Hello, I’m Katie McDermott with the Center for Transportation and the Environment. This is CTE’s national teleconference series. The purpose of this live forum is to engage transportation and environmental professionals in a dialogue about current policy issues, research innovations and best practices. Today’s program explores a new framework for enhanced decision-making called “scenario planning,” which is used to evaluate and test future alternatives related to the various forces that impact the health and quality of life of our communities. As a decision-making tool, scenario planning is becoming widely recommended to transportation agencies as an effective means of linking transportation visions with broader community visions. The Federal Highway Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal agencies are promoting its use in particular for transportation decision-making that involve significant environmental and growth related concerns. Today our panel will explore the benefits to be gained by metropolitan regions and states that choose to use scenario planning, as well as lessons learned from three case studies currently underway in Utah, Idaho and California.

We invite you to discuss today’s topic and share your experiences on it with our panel, you can use the numbers on your screen to phone or fax in your questions and comments at any time during the live broadcast, or you can email us at cte_email@ncsu.edu. After the broadcast, we invite you to participate in CTE’s web-based “After the Program” discussion forum, where you can continue to talk about the issues raised during today’s live broadcast with our panel and other audience members. The forum will begin today at 4:00 p.m., EST, immediately following the broadcast and will continue for up to two weeks.
A few more details before we get started. First, I hope you’ve already downloaded the program handout and a copy of the panelists’ PowerPoint slides from CTE’s website. If not, I encourage you to do so by using the URL address that’ll be appearing on your screen (http://cte.ncsu.edu). From this website you can also replay this program in its entirety through CTE’s webcast archive, or you can order a copy of the DVD or written transcript. We’d also like to get your feedback on today’s program. And to do that, if you’re participating at one of the satellite downlink sites, you can complete the evaluation form located in your handout and turn that in to the site coordinator before you leave today, or if you’re participating via the web, please complete the online evaluation form located on CTE’s website. Thank you very much for your attention to this.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce today’s moderator, Ms. Sherry Ways. Sherry manages the Scenario Planning Initiative for the Federal Highway Administration at their headquarters office in Washington, D.C., and in this role, Sherry assists state DOTs, MPOs and others with identifying opportunities to implement scenario planning as well as providing technical assistance, including the use of GIS applications in their transportation planning processes. We’re delighted to have her with us here today. Sherry, welcome to the program.

Ways: Thank you, Katie. Well, it is my pleasure to preside over this webcast this afternoon, entitled “Scenario Planning for Better Transportation Decision Making.” We have a fantastic panel today, who will be discussing scenario planning from the context of metropolitan and statewide transportation planning and decision-making processes. In addition, we will be looking at some case studies from Salt Lake City, Utah; Sacramento, California, as well as the state of Idaho. We will also talk about various software and tools available to agencies across the country to engage the public in scenario planning activities. At this time, I will now introduce our panel.

Our first panelist is Cindy Burbank. Cindy is the associate administrator for planning, environment and realty at the Federal Highway Administration in Washington, D.C. Cindy has over 28 years of experience at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Our second panelist is Robert Grow. Robert is Senior Counsel at O’Melveny & Myers in Salt Lake City, Utah, and is the founding chair of Envision Utah. Our third panelist is Matthew Moore. Matthew is the Research Program Manager of the Idaho Transportation Department. Our fourth panelist is Ted Gaines. Ted is the supervisor of Placer County in California and the board chair of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. Our fifth
Each panelist will have approximately ten minutes to make his or her presentation. At 3:00, we will take a break for 10 minutes and reconvene at 3:10. We will then convene at that time a panel discussion for about 20 minutes, where I will ask each panelist specific questions about their presentation or their scenario planning process. The last 20 minutes of our program will be open to you, our audience, to give us the questions that you have, and the panel here will answer. We will now begin the panel with Cindy Burbank. Cindy will discuss some of the initiatives underway at Federal Highway, regarding scenario planning. Cindy?

Burbank: Thank you, Sherry. Earlier today I was talking with Robert Grow, the distinguished gentleman to my right here, and he asked me what I hoped we would get out of the broadcast today, and my answer was that I tried to visualize the audience, and I saw two groups. The first group: individuals who have worked with scenario planning, maybe implementing it now are fairly expert in it. And for that group, I hope that we can give you a lot of reinforcement and encouragement as well as some additional tools and insights that you can use. The second group that I think may be out there watching today is individuals who’ve heard about scenario planning, are curious about it, might be interested in trying it but need a lot more information. And so for those, I hope we can motivate you and persuade you to try scenario planning, and as well give you some of the tools and techniques and insights that will make it successful in your area.

Let me start with a quotation from a Nobel Prize Laureate: Dr. Niels Bohr said, “Prediction is very difficult, especially if it’s about the future.” It took a Nobel Laureate to tell us that. In fact, if he were here, I would say that he’s right, but as a scientist, he may not even fully appreciate the difficulty, because for those of us who are implementing public planning, there is an extra challenge beyond the technical side of predicting the future. And that is the tremendous variety in values and perspectives among the public as to what they want the future to be. So we face that challenge as well.

If we could pull up the first graphic here to help illustrate this... This is a highway improvement, and now you could look at the next graphic. This shows that improvement as it might unfold under one scenario in the future. But the question is, will that really unfold? And is that the kind of lifestyle and the kind of scenario that the individuals in that region want to have? Scenario planning can help deal with those questions. Let me give you FHWA’s definition of scenario planning: “Scenario planning is an analytical
tool that can help us prepare for what lies ahead. Scenario planning provides a framework for developing a shared vision for the future, by analyzing a variety of forces, such as health, transportation, economic, environmental and land use trends, all of which affect growth or can be affected by growth. Successful public sector scenario planning actively involves the public, the business community, and elected officials on a broad scale. Both education them about growth trends and trade offs, and incorporating their values and their feedback into future plans.”

Now let’s take a look at another map. I borrowed this from Envision Utah. It shows four different scenarios of how development might occur based on the color coding on the map. Scenario planning enables a region to realistically evaluate a variety, a wide variety, of potential futures, and determine what the community wants their future to look like. Scenario planning also enhances public planning by raising the awareness of all stakeholders, the general public, the local elected officials, and so forth, making them aware of the external forces of change, and enabling the participants to consider alternative approaches to shape their future.

And now, a few more slides. This shows you kind of a traditional approach to planning. Take the present and forecast one solution or one future based on growth trends. And then, on our next slide, you can see an opportunity to try a scenario approach where you visualize two different futures. And in our third slide, here’s a range of scenarios that can be considered by elected officials and the public, all of which can be evaluated and try to build a consensus around it.

Now I’d like to quote Gonzo the Muppet, a little variety here, from a Nobel Laureate to Gonzo. Gonzo said, “I want to go there, but I don’t want to leave here.” And I think this reflects the fact that people are notoriously reluctant to accept change. They’re resistant to increased development, increased traffic, limits on land use, limits on their mobility, loss of open space. But the fact is that this country continues to grow and growth does bring positive as well as negative impacts on our lives. There are tradeoffs. And scenario planning can help people understand these forces of change and the collective choices that they have.

My agency, FHWA, encourages using scenario planning software tools to present scenarios visually to the public and others. The visualization of the interaction among various forces in each scenario can provide the public and decision-makers with important information on the consequences of potential actions. The use of graphic visual information, and we’re going to hear more about it today, can really help people
understand the potential impacts of different scenarios. We feel it’s very important to reach out to community leaders, businesses, local officials, and others to undertake scenario planning. This next slide here illustrates the various forms that that public involvement can take. Robert, you probably recognize some of these because again, we borrowed from you. What I especially like about these pictures are those which show the active involvement of stakeholders, they’re not passively merely listening; they are actively engaged in looking at a map and figuring out where should the growth go in the future, what are the implications of it?

My own agency, the Federal Highway Administration, offers technical support, planning funds, information and research to state, regional and local partners who want to undertake scenario planning. FHWA has supported scenario planning processes in Utah, Virginia, Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois and California. FHWA has also funded peer workshops which are hosted by our division offices in the various states around the country to enable folks to get together, discuss examples, benefits and strategies of scenario planning, and learn from each other. And in the last fiscal year, my agency made over half a billion dollars available to states and metropolitan planning organizations for transportation planning broadly, and that needs to cover a lot of different needs, but it can also be used to support scenario planning. So in the future, FHWA will continue to actively encourage scenario planning and to support it in a variety of ways. We believe that scenario planning can help citizens, businesses and government officials deal with the impacts of growth, especially the relationship between transportation and social, environmental, and economic development of regions. Thank you very much. Back to you, Sherry.

Ways: Thank you, Cindy. One of the key things that Cindy mentioned about federal highway and our view of scenario planning is the importance of public involvement, and that cannot be better exampled by Envision Utah, which Robert Grow is going to tell us a little bit about. Robert?

Grow: Thank you very much. It’s a pleasure to be here and to talk about the process we’ve been through for almost a decade in Utah. And I would like to say thank you at the beginning to the hundreds of agencies and companies and corporations that have been involved but also to the tens of thousands of citizens that have participated as we have created a regional vision for the future of our region.

Regional visioning is about looking forward to the future, creating scenarios or crash dummies of what the future could look like, and then selecting the best from among
those and then finding robust strategies to get there. It’s about a revolution in problem solving, where we look at the problem at the right scale. Air comes in air sheds, water comes in water sheds. Cars come in commuter sheds. And so we have to solve problems at the right scale, and to some extent we’ve outgrown the governmental structures where we live. We have 90 cities and towns, 10 counties, all compacted along the Wasatch Front in Utah that need to work together if we’re going to solve problems. Envision Utah set the table for all of them in the public to come together and work together on a shared vision. And many of the benefits have changed the way your urban area grows are only apparent at a regional scale because that’s the scale at which the problems actually exist. And so regional visioning is a process of helping the public understand what their choices are. As you go through regional visioning, you take some old tools, some brand new tools, and you use them, sometimes quite differently in the past. You take the MPO’s tools for transportation modeling. And instead of saying, “Well, what will it be like under this particular choice?” we actually take the tools and say, “What will be the differences between the series of choices is the future?” And so we take tools and we extend their application and try them in new ways. There’s a term called “placemaking” that planners use. Regional visioning is actually about taking the concept of making a better place, a place-making, to a larger scale.

Now why do we do regional visioning? It’s actually to help the public understand its choices. Those choices come in packages. You ask people, do you want clean air, do you want clean water, do you want three cars in your garage, they say yes to all of those. So if you give them scenarios about the future, they can actually see how those choices all fit together and what is actually feasible to try or to do in a region. And so you do that by developing high level, long term scenarios of the future. Virtual pictures of the way the region could be and then let them choose from those, the direction they would like to go. The visioning process first has to have staying power. So it starts out with a group of trusted and diverse stakeholders who give the process reputation, bring sophistication to it, bring talents, but in particular set up a trust level within the community, so that any citizen in our community could say, “I don’t know him, I don’t know her, but I do know him, and I trust him because—and I’ll trust the process because he’s involved.”

Using regional scenarios is about giving the public clear choices about what their future would be. To do that, you have to start with the community’s values. There are many techniques for drawing values out of a community, but if you start with the things they really care about, concerning their future and their children’s future, then you’re
much more likely to come up with a vision which they will support. We did a survey in Utah at the outset, said, “Who do you trust with determining the future of our region?” Forty percent of the people said, “Us,” people like you and me. Twenty percent said the government. And so people want to be involved because these issues are so important to them.

Now, as you look at the traditional process we’re used to in terms of planning, we’re all familiar with the bottom three of these: well, we should plan what we’re going to do, we should find out how to get the money and then we ought to build it. Regional visioning actually backs up to some pre-steps which are very important: What does this community value? What do they really want to see in their future and why do they value it? And from those values you can then create alternatives for them to look at in the visioning process, where they can then select and see how those values would play out long term and then you can develop strategies. All of that comes before you ought to be planning the region. And so regional visioning is about getting the steps in the right order and doing first things first; first going to the people, understanding what they care about, then showing them their choices and letting them decide what the future ought to be.

As you go to create scenarios, you start first by understanding the values of the public. From that, you can prioritize the future aspects of the urban area where they’re going to live and understand what it is that they want to see in that urban area. In addition, you have to deal with constraints and opportunities analysis. Florida is very different from Utah, we have mountain ranges, they have beautiful wetlands and rivers. But you have to take a very careful look at the region itself. The constraints analysis ties your vision to the ground, to reality. But the values give your vision wings so you can actually think big picture, think out of the box about the kind of place you can create.

Now, at Envision Utah, we started out to bring together a broad scope of community interests. I’d like to say thank you to some of those participants who are probably watching today from UTA and UDOT and UDEAQ, and from our MPOs, Wasatch Regional Council, Mountainland Association of Governments. We have had great partners throughout this entire process. These are the kinds of people we brought together, business leaders and developers, utility companies, government at all levels, conservationists and environmental groups. Religious leaders and education and, particularly, representatives from the media to help carry the message of the process to the public.
Now, there are a number of ways to find out the values of the community. Perhaps the most tested methodology is to hold public workshops, and literally we held hundred of these with thousands and thousands of participants, and from those workshops, we were able to draw what they cared about. You can see at this front table our former governor Mike Levitt, pondering over a map of what the region ought to look like in 20 years, and he wasn’t alone, he was joined by thousands of Utah citizens who went through this process. We used other tools as well to understand who we were and what we wanted long term. These are all designed to listen to the public about what matters. What things do they care about as we look towards the future?

Regional visioning is a search for causes and effects. And as you study scenarios planning, you come to understand that transportation is perhaps the key element of how a region will eventually evolve. Archimedes, a Greek a long time ago, said, “Give me a lever long enough and I’ll move the earth.” Well, transportation is the long lever that changes urban form. If you take that transportation armature and you mix it with the land uses that will be sited around it, then you have determined many of the things about the region’s future. For example, you’ve decided, "How much energy are we going to use?" The job creation aspect, so this is a good place to have a business. What will the air quality be like in the future? How much land will we consume? What will the traffic be like? How much water will our region use? How many miles will we have to drive to do the things we’d like to in our lives? How much open space will be left at the end of the day? And maybe most importantly, what kind of housing opportunity will be provided for everybody long term? These are the things you study in a scenario, and you take to the public as their choices, and so it’s really critical that as you look at these potential choices, that you not just cover one issue like air quality and another issue like housing, but you actually look across the wide range of impacts on the region. We took all of those choices to the public in a very broad public awareness campaign. There were radio ads, TV ads, we sent out 600,000 surveys, we had people answer online, and from that we created what’s called the quality growth strategy. If you look at the quality growth strategy, it would fit right into many of the themes you see in other growing regions; enhance air quality, increase mobility and transportation choices. Those are critical lands conserve water. Provide housing opportunity for everybody and in our conservative state maximize efficiency and public infrastructure. Spend our tax money smart, long term. And fiscal conservatives can find a real home in the scenarios planning process.

Now, what’s happened because of this? By 1999, we in Utah had developed a
quality growth strategy. Nothing happens though until a governmental entity or a planning commission or an MPO decides to do something differently. What has happened in Utah is a quality growth strategy’s balanced approach to transportation has now become the long range transportation plan for the MPOs. In fact, it’s our quality growth strategy, plus the mayors got together after learning about scenarios planning and balanced systems and they in fact expanded the public transportation aspect of the quality growth strategy. And so we as a region now have a balanced system that we would like to build and we’re actually moving forward to build that with a very successful bi-rail system, and we also have a commuter rail system that will start up in 2007. So that was the first thing that happened. The governmental agencies, those who were stake holders, the process went back and actually changed the long range plans.

Another thing we’ve been trying is scenarios at a different scale. For example, we did a process recently called the Mountain View Transportation Corridor Growth Choices. This is a 20 mile transportation corridor. It had been planned to be a freeway, but there was an EIS being done, which would be both federal highways and federal transit and would look at both aspects of transportation. And so we brought together the 16 mayors, the environmental groups, the large landowners along the transportation corridor in all the cities, and with them went through a scenarios process for a period of months and a developed a vision for the Salt Lake West Valley transportation corridor, which we call the Mountain View Corridor. That vision now has become one of the alternatives being discussed and evaluated in the environmental impact study which is currently underway. So we’ve learned to bolt visioning processes onto the front end of the legal processes that actually determine the outcomes for transportation in our region. Right now, we have started up a new four county visioning effort, which is bolted onto the front end of the development of the 2036 long range transportation plan for both of our MPOs. Again, it’s bringing together a wide group of stakeholders, we’re studying scenarios of all kinds, we have just done a series of workshops, have a few more to go, and from that we will create scenarios which we will again take to the public to update the quality growth strategy which we developed in 1999.

So, in conclusion, we in Utah have been studying how to have a better future. That’s what regional visioning is about. Going to the public, finding out what they want, and then saying, these are really the choices you have. If you look at our motto in Envision Utah, it is, “We’re working to keep Utah beautiful, prosperous and neighborly for future generations.” Those are the three “E’s,” you might note; economy,
environment, and social equity. But in Utah, we use the words beautiful, prosperous and neighborly for those things. Because those are the words that Utahans use. And so we’ve learned to communicate among ourselves in a way where we have a shared vision. Thank you.

Ways: Thank you Robert. One of the key things that Robert talked about is how to build a better future. And you have done it successfully at the regional level. Now we’re going to switch gears and look at it from the statewide level, and Matt is going to tell us a little bit about what Idaho has been doing in building a better future for their state. Matt?

Moore: Thank you, Sherry, pleased to be here today on behalf of the project team, the internal vision management team and the executive round table that participated in all of our transportation partners that helped us put together our transportation vision.

We like to think in terms of 30-year periods in transportation, because it helps people understand how change occurs, and I put together this slide to kind of characterize that. Turn of the last century, the Wright brother patented an airplane. About 30 years later, Amelia Earhart flies across the Atlantic ocean by herself. About 30 after that, the Apollo 10 is orbiting the moon. Another 30 years later and we have Cassini orbiting Saturn, sending us marvelous pictures of Saturn and all of its moons. This afternoon there was a gentleman in an airplane about to land who’s gone all the way around the earth in an airplane. So these changes are occurring more rapidly, they have a lot of depth to them, they have a lot of breadth, they’re accelerating at a rapid pace, and we took this 30-year period from 2004 to 2034 to talk about what changes are occurring, what kind of future we prefer, and how we do that. So by 2034, we could realize a vision that consisted of significant changes into the future.

To do that of course, we follow a similar process to what Robert talked about, Envision Utah. We set up a series of principles, which are really values, that people across the state hold, and those are four broad scale values and principles that are brought in purpose and in detail because they need to apply for a long period of time, and they’re fixed in time. The first is to meet the mobility need. The second one is to be compatible with the environment, the third one is to be an asset to the community, and finally to be flexible and responsive. Pretty important to have that fourth one, I’d say, for a 30-year period. Because we can’t forecast all the change, nor do we try to do that. But we try to say that our governments, our public, our private sector people need flexibility and responsivity.
Following the principles we set up another set of fixed priorities that are fixed for the statewide system. When we looked at Idaho’s transportation system, we talked about it in terms of the entire system. The Idaho transportation department maintains a component of that system; state highways and funds public transit for example, and has an aeronautics group that oversees different functions there, but we’re only one component of that process. So we have a lot of transportation partners out there that we have to work with. The system needs to be integrated across all modes and ways of doing business. It needs to support the quality of life. Again, some of the things that Robert talked about, but on a statewide scale. The funding needs to be flexible, there’s probably never enough of that available from the public or private sector.

Another one of the priorities for the 30-year vision was to integrate transportation/land use planning. That’s a big challenge, certainly in the western United States, and probably in just about any of the United States, because they’ve done separately in a large part. It’s not that one or the other had to be more important or that one or the other had to lead the process, but rather, they needed to work together. And that type of plan needed to occur simultaneously and with mutual objectives and priorities. Finally, we needed to support choices for all individuals so that they could get around how they wanted to get around, when they wanted to get around, the way they wanted to get around, and even if they didn’t want to get around.

Continuing on, we have a series of performance measurement tools that we use and we look at that in terms of, are we moving people? Are we moving goods and services? Are we sharing information? Certainly, sharing information is something that we recognized as a mode in and of itself in terms of transportation. A great deal of what a state department of transportation does is to move information and share information. And we need to be able to measure those in addition to moving people and goods and services. Using the metrics you see on the right hand side of the slide. And again, these are broad in nature because they’re going to be measured different ways. You’re looking at different modes of travel, and you’re looking at different products, and you’re looking at information. But these are what people want to see in a preferred future in Idaho from the statewide transportation system. Again, made up of our portion of the system and all of our partners’ portion of the system.

We have several examples of progress to date that we’re particularly proud of. Our governor has issued an initiative that he’s working with the legislature on called “Connecting Idaho” which is $1.6 billion worth of bonding to construct transportation
facilities across the state. We’ve worked with one of our most important partners, the Local Highway Technical Systems Council, which is made up of all the cities, all the counties, and all the local highway jurisdictions in the state of Idaho, about 344 public entities to integrate the vision principles and priorities into their strategic plan that they use for determining funding at the local level and at the regional level. We have just released a recreational airstrips focal plan. Idaho is unique in the 50 states to have almost 50 different air strips that are located in the front country before you get to the mountains and in the back country after you get into the mountains, where people access all kinds of recreational needs. They use it for management of resources, they use it for safety purposes, for firefighting, all kinds of needs, certainly fishing, hunting and rafting as well in our beautiful wilderness areas. But those are not all owned by the state of Idaho, in fact, they’re owned by the federal government, they’re owned by the private sector, and we developed a plan to put together a system of priorities and actions to be taken by an administrative body that would likely be created in the future to oversee and standardize the operations and maintenance planning and the development of those airstrips as they go forward. Also, this spring we’re going to release the context sensitive solutions guide, which will allow us to integrate context sensitivity in terms of construction projects, but also in terms of operations and design functions. And then finally, we’re in the process of realigning our division strategic plans to be consistent with the vision.

Now, in terms of scenario planning, what we did in Idaho, there are a series of rules and responsibilities that are incredibly important to the process. These are the lessons learned from our process in Idaho. It’s key to garner the support and to learn from your partners. They have a lot to teach you. And in fact, the more rural we went in the state, the more they could teach us. It’s a very valuable process. We recently made a presentation in a very rural area of the state and they validated what we had concluded in our plan, in our vision, because that’s what we told them. Finally, we need to recognize and research all the modes that are out there. We’re not trying to forecast, we don’t need to focus on data, we need to focus on what’s available, what we know, what we don’t know, what the needs are at this point. We need to work from a local perspective, a regional perspective, and a statewide perspective when we’re looking at scenarios. We need to focus on our common principles and priorities that I’ve already discussed and that we all can agree to, again as a basis, as Robert indicated, from which we can all work, and we need to do something called “employing the long term to get a short term focus.” And that means in order to see significant change over the long term, there needs to be
things we do in the short term, whether it’s a five year increment or a 10 year increment or a 20 year increment, they’re going to get us to that long term change and that preferred future that we want.

And finally, during all that process because we have other people to report to and we’re spending other peoples’ money, we need to develop tests and measure those changes and progress with indicators. Finally, the last slide talks about a series of recommendations that could have come out of the vision, but actually came out of the 9/11 Commission. And it’s fascinating to see this, and it really brought it home to me when I read this report, there’s a lot of consistency here in terms of what we do when we do it right, we do it really well. When we don’t do it right, it’s very apparent to us. The first lesson is we need to go to them. We can’t expect them to come to us all the time. We go to them, meet them in their own context, talk to them in their way, use the words that they use, not try to change those words, modify them, their phrases of whatever the case may be. We need to help them exercise their imagination and make that a routine process. That’s certainly what we did with our project team and we were challenged a great deal of the time simply to keep up sometimes with the imagination that was going on in the room, because we don’t focus on politics or economics, your constraints are lifted and people vote as citizens and as individuals, not as the place they hold in the world.

Scenarios really do help you identify your preferred futures. One of the scenarios that the 9/11 Commission was looking at, we want a different scenario, and we have a preferred future for Idaho. That future of course has to have accountability, and it has to focus on creativity, not bureaucracy. And with that, I’ll hand it back to Sherry.

Ways: Thanks, Matt. As you can see, one of the key issues in scenario planning is to go to the public. And one of the best examples of that was the Sacramento Blueprint project, which was a winner of one of the FTA Federal Highway planning excellence awards. Ted Gaines is with us today, who is the board chair of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. He will talk to us about some lessons learned from that effort. Ted?

Gaines: Thank you Sherry. Before I start talking specifically about Blueprint, I’d like to kind of lead you up to why we decided to do it. We took a look at our metropolitan transportation plan that looked 25 years out into the future, and we were going to spend $23 billion in transportation improvements and yet still have a 50% increase in congestion. And we took a look at that and said, “You know, we’ve got a problem. We’ve got to look at another way to do it.” If you look at the state of California and what’s happening throughout the state, our population grew by 600,000 residents last
year, and projections that Dan Walters talks about quite a bit in the \textit{Sacramento Bee} are for about half a million residents a year, and so over the course of a decade, you would look at 5 million residents within the state, and clearly we don’t want all the growth coming to the Sacramento area, but our fair share will come, and so we thought we really ought to develop a technique or a plan to take a look not only at transportation but also land use and to interweave those two concepts. And we’ve done that with the Blueprint, we really got the vision from Envision Utah and Robert Grow. And we had a lot of help with a number of important people within the community, including Valley Vision.

If we could move forward to the first slide and take a look here at the growth principles, and what we’re looking at with our blueprint are a number of items here, a variety of housing choice, we want to make sure that residents within the community have the ability to move up. If you look at a lot of the housing that’s being constructed currently, it’s very expensive, our median house price is over $400,000 in the region, so we want to make sure that people have the ability to live in an apartment and hopefully move into a starter home and then perhaps move up if they’d like. Secondly, we want to make sure we have transportation choices. We are primarily a road based transportation system, there’s been expansion of our light rail and we’re looking at bus rapid transit within the Placer County area of the southwestern corner in particular. And then we want to use out existing assets and there’s opportunities for redevelopment throughout the entire six county region. We want to look at mixed use development and we have a number of good examples that are recently completed and in the planning process currently. Certainly we want it to be high quality design so it lasts over time, and we want to protect our natural resources. If you look at the Sacramento Area Council of Governments region, it’s a six county region that includes a lot of farmland. Yellow County is very particular about maintaining its agricultural component, as are other counties in the region.

Looking at these growth principles, we ask the question as to whether these would be positive or negative impacts on the quality of life, and it was really a two-stage question: the question for today and then the question for your future and retirement. And we took a look at all these, preserving open space, transportation choices, using existing assets, a job-housing balance, offering housing choices, distinctive quality design, managing real growth boundaries, encouraging compact development along transportation corridors and mixed land uses.
We did a survey and obviously got a very good result in that people perceived these principles in a positive light currently, and then also in the future for their retirement. We did quite a bit of an outreach within the Sacramento region, it started with a number of workshops, we had over 50 workshops throughout the region, came to the local communities, and got a lot of input, and people really got excited about that. We also had what we called a “Tall Order Forum,” we had two of those and over 1,000 citizens attend the first one and 1,400 at the second one. We have a third one coming up that we’re going to put on a Saturday to see if we can enlist more residents to come to the event. And then last year, one of the final things we did in the year was to have our Elected Officials Summit. And we had over 100 elected officials at the summit, it was very successful. We had more electeds than we thought we would get, it was well over half the electeds within the region.

This is taking a look at, I think this is base case in terms of our growth in the six county region, and if I could have you toggle back and forth. That’s what happens from current to base case looking 50 years out. And if we could look at the side-by-side, you can see the base case scenario 50 years in the future and then the Blueprint plan 50 years in the future and you can see that it just makes sense in terms of our ability to provide enough housing for the growth as it comes, and that jobs-housing balance and the ability to preserve habitat and maintain our agriculture.

Then this is just taking a look at economic nodes outside the city center. It’s not really in the city center, that circle in the middle because there’s a number of cities encompassed there, including my county, South Placer.

This is taking a look at what are we doing with these new principles that we’ve developed. And it has the existing scenario, the base case scenario, and then the preferred Blueprint scenario. And you can see that what we’re doing is we’re still building large lot and rural, it’s just a smaller percentage and we’re looking at more attached housing in the form of townhomes, condominiums, and apartments, and then we’re looking at small lot development.

Growth through reinvestment, obviously you see that go from zero to a higher percentage in terms of our ability to create housing through redevelopment and additional jobs. And then growth near transit changes dramatically as we work on planning for the future in terms of job creation and housing along transportation corridors. Vehicle miles traveled make about a 15% decline over the existing, which is very nice; going from about 42 miles traveled per day down to about 35 miles traveled per day. And then with
that comes the reduction in air pollution which is something that’s very important to us and our children as we raise them in the community.

Next steps. Probably the most important one is the first bullet, which is developing a 2030 map with local governments for the NTP. Because we now have to implement the ideas of Blueprint within the NTP, and so you’ve got to get cooperation from all the local governments in order to do that. We’ve had good results already in terms of getting local government to step up, so to speak. In the city of Roseville, there’s a project in particular that is looking at additional housing, and there’s a number in the city of Lincoln for their 50 year plan they have also developed which I think is kind of a natural, another concentric circle coming from Blueprint, you see a lot of agencies throughout our region. SACTO, Sacramento Trade and Commerce Organization, is also looking at a Blueprint in terms of how to interweave economic development with our Blueprint vision for transportation and housing. We need to work on making sure that local government and the private sector knows how to use the technical tools. We’re going to have an electronic newsletter to track projects and to share problems and ideas. And we have kind of running time tally of how we’re doing. An educational series will take place for planners and planning commissioners as we try to drill deeper into our communities throughout the region so that everybody has an understanding of what our vision is, and then an opportunity to pursue the removal barriers and blueprint style growth. I just sent a letter to our planning department about a week ago asking that we take a look at our zoning and planning ordinances so that we’d have a little flexibility along these transportation corridors for setbacks and building heights and things of that sort. And then of course we’re going to monitor and report based on benchmarks that we set.

So, in conclusion, very excited about Blueprint and what we’re doing. It was really neat to see that we had a unanimous vote from the 22 cities in six counties throughout the Sacramento region for Blueprint, and now we really have the step where the rubber hits the road in terms of implementing the program. Thank you.

Ways: Thank you, Ted. I really like that idea of training local governments and the private sector on technical tools, and that’s a key piece as we go into our next presentation with Jean Brittingham, who will talk to us a little bit about technology and other tools to engage the public in scenario planning. Jean?

Brittingham: Thanks, Sherry. And I am going to talk a little bit about some specific tools, but more importantly I think what our three case studies demonstrate is that indeed there are a
plethora of tools out there. There is no lack of technology to support and so I am going to talk a little bit at the front end about the philosophy of using those and what’s important about choosing technology and making it work for the stakeholders that you are working with. It is very critical that we start with that.

It is very important to establish ownership and make sure that you have got a commitment to the kind of technology and approach you are going to use is the critical first step to gain a clear and understood and shared vision of how you are going to deploy your technologies and how you are going to use them in any given scenario planning effort. It’s really important, I think, and this is sort of background conversation that we like to talk about, pulling the background into the foreground and making sure everything is on the table so people understand what they are really going to be wading into. And so it is important to disclose and explore the challenges of high involvement. I really believe as we have talked about here today that it is the only way to really create these successful long term visioning processes is with high involvement, but it has particular challenges and selecting stakeholders is just an example of one of these challenges.

It is also very important to choose technology that supports the process outcomes and is audience appropriate. I find that in the last five years in fact everybody has become much more comfortable with technology, so the kind of technology that you can use, what you can have your audiences engage with and work with, has increased and is going to get even better over time as the kids who grew up with computers become even more and more savvy about this. And then again, it is important to have an owners group. Matt talked about several organizations and committees that we worked with in Idaho and it is always important to make sure you have those key thought leaders and people who can represent back to your key stakeholders involved in the choices around your technology.

Gaining engagement and encouraging risk taking: we talked about how creativity has to rule over bureaucracy but we are not, at the base of it, a risk taking society and we really work hard to get things pretty perfect. And I wish there was a crystal ball but so far none of the technologies that I have worked have that crystal ball element to them. They all have their gaps and their opportunities but you have to work within what you have and make sure that you choose the appropriate technology. We are going to talk about some high tech and some low tech approaches that I think work very well with the public. Tools are about empowering so whatever you choose should not intimidate. If you have to take more than about five minutes to explain how to use something to a crowd, you are probably losing them because they just don’t want to feel stupid. I don’t either. And I
don’t want to take a long time to have to understand how to use a tool especially if it’s meant to help me understand something. Immediate feedback and a whole systems approach works best. What I mean by this is, to the degree possible, have as much of the system that you are trying to affect, the region that you are trying to affect, and the different stakeholders in the room at one time as you can possibly get in there. There certainly is a limit to size. We talked about this last night. We had a couple of workshops that were, yeah, in fact, too large. But you can have an awful lot of people in the room with the right process and have it work very well.

And then you need to be sensitive to cultural reality but believe in people’s potential to be savvy. My favorite example of this is working on a visioning process with grade school kids. And we were sort of, you know, I don’t want to say that we were dumbing it down, but we were certainly working with what we thought was their capability to think futuristically. And these kids blew us away. They were awesome and we probably needed to be a little more savvy in our understanding of where they were at. So you really do need to set-up to the cultural reality and believe in people.

I think again in using tools effectively, there are some things that you can do to help yourself out. If you’re using a new technology or if you are using a new approach, give people some background material and some pre-work. They won’t always do the pre-work so do not expect them to come in having read everything you send them. But if you give them the opportunity to know what they are going to be doing in a room they typically will do better and then you still need to set context. Use tools that are intuitive. Again, if I have to explain it very long to people it’s probably not a good tool for a high involvement context and they found this out a little bit going back to the 9/11 Commission as they tried to use their computer technology and tried to have individuals use it, they made some adjustments to come back to a place where it would work a little bit better.

You have to trust non-experts to come to good conclusions. This is particularly hard I think for transportation engineers and leaders in this field sometimes to believe that people who don’t know anything about engineering can come up with good solutions. But they are experts on their lives. And that’s what they are in the room for is because they have to live with the conclusions that are going to come up. And this is one that is also sometimes hard is, you really do have to allow confusion to reign for a while. When you start getting a lot of people talking around an issue, working on the values discussion, they’re going to have to do some work to create their shared language, to
create their shared understanding. And it is okay. It looks a little chaotic but it is okay and it’s in fact important. I really believe in a process and a technology design that has two fallback approaches. If I have something that doesn’t work, we had a video that we used in Idaho that was a futuring video. It was great. But we had quite a bit of discussion about, “What if we’re somewhere and the video doesn’t work? What are we going to do to replace that piece of the experience for people?” So you need to think through what your “what if” scenarios are in that. That is another scenario planning approach. And you need to challenge your own normal thought processes. And again this gets back to thinking that experts aren’t going to be able to do what you need them to do.

What can they do? They can help people see it. We are going to show you a little bit about that. They can help people safely declare their opinions. I am going to talk in just a second about town hall polling and issues mapping. They can help develop shared understanding. This is the true scenario planning and the futures part of it where you say, “What is it that could happen?” and getting a complete and shared understanding of that. And they can inform and educate and that is all of the above, plus you can use websites and publications and many of the things to do that. So let’s touch some of these tools.

This is a visualization. It is very straightforward. It is a corridor example where you can talk about the things that you might do or you can use a visualization that graphically displays and gives people a sense of what they would be living with. One of the things I like the best about this kind of visualization; these can easily be animated as well which is very helpful for people. It lets people better see the unintended consequences of what they are asking for. A lot of times people say, “Well, this is what we want. This would be the safest.” And then you show them that it would also be the most inconvenient. And it is hard to explain that but it’s easy to see it.

This is an example of a group working and this is in the ITD visioning process. They’re creating an issues map together. There was about probably 50 people in that room. What you see on the table in the foreground, the little tools on the table are Town Hall polling pads where they got to vote on the issues after we were finished. We spread those out and put them in a computer program that allowed them to vote on which they thought were the most and least important.

This is in fact a display from the tool from Envision Sustainability Metroquest. It’s just one of the maps that are available, but as you can see what it does is it allows you to work on your transportation, in this case, transportation land use choices, and work around a set of factors that are going to affect the growth in the region. These high end,
high software, these are very high end models. But it gives you the capability of
manipulating onsite and real time and making adjustments in calibrating where you think
you really want to go, how much you’re willing to give up to get the preferred future. So
it’s a great tool for that particular discussion.

This is the output of the town hall polling. What I love about this tool is this
score or the scores those people created in that room, this is how many people responded,
what the mean was and what they said around the particular issue. This one is a good
example: “Will more people choose alternative transportation like transit biking and
carpools in the future?” And you can see the range of choices gave us rich fodder for
conversation and dialogue as we moved forward.

And again this is just another soft tool. This is when we said okay, every region
sort of had their, we broke up this conversation into three regions and said you have your
preferred future, give us a couple of scenarios that go backwards. This is the back casting
exercise. Here is your preferred future. What are you going to have to do in 20 years to
achieve your 30-year vision; in 15 years to achieve your 30-year vision; in five years and
next year, to start getting on path for your 30-year vision. So as you see there’s a lot you
can do. What the best thing about it is that it can focus your investments into this process,
and it is very important to capture the learning out of it, using the appropriate
technologies as only as good as the information that you then gather and use for
implementation and get back out to your stakeholders.

Ways: Thank you, Jean. Well, as you can see there’s so many different approaches to scenario
planning, and we’re going to take a ten-minute break, so get those questions ready.
You’ll see on the screen a 1-800 number as well as an email address where you can email
any questions that you have. We invite you to join us after our ten-minute break for
interactive discussion, and to get some of your questions answered. So again, thank you
very much for joining us and stay tuned.

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Ways: Hello, welcome back to our national webcast on “Scenario Planning for Better
Transportation Decision-Making.” We are going to spend the next 20 minutes in an
interactive discussion with the panelists. I’m going to ask a couple of questions, the
panelists are going to share some ideas and we’re going to take questions from you, the
audience, through the email address as well as the 1-800 number. So we’re just going to
get started here. I have a question for Cindy, and my first question is why is there such an emphasis on involving the public in scenario planning?

Burbank: We see right now such tremendous divisiveness about transportation decisions, and I think also in land use decisions in metropolitan areas, environmental issues and so forth. The public has many different points of view and some of those members of the public hold them very strongly; partly based on differences in values and partly based on differences in information. And I think that scenario planning is a way to bring everyone around the same table and try to exchange and understand different values and hopefully respect different values, make some compromises, and do some hard analysis and build some consensus for the future. I think it is just critical. We’re not going to get anywhere unless we engage the public in thinking this through and helping make those decisions.

Ways: Did anyone else want to add to that?

Grow: John Fergunessi has a fun slide about the traditional planning process. The first step is Decide, the government decides what it wants to do. The second step is to Explain to the public what you decided. The third step is to Assess the response. And the fourth step is to Defend yourself. If you look at the initials of that, it’s D-E-A-D, dead. And the public feels so deeply about all of these issues that affect the future of their lives. They’re not willing to delegate it to somebody else. They want to be involved in it. If they’re not involved, it’s not owned by them, it won’t ever happen. So if you’re trying to actually change something, implement something different, the public has to be there. To help decide the choices to be studied, not just to react to somebody else’s choices.

Ways: Good point.

Brittingham: Sherry, I’d like to add a comment, too. I think that to build on Robert’s comment, I think it is very important from the perspective of getting that consensus built and getting people together. It’s also true that that the world is getting much more complex and the transportation choices and decisions that were being made by transportation officials 30 years ago, are nowhere close to the degree of complexity as we’ve gotten more complex in our country, and the urban centers have gotten very congested. The reality is that the public is going to have to be involved and they’re going to have to understand some of this complexity. They really have to take it on themselves, that boy, there are no easy answers. And part of the education process isn’t just about the content; it’s about the context that all this is being done in. I think scenario planning is a great tool to bring that all together.
Moore: I might add, one of the things we learned working with students in our visioning process, and especially at the regional workshops, is they don’t see the constraints of the world as we see them. They don’t see the complexity of the world as we see it. If you give them the list of things that need to be done, they say let’s go do it. And they imagine new alliances, they imagine more ambitious goals. And the question really back to us is, change your context.

Ways: Very good. I have a question for Robert. One of the things that you mentioned during our break here—we had a great discussion on affordability—could you expand a little bit on that to our audience to tell us a little bit about what your thoughts are on that and how you looked at that from Envision Utah?

Grow: Offline we had a conversation about Sacramento and you mentioned that you’re experiencing the perfect storm in terms of events coming together. One of those is clearly affordability. People, many people in the country now, particularly in specific metropolitan areas, could never buy the house they live in. Their income level would never let them have the standard of living they have today if they hadn’t bought the house five, ten, fifteen years ago. And so affordability, what are the choices we’re leaving our children and grandchildren about how they’re going to live? Are we actually robbing them of opportunities and choices we had ourselves? And so you mentioned the issue about, we’re trying to actually remove barriers. But to what trends? What are the sweeping trends? And if you look back for the last 30, 40, 50 years, the most steady, constant unchanging trend has been that housing prices are rising faster than income levels in our country. And because of that, affordability is the crisis of the future if we’re going to have a society that really believes in equity, a place for everybody to have decent housing and an opportunity to raise a family if they would like to. So affordability gets right at people’s hearts and the way they make decisions in their lives, because it’s about their own life and the lives of their children, and it’s a motivating and unifying force. If you can get people to stop looking at their shoes and look at the horizon together, one of the best ways to do that is with affordability, you can bring consensus.

Gaines: Can I just comment in reference to that, because it is critical in Sacramento in terms of our ability to make sure that we provide—we’re calling it attainable housing because we want to make sure that people have that opportunity to buy a home. And again, I reflect on my own family and my children, of which I have six, and I’d like them to have the ability to live within the Sacramento region and buy a home. And I think Blueprint is the vehicle for that reality, for that to happen in the future, because we’re basically saying
that there are going to be 1.7 million new residents within the Sacramento region over the next 50 years, and we’ve got to plan that’s in place now, on how to accommodate that.

Ways: Okay, very good. Matt, I have a question for you. This one goes along the lines of paying for a scenario planning process. It can get very expensive, and I was just curious to know, how did the Idaho Transportation Department pay for the statewide visioning process that you underwent?

Moore: Well Sherry, there’s a short answer, and there’s a long answer. I’ll give you the short answer, and that is we used state planning research funds. And we did that for a number of reasons. The primary reason was we looked at our 1995 long-range plan, which had a lot of nice buzzwords in it, had some good concepts. Did a really good job of describing what a system should be and how it should work. And then we took it out to the public, asked them for comment and input, made some changes, published a final document, distributed it, and it sat on a shelf. So it didn’t do anybody any good. We opened it back up. It still had a lot of nice things to say, nice words in it and nice phrases. But it didn’t have any meaning, didn’t have any context, as we’ve discussed here. So we said, let’s do something different. Put together the work plan based on a number of things.

In 2000 we had a symposium, internally, of all of our management level on up, about 400 people came together and look at what the future held both for our agency and for transportation over the long term. Brought in some national and international experts to discuss those issues with us, and came to the conclusion that it was radically different from where we were, certainly where the 1995 plan was. And we took that and we said well, we’ve got to go out and go to them using that principle again. We went to our district offices and met with each one of them and said, what do you need out of the process? What do you need out of a long-range plan and vision? And what they told us was we need to see different realities, different scenarios brought to us. Scenario planning was a tool to do that.

Burbank: If I could just augment that for the benefit of the viewers, Matt, you mentioned it was state planning and research funds, and of course most transportation professionals will recognize that we call it SPR funds. They’re federal funds available to every state DOT, and we’re hopeful that when Congress gets around to reauthorizing our legislation, the sooner the better, we’d proposed and we hope it continues to shape up that there will be a fairly significant increase in those SPR funds. So that is something to look forward to for states and regions that are contemplating scenario planning. But there is a resource for this.
Ways: Wonderful. Would anyone else like to comment about your funding?

Grow: The original Envision Utah budget was about a million and a half dollars, and that took
us through three years. A third of it was from government, half local, half state. A third of
it was from foundations, and a third was from the business community. We actually set
out to raise it that way so that everybody would feel that there was balance in the group
leading the effort. But it’s less expensive today than it was when we set out. The tools
have come down, way down, in price. You used to have to do one of these models and
flip it on on the mainframe and leave the room and come back in the morning. And now
you can do it on your desktop and a PC. And so if there is a trend that is sort of governing
the direction of regional visioning, it is just the revolution in technology which allows
both modeling tools and visualization tools to be far more powerful than they were even a
decade ago.

Ways: Going back to the involvement process, Ted, you mentioned in your presentation that you
were able to engage quite a few elected officials in your process, and being an elected
official yourself, I was just curious to know what is the importance of the elected official
being involved in these processes, and how can other localities across the country engage
them as part of theirs?

Gaines: Well, I think the scenario process provided options for elected officials, the future didn’t
look so bleak, it gave us an opportunity to talk to one another through our cog, and to try
to look at kind of the logic of what was going to happen in the future and say to
ourselves, “Hey, we have an alternative, there’s an option, other scenarios in terms of
how we want to grow in the future.” And so that is very helpful using the Blueprint tool.

Grow: Can I suggest something else that happens over time? We just elected a new governor. He
was the chair of Envision Utah who followed me. His lieutenant governor was on our
original steering committee when he was a Utah county commissioner. The president of
the Senate was on our steering committee when he was a state legislator, and so if you get
the government officials involved, many of them continue to grow and to have new
places and opportunities to help implement the vision they help create at the outset. So
don’t underestimate the power of having public officials heavily involved from the
outset.

Moore: In Idaho we did a couple things. First of all we invited people to our original workshops.
We had the governor sign the letter and we had the chairman of our transportation board
sign the letter. And so we conveyed to people the seriousness of the issue, it made it very
clear that from the highest levels we really wanted to take a long look at it. The other
thing we did was when we brought people to the statewide functions from the regional areas, we looked for people who wore many hats who had different roles in society, and different responsibilities and changed hats frequently. They still became citizens when they were in our process. But they wore many hats in their daily life.

Ways: Well, speaking of technology, Robert mentioned that, I have a question for Jean in this area, I was just curious to know, based on what you know about some of the various scenario planning software tools that are out there that have the GIS databases and interfaces and so forth, how have these tools been helpful in evaluating environmental impacts?

Brittingham: I think the answer to that is that they’ve been very helpful, the short answer. The longer answer is that all these tools, again, if you mention one of the key parameters and that is the GIS that’s available. So they’re very dependent upon good data and it’s very much, in models and scenario planning that’s very true, garbage in, garbage out. So the more confidence you have in your GIS information, your data that’s going in, the more helpful they’re going to be. The better defined your parameters are around what is an impact, culturally, socially or environmentally, the better you can just use the models to determine what scenarios are going to be more or less impactful. I think they have incredible capability, as Robert mentioned, the tools are getting, I mean just, it’s not—it’s like all other technology, the half-life on this stuff is very short, they’re getting better very quickly and so we can get more and more reliability into these predictive models. I think the important part however, I still don’t want to really strongly emphasize that it’s the involvement with the model that’s making the choices about the assumptions; it’s the dialogue about what is and isn’t an impact and what you’re willing to live with relative to other choices, because there’s a whole series of attributes that are affected: it’s the environment, it’s social impact, it’s convenience, it’s affordability. So you have to take all of it in context. But I think the tools are very good at helping to predict the impacts.

Burbank: And if I could jump in here, because we are also actively promoting the use of GIS for planning in general, as well as transportation planning. And we particularly encourage state DOTs to partner with environmental organizations to build that GIS database so that it’s not just a transportation database but it comes from environmental organizations, whether it’s state environmental agencies or federal agencies or organizations like NatureServe, they’ve got tremendously valuable information, and I hope state DOTs will take advantage of that and build that into all of their planning, including scenario planning.
Moore: I guess the other thing that technology really did for people in Idaho, when you’re sitting in the room and you’re looking at the graphics on the screen and they’re changing in front of you, based on how you’re voting and what you’re preferences are, that you’re expressing anonymously through the Town Hall polling technology we used, you see the lights go on in the room and you see people who are not visual people, all of a sudden they understand what is a secondary impact of changing a focus, what’s a cumulative impact, what that decision does and what the policy outcomes are of density issues or types of transportation used in a corridor, or whatever the case may be. And that’s where the value is for people who are participating in the process.

Ways: I’d like to remind our viewers of the 1-800 number that’s on your screen, as well as the email address, if you have other questions or comments that you’d like for us to address with this panel, please send those along, please call the number and we’ll be more than happy to get those to you. As a matter of fact, I do have one question here, and this question is for Jean, back on the technology piece. The question is: are there other public domain resources for graphics and scenario planning that are available to agencies outside of perhaps hiring a consultant?

Brittingham: There are some, and I don’t have the designations with me, but there are some public domain information sites out there. There’s actually a very good sustainable futures, what’s called a web ring, and what it has is a lot of different locations that it can take you, and it does have some tools relative to how to design a scenario planning process, how to sort of begin the dialogue, and some different thoughts. I think actually it’s some of the work that you guys have been doing with working with state agencies and different DOTs giving some insights.

There’s some good tools out there and capabilities. I really would encourage people to work with their local agencies first and see what’s available. Sometimes if you just start reaching out, I’m sure Robert’s probably had this experience too, there’s a lot that’s out there. And we are all very, at least on this panel, I know, very committed to this process, so you can get a fair amount of free advice to get started. So it’s, you don’t have to hire a consultant to get off the ground with this, and there are good web sites. I encourage you to do a scenario planning search, Google it, is where I always start. But beyond that I think that there are tools out there and if you, we can also put some out on the web site afterwards, I think, some more of those designations.

Grow: Because this is sort of a young science, most of the learning that goes on is areas sharing with one another. When we started I went and looked at what Portland had done and
Denver had done and Minneapolis had done, and looked at what they had worked with and then we added to it. And so maybe we just ought to list off some of the areas in the country where we know there are efforts. There’s the Compass effort in Los Angeles; there’s the Blueprint in Sacramento; the San Francisco Bay Area has got an effort; Baltimore has had an effort. Washington, DC now started up Reality Check. Envision Central Texas is Austin. We could probably go through and compile a list of 20 or 30 places that are making significant efforts, and each one of those is learning. There’s also a group called the Alliance for Regional Stewardship, which has two conferences a year that talks about the kinds of techniques and tools to do multi-issue problem-solving at a regional scale. There’s another group called placematters.com. They hold a tools conference in the fall every year, this one will be in Orlando at the end of September this year, so look at placematters.com. But a lot of sharing is going on in an informal but available network. You could just plug into it.

Brittingham: The national conservancies as well, is a great place to look because they’ve been taking this on from, again, primarily from the environmental and species impact. But they have some very good resources out there to point you to as well.

Burbank: You know, we’ve just thrown a lot of different things at our viewers for where they can get information and assistance, and I wanted to mention that we hope by the end of the month to have on our Federal Highway Administration web site Scenario Planning page, in which we will populate with as much information as we can, and we would encourage you to let us know of things to put on there so that there can be one central place to find tools or organizations that have done some scenario planning, workshops and conferences. And we’ll also be happy to sponsor some peer workshops for the kind of peer exchange that you mentioned.

Ways: Just to follow up on that: if there’s an MPO or a state that’s interested in getting a federal highway hosted peer exchange or workshop on scenario planning, how would they go about getting that done?

Burbank: Every state has a Federal Highway Administration Division Office. You should be able to find it in the phone book. If you call the division office you ask for their transportation planner, and mention your interest in this, they can work with us on that and you can invoke either Sherry’s name or mine if there is any puzzlement at all, then that division will know who to get in touch with and you can follow up.
Grow: Can I add some more thought? And it is sort of the—we’re talking about tools, but if I were to guess, well let’s just ask the question, the last one you’ve been involved in, what percent of the money went to tools for outreach versus tools for modeling?

Brittingham: We talked about this a little bit. I think people very much believe that they can—again, this is, it partly comes from wanting a science answer when it’s just not primarily a science answer. Science is a supportive element in here. I guess that it’s about 80% for outreach and for really gaining involvement of the right and critical stakeholders and getting that consensus and staying in it, and 20% for tools. I really think that there is a tendency to believe that the tool is where the expense and the cost has to be, but really you’re better investing in getting people engaged and making sure that they move forward together.

Grow: Sacramento’s experience, same way?

Gaines: We emphasize the fact that it was voluntary in nature, and we had a unanimous vote at SACOG. It was really a kind of a bottoms-up approach. I think there was fear among communities throughout the region that it was going to be top down and command and control and this is what we’re going to tell you you have to do, but it’s not been the case.

Grow: So you’ve spent money on what, 60 workshops plus now?

Gaines: That’s right.

Grow: I think that’s our experience too, and most places are successful, a lot more money is going into the outreach of stakeholder building and bringing them together, than in terms of actually crunching numbers as to different ways the future could look.

Ways: Matt, you had a comment?

Moore: I guess I might say two things: one is scale, the other is context. Los Angeles for example, they flew people around in helicopters to look at their region. That’s thousands of dollars a minute. So in comparison, when you’re talking about thousands of dollars for a model that you get to keep and continue to run into the future and measure the implementation of a plan over time, it’s a good investment. So scale and context are very important in what you’re trying to do.

Ways: I have another question here from the viewing audience, and this is for anyone on the panel. The question is: how did you get the public to attend your meetings; what was the carrot?

Grow: We did TV and radio ads, but our largest outreach was the 600,000 surveys and we had advertisements on TV done by the governor, the wife of the former popular Democratic governor, the most famous football coach in Utah history, Steve Young, who was down...
playing football. I mean, it was Who’s Who in Utah inviting you and your family to participate. And we got those run as public service advertisements. And so don’t forget to build the media in, because if they believe in what you’re doing, they could really help with a lot of free advertising. And we made it fun, people heard about the workshops, or that we really were interested in getting input from them and letting them really tinker with the future of the region. We weren’t there to lecture them. We were actually providing a fun opportunity.

Moore: One of the things I’d say is it’s not a carrot, it’s a cookie. So you get people in the door, right?

Ways: How about you, Ted, any experiences with that?

Gaines: I would say it was very similar to Robert. We had an outreach effort with the Sacramento Bee, it was very supportive, and we did a leaflet that went out in the newspapers, plus they provided coverage through the process. We also had help from our public broadcasting station and also the private broadcasting station that one of them in the community.

Burbank: In terms of making it fun and interesting, as I understand it, one of the things you did, maybe in Sacramento but certainly Envision Utah, was a map of Utah showing current development and population, residences, and then poker chips or something represented future development and asked people to figure out where to put it?

Grow: Right, we actually had two workshops: one as where to grow and the other was how to grow, and we gave them chips equal to the density we were currently growing at and said here is, we had grid, 10,000 person squares. So you put these down on the map where you want to grow. They felt pretty good after the first million, and then we gave them two more million for 2050. That’s when you put people’s nose right up against the problem, they start to solve it. Then they start to stack chips, then they say well, where should those go, and you start working on transportation. You see the creativity come out. But that kind of a chip game in various forms is being done. I think in lots and lots of very similar—and you had a similar one, I just was at Reality Check in Washington, DC—they used the colored Lego’s for the different kinds of development that were stacked. Made it a lot of fun.

Moore: Certainly cheaper than helicopters.

Brittingham: You are frugal.

Ways: I’ve got a question here from our viewing audience, it’s addressed to Robert and Ted, and it looks like it’s a four-part question so we’ll try to get through this. Basically did you use
scenario planning to evaluate environmental trade-offs? If so, how did you measure the environmental values gained and lost? Were the values comparable in kind or completely different? Any observations or lessons learned?

Gaines: Well, I would say yes, if you take a look at the principles that we developed for Blueprint, environmental issues were addressed within those principles, and then if you look at the net result of the base case scenario versus our scenario C that we selected, you could see one that would really jump out at you would be the number of square miles of land that were not consumed as a result of this better approach to planning our future growth. And you could also see that in terms of our air quality. So I think those are a couple of examples.

Grow: Yes, you do environmental tradeoffs because each scenario has different outcomes on major environmental issues. I like to think like the Greeks did: they had four elements that are non-renewable; they had air or wind, which is air; they had water, which is water; they had earth, which is land; and they had fire, which is energy. And you could measure all of those things in scenarios. You could measure what impact you have on air quality using the Department of Environmental Quality, EPA Mobile 6 models and so on. So you measure the impacts on air quality from each of those. You measure the impacts on how much water we’re going to consume, as well as you can get some sense for the spatial protection of rivers and lakes in your modeling. With respect to land, you can not only model the amount of land consumed, the square miles saved, and our recent governor’s office of planning and budget said we’re going to save 100 square miles by 2030 with the changes we’re making right now. But you could measure not only how much land you save, but also basic protection of wetlands and things like that, and other environmentally sensitive areas, plus farmland, which turns out to be a very high environmental value in the West.

And on energy, fire, we didn’t measure that the first time around. We’re doing regional energy consumption as an output from the different transportation models we’re going to do in the scenarios this time, to get a sense for how much energy we are each going to need in the future. So the answer is yes, and the technologies, techniques, to do this are getting more sophisticated each time. We’re all learning from each other.

Ways: Here’s another question, they’re just rolling in now. This one is for Jean: is there a specific software tool that can help translate land development scenarios to performance indicators?
Brittingham: Well yeah, I think there are a couple that do this, and Robert can add on, but the one I’m the most familiar with is Metroquest, from the Envision Sustainability Tools, Inc. And this tool has the capability of talking about land use scenarios and its impact on specific indicators such as energy, transportation forms, loss of agricultural use, air quality. So it has several indicators that you can have in there. Again, this model is very dependent upon having the capability of putting good GIS into it, so again, emphasis on making sure that people get out there and get those GIS systems up and running and capable, and then put a good process in place to keep them current, because the better that data gets, the better these scenarios are going to be. But yeah, there are tools. Like I said, Metroquest is the one that I’m the most familiar with and that I feel the most confident about, that can set out attributes.

Grow: There are some others we can mention. I think it depends on the scale you want to work at. There are a number that are more localized in scale. Places3 I think has been heavily used in Sacramento and we have been doing some work with it in Utah but it’s…

Brittingham: Community Biz?

Grow: Community Biz. There’s one I think called Impacts. There are three or four that are designed best for a multi-block area like if you’re planning a new downtown or a transit-oriented development. On the regional scale, the Metroquest, there are lots of people who are doing sort of GIS modeling of the impacts but I think that one may be the most mechanized of the ones. And so I was learning more about that last night. And tools.

Brittingham: Urban Sim is also out there, and just goes just a little bit larger than this sort of community tool, but it’s not quite, I think, at the regional level yet. Then there are tools coming together all the time. I think people are getting excited about the capabilities in putting stuff together.

Grow: So it’s scenarios planners. It’s he who dies with the most tools. [LAUGHTER]

Brittingham: A whole new t-shirt.

Moore: No, I think essentially, you know, with Metroquest, that was the one that turned the light bulbs on so it’s who dies with the most light bulbs.

Gaines: We’ve offered Places3 to developers and architects within our community so that they can figure out their return on investment on a business perspective, which I think makes a lot of sense, too.

Grow: We’ve done a model in Utah called Impacts on how to measure infrastructure costs as a function development types and we’re continuing to improve that one which would be available to people as well.
Ways: Here’s another question, and this one is addressed to Ted: your VMT chart shows that you plan to go from 4.9 VMT per household to 34.9. How can you state this when current trends show that Americans are driving more, not less?

Gaines: That’s a good question. I think that with our Blueprint, we’re not discounting the fact that we are still going to need a roadway transportation system throughout the region. In fact, even in Placer County, we’re working on the Placer Parkway that will go, providing east/west corridor that is parallel to I-80 that will afford the ability for folks to get into the city of Sacramento if they are driving there as a commute or to our airport. But the other aspect of the blueprint is that we’re going to incorporate more transit into our future and that I think from an affordable housing standpoint and an economic standpoint, being able to provide the housing near these transit corridors are going to make it possible for us to incorporate the future of growth that we know is coming our way. I don’t think you’re ever going to get people entirely out of their cars. There’s just… [LAUGHTER] It’s just not going to work.

Brittingham: They’re too darn convenient, you know? They are very convenient.

Grow: And the goal really is to end up with a balanced system that provides more choices. I think that if you back and you sort of say, “What was it about the scenario that was picked by Utahans that work the best?” It was that we put 600,000 people within walking distance of a transit stop. And we now have a plan to have 300 transit stops and put a little over a million people within simple walking distance of that from homes within the next 20 years, we hope. The key is co-locating housing and transportation systems so they really work together and so not every piece of land matters from a regional transportation standpoint. The ones around freeway exits and transit nodes are what really matter and that’s where we need to focus our energy and planning. Most people are going to stay in single family homes. That’s not the issue. The issue is maximizing the benefit of the transit system and that provides a wide selection of housing types and has all sorts of other equity benefits, housing benefits.

Burbank: Can I follow up on that? How do you get to that higher level of density around a transit stop because we see many examples of resistance to that when it’s in my backyard?

Grow: Well, what’s happening, I can’t talk about everywhere, but what is happening in Utah is 88% of the public wants the light rail system expanded. We have four extensions that are planned. The cities are bidding for those against each other. They want theirs first. Well, how do you bid for a transit line if you’re a city? By ridership. How do you get ridership? By zoning the land around it for housing. And so the cities are actually, I think, ending up
putting the housing there on their own, recognizing that’s how we make the transit system pay and how they get first in line. So part of this, part of why the public outreach is so important, is that it is the public who decided they wanted the system, now the public officials to serve that vision need to put the density, the housing, around those transit nodes.

Brittingham: I want to build on that for just a second because I think that point that you just made, and we didn’t talk about this earlier, but part of the reason for the involvement and the public involvement and the consensus building is: where does political will come from? I mean politicians trade out and every four years or sometimes every two years you’ve got new people in there. I think political will comes from working with a large enough body of people, getting a critical mass. That is what is happening in Envision Utah and in Idaho. So that not only do you have people who were now in different positions who have been involved in the process, but they know this is something that people want so they come into office and they are capable of sort of holding to the plan and having some political will and to some changes that are very different for individuals here and there very difficult. And those individuals as we know can hold up a process. But if you have this process behind the politicians, it gives them the ground that they need to stand on.

Grow: If we had lived 300 years ago in a small town in New England, we would have had town meetings to decide things.

Brittingham: Exactly.

Grow: And the public outreach of these is a town meeting at a regional scale. It’s how to develop civic capacity.

Burbank: I lit up because I’m from a small town in Vermont. [LAUGHTER] When I was growing up it was like 300 years ago and I went to those town meetings and, yes, they are wonderful.

Grow: And you can do that with these new techniques and tools at a regional scale. Not a way you could do ten years ago.

Burbank: Absolutely.

Gaines: Just one more comment. If you take a look at the city of Lincoln who is looking at their 50 year vision for the future; they are looking at village concept which will provide the housing and the services within walking distance or a bike ride or driving also. But if you can reduce those number of trips that are not commute related, those are the large percentage of the trips that are being made anyway. From what I recall 20% of vehicle miles are traveled to commute to and from and the other 80% are for other reasons.
Ways: Here is another question for the entire panel. This one says, “Transportation, land use, and funding are often separate. Can this be better integrated? Is funding the problem?”

Burbank: It definitely can be better integrated. That’s the easy part.

Grow: If you’re looking at a transportation corridor and you’re looking at building roads and a transit system in the same corridor and somebody asks you about sequencing, how do you answer that? Because the funding comes from different sources and the people who are actually going to choose and build those, do not control when the money comes. And so there is no question in my mind that it would be better if transportation money all came out of one pot. Now, we have a lot history that other people understand better than I do. But the fact that it is two different funding streams, two different pockets, I think does make it more complicated. It means we split our EISs so we ought to be doing combined EISs for corridors with both transit and roads and so on. We ought to be trying to integrate multi-modal transportation systems in the same planning process in and then the same funding process someday but somebody smarter than me is going to have to figure out how to do that.

Burbank: We’re moving there. And most of the funds are flexible. They can be flexed.

Moore: Well, certainly in Idaho that was identified for us as I discussed in my presentation that the transportation and land use planning has to occur together. One doesn’t have to be more important than the other. But it is going to take a lot of time to get there. What we really identified when we talked to local planners at the city and the county level, they said, “There’s really no forum for us to have an exchange except in an EIS or a corridor plan type of a project to really have some influence and make sure that we’re getting the right answers built into the process as we go along.” So there has to be some equalization and some recognition of the disparity in the funding and the timing.

Ways: Well, I want to thank out panelists today for a wonderful discussion on Scenario Planning for Better Transportation Decision-Making. We are hopeful that you have gained something from this presentation today that will help you in determining whether scenario planning is the right tool for you in your region or in your state. And in addition, there have been lots of ideas here: the importance for public participation as well as consensus building and starting early in the process, as well as looking at the various software tools, non-software tools, all kinds of activities and things that you can do to fund your scenario planning project as well as receive technical assistance. Federal Highway is ready to assist you in any way that we can through our peer workshops and a website that will be up and running very shortly. Again, if you have other questions, feel

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free to post them on the website. There will be an ongoing discussion that Katie will talk about as well. So again, I thank you so much; the panel thanks you, and we hope that you enjoyed this session today.

McDermott: Thank you, Sherry, and thanks to all of our panelists on behalf of CTE and thanks most importantly to you for being an important part of today’s program. I’d like to acknowledge the many downlink sites across the country that tuned in today for this broadcast including EPA’s Air Pollution Distance Learning Network. I must also recognize the efforts of the North Carolina Agency for Public Telecommunications, the North Carolina Information Highway, NC State University’s Video Communications Services and East Bay Media, all of whom made possible today’s webcast. Just a few reminders before we leave you today: First, you can, as Sherry mentioned, continue this discussion about scenario planning on CTE’s web-based “After the Program” discussion forum. We did not get a chance to address all of your questions in this past hour so we will post those questions on the web forum. If you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to include those on the forum and we will have our panel respond to them as well as other members of our audience respond. DVDs or written transcripts of today’s broadcast can be ordered through our website. You can also view this broadcast again in its entirety through CTE’s webcast archive and online versions of the program handout as well as copies of the panelists’ PowerPoint slides will be available for download as well. And finally, please remember to complete the evaluation form located in your handout or if you are participating via the web today, please complete the online evaluation form located on CTE’s website. We invite you to regularly check out our website or our newsletter for information about other programs that we are developing through our national teleconference series throughout the year. We hope you can join us again on May 12th for our next broadcast which will showcase the results of the first national Gallup survey on performance perceptions between transportation and resource agencies.

Well, that’s our program for today. It’s been a pleasure being with you. Until next time, thank you and good night from Raleigh, North Carolina.

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