

To: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Date: 8/13/2018

From: Ruby Horta, Director of Planning & Marketing

Reviewed by: 

SUBJECT: County Connection's role in transformative projects

Background:

At the regional level, the MTC and Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) have developed a new initiative, called Horizon, to explore the pressing issues and possible challenges Bay Area residents may face through 2050. MTC has reached out to public agencies as well as members of the public to submit transformative projects that have the potential to reshape transportation in the Bay Area. These projects are defined as transit or roadway projects that improve capacity, have a lifecycle cost exceeding \$1 billion and were not evaluated in the Plan Bay Area 2040. Transit projects may also include improved frequency or coverage.

This initiative provides an ideal opportunity for transit agencies to partner with cities and congestion management agencies. There are a number of projects in Central Contra Costa County that satisfy the requirements of transformative transit and roadway projects. For example, bus on shoulder, now known as part-time transit lanes, bus rapid transit, mobility hubs with shared autonomous vehicle connections, transit signal priority on high capacity corridors, real-time passenger information at bus stops, enhanced service near schools, zero emission vehicle replacement (121 fixed route), 10-15 minute headways to BART, and improved frequency system wide.

Given developments surrounding public transit, it is important for County Connection's voice to be part of the conversation both locally and at a regional level. MTC's Horizon Initiative offers an opportunity for County Connection's Board of Directors to provide staff guidance on what the agency's role should be with regards to defining transformative projects in Contra Costa County.

Horizon Initiative – Potential Projects:

Bus on shoulder (BOS) – In 1991, Metro Transit pioneered a simple way to get buses out of congestion by traveling on the shoulder instead of sitting in rush-hour traffic. The Twin Cities region now has more than 300 miles of freeway shoulder available to buses. That's more than three times the number of all metro areas in the country – combined. In California, efforts to implement BOS have been delayed due to safety concerns from the California Highway Patrol. However, like Metro Transit, projects here can also ensure that speed is secondary to safety.

While bus drivers are authorized to use designated shoulders, they follow strict guidelines. Bus drivers:

- Must not use the shoulder when traffic is moving faster than 35 mph.
- Cannot exceed the speed of traffic by more than 15 mph; max. speed is 35 mph.
- Must yield to any vehicle entering the shoulder, including at freeway ramps or intersections.
- Must join regular lanes when the shoulder is blocked by stalled cars or debris.

Bus rapid transit (BRT) – Although our region is largely suburban, there are a number of corridors that may benefit from some BRT concepts, specifically during the peak commute. BRT uses segregated lanes, inaccessible to other vehicles, to improve reliability and are often connected to the local traffic lights for traffic signal priority (TSP). BRT routes also stop less frequently, and tend to characterize their stopping points as stations or mobility hubs.

Mobility hubs – These are expanded bus stop that provide access to different modes of travel – walking, biking, transit, and shared mobility. They provide an integrated suite of mobility services, amenities, and technologies to bridge the distance between high-frequency transit and an individual’s origin or destination. Sample mobility hub services, amenities, and technologies include: bikeshare, carshare, neighborhood electric vehicles, bike parking, dynamic parking management strategies, real-time traveler information, real-time ridesharing, microtransit services, bike and pedestrian improvements, and wayfinding. These features help travelers connect to regional transit services and make short trips within the neighborhood and beyond. Integration of information technology helps travelers find, access, and pay for transit and on-demand shared mobility services. In the future, automated and connected transportation services may enhance mobility for travelers of all ages and abilities while fostering a safer environment for all mobility hub users.

However, these potential transformative projects will require significant political support and long-term partnerships with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and all member jurisdictions.

Financial Implications:

To be determined.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the MP&L Committee forward the information presented in this memo to the Board, for review.