

To: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Date: 2/21/2020

From: Ruby Horta, Director of Planning, Marketing & Innovation

Reviewed by: *RH*

SUBJECT: Bay Area Transit Coordination

Background:

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) was created by the California Legislature in 1970 and, today, is responsible for planning, financing, coordinating and managing transportation for the nine Bay Area counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma). More than 20 different transit operators, in over 100 cities, serve the nine-county Bay Area. Rail agencies such as BART, Capitol Corridor and ACE serve regional commutes and bus agencies like County Connection fulfill local needs. However, despite the varying levels of service and service area, the region has a history of implementing projects to improve transit coordination, as defined by MTC.

Regional Coordinating Efforts:

Early efforts focused on regional programs and policies such as disseminating tax-free transit benefits and making paratransit eligibility determinations. For example, today, County Connection manages the Bay Area's Regional Eligibility Database (RED) program which allows ADA-paratransit eligible consumers to reciprocally use paratransit services in the nine-county Bay Area and are not considered visitors nor subject to visitor policies. Other efforts, such as the Transit Connectivity Plan, identified improvements to (1) designated regional transit hubs, including way-finding signage and transit information, real time transit information, schedule coordination, last-mile services and hub amenities, and (2) system wide connectivity improvements, including 511 information and Clipper. Due to these efforts, AC Transit manages regional wayfinding and all Bay Area agencies accept Clipper as a form of payment.

Currently, each operator certifies its adherence to the provisions of SB 602 as part of the annual allocation process for TDA and STA funds when requests for these funds are submitted to MTC. Per the requirements of SB 602, each transit agency in the region has a revenue sharing agreement with every connecting agency. In some cases, this takes the form

of a reciprocal agreement to accept each other's passengers free of charge or to honor each other's period passes or single-trip transfers for a discounted fare. The East Bay Day Pass is an example of a joint fare instrument to address SB 602 requirements. Each transit agency in the region is required to maintain these reciprocal agreements as a condition of receiving STA funds.

Additionally, MTC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the San Francisco Bay Area and as such must carry out transportation planning and fund programming processes required to maintain the region's eligibility for federal funds. One of these processes is the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP). MTC, in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region IX office, requires that public transit operators prepare and regularly update a SRTP as inputs to regional transportation programming activities.

Other regional coordinating efforts include the onboard survey program, community-based transportation plans and various working groups comprised of small and large operators defining policies and offering support for fare, capital and grant planning.

Local Coordinating Efforts:

Beyond the nine-county Bay Area coordinating efforts, transit agencies have also implemented coordinating efforts on a more local level. East Bay Operators, including LAVTA, TriDelta, WestCat and County Connection partnered to establish the East Bay Day Pass. Given the overlapping service areas for the four bus operators, passengers using Clipper can take unlimited rides on all four service providers for maximum daily rate of \$3.75 or \$1.75 for seniors/disabled.

Last summer, the Contra Costa County transit operators, in partnership with 511 Contra Costa, created the countywide Summer Youth Pass. While the pass was valued at \$60, 511 Contra Costa provided a subsidy of \$25 per pass, bringing the retail price down to \$35. All three transit agencies experienced ridership growth and summer youth pass usage over the summer. A follow up survey indicated a high satisfaction rate and the desire for year-round programs.

Schedule coordination amongst adjacent service areas is a priority when designing service. County Connection serves six BART stations and one Amtrak Station in Contra Costa County; one BART and one ACE station in Alameda County and we share our service area borders with multiple bus operators. The East Bay Day pass on Clipper allows for seamless transfers amongst bus operators, County Connection offers a discount to passengers transferring from BART, fare agreements are in place for passengers transferring from Amtrak and ACE and

County Connection will hold buses at the Pleasanton ACE station when trains are delayed. All of these efforts support a seamless transition between coordinated operators.

In the event of emergencies, and planned maintenance efforts, BART has requested the assistance of various bus operators to support rail service. Currently, County Connection, as many other bus operators throughout the Bay Area are under contract with BART to provide the Early Bird Express between 4am-5am, as BART conduct maintenance work. Additionally, bus operators provide assistance with transportation between BART stations in the event of an emergency, in the form of mutual aid or bus bridges.

New Opportunities:

Public transit agencies are in a constant state of change in order to meet changing passenger demands. In the case of County Connection, we offer express, local and school service. For example, as school bell times change, so do our trip times serving schools. Commute patterns define much of our express service, which is tightly knit to rail. As BART, Capital Corridor and ACE modify their schedules, so do schedules for our connecting services to ensure a seamless transition. One of the most effective ways to improve connectivity between local and regional systems such as County Connection and BART is to add more service to local routes thus connecting with more trains.

Despite the ongoing efforts of the region to create a seamless multimodal system, not every trip, on every mode accomplishes this goal. It should be recognized that due to varying levels of funding, not all transit agencies can connect with overlapping service. Without additional resources, a transit agency like County Connection is unable to meet all school bell times, BART trains coming and going from two separate directions and address local day-to-day needs, including additional weekend coverage.

The Bay Area has a rich multilayered system of transportation agencies coordinating to provide a seamless transportation network that may be traversed using a single payment instrument. Although improvements can be made to certain systems to improve frequency, those improvements will require additional funding.

Financial Implications:

None.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.