

Attachment E: Summary of Comments

The following table summarizes the comments and questions received from partner agencies in June 2024 and the Regional Network Management and Policy Advisory Councils in July 2024. In addition to the general comments summarized below, staff is responding to project-specific comments individually.

Draft Transit 2050+ Network

Question/Comment	Response
<p>Please move <i>[project]</i> to the fiscally-constrained project list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkeley & Redwood City Ferries • San Jose Airport Connector <p>Please accelerate <i>[project]</i> from the long-term phase to the near-term phase of the fiscally-constrained project list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portal • AC Transit Rapid Network • ACE Frequency Improvements 	<p>Staff will work with the PMT to review this and other feedback on the Draft Network as we develop the final version that will be incorporated into the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint in December. Unless the Final Transportation Revenue Forecast is higher than draft numbers, any projects added would require removal of other projects of an equivalent cost.</p>

Question/Comment	Response
<p>It is not clear in some cases why certain projects are in Bin 1 vs. Bin 2 vs. not included in the fiscally-constrained network. For example, why would a project have a high or very high benefit-cost ratio but not be included in the Draft Transit 2050+ Network?</p>	<p>There are several projects with a high or very high benefit-cost ratio that are not included in the current version of the draft network. Multiple factors were considered by the transit operator-led Project Management Team (PMT) and staff when developing the Draft Transit 2050+ network, including benefit-cost ratio, direct access for Equity Priority Communities, frequency gaps, speed gaps, geographic distribution of the transit network, local priorities, alignment with Transit 2050+ organizing principles, and the level of capital funding fully committed to the project. In part, this was due to the PMT’s direction to pivot away from the singular central role that Project Performance has played in past cycles of Plan Bay Area and use a more holistic approach to developing the Draft Network. Though there is no specific cross-factor formula for determining which projects were included, greater effort will be made to improve clarity around reasons for project inclusion in the Final Transit 2050+ Network.</p>

Question/Comment	Response
<p>Given the reduction in anticipated transportation revenues compared to Plan Bay Area 2050, was there any consideration made to revisiting MTC’s “Fix it First” policy?</p>	<p>MTC has a longstanding Fix-it-First policy, which has been applied to Plan Bay Area 2050+, despite a considerable reduction in anticipated transportation revenues. For transit, the ongoing operations and maintenance costs reflect the 2023 level of transit service in the region and the level of funding required to maintain the overall total number of transit revenue hours of service across the region. Reducing spending on operating and maintaining existing service levels, which for most operators are already lower than 2019 service levels, would equate to further reducing regionwide transit service levels in the future. While this would allow for more capital projects to be included, reducing baseline operating levels below 2023 levels would adversely impact performance on climate, equity, and mobility goals.</p>
<p>Can funding levels for some of the policy-based transit transformation strategies be reduced (Strategies T2, T3, T4)? Could more be then allocated to the projects featured in Strategies T10 and T11?</p>	<p>Funding level recommendations for the transit transformation programs and policies (Strategies T2, T3, and T4) are still in draft form, much like the Draft Network that informs the funding levels for Strategies T10 and T11. These funding levels are subject to change with continued stakeholder feedback and updated projected revenues. However, public engagement, previous stakeholder feedback, and agency needs have continued to reinforce that these strategies are important to customers. Additionally, we will need to prioritize and potentially increase funding for strategies that result in cost-effective mode shift and reduction in vehicle miles traveled to meet the state-mandated greenhouse gas reduction target.</p>

Question/Comment	Response
<p>The maps depicting the Draft Network do not provide sufficient detail on how local transit will be improved. Some agency service areas are represented by a single line.</p>	<p>The regional maps included in the presentation are intended to provide a high-level overview of the improvements included in the Draft Network. In most cases, the lines represented on each map are not intended to be viewed as single corridors and instead represent improvements along multiple corridors connecting geographic subareas throughout the region. In the “Draft Network: Region” slide, an effort is made to visually reflect local bus service improvements within various geographic subareas as highlighted zones.</p>
<p>Because the Transit 2050+ Needs, Gaps, and Opportunities Analysis was limited to the nine-county Bay Area region, interregional transit services may not be identified as filling a gap even though they fill key transit service gaps between the Bay Area and nearby regions.</p>	<p>The Needs, Gaps, and Opportunities Analysis only identified potential service and transit priority gaps within the nine-county Bay Area and was one factor considered in developing the draft transit network. However, the Project Performance Assessment did capture interregional benefits, leveraging a multiplier reflecting the share of ridership from outside the Bay Area region as appropriate.</p>
<p>When will projected transportation revenues be finalized?</p>	<p>MTC/ABAG is finalizing the Needs and Revenue Forecasts for Plan Bay Area 2050+ this summer and will share this with partners, stakeholders, and the public in fall 2024. Transportation revenues may increase or decrease at this upcoming juncture, allowing for greater or fewer projects to be included in the Draft Final Network.</p>

Question/Comment	Response
<p>Strategies T3 (Timing at Regional Hubs) and T10 (Enhance Transit Frequency, Capacity, and Reliability) were identified as the Policy Advisory Council’s top priorities.</p>	<p>Staff will work with the PMT to consider this and other feedback on the Draft Network as we develop the Final Network that will be incorporated into the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint in December.</p>

Draft Project Performance Assessment

Question/Comment	Response
<p>Why do equity scores vary so significantly between the three futures?</p>	<p>Each of the three Horizon Futures (Back to the Future, Clean and Green, and Rising Tides, Falling Fortunes) is a “what if” scenario for the year 2050 with different assumptions about a wide range of global, national, and regional political and socioeconomic conditions. As a result, the number as well as the home and work locations of lower-income individuals in year 2050 varies significantly for each future, which directly affects the extent to which projects benefit lower-income households. Conversely, the Equity Priority Communities flag reflects existing conditions (location of low-income communities and/or communities of color today) and does not vary across the three futures.</p>
<p>The Project Performance Assessment equity scores are not intuitive and results for some projects do not fully reflect potential equity benefits.</p>	<p>The Project Performance Assessment includes four different equity metrics. The three equity scores for each Horizon Future assess how projects may benefit lower income individuals more than higher income individuals for</p>

Question/Comment	Response
	<p>three potential 2050 future scenarios, reflecting interest in “who benefits most”, not just where the project is located. The Project Performance Assessment also assesses whether or not a project would directly serve an Equity Priority Community. Based on this feedback earlier in the summer, staff pivoted to focus primarily on the geographic assessment as it is easier to understand and reflects near-term conditions.</p>
<p>The benefit-cost scores for major rail extension projects do not fully capture or reflect project benefits.</p>	<p>Major rail projects often have relatively low benefit-cost ratios due to very high lifecycle costs, particularly in 2050 futures where economic and housing growth is not as robust. Additionally, the Project Performance Assessment focuses on individual project benefits, which only captures some of the potential synergies that these projects may provide. Such projects also may have significant land use or economic development benefits that are not fully captured.</p>
<p>There should be more transparency and disaggregation in Project Performance metrics like equity scores and benefit-cost ratio.</p>	<p>There are a number of challenges in displaying project performance results to an audience that may or may not at all be familiar with the modeling process. Results are presented at a similar level of detail as in Plan Bay Area 2050, so as to be clear and understandable for stakeholders who are unfamiliar with the process but still provide enough transparency in the details that are shared. Staff will continue to explore how equity scores and benefit-cost ratios can be categorized and disseminated in a way that is both clear and transparent enough for all stakeholders.</p>

Question/Comment	Response
Suggest using a business case approach for future project assessment and prioritization (similar to what is used in London, Auckland, or Vancouver).	Staff will work with partner agencies and stakeholders to consider new methodological approaches as part of the forthcoming major plan update commencing in 2026, as appropriate.
How was California High Speed Rail (HSR) considered as part of the Project Performance Assessment this cycle?	California High Speed Rail is assumed to be open and operational in the year 2050 in the Clean and Green future. For projects analyzed in this specific future, consistent with the methodology developed in Plan Bay Area 2050, an interregional multiplier to project benefits is applied if project scope directly enables high-speed rail service (e.g., full grade separations, electrification, etc.) to begin operating between the Bay Area and destinations south of Gilroy, and if associated capital costs of that infrastructure are captured on the cost side of the assessment.