only collaboration among local governments, but among private and civic sectors as well.

A regional collaboration works across existing geographic and political boundaries and institutional barriers. Regional collaboratives bring together a diverse group of constituents and leaders to create goals for the region and design strategies that implement collective, effective, measurable results. Regional collaboratives work when they are built on a foundation of credibility and trust between members.

Typically, regional collaboratives are alliances of leading government and nongovernment organizations that provide direct access to and through the region’s civic and community resources. These alliances are not a “one size fits all” proposition; they take a variety of forms. Below are three different models of regional collaboration.

- A Compact - In some regions, the platform is a multisector agreement among existing governance partners—a tangible, interdependent set of actions in the form of a written agreement.
- A Forum - In other cases, partners create an ongoing multisector forum or network for developing collaborative solutions.
- An Organization - In still other cases, a new multisector organization is created as a new collaborative structure, a separate entity that acts as a broker of multisector agreements among governance partners.

### Compact key examples

#### Denver’s Mile High Compact

The Mile High Compact (MHC) was created through the effort of a working group of elected officials, city managers, senior planners from Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and the Metro Mayors Caucus. It was a voluntary effort, creating and signing the agreement was a slow process that spanned over 10 years. At the initial signing in 2000, 30 of the 55 communities in the Denver area signed the MHC. As of 2008, 44 of the 55 municipalities—88 percent of the population—had signed. As part of the MHC, they commit to meet annually to evaluate its effectiveness and to consider modifications.

Here are a few of the lessons to be learned from Denver’s Mile High Compact.



- **Patience**

Establishing a regional compact can take time. It took eight years from the beginning of the Metro Vision process in 1992 to the initial signing of the MHC in 2000. Those years were spent establishing understanding, generating shared principles, and building trust. It took another eight years for the current +/- 90 percent of cities to sign on. As Ventura County explores a compact or other platform for regional collaboration, we should be patient and work to build mutual understanding and trust.

- **Organizational Structure before Content**

One idea for the Ventura County compact is to first establish a working organizational platform based on a willingness to work through compact draft language and implementation issues.

As we saw with the Denver's Metro Mayor's Cause, support from a prominent group of elected officials can give a compact an important initial impetus. One avenue for a Ventura County compact is to first establish a forum of elected officials willing to explore a compact further.

- **Prioritize the Collaborative Structure**

The Mile High Compact has been long lasting and powerful because it has focused on an ongoing process of collaboration more than on pinpointing current issues. As issues and concerns evolve, the collaborative structure established or strengthened in the compact has met the challenge.

### **Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area**

Unlike Denver's process, the Bay Area's Compact includes multisector parties. It benefits from broad support that includes business, economic development, environmental, transportation organizations, and local governments. Individual local governments are not members of the alliance that endorsed this compact, but the Association of Bay Area Governments is a member party.

The Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area (CSBA) was established to serve as a framework for action to guide but not prescribe regional and local planning and decision making and to motivate government, employers, civic organizations, and individuals in cooperative efforts that will lead to a more sustainable region.

Here are a few of the lessons to be learned from the Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area:

- **Use a Multisector Approach**

The explicit involvement of businesses, nonprofits, and other nongovernmental agencies in the drafting and indeed implementation of a compact could add momentum to the process and strengthen the end product, especially if local government does not show strong initial interest in the final phase.

- **Start with an Agreement in Principle**

By first working to develop an "agreement in principle" in the draft CSBA, the Bay Area Alliance was able to involve a number of key parties, notably local governments, in the further development of the draft. This ostensibly increased acceptance for the CSBA as governments saw their ideas and concerns directly addressed while the draft was fleshed out.

- **Recommendations Developed by Small Working Groups**

The Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area began as an alliance between key business holders, nonprofits, and regional government entities. This unique approach established five working caucuses and six working groups to ensure a broad cross-section of perspectives and representation from different sectors.

### **Forum key examples**

#### **Example: Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus**

In Chicago, Mayor Richard Daley established the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (Caucus) to develop a common vision for the region. The Caucus unites 272 mayors from six counties in the Chicago area. The Caucus cooperates with leaders from the private, nonprofit, and public sectors to tackle common regional issues such as economic development, air quality, affordable housing, and electrical service reliability.

- **Credible to Government, but Not of It**

Though the Caucus was rooted in a governmental perspective, it did not pretend to speak on behalf of all cities and towns in the region. The Caucus represented the mayors and not the overall local governments the way the Ventura Council of Governments does. Thus, the Caucus was highly credible to local governments but was also free enough from the burden of direct local government representation to proactively explore key issues. The Caucus did not focus on developing any specific, reciprocal commitment like a compact, but rather focused on improving understanding and abilities to address common issues, starting with effective regional economic development. The strength of the 272 mayors by itself made the organization noteworthy

and credible both as a voice for local governments and as a force to be considered as state legislation is developed.

### **New Organization key examples**

To be effective in developing solutions to inter-jurisdictional challenges, Ventura County needs a coalition of interested parties. Bringing a substantial number of stakeholders together presents a considerable challenge that few coalitions have overcome. There may be differences in goals, distrust between parties, or the idea of direct collaboration between governments on land use and other locally driven issues is seen as too controversial. Local governments can be unwilling to give coordination power to an existing entity, such as a council of governments (COG), because it is seen as tantamount to letting other local governments determine the fate of your own local government.

A governmental organization, like a COG, has some built in challenges to assembling a coalition. There is little natural incentive for a COG to slowly build a coalition to address issues that are complex or have some controversial facets, which could hinder interest from some constituent cities. Further, a governmental organization, by its very nature, can experience difficulty attracting nongovernmental entities, such as business or environmental groups, to a coalition. Put simply, there is a question of neutrality. Some regions have utilized a nonprofit organization to fill the role as neutral facilitator between cities. The non-profit must be broadly trusted, have widespread appeal, and be credible as a neutral coalition builder.

#### **Example: Envision Utah**

Envision Utah has proven successful as a national model for coalition building to address growth—and planning—related challenges. Envision Utah is extraordinary in that it may not be a true coalition at all. A coalition forms around a common agenda, but Envision Utah began with an ironclad rule: it had no agenda. Instead, it involved as many people as possible—including, most importantly, powerful decision makers (like the Chicago Mayors Caucus)—in defining what the region's agenda should be.

- **A Coalition-Building Model**

The Envision Utah coalition-building model is a consensus model in which the various parties are brought under one umbrella coalition and bargain for a mutually agreeable solution. Consensus is hard to reach, however, among such a large and diverse group. One key to success is to create the coalition before generating a vision or agenda for the future of the region and to include the coalition in the

generation of the vision. The Envision Utah coalition was asked not to support an agenda but to create an agenda. Because a broad base of stakeholders created Envision Utah's vision for the region's future, implementation has met less resistance than have the efforts of other coalitions. The list of partners is so comprehensive that almost no one who could conceivably successfully oppose the effort is left out.

### **3) THE CASE FOR VENTURA COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION**

We all benefit when we consider consequences outside our city even as we plan what's inside. Consider these examples relevant to Ventura County:

- **A More Competitive Economy**

Businesses tend to cluster in metropolitan areas where they can draw upon resources provided at the regional level, such as transportation infrastructure, research and technology, skilled labor, and supplier networks. A good illustration of this phenomenon in and near Ventura County is the biotechnology industry. The so-called 101 Biotech Corridor stretches from roughly Camarillo to Westgate Village, beyond the reach of one city. Its continued growth will partly rest on the ability of local governments to maintain or improve the quality of life that attracts the highly skilled labor that works in the biotech industry, partly on our ability to meet the freight and workforce transportation needs of this industry, and partly on our ability to ensure we have sufficient space planned and zoned for industry expansion. It will take the efforts of more than one city to meet these industry needs.

- **A Robust and Resilient Housing Market**

According to demographic projections prepared by planners in Ventura County for SCAG, the age group that will experience the biggest increase over the coming decades is that of residents over age 65. Part of the challenge we'll face in Ventura County is what happens to the homes that older residents sell as they downsize. The typical buyers for these typically large, expensive properties are in the 45- to 65-year-old age range which will number less than half the growth of the over-65 age category in Ventura County. Thus, sellers of expensive homes will outnumber of buyers of expensive homes roughly two to one. How will our housing market react when a large number of these expensive properties come on the market over the coming decades? Housing policies, via general plans and zoning, need to be set based on a look into the market shifts expected in

the coming decades and not just based on meeting state requirements like the Regional Housing Needs Assessment targets (RHNA).

- **Keeping Growth Well Managed**

The separation between cities that we enjoy today is a product of past inter-jurisdictional coordination, both from the Guidelines for Orderly Development and from SOAR. Consider how the county would be different today if a few cities had adopted these growth management strategies but most did not.

And yet these past battles against sprawl did not permanently resolve the issues. Many of the SOAR growth boundaries will sunset between 2020 and 2030, and currently more than 600,000 acres of open space and agricultural land are not covered by these protections. Between now and 2020, a coordinated effort between the county and cities is needed to have continued success managing growth.

- **A Growth Management Opportunity**

There are efforts underway to identify and conserve important wildlife and open land connections between the Los Padres National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains. These open land connections should be identified based on the character of the landscape, not on the location of political boundaries. As we think together about how to continue to be effective in managing growth, we can broaden our goals to include the conservation of important linkages. This means agreeing which linkages are most important and developing mechanisms and money to preserve land. To be successful, both the ongoing management of growth and coordinated efforts to conserve cross-county landscape linkages need to be accomplished by cities and Ventura County working together.

- **The Chicken-and-Egg Quandary of Transit Investment**

An increased investment in transit, especially if a large percentage were federal dollars, appears to be publicly supported in Ventura County. The challenge in Ventura County is that we have roughly half the per-capita revenue source for transit. We need outside sources of revenue to improve or expand our county transit system.

However, in order to justify a federal investment in transit facilities, there needs to be enough potential riders near potential transit stations. The first step in attracting more homes and businesses near transit is by changing plans and zoning to enable the growth. The catch-22 for a community that wishes to increase the likelihood of a transit investment is this: If one city were to increase allowable intensities significantly along their potential stations, but none of the

other cities along the proposed route followed-suit, then the overall increase in intensities along the line may not make a transit investment justifiable. Further, the one city would not likely increase allowable intensities significantly, and work through the controversies that a significant change always brings, unless there was a high likelihood that it would be rewarded with a plan for a large, near-term, transit investment. In order to bring about a transportation system change – that costs substantial sums of money and thus must be well justified – we must be willing to work together. If one city along a potential transit line knows that the other nearby cities have committed in principle to supporting transit along the proposed line, it will be much more willing to consider changes.

- **Energy Independence and Climate Stability**

Individual buildings have a significant impact on energy use, water use, and the consumption of raw materials. Many of these impacts last not just during the first homebuyer's residency, roughly 10 years, but over the lifetime of the structure—sometimes greater than 100 years. The costs and benefits of a change in high-performance building standards in the county needs more study. If a change made sense, a benefit of banding together to implement higher building standards is that no city puts itself at a competitive disadvantage for economic growth against other cities in the county.

#### **4) NEXT STEPS TOWARD A REGIONAL COLLABORATION**

Phase II of this effort is a good nucleus of input and a sound basis for a working draft Compact.

Here are suggested next steps for the Compact process presented in the general order in which they should be addressed.

##### **Endorse the Draft Compact as a Framework**

The Phase II Steering Committee should endorse the draft Compact as a framework that includes appropriate issues to discuss and refine further.

The draft Compact can then be used to organize further input as we turn to strengthening a coalition of interests. Capture ideas and modifications of a number of key parties, notably local governments, in the framework of the draft Compact. This ostensibly will increase acceptance for the Compact as parties see their ideas and concerns addressed as the draft is clarified.

##### **Focus on Strengthening the Coalition**

The process is still wide open. Sponsors and champions from Phases I and II should invite other parties to join the effort as a "Friend of the Compact." Participation from city and county leaders has not been strong in the first two phases of the Compact. In order for a regional collaboration to have staying power, we need to focus on building a strong coalition. By supporting the Compact process as a "Friend of the Compact," an organization simply agrees to work in good faith to 1) define a useful platform or structure for regional collaboration and 2) help refine the framework of issues in the draft Compact into something they are willing to seriously consider. Establishing many Friends of the Compact is a way to establish momentum, and get many key parties at the table to help list the issues and solutions the Compact will incorporate.

##### **Invite Multiple Sectors to the Table**

To date, the emphasis on which potential parties might join a Compact agreement has been on local government. This should be explicitly broadened to emphasize multiple-sector involvement. In addition to local governments, nonprofit organizations, business organizations, and citizen groups should be invited to sign on as a Friend of the Compact. The purpose in the short term is to increase momentum and interest in the Compact process. In the longer run, more nongovernmental friends may increase the effectiveness of the coalition in addressing issues of mutual, regional concern. This means that the language of the Compact may need to be broadened to include advocacy actions that are more appropriate for nongovernmental entities. One approach is for the Friends of the Compact to work with business community leaders to learn what they need to be more successful. This may be a useful way to include the private sector and may also provide insights that are of interest to many public sector leaders.

##### **Take the Show on the Road**

Part of step 3 requires seeking input on regional collaboration and the Compact with every local government regardless of whether they are currently a Friend of the Compact.

##### **Establish the Platform for Collaboration**

The Friends of the Compact should establish the platform for collaboration. Some of these options are in this document, but they include: Utilizing or pivoting off an existing governmental organization that has a countywide role. Creating or inviting an existing nonprofit to be the facilitating

entity of the regional collaborative. Establishing a "credible to government, but not of it" organization, such as a mayors caucus. What these options have in common is that each has an entity that is responsible for the logistics of coordination and helping the collaborative move its business forward. In the absence of a responsible coordinating party regional collaboratives weaken and die over time. Other options than these may be appropriate.

##### **Refine the Language of the Compact Voluntary Agreement**

The Friends of the Compact should turn their attention to the language and content of the Compact unless step #4 suggests a different direction.

##### **Invite Organizations to commit to the Compact Voluntary Agreement**

Invite Friends of the Compact and other organizations to commit to the Compact voluntary agreement – to become a Partner. Some patience is necessary to increase the base of participation or the size of the coalition before moving to this step. A sign of success is that many organizations are participating as a "Friend of the Compact" and that these organizations feel ownership over the details of the Compact voluntary agreement.

#### **THE DRAFT COMPACT: A FRAMEWORK FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

The Compact document that is attached is a draft, but one that has thought and momentum behind it. It is the product of an extensive and open public process and the thoughtful consideration of a steering committee. And it is just a place to start a more focused dialogue. In the third and final phase of the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County, we encourage cities and organizations to join a countywide conversation about how to create a more sustainable future by refining or augmenting the vision and actions in the draft Compact. While the draft Compact represents many voices, the final Compact will aim to represent the county as a whole. We invite you to become a "Friend of the Compact" to work with other local governments and organizations in good faith to 1) define a useful platform for regional collaboration—a structure to discuss countywide issues and responses to them and 2) help refine the framework of issues in the draft Compact into something you are willing to seriously consider supporting.





# Exploring Alternative Futures for Ventura County

compad



## Exploring Alternative Futures for Ventura County

Part of the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County process was learning what residents value as they picture the long-term future of the county. What do they think are the best strategies to maintain quality of life and improve the sustainability of Ventura County?

In a series of workshops, residents brainstormed about how the future of the county ought to unfold. Their ideas were put together in a range of simulations or scenarios—alternate stories about how the future might unfold. Scenarios are not competing master plans for the county. Rather, they help us think through the consequences of decisions we might make today about how our communities grow and change; the types of investments we might make in roads, transit, and trails; and what steps we take to address the future of farmland and open land in the county.

For this reason, the Compact’s scenarios explore the county at one million people, about 20 percent greater than today’s population. Estimates for when this population might be reached vary based on assumptions. Some say 2025, some 2030, some 2040. If growth in Ventura County only came from our kids and grandkids staying here—with no in-migration—one million would likely be reached shortly after 2040. While the speed of growth is not certain, the fact of growth is. If we choose to address it head-on with a long-term game plan we can improve the sustainability of the county as a whole.

### SCENARIOS GROWN FROM GRASSROOTS

The scenarios explored in the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County process were generated by summarizing results from residents in a series of mapping workshops.

In the fall of 2009, residents attended six Map-the-Future workshops, where they mapped out their own pictures of what they’d like life to be like in Ventura County with an additional 200,000 residents. Together with a similar workshop held in 2007, about 350 residents participated in the workshops, representing residents from each quadrant of the county.

### Sustainability Means Taking the Long View

Planning for a sustainable future means ensuring that environmental impacts, the health of the economy, and the quality of life for residents of all backgrounds and income levels can be maintained or improved over time. Planning for sustainability is fundamentally making things work better over the long term. Short-term thinking or analysis simply doesn’t help us determine if our trends and plans are sustainable.



Ventura County shares common issues with Santa Barbara and Los Angeles County



**EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES**

These workshops, combined with one held in 2007, resulted in 47 maps, each representing ideas from a small group of county residents.

**KEY THEMES FROM MAP-THE-FUTURE WORKSHOPS**

In the Map-the-Future workshops, groups were asked to consider how cities and towns might change if 200,000 more people came to Ventura County—Where might they live and work, how would they get around, what would happen to farms and open lands?

This exercise of figuring out where, from a countywide perspective, 20 to 30 years of growth might occur forced participants to consider which outcomes matter most.

At the start of the workshop participants—and respondents to an online questionnaire—were asked to name the top challenges faced in the county. This gives us an indication of what issues brought them to the workshop and what challenges they wished to address as they mapped out ideas for the future. Their top three issues from this questionnaire, in order of importance, are: 1) housing costs, 2) traffic congestion, and 3) loss of open space or agriculture. These concerns shaped how they responded to the challenge of where to place growth for the next 200,000 county residents

Here are the key themes that emerged from the 47 workshop groups when they mapped-out the future:

**Keep Our Growth Boundaries**

One of the clearest themes from the workshops was the desire to continue using growth boundaries in Ventura County. Some groups kept the boundaries as they are today, while others suggested various levels of expansion.

**Grow Up, Not Out**

A majority of groups explored adding people and jobs in town—in existing downtowns or along commercial streets—in addition to exploring changes on currently vacant land. This effort to grow more in already built-up areas appeared to be a means for participants to minimize the expansion of today’s growth boundaries.

**More Moderately Priced Housing Choices**

Most groups explored a mix of homes that included more townhouses, condos, and apartments than what has been built recently in the county. For reference, about 75 percent

of recent housing starts in the county have been single-unit homes.

**Expand Public Transportation**

A strong majority of workshop groups explored placement of more new public transportation routes rather than expanded or new roadways.

**Center Our Growth**

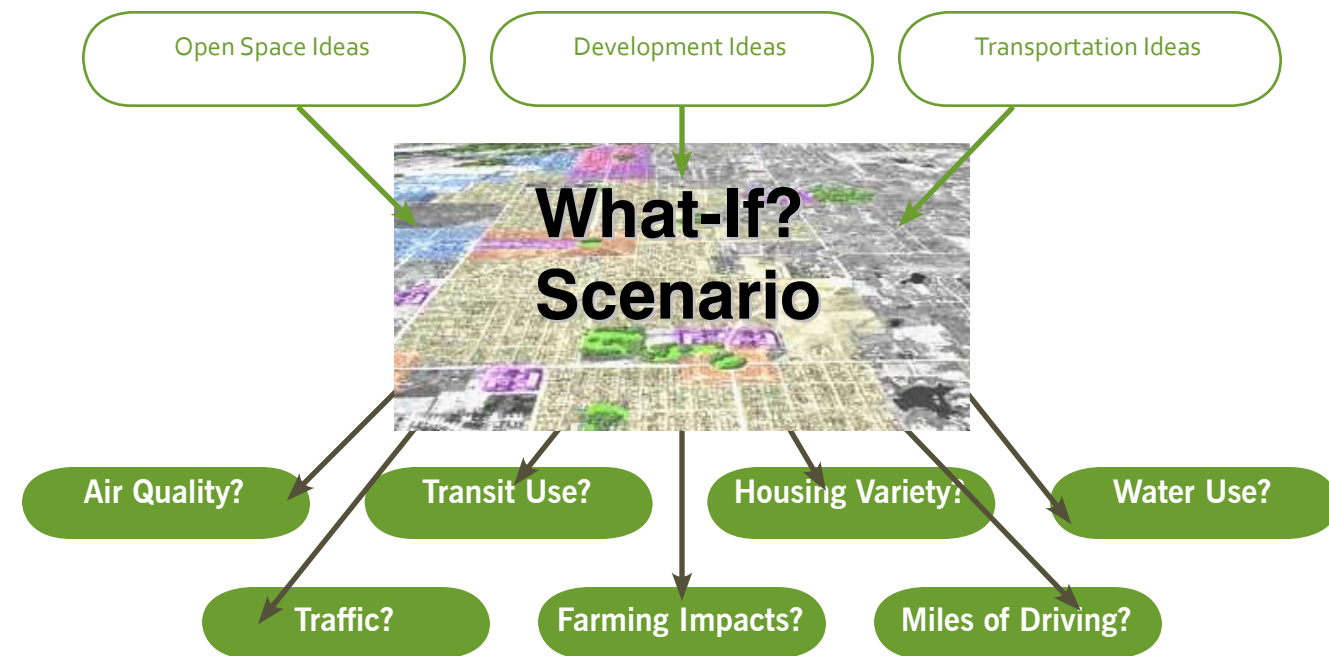
A strong percentage of groups also placed a number of ‘center’-type places on their maps. These areas, which mix employment, shopping, and housing in a pedestrian-friendly setting, were often placed near new or existing public transportation routes on participants’ maps.

**SIMULATING VENTURA COUNTY 1,000,000**

The range of workshop map results were summarized into three simulations of where the next generation of residents might live, work, and shop, and how they might travel around the county. These simulations retain the common themes and the diversity of input from the mapping workshops.

Scenarios enable us to explore alternative shapes and designs for our communities and get a sense of what the consequences might be for our quality of life—how much water we might need, how clear the air might be, or how far people might drive. As we think about the future, both what it looks like and how it might affect quality of life, we can determine the future we want to create overall for the county. After we clarify our desired future, we can identify and prioritize the steps we should take today to make that future happen. Using scenarios helps us make wise choices to explicitly shape the future we want for Ventura County.

Here are the three scenarios developed as a product of the Map-the-Future workshops and how they might impact quality of life:



Scenarios enable us to explore how various open space, development, and transit ideas might affect our quality of life in the future.







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### Scenario Centers

- City Center 
- Town Center 
- Village Center 
- Boulevard Community 




### Scenario Development Types

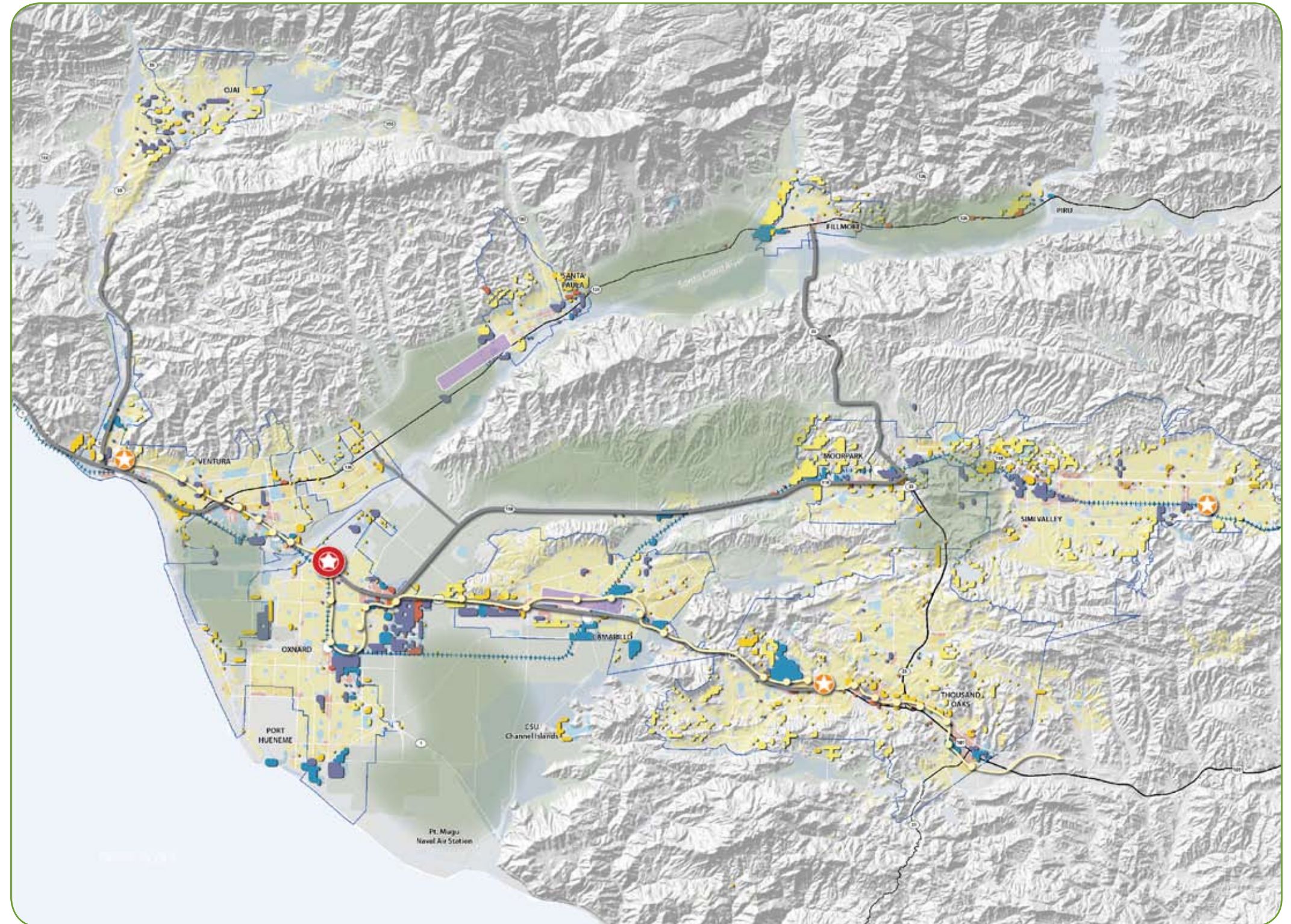
-  Town Residential
-  Village Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Highway Commercial
-  Office Area
-  Industrial Area

### Scenario Transportation Options

- Light Rail 
- Light Rail Station 
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) 
- BRT Station 
- Fast Bus 
- Fast Bus Station 
- Road Improvements 

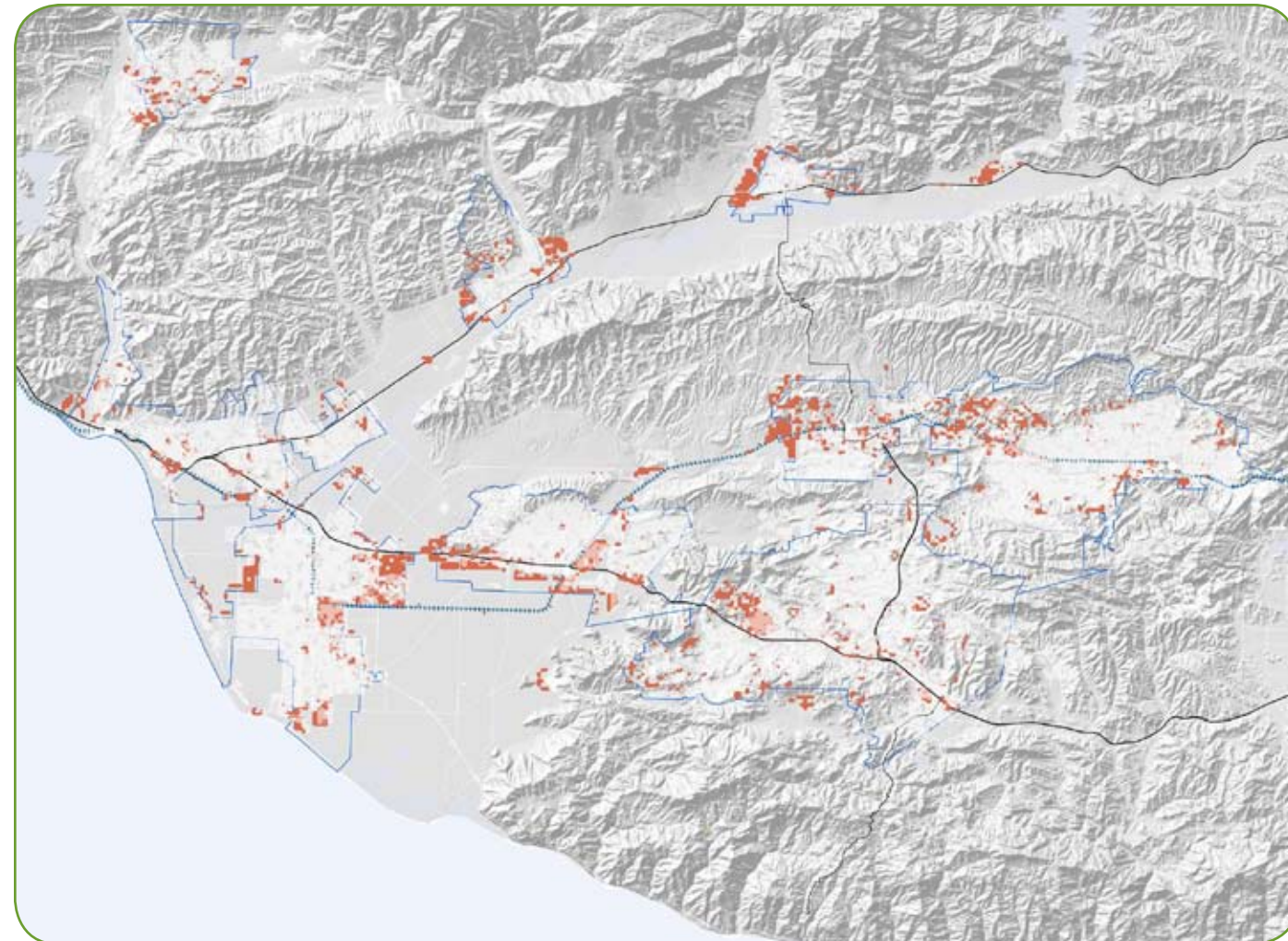
### Existing

-  Commercial
-  Office
-  Industrial
-  Civic
-  Single Unit Homes
-  Multi Unit Homes
-  Agriculture
-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  Current Growth Boundary



Scenario One





■ Infill and Redevelopment     ■ Development on vacant land



In scenario one most homes are single units on vacant land



The majority of transportation improvements in Scenario One are road expansions with some transit improvements.

## Scenario One

### PATTERNS OF GROWTH

Scenario One focuses on less dense development. Homes tend to be separated from shopping and jobs. Most of the new homes are single unit. The amount of new growth that occurs through redevelopment and infill is 7 percent for housing and 15 percent for employment. Overall consumption of vacant land is the highest (24 square miles) in this scenario, with 23 percent of future housing development and 29 percent of future employment development occurring outside urban growth boundaries.

### TRANSPORTATION







The majority of transportation improvements in Scenario One are road expansions with some transit improvements. These improvements result in 16 percent of housing and 18 percent of employment within a half mile of transit stations.










### Scenario Centers

- City Center 
- Town Center 
- Village Center 
- Boulevard Community 










### Scenario Development Types

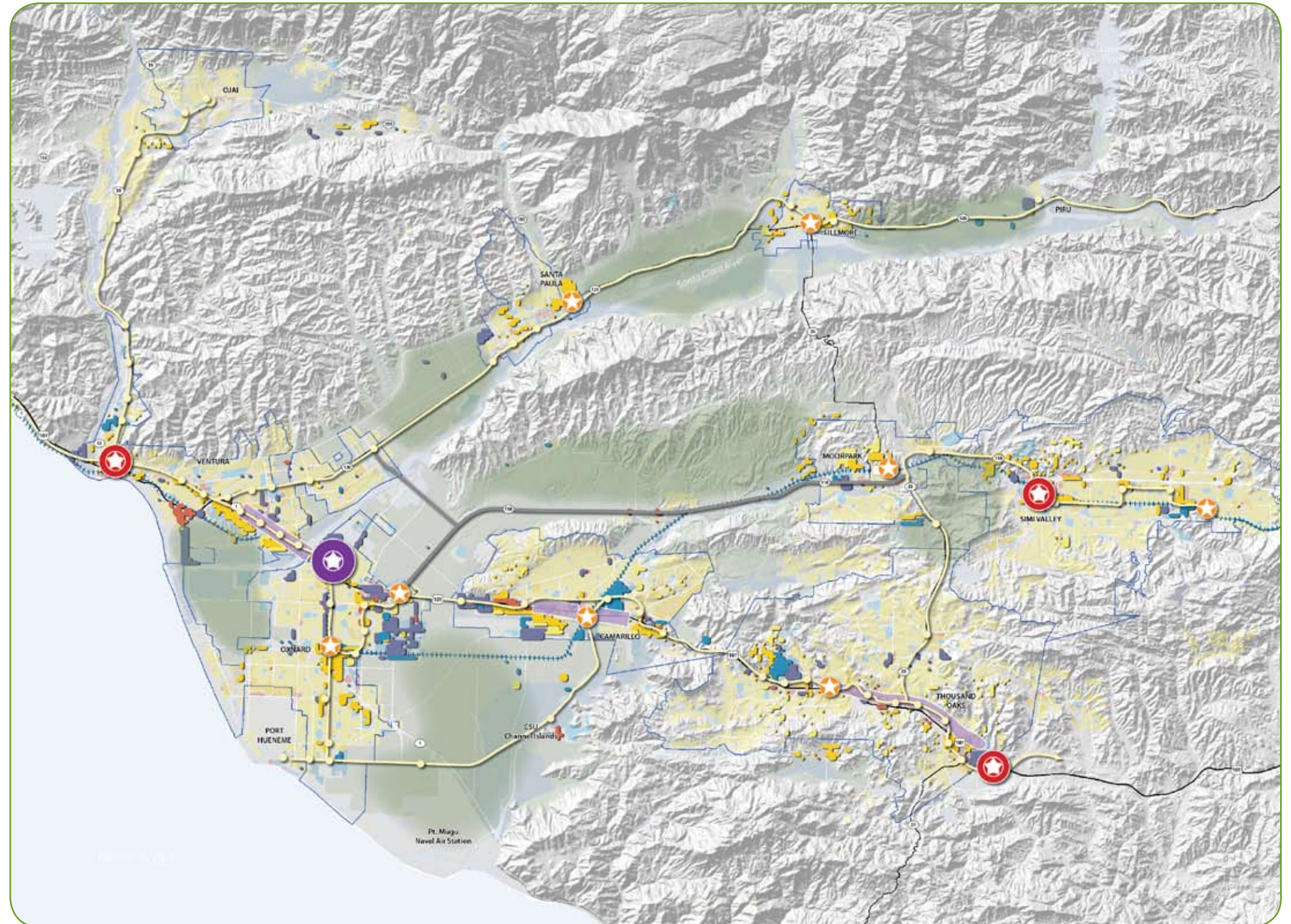
-  Town Residential
-  Village Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Highway Commercial
-  Office Area
-  Industrial Area

### Scenario Transportation Options

- Light Rail 
- Light Rail Station 
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) 
- BRT Station 
- Fast Bus 
- Fast Bus Station 
- Road Improvements 

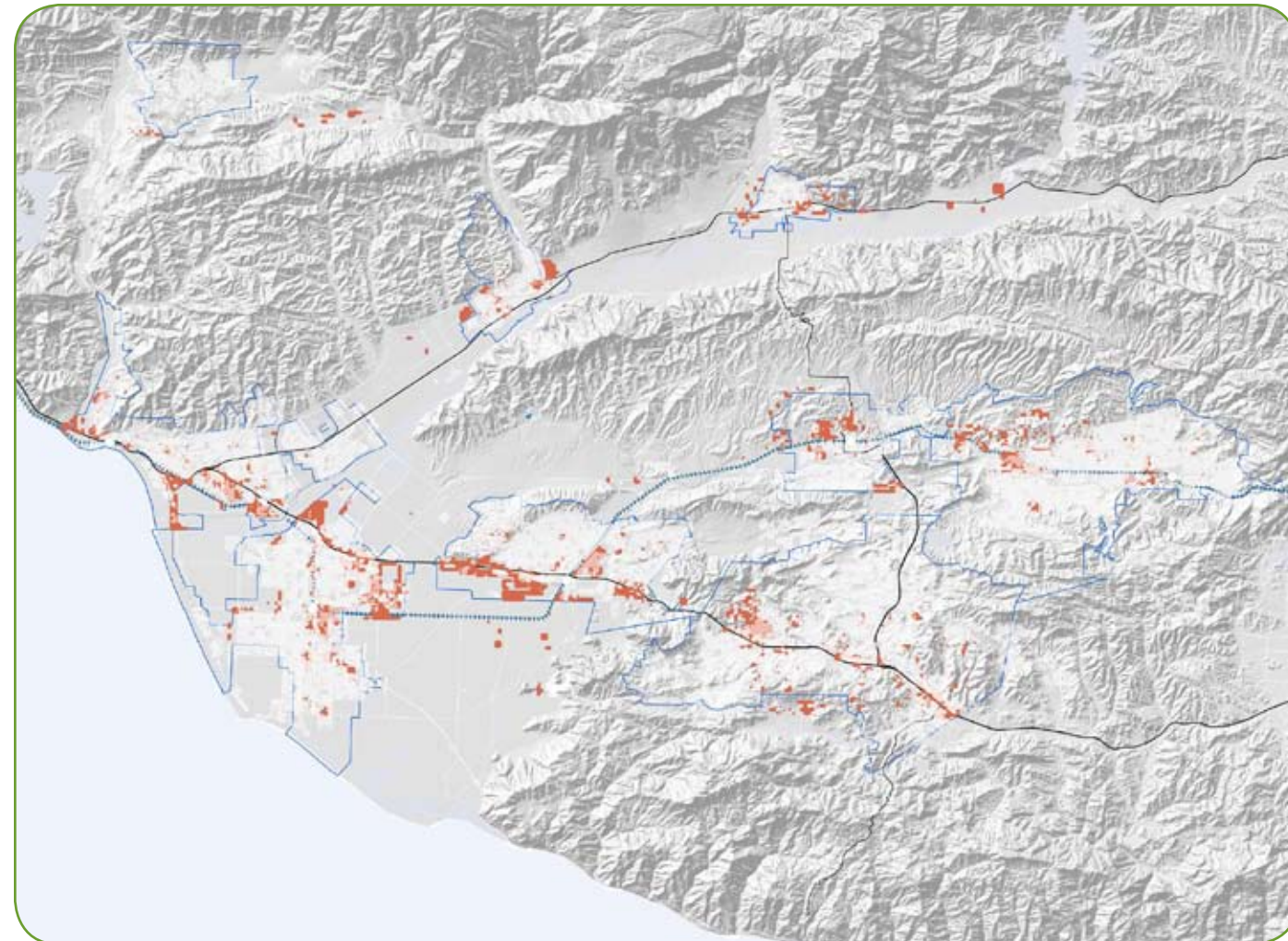
### Existing

-  Commercial
-  Office
-  Industrial
-  Civic
-  Single Unit Homes
-  Multi Unit Homes
-  Agriculture
-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  Current Growth Boundary



Scenario Two





■ Infill and Redevelopment    ■ Development on vacant land

## Scenario Two

### PATTERNS OF GROWTH

This scenario places a greater focus on mixing uses, varying housing types, and redevelopment, which reduces the amount of vacant land used to 14 square miles. Thirty-five percent of new housing would be built in mixed-use areas and 24 percent of new employment would be in mixed-use areas. Twenty-nine percent of new housing and 27 percent of employment would be built through redevelopment or infill. New housing would be a balance of single-unit, townhouse, and multiunit. Most future development would be built within the urban growth boundaries.

### TRANSPORTATION

Transportation improvements in Scenario Two include a combination of roadway expansion and multiple transit lines. These improvements put 49 percent of housing and 42 percent of employment within a half mile of transit stations.



Thirty-five percent of new housing would be built in mixed-use areas and 24 percent of new employment would be in mixed use areas



Transportation improvements in Scenario Two include a combination of roadway expansion and multiple transit lines.









New housing would be a balance of single-unit, townhouse, and multiunit.










### Scenario Centers

- City Center 
- Town Center 
- Village Center 
- Boulevard Community 

### Scenario Development Types

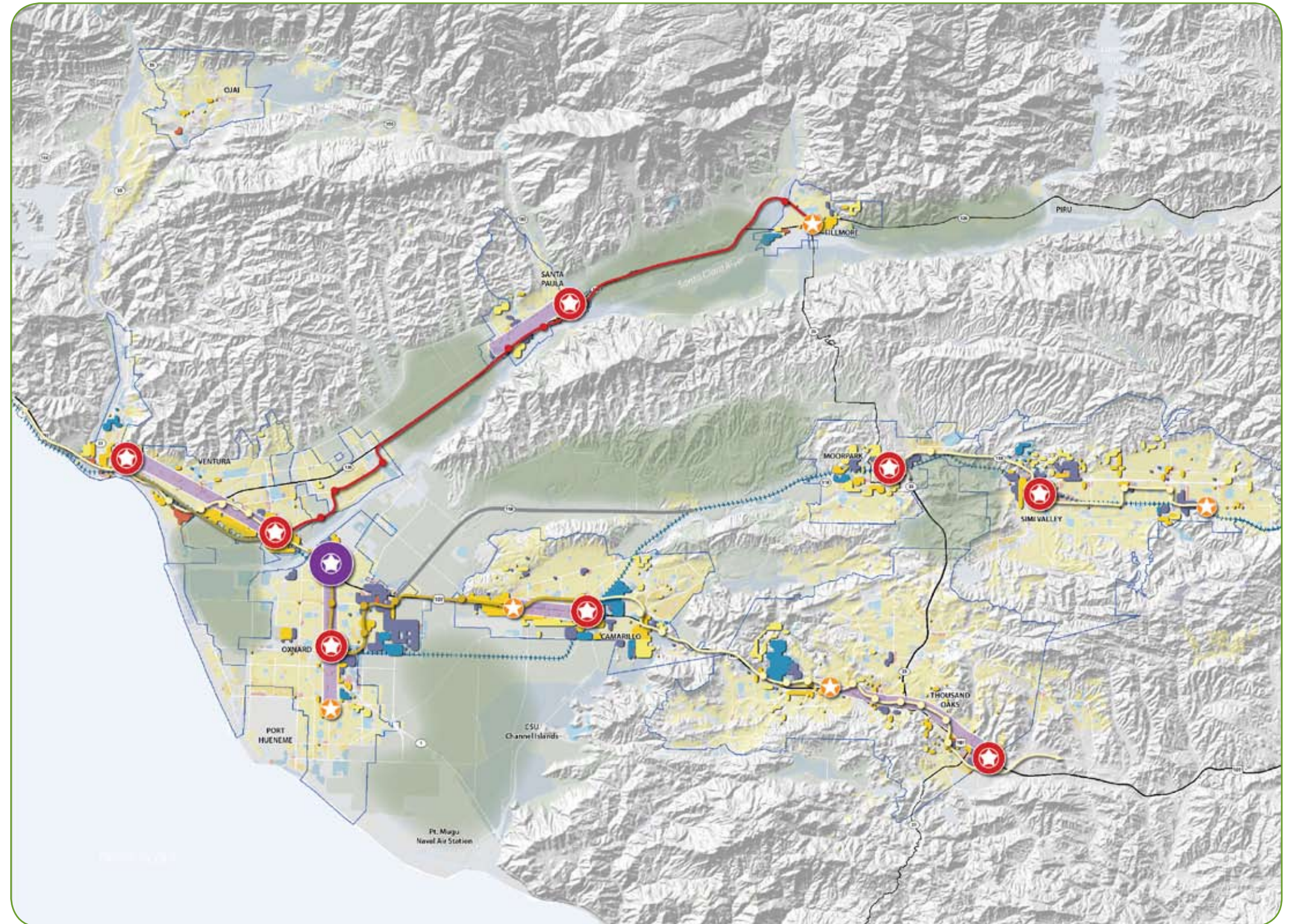
-  Town Residential
-  Village Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Highway Commercial
-  Office Area
-  Industrial Area

### Scenario Transportation Options

- Light Rail 
- Light Rail Station 
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) 
- BRT Station 
- Fast Bus 
- Fast Bus Station 
- Road Improvements 

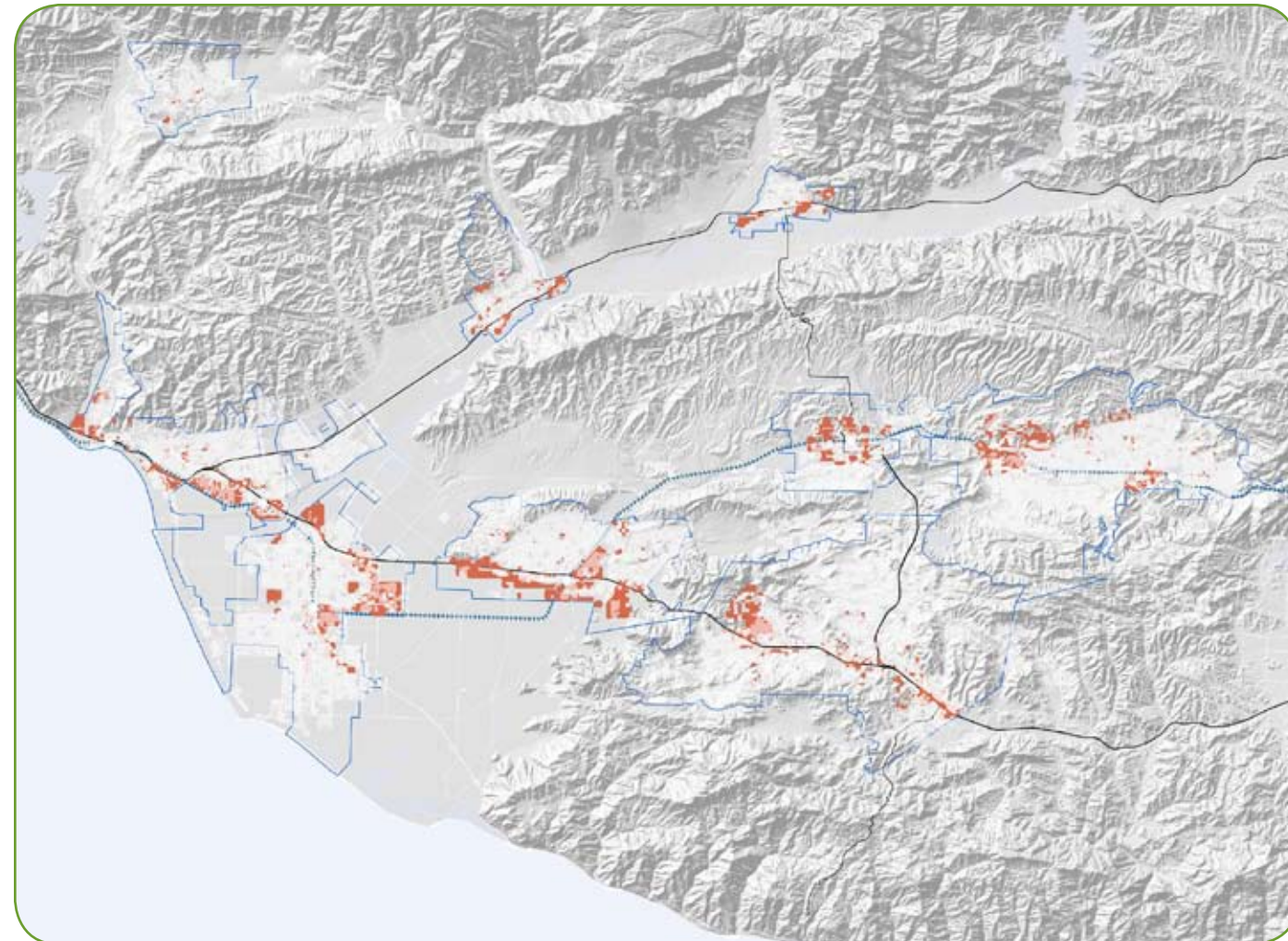
### Existing

-  Commercial
-  Office
-  Industrial
-  Civic
-  Single Unit Homes
-  Multi Unit Homes
-  Agriculture
-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  Current Growth Boundary



Scenario Three





■ Infill and Redevelopment    ■ Development on vacant land

## Scenario Three

### PATTERNS OF GROWTH

Scenario Three puts the greatest emphasis on mixed use and higher intensity development, with 53 percent of new housing and 44 percent of new employment in mixed-use areas. While most new land development is used for single-unit homes, a majority of all the new housing is in multi-unit buildings. Scenario Three consumes the least amount of vacant land of the three scenarios (11 square miles) and 100 percent of development occurs within urban growth boundaries.

### TRANSPORTATION

Scenario Three includes some roadway expansion while emphasizing transit investments like fast bus, BRT, light rail, and improvements to current Metrolink. These improvements put 59 percent of housing and 56 percent of employment within a half mile of transit stations.



Scenario Three includes some roadway expansion emphasizing transit investments.



Scenario Three puts the greatest emphasis on mixed use and higher intensity development.  
*Photo courtesy of "La Citta Vita"*



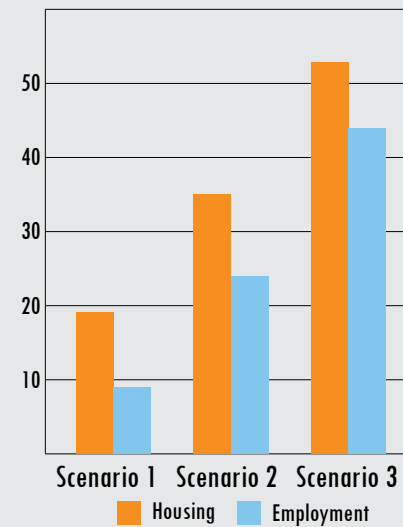
While most new land development is used for single unit homes, a majority of all new housing is in multiunit buildings.

## Comparing the Scenarios

The following charts highlight the difference between the three scenarios.

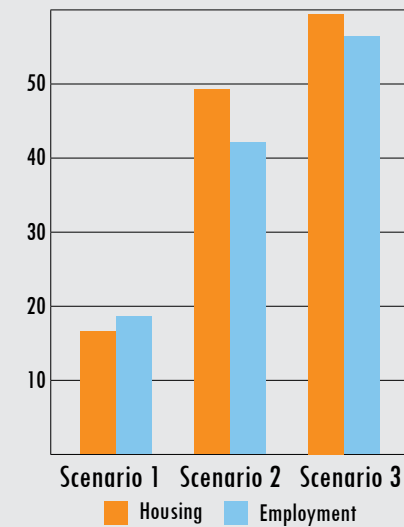
### Mixed-Use

Percentage of future development that would occur in mixed-use areas.



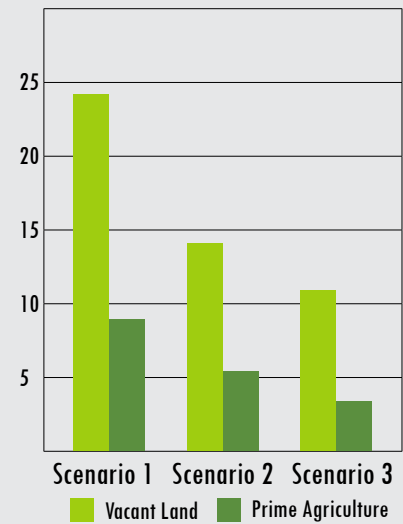
### Transit

Percentage of new housing and employment that would be within 1/2 mile of transit.



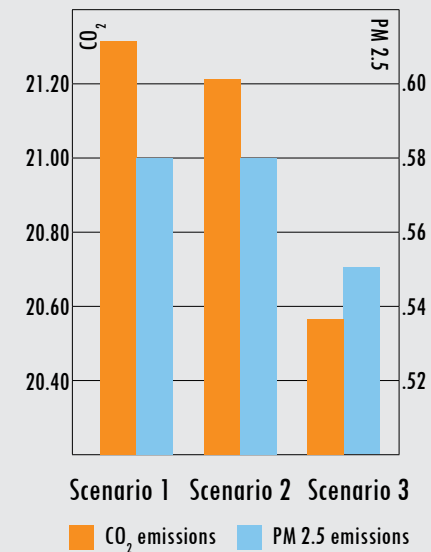
### Land Consumption

Amount of vacant and prime agricultural land in square miles that would be used for development.



### Greenhouse Gasses

Daily CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and PM 2.5 in tons per capita for light and medium duty vehicles only.

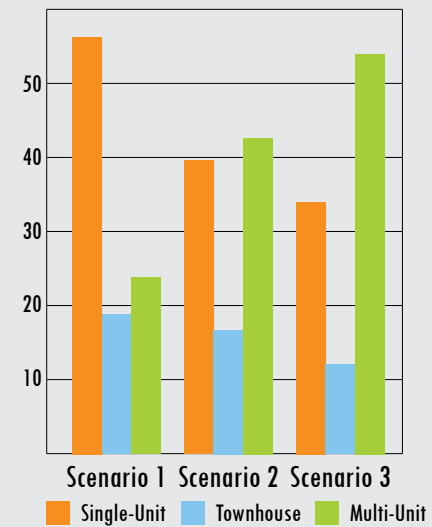


### Comparing the Scenarios



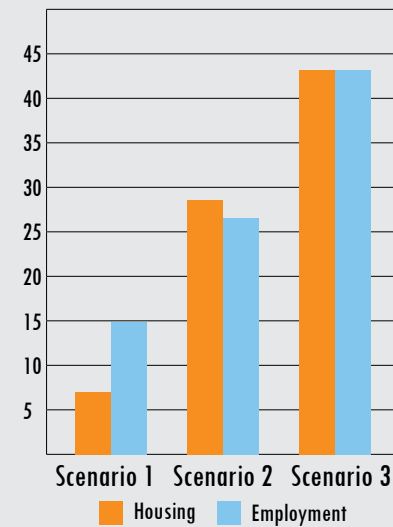
### Housing Mix

Percentage of new housing by type.



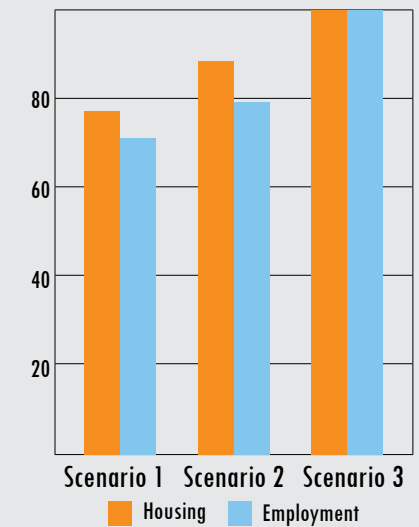
### Land and Building Reuse

Amount new of growth that would occur through infill and redevelopment (percent).



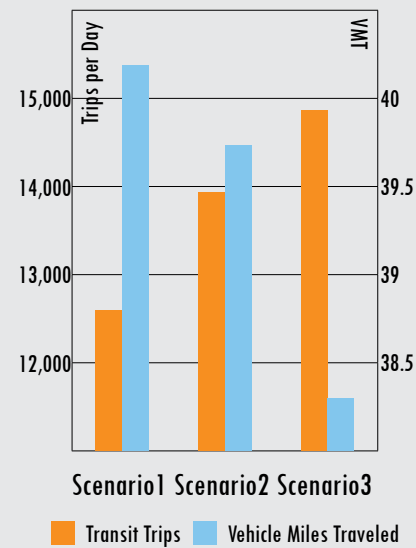
### Urban Growth Boundaries

Percentage of future development that would occur within urban growth boundaries.



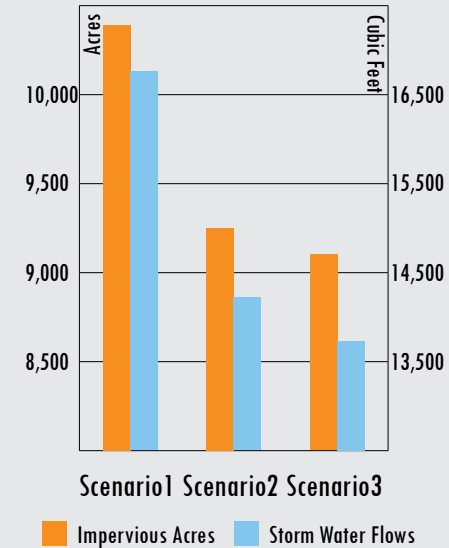
### Transit Trips & Vehicle Miles Traveled

Projected total daily transit trips and daily VMT per person.



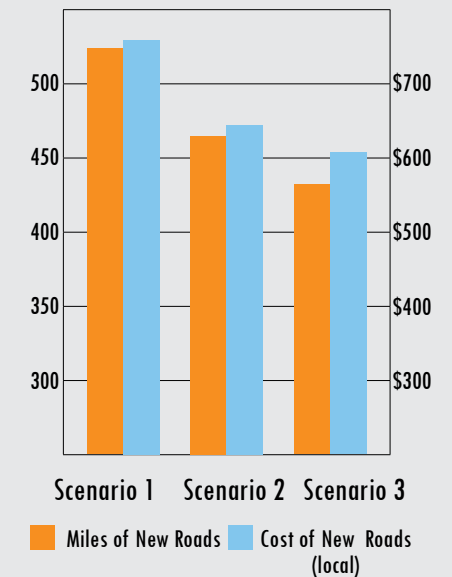
### Impervious Acres & Storm Water Flows

Projected new impervious acres and storm water flows.



### Roads

New roads (in miles) and cost of new local roads (in millions).



# Choosing the Future: County Residents Have Their Say

Some 280 residents participated in Sustainability Summits and via an online questionnaire held in April 2010. The seven summit meetings were open to all and were advertised in many city newsletters, through local newspapers, including the Star, and on the radio. Given the moderate number of participants, we shouldn't view the findings as an expression of overall public support in the county for the results outlined below. However, the summit findings indicate what approaches to the future other residents might favor if they do what summit participants did – if they spent a few hours thinking about long-term strategies to address growth and considered the potential consequences that might follow.

Participants reviewed the three scenarios and how they might impact quality of life over the coming decades. A series of questions were posed, both in the meetings and in the online questionnaire, to understand elements of the future most desired by participants. Follow-up questions were asked about the types of near-term actions participants would support in their city or in Ventura County overall.

Overall, a majority of participants favored Scenario 3 as their overall preferred approach to the future of the county

- 56 percent favored Scenario 3

More important than this preference was how they responded to the variety of growth-related issues discussed in these meetings. Here are the key public findings:

## REUSE LAND IN TOWN TO MAINTAIN GROWTH BOUNDARIES

Participants were asked what they would like to see done with the current growth boundaries.

- 69% said growth boundaries should remain as they are – the trade-off being that more growth should be accommodated by infill and redevelopment.
- An overwhelming 94% supported the continued use of growth boundaries.

When asked how they would like to see redevelopment occur attendees supported reuse of land and buildings on commercial streets, including areas that may have nearby neighborhoods.

- 79% also supported reducing major barriers to reusing land for new homes or jobs.

Barriers include unnecessarily high parking requirements, restrictions on development intensity, long or uncertain planning review time frames, and restrictions on development near transit stations.

## NEW HOUSING CHOICES SHOULD BE MORE LAND EFFICIENT AND MODERATELY PRICED

Most participants favored an increase in smaller lot single-unit homes, townhomes, and multiunit homes.

- 35% felt there should be equal numbers of single-unit homes and multiunit homes built, while ...
- 48% favored more multiunit than single-unit homes built in the coming decades.
- This represents a substantial shift from current trends, where 75 percent of construction is single-unit homes.
- 92% favored changing zoning to allow smaller lots,

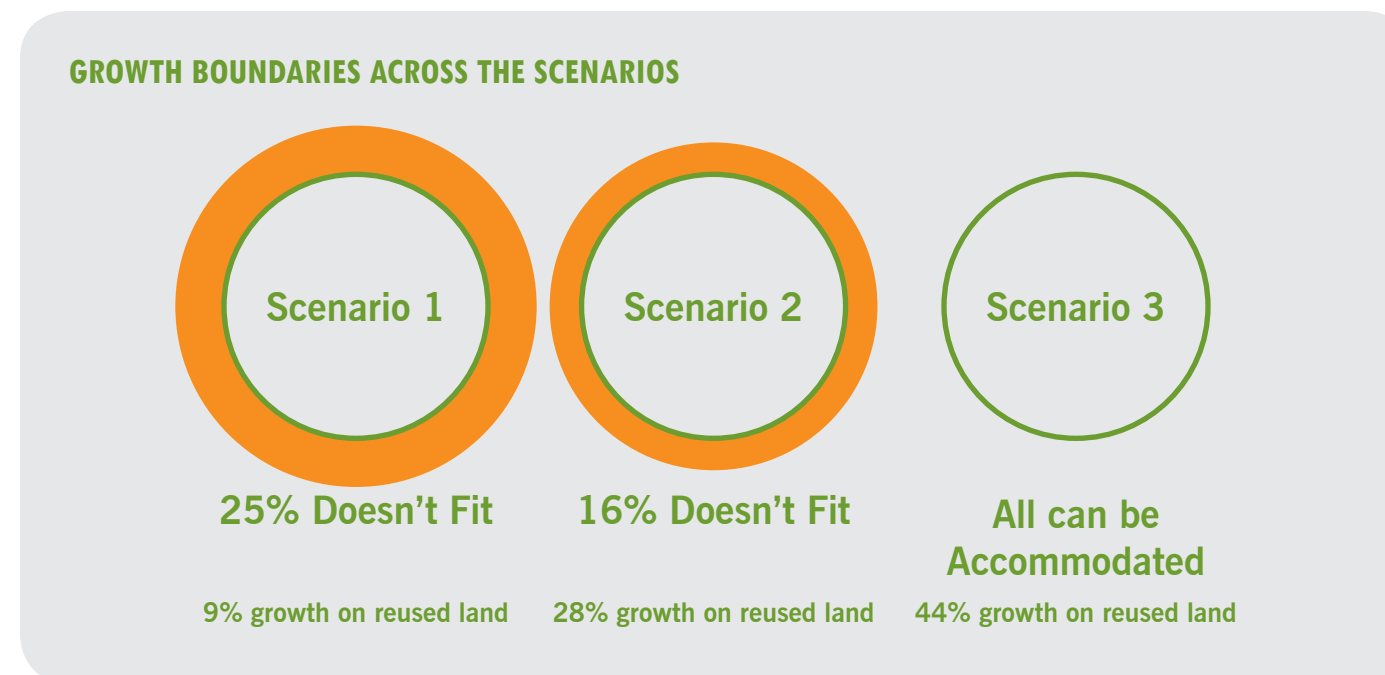
townhouses, and condominiums to meet the individual needs of residents at different income levels.

## SUPPORT TRANSIT WITH APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

- 85% of participants favor a “substantial increase” in the intensity of offices and housing near transit to enable an expanded high-capacity public transportation system in Ventura County.
- 80% also supported the idea of a consolidated transit system where routes and service schedules are integrated to maximize transit ridership.

Currently, there are seven transit service providers operating in Ventura County, generally based in municipalities.

**In comment cards, Participants suggested incentives to reduce driving such as employer flex time, bike to work, carpooling and car sharing. They also suggested promoting private transportation providers such as shuttle vans.**





**When asked in what type of home they expect to reside in fifteen years, 30% of summit attendees who currently live in single unit homes expect to live in townhouses or multi-unit homes.**



### **INVEST IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THAT BYPASSES CONGESTION**

When asked how they would prefer to improve transportation infrastructure, participants favored bus rapid transit and rail, forms of public transportation that bypass congestion, even if it meant fewer transit routes.

Eighty-four percent of participants felt that there should be as much or more investment in public transportation than in roads. Forty-six percent felt the investment in new transit should exceed new roadway investments. Sixty-eight percent support a 0.5 cent sales tax increase to fund transportation improvements.

### **BALANCE JOBS WITH HOUSING AND HOUSING WITH JOBS**

Eighty-six percent of attendees agree that, in order to reduce driving distances and give residents more time in their community or at home, housing options in each part of the county should match the needs of the people who work in that area. In addition, 42 percent would like to encourage job growth where housing already exists to reduce commuting.

### **COORDINATE OPEN SPACE EFFORTS COUNTYWIDE**

Sixty-six percent of participants said we should have an overall open space district that utilizes a dedicated revenue stream to achieve countywide open space goals. Sixty-two percent would agree to some sort of tax increase for the purchase of open space.

### **FURTHER STUDY IMPROVING EFFICIENCY OF NEW BUILDINGS**

A minority of 37 percent support efforts to require higher levels of efficiency for new buildings. However, 91 percent feel that the idea should be studied further to understand the costs versus the benefits.







# Setting the Table for Collaboration

compad





## Setting the Table for Collaboration

The public process results give us a clear sense of what types of strategies we could explore to address key countywide challenges. Perhaps more important than what we do is how we do it—how local governments and other parties interact with each other as they collaborate, how are decisions made, how to maintain momentum.

As we consider how best to organize regional collaboration we must not infringe on the rights of local government to make their own decisions. Local governmental sovereignty is an important fixture in California’s political landscape, which presents a challenge in addressing problems that cross political boundaries. And yet there are a variety of methods to improve formal collaboration between jurisdictions while maintaining local sovereignty.

What are the options for leaders faced with a complex, pressing public problem? How can leaders choose the best approach for the scope of the problem they face? Aside from doing nothing, here are four options for deciding how to frame and address public problems:

1. We can segment the problem into one or more issues that fit local government’s existing agency structure.
2. We can go further and define the problem as a multi-jurisdictional challenge, but one that still implies a local government solution.
3. Alternatively, we can frame the problem as one with multiple dimensions, requiring collaboration among government agencies and others such as the private and civic sectors, but only at the local level.
4. Or we can frame the problem as a regional challenge with multiple dimensions, requiring not only collaboration among local governments, but among private and civic sectors across the region as well.

The last option of regional collaborative governance is an approach that, while difficult, is arguably the only one that is a match for the complexity of many pressing public problems today.

**One of the distinct advantages to a compact is that it shifts the emphasis away from who controls the regional decision-making process toward focused, problem-solving dialogue—how the problem is solved.**

### REGIONALLY COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS

A regional collaboration works across existing geographic and political boundaries and institutional barriers. Regional collaboratives bring together a diverse group of constituents and leaders—both grassroots and grasstops. They create goals for the region and design strategies that implement collective, effective, measurable results.

Regional collaboratives work when they are built on a foundation of credibility and trust, which enable the collaboration to play an honest broker role. Their viability and effectiveness depend upon these essential attributes and values.

Typically, regional collaboratives are alliances of leading government and non-government organizations that provide direct access to and through the region’s civic and community resources. The alliances are not a “one size fits all” proposition; they take a variety of forms.

The examples below are of three different models of regional collaboration.

#### A Compact

In some regions, the platform is a multisector agreement among existing governance partners—a tangible, interdependent set of actions in the form of a written agreement.

#### A Forum

In other cases, partners create an ongoing multisector forum or network for developing collaborative solutions.

#### An Organization

In still other cases, a new multisector organization is created as a new collaborative structure, a separate entity that acts as a broker of multisector agreements among governance partners.

What these different platforms share is that they provide practical, voluntary, and nonpartisan public “space” to work on regional or inter-jurisdictional problems and solutions.

### A COMPACT: A NEGOTIATED, RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT

A reciprocal agreement that is negotiated between parties can help balance and preserve the independence of cities and counties as important issues like conservation and transportation are brought forward for regional consideration.

A compact is not a new form of government. The essential roles local governments will remain as strong as before. What makes a compact work is that it creates a network of responsibility based on trust and accountability. A compact sets the parameters for a set of practical, mutual obligations.

Compacts, sometimes based on simple rules, are emerging as one of the most important forces for building trust in regional problem-solving processes. One of the distinct advantages to a compact is that it shifts the emphasis away from who controls the regional decision-making process toward focused, problem-solving dialogue—how the problem is solved.

Successful compacts include a clear problem definition, delineation of roles and responsibilities, and development of concrete implementation plans. Below are two examples of compacts with similarities to elements discussed as part of the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County.

**As we consider how best to organize regional collaboration we must not infringe on the rights of local government to make their own decisions.**

# Example: Denver's Mile High Compact

The Mile High Compact (MHC) was created through the effort of a working group of elected officials, city managers, senior planners from Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and the Metro Mayors Caucus.

It was a voluntary effort, and signing of the agreement was a slow process that spanned about 10 years. At the initial signing in 2000, 30 of the 55 communities in the Denver area signed the MHC. As of 2008, 44 of the 55 municipalities—88 percent of the population—had signed. As part of the MHC, they commit to meet annually to evaluate its effectiveness and to consider modifications.

## PROCESS

Colorado experienced considerable growth throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In the late 1990s both residents and public officials began heated debate about how to deal with growth issues. In 1997, as the result of a five-year process, DRCOG adopted the Metro Vision 2020 (later updated in 2007 to Metro Vision 2035), which established urban growth boundaries and other regional long-term goals for the greater Denver metropolitan area.

The MHC's implementation process was voluntary, flexible, collaborative, and ultimately effective. In 2000 a coalition of civic interest groups, the governor, elected officials, the business community, and environmentalists were pushing the legislature to enact growth management legislation. State legislation was drafted that incorporated many of the same components as Metro Vision, but making it mandatory. The legislation didn't pass but it sent a strong message to local jurisdictions. The same coalition next undertook a grassroots effort to put an initiative on the ballot that would require citizen votes on all new growth development plans. Local jurisdictions and the development community were strongly opposed to putting that control in the hands of voters. The initiative was voted down on the ballot 70 to 30 percent.

The idea of a compact had great appeal to local governments because they saw the potential value of Metro Vision 2020 for the metro area and because they sought to avoid the state level initiative process. In response, the powerful

Metro Mayors Caucus of 39 mayors conceived of the Mile High Compact, a voluntary but binding interlocal agreement between jurisdictions to follow the growth measures outlined in the Metro Vision. The MHC established Metro Vision 2020 as a framework for local decision making. After the MHC was drafted by the working group, elected officials took the MHC back to their city councils and boards of county commissions for ratification.

## ELEMENTS

Here are some example elements from the Mile High Compact:

### Metro Vision 2020

"We acknowledge that Metro Vision 2020 is the comprehensive guide for the development of the region. Moreover, we agree that Metro Vision 2020 is a dynamic document that reflects changes in the region."

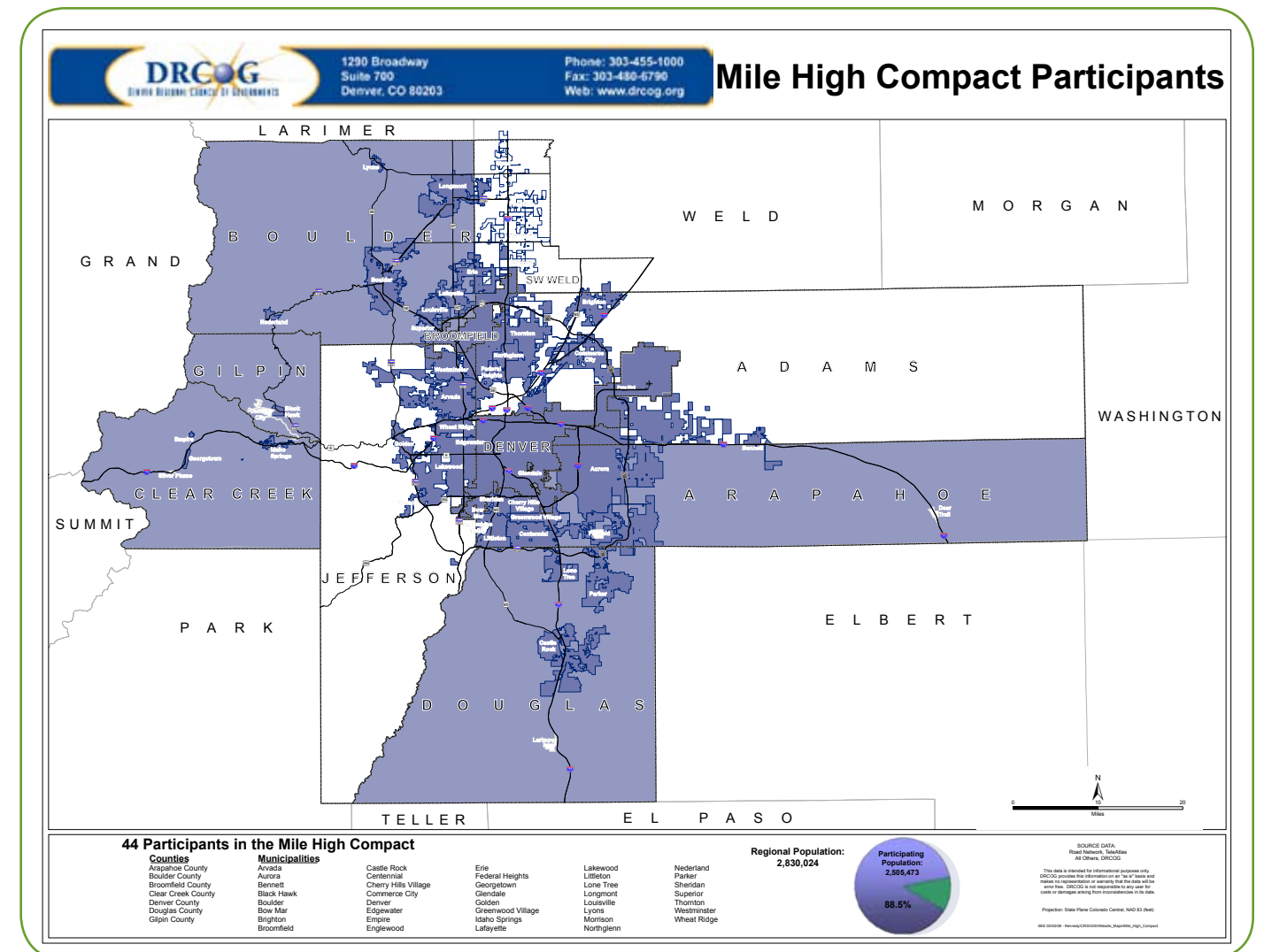
### Comprehensive/Master Plan Principles

"We agree to rely on the following principles in developing or amending our Comprehensive/Master Plans:

- Metro Vision 2020. Local comprehensive/master plans will be consistent with the regional vision provided by Metro Vision 2020 and will incorporate its core elements:
  - Designating the extent of urban development within a specified area;
  - Creating a balanced multi-modal transportation system;
  - Establishing a hierarchy of mixed-use, pedestrian and transit-oriented urban centers;
  - Preserving four free-standing communities of Boulder, Brighton, Castle Rock and Longmont;
  - Development of a regional open space system;
  - Preserving the region's natural environment, especially air and water quality."

### Intergovernmental Collaboration

"Issues that overlap or affect neighboring jurisdictions or districts will be addressed in a collaborative process."





**Urban Growth Areas or Urban Growth Boundaries**

“We agree to adopt Urban Growth Areas or Urban Growth Boundaries, as established by Metro Vision 2020, within our comprehensive/master plans, or in the case of counties by resolution of the Board of Commissioners, and to allow urban development only within those areas. We will encourage and support the efficient development within our Urban Growth Areas or Urban Growth Boundaries consistent with the goals of Metro Vision 2020. Modifications to Urban Growth Areas or Urban Growth Boundaries will be addressed through Metro Vision 2020’s flexibility process. We agree to address non-urban growth outside of the Urban Growth Area or Urban Growth Boundary through subregional planning, intergovernmental agreements, comprehensive/master plans or revised Metro Vision policies.”

**Coordination with Other Plans**

“We will work to coordinate our plans with neighboring and overlapping governmental entities and work to integrate our plans at a sub-regional level”

**Intergovernmental Agreements**

“We will enter into additional intergovernmental agreements, when necessary, to address discrepancies and/or inconsistencies at the jurisdictional boundaries or any other planning and coordination matters.”

**Term**

“We will annually jointly evaluate the effectiveness of the processes set forth herein and to propose any necessary amendments. If any parties consider withdrawing from the agreement, they must notify DRCOG by April 1st with the action to be effective by the following January 1st.”

**RELEVANT LESSONS FOR VENTURA COUNTY**

Here are a few of the lessons to be learned from Denver’s Mile High Compact.

**Patience**

Establishing a regional compact can take time. It took eight years from the beginning of the Metro Vision process in 1992 to the initial signing of the MHC in 2000. Those years were spent establishing understanding, generating shared principles, and

building trust. It took another eight years for the current +/- 90 percent of cities to sign on. As Ventura County explores a compact or other platform for regional collaboration, we should be patient and work to build mutual understanding and trust.

**Organizational Structure before Content**

One idea for the Ventura County compact is to first establish a working multisector organizational platform based on a willingness to work through compact draft language and implementation issues.

As we saw with the Denver’s Metro Mayor’s Cause, support from a prominent group of elected officials can give the a compact an important initial impetus. One avenue for a Ventura County compact is to first establish a forum of elected officials willing to explore a compact further.

**Prioritize the Collaborative Structure**

The Mile High Compact has been long lasting and powerful because it has focused on an ongoing process of collaboration more than on pinpointing current issues. As issues and concerns evolve, the collaborative structure established or strengthened in the compact has met the challenge.

## Example: Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area

Unlike Denver’s process, the Bay Area’s Compact includes multisector parties. It benefits from broad support that includes business, economic development, environmental, transportation organizations, and local governments. Individual local governments are not members of the alliance that endorsed this compact, but the Association of Bay Area Governments is a member party.

The Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area (CSBA) was established to serve as a framework for action to guide but not prescribe regional and local planning and decision making and to motivate government, employers, civic organizations, and individuals in cooperative efforts that will lead to a more sustainable region.

### PROCESS

This compact was developed in a multi-stakeholder collaborative process overseen and coordinated by the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities (Bay Area Alliance) over six years.

In order to improve the likelihood of regional consensus, the member organizations of the Bay Area Alliance—along with many other participants—first worked to develop and reach “agreement in principle” on the CSBA. Then they encouraged and facilitated a regionwide conversation about a more sustainable future, based on the vision and actions in the draft compact. The final CSBA reflects the feedback received during the course of that regionwide conversation.

**SIDEBAR:** The Bay Area Alliance first worked to develop and reach “agreement in principle” on the Compact. Then they encouraged and facilitated a regionwide conversation based on the vision and actions in the draft compact.

Individual county and city officials reviewed an initial draft and deliberated strategies for implementation in the 1999 and 2000 General Assemblies of the Association of Bay Area Governments. City councils and county boards of supervisors subsequently reviewed and commented on the draft CSBA.

### ELEMENTS

The CSBA identifies key regional challenges and recommends a package of strategic commitments to meet those challenges and put the Bay Area on a more sustainable path. Here are some example elements from the Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area:

#### The Ten Commitments to Action

1. Enable a diversified, sustainable and competitive economy to continue to prosper and provide jobs in order to achieve a high quality of life for all Bay Area residents.
2. Provide housing affordable to all income levels within the Bay Area to match population increases and job generation.
3. Target transportation investment to achieve a world-class comprehensive, integrated and balanced multi-modal system that supports efficient land use and decreases dependency on single-occupancy vehicle trips.
4. Preserve and restore the region’s natural assets -- San Francisco Bay, farmland, open space, other habitats.
5. Improve resource and energy efficiency, reduce pollution and waste.
6. Focus investment to preserve and revitalize neighborhoods.
7. Provide all residents with the opportunity for quality education and lifelong learning to help them meet their highest aspirations.
8. Promote healthy and safe communities.
9. Support state and local government fiscal reforms.
10. Stimulate civic engagement.”

Here are some of the details under the Commitment #2: Provide housing affordable to all income levels within the Bay Area to match population increases and job generation.

“Support efforts to use existing housing stock efficiently, by encouraging second units, group housing and similar mechanisms.”

“Advocate local, state and federal governments adopt or amend policies to prevent and compensate for displacement (of affordable housing).”

**e-vision**  
the future

## COMPACT FOR A SUSTAINABLE BAY AREA

**BAY AREA ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**  
Working together to achieve and maintain a prosperous economy, quality environment and social equity



**The Bay Area Alliance first worked to develop and reach “agreement in principle” on the Compact. They then encouraged and facilitated a region-wide conversation based on the vision and actions in the Draft Compact.**

“Advocate local government actions, such as amending general plans and zoning ordinances, and providing incentives, such as permit fast tracking, to encourage affordable housing development, especially near transit.”

“Support the establishment of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to assist jurisdictions in providing their fair share of affordable housing.”

**RELEVANT LESSONS FOR VENTURA COUNTY**

**Use a Multisector Approach**

The explicit involvement of businesses, nonprofits, and other nongovernmental agencies in the drafting and indeed implementation of a compact could add momentum to the process and strengthen the end product, especially if local government does not show strong initial interest in the final phase.

**Start with an Agreement in Principle**

By first working to develop an “agreement in principle” in the draft CSBA, the Bay Area Alliance was able to involve a number of key parties, notably local governments, in the further development of the draft. This ostensibly increased acceptance for the CSBA as governments saw their ideas and concerns directly addressed while the draft was fleshed out.

The Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County has utilized an open, grass-roots process through the first two phases. Sticking to this general approach makes sense. But the next phase could create the details of the compact agreement by directly involving its potential partners. This may increase trust/acceptance by potential Compact partners just as it did for the Bay Area.

**Recommendations Developed by Small Working Groups**

The Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area began as an alliance between key business holders, nonprofits, and regional government entities. This unique approach established five working caucuses and six working groups to ensure a broad cross-section of perspectives and representation from different sectors. The Ventura County Compact process could utilize a working-group structure to involve local governments and other stakeholders in the development or refinement

of the Draft Compact. This is also a great way to involve the private sector, major utilities, nonprofits, and environmental groups to broaden the collaborative base of the Compact.

Ventura County could choose to form multiple working groups to tackle the different elements of the Compact and benefit from varying perspectives and solutions to problems.

**One of The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities “10 Commitments to Action” addresses State and Local Government Fiscal Reforms. The Alliance is advocating for changes in state legislation to provide all local governments with adequate and stable tax revenue in order to establish cooperative, rather than competitive, economic development programs.**

## Regional Forum

The development of a new platform for collaborative discussion could be an alternative to or a first step (as in the case of Denver) toward the development of a compact. Here is a successful example from Chicago.

## Example: Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

In Chicago, Mayor Richard Daley established the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (Caucus) to develop a common vision for the region. The Caucus unites 272 mayors from six counties in the Chicago area. The Caucus cooperates with leaders from the private, nonprofit, and public sectors to tackle common regional issues such as economic development, air quality, affordable housing, and electrical service reliability.

### PROCESS

Initially, the Caucus met to address economic concerns for the region. Specifically, the Caucus developed a strategy to provide guidance to municipalities on how they can cooperate to promote economic opportunities. The goal is to strengthen the Chicago region's ability to compete with other regions by reducing intercity competition and improving intercity collaboration on economic issues. Adherence to this strategy represented a significant shift in mindset for Chicago mayors, who took for granted fierce municipal competition for business activity and taxes prior to the formation of the Caucus.

The Caucus also provides resources and tools to local governments to aid in more effective planning, including intercity coordination of plans and integration of regional considerations in local planning.

David Bennett, Executive Director of the Mayors Caucus, believes that the cooperative approach among municipalities was one of the keys to recruiting Boeing headquarters to Chicago. According to Bennett, Chicago was the only metro area Boeing considered that presented itself as a unified

region. "Our presentation excited Boeing," said Bennett. "They liked our cooperative approach and the fact that our region is so diverse."

In 1999 Chicago faced a crisis in electrical reliability. The Mayors Caucus worked with the local utility to form a plan to upgrade the region's transmission and distribution system. Later the legislative committee succeeded in deregulating the electric market.

Another area the Caucus has had success in is air quality. Caucus programs have led to reducing ozone precursor emissions by 6.87 tons per day, exceeding program goals.

After the initial focus on economic issues, the flexible structure of the Caucus enabled additional issues to easily be explored. The Caucus has addressed electric service reliability; funding for cleaner air; the creation of a statewide economic development plan; investment in the region's roads and other public infrastructure; plans to protect the region's critical utilities, including electricity, natural gas and water; plus the adoption of a housing agenda.

### RELEVANT LESSONS FOR VENTURA COUNTY

#### Credible to Government, but Not of It

Though the Caucus was rooted in a governmental perspective, it did not pretend to speak on behalf of all cities and towns in the region. The Caucus represented the mayors and not the overall local governments the way the Ventura Council of Governments does. Thus, the Caucus was highly credible to local governments but was also free enough from the burden of direct local government representation to proactively explore key issues.

The Caucus discussed above did not focus on developing any specific, reciprocal commitment like a compact, but rather focused on improving understanding and abilities to address common issues, starting with effective regional economic development. The strength of the 272 mayors by itself made the organization noteworthy and credible both as a voice for local governments and as a force to be considered as state legislation is developed.





### **Newly Formed Organization**

To be effective in developing solutions to inter-jurisdictional challenges, Ventura County needs a coalition of interested parties. Without a large coalition, there may be a lack of momentum and there may not be enough implementing parties to spread the load across, thereby making a difficult challenge achievable. Bringing a substantial number of stakeholders together to forge a coalition with broad enough membership to be effective presents a considerable challenge that few coalitions have overcome. In addition to their differences in goals and interests, the various parties may distrust one another for a host of reasons.

In some cases the idea of direct collaboration between governments on land use and other locally driven issues is too controversial. Local governments are unwilling to give coordination power to an existing entity, such as a council of governments (COG), because it is tantamount to letting other local governments determine the fate of your own local government.

A governmental organization like Ventura COG has some built-in challenges to assembling a coalition. First, it must answer to a diverse set of constituent jurisdictions. It typically thrives by carrying forward primarily those positions or issues that are strongly held by most of its constituent cities. There is little natural incentive for a COG to slowly build a coalition to address issues that are complex or have some controversial facets, which could hinder interest from constituent cities.

Further, a governmental organization, by its very nature, can experience difficulty attracting nongovernmental entities, such as business or environmental groups, to a coalition. The nongovernmental groups may wonder if the governmental entity will put its own constituents first. Put simply, there is a question of neutrality.

Some regions have utilized a nonprofit organization to fill the role as neutral facilitator between cities. Such a nonprofit can be a newly created entity or an existing organization that is broadly trusted, has widespread appeal, and is credible as a neutral coalition builder not directly tied to a strong planning agenda.

## Example: Envision Utah

In 1995 in Salt Lake City, Utah, a new nonprofit organization called Envision Utah fulfilled this role. Envision Utah has proven successful as a national model for coalition building to address growth- and planning-related challenges. Envision Utah is extraordinary in that it may not be a true coalition at all. A coalition forms around a common agenda, but Envision Utah began with an ironclad rule: it had no agenda. Instead, it involved as many people as possible—including, most important, powerful decision makers (like the Chicago Mayors Caucus)—in defining what the region’s agenda should be.

### THE ENVISION UTAH CONSENSUS MODEL

The Envision Utah coalition-building model is a consensus model in which the various parties are brought under one umbrella coalition and bargain for a mutually agreeable solution. Consensus is hard to reach, however, among such a large and diverse group. One key to success is to create the coalition before generating a vision or agenda for the future of the region and to include the coalition in the generation of the vision. The Envision Utah coalition was asked not to support an agenda but to create an agenda. Remarkably, when asked to think about the good of the region and when educated about the consequences of choices, the people of the Wasatch Region made decisions that fit closely the

agendas of other anti-sprawl coalitions. Because a broad base of stakeholders—rather than a coalition built around a specific agenda—chose Envision Utah’s vision for the region’s future, implementation has met less resistance than have the efforts of other coalitions.

Envision Utah invested significant time and effort in reaching out to a large group of stakeholders who were diverse in terms of geography, race, gender, political ideology, and community role; trusted by the public; and influential in their ability to implement the vision that would result from the effort. As a result, Envision Utah’s list of members, partners, and special advisors includes business, city, county, state, media, and religious leaders, as well as both conservationists and developers. The list of partners is so comprehensive that almost no one who could conceivably successfully oppose the effort is left out.

Involving the public and stakeholders in the creation of the Envision Utah’s vision served multiple purposes. First, important potential allies were more likely to join the movement because they were given a significant role in shaping it. Those who had a hand in creating the regional vision were more likely to support it in its final form. Moreover, potential oppositional forces were included at the outset as allies. Finally—and perhaps most important in Utah’s conservative political climate—adding numerous locally respected individuals to Envision Utah’s list of partners and special advisors lent credibility to the organization and helped to overcome skepticism about Envision Utah’s motives.



### RELEVANT LESSONS FOR VENTURA COUNTY

#### Alternative Platform to Government/Quasi Government

Ventura County may choose to vest a new or existing nonprofit organization with the responsibility to build a stronger coalition before the final compact is completed. A nonprofit may have more freedom to explore complex or controversial ideas and may have a natural advantage in courting private and nonprofit coalition partners.

#### Focus on Coalition Building before Finishing the Compact

While a good nucleus of interests are at the table, a strong coalition has not yet been built in the Ventura County Compact process. Close involvement by many decision makers was not characteristic of the second phase of the Compact process. The Envision Utah case study highlights the value of building a coalition before the vision is finalized. The second phase of the Compact was conducted as a neutral process and has involved a number of interests from across the county. While it doesn’t represent widespread support, it is a reasonable basis for a draft Compact with which to start an open dialogue about the county’s future. The third phase should focus on coalition building as it emphasizes that the final compact will be the result of many voices—similar to the Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area process.

Perhaps more important than the substance of the Compact is the development of a coalition with a commitment to share the work in addressing difficult countywide challenges—both those that exist and those that will arise over time. In short, the third phase can utilize the lessons of the Envision Utah case study if it focuses more on process and the structure of the coalition perhaps more than on the details of the Compact voluntary agreement.

A list of suggested steps that build on these case study lessons is included in part 4 of this report.

**The Envision Utah case study highlights the importance of maintaining a balanced diversity of interests as a coalition is built. For example, maintaining a balance between west and east Ventura County interests, business and non-profits, development and environmental organizations can help establish and reinforce the notion that the coalition is not beholden to one or just a few key interests.**



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# The Case for Ventura Countywide Collaboration

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## The Case for Ventura Countywide Collaboration

This section makes the case for countywide collaboration to address issues that emerged from, and were discussed in, the public meetings conducted for the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County. These issues of regional concern are addressed with more detail in the companion report from the first phase of the Compact's process. It can be found at [www.compassblueprint.org/tools/venturacounty](http://www.compassblueprint.org/tools/venturacounty). Each of the issues below is addressed in the working draft Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County.

Life is lived beyond the boundaries of one city. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the price we pay for housing, the places we visit, the food we eat, the job options available to us. All of these important aspects of life are affected by decisions made outside the city where we live, as well as by decisions made within that city.

Each city rightly worries first and foremost about its residents, their homes, and the immediate environment they experience the most. And yet often the impact of these local decisions on residents outside of the city is not adequately considered.

A decision that is locally good is not necessarily good for residents in other affected jurisdictions. Consider the differences between how a decision might be made solely based on local considerations versus a balance of both local and inter-jurisdictional considerations.

### THINK INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS

We all benefit when we consider consequences outside our city even as we plan what's inside. Consider these examples:

#### A More Competitive Economy

Businesses tend to cluster in metropolitan areas where they can draw upon resources provided at the regional level, such as transportation infrastructure, research and technology, skilled labor, and supplier networks. Just as Orange County, the Inland Empire, and Los Angeles act in many ways as a

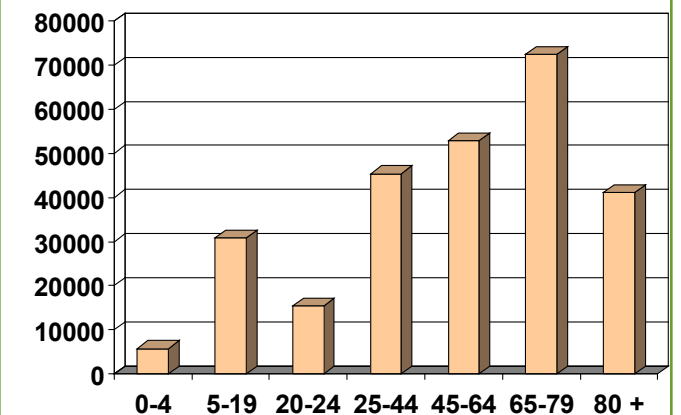
cohesive business environment, so too does Ventura County. The business management guru Michael Porter describes this tendency in terms of industry clusters, which are concentrations of related and complementary businesses that utilize those resources of a region that are particularly well suited for them.

A good illustration of this phenomenon in and near Ventura County is the biotechnology industry. The so-called 101 Biotech Corridor stretches from roughly Camarillo to Westgate Village. The list of clustered firms includes Amgen, Baxter Biopharma Solutions, Integrity Biosolution, Stem Cell Biotherapy, Trinity Therapeutics, ChemDepo, and Kinamed. The 101 Biotech Corridor has become a business cluster that works beyond the reach of one city. Its continued growth will partly rest on the ability of local governments to maintain or improve the quality of life that attracts the highly skilled labor that works in the biotech industry, partly on our ability to meet the freight and workforce transportation needs of this industry, and partly on our ability to ensure we have sufficient space planned and zoned for industry expansion. It will take the efforts of more than one city to meet these industry needs.

#### A Robust and Resilient Housing Market

People need and want different forms of housing as they move through their lives. After children leave the house or households approach retirement, most will choose to downsize their homes. According to demographic projections prepared by planners in Ventura County for SCAG, the age group that will experience the biggest increase over the coming decades is that of residents over age 65, who will increase by 114,000. This represents a substantial increase in the demand for downsizer housing: that is, single-family homes with small backyards, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments.

CHANGE IN PEOPLE BY AGE GROUP (NOW TO 2035)



Downsizing seniors could swamp the market with more expensive homes.

Part of the challenge we'll face in Ventura County is what happens to the homes that older residents sell as they downsize. The homes families own before they downsize represent the largest, most expensive homes on the market. The typical buyers for expensive properties are in the 45- to 65-year-old age range. Yet this age range will grow by about 53,000, less than half the growth in the over-65 age category in Ventura County. Thus, sellers of expensive homes will outnumber buyers of expensive homes roughly two to one. How will our housing market react when a large number of these expensive properties come on the market over the coming decades? We could see tremendous downward pressure on property values, affecting the ability of some seniors to sell without substantially compromising their retirement equity.

### CAN A DECISION BE GOOD FOR THE BLOCK BUT BAD FOR THE COUNTY?

Consider a hypothetical example. A condominium project is proposed a half block away from a busy commercial street. Local opposition to the in-town development due to traffic increases in the vicinity helps the city decide to deny development. The developer regrouped and successfully builds on the edge of town. These new housing units are thus further away from jobs, shopping, and transit opportunities than they would have been. As

similar development decisions are made, more vacant land is developed at the edge of the city, more residents are dependent on their cars to get around, driving distances grow, and as a result, air pollution rises. The irony is that more parts of the city are impacted by these longer driving distances than would have been impacted by the original in-town condominium proposal.

One key axiom of good planning is to apply a solution, a scale of analysis, or a dialogue to a problem that is as big or bigger than the geography of the issue being considered.

**PARTERING FOR SUCCESS**

To ready our housing stock for dramatic shifts in our demographic composition, we need to start planning today. Housing policies, via general plans and zoning, need to be set based on a look into the market shifts expected in the coming decades and not just based on meeting state requirements like the Regional Housing Needs Assessment targets (RHNA).

**Keeping Growth Well Managed**

Ventura County has a long history of managing growth to protect farms and open land to keep cities separate and distinct, helping prevent the sprawl that plagues many counties in Southern California. Since the late 1990s, Ventura County has been one of the most successful in conserving farms and open land in California.

Our success started with cities coming together to adopt a seminal document called the "Guidelines for Orderly Development" (Guidelines). The Guidelines were adopted in 1969 and renewed in 1996 by all cities in Ventura County and

by Ventura County. The Guidelines recommend that urban development occur within incorporated cities and not in the unincorporated county.

In the late 1990s, voters in Ventura County and cities adopted the Save Our Open Space and Agricultural Resources program (SOAR). Essentially, SOAR created urban growth boundaries to manage growth. Voters must approve before development can occur on open space and agricultural lands outside the SOAR growth boundaries.

**The Upcoming Growth-Management Challenge**

The separation between cities that we enjoy today is thus a product of past inter-jurisdictional coordination, both from the Guidelines for Orderly Development and from SOAR. Consider how the county would be different today if a few cities had adopted these growth management strategies but most did not.

And yet these past battles against sprawl did not permanently resolve the issues. Many of the SOAR growth boundaries will sunset between 2020 and 2030, and currently more than 600,000 acres of open space and agricultural land are not covered by these protections. Between now and 2020, a coordinated effort between the county and cities is needed to have continued success managing growth, with all of the benefits that provides: protecting farms and open land, keeping our cities distinct from each other, and encouraging organized and efficient development patterns.

**A Growth Management Opportunity**

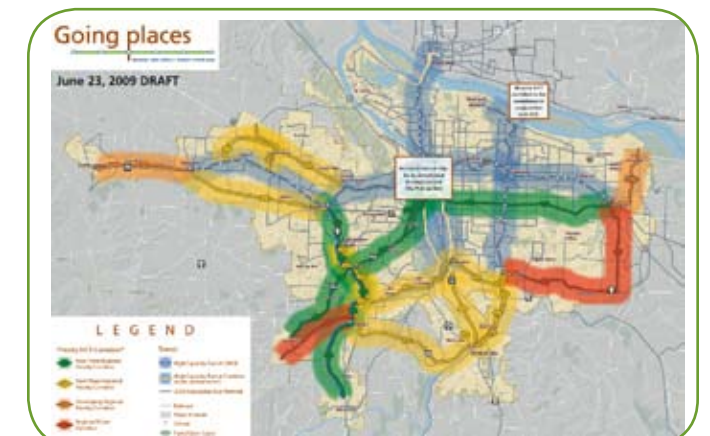
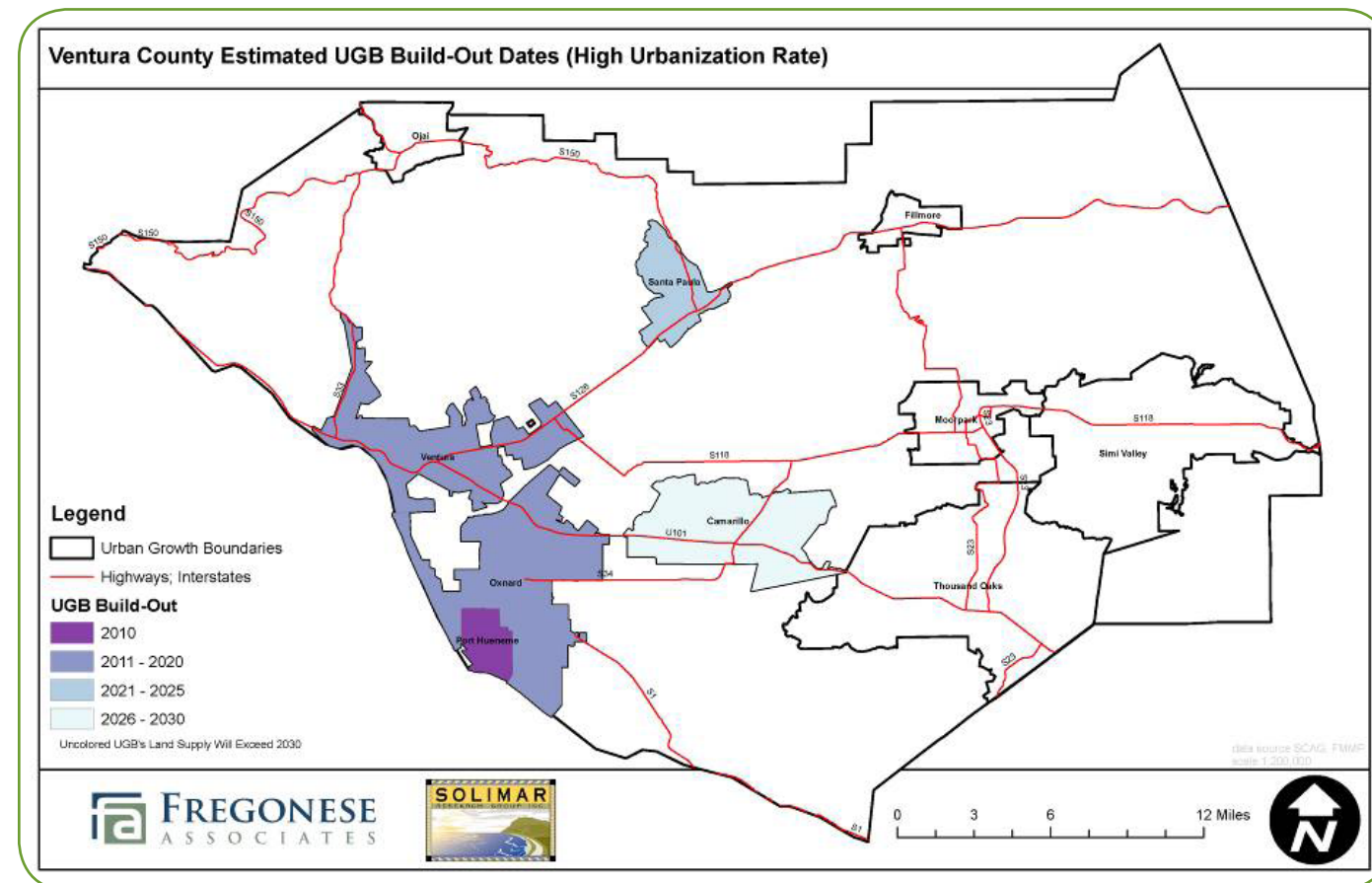
There are efforts underway to identify and conserve important wildlife and open land connections between the Los Padres National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains.

These open land connections should be identified based on the character of the landscape, not on the location of political boundaries. As we think together about how to continue to be effective in managing growth, we can broaden our goals to include the conservation of important linkages. This means agreeing which linkages are most important and developing mechanisms and money to preserve land. To be successful, both the ongoing management of growth and coordinated efforts to conserve cross-county landscape linkages need to be accomplished by cities and Ventura County working together.

**THE CHICKEN-AND-EGG QUANDARY OF TRANSIT INVESTMENT**

An increased investment in transit, especially if a large percentage were federal dollars, appears to be heavily supported in Ventura County. It was a strong public process finding from Phase II of this effort. In a recent county survey, 70% said they thought "new rail and public transit projects will significantly reduce traffic congestion in the long run." In short, most of us want a great transit system.

The challenge in Ventura County is that we do not have the dedicated funding stream established to pay for new capital transit investments— even in the long-term. We have roughly half the per-capita revenue source for transit. Even with double the revenue stream, we need outside sources of revenue to improve or expand our county transit system.



Successfully funding new public transportation, like a bus-rapid transit, depends on the collective efforts of all the cities that share a corridor."



**FROM 2000 TO 2006, 965 ACRES OF FARMLAND LOCATED OUTSIDE THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES (UGB) WERE LOST TO URBANIZATION, A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT FROM THE OVER 9,000 ACRES THAT WERE CONVERTED TO URBAN USES FROM 1996-2000. THE SLOWING RATE OF FARMLAND CONVERSION HAS BEEN LARGELY DUE TO OUR UGBS.**

However, in order to justify a federal investment in transit facilities, there needs to be enough potential riders, i.e., homes and offices, near potential transit stations.

The first step in attracting more homes and businesses near transit is by changing plans and zoning to enable the growth; that is, by increasing maximum densities for housing and by increasing building-floor-area to lot-area ratios for offices. The catch-22 for a community that wishes to increase the likelihood of a transit investment is this:

- Assume that, in order to justify a new bus-rapid-transit corridor, intensities need to increase by 50% near all potential transit stations, in all affected cities, over what is currently planned.
- If one city were to increase allowable intensities by 50% along their potential stations, but none of the other cities along the proposed route followed-suit, then the overall increase in intensities along the line may only be 10%. Thus, the bus-rapid-transit investment would not be justifiable.
- Further, the one city would not likely increase allowable intensities by 50%, and work through the controversies that a significant change always brings, unless there was a high likelihood that it would be rewarded with a plan for a near-term transit investment.

**AN OPEN SPACE DISTRICT:**

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District is a Special District formed by a vote of the citizens of Sonoma County in 1990. This Special Districts is a government entities created to acquire and preserve agricultural and open space lands as a legacy for future generations.

**Where does the money come from?**

The Sonoma District get its money from a portion of sales tax

The District can protect land through voluntary land protection agreements ("conservation agreements") and through outright purchase from willing sellers.

**What is a Conservation Agreement?**

Overall, in order to bring about a transportation system change – that costs substantial sums of money and thus must be well-justified -- we must be willing to work together. If one city along a potential transit line knows that the other nearby cities have committed in principal to supporting transit along the proposed line, it might be willing to explore the 50% change. Thus, by working cooperatively there would be a reasonable possibility that the transit investment will be made.

**ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND CLIMATE STABILITY**

Individual buildings have a significant impact on energy use, water use, and the consumption of raw materials. Many of these impacts last not just the during the first homebuyer’s residency, roughly 10 years, but over the lifetime of the structure—sometimes greater than 100 years. If one jurisdiction increases standards beyond what is required by the state (which are already among the highest standards nationwide), it may put itself at a competitive disadvantage relative to nearby communities. A housing developer may simply go to the next-closest community that does not have these higher standards in order to maximize his postconstruction sales profit.

The costs and benefits of a, change in high-performance building standards in the county needs more study. If a change made sense, a benefit of banding together to implement higher building standards is that no city puts itself at a competitive disadvantage for economic growth against other cities in the county. If, based on further analysis of the long-term costs and benefits of such a policy, high performance building standards make sense, banding together many cities helps us avoid being in competition with each other.

A Conservation Agreement is a voluntary legal agreement that a landowner makes to restrict the amount and type of development that may take place on his or her property. A conservation agreement remains with the land forever. The farmer is able to stay in farming instead of selling, while the public benefits because the agriculture sector remains economically viable and residents can continue to enjoy the beauty of the County’s farming heritage.

**What kind of properties does the District protect/ preserve?**

The Sonoma District uses a plan to prioritize which pieces of land to conserve. Generally, the Sonoma District conserves Farms & Ranches, Greenbelts & Scenic Hillside, Water, Wildlife & Natural Areas and Recreation & Education.





# Next Steps Toward a Regional Collaboration

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# Next Steps Toward a Regional Collaboration

Phase II of this effort explored various simulations of the county at a population of one million. The process to develop these simulations or scenarios was wide open, involving multiple open public meetings and online opportunities. These ranged from Map-the-Future workshops to a set of summits (meetings to learn what elements residents prefer from the scenarios) to online questionnaires. We have a clear sense of what and generally how participants want to see the sustainability of Ventura County improved over time.

However, while participants in Phases I and II of the Compact process represent a number of interests from across the county, they cannot be extrapolated to assume countywide support. Nonetheless, it is a good nucleus of input and a sound basis for a working draft Compact.

Here are suggested next steps for the Compact process. These steps are presented in the general order in which they should be addressed, but there may be overlap between them.

## 1. Endorse the Draft Compact as a Framework

The Phase II Steering Committee should endorse the draft Compact as a framework that includes appropriate issues to discuss and refine further.

The draft Compact can then be used to organize further input as we turn to strengthening a coalition of interests. Capture ideas and modifications of a number of key parties, notably local governments, in the framework of the draft Compact. This ostensibly will increase acceptance for the Compact as parties see their ideas and concerns addressed as the draft is clarified.

## 2. Focus on Strengthening the Coalition

The process is still wide open. Sponsors and champions from Phases I and II should invite other parties to join the effort as a “Friend of the Compact.”

Participation from city and county leaders has not been strong in the first two phases of the Compact. In order for a regional collaboration to have staying power, we need to focus on building a strong coalition.

By supporting the Compact process as a “Friend of the Compact,” an organization simply agrees to work in good faith to 1) define a useful platform or structure for regional collaboration and 2) help refine the framework of issues in the draft Compact into something they are willing to seriously consider.

Establishing many Friends of the Compact is a way to establish momentum, and get many key parties at the table to help list the issues and solutions the Compact will incorporate.

## 3. Invite Multiple Sectors to the Table

To date, the emphasis on which potential parties might joining a Compact agreement has been on local government. This should be explicitly broadened to emphasize multiple-sector involvement. In addition to local governments, nonprofit organizations, business organizations, and citizen groups should be invited to sign on as a Friend of the Compact.

The purpose in the short term is to increase momentum and interest in the Compact process. In the longer run, more nongovernmental friends may increase the effectiveness of the coalition in addressing issues of mutual, regional concern. This means that the language of the Compact may need to be broadened to include advocacy actions that are more appropriate for nongovernmental entities.

One approach is for the Friends of the Compact to work with business community leaders to learn what they need to be more successful. This may be a useful way to include the private sector and may also provide insights that are of interest to many public sector leaders.

## 4. Take the Show on the Road

Part of step 3 requires seeking input on regional collaboration and the Compact with every local government regardless of whether they are currently a Friend of the Compact.

## 5. Establish the Platform for Collaboration

The Friends of the Compact should establish the platform for collaboration. Some of these options are in this document, but they include:

- Utilizing or pivoting off an existing governmental organization that has a countywide role.
- Creating or inviting an existing nonprofit to be the facilitating entity of the regional collaborative.

- Establishing a “credible to government, but not of it” organization, such as a mayors caucus.

What these options have in common is that each has an entity that is responsible for the logistics of coordination and helping the collaborative move its business forward. In the absence of a responsible party, even as simple as a designated board and chair, regional collaboratives weaken and die over time. Other options than these may be appropriate.

## 6. Refine the Language of the Compact Voluntary Agreement

The Friends of the Compact should turn their attention to the language and content of the Compact unless step #4 suggests a different direction.

## 7. Invite Organizations to commit to the Compact Voluntary Agreement

Invite Friends of the Compact and other organizations to commit to the Compact voluntary agreement – to become a Partner. Some patience is necessary to increase the base of participation or the size of the coalition before moving to this step. A sign of success is that many organizations are participating as a “Friend of the Compact” and that these organizations feel ownership over the details of the Compact voluntary agreement.

## THE DRAFT COMPACT: A FRAMEWORK FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Ventura County residents, public agencies, civic groups, and businesses share a history of cooperation to address growth-related challenges. We all seek after a livable, more sustainable future for Ventura County. But the future we will create will be brighter if we band together again, in the spirit of cooperation, to forthrightly address our current and future issues of mutual concern.

A compact is a way for us to commit to work together as a team and utilize a shared game plan. It can establish our partnership, put forth a vision that addresses our issues of mutual concern, and detail shared principles to help guide us toward success.

The Compact document that is attached is a draft, but one that has thought and momentum behind it. It is the product

of an extensive and open public process and the thoughtful consideration of a steering committee. And it is just a place to start a more focused dialogue. In the third and final phase of the Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County, we encourage cities and organizations to join a countywide conversation about how to create a more sustainable future by refining or augmenting the vision and actions in the draft Compact.





# The Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County

DRAFT 18 August 2010

## **A note to the reader:**

*This draft of the Compact does not incorporate all issues that may be appropriate for a countywide collaboration to address. This draft includes only elements that were directly discussed in the process up to July of 2010. It is anticipated that additional topics will be added in the future based on the interests of Friends of the Compact.*

## **PREAMBLE**

Encouraged by past success in Ventura County in working together on common issues, and desiring to forge a model for cooperative action toward a sustainable future, we seek to develop a Compact as a framework to enable us to more effectively collaborate. This Compact is a living document that may be revised as necessary based on this and future countywide dialogues.

## **PARTNERSHIP**

We, the participating local governments, business entities, and nongovernmental associations commit to a Partnership to move forward our vision and to address issues of mutual concern. We recognize that we will be more effective working together than by undertaking isolated or uncoordinated actions.

Our Partnership will utilize this Compact as a framework to undertake consistent, coordinated actions.

The Partnership will meet as a newly established entity that includes the governmental, private, and nonprofit sectors. Decisions of the Partnership will be shared or coordinated with the Ventura Council of Governments, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, and other countywide entities as the Partnership deems appropriate.

The Partnership will meet annually or more frequently as deemed necessary to discuss progress achieving the vision and addressing issues of mutual concern, to nominate and discuss new issues, to consider modifications to the Compact, or for other Partnership business as necessary.

## INTENT OF THE COMPACT

- A) To develop a shared commitment between jurisdictions, other governmental bodies, and nongovernmental entities to address issues of mutual concern.
- B) To strengthen existing frameworks for cooperative intergovernmental relations.
- C) To affirm the existing authority of local jurisdictions to address the form of communities.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A) We, the Partnership of local governments and interested organizations of Ventura County, recognize that some of the challenges we face today and will face in the future can be more effectively addressed if we work together than if we work independently.
- B) We recognize that the quality of life of residents in each part of the county is shaped by decisions in the county as a whole, not just in individual cities or towns.
- C) Each of us wants other organizations in the county to directly address issues of common concern. For that to happen, we affirm that we must be willing to address these issues ourselves. Therefore, our organization agrees to enter into the following Compact, with our commitment confirmed when a majority of local governments in Ventura County also makes the commitment.
- D) As a local government, while interested in making a shared commitment with the other local governments, we also affirm our existing authority to make local decisions. This includes determining—together with our residents, business owners, and local organizations—how the shared commitment of this Compact will influence our local plans, investments, and ordinances.
- E) We, the Partnership, agree to let the following mutually developed Vision guide the development and updating of the Compact. This Vision is living and may be revised as necessary based on countywide dialogues.

## THE VISION

Our vision for a Sustainable Ventura County addresses the following issues:

### **A Living Vision**

- i) We have a living, countywide vision to help local governments make decisions that consider regional and long-term consequences.

### **B Integrated Planning**

- i) We integrate our land use, housing, and transportation plans and processes.

- ii) We coordinate local plans with nearby cities and with county and regional planning efforts
- iii) We seek to reduce our transportation needs through integrated planning.
- C Sustained Agriculture and Food System**
  - i) We aim to grow enough food to meet our own needs by sustaining local agriculture. We support a healthy agricultural business network of farms, processing facilities, and allied businesses.
- D Local Opportunities**
  - i) We provide for a broad range of living, shopping, work, education, and entertainment opportunities that are accessible to residents in each area of the county.
- E Climate Change Responsibility**
  - i) We do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help address climate change.
- F Healthy Economy**
  - i) We encourage creation of an economy that is broad based, competitive, and prosperous so that residents will have the opportunity to work and thrive within their own communities.
- G Energy Conservation**
  - i) We support the conservation of energy and the use of renewable energy as an alternative to fossil fuels.
- H Protected Environment**
  - i) We protect and improve the health of our natural environment.
- I Equitable Prosperity**
  - i) We minimize disparities and improve the prosperity and quality of life for all segments of Ventura County's population.
- J Housing Opportunity**
  - i) We provide a range of housing choices to meet the needs of residents of all life stages and incomes.
- K Inclusion**
  - i) We facilitate diverse participation--including people of color, youth, low-income people, and senior citizens—who are historically underrepresented in the public planning process.
- L Well-Managed Growth**
  - i) We continue our legacy of locating urban development within incorporated cities.
  - ii) We grow within our means.
- M Protected Open Space**
  - i) We protect our open spaces and encourage public access to them.
- N Sustained Resources**
  - i) We protect and sustain natural and nonrenewable resources.
- O Transportation Choices**
  - i) We provide a variety of transportation choices to efficiently move people and goods.
- P Waste Reduction**
  - i) We encourage consumers and producers to reduce waste.
- Q Water Conserved**
  - i) We conserve our water resources and ensure an adequate water supply for the future.



## PRINCIPLES OF AGREEMENT

As a Partnership, we agree to the following Principles of Agreement that address the issues of mutual concern incorporated in the Vision.

### **A note to the reader:**

*Not all elements of the Vision outlined above are addressed by Principles of Agreement, only those that benefited from clear support through the 2007 to 2010 Compact for a Sustainable Ventura County Process. It is anticipated that additional elements will be added including but limited to:*

- + *Economic Development*
- + *Bike and Pedestrian Transportation*
- + *Sustained Resources*
- + *Waste Reduction*
- + *Water Conservation*

*Further, the existing Principles in this draft will be modified as changes are made to reflect the interests of Friends of the compact.*

### 1. WELL-MANAGED GROWTH:

Efficient, orderly growth helps us maintain a clear distinction between cities and rural areas, helps maintain the viability of local farming, and improves the efficient use of roads and infrastructure. To promote well-managed growth we commit to the following Principles:

- A **Orderly Development** We recognize the ongoing value of the Guidelines for Orderly Development, which have been adopted by all cities in Ventura County and by Ventura County, which recommend that:
  - i) "Urban development should occur, whenever and wherever practical, within incorporated cities which exist to provide a full range of municipal services and are responsible for urban land use planning."
- B **Boundaries for Urban Development:** We reaffirm the validity of using urban growth boundaries for managing growth.
- C **Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources:** We will work to maintain the current SOAR boundaries insofar as they are feasible and in consideration of sound urban planning principles. To support maintenance of current SOAR boundaries, we will orient population and employment growth, as appropriate, toward the reuse of land and buildings within our existing boundaries.

2. **LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES:** Residents should have great accessibility to a variety of living, shopping, entertainment, and work opportunities. This gives residents more options to improve their lives, more time to enjoy living instead of getting around, reduces the need to drive long distances, and can lead to healthier lifestyles that incorporate walking and bicycling. To enable residents to have a range of local opportunities, we commit to the following Principles:

## MAJOR OBSTACLES TO IN-TOWN DEVELOPMENT INCLUDE:

- Resistance from nearby residents
- Entitlement uncertainty
- Long or uncertain planning review time-frames
- Unreasonably low allowable intensity
- High parking requirements that fail to consider the higher potential for walking, bicycling, and transit use that most in-town locations enjoy.
- Encumbrances to development and redevelopment near existing or potential transit

- A **Strong Centers and Livable Boulevards:** As growth occurs, we will encourage a strong percentage to be focused on centers and livable boulevards.
- B **Reuse Land and Buildings:** To also reduce demand for encroachment of urban growth on valued open lands, we will encourage land and building reuse on appropriate commercial streets and in nonresidential and mixed-use areas of in our city or town, while protecting local neighborhoods.
  - i) Further we will work to make in-town or reuse sites as desirable for development as edge-of-town locations. Thus, we will consider removing major obstacles to in-town

3. **PROTECTED OPEN SPACE:** We recognize the intrinsic value of open space to human and other life, allowing for recreation, animal habitat, the production of food and fiber, the reduction of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere and the creation of oxygen, and many other benefits. To protect our valued open space, we commit to the following Principles

- A **Fair Treatment:** We will treat land owners fairly who own land that is intended for permanent open space.
- B **Countywide Open Space District and Plan:** Further, we recognize the need for a countywide open space district and a countywide open space plan in order to prioritize and purchase or establish conservation easements on open space with cross-jurisdictional or regional importance. These include:
  - i) Wildlife corridors
  - ii) Greenbelts
  - iii) Prime agricultural lands
  - iv) Critical lands

4. **HOUSING OPPORTUNITY:** We recognize that enabling a greater variety of housing including more compact and moderately priced homes has benefits both to the community as a whole and to individual residents and households. These include reducing the costs of producing housing and the costs of home maintenance so that more people can enjoy the benefits of having a home; reducing land consumption saving valuable farmland for food production; protecting open space that supports the needs of humans and other forms of life; and reducing the distances between homes and services so that more trips can be made on foot or by bicycle. To improve housing opportunity, we commit to the following Principles

- A **Plan Housing for Long-Term Needs:** We will plan for a housing supply that, including more compact and moderately priced units, will enable the private sector to more closely meet the needs of our changing population.
  - i) As Ventura County ages, the demand for larger-lot single-unit homes will fall while the demand for downsized housing types will grow. Local governments should calibrate housing plans to enable the private housing market to match the shift in housing types that will demand in the coming decades.

## COUNTYWIDE HOUSING

**STUDY:** Ventura County will benefit from a long-term housing market analysis. Such a study could compare the existing housing stock plus the housing potential of vacant and potential redevelopment sites against market demand shifts that are a function of age, preferences, and what can be afforded by existing and future residents of Ventura County. A long-term housing analysis like this would provide informed long-term planning numbers for jurisdictions to consider. Shared funding between jurisdictions would increase the value of such a study and reduce the per-jurisdiction costs. This study will aid in effective long-term planning for a housing stock that meets the wants and needs of the county's population.

## REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND HOUSING NEEDS:

The state requires local governments to demonstrate how they will provide moderately priced housing consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Sometimes cities view this as sufficient in meeting housing needs, but the RHNA represents only a minimum threshold for moderately priced housing. The RHNA targets thus may not represent all housing needs. Further, cities and the county should strive to meet all housing needs, not just those recognized by the commercial housing market.

- ii) Lower cost homes such as townhouses, condominiums, apartments, or smaller-lot single-unit homes occupy less space, require less water, and cost less to provide infrastructure.
- B **Workforce Housing:** We will work to provide a range of housing choices in each part of the county in an effort to provide workforce housing for area businesses. This will help reduce driving distances caused by avoidable commuting, and reduce financial and social impacts to residents and communities.
- C **Encourage Strategically Located Workforce Housing:** we will consider changing city zoning within our jurisdictions to allow more small lots, townhouses and condominiums in strategic places. The location of workforce housing matters. It benefits residents, the community and the county when workforce housing is encouraged:
  - i) In areas near existing or potential public transportation stops or stations
  - ii) Near or in centers and livable boulevards
  - iii) Within appropriate commercial areas
- D **Public Involvement in the Planning Process:** We will seek the input of residents and housing stakeholders as we plan for the housing in our communities and Ventura County.

5. **TRANSPORTATION CHOICES:** We recognize that providing a variety of transportation choices will reduce household transportation expenses, improve the ability of our workforce to reach places of business, reduce county energy use and air pollutants associated with the burning of fossil fuels, improve the resiliency of our economy in the face of uncertain energy prices, and improve the health of residents by encouraging walking and bicycling. To improve transportation choices, we commit to the following Principles:

- A **Funding Public Transportation:** In principle, we support spending a significant percentage of countywide transportation funds on public transportation even if it means a corresponding decrease in money for roadways.
- B **Time-competitive Public Transportation:** In principle, we recognize that forms of public transportation that are able to have reasonably competitive times will:
  - i) Attract more transit riders
  - ii) Increase market demand for near-transit development
  - iii) Help ensure county residents can stay mobile despite projected increases in gas prices or traffic congestion.
  - iv) Reduce green-house gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels.Therefore, we will work for the long-term development of a countywide transit system that is reasonably time competitive with private transportation.
- C **Transit System Consolidation:** Further, to improve the effective use of transit funding in the county and to better establish cross-jurisdictional routes that maximize transit ridership, we will work to consolidate the county's seven transit agencies.



At a minimum, housing should be allowed as a permitted use in community and neighborhood scaled commercial areas.

6. INTEGRATED PLANNING: We recognize that integrating land use and transportation planning will reduce the need for residents to drive long distances; improve the mobility of residents; reduce household transportation expenses; reduce the need to provide new road improvements; increase the viability walking, bicycling and public transportation choices; reduce county energy use and air pollutants associated with the burning of fossil fuels; and improve the health of residents by creating viable opportunities to walk and bike.

A Improve Proximity: We recognize that reducing the distance between homes and destinations reduces driving distances and enables walking and bicycling. We will work to improve proximity through the following means:

- i) We will enable and encourage new or modified places in our jurisdictions that mix complementary uses such as homes, retail, and office within a short walk of each other.
- ii) Cities that have strong employment centers will explore increasing the availability and range of housing choices within bicycling distance of these job areas.
- iii) Areas of the county that have a lack of basic employment opportunities (office, education, manufacturing, etc.), will plan for and incentivize job growth in the area. County economic development professionals (such as EDC/VC) should prioritize job growth in these areas.

B Match Growth with Public Transportation: Further, we recognize that by focusing more growth and development with public transportation, we can improve the use and cost effectiveness of public transportation service.

7. ENERGY CONSERVATION: We recognize that the conservation of energy will reduce green house gas emissions to help respond to the threat of climate change and will improve our ability to live sustainably and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. To support energy conservation, we commit to the following Principles.

A High Performance Buildings: Individual buildings have a significant impact on energy use, water use, and the consumption of raw materials. If one jurisdiction were to increase standards to ensure higher performance buildings it may put itself at a competitive disadvantage relative to other communities. We will explore the financial, economic development, and long-term environmental impacts of increasing standards (exceeding state requirements) for high-performance buildings in Ventura County.

8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: *Principle of Agreement to be Added based on further discussion by Friends of the Compact*

9. BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION: *Principle of Agreement to be Added based on further discussion by Friends of the Compact*

10. SUSTAINED RESOURCES: *Principle of Agreement to be Added based on further discussion by Friends of the Compact*

11. WASTE REDUCTION: *Principle of Agreement to be Added based on further discussion by Friends of the Compact*

12. WATER CONSERVATION: *Principle of Agreement to be Added based on further discussion by Friends of the Compact*

13. PROCESS: Modifications to the Compact, such as new Issues of Mutual Concern, may be nominated during a meeting of the Partnership. The Partnership will act on proposed

14. IMPLEMENTATION: The Partnership will share with each other effective implementation practices that relate to the Issues of Mutual Concern. These best practices may come from within or beyond the Partnership.

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