

# SBE TODAY

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## One Iconoclast's Blunt Message on Transportation Funding

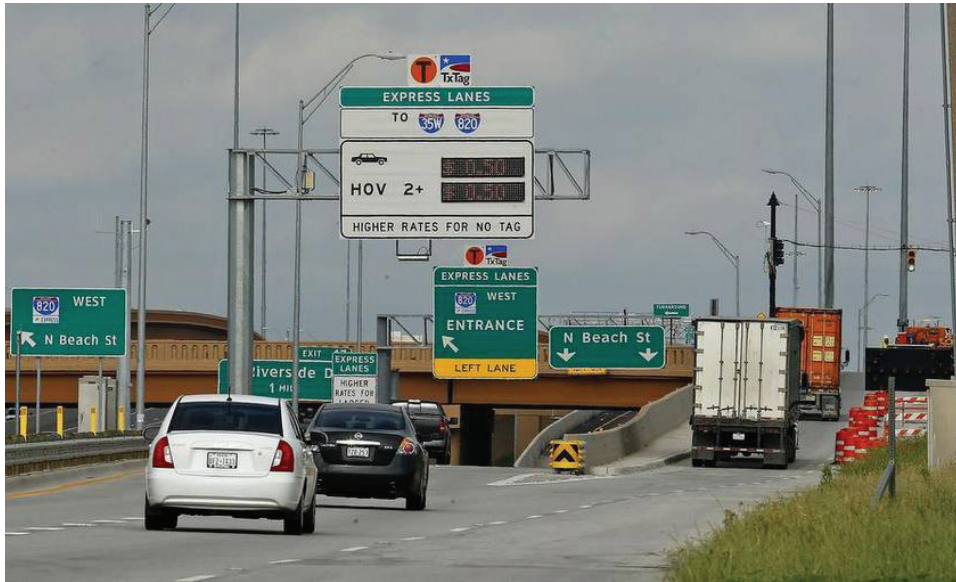


Photo credit: David Kidd

By Alan Ehrenhalt

It would be easy to dismiss Charles Marohn as a crank. At a time when half of Washington is battling around numbers that purport to reveal how much money Congress should spend to save the nation's troubled transportation system, Marohn is suggesting the simplest number of all: zero. What the system needs, Marohn says, isn't a big infusion of cash, but a thorough examination of what it ought to be doing in the first place. Barring such an examination, he wouldn't give the transportation system a dime.

Marohn is an unrepentant iconoclast, but he is no crank. He is a soft-spoken civil engineer from small-town Minnesota who spent most of two decades giving local governments conventional advice on how to build and repair roads, sidewalks and bridges. His solutions came straight out of the Green Book, published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the bible that engineers all over the country use in dealing with transportation issues. But eventually he decided that his advice wasn't worth much. He was telling communities to build high-speed streets and highways that were neither attractive nor safe. What the local residents really needed, Marohn came to believe, was less-intrusive, lower-speed infrastructure that fostered human-scale street life and a safe pedestrian presence.

So Marohn put aside his Green Book and became an activist. He started the blog Strong Towns and began putting his dissenting ideas into print. He followed up by developing a presentation of these ideas, called the Curbside Chat, and taking it to audiences around the country. He found himself attracting good-sized crowds and coverage in the local media. Five years and 200 Curbside Chats later, Marohn has made himself a stealthy presence in the current debate over federal transportation law. Some of the players in Washington have barely heard of him. But if you ask local leaders in Sarasota, Fla., or Sandpoint, Idaho, or York, Pa., you will find many who not only know about him but also pay attention to him. "There's a groundswell that we're giving voice to," he insists. "Our strength is talking to normal people."

I spoke with Marohn by phone recently as he drove to Palm Beach, Fla., to give a Curbside Chat presentation before flying to La Crosse, Wis., to give another one the next night. He reiterated his view that the country can survive a while longer without a sweeping new federal transportation bill. Doing nothing, he said, "is preferable to throwing a lot of money at the current approach."

The gospel according to Marohn is simple enough to put into a few words: We have built too many highways. We have built them in places that didn't need them. We have built them in places that can't afford to maintain them. That's why the federal Transportation Trust Fund is going broke.

And if Congress approves a new transportation bill under the old rules, we'll just build more unneeded roads and force the communities that host them into a further cycle of debt.

Marohn isn't against spending federal dollars to repair the infrastructure we have. He's against handing more money over to transportation planners who will always be able to find an excuse to build something new. "The present system is overbuilt and is going to contract," Marohn recently wrote. "We have so much transportation infrastructure that every level of government is now choking on maintenance costs. I'm tired of seeing bridges fall down and expensive roads go bad while we spend billions on new stuff we will never be able to maintain."

Marohn identifies himself as a conservative Republican, a stance that seems compromised in some ways by his close ties to the New Urbanist movement, most

■ Continued on page 4

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# California Sub-Bid Request Ads



Is requesting quotes from qualified M/WBE/Service Disabled Veterans Subcontractors, Suppliers, and Service Providers for the following (but not limited to) work:

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## Los Coches Substation Modification Phase 2 Site Development Project

Located in the Lakeside Community of the County of San Diego, CA

## San Diego Gas & Electric Company

**BID DATE June 18, 2015 @ 12:00 p.m.**

Sub & Vendor Bids Due Prior

## Sukut Construction, LLC

4010 W. Chandler Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92704

Contact: Thomas Rubio

Phone: (714) 380-8566 • Fax: (714) 545-2003 • Email: estimating@sukut.com

Plans/specs are available for viewing at our Santa Ana office by appointment. Subcontractors must be prepared to furnish 100% performance and payment bonds and possess current insurance and workers' comp coverage. Sukut Construction will assist Qualified Subcontractors in obtaining bonds, insurance, and/or lines of credit. Please contact Sukut Construction for assistance in responding to this solicitation. Subcontractors/Vendors will be required to sign Sukut's Standard Subcontract/Purchase Order. Copies are available for examination.

Sukut Construction's listing of a Subcontractor in its bid to the agency is not to be construed as an acceptance of all of the Subcontractor's conditions or exceptions included with Subcontractor's price quotes. Quotations must be valid for the same duration as specified by Owner for contract award.

**Sukut Construction, LLC**  
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REQUEST FOR DBE SUBCONTRACTORS  
AND SUPPLIERS FOR:

**Hwy 84 Fremont**

**Caltrans #04-2A3314**

**BID DATE: June 10, 2015 @ 2:00 PM**

We are soliciting quotes for (including but not limited to): Trucking, Lead Compliance Plan, Construction Area Signs, Traffic Control System, Portable Changeable Message Sign, Water Pollution Control Program, Sweeping, Cold Plane AC, Multilayer Polymer Overlay System, Asphaltic Emulsion, High Friction Surface Treatment, Rumble Strip, Tack Coat, Delineator, Barrier Marker, Object Marker, Striping & Marking and Construction Materials

## O.C. Jones & Sons, Inc.

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Phone: 510-526-3424 • FAX: 510-526-0990

Contact: Donat Galicz

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100% Performance & Payment Bonds may be required. Worker's Compensation Waiver of Subrogation required. Please call OCJ for assistance with bonding, insurance, necessary equipment, material and/or supplies. OCJ is willing to breakout any portion of work to encourage DBE Participation. Plans & Specs are available for viewing at our office or through the Caltrans Website at [www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/weekly\\_ads/index.php](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/weekly_ads/index.php).

Sub Bids Requested From Qualified  
SBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for  
**Webcor/Obayashi (JV)**

## TG13.1 Roof Park Landscaping and Irrigation Construction Services

Location: San Francisco, CA

Project Number: 30100

**Bid Date: June 30, 2015 @ 2:00 PM**

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: geofoam installation; craning; glass; masonry; metals; painting; pavers; play installation; play surfacing; reinforcing steel; sandblasting; and surveying.

We will pay up to and including one and one-half percent (1-1/2%) of your bonding cost. Certification assistance is available, as well as viewing plans and specs.

## McGuire and Hester

9009 Railroad Avenue • Oakland, CA 94603

Phone: (510) 632-7676 • Fax: (510) 562-5209

Contact: Kevin Exberger

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Sub Bids Requested From Qualified  
DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for  
**County of Placer - Auburn-Folsom Road  
Class 2 Bike Lane Improvement Project**  
Location: Placer County, CA  
Federal Aid Project No. CML 5919 (014)  
**Bid Date: June 23, 2015 @ 11:00 AM**

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: cold plane AC pavement; clearing/tree removal; erosion control; pavement reinforcing fabric; concrete flatwork; construction area signs; and striping.

We will pay up to and including one and one-half percent (1-1/2%) of your bonding cost. Certification assistance is available, as well as viewing plans and specs.

## McGuire and Hester

9009 Railroad Avenue • Oakland, CA 94603

Phone: (510) 632-7676 • Fax: (510) 562-5209

Contact: Sean Moss

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Sub Bids Requested From Qualified  
DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for  
**County of Solano**  
**Midway-Sievers Road Widening Project**  
Location: Solano County, CA  
Federal Aid Project No. HRRRL-5923(104)  
**Bid Date: June 23, 2015 @ 2:00 PM**

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: SWPPP; traffic control; quality control plan; striping; and trucking.

We will pay up to and including one and one-half percent (1-1/2%) of your bonding cost. Certification assistance is available, as well as viewing plans and specs.

## McGuire and Hester

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Contact: Robert Herrera

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# California Sub-Bid Request Ads

**Project Name: Transbay Block 8**  
**Project Location: San Francisco, CA**  
**Pre-Bid Meeting: June 22, 2015 at 2:00PM**  
**Bid Due Date: July 2, 2015**  
**Meeting Location:**  
**SFPUC Contractors Assistance Center**  
**5 Thomas Mellon Cir**  
**Suite 168**  
**San Francisco, CA 94134**  
**(415)467-1040**

**Requesting Bids for:**  
**Mass Excavation & Shoring**

Related California and Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation are currently requesting bid proposals from qualified subcontractors and material suppliers based in San Francisco, including those certified with the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII), Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), for the construction of the Transbay Block 8 Project. The OCII has established a subcontractor participation goal for this project at 50% SBE participation.

The Project is comprised of approximately 546 residential units and 18,000 square feet of neighborhood retail over a 3-level subterranean parking structure. The design features a 55-story tower, 65' and 85' podium buildings, townhomes and a publicly accessible mid-block paseo. The Project's residential program includes 116 for-sale condominiums, 280 market rate rental units and 150 below market rate rental units

For more information please email TB8@related.com. A member of the team will be able to provide clarifications and answers to any questions. Please do not send your bids via email to this email address. Electronic bid submittals will not be reviewed. Bid proposals shall be submitted no later than 3pm on July 2, 2015 via hard-copy delivery to 44 Montgomery, Suite 1050, San Francisco, CA 94104 to the attention of: Jeff Lucas.

**Transbay 8 Urban Housing, LLC**  
 44 Montgomery, Suite 1050  
 San Francisco, CA 94104  
 Phone: 415-677-4406 • Fax: 888-371-8739  
**Contact: Jeff Lucas**  
 Email: TB8@related.com

Sub Bids Requested From Qualified DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for  
**County of San Joaquin - Austin Road Bridge (29C-259)**  
 .....  
**County of San Joaquin - Stanley Road Bridge (29C-112)**  
 .....  
**County of San Joaquin - Van Allen Bridge (29C-115)**  
**Location: San Joaquin County, CA**  
**Bid Date: June 18, 2015 @ 1:30 PM**

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: trucking and rebar. We will pay up to and including one and one-half percent (1-1/2%) of your bonding cost. Certification assistance is available, as well as viewing plans and specs.

**McGuire and Hester**  
 9009 Railroad Avenue • Oakland, CA 94603  
 Phone: (510) 632-7676 • Fax: (510) 562-5209  
**Contact: Dave Koerber**  
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**REQUESTING BIDS FROM QUALIFIED DBE SUBCONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECT:**

**I-5 Poly Concrete Overlay & Reconstruct AC Approaches Project, Shasta and Siskiyou Counties**  
**Engineers Estimate: \$4,020,000; 220 Working Days**  
**Caltrans Project No. 02-4F6104, Bid Date: June 9, 2015 at 2:00 pm**

We hereby encourage responsible participation of local Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (9% Goal), and solicit their subcontractor or material quotation for the following types of work. This is a highway project with the typical items of work associated, but not limited to: Lead Compliance Plan, Construction Area Signs, Traffic Control System, Type III Barricade, Temp Pavement Marking, Portable Changeable Message Sign, Temporary Railing, Temp Crash Cushion, Job Site Management, SWPPP, Temporary Erosion Control, Public Safety Plan, Rapid Setting Concrete (Patch), Remove Chain Link Fence, Remove Guardrail, Remove Traffic Stripe, Remove Asphalt Concrete Dike, Remove Inlet, Remove Asphalt Concrete Surfacing, Cold Plane Asphalt Concrete Pavement, Remove Unsound Concrete, Prep Concrete Bridge Deck Surface, Furnish Poly Concrete Overlay, Remove Chip Seal, Remove Concrete, Bridge Removal, Roadway Excavation, Shoulder Backing, Class 2 Aggregate Base, Hot Mix Asphalt, Tack Coat, Structural Concrete, Aggregate Base, Minor Concrete, Paving Notch Extension, Drill and Bond Dowel, Clean Expansion Joint, Joint Seal, Rebar, Galvanic Anode, Flume Downdrain, Rock Slope Protection, Minor Concrete, Misc. Iron and Steel, Fence and Railing, Alternative In-Line Terminal System, Concrete Barrier, Pavement Marking and Striping, Maintaining Existing Traffic Management System Elements During Construction, Modify Service, Inductive Loop Detector, Construction Equipment and Rentals, Trucking.

CTM Construction, Inc. is willing to break down items of work into economically feasible units to encourage DBE participation. If you are interested in any of this work, please provide us with a scope letter or contact us immediately. Plans and Specifications are available from the Caltrans website at [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/contractor\\_info/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/contractor_info/).

Conditions or exceptions in Subcontractor's quote are expressly rejected unless expressly accepted in writing. Subcontractor and Supplier quotes are required 24 hours prior to the bid date to enable thorough evaluation.



**CTM Construction, Inc.**  
 3300 Fitzgerald Rd. • Rancho Cordova, CA 95742  
 916-852-6294 • Fax 916-914-2107

Each Subcontractor shall be prepared to submit faithful performance and payment bonds equal to 100% of their quotation. The Contractor will pay standard industry rates for these bonds.

**Contact CTM Construction, Inc. for assistance with bonds, insurance, lines of credit, equipment, supplies or project plans and specifications. CTM Construction, Inc., is a Union Contractor.**

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**REQUESTING SUB-QUOTES FROM QUALIFIED LBE/ LIABE / LBABE / SBE / VSBE SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS FOR:**

**Air Cargo Way Pavement Rehabilitation**  
**Project No: 2015-05-A1**  
**Owner: Port of Oakland**  
**Engineers' Estimate: \$1,200,000.**  
**BID DATE: June 24, 2015 @ 2:00 PM**

**Items of work include but are not limited to: Traffic Control, Site Demolition, Cold Mill Asphalt Concrete, Trucking, Crack Sealant, Soil Cement Base, Striping, Survey Monuments and LED In-Road Warning Lights.**

Granite Rock Company 'Graniterock' is signatory to Operating Engineers, Laborers, Teamsters, Carpenters and Cement Masons unions. 100% performance and payment bonds will be required from a qualified surety company for the full amount of the subcontract price. Bonding assistance is available. Graniterock will pay bond premium up to 1.5%. In addition to bonding assistance, subcontractors are encouraged to contact Graniterock Estimating with questions regarding obtaining lines of credit, insurance, equipment, materials and/or supplies, or with any questions you may have. Subcontractors must possess a current contractor's license, insurance and worker's compensation coverage. Subcontractors will be required to enter into our standard contract. Graniterock intends to work cooperatively with all qualified firms seeking work on this project. Granite Rock Company is an equal opportunity employer.

**Granite Rock Company**  
 7700 Edgewater Drive, Building B, Suite 300  
 Oakland, CA 94621  
 Phone (408) 574-1400 Fax (408) 365-9548  
**Contact: Bob Williams**  
 Email: [estimating@graniterock.com](mailto:estimating@graniterock.com)  
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# California Sub-Bid Request Ads

WestCare the Specialized Treatment for Optimized Program (STOP) contracted to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the STOP in Program Area 1 is seeking DHCS licensed/certified Residential (RES), Non-Residential (OPT), and Sober Living Environment (SLE) services to serve male (M) and female (F) parolees with specific needs in the following counties:

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**Placer-** SLE/M-F      **Sacramento-** SLE/M-F

Interested Providers contact

**Christy Glunz**

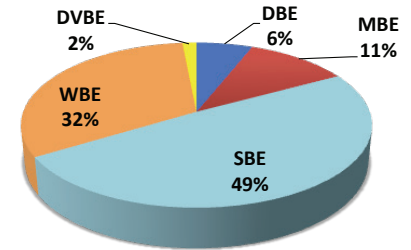
**Phone: (916) 564-4400 ext. 20404**

**Email: [Christy.glunz@westcare.com](mailto:Christy.glunz@westcare.com)**

Please include mailing address and phone number.

Deadline for completed Applications is **June 15, 2015**

## AUDIENCE PROFILE Small Business Exchange, Inc.



## One Iconoclast's Blunt Message on Transportation Funding

Continued from page 1

of whose leaders are liberal Democrats. But in keeping with his Republican roots, Marohn makes his arguments against highway building from a fiscal perspective. He doesn't talk much about climate change, aesthetics or social justice. He talks about wasting the taxpayers' money.

Marohn tells his Curbside audiences that highway building and suburban sprawl are essentially a Ponzi scheme. A new interchange or bypass connected to an interstate highway brings a community a much-appreciated windfall as residential and commercial development takes place near the highway, and the homeowners and commercial tenants begin contributing property taxes to the local treasury. For a few years, everyone is happy. But in the long run, property taxes aren't sufficient to meet the costs that the development creates: additional sewers, road repair, and the creation of new parks and public schools to cater to the families that move in.

The local government can cover these bills by attracting more growth, and this is what many of them do. The new round of growth pays for the previous one -- this is why Marohn calls it a Ponzi scheme. But the opportunities for growth are ultimately finite, and eventually most communities are forced into debt to pay for all the growth they have cheerfully approved. "Few cities," Marohn says, "have any clue of the scale of their commitment for infrastructure maintenance."

Marohn's is a coherent theory of how governments got themselves into the predicament that now befalls them. There are plenty of others. The federal gas tax hasn't been increased by Congress since 1993. Given a sufficient boost, it might come close to supporting the nation's infrastructure needs in 2015. Marohn argues that even if this is true, the gas tax hike that would be required now for catch-up purposes would be so large as to be politically impossible. On this score, he is probably right.

Free-market conservatives say that had the Highway Trust Fund not been "raided" during the Rea-

gan administration to include money for mass transit, it would be much closer to solvency than it is today. This may be true as well. But the trust fund was broadened to include transit as a way of attracting urban and some suburban votes; those votes are likely to be as crucial now as they were in the 1980s.

Defunding new highways altogether is not an idea that Congress is likely to take seriously as it debates a long-term transportation policy. Republicans have flirted with it, though. Earlier this year, two GOP lawmakers, Sen. Mike Lee of Utah and Rep. Tom Graves of Georgia, proposed what they call the Transportation Empowerment Act, which would reduce the gas tax from its current 18.4 cents a gallon to 3.7 cents over five years and turn almost all responsibility for the federal highway system to the states. The modest amount of money left in the trust fund would be used only for maintenance of existing highways. Any state that wanted a new highway within its borders would have to finance the project with its own tax money.

This idea is a nonstarter for congressional Democrats and the Obama administration, and for a significant number of Republicans as well. It has no chance of being enacted into law. But it attracted an angry blast from the engineering and road-building establishment, whose leaders argue that in the antitax environment that prevails across much of the country, most states would not replace the federal money they were losing. Crucial infrastructure needs would go unmet. Marohn, unpredictable as usual, responded that the Republican idea might be worth listening to. At first, he wrote recently, "I wasn't an advocate of the Transportation Empowerment Act. If you are defined by your enemies, however, having hysteric members of the infrastructure cult line up against it makes me think it deserves a lot more attention."

In fact, it's not so certain that states would simply turn their backs on infrastructure responsibilities if the federal gas tax went away. As the highly respected transportation blogger Kenneth Orski has carefully documented, states have actually been

quite busy on the transportation front while Congress has made little progress. Orski reports that 23 states, many of them solidly Republican, have considered measures to raise transportation revenue this year. Several have gone for increases in their state gas taxes. Georgia, no bastion of free-spending fiscal policy, raised its fuel tax to 21.7 cents and indexed it to inflation. Maine Gov. Paul LePage, as cranky an antitax zealot as there is in the country, has proposed a new \$2 billion plan to rehabilitate state infrastructure.

So it's at least plausible that quite a few states would put serious money into infrastructure if the federal trust fund went away. That would give Marohn a sort of moral victory over the highway construction lobby, his arch-enemy. But it wouldn't really satisfy him, because for the most part the states have been as fixated on new construction as the feds are. A true victory for Marohnism would require not just a shift in transportation dollars but also a shift in transportation thinking. That doesn't seem to be on the immediate horizon.

Still, there are small signs of change even at the policymaking level. President Obama's six-year transportation proposal, while no more likely to be approved intact than the Republican plan, does include some touches friendly to Marohn and his mavericks. One provision would make it possible for states to charge tolls on more interstate highways. Another term would encourage more experiments in congestion pricing.

Meanwhile, in Ohio, the cities of Cleveland and Akron told the Department of Transportation recently that they wanted to divert some of their state money away from construction of new roads and into maintaining the existing ones: a "fix it first" policy. The state turned them down. For those who share Marohn's attitude toward transportation policy, however, what those cities wanted to do could be seen as a straw in the wind. "I'm a pariah," Marohn admits. "But I'm making progress."

Source: <http://www.governing.com>