



**METROPOLITAN  
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COMMISSION**

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## *Memorandum*

**Date:** June 24, 2025  
**To:** Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)  
**From:** Carina Lieu, Policy Advisory Council Chair  
**Regarding:** June 2025 Council Report to Commission

### **Summary:**

This memo provides a summary of the activity of the Policy Advisory Council (Council) over the previous month. The Policy Advisory Council met on May 27, 2025 and covered three items: a legislative update, a preview of the upcoming *Accessible Futures Summit*, and a presentation on the Final Blueprint Outcomes for Plan Bay Area 2050+.

## **Legislative Update**

### **Cap & Trade, High-Speed Rail, and Transit Funding**

Council members had questions about how the state is using its cap & trade money, especially the \$1 billion a year going to High-Speed Rail. Some wondered if this was required by law or just the governor's decision. The governor now wants to make this amount mandatory. People were also worried that only "up to 10%" of the money is planned for improving local transit, which could mean no money at all. They asked for a guaranteed minimum, like at least 5%, especially if the plan includes making fares simpler and more affordable for riders.

### **Housing, Environment, and Budget Concerns**

There's worry that 9,000 families in Alameda County could lose their housing support (Section 8 vouchers) due to federal cuts. Some members also talked about how hard it is to get fire insurance in certain areas, making it tough for people to sell or move homes. For the environment, a bill (AB 697) would protect certain animals near Highway 37, which is important because that area is being considered for road expansion. There's still a big funding gap—about \$10 billion—to make that project happen.

### **Transit Plans, Elections, and Public Input**

The Council discussed a \$55 million plan to improve public transit, including better fare systems, maps, bus lanes, and programs to help people with disabilities. They said these upgrades should be

a top priority. There was also a call to make the legislation inspiring—not just another tax measure—so the public supports it. A new ballot measure could be voted on in November 2026, but it would need nearly 200,000 signatures first. Council members want their input to be heard and used as the process moves forward. Many are pushing for strong funding for both public transit and affordable housing and want MTC to keep working closely with other partners and communities.

## **Accessible Futures Summit**

Staff presented to the Council on the upcoming Accessible Futures Summit happening at the Bay Area Metro Center on June 16–17, 2025. Up to 150 people will be able to attend in person, with no limit for those joining online through Zoom. Some Councilmembers expressed interest in the panels and the opportunity to learn from peers in this horizontally designed convening—especially about transportation for people with disabilities. Staff encouraged Councilmembers to continue to spread the words, stressing that it was not too late to share across networks, since some groups like college programs were busy with graduations and had yet to see the invitation.

Councilmembers expressed gratification that this summit is finally happening and that MTC is putting resources into it. They mentioned that accessibility is more important than ever because more people are aging or living with invisible disabilities. One councilmember said it's important to include people from all political backgrounds since disabilities affect everyone. Another person said we need to make it easier for people with disabilities to get around—not just within their own counties, but across the entire Bay Area. They suggested MTC lead the effort to create one big, connected paratransit system.

A question was raised about language interpreters. Organizers said people can request things like sign language or different languages when they register. Spanish will be available, and they're also working on Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog flyers. A press release and blog post will go out soon to help spread the word, especially to community centers. Some people said it's important to have these translations both online and in person with real interpreters.

## **Plan Bay Area 2050+: Final Blueprint Outcomes**

Several Councilmembers raised concerns about whether the plan can adjust to future changes like a new federal administration or budget cuts. Others asked if MTC can shift money to match new priorities. One Councilmember asked whether farmland counts as open space—it does. Another shared worries that new housing laws might hurt low-income communities by pushing them out of their neighborhoods. He suggested the plan should do more to protect and preserve those communities.

Sea level rise was another concern, especially in places like San Francisco, and there were questions about how the plan measures risk and where the money estimates come from. One Councilmember said the job and population growth forecasts seem unrealistic now, especially after COVID, and suggested looking beyond the Bay Area when studying impacts on traffic and air

pollution.

Others asked for improvements in transit connections and suggested reopening old tunnels and protecting renters while still encouraging housing development. Concerns were also raised about the plan's focus on building affordable housing in new "growth areas," with one Councilmember asking how that doesn't just create new ghettos and force people to move farther from jobs.

Staff replied that the goal is to give people more options, not fewer—protecting those who want to stay while helping others live closer to opportunity. There were also questions about electric vehicle plans, especially with fewer rebates available in the future, and how the plan works with the state's air board. Councilmembers asked for more details on how the plan will reduce emissions and whether it considers realistic car usage trends.

One Councilmember wanted to be sure that "high-quality transit" means frequent and reliable service, not just any bus. Others asked how to better show the benefits of cleaner cars for families, like saving money on fuel. A few pointed out that when low-income people leave a neighborhood, they're often replaced by wealthier people—not that no one moves out.

Councilmembers also commented we need to better define what we mean by "open space," especially when it's actually private land or school property that the public can't use. Finally, Councilmembers wanted to know how their feedback will be used in the rest of the planning process. Staff said more draft reports will come out in September and promised to keep working with the Council and provide written answers, especially on big issues like sea level rise.