

Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments
Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee

October 9, 2020

Agenda Item 5b

Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint: Telecommuting Strategy Follow-Up

Subject: Presentation on the Plan Bay Area 2050 telecommuting strategy based upon action at the September 23, 2020 Commission meeting, per request of MTC Planning Committee Chair Spering.

Background: One of the key challenges identified in the Plan Bay Area 2050 Draft Blueprint was that the 25 strategies adopted by the ABAG Executive Board and Commission in February 2020 did not achieve the ambitious state-mandated climate target for year 2035. Under Senate Bill 375, the Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint must meet or exceed this 19 percent per-capita emission reduction target from cars and light-duty trucks for the region to continue to receive key transportation monies. Therefore, bold new strategies were proposed this summer for the Final Blueprint phase, including accelerating adoption of telecommuting.

Last month, the ABAG Executive Board and the Commission approved the Final Blueprint Strategies, Growth Geographies, and Regional Growth Forecast for Plan Bay Area 2050. One of these 35 strategies focused on requiring major office-based employers to significantly increase future levels of telecommuting, with an intent to reduce auto trips. Ultimately this could enable up to 25 percent of the regional workforce to telecommute on a typical day in 2035, reducing emissions and congestion as a result.


Given extensive feedback preceding and during its review of the staff recommendations in September, the Commission requested as part of its action that alternatives to the telecommute strategy (EN7) be brought forward to consider. In response to this request, staff has developed a brief presentation (**Attachment A**) to provide more context on this strategy, as well as what would be required of any alternatives to it.

Staff will return with analysis of the Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint by the end of 2020, including analysis of greenhouse gas emission impacts to determine if the Blueprint meets or exceeds the statutory target. Following additional discussion with stakeholders, staff will also identify one or more alternatives that would achieve similar greenhouse gas reductions as the telecommuting strategy.

Issues: None

Recommendation: Information

Attachments: Attachment A: Presentation


Therese W. McMillan

PLAN BAY AREA 2050

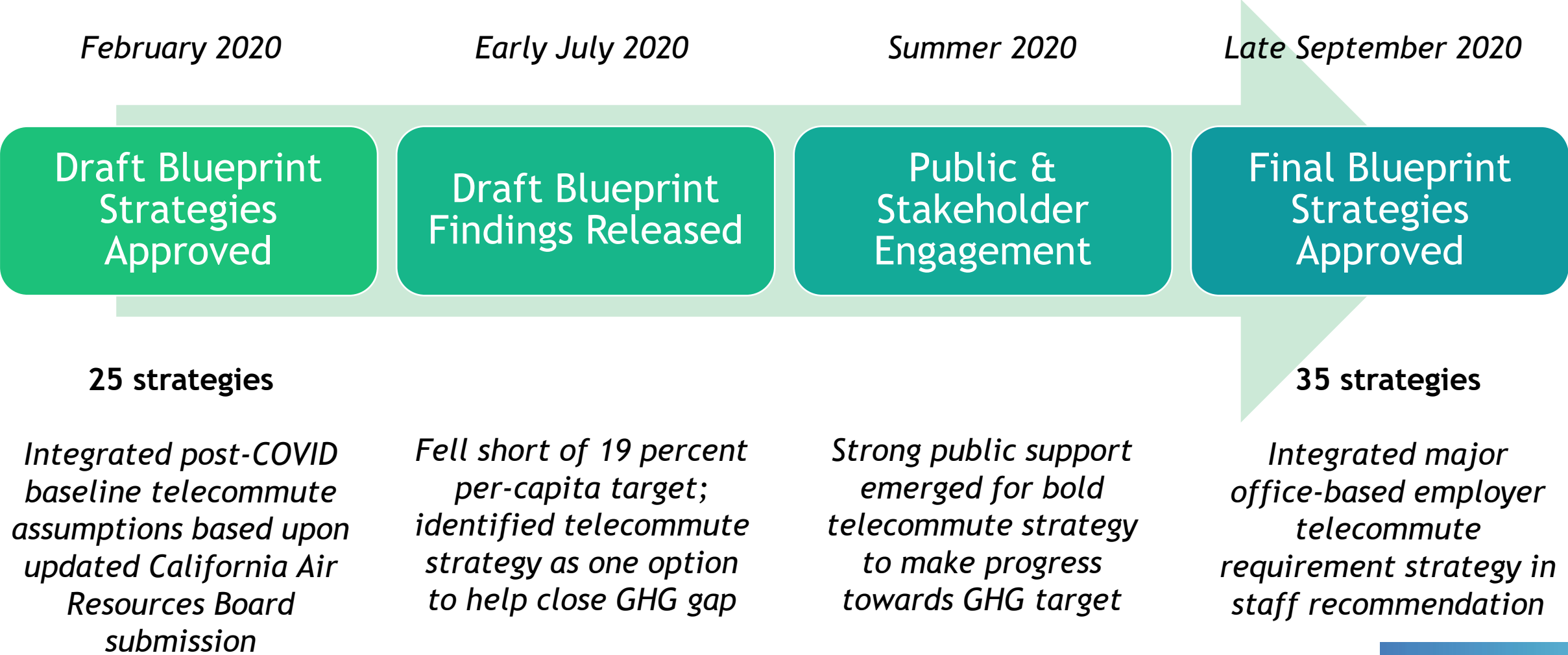
Final Blueprint: Telecommuting Strategy Follow-up

Therese W. McMillan

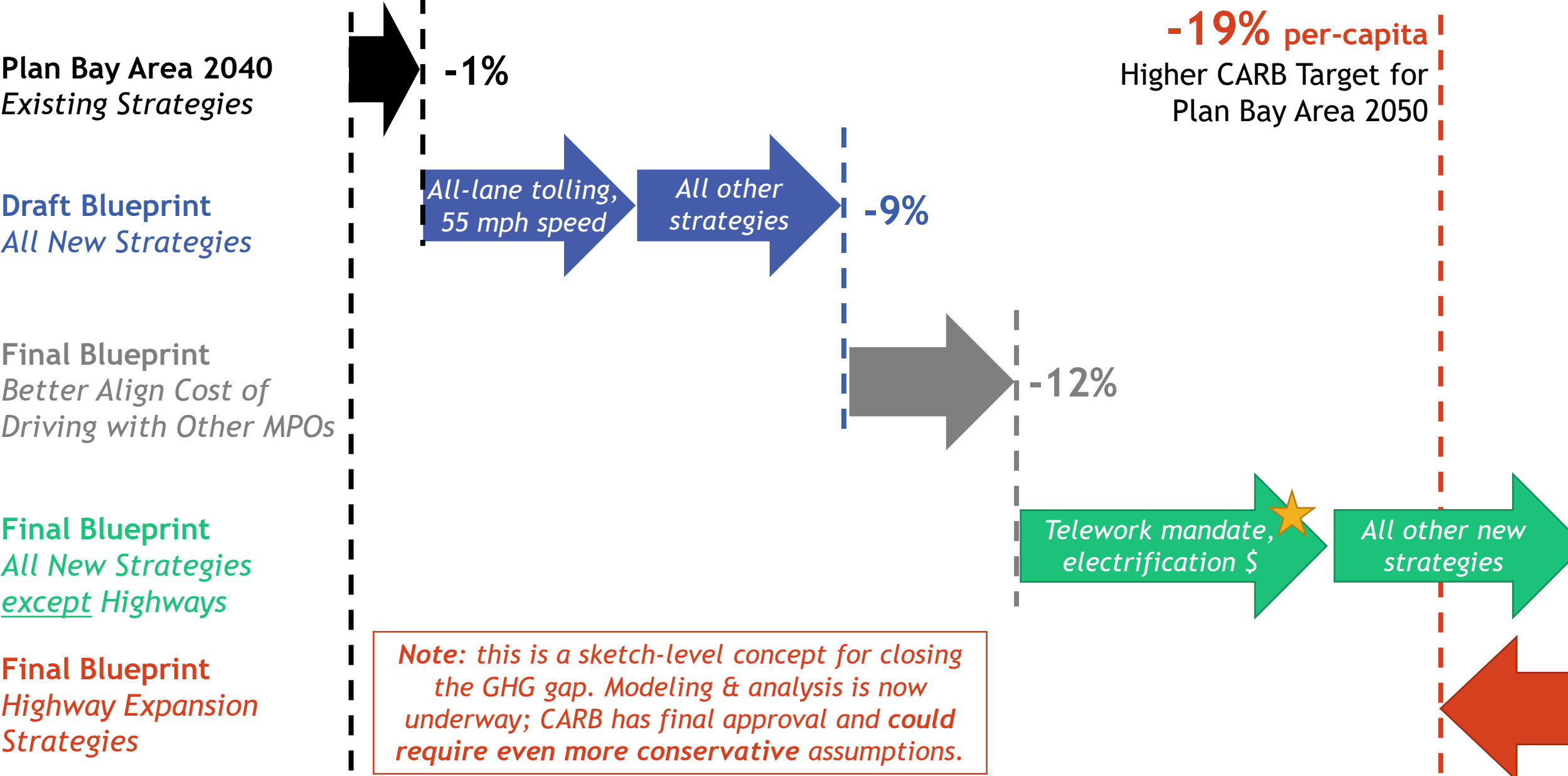
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Recap: Recent Plan Bay Area 2050 Milestones



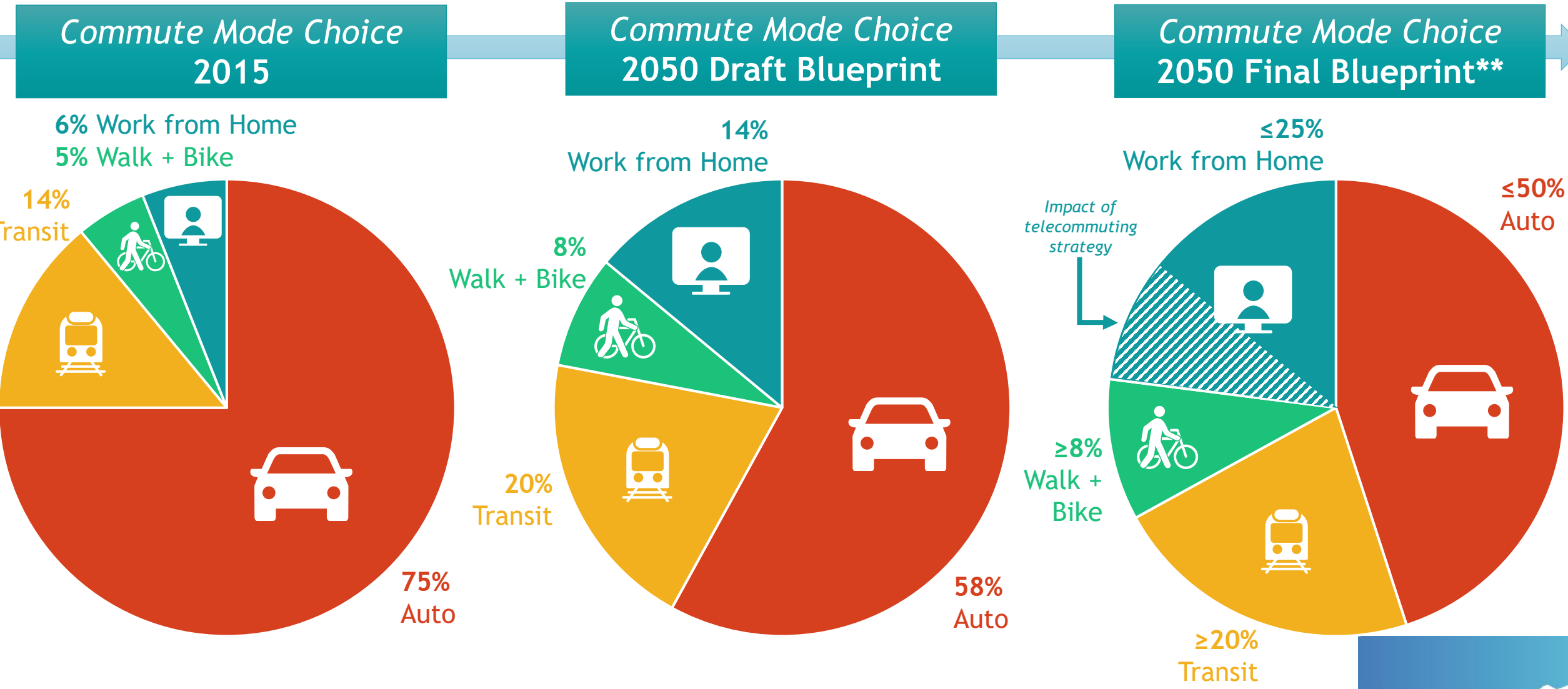
Closing the GHG Gap: No Easy Solutions



Telecommuting Strategy (EN7): Key Points

- **As adopted by the ABAG Board and Commission, the strategy only assumes that major office-based employers would need to reach a 60 percent telecommute share by 2035.** Manufacturing, retail, hospitals, etc. are all assumed to be exempt; small businesses with less than 25 employees are assumed to be exempt. This has the effect of increasing telecommute mode share to no more than 25 percent.
- **Strategies in Plan Bay Area 2050 are merely policy recommendations in a long-range plan context.** MTC would have to pursue new regulatory authority, and moving from planning to action would require negotiation, refinements, and consensus.
- **The telecommuting strategy is just one of 35 strategies in the Final Blueprint.** It must work in tandem with improved internet access in low-income/underserved communities. Potential risks from demand for lower-density suburban development are mitigated through housing and environmental strategies like strengthening urban growth boundaries.

Telecommuting Strategy (EN7): Intended Effect



** Envisioned modal shift; analysis underway this fall to understand combined effect of 35 approved strategies.

Statistically-Valid Telephone Poll - Summer 2020

76%

support strategy

“Requiring employers to limit in-person office work when telecommuting or working from home is possible”

Workshops, Online Survey, and Letters - Summer 2020

1,500+

comments in support

130+

comments in opposition

Alternative Approaches: Framing the Discussion

As part of MTC Resolution No. 4437, the Commission requested that staff look at **alternatives for the telecommuting strategy** that would generate the same **GHG emissions reductions**.

Three types of alternatives:

Refine existing strategy

Scale back existing strategy and mitigate elsewhere

Eliminate strategy and mitigate elsewhere

To be effective, alternatives must meet the following requirements:

At Scale

- A modified or alternative strategy cannot have marginal impacts on GHG reduction.

No Duplication

- A modified or alternative strategy cannot “double count” estimated GHG reductions. *(must ensure CARB approval)*

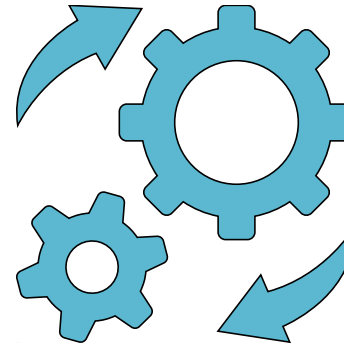
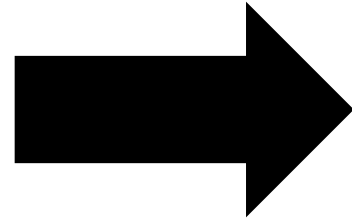
Within Fiscal Constraint

- Transportation strategies must fit within federally-required “fiscal constraint” - all monies are currently allocated to specific investments.

Implementation: Nexus with Telecommuting



**Final
Blueprint**



**Implementation
Plan**

- The Implementation Plan, slated to kick off next month, will identify near-term tangible actions that MTC/ABAG and partners can advance, for each strategy identified in the Final Blueprint.
- This presents an opportunity to maximize the viability of each strategy, including telecommuting. The Implementation Plan could recommend pilot programs for telecommuting - or alternatives such as robust trip caps - that could advance implementation.
- Implementation activities in 2021 and beyond could then inform future strategy revisions as part of the Plan Bay Area 2050 Update, slated for adoption in 2025. *Long-range planning is an iterative process.*



Over the next month, staff and interested partners will continue to discuss refinements or alternatives to the telecommuting strategy that must achieve the same GHG emissions reduction, prior to the release of Final Blueprint analysis at the end of 2020.