



**The Practice
of Stewardship:**
Developing Leadership
for Regional Action

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785 Castro Street, Suite A

Mountain View, CA 94041

650-404-8120

Email: chi@coecon.com

www.regionalstewardship.org

Prepared by:

John Parr

Kim Walesh

Chi Nguyen

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Foreword

David Harris
Director of Florida Philanthropy
MacArthur Foundation

The Alliance for Regional Stewardship is about turning good ideas into practice. Every region wants to know how to address its complex economic, environmental, and social challenges, and every region also knows that our current ways of addressing these challenges are inadequate. We need to develop new practices appropriate to 21st century situations.

This monograph was born out of a desire to understand how regions develop regional stewards and the capability over time to lead themselves into the future. In South Florida, we recognized the power of thinking and acting as one region, but we have struggled at times with how to ignite and grow this perspective into a practical movement. We are now beginning to work together to create a more unified regional identity and regional leadership teams to deal with our problems in more effective ways.

This monograph was developed by John Parr and Kim Walesh, who examined the practices of regional stewards across the nation and shared those practices at the Alliance Leadership Forum in Miami in 2001. They then refined the practices through interacting with more than 25 regions that are active in the Alliance for Regional Stewardship.

Two fundamental findings emerge from this process of listening to regional leaders and how they do their work:

- Regional stewards emerge by working together on regional problems. Alliance participants view this practical learn-by-doing orientation to leadership development as very important.
- As the regional change process evolves, it focuses initially on specific issues; leaders eventually start asking themselves how to sustain the process of change and broaden the base of regional leaders. Alliance participants view strengthening long-term leadership capacity as an essential part of regional problem solving.

Here I believe lies the most exciting work ahead. Building on the practical experiments taking place in regions today, I believe we can do more to develop regional leaders intentionally and deliberately—always in the context of action and practice and teamwork.

This monograph is dedicated to the memory of John W. Gardner, a mentor for the Alliance and teacher for all who are committed to leadership and community. His foreword to the first Alliance monograph defined regional stewards as leaders who “have first of all a deep sense of responsibility to their regions. They want it to thrive economically, to be sustainable environmentally and to have a web of mutual obligations, caring, trust and shared values that make possible the accomplishment of group purpose.... regionalism will continue to gain ground, but its progress will be greatly strengthened if we cultivate our potential regional stewards.”

Shortly before his death, John penned some thoughts about where we are in the effort to promote regional approaches: “No more regionalism for its own sake. We now need pragmatic regionalism with a purpose.” The development of this monograph was guided by examples of leaders doing just what John wrote about.

We hope that promoting the practice of stewardship by helping regional stewards learn from each other can be one way the legacy of John W. Gardner lives on.

Regional Action: The Context for Leadership Development

Why do some regions continually innovate and advance while others become stagnant and lag?

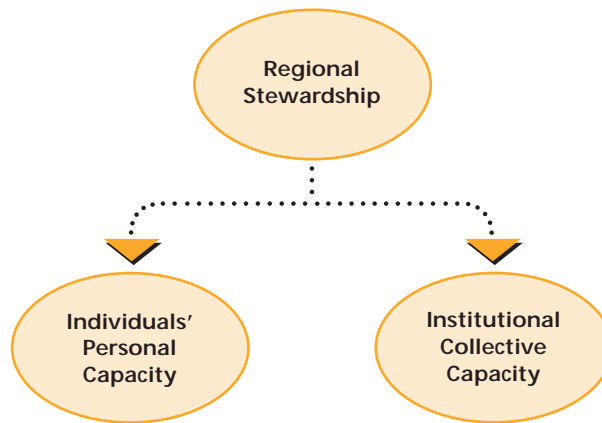
As regional challenges become more complex, the need to develop regional leaders is an increasingly pressing concern. But how does a region develop broad leadership when current developments—devolution of authority, globalization of companies, mobile and disconnected populations—threaten to create an “anonymity of leadership”?

Our first monograph, *Regional Stewardship: A Commitment to Place*, describes how a new type of leader—regional stewards—is creating opportunities for regions. Many communities can identify at least several individuals who provide this type of leadership for their region. These people act on a sense of responsibility for the long-term future of their region and are effective agents of change. John W. Gardner calls them the “responsibles.”

Regional stewardship is different from traditional leadership that focuses on organizations. Leading successfully in a single organization or sector is not sufficient for regional stewardship. Today’s regional challenges require a new level of problem-solving capability and the ability to work across political, sectoral, and institutional boundaries. (See Alliance Monograph #1 for a full discussion of regional stewardship.)

Traditional Leadership	Regional Stewardship
One jurisdiction, one organization	Crosses jurisdictions and organizations
Specific problem or goal	Integrated vision/goals for the region
Leverages his or her networks	Brings diverse networks together
Commitment to an issue/cause	Commitment to place

Regional stewardship is both an individual trait and a regional capacity. Discussions about regional stewardship often focus on individuals who are “leading” the region. But we also see that some regions continually demonstrate the capacity to innovate and outperform others, even as individual leaders come and go. They seem to have the ability to sustain change over time. This capacity goes beyond individuals—it lives in the collective spirit and practices of the region’s people and organizations, in its culture and connections. Thus, a key finding of this monograph is that regional stewardship has both personal and institutional dimensions.



This monograph shares the success strategies that regions have used to build both individual and institutional capacity for regional stewardship. How can regions cultivate this capacity? What kinds of experiences and training are necessary to develop regional stewardship?

Regional stewardship develops in the context of action. We started this monograph intending to describe innovative leadership development programs across the country. As we talked to practitioners, however, it became apparent that leadership programs were an important tool to supplement collaborative regional action. To grow the pool of regional stewards, no better teacher exists than experience.

“We’re really not about creating regional leaders. We’re about solving problems.”

—Gordy Kacala, Executive Director, Racine County Economic Development Corp.

Regions view a primary orientation to action, rather than to leadership development per se, as very important. They find that people emerge and develop as regional stewards in the context of engaging and working on regional challenges and opportunities.

This practice-based leadership—in which participants gain skills through action—drives community change. As individuals work together and recruit others to their cause, more and more people increase their awareness of the region. They develop relationships across boundaries, improve collaborative leadership skills, and build personal commitments to stewardship of the region. Working as a team, these leaders tackle complex regional challenges and, we hope, reflect and share what they have learned. In the process, they build individual and institutional leadership capacity to sustain change over time.

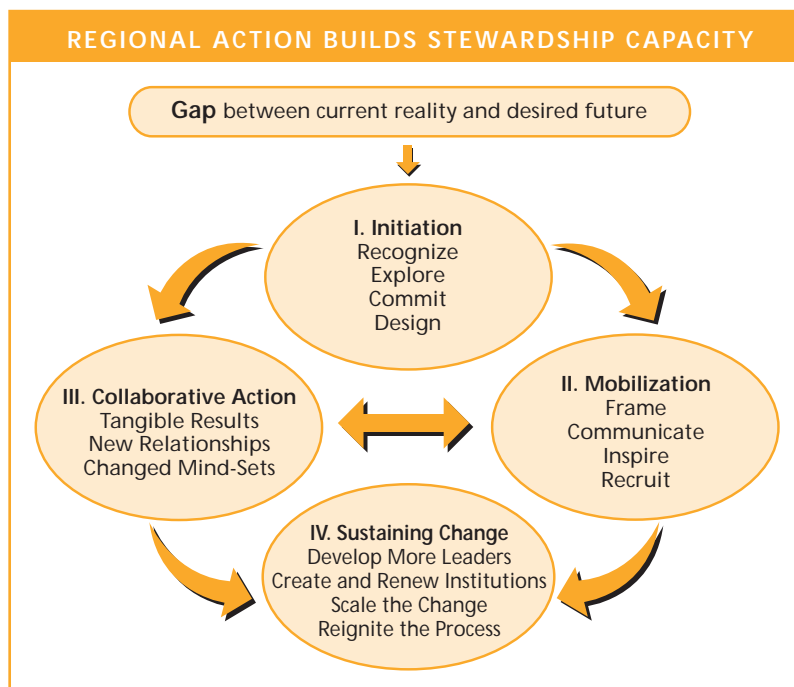
“In some ways the language about regional leadership gets in the way. The approach needs to be ‘we are going to solve a problem’ rather than ‘we are going to turn you into regional stewards.’”

—Sally Jackson, President & CEO, Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce

Framework: Common Stages of Regional Change

Though many models and approaches exist, regions that have succeeded at building leadership capacity also seem to excel at leading regional change. The change process shares some common stages, even as the nature and amount of time spent in each stage, as well as the sequencing of them, varies.

In this monograph, we use the change process below as a framework for understanding how innovative regions have recruited, mobilized, and supported leaders, thereby creating a fertile training ground for the development of regional stewards and regional stewardship capacity. As the chart shows, the process can follow different paths.



Gap. A starting point for catalyzing regional action is a widening gap between current conditions and the region's desired future. The current reality can be deteriorating, or a community's aspirations for its future may be changing. The presence of this gap—and recognition of it—is an important indicator of regional readiness for action.

I. Initiation. In the initiation stage, a core group of leaders lays the groundwork for collaborative action by identifying the regional opportunity and committing to action. The initiation stage typically includes some common elements.

- *Recognize*—a core group of leaders recognizes a gap between the region's current reality and desired future and that change is required.
- *Explore*—the leaders explore their common interests and possibilities and how they might learn and work together.
- *Commit*—they commit personally to work for civic change and to take a risk.
- *Design*—they design what should happen next, including what specifically they will do and how they will mobilize others.

II. Mobilization. The key challenge of the mobilization stage is to engage the broader public in discussion about the region's future and build commitment to act. The mobilization stage typically includes some common elements:

- *Frame*—frame critical issues and opportunities, focusing attention on what needs to be done and why.
- *Communicate*—communicate key information and messages widely, to stimulate learning and discussion among opinion leaders and residents
- *Inspire*—rally and motivate others to join the regional cause.
- *Recruit*—recruit a broader set of people to take part in what happens next, connecting diverse networks in often nontraditional ways.

III. Collaborative Action. This stage is about creating platforms for people to work together on the business of regional change. It is about moving from recruiting people to supporting their work, from discussing to doing. The collaborative action stage, when successful, typically results in some common elements:

- *Tangible Results*—evidence indicates that collaborative action can effectively address common problems.
- *New Relationships*—new networks are created as boundary-crossing relationships develop between participants.
- *Changed Mind-Sets*—a new way of thinking creatively about regional problem-solving emerges.

IV. Sustaining Change. The key challenge is to keep stakeholders at the table, broaden and deepen leadership, and renew the mission. To help sustain the change process, regions start to address the following key challenges:

- *Develop More Leaders*—institutionalize the development of regional leaders.
- *Create and Renew Institutions*—create and renew regional civic institutions and institutional alliances as individuals and issues change.
- *Scale the Change*—work toward systemic change by increasing and institutionalizing successful initiatives.
- *Reignite the Process*—refocus and regroup around new challenges and opportunities as they emerge over time.

As a region moves through each of these stages, leaders surface, become engaged, and develop. Over time, regional collaboration becomes common practice because people recognize that it is effective. Individual leadership translates into a *regional stewardship capacity* as a critical mass of people come together to influence others and change the way they approach regional opportunities and problems.

Tools for Regional Change and Fostering Regional Stewardship

The remainder of this monograph describes what regions have learned at each stage of the regional change process: Initiation, Mobilization, Collaborative Action, Sustaining Change. Each chapter describes the challenges of this stage and the tools used by regional leaders to address these challenges. Practical examples are shared, as well as peer advice that leaders offer their counterparts in other regions.

Stages of Regional Change	Tools Used to Develop Regional
I. Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage Precipitating Event• Convene Leaders• Learn from Other Regions• Provide Financial Incentives
II. Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share Catalytic Publications• Use Media to Communicate the Message• Hold Public Events• Recruit Leaders from New Sources
III. Collaborative Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Regional Strategy• Form Action Teams• Create Advocacy Coalitions• Engage in Civic Dialogue
IV. Sustaining Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare More Leaders• Measure Regional Progress• Celebrate Success/Capture Lessons• Build and Renew Civic Institutions

Exhibit: Diverse Roles for Regional Stewards

Regional Stewards are leaders who act on a commitment to the long-term well-being of their regions. In the change process, regional stewards work as a team to play three roles (adapted from *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell):

Some regional stewards are the originators of regional change. They are an initial set of leaders who become agents of change for the region, acting as **mavens** who share their knowledge and different perspectives. They are often integrators who see the need for more connected regional approaches to addressing economic, environmental, and social objectives.

Other regional stewards connect new approaches and ideas to diverse community networks. As connectors they help recruit others beyond the initial group to act differently. The **connectors** are true boundary crossers with a special gift for bringing together people from different worlds in the region. They help people and institutions collaborate across traditional boundaries—sectoral, political, socioeconomic, cultural—and create personal relationships. They are coalitionbuilders who build support from leaders, citizens, interest groups, and policy professionals toward a shared regional vision.

Still other regional stewards are persuasive communicators of possibility, who raise aspirations, talk about possibilities, and articulate a positive picture of a potential future in a compelling way. Like good **salespeople**, they can persuade the unconvinced that a new approach has merit. They embody the spirit of change and convert many others to act differently.

Regional stewards work toward a “tipping point”—that time when a distinct set of factors and players turns the idea of regional stewardship into a movement that has widespread support and leads to significant change.

I. Initiation: Getting Started

“Good stewardship is about leadership, not crisis management.”

—Leon Panetta, former Congressman, Presidential Chief of Staff

Many regions report that getting started is the hardest part of regional change. Often, it is difficult to figure out who should come together in the first place and the compelling reason why. Leaders must overcome their community’s natural cultural barriers—protecting the status quo, a lack of urgency, an unwillingness to take risks—in order to initiate change.

For regions that are in the initiation stage, identifying and surfacing potential regional leaders is critical. A great deal of time is usually spent exploring, learning, and considering whether and how to “do something” while little apparent progress appears to take place. Often, an initial group of leaders comes together in fits and starts, with individual participation in a state of flux. Patience and persistence are essential.

But always, regions that make progress through this stage point to a precipitating event that ultimately coalesced a core group of leaders to commit to act regionally. The precipitating event transformed how the leaders saw their region and their role in it; it helped clarify the gap between their region’s current reality and the desired or possible future. It ignited their passion. The precipitating event can be, but does not have to be, a crisis. In fact, regions that have experienced a crisis report that, though the crisis spurs initial action, it is the opportunity that leaders frame from the crisis that galvanizes commitment and action over the long term. Precipitating events take different forms:

- *A loss or defeat.* Losing the competition for the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation (MCC) Consortium—the nation’s first high-tech R&D consortium—to upstart Austin caused Atlanta to reconsider its entire economic strategy for future success.
- *A crisis point.* Economic crisis—thousands of jobs lost, defense cut-backs, and technology restructuring—prompted the Los Angeles megalopolis to start organizing by economic subregion.

- *A frank statement.* Craig Barrett, CEO of Intel, told a group of Phoenix business and civic leaders that Intel would not consider putting the “brainy” R&D jobs in Phoenix, only the production jobs. This statement ignited leaders around a strategy to attract more high-end jobs.
- *A big idea or aspiration.* Realizing that oil, gas, and state government were not a promising economic future, a small group of Austin leaders envisioned that Austin was “poised for greatness” in information technology. Pride and love of place elevated aspirations.
- *A catalytic person.* The appointment of Richard Atkinson as Chancellor of UC-San Diego raised the sights of the university and the role it could play in the region. Former director of the National Science Foundation, Atkinson brought an audacious vision and built a team of university, civic, and business leaders to execute it.

It is the precipitating event that causes the leaders ultimately to commit to action. But the initial time and energy invested in “exploring” regional collaboration often lay the groundwork for recognizing, leveraging, and even generating the precipitating event.

The following tools and techniques have helped lay the groundwork for identifying potential leaders and initiating regional change:

Convene Leaders—Bringing an informal working group of “early adopters” together can be a way to kick start the process. Typically, these people see a compelling issue that requires regional attention or an opportunity that they must seize immediately. Sometimes the early adopters are established community leaders; other times, new leaders with fresh perspectives emerge.

The convener is usually a neutral party who has credibility and influence in the community. Whether an organization (such as a community foundation or citizen’s league) or an individual (such as a recognized civic or business leader), the convener must create a safe public space for dialogue.

In their earliest stages, these informal working groups often go through an extensive learning and exploration process that might include best-practice workshops or visits to other regions. In the

process, the members of the group build trust and relationships with one another. Ultimately, they join together and commit to providing visible, public leadership to champion a cause.

These groups are especially useful in fragmented regions, because they begin to build understanding and relationships across sectors and geography. But they risk losing momentum if they do not make progress to action.

Case Study: Southeastern Wisconsin Exploration in Early Stages

Greater Milwaukee is an example of region struggling through the early stages of initiation. The heads of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, public university, and major utility have convened a group of leaders from diverse sectors and counties under the umbrella of "Southeastern Wisconsin Joint Venture." The group is going through a learning and exploration process about why and how to act regionally. It has not yet identified the precipitating event or theme that can ignite real commitment and clarify the focus of collaborative action.

Case Study: Fresno Incubates a Collaborative Regional Initiative

California State University at Fresno and the Fresno Business Council laid the groundwork for a new civic initiative by recruiting a merit-based team of leaders—beyond the traditional sources—based on their understanding of stewardship, their skill sets, and their subject-matter expertise. At the kick-off retreat, the team crafted a set of core operating values that included principals of power parity and inclusion, commitment to healthy conflict resolution, and envisioning "success without limitations." Not only have these principals created the working culture for the collaborative initiative, but participants have literally become ambassadors for the values and the importance of applying them in every setting. With the articulation of and commitment to common values, a civic infrastructure is in place to accelerate the work of regional change.

www.fresnobc.org

Learn from Other Regions—Trips to other regions and interactions with their leaders can provide an important catalyst for conversation about a region's aspirations and possibilities. Participants report that these visits allow them to build relationships with each other and facilitate further collaborative action. These site visits can also play to competitive instincts. Interaction with leaders in other places provides opportunity to hear how others in a community talk about what they did and why they did it. In a variation on this process, conveners can

bring outsiders into a region to bring knowledge of what leading regions are doing nationally. Both options can inspire and motivate leaders to take action.

Case Study: Seattle Learns from World-Class Cities

In 1982, the Mayor of Seattle and the business leadership began a program to visit leading American cities to study their successes. They asked, “What can we learn from other cities’ strategies and programs?” These trips developed into a program of annual visits to global cities, each attended by a delegation of 90 business and civic leaders. The Seattle International Trade Alliance has documented the high-level “take backs” from the reconnaissance trips, which it has applied to Seattle’s economic development strategies. To date, the delegations have visited a number of U.S. cities as well as Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Stuttgart, Osaka/Kobe, Hong Kong, Bristol and London, Singapore, and Barcelona.

www.ci.seattle.wa.us/tda/

Case Study: Columbus Uses Austin Trip to Catalyze Regional Partnership

The current effort in Columbus to develop a regional strategy and partnership between business, government, and university was sparked by a Chamber-organized visit to Austin. Chamber President Sally Jackson reports that the trip was powerful on several different levels. First, the 40 leaders learned about best practices in two specific areas of interest: education-business partnerships and technology development. Second, the shared, interactive nature of the learning meant that people retain and apply it better. Third, the camaraderie that travel and group learning built among trip participants was fundamentally different from what they could achieve in town. “Participants returned with entirely new, heightened expectations for our region, and with some specific ideas of what the leverage points could be. They committed to drive this conversation at home.” Plans are in the works to take 50 leaders to Toronto in April 2002 to explore the themes of bioscience and the creative community.

www.columbus-chamber.org

Provide Financial Incentives—States and foundations have used financial incentives to encourage leaders to come together in a region and explore their mutual interests. This patient capital helps support the learning and dialogue that needs to take place among an initial core group of leaders to understand shared concerns and potential approaches to working together. Though financial incentives can serve as a type of precipitating event, on their own they are seldom sufficient: a leadership team must truly coalesce and commit in the

initiation stage or the initiative induced by financial incentives will not prove sustainable.

Case Study: The James Irvine Foundation Seeds Collaborative Regional Initiatives

Between 1994 and 2001, the James Irvine Foundation invested in seeding the creation and development of 19 collaborative regional initiatives in California, including the Santa Barbara Economic Community Project, the San Fernando Economic Alliance, and the Sierra Business Council. The Foundation also invested in a statewide learning network and an annual Civic Entrepreneur Summit. In 2000, the California CRI movement institutionalized this learning capacity by creating a comprehensive support organization—the California Center for Regional Leadership—to serve the growing “field.” This movement increasingly influences policies at the state level with the formation of the California Assembly’s Speaker’s Commission on Regionalism to recommend ways to align state and local government policies and programs with regional collaboration.

www.calregions.org

Case Study: Virginia Creates Regional Competitiveness Program

Inspired by the success of the Hampton Roads Partnership, the General Assembly of Virginia created the Regional Competitiveness Program in 1996 to support regional economic development efforts in 19 regions. The Act established a \$22 million incentive fund to encourage joint activities that address regional economic competitiveness needs. The Regional Competitiveness Program is designed to reward existing regional actions and stimulate new regional activities. Even areas of the state where regional activity has already begun must increase their efforts to reach new levels of cooperation in order to qualify for incentives. The model is not mandated from the top down; rather, it provides incentives for bottom-up collaboration by creating incentives for localities that choose to come together to carry out new levels of regional economic development.

www.dhcd.state.va.us/CD/crd/rcp/rcpindex.htm

Advice to Peers: Initiation

Alliance participants offer the following advice to peers:

- Begin developing a shared information base and language.
- Create opportunities for shared learning.
- Jump on precipitating events—create that “trigger” if you need to.
- Take a risk in committing to the unknown.
- Be inclusive from the beginning.

II. Mobilization: Lighting a More Public Spark

The key challenge of the mobilization stage is to engage the broader public in a discussion about the region's future. Once a core group of leaders commits to advance the region, it typically works to attract more visible attention, create some shared excitement about the need to work regionally, and recruit others to action. A region that can successfully mobilize its population toward a common goal is growing its regional stewardship capacity.

(Sometimes, though, the initiating group will move right into collaborative action, albeit primarily among its own members, and then later, when results are evident, attempt the larger-scale recognition and mobilization—see Part III: Collaborative Action).

For mobilization to work, a region must engage the hearts and minds of a broader constituency and must appeal to its shared interests. In diverse regions, this task means crafting a message that is relevant to the diverse interests of its population and delivering it in a multilingual, multicultural way. Sometimes, an inspiring vision or an alarming fact captures the public's attention. Other times, a new framing of issues can help people see the need to work together in new ways.

Regions have used the following tools and techniques to mobilize broad leadership for a regional initiative:

Share Catalytic Publications—Fact-based reports such as benchmarking studies, diagnostic reports, and future scenarios frame the region's current reality and its potential for a better future. If they present compelling information or tell a compelling story about the state of the community or its potential, they can serve as an effective call to action.

Case Study: Hampton Roads Rallies Around Per Capita Income

Leaders have used indicators' reports to raise awareness of regional challenges and sound the call to action. But rather than producing a comprehensive set of indicators, leaders from Hampton Roads, Virginia, rallied others around a powerful statistic about declining per capita income. In 1980, per capita income in the Hampton Roads region was close to the national average and exceeded that of regional neighbors Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham. By 1999, the region had fallen significantly behind both the nation and its neighbors. Explains Jimmy Eason, CEO of the Hampton Roads Partnership, "We translated statistics into numbers that hit home with people. For example, if our per capita income were once again equal to Raleigh-Durham's we would have \$11 billion more circulating through our economy." Eason and his team used this alarming statistic to recruit people into a regional strategic planning process and mobilized the community to focus on its economic future.

www.hrp.org

Use Media to Communicate the Message—Some regions have found that the media can be a valuable partner in disseminating key messages to the broad public. This task can include distributing catalytic publications as newspaper inserts, influencing editorial writings, or developing special television programming.

Case Study: New Journalism Stimulates Regional Discussion

The print medium in more than 20 regions has helped create a public spark for change. In partnership with local newspapers, national journalists Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson provide challenging "outsider" views to inform and stimulate civic dialogue. To prepare Citistates reports, the Citistates team interviews a broad range of metropolitan leaders and citizens groups. Then the team creates a series of in-depth articles drawing on what it has learned from community leaders and citizens, as well as knowledge of regions nationwide. An independent assessment of the region's major problems and opportunities appears in the newspaper, either as a day-to-day series or as a special pull-out section. Citistates Reports don't intend to solve civic challenges. They intend, in a positive spirit, to stir things up—to leave the civic debate more informed, more energized, more focused on shared solutions than when the Citistates Group hit town.

www.citistates.com/reports.html

Case Study: South Florida Invests in Regional Learning

In 2000, The MacArthur Foundation and Collins Center for Public Policy launched the “Regional Growth Project” to stimulate the development of a regional identity and regional leadership for South Florida. The Foundation invested in a set of new research-based materials about the challenges and opportunities of becoming a viable region and a successful society in the new global economy. These materials included a high-profile series of newspaper articles about the region, development of four scenarios for the region’s future, and quantitative measures of the region’s progress. Together, the materials present compelling and informed viewpoints about potential futures of the region as well as current realities.

Several key messages have emerged, including the important role of South Florida in Latin America and the opportunity to be a leader in environmental sustainability. The MacArthur Foundation and Collins Center are now using these materials to communicate key messages through the media, including televised town-hall meetings. These efforts led to the creation of a South Florida Alliance for Regional Leadership that will continue communicating the messages and promoting regional action.

www.collinscenter.org

Hold Public Events—Public events can stimulate discussion and inspire others to join the cause. The region invites broad participation from community members in forums, symposia, or speaker series. These events can serve as platforms for dramatic release of catalytic publications, as well as for powerful testimonials by credible leaders about their personal commitment to regional change.

Case Study: Cincinnati Educates with Great Cities Symposium Series

Cincinnati has had success engaging regional stakeholders and the media through its Great Cities Symposium Series, launched by the Metropolitan Growth Alliance (MGA) in November 2000. Funded by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, each symposium is clearly focused on a regional issue that MGA is facing. Past topics have included “Cyber Cities” and “The Competitive Advantage of Shared Leadership.” On average, 200 community leaders attend the two-hour programs held either in early morning or at noonday. The format usually includes a keynote address by a national thought leader, a best-practices panel of experts from other metro areas, a question-and-answer session, and moderator comments. After the presentation, the speakers join MGA leadership in the boardroom of the *Cincinnati Post* and the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (the local dailies), and lively discussion follows. Each event has been the subject of feature editorials, helping MGA to reach a yet larger audience. In addition, the symposia are recorded for rebroadcast on television, and notes from the session are available on MGA’s Web site.

www.greatercincinnati.org/page94.cfm

Recruit Leaders from New Sources—Some regions make a special attempt to reach out and mobilize leaders from nontraditional sources of leadership. These leaders include people from entrepreneurial companies and disadvantaged communities, as well as people of color, women, youth, and seniors.

Case Study: Pittsburgh’s Entrepreneurs Network Connects Emerging Leaders to the Community

In 1999, leaders in Pittsburgh felt that the region needed to revamp its image, as recent graduates of local universities fled to other urban hotspots upon graduation. The Heinz Endowments convened young, entrepreneurial leaders of businesses in order to understand how to attract and retain young talent to the region. Some of the entrepreneurs reported that this was the first time their opinions have been actively solicited and incorporated in the decision-making processes. The initiative spawned a series of conversations that resulted in the creation of an ongoing CEO-level Entrepreneurs Network based at the Pittsburgh Technology Council. The Network recruits and focuses emerging leaders on improving Pittsburgh’s regional quality of life amenities and entrepreneurial identity. There is some evidence that the image of Pittsburgh may be shifting—Pittsburgh was recently included on a list of America’s top “Hot Jobs-Cool Communities.”

Case Study: Gateway Cities Reaches Out to Disadvantaged Communities

Gateway Cities, a multisector collaboration of 27 cities in Southeast Los Angeles County, undertook an ambitious new program in 2001 to involve the community directly in planning and managing its own future. The Sustainability Planning initiative selected Huntington Park for its pilot project. The city has a 98% Latino population, with a per capita income of just more than \$9,000 and a high-school attrition rate of 54%. To recruit from non-traditional sources of leadership, a major outreach campaign identified community activists, organizers, and influencers to take part in the project. Bilingual facilitators from USC's school of Policy Planning and Development conducted meetings in Spanish. Residents were asked questions that were personally meaningful to them: "How would Huntington Park have to change for you to want to live here 20 years from now and for you to want your children to live here? What specific steps create the community you envision?" Because of their strong commitment to a sustained outreach program, the regional collaborative initiative was able to engage 50 under-represented community members and business leaders who would not otherwise be part of the discussion.

www.gateway-partnership.org

Advice to Peers: Mobilization

Alliance participants offer the following advice to peers:

- Focus on people "missing in action"; go beyond the "usual suspects."
- Understand and make the message relevant to individuals—identify "what's in it for me" for various constituents.
- Frame issues for broad consensus and regional planning.
- Create vehicles for dialogue and information sharing.
- Create regional networking opportunities.
- Consider a generational shift when seeking new ideas and structures.
- Play to the region's history and values.

III. Collaborative Action: Doing the Hard Work of Change

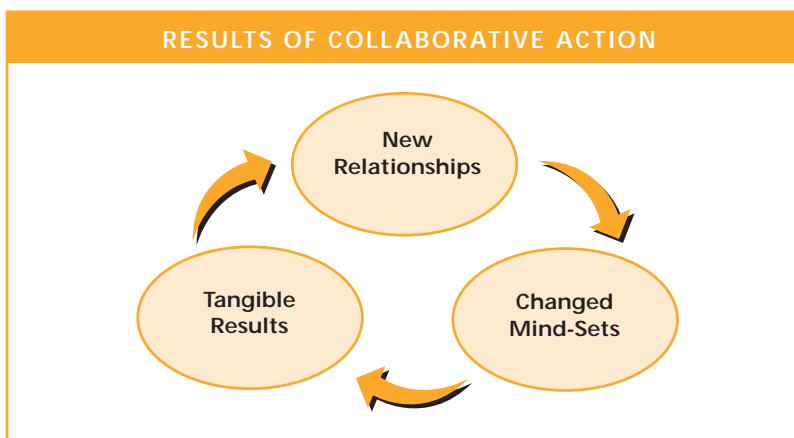
The key challenge of the Collaborative Action stage is to create the appropriate platforms for people to work together for change. It is about moving from recruiting people to supporting their work, from discussing to doing.

The hard work of regional change begins with clear purpose. Actors must agree on their roles and responsibilities and begin to take ownership of the process. Some regions start with small wins—tangible results early on—to demonstrate success and win over skeptics. They set measurable goals and demand accountability toward those goals. It is in the collaborative action stage that leaders often discover true common ground and deepen their commitment to regional stewardship.

“There can be real difficulty finding common ground. Theoretically, we agree on interdependencies. Practically, we don’t really believe it. The perceived risk of coming together regionally outweighed the perceived benefits. It wasn’t until cross-jurisdictional teams were formed that we started to find real common ground.”

—Pat Timm, Executive Director, Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Growth Alliance

When successful, working together in the collaborative action stage leads to *new relationships* as well as to *changed mind-sets* and *tangible results* among people.



Regions have used the following tools and techniques to work for change:

Develop a Regional Strategy—Leaders can bring people together to develop a strategy for moving their region toward the desired future. Regional strategy sometimes follows the creation of a vision or the articulation of shared values and aspirations. Other times, strategy is implemented de facto, as people and organizations launch individual initiatives and then connect the pieces into a coherent strategy.

Case Study: Charlotte Unites Around Strategy

Voices & Choices is a three-year-old regional collaboration created after a Citistates report (see Part III) called for the creation of a regional citizen-based group. Representing 14 counties, CCC nurtured a grassroots effort to address growing concerns about growth and sprawl in the region. The effort involved broad engagement of community members, business leaders, and environmental activists. It culminated its Mobilization stage in a regional Environmental Summit in November 1998, where more than 500 people worked together to craft a regional vision and establish priorities. This strategy recognized the connections between environmental health, economic sustainability, and quality of life. Following the Summit, Voices & Choices formed action teams in areas of land use, open space, transportation, air quality, water quality, and resource recovery/recycling; teams are regionally representative and produce 150 action steps for use by individuals, governments, and businesses in the region to protect the region's quality of life.

www.ccchoices.org

Form Action Teams—Collaborative action teams create and implement new initiatives to achieve a specific result. Typically, these teams focus on implementing a focused part of a regional strategy. They have a strong orientation toward action and results, and they are often a coalition of organizations working toward the same end.

Case Study: Greater Denver Corporation Champions International Airport for the Region

Formed in 1987 as a strategic leadership group, the Greater Denver Corporation (GDC) developed to jump-start Denver's stagnant economy. The GDC invested in the region's infrastructure and created an effective economic development strategy, including the formation of the Metro Denver Network to market the region. In its first project, the GDC worked with Mayor Peña to develop a new international airport for the Denver region. An unconventional action team of business groups, labor leaders, and civic activists—groups who do not typically share an agenda—formed to support the project. The Greater Denver Corporation began with a \$1 million investment toward the work of building new partnerships in the region. Governor Roy Romer became an active participant, going to restaurants every morning in Adams County to have "oatmeal breakfasts" with blue-collar workers. The result of this effort was that the annexation vote was approved by a 56%-to-44% margin after a hard-fought campaign.

Create Advocacy Coalitions—Unlikely coalitions can influence decisions that affect multiple stakeholders in the region. Regional coalitions have been successful at both influencing regional decisions and bringing regional perspective to decisions that take place at the neighborhood/organizational level.

Case Study: Silicon Valley Housing Action Coalition

The Housing Action Coalition, formed in 1994, works to increase the supply of affordable, well-constructed higher-density housing in Silicon Valley. The Coalition is composed of more than 150 diverse individuals and organizations, including the Building Industry Association, the Sierra Club, the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, the Greenbelt Alliance, and the Association of Realtors. The Coalition's strategies include education, advocacy, and legislation. Coalition members attend hearings to advocate for higher-density housing projects to counter the traditional opposition and represent the unknown voices of the people who will live in the housing. To date, the coalition has successfully advocated for approximately 26,000 new homes, many of them transit-oriented developments. Almost 50% of the units were affordable to low- and moderate-income earners.

www.svmg.org/Committees/Housing/Housing_Action_Coalition/

Engage in Civic Dialogue—Leaders create opportunities for productive public conversations about the issues confronting the region.

Typically, this task involves framing issues, sharing individual perspectives, understanding diverse perspectives, learning about facts, and a disciplined process of evaluating and deciding on options for going forward. Bridging differences and building trusting relationships are important by-products for long-term leadership capacity.

Case Study: Minnesota Citizens League Shapes Agenda for More Than 45 Years

Founded in 1952, The Citizens League of Minnesota involves citizens in identifying and framing critical public policy choices, forging recommendations, and advocating their adoption. The organization has pioneered a process that involves citizens in studying public issues and developing policy solutions. The 2,500 members of the League contribute their time and money to promote uninhibited discussion, research, and promotion of action. Through the years, the League has been one of the most effective agents of change in Minnesota public policy. The League's impact is evident in areas such as public finance, regional government, education, transportation, and health care.

www.citizensleague.net

Case Study: Metro Hartford Region Holds Community Conversations about Race

A 1997 study found that racial and ethnic divisions were an economic issue as well as a social issue and that if these divisions were not addressed, the Hartford metropolitan area would not achieve its goal of becoming one of the top ten places to live and work in the United States. Leaders from the Aetna Foundation, the Secretary of State's Office, the National Conference for Community and Justice, and the Millennium Project joined forces and developed a regional study circle program. By the end of the year 2000, more than 2,000 people had participated in study-circle sessions, more than a third of which took place in the workplace. The sessions have had many results. The MetroHartford Millennium Project, a public-private economic development effort, created a "Diversity Task Force" that has placed its members on all other task forces to ensure that racial equity is a constant and central focus of all the economic development work. The State Department of Public Works created a diversity leadership council and has launched its own program of study circles on diversity. The *Hartford Courant*, the daily newspaper, in addition to being a sponsor and giving extensive coverage to the regional effort, committed to holding study circles for at least 20% of its 1,300 employees.

www.aetna.com/foundation/news/articles/manchester.html

Advice to Peers: Collaborative Action

Alliance participants offer the following advice to peers:

- Identify the consequences of inaction.
- Spend the time clearly defining issues and make sure all players at the table create broad public understanding of solutions to problem.
- Engage from beginning to end. Don't let the engagement stop after the first round.
- Identify clear action steps and roles for implementers.
- Help players understand what will be necessary to get to action.
- Set the right pace.
- Choose the right people.
- Use benchmarks to express objectives.
- Learn from past initiatives that have failed, but also remind people of what worked in the past.
- Be patient, maintain constancy of purpose, and keep a calm nature.
- Develop a revenue stream to fund program/initiatives.

IV. Sustaining Change: Ensuring Continued Success

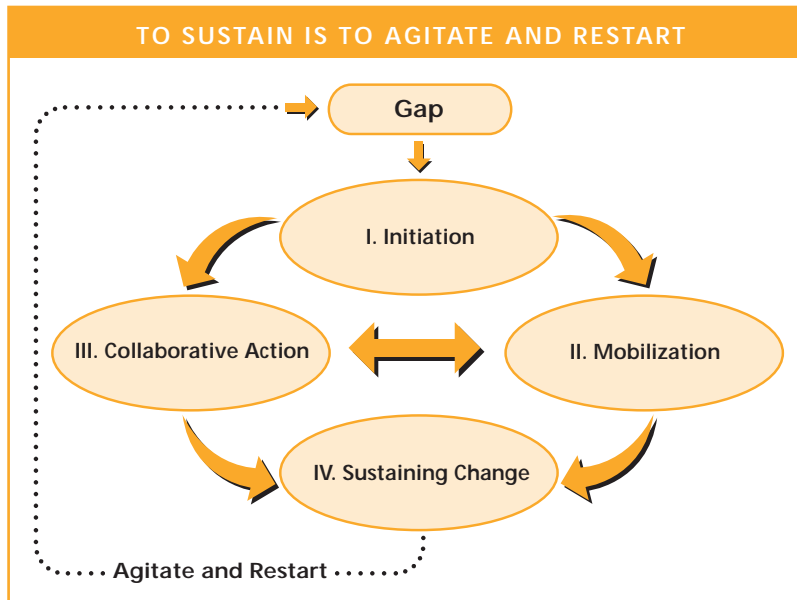
The key challenge for many regions is to sustain the change process and to bring it to scale. Regional change is an ongoing, continuous process. In the beginning, a core group of leaders initiates a new way of working together and of seeing the region and its future. They mobilize others to join the group, and create platforms for people to work together to gain new results through new methods. At some point the group celebrates success and starts to think about how to sustain the change over time.

Another challenge that regions face in trying to sustain change is in integrating newcomers into regional efforts as the prior generation of leaders steps back. Leaders who are new to the area—say, a new university president, or mobile professionals, or emerging business leaders—have little historic and institutional memory of the successes and challenges of the community. Engaging them requires both an educational component and a mentoring component.

The regions that have been at this process the longest point out that the most important part of sustaining change is actually in restarting the change process. As success occurs and the context changes, leaders need to recognize new gaps between current reality and desired future. Even as they recognize success, regional stewards agitate to do even better.

“On a scale of 1 to 10, we’re a 10 on what we’ve done, and we’re a 3 on what we still need to get done. What we’ve done, we’ve done exceptionally well. On the other hand, we still have a lot of work to do.”

—Al Ratner, Co-Chairman of the Board, Forest City Enterprises, Cleveland



Regions have used the following tools and techniques to sustain change and institutionalize the regional stewardship capacity:

Prepare Business and Civic Leaders to be Regional Stewards—

Though practical experience is a powerful teacher, a common concern is that the current preparation of leaders is insufficient to meet today’s complex regional challenges. As one leader explained, “On its own, leadership training inside the corporate, government, or grassroots world is inadequate for regional leadership. For example, leaders who are used to directly controlling resources in organizations can get frustrated by messy civic change processes. To succeed in the regional civic space, leaders need new frameworks and skills, new mentors and best practices. And they may actually need to unlearn some things and change some perspectives.”

Leadership Training Programs. Some regions have begun to sponsor leadership programs to equip business leaders, neighborhood leaders, and politicians with the collaborative skills and cross-sector networks to become regional stewards. Typically, these programs provide leaders with some combination of skill development, regional awareness,

team building, and opportunities to reflect on what they have learned from their experiences. To realize the full benefit, it is critical for these programs to connect the classroom training with the actual practice of regional stewardship.

Examples of Regional Leadership Programs

- Atlanta Regional Leadership Institute
- Central Oklahoma Leadership Institute
- Central Valley IDEAL Program
- Charlotte Region Lee Institute/ALF Chapter
- Denver Community Leadership Forum
- Houston American Leadership Forum
- Kansas City Metropolitan Leadership Forum
- Leadership St. Louis
- Portland Institute for Civic Leadership
- Sierra Leadership Seminar

(For full case studies, see www.regionalstewardship.org/publications.html)

Case Study: Sierra Leadership Seminar

The Sierra Leadership Seminar is a collaborative leadership course, operated under the Sierra Business Council, that strengthens the ability of current and emerging local leaders to spearhead positive change in their communities. In monthly two-day sessions over five months, the course covers individual skill development (i.e., facilitating, recording, handling difficult people) as well as content about the region (i.e., planning for prosperity, biodiversity, public input processes). Between sessions, participants are expected to apply the skills and knowledge they've learned to problems in their own communities and report back their results. This practical, community-based experience helps participants understand, anticipate, and learn to surmount the difficulties in creating change at the local or regional level. Participation in the program has motivated some people to run for office and others to get involved in the civic arena in heightened ways. The value accrues to the individuals as well as the Sierra Business Council because the Seminar creates teams of talent who become engaged in Council projects and community issues.

www.sbcouncil.org/seminar.asp

Mentoring Emerging Regional Stewards. An innovation that seems particularly powerful is to have established regional leaders mentor and coach younger and emerging leaders. Austin's AARO organization includes the leaders of all of the major civic organizations in Austin. Its chair, Neal Kocurek, launched a program in 1998 in which established leaders would mentor emerging leaders and help them succeed with a three-year project. Neal Kocurek and Pike Powers mentored young entrepreneurs Steve Papermaster and Peter Zandan as they created and led the 360 Summit and the Austin Idea Network.

"For almost a half century, large businesses nurtured civic leadership. That's now the rare exception. This makes mentoring of new and diverse leaders more important than ever before."

—Curtis Johnson, President, Citistates Group

Measure Regional Progress—Communities develop indicators to measure how their region is progressing toward its desired future or how it is doing relative to other regions. Indicators help leaders and citizens determine if their region is moving in the right direction. They use indicators as a basis for celebrating success and rallying around deficiency. Indicators reports are also a powerful tool for public education about the region.

Case Study: Chicago Metropolis Measures Its Regional Realities

Chicago Metropolis 2020 is a regional civic organization launched by the Commercial Club of Chicago in 1998. To prepare the region for the twenty-first century, Chicago Metropolis sponsored public forums to develop and test a set of 12 shared goals for the region. Inaugurated in 2001, *Regional Realities* provides fact-based measurements (40) of how the region is progressing toward its 12 goals. The document aims to promote regionwide debate and action that is based on solid information about the challenges ahead. Explains Metropolis President Frank Beal, "We view *Regional Realities* as a call for discussion, education, and collaboration. It sets the stage for more informed regional participation." Now that the measures are in place and will have annual updates, they are helping to evaluate the desirability of alternative growth scenarios in a public engagement process.

www.chicagometropolis2020.org/index.htm

Celebrate Success and Capture Lessons—Leaders know how important it is to recognize and celebrate success. Sometimes they do so through special celebratory events. Some regions recognize successful regional stewardship with awards. California, for example, offers the David Packard Civic Entrepreneur Award to the individuals and teams that have succeeded in breakthrough collaborations. The Lee Institute in Charlotte, North Carolina, recognizes collaborative leaders following in the footsteps of Bill Lee, Duke Power's Chairman and CEO for more than 12 years.

As important as it is to celebrate, it is also important to capture the lessons of why the success occurred and to share those lessons with other leaders in the region as well as other regions nationally. This task is particularly valuable for educating new leadership about the region's past success and challenges.

Build and Renew Regional Civic Institutions and Alliances—

Leaders create new regional civic organizations and alliances to help institutionalize new practices. These institutions play a key role in ongoing accountability; civic institutions with a responsible portfolio command more consistent behavior from people, including elected officials. They give cover for leaders to do things that otherwise might be too risky personally or politically. And they are the strategic scanners and conscience that prod leaders when they are too passive or tuned out to act.

Creating regional civic institutions and alliances was a new challenge in the 1990s, and remains so for many regions. But the next challenge on the frontier is to renew their focus as times change. We must keep civic institutions vital, refreshed by new leaders and informed by more experienced ones.

Case Study: Metro Denver Transit Alliance Builds Civic Capacity

In the aftermath of the defeat of a 1998 \$4 billion ballot initiative to build out the light-rail system in Denver, the Center for Regional and Neighborhood Action convened the initiative's supporters to explore how they could work together in the future. These meetings led to the creation of the Transit Alliance—a nonprofit coalition of 34 local governments, business associations, and citizen groups. The Alliance is staffed by two strong environmental activists, has offices in the Metro Chamber of Commerce office building, and is chaired by a suburban mayor. The members of the Transit Alliance played leadership roles in the successful vote in the November 2000 election to add a 19-mile leg of light-rail and highway expansion connecting the downtown to the high-tech employment corridor. In addition, the Transit Alliance is building support for the next two light-rail lines through educational efforts. Beyond the success in passing legislation, the Transit Alliance has established new working relationships among its participants. New consensus is developing on several growth-management issues as the result of the new levels of trust and reciprocity.

www.transitalliance.org

“Once we formed the Metropolitan Growth Alliance, a lot of power and authority were handed to us because there was no one else in this space. This indicates that people want an institution and individuals that provide leadership for the region.”

—Pat Timm, Executive Director, Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Growth Alliance

Advice to Peers: Sustaining Change

Alliance participants offer the following advice to peers:

- Have multiple “keepers of the flame.”
- Build culture around enduring principles, not personalities.
- Develop civic infrastructure across sectors and at multiple levels.
- Develop regional schools, councils, committees to spread the message through different channels.
- Celebrate success by setting and revealing new goals.
- Be vision driven, not project driven.
- Maintain focus on place.
- When dealing with a long-term issue/plan, keep the message fresh.
- Agree on how to measure success.
- Keep volunteer leaders engaged, and staff in appropriate roles.
- Take a long-term view.

Going Forward: Preparing Regional Stewards

The development of leaders is possible on a scale far beyond anything we have ever attempted.... Many dismiss the subject with the confident assertion that 'leaders are born not made'. Nonsense! Most of what leaders have that enables them to lead is learned. Leadership is not a mysterious activity. It is possible to describe the tasks that leaders perform. And the capacity to perform those tasks is widely distributed in the population.... We have barely scratched the surface in our efforts toward leadership development.

—John W. Gardner, On Leadership

An important finding of this monograph is that today regional stewardship develops primarily in the context of action. Working as a team, individual leaders catalyze regional change. In the process, they build individual and institutional leadership capacity to sustain change over time.

While the pragmatic orientation must remain central, more can be done to engage people in the practice of regional stewardship. Given the increasingly urgent nature of our regional challenges, participants in the Alliance for Regional Stewardship believe that we shouldn't just wait for leaders to emerge through civic change processes. Rather, we can provide active regional stewards the opportunity to capture and share their knowledge. We can equip leaders from a single sector with new abilities to solve problems working across political, sectoral, and institutional boundaries. Together we can develop new frameworks, language, and models of how to lead collaboratively in the regional civic space.

Our challenge going forward from here is to take seriously the need for more regional stewards from all walks of life and to develop mechanisms to accelerate the development of leaders who can address the challenges facing regions today.

About the Alliance for Regional Stewardship

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

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

Alliance activities include:

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

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



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REGIONAL
STEWARDSHIP

785 Castro Street, Suite A
Mountain View, CA 94041
650-404-8120