

June 9, 2011

Mark Green, Chair, and Members  
ABAG Administrative Committee

James P. Sperring, Chair, and Members  
MTC Planning Committee

Dear Chairs and Members:

We join two of your advisory bodies – MTC’s Policy Advisory Council and the RTP/SCS Equity Working Group – in urging you to add a scenario that maximizes social equity to the set of alternatives that MTC and ABAG will develop and analyze this summer. The list of scenarios before you today, which was only released to the public in the past week, will be incomplete without such a scenario. Including one in the analysis is critical to your informed decision making and the public’s meaningful participation.

Instead of voting to accept the set of five alternatives before you today, we ask that you **direct staff to include for analysis an additional scenario that maximizes social equity — the Equity, Environment, and Jobs Scenario (see attached) — and to ensure that *all* of the scenarios advance social equity outcomes.** Staff should then present you with an updated slate of alternatives at your July meeting.

The best Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) will be the one that most strongly promotes all of the “three Es”: equity for low-income communities and communities of color, economic vitality, and environmental health. None of the five proposed Alternative Scenarios before you today offers that choice.

Key components of an Equity, Environment, and Jobs Scenario are summarized on the **attached sheet** and include maximizing the funds needed to operate local transit service while providing affordable housing in job-rich suburban communities as well as in the urban core. We believe that this scenario will outperform the five currently before you, not only in terms of social equity performance measures, but in terms of GHG reduction, local job creation, and other important regional goals. Hard facts support our view: research shows that transit operating expenditures create 40% more jobs than spending on capital projects, and that affordable housing near entry-level jobs improves access to economic opportunity. Similarly, investing in robust local transit operations is the most cost-effective way to maximize GHG reductions, and affordable housing near jobs directly reduces driving.

The failure to include and analyze an equity scenario will not only deprive the public and decision makers of important information about the range of choices available, but will also shut out the meaningful input of advisory groups whose work is not yet completed. The work of your Housing Methodology Committee and Equity Working Group, bodies you created to advise you on the Sustainable Communities Strategy, is ongoing and not reflected in the five scenarios now before you. These bodies should have a meaningful opportunity to inform the scenarios. Rather than voting on an incomplete set of alternatives today, we request that staff be directed to present an updated set of scenarios, including an equity-focused scenario, at your meeting next month.

We look forward to working with staff to develop the specific details of the Equity, Environment and Jobs Scenario, and of the other staff-outlined scenarios.

Sincerely,

*ACCE Riders for Transit Justice*

*Albany Rollers & Strollers*

*Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)*

*Bay Localize*

*Breakthrough Communities*

*Center for Progressive Action*

*Ella Baker Center*

*Genesis*

*Grassroots Leadership Network of Marin*

*Green Youth Alliance*

*PolicyLink*

*Public Advocates*

*Public Interest Law Firm, a project of the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley*

*Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP), A Project of the Public Health Institute*

*SF Bay Walks*

*SF Council of Community Housing Organizations (CCHO)*

*SF Walks & Rolls*

*United Seniors of Oakland & Alameda County*

*Urban Habitat*

*Walk&Roll Berkeley*

Enclosure: Equity, Environment and Jobs Scenario features

cc: MTC Commissioners and ABAG Board Members  
MTC and ABAG staff

## **Equity, Environment and Jobs Scenario**

MTC and ABAG should put an “Equity, Environment, and Jobs” scenario on the table for consideration. We recommend the scenario include the following key features.

### **Land Use Components of the Scenario:**

- Distribute a substantial proportion of the region’s overall housing growth to high-opportunity communities based on the presence of jobs, high-performing schools, transit service levels, and other indicators of opportunity.
- Allocate to cities with disproportionately low numbers of lower-income residents a proportionately higher percentage of extremely-low, very-low, and low income housing units.

### **Transportation Components of the Scenario:**

- Maximize existing and new funding for local transit operations, and prioritize operating assistance for those communities in which lower-income populations are concentrated or for job centers which commit to more lower-income housing growth, with a goal of increasing transit operating funding substantially.
- Prioritize capital funds that cannot be shifted or swapped to transit operations for maintenance of the existing transit system rather than capital expansion.
- Include only the most cost-effective transit expansion projects, including those prioritized in CBTPs (Community Based Transportation Plans), in communities that protect existing low-income residents from displacement.
- Prioritize capital projects that will improve health and safety, especially in Communities of Concern, that equalize mortality rates by race and income.
- Set aside a portion of Local Streets & Roads (LSR) and other funds to reward local jurisdictions that accommodate, and provide local funding to build, a significant portion of the region’s lower-income housing need and/or enact strong policies to protect existing extremely-low, very-low, and low income residents from displacement.

We look forward to working with staff to develop the specific details of the Equity, Environment and Jobs Scenario, and of the other staff-outlined scenarios.