OneBayArea

Regional Employment Policy Framework
Draft Outline
September 27, 2010

I Introduction

Overview

With commuting representing over 40% of the total vehicle miles traveled in the Bay Area, reducing the length of commutes and increasing non-auto commutes are essential for reducing the region's greenhouse gas emissions. Housing location and affordability are key issues in the Bay Area, for both commute choice and economic competitiveness. However, housing near transit alone will not change commute behavior – jobs must also be more accessible by transit and other modes. Research has shown that the commute trip is the easiest trip type to shift to transit and that the distance from the transit stop to the workplace is a key factor in mode choice.

At the same time, the trend over the past several decades has been employment decentralization and low-density office development. With the majority of jobs now located outside of central business districts, the region's commute pattern has become much more complex and dispersed. Bay Area goals for reducing VMT and increasing transit ridership will not succeed without shifting more work to transit-served employment centers.

This project takes a look at travel from the place of work perspective, with a focus on the densest and best transit-served employment areas in the region. By expanding the discussion of VMT reduction beyond housing location, this project connects the Sustainable Communities Strategy to the economic competitiveness of the region and opportunities for supporting job growth. Key issues we have identified include jobs-related targets and indicators, engaging the business community in the SCS, and informing the growth allocation process and the sub-regional discussions.

Other Regional Job Issues

While our focus is on transit-served office employment areas, this work relates to a number of regional job issues, including: maintaining industrial land, businesses, and jobs; last-mile connections to transit for low-density job areas; industrial park/campus redevelopment; other major destinations (commercial, entertainment, university, medical); equitable access to jobs; industry clustering and regional economic development; and economic development in poorer inner-bay communities and smaller outer-bay communities.

Other Considerations

The discussion of regional employment policies raises a number of other issues that would be explored through our analysis: the variation in fiscal impacts for different local jurisdictions; over-zoning for jobs and fierce competition among local jurisdictions for employers; current economic conditions and vacancy rates and the uncertainty over future commercial development; changing workplace trends; the

degree to which land use policy and transit investments influence employer location decisions; and the extent to which job-based policies or incentives would pull resources from housing production, while housing affordability is still considered a threat to the region's economic competitiveness.

II Job Location

- Where are the densest, job-rich areas in the region?
    - Identify the top employment centers/areas, their share of jobs within cities/counties/region, and their relation to Priority Development Areas and transit
- Trends – how has job density changed over time in the region in the Bay Area?

III Industry Growth and Concentration

- Growth trends in industry sectors from 1990-2008
- Projected industry sector growth
- Spatial concentration of jobs by industry sector

IV Access and Density

- Density & growth – What is the past and projected growth in major employment centers?
- Density & transit – What is the past and projected growth of station areas and transit expansion areas?

V Policy Findings / Strategies

<u>Potential SCS Targets and Indicators</u>

- Jobs-transit targets
- Indicators of economic well-being, the relation of the SCS to economic strength of the region, measures of regional economic development

<u>Engaging the Business Community and Local Jurisdictions Around Employment in the SCS</u>

- What is the level of business community and economic development staff interest in these issues?
- What are the best pathways for these folks to directly input into the SCS process?
- What other topics are most relevant to the business community and local staff? Potential related topics include clustering of industries, transit to workplace, labor market access, and retooling low-density, single-use sites.

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Informing the Growth Allocation Process

- What are our assumptions about the distribution of employment and the variables that influence distribution?
- What growth scenarios should we consider specifically with respect to where job growth occurs and what employment-related policies are evaluated?
- What are the policies and investments most-meaningful for employers or employment centers?

Other Regional Policies

- Resolution 3434 TOD Policy: Is there an effective way to include jobs in the TOD Policy that accounts for the transit benefits of connecting regional destinations without sacrificing the crucial emphasis on housing production?
- PDA Framework: How do we incorporate growing employment centers into the Priority Development Area framework without undermining the regional emphasis on housing production? What transit service or job density thresholds should be required?
- Transit Sustainability Project: What transit service issues have disproportionate impacts on access to work and non-auto commute trip mode share? How can transit better serve the workplace?