

Therese McMillan
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Remove Telecommuting Mandate from Plan Bay Area 2050.

Dear Director McMillan:

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that the telecommuting mandates as written, be removed from Plan Bay Area 2050.

The policy proposes to mandate that employers who have 25 or more employees in the Bay Area require 60% of their workers to work remotely. **Incredibly, the policy as written would require these workers to work remotely even if they could get to work by walking, biking or taking transit.** A motion to alter the policy to allow flexibility for workers to bike, walk or take transit to work instead of working remotely failed at the last meeting.

As written, this remote work mandate would devastate downtowns, restaurants and even small businesses who rely on providing food, goods and services to workers at jobsites. We are seeing an increase in small and medium size businesses struggling through the SIP orders- doing anything that could chill any chance of their survival at this time will only further close thousands of local businesses. Each month more and more businesses are giving up. We owe it to our community and to the employed citizens of our community to be accelerating commerce and livelihoods right now. Unfortunately, this new policy has the exact opposite effect.

We recognize that this is a longer term strategy that is not proposed to be imposed in the short term. But downtowns and cities are hurting right now. Many may not make it a few more months if relief is not on the way. That is where our focus should be. Proposing this Main Street-killing plan now and asking businesses, restaurants, mom and pop stores- who are already struggling - to engage and fight back against this policy right now is particularly tone deaf.

A broad government mandate that people must work remotely even if their commute would produce zero emissions is wrong. Freedom of movement is key to a vibrant economy. We shouldn't stop movement, we should encourage workers to move in ways that produce less pollution, including carpooling, electric vehicles, walking, biking and taking transit.

The intentions of reducing pollution are important. There is little to show that this mandate is what is needed to achieve those goals, and some indication that it may do more harm for GHG reduction than good. Already we are seeing outmigration from the Bay Area. By exporting residents and their climate impacts out of cities to more rural areas and even to other states we

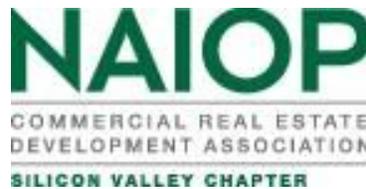
risk forfeiting the benefits of leadership California and its cities have had on climate change. We know that Californians who relocate to Texas, for instance, end up tripling their carbon footprint.

Mandating telework does not mean there is zero impact to GhG. Employees working from home, especially those who move to remote or rural areas rather than cities may not be commuting to the office, but could also be inducing demand for delivered goods and increase the volume of local trips - impacts that are not yet well understood.

Policies and proposals from MTC should enhance, rather than undermine the ability of the Bay Area's innovation to thrive. We have the knowhow and the will to lead on climate change in the Bay Area, and for the state.

We ask that MTC and ABAG work with the employer community - not just big tech but those who rely on transit and on thriving downtowns and offices - to develop a policy that reduces pollution without destroying downtowns, transit, restaurants, and more.

Sincerely,



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Sutter Health Medical Foundation
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October 8, 2020

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 95105-2066

Re: **Item 5b** Plan Bay Area 2050: Final Blueprint – Opposed to the 60% Telecommute Mandate

Dear Members of the MTC and ABAG:

We at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group are pleased that MTC is showing a willingness to examine the 60% telecommute policy, **but we remain very concerned** that the policy as written still would require workers to stay home, even if their commute would have no impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

While we support many Plan Bay Area 2050 goals and appreciate benefits of reduced congestion and GHG emissions due to remote work practices during regional Covid-19 shelter-in-place orders, **we oppose this one-size-fits-all mandate.**

The solution to pollution and traffic from cars is not that we don't move - it's that we move better.

Telecommuting is just one tool in the toolbox to help reduce traffic and GhG emissions. Others include good public transit, walking, biking and micro mobility. Each of these other tools features benefits including to public health and/or community beyond the GhG/traffic benefits featured by telecommuting alone.

Reducing GhG emissions is an important means to the goal of slowing climate change. But a remote working mandate this draconian risks encouraging sprawl, increasing non-work commute trips and doing far more harm to our environmental efforts than simply encouraging commuters to shift to better, more sustainable modes of getting to work.

Telecommuting has promise, but this proposal applies the policy broadly and as a club not a scalpel. It risks starving transit of ridership, farebox recovery and the ability to plan for consistent ridership demand. It risks discouraging infrastructure investments to support other modes like biking, walking and micro-mobility; and imposing it indiscriminately, as proposed, risks harming innovation in Silicon Valley and sending companies that value innovation elsewhere.

The Leadership Group has been a strong supporter of innovative ways to reduce solo driving and the congestion and GhG problems it can cause. We worked with our members, conducted a series of surveys on opportunities to capture some of the recent gains in GhG and traffic relief. We formed a Commute Compact Working Group and collaborated with a Bay Area Air Quality Management District effort spearheaded by Supervisor Chavez and others on a voluntary pledge to

Nothing will put the brakes on important voluntary efforts like these faster than the prospect of large overreaching government mandates formed without substantial outreach to the employer groups they target.

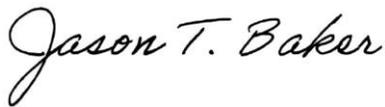
Unrealistic and unworkable proposals such as this in PBA 2050 do harm even if they are never actually enacted. They take up space in our regional planning processes, and can be allotted credit for “potential,” but illusory, progress on climate and traffic goals that will never be realized. That space would be better used for more realistic proposals that might actually be enacted.

Finally, there are benefits to being together. Community and human interaction are important to our mental and physical health. Absent a global pandemic, a government mandate that we stay apart is wrong.

We request that the MTC and staff remove Strategy EN7, continue to engage with the employer community, and provide additional analysis of the effects of any proposed remote work policy on health, community, innovation, the environment and the economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



/ST

Jason Baker
Vice President, Transportation, Housing & Community Development
Silicon Valley Leadership Group