



Date: April 21, 2010  
To: Regional Advisory Working Group  
From: Ted Droettboom, MTC/BCDC/BAAQMD/ABAG Joint Policy Committee  
Subject: A Local/Regional Process for the Preparation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy

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### Purpose

This memo outlines the process through which the Bay Area intends to prepare its Sustainable Communities Strategy. The process will be conducted by a partnership of local governments and regional agencies and is consistent with *Policies for the Bay Area's Implementation of Senate Bill 375*, adopted by the Joint Policy Committee and each of the four regional agencies in 2009. The proposed structure for the partnership is discussed in a companion memo.

### Place and Location

SB 375 directs that the growth assignment in the Sustainable Communities Strategy attempt to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from light-duty vehicles. This will occur largely through the reduction of vehicle miles traveled (what transportation professionals refer to as VMT). VMT can be reduced by decreasing the number of trips (trip frequency), by shortening trip length (access through proximity), by reducing single-occupant vehicle trips (ride sharing), or by diverting trips to non-automobile modes (transit, walking and biking).

The place to which growth is assigned affects VMT and its causal factors in two ways:

1. Through the *characteristics* of the place itself; e.g., the mixture and intensity of its land uses, the quality of its streets and sidewalks, the directness and efficiency of its internal connections, the availability and cost of its parking, the affordability of its housing, the diversity of its jobs, and the match between jobs and housing;
2. Through the *location* of the place relative to other places—particularly places with complementary characteristics—and relative to the transportation network, both transit and roads.

The regional agencies, and most of the congestion management agencies (CMAs), have developed simulation models and other planning tools to assess the probable impact of place characteristics and place location on VMT and hence on automotive greenhouse gases.

### Priority Development Areas

Priority Development Areas (PDAs for short) are special places. Located within the Bay Area's existing urbanized footprint and connected by high-quality transit, Priority Development Areas are neighborhoods which local governments have identified as capable of taking on more housing growth. There are currently more than 120 Priority Development Areas in over 50 jurisdictions. Together they consume less than 3 percent

of the region's land area but are judged by their nominating jurisdictions to be able to accommodate over half of the region's growth in households to 2035.

As they are strategically located on the regional transit network and as their nominating local governments have already volunteered a readiness for these neighborhoods to grow, PDAs are expected to play a central role in the Sustainable Communities Strategy. As a core part of the regional agencies' FOCUS program, priority development areas are eligible for regional and state incentive funding to help achieve their housing potential. As part of the partnership process, we will explore additional funding options and opportunities for PDAs to help make the Sustainable Communities Strategy real.

### An Iterative Process

The regional agencies and their local partners will work together to assign growth through an iterative process:

1. Based on its regional 2040 housing and employment growth forecasts ABAG staff (see separate memorandum for details), the regional agencies, in cooperation with local agencies, will develop several combinations of preliminary local housing/employment distribution and transportation investment scenarios for 2020, 2035 and 2040. These scenarios are intended to explore the range of possibilities for achieving adopted CARB GHG targets and other regional agency targets.

In building the starting distribution, the regional agencies will fully share analytic assumptions for assigning growth among PDAs and other locations; investment strategies would support this development, including local actions (for example, parking pricing and management) and regional initiatives (for example, freeway and transit performance, accelerated adoption of alternative vehicles, congestion pricing).

2. Using the information developed in #1 above, sub-regional working groups, comprising city and county officials meeting with congestion management agencies and transit providers and assisted by regional-agency staff, will review and refine initial local growth assignments and further assess investment strategies and local actions for their sub-region (county and/or corridor). Using the region's simulation models, the regional agencies will test the cumulative growth distribution and investment policies resulting from sub-regional revisions against the three sets of Bay Area performance targets.

We anticipate that PDAs, which have already been jointly identified by local jurisdictions and regional agencies as preferred places for growth, will figure heavily in sub-regional considerations. In judging the capability of various PDAs to participate in meeting the regional performance targets, sub-regions will be assisted by a PDA Assessment recently completed by the regional agencies. Sub-regional discussion of the Assessment relative to the initial and revised distributions will help refine the conditions and resources required to implement growth assignments.

3. If a performance gap results, particularly relative to the greenhouse-gas targets, the regional agencies will work with the sub-regions to identify and re-evaluate

additional integrated transportation measures and land use policies which can assist in meeting the targets to constitute the Bay Area's first Sustainable Communities Strategy.

4. If the final integrated SCS does not achieve the CARB-designated GHG target, then the region is required to also adopt an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) that demonstrates "how the target could be achieved through alternative development patterns, infrastructure, or additional transportation measures or policies.", integrated with the transportation network and with transportation measures and policies