



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Association of Bay Area Governments

March 20, 2025

Call for Priority Conservation Area Nominations Now Open

Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) are areas nominated by local governments that include natural lands, working lands, recreation areas, urban green spaces, and locations where nature-based solutions can be used to adapt to climate change. The window to nominate new PCAs is open through May 2, 2025, offering an opportunity to help shape the Bay Area's conservation priorities. To support local nominations, ABAG-MTC hosted a webinar on March 4 covering the nomination process and submission tool. Materials from the session, along with additional resources and staff assistance, are available online (<https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/land-use/priority-conservation-areas/2025-priority-conservation-area-pca-nomination-cycle>).

Youth Mentorship Programs at ABAG-MTC

Summer 2024 marked the fourth year of the College Mentorship Program and the Summer Academy, two youth programs that align with MTC-ABAG's Equity Platform. The Norman Mineta Bay Area Summer Academy provides a multi-week, mostly remote-learning curriculum for Bay Area high school students. The Ann Fitzgerald Flemer College Mentorship Program provides students with a paid, full-time opportunity to gain professional work experience in transportation planning, finance and operational projects.

The number of high school participants doubled for the third year in a row, from 113 to 231 participants, while the college program supported more than a dozen students. We also saw a record number of college mentees have their time extended for several months to continue working with staff on vital projects that serve the region. For this upcoming cohort, we anticipate having similar numbers of high school students and have confirmed 19 slots for college mentees. Please help us get the word out about these programs and if you are interested in having one of our staff conduct outreach in your area, please contact Ky-Nam Miller at kmiller@bayareametro.gov for more information.



ABAG-MTC Visit to Sacramento

Nine members of the ABAG Executive Board and MTC commissioners, along with the agencies' executive and legislative staff, met with members of the Bay Area's Sacramento delegation on March 18 and 19. The group highlighted ABAG and MTC's top priorities, including SB 63 (Wiener and Arreguin) and a \$30 million budget request for the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority.

ABAG-MTC Participates in League of Women Voters Bay Area's League Day

On March 8, Chief Deputy Executive Director Alix Bockelman, ABAG President Belia Ramos and MTC Chair Sue Noack joined the LWV Annual League Day - Regional Government: How Does it Affect You. Topics included ABAG's support of regional planning, how the agency operates while maintaining separate governing boards and examples of funding in local jurisdictions.

Discussions on Senate Bill 375 Reform Continue in Sacramento

On March 17, Executive Director Andrew Fremier and Deputy Executive Director, Metro Planning and Policy, Matt Maloney met with their counterparts from the Los Angeles, San Diego, and Sacramento regions, as well as executives from the California Air Resources Board, California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and California Department of Housing and Community Development. Discussions focused on ongoing challenges with the regional planning framework established under Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008). The Air Resources Board is expected to pursue changes to the existing greenhouse gas (GHG) targets in the coming months through its regulatory processes, while parallel legislative reforms are being explored, including but not limited to SB 486 (Cabaldon, 2025).

Executive Office Assembles Federal Actions Response Team

The Executive Office has assembled a team to monitor Executive Orders and other federal agency directives to assess risk to projects and programs we administer and provide a forum for developing any strategies in response. The response team is analyzing our budgets and our federally funded contracts. We also are working to keep our partners informed as we obtain new information from our federal partner agencies. We will continue to keep the Executive Board and staff apprised of the latest developments at the federal level.



Jim Spering Honored on Senate Floor

The California State Senate on Feb. 14 honored former longtime ABAG Executive Board member and MTC Commissioner Jim Spering of Solano County for his decades of service and regional leadership. The Senate resolution was presented by state Sen. Dave Cortese, who noted that “Jim was a peacemaker, some might call him a dealmaker...We deeply appreciate his work to make transportation more accessible, as well as the space he has made for community voices in the region.” Following Sen. Cortese’s remarks, former ABAG President and current state Sen. Jesse Arreguin as well as Senators Scott Wiener, Christopher Cabaldon and Tim Grayson of Contra Costa County each shared their own appreciation of Mr. Spering. A brief story and link to a video of the proceedings can be found on the BayLink blog:

<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/video-mr-transportation-jim-spering-recognized-state-senate-resolution>

UCLA Report Recognizes Plan Bay Area 2050’s Innovative Planning and Prioritization Process

The Institute of Transportation Studies at UCLA recently released a statewide report focused on better aligning transportation planning and investments with climate and equity goals, looking at processes and practices at large and small MPOs across California. The authors recognized Plan Bay Area as having “the most comprehensive and transparent RTP/SCS programming process among the MPOs reviewed,” spotlighting in particular the use of exploratory scenarios in understanding transportation project performance and its integration of advanced project-level equity analyses. The report also acknowledged the Guide to the TIP and the Vital Signs performance monitoring initiative as statewide best practices. UCLA’s report has now been published and is available to the public: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/RESEARCH%20CONTRACT%2021RD008%20FINAL%20REPORT_0.pdf

ABAG TA Highlighted on New CALCOG Website

CALCOG launched a new Housing Implementation Programs Exchange website, a collection of the best of what CALCOG members produced for REAP 1. The site includes a curated set of resources for most of the major housing subject areas and updated 2025 summaries of the law in key areas. Resources created by ABAG's Regional Housing Technical Assistance Program are included throughout the site. www.calcog.org/hip



Agency Staff Attend Housing California and CALCOG Conference

Several agency staff attended Housing California’s annual conference and CALCOG’s Regional Issues Forum, both held in Sacramento March 5-7. Principal Regional Housing Planner Heather Peters was part of CALCOG panel “Sowing What We REAP: How Regions Support the Housing Element Process” which highlighted innovative work accomplished under the REAP 1.0 program, featuring cutting-edge tools and strategies that empower local jurisdictions to effectively track and plan housing development. Former ABAG Presidents and now state Senators Jesse Arreguin and Dave Cortese highlighted the importance of bringing a regional perspective to Sacramento policy making and encouraged the audience of COG and MPO board members and staff to stay engaged.

for

Andrew Fremier
Executive Director