



Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What is Plan Bay Area?

Plan Bay Area is a state-mandated, integrated long-range transportation, land-use and housing plan that will support a growing economy, provide more housing and transportation choices and reduce transportation-related pollution in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. It builds on earlier efforts to develop an efficient transportation network and grow in a financially and environmentally responsible way. It is a work in progress that will be updated every four years to reflect new priorities. By planning now, we will create a Bay Area we will be proud to leave to future generations.

Why is there a Plan Bay Area?

By law (Senate Bill 375), all regions in California must complete a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). SB 375 requires California's 18 metro areas to integrate transportation, land-use and housing as part of an SCS to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light-duty trucks. In the Bay Area, this requires the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to adopt an SCS that meets greenhouse gas reduction targets adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

Who is responsible for doing this planning?

Within the Bay Area, the law gives joint responsibility for Plan Bay Area to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). These two agencies work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). They also partner with local communities, agencies, and a wide range of stakeholders to ensure broad public input into Plan Bay Area's preparation.

What does the Metropolitan Transportation Commission do?

MTC is the transportation planning, financing, and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. MTC operates the regional transportation network as smoothly and efficiently as possible now and for the future.

Under what authority does MTC exist?

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), a statutorily created regional transportation planning agency pursuant to Government Code Section 66500 *et seq.*, is for the purposes of the Political Reform Act, a local government agency pursuant to Government Code Section 82041. Federal law [Title 23, United States Code, Section 134 (d)] designates MTC as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. As such, MTC must adopt and regularly update a long-range regional transportation plan.

The Commission's work is guided by a 21-member policy board, with 18 of the commissioners designated as voting members. Sixteen of the voting commissioners are appointed by local elected officials in each county. The two most populous counties, Alameda and Santa Clara, each have three representatives on the Commission: the county board of supervisors selects one member; the mayors of the cities within the county collectively appoint another; and the mayors of the biggest cities in these two counties (Oakland in Alameda County and San Jose in Santa Clara County) each appoint a representative.

What does the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) do?

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional planning agency and council of governments (COG) serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of the Bay Area, including coastal communities, older industrial centers, rural towns and big cities. ABAG was formed by local government leaders in 1961 who recognized the need to address common issues from a regional perspective.

ABAG's mission is promoting good planning to build a better Bay Area in order to enhance the quality of life here by supporting regional collaboration, planning, research and member services. ABAG also houses the San Francisco Bay Trail project, the San Francisco Estuary Project, and a Risk Management and Insurance Services program that provides cost effective self-insurance to over two dozen local jurisdictions. ABAG also conducts regional population and employment projections and the state-mandated Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) process (Government Code Section 65584 *et seq.*).

Under what authority does ABAG exist?

ABAG is a joint powers agency formed in 1961 pursuant to California Government Code Section 6500, *et seq.*, and the council of governments (COG) for the San Francisco Bay Area. ABAG is governed by a 38-member Executive Board comprised of locally elected officials based on regional population. A General Assembly made up of elected officials from every member jurisdiction determines policy matters and reviews major Executive Board actions and recommendations. Each delegate has one vote, and a majority of city and county votes are required for action.

So why are regional agencies involved in planning?

As required by State legislation (Government Code Section 65080 *et seq.*) and by federal regulation (Title 23 USC Section 134), MTC is responsible for preparing the RTP for the San Francisco Bay Area Region. An RTP is a long-range transportation plan, updated every four years, that identifies the strategies and investments to maintain, manage, and improve the

region's transportation network. In 2009, MTC adopted its most recent RTP, known as the Transportation 2035 Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area.

As the Council of Governments for the Bay Area, ABAG is responsible for providing a forum for local jurisdictions to work out issues with impacts that cross jurisdictional boundaries. ABAG also is required by state law (Article 10.6 of the California Government Code) to update the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) every eight years, and to allocate specific housing targets to individual cities and counties. State law (Senate Bill 375) also requires ABAG and MTC to plan jointly for transportation, land-use and housing as part of an SCS to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light-duty trucks.

What will Plan Bay Area do?

State law requires Plan Bay Area to:

1. Identify "areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region" — where people will live, including all income groups, for at least the next 25 years; and
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light-duty trucks by an amount specified by the CARB.
3. Meet the federal requirements for an RTP.

How does the Plan Bay Area affect me, personally?

This Plan looks ahead to 2040 and seeks to preserve what we love about our small towns, cities and farmlands; maintain key transportation infrastructure; and offer more choices in where we will live and how we will get around. As a long-range initiative, Plan Bay Area will have more of an impact on future generations than it will on those of us here today. The goal is to reduce traffic congestion, improve transit options, create more opportunities to walk or bike, strengthen existing neighborhood infrastructure and support the creation of more affordable housing options within Bay Area communities.

Will Plan Bay Area change the character of the region's rural communities, small towns and suburban residential neighborhoods?

No. Most single-family neighborhoods will remain unchanged. Plan Bay Area recognizes the diversity of communities across our region. The Plan concentrates new growth in areas nominated by local governments, with most of the growth taking place toward the center of our region in cities like San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. Overall, over two-thirds of all regional growth by 2040 is allocated to Priority Development Areas. As a result, small cities, single family neighborhoods and rural areas throughout the Bay Area will take on a very small share of the region's overall growth. Local land use authority is retained by the region's cities and counties. Local jurisdictions will continue to determine where future development occurs.

How do smaller suburban job centers benefit from Plan Bay Area?

Plan Bay Area supports growing suburban job centers such as the Tri-Valley by maximizing the amount of forecasted employment growth in these jurisdictions given the amount of housing that they deem appropriate. The Draft Plan invests in the region's transportation network to support

job growth and housing in existing communities by focusing the lion's share of funding on maintaining and improving the efficiency of the existing transit and road system.

The Draft Plan also includes strategic transportation investments that benefit suburban cities by addressing management, reliability and safety of the existing freeway, highway and arterial infrastructures while targeting freeway improvements to most congested locations.

Why would local governments want to support the Plan Bay Area?

Implementation of Plan Bay Area is intended to improve the quality of life of neighborhoods by providing cleaner air, improved public health, better mobility, more walkable streets, and homes closer to transit, jobs and services. Plan Bay Area redirects some regional resources to more closely align with local community development visions, as adopted in local plans. This includes funding from the One Bay Area Grant Program and assistance in meeting the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This sounds like a big effort. Are we starting from scratch?

Not at all. For decades, the Bay Area has been encouraging more focused and compact growth. Plan Bay Area builds on this history and places even greater emphasis on the integration of transportation and land use planning. Plan Bay Area continues our traditional emphasis of investing in operating and maintaining our existing transportation system, and builds on successful regional programs centered on focused growth around high quality transit, including affordable housing, complete streets that serve pedestrians and bicyclists and well as motorists, and protection and preservation of open space.

When will the Draft Plan Bay Area be complete?

MTC and ABAG issued a Draft Plan Bay Area for public comment in April 2013, after more than two years of public dialogue and consultation. The agencies are scheduled to consider adoption of the Final Plan in July 2013. If adopted, Plan Bay Area will be updated every four years, as required by law, to reflect the region's changing needs and priorities.

What does it cost to conduct and complete a planning process like this?

The budget for the planning portion of Plan Bay Area (that is, the costs associated with conducting the process versus the funding the plan directs toward programs and projects) is approximately \$3.1 million over 3 years. This includes consultant assistance and staff costs to update the regional travel model; to create a new, integrated economic and land use model for the current Plan and future updates to the Plan; to conduct model analyses; to evaluate the performance of plan scenarios, alternatives and projects; to prepare the Draft Plan and the Draft Environmental Impact Report; to complete supplementary reports and to conduct public engagement. Funding comes from the region's annual allocation of federal, state and local planning revenues.

What are some of the other regional efforts related to Plan Bay Area?

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) are considering how to improve the region's land use pattern and placement of public infrastructure, including transportation. To reduce air pollution (smog, particulate matter and airborne toxins), the Air District is considering how to address the air quality impacts of transportation and other sources associated with land development. BCDC is preparing for rising sea levels and storm surges affecting areas on and near the Bay shoreline. Future sea levels will have implications for the location of development and transportation infrastructure.

About Forecasts

How can ABAG and MTC predict the future?

We do not predict the future. For several decades, both MTC and ABAG have been developing and updating long-term regional plans for the Bay Area by using computer modeling to forecast transportation and housing demand, economic growth, demographics, and land-use changes, among others. These forecasts are used to inform planning and investment decisions. The forecasts are updated every two to four years to make sure they are based on the most reliable data, including locally adopted plans for development and conservation.

How many people will Plan Bay Area need to accommodate?

The Bay Area is currently home to about 7 million people. Data suggests that over the next 30 years the region will attract another 2 million people. The rate of growth depends on several variables, including job growth, age distribution, predicted birth and death rates, and estimated migration into the Bay Area.

Why do the Department of Finance population numbers differ from ABAG's projections?

California's Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Finance, and ABAG all agree that economic trends need to be addressed in Plan Bay Area. ABAG's 2.1 million population growth projection is directly tied to employment growth. The Department of Finance's 2013 projections do not take into account the high rate of growth in jobs, population and migration into the region. The Department of Finance population projections depict only one possible course of future population change, i.e., the one reflecting assumed trends in fertility, mortality, and migration. The model does not consider employment, which is a major driver of migration. The Department of Finance will incorporate ABAG employment forecasts in the future. The Department of Finance, and Department of Housing and Community Development agree with ABAG's methodology and projections.

Why are your population estimates based on one number and not a range?

We recognize that there is a range of future population estimates; however for planning purposes we have to arrive at a single number. Based on the current population and assumptions for fertility rates, death rates and future jobs (which affects job seekers moving to the Bay Area), the Plan Bay Area estimate represents what we believe is the most likely future population. To ensure the forecast is as accurate as possible, it will be updated every four years.

Why should we have confidence in the population/demographic models used to support the plan?

The Plan Bay Area forecast was developed by ABAG with extensive assistance and peer review by a team of economists and other state agencies including the California Department of Finance. The forecast uses demographic data from national and state sources, such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census, and the California Department of Finance. It relies upon standardized forecasting methods to estimate the Bay Area's share of expected national employment growth and the detailed demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) of the region's future population. The methodology for forecasting the region's future population is based on natural increase of the existing population (births minus deaths) and expected job growth (which draws people to the region). A detailed description of the forecasting methodology is available in the *Draft Forecast of Jobs, Population and Housing*.

The forecast includes these inputs and is based on the best professional estimates of ABAG staff. In addition, although the SCS forecasts population growth out to 2040, by law the SCS must be updated every four years. This provides ABAG the opportunity to continually refine the assumptions and data used in its forecasts.

Why are natural hazards such as earthquakes, sea level rise and flooding not integrated more directly into the plan?

Plan Bay Area is a long-term, regional-scale plan covering 101 cities and nine counties, over 150 major transportation projects, and many other transportation and land use projects over the next approximately 27 years. The Plan and the Environmental Impact Report address natural hazards at the level appropriate for long-term, programmatic regional plans. Potentially significant site-specific natural hazards caused by projects implemented under Plan Bay Area will be addressed at the project-specific level. MTC and ABAG will continue to monitor these issues and revise Plan Bay Area in response to the changing environment every four years, as required by law.

About Transportation

How does Draft Plan Bay Area invest transportation funds?

Draft Plan Bay Area focuses the lion's share of investment on maintaining the existing transit and road system and boosting the transportation system's efficiency. The Plan also provides support for focused growth in Priority Development Areas, including the new One Bay Area Grant program.

How much transportation revenue is expected to be available?

The Draft Plan Bay Area forecasts transportation revenue totaling \$289 billion over 28 years. However, most of this money will be needed just to maintain the existing transportation network. Of the total amount, \$57 billion is "discretionary," or available for assignment to new projects and programs.

How does Plan Bay Area invest future transportation funds?

Draft Plan Investments by Function

Function	Committed YOE\$ billions	Discretionary Revenue YOE\$ billions	Total YOE\$ billions	% of Total
Transit: Maintain Existing System	\$139	\$20	\$159	55%
Road and Bridge: Maintain Existing System	\$69	\$25	\$94	33%
Transit: Expansion	\$13	\$8	\$21	7%
Road and Bridge: Expansion	\$11	\$4	\$15	5%
Total	\$232	\$57	\$289	100%

How does the Draft Plan Bay Area propose to invest future discretionary funds?

The Draft Plan invests discretionary funds into six key investment strategies: (1) county investment priorities would receive \$16 billion, or 29 percent of available funds; (2) system maintenance would receive \$15 billion, or 26 percent; (3) programs to support focused growth are slated to garner \$14 billion through the One Bay Area Grant program, or 25 percent of expected discretionary funds; (4) transit expansion projects would receive \$5 billion, or 9 percent; (5) freeway and transit efficiency projects would receive \$4 billion, or 7 percent; and (6) \$1 billion (less than 1 percent) would go toward programs specifically designed to combat climate change. The plan includes a \$2 billion reserve fund set aside for future rail expansion projects.

What is OBAG?

The One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program is designed to reward jurisdictions that accept housing allocations through the Regional Housing Need Allocation process. The program totals \$320 million over the next four years (\$14.6 billion over the life of the Plan, which amounts to 5 percent of overall funding and 25 percent of discretionary funding in the plan). The program grants local communities the flexibility to invest in transportation infrastructure that supports infill development by providing funds for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, local road repair and planning activities, while also providing funds for Safe Routes to School programs and for Priority Conservation Areas.

How does the Draft Plan propose to support bicycle and pedestrian travel?

State Transportation Development Act (TDA) and local sales tax funds committed to bicycle and pedestrian improvements total \$4.6 billion during the Plan period. The One Bay Area Grant program, \$14.6 billion over the life of the Plan, is another fund source that can be used to pay for ‘Complete Streets’ projects. These projects can include stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes, pedestrian bulb-outs, lighting, new sidewalks, Safe Routes to Transit, and Safe Routes to Schools projects that will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and travel.

In addition to this funding, cities and counties that wish to use OBAG grant funds must adopt a ‘Complete Streets’ resolution and in the future an updated general plan element to improve the delivery of Complete Streets projects serving all road users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. During MTC’s last survey of project sponsors in 2006, over 55% of transportation projects surveyed already included complete streets elements. The resolution requirement is expected to increase the rate of complete street implementation.

What does the Plan propose to fund for the region’s Climate Initiatives Program?

The Climate Initiatives Program invests in eight programs focused on technology advancements and incentives for travel options to help the region meet the SB 375 GHG emissions targets. The programs include: implementing the Commuter Benefit Ordinance, authorized by SB 1339; expanding car sharing to ensure vehicles are available at high-demand locations and expanded to suburban communities; providing incentives to reduce the cost of vanpools; establishing discounted fees charged on new vehicles with low miles-per-gallon rating to help purchase fuel-efficient vehicles; a public education campaign and rebates for tools that encourage “smart driving”; establishing a voluntary vehicle buy-back incentive program to accelerate the removal of low-mpg vehicles coupled with incentives towards the purchase of plug-ins or electric vehicles; and investing in a regional electric vehicles charger network. In addition, the Plan calls for the expansion of the most successful strategies identified in the Climate Initiatives Innovative Grants program, which is currently underway.

About Housing and Land Use

Why do we have RHNA – Regional Housing Need Allocation?

California Housing Element law (Article 10.6 of the California Government Code) requires each jurisdiction to plan for housing for all income levels by ensuring that local zoning and planning support the production of a diverse range of new housing. The RHNA is the state-mandated process to identify the share of the state’s housing need for which each jurisdiction must plan over an 8-year period. Jurisdictions are not responsible for building the housing; only for demonstrating in their local Housing Element that it could be built under current zoning. ABAG oversees the RHNA process in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

How does Plan Bay Area relate to the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA)?

Plan Bay Area combines these three initiatives into a single, integrated regional plan. For example, RTPs traditionally include land use projections. Plan Bay Area’s distribution of growth is the SCS. Senate Bill 375 also stipulates that the SCS will identify areas to accommodate the RHNA. State law requires that the RHNA follow the development pattern specified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Does Plan Bay Area override local land use control?

No. Cities and counties, not MTC or ABAG, are ultimately responsible for the manner in which their local communities continue to be built out in the future. For this reason, cities and counties are not required to revise their “land use policies and regulations, including [their] general plan, to be consistent with the regional transportation plan or an alternative planning strategy.” [Gov. Code, § 65080, subd. (b)(2)(J)]. The Plan’s SCS merely provides a land use vision that “*if implemented*, [would] achieve the greenhouse gas emission reductions targets” for the region. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21155, subd. (a) (emphasis added).) The proposed Plan will only be implemented insofar as local jurisdictions adopt its policies and recommendations.

Rather than increase regional land use control, the Plan facilitates implementation by expanding incentives and opportunities available to local jurisdictions to support growth in Priority Development Areas (PDAs). In addition to funding transportation and planning projects in PDAs, the Plan sets the stage for cities and counties to increase the efficiency of the development process, if they choose, for projects consistent with the Plan and other state legislation.

What is a Priority Development Area?

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are locally designated areas within existing communities that have been identified and approved by local cities or counties for future growth. These areas are typically accessible to transit, jobs, shopping and other services. Over 70 local governments have voluntarily designated some 170 PDAs, which are proposed to absorb about 80 percent of new housing and over 60 percent of new jobs on less than five percent of the Bay Area's land. The result is a locally supported, compact and efficient growth pattern that meets CARB's GHG reduction targets and provides adequate housing for the Bay Area's growing population.

What is a Priority Conservation Area?

Priority Conservation Areas are identified in partnership with land trusts, open space districts, parks and recreation departments, local jurisdictions and property owners to preserve the region's diverse farming, recreational, and resource lands for future generations. This process builds on a century of park development and open space protection. The purpose of designating Priority Conservation Areas is to protect key natural lands in the San Francisco Bay Area through purchase or conservation easements with willing property owners.

If Plan Bay Area includes additional housing units in my community, does this guarantee that those units are going to be built?

No. The pace at which new housing is built will be determined by various factors, including local zoning, the financial feasibility of building the new housing permitted under this zoning, and ultimately the decision by a city council, town council, or board of supervisors to approve each housing project. Cities and counties will continue to retain all control over local building decisions following adoption of the Plan. Over the long term, communities may change zoning, provide incentives for developers, or adjust other land use policies to increase or decrease the feasibility of building the levels of housing projected in the Plan.

Have ABAG and MTC investigated whether Plan Bay Area's development is feasible?

The regional land use plan, or distribution of growth to individual jurisdictions, was developed through a variety of land use and transportation scenarios that distributed the total amount of growth forecasted for the region to specific locations. These scenarios sought to address the needs and aspirations of each Bay Area jurisdiction, as identified in locally adopted general plans and zoning ordinances, while meeting Plan Bay Area performance targets adopted by ABAG and MTC to guide and gauge the region's future growth.

The framework for developing these scenarios is based as Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) nominated by local governments, not ABAG or MTC. ABAG and MTC incorporated local feedback from individual jurisdictions, relying on their best

assessment of feasible growth over the plan period and then applied a series of additional factors to achieve Plan Bay Area's goals. The scenarios were then developed through an open, deliberative process, during which public input was sought at every step along the way. After further modeling, analysis, and public engagement, the five initial scenarios were narrowed down to a single preferred land use scenario.

Feasibility of this scenario was further tested by an assessment of a representative sample of PDAs from throughout the region by consultants at Economic and Planning Systems (EPS) deeply familiar with the market characteristics of each jurisdiction in the Bay Area. Overall, the study concluded that the proposed development pattern contained in the preferred scenario, while ambitious, represents an achievable level of growth with sufficient policy changes, some of which are now underway or currently being examined.

So all projects in Plan Bay Area will require further environmental review?

It's important to note that while Plan Bay Area includes a "Program-level" EIR under the California Environmental Quality Act (or CEQA), any major transportation, housing or other project included in the plan must still comply with CEQA, and in some cases the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For example, if a project to add bicycle lanes is listed in the Plan, separate environmental review specific to that project is still required under CEQA and will be conducted by the jurisdiction with approval authority over the project. Likewise, if the Plan describes new housing units or jobs within a city or county, the actual planning and development enabling any proposed project that might be brought forward to a city or county would fall under a local environmental review and still need local approval. SB 375 provides CEQA streamlining benefits that local jurisdictions can take advantage of, but it the Plan Bay Area EIR does not preclude future environmental review.

What is open space and who owns it?

Open space generally refers to undeveloped land or water that could be either publicly or privately owned.

Is Plan Bay Area consistent with Urban Growth Boundaries and similar locally adopted growth controls in many Bay Area counties?

Yes. The Draft Plan accommodates 100% of new growth within existing urban growth boundaries and similar locally adopted growth controls. It also emphasizes protection for the region's farmland and scenic and natural resource areas, including Priority Conservation Areas.

How will local sewer, fire, water and other local infrastructure be impacted by housing growth? What about schools, libraries, and other public services?

Infrastructure, school, police, and fire service effects will vary in different locations, with those locations experiencing more growth likely requiring additional services. Funding for many of these services will be locally determined, as public service standards, performance measures, and policies related to police and fire are typically set by local jurisdictions and agencies; and library and recreation facilities are typically set in city and county general plans. For schools, standards

relating to class size are primarily determined at the state level, although local school districts are responsible for the planning and construction of school facilities. Additional funding may come from developer agreements, which can include impact fees to support schools and other community benefits, such as parks and libraries.

As a regional plan encompassing nine counties, Plan Bay Area cannot provide a detailed assessment of local needs. However the compact growth pattern in the SCS should allow jurisdictions to leverage existing facilities and absorb some of the increased demand with facilities that are currently underutilized. Overall, more compact urban development costs less for upfront infrastructure, saves on ongoing delivery of services, and generates more local tax revenue per acre than conventional suburban development. New employment associated with providing public services is recognized in the Plan Bay Area jobs forecast, with increases in every county consistent with population growth.

The SCS DEIR found that impacts to schools, libraries, and parks from land use development are Potentially Significant, and therefore would have to undergo environmental review during the approvals process to determine feasible mitigations. For additional information, please see the Draft EIR, chapters 2.12 and 2.14.

How are water needs for new development proposed in this plan being addressed?

Plan Bay Area is a programmatic document and the Draft EIR includes a program-level assessment of impacts related to water supply. The Draft EIR demonstrates the region faces questions regarding water supply deficiencies particularly during drought years. While numerous factors influence water demand, including employment growth, socio-economic characteristics, geographic distribution of the population, variation in precipitation levels, and water conservation practices, overall population growth is the most important factor. The projected population growth will occur with or without the Plan.

The proposed Plan Bay Area concentrates the projected growth within currently developed areas in the region, which reduces per capita water consumption. As a result, the proposed Plan should help protect the region's water supply by reducing development pressure on rural areas; areas where per capita water use is typically higher and new water infrastructure would be needed to accommodate growth.

With a few exceptions, the areas anticipated for new development conform to local general plans and specific plans. Each of the Bay Area's urban water suppliers must prepare an Urban Water Management Plan that assesses current and future demands for water. The potential future development would have been accounted for in the local Urban Water Management Plan.

About Greenhouse Gas Emissions

What are the greenhouse-gas reduction targets?

In 2010, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets for regions across California, as required by law. For the San Francisco Bay Area, this

means a 7 percent per capita reduction target for the year 2020 and 15 percent per capita reduction target for 2035, based on 2005 levels. CARB set the GHG emissions reductions targets for the various regions in the state as a per capita metric. The DEIR of the Plan included both this “SB 375 metric” focused on reducing per capita emissions from cars and light duty trucks related to transportation and land use planning, as well as an overall GHG emissions metric in its analysis of Plan Bay Area.

Why is lowering greenhouse gas emissions important?

Lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions protects public health, lowers energy consumption, and reduces our contribution to global warming. More immediately, strategies to reduce emissions emphasize creating more options to take public transit, walk or use a bicycle for transportation instead of a car, when viable and appropriate. In addition, other laws require Plan Bay Area to meet federal and state air quality health standards for several pollutants.

Why the focus on cars and light trucks?

Transportation is the biggest single source of greenhouse gases in California. In the Bay Area, it accounts for 41 percent of our overall emissions, most of that comes from personal travel in on-road vehicles. To reduce our contribution to global warming, the region must pursue multiple transportation and land use strategies.

Plan Bay Area will:

1. Reduce the separation of land uses (jobs, stores, schools, and homes) and encourage more complete, mixed-use communities, so people can drive less and walk, bike or use more transit;
2. Cluster more homes, jobs and other activities around transit, so people can more easily use transit rather than drive; and
3. Plan land uses and transportation together, to reduce traffic congestion, improve vehicle speeds, reduce emissions from idling and other inefficiencies.

What about low-carbon fuels, more efficient cars, and solar/green buildings? Won't that reduce the region's greenhouse gas emissions? Why do we even need SB 375?

Vehicle technology and transportation pricing (e.g., parking) are likely to have a significant impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The impact of more efficient vehicles would be significantly reduced, however, if we continue to drive more and congestion increases because of inefficient land uses. Experts agree that there is no single answer. Changes in technology as well as changes in travel behavior will be necessary to reduce emissions to healthier levels in the future. There are other planning and implementation efforts that address building energy efficiency, renewable energy production, and additional GHG reduction approaches (for example, local Climate Action Plans and Energy Upgrade California (<https://energyupgradeca.org/overview>).

Further, SB 375 requires regional planning agencies in the state to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) in their regional transportation plan that demonstrates how the region could achieve the GHG emissions reductions targets through integrated land use and

transportation planning. The CARB Scoping Plan, developed to implement AB 32 as a comprehensive statewide strategy to reduce GHG, specifically charges CARB with implementing GHG reduction strategies related to clean vehicles and fuel efficiency. Therefore, the SB 375 targets analysis does not include the GHG emissions reductions and benefits of statewide standards that are anticipated as the result of fuel efficiency standards and the low carbon fuels standards (LCFS) as part of the region's efforts to reduce GHG emissions through integrated land use and transportation planning. Were MTC/ABAG to include those benefits in the SB 375 analysis, the region would be taking credit for emissions reductions in the land use and transportation planning sector that the state is taking credit for as part of ARB's responsibilities, thus double counting.

What if Plan Bay Area can't meet its targets?

If we cannot meet the greenhouse-gas reduction targets in Plan Bay Area, then we must prepare an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) to accompany the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The APS would identify the physical, economic or political conditions required to meet the regional greenhouse gas targets.

Equity

What does "social equity" mean?

Social equity is the idea that all persons should have fair and equal access to opportunity. Plan Bay Area is designed to find housing for all persons at all income levels in the region, improve air quality in polluted areas and to make housing and transportation more affordable for lower-income households. For more information, visit the One Bay Area web page on [equity](#).

What does "environmental justice" mean?

Environmental justice stems from a Presidential Executive Order to fairly distribute benefits and burdens for disadvantaged communities and to include minority and low-income communities in decision-making. The federal government oversees regional planning. As a recipient of federal funds, MTC is required to incorporate environmental justice principles in all its planning efforts, including Plan Bay Area.

Public Input

How are local governments and other organizations involved?

Local officials, as well as environmental, social justice, faith-based, public-health and business leaders, are engaging in Plan Bay Area through a Regional Advisory Working Group that provides input on planning and policy issues. The agencies also get input from several other interest groups through MTC's Policy Advisory Council and ABAG's Regional Planning Committee. These meetings are open to the public and broadcast live via streaming audio. For more details, visit [OneBayArea.org](#).

How are you involving residents in low-income communities and communities of color?

MTC and ABAG are partnering with nonprofit groups working in low-income communities and communities of color, selected through a competitive procurement process, to involve residents in those communities in development of the Plan.

Are businesses involved in the Plan Bay Area process?

Yes. MTC and ABAG have been working with business leaders from throughout the region, especially at key points during development of the Plan.

Is my input really considered by ABAG and MTC?

Absolutely. Oral and written comments from workshops, telephone survey results, a web survey and focus groups, have been analyzed, summarized and presented to ABAG and MTC decision makers at key milestones in the development of the plan. The Draft Plan and its Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) were released March 22 and April 2 respectively for public review and comment. All oral and written comments will be summarized and presented for review by ABAG and MTC board members to inform their final action on the Draft Plan, which is slated for adoption in July 2013.

How can I get involved?

Public engagement is essential to the success of all the regional planning efforts. Plan Bay Area needs the input of all stakeholders — especially the people who live and work in Bay Area communities — to build a plan that meets their vision, goals and aspirations for a prosperous future.

There are many ways to get involved. You can go to our [Get Involved](#) page to sign up for alerts about [meetings](#) and other opportunities to have your voice heard. We also encourage you to visit our [Public Process](#) page, which explains the nuts and bolts of what can be an admittedly complicated multi-year planning process.

Plan Bay Area is based on the work of hundreds of local planning efforts that have taken place around the Bay Area. We encourage you to get involved in local planning efforts, including neighborhood plans, General Plan and Housing Element updates. A second regional planning effort, the Bay Area Prosperity Plan, is engaging a broad range of community organizations and partners around the region on economic development and housing strategies to implement Plan Bay Area. You can learn more about this effort at <http://onebayarea.org/regional-initiatives/Bay-Area-Prosperity-Plan.html>.

Why don't you do more to publicize opportunities to comment on this plan?

MTC and ABAG are conducting an extensive public engagement program. Methods for publicizing comment opportunities include:

- Regular press releases to the news media outlets about comment opportunities
- Numerous presentations to local elected officials and civic groups.
- Social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- An interactive web site that has drawn some 50,000 unique visitors to learn about Plan Bay Area and comment via a “Virtual Workshop” and an online “Plan Bay Area Town Hall”
- Email and direct mail

The Role of Regional Government

Some claim that Plan Bay Area is part of an ill-intended global agenda to force lifestyle changes — is this true?

Plan Bay Area is a home-grown effort to plan for future transportation and land use needs. Most of us who live here are accustomed to saying that we live in “The Bay Area.” That simple phrase speaks volumes. It shows we already share a regional identity. We have a history of joining together on issues that cross jurisdictional lines. Notable examples include working to save San Francisco Bay, set aside land for a vast system of interconnected parks and open space, and pioneer a regional rapid rail system. All these efforts have shaped our collective identity and put us on the map as a region. Our first long-range comprehensive regional plan was completed in 1964 by ABAG. MTC has been adopting and updating regional transportation plans since 1971, the most recent of which was adopted in 2009. Plan Bay Area is a work in progress that will be updated every four years. While it is done in part to meet state and federal laws that require metropolitan areas to plan for regional needs, the Plan furthers a very important conversation in the Bay Area about the quality of life we enjoy today, and how to leave a better region for future generations.

Is there any relationship between Plan Bay Area and U.N. Agenda 21?

No. Plan Bay Area is mandated by California Senate Bill 375. For more information, read the American Planning Association fact sheet “[Agenda 21: Myths and Facts](http://www.onebayarea.org/pdf/Agenda21mythsfacts.pdf)” available online at <http://www.onebayarea.org/pdf/Agenda21mythsfacts.pdf>.

Does Plan Bay Area force local governments to accept regional dictates in order to receive transportation funding?

Plan Bay Area does not require local governments to implement regional requirements in order to receive transportation funding. The majority of funding in the Plan (\$232 billion, or 80%) is already committed for specific purposes. The remaining \$57 billion in revenues are available for assignment through the plan. As revenues become available, MTC assigns these funds to specific projects and programs, and may, at its discretion, include specific requirements. For the One Bay Area Grant program (OBAG) — which is slated to receive 5% of funding included in the Plan — MTC requires recipients to comply with existing state law by having an approved housing element. MTC directs the majority of OBAG funds to areas that local jurisdictions have nominated and have been approved as Priority Development Areas, though it is not a requirement to be designated a PDA in order to receive funding. So the Plan itself does not dictate specific requirements to local governments, rather the subsequent funding programs may

include policies to ensure scarce transportation revenues are invested appropriately and in a manner that supports implementation of the Plan.

Will Plan Bay Area be on the ballot for approval by voters?

Rather than asking voters to adopt the long-range transportation and land use plan, state law requires this action from ABAG (as the state-designated Council of Governments) and MTC (as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization). Both boards consist of locally elected officials.

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