



May 2, 2022

Dear Executive Director McMillan:

We want to thank you and your staff for the immense amount of effort and thoughtful planning that you have given to updating the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy. Much has changed in the Bay Area since the original Transit-Oriented Development policy was passed in 2005. Our converging crises of housing unaffordability; climate change; racial and economic inequities have only deepened in scale and urgency.

Plan Bay Area 2050 charts a path forward for more inclusive, equitable, affordable and sustainable communities. It sets ambitious targets for housing and job growth, with needed shifts to more sustainable and affordable forms of transportation. The plan seeks to deliver 33,000 annual new homes (half to people with low incomes) and 25,000 annual new jobs within transit rich areas. The plan also aims to limit the share of trips made in single occupant vehicles to just 36 percent, a goal which will rely significantly on mode-shift in transit rich areas.

MTC has an obligation to implement its sustainable communities strategy, and the TOC policy update is a critical mechanism by which our region can chart an ambitious path towards realizing the goals of the plan. It is an opportunity to operationalize Plan Bay Area 2050's goals for social and racial equity, including more sustainable transportation connections in Equity Priority Communities and meaningfully tackling housing affordability and anti-displacement.

We are aware that staff have been engaging with local jurisdictions to receive feedback on the draft TOC policy. While this is an important part of the policy refinement process, we urge you and your staff to hold this feedback in the context of the multi-year, extensive feedback process that you undertook to design and refine Plan Bay Area 2050. This outreach was groundbreaking and involved an incredible amount of effort to reach every corner of the Bay Area community. The results of that engagement – the goals and strategies of Plan Bay Area 2050, must remain the guides for the TOC policy if we are to achieve the outcomes our region needs to be a more affordable, sustainable, and equitable place to live. Given the collective agreements reached and unanimously supported in Plan Bay Area 2050, it makes sense for staff from individual jurisdictions to recommend how -- but not whether -- any given jurisdiction should go about meeting its share of growth, mode shift, equity, and affordability targets near transit.

We were encouraged by the draft TOC policy presented by staff in January of this year. The draft policy was consistent with many of the core principles we see as essential for an effective and equitable TOC policy and set the stage for further refinement to strengthen the policy. We submitted memos (attached) highlighting additional ways the policy can center equity, such as setting minimum standards for affordable housing and anti-displacement policy implementation, incorporating strong community engagement requirements in equity priority communities to advance transit station access, and dramatically increasing parking management mechanisms like TDM standards and eliminating parking minimums.

The success of the TOC policy, however, depends not only on policy design but even more so on whether cities and counties complete the planning and policy changes necessary to meet the goals of the policy. Effective incentives are essential to a policy that will be successful not only in concept but in outcomes. The 2005 policy set a strong foundation for connecting discretionary transit expansion resources to the transit-oriented development policy goals – working to ensure that new transit investments supported the intended ridership, sustainable mode-shift, and equitable development goals. For this new TOC policy, it is important that we carry forward the successes of 2005 and condition discretionary funds for new transit corridors, infill stations, and ferry terminals; our funding for new and enhanced transit is limited and must be prioritized for places that will deliver on Plan Bay Area's vision. For this new policy update, we must also expand the incentives in our toolbox to include OBAG as well as other potential discretionary funds and project endorsements.

Finally, we recognize that the TOC policy update is happening during a time when local jurisdictions are facing great change as well as unprecedented demands from the State with their Regional Housing Needs Allocations and housing element updates. Despite these competing demands, our region cannot afford to pick one vital policy at the expense of the other. MTC should convene leaders to figure out how implementation of RHNA and the TOC policy can be complementary and coordinated. We would welcome the opportunity to talk through these challenges with you and to bring a solutions-oriented approach to ensuring that the TOC policy will be effective at meeting Plan Bay Area 2050 and successfully implemented across the region.

Thank you for your time and continued interest in engaging with community stakeholders in this process.

Respectfully,

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