

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments  
MTC Planning Committee and ABAG Administrative Committee**

**November 8, 2024**

**Agenda Item 8b**

**MTC and ABAG Advisory Council Strategy**

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**Subject:**

Overview of a concept to create an integrated advisory council to serve both the MTC Commission and ABAG Executive Board.

**Background:**

Recent MTC and ABAG Committee Integration

Over the last decade, MTC and ABAG have worked to coordinate the activities of various committees. Even in the years prior to the 2017 consolidation of MTC and ABAG staff, the MTC Planning Committee and ABAG Administrative Committee often met jointly to discuss Plan Bay Area and other shared topics of interest. Fast-forward to the present day, these joint meetings routinely occur on the second Friday of every month. This has resulted in greater coordination and communication among the MTC and ABAG members on planning matters related to transportation, housing, and the environment.

In recent years, MTC and ABAG have successfully implemented a similarly coordinated approach for two other sets of committees. In June 2020, the ABAG Executive Board formed the ABAG Housing Committee, which typically meets jointly with the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) Oversight Committee on the second Wednesday of every month. In August 2020, the MTC Commission and ABAG Executive Board created a Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee, which now meets on the second Friday of every month.

MTC Policy Advisory Council and ABAG Regional Planning Committee

The MTC Policy Advisory Council (“MTC Council”) is a 27-member body comprised of Bay Area residents. It addresses a set of transportation topics defined and supported by Commission leadership. The members typically bring a work, academic, or volunteer background on transportation, land use, the environment, the economy, and/or climate change. While the members of the MTC Council bring broad expertise among various focus areas, the MTC Council’s agendas are typically focused on planning or public policy issues related to

transportation. Over the years, some members have expressed an interest in advising staff on broader issues.

The ABAG Regional Planning Committee (“RPC”) comprises a set of elected and non-elected members, including a number of representatives from the ABAG Executive Board. Prior to the staff consolidation, the RPC provided direction to ABAG staff on Plan Bay Area and other planning topics. In the years since the staff consolidation, the cadence of RPC meetings has slowed considerably; the most recent meeting of the RPC was in December 2021. The primary reason for the pause is that the RPC has considerable *membership and topical overlap* with the ABAG Administrative Committee and the recently formed ABAG Housing Committee. Because of this, staff have been mindful of the extra burden placed on Board members by an additional committee meeting, which often addresses similar topics.

#### Advisory Council Integration Strategy

Most recently, staff have engaged MTC Commission and ABAG Executive Board leadership, the MTC Council Chair and Vice-Chair, and the RPC Vice-Chair on the future scope of these committees. Based on these conversations, staff are ready to move forward with further development of a concept that would expand the scope of the MTC Council to serve both MTC and ABAG via integration with the ABAG RPC.

The integration of these two committees would signal the latest important step to strengthen policy coordination between the two governing boards, similar to what was accomplished with the Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee, the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee, and the BAHFA Oversight and ABAG Housing Committee. An integrated committee would allow the members to address a holistic set of issues rather than be limited to a singular focus area.

#### **Next Steps:**

While staff will continue to assess the specific details of this future committee’s membership and appointments, we believe the Commission and Executive Board would be well-served by an advisory council that retains a focus on *non-elected advisors* with participation by some regional civic and non-profit organizations. Staff also suggest retaining a geographically diverse structure in which each county appoints representatives while providing for at-large appointments of

organizations such as business, labor, and environmental groups that work regionwide. This membership and appointment approach would incorporate features from both the MTC Council and RPC, providing for an inclusive, balanced structure.

As this new integrated committee takes shape, it may also be advantageous to allow for the formation of a limited set of subcommittees to address specific focus areas. For example, the MTC Council currently has an Equity and Access Subcommittee, and the RPC has included various subcommittees in the past.

MTC Council members currently serve four-year terms; the current term ends in December 2025, though the recruitment process for the next set of members would typically begin in the summer of 2025. This proposed change would not affect the current slate of MTC Council members. Regarding the ABAG RPC, many of its current non-elected members from nongovernmental organizations may be good candidates to serve on this new integrated committee. Staff are in the process of reaching out to these members to discuss this concept and gauge their interest in serving. Additionally, the staff's preference would be to limit the number of members to 27, which is the current size of the MTC Council.

Staff's timeline is to implement this new integrated committee by the end of 2025. However, to formally adopt and authorize this concept, additional MTC Commission and ABAG Executive Board actions may be necessary in 2025.

**Issues:**

None identified.

**Attachment:**

None



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