

Report on ABAG to MCCMC

June 17, 2014

Please direct questions to Pat Eklund, Council Member, City of Novato 883-9116 or peklund@novato.org

ABAG BAY TRAIL DEDICATION: You are invited to participate in the bay trail celebration of the grand opening of the most recent addition to the Bay Trail in Hamilton on June 26, 2014 beginning at 4:00 pm. The opening of this 2.7 mile section means that 338 miles of the proposed 500 mile Bay Loop has been completed, and we're thrilled to have it right in our back yard! Join us for the official ribbon-cutting, food, refreshments, and more. (see attached flyer)

HOUSING ELEMENT ASSISTANCE: ABAG has partnered with the CA Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to provide office hours for jurisdictions seeking technical assistance as Housing Elements are being prepared in June and late summer. This is to improve clarity and certainty prior to entering the HCD review or public engagement. Please contact your HCD staff person or myself if you have questions.

PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS: On July 17, 2014, the ABAG Executive Board will be finalizing the criteria and process for submittal of applications for Priority Conservation Areas. If you are interested in providing input, please contact me. Some of the proposed changes includes: 1) Local governments (cities, counties and open space districts) will submit applications; 2) PCA Designations and Criteria include four categories including: Natural Landscapes— areas critical to the functioning of wildlife and plant habitats, aquatic ecosystems and the region's water supply and quality. Examples: wetland restoration, riparian corridor protection. Agricultural Lands—farmland, grazing land and timberland that support the region's agricultural economy. Example: conservation easements. Urban Greening— existing and potential green spaces in cities that improve community health, capture carbon emissions, address stormwater, and enhance the public realm. Example: urban portion of riparian corridors, potential sites for parks and community gardens. Regional Recreation—existing and potential regional/local parks, trails, and other publicly accessible recreation facilities. Examples: regional trail networks, areas for potential park expansion.

Timeline for New and Updated PCA Applications:

July 2014: PCA Program update—including Application Process and PCA Designations— adopted by Executive Board for adoption.

July 1, 2014: Beginning of PCA application period. New PCAs must submit application and existing PCAs submitted needs to obtain local government support letter.

May 30, 2015: Deadline for PCA applications. Existing PCA designations will be removed if no application has been filed.

June 2015: Following staff review, RPC recommends PCA nominations to the Executive Board for adoption

July 2015: Executive Board adopts PCA nominations recommended for adoption by the RPC.

Also, the Executive Board will be approving the request for additional funds from MTC to support the PCA Program.

Background: The Priority Conservation Area (PCA) program was initiated in 2007 to identify Bay Area open spaces that: 1) provide regionally significant agricultural, natural resource, scenic, recreational, and/or ecological values and ecosystem functions; 2) are in urgent need of protection due to pressure from urban development or other factors; and 3) supported by local consensus. The PCAs were established at the same time as the locally nominated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) through the FOCUS program. Together, the PDAs and PCAs have informed the development of Plan Bay Area and implementation initiatives such as the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG). Over 100 PCAs were nominated during the first round of applications by local governments and environmental organizations; and, on July 17, 2008, the ABAG Executive Board adopted the first set of PCAs. The first PCA projects were funded in 2013 and 2014 through OBAG. OBAG provided \$5 million in funding for a competitive program in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties managed by the Coastal Conservancy. Another \$5 million in

OBAG funding was divided between the North Bay Counties Congestion Management Agencies—each of which managed its own program.

MARIN ABAG DELEGATES MEETINGS: In April and May, 2014, the delegates and/or alternates from the Marin cities met to brainstorm what went well and what needs improvement for the Update to Plan Bay Area due in 2017. The cities also agreed to develop a statement of principles that will facilitate our advocacy framework for the Update to Plan Bay Area and a statement of needs from ABAG/MTC. Thank you to all of the delegates and/or alternates that are participating in our discussions. It is making a difference! Our next meeting will be in July, 2014.

UPDATE TO PLAN BAY AREA: In May, 2014, the Executive Board discussed what went well and what needs improvement for the Update to Plan Bay Area due in 2017. Suggestions included: Need to improve the entire process especially with better and more open communications with local governments and public; need to identify the requirements and components of the Update pursuant to SB 375 and what we believe should be included; need to develop a timeline that provides for adequate time for everyone to get involved in the process; need to discuss how to maintain the diversity of life styles in the SF Bay Area, etc.. It was also mentioned that ABAG participated in delegate meetings in six of the nine counties – Marin, Sonoma, Solano, Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Marin County had the most representatives attend the meetings – nine out of 11 cities in April; and, 7 of 11 cities in June. It was an active discussion at the Executive Board – one of many that will help drive the update process. The ABAG President agreed that the Update to Plan Bay Area will be on every Executive Board agenda.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) REPORT AND TOOL: In May, the Air Resources Control Board (ARB) released a new tool available for local governments to determine whether different types of development will reduce vehicle miles traveled. I attended the training in Sacramento and after some errors I found for Marin County, the tool is available for use. I sent out an email to the ABAG delegates in Marin and encouraged them to share with all council members and staff. To access the tool, final report, and summary for policymakers for the research project, “Quantifying the Effect of Local Government Actions on Vehicle Miles Traveled,” are posted on the following ARB website: http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/single-project.php?row_id=64861. This tool has some advantages, but also limitations. I raised the issue that the ‘types of jobs’ in the suburbs could have a tremendous impact on the VMT. After some discussion, the ARB asked that I submit a research proposal to modify the tool to include the type of jobs which I did do. I also submitted a proposal to look at whether we would get more mileage out of examining the GHG reductions from CAFÉ standards vs land use. I worked with Richard Hall in San Rafael on that proposal. Copies of proposals were distributed to the ABAG delegates in Marin.

CONTRACT FOR DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTING CONSULTING: In May 2014, ABAG contracted with Analysis and Forecasting Inc. and Dowell Myers, Professor of Urban Planning and Demographic in the School of Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Southern California. The purpose of the contract is to develop a demographic model for forecasting population growth, both through natural increase and mitigation, in a way that provides ABAG’s research group with the detail necessary to understand the changes in housing demand.

URBANSIM, A DYNAMIC LAND USE MODEL: UrbanSim, a land use model for Plan Bay Area, can be used by local agencies to ‘test out’ land use planning strategies. Paul Waddell, Professor and Chair of City and Regional Planning Department at UC Berkeley, gave an overview of UrbanSim and discussed the possibilities of using this model to help assess the impacts of alternative plans and policies related to land use and transportation to evaluate growth management policies. Paul Waddell is under contract to ABAG to expand the UrbanSim model which will be maintained MTC but under the direction of ABAG.

Communities for a Better Environment et al. v MTC, et al.: A coalition of environmental groups including the [Sierra Club](#), Earthjustice and Communities for a Better Environment asserts that the EIR was inadequate and the Plan does not spend enough money on public transportation. Settlement: Proposed settlement to extend the public process and data based on availability.