

## **Rod Diridon, Sr., to Receive Hall of Fame Award from American Public Transportation Association in Houston on Tuesday, October 14**

*He is Mineta Transportation Institute's emeritus executive director*

**San Jose, CA – October 7, 2014** – The [American Public Transportation Association](#) (APTA) will induct Rod Diridon, Sr., into its prestigious Hall of Fame at its annual meeting and expo in Houston on Tuesday, October 14. Mr. Diridon is emeritus executive director of the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI), which is affiliated with the San Jose (Calif.) State University College of Business.

He is being honored for a lifetime of leadership and advocacy for public transportation in the US and around the world. A trainman during college, Mr. Diridon appreciates rail's linchpin niche in the nation's transportation network. After two naval officer Vietnam combat tours, he began his elected career in 1971 as a 31-year-old city council member followed by 20 years and six times as chair of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and Transit Board. He also chaired the bay area's three regional agencies, APTA, and was International Transit Association in Brussels (UITP) vice chair. He is especially proud of cofounding the APTA Diversity Council supporting women and minorities.

He chaired nine successful rail projects and four regional and two statewide transportation taxes. That focus earned the title "father of modern transit in Silicon Valley." In 1995, the main San Jose rail station was renamed the San Jose Diridon Station, hosting three commuter rail lines, light rail, and the planned BART and high-speed rail, all of which he chaired, as he left office because of term limits.

In 1993 he transitioned to executive director for the newly-formed Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) at San Jose State University. Former US Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta said, "Rod led MTI since its inception. The Institute has become known throughout the world for providing peer-reviewed research on critical transportation policy issues. That remarkable success was based upon Rod's lifetime of top policy level leadership."

MTI became known for reliable research on tough issues and a unique California State University Master of Science in Transportation Management taught statewide by expert professors via the Caltrans videoconference network. Retired Deputy US Secretary of Transportation Mort Downey said, "Via the Mineta Institute, Rod Diridon's dynamic pursuit of the nation's toughest research issues has helped agencies craft programs for safety and security, financing to replace the dwindling gas tax, preparation for high-speed rail connectivity, and much more."

In 2000, Governors Davis and then Schwarzenegger appointed Mr. Diridon to the California High Speed Rail Authority Board with orders to jump start the project. Elected chair, he used his 24 years of policy board experience to comply. San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission executive director Steve Heminger observed, "Rod is like a locomotive when he's focused on an objective. It's best to be on board rather than in his way!"

Mr. Diridon also helped convert the US High Speed Ground Transportation Association into APTA's High Speed Intercity Rail Committee, which he chaired. He also chairs the US High Speed Rail Association's Board.

In a front page feature article on his crusade to create high-rise transit villages atop rail station parking to combat climate change, traffic congestion, urban sprawl, and promote transit ridership,

the *Silicon Valley Business Journal* said, "...you ignore him at your peril." Rod's message is that cities must radically increase the number of dwelling units atop and around transit to justify the billions of dollars invested to create those systems, maintain economic competitiveness, and fight climate change.

Mr. Diridon is a favorite worldwide conference keynoter on sustainability, stressing the interconnection among transit, land use, and climate change. He has often been quoted, "The rest of the world knows that steel wheels on rails are the most efficient and sustainable means of transport. Electrically powered light, metro, and intercity high speed rail systems are the least expensive and surest countermeasure to combat climate change. We must win that battle to maintain the US economy while protecting the future for our children."

He's chaired over 100 programs and, though retiring to half-time emeritus executive director at MTI, continues his travels. He received the lifetime achievement awards from the national Council of University Transportation Centers, US High Speed Rail Association, SJSU College of Business, and others.

Rod's passion is for his wife, Gloria Duffy, California Commonwealth Club president/CEO, son Rod and wife Sabra with two-year-old twins Avery and Rod, and daughter Mary and husband Steve with six-year-old Allie and three-year-old Aaron. Mr. Diridon ends every speech with a plea for help in combating climate change so that we might all be considered good ancestors.

#### **ABOUT APTA**

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of 1,500 public and private sector organizations, engaged in the areas of bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne services, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail. This includes: transit systems; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. APTA is the only association in North America that represents all modes of public transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services and products. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada ride APTA member systems.

#### **ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE**

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information transfer programs regarding surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. Congress established MTI in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. MTI won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2012. The Institute is funded through the US Secretary of Transportation's Research and Technology Office, US Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, the California Department of Transportation's Division of Research, Innovation and Systems Development, and public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI is the lead institute for the nine-university Mineta National Transit Research Consortium. MTI is affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University's College of Business. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu)

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