



FINAL 2025 DRAFT MTC/ABAG JOINT ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Note: This is an updated version of the Draft 2024 Advocacy program presented at the December Joint Legislation Committee. Text additions are displayed in *italics* and text removals are indicated with ~~strikethroughs~~.

State Advocacy Objectives and Goals

1. **Transportation Funding:** Advocate for resources to support the implementation of Plan Bay Area 2050 (and future iterations), including sustaining and, where possible, increasing funding for operating and maintaining the transportation network, transit modernization and expansion, improving multimodal transportation options and improving the resilience of our transportation network.

Prioritize 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 or beyond. Further, support extending California's Cap and Trade program past 2030 while preserving funding for transit and affordable housing and exploring opportunities to secure new Cap and Trade revenues for transit operations. Support incorporating equity considerations into funding decisions and advocate for definitions that include Bay Area low-income communities.

2. **Transit Transformation Action Plan and other Public Transit System Improvements:** Support policies aimed at ensuring public transit is an affordable, reliable, safe and convenient transportation option that is provided equitably and accessibly. Specifically, support policies to create a more user-friendly, connected Bay Area transit network that better serves existing transit riders and attracts new riders to transit in line with the Transit Transformation Action Plan (Action Plan) adopted by the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force. Support policies that show promise to remove barriers to

timely Action Plan implementation, including related to fare coordination and integration, real-time transit and other customer information initiatives, and transit priority.

3. Bay Area Housing Finance Authority and Housing Production, Preservation and Tenant Protection (“3 Ps”):

Support the Plan Bay Area 2050’s ambitious housing goals by advocating for policies and funding *that support local government in planning for more housing, that* increase housing production – including lowering construction costs – *that* support preservation *and that invest* in associated infrastructure to help build complete communities. Support policies aimed at protecting tenants and low-income communities from displacement. Identify opportunities to support Bay Area Housing Finance Authority’s work – including preparations for a future regional housing measure and BAHFA pilot programs – and advocate for policies and funding to support that work. Specifically, explore authorizing legislation for a regional housing measure to be approved via citizen’s initiative.

4. Regional Transportation and Land Use Planning: Partner with the California Association of Councils of Government, metropolitan planning organization partners, and state entities (including the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and the California Department of Housing and Community Development) to holistically review 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 environmental, housing and transportation-related objectives, including, but not limited to, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions.

5. Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA): Monitor proposals and engage in discussions related to RHNA updates, consistent with Plan Bay Area 2050’s housing goals, regional planning updates (see item 3) and the “3Ps” (see item 4).

6. **Transportation System Effectiveness:** Advocate for policies that sustain and improve the effectiveness and service delivery of the Bay Area’s transportation system, including Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) toll bridge operations, FasTrak®, Clipper®, Freeway Service Patrol, Express Lanes, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, bus-only lanes and other transit priority improvements that help move buses out of traffic and BayWheels. Support policies that provide an opportunity to increase FasTrak and Clipper usage, including expanding the ability of transportation agencies to better communicate with their customers about programs and projects related to transportation overseen by the transportation agencies.
7. **Transportation Project Delivery:** Monitor legislation related to transportation project delivery and support strategies to speed up the delivery of transportation projects and *reduce their cost at a lower cost*, including expanding flexibility in contracting and public private partnerships. Seek opportunities to support transit priority, State Route 37, and other MTC/BATA priority projects. Support authorizing State Route 37 corridor projects to be evaluated under the *California state’s Endangered Species Act (CESA) – which allows an incidental take permit so long as impacts to the species are fully mitigated, among other requirements* – vs. the Fully Protected Species provisions of the California Fish and Game Code (which preceded the CESA). (The California Fish and Game Code does not allow for incidental take of species identified as Fully Protected except for narrow exceptions. This severely restricts work along SR 37, with work windows potentially limited to 10-12 weeks per year in portions of the project.)
8. **Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation:** Advocate for policies and funding tools that support regions in implementing state-mandated sustainable communities strategies (SCS), including support for new or ongoing resources for regions to invest in SCS implementation, such as a third iteration of the Regional Early Action Planning Grants (REAP). Further, support policy changes that will help the Bay Area meet its state and regional climate goals consistent with the Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation Plan, including Vision Zero safety improvements and roadway pricing.

9. **Climate, Resilience and Environment:** Support funding and policy strategies to help achieve and better coordinate state and regional climate and conservation goals, including providing regional technical assistance to advance sea level rise adaptation and protecting the San Francisco Estuary through implementing the Estuary Blueprint and other San Francisco Estuary Partnership work; advancing energy efficiency and decarbonization, including through supporting the Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) and ABAG POWER; and improving the Bay Area’s resilience to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change, including earthquakes, sea level rise, heat and fire.

Federal Advocacy Objectives and Goals

1. **Transportation and Housing Funding:** Support and defend robust federal investment in Bay Area transportation and housing infrastructure consistent with Plan Bay Area 2050, MTC’s Bay Area Infrastructure Grants Strategy and Major Project Advancement Policy. Support policies and funding opportunities to implement the 3Ps in the San Francisco Bay Area, including increasing availability of Low Income Housing Tax Credits for California affordable housing developments and supporting regional efforts to address affordable housing challenges.
2. **Preserving California Access to Federal Transit Funds:** Support efforts spearheaded by the California Transit Association and the State of California to resolve ongoing issue that Bay Area federal transit funds may be withheld because of a 2021 U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) interpretation that state pension law known as “PEPRA” may impede federally guaranteed transit union collective bargaining rights.
3. **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Reauthorization:** Develop a surface transportation reauthorization platform for the next multi-year federal surface transportation program guided by the principles below. Engage with local, regional, state and national partners to build a coalition to support MTC/ABAG reauthorization priorities in advance of the IIJA’s expiration on September 30, 2026.

- a. Preserve the Bay Area’s core transit and highway formula funds. Specifically, advocate that formula funding increases provided through IIJA advance appropriations (i.e., from the General Fund) are made permanent, in addition to maintaining Highway Trust Fund commitments to IIJA formula programs.
- b. Support increases in formula resources to provide increased predictability for long term investments, reduce administrative burden, and enhance flexibility for regions and states to align federal spending with the investments needed to achieve regional, state and federal goals related to safety, mobility, economy, climate, resilience, affordability, and more. Additionally, engage in discussions related to the federal government’s role in transit operations guided by the following principles:
 - i. **Focus on Transit Riders:** Federal operating assistance should focus on transit improvements that attract and retain riders.
 - ii. **Maintain federal commitments to safety and state of good repair:** Any new transit operating program should augment, not replace funding for current programs. Absent new money, safeguards should ensure any new flexibility to use formula funds for operating assistance does not come at the expense of federal investments in safety and state of good repair.
 - iii. **Support improvements that can be sustained over the long-term:** Ensure upgrades that only require a time-limited subsidy, including upgrades to existing service, are eligible for funds. For traditional service expansions, ensure new service can be maintained.
- c. Maintain federal support for the Capital Investment Grant program, the primary federal fund source for major transit capital and modernization improvements.
- d. Grow federal support for transit and regional mobility solutions, including through updating tolling policy to allow roadway pricing to support mode shift. Revise transit programs to reward Bay Area best practices and expedite project delivery without harming the environment.

4. **Climate, Resilience and Environment:** Defend existing clean air vehicle rules and standards to reduce GHGs from transportation, including California's ability to set rules that exceed federal standards. Defend against any efforts to undermine the Bay Area's efforts to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and make our communities and transportation networks resilient to a changing climate, especially in communities of concern that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Support funding and policies that protect the San Francisco Estuary and sea level rise adaptation, including securing funding for the San Francisco Bay Area Sea Level Rise Study authorized through the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.