

Plan Bay Area 2050+: Final Regional Growth Forecast

Background

The Regional Growth Forecast identifies how much the Bay Area might grow between the plan's base year (2023) and horizon year (2050), including population, jobs, households, and associated housing units. The forecast also includes characteristics of that growth, including employment by sector, population by age and ethnic characteristics, and the basic income distribution of households formed from that population. The forecast's primary purpose is to serve as a planning input for the Plan Bay Area 2050+ update. It estimates regional growth through 2050 for the nine Bay Area counties, which in turn will serve as an input for an analysis of land use patterns on the county and subcounty levels, influenced by the adopted strategies. The resulting land use pattern then informs the Travel Model's identification of present and future travel demand throughout the Bay Area.

Plan Bay Area 2050+ is a limited and focused plan update. The forecast is therefore not subject to a major revision, but carries over the methodology, approach and key underlying assumptions from Plan Bay Area 2050. For that plan, MTC/ABAG staff developed the Regional Growth Forecast methodology in collaboration with a consultant and a technical advisory committee. The methodology was adopted by the ABAG Executive Board in September 2019. The final Regional Growth Forecast for Plan Bay Area 2050, which accounted for a near-term COVID adjustment, was completed in June 2020 and adopted by the Commission and ABAG Executive Board in September 2020. Recent data, including from the 2020 Decennial Census, has revealed a lower population baseline compared to the projections in the Plan Bay Area 2050 Regional Growth Forecast. Specifically, the updated forecast for Plan Bay

Area 2050+ projects the region’s population to be nearly 200,000 lower than previously estimated, necessitating a numerical revision of the growth forecast with three more years of data on the front end, but otherwise maintaining the methodology and assumptions of the prior release.

A detailed summary of the Draft Regional Growth Forecast was shared at the November 2023 meeting of the MTC Planning Committee and ABAG Administrative Committee. Staff recommends carrying this Draft Forecast forward into the Final Blueprint phase as the Final Regional Growth Forecast for Plan Bay Area 2050+. Relevant total projections for population, households, housing units, and jobs are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Regional Growth Forecast

Item	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Population	7,749,000	7,723,000	8,048,000	8,476,000	8,903,000	9,266,000	9,586,000
Households	2,798,000	2,902,000	3,027,000	3,312,000	3,511,000	3,662,000	3,796,000
Housing Units	2,875,000	3,018,000	3,187,000	3,486,000	3,696,000	3,855,000	3,996,000
Jobs	4,025,000	4,154,000	4,661,000	4,855,000	5,079,000	5,255,000	5,436,000