

Report on ABAG to MCCMC

January 28, 2015

MARIN ABAG DELEGATES AD HOC COMMITTEE: Last year, the Marin ABAG delegates (and alternates, as appropriate) worked to develop a list of:

1. what went well with Plan Bay Area and suggested improvements for Plan Bay Area Update 2017;
2. principles that will be used as our advocacy platform for Plan Bay Area Update 2017; and,
3. requests of both ABAG and MTC.

These attached documents will be used to help inform the Regional agencies of what we believe went well with Plan Bay Area (adopted in 2013) and what improvements should be considered for the Plan Bay Area Update due in 2017. Please email your suggested additions or deletions to peklund@novato.org or pateklund@comcast.net by February 14, 2015.

PLAN BAY AREA UPDATE 2017 -- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: MTC is updating its 2010 Public Participation Plan (PPP) which is required by State and federal law to provide interested residents with opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process. Based on comments heard at a MTC October 8, 2014 public meeting, MTC released a Draft PPP on November 7, 2014 which “informs interested residents on how to engage in the range of MTC’s planning work and funding allocations, and includes as a primary focus public engagement opportunities for [Plan Bay Area](#) — the region’s long-range transportation and land use blueprint. This Draft PPP included Appendix A which is a **Draft 2015 Public Participation Plan for the 2017 Plan Bay Area update.** Specifically, MTC added information that highlights: 1) the significance and impact of key planning milestones; 2) opportunities for public input for each planning milestone; 3) which agency or agencies are making decisions; 4) the role of various advisory committees; and, 5) how MTC and ABAG will partner with local government on public outreach.

Even though ABAG contributed to the Draft MTC PPP for the 2017 Plan Bay Area Update (Appendix A), it did not reflect the additional ABAG outreach efforts planned for the Update. At the December 4, 2014 ABAG Executive Board meeting, Board members expressed concerns that there be one public participation plan that is jointly implemented by MTC and ABAG especially since Plan Bay Area Update 2017 is a joint document. In response, Ezra Rapport, Executive Director stated: “we ... are in conversation with MTC staff to ensure that both the Public Participation Plan, which MTC and ABAG will conduct jointly, and ABAG memos and related materials reflect that both agencies are part of one coordinated community engagement and public participation effort. MTC has invited us to propose additional language for the draft Public Participation Plan prior to its adoption in March 2015. They have already incorporated language we drafted explaining the role of ABAG delegate meetings in gathering input and are open to incorporating language related to other activities/strategies outlined in our memo.” The **MTC Public Participation Plan 2015** is available online at http://mtc.ca.gov/get_involved/participation_plan.htm

Updating the PPP can be viewed as a key first step to making the Plan Bay Area process transparent and accessible. Key dates leading up to adoption of the Draft PPP are:

- 2/13/15: MTC Legislation Committee: Present summary of comments and any recommended changes (if there are significant changes, release for a second comment period)
- 2/25/15: Close of 45-day public comment period
- 3/25/15: MTC adoption of the PPP
- 4/10/15: Joint ABAG Administrative and MTC Planning Committee meeting

ABAG/CSAC LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAY: You are invited to a Legislative Workshop sponsored by ABAG, California State Association of Counties, and MTC on Wednesday, **February 11, 2015** from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the CSAC Conference Center located at 1020 11th Street, 2nd Floor, Sacramento. The Legislative Workshop features briefings on bills and initiatives related to local government, land use, housing, transportation, funding, financing mechanisms, Cap and Trade, and environmental challenges from water to climate change. Senate and Assembly Legislative Committee Chairs will be invited to speak at the workshop. The reception follows the workshop beginning at 5:00 to 7:00 pm at: Ella Dining Room and Bar, 1131 K Street, Sacramento. Please RSVP by Wednesday, February 4th, to Halimah Anderson at 510/464-7986 or handerson@abag.ca.gov; or Leah Zippert at 510/464-7995 or lzipper@abag.ca.gov.

ABAG GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The ABAG General Assembly will be held on **April 23, 2015**. This year’s theme is **Best Practices in Green Infrastructure** with speakers describing how they’ve combined green streets and green storm water programs with locally driven place making designs. Also, for the first time, we will also be setting aside time for cities and towns to meet in caucuses based on common interests and challenges (e.g. a small cities and towns caucus; older suburbs caucus and big cities caucus). This suggestion grew out of the ABAG delegate meetings held around the region last year. All delegates or alternates should plan on attending, if available.

PROPOSED ABAG BUDGET AND WORKPLAN FOR 2015-2016: On January 15, 2015, the ABAG Finance and Personnel Committee recommended the draft ABAG Budget and Workplan for 2015-2016 to the ABAG Executive Board for distribution to all member cities/towns. The Budget and Workplan approved will be voted on at the upcoming General Assembly on April 23, 2015 by the member cities/towns. The Draft Budget and Workplan can be viewed at: <http://abag.ca.gov/meetings/execboard.html>. If you have any comments, please contact Pat Eklund.

PDA’S FOR THE 2017 UPDATE PLAN BAY AREA: The ABAG Executive Board discussed the draft PDA Criteria/Guidelines that retains the current three PDA criteria without modifications: location within an existing community, housing growth potential and access to transit; and, the density guidelines; but, some minor changes on the size of the PDA. The Executive Board did not approve the draft criteria/guidelines and asked staff to: consider increased flexibility in creating PDAs; a joint ABAG and MTC reexamination of the ½ mile criteria; placing the ½ mile to 1 mile change on a joint ABAG Administrative Committee and MTC Planning Committee meeting in January; staff analysis of changing the ½ mile criteria to one mile; mechanisms for exceptions to the ½ mile criteria; MTC’s transit planning requirements. This item should be heard before the ABAG Administrative/MTC Planning Committee then brought back to the ABAG Executive Board for consideration.

STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL: On January 20, 2015, the Strategic Growth Council adopted the final guidelines for the SGC Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program: 1) the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program which contains the housing, transportation and infrastructure components of this program, and 2) the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program. I submitted comments on the proposed definitions of metropolitan and non-metropolitan, eligibility requirements and the calculation of GHG emission reductions as part of the draft AHSC Program guidelines; and, on the 40 acre minimum and USDA’s role on ranking priority agricultural lands as part of the draft SALC Program guidelines. In response to public comments, the Strategic Growth Council made substantive changes which are highlighted in their staff reports available online at: http://sgc.ca.gov/s_012015meetingmaterials.php. I am pleased to report that the Strategic Growth Council did reduce the density requirements which are reflected in Appendix C. Figure C-1 (see below) will be “used exclusively for determining minimum net density requirements for Affordable Housing Development to be consistent with the requirements of Section 103(a)(1)(A)(iv).” On Page 67 of 82 it states:

Figure C-1 Project Location Designation Definitions

Rural	Suburban	Urban
Jurisdictions (cities/counties) located within Non-Metropolitan Counties	Jurisdictions (cities/counties) located within Non-Metropolitan Counties Jurisdictions (cities/counties) located within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with a population of less than 2 million unless a city has a population of greater than 100,000 in which case it would be considered Urban	Jurisdictions (cities/counties) located within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with a population of more than 2 million unless a city has a population of less than 25,000 in which case it would be considered suburban

Other significant changes and additions are: simplified the guidelines to clarify the program requirement; streamlined scoring criteria; refined the program requirements; added ARB’s GHG Quantification Methodology and clarified the MPO role. Technical workshops will be held in early February and concept proposals are due February 19, 2015.

Please direct questions to Pat Eklund, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Novato (phone: 415-883-9116; email: peklund@novato.org or pateklund@comcast.net)

Marin ABAG delegates final list of what went well with Plan Bay Area 2013 and improvements for Plan Bay Area Update 2017

In a joint meeting, ABAG and MTC Board Members adopted the Plan Bay Area in July 2013. Plan Bay Area is a state-mandated, integrated long-range transportation, land-use and housing plan that supports a growing economy, provides more housing and transportation choices and reduces transportation-related pollution in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. It builds on earlier efforts to develop an efficient transportation network and grow in a financially and environmentally responsible way. It is a work in progress that will be updated every four years.

In preparation for the update to the Plan Bay Area due in 2017, the Marin ABAG delegates have the following comments on what went well with Plan Bay Area 2013 and suggestions for improvements on the process and content in the Plan Bay Area Update 2017.

WHAT WENT WELL with PLAN BAY AREA 2013:

1. Marin County initiated an ad hoc group of council members that have been selected by their Town/City to be ABAG delegates/alternates to share information and collaborate on mutual interests and issues. These meetings have increased the shared knowledge of the elected officials.
2. The citizens of Marin County have an increased awareness of the existence of ABAG and MTC.
3. The SF Bay Area growth was focused in the urban cities and where the jobs are anticipated.
4. Plan Bay Area did reflect a reduction of 15% of the GHG emissions and complied with SB 375.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT in PLAN BAY AREA UPDATE 2017:

1. ABAG/MTC needs to emphasize local control. Due to a variety of factors, there was a perception that the Regional agencies were not respecting local land use authority. Even the original title "One Bay Area" gave the impression that this Plan was 'top down'.
Suggestions:
 - a. Plan Bay Area Update 2017 should emphasize that each county and city/town has its own character and needs; and, the recommendations made in the Plan are at the discretion of the local jurisdictions since they are responsible for planning and zoning.
 - b. ABAG/MTC should consider changing the title of Plan Bay Area since it implies that 'one size fits all'.
2. Population, housing and jobs projections: In 2013, it became apparent that ABAG's projections used in Plan Bay Area were different than the California Department of Finance (DOF) projections. ABAG/MTC did not provide adequate explanations on the difference, nor the models used.
Suggestions:
 - a. ABAG/MTC should provide early in the process the population, housing and jobs projections by city/county along with the rationale and modeling used in comparison to the DOF projections and US Census Bureau data to the towns/cities/counties/public. The Cities, Towns, Counties, Public should be given adequate time to evaluate those projections and compare to their local General Plans. If there is a difference, then ABAG/MTC should provide an explanation and encourage discussion on which projections should be used for the update.

Marin ABAG delegates final list of what went well with Plan Bay Area 2013 and improvements for Plan Bay Area Update 2017

- b. ABAG/MTC should allow the local governments and the public an opportunity to suggest which projections and assumptions should be included in the Plan.
 - c. ABAG/MTC should always explain in detail where the numbers come from, whether they have been validated and how the projections are made so that everyone can understand them and how they fit into the bigger picture.
3. Water availability. Some counties rely on the water collected in their watersheds; and, others are limited on what is available from the Federal and State water projects.
Suggestion:
 - a. Since there are limited resources in Marin County especially for water, the Plan needs to factor in those constraints and that it could limit and/or influence implementation of the Plan.
4. Sea Level Rise. Plan Bay Area must incorporate anticipated sea level rise and potential impacts on the natural and built environments.
Suggestion:
 - a. The Plan Bay Area Update 2017 should include a detailed discussion on anticipated sea level rise with the data, assumptions, rationale and suggestions for minimizing impacts to the natural and built environments.
5. Air Quality. The Plan Bay Area must incorporate potential public health impacts of focusing housing adjacent to transportation corridors.
Suggestion:
 - a. The Plan Bay Area Update 2017 should include a detailed discussion on the potential health impacts of focusing housing adjacent to transportation corridors.
6. Public involvement: Public engagement is critical throughout the process and there is a recognized need to have more effective engagement of the public and opportunity for the public to feel they can make a difference.
Suggestions:
 - a. ABAG/MTC need to have a collaborative process with the public that early on fully explains the issues, allows adequate time for understanding the documents and for meaningful public involvement.
 - b. More public workshops should be held in each of the counties.
7. Member agencies involvement: Involvement in the Plan by staff and elected officials can be improved significantly.
Suggestions:
 - a. ABAG/MTC need to increase their communication with the cities/towns/counties – both staff and elected officials -- and engage them in each step of the process to ensure opportunities for meaningful input.
 - b. The Plan should be a discussion topic at every ABAG General Assembly which would allow more meaningful input from elected officials.

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- c. Prior to ABAG/MTC Board action, ABAG should bring the Plan to the General Assembly for an advisory vote of the member agencies.

8. Alternative and Preferred Scenarios. It was unclear to the public and member agencies how and who were actually involved in developing the alternatives and preferred scenario. Later on, it was acknowledged, that special interests (e.g. building industry and others) worked with ABAG/MTC in developing the alternative scenarios that were evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report; however, the cities/towns and counties were not engaged.
Suggestions:
 - a. ABAG/MTC needs to involve the local agencies in the development and evaluation of the scenarios and preferred alternative.
 - b. There should be adequate time for all parties to be actively engaged in developing the scenarios and alternatives, and all documents at each step in the process.

9. Assumptions. SB 375 and Plan Bay Area assume that placing housing/jobs near transit will reduce GHG emissions.
Suggestions:
 - a. ABAG/MTC should evaluate and share with the public and local agencies whether the projections for GHG emissions are accurate prior to development of the alternatives and preferred scenario.
 - b. ABAG/MTC should identify and share with the towns/cities and counties what specific activities are reducing GHG emissions and their respective level for each.

10. Process. There was not adequate time to review and meaningfully comment on Plan Bay Area.
Suggestion:
 - a. ABAG/MTC needs to increase the review time to at least 60 days for all documents to ensure adequate time for comment by the public and local agencies.
 - b. The Final Plan acted on by the respective Boards should be produced and distributed as presented at the ABAG/MTC Boards.

Marin ABAG delegates list of principles for Plan Bay Area Update 2017

Marin County leads the nation in preserving its natural environment for future generations. As a result, two national parks, the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area were formed, development of coastal areas was limited, and agricultural land was preserved. Small towns and cities were planned and built to create communities that minimized the impact on the natural environment.

This vision should continue to guide planning and development decisions in Marin County. Dedicated open space and conservation areas in the surrounding environment are not sufficient alone to maintain the character of the towns and cities in Marin County. Planning policies should strive to maintain the small-town feel of built communities in Marin County. Open space, marshland, natural habitats and greenbelts within built communities should be required, not only to achieve environmental or aesthetic goals, but to promote active and healthy lifestyles, and continued enjoyment of a unique, natural landscape. In updating Plan Bay Area which is due in 2017, the Marin ABAG delegates have agreed to the following principles:

1. Promote and maintain local control of land use decisions including planning and zoning.
2. Encourage use of realistic and credible population, housing and jobs projections that clearly articulate assumptions, modeling and rationale.
3. Advocate for more effective public and local agency engagement throughout the process.
4. Promote acknowledgement of resource limits especially for water availability.
5. Work to reduce GHG emissions within our control by implementing our Climate Action Plans and/or additional measures as determined appropriate by local government.
6. Plan and prepare for sea level rise in Marin County.

Requests of ABAG/MTC by Marin ABAG delegates

The Marin ABAG delegates requests the following of both ABAG and MTC:

1. Seek legislative changes on what 'counts' towards achieving the RHNA allocations to include, but not limited to: acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing units, assisted living, multi-generational housing situations, and congregate care units.
2. Make the ABAG General Assemblies more substantive and relevant by discussing issues of interest to member cities/towns including, but not limited to population, housing and jobs projections. Consider surveying the members soliciting topics.
3. Provide more opportunities for the towns/cities to have meaningful input into the ABAG/MTC actions and decision-making process.
4. Make Regional information and tools available for cities/towns that support and enhance local planning efforts and integrated decision-making for their community.
5. Work together in partnership with local jurisdictions to solve regional issues; and, foster support for and reinforce local control and authorities.
6. Reach out to local jurisdictions to educate staff and elected officials in cities/towns on what resources and tools are currently available; and, work to provide the resources and tools that cities/towns need on emerging issues.
7. Develop a small City Caucus similar to the League of CA Cities and work for better city representation on committees.