

Public Comment on Draft Plan Bay Area

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External Email

Members of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Plan Bay Area 2050 Team,

I would like to submit the following comments on the Draft Plan Bay Area.

1. No freeway or highway expansion. The draft plan calls for 450 miles of new freeway lanes by 2050, at a cost of \$20bn, including in urban areas like San Francisco. Almost half of this cost is hidden in the Express Lane program, which will primarily encourage new auto trips by expanding freeway capacity. Plan Bay Area's own analysis shows that building freeway lanes results in more congestion and higher emissions than if they were not built.

2. Create Express Lanes out of existing lanes. Instead of building new freeway lanes, we should create a network of free-flowing traffic lanes by converting existing general purpose lanes to Express Lanes. This will generate revenue, reduce emissions, and improve transit service, without the added congestion and emissions that come from building new freeway lanes.

3. Remove freeways instead of building more of them. It's time to remove urban freeways that cause high rates of asthma, covid vulnerability, and other public health impacts in communities of color, and don't even serve a compelling transportation need. Freeway removal was not even studied in Plan Bay Area, so we don't know how much these projects would improve congestion and emissions. Plan Bay Area should study proposed freeway removal projects, such as I-280 and the Central Freeway in San Francisco, and I-980 in Oakland.

Karl Voelker

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