

TO: MP&L Committee

DATE: February 26, 2021

FROM: Rick Ramacier 
General Manager

SUBJ: Update on State Legislation

Background

Since the MP&L Committee last met, Assembly Member Chiu has amended AB629, the Seamless and Resilient Bay Area Transit Act, and Assembly Member Mullin has amended AB476 into a vehicle to pursue “bus on shoulder” authorities. Each development is briefly highlighted below.

AB629 – Chiu

On Monday, March 22, 2021 Assembly Member Chiu informed the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (BRTF) that AB629 was being amended from a Spot Bill to a working draft. He indicated that the main piece regarding the concept of Transit Network Management (TNM) would be added after the BRTF comes up with recommendations for that part of AB629. The amended bill he referenced was released the next day.

As a working draft, AB629 does not contain anything that would pose a strong concern to County Connection. It puts forward additional requirements for MTC to ensure that significant steps are taken to create a more seamless and resilient regional transit system. MTC is to consult comprehensively with the transit operators in these endeavors and is expected to institutionalize the consultations and the results.

The draft bill specifically calls out fare integration, universal mapping and wayfinding with common branding, and greater joint use of technology to monitor and adjust services for on-time performance; especially as it relates to passenger wait times. This last called out item would also require transit operators to use open data standards within the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data format.

MTC and the transit operators are already focusing on these areas. Particularly, a regional Fare Integration study is well underway under the auspices of an MTC/operator Task Force that was set by the Clipper Executive Board (CEB). Along the same lines, MTC has just launched a study on mapping and wayfinding that will have comprehensive operator participation.

So, this draft of AB629 is right in line with many regional initiatives and the work of the BRTF.

AB476 – Mullin

Assembly Member Mullin has amended AB476 to now facilitate the legislation that will ultimately be needed to run transit buses part time on the “shoulders” of I-680. He amended AB476 with the language from last year’s SB1283 – Beall. Beall’s proposal was removed from consideration as a result of the temporary bill caps installed last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mullin intends to make AB476 a two-year bill and move it early in 2022. This is in part to allow the work that the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and others are doing on bringing the California Highway Patrol (CHP) along, to continue. Thus, this bill will be amended at some point to reflect that, and other issues being worked on regarding bus operator training, etc.

Staff Recommendation

At this time, it would be premature for County Connection to take a formal position on either proposal. At some point, it will likely be appropriate for County Connection to consider formally supporting AB476. As the BRTF continues to do its work and as Assembly Member Chiu works on how he will further amend AB629, staff is cautiously optimistic that County Connection will be able to support the final version of the bill.

Action Requested

No action is requested other than to forward this update to the Board of Directors as information.