

How We Win Next Time: The Future of Regional Housing Funding in The Bay Area

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Executive Summary

This report examines the rise and removal of Regional Measure 4 (RM4), a proposed \$20 billion Bay Area housing bond measure intended to fund the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA). RM4 was designed to address the region's housing crisis through the "3 Ps" framework—producing and preserving affordable housing and protecting tenants. Though the measure was approved for the November 2024 ballot, it was ultimately withdrawn amid polling concerns, legal challenges, and the failure of the related Proposition 5, which sought to lower the voter threshold for bond passage.

Drawing from interviews with 15 key stakeholders and case studies of other housing campaigns across California, the report analyzes the effort's achievements, challenges, and how future Bay Area efforts might succeed. It underscores that regional coordination remains essential given the scale of the Bay Area's housing challenges, even amid skepticism about new taxes and regional identity. Campaign success hinges on early coalition-building across sectors, effective public messaging, continued voter and funder engagement in non-election years, and strategic selection of a funding mechanism.

The report also details alternative revenue scenarios, concluding that a parcel tax tied to square footage may offer a progressive and politically viable path forward. Finally, it recommends state legislative changes to expand BAHFA's powers, particularly permitting raising revenue via signature initiative to lower the required voter threshold. Recommendations also highlight the need to bridge gaps between housing advocates, labor, and potentially the business community to build a coalition strong enough to win future regional funding campaigns.

This report aims to contribute to strategic planning around passing voter-approved BAHFA funding in the medium-term, and around broader campaign efforts to fund essential work tackling the housing crisis.

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Professors Carolina Reid and Ann Silverberg - a deep thank you for your enthusiasm and advice. And for helping me narrow this capstone so that I won't still be trying to finish it by the next election cycle.

My sincere appreciation to all the interviewees who generously shared their insights and passion for progress. I hope I have come close to capturing the nuances, experiences, and dreams you shared with me.

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- *Scott Littlehale* (NorCal Carpenters Union)
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- *Tom Clifford* (Clifford Moss)
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- *Gloria Bruce* (Crankstart)
- *Kevin Zwick* (formerly of Silicon Valley Housing Trust)
- *Ray Bramson* (Destination: Home)
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Who is this Report for?

This report aims to capture lessons learned during the 2024 regional housing funding effort to shorten the learning curve for community and elected leaders about the mechanics of strong housing funding campaigns in the Bay Area, and to suggest a path forward. It also seeks to honor the hard work that has gotten the region this far in realizing a coordinated regional approach to meeting the housing need.

BAHFA & Regional Measure 4 Background

The Creation of BAHFA and the BAHA Coalition

The path to Regional Measure 4's (RM4) \$20 billion bond being approved for the November 2024 ballot was long. It began with the Committee to House the Bay Area (CASA), assembled by MTC and ABAG in 2017 (Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2021), inspired in part by a study tour for Bay Area housing leaders of the New York City self-sustaining housing funding and finance agencies. CASA was a mechanism to begin correcting for the fact that for the previous decade, Bay Area counties had been adding anywhere between 5 and 20 jobs for every new unit of housing created (Committee to House the Bay Area, 2019). This imbalance was unsustainable and demanded aggressive regional housing production to meet the demand and to disrupt the displacement of lower-income residents. CASA led to the development of a regional strategy centered on three P's: **produce** a sufficient amount of housing for all income levels, **preserve** existing affordable housing, and **protect** current residents from displacement.

Though the Bay Area Housing for All (BAHA) Coalition had existed before the CASA process and had helped to inform it, out of CASA emerged a strengthened BAHA partnership. Led by the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH), Enterprise Community Partners (Enterprise), All Home, and the San Francisco Foundation, this coalition ultimately grew to 60+ non-profit, philanthropic, business, and civic organizations dedicated to an affordable and thriving Bay Area meeting the housing, racial equity, climate, and transportation needs of every resident. BAHA's activities were funded in large part by key philanthropic partners like the San Francisco Foundation, as well as through contributions from coalition member organizations.

Another critical outcome of the CASA compact was the vision for a regional funding agency - the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) - charged with raising significant revenue to address the housing shortage. In 2019, Assemblymember David Chiu's [AB 1487](#), co-sponsored by Enterprise and NPH, authorized BAHFA. The enacted authority has the power

to raise revenue across the Bay Area in five different ways.¹ The Bay Area is defined as all or a subset of the nine Bay Area counties, but no fewer than four of these counties. Revenue has to be spent directly on the three P's or providing technical assistance to advance them. The bill established the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) as BAHFA's governing board and requires regular audits and oversight.

In 2021, BAHFA received a \$20 million appropriation in the state budget to kickstart its initial programs. In 2022 and 2023, BAHFA hired its first staff members and launched five pilot programs while laying the groundwork for a substantial funding source. These pilots include a) a targeted homelessness prevention initiative alongside the Regional Impact Council, b) a regional network for rental and mortgage assistance providers, c) expand technical assistance around preservation financing tools, d) Doorway, a one-stop streamlined regional application platform for affordable housing, and e) development of a regional affordable housing pipeline database (BAHFA, 2021). Each leverages BAHFA's unique niche at the regional level, stewarding needed projects that no single jurisdiction is well-positioned to execute.

The BAHFA Board - composed of the same board as the [MTC Commission](#), meaning representatives from each county and major city in the Bay, as well as key commissions and agencies - began meeting monthly in June 2020 to build AB 1487's template into a full-bodied government agency. The BAHFA Advisory Committee - also housed within MTC and composed of non-governmental community representatives - began meeting monthly in January 2023 to further guide spending plans, equity priorities, and other key BAHFA activities. All throughout, these plans were deeply informed by the BAHFA Coalition, a group of regional advocates spanning developers, policy experts, and community organizers.

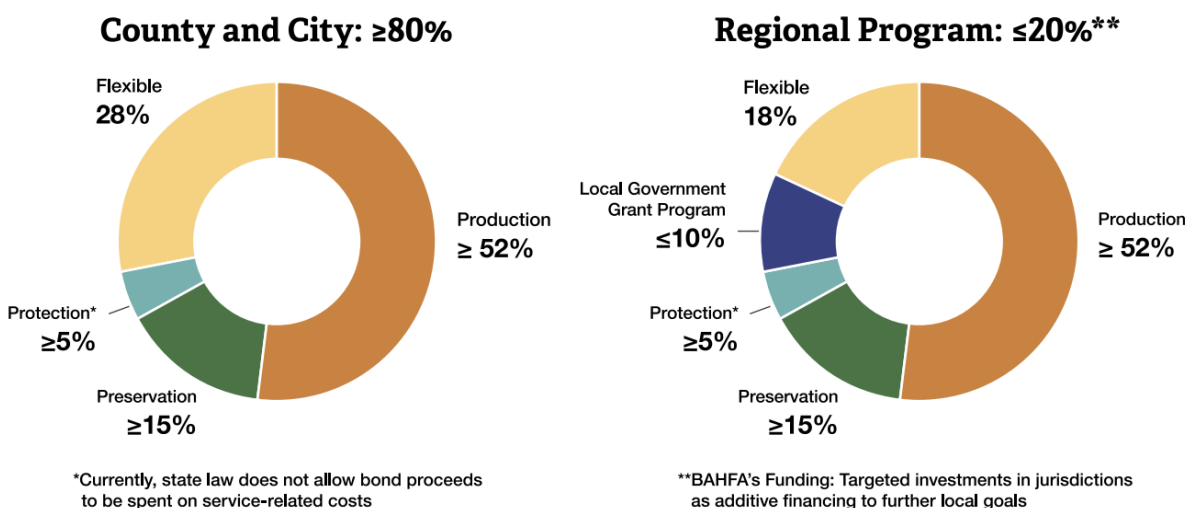
How BAHFA Works

[BAHFA's Business Plan](#) details a roadmap for the agency to allocate billions of dollars to address Bay Area resident's housing needs. AB 1487 stipulated that BAHFA spend funds in a fairly prescribed way: 80% would be redistributed back to each county and a handful of large cities² eligible for direct "return to source" funding. The remaining 20% would be retained regionally, largely to support the Bay's first-ever revolving loan fund that would provide low-cost debt to help make housing projects feasible. BAHFA, counties, and direct-allocation cities must each create and follow expenditure plans to ensure the funds are used as intended by AB 1487's founding principles. Figure 1 illustrates how these different funding streams address each of the 3 P's, with new production receiving the majority of funding.

¹ These include a GO bond secured by a parcel tax, a uniform parcel tax, a per employee head tax, a commercial gross receipts tax, or a commercial linkage fee. The latter is only allowed after voters have approved the GO bond or parcel tax first. Source: BAHFA Business Plan

² In 2024 these cities were San Jose, Oakland, Santa Rosa, and Napa. BAHFA Business Plan pg 2

Figure 1. BAHFA's Spending Guidelines, per AB 1487



Source: BAHFA Business Plan, April 2024, p. 4

BAHFA's regional spending rules differ from those governing city / county spending. For example, BAHFA spending on production can only be used for rental housing (up to 80% AMI) whereas city / county production spending can include ownership and workforce housing up to 120% AMI.

BAHFA has several equity objectives, ranging from targeting production for extremely low-income (<30% AMI) households and those people most at risk of homelessness, investing in Equity Priority Communities and Transit Priority Areas, and prioritizing historically marginalized organizations and developers.

Finally, California's rules governing General Obligation (GO) bond spending pose a challenge. Currently, bond revenue can only be spent on "bricks and mortar", meaning property acquisition and improvement. This restriction means if BAHFA raises money via a GO bond - which they ultimately selected for the ballot initiative in 2024 - they cannot spend this money on any services. Tenant protection, education, and homeless outreach and services are among the several parts of BAHFA's intended mission - mostly in the "protection" P - that would be out-of-bounds without a state legislative fix expanding eligible uses for bond revenue.

New York City's HDC Model

BAHFA draws inspiration from the successful NYC Housing Development Corporation (HDC), established in 1971. HDC lends money to produce and preserve affordable housing, but unlike most other public models, the fund is self-sustaining meaning it receives no ongoing public financing and poses no cost to taxpayers. Its primary revenue streams are the interest spread on its loans, modest per-project fees, and investment of cash income (Enterprise Community

Partners, 2024). However, unlike a private bank in which this upside is distributed to shareholders, HDC's net income is funneled back into producing more affordable housing. HDC issues \$1.5 - \$2.7 billion annually and finances approximately 10,000 - 15,000 units annually (BAHFA 2024, BAHFA Business Plan). Whereas it took HDC over 40 years to achieve this scale, BAHFA hopes to quickly capitalize its lending activity with start-up funding in the form of a bond or other significant revenue stream.

Path to the Ballot

After comparing several scenarios, MTC / BAHFA leadership working in collaboration with the Leadership Team of the BAHA Coalition BAHA decided on a GO bond as the best ballot approach. The BAHA Coalition's advocacy was crucial in this decision. A GO bond emerged as the best path for several reasons:³

- **Scale** - A GO bond would raise significantly more funds than any taxes allowed under AB 1487 (employee head tax, payroll tax, gross receipts tax, commercial linkage fee).
- **Equity** - Homeowners and businesses share the cost of such a bond, which is largely repaid through property tax. Exemptions could be more easily carved out for low-income owners, seniors, small parcels, etc, than for other revenue mechanisms.
- **Public Sentiment** - In polled testing, the messaging around "bond" versus "tax" was deemed less likely to promote an anti-tax response from concerned voters. Bay Area voters had a recent track record of supporting GO bonds including Prop A1 in Alameda County (2016), Measure A in Santa Clara County (2016), and Measure U in Oakland (2022). From 2015 up until mid-2020, GO bond support had consistently polled near the two-thirds threshold needed to pass, especially in certain progressive counties. Such bonds have also historically seen more support from the business community relative to other revenue sources.
- **Potentially Expanded Uses** - Though bonds could only be spent on capital needs as opposed to services, legislative advocacy was concurrently happening in 2024 to make bond spending more flexible and to lower the required voter threshold. The hope was that this would succeed by the time BAHFA bond funds were being administered.
- **Enable Self-Sustaining Financing** - BAHFA has a goal to create a self-sustaining regional loan fund to provide low-interest loans, and proceeds from fees and interest that can be reinvested in the fund. GO bond funding best allows for this type of activity.

On June 26, 2024, the BAHFA Board [unanimously approved](#) a \$20 billion general obligation bond for the November 5 ballot in the nine Bay Area counties. 81 people spoke at the dais (BAHFA, 2024, p. 5, Meeting Minutes) and several more submitted written comments. The vast majority expressed the dire need for this funding. At the meeting in which the Board approved the bond for the November ballot, former Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff of the BAHFA Board

³ Source: internal BAHA communication

summed up the Board's general enthusiasm saying that *"this is not only a solution that is at the right level of boldness, but it is the right mechanism...[For a] crisis that has been generations in the making, it is appropriate that the solution will be generations in the making"* (MTC, 2024, p. 108, Meeting Transcript).

The RM4 Campaign

BAHFA was created following a high season for Bay Area housing ballot measures. In 2015 and 2016, major bonds for housing passed in San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda County, and Santa Clara county. Regional success at the required two-thirds voter majority at that time seemed within reach. The Coalition had previously advocated for the bond measure to be placed on the November 2020 ballot but deemed COVID too disruptive to voter attitudes making the ballot measure vulnerable.

The BAHFA Coalition began anchoring on the 2024 election as the most promising opportunity to pass a regional bond. They hired Clifford Moss and Team CivX, two local political strategy firms with track records of success across the state, to help structure and guide the RM4 campaign. The campaign team established a central campaign committee, as well as county-level lead organizations in each of nine counties to establish local endorsements from key electeds and organizations who could motivate voters.

Though base-building and endorsements work had begun months and years prior to approval for the ballot, the RM 4 campaign officially launched in early July 2024, shortly after the June 26 approval by the BAHFA board.

Importantly, the larger RM4 effort had been on a concurrent track with efforts to make it easier to pass bonds locally. In 2019 Assemblymember Aguiar Curry introduced Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 1, which would have lowered the voter threshold from two-thirds to 55% for GO bonds and special taxes for affordable housing and public infrastructure projects. The bill was later stalled in the legislature, but spurred momentum among advocates. These advocates, including NPH, considered a 2022 signature initiative campaign that would have had the same effect as ACA 1, but COVID forced them to postpone their focus to the 2024 cycle.⁴ Initial polling had revealed that this would be a difficult pitch to voters, who understood very little about these procedural issues, and that success would require a \$40-50 million voter education campaign with little funded opposition. Thus emerged a 2023 strategy to place such a measure on the ballot via legislative action (ultimately, a revived ACA1) in order to save a prospective campaign \$12 million in qualifying their own measure via signature initiative.

⁴ Source: internal Proposition 5 campaign reflection documents; personal communication with Amie Fishman.

This path put Proposition 5 on the November 2024 statewide ballot: the measure that would lower the voter threshold from two-thirds to 55% for local affordable housing and infrastructure bonds. If passed, Proposition 5 would apply to any bond measures on the same ballot including RM4, meaning RM4 would only have to garner 55% of the Bay Area vote to win. Proposition 5 itself would need 50%+1 of statewide votes to pass, as does any ballot proposition that passes via the state legislature.

This dual strategy was plausible. There was a longstanding notion in the infrastructure and housing field that requiring two-thirds approval for local bonds let such critical funding be hamstrung by an unreasonably small minority of voters. The threshold for public education bonds had been lowered to 55% in 2000 when Proposition 39 passed with 53% of the statewide vote (California Association of Bond Oversight Committees, 2020). Campaign leaders believed the public would likely be receptive to bringing other bonds in line with this standard.

Removing RM4 from the Ballot

By 2024 it was clear that the Bay's electoral mood had changed. Polling by EMC research group (2024), presented to the BAHFA Board in June 2024, revealed that public support for a regional housing bond fluctuated between 50% and 55% from December 2023 through June 2024. By any measure, two-thirds was going to be out of reach that fall. Whereas Proposition 5 would have simply helped RM4 previously, it was now vital to its chance of success.

However, Proposition 5 faced several obstacles of its own. Opting for a legislative route to the ballot ceded some control to the bill sponsor and legislative process. This led to omissions around key oversight and taxpayer protections, which are especially important in an electorate so concerned with fiscal responsibility and pocketbook issues. Next, in July 2024 the Legislative Analyst Office's fiscal statement - the ballot measure's accompanying language about fiscal impact - emphasized that borrowing would be paid for by higher property taxes, in a sharp departure from past propositions lowering voter thresholds that did not mention taxes. Polling reflected that this language dropped voter support by nearly 20 percentage points to ~45% anticipated approval.⁵ This drop in the polls hurt the campaign's fundraising potential as key prospective funders questioned their odds of winning: after a strong start, the campaign ultimately only raised \$14 million of the \$40-50 million that would have been necessary to effectively reach voters with their messaging. The campaign strategy team chose to use a "stealth approach": avoiding aggressive presence in print and televised media to thus not provoke anti-tax opposition spending, given uncertainty around the response from the California Business Roundtable. While this choice may have been the only viable one at the time, it constricted activities of the field campaign infrastructure that the Proposition 5 campaign had inherited from RM4. Trying to minimize public visibility ran counter in many ways

⁵ Source: internal Prop 5 campaign reflection documents

to clarifying Proposition 5's many complications to voters, setting the campaign up for an inherent challenge.

As polling indicated faltering public support for Proposition 5, it became clear that RM4 was in peril. BAHA campaign leaders began to seriously discuss the tactical idea that it was better to pull the bond and “wait for a brighter day” than to lose and then bring the same ballot measure to voters only a few years later. Leaders had to make a difficult decision about the high levels of tax aversion in the region, even as that same electorate had consistently cited housing as one of their top concerns (Public Policy Institute of California, 2023).

Last-minute mobilization by anti-tax groups created an additional headwind for RM4. On August 2, 2024, barely one week before the legal deadline to remove a measure from the November 5 ballot, the BAHFA and ABAG Executive Board received a pre-litigation demand letter from a Walnut Creek law firm threatening a lawsuit. They cited what they considered biased and misleading language in the ballot title and ballot measure text (Law Offices of Jason A. Bezis, 2024). They also claimed, correctly, that the ballot measure understated the annual cost of the bond by \$241 million, which was over a quarter of the true cost. The ensuing media articles raised concerns about BAHFA's level of public trust, even as they were in the early weeks of an already uphill campaign.

On August 14, the BAHFA and ABAG Executive Boards issued a joint statement removing the bond from the ballot. The statement expressed the weight of this decision but also a commitment to carrying this effort forward in the future. Honoring the foundation that RM4 had laid, the statement affirmed that “each step brings us closer to the summit” (MTC, 2024).

Does a Regional Approach Matter for Housing?

Given the difficulty of mobilizing across nine counties with different housing needs and political attitudes, the question of the wisdom of pursuing a regional approach is valid. Certainly, affordable housing funds could continue to be raised solely on a county- or city-basis. Various interviewees cited the lack of strong regional identity as a challenge to animating voters about a regional solution. One suggested that the Golden State Warriors or Kaiser Permanente might be the best public champion for such a bond effort, as some of the few figures who might induce voters to think about “The Bay” as a whole.

However, others argued that the solution needs to fit the problem. Otherwise, voters risk funding incomplete solutions and that ultimately increases their frustration and skepticism when governments continue to ask them for money at the ballot.

The case for a regional approach was articulated in “The Elephant in the Region: Charting a Path for Bay Area Metro to Lead a Bold Regional Housing Agenda”, a 2018 Enterprise report that helped advance BAHFA’s inception. The report made four key arguments for a regional approach. First, land use power and project approval processes mostly rest at the local level, but cities and counties are almost uniformly unequipped to meet the pace and scale of the problem. Many Bay Area jurisdictions are unable to meet their RHNA goals, especially for low-income households. This failure stems from a combination of local political or resident resistance, lack of funds, and short-staffed government departments with limited technical capacity for such expediting. The latter is especially true for small jurisdictions.

Second, rental affordability challenges do not stop at city borders. Limited housing production in one jurisdiction forces priced-out residents to move to lower cost parts of the region, especially for the in-person jobs that low- and moderate earners typically hold - which often keeps these moves within the region. Research by the Turner Center has shown that low-income households leaving the Bay are most likely to move to other relatively affordable areas nearby, like Sacramento, Fresno, and Modest metro areas (Romem & Kneebone, 2018). A regional body could manage how these “costs of underperformance” are distributed and could enforce localities’ failure to build their fair share. The ancillary costs of this shortage-induced displacement - air pollution from long auto commutes, labor shortages - are also borne by the region as a whole (BAHFA, 2021).

Third, a regional housing body could establish and enforce a development pipeline, prioritizing funding and technical assistance to logically sequenced housing projects in the same way MTC does for transportation projects. In 2021, MTC / ABAG created an Expanded Regional Housing Portfolio for this exact reason (Karlinksy, 2024). Such support could also help clear the path for vacant and under-developed public land that localities have a hard time putting to use as housing because of funding and capacity limitations.

Finally, there is a clear need for reliable gap funding to help make feasible - and ideally, simplify⁶ - the capital stack for affordable projects. It is hard for any individual locality to generate enough volume for a self-sustaining financing source, but aggregated to the regional level there might be the transaction volume to make such a fund possible, especially with the help of significant seed capital such as GO bond proceeds.

Furthermore, current sources are far from meeting the Bay Area’s regional housing funding needs. A 2024 “Ready to Build an Affordable Future” housing pipeline report by Enterprise found that between state and local sources, as well as federal tax credits, the Bay Area

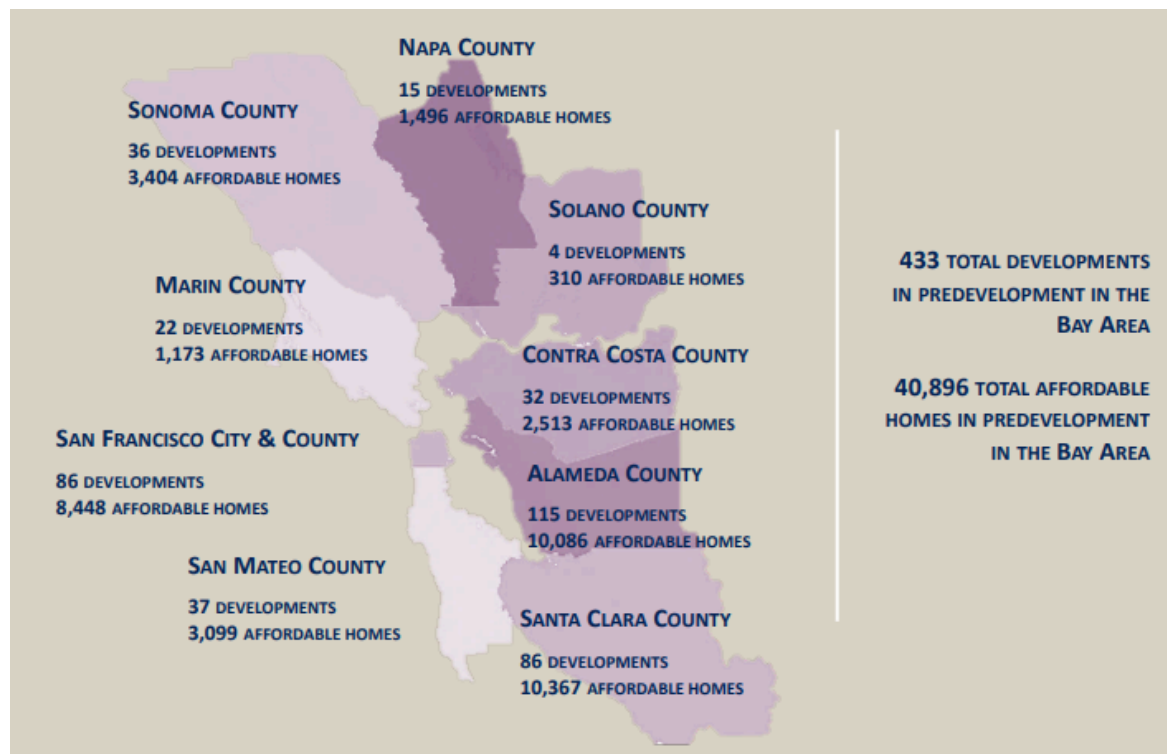
⁶ Simplification is possible by replacing multiple smaller sources, and reducing competition for very oversubscribed state and federal sources. BAHFA plans to do this both by issuing direct subsidies as well as through their low-interest revolving loan fund.

receives a mere 8% of the current subsidy need. This unmet need represents 433 predevelopment⁷ projects that would collectively produce nearly 41,000 units⁸. Insufficient and overly-complex capital stacks are a primary driver of this gap. Figure 2 illustrates this need at the county level. Alleviating this funding constraint is beyond the scope of a single city or county; bold new regional sources are critical to move these projects out of their stalled state and to simplify the layers of required capital.

In addition, SPUR's 2021 "Meeting the Need" report characterizes what will happen in the absence of strong regional intervention in housing production. They predicted that displacement would increase, with the burden falling hardest on low-income renters of color. Development would also be pushed further afield into natural areas, farmland, and areas prone to wildfire. Providing these places with utilities would be expensive, environmentally harmful, and increase wildfire risk.

In short, strong regional housing governance can compel housing actions that localities cannot or will not do, while also being more nimble and Bay Area-specific than state level action.

Figure 2. Bay Area Affordable Housing in Predevelopment



Source: "Ready to Build an Affordable Future", Enterprise Community Partners, May 2024

⁷ I.e., funding is required to begin approval and construction processes

⁸ Unfortunately, even if all these predevelopment projects were funded tomorrow, it would only account for 23% of the Bay's 180,000 unit RHNA allocation by 2031 (ibid). Clearly subsidy for currently proposed alone is not the only tool in which housing policymakers must invest

A Toolkit for Future Campaigns

This section examines recent housing campaigns and their strategies more closely. It generalizes campaign best practices informed by two case studies and 15 expert interviews, and surfaces lessons for the larger RM4 effort. It concludes with recommendations for a future Bay Area regional funding effort, including a consideration of different revenue sources.

Case Studies

This section analyzes two earlier campaigns to pass the 2016 Measure A bond in Santa Clara County and the 2024 Measure A sales tax in Los Angeles County, in order to illustrate how they differed from RM4.

Campaign	Year	\$ Amount & Type	Voter Support	Campaign Funding	Key Messages
Santa Clara County Measure A	2016	\$950 million GO bond	67.9% <i>Needed 66.7%</i>	unknown	Homelessness is expensive - let's invest in real (and fiscally smart) solutions.
Los Angeles County Measure A	2024	½ cent sales tax increase, ~\$1 billion annually	57.8% <i>Needed 50%+1</i>	\$12M (\$9M + \$3M for signature gathering)	Homelessness will increase without passage. This will also impact public safety.
Regional Measure 4	2024	\$20 billion GO bond	N/A	~\$9 million (anticipated need)	We are not on track to build enough affordable housing. Our neighbors need this.

Santa Clara Measure A, 2016

In November 2016, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A, the largest dedicated funding source for affordable housing in the county's history. The \$950 million GO bond was laser-focused on homelessness, with \$700 million for supportive housing and services⁹ (NPH, 2016). The remainder was split between first-time homebuyer programs (up to \$50 million) and housing for families earning 80-120% of Area Median Income (~\$100 million), and other low-income rental housing (Santa Clara County, 2016). Annual tax burden was expected to be \$12.66 per \$100,000 of assessed property, with no exemptions. VMC (now Valley Health) Foundation and the Housing Trust of Silicon Valley were major philanthropic backers.

In 2007, then-Mayor of San Jose Chuck Reed and then-County Supervisor Don Gage launched a Blue Ribbon Commission to study homelessness in the County (Results for America, n.d.). The goals were to chart a path to ending homelessness in the County in 10 years, and to

⁹ Though GO bond funds cannot be used for services, the county committed additional dollars for this use

provide a unified approach to the issue. This Commission established the Housing 1000 program in 2011, which aimed to stably house 1,000 of the county's most vulnerable residents. As Ray Bramson said, it was *"a good proof point..and really showed that you could effectively get chronically homeless adults into stable and permanent housing"* (R. Bramson, personal communication, November 20, 2024). Concurrently, the county was conducting an innovative [Home Not Found](#) study, documenting the cost of homelessness to the county's health care, justice, and social service systems. The study revealed that housing these residents would be \$42,000 - or 68% - less expensive annually to public coffers than if they were unhoused.

This finding created the basis for what Kevin Zwick, CEO of the Housing Trust of Silicon Valley at the time, calls *"a counternarrative around cost"*. It began to chip away at the popular notion that building affordable housing at \$700,000 or more per door at the time was ridiculous investment. *"[The idea is] 'How could you possibly spend that much?' It's getting at something in how Americans feel about who's deserving of assistance, and who's not"* (K. Zwick, personal communication, November 21, 2024). The idea that money could be spent in a way that achieved better outcomes was digestible and attractive to key players in the county.

Leadership was also crucial. Once the possibility of a large bond was on the table, everyone wanted a piece of it. Then-Supervisor Cindy Chavez simply kept raising the bond dollar amount from \$500 million to nearly double that until all important constituencies - permanent supportive housing, homeownership, production - felt represented. Kevin Zwick: *"Let's make a bigger pie. And then we can all go fight for a bigger pie...we all have something to win"*. Supervisors Cindy Chavez and Dave Cortese also served as champions helping as bridge builders to local leaders like then-Mayor of San Jose Sam Liccardo demonstrating that the broader effort was also in localities' interest.

The County had been investing in relationships for some time. The American Leadership Forum of Silicon Valley had been facilitating annual cohorts of leadership skill-building across public, private, and nonprofit sectors locally since 1988 (American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley, 2025). According to people involved in the campaign, this existing social capital was key to retaining strong relationships in the face of disagreement and ultimately, compromise. *"People weren't coming [to key campaign decisions] solely on a transactional basis"* (K. Zwick, personal communication, November 11, 2024). Furthermore, the task force to review findings from Home Not Found and Housing 1000 was led by representatives of the South Bay Labor Council and the Downtown San Jose Business Association. Labor and business stakeholders were deeply engaged from the beginning alongside traditional advocacy groups.

Other factors were at play as well. Redevelopment funds had recently been dissolved by then-Governor Jerry Brown, and some voters were aware of *"the gaping hole where housing funding used to be"* (R. Bramson, personal communication, November 20, 2024). And more

generally, in addition to the coordinated top-down drumbeat about the need for housing, “*voter settlement was extremely positive about the need for housing in 2016...Everybody recognized the high cost of living, the pressures of rising rents and average median income continuing to float up and up*” (ibid). Voters were still fairly bought into the idea that housing ends homelessness and government funding can bring about the needed change.

Once campaign season was active, the primary core messaging to voters was a workforce housing argument around affordable places for neighbors to live. A secondary message that was powerful for electeds and endorsements but used less in general public messaging was that the city was losing money by keeping people on the streets. According to Kevin Zwick, distrust in government’s ability to use large funds well was a factor, but apparently only a minor one and with more traditionally conservative voters.

Ultimately Measure A passed narrowly and continues to fund projects in Santa Clara County today. There are some learnings for RM4 and housing campaigns more generally:

- **Voter sentiment was different in 2016.** There was an optimism and general faith in government-led solutions to the affordability crisis, which was far less present in 2024.
- **A long and steadily increasing on-ramp sustained momentum.** The various studies, pilots, task forces created a clear road to the bond measure. They also helped various constituencies like labor and business be integral to laying the groundwork, rather than invited in later on.
- **Counternarratives around cost are powerful.** Reframing the message from “affordable housing is so expensive to build” to “We are currently spending \$X on the housing and homelessness crisis in these indirect ways that do not lead to long-term solutions” can be effective.
- **Government champions are important for getting other electeds on board.** Supervisors Chavez and Cortese played this light “enforcer” role, inducing local electeds to get behind the larger effort.
- **A bigger bond meant more supporters with little downside.** Bond size seemed to not matter much to voters after a certain point, and helped grow the tent of constituents.

Los Angeles County Measure A, 2024

In 2017, Los Angeles County passed a 0.25% sales tax via Measure H, which was set to expire in 2027. In November 2024, voters approved Measure A, which doubled this sales tax amount to 0.5% and has no sunset date. The tax is estimated to raise just over \$1 billion annually. 36% of Measure A funds (~\$370 million annually) will go to LACAHSa, Los Angeles’ regional government akin to BAHFA. LACAHSa aims to address the county’s housing crisis by focusing on housing production, renter protections, and homeless services and supportive housing.

The measure's structure involved several important decisions.¹⁰ First, the measure would have no sunset, which is powerful but unusual. Leaders framed this choice to skeptical electeds, especially business leaders, as "we don't want to have to do this all over again in 10 years." A time-limited sales tax is also harder to bond against than a permanent source. Second, given that sales taxes are generally regressive, the campaign heavily advertised the robust set of included exemptions for groceries, medicine, EBT purchases, diapers, and gas (The Angeleno Project, 2024) to limit the disproportionate impact on low-income households. Third, Project Labor Agreements are required for any project of 40 or more units wishing to receive Measure A funding (Los Angeles County, 2024). Labor was deeply involved with the campaign from the outset, and pushed for Measure A to not be simply building housing but also to secure union contracts to do so. Labor groups played a critical fundraising role, contributing half of the \$9 million that fueled the voter campaign.

The Measure A coalition held weekly open door meetings from many years leading up to 2024 as a forum for major decisions about revenue source and structure, messaging, endorsement strategy, and other key aspects of the campaign. This transparency was intentional - "*we wanted to make [our decisions] obvious to anyone paying attention*" said campaign co-Director Tommy Newman - to build a large table with a long runway. Early membership skewed towards labor representatives and grassroots organizing groups. Measure A's coalition also marked the first time in county history that affordable developers and homeless services providers were in deep collaboration. The merger also opened up access to new funders who cared more about one issue than the other, and helped the campaign fight more opponents.

Once the campaign launched in 2024, effective messaging was key but the ground was shifting under the campaign's feet. The City of Grants Pass v Johnson U.S. Supreme Court decision in June 2024 allowed cities to enforce bans on public camping even when no shelter is available. California cities and counties acted quickly to use this new power in response to pressure primarily from housed residents to "clean up" homelessness (Anastas & Kendall, 2025). The Grants Pass decision came down after the Measure A campaign was already in full swing. Up to that point, the campaign had largely driven the classic message that all residents deserve dignified housing that they could afford. All of a sudden, it was much easier to displace unhoused people and move them - at least temporarily - to new areas, making them more visible in new communities. Voters were more concerned about visible homelessness in new places than they had been prior. After careful polling, the Measure A campaign shifted to two new core messages: 1) Homelessness will increase by 25% if Measure A does not pass (this was grounded in real data), and 2) Helping house homeless people will improve public safety for all. The latter was a departure from the human-focused language that advocates usually use

¹⁰ Many of these insights, including any quotes attributed to Tommy Newman, are from two panel presentations about Measure A at a convening hosted by the San Francisco Foundation in February 2025.

to describe unhoused residents, but was seen as necessary to pass critical funding by speaking to voters in terms of how they saw their own concerns.

To push back against fears about a sales tax's regressivity, the campaign analyzed the expected monthly tax burden on low- vs mid- vs high-income residents, accounting for the various exemptions. They found that the burden on high-income households would be 6 times that for low-income households, illustrating that low-income residents would be protected from the worst of the cost but stood to gain the most from the revenue generated.

Finally, the campaign was concerned about down-ballot roll-off¹¹ especially during such a stacked election season with presidential and congressional races on top of the 10 state propositions. They built an engaging digital tool, especially targeted at younger and more racially diverse voters, to drum up enthusiasm among lower-propensity voters.

As with Santa Clara's measure, Los Angeles' Measure A has several important learnings for other ballot measures:

- **It is easier to defend an existing revenue source than it is to start a new one.** The campaign could emphasize what would be lost if voters did not support Measure A, since a (albeit smaller) version of the sales tax already existed. This puts voters in a different psychological stance than trying to convince them that the benefits of a brand new source outweigh the costs.
- **There are some inherent benefits to sales taxes in terms of campaigning.** Relative to GO bonds, sales taxes are intuitive to most voters, and can be spent on both production and services which helps to broaden the coalition to include homeless services providers, tenants rights advocates, and others.
- **"Public safety" messaging around homelessness can be effective**, especially in a fearful electorate.
- **The campaign forged strong labor ties, which let them hold their ground elsewhere.** The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce initially opposed the measure, in large part because of the lack of a sunset. Thanks to relational work and evolving mindsets, however, the business community was organizing to get to a neutral stance and did not fund opposition to Measure A. Regardless, the core campaign could avoid making concessions since labor was so heavily invested, thanks in part to the condition in the measure text about PLAs on projects over 40 units.
- **A unified front that represented both affordable housing development and homeless advocates was powerful.** Being able to articulate the full-spectrum of need

¹¹ Downballot roll-off is the phenomenon of people voting on top-of-ticket candidates like President and Governor, but then do not cast a vote for lesser-known ballot items like state or local propositions because of fatigue or a sense that such races do not matter. [Research](#) has shown that downballot roll-off is much more common among Democratic voters than Republican ones, which is a challenge for state and local progressive campaigns.

and engaging both affordable housing development advocates and homeless advocates opened up new partnerships and funding opportunities.

- **LCAHSA was not overly emphasized in the campaign.** This is somewhat in contrast with RM4's consistent mention of BAHFA as a new and exciting authority in the region. Publicly emphasizing the social impact, not the government actor, is important.

Single county campaigns may have an advantage over regional bond efforts since identifying core constituents is easier, and there may be stronger existing networks to leverage. Los Angeles County is a complex - it has 88 cities, nearly as many as the nine-county Bay Area - but single county efforts may benefit from coalition efficiency and pre-existing voter identification with the scale of funding.

Elements of Successful Campaigns

Every campaign and electoral context is different from the next. Still, it is worthwhile to try and distill some best practices.

There is some available literature on how to structure a successful progressive ballot campaign. [The Campaign Workshop](#) has compiled a list of helpful guiding questions to help organizers understand whether their issue is ready for the ballot, and to avoid running afoul of campaign laws. [The Alliance for Justice](#) (2020) has created a legal guide on ballot measures, with content on navigating legal requirements at each step of the process, attracting potential funders, and understanding state-specific differences in campaign and elections law.

However, extensive research is needed to find much related to housing campaigns. [The National Low-Income Housing Coalition](#)'s 2022 report is one of the few guides specific to ballot measures for affordable housing funding. It lists different issues such as what measures can fund and how campaigns and funding mechanisms should differ, replete with recent examples. It also includes recommendations about campaign fundamentals, including media and messaging, community partnerships, and legal requirements.

General Best Practices, rooted in several Bay Area campaigns

In addition to these national resources, interviews with Bay Area stakeholders revealed best practices focused on campaign outreach, structure, navigating coalition-building with powerful players, and the nuances of voter messaging specific to the Bay Area context.

Interviewees included coalition leaders, housing advocates and policy experts, campaign consultants, representatives of business and labor organizations, and government staff. See Acknowledgements at the top of this report for a complete list. The associated campaigns were

RM4 (2024), Prop 5 (2024), Berkeley Measure L (2022), Alameda County Measure A1 (2016), and Santa Clara County Measure A (2016).

External Factors

Macro conditions are important determinants of voter sentiment, and campaigns must account for these to be successful

Several factors fueling measure success in 2016 (recent and well-publicized dissolution of redevelopment, more voter friendliness to new taxes) are not easily reproducible in future campaigns. For example, in 2016, the bonds were riding the coattails of optimism that Hillary Clinton was going to win. In 2024, NPH's "It Begins with Home" campaign got largely overshadowed by Trump's spotlight. Los Angeles Measure A adapted to their changing context by crafting messages around the public safety impacts of investing in housing and homelessness services.

Voter sentiment often follows a pendulum in reaction to public policy corrections. A strong campaign crafts strategy that capitalizes on the phase between voters wanting more policy action and becoming disenchanted with that action.

Counternarratives around cost are powerful

Making the business and healthcare case for the public cost of insufficient affordable housing is helpful for getting elected politicians and businesses on board, as in Santa Clara County Measure A in 2016.

Long-term voter engagement is necessary

It is critical to develop long-term engagement strategies that are active in off-years and before election season. This may benefit from centralizing housing advocacy leadership across the state and locally. Alameda County A1 had a strong resident organizing program, mostly among seniors, involving rallies and presentations. Regionally, organizers must advertise wins in the media starting now to drive the popular narrative that housing is the answer to homelessness and is an existential issue for the Bay's economy and future.

Voters are expecting more oversight and accountability around public spending, compared to the past

Several interviewees referenced that this appetite has only grown since 2016.

Up to a certain point, bond size may not matter much to voters

In Santa Clara County Measure A and Alameda County A1, leaders kept increasing the bond size to include all key constituents' programs of interest for coalition-building purposes. However, this may be the result of an optimistic electorate rather than a universal truth. Bond size is also limited by repayment source, and different sources may provoke different organized opposition.

Internal Factors

A “backbone” organization is key, especially for regional work

Campaigns that span multiple cities or counties benefit greatly from a central organization to develop campaign infrastructure, build local organizing capacity, and fund engagement with local electeds. Usually it is helpful to establish a 501(c)4 organization to support local ballot measures that build over several years towards a regional measure. NPH has played this role in the Bay Area funding efforts in a significant way since 2015, and in other ways for many years prior. Their county-level assessments, capacity building, and wins built the path for RM4. The United Way of Los Angeles played that role in the successful 2024 Measure A campaign.

Industry-diverse campaign leadership is key, and they must be at the table early

The campaign leadership team cannot primarily be composed of affordable housing developers. They may not possess the sufficient skillsets and will not appeal to a wide enough endorsement and voter base. Construction trades, business coalitions, healthcare representatives, and others are important to build into leadership and early on. Consider the motivations of each of these groups and the levers of compromise necessary to invest them, as named supporters and financial contributors.

San Francisco Foundation is a crucial but rather unique funding partner for housing campaigns. 501(c)4 funders are also important.

SFF is committed to regionalism, systems change, and racial equity in a way that is rare in Bay philanthropies. Apart from their direct contributions, they bring other funders, credibility, and clout to the table. Other community foundations can play a similar role, and have like the California Community Foundation in Los Angeles’ campaigns. Unfortunately, many Bay Area tech sector philanthropies are shifting their focus to deregulation efforts more aligned with the Trump administration.

In the 2024 campaigns, some partners like the Marin Community Foundation stepped forward to fund campaign work for the first time. Given how critical philanthropic dollars are to these campaigns, organizers should actively seek ways to keep these new funders engaged until the next opportunity, and to instill a systems-change mindset in other potential funders. Future campaigns should also develop relationships with 501(c)4 funders, i.e., social welfare organizations. These contributions can be spent on political lobbying and issue advocacy, which is crucial to early campaign work. Prospective funders include labor unions, local political parties, some private foundations, the Sierra Club, local Lions and Kiwanis clubs, and various political action funds.

Key Quotes

“But its boiled down to: Do you have a problem that people think is a problem? And does your solution fit?” - Ned Wigglesworth, talking about campaign fundamentals

“What’s going to move things is either organized people or organized money” - Amie Fishman, NPH, speaking on the foundation for a successful campaign

“How do you amass the power to win? And how do you review the landscape of stakeholders and think about who’s positioned where? How do you sequence conversations to understand who needs to see what in a measure to be in support, and who needs to be to see what in a measure to be in support with resources?...They have to see that it matters for their bottom line...And you have to start with polling numbers that allow people to see the possibility for winning” - Judith Bell, San Francisco Foundation, speaking about general campaign strategy

In 2016 “people weren’t quite as hopeless and angry about homelessness and about everything as they are now. We just had an easier time of it, and we could coast on a generally tax friendly electorate, elected endorsements and...all the typical groups got behind it.” - Gloria Bruce, Crankstart

The next section discusses RM4’s successes and challenges. Though the public-facing RM4 campaign lasted barely six weeks from when it was approved for the ballot to the date it was pulled, these insights consider the long arc of base-building and mobilizing by the BAHA Coalition and its partners. These insights were drawn from interviews as well as notes from a convening on this topic hosted by the San Francisco Foundation in February 2025.

RM4’s Successes

The campaign fostered new relationships and engagement across uncommon groups, including electeds and funders

Local advocates, labor, new funders like Marin Community Foundation, Canal Alliance, etc. Near unanimous support of elected officials was key and required major outreach. These are relationships to build on next time.

There were many examples of strong local campaigns

Housing organizers got politically savvy, and the process empowered local organizing staff, creating stronger infrastructure.

BAHFA was established as the regional body, and BAHA as an enduring advocacy group

Even as local groups turn to local fights in the short term, BAHA Coalition and other regional partners are in place to maintain connective tissue between these local efforts and a future regional one.

There is now broader advocate awareness of needed state rule changes and a regional measure mechanics

This effort involved many complexities: the nuances of AB 1487, rules regarding legislative

ballot measures and signature initiatives, bond spending restrictions, and MTC's role are complex. These issues and processes will re-emerge in future campaigns and there is now a suite of organizers well-versed in managing them.

RM4's External Challenges

The housing industry is limited by its position and structure in how much power it can wield

The industry could do more centralized lobbying and organizing, as well as a better job marketing the value of its work to the public. Currently the main agenda-setting organizations have insufficient capacity relative to the size of the social challenge that affordable housing poses. Furthermore, the affordable housing industry is structured around compromise, whereas labor is set up to mobilize political power. This weakens housing's ability to win politically.

The anti-tax sentiment is very strong right now, and may remain so for some time

Voters' perception of large-scale economic weakness overrode their belief in the solution of more public spending. There remains significant voter anger and cynicism, and government is a target for such feelings. This is amplified by the anti-incumbency mood in the Bay, and the lack of a recent strong unified three-Mayor system in the Bay. Power is not well-consolidated, making coordinated mobilization a challenge.

The polling numbers were not there to win at two-thirds, so RM4 became reliant on Prop. 5, which in itself was a confusing sell to voters

As a procedural fix, Prop 5 was not intended to be a public-facing campaign: it was very technical and confusing to the average voter. As confidence in Prop 5 waned, the decision to pull RM4 became clear.

There are long-standing challenges to organizing in partnership with labor in California

"The Path Forward" section that follows discusses these difficult dynamics in greater detail. The persistent debate internal to the labor movement - how fully to commit publicly-funded projects to Project Labor Agreements - presents a challenge to organizing alongside labor. Since trade unions are the main inroad to other unions (service sector, public sector, etc) who would benefit from affordable housing investments, this roadblock poses a challenge to diplomatically reaching these other organized labor constituencies. RM4 lacked a trusted neutral mediator who might have brokered a compromise.

RM4's Internal Challenges

As noted above, the RM4 campaign was never given a true chance to take off. This section reflects on the pre-campaign phase, though such a time is difficult for strategic decisions and partnership before there is the certainty of an approved ballot measure.

Bring tenant protection groups and community organizing groups deeper into the fold

There was the feeling among some more progressive housing justice and tenant protection groups that they were not adequately included in the BAHA Coalition leadership, and the utility of a long-term production-focused bond seemed unclear for their immediate need to protect vulnerable tenants. This was amplified by the small amount of bond revenue that AB 1487 dedicated to tenant protections (5%), even though over a quarter of flexible funds could have gone to these protections, pending a legislative fix allowing bond funds to be used for this.

Key Quotes

RM 4 + Prop 5 was “a swing for the fences” - senior San Francisco Foundation staff member

“We never had that triumvirate [of developers, building trades, and the carpenters' union] in place and that was one of the biggest problems going into the campaign” - unnamed source

“I don't think we had the degree of support that we needed from the business community or from labor that would have really helped us to have the key resources and the key stakeholders that could have made a difference” [in RM4].” - unnamed source

“Labor is structured to move political power. That has not traditionally been how the affordable housing sector has been organized, so we need to continue to work to address this deficit of power.” – Amie Fishman, NPH

“[We now need to think] about who can bring to bear the resources to actually move something like this, and starting from the ground level of building those relationships and that base, so that we can actually win something in 2028. This could be not just a path to getting a measure passed, but more broadly of getting housing on the forefront of the agenda of a far broader set of stakeholders than we've been able to do in the past...The housers, we need more friends.” - Chris Schildt, Urban Habitat, reflecting on RM4

In many ways, the BAHA Coalition led a very strong campaign. They built on organizing infrastructure and relationships over a long time frame, from BAHFA's initial inception to placing the bond measure on the ballot. They sought influential endorsements from political leaders across a diverse region - which they achieved - and from other power players like advocates, business, and labor - which they partially achieved. They motivated many grassroots organizations and new philanthropic actors to get involved in housing systems-change work. And ultimately, the decision to remove RM4 from the ballot gives the campaign a better chance to win in the future.

There were some tactical missteps. The messaging relied on optimism the voters simply did not feel. On-the-ground organizers could have been provided outreach materials earlier in the process, especially given the complexity of how bond funds would be used and the many public questions around this.

However, several interviewees called these missteps “deck chairs on the Titanic”. There were structural and timing issues that would have been all but impossible to overcome this election cycle. Voter optimism was incredibly low, and this especially affected progressive down-ballot contests. As it became clear that RM4’s success was linked to Prop 5’s success, and as the latter became a shakier foundation, the likelihood of support faded among key prospective partners like labor and business. The perennial division within the labor community proved them a challenging partner to organize alongside. The business community felt that there was not enough for them in the bond and did not throw as much of their weight behind the bond as they might otherwise have. Future campaigns will have to assess the surrounding political and economic landscape to determine the best time to place another measure on the ballot.

The Path Forward

To summarize the following section, these are the top needs to be successful at the ballot in future regional housing funding efforts:

1. Legislatively clarify that BAHFA can pass measures via **signature initiative**, which only requires a simple majority of voters rather than two-thirds. Such a bill could also expand BAHFA’s revenue raising options.
2. **Keep reminding voters that funding for housing is powerful.** Pass county- and city-level funding where possible in the interim, and heavily advertise these wins. Maintain strong **relationships with new funders** that emerged during the RM4 effort.
3. Develop a workable compromise around **labor standards** so that unions are a strong constituency behind the effort. Consider the role that the business community could play in future efforts.
4. Select a **viable revenue mechanism**, informed by future polling, and work the power politics around it as early as possible.

Legislative Fixes

For the foreseeable future, passing regional funding at the two-thirds threshold feels all but impossible to many of the interviewees, given the electoral mood. These are people most familiar with Bay Area politics and dynamics, many of whom have been advocates in the region for decades.

Another ballot effort similar to Proposition 5 in the near future seems unlikely due to the recency of its rejection by voters. It is somewhat hopeful that this rejection was within the margins of optimism for the future, falling barely five percentage points short (45% of voters supported) of statewide approval. Even so, organizers were not considering a renewed effort in the short term.

This suggests a different electoral tactic: the signature initiative. In California, measures can be approved for the ballot if a group submits signatures from 10% of the registered voters in the ballot area indicating their support of the measure. That is how both affordable housing funding Measures ULA (City of Los Angeles) in 2022 and Measure A (County of Los Angeles) in 2024 arrived at the ballot (Magana, 2024). Both went on to succeed. Signature initiatives are attractive since they only need to garner a simple majority (50% + 1 vote) to pass, given that they have already demonstrated significant community support during the signature-gathering process.

BAHFA's ability to place a measure on the ballot via signature initiative is a legal gray area. The authors of AB 1487 believed that signature authority was implied, but BAHFA's lawyers are not so sure and want to have this clarified before they pursue it, especially in light of the lawsuit that RM 4 faced in August 2024. The task thus turns to the legislature to clarify this in a clean-up bill. At the time of this writing the 2025 California legislative session is beginning. Reputedly, Senators Scott Weiner and Jesse Arreguin are planning to introduce a transportation-focused bill clarifying that MTC can raise funds via a signature initiative, paving the way for the anticipated 2026 multi-county transportation bond. It may be possible to amend this during the legislative process to clarify that such power would extend to all branches of MTC, including BAHFA. Alternatively, the BAHFA leadership team may pursue such a clarification bill in 2026 (J.T. Harechmak, personal communication, February 2, 2025), after there have been meaningful labor standard discussions in the build-up to the proposed 2026 state housing bond likely mediated by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks who introduced the bond legislation.

Any such bill could serve the dual purpose of both clarifying signature initiative power and expanding BAHFA's list of allowable revenue sources. AB 1487 prescribed five revenue options for BAHFA. Notably absent from the list was a sales tax - which Los Angeles passed in Measure A in November 2024 - and real estate transfer taxes.¹² Clean-up legislation could give BAHFA the option to raise revenue in these additional ways.

There is an important unanswered question about who might pay for the expensive signature collection process that is the first and crucial step in a signature initiative. In Los Angeles Measure A, this process cost roughly \$3 million to gather 410,000 signatures (just over \$7 per signature).¹³ Ballotpedia compiles helpful history of California's cost-per-required-signature (CPRS) showing that this is on the low end, compared with recent statewide ballot measures. In 2024 the average CPRS was \$15.08 and in 2022 it was \$16.18 (Ballotpedia, 2024). Both of these are nearly double the averages from 2020 and 2018, making trends hard to discern.

¹² AB 1487 only allows for uniform parcel taxes, by which each parcel pays a flat fee. This is typically viewed as more regressive since owners of small properties pay the same fee as do large ones.

¹³ SFF Convening Presentation on Measure A, Tommy Newman

There is little research on how CPRS for local and regional measures compares with these statewide costs, but intuitively local costs may be lower since such initiatives can better leverage invested local organizations and their followers.

The prospective funder list is long and depends on which funding groups are engaged in the campaign's base. Community foundations and public foundations can fund ballot measure activity in a way that private foundations cannot (Bolder Advocacy, 2020). Business associations could fund it. The affiliates of county labor councils and building trades councils could as well if properly motivated. Wealthy philanthropists trying to advance their belief in housing systems-level change are also an option. Identifying these players early in the process is key, as they will likely want to heavily shape any such measure in exchange for an early - and therefore risky - financial investment.

Getting Small Wins, but Remembering the Region

While we wait for regional voter sentiment to thaw enough in favor of new spending, it is important to get Bay Area wins where we can. Various interviewed leaders spoke optimistically about renewing county-level bonds in Alameda as Measure A1 funds begin running dry, and as of April 2025 county supervisors are in the early stages of planning for such an effort (Alameda County Community Development Agency, 2025). San Francisco passed a \$300 million affordable housing bond in March 2024, with a 70% voter approval rate. Opportunity remains high in some parts of the Bay.

In addition to the direct production impacts of these potential new dollars, these wins play a role in sustaining an optimistic public narrative after the rejection of RM 4 and Prop 5. If marketed correctly, they provide an opportunity to show moderate voters that change remains possible, and that new housing helps reduce homelessness and housing instability.

Sharon Cornu (personal communication, December 10, 2024) former campaign lead at NPH and involved with several of the Bay Area campaigns referenced in this capstone, affirmed the importance of optimistic messaging. *"I think we need to do more to show people that we have solutions and we have successes. The housing community has done a good job over the past several years of leading with success and expecting success, and...I think more needs to happen. There are too many slideshows that the first 60 slides are dimensions of the problem. And there's two slides at the end about solutions we need to lead with solutions. We need to be positive and proactive and show people that this works."*

Apart from stronger messaging, the additional task will be to keep key groups, especially funders, feeling connected to the regional action that RM4 ignited, even as they return to local organizing for the foreseeable future. These are groups like the Marin Community Foundation, which invested newly in systems-level change as a significant player in the sometimes difficult

political terrain of Marin County. Silicon Valley Community Foundation is another funder that has historically invested in these campaigns and could continue to do so.

Speaking about these funders, Judith Bell (personal communication, January 14, 2025) of the San Francisco Foundation noted,

“One of the challenges here [is going to be] how to have a through line that allows people to stay engaged, allows them to figure out where the opportunities are more locally, but without cutting the bonds that we've built to have a regional understanding. That's the task in front of us. I don't think we should wait for the region but we don't want to give up the progress that we've seen in understanding the issue from [a] regional perspective.”

This requires understanding how these funders think about what is possible in their communities, and the level and strategies for which they are comfortable being involved. These various steps can help to keep the spirit alive between ballot campaigns and build public goodwill and understanding about investable solutions to our housing crisis.

The Labor Standards Challenge

As various interviewees expressed, affordable housing developers and advocates alone are not the political powerhouse that they ought to be in the state, given how high the priorities of housing and homelessness are among voters. Therefore, part of amassing the power to win means creating strong bridges with other influential sectors. Construction labor unions are chief among these, and have played crucial roles in previous housing funding campaigns. However, internal divisions have made unified organizing difficult in recent years. This task is critical to future successes.

Media outlets have well documented the various political battles within California's construction labor movement in recent years (Dillon, 2017; Christopher, 2024). The Norcal Carpenters Union, which is composed of unionized carpenters as well as several other trades,¹⁴ is primarily organized regionally rather than on a county-by-county basis, though they do have local unions as well. The carpenters have over 36,000 members and 6,000 active apprenticeships, and their priorities include quality insurance coverage for workers, prevailing wages, and career pathways for apprentices. In an interview, their executive research analyst Scott Littlehale stated that their goal in BAHFA negotiations and all funding debates is non-exclusionary labor standards that still have strong protections.

¹⁴ Drywall installers, lathers, millwrights, modular installers, piledrivers, cabinet makers.

The Building and Construction Trades Council of California comprises 157 affiliated unions, ranging from boilermakers to bricklayers to electrical workers to ironworkers, and many more. They share many of the Carpenters' priorities. Affordable housing production is an attractive end goal for both groups. Aside from direct job creation in their industry, construction workers are more likely to live in overcrowded housing or be housing cost burdened (Littlehale & Lantsberg, 2016). Many of their apprentice and journey-level workers in particular may qualify to live in such housing once constructed, reducing long commute times to job sites.

Where these groups differ is how strictly they believe *all* projects should commit to a Project Labor Agreement (PLA). PLAs are collective bargaining agreements between a developer and union leadership. They include many provisions ranging from stipulating union-only labor, local hire provisions, veteran hire requirements, prevailing wage compliance, and no-strike clauses. Importantly, they are binding on all contractors and subcontractors. The building trades typically advocate for PLAs - or the "skilled and trained" labor standard, which is a loose proxy for a PLA - on all projects, especially moderate and large projects. They feel that this best protects workers and builds economic opportunity. Carpenters are wary about the mandated use of PLAs on all residential projects, concerned that they can prohibitively raise costs by excluding bids from non-union contractors. They also cite a lack of unionized labor supply in some trades that makes enforcing PLAs difficult. Rather, the Carpenters feel that if developers comply with certain prevailing wage, healthcare, apprenticeship, and compliance oversight agreements, then they should not be required to agree to a full PLA, especially on small projects (i.e., under ~50 units). This standard emerged from negotiations in crafting AB 2011 (Wicks) in 2022.

These differences make it more challenging for coalitions like BAHFA to know who to organize with, when to broker an agreement, and whether the result of that brokering should be seen as specific to the campaign at hand or more universal. There was a locally-brokered deal based on MTC legal counsel that any BAHFA labor standards would only apply to the 20% of funds that BAHFA controlled, not the other 80% devolved to cities and counties as that was out of MTC's jurisdiction. This 80% would be governed by PLAs in the counties that were accustomed to using PLAs (namely, Alameda County and the County of San Francisco), and the other counties would use the AB 2011 labor standard. However, the building trades were not satisfied with this deal and pushed state legislation in 2023 to supersede the local agreement. This bill ([SB 735](#), Cortese) would have mandated PLAs for all projects over 40 units receiving BAHFA funds, but ultimately failed.

For the Carpenters, a few changes would have gotten them more invested in the RM4 process. First, the AB 2011 labor standard would have been more attractive to them than mandated PLAs. They were told that AB 1487 precluded writing any labor standards into the bond language itself, in the way that Los Angeles Measure A had done on projects above 40 units.

Second, the locally brokered deal did not apply the AB 2011 labor standards to 100% of BAHFA funds, and the patchwork of standards for city and county funds made the bond feel too risky for them to wholeheartedly support. Third, they wanted to see leadership emerge. The question of “who was going to own it” felt unanswered - they wanted a political leader to steward the process and take the ensuing heat in the way that Senator Scott Weiner had on SB 423 and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks had on AB 2011. From their perspective, it felt that most BAHFA actors were waiting for someone else to start the direct negotiation process, and as a result it only happened weakly. Scott Littlehale from the NorCal Carpenters half-joked, “*the BAHFA coalition was afraid to poke the bear. But the bear was already awake*” (personal communication, March 18, 2025).

There are, perhaps, alternatives. In 2022 Portland Metro (City of Portland and Multnomah County) passed the groundbreaking [Regional Workforce Equity Agreement](#). It is a prime example of a more flexible approach that also was supported by the area’s major construction unions. The agreement makes hiring diversity requirements clear for all large public projects in the region. It also incrementally increases workforce goals, invests in pre-apprenticeship and recruitment programs, and has strong accountability mechanisms (Multnomah County Communications Office, 2022). Both union and open shop¹⁵ contractors can participate. A similar agreement in the Bay Area could clarify labor disputes and pave the way for publicly-funded projects.

It will not be easy, however. California labor unions exert more power than Oregon’s do, and they are not keen to compromise on it. One interviewee mused that the most forceful way of bringing unions to the bargaining table would simply be being told “No” by elected officials and losing some key battles. This could involve educating elected officials that the majority of California workers are still non-union and largely want funding for projects to pass, especially if these employment opportunities create an on-ramp into the stability and protection that unions offer. However, such a “No” will be difficult for electeds. The Building Trades in particular hold immense voting power and sway on the endorsement slates of many county labor councils, which are often a prerequisite for successful Democratic candidates in California. As long as this political power hold remains firm, it will remain difficult to convince union factions to compromise.

Involvement from the Business Community

The business community can also be an important source of power for housing coalitions, but the relationship is complex. Adequate housing is vital for attraction and retention of employees to the region. On the other hand, attracting high-income employees can raise the cost of living

¹⁵ Open shop contractors hire workers based on skills, regardless of union membership

and rents while low and moderate incomes often do not keep pace, exacerbating unaffordability. From a revenue-raising perspective, a thriving business community helps to ensure a steady revenue stream from commercial parcel taxes and other taxes. Several of AB 1487's allowed revenue mechanisms place the primary revenue burden on employers, including the employee head tax, gross receipts taxes, and commercial linkage fees.¹⁶

These tensions make allying with the business community a potential challenge for housing campaigns. Different campaigns handle this challenge differently. In 2016, Santa Clara's Measure A fully embraced the business community and was partially led by it. Key task forces were led by the Downtown San Jose Business Association, in part because of the strong campaign argument around the high fiscal cost of an inefficient response to homelessness, and in part because of the dampening effect that visible street homelessness had had on retail health in certain parts of the city. In contrast, Los Angeles' 2024 Measure A campaign received pushback from the chamber of commerce and business community broadly. The campaign's choice of a sales tax as the revenue mechanism, and that the sales tax has no sunset date both contributed to business concern.

The Bay Area Council (BAC) has been the primary civic advocate for the Bay's business community since the 1940s. They were early advocates for AB 1487 and have supported many housing ballot measures in the past. As members of the BAHFA coalition they published [reports](#) in support of the prospective bond and its impact on the region's economic health, with some suggested modifications. Still, among many interviewees the general perception was that the business community did not support the BAHFA funding effort as enthusiastically as they could have. An interview with Louis Mirante, BAC Vice President of Public Policy and Housing, helps shed light onto what may have stimulated more full-throated support.

There were two structural changes that the BAC hoped to see to BAHFA's spending plan. First, they would have wanted bond revenue to cover development impact fees for both affordable and market rate development, as they expressed in a January 2024 suggestion [letter](#) to MTC. Such a move would have been an attractive business proposition for market-rate developers with deeper pockets. This could have functioned similarly to how California's school impact fees are administered - [SB 50](#) (1998, Greene) enacted a waterfall structure under which if there is state money available for building schools, local governments cannot collect impact fees for building them. The BAC wanted something similar for BAHFA funds, on the premise that with this new influx of available bond funding, city impact fees become a somewhat redundant revenue source for affordable housing that slows development. Second, they wanted more dedicated funds for homeownership in the BAHFA spending plan as an issue that resonates with many voters.

¹⁶ The extent to which employers pass these costs on the consumers varies by tax and industry

There were also important campaign dynamics and political differences that dampened BAC involvement. Principally, the BAC strongly believes that lack of market-rate housing is a key driver of the Bay's affordability and homelessness crisis. Lack of new supply locks prospective homebuyers into rental units in a way that ripples down the income chain, with many renters staying in artificially cheap units they would move out of but for the lack of new supply and mobility of upper-income tenants. This view has been vigorously debated (as summarized in Phillips et al, 2021), as has the effect of new market-rate production on displacement of low-income residents (Greenberg & Kumar, 2022). Most studies find an improvement in neighborhood-level affordability, though they remain cautionary about a blanket approach. Still, the BAC felt that any conversation around supporting market rate supply was a non-starter with much of the BAHA coalition, who preferred to focus only on below-market-rate production and preservation.

Additionally, the BAC felt “*underdeployed*” (personal communication, March 10, 2025). Mirante noted the marked conservative shift in the 2024 election results, in part due to voter perception of economic weakness and instability. Among BAHA coalition members, the BAC was in a more unique position to credibly reassure a skeptical public that RM4 was directionally helpful to the business and economic climate. The BAC wishes they had been better used to promote that campaign message, and doing so would have required a more powerful seat at BAHA.

Secondarily, the BAC wanted more parity with other campaign members. Many other BAHA coalition members were compensated for their time on coalition advising and actions; the BAC was not. Mirante explained that this did not help their sense of connection to the greater coalition. “*There was a dynamic where the people [most opposed to market rate investment] were the ones who are like getting the spotlights and getting the grant funding and getting the things they wanted in the bond language and the strategic documents for BAHFA. There was the belle of the ball....and it wasn't us. It was the people who disagreed with us*”. This perception of being on the coalition fringe also made it a difficult sell to BAC members who wondered why their dues were being spent on a coalition that was privileging other voices, and indeed pushing an agenda that would raise their tax obligation.

The BAC felt underutilized, taken for granted, and in an awkward spot with their members pushing what they saw as a BAHFA revenue agenda that did not well-reflect their interests. As Mirante said, “*I would ask of the folks in the coalition who want to put this all on the backs of big business...to see us more as a potential partner rather than a potential source of income.*”

Still, other campaign members tell a different story. They note that the BAC had a string of demands that they did not communicate at productive moments in the process, slowing the plan formation and distracting key leadership. First, BAC commissioned an inaccurate report stating that bond funds could not pay for inclusionary housing requirements. Next, they pushed

the inception of 2024 legislation that BAHFA funds could not be conditioned on local policies including rent control ([AB 598](#), Wicks). After ensuring coalition leaders that there would be no more demands, the BAC later made their support contingent on the removal of commercial linkage fees as a primary revenue source option. All told, some campaign leaders were frustrated by this string of asks that slowed campaign momentum, strained trust, and, even when all asks were met, did not produce more mobilization of the BAC membership base.

This history shows how fraught the partnership can be between business and housing advocates. Understanding each side's narrative is crucial if the business community is to be a major player in future funding efforts.

The Right Funding Approach

The final section of this capstone briefly analyzes revenue source options. BAHFA does not have to choose a general obligation bond. BAHA leadership and a small working group involving MTC, Enterprise, and All Home staff also contributed to the analysis of seven primary revenue scenarios in Spring 2025. Financial analysis consolidates recent research MTC had commissioned on several of the revenue sources in preparation for the anticipated 2026 transportation ballot measure, and includes two original estimates as well.

This analysis builds on several recent studies with similar goals. NPH conducted a 2013 study exploring 12 potential sources, including real estate fees and vehicle registration taxes. The study emphasized the critical role of the state legislature in providing authority to implement these revenue-raising measures.¹⁷ As part of the CASA Compact in 2017-18, MTC staff evaluated 10 potential sources, with the goal of raising \$1.5 billion per year cobbled together from multiple sources (The Committee to House the Bay Area, 2019, p. 18-19). These sources included most of the options eventually listed in AB 1487, as well as a sales tax, vacancy tax, and revenue sharing program with local governments. Finally, negotiations at the state legislature in 2019 produced the list of revenue options that ultimately appeared in AB 1487. These included concessions around removing a sales tax from the list - based on the concern from transportation and human services groups that have historically relied on this source - and making a commercial linkage fee contingent on the prior passage of a property tax measure to secure the business community's backing.

The California Budget and Policy Center has also compiled several incremental [statewide revenue source ideas](#) as part of the Roadmap Home 2030 groundwork to create a long-term plan for housing in the state. Each of these studies informed this research.

¹⁷ Source: internal BAHA campaign communication

Table 1. Revenue Scenario Summary

Funding Mechanism	Scale Required for \$1B annual source	Path to the Ballot	Equity Implications	Key Considerations
Per Sq. Ft Parcel Tax	\$0.1754 / sq ft	BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix	Progressive , as large lots pay more	East Palo Alto, CA passed this in 2018 for commercial space over 25,000 sq ft (Measure HH). BAHFA is currently not allowed to levy a graduate parcel tax (different rates apply to residential and commercial properties)
Real Estate Transfer Tax	Various configurations. 6.5% tax on top 5% of home sales is one option	BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix + add RE transfer tax to BAHFA option	Largely progressive. Homeowners skew wealthier, but it may decrease home turnover.	Difficult to revenue bond against, given market volatility The City of Los Angeles passed this in Measure ULA (2022). Sunset date is an important consideration
Employee Head Tax	\$216 employee, assuming flat rate	BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix	Depends. Exemptions for small businesses help.	Mountain View, CA has had this since 2020 for transportation revenue. It raises \$6M / year
Payroll Tax	0.36% of taxable wages	BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix	Progressive but depends. High-wage employees generate more tax burden than low-wage ones. Small business exemptions help.	Concerns about induced downsizing. This may be somewhat more palatable to the business community than would a head tax.
Commercial Gross Receipts Tax	Unclear	BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix. Must pass property tax first	Regressive, but depends. May be passed along to consumers, and contributes to tax “pyramiding” (Ross, 2016)	Extremely administratively complex Very lucrative: San Francisco raised \$1.3B via their gross receipt tax in 2023-24 alone
Income Tax	0.17%	New legislation allowing sub-state income tax + BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix + add income tax to BAHFA options	Depends on structure. Graduated tax rate is more progressive than a flat one, but still regressive within income bands.	Sub-state income tax is currently illegal in CA, per tax code. State legislation is required to permit this
Sales Tax	½ cent tax	BAHFA signature initiative legislative fix + add sales tax to BAHFA options	Regressive but depends. Various exemptions help (groceries, medicine, EBT purchases) alleviate burden on low-income consumers.	Lots of competition for this funding source from local governments and interest groups, especially transportation. Concern around nexus with housing

				<p>Counties must receive state approval to have a sales tax rate above 9.25%. Many counties are near or over this level.</p> <p>Many localities have passed this, including Los Angeles County in 2024 Measure A.</p>
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All the listed tax-based sources could be spent on capital and non-capital (i.e., operations, services) costs. Bonds can only be spent on capital costs. To the best of the author’s understanding, BAHFA cannot pass a funding measure that combines multiple taxes (i.e., a simultaneous parcel tax and head tax). Measures can be passed sequentially and levied concurrently, but they cannot appear on the same ballot measure.

According to the working group¹⁸ that helped to inform these options, there is an open question as to whether the \$1 billion annual goal is appropriate or whether a smaller revenue amount could still be effective and may have an easier political path to success. This goal number emerged from the CASA process. Enterprise had formerly calculated the regional need at \$9.7 billion based on RHNA, and BAHFA staff recalled original conversations that \$8 billion - \$9 billion seemed like the minimum viable amount to effectively capitalize themselves. This possibility allows for revenue scenarios at approximately half of the rates in Table 1 above, which may lessen the response from organized opposition.

There are other practical considerations to lowering the goal revenue amount. First, what is the minimum amount that is worthwhile for local jurisdictions to administer in a return-to-source funding structure? Especially for smaller cities receiving a now-reduced funding amount, the benefits of this funding stream would have to outweigh the staffing and oversight costs required to administer it locally. Second, what is the minimum amount that would animate funders and coalition partners to invest sufficiently for any campaign to succeed? These are worthwhile conversations for the BAHFA coalition to continue having among its members and alongside BAHFA staff.

Conversations informing this analysis uncovered several other potential sources that were not included in the primary analysis. These included a transient occupancy tax, “vice” taxes like soda, gambling, and cigarettes, a sales tax measure that flows to the general fund rather than to a special (i.e., specific) use.¹⁹

¹⁸ Comprised of staff from BAHFA, MTC, Enterprise Community Partners, NPH, and All Home

¹⁹ Sales tax measures to a California locality’s general fund [must only receive](#) 50%+1 votes to pass the ballot, as opposed to a two-thirds vote if they are directed to a specific use.

Of course, extensive public polling on receptiveness to different revenue sources will be a key determinant of the ultimate selection. One interviewee noted that this polling strategy may be segmented because of Public Records Act considerations: MTC/ABAG might administer polling on more general questions whose results pose no risk to being publicly searchable and potentially misconstrued, whereas NPH or a similar group may consider administering polling on questions that coalition leaders want to hold closer to the chest. Regardless, these data will be key to informing the revenue approach.

[A detailed table of revenue options is available here.](#)

Per Sq Foot Parcel Tax & Transfer Tax as Promising Paths

A square footage parcel tax holds promise. There is a long precedent of building in exemptions for seniors and low-income owners, making it more progressive than most sources. Taxing on a per sq foot basis privileges smaller parcels which are more likely owned by lower-income residents, creating a built-in progressive structure. Whereas some property taxes - though progressive in theory - ultimately become regressive because of California's Proposition 13 that suppresses the tax liability for longtime (and thus often Whiter, wealthier) homeowners, taxing on a square foot basis avoids this distortion. Unlike bond revenue, these taxes - like all tax-based revenue - can be spent on resident services and protections in addition to capital costs. There is regional precedent, though at a flat rate, with the [Bay Area Restoration Authority Measure AA](#) raising \$12 per parcel or \$25 million annually for shoreline projects. A parcel tax may play better with renters, who compose 44% of Bay Area residents (Bay Area Equity Atlas, 2025). East Palo Alto's Measure HH offers precedent with a \$2.5 / sq foot tax on commercial spaces over 25,000 sq ft. The Alameda County Superior Court in 2023 upheld the ability to pass a sq foot parcel in support of the county's 2020 Measure A for school districts (Fensterwald, 2023).

The major anticipated political opponent is the Taxpayers Association. Interviewed representatives of the business community indicated support for a parcel or land-based tax if it were structured in a way that spread the burden across the broader Bay Area community and did not single out the business sector. Additionally, the source is not overtapped - like a sales tax - and so pursuing it does not necessitate conflict with other entrenched interests.

There are some minor methodological decisions that would have to be addressed, including selecting developed vs undeveloped parcels, modeling exemptions into a revenue forecast, and whether to treat residential and commercial parcels differently. Even so, this approach is worthy of close consideration because of its potential for progressivity, clear political pathway relative to other sources, and Bay Area precedents.

As BAHFA and the BAHA Coalition is beginning to pursue legislation expanding the revenue options allowed by AB 1487, they would do well to add a real estate transfer tax to the list. Taxing high-value property transfers has a strong built-equity mechanism and the burden could be shared by both residential and commercial property, which may reduce political resistance if one constituency does not feel they are the sole target. Furthermore, the rate could be reasonable. Achieving the limited goal revenue scenario of \$500 million annually would only require a 3.25% tax on residential and commercial transfers over \$4 million (halving the rate in Table 2). Measure ULA is currently proving the success of a similar model in the City of Los Angeles, with transfers over \$5 million being taxed at 4% and those over \$10 million being taxed at 5.5%. Despite concerns about lower-than-expected Year 1 revenues in 2024, the first quarter of 2025 has ULA funds on track to raise ~\$1.3 billion this year,²⁰ surpassing the original goal of approximately \$1 billion annually. Yet Measure ULA provoked significant opposition from the California Business Roundtable and others who have concerns about such a transfer tax; any future efforts should consider how to mitigate this potential opposition.

Research by the Other and Belonging Institute (Moore et al. 2023) echoes enthusiasm for the potential of a high-value real estate transfer tax in meeting BAHFA's revenue needs due to its equitable structure, transformative potential, and considerable scale. This research also recommends that BAHFA's sophisticated Equity Framework be expanded to cover the 80% of funds that will be devolved to cities and counties, which currently have little oversight for equitable and coordinated spending.

Other researchers have raised concerns about the impact of Measure ULA on multifamily production - and the resulting broader impacts on housing supply and thus affordability - and have suggested that these projects be exempt from the tax during the 15 years after construction (Phillips & Ward, 2025). Similar time-limited exemptions may be helpful for commercial and industrial properties. Practitioners in the Bay Area should track Los Angeles production impacts and be mindful of such concerns when designing any similar tax measure.

²⁰ The [ULA Dashboard](#) tracks monthly revenue raised. In the first three months of 2025, the measure raised \$320 million, suggesting a total annual raise of \$1.28 billion, not accounting for seasonal fluctuations or the impact of the Los Angeles fires in January 2025.

Conclusion

RM4's path to the ballot was at least seven years in the making, starting officially with the 2017 CASA process though building on many prior years of local organizing and successful campaigns. The effort will not be stopped by the events of Fall 2024. This report aims to contribute to the ongoing reflection about RM4 as a trailblazing regional ballot effort, and to help inform success next time.

The findings were informed by interviews with 15 experts close to the process, from seats of government, advocates, campaign professionals, and interest groups. Having mapped the rise and fall of RM4, the report concluded with several recommendations for the path forward. BAHFA's best near-term strategy for successful regional funding involves stewarding city- and county-level funding wins to keep voters and funders engaged, and confirming their signature initiative authority and expanding their revenue options to include a real estate transfer tax and other tax sources via legislation. Contributing to a stronger brokered labor standards compromise will be an essential step in securing support from this powerful constituency. Alongside the BAHFA Coalition, BAHFA must select a revenue mechanism based on updated polling and a deep analysis of the Bay Area's power landscape. This report recommends a sq ft parcel tax across residential and commercial properties, though close consideration should be given to a real estate transfer tax on high value properties. However, new legislation and swiftly-changing economic conditions mean that coalition leaders must constantly reassess these factors in the lead-up to a new campaign.

Several key questions remain unresolved regarding this future strategy.

1. Will BAHFA be able to achieve legislation confirming signature initiative authority and expanded revenue options?
2. Which key constituencies, especially business and labor, will be fundamental to the campaign? What gradients of opposition or support will certain funding sources provoke among these constituencies?
3. What are the political downsides of pursuing a source like sales tax that other entrenched constituencies see as their own?
4. If a smaller revenue amount is politically easier, what amount feels worthwhile for coalition partners and funders?

One resounding message emerged from every interview: despite this election cycle's challenges, this regional housing funding effort will endure. The strength and energy of the coalition was evident, and the prospect of several billion dollars in dedicated funding is powerful enough to continue bringing interested parties to the table. And it must, because such a robust subsidy source is one critical piece of a stably housed region, and such stability is vital to the Bay's future.

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