

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Board of Directors

Date: 12/22/2022

From: Pranjali Dixit, Manager of Planning

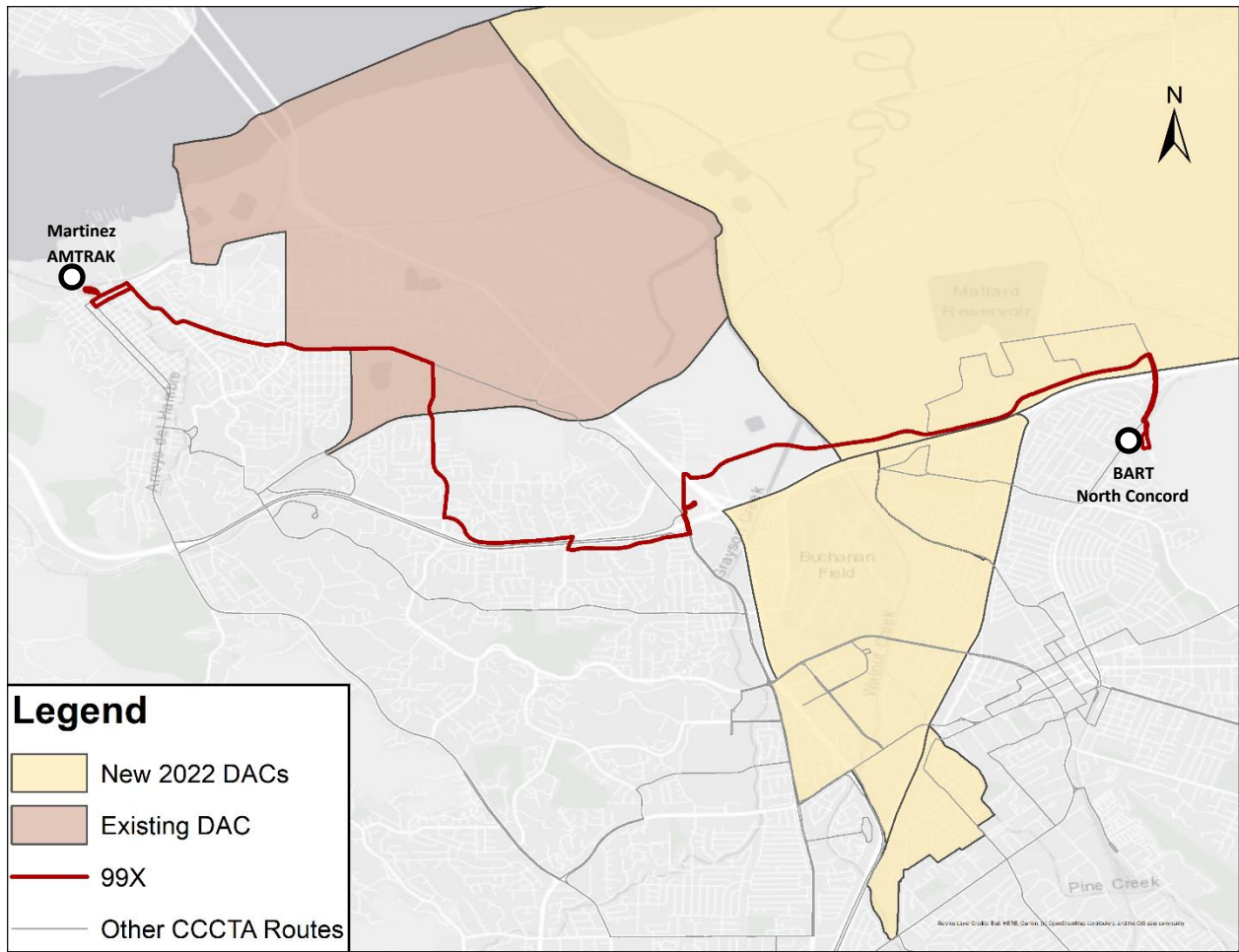
Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: LCTOP and Route 99X Update

Background:

The Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) cap and trade funding first became available in FY 14-15. The initial three years of funding were primarily used to operate the Martinez Shuttle – Route 3. Prior to FY 17-18, at least 50% of LCTOP funds had to be used **within ½ mile** of a disadvantaged community (DAC). The FY 17-18 guidelines stated that eligible projects must be “**within a DAC**”. At the time, the only DAC within County Connection’s service area was in Martinez along Pacheco Blvd. Route 3 was ½ mile from the DAC, thus no longer eligible for the funds. Due to low productivity and lack of alternate funding sources, Route 3 was eliminated in Fall 2018.

Starting in August 2018, County Connection launched Route 99X, which was designed to meet the new guidelines. The route runs from Martinez Amtrak to North Concord BART during peak hours and serves the Pacheco Transit Center, Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, Contra Costa County offices at Glacier and Muir, and the courthouse in Martinez. Route 99X serves the section around Pacheco and Morello which is part of the DAC in Martinez as shown in the map below. Beginning in FY 21-22, DAC definitions were updated and there are now three additional DACs in County Connection’s service area in Concord.

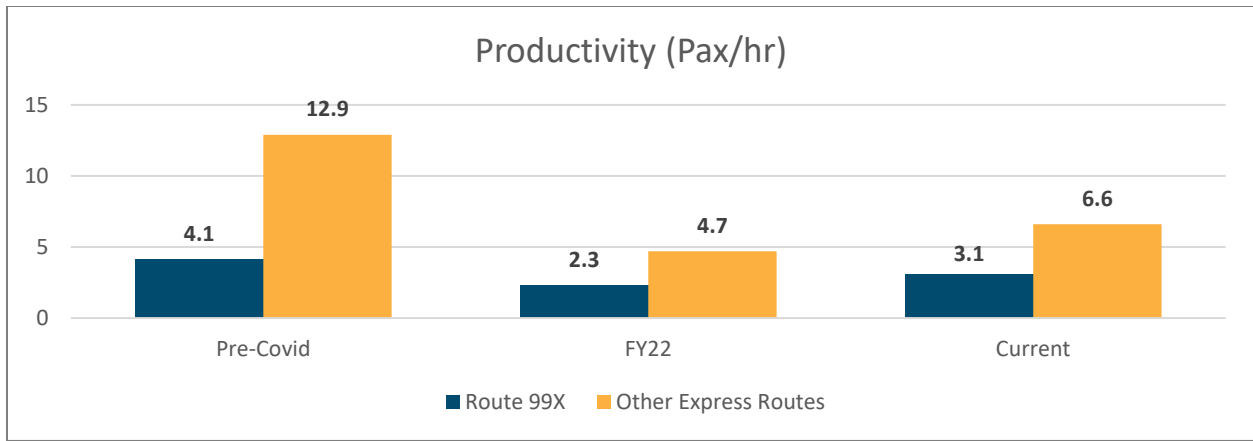


Ridership Trends:

Since the launch of the route in August 2018, the route has not attracted much ridership and even at its peak, its performance was below the overall express route average. During the pandemic, as people started working remotely, commuter trips went down and have remained significantly below pre-pandemic levels as many workers have not yet returned to the office full time. Although the overall Express route ridership continues to lag, Route 99X continues to underperform compared to other express routes. Currently the route operates 19 trips during the peak commute hours and averages 44 passengers a day at 3.5 passengers per hour, which is below the current express route average of 6.6.

The biggest ridership generators along the route are the Martinez Amtrak Station, North Concord BART, Concord Adult Homeless Shelter located on Arnold Industrial Way, and the apartments/businesses on Morello Ave.

New or expanded transit service is only eligible for LCTOP funds for up to 5 years, so Route 99X will no longer be eligible starting in August 2023. Due to the consistent underperformance and lack of funding, staff will evaluate options to redesign the route to better suit the demands and/or reallocate funds based on the new DACs, and will present proposed recommendations at a future meeting.



Financial Implications:

For FY 21-22, County Connection received \$600,619 through the LCTOP grant program for continued operation of Route 99X from August 2022 to August 2023.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None.