



NOTICE OF PREPARATION
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
San Francisco Bay Area Regional Transportation Plan /
Sustainable Communities Strategy
Environmental Impact Report

To: Interested Agencies, Organizations and Individuals
Project: Draft Environmental Impact Report for Plan Bay Area 2040 – the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) / Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)
Lead Agency: Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Comment Period May 16, 2015 – June 15, 2016 (30-days)

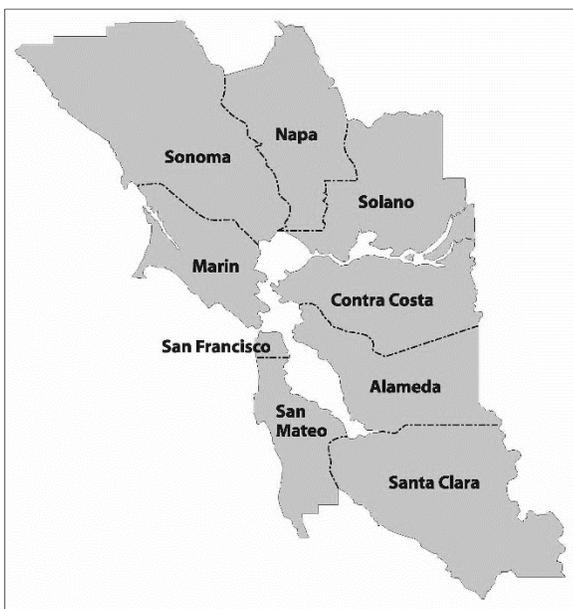


Figure 1. Nine-County San Francisco Bay Area

Interested agencies, organizations and individuals are invited by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to comment on the scope and content of the environmental impact assessment that will be conducted for the update of *Plan Bay Area*, an integrated land use and transportation plan looking out to the year 2040 for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. A map of the area is included in this notice as Figure 1.

MTC is the lead agency undertaking preparation of a program-level Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Plan Bay Area 2040. Plan Bay Area 2040 (or “the Plan”) is the update of the area Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), a long-range plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with other economic, environmental, and public health goals. It identifies regional transportation planning needs, priorities and

funding, and allows project sponsors to qualify for federal funding for public transit, streets and roads and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Plan must demonstrate achievement of a region’s share of state greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and is required to be updated every four years. Attachment A to this NOP provides more information on MTC, SB 375, Plan Bay Area 2040 and alternative plan scenarios.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15082), the purpose of this Notice of Preparation is to seek comments about the scope and comment of the environmental impact assessment that will be conducted for this update of the Plan. If you represent an agency that may rely upon the EIR for project approval and/or tiering, MTC and ABAG are particularly interested in what information may be helpful for these purposes. Input is also sought from organizations and individuals as to the issues that should be addressed in the EIR.

Adoption and implementation of the Plan has the potential to result in environmental effects in all of the environmental impact areas identified in CEQA. For this reason, the Plan Bay Area 2040 EIR will be a “full scope” document and will analyze all of the required CEQA environmental issue areas. These include: aesthetics and visual resources; agriculture and forestry resources; air quality (including toxic air contaminants); biological resources; cultural resources; geology, seismicity, soils, and mineral resources; energy consumption; greenhouse gas emissions and climate change (including sea level rise); hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; noise and vibration; population and housing; public services and recreation; transportation; utilities and other service systems. The EIR will also address cumulative effects, growth inducing impacts and other issues required by CEQA.

All interested agencies, organizations and individuals are welcome to submit comments and/or participate in the scoping meetings for the Draft EIR. Oral comments will be accepted during three regional scoping meetings:

Thursday, May 26, 2016

11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library
One Washington Square, Room 225
San Jose, California

Tuesday, May 31, 2016

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

MetroCenter Auditorium
101 8th Street
Oakland, California

Thursday, June 2, 2016

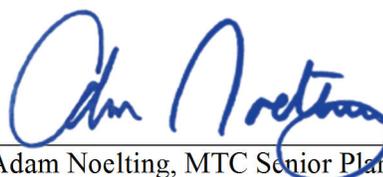
11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Finley Community Center
2060 W. College Avenue
Santa Rosa, California

Written comments will be accepted at the scoping meetings; via mail to MTC Public Information, 375 Beale Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA, 94105; via fax to 510.817.5848 before May 19 (beginning May 23, send fax to 415.536.9800); or via email to eircomments@mtc.ca.gov. **Written comments must be received at the MTC offices no later than June 15, 2016.** For more information, call the MTC Public Information Office at 510.817.5757 before May 19 (beginning May 23, call 415.778.6757). Note: MTC and ABAG will have new phone numbers beginning May 23.

Do you need written materials in large type or in Braille to participate in MTC or BATA meetings? Do you need a sign language interpreter or other assistance? Is English your second language? Do you need one of our documents translated? Do you need an interpreter who speaks your language present at one of our meetings?

We can help! You can request assistance by calling 510.817.5757 before May 19 (call 415.778.6757 beginning May 23) or 510.817.5769 for TDD/TTY before May 19 (the TDD/TTY number is 415.778.6769 beginning May 23). Visit www.mtc.ca.gov for more information. We require at least three days’ notice to provide reasonable accommodations. We prefer more notice if possible. We will make every effort to arrange for assistance as soon as possible.



Adam Noelting, MTC Senior Planner
Plan Bay Area 2040 Project Manager

5/16/2016

Date

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Metropolitan Transportation Commission
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Environmental Impact Report
ATTACHMENT A

Background

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the transportation planning, coordinating and financing agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area (which includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma Counties). Created by the State Legislature in 1970, MTC functions as both the regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) which is a state designation, and as the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) which is a federal designation. 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 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the San Francisco Bay Area Region. An RTP is a long-range plan that identifies the strategies and investments to maintain, manage, and improve the region's transportation network.

A Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is a required element of the RTP under California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, also known as Sen. Bill 375 (Stats. 2008, ch. 728) (SB 375). While other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions focus on alternative fuels and vehicle efficiency, SB 375 is intended to more effectively reduce emissions by integrating land use and transportation planning to reduce overall passenger vehicle miles traveled. Through the development of a SCS, that accompanies the RTP, policies and strategies will be identified to reduce per capita passenger vehicle-generated GHG emissions. The SCS will identify the general location of land uses, residential densities, and building intensities within the region; identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region; identify areas within the region sufficient to house an 8-year projection of the regional housing need; identify a transportation network to serve the regional transportation needs; gather and consider the best practically available scientific information regarding resources areas and farmland in the region; consider the state housing goals; set forth a forecasted development pattern for the region; and allow the regional transportation plan to comply with the federal Clean Air Act. (Gov. Code, § 65080, subd. (b)(F)(2)(B)) If the SCS for the RTP update does not achieve the GHG emission targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) must be developed to demonstrate how the targets could be achieved.

The San Francisco Bay Area's RTP/SCS sets policies to guide transportation decisions and proposes a program of capital, operational, and management improvements needed through the year 2040. In addition, if the SCS achieves its GHG emission target and the CARB accepts a determination by MTC that the SCS, if implemented, would achieve its GHG emissions target, certain land development projects may be eligible for CEQA streamlining if they are consistent with the general use, density, intensity and applicable policies of the adopted SCS.

Plan Bay Area 2040

Plan Bay Area 2040 is the update of the region's first RTP/SCS, *Plan Bay Area*, and is a joint effort led by MTC and ABAG and developed in partnership with the Bay Area's other two regional government agencies, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Bay Conservation and

Development Commission (BCDC). Plan Bay Area 2040 strives to meet the requirements of SB 375 by developing an integrated RTP/SCS plan and strives to attain the per-capita GHG emission reduction targets of -7 percent by year 2020 and -15 percent by year 2035 from 2005 levels.

Plan Bay Area 2040 will reinforce land use and transportation integration per SB 375 and present a vision of what the Bay Area's land use patterns and transportation networks might look like in 2040. Goals of Plan Bay Area 2040 include:

- Climate Protection
- Open Space & Agricultural Preservation
- Transportation System Effectiveness
- Adequate Housing
- Healthy and Safe Communities
- Equitable Access
- Economic Vitality

Plan Bay Area 2040 forecasts the Bay Area to add over 2.4 million people, 1.3 million new jobs and 823,000 new housing units between 2010 and 2040. To plan for this future growth and meet the targets set forth in SB 375, Plan Bay Area 2040 builds on local and regional planning efforts by using a framework of 188 locally-adopted Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and 165 Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) in the nine-county Bay Area. PDAs are areas where amenities and services can be developed to meet the day-to-day needs of residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit. Plan Bay Area 2040 strives to help PDAs become "Complete Communities," based in large part on local aspirations and community context. PCAs are areas of regional significance that have broad community support and are in need of protection. They provide important agricultural, natural resource, scenic, cultural, recreational, and/or ecological values, and ecosystem functions.

Plan Bay Area 2040 also includes a financially constrained transportation investment plan as required by state and federal planning regulations. It includes transportation projects and programs that would be funded through existing and future revenues that are projected to be reasonably available to the region over the 24-year horizon of the plan to support the adopted growth pattern. A total of \$299 billion in revenues is available for the financially constrained Plan Bay Area 2040.

For more information about Plan Bay Area 2040, visit: <http://planbayarea.org/plan-bay-area.html>.

Scenarios to be Analyzed

MTC and ABAG have developed three land use and transportation scenarios, described below, to illustrate the effects that different housing, land use and transportation strategies have on the region's adopted goals and performance targets. MTC and ABAG will evaluate the three scenarios, and one or a combination of them will be identified as the preferred plan, which will be analyzed as the project in the EIR. The remaining scenarios may be analyzed as alternatives in the EIR.

Each scenario uses the same regional growth control totals of 2.4 million new people, 1.3 million new jobs and 823,000 new housing units, along with the same discretionary transportation revenues to support the growth.

Main Streets Scenario

The Main Streets Scenario targets expected growth in people and jobs in the downtowns of every Bay Area city. This scenario most closely resembles traditional suburban growth, with more growth in areas that are presently undeveloped. Of the three scenarios, this scenario expects the smallest share of

housing growth to occur in PDAs (54%); comparable to the other scenarios, expects the smallest share of new housing to occur in the three big cities of San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland (43%); expects a similar share as with the Connected Neighborhoods scenario of new housing in Bayside communities (21%); the largest share of new housing is distributed in Inland, Coastal, Delta communities (35%) in comparison to the other scenarios. Specific land use strategies include upzoning of select suburban areas to increase residential and commercial development capacity; allowing urban growth boundaries to expand faster than expected compared to past trends; reducing parking minimums in PDAs along regional rail transit; and encouraging affordable housing through inclusionary zoning, fees on commercial development and other tax policies.

This scenario calls for an expansion of high-occupancy toll lanes, with pricing based on level of congestion, and highway widenings to manage the increased number of cars. Of the three scenarios, this scenario invests the largest share of discretionary revenues towards maintaining and operating the existing system (53%), followed by investments in major projects (24%) and system enhancements (23%). Specific strategies to support the growth pattern include strategic transit investments, especially bus improvements, to provide access to increasingly dispersed job centers; technological advances to use roadway capacity more efficiently, while emphasizing freeway-focused pricing like Express Lanes / Managed Lanes as complementary strategies; strategic highway capacity increases; investment into both state of good repair (particularly for highways and local streets across all nine counties); and technological advancements (e.g. clean vehicles) and incentive programs to encourage travel options that help meet GHG emissions reduction targets.

Connected Neighborhoods Scenario

The Connected Neighborhoods Scenario emphasizes expected growth in people and jobs in areas near major transit corridors prioritized by cities as being the best places for new development. Of the three scenarios, this scenario expects the largest share of housing growth to occur in PDAs (69%); expects a similar share as the Main Streets Scenario of new housing to occur in the three big cities of San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland (44%); expects a more modest share of new housing in Bayside communities (22%); with the largest share of new housing in Inland, Coastal, Delta communities (35%). Specific land use strategies include encouraging new housing development by increasing residential development capacity in PDAs based on locally identified PDA place type; raising caps on office development in San Francisco; avoiding development on adopted PCAs and accommodating all new growth within existing urban growth boundaries or urban limit lines, using city boundaries as a limit when a jurisdiction has no expansion limit; reducing parking minimums in PDAs with high levels of transit access along El Camino Real and East Bay corridors; and encouraging affordable housing through inclusionary zoning.

Expansion of roadways would be limited, with more focus on modernizing and expanding our transit system. Investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure would help create more walkable and bikeable downtowns. Compared to the Main Streets Scenario, this scenario invests a smaller share of discretionary revenues towards maintaining and operating the existing system (46%), but invests more towards major projects (31%) and the same share toward system enhancements (23%). Specific strategies to support the growth pattern include strategic transit efficiency investments to improve frequencies and reduce travel times on core transit lines across the region; a limited set of high performing highway efficiency investments, including strategic highway capacity improvements to address bottlenecks and provide reliever routes to freeways within the urban core; the most cost-effective transit expansion projects that support the region's highest-growth PDAs; state of good repair needs with expansion and efficiency priorities for all modes; identify opportunities to align state of good repair to support PDA growth by repaving streets and upgrading buses that serve these communities;

and technological advancements (e.g. clean vehicles) and incentive programs to encourage travel options that help meet GHG emissions reduction targets.

Big Cities Scenario

The Big Cities Scenario concentrates expected growth in the Bay Area's three largest cities: San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. Neighboring towns already well connected to these cities would also see growth, particularly in areas that cities have prioritized for development. Of the three scenarios, this scenario expects a similar share of housing growth as the Main Streets Scenario to occur in PDAs (55%); expects the highest share of new housing to occur in the three big cities of San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland (72%); expects a smaller share of new housing in Bayside communities (17%); and the smallest share of new housing in Inland, Coastal, Delta communities (11%). Specific land use strategies include increasing development capacity in areas with high transit access by increasing residential densities in key PDAs, TPAs and select opportunity sites; eliminating caps on office development in San Francisco; avoiding development on adopted PCAs and accommodating all new growth within existing urban growth boundaries or urban limit lines, using city boundaries as a limit when a jurisdiction has no expansion limit; reducing parking minimums in three big cities and neighboring communities; encouraging more affordable housing through inclusionary zoning, fees on residential development and other tax policy.

City streets, bike lanes, rail lines and other transportation infrastructure serving the region's core will be repaired, maintained, and expanded to meet increased demand. Compared to the previous two scenarios, this scenario invests the smallest share of discretionary revenues towards maintaining and operating the existing system (39%), and invests the largest share towards major projects (38%) and the same share toward system enhancements (23%). Specific strategies to support the growth pattern include expansion of the South Bay transit system to support high-density development across Silicon Valley, while at the same time prioritizing investment in core capacity projects in San Francisco and Oakland to enable high-density development; link regional rail systems into the heart of the Bay Area's two largest cities – San Francisco and San Jose – while boosting service frequencies to support increasingly-urban commute patterns; state of good repair needs with expansion and efficiency priorities for all modes; support urban development in San Francisco by implementing cordon pricing and leveraging motorists' tolls to pay for robust and time-competitive transit services; align operating and maintenance funds to prioritize investments into high-growth cities and high-ridership systems; and technological advancements (e.g. clean vehicles) and incentive programs to encourage travel options that help meet GHG emissions reduction targets.