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Vallejo City Council Approves First Structurally Balanced Budget in Over a Decade

On June 24, the Vallejo City Council unanimously approved the **City Budget** for Fiscal Year 2014-15, the first structurally balanced budget in over a decade. This milestone follows the most recent audit in which the City received an Unqualified Audit Opinion, its first in seven years.

The City's FY 2014-15 budget of \$203.1 million includes \$78.5 million in the General Fund expenditures with an additional \$20.1 million in Measure B expenditures, a voter-approved, ten-year one percent sales tax that began in April 2012.



While the **City of Vallejo** has weathered many storms during the last decade, the passing of this structurally balanced budget is proof that through difficult decision-making, efforts to achieve program efficiencies

and savings, and with the support of its citizens, the City has turned a significant corner. This budget is an important step toward restoring fiscal stability, setting the foundation for economic recovery and addressing long-term unmet needs through targeted spending.

The spending plan is much more promising in its outlook, with FY 2014-15 marking the achievement of many milestones on the City's road to fiscal recovery. Optimism does remain tempered by the longer-term financial outlook for the City, which will continue to present fiscal challenges, but this is nonetheless an enormous accomplishment for the City of Vallejo.

Curtola Park and Ride Hub Groundbreaking

Yesterday marked another milestone with the groundbreaking of the **Solano County Transit's** Park and Ride Hub located at 1521 Lemon Street at Curtola Parkway.

The current Park and Ride hub is functional, but holds only 485 parking spaces and has limited transit access. The informal and casual carpool loading zone often creates confusion for users, and lane movements are tricky to navigate. With facility improvements, the Curtola Park and Ride Hub will expand to 590 spaces and will have reconstructed parking and surface areas to eliminate confusion for an easy park and ride.

In addition to a reconstructed parking lot, a new terminal with bus-only access will be constructed with a new passenger waiting area with weather protection. Electric vehicle charging stations will also make their way into the redesign, along with security cameras, lighting, and fencing to limit unauthorized access.

The project involves four phases, the first of which includes the construction of the new transit terminal, a safety and customer service center, and improved amenities for transit users. The first phase is expected to be completed by February 2015, with anticipated project completion by June 2016.

The total cost for design and construction is approximately \$14.5 million. The project is fully funded with Regional Measure 2 (RM2) bridge toll revenues made available through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.



SolTrans and National Express Win APTA Gold Award

Solano County Transit (**SolTrans**) and its contracted operator, National Express Transit Services Corporation, have been awarded the 2014 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Gold Award for Excellence in Safety Achievement.

The award was presented on May 4 at the Annual APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri. SolTrans Executive Director Mona Babauta was present alongside representatives of National Express to receive the award and be recognized in front of more than 500 conference attendees from across North America.

"SolTrans is honored to be recognized by APTA and our peers around the country for our achievements in safety over the past year." Babauta said. "We take safety very seriously, and through our partnership with National Express and their strong expertise in the area of safety and security, we have, as partners, been able to make significant strides in strengthening our safety program at SolTrans."

SolTrans and National Express received this award because of significant improvements in safety since National Express took over the operations in July 2013. These improvements include a 71 percent reduction in vehicular accidents, a 75 percent reduction in passenger-related incidents and a 56 percent reduction in employee injuries.



National Express' Vice President for Safety Mr. Tom Greufe attributes the safety improvements to an overhaul of the safety culture at the operation. "When National Express was selected by SolTrans last year, we knew we would have to establish new systems and policies to improve safety performance," Greufe said. "But it took the whole team, including all the operators, to actually achieve what we were able to achieve in such a short time."

SolTrans provides local fixed route bus, regional express bus, complementary paratransit, dial-a-ride service, and subsidized taxi programs in Vallejo and Benicia. They deliver safe, reliable and efficient transportation services that link people, jobs, and our communities.

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VCUSD Receives \$6 Million Grant for Wall-to-Wall Academies

The **Vallejo City Unified School District** (VCUSD) is excited to announce it is a recipient of the Career Pathways Trust Grant (CCPT), a \$6 million grant to help students stay in school and move toward college and employment in high-demand industries.

State officials received 123 eligible applications and nearly 40 were selected from community college districts, county offices of education, charter schools and school districts.

"Our skillful staff has maintained a focus on ensuring that every student has clear attainable pathways to college and/or career success," said VCUSD Superintendent Dr. Ramona Bishop. "As a recipient of the CCPT Grant, we will continue to build sustained wall-to-wall career pathways connecting K-12 schools, community colleges and businesses so that students will be successful contributors to our community."

The grant will focus on four measurable outcomes: an increase in the number of students graduating with A-G requirements met, internship opportunities, graduation rates and number of students attending post-secondary institutions. It is with the help of community partners that VCUSD was able to secure this grant.

With the cooperation of the Workforce Investment Board of Solano County, Napa Valley Community College, Solano Community College, Touro University, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, and many others, Vallejo and Jesse Bethel High Schools are successfully executing the **Wall-to-Wall Academies** that will prepare students for a college or career path after high school.

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