

Appendix: Policy

Regional conservation policies and funding

The CLN 1.0 Progress Report has emphasized that the San Francisco Bay Area is unique because of its landscapes and biodiversity. The Bay Area is simultaneously a booming cultural region with a growing human population. Both of these traits—the natural habitats and human population—contribute to and benefit from the quality of life throughout the region.

The cultural and political emphasis over the past few years for more sustainable communities at the state, regional and local levels has resulted in new and emerging policies aimed to ensure that the Bay Area's high quality of life will not only continue but flourish. Indeed, the region's economy depends on the quality of life that comes from healthy, functioning ecosystems that provide clean water, beautiful views and vistas, locally grown food, resilience to a changing climate, and accessible open spaces for recreation.

While the Conservation Lands Network is a regional vision, implementation of it through policy is complicated because the Bay Area has limited regional government. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns of the region, including coastal communities, older industrial centers, rural towns and urban cores. And regional transportation planning is handled by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). But the majority of planning decisions, including zoning and economic investments, are local decisions made in each of the 101 cities and within each Bay Area county. One type of funding is local, state, and federal funding to purchase fee title or conservation easements to protect lands. Mitigation requirements for public works and private development can also help with funding to implement the Conservation Lands Network.

While local policy and funding decisions are critical to the governance of the communities that make the Bay Area so unique, the CLN 1.0 Progress Report tracks policies and funding incentives for conservation from a regional perspective.

Integrating conservation in infrastructure decisions

Plan Bay Area is the most significant regional land use plan since the CLN 1.0 report was published. Plan Bay Area was approved by MTC and ABAG in 2013 and includes the region's Sustainable Community Strategy and Regional Transportation Plan. This a long-range transportation plan, updated every four years, and identifies the strategies and investments for the region's transportation network. Plan Bay Area is a driver to land use in the region.

Plan Bay Area includes funding for a Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Program. In 2014, PCAs comprise over 100 regionally significant open spaces for which there exists broad consensus for long-term protection, but which face nearer-term development pressures. PCAs are designated by the Association of Bay Area Governments. The program, however, is funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The Commission allocated \$10 million to the PCA Program in February

2013. The framework established the goals and project selection criteria for this program, and delegated the administration of the program to the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and the North Bay congestion management agencies (CMA). The following projects were funded.

Figure: North Bay Priority Conservation Area Program Grants Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Regional Priority Conservation Area Program Grants, Association of Bay Area Governments.

County	Applicant	Project Name	Requested Amount	Recommended MTC Funding*	Conservancy Funding	Total Grant Award
Alameda	City of Berkeley	Bay Trail Shoreline Access Staging Area Project	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Alameda	East Bay Regional Park District	Bay Trail, Gilman St. to Buchanan St.	\$750,000	–	\$750,000	\$750,000
Contra Costa	Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust / CCTA	Brentwood Wallace Ranch Easement**	\$500,000	\$500,000	–	\$500,000
Contra Costa	East Bay Regional Park District	Breuner Marsh Restoration and Public Access	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Contra Costa	East Bay Regional Park District	SF Bay Trail, Pinole Shores to Bay Front Park	\$1,000,000	\$119,711	–	\$119,711
Contra Costa	Contra Costa RCD	Pinole Creek Fish Passage	\$150,000	–	\$100,000	\$100,000
Santa Clara	City of San Jose	Coyote Creek Trail: Brokaw Road to Union Pacific Railroad	\$712,700	\$712,700	–	\$712,700
San Francisco	Port of San Francisco	Pier 70 - Crane Cove Park	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	–	\$1,000,000
San Francisco	San Francisco Recreation and Park Department	900 Innes Park Planning	\$500,000	–	\$500,000	\$500,000
San Francisco	San Francisco Recreation and Park Department	Twin Peaks Connectivity Conceptual Plan	\$167,589	\$167,589	–	\$167,589
San Mateo	City of Pacifica	Milagra-Battery Trail	\$100,000	–	\$100,000	\$100,000
San Mateo	San Mateo County Department of Parks	Office of Education Loma Mar Acquisition **	\$500,000	\$500,000	–	\$500,000
San Mateo	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	Souther Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	–	\$1,000,000
Total				\$5,000,000	\$2,450,000	\$7,450,000

* Subject to this action.

** Grant Exchange will involve an exchange with a federally eligible transportation project to provide other funds to the project.

Figure: North Bay Priority Conservation Area Program Grants Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

North Bay Priority Conservation Area Program Grants Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

County	Sponsor	Project Name	Project Type	Programmed Amount
Marin	Novato / Marin Agricultural Land Trust	Thatcher Ranch Easement Acquisition*	Agricultural Protection	\$250,000
Marin	Novato	Pacheco Hill Parkland Acquisition*	Space / Resource Preservation	\$500,000
Marin	Mill Valley	Bayfront Park Recreational Bay Access Pier Rehabilitation	Bicycle/Pedestrian Access	\$100,000
Marin	San Anselmo	Sunny Hills Ridge Trail	Bicycle/Pedestrian Access	\$80,000
Marin	Marin County	Mill Valley-Sausalito Pathway Rehabilitation	Bicycle/Pedestrian Access	\$320,000
Napa	Napa County	Silverado Trail Yountville-Napa Safety Improvements	Road Improvements	\$143,000
Napa	Napa County	Suscol Headwaters Preserve Acquisition*	Open Space Preservation	\$1,107,000
Solano	Solano County	Suisun Valley Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements	Bicycle/Pedestrian Access	\$1,175,000
Solano	Solano Transportation Authority	Solano PCA Assessment Plan	Planning	\$75,000
Sonoma	Sonoma County	Bodega Hwy Roadway Preservation	Road Improvements	\$1,000,000
Sonoma	Sonoma County	Sonoma County Urban Footprint Planning	Planning	\$250,000
Total				\$5,000,000

* Grant exchange will involve an exchange with a federally eligible transportation project to provide other funds to the project.

The goal of the PCA Program is to support Plan Bay Area by preserving and enhancing the natural, economic and social value of rural lands amidst growing population across the Bay Area, for residents and businesses. These values include unique ecosystems, productive agricultural lands, recreational opportunities, healthy fisheries, and climate protection. The program is being updated in 2014 and will be important in implementing the Bay Area's Sustainable Community Strategy and continued funding to implement the Conservation Lands Network.

With the region's population expected to grow from about 7 million in 2011 to approximately 9 million in 2040, integrating infrastructure and land use decisions can yield a number of benefits and is critical for biodiversity conservation.

Policies should consider the impacts/benefits to natural resources, working lands, and parks when making decisions in citing, designing and mitigating infrastructure plans and development. Additionally, there are increasing opportunities for green infrastructure instead of grey infrastructure solutions, as described in the *Healthy Lands and Healthy Economies: Nature's Value in Santa Clara County* report (Batker 2014). A Regional Advance Mitigation Program (RAMP) is under consideration as a process that would help the MTC capitalize on these benefits while simultaneously satisfying federal transportation guidance for the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy.

Providing residents with access to parks and recreational open spaces

Parks and recreational open spaces promote healthy people. Studies show that people exercise more when outdoor recreation areas are located nearby. These open spaces also contribute to the Bay Area's high quality of life and attract talented workers that encourage businesses to stay and locate here. In addition to the very human benefits, trails have implicit greenhouse gas benefits as "highways" for alternative modes of transportation, and improve connectivity.

Since 2010, there has been progress on completing the spine of the three major multi-use regional trails: the Coastal Trail, the San Francisco Bay Trail, and the Bay Area Ridge Trail. 31 miles of these three major multi-use trails have been completed since 2010.

Equally important is improving access and pedestrian/bicycle connections between the trails and nearby communities by providing sufficient local, state, and federal funding to complete the trails. Requiring the completion of trail segments as condition of permits for development or infrastructure projects may further support this effort. Policies that encourage connection with open spaces will lead to support for conservation and direct stewardship.

The Open Space Council encourages helping all Bay Area residents live within a 10-minute walk of a publicly accessible open space, such as a neighborhood park, regional park, garden, recreational area, or trails. We also support work to increase access to the Bay Area's regional parks and trails via public transit. These efforts will require sufficient local, state, and federal funding for the acquisition of new urban parks, as well as the renovation and management of existing urban parks. Funding should prioritize typically underserved neighborhoods with a high percentage of children.

Ensuring Agricultural Lands Remain in Active Production

Bay Area farms and ranches supply healthy, local food to residents and currently contribute more than \$1.8 billion directly to the regional economy and an additional \$5.5 billion in associated economic impacts. (Crop Reports, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, 2010). Many of these working lands are at risk of development, particularly the region's best farmland. Conserving farms and ranches not only protects local food and supports local farmers and ranchers, it is an integral part of implementing the Conservation Lands Network.

Policies can limit conversion of farm and ranchland by extending the expiration dates of all existing urban growth boundaries and continuing the Williamson Act. In addition, the adoption of agricultural districts with minimum densities appropriate to agricultural production for that region and requirements that subdivided lands be used only for agricultural production and processing will help conserve agricultural lands. Funding incentives for technical assistance and conservation are a critical regional resource for the continued stewardship of private and working lands—many of which provide excellent habitat.

Safeguarding and restoring natural habitats

Support for work across the region has come from a variety of funders and has benefitted resources at a range of levels, from management of individual species to implementation of a broad habitat conservation plan.

Funding from the San Francisco Bay Area Program of the Coastal Conservancy has been critical in the protection of land and water resources. During the progress report period, the Coastal Conservancy Bay Area program authorized \$25 million for habitat restoration, and public access around the nine Bay Area Counties. This investment has been more than doubled by matching funding for land acquisition, habitat restoration, climate change adaptation, and access trails and infrastructure.

Local policies - zoning for open space protection, establishing or renewing urban growth boundaries, implementing hillside ordinances, creating habitat conservation plans, and designating greenbelt reserves – are most critical for protecting biodiversity and quality of life, but a detailed discussion of local policies is beyond the scope of this report.

Regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) establish a coordinated process for permitting and mitigating the incidental take of endangered species. The HCP process creates an alternative to the current project-by-project conservation approach. Habitats are protected by fee money, grants and other funding sources established in the plan through easements, monitoring, habitat enhancement and management. Regional HCPs in the Bay Area include:

- **East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan (2000)**
<http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/cd/water/HCP/>
- **Santa Clara Habitat Plan (2013)**
<http://scv-habitatagency.org/>
- **Solano County Habitat Conservation Plan (under development, 2014)**
http://www.scwa2.com/Conservation_Habitat_Info.aspx
- **San Bruno Mountain Habitat Management Plan (2007)**
<http://parks.smcgov.org/documents/san-bruno-mountain-habitat-conservation-plan-hcp>

Regional Conservation Plans and strategies also provide a shared vision for long-term protection but do not have the level of funding, infrastructure or engagement as an HCP. Regional Conservation Plans and Strategies in the Bay Area include:

- **East Alameda Conservation Strategy (2010)**
<http://www.eastalco-conservation.org/>
- **Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy (2005)**
http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/Recovery-Planning/Santa-Rosa/es_recovery_santa-rosa-conservation.htm
- **Suisun Marsh Habitat Management, Preservation, and Restoration Plan (2013)**
<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/3/Suisun-Marsh>

In summary, policy is critical to limit development of lands on the Conservation Lands Network, encourage compatible forestry and agricultural uses, require stream and watershed protection during forest and agricultural operations, reduce sedimentation and nonpoint source pollution, and mandate buffers along stream corridors. More work is needed to encourage local, state, and federal governments to enact and/or enforce land use policies that conserve the CLN. The application and consistent enforcement of land protection policies within city, county, and regional agencies should be encouraged.

The Open Space Council advocates for the proper stewardship, management, and monitoring of lands within the Conservation Lands Network to maintain or enhance

ecosystem processes and functions vital to healthy and diverse populations of plants and wildlife by providing sufficient local, state, and federal funding for these actions. In addition, secure sufficient local, state, and federal funding for private landowner stewardship incentive programs and encourage the expansion of wildlife- and fish-friendly farming practices and programs.