

County Connection

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: MP&L Committee

Date: January 27, 2014

From: Kristina Vassallo, Civil Rights Administrator

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: Draft County Connection 2015 Federal Legislative Program

Background:

Attached you will find a draft of the County Connection 2015 Federal Legislative Program. This includes County Connection's support in the reauthorization of MAP-21 and full funding of the FY16 appropriations bill. MAP-21 programs were recently extended from September 30, 2014 through May 31, 2015.

A sample brochure (based on 2014) of the County Connection 2015 Federal Legislative Program will be available for viewing at the scheduled MP&L meeting. Content and organization may be subject to change at the committee's discretion.

Action Requested:

Staff respectfully wishes the MP&L Committee to review the following items, with changes as necessary and recommend the proposed County Connection 2015 Federal Legislative Program to the Board of Directors.

2015 Federal Legislative Program

County Connection

County Connection is a joint powers agency that provides fixed-route and ADA paratransit services through the communities of Clayton, Concord, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, and unincorporated communities in Central Contra Costa County. County Connection operates a fleet of 121 fully accessible transit buses and 63 paratransit vehicles and continually strives to best meet the needs of our customers, communities, and the general public.

County Connection Mission

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

County Connection customers rely upon public transportation and come from diverse backgrounds both socially and economically. The service area (Central Contra Costa County) is approximated at 200 square miles with a population of close to 500,000. 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
- Riders who rely on transportation and 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!

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. Moreover, sufficient federal investments in public transit will be imperative in order to attract new ridership and acquire long-term solutions to issues such as air quality and traffic congestion.

County Connection supports two primary objectives:

1. Reauthorization of MAP-21
2. Fully funding the FY16 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 fair share 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.
- Provide a substantial federal investment in order to meet the estimated \$60 billion in public transit capital needs.
- Continue to allow the use of federal formula funds for preventive maintenance and to maintain present levels of service through direct operating assistance options
- Restore fairness and balance between bus and rail capital needs.
- 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.
- Maintain the ADA set-a-side option in the 5307 program.

Position #2: Fully fund the FY16 transit appropriations bill

County Connection needs federal funds to maintain service levels and maintain capital equipment to a state of good repair. The FY16 transit appropriations bill should:

- Maintain funding in FY16 at the authorized level.
- Provide funding in a timely manner without unnecessary and burdensome review

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.
- County Connection uses clean burning hybrid Gillig buses 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.

County Connection Provides These Important Transit Benefits:

- Commuter shuttles that reduce travel time, relieve congestion, and connect to regional transportation services
- Comprehensive local services that allow students to use public transit to go to and from school.
- Direct and convenient service between communities of concern such as the Monument Corridor in Concord and medical facilities such as the County Hospital
- Over 200 jobs directly and hundreds more indirectly through the purchase of vehicles and supplies.
- 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.
- Direct connections to shopping via shuttles from neighborhoods and BART.