

TO: Planning Advisory Council
June 10, 2019

From: PASZ
Palo Altans for Sensible Zoning

DEMAND A SPECIFIC TIMELINE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE INITIAL JOB GROWTH FORECAST.

Today you are being asked to provide advice on the Regional Growth Forecast Methodology for Plan Bay Area 2050. There is one major gap that must be addressed. Despite huge community issues, the Plan has no specific mention of public participation in establishing the Plan's job growth number, currently running at a very high rate.

BACKGROUND

Plan Bay Area is based entirely on an aggressive jobs-based model. These projected new jobs create the need for population growth and housing. Once established, there is no questioning of the basic number of jobs stated in the Plan. (Note that when a number of questions were raised about exploring lower job growth numbers during the 2017 Plan Bay Area 2040 update, the Master Response was that "an alternative that reduces household or job projections relative to the proposed Plan would not be consistent with Federal or State regulations" (MTC Final Plan Bay Area 2040 EIR, 7/10/17, p 2-15). The jobs growth numbers that are translated into population and housing growth numbers are 'accepted' by two state agencies--the Department of Housing and the Department of Finance, Office of the State Demographer). But in 2013, the three parties involved in the population forecast agreed that "ABAG will share the job growth forecast and land use trends analysis with DOF for their next projections" (ABAG/HCD/DOF, "Overview of the Regional Housing Need Determination, DOF Population Projections and Plan Bay Area Forecast" July 2013). Sharing forecast projections with two state agencies must be in a public meeting with opportunities to explore alternatives and for the public to provide appropriate inputs.

Plan Bay Area has had a dreadful time trying to achieve their planned balance between new jobs and new housing. This is especially true in the West Bay (the region that includes the cities between San Francisco and Santa Clara/Cupertino). In this area the Census Bureau reports an additional 250,000 new jobs were created between 2010 and 2017 with half of the added workers commuting from outside the areas. In the meantime, Bay Area transit systems (Caltrain and BART) are at capacity with no increase in ridership over the last three years.

MTC admits there are problems: in their latest Perspectives Paper "Future of Jobs" (May 2019) they have introduced Priority Strategy L3 that states that "office growth limits" in jobs-rich areas might be appropriate. Further, in today's packet they state that an interactive modeling process make sense although their 'realistic' job growth number

would be “consistent with national economic trends” (“Draft Methodology, page 4 of 13).

TODAY’S OPPORTUNITY

You have an opportunity for input today. Yet, in today’s discussion materials, MTC is about to initiate a jobs growth update that is somewhere between “a low extension of recent trends or a higher extension recent trends” (Draft Methodology, page 5 of 13). Nowhere does it state that there will public participation in this process (it states pretty clearly that the two parties involved in this critical initiation of the model will be consultant CCSCE and The Technical Advisory Committee).

Thus, you are being asked to approve a Plan model driven by a jobs forecast without any chance for public discussion of the impact of overall job growth targets on community life in the Bay Area or a better regional distribution of those jobs. The current plan is to have the initial job growth forecast with an internal model –“Regional Economic Modeling Inc REMI 2.2 model with analytic techniques created in-house” utilizing a “technical advisory committee of economic, demographic, real estate and model experts” while getting feedback from “economists and demographers from the California Department of Finance are consulted”. It states nothing about when there will be a chance for public discussion of alternative jobs growth forecasts and their impacts on a variety of community indicators. What is clearly needed is the chance for the public to participate in exploring how alternative number of total jobs or regional limitations on jobs may produce a better balance of jobs and housing growth (and more moderate growth in congestion, prices and quality of life in each area/region of the Bay Area.

THE NEED

There are at least ten areas of impacts that need to be addressed in considering alternative rates of job growth. The impacts include the consequences of job growth on multiple indicators of community health over successive five year periods, including:

- * land prices
- * housing prices
- * jobs/housing balances on specific broad areas like the West Bay
- * income inequality
- * congestion
- * transit operations
- * impact on families
- * tax burden on residents (especially on costs of transit options and affordable housing subsidies)
- * sustainable growth goals
- * the future of local democracy

Tell the public today (June 12th), when there will be opportunities to publicly explore alternative options for job growth numbers and the range of impacts likely to occur. Please announce specific dates when public input will take place on overall regional

jobs projections and opportunities to present alternative outcomes and impacts on when and how to access REMI job projections (or alternative models that better capture community impacts of job growth).

The goal is to have "sufficient resources to support balanced growth between jobs and family communities" and not to depend upon a model that prioritizes job growth over any other aspect of community change.

GIVE US CONCRETE DATES FOR PARTICIPATION TODAY

Gregory Schmid
Palo Altans for Sensible Zoning (PASZ)
Palo Alto CA 94303
gregschmid@sbcglobal.net