

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council**

December 15, 2023

Agenda Item 6a

Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint Update

Subject:

Update on the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint, including strategies and growth geographies, as well as next steps for the long-range regional plan in 2024.

Background:

In July 2023, MTC/ABAG kicked off Plan Bay Area 2050+, a limited and focused update to the regional vision for transportation, housing, economic development, and environmental resilience. In October and November 2023, staff shared progress on the plan with relevant advisory bodies and policy committees, including the MTC Policy Advisory Council, the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee, and the ABAG Executive Board. The update included findings from the first round of Plan Bay Area 2050+ public and partner/stakeholder engagement; core planning assumptions including fundamental external forces, the draft Regional Growth Forecast, and needs and revenue analyses; and proposed strategy refinements for the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint. This Summary Sheet details staff responses to key feedback from policymakers and the Policy Advisory Council and revised Draft Blueprint strategies and growth geographies tentatively scheduled for adoption by the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee in January 2024 for further study and analysis.

Staff Responses to Policymaker and Policy Advisory Council Feedback:

Several key themes emerged from policymaker and advisory body discussions regarding the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint. Primary areas of feedback, as well as staff responses, are summarized in the table below.

Feedback by Topic

Topic #1	Revenue Shortfalls and Tax Fatigue
Summary	There were several comments regarding the scale of projected revenue shortfalls, including that the public may not be receptive to new revenue sources to address funding gaps.
Staff Response	Staff acknowledge that the current financial picture is challenging. It is important to remember, however, that Plan Bay Area is a long-range planning document and not a near-term financial programming document. Additional updates to the plan's needs and revenue analyses will be considered in 2024 if the policy landscape shifts further.
Topic #2	Rising Affordable Housing Construction Costs
Summary	There was strong interest in addressing rising affordable housing construction costs to address the gap between projected financial needs and revenues.
Staff Response	Staff agree this is an important topic for further study and action. The Draft Blueprint contains several proposed revisions to the plan's housing strategies to integrate innovative construction and financing models that could help reduce housing development costs. Staff also recommend this topic be flagged as an early priority for the plan's implementation phase.

Topic #3	Sea Level Rise and Resilience Projects
Summary	Concerns were expressed about the imminent risk of sea level rise; as such, it will be necessary to plan for and advance projects that will support a resilient region in a fiscally responsible manner.
Staff Response	Staff are proposing to categorize sea level rise projects by their projected inundation levels in 2035 and 2050 to inform nearer term funding needs.
Topic #4	Roadway Pricing
Summary	Several concerns were raised about roadway pricing, specifically regarding equity implications for lower-income individuals and those for whom roadway tolls and other pricing mechanisms are likely to have disproportionate impacts.
Staff Response	The examination of equity considerations is a key focus of the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways Study (which will be embarking on a second round of analysis in winter 2024) and will inform the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint. In addition, the plan will include a comprehensive equity analysis that will evaluate the impact of the full, integrated suite of plan strategies on areas such as affordability and mobility. Staff recommend moving forward with an expanded pricing strategy in the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint to better position the region to address an anticipated gap in meeting the plan's statutorily required GHG emissions reduction target.

Topic #5	Potential Barriers to Public Participation
Summary	Concerns were raised regarding potential barriers to public participation as part of the first round of Plan Bay Area 2050+ engagement. Specifically, of the 15 pop-up workshops that were held across all nine counties from late July to early September 2023, two events (the Sonoma County Fair and the Silicon Valley Pride Festival) had entrance fees – which could have prevented individuals not able or inclined to pay from providing input.
Staff Response	Although multiple avenues for input on the plan were available and widely promoted beyond the pop-ups, staff acknowledge that entrance fees for events can be a barrier to public participation. Moving forward, all future Plan Bay Area community workshops will be held at free events.

Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint Strategy Refinements:

Staff previously shared proposed Draft Blueprint strategy refinements in October and November, detailing which of Plan Bay Area 2050’s 35 strategies were likely to see major, minor, or no changes in Plan Bay Area 2050+. These refinements reflected Plan Bay Area 2050 implementation progress and the post-pandemic planning context, along with insights gathered during round 1 engagement. Staff recommend moving forward with these revisions for further study and analysis, including:

- Non-transit transportation strategy refinements focused on expanding pricing strategies, prioritizing equity considerations, adapting to tighter fiscal constraints, and promoting active transportation and safety;
- Environment strategy refinements focused on further reducing greenhouse gas emissions and proactively adapting to climate change; and
- Housing and economy strategy refinements focused on addressing pressing challenges of housing affordability, the rising cost of living, and homelessness.

Staff are also proposing targeted updates to the growth geographies that were adopted as part of Plan Bay Area 2050. Growth geographies are places that Plan Bay Area prioritizes for future homes, jobs, services and amenities and serve as a component of the plan's housing and economy elements. Specifically, proposed growth geographies for Plan Bay Area 2050+ will include 5 new PDAs and 16 modified existing PDAs nominated by local Bay Area jurisdictions, reflect updated data regarding existing and planned transit service, and integrate areas subject to MTC's revised Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy.

Attachment A contains further details on the Draft Blueprint strategy refinements, including revisions to the previously adopted Plan Bay Area 2050 strategies. Attachment B contains a map of the revised Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint growth geographies.

Continued Challenges in Meeting Statutory Climate Targets:

As a reminder, per requirements set out in Senate Bill (SB) 375 (Steinberg, Statutes of 2008), Plan Bay Area 2050+ must reduce per-capita GHG emissions from light-duty vehicles by 19 percent from 2005 levels by the year 2035, subject to California Air Resources Board (CARB) approval. Preliminary investigation suggests that Plan Bay Area 2050 strategies with updated assumptions will fall short of meeting the 19% target, driven by various changes in the broader planning context over the last several years, including lower population growth and declining transit usage.

This initial GHG "gap" for Plan Bay Area 2050+ is very likely to worsen as analysis proceeds in spring 2024, most notably because there are fewer financial resources to invest in improving and expanding the transportation system compared to Plan Bay Area 2050. The measured strategy revisions that staff are recommending for the Draft Blueprint reflect a first suite of modifications to work toward climate goals in a balanced manner, including concentrating housing and jobs in transit-rich locations, encouraging transit, active modes, and work-from-home; discouraging single-occupancy vehicle driving via pricing strategies; lowering speed limits; and supporting clean vehicle investments and incentives, among other areas.

Next Steps:

Staff will seek approval of Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint strategies and growth geographies at the January 2024 meeting of the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee. Pending approval, staff will pivot to studying the equity and performance outcomes of the Draft Blueprint. Round 2 engagement activities to further inform the development of the Final Blueprint are expected to commence in spring 2024, with MTC and ABAG Executive Board approval of Final Blueprint strategies anticipated in summer 2024.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendation:

Information.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint Strategy Refinements
- Attachment B: Plan Bay Area 2050+ Draft Blueprint Growth Geographies