



Memorandum

To: ABAG Executive Board; Metropolitan Transportation Commission

From: Community Advisory Council Chair Carina Lieu

Date: April – May 2026

Regarding: April - May 2026 Council Chair's Report

April 3, 2026 Meeting Summary

On April 3, 2026, the MTC-ABAG Community Advisory Council elected new officers. Carina Lieu was elected Chair, and Diana Benitez was elected Vice Chair.

The Council approved a measure authorizing remote participation in meetings consistent with SB 707, reinforcing the importance of accessibility and enabling more consistent participation.

The Council provided feedback on MTC's Vital Signs website, expressing strong support for the goal of making regional data more accessible to the public. Members also raised concerns about how the data is framed and understood, including the need for clearer explanations, improved accessibility for people with disabilities, expanded language access, and greater usability for non-technical audiences.

Councilmembers raised specific concerns about reliance on federal data definitions that do not reflect the cost realities of the Bay Area. Members emphasized the need to incorporate more localized data to better represent community need. Councilmembers raised concerns about how displacement is defined and interpreted, noting that current indicators can imply that households are choosing to move rather than being displaced, and emphasizing the need for the data to better reflect lived realities. In addition, members emphasized the importance of connecting data to decision-making, including how tools like Vital Signs can be used to inform and track outcomes across regional programs.

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The Council provided feedback on the CARE Program, with a focus on accountability in community engagement. Members emphasized the need for clear expectations, representative participation, and transparency in how community input informs decisions. Councilmembers highlighted the importance of follow-through, including tracking outcomes, demonstrating impact, and ensuring investments reach historically underserved communities. Members underscored the importance of representation in advisory bodies, including participation from people with disabilities, older adults, and other priority populations.

Overall, the discussion reflected a consistent focus on aligning data, engagement, and implementation in ways that are accessible, credible, and grounded in the realities communities are experiencing.

May 1, 2026 Meeting Summary

At the May 1, 2026 Community Advisory Council meeting, the Council received staff presentations on two agenda items: Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) and early framing for Plan Bay Area 2060.

Equity Priority Communities (EPCs)

Councilmembers were updated on the refresh of the Equity Priority Communities framework and engaged in a discussion on the strengths and limitations of the approach. Members expressed appreciation and the opportunity to weigh in early on the tool. Members emphasized that a binary and place-based approach can miss dispersed or difficult-to-measure populations, including those with disabilities, farmworkers, undocumented residents, youth, climate impacted communities and hidden pockets of need within higher-resource areas.

To that end, members spoke to the reliability and accuracy of the American Communities Survey data, raising questions about the data collection methods used by the Census Bureau, and how this may miss gathering complete information about youth and immigrant populations.

There was an emphasis on disability inclusion - councilmembers encouraged staff to find ways to better capture people with disabilities who are employed or not traditionally counted through income-based measures. Members representing communities with disabilities highlighted the diversity within disability communities, particularly for those having multiple disabilities, barriers related to transit access and employment due to having a disability, and the importance of sustained follow-up from the Accessible Futures Conference put on by MTC-ABAG in June 2025.

Housing instability and displacement risk were repeatedly raised as concerns. Councilmembers encouraged distinguishing between communities already experiencing displacement pressures, using indicators such as rent burden, loss of low-cost housing, and transit access, while avoiding approaches that inadvertently penalize communities for density or new infill development.

Across the discussion, members stressed the importance of coordinated outreach, reducing engagement fatigue, and working through trusted community-based organizations. Youth, immigrant, undocumented, farmworker, and labor communities were identified as critical voices to more intentionally include moving forward.

Plan Bay Area 2060

The Council also discussed early priorities and framing considerations for Plan Bay Area 2060. Members emphasized climate change as a core organizing lens for the plan, intersecting with housing, transportation, public health, environmental justice, and economic resilience.

Councilmembers raised the need to meaningfully address housing affordability, jobs–housing balance, and economic development, including how current and historic (i.e., redlining) land use and employment patterns contribute to displacement, long commutes, and regional inequities. Several members highlighted the importance of addressing the Bay Area within a broader mega-regional context.

Emerging issues such as automation and artificial intelligence were raised as areas requiring early dialogue—particularly with labor and youth—given potential impacts on employment, mobility, and access over the coming decades.

Finally, members encouraged clearer milestones, benchmarks, and acknowledging assumptions within the plan, noting the importance of connecting long-range vision to near-term implementation, funding realities, and tangible community outcomes. The Council expressed interest in continuing to partner with staff to help shape messaging, weigh tradeoffs, and inform engagement approaches throughout the plan's development.