



No Road, No Rage: A Forum on Expanding Bay Area Ferry Service



MTI

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Institute

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1991



MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Norman Y. Mineta International Institute for Surface Transportation Policy Studies (MTI) was created by Congress through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and established in the California State University system at the San José State University College of Business. MTI continues as a University Transportation Center (UTC), reauthorized in 1998 by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

MTI is unique among UTC's in two areas. It is the only center with an outside, internationally respected Board of Trustees, and it is the only center located in a College of Business. The Board provides policy direction, assists with needs assessment, and connects the Institute and its programs with the international transportation community. The Institute's focus on policy and management resulted from a Board assessment of the industry's unmet needs and led directly to the choice of the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. MTI applies the focus on international surface transportation policy and management issues in three primary areas:

Research

The Institute aims to provide policy-oriented research for all levels of government and the private sector, to foster the development of optimum surface transportation systems. Research areas include: security of transportation systems; planning and policy development; interrelationships among transportation, land use, the environment, and the economy; financing of transportation improvements; and collaborative labor-management relations. Certified Research Associates conduct the research. Certification requires an advanced degree, generally a Ph.D., a record of academic publications, and professional references. Research projects culminate in publication available both in hardcopy and on the Institute's website.

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The educational goal of the Institute is to provide graduate-level education to students seeking a career in the development and operation of surface transportation programs. MTI, through the College of Business at San José State University, offers an AACSB accredited California State University Master of Science in Transportation Management and a Graduate Certificate in Transportation Management that will prepare the nation's transportation managers for the 21st century. The masters degree is the highest conferred by the California State University system. With the active assistance of the California Department of Transportation, MTI delivers its classes over a state-of-the-art broadcast videoconferencing network throughout the State of California and via webcasting beyond, allowing working transportation professionals to pursue an advanced degree regardless of their location. To meet the needs of employers seeking a diverse workforce, MTI's education program promotes enrollment to under-represented groups.

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MTI's third responsibility is to develop and maintain electronic information systems to store, retrieve, and disseminate information relating to surface transportation policy studies. The Institute's website, *TransWeb*, enables transportation professionals, students and individuals worldwide to access information relating to surface transportation research and policy. *TransWeb* is found at <http://transweb.sjsu.edu> and delivers regional, state, national, and international transportation information. The Institute also maintains a library of periodicals and other unique publications for transportation research in cooperation with the San José State University Library system. MTI is funded by Congress through the United States Department of Transportation Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by private grants and donations.

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**No Road, No Rage:
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16. Abstract <p>On November 21, 2002, the Mineta Transportation Institute and The Commonwealth Club of California sponsored a forum on expanding ferry service in the Bay Area. A primary goal of the forum was to explore water transit service as a way to ease congestion on the roads. The forum explored the costs involved, what lines would be given priority, the number of ferries to be deployed, the infrastructure required, and environmental concerns. As the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority is seeking to expand ferry service for the Bay Area, the evening enabled interested citizens to hear more about the proposal, ask questions, and share their hopes and concerns.</p> <p>This publication is an edited version of the November 21 forum.</p>			
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To order this publication, please contact the following:

Mineta Transportation Institute
College of Business
San José State University
San Jose, CA 95192-0219
Tel (408) 924-7560
Fax (408) 924-7565
e-mail: mti@mti.sjsu.edu

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- Rod Diridon, Executive Director, Mineta Transportation Institute
- Steve Kinsey, Marin County Supervisor and Metropolitan Transportation Commission Vice Chair
- Russell Long, Executive Director, Bluewater Network and Water Transit Authority (WTA) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Member
- Cynthia Murray, Marin County Supervisor and WTA Citizens Advisory Committee Member
- Gavin Newsome, San Francisco Supervisor and WTA Board Member
- Don Perata, California State Senator representing the Ninth District
- Tom Vacar, Consumer Editor, KTVU-TV

The event was sponsored by The Commonwealth Club of California and the Mineta Transportation Institute.

Special thanks goes to Senator Don Perata for his time and effort in developing this project, and to the WTA staff who skillfully prepared the materials and website for the evening.

MTI would also like to thank the following individuals for their hard work and dedication in publishing this forum: Research Director Trixie Johnson; Research and Publications Assistant Sonya Cardenas; Transcriber Kim Rose; Graphic Designers Shun Nelson and Tseggai Debretsion; Webmaster Barney Murray; and Editorial Associates Irene Rush and Kaylee Wambaugh.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Thursday, November 21, 2002, the Mineta Transportation Institute and The Commonwealth Club co-sponsored a forum on expanding ferry service in the Bay Area. The forum was held at the San Francisco City Hall. Representatives from the public and private sectors were invited to participate.

Senator Don Perata, legislative sponsor of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA), gave the keynote speech. Tom Vacar, consumer editor for KTVU-TV, was moderator for the program. The following persons served as panelists:

Steve Kinsey, Marin County Supervisor and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Vice Chair

Russell Long, Executive Director, Bluewater Network and WTA TAC Member

Cynthia Murray, Marin County Supervisor and WTA TAC Member

Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Supervisor and WTA Board Member

Most of the evening was devoted to answering written questions submitted by audience members. Some major themes explored were the costs involved, what lines would be given priority, the number of ferries to be deployed, hours and frequency of service that could be expected, infrastructure required, and concerns about pollution.

FOREWORD

As part of the Mineta Transportation Institute's ongoing efforts to promote dialogue addressing surface transportation issues, it is my pleasure to share this edited transcript of *No Road, No Rage: A Forum on Expanding Bay Area Ferry Service*. As the title suggests, expanding water transit services has been proposed as one way to ease congestion on the roads.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority is seeking to expand ferry service for the Bay Area, and this forum offered an opportunity for interested citizens to hear more about the proposal, ask questions, and share their concerns and hopes.

This event was the result of many people's efforts, and I thank all those individuals and organizations referenced in the Acknowledgements section. I especially want to thank George Dobbins, Program Director of The Commonwealth Club, for working with MTI to sponsor this event; Senator Don Perata for being a leader in the legislature on this issue and also for being our keynote speaker; Tom Vacar for taking the time to be our moderator; and our panelists, Steve Kinsey, Russell Long, Cynthia Murray, and Gavin Newsom.

The Mineta Transportation Institute has three primary functions: research, education, and information transfer. It is in this last role that we organized and presented this discussion. We hope that this edited transcript will contribute to an understanding of the issues and possible solutions, not only for those in our community, but also for anyone considering water transit issues.



Ron Diridon

Executive Director

SESSION TRANSCRIPT

ROD DIRIDON:

I'm Rod Diridon, Executive Director of the Mineta Transportation Institute, and we are co-sponsoring this forum with several other organizations—The Commonwealth Club of California, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and many, many others. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail here, nor will I take a lot of time introducing people because we have some knowledgeable people here; they want to share their thoughts, they want to hear your thoughts, and, as a consequence, want to hear less of me.

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce the next person, in a rather perfunctory way, but also in a manner that suggests to you that I respect him highly. He is one of the finest political minds that this Bay Area has ever turned out. He's worked all the way from a staff position on up through the Board of Supervisors, Assembly, and now to the State Senate. He's on many, many committees, as you'll notice, but for us, he is the Chair of the Select Committee on Transportation for the Bay Area, and in that position will have responsibility for this topic when it gets into the State Senate. So please meet Senator Don Perata.

DON PERATA:

Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here. I was over at UC Berkeley earlier talking to a class and you look just like them, same age, same interests. I was going to give you the same speech, but probably couldn't get away with it. It's nice to be in San Francisco—I'm looking at the sterling silver water glasses for the supervisors; they are pretty impressive. The topic at hand, the ferry service in San Francisco Bay, has been a concept for many, and many did not believe it would ever get as far as it has. Yet when you look around at the greater bay, it's kind of puzzling why an area that has as much water access and as much natural beauty as we have, and as many traffic congestion problems as we have, hasn't done more than we have to date. Historically, when you look at the way in which our transportation systems used to function prior to the bridges, and even after, when the key system used to run back and forth on the bridge, which would look suspiciously like BART underground today, we see that in many instances we go back and forth and back and forth, and we're returning now to the future. It's in the past. The future should look a whole lot like the past, only we have now developed this area to such a degree that we need to be more selective than ever about what we do.

Once all that's done—and that's been largely the mission of the WTA created by the legislation a few years back—the hardest part comes, and that is to create the political will necessary to get it done. To date, as hard as everybody in this room has been working on it, that has really been the easy part. The difficult part now is when we engage with others in the competition for dollars for

transit. Where everyone should be allies, the truth is that everybody has to be concerned about the next year and the following year, and of their own survival to serve their district.

One of these days, long after I'm gone, there may be an integrated transit system in the Bay Area, where things like connectivity will have meaning for people, where funding transit will be second nature like breathing and anything else we do to protect the beauty of this area. But we're not there yet. In fact, when I created the WTA by legislation, the Water Transit Authority, I was creating the twenty-seventh transit district in the Bay Area. We have two of the three directly elected transportation or transit boards in the country. Now that makes us incredibly smart, or we're missing something. I've always thought that if we had a single rail system in the area, and a bus system that was interconnected, we would be well served.

The fact of the matter is that we have different needs served in different manners. We have some commuting routes; we have neighborhood bus service that has dwindled and diminished, that really, in my judgment, further creates and exacerbates the problem between the working class, the lower economic working class, and the rest. The further we get away from being able to provide those basic services, the less integrated economically our society is, and I think, QED, the more social problems we have. So I've learned to pay my respects in the combinations to the various entities and districts. I'm not going to walk into San Francisco City Hall and talk about what the Muni ought to be; actually no one has wanted to really consolidate with Muni, if the truth were told. Everybody wants to run for mayor; everybody has his or her own problems.

So here we are tonight, thinking about what we are going to do to get this great idea on the field of play. We have a fledgling system; we have a very fine system, for example, in Marin County, and if you're from Marin, and you're paying a higher toll today, you may not agree with me. I don't pay that toll, so I'm at liberty to say these things. But we have some examples; we know this thing can work. We have success, and we know we'd have a lot more success if we could create better access, more frequent and reliable service. We've been talking to a variety of people, really trying to keep everybody in the tent, which is not often easy. In fact, my consultant has been working on that. In order to not be here tonight, he went to Germany, which I thought was pretty extreme, but he said, "You go talk. I'm going to catch a plane." So he's now somewhere in Germany I've never heard of, probably in a garrison, but he's got to come back; he had a two-way ticket.

He's been doing a lot of the work, Ezra Rapport, and he's been talking a lot to me about things that seem to be theoretically fabulous; and I'm always the one with the fire hose, dousing the flames of enthusiasm. What I think we're really coming down to is this: Next year, perhaps as early as January 2003, we will introduce legislation to raise the tolls on the bridges. Everything, unless they'll agree, but the Golden Gate Bridge. The wisdom has been, we'll raise it a dollar, and that sounds fine, except when you realize how little a dollar buys for the purposes at hand. Over 30 years, it seems to be a staggering amount of money. It would generate about a \$130, \$140 million a year, so without much difficulty, you can realize we're getting into the couple of billion. But when I think that the state now has a \$23 billion deficit, \$2 billion over 30 years for transit seems

almost embarrassing. What I believe we're going to come down to is this: We're going to look at the Water Transit proposal, we're going to look at what we're going to get, what we want to get, and we're going to have to talk about what's realistic.

But we did the honest thing—because the WTA wanted to do that, as they imposed it on us—we did a research survey, and it showed a couple of interesting things. There is overwhelming support to raise the toll a dollar, and it's explained pretty clearly that about 9 percent of those interviewed use the bridges. It's the best tax in the world: We raise it, you pay. The underlying reason that people have is not that they really believe that we're going to solve congestion, but they believe that there may be some abatement of congestion, and if there is, I will still be able to drive my car. It's the fond hope that the guy next to me will be on the ferry, but I'll be in the bridge lane. I'm not interested in changing anybody's psychology; I'm interested in knowing what people might be willing to do. This is the art of the possible. I know we're not going to have unanimity. Russell Long and I were talking earlier that, at the initial time that I launched this idea of the WTA and expanding ferry service, the Bluewater Network was opposed, and of course I took high offense to that—how could they be opposed? As it turned out, they had pretty good reasons. I think the product that we have now is a better product; I think we have melded together some extraneous issues that now become common interests.

I learned from that, as I learn from most things I do, there would not be 100 percent going up on the board. What we have to get down to right now, and the process is pretty simple: We introduce legislation that will contain an expenditure plan. In other words, people are going to want to know who's going to get what, and everybody in this room who represents an interest, civic or otherwise, is going to want to know where that money is going. That allocation is going to have to satisfy enough people to have a working coalition to support legislation. It is as clear as that. We have determined from the poll, and from just walking-around reality, that while a lot of half-cent sales taxes in this area have been passed, the majority of that money goes to funding transportation as opposed to transit projects. People have talked about a connection, which is known in the jargon as a nexus, some connection between the raising of the toll and transit, because more roads, in many people's minds, simply equate with more congestion. So people are willing to raise that toll or see it raised if it goes to pay for transit services and not to expand roads, build interchanges, or anything of that nature. I will tell you that not everybody wildly embraces that. I have heard from people from Contra Costa County that want to know why bridge money can't help punch a fourth bore in the Caldicott. They believe that is a legitimate expense.

No one's wrong on this—what we're hoping to get is a majority of people who are right. The legislation will go in, with as much of a consensus as we will have. Then the plain fact of the matter will be, I'll be presenting a bill, hopefully with pretty unanimous support from the delegations throughout the bay. But we're going to have people voting on this from places like Santa Clarita and the Inland Empire, and I've been to the Inland Empire—that's also known as Riverside and San Bernardino, Imperial County—I'm not sure if some of those people have ever

seen the bridge or bridges. I have had some of my colleagues, including the chair of the Transportation Committee in the Senate, that said, “Well, that’s your bridge.” I said, “Well, it’s got an interstate running across it.” But people do see it as our bridge and our problem. So we’re going to have to be able to solicit votes from people. Normally when somebody on a regional issue—or an issue that they either perceive to be regional or it’s in their best interests to make it regional—they’ll give you a vote but, “What’s in it for me? What do I get for it?” I always think that if you’re living in Southern California, you’re terminally angry, so you need to have something, and there is no paucity of projects in Los Angeles that people would like to see done, so that becomes the art of the politics.

We believe that we can pass a simple majority bill. Tax bills are normally a two-thirds vote, which has become “Mission Impossible”, but this will be a majority vote bill. We’re confident. I would love to be able to stand here and say to you, we’ll pass it with a simple majority, and we’ll get it to the governor, and he’ll sign it. I believe the only practical way of doing this is the same thing that was done with Regional Measure I: It’s going to go for a ratification vote in the seven counties. The political cover that my colleagues will exact from me is, if I want it on the ballot then I’ll vote to allow the voters of the area to decide for themselves to approve of an increase in the toll. I believe that’s going to be the syllogism of getting from this point, to this point, to this point.

To date, we have done no more than have lots of conversations with lots of transportation agencies, and individuals representing them, to try to figure out what the overall plan would be. Tucked in the middle of that as one of the line items is ferry service. I will tell you categorically—I think raising bridge tolls is something that we’re going to be able to do once, and then we’re going to have put it in the drawer for another decade or decade and a half. So my interest is to see how far we can get the public to go to create more transit opportunities. If we have support for a dollar, do we have support for two dollars, which is what a lot of the business community has been talking to us about. Because frankly, on ferry transportation service, a buck is okay. It’s nothing that you’re going to put on your résumé and show around to people. We just don’t get as much as we need to go where we want to. Frankly, when you look at Oyster Point and the opportunities there, you look at Mission Bay, you look at Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley corridor, you go up the bay to Vallejo, there just isn’t enough to create the critical mass necessary to make it work.

The other issue that will be debated is congestion pricing, that is, adding a higher toll during those hours when people commute. There is a lot of interest in that; how deep and broad the support is, I don’t know. I have heard from people in my delegation who have said, if you have to take your car to work, you are really punishing the working family who has no alternatives. I think that will be the fight that we’ll be enjoying with congestion pricing. I think that it would be an error not to consider everything, but in the final analysis, we’re not going to talk this thing to death. We’re going to make a decision. We’re going to do what we can do to get what we can get so that we’re not standing still. If we have to get five yards now and come back and get five yards later, so be it.

I think we have to be bold enough to say, this is an idea that is unparalleled; it is an opportunity that will not pass this way lightly, or reasonably, again. You don't get this kind of critical mass together, lose it, and then pick it up again. There is a plan to put a high-speed rail in California, which is going to be a very expensive proposition for which there's a greater amount of support, and there are a lot of people in the Central Valley who are saying, "Hey, what about us? For years, we have gotten nothing, this gives us something," and they're not about to just step aside because we happen to have waterfront.

The final thing to leave you with is this: We are probably coming along at the very worst time. Every government within the sound of my voice and your imagination is in deep financial trouble right now, starting with the State of California, and moving on through every city and school district and special district and transit district throughout the state. There will be an effort on the part of some to argue that this is no time to be raising tolls because however you cut it, it is a tax. We call it a fee; I don't care what you call it, but you really are asking the public to pay for something. So we're going to have to argue against any inertia that's going to develop right now to say the last thing you want to do in a recession, at a time when local budgets are in trauma, in shock, is to raise. My answer to that is, it's probably the best time, but more importantly, I know, having lived in the state all my life, and subsequent to Prop. 13, we are always following the business cycle. Until we have another way of financing government in this state, we're always going to be chasing. We'll be out of this at some point, and if we wait to start again, when we get out of it we'll be at this point again, and we'll have to go back and do it again because we'll be back in the trough, not at the peak. I don't think any of that matters; what matters is the political will to do something that a growing consensus of people think is important to do. We can get people from Marin, in the South Bay, and the West Bay—we are never going to call it the City—San Francisco together on an idea; you can get business leaders and political leaders and union leaders, people who represent the work force, together on something, that's nothing to be trifled with.

That's another argument that you're going to hear. That those bridges were paid for once, why do we have to pay for it again? For my part, I've paid for a lot of things that I'm paying for again, and so I guess I've lived too long to not realize that that's the way life works.

I thank you for being here. I hope that you'll engage in the discussion. We'll listen carefully to the moderators; these people have done a lot to bring this to where we are today. I would submit to you that they've done as much as or more than I have. I have simply been sort of directing a wonderful orchestra with a lot of terrifically talented people. I want to tell you how grateful I am for them, for the work that a lot of you, who I recognize in the audience, have done. We're going to succeed. It may not be everything that we want, but we are going to succeed. Thank you.

ROD DIRIDON:

Let me note now that you can follow the agenda and read it, so I'm not going to be reading each one of the panelist's backgrounds to you. But I am going to give a little more background on the next person, who is going to be moderator for this evening. When they coined the words "Crusading Reporter" and "Crusading Journalist," they did it because Tom Vacar made them. He began as an auto company executive and he saw the light, became one of Nader's Raiders, and he began way back sometime as an attorney. So he knows what he's talking about, and he's moved right on through now to be a journalist's journalist. He's won Golden Mike awards, Emmys; he's won the prestigious Society of Professional Journalist Medal for Distinguished Public Service, and now he's here with us tonight. We appreciate his time. Welcome, Tom Vacar from KTVU Fox 2.

TOM VACAR:

We like to work from scripts because not only do they work well, they cut the time. So I just want to preface all of this by saying in the 1920's, there was this little place called San Francisco. It was built on gold and sailcloth, on rail iron and maritime, but most of all, it was built on the sweat and dreams of men and women from the corners of the earth. It was surrounded by other notable places, from Santa Rosa to the north, to San Jose in the south, to Oakland in the East, and dozens of other towns and hamlets throughout. What was then the San Francisco region was connected by a magnificent fleet of ferryboats—the glue that made the Bay Area a community of commerce and commonality. Then in the 1930s came the bridges, and with them cars and trucks that quickly replaced the ferries as kings of the bay and its glue. Ferries began a forlorn decline. Cheap gas and the car made those outlying towns and hamlets something we now call suburbs. In the 1950s, America, and California most of all, defined progress as more—more highways, more power plants, more factories, more infrastructure. With more infrastructure came more cars, more suburbs, more people, all fueled by cheap gasoline.

A burning Cayohoga River in Cleveland in the late 1960s marked a sea change. We were killing our planet and we all knew it, yet the progress in America and California continued, until another issue came up called Proposition 13. It was a landmark event in America because it was the turning away from infrastructure and progress as we had up to that point defined it. So we slowed the building of roads, of power plants, unfortunately even of mass transit, and most especially the ferries. What has followed ever since is the confluence of more people, more vehicles, more commerce, more crowding, and gridlock. Then came Loma Prieta, and the house of cards, most notably a section of the upper deck of the Bay Bridge, came tumbling down. It was the ferries that saved the day, as they would again during the BART strike. Then again came more cheap gas, more good times, the dot com boom followed by the dot com bust. Now we have to ask ourselves, "Where will the ferries figure in the bay's future?" Tonight, we will discuss exactly that. As you know, joining me tonight are our four panelists, and I'm going to ask the first question.

The first question that I have for all of you, beginning with Madam Supervisor, would be:

Mass transit seems to be most effective—and when you take a look at, for example, the Japan rail system or the Sydney, Australia, ferry system—when it is available, it is easily accessible, when it is affordable, and most importantly, when it is frequent. That's something that can't be said about a lot of the Bay Area transit system. How can we make all of that work in the ferry system?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I think you identified one of the key things that the ferry does add to our equation on transit, which is, we need more choices, and we have different people who have different transit modes that appeal to them. In Marin County, we don't have BART, we don't have rail, we have strictly bus, and we have ferry in the southern part of the county. So if we were able to expand our ferry service, it would give people who are solo drivers now other choices. When you talk about the headways, when they're able to come, and the frequency and things like that, that's all part of building a system that's responsive to the demands. In most of our areas we have a huge demand for increased transit because we have huge congestion, and the congestion is at peak time. So if we can add more opportunities for people to get out of their cars at the peak times, that will help people have the availability, the consistency, the choice, and cost effectiveness. Everything that we've seen in the WTA survey shows that this is something that people would want and support.

TOM VACAR:

Supervisor Newsom?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

I agree with everything that my colleague in the North Bay said. If I could just give a brief overview, with your indulgence, Tom, just again to thank Senator Perata for his leadership. We simply would not be sitting here today if not for his extraordinary stewardship for many, many years on this issue. I'm incredibly in debt to and appreciative of that leadership and stewardship. I should also note that a lot of people helped us get from where we were in October of 1999 to where we are today. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize at least two of the board members on the WTA that I do see out there, Mayor Boro and Joe Freitas I believe are both here tonight, and I want to thank them for their extraordinary stewardship in this process. We've been meeting, Tom, for two years to answer your question. We have been surveying hundreds, if not thousands, of people to determine precisely the area and the expertise that would be required to meet the expectation and to answer, in much greater detail, your concerns. That being said, as Senator Perata did note, to our surprise we have overwhelming support. Seventy-plus percent of the region is supportive of increasing those bridge tolls if it's going to go to congestion relief.

Working over the last two years with committees and supervisors, the Technical Advisory Committee has met for these two years, met all over the Bay Area, nine Bay Area counties, and put together a plan, an implementation and operations plan, which hopefully will be provided in draft form,—and if not, it will be provided very shortly—that goes in front of the California legislature as early as next month. That implementation plan goes a long way to addressing and answering those questions about expanding the service system in a cost-efficient manner, an environmentally friendly manner, and in a manner that obviously derives a lot of interest from people who otherwise find it so easy to utilize their single-occupancy vehicle to get from here to there. So we're excited about exploring in greater specificity some of the recommendations we've made in order to move us forward and to give Don the tools he'll need to convince a lot of people that, I believe, might be on the fence as it relates to moving this agenda forward.

TOM VACAR:

Supervisor Kinsey?

STEVE KINSEY:

Thank you, Tom. Again, just to remind myself, if not the others, really the question you're asking us is, "What can we do to make an effective transit system, and where do the ferries fit into that?" I'm here this evening not only as a supervisor from Marin County, but in my capacity as the Vice Chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, which is a regional body serving our nine Bay Area counties, and ultimately helping to guide and oversee the nearly \$90 billion, or about \$3 billion a year, that is invested in transportation in the Bay Area. Clearly, I would suggest regional planning for our transit systems coordination. We heard the senator ambitiously talking about consolidating transit agencies. Even if we can't do that, we need to do a good job of coordinating those. I think that the work that the WTA has done to date has recognized that a Water Transit Authority will be able to bring expanded organizational capacity to our existing water transit operators through improved marketing, through the ability to have purchasing power and joint maintenance opportunities and contracts. Those abilities to do more with the same amount of resources will be an important thing.

Another interesting aspect Supervisory Murray touched on is that around the bay, we've realized that our infrastructure is approaching its capacity on our roadways. There are really only two ways we're going to be able to address the continuing demands that are placed by the expected million new jobs and a million new people over the next 20 years, and that is, more efficient use of our existing systems, and to some extent, expansion of our transit opportunities. What we find with the water transit is that properly done, with feeder routes from the bus transit services, we can not only increase transit ridership on the ferries, but also improve bus transit ridership at the same time. When we can see a symbiosis, a coming together of our investment to improve the transit choices, for not only the one mode but all of our transit programs—we see that as a very strong benefit.

Lastly, I would just say that there are programs at work that we need to continue, and I think MTC has to take a significant role, and we have. That is, to improve the connectivity for people, so that you don't have to buy fares on each of the different modes of transit that you're going to be using. We have introduced a Translink, credit-card-style, one card for payment on all the different transit systems. We want to keep that going. We're currently looking for the first time at an intermodal hub study, so that we can see where are the best places for these different types of transit to connect, and how to improve the facilities there, improve the information that we provide to people about when the next bus, next ferry will be leaving, so that they have information to be able to feel comfortable and confident that they can make their trip in a convenient way. Those are some of the things that we're going to be doing to make this a better, more usable system.

TOM VACAR:

I want to reframe the question just slightly for Russell Long, who's with the Bluewater Network. Russell sounded the alarm a year and a half, two years ago. About three years ago, I did a story with him, as did a number of other people, about how it's great to have these ferries, but these ferries are fairly old technology and many of the ferries aren't very clean. The prospect of having dozens, as opposed to just a few ferries must be of some concern to you, so I want to talk about the question of accessibility and affordability. I want you to frame it also in your righteous concerns about the environment.

RUSSELL LONG:

Tom, I think one of the interesting things about the study that we released three years ago was, for the very first time, the study was showing that one mode of transit was far more polluting than all the other modes that we were conventionally used to. It kind of broke apart a myth that we all had: that ferries are somehow clean and green. In the process of doing that, fortunately, Senator Perata said this is worth looking into: We need to address it; we need to be concerned, and let's see what we can do. He incorporated changes in his legislation, SB428, that provided that the WTA must conduct feasibility studies and analysis for the use of alternative fuels and propulsion technologies. We're very thankful that he did that because we never would have gotten to the place that we're at today with what's being proposed before us, with a very clean system, which I'll talk about in a few minutes. I think that for the first time, we're beginning to address the issues in parity between the environmental impacts of different transit sources in San Francisco Bay—that's something that's never happened before. We're very happy that for the first time it is occurring, and it needs to continue in terms of, for example, looking at the high-speed rail system that's being discussed; this needs to be examined as well. Rail has characteristically been almost as bad as ferries, maybe as bad. We need to look at those emission sources and make sure that if we're doing rail, if that does happen, we need to put the best technologies on locomotives to ensure that they also are doing all they can, and coming into alignment with other transit sources environmentally.

TOM VACAR:

Jim Haas of the Rincon Point South Beach Citizens Advisory Committee asks:

Transit access to ferries is important, even in San Francisco. Will funds from the bridge toll increase be made available for the purpose, particularly for the E-line historic streetcar line along the San Francisco waterfront?

The question, I guess is to you, Mr. Perata. What about it? You are definitely a panelist.

DON PERATA:

Well, thank you, I didn't know I was. Repeat it.

TOM VACAR:

The question is: Will the funds from any bridge toll increase help fund all those things that will get people to the ferries? You can think about it—they had a ferry dock in Richmond, and had parking and everything else. It was a lousy part of town, and people were afraid to use it, and ended up not using it, and it was canceled. Are you going to use that money from the bridge toll increases to help make this a more friendly system?

DON PERATA:

I think you said it earlier, Tom: The reliability, access, and frequency of service all make something work. We could have the best system crossing the bay that we want, and if you can't get there, if your bus gets there two minutes after the ferry leaves—and that used to be the way with AC Transit and BART not too long ago—it simply won't work. So this will be an integrated expenditure plan that makes whatever is going to happen on the water feasible because it was happening on the land.

TOM VACAR:

Russ, take a shot at that.

RUSSELL LONG:

Pass.

TOM VACAR:

You're going to pass on that, okay.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

For what it's worth, in our operations and implementation plan, we set aside 25 percent of the operating budget for land-side connections. So with regard to the specific question of the E-line, I've been somewhat of a fanatic on the E-line, and I know that there was some special legislation, Prop. 51, that had set aside some specific dollars for that E-line. It was not supported by the voters. That being said, we've seen phenomenal success in San Francisco with the F-line, which was extended down the Embarcadero in '95, and down last year [2001] in March to Fisherman's Wharf. The idea is to connect the F-line with the E-line through the tunnel near the Safeway down near the bay, the Marina Green area. Eventually we will do that, but if it's going to be at the cost of reducing some of the funding for ferry service, I would argue at the moment against that. I think we can find other funding for the E-line extension.

TOM VACAR:

Madam Supervisor?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I just want to say that I think one of the best parts of the way this whole system has been designed is that they have built in the connectivity. They haven't said, "We're just going to look only at what we're going to put on the water." They're looking at how you make sure that the people get there. We know that the more modes of transit that people use, the less likely they are to use it if they have to keep changing. So the fact that they can get them to the ferry and get them right on is going to be a big incentive. We're also looking in Marin County at having the ferry be the destination where a rail line would end, and help people who are riding the rail, and can't get by rail into San Francisco, get on the ferry, and complete their run. So we're using that as another form of connectivity.

TOM VACAR:

You have a right of way already built there?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

We have secured the right of way, yes.

TOM VACAR:

Supervisor, I guess the other question is: Is the Larkspur ferry the good model, where people come from all over Marin County to a parking lot where they bring their fuel-burning cars? Is that a good model? Will we see ample parking at these new ferry terminals?

STEVE KINSEY:

We want to see ample access for bus transit primarily, and I think that we need to look at congestion pricing in terms of our parking, but we need to provide the ability for people to get from the land-side onto the ferries. There's no question about it. I would say Larkspur is only part of the way there. Today they do have the parking; they don't have the parking fee, but I wouldn't be surprised, given the bridge district's financial challenges, to see them looking at congestion-based pricing and using some of those dollars to create the feeder bus services to bus transit. The other thing that I would say, Tom, is that specifically in SB428, the legislation that moved the WTA along, gave a special role to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to review the information that was developed by the WTA to ensure that their ambitious plans were feasible. I'm happy to report that just this week the commission unanimously approved a review of the WTA's report to the legislature and found that the feasibility studies are supportable. There were a couple of things related to this question that I think are germane here: one, there is a critical relationship between the land-based access to the ferries and the success of this program, and two, you want to make sure that you're working in close collaboration with the transit providers, as opposed to perhaps putting competitive feeder bus services. So one of our recommendations is to make sure that we don't create a problem in getting those feeder buses to the transit sites.

TOM VACAR:

This one comes from Joseph Blue, Golden Gate Bridge Director. He says:

With all the transportation districts facing economic crisis, how can the state help these financial problems regarding public transportation?

Let me just throw that initially to Madam Supervisor because your county is obviously like every other, dependent on the state funds. How can the state help?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

The state certainly has the ability to do prioritization of their budget; the state gets a lot of money right now from the sales tax on gasoline and from other funding that comes through the federal government and their own. I'm probably not the best one to answer this question. I think Supervisor Kinsey from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission could complete it. But just as the state does prioritization, the counties do too, and we are looking to go on the ballot to have

a transportation sales tax. We're one of the counties in the Bay Area that is not a self-help county because we haven't taxed ourselves yet, and I think in order for us to leverage the scarce funds that are out there, we need to pass that sales tax and work as a partner with the state and federal government in generating our own funds. More and more, I think it's going to have to be a lot more collaboration and partnership and making sure that we're carrying our own fair share of the weight.

TOM VACAR:

Supervisor?

STEVE KINSEY:

Yes. There are two important things that the state can do, as far as I'm concerned, to support all of us in these troubled times for transportation funding. First and foremost, I think we should all be thankful that we have Jeff Morales now as the head of the Department of Transportation. He has brought a leadership style that recognizes that transportation isn't just roads; he is strongly committed to a multimodal future. Even in District 4 (that's the area that we all are serving) they are in the process of a coordinated corridor study where they are looking at more than just their highway system; they're looking at this connection to bus and ferry transit and rail, and how they can do it. That's a remarkable achievement and we need to continue to do that. The second thing—and this is the real heavy lifting and we're going to need the senator and a number of his colleagues in the legislature—but we absolutely need to change the voting of tax increases for transportation, from a two-thirds majority to 55 percent or some reasonable super-majority. That was tried a couple of years ago and it didn't get to the voters, but it needs to get to the voters this time around. In spite of our being one of the most congested areas in the country, four of the five transportation sales tax measures in our state went down to defeat. Why put all this effort into these kinds of transportation funding programs if even with 60, 62, 63 percent you're still out of luck at the end of the day? Those are two important things that could be done.

TOM VACAR:

If the Marin-Sonoma Transit Agency places a sales tax for transit service from Sonoma to Marin, and is defeated at the polls, what effect would this have on a Port Sonoma-San Francisco ferry system?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

None.

TOM VACAR:

Okay. Repeating that, none. You see in the TV business, you've got to have at least three seconds that sound alike, so, none, none, none, put that in the piece. Jon Anderson, representing MEBA ferry system professionals nationwide (Alaska, San Francisco, Washington, New York) for many, many years, says:

Considering the economic appropriation process for the WTA, where is the mosaic of money, and what percent is federal, state, and local?

Senator Perata, please?

DON PERATA:

I don't know about the mosaic, but where the money is coming from in the proposed legislation is going to be out of the tolls. Everything else that helps integrate the system on the land-side will be part of this morass of funding that includes wheels through MTC, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. We are looking specifically at a menu of programs that will be funded by the toll increase, whether it would be a dollar, or two, or what have you. In order for programs or projects to qualify, that will include their ability to fund adequately the service in order to merit participation and half the money—have we done that yet, is it half capital, half operations, or sixty-forty?—but there will be a split between operational money and capital money.

TOM VACAR:

Supervisor Newsom? Just to weave a framework, what kind of money are we talking about in the first place?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Our estimates are in the \$646 million range over the course of 10 years for capital as well as operating costs. We are also looking at sales tax revenue. We also have Prop. B, our half-cent sales tax, which we're going to ask the voters to support in the next few years. We're looking at putting it on the ballot, conceivably in San Francisco, as early as next year. We're also clearly looking, as the senator said, with toll increases as well as federal dollars. There's the federal ferry discretionary fund, and we're looking there clearly to fund this. Most important, when we conceived of the plan and made the recommendations for specific routes, we also looked at fare-box capture, meaning we wanted a competitive system that would attract potentially even private interests to the extent that they can offset some of the operations and capital costs. So we've really looked for competitiveness as it relates to the quality of the service. That's why we limited our recommendations for new ferry lines to not include, for example, Port Sonoma at this moment, but potentially for the future. So that was also part of the equation as it looks to financing.

TOM VACAR:

Okay, this one is for Russell Long, from Philip Doss:

If it's true that zero-emission ferries are operating elsewhere in the world, why are we being told the Bay Area won't see them for 10 years? Are we not missing out on a major opportunity?

RUSSELL LONG:

First, I'm not aware of any ferries that are zero-emissions operating in other parts of the world. What we see is that we have some ferries in Scandinavia that are using SCR—it's basically a marine catalytic converter as well as traps to capture the fine-particle pollution that comes from the smokestack exhaust. That's a big game, and unfortunately it's not zero emissions. In Australia, there is a vessel known as the Solar Sailor that was funded by the Australian Greenhouse Office. They funded this vessel, and it's really an electric vessel running on solar wings. The wings rise up to help propel the boat, it provides a little additional power, and it's like icing on the cake—a beautiful boat and it has auxiliary generators on the stern. It can run on various different fuels, natural gas or propane. I think they're using propane right now.

We're proposing, as a result of some design work that the WTA is doing right now, to come up with probably the cleanest ferry in the world. We've been advocating that they move in the direction of a similar vessel, but one that has fuel cells on the stern, as a developmental phase. This would be kind of a bridge vessel that would eventually get us to a completely zero-emission fuel-cell boat. We're in discussions with the WTA about how to advance that concept and make it a reality. A request for funding has been made to Congress, and there's a good chance that that money could come through to get that boat moving at some point. In fact, there's ongoing design work right now as a result of a federal grant by the maritime administration, and that's in the hands of the WTA's very capable engineer, Mary Culnane, who's in the front row right here.

TOM VACAR:

For those of you that don't know what fuel cells are, they actually went to the moon on the Apollo program. In that case, they took liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen; when they combine them, it creates an energy source, so basically they had a little electrical plant on board that could make all kinds of things, such as oxygen, that they would need. What's really amazing about a fuel cell—and there are actual fuel-cell buses in operation now in Southern California, and some will be coming north—is that the emissions from the pure fuel cells are water vapor. They truly are zero-emission vehicles, and they are about four years away from being in automobiles on a commercial basis. So fuel cells seem to be a very promising thing for a lot of ferries on the bay.

RUSSELL LONG:

Yes, it does hold a great deal of promise. I would debate whether four years is realistic, though some of the auto manufacturers like to talk about that, but behind closed doors, they say it might be more like 10 to 15 years. It's going to take time. There are reliability issues with fuel cells, there's incredibly high costs associated with manufacturing these vehicles, and when we talk to the fuel-cell manufacturers, they have some very serious concerns themselves in the short-term.

Ultimately that's the direction we'd all like to go, to have vessels out there running on fuel cells that are powered by hydrogen, and the hydrogen itself being made by breaking the water molecule, what's called electrolysis; that can be done using sun and wind. So to use solar power, or to use a wind generator, to break the water molecule, create the hydrogen, there are no additional greenhouse gas emissions or any kind of emissions associated with that. Then the hydrogen goes on board the boat, and from that the only emission you have is water. In fact, I met with some of the key fuel-cell people at Toyota in Los Angeles this week, and they told me that one of their big concerns with their new fuel-cell cars that are being experimented with, is there's so much water coming out the tailpipe, they're worried about what will that do in the wintertime. In some cold places, it could freeze up the tailpipe, or it could make the roads glassy. So this is the kind of thing these guys are starting to think about now.

TOM VACAR:

This is probably one of the more important questions that will be asked tonight. It's from Sandra Salvatori, who represents her frustrated commuter self, and I think that this may be the key question:

I live in Sausalito, but I work in Foster City. What is the vision for getting me down the Peninsula in a reliable, frequent manner? Can I someday soon just take a ferry to Foster City?

Let's begin with Madam Supervisor.

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I would say not soon, and right now the ridership studies have focused on where high ridership would occur. I would venture that there's probably not a high ridership of people going from Sausalito to Foster City. I think it's one of those things, as the usage grows new destinations could be looked at, but at this point in time I would say that's probably not in the works. I know that we've had great success in Marin with the route from Larkspur to PacBell Park, and they're also looking at routes to the airport. That would be high ridership, but I don't think as far as a commuter. One of the other things I think that we need to look at is that the ferries, I think, will be a tremendous boon to our tourist traffic. We in Marin have millions of tourists that come through

our county every year, and many of them don't even stop; they're on the way to the wine country and other destinations. We could divert a lot of that tourist traffic to the ferries, and hook them right into Port Sonoma, and go on to the wine train, and on to the wine country, and lots of things like that. That's the kind of traffic that really hasn't been looked at yet. There could be other kinds of usage and ridership that I think we need to explore in the future.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

If I could just add to the question, what is the WTA recommending. If not Foster City, we were recommending, South San Francisco, Treasure Island, Hercules, Rodeo, Berkeley/Mission Bay, Redwood City, and the Richmond/Antioch/Pittsburg corridor. Then potentially, as I said, the eighth recommended for further study is Port Sonoma. That's in addition to the six current sites, which include Sausalito and Larkspur and Tiburon, Oakland, and the like. So that was again the specific recommendations to have come out of our efforts, our collective efforts.

TOM VACAR:

This is from Mark Sawicki, a UC Berkeley student. He says:

What is the status of a proposed light rail in Marin, the SMART System, linked to a new ferry landing at San Quentin or that area?

STEVE KINSEY:

That's part of the future as well. But it doesn't have the certainty that would allow it to be a part of any first phase. The County of Marin is looking closely at San Quentin as one of the most remarkable remaining sites in the Bay Area to be a transit hub, a world-class transit hub, as well as meeting some of our other needs for workforce housing and bay access for recreational uses. We're excited that we're on the verge of reopening a historic rail tunnel to connect San Rafael directly to the ferry terminal with bike and pedestrian access. San Quentin is in our future, but there's one large problem, which is that it is, by the Constitution, the only place in the state of California where executions can take place. Until the state steps up to its responsibilities to look at a broken system today, related to Death Row, there's no meaningful opportunity to think about the ferries arriving at San Quentin. But the county of Marin is looking at that; we're going to change our General Plan to lay the groundwork for that to happen, and I'm confident that in the decade ahead, the state and the region will recognize it for the remarkable opportunity site that it is.

TOM VACAR:

Something just came to mind, and you all probably thought about this. Let's assume that before the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge is built, and before all the other retrofits are done, which

seem to be ongoing for a long time, let's say that the Hayward fault erupts, and we put some of these bridges out of service in a serious way. Are there enough ferries currently around to handle what would be the potential load? I'm talking about not just losing the Bay Bridge, but maybe losing one or two others. If there are not any available in the bay, are there any available on the West Coast that we could get in an emergency situation so that we wouldn't have an overloaded ferry system? Can anybody take a shot at that?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I'm the Director of Emergency Services for Marin County. It's one of the huge reasons why I'm so excited about the ferry; the WTA is expanding our ferry service because if you look at what happened on 9/11 in New York City, the ferries were the ones that saved the day. They not only moved the people in and out, but they used different kinds of ferrylike things to get all the debris out and things like that. They're so flexible, and they're so able to get into a place that doesn't need a lot of infrastructure, that it would be a godsend. So for me, if we're really going to be prepared for a disaster, we need to have a ferry system. One, because of its capacity to go where other systems can't go, that would be broken and damaged; and two, because we need redundancy. So you talk about if we have enough ferries today. I'm not sure what the number would be because it would depend on the degree of disaster, but we certainly could pull private ferries over and things like that, and we could probably bring others in. New York was able to do amazing things; they were able to get a dredge permit in 24 hours to be able to have ferries get into where they needed them. I think it's a great thing for us to do, and we need the redundancy in our system to address those kinds of situations that may occur.

TOM VACAR:

This is an excellent question because it goes to the part of the whole funding mechanism. This is from Pat Lamken; the question is:

Why is the WTA so opposed to freight transit by ferry? After the 1989 earthquake, ferry shipping companies were willing to cooperate on bringing trucks into SF. Why not continue to do so, or bring cargo into SF? What about this issue of using cargo as airlines do to subsidize passenger ferries?

RUSSELL LONG:

I'd like to take a crack at that, Tom. One of the problems with that concept is that the more a ferry weighs, the more power it takes to move it through the waters, especially to move it at very high speeds as we're disposed toward doing these days. Passengers don't weigh a whole lot—when you put a couple hundred on a vessel, it's not a significant weight—but when you start loading up that vessel with all kinds of baggage from airports, and running it between, let's say, Oakland Airport and SFO, you weigh down the vessel a lot; you require much bigger engines and you have

far greater emissions. It's extremely difficult, using even the best control technology that the WTA is advancing as part of their plan, to bring those emissions down even to the level of a diesel truck operating on the roads. So while it might be something we can do in the future, as we get closer to a fuel-cell-powered ferry or lower-emission ferries than we have today, it's probably not realistic or practical today without impairing air quality in the Bay Area.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Tom, if I could jump back. Russell educated me on that subject over the course of the last year or so as well. On the issue of the importance in this new world of ferry services as a backup, it should be noted that we've used, in the last 23 years, our ferry system as backup for disabled roads and bridges, not just for Loma Prieta, or a BART strike, but we've used it on six different occasions. It's that critical; they're so easy to launch, and the ridership is always remarkably supportive in the long run every time there is one of these short interruptions because people find the ease, access, convenience, and advantages of a ferry system. I think it is critical, as we look at both manmade and other disasters, to be cognizant of what is the safest modality of public transportation. The safest way you can travel on public transit is on ferries, and I think it's critical to look at that, as Don and others will advocate at the state level for the funding that we need to make this happen.

STEVE KINSEY:

We also could point out that it was recognized in the WTA program, and I think that you've increased the fleet to be prepared, right from the beginning, to be able to have those additional ferries so that you have that immediate response that we weren't able to have after Loma Prieta.

RUSSELL LONG:

That won't carry a whole lot of passengers in the event of a major earthquake in the Bay Area, probably on the order of a few thousand. If we had 200,000 people trying to get out of the downtown area and get home, many of them across the bridges that could be closed, it's going to take an awful long time with only 14 boats. If the WTA manages to build out say, 30 boats, that's obviously going to accelerate things by a factor of three. But there's another consideration that I think needs to be mentioned. We have to be concerned about liquefaction along the waterfront. As terminals are built, they need to be built to be very, very strong to be able to handle severe earthquakes. Otherwise, we can have the boats, but no way to access them.

TOM VACAR:

This is a long question, but it kind of got regenerated, and it says:

How do we get people out of cars and into transit?

That's got to be the gold question. Russ, you raised the issue about pollution, but you also raised the issue about preserving the environment, and certainly a ferryboat, properly used with proper emissions controls is probably a very efficient thing. How do you get people to take them?

RUSSELL LONG:

There are two parts to that question, I think. The first is, despite all the incredible advances that the WTA is proposing as part of their plan—which will in fact reduce emissions of ferry boats by a factor of 10—they're going to be 10 times cleaner than they are today as a result of some of the devices they're putting on them. We're still only getting ferries down to the emissions level of an automobile, roughly. There are a few more steps they could take that we've suggested to them; and they may or may not, but if they do, I think it would, for the first time, make ferries actually cleaner than automobiles. If that happens, obviously, there's an even greater desire to get people on board to reduce the impacts to air quality in the bay, and it's difficult. I think there's been a great difficulty moving people into mass transit, and the numbers are showing that people may be going the opposite direction. So I think integration of transit sources is very important. That's been mentioned here tonight, and I think there are a number of issues. It's very complex.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

To me, it's cost efficiency and convenience; it's as simple as that. I'm going to use a ferry that's convenient and cost effective. All the intangibles then create reduction of the impact and the environment, that's a benefit. It makes me feel better about myself; reduction in congestion makes my aunt, who's using the car today, feel a little more inclined to support my decision to take the ferry. I think fundamentally, though, it's got to be convenience, cost effectiveness, and efficiency.

STEVE KINSEY:

I would like to start by saying, whoever has the answer, please give me a call after tonight! Because MTC is struggling right now under the burden of a number of lawsuits that are specifically targeted at this issue of how do we, as a region, create an increased transit ridership. In 1983, MTC, in an effort to work with transit operators to improve air quality, committed to developing plans that were envisioned to increase transit ridership. Recently, the courts have held that we were actually accountable for a 15 percent increase in transit ridership; and in spite of the fact that the population of the Bay Area has increased in the last 20 years, and certainly our investments in transit have increased, the increase in transit ridership is still hovering below 10 percent of what it was in 1983.

I think that the reality of it is that it's going to come partly as a result of the pain that people feel in the alternatives, but on the proactive side, reliability is what I think ultimately is going to be the

key for making people feel confident about using transit. If they currently are using their private automobile, comfort is certainly an issue for them, and connection—making it so that it's not a journey in and of itself to try and get from one mode to another—and then of course, the frequency—which is a function of funding, are all important things. In that regard, we have to increase our funding sources, which brings us back to why we're having this evening's meeting, why we're looking at legislation next year to increase the ability to fund our transportation systems. We have to recognize that on a true-cost basis, gasoline has actually gone down in price over the last 20 years, in effect, a hidden subsidy to the automobile. If we step up to the plate as a nation and as a state and recognize that, we will begin to level the playing field for funding opportunities for transportation.

TOM VACAR:

Madam Supervisor?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I think all those things are important, but I think that the difference in how the WTA is approaching it is that they're really looking at it as an experience. They're looking at the design of the docks, and how you load and unload, and making it not feel like you're cattle. They're looking at other kinds of docking than just the boat pulling into the dock; they're looking at Internet docking, so you can go on and use your laptop while you're on the ferry. They're looking at where you could bring your bikes on board, so you have places for your bikes and you can go on to your destination. They're looking at making it something that doesn't feel like it's stigmatized, like a lot of the buses. It's not going to have that feeling like you're all crowded in there, and you're suffering. They're trying to make it pleasurable. I think that's going to be a real key thing, because they're looking at what people find comfortable, what people enjoy. They'll have a sense of community. I think that is going to be a key to getting people out of their cars, to give them some plusses, and not just that it's going to save some money and time.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

To underscore that, we surveyed over 3,000 passengers in order to determine precisely that. I think that's an absolutely critical point, that whole experience which is, from my perspective, one of the great secrets in the bay. It's the beauty and the natural benefits that come with the casual commute, and all the extraordinary wonderful expectations that are the region, that make it so special. I think that's a great point.

TOM VACAR:

What you're talking about is something called an incentive, an incentive to be comfortable, to have a nice experience, and all that. I use the ferry quite often to go from where I live in the city to Oakland, where I work at Channel 2, and it's a wonderful experience. It's more fun than driving my car, and I have a pretty neat car. Let me ask you about incentives. Let me ask you about the kinds of incentives that, if you have a compressed natural gas car, you can use; even if you're a single person, you can use the commute line. There was an incentive that PG&E had when it was desperate to get people to stop using power called the 20/20. Use 20 percent less than you did before, and by God, we'll pay you money. Are there any plans with you all to give people an incentive? For example, if you take the ferry five times, we'll eliminate five gallons worth of state road tax on your thing. You turn in a coupon, you get a discount, or you can apply for it, but we will give you, like they used to give out in the oil-based tax stamps, some sort of tax or real benefit. Are there any incentives like that in the offing to give people a real reason to say, "Yes, I'm going to try this because I'm going to get something for it."

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I don't know if there's anything that's coming from the WTA, but I think a lot of employers are interested in working on those incentives. I know we, as a major employer, are looking at how we can incentivize our employees to take transit. At this point, we pay 50 percent of their bus transit. If a ferry were something that employees could use to get to our offices, we would be interested in doing that. I think that's something to work with the business community on and the major employers, and see if they could put together some packages.

TOM VACAR:

It says this is for Russell again.

WTA proposes 40 new ferries, while there are about 900,000 trucks in the Bay Area. How many trucks equal one ferry? Isn't the focus on zero-emission or near-zero-emission ferries misplaced in view of their miniscule overall impact on Bay Area air quality?

RUSSELL LONG:

First, the impact isn't miniscule because the amount of fine particles that are coming out of the exhaust of these vessels is incredibly high. It subjects a lot of people—passengers, dockworkers, and the crews on the vessels themselves—to extreme levels of cancer-causing material. Trucks don't have the same direct impact, though obviously there is impact there too, and it's a valid question. The point is, every sector has to do its share. The EPA is regulating the truck industry heavily now; just five years from now, they're all going to have to put on basically catalytic

converters, the SCR unit I mentioned before, and the particulate trap if they're going to sell a truck in California.

That industry is being regulated very hard. The marine sector has been left completely unregulated. The EPA has never put regulations into effect on commercial vessels, and they've only started to do so. Those regulations haven't even kicked in yet. The point is, every sector has to do its share, and if you look at some of the big engines in the marine sector, they're incredibly polluting. You can't even make a comparison with trucks because they are so off the scale. We're hoping that what the WTA is proposing here is going to help to establish a whole new playing field when it comes to vessels. The U.S. EPA will be required, as part of the Federal Clean Air Act to take a look at what's happened here in California, and their mandate is to achieve the "greatest degree of emissions reductions" which the EPA Administrator believes shall be available using technology that will be available. When they look at California as a result of the great work the WTA is doing, they're going to be under a legal mandate to bring the limbo bar down on all commercial vessels around the country. The point is that what the WTA does here is going to have a significant national effect in the same way that the Pavley Bill did this year, in terms of reducing global warming emissions from passenger cars. The WTA's work is going to do, in effect, the same thing that the Pavley Bill did, except in the marine environment. That's another reason we should be thankful to Senator Perata for changing the original legislation to mandate an examination and study of new fuels and propulsion technologies.

TOM VACAR:

This is a very good question, because I think it goes to one of the other issues about frequency. Irene Kelly, who's a member of The Commonwealth Club, asks:

Will ferry service ever be available on a 24-hour basis? Only having transportation alternatives to cars available all the time will let people get out of their cars effectively. BART doesn't accommodate that need either. What about trying at least on an experimental basis the concept of very late night ferry service, or ferry service on Friday and Saturday nights? What about around-the-clock or very long-term ferry service?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

It sounds great in the perfect world. Unfortunately, we live in the imperfect one. The analogy is our MUNI Owl service, and it continues to expand as ridership, usage, and demand expand. I don't imagine any of us on the board of the WTA are absolutely opposed to some consideration of the same, as long as the demand forecasts are there and we can justify the expenses.

TOM VACAR:

Senator Perata, let me ask you then, what about that? Is there federal money? Is there money someplace where you can at least try on an experimental basis this concept of providing it more than just infrequently and mostly for the convenience of the ferry system?

DON PERATA:

We're sort of going the opposite direction. There have been agencies like AC Transit that have pulled out of neighborhoods after midnight. One that they pulled out of was the airport facility that United has, so people couldn't get to work, or they could get to work but they couldn't get home. I think right now it is a luxury to do that. You could try it on an experimental basis; I think what it would probably tell you is that it would be a boutique service that would jeopardize other services. I think it would be difficult to propose, much less maintain.

STEVE KINSEY:

I would suggest that we already have that in its own modest way on the Golden Gate Ferry system—where I'm going to have hustle to be out on the 9:10 [ferry] tonight, but if I was here on the weekend, I could go until 1:00 in the morning. So we've recognized already that there are different patterns of usage for these different transit services. I think that in the end we're going to probably be forced to look at more creative solutions than just throwing more service at it in these low-volume periods of the day and night. In Marin County there are efforts to get our employees to use bus transit. We've provided a guaranteed ride home service, so that if transit is out, we'll pay the cab fare; and nobody's taken unfair advantage of that. Those kinds of ideas are going to have to be applied to give people the sense they have 24-hour mobility.

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

Tom, also the WTA is very wise, they're looking to get two different types of vessels, a 149-passenger vessel and a 300-passenger vessel. They will be able to accommodate perhaps lower ridership areas at certain times by using the smaller vessel, so they don't have to always have this great big one where they have to really pack it in to make it economically viable. I think that's really good, that they'll have some flexibility in being able to address the level of ridership.

TOM VACAR:

Earlier, somebody asked a question and I didn't fully go through that card.

What about a 50-passenger vessel? What about something that recognizes that they may only get a few people, but if it runs all day back and forth—if that's a real possibility—is that a real possibility?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

The biggest cost generally is labor, and so you still need, I would imagine, the same size crew for that size ship. Probably it would need a feasibility study, and at some point there's a price point level that would have to be looked at. Generally, they don't go smaller for those reasons. We have the same things come up about buses.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Though we are talking about water taxis in San Francisco, that of course is less of a regional impact, but there are a lot of concerns and considerations there. I know there are a number of people that have presented plans to not only my office, but also to the Port itself. So we can go even further down and scale this back.

TOM VACAR:

According to WTA studies, Berkeley and Albany represent a very popular, potential new ferry line. We have support of both cities and local landowners. We reside on the most congested freeway section, I-80, in the Bay Area. What's the most effective thing Berkeley ferry supporters can do to get support in Sacramento for expanded ferry service in our neighborhood?

Question is from Jerri Holan, Friends of the Albany Ferry.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

You got on our list, which is good. A Berkeley-San Francisco-Mission Bay line is one of the recommended new services. From that perspective, once we pass this operations and implementation plan for it and put it in the hands of Senator Perata, I think the best thing to do is work with him and work with other legislators to make sure that is included in the new plan.

RUSSELL LONG:

Our colleagues at the Sierra Club have some concerns about one of the sites in Berkeley because it adjoins a park that has been the subject of controversy in the past, I think. They, including people like Sylvia McLaughlin, have worked hard to protect this park through the years. There are sites over there which we understand are more acceptable to some of our environmental colleagues in the East Bay, and that's being discussed right now.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Supervisor Murray just appropriately pointed out that in your packet, just coincidentally, and most important, conveniently, we have a suggested sample letter that you can send to your senator or assembly member. I see tens of thousands of these on hundreds of different issues—it's always best to try to personalize these things as much as you can, so it's not just a copy of a form letter, which tends not to have the impact, at least from my own humble perspective, that a handwritten note or a note that goes on your own letterhead would have. But this is a perfect opportunity for you to advocate for your particular interest.

TOM VACAR:

This is a very good question:

Will the WTA guarantee that the employees be union employees?

Question was asked by Steve Ongerth, representing himself.

STEVE KINSEY:

As far as I know, the unions were well represented and continue to be on the WTA. I have every reason to believe unions will have their fair place at the table in this.

DON PERATA:

I don't think that. I think there will be a question that will arise in the legislature, and I think that unless organized labor is pulling with both oars, I don't think we'd get a bill out. I look forward to their support.

TOM VACAR:

How do ferries benefit transit-dependent riders? Is this equally important to reducing car trips?

Question is from Bill Barnes.

STEVE KINSEY:

How do ferries benefit transit-dependent riders? I think obviously it's a system that we're trying to build, and we've been saying throughout the evening that we're looking for connections between our different transit modes. We talk about, and the senator talked about, the bridge toll increase, and not wanting to impact people by unfairly charging higher rates for those who are automobile-

dependent, but we have lots of ways. At MTC we've just completed a lifeline transit, which looks exactly at that user group of transit-dependent riders. We're trying to target our investments into improving service to that particular population. Also, under the welfare reform, we developed the Welfare-to-Work program, where we've specifically targeted a range of support services, some through bus transit, others through more innovative programs. I think the point that there needs to be equity is a valid one; and I think that expanding the system for all users is where we want to be.

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

One, it does give them more choices. More transit allows more people to use it. Two, the pricing for the ferry is being kept at a price level that's going to be competitive with other forms of transit. Three, it is paratransit-accessible and I think that's an important thing as our population gets older. We have more people who are going to need easier accessibility, and they're being designed with great accessibility for people with different mobility challenges. I think it's going to be terrific.

TOM VACAR:

Rod?

ROD DIRIDON:

In a prior lifetime, I was Chair of MTC during the Loma Prieta earthquake. I recall that probably the transit-dependent were the most seriously impacted at that time, because they couldn't move to a car that would drive clear around the bay or use another route. They were stuck. So the ferry, especially in an emergency period, is absolutely essential for the transit-dependent.

TOM VACAR:

Here's an interesting question from Elana Lichtenthal, who's representing herself.

Have you estimated the average cost per toll/transit traveler to fund this initiative; and if so, over how many years? You mentioned the \$600 million figure, but what it's going to cost me?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Good question. I wish I had it. We may have someone in the room who has the specific feasibility analysis and financial analysis that can answer that question in more specific terms. But the idea is to make it competitive. In fact, the ultimate idea is make it not only competitive, but to the extent it's competitive we want to make it the first choice. If we can get ridership up, there are some examples—not many right now because we haven't hit that level of demand—but there are

potential examples where we can truly be more competitive I would argue, than some other modalities of public transportation.

TOM VACAR:

From Brian Cunningham, RIGEL Pharmaceuticals:

What can be done to ensure direct connection from the East Bay to the Peninsula to transport workers to biotech companies and other industries in South San Francisco, the airport area, all that?

DON PERATA:

One of the things that San Mateo County has discussed, and specifically the city of South San Francisco, is to build the infrastructure for the docking of the ferry, which brings up, how can you get more for what you need where you live? A lot of these counties were going out, perhaps in sales taxes, to make ferry systems and at least the facilities or the connections part of their plan; they could speed along the effort to put a ferry in Berkeley or somewhere else. Part of the problem is who's got the best shot at getting the thing used, so you don't end up with the Richmond experience where you hold the party and nobody shows up. The other issue that is underlying this whole plan is an example of the biotech industry, where you've got a job center and you can feed the job center so that when people are leaving the East Bay going to Oyster Point, they are already at their destination. They don't have to spill out in a lot of different directions, so you're getting thousands of people working in a place, the same way that Mission Bay would be a destination point. In my judgment, if we could master the routes to places where there are lots of people working, if we could get from the East Bay to San Francisco and then make it easy enough to get to UCSF where thousands of people are employed, or the University of California, we would have made a great contribution. Because you're going to pull all those, I would venture to say, virtually individual crossings, one car, one person crossing, going to San Francisco right now. Because that's what I hear most people say: "I'd get out of my car if I could get on a ferry, and I work at Genentech. But I can't do that, so I'm on the freeway for an hour and 15 minutes."

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Senator, I think that's exactly what our mandate was, and what we attempted to do. You may recall when the Blue Ribbon Task Force came out with recommendations to expand our ferry system, they talked about 120 new ferryboats, and they talked about 27 new terminals. That means, to put into perspective what our recommendations are today, just 7 new terminals and only, as Russell said, 30, 31 new ferries in addition to the 13 or 14 we have. So we'd have a total of around 44, 45 ferries, but again, specifically with the senator's consideration in mind, we made sure that we dealt with those that would be impacted or at least benefited the most.

TOM VACAR:

A question came to my mind that I think is worthy of asking. We know that the Golden Gate Bridge District is in financial trouble, deep financial trouble, \$5-a-crossing financial trouble. Many people think that that's mismanagement on the part of the bridge district, mismanagement in controlling the money. Doesn't that hurt the idea of a ferry system where somebody can say: "Look what happened, ferries are part of the Golden Gate Transit System, why should we allot even more money to have more mismanagement, maybe even higher rates, etc.?" How bad is this Golden Gate Bridge District thing hurting you guys?

DON PERATA:

I think politically they're doing us a great favor by going \$5; they really took the first shot and we look like a bargain. I have not heard all the allegations that you mentioned, so maybe they have been localized to people who live in Marin, but I think they did us a big favor by making a difficult choice to raise the tolls. In that sense, I believe we now can point to: They're doing it over there, maybe we should be following it.

TOM VACAR:

Senator, you can hear those complaints at 10 o'clock on Channel 2 frequently. Great idea whose time has come.

Can the past ferry service from the 1900s to the 1950s, the history of that, the success of that, be used to help promote the new millennium ferry service?

Question is from Michael Marston (SPUR).

DON PERATA:

I have some colleagues in the senate that are living in the early 1950s. I don't know; it's very difficult because in the 21st century, looking that far back into the past does not yield too many people that remember it. Having taught history for a period of time in my earlier life, people who are aware historically what went on are even fewer. I think our best opportunities will be to appeal to the rationality of what we need to be doing now, and why this would play into an intelligent approach to transit in the future, rather than invoking the past.

TOM VACAR:

This is an excellent question:

Albany supports a ferry service to relieve congestion on the I-80 Corridor. How will the ferry, designated for an Albany terminal, be developed as a regional ferry service so that Albany, population 17,000, will not be overwhelmed financially with costs of a terminal and infrastructure improvements?

Ultimately, to continue the question, maybe the closure of the whole system? Do you guys think about that? Question is from Allan Maris, Councilman, City of Albany.

STEVE KINSEY:

One of the things about this is that not the land costs, but the terminal costs, are included in the budget here, so there will be a cost-sharing approach to many of these access points to the ferry. I think that the folks should feel that they're not going to be fully responsible, but ultimately the communities that step up and provide some local match are going to have a greater opportunity to get into expanded ferry service.

TOM VACAR:

Have you guys detected any resistance on the part of communities like Albany, which says it supports, and Berkeley, which says it supports, but sometimes when you put up a ferry dock or some sort of infrastructure, people from outside of town come in and you get traffic problems and all that. Is there any resistance to putting in ferry docks or ferry infrastructure because people don't want their town invaded by commuters, when they haven't normally been invaded by commuters?

STEVE KINSEY:

That's never happened in Marin County—just kidding, of course.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

San Francisco. We're going to be the main hub of this entire system, and we've been very fortunate to have received, \$16+ million to begin improvements of the ferry terminal. There are a lot of resources out there. It's just the quality of one's imagination that allows places like Albany and other places to share in those resources, and be able to have them impact in our communities.

STEVE KINSEY:

There's a real issue here, that community acceptance of almost anything in the public sector today is one of the major challenges that we all face. But it shouldn't happen for this reason or that, and ferries will have that just as other forms of transportation will. I think Russell and his organization getting in early, and the senator's reception on the ecological aspects of the fuel, has been helpful,

but these still will require regular dredging. There will be other environmental considerations of ferry service, just as there are with any form of transit. So I don't want to take lightly the fact that there will be resistance, and part of the value of building a broader consensus of support is to be able to respond to that.

RUSSELL LONG:

I think, Tom, a lot of these issues are going to get dealt with more specifically in what's called the Site Specific EIRs that will be conducted as each of these sites progresses within its analysis. I've attended some of the meetings the communities have held, and that issue has come up before: "What happens to people driving in from out of town? Will that displace all the parking in my neighborhood?" That's a concern for people. There are concerns on the environmental side that have to be addressed, issues of rafting birds, issues of noise, wake impacts, dredging impacts—each and every one of these will have to be treated separately as we go along through the process.

TOM VACAR:

Mike Gaylord says:

Transportation systems cost money; "build it and they will come." In looking for support for low-emission proposals, it's important that the commute possibilities not be stillborn due to unacceptably high start-up fares, vis á vis the exorbitant SFO tariff for BART trips to the airport. Will the players at WTA commit to building ridership at the start by setting affordable fares, even if there's an initial loss, to get people hooked on ferries again?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

I think the short answer is absolutely yes, if that's the purpose of all these consultants and all these studies, and the demand surveys, and the competitive economic analysis that we put together. To the degree that I have a specific dollar amount for a 139-passenger ferry versus a 300-passenger ferry, I confess, I'm not aware of any of those specifics, but we have ranges and that's certainly a consideration that was, we believe, met in the implementation and operations plan.

TOM VACAR:

Okay, from Brian Cunningham, RIGAL Pharmaceuticals:

Aren't the ridership studies based on data that's five years old or more? Will a study be done to examine commuting patterns to the Peninsula from other areas around the bay? The point being that if you're going to determine new ferry routes, do you have local, reasonable, recent data to support it?

STEVE KINSEY:

I think certainly Gavin could speak to that, but in our role at MTC in reviewing the forecasts, that was specifically one of our responsibilities. Our staff worked with the WTA, worked with the survey information that was developed, and actually adapted the models, the computer models that project these ridership figures, to be at the leading edge of the industry in terms of projecting ridership. So we're satisfied that they are not only current numbers, but they're at the front edge.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

In fact, these were all done in the last year or so, and exactly right, you guys were able to look over our shoulders and make sure they were adapted to the latest projections. I think you used the example of some of the projections by 2025 that had been amended—the 1.4 million new residents in the Bay Area counties, as well as the 1.2 million new jobs that will be developed. All these things were brought in, and pretty reasonably from my humble perspective, sophisticated analysis as they were thrown into the computer, spit out, and certified by the MTC and others.

TOM VACAR:

This is a great question, and a few years ago, this might have seemed a little bit silly, but it's not silly anymore, just looking at the number of bikes out there. From Ken Eichstaedt of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition:

Connectivity is important. How will the WTA coordinate with the MTC Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, to assist the nonmotorized needs of the Bay Area, which clearly are growing?

STEVE KINSEY:

I feel very good that for the first time in the last year, MTC did adopt a regional bicycle plan. We're also, as I pointed out earlier, currently undertaking a regional transit hub connectivity study, so we're looking for these intermodal connections to occur. We recognize that connectivity between modes is most critical. We also feel strongly that bicycles are a viable alternative form of transportation, and as Cynthia Murray acknowledged, the WTA has strongly considered the needs of bicycles in the design of the program.

TOM VACAR:

Anyone else?

RUSSELL LONG:

I just want to add that we got a letter this week from someone from the Bicycle Coalition and they're very concerned about the design of the vessels because with the current vessels, bikes are subject to salt spray, and it winds up corroding the bikes. I think that has to be incorporated into a decent plan for these vessels as well.

TOM VACAR:

I think this is the person that asked this question [John Stephens, Casual Carpoolers and BART Riders]; I think I'm going to answer it:

If there's such widespread support, why aren't there any reps from BART, CalTrans, AC Transit, etc.?

I guess if we would have invited everybody, they would have shown up and we'd have everybody here. The other thing is, my guess is there are some reps out there. Let me ask this question:

What are the optimistic and pessimistic timelines for ferry expansion? What are the optimistic and pessimistic expectations on fares?

Let's talk first about timeline and then let's talk about fares.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

Best case, EIR, Draft EIR, was extended to, I believe, January 30 of next year [2003]; it would be in the legislature in the summer of next year, conceivably. Most optimistic projections are three years from adoption and some identity of funding sources to as long as eight years for some of the more complicated terminals and routes. I always love these projections because they never seem to happen, but most ambitiously, 2007.

TOM VACAR:

Anybody else want a shot at that?

Will the proposed Rodeo/Hercules ferry dock be at the existing Rodeo Marina or a new facility, and if so, where?

Question is from Dave La Barne, property owner in Rodeo.

STEVE KINSEY:

I don't have a quick answer to that. We don't have it yet, so we don't know yet.

TOM VACAR:

Understandably, everything discussed here tonight is based on long-term regulated service. Is there anything in the short-term, more entrepreneurial, that could help pave the way for a more robust system?

That's a good question. Are there some private entrepreneurs out there that say, "You WTA folks just do whatever you want. I'm going to set up some ferries and see if I can make some money?" First of all, is there anybody on the horizon and second, could they do it? Third, could they make money on it? Question is from Ryan Phelan.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

We currently have a private service out of Tiburon, so certainly they could do it; it's being done.

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

And Sausalito. Private service out of Sausalito—they've been in business a long, long time. I would presume they're making money. That's their business model—if they make money or not. Nobody's stopping them.

GAVIN NEWSOM:

We were very considerate of the private industry as it relates to looking at this more entrepreneurially, and that's why I mentioned it, as it relates to funding sources, other private sector development interests, and the like.

TOM VACAR:

All right. I have in my hand the last card [from Walter S., Pedestrian Transit Riders Association].

Bridge tolls in New York City are \$7, yet bridge tolls, with Golden Gate exception, are only \$2 in California. There's a recognition in New York City that they must move people rather than cars.

Let's comment about just the fare issue. Don said \$5 is a bold move on the part of the Golden Gate Bridge District. My guess is there are people in Marin and Sonoma that think you're out of your

mind, but what about it? What about raising tolls to be realistic with supporting an overall transit system? I know that's a hard question; that's where you get enemies. Gavin, come on?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

I've always been for peak-time pricing, and I know that there are some people I respect that are vehemently opposed to the consideration of peak-time pricing. So you've got to deal with reality. We've got to deal with the fact that there's only a limited amount of money out there, and there should be some type of user fee—things we've taken for granted, and frankly have had subsidized, unfortunately, I am not convinced they're going to be there for us in the future in the context that we're going to be able to continue to subsidize them. It's inevitable that things have to go north. The good news is that it seems to me as long as we can equate some efficiency and some outcome with accountability, or that the public seems to be there with us, considerate of that prospect, and I believe that Senator Perata and others, the legislature, will be making that case loudly. All of us will have to come together, at the peril of having not been successful once we wake up in January or perhaps November 6 of 2004. I'm hopeful that we can all come together around some consideration of toll increase.

TOM VACAR:

Russ?

DON PERATA:

I think there needs to be some type of a policy compromise on this. My political friends here are probably not in a position to go out there on a limb, and say, "We'd like to raise tolls to 10 bucks per car" because that would dissuade people from driving to work, and incentivize transit. My environmental colleagues, on the other hand, think that moving in that direction is a good thing, and obviously there would be a lot of environmental benefits. But then my environmental justice colleagues say, no, you cannot do that; it's absolutely going to knock out the low-end people from being able to commute in to the bay. So I think there's got to be a policy compromise, and what Supervisor Newsom is suggesting is probably the best of a bunch of not-so-great ideas, and it may be the most realistic one for us to pursue.

TOM VACAR:

We've got about 10 minutes left, so I'm going to allow each of our panelists, beginning with Supervisor Gavin Newsom here, to make a couple of minutes statement. Try to keep it to a couple of minutes, and we're going to end where we began, with Mr. Perata. So, please?

GAVIN NEWSOM:

What I want to say is a job well done again as far as we've gotten. We've fulfilled the mandate at the WTA; we fulfilled, I believe, the expectations of most that we can come together, collaborate with the distant points of view represented on an 11-body panel, come together with consultants with the latest technology, the latest information, and put a plan that I believe is not only workable, but is feasible in the immediate term, and certainly in the mid-range and long-term. I'm proud to have been a participant in this process, and I'm honored and proud indeed that this body was considerate enough to consider the impacts on the environment, which I think would have derailed this entire process. I believe Bluewater Network, more than any other organization, deserves a tremendous amount of credit for their willingness to work together to compromise, not on their core principles, but to the extent that their objectives were met in parallel with ours. I believe everyone deserves a great deal of credit. I'm enthusiastic. I wish, and I will end with this, that the Olympic bid was successful; I think potentially that could have certified the prospect that we would get the funding and get the prioritization for this region to make this a reality. I think that was a step back, but the fact is, we need to do something and we need to do it now, and it needs to be done differently, and I think ferries are just that. I'm encouraged about the prospects again for the future.

TOM VACAR:

Well, maybe another Bay Bridge World Series could help that along too. Madam Supervisor?

CYNTHIA MURRAY:

I, too, applaud the efforts of the WTA and Senator Perata, because I think if we look at how we can reduce congestion, we have to understand that, given our circumstances, no one mode is going to be able to make the level of improvements we need. We have to look at giving people choices, giving them different modes, and making those modes work together as seamlessly as possible. I think that the WTA has really anticipated that—they're not just looking at the ferries, they're looking at the shuttle buses that would get the people to the ferries, and they're looking at where these ferries need to be located at the high-rider destinations. I also applaud their sensitivity to the environment: Not only are they looking at the zero emissions, but they're looking at technology and design of the vessels that would have very low wakes, that would have the ability to go in shallow water—as little as six inches, was one of the boats that was explored—so that very little dredging would have to occur.

They're being really sensitive in designing a system that's sustainable, that's balanced, and meets the needs of the people who need it the most by reaching out to those who have no other form of transportation, as well as attracting the higher-end riders by making it more of an experience, something that's going to be desirable and fun, and allow them to do the kinds of things they like to do in the morning and afternoon, and not just sit in their cars and be screaming at their fellow

drivers. I think that's great, and I think that they've done a terrific job in public outreach. I was on the Citizens Advisory Committee and we held numerous meetings, I think nine, ten, eleven meetings in just the North Bay; then we had meetings all over the bay. I think they certainly have tried to do the kind of work on the front end to make sure that the product coming out the back end is going to have the positive outcomes to do the kind of congestion relief that we also desire, and we need it today as well as into the future. It's great to look at what's coming, but we could really use this help today. So anything that can get us our relief sooner, and not go back to the tolls, is a good thing. We need to be able to say, with accountability, with citizen input, and with their support; then we can have solutions today. We don't have to wait way into the future. If paying a little more is going to buy those solutions sooner, I think that people will find a value there. I think we can work with the public and help them understand that they have choices that they can support, and I think they will support them.

TOM VACAR:

Supervisor Kinsey?

STEVE KINSEY:

Again, in my capacity as a member of the MTC, I think that MTC has recognized that we do not have the resources available to meet the transportation requirements of the next generation today. Unless we can identify—and this process has certainly done that—and the leadership of Senator Perata and his colleagues is going to be necessary in the next session to bring the financing opportunities forward for the water transit portion and many other transit projects that are included in his legislative efforts. We need to increase our transportation choices. Clearly mobility is a fundamental component of a quality of life; it's also a real driver of the economic opportunities of the Bay Area. One point I wanted to mention this evening that hasn't come up through the questions that have been raised: We have learned that there is a distinct relationship between transportation and land use. Transit-oriented development is an important and fundamental part of what we're going to need to be doing as we go forward into the future. Water transit revitalizing our communities along their waterfronts is a tremendous added driver to this program that we haven't talked about this evening, that I think will be an important contribution—that the transit mode can help the quality of life. When this program began as a blue ribbon committee several years ago, it was driven by wildly optimistic and deeply dedicated advocates for one mode, the ferry mode. MTC was concerned about the scale of that ambition, but what we observed in working together with the WTA over these last two years is a maturing and a realism that has come together that gives us confidence, that has allowed us to support these efforts and to go forward together looking for increased funding at the federal level as well as at the state and local level.

TOM VACAR:

Mr. Long?

RUSSELL LONG:

I would like to commend the Water Transit Authority for everything they've done on this project. I think that they have been incredibly responsive and have proceeded on very much a good faith effort with the environmental community to try to come up with the best environmental plan that they possibly can. I'd also like to commend Senator Perata for the legislation, the changes he made that brought us to this point, and Supervisor Newsom, who helped us establish the Clean Marine Committee that looked at technical solutions and what can be done; that was done through the Board of Supervisors, with a resolution asking the WTA to set up an independent ad hoc committee to do that. Through that committee, we analyzed all these different technical options that were available under Mary Culnane's good work, and this was all very positive. As a result, I think we're going to wind up with the United States EPA being forced to develop ferries that are 10 times cleaner across the country because of what's happening here with the WTA. So this is an incredible and unprecedented victory.

Some of the things that the WTA is doing have not been mentioned this evening. For example, whale detection devices are going to be put on ferries, very inexpensive units, but no one's ever tried them on a commercial vessel before. We have no reason to believe they won't work, but because so many grey whales are now migrating into San Francisco Bay, this will allow us to increase the safety of passengers—one passenger was actually killed on a ferry in a collision with a whale some years ago in the Atlantic—and it will also protect these lovely cetaceans that we need to protect. It's a great victory, and we hope the WTA just looks at a few more things on air emissions; we know that they will, and we commend them for having gone as far as they already have. We know there will be a few more studies on site-specific issues, and of course, that's necessary, and we have every confidence that those will be resolved in due course. Finally, I just want to say that this plan is a testament to the vision of all involved that we have come to this point.

TOM VACAR:

Senator Perata?

DON PERATA:

There are a lot of reasons to be optimistic. This side of the table, when we started representing MTC in the marine environmental interests, we were very jaundiced about the approach. We were able to work through that, and it's a much better plan for their participation. I think it's been approached in an intelligent way. I'd like to pay homage to the person that got me into this, Ron

Cowen, who had the original vision to put 200 boats on the water and have 100 terminals. If it weren't for people who said, "Why not?" we wouldn't be here talking about "Why?" That's important.

I want to underscore something about bridge tolls. I don't understand why people are paying \$2 to cross the bridge and \$20 to park. When I hear that argument, I'm lost. I came over to this fair city to participate in a panel discussion, not unlike this, held at the Bank of America building. I went up, did my thing, came down, and they whacked me \$14. I thought the guy was kidding. He didn't look like he had a great sense of humor, but that's what I paid. I paid \$2 to get over, I don't know how much in gas, and then \$14 for what was about \$1.80 in time. So I don't have a lot of tolerance for that argument. In New York, they do things because they've got to do them. Here, we're a little spoiled: We want it all, we don't want to pay for it, and my way is better than anybody else's way. The only way to cut through that is political leadership. If we don't have the moxie to do it, shame on us.

We have to recognize that we're not really talking about ferries exclusively; this is an integrated expenditure plan. That as BART gets stronger, as AC Transit can put more buses across the bay, and we can use HOV lanes to their god-intended purpose, if we can make the ACE trains stronger so the service coming into the southern part of the bay is enhanced, we are integrating the whole system, we are making everything stronger, and that makes ferry service plausible and possible. So without that kind of a broad coalition, this isn't going to work. That's why I think you walk out of here tonight thinking, "Do we want to go for a buck or a \$2 increase?" I chased one gentleman out, so maybe we can blow out all the opposition, but we're going to really have to think about it. Is it going to be \$675 million over 10 years, or are we going to double that so we can do twice as much for all of this? We're going to get there slowly, or can we go a little bit faster; rather than walking fast, can we jog? I think that's just coming down to that issue because the groundwork has been laid magnificently, but all our fights are not over. Legislatively, we have a story to tell and a reason for asking the voters to approve this. I really think now we're down to one or two, and do we deal with congestion pricing or not? As I said, there's a lot of subtleties to that.

I want to commend all of you for hanging out here for a couple of hours. The wine you could have drunk and left, you didn't, thank you. You've done a great job, and I've been honored to be a part of this. I look forward to round 2, which will be very interesting. Thank you, thank you all for being here and for all your help.

TOM VACAR:

And the last word will go to Rod.

ROD DIRIDON:

I would like to first remind all of you that in the last two pages of the material that's been so skillfully prepared by the WTA staff, you have a sequence of Web pages where you can obtain additional information; you have the information contact point with Heidi there if you need access directly to the WTA; and on the last page, as Gavin noted, is a sample letter that you might care to prepare, using your own words, to communicate with your legislators. That letter, that communication is very important, so please just don't set it aside; make sure you do act upon it.

Then it's time to say some thank you's, and a special thank you to Senator Don Perata for his forethought in developing the project in the first place, and his time this evening. Thank you, Don. To the panel that have very, very busy evenings, having been there, I know every evening like this is extremely valuable, and except for Gavin, they're out of their districts and they're not out accomplishing a whole lot politically, except doing the good of the overall community—the Bay Area-wide community, so thank you all very much for being here. Our crusading journalist, Tom Vacar, has launched on another crusade and he's doing a great job. Tom, thanks for your skill and for your forethought and for your congeniality tonight.

TOM VACAR:

I thank all of you for coming and sometime in the next few days, let's go out and celebrate all this new knowledge by taking a ferry ride. Good night.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND TERMS

AC Transit	Alameda Contra Costa Transit
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Pavley Bill	Assembly Bill 1493, passed July 1, 2002, requires the California Air Resources Board to adopt regulations that “achieve the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles” no later than January 1, 2005. The bill will require automakes for the first time to limit carbon dioxide and other global warming pollutants from new cars and light trucks.
QED	quod erat demonstrandum
SCR	Selective Catalytic Reduction
SMART	Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
WTA	Water Transit Authority

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