



July 19, 2024

Chair Robert Powers
Regional Network Management Council
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Plan Bay Area 2050+ - Inclusion of Berkeley and Redwood City Ferry Services

Dear Chair Powers and Members of the Regional Network Management Council,

On behalf of the Bay Area Council, representing over 325 major employers across the Bay Area, I am writing to express our concern regarding the exclusion of the San Francisco Bay Ferry (SF Bay Ferry) Berkeley and Redwood City Ferry services from the current draft of Plan Bay Area 2050+. These projects have historically been included in previous versions of Plan Bay Area, have already secured significant funding and advanced in planning and design, and are critical projects to help our region meet our mobility and climate goals. They should be put back into our regional transportation plan.

We understand that projects can be excluded from Plan Bay Area if they are duplicative of other transit services or are not cost effective. These services are neither. The Redwood City Ferry service will provide a new transit link between the East Bay and Redwood City, and the Berkeley Ferry service will provide a new, faster transit option in the particularly congested Transbay corridor. From a cost-efficiency standpoint, SF Bay Ferry operates a cost per passenger mile similar to other transit modes carrying passengers along important long-distance trips, most of which would be completed in cars if the service were not available. In fact, they have the sixth lowest cost per passenger mile among the region's 27 operators.

Excluding these critical ferry projects from Plan Bay Area 2050+ reduces the amount of funding coming to the region. SF Bay Ferry will not be able to apply for "ferry only" funding to support these services if they are not included in the regional transportation plan, including federal ferry funding that would bypass our region. The Redwood City Ferry service has already secured \$20 million and the Berkeley Ferry service has already secured \$11.1 million, and will be funded entirely from money that can only be used for ferry transit projects and thus is not taking away any funding from other projects in the region.

Moreover, excluding these projects as a regional transit priority severely undermines our region's goal of shifting people to transit. SF Bay Ferry is an incredibly popular transit service; it was the fastest growing system prior to the pandemic, and it was the first system to recover almost all of its pre-pandemic ridership since then. In fact, it is the most highly rated transit agency in the country with a 99% customer satisfaction rating. We must expand this popular mode of transit to provide clean, comfortable, and convenient travel options that are a compelling alternative to driving if we are ever to reach our ambitious climate goals. SF Bay Ferry currently operates the nation's cleanest high-speed, high-capacity ferry fleet, and has made considerable progress towards their ambitious goal of shifting 50% of the vessel fleet to zero emissions by 2035. Lastly, and importantly, the agency has also aligned its fares with other transit modes to become a travel mode of choice for riders of all income levels.

Both the Berkeley and Redwood City Ferry services are a vital component to our regional transportation infrastructure, providing essential transit connections, enhancing emergency response capabilities, and leveraging dedicated funding sources that benefit the entire Bay Area. We urge the Council to include these projects in the next draft of Plan Bay Area 2050+ to help our region meet our shared mobility, climate, and equity goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Loper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Emily Loper
Vice President of Public Policy
Bay Area Council