

Transportation for a Livable Contra Costa County

Public-interest recommendations for the new Measure C

What is Measure C?

Measure C is a 1/2% transportation sales tax, approved by Contra Costa County voters in 1988 and set to expire in 2009. During the upcoming year, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority will see significant public debate over the measure's renewal. Under current law, renewal requires approval by 2/3 (67%) of the voters. Experience shows that the plan will only pass if it is developed with an extensive public process that draws the full and unanimous support of community members.

If passed, the new Measure C would raise \$1.6 billion in transportation funding, last for another 20 years, expiring in 2029, and improve the "Growth Management Program" initiated by the first Measure C. The massive funding in a Measure C renewal offers Contra Costa County an unprecedented opportunity to choose investments and policies that will expand our transportation choices, rein in sprawl, and build a safer and more livable county.

Principles for Measure C

The signers of this platform urge the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to develop a plan for the new Measure C based on the following principles:

- Strengthen the Urban Limit Line;
- Provide transportation choices to give residents an alternative to traffic congestion;
- Invest in a transportation system that provides basic mobility for all existing communities and residents;
- Fund a balance of transportation projects and programs, recognizing the county's diverse needs and changing demographics;
- Support coordinated transportation and land use planning that includes smart growth and adequate affordable housing and that requires new growth to pay for the infrastructure it needs;
- Promote social justice by prioritizing the needs of communities that have been historically disenfranchised; and
- Distribute transportation spending to geographic areas by population.

Developing this Platform

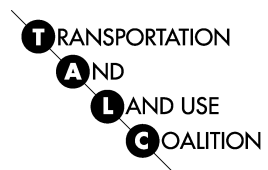
This platform was developed by a collaboration of public interest groups based on three public strategy sessions – held in Pittsburg, Concord, and Richmond – that drew more than 170 participants, along with outreach to more than 20 organizations. Brought together by the Transportation and Land Use Coalition, this collaboration includes representatives of environmental, labor, social justice, faith, civic, and other public interest groups.

To endorse the platform, to see the latest endorsement list, suggest changes, or to get more information, contact:

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Working together for a sustainable
and socially just Bay Area

Creating an Effective Growth Management Program

The way we grow has a tremendous impact on our transportation systems: unchecked suburban sprawl has played a major role in creating the county's current gridlock. If communities are to maintain their unique character and improve quality of life, Measure C's Growth Management Program (GMP) must help define the areas of future growth, prevent congestion caused by sprawl development, and encourage development patterns that promote alternatives to driving alone.

The four GMP recommendations (A-D) below point to how an effective Growth Management Program can steer development in ways that will improve and take advantage of our existing transportation infrastructure, rather than overwhelm it. In order to achieve Measure C's growth management and transportation objectives, jurisdictions should also adopt a range of policies to help guide better planning. These policies should address issues such as slope-density standards, tree and creek preservation, scenic and conservation easements, inclusionary zoning for affordable housing, and minimum densities around transit. Such policies, along with the GMP recommendations below, are necessary to achieve better coordination of transportation and land use planning and to create a more livable Contra Costa County.

A. Simpler, More Effective, Enforceable GMP

The new GMP should be simpler to monitor, be more effective at protecting communities from the negative impacts of suburban sprawl, and have a better enforcement mechanism. The new GMP should:

- (a) Create an Independent Oversight Committee to monitor and enforce compliance, with sufficient staff resources to ensure it has the information necessary to do its job. This committee would consist entirely of private citizens and would have the responsibility of affirming compliance with the GMP before Measure C could be distributed.
- (b) Require annual reporting by jurisdictions;
- (c) Award Local Streets and Roads, Smart Growth, and Mitigation funds (items #6, #7, and #8, below) only to jurisdictions that comply with the GMP; and
- (d) Require, for jurisdictions that are not in compliance with the GMP, that CCTA remove those projects that would have specifically served the jurisdiction's growth from CCTA's Strategic Plan and from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

B. Strengthen the Urban Limit Line

The new GMP should take politics out of the Urban Limit Line (ULL) by making it a voter-approved policy, subject to change only by a vote of the people. Measure C should also require adoption of city Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB's) which are consistent with the County ULL. Both the county ULL and city UGB's should use a planning horizon of 20-30 years, to reflect the 20 year planning horizon of Measure C.

C. Communities must have and comply with State-Approved Housing Elements

Provision of adequate affordable housing at all income levels is essential to maintaining vital communities and preventing "leapfrog" development beyond the Urban Limit Line. The GMP must require jurisdictions to have a state-approved Housing Element in their general plan and to achieve the objectives established in their Housing Elements at all income levels.

D. New development must pay for itself

The new Growth Management Program (GMP) should revise the development mitigation fee program to be more consistent and effective in requiring new development to fully pay for the infrastructure it needs.

(see next page for Proposed Transportation Investments)

Proposed Transportation Investments in Measure C

Congestion Relief through Transportation Choices

1. Countywide Web of Express Buses– \$150 million (9% of Measure C’s \$1.6 billion)

A comprehensive network of express buses could provide door-to-door service that picks people up in their neighborhoods, speeds past clogged traffic on existing and new carpool/bus lanes on highways 680, 80, and 4, and drops people directly at work. New comfortable buses would run on 11 new routes and improve 10 existing routes, many running as frequently as BART, connecting all corners of the county to major job centers.

2. East County Rail Extension– \$160 million (10%)

eBART could expand BART’s reach to East County, running the same hours and just as often as BART. Since it would use existing train tracks, eBART with four new stations could be built sooner and more affordably than a one-station BART extension, whose cost far outstrips available funding. The eBART extension should be built to downtown Brentwood and funding should require that jurisdictions surrounding each new eBART station must plan for smart growth around the stations, that new service be run by BART using BART personnel, and that the project includes adequate feeder transit service.

3. Ferries for Antioch, Martinez, Hercules, and Richmond– \$80 million (5%)

New ferry routes could serve San Francisco commuters from terminals in Antioch, Martinez, Hercules/Rodeo, and Richmond. The new service must use environmentally-friendly new boats, be supported by feeder transit service, and plan for smart growth around the new terminals.

4. Highway Improvements that increase Transportation Choices– \$160 million (10%)

Highway funding in Measure C should only support targeted highway improvements that make it more convenient to carpool and ride mass transit, which 31% of the county’s commuters already do. These improvements would include gap closures in the county’s carpool/bus lane network and direct carpool/bus lane connectors at specific interchanges. To support the Urban Limit Line, the measure should not fund transportation projects that would spur growth outside the ULL, such as the Highway 4 Bypass, Vasco Road, SR239 from Brentwood to Tracy, or the Buchanan Bypass.

5. Commuter Information and Coordinated Planning– \$50 million (3%)

The Contra Costa Commute Alternative Network (CC CAN) provides valuable information and incentive programs (such as “guaranteed ride home” and ridematching) to help the 31% of county commuters who use carpools, vanpools, and transit every day. In addition, planning funds would support active coordination of transportation and growth planning throughout the county, including the Growth Management Program.

Smart Growth Incentives (available to jurisdictions that meet GMP conditions)

6. Maintain Local Streets and Roads– \$160 million (10%)

Cities and the county need adequate funding to fix potholes, resurface streets, and otherwise maintain local streets and roads and other local transportation infrastructure.

7. Smart Growth and Affordable Housing to Reduce Commuting– \$160 million (10%)

Shaping Our Future calls for aggressively promoting smart growth through infill development and by meeting the housing needs of the whole county’s population, including low-income and very-low-income workers such as teachers, child-care workers, sales clerks, and police and fire personnel. One component of this program would provide additional transportation funds to cities and the county when they approve transit-oriented housing and mixed-use developments, to mitigate the impacts of those developments. A second component would provide seed capital for affordable housing near mass transit, to reduce people’s commuting needs.

8. Mitigation for Transportation Impacts– \$80 million (5%)

Vehicles are the largest source of air and water pollution, and growth facilitated by an expanding highway network threatens precious open space. Mitigation funds should reverse the cumulative and regional impacts of transportation projects on our air, water, and land. These funds could support mitigation such as protection of open space at-risk for development, restoration of creeks and wetlands affected by runoff, and purchase of wildlife habitat and corridors threatened with interruption by transportation corridors.

Proposed Transportation Investments in Measure C (continued)

Community Transportation

9. Mobility for seniors and the disabled– \$200 million (13%)

The percentage of people over 65 is expected to double by 2020; more and more people will need to rely on special transit services for seniors and the disabled. Measure C should support paratransit and other services, including those mandated but not funded by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as improvements over and above ADA requirements.

10. Better Feeder and Local Transit to Provide Mobility for All– \$240 million (15%)

More than 30% of county residents do not own or drive a car – mostly children, seniors, the disabled, and low-income families. These neighbors need a more convenient, reliable, and frequent local bus system to get to work, health care, shopping, schools, and other services. Because the previous Measure C provided so little funding for buses, current bus service operates well below service standards in many areas. Improvements could include: better connections, shuttles to BART, more frequent buses, more direct routes, flexible demand-responsive service in some areas, and more evening, weekend and overnight service where appropriate.

11. Safe Transportation for Children– \$80 million (5%)

Measure C should support a new program to safely and conveniently move children between home, school, and activities. Projects could include free youth bus passes, school buses, safe routes to school, child-care shuttles, and other innovative services.

12. Safety and Access for Pedestrians and Bicyclists– \$80 million (5%)

Walking and bicycling, the healthiest and most environmentally sound modes of transportation, give life to commercial areas and promote smart growth and transit use. But a statewide study found Contra Costa County is the second-most dangerous county in the state to be a pedestrian. Measure C should fund the county's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which lays out projects and policies that make it safer and easier to get around on foot and by bicycle: sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, bike lanes, trails, and others.

Overall Policies Guiding Transportation Spending

In addition, Measure C should include the following three policies to guide funding:

Support local job development: All construction funded by Measure C must use a state-approved apprenticeship program to ensure Measure C's investments provide good jobs for local residents.

Good roads: All projects funded by Measure C must fully consider the needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclists and persons with disabilities), for example, by providing sidewalks and bike lanes as a part of new road construction.

Union Recognition of Transportation Workers: To acknowledge that our transportation system depends on a quality workforce, Measure C should support the expansion of union recognition along with expansions of transit services.