

Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments Regional Equity Working Group

September 18, 2019

Agenda Item 3

Introduction to Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Equity Analysis

- Subject:** Overview of Plan Bay Area 2050, key equity issues and strategies from past plans, and roles and responsibilities of the Regional Equity Working Group (REWG).
- Background:** Earlier this month, MTC and ABAG officially kicked off Plan Bay Area 2050, the next-generation long-range regional plan. This effort, which will identify strategies for local, regional, and state agencies to consider in the years ahead, will strive to make the San Francisco Bay Area a more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant place for all. Focusing on four core topic areas (transportation, housing, the economy, and the environment), it will emphasize two core cross-cutting issues throughout: incorporating Plan strategies that are more *resilient* to an uncertain future and improving *equitable* outcomes. Importantly, Plan Bay Area 2050 will build upon the predecessor Horizon initiative which is wrapping up later this fall. Additional information on Plan Bay Area 2050 can be found in **Attachment A**.

As part of the last four long-range plan updates, MTC and ABAG have established a working group focused on social equity to advise on methodologies and strategies to improve equitable outcomes in the region. Known as REWG, this working group will begin convening in parallel with the Regional Advisory Working Group (RAWG) to provide key input on the planning process – with a specific focus on social equity. Given the critical importance of equity this Plan cycle, REWG will again play a key role in the Plan development process.

For Plan Bay Area 2050, REWG will provide input on both the Blueprint (previously referred to as the “preferred scenario”) and the shorter-range Implementation Plan phases of the planning process, in addition to helping scope the Equity Analysis Report for the Plan. While REWG does not have a formal membership, RAWG and MTC Policy Advisory Council members are encouraged to attend. More information on upcoming meetings and the roles and responsibilities of REWG participants can be found in **Attachment B**.

The equity work for Plan Bay Area 2050 is part of the larger Equity Platform effort being advanced in the months and years ahead by MTC and ABAG. Not every strategy or implementation action can be incorporated into a long-range regional plan; as such, members of the REWG will receive ongoing progress updates on this broader, cross-cutting initiative. It is also important to emphasize that the equity work for Plan Bay Area 2050 need not start from scratch; there has been robust equity conversations over the years with the public and with stakeholders in prior Plan cycles, as well as through the Horizon planning process. Instead, staff recommend that Plan Bay Area 2050 build upon the foundation of past planning work, as discussed in **Attachment C**.

Next Steps: The next REWG meeting is slated for November 2019 and will be held as an in-person workshop at 375 Beale Street in San Francisco. This meeting will delve into specific equity strategies for consideration in the Plan Bay Area 2050 Draft Blueprint. Further updates, as well as additional opportunities to become involved in the long-range regional planning process, will be posted on the project website (<http://planbayarea.org>).

Attachments: Attachment A: Plan Bay Area 2050 FAQs
Attachment B: REWG Draft Meeting Schedule
Attachment C: Past Regional Plans – Key Equity Issues & Strategies

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Plan Bay Area 2050 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Plan Bay Area 2050?

Plan Bay Area 2050 is a long-range plan charting the course for the future of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Plan Bay Area 2050 will focus on four key issues—the economy, the environment, housing and transportation—and will identify a path to make the Bay Area more equitable for all residents and more resilient in the face of unexpected challenges. Building on the work of the Horizon initiative, this new regional plan will outline strategies for growth and investment through the year 2050, while simultaneously striving to meet and exceed federal and state requirements. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments are expected to adopt Plan Bay Area 2050 in summer 2021.

What will Plan Bay Area 2050 do? What won't it do?

Plan Bay Area 2050 will outline a roadmap for the Bay Area's future. While it will pinpoint policies and investments necessary to advance the goal of a more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy and vibrant Bay Area, Plan Bay Area 2050 neither funds specific infrastructure projects nor changes local policies. Cities and counties will retain all local land use authority. Plan Bay Area 2050 does identify a potential path forward for future investments – including infrastructure to improve our transportation system and to protect communities from rising sea levels – as well as the types of public policies necessary to realize a future growth pattern for housing and jobs.

Ultimately, Plan Bay Area 2050 reflects a shared vision – one that cannot be implemented by any single organization or government agency. Only through partnership with local, state and federal governments – as well as with businesses and non-profit organizations – will the Plan's vision come to fruition. Once the Plan is adopted in 2021, MTC and ABAG, along with partner organizations, will create an implementation plan that will advance projects and programs outlined in Plan Bay Area 2050.

Why are MTC and ABAG developing Plan Bay Area 2050?

Today's Bay Area stands at a crossroads: housing costs continue to rise, traffic congestion is worsening, gaps in income inequality are growing and the region faces increasing risk from the effects of climate change. Global and national shifts both today and in the coming decades – from immigration and trade policies to driverless vehicles and earthquakes – may exacerbate these regional challenges, making the Bay Area's future more uncertain than ever. Working closely with the public, as well as with partner agencies and policymakers, MTC and ABAG aim to develop a plan that will better prepare Bay Area residents for the many challenges the region may face through 2050.

ABAG and MTC are required to develop Plan Bay Area 2050 in order to satisfy federal and state planning requirements, and it must be updated every four years. Under Senate Bill 375, each of California's metropolitan regions must develop long-range plans to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board. Regions also must demonstrate that their plans accommodate all future projected households without further growth in in-commuting, or the amount of people traveling from neighboring areas to the region (i.e. from outside of the Bay Area to the Bay Area). Under federal law, among other requirements, regions must demonstrate that their

plans are financially constrained and reflect reasonably anticipated transportation revenues over the coming decades.

While Plan Bay Area 2050 seeks to meet and exceed these requirements – and will ultimately serve as the Bay Area’s Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy – it will be designed to illuminate a broader, more aspirational vision of what the Bay Area can become over the next generation.

How will Plan Bay Area 2050 be different from prior planning cycles?

Plan Bay Area 2050 will be a major update to the regional plan, and it will take a fresh approach when compared to our past plans: Plan Bay Area (2013) and Plan Bay Area 2040 (2017). Past regional planning efforts, in the Bay Area and across the country, have focused on developing a fixed set of assumptions for the future and then choosing the optimal strategies. However, we know that the Bay Area will face some unexpected challenges in the decades ahead. By leveraging nearly two years of work from the Horizon initiative, Plan Bay Area 2050 will integrate the most resilient and equitable strategies in order to help prepare the Bay Area for a broad range of potential challenges. Plan Bay Area 2050 will also incorporate economic and environmental issues more deeply into the Plan, and for the first time it will feature strategies to prepare for sea level rise and earthquakes. Lastly, Plan Bay Area 2050 may be able to integrate new regional revenue sources that may become available in the future, which could play a critical role in tackling the region's significant challenges, from growing commute times to rising sea levels.

While Plan Bay Area 2050 seeks to meet and exceed federal and state planning requirements – and ultimately will serve as the Bay Area’s Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy – it will be designed to offer a more aspirational vision of what the Bay Area could become. In close coordination with local and regional partner agencies, we will work to implement the transformative ideas featured in the Plan starting in late 2021.

How can I get involved?

MTC and ABAG need you — and the nearly 8 million residents who call this nine-county region home — to participate in the Plan Bay Area 2050 process as we work together to develop the Bay Area’s next regional plan.

As Plan Bay Area 2050 is developed, ABAG and MTC will host a number of interactive community workshops, pop-up events, webinars, briefings for elected officials and public hearings, among other activities. MTC and ABAG warmly invite you to participate. Your feedback will help shape Plan Bay Area 2050.

To stay up-to-date on Plan Bay Area 2050, please subscribe to the Plan Bay Area 2050 mailing list. MTC and ABAG send out a monthly email update, highlighting work currently underway as well as offering a list of upcoming events and meetings.

REWG Draft Meeting Schedule

The Regional Equity Working Group (REWG) will primarily meet between fall 2019 and fall 2020 at critical points in the Plan Bay Area 2050 process. To ensure the broadest stakeholder participation possible – and to prioritize in-person attendance at key points in the process – staff proposes a combination of in-person workshops and webinars, depending on the monthly content being presented and discussed at REWG.

As shown in Table 1 below, REWG is anticipated to meet on a monthly or bimonthly basis depending on the phase of the planning process. As proposed below, REWG will focus extensively on prioritizing and refining equity strategies for Plan Bay Area 2050 as part of the Draft Blueprint phase this fall. Staff will also weave equity into conversations with RAWG as we seek to collaboratively identify and refine strategies for each element of the Plan. In 2020, REWG will focus on revisions to the Draft Blueprint following extensive public engagement in spring 2020, followed by work to develop the key equity actions for the shorter-range Implementation Plan.

Note that the Plan Bay Area 2050 project schedule, as well as the REWG meeting schedule, remains subject to change in the months ahead. For the latest schedule information, please refer to the project website (<http://planbayarea.org>).

Table 1: Draft Meeting Schedule

Key Tasks and Milestones	Month	Format
Orientation to the Agency-wide Equity Platform, Plan Bay Area 2050, and REWG	September 2019	Kick-Off
Strategies Discussion: From Horizon to Plan Bay Area 2050	November 2019	Workshop
Draft Blueprint: Refine Equity Strategies	December 2019	Webinar
Draft Blueprint: Finalize Equity Strategies	January 2020	Workshop
Draft Blueprint: Discuss Results Final Blueprint: Refine Equity Strategies	Spring 2020	Webinar
Implementation Plan: Identify Potential Implementation Actions Related to Equity	Summer 2020	Workshop

Past Regional Plans – Key Equity Issues & Strategies

Equity work for Plan Bay Area 2050 will build upon past work from Plan Bay Area (2013), Plan Bay Area 2040 (2017), and Horizon (2019), which have often considered how each Plan and its strategies may lead to varying benefits and burdens by income and race. MTC/ABAG's equity work has become increasingly cross-cutting over the years, shifting from focusing solely on transportation to discussing a broader array of key regional equity issues. This attachment will highlight the three core elements of past equity work – identify key equity **issues**, selecting **geographies & metrics**, and prioritizing **strategies** (e.g., public policies, infrastructure investments, etc.) to achieve equitable outcomes. Further information will be provided as part of the presentation of the accompanying slide deck.

Key Equity Issues

- **Transportation.** Over the past few planning cycles, transportation equity issues have expanded from a focus primarily on affordability to a broader array of concerns related to roadway safety, physical activity, and more. Most recently, through the Horizon planning process, MTC/ABAG has explored the impacts of new transportation technologies such as autonomous vehicles, which could provide critical mobility benefits to transit-dependent populations but also risk further exacerbating the decline in transit ridership.
- **Housing.** Similar to transportation, housing equity issues initially focused primarily on affordability, but in the boom years since the Great Recession, have expanded to new topic areas. These have included measuring the impacts on displacement risk and to more directly focusing on creation of deed-restricted affordable housing.
- **Economy.** The decline of the region's middle class in recent years – in particular, as evidenced by the shrinking share of middle-wage jobs – has led to a broader discussion of economic inequities in the Plan context. Starting with Plan Bay Area 2040, MTC/ABAG has focused on how to strengthen our region's middle-wage industries and to consider associated trends like growing income inequality and the impacts of automation.
- **Environment.** Air quality impacts have been a common thread throughout recent planning processes, given that many Communities of Concern are in close proximity to major transportation assets. With Horizon, the integration of natural hazards highlighted a new suite of environmental inequities – including the greater vulnerability of lower-income communities at risk from sea level rise, as well as greater seismic risks associated with older building stock found in many Communities of Concern.

Geographies and Metrics

Central to past Plan Bay Area efforts has been a key geography known as Communities of Concern (CoCs). The latest definition of Communities of Concern, developed for use in Plan Bay Area 2040, highlighted locations in relation to eight disadvantage factors. Census tracts with a concentration of both minority and low-income households, or census tracts with a concentration of low-income households plus at least three additional disadvantage factors¹, were identified as Communities of Concern for the Equity Analysis. Since the completion of Plan Bay Area 2040, the same definition was used in late 2018 to update the Communities of Concern data layer with the latest American Community Survey (ACS) information. In recent years, Communities of Concern have been leveraged for projects within and beyond MTC/ABAG in relation to social equity – meaning the definition of these areas has impacts that extend beyond the scope of long-range planning.

¹ These include limited English proficiency, zero-vehicle households, seniors 75 years or older, people with disabilities, single-parent families, and severely rent-burdened households.

Metrics have also been useful in quantifying equity impacts as part of Plan Bay Area, Plan Bay Area 2040, and Horizon. From exploring disproportionately high health impacts as a result of air quality and road safety challenges to flagging the heightened displacement risk posed by specific scenarios, use of equity metrics has helped inform policymakers about the strengths and limitations of past plans. Over the past five years, MTC/ABAG has developed a suite of 41 key indicators to track progress through the Vital Signs performance monitoring initiative, including the addition of a new equity lens in 2017. Plan Bay Area 2050 presents an opportunity to build upon the foundation of past plans and initiatives which combed through potential metrics to best communicate equity challenges.

Strategies

Strategies are core to the regional planning process and reflect potential policies or investments that could be advanced by local, regional, or state agencies to improve outcomes in the San Francisco Bay Area. While MTC/ABAG may not be in the lead on implementing a specific strategy, Plan implementation could involve partnership with the public, private, or non-profit sectors to advance a specific strategy over the years and decades ahead.

As recently as 2013, the equity strategies in Plan Bay Area focused primarily on MTC’s core area of expertise: transportation. To the present day, our “Fix It First” policy to prioritize operations and maintenance for local and regional transit systems – and continued investment in the Lifeline Transportation Plan – have been core elements of the Plan’s equity strategies. Plan Bay Area 2040 included new equity strategies focused on affordable housing, with inclusionary zoning and affordable housing revenue generation as central concepts in the Plan.

Most recently, through the predecessor Horizon initiative, MTC/ABAG have been exploring a much more robust package of equity strategies – from free transit and free bikeshare to renter protections and affordable housing in high-resource areas (HRAs). As part of the Futures Round 2 analyses phase, Horizon also integrated new equity strategies related to economic development (e.g., portable benefits, childcare support for low-income workers) and environmental resilience (prioritizing sea level rise adaptation and building retrofits in disadvantaged communities first). A summary of the key equity strategies currently being evaluated through Horizon – the result of a robust set of public and stakeholder engagement in spring 2019 – can be found in Figure 2 below. Note that many of the strategies fall outside of MTC and ABAG’s authority, so implantation would require a greater set of stakeholders.

Figure 2: Key Equity Strategies from Horizon by Topic Area

Transportation	Housing	Economy	Environment
Prioritize Transit Operations & Maintenance	Require 20 Percent of All New Housing to be Affordable	Provide Portable Benefits for Part-Time and Freelance Workers	Fully Adapt to Sea Level Rise
Build a Next-Generation BRT Network	Allow Affordable Housing in Areas of High-Opportunity	Expand Childcare Support for Low-Income Families	Expand Existing Building Improvements (energy, water, seismic, fire and accessibility)
Invest in Free Short-Trip Service	Increase Renter Protections		
Provide Free Transit for Lower-Income Riders	Funding for Affordable Housing Production and Preservation		

Next Steps

Under federal and state requirements, Plan Bay Area 2050 must be adopted by summer 2021, which necessitates finalizing the Blueprint by summer 2020 to complete required environmental analyses (i.e., CEQA). As such, staff recommends leveraging past work on issue areas, geographies, and metrics to the greatest degree possible – in order to focus specifically on strategies and implementation actions to advance equity. In particular, staff suggests the use of 2018 Communities of Concern rather than working to redefine the Communities of Concern during the Plan Bay Area 2050 Blueprint phase, with an opportunity to update the Communities of Concern in the coming months as part of the larger Equity Platform initiative. This approach would allow the REWG to focus the majority of its time on weaving equity and equity strategies more deeply into the Plan. Staff looks forward to your feedback on this approach and on potential equity strategies as we move forward this fall.