

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments  
Community Advisory Council**

**April 3, 2026**

**Agenda Item 10.a.**

**Staff Liaison Report**

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**Subject:**

Overview of recent MTC and ABAG policy decisions and other activities.

**Issues:**

None identified.

**Recommendations:**

Information only

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Staff Liaison Report – April 2026

## Staff Liaison Report – April 2026

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### **Updates and Follow Up Items:**

- Councilmembers should have received the Council Handbook via email, along with a survey to gather dietary restrictions, preferred pronouns, and feedback on the first session. Please contact Ky-Nam if you need either the handbook or survey.
- The Norman Mineta Bay Area High School Summer Academy applications are now live. Students will learn how regional governments address key regional challenges as they consider potential careers in public service. Students from across the Bay Area are encouraged to [apply](#) – the deadline is April 27, 2026. Please share with your networks. <https://mtc.one/SummerAcademy2026>
- The summer committee schedule was updated across both agencies for 2026. July is now the “summer recess” month for MTC and ABAG, so there will be no (or very limited) Commission, ABAG Executive Board and committee meetings. Accordingly, the Community Advisory Council will meet in May, June, and then August over the summer.

### **Executive Director's Report to the Commission & ABAG Exec Board:**

The following items are excerpts from the February and March 2026 Executive Director's Reports to the Commission and ABAG Executive Board. To read past reports in their entirety, see these links:

- Commission Report: <https://mtc.ca.gov/news/executive-directors-report>
- ABAG Executive Board Report: <https://abag.ca.gov/news/executive-directors-report>

### **Commission Updates:**

#### [El Cerrito TOD Groundbreaking](#)

On March 5, Chair Noack, Chief Deputy Executive Director Alix Bockelman, Deputy Executive Director Daniel Saver and I will attend the groundbreaking ceremony for Parcel A South of the El Cerrito Plaza BART TOD project. The development will be 100% affordable, with 70 units in a six-story mid-rise building. MTC helped this project across the finish line with a \$2.4 million Priority Sites pre-development loan that provided permanent gap financing to

support architectural and engineering consultants, permits and plan check fees, modular manufacturer deposits, among other costs.

### [Bike to Wherever Days Pledge to Ride Kicks Off in Oakland](#)

The Pledge to Ride campaign for May's Bike to Wherever Days kicks off Sunday, March 8 at FansFest in Fruitvale Village, Oakland. FansFest is an annual celebration of Oakland's rich sports legacy, with music, food and local celebrity guests. Drop by the fest and pledge to join thousands of fellow cyclists who pedal to work, school, errands or just for fun.

### [Caltrain Names Train in Speaker Emeritus Nancy Pelosi's Honor](#)

On Sunday, March 22 Commissioners Burt, Abe-Koga and Melgar joined other local, state and national leaders at a Caltrain ceremony celebrating the naming of one of its state-of-the-art electric trains in honor of Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi at Caltrain's San Francisco Station. Made during Women's History Month, the dedication recognized Pelosi for her outsized role in advocating for Caltrain and other public transit agencies throughout her career as she nears the end of her final term in Congress after serving for 38 years.

### [CalEnviroScreen 5.0 Released](#)

CalEnviroScreen (CES) is a statewide tool used to identify Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) based on cumulative environmental and population burdens. CES guides eligibility for several state funding programs. The recent draft release of CES 5.0 incorporates updated census data and two new indicators, resulting in a modest statewide expansion of DACs.

In the Bay Area, DAC-designated census tracts increased from 113 to 122; however, this update does not materially change the region's representation. Only 6.9% of Bay Area tracts qualify as DACs under the draft CES 5.0, compared to 29% statewide. Under the proposed CES 5.0 the region accounts for just 5.4% of all DACs, compared to 5.8% in CES 4.0. As a result, many Bay Area communities with significant socioeconomic and environmental challenges remain underrepresented, limiting access to state discretionary funding tied to CES.

Staff are currently working on a comment letter for submittal to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) in advance of the April 1, 2026 comment deadline. Staff will continue to monitor the CES update process and work with regional and state partners to advocate for a definition of DACs that better reflect the full range of disadvantages in the Bay Area. A more detailed update on CalEnviroScreen is planned for next month's joint meeting of the MTC Planning and ABAG Administrative Committees.

### [Sacramento Lobby Days](#)

On March 17 and March 18, Chair Noack, Vice Chair Moulton-Peters, Commissioners Ahn, Ezzy-Ashcraft, John-Baptiste, Papan and ABAG President (& Commissioner) Ramos and ABAG Executive Board member Motoyama met with members of the Bay Area legislative delegation to discuss our 2026 legislative priorities. Over the two-day period, we focused on three legislative priorities: 1) protecting transit and housing investments in the FY 2026-27 State Budget; 2) seeking \$15 million to one-time funds to sustain the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority's programs; and 3) supporting SB 1087 (Cabaldon), the MTC-ABAG sponsored legislation to modernize SB 375, the law requiring sustainable communities strategies.

### [State Partners Visit MTC-ABAG](#)

On Thursday, April 9, state partners from the California Transportation Commission, California Air Resources Board and California Department of Housing and Community Development are holding a joint meeting at the Bay Area Metro Center at 1 p.m. We have arranged a tour of the Oakland Chinatown Transit Oriented Development project located at the Lake Merritt BART station – a project that is the result of an MTC-funded station area plan and predevelopment loan from BAHFA. The project has received state and regional funding and exemplifies the region's efforts to expand access to affordable housing near public transit. This is an opportunity to discuss the important role MTC-ABAG plays in supporting both the planning and implementation of projects to implement sustainable communities strategies and the need for additional flexible regional funding.

### Doorway Receives Regional Excellence Award

BAHFA's Doorway Housing Portal received a Eureka! Award for Regional Excellence from the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) during the organization's Regional Leadership Forum in Long Beach on March 9. The Eureka! Award recognizes regional programs that demonstrate the type of creative leadership and thinking needed to solve tough regional challenges and can serve as examples for other regions to follow. The Doorway Housing Portal, launched in 2023, is the first multi-jurisdictional online affordable housing portal in the country and serves as a one-stop shop for searching and applying for affordable housing.

### Standardized Transit Maps and Sign Designs Approved

The Regional Network Management (RNM) Council last month approved the first set of transit wayfinding design guides to help Bay Area transit agencies establish a uniform look for signs and maps used everywhere from individual bus stops across the region to major hubs where multiple systems connect. At major hubs, the guidelines include maps illustrating how to access key destinations in the area, such as libraries and community centers. The RNM Council's action finalizes the region's new transit network identity and offers transit stop sign guidelines that MTC and agencies can use in the near-term while guidance for all transit stops and stations is refined and finalized. (<https://mtc.ca.gov/news/bay-area-transit-agency-leaders-ok-standardized-sign-designs>)

### National Defense University Presentation

On Jan. 30, Chief Deputy Executive Director Alix Bockelman and Housing & Energy Deputy Executive Director Daniel Saver presented to 80 fellows from the National Defense University international master's program. The group included military officers from roughly 60 nations, plus 10 American officers. Many of the foreign students are high-ranking military officers, and alumni have gone on to serve as ministers of defense and even prime ministers in their home countries. Alix and Daniel spoke to the group about the role of government in infrastructure, transportation, housing and technology in the Bay Area.

### [New Bay Area Travel Study Data Available Via Dashboard](#)

A new Bay Area Travel Study (BATS) [dashboard](#) is now available to help MTC and transportation agencies plan for a more efficient and more effective regional transportation network. The dashboard allows users to explore how travel patterns — such as mode share, trip rates, trip purpose, trip lengths, working from home, and home delivery — vary across counties and demographic groups. The dashboard focuses on data from 2019 and 2023, highlighting how travel behavior changed before and after the pandemic. Knowing more about who travels, and how and why they go from place to place, will help MTC and other agencies develop policies and make informed transportation investments.

### [State Transit Loan](#)

Gov. Gavin Newsom last week signed into law state Assembly Bill 117, authorizing a \$590 million loan to MTC to further loan to Bay Area transit agencies to avert major service cuts at AC Transit, BART, Caltrain and San Francisco Muni during the 2026-27 fiscal year that begins July 1. The bill reflects the agreement MTC reached last month with Office of Governor Newsom, the California Department of Finance and the Metropolitan Transportation. Negotiated in close coordination with the affected transit agencies — which together face a projected deficit of more than \$800 million in the next fiscal year — the new agreement will sustain operations used by hundreds of thousands of daily transit riders across the region.

The new law allows the loan to be funded no later than July 1, 2026, using money awarded but not yet allocated for Bay Area projects by the California Transportation Commission through the state Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). Because many transit capital projects have long construction timelines and the TIRCP is continuously replenished, the loan is structured to uphold the state's commitments to awarded projects while minimizing risk to project schedules.

### [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>.

**ABAG Executive Board Updates:**

[Sacramento Lobby Days](#)

On March 17 and March 18, President Ramos, Executive Board member Motoyama, MTC Chair Sue Noack and Vice Chair Moulton-Peters and other Commissioners and staff are scheduled to meet with members of the Bay Area legislative delegation to discuss our 2026 legislative priorities. Over the two-day period, we will be focused on three legislative priorities: 1) protecting transit and housing investments in the FY 2026-27 State Budget; 2) seeking \$15 million in one-time funds to sustain the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority's programs; and 3) supporting SB 1087 (Cabaldon), the ABAG-MTC sponsored legislation to modernize SB 375, the law requiring sustainable communities strategies.

[State Partners Visit ABAG-MTC](#)

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[Doorway Receives Regional Excellence Award](#)

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launched in 2023, is the first multi-jurisdictional online affordable housing portal in the country and serves as a one-stop shop for searching and applying for affordable housing.

#### [State Coastal Conservancy Funds Bay Area Olympia Oyster Public Education Initiative](#)

The California State Coastal Conservancy, in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy, awarded the San Francisco Estuary Partnership \$75,000 to support the San Francisco Bay Area Olympia Oyster Public Education Initiative. The initiative aims to increase the pace and scale of native oyster restoration in the San Francisco Bay through public education and outreach and is a partnership with the SF State University's Estuary and Ocean Science Center, the Native Olympia Oyster Collective and Hog Island Oyster Company. The Estuary Partnership will lead on social media messaging to accompany the public launch of The Alluring World of Olympia Oysters, a web story about the importance of Olympia Oyster restoration.

#### [2026 Webinars: Annual Progress Reports \(APR\) Update with HCD, When Ground Floor Retail Works — and When It Doesn't](#)

On Jan. 22, 125 local planning and housing staff joined ABAG's RHTA program webinar with the CA Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). HCD staff covered new updates to the APR form, such as expanded income categories for classifying unit affordability, as required by AB 3093 (Ward, 2024), requirements for reporting historical designations, as required by AB 2580 (Wicks, 2024), and more detailed requirements for reporting on the implementation of housing element programs. HCD also announced that local jurisdictions could continue to use the affordability assumptions from ABAG's regional accessory dwelling unit (ADU) affordability survey rather than local staff independently documenting ADU rental rates. Over 175 people attended the March 11 webinar, "When Ground Floor Retail Works — and When It Doesn't," highlighting the growing pressure cities face to deliver more housing while still creating active, vibrant streets. The webinar provided practical guidance with an explanation of how mixed-use policy intersects with real retail market

conditions and the development constraints that shape ground floor space.

#### [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.

### BayREN Forum on Powering Data Centers

BayREN is hosting an online [forum March 18](#) to explore the realities of Bay Area data center development, distinguishing between buzz about very large facilities serving “hyperscalers” and the smaller-scale cloud storage projects that are more likely to enter local permitting pipelines. As the demand for digital infrastructure continues to grow, particularly with the advancement of AI, local governments must navigate the complex balance between data center expansion and regional resource constraints. The forum will look at maintaining grid reliability and protecting ratepayer affordability while managing the environmental impacts of intensive energy and water use.

### 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.

### [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.

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

- **[MTC, ABAG release proposed final Plan Bay Area 2050+](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-abag-release-proposed-final-plan-bay-area-2050)**  
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-abag-release-proposed-final-plan-bay-area-2050>) After nearly three years of public discussion, technical analysis and refinement, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments last Friday released the proposed final Plan Bay Area 2050+ and the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Plan Bay Area 2050+.
- **[Take me out to the ballgame \(via public transit\)](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/take-me-out-ballgame-public-transit)**  
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/take-me-out-ballgame-public-transit>) With the San Francisco Giants home opener scheduled for Wednesday evening against the New York Yankees, local transit agencies are reminding fans that there are many ways to get to the ballpark without driving.
- **[New Clipper START partnership automates, simplifies verification process](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/new-clipper-start-partnership-automates-simplifies-verification-process)**  
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/new-clipper-start-partnership-automates-simplifies-verification-process>) The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) this year launched a partnership with the California Department of Technology (CDT) to simplify and automate the verification process for CalFresh recipients who apply for the Bay Area's Clipper START transit-fare discount program.
- **[BART's Next Generation Fare Gates Project wins two honors](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/barts-next-generation-fare-gates-project-wins-two-honors)**  
(<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/barts-next-generation-fare-gates-project-wins-two-honors>) BART's Next Generation Fare Gates Project is being recognized by two prestigious national organizations: The American Public Works Association named the

fare gates as its winner of the 2026 Public Works Project Award and the International Partnering Institute announced the gates as its 2026 Collaborative Project of the Year.

- **[FasTrak®, FasTrak Flex® and Express Lanes START<sup>SM</sup> – Saving drivers time and money](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/fastrakr-fastrak-flexr-and-express-lanes-startsm-saving-drivers-time-and-money)** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/fastrakr-fastrak-flexr-and-express-lanes-startsm-saving-drivers-time-and-money>) FasTrak® saves drivers time — and often money, too — on Bay Area toll bridges and in Express Lanes.
- **[El Cerrito Plaza BART Station affordable housing gets BAHFA assist](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/el-cerrito-plaza-bart-station-affordable-housing-gets-bahfa-assist)** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/el-cerrito-plaza-bart-station-affordable-housing-gets-bahfa-assist>) An El Cerrito Plaza BART Station affordable housing project, which celebrated the start of construction this week, had an early infusion of dollars from the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA).
- **[Bay Bridge West Span joint rehabilitation work continues](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/bay-bridge-west-span-joint-rehabilitation-work-continues)** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/bay-bridge-west-span-joint-rehabilitation-work-continues>) Caltrans recently completed two-thirds of the lower deck reconstruction (Phase 2) of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge West Span expansion joint rehabilitation project.
- **[BART invites members of blind and low-vision community to a sensory orientation](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/bart-invites-members-blind-and-low-vision-community-sensory-orientation)** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/bart-invites-members-blind-and-low-vision-community-sensory-orientation>) Members of the blind or low-vision community who would like to explore BART in a relaxed environment are invited to a sensory orientation event from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, at 19th Street Station in Oakland.
- **[MTC launches new grant program to encourage transit-oriented development](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-launches-new-grant-program-encourage-transit-oriented-development)** (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtc-launches-new-grant-program-encourage-transit-oriented-development>) Following MTC’s January adoption of a framework for funding the fourth cycle of One Bay Area Grants (OBAG 4), the Commission today approved dedicating \$45 million of the \$820 million in OBAG 4 money for a Transit-Oriented Communities Incentive Program designed to encourage Bay Area cities, towns and counties to adopt policies that promote dense residential development within a half-mile

of BART, Caltrain, SMART, Capitol Corridor and ACE stations; Muni and VTA light-rail stations; Muni and AC Transit bus rapid transit stops; and ferry terminals.

- [MTC's vanpool subsidy rises to \\$600](https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtcs-vanpool-subsidy-rises-600) (<https://blog.bayareametro.gov/posts/mtcs-vanpool-subsidy-rises-600>) For drivers frustrated with a non-productive, long and grueling commute, MTC's Bay Area Vanpool Program is an alternative that provides direct subsidies to both new and existing vanpools.

### **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](mailto: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>)