

Charting a New Course for Water Transportation in the Bay Area

A grand new vision for transportation in the Bay Area will soon be revealed. This new vision will spark the imagination of an entire region and inspire people to consider the best possible quality of life in the Bay Area.

On February 17th, the Bay Area Task Force for Water Transit, will release a grand vision for a comprehensive, high-speed water transportation system on the San Francisco Bay. Working with a mandate from the State Senate, the Task Force plan separate the majesty of the Bay as the spine of an integrated transportation system, and at the same time protect the environmental integrity of the Bay.

The Task Force work is dictated by the indisputable fact that the region has come to build in the Bay Area the best high-speed transportation system in the world. Traffic congestion is at an all-time high, and it only gets worse. Meanwhile, the freeway grid is essentially gridlocked, rail systems and bridges are nearing capacity and the population of the Bay Area is increasing at an historic rate. The time has come for a sweeping change in the region's transportation.

Imagine...

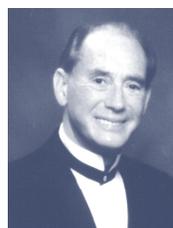
Commuters are picked up at a convenient neighborhood location or their front door and carried to a Bayside ferry terminal. An advanced high-speed ferry whisks them away to their South, North, East or West Bay destination. Passengers arrive at their location calm and refreshed and, if necessary, connect to ground transportation easily and quickly using an affordable universal fare card.

Culture lovers are delivered directly to and from ferry terminals and dedicated shuttle buses to enjoy an evening at the opera, museum, or symphony; sports fans take water transit to the new waterfront sports stadiums; tourists ferry-hop between the region's recreational sites.

Regional airports are linked by water transit, allowing air passengers to clear security and check luggage at remote satellite locations and to travel directly to airline terminals using amphibious hovercraft.

A secure, reliable and safe water-based transportation system is in place that can keep the region moving in the event of a natural disaster, even if there is a major damage or disruption to bridges, freeways or fixed rail services.

The Bay Area Water Transit Initiative will provide a world-class of water transportation that meets the real needs of Bay Area residents, creates new market opportunities, reduces air pollution and congestion, and makes the Bay a bridge – not a barrier.



A Message from Ron Cowan, Chairman

Dear Reader:

The Bay Area has always been shaped by people who share a sense of pioneering spirit and vision. Indeed, from the days of the gold rush when people heard the call to "follow the setting sun," the Bay Area has drawn people for its magical charm, beauty and unique opportunities.

However, as we prepare to greet the 21st Century, we are facing some serious challenges. Transportation and mobility are among the most significant. Since March 1998, a committee group of 52 individuals has been working to make a sweeping change in Bay Area transportation. This group, the Bay Area Task Force for Water Transit, was appointed by the Bay Area Council and Bay Area Economic Forum at the direction of the State Senate to create an action plan for the world's best water transportation system.

Emboldened with a new vision for Bay Area transportation, the Task Force has obtained widespread public input through a series of public forums, meetings with countless elected officials, transportation experts and community stakeholders. The unveiling of the Grand Vision on February 17, 1999 marks a milestone in this historic process.

The system we envision will be extraordinary and at the same time will protect the environmental integrity of the Bay. We anticipate the day when a vast network of modern, high-speed vessels crisscross the Bay, moving people and goods with a new sense of efficiency and cohesion.

We call upon civic leaders, friends and colleagues throughout the region to unite behind this effort by staying informed, participating in future public meetings, and when the time comes, urging the appropriate elected officials to take action. I hope you will join us in this momentous effort to chart a new course for Bay Area transportation in the 21st Century.



Task Force Gathers Public Input

Bay Area Council CEO Sunne McPeak, San Francisco Supervisors Michael Yaki and Barbara Kaufman, and San Francisco Airport Executive Director John Martin discussed the work of the Task Force at a public forum in San Francisco. The Task Force has held a series of public forums in Oakland, San Francisco and Marin, gathering input from hundreds of residents, elected officials and civic leaders. A forum in the South Bay is slated for the coming months.