



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AND

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Plan Bay Area?

Plan Bay Area is an integrated land use and transportation plan that is being undertaken as a result of Senate Bill 375. All metropolitan regions in California must complete a similar plan as required by the bill.

The law gives joint responsibility for Plan Bay Area to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The two agencies will work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) to create a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area in conjunction with the update of the region's transportation and housing plans. They will also partner with local governments, county congestion management agencies and a wide range of stakeholders to ensure broad public input into Plan Bay Area's development.

What will Plan Bay Area do?

State law requires that Plan Bay Area develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that accomplishes three principal objectives:

1. Identify areas to accommodate the region's projected population associated with Bay Area economic growth, including all income groups, for at least the next 25 years;
2. Develop a Regional Transportation Plan that meets the needs of the region; and
3. Reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks.

In responding to these three state mandates, Plan Bay Area will also need to be responsive to a host of other regional and local quality-of-life concerns.

What size of population will Plan Bay Area need to accommodate?

The Bay Area currently has about 7 million people. Over the next 25 years it is expected to grow by about another 2 million; this additional growth is equivalent to approximately five times the current population of the City of Oakland.

Who will prepare Plan Bay Area?

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). The two agencies will work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). They will also partner with local governments, county congestion management agencies and a wide range of stakeholders to ensure broad public input into Plan Bay Area's preparation.

How will Plan Bay Area affect local land-use control?

SB 375 does not alter the authority of city and county governments to make decisions about local land use and development. However, the law does require that Plan Bay Area be consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and therefore affects the next iteration of housing elements in local general plans.

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 elements into a single, integrated regional plan. For example, Regional Transportation Plans traditionally include land use projections. For Plan Bay Area the SCS will be the land use allocation in the next RTP, slated for adoption in March 2013. SB 375 also stipulates that the SCS will incorporate an 8-year housing projection and allocation pursuant to RHNA.

Aside from the RHNA requirement, why would local governments want to conform to Plan Bay Area?

1. To improve the quality of life of our neighborhoods by providing cleaner air, improved public health, better mobility, more walkable streets, and homes closer to transit, jobs, and services.
 2. To benefit from incentives that will be available to conforming localities — for example, Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) funding, Station Area Planning Grants, investments from the Regional Transportation Plan, and assistance in meeting the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
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Why the emphasis on automobiles and light trucks?

Transportation is the largest single source of greenhouse gases in California. In the Bay Area, it accounts for 41 percent of our emissions, and over three quarters of these come from personal travel in on-road vehicles. If we are to significantly reduce our contribution to global warming, then we need to reduce the impact of our travel within the region. Plan Bay Area aims to reduce emissions by:

- Reducing the separation of land uses (jobs, stores, schools, and homes) and encouraging more complete, mixed-use communities, so people can drive less and increase their walking, biking, and use of transit;
 - Clustering more homes, jobs and other activities around transit, so people will be encouraged to take transit rather than drive; and
 - Planning land uses and transportation together, so we can manage traffic congestion and vehicle speeds, reducing emissions from excessive idling and other inefficiencies.
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Plan Bay Area sounds like a big project. Are we starting from scratch?

Thankfully, we are not. For decades, the Bay Area has been encouraging more focused and compact growth to help revitalize older communities, develop complete communities, reduce travel time and expense, make better use of the existing transportation system, control the costs of providing new infrastructure, protect resource land and environmental assets, promote affordability, and generally improve the quality of life for all Bay Area residents. Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions just provides another reason to continue and accelerate these ongoing efforts.

Responding to the regional agencies' FOCUS program, over sixty local governments have voluntarily designated over 120 Priority Development Areas (PDAs). Located within existing urbanized areas and served by high-quality public transit, PDAs consume only about three percent of the region's land area but are being planned by their local jurisdictions to house nearly one-half of the region's projected population growth to the year 2035. FOCUS PDAs and associated incentive programs like Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) – which reached its 10-year anniversary in 2008 – provide a solid foundation upon which to build Plan Bay Area.

How much time do we have to complete Plan Bay Area?

According to the State, the Bay Area's final plan is due in March 2013. However, a draft plan needs to be completed by the beginning of 2012 so it can guide the investments in the transportation plan, to ensure consistency with the eight-year housing allocation, and make sure that environmental impact documents are completed in time to allow sufficient public review. We received our final greenhouse-gas targets from the California Air Resources Board in September 2010. That leaves a relatively short time to work with all our partners to actually produce the plan.

In coming months, we will build the necessary analytic tools, strengthen partnerships with local governments and other stakeholders, and work out the information and engagement mechanisms to make the process transparent and worthy of public support.

How can I get involved?

Public engagement is essential to the success of all the regional efforts that are part of the One Bay Area initiative, as well as to the multi-year development of one of our most comprehensive regional planning efforts to date, Plan Bay Area. Simply put, we need the input of all stakeholders — most especially the people who live and work in Bay Area communities — if we're going to build a plan that meets their vision, goals and aspirations for a prosperous future.

There are many ways to get involved. A great way to start is by getting engaged in the development of Plan Bay Area. 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.

Finally, if you're on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), please visit our One Bay Area social media pages for more updates and conversation. Over time, we hope these sites will become an online hub of activity for a whole community of engaged Bay Area citizens. We need you to be our partners!

Glossary of Terms

Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) — If the SCS is unable to achieve the greenhouse gas reduction target, then an APS must be prepared. The APS would show how the greenhouse gas targets would be achieved through alternative development patterns, infrastructure investments, or additional transportation measures or policies. The APS is a separate document from the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), but may be adopted at the same time as the RTP.

Assembly Bill (AB) 32 — The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, which requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

Assembly Bill (AB) 32 Scoping Plan — The scoping plan developed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has a range of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction actions which include [direct regulations](#), alternative compliance mechanisms, monetary and non-monetary incentives, [voluntary actions](#), market-based mechanisms (such as a [cap-and-trade](#) system), and an [AB 32 cost of implementation fee regulation](#) to fund the program. The plan is a central requirement of [AB 32](#).

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) — The council of governments and designated regional planning agency represent the San Francisco Bay Area's nine counties and 101 cities and towns. ABAG initiates innovative programs, projects, and partnerships to help resolve the region's economic, social, and environmental challenges, providing research and analysis and cost-effective local government service programs. ABAG is committed to enhancing the quality of life in the Bay Area by leading the region in advocacy, collaboration, and excellence in planning, research, and member services.

Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) — BAAQMD regulates industry and employers to keep air pollution in check and sponsors programs to clean the air. BAAQMD also works with ABAG, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) on issues that affect land use, transportation, and air quality.

Bay Area Regional Agency Climate Protection Program — This program was approved by the Joint Policy Committee (JPC) on July 20, 2007. As part of this process, ABAG established targets for assessing alternative land use scenarios in the development of the latest iteration of *Projections 2009*, the region's policy-based forecast of population and employment. MTC developed the RTP update, *Transportation 2035*, which evaluates transportation strategies and investment programs relative to a target of reducing GHG emissions from on-road vehicles in the year 2035 by 40 percent compared to 1990 levels.

Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) — A state-established agency with jurisdiction over dredging and filling of San Francisco Bay and limited jurisdiction over development within 100 feet of the Bay.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) — part of the California Environmental Protection Agency. Its mission is to promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through the effective and efficient reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and considering the effects on the economy of the state. SB 375 requires that CARB set GHG-reduction targets for cars and light trucks in each California region for the years 2020 and 2035.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) — This California [law](#) passed in 1970 requires that documentation of potential environmental impacts of development projects must be submitted prior to development. Under SB 375, housing development projects can qualify for a full CEQA exemption if:

- They do not exceed 8 acres or 200 units
- They can be served by existing utilities
- They will not have a significant effect on historic resources
- Their buildings exceed energy efficiency standards
- They provide any of the following:
 - 5 acres of open space
 - 20 percent moderate-income housing
 - 10 percent low-income housing
 - 5 percent very-low-income housing.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) — CO₂ is a colorless, odorless, non-poisonous gas that is a normal part of the ambient air. CO₂ contributes the most to human-induced global warming. Human activities such as fossil fuel combustion and deforestation have increased atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ by approximately 30 percent since the industrial revolution.

Clean Air Plan (CAP) — At a public hearing on September 15, 2010, the BAAQMD Board of Directors adopted the final *Bay Area 2010 Clean Air Plan*, and certified the Final Environmental Impact Report on the CAP. The 2010 CAP serves to update the Bay Area ozone plan in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 10 of the California Health & Safety Code. In addition, the 2010 CAP provides an integrated, multi-pollutant strategy to improve air quality, protect public health, and protect the climate.

Climate Change — Climate change refers to changes in the Earth’s weather patterns, including the rise in the Earth’s average temperature due to an increase in heat-trapping or greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Climate scientists agree that climate change is a man-made problem caused by the burning of fossil fuels like petroleum and coal. Transportation accounts for about 40 percent of the Bay Area’s GHG emissions. Climate change is expected to significantly affect the Bay Area’s public health, air quality, and transportation infrastructure through sea level rise and extreme weather events.

Congestion Management Agency (CMA) — A county-level agency responsible for preparing and implementing a county’s Congestion Management Program. CMAs came into existence as a result of state legislation and voter approval of Proposition 111 in 1990. Subsequent legislation made optional the requirement for counties to have a CMA. All Bay Area counties have them.

Complete Communities — Complete communities are those which provide the opportunity for people to live a complete day, including their work, school, services, and recreation, within the boundaries of their own neighborhoods. Complete communities offer these amenities in a

pedestrian-friendly atmosphere where public transit is at least as convenient as the automobile. These neighborhoods or districts are self-sufficient by connecting transit and shopping, and are surrounded by different housing types, services, and amenities. Complete communities are created through an integrated approach to transportation planning, land use planning, and urban design with an inter-related set of policies that mutually reinforce one another.

Current Regional Plans Forecast — Current Regional Plans Forecast refers to the forecast of housing and employment based on the assumptions in ABAG Projections 2009 and some input from local jurisdictions. It reduces employment growth expectations for 2035 given the current recession and economic restructuring.

Detailed Scenarios — Following development of the Initial Vision Scenario, Detailed Scenarios that account for available revenues will be developed, analyzed and discussed as part of the Plan Bay Area process. (See also Initial Vision Scenario and Preferred Scenario.)

Equitable Development — Equitable development ensures that individuals and families in all communities can participate in and benefit from economic growth and activity. It is grounded in four guiding principles: the integration of people and place strategies; reduction of local and regional disparities; promotion of "double bottom line" investments; and inclusion of meaningful community voice, participation, and leadership.

FOCUS — A regional planning initiative spearheaded by ABAG in cooperation with MTC, and in coordination with BAAQMD and BCDC. FOCUS seeks to protect open space and natural resources while encouraging infill development in existing communities (see PCAs and PDAs below). The FOCUS initiative encourages future growth in areas near transit and within the communities that surround the San Francisco Bay. Concentrating housing in these areas offers housing and transportation choices for all residents, while helping to reduce traffic, protect the environment, and enhance existing neighborhoods.

Focused Growth — Development that reflects higher densities, mixed use, and a higher proportion of housing and employment growth in urban areas, particularly near transit stations and along transit corridors, as well as in town centers.

Growth Opportunity Areas — Locations in the region identified by local jurisdictions during the development of the Initial Vision Scenario with potential capacity for growth. These areas may be in the process of becoming PDAs or have different criteria to pursue sustainability focused on employment or rural characteristics.

Global Warming — The progressive gradual rise of the Earth's average surface temperature thought to be caused in part by increased concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) — Gas in an atmosphere that absorbs and emits radiation within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect, which causes warming of the atmosphere of the Earth.

Initial Vision Scenario (IVS) — As part of Plan Bay Area, the Initial Vision Scenario articulates the Bay Area's vision of future land uses and assesses its performance relative to statutory greenhouse gas and housing targets as well as other voluntary performance targets. The

Initial Vision Scenario is unconstrained by available revenues. As such, it serves as a starting point for the development, analysis and discussion of Detailed Scenario alternatives that will lead to a preferred scenario by early 2012. (See also Detailed Scenarios and Preferred Scenario.)

Joint Policy Committee (JPC) — The JPC coordinates the regional planning efforts of the [ABAG](#), BAAQMD, [BCDC](#) and MTC. Among the JPC's current initiatives are [focused growth](#), [climate protection](#), and development of a sustainable communities' strategy pursuant to [SB 375](#).

Low-carbon emissions standards or low carbon fuel standards (LCFS) — California's LCFS requires fuel providers to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels sold in the state, dramatically expanding the market for alternative fuels. By 2020, the LCFS will reduce carbon content in all passenger vehicle fuels sold in California by 10 percent.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) — A regional council of governments authorized under federal law to develop a regional transportation plan.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) — The transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. MTC is the MPO for the Bay Area.

Particulate Matter_{2.5} (PM_{2.5}) — Fine particles are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller. The regional target is to reduce fine particulate matter, PM_{2.5}, by 10 percent below today's levels.

Particulate Matter₁₀ (PM₁₀) — Particulate matter of 10 micrometers or less in size. The regional target is to reduce coarse particulate matter, PM₁₀, by 45 percent over today's levels.

Performance Measures — Indicators of how well the transportation system or specific transportation projects will improve transportation conditions.

Place Types — Groups neighborhoods or centers with similar sustainability characteristics and physical and social qualities, such as the scale of housing buildings, frequency and type of transit, quality of the streets, concentration of jobs, and range of services. Place types are a tool of local-regional exchange to identify places and policies for sustainable development. Bay Area jurisdictions can select a place type to indicate their desired level of growth in the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Plan Bay Area — One of our region's most comprehensive planning efforts to date. It is a joint effort led by ABAG and MTC in partnership with BAAQMD and BCDC. All four agencies are collaborating at an unprecedented level to produce a more integrated land use-transportation plan.

Priority Conservation Area (PCA) — Regionally significant open spaces for which there exists a broad consensus for long-term protection and for which public funds may be invested to promote their protection. Local jurisdictions and open space agencies identified these locations voluntarily through the FOCUS initiative.

Priority Development Area (PDA) — Locations within existing communities that present infill development opportunities, and are easily accessible to transit, jobs, shopping and services. Local jurisdictions identified these locations voluntarily through the FOCUS initiative.

Reduction Target — A goal set by California Air Resources Board for a region to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks within a specific timeframe.

RAWG (Regional Advisory Working Group) — An advisory group set up to advise staff of ABAG, MTC, BAAQMD and BCDC on development of Plan Bay Area. Its membership includes staff representatives of local jurisdictions (CMAs, planning directors, transit operators, public works agencies) as well as representatives from the business, housing, environmental and social-justice communities.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) — The Regional Housing Needs Assessment process is a state mandated planning process for housing in California. ABAG is responsible for allocating this state-determined regional housing need among all of the Bay Area’s nine counties and 101 cities with assistance of a recently established SCS Housing Methodology Committee. The SCS Housing Methodology Committee is currently evaluating the factors to be used by ABAG in the current allocation process. Beginning in this current cycle, RHNAs must be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) mandated by SB 375. Local housing elements must be adopted 18 months after the next regional transportation plan.

RHNA Integration — RHNA must be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). SB 375 requires that the RHNA/housing element cycle will be synchronized and coordinated with the preparation of every other RTP update, starting with the first update after 2010 (i.e., 2013). RTP updates occur every four years, and housing elements must be adopted by local governments eighteen months after the adoption of the RTP. With a few exceptions, the region will now be on an eight-year RHNA cycle and local governments will be on eight-year housing element cycles. In addition to synchronizing with the preparation of the RTP and the SCS, the RHNA allocation must be consistent with the development pattern included in the SCS. The resolution approving the RHNA shall demonstrate consistency with the Bay Area’s implementation of SB 375 and the SCS.

Regional Performance Targets — Both ABAG and MTC used performance targets in developing the *Regional Transportation Plan and Projections 2009*. Performance targets include limiting greenfield development to 900 acres per year, or 22,500 acres over the 2010-2035 time period. Additional targets include increasing non-auto access to jobs and services by 20 percent, by 2035, and reducing daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita by 10 percent, compared to 2006 levels. Other targets include increasing access to jobs and essential services via transit or walking by 20 percent above today’s levels; reducing driving per person by 10 percent below today’s levels; reducing traffic congestion, measured by hours of delay, by 20 percent below today’s levels; and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) — A transportation plan which is developed every four or five years that, among other things, outlines a region’s transportation investments. The Bay Area’s Regional Transportation Plan is called *Transportation 2035 Plan* and it is the long-range planning document of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The plan has a 25-year horizon and serves as a comprehensive blueprint for investment strategies for maintaining, managing and improving the surface transportation network in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The plan determines how the region will spend nearly \$218 billion in local, regional, state and federal funds that are projected to be available to the Bay Area over the next 25 years.

SB 375 Transportation and Land Use Planning Act of 2008 — The act mandates an integrated regional land-use-and-transportation-planning approach to reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions from automobiles and light trucks, principally by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). SB 375 requires that the California Air Resources Board (CARB) set GHG-reduction

targets for cars and light trucks in each California region for the years 2020 and 2035. SB 375 provides incentives for creating attractive, walkable and sustainable communities and revitalizing existing communities. SB 375 also changes the state Housing Element law by linking regional planning efforts for transportation and housing. Under the bill, all transportation and housing planning processes are put on the same eight-year schedule and must be updated once every eight years. The Sustainable Communities Strategy, RTP and RHNA will be developed together through a single and integrated cross agency work program with the JPC.

SB 375 Implementation — SB 375 explicitly assigns responsibilities to ABAG and to the MTC to implement the bill’s provisions for the Bay Area. Both agencies are members of the Joint Policy Committee (JPC). The policies in this document were approved by the JPC and provide guidance to the two lead regional agencies in fulfilling their responsibilities in collaboration with their JPC partners, BAAQMD and BCDC.

Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) — A part of the Regional Transportation Plan that predicts a likely growth pattern for the region. The SCS lays out how emissions reductions will be met. This strategy becomes part of the Regional Transportation Plan. It does incorporate the RHNA requirement to provide housing to accommodate all income groups while meeting reduction targets. SB 375 requires the regional transportation plan for regions of the state with a metropolitan transportation planning organization to adopt an SCS.

Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) — The Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) is the CEQA document that will be prepared to review ‘transit priority projects’ that are consistent with the adopted Sustainable Communities Strategy. The SCEA is not required to reference, describe, or discuss growth inducing impacts or any project-specific or cumulative impacts from cars and light-duty truck trips generated by the project on global warming or the regional transportation network. The lead agency’s decision to review and approve a transit priority project with the SCEA shall be reviewed under the substantial evidence standard.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) — A type of development that links land use and transportation facilities to support public transit systems and help reduce sprawl, traffic congestion and air pollution. Transit-oriented developments include housing, along with complementary public uses (jobs, retail and services), at a strategic point along a regional transit system, such as a rail hub.

Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) — MTC’s TLC Program provides funding for projects that provide for a range of transportation choices, support connectivity between transportation investments and land uses, and are developed through an inclusive community planning effort. The purpose of TLC Program is to support community-based transportation projects that bring new vibrancy to downtown areas, commercial cores, neighborhoods, and transit corridors, enhancing their amenities and ambiance and making them places where people want to live, work and visit.

Transit Priority Projects — Projects that contain at least 50 percent residential use; have a minimum net density of 20 units per acre; have a floor-area ratio for the commercial portion of the project at 0.75; and are located within ½ mile of either a rail stop, a ferry terminal, or a bus line with 15-minute headways.