

To: MP&L Committee

Date: January 30, 2013

From: Rick Ramacier
General Manager

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 7, 2013. Staff also seeks your feedback.

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

Action Requested

Upon your review of the two draft programs, staff requests that you forward them to the Board of Directors for comment and action.

Text version for review – Layout of the program brochure will be available at the meeting.

FEDERAL PROGRAM

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.

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

- o Commuters going to work.
- o Students going to school.
- o Seniors and persons with disabilities who are dependent on public transit.
- o Transit dependent people who are productively participating in the community.
- o Residents who want to connect to their life activities in a manner that reduces their carbon footprint.

County Connection Faces Financial Challenges

- o County Connection permanently lost over 15% of its operating funds during the recent recession. County Connection cannot make any significant service additions without additional operating revenues.
- o County Connection employees agreed to long term wage freezes and benefit reductions.
- o County Connection has eliminated and restructured its least productive services.

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 the 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 things 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 and each rural area as defined receive 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 and 5311 splits.
2. Woefully low funding in the 5339 program is infused with much higher levels of funding, similar to the State of Good Repair program – which is rail intensive – to rebalance the federal transit program between bus and rail. 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 terribly underfunded and very few bus projects can proceed nationally. The 5339 program funding should increase by three-fold to at least \$1.2 billion annually.

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.

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.