



NORTH BAY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

September 10, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

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Therese McMillan, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
 Bay Area Metro Center
 375 Beale Street, #800
 San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

RE: Plan Bay Area 2050

Dear Therese:

We are extremely appreciative that staff is proposing to include many of the North Bay’s highest priority projects in Plan Bay Area 2050, such as State Route 37 improvements and a number of other transit and roadway projects. Providing regional support is key to allowing these projects to advance, supporting much-needed mobility improvements for the area’s workers, residents, and visitors. Continuing to make progress on these projects is especially important in these challenging economic times. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 taught us well that construction and infrastructure projects, including transportation, are an essential employment and economic activity that can spur economic growth.

Nevertheless, we are writing to convey some comments pertaining to the proposed “all-lane tolling” strategy for Plan Bay Area 2050.

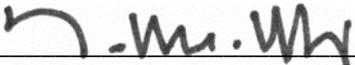
First, tolling could create equity issues for many of the North Bay’s low-income workers, and tolling freeways would be a significant change for all users of those facilities, but particularly for lower income workers. This is especially concerning at this time, when many in our communities are facing severe financial pressures. We urge you to pay particular heed to the challenges posed for low income communities in your assessment of the tolling strategy.

Second, we will likely get significant public push back from residents and travelers concerned about a tolling proposal – and our general concern is the timing and the potential that public outcry will delay the plan, projects, or both. It is crucial to consider the public reaction and to undertake significant public outreach before settling on any specific parameters. Since that outreach would primarily occur at the time of the study, it also seems premature to identify specific freeway segments or other operational details associated with this strategy as part of Plan Bay Area 2050.

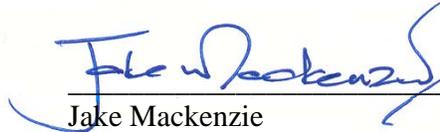
We recognize the challenges presented by SB375 with respect to meeting regional GHG emission targets, as well as the extraordinary staff work that has gone into the Blueprint development so far. We do not argue that the region should be (and is) undertaking very serious efforts to both prevent and prepare for the impacts of climate change. It is also increasingly apparent that the need to demonstrate compliance with the state’s established GHG targets is creating very challenging local dynamics. We may wish to consider dialoging with State agencies in coordination with the State’s other mega-regions to identify tenets that result in more practicable long range plans and policies that achieve both regional and the state goals.

Thank you for your consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact any of us for further discussion.

Sincerely,



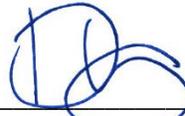
Damon Connolly
MTC Commissioner, Marin County



Jake Mackenzie
MTC Commissioner, Sonoma County



Alfredo Pedroza, Vice Chair
MTC Commissioner, Napa County



David Rabbitt
MTC Commissioner, Sonoma County



James Spering
MTC Commissioner, Solano County

Cc: Scott Haggerty, MTC Chair and Alameda County Board of Supervisor