

Megaregion Working Group Meeting Notes

Friday, April 28

12:30-2:30 p.m. meeting held via Zoom with public participation available throughout

Next Meetings

- o Friday, September 29
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Meeting Agenda

- Invited Speaker: Administrator Amit Bose, Federal Railroad Administration
- Megaregion Advocacy Update
- Valley Rail Scope Amendment
- Funding Update

Working Group Representatives in Attendance

SACOG Representatives: Bonnie Gore, Gary Bradford, Mike Kozlowski

MTC Representatives: Carol Dutra-Vernaci, Gina Papan

SJCOG Representatives: Gary Singh, Robert Rickman, Nancy Young, Leo Zuber

Meeting Summary

This is the second meeting of the Megaregion Working Group in 2023, with the focus of the meeting on state and federal funding advocacy for the “Megaregion Dozen” projects. Opening remarks were provided by Administrator Amit Bose of the Federal Railroad Administration. The Working Group elected the Vice Chair for 2023, City of Manteca Mayor Gary Singh, and welcomed two of the new representatives from MTC, Carol Dutra-Vernaci, and Gina Papan.

Invited Speaker: Administrator Amit Bose, Federal Railroad Administration

- Administrator Bose provided remarks supporting the leadership of SACOG, SJCOG, and MTC for their continued commitment to partnering to create and sustain future of rail in the Megaregion.
- Administrator Bose provided an overview of available funding programs from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for passenger rail projects, including the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program, the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program.
- Administrator Bose discussed the importance of modernizing rail infrastructure and improving safety and accountability to keep workers and passengers safer. This includes actions to pass stronger safety accountability measures, in addition to historic rail infrastructure investments to improve safety.

Megaregion Advocacy Update

- Chair Gore provided an overview of the Megaregion Advocacy Day on April 19, which was the first time the group met in person to advocate for the Megaregion's shared transportation and legislative priorities, including AB 350, the legislation that would extend the timeline for SACOG's MTP/SCS.
- Representatives Rickman noted how the meetings were well received and that the Valley Link project had received a TIRCP award for \$25 million earlier in the week.
- Several Representatives and SJCOG Executive Director Diane Nguyen supported making the Megaregion Advocacy Day an annual event.
- MTC, SACOG, and SJCOG Representatives and staff also noted other recent or upcoming advocacy trips where the Megaregion Dozen projects will be discussed, including the Cap to Cap trip that recently ended for SACOG Representatives and SJCOG's upcoming trip to DC.

Valley Rail Scope Amendment

- SACOG staff provided an overview of the scope amendment to update the Valley Rail project title, and brochure information to include the planned segment north to Chico. Staff described these changes and the impact to the project and Megaregion by approving the update.
- Director Bradford provided supportive comments for the amendment and the effort to extend passenger rail north to Yuba County.
- Representatives approved the scope amendment for the project.

Funding Update

- SACOG staff provided an overview of the updated Megaregion Dozen brochure.
- SACOG staff presented on the pending and recently awarded grant applications for Megaregion Dozen projects, and provided a comparison of funding gaps for the projects and provided a preview of future grant programs that project sponsors will compete in for grant funding.