

ABAG
March/April 2000



Service Matters

Census 2000 Is Coming

Cities and Counties Urge Residents to Return Vital Form

Sharpen your pencils. Come April, Bay Area residents will be filling in the blanks on two federal forms: the annual tax return and the once-a-decade census. Of the two, the latter will be much easier to complete. And every returned form means more dollars, and ultimately services, for Bay Area communities.

Most residents will receive the short form—an 8-question survey that asks the number of people living in the household, whether the home is rented or owned, and the age, sex, and race of the occupants. Six of the questions must be answered for every person living in the household. The forms will be distributed in six languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Census officials estimate the form will take about 10 minutes to complete.

On average, one in six households will receive the long form, which covers about 34 subjects including education, ancestry, employment, disability and home heating fuel. (For statistical reliability, the ratio will range as high as one in two households in smaller, less-populated towns, such as Cloverdale, and as low as one in eight in larger, more densely populated cities. Census officials estimate it will take about 38 minutes to fill out this longer form.

A number of changes have been made to the census form to make it easier to fill out. For example, for the first time residents can choose more than one racial category to answer the question, "What is your race?" One new question has also been added about grandparents who are the primary caretakers of their grandchildren.

Why does it matter?

An accurate population count is critical because it determines how much state and federal money local jurisdictions will receive every year until 2010. Census officials estimate that every year more than \$185 billion in federal funds are awarded to localities based on the census. Beyond its financial significance, the data collected by the census enables cities and counties to plan for schools, roads, and hospitals.

For example, the data on age is used:

- To determine the voting age population required for legislative redistricting
- To allot funds to counties and school districts to improve the education of economically disadvantaged children
- To identify locations needing new schools as well as the required grade levels (elementary, middle or high school)
- By planners to determine the number of highways, hospitals, health services and retirement homes needed.
- To enforce equal employment opportunities under the Age Discrimination and Employment Act
- To forecast the number of people eligible for Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Boosting the Count

The Census Bureau is spending \$100 million in a nationwide publicity campaign to encourage people to fill out and return their forms. More than 4 million U.S. residents, a disproportionate number from ethnic and minority communities, were not counted in the 1990 census, considered one of the most expensive and least accurate in the nation's

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the planning and services agency for the San Francisco Bay Area's 9 counties and 101 cities.*

ABAG's New Elected Officers

President Bill Carroll and Vice President Gwen Regalia



With 30 years of public service under his belt and still counting—20 on the Vacaville City Council, including 18 as Mayor, and nine on the Solano County Board of Supervisors—Supervisor Bill Carroll has just added

Supervisor Bill Carroll

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another job to the list. In December 1999, Carroll became President of the Association of Bay Area Governments. A month later, in January, the executive board asked Walnut Creek Councilmember Gwen Regalia to join him as Vice President.

Carroll and his wife, Marge, own and operate Vacaville Music & TV in downtown Vacaville, which they started in 1960. Carroll edged into politics by serving on the city's Capital Improvement Committee in the late 60s and subsequently a term on the city's planning commission. While he was a planning commissioner, a seat opened up on the city council. "I thought I'd give it a shot," says Carroll.

He was elected to the council in 1970 and elected mayor in 1972. In 1991 he was elected Supervisor and is currently serving the first year of his third term.

Carroll notes that he convinced his wife, when they were newlyweds, to leave her position as an executive with Basic Vegetable Products in Vacaville to start a business with him "so we could be together all the time. Then I got into politics," he adds with a grin, "and she says she hasn't seen me since."

Although he has been invited to seek higher office, Carroll says he prefers working at a level "where you can throw a rock and see the waves that it makes."

When asked what challenges he sees facing the region, Carroll notes that over the years he has seen improvements in some areas, such as air pollution, while others, such as traffic congestion, housing supply and Bay pollution, have worsened. "All of the problems [the region faces] are associated with a rather dramatic increase in population," he says. "That's why dealing with things on a regional basis is a very high priority because many of these problems don't stop at jurisdictional boundaries."

Carroll, who has served on ABAG's executive board from 1972 to 1978 and again from 1993 to the present, says he

sees the agency largely maintaining its current course and programs, "keeping things on an even keel and moving in the direction we're going." He says he sees ABAG "continuing to collaborate with MTC and other regional bodies to continue, and improve where possible, the economic vitality of the region."



Councilmember Gwen Regalia has served on the Walnut Creek City Council since November 1987, including three terms as Mayor. Before her election to the city council, Regalia was a member of the Walnut Creek School Board, serving as its president for two years, past president of the Kennedy-King Memorial College Scholarship Fund, and past president and director of the Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging. Regalia has served on ABAG's Executive Board since 1991, first as an alternate and since 1995 as a delegate, and is past chair of the agency's Finance and Personnel Committee. She is also chair of the City-County Relations Committee, a former member and chair of the regional transportation agency (TRANSPAC), and a former member of the County Transportation Authority. She received the 1998 Women of Achievement Award for Government from the Contra Costa Times and Broadway Plaza.

ABAG Power

Returns “Green” To Members

In July 1999, ABAG POWER began providing renewable, or “green,” energy to participating members in its electric program. At that time, local agencies in Northern California were among the first in the State to receive environmentally friendly energy. In February, members, received another benefit from using green power—rebate checks totaling approximately \$750,000 for the period of May through October 1999.

This green rebate comes from a State program, which encourages the use of renewable energy. A second dividend for about the same amount is planned for disbursement to participating agencies in August 2000. This will make the total rebate from the renewable program roughly \$1.5 million for fiscal 2000.

Members are expected to save 4 to 5 percent in electric energy costs, compared to PG&E, during fiscal 2000.

ABAG POWER has been providing electricity to cities, counties and special districts since the market was restructured in April 1998. ABAG saw this as an opportunity to reduce governments’ energy costs and secure energy price stability. During its first year, the program resolved the initial (and common) operational challenges associated with billing and meter installation and is now considered one of the most effective non-industrial energy service provider (ESP) in California.

Green Program Starts with Member Interest

In response to strong interest by members, ABAG POWER initiated its renewable energy program by signing an agreement with Calpine Corporation of San Jose. (Calpine is one of the nation’s fastest growing independent power companies and is dedicated to providing reliable and competitively priced electricity and thermal energy.) Under the agreement, ABAG POWER receives renewable power from Calpine’s geothermal facilities. With the state rebate, the cost of renewable energy is lower versus buying energy from PG&E or the Power Exchange, the market for buying and selling electricity.

ABAG POWER became a registered renewable provider

with the California Energy Commission, enabling the program to participate in the State’s customer rebate program. Members of ABAG POWER’s electric program received a rebate equal to \$15.00 per megawatt hour of renewable power used. The program also imposes a limit of \$1,000 on meters greater than 20 kilowatts.

Due to the limits, approximately 35% of the entire electric program receives renewable energy. Some members have expressed interest in having 100% of their power come from renewable sources. In response, ABAG POWER is now finalizing arrangements with Calpine to convert the entire electric load to renewable energy for these agencies.

Other Program Initiatives

The renewable program is just one of many efforts ABAG POWER is making to provide energy savings and price stability to its members. Staff is currently evaluating the benefits of developing a closer relationship with the Northern California Power Agency to further improve energy purchasing strategies. Staff also plans to initiate a program providing assistance to members to identify and implement energy efficiency improvements in local government facilities.

In February, members received another benefit from using green power -- rebate checks totalling approximately \$750,000.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

ABAG POWER’s electric program operates with a one-year term commitment from its members. The program welcomes new members at any time during the year.

If your agency is interested in learning more about the electric program or desire to consider becoming a member, please contact Dave Finigan at 510/464-7905 or email DaveF@abag.ca.gov.

Housing Needs

Putting the Process in Prospective

“Impossible.” “Unrealistic.” “Unfair.” Those are a few of the more judicious terms some Bay Area cities and counties have employed to object to ABAG’s allocation of the region’s housing need. Many communities complain that the number of new housing units ABAG expects them to plan for is far too high to reasonably achieve. Bay Area local jurisdictions have until April 30 to file their formal response. But before they do, it would be prudent to consider three critical points.

Over and over again Bay Area residents have made it clear that housing and transportation are their two top concerns.

First, the 230,743 new housing units the California Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department expects the Bay Area to plan for between 1999 and 2006 is lower than the number HCD originally required. ABAG convinced HCD to reduce the Bay Area’s allocation by 80,000 units, from 310,761, although the number could quite easily have been much higher.

The region’s current responsibility, which translates into 30,764 units per year, is lower than in 1989—when the Housing Needs Process was last undertaken—despite the fact that the need for housing is significantly greater now. Between 1970 and 1979 and again between 1985 and 1989, the region exceeded the 30,764 per year new housing unit construction threshold. These periods of rapid housing construction coincided with periods of strong job growth. But when the number of jobs boomed in the mid-to late-90s, the region built between 15,000 and 22,000 units per year—well below demand. In 1980, the ratio of jobs to households was 1.29. Today it’s 1.51. Unless we

address this housing/jobs imbalance, traffic congestion will worsen. Today, approximately 50,000 people commute daily from San Joaquin Valley to jobs in the Bay Area. By 2020, the number is expected to triple.

Second, the Bay Area’s housing needs allocations are based in large part on *Projections*. Every two years, when ABAG updates its housing and employment projections for the region, every local jurisdiction is invited to comment on its numbers. In 1999, when *Projections 2000* was being prepared, 26 local jurisdictions raised questions about or suggested changes to their growth projections. All but two of the comments were incorporated into ABAG’s final report.

Third, ultimately, if we don’t address the Bay Area’s housing shortage issue, the entire region will pay the bill. As the social, economic and environmental costs of our housing and job supply imbalance has grown, so have the murmurs of public discontent. An increasingly vocal minority is suggesting that the region curtail job growth in order to arrest the problem. We strongly disagree with this strategy. We believe it would choke the region’s vitality. However, we cannot continue to approve jobs without providing a sufficient supply of workforce housing or approving them far from where adequate housing supplies are located. That too will strangle the region.



Housing Needs - continued

Putting the Process in Prospective

Over and over again, Bay Area residents have made it clear that housing and transportation are their two top concerns. Local governments have a responsibility, and many tools, to help address those concerns. ABAG could serve as a clearinghouse to help localities get the information they need to begin to turn the situation around. For example, local jurisdictions could be put in touch with communities elsewhere in the region, and beyond, who have implemented zoning incentives such as inclusionary zoning, creative financing packages to help non-profit housing developers build affordable housing, and successful compact patterns of developments. Many communities have vacant and/or underutilized properties that could accommodate housing with densities similar to the surrounding areas.

Ultimately, we need to urge the Legislature to modify state law to reflect current realities in the region, such as environmental and other constraints, in setting housing objectives for the Bay Area, to provide incentives to communities to build housing—particularly affordable housing; and to change the tax laws so communities that build more housing aren't penalized.

But we can't sit on our hands until that happens. The challenges we face are formidable, but not impossible. Rather than fight over the numbers, let's work together to build a future that accommodates our current and future population, while protecting the many qualities Bay Area residents appreciate about our region and its communities.

SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF ABAG'S ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

VOTING MEMBERS

ABAG President/Chair Supervisor Bill Carroll
ABAG Vice President/Councilmember Gwen Regalia
ABAG Immediate Past President Supervisor Mary V. King
Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier
Mayor Mark Green
Supervisor Mary Griffin
Councilmember Dick Spees
Supervisor Mike Rippey
Supervisor Michael Yaki
Councilmember John Marquez
Councilmember Charlotte Powers

JURISDICTION

Solano County
City of Walnut Creek
Alameda County
Contra Costa County
City of Union City
San Mateo County
City of Oakland
Napa County
San Francisco City/County
City of Richmond
City of San Jose

Census 2000 is Coming - continued

history. Bay Area counties estimate that the undercount resulted in a loss of approximately \$250 per person per year in federal funds. For Alameda County, where approximately 38,000 people were missed, that meant a loss of nearly \$96 million. For Santa Clara County, the loss was approximately \$75 million, and for San Francisco County, about \$22 million.

That's why every county in the Bay Area, and a number of

An accurate population count is critical because it determines how much state and federal money local jurisdictions will receive every year until 2010.

cities, are actively working to boost their response rates. For example, Santa Clara County committed \$752,000 from its own coffers, in addition to approximately \$200,000 from the state, to encourage residents to return the form. The county is targeting its outreach efforts towards communities that have been historically undercounted. In addition to radio and TV spots, the county's "Census 2000 Complete Count Committee" has provided mini-grants to community-based organizations to help them get the word out to the communities they serve. The cities of Mountain View, Gilroy, San Jose, Milpitas and Cupertino are working closely with the county to augment the county's efforts inside their borders, while the City of Sunnyvale is pursuing the same goal independently, through its own complete count committee.

Marin County is relying on staff and \$17,000 from the state to boost its turnout in 2000. The county is working with community-based organizations, religious institutions, and the Marin Community Foundation to contact residents in several areas of the county, including West Marin, Marin City, and San Rafael, that had the highest undercounts in 1990. Solano County, which organized its complete count committee at the close of 1999, is working closely with the City of Vallejo, which got its committee going a year ago, in March 1999.

Vallejo, which had the largest undercount in the county in

the last census, is using a variety of means to urge residents to complete and return their forms, including hanging a banner across the city's main street, carrying signs in the city's Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade, inserting notices in utility bills, and airing interviews with local leaders on the city's cable access station. Before April 1, the city plans to hold two large community forums to answer any lingering questions from residents, particularly about confidentiality. By law, the Bureau cannot share the information on its questionnaires with anyone, including welfare agencies, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Internal Revenue Service, courts, police or military.

Between March 27 and April 11, the Census Bureau will post mail back response rates for every city and county at www.hakwan.com. The data will allow local governments whose rates are low to mount a last minute full-court publicity press. The Census Bureau will begin making the results of the short form available by the end of this year. By law, the Bureau must provide the President population totals per state by December 31, 2000. This information is used to determine the number of congressional representatives for which each state is eligible. By April 1, 2001, the Bureau will provide each state with redistricting counts: the number of people and the number 18 years and older in each city and county down to the city and block level. The detailed information collected on the long form will most likely be released in the beginning of 2002.

1990 Census Undercount Rates and Money Lost

<u>County</u>	<u>Undercount Rate</u>	<u>Money Lost</u>
Alameda	3%	\$95,938,650
Contra Costa	2%	40,186,000
Marin	1%	5,752,400
Napa	2%	5,538,250
San Francisco	3%	54,296,925
San Mateo	2%	32,481,150
Santa Clara	2%	74,878,850
Solano	2%	17,021,050
Sonoma	2%	19,411,100

Smart Growth Publication

ABAG to Release *Theory in Action*

In response to the growing local and national interest in smart growth, ABAG has produced *Theory In Action: A Compendium of Smart Growth Case Studies*. The publication, which will be released in early April, profiles a variety of innovative smart growth strategies implemented by states, counties, cities, towns, nonprofit organizations, and businesses around the country.

Our current pattern of development tends to consume a disproportionate amount of land relative to the population growth it accommodates. It despoils the ecosystems it intrudes upon, compromising their ability to provide clean water, produce food, and support a healthy diversity of plants and animals. The increasing distance between cities and the sprawling developments that ring them leads to longer commutes while stratifying the population. Congestion becomes unmanageable, communities lose their identities and quality of life suffers as people spend more and more of their free time in cars. Low-income groups are often left in undesirable areas of the city, while higher-income groups move towards and beyond the edges of the city. Consequently, cities face increasing demand for services while their ability to fund those services decreases—fueling the cycle of urban decline and suburban sprawl.

The Bay Area will grow by more than one million residents in the next 20 years. This growth will require thousands of local decisions about where to site housing, employment,

schools and shopping; which roads and public transit to maintain and enhance; and how to preserve the natural beauty that makes the San Francisco Bay Area a much admired region.

Theory in Action documents more than fifty smart growth initiatives such as compact development, urban revitalization, affordable housing, and open space protection at the local, regional, and state level in the Bay Area, elsewhere in California, and the rest of the country. Many of the initiatives were in place long before smart growth became a movement; others were developed more recently. All provide lessons that can help communities steer toward smart growth.

These case studies are intended not only to be read, but to spur readers to action. Readers are urged to identify projects that could work in their community, call the contact person(s) listed in the case

studies for more information, encourage others to get involved, and, most importantly, actively work to implement smart growth strategies appropriate to their communities. This guide is intended to provide the impetus for creative thinking and innovation and encourage a transformation in the way local governments deal with complex land use, housing, and transportation challenges.

Copies of the report will be available on April 7 for \$10. To order, call 510-464-7900 or visit our website at www.abag.ca.gov.

Theory In Action

A compendium of Smart Growth case Studies



More than 50 case studies illustrating innovative smart growth practices in the San Francisco Bay Area and around the nation.

Oakland & San Leandro

Revitalize Joint Border

In December 1999, the **Cities of Oakland and San Leandro** signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue their Joint Revitalization Plan. Realizing the benefit of working collaboratively to address common concerns, the two cities adopted the original plan in September 1997. As a joint effort, the cities applied for and received an ABAG grant to improve areas along their shared border and to explore ideas for further cooperation. The MOU proposes actions to further improve the appearance of the “gateway to the East Bay.”

The plan identified five major goals: airport area improvements, job creation and placement, commercial revitalization, neighborhood improvement and inter-jurisdictional cooperation.

With the Port of Oakland and the Alameda County Transportation Agency, the cities began the Airport Gateway Design Project to improve the airport’s gateway corridors, which include 98th Avenue, Doolittle Drive and Hegenberger Road. The improvements include street widening and design. A portion of a \$300,000 HUD grant will be used to complete this goal.

Creating good paying jobs is a critical element of the plan. To accomplish this, the cities held a joint job fair. Approximately 600 companies and 600 job seekers participated in the all-day event. Currently, the cities are surveying participating companies and, to date, have found that about 40 people were hired as a direct result of the job fair.

To revitalize the joint commercial corridors and enhance further investments along MacArthur Boulevard, International Boulevard and East 14th Street, the cities committed resources to aid local businesses with design assistance and façade improvements.

Improved neighborhood appearance is another plan objective. The cities encouraged interaction between neighborhood associations along the city limit line. A holiday decorating event for children was held, three joint area cleanups were completed and homes for senior citizens were painted.

To continue inter-jurisdictional cooperation, Oakland and San Leandro police departments established “pocket precincts” for police staff along border streets. The cities also sponsored an emergency preparedness event. This event added safety improvements to 21 homes in the Durant Manor/Broadmoor neighborhoods.

The MOU will maintain the efforts already implemented, especially the continued cooperation among elected officials, interaction between planning/development staff and coordination among police, fire and emergency preparedness personnel.

For more information, please contact the Oakland Project Coordinator Caroline Williams at 510/238-6271 or the San Leandro Project Coordinator Kathy Ornelas at 510/577-3358.

JOINT COMMITTEE SPONSORS NOISE OVERFLIGHT WORKSHOPS

The Regional Airport Planning Committee (RAPC), a joint ABAG-MTC committee, is holding four public meetings about noise from the overflight of jet aircraft. Representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the major commercial airports in the region, and several regional planning agencies will be in attendance.

Members of the public will be able to obtain information about airport operations—why air traffic is routed the way it is, how weather affects air traffic patterns, and who is responsible for enforcing various airplane-related regulations—as well as voice their opinions on overflight noise.

One reason RAPC is hosting these meetings is because of the confusion about where the public can voice its concerns since authority for regional noise issues is not vested in one

agency. The meetings will allow RAPC members to hear first hand about the nature and extent of the overflight noise problem.

ABAG members serving on RAPC include Councilmember Tom Vargas, City of Livermore, Councilmember Bill Ward, City of Hayward, and Councilmember Dick Spees, City of Oakland. ABAG Former ABAG presidents, Supervisor Mary Griffin, San Mateo County, and Councilmember Charlotte Powers, City of San Jose, serve on RAPC as appointees of MTC. Mayor Jim Spring of Suisun City, is also an MTC appointee on RAPC. Mayor Gus Morrison, City of Fremont, is a representative to RAPC from BCDC.

For more information, contact ABAG Senior Planner Patricia Perry at 510/464-7957 or PatriciaP@abag.ca.gov

Announcements

Mark Your Calendars!

ABAG Spring General Assembly
Smart Growth: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality
April 27-28, 2000

Sheraton Palace Hotel, San Francisco,
Thursday April 27

Westin St. Francis, San Francisco,
Friday April 28

Co-sponsored by the San Francisco District Council of
the Urban Land Institute.

Hear about successful strategies local jurisdictions around the region have employed to accommodate growth in a way that protects our quality of life, environment and economy. Participate in a moderated discussion about what local, regional and state agencies can do to help steer future growth in the region.

For information or to make reservations, call ABAG at 510-464-7900. The conference program and an electronic reservation form will be posted at www.abag.ca.gov/abag/events/ga after March 15th

BAY AREA ALLIANCE PLANS WORKSHOPS

The **Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development** is planning a series of workshops around the region in May and June to gather input from public and private sector leaders on its *Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area*. Established in 1997, the **Bay Area Alliance** is a multi-stakeholder coalition whose members represent the three "E" sectors of sustainability—economy, environment and social equity—and government.

Previewed at the Spring 1999 General Assembly, the draft *Compact* proposes a package of actions intended to preserve the economic, environmental and social attributes of our region for future generations. The complete schedule of workshops will be announced in April and will appear in the next issue of *Service Matters*. Invitations will be sent to Bay Area elected officials and other leaders. Please plan to attend the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development workshop in your county and participate in this important regional dialogue.

BAY TRAIL UNVEILS NEW WEB SITE

The Bay Trail Project recently went live with its revamped web site, chock-full of previously unavailable content, including several interesting new features. The site, which can be found at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>, was designed by Bay Trail Project staff and ABAG's webmaster, Todd Parsnick.

The catchiest new feature on the site is "Virtual Bay Trail," a gallery of 360° IPIX™ images of popular spots along the Bay Trail, created by volunteer (and former ABAG employee) Dan Stone. Currently, three of these wrap-around views are available: from Point Isabel in Richmond, Berkeley's Cesar Chavez Park, and—most dramatic of all—the east sidewalk of the Golden Gate Bridge. First-time users might want to read the brief online guide for help navigating through the images.

The section titled "About the Bay Trail" includes an overview and history of the project, a chronicle of major recent accomplishments, and contact information for Bay Trail Project staff. Also available are fact sheets on various aspects of the Bay Trail, including its transportation potential, the list of cities along its alignment, the status of public access on the main toll bridges, and a list of 100 treasures along the Bay Trail.

Other sections contain recent issues of the newsletter, *Bay Trail Rider*, the entire set of popular Bay Trail maps (which show developed as well as planned sections), an audiovisual presentation titled "Journey to our Water's Edge," guided photo tours of completed segments of the Bay Trail, and links to other like-minded sites. Finally, shoppers will want to click on the new Bay Trail online store, now selling caps, t-shirts, maps, and the ever-popular *San Francisco Bay Shoreline Guide*, a 192-page book produced by the State Coastal Conservancy.



Taming the Monster Home

Changing Ordinances

The ongoing debate between homeowners' rights and neighborhood preservationists is heating up as local governments throughout the Bay Area consider measures to limit so-called "monster homes." Neighborhoods in **Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Mateo** and **Santa Clara Counties** are transforming, as smaller bungalows are demolished and replaced by multi-storied, mini-mansions that almost exceed the property line.

Responding to a recent survey, 32 Bay Area cities face this problem and are either writing new ordinances or exploring ways to minimize these structures.

Opponents argue the oversized homes destroy neighborhood history and charm, intrude upon privacy and limit open space. Proponents maintain their fundamental right to property without government interference. They also contend that the newer homes increase property values for the entire neighborhood.

This debate is raging in areas where the jobs-housing balance is lopsided, real estate costs are exorbitant and land is scarce. People who either can't afford to purchase larger

homes or prefer to live closer to their jobs expand their existing homes to accommodate growing families. Homeowners are more likely to build "monster homes" when the land value is greater than the home improvement value.

Recently, the **County of San Mateo** placed restrictions on the height and floor area of homes in the unincorporated Mid-Coast just north of Half Moon Bay. These rules are only temporary until a task force of residents, developers and elected officials finalizes permanent housing codes.

The **City of San Jose** also adopted an urgency ordinance for six months that ties the size of a house to the size of the lot. The city also voted to temporarily prohibit homeowners from demolishing houses while the process set forth in the interim ordinance is reviewed.

For more information on San Jose's ordinance, please contact Jean Hamilton, senior planner, at 408/277-4576, or visit their website at <http://www.ci.san-jose.ca.us/planning/sjplan/sfhp.htm>.

Alameda County

First in State to Use Tobacco Settlement Funds

Over the next 25 years, the State of California stands to collect \$23.9 billion from the 1998 national lawsuit against the tobacco industry. That amount will be divided among the state, several cities and all 58 counties.

Alameda County is the first county in the state to develop, adopt and implement a plan using the funds to improve public health. The county's board of supervisors approved a policy on how to spend its share—\$18 million annually. Almost \$500 million is expected to enter the Alameda County General Fund over the next 25 years.

"Alameda County has a strong commitment to this unique and valuable opportunity," said Dave Kears, director of the Health Care Services Agency.

The plan contains four priority areas for funding based on the county's leading causes of death and prevention services currently provided. The plan also recommends establishing capital, endowment and health initiative funds.

The capital fund would pay for health care and related capital projects. The endowment fund would allow interest earnings to fund either health initiative programs or capital needs. The health initiatives fund would pay for public health, school-linked services, behavioral health care expansion for indigent adults and expand health insurance coverage. The plan also recommends leveraging funding from other sources, such as Propositions 10 (the 50-cent-a-pack tax on tobacco products passed in 1998) and 99 (the 25-cent-per-pack cigarette tax hike passed in 1988).

Counties to Test E-Voting

Internet Technology

Internet technology allows users to communicate, research and shop at their convenience. Soon, Californians will be able to cast their votes online. A task force convened by California Secretary of State Bill Jones recently studied the feasibility of e-voting.

Although the technology is available, we're not quite ready to vote via our home or office computers. Citing concerns about security, privacy and reliability, Jones said the Internet presents challenges to guaranteeing tamper-free secret balloting.

The task force recommends an incremental, four-step process of getting voters online to minimize fraud and mistakes. Step one allows voters to cast their ballots on the Internet at their regular polling places. County registrars could test the system and verify identification. Step two permits Internet voting at any designated polling place. Step three allows voters to log on at any county facility or kiosk. Voters would confirm their identity by swiping a digital signature card that resembles a credit card. Step four lets people vote from any Internet connection. Once implemented, people can vote online at their convenience 29 days before the actual election.

Counties will test the first phase of the task force's recommendations this November. Voters in **San Mateo County** can use touch-screen computers. **Contra Costa County** will allow voters to use a computer connected to the Internet rather than the punch card for a school bond election. In **San Francisco**, a proposal was introduced to purchase an optical scan system to replace its punch card voting system.

And in **Alameda County**, a proposal to allow absentee voters to use touch screens to vote prior to the general election will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

Internet voting could possibly increase voter turnout, especially among 18-24 year olds, a group generally less inclined to vote. However, some fear the lack of access to computers in poor or non-English-speaking households could harm turnout. These opportunities and concerns are being considered during the testing phase.

For more information on the Secretary of State's Task Force report, log on at <http://www.ss.ca.gov/executive/ivote>.

ABAG Legislation Update

AB 1315 (Ashburn) **Sales & Use Tax: Fuel Tax:** Would remove state and federal excise taxes on gasoline from the state sales tax base. Would repeal the sales tax on federal and state gasoline excise tax. Would require the state to backfill local governments' loss of sales tax revenue through annual appropriations from the General Fund. Legislation & Governmental Organization Committee (L&GO) opposes.

SB 17 (Figueroa) **Transit Pass Tax Credit:** Would establish a tax credit of 40 percent in tax years 1999-2003 of the cost paid or incurred by an employer for providing subsidized public transportation passes to an employee. L&GO Committee supports.

SB 494 (Figueroa) **San Francisco Bay Trail:** Would require the State Coastal Conservancy to establish a competitive grant program to be administered by ABAG to fund the completion of the Bay Trail network. L&GO Committee supports.

SB 1116 (Perata) **SF-Oakland Bay Bridge Traffic Congestion: Variable Tolls:** Would state that traffic congestion and its ill-

effects could be reduced through increasing tolls during peak periods, except for carpools, and using the revenue generated to provide improved transit services in the corridor. L&GO Committee took a watch position.

Newly Introduced/Amended Bills

AB 1756 (Corbett) **Tax Credits: Seismic Retrofitting:** Would authorize a 55 percent tax credit for seismic retrofit construction on residential dwellings constructed prior to 1979.

AB Number to be assigned (Torlakson) **Inter-Regional Partnership Pilot Program:** Would establish a state pilot project based on the five-county joint partnership to test and evaluate a variety of policies and incentives designed to mitigate current and future imbalances of jobs and housing in the Counties of **Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, San Joaquin** and Stanislaus.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Notable Numbers....

March 2000

- 15 - 12 Noon
ABAG POWER Executive
Committee
ABAG Room 106B
- 16 - 3:30 p.m.
L&GO Committee
ABAG Room 106B
- 5:00 p.m.
Finance & Personnel
Committee
ABAG Room 102A
- 7:30 p.m.
Executive Board
MetroCenter - Auditorium

- 13 - 7:00 p.m.
RAPC Noise Overflight
Workshop
Marin County (site to be
determined)
- 27 - 7:00 p.m.
RAPC Noise Overflight
Workshop
Palo Alto Art Center
1313 Newell Road
Palo Alto
- 27 - 8:00 a.m. **(Day One)**
Spring General Assembly
Sheraton Palace Hotel
2 New Montgomery
San Francisco
- 28 - 8:00 a.m. **(Day Two)**
Spring General Assembly
Westin St. Francis
335 Powell Street, Union Sq.
San Francisco

April 2000

- 5 - 1:00 p.m.
Regional Planning
Committee
MetroCenter - Auditorium
- 6 - 7:00 p.m.
Regional Airport Planning
Committee (RAPC) Noise
Overflight Workshop
MetroCenter - Auditorium

May 2000

- 4 - 7:00 p.m.
RAPC Noise Overflight
Workshop
South San Francisco
Conference Center
225 South Airport Blvd.
South San Francisco

April 30 - deadline for filing comments on housing needs numbers.

2,518:

Average number of Californians using HOV lanes during peak hours

925:

Current lane miles dedicated to HOV lanes in the state.

270:

HOV lane miles in the Bay Area.

67:

Percentage of HOV lanes operating at capacity during peak hours in California.

418,000:

Vehicle hours of delay on urban freeways in the state in 1998.

\$2.3 Billion:

Amount Caltrans has spent to date in state and federal funds on construction of HOV lanes in California.

2:

Number of occupants needed to use most HOV lanes.

Note: Numbers from Legislative Analyst Office.



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