

Fwd: Request for MTC to address the climate crisis

MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Mon 7/19/2021 8:30 AM

To: Plan BayArea Info <planbayareainfo@bayareametro.gov>

📎 1 attachments (777 KB)

350 Bay Area comments on Plan Bay Area 2050.pdf;

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From: Jack Lucero Fleck <jack@350bayarea.org>

Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 8:00:00 AM

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Cc: 350 Bay Area Transportation <350ba_transportation@googlegroups.com>

Subject: Request for MTC to address the climate crisis

External Email

July 19, 2020

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Dear Commissioners,

We are sending this comment letter on Plan BayArea 2050 (attached) to you directly since our comments include a specific ask from the MTC board.

We are asking the MTC board to recognize the climate emergency and declare a goal to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by 2050 or sooner. This will require a combination of reducing vehicle miles traveled as well as electrifying all vehicles.

As discussed in our letter, we urge MTC to increase its efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled. MTC should also play an active role in seeing that cities and counties have adequate trained staff to administer the installation of infrastructure for electrification--i.e. charging stations in homes, apartments, workplaces, garages, and other public spaces as well as hydrogen fueling stations. Also, thousands of electricians will need to be trained to install this equipment as well as hundreds more technicians to maintain the chargers, and MTC should help support this effort.

In addition to ensuring that charging infrastructure is installed, we urge MTC to promote adoption of electric vehicles via public education, low cost financing, training for car dealers, and many more actions as outlined in the [Air District's EV Acceleration Plan](#). The goal is not to compete with the Air District, but to work together to eliminate fossil fuel vehicles as soon as possible.

MTC should not sit by and hope that state and local agencies plus the Air District (which has historically not even addressed mobile emission sources) will take care of this enormous challenge. We recognize that addressing electrification of transportation has not been a traditional role for MTC. However, historically city planning has evolved from considering only land use and transportation to now including housing, economic development, and conservation among many other elements. The climate crisis requires that we adopt new approaches to this global problem, which requires local action, and needs MTC's support.

Please direct staff to produce a supplemental report showing how Plan Bay Area 2050 will achieve zero emissions by 2050 or sooner. Note that Governor Newsom, on July 9, urged the California Air Resources Board to look at what can be done to "evaluate pathways" to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. Clearly there is no time or excuse for delay.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jack Lucero Fleck
On behalf of 350 Bay Area

July 19, 2021

Dear MTC and ABAG Staff,

We are [350 Bay Area](#). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the [draft Plan Bay Area 2050](#).

We recognize that Plan Bay Area 2050 (PBA) is vitally important to building a future Bay Area. It lays out a vision of an equitable, diverse and thriving Bay Area. And it includes many strategies to achieve that vision.

But something is missing. We are in the midst of a climate emergency, caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, that threatens the stability of our economy and our very survival. And transportation, a major element of PBA, is the biggest source of those greenhouse gases in the Bay Area. But PBA and MTC are missing in climate action when it comes to addressing this crisis.

We are writing to urge you to address this shortcoming. In particular, **Plan Bay Area 2050 should include plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 (or sooner)** in accordance with State and Bay Area goals, as we describe in the comments below.

[350 Bay Area](#)

350 Bay Area has local chapters in six of the nine Bay Area counties and is closely allied with 350 Silicon Valley in the South Bay. Our goal is to “eliminate carbon pollution and achieve a clean energy future with racial, economic, and environmental justice.” Since transportation is the main source of greenhouse gases in the Bay Area, it is an essential part of our work to eliminate internal combustion engine vehicles (ICEVs)—cars, buses, and trucks. We have engaged in such efforts with cities, counties and at the state level.

We worked with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) board to encourage them to set a goal for deep carbon emission reductions, which they did in 2013. BAAQMD has continued to support adoption of electric vehicles, as outlined in their recent [EV Acceleration Plan](#). MTC, which is the primary agency responsible for transportation, and which has a budget five times bigger than BAAQMD should take the lead on this electrification process.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to convince MTC to take any such action.

We have worked with elected leaders and activists in over 20 cities and counties in the Bay Area to declare climate emergencies. In fact at least nine members of the MTC Board of Directors have voted for these climate emergency declarations for the cities and counties they represent.

Naturally, we are disappointed and frustrated that MTC has not taken regional leadership in this crucial task.

Plan Bay Area Strengths

The good work that the plan represents includes its guiding principles and 35 strategies. We recognize that PBA makes a very good effort to address problems of housing, social inequity, and improved transit, biking & walking. We support the call for new development to be affordable, higher density, transit and/or jobs oriented, and to avoid displacement. We support funding of both housing and transit. And we support PBA's economic strategies to end poverty and reduce inequality.

But what about climate?

Plan Bay Area does not ignore the climate crisis. But it takes very limited steps to address it.

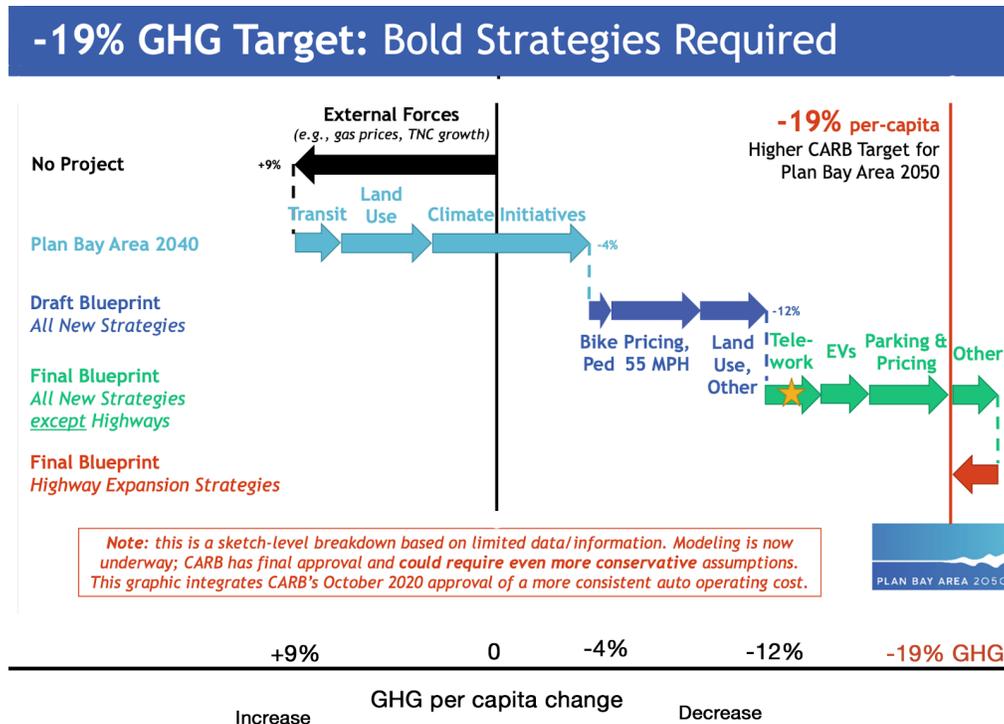
The main steps that it does take are to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The plan states, "Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation would decrease significantly as a result of these transportation and land use changes, and the Bay Area would meet the state mandate of a 19% reduction in per-capita emissions by 2035 — but only if all strategies are implemented." (pg xi)

The plans to achieve the 19% reduction are sketched in the [November 20, 2020 final blueprint document](#) (see figure below). MTC's breakdown is shown in the sketch below; note that we added a horizontal axis illustrating that movement to the left on the sketch is an increase in GHGs and movement to the right is a decrease--MTC may want to make a similar modification to clarify this sketch. According to the sketch, MTC believes that most of the 19% can be achieved by a combination of transit, land use, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, telework, parking and pricing, plus "climate initiatives" and "EV" actions.

Unfortunately, the climate initiatives listed in Plan Bay Area 2040 have not provided any significant GHG reduction to our knowledge so far. Also, transit ridership has declined and is unlikely to increase without significant support in funding, incentives and transit FIRST policies. More VMT reduction efforts such as parking/pricing management, congestion pricing for SOVs, and even car-free city centers should also be added. Changing land use patterns to foster significant mode shift to bike/pedestrian travel will similarly require support and planning, including safety enhancements, convenient return-from-shopping transit, and incentives.

We notice that MTC’s sketch below shows only a small reduction in GHGs from Electric Vehicles (EVs); we are assuming this refers to additional reductions beyond what the state is planning to achieve, but this would be good to clarify.

Figure showing MTC GHG reductions.



We agree with PBA’s efforts to reduce VMT. As suggested above, we would encourage strengthening them. In this regard, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Mobile Source Strategy is calling for a 25% per capita reduction in VMT to achieve both the State’s goals of 40% GHG reductions by 2030 and the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2045.

In response to a question at the East Bay Workshop on June 14, 2021 and a follow up email, MTC staffer Dave Vautin clarified that, with state mandated fuel efficiency gains, PBA would achieve as much as 53% per capita CO2 emission reductions by 2050. ([Page 81, Performance Supplemental report](#)--see table below)

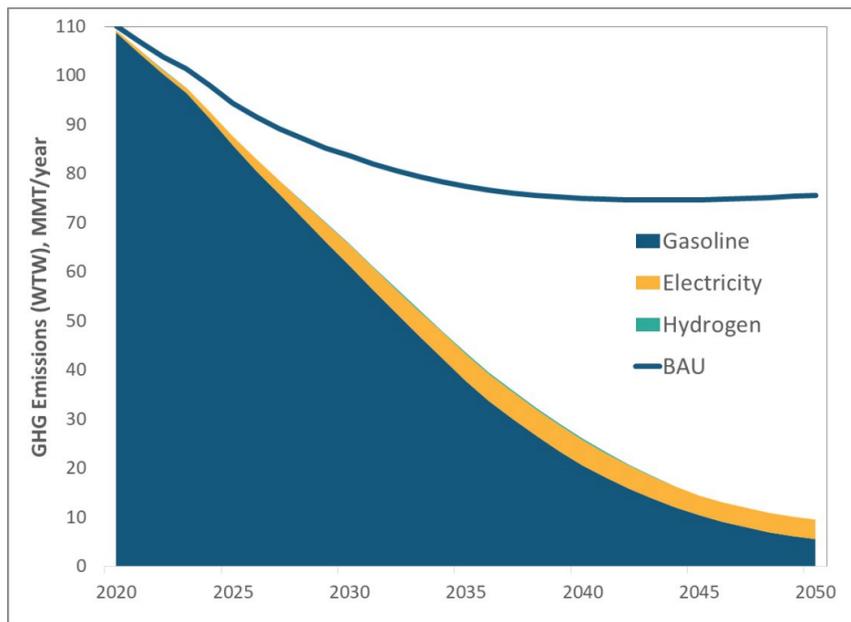
Table showing combined MTC GHG reductions and State fuel efficiency reductions

Will the environment of the Bay Area be healthier and safer?

Daily CO2 Emissions Per Capita, Relative to 2005	2015	2035 No Project	2035 Draft Plan	2035 EIR Alt 1	2035 EIR Alt 2	2050 No Project	2050 Draft Plan	2050 EIR Alt 1	2050 EIR Alt 2
Cars and light-duty trucks (SB 375)	-1%	1%	-22%	-22%	-23%	3%	-20%	-21%	-20%
All vehicles (including fuel efficiency gains)	-7%	-41%	-49%	-49%	-49%	-44%	-52%	-53%	-53%

MTC’s table above shows the importance of improving fuel efficiency. In fact, it understates what CARB is projecting--e.g. See figure 14 below from CARB’s [Draft 2020 Mobile Source Strategy](#), which projects over 90% reduction in GHGs from Light Duty Vehicles (LDV) by 2050.

Figure 14 – Statewide LDV GHG Emissions (Well-to-Wheel)



Consider what it will take to achieve this electrification of transportation, and what role MTC should play in this.

The Bay Area has over 8 million cars and trucks ([source--DMV](#)). Assume that PBA’s efforts to control VMT are successful and that the number of vehicles does not grow. To provide even 50% of these vehicles with chargers (most people understandably won’t buy an EV if they don’t have a place to charge it) at an estimated \$3,000 each would cost \$12 billion over the next 15 years. In addition, thousands of public chargers are needed for those who live in buildings without garages or driveways, and for trips that exceed the battery range for an electric vehicle.

This is a huge investment in transportation infrastructure, which MTC, along with cities and counties, should be supporting.

Also, If 75% of the cost of a charger goes to labor, that would be at least \$9 billion for labor, or about \$600 million per year. There will need to be training and hiring for electricians, building inspectors, plan checkers, and planners to build this infrastructure. The GOOD news is that these are skilled, well-paid employees. \$600 million per year--that's 7500 jobs at \$80,000 per year each.

But Plan Bay Area is leaving all this up to the state, the cities, and the market to work out.

Instead, we urge MTC to join the struggle to eliminate, not merely reduce, GHGs from transportation. As noted, many cities are working actively toward this by declaring climate emergencies and setting the goal to drastically reduce GHGs. MTC should support, coordinate, promote best practices, sponsor pilot projects, and generally be the regional leader for this enormous challenge.

MTC should also work to make sure the electrification process is equitable for all income levels and diverse communities.

Below are some of the programs that cities and counties are engaged in to promote electrification, where MTC could provide leadership (this list does not include programs already covered in PBA such as commuter benefits, bike & pedestrian planning, land use planning, etc). As noted above, we recognize that BAAQMD is supporting many important projects, but we think MTC should be much more active and should take the lead.

Model building codes/plans/best practices

- [AB 1236 compliance map \(streamlining EV charging\)](#) -- most Bay Area cities are in compliance, but not all; provide assistance to those who need it
- Require EV charging infrastructure in new apartments, [Peninsula Clean Energy](#)
- Require installation of EV charging in existing commercial lots ([SF](#))
- Include EV infrastructure in the city's general plan ([San Anselmo](#))
- EV Fleet adoption ([Fremont](#), [San Francisco](#))
- Zero Emission Vehicle Roadmaps ([SF](#), [Berkeley](#), [San Anselmo](#).)

The plan could also highlight actions where state and federal support are needed, and MTC could lobby for these actions. Some examples include:

- Funding for purchase of electric vehicles and e-bikes
 - Clean Cars for All (State)
 - Clean Vehicle Rebate Program (State)
 - Clean Trucks (State)
 - Fee on gas guzzlers to support purchase of EVs (e.g. AB1218)
- State phase out sale of gas cars by 2030--Resolutions have been passed by various cities--MTC should support this effort. (ZEV2030.org)

This is by no means meant to be a limiting list. MTC could also support innovative financing plans to help people install charging infrastructure in homes, apartments, and garages. For example, MTC could help cities and counties finance loans for installing outlets and charging stations using revenue bonds to be repaid from the savings from owning an EV.

And training programs for the thousands of electricians that will need to install the charging stations could be financed and led by MTC, in conjunction with IBEW and community colleges.

As an example of a good program that needs to be massively scaled up, consider the Clean Cars for All program. BAAQMD reports that from March of 2019 to November of 2020, they awarded 1,337 grants averaging about \$7500. This is very good, but recall that we need to replace 8 million vehicles in the Bay Area. If only ¼ of those qualify for low income grants, that is still 2 million grants, so the program needs massive funding, which MTC can help lobby for and administer.

The elimination of ICEVs is the biggest challenge facing the Bay Area's transportation future. It is essential that MTC play an active role in this transformation.

Next Steps

One of the first steps that President Biden took on January 21st was to issue an executive order expressing the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for all federal agencies to address climate change. MTC should adopt the spirit of this executive order and take up the challenge. As President Biden said, "Together, we must listen to science and meet the moment."

We understand that Plan Bay Area is nearly complete, and it is not likely to be feasible to incorporate all these changes quickly. Therefore, we recommend that the MTC board direct staff to prepare a supplemental report discussing how MTC can ensure that the Bay Area eliminates GHGs from transportation by the State's goal of 2045. Most

recently (July 9) Governor Newsom asked CARB to evaluate pathways to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035, which underscores the urgency of taking action. The time to act is now!

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jack Lucero Fleck
On behalf of 350 Bay Area