



## SMART GROWTH CALIFORNIA

*A Fundations' Network Dedicated to Building Great Communities in California*

### THE OPPORTUNITY

California has an unprecedented opportunity to create serious reform in transportation and land use: to make our transportation system really work for people by providing better travel choices; to invest much more significantly in transit, biking, and walking; to help address our energy, climate, health, and affordable housing challenges; to spend taxpayer dollars in a wiser, more accountable manner; and to ensure our transportation system is making us a more prosperous state.

California is faced with a “perfect storm” of opportunities, which could transform the paradigm of growth in the state:

- The \$787 billion federal stimulus legislation contains at least \$3.6 billion for transportation in California, which will be allocated this year.
- Over the next two years, Congress will reauthorize the Surface Transportation bill, which could provide more than \$500 billion in funding over six years for highways, highway safety, and transit.
- The Steinberg Bill (SB 375) compels regional planning agencies to make planning choices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing sprawl and promoting development patterns that help people drive less.
- Key California lawmakers are working in Congress to advance public transportation maintenance and expansion budgets, and to advance climate change legislation that supports smart growth.

Unfortunately, the outcome of these initiatives is by no means certain. To take advantage of these opportunities, we need to influence transportation and land use-planning decisions at federal, state, regional, and local levels so that they affect California’s communities in the most advantageous ways possible. Transportation and land-use decisions, when considered together, are our best hope to positively impact people’s access to jobs and services, access to healthy food and physical activity environments, ability to afford a home, greenhouse gas emissions, and the fiscal efficiency of local and regional governments for the long term.

In California, foundations can play a pivotal role by helping nonprofits respond to strategic opportunities at the national, state, regional and local levels, and by helping them coordinate their responses so that they meet communities’ goals for environmental sustainability, economic development, equity, affordable housing, and better health outcomes.

## **SMART GROWTH CALIFORNIA**

Smart Growth California was founded by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities (TFN) and The San Francisco Foundation to support funders that are working to advance smart growth and build prosperous communities throughout California. The initiative is dedicated to helping bolster and support foundations in their efforts to advance a transportation and land use reform agenda that will benefit all Californians and the communities in which we live.

To accomplish this mission and goal, Smart Growth California has the following objectives:

- Increase the number of foundations acting strategically and actively to advance transportation and land use reform in California,
- Foster strategic collaboration among foundations and other partners to promote transportation and land use reform in California,
- Increase financial resources devoted to transportation and land use reform in California,
- Increase the knowledge of California foundations about transportation and land use reform, and
- Support 10 to 15 foundations, which are engaged in sustained and meaningful action on transportation and land use issues in California.

Smart Growth California is engaged in the following activities: identifying key foundations, nonprofits and coalitions working on these issues in California; researching statewide and regional strategies and funding needs; conducting outreach to key foundations; facilitating strategic collaboration between funders; and organizing educational initiatives, information-sharing and networking opportunities to advance the field.

Smart Growth California offers foundations the following services: monthly conference calls on topics of interest to funders that are active in California; convenings for funders which include briefings, information sharing, and networking opportunities; an interactive social network for funders only ([www.smartgrowthcalifornia.org](http://www.smartgrowthcalifornia.org)) where funders can get current information on smart growth in California, and share ideas and strategies; and (forthcoming) an email newsletter with updates from TFN staff.

## **PLEASE JOIN US**

Does your foundation work on smart growth issues such as transportation and land use reform, climate change, affordable housing, public health, or community development? Are you interested in thinking creatively about the best ways to accommodate California's growth while preserving a high quality of life? We invite you to join our partnership.

For more information, please contact Nina Bohlen, TFN's Western Program Consultant, at [ninabohlen@fastmail.net](mailto:ninabohlen@fastmail.net) or at 510-444-5542. For up to date information about Smart Growth California's efforts, visit us at: [www.smartgrowthcalifornia.org](http://www.smartgrowthcalifornia.org).