

TO: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

DATE: November 24, 2020

FROM: Rick Ramacier
General Manager



SUBJECT: Brief Summary of Likely Federal
Legislative Issues in 2021

Background

As staff begin to think about drafting a 2021 Federal Advocacy Program, we wish to briefly go over the major items we think will be at play in 2021. Your initial feedback and input will be asked for at your meeting on December 3, 2020. Staff will then return with a first draft of a 2021 Federal Advocacy Program for your review and feedback at your January 2021 meeting.

Likely Broad Areas of Interest for 2021

The incoming Biden administration have already indicated a strong interest in helping public transit weather the financial crisis brought on by the COVID-19 crises early in its tenure. This builds on the effort by the House under Speaker Pelosi to pass out a CARES Act II - if you will - earlier this year. That legislation contains a great deal of temporary transit funding for Bay Area transit operators. Senate interest in this is uncertain at this time.

The incoming Biden administration has indicated its interest in tackling a transportation re-authorization bill that is well funded in 2021. With high interest in the Congress on this item, we should be prepared for and expect action on this in 2021.

With respect to the transportation re-authorization, County Connection put forward a few important interests in its 2020 Federal Advocacy Program. Staff believes we should continue with these at minimum and consider if anything else could be addressed in reauthorization that is of interest to us.

The next federal transportation reauthorization could be one that lends itself to once in a generation change and is likely to be robustly funded, providing unique opportunities for County Connection to weigh in on important federal transportation policy.

Finally, the House is taking a hard look at bringing back earmarks in both the new authorization as well as in the annual appropriations process. If they do, Congressman DeSaulnier's office has expressed an interest in doing something with County Connection.

Meetings with the County Connection Congressional Delegation

Indications are that in-persons meetings in Washington DC may not start up until May of next year – due to the pandemic. However, staff believes we should begin to express our legislative interests to our delegation as early as late January 2021. This would be done remotely. Staff would like your feedback on this approach.

Action Requested

Staff would like your feedback and general direction towards preparing a first draft of a 2021 Federal Advocacy Program. Staff would incorporate this into a first draft for your review and comment at your January 2021 meeting.