

## DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT

MCAG's 2016 draft Public Participation Plan (Plan) is available for public review and comment through September 6, 2016. The Plan is a guide to meeting the federal and state Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) requirements for the engagement of stakeholders and the general public in transportation planning activities. It is intended to provide direction for MCAG's public outreach efforts and contains the requirements, procedures, strategies and techniques used by MCAG to communicate with the public and appropriate affected agencies throughout the transportation planning process.

This update reflects new requirements and approaches to addressing public engagement and outreach as identified in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act which was passed by Congress in December 2015. It also includes an update to the requirements related to Sustainable Communities Strategies as required by SB 375.

The draft document is available for review at the MCAG office, located at 369 W 18th Street, Merced and can also be found on the MCAG website at [www.mcagov.org](http://www.mcagov.org).

The 45-day public review and comment period will conclude at 5:00pm on September 6, 2016. Public comments may be submitted in writing at the address above, or to [stacie.dabbs@mcagov.org](mailto:stacie.dabbs@mcagov.org). All comments received will be reviewed and addressed as appropriate prior the Plan being considered for adoption by the MCAG Governing Board at the September 15, 2016 meeting.

For more information, please contact Stacie Dabbs at [stacie.dabbs@mcagov.org](mailto:stacie.dabbs@mcagov.org) or (209) 723-3153 x 308.



### THE BUS ADDS SECURITY AT THE TRANSPO

The Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County (Authority) has added full time security patrol at the Downtown Merced Transpo Center and other bus stops throughout the countywide transit system.

The private security detail is being provided by Sacramento-based National Security Industries. This security is the latest demonstration of The Bus' commitment to providing riders with a safe and secure public transit experience. The patrol compliments a network of safety measures and investments made by the Authority in previous years including the installation of surveillance cameras on every bus and the 24-hour video surveillance at the Transpo Center.

"The safety and security of our passengers is always our top priority and we believe this additional layer of protection was an important and necessary step to take," said Rich Green, Transit Manager. "Luckily, we have not had any specific threats or major concerns—we put the additional security in place to help riders feel safe and to provide them with the best experience possible."

The new security patrol coincides with The Bus' hours of operation which can be found at [www.mercedthebus.com](http://www.mercedthebus.com) or by calling The Bus at (209) 723-3100.

## DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT: Daron McDaniel

Director Daron McDaniel currently serves as Merced County Supervisor for District 3. He moved to Merced County 33 years ago when his father was a part of the management team that opened Merced Color Press. He graduated from Merced High School before going on to attend Merced College and California State University, Stanislaus. While raising their family in Atwater, Director McDaniel and his wife Buffy started a charitable foundation that has supported athletic programs throughout the region. The McDaniel's believe deeply in giving back to their community and most recently supported the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Celebration at the Bloss House in Atwater. In addition to running his small business, Director McDaniel has also served on the Peggy Heller and McSwain School Site Councils and as a District Representative for Congressman Jeff Denham. He continues to utilize his broad network of partners and contacts at the state and federal levels to better serve Merced County.



## YARTS to begin winter service schedule October 1st

The Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) will transition to a winter schedule on October 1, 2016 which will conclude summer service from Mammoth Lakes, Sonora, and Fresno for the season. Year-round service from Merced and Mariposa along Highway 140 will continue with a new [winter schedule](#). Summer service from Sonora and Fresno will resume May 15, 2017. Service from Mammoth Lakes will begin the first weekend in June.

YARTS is a regional public transit service that provides a year-round alternative to driving to Yosemite from Merced and Mariposa along Highway 140, and from Highways 120, 395 and 41 during summer months. YARTS schedules make connections with all intercity transportation providers in Merced: Amtrak, Greyhound and Boutique Air at the Merced Airport, and also connects to transit providers in Mono, Tuolumne and Fresno Counties during summer operations.

For more information about YARTS or the seasonal schedules, please visit [www.yarts.com](http://www.yarts.com) or call (877)989-2787.



## MCAG SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

Citizen's Advisory Committee - Sept 2, 2016  
Labor Day/Office Closed - September 5, 2016  
Technical Review Board meeting - Sept 21, 2016  
Governing Board Meeting - September 22, 2016

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## The California Road Charge Pilot Program *A volunteer's perspective*

By: Cindy Kelly

*The State of California initiated a nine-month statewide pilot program to explore road charging as a potential long-term replacement for the gas tax. Road charging is a funding mechanism where drivers pay to maintain the roads based on the miles they drive, rather than the amount of gasoline they consume.*

In June, I was selected as one of the two volunteers to represent Merced County in the California Road Charge pilot program. There are a total of 5,000 volunteers throughout the state of California who are using one of four methods to report vehicle use:

1. Complete and send in a monthly report
2. Use your car's navigation system
3. Use an app for Android or IOS or
4. Use Azuga a Mileage Meter (MM) plug in device.

I chose the fourth option primarily because I felt it was the most accurate and best suited my needs. Sending in a monthly report seemed like too much work, my car doesn't have a navigation system, and using the app wouldn't be accurate, as it was tied to my phone's location, not my vehicle. The best part of the project is the guidelines are simple - - **drive your car**.

Each week, Azuga sends me a weekly usage summary that shows how much money is left in my "account" (not real money), how many miles I've driven, my trip locations, my engine and battery health, my driving score and any events that may have occurred such as idling, hard breaking and speeding.

Over the past three months, I've learned several facts about my vehicle usage: my average monthly road charge under this program is about \$20.00 (based on miles I've driven — fees are calculated at \$0.17 cents per mile), I probably drive faster than I should on certain trips and that I can definitely cut down on my idling time. Even though this pilot was initiated to evaluate the feasibility of road usage charge versus a gas tax charge, it provides more valuable information on my vehicle usage and lets me make decisions based on the data my vehicles sends back to Azuga. I can evaluate my trips and look at alternate transportation options. In some cases, there were simple trips where I could've walked instead of driving. For longer trips that weren't too far away, I could have taken public transit. Having the data in hand helps me make better choices.

I still have six months to go as a volunteer in this pilot project and I'm hopeful that my participation will assist in the state's decision to look at alternative funding options for California's growing transportation needs.

For more information on the California Road Charge Pilot Program please visit the Caltrans webpage at: [www.californiaroadchargepilot.com](http://www.californiaroadchargepilot.com)