San Francisco Bay Area -- Best Practices Trip

April 28-May 1, 2019

Regional Problems Require Regional Solutions:
An Emerging Consensus

Our Trip Theme: **Growth with Equity**

What we'll see, hear and talk about:

-- New initiatives to resolve the **twin crises of housing and homelessness:** the need for more housing that is affordable, available, and appropriate.

-- "Revolutionizing" **transit and housing along a major transportation/transit/commercial corridor.**

-**- Resilience of local communities** in the face of multiple environmental threats and the challenges of growth.
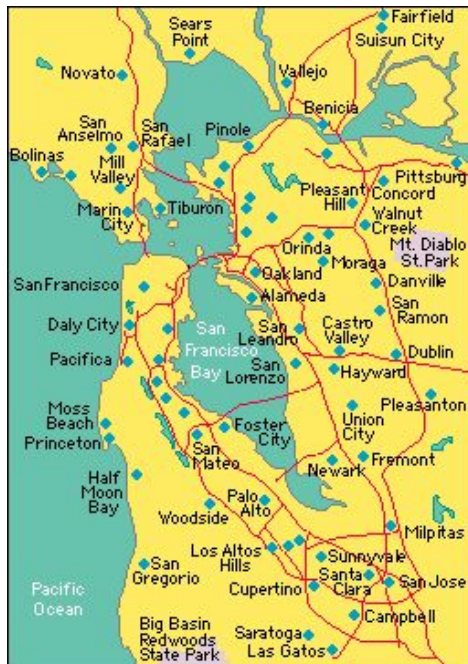
For more than 100 years, the San Francisco Bay Area has been defined as the nine counties that surround greater San Francisco Bay. People living in the Bay Area, however, have not always acted as though they lived in a single region. Bay Area residents thought that they lived in an area encompassing three big cities -- San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose -- lots of smaller cities and towns, and a generous amount of open space.

As the cities and towns have grown, however, they have grown together -- and also, they have begun to realize that they share problems: rising housing costs, rising displaced and homeless populations, snarled traffic.

Recently, civic leaders have begun to talk about sharing solutions.

The new mantra: Regional problems demand regional solutions.

Helping people without housing, for instance, has evolved from a job exclusively for the big cities, where tents and piles of junk belonging to people without housing cluster on sidewalks -- into a job that all 9 Bay Area counties share in common and should tackle together.

Acting regionally, however, is not easy.

As a rule, elected officials respond to the people who elect them – in a city or a county, for instance – and the SF Bay Area has no regional government.

Parallel to Portland Metro Area: Even in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsdale region, as defined by the US Census, we do have a regional government – Metro -- encompassing three Oregon counties (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas), but Metro does not serve Clark County in Washington State, the home of at least 58,000 people who commute to the three Metro counties for work.

So, let's start with: How do you define a metro region?

Defining a Metro Region:
The San Francisco Bay Area as a Case Study

The San Francisco Bay Area (seen in the first 3 images of this document) has been defined as a single region since at least the early 1900s, when some maps began defined the region as the counties close to greater San Francisco Bay (which includes San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay, and Suisun Bay).

Nine counties touch on Greater San Francisco Bay: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Solano, Sonoma.

Locals call the sub-regions:

San Francisco -- which is a county and a city
The North Bay -- which includes the counties of Marin, Napa, Solano, Sonoma
The Peninsula -- or San Mateo County, including the cities of San Mateo, Redwood City, and Palo Alto, which is contiguous with the northernmost portion of Silicon Valley, which also includes:
The South Bay -- or Santa Clara County (and -- arguably, a northern slice of San Benito County), and parts of

The East Bay -- which includes Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The U.S. Census defines the San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland, CA Combined Statistical Area (CSA) to include nine Metropolitan Statistical Areas, which are linked economically to the central nine counties.

From wikipedia, here is an enlargeable map of the component Metropolitan Statistical Areas of the **San Jose–San Francisco–Oakland, CA Combined Statistical Area**:

San Francisco–Oakland–Hayward
San Jose–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara
Santa Rosa-Petaluma
Napa
Vallejo–Fairfield
Santa Cruz–Watsonville
Stockton
Modesto
Merced

The CSA includes counties that are economically linked, through commercial and business flows, such as the traffic illustrated in this map of truck traffic on roads both in the 9-county Bay Area and in neighboring counties. The major north-south arteries on the right of this graphic are I-5 and CA. Hwy 99, which are the major north-south arteries linking Northern and .Southern California in SF Bay Area-to-Sacramento region.
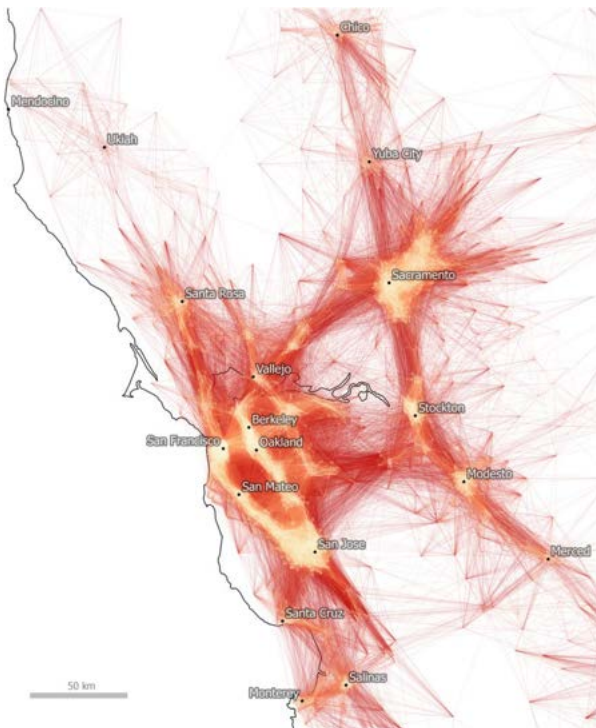
Economic links also include commute traffic. A "commute shed," which is like a watershed but for traffic, is another way of defining a metropolitan region.

A map of commuting traffic in the Bay Area shows that most commutes happen within the 9-county region, but commutes stretch as far as Sacramento, Stockton and Modesto, to the east;

Monterey and Salinas to the south; and Santa Rosa to the north.
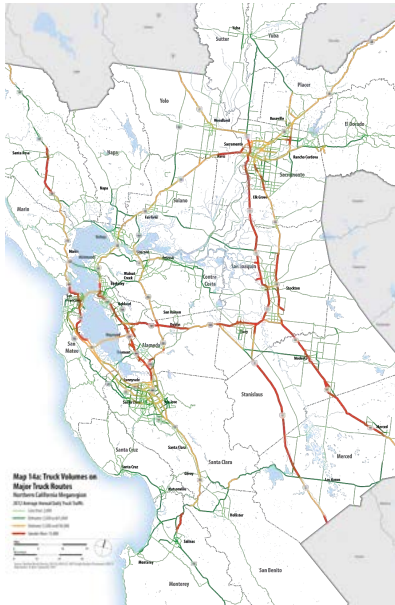
" 'As this region has gotten exorbitantly expensive, people continued to move further out both within those nine counties, and then to adjacent counties,' ...While these people no longer live in the Bay Area, they still might work, shop, eat and go to church here."

The San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) has explored other definitions of the Bay Area.

No Regional Government, but Five Regional Agencies

Although the nine counties, encompassing 101 cities and towns, has no regional government like the Portland area's Metro, they do have five agencies that regulate aspects of civic life.

ABAG - Founded in 1961- is a Council of Governments (or COG). It is a regional planning agency, advisory only, government by a group of delegates, each of whom is an elected official from a city or county which is a member of the organization.

BAAQMD -- Founded in 1955, the agency regulates stationary sources of air pollution (which, because it excludes a northern portion of Sonoma County, covers an area slightly smaller than the full 9-county region); adopts air pollution regulations for the district; declares spare the air days; etc.. A 24-member Board of Directors, is composed of elected officials. The number of directors from each county is reflective of population (MarinCo. has 1, Alameda Co. has 4). Each delegate is appointed by a County's Board of Supervisors and/or their County's City Selection Committee.

BCDC -- Founded in 1965, is responsible for protection, enhancement and responsible use of the San Francisco Bay. Created after citizens complained about the Bay being filled in and polluted. By 1965, about 42% of the Bay had been filled in. BCDC was the first regional government entity created for an urban area by legislative action.

SFRWQCB: – One of nine of [California's Regional Water Quality Control Boards](#) created by the CA Legislature in 1967, the San Francisco Region Water Quality Control Board develops, adopts (after public hearing), and implements a Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the San Francisco Bay watershed, which is defined as rivers draining to [San Francisco Bay](#) (except the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers) and to the Pacific Ocean from Tomales Bay south to [Pescadero Creek](#) (an area that follows geographic boundaries, and so is larger than the 9-county region).

MTC -- Founded in 1970 – Responsible for regional [transportation planning](#) and financing, created by the state; for federal purposes, is a Metropolitan Planning Organization. Critically: administers state and federal transportation money. commissioners are appointed by local elected officials, ABAG and BCDC reps,

The BCDC and MTC were created with support of the **Bay Area Council**, the business-university-public agency organization which is in effect the 9-county Bay Area's chamber of commerce.

No Regional Airport Authority --
All Three Airports Compete With Each Other
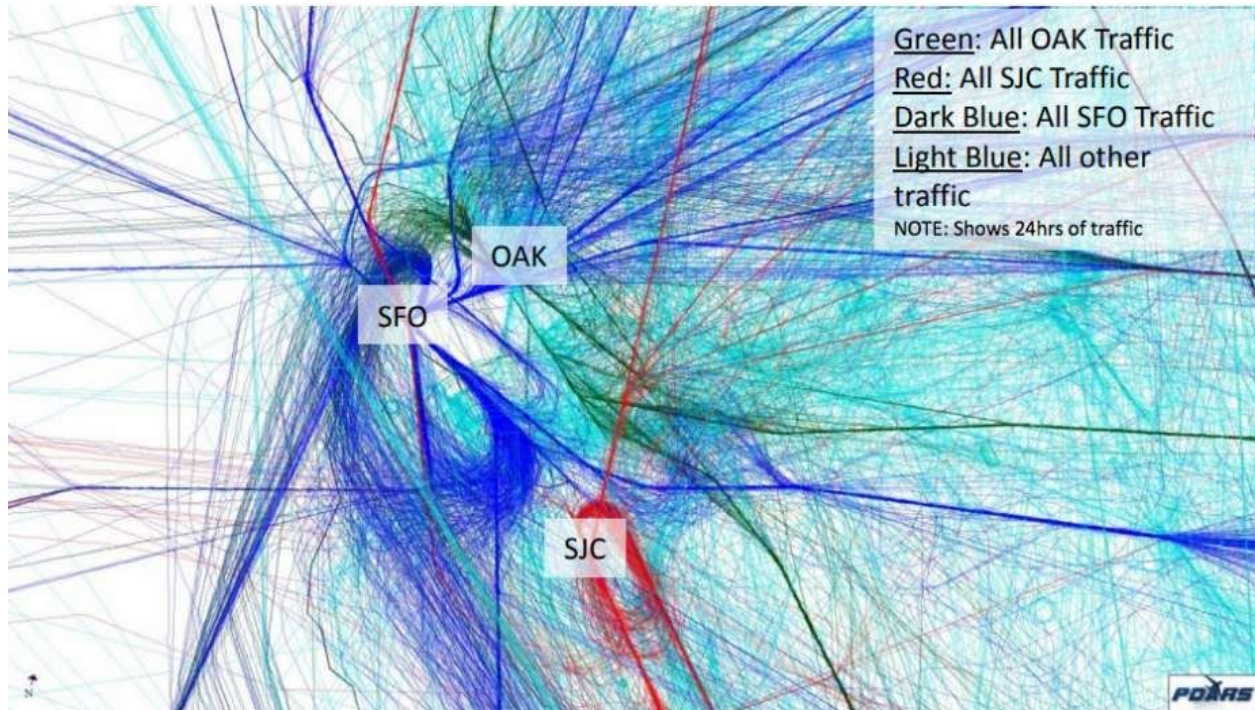
It might seem logical for the 9-county region to have a single airport authority. It doesn't. The three airports are governed and operated by three separate airport authorities. The airports complement each other in some respects, and compete in others. As the map of flights indicates, and as a ranking of American airports by total passenger volume indicates, San Francisco (SFO) is the busiest (7th busiest in the United States, but 4th by international passenger traffic). Although San Jose city is the largest Bay Area city, San Jose's airport passenger traffic is the second largest in the Bay Area. Oakland (OAK), which has a relatively large volume of air freight traffic, is the 7th busiest airport in the U.S.. (By contrast, Portland is the 30th busiest.)

A Patchwork of Transit Systems

The Bay Area's rapid transit system also is not governed by a single authority, and is therefore something of a tangle of systems.
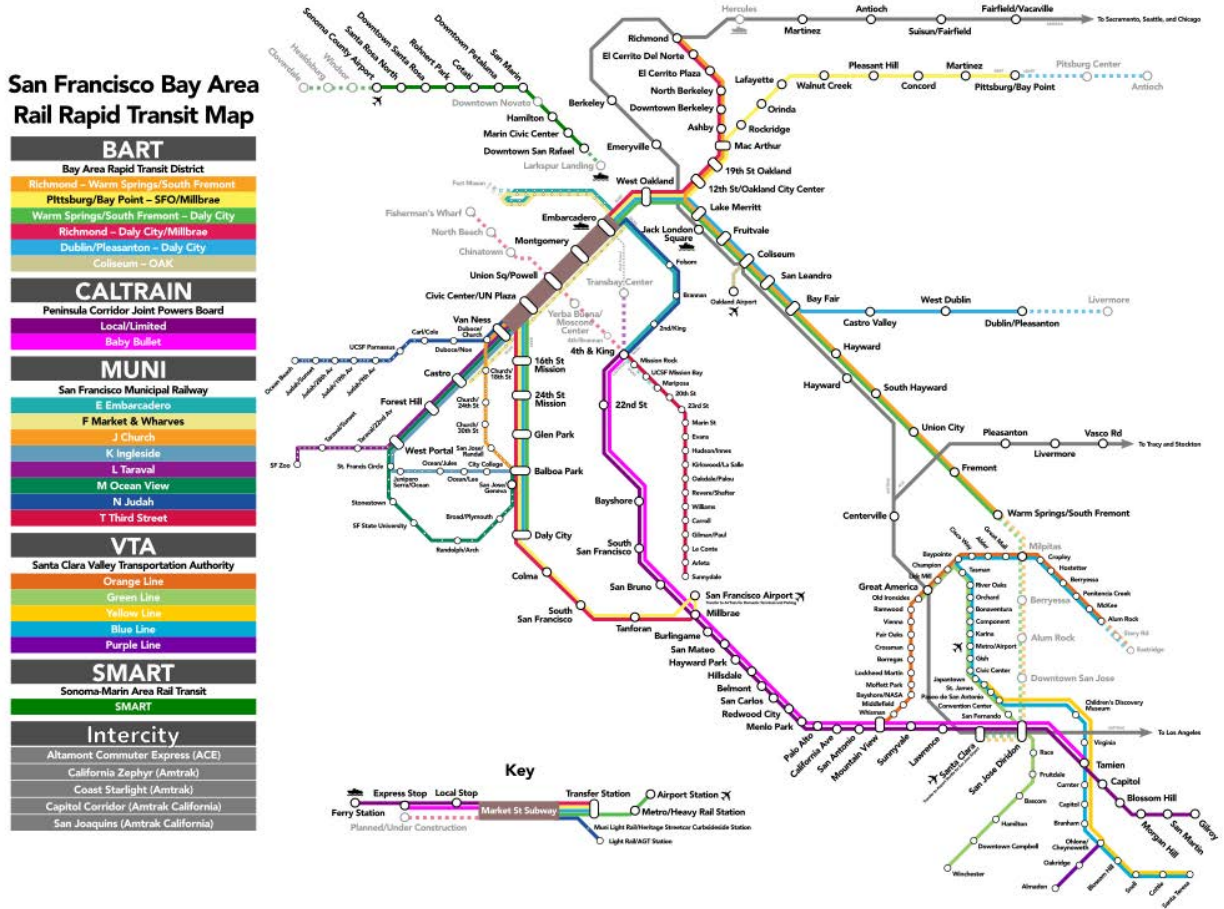
The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) light rail system links five counties (San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa). Also included in the Bay Area's transportation systems are -- of course -- highways and bridges, and an extensive system of ferries that cross the Bay.

Which Regional Problems Require Regional Solutions?

The movement of people and goods, and environmental preservation, have long been recognized as regional problems requiring regional solutions.

New to the list of regional problems is **homelessness**,

"Homelessness in San Francisco will never be solved as long as the city is surrounded by 15,000 unsheltered homeless people in the neighboring counties."

-- Jeff Kositsky,
Director, San Francisco Dept. of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

(See pg. 5 of the [report](#))

Also new to the list of regional problems is **housing.**

Three years ago, tech companies' attitude toward housing was "[it's not our problem,](#)"
-- Priscilla Chan, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

Best Practices On Housing and Homelessness

The Bay Area Council Economic Institute -- which is the Bay Area Council's think tank -- recently published a report about how to help people experiencing homelessness. The report's title is **Bay Area Homelessness: A Regional View of a Regional Crisis**.

Parallel to Portland Region:
Oregon Community Foundation's report on homelessness in Oregon
Multnomah County-Portland Joint Office of Homeless Services: A Home for Everyone

In another initiative
CASA -- The Committee to House the Bay Area ("Comprised of major employers, for-profit and nonprofit housing developers, labor and environmental leaders, public policy and affordable housing advocates, transportation experts, charitable foundations and elected officials, CASA was convened in mid-2017 by MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to tackle the region's housing crisis head on.") recently endorsed a series of measures to address the need for more housing.

Best Practices discussed in the CASA Compact include:

1. **Prevention** of displacement
2. **New affordable** housing
3. New housing **with supportive services**
4. **Individuals:** identify and support
5. **Collaborative action**

Worth a read: Dec. 2018 article: "Can Regional Governance Solve the Bay Area's Housing Crisis? We're About to Find Out," The Bay City Beacon

The CASA website has links to both support and opposition.

Private-Public-Community Partnerships

As of January 2019, however, the **Partnership for the Bay's Future**, a public-private partnership supported by Facebook, Genentech, and Kaiser Permanente, as well as a Who's Who of Bay Area philanthropies, has founded an Investment Fund and Policy Fund, which aim to secure $500 million to build more affordable housing in the Bay Area.

(Skeptics might point out that the partnership emerged after local community organizers filed a lawsuit.)

In the Oakland area, meanwhile, **Kaiser Permanente** in January 2019 announced a three-part initiative to help people experiencing homelessness.

- Preventing displacement by investing in real estate in Oakland, such as Kensington Gardens, a 41-unit Oakland apartment building.

- Anchoring a $100M national loan fund for affordable housing

- Identifying 500+ individuals with health problems, who need housing, and both finding housing for them and facilitating health and social services for them

New Housing and New Transit Solutions Along a Transportation/Commercial Corridor

On the Peninsula, Hwy. 82, known as El Camino Real, runs 40+ miles from San Francisco to San Jose, passing through 3 counties and many cities.

El Camino Real is the northernmost section of The Royal Road, which linked missions established by the Franciscan months. As the 20th Century progressed, it became the main artery on The Peninsula, between San Francisco, its southern suburbs, and the next largest city, San Jose.

By the time Silicon Valley arose among the suburbs and engulfed the agricultural lands that once made San Jose an international exporter of fine prunes, Hwy, 82 had become a long string of shopping malls and strip malls. (More rapid traffic had moved to two north-south freeways, parallelling Hwy. 82, and the CalTrain commuter rail tracks.) It was, and is, ripe for redevelopment.

The Grand Boulevard Initiative envisions adding hundreds of thousands of housing units, with ground floor retail, while incorporating new transportation and transit solutions on Hwy. 82.

A similarly ambitious vision -- combining housing, transit and redevelopment -- is being realized in the South of Market Street (SoMa) neighborhood in San Francisco, where a formerly industrial area is being redeveloped

.

Another ambitious vision combining housing, office space, and transit in the East Bay has already been realized in the neighborhood around BART's Fruitvale Station in Oakland.


The Transit Oriented Development there has gotten good reviews for creating little displacement of the local Latino population -- although questions can be raised about the way such success is measure.

Parallels to the Portland Metro Region:

New affordable housing close to transit in the Jade District.

Redeveloping the Southwest Corridor Plan.

Another Regional Problem: Preparing for Resilience
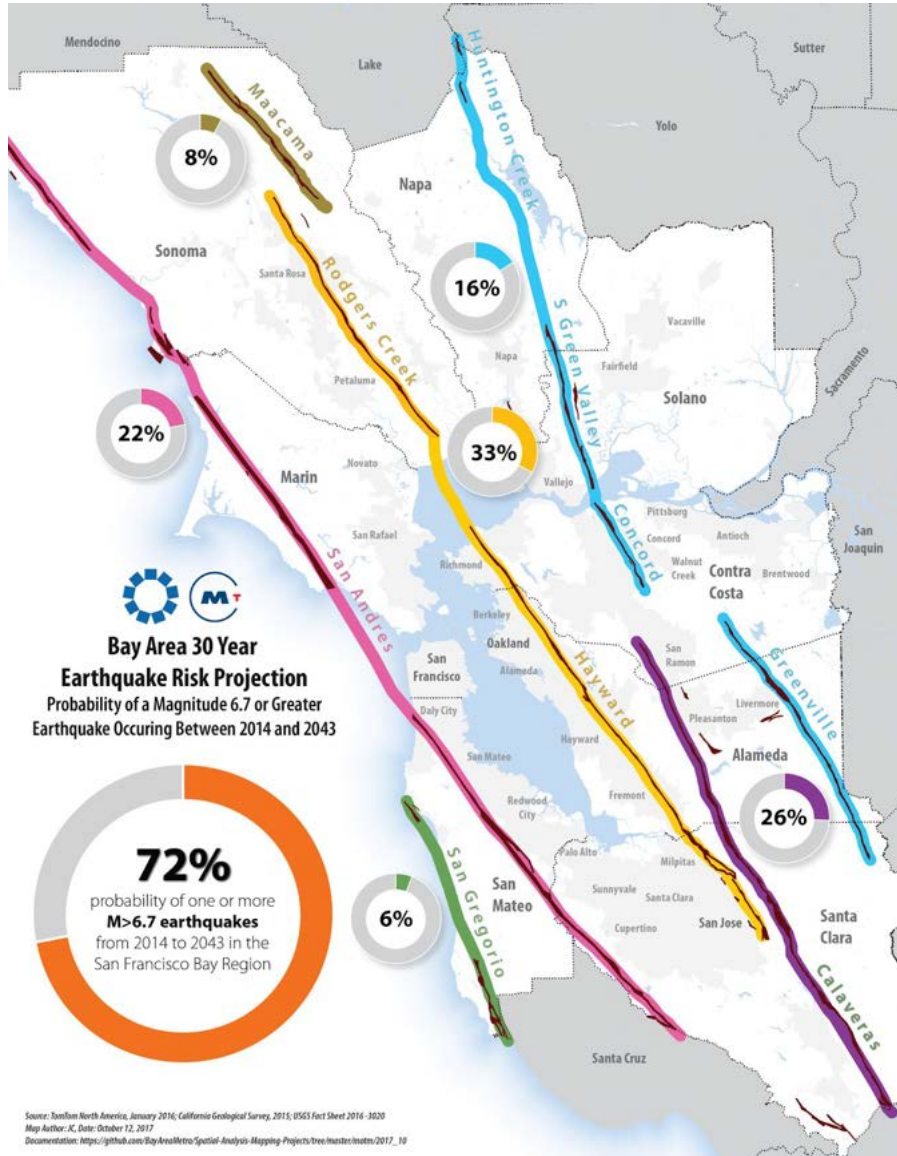
The Bay Area is famously prone to earthquakes, and climate change will make it vulnerable to rising sea levels.

To plan for climate change, Bay Area Regional Collaborative pulls together four 9-county agencies mentioned earlier.

-- **ABAG**: *Assoc. of Bay Area Governments*
-- **BAAQMD:** *Bay Area Air Quality Management District*
-- **BCDC:** *Bay Conservation and Development Commission*
-- **MTC:** *Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

Some of the most populous Bayside locations will be inundated with a 5-foot sea rise, if no "defensive actions" are taken.

Potential reach of 5-foot sea level rise with no adaptation or defensive responses

Source: Climate Central.org

Sources of images used in this document:

Pg. 1 (upper): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco_Bay_Area

Pg. 1 (lower): http://blipnclik.blogspot.com/2010/05/locomotion-in-new-york-city-san.html

Pg. 2: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco_Bay_Area

Pg. 3 (upper):
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Jose%E2%80%93San_Francisco%E2%80%93Oakland,_CA_Combined_Statistical_Area:

Pg. 3 (lower): https://www.spur.org/news/2018-06-19/where-exactly-bay-area

Pg. 4 (both): https://www.spur.org/news/2018-06-19/where-exactly-bay-area

Pg. 6: 12th image, (Note: clicking through to the supposed origin of this map does not result in a clear image or origin information.)
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Pg. 7: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SF_Bay_Rail_Transit.svg

Pg. 9: https://mtc.ca.gov/our-work/plans-projects/casa-committee-house-bay-area

Pg. 10:
https://kerrcontractors.com/company-newsletters/winter-2018/attachment/kaiser-permanente-logo/

Pg. 11 (upper): https://deleonrealty.com/2014/grand-boulevard-initiative/

Pg. 11 (lower):
http://edgeblog.jll.com/2015/10/23/san-franciscos-emerging-market-the-central-soma-plan-video/#more-301

Pg. 12: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fruitvale_station

Pg. 13: http://gis.mtc.ca.gov/home/motm2017.html

Pg. 14:
https://thebolditalic.com/how-climate-change-will-change-the-shape-of-san-francisco-5b53c73aef9a