

PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREA

REFRESH

-  STRATEGY EN1
SEA LEVEL RISE
ADAPTATION
-  STRATEGY EN4
URBAN GROWTH
BOUNDARIES
-  STRATEGY EN5
CONSERVATION
LANDS
-  STRATEGY EN6
PARKS AND
RECREATION

PRESENTATION ORGANIZATION

- 1. Introduction and background**
- 2. Overview of PCA challenges and proposed reforms**
- 3. Proposed changes to how PCAs are defined**
- 4. Using data to inform PCAs**
- 5. Next steps**

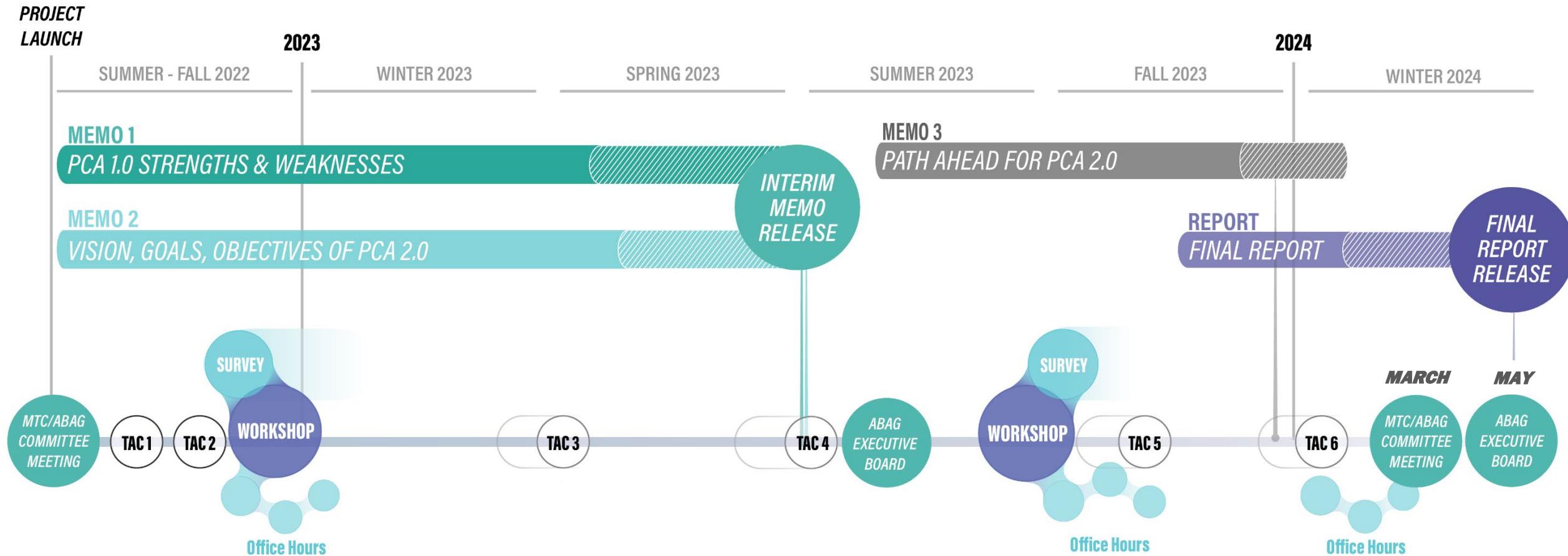


MTC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Joint meeting with the ABAG Administrative Committee
MARCH 8, 2024

PCA Refresh timeline and milestones



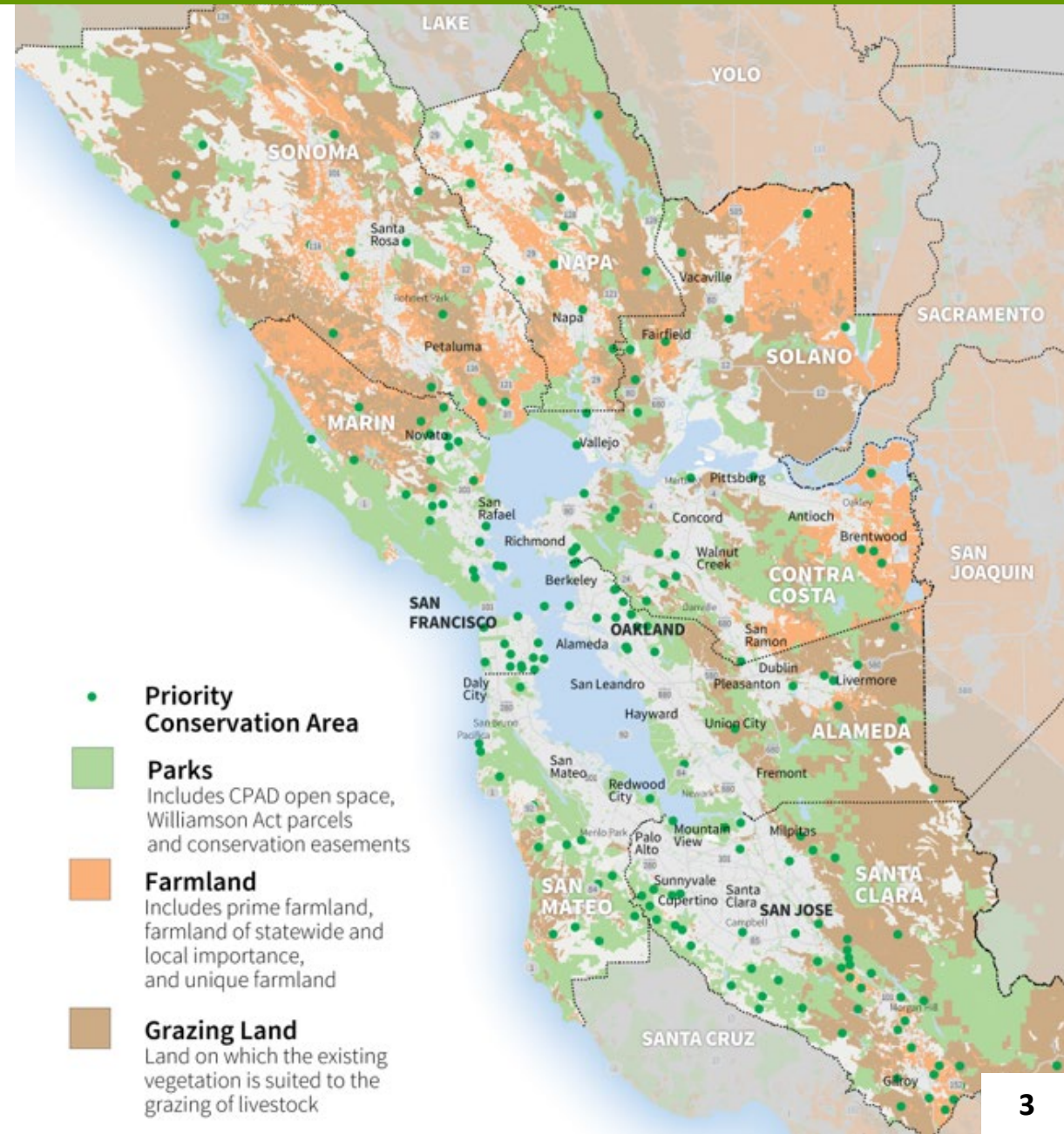
The PCA Refresh began in Fall 2022 and is targeting a final presentation to the ABAG Executive Board in May 2024.



Background on the PCA Planning Program



- Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) were conceived at the same time as Priority Development Areas (PDAs) as part of a **planning framework established in 2007**.
- PCAs were identified and nominated through a **voluntary, locally-driven** process by cities, counties, and park/open space districts and designated by the ABAG Executive Board.
- Today, the region's **185 PCAs** encompass four primary designations: natural landscapes, agricultural lands, urban greening, and regional recreation.
- MTC and the State Coastal Conservancy administer the parallel PCA Grant Program, which has programmed over **\$30 million** in grants to support PCA projects since 2013.



How PCAs function today and goals for the future



PCAs 1.0

How substantially have PCAs been used in the past?

LIMITED

Primarily due to data limitations and inconsistency.

PCAs 2.0

How substantially can PCAs be used in the future?

SIGNIFICANTLY

Consistent PCAs enable incorporation into core work.

LIMITED

Primarily due to limited use in regional plans and policy.

MORE THAN PREVIOUSLY

Increased use in regional plans should result in more advocacy.

MODERATELY

Through OBAG grants program, \$30M has been awarded to PCAs.

MORE SIGNIFICANTLY

With a goal to advocate for more funding that is better-aligned.

GOALS OF THE PCA REFRESH

- Implement a regional land use pattern which supports the objectives of Plan Bay Area as well as applicable state and regional conservation strategies.
- Disseminate scientific data regarding conservation and provide platforms for local governments to share best practices and develop shared strategies.
- Provide specific tools and funding analyses for local governments and others.

**REGIONAL
PLANNING
& POLICY**

**ADVOCACY &
TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE**

**PROGRAM
FUNDING**

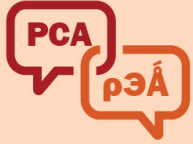
Proposed PCA reforms



PCAs 1.0

Too little structure

1



The existing PCA definition is inconsistent with how PCAs are used and funded.

2



Climate adaptation and equity are not directly incorporated into PCAs.

3



PCAs have poorly defined geographic boundaries.

4



PCA types are inconsistently applied in the region.

5



Existing PCAs have incomplete coverage across the region.

6



Existing PCA funding is too restricted and insufficient to meet the needs.

PCAs 2.0

Data-supported and structured



Redefine PCAs to be clearer and reflect how they are used in practice.



Add climate adaptation as a new PCA type and integrate equity into each PCA type.



Ensure PCAs have accurate and verified geographic boundaries.



Ensure consistency with minimum data standards for PCA types.



Incorporate regionally-identified PCAs to complement local nominations.



The hope is that the product of the other reforms will elevate PCAs for new funding.



VISION

By the year 2050, the Priority Conservation Area Program will ensure the region's biodiversity, natural resources, open spaces, agricultural lands, clean water and clean air are resilient to a changing climate and enjoyed by all.

DEFINITION

Priority Conservation Areas are locations nominated by cities, counties, and park/open space districts and designated by ABAG for protection and enhancement of natural lands, working lands, areas of regional recreation, urban greening, and climate adaptation needs.

INTENT BEHIND KEY CHANGES

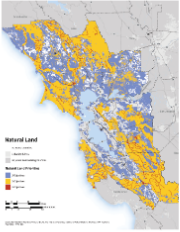
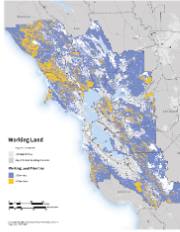

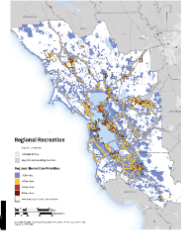

Biodiversity, *resilience*, and *equity* are key topics that the Refresh seeks to elevate. The vision acknowledges each with language like: “biodiversity,” “resilient to a changing climate,” “enjoyed by all”.

The prior definition focused PCAs as areas for *protection* only. The updated definition expands to include *enhancement* to match both how PCAs had already been used, as well as how stakeholders would like to see them used.

Climate adaptation has been added to the Framework as a fifth PCA type.

Proposed method to add structure to PCA types



WHERE DOES THIS PCA TYPE EXIST?	 NATURAL LANDS	 WORKING LANDS	 URBAN GREENING	 REGIONAL RECREATION	 CLIMATE ADAPTATION
IN LOCATIONS SUPPORTED BY DATA	●	●	●	●	●
INSIDE CITY LIMITS OR UGB			●	●	●
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS OR UGB	●*	●		●	●
WHAT ACTIVITY IS SUPPORTED BY THIS PCA TYPE?					
PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION	●	●			
ENHANCEMENT	●	●	●	●	●
WHAT APPROACH IS USED TO INTEGRATE EQUITY INTO PCAS?					
PLACE-BASED APPROACHES			●	●	
PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES	●	●			●

*Eligible Natural Lands are inclusive of tidal areas (e.g. tidal wetlands, polder management, and non-urbanized upland migration areas.)

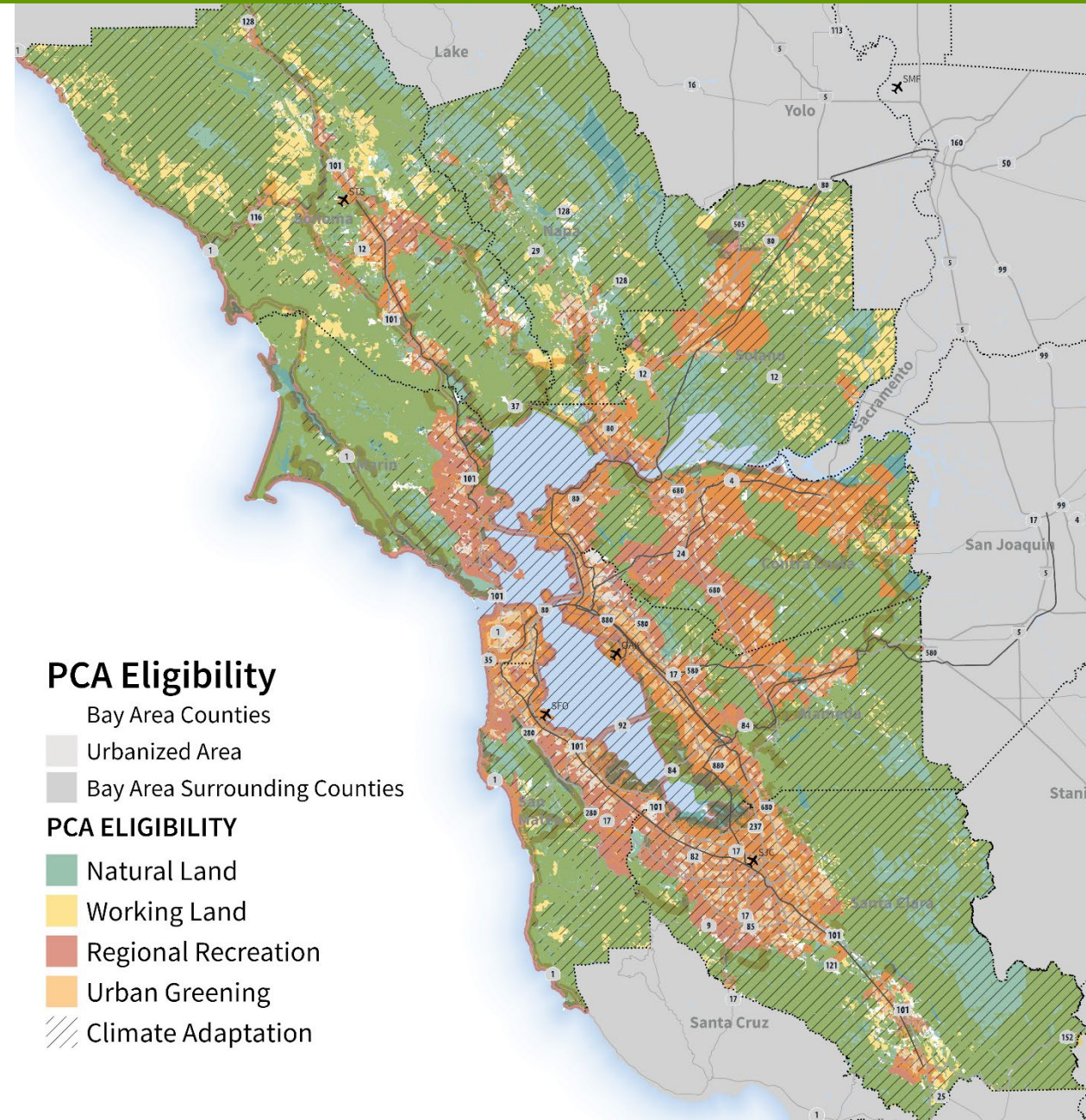
Map of Draft PCA Eligible Locations



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE PCA ELIGIBLE MAP

- There is high coverage of PCA eligibility in the region. While most of the region can theoretically be identified by a local agency as a PCA, there will be careful review of which PCA types meet minimum data standards¹. The approach aims to maintain flexibility for locals to nominate priority areas, while ensuring cohesion across types within the region.
- Importantly, it is not the desire for all eligible locations to be nominated. Future local nominations should continue to prioritize conservation needs, leverage underlying data and local goals, to recommend a subset of eligible areas as PCAs.
- PCAs can be identified as multiple PCA types if they meet the minimum data standards for each type.

¹ Over 30 datasets relevant to PCA type objectives are used to set minimum data standards.



Map of Draft Regionally-Identified PCA Locations

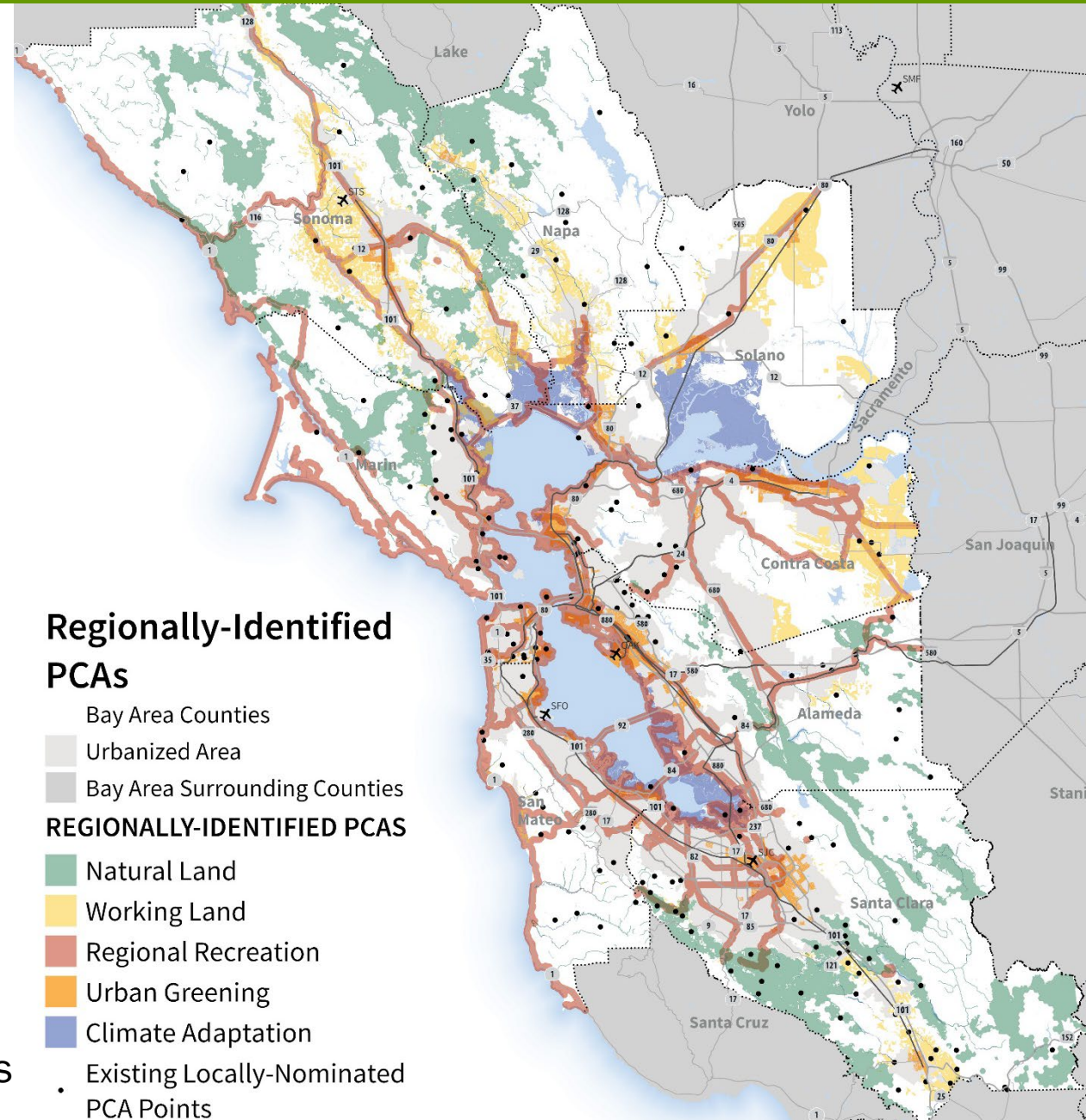


INTENT BEHIND REGIONALLY-IDENTIFIED PCAs

- Regionally-Identified PCAs are added to the Framework to ensure cohesive coverage across the region. Unlike the PCA eligible map which has high coverage, the regionally-identified PCAs focus more narrowly in areas that are regionally-significant or regionally-connective.
- Locally- and Regionally-Identified PCAs will be treated the same. MTC anticipates sharing a finalized map of regionally-identified PCAs ahead of a future round to locally-nominate new PCAs.

FOCUS OF REGIONALLY-IDENTIFIED PCAs

- **Natural Lands** – Wildlife corridors and priority streams.
- **Working Lands** – Agricultural lands nearest development.
- **Regional Recreation** – Regional trails.
- **Urban Greening** – Needs in Equity Priority Communities.
- **Climate Adaptation** – Tidal habitat with sea level rise impacts



Upcoming PCA Refresh Milestones



Staff is seeking approval from the ABAG Administrative Committee to release the draft Final Report for public comment through the end of March.

- **May 2024** ABAG Executive Board presentation

Pending Executive Board direction in May

- **Summer 2024** Launch Phase I Implementation to evaluate and amend existing PCAs
- **Fall 2024** Launch Phase II Implementation to open a call for new PCA nominations

PCA Grants continue to move forward in the interim

- **March** Round I grant call for projects
- **Fall/Winter 2024** Round II grant opportunity

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