



Date: September 25, 2013

To: Regional Planning Committee

From: Miriam Chion, Planning & Research Director

Subject: **Plan Bay Area Implementation: Inner Bay Area Corridors**

Background:

This memo elaborates on the Inner Bay Area Corridors concept first introduced to the ABAG executive board on September 19, 2013 (please refer to “Plan Bay Area Next Steps” memo included in RPC packet for context). Over the next thirty years jurisdictions along El Camino Real, International Boulevard/East 14th Street/Mission Boulevard, and San Pablo Avenue are expected to accommodate over two thirds of the Bay Area’s growth in housing and jobs as well as major transit investments. Since 2007 ABAG and MTC have been collaborating with local jurisdictions and stakeholders along these major thoroughfares to better define how growth will follow and support local plans while at the same time enhancing regional prosperity for all our diverse communities. With Plan Bay Area moving into its implementation phase, staff is seeking your input on an initial dialogue on Priority Development Area (PDA) strategies along these corridors. These corridors link the Bay Area’s major employment centers and can provide an organizing framework for housing and employment growth, neighborhood vitality, and complete communities.

This task will build upon local plans and strategies, CMA PDA Growth and Investment Strategies by county and previous corridor studies. Also, the current success of the Grand Boulevard Initiative on El Camino Real provides a wealth of experience on the process of inter-jurisdictional coordination and planning and investment strategies.

Questions for your consideration (No action required):

- How to identify major planning, policy and investment challenges for the development of complete communities along the Inner Bay corridors?
- How to define the qualities, boundaries and priorities of the East Bay corridor? How and what can we learn from the Grand Boulevard Initiative and the previous San Pablo Corridor Project?
- How can regional agencies support the opportunities and challenges of the corridors?
- Are there other related issues to PDA implementation that should be addressed in the corridors?

Introduction:

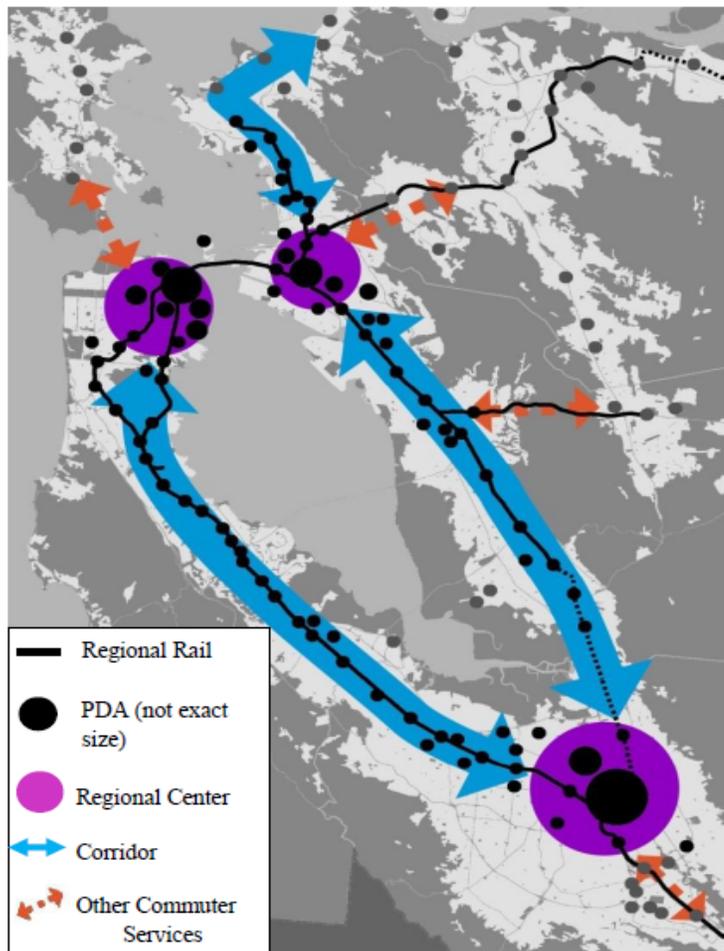
For much of the past decade local jurisdictions have been working in collaboration with ABAG and MTC on ways to support housing and job growth in in-fill areas served by transit. These efforts, embodied in the designation of PDAs, have informed the region's approach to implementing Plan Bay Area. Significant effort has already been focused on El Camino Real, International Blvd/East 14th Street, and San Pablo Avenue, which are key transportation corridors that link the region's major employment and population centers. Jurisdictions along these corridors are expected to accommodate over two thirds of the Bay Area's jobs and housing growth over the next thirty years. These corridors are also at the heart of the Bay Area's existing transit network and key Plan Bay Area transit investments.

PDAs along these corridors vary significantly in terms of their financial resources, access to capital, attractiveness to investors, housing market activity, strength of local businesses and commercial development. **Ensuring that future growth will respond to existing and future community needs will depend upon coordination between local and regional agencies, business organizations, community based organizations and others along these corridors.**

Over the past several years communities alongside these thoroughfares have been engaged in wide-ranging discussions about how they might implement their local plans while also ensuring a prosperous sub-regional corridor:

- Jurisdictions along El Camino, through the **Grand Boulevard Initiative**, are well under way towards implementing local plans that align with a shared sub-regional vision. They have completed an assessment of existing conditions and are currently working on infrastructure investment strategies, urban design and public engagement.
- In 2004 communities along San Pablo Avenue (originally from Oakland to Pinole) formed the **San Pablo Corridor Project** and conducted preliminary discussions to

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coordinate their local plans to ensure a thriving corridor. Since then, they have experienced housing and retail development as well as some implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit system.

- Jurisdictions along International Blvd/East 14th St/Mission Blvd have planned for growth in jobs and housing alongside the corridor, but have not yet established a formal framework to coordinate their efforts.

Opportunities and Challenges:

ABAG and MTC are looking for ways in which regional coordination might support existing and future local initiatives in these corridors and PDAs. By working alongside local jurisdictions, regional agencies hope to develop strategies and partnerships to seize upon new development opportunities and craft appropriate responses to challenges. ABAG hopes to investigate the unique role that different PDAs play in the regional economy and the potential for place-based strategies that both strengthen local business districts and create physical environments that support regional prosperity.

These efforts will build upon past and current planning activities including ABAG/MTC's current economic development and land use efforts. These parallel tasks will provide analysis and potential strategies that can be incorporated into corridor and PDA level planning.

ABAG and MTC hope to work with jurisdictions and stakeholders along the corridors to prioritize key issues to investigate from a regional perspective. From previous discussions we identified a preliminary set of issues which are presented below as possible avenues for exploration:

- **Short and long term development feasibility**
- **Entitlement streamlining**
- **Housing (production and rehabilitation, affordability, policies)**
- **Economic development (clusters of specialized activity, driving industries and local services, workforce development, neighborhood character and networks)**
- **Neighborhood services (schools, parks, food, health)**
- **Community stability and displacement risk**
- **Physical infrastructure**

Proposed Next Steps

Over the next three months, regional agencies in consultation with local jurisdictions will define the following tasks:

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- **Engagement and convening:** ABAG and MTC are coordinating site visits with local staff at PDAs along corridors to hear their perspectives about the challenges and opportunities along the corridors. Regional agency staff may also meet with other key stakeholders, such as special districts, business groups etc. Staff would continue to engage local jurisdictions and others throughout the implementation process.
- **Strategic land use analysis:** Based upon the neighborhood and corridor-level challenges and opportunities identified locally and the stage of development in each corridor, ABAG and MTC can conduct an assessment of the specific qualities and unique needs of PDAs along the corridors. This will draw upon previous and ongoing analysis conducted by local agencies, CMAs and regional agencies. This analysis will focus on housing production and rehabilitation, increasing economic vitality and neighborhood vitality and resiliency.
- **Advance implementation strategies:** According to the needs and priorities of each corridor, ABAG and MTC staff would work with local jurisdictions and other stakeholders to implement strategies that support community engagement, strengthen inter-agency coordination and expand public and private investments.

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Corridor Profiles

This table summarizes the local and regional planning initiatives along the proposed corridors. These corridors are comprised of complementary business districts, employment centers, and communities that converge at the Regional Centers (San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland) and are connected by the region’s core transit network. With the exception of the Grand Boulevard Initiative the names and descriptions of each corridor—articulated below—are preliminary and may be refined through discussion.

Corridor	Grand Boulevard Initiative (El Camino Real)	International Blvd/East 14 th Street/Mission Blvd	San Pablo Avenue
Transit Infrastructure	23 Caltrain Stations 6 BART Stations Caltrain Electrification (expected) El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (expected)	10 BART Stations Capitol corridor train BART Extension from Fremont to San Jose (expected) International Blvd Bus Rapid Transit (expected)	10 BART Stations Expansion of Bus Service (expected)
Current or Past Organizing Efforts	The Grand Boulevard is a collaboration of 19 cities, counties, local and regional agencies united to improve the performance, safety and aesthetics of El Camino. The goal is to produce a coordinated series of policy decisions that will be embraced by all jurisdictions, thereby helping El Camino to function and look better. The initiative brings together for the first time all of the agencies having responsibility for the condition, use and performance of the street.	While this corridor has not benefited from local coordination of planning oversight over the street, there is tremendous potential for collaboration. All the cities alongside this corridor identify International/East 14 th /Mission as a place for increased housing densities and mix of uses. There are many vacant and underutilized sites that could thrive under enhanced local cooperation and the area is expecting the creation of several new bus rapid transit lines.	Communities along San Pablo Avenue have taken initial steps to form a corridor-level coalition to enhance the quality of the corridor. All nine corridor cities identify the street for increased densities and mix of uses, there are multiple sites that are suitable for development, and the corridor is highly walkable.