

# County Connection

## INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: MP&L Committee

Date: February 8, 2019

From: Rick Ramacier  
General Manager



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**SUBJECT:** Draft 2019 Federal Legislative Program

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### Background:

Staff has incorporated comments from your last meeting on the Draft 2019 Federal Legislative Program. Staff wishes to review this with you at your meeting on February 12, 2019. Staff will ask you to forward this to the full board for approval. A new mock-up of the related pamphlet will be available at the meeting.

### Issues

1. Fund the federal transit program in FY2020 at the authorized levels of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. County Connection is projected to receive just over \$1.5 million in federal funding to assist in supplying Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services in FY20.
2. Urge that public transit be adequately included in any major infrastructure package that may move through Congress. There is a projected \$90 billion shortfall to keep the current federal transit systems in a state of good repair. This does not include building in any new capacity.
3. Find a permanent fix to the growing shortfalls in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and the related Mass Transit Account (MTA). Both of these are on target to be essentially bankrupt by the end FY21 according to most experts. Thus, projects that are programmed for funding from these accounts will be unable to be completed. The potential funding at risk for County Connection is well into the millions and involves on-going critical support for ADA paratransit services as well replacing our diesel fleet with zero emission based electric buses.
4. Create a new funding program in the next re-authorization to provide demonstration project funding for first & last mile public transportation solutions that both are innovative and provide mobility integration. While funds would be granted to public transportation providers as defined, these grantees would be allowed to fully partner with other public entities as well as private sector partners or non-profit partners to bring about demonstration projects under this new funding category. Up to 10% of the federal transit program should be applied to this.
5. Modernize the federal definition of public transportation to support and encourage public transit evolving into mobility integrators. This will allow public transportation providers to take advantage of new technologies that create opportunities to offer innovative, cost effective, and higher quality services without being hamstrung by the current decades old federal definition of public transportation. Any update should maintain longstanding definitions that a public transportation service is "publically-funded" and that private organizations cannot be independently eligible for federal funding.

### Program Format

As agreed upon at your last meeting, the pamphlet format is similar to the 2018 format.

### Action Requested:

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee review the draft 2019 Federal Legislative Program and provide feedback and direction at your meeting on February 12, 2019. Staff further request that this item be forwarded to the board for adoption.