



December 2025 Newsletter

CLIMATE ACTION IN THE CITY UPDATES: SAN FRANCISCO'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP) DOOMED? NOT SO FAST!

By Joni Eisen



The COP 30 UN Climate Summit concluded without a roadmap to phase out coal, oil and gas. The current US administration is aggressively increasing pollution and emissions in pursuit of more wealth for big corporations and far-right cronies. **Now**

more than ever, it's up to local jurisdictions to keep up the fight for a livable planet.

In streamlining City government and reforming the Charter, the mayor must prioritize climate goals. The recent and upcoming SF Environment Department (SFE) budget cuts will significantly and adversely impact the Department's ability to implement the City's Climate Action Plan at a time when local climate action is more important than ever. However, the mayor's current focus is on restructuring City government to be more efficient and accountable – and this would necessitate reforming SF's weirdly long, complicated and arguably outdated City Charter. That, in turn, would open up an **opportunity to create a CAP-focused, authorizing entity with teeth** to oversee and enforce climate goals in every City agency - bypassing the constant fight over General Fund leftovers, and exploring other ways to finance implementation of SF's comprehensive, detailed Climate Action Plan.

[Learn more and sign the petition to the mayor here.](#) The petition will be delivered to Mayor Lurie, along with a letter signed by San Francisco Tomorrow and 30+ other local organizations, at a meeting with local climate leaders.

The last major charter update was 30 years ago, and more than 100 charter amendments have been passed since then. Changing the smallest detail in the charter requires going back to the voters with yet another ballot measure. Mayor Lurie and Board of Supervisors President Rafael Mandelman will soon convene a charter reform task force. See below for further opportunities to exert your influence in support of CAP goals. Meanwhile, if you haven't already, **[please sign the petition.](#)** Thanks! Having an entity with actual enforcing power, directly responsible to the mayor, would make sure the Commission on the Environment's and SFE's amazing work researching and developing the ideas and strategies in the CAP can become reality.

Urge the Commission Streamlining Task Force NOT to weaken and ultimately destroy the Commission on the Environment! Yes, SF has too many commissions. That's why the voters passed Prop E in 2024, establishing the Commission Streamlining Task Force. In September the Task Force voted to recommend downgrading the Commission on the Environment from a governance body to an advisory body that will sunset after three years. While many commissions may

have become superfluous or inactive, this Commission has not. [Please urge the Task Force to keep this vital commission](#), before they meet December 12th.

As the only public forum dedicated to climate and environmental issues in San Francisco, the Commission on the Environment is responsible for significant environmental and climate policy-making and citywide coordination among departments on environmental issues. Weakening and then destroying it reveals to the world San Francisco's declining commitment to addressing the climate crisis that the City and its residents face.

Friday December 12, 10am at City Hall room 263: the **Commission Streamlining Task Force Special Meeting** will be held to discuss their final recommendations.

Participate:

In person at the meeting. Agenda details will be [posted here](#) the Monday before the meeting, including other public comment options.

Online: WebEx meeting or phone

Written comments regarding the subject of the meeting will be made part of the official public record and will be brought to the attention of the Task Force.

- Email your own comments to CommissionStreamlining@sfgov.org by **5pm the Thursday prior** to the Task Force meeting.
- [Or you can use this handy letter-writing tool](#) and include the Mayor and Board of Supervisors.

Reducing Deadly Air Pollution in the entire Bay Area. In 2023, the Bay Area Air District ("Air District") established strong standards to reduce deadly air pollution from the use of fossil fuels in homes and buildings. The regulations create zero nitrogen oxide (NOx) limits on new appliances and are set to start taking effect, in 2027 for hot water heaters and 2029 for furnaces, with an end to the sale of air-polluting heaters.

As the implementation deadlines are approaching, the Air District has been working to add some common-sense exemptions to protect low-income households - but **the gas industry and its allies are working overtime to use the reopening of the rules as an opportunity to roll them back entirely. We can't let that happen.** These rules are

some of the strongest tools San Francisco can rely on to make substantial progress toward achieving the City's 2040 net-zero GHG emissions goal.

You can give **public comment at the Bay Area Air District's December Stationary Source Committee meeting Wed, Dec 10 at 10:00am**, 375 Beale St Suite 800, San Francisco. [More info and rsvp here](#). You can [send a written comment here](#). And you can follow the implementation process on the [Air District's website](#).

TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

TRANSIT TEETERING: \$\$\$

FUTURE FUNDING

By Howard Wong, AIA



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Transit upcoming goals. Everyone must be encouraged to ride transit, which transit agencies must make attractive to ride: safe, clean, reliable, accessible. Even with rising ridership and return-to-office numbers, transit agencies face annual structural deficits as pandemic relief funds run out in 2026. Cost efficiencies, route shortenings, deferral of projects, position cuts and layoffs can only go so far in stemming massive service cuts without new, sustained funding.



\$750 million: To loan or not to loan? Of immediate concern is that while the State Legislature's June budget had included an agreement on a transit-lifeline loan of \$750 million to help Muni, BART, Caltrain and other transit systems through

November 2026, when transit funding measures would appear on the ballot, the Governor's office appeared to be renegeing on the loan.

Lobbying by Bay Area political leaders reopened negotiations on loan terms in the next months (interest rates, repayment terms, possible concessions/reforms), for Legislative approval in early 2026. Without confidence in a new funding stream, transit agencies would be forced to gradually reduce service. As federal/state transit relief funds run out, annual structural deficits are looming: Muni \$320M/year (\$430M/year by 2030); BART \$350M/year; Caltrain \$57M/year. Muni could cut service frequency by 50%, eliminate bus lines, end fare subsidies, and stop service after 9pm. BART could cut service by 65%-85%, and cut two of its five lines.

 **Regional Transit Funding on the November 2026 ballot.** California Senate Bill 63, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, enables a sales tax measure for five Bay Area counties. If approved by voters, San Francisco could levy an additional sales tax of 1%, and Alameda/Contra Costa/San Mateo/Santa Clara an additional 0.5%, for the next 14 years. New tax revenue would be shared by the SF Metropolitan Transportation Agency (SFMTA-Muni), BART, AC Transit, Caltrain, SF Bay Ferry and Golden Gate Transit. The measure has proactive language, requiring transit agencies to improve financial efficiency, rider experience, regional transit integration, and implementation of the MTC Transit Transformation Action Plan.

The best chance for success is to place the measure on the ballot via signature-gathering. SB 63 creates a five-county special district to enable putting the regional measure on the ballot, with an option for a voter-initiative process requiring only a simple majority (50% + 1) to pass, rather than the two-thirds vote needed for a tax placed on the ballot by a government agency. But even if passed, the estimated \$1 billion in new annual funding would be insufficient to cover total structural deficits in all regional transit agencies.

 **San Francisco Parcel Tax Measure on the November 2026 Ballot.**

Augmenting the Regional Transit funding measure, SF Mayor Lurie is proposing a parcel tax measure on the SF ballot - potentially generating \$85 million annually to further stem Muni service cuts. A parcel tax is a usually flat fee charged to property owners - though it could vary according to the size of the property. Specifics regarding the tax rate, exemptions, and structure are in the works. The mayor sees robust transit as key to revitalizing downtown. The planned ballot measure includes reforms for Muni accountability and reliability.

Muni Now, Muni Forever has created a ballot measure proposal which they are discussing with the mayor. That proposal, called the “Muni Forever Proposal,” is expected to raise over \$260 million and will include tenant protections and exemptions for residents on SSI/SSDI. When combined with the regional ballot measure described above, the increased funding is expected to bring enough money to grow Muni service by 10%. [Find out more here](#). A parcel tax measure normally requires two-thirds voter approval but a citizens’ initiative (via signature-gathering) would only need 50%+1 voter approval.

Possible new local tax on ride-hailing companies and high-end

CEO pay. Four members of the SF Board of Supervisors are considering such a ballot measure; specifics are in the works. If the measure does not set aside money for a specific use such as transit, it would only need 50%+1 voter approval - but the revenue could be used anywhere.

 **Now what?** Two transit and other funding measures (local, regional, state) on the same ballot pose political risks. And large transit service cuts pose their own, socioeconomic risks.

SFMTA can’t wait. More ongoing budget cuts? Even as transit ridership and return-to-office numbers are growing, increasing fare revenues, SFMTA may need to address current budget shortfalls by implementing new 5%-7% cuts across all divisions. If November 2026’s ballot measures were to pass, funding would not be available until 2027 - and even then, Muni could still have some remaining budget deficits. SFMTA has already enacted efficiencies, delayed projects, cut mid-day service frequencies, trimmed five bus routes, raised fares/fees, frozen hiring, eliminated vacant positions, laid off top managers...SFMTA will be holding workshops, seeking new funding sources and tolerable cuts.

 **Regional transit agencies have to be proactive: Improve service, get the word out.** A groundswell of transit support is happening - but non-transit users and tentative taxpayers need to be engaged, to become aware that robust public transit helps all of us, from cleaner air and better health outcomes to lower traffic congestion. The good news is that a transit advocacy coalition has arisen, made up of diverse people and groups across the political spectrum and region.

But the most powerful influence lies within the capabilities of transit agencies, as they demonstrate their transit/transportation expertise and innovative managerial skills. Transformative transit can arise from regional integration/coordination among the 27 Bay Area transit agencies and 151 transit-related planners and providers. Best practices from around the world can be applied, such as shared resources, seamless transfers, wayfinding, aesthetics, design quality, service reliability, low-cost transit fundamentals. The result will be higher regional transit mode share - signifying that more people are choosing public transportation over private vehicles. And that's the ultimate goal.

RIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT: TaTTT: Take a Transit Trip Today.

Everywhere; all over the Bay Area. For instance, ride neighborhood bus routes, like the **Muni 39-Coit Bus** to boost ridership and revenue numbers. Muni is one the country's most robust transit systems; explore culture, history, and neighborhoods. BART, Caltrain, ferries and buses connect unique regional destinations and events. See you onboard!