



**Regional
Stewardship:**
A Commitment
to Place

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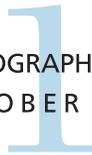


Table of Contents

Foreward	1
What is Regional Stewardship?	3
Why We Need Regional Stewardship Now	5
What Regional Stewards Do	8
Regional Stewardship in Practice	14
Promoting Regional Stewardship	24

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Foreword

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What makes regions work today?

Who makes things happen?

The typical American community is run by a diverse cast of characters. Beyond a small number of visible elected officials and business leaders, community leadership can be found in a less visible, but active, group of tenaciously caring citizens. They are the ones who attend significant community meetings; they chair important civic committees; and they help raise the funds to keep the important civic ventures going.

Meet the Responsibles. They come from all walks of life including neighborhood leaders, housewives, professionals, executives, educators, union members and other citizens. Just about everyone in the community knows who they are. In earlier times they all came from the same socio-economic class and the word “Establishment” was used to describe them. Today they are of diverse origins and the chief qualification is an unswerving devotion to the not very glamorous task of keeping a community in working order.

As the importance of regions becomes apparent, the Responsibles are emerging in leadership roles. We call them Regional Stewards; they are the Responsibles who work for their region.

Concern for regions is not new. People in the field of public administration have for many years been active in forming regional planning organizations, sponsoring regional development programs and so on. But it was not until recently a subject of general interest. Then, several years ago, regions began to win the attention they deserve—thanks to the gifted journalist, Neal Peirce, thanks to William Dodge’s writing and organizing skills,

thanks to the environmentalists, thanks to Rebecca Morgan, Douglas Henton, and many other regionalists.

Informed Americans are beginning to acknowledge that some crucial problems such as traffic congestion and pollution simply cannot be solved within municipal boundaries. They have become familiar with words and phrases such as urban sprawl and infill. And this new awareness is immensely important. Until a subject is on the agenda of informed Americans, nothing happens. When it does get on the agenda, all kinds of constructive change are possible. So now is the time.

Every American community has enough potential leadership to run a small nation. But most of the potential leaders are not leading. Many are hiding out in the law firms, the corporate executive ranks, or the universities, living comfortable lives and giving little or no attention to the present or future problems of their community. Who gave them permission to stand aside?

Regional stewards are rising to the challenge. But what do regional stewards look like? They have first of all a deep sense of responsibility about their region. They want it to thrive economically, to be sustainable environmentally, and to have the web of mutual obligations, caring, trust and shared values that make possible the accomplishment of group purpose.

They recognize that most of our communities are seriously fragmented, and they are committed to bringing the fragments together, committed to fostering the shared understanding and priorities that will permit community solidarity in pursuit of goals. Regional stewards will draw young potential leaders into the fray. They will make sure that leaders in their region come to know and understand different sectors so that true community deliberation can take place.

Regionalism will continue to gain ground, but its progress will be greatly strengthened if we cultivate our potential regional stewards.

What is Regional Stewardship?

Regional stewards are leaders who are committed to the long-term well-being of places. They are integrators who cross boundaries of jurisdiction, sector, and discipline to address complex regional issues such as sprawl, equity, education, and economic development. They see the connection between economic, environmental, and social concerns and they know how to “connect the dots” to create opportunities for their regions. Regional stewards are leaders who combine 360 degree vision with the ability to mobilize diverse coalitions for action.

Why Regions Matter Today

In a seeming paradox, place has become even more important in the New Economy. Although we have become a global economy, and the Internet has collapsed space and time, we have also discovered that most innovation still happens face-to-face in real place. Place matters because people matter in the New Economy. Skills and knowledge are the keys to economic progress. Skilled and knowledgeable people tend to locate in communities that have a good quality of life and great social, cultural, and natural assets.

Communities today face challenges in workforce, transportation, housing, open space, and social inclusion that cannot adequately be addressed by traditional political boundaries and jurisdictions. They must be examined on a regional level, where economic, environmental, and social concerns all come together. Economic development, for example, extends beyond cities to regional economic clusters, environmental issues exist within bioregions, and social issues cut across neighborhoods within regions. In short, regions are where the action is and must be today.

The regional movement has been stirring for some time. Early waves of regionalism focused on government consolidation in the 1960s such as Unigov in Indianapolis. In the 1970s,

the focus shifted to government coordination and gave rise to regional councils of government.

Today's new civic regionalism is based on the rise of what Neal Peirce calls "Citistates"—economic regions that now compete in the global economy. Civic regionalism is, in part, a response to the devolution of political power that has occurred in the past 20 years. In particular, political devolution from the national government to state and local governments has demanded new types of regional collaboration to address government fragmentation.

Why Stewardship Matters Today

Stewardship means the careful and responsible management of something entrusted in our care. Regional stewardship combines the idea of "regional citizenship" with "stewardship of place." Thus, regional stewards are more than just regional leaders; they are special leaders who are committed to the long-term well-being of their communities and regions. At a time when short-term thinking dominates the economic and political worlds while major challenges demand long-term solutions, we have a clear dilemma. Who will take responsibility for the future of the region? Who will be stewards of place?

A distinction exists between regional government, governance, and stewardship. *Government* is the formal structure that makes policy decisions and allocates public resources. *Governance* is the informal process of business, government, and community collaboration that shapes decisions and actions in a region. *Stewardship* is the commitment of regional leaders to place.

Regional stewardship is about residents, businesses, government, educational institutions, and community organizations acting as a "network of responsibility." The basic values underlying regional stewardship are evident: We want to

create broad prosperity; a healthy, attractive environment; and inclusive communities for ourselves and the next generation. The essence of regional stewardship is taking responsibility to ensure that we pass on a better place to our children.

Why We Need Regional Stewardship Now

The New Sources of Regional Leadership

Many communities are undergoing a crisis of leadership as major trends dramatically reshape patterns of leadership in regions. In the recent past, the sources of leadership were clearly located among local elected officials, CEOs of corporations, regional banks, utilities, and local chambers. Today, the influence of globalization, the digital revolution, and new demographics means that leaders will come from different sources and bring more diverse backgrounds.

- **Globalization.** In the past two decades, globalization has meant that corporations must now compete on a world-wide basis, often with investments in many different regions. CEOs of most large corporations have fewer roots in a single region and make less time for regional civic affairs. The greatest impact has been on *Fortune 500* companies that were anchor firms in their regions. Recently, the globalization process has changed the nature of competition in major banks and utilities, resulting in both deregulation and consolidations. The question now for most regions is whether major corporations can be both global and regional at the same time.
- **Digital revolution.** The Internet has fundamentally changed the way business is done, giving firms powerful tools to connect directly with customers, reengineer operations, and network with each other to create greater productivity and improved quality. The emergence of small, entrepreneurial firms driven by the Internet has dramatically changed the nature of business leadership in many regions. Rather than looking solely to large firms for

leadership, regions are asking how to recruit young entrepreneurs from the new economy into positions of regional leadership.

- **New demographics.** Many regions are experiencing major transitions in their demographic profile. In California, Texas, and Florida, there is a significant increase in the Latino population. These and other regions are experiencing a dramatic rise in immigration from Asia as well as Latin America. Consequently, the sources of regional leadership are changing. Regional leaders and other civic leaders with a regional perspective will increasingly come from a much more diverse population and will have different pathways to leadership.

The Anonymity of Leadership

Many regions suffer from an anonymity of leadership. Leaders may still exist, but they often come from different sources, and they may not know each other in rapidly expanding metropolitan regions. The challenge common to most metropolitan regions is that leadership is fragmented, disconnected, and therefore ineffective. With global corporations, banks, and utilities looking beyond the region; new economy entrepreneurs not yet plugged in; new immigrants and ethnic leaders not yet fully included in the regional dialogue; and local elected leaders often in conflict, no wonder an “anonymity of leadership” exists.

In addition to the diversity of new leadership, devolution of authority has increased the problem of anonymity of leadership. For the past decade, authority has been shifting from the federal government to states and communities. Although regions have more responsibility today, their capacity to respond is fragmented and weak. As metropolitan regions have grown in geography, most regions now encompass many local governments. Mayors and local elected officials do not have the authority to make regional decisions, and the failure to

coordinate key functions results in inadequate regional outcomes in key areas such as transportation and housing. Regions are experimenting with new forms of distributed and networked governance, but most are still in the early stages.

The Limitations of Traditional Leadership

In many regions, we are beginning to see the limitations of traditional forms of leadership. Traditional leadership may exist in a region in the form of CEOs of major corporations, issue advocates, neighborhood activists, social entrepreneurs, and ethnic community leaders, but even with these traditional forms of leadership, why are the most pressing and most difficult regional issues not finding resolution? Why do regions still grapple with congestion, affordable housing, social equity, and workforce development?

The reason is that contemporary challenges facing regions cross multiple boundaries and jurisdictions. These problems require creative, integrated approaches to problem solving. Even breakthrough solutions in one area can be undermined by connected but unaddressed problems. For example, one city in a region can be a textbook example of smart growth, but it may suffer the consequences of poor planning of neighboring cities. In this case, the only way of effectively addressing the challenge of growth is a regional collaboration.

Traditional forms of leadership are still essential to communities. For example, neighborhood activists and ethnic leaders are critical to mobilizing the grassroots; social entrepreneurs pioneer new approaches to social problems; environmental activists maintain vigilance over our natural assets; government leaders focus public resources on critical needs within their jurisdictions. However, the opportunity for metropolitan regions is to develop a new model of leadership that can meet the increasingly complex challenges of economic, environmental, and social change. One promising model is regional stewardship.

What Regional Stewards Do

Regional stewards go beyond traditional forms of leadership. Regional stewards are leaders that cross boundaries, take an integrated approach, and build coalitions for action.

Traditional Leadership	Regional Stewardship
One jurisdiction, one organization	Multiple jurisdictions and organizations
Specific problem or goal	Integrated vision for the region
Single network	Diverse collaborative networks
Commitment to an idea/cause	Commitment to place

Regional stewards tend to have certain common characteristics:

- They are *civic entrepreneurs* who apply the same entrepreneurial spirit and persistence to solving regional challenges that business entrepreneurs apply in building a business.
- They are *integrators* who see the need for more connected regional approaches to addressing economic, environmental, and social objectives.
- They are *boundary crossers* who work beyond traditional governance and consistently collaborate across organizational boundaries and political jurisdictions.
- They are *coalition builders* who build support from leaders, citizens, interest groups, and policy professionals toward a shared regional vision.

Regional Stewards are Civic Entrepreneurs

In times of fundamental economic, political, technological, and demographic shifts, leaders emerge to help America's communities thrive. In *Grassroots Leaders for a New Economy*,

Collaborative Economics called these leaders “civic entrepreneurs” because they combine two great American traditions: the spirit of innovative enterprise and the spirit of community initiative.

Civic entrepreneurs are catalysts who help regions go through the change process. Like the business entrepreneur, the civic entrepreneur operates in a time of dramatic change, sees opportunity, and mobilizes others in the community to work toward their collective well-being. Although civic entrepreneurs come from all sectors—public, private, nonprofit—they share common characteristics of entrepreneurial business leaders. They are risk takers. They are not afraid of failure. They possess courage born of strong convictions. They are passionate and energetic. They are people of vision.

Austin engages civic entrepreneurs

In 1999, two young entrepreneurs from the New Economy—Peter Zandan and Steve Papermaster—organized the Austin 360 Summit, bringing together more than 300 high-level executives in an active day of dialogue and debate about Austin’s future. At the second Summit in 2000, the leaders adopted a declaration of interdependence that outlined strategic commitments to the community. This declaration recognized that “we are interdependent on the resources, institutions, assets and people of the community.”

The Austin Network was created at the Austin 360 Summit in 2000. It is “not a new organization...instead it is a network of networks, a connector of people, institutions and resources. It will facilitate the collaboration of teams of entrepreneurial stewards to do serious work on serious issues.” Co-chaired by Tom Meredith, managing director of Dell Ventures, and Lee Walker, chairman of Community Investment Corporation and chairman of the Board of Capital Metro, the Network will become a platform to engage New Economy civic entrepreneurs and connect them with the information, resources, and networks that will lead to regional change in Austin.

Regional Stewards are Integrators

Regional stewards have 360 degree vision, recognizing the interdependences between economy, environment, and social equity. In many regions, leaders are addressing problems in each of these areas, but their approach is not integrated. Different leaders in a region lead each of these conversations and they are not connected to each other.

Partly because of the problem of anonymity of leadership in large metropolitan regions, leaders do not know what other leaders are doing, and have a hard time linking their efforts. Regional stewards help their communities develop an integrated approach to policy and planning, based on a common set of values and a regional vision.

Silicon Valley creates an integrated vision

In 1998, Joint Venture: Silicon Valley, a regional public-private partnership, released Silicon Valley 2010, a vision that integrates goals for an innovative economy with a livable environment and inclusive society. It was the product of 18 months of work by a Vision Leadership Team composed of a diverse group of regional citizens from business, government, education, and the community, representing a broad cross-section of the region's changing demography. Chaired by Jay Harris, the publisher of the *San Jose Mercury News*, and Dianne McKenna, former Santa Clara County supervisor, the vision leadership group integrated the inputs from eight focus groups, a public-opinion survey, and ten community town-hall meetings to create a vision with 19 specific goals. An integrated framework for these goals focused on an innovative economy, livable environment, inclusive society, and regional stewardship.

In 1999, Joint Venture created the Silicon Valley Civic Action Network (SV-CAN) to stimulate local action in support of the regional goals of Silicon Valley 2010. SV-CAN will sponsor a series of workplace forums for employees at major companies such as Hewlett-Packard and Sun. It has also hosted community forums on closing the "digital divide," with a specific focus on involving the Latino community. The Packard Foundation and The James Irvine Foundation have been supporting this new effort in more "grassroots" regional stewardship.

Regional Stewards are Boundary Crossers

Regional stewards are “boundary crossers”—a term coined by nationally syndicated columnist Neal Peirce. They reach across jurisdictional, organizational, ethnic, and other boundaries to seek solutions to community problems. They are not deterred by turf issues. In fact, it is striking how often regional stewards are building collaborative solutions outside the traditional government structures.

We are entering a period of experimentation and designing “new civic intermediaries” to address regional challenges that transcend the ability of government, business, or community institutions to address by themselves. These intermediaries—which can be institutions or ad hoc alliances—work across multiple political jurisdictions, organizations, and networks.

Greater Washington overcomes political fragmentation

In Greater Washington, technology leaders such as Steve Case of America Online have joined with other business and civic leaders to support a regionwide Potomac Conference focused on “creating a world-class connected community” for the New Economy. What these leaders understood was that leadership in the region was fragmented by political jurisdictions (District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Maryland), between public and private sectors, and between the new economy and the traditional economy.

The Potomac Conference has identified common regional issues, such as workforce and transportation, that must be addressed on a more connected basis by regional stewards. Beyond the Potomac Conference, several programs and projects are under way. Foundations such as the Meyer Foundation and Fannie-Mae Foundation are playing an important role in regional community building in Greater Washington. Business leaders are leading initiatives to help prepare people for the New Economy. At one simple level, just connecting these efforts so as to increase awareness is essential for the region’s success.

Regional Stewards are Coalition Builders

Regional stewards build new coalitions for change by pulling together support from the four following groups in the community in new ways:

- **Leaders.** Because leaders come from many sources today and focus on different issues, we have seen that many regions suffer from an anonymity of leadership. Regional stewards are a subset of civic leaders in the region who not only see the bigger picture and the need to create more connected leadership but are willing to recruit other civic leaders to the cause.
- **Citizens.** Residents can become more engaged today in regional issues through a variety of new information tools that help connect citizens directly with regional stewards. Reaching out to citizens and involving them directly can “democratize the planning process” and build grassroots support for regional action.
- **Interest groups.** Today, a variety of interest groups engage in public-policy debate. For example, the Sierra Club will advocate for the environment, whereas developers will advocate for development, labor will lobby for worker issues, and business will advocate for business interests. Although an important part of the political process, interest groups can stand in the way of significant regional change. Strong regional leadership with broad-based citizen support is necessary to change the normal interest-group dynamics. An effective regional process can recruit some members of interest groups to a broad coalition for change if the benefits are clear and if collaboration is seen as the only way to break through gridlock.
- **Policy professionals.** Ever since the progressive movement at the turn of the twentieth century tried to take politics out of government, policy professionals who serve the public sector have taken center stage in state and local governments. Power and decision making often reside with

experts—whether they are planning commissions, transportation boards, or government officials—rather than with residents or civic leaders. An effective regional process will recruit and engage policy professionals, seeking to involve them in larger coalitions for change.

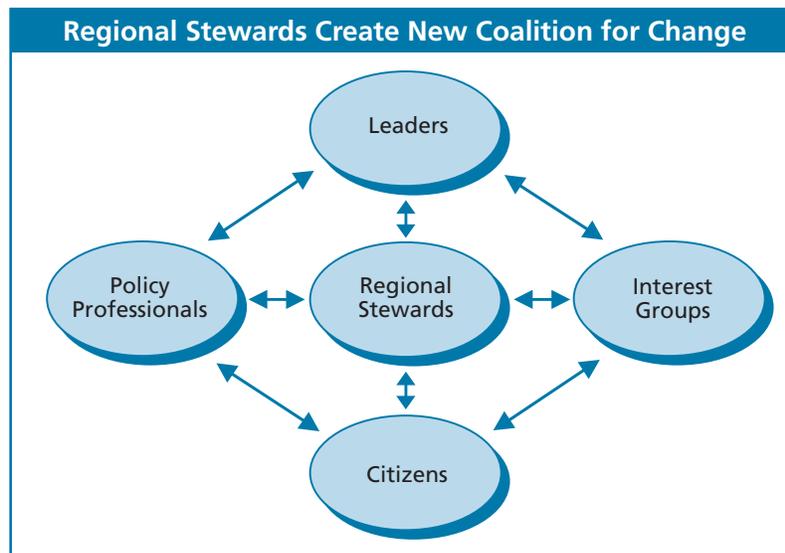


Figure 1 illustrates how regional stewards create coalitions for change.

Regional stewards reach across their regions to create broad-based coalitions for change. These new coalitions can influence and motivate policy professionals to act while neutralizing the effect of competing interest groups in the policy process.

A variety of new structures and organizations are developing at the regional level to move toward regional stewardship. No single model will work in every region, and thus regions should try to learn from each other what works best and adapt those lessons in the most appropriate way to their own situations. The following section provides examples of how communities across the country are experimenting with new ways of “connecting the dots” and developing coalitions for regional change.

Regional Stewardship in Practice

As communities search for new models of regional stewardship, four distinct conversations are taking place. Rarely are they connected, and the result is that regional leaders working in one area often do not know their counterparts working in another area.

The four conversations are:

- **New Economy:** preparing people and places to succeed
- **Livable Community:** creating great places to live and work
- **Community-based Regionalism:** ensuring that everyone is included
- **Governance Reform:** finding creative ways to govern



Figure 2 illustrates how the four realms for conversation and action are beginning to connect around specific issues.

Although it is still too early to find definitive success stories, some regions have made concerted efforts to connect the dots and build new coalitions for change across the different regional conversations. They are pioneering new models of regional stewardship.

New Economy: Preparing People and Places to Succeed

The New Economy is about more than high tech. It is a new way of competing based on speed, quality, flexibility, knowledge, and networks. Industries as diverse as retail, entertainment, apparel, polymers, food, and autos are being fundamentally transformed by the New Economy. The Internet is an enabler of this change, much like electricity in the past hundred years. What is becoming clear is that all institutions—including education, government, and community organizations—will need to adapt to the new rules for success.

Some regions are taking active steps to help people and places succeed in the New Economy. Business leaders and New Economy entrepreneurs, faced with workforce needs in their regions, are coming forward to help address these issues.

- In the *Greater Washington, D.C.*, area, the leadership of the Potomac Conference brings together regional business, government, and education leaders to develop a common agenda designed to promote a “world-class connected community” for the New Economy. This agenda focuses on innovation, education, inclusion, quality of life, and regionalism. Steve Case, chairman and CEO of America Online, has become a leader in this regional movement, speaking out for a more connected community.
- *Minneapolis* is asking similar questions about the how to prepare for the New Economy. A loose network of leadership is beginning to work on this issue, including the Global Alliance of top CEOs and the Minneapolis Citizen

League. A series of projects focused on the New Economy addresses “how to we prepare for the New Economy without leaving anyone out.”

Pittsburgh’s Innovation Works

Pittsburgh, like many industrial cities, has gone through a dramatic economic transformation in the past decade. Once known for its steel industry, Pittsburgh today has a diversified economy that is driven increasingly by entrepreneurial firms in software, bioscience, robotics, and materials, with a strong intellectual foundation in world-class universities such as Carnegie Mellon.

The Heinz Endowments embarked on an effort to increase awareness of Pittsburgh’s entrepreneurial economy by creating a Metrics report to track progress, creating a “hot team” of young entrepreneurs to develop a strategy to retain top talent, and helping to form Innovation Works, a new public-private initiative, to help bring venture capital and support to innovative businesses and to share information about Pittsburgh’s innovation economy. A cadre of New Economy leaders has emerged and is beginning to play an important role in Pittsburgh’s regional leadership, working side-by-side with the business leadership from more traditional firms.

Pittsburgh is an example of new ways to engage young entrepreneurs in regional leadership efforts. It also illustrates how a region can transition from old economy to New Economy through a collaborative regional effort.

Livable Community: Creating Great Places to Live and Work

Residents in both suburban and urban areas are increasingly worried about the declining quality of life in their regions. One concern is the impact of land-use decisions on housing, transportation, and the environment. More than 200 state and local ballot initiatives in 1998 reflected the growing concern about livable communities.

Livable communities have become a rallying cry for regions that are addressing the problems of sprawl, congestion, and

separation. The understanding is that continued patterns of land use drive this conversation; housing and transportation problems will undermine the quality of life and economic vitality of the region if they go unchecked. New visions of urban design—including compact development, transit-oriented housing, walkable neighborhoods, and protected open space—are being explored and promoted as alternatives to the traditional suburban sprawl models. Sometimes under the banner of “Smart Growth,” the livable communities movement is clearly gaining momentum in regions across the country.

Regions are taking a variety of steps to promote livable communities:

- *Chattanooga* has been a leader in this movement with its grassroots process, Vision 2000. This process involved thousands of citizens in hundreds of projects that have made Chattanooga one of the most sustainable communities in America. This long-term commitment has begun to change the whole culture of the community by focusing on a series of tangible projects, including a major river walk, downtown renewal including a large freshwater aquarium, an eco-industrial park, and major transit and housing innovations.
- In *South Florida*, the MacArthur Foundation and 22 other philanthropies are sponsoring the Sustainable Everglades Initiative. This initiative is an effort to coordinate responses to save the Everglades by promoting a shared framework for sustainability, aligning public policy, building capacity of individuals and institutions to act in sustainable ways, and introducing market incentives to reward sustainable behaviors in the region.
- *Bay Area Council*, a major business group, has stimulated the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, a coalition of business, environmental, and neighborhood

groups that are creating a Compact for Sustainable Development and projects focused on land use, housing, and increasing capital investment in low-income neighborhood development.

Central Carolina Choices

Central Carolina Choices (CCC) is a three-year-old regional collaborative, created after a Peirce Report called for the formation of a regional citizen-based group. Representing 14 counties, it acts as a convenor on regional issues. It was formed through the collaboration of four key regional organizations: Community Foundation, Charlotte Observer, Carolina's Partnership (an Economic Development Organization), and the Urban Institute at UNC Charlotte.

Led by Central Carolina Choices, a grassroots effort rose to address growing concerns about growth and sprawl in the region. The effort involved the broad engagement of community members, business leaders, and environmental activists. CCC developed future scenarios for the region and presented them at town-hall meetings. This effort culminated in a regional Environmental Summit, where more than 500 people worked together to craft a regional vision and establish priorities. Following the Summit, CCC created six public-private action teams to develop plans to implement the vision: "Voices & Choices."

Central Carolina Choices is an example of a collaborative that is connecting its leadership with grassroots citizens to address regional challenges in more effective ways. It has become a leadership development mechanism for the region, thereby erasing the anonymity of leadership and helping to connect the dots in the region.

Community-Based Regionalism: Ensuring That Everyone Is Included

In the past, neighborhood and regional leaders had little in common. In fact, they worked through disconnected networks. However, in a growing number of communities across the country, community practitioners concerned with improving the well-being of low-income neighborhoods are recognizing that the future of residents in low-income neighborhoods

is tied to the broader social, political, and economic factors in their region. This movement is “community-based regionalism.”

Promoted by groups such as PolicyLink, community-based regionalism recognizes that the interests of neighborhoods are connected to the future health of the region and vice versa. Recent research by Manuel Pastor and others has shown that long-term regional prosperity is linked to reducing poverty and inequality in metropolitan areas. The clear implication is that equity must become a part of every regional strategy, not just an afterthought.

A number of regional efforts are under way that promote community-based regionalism. PolicyLink has completed a survey of some leading examples.

- In *Oakland*, the Unity Council, one of the city’s oldest community-based institutions, has led a grassroots effort in support of transit-oriented development in the heart of Oakland’s largest Latino community.
- In *San Antonio*, Quality Employment Through Skills Training (QUEST) is working with regional employers and local community colleges to develop industry-specific job training and placement that have helped redefine relationships between employers, community colleges, and local communities.

Community-based regionalism is based on the understanding that long-term economic and social well-being of the region depends on the strengths of its neighborhoods. Regional strategies that promote inclusion and opportunity will help create prosperity for all.

The Metropolitan Alliance in Los Angeles

The Metropolitan Alliance is a regional collaboration of community-based organizations, labor unions, religious institutions, and service providers anchored by the community organization AGENDA (Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives). The vision behind the Metropolitan Alliance, formed in 1996, was to help unify diverse constituencies and develop a vehicle for community residents to build their own power and participate in policy making. The Alliance is a uniquely multicultural collaboration, bringing the African American, Latino, and new immigrant communities together on issues of common concern.

The first organized activity of the Alliance was a campaign to help defeat Proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action initiative. Although the statewide initiative passed, the precincts targeted by the Alliance defeated the initiative by large majorities. After an extensive process of research, polling in neighborhoods, and strategic planning, the Alliance now focuses on linking the public subsidies for private corporations to community benefits.

The Metropolitan Alliance is an example of how community organizations can effectively collaborate to mobilize grassroots support and ensure that social equity is part of the regional conversation.

(excerpted from PolicyLink)

Governance Reform: Finding Creative Ways to Govern

Although few examples of regional government exist in the United States, a wide variety of experiments are under way in creating innovative regional governance—ways to solve problems that cross local boundaries. The United States has seen three waves of regional government reform.

The first was the *unigov* movement of the 1960s. This movement resulted in consolidations of city and county governments in places such as Indianapolis, Jacksonville, and Dade County. Based primarily on business leaders' interest in cost efficiency, this consolidation approach has not

been widely adopted because of local elected officials' general reluctance to accept regional government.

The 1970s saw the growth of regional *councils of government*: voluntary associations of local governments often mandated by the federal government to receive federal funds in such areas as transportation. Although serving a role in information sharing and coordination of federal programs, the influence of councils of government has been generally quite limited in terms of effective regional planning because of a lack of implementation authority. An exception is the role of the regional council in implementing the federal transportation program, which required regional planning as a condition of funding.

The 1980s saw the rise of the regional public-private partnership. A wide variety of ad hoc arrangements developed to address regional issues based on the common interests of business and government. Voluntary in nature, these partnerships sometimes resulted in the creation of regional special-purpose authorities in areas such as housing, transportation, and economic and community development (e.g., economic development corporations). Together, the regional landscape is filled with different types of regional public, private, and public-private organizations:

- In *Kansas City*, the Local Investment Commission (LINC) is a broadly representative 36-member citizen commission that represents a new model of citizen-based governance of human services. LINC combines authority delegated to it by Missouri's state human services agencies with the insights, energy, and commitment of local residents to tackle the toughest problems for low-income families and neighborhoods.
- In *San Diego*, state legislation is considering the consolidation of several regional public agencies, including the council of government, into a single regional planning agency

for land use, transportation, and housing. The private sector has developed a Partnership for the New Economy led by New Economy leaders working on similar issues. The question will be how to connect the public and private efforts.

- Both *Minneapolis* and *Portland* have established different forms of regional government. The Metro Council in Minneapolis is appointed; the Metro Council in Portland is elected. In both regions, civic efforts help to set the agenda for regional government, with the Citizen League playing that role in the Twin Cities, and a variety of civic groups—including the 1000 Friends of Oregon—playing that role in Portland.
- The most recent dramatic example of regional governance reform was the creation of the *Georgia Regional Transportation Authority* by the state government. This new public authority appointed by the governor has authority over not only regional transportation but also land use and housing.

We are entering a new period of experimentation in regional governance reform driven primarily by the need to connect private-sector interest in livable communities with public-sector authority over physical planning. It is likely that new types of networked or distributed governance will be explored that will connect local governments and public-private partnership to promote regional goals through regional networks. In others cases, such as Atlanta, we will see new efforts at government consolidation. In all these experiments, we will find a way to relate better the efforts of the informal civic leadership with regional public authorities.

Chicago Metropolis 2020

In 1999, the Commercial Club of Chicago, a business leadership group, created a regional vision—Chicago Metropolis 2020—that outlined goals for the economic, social, and physical development of the region in an integrated way. Led by George Ranney, former vice-president of Inland Steel, Chicago Metropolis 2020 formed as a nonprofit collaboration to build broad ownership and implementation of the vision. The Executive Council of Chicago Metropolis 2020 is a high-profile group that is composed of 50% business representatives from the Commercial Club and 50% representatives from cities, community organizations, and labor and faith communities.

Chicago Metropolis 2020 has engaged the community in a series of eight regional forums to establish priorities for the region. Chicago Metropolis 2020 will release the first Regional Report Card in January 2001. It will measure progress toward the regional vision expressed as 15 goals. In addition, Chicago Metropolis 2020 has been a vocal advocate of the need to reorganize agencies active in regional planning and lobbying for federal and state transportation funding. It has adopted the Metropolis Principles that corporations will use in siting new facilities that are consistent with the smart-growth/livable-communities thinking. The tough challenge for the region remains regional governance for land use, transportation, and housing.

Chicago Metropolis 2020 has been a leading example of combining business clout and civic engagement to become a “regional civic catalyst” that spotlights critical issues, organizes civic teams to address those issues, and reports on progress as a means of educating regional leaders and stimulating further action.

Promoting Regional Stewardship

At this stage of regional experimentation and evolution, regional stewards need support. Our challenges are to recruit and support these new leaders. We need to understand and accelerate pathways to regional stewardship. We need to connect our regional stewards both within regions and across regions so that we can share best practices and lessons learned. Finally, we need federal and state support for regional stewardship.

Understand and Support Pathways to Regional Stewardship

Regional stewards develop over time in a leadership path. A leader may begin by identifying and selecting ways to give back or becoming directly active as a volunteer in something that has personal meaning to his or her own interests. Based on that experience, the next step may be to join or take a leadership role in a larger effort.

These leaders then become civic and social entrepreneurs. Civic entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs bring innovative problem solving to community issues. They work in the overlapping spheres of civic initiative and social philanthropy. These leaders are found in all parts of the community, including neighborhoods, government, business, nonprofit organizations, and education. Civic and social entrepreneurs are “change agents” who bring new opportunities to their communities. However, their efforts tend to be focused on delivering near-term results on a single issue or cause.

To become regional stewards, these leaders need to recognize how their efforts fit in the broader vision for the region and see the connections between economy, environment, and society. They need to be connected to diverse networks and be able to bring those networks together to create coalitions for change. They must have the values and vision that will lead to the long-term care of the region.

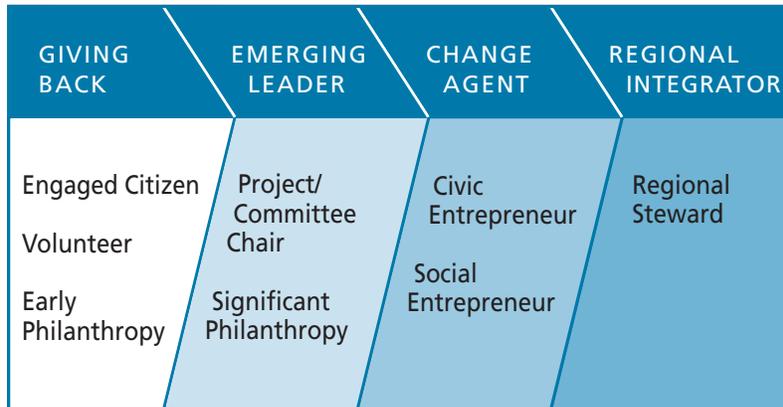


Figure 3 illustrates a typical pathway to regional stewardship.

Some places are experimenting with regional training programs for civic leaders in order to expand their networks and their knowledge of regional issues. These leadership programs convert civic leaders from all sectors into regional stewards by helping them see regional challenges in an integrated way. The opportunity is for regions to identify these diverse, high-potential civic leaders and accelerate their development along this pathway.

Recruit Young, Next-Generation, and New Economy Leaders

The sources of regional leadership have diversified immensely. Economic and demographic shifts in the population mean that it is increasingly important to broaden and deepen the bench of leaders. With traditional leadership in transition, regions are facing the challenge of maintaining a diverse, robust “pipeline” of leaders who will rise to regional stewardship.

In the current landscape, New Economy entrepreneurs represent a promising pool of potential regional leaders. Regions will need to cultivate the energy and creativity of these emerging leaders while providing them with the skills,

mentors, and networks to effect positive change. New Economy leaders operate in a new way: speed and flexibility drive outcomes. Regions can benefit from the largely untapped talents of New Economy leaders by linking them to leadership opportunities that leverage their time and skills.

Hot Team Pittsburgh

Hot Team Pittsburgh—thirty-eight young CEOs of growth companies have come together to design the entrepreneurial Pittsburgh of the 21st century with “hot ideas and cool places.” Innovative ways of working have led to a process that is built around speed and flexibility, where many activities—the convening of a team, focusing on a specific challenge, engaging broad expertise and interests, and determining near-term metrics for success—happen via e-mail and voice mail, not just in face-to-face sessions.

Connect Regional Stewards

In times of rapid change and complex problems, many regional stewards express strong interest in building “lateral relationships” with stewards from other communities. They want to share lessons learned and have a support network. The goal is to make it easy for regional stewards to learn from each other.

California Center for Regional Leadership

Since 1996, The James Irvine Foundation has provided seed grants to help organize California collaborative regional initiatives and has hosted an annual Civic Entrepreneur Summit to promote peer-to-peer learning among civic entrepreneurs. Fifteen collaborative regional initiatives across the state now participate in this learning network and share experiences across an interactive website: www.civcnavigator.com. In 2000, a new statewide nonprofit organization called the California Center for Regional Leadership (CCRL) was formed to support California’s regional leaders and organizations. CCRL convenes working groups and conferences to promote learning, communicates regional success stories, and helps build leadership and organizational capacity in regional efforts.

Like private-sector entrepreneurs operating in remote environments, civic entrepreneurs can feel isolated. As George Vradenburg III of AOL explained, “The problem is that in some communities civic entrepreneurs are not nurtured. Energy dies without support—like drops of water in a desert.” Getting to know others who are lending themselves to community leadership and facing similar challenges can enhance their effectiveness and be a source of personal rejuvenation.

The Alliance for Regional Stewardship

The Alliance for Regional Stewardship is a national peer-to-peer network of regional leaders who benefit by sharing experiences and working collaboratively on innovative approaches to common regional challenges. Alliance members are leaders from regions across the country who recognize the interdependences of their regions’ economy, environment, and society—and are seeking practical ways to effect change. Through activities such as semiannual Leadership Forums, best-practice scans, monthly newsletters, and innovation teams, the Alliance identifies leading-edge practices and distributes the knowledge to its network of regional leaders across the country in a timely manner. Their website is at www.regionalstewardship.org.

Develop National and State Support for Regional Stewardship

To thrive and succeed, regions need an environment that encourages the kind of integrated, regional collaboration that regional stewards do. By building coalitions that work beyond traditional government, they are creating a new networked governance approach to solving regional issues. The federal and state governments can support these endeavors by considering the following principles for developing an ongoing federal-state-regional partnership:

- **Recognize regions as partners with the federal and state government.** The first step is for federal and state government to recognize that natural regions can be important

partners for the design and implementation of strategies for economic vitality and quality of life. Our current thinking about federal-state-local government is not longer adequate to address critical issues facing our regions. We need to shift our thinking toward regions as an important part of the solution.

- **Provide presidential leadership in support of regional stewardship.** Once we recognize regions as partners, the president can use the bully pulpit to sing the praises of regional stewardship and the importance of public, private, and community leaders to collaborate at the regional level. Regional stewards can address key issues in partnership with the federal and state government. Introducing the term to the broader public and recognizing successful regional examples would be an important first step.
- **Support regional networks.** Regional networks can connect existing political institutions with the private sector in new coalitions for change. The federal and state governments should support these regional networks and work with them in implementing programs in such areas as transportation and workforce.
- **Promote “bottom-up” regional planning across traditional programs.** Through a “reverse request for proposal” process, regional networks should be encouraged to develop their own integrated strategies and then ask federal agencies to participate. This innovative approach tested by the Partnership for Regional Livability should be expanded.

Partnership for Regional Livability

The Partnership for Regional Livability (PRL) began in 1999 to help civic leaders in regions across the United States address large-scale, intractable problems, such as air pollution, sprawl, poverty, and unemployment. The Partnership delivers technical assistance to regions, drawing on a national network of experts. It organizes a region's access to federal government expertise and resources, with the cooperation of local and state elected officials. It helps develop federal readiness and capacity to work with regions. And it helps regions build supportive relationships with each other, exchange information, and share tools and lessons learned. The PRL is currently pilot-testing innovative programs in four regions: Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

- **End the top-down stovepipe planning model.** The federal government's traditional categorical approach to programs should be replaced by a networked model in which regions define their needs and then work with a team of regional agencies to address the challenges. The federal government should review its existing regional support programs across agencies—including the Economic Development Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Labor, and Appalachian Regional Commission—and create a more rational approach based on the real needs of regions. Building on the existing regional public and private structures, a much more integrated approach to regions can be fashioned through a dialogue between regional stewards and federal and state leaders.

About the Alliance for Regional Stewardship

The Alliance is a national, peer-to-peer learning network of regional leaders who benefit by sharing experiences and working collaboratively on innovative approaches to common regional challenges. The Alliance is for proven leaders who recognize the interdependencies of their regions' economy, environment, and society—and are seeking practical ways to effect change. These leaders can come from business, government, education, or community sectors, but they share a common commitment to collaborative action and regional stewardship.

The Alliance supports regional stewardship by helping leaders learn about best practices from other regions, communicate to state/federal leaders and the media about regional challenges and innovations, and develop new leaders to regional civic efforts.

Alliance activities include:

- Semi-annual leadership forums
- Ongoing communities of interest and web conferences
- Monthly e-newsletter
- Monograph series on key regional topics
- Innovation scans of regional best practices
- Media roundtables to bring regional leaders and media professionals together
- Pathways to regional stewardship projects

For more information about the Alliance for Regional Stewardship, please visit our website at www.regionalstewardship.org



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