

Youth Transportation Coalition (YTC)

Enriching Lives by Building Community Resources, Increasing Transit Access & Supporting Education

A project of the non-profit TIDES Foundation

June 3, 2003

AC Transit Board of Directors
1600 Franklin St.
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear AC Transit Board Member:

We are writing on behalf of a broad coalition of public officials, schools, youth advocacy groups, community-based organizations, transportation and environmental experts who have been working closely with AC Transit for nearly two years to support implementation of the **Free and Reduced-Fare Youth Bus Pass Program**. We know that AC Transit has contributed very substantial resources, during a time of financial difficulty, to make the first year of this two-year pilot program happen. As you consider the challenges of maintaining AC Transit's commitment to complete the pilot, we want to make sure that you are fully aware of the efforts our group is making to generate public support and financial resources for the program.

Given the scope and cost of the Free and Reduced-Fare Youth Bus Pass Program, it is clear that we must identify new, long-term, sustainable sources of funding for it. It is also clear that doing so will require broad and active public support. To these ends, we have been working on the following fronts:

- During 2002-3 we were instrumental in raising \$760,000 from other public agencies to match contributions by MTC and AC Transit. These public funding partners include: Congestion Management Agency, Contra Costa County Social Services, Alameda County Social Services, and Contra Costa Transportation Authority.
- During the same period, we also raised \$79,500 from private sources including Kaiser Permanente, The Women's Foundation and State Street California Foundation. In addition, schools and other partner organizations contributed an estimated \$250,000 in in-kind staff support.
- For the second year of the pilot, in addition to MTC's promised contribution of \$1 million, we already have commitments for repeat contributions from Kaiser Permanente and Contra Costa County Social Services totaling \$150,000, and a likely contribution from Alameda County Social Services for \$50,000.

Equally, if not more important, we are building the organizational capacity to generate far greater support for the program beyond the second year of the pilot by creating an independent organization—the **Youth Transportation Coalition (YTC)**—to serve as a communications, advocacy and funding bridge to AC Transit (and other transportation agencies.) With the assistance of a consultant, we have been intensively developing this organization over the past five months. The mission of the YTC is to reduce barriers to use of transit by low-income youth in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties through two complementary and intertwined strategies:

We must provide our youth not only with a free and quality education, but a way to get there
YTC serves Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Youth Transportation Coalition (YTC), 2550 Ninth Street #103, Berkeley, CA 94710

(1) Youth Transportation Advocacy Network: a regional communications network to alert supporters to information and actions they can take to promote key changes in transportation funding and policy for low-income youth. The advocacy network will provide a mechanism to mobilize YTC members generally, and will provide leadership development opportunities for young people through organizing and advocacy activities.

(2) Policy & Program Development Incubator: through workshops, public forums, planning committees and their appropriate mechanisms, the YTC will bring together its diverse members to formulate changes to state and local transportation policy and identify how existing or new funding sources could be better used to address youth transit needs, including ongoing support for the Free and Reduced-Fare Youth Bus Pass Program.

Because of limitations on AC Transit's ability to mobilize community support and to attract private sector funding, we believe that the creation of the Youth Transportation Coalition is a critical step in developing a long-term strategy of public support and funding for the Free and Reduced-Fare Youth Bus Pass Program.

To date, the YTC has established a Steering Committee (Attachment 1) and selected the Tides Center to serve as its fiscal agent (independent fiscal agency was essential in attracting the contributions from The Women's Foundation and State Street California Foundation.) The Steering Committee has met monthly since last fall to review funder opportunities and support program implementation. The Committee has also met in four extended planning sessions to design the infrastructure for the YTC. Beyond the Steering Committee, the YTC already has an informal membership of more than 100 supporting organizations and public officials, as well as hundreds of youth and their parents. Currently, the YTC is pursuing the following strategies to expand support and resources for the Free and Reduced-Fare Youth Bus Pass Program:

- Sharing information about the success of the program to raise awareness in the community.
- Reaching out to local corporations and private foundations to inform them about the benefits of the program and linkages with their philanthropic priorities.
- Organizing local advocates to strategize about long-term public funding options to support the bus pass program.
- Working with schools and families to help publicize the program.

The YTC and its consultant are currently in discussions with a variety of funders and have a funding application pending with the Clorox Company Foundation. While we do not expect such private funders to be able to close the financing gap for operations of the bus pass program, we believe that private contributions to support the activities of the YTC will result in leveraging far greater citizen support, public policy and ultimately public funding to support ongoing operations. We also believe that the forum offered by

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the YTC, where a wide range of stakeholders can come to the table, will provide heretofore unrecognized opportunities for AC Transit, schools, and other public and private agencies serving youth to link resources and jointly pursue funding sources.

With this said, we only support proposals that continue the pilot, and the commitment, for a second year with no changes in fare structure or geographic area served.

Sincerely,



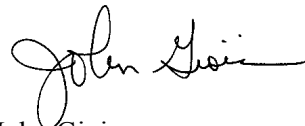
Dion S. Aroner
Former Member, CA State Assembly



Loni Hancock
Member, CA State Assembly



Keith Carson
Alameda County Board of Supervisors



John Gioia
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

DA:KC:JG:LH:sg:lb

Attachments

cc: Honorable Beverly Johnson, City of Alameda
Honorable Jewel Okawachi, City of Albany
Honorable Tom Bates, City of Berkeley
Honorable Mark Friedman, City of El Cerrito
Honorable Ken Bukowski, City of Emeryville
Honorable Gus Morrison, City of Fremont
Honorable Roberta Cooper, City of Hayward
Honorable David Smith, City of Newark
Honorable Jerry Brown, City of Oakland
Honorable Valerie Matzger, City of Piedmont
Honorable Irma Anderson, City of Richmond
Honorable Shelia Young, City of San Leandro
Honorable Sharon Brown, City of San Pablo
Honorable Mark Green, City of Union City
Members, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Members, Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
Members, YTC Steering Committee

Attachment 1: YTC Steering Committee Members

YTC STEERING COMMITTEE, 2003

Lara Bice, **Office of Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson**

Summer Brenner, independent transportation expert

Terrance Cheung, **Office of Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia**

Paul Ehara, **West Contra Costa Unified School District**

Lisa Hammon, **West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee**

Idris Hassan, **Youth Together**

Jeff Hobson, **Transportation and Land Use Coalition**

Jason Hodge, **AC Transit**

Elisabeth Jewel, **AJE Partners**

Kim Miyoshi, **Kids First Oakland**

Alicia Perez, Office of the Superintendent, **Oakland Unified School District**

Rachel Weinstein, **Office of Assemblymember Loni Hancock**