

A Community Vision for a New Transportation Sales Tax

Prepared by a growing coalition of environmental, labor, transportation, housing, social justice, faith, civic, and other public interest groups representing Contra Costa voters.

[January 6, 2016]

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is expected to seek voter approval for a new ½ cent transportation sales tax in 2016. If approved, this measure could raise more than \$2 billion dollars over 30 years. Experience shows that a plan will only pass if it is developed with an extensive public process that draws the nearly full and unanimous support of the community.

A revised draft Countywide Transportation Plan and revised draft Environmental Impact Report have yet to be completed. Decision-makers, residents, and organizations need to see these documents to appropriately plan for future transportation investments. Without this planning, the process to achieve consensus on a variety of vision and policy goals will be considerably more difficult.

We see the following as the major planning issues facing Contra Costa County:

- Ever-increasing traffic, the direct result of land use decisions and induced demand.
- A pressing demand for new homes and jobs within our cities and towns where residents and employees of all incomes have access to safe and convenient transit, walking, and biking networks, reducing single-occupant driving and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The need to dramatically increase funding for transit and enhance the existing transit system for peak performance.
- Growing threats to our natural and agricultural lands, requiring stronger protections and investments.
- An economic imperative to create quality jobs closer to home.

Much has changed since Contra Costa County last passed a transportation measure. When past funding measures were approved in 1998 and 2004, Contra Costa County did not face state mandated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The intersection between land use, transportation, conservation, social equity, health, and economic prosperity was less well understood. Voters today expect more than business as usual or incremental change. Any funding measure must be transformational. We must prioritize plans and investments that change the current dynamic and stay accountable to the public.

To achieve a transformative plan, we share the following vision:

Vision for Contra Costa County:

Any new investments in Contra Costa County's transportation system should be transformational, advancing the County's ongoing transition to a place where all residents have a variety of transportation choices to meet their daily needs. New funds should provide an alternative to traffic congestion, protect the climate, and improve mobility by creating a more balanced, multimodal system that supports transit, walking, and biking as primary modes of transportation. These investments should promote equitable, sustainable development that is well served by transit, create quality local jobs, and protect the agricultural and natural lands that make our region so special.

Incentivizing Sustainable, Equitable Development: Contra Costa should incentivize infill development for people of all incomes near transit - with a priority for affordable housing - and protect existing residents from displacement. Affordable housing near transit is widely known as a highly effective climate protection strategy, promotes increased transit ridership and should be additionally incentivized in all communities. Sales tax revenue and related grant programs that provide funding for cities to build Transit Oriented Development (TOD) must be conditioned on a demonstrated track record of building affordable housing, having locally appropriate anti-displacement policies in place and planning for affordable housing within the specific TOD development. All transportation investments should be made based on strong performance standards to achieve livable, walkable, and affordable communities. These thriving communities will also attract quality jobs located closer to Contra Costa residents.

Local and Regional Transit: Contra Costa should connect people with a transit system that is well maintained, achieves 15-minute headway or better, closes gaps in bus service, manages mobility, and ensures affordable, accessible, and efficient service for all passengers. Investments should be made to increase public transit ridership and provide service at levels that working people and their families can rely upon for daily transportation needs.

Growth management: Contra Costa should lead the region with a bold growth management program that enhances our Urban Limit Lines and protects and invests in our natural and agricultural lands. Policies and programs, such as the Growth Management Program, must be treated as seriously as large infrastructure projects; in the long run they can meet our collective goals far more cheaply.

Global Warming Solutions: Contra Costa should take leadership to exceed the State of California's mandated reductions for vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). To do so, it should prioritize maintenance of the existing transportation system, including BART; create healthy, sustainable, walkable transit-oriented communities for all; and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles.

Good Local Jobs: The jobs that infrastructure projects and operations investments create should strengthen the local economy and improve the living standards for those who build, maintain and operate the system and provide opportunities for family-supporting jobs and career-enhancing skills for the working people and children of the entire county.

Complete Streets: Contra Costa's roads should provide choices for all people, ensuring that all communities have complete streets that reduce congestion by giving families and commuters safe and attractive options for all modes of transportation.

Regional Trail Network: Contra Costa should expand on its very popular walking and biking trails to create a fully connected, regional trail system that integrates transit centers and downtowns, neighborhoods, and the county's great open space network.

Accountability and Public Benefits: The projects funded by the revenues of this sales tax should be developed with the input of the communities the project is designed to serve, contain provisions for accountability and transparency to public institutions, including recapture provisions if public goals aren't being met, and ensure that any unexpected additional sales tax revenues will benefit the public through investment in voter-approved programs funded by this tax measure.

Endorsements List:

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Bob Allen, Urban Habitat

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Transformative Policies for a New Transportation Sales Tax

[January 6, 2016]

Incentivizing Sustainable and Equitable Development:

- 1. Establish a new competitive fund, similar to the OneBayArea Grant (OBAG) Program** to reward jurisdictions that have a strong track record of affordable housing development and have adopted policies that encourage sustainable, equitable development with safe and convenient walkable access to transit. Funding should be directed to locally-nominated Priority Development Areas and be dedicated to transportation projects that help catalyze sustainable, equitable development. Distribute funds from this program using a formula similar to the OBAG county funding distribution formula.
- 2. All jurisdictions must maintain a state-approved Housing Element**, file a Housing Element Annual Progress Report (APR) with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and hold an annual public informational hearing at the time of filing to receive transportation funds.
- 3. New transit projects must demonstrate existing or planned transit-supportive housing densities** within a half-mile of station areas, consistent with MTC's Resolution 3434 of 2005.¹
- 4. Establish a program to address anti-displacement** that provides funding for protections of existing residents and new affordable housing near transit stations.
- 5. Allocate Return to Source funds to local jurisdictions using the same distribution formula that MTC uses to allocate OBAG funds to counties**—based on population, past housing production, and future housing needs (RHNA) with weighting for affordable housing. Give priority to jurisdictions with particularly strong track records of affordable housing production.

Local and Regional Transit:

- 1. Develop and fund a coordinated, countywide, accessible transportation and smart mobility management system to improve efficiency and options for riders** of all abilities with the goal of increasing access to jobs, medical care, services, and more. Automobiles and fixed route services have enjoyed substantial investment, attention, funding and development for decades, this effort would start to bring accessible services up to that standard.
- 2. Create affordable and accessible transit options**, such as extending West County's student bus pass program throughout Contra Costa County.
- 3. Invest in fix-it-first strategies and facilities** to ensure a well-maintained and fully operational regional transit system that expands on opportunities for high quality service and maintenance jobs.

¹ http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/rtep/pdf/April_Commission_3434.pdf#page=14

4. Ensure that Contra Costa closes gaps in bus service so that working people across the county can access jobs, housing, and services, such as extending bus service from West County to Martinez.

5. Provide funding to achieve 15-minute headway frequencies and adequate hours of operation on key routes and within PDAs.

6. Invest in walkable transit connections—sidewalks, paths, and other pedestrian facilities—to close gaps in the pedestrian infrastructure and make it easy and quick to access transit.

Growth Management:

1. Enhance our Urban Limit Lines (ULLs): To prevent sprawl development, we must eliminate the loophole in Contra Costa County’s Urban Limit Lines that allows 30-acre expansions without a public vote. And we must refine our existing ULL policies by defining key terms such as “urban” and “rural,” clarifying which services must comply with our urban limit lines (water, sewer, etc.), and preventing subdivisions outside the lines.

2. Prohibit sprawl-inducing projects: These include, among others, the James Donlon Extension, Camino Tassajara Expansion, and Highway 239 alignments. Projects that are listed as poor performers in MTC’s Regional Transportation Plan as well as those identified by CCTA’s forthcoming performance-based project assessment will not be eligible for sales tax revenue or bond funding.

3. Ensure agricultural protections: All jurisdictions with agricultural land within their planning area, including rangelands, must adopt an Agricultural Protection Ordinance, which mitigates for the conversion and cumulative impacts on those lands, to receive return to source funding.

- a) This mitigation can overlap with other mitigation such as endangered species mitigation but must be at least 1:1.
- b) Funds may be used for ongoing management of mitigation areas.

4. Establish new Growth Management Program standards: To reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and impacts on wildlife habitats and agricultural lands, while increasing carbon sequestration, all jurisdictions must have the following policies in place to receive return to source funding:

- a) Hillside development ordinance
- b) Ridgeline protection ordinance
- c) Open space system with major ridgelines defined
- d) Protection of wildlife corridors
- e) Plan to conserve buffers around open space and agriculture
- f) Prohibitions on culverting blueline creeks for anything more than road crossings in the shortest length possible
- g) No development of major subdivisions, urban development, or urban services allowed in non-urban Priority Conservation Areas

Global Warming Solutions:

1. The TEP shall meet or exceed the following two greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets:

- a) By 2020, a reduction in GHG emissions per capita of 7%

- b) By 2035, a reduction in GHG emissions per capita of 15%.²

2. Reduce GHGs by supporting Priority Development Areas (PDAs) with enhanced transit:

Incentivize housing at all income levels within the PDAs and provide high levels of transit service to make sustainable transportation choices available for residents across the income spectrum.

Augment these investments by fostering the diffusion of electric, rather than fossil fuel, vehicles.

3. Mitigation of GHG pollution: The TEP will prioritize projects and programs that reduce VMT and GHGs. If transportation projects or programs increase greenhouse gas emissions, they must fully mitigate those emissions by protecting carbon-sequestering natural or agricultural lands. Mitigation strategies must also address localized air pollution impacts, particularly for low-income communities and other vulnerable populations, including children and seniors.

Environmental Mitigation:

1. The TEP shall dedicate a significant amount of funding to an Advanced Mitigation Program to enhance the effectiveness of transportation-related environmental mitigation activities. This program will bundle and strategically deploy mitigation funds to proactively conserve important natural and agricultural lands and leverage other conservation investments.

- a) Funds may be used for ongoing management of mitigation areas.
- b) Funding levels shall be based on the maximum number of qualifying TEP projects for environmental mitigation.

Good Local Jobs:

1. Projects and programs funded by the TEP must meet wage and benefit standards that ensure local family-supporting jobs. Major transportation projects must include Project Labor Agreements.

2. Create and monitor employment performance criteria, including the following:

- a) Local hire programs
- b) Apprenticeship programs approved by state
- c) Helmets to Hardhats Veteran hiring programs
- d) Annual monitoring:
 - i. Demographic information such as race and ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, income range, zip code or census tract, resident of an area of concentrated poverty, veteran status, criminal justice history
 - ii. Number of positions (direct, indirect)
 - iii. Job type (full-time, part-time, permanent, short-term, contract or civil service, newly created or continuation of existing jobs)
 - iv. Training opportunities and occupational ladder

Complete Streets:

1. Create a distinct Complete Streets Program category:

² http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/final_targets.pdf; <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/sb375.htm>

The goal of this program is to make major streets efficient and safe for all anticipated users, and thereby maximize investments to move more people along currently congested streets and in the process give commuters more transportation choices.

- a) This program is separate from the trails category that functions to fill gaps in the bikeway network. It is also separate from other transit operations and local streets and roads repaving funding.
- b) The program will fund, among other things, projects to restripe roadways for all users and major repaving projects that create multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

2. Eligible Complete Streets Program projects include:

- a) Road diets for improved safety and increased access for all users
- b) New protected bikeways on major streets
- c) Pedestrian and children safety improvements
- d) Transit operation improvements and associated facility improvements
- e) Smart parking management
- f) ADA access and projects to relieve paratransit demands
- g) As part of the above, truck loading, signal upgrades and repaving
- h) Any other project designed to give commuters attractive options to leave their car at home and find a better way
- i) Ongoing maintenance of Complete Streets projects

Regional Trail Network:

1. Dedicate funding for the regional trail network, including paved trail gap closure projects, countywide crossing-safety improvements, grade-separated crossings, and maintenance funds for existing and future paved trail facilities.

2. The highest priority trails for funding are:

- a) San Francisco Bay Trail
- b) Iron Horse Trail
- c) Contra Costa Canal Trail
- d) Delta De Anza Trail
- e) Marsh Creek Trail, including the newly proposed section between Round Valley Regional Preserve and Clayton
- f) Great California Delta Trail
- g) Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail
- h) Richmond Greenway

3. Conforming to current Measure J requirements, dedicate one-third of regional trail funding to the East Bay Regional Park District. Allocate the remaining two-thirds competitively among the four sub-regions.

Accountability and Public Benefits:

1. Ensure that all funds are delivered in a timely fashion as approved by voters to benefit Contra Costa County.

2. Provide annual reviews of all project and program performance to ensure that voters know how and where their tax dollars are being spent.

3. An Independent Advisory Committee should review all CCTA tax measures and provide periodic progress reports to the public. The advisory committee should include a range of non-profit organizations and other stakeholders.

4. Ensure contract accountability with the following:

- a) Increased citizen input in the subsidy award process
- b) Inclusion of job, environmental, and social equity standards
- c) Clawback or recapture provisions if commitments not met