

ENVISIONING THE MONTEREY BAY AREA

Best Management Practices



THE 2035 MONTEREY BAY AREA REGIONAL BLUEPRINT
Public Workshop Series 2010



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Best Management Practices

While not comprehensive, the list presented here is a useful overview of best management practices to help us guide the region's growth over the course of the next 25 years and beyond.

[MOVE] Accommodate the Transportation Needs of an Aging Population

The region's aging population has higher transit service needs that can be met by implementing the following:

- Make pre-trip and trip experiences more secure
- The bus fleet must be low-floor accessible
- More service in off-peak periods
- Provide scheduled services for specific needs such as shopping, health or recreation
- Driver provides physical assistance to elderly riders
- Targeted carpooling and vanpooling
- Government provided group insurance coverage for carpools/insurance pools for volunteer drivers

[MOVE] Encourage Pedestrian Oriented Street Design

Abide by the following design standards to improve pedestrian safety and comfort:

- Use streetside parking, narrow streets, changes in paving materials, wide sidewalks and other traffic calming measures
- More roundabouts at low volume intersections to calm traffic and support higher safety demands
- Median refuges throughout hazardous sections of wider, multilane roads
- An abundance of street furniture such as benches, lighted walkways, and public art

[LIVE, WORK, PLAY] Increase Opportunities for Infill, Redevelopment and Reuse

- Through a combination of local and state resources, re-develop land with residential, commercial or recreational uses to strengthen local communities
- Utilize tax credits, impact fee abatements and streamlined permitting to incentivize infill
- Include tort liability for condominium development to assist with risk-minimizing financing structures

[LIVE, WORK, PLAY, MOVE] Adopting a "Fix It First" Policy for Infrastructure

- Public expenditures on capital such as streets, highways, sewer and water systems, lighting, schools and other civic buildings are significant, even as maintenance only costs
- Assess the 'full cost' of new development to calculate impact fees sufficient to cover the costs of new infrastructure
- Use a step by step approach to encourages development where infrastructure already exists

[LIVE,WORK] A Regional Tax Revenue Sharing Program

The California local tax structure, heavily dependent on retail sales tax revenue, results in the ‘fiscalization of land use.’ Retail development is favored over industrial and residential uses because of the sales tax revenue. Regional tax base sharing allows a portion of collected revenues to be shared with jurisdictions within a region based on population or some other indicator. By leveling the playing field, jurisdictions will no longer need to offer the costly incentives usually associated with attracting a large retailer or similar enterprise to the region. Tax base sharing also relieves the pressure that growing communities feel to spread local debt costs through growth.

[LIVE] Modify Cost-Pricing Practices for Utilities

Typically public utilities adopt price schedules that assume an average rather than actual cost. For example, according to an Environmental Protection Agency report, a telephone company estimated that compared to serving customers in the central business district, it costs twice as much to serve households in the rest of the central city and ten times as much to serve households on the urban fringe. Because all customers pay average costs, residents in more urban, higher density areas subsidize edge residents. Linear utilities such as cable television, broadband, water and sewer, phone service and even mail delivery do not reflect efficiencies associated with clustered development.

[LIVE,WORK, PLAY,MOVE] Adopt Policies to Protect Key Natural Resources

Greenbelts, urban reserves and other, similar, methods have been used to protect key resources and encourage compact development. Land Trusts within our region have had a successful record of preserving land from development. Regional and local government can work more closely with land trusts to preserve land.

[LIVE, PLAY] Encourage Pedestrian Oriented Neighborhood Design

Beautification is an old idea that beautiful cities and neighborhoods benefit everybody, contributing indirectly to the livability of urban areas and the ability of urban areas to attract people to urban cores and away from urban fringe development. Making neighborhoods more walkable, more bikeable make it easier for people wishing to take those means of travel. Neighborhood design improvements support a mix of uses so that each neighborhood has some commercial and support services such as day care, recreation and services geared to the elderly. In areas with shrinking school age populations, schools can be re-purposed to serve the adult education interests of an older population.

[WORK, PLAY] Encourage Pedestrian Oriented Commercial Design

Parking lots and driveways now occupy a significant portion of the building envelope in any given commercial area. Because each commercial development is often an island separated from other commercial ‘islands’ asphalt, pedestrians are not welcome to commercial areas. Any effort to re-concentrate growth in existing areas must consider readjusting the emphasis of which traveling modes are most important to the viability of commercial areas. Redevelopment of existing areas will need to consider whether the dominance of one-story buildings in commercial corridors is the best use of land. Improving pedestrian access, improving the visual and aesthetic elements of commercial design that make commercial spaces more appealing to pedestrians, and the amount of and location of parking spaces will be critical to reclaiming commercial areas for pedestrians.

[LIVE, WORK, PLAY, MOVE] Increase Residential/Commercial Density Near Transit

While existing transit services serve the majority of homes and jobs, the percent of the population that is within a quarter-mile of a transit stop is rather small. Since a quarter-mile distance from a transit stop is the 'catchment' area for most people willing to take transit, our region's built environment should be developed to maximize the density of areas around transit stops to increase transit ridership and lower dependence on personal vehicles.

[LIVE] Integrate Affordable, Workforce and Market Rate Housing

Many local jurisdictions have inclusionary ordinances that require developers to include workforce or affordable housing in residential developments. However, the region will continue to need affordable housing than it currently has. Even under current "down" market conditions, the desirability of California in general and the coast in particular will continue to drive demand for lower than market rate housing. Mixing in affordable housing with new market rate housing will support a greater sense of community and will also support transit availability within neighborhoods to all residents. Requiring new developments to always include an affordable component is a powerful mechanism for ensuring equity in housing across the region.

[PLAY] Destinations: Locate Major Regional Activity Centers within Existing Development

In past decades, most new major regional activity centers, such as shopping centers, were placed on the urban periphery near major roads but outside the built area to take advantage of the availability of large buildable lots. These centers frequently became the hub of new suburban development and helped to expand the urban footprint. Often these developments are built by outdated formulas that dictate that shopping centers be single floor, together with surface parking lots, these major centers consume a lot of land. With new multi-story commercial, supported by parking structures and access to transit, future activity centers can take up much less space than they have in the past and can fit within the existing development pattern.

[LIVE, WORK, PLAY] Implement School Centered Development

Good schools anchor good neighborhoods. When families move to a new area, they often look at which schools offer the highest quality of education, and then those families frequently decide to move close enough to be in the school district and/or to be within walking distance of that school. Over time, development standards for schools have evolved so that schools often occupy a large amount of land, the higher the grade, the more land the school occupies. As with major regional activity centers, this need for land has pushed new schools out to the urban periphery. As families follow schools to the periphery a mutually reinforcing dynamic sets in and the need for new land for homes and schools becomes self-fulfilling. The State of California is currently revising standards to reduce the necessary footprint for schools, allowing greater diversity in terms of how much land schools need and the necessary types of facilities.

[MOVE, PLAY] Improve Connectivity of Streets and Pedestrian Network

High levels of connectivity within and between neighborhoods are a hallmark of good residential design. By supporting the movement of pedestrians and bicyclists as much as motorized traffic, residents enjoy a level playing field with their choices of mode to get around. For many people, however, residential design is often used to bolster a sense of privacy by limiting street connectivity. While limited connectivity discourages through traffic, it also discourages non-motorized travel by making non-motorized travel much more labor intensive than a grid pattern of streets with much higher levels of connectivity.

[MOVE] Implement “Safe Routes to Schools” Program

Since the 1970s, we have increasingly relied upon personal vehicles for trips to and from school. Walking and biking are the exceptions to the norm. Reducing vehicle trips to schools will ease congestion around schools, promote walking as exercise for students, and facilitate easier carpooling and transit use for adults going to work. A cornerstone of increasing walking trips to schools is addressing a growing if not statistically valid concern that walking trips to school are not safe because of traffic and crime. Safe routes to schools programs funded through the Federal Highway Administration, Safe Routes to Schools programs fund projects such as sidewalk improvements; traffic calming and speed reduction improvements; pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements; on-street bicycle facilities; and traffic diversion improvements.

[MOVE] Use Intelligent Transportation Systems

ITS improves transportation safety and mobility and enhances productivity through the use of advanced information and communications technologies. Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) encompass a broad range of wireless and wire line communications-based information and electronics technologies.

Intelligent Transportation Systems can be used to re-route congested traffic to less congested roads, meter onramps, and inform drivers of expected travel times to destinations. ITS can also be used to inform transit users when the next bus or train is coming and these systems can support a wide range of intersection Management tools as well to improve system safety.

[WORK, MOVE] Encourage Telecommuting and Alternative Schedules

Many regions in the United States encourage alternative work schedules and even working from home but participating in office work through electronic means (telecommuting) as a way of easing peak-hour trips. Relatively easy to implement, participation is driven by employers. Reducing office worker trips once a week or biweekly should lower vehicle volumes on major regional roads.

[MOVE] Alter Parking Requirements and Types of Supply

Parking - particularly single level surface lots - is one of the largest uses of land in the region. These lots increase stormwater runoff while providing no direct economic benefit to the region. Maximum parking requirements for residential uses can be used to encourage residential use of transit and alternative modes. Shared parking facilities allow adjacent businesses to provide enough parking for patrons will not being forced, as is often the case, to provide an over-supply of parking. One of the primary ways we can more appropriately control the supply of parking is by revising local zoning ordinances to include parking maximums, reduced minimums, area-wide parking caps, and shared parking.

[MOVE] Implement and Coordinate Employee Vehicle Sharing Programs and Alt Modes

In rural areas, many workers are employed in agricultural activities. Van pooling these workers is a safer and more reliable means of transit that has been well received in other parts of California. If van pooling becomes widespread in the Monterey Bay Area, there will be a significant reduction in trips on rural roads. With about 60,000 to 80,000 peak season farm employees, van pooling eventually capturing five to ten percent of these trips will contribute to lowering traffic volumes on major roads.

[MOVE] Implement Vehicle Sharing Programs

Reserving spots for vehicles in car sharing programs associated with residential or commercial uses with limited parking is an innovative technique for reducing vehicle ownership while still providing the opportunities that come with personal vehicle mobility. The same principle can be extended to bicycle sharing programs. Firms like ZipCar are extending their reach into communities in the Monterey Bay Area. According to ZipCar, each car share car can replace up to 15 personal vehicles. Currently, there are a very few park and ride lots in the region. There is an opportunity for existing programs like Travel Demand Management programs funded by the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ), to support outreach to drivers to use park and ride lots in the region.

[LIVE, WORK, PLAY, MOVE] Implement Public Process for Discussion of Planning Decisions

Involving the public early and often is a formula for success. Often, public opposition to projects that bring new development to their neighborhoods is a source of anxiety and frustration. Public planning events are useful even in times when there is no immediate planning related outcome. Developing an ongoing series of events devoted to raising awareness of the need for coordinated transportation and land use is crucial to keeping the public informed about local issues and regional concerns. Local agencies should also require project proponents to reach out to the public and to elected officials.

[MOVE] Pricing

Pricing refers to any number of schemes to incentivize change in individual travel behavior through charging the individual or vehicle for driving, parking or both. A sharp and sustained rise in gasoline prices has been shown to lower vehicle miles traveled. In the Monterey Bay Area, a sustained gasoline price increase could work in conjunction with taxes levied for transit services to improve transit ridership. For example, in the San Francisco Bay Area, commuter rail services provided by BART attracted 2.7 trips per capita a month, which is relatively high for the United States. Gas price spikes in 2008 increased BART ridership by six percent during the months of March to September. In the Monterey Bay Area, with lower per capita ridership (1.3 trips per capita), ridership increased by almost seven percent.

[LIVE, WORK, PLAY, MOVE] Provide Recognition Programs

Recognition programs help frame which planning efforts are the most valuable to the region and communicate to other agencies and groups who engage in planning activities the values of high quality regionally supportive planning efforts.

Save the Dates: the 2010 Workshops

DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
May 15th	Saturday	10am -12pm	Police Community Room, 155 Center St, Santa Cruz
May 20th	Thursday	2-4pm	Monterey Conference Center, 380 Alvarado Street, Monterey
May 24th	Monday	5-7pm	Soledad YMCA, 560 Walker Drive, Soledad
May 27th	Thursday	5-7pm	Salinas Community Center, 940 North Main Street, Salinas
June 2nd	Wednesday	6-8pm	Watsonville Community Room, 275 Main St., Watsonville
June 16th	Wednesday	5-7pm	Rm 218, Veterans Memorial Building, 649 San Benito Street, Hollister
June 26th	Saturday	10am -12pm	Rm 218, Veterans Memorial Building, 649 San Benito Street, Hollister

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