

1 INTRODUCTION

This Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared on behalf of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This EIR analyzes the environmental impacts of the adoption and implementation of the proposed Plan Bay Area 2050 (proposed Plan), which is the update to Plan Bay Area 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the San Francisco Bay Area.

1.1 PURPOSE

This Final EIR has been prepared in compliance with the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines. It responds to comments on, and provides revisions to, the Draft EIR published June 4, 2021.

This document, combined with the Draft EIR, constitute the Final EIR on Plan Bay Area 2050. This Final EIR revises and incorporates by reference the Draft EIR, which is available as a separately bound document from MTC.

The primary purposes of this Final EIR are to respond to written and oral comments on the environmental analysis in the Draft EIR received during the public review period, and to revise the Draft EIR as needed. The public review period for the Draft EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2020090519) was from June 4, 2021, through 5 p.m., July 20, 2021. A list of the individuals, agencies, and organizations that commented on the Draft EIR and copies of the written and oral comments are included in Chapter 2 of this document. Responses to comments are also provided in Chapter 2.

Some comment letters raised points relating to both Plan Bay Area 2050 (“proposed Plan”) and the Draft EIR; in accordance with CEQA, this Final EIR responds to comments on environmental issues in the Draft EIR and provides general responses to comments on the proposed Plan. MTC and ABAG are considering all comments received on the proposed Plan and provided an initial summary of these comments during an online presentation in August 2021, entitled “Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 and Draft Implementation Plan: What We Heard.” Proposed Plan modifications will be presented in October 2021 as a part of staff reports to MTC and ABAG committees. To respond to some comments, revisions and refinements have been made to the Draft EIR environmental analysis and mitigation measures; these revisions are included in Chapter 3 of this Final EIR.

The Draft EIR discloses significant environmental effects of implementing the proposed Plan, identifies feasible measures to minimize the significant effects, and provides a comparative analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Plan. “CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters...” Rather, a Lead Agency, “need only respond to significant environmental issues and do[es] not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15204(a)).

Information provided in the responses to comments and in the revisions to the Draft EIR clarifies and amplifies the analysis presented in the Draft EIR. No significant new information, as defined by CEQA (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5), was added that would trigger recirculation of the Draft EIR, as explained in responses to comments in Chapter 2, “Comments and Responses on the Draft EIR.” This is also explained in the CEQA Findings and Facts in Support of Findings prepared as required in Public Resources Code Section 21002, which includes the requirement that agencies must adopt findings

before approving projects for which EIRs are required. (See Pub. Resources Code, Section 21081, subd. (a); CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091, subd. (a).) Specifically, there are no new significant environmental impacts, nor a substantial increase in the severity of any significant impact, identified in the comments or responses that were not already identified in the Draft EIR.

The Final EIR is available online at planbayarea.org/EIR and arrangements to access the report can be made via email to info@bayareametro.gov or via telephone at 415-778-6757. The Draft EIR and Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 are available for viewing at select Bay Area libraries, listed in Section 1.2, below. The library reference desk staff will let you know how you can access the documents on one of their public computers.

1.2 DRAFT EIR PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The Draft EIR was released for public review on June 4, 2021. The review process provided the public with opportunity to review the document and make comments. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR and public outreach efforts are described below:

- ▲ On May 26, 2021, MTC and ABAG issued a news release about the availability of the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 document, the upcoming release of the Draft EIR, and upcoming public meetings and public hearings on the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Draft EIR. The news release also was published on the MTC (mtc.ca.gov), Plan Bay Area (planbayarea.org) and ABAG (abag.ca.gov) websites, in English, Chinese, and Spanish. The news release was issued via a wire service and as an email communication to 591 interested recipients.
- ▲ On June 4, 2021, MTC and ABAG issued a news release focused on the availability of the Draft EIR, as well as upcoming virtual public meetings and public hearings on the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Draft EIR. The news release also was published on the MTC (mtc.ca.gov), Plan Bay Area (planbayarea.org) and ABAG (abag.ca.gov) websites, in English, Chinese, and Spanish. The news release was issued via a wire service and as an email communication to 591 interested recipients.
- ▲ On May 27, 2021, MTC and ABAG mailed the NOA to 112 public agencies and the 101 local jurisdictions. In addition, the NOA was mailed to 443 non-profit/private organizations and to 31 tribes.
- ▲ On June 4, 2021, MTC and ABAG emailed the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR to 2,541 contacts from Federal, State, regional and local agencies; Tribal Governments; interested organizations; and interested individuals as identified in MTC's contact database.
- ▲ On June 4, 2021, MTC and ABAG issued an email communication announcing the opportunity to review and submit comments on the Draft EIR to 8,231 contacts interested in Plan Bay Area 2050.
- ▲ MTC and ABAG filed a Notice of Availability with the nine County Clerks (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma) in the Bay Area on June 2, 2021, for posting.
- ▲ A four-panel brochure with a schedule of the virtual Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 and Draft EIR hearings and other public workshops, as well as complete information on how to submit comments was mailed to 20,473 addresses located in Equity Priority Communities.
- ▲ On June 4, 2021, MTC and ABAG uploaded the Notice of Completion, NOA, and Draft EIR to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse CEQA Submit website.
- ▲ MTC and ABAG posted the Draft EIR on the Plan Bay Area website: <https://planbayarea.org> on June 4, 2021. The Draft EIR was available for viewing online or downloading.

- ▲ MTC and ABAG posted legal notices about the availability of the Draft EIR and upcoming public hearings on the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 and Draft EIR in the newspapers and publications listed below:
 - *East Bay Times* | June 3, 2021
 - *La Opinion de la Bahía* (in Spanish) | May 30, 2021
 - *Marin Independent Journal* | June 3, 2021
 - *Napa Valley Register* | June 2, 2021
 - *San Francisco Examiner* | June 2, 2021
 - *San José Mercury News* | June 3, 2021
 - *San Mateo County Times* | June 3, 2021
 - *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* | June 3, 2021
 - *Sing Tao* (in Chinese) | June 3, 2021
 - *Solano County Daily Republic* | May 30, 2021
- ▲ MTC made the Notice of Availability and the complete Draft EIR document available for viewing to the following Bay Area public libraries:
 - Alameda County
 - Fremont Main Library (2400 Stevenson Boulevard, Fremont)
 - Oakland Public Library (125 14th Street, Oakland)
 - Contra Costa County
 - Contra Costa County Library, El Cerrito Branch (6510 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito)
 - Contra Costa County Library, Concord Branch (2900 Salvio Street, Concord)
 - Marin County
 - Marin City Library (164 Donahue Street, Sausalito)
 - San Rafael Public Library (1100 E Street, San Rafael)
 - Napa
 - Calistoga Public Library (1108 Myrtle Street, Calistoga)
 - Napa County Library, Main Branch (580 Coombs Street, Napa)
 - Santa Clara County
 - Central Park Library, San Clara (2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara)
 - Santa Clara County Library, Gilroy Branch (350 West 6th Street, Gilroy)
 - San Francisco County
 - San Francisco Public Library, Main Branch (100 Larkin Street, San Francisco)
 - Merced Branch Library (155 Winston Drive, San Francisco)
 - San Mateo County
 - San Mateo County Library, Half Moon Bay Branch (620 Correas Street, Half Moon Bay)
 - San Mateo County Library, East Palo Alto Branch (2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto)

➤ Solano

- Dixon Library (230 N. 1st Street, Dixon)
- Fairfield Civic Center Library (1150 Kentucky Street, Fairfield)
- Fairfield Cordelia Library (5050 Business Center Drive, Fairfield)
- Rio Vista Library (44 South Second Street, Rio Vista)
- Suisun City Library (601 Pintail Drive, Suisun City)
- Vacaville Cultural Center Library (1020 Ulatis Drive, Vacaville)
- Vacaville Town Square Library (1 Town Square Place, Vacaville)
- Vallejo John F. Kennedy Library (505 Santa Clara Street, Vallejo)
- Vallejo Springstowne Library (1003 Oakwood Avenue, Vallejo)

➤ Sonoma County

- Petaluma Regional Library (100 Fairgrounds Drive, Petaluma)
- Sonoma County Library, Central Library (211 E Street, Santa Rosa)
- Sonoma County Library Headquarters (6135 State Farm Drive, Rohnert Park)

- ▲ MTC and ABAG staff sent out copies of the Draft EIR upon request.

The public review period lasted 47 calendar days and closed at 5 p.m. on July 20, 2021. MTC and ABAG accepted written comments via mail, fax, e-mail, and online via the Plan Bay Area website through August 31, 2021. MTC and ABAG hosted three virtual public hearings to receive oral comments on June 11, June 22, and July 7, 2021. Verbal comments made at these meetings were transcribed by a court reporter and are included in this Final EIR as official Draft EIR comments.

1.3 DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Before taking action on the proposed Plan, MTC and ABAG must certify the EIR and make the following findings of fact:

- ▲ the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA,
- ▲ the MTC Commission and ABAG Executive Board reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to considering the proposed Plan, and
- ▲ the Final EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Commission and Board (CEQA Guidelines Section 15090).

MTC and ABAG must further find, based on the standards provided in Section 15088.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, that recirculation of the Draft EIR is not required.

Prior to approving the proposed Plan, MTC and ABAG must also prepare one or more findings of fact for each significant environmental impact identified in the document (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15092). These findings must state that either:

- ▲ the proposed Plan has been changed (including adoption of mitigation measures) to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact,
- ▲ changes to the proposed Plan are within another agency's jurisdiction and have been or should be adopted, or
- ▲ specific considerations make mitigation measures or alternatives infeasible.

For impacts identified in the EIR that cannot be reduced to a level that is less than significant, MTC and ABAG may issue a Statement of Overriding Considerations (CEQA Guidelines 15093) if specific

legal, social, economic, or other factors justify approval of the proposed Plan, despite potential resulting unavoidable adverse environmental effects.

Following certification of the Final EIR and final action on the proposed Plan, MTC and ABAG will issue a CEQA Notice of Determination.

1.4 FINAL EIR ORGANIZATION

This Final EIR is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, “Introduction,” describes the primary purposes of this Final EIR, as well as the Draft EIR public review process that took place and the decision-making process that will take place before MTC and ABAG take action on the proposed Plan.

Chapter 2, “Comments and Responses on the Draft EIR,” lists all agencies, organizations, and persons who submitted either written or oral comments on the Draft EIR; reproduces and numbers all comment letters and transcripts; and provides a unique number for each comment in the right-hand margin. Chapter 2 also provides responses to comments, including master responses to similar comments raised by several different agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Chapter 3, “Revisions to the Draft EIR,” presents revisions to the Draft EIR text made in response to comments, or to amplify, clarify or make minor modifications or corrections. Changes in the text are signified by ~~strikeouts~~ where text is removed and by underline where text is added.

Chapter 4, “References,” identifies the documents used as sources for the Final EIR.

Chapter 5, “Report Preparers,” identifies the lead agency contacts as well as the preparers of this Final EIR.

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