

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
Policy Advisory Council**

**July 28, 2023**

**Agenda Item 5c**

**Staff Liaison Report**

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**Subject:**

Overview of recent MTC policy decisions and other activities.

**Issues:**

None identified.

**Recommendations:**

Information

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Staff Liaison Report – July 2023

## Staff Liaison Report – July 2023

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### Follow up from June 14, 2023 Policy Advisory Council Meeting

- MTC Staff member Mark Shorett provided the following follow-up to the questions around defining “Transportation Oriented Development” that came up during the June 14<sup>th</sup> presentation providing updates on the Transit 2050+ modal plan from Kara Vuicich of MTC and Andy Metz of AC Transit:

“Thanks for the inquiry; below you’ll find a more detailed explanation of the difference between Plan Bay Area 2050 (the adopted long-range plan) and the near-term implementation of that vision via the Transit Oriented Communities Policy.

Plan Bay Area 2050, which is a long-range plan over a 30-year time horizon, identifies places for future housing and job growth known as “Growth Geographies”. These are determined based on a number of factors, including level of transit service. The definition of one of these Growth Geographies, Transit-Rich Areas, is similar, but not identical to, the definition used in the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy.

#### **In Plan Bay Area 2050, Transit-Rich Areas are places within a half mile of:**

1. “Fixed guideway” transit stops: rail stations, ferry terminals, and bus rapid transit stops (i.e., buses traveling in dedicated lanes)
2. Bus stops that are served by frequent routes, but do not meet the definition of “bus rapid transit”. The routes serving these stops arrive every 15 minutes or better during the morning and afternoon peak periods, but need not travel in dedicated bus lanes.

#### **The Transit Oriented Communities Policy**

Applies to places within a half mile of the first category of stops (“fixed guideway” transit stops) but not the second category. One way to look at the TOC Policy is as an “implementation action”, a first step towards making the broader Plan Bay Area 2050 a reality. Like other implementation actions, it is intended to be achieved within five years of the Plan’s adoption: cities with areas where the TOC Policy applies are expected to comply with the policy by 2026, which will involve adopting development standards consistent with Plan Bay Area 2050 (e.g., allowing a variety of housing types and removing parking requirements).

**The “Evaluation and Policy Updates” section of the TOC Policy (see [page 23](#))**

Provides an opportunity every four years to review and, if appropriate, update the Policy. Given that the TOC Policy was adopted in 2022, this would likely occur around 2026. In the meantime, since Plan Bay Area 2050 already integrates the expanded transit geographies you are interested in, there isn’t a specific change to be made to the Growth Geographies at this juncture. Rather, we could instead consider a new implementation action coming out of this plan update to underscore the importance of a 2026 TOC Policy update with regard to this topic, assuming it remains a high priority for the Policy Advisory Council. In terms of timing, implementation actions are slated for prioritization starting in the latter half of 2024.”

- Councilmember Vinay Pimple asked about tactile maps, and was provided with these resources from [Lighthouse for the Blind](#), which are worth checking out.
- Councilmember Pimple also referenced these [foldable electric bikes](#) currently available from Costco.

**Executive Director’s Report:**

The following items are excerpts from the June 2023, Executive Director’s Report to the Commission. To read this and past reports in their entirety, check the agenda from a given Commission meeting (search for past meetings on [MTCs Legistar webpage](#)).

**Key Updates:**

- State Budget Agreement Gives Bay Area Transit a Near-Term Lifeline: SB/AB 102 were released reflecting the final agreement between the Legislature and the Administration on funding to help California transit agencies avoid a near-term fiscal cliff and deep service cuts by Muni, BART and other transit agencies. The budget includes \$1.1 billion for a new Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program to be funded over multiple years and the restoration of a \$2 billion commitment for local transit capital improvements that was included in last year’s budget agreement. Both funding programs will be distributed by formula to MTC and provide the option to flex these funds towards transit operations to prevent service cuts. The Bay Area's share of the \$1.1 billion is approximately \$400 million, as is our share of the \$2 billion. At the time this report was finalized, the budget was expected to be voted on and sent to the

- governor on June 27 for his signature before July 1. An accompanying trailer bill, AB/SB 125 includes various reporting and accountability provisions, many of which require new reporting by MTC. Staff will provide a detailed summary of this trailer bill at your Joint MTC/ABAG Legislation Committee on July 14.
- SB 532 (Wiener): Bridge Toll Increase for Transit Operations: On June 22, Senator Wiener amended his bill, SB 532, to impose a bridge toll increase of \$1.50 effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2028 for the purpose of funding transit operations, including activities to improve the transit rider experience. According to Senator Wiener, the goal of the bill is to supplement transit operating funding made available in the state budget agreement and reduce pressure to shift transit capital funding to transit service.
  - Bay Area Transit Operators Receive Over \$100 million in New Federal Grants from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: On June 26, 2023 the Federal Transit Administration announced nearly [\\$1.7 billion](#) in awards for the Low- and No-Emission and Bus and Bus Facilities programs, including about \$109 million for Bay Area transit agencies, about 6.5% of the nationwide total. Agencies receiving funds include Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, City of Santa Rosa, Marin County Transit District, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and Solano County Transit.
  - \$43 million in Bay Area COVID-Relief transportation funds saved from rescission: The federal debt ceiling package signed into law earlier this month included the rescission of unobligated Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) COVID-Relief balances nationwide. When the debt ceiling deal was struck, nearly \$300 million in federal transportation funds were at risk in California, including \$43 million for Bay Area projects. MTC staff sounded alarms with our state and federal partners and coordinated closely with Caltrans and CTC as they took rapid action (and worked long hours) to save these critical transportation funds. In the end, our state was successful in obligating nearly all of the \$300 million balances that had been at risk statewide, and all but about \$500,000 in the Bay Area.

- Many Bay Area projects are included in CTC staff recommendations for SB 1 competitive grant programs. Overall, Bay Area projects were recommended for \$363 million out of \$1.73 billion available, or just shy of 21% of the available funds statewide. Bay Area projects represent less than 14% of the recommended Solutions for Congested Corridors (SCC) grants and 20% of the statewide total for Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) grants. The Solano 80 WB Truck Scales, which is also an RM 3 project, was recommended for \$129 million in the TCEP program, with other recommended awards for the Port of Oakland Green Power Microgrid project, rail safety improvements in Oakland and improvements to the I-80/San Pablo Dam Road interchange in West Contra Costa County. The CTC will consider action on these grants at its next meeting on June 28-29 in Solano County.
- On June 29, BAHFA celebrated the initial launch of the Doorway Housing Portal at 3 p.m. at the Bay Area Metro Center. Commissioners were invited.

#### **Items to Note**

- I joined House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi last week as speakers at the **San Francisco County Transportation Authority ground-breaking event for the West Side Bridges Replacement project** on Yerba Buena Island. Other speakers included SF Supervisor Rafael Mandelman; SF City Attorney David Chiu; CTC Commissioner Carl Guardino; SFCTA Executive Director Tilly Chang; Caltrans Deputy Director of Planning Jeanie Ward-Waller; TIDA Board President V. Fei Tsen; and SF Building & Construction Trades Secretary-Treasurer Rudy Gonzalez.
- This month, I **toured transit hubs and PDAs with several Commissioners**. These field trips included a tour of sites in Union City with Commissioner Dutra-Vernaci and a tour with Commissioner Chavez of sites along the BART-to-Silicon Valley corridor from Milpitas to Diridon Station in downtown San Jose, where we were joined by Chair Pedroza and Commissioners Abe-Koga and Spering.

- On June 16, ABAG successfully held its first in-person **General Assembly** since 2019. Delegates from 58 cities and towns and six counties unanimously approved ABAG's FY 2023-24 budget, followed by Brookings Institution Fellow Tracy Hadden Loh's keynote address on the power of place and urban activity centers in fueling economic recovery. Finally, four panelists from Contra Costa County, Solano County, the City of Fremont and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory described their most promising place-based economic development initiatives.
- On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, we closed a small follow-on **refinancing for BATA**. This refinancing took advantage of the work that had been done earlier in the spring with the larger tender refinancing and an additional market opportunity to refinance \$56 million of outstanding taxable debt with a combination of approximately \$40.8 million of new tax-exempt debt and Authority funds of \$3.9 million. The transaction produces total savings of \$24.6 million in debt service savings through the life of the transaction, and net present value savings of approximately \$5.5 million (9.9% of the refunded par).
- **Safe Streets For All Grant Application for Vision Zero Program:** MTC adopted a Vision Zero policy in 2020, including a goal of zero deaths by 2030, and we provide regional partners with safety and road infrastructure data and analysis through the Bay Area Vision Zero System (BAYVIZ). We're now aiming to expand the program's impact through a potential Safe Streets and Roads for All grant, part of the package of federal competitive grant programs within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. If successful in securing the grant, MTC plans to enhance the BAYVIZ system by expanding available data, developing a comprehensive Vision Zero toolkit for partners, and conducting studies on safety issues in regional arterial corridors with high numbers of fatal and serious crashes. This grant opportunity presents an exciting chance for MTC to make an impact on road safety and work collaboratively with their partners towards safer streets and roads for everyone.

News Headlines from [The Bay Link Blog](#):

- [MTC, ABAG start building Plan Bay Area 2050+](#): MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) today officially kicked off a two-and-a-half-year effort to develop [Plan Bay Area 2050+\(link is external\)](#), a limited and focused update to Plan Bay Area 2050, the visionary long-range regional plan adopted by the agencies in 2021.
- [Committee OKs eight projects for \\$379 million in RM 3 cash](#): MTC's Programming and Allocations Committee today approved an allocation of \$379 million in [Regional Measure 3\(link is external\)](#) toll dollars to fund eight transportation projects across the Bay Area. The committee's recommendation will be considered by the full Commission at its July 26 meeting.
- [Clipper® START pilot extended through June 30, 2025](#): The Metropolitan Transportation Commission last week approved an extension of the [Clipper® START pilot program\(link is external\)](#) through June 30, 2025. Clipper START offers discounts on public transit to qualifying Bay Area adults with low incomes. Twenty-one Bay Area transit agencies are participating in the pilot program: Seven agencies offer a 50% discount, while 14 additional agencies offer a 20% discount.
- [Throwback Thursday: Cable Car exhibit opens](#): The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has announced the opening of a [history exhibit\(link is external\)](#) at the San Francisco Public Library, as part of the ongoing [celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the cable cars\(link is external\)](#).
- [Pass2Class: free bus passes for Contra Costa students](#): Pass2Class bus passes, offering free rides to Contra Costa students at the beginning of the school year to encourage the use of bus transportation to and from school, are now available. [The application period\(link is external\)](#) will close Oct. 14 or when supplies run out, whichever comes first.

- [New affordable housing portal launches for Bay Area](#): The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) today launched the [Doorway Housing Portal](#), a hub to easily find affordable housing in the Bay Area. The first-of-its-kind regional online portal was developed with pro bono support from [Google.org](#) Fellows, a team that includes Google researchers, designers, product managers and software engineers.
- [Input wanted on Golden Gate Bridge District future](#): The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's Board of Directors recently launched a strategic planning process(link is external) to create a path forward regarding the district's future activities and finances given changes brought on by the pandemic.
- [North Bay youth ride free on public transit this summer](#): SMART, Marin Transit, Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus and Petaluma Transit have come together to provide free rides for kids and teens this summer from now through Aug. 31.
- [FTA seeks comment for updates to National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#): As part of continuing efforts to strengthen safety for both frontline transit workers and riders across the country, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration is proposing an updated version of the [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#).
- [Estuary Blueprint spotlight: tribal summit workshop on water quality and quantity](#): At a recent Tribal Water Summit, the [California Indian Environmental Alliance](#) and Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians held a workshop in collaboration with Mono Lake Kutzadika's Tribe, Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, and San Francisco Baykeeper to discuss water quality and water quantity in the San Francisco Estuary and its headwaters.



- [New report draws roadmap for Bay Area transit to survive and thrive](#): MTC, in partnership with Bay Area transit agencies, business groups and transportation advocacy organizations, last week [released a new report](#) that outlines steps that need to be taken over the next decade by MTC, transit agencies and the state government to help the region's transit network avert a near-term fiscal collapse and adapt to post-pandemic travel patterns; transition to a new business model by the latter half of the 2020s; and then expand its reach and capacity in the 2030s.
- [Contra Costa youth: unlimited transit rides all summer via \\$30 pass](#): Contra Costa youth ages 6–18 have access to unlimited rides from June 1 to Aug. 31 [with the purchase of a \\$30 pass\(link is external\)](#).
- The [Summer Youth Pass](#) is an easy way to get around Contra Costa County all summer long. Passholders can take unlimited rides on [County Connection](#), [Tri Delta Transit](#), and [WestCAT](#) local and express buses for an affordable, discounted price.
- [Throwback Thursday: Golden Gate Bridge "Then and Now" celebrates 86th birthday](#): The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District is celebrating the 86th anniversary of the span with an online "now and then" retrospective: [https://www.goldengate.org/golden-gate-bridge-86th-anniversary\(link is external\)](https://www.goldengate.org/golden-gate-bridge-86th-anniversary(link is external)) and on Instagram [@goldengatebridgedistrict\(link is external\)](#).
- [Campaign seeks to address speeding deaths](#): The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is partnering with advocates and experts from across the country to launch its “Speeding Wrecks Lives” safety campaign.
- [Report: Bay Area, California best locales for bicycle commuters](#): The Bay Area rates high among [bike-friendly U.S. cities for commuters](#), according to a new report. As part of National Bike Month, researchers at CoworkingCafe analyzed a series of factors such as infrastructure, traffic safety, weather, share of commuters who ride a bike to work, the number of co-working options with bike amenities and bike sharing services.

- [Asian American, Pacific Islander contributions to transportation highlighted](#): The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has produced a history of contributions to transportation [made by members of the Asian American Pacific Islander community](#).
- [Report: Airline cancelations down first three months of 2023](#): For the first three months of 2023, air carrier cancelations have stayed below 2% and are far lower than last year's 2.7% rate and the rate of 4.1% for the first three months of 2022, according [to a new report from the U.S. Department of Transportation](#).

#### **Further News Updates:**

The [Bay Link blog](#) offers a more in-depth look at these topics, often in the context of the work that the ABAG and MTC are doing, along with other stories of interest to Bay Area residents and professionals. The Bay Link Blog E-Newsletter, with the top Bay Link features of the week, is distributed every Tuesday. You can find more newsletters to subscribe to at this [link](#).

#### **Have a Question? Ask a Librarian**

If you need assistance locating information or are having difficulty navigating the MTC-ABAG websites, please feel free to contact the MTC-ABAG head librarian. Reference assistance is available by telephone (415-778-5236), or email [library@bayareametro.gov](mailto:library@bayareametro.gov) Information can also be found on the [MTC-ABAG library webpage](#).

#### **For MTC and Plan Bay Area Glossaries:**

- [Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms & Terms](#)
- [Plan Bay Area Glossary](#)