

Subject: Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint: Follow-up from May 27 Policy Advisory Council (925)

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From: Martha Silver

To: Martha Silver, Chirag Rabari

CC: Ky-Nam Miller

Good day, MTC Policy Advisory Council (MTC Council) Members and Staff,

Below you will find a few of the key areas where staff either conducted additional work and analysis as a result of the Council discussion, or where staff committed to circle back with additional detail.

Please contact [@Chirag Rabari](#) at crabari@bayareametro.gov should you have any additional questions or comments.

Martha Silver
Clerk of the Committee

Bay Area Residents Ability to Stay in Place / Impacts on Low-income Households

- At the May 27 meeting staff heard a number of questions and concerns re: the metrics on "page 26" of the Final Blueprint Compendium preliminary draft, touching on losses of low-income households and shares within Bay Area census tracts over the plan period. In particular, Council members were concerned about the relatively high percentage of census tracts experiencing losses of low-income households, as well as tracts experiences declining shares of low-income households, in 2050 under the Final Blueprint.
 - In the meeting, staff noted how this metric does not capture the movement of individual households or the reasons for relocation. In other words, the reason for “loss” could be displacement as traditionally understood, or alternatively households moving by choice to other locations with more attractive housing or other opportunities and resources. Therefore, even though this metric can be used to analyze neighborhoods with displacement risk, the limitations are important to note — the metric counts *any* net loss of a low-income household from a tract, *regardless of reason*.
 - Staff further noted how the plan’s strategies significantly increase the number of deed-restricted affordable housing units in Growth Geographies, especially in High-Resource Areas where affordable housing has historically been relatively rare, as well as in Transit-Rich Areas with good transit access.

Together, these policies could offer households with low incomes more areas in which to live affordably, and thereby drive choices to relocate.

- In response to the Council's feedback, staff conducted additional analysis to better elucidate the impact of select plan strategies in driving the observed outcomes.
 - See [pages 26 and 27](#) of the *revised* Final Blueprint Compendium for additional detail.
 - The following link to the [revised analysis shares 2050 modeled outcomes](#) for 3 alternatives, instead of the previously shared 2:
 - 2050 "No Project" (i.e., with no Blueprint strategies included)
 - 2050 Final Blueprint with all strategies implemented, *except for key affordable housing strategies* (affordable housing preservation, affordable housing production, and inclusionary zoning)
 - 2050 Final Blueprint with all strategies implemented, *including key affordable strategies*
- As can be seen at the preceding link, the 2050 Final Blueprint results seemingly "look better" without the plan's affordable strategies included. The percentage of impacted census tracts were significantly reduced compared to the complete suite of Final Blueprint strategies, with the percentage of census tracts meeting displacement and gentrification definitions dropping from 49% to 12%, and 52% to 14%, respectively. This strongly suggests that the plan's major investments in affordable housing are attracting low-income households to new areas — rather than other plan strategies (such as Strategy T5 / pricing) leading to the displacement of low-income households out of their existing neighborhoods.
- Going further, other metrics indicate that some low-income households are moving to well-resourced areas of the region with lower housing and transportation costs.
 - For instance, combined housing and transportation expenses as a share of income for low-income households decreases from 82% in the No Project alternative to 47% in the Final Blueprint. Additionally, in Transit-Rich & High-Resource Areas, the share of low-income households increases from 25% in the No Project alternative to 34% in the Final Blueprint.
 - These findings underscore the importance of interpreting the gentrification and displacement metrics, which do not capture the reason for relocation, alongside other metrics.
- Finally, it is important to note that this the metric does not capture the positive

impact of plan Strategy H1 to further strengthen renter protections, as this strategy cannot be modeled by our technical tools.

Resilience Project List & The Cost of Inaction

- At the meeting, there was a request for a refresher on the areas protected at specific levels of sea level rise by the plan's adopted Final Resilience Project List. Please see the following link for a map:
https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/meetings/attachments/6184/9aviii_24_1550_Atachment_G_Resilience_Project_List.pdf#page=6
- There was also a request for further context on the costs of inaction with respect to adapting to sea level rise. Our partners at BCDC included analysis to this effect in the [Sea Level Rise Adaptation Funding and Investment Framework](#).
 - This blurb is from the executive summary: “While the cost of tackling this regional challenge is significant, failing to adapt would result in a much larger deficit. Even a partial estimate of the cost of inaction is anticipated to be over **\$230 billion**.” Note that this value is likely in 2022 dollars so if we adjusted to 2025 dollars it would be ~\$250B.
 - Additional methodology is described in pages 3-5 in the Methodology report: https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023-07/SLR_Framework_Technical_Methodology_Report_0.pdf

Further Details Re: Parks and Open Space Access and Cost Estimates

- During the meeting, staff received a number of clarification questions regarding parks and open space metrics.
 - Does the urban parks metric include open space from schools or other use types that may not be accessible to the public?
 - The urban parks metric uses data from the California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) which includes open space intended for recreation and a broad range of other purposes, but park-like areas that are parts of public schools are not included in CPAD unless there is a known, defined agreement to allow those for public use.
 - Is agricultural or private land used in the open space metric (Strategy EN5 - Protect and Manage High-Value Conservation Lands)?
 - No, this metric does not include open space where public access is restricted. The data instead focuses on protected areas owned by public agencies and nonprofits. Private owners are not included, except for

parkland owned by some homeowner associations and some conservation mitigation sites.

- How did the plan develop its cost assumptions regarding protection and acquisition of open space? What is the scale of the plan's land conservation goals?

- **Per-acre acquisition costs**

- Two methods were used to develop a per-acre acquisition cost. The first method involved collecting examples of recent acquisitions across the region. A major source of data points were park district and open space trust annual reports and budgets which detailed recent efforts. In total, 28 recent projects were identified across the mega-region, totaling over 33,000 acres and \$240 million in acquisition costs (in 2023 dollars). The 28 projects were further sorted into two bins, acquisitions near urban areas, and acquisitions far from urban areas. The range of per-acre costs ranged from \$2,000 to \$397,000 per acre. The highest values in the range were all acquisitions near development. No projects included in the sample that were far from development had a per acre cost over \$50,000/acre.
- In addition to collecting recent data on acquisitions, a 2020 report completed for the Bay Area Regional Advance Mitigation Planning (RAMP) initiative was used to blend the estimated per-acre costs. The report focused on a cost-estimate for the RAMP effort. Included in the study was an estimate of the per-acre cost of acquisition, by County in the region by using publicly-available land sales data. The county per-acre costs range from \$211,000/acre to \$25,000/acre. Together these two sources of information are blended to create an assumed per-acre acquisition costs of \$75,000/acre for lands within one-mile of significant development, and \$23,000/acre for lands further than one-mile from significant development.

- **Scale of high-value conservation lands acquisition**

- The Conservation Lands Network (CLN) 2.0 Report and data framework were utilized to roughly identify regional priority areas for conservation. CLN provides a detailed, science-based approach to prioritize conservation of 50% of the Bay Area's natural and working lands by 2050. Utilizing spatial environmental data and informed by local ecologists and biologists, CLN maps conservation areas to support protection of a full representation of the Bay Area's habitats

in robust amounts to ensure long-term resilience of the region’s biodiversity. This analysis compares existing conserved lands against an inventory of natural habitats ranked for rarity and ecosystem importance and also considers priority stream corridors, habitat connectivity, and groundwater recharge areas. Two key composite datasets were used to estimate the high-level conservation land needs. CLN Essential Lands as well as CLN Important Lands were used for the analysis. Essential areas are lands that tend to contain high-value conservation targets, are located adjacent to existing protected lands, or play key roles in local habitat connectivity. Important areas are lands with more common vegetation types that may be interchangeable with other potential conservation lands with similar biodiversity values.

- Final Blueprint Strategy EN5 would result in the conservation of essential and important lands identified in CLN by 2050 in each county. In addition to identifying the total number of acres for conservation, the lands were further divided into two categories for financial accounting. Lands within a one-mile buffer of the urban edge, and lands further. This division was done to more accurately identify the costs associated with acquisition and protection of lands, with recent acquisitions in the region showcasing that lands near development were more expensive.
- Of the 2,210,000 acres to protect, over 1,430,000 acres are already protected in perpetuity. Of the 780,000 acres that remain, 112,500 acres are within one-mile of significant existing development and 667,500 acres are further from existing development.

- **The following table highlights the total needs based on the assumptions detailed above.**

Conservation Area Location	Acquisition Costs (per acre, \$2023)	Conservation Strategy Goal (Acres)	Total Needs (\$YOE, millions)
Acquisition Near Development	\$75,000	112,500	\$12,160
Acquisition Far From Development	\$23,000	667,500	\$22,382
Maintenance	-	-	\$1,007
Total	-	780,000	\$34,542

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