

To: MP&L Committee

Date: December 23, 2013

From: Kristina Vassallo, Civil Rights Administrator

Reviewed by:

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**SUBJECT:** First Draft of Proposed County Connection 2014 Federal Legislative Program

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### **Background:**

Attached you will find the first draft copy of the proposed County Connection 2014 Federal Legislative Program. This includes County Connection's interests in the reauthorization of MAP-21 and the full funding of FY15 transit appropriations bill. MAP-21 is set to expire September 30, 2014.

In addition, you will find the 2013 Federal Legislative Program for reference. Content and organization may be subject to change. Currently, the draft only contains two interests. More positions that County Connection will take interest in may be added as federal legislative updates become available.

### **Action Requested:**

Staff respectfully wishes the MP&L Committee to review the following draft of the proposed County Connection 2014 Federal Legislative Program and provide any feedback you may feel is necessary and pertinent.

## **2014 Federal Legislative Program**

### County Connection

County Connection is a joint powers agency established on March 27, 1980. The authority runs fixed-route and ADA paratransit services through the communities in Central Contra Costa County. Currently, County Connection operates 131 transit buses and 63 paratransit vehicles to a population of nearly 500,000 community members. While many of the County's residents are transit dependent, County Connection strives to best meet these needs which affect customers, communities, and the general public. County Connection is comprised of eleven Member jurisdictions and overseen by a Board of Directors whom are representatives of each jurisdiction. The service areas and jurisdictions include the cities of Clayton, Concord, Lafayette, Martinez, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek, the towns of Danville and Moraga, and the unincorporated areas of Central Contra Costa County.

### County Connection Mission Statement

The following mission statement was adopted by County Connection's Board of Directors in 1991. Our mission serves as a daily reminder of our goal to be the best transit agency while serving the public and our fellow employees.

*CCCTA is committed to providing transportation services with the constraints of our suburban and financial environment. CCCTA will also aggressively promote the expanded use of transit through creative implementation of programs and services to the communities we serve, in order to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, and energy consumption.*

### Ridership

Many of County Connection customers are dependent on public transportation. County Connection customers come from a diverse background both socially and economically. The service area (Central Contra Costa County) is approximated at 200 square miles with a population of 482,400. Annual ridership is estimated at 5 million for both fixed-route and paratransit services. County Connection customers are:

- Commuters going to work
- People connecting to regional rail like BART, Capitol Corridor and ACE Train (Altamont Commuter Express)
- Students going to school
- Seniors and persons with disabilities who are dependent on public transit
- Transit dependent people who productively participate in the community
- Residents who want to connect to their life activities in a manner that reduces their carbon footprint

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 our residents, County Connection is a life sustaining service!

## The Benefits of County Connection

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

## County Connection Innovation

- County Connection plays a key role in facilitating mobility management and commute alternatives that go beyond traditional fixed-route transit. This allows the public greater transportation alternatives.
- County Connection will use a federal Clean Fuels grant to fund the 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, which are manufactured locally.
- County Connection has participated in the planning of innovative transit oriented development project at both the Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek BART stations. Both stations will serve as major transit hubs for regional connectivity.

## Federal Legislative Program

Legislation is a major component in determining Federal policies and programs. In turn, it widely affects the funding allocations that County Connection will utilize in its operations and budgets. County Connection relies on over \$5 million dollars annually in federal transit funding for necessities crucial to the Authority such as bus replacement and preventative maintenance.

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, it is crucial that County Connection become aware of any new legislation to bring to its Board of Directors. Upon approval and adoption, County Connection has the ability to effectively respond to such legislation that could ultimately affect the Authority and its communities as a whole.

In relation to federal funding, County Connection has three primary interests:

1. Reauthorize MAP-21
2. Fully fund the FY15 transit appropriations bill

### **Position #1: Reauthorize MAP-21 with the following principles**

Reauthorization of Moving Ahead for Progress (MAP-21) is crucial to the core mission of County Connection. The principles behind MAP-21 should:

- Ensure equal access to federal funding for suburban transit systems in large urban areas
- Secure the financial integrity of the Mass Transit Account with the Highway Trust Fund
- Double the size of the federal investment in transit over six years to meet at least 50% of the \$60 billion in annual critical public transit capital needs. Support a projected doubling of ridership over the next 20 years.
- Continue to allow the use of federal formula funds for preventive maintenance and to maintain present levels of service through direct operating assistance options
- Maintain new programs 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.
- Create and Metro Mobility program as a flexible program funded out of FHWA funds like the STP of CMAQ programs.
- Maintain the ADA set-a-side option in the 5307 program.

### **Position #2: Fully fund the FY15 transit appropriations bill**

County Connection needs federal funds to maintain service levels and maintain capital equipment to a state of good repair. The FY15 transit appropriations bill should:

- Maintain funding in FY15 at the authorized level.
- Provide funding in a timely manner without burdensome review

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## 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

The information in this brochure is available on the  
County Connection website - [www.cccta.org](http://www.cccta.org)

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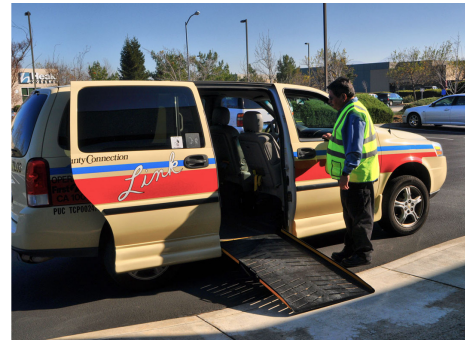
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**County Connection**

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# 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 over a 200 square mile area.

County Connection serves a dynamic and diverse modern suburban area that covers a 200 square mile area. 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 our residents, County Connection is a life sustaining service!

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## **County Connection Innovation**

- County Connection plays a key role in facilitating mobility management and commute alternatives that go beyond traditional fixed-route transit, giving the public greater transportation options.
- 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.
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- County Connection has participated in the planning of innovative transit oriented development projects at both the Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek BART stations. Both stations will serve as major transit hubs for regional connectivity.

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## Federal Program

County Connection relies on over \$5 million dollars a year 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 33%. Reauthorization of Moving Ahead for Progress (MAP-21) is crucial to the core mission of County Connection.

County Connection has three primary interests related to federal funding; 1) reauthorize MAP-21, 2) increase Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (5339) funds, and 3) fully fund the FY2014 appropriations bill.

### **Position #1: Reauthorize MAP-21 with the following principles**

- Ensure equal access to federal funding for suburban transit systems in large urban areas.
- Secure the financial integrity of the Mass Transit Account with the Highway Trust Fund.
- 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. Support a projected doubling of ridership over the next 20 years.
- Continue to allow the use of federal formula funds for preventive maintenance and to maintain present levels of service through direct operating assistance options.

- Maintain new programs 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.
- Create any Metro Mobility program as a flexible program funded out of FHWA funds like either the STP or CMAQ programs.
- Maintain the ADA set-a-side option in the 5307 program.

### **Position #2: Increase funding in the Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (5339) Program**

Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (5339) funds are the only funds suburban transit operators have to pay for bus facility improvements and/or fleet expansion. These funds allow for the strategic expansion of services. We have two interests related to the Bus and Bus Facilities Formula funding program.

- Ensure that 5339 funding is allocated and spent in the same Urbanized Area (UZA). Ensure that the formula takes into account population as well as other factors.
- The current 5339 program should be funded by at least \$1.2 billion a year. This will begin to restore it to the funding levels in existence prior to MAP-21 when 5309 was in place.

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### **Position #3: Fully fund the FY14 transit appropriations bill**

County Connection needs federal funds to maintain service levels and maintain capital equipment to a state of good repair. The FY14 transit appropriations bill should:

- Maintain funding in FY14 at the authorized level.
- Provide funding in a timely manner without unnecessary and burdensome review.

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### **County Connection Customers Are**

- Commuters going to work.
- People connecting to regional rail like BART, Capitol Corridor and ACE Train (Altamont Commuter Express).
- Students going to school.
- Seniors and persons with disabilities who are dependent on public transit.
- 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 has eliminated and restructured its least productive services.
- County Connection employees agreed to long term wage freezes and benefit reductions.