

2023 POLICY ADVOCACY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
State Budget Advocacy	Presentation by the General Manager to members of the Bay Area Caucus (February)	Presented the District’s funding needs before key decisionmakers
State Budget Advocacy	The District’s advocate offered comments at the Joint Hearing on Transit Operations (February)	Highlighted District’s projected \$155 million deficit and need for additional support to avoid layoffs and deep cuts to service
State Budget Advocacy	Advocated for state operations funding at a meeting of the Senate Subcommittee on Corrections, Public Safety, Judiciary, Labor, and Transportation (March)	Underscored the District’s funding needs before key decisionmakers
State Budget Advocacy	Testified- twice- at the Senate Select Committee on Bay Area Transit , which includes Senators Glazer, Skinner, and Wahab , all of whom represent the District’s service area (May, November)	Reiterated District’s funding needs before key decisionmakers
State Budget Advocacy	Advocated for state operations funding at a hearing of the Assembly Subcommittee on Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy, and Transportation (May)	Underscored the District’s funding needs before key decisionmakers
State Budget Advocacy	Advocated for state operations funding at the Assembly Budget Committee (May)	Reiterated District’s funding needs before key decisionmakers

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
<p>State Budget Advocacy</p>	<p>In response to the Governor’s proposed budget, AC Transit joined a coalition of 60 transit operators and transportation advocates in sending a letter to Budget Chairs Skinner and Ting urging support for transit. The January 18 letter called on the legislature to honor the transit investments made in the current year’s budget and requested new, multi-year funding in next year’s budget to help stave off service cuts, layoffs, and attract riders back to transit.</p>	<p>Coalition letters demonstrate to policy-makers widespread support for transit funding and, in so doing, influence the policymaking process.</p>
<p>State Budget Advocacy</p>	<p>In March, AC Transit signed on to a letter with more than 100 other organizations urging legislators to fund transit operations in next year’s budget.</p>	<p>Coalition letters demonstrate to policy-makers widespread support for transit funding and, in so doing, influence the policymaking process.</p> <p>Our participation in this letter bolstered the California Transit Association’s engagement on behalf of our industry with CalSTA, policy and budget committees in the legislature, and political leadership in the Senate and Assembly.</p>
<p>State Budget Advocacy</p>	<p>In June, the District, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and Bay Area public transit operators sent a letter to Senate and Assembly legislative leaders and budget chairs thanking them for supporting public transit in the FY 2023-24 State Budget.</p>	<p>Coalition letters demonstrate to policy-makers widespread support for transit funding and, in so doing, influence the policymaking process. The FY 2023-24 State Budget provides \$5.1 billion for transit operations.</p>
<p>State Budget Advocacy</p>	<p>Weekly coordination meetings between the District’s Department of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations and government affairs operatives from Bay Area transit agencies and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (ongoing).</p>	<p>Collected survey data of operating deficits to make the case for more funding.</p>

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
State Budget Advocacy	Conducted introductory meeting with Assemblymember Liz Ortega (April).	Elevated awareness about our need for operations and capital funding, hiring challenges and opportunities for partnership, and the Realign comprehensive operations analysis. Urged support for SB 532 (Weiner).
State Budget Advocacy	In April, District representatives met with Assemblymember Mia Bonta , who is a member of the Assembly Budget Committee.	Elevated awareness about our funding needs and appealed to her to support funding for transit operations in the state budget. Urged support for SB 532 (Weiner).
State Budget Advocacy	In August, hosted a meeting with Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan's District Director and legislative staff at AC Transit's General Offices.	Elevated awareness about our need for operations and capital funding, hiring challenges and opportunities for partnership, and the Realign comprehensive operations analysis. Urged support for SB 532 (Weiner).
State Budget Advocacy	During CTA's annual legislative conference in Sacramento, District representatives met with the offices of Assemblymembers Liz Ortega, Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Buffy Wicks, and Alex Lee , in addition to Senators Aisha Wahab and Nancy Skinner .	Generated awareness and support for transit operations funding in the state budget, our ZEB program needs, and AB 463 (Hart), and invited legislators and staffers to tour our facilities.
Federal Earmarks	Requested \$2 million to upgrade our zero-emission bus (ZEB) facilities at the Central Maintenance Facility (CMF) in East Oakland with hydrogen sensing technology.	Senator Alex Padilla requested \$1.8 million in the Senate Appropriations bill to fund ZEB upgrades at CMF. AC Transit was the only transit agency in the state to have its earmark request included in the Senate funding bill. Congresswoman Barbara Lee also requested \$850,000 in the House Appropriations bill for the CMF upgrades.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
Federal Earmarks	Requested \$2 million to fund the full architectural design of Zero Emission Bus University (ZEB U) at the District’s Training & Education Center in Hayward.	Congressman Swalwell requested \$850,000 in the House Appropriations bill in support of the ZEB U project.
Ballot Measures	Assessed likely impacts to the District of Initiative 1935, <i>Limits Ability of Voters and State and Local Governments to Raise Revenues for Government Services (Initiative Constitutional Amendment)</i> . If passed, the Act will increase the threshold to pass a local tax from a simple majority to a two-thirds majority, among other consequences.	Board adoption of a resolution in opposition to Initiative 1935
Federal Grant Support	Supported the successful application to the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) FY23 Low- and No-Emission and Bus & Bus Facilities grant programs.	The District was awarded a \$25.5 million federal grant to purchase 25 Fuel Cell Buses and transform our Training & Education Center into the nation’s foremost clean transit training facility. Nine letters of support from community-based organizations and all members of our federal delegation accompanied the submission.
Federal Grant Support	Supported the successful application to the FTA’s 2023 Areas of Persistent Poverty grant program.	The District was awarded \$450,000 to support the community outreach needed to develop a plan for improved transit on Foothill Boulevard between Lake Merritt and the Eastmont Mall in Oakland. Several letters of support from the community, secured by District staff, helped secure this funding.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
<p>State Legislative Advocacy</p>	<p>Conceived of and co-sponsored Assembly Bill 463 (Hart) to grant transit agencies across the state with priority access to electricity during disruptions to the power grid.</p>	<p>Assemblymember Greg Hart (Santa Barbara) introduced AB 463, which quickly received support from transit operators across the state. The bill did not advance out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, so the District and California Transit Association are exploring a possible regulatory fix through the California Public Utilities commission (CPUC).</p>
<p>State Legislative Advocacy</p>	<p>Helped shape and supported the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 125, the Transportation budget trailer bill.</p>	<p>SB 125 makes \$5.1 billion available to California’s transit agencies, which can be flexed to fund transit operations or capital improvements. Four billion dollars will be provided over the next two fiscal years by way of the Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). The governor had originally proposed slashing this program by \$2 billion; \$1.1 billion more is committed over the next four years towards a new Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program.</p> <p>SB 125 also establishes a Transit Transformation Task Force, led by the California State Transportation Agency, to develop policy recommendations to grow transit ridership, improve the transit experience. and address long-term operational needs.</p>

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
<p>State Legislative Advocacy</p>	<p>Advocated in support of SB 532 (Weiner), which would increase tolls over Bay Area bridges by \$1.50 for a period of 5 years, generating approximately \$900 million for Bay Area transit. This includes meeting with Assemblywoman Ortega and the Office of Senator Wahab to encourage their support for the bill.</p>	<p>Senator Weiner paused SB 532 in August, stating that he will convene a working group of Bay Area legislators over the fall to determine what transit funding proposals to pursue in the next legislative session.</p>
<p>State Legislative Advocacy</p>	<p>Increased engagement on activities related to the introduction of legislation in 2024 that will authorize the region to place a transportation funding measure on the ballot in 2026.</p>	<p>Senator Weiner has indicated he wishes to sponsor this legislation during the 2024 legislative session.</p>

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
<p>State Legislative Advocacy</p>	<p>Advocated for passage of legislation supported by the District during in-person and virtual meetings with policymakers and their staff, at committee hearings, in writing, and via our advocate in Sacramento.</p>	<p>Passed into law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB 645 establishes a five-year pilot program that gives several California cities, Oakland among them, the authority to install speed safety systems (e.g., automated cameras) aimed at slowing vehicle traffic. • SB 434 requires the state’s 10 largest transit agencies, including AC Transit, to survey riders about harassment on public transportation. The District will survey its riders in 2024. • ACA 1 lowers to 55% the voter threshold for tax measures that could help fund capital improvements to transit. This constitutional amendment requires voter approval and will be on the 2024 General Election ballot. <p>Vetoed by the Governor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB 719 would have required managed health care plans to reimburse public transit agencies for the cost of providing non-medical transportation. • AB 819 would have make a third or subsequent fare evasion violation no longer a misdemeanor with potential jail time and instead, an infraction punishable by a max. \$400 fine <p>See Attachment 3 for a complete list of bills and their status.</p>

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
Federal Appropriations Advocacy	This November, in coordination with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and The Bus Coalition, staff urged members of our Congressional delegation to oppose Republican amendments aimed at reducing funding for transit infrastructure grant funding and prohibiting the use of any federal funds for transit-oriented development.	All offices from our Congressional delegation affirmed that they would oppose these amendments, all of which ultimately failed.
Federal Advocacy	During APTA’s annual legislative conference in Washington, DC, District representatives met with staff from all six members of our federal delegation (Senators Feinstein and Padilla, and Representatives Garamendi, Lee, Swalwell, and Khanna), in addition to the powerful House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee .	These meetings offered a valuable opportunity to stress the importance of our service to their constituents, advocate for funding, highlight our leadership in zero emissions public transit, and to urge support for our earmark requests. Notably, Senator Padilla and Representatives Lee and Swalwell succeeded in inserting our earmark requests into their respective chamber’s annual funding bills.
Federal Advocacy	In August, District representatives met with Congressman Swalwell’s new legislative assistant to introduce her to AC Transit and provide an update on District priorities.	The meeting offered a valuable opportunity to cultivate a new relationship, stress the importance of our service to the congressman’s district, advocate for funding, highlight our leadership in zero emissions public transit, and to urge support for our earmark requests.
Regional Policy Development	Supported launch of a joint AC Transit – MTC effort to develop of a regional transit priority policy, per the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force’s <i>Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan</i> .	Nearly 80 high-level stakeholders attended, including executives/staff at MTC, Caltrans, transit operators, county transportation agencies, cities, and advocacy organizations.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
Local Revenue Generation	Conducted polling to assess the viability of a potential District revenue measure on the 2024 General Election ballot, and assessed what opportunities exist, in partnership with cities in our service area, to generate funding for public transit operations.	Polling revealed that voter support for a parcel tax measure is currently lower than the required two-thirds threshold (67%) needed to pass and would be extremely difficult to pass in 2024.
2024 Report to Congress and the Legislature	The Department of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations composed and distributed to policymakers and their staff its annual Report to Congress and the Legislature . Printed copies were distributed to federal and state policymakers and their staff at in-person meetings, and digital copies were provided following online meetings.	The Report is a key advocacy tool that quickly and effectively summarizes the District’s top priorities and needs. This year’s report underscored the need for operations funding; urged support for District-sponsored legislation, AB 463 (Hart); and spotlighted our industry-leading ZEB program needs.
2024 Federal and State Advocacy Programs	Led development of the agency’s annual federal and state advocacy programs, which guide the District’s policy-related activities in Sacramento and Washington, DC. As is the case every year, the programs were developed based on the significant input received from District staff, the General Manager’s Access Committee, and external stakeholders.	This year, staff made it a priority to further streamline the advocacy programs so that they provide the District greater flexibility when pursuing its policy goals.
Facilities Tour	Hosted over a dozen federal and state legislative staff for a tour of our zero-emission bus program at Division 4 in East Oakland.	Engagements like these are an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with legislative offices. These relationships are critical as the District works to advance its policy priorities.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	OUTCOME / IMPACT
Facilities Tour	Hosted Congressman John Garamendi and his staff on a tour of Division 3 in Richmond.	The tour offered an opportunity for the District to cultivate a working relationship with the congressman and his staff. These relationships are critical as the District works to advance federal policies and secure funding for its key priorities.
Facilities Tour	Welcomed Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator Nuria Fernandez and Associate Administrator Paul Kincaid, Region 9 Administrator Ray Tellis and Deputy Administrator Amy Changchien, and FTA Program Manager Roxana Hernandez to AC Transit. During our time together we showcased our initiatives and programs, visited the zero emission bus facilities at Division 2, and toured the Tempo BRT system, which received significant federal funding.	FTA provides financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems, oversees safety measures, and helps develop next-generation technology research. Building and sustaining relationships with FTA staff is critical as the District works to advance federal policies and secure funding for its key priorities.
District Breakfast Briefings	Hosted briefings of key stakeholders, including local elected officials and community leaders, across the District's five wards	Briefings provided an opportunity to update key stakeholders on our service, key initiatives, funding needs, and the ways in which they can partner with AC Transit to support public transit in the East Bay

OVERVIEW OF 2024 PLANNED POLICY ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS
State Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve the \$5.1 billion committed to public transit that was included in the state’s FY 2023-24 budget • Advocate for additional transit operations funding in the state's FY 2024-25 budget • Maximize the funding allocations the District receives from MTC via the \$5.1 billion secured in the state’s FY 2023-24 budget
Grant Funding	Continue to support the development of competitive grant applications, including securing letters of support from policymakers, partner agencies, and community-based organizations
Earmarks	Develop federal earmark requests and advocate for their inclusion in annual appropriations bills
Policy Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support effort to introduce and pass legislation authorizing a regional transportation measure to be placed on the ballot in 2026 • Engage on legislation, regulations, and other actions that could impact the District, as identified in the Board-approved 2024 Federal and State Advocacy Programs • Monitor and, where appropriate, influence the work of the <i>Transit Transformation Task Force</i>, which was created by last year’s budget trailer bill and is charged with developing policy recommendations to grow transit ridership, improve the transit experience, and address long-term operational needs
Policymaker Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct in-person and online meetings with policymakers and their staff, as needed, on issues of importance to the District • Coordinate with MTC to engage members of our state delegation in March and, potentially, our federal delegation in May
2024 Elections	Educate, as needed, our riders and key constituencies on measures that could impact public transit
Legislative Conferences	Leverage annual APTA and CTA legislative conferences to conduct in-person meetings with policymakers and their staff to advocate for and advance the District’s policy priorities
Board Updates	Coordinate updates to the Board from our state and federal lobbyists

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS
<p>Facilities Tours</p>	<p>Conduct tours for FEDERAL policymakers and their staffs during scheduled Congressional recesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 01/20/24 – 01/28/24: Martin Luther King Day Holiday • 02/17/24 – 03/04/24: President’s Day Holiday • 03/23/24 – 04/08/24: Congress Out of Session • 04/19/24 – 04/28/24: Spring Holiday • 05/25/24 – 06/02/24: Memorial Day Holiday • 06/15/24 – 06/24/24: Congress Out of Session • 06/29/24 – 07/07/24: Fourth of July Holiday • 07/12/24 – 07/21/24: Congress Out of Session • 08/02/24 – 09/08/24: Congressional Summer Recess • 09/28/24 – 11/11/24: Congressional Recess: 2024 Elections • 11/22/24 – 12/02/24: Congressional Recess: Thanksgiving • 12/20/24 – 12/31/24: Congressional Winter Recess <p>Conduct tours for STATE policymakers and their staffs during legislative recesses, ideally prior to the release of the Governor’s revised budget in May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 03/21/24 – 04/01/24: Spring Recess • 07/03/24 – 08/05/24: Summer Recess