

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

STATE 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.

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% its services.

- 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. And, 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 trip with ADA paratransit trips thereby increasing overall productivity and paratransit coordination. Allowing Medi-Cal users to use fixed-route 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.

- 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 a position to help its communities implement AB32 or SB375, or work to meet the growing transportation needs of seniors.

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.