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Subject: MTC Policy Advisory Council: Responses to Policy Advisory Council questions (at July meeting + emails afterward)
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 3:44:37 PM

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Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 11:21 AM

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Given the magnitude of questions raised, staff have done their best to provide a succinct but meaningful [response](#). Staff are happy to connect with Policy Advisory Council members by phone to address any questions that are not fully addressed below.

Questions from the Policy Advisory Council Meeting

1. How will the projected outcome of housing affordability moving in the right direction depend on the discussion regarding the regional housing needs allocation? [Plan Bay Area 2050](#) and [RHNA](#) envision the same level of housing production through 2030, with [Plan Bay Area 2050](#) taking further action in the decades afterwards. The [RHNA](#) methodology process ongoing right now is more about the specific locations for that robust housing growth, which can certainly have secondary effects on metrics such as transportation affordability and mode choices. Ultimately, the [RHNA](#) methodology must be generally consistent with [Plan Bay Area 2050](#), which ensures that [RHNA](#) will help make early progress towards this projected affordability outcome.
2. What is the amount of transit operating funding it will take to achieve a high level of ridership and very good connections? [MTC/ABAG](#) explored a suite of different transit investments and strategies through the [Project Performance Assessment for Horizon/Plan Bay Area 2050](#) (<https://mtc.ca.gov/our-work/plans-projects/horizon/project-performance-assessment>). While a few megaprojects like a New Transbay Rail Crossing – which could enable 24-hour rail service between the West Bay and East Bay – generate significant new ridership, strategies like more timed transfer points or fare discounts for lower-income residents are a more cost-effective way to grow ridership than increasing service levels.
3. Given the GHG gap, there should be a renewed emphasis on looking at parking policies as strategies to balance the cost between driving and other modes. Staff agrees with this suggestion; it will be discussed further at upcoming workshops. However, staff would note that this strategy is less resilient than roadway pricing, as it would become less effective in an autonomous future where parking demand may decline.
4. Andrew Fremier wrote a paper on the Columbus Day effect, noting that a 5% change in telecommuting would reduce congestion greatly. This plan shows a gain of approximately 8% - is this true and how much will it help? Telecommuting does help greenhouse gas emissions in the Draft Blueprint, but it should be noted that it is not a silver bullet. The Draft Blueprint does not include analyses of individual cause-effect relationships, so we cannot precisely quantify the GHG gains associated from this single external force. Based on modeling to date, we believe it provides a roughly 2 to 3 percent reduction in regional GHG emissions.
5. There are comments that a goal of 10-20% affordable housing won't get it. There are strategies to get above that, e.g., the Housing Leadership Council has inventoried all public land in the county and is trying to get agencies to use it for below market rate housing – this will take away a big cost from developers. The Draft Blueprint includes more than 400,000 deed-restricted affordable homes – just under 30% of all new homes built. This housing is not just generated from inclusionary zoning strategies but also from direct public investment in new affordable housing. Public land strategies are also integrated into the baseline of [Plan Bay Area 2050](#), as state legislation was passed on this front in 2018-19.
6. The other problem is the cost of permits and codes on developers. If you raise the requirement of affordable housing above 20%, this will create an unhealthy mix and would require developers to raise rents in order to recover, affecting median income people and pushing them out of the market. It's a fragile system. [Understood – it is indeed quite complex](#).
7. Regarding the commute mode choices, he is surprised that the work from home option only increased 8% and

that transit increased. He expected transit to decrease and work from home to increase substantially. (page 19 of the presentation) Thanks for this comment. MTC cannot independently set telecommuting levels in the Plan; we estimated a substantial but not extreme increase in telecommuting in concert with our regulators at the Air Resources Board. Transit ridership may indeed be lower for many years ahead, but we anticipate continued growth in transit use in the 2030s and 2040s, long after the end of the pandemic.

8. She is curious about access and barriers to access for means-based fares on the affordability slide – is the onus still on the low income riders to prove eligibility? Plan Bay Area 2050 does not generally get into the administration of each individual strategy, as this is a long-range plan across 30 years. However, this is an excellent question to discuss in the Implementation Plan context, and we'll share your feedback with the Clipper START team at MTC.
9. Regarding point 3 of the slide regarding growing walkable, transit-rich communities, she is curious re what percentage of low income and very low income housing and what types of jobs are being located in these transit-rich communities? Staff would refer to you page 4 of the Draft Blueprint: Outcomes handout (https://www.planbayarea.org/sites/default/files/pdfs_referenced/FINAL_PBA50_DraftBlueprint_Outcomes_1.pdf) which highlights where low-income households are locating in the Draft Blueprint. At this time, we do not have data on the typologies of jobs at the localized level to answer the second half of your questions.
10. Office workers are what percentage of our workforce? "Office jobs" – shorthand for white-collar workers in typical 9-to-5 settings that are generally eligible for telework – are between one-third and one-half of all Bay Area jobs today, depending on which industries are classified in this category. More information available at: <https://www.vitalsigns.mtc.ca.gov/jobs-industry>
11. Regarding the diverse guiding principle slide, has staff considered strategies re housing preferences for existing residents and what preservation of existing neighbors – not just neighborhoods - looks like? This is great strategy suggestion for the Final Blueprint. Workshops on strategy refinements will be occurring in July and August.
12. Is there an actual requirement for housing with job development without an option to pay a fee for not developing it or having mixed-income requirements without allowing low income housing to be built elsewhere, keeping wealthy people isolated from their neighbors? The inclusionary zoning policy, as structured and modeled in the Draft Blueprint, assumes that the developers builds the units on-site, rather than paying a mitigation fee for it to be built elsewhere.
13. In slide 13 of the draft blueprint highlights, how do these points intersect? Staff is unclear on which two data points are being referred to here.
14. In the evaluation section, add "for whom" and "which" – e.g., which Bay Area residents spend less? Whenever possible, the Equity and Performance Outcomes break down results to answer the question "for whom?" – please go to https://www.planbayarea.org/sites/default/files/pdfs_referenced/FINAL_PBA50_DraftBlueprint_Outcomes_1.pdf for more information.
15. What data did staff use to arrive at the statement that means-based tolls are effective in mitigating most equity impacts whereas means-based fares lead to cost reductions for low income transit riders? What percentage of eligible residents access these resources and programs and what percentage of unhoused and monolingual non-English speakers are accessing these resources? Refer to page 3 of the Draft Blueprint: Outcomes document listed above to see the data points that justify this finding. Also, please refer to the response above with regards to specific implementation details of the tolling strategy.
16. Has staff come up with a solution to apply means-based tolls to higher incomes as opposed to requiring lower income to apply and demonstrate eligibility? Please refer to the response above with regards to specific implementation details of the tolling strategy.
17. She is concerned about the diverse Bay Area slide: seeing increasingly wealthy demographics means that we've accepted displacement. Staff is also quite concerned about this outcome as well and is seeking strategy revision ideas to help reduce the risk of displacement and gentrification in the Final Blueprint. Comments are due by August 10th at info@planbayarea.org.
18. She would like to see motorcycle parking and inclusion in the plan spelled out a bit more and would encourage the expansion of the GHG metrics to expand and include Nox and other criterion particulate pollutants. Staff will consider further expansion of air quality metrics for the Final Blueprint release later this year. As noted above, staff are considering integration of a parking strategy in the Final Blueprint and this could include parking policies

for motorcycles as well; see comment above to that effect.

19. Ten percent for the housing strategy seems arbitrary; she would like to know what percentage of our residents currently need affordable housing based on income – set this as the percentage that has to be built. What percentage are currently displaced – this should be a hard number as a mandate. The Draft Blueprint includes more than 400,000 deed-restricted affordable homes – just under 30% of all new homes built. This housing is not just generated from inclusionary zoning strategies (ranging from 10 to 20 percent) but also from direct public investment in new affordable housing. As noted in the staff presentation, this still is not sufficient to house all of our low-income households – nearly \$400 billion in additional tax increases would need to be added into the Final Blueprint to fully close that gap. There will be further discussion this summer on if and how to close that gap in the planning context.
20. Regarding the low- and no-cost solutions on slide 14, is this specifically for deed-restricted affordable homes or does it apply to renters as well? Low- and no-cost strategies can be powerful on a variety of fronts. For example, changing zoning to enable multi-family housing does not have significant costs for cities, but it can enable construction of new apartments in places where this is currently not allowed. Similarly for transportation, pricing and speed limit strategies play a much larger role in reducing emissions than building new rail lines, for example.
21. Earthquakes and sea level rise were mentioned as disasters but in Santa Rosa and Napa County/North Bay, wildfires are also a factor and should be included in the analysis. The Draft Blueprint includes a multi-hazard home retrofit strategy, which includes increasing resilience to wildfires. Furthermore, the Draft Blueprint protects existing urban growth boundaries, which helps to reduce the risk at the urban-rural interface where fires pose the greatest threat. Refer to page 5 of the Draft Blueprint: Outcomes PDF for performance results related to wildfire protections (link provided above).
22. On slide 29, please stop using the Apple headquarters picture – it's an example of how not to build jobs in an environmentally sane way. Thanks for the feedback – we will replace that image for future presentations (e.g., September committee presentations).
23. Being transit-adjacent does not mean that you're adjacent to other services. COVID has taught us there is a huge need for open public spaces. She has concerns about solutions that increase housing while decreasing livability (lack of access to open public spaces, grocery stores, etc.). Extract the data from the overlay of the walk score map and add that to the mix. We appreciate the comment – this is a great strategy suggestion. We will consider both services and parks as elements to new and expanded strategies during the engagement process this summer. Staff is also working to add a metric to the Blueprint Outcomes PDF on access to non-work destinations in time for the Final Blueprint.
24. The strategies that the cities are using are displacing low income people and naturally occurring low income housing. We're looking for your feedback on how to tackle this displacement trend – what actions should MTC and ABAG consider?
25. On slide 11, how does the transportation and housing element relate to the environmental element? E.g., if we increase housing and transportation, what would the impact on the environment be? The Draft Blueprint shows clearly how transportation and housing strategies can move us toward our environmental goals. From all-lane tolling on key freeways to 55 mph speed limits to conserve gas to electric vehicle subsidies to additional development capacity in walkable communities near transit, all of these strategies help move the needle on our critical climate target. Even more action will be required in the Final Blueprint, however.
26. It's not just about getting people on transit or getting housing, it's about having a full quality of life. Thanks for this comment. It's much easier to quantify the availability of housing and the anticipated transit ridership, than it is to quantify quality of life. But from a qualitative evaluation perspective, we believe that many of the Draft Blueprint strategies will support a higher quality of life – reinvesting in our region's open spaces creates more places to relax and exercise in nature, childcare subsidies enable more low-income parents to remain in school or continue to work while raising a family, etc.

Item 7. Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint: Key Decisions for the Transportation Element

1. She supports prioritizing the bus and low cost active transportation strategies that will help move more people, reduce VMT, and deliver those benefits cost effectively and equitably. Regarding the process to be developed that will have options to pull back in time some of the larger projects that have been included in the second half of the time period due to lack of known funding, 1) she is glad to see that there are equity policies that are

needed in order for the region to prioritize spending money on these projects, 2) but with the possibility of federal stimulus funds, she would not want to see us pick projects that aren't in line with our overall goals.

Thanks for this comment. The Commission is considering how to proceed on this question at their July meeting; staff will provide some options to weigh.

2. He noticed in the funding that there is a line item for the Redwood City port for planning but nothing in the first amount of money and no mention of it in the second amount of money – why is that? San Mateo County submitted the project with full funding for planning/design work but not for construction. A regional contribution would not be required at this time given this local direction on the project.
3. The equity implications of the fee per mile strategy are disturbing; the extraction of \$15 billion per year from displaced communities who we don't serve with safe, efficient, reliable, affordable, or 24 hour transportation is unacceptable and it targets those who can't take public transportation due to our development shortcomings. It also encourages cities and communities who have historically not welcomed public transportation to continue to avoid the development of public transportation access to their communities. Under the scenario, if you were to add BART service, you would also be adding tolls for the residents as well. Creative strategies to address a few of these could include adding tolls and fines for cities that don't have 24 hour connected, clean, safe, affordable public transportation to encourage its development; providing free transportation in the evenings combined with 24 hour service at regular and convenient intervals could address equity needs especially for service workers and reduce driving for those enjoying nightlife past BART regular service, which could help contribute to our Goal Zero. To be clear, the \$15 billion in revenue is mostly coming from higher-income households, as lower-income households receive significant 2/3 off discounts on tolls at peak periods and many lower-income travelers choose to take public transportation instead. The Draft Blueprint does include robust increases in service on AC Transit, Muni, and BART, but further increases are under consideration for the Final Blueprint to augment our transit options.
4. Do not add fee per mile strategies until transportation options are clean, safe, reliable, affordable, and 24 hours with solid coordinated connections. This would be necessary for equity. Thanks for your comment; please refer to the response above.
5. A system that requires people to demonstrate their economic need for assistance misses most people who need that assistance. We can pass along this feedback to the Clipper START program.
6. On page 10 regarding Hwy 4 and SR 239, it would be nice to have a map to see the freeways at issue. Who is doing the mitigation study? The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) submitted the first phase of SR-4 widening & SR-239 as a project for consideration in the Final Blueprint; more information on the full buildout can be found here: <https://ccta.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/53a360a198c9a.pdf>
7. Regarding community outreach, what kind of participation or commitments have we gotten from the local press? There is Spanish language media in Santa Rosa called La Voz and there are Spanish language radio stations. We will pass this suggestion along to the public engagement team in advance of the Spanish telephone town hall.
8. He was heartened to hear that the regional discretionary money, especially in period 2, seems to focus on transit and alternative modes of transportation. He is hopeful that equity will be kept in the forefront – and if it's discretionary, that there are strong equity requirements implemented into the projects. Thanks for the comment.
9. He is curious about the proposed regional express bus network: How ready or willing are agencies to participate in the network and what is the timeline to establish it? The Regional Express Bus Network, consisting of one high-frequency line from Vallejo to SFO Airport and two more basic lines along US-101 and between Oakland and Redwood City, is fully recommended for inclusion in the first half of the Plan (prior to year 2035). These investments could be advanced in the next 5-10 years contingent on local transit operator support.
10. Regarding slide 16 and communities of concern, all of the comments are important especially the ones that bring up potential systems and policy changes that could be helpful, e.g., the time to transfer, but also better real time transit arrivals signage at all stops especially to address nights and weekends. We agree and will continue to keep equity front of mind when crafting revisions for the Final Blueprint phase.
11. The need for automatic daily and monthly caps is an interesting policy solution. Thanks for the comment; this may be something to consider in the Implementation Plan with regards to the integrated fare system.
12. When you talk about improved interchanges and address bottlenecks, which highways/interchanges are you talking about? Please refer to the table of specific projects included in the July Policy Advisory Council packet to see the list of interchanges and highway projects proposed for inclusion.

13. Please let the Council know how we plan on reaching the unhoused population in our outreach efforts. Ten percent or more of the population is not part of what is in the outreach matrix. The unhoused are our most vulnerable and most transit-dependent population. Staff has worked with Sacred Heart, a community-based organization in Santa Clara County with experience in helping the unhoused in the South Bay, to help increase awareness of outreach opportunities. Paper flyers were developed for distribution with information on online/phone options to comment. Staff is also working with the vice chair of the E&A Subcommittee to expand outreach to the unhoused.

Questions/comments submitted after the July 8 Policy Advisory Council meeting

Councilmember Baldini's comments:

- Seemingly Low Income Families are larger ==> Hence, their auto purchases are typically larger, perhaps older vehicles higher GHG emissions
- A means based toll will encourage more such vehicle trips -- Automobile ownership is aspirational, leading to purchase of inexpensive easy to repair vehicles...
- Should we subsidize vehicle purchases (low GHG emissions) rather than encourage driving and subsidized tolls...
- BART is very expensive to build and maintain -- overhead concrete, limited flexibility -- lacks passing sidings; has limited maintenance windows... stop future extensions.
- Go with heavy rail.
- Bicycle transportation is limited to a very small population -- no showers at place of employment; higher risk of injury; lack of safe bicycle storage; a fair weather sport...
- "Preserving" affordable housing is cultivating permanent slums -- little or no investment / incentive by landlords to maintain housing units leading to conditions ripe for increased crime...
- "Gentrification" is a natural process -- either the homeowner / landlords invest in their property or not... A homeowner may just sell and move or remodel! Moving allows someone else an opportunity to by-in and pull themselves up... Common practice for low-incomes families to remain at home longer saving money collectively for the next to purchase a home... It is a tidal move for all to head for the suburbs and return to the city... We are presently experiencing a move back to the suburbs...
- Toll income will be heavily affected by use of drones... Short term, our on-line instant gratification delivery demand will lead to more traffic... American Canyon will soon be the home of another
- Amazon D.C. -- initially 50 - 60 roundtrip over-the-road truck movement; 350-400 roundtrip van trips per day; plus employee trips... A huge impact on strained road system for the North Bay...

Thanks for all of these comments. Toll discounts for low-income residents do indeed make it easier for them to get from point A to point B, which is important for regional mobility and importantly equity, even if it makes the strategy less effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions than a flat-rate fee. With regards to bicycle investments, research has shown that building a safe and protected network of trails and lanes can help grow the market share for bicycling; this does not mean all residents must use a bicycle but it does open it up to more residents who can physically bike today but are concerned about their safety. We recognize your concerns about preservation of affordable housing, but this can be a cost-effective way to ensure residents can remain in their neighborhoods and not be displaced many miles from their friends and family. Lastly, we have assumed continued rise in e-commerce and a continued decline in storefront retail in the years ahead, consistent with long-standing national trends.

Councilmember Coates's question:

I wonder if Horizon took into consideration the flooding data accumulated by the First Street Foundation. Army Corp data is sorely out of date and does not properly account for climate change. <https://firststreet.org/flood-factor/> Plan Bay Area 2050 is focused primarily on sea level rise, which also increases the risk of flooding. Staff used the best available data for San Francisco Bay from our partner agency, BCDC: <https://explorer.adaptingtorisingtides.org/home>. We can certainly share this resource with them in case it is beneficial for further development of their map data.

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