

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Operations & Scheduling Committee

Date: 11/20/2023

From: Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning

Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: Spring Bid Update

Background:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff implemented major service changes to ensure transit availability throughout the service area based on changing demand. As businesses have reopened and employers have required employees to return to the office, ridership has increased steadily, aided by systemwide and regionwide fare promotions such as Monument Free, Summer Youth Pass, Pass2Class, and Clipper START. However, despite extensive recruitment and training efforts, the ongoing operator shortage remains a key hurdle to increasing service. Increasing traffic congestion has also required staff to make frequent schedule adjustments in order to maintain reliable service.

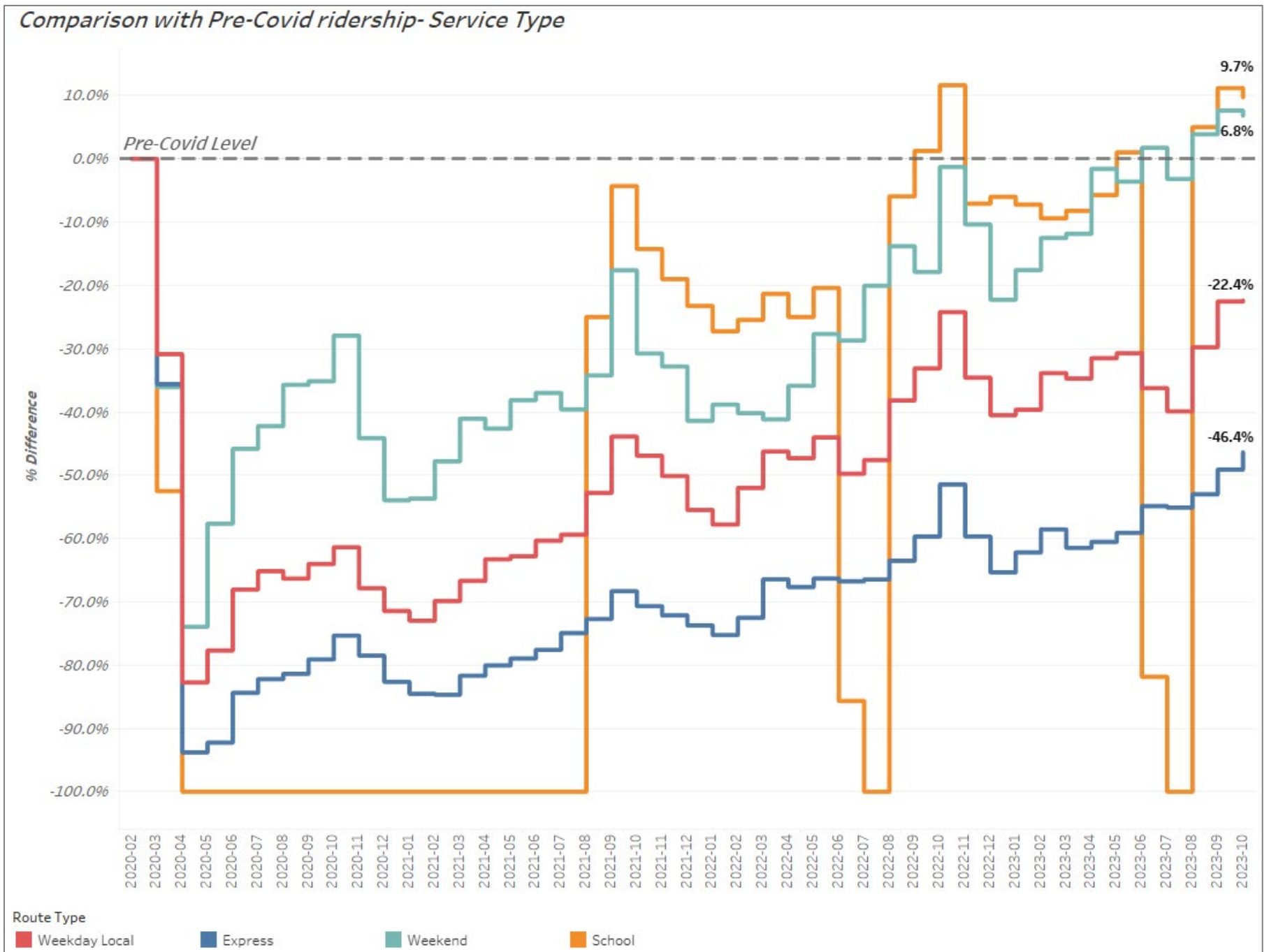
Ridership Trends:

Ridership has been growing steadily year-over-year, with weekend and school ridership showing the strongest recovery as seen in Figure 1. As of October 2023, weekend and school ridership surpassed pre-COVID levels, buoyed by the expansion of the Monument Free and Pass2Class program. Weekday local routes recovered to 78% of pre-COVID ridership, followed by express routes at 54%.

On-Time Performance:

The Fall Bid introduced several changes to improve on-time performance, based on data from Swiftly and operator feedback. Preliminary data from Swiftly has shown that modified routes saw an overall 2.3% increase in on-time performance, with Weekday Local and Express routes improving by 3.5% and 6.2%, respectively. However, Weekend routes decreased by 5%, largely due to ongoing construction in San Ramon, as well as increased weekend traffic to City Center. Routing changes were implemented in November for the Winter Bid to address this issue.

Figure 1: Comparison with Pre-Covid Ridership



Spring Bid:

The Spring bid will be implemented on January 14, 2024 to be consistent with regional coordination efforts to align signup calendars so that schedule changes occur at or around the same time across the Bay Area's transit operators including BART. Historically, the Spring bid has started in February, and staff met with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) who agreed to the January date. Because of the longer duration of the Spring bid, which will be in place until June, staff agreed to the ATU's request to have operators rebid midway through the 6-month signup.

The Spring Bid will include several service adjustments. Along with an analysis of current schedule and ridership levels, these changes were guided by passenger input, operator suggestions and maximizing efficiency of resource usage. The changes will include the following:

- Shifting of 97X trips in the AM to improve connections with other routes at San Ramon Transit Center.
- Schedule and Runtime changes on Route 321 to improve on-time performance.
- Changing the circulation of Route 7 at Pleasant Hill BART based on operator suggestion to improve on-time performance.

Financial Implications:

None. The service levels for the Spring bid are consistent with the proposed FY 2024 budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None