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REPORT

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Measure 2 Funding To Improve Bus Facilities in Solano County

MTC in mid September approved a \$1 million allocation of voter-approved Regional Measure 2 bridge toll money to help finance a planned 600-space parking garage at the Fairfield Transportation Center near the Interstate 80/West Texas Street interchange. The new structure will supplement the transit center's existing 400-space parking facility.

Funds will go to the Solano Transportation Authority to finance environmental and preliminary engineering elements of the estimated \$12.45 million Fairfield project.

More parking is needed to enhance transit usage from the Fairfield center. Fairfield-Suisun Transit and Vallejo Transit have successful express bus operations linking the Fairfield Transportation Center with the Vallejo Ferry Terminal and the El Cerrito del Norte and Pleasant Hill BART stations.

But both operators have been reluctant to increase service because there is not enough parking. This project will accommodate new commuters, and allow the transit operators to expand service.

Planned amenities at the new parking facility include additional bike lockers, ridesharing areas, and electronic displays with real-time bus arrival and departure information, as well as shop space for small retailers.

MTC made its first allocation of Regional Measure 2 funds for Solano County express bus facilities in July when the Commission committed \$415,000 to finance environmental studies for the planned Vacaville Intermodal Station. The Measure 2 expenditure plan includes a total of \$20 million for four express bus facilities in Solano County. In addition to the Fairfield Transportation Center and the Vacaville Intermodal Station, these include a park-and-ride facility on Curtola Parkway in Vallejo and an intermodal facility in Benicia.



MTC Grant Paves Way For Fairfield Multi-modal Station Area Planning

MTC this summer adopted a new transit-oriented development (TOD) policy under which regional funding for several planned Bay Area transit expansion projects — including a planned multi-modal transit station in Fairfield — will be tied to planning for new housing and employment within a half-mile of stations along the extension corridors. Under this policy, the Commission inaugurated a Station Area Planning Program to help local governments plan for the “transit villages” where jobs and housing are clustered next to transit stations. One of the eight grants awarded in the program’s pilot cycle is \$250,000 for the Fairfield station along Amtrak’s Capitol Corridor.

MTC is supporting station area planning to boost ridership on future rail extensions and bus rapid transit lines. By encouraging dense, mixed-use development around new stations, the region can get a better return on the investment in transit approved by the Commission under Resolution 3434 in 2001. The grants will help local residents and businesses explore ways to transform under-utilized parking lots and undeveloped parcels within a half-mile of transit stations into vibrant neighborhoods where people can get around on foot, bike or public transit.

MTC received 17 applications for station area planning grants, totaling \$5.6 million in requests. After extensive review, eight projects were unanimously selected for recommendation for funding through the \$2.8 million pilot cycle’s budget. Other grants were awarded for planning efforts in the neighborhoods around the Santa Clara Caltrain/ACE/Amtrak station, planning around stations slated for the BART corridor in Pleasanton and the e-BART corridor in eastern Contra Costa County, the proposed SMART commuter rail station in downtown Santa Rosa, a bus rapid transit station in downtown San Leandro, an Alameda Point ferry terminal in Alameda, and a Menlo Park station for Dumbarton commuter rail.

Rebounding Economy Prompts Rise in Freeway Congestion

Brake lights could be the proof that the Bay Area economy has begun to bounce back from the high-tech meltdown of recent years. Traffic congestion on Bay Area freeways increased last year for the first time since 2000, according to the latest congestion-monitoring data released in September by MTC and Caltrans District 4. The daily number of vehicle hours of delay due to congestion in the nine-county region rose by 4 percent in 2004, after dropping 18 percent in 2003, 5 percent in 2002 and 12 percent in 2001. Among the “Top 10” list of Bay Area congestion hot spots, the morning commute along west-bound Interstate 80 from Hercules to the Bay Bridge retained its longtime hold on the top spot in 2004 with an average 10,080 daily vehicle hours of delay.

The congestion statistics are part of the *Bay Area Transportation: State of the System 2005* project spearheaded by MTC and Caltrans. This annual initiative tracks the performance of the region’s transportation system and the condition of its facilities.

The increase in congestion largely reflects a general uptick in the Bay Area economy in 2004. A brighter employment picture put more workers onto Bay Area freeways last year. This same trend may be borne out by the 2005 congestion statistics, which are expected to be available early next year.



The overall increase in Bay Area traffic congestion was accompanied by a fresh shakeup in the annual list of the Bay Area's top 10 traffic hot spots. While the morning approach to the Bay Bridge on Interstate 80 remained the region's most notorious congestion location in 2004 — with daily vehicle hours of delay up a whopping 53 percent from 6,570 hours in 2003 — one commute returned to the top 10 list after a lengthy absence and three moved into the top 10 for the first time. The afternoon commute along eastbound State Route 92 from Clawiter Road to Interstate 880 in Hayward climbed to number 6 on the list from number 15 in 2003, marking this segment's first appearance on the top 10 list since the height of the high-tech boom in 2000. Newcomers to the list for 2004 include the afternoon drive from Mill Valley to San Rafael on U.S. 101 (number 8), the morning drive along northbound U.S. 101 in San Jose from Interstate 280 to Trimble Road (number 9) and the afternoon Bay Bridge commute on eastbound Interstate 80 from west of the Yerba Buena Island tunnel out past the Powell Street exit in Emeryville (number 10).

“Due to the fact that the congestion decline is reversing in the Bay Area, we need to manage our regional system more efficiently through intelligent transportation system (ITS) strategies,” said MTC

Bay Area Top 10

Freeway Locations with Most Delay During Commute Hours, 2004

Rank	Location	2004 Daily (Weekday) Vehicle Hours of Delay
1	Interstate 80, westbound, a.m. Alameda/Contra Costa County State Route 4 to Bay Bridge metering lights	10,080
2	Interstate 580, westbound, a.m. Alameda County North Flynn Road to Airway Boulevard	5,120
3	Interstate 580, eastbound, p.m. Alameda County Hopyard Road to west of El Charro Road	4,320
4	Interstate 80, eastbound and U.S. 101, northbound, p.m. — San Francisco Cesar Chavez Street to west end of Bay Bridge	3,840
5	Route 92, eastbound, p.m. Alameda County Clawiter Road to I-880 interchange	3,760
6	Route 4, westbound, a.m. Contra Costa County Lone Tree Way to west of Loveridge Road	3,600
7	U.S. 101, southbound, a.m. Marin County North of Route 37 to Interstate 580	3,110
8	U.S. 101, northbound, p.m. Marin County Route 1 to north of Interstate 580	2,680
9	U.S. 101, northbound, a.m. Santa Clara County Interstate 280 to north of Trimble Road	2,560
10	Interstate 80, eastbound, p.m. San Francisco and Alameda counties West of Treasure Island to east of Powell Street	2,430

Source: Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans District 4 Rankings are for routes in which continuous stop-and-go conditions occur with few, if any, breaks in the queue. Thus, corridors that have equally severe delays, but where congestion is broken into several segments, may rank lower in this type of congestion listing.

Commissioner and Caltrans District 4 Director Bijan Sartipi. ITS improvements include ramp metering, changeable message signs with accurate travel times, FasTrak™, carpooling and transit interconnectivity, as well as mechanisms such as the 511 traveler information system that help the public make informed travel decisions.

Regionwide, the congestion data show that vehicles typically spent 126,570 hours per weekday in congested conditions (defined as average speeds below 35 miles per hour for 15 minutes or longer) on Bay Area freeways in 2004. While this marks a 4 percent increase over 2003 figures, it is far below the 177,600 hours per day

recorded in 2000 at the height of the region's technology-charged economic boom.

As in previous years, gridlock was spread throughout much of the Bay Area in 2004. The biggest overall increase in freeway congestion occurred in Alameda County, where daily vehicle hours of delay grew by over 4,000 to 50,540. The biggest percentage increase came in San Mateo County, where daily vehicle hours of delay jumped by nearly a third to 9,550 in 2004 from 7,300 the year before. Marin County showed a 20 percent surge in congestion in 2004, and smaller percentage increases were registered in Alameda, Sonoma and Solano counties — in Solano congestion was up 9 percent from the 2003. Overall congestion

declined by 15 percent on San Francisco freeways, and smaller dips were recorded in Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties.

Funding to improve transportation infrastructure and manage congestion is coming from a variety of sources. The governor has rededicated Proposition 42 monies, Bay Area voters approved seven different measures last year, and the new federal transportation program delivers funds to address congestion in several key corridors. It all adds up to billions of additional dollars to help us deliver projects to meet the area's economic needs.

Bay Area Hosts World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems

The Bay Area will have an opportunity to demonstrate innovative transportation technologies to an international audience this fall when the 12th annual World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), co-sponsored by MTC, comes to San Francisco Nov. 6–10, 2005.

The theme “Enabling Choices in Transportation” communicates the emphasis on the end-user in transportation. In addition to many events for industry professionals, this conference will include events and activities focused on the public and elected officials, and will provide firsthand experiences of the benefits of ITS-enabled services and systems.

In partnership with Caltrans, MTC and the University of California at Berkeley, the conference will feature an Innovative Mobility Showcase (IMS) centered at SBC Park. At the IMS, visitors may take a ride in a vehicle equipped with real-time congestion mapping or on a hydrogen-powered bus as they travel through “intelligent” intersections.

The IMS will also show how vehicles can be used as probes for information on actual travel conditions, such as temperature, traffic conditions and roadway hazards.

The ITS World Congress also will highlight the first phase of the Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII) program, a partnership between industry and federal and state governments to develop in-vehicle equipment and roadside infrastructure that can relay information such as traffic conditions and roadway hazards between automobiles and transportation information systems such as the Bay Area's *511.org*.

ITS America and the San Francisco Organizing Committee, working with MTC and international partners, are building a dynamic schedule of events, including daily plenary sessions, hundreds of technical and scientific sessions, technology demonstrations, pre-and post-conference activities, and an exhibit hall featuring the latest products and services. More information is available at www.itsworldcongress.org.

To encourage broad participation by public sector staff and policymakers responsible for the delivery of transportation services in California, the World Congress Organizing Committee has arranged a significant discount for government sector attendees. Employees of public agencies within California are eligible to receive a discounted registration of \$500. This is nearly a 60 percent discount off the full registration rate of \$1,200 per person! Each registration will allow access to all World Congress sessions, the Innovative Mobility Showcase and exhibit hall.

