

Intro to Scenarios Creating Complete Communities

Plan Bay Area 2040

One of the key goals of Plan Bay Area 2040 is to encourage and support local governments in building “complete communities.” The planning principles behind complete communities are not new—indeed, they represent a return to development patterns common to older cities and towns throughout the world. The flexibility offered by complete, compact communities will prepare the Bay Area to adapt to a growing and changing population, fluctuating economic trends, and the uncertain effects of climate change.

Complete communities are places that:

- **Provide choices:** a range of housing options provides for residents with different needs
- **Encourage accessibility:** residents can walk, bike, or take transit for short trips and for commuting
- **Offer connections:** residents are easily linked to jobs, health care, parks, services, and amenities
- **Promote health:** residents see a high quality of life
- **Improve social and economic equity:** residents of all incomes and backgrounds have access to opportunity

The diagram below explores some of the features that need to be incorporated into the land use pattern as local governments implement Plan Bay Area 2040. The specific policies and strategies selected for each topic will depend on the underlying land use pattern and investment strategy selected.



INCREASING HOUSING CHOICES & AFFORDABILITY

- Lack of housing, especially affordable housing, continues to impede progress on achieving Plan Bay Area 2040’s goals for equity and sustainability. The problem is widespread, but most acute in areas with the greatest access to jobs and amenities.
- Sky-high housing costs also displace lower income and middle class households.
- To achieve the vision in Plan Bay Area 2040, the region will need to develop more housing, especially affordable and workforce housing; preserve affordable housing; and protect existing residents from displacement.

EXPANDING ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE PROSPERITY

- While the Bay Area economy has bounced back from the Great Recession, the impacts and benefits are shared unevenly. Although the Bay Area has an enviable economy, we need to take steps to sustain economic vitality and expand the number of people who experience that vitality—especially low- and moderate-income households.
- Some essential considerations for improving the Bay Area economy include upgrading and modernizing the region’s critical infrastructure systems; building enough housing to meet the demand for new workers; choosing transportation investments that increase access to jobs, services, and amenities; and expanding employment opportunities for the region’s workers by improving training and education.

PROTECTING & ENHANCING NATURAL ASSETS

- Access to parks, playgrounds, and open spaces is an essential component of a complete community and is vital to the Bay Area’s quality of life.
- Plan Bay Area includes both Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) and Priority Development Areas (PDAs), reflecting the integral relationship between resource protection and more compact growth.
- Plan Bay Area 2040 can help protect these areas by directing growth away from undeveloped areas to preserve farmland and open space; increase access to the region’s parks, trails, and open spaces; and protect and enhance the health of the San Francisco Bay Estuary.

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

- Resilience involves developing and implementing tools to prepare for, respond to, and quickly recover from disruptions such as earthquakes, fire, or flooding, or to adapt to long-term stressors such as rising sea levels, drought, or increased and prolonged heat events.
- Building a more resilient Bay Area means ensuring that residents are able to maintain, and even improve, their daily quality of life, no matter what stressors occur.
- Increasing resilience means incorporating an understanding of the risks from natural disasters and climate change into decisions about how to advance our regional vision.

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

- Clean air is fundamental to public health and the high quality of life.
- Encouraging new homes and jobs in Priority Development Areas (PDAs), or areas near transit and other amenities, helps improve local and regional air quality by reducing driving. However, development in some locations near major sources of air pollution could expose people living there to unhealthy levels of air pollution unless steps are taken to minimize exposure and reduce emissions.
- Smart planning and building design can integrate solutions to these issues.