

Plan Bay Area 2050 Engagement Activities: From Horizon through Draft Plan Bay Area 2050

Overview of Plan Bay Area 2050 Engagement

Engagement with the Bay Area’s residents has shaped Plan Bay Area 2050 at every step of the planning process. Starting in 2018, MTC and ABAG staff engaged members of the public in the Horizon initiative, the pre-cursor to Plan Bay Area 2050 that laid the foundation for strategies advanced into the Plan Bay Area 2050 Blueprint. Because Horizon was a separate effort from Plan Bay Area 2050 – without the engagement requirements mandated by Senate Bill 375 – it enabled staff to test out new engagement techniques to a wider audience. The use of in-person pop-up workshops, digital promotion and in-depth stakeholder engagement, among others, attracted a greater number of residents, partners and stakeholders. Through these new techniques, MTC/ABAG obtained high quality input that helped craft the main elements of the plan, including the plan’s Guiding Principles and 35 strategies.

In summer 2019, MTC/ABAG transitioned from Horizon to Plan Bay Area 2050. Since that time, over 15,000 residents have participated in online workshops/webinars and other public meetings, pop-up and digital workshops, telephone and online surveys, an online game, telephone townhall meetings, online discussions on distinct plan topics, a statistically valid poll and more. The region’s 101 cities and nine counties also participated in the development of the plan, as did the Bay Area’s tribal governments, and the region’s other regional agencies, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Community-based organizations and advocacy groups representing the Bay Area’s diverse communities and interest groups have been active participants throughout the process, as were some three-dozen local transportation agency partners.

In early 2020, the public engagement landscape shifted when the COVID-19 pandemic struck and prohibited in-person meetings, a required element of Senate Bill 375, the statute that guides the work of Plan Bay Area 2050. With in-person meetings prohibited, staff quickly pivoted toward digital engagement tactics in the spring of 2020, converting all planned activities to an array of digital platforms where the public could safely learn and provide input. Staff was able to successfully revamp engagement efforts to include tried and tested methods as well as entirely new approaches. The outcome of this shift yielded unprecedented engagement with thousands of new participants – far exceeding goals established in [MTC’s Public Participation Plan](#). Table 1 below summarizes all engagement events and activities conducted over the development of the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 excluding standing meetings of the Commission and ABAG Executive Board and standing advisory committee meetings.

Digital Engagement and its Impact on the Engagement Process

Throughout the Horizon and Plan Bay Area 2050 engagement processes, MTC/ABAG began using digital engagement to promote its events, surveys and interactive elements. Changes to SB 375 necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed for MTC/ABAG to count online engagement toward its requirements, and staff continued to strive toward innovative methods to attract as many people as possible to the engagement process. The main driver of this increased engagement was the use of digital promotion, which attracted unprecedented numbers of participants in surveys, workshops, website views and other online activities, allowing MTC/ABAG to engage with thousands of Bay Area residents who would not have otherwise known about Plan Bay Area 2050. As an example, in previous plans’ engagement efforts, online surveys yielded under 1,000 participants each; during Plan Bay

Area 2050 with the use of digital promotion, surveys yielded over four times that number. Those who would never have known about the plan were able to weigh-in to answer key questions and provide meaningful input, helping to develop and hone the strategies that are at the heart of the Draft Plan. A summary report on the impact of digital promotion in the Plan Bay Area development process is included as Attachment C.

Table 1. Summary of Plan Bay Area 2050 Engagement Events (2019-2021)

Engagement Round	Events	No. of Events	Number of Participants	Number of Comments
Round 1: Introduction to the Plan	In-Person Pop-up Workshops: Held pop-ups around the nine-county Bay Area (78% held in Equity Priority Communities).	37	1,000	3,000
	Mayor of Bayville Online Game: Introduced the plan and its considerations via an online game, which was promoted digitally to the Bay Area public.	1	3,000	9,900
	Tribal Summit: Engaged federally recognized tribes to introduce Plan Bay Area 2050.	1	4	41
	Stakeholder Engagement: Includes RAWG + REWG meetings, webinars and special workshops	23	Over 1,200	N/A
Round 2: Draft Blueprint	Community-Based Discussion Groups: Conducted small group discussions on the Draft Blueprint with members of community-based organizations.	7	61	260
	Digital Workshops: Conducted nine online workshops on the Draft Blueprint, one focused on each of the Bay Area’s nine counties.	9	288	350
	Online Survey: Conducted an online survey to request input on the Plan’s Draft Blueprint.	1	3,915	16,682
	Statistically-Valid Telephone/Online Poll: Conducted a statistically-valid telephone and online poll on key elements of the Draft Blueprint.	1	2,997	149,850
	Telephone Townhalls: Hosted five telephone town hall events in English (2), Spanish (1), Mandarin (1) and Cantonese (1) to reach residents with limited internet access and/or limited English proficiency.	5	19	32
	Tribal Summit: Consulted with federally recognized tribes on Plan Bay Area 2050’s Draft Blueprint.	1	2	22

	Stakeholder Engagement: Includes RAWG + REWG meetings, webinars and special workshops	22	Over 700 participants	N/A
Round 3: Implementation Plan (Winter 2020-21); Draft Plan, Draft Implementation Plan, Draft Supplemental Reports and Draft EIR (Spring/Summer 2021)	Discussion Groups: Conducted qualitative small-group discussions with residents and students to discuss the Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation Plan and prioritize next steps.	11	93	894
	Online Survey and Text-Based Survey: Conducted online- and telephone-based surveys on the Implementation Plan. Both surveys were available in English, Chinese and Spanish.	2	2,103	15,685
	Public Hearings: Held seven public hearings on four separate dates on Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 and Draft Environmental Impact Report.	7	66	40
	Public Workshops: Held four public workshops by geographic location (North Bay, South Bay, East Bay and West Bay) to discuss the Draft Plan, Draft Implementation Plan and Draft EIR.	4	189	70
	Tribal Summit + Government-to-Government Consultation: Consulted with federally recognized tribes on the Draft Plan and Draft EIR.	2	5	22
	Envision the Bay Area Youth Workshop: Engaged high school students throughout the region to discuss the Draft Plan's 35 strategies.	1	8	7
	Plan Bay Area 2050 Video Challenge: Encouraged Bay Area students and their families to submit a video on their favorite Draft Plan strategy.	1	23 participants	19 video submittals 4 comments
	Stakeholder Engagement: Includes RAWG + REWG meetings, webinars and special workshops	94	Over 1,000 participants	N/A
TOTAL		230 events	Over 16,000 participants	196,878 comments