



Date: November 14, 2014

To: Executive Board

From: Brad Paul, Deputy Executive Director  
Miriam Chion, Planning and Research Director

Subject: **Community Engagement Plan for Plan Bay Area 2017**

## **Executive Summary**

Last May, staff presented you with a memo describing what worked and what didn't regarding the first Plan Bay Area along with suggestions as to how to improve our communications about the Plan in the future. We also promised to come back with another memo presenting staff's recommendations for creating a more interactive, inclusive community engagement process for Plan Bay Area 2017.

As we begin the two and a half year process of updating Plan Bay Area, ABAG and MTC are developing complementary public participation plans to promote the ongoing and active participation of local jurisdictions, the public and a broad range of stakeholders.

This memo begins with a brief overview of the designated roles ABAG and MTC play in implementing SB375 and the federal Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) as well as the milestones we anticipate for Plan Bay Area 2017, including:

- 1) *State of Region* report - tells us what has happened in the Bay Area regarding jobs, business and housing over the past few years;
- 2) *People, Places and Prosperity* report – key regional land use perspectives for the next Plan;
- 3) Regional Forecast - jobs, population and housing forecast that inform the next Plan;
- 4) Scenarios/Draft Plan – housing and jobs land use alternatives based on #2 above and MTC's transportation investment strategy.

Next we outline ABAG's proposed community engagement process that will help supplement MTC's Public Participation Plan, and include a number of additional strategies that are complementary such as our ongoing countywide meetings with ABAG delegates. The strategies and venues described below will offer a variety of opportunities for community participation and engagement for Plan Bay Area 2017 including city officials, stakeholder groups, the business community and concerned residents.

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The community engagement proposals described in this memo incorporate your input from the May Executive Board meeting as well as our discussions with ABAG delegates (county by county), locally elected officials, MTC staff and other key stakeholders. The transparent, interactive community engagement process we are proposing should address most of the concerns we've heard over the past year about what "didn't work" the last time around.

### **Recommended Action**

Adopt Community Engagement Plan for Plan Bay Area 2017

### **Learning from the first Plan Bay Area**

In July 2013, ABAG and MTC adopted the Bay Area's first Sustainable Communities Strategy (e.g. Plan Bay Area). This state mandated plan must be revised and updated every four years in conjunction with MTC's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), another long-range plan that's revised every four years. The next iteration of Plan Bay Area will be adopted in July of 2017.

Plan Bay Area 2013 was the first time MTC and ABAG worked jointly on a regional plan that combined the RTP, an MTC responsibility, with the regional housing and land use issues that are ABAG's responsibility. Despite the initial challenges, as both staffs gained experience, this joint work became a more informed and better coordinated effort. Staff was managing multiple statutory deadlines that resulted in some people feeling the process was rushed.

One major difference between the first Plan Bay Area and the 2017 update is that the 2017 update does not include the state mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) which operates on an eight year cycle. It was required as part of the 2013 Plan and will be included again in the 2021 update of Plan Bay Area.

As we begin the process of putting together Plan Bay Area 2017, ABAG and MTC have benefitted from extensive in-house briefings on what worked and what didn't in the first Plan Bay Area process. This led to some very productive cross staff discussions on how to best improve the community engagement process going forward (see attached "How We Talk About Plan Bay Area").

### **Complementary Roles of ABAG and MTC in Plan Bay Area Process**

To ensure better coordination between transportation and housing investments and local land use decisions, SB 375 mandated that Plan Bay Area become an element of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the Bay Area's long-range transportation investment strategy adopted by MTC every four years. The legislation also called for ABAG to be responsible for developing the land use and housing assumptions that inform the Plan.

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Specifically, SB 375 added three new elements to the Regional Transportation Plan:

- (1) a land use component that identifies how the region could house the region's entire population over the next 25 years;
- (2) a discussion of resource and farmland areas; and
- (3) a demonstration of how the forecasted development patterns and the transportation network can work together to reduce GHG emissions.

Every four years, as part of the RTP, MTC creates a Public Participation Plan (PPP) that describes the ways MTC and ABAG will involve Bay Area residents, local public officials, Congestion Management Agencies and others in the preparation of Plan Bay Area and the RTP in an open, transparent way. This memo outlines the additional community engagement work ABAG will be undertaking, beyond the PPP, to help ensure a more inclusive and transparent community engagement process for the next iteration of Plan Bay Area. It will describe some of the tasks and strategies including coordinating closely with ABAG members and MTC staff and Commissioners on a number of issues.

### **Timeline and Milestone's for Plan Bay Area 2017**

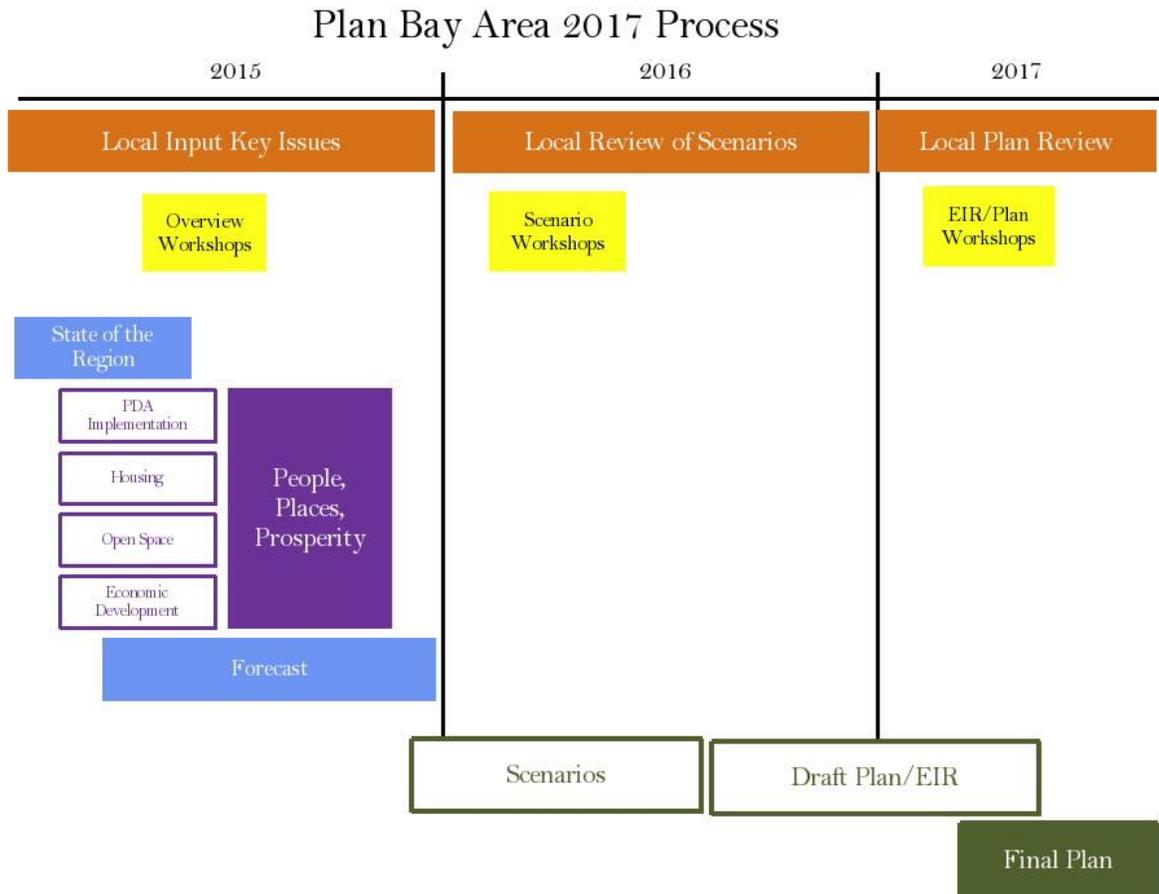
In preparation for the Plan Bay Area update, ABAG will complete three major tasks in 2015, the *State of the Region* report, the *People, Places and Prosperity* report, and the regional forecasts.

Below is a graphic of the next Plan process and timeline. After that is a more detailed description of key elements of that timeline.

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The development of Plan Bay Area 2017 involves three overarching phases: 2015 - Forecast and Major Planning Tasks; 2016 - Scenarios and Environmental Review; and 2017 - Plan Approval.

## 2015 - Forecast and Major Planning Tasks

The first phase Plan Bay Area 2017 starts with the *State of the Region report*, which provides an assessment of recent economic, demographic and housing trends to inform the forecast and upcoming plan. This report will be followed by a set of reports that address ongoing local strategies as well as regional tasks essential for the development and implementation of Plan Bay Area. They are organized under the four major categories of Plan Bay Area Implementation.

- PDA Implementation
  - *PDA Assessment (including economic and resilience issues)*
  - *Corridors Strategies*
  - *Infrastructure Interdependencies*
  - *Placemaking in the Bay Area*

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- Economic development
  - *Overview of Regional Strategies*
  - *Business partnerships*
  - *Job mobility and workforce opportunities*
  - *Priority Industrial Areas*
- Housing
  - *Housing and Community Risk*
  - *Housing production and affordability strategies*
  - *Fair Housing Equity Assessment*
- Open Space and Farmland
  - *Update of Priority Conservation Areas*
  - *Bay Trail Update*
  - *Water Trail Strategies*

These reports will be distributed to our Executive Board and Regional Planning Committee and posted on the ABAG website. They'll inform the comprehensive regional report: ***People, Places and Prosperity: Complete Communities in the Bay Area***, which will synthesize key regional land use issues and strategies to be considered in Plan Bay Area. The region's adopted Priority Development and Conservation Areas continue to act as the framework for the report.

ABAG and MTC are required to develop forecasts of the region's changing demographics as well as projections of anticipated housing and economic trends that will inform Plan Bay Area's investments and policy decisions. These forecasts form the basis for developing the Plan's regional land use plan and transportation investment strategies. ABAG is responsible for the land use and housing forecasts, and MTC is responsible for developing the transportation revenue and investment forecasts.

The end of 2015 will close with the release of the regional forecast of jobs, population and housing for Plan Bay Area. Based on econometric and demographic models, and local input from the Bay Area planners, this forecast will address growth from 2010 to 2040. Legal settlements associated with the Regional Housing Control Total for Plan Bay Area will also be addressed, including disclosure of key assumptions and the inter-regional commute forecast between the Bay Area and Central Valley counties.

### **2016 - Scenarios and Environmental Review**

ABAG staff in coordination with MTC will gather input from local jurisdictions and stakeholders to inform development of three scenarios. ABAG will encourage planners from the jurisdictions to bring these scenarios before their respective city councils to elicit feedback. Each scenario will present an alternative land use and transportation pattern for 2040. The land use scenarios are expected to be analyzed through the UrbanSim model for additional information. The transportation scenarios will be developed by the Travel 2 transportation model at MTC. The preferred scenario will be adopted by the ABAG Board and MTC Commission by May 2016.

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The Environmental Impact Report will start in May 2016 and will be discussed at the various regional committee meetings for the rest of 2016.

### **2017 - Plan Approval**

Plan Bay Area 2017 and its corresponding Environmental Impact Report would be adopted by the ABAG Board and MTC Commission by June 2017. Drafts will be released for discussion in February 2017

### **Proposed Community Engagement Plan for Plan Bay Area 2017 Update**

Plan Bay Area 2013 forms the baseline for Plan Bay Area updates that are mandated every four years. Since its passage, staff has had time to reflect on what went well and what didn't in that effort. The most frequently cited problems were the compressed schedule, use of technical jargon, a perceived loss of local control and the desire to engage in the kind of dialogue that's hard to do in two-minute presentations.

Based on our experience in developing Plan Bay Area 2013, the suggestions and complaints we received before and after adoption of that plan in July 2013, and our ongoing discussions with MTC, staff is recommending a number of methods and venues for soliciting public feedback, ideas and suggestions for the next Plan Bay Area. We believe this menu of options will allow communication with a wide variety of interests—from individual residents to stakeholder organizations to people opposed to the current plan. It should also be noted that all ABAG meetings are currently being videotaped, and are freely accessible at [www.Regional-video.com](http://www.Regional-video.com).

#### **1. ABAG Delegate Meetings**

An elected official from each city, town, and county in the Bay Area serves as a delegate to ABAG's General Assembly. Shortly after the adoption of Plan Bay Area 2013, staff (at the suggestion of Board member Eklund) decided to convene regular meetings of ABAG delegates in each county to start an ongoing dialogue with these elected officials to hear about the challenges they were facing in implementing Plan Bay Area and how ABAG could be of greater help.

To date, ABAG has held delegate meetings in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Solano, Sonoma, Marin, Napa and Contra Costa counties with anywhere from 5 to 15 delegates in each meeting. These conversations are helping to inform ABAG and MTC about the challenges facing local jurisdictions as they seek to implement Plan Bay Area in ways that reflect their local land use controls as well as their unique assets and values. Some communities are focused on creating more open space and recreation areas for their residents while others seek to attract more jobs or create additional transportation and housing options for local families.

These delegate meetings with locally elected officials have been so successful that ABAG staff is planning to conduct a second and third round in each county over the next two years to continue

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learning about local issues and challenges and to inform local officials about the milestones and deadlines described above, giving them an even greater voice in the shaping of Plan Bay Area 2017.

Opportunities for Input: *staff will set up staggered countywide meetings with ABAG delegates every nine months or so from now until adoption of Plan Bay Area 2017. Some counties (e.g. Marin) have chosen to meet more frequently.*

### 2. ABAG's General Assembly

One suggestion from our Delegate Meetings is that we set aside time at our General Assembly (GA) for member jurisdictions to meet in affinity groups based on the size of each community and the issues that are most relevant. For instance, we might have a small cities and towns caucus, one for the fifteen largest and fastest growing older suburbs and one for the three large cities. We will be building these kinds of affinity groups into all future GA's to allow ABAG members to compare notes on challenges they face, share best practices and discuss each milestone and publication related to the Plan Bay Area 2017 update. These affinity group meetings will also include appropriate ABAG staff and policy experts as resources for our members.

Opportunities for Input: *We will be conducting three ABAG General Assemblies between now and final adoption of Plan Bay Area 2017. These General Assemblies take place in April of each year. We'll also have the opportunity to conduct regional workshops and conferences around various aspects of Plan Bay Area such as resilience or economic development each fall. Our recent Loma Prieta 25 conference is one example of this.*

### 3. Technical groups and evening public workshops on specific topics

One criticism we heard was that while ABAG's Executive Board meetings were at night, some Plan Bay Area 2013 meetings (e.g. RPC, RAWG) were held during the day, making it difficult for residents who worked to participate. This time, staff will encourage our partners who hold daytime meetings to offer alternative evening venues where Plan Bay Area topics will be discussed.

We will also use our website, social media and the press to publicize evening workshops and encourage the working groups we participate with (e.g. HUD Prosperity Working Group, Bay Area Council Economic Institute) to meet in the evening as well.

Whether meetings are held in the evening or during the day, whenever possible they should not be run like the public hearings last time where people line up and get two minutes to tell us what they think and then get no immediate response. Meetings will be set up in ways that encourage dialogue among participants and with ABAG staff. We look forward to real conversations with people in these meetings and workshops, ones that allow us to benefit from openly discussing the challenges and opportunities local communities are facing related to housing, employment, open space, etc. and how the next iteration of Plan Bay Area could better address their concerns.

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We also need to avoid taxing both our staff and the general public with too many meetings. Therefore, we will use existing discussions among ABAG partners (e.g. regional agencies and business, open space and housing advocacy groups) to gather input for Plan Bay Area 2017.

Examples of this would include:

1. **Housing/Equity:** RPC, RAWG, HUD Prosperity Working Group/Conference
2. **Open Space/Farmland Preservation:** meetings re: implementing PCA revisions
3. **Business & Economic Development:** input gathered by Bay Area Council & BACEI; and economic development groups such as East Bay EDA, Silicon Valley Leadership, the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, the North Bay Leadership Council and the Joint Policy Committee
4. **Resilience:** Resilience activities include work to plan for climate adaptation i.e. Resilient Shorelines to consider rising sea levels (ABAG/BCDC/CA Coastal Commission, JPC) as well as other natural hazards such as mitigation and recovery from a major earthquake

Staff will also reach out to people with experience on these topics who either didn't participate in Plan Bay Area 2013 or opposed it and invite them to meet with us to discuss their ideas for better addressing each topic. The purpose of these meetings is to see if we clearly understand their concerns and accurately capture their points of view.

#### 4. Ongoing communication with local Planning Directors and City Managers through Meetings and Basecamp

ABAG's planning staff will continue to coordinate with planning directors and city managers in each of cities and towns in all nine Bay Area counties through Basecamp, an invitation only internet user group that allows users to communicate on a number of planning issues.

ABAG staff currently coordinates with local planners on the implementation of PDA planning grants, attends county wide meetings of planning directors and city managers, and participates in corridor meetings that include planning staff, transit agencies, Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) and local jurisdictions.

Staff uses these opportunities to gather local planning input to develop Plan Bay Area 2017 scenarios. In addition, staff will ask each planning director to update their local city council on an ongoing basis with regard to issues of concern in each jurisdiction.

*Opportunities for Input: Local planners will provide information on current building, housing and job trends, as well as input on local land use plans and community engagement.*

#### 5. New ABAG Website and Social Media

ABAG's communications staff, web master and IT staff are working collaboratively with a design consultant, to implement a new website design for ABAG, the first major update of our website since the 1980s. A major focus of this effort is to make the website simpler, more user friendly and easier to

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navigate. We will soon be putting up our new homepage which links to every page on the old website. Our next focus will be on updating those landing pages related to implementing Plan Bay Area 2013 and preparing for the Plan Bay Area 2017 Update. For instance, we have a new Priority Development Area (PDA) showcase that will highlight best practices and approaches in some of the Bay Area's most vibrant PDAs throughout the region.

As we begin the conversations on each of these topics, we will find better ways to highlight those discussions on our website in clear, simple, non-technical language with lots of good visuals. Upcoming reports (e.g. State of the Region Report, Regional Prosperity Plan) will continue to be published in hard copy form, but in addition we will have a web version up on our website for review and comment.

Finally, as part of this effort we are also developing a more robust social media program for ABAG starting with an ABAG Twitter account featured on the new ABAG homepage. We will continue to refine and expand our social media presence as we find new ways to engage our members and constituents, particularly around the major issues related to Plan Bay Area.

Opportunities for Input: *The new ABAG homepage will go live by the end of the year, including a link to our new ABAG Twitter account and several revised landing pages that speak directly to PDAs, PCAs and Plan Bay Area PDA implementation.*

### 6. Regional Public Workshops by County

We propose doing nine county workshops to solicit local feedback on the published papers, key milestones and major issues related to the next iteration of Plan Bay Area (e.g. proposed forecast methodology, resilience issues, maintaining local control). We are now considering conducting five county workshops on one date and four workshops on another date.

Each workshop would begin with an open house format, where ABAG and MTC staff would engage in a more informal dialogue with attendees around a set of exhibits related to major topics of interest (e.g. housing, local control, resilience). That portion of the workshop would be followed by a more traditional hearing not by ABAG or MTC staff or Board members, but by local elected officials, including ABAG delegates.

Key Planning and Management Staff that can attend each county-wide meetings:

Ezra Rapport	Mark Shorett
Brad Paul	Hing Wong
Miriam Chion	Gillian Adams
Duane Bay	Johnny Jaramillo

### 7. Taking Advantage of Invitations to Speak Out in the Community

Over the past year, staff has been invited to speak at local city council meetings, gatherings of local Boards of Realtors, forums on local housing and environmental issues, resilience conferences, etc. We see these as an excellent opportunity to both explain that ABAG is more than just Plan Bay Area, and to

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engage in more in depth discussions with these groups about their concerns, suggestions, questions and ideas as they relate to implementing the current Plan and preparing for the 2017 Update. To the extent staff is available, we will work with our Board and local officials to find opportunities to go out into our various communities to have these discussions at the local level.

### **Major Challenges and Opportunities that Remain**

- **Language:** As we stated in our May Board memo, we must continue to be mindful of the need to avoid technical jargon that leads to misunderstanding, distrust and alienation (e.g. GHG, TOD, VMT) whether it is in our upcoming publications, our meetings with local stakeholders or our larger public workshops.
- **Engaging the Business Community:** we will continue to work with the Bay Area Council and the Council's Economic Institute to engage business leaders in a deeper conversation about economic development forecasts for the Bay Area and what Plan Bay Area might contribute to the goals of the business community.
- **Deepening Discussion on Resilience:** we're currently working with both BCDC and the CA Coastal Commission to develop a deeper analysis of the impacts of sea level rise locally. ABAG's Resiliency Unit also works with the United States Geologic Survey, FEMA, and Caltrans to consider seismic risk mitigation and long term recovery in the Bay Area.
- **Working earlier with BCDC, Air Quality Management District and JPC:** ABAG and MTC staff have been meeting with these regional partners to determine when and how they would like to become more involved in the next iteration of Plan Bay Area.
- **Forecasts:** We will provide the public with our regional forecasts earlier in the process and in a more transparent way, starting with the release of the assumptions and methodology we will be using in the fall of 2015. Continuing to stay in close contact with the Department of Finance throughout this process will also help us arrive at a common set of projections related to anticipated increases in population, jobs and housing.

### **Conclusion**

ABAG's Community Engagement Plan attempts to facilitate a broad dialogue regarding the Bay Area's future with local jurisdictions, stakeholders, the business community, and the public at large. The intent is to ensure all sectors of the Bay Area community have an opportunity to engage, comment and influence Plan Bay Area 2017. While resources are limited, a robust engagement plan provides the best means to develop momentum for the implementation of the Plan's goals, including expanding housing choices, enhancing the natural environment, and growing the Bay Area economy.

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### **Recommended Action**

Adopt ABAG's Community Engagement Plan for Plan Bay Area 2017

1. ABAG Delegate Meetings
2. ABAG General Assembly
3. Technical Groups and Evening Public Workshops on Specific Topics
4. Ongoing Communication with local Planning Directors and City Managers
5. New ABAG website and social media
6. Regional Public Workshops
7. Taking Advantage of Invitations to Speak Out in the Community

Attachment:

Communications Support Surrounding Plan Bay Area 2017, May 8, 2014