

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments
Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee**

March 10, 2023

Agenda Item 5a

Release of MTC's 2023 Draft Public Participation Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area

Subject:

Overview of MTC's 2023 Draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the San Francisco Bay Area and update approach. On February 24, 2023, MTC's Draft PPP (see Attachment A) was released for a 45-day public review and comment period.

Background:

Federal regulations require MTC to adopt a [public participation plan](#) (PPP) to inform the public and our partners about how they can participate in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). State statutes further require MPOs to develop an engagement plan for the development of the RTP and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), which is the region's long-range plan known as Plan Bay Area. Due to the nature of the specific federal and state requirements, the PPP has historically been focused exclusively on the long-range plan and the TIP; however, the latest iteration of the PPP informs members of the public of the various other opportunities to get involved in MTC's work. The current update provided a timely opportunity to incorporate MTC's Equity Platform into the PPP, as well as update our Guiding Principles and Engagement Strategies.

Approach to the 2023 Update

MTC staff reviewed the PPPs of several key partners and conducted research on engagement best practices to help inform the latest plan update. In addition, staff conducted a month-long online survey alongside a robust digital promotion campaign to solicit the public's comments and suggestions for improving public engagement. The survey opened on November 9 and closed on December 9. A summary of comments and suggestions received is included in Attachment B. The February 24 release kicked off a 45-day comment period that will be supplemented with additional online engagement, virtual small group discussions, and a robust communications campaign that includes e-mail blasts, social media and blog posts, press releases and paid digital promotion.

What's Different?

Based on research and comments heard, staff reorganized the PPP to make it more user-friendly, by moving the federally- and state-required technical content into appendices and keeping the essential information for how to get involved in the main document. Staff also revised and expanded the Guiding Principles and Engagement Strategies, which will also serve as a guide for all agency staff when conducting public engagement. As noted above, MTC's Equity Platform also was incorporated into the plan.

The revised Guiding Principles serve as our vision for public participation and are rooted in our Equity Platform:

- 1. Effective engagement has a clear purpose.**

Defining the purpose for engaging the public, understanding the context and identifying the audience of those affected is imperative to ensure effective engagement from the standpoint of the agency and the participants.

- 2. Effective engagement requires two-way education and relationship building.**

Acknowledging the skills and expertise that exists within a given community and boosting community engagement with activities that increase mutual education supports productive conversations. Ongoing, mutual education improves outcomes and requires cultivating relationships with partners and communities to build trust and achieve consensus.

- 3. Effective engagement is not one-size-fits-all.**

Efforts must be tailored to each unique project and audience to enhance community engagement while making every effort to increase participation opportunities for those most impacted by past and current decisions.

- 4. Clear communication is essential in effective engagement.**

Public engagement must be conducted through clear and compelling communications that are appropriate for the intended audience. Leveraging inclusive storytelling builds shared understanding.

5. Effective engagement demands accountability.

Informing the public of opportunities to participate in the process and clearly demonstrating how community voices have influenced planning and policy decisions builds confidence in the public process.

6. Engagement requires openness and transparency.

An open and transparent public participation process empowers low-income communities and communities of color to participate in decision-making that affects them (adopted as an environmental justice principle by the Commission in 2006).

Additionally, our Engagement Strategies help inform *how* we conduct engagement:

1. Engage Early and Often
2. Enable Access for All
3. Prioritize Co-creation and Plain Language
4. Respond and Report Back
5. Assess Impact

Next Steps:

Key dates leading up to adoption of the 2023 PPP include:

February 24	Release MTC's Draft 2023 PPP for 45-day comment period
March 10	Legislation Committee: presentation and discussion on MTC's Draft 2023 PPP
April 10	Close of comment period
June 9	Legislation Committee: present summary of comments and any recommended changes (if there are significant changes, the PPP will be released for a second comment period in May 2023)
June 28	Final Commission action on 2023 PPP (or July 2023 if a second comment period is needed)

Issues:

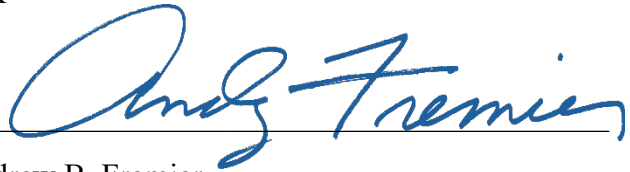
None identified

Recommendation:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: MTC's 2023 Draft Public Participation Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area
- Attachment B: Summary of Feedback
- Attachment C: Presentation



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