



October 14, 2016

Dave Cortese, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Julie Pierce, President
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Bay Area Metro Center
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RE: Healthy and Safe Communities target in Plan Bay Area Scenarios; Active Transportation Staffing for MTC/ABAG

Dear Honorable Chair and Honorable President:

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) released a [draft preferred land use scenario](#) toward the development of Plan Bay Area 2040. The Draft Preferred Scenario represents a regional pattern of household and employment growth by the year 2040, and includes a corresponding transportation investment strategy.

We are writing to express concern that the draft Preferred Scenario is deficient in several ways:

1 – It does not achieve the physical activity and health goals set by MTC and ABAG. The Healthy and Safe Communities target that Plan Bay Area strives for was revised last year. The target affirms the need of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to reduce adverse health impacts associated with air quality, road safety, and physical inactivity by 10%.

However, all the draft scenarios assessed in the Plan Bay Area process fall far short of that goal. Of the five scenarios considered, two provide no progress at all on this goal, and the other three provide only a decrease of 1 percent. The preferred scenario achieves this 1 percent, and is therefore literally better than the scenarios that provide no progress at all, but this is still woefully short of the goal affirmed by MTC and ABAG.

2 – The target for bicycle and pedestrian mode share, and the investment needed to achieve it, needs to be much stronger. Even with very modest investment, California saw a doubling of bicycling and walking between 2000-2012, according to the California Household Travel Survey. The Caltrans Strategic Management Plan released in 2015 set a goal of tripling of bicycle mode share and doubling walking and transit mode shares by 2020. With more significant investment in creating safe, connected active transportation systems, those numbers would substantially increase. The Bay Area must commit to a much bolder vision for active transportation as part of a multi-modal system in the Bay Area, and more significant investment in active transportation, both infrastructure and non-infrastructure.

Implementation of the Plan

To support the recommendations above, MTC will need to develop a detailed implementation plan as part of Plan Bay Area 2040 to achieve active transportation, physical activity and public health outcomes. The plan should include:

A. Stronger support for the Regional Safe Routes to School Program in OBAG, the Spare the Air Youth program, and MTC's Complete Streets policy. There have been proposals over the past couple of years to transfer funds from these valued programs. The proposals were ultimately reversed, but with the region's lackluster performance on goals related to traffic safety and physical activity, there is a clear need for proactive efforts to increase investments in programs that directly support these goals.

B. Support for our regional trail system and green infrastructure:

- i. Support and fund the completion of the Bay Area regional trail network and expand our system of urban trails, parks, and bikeways to serve the Bay Area's diverse population.
- ii. Expand "Transit to Trails" programs to enhance access to open space and reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.
- iii. Establish a Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Metrics Program to gather bike/ped usage data region wide (on-street and trails) and aggregate that data with local biking/walking data on a public web portal.

C. Increase Staffing Dedicated to Active Transportation: In addition to increased investments in the programs themselves, MTC requires additional staffing to ensure active transportation programs and policies are effectively carried out, evaluated, and supported, as well as to help devise strategies to expand and build upon the success of these programs. Currently, MTC has only one staff position dedicated to active transportation, and that one position has multiple responsibilities. We strongly recommend MTC increase its staffing capacity for active transportation, including the hiring of at least one additional staffer.

We hope that with additional investments in active transportation and increased capacity within MTC, Plan Bay Area can come closer to achieving its Healthy and Safe Communities target. We look forward to meeting with staff to discuss these recommendations further.

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