

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Application of Blue & Gold Fleet, L.P., a  
Delaware Limited Partnership (VCC-77),  
For Authorization to Discontinue  
Scheduled Passenger Transport Service  
Between San Francisco and Tiburon.

Application 20-09-005  
(Filed September 10, 2020)

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE,  
HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**

**ABOUT THE DISTRICT**

## About the District

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District is a special district of the State of California which operates and maintains the Golden Gate Bridge and two unified public transit systems – Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry – connecting the counties of Marin, Sonoma, San Francisco, and Contra Costa. The District provides these public services under authority of California State Law.

## Mission Statement

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's Board of Directors adopted the following mission statement on January 17, 2003:

"The mission of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) is to provide safe and reliable operation, maintenance and enhancement of the Golden Gate Bridge and to provide transportation services, as resources allow, for customers within the U.S. Highway 101 Golden Gate Corridor."

Prior to 2003, on December 21, 1990, the Board adopted a mission statement as follows: The Mission of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District is to provide safe, efficient and reliable means for the movement of people, goods, and services within the Golden Gate Corridor. In carrying out this mission, the District operates and maintains the Golden Gate Bridge in structurally sound condition to provide safe and efficient travel for vehicles and other modes of transportation; provide public transit services, such as buses and ferries, which operate in a safe, affordable, timely and efficient manner; and carries out its activities in a cost-effective and fiscally responsible manner. The district recognizes its responsibility to work as a partner with federal, state, regional and local governments and agencies to best meet the transportation needs of the people, communities and businesses of San Francisco and the North Bay.

## Additional Background Information

In 1969, with the mandate from the California State Legislature to enter the public transit business, the District planned, developed, and implemented what is today a nationally renowned bus and ferry system. The District is also unique among Bay Area transit operations because it provides transit services without support from local sales tax measures or dedicated general funds. As the District does not have the authority to levy taxes, the use of surplus Bridge toll revenue is the only available local means the District has to support the District's regional transit services. Presently, Golden Gate Transit bus and Golden Gate Ferry operations are funded nearly 50 percent by surplus Golden Gate Bridge tolls and 20 percent by transit fares. The remainder is met by federal, state and local subsidies along with advertising, concessions, and property equipment rental revenues and District reserves.

## Special District Formed - Golden Gate Bridge and Highway District

The idea of forming a special district of the State of California to construct the bridge was proposed by San Francisco City Engineer Michael O'Shaughnessy, Secretary to the Mayor of San Francisco Edward Rainey, and engineer Joseph B. Strauss. They believed a special district was necessary to oversee the financing, design and construction of the Bridge so that all counties affected would have a voice in the proceedings.

On January 13, 1923, an historic meeting ([PDF of meeting agenda](#)) was called by [Franklin P. Doyle](#) (*link is to a PDF of Doyle "in memoriam" 1863 to 1948, from the District's FY 1948/1949 Annual Report*), a local Sonoma County banker and president of the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce. Out of this meeting, the Bridging the Golden Gate Association was formed and devoted its efforts to the promotion of a span across the Strait. The Association was dedicated to promoting the idea, through its "Bridge-the-Gate" campaign, throughout the northern California counties. The Association was also committed to obtaining legislation for carrying out the project.

Working with California State Assemblyman Frank L. Coombs of Napa and Marin County attorney [George H. Harlan](#) ([click to read a biography](#)), a specialist in the organization of tax districts, the Coombs Bill, enabling the creation of a special district—Bridge and Highway District—for the purpose of planning, designing, building and financing a bridge across the Strait, was signed into law on May 25, 1923.

The fate of the bridge idea was now in the hands of the War Department as only it could authorize construction as the owner of the land on either side of the Strait. Additionally, the War Department had jurisdiction over all harbor construction potentially affecting shipping traffic or military logistics. In May 1924, San Francisco and Marin counties made a joint application to the War Department for a permit to build a bridge. The War Department held a hearing on May 16, 1924, to discuss two issues: would the bridge hinder navigation and was adequate financing available. Because of overwhelming testimony in favor of the bridge project, Secretary of War John W. Weeks issued a provisional permit on December 20, 1924.

Strong opposition emerged quickly from well-financed special interests, particularly ferry companies. An aggressive campaign was launched to stop construction of a bridge and the formation of the special district as the entity to build the bridge. Eight years of opposition and litigation followed.

Joseph B. Strauss based himself at San Francisco's Palace Hotel. He quickly became the most outspoken promoter of the span, spending the next few years leading and organizing petition drives to convince the individual counties from San Francisco to the Oregon border to join the new Bridge District. Under the Coombs Bill, all 21 northern California counties had the option to join or not join the Bridge and Highway District. When 10 percent of a county's population agreed, by signing a petition, the petition was then submitted to the county board of supervisors who would then decide to join or not join the District. While many counties opted out, San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Del Norte and parts of Napa and Mendocino counties ultimately voted to form the Bridge and Highway District.

Mendocino County was the first to approve on January 7, 1925. Marin quickly followed on January 23. Sonoma and Napa counties were eager to join. In Humboldt County, lumbermen worried newcomers might agitate against cutting the redwoods. Cattlemen and sheep ranchers feared tourism would bring campers and hikers who interfere with their stock. Cost-conscious Lake County said "no." San Francisco's ordinance

was introduced January 26. Supervisors held out for two months to gain more representation on the Bridge Board, and finally unanimously endorsed membership in the District on April 13. Finally, Del Norte voted its approval on August 24, 1925.

Subsequently, a vigorous campaign was launched against the formation of the District, and for nearly six years the formation of the District was dragged through the courts of the counties involved. Formal court hearings on protests against joining the District began October 1927. Fourteen months later, on December 1, 1928, Superior Court Judge C.J. Luttrell denied all 2307 protests. His decision was later upheld by the Supreme Court. Passage of Marin Assemblyman Charles Reindollar's bill validated all legal steps to form the District. Secretary of State Frank Jordan signed the Certificate of Incorporation on December 4, 1928.

Bridge supporters prevailed, and on December 4, 1928, the Golden Gate Bridge and Highway District, comprised of its six member counties, was incorporated by the California State Legislature as the sole entity responsible for the final design, construction, and financing of a bridge.

Following the formal creation of the Bridge and Highway District, the Boards of Supervisors of the District's six member counties appointed directors to the District's Board of Directors. The first meeting of the Board was held on January 23, 1929. William P. Filmer was the first Board President, with Alan MacDonald appointed as General Manager, John R. Ruckstell as Auditor, William W. Felt Jr. as Secretary, George H. Harlan as Attorney, and Joseph B. Strauss as Chief Engineer.

Secretary of War Patrick Hurley issued the construction permit on August 11, 1930.

The Chief Engineer of the Golden Gate Bridge, Joseph B. Strauss, with the assistance of Strauss Engineering (later to become Strauss and Paine, Inc.) Vice Presidents Charles A. Ellis and Clifford E. Paine, Consultant Engineers O.H. Ammann, Charles Derleth, Jr., and Leon S. Moisseiff, Consulting Architects Irving F. Morrow, along with many dedicated workers and professionals, oversaw the creation of a structure which has become world-renowned, earning the reputation as the world's most spectacular bridge and one of the most visited sites in the world.

## Transit System Established

Crossing the San Francisco Bay by ferry dates back to 1850 when ferryboats operated between San Francisco and Oakland.

In 1868, the Sausalito Land and Ferry Company purchased waterfront land in Sausalito and proceeded to layout streets and subdivide the central waterfront into view lots. They also began to operate ferry service between Sausalito and San Francisco, in part as a promotion for real estate development. The Princess, a small steamer was the first Sausalito ferry to serve San Francisco. A rail line also attracted people to what became a major transportation hub.

In 1875, the North Pacific Coast Railroad purchased the ferries. Then in 1907, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad purchased the railroad lines serving Marin County and the ferry service serving San Francisco. Sausalito became the hub of passenger transportation. In 1920, due to the unresponsiveness of the

Northwestern Pacific Railroad to the demand for auto ferries passage, a new ferry company, the Golden Gate Ferry Co., was inaugurated and offered auto ferry service between San Francisco and Sausalito.

Prior to the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge, ferry and rail service flourished. Following the opening of the Bridge in May 1937, ferry service between Marin and San Francisco declined and eventually came to an end on Friday, February 28, 1941. For the next 29 years, driving across the Bridge was the only way to travel directly between Marin and San Francisco.

Just over 3.3 million vehicles crossed the Golden Gate Bridge during the first full year of operation. By 1967, annual crossings had grown over 750 percent to 28.3 million vehicles. The Bridge was close to reaching the saturation point and the public needed an alternative to the private automobile.

As the traffic congestion continued to increase, a number of studies were undertaken to identify alternate means of travel between Marin County and San Francisco. The May 1967 *San Francisco-Marin Crossings*, prepared by the Division of Bay Toll Crossings, State of California explored numerous transportation solutions including building a second bridge, a bridge to Angel Island connecting to Tiburon, and an underwater tube linking San Francisco and Marin. A number of lower deck options for the Bridge were also investigated. As a fixed, six-lane roadway, the Bridge could not be as easily expanded to accommodate traffic growth as was the case with other highways.

At the time, Greyhound provided transit between Marin County and San Francisco and it was so unprofitable that management wanted to abandon it. Marin County Transit District (now known as Marin Transit) considered taking over the existing Greyhound bus system as a commute service to San Francisco.

By the late 1960s, the span was at capacity during the morning commute. The original construction bonds were due to be retired and the District had approximately \$22.8 million in reserves. An innovative solution was needed to provide much needed relief to the traffic congestion.

Released in July 1969, Arthur D. Little, Inc.'s report, *Feasibility Study of San Francisco-Marin Ferry System*, funded by Marin County Transit District and the City and County of San Francisco, indicated that a ferry system was feasible and should be implemented and operated by the Golden Gate Bridge and Highway District.

On November 10, 1969, the California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 584 authorizing the District to develop a transportation facility plan for implementing a mass transportation program in the U.S. Highway 101/Golden Gate Corridor. This was to include any and all forms of transit, including ferry. At that time, the word "Transportation" was added to the District name to indicate its new commitment to public transportation. The Legislature did not give the District the authority to levy taxes, nor could Bridge tolls support local transit services – only intercounty, regional service could be subsidized by Bridge tolls. The mandate was clear – reduce traffic congestion on the Bridge and the adjacent corridor to the north.

On January 12, 1970, the GGBHD contracted with Philip F. Spaulding and Associates to design a commuter passenger ferry system between Marin and San Francisco. Their August 21, 1970 report, *Golden Gate Commuter Ferryboat System, San Francisco – Marin Crossing*, concluded that a ferry system would be

successful in diverting as many as 5,800 commuters per weekday during its first year of operation, keeping up to 2,900 cars per weekday off the Bridge.

On December 10, 1971, California Assembly Bill 919 was passed requiring the District to develop a longer range transportation programs for the corridor. After extensive public outreach including 21 public hearings in six counties, a unified system of buses and ferries emerged as the best means to serve the people of Marin and Sonoma counties. This public transit network is commonly known today as Golden Gate Transit (GGT) and Golden Gate Ferry (GGF).

On August 15, 1970, the District took its first step into the transit business by inaugurating GGF service from Sausalito, CA, in southern Marin County to San Francisco. On the same day, GGT began operation of limited bus service to/from the Sausalito Ferry Landing.

GGT basic service from Sonoma and Marin counties to San Francisco began on Saturday, January 1, 1972, and was followed by the start of GGT commute service on Monday, January 3, 1972. On Saturday, December 11, 1976, ferry service was expanded to include a second route operating between Larkspur and San Francisco.

The capital cost of GGT and GGF transit system infrastructure was financed by a combination of federal grants from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) and District toll reserves. For example, UMTA funded \$14.3 million of the \$20 million required to purchase the buses and construct bus maintenance and storage facilities in San Rafael, Novato and Santa Rosa. District toll reserves met the \$5.7 million remaining balance.

Since the introduction of GGT and GGF, both systems have become an integral part of life in the North Bay counties of Marin and Sonoma. These services have been reshaped over the years to meet the changing needs of growing communities. And through its growth, GGT and GGF have continued to fulfill the mission of reducing automobile traffic and congestion while contributing to the protection of the environment with efficient, reliable and cost-effective alternatives to the private automobile. In 2008, it was estimated that *without* GGT and GGF, motorists would experience an increase in Bridge traffic of about 32% during the peak weekday morning commute hour.