

BayArea Plan

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and what does it do?

MTC is the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Commission's job is to make sure the regional transportation network functions as smoothly and efficiently as possible, and to plan responsibly to meet the future mobility needs of our region's growing population.

2. What is the Association of Bay Area Governments, and what does it do?

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional planning agency for the nine counties and 101 cities and towns of the San Francisco Bay region.

3. Why is there a long-range plan?

State and federal laws require MTC, as the metropolitan planning organization for the Bay Area, to develop a 25-year plan — based on a realistic forecast of future revenues — to guide transportation investment in the region, and to update this plan at least every four years based on new projections of population growth and travel demand. State Senate Bill 375, signed into law by then-Gov. Schwarzenegger in 2008, requires the Bay Area (and California's 17 other metro areas) to develop an integrated long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan to meet statewide targets for reductions in per-capita carbon dioxide emissions from cars and light trucks.

4. What kinds of forecasts must be made to develop a long-range plan?

Since its establishment by an act of the state Legislature in 1971, MTC has been developing and updating long-term regional transportation plans for the Bay Area. This requires the use of many kinds of forecast models, including those for economic growth, financial resources, demographics, and land-use changes, among others.

5. How do you project 2 million additional Bay Area residents over the next 25 years?

ABAG uses federal, state and in-house data sources to develop regional population forecasts. The rate of growth depends on several variables including age distribution, predicted birth and death rates, and estimated migration into the Bay Area.

6. Why should we care about greenhouse gas emissions?

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions are part of the state's plan to protect public health, lower energy consumption and reduce the need for driving. In addition, there are existing laws that require the plan to demonstrate attainment of federal and state air quality standards for several pollutants. Lastly, SB 375, signed into law by then-Gov.

Schwarzenegger in 2008, requires California to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and requires each of the state's 18 metropolitan planning organizations to develop a long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan that will reduce its region's per-capita carbon dioxide emissions from cars and light trucks to meet this target.

7. How can a regional transportation and land-use plan reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

The primary strategy is by working with local agencies to plan for more people living near their jobs and other essential services, in tandem with better access to mass transit and other transportation choices, so residents need not drive as much.

8. Why are regional agencies such as ABAG and MTC involved in local planning?

See Questions 1 and 2 on reverse side. MTC is required by state and federal law to update a long-range regional transportation plan for the nine-county Bay Area every four years. ABAG is obliged under state law to update a Regional Housing Needs Allocation every eight years, and to allocate specific housing targets to individual cities and counties. SB 375 now mandates that ABAG and MTC develop an integrated transportation and housing plan for the Bay Area.

9. Is Plan Bay Area going to usurp local land-use control?

No. SB 375 is explicit that neither ABAG nor MTC has the legal authority to supersede “the land use authority of cities and counties in the region.”

10. What is a Priority Development Area?

Priority Development Areas, or PDAs for short, are areas within existing communities that have been identified and approved by city or county governments to take on larger shares of future growth. These areas typically are easily accessible to transit, jobs, shopping and other services.

11. What is open space and who owns it?

Open space generally refers to undeveloped lands or water areas; land could be publically or privately owned.

12. Are businesses being consulted as part of the Plan Bay Area process?

Yes. MTC met with business leaders from throughout the region at key points during development of the Initial Vision Scenario in 2010-11, and has held several meetings that included representatives from the California Building Industries Association, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and the Bay Area Council, among other business groups. MTC and ABAG will continue to consult with businesses as development of Plan Bay Area proceeds.

13. How are you engaging local governments and concerned organizations?

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 meets monthly to give staff detailed input on planning and policy issues before finalizing recommendations for presentation to the ABAG and MTC boards. The agencies also seek input from a range of interest groups through MTC’s Policy Advisory Council and ABAG’s Regional Advisory Committee.

14. How is my input considered by ABAG and MTC?

Public comments from workshops, along with written comments and correspondence, results from a telephone survey, a web survey and focus groups, will be analyzed, summarized and presented to the MTC and ABAG boards this spring (currently slated for March). A recommendation for a draft preferred land use/transportation investment scenario from staff

is expected this spring, and decision-makers are expected to approve a preferred scenario by May/June 2012. A *Plan Bay Area* document and a companion environmental impact report (EIR) will be prepared for the preferred scenario over the next several months, leading to release of a draft in late 2012 and a final in spring 2013; we anticipate another round of public outreach between release of the draft Plan Bay Area/draft EIR and adoption of the final documents

15. What is environmental justice?

Environmental Justice stems from a Presidential Executive Order to promote the fair distribution of benefits and burdens for disadvantaged communities, and promote the inclusion of minority and low-income communities in decision-making. The federal government, which oversees the development of our regional planning efforts, states that: *“Each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”* As a recipient of federal funds, MTC is required to incorporate environmental justice principles in all its planning efforts, including the sustainable communities strategy to be incorporated into Plan Bay Area.

16. What is social equity?

Social equity includes the idea that all persons should have fair and equal access to opportunity. In Plan Bay Area, this includes MTC and ABAG's adopted targets to house all persons at all income levels in the region, achieve greater air quality improvements in impacted areas, and improve the affordability of housing and transportation for lower-income households. MTC and ABAG are analyzing planning scenarios for equity implications at each stage of the Plan's development. For more information, visit the One Bay Area page on [equity](#).

17. How much is being spent on public outreach for Plan Bay Area?

SB 375 (Chapter 728) requires substantial public involvement in the development of the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy. MTC's 2011-12 budget for Plan Bay Area public outreach and involvement is \$400,000. This includes funds for public meetings and Web-based activities, as well as costs associated with public events, workshops and briefings (e.g., assistance from firms with expertise in meeting facilitation, recording and review of public comments, facility rentals, food, language translations, publication design and printing, Web material development, etc.)

18. 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” (PDF).

19. How can I stay involved?

There are many ways to stay involved in the development of Plan Bay Area. Sign up to receive updates via e-mail or regular mail about additional public workshops, forums, web surveys and the like online at www.OneBayArea.org or by calling 510.817.5757.