



December 2, 2019

The Honorable Scott Haggerty
Chair, The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
375 Beale St #800
San Francisco, CA 94105
district1@acgov.org
info@PlanBayArea.org

RE: Plan Bay Area

Dear Mr. Haggerty:

On behalf of the Safe Routes Partnership, I am writing to provide comments and suggestions for the upcoming deliberations around Plan Bay Area 2050. If taken, our comments will improve the health, safety, education, and well-being of children, parents, and families in the Bay Area, as well as address equity and improve access to active transportation. To address the future needs of the region, Plan Bay Area must continue to address investments in Safe Routes to School, Complete Streets policies, active transportation infrastructure, and education programs.

The mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, to improve the health and wellbeing of kids of all races, income levels, and abilities, and to foster the creation of healthy communities for everyone. We have been part of Plan Bay Area discussions since 2012 and hope the viewpoints we have expressed will continue to be reflected in the next iteration of Plan Bay Area.

Regional Safe Routes to School

- Since 2012, MTC has directly funded Safe Routes to School, including both infrastructure and non-infrastructure education and outreach programs. Though the process of funding has changed a few times since then, MTC has continued to provide counties with funding that is dedicated to Safe Routes to School.
- Funding must continue for these highly successful programs to ensure that children can safely walk and bicycle to and from school throughout the region. This amount has been

programed at \$5 million a year over 5 or so year increments. These programs have been extremely successful and deserve to be increased to at least \$7.5 million per year over the same time period.

- MTC should explore ways to continue to support efforts in some counties, such as Santa Clara, and Contra Costa, to centralize their programs and improve data collection.

Spare the Air Youth (STAY) Program and Climate Initiatives Innovative Grants programs

- MTC currently provides funding for programs that educate youth about climate change and ways to fight it as part of both the Climate Initiatives Grants and Spare the Air Youth. Funding for programs that were assessed as successful in the Alta Planning Evaluation of the program should continue, which include the Center for Climate Protection, the bicycle coalitions, and the Bike Mobile.
- Funding for the annual youth climate education conference, the last of which occurred earlier in 2019, should continue.
- STAY committee meetings should continue to be hosted by MTC, with resources continuing to be dedicated for MTC staffing of the stakeholder meetings. The meetings have been a significant avenue for funded programs to share best practices, improving their effectiveness.
- MTC more recently began funding a pilot program of climate education and Safe Routes to School that is targeted at high school students. This program should be evaluated and expanded if success is demonstrated in the evaluation.

Complete Streets policy

- MTC's initial Complete Streets requirement was adopted in 2012 and required jurisdictions receiving One Bay Area Grant funding to adopt a Complete Streets policy resolution, or certify that their General Plan had sufficient Complete Streets elements. This MTC policy was highly successful and resulted in a massive proliferation of Complete Streets policies, as assessed in this report by SafeTrec and the Safe Routes Partnership:
<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/publications/complete-streets-policy-practice-san-francisco-bay-area>
- This Complete Streets policy should remain in the guidelines of Plan Bay Area, and stakeholders should be engaged to determine steps to deepen the requirement and ensure the policies are being enforced and actually resulting in infrastructure improvements on the ground in jurisdictions. MTC's Active Transportation Workgroup should be engaged in this discussion.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investments

- The One Bay Area Grant in both cycle 1 and 2 has been a successful component of Plan Bay Area. The grants have been the cornerstone to providing Safe Routes to School, climate initiatives, and active transportation infrastructure in the Bay Area.

- MTC should have continue the One Bay Area Grant program for a cycle 3 and beyond, and expand funding to further incentivize the creation of, and improvement of, walking and bicycling infrastructure and non-infrastructure.
- The first One Bay Area Grant Program (OBAG 1) was adopted by MTC in 2012 to guide \$827 million in federal funds over the five year period from 2012-13 through 2016-17. OBAG 2 is projected to total roughly \$916 million to fund projects from 2017-18 through 2021-22. The third round should include an increase of at least an additional \$100 million.
- MTC should also invest in improving the collection of regional data related to walking and bicycling to ensure current and future active transportation needs are met.

Expanded Commitment to Equity

- MTC's development of the [Equity Platform](#), which was discussed at the October Commission meeting, will be a strong statement of the region's commitment to addressing inequality and disadvantaged communities, and we support the process of its creation, including stakeholder input, and the development of objective metrics for success.
- In addition to utilizing existing working groups for community input, actual community meetings should be used to get feedback from Bay Area residents.
- In the proposed development of a supplemental stakeholder group, care should be taken to ensure representation from diverse communities representing all the populations defined by MTC as communities of concern. The equity platform should provide specific recommendations for improving safety, health, and liveability for each of the communities specified as communities of concern, as a way of ensuring all of our most vulnerable residents can benefit from Plan Bay Area.

Thank you very much for considering our recommendations for how the Bay Area can continue to ensure that its residents have safe, affordable transportation options. If you have any questions, please contact Margo Pedroso, Deputy Director, Safe Routes Partnership at margo@saferoutespartnership.org or 301-292-1043.

Sincerely,

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