

To: MP&L Committee

Date: January 25, 2017

From: Kristina Martinez

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: Draft 2017 Federal Legislative Program

Background:

Staff has prepared a draft of the 2017 Federal Legislative Program. This program is updated annually and highlights County Connection's legislative priorities at the federal level. The program also includes information about County Connection, ridership, innovation, and important transit benefits.

For the year 2017, County Connection supports the following:

1. FY 18 federal funding at authorized levels
2. Working relationships with Congress and new Administration
3. Reforming and updating federal regulations and rules

An attachment to position #2 has been provided for reference. The program addresses the President's interest in a comprehensive infrastructure proposal. A number of various proposals have emerged, including those from the Senate Democrats and the National Governors Association; however, none of these proposals are concrete at this point.

Action Requested:

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee review the draft 2017 Federal Legislative Program and provide any feedback on changes or additions. A draft of the brochure has been attached for reference.

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 which are transit dependent.
- Over 200 jobs directly and hundreds more indirectly through the purchase of vehicles and supplies.
- Alternative modes of transportation that support the local economy and environmental improvements, energy independence, senior mobility, student transportation, and connections to the Bay Area region for all activities.
- Direct connections to shopping via shuttles from neighborhoods and BART.

Stay Connected with 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.countyconnection.com

2017 Federal Legislative Program



COUNTY CONNECTION

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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.

County Connection Mission

County Connection is committed to providing transportation services within the constraints of our suburban and financial environment. County Connection 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.



County Connection Innovation

- County Connection is now using battery electric wireless powered trolley buses for its highly successful Walnut Creek downtown shuttle. A number of partners include Gillig Corporation, BAE Systems, and WAVE, Inc. This project was made possible by a federal grant.
- County Connection maintains a nationally recognized public-private partnership with the Bishop Ranch Business Park to provide frequent shuttles between Bishop Ranch and two regional rail systems, BART and the ACE Train. This features significant operating cost reimbursement as well as a fare subsidy from Bishop Ranch.
- County Connection is a fully technologically supported bus service. This is highlighted by 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 or smart phones.
- 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.

Federal Legislative Program

Position #2: Working Relationships with Congress and New Administration

The new Administration has expressed an interest in pursuing a large infrastructure proposal. Nationwide, there is a projected minimum \$88 billion shortfall to keep the current transit system in a state of good repair. This amount does not include what it would take to add new capacity.

While such a comprehensive package has yet to take any final form, County Connection urges that any such proposal include public transit as a major component of it.

Position #3: Reforming and Updating Federal Regulations and Rules

Technology in transportation is growing at a rapid rate and providing more opportunities for effective public transportation services. Currently, many long standing regulations and rules are outdated or restricted when it comes to public transit taking advantage of these opportunities.

County Connection seeks to work with federal regulators and legislators to reform and update the federal regulations and rules which may inadvertently hinder transit service though technological advances.

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 connects people:

- Commuting to work
- Using regional rail like BART, Capitol Corridor and ACE Train (Altamont Commuter Express)
- Traveling for education
- Seniors, persons with disabilities, and veterans who are dependent on public transit
- Actively using public transportation to reduce their carbon footprint

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 \$7 million dollars annually in federal transit funding for necessities crucial to the Authority such as federally mandated bus replacement and preventive 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 the following:

1. FY 18 Federal Funding at Authorized Levels
2. Working Relationships with Congress and New Administration
3. Reforming and Updating Federal Regulations and Rules



Position #1: FY 18 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 18.

The Authority expects to receive \$1.5 million in 5307 funds in FY 18 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.





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Washington Update Jan 26th 2017

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Thu, Jan 26, 2017 at 12:32 PM

Washington Update 1 26 2017

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Washington Update

By Joel Rubin, TBC Washington Representative

Good afternoon TBC Members –

As President Trump takes the reins of the White House, it's been a busy first week here in D.C. and the transportation world. Most notably, we saw an infrastructure proposal released by Senate Democrats and learned of a list of infrastructure projects developed by the National Governors Association for the Trump team. Meanwhile the Senate continued their work on Monday and Tuesday with confirmation hearings for the President's cabinet. Lawmakers from both the Senate and House departed D.C. on Wednesday and are huddling together at their party retreats in Philadelphia (Republicans) and West Virginia (Democrats).

Democrats Unveil Infrastructure Proposal

On Monday, Democrats in the Senate released an infrastructure plan that spends \$1 trillion over the next 10 years to repair old bridges and roads, expand bus and rail systems and modernize ports, highways, airports, schools, grids and much more. Democrats estimate their plan would create 15 million jobs. Of particular interest to the Bus Coalition, the plan would include \$180 billion to replace & expand Rail and Bus

Systems.

Led by Senator Chuck Schumer, Senate Democrats are essentially calling the bluff of President Trump. Trump campaigned on a \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, which was mostly \$137 billion in tax breaks to private investors with minimal federal spending. The Democratic plan released is entirely direct federal spending, although they declined to specify where the money will come from. This specific plan is obviously DOA on the Hill, but it's a clear benchmark for Democrats to rally around. We could see the Trump administration including some of these priorities as they work with Democrats over the coming weeks on a bipartisan plan.

Sen. John Thune (R-SD) and Chairman of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee commented to reporters on the proposal, "They're trying to stake out their own ground on this, but in the end, any infrastructure plan, to get through Congress and signed into law, is going to have to be one that the president agrees with and that enjoys the support of a lot of Republicans. Whatever they come up with, we'd be happy to look at ... but we don't want to go down the path of another \$1 trillion stimulus."

Here are the specifics from the Democrats' proposal related to transit:

"Problem: Public transit ridership has increased by 37 percent over the past twenty years, nearly double the rate of population growth, but repair, construction and expansion projects have not kept pace with the dramatic increase in demand. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates there is a \$90 billion backlog of repair projects facing the nation's public transportation systems. Decades of heavy use and under investment have resulted in decayed infrastructure and aging vehicles that need replacement. These circumstances contribute to significant delays and service outages for transit riders, and the risk of riders and workers being exposed to unsafe conditions is increased. Meanwhile, many subway and bus routes are overcrowded, yet 45% of American households – many in suburban and rural areas – lack any meaningful access to transit. Existing federal grant programs have huge funding backlogs causing significant delays in project delivery and increased construction costs.

Solution: We will invest \$90 billion to reverse the national repair

backlog: \$15 billion to support large, urgent repair projects that address critical safety risks, \$30 billion to replace many of the 46,000 buses and 8,000 rail vehicles that will exceed their useful service life by 2025, and \$45 billion to increase core formula programs, which support repair projects across the country. Formula investments also support rural transit, tribal transit and specialized transit services for seniors and persons with disabilities. To address overcrowding and ridership growth, we will invest \$25 billion to advance subway, light rail, streetcar and bus rapid transit projects that are under development but lack funding and \$15 billion to expand existing public transportation facilities, like stations. An infrastructure package should also include a bipartisan plan that ensures the long-term solvency of the Federal Highway Trust Fund, including the Mass Transit Account.”

Trump and Governors Association Team on Infrastructure Projects

On Tuesday evening it was initially reported by McClatchy ([Link to McClatchy story](#)) that National Governors Association and President Trump’s team had worked to compile a list of infrastructure projects in need of funding. While there has indeed been a process of collecting potential projects from the Governors, the list reported by McClatchy was debunked the next day by a former member of the Trump transition’s landing team who said the list was not circulated by their team. He noted that while some of the projects listed are good candidates, some have been completed already, are in development, or would not be the types of projects recommended.

However, it is interesting to know that there is a process of collecting projects from the Governors. At this point, 43 states and territories have submitted projects to the National Governors Association. You can click on this ([link to the list](#)) to see the type of large scale projects that are being submitted.

We’ll continue to keep you posted as we hear more.

Note: The next all TBC Membership call will be on February 17th at 2:30 PM EST!

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