



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Association of Bay Area Governments

January 15, 2026

### BAHFA Closes on Affordable Home Projects

BAHFA closed on two projects in December to preserve affordable homes for residents of the North Bay.

- Through the Welfare Tax Exemption Preservation Program, up to 99 units will be preserved for families in San Rafael's Canal District, and the Tesseract Capital Group will convert The Meridian apartment community into long-term affordable housing. At least 39 units in the complex will be converted to affordable homes initially, and the owner will work to convert the rest of the units in the near future.
- In St. Helena, under the REAP 2 Preservation Loan Pilot, BAHFA is providing a \$3 million loan to Our Town St. Helena to acquire an existing, occupied 12-unit building. This project will provide a rare affordable housing opportunity for lower-income households in a high resource community, with most existing households including two to four residents who work in service-oriented jobs in or near St. Helena.

### RHTA Hosts Housing Bills Webinar

The Regional Housing Technical Assistance (RHTA) Program hosted its fifth annual overview of housing-related bills signed in this legislative session on Dec. 16. Attorneys from Goldfarb & Lipman LLP provided information on the new laws and answered questions from jurisdiction staff. More than 400 staff from the nine Bay Area counties and other communities throughout the state participated.

### Update on SB 375 Modernization

We're continuing our work on SB 375 modernization with the other Big 4 MPOs and former senator Steinberg. This includes meetings with stakeholders and state agencies to hear their feedback and starting the search for a bill author. I anticipate staff will bring more details on the proposed bill content to the Joint Legislative Committee next month.



## Bay Area's First Horizontal "Living Levee" Protecting Against Sea Level Rise Under Construction

On Dec. 10, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, along with the City of Palo Alto, hosted a media tour to provide a behind-the-scenes look at the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee pilot project. The Palo Alto Horizontal Levee pilot project, located on a 500-foot-long section of coastline on Harbor Marsh in the Palo Alto Baylands, is estimated to be completed in summer 2026. The first of its kind, the pilot project will inform future levee projects similarly focused on advancing sea-level rise protections, improving marsh habitat in the San Francisco Bay and utilizing nature-based solutions to deliver multi-benefit outcomes. On the same day as the tour, Save The Bay hosted its first community event to plant native habitats along the levee. Throughout the month, Save The Bay and its volunteers planted over 2,000 native plants representing 35 different species at the project site. To learn more about this exciting project, visit <https://abag.ca.gov/news/first-its-kind-palo-altos-horizontal-levee-construction-begins>. The media tour was covered by several news outlets, including SF Gate, MSN, NBC Bay Area, KTVU Fox 2, ABC 7 and the SF Chronicle.

## Washington State Transportation Commission Virtual Panel

In early Dec., I participated in a virtual panel with representatives from Florida and Washington on corridor urbanism, the concept of focusing development of housing, services and commercial activity along major arterials to create safer and more walkable, transit-friendly communities. These three states were specifically chosen for our success in this area.

## California Infrastructure Conference Panel

On Dec. 11, I had the opportunity to speak on the panel "Strategic Transit Planning for CA's Future," at the California Infrastructure Development Conference along with Deborah Dagang (VTA), Ladonna DiCamillo (CA High Speed Rail) and Mark Vallianatos (LA Metro). The panel was moderated by Joshua Schank, who previously served as the first-ever Chief Innovation Officer for LA Metro. The conference brought together state leaders shaping capital projects to explore how agencies are navigating funding gaps, procurement complexity and risk while accelerating project timelines and strengthening long-term outcomes.

## Bay Area Council Board Presentation

Also on Dec. 11, I spoke to the Bay Area Council Board of Directors with Interim President and CEO John Grubb on "Charting the next Era of Bay Area Growth." I shared insights on some of the Bay Area's most pressing issues — from building housing to funding public transit and even exploring how AI could help reduce traffic. These conversations help keep the region moving forward with innovative ideas and collaborative solutions.



## 2023 Bay Area Travel Survey Dashboard

Later this month, the Planning Section will release an interactive dashboard for the 2023 Bay Area Travel Study, enabling users to explore travel behaviors such as changes in trip-making, travel modes and commute behavior by county and income group. MTC-ABAG invited 750,000 residents in all nine counties to participate in the survey to help plan for a more efficient and effective regional transportation network.

## Celebrate Jersey Day on Feb. 3

To celebrate transit's role in getting fans to Super Bowl LX-related events, MTC-ABAG and Bay Area transit agencies are encouraging transit riders to wear their favorite jersey on transit on Wednesday, Feb. 3. Agencies such as BART will be handing out prizes to those spotted wearing a jersey during their ride. Any sports jersey counts. Feb. 3 marks the first day of the Super Bowl Experience at Moscone Center and BAHC Live! San Francisco Fan Zone at Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco.

## Bay Bridge Clock on Display in Temazcal

Drop by Temazcal to see the restored clock that stood over the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza from 1956 until approximately 1985. MTC reclaimed the clock last year and contracted CJ Yother of San Leandro to disassemble and rebuild it. The clock and its neon lighting mechanisms weigh 500 pounds without legs. A video of the clock's history and restoration process is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA-YnRosVI8>.

## Toll Increase Went Into Effect Jan. 1

Just a reminder that on Jan. 1, the first of five phases of the toll increase approved by the Bay Area Toll Authority in Dec. 2024 went into effect, along with updates to the policies for high-occupancy vehicles on approaches to the state-owned bridges. Tolls for all regular two-axle cars and trucks increased by 50 cents from \$8.00 to \$8.50, to fund the preservation, rehabilitation and operational needs of the Bay Area's seven state-owned toll bridges. Drivers now need three or more people to qualify for the 50% carpool toll discount at all seven state-owned bridges, including the Dumbarton and San Mateo-Hayward bridges. Communications to the public began in late October and will continue through early 2026 to remind drivers of these changes.



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## Save the Date for the General Assembly

Save the date for the ABAG General Assembly on Thursday, June 18. The event will be held here at the Bay Area Metro Center. More details to come.

Andrew B. Fremier  
Executive Director