



November 19, 2020

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street #800
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Metropolitan Transportation Commission Meeting - Resolution 4437, Integrating a potential Alternative to the Plan Bay Area 2050 Telecommuting Strategy

Dear Chair Haggerty and Commissioners,

This letter is to express AC Transit's support for Resolution 4437, integrating a potential alternative to the **Plan Bay Area 2050** Telecommuting Strategy.

AC Transit supports the strategy's revised approach of focusing on commute travel modes. This approach supports the actual emission reduction/trip reduction goal of the strategy. The previous proposal would simply have required workers to stay home. Having Bay Area employees telecommute should not be the goal. The previous approach would have reduced transit revenue and vitiated the economic vitality of business centers like Downtown Oakland. This resolution provides employers a variety of methods to meet the 60% non-driving target. It also supports MTC's longstanding planning policy of encouraging employment growth in places with strong transit service.

We understand that a telecommuting/trip reduction strategy was included to meet the California Air Resources Board (CARB) mandate for **Plan Bay Area 2050**—a 19% reduction in per capita greenhouse gas emissions. However, AC Transit's Board of Directors adopted the attached resolution in opposition to any consideration of this strategy.

AC Transit operates the Easy Pass program, which provides systemwide bus passes at steeply discounted rates to groups of employees or residents. We believe this program can be useful to many employers in meeting the trip reduction targets in the revised strategy. We are aware that major efforts by many stakeholders will be necessary to achieve the revised target of 40% (or less) auto commuting for larger non-agricultural employers by 2035. This is a steep reduction from the current regional auto commute rate of an estimated 75%.

AC Transit supports Resolution 4437 and urges the Commission to adopt it. We look forward to working with MTC, other transit agencies, and other stakeholders on implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Hursh", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael A. Hursh
General Manager

Attachment: AC Transit Resolution No. 20-057 Opposing PBA 2050 Strategy EN7

CC: AC Transit Board of Directors

**ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 20-057**

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING PLAN BAY AREA (PBA) 2050 STRATEGY EN7: “INSTITUTE
TELECOMMUTING MANDATES FOR MAJOR OFFICE-BASED EMPLOYERS”**

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), as the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the nine-county Bay Area (the Region), is required to develop, in conjunction with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), a regional plan every four years in order to satisfy federal and state planning requirements; and

WHEREAS, MTC and ABAG are currently undertaking the process to develop and adopt the 2021 update to the plan, entitled Plan Bay Area 2050; and

WHEREAS, MTC is required by state law to include in this regional plan achievable strategies and investments to meet the Region’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District strongly believes that MTC (and the region) should continue to strive towards achieving our share of the state’s GHG emission reduction targets; and

WHEREAS, on September 23, 2020, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) voted to adopt MTC Resolution No.4437 and ABAG Resolution No.16-20 Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050: Final Blueprint; and

WHEREAS, among its strategies, the Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint includes Strategy EN7: Institute Telecommuting Mandates for Major Office-Based Employers, which proposes to mandate that large employers have at least 60 percent of their employees telecommute on any given workday; and

WHEREAS, The Final Blueprint indicates that the inclusion of Strategy EN7 is necessary to achieve the required GHG emission targets, and Strategy EN7 includes as a primary objective the reduction of GHG emissions; and

WHEREAS, Strategy EN7 does not differentiate between the types of trips the strategy aims to reduce as a result of its proposed telecommute mandate, resulting in the suppression of both trips that contribute to regional GHG emissions, such as drive-alone, and trips that would be taken by zero-emission or low-emission modes, such as walking, cycling, and transit; and

WHEREAS, though the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Shelter-in-Place orders necessitated that employers and employees quickly transition to telecommuting where possible, the economic, equity, social, and health impacts of large amounts of telecommuting have yet to be fully understood; and

WHEREAS, a higher number of front-line workers are minorities and the pandemic has further revealed the economic disparity in this county, and many low-income households do not have the facilities to enable them to conveniently work from home, or the employees are required to be on-site; and

WHEREAS, Conditions under COVID-19 should not be taken to represent either expected or desired future travel conditions, as modeled in Plan Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, the Region's cities, counties and employment centers rely on the vibrancy and sales tax revenue from office workers, including small businesses; and

WHEREAS, mixed-use vibrancy and activity, including the construction of high-density housing in urban centers, is particularly important in Priority Development Areas (PDAs), which ABAG and MTC have sought to foster; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area has a temperate climate, and relatively low per capita GHG emissions compared to most other regions in the United States; and

WHEREAS, by mandating a high level of telecommuting, MTC could inadvertently force employees (and employers) to other regions with high per capita GHG emission and more housing sprawl, effectively causing a net increase in GHG emission and creating more wildfire susceptibility; and

WHEREAS, sustainable reduction in GHG emissions in the Region requires fidelity to Plan Bay Area's goals to direct growth in population and employment to dense housing and commercial areas served by fast, frequent, and reliable transit; and

WHEREAS, the shift to telecommuting as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic response has resulted in significant ridership declines and budget shortfalls at AC Transit and other transit operators in the Region, necessitating the reduction of service frequency, capacity, hours, and coverage; and

WHEREAS, fares represent an important source of operating revenue for AC Transit.

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District does resolve as follows:


Section 1. Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District hereby opposes the inclusion of Strategy EN7: Institute Telecommuting Mandates for Major Office-Based Employers, as currently described, in the ultimate adoption of Plan Bay Area 2050.

Section 2. The Board of Directors of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District reiterates its support for the Plan Bay Area 2050 Guiding Principles to ensure a more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant Bay Area, including the importance of strategies and investments designed to meet the Region's GHG reduction targets.

Section 3. The Board of Directors of the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District encourages MTC to explore strategies that achieve the same GHG reduction outcomes as Strategy EN7, but are more directly targeted at the reduction of travel by GHG emitting modes and which allow flexibility for impacted employers and employees to choose transit and active transportation coupled with high-density housing as an alternative to telecommuting.


Section 4. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage by four affirmative votes of the Board of Directors.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 12th day of November, 2020.



Joe Wallace, President

Attest:



Linda A. Nemeroff, District Secretary

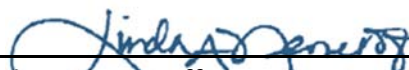
I, Linda A. Nemeroff, District Secretary for the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on the 12th day of November, 2020, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: VICE PRESIDENT ORTIZ, PRESIDENT WALLACE, DIRECTORS HARPER, WILLIAMS, SHAW, YOUNG AND PEEPLES

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE



Linda A. Nemeroff, District Secretary

Approved as to Form and Content:



Jill A. Sprague, General Counsel