

ACCESS NOW!

**A GUIDE TO WINNING THE TRANSPORTATION
YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS**



TRANSPORTATION
AND
LAND USE
COALITION

The Transportation and Land Use Coalition is a partnership of over 90 groups working for a sustainable and socially just Bay Area. We envision a region with healthy, walkable communities that provide all residents with transportation choices and affordable housing. The coalition analyzes county and regional policies, works with community groups to develop alternatives, and coordinates grassroots campaigns.

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Transportation Equity and Community Health

Access Now! is part of TALC’s “Transportation Equity and Community Health” (TEACH) project. The project’s goal is to ensure that low-income and people-of-color communities have a strong voice in transportation decisions, so that investments support better access, equity, and community health. As part of TEACH, TALC offers:

- **Free** copies of this guide in English and Spanish.
- **Training** on how to win transportation improvements.
- **Technical Assistance** to help groups prepare effective campaigns.
- **Website with additional tools:** www.transcoalition.org/access.
- **For non-English speakers**, Training and Technical Assistance in Spanish and translation for Training in other languages.

For details see p.78. Request these services with the order form at the back.

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THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

The Community Foundation of the Bay Area



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Winning Transportation Justice for Your Community

Jobs out of reach, missed health appointments, students unable to get to night classes. These problems all have a common cause: transportation barriers. Often these are the result of decades of transportation and growth decisions that failed to adequately involve the people with the greatest needs. In study after study – whether trying to assess why low-income parents cannot reach childcare or get to job interviews – inadequate transportation is identified as one of the top obstacles to self-sufficiency and a better life.

In the Bay Area, hundreds of thousands of people live in households without a car, and over a million more share one car among several adults. For these families, public transit, walking and bicycling are critical lifelines. For Lorraine Navarro in San Jose,

transit cuts, fare hikes, and unsafe streets threaten her ability to keep her job, limit her social life, take away money she needs for her education, and increase her chance of injury or death while walking (see opposite page).

“If we always do what we’ve always done, we will always get what we’ve always gotten.”

–*Rev. Andre Shumake, Pastor North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church and member of TALC Board of Directors*

The roots of inadequate transportation lie in the decisions made without a strong voice from low-income communities and communities of

color.

But it doesn’t have to be this way.

Communities Making Change

Throughout the Bay Area and across the country, low-income communities and communities of color are organizing and getting educated to demand the transportation they need. This growing movement is demanding an

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Lorraine Navarro

Lorraine is a student at San Jose City College. Active in La Raza Student Alliance and as a volunteer helping recent immigrants understand their civil rights, she also holds down a full-time job at the Oak Ridge Mall.

Only 23 years old, Lorraine is a 15-year veteran of San Jose's buses. She finds herself taking the bus even for short trips because she has had several near misses with cars while walking across San Jose's wide streets.



But in the last three years, the Valley Transportation Authority has repeatedly raised fares and cut service. At the same time, the agency is spending over \$170 million just for studies of extending BART to San Jose.

These cuts mean Lorraine can't take the bus home from work. She has to constantly improvise on getting to work in order to keep her job. Fare hikes mean she will soon be spending more than \$700 per year for worse transit service.

Shandra Moore

When her job at a local video game store couldn't offer enough hours to pay the rent, Shandra Moore knew she needed a better job.¹ But jobs are scarce in North Richmond, where unemployment is three times the Bay Area average.

The community is working hard for change: the new Career Center has computers and phones where residents can apply for jobs.

But until recently, buses stopped at 7 p.m. Many residents couldn't hold jobs because of



chronic transportation problems.

The community rose up and demanded a change. North Richmond Neighborhood House, which runs the Career Center, led the effort. Now, buses run more often and later at night, and a new express bus links residents to jobs in Marin County.

With these transit improvements, Shandra got a stable job selling paint at a large store in San Rafael.

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1. Not her real name.

...continued from page 2

equal share of the benefits of the transportation system, asserting a strong role in the decision-making process, and getting organized at the local, regional, and national levels.

This is the growing movement for transportation justice.

In North Richmond, community advocates have succeeded in expanding the frequency and hours of bus service. This allowed Shandra Moore (see p.3) to get – and keep – a better job. But every year, Shandra’s bus route has been vulnerable to the budget ax. Only continuing community support has kept the line running.

So the community fought for long-term change: they won inclusion of the route in Regional Measure 2, a 2004 ballot measure that permanently funds Shandra’s

...continued from p.3

Longer hours, a key community demand, make all the difference. Her shift sometimes starts at 7 a.m. or ends at 11:30 p.m. “I couldn’t keep this job, or even have gone to the interview, without the #42 and the #376,” Shandra says of the lines the community fought for.

route and many others through an additional \$1 toll on Bay Area bridges. And because the package supported its needs, the community became part of a strong regional coalition that helped win passage of the measure by 56% of the voters.

Unfortunately, these success stories are still the exception.

Transportation Injustice

Many people-of-color and low-income families live in communities where they are shut off from opportunities, and the situation is getting worse. In the recent recession, bus routes have been slashed and fares have skyrocketed.



When transit budgets get tight, the first services to go are often night and weekend services. Buses may not be full then, but they are a critical lifeline for everyone on them.

Transportation and city planning agencies have also done too little to make the streets safe. When they pay more attention to moving cars than to providing safe places to walk or bicycle, the cost is people's lives. Low-income residents, African-Americans, and Latinos walk more than whites and higher-income residents, so they are more likely to be hit by a car and killed or hospitalized.²

At the same time, low-income and people-of-color communities are more likely to be home to heavily used freeways. Proximity to these roads has been shown to cause higher rates of cancer and other health problems.³

In sum, low-income communities and communities of color are more likely to bear the burden and less likely to benefit from the transportation system as a whole.

Access Now!

How can we get many more communities actively involved? How can we win a better life for families and communities across the Bay Area? How can we make success stories like Shandra's the rule, not the exception?

These are the questions that motivated the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) to write this guide and to offer training and technical assistance to communities across the Bay Area.



The *Access Now!* guide and tools are designed to help low-income communities of color get more involved in transportation decisions. Strategic, focused involvement

can flex untapped political power and help transportation agencies to understand what these communities really need.

This guide can help you win local improvements and show you how to join others working at the county and regional level to ensure all of our communities have access, now.

2. According to studies based on data from California Department of Health Services and others cited in TALC's *Roadblocks to Health*, Chapter 5.

3. "L.A.'s toxic freeways," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 2003.

Who Should Use this Guide?

Are you a member or leader of a community group in the Bay Area?

Do you have constituents who face transportation problems, but you're not sure where to start to win improvements?

If so, this guide is for you.

Complex decision-making processes, dozens of agencies, and long timelines: all these obstacles make it hard to know how to influence transportation decisions.

But this guide, combined with other *Access Now!* tools (p.7), can help you overcome these obstacles. You *can* hold your elected officials and agencies accountable for meeting your community's transportation needs.



How to Use this Guide

Chapter 2, “Overcoming Roadblocks,” offers a general overview of transportation justice issues. It outlines some of the reasons the transportation system fails low-income communities and communities of color. It also proposes four ways to overcome these roadblocks. Start here for an introduction to transportation justice.

Chapter 3, “Getting What You Want,” looks at 19 of the most requested transportation improvements mentioned in TALC’s surveys of community leaders. Each entry describes the desired change, potential obstacles to winning it, which agency to start with and what to ask. If you know what you want, but you’re not sure how to get it, start here.

Chapter 3 also tells you how to figure out if there are special funding programs to support the change you want and how to lobby for more money.

Chapter 4, “Transportation Decision Makers,” describes each agency that makes transportation decisions, what the agency does, and who makes the decisions. It also describes key opportunities to win changes: look for the **Take Action** symbol for ways to make a difference. If you know which agency you’re trying to influence and you need to learn more about them, start here.

For more help, Chapter 4 also lists community and advocacy groups that have experience influencing these agencies. You can ask them for advice or help to win the changes you need.

Other Access Now! Tools

Learn more by using other tools developed by TALC.

Training and Technical Assistance

Training and technical assistance are available to leaders in the Bay Area’s low-income and people-of-color communities. See the “Key Contacts” appendix (p.78) for details.

Instant Advocate

The online “Instant Advocate Toolkit” has a wealth of well-organized information. Tools include case studies, model ordinances, cost and impact estimates, implementation techniques, and contact information. The IA Toolkit is online at www.transcoalition.org/ia. In this guide, look for the IA symbol **IA** to show when you might want to refer to the toolkit.

Useful Resources

Key Contacts, Online Resources, Useful Publications, and an Acronym Decoder are included as appendices at the end of this guide.

The *Access Now!* website also includes a Glossary and extended versions of the appendices: www.transcoalition.org/access.



Overcoming Roadblocks to Transportation Justice

Winning transportation justice will not be easy. This chapter starts by explaining four roadblocks to transportation justice:

- Excessive focus on congestion relief
- Restrictions on existing money
- Flashy projects grab the new \$\$
- Complexity deters community participation

Later in this chapter (p.11) you will find four ways in which community groups are breaking down these roadblocks. For references to in-depth discussions of these issues, see the Useful Publications appendix (p.83).

Excessive Focus on Congestion Relief

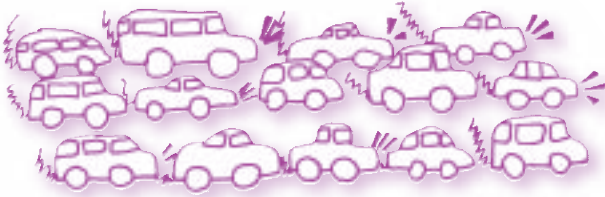
When elected officials and transportation agencies talk about a transportation crisis, they often mean increased traffic congestion

on freeways. It is no accident that the county transportation agencies are called “Congestion Management Agencies.”

The big-ticket solutions that agencies propose – widening freeways, extending suburban commuter trains, even express buses – aim at relieving the burden of congestion for people commuting long distances from suburban homes to work. These long-distance commuters are more likely than the population as a whole to be white and have higher incomes.

But only one in four trips in the Bay Area are from home to work.⁴ Most trips are for shopping, child care, school, and other everyday necessities. These trips tend to be shorter and are more likely to occur on evenings and weekends, outside the peak commuting hours.

People’s increasing inability to make these trips needs to be understood as a transportation crisis on a par with the problems of commuters stuck in traffic.



4. MTC, *2000 Base Year Validation of Travel Demand Models*, May 2004.

Restrictions on Existing Money

This excessive focus on congestion relief is made worse by restrictions on transportation money. Many of the largest funding sources can only be used for “capital” expenses, usually new highway or train projects. (See “Funding Jargon 101” below for definitions of capital, maintenance, and operations.) These constraints are especially true of funding from state and federal agencies.

Yet for low-income and people-of-color communities, operations and maintenance are often the most pressing needs: running

bus service more frequently or for longer hours, fixing potholes, or repairing broken sidewalks.

Because of these constraints, it is crucial for community groups to seize opportunities to define how new sources of money will be spent (see “Focus on New Money,” p.11). It is also critical to hold agencies accountable when they propose new projects. Groups can demand that agencies do not spend money building new projects until there is long-term funding available to operate and maintain them.

Flashy Projects Grab the New \$\$

Unfortunately, when politicians set priorities for transportation money, too often they choose flashy new projects instead of the most cost-effective ones (“cost effectiveness” is the benefit gained for each dollar of investment).

At the same time, agencies often overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs of these megaprojects, and do not have enough money to run the projects once they are built. Two prime examples are the recently completed BART extension to San Francisco International Airport (SFO, see sidebar p.10) and the proposed extension of BART to San Jose (p.45).

Funding Jargon 101

Capital projects: building a new road, train track, or sidewalk; or buying transit vehicles or some other tangible item with a long usable life.

Maintenance: patching potholes, maintaining buses and tracks, and keeping the system in good shape so it doesn’t require more expensive repairs down the line.

Operations: buying fuel, paying bus drivers and other expenses that keep the system running every day.

This problem hurts low-income and people-of-color communities in two ways. First, these glamorous projects often use money that could have been used for projects that would provide more transportation to more people. Second, when there isn't enough money to operate

and maintain the new service, agencies have to tap into their existing budgets. That often means they have to cut service and raise fares, hurting the communities that are most in need.

Who Wins, Who Loses: the BART-SFO Fiasco

Transportation powerbrokers were exuberant about a regional agreement in 1988 that promised to bring BART to SFO. They confidently predicted high ridership on this eight-mile, \$1.7 billion extension. Transit officials even predicted the line would make money. SamTrans (the bus agency for San Mateo County) agreed to be financially responsible for operating the line.

But the finished extension, which opened in 2003, gets less than half the expected ridership and cost 80% more than initial estimates, even accounting for higher costs due to inflation.⁵ The predicted surpluses have turned to deficits, and SamTrans is faced with paying millions more than expected. As a result, bus riders in San Mateo may face drastic cuts.

Complexity Deters Community Participation

Too often, transportation agencies make policy and investment decisions with inadequate influence by low-income residents and people of color. Transportation decision-making processes are complex, with long timelines and many agencies involved at different points.

Lack of understanding about how transportation decisions are made, and by what agencies, is a significant barrier to participating effectively in transportation decision-making.

Agencies have a responsibility to improve their outreach efforts. Many have understood this responsibility and are starting to reach out more than they have done before. But conducting more and more meetings won't help if community groups don't increase their own capacity to understand, analyze, and affect transportation decisions.

That's where this guide comes in.

5. Based on final project costs contained in FTA, *Annual Report on New Starts 2003*, and original cost estimates contained in MTC's Resolution 1876.

Breaking Through Roadblocks

Overcoming these roadblocks requires four main strategies:

- Get educated and organized
- Focus on new money
- Advocate for cost-effectiveness
- Demand mobility for all

Get Educated and Organized

The first step to winning transportation justice is to get educated and organized. There are three basic steps to take:

- Develop realistic recommendations or alternatives to agency proposals.
- Identify articulate speakers who can tell a compelling story about your community's needs.
- Back up your demands with strong public support (letters, postcards, showing up at meetings, etc.) and work to get media attention.



This guide will help you understand the role of different transportation agencies and the relationships between them. It will also help you figure out where to start in demanding a change.

To go deeper, you can call TALC for technical assistance (p.78). For some issues, you can also turn to reports by TALC and other groups who analyze issues from a transportation justice perspective (p.83).

There are many other resources and groups that can help you get your community organized. See the “Key Advocacy Groups” section for each agency listed in Chapter 4.

Focus on New Money

For years, transportation has consistently rated as a top concern for Bay Area residents.⁶ These polls guarantee that elected officials will continue to propose billions of dollars in new transportation initiatives.

Community groups must actively participate in – and lead – the campaigns to influence these spending plans.

Many of these initiatives require voter approval, usually by a two-thirds vote. Transportation agencies will pay attention to

6. Bay Area Council's “Bay Area Poll,” 1996 through 2002.

community groups that can turn out the vote. And if your members have been involved in shaping the plan, they are far more likely to campaign and vote for it when it appears on the ballot.

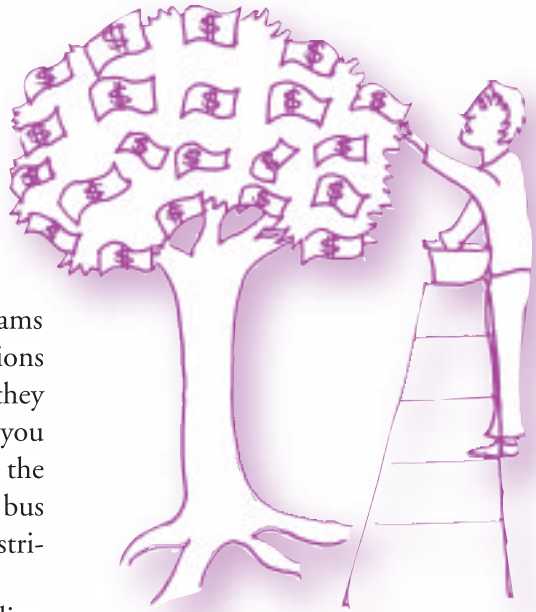
These new funding programs typically have fewer restrictions than existing funds on how they can be spent. This means you can win the changes you need the most, such as more reliable bus service or safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists.

These 20- to 30-year spending plans often provide only a portion of the money each project needs. This forces agencies to direct their discretionary money – sometimes for decades to come – to these same projects in order to complete them.

Key opportunities include:

- County sales taxes (p.51)
- Regional and local gas tax increases (p.47, 62, 69)
- Vehicle registration fees (p.73)
- Others, such as the federal transportation bill (p.75)

These plans are often developed at the county or regional level, where you are most likely to be successful if you work in partnership with other like-minded community groups. TALC fre-



quently helps coordinate county and regional efforts and can provide technical assistance even if it is not actively involved in a campaign (p.78).

Advocate for Cost-Effectiveness

Focusing on cost-effectiveness is not only good public policy, it is good for your community. If an agency chooses more cost-effective projects, it can provide more service to more people for the same (or lower!) cost. Often, these improvements can happen sooner, since it may take less time to secure funding for the project (see “Cost-Effectiveness in Action” on the next page for an example).

Further, improvements to the existing system, including many of the changes environmental justice communities need most, usually give “more bang for the buck” than the mega-projects often proposed for higher-income communities.

Cost-effectiveness measures, such as “cost per new rider” or “cost per trip,” are most easily applied to comparisons of different ways to expand mass transit. It is more difficult to compare costs and benefits with highway projects or other changes.

Look for these measures when transportation agencies make plans. And ask questions if the numbers aren’t available.

Of course, cost-effectiveness is not the only criterion agencies should use. For example, late-night and weekend transit is crucial to many people and needs to be kept – or put in place – even if it isn’t as cost-effective as commute-time service. But in general, focusing on cost-effectiveness is a good way to make sure the needs of environmental justice communities are fully considered.

If you need help applying this approach to your situation, call TALC for technical assistance (p.78).

Cost-Effectiveness in Action: AC Chooses BRT

In 2001, AC Transit was completing a Major Investment Study (MIS, p.44) comparing options for improving service in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Leandro.

The MIS found that a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT, p.19) line with a dedicated bus lane would be far more cost-effective than light rail. BRT could start running years earlier, would serve about the same number of passengers with the same quality of service, and would cost \$550 million less. The MIS cost figures meant that for the same cost, AC Transit could build three BRT corridors instead of only one light rail line.

And since BRT improvements can be implemented in stages, residents can start to enjoy the benefits sooner, before the agency collects funding for the whole project. When community groups saw that BRT would offer the same quality as light rail, come online sooner, and have the potential to cover more area, they demanded the more cost-effective option; AC Transit chose to implement BRT.

Demand Mobility for All

Transportation planning often focuses on auto congestion and long-distance commutes. But more than one-third of Bay Area residents do not own or operate a vehicle: mostly low-income families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

To make sure that agencies pay more attention to these people's needs, you can point out how they are currently being underserved.

By 2020, the percentage of Bay Area residents over 65 is expected to nearly double, to over 17% of the region's population. Without a transportation system that is convenient, reliable, and affordable, many older people are unable to go about their daily activities or make it to medical appointments.

For low-income families who cannot afford a car, public transit can be a lifeline to jobs, childcare, healthcare, and other crucial services. Social service agencies have found that inadequate transportation is one of the top three barriers to the transition from welfare to work.

Your community can win changes to meet these needs. For example, you can demand that



transportation agencies fully fund the Lifeline Transportation Network (LTN, p.58). Funding the LTN could bring more frequent bus service and other improvements on well-used routes and support creative programs such as child-care shuttles. You can also insist that transportation agencies put safety first by investing in projects that protect people when they walk or bicycle. You can ask for fair funding for programs that specifically serve youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.

The next chapter tells you how to demand – *and win* – changes like these.

Getting What You Want

An Index to the Issues

This chapter explores the 19 transportation improvements mentioned most frequently by leaders in low-income communities and communities of color, based on two surveys of community leaders and feedback received on initial drafts of this guide. The 19 improvements are divided into five major categories:

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How to Use this Issue Index

For each of these 19 improvements, a detailed entry helps to identify the different types of change you can win. Each entry includes:

- **A brief description** of the type of improvement and major challenges you might face.
- **The agency to contact first**, as well as questions you may want to ask (full descriptions of each agency are in Chapter 4).
- **Ways to win local and long-term change.**

Here are some of the types of changes you can demand:

- Low-cost changes your agency could do right away.
- Existing funding programs your agency could apply for.
- Most likely sources of new long-term funding.
- The most important local, county, and regional plans where you can advocate for the change you want.
- Policy changes that would make it easier to win these improvements.

These entries are intentionally brief, showing you how to get started on winning these improvements. Most entries also include a reference for finding more detailed

information. Many entries have greater detail in TALC's *Instant Advocate Toolkit*. Just look for this symbol: **IA**. The IA Toolkit includes a wealth of case studies, model ordinances, cost and impact estimates, implementation techniques, and contact information. It is available online at www.transcoalition.org/ia.

What's Not Here. This guide does not focus on projects that are mostly designed for long-distance commuting, such as BART extensions, commuter rail, major highway or road projects, and new ferry lines. If your community is trying to win a major capital project, you'll need to know more about the detailed processes they go through, from first studies to implementation. See TALC's *Access Now!* website for a description of the main steps, and feel free to call TALC for technical assistance.

ABCs of Transportation. Acronyms used in this section are spelled out in the Acronym Decoder appendix (p.86). These terms and other transportation jargon are described in more detail in the online Glossary on TALC's *Access Now!* website: www.transcoalition.org/access.



Transit Improvements

Residents of low-income and people-of-color communities consistently identify improvements to public transit – particularly buses – as their top transportation need. Low-income residents and people of color are much more likely than the general public to ride and depend on public transit. For example, 70% of bus riders in Santa Clara County are people of color and 59% make less than \$35,000 per year.⁷

7. Santa Clara VTA, *2000 On-Board Survey*.

More Bus Service on Existing Routes, and New Routes

To run buses more frequently, for longer hours on evenings and weekends, or to start new routes, your transit agency will need to secure additional operating funds. This type of money is often hard to find, which is why



it is so important to demand operating funds as part of new funding plans.

Without new operating funds, your agency will have to make other trade-offs (reduce other service or raise fares) to make these changes.

Start with...

Your transit agency: Ask if the routes you want improved meet MTC's Lifeline Transportation Network (LTN) guidelines (p.58) and are in a Community-Based Transportation Plan (p.54). Ask how much funding would be needed to make the changes.

Win long-term change...

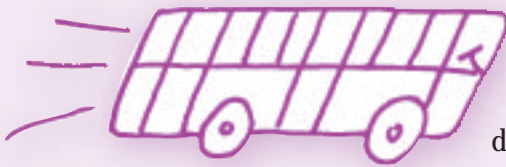
Urge your transit agency to apply for special programs to increase service, such as MTC's Low Income Flexible Transportation funding program (LIFT, p.58).

Win new transit operating funds from county transportation sales taxes (p.51), a regional gas tax or vehicle registration fee (p.62 or 73), or increases in MTC's Lifeline Transportation program (p.58) through the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP, p.60).

1A See the *Lifeline Transit Guidelines* tool for how to ensure MTC's Lifeline Transportation Network will define and fund needed transit improvements, and how to get a Community-Based Transportation Plan completed in your area.

Quicker Buses on Urban Streets: Bus Rapid Transit

One problem with riding the bus is that buses are often slow or late because of time wasted stuck in traffic. Bus Rapid Transit (or BRT) is a series of changes that allows “rubber-tire transit” (buses) to closely emulate what we love about rail, but at a much lower cost and with much more flexibility. Dedicated bus lanes, “smart” traffic lights that stay green for an approaching bus, and real-time arrival information make BRT faster and more reliable. New transit stations, boarding platforms, and electronic ticketing make BRT more convenient. And state-of-the-art, low- and zero-emission



buses offer a more comfortable ride and less pollution. Muni, AC Transit, and Santa Clara VTA all have plans for some form of BRT (see p.13 for a description of AC Transit’s decision to try BRT).

Start with... **AC Transit, Muni, or VTA:** Contact them or TALC to ask how to support BRT in your neighborhood.

Other large bus transit agencies: Contact them to encourage them to consider BRT improvements along high-traffic corridors.

Win long-term change... Support funding for BRT in county transportation sales taxes (p.51), a regional gas tax (p.62), or the RTP (p.60).

Demand that your Congestion Management Agency (CMA) fund BRT initiatives in their Countywide Transportation Plan (p.55).

A transit district gas tax (p.47) would be ideally suited for funding BRT improvements.

For a comprehensive overview of BRT, including case studies and cost estimates for proposed Bay Area BRT routes, see TALC’s report: *Revolutionizing Bay Area Transit...on a Budget* (p.83 for TALC’s reports).

Special Transit for the Elderly and Disabled: Paratransit

All transit agencies are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide equivalent transit services for people whose disability makes it impossible to use public transit. Transit agencies often pay other companies or subcontractors to provide paratransit service, which is often referred to as “ADA-mandated” paratransit. In addition, numerous social service agencies and cities provide



a variety of “non-mandated” paratransit for seniors or specific types of clients. Major issues frequently include ADA eligibility, fares, same-day versus advance scheduling, and coordination among different agencies. With the aging of the Bay

Area’s population, paratransit is likely to become more and more important.

Start with...

Your transit agency (for ADA-mandated service): Although a subcontractor may handle day-to-day operations, your local transit agency is ultimately responsible for policies. Ask for the staff member in charge of paratransit or get in touch with community members of the agency’s advisory committee that addresses issues for seniors and persons with disabilities (p.48).

Win long-term change...

See MTC’s *ADA Paratransit Resource Guide* for more information on ADA paratransit requirements and who provides which services. It is available from the MTC-ABAG library (p.84).

Win new operating funds for your paratransit operator. Likely sources include county transportation sales taxes (p.51) or a regional gas tax (p.62).

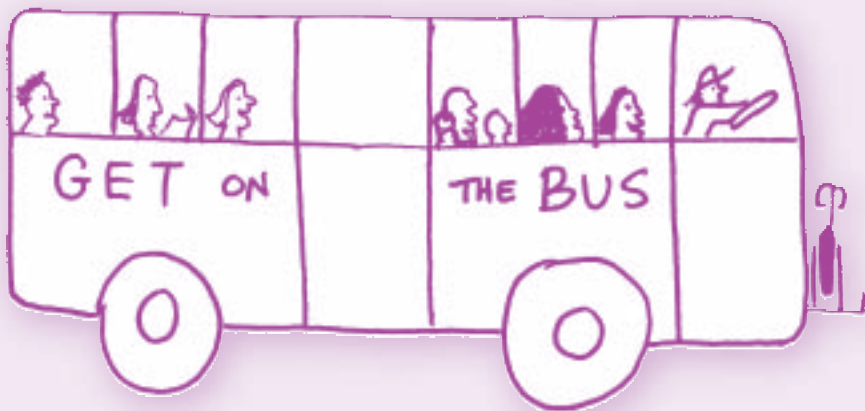
Win changes in state policy to allow transit agencies to provide Non-Emergency Medical Transportation and receive reimbursements from Medi-Cal. Contact TALC for more details on this opportunity.

Bus Shelters

Shelters can provide schedule and route information, protect riders from rain and sun, and make it safer to wait for the bus. Transit agencies usually contract with a private company that installs and maintains the shelters, often for free, in return for the right to sell advertising on them. Since they are installed on city sidewalks, the city – not your transit agency – makes the final decision about whether to install them and where.

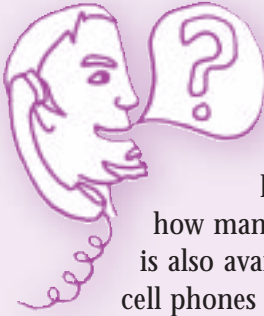
Start with... **Your transit agency:** ask when they plan to install shelters in your neighborhood, and what you can do to help make it happen. You may need to demonstrate community support for bus shelters or convince your city to support them.

Win long-term change... If your city or transit agency resists installing bus shelters, contact groups who have won them in other areas (see *Key Advocacy Groups that Influence Transit Agencies*, p.49). You may also contact staff in areas that recently installed shelters (such as AC Transit or the cities of Oakland and Berkeley).



Better Transit Information


Transit agencies provide information on routes and schedules over the phone (dial 511) and online (www.transit.511.org). Some agencies go a step further, providing real-time information about when the next bus is coming. Some Muni, AC Transit, and Emery Go Round bus lines have electronic signs at bus stops, indicating how many minutes until the next bus arrives. Information is also available online at www.nextbus.com and on some cell phones and wireless devices.



Start with... **Your transit agency:** ask when they plan to put electronic real-time information signs on your routes.

Win long-term change... Encourage them to apply for funding from Regional Measure 2 for real-time transit information.

Support increased funding for transit information. Likely sources include the Regional Transportation Plan (p.60) and county transportation sales taxes (p.51).



Safety and Access While Walking and Bicycling

In California, more than 20% of the people killed in traffic are on foot or a bicycle. Yet efforts to make streets safer for people who walk and bicycle receive only a small fraction of transportation funding, even of the funds specifically intended for traffic safety. Many health departments are working on making it safer to walk and bicycle because of concerns over obesity, as well as for safety reasons. Programs that fund these improvements go by many names: non-motorized transportation, Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to Transit, Transportation for Livable Communities, and others.

Pedestrian Safety

Since so many streets are designed specifically to speed car traffic, it takes more than just a crosswalk and a walk signal to make them safe and inviting for pedestrians. Your neighborhood could have better lighting, wider sidewalks, “bulb-outs” to shorten crosswalks at busy intersections, benches, shelters, and many other improvements. It takes engineering, education, and enforcement to slow cars and make walking safer and more pleasant. A comprehensive review in Europe found that traffic injuries fell by more than 50% in neighborhoods where traffic calming had been implemented.



Start with...

Your city: Contact the transportation planner or engineer who deals with pedestrian safety and ask if the city is already planning to make the changes you want. Encourage the city to apply for state and regional funds (p.67).

Win long-term change...

Convince your city to develop and implement a city-wide Pedestrian Safety Plan (p.67). For an example, contact the Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project about their city’s plan at (510) 238-7049.

IA See the *Pedestrian Infrastructure Campaigns* and *Traffic Calming* tools.

Bicycle Lanes and Other Bicycle Facilities

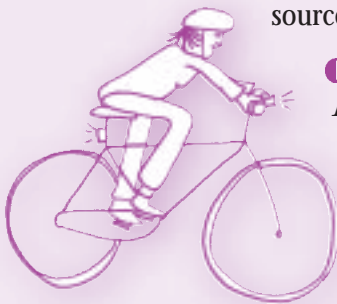
In the Bay Area, over a quarter of the trips people make are no more than a mile and a half long, which is a short bike ride.⁸ But many people are discouraged from getting on a bike because of unsafe streets, inadequate bike facilities, and a lack of respect from motorists. All counties, and some cities, have bicycle plans that list needed improvements, and a growing number of funding programs are available to pay for them.

Start with... **Your city/county:** Ask the bicycle planner if the changes you want are in their bicycle plan, and what you can do to make sure they are built soon. Encourage them to apply for state and regional funds (p.67). Also see p.67 for what to do if your city/county doesn't have a plan or if your desired changes aren't in the plan.

Win long-term change... Make sure MTC's Regional Bike Plan includes regional projects from your city or county bike plan, and that MTC allocates sufficient funding through the RTP (p.60).

Win continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs at the state level (p.72), in your county sales tax (p.51), or in reauthorization of the federal transportation bill (p.75).

Win new funding for bicycle access and safety. Likely sources include county transportation sales taxes (p.51), a regional gas tax (p.62), or other new funding sources.



IA See the *Safe Routes to Transit, Bike Infrastructure Campaigns, Bike to Work Day,* and *Bike Stations* tools.

8. MTC, *2000 Base Year Validation of Travel Demand Models*, May 2004.

Making Transit Areas Safe and Attractive

Better lighting, wider sidewalks, clearly marked crosswalks, and shelter from the sun or rain are examples of what transportation planners call “streetscape improvements.” There is a growing amount of funding available to support these and other efforts to make transit stops, stations, and downtown areas safer and more convenient.

Start with...

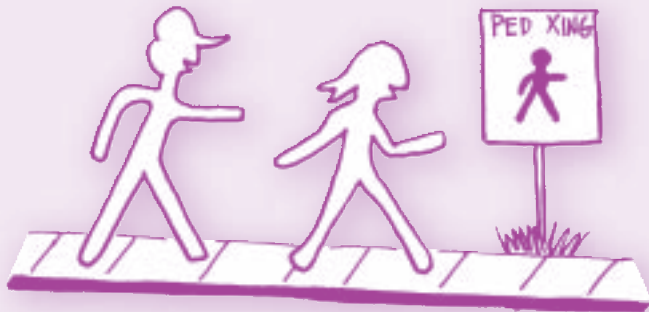
Your city/county: Encourage your city/county to apply for Transportation for Livable Communities funds (TLC, p.61). These funds can pay for an inclusive community planning process as well as for specific improvements. Also ask if there is a Specific Plan for the area, which may include plans for these improvements (p.68).

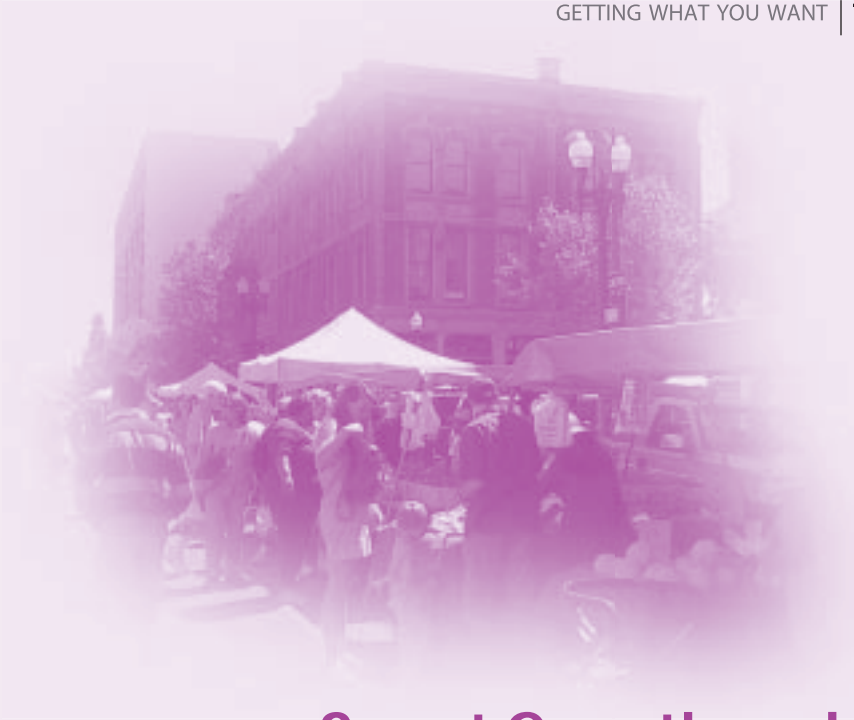
Win long-term change...

Win increased funding for the regional TLC and Safe Routes to Transit programs in the RTP (p.60) or a regional gas tax (p.62).

Win increased funding for similar local programs. Likely funding sources include county transportation sales taxes (p.51) or other new money.

IA See the *Transportation for Livable Communities* tool.





Smart Growth and Affordable Housing

When communities have homes, jobs, and services near each other, it is easier for everyone to get around. While this guide focuses on transportation issues, smart growth and affordable housing can reduce the need for transportation by bringing services and people closer together.

More Affordable Housing Near Transit

Skyrocketing housing costs continue to drive more and more low-income families to distant suburbs to find homes they can afford. These changes not only displace residents and tear apart existing communities, but sprawling suburbs also eat up family budgets by forcing families to have a car for every adult. The logical solution is to build more affordable housing close to public transit.

Start with... **Your city/county:** If there are proposals to build new housing near transit, support them and ask your city/county to apply for MTC's Housing Incentive Program (HIP) funds that provide a bonus for affordable housing (p.61).

Win long-term change... Demand that your county CMA create a countywide HIP program, as San Mateo's CMA has done (see **1A** tool below for details).

Win more funding for HIP in the RTP (p.60).

If your county is considering a sales tax, win funds for a county-level HIP program or push for a multipurpose tax that funds affordable housing (p.52).

For ideas on other local policy changes, such as inclusionary zoning, contact affordable housing advocates such as the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California at (415) 989-8160 or www.nonprophousing.org.

1A See the *Housing Incentives Program* and *Inclusionary Zoning* tools.



Specific Plans for Transit-Oriented Development

The Bay Area has hundreds of existing and planned rail stations and major bus stops that present opportunities for new transit-oriented development (TOD). Without community input, development could lead to gentrification and displacement. Instead, the community and local government can jointly develop a Specific Plan for the kind of development they want, and your community's real needs can be identified and included up front.

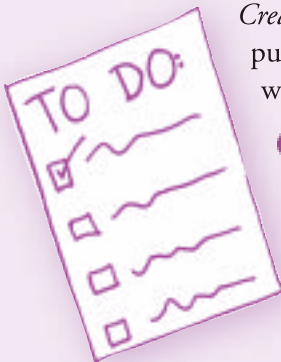
Start with... **Your city/county and/or transit agency:** Ask them to work with you to complete a Specific Plan around a train/BART station or major bus stop in your neighborhood (p.68).

Win long-term change... Demand that MTC and major transit agencies require smart growth and affordable housing around new stations as part of major expansions of public transit. Contact TALC for the current status of these efforts.

Win funding for Specific Plans in the RTP (p.60).

For more information on Specific Plans and other tools to promote infill development, see *Smart Infill: Creating More Livable Communities in the Bay Area*, published by Greenbelt Alliance: (415) 543-6771 or www.greenbelt.org.

TA See the *Infill Opportunity Zones* tool for one way to support more transit-oriented development.





Safe Transportation for Children

Walking, bicycling, or riding a school bus used to be the main ways most children got around. But dangerous traffic and suburban sprawl have pushed three-quarters of the state's children into the back seat of a car.⁹ And for families who can't afford a car, rising bus fares, cuts in city bus service, and disappearing school buses are increasing the cost and difficulty of getting to school and other activities. Some youth advocates, health agencies, and others are fighting back, pushing for a renewed focus on safe transportation for children.

9. CA Department of Transportation, "2000-2001 California Statewide Household Travel Survey," cited in STPP, TALC and LIF, *Can't Get There from Here*, 2003.

Safe Walking and Bicycling Routes to Schools

With childhood obesity on the rise, children need to integrate more walking and bicycling into their everyday lives. While half of all school children walked or biked to school 30 years ago, only about 10% do today.¹⁰ California's Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) program emphasizes a "3Es" approach combining engineering, education, and enforcement.

Start with... **Your school district or city:** Ask them to start a SR2S project at your neighborhood school, and secure funding for safe crossings, traffic calming, and street improvements. There are also special programs to teach safety skills or escort children to school. You can help organize a Walk to School day or other activities: call (888) 393-0353 or visit www.cawalktoschool.com.

Win long-term change... **Win continued funding for the state Safe Routes to School program (p.72).**

Demand that your CMA start a countywide SR2S program, as the Marin County CMA did.

Win new money for SR2S-type activities. Likely sources include county sales taxes (p.51) or the Bicycle and Pedestrian program in the RTP (p.60).

1A See the *Safe Routes to School* tool or visit www.safetorouteschools.org for Marin County's program.



10. U.S. DOT, 1972, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000, cited in TALC, *Roadblocks to Health*, 2002.

Free/Discount Transit Fares for Low-income Students

When AC Transit offered a free bus pass for low-income students, after-school programs reported a sharp rise in participation and students reported being more able to get to after-school jobs. Although most transit agencies have some discount for children, low-income families with several children still have difficulty paying transit fares at the end of the month. To provide free passes or larger discounts, your transit agency will need to secure additional operating funds.

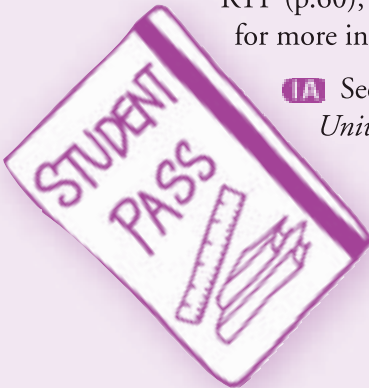
Start with... **Your transit agency:** Ask how much funding would be needed to support free or discount passes for low-income children.

Your school district or county Social Service Agency: Ask them to provide transit passes or tickets for students who qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches, or for students who are on public assistance.

Win long-term change... Get your transit agency to apply for special funds to support free/discount passes, such as MTC's LIFT (p.58).

Win new operating funds for your transit agency, earmarked for this purpose. Likely sources include county transportation sales taxes (p.51), increases in MTC's Liteline Transportation program (p.58) through the RTP (p.60), and future state legislation (contact IALC for more information).

IA See the *Low-Income Youth Transit Pass* and *University Transit Pass* tools.



Child-Care Transportation Shuttles

Transporting kids to child care on transit can greatly lengthen and complicate trips. For parents who depend on transit, the morning often goes like this: catch one bus to take the three-year-old to preschool; catch another bus to take the six-year-old to kindergarten; catch a third bus to go to work. It can take two hours or more, *if* everything runs on time.

Some agencies have started special child-care shuttles to close the gaps – and some are free. As of September 2004, programs exist in Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties and in the City of Alameda.

Start with... **Your county Social Service Agency:** Ask them to design a child-care shuttle program and apply for special grants such as MTC's LIFT program (p.58).

Win long-term change... Win new funding for programs that can fund this type of service. Focus on increasing funds for MTC's Lifeline Transportation program (p.58) through the RTP (p.60) and on county transportation sales taxes (p.51).

1A See the *Childcare Transportation Shuttles* tool.



School Buses

School buses are the safest way to get to school. But more and more school districts are reducing their busing programs or charging hundreds of dollars for students to get on the bus. Even worse, California has the oldest, most-polluting fleet in the nation. This is because California does not require schools to provide school buses, and the state reimburses most districts for less than half the cost of the transportation that they do provide. In many districts, school buses come out of the same



budget as textbooks and teachers' salaries. Recognizing that automobile school drop-offs are a significant cause of morning traffic congestion, some areas have initiated programs to help students get to school.

Start with...

Your school district: If it still provides yellow school buses, lobby them to improve service and invest in cleaner buses.

If students ride public transit to school, as in many urban areas, see the Free/Discount Transit Fares for Low-income Students entry (p.32).

Your county CMA: Ask them to support transportation to school, as Marin County and Contra Costa County have done (p.79-80 for contact info).

Win long-term change...

Join statewide groups in lobbying to maintain and expand school bus programs by funding them through traditional state and local transportation funding sources, rather than from the education budget. Contact TALC about how to get involved.

For more information, see *Can't Get There From Here: The Declining Independent Mobility of California's Children and Youth*, a report published jointly by the Surface Transportation Policy Project, Latino Issues Forum, and TALC (p.83 for the TALC library).



Reducing the Cost of Transportation

Not surprisingly, reducing the cost of transportation consistently ranks as one of the top transportation improvements needed by low-income communities. For low-income families who must own vehicles, transportation costs are second only to housing in the family budget. Low-income car owners spend nearly 20% of their budget on transportation, a larger share than their wealthier neighbors.¹¹ This section outlines some ways to keep the costs down, for both taking transit and driving.

11. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Expenditure Survey," 1999-2001.

How to Stop Excessive Fare Hikes

Transit agencies and low-income families often have the same problem: tight budgets. As inflation raises the costs of keeping the system running, agencies need to raise fares to balance their budgets. Sometimes, unexpected drops in revenue bring on a crisis. But sometimes an agency may propose an excessive fare hike to balance the books – or worse, to help pay for expensive new projects.

Start with... **Your transit agency:** A big public outcry is needed to stop fare hikes once they are proposed. Always get accurate information about *why* the agency is proposing the fare hikes in the first place. Be prepared to ask for technical assistance in scrutinizing the agency's budget (p.49 and 78 for who can help).

See *Influencing Service Cuts and Fare Hikes* in Chapter 4 for more information (p.45).

Win long-term change... Win new transit operating funds for your transit agency. Likely sources include county transportation sales taxes (p.51) and a regional gas tax (p.62).

Organize your community to elect (or get appointed) board members who actually ride the bus or the train.

IA See the *Promote Transit Fare Equity* tool.

Car-sharing in Your Community

The high cost of car ownership makes it an unworkable choice for many low-income families. Car-sharing programs can be a way for families to get the flexibility of access to a reliable car when they need it, without the high costs. As of August 2004, City CarShare had over 80 cars at 40 locations in San Francisco and in the East Bay. Regional Measure 2, passed in March 2004, has funding available to start new locations.

Start with... **City CarShare:** www.citycarshare.org or (415) 995-8588. Ask if it has cars available in your neighborhood or plans to expand there. Also ask how to apply for a CalWORKS discount for low-income families.

Your city/county: Ask a transportation planner to help start car-sharing in your neighborhood.

Win long-term change... Win new funding for programs that can fund this service. Focus on increasing funds for MTC's Lifeline Transportation program (p.58) through the RTP (p.60).

IA See the *Car-Sharing* tool.

Getting Your Employer to Help Pay for Your Commute

Many large employers offer special programs to help their employees use transit, carpools, or other alternate ways to get to work. Some of these programs, such as Commuter Check, reduce taxes for workers and employers alike. Through EcoPass programs, some large employers in Santa Clara County and the City of Berkeley give free transit passes to all employees.

Start with... **Your employer's personnel department:** Ask if your company participates in Commuter Check, EcoPass, or other similar programs. If not, use the **IA** tools below to see if they are eligible.

Win long-term change... **IA** See the *Commuter Choice*, *Parking Cashout* and *Employee Transit Pass (EcoPass)* tools.

Auto Assistance Program for Low-Income Families

For some families, especially in rural and suburban areas, access to a car can be a vital link to jobs and services. Several Bay Area counties have started programs that reduce the cost of car ownership for low-income families. Most programs are run by county Social Service Agencies.

Start with... **Your county Social Service Agency:** Ask if it has a program. If not, it may be able to start one. The agency may be able to use welfare funds, known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or apply for a LIFT grant (p.58).

Win long-term change... To be successful, car ownership programs must go beyond helping families buy a car, and deal with issues such as insurance, repairs, license and registration. For more information, see *Shifting Into Gear*, a guide to low-income car-ownership programs by the National Economic Development Law Center (www.nedlc.org).

Win new funding for programs that can fund this type of service. Focus on increasing funds for MTC's Lifeline Transportation program (p.58) through the RTP (p.60).

Guaranteed Ride Home

Most Bay Area counties have a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program to provide a free ride home from work – in a taxi or rental car – when unexpected circumstances arise. Eligibility varies, but usually includes CalWORKs recipients and employees at large companies. Some programs allow stops to pick up children.

Start with... **Your county CMA:** Ask who your county's GRH provider is and whether your clients or community members are already covered. To expand coverage, your GRH provider may be able to apply for a grant from LIFT (p.58) or other sources.

Your county Social Service Agency: Ask if it can help ensure that low-income families are eligible.

Win long-term change... Win new funding for programs that can help, such as MTC's Lifeline Transportation program (p.58) in the RTP (p.60) and ride-sharing in county sales taxes (p.51).

IA See the *Guaranteed Ride Home* tool.

Transportation Decision Makers

Who's Who and What They Do

Transportation decision-making *is* complex. No one-stop shop, no single agency, will address all your transportation needs.

To win the changes you need, you have to know *who* has the power to grant your demands.

A good rule of thumb is that the smaller the impact of a decision, the more likely it is that it can be dealt with at a local level – by your transit agency, city or county. A local agency's ability to make changes is often constrained by higher levels of government.

This chapter describes the agencies that control transportation decisions.

For each agency, this chapter explains:

- What it does.
- Key opportunities to win change.
- Decision makers and how to contact them.
- Key advocacy groups that influence the agency.
- How to get more information.

Agencies in this Chapter

Transit Agencies	41
County Congestion Management Agencies	50
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)	57
Local Government (Cities and Counties)	67
State Government	71
Federal Government	75

A note on jargon and acronyms: Transportation decision-making is filled with jargon and acronyms, and even this guide can't avoid them. But you *can* cut through them.

All acronyms used in this section are spelled out in the Acronym Decoder appendix (p.86). For details and definitions of other transportation jargon, see the online Glossary on TALC's *Access Now!* website: www.transcoalition.org/access.

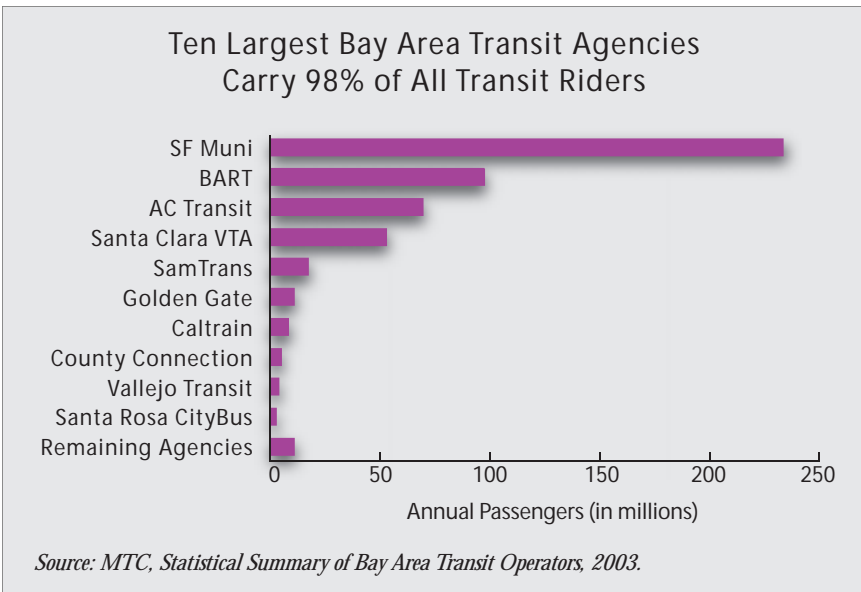
Transit Agencies (Muni, AC Transit, BART, etc.)

The Bay Area has more than two dozen transit agencies running buses, trains, and ferries. The graph below lists the ten largest agencies – which together carry 98% of the Bay Area’s transit riders and serve 92% of the population in the Bay Area’s low-income communities and communities of color.

Transit agencies decide when, where, and how often to run their buses, trains, and ferries, as well as

what fares to charge and what type of vehicles to use. These choices, however, are constrained by how much funding – and of what type – agencies receive from local, state, and federal sources, and by the decisions of the cities in which they operate.

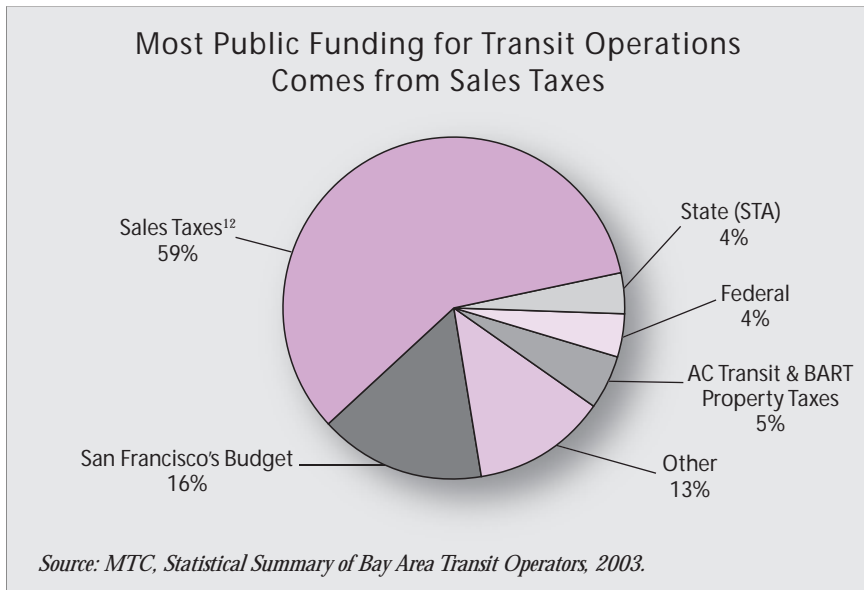
In addition, all transit agencies are required to provide equivalent service for people with disabilities (p.20).



Sources of Funding, and Restrictions on that Money

Most federal and state transportation money can only be used for *capital* expenses (see Funding Jargon 101, p.9). But most transit service improvements, such as more frequent service, longer hours, new routes, and lower fares, require additional *operating* funds. **Operating money is what keeps buses and trains moving every day**, and transit agencies usually use their money to operate as much service as possible. Without new funds, there is rarely any surplus available to improve service without making tradeoffs.

Not only is it hard to find operating funds, but the existing funding for transit operations is also unstable. Most public funding for transit operations depends on sales tax revenues (see the chart below), which are notoriously volatile. Santa Clara County's Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) saw its sales tax revenues go up by 28% from 1999 to 2001, then down by 31% from 2001 to 2003. These big ups and downs are a major cause of periodic service cuts and fare hikes.



12. About half of the "Sales Taxes" category comes from county sales taxes, the other half mostly from Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds from ¼-cent sales taxes in all counties, AB1107 funds from a ½-cent sales tax in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties, and permanent ½-cent sales taxes for transit operations in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The difficulty in finding operating money and the instability of existing funding make it very important to seize opportunities to secure more stable sources of operating revenue such as bridge tolls, property taxes, or gas taxes.

Some large transit agencies have secured money from more stable revenue sources.

For example, San Francisco covers most of **Muni's** operating budget through the city's general fund and parking/traffic budgets. By contrast, no other major city in the region provides significant transit funding.

AC Transit and **BART** both have property and parcel taxes. **Golden Gate Transit** gets a large part of its budget from bridge tolls. And **Regional Measure 2**, passed by Bay Area voters in March 2004, will provide more money for transit operations throughout the region from higher bridge tolls.

For more detailed information on sources and types of funding, consult the *Statistical Summary* and *Moving Costs* documents described in the Useful Publications appendix (p.84).

Communities Making Change

In 1997, community leaders in North Richmond saw that the combination of welfare reform efforts and poor transit access to jobs would spell disaster. Buses only served the edge of the neighborhood, ran infrequently, and stopped at 7 p.m. Several community groups came together to jointly demand changes from AC Transit, the local bus agency.

To its credit, AC Transit responded quickly, organizing four meetings with North Richmond residents. The result was a proposed new route – the 376 – to fill gaps in existing service. For several months, AC Transit funded the service out of its budget surplus. The agency and community then worked together to secure ongoing funding from other sources.

Not only did North Richmond get a new bus route, the community also won political power. In 2000, Joe Wallace, a leader in the campaign for the new bus route, won election to the AC Transit Board of Directors!

Key Opportunities to Win Change

Win New Money

The best way to win major changes from your transit agency is to win new money that provides new operating funds and requires agencies to implement new service.

See Chapter 2 (p.11) for an overview. The following are key funding opportunities: county transportation sales taxes (p.51), local and regional gas tax increases (p.47, 62, 69), vehicle registration fees (p.73), and the federal transportation bill (p.75).

Help Develop Community-Based Transportation Plans

These plans identify detailed improvements for low-income communities and describe ways to get those improvements up and running. Funded by MTC, they are cooperative efforts by a transit agency, the county Congestion Management Agency, and local community groups.

For details, see p.54 in the section on county Congestion Management Agencies.



Pay Attention to Major Investment Studies

Larger transit agencies sometimes conduct studies on how to significantly improve service in a particular area or along a particular corridor. This is often called a Major Investment Study (MIS), and is a terrific opportunity to influence the agency's plans for expansion.

For example, AC Transit conducted an MIS from 1999-2001 to consider how to improve service on the most heavily used lines in Oakland, Berkeley, and San Leandro. See p.13 for the outcome of this process.

Call your transit agency's planning staff and ask to be notified if they conduct an MIS or planning study in your area.

Influencing Service Cuts and Fare Hikes

Sooner or later, every transit agency runs a budget deficit and calls public hearings to propose cutting service, raising fares, or both. The deficit often results from an economic downturn that has reduced sales tax revenues, or from higher operating costs. Occasionally, an adjustment to account for inflation is needed when fares have not been raised for long periods. As described on p.9, getting new sources of operating funds can be very difficult, especially on short notice.

By the time an agency conducts hearings on service cuts or fare hikes, it is often too late to avoid changes entirely. There may be little the agency can do beyond rearranging which routes get cut or which fares get raised. Sometimes an agency can avoid service cuts by using its reserves, raising new funds, or making system operations more efficient.

Sometimes, the deficit may come about in part because the agency prioritizes new projects at the expense of maintaining current service (for an example, see sidebar). In this situation, the agency may be able to avoid some or all of the proposed cuts by delaying the

construction of a capital project or by issuing bonds to borrow against future revenues.

Transportation Injustice in San Jose

The Santa Clara VTA has put such a high priority on bringing BART to San Jose that it appears willing to sacrifice a major portion of its bus system. VTA has no funding to operate the proposed BART extension, so BART asked for a guarantee that trains would actually be able to run even if VTA cannot raise new funds. VTA signed an agreement that would give BART \$50 million per year of future Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds. This money is currently being used to operate VTA's local transit service.

Citing a drop in projected revenues, VTA has not only *reduced* funding for transit operations from their 2000 Measure A sales tax, but also has *increased* the amount set aside for the BART extension by \$1.2 billion.¹³

Since 2000, VTA has raised fares and cut service three times.

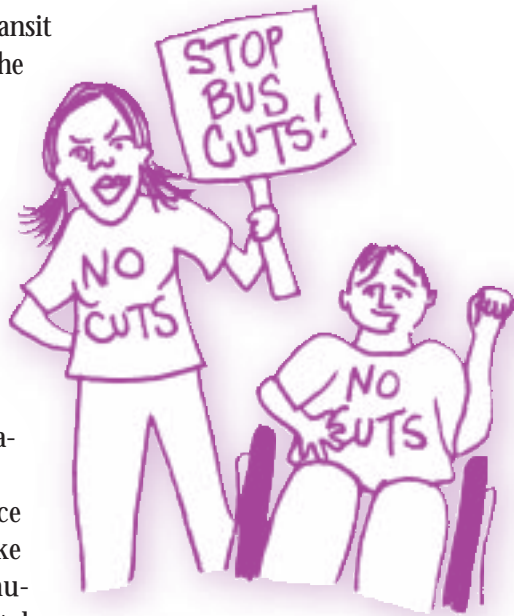
13. In 2001, VTA adopted a policy of reducing the portion of its Measure A funds allocated to transit operations funds, commensurate with the projected reduction in future sales tax revenue. For BART, however, VTA has increased projected spending from \$2 billion projected in the original

Take Action Get your transit agency's documents about the proposed changes. You may need technical assistance in scrutinizing agency budgets to figure out why there are proposed service changes (see Key Advocacy Groups, p.49 and the Key Contacts appendix, p.78). Analyzing budget documents can help you decide what alternatives, if any, to suggest.

Analyze proposed service cuts and route changes to make sure that low-income communities are not disproportionately affected. Agencies often eliminate night and weekend service first, because ridership is generally lower. You can point out, however, that these riders often have no alternatives.

Examine fare hikes to analyze how much fares have gone up over the last five or 10 years, and compare that to the inflation rate to see whether the fare increases are excessive. You can also consult with key advocacy groups, including transit labor unions, about the potential to make the system more efficient.

Finally, transit agencies that are in severe financial trouble can



try to raise new revenue. For example, AC Transit successfully passed a parcel tax in 2002, raising \$7.5 million per year for five years. This is helping the agency limit the service cuts they otherwise would have had to make.

Unfortunately, the dependence on volatile sales taxes means that periodic service increases and cuts are likely to continue. This is why it is crucial to increase funding for transit operations from stable revenue sources and to insist that proposed transit expansions have separate and secure sources of operating funds.

tax measure (passed in 2000) to a total of \$3.2 billion (\$2.4 billion for capital costs and \$800 million for bond financing) as of 2004.

Pass a Transit District or County Gas Tax

Transportation user fees make the most direct connection between the people using the roads and improving the transportation system. A little-known section of the state's tax code allows a county or transit district to ask voters for a 1¢ per gallon gas tax to support mass transit. The money may only be used for capital expenses, specifically to plan, build, purchase, and/or maintain rail lines, bus lanes, transit stations, and transit vehicles. This authority is separate from MTC's ability to ask voters to approve a regional gas tax (p.62).

However, no local agency in California has a gas tax. San Francisco won voter approval in

1980 for a 1¢ per gallon gas tax to support mass transit, but decided against implementing it because of uncertainty over whether a two-thirds majority vote was required. To TALC's knowledge, no agency has recently considered attempting to pass such a tax.

A local gas tax could be a stable funding source that would be well-suited to pay for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) improvements (p.19) or the maintenance of local streets and roads. A 1¢ per gallon tax would cost the average driver only about \$6 per year.

Contact TALC, your transit district, or your elected county officials to express your interest in helping to pass a local gas tax.

Detailed Information About Your Transit Agency

- For detailed information on sources of funding and performance measures for each transit agency, see the *Statistical Summary* described in the Useful Publications appendix (p.84).
- Your agency's Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) can be a helpful source of background information on its financial condition, current ridership, and other measures, as well as its plans for improving service. SRTPs are updated every two years and typically project 5-10 years into the future. To see a copy of your transit agency's SRTP, contact the agency or the MTC-ABAG library (p.84).

Decision Makers and How to Contact Them

Board and Structure

Most transit agencies are governed by a Board of Directors that consists of city council members and county supervisors who are appointed by city and county officials. At a few agencies (such as Muni and SamTrans), the board includes members of the public who are appointed by city or county officials.

Some agencies are part of their city's government (for example, Muni, Vallejo Transit); others are operated through a joint powers authority agreement among several cities and/or counties (County Connection, Golden Gate Transit). AC Transit and BART are unusual in being "special districts." Their Boards are elected directly by the voters and they have the ability to ask voters directly for special taxes such as property taxes. Santa Clara VTA, while it has an appointed board, also has special tax authority: it can ask voters to approve a special sales tax and it can levy special benefit assessments on property that benefits from rail improvements.

Advisory Committees

Most major agencies have some kind of citizens advisory committee, usually consisting of members of the public appointed by the agency's board. A few agencies also have advisory committees on access for seniors, people with disabilities, and/or bicyclists. Serving on one of these advisory committees can be a way to learn more about the agency. However, the influence of these committees varies significantly.

Contact the agency and groups who influence them (p. 49) to get the inside story about your agency.

How to Contact Them

See your phonebook or visit www.transit.511.org/providers/index.asp for detailed contact information. For policy information, contact transit agency planning staff or someone on the Board of Directors, not someone in the Customer Service Department.

Key Advocacy Groups that Influence Transit Agencies

There are independent advocacy groups whose specific goal is to influence the largest transit agencies:

- **Rescue Muni:** www.rescuemuni.org or (415) 273-1558.
- **Santa Clara VTA Bus Riders Union:** (408) 830-9284, www.vtaridersunion.org or info@vtaridersunion.org.
- **BayRail Alliance** (for Caltrain and other commuter rail): (866) 267-8024, www.bayrailalliance.org or info@bayrailalliance.org.

For most transit agencies, community groups come together in temporary coalitions to influence a particular issue. Talk to other major community groups in your area to find out who is active.

To find some of these groups, see Key Advocacy Groups under Local Government (p.70), or contact TALC.

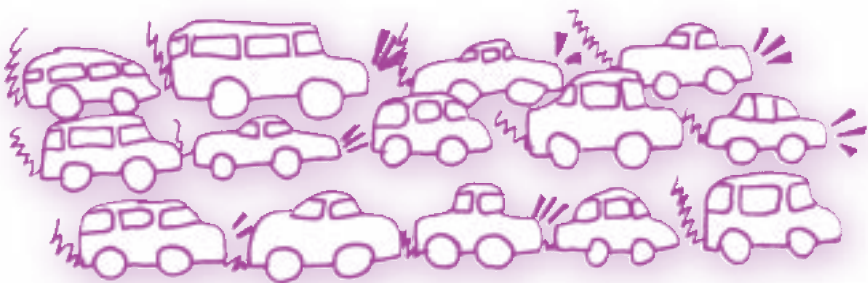
You may also wish to contact the labor unions that represent transit workers. The interests of transit unions and community groups often – but not always – overlap. For example, both are generally in favor of increasing levels of service. The unions also have extensive experience at dealing with the agency's officials. For more information, contact **TransitWorks**, a coalition of unions representing workers at Bay Area transit agencies, at www.transitworkscoalition.org.

County Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs)

Each Bay Area county has a Congestion Management Agency (CMA) – sometimes called a Transportation Authority – which is responsible for transportation policy and planning. The CMAs have four major roles:

- **Develop and periodically update a long-term Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP).**
- **Develop spending plans and allocate funds for counties that have transportation sales taxes (as of September 2004, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara).¹⁴**
- **Conduct planning studies**, such as Major Investment Studies (p.55) and Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs, p.54), and coordinate local government and transit agency efforts.
- **Request funding** for specific projects, based on the Countywide Transportation Plan;

While all of roles are important, if your county is developing a sales tax plan, it is a critical time to get involved. This is where there is the greatest flexibility and the best opportunity for you to win long-term funding.



14. In Alameda and San Mateo counties, the agency that manages sales tax proceeds is separate from the agency that conducts all other CMA duties.

Key Opportunities to Win Change

Win New Money in County Sales Taxes

Developing a new or updated sales tax spending plan is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. It typically generates billions of dollars over the 20- to 30-year life of the tax measure. Projects defined in these plans are often expected to get matching funds from other sources. These tax and spending plans shape how the county – and sometimes the region – will invest

other, more flexible funding for the next two to three decades.

Sales tax funds are flexible, so they are ideal for programs that are otherwise difficult to fund, such as more frequent transit service or discount passes. It is even possible to win sales tax funds for affordable housing or open space (see sidebar on p.52). **In fact, county sales taxes can support *any* of the improvements described in Chapter 3.**

Communities Making Change

During 1999 and 2000, homeless and low-income families won transportation justice by getting involved in Measure B, Alameda County's transportation sales tax. In a survey of their members, leaders of Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) had found that poor transportation access was a major problem. When they heard that Measure B's \$1.4 billion spending plan was up for negotiation, they jumped at the chance.

With help from TALC, BOSS teamed up with environmental groups that had defeated a 1998 attempt to renew Measure B. They bombarded the Transportation Authority with thousands of support letters and organized hundreds of chanting activists to fill the authority's meetings.

After a year of struggle, this coalition won a new plan with a \$186 million increase for buses, paratransit for seniors and persons with disabilities, and safety programs for pedestrians and bicyclists. With unanimous support and a strong grassroots campaign spearheaded by TALC, the new Measure B won a record-breaking 81% "Yes" vote.

State law requires a two-thirds majority at the ballot box in order to pass these special sales taxes. This means that agencies must consider input from a broad cross-section of the community, especially groups that could possibly mount an effective “No” campaign at the ballot box.

Take Action If your county is considering putting a measure on the ballot, get involved *now!* The planning process can last more than a year. In several counties, TALC has helped community groups influence these sales tax plans. To find out who else is influencing your county’s plan and how you can get involved, contact TALC at (510) 740-3150 or access@transcoalition.org. You should also ask your CMA to notify you about sales tax-related meetings (see Key Contacts appendix).

Sales Taxes Can Pay for Affordable Housing Too!

The lack of affordable housing, especially near transit, is a crucial problem for many communities, contributing to transportation problems throughout the region. But when Bay Area counties go to the voters for sales taxes, they almost always propose transportation-only measures. That could change, however, because there is a growing movement to consider multipurpose sales taxes to fund affordable housing, parks and open space, as well as transportation.

If your county is considering putting a transportation sales tax measure on the ballot, consider pushing for a multipurpose sales tax instead.

IA See the *Multipurpose Sales Tax* tool in TALC’s Instant Advocate Toolkit and contact the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California at (415) 989-8160 or www.nonprofithousing.org.

Bay Area Counties with Transportation Sales Taxes¹⁵
(as of September 2004)

Alameda	First Measure B passed 1986, expired 2002. First renewal attempt failed 1998. Current Measure B passed 2000, expires 2022.
Contra Costa	First Measure C passed 1988, expires 2009. Measure J is on November 2004 ballot.
San Francisco	First Proposition B passed in 1989. Current Proposition K passed 2003, expires 2034.
San Mateo	First Measure A passed 1988, expires 2009. Measure A is on November 2004 ballot.
Santa Clara	Current Measure A+B passed 1996, expires 2006. Renewal Measure A passed 2000; it begins when Measure A+B ends (2006) and will expire in 2036. Due to shortfalls in funding Measure A projects, VTA is considering asking voters for another sales tax.

Bay Area Counties without Transportation Sales Taxes

Marin	Failed attempts, 1990 and 1998. Have placed Measure A on November 2004 ballot.
Napa	No previous attempts. Considering placing measure on a future ballot.
Solano	Failed attempt, 2002. Have placed Measure A on November 2004 ballot.
Sonoma	Failed attempts: 1990, 1998 and 2000. Have placed Measure M on November 2004 ballot.

15. All five counties also have permanent ½% sales taxes to support transit operations: AB1107 in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties, that supports BART, Muni, and AC Transit, and separate taxes in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Help Develop Community-Based Transportation Plans

Some Congestion Management Agencies are conducting Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) to address transportation barriers in disadvantaged neighborhoods. These plans are largely funded by MTC as part of efforts to implement a Lifeline Transportation Network (LTN, p.58). MTC funding requires the CMAs to work with transit agencies and to fund community groups to ensure broad public participation.

These plans offer the potential for community groups to work on an equal footing with the CMAs and transit agencies. The plans are

meant to: (1) Define and prioritize gaps in existing transportation service; (2) Identify and prioritize solutions to fill these gaps; and (3) Identify viable ways to fund these solutions.

Take Action

- Get involved in a CBTP in your neighborhood. If there is no CBTP, lobby your CMA to start one.
- Use results of the CBTP plans and LTN study to win funding that supports improvements in your neighborhood.
- See p.58 for background on the LTN. **IA** See the *Lifeline Transportation Guidelines* tool for details on the LTN and CBTPs.

CBTP Neighborhoods

MTC has recommended conducting CBTPs in the following neighborhoods. As of September 2004, those marked with an asterisk have completed a CBTP or have one underway.

Alameda County: West Berkeley, West Oakland, East Oakland, Ashland*, Cherryland*, South Hayward*

Contra Costa County: Richmond*, North Richmond*, San Pablo*, Martinez, Bay Point/Pittsburg, Monument Corridor (Concord)

San Francisco: Civic Center, Mission, Bayview/Hunters Point

Marin County: Canal Area (San Rafael), Marin City

Napa: City of Napa*

San Mateo County: Daly City, East Palo Alto*

Santa Clara County: East San Jose, Milpitas, Gilroy

Solano County: Cordelia, Dixon*, Downtown Vallejo

Sonoma County: Santa Rosa (west of Highway 101)

Participate in the Update of Countywide Transportation Plans

Every two to three years, each county updates its Countywide Transportation Plan (or CTP, although it may go by another name, such as “Vision 2020”). This plan defines a long-term (usually 20- or 25-year) vision for transportation investments.

Like the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP, p.60), these plans usually focus on the distribution of capital funds. They usually are not a good place to ask for improvements in daily operations. But they are a good time to demand that your county identify new priorities and begin planning for them. In addition, the CTP is usually the basis for the county’s submittals to MTC for the RTP and for funding allocations.

Ask your CMA to notify you about the next CTP update.

Be Aware of Major Investment Studies and Planning Studies

Like transit agencies, CMAs also conduct planning studies to decide between alternate solutions to transportation problems. These often address options for reducing congestion or increasing transit access along a particular corridor. See p.44 for more information about MISs and similar studies.

Ask your CMA to notify you about any planning studies that would affect your neighborhood.



Decision Makers and How to Contact Them

Your CMA's Board of Directors consists of elected officials from the cities and county and, occasionally, representatives of transit agencies in the county. The complexity of decisions, long timelines, and turnover of Board members mean that CMA staff have significant influence over policy directions, so it is crucial to communicate directly with staff as well as with members of the CMA Board.

How to Contact Them

See the Key Contacts appendix (p.79-80) for detailed listings and links for each agency.

Each CMA maintains mailing lists of people who are interested in their activities: people to whom they send meeting notices, announcements about projects entering environmental review, major investment studies, and other information.

Key Advocacy Groups that Influence County CMAs

Despite their significant influence, CMAs are a low-profile part of transportation decision-making. You'll rarely see one mentioned in the news, and there are no county-level advocacy groups that specifically focus on tracking CMAs. Most of the time, few members of the public show up at CMA meetings. There are two major exceptions to this rule:

- TALC and other public interest groups usually pay close attention to CMA efforts to develop sales tax spending plans.
- Local groups may focus on a CMA if a controversial project arises.

Contact TALC at (510) 740-3150 or access@transcoalition.org to find out about key groups that influence your CMA on your particular issue.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) was created by the California legislature in 1970 to plan the transportation network for the nine Bay Area counties. MTC has four basic functions:

Planning

- MTC's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) defines which transportation projects are eligible for flexible state and federal funds.
- MTC initiates specific planning efforts, such as Welfare to Work transportation plans and Major Investment Studies.

Funding

- Each year, MTC votes to allocate nearly \$1 billion to mass transit, local streets and roads, highways, freight facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian routes in the region.
- Among these funds are several programs that MTC has initiated, such as the Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) and Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) programs.

Advocacy

- MTC promotes its position to the state and federal levels and brokers agreements between local agencies.
- MTC historically has *not* directly participated in county sales taxes, which are among the most influential transportation planning processes in the region.

Coordination

- MTC coordinates regional programs such as Translink (the regional transit ticket) and 511 (transit information available online at www.511.org or by dialing 511 from any phone in the Bay Area).

Key Opportunities to Win Change

Advocate for a Lifeline Transportation Network and Community-Based Transportation Plans

Serious transit investments in low-income communities are long overdue, and local community groups have long demanded that MTC and other transportation agencies do more to support them. In 2001, MTC adopted a *Lifeline Transportation Network Report* that identified key transit gaps in low-income communities in the Bay Area. Funding the LTN would significantly expand service hours, increase the frequencies of well-used routes, and add routes in underserved areas.

To fulfill the LTN, it will help to better define the highest-priority improvements and get transportation agencies at all levels to support those improvements. MTC has taken a small but useful step towards these definitions by funding local Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs). As of 2004, MTC has funded five CBTPs, covering nine of the 27 neighborhoods identified in the *LTN Report*. See the section on county CMAs for ways to influence these plans (p.54).

Despite adopting the *LTN Report* as part of the 2001 RTP, MTC has limited funding to fill the gaps. MTC's initial analysis showed that filling all of the LTN gaps with transit service would require more than \$100 million per year, over and above current transit operating funding – about

Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT)

MTC initiated the Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) program in 2000 to improve transportation services for residents of low-income communities. LIFT supports a wide variety of services, such as:

- Longer hours and better service on bus routes.
- New shuttle services.
- Child-care shuttles.
- Reduced-price car sharing.
- Reduced transit fares.
- Auto assistance programs.

Dramatically increasing LIFT funding is one of the most direct ways MTC could support transportation justice.

Contact MTC's LIFT program manager (p.79) to find out about applying for a grant.

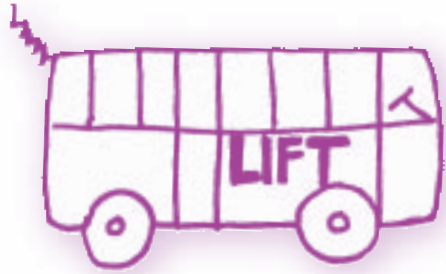
12% more than the current costs of all the Bay Area's bus services.

At the regional level, another small but important step is MTC's Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) program (see sidebar p.58). LIFT has funded several small LTN improvements. But the most recent cycle of funding allocated only \$2 million per year towards a \$100+ million need.

MTC has committed to a larger, \$9 million per year Lifeline Transportation program. And Regional Measure 2, passed in March 2004, will fund another \$7 million per year in LTN-related improvements. But even these increases are still far short of the region's needs. As this guide goes to press, MTC has not yet made a firm commitment about *when* it will begin providing that increased funding for LIFT or other elements of its Lifeline program.

Truly implementing the LTN would require MTC and other transportation agencies to make changes to the status quo:

- **Planning:** Conduct Community-Based Transportation Plans in *all* of the region's disadvantaged communities and commit to implementing the plans' recommendations. Complete the



LTN analysis: MTC and transit agencies still have not finished analyzing the best ways to fill gaps in the LTN, and how much it would cost.

- **Funding:** Secure additional money for transit operations and for targeted Lifeline programs such as LIFT, not just through regional allocations but also from local and state funding. For example, a regional gas tax with adequate funding for transit could single-handedly eliminate a large portion of LTN gaps (p.62).
- **Policy:** MTC and other agencies need to consider policies they have so far been unwilling to consider. These could include requirements that new transportation funding plans (such as county sales taxes) include funding for LTN improvements, perhaps as a condition of receiving other funds. As a principle of environmental justice, MTC could also require that transit

agencies planning expansions of service for long-distance commuters must also show that they can maintain – and improve – LTN service at the same time.

Because this is an emerging area of debate, it will be important for community groups to stay engaged with MTC and other transportation agencies. Groups need to follow up on the *LTN Report* and ensure that LTN gaps are *filled*, not just studied.

Take Action

- Insist that MTC fund CBTPs for all disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- Get involved in a CBTP (p.54).
- Join other community groups in demanding that MTC dramatically increase funding for Lifeline programs such as LIFT in the RTP and other processes (contact TALC for current status).
- Use the *LTN Report* and results of CBTPs to advocate for transit funding in county sales taxes and other new funding measures.
- Contact TALC to find out how to support long-term transportation reform to support LTN improvements.

Get Involved in the Regional Transportation Plan

Every three years, MTC updates the RTP. As this guide goes to print, MTC is in the middle of its latest update, called “Transportation 2030.” This RTP update will probably be concluded in early 2005.

Transportation 2030 will define how over \$100 billion in transportation money will be spent during the next 25 years. MTC assumes that about 92% of that total is for “baseline investments” or “prior commitments,” and will not be changed. These mostly include projects that have been in preparation for years and are nearly ready for construction, projects that were specifically approved by voters and are fully funded, and operations and maintenance of existing roads and transit services.

Deciding how to allocate the remaining 8% – about \$9 billion – is one of the biggest decisions in the RTP. These funds, known as “Track 1” usually can be spent only on capital projects, although some operating or maintenance funds are occasionally available.

In addition, MTC develops an advocacy plan for potential new funds. In Transportation 2030,

this plan is called the “Big Tent.” It will lay out investment priorities for as much as \$25 billion in county sales taxes, a regional vehicle registration fee, a potential regional gas tax, and other potential new funding.

The RTP provides many opportunities to pursue transportation justice. For example, MTC can:

- Decide how much funding goes to maintain the region’s transit systems (known as filling “transit capital shortfalls”).
- Allocate funding and adopt policies to implement the Lifeline Transportation Network, such as funding for LIFT (p.58).
- Adopt policies to encourage compact development and affordable housing around new transit stations.
- Implement policies to require that funding new transit expansion projects (such as BART to San Jose) will not reduce existing bus service.

In response to community pressure and federal environmental justice requirements, MTC has strengthened its outreach efforts and created many more opportunities for public participation in the RTP. This has included providing some funding to help community

groups conduct outreach and involve the public in the update process. More than ever, community leaders have the opportunity to present their views and hold MTC accountable to public input.

Take Action In 1998, 2001, and again in 2003-04, TALC has coordinated efforts by community groups to influence the RTP. Contact TALC to get involved, and contact MTC to find out about public involvement opportunities in the RTP.

Win Funds from Special Programs: TLC and HIP

MTC’s Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program provides Planning and Capital grants to help local governments pursue smart growth. Planning grants fund processes to bring community residents, designers, and transportation planners together to design transportation investments to meet community goals. Capital grants fund the design and construction of transit villages and bus stops, bicycle facilities, pedestrian plazas, and streetscape improvements. In this competitive program, projects get higher scores if they have been developed based on an inclusive community planning process.

In addition, the Housing Incentive Program (HIP) rewards cities and counties that approve compact housing close to major transit stations or corridors. Rewards are based on the number of bedrooms approved, with bonuses for affordable housing and higher density. Rewards can be used for the same types of improvements as TLC Capital Grants.

Take Action Ask your city planners to apply for TLC or HIP grants to fund improvements in your neighborhood. For more information on these programs and the current status of applications, see the *Smart Growth/TLC* section of MTC's website: www.mtc.ca.gov/projects/livable_communities/tlc_grants.htm.

Pass a Regional Gas Tax

Transportation user fees make the most direct connection between the people using the roads and improving the transportation system. MTC has the authority to place a regional gas tax of up to ten cents per gallon on a future ballot. But polls show voters are not enthusiastic about gas taxes, even though a five-cent-per-gallon tax would cost the average driver only about \$30 per year and raise \$170 million annually.

A regional gas tax would be a stable revenue stream that could fund needs such as transit operations and local street and road repairs. Indeed, MTC staff has floated the idea of devoting fully two-thirds of potential gas tax revenue towards transit operations. Because polls do not show strong support for any gas tax (regardless of how the money is used), MTC has held off on putting a plan together, and probably will continue to hold off until 2006 at the earliest.

Contact TALC or MTC to find out the status of planning for a regional gas tax.



Monitor Programming and Allocation Decisions

The RTP sets the 25-year plan for the region, but it does not actually distribute funding. The actual distribution is done when MTC votes on how to allocate state and federal funds, in two- and three-year cycles.

In principle, MTC follows policies adopted during the RTP. But in practice, they still have some flexibility. This is especially important when MTC must decide which projects should get funded first. Usually, these are the projects that are both ready to be built and have the most political backing.

These decisions need your close attention only if your community has successfully included a project in the RTP, but you are not sure when it will be funded or which specific programs will provide the money. In addition, if MTC has made a significant shift in policy or funding during the RTP process, you may need to follow up to ensure that the change is fully implemented.

For example, regional programs such as TLC (p.61) or LIFT (p.58) also need money from these

funding cycles. MTC's decisions about funding transit maintenance needs will need to be reflected in future programming and allocation decisions.

The main programs are:

- Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). About \$200 million per year, allocated every two years. The RTIP, compiled by MTC from priority lists submitted by county CMAs, is the part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) over which MTC has control.
- Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (STP/CMAQ). About \$130 million per year, allocated every two years. This is federal money over which MTC has significant discretion.

In addition, MTC has some discretion over other funding programs. For more details, refer to MTC's publication, *Moving Costs* (p.84).

If your community has a project in the RTP, ask MTC when it will be up for funding and from which program. If you need technical assistance, contact TALC (p.78).

Decision Makers and How to Contact Them

MTC Commissioners

MTC has 19 members, 16 of whom are voting members: 14 appointed by local elected officials (two each from Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and one each from Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties). The other two voting members represent regional agencies: the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

The three nonvoting members represent the state's Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency; the federal Housing and Urban Development Agency; and the U.S. Department of Transportation, respectively.

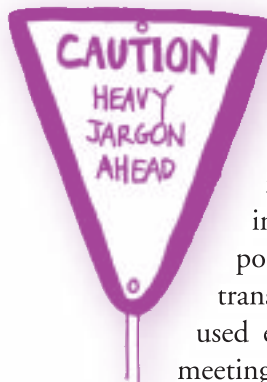
All commissioners serve four-year terms and may be reappointed indefinitely. The chair and vice chair are chosen by MTC's voting members every two years.

Committees and the Bay Area Partnership

Public discussion, recommendations and decisions are made at monthly Commission and committee meetings. Most substantive debate occurs at the committee level. Key standing committees include Planning and Operations (POC), Programming and Allocations (PAC), and Legislation.

The Bay Area Partnership brings together the top staff of MTC, county Congestion Management Agencies and transit agencies, selected city and county public works departments, ports, state and federal transportation departments, and environmental protection agencies. Many MTC decisions are discussed in Partnership meetings before being presented to the Commission as

a whole. Since 2003, the Partnership has been playing an increasingly strong role in influencing MTC positions. *Caution:* transportation jargon is used extensively in these meetings.



Public Advisory Committees and Working Groups

MTC also has three main advisory committees: an Advisory Council representing a broad range of interests, a Minority Citizens Advisory Committee, and an Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee. MTC staff keeps these committees informed of current activities and asks for their recommendations. They have no decision-making authority, but recently MTC has been asking for more of their input.

In addition, MTC often establishes “working groups” to advise the agency on specific planning processes or issues. For example, a Regional Welfare-to-Work Working Group meets every two months to share information and provide feedback to MTC staff on various efforts that affect low-income families. Although these working groups offer an op-



portunity to closely influence the inner working of specific planning processes, participating effectively often requires a high level of technical expertise on the specific issue. Working groups are generally *not* a useful avenue for large-scale public input.

How to Contact Them

Call MTC at (510) 464-7700 or visit www.mtc.ca.gov. For more details, see the Key Contacts appendix (p.79, or online at www.transcoalition.org/ access).

Key Advocacy Groups that Influence MTC

The **Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC)**, the publisher of this guide, is a coalition of over 90 public interest groups and has become MTC's key public watchdog, particularly on the RTP and smart growth processes. TALC analyzes county and regional policies, works with community groups to develop alternatives, and coordinates grassroots campaigns. For more information on TALC's trainings, technical assistance, and other services, see p.78. **Contacts:** (510) 740-3150, access@transcoalition.org, or www.transcoalition.org.

You may also wish to contact other advocacy groups that influence MTC:

- **Urban Habitat** conducts a Leadership Institute and coordinates a Social Equity Caucus (SEC) that brings together leaders from communities of color throughout the region. The SEC's **Transportation Justice**

Working Group guides their efforts on transportation issues. Contact: (510) 839-9510 or info@urbanhabitat.org. See additional information in the Key Contacts appendix (p.79).

- **Transportation Solutions and Defense Fund (TRANSDEF)** has brought several lawsuits against MTC over issues of air quality and regional transit ridership. Contact: David Schonbrunn, (415) 380-8600 or visit www.mtcwatch.org.
- The **Bay Area Bicycle Coalition (BABC)** represents local bicycle organizations on regional issues, especially the funding and implementation of a regional bicycle network that connects to transit, includes the Bay Trail, and links all Bay Area counties by bicycle. Contact: visit www.bayareabikes.org and click on the *Contact Us* page to find a representative from your county.

Local Government (Cities and Counties)

The Bay Area has more than 100 cities, counties, and other municipalities (towns, villages, etc.). Collectively known as “local government,” they are primarily responsible for maintaining local streets, roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, and multiple-use paths.

Local government decisions have a big influence on safety and access for people who walk and bicycle, as well as for people who depend on city streets: drivers and bus riders. For state highways in urban areas such as San Pablo

Avenue (State Route 123) and El Camino Real (State Route 82), local governments share control and responsibility with Caltrans.

Local governments also control most land use decisions. This gives them tremendous power over the availability of affordable housing and the potential for transit-oriented development (TOD).

In some cases, city governments also run local bus service, and/or provide or coordinate para-transit services. See Transit Agencies (p. 41) for more information on these cases.

Key Opportunities to Win Change

Local government decisions vary widely in the opportunities they present for winning change. It is beyond this guide’s scope to discuss every opportunity throughout the Bay Area. The following lists just three types of opportunities your community may want to pursue.

Update or Develop Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans

In the Bay Area, all nine counties and about half of the cities have

developed bicycle plans. A few have also developed pedestrian plans. Participating in the development or update of such a plan is a good way to make sure that your local government considers the safety and access needs of people who walk and bicycle. County-wide plans may be done either by county government or by your county’s Congestion Management Agency (p.50). Citywide plans are always made by the city.

Take Action If your local government has not yet developed a bicycle or pedestrian plan, mount a campaign to urge them to do so. Many state and federal grants are only available to jurisdictions that have completed one. For a good example of a pedestrian plan, see the City of Oakland's *Pedestrian Master Plan* at www.oaklandnet.com/government/Pedestrian/index.html.

But getting the improvements that your community needs into a plan is only half of the battle. The critical step is getting the plan funded and implemented.

Take Action If your local government already has a plan, ask the staff to apply for funding from a wide range of special programs that support non-motorized transportation, such as the statewide Safe Routes to School, MTC's Transportation for Livable Communities, and the new regional Safe Routes to Transit program created by the passage of Regional Measure 2, approved by Bay Area voters in March 2004.

Develop 'Specific Plans' for Transit-Oriented Development

All cities and counties are required to develop a General Plan that

defines general policies for future growth. More and more, local governments are also developing Specific Plans to guide new development in specific geographic areas, such as around transit stations. This is often called "infill development" because it usually happens on property that is surrounded by existing development. But infill and transit-oriented development often face significant barriers:

- They may not occur unless the local government and community actively promote it.
- Development may proceed in a haphazard fashion that does not respond to community needs.

A Specific Plan can help solve both problems.

Developing a Specific Plan offers community members the opportunity to decide in advance the type of development they want, instead of simply reacting to a finished plan. The planning process should include public workshops – sometimes known as design charrettes – to outline what the community wants. Plans may set affordable housing requirements, establish specific design standards, and/or include changes in zoning.

Ask your local government and transit agency staff to help develop and implement a Specific

Plan for your area. They may be able to apply to MTC for funding, if the RTP includes money to support Specific Plans.

Pass a County Gas Tax

Counties have the authority to ask voters to support a gas tax whose revenues can be used for building and repairing roads and for transit capital costs. Such a tax could pro-

vide important revenue for areas with large local streets and road maintenance needs. However, no Bay Area county currently has a gas tax, nor have any considered this option in recent years.

For more information about local or regional gas taxes, see the section on Transit Agencies (p.47) or the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (p.62).

Decision Makers and How to Contact Them

Land use decisions usually pass through an appointed Planning Commission. Some larger cities also have an appointed Transportation Commission that makes recommendations to the City Council. In other cities, these proposals proceed directly from staff to elected officials. The elected City Council or County Board of Supervisors always makes the final decision on issues that local governments control.

How to Contact Them

For contact information, see your phonebook or visit ABAG's website at www.abag.ca.gov/abag/local_gov/county/county.html.

For land use issues, contact your local Planning Department, Community & Economic Development Department, or similarly named office. For street, sidewalk, and bicycle issues, contact the Public Works Department. Some cities have a designated bicycle or pedestrian planner; most counties depend on their CMA for that function. In addition, more and more Public Health departments are becoming concerned about making walking and bicycling safer.

You may find allies among the city and county staff in these departments, and their support can be invaluable.

Key Advocacy Groups that Influence Local Government

Since their decisions affect people's everyday lives, local governments often have many groups lobbying them on a regular basis. The following kinds of groups may already be addressing your issue(s):

- **Pedestrian advocacy groups** exist in a few cities. Walk San Jose, Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project, and Walk San Francisco are good examples. See www.baypededs.org for others.
- **Bicycle coalitions** are active in most counties and a few cities. For a complete listing, see www.bayareabikes.org/links.htm
- **Community coalitions** bring together leaders with a variety of different interests. Examples include citywide efforts such as San Francisco's Transportation for a Livable City and Richmond Vision 2000, and neighborhood-specific coalitions such as San Francisco's Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition and San Jose's Mayfair Improvement Initiative.
- **Faith-based coalitions** bring together leaders of many faiths. Examples include the Richmond Improvement Association, Santa Clara Council of Churches,

Oakland Community Organizations, Peninsula Interfaith Action, and Contra Costa County's FaithWorks.

- **Housing advocacy groups** can help with local land use issues and Specific Plans. Members of the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) include nonprofit developers, who have extensive experience navigating local government land-use decisions. Contact NPH at (415) 989-8160 or www.nonprofithousing.org.
- **Groups representing seniors and the disabled** are often very experienced in dealing with pedestrian safety and paratransit issues. Examples include San Francisco's Senior Action Network, United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County, and independent living centers in most counties.

There are far too many local groups and important local leaders to list all of them here. For contacts in your area, contact TALC at (510) 740-3150 or access@transcoalition.org, or Urban Habitat's Social Equity Caucus Coordinator at (510) 839-9510 or info@urbanhabitat.org.

State Government

Four main parts of California's state government affect transportation planning and funding:

- The **Legislature** appropriates funding and passes bills that either provide money directly for projects or dictate how existing state funds will be distributed.
- **Caltrans** (the Department of Transportation) builds and maintains state highways, free-ways, and interregional rail. It also distributes funding for some specific programs.
- The **California Transportation Commission (CTC)** decides how to allocate Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funds.
- The **Governor** signs or vetoes legislation and appoints Caltrans and CTC officials.

Key Opportunities to Win Change

Contrary to popular belief, state funding accounts for a small portion (about 12%) of transportation funding in the Bay Area.¹⁶ Only a small share of that money is available for transit operations. Some state funds support street and road maintenance, while the State Transit Assistance (STA) and Transportation Development Act (TDA) programs support transit operations.¹⁷ STA and TDA funds are allocated according to a combination of ridership and population factors, based on established statewide for-

mulas. There is little opportunity to win changes in transit operating funding at the state level.

Lobby for State Legislation

In every two-year legislative cycle, the State Senate and Assembly consider many bills that may benefit or harm the interests of your community. In order to have a significant impact on state legislation, join statewide groups or coalitions. See Key Advocacy Groups in this section or contact your legislators for more information.

16. MTC, *2001 Regional Transportation Plan*.

17. Solano County is an exception: each year they ask MTC to allow them to use some TDA funds for road repairs.

Win Funding from Special State Programs

Caltrans has several small programs that may fund small improvements or help communities plan. Some of the most relevant include:

- **Environmental Justice Context-Sensitive Planning Grants** fund local government and nonprofit group efforts to reach out to low-income communities and communities of color to help them participate in transportation decisions.
- **Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants** fund

projects that increase affordable housing, improve the housing/jobs balance, encourage transit-oriented and mixed-use development, expand transportation choices, reflect community values, and broaden participation in transportation decisions.

- **Safe Routes to School Program** dedicates \$20-25 million per year to make it safer for children to walk and bike to and from school. Extremely effective and popular, the program is being copied around the country.

Communities Making Change

Grassroots pressure pushed Governor Davis to sign the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) bill in 1999. The bill dedicates \$20 million per year in state highway safety money for projects to make it safer for kids to walk and bicycle to school.

SR2S grew in part from research by the Latino Issues Forum and the Surface Transportation Policy Project. Their joint report found that Latinos and African Americans are at the highest risk from pedestrian-vehicle collisions, and that children are particularly vulnerable.

When the bill passed the legislature, highway interests urged a veto, but grassroots groups turned up the pressure. A statewide “Walk to School” day publicized the issue, and newspapers highlighted the impacts on children of color. In signing the bill, the Governor credited the grassroots support: only one other issue received more calls and letters supporting it that year.

Renewed in 2004, the SR2S program will continue to be vulnerable to the budget ax unless the program is made permanent.

Take Action Encourage your local government, school district, or transit agency to apply for these grants (see p.74 for grant application contact info). Even nonprofit agencies are eligible for Environmental Justice Planning Grants. (In fact, this guide was funded in part by that program.) With the current state budget crisis, all of these programs are threatened. See Key Advocacy Groups (p.74) for more information about how your community can apply for these programs.

Monitor State, Regional and Interregional Transportation Improvement Plans

Most state transportation funding for capital projects is distributed through the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), which is adopted every two years. MTC allocates most of the Bay Area's share of the STIP (75%) through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

The remaining 25% of the STIP is distributed through the Interregional Transportation Improvement Plan (ITIP). These

funds may only be spent on capital expenses, such as new highways, roadway repair, carpool lanes, rail lines, and transit stations that link regions within the state. The CTC decides how to spend ITIP funds based on recommendations from Caltrans.

For information about how to influence the RTIP, see p.63.

Win New Money with Vehicle Registration Fees

Several Bay Area counties and the region as a whole have considered seeking state legislation to allow them to levy an additional vehicle registration fee to pay for transportation improvements. The Bay Area already has a \$4 per vehicle fee for air quality improvements (Transportation Fund for Clean Air) and a \$1 per vehicle fee to pay for freeway call boxes and tow trucks. A \$1 regional fee would raise about \$6 million per year. Any fee would have to be authorized by the state legislature.

For the current status of these efforts, ask your legislators or contact TALC for technical assistance (p.78).

Decision Makers and How to Contact Them

State Legislature. Voters in each district elect 40 State Senators and 80 Members of the Assembly. Their staffs are good resources. For contact info, look under State Government, Assembly, or Senate in your phonebook or visit www.assembly.ca.gov or www.senate.ca.gov.

Caltrans and the CTC. The Governor appoints the Director of Caltrans and the members of the California Transportation Commission (CTC). For more information about the CTC, visit

www.catc.ca.gov. Key Caltrans contacts are:

- **District 4 (covering the Bay Area).** Call (510) 286-4444 or visit www.dot.ca.gov.
- **Environmental Justice or CBTP grants.** Call Norman Dong at (916) 651-6889 or Stuart Mori at (916) 651-8204, or visit www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.htm.
- **SR2S grants.** Call the Caltrans District 4 office (see above) or visit www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute2.htm.

Key Advocacy Groups that Influence State Government

Statewide coalitions can help you win in Sacramento. These groups conduct research on statewide issues, develop relationships with key state officials, analyze detailed state bills, and sometimes even write bills to be introduced in the legislature. Key groups include:

- **California Alliance for Transportation Choices.** This statewide coalition has emerged recently, uniting transit advocates and agencies, cyclists, pedestrians, and smart growth advocates. Contact: (916) 448-

1687, ext. 303 or www.ca.transportationchoices.org.

- **Latino Issues Forum.** This statewide think tank actively promotes pedestrian and bicycle safety, smart growth, and affordable housing. Contact: (415) 284-7220 or www.lif.org.
- **California Bicycle Coalition.** This group represents bicyclists on state issues and provides advocacy tools for local bike coalitions throughout the state. Contact: (916) 446-7558 or www.calbike.org.

Federal Government

Federal funding accounts for a small portion (about 12%) of the Bay Area's transportation funding.¹⁸ Most of this money is in the federal transportation spending bill, passed approximately every six years by Congress and signed by the President. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) administers the specific spending programs in the bill. The DOT includes both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Most federal spending programs delegate, to the state or to

MTC, the authority to decide which specific projects get funded. Even when the DOT retains authority to choose projects, it typically follows state or MTC recommendations. Most federal transportation spending may be used only for capital projects, such as highway or rail construction or the purchase of transit vehicles.

As a result, most of the time you will have more success in lobbying for funding at the local or regional level. However, there are a few key ways to win changes for your community at the federal level.

Key Opportunities to Win Change

Monitor Reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Bill

The most recent transportation spending bill was the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), passed in 1997. When TEA-21 expired in 2003, Congress could not agree on a new spending bill, so it continued the existing bill into 2004. As this guide goes to press, it is unclear whether Congress will soon pass

a final bill or whether it will pass another continuing resolution.

For the most part, the federal bill defines funding levels for large programs, specifies what types of projects are eligible, and how the money will be allocated. Some of these programs specifically benefit low-income communities and communities of color, such as the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program.

18. MTC, *2000 Regional Transportation Plan*.

Contact one of the Key Advocacy Groups listed on the next page to find out the status of TEA-21 reauthorization. If Congress has not yet passed a final bill, ask them how to make sure your community's interests are represented.

Win Federal 'Earmarks' for Key Projects

Sometimes, members of Congress can "earmark" a portion of an otherwise competitive federal program for a project in your community. For example, \$3 million earmarked in the Job Access and Reverse Commute program provided half of the funding for the second round of LIFT grants (p.58), approved by MTC in 2003.

Congress also has the authority to earmark funds for "Federal Demonstration" projects. For the Bay Area as a whole, this funding has amounted to about \$30 million per year in the most recent federal transportation bill.

To pursue an earmark, contact your Congressperson.

Demand Federal Oversight of MTC and Other Agencies

Every three years, MTC applies to DOT for certification to distribute federal funds and act as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Bay Area.

In 1999, many community members shared with DOT reviewers their personal stories and complaints about MTC. In their follow-up report, DOT cited this testimony and placed two procedural conditions on MTC's certification: requiring that MTC improve public participation in its planning processes, and second, that MTC include low-income groups in designing an "equity analysis" for the 2001 RTP. This federally required analysis is intended to determine whether the benefits and burdens of the plan's investments are fairly distributed. Controversy remains over whether MTC's analysis can accomplish this task.

Since then, MTC has significantly increased their outreach to low-income communities and communities of color, in some cases directly responding to criticisms that members of these communities expressed to DOT reviewers.

Similarly, you may seek oversight of other local agencies that

receive funds from federal agencies such as the DOT, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or others. In practice, federal authorities often defer to local decisions. Demanding federal oversight will not, in itself, cause a change, but it

can contribute to a larger effort to change an agency's practices.

Contact TALC for technical assistance (p.78) to find out the latest status on MTC's certification and the equity analysis.

Decision Makers and How to Contact Them

Staff people in your Senator's or Representative's office are often a good resource for federal issues. For contact information, look under Federal Government or Congress in your phonebook, or visit www.house.gov or

www.senate.gov.

See www.transcoalition.org/ access for detailed contact information on staff people at DOT who provide oversight on Civil Rights and Title VI issues.

Key Advocacy Groups that Influence Federal Government

To win in Washington, you need help from nationwide coalitions of community groups. Key groups include:

- **Surface Transportation Policy Project.** This diverse, nationwide coalition has led efforts to influence federal transportation spending for more than a decade. Contact: (202) 466-2636, stpp@transact.org or www.transact.org.
- **Transportation Equity Network.** This coalition of community

groups, coordinated by the Washington-based Center for Community Change, involves local groups in federal decisions and helps them build capacity for local campaigns. Contact: (202) 339-9343 or www.transportationequity.org.

- **Community Transportation Association of America.** This Washington-based group follows the transportation aspects of welfare reform. Contact: (202) 628-1480 or www.ctaa.org.

Key Contacts



Nonprofit Technical Assistance Providers

Further information about services offered by TALC and Urban Habitat, the two primary groups providing technical assistance on transportation equity issues to Bay Area groups, is included below. Additional groups are listed for each agency in Chapter 4 under Key Advocacy Groups and in the online version of this guide at www.transcoalition.org/access.

Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC)

Contact: (510) 740-3150 or www.transcoalition.org/access

Services: TALC offers free training and technical assistance to community groups in the Bay Area's low income and people-of-color communities. For a list of these communities, see the *Access Now!* website or contact TALC.

Training includes in-depth training sessions and brief presentations on how to participate effectively in Bay Area transportation decision making. Training is tailored to address your group's needs and local issues.

Technical assistance helps community leaders prepare effective policy proposals and focused campaign strategies on their own local transportation issues.

For Non-English Speakers: The *Access Now!* guide, training, and technical assistance are available in Spanish. Contact TALC for availability of training in other languages.

NOTE: Training and technical assistance will be available at least through June 2005, thanks to the support of funders listed on the inside front cover of this guide. TALC is seeking additional funding to continue these services beyond June 2005.

Urban Habitat

Contact: (510) 839-9510 or www.urbanhabitat.org

Services: Social Equity Caucus/Transportation Justice Working Group (SEC/TJWG). The SEC provides a forum for Bay Area social equity and environmental justice groups to discuss issues that disproportionately affect communities of color, to link local and regional efforts, and to promote a shared vision for a socially just region. The TJWG, which guides SEC efforts on transportation issues, is coordinated by Urban Habitat.

Leadership Institute for Sustainable Communities: In several all-day sessions, usually over the course of several months, these workshops bring together people-of-color leaders to delve deeply into key issues, develop skills in campaign development, research, and media, originate new strategies, and form lasting partnerships.

Government Agencies

Contact information for a few government agencies is listed here. Additional contacts are listed in the online version of this guide at www.transcoalition.org/access.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

Contact: (510) 464-7787 or www.mtc.ca.gov

Location: 101 8th St., Oakland, CA 94607

List of Commissioners: www.mtc.ca.gov/about_mtc/commphot.htm

Key staff: www.mtc.ca.gov/about_mtc/keystaff.htm

County Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs)

▪ Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA)

Contact: (510) 836-2560 or www.accma.ca.gov

Location: 1333 Broadway Ave., Suite 220, Oakland, CA 94612

▪ Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA)

(only administers transportation sales tax)

Contact: (510) 893-3347 or www.acta2002.com

Location: 426 17th St., Suite 100, Oakland, CA 94612

▪ Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA)

Contact: (925) 407-0121 or www.ccta.net

Location: 3478 Buskirk Ave., Suite 100, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

- **Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)**
(part of Marin County Public Works Department)
Contact: (415) 499-6528 or www.marintraffic.org
Location: 3501 Civic Center Dr., Room 304, San Rafael, CA 94903
- **Napa County Transportation Planning Agency (NCTPA)**
Contact: (707) 259-8631 or www.nctpa.net
Location: 1804 Soscol Ave., Suite 200, Napa, CA 94559
- **San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA)**
Contact: (415) 522-4800 or www.sfcta.org
Location: 100 Van Ness Ave., 25th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102
- **City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG)**
Contact: (650) 599-1406 or www.ccag.ca.gov
Location: 555 County Center, 5th Fl., Redwood City, CA 94063
- **San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA)**
(only administers transportation sales tax)
Contact: (650) 508-6200 or www.smcta.com
Location: 1250 San Carlos Ave., P.O. Box 3006, San Carlos, CA 94070
- **Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)**
Contact: (408) 321-5725 or www.vta.org
Location: 3331 North First St., San Jose, CA 95134
- **Solano Transportation Authority (STA)**
Contact: (707) 424-6075 or www.solanolinks.com
Location: One Harbor Center, Suite 130, Suisun City, CA 94585
- **Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA)**
Contact: (707) 565-5373 or www.sonoma-county.org/scta
Location: 520 Mendocino Ave., Suite 240, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Bay Area Transit Agencies

For a complete list of Bay Area transit agencies and their contact info, check www.transit.511.org/providers/index.asp or the blue Government pages in your phonebook.

Online Resources



A few of the most useful transportation equity websites are listed below. Additional online resources are listed in the online version of this guide at www.transcoalition.org/access.

Online Resources from Nonprofit/Community Groups

- **www.transact.org** – Surface Transportation Policy Project’s (STPP) website contains fact sheets on how transportation decisions impact social equity, the cost of housing, and economic opportunity. See the *Equity and Livability* link on their home page.
- **www.transcoalition.org** – TALC’s website lists current transportation justice campaigns and how to get involved. Click on the *Library* link for several TALC reports that address transportation justice issues.
- **www.transcoalition.org/ia** – TALC’s Instant Advocate Toolkit contains detailed, user friendly descriptions of dozens of innovative “tools” to help you win changes for your community.
- **www.transportationequity.org** – Transportation Equity Network’s website contains resources to help address the impact of transportation decisions on your community, including how to improve access to jobs and services and ensure public involvement in transportation planning.
- **www.its.berkeley.edu/publications/ejhandbook/ejlinks.html** – UC Berkeley’s Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS) lists several online resources on transportation and environmental justice issues.
- **www.vtppi.org** – Victoria Transport Policy Institute’s website lists numerous reports related to transportation equity, environmental justice, and improving public involvement in transportation planning. Click on the *Transportation Equity* link on their home page.

Online Resources from Government Agencies

- **www.mtc.ca.gov** – MTC’s website has several useful sections for community transportation advocates:
 - Click on *What’s Happening* or *Public Outreach* for upcoming meeting dates and meeting agendas.
 - Click on *Projects* for information on MTC’s Welfare to Work and Community-Based Transportation Planning (CBTP) efforts.
 - Click on *Smart Growth/TLC* for details on the Transportation for Livable Communities and Housing Incentive Program grant programs.
- **www.calepa.ca.gov/envjustice/** – Environmental Justice Program of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA): includes overview of California environmental justice issues, links to other state agencies involved in environmental justice activities, and listing of environmental justice-related state legislation.
- **www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ej2.htm** – U.S. DOT’s Environmental Justice website includes an overview of environmental justice and transportation, case studies and successful strategies from other communities, and a collection of other resources.
- **www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/index.html** – U.S. EPA’s Environmental Justice website provides an overview of environmental justice concepts, lists of available grants and training opportunities, and contact information for the federal EPA office closest to you.

Useful Publications



Numerous reports and studies have been published recently that address transportation equity issues in the Bay Area. A few of the most useful publications are listed in this appendix. Additional resources are listed in the online version of this guide at www.transcoalition.org/access.

Transportation and Land Use Coalition Publications

Several TALC reports directly address transportation equity issues in the Bay Area. For example:

- *Can't Get There from Here: the Declining Independent Mobility of California's Children and Youth*
- *Roadblocks to Health: Transportation Barriers to Healthy Communities*
- *Cleaning The Air, Growing Smarter: Transportation and Land Use Changes to Improve Public Health in Contra Costa County*
- *Revolutionizing Bay Area Transit...on a Budget: Creating a state-of-the-art rapid bus network*
- *Transportation Injustice: Why BART-to-San Jose cost overruns will devastate bus and rail service*
- *World Class Transit for the Bay Area*

These, plus over a dozen other TALC reports, are available, free of charge, from TALC's online library – www.transcoalition.org. Printed copies are available by using the order form in TALC's online library or by contacting TALC at (510) 740-3150 or library@transcoalition.org.

MTC-ABAG Publications and Library

Some key MTC publications include:

- ***Citizen's Guide to the MTC.*** Describes MTC's responsibilities, basic information on the Bay Area's transportation network, and how regional transportation projects are planned and funded.
- ***Moving Costs: A Transportation Funding Guide for the San Francisco Bay Area.*** Describes the sources of Bay Area transportation funding and how the money is spent. Includes contact information for a number of transportation agencies.
- ***Statistical Summary of Bay Area Transit Operators.*** Funding and spending data for 18 transit agencies.
- ***Lifeline Transportation Network Report.*** Describes a proposed Lifeline Transportation Network (LTN, p.58) for the Bay Area, including an analysis of gaps in this network.
- ***Regional Welfare-to-Work Transportation Plan.*** In addition to MTC's regional plan, each county has completed a local plan. These plans identify changes to the transportation system necessary to better meet the travel needs of CalWORKs clients.

MTC reports, brochures and studies are available to the public through the MTC-ABAG library, as are other periodicals and publications. Two full-time librarians are very knowledgeable, and can help you find what you need. This is a great public resource, so feel free to visit, call, or use their online catalog.

Location: 101 8th Street, Oakland
 (Downtown, next to the Lake Merritt BART station)
 Phone: (510) 464-7836
 Online: www.mtc.ca.gov/publications/library.htm

Three Key Transportation Justice Publications

It is beyond the scope of this guide to provide a complete overview of literature on environmental justice and transportation. The following lists three key publications that are good starting points for further investigation.

- ***Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism and New Routes to Equity***, edited by Robert Bullard, Glenn Johnson, and Angel Torres (South End Press, 2004). This book presents six stories of community activists around the country confronting transportation injustice and linking it to larger economic, health, environmental justice, and quality of life issues. It includes a chapter on TALC's efforts to pursue a joint equity and environmental agenda. Available in bookstores or from TALC.
- ***Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities***, by the Harvard University Civil Rights Project. This report describes the historical and current racial and economic inequities in the country's transportation system. It proposes national policy solutions that could be implemented through the federal transportation bill and other avenues. Available from www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu (click on *Research*, then *Metro/Regional Inequalities*, then *Transportation*) or call (617) 496-6367.
- ***Environmental Justice & Transportation: A Citizen's Handbook***, from UC Berkeley's Institute for Transportation Studies. The publication discusses how environmental justice could be considered in making transportation decisions, suggests how integrating environmental justice principles can improve transportation projects, and lists legal requirements. For a free copy, contact ITS: (510) 643-2591 or itspubs@socrates.berkeley.edu. Available for free download from www.its.berkeley.edu/publications/ejhandbook/ejhandbook.html.

Acronym Decoder



You don't have to know all the jargon to win the changes your community needs, but it helps to be able to keep up when the acronyms start flying. The following is a short list of acronyms used in this guide. For full definitions of more transportation jargon, see the Glossary in the online version of this guide at www.transcoalition.org/access.

ABAG: Association of Bay Area Governments

ADA: U.S. Americans with Disabilities Act

BRT: Bus Rapid Transit

CalWORKs: California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program

CBTP (MTC): Community-Based Transportation Plan

CBTP (Caltrans): Community-Based Transportation Planning grant program

CMA: Congestion Management Agency

CMAQ: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

CTC: California Transportation Commission

CTP: Countywide Transportation Plan

GRH: Guaranteed Ride Home

HIP: Housing Incentive Program

IA: Instant Advocate Toolkit

ITIP: Interregional Transportation Improvement Program

JARC: Job Access and Reverse Commute

LIFT: Low Income Flexible Transportation program

LTN: Lifeline Transportation Network

MIS: Major Investment Study

MTC: Metropolitan Transportation Commission

PAC: Programming and Allocations Committee

POC: Planning and Operations Committee

RTIP: Regional Transportation Improvement Program

RTP: Regional Transportation Plan

SEC: Social Equity Caucus

SR2S: Safe Routes to Schools

SR2T: Safe Routes to Transit

SRTP: Short-Range Transit Plan

SSA: county Social Service Agency

STA: State Transit Assistance

STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program

STP: Surface Transportation Program

TALC: Transportation and Land Use

Coalition

TANF: Temporary Assistance for

Needy Families

TDA: Transportation Development Act

TEA-21: Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

TFCA: Transportation Fund for Clean

Air

TLC: MTC's Transportation for

Livable Communities program

U.S. DOT: U.S. Department of

Transportation

Want to Learn More?

TALC offers **free** services to community groups in low-income and people-of-color communities in the San Francisco Bay Area: training, technical assistance, and free copies of this guide. TALC's services are available for non-English speakers as well. (See p.78 for details.)

To learn more, call us at (510) 740-3150, visit www.transcoalition.org/ access, or send in the form below.

- Call me to schedule a free Training or Presentation**
- Call me to provide Technical Assistance on the following issue:**
- Send me additional copies of the *Access Now!* guide in English Spanish (check one).**

Single orders are **free**. For two copies or more, please send a check for \$2 each to cover postage (make check payable to "TALC"). If cost is an issue, contact us about discounted or free copies.

Name

Organization

Address

City and Zip

Phone

E-mail

mail this form to: TALC
405 14th Street, Suite 605
Oakland, CA 94612

fax this form to: (510) 740-3131

call us at: (510) 740-3150



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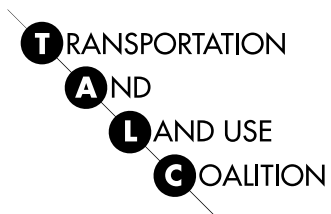
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