TA Community Advisory Committee
Meeting of April 1, 2025

Correspondence as of March 7, 2025

#	Subject
1.	Bay Area workers increasingly living farther from work
2.	Fwd: San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025

From: Mike Swire <mswire91@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 4, 2025 1:16 PM
To: Board (@smcta.com); cacsecretary [@smcta.com]
Subject: Bay Area workers increasingly living farther from work
Attachments: Bay Area workers living farther from jobs.pdf

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Dear SMCTA Board and CAC Members,

I thought that you might find the following article interesting. It presents data showing that in the past ten years or so an increasing number of Bay Area workers are moving farther from their jobs. The Bay Area has seen the highest increase in long commute workers among major US metro areas.

The article cites high housing costs and remote/tech work as potential causes. Another factor could be investments in road infrastructure that enables long distance commutes.

Mike Swire

S.F. saw the biggest change in workforce living 50+ miles from employer

Share of workforce living 50 or more miles from their employer in 2012 and 2022 and the percentage-point (pp.) change in those values

	City	2012	2022	▼ Change
1	**San Francisco**	**14%**	**19%**	**+5.0 pp.**
2	Austin	22%	27%	+4.7 pp.
3	San Diego	16%	20%	+4.2 pp.
4	Tampa	16%	19%	+3.2 pp.
5	Charlotte	17%	20%	+3.2 pp.
6	Dallas	13%	16%	+2.9 pp.
7	Miami	6%	9%	+2.9 pp.
8	Los Angeles	10%	13%	+2.7 pp.
9	Orlando	19%	21%	+2.4 pp.
10	Portland	7%	9%	+2.1 pp.

Page 1 of 3 ›

S.F. saw the biggest change in workforce living 10 or less miles from employer

Share of workforce living 10 or less miles from their employer in 2012 and 2022 and the percentage-point (pp.) change in those values

	City	2012	2022	▲ Change
1	**San Francisco**	**53%**	**45%**	**–7.5 pp.**
2	Austin	44%	37%	–7.1 pp.
3	Tampa	38%	34%	–4.6 pp.
4	Baltimore	58%	54%	–4.4 pp.
5	Orlando	41%	37%	–4.1 pp.
6	Riverside	39%	36%	–3.6 pp.
7	Boston	58%	54%	–3.6 pp.
8	Charlotte	39%	36%	–3.4 pp.
9	Dallas	32%	29%	–3.1 pp.
10	San Diego	45%	42%	–2.8 pp.

Page 1 of 3 ›

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S.F.’s workforce keeps moving farther away from their jobs. Here’s how far they live

By **Hanna Zakharenko** and **Roland Li** | Updated Jan. 31, 2025 9:05 a.m.

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San Francisco saw the nation’s biggest jump in the percentage of the workers living 50 or more miles from their jobs from 2012 to 2022, compared with the top 25 cities with the largest workforces in the U.S. Experts said this was fueled by remote work and high housing costs.

By 2022, 18.7% of San Francisco’s workforce lived 50 or more miles away from their jobs, up from 13.7% a decade earlier.

S.F. working population increasingly live in ZIP codes more than 50 miles away

Select a ZIP code below, use the search bar or toggle between layers to see more information

Change, 2012-22 | **Total workers, 2022**

---- approx. 50-mile radius

Percent change in S.F. working population:

-100% or less | -80% | -60% | -40% | -20% | 0 | 20% | 40% | 60% | 80% | 100% or more

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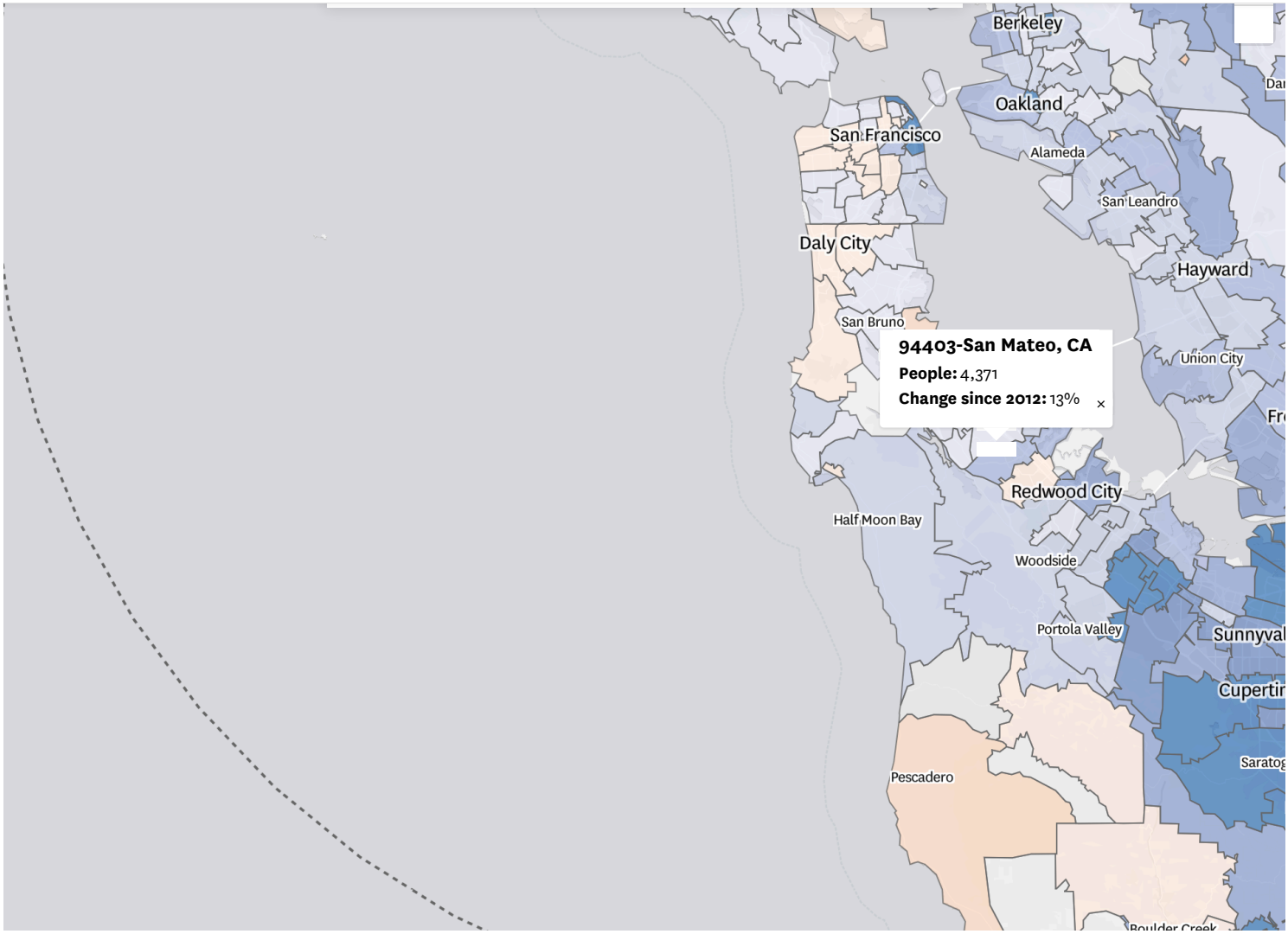

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Dashed circle shows the 50-mile radius from the center of San Francisco. For the 'Change over time' map, data is displayed only for zip codes where there were at least 20 people in either 2012 or 2022. For the 'Number of people' map, data is shown only for zip codes with at least 10 people in 2022.

Map: Hanna Zakharenko, Janie Haseman · Source: Census Bureau

The dispersion of workers in the Bay Area and around the country is a challenge for CEOs and elected officials seeking to bring back workers to the office as much as five days a week. (As of 2022, 58% of San Francisco government

office say it's necessary to improve performance and help downtown comebacks, but workers have said they value flexibility and dodging torturous commutes.

"I think the main thing you're seeing is the continued outward spread of U.S. metro areas and labor markets," said Ted Egan, San Francisco's chief economist. He noted the 25 most populous U.S. metropolitan areas saw an average 2.7% increase in workers living 50 or more miles away from their jobs over the decade.

However, some municipalities such as San Diego, Austin, Texas, and Tampa, Fla., had higher overall shares of dispersed workforces, with all three exceeding 20% of workers living 50 or more miles away.

"In San Francisco's case that's certainly due to work from home, in Austin probably also," Egan said. But he believes cities such as Charlotte, N.C., Tampa, Orlando and Dallas "are probably just showing the effects of new housing construction on the fringe."

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To get a better picture of what the workforce looks like, the Census Bureau regularly teams up with states to combine surveys on businesses, jobs and workers with existing census data, covering around 95% of U.S. employment.

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with where they work, allowing us to explore how San Francisco's workforce has changed in the past 10 years.

S.F. saw the biggest change in workforce living 50+ miles from employer

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Page 1 of 3 ›

Table shows top 25 cities by employment determined from Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Table: Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub · Source: Census Bureau

While the data doesn't show who is commuting and who is working from home, the San Francisco metro area sees a smaller number of daily miles traveled per capita than many other ranked cities, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Office occupancy data measured by security firm Kastle has also placed San Francisco at or near the bottom of the return to office trend for the past two years, compared with nine other major cities. Only about 45% of San Francisco workers are in the office compared with 2019 levels.

"The recent remote work dynamic has contributed to a dynamic we've had for some time in S.F.: the higher and higher housing costs in S.F. and inner Bay Area that have been driving workers further and further from S.F.," said

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former head of California's Employment Development Department.

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San Francisco also saw the largest decrease in the percentage of the workforce living less than 10 miles away from their employer from 2012 to 2022. Part of that reflects the relative lack of housing downtown, where most offices are located.

miles from employer

Share of workforce living 10 or less miles from their employer in 2012 and 2022 and the percentage-point (pp.) change in those values

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Page 1 of 3 ›

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There were about 608,000 workers in San Francisco in 2012, and 748,000 in 2022, a growth of about 140,000 jobs over 10 years.

Over 1 in 4 workers in San Francisco was employed in the information industry or the professional, scientific and technical services industry in 2022. These industries include companies such as Google and OpenAI.

likely to live further from employer

Each circle is a city positioned by the share of workers in information and technical industries and percentage-point change in the share of workforce living 50+ miles from their employer

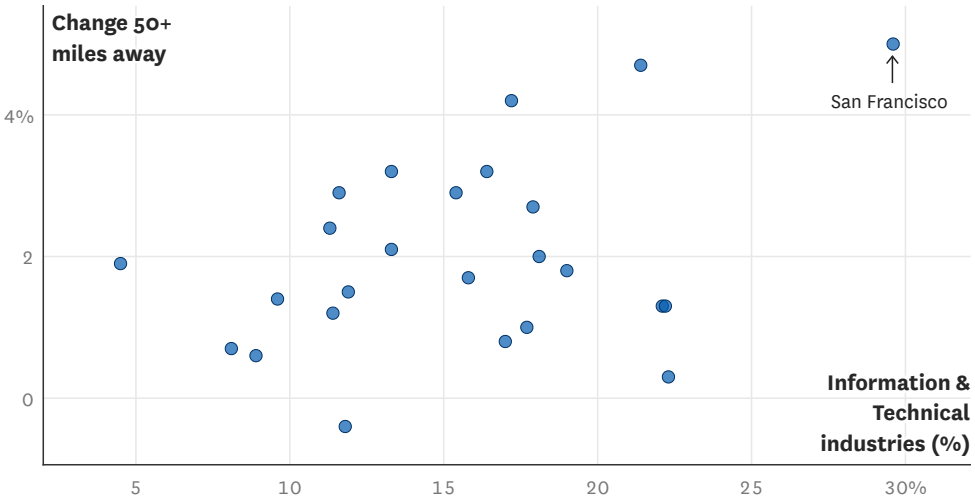

Chart: Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub · Source: Census Bureau

Cities with a higher percentage of the workforce in the tech sector also see a higher change in workforce living 50 or more miles away from 2012 to 2022. That coincides with the tech sector's embrace of remote and hybrid work, especially since the pandemic. In 2022, 41.4% of workers in the tech sector reported they were working remotely, according to the American Community Survey.

There were two tech hubs that saw fewer workers living 50 or more miles away from the office during that time: New York and Seattle.

"I think the most likely explanation for this is more housing construction within those cities, combined with a lack of transportation infrastructure investment to support long-distance commutes," Egan said.

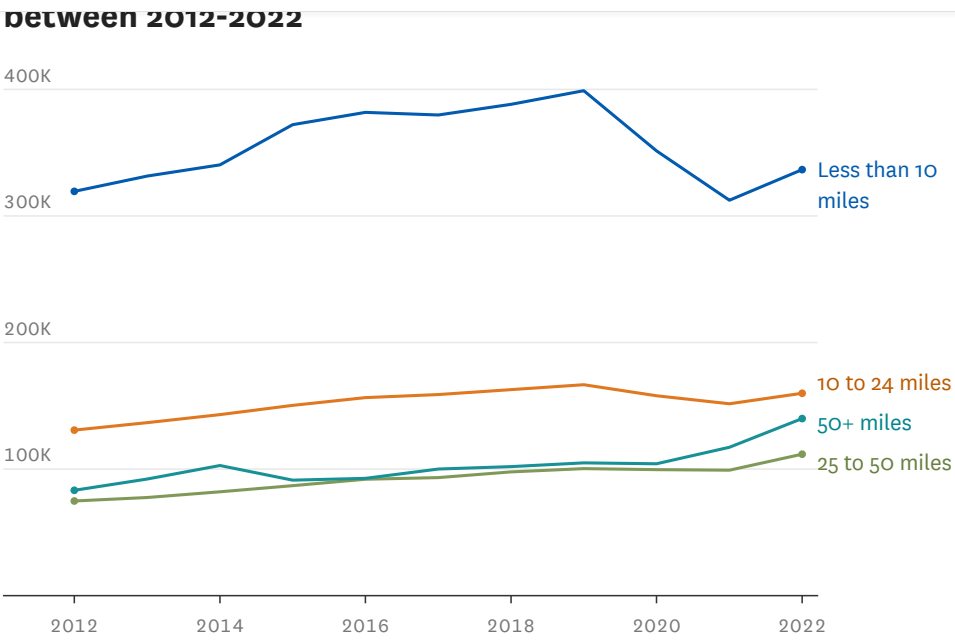

Chart: Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub · Source: Census Bureau

When looking at the change in where people live over time who work in San Francisco, much of the city has seen a slight decrease in population, whereas many ZIP codes in the East Bay and South Bay saw increases, some more drastic than others.

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The 94568 ZIP code saw its population that works in San Francisco almost triple from 2012 to 2022. The ZIP code includes Dublin, one of the fastest-growing cities in California and about an hour's drive from San Francisco.

"These areas outside of (the) inner Bay Area offer the schools, open space and reduced congestion and crime that many individuals seek, especially those with young children," Bernick said. "The suburbs/exurbs are making a comeback."

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the Sacramento area, where many Bay Area residents moved during the pandemic, according to postal data.

All those trends are obstacles for downtown San Francisco's comeback, including landlords seeking business and residential tenants, the vitality of transit agencies such as BART and Muni, and city officials looking to close a historic budget gap.

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Here's how work-from-home rates are changing in S.F.

S.F. is struggling to regain jobs lost in the pandemic. These industries are hurting the most

Credits

Reporting by Roland Li / San Francisco Chronicle. Data & graphics by Hanna Zakharenko / Hearst Newspapers DevHub. Editing by Danielle Rindler / Hearst Newspapers DevHub, Dan Kopf / San Francisco Chronicle and Robert Morast / San Francisco Chronicle. Design and development by Janie Haseman / Hearst Newspapers DevHub and Emma Stiefel / San Francisco Chronicle.

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From: Malcolm Robinson <calmotomal@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 5:46 PM
To: cacsecretary [@smcta.com]
Subject: Fwd: San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025

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I sent this letter to the SMC TA, and I should include the CAC in my comments.

Rgds,

Malcolm Robnson
SMC Resident Since 1970

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Malcolm Robinson** <calmotomal@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 5, 2025 at 5:38 PM
Subject: Re: San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025
To: Mike Swire <mswire91@gmail.com>

Will do.

On Wed, Mar 5, 2025 at 4:50 PM Mike Swire <mswire91@gmail.com> wrote:

> Great letter, Malcolm. Thanks for sending. Please also forward this and future letters to cacsecretary@smcta.com so that it goes to members of the CAC. I don't think we get many letters and it is important for members to see that much of the public is aligned with the comments that Giuliano and I make at the meetings (and you espouse).
>
> Keep up the good work!
>
> Mike
>
> On Wed, Mar 5, 2025 at 3:20 PM Malcolm Robinson <calmotomal@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> > FYI
> >
> > Sent from my iPhone
> >
> > Begin forwarded message:

From: Malcolm Robinson <calmotomal@gmail.com>
Date: March 5, 2025 at 2:35:12 PM PST
To: publiccomment@smcta.com
Subject: San Mateo County Transportion Authority (SMC TA) 2025

The SMC TA's job is to balance the needs and requirements of public v. personal transport in cars and buses and trains, while walking, and on bicycles and burgeoning micro mobility. The SMC TA needs to make our transport safer for everyone, and be smart with our tax dollars. This is no mean task.

On the first slide of all SMC TA decks is a bicyclist, and yet county wide bicycle planning and priority is nonexistent. SMC TA needs a countywide vision and Advocate for walking and biking infrastructure. SMC TA's piecemeal approach is misguided by half. That is why I ask the SMC TA to take a fresh look at planned freeway expansions, and please consider all methods of transport in your work.

For example, it took at least 40 years to get a train, the most efficient people transport yet devised, to SF International Airport and 30 years to connect BART and CalTrain. Chicago made grade separation a requirement in 1909, and SMC TA is still struggling with the effort. Burlingame fought and hindered their grade separation effort until the cost ballooned from about $14 million to $600 million, while creating the most unsafe rail crossing in California.

I have been watching the SMC TA and CAC on Zoom for the last 18 months. It is with chagrin that I watch ***trillions*** of scarce dollars spent on freeways that constitute a "no person's land" dividing towns in our county, while leaving the clean up funding to the cities. Why is it impossible for the SMC TA to widen a freeway and also make it safe to ride .8 mile from the In-N-Out on Industrial to the San Carlos Airport? Or ride 1 mile from San Bruno Ave. at El Camino Real to the airport to go to work? Can only wealthy towns make walking and biking across US-101 safe in SMC?

US-101 north of SSF settles down and does not need widening, yet the SMC TA wants to spend another $half trillion to add one lane. Does US-101 also need to be raised along the Bay due to climate change? The pedestrian crossing over US-101 in SSF at 610 Dubuque was removed and not replaced by the last widening project north of I-380. Why can't freeway widening ALSO make it safe to walk and bike in SMC? How can we help the SMC TA make it safe to walk and bike in our County? Please advise.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Rgds,

Malcolm Robinson
SMC Resident Since 1970