

SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP
PANEL REMARKS
MARCH 4, 2011

"THE SECRET IS TO GANG UP ON THE PROBLEM, RATHER THAN EACH OTHER." –
THOMAS STALLKAMP

MY NAME IS MONTE WARD. I HAVE A LONG HISTORY IN ORANGE COUNTY WORKING
ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES AND FUNDING.

I'M HERE TODAY, NOT BECAUSE I HAVE SOME FINE INSIGHT INTO HOW TO CREATE
A MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY. NOR CAN I CAN STEER YOU TOWARD SOME
GREAT NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES – I THINK MY FELLOW PANELISTS AND THE
OTHER SPEAKERS HAVE MUCH MORE TO OFFER ON THESE SCORES.

I'M HERE TO GIVE TESTIMONY, TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE WISDOM OF SEEKING
COMMON GROUND IN ATTACKING THE PROBLEMS WE'RE HERE TO TALK ABOUT
TODAY.

OVER THE YEARS, I'VE WORKED ON A LOT OF BIG PROJECTS. BUT THE TWO THAT I
COUNT AS MOST SUCCESSFUL AND HAVE HAD AND WILL HAVE THE MOST IMPACT
ARE THE VOTER APPROVED MEASURE M HALF CENT SALES TAX FOR
TRANSPORTATION PASSED FIRST IN 1990 AND THE RENEWAL OF MEASURE M
PASSED BY ALMOST 70 PERCENT OF THE ORANGE COUNTY VOTERS IN 2006.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, AT THE END OF THIS MONTH, M1 AS IT IS NOW CALLED
WILL SUNSET – ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS. THE NEXT DAY ON APRIL 1, 2011,
THE REVENUES FOR M2 WILL BEGIN TO BE COLLECTED STARTING A NEW
NARRATIVE.

I THINK THE HISTORY AND THE PRESENCE OF THESE BALLOT MEASURES HAS A LOT
TO TEACH US ABOUT WHAT WE ARE HERE TO DISCUSS AND LEARN ABOUT TODAY.

MORE THAN ANYTHING I THINK IF WE LOOK BACK TO WHAT WAS ACCEPTABLE TO
VOTERS IN 1990 AND CONTRAST IT TO WHAT WAS ACCEPTABLE IN 2006 AND NOW
TODAY, THERE ARE VALUABLE LESSONS ON HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY APPROACH
ISSUES OF GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

WHAT WE HAVE ARE TWO CASE STUDIES, SEPARATED BY TWENTY YEARS IN TIME
AND DEMONSTRATING THE EFFECTS, I THINK, OF AN EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT; INFRASTRUCTURE PROPONENTS AND THE
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY.

SO, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT CASE STUDY #1:

BACK IN 1990, A KEY CHALLENGE HERE IN ORANGE COUNTY WAS COPING WITH DECADES OF RAPID GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT – WE HAD OUTPACED OUR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE; TRAFFIC CONGESTION WAS TERRIBLE AND VOTERS WERE RESISTING NEW GROWTH.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY WAS VIGOROUSLY FIGHTING NEW ROADS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT; AND MORE QUIETLY, AND I THINK MORE EFFECTIVELY, WORKING TO CONSERVE NATURAL LANDS AS ORANGE COUNTY WAS BECOMING MORE URBAN.

MEASURE M IN 1990 WAS CALLED “THE TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN”. IT FOCUSED ON CATCHING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE UP WITH YEARS OF GROWTH AND MAKING COMMUNITIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT FUTURE DECISIONS. IN RECOGNITION OF VOTER FEARS ABOUT GROWTH IT DID NOT FUND NEW FREEWAYS OR MAJOR ROADS.

IT HAS DONE WHAT IT PROMISED. 20 YEARS LATER ALL OF ITS PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED. POPULATION HAS INCREASED BY 32%; EMPLOYMENT BY 17% AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION HAS REDUCED BY 10%.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY LARGELY DID NOT SUPPORT THE MEASURE THAT AT THE TIME ONLY NEEDED A SIMPLE MAJORITY TO PASS (IT GOT 54%).

THEY SAW NOTHING IN IT TO HELP WITH THEIR CONSERVATION GOALS AND THEY FOUND THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS TO BE TOO WEAK FOR THEIR LIKING – HAVING JUST TWO YEARS EARLIER SUFFERED THE DEFEAT OF A MUCH MORE ROBUST COUNTYWIDE GROWTH CONTROL MEASURE.

I RECALL CLEARLY, UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO GET CLAIRE SCHLOTTERBECK AND TOM ROGERS AND OTHERS TO SUPPORT MEASURE M AND SIGN THE BALLOT ARGUMENTS FOR IT.

GENERALLY, DURING THIS PERIOD, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS; INFRASTRUCTURE PROPONENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY WAS STRAINED – ADVERSARIAL AND COMBATIVE.

THERE WAS LITTLE COMMON GROUND AND NO COLLABORATION.

AND THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. THE 1990 BALLOT MEASURE LARGELY AVOIDED PROJECTS THAT WOULD PLAY TO VOTER FEARS ABOUT GROWTH; AND IT GAVE A NOD TO GROWTH MANAGEMENT BY REQUIRING LOCAL AGENCIES TO

PROVIDE THE NECESSARY TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH DECISIONS.

EVEN THOUGH MEASURE M DID NOT FUND NEW FREEWAYS AND MAJOR HIGHWAYS; THESE KINDS OF PROJECTS PROCEEDED WITH FUNDING FROM TOLLS AND FEES ON NEW DEVELOPMENT. OFTEN THEY WERE DELAYED AND/OR MORE COSTLY AS A RESULT OF LITIGATION, BUT THEY WENT AHEAD ANYWAY.

IN THE MEANTIME, THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY WAS HAVING GREATER SUCCESS WITH CONSERVATION – CHINO HILLS STATE PARK; AND LARGE AREAS OF NEWPORT COAST, LAGUNA GREENBELT; THE IRVINE RANCH AND RANCHO MISSION VIEJO WERE SAVED IN THE YEARS LEADING UP TO AND AFTER 1990.

MANY OF THESE SUCCESSES AND OTHERS WERE THE RESULT OF TAKING A DIFFERENT APPROACH – MORE COLLABORATIVE THAN CONFRONTATIONAL – WITH NEW RELATIONSHIPS FORMED BETWEEN CONSERVATIONISTS AND LAND OWNERS. AND NEW TOOLS FOR CONSERVATION PLANNING CAME INTO BEING THAT PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK FOR LARGER SCALE, COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT.

BOTH SIDES BEGAN TO SEE MUTUAL BENEFITS IN COOPERATION – BETTER CONSERVATION OUTCOMES ON THE ONE HAND AND MORE CERTAINTY WITH REGARD TO LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES ON THE OTHER.

THIS BRINGS US TO CASE STUDY #2;

IN 2003, I BEGAN THINKING ABOUT A STRATEGY FOR RENEWING MEASURE M. IN THE YEARS SINCE IT HAD PASSED THE VOTER REQUIREMENT HAD BEEN RAISED TO A 2/3 MAJORITY. THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE IN ORANGE COUNTY AND, I REASONED, WOULD NEED THE RIGHT ELECTION CYCLE AND PERHAPS MORE THAN ONE TRIP TO THE BALLOT.

MANY SAID 2/3 WAS JUST NOT POSSIBLE IN OC. I DISAGREED. OTHER JURISDICTIONS HAD DONE IT.

I PUT MY STOCK IN THE FACT THAT POLLING SHOWED ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF VOTERS WOULD REJECT ANY TAX MEASURE – NO MATTER WHAT IT WAS FOR OR HOW IT WAS PRESENTED. FROM MY IRRATIONALLY OPTIMISTIC PERSPECTIVE THAT MEANT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO WIN, BUT ONLY IF YOU COULD KEEP NO MORE THAN 8% OF VOTERS FROM JOINING THE HARD-CORE 25%.

THIS IS WHERE IT BEGAN TO BECOME CLEAR THAT PUTTING A RENEWAL BALLOT MEASURE TOGETHER HAD TO BE DIFFERENT. NO CONSTITUENCY COULD BE

OVERLOOKED. THERE MUST BE A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO WORK WITH EVERY INTEREST AND PERSPECTIVE AND FIND COMMON GROUND.

AS I LOOKED AT THE MAKEUP OF THE ELECTORATE AND SOME PRELIMINARY POLLING, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND VOTERS STARTED TO CRYSTALIZE.

- MORE THAN 50% OF VOTERS IDENTIFIED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.
- AMONG DEMOCRATS THIS WAS AS HIGH AS 80%.
- IT WAS ALSO HIGH AMONG COASTAL AND MORE AFFLUENT REPUBLICANS AND INDEPENDENTS.
- ISSUES OF GROWTH AND DENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED TO BE OF CONCERN TO VOTERS.
- BEACH CLOSURES AND WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS BOTHERED VOTERS ACROSS THE COUNTY, NOT JUST IN COASTAL AREAS.
- PRESERVING OPEN SPACE APPEALED TO SOME VOTERS; BUT MANY DIDN'T SEE THE CONNECTION WITH TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS.

SO IT WAS CLEAR THAT A SUCCESSFUL BALLOT MEASURE WOULD NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT VOTERS CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT. MORE IMPORTANT, TO MEET THE 2/3 THRESHOLD, IT WOULD NEED THE ENDORSEMENT AND ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY AND THEIR LOCAL CONSTITUENCIES.

THE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS THAT WERE CONSIDERED FOR THE M2 BALLOT MEASURE, TOOK THESE FACTS INTO ACCOUNT RIGHT FROM THE START.

- BIG CAPACITY HIGHWAY PROJECTS AND NEW ROADS WERE OFF THE TABLE.
- ROAD INVESTMENTS NEEDED TO EMPHASIZE MAINTENANCE, REHABILITATION AND OPTIMIZING WHAT WAS ALREADY THERE.
- TRANSIT INVESTMENTS NEEDED TO BE STRATEGIC, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EXISTING RAIL LINES AND COMPLEMENTING EXISTING SERVICES.
- CITIES NEEDED THE FLEXIBILITY TO MAKE TRANSIT AND NON-MOTORIZED INVESTMENTS BASED UPON LOCAL PRIORITIES.
- THERE NEEDED TO BE INVESTMENT IN TREATING OR AVOIDING THE RUNOFF FROM EXISTING STREETS AND HIGHWAYS THAT FOULS CREEKS AND BEACHES.

THIS WAS A PACKAGE THAT WOULD LIKELY NOT CREATE ACTIVE OPPOSITION FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY AND WOULD NOT RAISE RED FLAGS WITH VOTERS. BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH TO ATTRACT ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT.

IT WASN'T UNTIL FAIRLY FAR ALONG IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A BALLOT MEASURE THAT A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THAT PROBLEM APPEARED. IN JANUARY

2006, GREEN VISION AND FRIENDS OF HARBORS, BEACHES AND PARKS WEIGHED IN WITH A SUGGESTION THAT STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF A BALLOT MEASURE AND WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO DO SO MIGHT BRING THE NEEDED ACTIVE SUPPORT.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 1990 AND 2006 BEGAN TO COME INTO SHARP FOCUS:

- THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY WAS OFFERING TO COLLABORATE ON DEFINING MUTUAL INTERESTS AND TO OPENLY SUPPORT A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME.
- THEY WERE FOR THE MOST PART AND NOT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS FROM SOME IN THIS ROOM, ORGANIZED, DISCIPLINED AND SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE.
- THEY'D DONE RESEARCH, INCLUDING CREDIBLE POLLING, TO SUPPORT THEIR POSITION.
- THEY WERE CLEAR AND SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT THEY WANTED TO ACHIEVE AND THEY HAD DONE THEIR HOMEWORK ON HOW TO MAKE IT WORK.

THE OCTA APPROACH WAS DIFFERENT AS WELL:

- THE ELECTED LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ALLOWED STAFF TO NEGOTIATE FREELY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS.
- THE BOARD WAS WILLING TO MAKE SUBSTANTIVE FUNDING AND PRIORITY COMMITMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS.
- THEY KEPT TO THE POINT. BOARD MEMBERS DID NOT TRY TO LINK THE M2 NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER LOCAL ISSUES WHERE THEY HAD DISPUTES WITH MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION.

OUT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS CAME AGREEMENT ON TWO PROGRAMS THAT WILL HAVE REAL BENEFITS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN ORANGE COUNTY:

- THE FREEWAY MITIGATION PROGRAM PROVIDES AT LEAST 5% OF FUNDS SPENT ON FREEWAY IMPROVEMENTS FOR INVESTMENT IN COMPREHENSIVE MITIGATION THROUGH HABITAT PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION. USING CURRENT REVENUE ESTIMATES THIS IS A COMMITMENT OF MORE THAN \$300 MILLION IN ESCALATED DOLLARS OVER 30 YEARS.
- 2% OF THE FUNDS COLLECTED OVER THE 30 YEARS WILL GO TO WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS THAT WILL REMOVE OR CLEAN POLLUTANTS THAT WASH OFF ROADS AND FOUL CREEKS AND BEACHES. THIS IS ANOTHER ESTIMATED \$300 MILLION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT.

ASIDE FROM THESE SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS, M2 CONTAINS TRANSIT INVESTMENTS CURRENTLY ESTIMATED AT MORE THAN \$3.6 BILLION.

- MANY OF THESE ARE AIMED AT IMPROVING CORE COMMUTER RAIL SERVICES RIGHT THROUGH THE CENTER OF ORANGE COUNTY WITHIN REACH OF A MAJORITY OF JOBS AND RESIDENTS.
- \$1 BILLION IS AVAILABLE TO CITIES FOR IMPROVING CONNECTIONS OF ACTIVITY CENTERS WITH THE CORE RAIL SERVICES.
- HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS MORE ARE AVAILABLE TO CITIES FOR LOCAL TRANSIT SERVICES AND FOR IMPROVING FUTURE REGIONAL RAIL CONNECTIONS WITH ORANGE COUNTY'S CORE SERVICES.

PROPERLY MATCHED WITH COMPATIBLE LAND USE, THESE INVESTMENTS CAN ENABLE ORANGE COUNTY TO DEVELOP MORE COMPACT COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL CENTERS NEAR TRANSIT SERVICES AND STATIONS.

LIKEWISE, THESE INVESTMENTS AND COMPATIBLE GROWTH COULD, IN THE FUTURE, HELP ORANGE COUNTY MEET STATE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TARGETS AND REGIONAL AIR QUALITY STANDARDS.

SO, IT IS CLEAR THAT COLLABORATION HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN CASE STUDY #2. BUT IT HAS CONTINUED TO PAY DIVIDENDS.

AFTER THE M2 APPROVAL IN NOVEMBER 2006, THE OCTA, REASONING THAT VOTERS DIDN'T WANT TO WAIT UNTIL TAX REVENUES STARTED IN 2011 TO SEE BENEFITS, ADOPTED AN EARLY ACTION PLAN TO ADVANCE PRIORITY PROJECTS.

IN DOING SO, THEY KEPT FAITH WITH THEIR NOW PARTNERS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY AND PUT BOTH THE FREEWAY MITIGATION AND WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS INTO THE EARLY ACTION PLAN.

THROUGH CONTINUED COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP, THESE PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN FULLY DEVELOPED AND FUNDING ALREADY COMMITTED.

- MORE THAN \$50 MILLION IN STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS AND RESTORATION PROJECTS ARE UNDERWAY. WE CAN EXPECT ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING SUCCESSFUL PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS BY MID-YEAR.
- NEARLY \$20 MILLION IS COMMITTED TO REMOVING POLLUTANTS FROM CITY STREETS AND ROADS – WITH THE FIRST AWARDS OF FUNDS EXPECTED BY MID-YEAR.
- A FIRST EVER MASTER PLAN FOR LARGER SCALE WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS IS UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND WILL GUIDE ANOTHER \$38 MILLION IN GRANTS BEGINNING NEXT YEAR.

ALSO, IN THE MOST DIFFICULT FISCAL ENVIRONMENT OUR GENERATION HAS EVER FACED, OCTA HAS MAINTAINED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THESE PROGRAMS. AND, THEIR PROCESSES HAVE SO FAR BEEN SCIENCE-BASED, OPEN AND FAIR.

I DON'T THINK ANY OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED – THE BALLOT MEASURE WOULD NOT HAVE PASSED IN 2006; THE MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS WOULD NOT BE FUNDED; AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENTS WOULD NOT BE MADE -- HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE WILLINGNESS ON BOTH SIDES TO JOIN TOGETHER FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT, ATTACK A COMMON PROBLEM AND, ONCE THEY DID, TO STICK TO THE PROMISES THEY MADE.

THE LESSON IS CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS.

IN THE WORDS OF CHARLES DARWIN:

“IN THE LONG HISTORY OF MANKIND, THOSE WHO LEARNED TO COLLABORATE AND IMPROVISE MOST EFFECTIVELY HAVE PREVAILED.”

IF WE WANT TO MAKE HISTORY WE'LL FOLLOW HIS ADVICE.