



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION



Association of
Bay Area Governments

Draft Scenario Concepts Narratives

ABAG and MTC are beginning the process of developing three land use and transportation scenarios to inform discussions about the strategic update of Plan Bay Area 2040. The following draft scenario concept narratives show different options for how the Bay Area can grow and change over time in ways that help us meet our goals for a more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable region. A vital part of the Plan Bay Area 2040 strategic update, these scenarios represent three alternative Bay Area futures based on distinct land use development patterns and transportation investment strategies. Once refined, these scenario concept narratives will provide a framework for our scenario alternatives, which will be developed, modeled, and evaluated to understand the effects of different combinations of land use and transportation strategies on our shared goals and targets.

Similar to Plan Bay Area 2013, locally-identified Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) are the foundation for the scenario concepts. Growth is directed to PDAs in each scenario concept in recognition of the fact that PDAs have been identified by local governments as areas where new homes and jobs can be accommodated near transit. However, the extent to which population and job growth is emphasized in PDAs varies among the three draft scenario concepts, as does the amount of greenfield development expected. Of note, future growth is not assigned to areas that have been adopted as PCAs.

Scenario 1

Scenario 1 targets future population and employment growth to the downtowns of every city in the Bay Area to foster a region of moderately-sized, integrated town centers. As in the other scenarios, most growth will be in locally-identified PDAs, but this scenario offers the most dispersed growth pattern, meaning that cities outside the region's core are likely to see higher levels of growth and, within cities, more growth will be accommodated outside of PDAs than in other scenarios.

To accommodate this growth, investments, including resources for affordable housing, will be dispersed across PDAs, other transit-proximate locations outside PDAs, and underutilized transportation corridors across the region. This scenario comes closest to resembling a traditional suburban pattern, with an increase in greenfield development to accommodate the dispersed growth pattern. While an emphasis on multi-family and mixed-use development in downtowns will provide opportunities for households of all incomes to live near a mix of jobs, shopping, services, and other amenities, this scenario also assumes that many people will drive significant distances by automobile to get to work.

To support this scenario's dispersed growth pattern, transportation investment priorities will largely embrace new technologies and innovative strategies to manage travel demand. To accommodate increased reliance on automobiles for commuting, this scenario assumes a vast expansion of high-occupancy toll lanes on all regional highways, the institution of variable pricing, and highway widening at key bottlenecks. Additionally, the region will adopt transformational investments like automated buses and private vehicles. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will create a network of regional trails and bike lanes, including a robust regional network of bike sharing. To support industry and goods movement, the scenario will focus largely on "smart operations and deliveries" — technology and operations to reduce congestion and increase safety on urban and rural roads.

To reach our climate goals, this scenario sees heavy investments in technology advancements, clean vehicles, and incentives and to pursue near-zero and zero emissions strategies wherever feasible. The mobility needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income communities will be addressed most centrally by "mobility management" solutions to link individuals to travel options that meet their specific needs, as well as the provision of demand-responsive strategies by the public, non-profit, and private sectors.

Scenario 2

Building from the final, adopted Plan Bay Area 2013, Scenario 2 targets future population and employment growth to locally-identified PDAs throughout the region, with an emphasis on growth in medium-sized cities with access to the region's major rail services, such as BART and Caltrain. Outside the PDAs, this scenario sees modest infill development, along with a small amount of greenfield growth. As these communities grow over the next 25 years, compact development and strategic transportation investments will provide residents and workers access to a mix of housing, jobs, shopping, services, and amenities in proximity to transit traditionally offered by more urban environments. Resources for affordable housing will be dispersed across the Bay Area, with some concentration in PDAs to support the development of affordable housing where the most population and employment growth is targeted.

To support this scenario's growth pattern, transportation investments will prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure. The region's transit system will be modernized and expanded along key corridors to improve commutes and add capacity. Investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including the regional bike sharing network, will support the creation of more walkable and bikeable downtowns. While this scenario would see limited expansion of the region's roadways, it will use travel demand strategies, including an expansion of the regional express lanes network to use existing roadways more efficiently. To support industry and goods movement, this scenario will support environmentally sustainable investments at our key global gateways to create local jobs, protect the community, and attract international commerce.

To protect the climate, this scenario prioritizes a number of innovative transportation initiatives, including car sharing and near-zero and zero emission goods movement technologies. The mobility and accessibility needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income communities will be addressed through continued investments in transit operations, transit capital, and a continued focus on "mobility management" solutions to link individuals to travel options that meet their specific needs.

Scenario 3

Scenario 3 concentrates future population and employment growth in the locally-identified PDAs within the Bay Area's three largest cities: San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. Neighboring cities that are already well-connected to these three cities by transit will also see increases in population and employment growth, particularly in their locally-identified PDAs. The amount of growth outside these areas is minimal, with limited infill development in PDAs and no greenfield development. Growth in the three biggest cities will require substantial investment to support transformational changes to accommodate households of all incomes. This scenario will prioritize strategies to make these existing urban neighborhoods even more compact and vibrant, and enable residents and workers to easily take transit, bike or walk to clusters of jobs, stores, services, and other amenities. Resources for affordable housing will likewise be directed to the cities taking on the most growth.

To support this scenario's big city-focused growth pattern, the transportation infrastructure within and directly serving the region's core will be maintained to a state of good repair, modernized to boost service and improve commutes and capacity, and expanded to meet increased demand. While these transit investments will take priority, the roadway network will also require significant investments, such as a regional express lane network to prioritize direct access to the three biggest cities and regional express bus service to increase connections to the region's core. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will be dramatically expanded in these cities, including a robust network of bike sharing. To support industry and goods movement, investments at the Port of Oakland will be ramped up quickly to enable more efficiency and to mitigate the impacts of Port activities on nearby communities.

To reach our climate goals, this scenario will focus technological and financial incentive strategies in and around the three biggest cities, which will accommodate a significant increase in population and travel demand. The mobility and accessibility needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income communities will be addressed by directing resources for a robust increase in transit operations and capital within the region's core.