

January 12, 2015

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607
info@mtc.ca.gov

Shireen Malekafzali
MTC Policy Advisory Council Member

Re: Public Participation Plan for Plan Bay Area 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Public Participation Plan for Plan Bay Area 2017. As one of the newest members of the MTC Policy Advisory Council, representing low-income communities and environmental justice interests in San Mateo County, I hope my comments support your goals of creating an effective, fair and inclusive public participation process that results in a strong Plan. In putting my comments together I solicited feedback from other San Mateo County residents, leaders and advocates.

- 1. Don't Start Planning without an Understanding of the Needs:** Include an early process for assessing important transportation needs of the region, particularly for low-income communities, communities of color, those with disabilities and older adults, and describe how the needs will guide the Plan's development.
 - a. Review and consider analyses already conducted on transportation need.
 - b. Create new methods for capturing need directly from residents, such as bus surveys, employee surveys at major employers of lower-wage workers, and organizations that provide services to older adults, those with disabilities and lower income communities.

- 2. Development of the Plan should be guided by Strong Targets and Measures from the Start.**
 - a. Ensure the targets and measures are a starting point for how the plan scenarios are developed rather than waiting until the EIR to see how well each scenario meets the performance measures. They should guide the scenario process and decision points throughout.
 - b. MTC is building out a comprehensive performance measure web portal, which will be a great way to feature and share how MTC and Plan Bay Area are doing against their goals. Currently, there is no Equity section. This program, called Vital Signs includes the following sections, 1) transportation, 2) land use, 3) economy and 4) environment. Equity is distinctly missing. If transportation and land use are the main mechanisms MTC utilizes to achieve its goals, with economy and environment featured as goals, equity must also be included. This highlight MTC's focus on advancing equity and allows for interested advocates to track progress. Equity measures should be both imbedded across sections as well as featured on their own.
 - c. Ensure issues of gentrification and involuntary displacement are front and center in the Plan's development. Be clear that the Plan intends to minimize and avoid the negative impacts of gentrification and plans to measures progress towards that goal. UC Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation analysis on this – scheduled for release in March 2015 –can be a great starting point for baseline data.
 - d. Provide a focus on quality jobs. Plan Bay Area provides an enormous opportunity to support the advancement and development of new quality jobs. The opportunity should be maximized.
 - e. Include consideration of health outcomes, especially for vulnerable populations, in the Plan Bay Area process. Specify how the plan will be developed with clear health equity goals.

- f. Provide support for the development of accurate measures of transportation demand and mode share to effectively consider walking, biking and public transportation as critical means of transportation.
- g. Build in steps for considering and implementing the actions and strategies that have been developed under the HUD SCI grant.

3. Maximize Effective and *Ongoing* Means of Public Participation by low-income people, those with disabilities and older adults.

- a. Engage with underrepresented communities much earlier in the process with a focus on establishing understanding around the fundamentals of regional planning and how it impacts local experiences and local planning.
- b. Provide information on how to ensure continued participation through resources and easy to access venues and means of providing substantive input.
- c. Vary the location of Plan Bay Area deliberation meetings around the Bay Area to make it easier to participate and enable a broader set of participants from across the region.
- d. Provide local opportunities for stakeholders, particularly those that are low-income, people of color, those with disabilities and older adults to meet with commissioners and other MTC decision-makers in their communities to express their needs and aspirations.
- e. Maintain an Equity Working Group as an effective forum for integrating equity throughout the process.
- f. Clarify the linguistic needs of communities of concern and specify how the participation process will support access for limited English speakers with an important stake in the Plan's development.
- g. Provide mini-grants to organizations representing low-income participants to conduct outreach and facilitate their participation effectively and appropriately.
- h. Include public participation in the development of scenarios, not just evaluation of the scenarios.
- i. Demonstrate how public input is considered and incorporated within the process.
- j. Specify how the Public Participation Process will be utilized and referred to throughout the Plan development and how accountability to the Plan will be assured.
- k. Ensure lessons learned from the last Plan Bay Area public participation process are not lost and are incorporated throughout this next round.

Please let me know if you'd like to meet to discuss any of these comments in more detail. I would also welcome any opportunities to best ensure the full engagement and participation of San Mateo County residents in the Plan Bay Area development.

Sincerely,

Shireen Malekafzali
MTC Policy Advisory Council Member