

## Draft PBA 2050 Comment Form submission

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Submitted on July 20, 2021 Submitted values are: \*Name\* Steve Birdlebough \*Email\* [REDACTED] [1] \*Zip Code\* [REDACTED] \*Affiliation\* Transportation & Land Use Coalition \*Topic\* Transportation \*Comment\* [ Sonoma County Transportation & Land-Use Coalition Letterhead ] July 20, 2021 Metropolitan Transportation Commission 375 Beale Street, Suite 800 San Francisco, CA, 94105 Via E-mail info@bayareametro.gov Re: Plan Bay Area 2050 - Comments Greetings MTC Staff and Commissioners— The Transportation and Land-Use Coalition of Sonoma County congratulates you on completion of draft Plan Bay Area 2050. We recognize that the pandemic, as well as recent climate-driven events, are making planning particularly challenging. Hopefully, our “small county” perspective regarding the draft Plan can contribute to a final Plan that enables the Region and its residents to thrive. Sonoma County and all of its cities have adopted climate emergency resolutions, recognizing the need for extraordinary steps to achieve carbon neutrality. The County and several of its cities have set the year 2030 as the target date for reducing GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 levels. It is anticipated that with agricultural and other sequestration, it will be possible by 2030 to zero-out carbon impacts for the County as a whole. Because of the suburban character of Sonoma County, strong measures must be taken to accomplish these tasks. Automotive GHG emissions must be significantly reduced. This means that even with aggressive promotion of zero emission vehicles, driving must be reduced at the rate of about 5% per year. To achieve such reductions, more housing will need to be built close to job centers. We will need to make local streets safe for pedestrians and cyclists. Street designs and speed limits for autos will need to make 15-MPH the norm in most neighborhoods. Some streets near schools will need to be closed to traffic when children are present. Protected lanes for cyclists will need to be provided on arterials. More ped-bike bridges will be needed to connect neighborhoods that are at present separated by freeways. Convenience stores will be needed in every neighborhood to reduce frequent use of cars. Most of our long-distance commutes will need to be converted to telecommutes, or made by carpool and transit. Movement of heavy goods will need to be shifted from highways to rail. We appreciate your work on Plan Bay Area thus far. Attached are specific suggestions for changes to the text that would make it consistent with the need to reduce GHG emissions from the Transportation Sector to net-zero over the next nine years throughout the Bay Area. If you have questions concerning our comments or suggestions, please contact me at: scbaffirm@gmail.com (707) 576-6632. Cordially, /S/ Steve Birdlebough cc: Supervisor Rabbitt Santa Rosa City Council Member Fleming - - - - - [Attachment] RECOMMENDED CHANGES FOR PLAN BAY AREA 2050 The below recommendations aim to make it clear to city and county policy makers that they must focus on reducing VMT and improving active transportation much sooner than the year 2050. Deletions are indicated by [brackets] and additions are IN CAPITAL LETTERS. Questions, explanations, etc. are in BOLD CAPITALS. <https://www.planbayarea.org/draftplan2050> CHAPTER 2 | HOUSING STRATEGIES Spur Housing Production for Residents of all Income Levels (p. 11/17 Par.2) Increasing affordable housing production in WALKABLE High-Resource Areas and in places where affordable housing has historically been prohibited, opposed or discouraged HAS MANY BENEFITS. IT can REDUCE DRIVING AND increase access to opportunities like high-quality homes, schools and transportation for residents with low incomes. INVESTING IN HOUSING CLOSE TO JOBS AND SHOPPING REDUCES NEEDS TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN ADDITIONAL LANES OF HIGHWAY CHAPTER

4 | TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES Maintain and Optimize the Existing Transportation System: (p. 5/23 Par. 3) ... enable a seamless mobility experience that will help travelers navigate the many TRANSIT AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION options available to them and make more sustainable choices. THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS WILL BE INCENTIVIZED TO WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER BY PRIORITIZING FUNDING FOR PROJECTS THAT REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS. (p. 6/23 Par. 3) BY STEADILY REDUCING VMT, THE PLAN WILL AVOID FUNDING PROJECTS THAT ATTEMPT TO [include a strategy to] address highway bottlenecks and improve interchanges through [a limited selection of] ROAD widenings or road extensions to serve new developments. These road projects ARE UNLIKELY TO [may help] reduce congestion FOR LONG AND they WOULD VERY [will] likely increase vehicle miles traveled RATHER THAN DECREASING THEM AS IS REQUIRED. [in the long-term, with] Any congestion relief benefits OF ROAD WIDENING ARE LIKELY TO disappear LONG BEFORE [the year] 2050 SO CAPACITY INCREASES ARE NOT PART OF THE PLAN. (p. 6/23 Par. 3) [long term] Solutions to the region's congestion challenges, including road pricing, transit-supportive land use and transit improvements, [that] have been shown to succeed across a variety of [future] conditions IN OTHER REGIONS. THESE STRATEGIES WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN PART BECAUSE ROAD-WIDENING IS NOT PART OF THE PLAN. (p. 7/23) MAP OF toll lanes REVISED TO OMIT NEW LANES. (p. 8/23) implementing per-mile tolling on select congested freeways where parallel transit options [exist] CAN REASONABLY BE ESTABLISHED. MAKE SURE EVERYONE CAN GET A BARGAIN TRANSIT PASS STRATEGIES Create healthy and safe streets (p. 10/23) ... repurposed road space formerly in the exclusive domain of cars as car-free "slow streets" where people can SAFELY walk and bike. Slow streets programs and new parklets have cropped up around the Bay Area as people seek to spend quality, socially distanced time outdoors. IN MANY PLACES, MOST TRIPS ARE LESS THAN THREE MILES AND DO NOT REQUIRE A CAR. THE PLAN SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE URGENCY OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS. GOALS THAT DON'T NEED TO BE REALIZED FOR THREE DECADES FAIL TO MOTIVATE LOCAL POLICY MAKERS. PROVIDE A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS THAT HAVE RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT VMT REDUCTIONS ELSEWHERE. PRIORITIZE FUNDING FOR PROTECTED BIKE LANES AND IMPROVED SIDEWALKS. (p. 10/23 Par. 3) By 2030[50], protected bike lanes and off-street paths would be plentiful, STREETS WITH 15-MPH SPEED LIMITS CAN connect residents with commercial corridors, transit stops and community places. REDUCED vehicular speeds would [be reduced,] improve safety outcomes for everyone on the road, [and] inviting more people to bike and walk safely. CITIES CAN QUICKLY ADOPT STREET CLOSURES NEAR SCHOOLS WHEN STUDENTS ARE PRESENT, ENCOURAGING FULL USE OF SAFE ROUTES TO WALK OR BICYCLE TO SCHOOL. (p. 10/23 Par. 4) ... [a] AN EVENTUAL well-connected network with 10,000 new miles of protected bike lanes and off-street paths, with particular emphases on connections to transit and investments in Equity Priority Communities. This strategy includes investments in regional walking and biking routes, such as the, California Coastal Trail, the Great California Delta Trail, the Iron Horse Trail and the Bay Trail, that are critical for [commuting and] recreation AND MAY BE USED BY SOME COMMUTERS. [alike.] Aside from on-street infrastructure, a suite of complementary investments — including secure bike parking at transit stations, pedestrian lighting and intersection safety projects — supports a future where walking and biking are safe and comfortable choices for people of all ages. THIS YEAR WE SAW THAT STATE FUNDING FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IS INADEQUATE. FEDERAL FUNDING SHOULD BE SOUGHT. (p. 12/23 Par. 2) ... combined emphasis on lower speeds and street design for safer travel. This includes both a policy to reduce speeds on freeways to 55 miles per hour and the introduction of context-specific speed limit reductions on local streets, with speeds capped at between 20 to 35 miles per hour on local streets AND 15-MPH SPEED LIMITS IN SLOW SPEED NEIGHBORHOODS PATTERNED ON THE BARCELONA SUPERBLOCKS. STRATEGIES Build a next-generation transit network: (p. 15/23 Par. 3) To strengthen the quality of baseline service, frequency boosts on bus and light rail service throughout the Bay Area would be implemented. This includes improvements on urban systems like AC Transit, Muni and VTA, as well as on suburban systems like Napa VINE, County

Connection in Contra Costa County, and Sonoma County Transit. More frequent service will allow passengers to enjoy shorter wait times, more convenient service and less crowding. THE SOURCES OF FUNDING WILL BE \_\_\_ (p.16/23 Par. 2) Link21, a new program to transform Northern California's passenger rail network with a new transbay crossing between Oakland and San Francisco at its core. This new crossing will provide much needed capacity in the heart of the Bay Area and COULD CONNECT THE CAPITOL RAIL CORRIDOR TO SAN FRANCISCO. (p. 17/23 Par. 3) For those commuting ON THE PENINSULA [into the Bay Area] from the south, the plan includes investments IN ELECTRIFICATION OF CALTRAIN that lay the foundation for California HighSpeed Rail in the region. (p. 17/23 Par. 3) [Commuters living east of the Bay Area in San Joaquin County can also expect to see a new rail connection through Valley Link, a commuter rail line that will connect the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station with destinations in eastern Alameda County, into the Central Valley ] THE PLAN SHOULD NOT ENCOURAGE COMMUTES IN EXCESS OF 15 MILES. (18/23) HSR — EITHER DELETE ALL REFERENCES TO HIGH SPEED RAIL, OR INCLUDE SMART PASSENGER SERVICE BETWEEN MARIN AND SUISUN CITY BEGINNING BY 2040 AS SPECIFIED BY THE STATE RAIL PLAN, AND SMART SERVICE TO CLOVERDALE BY 2050. HIGH SPEED RAIL AND SMART TRAIN SERVICE TO SUISUN CITY ARE INTER-CITY SERVICES WITH FEW STOPS. THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO SERVE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF COMMUTERS. (19/23) ... freeway widening projects, with a larger focus on making better use of the existing freeway network ... CONVERT EXISTING LANES TO MANAGED TOLL LANES AS NECESSARY TO provide a reserved freeway lane that allows buses, carpoolers and fee-paying solo drivers to bypass congestion .... SINCE VMT MUST BE REDUCED VERY SOON, IT MAKES SENSE NOT TO WIDEN ANY MORE ROADS. ROAD-WIDENING WORKS AGAINST GHG REDUCTION! MISSING IS THE SHIFT OF FREIGHT FROM HIGHWAYS TO RAIL. TRUCKS CONTRIBUTE TO CONGESTION, COSTLY ROAD MAINTENANCE, AND EMIT SIGNIFICANT GHGS. ZERO EMISSION TRUCKS EMBODY SIGNIFICANT GHGS AND CAUSE ROAD DAMAGE DEMANDING HIGH-GHG REPAIR WORK. CHAPTER 5 | ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES - Reduce Climate Emissions (p. 7/22 Par. 2) CITIES AND COUNTIES PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING LAND USE AND STREET PROJECTS SO THIS STRATEGY CAN ONLY BE [When] implemented TO THE EXTENT THAT INCENTIVES COORDINATE [together as one package of] policies and investments. THE 35 plan strategies SEEK TO reduce GHG emissions by: focusing housing and commercial construction in walkable, transit-accessible places; investing in transit and active transportation modes; and shifting the location of jobs to encourage shorter commutes. (p. 8/22 Par. 2) By the year 2030 [5], large employers would have to ensure that no more than 40% of their workforce commutes by car on an average workday under the Plan Bay Area 2050 vision. To minimize impacts on small businesses and rural jobs, businesses with fewer than 50 employees would be exempt from this policy, as would agricultural employers. Each employer would have the flexibility to choose the right set of tools for their employees to meet or exceed this target. ABOUT \_\_\_ THOUSAND CARS WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE ROAD EACH DAY. THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE THAT HAVE ENDORSED THIS REQUIREMENT INCLUDE: \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 8/22 Par. 3) The Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program, codified into law in 2016, mandates that all employers in the Bay Area with 50 or more full-time employees offer their employees benefits that encourage alternatives to solo car commuting. MTC also coordinates several other transportation demand management initiatives, such as vanpools, education programs, and mobility hubs that concentrate transit and other shared commute options at community spaces. These programs and others like them would receive funding and additional support at the regional level to compound their impacts and reach more Bay Area residents. THE MOST LIKELY SOURCE OF \$33 MILLION IN ANNUAL FUNDING IS \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 9/22) Every auto trip begins and ends at a parking spot, making VALUE-PRICED parking another transportation demand management tool THAT INFLUENCES [with great potential to shift] individual behavior. There are a number of approaches [at policymakers' and employers' fingertips] related to parking that can encourage people to use alternatives to driving. [alone to work] For example, commuter benefits programs can financially incentivize employees to take transit, and eliminating free

parking at workplaces IS KNOWN TO [may] discourage them from driving. An oversupply of parking encourages driving and impacts everyone, whether they drive or not. In addition to the harmful environmental effects of increased driving, the HIGH costs of constructing and managing parking [in a building] are [typically] passed on to CUSTOMERS, property owners and renters. Land currently used for personal vehicle storage also prevents other potentially valuable uses of the space, such as housing or parks. EXAMPLES OF CITIES WITH STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL PARKING POLICIES ARE SAN FRANCISCO AND \_\_\_\_\_. SUBURBAN CITIES THAT ARE ACTIVELY EXPLORING SUCH POLICIES INCLUDE \_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 9/22 Par. 2) However, there are enduring policies in many cities and counties that mandate building a minimum number of parking spaces at new housing and office developments, regardless of demand. Removing OFF-STREET parking mandates can allow for parking to better match market demand while aligning with transportation demand management strategies that reduce driving and traffic. Implementing this strategy benefits housing affordability as well, by allowing developers to forgo the expense of adding unnecessary parking and pass those savings on to renters or homebuyers. (P. 10/22) While Plan Bay Area 2050 seeks to reduce the overall need for vehicle trips, it also recognizes that every trip is different and that cars will continue to be a transportation option FOR SOME TIME [into the future]. In addition to the above strategies that reduce car trips, the plan also explores strategies that can REDUCE THE GHG IMPACTS OF [make] those remaining auto trips [as sustainable as possible] by expanding clean vehicle initiatives. [The long lifespan of most vehicles presents an opportunity for] Bay Area residents CAN [to] retire their older, more polluting vehicles in exchange for rebates to buy SMALL zero-emission vehicles THAT MINIMIZE EMBEDDED GHGS. . IN ADDITION TO [aside from] support for CLEAN vehicle purchases, [a suite of supportive programs within,] MTC's Climate Initiatives Program WOULD MAKE THE ROAD NETWORK SAFE FOR ELECTRIC BICYCLES, GOLF CARTS AND OTHER SMALL [would further facilitate the adoption of] clean vehicles. These programs include a regional network of electric vehicle chargers and hydrogen fueling [network] stations [along] and WOULD INCLUDE incentives to RETIRE [trade-in] fossil fuel-powered vehicles AND TO WALK, BICYCLE, AND DRIVE SMALL ZERO EMISSION [electric] vehicles. To advance equity through clean vehicle initiatives, Plan Bay Area 2050 places a specific emphasis on providing charging infrastructure in Equity Priority Communities and supporting households with low incomes to choose electric NON-FOSSIL alternatives when replacing vehicles. THE PRIMARY INCENTIVES FOR CITIES AND COUNTIES TO STEADILY REDUCE VMT WILL BE \_\_\_\_\_. SUPPORT A REQUIREMENT TO CRUSH USED FOSSIL FUEL VEHICLES TO PREVENT THEM FROM CONTINUING TO EMIT GHGS THE PLAN SHOULD CREATE GOALS AND INCENTIVES FOR ANNUAL VMT REDUCTIONS THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED BY EACH CITY AND COUNTY IN ORDER TO SCORE WELL FOR STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS. [1] mailto: [REDACTED]