

Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments
Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee

July 8, 2022

Agenda Item 4a

MTC/ABAG'S 2022 Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip

Subject:

Report on MTC/ABAG's 2022 Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip.

Summary:

Last month's Washington, D.C. advocacy trip was MTC/ABAG's first in-person visit to the nation's capital since 2019 and the first such trip organized by Summit Strategies after decades of representation by MTC's long-standing federal advocate, Tom Bulger. MTC and ABAG were represented by MTC Chair Pedroza, MTC Vice Chair Josefowitz, Commissioners Schaaf and Dutra-Vernaci and ABAG President Arreguín, along with MTC/ABAG staff and our federal advocates. Approximately 20 meetings were held with members of the Bay Area Congressional Delegation, Biden Administration officials with the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Congressional committee staff. MTC/ABAG also met with officials and staff during working meals and at a small MTC/ABAG reception. A meeting and event attendee list is provided as Attachment A.

Our meetings were primarily focused on transportation advocacy related to implementing the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Specifically, we provided an overview of the Bay Area Infrastructure Grants Strategy—as adopted by MTC in March 2022—and advocated for regional priority grant requests seeking funding over the next year, as showcased in the *2022 Annual Report to Congress* (see Attachment B). Partners from the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority, Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, and San Francisco County Transportation Authority joined many of the transportation-focused meetings to highlight their sponsored projects within the broader Bay Area Infrastructure Grants Strategy.

Housing was a focus at several meetings—including at a meeting with HUD officials, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senators Feinstein and Padilla, and Congressional committee staff. We provided an update on the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) and discussed priorities related to federal support for housing production, including advocating for policies to expand access to federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits and support for rental

assistance, homelessness assistance, and local community development funds. Our housing fact sheet, included as Attachment C, served as a reference and leave-behind for those meetings.

Transportation Meeting Takeaways and Next Steps

We heard from numerous USDOT decision makers—including those with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Transit Administration and Federal Railroad Administration—that the Bay Area’s coordinated approach of aligning a short-list of regional priorities for target BIL grant programs was *the most strategic thing the Bay Area could do to enhance our competitiveness* and heard that no other region to date has presented such a cohesive, coordinated priority list.

We heard similar feedback from our Members of Congress who expressed interest in MTC bringing the delegation together to reinforce the Bay Area Infrastructure Grants Strategy. This included suggestions for a joint letter of support for regional BIL priority projects from the Bay Area Congressional Delegation as well as coordination around more program-specific engagement, such as organizing phone calls to the Administration in support of grant priorities.

Members of the Bay Area delegation also encouraged MTC to continue to coordinate with them and partners to help shape the development of grant programs to ensure Bay Area projects benefit. This coordinated advocacy has begun to bear fruit with the inclusion of \$600 million in Capital Investment Grant (CIG) resources in the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) fiscal year (FY) 2023 funding proposal to augment existing federal CIG commitments to projects like Caltrain Electrification and BART Transbay Core Capacity thanks to advocacy by Speaker Pelosi and other members of the delegation. There is a similar opportunity for coordinated advocacy to shape the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Rail program, which is still under development.

Housing Meeting Takeaways and Next Steps

Housing leaders in Washington, D.C. were excited to learn about Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) and in general, requested that we keep them updated on the BAHFA pilots and programs and offered to provide support, where applicable. Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Senators Padilla and Feinstein have been champions for BAHFA in Washington, D.C., including advocating for a new regional grant program in the Build Back Better legislation for

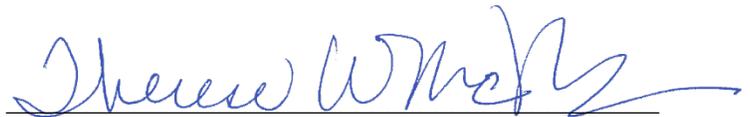
which BAHFA would have been eligible. We thanked them for this and committed to continue exploring options to provide resources for BAHFA, one of which was seeded during our D.C. trip. Specifically, as follow up to a meeting with Senate THUD committee staff, staff and our D.C. advocates have been exploring with committee staff including a version of the regional grant program for inclusion in the Senate's FY 2023 THUD appropriations bill. Lastly, senior leadership at HUD expressed strong support for our regional approach to addressing the housing crisis and are considering highlighting BAHFA as a best practice at a conference later this year.

Recommendation:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: MTC/ABAG 2022 Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip Meeting List
- Attachment B: MTC 2022 Report to Congress
- Attachment C: MTC/ABAG Housing Advocacy Fact Sheet



Therese W. McMillan

MTC/ABAG 2022 Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip Meeting List

MTC and ABAG representatives on during the June 13-15, 2022 Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip attended nearly 20 meetings with members of the Bay Area Congressional Delegation, U.S. Department of Transportation officials, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development officials, and staff from congressional committees with jurisdiction over transportation and housing. In addition, special guests from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Members of Congress, and Congressional staff joined MTC and ABAG for various working meals and a reception. A full list of meeting and event attendees follows.

Bay Area Congressional Delegation

- Senator Dianne Feinstein and staff
- Senator Alex Padilla and staff
- Congressman Mike Thompson and staff
- Congresswoman Barbara Lee and staff
- Congressman John Garamendi and staff
- Congressman Mark DeSaulnier and staff
- Congressman Eric Swalwell and staff
- Congresswoman Jackie Speier and staff
- Congressman Jared Huffman and staff
- Office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi; Robert Edmonson, Chief of Staff
- Office of Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren; Arlet Abrahamian, Legislative Counsel

United States Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary

- Charles Small, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs
- Kara Fischer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

- Nuria Fernandez, Administrator
- Veronica Vanterpool, Deputy Administrator
- Ray Tellis, Region IX Administrator
- Other senior FTA staff

Federal Railroad Administration

- Allison Fultz, Chief Counsel
- David Valenstein, Senior Advisor for Major Projects and Credit Programs

Federal Highway Administration

- Keith Benjamin, Associate Administrator for Highway Policy and External Affairs

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Joe Carlile, Senior Advisor—Budget, Policy and Programs
- Alan Williams, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs
- Nicole Lindler, Senior Advisor for Intergovernmental Affairs

Congressional Committee Staff

U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (Joint Majority and Minority Meeting)

- Dabney Hegg, Majority Clerk
- Alison Graab, Minority Clerk

Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee (Joint Majority and Minority Meeting)

- Homer Carlisle, Professional Staff, Majority
- Nicole Christus, Professional Staff, Minority

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Minority

- Murphie Barrett, Senior Policy Advisor
- Kelley Moore, Communications Director
- Libby Callaway, Legislative Assistant

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Majority

- Jackie Schmitz, Senior Professional Staff
- Garret Gee, Counsel

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Minority

- Cheryle Tucker, Staff Director for Highways and Transit Subcommittee
- Leslie Parker, Legislative Assistant