

Monterey Bay Area Blueprint

AMBAG staff, Regional Transportation Planning Agency staff, and staff from all local jurisdictions in the Monterey Bay Area have been collaborating on developing a regional growth and conservation strategy called Envisioning the Monterey Bay Area. This effort, otherwise known as the "Blueprint," focuses on improved mobility, accessibility and coordinated transportation and local land use that houses the region's future population but also preserves the most important agricultural lands and conservation areas. A successful strategy will detail how the region will reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) below trend through improved coordination between regional transportation and local land use planning. This coordination will facilitate changes in travel behavior.

As revenues are unable to keep up with growing public facility construction and maintenance demands across the region, the Blueprint also functions as a 'Smart Infrastructure' undertaking. Even as local jurisdictions grow according to their own General Plans, capital and program needs overflow political boundaries. By drawing attention to these regional trends, the Blueprint highlights the value of coordination and resource sharing among Monterey Bay Area localities.

Like successful Blueprints in other regions of California, Envisioning the Monterey Bay Area is also concerned with protecting natural and cultural resources. Conservation goals are achieved through a more compact urban form and sound conservation practices and strategies.

Goals

The Monterey Bay Regional Blueprint informs, fosters consensus, and builds capacity between regional and local decision-making bodies for purposes of increasing regional collaboration and integrated planning. The result is a unified vision and preferred land use pattern that maximizes existing land and transportation infrastructure for future growth accommodation. Anticipated outcomes for implementing this integrated land use and transportation approach, or the "Blueprint," include:

- Reduced Traffic Congestion
- Improved Air Quality
- Water, Natural Resource, and Agriculture Conservation
- Increased Economic Development Opportunities
- Expanded Housing Affordability and Choice
- Overall Better Quality of Life

More specifically, the Blueprint Policy Group recommended the adoption of the following four goals in developing the Monterey Bay Regional Blueprint.

The Blueprint process strives to:

1. Evaluate current trends regarding the distribution of population and employment in comparison with improving mobility and accessibility, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, providing housing and employment opportunities, and protecting natural and cultural resources.
2. Develop a preferred growth scenario that maximizes the achievement of these outcomes while retaining the autonomy of local jurisdictions.
3. Use the preferred growth scenario as a basis for SB375's Sustainable Communities Strategy, which will be used to inform regional transportation plans and to be a platform for future regional housing needs and housing elements.
4. Provide a forum for ongoing discussions and coordination of issues of regional significance.

These goals were adopted by the Board of Directors of Blueprint's lead agency, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, in March 2009.

Public Outreach and Workshops

We encourage nonprofits, community organizations, and the general public to get involved in the Blueprint process. AMBAG will be holding interactive public workshops in the near future to get input on the Monterey Bay Regional Blueprint Vision. We would love to hear from you! Please fill out the form below if you would like to receive email notices about future workshops or would like to provide general comment on the Blueprint process. We will respond to your inquiry promptly.

Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee

September 29, 2009

Lisa Dobbins
441 Union Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Dear Ms Dobbins:

After conferring with our City Manager, Mr. Carlos Palacios, the Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee (WAAC) is asking you and Action Pajaro Valley to support or an important change to the state's housing law. The WAAC has contacted Senator Maldonado and others with a request for housing law change. The present law does not take into account several formidable constraints including airport land use planning (mandated by state law), protection of agricultural lands, and lack of water availability. This puts California cities with airports at a considerable disadvantage.

As you know, there are serious land use planning issues affecting the Watsonville Municipal Airport which have resulted in major court proceedings. The WAAC responsibility is to advise the Watsonville City Manager and to confer with the Airport Manager regarding the most effective resolution of these and other airport issues. In our discussions with the City Manager, he emphasized that the current state housing law requires a continuous increase in housing irrespective of the resulting development encroachment on the airport. This lack of legal housing credit provisions for cities with airports is a state-wide problem according to John Pfeifer, the Western Representative of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA).

Our City Manager went on to point out that there are also other severe constraints that are not accounted for in the present housing law. For example, The Pajaro Valley adjacent to the airport is dependent on an underground aquifer for its water supply. As a result of unconstrained development, this aquifer has for years been experiencing a significant over demand resulting in salt water intrusion and a lack of water pressure. This has led to collapse of the underground water reservoir causing permanent damage to the reservoir's storage capacity.

On behalf of the citizens of this region and the entire state, the WAAC is asking you to actively support the urgent rewriting of the state's housing law in order to resolve these seriously dysfunctional constraints. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request. We stand ready to assist in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Kurt Yeager
Chairman

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