

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

November 12, 2021

Agenda Item 4c

2022 Washington D.C. Advocacy Trip Update

Subject:

Update on preparations for MTC and ABAG's 2022 Washington D.C. advocacy trip.

Summary:

Preparations began this month for an in-person MTC and ABAG advocacy visit to Washington D.C. in mid-March 2022, following the lead of the American Public Transportation Association, the National Association of Counties, and our other national association partners who are planning for in-person conferences in Washington D.C. next spring. While national groups have already released their conference dates, we will wait to finalize a date until the Congressional Calendar is released—typically in early December, in time for our December Legislation Committee meeting—so we can be sure to schedule our visit while Congress is in session.

As in previous trips to Washington, D.C. we expect the trip would extend from Sunday evening to Wednesday afternoon and would include meetings with the Bay Area Congressional delegation, officials within the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, partner organizations, and relevant committee staff.

COVID-19 Contingency:

In the event that a COVID-19 resurgence makes travel and in-person meeting unsafe, we would activate a contingency plan to transition to virtual meetings. We propose we plan for a California Transportation Reception indoors, as usual, with food and drink in the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (House T&I Committee) Room in the Rayburn House Office Building, but that we be prepared to substantially revise or cancel, based on conditions on the ground and local public health orders. As we engage with our southern California partner agencies who typically co-sponsor the event and get a better handle on the expected number of guests, we will explore whether it makes sense to consider a larger space for the reception since the House T&I Committee Room can get very crowded.

Discussion:

The transportation and housing packages under debate make a March 2022 trip to Washington D.C. well timed. In the case that a package has passed, the Administration will be gearing up to award discretionary grants at an unprecedented scale and it will a prime opportunity to communicate our priorities to Administration officials to help ensure Bay Area projects are well positioned to compete. Alternatively, if a package has not yet been solidified, demonstrating our support to Congress would be timely. While the persistence of COVID-19 could make travel to Washington, D.C. less attractive than usual, the spending packages under consideration also make it an especially important time for MTC/ABAG to make our voices heard and build relationships with members of Congress and the Administration.

Regarding the California Transportation Reception, MTC has credits from our unexpected 2020 cancellation with our long-time caterer and event planner—which together represent the bulk of the reception expenses. It's our understanding that in-person gatherings are again occurring within Congressional circles in D.C. and that the House rules will very likely allow for in-person receptions again by March 2022. Assuming COVID transmission rates are low in the Bay Area and Washington, D.C., we recommend we proceed with a reception, recognizing that we may need to pivot as circumstances dictate.

We look forward to hearing the Committee's feedback and answering any questions you may have.



Alix A. Bockelman