

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

January 22, 2025

Agenda Item 11a-25-0108 - REVISED

Final 2025 MTC/ABAG Joint Advocacy Program

Subject:

Final 2025 Joint Advocacy Program for MTC and ABAG, expressing the agencies' state and federal legislative priorities.

Background:

Attachment A is the proposed Final 2025 Joint Advocacy Program, which incorporates adjustments to items 1, 3, 4 and 5 based on the Joint Legislation Committee's and ABAG Executive Board feedback in January as well as feedback from partner agency staff and other stakeholders. These clarifying revisions are shown in italics and strikeout.

Proposed 2025 Legislative Priorities & Final Advocacy Program Updates

Staff continues to propose MTC/ABAG's top 2025 state advocacy priority be securing new revenues for transit operations to sustain critical services and support a reliable, safe, easy-to-navigate and integrated transit network, including through securing legislative authorization for a transportation revenue measure in 2026. Other anticipated priorities are listed below. These largely reflect the recommendations presented to the Joint Legislation Committee in January, with revisions indicated in italics.

- Maintaining existing state transportation and housing resources, including through supporting an extension of California's Cap-and-Trade program past 2030, ensuring the state and federal government honor transit funding commitments from the Fiscal Year 2023-24 state budget deal and 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL);
- Positioning the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority and a future regional housing measure for success by sponsoring legislation to allow a citizens' initiative to place a revenue measure on the ballot;
- Engaging in a holistic review of California's regional transportation and land use planning framework with the goal of improving how state and regional agencies collaborate to make progress toward the suite of state and regional climate, housing, and transportation-related objectives, including through ensuring state agencies balance this suite of goals in distributing certain state funds; and

- Coordinating with partners on the Resilient State Route 37 program to support a legislative change that will allow the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to process a fully protected species “incidental take” permit for the SR 37 corridor pursuant to provisions in the California Endangered Species Act. The bill would also require permittees to minimize and fully mitigate impacts to the species.

Staff also anticipates the legislature in 2025 will explore updates to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process. ABAG/MTC will engage in those discussions to ensure any updates are:

1. Aligned with Plan Bay Area 2050’s guiding principles and housing goals, as well as ongoing discussions related to regional planning updates (see item 3);
- Structured to empower regions to balance the state’s sometimes competing goals related to housing, equity, climate, resilience, economic vitality and environment; and
2. Implementable at both the regional and local levels.

Other state focus areas such as transportation system effectiveness, transportation project delivery, and climate, resilience, and environment remain largely consistent with last year’s advocacy program. However, staff significantly streamlined the advocacy program text to enhance clarity and focus. Similarly, federal advocacy goals track closely with those from 2024, with two caveats: First, we anticipate a significant shift toward “defending” federal resources. Second, staff recommends MTC/ABAG develop a surface transportation reauthorization platform to share with federal partners at the agencies’ annual Washington, D.C. advocacy trip. Though the current surface transportation law – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – extends until October 2026, it is customary for reauthorization discussions to begin two years ahead.

Outreach on 2025 Advocacy Program

In addition to seeking feedback from the Joint Legislation Committee in December and January, the draft advocacy program was presented to MTC’s Policy Advisory Council, MTC’s Partnership Legislative Committee comprised of staff in Bay Area transportation agencies and other advocacy organizations involved in transportation policy and housing partners from around the region. Additionally, in developing advocacy priorities, staff conferred with Bay Area regional agency partners, regional transportation planning agencies from across the state and state and national transportation and housing partners.

Recommendation:

ABAG Executive Board Approval

Commission Approval

Issues:

None identified.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Final MTC/ABAG 2025 Joint Advocacy Program

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew B. Fremier", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew B. Fremier