



**EVALUATION of the
PLAN BAY AREA PUBLIC OUTREACH and
PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

Prepared by:



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For:



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION



Evaluation of the Plan Bay Area Public Outreach and Participation Program

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1. OVERVIEW

This evaluation report is intended as a companion piece to the reports describing and documenting the three-year public outreach and involvement process conducted as part of the development of Plan Bay Area.

Plan Bay Area is a long-range integrated transportation and land-use/housing strategy through 2040 for the San Francisco Bay Area that gets updated every four years. This effort marks the nine-county region's first long-range plan to meet the requirements of California's landmark 2008 Senate Bill 375, which calls on each of the state's 18 metropolitan areas to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy to accommodate future population growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks.

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 summarizes the outreach activities and the methods used to solicit and understand public comments conducted during Phases One through Four.

Chapter 3 summarizes the principal findings of the evaluation, including a description of the methods used to evaluate and analyze these outreach efforts and their impact on the planning process. Evaluation findings are based on the five performance measures developed and adopted by MTC.

Chapter 4 includes recommendations for the Commission and MTC planners for the next iteration of the Bay Area's integrated land use and transportation plan. These findings are based on comments received by participants and by staff.

Plan Bay Area – A New Paradigm

On July 18, 2013, Plan Bay Area was jointly approved by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Executive Board and by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The Plan includes the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and represents the next iteration of a planning process that has been in place for decades. Working in collaboration with cities and counties, the Plan advances initiatives to expand housing and transportation choices, create healthier communities, and build a stronger regional economy. The Plan will be updated every four years.

As the region's transportation blueprint, Plan Bay Area has a 25-year horizon and specifies investment strategies for maintaining, managing and improving the surface transportation network in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Plan determines how MTC will spend nearly \$200 billion in transportation funding that is likely to flow into the region between now and 2040 from local, regional, state and federal sources.

Public Outreach and Participation Program

An essential component of developing Plan Bay Area was reaching out to and engaging the public in the Plan's alternative scenarios and associated policy choices. The four-phased process spanned over three years and built on the values, needs, and priorities that MTC heard from the public during development of its Public Participation Plan, which was adopted by the Commission in December of 2010. The Public Participation Plan describes approaches, methods and techniques for both fulfilling the statutory mandates of SB375 and promoting a transparent, inclusive and meaningful public process to inform the long-range plan. It can be viewed on MTC's website:

http://www.mtc.ca.gov/get_involved/participation_plan.htm

Target Audiences

As articulated in MTC's Public Participation Plan, the regional agencies sought the active participation of a broad range of individuals and organizations in the development of the Plan. In addition to bringing together representatives of local government, county congestion management agencies, transit agencies, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD, or Air District) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the Plan was designed to encourage the participation of a broad range of public advocates and community members in the planning process. A particular effort was made to involve members of under-represented communities who do not typically participate in regional and local planning. As the agencies stated, "The success of the SCS is dependent on all voices in the region being represented and involved, including stakeholders that are specifically identified in SB375 and in federal legislation that governs regional transportation planning."

The stakeholders in the Plan Bay Area planning process included, but were not limited to, the following:

- The general public
- Affected public agencies (cities and counties, transit agencies, county congestion management agencies, special districts, county health offices, resource agencies, etc.)
- Transportation and environmental advocates
- Neighborhood and community groups
- Business and labor organizations
- Affordable housing advocates, home builder representatives, homeowner associations
- Landowners, commercial property interests
- Low-income communities, communities of color and limited English proficient communities
- Other interested opinion leaders, advocacy groups

Goal Areas

The Public Participation Plan also articulated a set of goals for the public involvement and outreach program to achieve:

Diversity – Participants should represent a range of socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural, geographic and user (mode) groups with varying interests: social service, business, environment, social justice/ equity, etc.

Reach – The outreach program should make every effort to include the greatest number of people possible. Different levels of participation will make it more inviting for people with a range of involvement preferences to join the discussion.

Accessibility – Every effort should be made to engage as many participants as possible -- by taking the participation activities to where people already are located, whenever possible, and by providing multiple ways to participate, regardless of individuals' language, personal mobility or ability to attend a meeting, access the Internet, etc.

Impact – The feedback received should be analyzed and provided to policy makers wherever appropriate. Interested participants should be informed of actions by MTC and ABAG.

Education – This outreach program is an opportunity for MTC and ABAG to inform a wide range of people about transportation issues in the Bay Area, as well as the link to climate change and smart growth, among other issues. Each step of the process should include an educational element, whether it is about Bay Area transportation and land uses in general, specific projects being considered for inclusion in the long-range plan, or background on the outreach results to date.

Participant Satisfaction – People who take the time and energy to participate should feel it was worth their while to join in the discussion and debate.

2. SUMMARY OF OUTREACH APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

Approach to Public Outreach and Participation

The Plan Bay Area Public Outreach and Involvement Program articulated an approach to conducting activities in three major initiatives:

- **Government Engagement** Partnerships with local governments — from elected officials to city managers, planning and public works directors, transit operators and congestion management agencies — are critical.
- **Community Stakeholder Engagement** Reaching out to a broad range of stakeholder groups, including transportation and housing advocates; neighborhood and environmental associations; school districts and business organizations will contribute to a robust dialogue about regional needs and priorities.
- **Joint Stakeholder Participation via Policy & Advisory Committees** Participation in regularly scheduled meetings of advisory and policy committees is one way that interested stakeholders — whether government or non-government — can get and stay involved. Meeting times and locations for these meetings are posted on the OneBayArea website. Citizen advisory committees can be used to hear and learn from many voices in the Bay Area.

To get meaningful input from the public, outreach activities were designed to educate people about the decisions facing ABAG's and MTC's policy board members who had to consider various scenarios and policy choices related to the Plan. Because of the new approach to integrating housing, land use and transportation planning through SB375, there was an added informational element to this process over prior years' efforts. Participants joined the Plan Bay Area process not simply because of their interest in transportation issues as in previous Regional Transportation Plans, but also because they wanted to challenge assumptions in the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) process conducted by ABAG. Moreover, the identification of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs), which was done at the local level by cities and counties, added another layer of planning policy to the mix.

The educational element was intended to inform participants about the implications involved in adopting the Plan: What are the issues that must be considered in planning for the Bay Area region's growth? The transportation system? What effects will the different choices have on our communities and our region? At the same time, the involvement campaign was designed to make it easy for participants to express their priorities and preferences, both in terms of values and actual projects and programs.

Public Involvement Activities

MTC and ABAG developed a three-year program of public outreach and engagement activities designed to meet their objectives of broad, accessible and meaningful participation from regional stakeholders. Some of these activities focused on general public participation; others were meetings of representative committees and groups that were open to the public. The opportunities included:

- General Public Workshops
- Community-Based Organization-Sponsored Focused Groups in Targeted Communities
- MTC Commission Meetings
- ABAG Executive Board Meeting
- Joint MTC Planning Committee /ABAG Administrative Committee Meetings
- Leadership Roundtables with Elected Officials
- MTC’s Policy Advisory Council Meetings
- ABAG’s Regional Planning Committee Meetings
- Regional Advisory Working Group Meetings

Two other methods supplemented the program of meetings – telephone polling, which was done at three key junctures in the Plan development process to determine levels of awareness, attitudes and priorities in creating, modifying and prioritizing the investments and other policies contained in the Plan; and focus group sessions, designed to engage a representative sampling of Bay Area stakeholders on key discussion topics.

Partnerships with county-level congestion management agencies, or CMAs, provided a strong connection to local transportation planning as well as to local elected officials who serve on CMA boards. MTC worked with CMAs on a “Call for Projects” for inclusion in the plan. ABAG and MTC partnered with CMAs to host presentations for local elected officials on the Draft Plan.

In addition, MTC and ABAG created and maintained a special website, **OneBayArea.org**, to serve as a resource for information, announcements, interactive discussions and document library.

These methods balanced qualitative public input with statistically valid and representative measures. A description of the activities by Phase is provided below. Reports for each phase on the One Bay Area website document what we heard. (See <http://OneBayArea.org/plan-bay-area/meetings-events/What-We-Heard.html>.)

S U M M A R Y O F O U T R E A C H A P P R O A C H A N D A C T I V I T I E S

Phase One: April 2010 – January 2011

- A kick-off “summit” at ABAG’s Spring General Assembly on April 22, 2010 launched the Plan Bay Area effort. More than 350 Bay Area city and county elected officials, regional leaders, and community stakeholders came together to mark the beginning of the development of the Bay Area’s SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).
- Through the summer and fall, MTC and ABAG staff conducted Leadership Roundtables with elected officials on a county-by-county basis. The agencies also sponsored a public workshop on March 10, 2010, to discuss the greenhouse gas reduction targets to be incorporated into the Plan.

Phase Two: February 2011 – December 2011

- The second phase of public outreach followed release of the Initial Vision Scenario in February 2011. The Initial Vision Scenario for Plan Bay Area was a hypothetical growth pattern put forward by ABAG staff with input from local governments and county congestion management agencies. It incorporated demographic projections of household growth as well as assumptions developed by local jurisdictions about where to accommodate that growth – primarily in Priority Development Areas. Public engagement centered on testing those assumptions and identifying priorities for land use and transportation policy initiatives.
- MTC and ABAG partnered with a group known as Envision Bay Area, which received a grant from the Knight Foundation to promote public participation in development of Plan Bay Area, to conduct a series of 10 public workshops, one in each Bay Area county, with a second one in Alameda County. The group, led by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, with assistance from Greenbelt Alliance, KQED Radio and others, developed an interactive Web tool – dubbed “You Choose, Bay Area” – which walked participants through a priority-setting exercise about future land development and housing growth. A version of that tool was adapted for use in the workshops, which also sought public comment on proposed “place types” for locally designated Priority Development/ Conservation areas, as well as on transportation investment options and potential policy initiatives.
- MTC contracted with 14 community-based organizations in low-income communities and communities of color to involve residents in those communities in the Plan Bay Area dialogue. These groups used a variety of methods to survey residents, resulting in 1,600 completed surveys.

- A telephone poll was conducted with 1,069 randomly-selected households throughout the Bay Area to solicit responses to potential growth scenarios, development and open space strategies and policy alternatives.
- To support the dissemination and understanding of the Initial Vision Scenario, MTC and ABAG staff conducted briefing sessions for local elected officials in all nine counties. This intensive consultation comprised twenty-one meetings in the spring of 2011.
- In addition to regular sessions of the various committees, working groups, board and commission, MTC and ABAG staff and board members participated in a Native American Tribal Consultation.

Phase Three: January 2012 – March 2013

- The third phase of outreach began with a series of public workshops in each of the Bay Area’s nine counties in January 2012. That month also saw a round of 10 focus groups hosted by community-based organizations to engage participants from typically under-represented communities around the region. These events sought feedback on a set of land use policies and transportation investment priorities that were contemplated in alternative scenarios being studied by MTC and ABAG.
- In this phase, public workshop participants raised strong concerns that the regional plan emerging would subvert local land use authority in favor of a “one size fits all” development framework and would usurp private property rights and reduce housing and transportation choices for current and future Bay Area residents.
- MTC and ABAG developed a “virtual workshop” to allow community members to participate in the information and choices presented at the on-site workshops. A total of 1,300 residents participated in the online tool. To supplement the public workshops, a series of four focus groups with randomly-selected telephone poll participants was conducted to allow more in-depth discussion on major choices and tradeoffs.
- These results were compiled, along with those from the January 2012 telephone survey, to provide a more complete perspective on the issues central to evaluating alternative scenarios.
- In early summer of 2012 MTC and ABAG initiated public engagement for the environmental review process for Plan Bay Area. Five public scoping meetings were held in key locations around the region.
- MTC and ABAG participated in a second Native American Tribal Consultation.

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

Phase Four: April 2013 – July 2013

- The final phase of public engagement sought feedback on the Draft Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Public workshops were convened in each of the nine Bay Area counties, this time with the format of an open house and public hearing period. In the open house portion, participants had the opportunity to interact with staff regarding the key policy directions contained in the draft document, and to learn about the performance of the preferred land use/transportation/housing scenario against targets, both those mandated by state law and those adopted voluntarily by the agencies' governing boards.
- Twelve community-hosted focus groups continued the outreach serving under-represented communities of the region.
- Telephone polling was also a part of this phase, which included telephone interviews with 2,516 Bay Area residents. The survey was conducted in English, Spanish, and Cantonese.
- MTC and ABAG staff joined the congestion management agencies in each county to conduct a presentation and discussion for local elected officials on the Draft Plan.
- They also held three public hearings on the Draft Environmental Impact Report, one in Oakland, San Jose and San Rafael.
- As part of the ongoing website updates at OneBayArea.org, an interactive Web page entitled, "Plan Bay Area Town Hall," received 90 comments.
- The ad hoc and regular committees with agendas relating to Plan Bay Area met in this phase to offer their comments on the Draft Plan and Draft EIR. Staff participated in a third Native American Tribal Consultation.

3. KEY FINDINGS

Plan Bay Area drew an unprecedented number of participants. The number of workshop participants, activity on the Plan’s website, and written correspondence received on the Draft Plan, all dramatically exceeded levels from previous plans. The amount of media coverage also exceeded previous updates and the sheer volume of engagement opportunities — including 270 public meetings — allowed for a more inclusive and robust public engagement process.

With the next planning cycle beginning in 2015, it is important to build upon lessons learned from this effort to craft an even more effective public outreach and involvement program. The following findings about the outreach process will help determine recommendations for the development process of the next long-range plan.

Evaluation Methodology

In the 2010 Public Participation Plan, MTC and ABAG set forth a set of goals and performance benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the public participation program.

The methodology for assessing the program along each of these performance measures was specific to their requirements. For example, evidence of the accessibility of the outreach process is provided in terms of the comprehensive program of activities from geographic, language, format and technology perspectives. Measuring other aspects such as reach can be achieved by determining the number of comments received and logged by the agencies as a direct result of the outreach program. Some of the data needed to demonstrate effectiveness in meeting performance targets depended on the willingness of participants to share information. However, in some cases the agencies encountered both an unwillingness of participants to provide data as well as some deliberate misinformation provided by participants.

The evaluation methodology combined primary and secondary research techniques. Demographic information and process evaluation questions were incorporated into feedback at the Phase Two public workshops, and via a survey of the community-based organizations that sponsored the targeted workshops in Phases Two through Four. Secondary data analysis included a thorough review of the source documents of all of the public engagement activities, including the summary reports, report appendices, meeting handouts, announcements, flyers, and public notices.

A. Diversity

MTC and ABAG made a concerted effort to reach out to and engage residents from all segments of the population.

Measure: The demographics of targeted groups (age, ethnicity, income, geographic location, disability) roughly mirror the demographics of the Bay Area's population.

Outcomes:

- In aggregate, the outreach program engaged Bay Area residents from all parts of the region, and included participants representing a wide variety of ages, ethnicities and incomes. By providing general workshops, targeted workshops, telephone polling, focus groups and online activities, MTC and ABAG provided information and participation opportunities for all segments of the Bay Area's population.
- The outreach program engaged over 12,000 participants throughout the four phases. See Appendix A for a complete count of by phase and outreach strategy.
- To ensure a representative sample for the telephone polls, residents were randomly contacted from a mixed sample of listed, Random Digit Dial (RDD), and cell phone numbers. Interviewers made a minimum of three to four attempts for each contact. Once contacted, the respondent was given the opportunity to participate in the study by completion of a short telephone survey. Interviews were categorized by the home zip code of the respondent. The three surveys were available in English, Spanish and Chinese. Respondents in less populous counties (such as Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma) were polled at levels larger than their representative population share to account for standard deviation and provide an acceptable margin of error at the county level as well as for the region overall.

Measure: Participants represent a cross-section of people of various interests, places of residence and primary modes of travel, as reported on evaluation forms distributed at meetings.

Outcomes:

- Participants in the outreach process represented a reasonable cross-section of the Bay Area. For example, in the Phase Two public workshops, attendees were asked to indicate whether they represented business, neighborhood, environmental, or transportation advocacy groups. As noted earlier, the data are incomplete, but the results do indicate a good amount of diversity among participants' stated affinities (see table below).

PHASE TWO PUBLIC WORKSHOPS Self-Identification	% of Total Attendance at 10 Workshops
Business Person	10%
Social Justice Advocate	10%
Environmental Advocate	16%
Community Member	30%
Health Advocate	2%
Government	19%
Educator/Student	5%
Other	8%
Total	100%

- In the public opinion polls, conducted three times over the course of the Plan Bay Area outreach program, respondents reported use of a wide variety of travel modes, both personally and among members of their households. For example, in the April 2011 poll, 47 percent of respondents indicated they had used transit in the past month. Over 50 percent of poll respondents in spring 2013 reported that they or someone in their household had ridden a bicycle.

- The Plan Bay Area website allowed individuals from all nine counties who could not attend workshops or meetings to participate in the outreach process.

B. Reach

MTC and ABAG sought to engage a significant number of individuals from throughout the region by providing participation opportunities at a variety of levels.

Measure: 3,000 or more comments are logged.

Outcomes:

- Well over 5,000 comments were logged throughout the four phases of outreach, including input from public workshops, community-based targeted meetings, EIR hearings and online forums.

Measure: 6,000 individuals actively participate in the Plan Bay Area public participation efforts as measured by survey responses and meeting attendance (excluding repeat attendance).

Outcomes:

- While it is difficult to gauge repeat attendees, since sign-in sheets were not completely reliable, staff recorded and estimated that over 3,000 individuals attended some 29 public workshops held over the three-year span of the public involvement program. An additional 426 people participated in eight public hearings related to the environmental impact report required for the plan; nearly 2,000 individuals participated in 36 community-hosted events; over 5,000 individuals participated in the public opinion poll via telephone; and nearly 1,400 people participated in online surveys and forums.
- See Appendix A for a complete listing of participants by phase and outreach strategy.
- Bay Area residents who could not attend a workshop could access information about Plan Bay Area via the robust website maintained throughout the development of the Plan. A virtual workshop during Phase 3 and an online forum during Phase 4 were two activities that led to a record number of visits to the website, as indicated below.

Measure: 30,000 visits or “views” to the OneBayArea website.

Outcomes:

- An active Web and social media presence resulted in some 356,000 page views by 66,000 unique visitors to the OneBayArea.org website since its launch in April 2010, and some 1,300 individuals participated in a January 2012 “virtual public workshop.” Another 90 comments were submitted on the draft plan via an interactive online comment forum.
- While the very high volume of unique visits to the web site demonstrates an active and robust level of participation, inquiries from the public and agency staff suggest that some individuals had trouble navigating the web site at onebayarea.org. The agencies overhauled the site prior to the release of the Draft Plan, which streamlined navigation and added more interactive features (such as weekly quizzes, more video, etc.). On the redesigned site, prominent links to Plan Bay Area were included on the home page. Nonetheless, because Plan Bay Area was but one element of a site dedicated to a range of regional initiatives, many found it hard to quickly access information about the plan.

Measure: Plan Bay Area, or elements of it, is mentioned in at least 70 radio or TV broadcasts, newspaper articles, editorials, commentaries, or other printed media.

Outcomes:

- MTC and ABAG aggressively worked with Bay Area newspapers to disseminate information about the Plan Bay Area process throughout the region. With the release of the Draft Plan Bay Area, the two agencies hosted a brown-bag lunch meeting with reporters to provide them the opportunity to ask questions of the executive directors and key staff who worked on the Plan, and to encourage coverage on the Draft Plan.
- In all, some 340 articles and opinion pieces were published covering nearly every major local paper throughout the region.

C. Accessibility

MTC and ABAG extended efforts to ensure that public workshops were accessible to a broad a range of Bay Area residents. For example, through partnerships with local community organizations, workshops were conducted in neighborhoods where regional planning outreach has not traditionally been conducted.

Measure: Meetings are held in all nine counties.

Outcomes:

- Meetings were held in all nine counties during the four phases of public outreach and involvement.

<i>County</i>	<i>Phase One Locations (2010)</i>	<i>Phase Two Locations (2011)</i>	<i>Phase Three Locations (2012)</i>	<i>Phase Four Locations (2013)</i>
Alameda	Oakland	Berkeley Oakland	Dublin	Fremont
Contra Costa		Concord	Richmond	Walnut Creek
Marin		San Rafael	San Rafael	San Rafael
Napa		Napa	Napa	Napa
San Francisco		San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
San Mateo		San Mateo	San Carlos	Foster City
Santa Clara		Mountain View	San Jose	San Jose
Solano		Fairfield	Fairfield	Vallejo
Sonoma		Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa

Measure: 100 percent of meetings are accessible by transit, if available.

Outcomes:

- Meeting venues were selected to be accessible by bus and/or rail transit in their jurisdictions. In some suburban locations participants may have had to leave a meeting early in order to meet the transit schedule.

Measure: Meetings are linguistically accessible to 100 percent of participants, with three working days' advance request for translation. (Meeting announcements offer translation services with advance request for translation services.)

Outcomes:

- Every brochure and postcard mailed announcing the public workshops included text in Spanish and Chinese with the offer to accommodate language translations. The OneBayArea.org website is available in other languages via electronic translation.
- In addition to making meetings accessible via advance requests from the public, MTC and ABAG contracted with 14 nonprofit groups to reach some of the typically underrepresented communities of the Bay Area. The community hosted meetings in Phase Two utilized a survey to collect opinions that was available in English, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. Materials for community-hosted focus groups during Phase Three were available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. In Phase Four, community organizations hosted twelve focus groups in preparation for the release of the Draft Plan. Materials for these focus groups were available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese; additionally, one focus group with residents from multiple counties was conducted entirely in Spanish.

Measure: All meetings are accessible under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Outcomes:

- Every brochure and postcard announcing the public workshops included directions on how to request special assistance in order to fully participate. All meetings were accessible under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

D. Impact

Measure: 100 percent of written correspondence received is logged, analyzed, summarized and communicated in time for consideration by staff or policy board members.

Outcomes:

- All correspondence was recorded and logged into a database, analyzed and summarized. Reports were provided to MTC Commissioners and ABAG Directors on a regular basis, as shown below:
 - Dec. 10, 2010 -- Joint MTC Planning /ABAG Administrative Committee *Final Draft MTC Public Participation Plan*: Staff reviewed comments received on the Revised Draft Public Participation Plan (released for public review on Oct. 15, 2010), describe revisions in response to comments, and sought referral of the Plan to the full Commission for approval.
 - June 10, 2011 – Joint MTC Planning /ABAG Administrative Committee *Workshop Summary*: Staff summarized input received at the nine public workshops held in April – May 2011.
 - March 9, 2012 – Joint MTC Planning /ABAG Administrative Committee *Plan Bay Area: Winter 2012 Public Outreach and Involvement*: Staff summarized key results from public outreach via a telephone survey, focus groups, and community-based organizations
 - July 13, 2012 – Joint MTC Planning /ABAG Administrative Committee *Plan Bay Area: Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Feedback and Alternatives*: Staff presented input received during the programmatic EIR scoping process and asked for Committees to refer approval of the EIR alternatives to their respective Boards at the joint ABAG/MTC meeting on July 19, 2012.
 - June 14, 2013 – Joint MTC Planning /ABAG Administrative Committee *Draft Plan Bay Area Summary of Public Input*: Staff presented the results of the Plan Bay Area telephone poll and summarized recent public hearings and written comments, including:
 - Comments from MTC’s Policy Advisory Council
 - Summary of Public Comments – Key themes from comments
 - Staff summarized key issues and related policy issues identified for potential revisions to the Draft Plan.

E. Education

A key aspect of the public involvement process is to inform and educate the public about the decisions facing ABAG's and MTC's policy board members so the public can provide meaningful input.

Measure: 60 percent of participants “strongly agree or agree” with statements that indicate that participation in the outreach and involvement efforts was a good opportunity to learn more about Bay Area transportation, land use and housing issues.

Outcomes:

- From results of the electronic voting at the Phase Two public workshops, most participants indicated that they gained a better understanding of other people's perspectives and priorities. Responses were more mixed regarding understanding the choices involved with planning issues, and there was a wide variation in the degree to which people thought that meeting materials and information were clear, with the right level of detail.
- Results from the Plan Bay Area Survey of Community-Based Organizations conducted in October 2012 (after two rounds of targeted workshops) also revealed some degree of participants' confusion over planning issues and the clarity of materials. They did, however, state that the issues presented were relevant to them. Some suggested more time for small group discussion to allow an opportunity for questions to be answered.

F. Participant Satisfaction

Measure: 60 percent of participants “strongly agree or agree” with statements that rate the Plan Bay Area public participation efforts and target the participants’ personal experiences.

Outcomes:

- Given the novelty and complexity of Plan Bay Area, participants were mixed in their reviews of the engagement activities. For example, in the Phase Two public workshops that introduced the Plan process and were highly interactive, evaluation forms indicated a strong level of participant satisfaction. A high percentage (between 60 percent and 83 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I gained a better understanding of other people’s perspectives and priorities.” People also indicated they gained “a better understanding of the choices involved with planning issues” (from 34 percent - 75 percent). Respondents were less in agreement that “the meeting materials and information presented were clear, with the right level of detail” (from a low of 15 percent to a high of 70 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing).
- In the Survey of Community-Based Organizations, which was administered to leaders and staff of the organizations, respondents reported that the focus group format was effective and that the time allotted for discussions topics was appropriate. They also stated that the issues and topics covered were relevant to participants and reported that attendees found the meetings worthwhile.
- Many participants offered feedback about the process on comment forms submitted during each phase of the outreach program. These ranged from positive – “good information; thank you!” – to negative – “the entire meeting was superficial, shallow ... and not useful.” Several comments related to the difficulty in accommodating and understanding the information presented in order to make informed choices.
- Many comments questioned the validity of the entire process, indicating their view that the decisions were already made. As noted earlier, organized groups sought to disrupt meetings and were quite vocal in their criticism of the entire planning process, including the public participation process, which they stated was biased.
- In response to earlier feedback, the Fourth Phase public workshops were designed specifically to maximize the opportunities to ask questions and to register comments. The Open House format allowed participants to interact directly with staff regarding the key elements of Plan Bay Area, while a separate room was dedicated to hearing public comment.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY/REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Plan Bay Area elicited broad participation from a wide range of perspectives, with many people participating in a regional planning process for the first time. The following recommendations are based on feedback from participants throughout all phases of the outreach program, as well as specific observations and insights contributed by MTC staff, analyzed and refined by the expertise of consultants.

Agency Collaboration and Coordination

- The lead agencies must establish early on and adhere to the roles, responsibilities and schedule necessary to develop the plan. The design of the public involvement campaign is directly tied to this process in order to maximize opportunities for participation and inform decisions.
- Work with local jurisdictions and congestion management agencies early on to organize their participation throughout the stages of outreach and engagement.
- Any outreach associated with the call for projects — to identify projects proposed for inclusion in the plan — must occur early in the process and provide for adequate time for the public to comment.
- The lead agencies must ensure that the early phase of public involvement, in which goals and targets are being set, has broad representation across the region and across interest groups.
- The very successful partnerships with community-based organizations to expand the reach of community participation should be continued and enhanced. These partnerships can also extend to include non-meeting involvement techniques, tailored to the preferences and needs of particular cultures and neighborhoods.
- Agencies should continue to use statistically valid public opinion polling to ensure a broad cross-section of participation by Bay Area residents.
- Continue to partner with congestion management agencies to host workshops with local elected officials.
- The plan development process and public engagement program should be conducted in an objective, politically neutral manner.

A Transparent Process

- Clarify which issues are truly open to debate and what is available for influence by the public at each phase of the planning process. Also, provide clear information about the assumptions and data used to develop the plan.
- Indicate how and when input from the public will be presented and considered by the regional agencies in moving the plan forward.
- Articulate (internally and externally) clear objectives for each outreach phase.

Engagement

- Consider a multi-track public engagement program that allows individuals to participate at their desired level of intensity, with the associated level of information detail. Participants would choose a track (High, Medium and Low) and be able to switch tracks at any point. This would clarify for all involved how much and how often they would be engaged. Each track would have an estimated number of meetings, online engagement opportunities, information communications and educational opportunities.
- Consider using focus groups to supplement telephone polling at each phase of the planning process, to provide additional representative samples of opinions.
- Consider programs targeting youth in future engagement activities.

Information / Education / Communication

- To avoid confusion for the general public, MTC and ABAG should develop a joint communications plan, with major messages and key points identified for each phase of the development of the plan.
- Provide a dedicated web site in order to make it easier for the public and partner public agencies to access needed information specific to Plan Bay Area (versus hosting it on a web site covering a range of planning topics). Consider more online technology tools, such as interactive maps, visualizations, as well as a website dedicated exclusively to the Plan.

- Explain more clearly how regional policies reflect local land use policies. For example, focus workshops on the connection of Plan Bay Area to local General Plans, Countywide Transportation Plans, etc.
- Disseminate information and emerging policy directions for the planning process via a speaker's bureau.
- Augment the agency database with more Bay Area residents in order to expand outreach, and make more extensive use of social media – for education, to encourage participation, to drive people to the website, etc.
- Continue to make available – as printed copies, video or online content – topical information that articulates the agencies' missions to help explain their roles in the region. Provide examples of the benefits of long-range transportation and land use planning.
- Continue to collect evaluation data in participant surveys.

**APPENDIX A:
Participants by Phase and Outreach Strategy**

Participants by Phase and Outreach Strategy

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS	Number of workshops	# of Attendees (estimated)
Phase 1 (<i>March 10, 2010</i>)	1	100
Phase 2 (<i>Spring 2011</i>)	10	790
Phase 3 (<i>January 2012</i>)	9	1,100
Phase 4 (<i>April 2013</i>)	9	1,100
TOTAL	29	3,090

EIR PUBLIC HEARINGS	Number of workshops	# of Attendees (estimated)
Phase 3: <i>June 2012 (Scoping Hearings)</i>	5	270
Phase 4: <i>April 2013 (Draft EIR Hearings)</i>	3	156
TOTAL	8	426

COMMUNITY-HOSTED OUTREACH	Number of meetings/ events	# of surveys/ participants
Phase 2 Surveys (<i>Spring 2011</i>)	14	1,600 surveys
Phase 3 Focus Groups	10	150
Phase 4 Focus Groups	12	181
TOTAL	36	1,931

TELEPHONE SURVEYS / PUBLIC OPINION POLLING	# of surveys/ participants
Phase 2 Polling (<i>Spring 2011</i>)	1,069
Phase 3 Polling (<i>January 2012</i>)	1,610
Phase 4 Polling (<i>Spring 2013</i>)	2,500
TOTAL	5,179

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT	# of surveys/ participants
Online Survey (Phase 3)	
Online Forum/Open Town Hall (Phase 4)	
TOTAL	1,386
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	12,012