

Re: Public Comment on Draft Plan Bay Area

Raayan Zarandian Mohtashemi <[REDACTED]>

Wed 7/21/2021 9:34 AM

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

Cc: info@planbayarea.org <info@planbayarea.org>

External Email

Thank you.

In that case, additional comment is to adopt the policy from Alternative 1: Eliminate all freeway capacity-increasing projects and divert funding toward core capacity transit upgrades, while modifying all capacity-increasing express lane projects to general-purpose lane conversions.

On Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 9:01 AM Plan BayArea Info <planbayareainfo@bayareametro.gov> wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for your comments on Draft Plan Bay Area 2050, the long-range regional plan for transportation, housing, the economy and the environment.

Your comments specifically cite Strategies T6 and T12, which total \$20 billion out of the \$579 billion in overall transportation investments (3% of all transportation spending), all part of the overall \$1.4 trillion plan or 1% of total spending. These two strategies fund a suite of capacity-increasing (e.g., addition of a vehicle lane) and non-capacity-increasing (e.g., interchange safety improvements) investments in highways, express lanes and express buses. In total, capacity-increasing road investments would only increase lane-mileage in the Bay Area by 2% over the next three decades—with much of that new capacity reserved for carpools, express buses and toll-paying single-occupant vehicles.

While we agree that expanding freeway capacity can contribute to long-term increases in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), GHG increases associated with Strategies T6 and T12 would be fully mitigated through implementation of all-lane tolling (Strategy T5) starting in 2030. Furthermore, GHG reduction is just one of the many objectives associated with our long-range plan. Furthermore, limited strategic investments in our region's highways also can contribute toward important regional mobility and economic goals.

Concurrent with the review of the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 document, the accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was also out for public review. The Draft EIR studied an alternative known as Alternative 1 (TRA Focus Alternative), which does exactly what is proposed in your letter—eliminate all freeway capacity-increasing projects and diverting funding toward core capacity transit upgrades, while modifying all capacity-increasing express lane projects to general-purpose lane conversions. This alternative was identified by MTC and ABAG as the Environmentally-Superior Alternative. The Commission and ABAG Executive Board will determine whether to approve the Draft Plan, or one of the EIR alternatives, as the Final Plan this fall, likely in October.

Lastly, with regards to freeway teardowns, MTC and ABAG solicits transportation project ideas from local public agencies, such as the cities of San Francisco and Oakland, and from the public at-large, and then conducts a rigorous Project Performance Assessment to understand the costs and benefits associated with those investments. In 2018 and 2019, when this phase of the planning process was

conducted, neither city advanced the concept of freeway teardown to MTC for consideration, as such discussions presumably remain in the preliminary stages at the local level. Please note that the long-range plan is updated every four years, and MTC and ABAG would certainly consider such projects for future iterations of Plan Bay Area if and/or when one or more cities bring forward such a proposal for consideration in the regional planning process.

Thank you again for your feedback and engagement in the Plan Bay Area 2050 process.

The Plan Bay Area 2050 Team