

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council**

July 8, 2020

Agenda Item 8

Staff Liaison Report – July 2020

Subject: Relevant MTC policy decisions and other activities.

Recommendation: Information

Attachments: Attachment A: Staff Liaison Report – July 2020



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

**Agenda Item 8
Attachment A**
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Memorandum

TO: Policy Advisory Council
FR: Marti Paschal, Staff Liaison
RE: Staff Liaison Report – July 2020

DATE: July 8, 2020

W.I. 1114

MTC, ABAG Leaders Issue Statement in Support of Social Justice Activism

Bay Area Residents,

Communities nationwide and across the Bay Area are expressing their anguish and outrage over the recent violent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd and the systemic injustice that their deaths, and [too many more](#), reveal in our society. As regional agencies charged with bringing the Bay Area's diverse residents and our many governmental agencies together, to unify our region and increase access to opportunity, we want to say simply and unequivocally that we stand side-by-side with those working towards a fair and just society.

We acknowledge and are seeking to repair the historic role local governments and the planning profession have played in systemically denying opportunities to Black people and other minorities through redlining, [urban highways](#) that uprooted too many neighborhoods, [exclusionary zoning](#), redevelopment and outright discrimination and segregation.

During this challenging time, the compounding impacts of a pandemic and deep economic disruption have starkly displayed the disproportionate burdens that exist in our society. Especially so with respect to those us who are working to improve access to transportation and to overcome the Bay Area's chronic and punishing housing shortage.

As regional leaders of local government, it is clear that we have roles to play in transitioning to a more just, inclusive place where everyone can participate and prosper, regardless of race, color, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender or gender expression or identity, or national origin.

We stand with those calling for systemic change, to break down barriers that reduce opportunity and that undermine our shared prosperity. We are committed to meaningfully advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within our agencies, to redouble our already substantial outreach, and to lift up the voices of those who have been historically kept away from the decision-making table.

We are confident that the nearly 8 million people who live in the Bay Area can meet this moment together.

Signed,

Scott Haggerty
MTC Chair

Jesse Arreguin
ABAG Executive Board President

Equitable Housing | Metro Talks: Rebuilding a Better Bay

In the wake of our current health, economic and housing crisis, and as people protest for racial justice in cities across the country, we launched The Metro Talks Equity Series—a series where regional thought leaders consider how to best restore the Bay Area with equity as the guiding core value. The first talk took place on June 3, 2020, and looked squarely at the housing affordability crisis, which was already a major public policy challenge before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our panelists included:

- Conor Dougherty, Economics reporter for The New York Times and author of "Golden Gates: Fighting for Housing in America";
- Lorena Melgarejo, Executive Director, Faith in Action;
- Steven Falk, formerly Interim Oakland City Administrator and Lafayette City Manager; and
- Moderator, Therese McMillan, Executive Director, MTC-ABAG.

Metro Talks is a remote series of public forums to seed and exchange ideas on how the Bay Area can transform for the better. The forums bring together prominent leaders and experts to discuss significant regional issues like housing, community development, climate change, the economy, technology, and transportation.

New Lane Striping for I-880 As Express Lanes' Fall Opening Draws Closer

Work crews have begun striping new lane configurations on Interstate 880 in Alameda County as MTC and Caltrans gear up for the fall 2020 opening of new Express Lanes between Oakland and the Santa Clara County line. The five-week project will result in significant changes for drivers in the I-880 corridor. These will include the addition of double white lines (which cannot be lawfully crossed) in several segments, dashed lines in others, and the creation of new merge lanes in select locations.

Southbound striping began Monday night, June 15, with the initial work extending through Saturday morning, June 20, along the stretch from Washington Avenue in San Leandro to Highway 92 in Hayward. Work in both directions will be done in the overnight hours from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., with two to five miles completed each night. Work schedules will run from Monday night/Tuesday mornings through Friday night/Saturday mornings. While at least one lane in either direction will be open at all times, as many as three lanes may be closed at some times.

The new lane striping will be painted between the far-left HOV lane (lane 1) and the adjacent general-purpose lane (lane 2). Once the new striping is painted, drivers in certain segments will not be allowed to move into or out of the far-left lane. Lane-change rules will be effective immediately, even though Express Lane tolling will not begin for several months. As part of the lane-striping project, crews will install signs explaining where to exit the far-left lane to reach different highway exits.

Southbound work from June 15 to June 20 will include striping of an exit zone between lane 1 and lane 2 near Hacienda Avenue, and an entry zone between lane 1 and lane 2 near A Street. Work crews already have striped a new entrance/exit zone in the northbound direction south of Auto Mall Parkway in Fremont.

Travelers can visit [511.org \(link is external\)](https://511.org) to learn where to enter and exit the far-left lane. The site includes FAQs and maps explaining where the striping configurations are being painted and what they mean, as well as a [video explaining how to obey the new striping rules](#).

Executive Director's Report

The following items are excerpts from the June 2020 Executive Director's Report to the Commission. To read the report in its entirety go to:

<http://www.mtc.ca.gov/whats-happening/news/executive-directors-report>.

Protests and Social Unrest

In response to the violent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, ABAG and MTC leadership released a joint statement acknowledging the systemic injustice that their deaths illuminate in our society. Chair of MTC and the President of ABAG have both committed to advance equity, justice and inclusion within our agencies and lift up those voices in our region who have historically been silenced or not included at the table. I invite everyone to read the statement. It is included on the ABAG and MTC websites.

<https://abag.ca.gov/news/abag-mtc-leaders-issue-statement-supporting-social-justice-activism>

Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force

The task force, established by Chair Haggerty and chaired by Commissioner Jim Spring, met twice on May 29th and June 15th. At the first meeting, key mutual understandings were established for the work of the task force:

- 1- COVID-19 has created an unprecedented public transit crisis.
- 2- Broad support exists for the Task Force to guide regional transit recovery.
- 3- Safe and healthy transit protocols are essential across all systems.
- 4- Addressing mobility needs of low-income and vulnerable riders is a priority.
- 5- CARES Act Phase 2 funds must be delivered expeditiously.
- 6- This effort will reach out to frequent transit users and other constituencies that are not specifically represented on the Task Force.

At the second meeting on June 15th, the focus was on two major areas: 1) near-term recovery strategies with a focus on safety considerations for public transit, for both workers and riders; and 2) CARES Act Phase 2 funding considerations. In both cases, equity emerged as a resounding theme and concern – particularly our responsibility to serve those most in need of public transit, or are often the most vulnerable to the risks of COVID 19. The transit operators have been working collectively to determine best safety practices, and discussion among all task force members outlined areas for consideration and response, including the most appropriate role for MTC as a regional agency and facilitator. With respect to the distribution of CARES funding, the Commission's direction in what is known as "Principle 5" was reviewed, including initial top line analyses of how those factors may manifest in alternative formula distributions to the transit operators. Further work in this regard will be brought forward at the third meeting of the Task Force scheduled for June 29th.

BAHFA

The MTC Commission will be convening the first meeting of the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) after the June 24th Commission Meeting. Members of the ABAG Executive Board will be in attendance to celebrate this joint venture between ABAG and MTC, an important new tool that will be available to help implement the Expanded Regional Housing Portfolio you will be discussing under agenda item 11a.

Operations

Re Innovate 680, one of our first DAA (Design Alternative Assessments): Contra Costa, in partnership with Caltrans and MTC, will hold virtual public scoping meetings to launch the project into the environmental phase. This is a big milestone, as the project will close out the 25-mile gap between Rudgear Road to the Benicia Bridge. It includes a conversion of an existing HOV lane into an express lane and the construction of a new express lane.

Clipper, FasTrak, Express Lanes

Since last month's meeting, the Clipper Customer Service Center in the Embarcadero BART/Muni station has reopened limited hours on weekdays. July 15 is the launch date for Clipper START for the operators that are part of that pilot. The Clipper mobile app has been demonstrated to MTC and to operators, and will soon enter its testing phase. More broadly, transit agencies are looking to Clipper as a largely contact-less fare payment solution, as one response to the new reality of COVID-19.

The region's Express Lanes, including BAIFA's I-680 express lanes resumed tolling operations on June 1. They had ceased tolling in mid-March shortly after shelter-in-place directives were issued.

State Grants

Award recommendations for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) and Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Programs

For AHSC, 10 projects in the region are proposed for award, totaling \$247 million, representing 45% of the pot. For TCC, Oakland's application is proposed for an implementation grant award of \$28.2 million; final awards are expected to be approved by the Strategic Growth Council at their meeting on June 25th.

Caltrans Planning Grant Awards

MTC received notification from Caltrans late last week of two Planning Grant awards: 1) Vehicle Miles Traveled-Reduction Planning for Priority Development Areas in Richmond and Vallejo (\$539,534); and 2) Bay Area Regional Rail Partnerships: Project Delivery and Governance (\$400,000). We look forward to working closely with Caltrans and our regional partners to advance these planning efforts.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

While this is a lead responsibility of ABAG, it is noteworthy for the Commission that the region received its Regional Housing Needs Distribution (RHND) number from the State Housing and Community Development (HCD).

That number, representing the assignment of housing need to the entire 9 county Bay Area, is 441,176, about 2.4 times higher than last cycle. The staff and ABAG are working closely with local government on the required allocation of that number to cities and counties, and coordination with our work in Plan Bay Area 2050 is an important parallel effort.

Things of Note

I moderated the inaugural "Metro Talks forum", on 6/3 via webinar. The topic was equitable housing, and featured Conor Dougherty, Economics reporter for The New York Times; Lorena Melgarejo, Executive Director of Faith in Action; and Steven Falk, Former Interim Oakland City Administrator and Lafayette City Manager. The event received very positive feedback, and the future of transit was highlighted among others as a key topic for future sessions.

On 6/8 there was a positive article in the Chronicle by John King about the newest segment of Bay Trail in Albany, and KPIX Channel 5 aired a segment on the evening news about the new Bay Trail segment as well.

Upcoming/Anticipated Events

I will be participating as a panelist as part of San Jose State University's Mineta Transportation Institute's (MTI) annual Norman Y. Mineta Transportation Finance Summit (Friday, June 26th, 10:00am) in partnership with the Commonwealth Club of California.

PG&E Shutdowns

We are approaching the season where PG&E begins to implement their Public Safety Power Shutdown strategy. This is particularly challenging during the current Covid-19 situation given our remote meeting and working environment. These shutoffs could present disruptions to MTC and its operations on a frequent basis depending on PG&E's threat assessments. Staff is reviewing the situation to understand and identify options; we are also dedicated to the ongoing monitoring of possible disruptions.