

For Immediate Release

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Contra Costa County Paratransit Services Gets a \$1 Million Boost

US DOT awards Contra Costa Transportation Authority SMART grant
to transform transportation for seniors and those with disabilities

Walnut Creek, CA – Thanks to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) now has a \$1 million boost to enhance mobility options for seniors and those with disabilities. County of Contra Costa officials gathered in Walnut Creek today as US Representative Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (10th District) announced the federal Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) award. The SMART grant funding will be used to implement a centralized call center with access to all relevant transportation data, so seniors and paratransit users can make real time transit choices through an Accessibility Application (App). The primary goal of creating an Accessibility App is to address equity and access through data sharing and will to transform transit to better serve seniors and those with disabilities.

“The Accessibility App is a much-needed virtual tool as many transit agencies do not have paratransit or other accessible transit data with real-time service options,” CCTA Chair Newell Arnerich said. “Transit should be easy, accessible and efficient. Our new technology will enable transit operators to make the best use of passenger’s specific needs, so they can provide easy to access options for the most vulnerable members of our county.”

“There is a growing trend in the transit service industry to develop and use data to help enhance transparency, improve efficiency, and foster innovation,” CCTA Executive Director Tim Haile said. “CCTA is partnering with research engineers at UC Berkeley to use data to build the Accessibility App which will be made possible thanks to the SMART grant.”

Applying for a SMART grant is a competitive process, whereupon applications from all over the US are reviewed. Of the hundreds of applications submitted for funding, the US Department of Transportation saw the value in CCTA’s Accessibility App project and chose to support its development by awarding the project a \$1 million grant.

“I am proud to have advocated for this funding for Contra Costa Transportation Authority that will help improve transportation accessibility and efficiency for members of our community, including seniors and individuals with disabilities,” said Congressman DeSaulnier. “I look forward to continuing to support CCTA as it implements this important App and continues its

efforts to create a more convenient, accessible, and equitable transportation system across our district.”

County Supervisor Ken Carlson was on hand today to publicize existing pilot programs aimed to make transit easier for seniors and paratransit passengers. CCTA has partnered with other entities, such as the City of San Pablo, to connect senior and disabled transportation from San Pablo directly to county medical facilities in Martinez. CCTA also supports the Low-Income Fare Equity (LIFE) program to provide free rides to eligible paratransit users who are low-income earners.

The public can find out full details about CCTA’s existing and future accessibility programs as by going to <https://ccta.net/accessibility/>

About the Contra Costa Transportation Authority:

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is a public agency formed by Contra Costa voters in 1988 to manage the county’s transportation sales tax program and oversee countywide transportation planning efforts. With a staff of 24 people managing a multi-billion-dollar suite of projects and programs, CCTA is responsible for planning, funding, and delivering critical transportation infrastructure projects and programs that connect our communities, foster a strong economy, increase sustainability, and safely and efficiently get people where they need to go. CCTA also serves as the county’s designated Congestion Management Agency, responsible for putting programs in place to keep traffic levels manageable.