



July 20, 2021

MTC Public Information

Attn: Draft EIR Comments

375 Beale Street

Suite 800, San Francisco, CA, 94105

Submitted via email: [eircomments@bayareametro.gov](mailto:eircomments@bayareametro.gov)

**Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report for Plan Bay Area 2050**

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), I respectfully submit this letter regarding the Plan Bay Area 2050 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Midpen preserves nearly 65,000 acres of open space on the San Francisco Peninsula and is one of the largest regional open space districts in California. Our mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. On the San Mateo County Coast, Midpen has an expanded mission to also acquire and preserve agricultural land of regional significance, preserve rural character, and encourage viable agricultural uses of land resources.

On October 28, 2020, Midpen submitted a comment letter in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the DEIR. This letter included several requests pertaining to (1) minimizing wildfire hazards in local communities within the wildland-urban interface, (2) ensuring wildlife connectivity and preventing further habitat fragmentation, and (3) emphasizing bicycle/pedestrian improvements and improving trail access. Midpen appreciates how these comments were addressed in the DEIR analysis and mitigation measures.

The Plan Bay Area 2050 strategy of promoting compact urban communities aligns with Midpen's mission to *preserve a regional greenbelt of open space* and is consistent with statewide planning efforts, including Executive Order N-82-20, which aims to conserve at least 30% of California's natural spaces by 2030. Based on our review of the DEIR alternatives, **Alternative 1: Transit Rich Area (TRA) Focus Alternative** – the environmentally superior alternative – is a growth strategy that maximizes protection of our natural and working lands.

Alternative 1 promotes compact urban growth, focusing development within built communities and avoiding sprawl into open space lands to preserve critical natural resources that perform ecological services (water recharge, carbon sequestration, flood protection, etc.) for our growing population. By focusing growth in urban areas, Alternative 1 minimizes development pressure within the wildland-urban interface to avoid exacerbating wildland fire risk and associated

impacts. Alternative 1 also reduces development pressure in agricultural areas to sustain local food production. All together, these benefits protect the remaining habitat corridors throughout our Bay Area region to sustain wildlife populations that are continuously stressed by human-made barriers such as exurban roadways and development.

Of ever-growing importance given the dramatic rise in climate-related impacts, the compact development strategy envisioned under Alternative 1 would reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – a key consideration that must be prioritized now and into the future.

Midpen strongly encourages the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to adopt Alternative 1 as the future vision for the Bay Area.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the Plan Bay Area 2050 DEIR. Please contact Jane Mark, Planning Manager ([jmark@openspace.org](mailto:jmark@openspace.org)) and Alex Casbara, Planner III ([acasbara@openspace.org](mailto:acasbara@openspace.org)) if you have questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,



Ana Ruiz (Jul 21, 2015, 3:29 PDT)

Ana M. Ruiz  
General Manager

cc:

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors