

## **STAFF REPORT: INTEGRATED REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVE**

### **Summary:**

There is a demonstrated need to improve the efficiency for implementation of priority development projects while ensuring the long-term protection of important natural resources across California. These objectives are best accomplished by an overall Integrated Regional Planning (IRP) approach that effectively links regional development planning with regional conservation planning. This approach uses the combined assessment of regional development and conservation priorities to implement planning solutions that mitigate development impacts through the protection and stewardship of regional conservation priorities. A resolution of SGC commitment to the IRP approach will facilitate our ability to align key agencies and organizations with this initiative.

### **Recommended Action:**

Adopt a SGC resolution that supports an Integrated Regional Planning initiative that will link development and conservation planning in California.

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### **Background**

The Strategic Growth Council is required by statute (SB 732) to:

- coordinate member state agencies to improve air and water quality, improve natural resource protection, encourage sustainable land use planning;
- recommend policies and investment strategies and priorities to encourage the development of sustainable communities, such as those communities that protect the environment;
- provide, fund, and distribute data and information that will assist in developing and planning sustainable communities; and
- manage and award grants and loans to support the planning and development of sustainable communities.

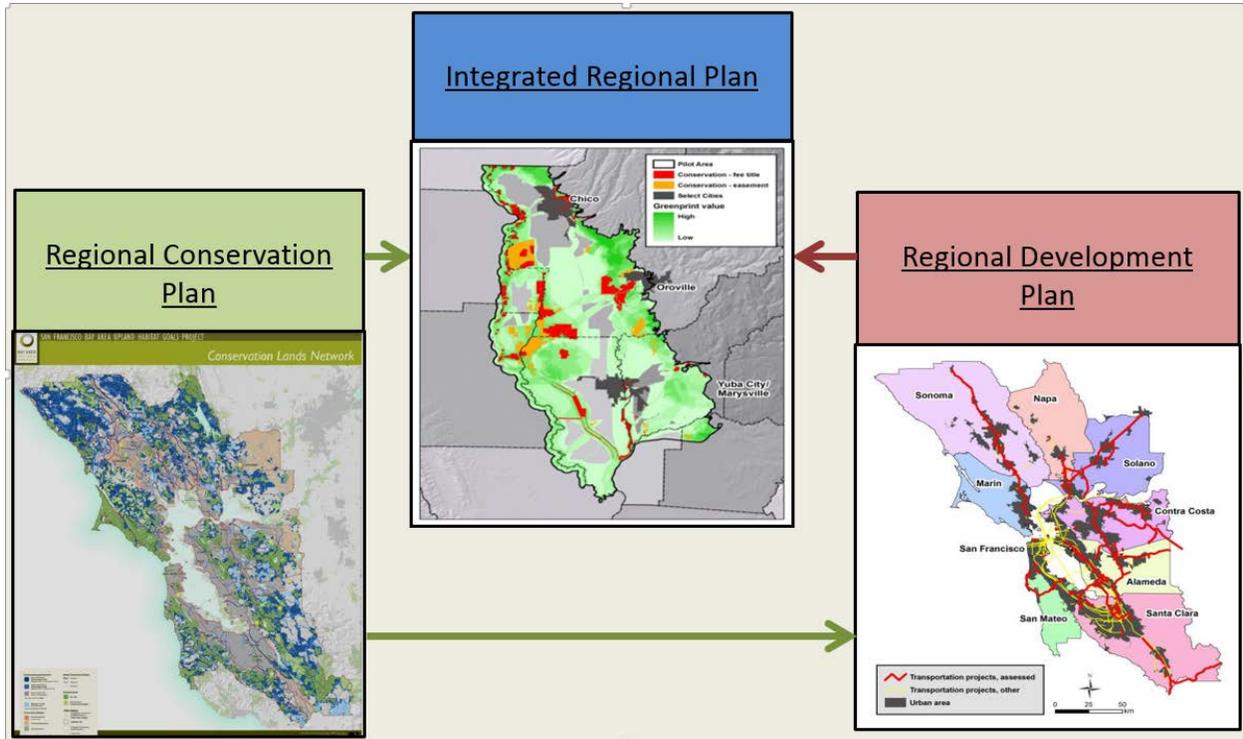
The environmental review process and the required federal and state permits for environmental impacts have been blamed for delays in the development of critical infrastructure and other development projects. Various programs around the nation are using proactive planning and advance compensatory mitigation to reduce project delays and increase the environmental benefits associated with mitigation for development.

Regional advanced mitigation program (RAMP) is an example of a program to incorporate regional planning principals and environmental considerations early in the development of infrastructure and other development projects. Using this approach, infrastructure agencies work with resource agencies to consider the combined environmental impacts of several planned projects, bundle the estimated mitigation needs of those projects, use the recognized needs to protect habitat at an ecologically effective scale, and link mitigation actions with regional conservation priorities.

### **Justification for Council Action Request**

This need to improve the efficiency for implementation of priority development projects while ensuring the long-term protection of important natural resources requires a standardized approach across California. These objectives are best accomplished by an overall Integrated Regional Planning (IRP) approach that effectively links regional development and conservation planning processes. This IRP

approach combines the analysis of regional conservation and development assessments to document potential environmental impacts and identify planning solutions that mitigate these impacts through the protection and stewardship of regional conservation priorities.



### Next Steps

The Strategic Growth Council is working to coordinate state agencies to develop and implement this Integrated Regional Planning program. The following next steps are being worked on to advance this program.

1. Refine the IRP methodology for California and clarify the minimum data requirements.
2. Articulate the required roles for natural resource, infrastructure development, and land management agencies.
3. Identify the information system technology requirements of a foundational information management system.
4. Engage the California Biodiversity Council to support state, federal, regional and local interagency alignment for the Regional Conservation Planning component of IRP.
5. Establish strategic pilot projects to demonstrate the IRP process and benefits.
6. Identify policy barriers to the implementation of IRP.
7. Document the financial tools and mechanisms required for the broad implementation of IRP.

# Resolution 1-14

## Support for Integrated Regional Planning in California

(9.22.2014 draft)

### BACKGROUND

**WHEREAS**, The Strategic Growth Council (SGC) recommends policies and investment strategies and priorities to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, The SGC provides incentives and awards financial assistance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote water conservation, reduce automobile use and fuel consumption, encourage greater infill and compact development, protect natural resources and agricultural lands, and revitalize urban and community centers; and,

**WHEREAS**, The SGC Sustainability Objectives are to “improve the protection of natural resources and agricultural lands”; and,

**WHEREAS**, The SGC has a Principle for Action to “preserve and protect the environment, grow the economy, and enhance social equity and environmental justice”; and,

**WHEREAS**, The SGC has a Principle for Action to “advance the State Planning Priorities which includes the promotion efficient development patterns and the protection of environmental and agricultural resources”; and,

**WHEREAS**, The SGC have reported that Regional Advanced Mitigation Planning (RAMP) and the Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative (SAMI) align well with the Council’s goals and objectives, and recommend providing SGC direction and leadership at the regional and project levels.

**RESOLVED**, the Strategic Growth Council will coordinate state agencies for the development and implementation of an Integrated Regional Planning approach to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of regional development and natural resource conservation in California.

*Introduced for approval to the California Strategic Growth Council on October 6, 2014*