

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council**

February 25, 2025

Agenda Item 6d

Staff Liaison Report

Subject:

Overview of recent MTC policy decisions and other activities.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Staff Liaison Report – February 2025

Staff Liaison Report – February 2025

Follow Up Items:

- In response to a request from Councilmembers for an analysis of implications of federal executive orders to claw back funds, MTC’s legislative staff recommends reviewing the [February 2025 Report](https://mtc.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?M=F&ID=b6cb7d4e-fa64-4db3-8762) (<https://mtc.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?M=F&ID=b6cb7d4e-fa64-4db3-8762>)
- In response to a Council question about “sanctuary transit operators” who commit to providing riders with safe rides without fear, staff is inquiring with local transit operators and will report back any related policies or practices to protect vulnerable riders from harassment.
- In response to Councilmember requests to create taskforces on capital project delivery and Senate Bill 125, staff recommends that Councilmember examine the [RM3 Oversight Committee](https://mtc.ca.gov/funding/regional-funding/regional-measure-3) (<https://mtc.ca.gov/funding/regional-funding/regional-measure-3>) and [Senate Bill 125 Task Force](https://calsta.ca.gov/press-releases/2023-12-08-secretary-appoints-25-members-to-transit-transformation-task-force) (<https://calsta.ca.gov/press-releases/2023-12-08-secretary-appoints-25-members-to-transit-transformation-task-force>). Task forces are created at the direction of the Commission.

Executive Director's Report:

The following items are excerpts from the January 2025 Executive Director's Report to the Commission. To read past reports in their entirety, check the agenda for a given Commission meeting. Search for past meetings on [MTCs Legistar webpage](https://mtc.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx) (<https://mtc.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>)

Updates

- On Jan. 13, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority hosted MTC and other transportation operators across the Bay Area at the Milpitas Transit Center BART station to sign the [Equity in Infrastructure Project Pledge](https://equityininfrastructure.org/pledge) (<https://equityininfrastructure.org/pledge>). Chief Deputy Executive Director Alix Bockelman and DeNise Blake, President of the Northern California Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) and MTC Assistant Director of Operations & Capital Projects, spoke at the event. This pledge underscores MTC’s commitment to

fostering generational wealth and addressing the racial wealth gap by improving public infrastructure contracting practices to create more opportunities for Historically Underutilized Businesses, including Disadvantaged and Small Business Enterprise firms, through prime, joint venture and equity contracting opportunities. For more details see this story on our website: <https://mtc.ca.gov/news/mtc-bay-area-agencies-join-national-movement-support-minority-owned-businesses>.

- Commissioner Rabbitt was joined by MTC staff and Policy Advisory Council members, former Commissioner Damon Connolly, Congressman Jared Huffman and a host of other officials on Jan. 10 to celebrate the opening of the North Petaluma SMART station. The project was funded in large part through the state Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, made possible by a coordinated Sonoma County application endorsed by MTC. Another Commission endorsement helped secure a state Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities award for a 131-unit affordable housing project scheduled to break ground soon on a site adjacent to the new station.
- The last of three \$1 toll increases approved by voters through Regional Measure 3 (RM 3) in 2018 went into effect at the seven state-owned toll bridges on Jan. 1. This is separate from the toll hike approved by BATA in Dec., which will be phased in over five years, beginning Jan. 1, 2026, to pay for the maintenance, rehabilitation and operation of the bridges. Through RM 3, toll revenues are funding a comprehensive suite of highway and transit capital improvements across the region to improve mobility in the bridge corridors as well as express bus service and operating funding for the Salesforce Transit Center. For details on the full RM 3 expenditure plan see <https://mtc.ca.gov/funding/regional-funding/regional-measure-3>.
- MTC required that jurisdiction recipients of various OBAG 2 and 3 funds receive Housing Element certification from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by Dec. 31, 2024. As of the previous update to the Commission in Nov. 2024, four jurisdictions had OBAG grants at risk due to noncompliance with this requirement. In December 2024, the Commission transferred sponsorship of an OBAG 3 project from a noncompliant jurisdiction (San Mateo County) to a compliant jurisdiction (Redwood City). Thanks to the diligent work and exemplary

coordination among MTC-ABAG, HCD, and local jurisdiction staff, all three remaining jurisdictions subject to this requirement met MTC's deadline and no grant awards will be rescinded. Overall, 96 Bay Area jurisdictions have certified housing elements.

- Lastly, I'm honored to recently have been appointed by the U.S. Department of Transportation to its Federal System Funding Alternative (FSFA) Advisory Board as the representative of an owner and operator of toll facilities. This appointment is for two years as of Dec. 30. The FSFA Advisory Board is specified in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to provide recommendations on a long-term solution and sustainable future of the Highway Trust Fund and is the first step in a cascade of program tasks leading to a large, at-scale pilot program demonstrating the feasibility of a national motor vehicle distance-based fee to potentially replace the federal gas tax, which was last raised in 1993. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF) is the source of funding for the federal highway formula-based programs that fund MTC's One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program as well as the federal transit formula funds that are programmed and allocated by MTC. In recent years, the HTF has only remained solvent as a result of General Fund transfers. The first meeting will be scheduled for the week of Feb. 24.

News Headlines from [The Bay Link Blog \(https://blog.bayareametro.gov/\)](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/):

- **[MTC funding helps open SMART pathway segment, boosts Bay Trail](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-funding-helps-open-smart-pathway-segment-boosts-bay-trail)**: (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-funding-helps-open-smart-pathway-segment-boosts-bay-trail>) A mile-long segment of Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit's pathway from McInnis Parkway to Smith Ranch Road opened in Marin County last weekend.
- **[MTC, Estuary Partnership protecting Bay Area waterways](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-estuary-partnership-protecting-bay-area-waterways)**: (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-estuary-partnership-protecting-bay-area-waterways>) Hybrid and electric vehicles are becoming more popular and are helping to reduce the air pollution known as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, created by traditional combustion engine vehicles. However, all vehicles, including hybrid and electric vehicles, contribute to other kinds of pollution – including water pollution.

- **Survey shows Caltrain riders are satisfied with service, feel safe:**
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/survey-shows-caltrain-riders-are-satisfied-service-feel-safe>) Caltrain released the results of its 2024 Customer Satisfaction Survey last week, with the rail agency receiving an overall satisfaction rating of 4.02 out of 5. The survey was taken prior to Caltrain's launch of its major electrification and enhanced schedule, the agency noted.
- **2025 advocacy priorities approved by MTC/ABAG:**
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/2025-advocacy-priorities-approved-mtcabag>) The Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments have approved the Final 2025 Joint Advocacy Program, expressing the agencies' state and federal legislative priorities for the calendar year.
- **BAHFA helps community land trusts preserve affordable homes:**
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/bahfa-helps-community-land-trusts-preserve-affordable-homes>) Two loans recently made by the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) to community land trusts will preserve 34 affordable homes in San Francisco and San Jose, ensuring stable housing for people who may otherwise have been forced out by rising rents.
- **California invests millions in Bay Area transportation infrastructure:**
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/california-invests-millions-bay-area-transportation-infrastructure>) The California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocated nearly \$1 billion last week for projects aimed at solving mobility challenges and aiding California's continued effort to make the highway system more resilient to climate change.
- **Black History Month: African American contributions to transportation highlighted:**
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/black-history-month-african-american-contributions-transportation-highlighted-0>) The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has produced a important webpage looking at the contributions of African Americans to transportation.

- **Caltrain’s Celebration Train makes annual trip commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/caltrains-celebration-train-makes-annual-trip-commemorating-martin-luther-king-jr-day>) The dream lives on this month as the Caltrain NorCalMLK Celebration Train makes its way up the Peninsula from San Jose to San Francisco on Monday, Jan. 20.
- **Schedule alignment accelerates Bay Area transit transformation:** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/schedule-alignment-accelerates-bay-area-transit-transformation>) Bay Area transit’s ongoing transformation into a more connected, more efficient and more customer-focused mobility network this week took another step forward as major transit agencies synchronized their schedules to improve transfers between systems and agreed to coordinate future schedule changes twice a year: in mid-January and in mid-August.
- **Tolls fund bridge maintenance, upgrades for drivers, transit riders:** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/tolls-fund-bridge-maintenance-upgrades-drivers-transit-riders>) The Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) is responsible for keeping the Bay Area’s seven state-owned toll bridges structurally sound and in a state of good repair. Bridge toll dollars from the more than 342,000 paid trips each day fund bridge maintenance and the Bay Area’s overall transportation system.
- **Commission, ABAG Executive Board approve Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint:** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/commission-abag-executive-board-approve-plan-bay-area-2050-final-blueprint>) MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) this month approved further study of the Final Blueprint for Plan Bay Area 2050+.
- **Slideshow: public transit mapping and wayfinding efforts underway:** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/slideshow-public-transit-mapping-and-wayfinding-efforts-underway>) MTC and transit agency partners are developing new maps and signs to help make trips easier to understand for both existing and new riders. The work is highlighted in this new slideshow.

- **[End of 2024 shows growing Caltrain ridership:](#)**

(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/end-2024-shows-growing-caltrain-ridership>)

Caltrain's ridership continues to show major gains, with December 2024 having over a half million passengers, a 41% increase over December 2023, the agency reported this week.

Have a Question? Ask a Librarian

If you need assistance locating information or are having difficulty navigating the MTC-ABAG websites, please feel free to contact the MTC-ABAG head librarian. Reference assistance is available by telephone (415-778-5236), or email library@bayareametro.gov. Information can also be found on the [MTC-ABAG library webpage](https://mtc.ca.gov/tools-resources/mtc-abag-library) (<https://mtc.ca.gov/tools-resources/mtc-abag-library>).

For MTC and Plan Bay Area Glossaries:

- [Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms & Terms](https://mtc.ca.gov/tools-resources/mtcabag-library/glossary-transportation-planning-acronyms-terms) (<https://mtc.ca.gov/tools-resources/mtcabag-library/glossary-transportation-planning-acronyms-terms>)
- [Plan Bay Area Glossary](https://www.planbayarea.org/about/glossary) (<https://www.planbayarea.org/about/glossary>)