

## **Spotlight – Association of Bay Area Governments (from the July 2011 CSDC Network News)**

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional planning agency for the nine counties, and the 101 cities and towns of the San Francisco Bay region. ABAG, established 50 years ago, was the first Council of Governments in California. ABAG's planning and research programs address regional economic, social, and environmental challenges.

"Plan Bay Area" is a key regional planning initiative that encourages focused growth through a voluntary, incentive-based development and conservation strategy. This initiative is administered by ABAG in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). "Plan Bay Area" provides an opportunity for local governments and the regional agencies to work together to create complete, livable communities. These communities will help achieve a more efficient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable region.

The ABAG Research Department produces *Projections* – a biennial demographic and economic forecast for the Bay Area. The *Projections* series document population, jobs, housing, and income changes over a twenty-five year period using the most recent Census for its base year. Starting in 2009, the forecasts include regional performance targets such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Local government policy makers and administrators, as well as private sector business and the general public, consider *Projections* pivotal to their planning and development decision-making.

With increased coordination in regional planning, expectations and requirements for data and modeling have increased and the quality of the demographic data has improved. The results of Census 2010 data will continue to be a focus of ABAG's Research Department efforts in the coming years. The research team will analyze information on retirement trends, migration, and demographic information for the Bay Area and for surrounding regions.

The ABAG Research Department will continue to work with MTC to better coordinate work on the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), the Regional Transportation Plan, and other projects. As part of the SCS process, ABAG and MTC are working together to establish a set of specific regional targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing land use scenarios.

MTC uses decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS) data for a variety of demographic and household analyses, with special attention given to transportation-related characteristics. MTC relies heavily on the census journey-to-work data and the Census Transportation Planning Package. As an example of MTC transportation research using census data, MTC is currently analyzing how travel behavior differs across racial/ethnic populations. This research will be presented in October at the 2011 Transportation Research Board Census Data for Transportation Applications Conference. MTC will use decennial census, ACS, and Public Use Microdata Sample data to explore changes in racial/ethnic diversity in the San Francisco Bay Area, along with corresponding changes in transit use and household vehicle availability.

MTC will also examine changes in the "limited English proficiency" (LEP) population, using census data to determine which languages are spoken by LEP households and which transportation characteristics describe the LEP population. One hypothesis tests whether the LEP population is more transit-dependent than the non-LEP population and, if so, what are the transportation policy and planning implications for this subgroup. MTC Research Department will use census data to investigate the transportation characteristics of minority communities, including characteristics such as the proportion of zero-vehicle households, the number of vehicles per household, and the means of transportation to work.

ABAG staff has assisted with census planning activities since the 1970 census. Patricia Perry, recently-retired and longtime ABAG senior planner, collected volumes of census documents and treated them as precious commodities, even as the revolution of the digital age changed the need for printed materials.

Due to her conscientious hard work, the MTC-ABAG Library maintains census documents that go back to the 1940 census, although the stacks of computer tapes and massive tape drives are now gone.

The MTC-ABAG library specializes in transportation planning, demographics, economic analysis, public policy issues and regional planning in the San Francisco Bay Area. The library operates the Bay Area Census website [[www.bayareacensus.ca.gov](http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov)] which posts recent and historical census data.



Julie, Hing, and Shimon

Hing, Julie, and Shimon have a combined total of almost 50 years of working with census data between them and would be glad to assist with Bay Area demographic needs.