



Date: May 18, 2010
To: Regional Advisory Working Group
From: Miriam Chion, Principal Planner
Subject: **Priority Development Area Assessment – Overview**

This assessment and related report will document the planning and investment strategies required to accomplish sustainable and equitable development in the existing 60 Planned Priority Development Areas (PDAs). While all of these PDAs have been proposed by local jurisdictions committed to sustainable transit-oriented development through local plans, they vary greatly in their visions of complete communities and readiness to produce new housing. Based on the studies, plans, and efforts led by the local jurisdictions, the assessment will identify the criteria and conditions for housing production as well as the scale and type of growth to be expected in Planned PDAs. It will identify the goals, strategies and achievements towards the development of complete communities and the required planning and investment support.

Assessment Scope

Readiness for growth

Planned Priority Development Areas present a wide range of approaches to accommodate future development supported by public transit. Readiness for development will be assessed based on the scope and stage of the planning process and implementation strategies, the support from the community and elected officials for the development of PDAs, and the level of investment attraction over the last ten years. Preliminary feedback from meetings with local jurisdictions indicates that community participation, streamlined environmental review, transit improvements, and catalyst projects are some of the top priorities to facilitate the implementation of adopted plans. Information exchanged in these meetings suggests four potential groups of PDAs based on growth patterns and readiness qualities:

- Established urban neighborhoods ready to accommodate major growth through high-density housing linked to public transit
- Places growing rapidly and shifting from suburban or semi-rural to urban neighborhoods
- Established suburban places embarking on major efforts to strengthen their downtowns or commercial nodes and accommodate small growth
- Low-density urban neighborhoods focused on retaining and enhancing existing qualities while addressing very small growth

Development of complete communities

Jurisdiction with Planned PDAs make various choices regarding the quality of the public realm, housing types and affordability, transit and pedestrian accessibility, retail and cultural activities, school performance, and access to open space, among other neighborhood qualities. This assessment will document the community vision and current conditions of the Planned PDAs, and identify the various planning and development strategies required to develop and improve the neighborhood

qualities needed for a complete community. Preliminary feedback from local jurisdictions indicates the following priorities:

- Housing affordability
- Transit service improvements
- Infrastructure improvements (access to water and sewer upgrades for infill development)
- Redesign of parking strategies
- Access to and quality of schools
- Design of public spaces
- Addressing public safety
- Supporting additional civic and cultural activities

Approach and schedule

- October 2009: Regional workshop to identify key planning efforts across local jurisdictions.
- November 2009 – February 2010: 47 meetings with planning, redevelopment, and community development directors; transit agencies; and congestion management agencies to gather specific qualitative information on development challenges and expectations.
- March – May 2010: Survey to gather additional information and detailed planning and development data that can be systematically analyzed at the regional level.
- April – May 2010: Gather demographic, economic, land use, and transportation data.
- May – July 2010: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of implementation conditions and qualities of urban development for Planned PDAs. Preliminary findings to be presented at county/corridors meetings.
- August – September 2010: Findings review with local jurisdictions and final report production

Informing the Sustainable Communities Strategy

This assessment summarizes the efforts and accomplishments of the PDAs, which are most likely to take the largest share of growth in the region. This assessment will address the Sustainable Communities Strategy as follows:

- *Growth capacity to inform regional growth allocation modeling:* the assessment will document the growth potential in the Planned PDAs based on local planning efforts, community support, available resources for public improvements, and attractiveness of place. It will also provide an overview of the future population profile for these PDAs.
- *Sustainable development challenges to inform regional policies, development alternatives, and investment strategies:* the assessment will identify the planning tasks, community participation, rules and regulations, investments, and interagency coordination required for targeted housing production, transit access, and creation of complete communities.
- *Local and regional collaboration for public participation grounded on local concerns and strategies:* development of the assessment offers an opportunity for close interaction between local and regional agencies in the analysis of planning strategies and development conditions. It will help regional and local staff to recognize areas of local strength and regional strength, issues shared across jurisdictions and issues specific to place type, and development areas of strong consensus and areas of discrepancies.
- *Inform the Sustainable Communities Strategy Indicators/Co-benefits framework:* The Priority Development Area Assessment will analyze information related to sustainable neighborhood development and complete communities at the PDA level. This methodology could inform the SCS Co-Benefits/Indicators framework, potentially advised and supplemented by the RAWG.