

To: MP&L Committee

Date: February 1, 2018

From: Rick Ramacier
General Manager

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: Draft 2018 Federal Legislative Program

Background:

Staff has prepared a draft of the 2018 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.

Virtually no federal transportation legislation was enacted in 2017. The issues that we identified as important to County Connection remain for attention in 2018. Therefore, staff proposes a program that is nearly identical to the one in 2017.

Issues

1. Fund the federal transit program in FY2019 at the authorized levels of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. County Connection is projected to received \$4.3 million in federal capital funding to support the purchase of 42 paratransit vehicles in FY19 and just over \$1.5 million in federal funding to assist in supplying Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services in FY19. If the federal transit program is not fully funded in FY19, those two projects could be at risk.
2. Urge that public transit be adequately included in any major infrastructure package that may move through Congress. The Administration continues to periodically suggest that they want to put forward a \$1.0 trillion comprehensive infrastructure package. County Connection should urge that any such package contain meaningful funding for public transit. There is a projected \$90 billion shortfall to keep the current transit systems in a state of good repair. This does not include building in any new capacity.
3. Find a permanent fix to the growing shortfalls in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and the related Mass Transit Account (MTA). Both of these are on target to be essentially bankrupt by the end FY21 according to most experts. Thus, left to no attention many projects that are programmed for funding from these accounts will go without leaving said projects unable to be completed. County Connection should urge that Congress and the Administration greatly increase their efforts to fund the massive shortfalls in the HTF and bring financial stabilization to it.
4. Reforming and updating federal regulations and rules. US Department of Transportation (DOT), Secretary Chow has expressed a consistent and strong interest in reforming and updating federal transit rules. Particular attention is being paid to rules that may impede the use of technology in the delivery of public transportation and/or prevent public transportation from taking full advantage of new service schemes under the umbrella of shared mobility or micro transit. County Connection should urge DOT on as they pursue these reforms. And, we should urge Congress to be supportive of their efforts.

Program Format

Staff proposes to use a similar format to previous year to summarize and highlight our federal legislative interests. A draft of a proposed 2018 Federal Legislative Program brochure will be distributed at your meeting on Thursday, February 8, 2018. This brochure will look very similar to the 2017 one.

Action Requested:

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee review the draft 2018 Federal Legislative Program and provide feedback and direction at your meeting on February 8, 2018. Also, we will request that you forward the draft program and brochure to the full board for approval and distribution.