

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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## Contra Costa Times Readers' Forum: Speak up for the future of Contra Costa County

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CONTRA COSTA County is our home. Whether you are a new resident or someone with deep roots here, this county is a special place. And if you are like us, you cherish what makes it unique, from our excellent schools, to our unique and diverse communities to our beautiful parks and open space.

It's also clear that the place we call home is changing. As the economy recovers, employers are thankfully hiring again and our region is growing.

By 2035, the Bay Area is expected to add more than 900,000 new households and 1.2 million new jobs. To reduce traffic congestion and avoid harmful air quality, we'll have to get smarter about how we design our communities, so that people can meet most of their daily needs without having to drive as much.

What we know is quite simple: we have the choice to use new growth to make our communities better places to live. What does this look like? It can mean you save money on gas because you are able to walk to new shops and restaurants near home. It can mean your children have the choice of safely walking or biking to school.

It can also mean homes we can all afford, and a convenient bus route or more efficient road ways that can get you to work.

A California law is asking all regions to come up with a plan to accommodate growth over the next 24 years. In the next few months, regional planning agencies will be making vital decisions about how we get around and

where we build, decisions that will impact housing and transportation over the next two decades.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission will be deciding how to spend more than \$200 billion in transportation funding over the next 25 years and we want to hear how you want those dollars spent.

The Association of Bay Area Governments is charged with allocating the regional housing needs for the coming years. A primary goal is to preserve the character and special qualities of our existing neighborhoods, communities and green spaces while accommodating the anticipated population increases. Just how we accomplish this is under discussion.

The regional agencies can't do this alone. We know you care about the future of the Bay Area and Contra Costa particularly. We need your input.

Fortunately, MTC, ABAG and several organizations including Greenbelt Alliance and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation are gathering feedback from residents.

Each county is holding a forum to hear what matters most to you -- things like a short commute, clean air, and more affordable homes. If you can't make it to a forum, you can also make your views known on [youchoosebayarea.org](http://youchoosebayarea.org).

What happens in the next few months will impact whether our children and grandchildren will want to live and work here in Contra Costa County. Please join us Saturday, May 7, in Concord.

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**Superior City Councilmember of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, June Pierce is a Western Piedmont Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle, Concord. Further information: [www.greenbelt.org](http://www.greenbelt.org) or [www.shesbayarea.org](http://www.shesbayarea.org)**  
**Clayton City Councilwoman and the Contra Costa Cities ABAG Representative, and Amy Worth is an Orinda City Councilwoman and vice chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.**