Ten Planning Successes

How big plans can succeed,

and why.

JOHN LANDIS

RANDAL O'TOOLE'S ARTICLE in the last issue of the *Wharton Real Estate Review*, "Why Government Planning Always Fails," echoes many of the arguments made by Peter Hall in his influential 1982 book, *Great Planning Disasters*. Hall described five cases of planning hubris and failure: London's Motorways and Third Airport; the Concorde supersonic airliner; San Francisco Bay Area's BART system; and the Sydney Opera House. He argued that over-ambition, a fascination with technology, and the belief that big projects could alter the shape of cities inevitably produced massive cost overruns and delays. More to the point, mega-projects such as these distracted

planners from smaller, more incremental, and more effective initiatives. Hall's writing style and clever choice of examples turned his book into an international planning bestseller, and *Great Planning Disasters* became shorthand for all the things that planners and planning couldn't seem to get right.

This article identifies ten planning initiatives that succeeded. All ten are in the United States and were undertaken after 1973. That year marked the completion of the great post-World War II federal construction projects such as the interstate highway system and the effective end of the country's two great urban revitalization programs—urban renewal and public housing. It also marked a shift of urban and infrastructure planning responsibility from the federal government back to state and local governments.

What constitutes successful planning? One definition might be "any plan that was implemented as intended, regardless of its outcome." However attractive in its simplicity, this is far too indiscriminate a definition, like giving an "A" for effort instead of achievement.

A more rigorous definition of success would be "a plan that achieves its goals and objectives." Most plans are adopted with specific purposes in mind. These are usually expressed in general terms as goals, or in measurable terms as objectives. In the case of a local comprehensive plan, the goal or purpose is to direct population growth into a particular spatial form. In the case of a rail transit extension, the goal may be to reduce highway congestion and air pollution, or to provide improved accessibility to those without cars. In the case of an urban revitalization project, the goal might be to catalyze private investment.

The problem with this last definition is that it is independent of issues of cost and cost-efficiency. Notwithstanding the fact that it successfully relocated Boston's above-ground Central Artery into an underground tunnel, no one would call Boston's Big Dig a planning success. It took far too long (sixteen years) and cost far too much ($14 billion at last estimate, compared with an initial estimate of $2 billion) to be considered a "success."

A more rigorous definition of success might be "a planning project delivered on time that generated quantifiable benefits in excess of costs." But if the prior criteria are too loose, this one is too tight: it excludes efforts in which costs and benefits can not be completely and properly monetized—a category that includes many if not most planning projects. How, for example, might one properly evaluate the success of habitat conservation plans, which protect threatened and endangered species—many of which have very high ecological value or "existence value," but little or no market value?

My preferred definition of success falls between these extremes. It is: "a local and public initiative focusing on the built or natural environment that results in a net private and social benefit, and which can serve as model for similar efforts." Let's take a few sentences to consider what this definition includes and excludes. I use "local" to indicate that a plan or project must be undertaken at a region, city, neighborhood, or ecosystem level, and that its benefits must accrue at that same geographic level. This definition intentionally excludes nationwide initiatives such as the Community Development Block Grant Program.

"Public" denotes projects initiated by public or publicly chartered entities including state and local governments, special districts and public utilities; public task forces, boards, and commissions; and non-profit public policy research organizations. This excludes private-purpose projects initiated by private businesses or business councils, private landowners and developers, and by community groups lacking public accountability.

"Built or natural environment" identifies projects that have a physical or place-based dimension. This includes most types of land use and environmental regulations but excludes policy initiatives such as welfare reform and government efforts to expand the supply of mortgage credit to under-served communities. It is not that that these policies are not worthwhile. Quite the opposite: by some accounts, welfare reform and expanded mortgage credit have done more to change urban landscapes across the country than all place-based projects combined. Rather, it is because people are inherently mobile, making it difficult to isolate and measure the benefits of people-based policies and programs.

Finally, there is the ability of a plan to "serve as a model." It is not enough simply that a planning project work as intended; except for the Chicago Cubs, everyone gets lucky sooner or later. In order to be considered a success, a plan must work as projected, for reasons that can be documented and understood, and in ways that are transferable to other circumstances.

The ten planning successes profiled below, in rough chronological order, are: the California Coastal Act and the Chesapeake Bay Program; planning consistency laws; the Northeast Corridor (Rail) Improvement Project; New York City's Times Square and Battery Park City; Portland's urban growth boundary; the low-income housing tax credit and the historic preservation tax credit; downtown ballparks; and land trusts.

This list includes three regulatory initiatives (planning-zoning consistency laws, the California Coastal Act, and Portland's urban growth boundary), two collaborative environmental planning initiatives

(the Chesapeake Bay Program and land trusts), two locally implemented federal tax credit programs, one innovative development form (downtown ballparks), one coupled set of public-private partnerships (Times Square and Battery Park City), and one—and only one—large public infrastructure project (the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project). By contrast, all of Peter Hall's great planning disasters consisted of large infrastructure or building projects. Three projects are national in scope (low-income housing and historic preservation tax credits, planning-zoning consistency laws); two are organized by ecosystem (the California Coastal Act and the Chesapeake Bay Program); one is mega-regional (the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project); one is ex-urban (land trusts); one is metropolitan (Portland's urban growth boundary); two are downtown-focused (downtown ballparks, Times Square/Battery Park City); and one is suburban. In terms of implementation, only two (planning-zoning consistency laws and the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project) draw on existing agencies and institutions; the rest resulted in the creation of new agencies, institutions, or implementation structures. In terms of funding, only one (the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project) involved significant federal outlays, while two others (the low-income housing and historic preservation tax credits) involve significant ongoing federal tax expenditures. The rest are funded at the state, metropolitan, or local level.

THE CALIFORNIA COAST AND CHESAPEAKE BAY

Ten million more people now live within thirty miles of the California coast than in 1970, yet the coast itself remains virtually unchanged. This is all the more remarkable because other fast-growing coastal states—Florida, Texas, North Carolina, and Virginia—have failed to protect their coastlines from over-development.

California's success is due to the prescience of its citizens; in 1972, the state's voters went to the ballot box to enact Proposition 20, which put a temporary moratorium on coastal zone development and established the California Coastal Commission, which was given the power to approve or deny all development proposals within the coastal zone. In practice, this power is exercised lightly and mostly on appeal. Guided by statute, the commission has worked with seventy-four coastal cities and counties to design, enact and implement Local Coastal Plans. These LCPs proscribe which uses are allowed and prohibited within the coastal zone, as well as any required mitigation measures. This state-local partnership arrangement keeps the commission out of simple land-use

decisions, while focusing its attention on multi-jurisdiction and statewide issues. The process has served to embed strong statewide coastal planning in local community planning.

The protection of another irreplaceable marine resource, the Chesapeake Bay, took a different course. The Chesapeake Bay Agreement, signed in 1983, committed three states—Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia—as well as a host of federal agencies, public and private universities, and environmental organizations to reducing the flow of pollutants entering the Chesapeake Bay and to a gradual improvement in water quality. The inter-governmental Chesapeake Bay Program defines its collective actions through voluntary agreements and provides general policy direction through consensus documents and directives. A series of amendments in 1987, 1992, and 2000 expanded the original agreement to include strict regulations that limit upstream nutrient runoff.

PLANNING/ZONING CONSISTENCY LAWS

Planning/zoning consistency laws require that any zoning action be predicated on a finding of consistency with the local comprehensive plan, and that any zoning change be preceded by a comparable change to that plan. About twenty states have enacted such laws, which have become below-the-radar planning successes.

Consistency laws have several benefits. Foremost, they put the plan and the processes used to generate the plan in the driver's seat, thereby ensuring that individual development decisions adhere to a larger framework. This reduces the natural tendency to make zoning changes on a case-by-case basis, and imposes a degree of consistency across individual zoning decisions. From a governance perspective, consistency laws link conditions of approval as set forth in zoning and subdivision ordinances back to broader public purposes. This makes the permitting process more understandable and transparent to all involved. Consistency requirements cannot mitigate against bad plans and they certainly don't deter communities intent on making bad zoning decisions, but they do require communities to balance what is a natural tendency toward opportunistic decision-making against a more collective view of the future.

THE NORTHEAST RAIL CORRIDOR

The Northeast Corridor—a continuous swath of cities and suburbs stretching from Boston to Washington, D.C.—is the only part of the United States where long-distance rail service competes with driving

and air travel. Amtrak's Acela train makes the 230-mile trip from South Station in Boston to New York City's Penn Station in three hours, and the 226-mile-trip from Penn Station to Union Station in Washington in two hours and forty-five minutes (about half the time it took forty years ago). Altogether, some sixty trains leave New York for Washington daily, and most travel full. While passenger train service elsewhere in most of the United States continues its historical decline, ridership on the Northeast Corridor has grown steadily from 2.5 million[1] in 1974 to nearly 11 million[2] in 2007.

Improvements to the Northeast Rail Corridor have come in two phases. The first occurred in 1976 with the establishment of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project (NECIP). Congress appropriated $1.6 billion to install continuously welded track, replace and rebuild old bridges, and upgrade the reliability of the electric supply and signaling systems. Another $1 billion was added when it became apparent that the track and bridge systems were much more decrepit than had been thought. The NECIP's second phase, completed in 1999 at a cost of $2.4 billion, funded further bridge and track improvements, the electrification of the New Haven-Boston route, and the purchase of twenty high-speed Acela Express trains. Smaller amounts of funding were made available to upgrade stations and station area facilities.

The NECIP's success can be measured not only by continuing increases in train ridership, but also by the fact that despite a large increase in travel activity along the Northeast Corridor, congestion on Interstate 95 connecting Boston to Washington is no worse today than it was forty years ago. This success is the result of a policy decision to undertake continuous improvements in an existing technology that directly competes with other modes (air and auto) rather than pursue a new technology to meet an unknown demand. Still, success does not come cheaply. Although the NECIP was intended to be self-supporting, it constantly loses money. If one were to amortize the federal government's $5 billion investment in the

1 This estimate of 2.5 million passengers covers New York to Washington, D.C. Metroliner service only (Federal Railroad Administration, 1978, *Two-Year Report on the Northeast Corridor*. Washington, D.C. p. 18)

2 This estimate covers all inter-city passenger train service between Boston and Washington, D.C. including Acela and Regional Rail service. Metroliner service was discontinued in 2006.

3 This estimate covers only the New York to Washington D.C. section, and assumes a steady increase in ridership from 2.5 million riders per year in 1974 to approximately 8 million riders per year in 2007.

Northeast Corridor since 1976, and credit the entire increase in ridership during this period to improvements in service, the (undiscounted) subsidy would exceed $55 per additional passenger[3].

PORTLAND'S URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

Portland is the only urban area in the United States to have a metropolitan urban growth boundary, or UGB. Portland's UGB was created in 1979 under state legislation authorizing Oregon cities with more than 50,000 residents to designate urban growth boundaries to protect high-quality farmland. Following a 1992 voter referendum, this authority was delegated to the Portland Metropolitan Service District, known as Portland Metro. Portland's UGBs currently includes all or parts of three counties and twenty-four cities. When initially established, it encompassed 350 square miles of land area and several thousand acres of potentially developable land. This was estimated to be enough to accommodate twenty-plus years of population growth at prevailing densities (a key provision of Oregon's UGB law is that boundaries must be reviewed every five years and enlarged as needed to accommodate anticipated population and job growth). Since 1998, Portland Metro has enlarged the boundary five times by a total of just over 25,000 acres, or 10 percent.

In terms of slowing the rate of farm and forest loss, and Portland's UGB has been an unqualified success. According to data from the U.S. Geological Survey's national land cover inventory, between 1992 and 2001 the growth of metropolitan Portland consumed just 0.40 acres of farm and forest land per additional resident. This compares favorably with the much denser San Francisco Bay Area (0.39 acres lost per new resident), and is much less than other West Coast metropolitan areas, including Seattle-Tacoma (0.61 acres), nearby Clark County, Washington (0.62 acres), Sacramento (0.91 acres), and the San Joaquin Valley in California (2.59 acres). Where has this "missing sprawl" gone? Comparisons of census block densities between 1990 and 2000 reveal that some of it is taking the form of higher densities in new suburban neighborhoods, with the balance occurring as infill development in existing communities.

This success notwithstanding, Portland's UGB remains controversial, with critics focusing on three issues. Developers and some economists attribute much of the increase in Portland area housing prices to the UGB. Urban designers contend that Portland's suburbs are as generic and auto-oriented as

those in every other western metropolitan area. Last, some blame the 2004 passage of Measure 37, which allows landowners adversely affected by local zoning and land use regulation to sue for damages, on the omnipresent nature of Oregon land use restrictions, with the UGB being the most visible example of such restrictions.

Most accounts of Portland's UGB attribute its success to four factors. First, the UGB concept is easy to understand, and there is a clear link between the program's farmland protection goals and its implementation. Second, Metro's administration of the program has been firm, patient, and steady. It has resisted political pressures to relax the boundary even as it has embraced the need for flexibility as growth trends and real estate market conditions have changed. Third, Portland-area local governments, and especially the City of Portland, have worked hard to identify alternative infill sites and, where possible, to streamline the entitlements process to make such sites more attractive. Last, Portland local governments have also engaged in a series of land assembly and infrastructure investments, most notably a light-rail system, to make urban living more attractive. At the same time that Portland has made sprawl harder, it has worked to make alternatives to sprawl easier.

TIMES SQUARE & BATTERY PARK CITY

A recent survey named New York City's Times Square the nation's number one tourist attraction in the nation's number one tourist city. Times Square is a center of high (and low) entertainment, commerce, media, and people-watching and is, quite possibly, the most vibrant single urban location in North America. For anyone who visited Times Square before 1990, when it was home to a plethora of adult theatres, prostitutes, teenage runaways, and a rising homeless population, this is an impressive transformation.

The transformation of Times Square did not occur quickly or easily. As Lynne Sagalyn documents in *Times Square Roulette*, improving Times Square took three attempts over twenty-five years. The first attempt, a private initiative launched in 1977, proposed transforming Times Square into an urban theme park and cultural showcase for New York City. Lacking political support and viable financing, this proposal died on the vine. Stepping into the vacuum, Mayor Ed Koch's administration turned to the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC), a powerful statewide public developer. UDC, in turn, negotiated with several private developers to build four corporate office towers and a 2.4 million-square-foot trade mart. Known as the 42nd Street

Development Project, this effort fell victim to lengthy litigation, a declining office market, and widespread public dissatisfaction over its massive scale.

The third plan took Times Square back to its entertainment roots. Championed by the New York Municipal Arts Society and theater owners, the revised plan focused on an integrated mix of historic preservation, diverse entertainment uses, destination retailing, a collage of world-class electronic signage, and much-needed improvements to the Times Square subway complex. These efforts were directed toward creating a new image for the area that resonated with the cultural identity of the old Times Square. In1994, UDC and the City of New York found a blue-chip partner that shared their vision: the Walt Disney Corporation. When Disney agreed to renovate the historic New Amsterdam Theatre as the centerpiece of its New York operations—a project buttressed by generous public subsidies and other risk-reducing agreements—the final piece of the Times Square puzzle fell into place.

Public-private partnerships are not new in New York City. Four miles south of Times Square, an entirely new community named Battery Park City was being constructed on Hudson River landfill. Conceived in the mid-1960s and championed by New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Battery Park City was to be a complete community of housing, public infrastructure (schools, parks, and public spaces), and light industry. To oversee its development, the New York State Legislature in 1968 created the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA). BPCA issued $200 million in bonds in 1972 to cover initial site improvements, but because of a weak real estate market and New York City's dire fiscal health, little construction occurred until 1980. BPCA itself was re-organized in 1979 and with additional financing authority, a new master plan, and the participation of private developer Olympic & York, construction began on the World Financial Center, the business core of the project. Another eighteen major buildings would be added over the next two decades. Today, 10,000 people live in Battery Park City at a density of just over 100 people per acre. This makes Battery Park City the largest and densest new community built in any American city in fifty years.

Times Square and Battery Park City couldn't seem more different. Battery Park City is a planned community of residential buildings and predominantly private spaces; Times Square is a re-imagining of a long-standing historical and public place. But behind these apparent differences are some important similarities. Both projects were developed through sophisticated public-private partnerships coupling public debt capital with private funds. Both experienced multiple starts and stops

because the public development process and private real estate market were not always in synch. Both, but particularly Times Square, were dependent upon sustained political support from a changing cast of stakeholders. And both plans changed radically during the pre-development phase, putting a premium on program flexibility, public professionalism, and institutional relationships.

LOW-INCOME HOUSING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and the Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HPTC) contradict two of my four criteria for successful planning initiatives: both are federal programs and neither is place-based. Nonetheless, both merit inclusion. Enacted as part of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the LIHTC allows non-profit and for-profit developers of affordable housing to sell tax credits to investors in amounts up to 90 percent of construction costs. These syndications can raise up to half a project's construction costs, reducing its reliance on conventional financing and public subsidies.

The success of the LIHTC lies in its widespread adoption and unique market niche. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than two million homes have been built or rehabilitated using the LIHTC program since 1987, making it the largest affordable housing production program in U.S. history. The overwhelming majority of tax-credit housing units are occupied by very poor households making less than half of the city or county's median household income. In the absence of this program, most of these households would have had to pay higher rents for lower quality units. Alternatively, they would have had to apply for Section 8 housing vouchers, which are in short supply. An added benefit: because tax credit projects are usually indistinguishable from—and in some locations, markedly better than — new market-rate housing, they promote neighborhood upgrading.

The LIHTC program is not without controversy. For one thing, its new homes are not inexpensive. The all-in development cost of a typical LIHTC apartment unit can range from a low of $100,000 in a low-cost market such as Atlanta to well over $200,000 in New York, Boston, or San Francisco. Nor is the program inexpensive to taxpayers. Over a twenty-year period, LIHTC rental units cost the U.S. Treasury 20 percent to 50 percent more than subsidizing a comparable voucher unit in the same location.

The Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HPTC) is simpler to use than the LIHTC.

Property owners or developers who rehabilitate a certified property may claim a tax credit equal to 20 percent of their rehabilitation cost. To qualify, a proposed renovation or rehabilitation must be reviewed and approved by a state historic preservation office and by the National Park Service. A 10 percent credit is available to property owners and developers who renovate or rehabilitate any non-residential structure built prior to 1936.

The National Park Service reports that the HPTC has been involved in the rehabilitation of nearly 35,000 historic structures since 1976, resulting in more than $45 billion of new investment in buildings and communities. For every one dollar of tax revenue lost to the federal treasury, the National Park Service estimates that five dollars of private investment has been generated. Left out of these calculations is the catalytic effect on nearby buildings and adjacent property values. Finally, there is the not insignificant benefit of preserving historical and cultural resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

What makes the LIHTC and HPTC programs so successful is that they work through the tax code and not through a large federal bureaucracy; they make use of incentives to reward good development; they are reasonably transparent to all involved; and they aren't so large that they give away the store. Both are easy to understand in concept but just difficult enough to use in practice that they encourage sophisticated developers while discouraging neophytes.

DOWNTOWN BALLPARKS

Mayors, urban planners, and downtown developers have tried for decades to engineer the revitalization of America's older industrial cities, and until recently, nothing—not urban renewal, not Model Cities, not community development block grants, and not enterprise zones—seemed to work. What has worked, it turns out, is baseball parks. Since the opening of Camden Yards in 1992, fourteen new downtown major league ballparks have opened nationwide, with another two opening in April 2009.

Known as "new old" parks or "retro" parks because their designs and façade materials harken back to an earlier era, downtown ballparks differ from their multi-use stadium counterparts of the 1960s and 1970s in a number of ways. Designed for baseball and not meant to be shared with other professional sports, they are smaller, which makes the fan experience more intimate, and more of a "place." As the term suggests, downtown ballparks are in or close to downtowns, making it easier for fans to arrive on foot or by public transit. This lessens the need for large parking lots or parking structures, and

makes it easier to integrate the ballpark into a surrounding neighborhood. Last, rather than being publicly owned, most downtown ballparks are privately owned.

Even without large parking facilities, downtown ballparks are expensive to build, and almost all rely on some form of public financing or subsidy. Few of these subsidies make good investment sense—the subsidy cost per job created is usually far higher, and the incremental tax revenue is usually far lower than for other public investments. Compelling as it is, this knowledge has yet to dissuade any major city from seeking, promoting, or subsidizing a new ballpark. The plain political facts are that municipalities regularly make public investment and subsidy decisions for reasons that go far beyond economic return.

For planners, the more important question is whether downtown ballparks have brought new investments, new residents, and new life to their cities and neighborhoods, and done so in a way that is less costly to city treasuries than the alternative. The answer to this question, for the most part, is yes. Two examples are especially noteworthy. In Denver, the 1995 completion of Coors Field accelerated the revitalization of the Lower Downtown area already in progress. In San Francisco, the construction of Pac Bell Park (later SBC Park, and now AT&T Park) jump-started the long dormant redevelopment of the Mission Bay/China Basin area. According to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, since AT&T Park opened in 2000, nearly 3,000 new housing units have been undertaken and completed nearby. Some of these projects would have been built in the absence of AT&T Park, but there is no doubt that their timing, density, and quick success owes much to the ballpark.

Even in cities like Baltimore, Cleveland, and Detroit, which are not growing, downtown ballparks have slowed downtown disinvestment and helped promote development. The effect has not been enough to reverse population and job losses at the city level, but it has helped stabilize large areas and signal they are safe for new investment.

LAND TRUSTS

Considering that the United States is a nation of private property owners, a surprisingly large share of land is held in public trust. According to the non-profit Trust for Public Lands (TPL), about 325 million acres (6 percent of the country's land area) are held in trust by federal and state agencies, and are unavailable for urban development. An additional 150 million acres are held in trust by local governments and public and private land trusts.

It is this last category—public and private trust lands—that is growing most

rapidly. According to the Land Trust Alliance, the number of land trusts active in the United States rose from 885 in 1990 to 1,660 in 2005, and the amount of protected land area increased from 1.9 million acres in 1990 to nearly 12 million acres by 2005. Measured in terms of acres conserved, land conservation efforts have been most successful in the Northeast and Pacific regions. Among the leading states are California, Maine, Colorado, and Montana.

Land trust operations are funded by individuals, foundations, and public grant programs, and through the sale of excess land holdings. Some land trusts operate opportunistically, acquiring easements or sites wherever and whenever they can. Others are more strategic or localized in their efforts. According to the Land Trust Alliance, as of 2001, the most active land trusts were those that specialized in protecting wetlands, river corridors, watersheds, farm and ranch lands, nature preserves, open space, and species habitat.

The appeal of land trusts is in their ability to generate large public and environmental benefits at minimal public cost. But low cost is not the same thing as no cost. In addition to potential losses to the federal treasury through foregone income and estate tax revenues, many land trust holdings typically require some level of active management, the costs of which can add up. In terms of comprehensive land-use planning, well-located land acquisitions help contain urban sprawl, but poorly located ones can exacerbate it.

As with all efforts that confer public benefits, care must be taken when defining "success." The simplest and most common measure of land trust success, acres preserved, ignores more complicated measures such as ecological quality, site contiguity, and the degree to which the preserved land was likely to be developed. Of the major conservancy organizations, only the American Farmland Trust publishes information detailing conversion threats.

There is no doubt that the land trust movement would be even more successful if it were less fragmented and more science-based. Even so, this realization should take nothing away from the movement's overall success. Compared to the alternatives—open space and agricultural zoning, urban growth boundaries, purchase and transfer of development rights, and fixed-term preservation contracts—land trusts have been more successful, less politically disruptive, and more cost-efficient at identifying and preserving critical conservation lands.

CONCLUSIONS

What do these ten success stories have in common? Very little, as it turns out. Most were well-administered, but so too are

many efforts that produce mediocre results. Most occurred in growing cities or metropolitan areas, lending credence to the view that planning for growth is always easier than amidst decline. But even this is too simple: Times Square and Battery Park City helped reverse decades of decline and neglect, as have several downtown ballparks. As we look again at these "planning successes," a few common themes stand out.

Avoid over-reaching. The danger with any large initiative is that it promises more than it can deliver. None of the planning initiatives profiled in this article fell into this trap: many were grand, but none was grandiose. All were based on reasonable understandings of their respective policy or political contexts, were designed around feasible goals and objectives, and in the end had sufficient resources to meet those goals. None was intended to remake an entire community or dramatically alter societal or individual behaviors.

Frame favorable images. Getting the general public—as opposed to planners and elites—to support a complicated initiative requires that the initiative have a simple and positive image. This requires conscious framing. For example, from its inception, Portland's UGB was presented as being centrally concerned with preserving nearby farmland, not about the more ambiguous goal of promoting higher urban densities. In a similar vein, providing public subsidies for downtown ballparks is usually framed as catalyzing nearby neighborhood development (good), and not about funding skyboxes for wealthy boosters (not so good). Even the most mundane planning issues benefit from positive framing. For example, heightened planning requirements, of which planning/zoning consistency are a case in point, are best received when presented as promoting fairness and consistency, and not as adding onerous new regulatory burdens.

Plan for game changers. Big planning interventions invariably take a long time to succeed, and this creates inevitable tensions. Political patrons grow impatient with projects that take longer than an election term to gain traction. Public constituents and stakeholders gradually move away and are replaced by people with other priorities. Expectations invariably rise over time, and popular interest shifts to more topical issues. Successful planning projects must therefore mix patience and impatience. They must focus on achieving early success as a way of justifying their creation, while also building a longer-term constituency. They must recognize that lasting success involves achieving some degree of long-term and systemic change. This criterion argues for "game changers" capable of meeting current needs while simultaneously establishing new models for the future. Among the successful plans

profiled above, the California Coastal Commission stands out as a notable example of this approach to short-term success and long-term change. Other examples of successful game changers are downtown ballparks and Times Square.

Mix clear goals with an adaptable approach. Rhetoric aside, plans rarely result in complete win-win outcomes, at least not initially. Someone must pay the initial costs of plan implementation or forego the benefits of private development. Because of this, plans and planning projects can be a tough sell. This requires having easy-to-understand goals of the sort that can be boiled down to one or two sentences. It also requires anticipating that the planning approach may have to change to respond to changing circumstances. Change is okay when goals and purposes are clear, but it is disruptive when they are not.

Secure broad and measurable benefits. Thirty-five years ago in *The Politics of Regulation*, political scientist James Q. Wilson identified politically successful regulations as those that conferred broad public benefits while avoiding deep or narrow costs. Successful planning interventions must similarly offer tangible benefits to the broadest spectrum of the community. Housing projects funded under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, for example, are essentially costless at the local level and confer benefits on entire neighborhoods, not just on individual tenants. And even then, they are a tough sell.

Invest in adaptable institutional capacity. As François de la Rochefoucauld wrote a long time ago, "the only constant in life is change." The best response to changing circumstances is to invest in institutional capacity, not just in projects or programs. Consider again the case of the California Coastal Commission. Initially, the commission saw its primary role as protecting California's coastal resources. Over time, however, the commission adapted to becoming a partner with local governments in building joint regulatory and planning capacity. On the other side of the coin, the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project serves as an example of what happens when agencies do not adapt beyond their original mission. Because authority for the NECIP rests entirely with Amtrak, an agency whose *raison d'être* is providing inter-city passenger train service, opportunities to coordinate improved Northeast Corridor service with intra-metropolitan train service and station area land development projects have never been properly realized.

The ten cases profiled above are hardly the only examples of planning success. Other widely recognized examples include urban waterfront revitalization, festival marketplaces, anti-pollution laws, HOPE VI housing, and inclusionary zoning ordinances. Every year hundreds if not thou-

sands of local governments and public agencies adopt plans to guide their future actions. Only a few, such as New York's recent *PlanNYC*, make it to the front page. Most function as they are intended: quietly and in the background, combining a long-term strategic vision with day-to-day implementation activities. Indeed the underlying success of planning is not that it generates flashy success stories. Rather, it is that planning has been so thoroughly institutionalized at every level of government and in every type of public initiative. Those communities, cities, and states that are routinely recognized as being the best governed are the same ones that have made planning part of their institutional DNA.