



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

TO: Commission

DATE: August 13, 2015

FR: Chair

RE: MTC/ABAG Relationship

In my July 16, 2015 memo to you I described my request to MTC's Executive Director for an outline of how a consolidated planning department might better serve both the MTC commission and ABAG executive board. The outline is under development and will be available for you in advance of our September 23rd meeting where we will take up this issue.

As many of you are likely aware, recently a considerable amount of "off line" discussion has occurred among ABAG representatives and certain officials relative to our consideration of a proposed consolidated planning function. It appears there is also misinformation and/or confusion regarding what the Commission will and will not be considering.

In the interest of providing clarity and transparency I am reiterating and offering the following:

1. The work product of a consolidated planning department would continue to be approved by the joint Planning/ABAG Administrative committees and the MTC commission and ABAG executive board;
2. The existing statutory authority of the MTC commission and ABAG executive board would be respected and maintained;
3. A consolidated planning department would offer various benefits. These include using taxpayer dollars more efficiently by speeding up internal processes and improving the quality of external communications, and better communication with cities and counties. A consolidated staff function would not diminish local governing authority—indeed the statutory mandate for local control would be maintained; and
4. The proposal for a consolidated planning department will include a retention policy that would require MTC to offer employment opportunities to all ABAG Planning and Research staff at commensurate salaries and benefits.

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Finally, time is of the essence. Plan Bay Area was arguably more costly, less timely and more litigious than necessary because, unlike every other region in California, it was the product of two planning departments rather than one. In November 2015, we will commence in earnest our update of the Plan with a six-month scenario development process for Plan Bay Area 2040. In June 2016, the policymakers of MTC and ABAG will adopt a Preferred Scenario for the Plan. It is important that we consider the consolidation issue in the next several months before we are deeply involved in the update of the Plan. I look forward to working with you as we consider the benefits of a more unified and integrated approach to regional planning for the Bay Area.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Cortese", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Dave Cortese