



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area
97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94022

May 12, 2013

Amy Worth, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Mark Luce, President
Association of Bay Area Governments

101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Plan Bay Area

Dear MTC Chair Worth and ABAG President Luce:

The League of Women Voters of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area strongly supports the process of regional planning that has successfully coordinated land use and transportation planning for Plan Bay Area. We are pleased that Mountain View has identified Priority Development Areas (“PDAs”) which basically align with the Plan, and that Los Altos and the VTA are considering the El Camino corridor in Los Altos as a PDA.

We are concerned that one of the PDAs earlier identified in Mountain View is the North Bayshore area, where the recently adopted General Plan does not allow housing. We would like to see housing at least considered for this area because of the great number of jobs planned for North Bayshore. However, we acknowledge that before housing is even considered for this area, rising water levels must be further studied, and, in addition, innovative transportation solutions must be found. Mitigation measures, along with funding mechanisms to implement mitigation for both of these problems, need to be included in Plan Bay Area for Mountain View, as well as other comparable areas. Mitigation measures for sea level rise could include more funding for wetlands restoration, important in our area as elsewhere in the Bay Area.

We are also concerned that neither Mountain View nor Los Altos will be able to produce a significant number of housing units for lower-income households unless more robust incentives for affordable housing are offered through Plan Bay Area. Perhaps more funding for these purposes can be provided in the One Bay Area Grant Program or through Plan Bay Area itself.

We urge MTC and ABAG to incorporate the best elements from the Environment, Equity, and Jobs (“EEJ”) Alternative, in order to help prevent displacement of lower-income households as high-end residential units are built in the identified PDAs. We see this happening in Mountain View already, where developers of luxury apartments have purchased most of the sites identified in the Housing Element as potential sites for affordable housing.

The EEJ alternative also emphasizes more funding for public transit, rather than spending to build new highway express lanes. We believe that transportation costs and accessibility to public transit for everyone, but especially low-income households, need more attention. We are pleased to see that the reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions is expected to meet the State-mandated target by 2035, but we want to be sure that sufficient transit services are offered for the entire diverse Bay Area population while, at the same time, incentives are offered to drivers to leave their cars at home. We would also like to see more attention to providing complete streets.

Although we understand that the emphasis in Plan Bay Area is on coordinating transportation and land use planning in an effort to locate housing near jobs and transit, we believe that other important infrastructure, such as providing for new schools in areas of increased growth and ensuring that other services are available to residents in high-growth areas, should be given more consideration in the Plan. For example, these issues need to be taken into account before housing in North Bayshore in Mountain View is feasible. Otherwise, Greenhouse Gas emissions could actually become worse with dense residential development in certain areas.

Generally, we are pleased that Plan Bay Area has made a strong effort to prevent sprawl, protect our environment, conserve agricultural lands, and reduce vehicle miles traveled and Greenhouse Gas emissions by planning for housing in jobs-rich and transit accessible areas. However, we hope that some of the best ideas of the EEJ Alternative will be evaluated more fully in order to accomplish some of the goals we have mentioned.

Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely yours,
Sue Graham
President
LWV of the Los Altos-Mountain View Area

Cc: