

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Board of Directors

Date: 03/15/2024

From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: Draft 2024 Federal Advocacy Program

Background:

County Connection's Federal Advocacy Program highlights the Authority's top priorities for 2024. The need for an on-going reliable federally funded transit program remains crucial to the ability of County Connection to provide reliable, safe, and effective service to its communities. When staff meets with legislators, they bring with them a printed Federal Advocacy Program brochure, summarizing priorities of the Authority. Attachment 1 includes a summary of legislative priorities for 2024.

Updated Materials:

Staff has revised the Federal Advocacy Program brochure for 2024, keeping with a format that has served well to provide an overview of the Authority's current operation, strategic plans, and needs for future innovation and growth. Included in the brochure are statistics from a 2023 passenger survey, updated language for priorities #1 and #4, as well as new images with focus on our passengers and operating staff. On the back panel of the printed brochure there is a QR code, which will direct to a companion webpage that mirrors the priorities contained in the brochure. The webpage will also include links to various financial, planning, and research documents, including County Connection's Operating and Capital Budget, Short-Range Transit Plan, Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan, and Title VI Program Report, as well as an embedded video to our One Seat Regional Ride promotion video. (Note: The current QR code directs to the 2023 Federal Advocacy Program companion web page. The 2024 Federal Advocacy Program companion webpage is not yet live and will be published once the priorities are finalized following the MP&L Committee meeting in April.)

The MP&L Committee reviewed the initial draft brochure and provided guidance and feedback on its content, which has been incorporated into the current draft. After staff receives additional input from the Board, a final brochure will be presented to the MP&L Committee for final review at the April meeting.

Financial Implications:

None.

Recommendation:

The MP&L Committee and staff recommend approval of the draft 2024 Federal Advocacy Program. The MP&L Committee will have another opportunity to provide feedback after Board review at the April MP&L Committee meeting.

Action Requested:

The MP&L Committee and staff request that the Board review, provide feedback, and approve the draft 2024 Federal Advocacy Program.

Attachments:

1. Draft 2024 Federal Advocacy Program Priorities
2. 2024 Federal Advocacy Program Brochure

2024 FEDERAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

County Connection relies on federal transit funding for crucial capital and operational funds to ensure the implementation of a reliable and robust public transportation system. The CARES, CRRSAA, ARP, and the IIJA Acts together placed County Connection in reasonable financial condition as we begin to emerge from the Pandemic. However, the need for an on-going reliable federally funded transit program remains critical to enable County Connection to provide reliable, safe, and effective service to its constituents. Thus, County Connection supports the following:

Priority #1: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Reauthorization

County Connection relies on vital federal funds to support essential programs such as conversion to a Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) fleet, ADA paratransit and lifeline services. A fully funded appropriation of the IIJA is imperative to keep these programs moving forward and functioning. Additionally, the Authority strongly supports the re-authorization of the IIJA to ensure a strong funding platform supporting public transit into the future.

Priority #2: Enact APTA's Recommendations on Mobility & Innovation

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have adopted a set of recommendations for federal enactment to promote and support innovative mobility solutions to increase the ability of all sorts of people to use public transportation throughout their everyday lives. These innovations in mobility must serve to improve and enhance traditional public transportation, not replace it. These innovations should also promote and provide opportunities to prepare the next generation of public transportation workers through work force development programs.

Many areas such as the one County Connection serves need to greatly improve their public transportation options to attack the housing crisis, climate change, equity, and aging population. However, historical growth patterns in these areas make traditional public challenging to provide. Thus, innovative mobility solutions are needed. They will also make established transit in these areas more effective and increase ridership.

Public transit agencies like County Connection are well positioned to deliver these innovative solutions along with their traditional fixed route services in an integrated and coordinated manner, if allowed to and supported by federal policy.

Priority #3: Restore the Federal Highway & Mass Transit Fund

With the Federal Highway and Mass Transit Accounts nearly broke, more and more of the federal transit program is at risk of not being funded. We urge that a permanent fix to this problem be found. Without financial stabilization for these accounts, many County Connection projects will be at risk.

County Connection




2477 Arnold Industrial Way Concord, CA 94520-5326 (925) 676-1976 countyconnection.com

Priority #4: Community Project Funding Request

County Connection is committed to converting the existing fleet of diesel buses to Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV's) in compliance with the California ICT regulation. The Authority currently has a fleet of Battery Electric buses that must rely on the local electric utility to provide energy to charge the vehicles. In order to provide resilient essential electrical power to ensure County Connection can operate during natural disasters the Authority is seeking a community project grant to fund the installation of a Hydrogen Fuel Cell Generator. This will allow the Authority the ability to continue to operate battery electric buses in the event the local utility is incapable of providing power.

OUR BUS SERVICE AT A GLANCE

County Connection provides vital local transit service for communities in Central Contra Costa County.

CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  RIDERSHIP ~2.36 M in 2023  POPULATION 540,000  SERVICE AREA 200 Sq Miles	OUR RIDERSHIP BASED ON 2023 SURVEY DATA		
	BY CATEGORY	COUNTY CONNECTION RIDERS	COUNTY RESIDENTS
	No car	28%	5%
	Minority Population	63%	39%
	Household Income <\$50k/yr	59%	17%
	Ages 19-34	37%	16%

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRIPS

Local Trips: 76%
Regional Trips: 24%
BART Transfers: 35%

San Francisco Bay Area

Contra Costa County

2023 CAPITAL FUNDING

Federal funding accounts for an estimated 73% on an annualized basis.

Local: 27%
Federal: 73%
\$13.6M Annually

PRIORITIES OF THE FEDERAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM



INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

County Connection relies on vital federal funds to support essential programs such as conversion to a Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) fleet, ADA paratransit and lifeline services. A fully funded appropriation of the IIJA is imperative to keep these programs moving forward and functioning. Additionally, the Authority strongly supports the re-authorization of the IIJA to ensure a strong funding platform supporting public transit into the future.



ENACT APTA'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON MOBILITY & INNOVATION

County Connection supports innovative mobility solutions to increase public transportation use. Innovations should prepare the next generation of public transportation employees through workforce development.



RESTORE THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY & MASS TRANSIT FUND

Without a reliable and sustainable trust fund, many transit projects will be at risk.



COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING REQUEST

County Connection is committed to converting the existing fleet of diesel buses to Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV's) in compliance with the California ICT regulation. The current fleet of Battery Electric buses rely on the local electric utility to charge the vehicles. The Authority is seeking a community project grant to fund the installation of a Hydrogen Fuel Cell Generator, allowing for the ability to continue to operate battery electric buses in the event of a natural disaster or when the local utility is incapable of providing power.



(L to R) Boy in Walnut Creek greeting bus operator, passengers aboard route 6 with service between Orinda and Lafayette BART stations, father with kids aboard route 15 to Concord, CA.

COMMITTED TO SERVING OUR COMMUNITY



LOCAL ECONOMY

Many of our riders are essential workers. Without them and an ability to travel to work, our economy suffers.



QUALITY OF LIFE

We give seniors and our disabled community freedom to safely travel throughout the region.



EDUCATION

We offer the only public bus service for Middle and High Schools in Central Contra Costa, as well as provide service to Diablo Valley College and Saint Mary's College. When our area students go to school, we make sure there's an affordable transit option to get there.



SEAMLESS SUPPORT

When our Bay Area transit partners have service interruptions, we provide a bus bridge connection to ensure riders can safely reach their destinations.



REDUCED TRAFFIC CONGESTION

We keep roughly 3K vehicles off the road each day, which helps reduce daily carbon emissions in the region.



Paratransit Operator, Stan Levine with passenger, Tim.

REGIONAL TRANSIT BENEFITS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

PARATRANSIT ONE-SEAT REGIONAL PILOT

Area transit agencies handle cross-regional paratransit logistics, so our customers don't have to.

JOINT CONTRACT FOR PROVISION OF ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES

A partnership with the Livermore-Amador Valley Transit Authority to improve paratransit efficiencies.

FUEL CELL BUSES FOR COMMUTER SERVICE

A partnership with Contra Costa Transportation Authority and Livermore-Amador Valley Transit Authority will provide express service along the congested I-680 commuter corridor.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT MAKES COUNTY CONNECTION STAND OUT!

- Short-Range Transit Plan FY23-28
- Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan
- Operating and Capital Budget FY24
- One Seat Regional Ride promo video
- Title VI Program Report



THANK YOU!

County Connection
Central Contra Costa Transit Authority
2477 Arnold Industrial Way, Concord, CA 94520
925-676-7500 | www.countyconnection.com

County Connection

2024 FEDERAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY ★ CA



Serving Contra Costa County communities of
Clayton - Concord - Danville - Lafayette - Martinez - Moraga
Orinda - Pleasant Hill - San Ramon - Walnut Creek
and Unincorporated communities in Central Contra Costa County