

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee
From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Date: 5/24/2023

Reviewed by:



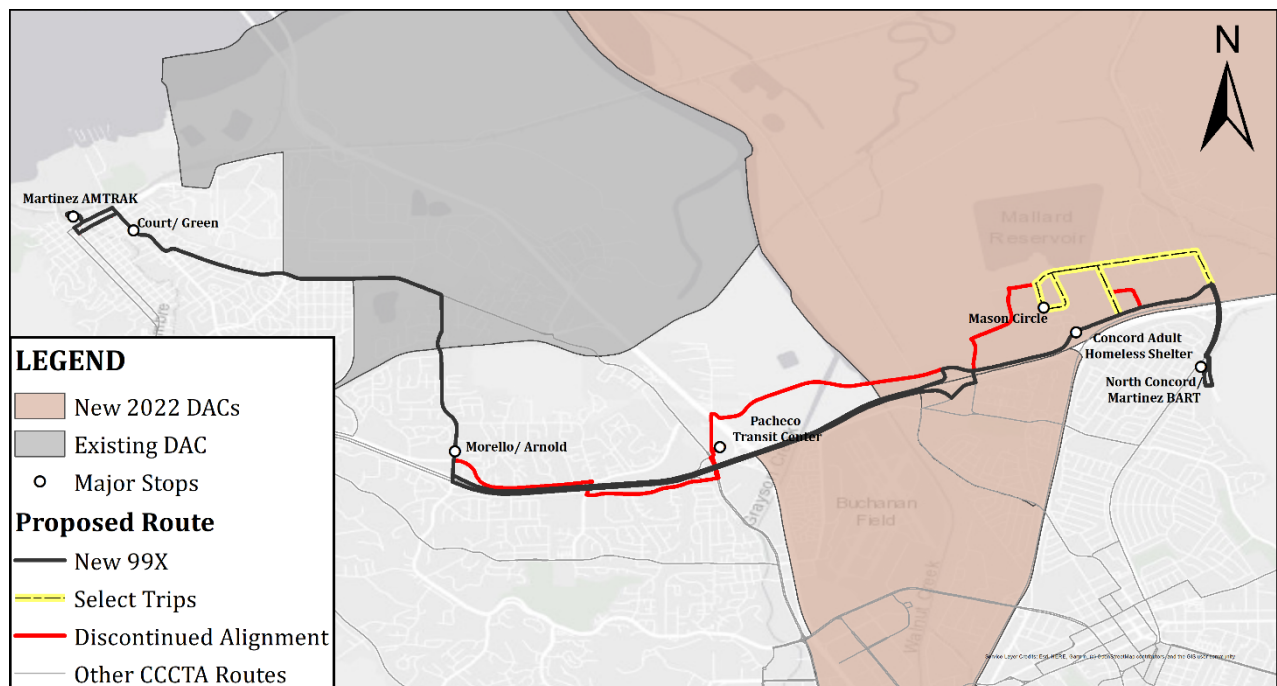
SUBJECT: Routes 99X/27 Outreach Planning

Background:

In August 2018, County Connection launched Route 99X, an express route serving the Disadvantaged Community (DAC) in Martinez around Pacheco and Morello and funded by the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) cap and trade grant program. During the pandemic, as people started working remotely, ridership on commuter trips went down and has remained significantly below pre-pandemic levels as many workers have not yet returned to the office full-time. Although overall express route ridership continues to lag, Route 99X continues to underperform compared to other express routes.

In March 2023, staff presented a service change proposal that included the consolidation of Route 99X and Route 27 (see map below), which currently provides limited trips within North Concord, similar to Route 99X. In short, the proposal was to not only combine the two routes but eliminate route segments with little to no ridership, creating a single, more efficient, and fare-free express route.

The Board approved the proposal in May 2023. With permission to move forward, staff are making plans to market the service change in the months ahead of the Fall Bid, which starts on August 6, 2023, when the proposal will take effect.



Marketing and Outreach Planning:

Staff is making plans to market and engage with riders and the communities most impacted by the Route 99X/27 service change, which include the following touchpoints:

Service Change Notifications:

Staff will post service change notices and effective dates at all Route 99X and Route 27 bus stops starting July 2023. As well, staff will post a general service change notice on our website and across all County Connection social media accounts. Additionally, staff may pay for targeted ads on Facebook and Twitter for people living in Martinez and the North Concord area.

Riding the Route:

As part of our Mobile Lobby programming, staff will ride both routes each week throughout July and into August 2023, handing out service change flyers to passengers and answering questions as needed. Depending on the number of people we are able to engage on the buses, we may also plan to have a pop-up informational table along the routes during peak riding hours near areas where commuters frequent or travel for community services, including the Pacheco Transit Center, Mason Circle, the Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, and/or North Concord BART.

Community and Business Engagement:

Staff will be working with area community centers and businesses; Pacheco Transit Center, Mason Circle, Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, and North Concord BART, where Route 99X and Route 27 run. Management and/or Human Resources of community centers and businesses in or around the service area will be provided printed flyers (with County Connection Customer Service contact information) that they may post or distribute as needed. Additionally, upon request, we can have staff available for scheduled meetings to discuss the proposed service changes and timeline.

Financial Implications:

Any costs associated with marketing plans are included in the Promotions budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None