

## Public Comment on Draft Plan Bay Area

Serena McNair [REDACTED] >

Fri 7/16/2021 10:45 PM

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

**\*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. We need additional bike lanes and infrastructure (a bike lane on the Bay Bridge would be an awesome start!), robust public transit, investments in high-speed rail, NOT more freeways! If the last two years have shown us anything, it's that we urgently need to divest from fossil fuels and transition to low- or no-carbon alternatives.
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. As we have seen with the closure of the Great Highway in San Francisco during COVID, closing a highway can be a success for climate goals as well as an excellent space for people to safely enjoy the outdoors within their community. San Francisco has also seen years of positive results with the removal of the Embarcadero Freeway. Taking it down has allowed for a massive increase in outdoor space for locals and tourists, space for businesses, and beautiful views that were previously blocked for decades, as well as a decrease in traffic. (The old adage "If you build it, they will come" works just as well in reverse--if you take down a freeway, people will find ways other than personal cars to get to where they need to go!) More cities--particularly cities with larger marginalized communities than San Francisco--deserve to experience the same benefits.

Serena McNair  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]