

# County Connection

## INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: MP&L Committee

Date: February 27, 2019

From: Rick Ramacier  
General Manager



---

**SUBJECT:** Final 2019 Federal Legislative Program

---

**Background:**

Staff has incorporated comments from the board meeting of February 21, 2019 into a final draft federal legislative program pamphlet. We would like to take one more review with your committee to ensure that it reflects the board's comments. Assuming your concurrence at your meeting on March 7, 2019. This final draft pamphlet will be representative piece of the County Connection 2019 Federal Legislative Program

**Action Requested:**

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee review the final draft 2019 Federal Legislative Program pamphlet and provide feedback at your meeting on March 7, 2019.

## 2019 Federal Advocacy Program



*Connecting our community by providing innovative transportation choices when and where you need it.*

COUNTY CONNECTION

2477 Arnold Industrial Way • Concord, CA 94520 • (925) 676-1976

[www.countyconnection.com](http://www.countyconnection.com)

### 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 American made 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.

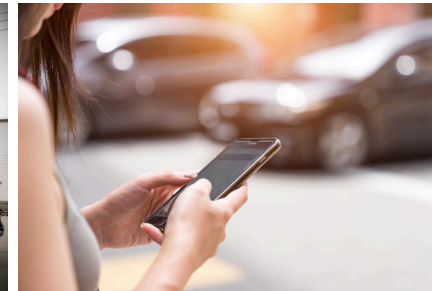


Photo Credit: Contra Costa Transportation Authority

### County Connection Innovation

- The highly successful Walnut Creek downtown shuttle is now using **battery electric inductively charged buses**. Partners include Gillig Corporation, BAE Systems, and WAVE, Inc. This project was made possible by a federal grant.
- County Connection maintains nationally recognized public-private **partnerships** with major job centers. The Bishop Ranch Business Park provides 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.
- The Shadelands Business Park provides **frequent service** back and forth to the Pleasant Hill BART station. Fares are underwritten by the Shadelands property owners.
- County Connection is a **fully technologically supported** bus service. This is highlighted by Clipper (a Bay Area electronic fare payment system).
- All buses enjoy **Wi-Fi** capability. 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 (TOD)** projects at both the Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek BART stations. The Walnut Creek Transit Village is tentatively set to open in February 2019. Additionally, the North Concord BART station has begun its Developer selection process, which County Connection is part of in an effort to align the TOD with future development at the Concord Naval Weapons Station.
- County Connection has completed a year-long service restructure planning process with the primary goal of **increasing productivity** by aligning service with demand. These service changes will be implemented in Spring 2019.



County Connection



## 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.

## Ridership

County Connection is an integral Bay Area agency linking customers that rely upon public transportation. Our riders are:

- From diverse backgrounds both socially and economically
- Using regional rail like BART, Capitol Corridor and the ACE Train (Altamont Commuter Express)
- Seniors, persons with disabilities, and veterans who are dependent on public transit
- Actively using public transportation to reduce their carbon footprint

- Commuting to work
  - Students going to school
- Central Contra Costa County**
- Approximately 200 square miles
  - Population around 540,000
  - Annual ridership estimated at 3.5 million (fixed-route and paratransit)



## Federal Advocacy Program

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. Funding the FY20 federal transit program at authorized levels
2. Adequately funding public transit in any infrastructure initiative
3. Finding a permanent source of funding for the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account
4. Creating a new funding program in the next re-authorization
5. Modernizing the definition of public transportation

### **Priority #1: Fund the FY20 Federal Transit Program at Authorized Levels**

County Connection relies on federal funds to maintain service levels and capital equipment to a state of good repair. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act must be honored by appropriating to the full authorized levels of funding in FY20. The Authority expects to receive approximately \$1.4 million in 5307 funds to assist in supplying Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services. This portion of funding is 25% of the paratransit operating budget. Without it, County Connection would need to transfer \$1.4 million from fixed-route operations to cover paratransit needs, which would result in a cut of fixed-route service.

### **Priority #2: Adequately Fund Public Transit in Any Infrastructure Initiative**

The Administration and incoming House majority are interested in pursuing a comprehensive infrastructure proposal. Nationwide, there is a projected minimum \$90 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 contain meaningful funding for public transit.

## Federal Advocacy Program

### **Priority #3: Find a Permanent Source of Funding for the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account**

According to most experts, the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and the related Mass Transit Account (MTA) are on target to be essentially bankrupt by the end of FY21. County Connection urges that Congress and the Administration increase their efforts to find a permanent fix to these growing shortfalls. Without financial stabilization for these accounts, many County Connection projects that are planned could be at risk.

### **Priority #4: Create a New Funding Program in Next Re-Authorization**

As mobility options in transit continue to emerge, County Connection must stay at the forefront of initiatives in order to increase ridership and remain as efficient as possible. Creating a new funding program in the next re-authorization would allow demonstration project funding for first and last mile public transportation solutions that are both innovative and provide mobility integration. While funds would be granted to public transportation providers as defined, these grantees would be allowed to fully partner with other public entities as well as private or non-profit sectors for demonstrations under this new funding category. Up to 10% of the federal transit program should be applied to this.

### **Priority #5: Modernize the Definition of Public Transportation**

Modernizing the federal definition of public transportation supports and encourages public transit evolving into mobility integrators. This will allow public transportation providers to take advantage of new technologies that create opportunities to offer innovative, cost effective, and higher quality services without the constraints of the current decades old federal definition of public transportation. Any update should maintain longstanding definitions that a public transportation service is "publically-funded" and that private organizations cannot be independently eligible for federal funding.

## San Francisco Bay Area

