



May 2021

To the residents of the Bay Area:

As the Bay Area continues to grapple with the lasting local and global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, uncertainty about the future for our families and loved ones, and our community at large, feels greater than ever before. In this moment of reckoning, the Bay Area is at a crossroads. Does the region strategically move from isolation and fear into a future that is more affordable, diverse, connected, healthy and vibrant for every Bay Area resident, or do we continue down a path of inequality? Plan Bay Area 2050 is a blueprint for policies and investments that work toward the former – a vision for a brighter future defined by equity and resilience to uncertainty in the decades to come.

MTC and ABAG began to pivot away from an approach of trying to predict the future several years before COVID-19 turned our world upside down, instead recognizing that uncertainty is a given and that the Bay Area needs more resilient policy solutions. While the exact effects of a pandemic could not be foreseen, MTC and ABAG planners did consider possible futures with economic downturns, exponential growth in telecommuting, and sudden shocks to the system, including natural hazards, that are outside the region's control. Starting with the Horizon initiative in 2018, multiple years of resilience-focused analysis have informed this plan's vision and bolstered its strategies, providing insight as the Bay Area pivots from a period of unprecedented economic expansion to one of potentially more limited financial resources.

Alongside the pandemic, the early 2020s have ushered in a broad awakening to racially discriminatory policies in public and private spheres alike, opening necessary and often painful discussions in all corners of the nation. While the Bay Area has a long history of working together to create a better, more inclusive region, government agencies must step up like never before to meet the moment. To earn the trust of the people they serve today, institutions must address exclusionary policies of the past. Plan Bay Area 2050 represents an important step for regional government to address decades of discrimination by prioritizing and quantifying equity in more direct and ambitious ways than previous Bay Area long-range plans.

The strategies included in Plan Bay Area 2050 would help families stay in affordable homes; maintain the cultural fabrics of their neighborhoods; and benefit from investments in transit, open space and more in their communities if implemented by cities, towns and other partners. Job training programs and a universal basic income would provide a reliable economic safety net for those most in need, while long-term land use strategies improve the Bay Area's jobs-to-housing imbalance and promote inclusive neighborhoods. Environmental strategies protect increasingly vulnerable communities from potentially devastating effects of sea level rise, wildfires and earthquakes, while meeting statewide targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to input from elected officials, staff from city and county governments, transportation agencies, advocacy organizations, the private sector, and other partners, this plan was shaped by the voices of over 15,000 everyday Bay Area residents. Shelter-in-place orders pushed MTC and ABAG to get creative in how we reached our constituents, enabling more diverse voices to weigh in at multiple decision points. MTC and ABAG took steps to hear from the broadest spectrum of the public possible by offering opportunities for engagement in four languages, connecting with young people who will inherit the Bay Area of 2050, and prioritizing the voices of historically underserved communities.

Implementing the bold strategies included in Plan Bay Area 2050 will require partnership and resolve. The Bay Area will need to think beyond our neighborhoods and act collaboratively as a region if we are going to address the challenges at hand. As residents of one of the most beautiful and diverse regions in the world, we must listen more intently, make a commitment to respect one another, and work harder together. Every Bay Area resident can contribute to a more equitable and resilient region, and MTC and ABAG truly look forward to sharing and working toward a vision for a Bay Area that is more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy and vibrant for all.

Sincerely,

Therese W. McMillan

Executive Director