

# County Connection

## INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: MP&L Committee

Date: January 25, 2016

From: Kristina Martinez

Reviewed by:

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**SUBJECT:** Federal & State Legislative Updates

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### STATE LEGISLATION

#### Action Required:

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee discuss and take the following actions on state legislation:

- Support AB 1592 (Bonilla)
- Support and seek amendments to SB 824 (Beall)
- Support Bus on Shoulder draft bill

#### Background:

##### AB 1592 (Bonilla)

AB 1592 was introduced by Bonilla to begin a pilot project on autonomous vehicles. This bill would authorize Contra Costa Transportation Authority to conduct the pilot project at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. Tested vehicles would not be equipped with a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator, or operator and would also be limited to operate at speeds of less than 35 mph.

County Connection was specifically asked by Assembly Member Bonilla's office to support this bill with the belief that at some time in the future, this could potentially have public transit application.

##### SB 824 (Beall)

SB 824 was introduced in early January 2016 and proposes to modify several components of the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). This includes allowing operators to pool their funding shares with other agencies, the rollover of funds from year to year for larger projects, and reimbursement eligibility upon approval of a capital project or component to a capital project.

Similarly, staff has had discussions with Assembly Member Bonilla's office regarding greater flexibility in the expenditure of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds. Currently, 50% of LCTOP funds received by County Connection are utilized for services in the City of Martinez, a criteria met by applying these funds towards disadvantaged communities (DAC). However, County Connection is unable to apply LCTOP funds with communities beyond the City of Martinez.

Assembly Member Bonilla has expressed a willingness to assist County Connection in gaining greater flexibility of LCTOP funds. SB 824 is likely a vehicle to use for that change as the bill presents the opportunity for Bonilla to become a co-sponsor or put forward a similar amended bill.

Staff requests that the MP&L committee support SB 824 and seek amendments to include a broader definition of how the 50% is applied. This includes applying the 50% on a state wide versus operator basis, allowing greater flexibility of how LCTOP funds are allocated.

#### Bus on Shoulder (Draft Bill)

The Bus on Shoulder draft bill extends the ability of select counties and/or operators to run bus on shoulder transit service within the highway system. The draft includes the Monterey-Salinas Transit District, the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. The Districts and Authority intend to work closely with the California Highway Patrol in determining such corridors while maintaining the safety of both drivers and vehicles.

Through VTA, the author, Assembly Member Stone has expressed a willingness to add County Connection and the 680 corridor to the draft bill. This legislation would allow County Connection to provide bus on shoulder service on the 680 corridor as recommended by the I-680 Transit Investment & Congestion Relief Study. The study was recently conducted by Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and is likely going to receive partial funding in any new transportation expenditure plan.

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee support this should a formal bill arise, which may occur by the time the committee meets at its scheduled February 4, 2016 meeting. The draft language for the Bus on Shoulder bill has been attached for your reference.

#### **FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

Staff has prepared the draft 2016 County Connection Federal Legislative Program and requests that the MP&L committee review the program and provide any feedback on changes or additions. The draft has been attached for your reference.

## **BILL DRAFT: BUS ON SHOULDERS**

SECTION 1. Section 148.1 of the Streets and Highways Code is amended to read:

148.1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Monterey-Salinas Transit District, ~~and~~ the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, *and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority* may conduct a transit bus-only program using the shoulders of certain highways in the state highway system within the areas served by the transit services of the districts *and the authority*, with the approval of the department and the Department of the California Highway Patrol. The department, the Department of the California Highway Patrol, and participating transit districts shall jointly determine the segments of each highway where it is appropriate to designate the shoulders as transit bus-only traffic corridors, based upon factors that shall include, but not be limited to, right-of-way availability and capacity, peak congestion hours, and the most heavily congested areas. Under the program, the participating transit districts shall actively work with the department and the Department of the California Highway Patrol to develop guidelines that ensure driver and vehicle safety and the integrity of the infrastructure.

(b) The development of the guidelines shall be done with transparency, including the opportunity for public comment.

(c) The department and the participating transit districts shall monitor the state of repair of highway shoulders used in the program, including repairs attributable to the operation of transit buses on the shoulders.

(d) The participating transit districts shall be responsible for all costs attributable to this program, including costs related to repairs attributable to the operation of transit buses on shoulders.

(e) The program may commence operation as soon as guidelines are agreed to by the *participating* transit districts, the department, and the Department of the California Highway Patrol.

(f) As used in this section, "highway" includes "freeway."

SEC. 2. Section 21650 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

21650. Upon all highways, a vehicle shall be driven upon the right half of the roadway, except as follows:

(a) When overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction under the rules governing that movement.

(b) When placing a vehicle in a lawful position for, and when the vehicle is lawfully making, a left turn.

- (c) When the right half of a roadway is closed to traffic under construction or repair.
- (d) Upon a roadway restricted to one-way traffic.
- (e) When the roadway is not of sufficient width.
- (f) When the vehicle is necessarily traveling so slowly as to impede the normal movement of traffic, that portion of the highway adjacent to the right edge of the roadway may be utilized temporarily when in a condition permitting safe operation.
- (g) This section does not prohibit the operation of bicycles on any shoulder of a highway, on any sidewalk, on any bicycle path within a highway, or along any crosswalk or bicycle path crossing, where the operation is not otherwise prohibited by this code or local ordinance.
- (h) This section does not prohibit the operation of a transit bus on the shoulder of a state highway in conjunction with the implementation of a program authorized pursuant to Section 148.1 of the Streets and Highways Code on state highways within the areas served by the transit services of the Monterey-Salinas Transit District, ~~or~~ the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, *and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.*

## **2016 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 approximately 200 square miles with a population of close to 500,000. Annual ridership is estimated at 3.5 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. FY 17 Federal Funding at Authorized Levels

### **Position #1: FY 17 Federal Funding at Authorized Levels**

County Connection relies on federal funds to maintain service levels and capital equipment to a state of good repair. The recently enacted FAST Act must be honored by appropriating to the full authorized levels of funding in FY 17.

The Authority expects to receive \$1.5 million in 5307 funds in FY 17 for the use of paratransit operating contracting. This portion of funding is 25% of the paratransit operating budget. Without this revenue, County Connection would need to transfer \$1.5 million from fixed route operations to cover paratransit needs. Consequently, this would amount to a 10% cut of fixed route service.

### County Connection Innovation

- County Connection launched a mobility management program through the use of New Freedom funds and 5310 funds through partnerships with other Contra Costa County Operators, Social Service agencies, and the Contra Costa Mobility Management Center.
- County Connection will introduce its fully electrically powered trolley buses for its highly successful Walnut Creek downtown shuttle. This first of its kind application will rely on inductive charging and brings new private partners to the electric bus field. This was funded using a federal Clean Fuels grant in 2016.
- 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 is now a technologically supported bus service. As of late 2015, the Authority implemented Clipper (a Bay Area electronic fare payment system) and all buses enjoy Wi-Fi capability. County Connection customers can also 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.