

Horizon: Futures Final Report

Subject:	Presentation on findings from the second and final round of Futures Planning, including recommendations of Horizon strategies resilient to future uncertainty which should be advanced into Plan Bay Area 2050.
Background:	<p>In early 2018, MTC/ABAG launched the Horizon initiative, focused on preparing the Bay Area for an uncertain future. Through four main work elements – Public Engagement, Perspective Papers, Project Performance, and Futures Planning – Horizon sought to identify transformative solutions to make the Bay Area more resilient and equitable in the coming decades. Each element was crafted to help build a stronger foundation for the next-generation regional plan, Plan Bay Area 2050.</p> <p>Over the past 18 months, the Futures Planning process has advanced from identifying Futures to testing strategies to study in each of the them. Along the way, staff explored how Plan Bay Area 2040 strategies performed under a wide range of divergent external forces. In short, many of the prior Plan’s strategies struggled to perform when exposed to a greater variety of political, technological, economic and environmental challenges that could impact the lives of Bay Area residents. These were discussed in detail in the Futures Interim Report – Opportunities and Challenges (published March 2019).</p> <p>Most recently, staff held public workshops and stakeholder meetings in spring 2019 to identify a set of roughly 30 strategies to study in the second round of Futures Planning. These strategies were designed to be both resilient and equitable, targeting the specific challenges laid out in the Futures Interim Report. Over summer 2019, staff have been conducting extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the strategies, simulating their impacts to provide an informed recommendation about which should be considered for inclusion in Plan Bay Area 2050.</p>
Issues:	In advance of the Futures Final Report publication later this month, staff is providing a summary of preliminary findings from the Futures Round 2 analysis. These findings are high-level, focusing on the “top 10” key takeaways from our work so far; the report will delve into the specifics in greater detail, serving as an initial staff recommendation for the Draft Blueprint phase of Plan Bay Area 2050.

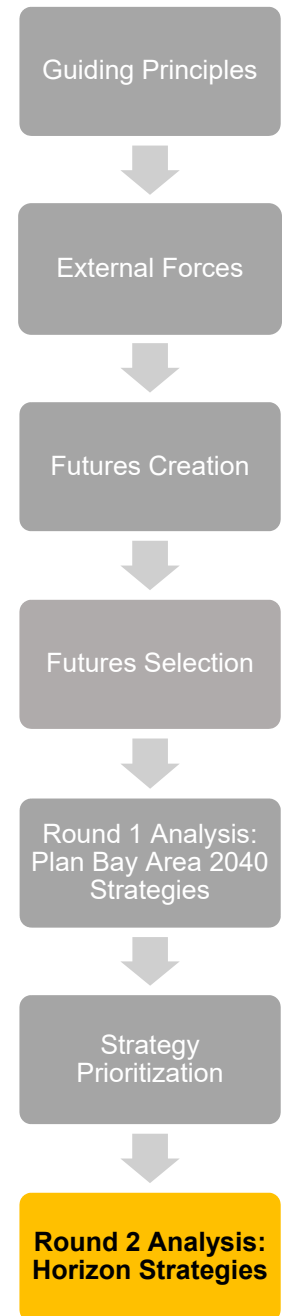


Figure 1: Primary steps of the Futures element of *Horizon*.

As detailed in **Attachment A**, our work to date has generated ten high-level findings based on the strategies studied in Futures Round 2:

1. New growth areas enable more growth near transit and near opportunity.
2. A mix of strategies to retain and expand affordable housing made progress in addressing the current affordable housing gap.
3. Shifts in transportation mode choice were most pronounced for active transportation, driven in part by micromobility strategies.
4. While still present, transit overcrowding was partially alleviated, with new bus rapid transit (BRT) lines as well as a new Transbay Rail Crossing playing a key role.
5. Road pricing reduced roadway congestion, but equity concerns need to be addressed before advancing this strategy further.
6. Economic development strategies evaluated were insufficient to slow the decline of the middle class.
7. Adaptation and retrofit strategies boosted our region's resilience.
8. Urban growth boundaries led to minimal greenfield development in both Round 1 and Round 2.
9. A VMT-based fee on office development was effective in focusing office growth, but not in shifting jobs to the East and North Bay.
10. A large tax package focused on higher-income individuals and businesses, contemplated to underwrite the cost of strategy projects and subsidies, did not have significant adverse impacts on the economy.

In addition to high-level findings, the final report will provide a breakdown of findings for each individual strategy, focusing on its resilience to a range of uncertain future conditions as well as its implications for social equity.

The Futures Planning work – in particular, the Futures Final Report – will serve as a helpful foundation for staff, committees, and board members as key Plan Bay Area 2050 decisions must be made over the coming months. Through the Blueprint planning process, the subset of Horizon strategies that proved resilient and equitable under a wide range of future conditions can be refined, improved on, and when needed, supplemented.

Starting this month, staff will hold “pop-up” workshops across the region, highlighting the most effective strategies from the Futures Final Report; this will allow us to better understand which strategies resonate with the public. Staff will also host Plan Bay Area 2050 Blueprint half-day stakeholder workshops focused on the four topical areas of the plan: Transportation, Housing, the Environment, and the Economy. Feedback at these events will inform refinements to the strategies to study in the Blueprint phase.

Recommendation: None

Attachments: Attachment A: PowerPoint Presentation


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