

Achieving Sustainability through Consensus Building:

Report from the Cutting Edge

The Context

- ▶ 1987 international conference on sustainability
- ▶ Presidential directive to incorporate sustainability into federal policies
- ▶ Adoption of legislation:
 - 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)
 - 1998 Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21)
 - ▶ Pilot Sustainable Development Programs

The Concept

- ▶ “A sustainable condition ...
is one in which there is stability for both social and physical systems, achieved through meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”
 - World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

The Goal

- ▶ Integrate regional transportation planning and construction with local land use planning goals and efforts
- ▶ Promote more efficient and effective use of limited financial, natural and organizational resources

The How

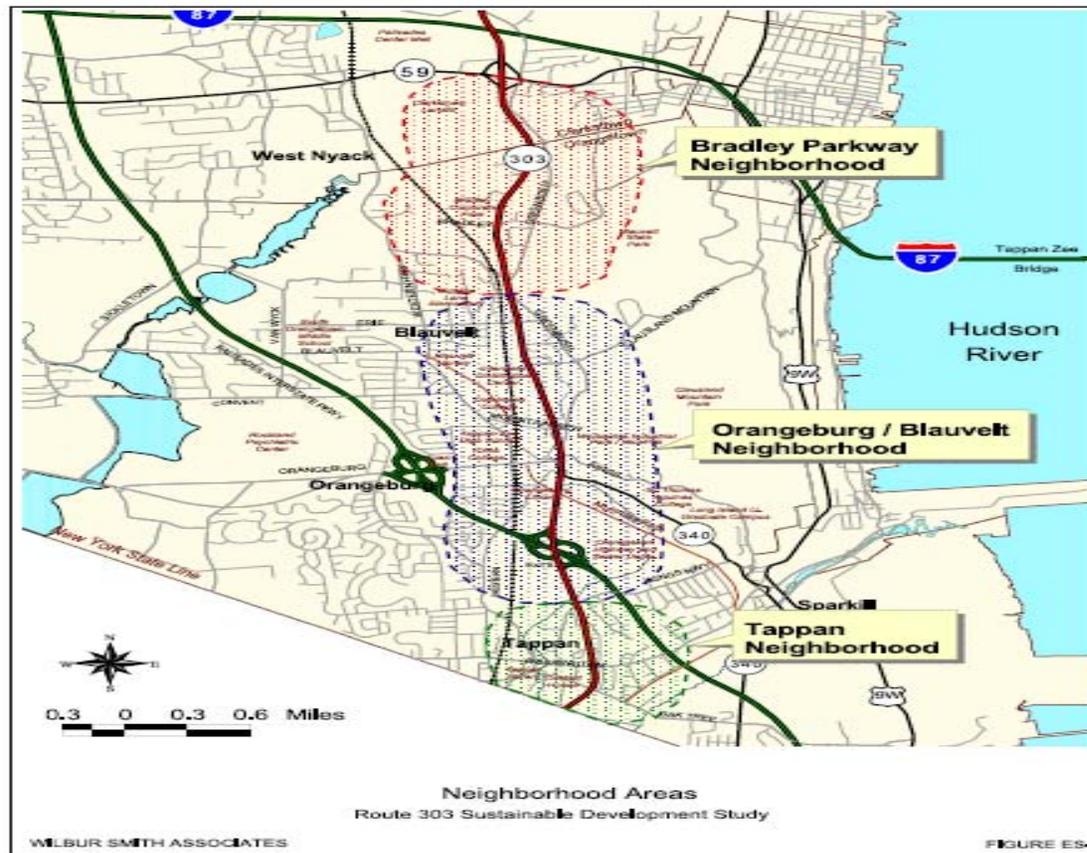
Consensus-building

- ▶ Within local, county, and state government
- ▶ Among agencies charged with public business (e.g. transportation, transit services, economic revitalization, land use, etc.)
- ▶ Among users of the transportation network

Sustainable Development Pilot Programs sponsored by NYMTC

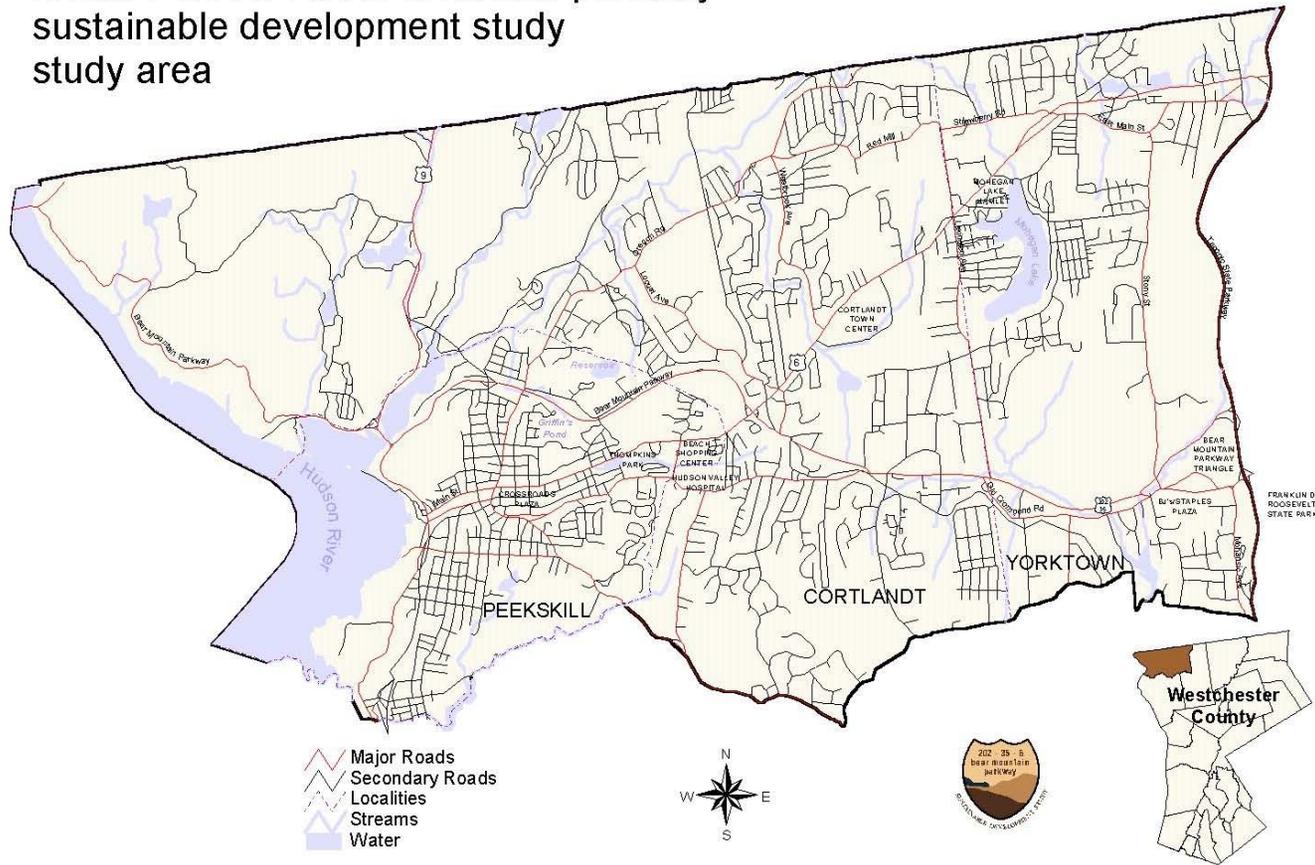
- ▶ 1999 Route 303, Rockland County
- ▶ 2000 Routes 35/202/6 & Bear Mt Pkwy, Westchester County
- ▶ 2001 SEEDS, Suffolk County
- ▶ 2005 South Brooklyn, Kings County

Route 303, Rockland County

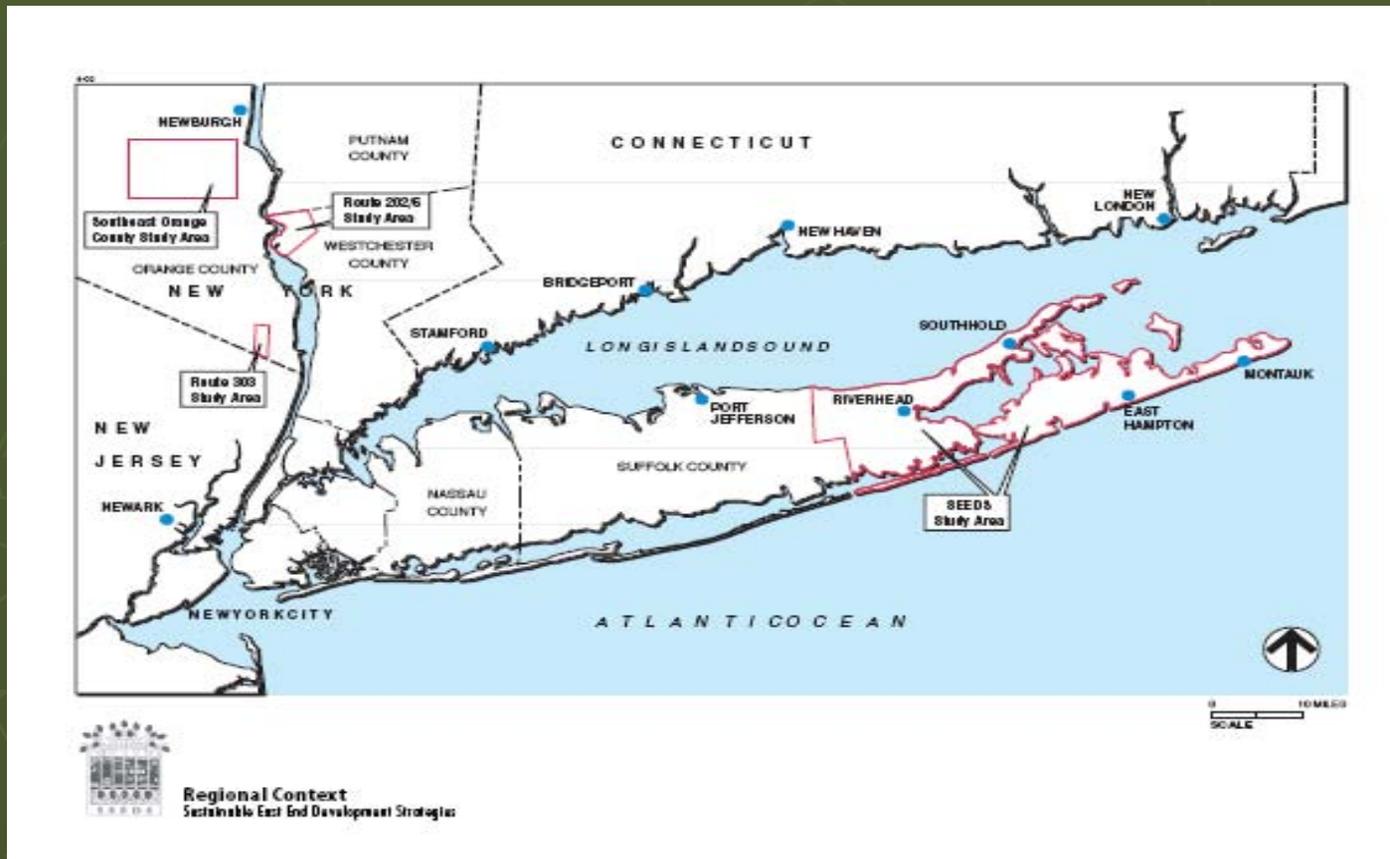


Routes 35/202/6 & Bear Mt Pkwy, Westchester County

routes 202/35/6 bear mountain parkway
sustainable development study
study area



SEEDS, Sustainable East End Development Strategies, Suffolk County

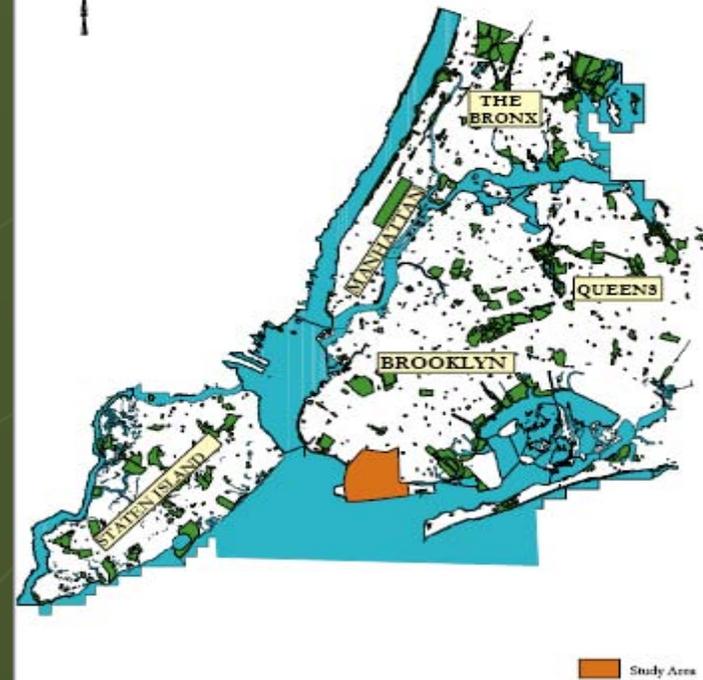


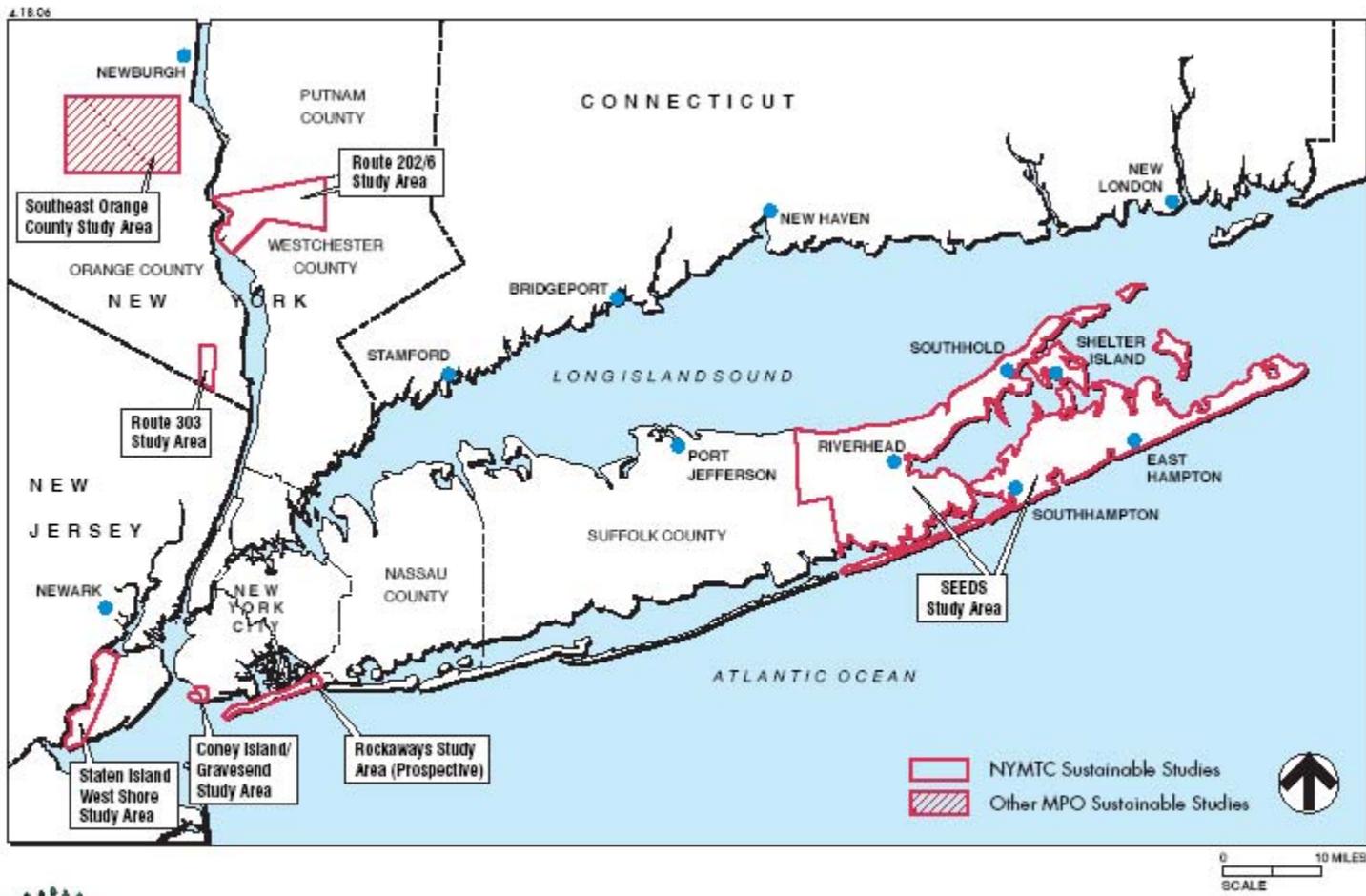
Coney Island/Gravesend, Kings County (Brooklyn)



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Figure 1-1: Study Area in a Regional Context





Sustainable East End Development Strategies

Regional Context

The Evaluation

- ▶ How well did the programs work?
- ▶ Did they achieve consensus?
- ▶ Did they foster intergovernmental relations?
- ▶ Did they change the way land use and transportation decisions are made?

Evaluation Methodology

- ▶ Questionnaires
- ▶ Interviews
- ▶ Experience

Evaluation Focus

- ▶ Design
- ▶ Process
- ▶ Implementation

Design Phase

- ▶ Project area is identified
- ▶ Local commitments obtained
- ▶ Funding secured
- ▶ Administrative structure put in place

Process Phase

- ▶ Steering committee is formed
- ▶ RFP prepared, consultants chosen
- ▶ Project manager assigned
- ▶ Public outreach and education
- ▶ Consensus-building and conflict resolution
- ▶ Model design and output assessment
- ▶ Final report

Implementation Phase

- ▶ Amendment of TIP
- ▶ Actual construction
- ▶ New and amended services &/or policies
- ▶ Ongoing coordination
 - Local governments
 - Regional agencies
 - Public

Design

Findings/Recommendations

- ▶ Consider the political & functional ramifications of how funding is allocated because it can affect “buy-in”.
- ▶ Political commitment affects consensus-building and implementation
- ▶ Solidify political & agency commitments to participate & implement through MoUs or IMAAs.

Process

Findings/Recommendations

- ▶ Avoid pitfalls in RFP process
 - Seek best fit with in-house resources
- ▶ Keep the process transparent
 - Add citizen representatives
 - Appoint Technical committees
 - Define roles
- ▶ Communicate through dialogue
 - Committees/Consultants
 - Elected officials
 - Press & Public
- ▶ Keep it Short!

Process

Findings/Recommendations

- ▶ Think implementation from the beginning
 - MOUs and IMAAs
- ▶ Models & Outputs
 - Explain in Plain English/Develop a template
 - Allow assumptions to be challenged
 - Support research to bridge micro-macro gap
- ▶ Make outreach, consensus-building & conflict resolution high priorities
- ▶ Re-think the report
 - Take it public
 - Use it

Implementation Findings/Recommendations

- ▶ Short term
 - Target, prioritize and implement ASAP
- ▶ Long term
 - Begin amending TIP to reflect consensus
- ▶ Ongoing publicity
 - Toot your horn!
- ▶ Ongoing evaluation & consensus-building
 - Establish feedback mechanisms on all levels

Conclusion #1

- ▶ Integrating sustainability and consensus-building requires sensitivity to:
 - The art of balancing needs
 - Diversity of planning specialties
 - Governmental context

Conclusion #2

- ▶ Planning the SDP is critically important
 - The Design phase is essential
 - The foundation of the Implementation phase has to be laid during Design & Process phases
 - Fear of change must be dealt with

Conclusion #3

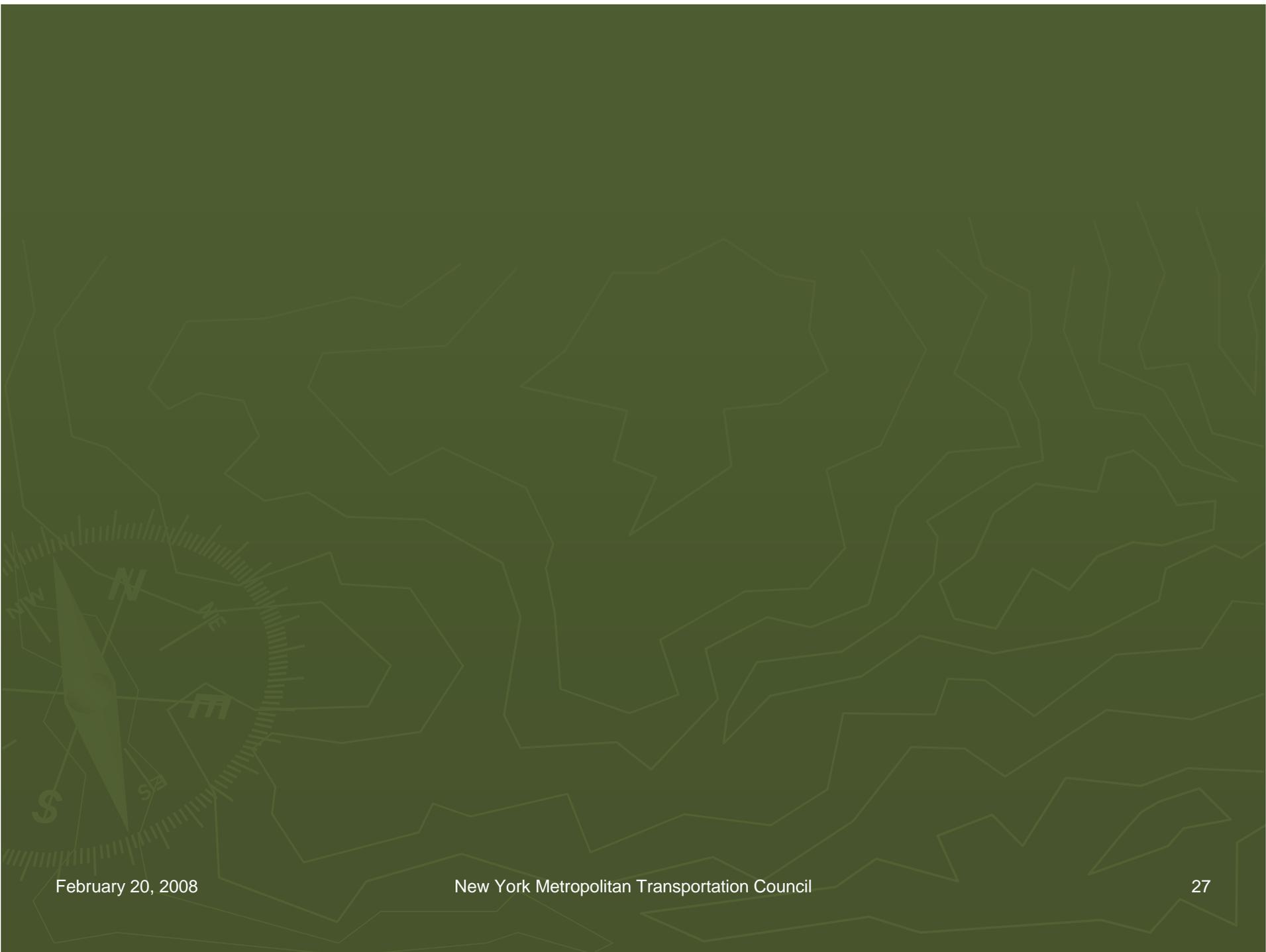
- ▶ Building consensus is different from sustaining it.
 - Conflict-resolution skills are as vital as consensus-building skills
 - People have to be willing to cross disciplines, translate concepts, work flexibly with different organizational styles and budgeting cycles, etc

Conclusion #4

- ▶ More research is needed:
 - to build a better bridge between micro and macro models
 - to develop more effective conflict-resolution techniques
 - To perfect consensus-building techniques

Conclusion #5

- ▶ The successful SDP is a process –
which in and of itself
becomes the agent of change.



Need More Information ?

- ▶ Evaluation of Pilot Sustainable Development programs conducted by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council: 1999-2007
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