Sustainable Communities Strategy

Q&A

Association of Bay Area Governments

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**** This document reflects actual questions asked at public workshops, in letters, articles, and phone calls, and region-wide committee meetings. ****

Overview, Benefits, and Goals

What is the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and what does it do?	The SCS is a long term regional land use plan (2040) designed to prepare the Bay Area for job growth while maintaining our high quality of life. The SCS is required to be adopted by MTC and ABAG in April 2013 by SB 375 (2008; Steinberg). The SCS has been undertaken collaboratively with local governments, identifying areas where cities have chosen appropriate future growth. The SCS is to be updated every four years.
How is Plan Bay Area related to the Sustainable Communities Strategy?	The SCS is part of a larger planning process, called Plan Bay Area, which includes the Bay Area's regional transportation plan, air quality plans, and open space planning.
What are the goals of the SCS?	SCS is intended to more efficiently utilize the infrastructure of the Bay Area to accommodate the growth of the Bay Area economy. Planning in advance for growth should result in more jobs for the economy, better neighborhoods, improved transportation choices, lesser taxes, and a higher quality of life for residents.
Who is involved in the process of developing the SCS and what are the roles of those involved?	The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) have the primary responsibility of developing the Bay Area's SCS. Land use, transportation, public health, and infrastructure planning are being coordinated under Plan Bay Area. They are working in collaboration with the State, regional, local agencies, as well as many business and community groups who view themselves as stakeholders in the process. SB 375 requires that the Boards of the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission adopt the SCS/Plan Bay Area by April 2013.
What are the regional agencies in the Bay Area and who are their board members?	The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), www.abag.ca.gov The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), www.mtc.ca.gov Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD/Air District, www.baaqmd.gov Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), www.bcdc.ca.gov Go to the agencies website's as listed above for full lists of the board and commission members.

What sort of changes can we expect as a result of the SCS? When will changes begin?	Land use and transportation decisions take place slowly over many years. The SCS is looking at 2040 as a planning horizon. If we look back at the Bay Area since 1980, we can see many changes from that time. Over time, cities that agree with the principles of the SCS will begin to plan and zone for land uses that are identified in the plan. It is also important to note that the SCS is updated every four years, so changes in the economy or other factors can be taken into account. The SCS will not have immediate affects on the Bay Area. Over time, cities that agree with the principles of the SCS will begin to plan and zone for land uses that are identified in the plan. The State and regional agencies will encourage incentives and resources to support such efforts. The Bay Area's transportation plans will also be matched to accommodate the growth plans outlined in the SCS.
What is the process and timeline used in developing the SCS?	The SCS process began in 2009, building upon several local and regional efforts in the prior decade to coordinate land use and transportation planning. One of the early steps in the process was to ask cities to self-identify areas for growth where appropriate, and where that location would be well served by transit or pedestrian travel. The cities and regional agencies then began a process of collaboration, establishing principles for high quality planning and neighborhoods and a system for developing priorities for funding. Once this regional framework for growth was established, ABAG was able to make projections as to how the Bay Area economy might expand in the future, and where jobs and housing might locate.
What is a Preferred Land Use Scenario—plan for whose future?	The Preferred Scenario, titled the Jobs-Housing Connection, identifies where economic growth will likely occur in the region, and where housing to serve such growth might be located. Several alternative scenarios were studied. The Jobs Housing Connection, will be the forecasted preferred scenario of the region when approved by ABAG in May 2012. Additional input will be sought from local governments, special districts, stakeholders and residents before a Plan is finally adopted in April 2013. As we are all aware, there is no one possible future that we can rely upon. That is why the Plan will be amended every four years.

What is the time-frame for updating the SCS land use Scenarios and finalizing the plan?	The regional agencies and local government land use authorities have been discussing various economic and land use scenarios for over 18 months. On March 15, 2012, ABAG will release the Jobs Housing Connection Scenario (the Preferred Scenario) for additional comments. On May 17, ABAG will approve the Jobs Housing Connections Scenario as the preferred scenario to be evaluated in a required program environmental impact report (EIR). Between May 2012 and the end of this year, City Councils and stakeholders will be requesting refinements to the preferred scenario (or the Project per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), leading to final adoption of an SCS by April 2013.
What are the Alternative Scenarios that have been identified and how were they determined?	Following the release of the Initial Vision Scenario in Fall of 2010, ABAG and MTC received comments from local planners, City Councils, and stakeholders. From all these comments, an attempt was made to present five alternatives that drew upon the received comments. Three of the Alternatives were based on ABAG's independent research as to market trends and reasonable planning assumptions. ABAG has taken the comments on the Alternative Scenarios into account in creating the Preferred Scenario – Jobs Housing Connection.
How did you come up with these potential land use scenarios?	All of the scenarios were designed to prepare the Bay Area for future job growth. The Bay Area is a growing region with world class economic assets. Working in collaboration with local government and special districts, the scenarios were developed to meet the region's housing and transportation needs.
How often will the SCS be updated and what is the process for updating the plan when necessary?	The SCS is required by SB 375 to be updated every four years. ABAG will be working with local governments to determine whether land use adjustments are required. Market forces and the capacity of cities to finance infrastructure are two important trends to monitor.
Over what period will the SCS be applied to the region?	The SCS planning horizon is 2040. If projected economic growth in the United States is delayed, Bay Area projections might therefore be deferred until 2040-2050.
How often have planning processes such as the SCS taken place in the Bay Area?	The SCS is the first planning process of this type in the Bay Area. Other regional plans were developed by various entities or regional agencies, but none have nearly the same level of collaboration with local governments and stakeholders as the SCS.

When was the last regional planning process undertaken and what were some of the benefits of the region's last long-term planning strategy?	Regional plans have been undertaken by ABAG throughout the decades. As a result of these plans which included an open space plan, an ocean coastline plan, and the Environmental Management Plan for the Bay Area (a complex work program that combined air and water quality, water supply, and solid waste), several environmental protection agencies were created These included the Coastal Commission, San Francisco Estuary Partnership, and the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority.
What is SB 375 and why was this law created?	SB 375 is a state law requiring regional agencies throughout the State to develop integrated land use and transportation plans. The bill was intended to foster development patterns that reduce the need to drive. The reduced need to drive is measured by reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
Why is the SCS necessary?	The State of California has been growing rapidly over the past five decades. During this time, many transportation and water improvements have been made to accommodate growth. The State financial condition has made additional growth improvements highly problematic, and the Legislature has proposed that each region in the State come up with its own plan.
What will be the benefits of the SCS for families with children?	Producing jobs, reducing traffic congestion, and building high quality neighborhoods is essential for families in the Bay Area. Maintaining the quality of life for the Bay Area for future generations is a primary goal of the SCS.
What will be the benefits of the SCS for the population over 55?	Many residents over 55 are looking for safe and enjoyable neighborhoods where driving is optional for routine trips. If the SCS is successful, many additional neighborhoods of this type will exist in the Bay Area.
What will be the benefits of the SCS for residents under 35?	Many residents under 35 are seeking urban neighborhoods where there are cultural activities and community amenities. The SCS will provide additional choices of the community one wants to live in the Bay Area.
What will be the benefits of the SCS to larger cities employing over 20,000 residents?	Cities with larger employment sectors function better when workers live close to jobs that are accessible to transit. This reduces pressure on highways, downtown congestion, and parking facilities.

What sort of changes should we expect to cities with large employment sectors?	The Bay Area economy has strength in knowledge based industries. There is evidence to suggest that such industries, in addition to locating at employment campuses, are interested in locating in highly functional city centers.
What will be the benefits of SCS for smaller more rural cities and towns?	A key aspect of the SCS is to channel growth and high density employment to urban centers which already have transit and high capacity infrastructure. The SCS has a goal of preserving land for agriculture, recreation, and open space for future generations. Over the time period of the SCS, there may be additional resources to these communities to preserve key land through public acquisition.
What sort of changes should we expect to rural areas?	Rural cities and towns are expected to remain intact with their current quality of life. The Bay Area should be able to grow economically without changing the character of smaller cities and towns.
How are Priority Development Areas (PDA) put together and how do PDAs relate to the scenarios/proposed blueprints for moving forward?	PDAs are specific areas that are nominated 100% by local governments themselves, following consultation with planning staff and City Councils. PCAs were nominated in a slightly different fashion, with only general areas identified as near-term conservation opportunities.
What sort of growth is the region expecting and how was this number of growth determined?	ABAG is forecasting that the Bay Area could add over 1 million jobs, 2 million in population, and approximately 700,000 households to the region by 2040. Regional growth projections were undertaken by expert consultants retained by ABAG. The methodology for forecasts of this type is commonly used throughout the United States for regions performing long term forecasts. ABAG has issued a report on this subject which is posted online at www.abag.ca.gov.

Local Control

Will local governments be forced to make land use decisions that are dictated by regional agencies?	No. Local governments retain full land use authority in their jurisdictions.
What authority do regional agencies have to implement the SCS?	With respect to land use authority, only local governments can implement the SCS. ABAG has no implementing authority, but it does administer grants that act as incentives for local government to plan for future growth.
What is the role of local government in this planning process?	Local government is the originator and implementer of the land use strategy of the SCS. Local planners and City Councils nominated the Priority Development Areas (PDAs) in their cities, and only they can implement land use plans.
What are local governments currently doing in relation to planning how counties, cities, and towns are developed and what could change with adoption of an SCS plan?	One of the advantages of a regional SCS is that cities and counties can see what their neighboring jurisdictions are planning. Once the SCS plan is adopted, local governments will be able to see who is planning to participate in implementing land use plans.
What is the ongoing role of city/county planning directors related to the SCS plan?	City and County planning directors retain their full authority and report to their respective local officials.
Do potential plans that have been identified relate to existing city and county plans?	In most cases, yes. Sometimes cities have not updated their general plans to reflect their PDAs. In other cases, the SCS has assumed different levels of growth for the PDAs over the 30 year planning period than what is reflected in local plans. ABAG discusses these changes with local governments during the planning process.

Community Input

What role do I as a member of the public/community play in the SCS process?	Members of the public provide the maximum impact when working with their local governments on land use plans. Members of the public also provide comments on the SCS documents, and can attend all sessions conducted by ABAG where the SCS is discussed on the public agenda. Additionally, there are various public meetings to discuss the SCS where members of the public are invited. For an updated list of SCS events, go to http://www.onebayarea.org/plan_bay_area/
Who or What will my input affect?	The SCS is influenced by many different stakeholders: cities, counties, community groups, governmental agencies, and business members. It is not possible to trace the influence of any one stakeholder, group, or individual.
How can my input help in plans to strengthen neighborhoods?	Local governments want the participation of residents regarding the planning of neighborhoods.
How can I affect and reduce traffic congestion?	Recurring traffic congestion is caused when too many people are attempting to drive over the same roadways. As more people get on the highways, the speeds of the traffic go down, and the highway becomes even more inefficient. So as an individual, it helps if there are more opportunities and choices for alternative transportation to help reduce trips and the number of cars on the road. The SCS can help reduce traffic by planning neighborhoods where trips and errands can be done locally, and transit is available for work trips.
How will this SCS/planning affect the neighborhood I live in?	Unless you live in a PDA, the SCS should not affect your neighborhood. If you do live in a PDA or plan to live in one, there is a community planning process to discuss how to make sure any changes to the neighborhood result in a high quality place to live.
Why are we meeting with the public to discuss and hear their insights into transportation and land use planning over the next 35 years?	Decisions made today regarding infrastructure investments will affect the region for many years to come. The best plans will take into account many different points of view.

Housing and Land Use

What about housing that is sitting idle, owned by banks/foreclosure?	It is expected that the vacancy rates for housing in the Bay Area will remain high for some years to come. This is a temporary effect of the financial crisis. Over time, these units will be put back on the market for sale and rental. ABAG has assumed a reduced need for new housing over the 30-year time period.
Why don't we make empty homes affordable housing, instead of building more?	It would make sense for existing empty homes to be used for permanently affordable housing. However, there are few programs with the cash to buy these homes for that purpose.
Is this a move to force me to live in high density high rise neighborhoods, and convert single family residential neighborhoods into dense clusters?	The SCS will not require any person to live where they do not choose. We are aware of no plans in any city in the Bay Area to convert a single family neighborhood into dense clusters. The SCS preserves existing single family neighborhoods, while looking at opportunities to improve neighborhoods that already have higher density or vacant parcels.
Are you forcing the regions cities and towns to become urbanized?	No cities or towns are being forced to urbanize.
How is the SCS related to housing mandates and needs that have been designated for cities and towns?	State law requires that the region's housing need be zoned over an eight year period. This allocation is called the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA). ABAG is required by State law to provide the allocation method. This work is done in collaboration with cities and counties. Some counties prefer to do their own allocations, such as San Mateo, Napa, and Solano. The RHNA must be consistent with the SCS, but there are other objectives to be considered in the RHNA. For more information about the Bay Area RHNA, visit to the ABAG website and the regional housing section at http://www.abag.ca.gov/housing-top.html.
How are housing projections related to state-mandated housing allocations?	The long term housing projections in the SCS (25 years) are not related to the state mandated housing allocations (RHNA). RHNA is allocated over an eight year period (2014-2022).
How will housing allocations be divided amongst counties, cities, and towns?	Housing allocations amongst cities are made pursuant to the adoption of the RHNA methodology by ABAG. Three counties—San Mateo, Napa, and Solano— have chosen to make their own allocations, which is their right. ABAG convenes a Housing Methodology Committee with broad representation before making any recommendations. For more

	information, visit http://www.abag.ca.gov/housing-top.html.
How were housing allocations determined and why?	In areas where ABAG conducts the allocations, housing allocations were made pursuant to two policies: 1) zoning for housing in PDAs (70% of the region); and zoning in cities without PDAs, based on household formation rates and other factors (30%). For more information, visit http://www.abag.ca.gov/housing-top.html.
What are the housing projections in the Plan Bay Area Initial Vision Scenario document and how were they determined?	The Housing Projections in the Initial Vision Scenario were established by the ABAG model under the assumption that there was an unlimited amount of housing subsidy available to the Bay Area to support affordable housing. The purpose of the Scenario was to demonstrate how high levels of housing might be distributed in the region to meet high levels of job growth and avoid importing workers from the Central Valley. The Initial Vision Scenario does not use reasonable planning assumptions and is not eligible to be adopted as the SCS.
Why can't we stop developing housing to stop the region from growing?	The Bay Area expects to have a level of job growth in order to maintain our economy and quality of life. If the Bay Area inhibits job growth, the jobs will go to another region and this will start a cycle of decline as other regions have experienced when job losses were not replaced with new jobs. Unemployment and fiscal pressures reduce public services and property values decline. The purpose of the SCS is to prevent economic losses from happening here. To support job growth, it is necessary to supply more housing for workers in locations that have a transit choice and are not dependent on highway travel.
What about infrastructure to support these plans?	Infrastructure financing to support infill development is one of the principal challenges of the SCS. With the loss of redevelopment, new methods will be needed to finance reconstruction of the built environment.
How are transportation and land use decisions integrated?	Land use decisions over the long term impact how people travel around the region. To the extent that agencies can better predict long term land changes, the transportation system can be better built to accommodate these trips. Programming future transportation investments requires a high degree of understanding as to how land use will change. Land uses will also change based on how the transportation system is working. High levels of highway congestion will discourage employers from locating on those corridors.

Funding, Economy, Jobs

What is the funding source for Plan Bay Area and how much funding is being allocated for it?	Plan Bay Area utilizes state and federal transportation funds, and may also guide funds available to congestion management agencies, transit districts, local governments and other special districts.
How will the funds be distributed for Plan Bay Area projects?	Plan Bay Area is intended to help guide investment decisions in the future. Funds for Plan Bay Area are distributed regionally and locally, depending on fund source
How are transportation investment dollars related to land use decisions?	Living closer to jobs and essential service results in more walking, cycling or transit trips.
Aren't we in an economy that is suffering?	The United States and Bay Area economy has been negatively impacted by the financial crisis that occurred in late 2007. Millions of jobs were lost nationwide and the threat of a second great depression was a possibility. Plan Bay Area looks ahead to times when the United States recovers and begins producing jobs again. The Bay Area is expected to capture a good share of those jobs, and Plan Bay Area will help prepare for this job growth.
Isn't there a local, state and national budget crisis?	The financial crisis, among other factors, has created a budget crisis for most levels of government. The best means to resolve these problems is through a growing economy. Plan Bay Area should help the Bay Area economy recover and grow, generating additional tax revenues without raising taxes.
What about business needs?	Attention to business needs is critical for the Bay Area economy to be successful. Many businesses find locating and expanding difficult in this region. There are many issues that will need to be addressed in the Bay Area to create a better business environment and increase job production.
How can we talk about growth in this bad economy?	The Bay Area economy will grow more rapidly when the national economy recovers. By preparing the Bay Area for job growth, Plan Bay Area provides a better future for its residents.

Where do these statistics for population growth come from?	Population forecasts are created by various methodologies. ABAG uses a "shift share" method. First, the region's job potential is calculated as a portion of the national share. Regions grow or shrink based on the economic viability. When jobs are created in the Bay Area, people are induced to stay in the region or come from outside the region to fill these jobs. For more information on forecast methodology, visit www.abag.ca.gov.
Why aren't we talking about jobs?	The primary purpose of the Bay Area's SCS is to prepare the region for job growth. For jobs to be developed in the Bay Area housing, transportation, and supporting infrastructure need to be developed.

Misconceptions

ABAG and MTC conspired to eliminate public discussion and open debate.	The land use SCS—Jobs-Housing Connection—is a plan which has been created collaboratively with local governments. Even though the focus was to engage local governments, there have been many meetings on the subject that were open to the public. The last two attempts to hold public workshops on this complicated subject were met with concerns. One of the concerns of some members of the public was that these meetings would be used to justify the plan, not actually seek input. Other people stated concerns that the meetings were designed as propaganda to reach a pre-determined outcome, not allowing for people to question if a plan was required at all. That was not the intended purpose of the meetings, which was to hear the comments of the public regarding various aspects of the plan. Additional public meetings will be held to continue outreach to community embers and give more opportunities to provide input. For a partial list of meetings held to date, please see OneBayArea web site at http://www.onebayarea.org/spotlight_12-11.htm
This public meeting was staged participation from paid employees.	No employees of the agencies were paid any special compensation for attending the meetings. Salaried employees are expected to attend meetings to facilitate them. We are not aware of any employees of the regional agencies who spoke at the meetings as member of the public.

ABAG and MTC violated the Brown Act (open meeting law) by requiring the public to pre-register and declare their political label for these visioning meetings (labels like concerned citizen, small government advocate, social justice advocate, or environmental advocate).	The pre-registration process was created to ensure adequate refreshments and meeting space for break out groups and to track the differing points of view of those who were attending. The pre-registration process may have given a false impression of attempting to control which members of the public could attend. Pre-registration will be optional in future SCS meetings. These types of public meetings are not covered under the Brown Act.
Isn't the SCS and Plan Bay Area related to Agenda 21?	The SCS/Plan Bay Area and the United Nations Agenda 21 have no connection at all. We are aware that there are groups across the United States that are trying to make a case that regional planning for land use and transportation sustainability is part of a United Nations initiative known as Agenda 21. This is known as the "Agenda 21 conspiracy." We have since investigated the United Nations Agenda 21. Agenda 21 refers to the need in the developing world to practice environmental sustainability, such as forestry and natural resources management. There are also discussions regarding the need for rapidly urbanizing cities in the developing world to build public works, such as water and sewer systems, in advance of the growing population. In the United States, there are already many regulations regarding land use and resource management, and no need to reference United Nations documents. There has been no contact between the United Nations and the Bay Area's regional agencies. For more information about United Nations Agenda 21, please see http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=52 And from the American Planning Association: http://www.onebayarea.org/pdf/Plan_Bay_Area_FAQ_2-12.pdf
What is the role of the State in all this?	The State legislature has mandated that the regions in California prepare plans that will manage and accommodate the State's growth (SB 375). California has grown very rapidly in the past five decades, and existing infrastructure systems and water supply are severely strained. For California to grow economically, the State believes each region should plan for the future.

Will the land use decisions affect personal property rights?	Plan Bay Area will have no impact on personal property rights. All persons owning property have rights established by law and the Constitution. Property rights are protected and regulated by local government zoning. Local governments can only change zoning after an extensive legal process, where the property owner participates.
Are we talking about eminent domain?	The SCS has no eminent domain authority. Local governments or state agencies can only use eminent domain when property is needed for a public purpose, and then full compensation must be paid to the owner.
Are you taking away my choices for where I live?	No choices are being taken away. The SCS should provide additional choices of neighborhoods in the Bay Area.
Aren't you violating my property rights?	No property rights are being violated or threatened by Plan Bay Area.
Aren't you taking away use of cars?	No.
How is this related to social justice, environmental justice, and equal justice?	Social equity is the formal term, and includes the idea that all persons should have fair and equal access to opportunity. In SCS Plan Bay Area, this includes MTC and ABAG's adopted targets to house all persons at all income levels in the region, achieve greater air quality improvements in impacted areas, and improve the affordability of housing and transportation for lower-income households. MTC and ABAG are analyzing planning scenarios for equity implications at each stage of the SCS Plan's development. Environmental Justice stems from a Presidential Executive Order to promote the fair distribution of benefits and burdens for disadvantaged communities, and promote the inclusion of minority and low-income communities in decision-making. The federal government, which oversees the development of our regional planning efforts, states that: *"Each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."* As a recipient of federal funds, MTC is required to incorporate environmental justice principles in all its planning efforts, including the sustainable communities strategy to be incorporated into Plan Bay Area.

Public Workshops were a sham. The workshops were not transparent. You did not answer any questions during the public workshops?	The land use SCS—Jobs-Housing Connection—is a plan which has been created collaboratively with local governments. Even though the focus was to engage local governments, there have been many meetings on the subject that were open to the public. The last two attempts to hold public workshops on this complicated subject were met with concerns. One of the concerns of some members of the public was that these meetings would be used to justify the plan, not actually seek input. Other people stated concerns that the meetings were designed as propaganda to reach a pre-determined outcome, not allowing for people to question if a plan was required at all. That was not the intended purpose of the meetings, which was to hear the comments of the public regarding various aspects of the plan. Additional public meetings will be held continue outreach to community members and give more opportunities to provide input. For a partial list of meetings held to date, please visit the OneBayArea web site at http://www.onebayarea.org/spotlight_12-11.htm

Appendix: March 28, 2012 MCCMC Questions from the Members

Impact of SCS Preferred Scenario on Marin

Q: The appendices of the Preferred Scenario document present great detail on the methodologies and rationale for the projections in the document. However, in the Preferred Scenario, many of the household numbers (jobs and housing unit numbers as well) in Marin radically changed from the prior four "alternative" scenarios:

Marin Jurisdictions	Projected household growth 2010-2040		% Change
	Average of 4 alternative scenarios	Preferred scenario	
Corte Madera	558	270	-52%
Novato	1,616	890	-45%
Larkspur	592	350	-41%
San Rafael	3,594	2,990	-27%
Unincorporated	3,651	3,800	+4%
Tiburon	334	460	+38%
Mill Valley	500	740	+48%
San Anselmo	327	510	+56%
Belvedere	54	90	+66%
Fairfax	188	360	+91%
Sausalito	255	600	+135%
Ross	55	130	+136%
Total	11,724	11,190	-5%

Q: No explanation was given other than on Page 29 for Marin County: "Feedback received from several (Marin) jurisdictions related to the Initial Vision Scenario and Alternative Scenarios has been taken into account in the development of the Jobs-Housing Connection (aka Preferred) Scenario. Some jurisdictions indicated that levels of household and employment growth were appropriate, while other cities expressed concern that the distributions were too high." What apparently happened was radical shifting of the housing and jobs from those that complained to those that didn't (some of whom as a result are now ready to complain), regardless of the sophisticated modeling methodologies employed. Is this plan really a genuine effort to recommend the most rationale plan, or just an effort to disperse the discontent as evenly as possible?

A: Both the Initial Vision Scenario and the Alternative Scenarios, as stated in their reports, were based on estimates that preceded ABAG's forecasting work. The current scenario, Jobs Housing Connection, is now based upon ABAG's comprehensive forecasting methodology for jobs, housing, and population totals for 2040. The forecasted numbers resulted in reduced overall totals that the Alternative Scenarios. In the Initial Vision Scenario, an attempt was made to provide maximum densities to urban corridors. This allowed very low totals to be placed in the rural areas. However, as the report indicated, the Initial Vision Scenario was not realistic. Given that the prior scenarios were not forecasted while the new one is, it makes little sense to compare them.

Rather, a better question is how the allocations were made in the forecasted scenario. ABAG used a combination of factors to determine the allocations, including the jurisdiction's proximity to employment corridors and transit, real estate market conditions, and development potential, as well as the need to provide some level of accommodation of the County's natural growth rate. In addition, ABAG planners worked with local planning officials regarding the capacities of each jurisdiction to accommodate the County's growth over the long term. The particular circumstances of a jurisdiction must be taken into account when making an allocation. Political considerations regarding "discontent" were not used as a long term factor.

Q: If so much analysis went into the prior ABAG allocations how could they have been switched so quickly when three jurisdictions complained of their allocation? If a city wasn't predicted to have the number of households increase as most recently allocated, why didn't your initial analysis bear that out?

A: As stated above, the prior reports were based on "estimates" preceding the forecast. This was clearly stated in these scenarios. ABAG believed it was better to obtain as much local input as possible through the generation of these alternatives, even though it was known that the forecast methodology might change the regional growth totals to reflect more rigorous demographic and economic analysis.

Q: Please explain how Corte Madera, Novato and Larkspur's housing allocation were cut in half in the Preferred Scenario, while some other Marin jurisdictions saw dramatic increases? What was the basis?

A: As noted in the response to the preceding question about analysis, a more rigorous forecast approach was used, which shifted some of the underlying data used to distribute jobs and housing. Distribution of housing into each jurisdiction was based upon a number of factors, including local input, related to estimated growth. These allocations are also subject to local input. ABAG is still seeking specific comments as to why these allocations may or may not be realistic. Factors such as topography and lack of available land sites are relevant.

Alternative Ways to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

Q: Have there been any peer-reviewed studies to determine whether or not all of these job-housing planning efforts are the most desirable way to achieve GHG reductions?

A: There is confusion in this question regarding the overall objective of the long term regional land use plan and strategy. SB375 requires that ABAG and the state's other regional planning organizations produce a land use plan that is in part measured by reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGe), but this is generally a **proxy measurement** for the regional land use plan to reduce the use of the automobile on already congested highways as well as reducing natural resource consumption through more compact land development. AB 32 is the State law that requires reducing overall GHGe. ABAG is not arguing that jobs-housing planning is the best way to reduce GHGe; to the contrary, the reduction of GHGe will have to be undertaken through efforts to transform the use of energy in the State pursuant to AB 32, as well as transportation strategies that will be articulated in the forthcoming Regional Transportation Plan produced by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Q: How will our alternate efforts to reduce GHG emissions (EVs, Bike/Ped, Clean Energy) count toward the overall greenhouse reduction goals of AB32? Will these other efforts offset the housing jobs imbalance to reduce the burden of growth our communities are being forced to plan for? What are the minimum thresholds for alternative efforts in order for them to be counted or effective in reducing GHG emissions? For example, EVs - electric vehicles and ped/bike paths are mentioned. Are there minimum numbers of electric vehicles and ped/bike paths that we must plan for to get credit in reducing GHG emissions?

A: As noted in response to the question above, SB 375 requires that ABAG produce a Sustainable Communities Strategy addressing the impacts of land use and regional transportation on reducing GHG. This does take into account assumed policy changes in vehicle emissions resulting from

adopted state laws, but does not take into account potential future increases in alternative vehicles such as EVs.

Regarding jobs-housing balance, taking individual or local action to reduce GHGs is a laudable goal, but does not address the need to sustain the economy of the Bay Area by providing sufficient housing for workers and residents. The two efforts are compatible, but the suggestions above are not a factor in determining the allocations of the land use plan.

Q: SB375 is all about reducing GHG by minimizing driving from homes to jobs. But Marin County has found very effective ways to reduce GHGs. We founded Marin Clean Energy and, by this July, the vast majority of all Marin residents and businesses will be customers of MCE, which procures 50% - 100% renewable sources on their behalf (compared to 20% from PG&E). This will reduce GHG by more than 39,000 tons per year. That's the equivalent of removing 6,937 cars from the road for an entire year. Can Marin get Carbon Credits to help offset our housing goals?

A: It is important to differentiate the mandates provided by SB375 and AB32; SB375 primarily addresses mobile source emissions (e.g., auto, bus, etc), while AB32 addresses all emissions sources (including those related to the production of energy for stationary sources such as homes and businesses—which as you note have seen dramatic emissions reductions in parts of Marin.) Also see response above to question about alternate efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

Q: Since recent ABAG studies show that transportation efforts are crucial to meeting GHG reduction goals no matter what the growth scenario, will there be an effort to provide bonuses for public transit to communities affected by traffic congestion generated by increased housing density whether or not they have PDAs?

A: The preferred scenario does take transit access into account in distribution of housing units – both within and outside PDAs. This is, however, constrained by the region's capacity to provide new transit investment beyond what has already been funded. MTC is responsible for developing the region's overall transit planning and funding program.

Q: SB375 is about reducing GHG by having jobs close to housing or connected to housing by public transit. The Central Valley has a significant excess of housing (triggering the current nation-wide housing crisis). What is the State doing to encourage jobs and population growth to fill those existing homes, instead of constructing new housing units in the Bay Area.

A: The issues regarding Central Valley growth are important and complex. Through SB375, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations throughout the state – including San Joaquin County Council of Governments (SJC COG), which includes Stockton are required to produce a Sustainable Communities Strategy that achieves significant projected GHG reductions within the communities in its boundaries. Through this approach, the state's MPOs (which include ABAG

and SJC COG) are working together to reduce the need for long commutes between regions. As part of this effort, ABAG's Sustainable Community Strategy—Plan Bay Area focuses on counties within our jurisdictions (the nine-county Bay Area). It is also worth noting that the Bay Area economy is significantly different from the Central Valley and jobs and housing cannot be readily transferred to that region even with its surplus of housing.

Consideration of Unique Local Constraints

Q: Methodology of job projection numbers: With such limited commercial zoning in Belvedere, the job projection numbers appear misleading. Perhaps they include day workers or home occupations? In which case is this a reliable methodology for housing growth?

A: Limited commercial growth capacity is an important consideration. Belvedere should provide more specific information regarding these constraints. Housing growth is not based significantly on the employment base within the city. Workers who are employed within the County reside within a commute shed, which could include many different cities. Housing growth serves the commute shed, while it also serves the natural population increase in the County. Otherwise, County population growth has to be accommodated in other counties, which is the case in Marin. It is expected that Marin will provide some housing to accommodate at least a fraction of its natural growth in both population and jobs.

Q: Based on the draft RHNA numbers, the methodology appears to penalize communities that have severe constraints. Belvedere is made up of two islands which are topographically and environmentally constrained and built-out. Our flat lands have severe flooding issues and are built-out. The numbers allocated to our community do not seem to take into account these factors. Is this a reliable methodology when we have limited ways of creating additional housing?

A: Severe constraints in development are a relevant factor in long term housing allocations. Belvedere is advised to make specific comments to ABAG regarding these issues so a judgment can be made in dialogue with local planners. These customized factors are why no methodology formula is complete without local input. The Scenarios are published to generate such input.

Q: Do the ABAG housing and job growth projections sync with the build out projected by our general plans in the housing element cycle before the one that took SCS projections into account?

A: General plans are ten years in duration while ABAG projections are over thirty years. ABAG's long term projections do not require amendment to a cities' general plan nor require CEQA document consistency. While the General Plans are relevant, they are only one factor in the analysis.

Reconciliation of SCS and RHNA

I am trying to better understand/reconcile the SCS Draft with the RHNA Draft. If the SCS Draft goes from 2010-2040 and the RHNA draft is for 2014-2022, then the RHNA time window is roughly 30% of the SCS time window (8.8 years vs 30 years). If that is the case, shouldn't the RHNA draft numbers be closer to 30% of the total SCS draft numbers? As shown below, for most jurisdictions they are closer to 40-45%.

	SCS Draft 2010-2040	RHNA 2014-2022 Draft	RHNA Draft % of SCS Draft
Belvedere	20	23	115%
Corte Madera	210	101	48%
Fairfax	310	129	42%
Larkspur	140	131	94%
Mill Valley	570	274	48%
Novato	890	411	46%
Ross	80	36	45%
San Anselmo	460	201	44%
San Rafael	2,820	898	32%
Sausalito	380	224	59%
Tiburon	330	159	48%
Marin County Unincorporated	1,940	805	41%

Q: I would think that the RHNA draft would be even lower than 30%. The Marin County Total for the 2007-2014 cycle was 4,882 units. That is roughly 697 /year or 2,788 units from 2010-2013 for Marin. The SCS Draft total for Marin is 8,150. Will the 2,788 be subtracted from that amount since those units would have been included in the previous housing cycle (2007 – 2014)?

A: The RHNA draft is based on a Housing Need analysis created by the State for zoning purposes. The allocation within the region takes a variety of factors into account as established by the Housing Methodology Committee and the ABAG Executive Board (three counties, San Mateo, Napa, and Solano, in this cycle are acting as subregions and are creating their own internal methodology). One of the key factors in the Fair Share portion of the ABAG RHNA (30% of the total) is the principle that each city will accommodate a minimum of 40% of its household growth. The SCS (Jobs Housing Connection) is a long term forecast of actual production, which takes into account development constraints as well as sustainability criteria. What this analysis is showing is that ABAG does not believe that actual production in Marin is going to keep pace with RHNA zoning requirements as they are established for the current RHNA cycle. Under State law, the zoning for the prior RHNA cycle that did not produce housing can be rolled over to the current RHNA cycle for Housing element purposes.

Q: Growth in jobs and housing estimated under the SCS scenarios are difficult to justify to the public for many reasons: One is that the duration of the current RHNA cycles is longer, 8.8 years instead of the 7 year past cycles, because the RHNA and RTP cycles are being synced. Further confusion is generated because we are told growth is not assumed to be linear over the duration covered by SCS growth estimates. What are the household and job growth estimates that would allow us to judge the comparability of job/housing growth for the previous RHNA cycles and the current synced cycle generated by SCS planning?

A: It is easy to see the confusion of the public when considering the RHNA State statutes on Housing Element law, and comparing that to SB 375, which is a long term regional plan adopted by ABAG and MTC that does not require zoning, general plan amendments, or CEQA compliance. We hope these questions and answers provide some guidance as to the best way to explain this to the public. RHNA /housing element law is required by the State to ensure adequate zoning capacity for housing over an eight year period. SB 375 creates a long term regional plan to ensure continued economic growth in the Bay Area, while maintaining quality of life and conserving resources.

Consequences of Not Meeting Projections or Participating

Q: In a prior meeting with ABAG representatives I was told that 70% of the cities in ABAG's jurisdiction did not meet ABAG's allocation requirements. How can we call this an operational system if you have a 70% failure rate?

A: This information was incorrect. Actual housing production in relation to RHNA has been much higher. The production of housing for certain income categories remains problematic. RHNA is designed only to provide zoning capacity; the production of housing units occurs in economic cycles and affordable housing requires sufficient government subsidies.

Q: How will housing/jobs imbalance affect eligibility for grants for transportation or other local projects besides the current ABAG proposal to condition availability of Federal Gas Dollars? What are the disincentives for communities who reject growth?

A: MTC has developed the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program which provides incentives to cities who are developing PDA growth strategies, to be administered by County Congestion Management Agencies such as the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM). Cities that are developing PDAs help sustain the Bay Area economy and need additional investment to make these growth projections feasible. As a result, at least 50% of the One Bay Area Grant funds administered by TAM would be allocated to projects in the PDAs under the current OBAG proposal. New homes with proximity to transit help relieve highway congestion, and for that reason, these funds accomplish an important transportation objective. The program is incentive based and there are no disincentives for communities who do not choose to have PDAs.

Q: Is it true that no jurisdiction is required to modify or conform their General Plan or other local policies or laws to be consistent with or otherwise comply to the SCS or provisions of SB375?

A: True, SB 375 contains explicit provisions to this effect.

Q: Now that the Redevelopment Agencies are no longer available to provide funding for affordable housing, how does ABAG's SCS planning effort contribute to the availability of affordable housing?

A: It is axiomatic that affordable housing and urban growth will need alternative financing in light of the elimination of Redevelopment agencies. In ABAG's view, the adoption of a

solid land use and transportation plan with the consensus of the region will create a strong argument for the development of new programs to implement SB 375.

Q: Is there legislative protection from suits brought by builders or advocates against communities who chose not to build in the high density areas they are required to zone for?

A: Compliance with RHNA and Housing Element law is mandatory under State law. Each community can devise their own means to comply with this zoning requirement, working with State agencies. SB 375 did contain some additional enforcement language regarding RHNA.

Q: If Corte Madera completes the process to withdraw from ABAG (an approximately 15 months process), will ABAG assure Corte Madera that there will be no penalties when determining future housing and jobs allocation or eligibility for transportation or other funds?

A: ABAG regrets the Corte Madera decision and hopes to engage in constructive dialogue in the future. Withdrawal from ABAG membership carries no specific penalties.

Origin of Growth Projections

Q: Who (exactly) at the state level determined the projected growth numbers? What interested parties are included in the process?

A: The only projected number from the State is the RHNA regional total requiring the zoning capacity of approximately 187,000 housing units over the 2014-2022 period. This forecast is released by the Office of Housing and Community Development pursuant to State law. HCD consults with the Department of Finance and others, including ABAG, in making its determination. The other projections listed in the Jobs Housing Connection Scenario through 2040 are undertaken by ABAG.

Q: Broadly explain the methodology used to formulate the jobs/housing projections, including what assumptions were used for factoring in trends, current economy (high vacancies of commercial use).

A: The methodology for formulating the projections is explained in the Jobs-Housing Connection Scenario, available at the ABAG web site.

Q: The Marin County Board of Supervisors is preparing a request for an independent review/audit of the SCS scenarios (scope not yet defined). Has this type of independent review been done before? If so how, by whom and what was the outcome?

A: The methodology used by ABAG for this forecast was conducted in a peer review setting involving several teams of consultants. These sources are published in the Jobs-Housing Connection report. In the past, ABAG relied more on modeled results, with less local input for calibration. ABAG has asked the Bay Area Council Economic Institute for additional peer review comments regarding its long term forecast and methodology. Prior long term forecasts by ABAG for population growth have been accurate at the 99% level. Job growth in the Bay Area, however, has been volatile, and both jobs and housing are subject to economic cycles. The financial crisis exceeded a typical economic cycle. Long term forecasts can be made inaccurate by intervening events; important, in our judgment, is the publication of the underlying assumptions. These assumptions are published in the Jobs-Housing Connection report. SB 375 requires revisiting the forecasts and long term regional growth allocations every four years.

Q: Why doesn't ABAG look to actual historical demographic numbers in making their allocations? For example, Mill Valley has never grown in the fashion of ABAG's recent allocations. We are almost completely built out with only infill possibilities, yet your SCS allocation requires about 25 new units every year for the next 30 years. Are we supposed to rezone currently operating and successful commercial sites to residential, making them non-conforming?

A: Local input regarding development constraints is relevant to the long term forecasting undertaken by ABAG. Historical data is an insufficient means to make the forecast. Housing in Marin is difficult to develop, but growth within the County must be accommodated in other counties if not in Marin. RHNA allocations will require the demonstration of appropriate zoning within the Housing Element of the city. The method by which this requirement is met is clearly a significant local issue for Mill Valley. ABAG does not attempt to provide advice to cities as to how to meet the State mandated RHNA requirements.

For more information, contact ABAG at 510/464-7900 and visit ABAG website at www.abag.ca.gov.
For ongoing updates and background materials on SCS Plan Bay Area, visit the website www.onebayarea.org