

Senior Mobility Action Council

SMAC meets the 4th Monday of
the month in the Bodega Bay
Room, 2nd Floor at
300 Ellinwood Way
Pleasant Hill, CA

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Inside This Issue:

GoMentum	3
Travel Training	4
Mobility Matters	5
A Conversation With Our Passengers	5
Caring Hands	6
Volunteer Drivers	6
Rossmoor	7
Why I Volunteer	7
Senior Rally - 2017	8
DMV Options for Vets	8
Challenges With Public Transportation	10
The State of Mobility	10
Transition Generation	11
Lamorinda Spirit Van Drivers	11
GoGoGrandparent	11
Climate Change	12
Spare the Air Day	13
More Than A Ride	14

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What is Accessible Transportation and Why We Need It

By Debbie Toth, President and CEO, Choice in Aging

Have you ever stopped to think how lucky you are that you can go from Point A to Point B without worry? Of course you have to make sure you have gas so you can get there, but your planning might revolve around avoiding rush hour traffic, as opposed to needing to schedule your ride up to three days in advance and understanding the trip could take you two hours to go four miles.

This is the story for people who are functionally unable to drive themselves or take fixed route transit, such as BART, the bus or even a street car. Our system currently has a one size fits all unfunded mandate to provide transportation to these community members—our system is called paratransit. Paratransit is a curb to curb bus with wheelchair lift that transports passengers who medically qualify to and from destinations which fall within a 3/4 mile radius of a fixed route stop. But wait, there's more. You share this ride with up to 10 other people, perhaps even more, and there is no hierarchy to the importance of a trip. So someone going to dialysis with renal failure takes the same priority as someone getting their hair done or going to the grocery store. It may cost the rider twice the fixed route price per way, but it will likely cost the provider 10 times that amount. So, you see, it is a bit of a broken system. It isn't funded and it isn't person centered, but it sure beats the alternative - which is not having any transportation at all.

As a society, we spend billions of dollars studying bridges and bridge tolls, freeways and interchanges, traffic lights and traffic patterns—all to reduce congestion for the single occupancy vehicle. We spend next to nothing on looking at those who cannot drive or be driven in such vehicles. Is it right that in a civil society we allow people to age out of transportation? Is it right that if someone is born with or develops a disability which doesn't allow them to drive that they can't get from A

to B? I think not, and my guess is you agree.

So what would a world look like if we had truly accessible transportation that put the rider at the center of the planning/trip? First of all, we would invest in studying the need and the current lay of the land, and doing a literature review of best practices in accessible and coordinated transportation. What is that? That is a system that has various options for various needs. For example, someone who is cognitively impaired and needs a companion rider might be able to take paratransit and might even enjoy some of the social stimulation of riding on a group trip. Someone who has bouts of incontinence when separated from a restroom for longer than an hour might not, and may have skin breakdown as a result of being on extensive length trips on a shared ride. Someone who is just beginning to lose their ability to navigate from A to B and must use a cane, and has financial resources, may be able to pay for Uber or Lyft, but might not have a SMART phone - so may turn to Arrive or GoGoGrandparent who can make the ride reservation for them. Or someone might need to go to a physician appointment and doesn't have a companion and needs someone to accompany them and wait for them and so needs a volunteer driver program. While yet others simply cannot afford \$8.00 to go to the grocery store - they are already choosing between food and medications. And the list of situations and needs goes on.

We need a system that looks at these needs and provides the appropriate, accessible, least costly option for those in need. As it stands, in Contra Costa, we have a number of nonprofit providers who saw the need and created systems of transportation to meet that need; however, it is extremely labor intensive and costly to operate all of these separate entities and for them to have to fund raise each year to ensure the continuity of service. We need an investment in this transportation system and a local sales tax may be the only way to do that. Cont. on page 14

SMAC Mission: To address transportation barriers and gaps in service experienced by Contra Costa older adults through education, advocacy and the promotion of effective coordination of services and mobility management that enhances the autonomy and independence of older adults in Contra Costa County.

Senior Transportation Forum 2017

IT'S MORE THAN JUST A RIDE!

Learn More About Transportation for Older Adults in Our Community



Friday, September 29th
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

John Muir Medical Center
Ball Auditorium, Walnut Creek

Welcoming Remarks by Congressman Mark DeSaulnier

CCC Demographics:

Debbie Toth-Choice in Aging

CCC Transportation Options:

Moderator: Kristin Connelly – East Bay Leadership Council,
Amy Stice-Arrive, Elaine Welch-Mobility Matters, Peter Engel-CCTA,
Jeanne Krieg-Tri Delta, Mary Bruns-Lamorinda Spirit

Sustainable Mobility For All:

Hon. Rod Diridon, Sr.-Emeritus E.D. Retired Mineta Transportation Institute

GoMentum:

Peter Engel-CCTA

Social Justice & Transportation:

Jim Wunderman-Bay Area Council

Next Steps:

Kristin Connelly, Debbie Toth, Attendees

Sponsored by the Senior Mobility Action Council, a work group of the Contra Costa Advisory Council on Aging. Lunch Provided. Seats Limited. RSVP to Meals on Wheels and Senior Outreach Services: 925-937-8311 or nsalgado@mowsos.org

GoMentum Station – Redefining Mobility By Peter Engel

Randy Iwasaki, Contra Costa Transportation Authority's (CCTA) Executive Director, was challenged to bring new clean jobs to Contra Costa. What evolved is a solution that not only boosts the economy; it will improve the environment, make roads safer, reduce congestion and ultimately will redefine mobility on an international scale.



Iwasaki set out to find a location where new and innovative transportation technologies could be developed, tested and brought to market. By collaborating with the City of Concord, the Navy, and Stantec as a program manager, CCTA was able to secure the former Naval Weapons Station to create GoMentum Station in Concord—one of the nation's largest secure testing facilities for autonomous and connected vehicle technology.

Formerly a naval weapons station, the 5,000 acre GoMentum Station is now the center of cutting edge transportation research. The test site offers a unique and varied terrain and infrastructure, which allows for the latest developments in transportation technology to be safely tested in similar conditions found on public streets. GoMentum's East Bay location is in close proximity to the world's top technology companies.

Partnering to redefine transportation

The partnership grew to bring together automobile manufacturers, communications and technology companies, researchers and public agencies with the aim of creating a mobility revolution. The innovative technology being explored at GoMentum Station will redefine the next generation of transportation, helping to reinvent the ways we will move through our communities over the next 25 years and beyond.

Current testing at GoMentum includes automobile manufacturer Honda, Chinese internet search engine giant Baidu, Uber's commercial autonomous truck, Otto and EasyMile Shared Autonomous Shuttle. All joined CCTA and the City of Concord to support GoMentum Station. Other partners include BestMile, First Transit, Bishop Ranch, Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, ITS America, ITS Australia, ITS California, Ministry of Transport, Singapore, ITS New Zealand, Canadian Automated Vehicles Center of Excellence, Tongji University, California Polytechnic State University and Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Connected vehicles will mean safer roads

It's not the purpose of GoMentum Station to just test autonomous vehicles (AV); but also to test connected vehicle (CV) technology. In the future, vehicles will be able to "connect" or communicate in several ways to several things including the infrastructure, other vehicles and even pedestrians through a person's smart phone or watch. Vehicles communicating with traffic signals, cars, signage, bicycles, etc. will provide a wealth of data which will help, theoretically, the cars to "learn" about the environment and circumstances in which they operate. A smarter car will mean fewer accidents thus safer roads.

Shared Autonomous Vehicles in use at Bishop Ranch



One of the most exciting vehicles being tested is the EasyMile Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAV). These vehicles are designed to take people from their homes or stops close to their homes to larger transit hubs where people will then transfer to trains or express buses. The SAVs are electric slow moving (under 25 mph) shuttle buses that carry twelve people or fewer with a wheelchair. They have no steering wheel or brake and they operate on a pre-learned route – think Disneyland People Mover without the track. The SAV testing started at GoMentum and has moved to Bishop Ranch Business Park in San Ramon. It will test there in parking lot environments. Once that stage is complete it will move throughout parts of Bishop Ranch testing in parking lots and crossing public streets and actually dealing with traffic.

After that it will carry passengers at the Ranch from their building sites to the Transit Center.

Self-driving trucks aimed to move goods safely

Another exciting technology being tested at GoMentum Station is Otto. Recently purchased by Uber, this vehicle is tested by a team of forward-thinking technologists and innovators, dedicated to revolutionizing the way we approach transportation in America starting with self-driving trucks. At the heart of Otto's vision is a belief that autonomous technology is the key to creating a more viable, efficient and, above all, safer transportation future. Freight movement is critical to the strong economy of the United States and this is threatened by a Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate that the U.S. faces a truck driver shortage exceeding 30,000 annually. Cont. P. 9

Travel Training Program Takes Off at San Pablo Senior Center by Vicky Voicehowsky, Recreation Supervisor, Senior Services



A group of eight seniors, two San Pablo City staff, and one student intern embarked on a travel training event to Emeryville on Monday, July 10th using public transportation. Equipped with itineraries, bus schedules and day passes for AC Transit and BART, the group took off for a day of adventure and learning.

In March 2016, three West County cities (San Pablo, El Cerrito and Richmond) commenced a collaborative project led by Berkeley's Center for Independent Living (The CIL), which was made possible through Caltrans grant funds. For one whole year, travel training experts from The CIL met with transportation representatives from each city and 'trained the trainer.' The idea behind the project was for The CIL to teach each City how to implement and sustain a successful and much needed travel training program for seniors

and individuals with disabilities in their community who desired to maintain their independence by taking advantage of the public transportation options around them. Some of the topics that were covered during the training were disability sensitivity, travel coaching objectives, learning styles, training techniques, Bay Area transportation systems and a lot of hands-on work in the field.

City of San Pablo's Senior Center hosted a pilot travel training group event with the assistance of The CIL staff in March, 2017. The trip's destination was the new and popular market, Sprouts, in Pinole. The trip was a success, and one of the participants has since become a volunteer travel coach for the city's program.

After City of San Pablo staff graduated and were deemed travel training experts, they set out to plan their next group

event to Emeryville. "We have received a lot more interest than we expected from seniors who want to learn to ride public transit so they can continue living their lives with independence," said San Pablo Senior Center Supervisor, Vicky Voicehowsky. "The program is so vital to the health of the entire community. It helps prevent isolation and depression, gives seniors and people with disabilities confidence that they can do things on their own. We are happy that we can provide this resource to the senior and disabled residents of San Pablo." During their trip, not only did the seniors learn how to use AC Transit, BART and Emery Go-Round; but they also learned about the free shuttles that provide transportation to major hospitals like Oakland Kaiser and Alta Bates Medical Summit Center. To make this adventure fun for all, seniors, city staff and intern enjoyed delicious food at the Emeryville Public Mar-

ket. "The training was very informative. I participated in the training because when I'm not able to drive anymore, I'll be able to go where I need to go on my own," said San Pablo senior participant Dorene Lucero. "I use a cane for mobility and felt very confident travelling with the staff members; they were really helpful. They taught me a lot of the basics: like wait until the bus comes to a full stop before getting up. I am very happy that this great resource exists for seniors here in the City of San Pablo," exclaimed another senior center participant, Celeste Martin. The San Pablo Senior Center offers group and individual travel training events throughout the year. For more information on being a trainee or a becoming a volunteer trainer, please call the San Pablo Senior & Disabled Transportation line at (510) 215-3095 or visit our website at www.sanpabloca.gov/seniors.



Mobility Matters Update— by Elaine Welch, CEO

Mobility Matters is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that provides a number of mobility management services in Contra Costa County. Our major goal is to work with all types of transportation providers and other stakeholders to find and fill gaps in mobility services. In this role, we provide a Transportation Information & Referrals Helpline that matches riders to appropriate providers.

We also publish a transportation guide and maintain a website called “Way to Go Contra Costa” that addresses accessible transportation in Contra Costa County communities.

In addition, since 2005, we have been providing a free, one-on-one, door-through-door, escorted transportation program called **Rides for Seniors** for ambulatory, otherwise homebound sen-

iors age 60 and over. The majority of these trips are for medical and dental care and shopping for basic necessities, like groceries. Currently, over 150 volunteer drivers are transporting nearly 200 senior residents from all communities in Contra Costa County. Most of these older adults would risk isolation and premature institutional placement without our services, since they are unable to take other forms of transportation.

In May 2017, we started a **Rides 4 Veterans** program similar to our Rides for Seniors program, except this model is built on the concept of veterans driving other veterans, but all volunteers, whether veterans or not, are welcome and appreciated. Clients in this program are honorably discharged veterans of any age who reside in Contra Costa County and are unable to use other forms of transportation.



Programs like ours, that are free to clients, are not free to run. In order to carry out our mission and keep the promises we make to the vulnerable populations we serve, we have two ongoing needs – financial (grants and donations) and human resources (volunteers).

See our website www.mobilitymatterscc.com and/or brochures for qualifying criteria to become a client in either of our programs and also the requirements for volunteer drivers and other ways to help.

A Conversation With Our Passengers

By Mary Bruns, Lamorinda Senior Transportation

It was affirming and enlightening to talk to passengers who frequently use the Lamorinda Spirit Van as well as to the 8 people who joined the April 10, 2017 Senior Center Without Walls “Senior Transportation Focus Group”. We learned how appreciative Spirit Van passengers are for the program, the drivers, and how important community based transportation is to older adults across the country. Some use the Spirit Van to go to medical appointments, meet their shopping needs and get help carrying their packages; and some enjoy the camaraderie of going to the C.C. Café Lunch Program at the Walnut Creek Senior Center where they can get out of the house, take a ride through scenic Lamorinda, and socialize with their new-found friends on the van and at the Café.

Most passengers are in their 80's and 90's; with one or two exceptions, they no longer can drive or limit themselves to driving locally.



Aging often brings physical challenges so mention was made of conditions such as macular degeneration, heart conditions, strokes, limited walking ability, painful knees, arthritis, MS, and using canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. Impressive were the stories of people who are determined to exercise daily either through walking or riding a stationary bike to help maintain mobility and balance.

Two people spoke of long waits for paratransit due to heavy bookings; one member of the Focus Group spoke of the difficulty of grocery shopping by taxi since taxis don't wait for them; one participant spoke of taxi drivers who wouldn't drive her to visit her husband at his board and care as the trip was too short. Some wished the Spirit Van operated on weekends.

All in all, these were very valuable and inspirational conversations. When asked how she was doing, one woman, confined to a wheelchair with MS said: “I have an 8 to 5 assistant every day. My feet, hands, and legs don't work, but I feel great. We love Eddie (the lunch driver). He took us to a play at the Town Hall Theatre, and we had a great time. Going to lunch is my only activity.” Inspiring!!!



Caring Hands Volunteers: Reaching Out to Seniors One at a Time

Life presents challenges at any age, but these intensify in later years. The first concern may be that it becomes too difficult to drive to the doctor or the grocery, or to just get a haircut. Support systems change; neighbors and friends may not help as expected; and loneliness may put a damper on daily routine.

Caring Hands volunteers offer friendship which makes an extraordinary difference in the quality of life for many of our seniors.

- “When she came, it was as if a heavy burden was lifted off my shoulders. She is my angel.”
- “I feel better about myself due to her visits.”
- “Not only does it allow me to have an intelligent friend but relieves me from having to take public transportation which causes me pain every time.”

These are just a few of the words grateful care receivers have used to describe their relationship with their volunteer match.

Caring Hands Volunteer Caregivers Program, a collaborative community outreach program between John Muir Health, social service agencies, congregations of various faiths and the community-at-large, creates finely-tuned one-on-one volunteer – senior matches in Central and East Contra Costa County. The Caring Hands Program is dedicated to helping aging adults remain independent as long as safely possible. Isolation and loneliness shorten lives and may make health problems worse.

The enriching matches we create become oftentimes long term loving friendships. Care receivers treasure a friendly visit, a walk in the park or other social outing with their volunteer.

Transportation to medical appointments or stores, reading mail, letter writing, or providing respite care to give a break to a family member, are other valuable services provided by our volunteers, which make a tremendous difference to a frail or isolated senior.

Volunteers receive ongoing education, support and recognition of their efforts. For more information about Caring Hands please contact us at (925) 952-2999 or by email at Caring.Hands@johnmuirhealth.com



Volunteer Drivers Fill a Critical Need by Ray Zenoni

Volunteer Transportation Programs

Volunteers provide free services that often fill gaps not covered by resources provided by the community or the government. While the Bay Area offers many transportation options, accessible transportation often is not available for those who are home-bound seniors or the disabled. Public transportation may not be an option for various reasons such as:

- unavailability of services in their area
- difficulty in accessing the service due to mobility issues
- services that don't go where the rider wants or needs to go
- the length of travel time required when using public transportation.

For many of these people, community volunteer transportation programs are their only means of accessing critical life sustaining services such as medical care, buying groceries, etc. Also, volunteer transportation programs provide more than just a ride. They also provide other benefits to the rider such as an opportunity for socialization, a break from their routine, a safety check, and often a helping hand from the vehicle to their destination.

Critical Need for Volunteers

In Contra Costa County, there is a critical shortage of volunteers. Often people who might be inclined to help don't volunteer because their free time is limited. ***The truth is that it can take as little as a couple of hours a month to help. And volunteer transportation opportunities can be matched to your availability.***

Benefits to Volunteers

Health benefits: Research has shown that volunteerism strengthens the immune system and improves overall health.

Stress Reduction: Experts report that when you focus on someone other than yourself, it interrupts the usual tension-producing patterns.

“The Happiness Effect”: You know that feel-good sense you get after a vigorous workout? It comes from a release of dopamine in the brain. Helping others has that exact same effect.

Increased brain function: A study by John Hopkins University revealed that volunteering increases brain functioning.

Fulfillment: Enjoy a sense of purpose and fulfillment and increase your self-confidence.

Decrease your risk of depression: Volunteering with and for others increases social interaction and helps build a support system based on common commitment and interests—both of which have been shown to decrease depression.

Every person and every hour counts!

You can make a difference and make our community a better place to live and to age. For more information, contact one of the non-profits that serve our community. (Listed on page 14)



“Rossmoor Bus Service is Essential; Bus Drivers Helpful,” Riders Say.

by Cathy Tallyn, Rossmoor News Staff Writer

It was cold, dreary and uninviting outside, but inside the Rossmoor bus it was warm and cheery last Wednesday morning. A handful of Rossmoor residents were on their way to and from Safeway. Simone Bordelon was at the wheel of the bus. In back of her sat Gloria, Helene and Harriet. The four called each other by their first names and chatted affably. During the ride, the passengers entreated Bordelon to share stories about her nine years as a Rossmoor bus driver.

“Tell about the snake,” said one. Being a good sport, Bordelon told her story. There was something shaped like an “S” lying in the roadway. She couldn’t figure out what it was until she got closer. She realized it was a snake. “I screamed,” Bordelon said, “because I ran over it.”

“I thought she was having a heart attack,” said a witness to the deadly deed. The driver and passengers chuckled over the story. The residents also gave their opinions on bus service and the role it plays in their lives. They agreed it is essential.

“Our purpose is to help residents maintain their independence, and have a good time,” said Leslie Young, Travel Coordinator in the Golden Rain Foundation Bus Transportation Department. Last year, there were 86,053 rides taken and 128,630 miles logged by the 12 buses in the Rossmoor fleet.

“I don’t drive,” said Helene Ryan. “The bus enables me to lead a normal life,” she said. “The main reason I moved to Rossmoor is the bus,” said Harriet Shapiro. Gloria Halverson said she takes the bus to play pickleball. Chuckie Niethold said he’s lived in Rossmoor for 14 years and rides the bus most days to go shopping. He’s another of Bordelon’s regular riders.

I love my job,” said Bordelon. “They (the riders) are like my second family.” She in particular likes listening to residents’ life stories. “There’s a lot of history in their stories.” Bordelon stopped the bus to pick up a passenger. “Residents can wait at Rossmoor’s covered bus stops and at the many benches spread along Rossmoor streets. Occasionally, someone flags down a bus. I will stop, but only when and where it’s safe to do so,” she said.

“Are you new?” Bordelon asked the passenger as she settled into

her seat. Elizabeth Wetherell told her that she is new to the bus. “A good way to get to know Rossmoor and see what Rossmoor has to offer is to ride a bus,” Bordelon said.

“The bus drivers are wonderful. They are very patient,” Marie O’Donnell said. The five-year resident of Rossmoor said she still has a car and drives, but sometimes prefers to take the bus. “I meet a lot of nice people on the bus.”

Bus service is offered every day in Rossmoor; the bus service operates 365 days a year, including Thanksgiving and Christmas. The service runs from 5:50 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. There are four fixed routes within Rossmoor. A fifth, the green line, takes residents to and from downtown Walnut Creek eight times each weekday. It stops at such places as BART, Target, the Leshner Center for the Arts, Peet’s Coffee, the Walnut Creek Yacht Club, Union Bank, the Container Store, Kaiser, Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s. There’s also Dial-a-Bus service, which is offered early in the morning and during the evening as well as on weekends and holidays.

Why I Volunteer? By Jim Donnelly, QEP



When I was asked to write an article about why I volunteered on the Senior Mobility Action Council (SMAC), my immediate answer was that it’s scheduled meeting times fit with my schedule.

A better question is “Why do I volunteer?” The answer to this question is more about me and my belief that we are all better off if we all give back to our communities and try to help those in need. I was brought up to believe that society functions better when we work together for the common good. As I am now semi-retired I find I have more time to devote to civic activities, and I am enjoying it tremendously. Volunteering hasn’t just been something to do after retirement. During college and my working career, I also volunteered which was my way of giving back as well as meeting many engaged professionals. Although these roles required a lot of effort, they also gave back a feeling of accomplishment in doing work to further my profession.

I have met so many great volunteers who leave me in awe at how much they are giving back and I find myself uplifted just working with them. A few years ago I listened to a lecture by the Dali Llama where he espoused the idea that: “If you want to be happy, help someone.” I find he is right—I do feel happy when I am helping others.



Senior Rally 2017: A Great Success!! By Shirley Krohn, President of the Advisory Council on Aging; Vice Chair Joint Rules Committee and Senior Assembly Member of the California Senior Legislature

On May 11, 2017, over 450 seniors and senior advocates from across the State came to Sacramento to celebrate our aging population and to remind our elected officials that seniors **Count** and they **Vote!!** Seniors from as far away as San Bernardino heard from over 12 of our elected officials who delivered passionate and important messages concerning aging issues. Senate President Pro Tempore, Kevin deLeon was the keynote speaker as well as Assembly Member Ash Kalra who is the Chair of the Assembly Aging & Long Term Care Committee. Contra Costa County had attendees from each area: West, Central and East Counties. Plans are already in the works for the 2018 Senior Rally on May 8th.



DMV HAS NEW OPTIONS FOR VETERANS

ARE YOU A DISABLED VETERAN? Do you have a valid driver license, California identification card, or a vehicle registered in your name? Then you may have the possibility to have disabled veteran license plates for your vehicle, and/or a veteran designation on your driver's license or identification card.

A DISABLED VETERAN is a veteran who, as a result of an injury or disease suffered while on active duty with the U. S. Armed Forces:

- Has a service-connected disability rated at **100%** by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, due to a diagnosed disease or disorder which substantially impairs or interferes with mobility.
- Is so severely disabled as to be unable to move without the aid of an assistive device.
- Has lost or lost the use of, one or more limbs.
- Has permanent blindness, as defined in section 19153 of the welfare and institutions code.

A QUALIFIED DISABLED VETERAN may obtain special disabled veteran license plates for **no fee on one vehicle** currently registered to the disabled veteran. The requirements are:

- Current California registration card for the vehicle in the disabled veteran's name.
- A completed disabled veteran certification (Reg.256A).
- Proof of eligibility. This must be a letter or photocopy from the US Department of Veterans Affairs or the military service that discharged the veteran.
- The license plates currently on the vehicle must be surrendered.

PROCESS TO ADD VETERAN DESIGNATION TO YOUR DL/ID CARD:

Having a disability is not a requirement for the designation

- Obtain a veteran status verification form the (VSD-001) which will be issued by the county veteran service office.
- Bring the completed form to the (VSD-001) to a DMV field office. For faster service, make sure you make an appointment to visit the office.
- Complete and pay the application fee for the driver license or identification card application/commercial driver license application (DL 44/44C).
- Pay an additional \$5.00 fee to add the veteran designation to your DL/ID card.
Once requirements have been met a DL/ID card with the word "**VETERAN**" will be issued.

For any questions or concerns, you can contact the department at 1-800-777-0133. You may also use that number to make your DMV appointment.

GoMentum Station—Cont. from page 3

Part of the issue is that truck drivers fall under very strict regulations for ratios of drive time to sleep. Autonomous trucks that can safely drive themselves on our interstate free-ways will allow drivers to sleep in their sleeping compartments, which will effectively increase the range in which they can operate the truck.

What's next?

These are only two examples of some of the amazing things happening at GoMentum Station. In the future, plans to improve the site's infrastructure will enhance testing in varying conditions as well as pedestrian movements and safety. Earlier this year, the Federal Department of Transportation designated GoMentum Station as one of only 10 designated autonomous vehicle proving grounds in the U.S. What does this mean? Well hopefully the designation is the first step to some federal funding for planned improvements and more testing.



So what does all this mean to you? The testing that is occurring at GoMentum will inevitably lead to improved vehicle safety as the driver is taken out of the driving equation. It is estimated that over 90% of all vehicle accidents involve some level of human error. It also means that as we all mature to a point where our reflexes get a little slow or our eyesight gets a little worse, we won't have to worry about loved ones taking away our car keys. *"Go ahead and let them have my keys. I will let my car do the driving!"*

Autonomous Vehicles 101

Here are some vehicle autonomy facts that might interest you. According to Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International Standard J3016 there are five levels of autonomy in automobiles:

Level 0: No self-driving features. Many cars on the road today would fall into this category—even when they're equipped with forward collision warning or blind-spot monitors. Level 0 relies solely on the person behind the wheel to control the car's functions, including steering, throttle, and brake, while the car is running.

Level 1: Some driver assistance. These cars may have one or more systems that can control speed or steering. Many new cars have available adaptive cruise control, which is an example of a Level 1 feature. By 2021, an overwhelming majority of new cars sold in the U.S. will feature automatic emergency braking, which is also a Level 1 feature. Additionally, automakers are now making available active lane control on entry-level cars, which can steer a car back into a lane.

Level 2: Even more driver assistance. Many luxury automakers are now making available Level 2 cars that can control steering and speed simultaneously, without driver interaction for short periods of time (under one minute, and in some cases, seconds). Perhaps the most well-known system, Tesla's Autopilot, is a Level 2 feature that measures torque on the steering wheel to ensure that a driver is paying attention. Level 2 cars cannot control a car in all situations, including merging on to a highway or stop-and-go traffic.

Level 3: Conditional autonomy. Unlike Level 2 cars, Level 3 autonomy can control a car in all situations and the car is constantly monitoring the road; but unlike higher levels on the SAE scale, Level 3 cars will return to human control if the system can't function correctly. According to the SAE definition, Level 3 cars will ask drivers to intervene when the self-driving systems fail, but for many automakers that presents a safety problem for drivers who rely too much on the systems and may not be prepared to take over.

Level 4: Nearly autonomous. Recently, a few auto makers have said that they will offer a Level 4 autonomous car before 2021. As a Level 4 car, no driver interaction is needed and the car will stop itself if the systems fail, which is an important distinction from Level 3.

Level 5: Completely autonomous. Although Level 4 to Level 5 may seem like a small step, in reality it's a giant leap. Level 5 autonomy takes the driver all the way out of the equation. While the presence of a steering wheel, gas and brake pedals don't preclude a car from being Level 5, they'd be useless.

Even without full autonomy (Level 5), senior drivers will benefit from all this new technology. As cars move through Levels 2 through 4 they will help compensate for those who have a bit slower reflexes or slightly poorer eyesight.

Challenges With Public Transportation—A Personal Story by Rita Xavier

As a senior citizen non-driver, it can be difficult to get around Contra Costa County on public transit. As an involved individual volunteering on many commissions and boards, I find it necessary to reach other parts of the county from my home in West County. As a case in point, if I do not have a ride with another member from West County to the Senior Mobility Action Council meeting on Ellinwood Way at the county buildings in Pleasant Hill, I have to walk from my home to an AC Transit bus stop seven blocks from my house in San Pablo and take the bus to BART Del Norte Station in El Cerrito, then transfer at MacArthur Station in Oakland to the Pittsburg/Bay Point line.



After disembarking from BART at the Pleasant Hill/Contra Costa Center Station, the next step is to take a County Connection bus to Ellinwood Way. The buses are an hour apart, and there is an even longer period between buses at certain times of day. If I miss the County Connection bus because of a slight BART delay, I am unable to attend the meeting. This has happened to me in the past. The other solution is to leave my home at 6:00 a.m. for a 9:00 a.m. meeting and wait at the county buildings for 45 minutes or longer for the meeting to start, or take BART to Concord and use another bus line which runs more often but then walk almost one mile after getting off the bus. That area is hazardous for pedestrians.

This is a difficult situation for a senior citizen to handle, and next to impossible for one who has health issues. A one-way trip to that location from my home requires over two hours of travel time each way, and sometimes much longer. Traveling through Martinez by public transit instead of Oakland-Pittsburg BART is even more difficult. After checking schedules and transfers, I have not even attempted to take that route.

This points out to me, and to others on the Senior Mobility Action Council, that there is a dire need for a better system for traveling by public transit from one part of the county to another, especially for seniors. The location of county agencies in Martinez and Pleasant Hill presents many difficulties for West County seniors when they are required to visit those facilities for various reasons. Seniors from East County are faced with similar issues. The Senior Mobility Action Council is working on finding answers. It is our *raison d'être*.

The State of Mobility and the Future of Senior Transportation by Ken Gray

In July, I had the opportunity to attend the American Public Transportation Association of Transit Board Members Support Seminar in Chicago, IL. After attending thirteen sessions, opening and closing events, I came away more aware of a number of transportation issues the senior population will need to know going forward. As new and aging seniors, we will need to become "Transit-Ready".

The average age of Americans is increasing, and this new "gray wave" of seniors is making increased demands on transit agencies who in turn will have to make hard decisions. Just as the phone has changed over the past twenty years – you can talk on it, use it as a mini computer, watch TV and movies on it – public transportation agencies will also change by becoming Mobility Managers with the task of helping seniors make the best decisions possible with the technology available.

This new group of seniors will want to be more mobile, engaged, active and will want technology to make transportation decisions. Funding public transportation is going to be an expectation of this generation. Other expectations and trends of the near future include:

- **Automated Vehicles:** By 2020 you are going to see driverless cars on the road. The question is, would you purchase and use one vs. having a public transportation system.
- **Co-op Cars:** Why buy a car if you only need it on an infrequent basis? Car sharing is already happening in big cities where parking and costs to own a vehicle are high and the usage is expected to grow and expand to the suburbs.
- **Co-op Bikes:** Like co-op cars, this is also happening in larger cities, and it is expected to expand.
- **Electric Buses:** An electric bus was available for the Chicago conference attendees to ride and review; it is the wave of the future. Our own Tri Delta Transit Agency is in the process of ordering and testing electric buses from three different manufacturers to ensure that they invest in the best technology available.
- **Automated Buses:** As safety technology improves, automated buses will emerge.
- **Automated Trains:** Remember the People Mover trains at Disneyland? BART currently has one that goes from the Oakland BART Station to the Oakland Airport. Many airports have them running throughout the terminals.
- **Lift and Uber:** As public transit becomes more expensive, seniors will adapt to private car transportation through the services made popular by the under 40 crowd. With less Federal funds available for infrastructure and subsidies, fare prices are going to continue to go up.

Ken Gray is a Board Member for the Tri Delta Transit Agency, a Board Member for John Muir Caring Hands, and is a member of the Senior Mobility Action Council, a CCC ACOA workgroup.

We Are the Transition Generation—By Mary Bruns, Lamorinda Spirit Van

In many ways we are the Transition Generation — between the old way of looking at things and the new way. We have become more aware of climate change and protecting the environment. We are working towards accepting all people as of equal importance: men, women, children, people of diverse races, cultures, religions, and people with different sexual preferences than our own. We have done a good job of making children's needs important. Women are working on breaking through the glass ceiling. More men are participating in childcare. Now we are remembering that our aging population is equal too. Since people age 85 to 100 are the fastest growing population, becoming substantially larger than before, we have the opportunity to make sure services are in place to help each one of us as we age. **Your voice is important and needed** to support funding for accessible transportation for older adults and the disabled. Won't you join the senior transportation community in the recognition that on Planet Earth, there is no one but us—to vote for paying for services that we want in place for all people as they age. As Robert Frost says: *"The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep. And miles to go before I sleep."* Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.

A Few Words From the Lamorinda Spirit Van Drivers

Awhile back, I asked our drivers if they would write a paragraph or two about their experience as Volunteer Drivers with the Lamorinda Spirit Van Senior Transportation Program. It was heart-warming to read their responses:

Hadi: "Every month I look forward to receiving the *Lafayette Today* in the mail. I enjoy reading about the local news and events in Lafayette. About two years ago, I had just retired and was reading the paper with even more interest when I came across an article about seniors in our community needing rides to their appointments, shopping, and errands. I called the number; and before I knew it, I was trained and certified as a Lamorinda Spirit Volunteer Driver. Now every Thursday morning, I take a group of older adults grocery shopping. I have come to realize how much I look forward to seeing my six ladies each week, and I can't help but notice how happy the ladies are when I'm driving them. It's great to be a part of their lives. I feel I'm providing a very important and necessary service to our community; and who knows, maybe someday I will need this wonderful service myself."

Jeanne: "I am one of the newest Spirit Van Drivers, though I have chosen to volunteer with seniors many times in my life. I have been thrilled to meet the people who regularly ride the van; they are mostly in their 80's and 90's, many late 90's, who are very kind and appreciative. For my first shift, my kids (aged 9, 6 and 3) made holiday cards for me to hand out. A couple of shifts later, there was a handwritten note in my folder from one of the ladies to my son. She thanked him for the drawing and said she had it hanging on her refrigerator. Satisfying community interaction all around!"

Mike: "One of our passengers was scheduled for a four o'clock pick-up at BART. I arrived about 15 minutes early, and she was already there. I asked how long she had been waiting, and she replied she had been there since 3:15. She then explained that she didn't ever want to keep a Spirit Driver waiting for her. That is one dedicated rider!"

Warren: "It is very hard to single out any one event or experience while driving for the Spirit Van. Over the years the ladies that I drive have become more my friends or even grandmothers to me. Our interchanges are definitely personal as they show compassion and interest in my issues regarding my mother as I share concerns for their personal situations with their health and families. Every week is like getting together with friends for a short trip around Lafayette. Last week I experienced a very touching moment when driving one passenger. I had to help her into the van; and once seated, she explained: 'I don't get around as well as I used to; I can't hear very well; and I can't read any more; but I'm going to be 100 tomorrow!' I told her she was doing great! And then, another passenger and I sang 'Happy Birthday' to her. Driving the Spirit Van has been a rewarding experience for me. I really believe I receive far more than I am able to give." We invite you to join our dedicated Volunteer Driver Team or to get to know us as a passenger. **Call 925 283 3534 for more information.**

GoGoGrandparent—Another Transportation Option by Mary Bruns

The City of Lafayette has been operating the Lamorinda Spirit Van Program (a volunteer driver, community based senior van transportation program) for 11+ years and recently used part of a Lafayette passenger bequest to offer an additional ride option: GoGoGrandparent. GoGoGrandparent is an organization that helps people access an Uber or Lyft type of ride when they don't have a Smart Phone or don't want or know how to use the "app". The person simply registers with GoGoGrandparent and then phones **855-464-6872** to request the ride. No pre-scheduling is required. The driver usually arrives within 15 minutes.

GoGoGrandparent arranges and monitors the ride and bills the passenger's credit card. This ride option provides passengers with the ability to go places 24/7 as long as they can get into the car and walk from the car to their destination independently or with the help of someone they bring along (no extra charge). At this time, only passengers who can transfer from a foldable wheelchair to the car can utilize this option. We want our passengers to have as many transportation options as possible for those times when we cannot fit a caller into the Lamorinda Spirit Van schedule, for evenings and weekends when we are not available, for those occasions when the passenger needs to go somewhere outside of our service area, and finally, when the person simply wants an Uber/Lyft ride and does not have a Smart Phone or doesn't know how to use their "app". To cover the GGG costs, a 19 cent per minute surcharge is added to the fare which comes to about \$3 for a 15-minute ride. The bequest allows us to subsidize 50% of the cost of the ride for Lafayette seniors age 70 and up—up to a maximum subsidy of \$50 a month for the duration of this program.



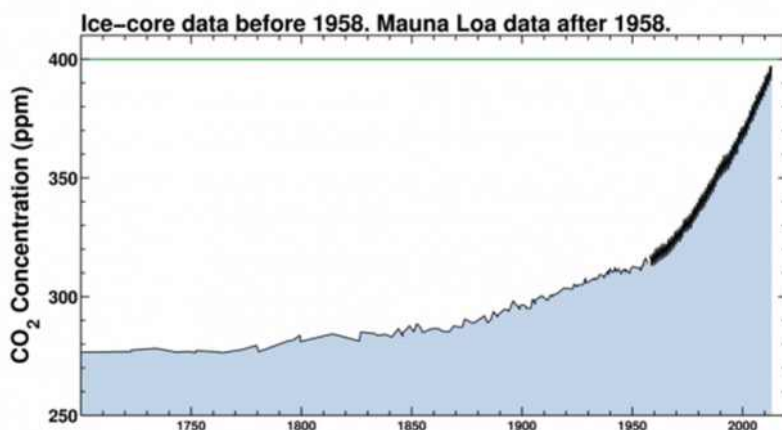
Concern About Global Climate Change is Not New.

By Jim Donnelly, QEP

Most people think that knowledge of greenhouse gas impacts on global warming is relatively recent. This is not true. I heard my first lecture on global warming when I was a chemistry major at university in 1970. The knowledge that the earth atmosphere affects global temperatures can be traced back to at least the first quarter of the 19th century (see below). The first politician to relate increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to the burning of fossil fuels was President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. We have seen carbon dioxide concentrations increase from about 285 parts per million (ppm) at the beginning of the industrial age to over 400 ppm today. As atmospheric carbon dioxide (and other greenhouse gases) concentrations increase, more solar energy is trapped near the earth's surface leading to global warming. Approximately 40% of greenhouse gas emissions arise from transportation: driving gasoline and diesel powered cars and trucks.

- French Mathematician and Physicist Joseph Fourier (1768-1830) calculated that an object the size of the Earth at its distance from the Sun should be considerably colder than the planet is if it is warmed by the effects of incoming solar radiation. His consideration of the possibility that the Earth's atmosphere might act as an insulator of some kind is widely recognized as the first proposal of what is now known as the Greenhouse effect. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration during that time was approximately 285 ppm.
- English Physicist John Tyndall (1820-1893) was the first to prove that the Earth's atmosphere had a "Greenhouse effect" by proving that water vapor strongly absorbed infrared radiation. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration grew to approximately 290 ppm during this period.
- Swedish Scientist Svante August Arrhenius (1859-1927), one of the founders of the science of physical chemistry, first speculated that changes in the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere could substantially alter the surface temperature through the Greenhouse effect. He was the first person to predict that emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels and other combustion processes would cause global warming. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration grew to approximately 295 ppm.
- Lyndon Johnson in a 1965 Special Message to Congress stated: "This generation has altered the composition of the atmosphere on a global scale...a steady increase in carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration reached approximately 320 ppm by 1965.

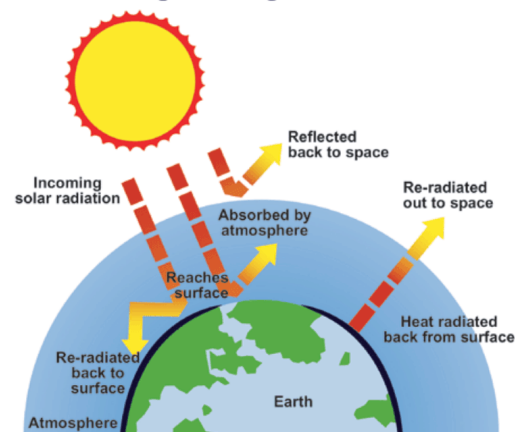
Many atmospheric scientists believe that carbon dioxide concentrations over 350 ppm will lead to severe global consequences due to global warming. These consequences include more extreme weather events such as droughts, heavy rainfall and flooding, increase in the severity of tornados and hurricanes, sea level rise and an increase in acidity of the oceans. We are already seeing global temperatures that keep setting records; for example, Iran recently saw a temperature of 130 degrees. Today atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration is over 400 ppm and continues to grow each year.



UNC Charlotte

The Physicist Stephan Hawking recently asserted that we have about three years to fully address global climate change or we better be ready to leave Earth in the next 100 years. We as citizens and countries of the world must severely decrease our carbon footprint quickly or we will be leaving a devastated planet to our grandchildren.

Global warming and the greenhouse effect



Spare the Air Days by Ralph Hoffmann, MS and Jim Donnelly, QEP

How we travel from place to place impacts our environment and the air we breathe. Spare the Air Days are announced by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) when the forecasted air quality index for the next day is expected to be 101 or greater in at least one of the eight regions of the SF Bay Area. Contra Costa County is in the Eastern Region, which often has the worst air quality of the eight regions because it is inland, because we experience a high level of commuting, and because the majority of the five Bay Area oil refineries are in our county.

Spare the Air Days are called for different pollutant levels in summer and winter. During the summer months, Spare the Air Days are called when the concentrations of primarily ozone for the next day are expected to raise above a federally established level considered Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. The pollutants associated with summer Spare the Air Days are associated with automotive and industrial emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and processing of hydrocarbons. Summer Spare the Air Days advise limiting driving as a primary way of reducing pollutant levels.

During the winter, Spare the Air Days are more associated with high levels of Particulate Matter (PM). They are called when the air quality index for the next day is expected to exceed a federally established level considered Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. Winter Spare the Air Days are associated more with the burning of wood in fireplaces. Winter Spare the Air Days forbid the burning of wood in fireplaces and wood stoves.

Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index, or AQI, much like an air quality "thermometer", translates daily air pollution concentrations into a number on a scale between 0 and 500. The numbers in this scale are divided into six color-coded ranges, with numbers 0-300 as seen below.

(0-50) **Good** No health impacts are expected when air quality is in this range.

(51-100) **Moderate** Unusually sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion.

(101-150) **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups** Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit outdoor exertion.

(151-200) **Unhealthy** Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

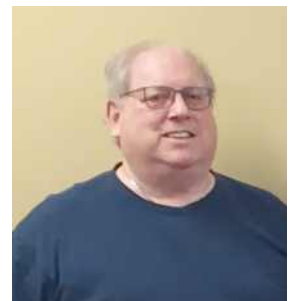
(201-300) **Very Unhealthy** Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid all outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit outdoor exertion.

The AQI numbers refer to specific amounts of pollution in the air. It's based on the [federal air quality standards](#) for six major pollutants - ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and two sizes of particulate matter.

In most cases, the federal standard for these air pollutants corresponds to the number 100 on the AQI chart. If the concentration of any of these pollutants rises above its respective standard, it can be unhealthy for the public.

Gasoline or diesel powered cars and trucks are the largest mobile source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, while oil refineries are the largest stationary source of GHG emissions in the Bay Area. Together they produce over half of the GHGs in the air of the Bay Area. GHGs raise air temperature and many are a health hazard, especially for senior citizens. The overwhelming compounds related to GHG emissions are carbon dioxide and methane, neither of which is included in the pollutants considered in the Air Quality Index.

Contra Costa is currently represented on the BAAQMD Board of Directors by John Gioia and Karen Mitchoff of our of Supervisors and by Dave Hudson, San Ramon City Council and Mark Ross, Martinez City Council.



More Than A Ride by Ray Zenoni, Volunteer Driver



I arrive at Lynn's house at 10:00 am and I ring the bell. A neat and friendly woman opens the door and returns inside to get her walker. I escort her to my car, stow the walker in my trunk, and then we are off to her doctor's office. On the way, we have a great conversation about her time as a teacher, about her family, and about her volunteer activities when she was still able to get out on her own. But life moved on and left her home alone and without the ability to drive.

At the doctor's office while waiting, I get caught up on my emails on my cell phone. After her appointment, we return home, continuing our conversation on the way.

Lynn cannot take a bus or taxi because she needs help getting from the vehicle to her destination. The escorted rides are a lifesaver for her and enable her to continue to remain in her own home, which is such a big part of her life. For me it is a ride to the doctor's office; but for her it is some companionship, an outing, and a bit of an adventure beyond the confines of her home. I come away feeling as though I have known her for a long time and hoping that I might be able to give her another ride in the future. Since that day I have given Lynn a number of rides and continue to look forward to many more.

I enjoy driving, it does not take much of my time, and it feels good to knowing that my efforts are both appreciated and make a real difference in someone's life. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, contact one of these great organizations that provide senior transportation in Contra Costa County:

Caring Hands: 2855 Mitchell Dr #100, Walnut Creek, CA 94598 925 952-2999

Lamorinda Spirit Van: (925) 283-3534

Mobility Matters: 1035A Carol Ln, Lafayette, CA 94549; 925 284-6161

Orinda Seniors Around Town (925)402-4506

Pleasant Hill Senior Van (925) 671-5272

Walnut Creek Senior's Club Mini-Bus (925) 933-1434

Volunteering as a senior driver is incredibly rewarding, and it can take as little as one ride a month to make a difference in someone's life. It can make a difference in your life as well - because it is far more than just a ride.

What is Accessible Transportation (Continued from page 1)

Additionally, we need to break down the artificial barriers created by an ancient Joint Powers of Authority arrangement that created four different providers with four different service areas in Contra Costa County. In order for riders to travel from one part of the county to another, they might have to take up to three paratransit rides, each shared with up to 10 other passengers; and a trip could exceed two, three, even four hours – and that is one way! This doesn't even address having to cross county lines and that this, too, can require a change in provider in some cases.

Furthermore, these four different providers in west (two providers), central, and east Contra Costa County all have different:

- Hours of operation
- Service points in relation to fixed route stops
- Provision of ADA and non ADA transit and ability to receive subscription trips
- Eligibility processes
- Turnaround times for eligibility approval
- Boards of Directors, management and staff.



Perhaps it is time, as a first step, to look at how we as a county can unify the provision of accessible transportation so riders are not subject to the inefficiency and unnecessary burden of such a complex and non person-centered system. This would not only benefit the riders, but the providers as well. Creating a single point of entry and an entity to coordinate the onboarding, eligibility, scheduling and provision of rides will save money, time and energy for the providers. In addition to correcting this area of accessibility, we must also look at what can be done to increase capacity, coordination, and variety of services to meet the varied needs. Additionally, on-going funding streams need to be developed to ensure accessible transit continues to remain accessible for the burgeoning population of riders that will need it in the coming decades. **Aging out of transportation to the grocery store, pharmacy, social services or healthcare services simply should not be anyone's reality!**