

To: Board of Directors

Date: February 15, 2013

From: Rick Ramacier

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: Draft County Connection 2013 Federal Legislative Program and State Program

Background

Attached you will find draft copies of the proposed County Connection 2013 federal and state legislative programs. Staff wishes to review both of these with you at your meeting on February 21, 2013. Staff also seeks your feedback.

Once approved by the Board, these two pieces will be used to inform our congressional and state legislative delegations of our legislative interests in 2013.

MP&L Committee Review

The MP&L Committee reviewed a first draft of both the federal and the state programs. The attached drafts are second drafts that take into account their comments. They have forwarded this item to the full Board for approval.

Action Requested

The MP&L Committee and staff respectfully request that you approve the two attached draft legislative programs at your meeting on February 21, 2013. This would occur upon completing your review of the two drafts and providing comment at the same meeting.

County Connection Benefits The Community By

- Providing direct connections to shopping via shuttles from neighborhoods and BART.
- Providing commuter shuttles that reduce travel time, relieve congestion, and connect to regional transportation services.
- Providing comprehensive local services that allow students to use public transit to go to and from school.
- Providing direct and convenient service between communities of concern like the Monument Corridor in Concord and medical facilities like the County Hospital.
- Providing over 200 good paying blue collar jobs, and by indirectly supporting hundreds more through the purchase of vehicles and supplies.
- Providing alternative modes of transportation that support economic enhancement, environmental improvements, promote energy independence, senior mobility, student transportation, and connections to the Bay Area region for all activities.

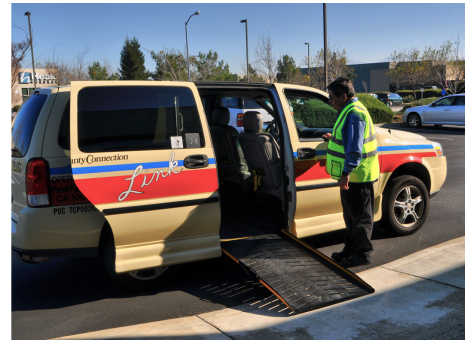
County Connection

2477 Arnold Industrial Way • Concord, CA 94520 • (925) 676-1976

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County Connection

2013 Federal Legislative Program



COUNTY CONNECTION

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Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (County Connection)

Is a joint powers agency of 11 communities serving a population of nearly 500,000 people taking over 3.6 million transit trips annually. The annual combined operating budget of County Connection is over \$34 million. County Connection operates 121 fixed-route buses and another 54 paratransit vehicles.

County Connection serves a dynamic and diverse modern suburban area that is geographically spread out. Serving such an area is both challenging and rewarding. County Connection patrons are ethnically and economically diverse, and often transit dependent. Without County Connection services, many central Contra Costa County residents would have no transportation available for work, school, medical appointments, or to take advantage of recreational opportunities. For them County Connection is a life sustaining service!

County Connection Customers Are

- Commuters going to work.
- People connecting to regional rail like BART and ACE Train.
- Students going to school.
- Seniors and persons with disabilities who are dependent on public transit.

County Connection Innovation

- County Connection will use a federal Clean Fuels grant to fund the full electrification of our highly successful Walnut Creek downtown trolley.
- County Connection maintains a nationally recognized public-private partnership with the Bishop Ranch Business Park to provide frequent and fast shuttles between Bishop Ranch and two regional rail systems, BART and the ACE Train. This features significant operating cost reimbursement as well as full fare subsidy from Bishop Ranch.
- County Connection customers can use Bus Tracker, a real time bus stop information system that allows people to access real time bus arrival predictions from their laptops and smart phones.
- County Connection uses clean burning hybrid Gillig buses manufactured locally.

Federal Positions

A. Reauthorization of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP 21) with the following principles:

1. Secure the financial integrity of the Mass Transit Account with the Highway Trust Fund.
2. Double the size of the federal investment in transit over six years to meet at least 50% of the estimated \$60 billion in annual critical public transit capital needs by the end of the six years, and to support a projected doubling of ridership over the next 20 years.
3. Continue to allow the use of federal formula funds for preventive maintenance and the allowance of greater use of federal funds to maintain present levels of service through direct operating assistance options.
4. Maintain the new program structures for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, and continue the folding of the old Job Access/Reverse Commute program within the 5307 and 5311 formula programs. Maintain and enhance the related coordination requirements.
5. Create any Metro Mobility program as a flexible program funded out of FHWA funds in addition to any transit 5307 program. **Ensure equal access to such funds for suburban transit systems in large urban areas.**
6. Maintain the ADA set-a-side option in the 5307 program.

County Connection relies on over \$5 million dollars on an annualized basis in federal transit funding for critical needs like bus replacement and preventative maintenance. Without this funding, County Connection would have to permanently reduce its services by at least 33%. Thus, a strong and robust reauthorization of MAP 21 is crucial to the core mission of County Connection.

B. Revise and increase funding in the Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (5339) such that:

1. Each individual Urbanized Area (UZA) as defined receives a formula share of 5339 that must be spent in that area. This formula should be based in part on population and modeled on the 5307 formula.
2. Inadequate funding in the 5339 program is greatly increased to higher levels of funding to make it a meaningful program similar to the State of Good Repair program – which is rail intensive. Under MAP 21, the State of Good Repair program is funded at five times the level of the Bus and Bus Facilities program. Thus, bus improvement programs that were once funded under the old 5309 program prior to MAP 21 are now comparably and significantly underfunded, and very few bus projects can proceed nationally. The 5339 program funding should increase to at least \$1.2 billion annually in order to restore comparability to the previous 5309 program.

This is the only real program where suburban bus agencies like County Connection can go to federally for resources to help fund bus facility improvements and/or expansions to rolling stock that allow for the strategic expansion of services. Without a robust 5339 program, agencies like County Connection will be very hard-pressed to enhance or expand services to meet the growing demand for suburban bus service.

C. FY2014 Transit Appropriations funded to authorized levels including:

1. Funding transit at a level that is greater than FY13 levels.
2. Funding that is provided in a timely basis and without unnecessary or overly burdensome review.

A full FY14 transit appropriations bill is needed to ensure that County Connection receives the federal funding it is counting on to maintain services and its capital equipment in a state of good repair.

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- Transit dependent people who are productively participating in the community.
 - Residents who want to connect to their life activities in a manner that reduces their carbon footprint.

County Connection Faces Financial Challenges

- County Connection lost over 15% (over \$16 million in total) of its annual operating funds during the recent recession. County Connection cannot make any significant service additions without additional operating revenues.
- County Connection employees agreed to long term wage freezes and benefit reductions.
- County Connection has eliminated and restructured its least productive services.

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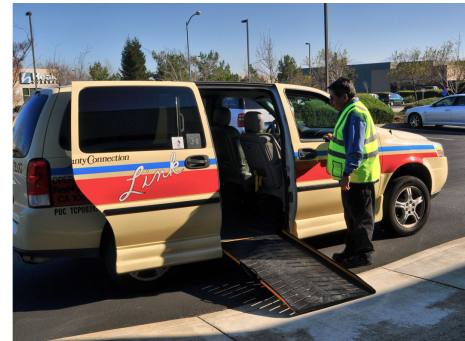
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State Positions

- A. Fully fund the State Transit Assistance (STA) in FY14 by maintaining the sales tax on diesel fuel rates, and by ensuring that all of those proceeds are deposited in the Public Transportation Account (PTA) as called for by current law.**

STA is expected to provide County Connection with approximately \$3.2 million in FY14 which represents nearly 10% of its projected operating budget in FY14. Without this STA funding, County Connection would have to cut up to 15% of its service.

- B. Fully appropriate the highest possible level of Proposition 1B bond revenue as a part of the FY14 state budget, and ensure that bonds are issued timely by the Treasurer's Office so that Proposition 1B projects are not delayed.**

County Connection is programmed to receive federal grants in FY14 to replace old buses and paratransit vehicles. The required local match is to be Proposition 1B funds. If sufficient Proposition 1B bonds are not sold in a timely manner, these crucial vehicle replacement projects could be delayed or worse. A lack of Proposition 1B funding could put County Connection federal funding at

risk as well. Finally, without its expected FY14 Proposition 1B funding, County Connection will have to keep less reliable and energy efficient vehicles on the street longer than anticipated, driving up operating costs, and leading to less reliable service to the public.

- C. Improve Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) coordination with public transit service by allowing public transit operators to act as Medi-Cal transportation brokers, and allowing Medi-Cal users to be reimbursed for using fixed-route transit to and from medical services.**

This will allow County Connection to better coordinate overly expensive Medi-Cal trips with ADA paratransit trips thereby increasing overall productivity and paratransit coordination. Allowing Medi-Cal users to use fixed-route services and get reimbursed will save the state significant money.

As California implements the Affordable Healthcare Act (AHCA), the potential number of Medi-Cal transportation based users will likely explode. These will be individuals that qualify based on income rather than health condition. It only makes financial sense that California allows public transit operators to transport these individuals on fixed-route services and receive fare reimbursement versus transporting otherwise healthy, able-bodied people via more expensive means.

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- D. Provide local or regional areas greater ability and flexibility to seek voter approval for additional tax or fee revenues to support transit capital and operations.**

County Connection can only maintain present service levels at best. Without additional revenue support, County Connection will not be in position to help its communities implement AB32 or SB375, or work to meet the growing transportation needs of seniors.

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