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To: info@planbayarea.org
Subject: Plan Bay Area 2050 Blueprint comments
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External Email

Dear all -

Here are my comments in no particular order:

- PBA 2050 transportation and land use strategies are not intertwined enough in blueprint with environmental, (public health) and social equity strategies. One example, goals and strategies for transportation should include adapting to sea level rise, restoring watershed quality and function with infrastructure improvements (including transportation), and removing physical and economic barriers to equitable opportunities for mobility. MTC and ABAG should coordinate Plan Bay Area with other Bay Area agency goals like BCDC's, State Coastal Conservancy's (with respect to Bay Area), San Francisco Bay Restoration Authorities'. How do they map together? What are multi-benefit opportunities?
- The combination of current, and possible new, state housing and transportation CEQA streamlining legislation and Plan Bay Area PDA funding incentives pit local governments hungry for funding and development dollars against their communities that want a say in how growth will be managed.
- The Blueprint does not go far enough in ensuring robust public transportation networks which is critical for creating sustainable communities for all income levels.
- In the past, efforts to encourage more trips by bike, walking or transit have not been hugely effective. What if PBA 2050 transportation strategies are ineffective in curbing reliance on single occupancy automobile use? Won't there just be more congestion, idling combustion engines, and GHG emissions as a result that would eliminate progress toward sustainability goals creating a possible backlash in public sentiment on these planning efforts?
- How will the Blueprint's transportation planning adapt to changing employment markets, including recent increases in work-at-home and telecommuting opportunities, that may reduce transit ridership, affect travel patterns and infrastructure needs?
- Regarding, Draft Blueprint Transportation Strategy "1. Operate and Maintain the Existing System . . . while ensuring that all Priority Development Areas have sufficient transit service levels." It seems the extent and reliability of the transit system and its flexibility in getting riders where and when they want to go is not built in. How might dense development built around fixed rail transit be impacted if fixed rail does not provide frequent, affordable transit to destinations like job centers? SMART in Marin County is one such single-track, fixed-route system that has not induced mode shift or reduced GHGs as hoped, has struggled financially, and has limited future capacity. How will nearby highway and arterial congestion be affected if Northgate PDA planning increases housing density without a truly efficient and affordable transit option with

flexibility to destinations? Will walking, biking and transit ever efficiently get people to where they need to go on a daily basis in places like Marin County? How will impacts of PBA's future 2% housing growth plan for Marin (8,800 housing units?) and yet expected declining job growth (below 0%) meet sustainability goals? Without robust transit or large job center destinations, PBA 2050 Blueprint in Marin seems likely to make meeting sustainability goals more difficult.

- The individual and community health impacts are largely unknown on infill development and TOD (housing within ½ mile radius of fixed rail transit station). San Rafael's PDAs plan to be located along Hwy 101, and its associated interchanges and arterials. Impacts include heightened noise, congestion, pollution and traffic.
- Adapting to sea level rise and reducing pollutants to the bay through state-mandated and regional stormwater pollution prevention measures should be included and prioritized in the Transportation Complete Streets Strategy implementation.
- It will require a lot of nuance to integrate large scale planning policies and processes that will translate into a range of urban scales that meet local "livability" ideals as well as those of sustainability. Legislation and PBA 2050 have lots of language about "sustainability" yet there is the ongoing threat that this type of top-down regional planning serves the interests of developers capitalizing on incentives rather than serving the interests of local communities. It's important to think through the local-scale impacts from broad regional policies and build in flexibility that is context-sensitive in integrating growth into existing communities.
- Growth strategies need neighborhood vision and participation in development plans so that amenities and services meet the needs of growing urban neighborhoods. Only then can incremental mixed-use development opportunities that are appropriate in size and transition be integrated into neighborhoods for truly sustainable and livable futures for generations that follow. Human scale, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, public realm land use patterns that concentrate street activity, trees, narrower streets, etc are important components. Also important are effective implementation of anti-displacement strategies.
- How might Plan Bay Area 2050 blueprint strategies benefit by identifying zones for opportunities where Daniel Parolek's Missing Middle Housing examples, (converting often-times beautiful existing buildings to duplex, triplex, fourplex configurations or building courtyard apartments or small-scale townhouse developments), would work well and incentivizing those. The Blueprint's Housing Strategy "Allow a Greater Mix of Housing Types and Densities in Growth Areas" is not specific enough to ensure that.
- It's important to provide safeguards so that as Bay Area housing becomes more affordable, and communities and cities more sustainable and livable, that planning and community-based efforts benefit local tax paying residents and that properties do not become "global commodities" for investors. Plan Bay Area 2050 would do well to incentivize local residents to invest in their communities for equity, sustainability and livability reasons so they will reap the benefits of their community-based efforts as would future generations of Bay Area residents.

Thank you for your efforts and your consideration of these thoughts.

Respectfully,

Kate Powers, 