

Plan Bay Area 2050+ Round 4 Engagement Summary

Background

The fourth and final round of engagement for Plan Bay Area 2050+ took place in fall 2025 and represents the culmination of nearly three years of work to develop the Draft Plan. The final phase built on previous engagement efforts conducted between 2023 and 2025 and offered the public, partners and stakeholders the opportunity to review the Draft Plan and its accompanying supplemental reports, as well as the Draft EIR. The nearly 60-day public comment period began on October 20, 2025, and closed at 5 p.m. on Thursday, December 18, 2025. All comments received are posted to the Plan Bay Area website as follows:

- Draft Plan and Draft Transportation-Air Quality Conformity Report comments:
planbayarea.org/draftplan
- Draft EIR comments: planbayarea.org/2050/draft-environmental-impact-report-eir

To ensure broad regional access and multiple avenues for participation, staff implemented a comprehensive engagement approach during the public comment period. Engagement activities were designed to reach residents and stakeholders across the nine-county Bay Area and to accommodate both in-person and virtual participation. Additionally, through ongoing partnerships with 15 community-based organizations (CBOs), staff were able to broaden participation and more effectively engage communities that have historically been underrepresented in regional planning efforts.

During this final phase, staff conducted the following engagement activities:

- Four sub-regional webinars—one each focused on the North Bay, East Bay, South Bay, and West Bay—with content tailored to each sub-region, highlighting how Plan Bay Area 2050+ strategies apply at the local level.
- Three hybrid public hearings, geographically distributed across the region and structured to allow for both in-person and virtual participation.
- A public comment period exceeding the required 55 days, during which comments were accepted through multiple formats such as: email submissions, an online web form, telephone messages, U.S. mail, fax and oral testimonies provided during the public hearings.

All webinars and public hearings were held during the public comment period to maximize opportunities for participation and to allow members of the public to engage with the Draft Plan and Draft EIR prior to submitting formal comments.

To support inclusive participation, Spanish and Chinese interpretation services were offered and members of the public utilized these services for the webinars and public hearings.

Key Themes: Draft Plan

In total, staff received 363 public comments about the Draft Plan and Draft EIR:

FORMAT	# SUBMISSIONS		
	Plan	DEIR	Plan + DEIR
Webinars	120	0	120
Email	78	81	159
Public Hearings	30	14	44
Online Form	26	12	38
Voicemail	2	0	2
U.S. Mail or Fax	0	0	0
TOTAL	256	107	363

Several consistent themes emerged about the Draft Plan across all formats from public and stakeholder input received during this final round of engagement. While local jurisdictions, public agencies, advocacy organizations and members of the general public approached Plan Bay Area 2050+ from different perspectives, their feedback largely overlapped about shared concerns related to growth assumptions, affordability and equity impacts, and the practical capacity to implement Plan strategies at the local and regional levels.

Draft Plan: Key Themes by Commenter Group

Across all commenter groups, feedback consistently identified the Regional Growth Forecast as the most prominent and foundational issue, often underlying broader concerns about the Plan's assumptions and implementation. Beyond growth projections, comments centered around several additional themes such as affordability, equity, transit service quality, local implementation capacity

and the need for clear accountability and performance tracking as Plan Bay Area 2050+ moves from vision to implementation.

Regional Growth Forecast

Across all four stakeholder categories, feedback related to the Regional Growth Forecast emerged as the most common and consistently raised theme during the final round of engagement. All groups referenced the Draft Plan's population, household, employment and housing growth assumptions as a foundational issue shaping their overall perspectives. Many commenters specifically noted a perceived discrepancy between the growth projections used in Draft Plan Bay Area 2050+ and those published by the California Department of Finance (DoF), often contrasting the Draft Plan's higher long-term growth assumptions with the DoF forecasts that reflect more modest growth. These questions about alignment and methodology frequently served as points prefacing broader feedback on affordability, infrastructure capacity, fiscal feasibility and implementation considerations.

Affordability

Affordability emerged as a key concern, particularly among the general public focused on day-to-day household costs. Comments reflected questions about how proposed transportation, housing and climate strategies may influence the cost of living over time, with particular attention to impacts on low-income households, seniors and working families. Feedback underscored the importance of maintaining affordability as strategies advance toward implementation. Draft Plan Bay Area 2050+ advances affordability objectives through strategies that are projected to reduce the combined housing and transportation cost burden for all Bay Area households by 25% by 2050, and for low-income households by 50% by 2050. The plan also supports a projected 45% increase in the share of households living near frequent transit and a 40% increase in the number of jobs accessible by transit, biking or walking by 2050, contributing to long-term cost savings and expanded access to opportunity.

Equity and Distribution of Benefits

Comments from local jurisdictions and advocacy groups frequently highlighted questions about how equity is defined and operationalized in the plan, including the distribution of benefits and burdens across communities. Participants encouraged an approach to equity that extends beyond designated Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) and reflects differences in local fiscal capacity, infrastructure conditions and cumulative impacts, including for communities that face constraints but are not

formally classified as EPCs. Draft Plan Bay Area 2050+ reflects this dual approach by prioritizing targeted investments for EPCs while also advancing regionwide outcomes, including increasing the share of all households living near frequent transit to more than 60 percent by 2050, expanding access to jobs and services across all income levels, reducing regional exposure to environmental hazards and improving transportation affordability and reliability throughout the nine-county Bay Area, alongside strategies intended to support equitable implementation and avoid disproportionate impacts on any single group of communities.

Transit Service

Transit-related feedback, particularly from the general public and advocacy groups, consistently emphasized service quality, including frequency, hours of operation, safety, cleanliness and first- and last-mile access. Participants underscored the importance of transit systems that support a wide range of trip purposes beyond traditional commute travel, especially for seniors, people with disabilities, shift workers and residents in both urban and suburban communities. The Draft Plan advances a service-focused approach through Strategy T11, which emphasizes more reliable, frequent and convenient transit service throughout the day and week, including evenings and weekends, with frequent service defined as 10–30 minute headways on key corridors.

Local Implementation Capacity

A recurring theme, particularly among local jurisdictions and other public agencies, involved questions about how Plan strategies would be implemented at the local level. Participants expressed concern about the capacity of cities, counties and special districts to absorb additional responsibilities related to infrastructure, service delivery and long-term maintenance, and emphasized the need for stronger alignment between regional expectations and local fiscal, staffing and delivery constraints. The Draft Plan acknowledges these implementation realities by emphasizing phased strategies tied to reasonably anticipated funding, expanding the use of performance-based and formula-driven funding programs and prioritizing technical assistance, coordination and capacity-building to support local governments as Plan strategies move toward implementation.

Transparency, Accountability and Implementation

Participants, particularly advocacy organizations and local jurisdictions, frequently raised questions about how Plan Bay Area 2050+ strategies would be tracked, evaluated and adjusted over time. Comments emphasized the importance of clear accountability mechanisms, performance measures and transparency around funding decisions, implementation timelines and outcomes to ensure that commitments made in the Plan translate into measurable progress. The Draft Plan advances an established monitoring framework by linking long-range strategies to ongoing performance tracking through MTC's Vital Signs program, which publicly reports indicators related to housing, transportation, equity, climate and economic outcomes. These indicators, together with annual progress reporting commitments, are intended to provide regular updates on implementation status, track progress toward Plan goals and support course corrections as conditions and priorities evolve.

Key Themes: Draft Environmental Impact Report

Across all commenter groups, the most consistent theme raised during review of the Draft EIR related to the Regional Growth Forecast. Beyond this shared concern, subsequent themes varied by group but most commonly focused on environmental impact determinations, including significant and unavoidable impacts, infrastructure and environmental capacity constraints and the feasibility, enforceability and implementation of proposed mitigation measures.

Growth Assumptions and Environmental Impact Determinations

A central theme concerned how the growth assumptions used in the Draft EIR influence the scope, magnitude and significance of environmental impacts. Long-range population and employment projections serve as inputs to the environmental analysis and directly affect impact determinations across multiple issue areas including transportation, water supply, climate change, wildfire risk and public services. The discussion reflected the importance of articulating how these assumptions inform environmental outcomes and of disclosing uncertainty where growth projections materially affect impact conclusions and cumulative impact analyses.

Infrastructure Capacity, Environmental Constraints and Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Another prominent theme focused on whether the Draft EIR adequately accounts for infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints when evaluating future growth. The environmental analysis identifies limitations related to water supply, wastewater and stormwater treatment, utilities, emergency response, evacuation capacity and exposure to climate-related hazards. The discussion reflected the need to distinguish between impacts that can be reduced through mitigation and those that remain significant and unavoidable due to physical, regulatory or institutional constraints.

Mitigation Feasibility, Enforceability and Implementation Framework

The feasibility and enforceability of mitigation measures also emerged as a key theme. In several instances, the Draft EIR relies on mitigation measures that depend on future actions by local jurisdictions, partner agencies or external funding sources that are outside the direct control of the lead agencies. The discussion reflected the importance of identifying implementation responsibilities, funding assumptions and the extent to which mitigation measures can be monitored and enforced over time. Clarity on these elements supports evaluation of whether the mitigation framework reduces impacts to the extent feasible, consistent with CEQA requirements.