



## Transportation Committee

November 25, 2009

### Update on the Connect Card Program

**Issue:** The Connect Card Program is approaching the conclusion of its current phase, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being prepared to govern implementation.

**Recommendation:** None; this item is for information only.

**Discussion:** Formerly known as the Universal Transit Fare Card, the Connect Card is a regional, electronic transit fare system. The system will allow for seamless transfers between transit systems, and it will provide a powerful new tool to increase transit ridership across the region. Eight different transit agencies spanning all six counties the SACOG region are participating.

The Connect Card program is currently in Phase 2, Engineering Design. Phase 2 is nearing conclusion and should finalize system requirements and technical specifications by January 2010. At that time, a Request for Proposals will be prepared for release, with a vendor scheduled to be under contract by May 2010. Staff expects the Connect Card system to be fully deployed by September 2011.

Prior to putting a vendor under contract for the Connect Card, each of the eight participating transit agencies and SACOG must enter into a MOU to govern decision making and overall conduct of the program. In close cooperation with SACOG legal counsel, staff is working with the Connect Card stakeholders to develop a consensus framework. A draft document is currently under review and staff expects to have a final MOU before the Board for its consideration by March 2010.

Approved by:

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Attachment

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## The Connect Card Program Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the Connect Card?**

A: The Connect Card is a program to implement a regional, contact-less electronic transit fare system (or “smart card”) in eight different transit systems across the greater Sacramento region.

**Q: How does Connect Card work?**

A: A transit patron will carry a smart card (perhaps the size of a credit card) and use it to board and pay fare on buses and light rail; the patron will pass the card within a couple of inches of a sensor near the driver, and the sensor will acknowledge the payment.

**Q: How will the Connect Card system know that it is the correct fare?**

A: The smart card will know automatically the required fare for any given patron. If the patron pays with a special discount, that information will be encoded onto the computer chip in the card. All or nearly all transit fares will be programmed into the system computers.

**Q: Are there different options for paying fare with the Connect Card?**

A: Yes. Patrons will be able to buy various types of passes, put a fixed amount of value into the “cash purse”, or enroll in special discount programs. Patrons may choose to reload value through an automatic account deduction, an on-line internet transaction, or with cash/credit from a kiosk.

**Q: What are the advantages of the Connect Card to the general public?**

A: Advantages include easy and varied methods for paying transit fare, quicker boarding of buses, and seamless transfers between transit systems. The Connect Card will make using transit easier and more convenient.

**Q: What are the advantages of the Connect Card to the transit agencies?**

A: Transit agencies will be able to improve operational efficiency over time by consolidating programs and fare media types, and through use of much improved rider data for planning. Reduction in cash handling should yield some immediate cost savings.

**Q: How are we paying for the Connect Card program?**

A: SACOG has secured funds from regional programs to pay full program costs, through implementation, for those transit systems in the greater Sacramento RTPA. SACOG is working with its partners in Placer and El Dorado counties to fund the program for those systems.

**Q: When will the Connect Card become operational?**

A: The Connect Card system is expected to be fully operational by the summer of 2011.