

WATER TRANSIT AUTHORITY



WTA

PRESS RELEASE – JUNE 21, 2006

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REAL-TIME INFORMATION ARRIVES FOR FERRY SERVICE

Passengers taking the ferry to Sausalito, Larkspur, Vallejo, Oakland and Alameda will soon find it easier to know when the next ferry will depart. The Water Transit Authority (WTA) recently unveiled the first real-time ferry schedule sign inside the San Francisco Ferry Building, at the Bay Crossings ticket outlet/newspaper stand (Shop #22). The signs allow passengers to view ferry departure times from San Francisco and ferry service disruption notifications.

Through a five year cooperative agreement between the WTA and publicly operated San Francisco ferry boat operators, similar message signs will soon be appearing at ferry docks at Pier 41 in San Francisco and in Sausalito, Larkspur, Vallejo, Oakland and Alameda. Funding for the project comes from state Regional Measure 2 transportation monies earmarked for ferries.

“SF Muni and AC Transit already use real-time information technology to better serve their customers, but this is the first of its kind in the region for region-wide ferry service” says Steve Castleberry, CEO of the WTA. Via global positioning satellites (GPS) the

WTA's vendor for this project (NextBus, Inc.) can track the location of all publicly operated ferries operating on the bay and then predict departure times. Castleberry adds that "our goal is to make the ferry ride as stress-free as possible for our customers. With real-time information on when the ferries will depart, our customers will know if they have time to grab a cup of coffee or run errands in the ferry terminal before the ferry takes off."

Web-based real-time ferry schedule information, allowing ferry passengers to go online via a personal computer, PDA or web-enabled cell phone to view real-time ferry schedules, will soon be available at www.nextbus.com or via a link to NextBus at www.watertransit.org.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority is a regional agency mandated to build and operate a comprehensive public water transit system of ferries, feeder buses and terminals. The Bay Area commuter fleet amounts to 13 boats serving 6 routes around the bay. The Authority's mission is to expand existing routes and add 8 new routes to triple ferry ridership by 2025.