



# Building a Powerful Regional Equity Coalition to Deliver on Sustainable Communities

**Belén Seara**  
**Urban Habitat**  
**October 15, 2012**  
**[www.urbanhabitat.org](http://www.urbanhabitat.org)**



# SF Bay Area Region in Context



- 9 counties
- 101 cities
- 7 million residents
- 50% are people of color
- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest (population) in CA, 6<sup>th</sup> in U.S.
- In sum, more people and more fragmented than most regions



# Frame: Regional Decision-Making



**Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Commission**

**Manages \$200B in  
transportation funding**



**Bay Area Air Quality  
Management District**

**Regulates sources of  
air pollution**



**Association of Bay  
Area Governments**

**Coordinates housing  
and land-use policy**



**Bay Area Conservation  
and Development  
Commission**

**Manages the water and  
marshes of the Bay**

**All governed by a board composed of locally elected officials**



# Opportunities: Regional Equity

**Low-income communities and communities of color MUST coordinate and act at the regional level in order to:**

- **Secure more funding for public transportation**
  - **Reduce pollution and improve public health**
  - **Build more affordable housing, especially in job-rich suburban communities**
  - **Create more jobs for the chronically unemployed and increase income mobility for the working poor**
-



# Biggest Challenge: Sustainability

**Sustaining a multi-issue coalition of single-issue organizations, especially if there is no clear campaign or policy to organize around**

**Create and institutionalize a regional equity community:**

- **Bay Area Social Equity Caucus (1998) -- regular programming**

**Think regionally, but focus on place-based work:**

- **Richmond Equitable Development Initiative**
- **Great Communities Collaborative**

**Form ad hoc coalitions to work on specific policies and campaigns:**

- **SIX BIG WINS**
-



# SB 375: Sustainable Communities Strategy

## 1. Integrates in one planning process

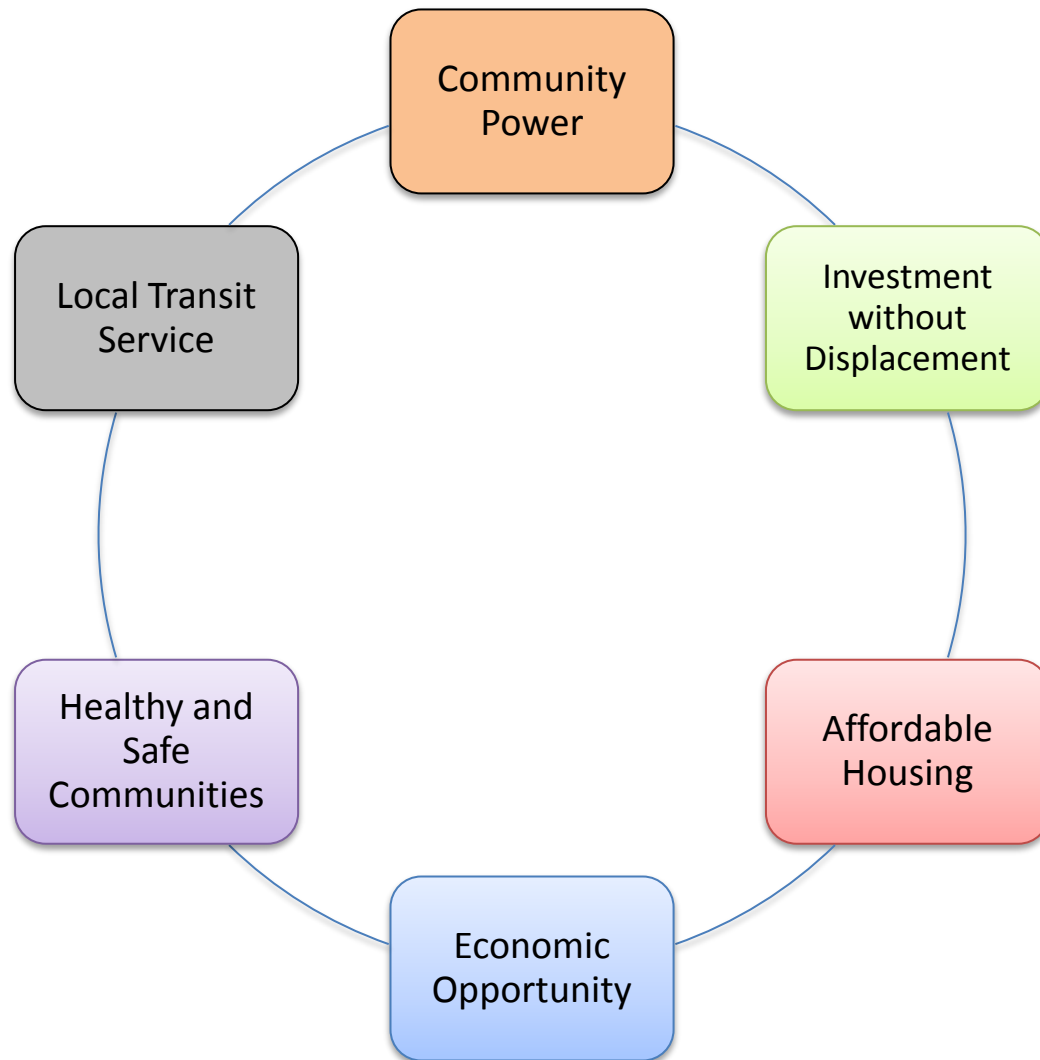
- Regional Transportation Plan (\$225 billion over 25 years)
- Land Use Plan (Regional Housing Needs Assessment)

## 2. Legislative goal is to reduce GHG emissions

---



# 6 Wins for Social Equity



➤ 30+ groups, including grassroots and faith-based organizing groups.

➤ Each Win has its own Win network, co-led by a grassroots and a policy organization

➤ Overarching functions led by Coordinating Committee:

- Alliance of Californians for Community Power
- Breakthrough Communities
- California WALKS
- Genesis
- Public Advocates
- Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
- Urban Habitat

---

# SCS Decision Points

- **Getting a seat at the table**
  - Public Participation Plan, Title VI & EJ requirements
  - Elected officials
- **Setting decision-making criteria**
  - RTP goals, performance measures, and targets
  - One Bay Area Grant funding criteria
- **Allocations**
  - Prioritizing transportation needs
  - Re-visiting “committed”/grandfathered projects
  - Regional Housing Needs Allocation
- **Offering fair alternatives**
  - Scenario development (“Equity, Environment, & Jobs scenario”)
- **Assessing impacts**
  - Federally-required Title VI/ EJ equity analyses





---

# Key Lessons

Meaningful community participation depends on:

- 1. Resources** to build community capacity
- 2. The structure of the decision-making process**
- 3. Opportunities for deliberation** among members of communities

---

# Key Lesson #1

## 1. Resources to build community capacity

- Participation can be a full-time job. Resource a trusted community group to do that job.
- A trusted community group can keep other stakeholders informed and help them decide how to prioritize their limited time
- Resources also needed to help those other stakeholder groups to **build their capacity** to participate

---

# Key Lesson #2

## 2. Structure of the decision making process

- Planning should begin with **needs**, not projects.
- What **decisions** will be made at each stage, and **why do they matter?**
- Develop a range of **alternatives** at each stage and explain how well each one meets the **needs**
- How will the **outcomes** of one stage **inform the process** in the next, how will they **affect the final outcomes?**

---

# Key Lesson #3

- 3. Opportunities for deliberation** among communities
- **AVOID isolated individuals** responding in a vacuum to survey questions or proposed decisions
  - Instead, a diverse group of community stakeholders needs a chance to take the blinders off and **reach consensus** about what they want
  - Agencies must support this deliberation by providing the **information and analysis** that will help communities work through the issues



# Challenges Moving Forward

**FUNDING:** More support needed for local organizations to engage in regional work

**LEADERSHIP:** Lack of equity advocates on regional decision-making bodies

**GEOGRAPHY:** How to include the voices of communities in the nine counties, especially in communities where there are no advocacy orgs or CBOs

**DEMOGRAPHICS:** Understanding the new “equity” narrative of movement, relocation, and displacement

---



# Building a Powerful Regional Equity Coalition to Deliver on Sustainable Communities

**Belén Seara**

**Land Use and Housing Director**

**Urban Habitat**

**October 15, 2012**

**[www.urbanhabitat.org](http://www.urbanhabitat.org)**

# The “Equity, Environment and Jobs Scenario”

- Fund the operation of more local transit service, and create a free youth bus pass.
- Allocate more affordable housing to high-opportunity areas near transit and jobs.
- Measure health impacts and equalize health outcomes.
- Use regional funds to reward cities that promote affordable housing and protect against displacement (One Bay Area Grant program).

# Extra slides





# EQUITY ANALYSIS SCORECARD

Scenarios were assessed for equity based on five measures chosen to reflect key regional equity issues. This table shows how each scenario performs for both the region's communities of concern and the rest of the region.

## MEASURES ▼

<b>1 HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION AFFORDABILITY</b> Share of income spent on housing and transportation costs	Households less than \$38K/year (2010\$)	Households more than \$38K/year (2010\$)	<b>2 DISPLACEMENT RISK</b> Share of today's overburdened-renter households at risk for displacement based on future growth patterns	Communities of Concern	Remainder of Region

Low-income households will be spending over 84% of their incomes on H+T

BASE YEAR ▶	77%	41%	n/a	n/a
-------------	-----	-----	-----	-----

SCENARIOS ▼	10% ---- 100%	10% ---- 100%	0% ----- 50%	0% ----- 50%
-------------	---------------	---------------	--------------	--------------

<b>1</b> Initial Vision	77% <sup>**</sup>	43%	38%	10%
<b>2</b> Core Concentration	84%	44%	40%	15%
<b>3</b> Focused Growth	85%	44%	35%	7%
<b>4</b> Constrained Core Concentration	85%	44%	35%	7%
<b>5</b> Outward				

35% of households in "communities of concern" will be at high risk of displacement.



# Building Regional Leadership



**25 Graduates**  
**25 Seats Won**  
**14 Recent Graduates**

- **Richmond Seats**
  - Planning Commission
  - Economic Development Commission
- **Oakland Seats**
  - Planning Commission
  - Housing Authority
- **San Francisco Seats**
  - Citizens Committee on Community Development
  - Hunters Point Shipyard Citizen Advisory Committee
- **Regional Seats**
  - Metropolitan Transportation Commission Policy Advisory Council