

30-Year Effort Finally Realized: Oakland Airport Connector

It's taken 30 years, but after yesterday's Board vote, BART is now just weeks away from soliciting bids to construct the Oakland Airport Connector, a direct passenger rail link between BART's Oakland Coliseum Station and Oakland International Airport. Along with the extremely popular BART connection to San Francisco International Airport, the new Oakland Airport Connector will bring the region one step closer to achieving the Bay Area Council's goal of connecting all three international airports directly to the regional rail network. Over its 30 year gestation, less committed supporters have repeatedly left the project for dead as obstacles have arisen, but the Council--along with fellow project boosters including BART Director Carole Ward Allen, Alameda County Supervisor Larry Reid, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, and the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency—provided the necessary support and pressure to keep the project alive and moving forward.

President Obama's stimulus package gave the project a critical boost at an important time, with seventy million dollars of federal stimulus funds helping to close the project's budget gap. Equally important, however, is the fact that stimulus funds come with a short timeline, forcing project sponsors and supporters to hustle to put all the pieces together. Yesterday the BART Board approved the final piece of the complicated funding package, a federally-guaranteed loan backed by future passenger fare revenue from the airport connector. With construction firms currently hungry for work—construction bids are routinely coming in at 20 percent to 40 percent below estimate—it's likely that BART will get a great deal on a legacy project that will benefit the region's mobility for generations to come.

Bay Area Council Urges "Yes" on 1A-F

Today, the Bay Area Council hosted a press conference with Former San Francisco Mayor and Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, AARP, CTA and many others in support of Props 1A-F. The Council's Executive Committee formally set the organization's ballot positions after gathering feedback from the membership, the Government Relations Committee and Council staff. While members expressed a lot of emotion about the decision, in the end the feedback was resoundingly "Yes." They need to pass to keep our state functioning.



1A - Rainy Day Fund – Yes
1B - Protect Education Funding – Yes
1C - Lottery Modernization – Yes

1D - Children's Services Funding – Yes
1E - Mental Health Funding – Yes
1F - Salary Freeze – Yes

Article of the Week

The Constitutional Convention and California's dysfunction went global this week with a long [story in the Economist](#). The Economist, which publishes in more than 200 countries, was very supportive of the Convention.