

One Bay Area

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY



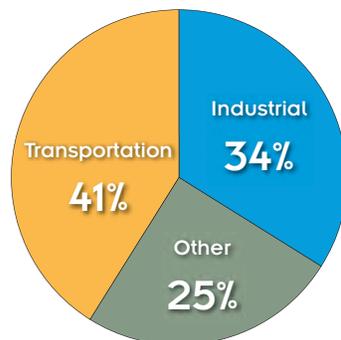
California Senate Bill 375 (2008) aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy, which integrates transportation and land-use planning. It's a tall order to be sure. But it's also a great chance to leave our nine-county San Francisco Bay Area in better shape for future generations. The Strategy will need to reflect the region's progressive values, and be developed in close collaboration with local elected officials and community leaders.

Focus on Reducing Transportation-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The law calls upon metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in 18 regions in California to develop an integrated transportation, land-use and housing plan known as a Sustainable Communities Strategy (Strategy), with the ultimate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions for cars and light-duty trucks. In the Bay Area, this involves the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), as the MPO, and the region's Council of Governments, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

SB 375 also waives certain requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for projects in regions that develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Strategy must integrate planning for transportation, land use and housing. Specifically, it must:

1. Identify specific areas in the nine-county Bay Area to accommodate all the region's projected population growth, including all income groups, for at least the next 25 years; and
2. Try to achieve targeted reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks.



The transportation sector, which includes cars and light trucks, accounts for 41 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the Bay Area.

The Benefits of Integrated Land Use and Transportation

- Integrating land uses (jobs, stores, schools, homes, etc.) and encouraging more complete communities can reduce automobile trips and emissions.
- Clustering more homes, jobs and other activities around transit can make it easier to make trips by foot, bicycle or public transit.
- Planning land uses and transportation together can help improve the vitality and quality of life for our communities, while improving public health.

Goals Rooted in Economy, Environment and Equity

The Strategy will reflect the "Three E" goals of sustainability — Economy, Environment and Equity. The vision will be crafted with guidance from local government officials and Bay Area residents to help support a prosperous and globally competitive economy, provide for a healthy and safe environment, and produce equitable opportunities for all Bay Area residents. The Strategy will establish targets or benchmarks for measuring our progress toward achieving these goals.

Who will prepare the Bay Area's Sustainable Communities Strategy?

ABAG and MTC will develop the Strategy in partnership with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The four regional agencies will team with local governments, county congestion management agencies, local planning and public works directors, city and county managers, public transit agencies, interested residents, stakeholders and community groups to ensure that all those with a stake in the outcome are actively involved in the Strategy's preparation.

Despite the daunting list of agencies and officials involved, the strategy will focus on a simple and fragile fact: there is only one Bay Area to pass on to our children and grandchildren.

What's the relationship between the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Regional Transportation Plan?

MTC must adopt the Sustainable Communities Strategy as part of its next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Bay Area, which is due in 2013. Because state and federal law require everything in the plan to be consistent, the RTP's investments must be consistent with the Strategy and must be judged to be realistically achievable in the RTP's 25-year planning horizon. This also means the Strategy must be in sync with local land-use plans.



Community vitality and walkability are key to developing a Sustainable Community Strategy. Shown above is one of Oakland Chinatown's innovative pedestrian crossings.



ABAG's next Regional Housing Need Allocation must follow the development pattern specified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

What's the relationship between the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Regional Housing Need Allocation?

ABAG administers the state-required Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA). State law requires that the RHNA follow the development pattern specified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy. ABAG will adopt the next RHNA at the same time that MTC adopts the RTP. Local governments will then have another 18 months to update their housing elements. Related zoning changes must follow within three years.

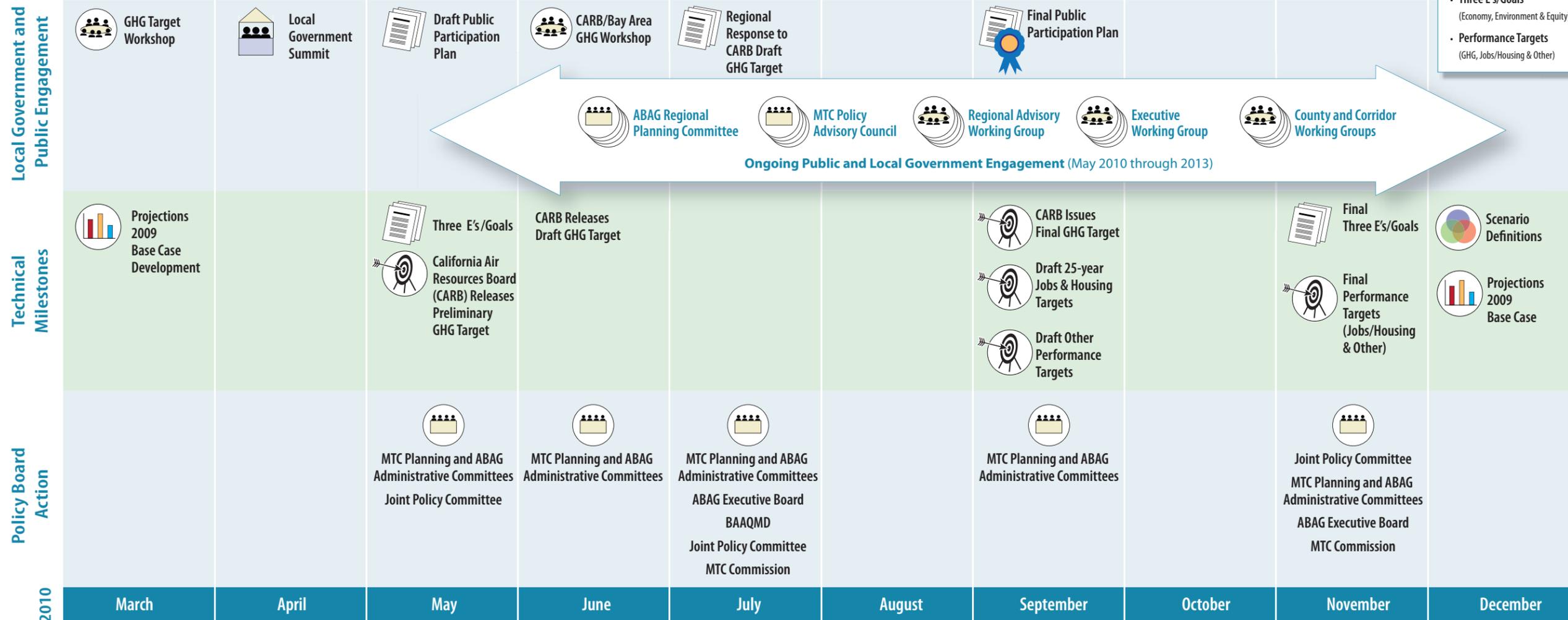
Planning Process: Phase 1 Detail for 2010

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Architecture: Three E's and Goals, Performance Targets, Growth Projections and Initial Scenarios

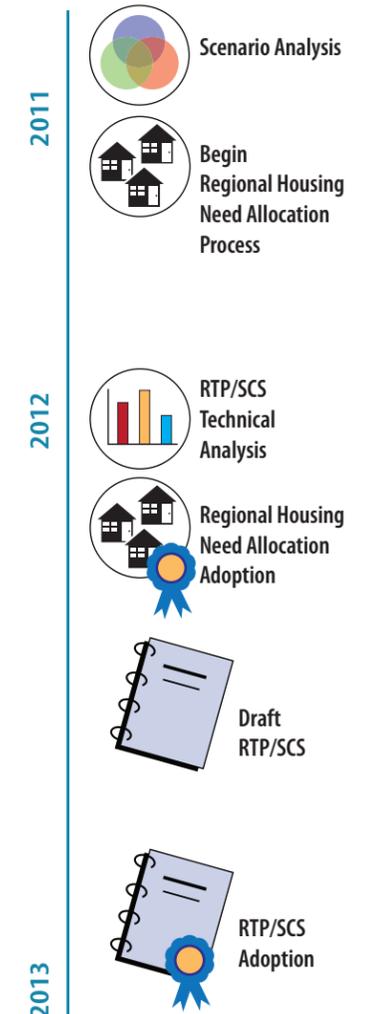
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Phase One Decisions:

- Public Participation Plan
- Three E's/Goals (Economy, Environment & Equity)
- Performance Targets (GHG, Jobs/Housing & Other)



Phases 2-4



Aren't we already building sustainable communities in the Bay Area?

Yes! Local leaders have been pursuing more compact growth to help revitalize older communities, reduce travel time and expense, bolster the existing transportation system, control the costs of providing new infrastructure, conserve resources, promote affordability, and generally improve the quality of life for Bay Area residents. Responding to the regional agencies' FOCUS initiative, over 60 local governments have voluntarily designated more than 120 Priority Development Areas (PDAs), where much new growth would be concentrated.

Located within existing urbanized areas and served by high-quality public transit, PDAs consume only about 3 percent of the region's land area but are being planned by their local jurisdictions to house over half of the region's projected population growth to the year 2035. FOCUS and associated incentive programs, like MTC's Transportation for Livable Communities initiative, provide a solid foundation upon which to build the Sustainable Communities Strategy.



Simply put, the Sustainable Communities Strategy can be a way to make our cities and towns better places to live.



The Sustainable Communities Strategy can help cities and counties qualify for regional discretionary funds and streamline the CEQA process for new projects.

How do I get involved in the Sustainable Communities Strategy?

For more information and to sign up to receive regular updates on the Bay Area's Sustainable Communities Strategy, please visit www.OneBayArea.org, call 510.817.5831 or 510.464.7995, or send an email to: info@OneBayArea.org.



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