

# Handling Multi-Agency Transit Projects

## A TALE *of* TWO CITIES

CTA Oakland, November 17, 2016

# 2009

## Two City Transit Operators in Financial Crisis



### Vallejo Transit

Funding deficit

Insufficient transit staff

Significant FTA triennial review findings

No Long Range Transit Plan

Ferry transition (loss of major transit asset)

Use of transit assets as collateral for city bankruptcy

Bankruptcy

### Benicia Breeze

Funding deficit

Lack of dedicated transit staff

Significant FTA triennial review findings

No Long Range Transit Plan

Poor Ridership and Farebox Performance

# 2009

## Tale of Two Priority Transit Projects

### City of Vallejo Curtola Park and Ride Expansion

Inadequate parking to meet demand

Insufficient funding to fund project

No operating and maintenance plan

Did not incorporate transit into design

Safety and security concerns due to theft

### City of Benicia Benicia Bus Hub Project

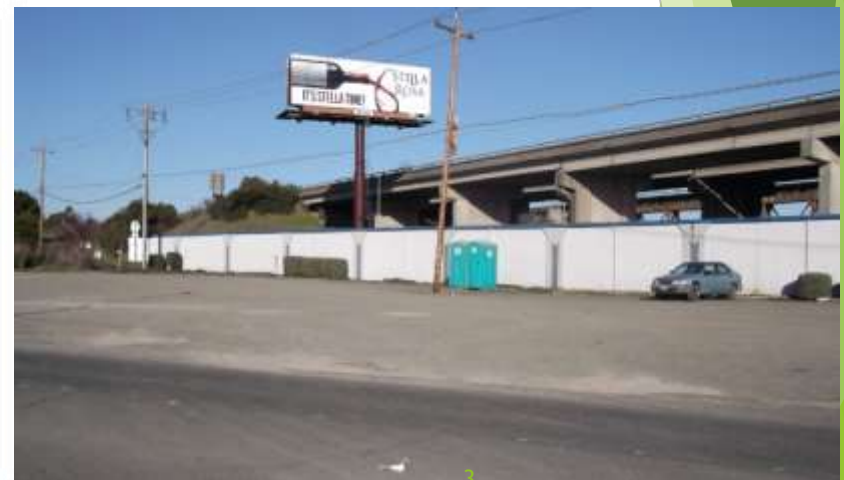
Project not shelf ready

Insufficient funding to fund project

No operating and maintenance plan

Did not incorporate transit into design

Significant problems with on site property owner



# Background of Vallejo Transit and Benicia Breeze Merger

- ▶ In 2005, the Solano Transportation Authority (STA) Board held a retreat to discuss a variety of policies and financial issues facing Solano County. One of the resulting action items directed STA staff to complete a comprehensive evaluation and consolidation study of Solano County's six transit operators.
- ▶ In 2007, a Consolidation Study began. To guide this effort, STA Board adopted a set of four goals for the consolidation study:
  - ▶ To streamline transit service, simplifying and improve access to transit use for riders
  - ▶ To achieve service efficiencies and economics
  - ▶ To provide a central focus on transit service for the County
  - ▶ To create a robust transit service to meet the growing transit needs of the County
- ▶ In 2009, the STA Board appointed a Transit Consolidation Steering Committee consisting of STA Board, all City Managers, and County CAO to guide this study.
  - ▶ Phase II of this effort involved a review and analysis of the existing six transit operators and seven consolidation options.
  - ▶ One of the recommended options was the Consolidation of Benicia and Vallejo transit services
  - ▶ This was with the concurrence of the Board members from these two jurisdictions



# Background of Vallejo Transit and Benicia Breeze Merger

- ▶ STA work actively together with the two cities at the policy and staff levels.
  - ▶ June 2009 - October 2009, a policy level committee (Coordinating Committee) was formed to guide this effort. The Mayors of Benicia and Vallejo and a councilmember from each City were the Coordinating Committee members
  - ▶ Two City Managers and the STA Executive Director comprise the Management Committee
  - ▶ Benicia, Vallejo and STA transit staff and consultants comprise the Working Group
- ▶ In 2009-2010, a Transition Plan was developed to inform decision about the formation of the consolidated agency and provide a road map for transitioning from two city operated transit services to independent transit authority operated through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA).



# Background of Vallejo Transit and Benicia Breeze Merger

In the Fall of 2010, the Solano County Transit (SolTrans) joint powers agreement was approved by the member agencies City of Benicia, City of Vallejo, and the Solano Transportation Authority to consolidate Benicia and Vallejo transit services.

- The SolTrans Board of Directors is made up of the Mayor and a Councilmember from Benicia, Vallejo and the Solano MTC Commission representative. The Solano Transportation Authority is an ex-officio member of the SolTrans Board.

July 1, 2011 Solano County Transit (SolTrans) officially took over the public transit programs from the cities of Vallejo and combining Vallejo Transit, Vallejo Runabout, and Benicia Breeze



# Merger Benefits

- ▶ \$1 million savings in the first year alone by merging three operating contracts
- ▶ Provided dedicated transit staff
- ▶ Development of a Long Range Transit Plan
- ▶ Became financially solvent
- ▶ Good standing with FTA
- ▶ Enhanced ability to deliver transit capital projects
  - ▶ Curtola Park and Ride
  - ▶ Benicia Bus Hub
  - ▶ New SolTrans Maintenance Facility Expansion and Upgrade
- ▶ Independent Joint Power Authority (JPA) with Board members focused on transit service



# Project Transition Tale- Curtola Park and Ride Facility

- ▶ Project Development Team Formed - Caltrans, SolTrans, STA and Vallejo
- ▶ Vallejo transferred lead for design and construction to SolTrans
- ▶ SolTrans incorporated transit design into project
- ▶ SolTrans and STA obtained additional funding and scaled project to available funding
- ▶ Sponsored Legislation for Caltrans to relinquish ownership of Curtola property to SolTrans SB 1368 (Wolk)
- ▶ Improved Security at Facility
- ▶ Innovative Public Private Partnership Study provided by STA
- ▶ Established paid parking and other enhancements such as electric vehicle charging stations, on site vending and solar panels to offset O&M cost



# Project Transition Tale- Curtola Park and Ride Facility

- ▶ Curtola lot is now a sustainable transit hub that incorporates 590 paid parking spaces, restrooms, 24/7 security cameras, 20 electrical vehicle charging stations and facilities for vendor.



# Project Transition Tale- Benicia Industrial Bus Hub Project

- ▶ Project Development Team Formed - Benicia, STA, and SolTrans
- ▶ STA obtained right of way for project
  - ▶ Owner/Taco Vendor able to stay on site to service customers
- ▶ Benicia lead for construction of project
- ▶ SolTrans incorporated transit design - bus and casual carpool
- ▶ STA obtained additional funding with support from Benicia and SolTrans
- ▶ Benicia agreed to cover O&M cost



# Estimate date of completion - December 2016



# Tale of Two Cities- Key to Success

- ▶ By merging two failing transit systems, a more dynamic and successful transit partnership called SolTrans has emerged
- ▶ Guidance and direction from elected leadership from Benicia, Vallejo, and STA
- ▶ Ability to work together - partnership with Benicia, Vallejo, and STA
- ▶ Merged three contracts into one which allowed to be more responsive to the needs of the communities
- ▶ Funding support from MTC and STA
- ▶ Employed quality transit staff
- ▶ Completed projects that are sustainable and benefits for transit system



# Questions and Contact Info

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