



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of November 5, 2020

Correspondence as of October 27, 2020

Subject

- 1 Bay Area Transportation Working Group (BATWG) Newsletter
- 2 Concerns about MTC Potential Work from Home Mandate

From: Bay Area Transportation Working Group <BATWGnewsletter@gmail.com>
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Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2020 8:33 PM
To: Board (@caltrain.com)
Subject: BATWG Newsletter – October 2020

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Bay Area Transportation Working Group (BATWG)

BATWG is a 501 c3 Non-Profit Corporation organized by a group of experienced transportation professionals and activists in 2012. Mostly volunteers, we are dedicated to working with like-minded groups to improve the reliability and appeal of the Bay Area's passenger rail and bus systems and to significantly ease regional traffic congestion. To learn more about BATWG, please go to batwgblog.com.

BATWG meetings normally occur on the third Thursday of the month from 10 a.m. to noon. To receive an Agenda please send a note to BATWGNewsletter@gmail.com. Dues are \$40 a year, with discounts for seniors and students. To pay dues or otherwise contribute, go to the BATWG website batwgblog.com and click on the donate button, or mail a check to BATWG, P.O. Box 590 888, San Francisco, CA 94159.

BATWG Newsletter

Issue No. 29, October 12, 2020

Valley Link.....Not Ready for Prime Time

October 12, 2020



On September 24, 2020 the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) diverted \$400,000,000 in Alameda County sales tax funds to the hasty, politically-inspired, Valley Link Project (VLP.)

During and before the meeting BATWG strongly urged that the proposed Valley Link Line which mostly duplicates the existing ACE line be treated with caution. For the following reasons it is much too early to be allocating \$400 million in Alameda County funds to a commuter rail line benefitting primarily San Joaquin County:

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MTC Begins Final Phase for Plan Bay Area 2050

October 12, 2020

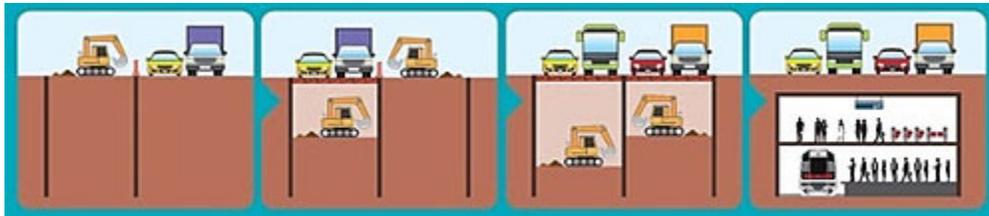
The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) released its draft Bay Area 2050 Plan on July 8, 2020. Following that milestone, public review and comment over the summer led to modifications and additions that are now being incorporated. These modifications escalated the Plan's price tag by \$668 billion, demonstrating the challenge of building support among the 100 government entities around the Bay. The final Plan Bay Area 2050 is expected to be adopted by the fall of 2021. The Plan anticipates that the nine-county Bay Area will add 2.5 million new residents and 1.33 million new jobs between 2020 and 2050. The Plan envisions that by 2050 the Bay Area will be affordable, connected, diverse, healthy and vibrant. These aspirations are expressed through thirty-five strategies defined as policies or bundles of investments, clustered under eleven categories:

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VTA's Santa Clara Street Subway goes Off the Rails

October 12, 2020

The estimated price of building the 4.8 mile BART extension through San Jose has increased again. It's now up to \$6.86 billion and rising. This all started because of downtown demands that the entire subway be built with no construction impact on Santa Clara Street. This short-sighted demand apparently stemmed from the misguided belief that constructing the two downtown stations using the standard cut-and-cover methods used all over the world for station construction would bring Santa Clara Street to a halt for the entire 4 to 6 year construction period. This is not true. As shown in the section below, at no time would the street be entirely closed. Here's how stations are normally built. First, one half the street is excavated and decked over, after which the traffic is shifted to the decked half while the other half of the street is similarly excavated and decked. This phase of the project can be completed in a relatively short amount of time. Once the wooden decking is in place and all traffic again flowing, the major below-grade construction work begins. At the end of the job the permanent new roadway is reconstructed, again in a relatively short amount of time and again while keeping at least half the street operating at all times.



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COVID's Long Term Impact on Transportation

October 12, 2020

We've taken a hit. COVID is obviously no joke...not something to be taken lightly. While it's too soon to predict exactly how COVID and its aftermath will affect society, there are a few observations that can safely be made.

The Problem:

Vaccine: Yes, there could soon be a highly effective vaccine and/or other curative. If so, great...the sooner the better. But what if it takes longer than expected to make these curatives available? Or, what if there are troublesome side effects or if the vaccines and treatments aren't fully effective? What if another vicious virus comes along, requiring us to go through the whole agonizing process all over again? Even if an effective, early vaccine does become available it will take many months to inoculate a large share of our population.

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California Legislature

October 13, 2020

The Honorable Scott Haggerty
Chair, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street, #800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Concerns about MTC Potential Work from Home Mandate

Dear Chair Haggerty:

We commend you and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) staff for your work on Plan Bay Area 2050 (Plan) to make our region a more sustainable, prosperous and equitable place. We are writing to express our concern about the inclusion of a Work From Home Mandate in Plan Bay Area. While requiring or encouraging work from home during the pandemic makes sense, we do not agree that a Work From Home Mandate is a viable or appropriate long-term strategy for the Bay Area.

We understand that the Work From Home Mandate was included late in the process of developing the Plan, and is intended to help meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals set out by the State pursuant to SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008). We are concerned, however, that the Work From Home Mandate was not adequately vetted, may not achieve a reduction in transportation greenhouse gas emissions, and may have additional negative consequences for our constituents and our region as a whole.

In particular, we are deeply concerned about the inclusion of a blanket Work From Home Mandate because:

1. It is likely to meaningfully reduce fare revenue for our public transit systems — systems that are absolutely essential to the Bay Area's future prosperity — and further damage the financial health of these systems. As is clearly stated throughout the rest of the Plan, well-funded transit systems are of critical importance for equity, climate and our region's quality of life. Well-funded transit systems are particularly important for workers who cannot work from home, who are disproportionately low-income and people of color, as well as for seniors, the disabled, youth, and other transit-dependent groups. Draining funds from our transit systems will badly harm these low-wage workers, who simply cannot work from home.
2. A Work From Home Mandate is likely to dramatically reduce the number of office workers in our region's downtowns, threatening the livelihoods of non-

office downtown workers in service industries and causing severe impacts to local city budgets. In counties like San Francisco and Santa Clara, over 50% of workers are Work From Home-eligible. Additionally emphasizing working from home undermines other strategies in the Plan such as walkable urban neighborhoods and increased housing density near employment and transit centers, two data supported strategies proven to reduce transportation related GHG emissions.

3. This mandate doesn't acknowledge the difference between downtown offices in walkable neighborhoods near transit where the majority of workers commute by sustainable modes, and suburban office parks where almost everyone drives alone to work. In San Francisco, for instance, fewer than 30% of workers eligible to Work From Home drive to work. What would be the rationale for requiring office workers who walk to work to work from home?
4. The mandate fails to account for equity. Low wage and service workers are typically not able to work from home — their jobs simply don't allow it. Moreover, even for lower wage office workers whose job may allow work from home, they are more likely to live in smaller homes with large families or multiple roommates, and thus not be able, realistically, to work from home. They should not be required to do so.
5. This mandate would likely result in people leaving the region or moving further from their workplace or from transit that can transport them to their workplace. Such a mandate could also be used as a rationale for those who assert that building sufficient housing for all those who will live in our region is not necessary.
6. There is meaningful evidence that Work From Home mandates increase greenhouse gas emissions. While working from home may eliminate a commute trip, errands and other non-work trips can increase, increasing daily VMT. Additionally, teleworkers tend to live farther from job centers, in lower-density environments, leading to longer, more auto-dependent commutes when they do go into the office, and higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions from home energy usage. The region's efforts to avert deepening our climate crisis should not rely on a strategy that could actually worsen our climate crisis.

Instead of a blanket Work From Home mandate, we suggest MTC pursue efforts to reduce trips and VMT by adding to the existing PBA2050 strategies that:

- Locate more new housing near transit and jobs,
- Locate new office space near transit and housing,
- Invest more in transit rather than highway widening, and
- Implement aggressive but flexible policies that give Bay Area residents the option of shifting their commute and non-commute trips onto sustainable modes and reduce unnecessary commute and non-commute trips.

The Honorable Scott Haggerty

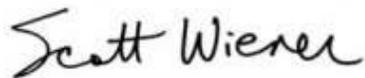
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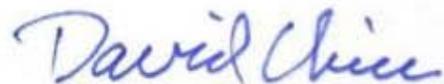
Policies that MTC pursues to enable employees to work from home must be designed to ensure that such policies do not result in an increase in GHG emissions, a decrease in transit ridership and transit funding, or inequitable outcomes.

We look forward to working together to move our region toward a more sustainable future. Thank you for your work, collaboration, and attention.

Sincerely,



Senator Scott Wiener



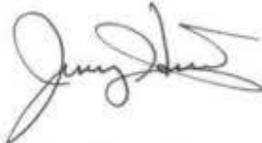
Assemblymember David Chiu



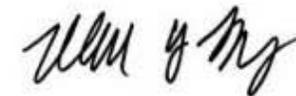
Senator Nancy Skinner



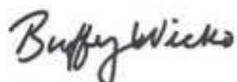
Senator Mike McGuire



Senator Jerry Hill



Assemblymember Philip Y. Ting



Assemblymember Buffy Wicks



Assemblymember Marc Berman



Assemblymember Evan Low



Assemblymember Bill Quirk



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Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry

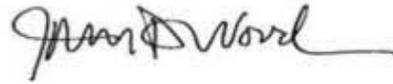
The Honorable Scott Haggerty

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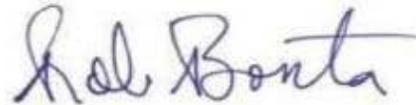
Assemblymember Kevin Mullin



Assemblymember Jim Wood



Assemblymember Kansen Chu



Assemblymember Rob Bonta

Cc: Therese McMillan, Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission