

Memorandum

TO: Joint MTC Planning Committee with the
ABAG Administrative Committee

DATE: February 2, 2018

FR: Executive Director

RE: Futures Overview

Since early 2010, MTC and ABAG staff have focused significant resources on the technical analysis, local engagement, and public outreach necessary to produce the integrated Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The culmination of these efforts – Plan Bay Area (2013) and Plan Bay Area 2040 (2017) – have moved toward a regional consensus on broadly-shared principles such as focused growth, investment in alternatives to single-occupant vehicles, and “fixing it first” before expanding the system – all with an aim of reducing per-capita greenhouse gas emissions and housing the region’s population.

At the same time, statutory constraints on the RTP/SCS can make it challenging to explore the growing number of pressing issues facing Bay Area residents and policymakers. Political, economic, environmental, and technological uncertainties suggest a new approach that acknowledges risk factors rather than holding them constant across all scenarios evaluated (e.g., housing control totals, tax revenues, or the market share of autonomous vehicles). Peer agencies in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Atlanta have pioneered a “futures”-based planning approach to go beyond the statutorily-required process.

Topics to be Explored through *Futures*

External forces – such as new technologies, unexpected natural or manmade disasters, economic booms and busts, and political volatility – may fundamentally alter the region’s trajectory and its policy responses through 2050. Integrated Planning Program staff have developed an 18-month “blue sky” planning effort (tentatively titled *Futures*) to tackle a suite of challenging questions that transcend the traditional RTP/SCS framework, including:

- What might different levels of autonomous vehicle adoption in coming years mean for our pipeline of traditional transportation investments – and should we change course?
- What strategies should we consider to better prepare our built infrastructure – including housing and job centers – for increasingly-frequent disasters?
- How should the Bay Area respond if economic output, population, and employment suddenly boom or bust – are certain projects more or less effective in that case?
- What actions can the Bay Area take to improve our resilience to national and international geopolitical and economic shifts?

Futures is not a visioning exercise – the intent would not be to choose a preferred scenario for advancement into the RTP/SCS. Instead, *Futures* would allow policymakers, planners, and the public to explore multiple sets of external conditions and think through policy and investment solutions that make sense in each distinct future. Ultimately, policies and projects that make sense across multiple futures – thus demonstrating their resilience to potential headwinds – would be considered top

priorities for incorporation in the next RTP/SCS. That separate but closely related effort would kick off in mid-2019 at the conclusion of *Futures*, with a “preferred scenario” identified by early 2020 – a process that would be informed by the three *Futures* initiative components below.

Components of the *Futures* Initiative

- 1) ***Futures Planning*** – In lieu of traditional scenario planning where funding and growth are distributed based on fixed control totals and fixed future assumptions, *Futures* will create a handful of divergent futures where the Bay Area must respond in very different ways. As discussed above, the purpose of this work would be to identify strategies and investments that allow the Bay Area to move forward with high-performing strategies and investments that perform well regardless of what happens in the decades ahead. Key milestones include:
 - Selection of specific futures for analysis: June 2018
 - Identification of current policy gaps for each future: September 2018
 - Collaborative development of policy solutions for each future: Fall 2018
 - Report detailing “win-win” strategies across futures: May 2019
- 2) ***Project Evaluation*** – Expanding upon the project evaluation framework used in *Plan Bay Area* and *Plan Bay Area 2040*, major transportation investments will be evaluated across the various futures to better understand how they would perform with differing assumptions about autonomous vehicles, overall regional growth, gas prices, and other traditionally exogenous factors. Key milestones for this work include:
 - Finalization of project evaluation framework: July 2018
 - Release of draft project performance results: March 2019
 - Approval of final project performance results: June 2019
- 3) ***Policy Analyses*** – To address a limitation of past planning cycles where individual policies were not explored in depth outside of the scenarios framework, staff proposes to conduct roughly five to seven analyses of broad, topical focus areas. The primary objective of each analysis will be to identify high-impact policies related to that topic area that support the region’s guiding principles. To be released at events across the nine-county region, topics will include the following:
 - Autonomous vehicles & future mobility: June 2018
 - Travel demand management & climate mitigation: September 2018
 - Regional growth strategies: December 2018
 - Future of jobs: March 2019
 - Regional governance: June 2019
 - Design & better buildings: September 2019

Public outreach, combined with ongoing stakeholder engagement, will inform each of the three components. The initial round of outreach, commencing this month, will include pop-up events across the region to “meet people where they are”, combined with an online survey. Input received from the public will be a primary input when developing the guiding principles of *Futures*.

Staff anticipates that social equity will emerge as one of the core guiding principles for the *Futures* initiative, which means it will be carefully considered across the suite of project deliverables. Engaging a diverse cross-section through public outreach is critical to the success of this effort, with a focus on communities of concern and younger generations. Furthermore, analysis of divergent futures will not only quantify regionwide performance outcomes in each future, but also consider how the conditions in each future affect different cross-sections of our diverse region.

Integrating Related Planning Processes into *Futures*

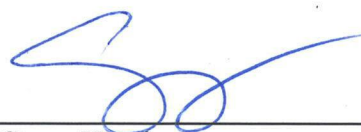
- **Housing:** Staff will work to incorporate consensus recommendations from the ongoing CASA – Committee to House the Bay Area – process, which seeks to increase housing production at all levels of affordability, preserve existing affordable housing, and protect vulnerable populations from housing instability and displacement. CASA’s final report is slated for release in late 2018.
- **Resilience:** Sea level rise mapping from the Adapting to Rising Tides project, combined with adaptation strategies identified through case studies, will be used to develop appropriate adaptation strategies unique to each future. Earthquakes – such as potential earthquake scenarios explored through the HayWired project – and other natural disasters will also be integrated into each future to explore potential policy responses under varying circumstances.

Next Steps

In the coming months, staff will reach key milestones on several major deliverables currently underway:

- April: guiding principles across all futures; initial public engagement/outreach
- June: policy analysis #1 (autonomous vehicles) recommendations; proposed futures for further study; overview of project evaluation process
- September: policy analysis #2 (resilience) recommendations; midpoint report on futures analysis; overview of fall 2018 collaborative workshops

Staff looks forward to the committee’s input on the proposed *Futures* effort.



Steve Heminger

Attachment:

- Presentation

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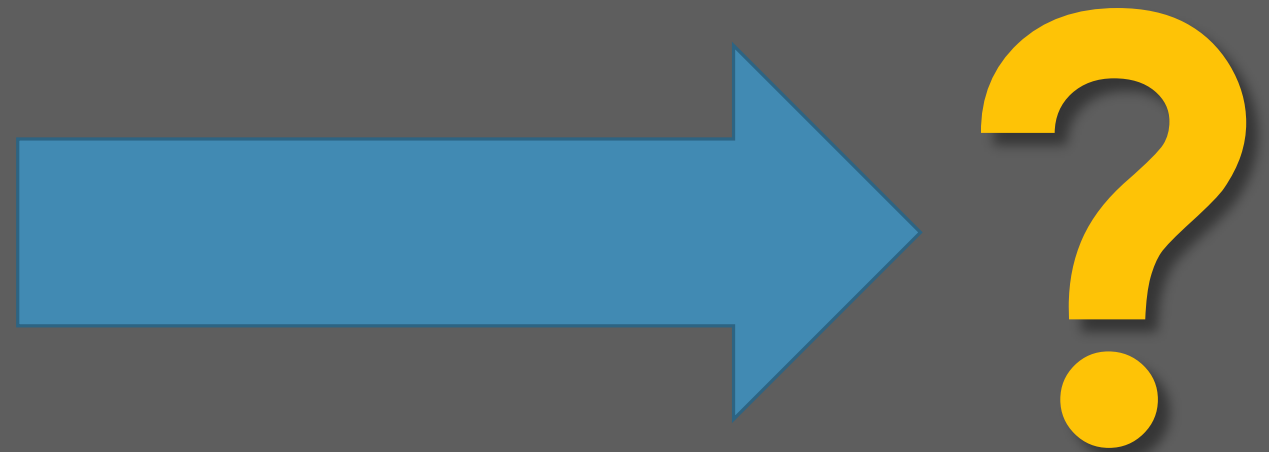
Futures

Overview of Proposed Planning Process

Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee

February 9, 2018

We live in a time of incredible uncertainty. **And our regional plans need to acknowledge this reality.**



As we think about how to move forward, **history provides us with some inspiration on how to overcome the ever-changing circumstances.**



The Bay Area has always been a region of booms and busts – starting with the Gold Rush.

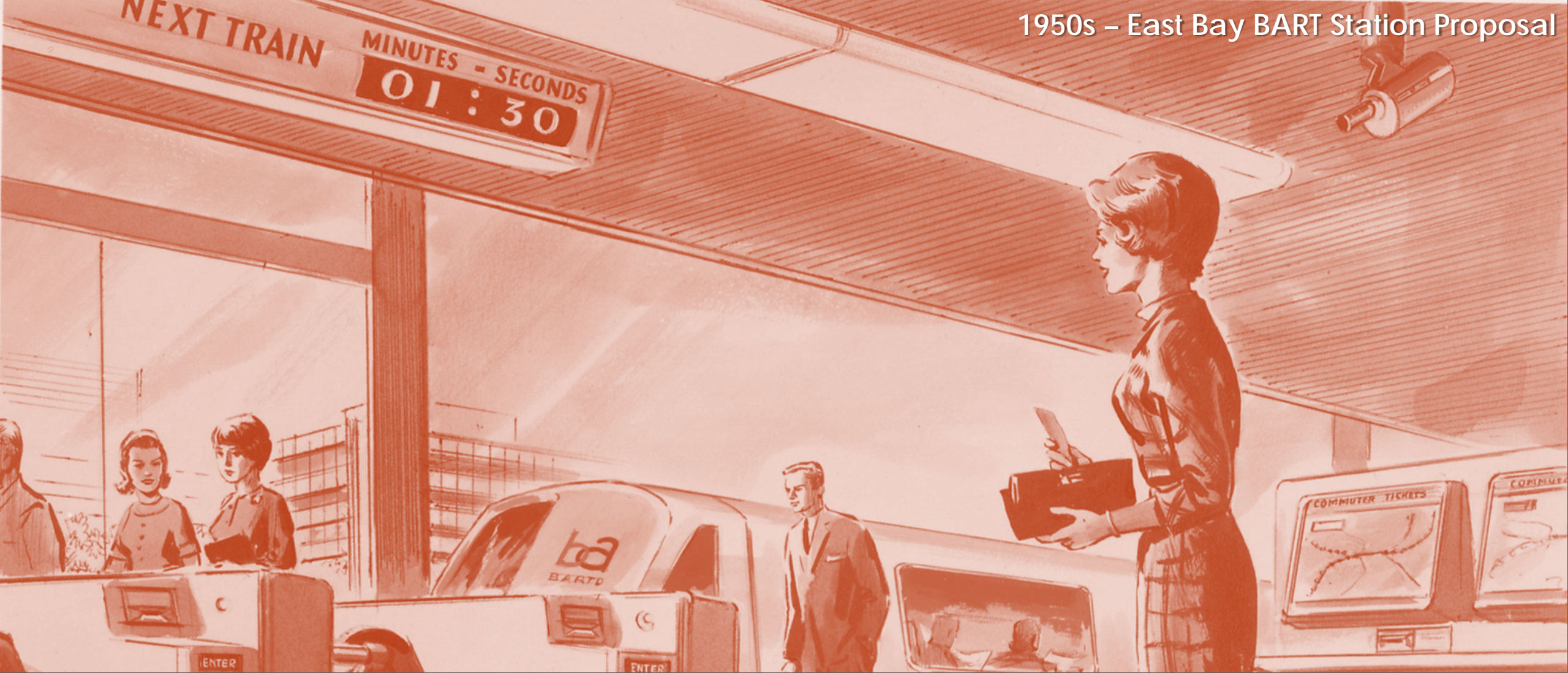


Our resilience to external forces – environmental, political, economic, technological – has been our greatest strength.

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Unanticipated events – such as wars and earthquakes – shaped our region.



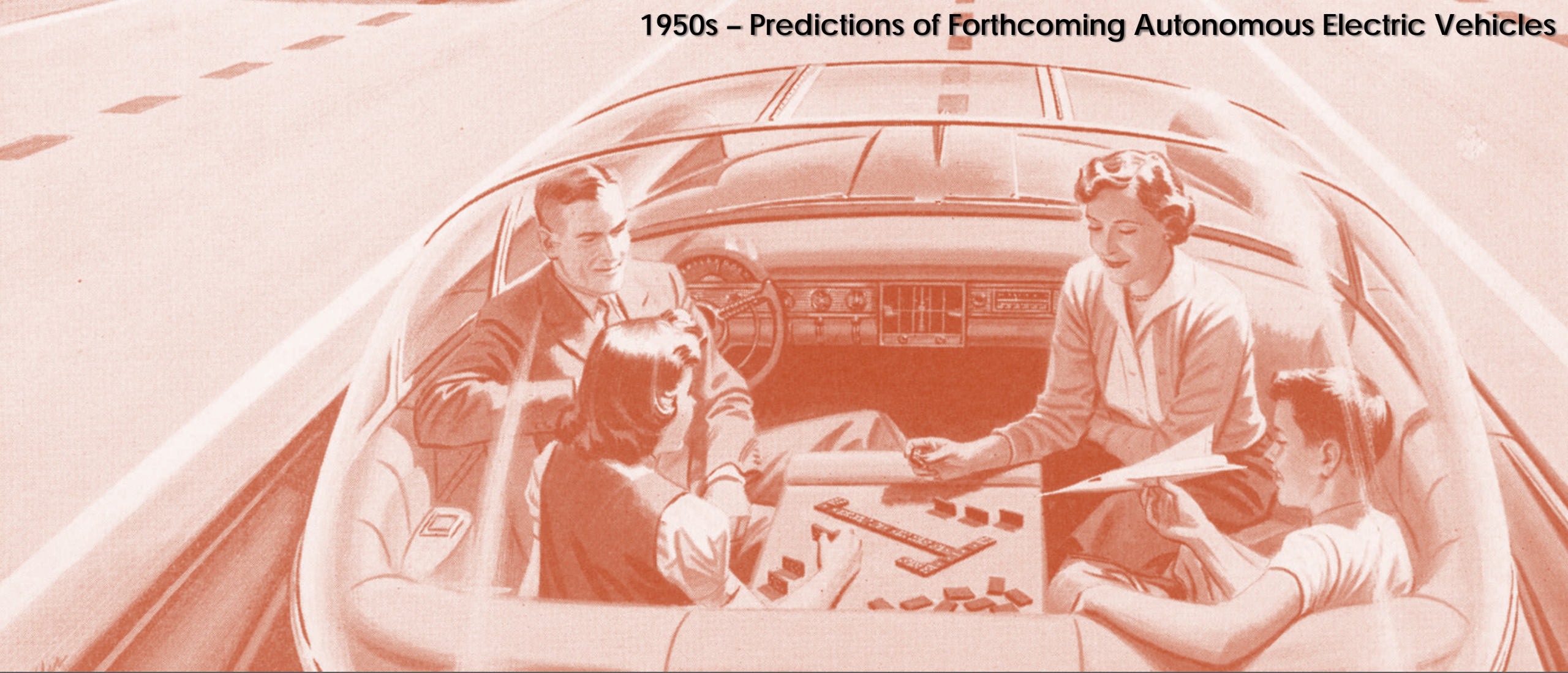
Transportation innovations transformed our region's built environment and its economy.



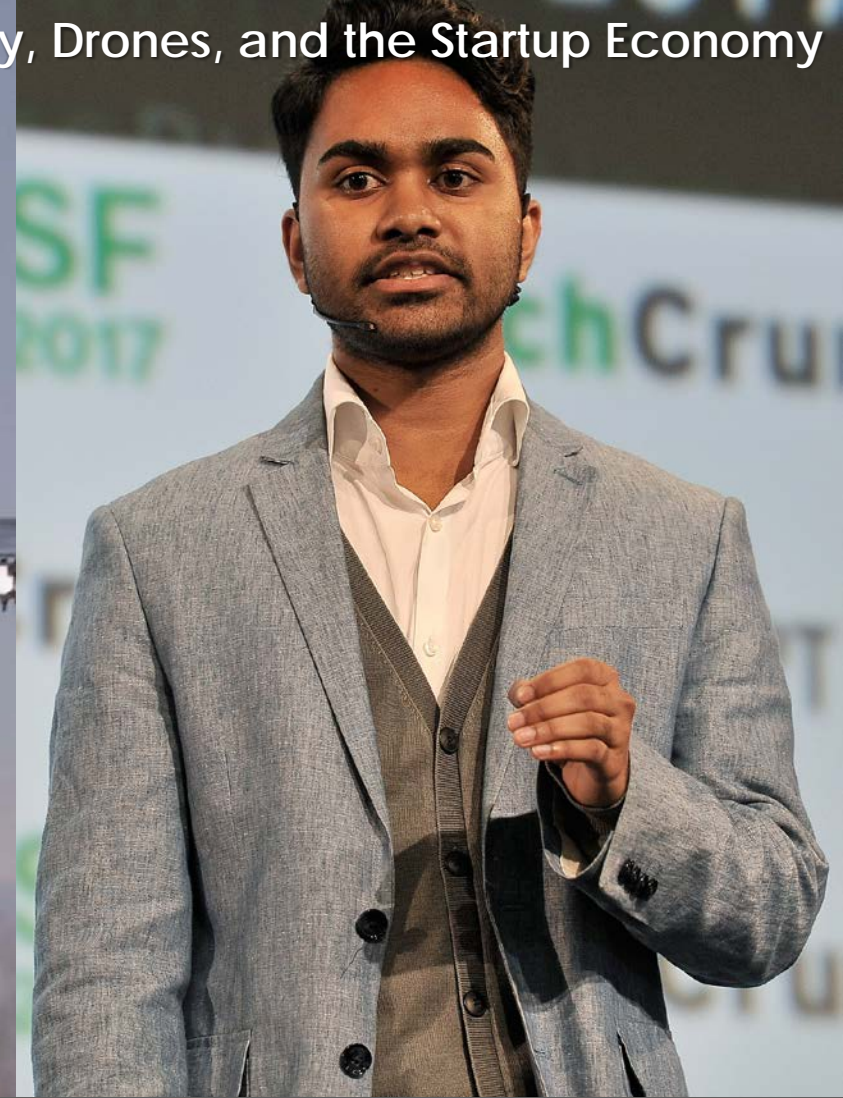
Still, 20th century planning decisions were often quite inequitable, displacing lower-income communities.



Some of our communities look nearly identical to the 1950s, while others have transformed over time.



We've long dreamed about innovations that could change our lifestyles and our communities...



... but with the accelerating pace of innovation, shifts may occur sooner than expected.



The challenges we face are not merely technological – they are political, economic, and environmental.



Yet we have a history of taking action to address regional crises – will we rise to 21st century challenges?

A blue-sky planning effort – tentatively known as *Futures* – will seek to explore a suite of challenging questions that transcend the traditional RTP/SCS framework.





What might autonomous vehicle adoption mean for our pipeline of transportation investments?



What strategies should we consider to prepare for increasingly-frequent disasters?



What changes need to be made to land use and transportation policies to tackle rising sea levels?



How should the region respond if economic output, population, and employment suddenly boom or bust?



What role should government play to ensure that everyone benefits in tomorrow's economy?



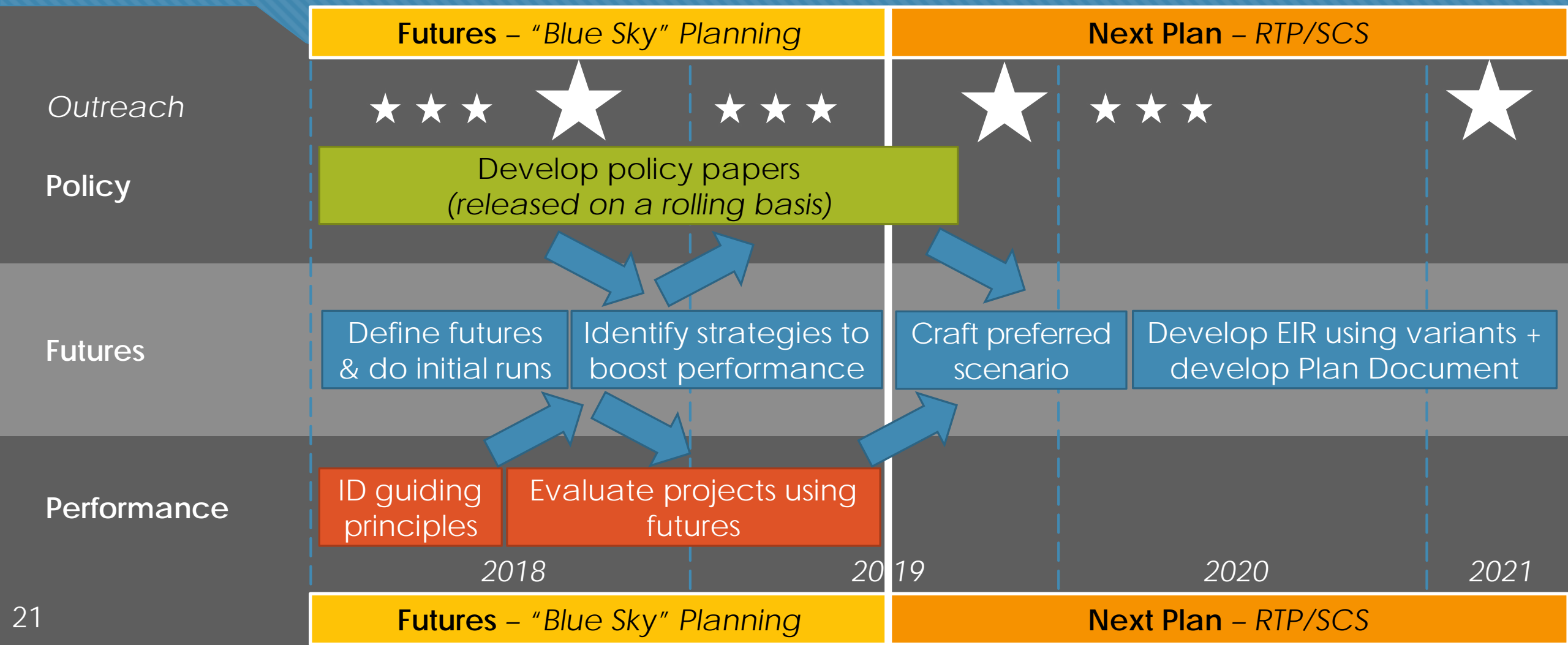
What actions can we take to improve our resilience to geopolitical and economic shifts?

Overview of Proposed Process



High-performing strategies and projects from *Futures* – those that are resilient to uncertainties – **will be recommended for inclusion in the Preferred Scenario** for the Next Plan (RTP/SCS).

Overview of Proposed Process



Key Futures Components & Milestones

POLICY



Paper Release Events
(June/Sept./Dec. 2018;
March/June/Sept. 2019)



Integration into Preferred Scenario
(Summer/Fall 2019)

FUTURES



Guiding Principles
(Spring 2018)



External Forces/Futures Identification
(through June 2018)



"Status Quo" Analysis
(through September 2018)



Policy Solutions
(through Early 2019)



"Win-Win" Strategy Report
(through May 2019)

PERFORMANCE



Major Projects Data Update + Visionary Projects Submission
(Spring 2018)



Evaluation Framework Finalization
(July 2018)

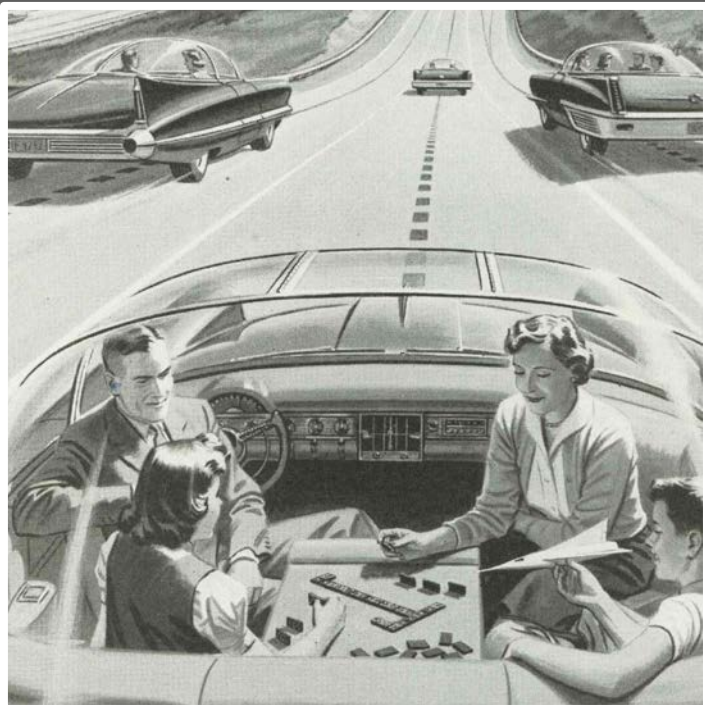


Draft Results Release
(March 2019)



Integration of High-Performers into Preferred
(Summer/Fall 2019)

Proposed Policy Analyses (page 1 of 2)



Topic 1:
Autonomous Vehicles
June 2018



Topic 2:
Climate Mitigation
September 2018

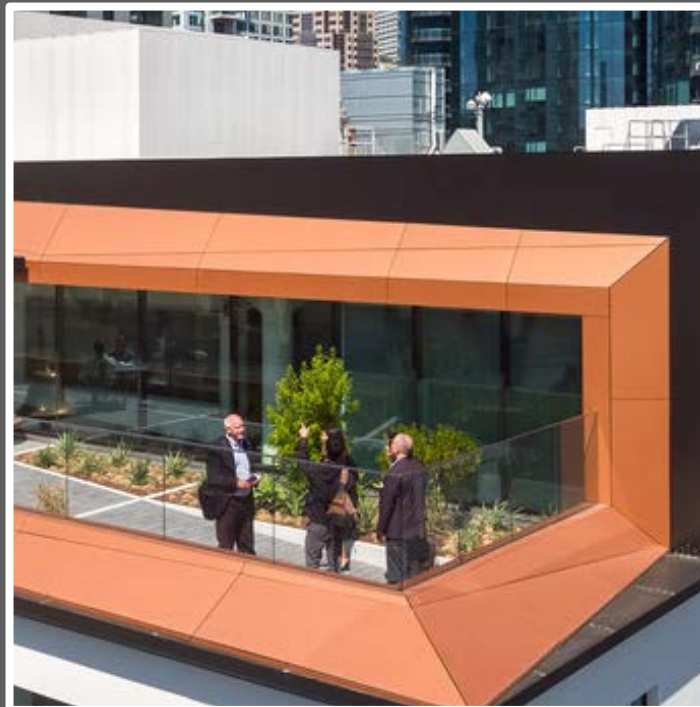


Topic 3:
Regional Growth Strategies
December 2018

Proposed Policy Analyses (page 2 of 2)



Topic 4:
Future of Jobs
March 2019



Topic 5:
Regional Governance
June 2019



Topic 6:
Better Buildings
September 2019

How will CASA be integrated into Futures?

Combined with strategies specific to each future, consensus recommendations from CASA will be integrated across all futures to address affordability & displacement challenges.

How will Adapting to Rising Tides be integrated into Futures?

The latest BCDC sea level rise inundation maps, as well as adaptation strategies from case studies, will be used to develop an appropriate adaptation approach for each future.



First Step – Guiding Principles

- **First step:** establish a regional vision based on **guiding principles** over the next three months.
- **Identify aspirations for the Bay Area** in 2050 regardless of external shocks & stressors.
- **Official goals and targets will be set later on** during the traditional RTP/SCS process in mid-2019.

Engaging the Public in Futures

- We want to take a different approach on **public outreach** for this planning cycle – testing different formats to get more people involved in the planning process and to “meet them where they are”.
- We also want to increase our digital engagement through **online surveys, digital tools, and social media**.
- To kick off the process, Integrated Planning staff will be seeking input on guiding principles across the nine-county region through a **series of 15 to 20 “pop-up” public outreach events** in late February & March.
- We need your help to get the word out on social media about *Futures* and ways to get involved.



What's Next?

- April 2018: draft guiding principles; initial outreach feedback
- June 2018: policy paper #1; proposed futures; project evaluation framework

