

**To:** Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

**Date:** 11/29/2017

**From:** Rick Ramacier, General Manager

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**SUBJECT: 2018 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Legislative Conference**

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### **Background**

Since the early 1990s, County Connection has actively participated in the annual APTA legislative conference in Washington DC. Typically, County Connection takes advantage of these conferences to visit with its own congressional delegation in conjunction with the conference. Usually, the County Connection group consists of two or three board members and one or two staff. The relative importance of these meetings varies by year. But, they always provide value to County Connection as well as the congressional offices.

In almost every year, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) sends a few board members and staff to Washington DC in the same week as the annual APTA legislative conference. Thus, County Connection and other Bay Area transit operator folk have attended useful congressional meetings with MTC. This strategy was key in getting the BART extension to SFO funded. As part of that, MTC has hosted a catered reception every year where attendees are addressed by various member of congress and spend time in relaxed atmosphere talking with them and/or their staff. So, this event often turns into a very productive few days in Washington DC for County Connection.

### **2018 – APTA and MTC Not in Sink**

Most years, the APTA legislative conference is held between Sunday and Wednesday of the second week of March. However, in 2018 APTA will move the conference to the third week of March (Sunday through Wednesday). Meanwhile, MTC has committed to sending their folks to Washington DC a week earlier – the usual second week of March which coincides with a National League of Cities conference.

The last time this happened was in 2015. Before that time, this kind of thing had not happened for at least 20 years.

In 2015, I went to the APTA conference as well as to meetings set up by MTC by traveling back and forth to Washington DC two separate times. One board member did the same. In hindsight, I am not sure that was worth the effort and expense.

So if in 2018, The County Connection board and staff attendees go to only one event – the APTA conference or the MTC based meetings – the question is which one? It's important to note that County Connection would meet with its congressional delegation offices regardless of which week our representatives were to go. There are advantages and disadvantages to either approach. A third approach is to participate in both events.

### **Options**

Staff identifies the following options to think about.

- 1) Attend the APTA conference between Sunday, March 18, 2018 and Wednesday, March 21, 2018. Visit with our congressional delegation at the same time.
- 2) Attend the MTC based meetings, attend the annual California reception as described above, and visit with our congressional delegation between Sunday, March 11, 2018 and Wednesday, March 14 2018 or Thursday, March 15, 2018.
- 3) Do both.
  - A. By staying in Washington DC through the weekend of March 16th and 17th. Or
  - B. By flying back and forth twice.

I would further note that current FY17-18 operating budget does not anticipate a 2nd Washington DC trip for multiple County Connection staff or board members, or for an extra-long trip.

### **Recommendation:**

Staff wishes to discuss this with the MP&L Committee to gain a sense of where you might want to be on this. Staff further requests that you consider sending this to the full board for discussion and feedback.