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MTC REPORT



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Speaker Pelosi Joins MTC Commissioners in Washington, D.C.

I was pleased to join a delegation of MTC commissioners and staff in early March for our 28th annual lobbying trip to the nation's capital. We were overjoyed that Speaker Nancy Pelosi attended our Capitol Hill reception, held in her honor. With a change in leadership, Congress seems poised to take action on the key topic of this year's trip — transit security and emergency preparedness.



The trip was well timed — the House had two bills being considered in committee on the topic (HR 1269 and HR 1401), while the Senate also was amending transit security provisions into its larger bill (S. 4) which implements the recommendations of the 9-11 Commission. We met with Senate Banking Committee staff as well as staff for Congresswoman Lofgren who sits on the House Homeland Security Committee, and Representatives Tauscher and McNerney who sit on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The goal of these meetings was to convey MTC's support for a risk-based, multi-year transit security measure.

Transit systems across America were built in a time when concerns about terrorist attacks and other security concerns were not forefront in our minds. Approximately 14 million people nationwide ride public transportation each workday, compared to 1.8 million people who fly on commercial airlines. In the Bay Area, roughly 320,000 people ride the BART system each weekday. Between 2002 and 2005, the

federal government invested \$18.1 billion in aviation security, in comparison to only \$250 million in public transit security. This amounts to less than 1 cent in public transit security per passenger, compared to \$7.38 in aviation security per passenger.

MTC will work with our Washington representatives to ensure that Congress takes action this year to address the nation's transit security needs.

New Leadership and Commissioners in Place at MTC

Thank you Napa County for reappointing me to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and to my fellow commissioners for unanimously electing me to be MTC's new chair. It has been my pleasure to serve on the Commission since 2001, where I have chaired the Administration Committee while also serving on three other standing committees.

At the top of my agenda at MTC is prompt implementation of the infrastructure bond package passed by the state's voters last November. The stakes are high, with nearly \$20 billion in new transportation money in the pipeline statewide (see story on page 2).

Transit efficiency is another interest of mine. The region has to do better to make our two-dozen public transit operators work together for the good of the customer. Toward that end, I plan to take a leadership role in deploying the TransLink® fare smart card regionwide (see story on page 3).

Further on the horizon, I am looking for a new approach to formulating the region's next long-range transportation plan, which is due for adoption in 2009. Rather than being the sole province of MTC, this edition must be more of a partnership effort if we're going to make headway against regional problems such as sprawl and traffic gridlock. Our partners would include the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area Quality Management District, and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague and fellow Commissioner, Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, who was elected as MTC's vice chair. Commissioner Haggerty has served on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors since 1997, and is currently the president of the Board.

In addition to appointing new officers, the Commission welcomed six new members to the new four-year term in February:

- Tom Bates, mayor of Berkeley, who is representing the cities of Alameda County, and replaces Shelia Young;
- Sunnyvale City Councilmember Dean J. Chu, who is representing the cities of Santa Clara County and replaces John McLemore;
- San Jose Vice Mayor Dave Cortese, who is the Association of Bay Area Governments' appointee (and the chair of that agency's executive board) and replaces Pamela Torliatt;
- Federal D. Glover, who has been appointed by his fellow members of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors to replace Mark DeSaulnier, who recently was elected to the California Assembly;
- Orinda City Councilmember Amy Worth, who is representing the cities of Contra Costa County and replaces Irma L. Anderson; and
- Ken Yeager, who has been appointed by fellow members of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to represent Santa Clara County and replaces James T. Beall Jr., who recently was elected to the California Assembly.

Additional information about MTC and our commissioners can be found at www.mtc.ca.gov.



Northern County Mobility Projects Receive Funding in 11th Hour

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) on February 28, 2007, took an important first step to deliver the first commitment of funds from the \$19.9 billion transportation infrastructure bond approved by California voters as Proposition 1B in November 2006. Bay Area officials worked intensely for a fair share of the \$4.5 billion dedicated to the improvement of traffic flow statewide. Napa County's notoriously congested State Route 12 through Jameson Canyon also received \$95.1 million, and last minute changes in the CTC's program brought over \$100 million to projects in Marin County, including improvements to the Novato Narrows and the northbound connector from Interstate 580 to U.S. 101.

The statewide Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) program now includes nearly \$1.3 billion for Bay Area projects, plus an additional commitment of \$405 million through the State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) for replacement of Doyle Drive in San Francisco, the approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. This brings the total amount programmed for Bay Area transportation projects to roughly \$1.7 billion.

The final days before the CTC's vote were tense. Concerted advocacy on all fronts to stress congestion relief as the ultimate objective for these funds resulted in several last minute fund awards for Bay Area projects.

The funds allocated for the Jameson Canyon Road portion of State Route 12 will be used to upgrade the corridor from a two-lane to a four-lane highway and to construct a median barrier. This portion of the corridor provides an important link between the growing commercial development in southern Napa County and population increases in the Fairfield/Suisun Valley area of Solano County.

Other northern county projects included in the final CMIA program include:

- adding HOV lanes to Highway 101 through the Novato Narrows;
- making improvements to the U.S. 101/I-580 interchange in San Rafael; and
- building carpool lanes on Highway 101 in Sonoma County in congested areas from Cotati to Windsor.

Transportation agencies from around the state submitted more than \$11.3 billion in highway projects for consideration, and it was up to the CTC to winnow them down to \$4.5 billion. Construction on all the projects is supposed to begin by 2012.

TransLink® Taking First Steps to Regionwide Rollout

TransLink®, the Bay Area's single reloadable transit smart card, began its official pre-launch on all Golden Gate Transit bus and ferry routes and on all AC Transit and Dumbarton Express buses in November. The number of transit boardings with TransLink has grown from about 800 per day at the beginning of the pre-launch period to more than 2,500 each day in mid February.

The credit card-sized TransLink card stores value in the form of electronic cash and transit passes. To pay a fare, a rider simply "tags" the card by touching it to one of the card readers installed on buses or at the entrance to transit stations or terminals and — in an instant — the card reader automatically deducts the correct fare and applies any appropriate discounts, including transfers.

Golden Gate Transit currently accounts for the majority of these TransLink riders. Since the start of the pre-launch period, Golden Gate Transit has distributed more than 800 TransLink cards to its ferry riders, and more than 500 cards to its bus riders. Golden Gate Transit is actively recruiting more bus riders to participate in the pre-launch, with a goal of reaching at least 1,000 daily bus boardings during the pre-launch period. AC Transit in early February distributed TransLink cards to roughly 1,000 customers.

With TransLink now up and running on these North and East Bay routes, the system will continue rolling out in phases to other transit agencies. Muni, BART and Caltrain are the next three agencies that will activate TransLink throughout their route and station networks. Installation of TransLink equipment on Muni buses will begin soon, and BART already has begun testing integration of TransLink into its fare gates. Caltrain has begun preparing for physical installation of TransLink equipment at each station as well.

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and SamTrans are scheduled to join the TransLink network in 2008, followed by the smaller Bay Area transit operators. Once all agencies are on board, a customer will be able to ride every transit system from San Jose to Santa Rosa with just one card.

TransLink is a joint effort of MTC, AC Transit, BART, Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit, Muni, SamTrans, Santa Clara VTA and all other Bay Area

transit agencies. MTC has funded the system's development through a combination of federal, state and regional funds. The TransLink project has a total start-up and maintenance budget of nearly \$150 million, which covers an implementation period lasting about nine years and a maintenance period through 2014.

Expenditures to date total approximately \$45 million.

Anyone who wants to participate in the pre-launch can get a card through the TransLink Customer Service Center by visiting 511.org and clicking on the "TransLink" button, or by going to translink.org.



Customers also can reach the Customer Service Center by phone. Just call 511 and ask for “TransLink” at the first prompt.

Climate Change Concerns Bring Regional Agencies Together

We had a packed house for two climate change workshops sponsored by the Joint Policy Committee (JPC) in February. Numerous local elected officials and interested members of the public attended the event, including several MTC commissioners. The JPC is now developing a set of initiatives that the Bay Area, acting collectively as a region and through its regional agencies, can undertake to deal with the issues of global warming.

Established by state law in 2004, the JPC coordinates the regional planning efforts of MTC, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District). The climate change workshops were sponsored by the JPC and its member agencies and, in recognition of the threat of rising sea levels, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

At the workshops, the public brainstormed on possible partnerships between the regional agencies and cities or community groups that might help the region move forward with climate protection. There was also discussion about what type of leadership role the regional agencies should take, and suggestions for which near-term actions should be prioritized and implemented in the next one to three years.

To view the JPC’s climate change presentation, and to offer your public comment, visit www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy/jpc_climate_change.htm.

The JPC meets bi-monthly in the auditorium at the Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter (MTC’s headquarters) at 101 Eighth Street, Oakland. Agenda packages are posted on line one week in advance of the scheduled meeting. JPC meetings are open to the public, and are webcast in streaming audio at www.abag.ca.gov.

MTC Now Seeking Advisors

MTC is currently seeking advisory committee applicants for the 2007–2009 term. Residents of Napa County, as well as Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma counties, are encouraged to apply.

MTC fosters ongoing community participation and guidance through three advisory committees: the MTC Advisory Council, the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee and the Minority Citizens Advisory Committee. Each committee makes recommendations on a range of transportation issues and projects — from the regional transportation plan to state and federal legislation to general planning principles for the Bay Area. Appointed for two-year terms, advisory committee members attend monthly meetings during regular business hours and may receive a stipend.

We welcome applicants from the Bay Area’s diverse populations willing to express their opinions and to develop and implement work plans addressing transportation policies and regional funding priorities. In most cases, no specific education or professional experience is required, just a strong interest in transportation and its effect on the Bay Area.

Applications are due by April 13, 2007. My fellow MTC commissioners and I will review all applications, and may conduct interviews with potential members before making the final appointments to the advisory committees. Current advisors’ terms end in July 2007, and the new advisors will begin in September 2007.

For more information and to apply, please visit www.mtc.ca.gov/get_involved/advisory/index.htm or contact MTC’s Public Information Office at 510.817.5757 or info@mtc.ca.gov.

