



March 16, 2016

Mr. Dan Marks, AICP  
Special Advisor  
Management Partners  
2107 North First Street, Suite 470  
San Jose, CA 95131

Re: ABAG-MTC Merger Study

Dear Mr. Marks:

The Bay Area Planning Directors Association (BAPDA) Steering Committee supports the efforts of the ABAG-MTC Merger Study. Thank you for meeting with our Steering Committee on January 22, 2016, and for meeting with concerned Planning Directors two weeks later on February 5, 2016.

Many Bay Area Planning Directors work closely with staff of both regional agencies and have an interest in effective regional governance that ensures adequate participation by local elected officials in decision making. We also recognize that the merger of ABAG and MTC could provide opportunities to advance the common interests of both agencies, while ensuring effective planning and governance.

We all recognize the critical need for transportation planning to address the existing and future challenges facing our region, and we hope this need will be on the table as a guiding principle for your study. Also, as you study the issues and develop alternatives, we would like the following to be considered:

- If a merger were to occur, regional planning efforts should be based on local information and not be driven by top-down land use choices or transportation investments. At the same time, transportation planning should start from an assessment of challenges and opportunities, not from a list of projects proposed for funding.
- A new government structure should be conducive to a healthy dialog between land use and transportation and should not be more forcefully weighted against one over the other.
- Historically, ABAG has provided cost effective insurance and financial expertise that cities throughout the region have come to rely upon. A new agency should continue to provide these services.
- The Bay Area has other needs for regional coordination and planning, such as the Bay Trail, hazard mitigation planning, planning for rising sea level, and assistance with identifying and securing grant funding. If other needs will arise in the future, the regional organization that emerges from the ABAG-MTC Merger Study needs to have the capacity to address existing needs, and the flexibility of mission and structure to address future needs.
- An integrated organization should include broad representation on Regional Boards, by local elected officials, with a structure that is neither identical to MTC's Commission nor to ABAG's Board.

- Alternative arrangements other than integrating ABAG's planning function into MTC should be considered.
- The process should continue to allow for thoughtful consideration of the issues and public input. Even if your study can only articulate high level objectives and milestones in the time provided, these should set the stage for continued input and deliberations to advance the objectives identified. Regional governance is too important for a rush to judgement.

We recommend that both agencies continue to move forward deliberately and thoughtfully with the benefit of input from the public and local jurisdictions. We ask that you provide this letter to the MTC Planning Committee and the ABAG Administrative Committee.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We welcome the opportunity to engage in further discussion.

Sincerely,



Al Savay, AICP, BAPDA Steering Committee Chair  
Community & Economic Development Director  
City of San Carlos



Brent A. Butler, AICP, CFM  
Planning and Housing Manager  
City of East Palo Alto



Casey McCann  
Community Development Director  
City of Brentwood



Brent Cooper, AICP  
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Colette Meunier, AICP  
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Christina Ratcliffe, AICP  
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