

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council**

November 10, 2021

Agenda Item 9

Staff Liaison Report

Subject:

Relevant MTC policy decisions and other activities.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Staff Liaison Report – November 2021

Staff Liaison Report – November 2021

ABAG, MTC Adopt Final Plan Bay Area 2050 And Environmental Impact Report

On October 21, 2021, the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission adopted Plan Bay Area 2050 and its associated Environmental Impact Report. The unanimous votes by both boards capped a nearly four-year process during which more than 20,000 Bay Area residents contributed to the development of the new plan. Defined by 35 strategies for housing, transportation, economic vitality and the environment, Plan Bay Area 2050 lays out a \$1.4 trillion vision for policies and investments to make the nine-county region more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy and economically vibrant for all its residents through 2050 and beyond. From housing strategies that would produce more than 1 million new permanently affordable homes by 2050 to transit-fare reforms that would reduce cost burdens for riders with low incomes and paths to economic mobility through job training and a universal basic income, the goal of a more equitable Bay Area is interwoven throughout the plan. With a groundbreaking focus on climate change, strategies also are crafted for resilience against future uncertainties, including protection from hazards such sea-level rise and wildfires.

“Plan Bay Area 2050 reflects a shared vision that can’t be implemented by any single agency,” explained ABAG Executive Board President and Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguín. “To bring all these strategies to fruition will require ABAG and MTC to strengthen our existing partnerships and to form new ones — not just with our cities and counties and the state government, but also with the federal government, businesses and nonprofits.”

MTC Chair and Napa County Supervisor Alfredo Pedroza acknowledged the work ahead.

“Building and preserving affordable housing. Adapting to sea level rise. Getting more people closer to their jobs and more jobs closer to the people. Sharing prosperity equitably. All of these are big lifts. But the new plan can serve as a north star for the Bay Area’s journey to 2050.”

Among the features that distinguish Plan Bay Area 2050 from previous regional plans is an associated Implementation Plan that details the specific actions ABAG and MTC can take in the next five years to put the new plan into action.

“The Implementation Plan is a commitment to do hard things, not just think about them,” said MTC-ABAG Executive Director Therese W. McMillan. “Even if these steps have to be taken incrementally, they will lead us to a more equitable and resilient Bay Area.”

The adopted final Plan Bay Area 2050, the EIR, and all the supplemental reports accompanying the new plan are available online at planbayarea.org/finalplan2050.

Goods Movement and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A request was made at the Policy Advisory Council’s October 2021 meeting for information about goods movement in the Bay Area. MTC planning staff recommend the following two reports:

- San Francisco Bay Area Goods Movement Plan, which was adopted in 2016 with the Alameda County Transportation Commission and can be found at this [link](#); and
- MTC’s Goods Movement Investment Strategy, which was adopted in 2018 and looks at projects over a 10-year horizon that support goods movement in the region. Information on the strategy can be found on MTC’s web site at this [link](#).

Newsom signs two transportation bills supported by MTC

Transportation-related bills supported by MTC addressing safety have now been signed into law by Governor Newsom. AB 43 (Friedman) allows greater flexibility for local jurisdictions to set speed limits on streets with high injuries and fatalities by enabling cities to lower speed limits below the 85th percentile on streets with high injuries and fatalities. MTC and ABAG supported the bill. “This long overdue bill is a cornerstone to the state taking action to reduce roadway injuries and fatalities and was a core recommendation coming out of the state’s Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force,” MTC-ABAG Executive Director Therese McMillan wrote to Governor Newsom in support of the bill. MTC has established the [Vision Zero Working Group](#) to provide a forum for regional policy discussions about improving roadway safety.

The Governor also signed AB 917 (Bloom), supported by MTC. It authorizes transit operators statewide to use camera-based enforcement for transit stops and transit only lanes where it is already illegal to park. After the devastating impact COVID 19 had on public transit ridership, the bill enables transit agencies to improve service reliability and rider safety.

MTC, ABAG applaud action on housing bills

Several key bills aimed at addressing the state’s housing crisis – including one supported by MTC and ABAG – [were also signed law by Governor Newsom](#).

MTC/ABAG supported [Senate Bill 10](#), which authorizes local agencies to update zoning (and any associated changes to a general plan) to enable up to 10 units per parcel without undergoing a CEQA analysis (California Environmental Quality Act) until Jan. 1, 2029.

“SB 10, while by no means a panacea to our state’s housing crisis, would aid local jurisdictions across the Bay Area and other regions throughout the state in their efforts to combat the state’s housing shortage by providing local governments a new tool to expedite the housing planning process,” MTC Executive Director Therese McMillan wrote to Gov. Newsom in support of the bill.

In all, Governor Newsom signed 31 housing bills into law. The Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley called the actions a [breakthrough in California housing policy](#).

Further policy changes and funding will be needed from the state and federal government to preserve and produce the affordable housing that’s needed for the Bay Area to thrive. MTC/ABAG’s advocacy platform will continue to prioritize this goal in 2022.

Transportation, Housing News Right to Your Inbox

MTC offers a convenient [Daily News Headlines](#) subscription, delivering a curated list of stories about transportation, housing, development, the environment and more directly to your email inbox. The headlines are sent each weekday, arriving just in time to enjoy with your morning coffee.

The [Bay Link blog](#) offers a more in-depth look at these topics, often in the context of the work that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and MTC are doing, along with other stories of interest to Bay Area residents and professionals. The Bay Link Blog E-Newsletter, with the top Bay Link features of the week, is distributed every Tuesday.

[Sign up for each of these newsletters](#), along with others from the MTC-ABAG family, including the Plan Bay Area 2050 E-Newsletter and updates about MTC Express Lanes.

Have a Question? Ask a Librarian

If you need assistance locating information or are having difficulty navigating the MTC-ABAG websites, please feel free to contact the MTC-ABAG head librarian, Julie Tunnell. Reference assistance is available by telephone (415-778-5236), or email library@bayareametro.gov. Information can also be found on the [MTC-ABAG library webpage](#).

For MTC and Plan Bay Area glossaries:

- [Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms & Terms](#)
- [Plan Bay Area Glossary](#)

Executive Director's Report

The following items are excerpts from the October 2021 Executive Director's Report to the Commission. To read the report in its entirety visit the [Executive Director's Report webpage](#).

Key Updates

COVID-Related Activities

A reminder that all Covid-19 related reporting items can be found on our MTC webpage. We provide monthly updates on all related activities, and statistics that are affecting the region. For more information, visit [MTC's COVID-19 Response page](#).

Technical Assistance Web Portal Launch

As one example of the support tools that are critical to the PBA implementation plan and intersecting initiatives such as the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA), the Regional Housing Technical Assistance program has released a Housing Element Site Selection tool. A webinar was held on the new Housing Element Site Selection tool, which was developed in house to assist jurisdictions with determining which sites meet state requirements for zoning. Twenty-Five (25) jurisdictions have begun working with a consultant to create a Housing Element update public engagement tool that they can host on their individual websites. This tool is currently only available to planning department staff through licensing agreements.

There are a variety of upcoming work groups, some of which are currently meeting, on housing related issues: "Making Middle Housing Work" and "Wildfires – How to Preserve and Protect Housing".

Visit the [Technical Assistance Portal](#) for more information on upcoming activities and information.

FTA Releases Formal Intention to Expedite Funding for BART Phase II Project

On October 25, 2021, the Federal Transit Administration announced a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Project, announcing the project was formally selected for funding through the Expedited Project Delivery (EPD) Pilot Program. The project funding plan includes 25% of the costs to be funded through the EPD Program and the remaining 75% from state and local sources.

Through this LOI, FTA intends to obligate up to \$2.3 billion or 25 percent of the final project cost, whichever is less. The LOI will be in effect for two years, and during which VTA will continue to advance design, receive actual contractor bids, identify and mitigate or eliminate perceived risks, finalize an overall cost estimate, and solidify the funding plan to ultimately achieve a Full Funding Grant Agreement.

Find additional information in the [VTA press release](#).

Items to Note

State Discussions Resuming on General Fund Support for Transportation

This month, the general managers of the large transit operators and I were invited to meet with Assemblymember Phil Ting and Senator Nancy Skinner, Chairs of the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees, respectively, regarding the region's transit priorities. Chairs Ting and Skinner are eager to advocate for the Bay Area's priorities when negotiations resume over funding for high-speed rail and potential General Fund support of public transit and other transportation needs. We delivered a unified message to invest in core transit needs by growing the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program and considering regional targets and some changes to eligibility to help projects such as electric vehicle charging facilities and storage facilities qualify. While the size of the General Fund surplus is still unknown, a recent Legislative Analyst's office report available at this link estimates it to be in the range of \$8 billion - \$30 billion, of which about 40 percent would be considered true "surplus." We will continue to keep the Commission apprised through the Legislation Committee on status of this fluid situation entering the next year.