

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

January 9, 2026

Handout - Agenda Item 2c

Washington D.C. Legislative Update

Subject:

December 2025 Report from Washington, D.C. advocate.

Issues:

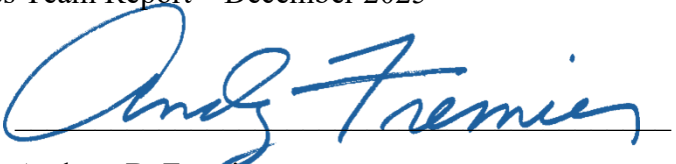
None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – December 2025



Andrew B. Fremier



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Summit Strategies Team Report – December 2025

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: January 6, 2026

Subject: December 2025 Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **Senators Introduce Bill to Boost Transit Funding**
 - **House Passes SPEED Act**
 - **Housing Package Introduced**
 - **Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress**
 - **National Transportation News Roundup**
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Below is a status update on issues of interest to MTC and the actions that we have taken to date.

Senators Introduce Bill to Boost Transit Funding

Senators John Fetterman (D-PA) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) have reintroduced a bill that would boost state and local transit funding to help add new routes, increase service frequency, and prevent service cuts. The Moving Transit Forward Act of 2025 would create a new program that would boost funding for operating costs and capital projects and would cover cost increases, allow for additional service, or address projects that increase safety. The bill currently boasts eight Democrat co-sponsors—and 0 Republican co-sponsors—and strong union support.

Senator Van Hollen (R-MD) introduced the bill under the same name in 2024, but the bill failed to advance out of committee.

House Passes SPEED Act

On December 18, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives passed The Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act (H.R. 4776) in a 221 to 196 vote, with 11 Democrats joining a majority of Republicans to support the measure. This bill would streamline the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). While ensuring environmental impacts are taken into consideration before major projects begin construction, the NEPA process can also create hurdles for infrastructure projects around the country, causing significant delays, increasing costs, and impacting clean energy projects. The SPEED Act aims to make significant changes to NEPA, including reforms that will have an impact on transportation projects. The bill changes the definition of a major federal action so that grants and cost share awards would not on their own require compliance with NEPA. This means that a project that requires no federal permit, review, or other action other than the funding action from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) would not have to complete NEPA. The SPEED Act also codifies the Supreme Court ruling, which directs agencies to limit analysis only to effects that are proximately caused by the project itself, excluding effects that are speculative or separate in place and time, and directing courts to afford substantial deference to agencies. Environmental groups and a majority of House Democrats argue that the SPEED Act would undermine judicial review of projects, limit public input, and tip the scales in favor of approving projects that would hurt communities. The bill now heads to the Senate where negotiators will weigh how to incorporate or modify the legislation to tackle bottlenecks in the permitting

process. As the measure currently stands, it is unlikely to receive support from Senate Democrats, who have decried the anti-wind energy provisions in the bill.

Housing Package Introduced

The other week, the House Financial Services Committee held a markup of the bipartisan Housing for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 6644). The bill advanced out of committee in a nearly unanimous vote — 50-1. The package, which includes parts of 48 pieces of legislation, includes various proposals to tackle housing affordability, including streamlining regulations, updating housing programs, and changing housing financing options.

While the bill has bipartisan support, it has less robust transit-oriented development provisions than the Senate-led housing package — the Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act of 2025. Below is a comparison:

House — Housing for the 21st Century Act	Senate — ROAD to Housing Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three years after enactment, the Assistant Secretary shall publish guidelines and best practices to support housing production. These guidelines shall include recommendations regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “mechanisms, including proximity to transit, to determine the appropriate scope for rezoning and ensure development that does not disproportionately burden residents of economically distressed areas”○ “provisions to encourage transit-oriented development, including increased permissible units per structure and reduced minimum lot sizes near existing or planned public transit stations”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In <u>addition to the provisions on the left</u>, the Senate bill includes the “Build More Housing Near Transit Act,” which directs the USDOT to incentivize local governments to promote housing development and regional growth in and around the transit corridors of future New Starts projects. Specifically, the bill will amend U.S. Code Section 5309, which governs the application process for capital investment grants to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Direct the Transportation Secretary to boost a transit project’s rating if the project includes pro-housing policies for areas along the project route.○ Define pro-housing policies as a state or local action to remove regulatory

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The bill requires identifying barriers to housing supply and types of land use policies, including “creating transit-oriented development zones”	<p>barriers to constructing or preserving housing, reduce or eliminate parking minimums or minimum lot sizes, establish by-right approval processes for multi-family housing, commit substantial public property to affordable housing development or preservation, and eliminate or raise residential property height limits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Engage HUD to develop a methodology to evaluate the merits of the pro-housing policies documented in a CIG application.
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The ROAD to Housing Act was stripped from the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in a bid to placate House Financial Services Chair French Hill (R-AR), who later introduced the Housing for the 21st Century Act. A housing bill will likely be a priority for Congress in 2026.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

Your DC Team has been hard at work and has communicated with several congressional offices and agencies over the last month. This list includes:

- The DC Team coordinated a call with the Office of Representative Lateefah Simon (D-CA) to discuss transit-oriented development (TOD) and communicate MTC’s position on transit and housing issues.
- In December, the DC Team organized a call with the government affairs staff and consultants of some of the legacy transit systems around the nation to discuss preserving increased State of Good Repair (SOGR) funding in the next surface transportation bill. The Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA) included a little less than a billion dollars a year in advanced appropriations for this program. As Congress reauthorizes IIJA, the funding added through advanced appropriations is coming under significant scrutiny and at risk of being cut. In the meeting, we discussed how the agencies that benefit the most from this program can work together to preserve the additional funding.

- In December, the DC Team attended the USDOT kickoff to the World Cup event. The event served more as a pep-rally than an information session but following a series of speeches from USDOT officials and dignitaries, the crowd broke into working groups where the primary focus was on improving wayfinding, seamless fares, and security. Recently, the US Department of Homeland Security released two rounds of funding that can be used by host systems to improve safety and security in preparation for the World Cup. This funding can be used to support capital and operational improvements on transit. FEMA makes funds available to the Host City Committee Task Forces through governor-designated State Administrative Agencies (SAA). To carry out the extensive security activities required to protect players, staff, attendees, venues, and critical infrastructure across the host cities and strengthen them against potential terrorist attacks, the Host City Committee Task Force in each of the 11 host cities will then make subawards to local units of government.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

- [Transit in 2025: A year of turmoil \(Trains\)](https://www.trains.com/pro/passenger/transit-in-2025-a-year-of-turmoil/)
<https://www.trains.com/pro/passenger/transit-in-2025-a-year-of-turmoil/>
- [‘Blatant failures’: Federal Transit Administration rejects CTA’s revised safety plan \(WGN\)](https://wgntv.com/news/traffic/blatant-failures-federal-transit-administration-rejects-ctas-revised-safety-plan/)
<https://wgntv.com/news/traffic/blatant-failures-federal-transit-administration-rejects-ctas-revised-safety-plan/>
- [Can Washington, D.C., Keep Its Transit Comeback Rolling? \(Governing\)](https://www.governing.com/transportation/can-washington-dc-keep-its-transit-comeback-rolling-wmata?_hsenc=p2ANqtz--e5SXjC8GHW6b6xCRIh7jaOCCNpmyZpu6D9CLgcylFP13Ct5sVo5oEwMU0DWiLkhAU2y0RJ_4eEbpBifHI-G9xqvq4-JOIMVfcMa4597SAcBoQFM&_hsmi=397049611)
https://www.governing.com/transportation/can-washington-dc-keep-its-transit-comeback-rolling-wmata?_hsenc=p2ANqtz--e5SXjC8GHW6b6xCRIh7jaOCCNpmyZpu6D9CLgcylFP13Ct5sVo5oEwMU0DWiLkhAU2y0RJ_4eEbpBifHI-G9xqvq4-JOIMVfcMa4597SAcBoQFM&_hsmi=397049611
- [Subway and Bus Fare Rises to \\$3 in New York City on Sunday \(The New York Times\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/04/nyregion/nyc-subway-bus-fare-increase.html)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/04/nyregion/nyc-subway-bus-fare-increase.html>