



# Bay Area Monitor

A Bimonthly Review of Regional Issues in the Bay Area

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## The Golden Gate Bridge: Holding It All Together



Schoolchildren around the country would send in their pennies and the federal government would probably provide emergency funds to help rebuild the Golden Gate Bridge if it were damaged in an earthquake. Ironically, intact but seismically fragile, the bridge has not had the same financial appeal. Nevertheless, bridge officials have been working for several years to strengthen the bridge and find the funding to do the job.

The Golden Gate Bridge is an icon which represents the Bay Area and California to the world. In addition, it is a heavily travelled link in the region's transportation network, carrying over 40 million people per year, many of them daily commuters.

Although it suffered no significant damage in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, studies show that the 66-year old structure could fail in an earthquake 7.0 or greater on the nearby San Andreas or Hayward faults. The estimated replacement cost, in 2003 dollars, is over \$2.1 billion. The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, which operates the bridge, is at the midpoint of a three-phase seismic retrofit program estimated to cost \$392 million.

Phase I of the retrofit, which lasted from August 1997 to December 2001, retrofitted the North Viaduct section of the bridge, between the northern tower and the anchorage where the bridge meets land (the anchorage will be retrofitted in Phase III). The steel towers which support the roadway were removed and rebuilt on new foundations, and the five truss spans which make up the viaduct were connected to move as a single unit in an earthquake.

Phase II, now underway, is strengthening the South Viaduct and Anchorage Housing, the Fort Point Arch, and the South Pylons. Work began in the summer of 2002 and will last for four years. Like Phase I, which created little disruption for the public using the bridge and adjacent areas, Phase II work will have no impact on traffic, although visitors will have less access to Fort Point during the week.

Finally, if funding is obtained, Phase III will retrofit the main suspension span and towers, the South Pier and Fender, the North Anchorage and a pylon at the north end of the bridge. This part of the program is estimated to take 3.5 years to complete once it is funded.

The Golden Gate Bridge is part of the national highway system, and capital improvement projects on it are eligible for federal funds. Bridge officials originally estimated that costs for the seismic program could be funded 50% by the federal government, with the remaining funds coming from local, regional and state sources. When federal funding was not obtained by the beginning of Phase I, the district paid for the project using \$71 million in bridge tolls, with the assurance that this money would count as a local match for funds received in later phases. Phase II has received \$83 million in federal funds, approximately half the total estimated cost of \$161 million. The remainder is being paid by state and regional transportation funds and from bridge tolls.

If federal funds are to match 50/50 with other funding for the full seismic retrofit, approximately

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## 'Clean Air'port Gets Recognition

In recognition for outstanding efforts to promote clean air, the Port of Oakland/Oakland International Airport has been honored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) as a 2003 Bay Area Clean Air Champion. At a public ceremony on July 16, the 2003 Clean Air Champions were honored for their contributions to cleaner air in the region.

Each year, the BAAQMD requests nominations of individuals or groups who have made exceptional efforts to improve air quality, and who live, work or have a location in the Bay Area. Champions must exert exceptional effort to promote clean air. They must be motivated by a dedication to improving air quality. Their actions must be voluntary and not required by their jobs or by regulations. A selection committee consisting of representatives of the BAAQMD, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the American Lung Association of the Bay Area, RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, and radio stations KCBS All News 74, LIVE 105 and ALICE @ 93.7 reviews the nominations, selects the finalists, personally interviews them and picks the champions.

The Oakland Airport takes pride in being ahead of other airports in the Bay Area, and most airports in the rest of the country, in adopting environmentally-friendly programs. Airport projects that earned the designation of Clean Air Champion include a compressed natural gas (CNG) station that serves the public and the 30 CNG light vans and trucks in the airport's service fleet.

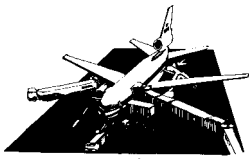
At least 50 percent of taxis, shuttles, and ground service vehicles that operate at the Oakland airport are required to be alternative-fuel vehicles. This

requirement is more stringent than for any other airport in Northern California. A fleet of electric vehicles—an electric SUV and 15 smaller electric vehicles—provides service and security at airport parking lots. The airport acquired 30 light-duty electric vehicles, half of which are used by the airport and half by the Port of Oakland. Airport parking lots have 8 electric charging stations for airport and public use. In addition, airlines and other airport tenants are encouraged to adopt environmentally sound practices.

In 1997, the Port of Oakland, which, like the airport, is under the management of the Port of Oakland Authority, began its Vision 2000 Maritime Development Plan for expansion and improvement. Anticipating that construction and operation of the expanded facility would result in an increase in air-polluting emissions that could not be abated, the Plan's Air Quality Mitigation Program pledged \$8.98 million toward implementation of measures to offset these emissions.

To minimize air pollution during construction, the Port explored innovative control measures. AC Transit was provided with funds to repower 27 transit buses with lower emitting engines and soot filters. These buses are dedicated to routes serving the port vicinity. Funding was also provided for AC Transit to employ and train residents of neighborhoods impacted by emissions from the Port. A second project involved repowering and retrofitting a tugboat berthed at the Port with a lower-emitting diesel engine. A \$5.2 million project to

*(continued on page 8)*



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The *Bay Area Monitor* provides an impartial, independent view of agency decisions and activities and other important

Bay Area issues. Material and viewpoints are chosen by LWVBAEF to provide a comprehensive view of regional topics. Information is gathered from many sources; LWVBAEF is not responsible for their accuracy.

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## County by County: New Partners for Regional Planning

County congestion management agencies (CMAs) are being encouraged to participate more extensively in smart growth planning in the region through a series of grants from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The new program, called Transportation Planning and Land Use Solutions (T-PLUS), will be financed for three years, with annual grants totalling \$1.35 million going to CMAs that sign onto the memoranda of understanding and funding agreements. All nine counties are participating in the first year of T-PLUS.

While responsibilities of CMAs vary by county, they are primarily responsible for transportation planning. Their governing boards are local elected officials who are also responsible for land use decisions in their own jurisdictions. Although a majority of Commissioners on MTC's 19-member board are also local elected officials, CMAs often have the best opportunities to discuss the connections between local land use planning and county and regional transportation planning, because every jurisdiction in a county can be represented on a CMA.

The general scope of work for T-PLUS focuses on four transportation/land use priorities for MTC:

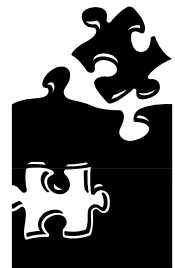
- The Transportation for Livable Communities/Housing Incentives Programs (TLC/HIP). These two programs fund projects which integrate transportation with land use, such as streetscapes, improved transit access, and bike and pedestrian improvements, or which encourage high density housing near transit.
- Smart Growth policy development and program implementation. Following the completion of the Smart Growth Strategy (see August/September 2002 issue), MTC is encouraging workshops, the development of modeling tools and best practices "toolkits", and other incentives and strategies to implement the smart growth concepts adopted for the region.
- MTC Resolution 3434 planning and implementation. Resolution 3434 focuses on transit corridors and regional transit policies, which need local actions such as transit-oriented development to be successful.
- Mitigation programs. Transportation-related impacts can be reduced or offset with mitigation

programs such as more extensive transit usage and ridesharing, and the use of mitigation banks.

Each CMA's approach to the new program, while having similar elements, is somewhat unique. Certain parts of the T-PLUS program will apply to all CMAs that participate; all will assist MTC with the monitoring and delivery of the TLC/HIP program, will provide an annual report to MTC, and are expected to address all four general areas to some degree. Beyond that, CMAs can tailor elements of the general workscope to fit their local needs and opportunities.

The variety of uses for the T-PLUS grants was evident at a presentation by CMAs to the MTC Planning and Operations Committee. During the first year of the program, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties will be working on transit-oriented development (TOD) planning, particularly for areas near current or proposed BART stations. Marin and Sonoma Counties will be developing their tool kits, while Solano and Santa Clara Counties will be expanding the use of toolkits which have already been developed. San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties plan to increase the use of incentives for appropriately located housing. Countywide TLC/HIP plans will be developed and implemented in Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma Counties. Napa is also using its resources during the first year to develop a countywide development strategy that is intended to integrate not only transportation and land use issues but also issues related to economic development, housing, the environment, and potential institutional changes to foster increased inter-jurisdictional collaboration. Other options, such as workshops, implementing transportation impact fees and working on corridor plans, are also part of many CMA work plans for the first year.

A kickoff meeting in June allowed participants to share tools and ideas and brought together staff and board representatives from MTC and each CMA. Along with discussions on adding staff, using toolkits and working with ABAG on housing allocations, participants raised other issues. Several local elected officials commented that the counties differ  
(continued on page 7)



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## Measure of Success: Renewing Transportation Sales Taxes



For more information:

Contra Costa Transportation Authority, 925-407-0121;

[www.ccta.net](http://www.ccta.net)

San Francisco County Transportation Authority, 415-522-

4800; [www.sfcta.org](http://www.sfcta.org)

City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (CCAG), 650-599-1406

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, 408-321-

5725; [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org)

Over the next 18 months, voters in at least three Bay Area counties will be asked to consider renewing their transportation sales taxes, although current measures will not expire until 2008 or 2009. If approved, the reauthorization measures will bring the stability of long term funding for major transportation projects and programs in San Francisco, San Mateo and Contra Costa Counties. With many projects still only partially complete, and a dismal state funding picture, county transportation authorities are hoping to convince voters that transportation sales taxes are more important than ever.

Transportation sales taxes have become a financing option used by most of the urban counties in the state. Recent updates of countywide transportation plans have shown that without local funding there will continue to be many projects needed but not built. Although these taxes are vulnerable to economic downturns, they provide a funding source that seems more predictable and secure than state funding, and offer a reliable source of local matching funds to help secure grants from other agencies. For example, in San Mateo County, Measure A funds will total approximately \$1 billion over 20 years; they have already helped bring another \$1 billion in matching state and federal grants. In Santa Clara County, where the drop in sales tax revenue has severely impacted plans for both current and reauthorized sales tax measure income, officials are polling residents on a potential new measure to raise extra funds needed to complete the plans.

The long lead time for these new measures reflects changes in transportation funding since the

original measures were passed in the late 1980s. "Self-help" counties, those with transportation sales taxes, initially decided to use local funds to offset cutbacks and limitations in state transportation funds in order to complete projects which would otherwise have remained on wish lists. The first "focused" self-help tax measures were required to sunset—10 years for Santa Clara County, 20 years in Contra Costa and San Mateo Counties—and needed only a majority vote. However, due to subsequent initiatives and court cases, these taxes will now require a 2/3 vote for reauthorization. Even with attractive expenditure plans, ballot measures may need good timing, a strong union of diverse interests and/or more than one try to pass.

San Francisco's Measure B, approved in 1989 and due to expire in 2009, would be replaced by a measure which is scheduled for the November 2003 ballot. It would extend the sales tax for 30 years and is likely to raise \$2.6 billion over its lifetime. According to the expenditure plan, the majority of the funds would be used to extend Muni Metro from the South of Market to Chinatown, provide the San Francisco share of funding for Caltrain electrification and extension to the Transbay Terminal, and rebuild Doyle Drive, the dangerous link between San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. The plan also includes infrastructure for a bus rapid transit network and for ferries. Programs which would be funded include paratransit, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and transportation system planning. Some of the projects, such as the Muni Third Street Rail, would be funded only for a first phase; the measure includes preliminary planning to enable extensions beyond 30 years.

Sales tax renewal measures in both San Mateo and Contra Costa Counties are aimed at the November 2004 ballot, although changes in the political and economic climate could mean a delay. If the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) decides to move forward with another sales tax measure, it would probably also be on the November 2004 ballot. In San Mateo, a 20-year renewal of Measure A, which expires at the end of 2008, could bring in an estimated \$1.5 billion, and in Contra Costa, renewal of Measure C for 20 years beginning

### Transportation Sales Tax Measures in Brief

	San Francisco	San Mateo	Contra Costa
<b>Orig. Measure</b>	B	A	C
Orig. Passed	1989	1988	1988
Duration	20 yr	20 yr	20 yr
Expires	2009	2009	2009
<b>New Measure</b>			
On ballot	Nov. 2003	Nov. 2004?	Nov. 2004?
Duration	30 yr	20 yr?	20 yr
Est. Total Income	\$2.6 billion	\$1.5 billion	\$1.6 billion

in 2009 could raise an estimated \$1.6 billion. Polling in both counties shows that voters are pleased with the results of the current sales taxes and are likely to support a renewal.

However, the next step is to develop expenditure plans tailored to fit within the anticipated income while accommodating as many interests as possible. San Mateo cities are now generating their initial proposals for an expenditure plan, which will be incorporated into a prioritized list by the end of the year. Many projects funded by Measure A, such as Caltrain service across the Dumbarton railroad bridge, are not complete and will need additional sales tax funds, while proposals for new projects are also surfacing.

In Contra Costa, initial "wish lists" from the transportation authority's city/county subcommittees totalled approximately \$4.5 billion, far more than could be included in any final expenditure plan. Polling shows that popular choices in Contra Costa include a fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel, extending Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) service, support for transit for the elderly and disabled, and maintaining local streets and roads. Suggestions from city/county subcommittees, interest groups, and a citizens advisory committee ranged from a transit-heavy proposal with no money specified for the Caldecott bore, to a plan which focused over 50% of the funds on highways and local streets and roads. A draft environmental document to be released in December 2003 will include three alternatives; a final plan will be picked in spring 2004.

**T**he BART District and the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA), two multi-county transportation agencies, have been involved in the expenditure plan process in all three counties. San Francisco's expenditure plan includes \$10.5 million for BART station access, system and capacity projects. Sales tax funds from Contra Costa helped fund the BART extension from Concord to Pittsburg/Bay Point, but the new expenditure plan is unlikely to support a full BART extension farther east, favoring less costly diesel units on existing rail lines instead. San Mateo County, which has just welcomed new BART service, could fund studying a BART extension south from Millbrae. In Santa

Clara County, stations that will probably be whittled from plans for the BART extension to San Jose could be restored with a new sales tax measure.

The WTA, which is planning more extensive ferry service in the region, has been actively educating sales tax expenditure plan participants about its financial needs. WTA is working to secure federal funding, as well as an earmarked portion of any increased bridge tolls (see *October/November 2002 issue*), but local sales tax measures will be essential for capital expenditures such as building terminals and may also be needed for additional operating costs. WTA would receive \$5 million from San Francisco's renewal measure to improve downtown ferry terminals to accommodate increased ridership. WTA plans for Contra Costa County show potential ferry terminals at Richmond, Hercules/Rodeo, Martinez, Pittsburg and Antioch, but the county's expenditure plan analysis includes service from only the first two, estimated to cost \$31 million. In San Mateo County, WTA is proposing service from South San Francisco and Redwood City to San Francisco, and possibly the East Bay. A South San Francisco terminal would cost approximately \$10 million.

**B**y early 2004 both Contra Costa and San Mateo Counties will be well on their way to putting renewal measures on the ballot and VTA will be close to a decision point on its options. The success of San Francisco's November tax measure, as well as other political and economic factors such as any potential increase in the state sales tax, will affect the timetable for bringing the next renewal measures to the voters. Meanwhile, state legislators may offer voters a measure to pass transportation sales taxes with a 55% vote rather than 2/3 approval. Legislators have also looked at a proposal that would require only a majority vote for taxes accompanied by specific spending plans and oversight bodies, such as transportation sales taxes, while requiring the 2/3 vote for general taxes. Either of these changes would make it easier to pass transportation sales tax measures, although opponents to lowering the vote requirement note that it would make it less important to secure broad-based community support prior to approving an expenditure plan for the ballot.

Political factors affecting sales tax renewals may include the controversy over a recent VTA decision to use some of the proceeds of its latest sales tax measure, set to begin in 2006, to repay bonds that will partially fund current VTA operations, although this use was not anticipated when Santa Clara voters approved renewing the sales tax in 2000. Expenditure plans submitted to voters in the future may need to include either more flexibility or greater restrictions on how tax money could be used.

Local transportation sales taxes are becoming a required part of the funding mix in the Bay Area, relied upon for local matching funds and to complete particularly desirable local projects. As such, they will soon lose their status as "new money" in the transportation funding pot. However, they are not a guaranteed source of money, both because they suffer in economic downturns, and because the voters can deny a renewal. Like Santa Clara, other self-help counties may find that in spite of careful long-range planning, projects will have to go on the shelf until voters are once again inclined to add to their tax burden. Therefore, polls, advisory groups, and plenty of lead time are seen as essentials in successfully bringing the upcoming measures to the voters. *Leslie Stewart*

## Tough Questions, Hard Choices: Transportation 2030 Hits the Road

**T**ransportation 2030, the current revision of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), will become more "up close and personal" this fall. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) kicked off the plan review with a 450-attendee Transportation Summit in June. In the next few months the agency will be holding community meetings and forums with interest groups to tackle some of the tough questions about future transportation plans for the region.

Key issues discussed at the Summit and on the agenda for the smaller meetings include:

**\* How to create a plan that is a vision of what the region should be, not just a list of what can be done with funds already guaranteed to arrive.** One option is to make the plan a "Big Tent" that goes beyond the financially constrained plan required for air quality and federal funds planning. The Big Tent would create a broader plan that also describes the rest of the vision, including related areas such as air quality and smart growth, and identifies some of the potential sources of funding for this larger network of projects and programs.

**\* How to define the goals and objectives of the plan, which may differ from the goals in the previous version.** The six major goals adopted in the 2001 RTP were mobility, safety, equity, environment, economic vitality and community vitality. Proposed new goals could address: rehabilitation/maintenance, transit connectivity, reliable travel choices, smart growth, clean air, "lifeline" mobility, and safety/security. Discussion is needed on whether these are appropriate groupings, how progress will be measured, and whether other concerns should be added. MTC will also need to coordinate the new goals as much as possible with the transportation performance measures which were recently adopted as required by law (see *August/September 2003 issue*).

**\* How to distribute the funding when it becomes available.** If there is not enough money to go around, how much goes where? The 2001 RTP, which was financially constrained, designated ap-

proximately 90% of the money expected for the planning period as "committed funds", meaning they were earmarked because of voter mandates, state or federal laws, or previous MTC decisions. Many of the projects in the 2001 RTP using committed funds are not complete because the planning period extended into the Transportation 2030 time-frame. Some decisions will need to be made on whether all the projects for which prospective funds have been committed will continue to be part of Transportation 2030. If so, they will once again use 90% of the funding. If not, and some of the committed funding is freed up for other projects, what will they be and how will they be chosen?

For the 2001 RTP, MTC commissioners agreed to fund 100% of any shortfalls for transit capital needs and key local streets and roads. If this policy is maintained for Transportation 2030, \$8.2 billion—almost all of the \$9.6 billion in uncommitted funds—could go to these shortfalls. Including all local streets and roads, the shortfalls could total \$14 billion. Likewise, there are enough new project needs to use all the available funds without providing any money for maintenance and operation of the existing system. Ongoing regional traveler information programs, transit connectivity and freeway service patrols may also be competing for uncommitted funds, together with bicycle projects, lifeline transportation for people dependent on public transit, and other regional and local priorities. Although some of these might be financed through additional funds included in the Big Tent, such as additional sales tax revenues or a regional gas tax, the financially constrained portion of the plan will need to reflect some very difficult choices.

**\* How to pull together transportation and land use for the best transportation investments.** With the completion of the Smart Growth project, MTC has a commitment to integrate some of those policies into the Transportation 2030 Plan. As part of the 2001 RTP, the agency tripled the size of the Transportation for Livable Communities/Housing Incentive Programs, which might be further expanded or leveraged through programs such as T-PLUS (see *article page 3*). The Commission could also adopt a



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online at [http://  
www.mtc.ca.gov/  
T2030/](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/T2030/)

specific policy explicitly linking transportation planning to Smart Growth objectives. Some transit expansion funds distributed by MTC could be conditioned on the presence of supportive land use policies such as transit-oriented development plans.



MTC will make some decisions by the end of 2003 on the percentage of committed and uncommitted funds which will be allocated to regional or local projects. If participants in community meetings and other forums confirm the early responses to these planning questions, Transportation 2030 will be shaping up as a Big Tent plan, including far more issues and non-confirmed funding sources than before. It will link transportation planning, and even project funding, to smart growth objectives for the region.

In early 2004, countywide meetings will be held by the congestion management agencies to look at local concerns that need to be accommodated. These will be the next opportunities to review and comment on the key components of the Transportation 2030 Plan after the fall meetings. *Leslie Stewart*

*The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Education Fund will be hosting one of the community forums on Transportation 2030. The forum is set for November 22 in Vallejo, but some details were preliminary at press time. Please contact LWVBAEF at 510-839-1608 or edfund@lwvba-ca.org to be placed on the notification list for this event.*

## **Golden Gate Bridge**, *continued from page 2*

\$113 million will be needed from the federal government for Phase III, with \$47 million from local sources. In July the District received \$7.8 million in federal funds as a first installment of the federal portion, but the local funding sources still need to be identified.

Recently, federal funding for the bridge has been obtained not only as protection against future earthquakes, but also as an acknowledgement that strengthening the bridge will protect against the newly recognized threat of terrorist activity. While total costs for new security measures at the bridge are hard to determine, they are adding to the financial woes of the district, which has recently cut its bus services and raised bridge tolls to reduce budget deficits.

Despite financial difficulties, bridge staff and board members are committed to keeping the bridge sound and safe. In addition to service cuts and increased tolls, they are appealing to the many visitors and other bridge lovers for support through innovative strategies which include a Golden Gate Bridge Christmas ornament\* and a donation box at the visitors plaza near the south end of the bridge. Proceeds from the donation box are earmarked for bridge maintenance and repair. With enough help from friends, federal or otherwise, the district hopes to complete the full Golden Gate Bridge seismic retrofit before the next Bay Area earthquake tests the landmark structure. *Leslie Stewart*

*\*The holiday ornament can be ordered from the district's website, [www.goldengatebridge.org](http://www.goldengatebridge.org)*

## **T-PLUS**, *continued from page 3*

greatly in their approaches to land use and transportation decisions. In Santa Clara, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority was created to merge transportation and land use decisions, and San Mateo's CCAG does both, but in Sonoma and Contra Costa Counties, local officials seem concerned about giving CMAs additional responsibility for integrating transportation with land use.

Steve Heminger, MTC Executive Director, noted that at the June 2003 Transportation 2030 Summit, there was support for smart growth but a strong desire to keep local control. Marci Coglianese, Councilmember from Rio Vista, observed that many cities are already using alternative transportation modes, working with urban limit lines, and using the concepts in the TLC program, but are uncomfortable with the words "smart growth" because of the implication that a regional policy will be implemented from the top down.

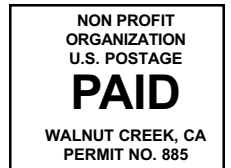
The T-PLUS program is intended to move funding from the regional to the local level, providing the flexibility to implement the regional policies at the local level in ways which are most appropriate to the variety of communities in the region. In a recent letter from the CMAs to the ABAG/MTC Task Force, Mike Zdon, CMA Moderator, stated, "The T-PLUS Program recognizes the importance of planning comprehensively. It strengthens the CMA, MTC and ABAG coordinative process. Most importantly, T-PLUS, which recognizing the overall policy guidance of regional agencies, provides local land use and transportation decision makers (who sit on CMA boards) the flexibility to adapt regional policy to specific local needs." *Leslie Stewart*

**CMAs** are countywide agencies responsible for preparing a county's Congestion Management Program. Created by legislation and Prop 111 in 1990, they have since been made optional, but most Bay Area counties still have them. They often serve as a county's sales tax authority. Information on the CMAs and county sales tax authorities, including links to websites, can be found online at <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/T2030/cmas.htm>

League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Education Fund

# Bay Area Monitor

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What is T-PLUS? See page 3

## Clean Airport, *continued from page 2*

provide partial funding to marine terminal operators to replace or retrofit diesel engines of cargo handling equipment is expected to make a significant reduction in diesel emissions. An ongoing project involves studying ways to reduce diesel emissions of trucks serving terminal operators, especially vehicles based in the Port's neighborhood. (See *September/October 1999 and April/May 2001 issues of the Bay Area Monitor for more on the Port's Air Quality Mitigation Program.*)

### Upcoming Events:

October 15-16, FireWise Community Workshop on Creating FireSafe Communities, San Ramon. [amber@diablofiresafe.org](mailto:amber@diablofiresafe.org) or 510-893-9888.

October 21-23, San Francisco Estuary Project's 6th Biennial State of the Estuary Conference, Oakland. [http://www.abag.ca.gov/events/estuary\\_state](http://www.abag.ca.gov/events/estuary_state) or 510-622-2465.

October 24. ABAG General Assembly, *Under Construction: Building a New Model of Comprehensive Regional Planning and Governance*, San Francisco. <http://www.abag.ca.gov> or 510-464-7900.

## Update: Clean Ferries



The Legislature sent two bills to the Governor (still unsigned at press time) that are important to the San Francisco Bay Water Transit Authority (WTA). SB 915 (Perata) would adopt the Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) prepared by WTA. (See *August/September 2002 issue*) SB 916 (Perata) would submit a measure to the voters in 2004 to increase tolls on Bay Area state bridges from \$2 to \$3 to fund transportation projects, including ferries. SB 916 projects include two new ferry routes—South San Francisco to San Francisco, and Berkeley or Albany to San Francisco—plus the enhancement of existing routes.

As the number of ferryboats on the Bay increases, the amount of air pollution caused by the fleet will also increase. In order to limit the degradation of air quality as much as possible, the WTA has set a stringent air emission standard for ferry boats. Rather than regulate the type of fuel or the technology, the WTA has decided on an emission standard as the preferable alternative. The standard chosen by WTA is 85 percent cleaner than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's standard for diesel.

To effect significant emission reductions from ferryboats, WTA plans to build a fuel cell-powered boat using a federal grant; however, this plan is on hold, awaiting the development of appropriate technology.

Meanwhile, funding for WTA to develop and build a test ferryboat that will use biodiesel fuel is included in SB 916. Total emissions from biodiesel are lower than from petroleum diesel, although nitrogen oxides emissions are somewhat higher. Should passage of SB 916 fail, WTA would have to seek other sources of funding.

*Adelia Sabiston*