

Plan Bay Area 2040 Open Forum

Results as of June 30, 2016

The Plan Bay Area Open Forum is one way for Bay Area residents to weigh in on the policies and strategies shaping Plan Bay Area 2040, the long-range regional transportation and housing roadmap. The Open Forum allows residents to view information about the three scenarios and provide input by answering four quick questions. Comments and responses are published and publicly viewable on the forum, with the hope of sparking a conversation online.

TOPIC: What do you think of the proposed ideas to successfully manage future growth in the Bay Area?

This topic started on June 8, 2016, 7:34 PM.

Results contained in this document as of June 30, 2016, 4 PM

NOTE: *Plan Bay Area Open Forum is not a certified voting system or ballot box. As with any public comment process, participation in Plan Bay Area Open Forum is voluntary. The responses in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials.*

Which aspects of each scenario that do you feel will help meet today's challenges while laying the groundwork for future success?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected neighborhoods - local walk-ability and bike-ability • Big cities - connecting cities by rail
<p>The (1) Main Streets plan may be the best one to provide more affordable housing, but at the cost of greater commutes. (2) Connected Neighborhoods plan may moderate that somewhat, but also promotes somewhat greater commutes. (3) Big Cities give the best reduction in commutes, but at a high cost of pushing out middle and low income people to areas where there are few jobs. None of these, in exclusion, is a good solution. Also, we need to maintain and evolve the diversity and unique characters of all the towns and neighborhoods, so imposing a single solution would destroy the diversity and result in a bland homogenization like some midwestern town. We need, above all, a balanced solution that mixes all these approaches.</p>
<p>They are ridiculous plans that ignore the needs and desires of the people for false "environmental" goals.</p>
<p>Your three scenarios propose Hobson's choices. They are based on overly simplistic assumptions that ignore some of the most important questions, such as the relationship between uncontrolled job growth without regard to available local housing, the effect of job growth on inflation of housing prices and displacement, and the lack of responsibility of local jurisdictions to address availability of local employee housing before approving large new employment centers. I reject your proposals as artificial and unrealistic.</p>
<p>Few</p>
<p>None. I advocate a local General Plans scenario. No top down planning!</p>
<p>I think that the main streets scenario will appeal to most people, while the Big cities scenario will appeal to younger single people.</p>
<p>No matter which communities we are developing, I think it is important to develop in established areas that are near existing amenities. Whether these amenities are existing transit, existing transit or existing job centers.</p>
<p>Investing in mass transit, eg. BART, Muni, AC transit and Caltrains. Secondarily expanding carpool lanes-but not fee lanes! Increasing pedestrian and bike-friendly streets. Transit villages that build housing close to mass transit options makes sense, within certain limitations cited below.</p>

What is the toughest challenge the region will need to address for the next generation? What ideas do you have for helping to address this challenge?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Employment opportunity
<p>The increased needs for transportation are challenging in areas that are already built up. More light rail, to augment the rapid transit Bart, Caltrain, and other rail systems need to be increased, not only in the dense cities like San Francisco and San Jose, but also along the East Bay corridors as well. This is not to be redundant to Bart and existing rail, but to augment it and make Bart and rail more accessible to the entire region. Extensions to Bart might be in the plan too, but more important to bring in areas that are further from Bart and could not benefit from those extensions. Buses are fine for shorter</p>

distances, but too many trips would take an hour or longer just to cross a single town if they depend solely on bus transportation. I believe we need far more light rail lines that exist today, even in cities that already have them, and especially in cities that do not. Buses are the reason so many people drive. You will never get all those people out of the cars if they have to ride buses. Light rails are much more efficient, especially if they can go underground or on elevated rails, and not compete with traffic. □

Secondly, there will probably be some need to accommodate more automobiles. We should not try to force people out of cars by intentionally creating traffic jams -- ignoring the needs of traffic or even unnecessarily reducing the number of lanes to reduce the traffic. This, especially is the practice in San Francisco -- to force drivers to get into traffic jams, with the fruitless hope that they will ride on buses instead (and still, of course get stuck in the very same traffic jams).

Rather than widening highways, I would prefer we build parallel and cross highways would distribute the traffic and allow it to flow better, while cars can find shorter routes. Not all of it should be super freeways. Major boulevards and secondary highways for local traffic would suffice, where the traffic can be made to flow swiftly, without endangering pedestrians. If something isn't done, the cars will exit the freeways and clog up all the neighborhood streets as well. But in most places, at least the neighborhood streets have many alternate pathways, so the traffic isn't necessary concentrated in one spot. Trying to force traffic into following a specific pattern is like trying to push water uphill with a broom. It will always spread out and seek its own level. Yet I see too many misguided politically-correct attempts to corral traffic, to the frustration of everyone, and resulting in a horrible failures. Have those people been educated in the basics of urban design? Or do they eschew the well known engineering principles and laws of science in order to promote their political belief that everyone must stop driving? The best that can be done is to accommodate the bulk of the traffic in a distributed way, while giving people the opportunity of efficient, comfortable rail transportation to help encourage (not force) people to use the alternatives.

Building the houses and roads people want and will use.

To meet the transportation needs for the growing population of seniors and people with disabilities. Innovated and cost effective programs are needed since transit and paratransit does not work for everyone. A dedicated funding source to assist counties to develop and implement mobility programs.

We need to:

- 1) Evaluate the infrastructure carrying capacity of urban areas within the Bay Area and tailor development plans so they fit with available infrastructure.
- 2) Before proposing major growth for an urban area, the jurisdiction needs to explain how it will provide AND PAY FOR any expansion of infrastructure needed to meet that new growth.
- 3) Planning for growth should strongly incentivize keeping jobs and demographically matched local housing close together. There should be strong disincentives for proposing job growth without explaining how future employees will be locally accommodated without displacing current residents.

There will be no Population Increase if there is no Jobs Increase. PLAN BAY AREA attempts to predict growth based on estimated Population Increase but omits to address ways to direct and control Jobs that cause this increase. The root of the challenge is finding ways to encourage job growth where there is regional housing to take these jobs and discourage job growth where there isn't.

But instead the PLAN ignores this obvious approach and dollops Housing & Transit around already congested areas expecting an inordinate amount of commuters to abandon their cars as if we were all in a dense European city. They need to waken up to the fact that Americans have already chosen life in the suburbs as their preferred goal and will keep their cars, especially when they will all be driven with free energy, charged overnight from solar panels + battery.

This is the future that will give us ZERO GHG Emission (fulfilling the SB375 goal tenfold if the PLAN did nothing).

There are studies that predict that Suburbs will power cities in the future from excess generation.

Autonomous electric vehicles, commuting us door to door, might render many Minor Transit Systems useless, if the PLAN would provide the necessary roadways for this to happen.

Bottom Line -- focus on the root cause of disparity in Housing, Transportation and Jobs -- incentives for JOB location and relocation to where there is Housing for it -- and penalties where there isn't.
<http://marininfo.org/Bay/MapofPlanBayArea.htm>

Housing affordability. Let local Housing Elements do the heavy lifting with OBAG support.

The high cost of living. We should make it easier to build more housing so people don't have to endure 2+ hour commutes.

There are 3 key areas to address:

- maintaining infrastructure
- transportation options
- housing at all price points

Right now the most affordable family housing is located in areas that create long driving commutes to our job centers. We need to make sure we have convenient and affordable housing options near all job centers in the region. Options should include family sized housing and not just luxury 1 bedroom apartments.

We should develop market-rate and "affordable" housing near all of the key transit hubs in the region. Our local transit agencies should consolidate into fewer agencies for improved operational efficiency and to be more user friendly.

First and foremost, the growing wealth disparity that increases the number of homeless people and restricts housing opportunities to wealthier sub-populations. Secondly, none of these plans takes into account the impending disasters due to climate change, such as lack of water and sea level rise. The vast amount of money that will be required to address these two issue will likely prevent resources being left to implement any of the proposed scenarios. These deteriorating environment may well mean the there is no population growth in this area.

How can we prevent displacement of long-time residents and best address the lack of affordable housing in the region?

Multi-family housing and senior housing, including high rise

Allow the building of the houses people want and need.

Responsibility must be placed on employers and local jurisdictions to show how additional local housing matched to the demographics of new employees will be provided and paid for. Those questions must be answered before new employment centers are approved.

That seems almost impossible, especially among renters. There are too many loopholes to prevent people paying low rents from being evicted. Home owners are less vulnerable, but when the opportunity to sell out and move presents itself, or when a homeowner is forced to move due to economic problems they will also move, and there will always be somebody twice (or more) as rich to replace them. One of the strange mysterious effects, is that low-to-middle income housing gets bid up into the range of high-income housing, but never mind that the quality of the housing is still the same, and does not in any way match the price. We actually have lots of low to middle income housing, if it were not bid up into ranges that completely misrepresent the quality of the housing. So one solution that is being attempted is to force builders to provide more affordable housing as a certain portion of their projects. But as long as there is insufficient housing, previously-affordable housing will always be bid up into ranges that do not match the quality of the housing. This of course means that the high-priced, low-quality housing is very vulnerable if the bubble were to burst, although for the near future, that is not likely.

Paradoxically (to some, especially the politically-correct), the solution to low and middle income housing might be to allow more high-income housing to be built, so that the high-income buyers will stop bidding up the price of existing affordable housing. But it will take an awful lot of additional housing to cool down the bidding wars. And anything that cools it down enough for affordable-quality housing to return to affordable prices will cause those who bought high-priced affordable-quality housing to suddenly be underwater with their mortgages and could trigger a crash in the housing market. So we are stuck with a huge quantity of affordable-quality housing priced at high-income levels. This is a huge, problem that doesn't appear to have any really beneficial solution that would provide more than a trickle of new affordable housing.

Actually, we need a balanced solution with more of every level of housing, to match the demand at each level, and allow the lower quality housing to remain in the hands of the low-to-middle income owners. This would require a deep analysis of where, geographically, the demand for each level of housing exists, and encourage builders to provide it. Of course, with the high prices of land and building and labor, providing more affordable housing is still difficult, especially doing so while not creating long commutes, and is one of the nearly insurmountable problems. I would avoid too much government interference, but it might be necessary in order to provide any more affordable housing at all.

Good luck with finding a solution to all this!

One for one replacement policy as in SF. Again let local Housing Elements be the vehicle.

Reduce property taxes.

Implement emergency rent control and just eviction clauses. Investigate the huge number of structure fires in areas like the Mission, and prevent developers from reaping any benefit from these occurrences. Mandate 50% low income housing requirements for all new housing development. Encourage, incentivize and invest in housing co-ops to increase tenant ownership of multi-unit buildings. Tax corporations like Uber and Airbnb to fund these proposals and discourage high paid tech workers from moving in and displacing long-time residents.

Build more housing in convenient places and keep building.

Which present-day transportation investments do you think would provide the most benefits for current and future Bay Area residents?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muni metro / underground rail to displace some downtown bus routes over time • More bike lanes, better interconnection of bike lanes • More pedestrian areas, better interconnection of pedestrian areas • No car zones • Freeway through SF instead of city streets
<p>As I said above, more light rail.</p> <p>Relatively, this could be done incrementally, without super-major investments, since it would be done more locally. For example, San Francisco will soon complete the central subway to Chinatown from Caltrain. A light rail along Geary Blvd has been mentioned for years, yet nothing has been done about it. (It would not need to go all the way to the ocean -- Presidio Blvd or Park Presidio would probably be far enough). A light rail along 19th Avenue, or parallel to it, to meet up with the M line in the south (or even further to the Daly City Bart station) and connect it to the Golden Gate Bridge on the north end, would also be great, but not quite as important as Geary. We have two light rails (N and L) going through the Sunset area, but nothing in the Richmond area. San Jose has a nice start for a light rail system, but there are plenty of areas left out of that too. The Peninsula (Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, San Mateo, Daly City) are completely void of any light rail, but have extremely heavy traffic. I'm not so familiar with the East Bay, but the only rail system there is Bart and the Capital/Amtrack trains, which serve just a tiny part of it with any convenience. If anything, the traffic in the East Bay is even worse than the Peninsula -- why is there no light rail?</p>
<p>Highway capacity expansion.</p>
<p>Efficient local transit and making sure that local communities are walkable and bikeable. Reduce dependency on cars AND TRANSIT by designing communities to be self-contained, including jobs, housing, and amenities.</p>
<p>Extra lanes and roadways for Autonomous Electric vehicles, commuting us door to door.</p>
<p>Extend work of CCTA on their TEP to the region. Recognize your VMT focus is short-sighted. More work needed on autonomous vehicles and MTC's model should reflect differences in lane capacity with them. See TRB report on Atlanta modelling.</p>
<p>Build more HOT lanes on area freeways.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve BART's core network • consolidate transit agencies
<p>Encourage powered two-wheeled vehicles and heavily tax SUVs . . .</p>
<p>BART needs to expand. Bus transportation to the BART corridor needs to be expanded so service is convenient, rapid and cheap. Protected bikes lanes and count-down pedestrian crosswalks should be at every busy intersection, with adequate countdown time for kids, the elderly and disabled to cross.</p>