



MEMORANDUM

To: Anne Muzzini, County Connection

From: Richard Weiner, Terra Curtis

Date: July 22, 2015

Subject: Lamorinda Service Alternatives Refinements – Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

This memo updates the Lamorinda Service Alternatives Executive Summary dated March 27, 2015 by summarizing public feedback received on the original service alternatives and providing initial thoughts of service refinements and recommendations.

The Lamorinda Service Plan is aimed at improving transit ridership, service quality, and cost effectiveness by developing alternative service options in the Lamorinda Area. While the focus of the plan is public transportation options, other alternatives have also been considered.

Based on initial conversations with the Lamorinda Program Management Committee Technical Advisory Committee (LPMC TAC), the LPMC, local transportation providers, and community members, key challenges for transit in the area include the following:

- Current transit service works for some, but is not a viable option for most residents within the Lamorinda area
- Vehicle access is limited due to parking constraints at both local BART stations and in downtown Lafayette

To initiate the process of finding transit service alternatives that address these challenges, three key transportation markets were identified: **commute trips**, **school trips**, and **midday trips** (with a focus on seniors). Preliminary alternatives were developed and the feasibility of each was determined based on discussion with TAC members. Several were carried forward for further development. This Executive Summary describes the public feedback received on prioritized alternatives and poses initial recommendations for refining those alternatives.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Between May 21 and June 12, 2015, several channels were used to gather public feedback on the draft service alternatives—a process used to refine the prioritized service alternatives described in the next section. Figure 1 summarizes the surveying methods, dates, and responses received.

Figure 1 Alternatives Refinement Public Outreach Summary

Survey Method	Dates	Responses
Online survey of BART passengers, disseminated by handing out postcards at Lafayette and Orinda BART stations	Disseminated May 27 and 28 Survey open through June 12	500
Online survey of the general public disseminated through Nextdoor, the Lamorinda Weekly, and via flyers posted in the Lamorinda Spirit Van and several senior centers and housing facilities	May 25 - June 12	591
Online survey of parents of schoolchildren, disseminated through the Lafayette, Orinda, and Acalanes school districts' superintendents	May 21 - June 12	653
Textizen text-based survey advertised on County Connection buses	May 28 - June 12	39
Interviews with several individuals who work closely with Lamorinda's senior population	Early June	3

Like in the first round of outreach, the number of responses received indicates a high level of engagement with transportation issues in Lamorinda; unlike the first round, we saw a high level of engagement through channels other than Nextdoor. As seen in Figure 2, school bus expansion, a taxi subsidy program for seniors and people with disabilities, and BART shuttles garner the most support from respondents.

It should be noted that while respondents were not asked directly about their interest in using on-demand transit services—which could be thought of as a third version of the BART shuttle concept—many indicated support through free form comments and the vast majority (80.9%) support a model that prioritizes response time over service area (offered by many on-demand models).

Figure 2 Summary of Support for each Proposed Alternative

Alternative	% of Respondents Interested in Using the Service	Total Responses
BART Vanpools	32.3%	464
BART Shuttles - Moraga Way - Mt. Diablo Boulevard - On-demand model	56.0%	430
Taxi Scrip/Voucher program for seniors or people with disabilities	79.6%	103*
Taxi Scrip/Voucher program for the general public	42.2%	102*
School Bus Program Expansion	81.4% - 89.2%**	518
*This question was added to the survey on June 1, 2015 after many responses had been received **Respondents were asked about each expansion proposal separately		

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One final overarching point is the relatively frequent suggestion by respondents to many of the surveys that bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements are needed, particularly to encourage and facilitate more walking and biking to school. Many people stressed these options as complements to existing and proposed transit service alternatives.

The following section describes the benefits and drawbacks of each service alternative, including feedback received in the second round of public outreach and initial recommendations. Prioritization of these recommendations is provided in a table at the conclusion of this Executive Summary.

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RECOMMENDED SERVICE REVISIONS

Figure 3 Summary of Alternative Benefits and Drawbacks

Service Alternative	Benefits	Drawbacks	Public Feedback	Initial Recommendations
<p>Vanpool to BART</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rideshare operation handled primarily by individuals; public entity does not have to be involved on a day-to-day basis ▪ BART and/or other public entities may be able to subsidize the service to reduce costs to participants ▪ Concept is simple; easy to communicate the operations to potential rideshare subscribers ▪ Designed specifically for commuters to points west of Lamorinda (Oakland and San Francisco) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subscribers must commit to both morning and evening departure times ▪ Some subscribers must commit to be drivers ▪ Vehicle rental agreement holders (the driver and/or backup driver) may have to front all or part of the cost of the vehicle rental ▪ Requires a high number of subscribers to enable participants to be picked up from their homes ▪ Limited cost savings to users (but guaranteed access to BART) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 25% of BART riders would use this option, but Moraga residents most likely ▪ Respondents report the most common reason they would support such an option is its link to guaranteed BART parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given its relatively low level of support and other alternatives' ability to achieve similar outcomes, this alternative is not recommended at this time.

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Service Alternative	Benefits	Drawbacks	Public Feedback	Initial Recommendations
<p>Moraga/Orinda BART Shuttle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Passengers pay only for their fare; no vehicle rental, fuel, insurance, or maintenance costs to split ▪ Highest level of flexibility for passengers; morning and evening trip times could be flexible due to shuttle frequency ▪ Supplements less frequent County Connection Route 6 service ▪ Expands transit service options to BART system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited service area (presuming that many would still drive to access transit) ▪ Service is geared to residents of Moraga and Orinda, though Lafayette may benefit from reduced traffic congestion ▪ Requires additional operational and capital funding ▪ Park-and-ride are conceptual and require further investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported by a majority of general public responses, 38% of surveyed BART riders ▪ Mostly looking for a more frequent option, potentially could be served by a new option or increased Route 6 frequency ▪ Lots of complaints about Route 6 headway (both for riders and non-riders) ▪ People think some kind of incentive/marketing campaign to get people using the shuttle will help ▪ Note: BART is very frequent in the 7 a.m. hour (every 5 minutes) and decreases to every 10-15 minutes closer to 9 a.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This service option is recommended to continue into the Implementation Plan. ▪ Route 6's existing low frequency has decreased the public's confidence in using County Connection for timely connections; as such, it may be best to develop this as a standalone service through branding and service characteristics, rather than simply increasing the frequency of Route 6. ▪ BART frequency at the time most people use it suggests this feeder service would not have to be incredibly reliable at arriving at BART at a particular time; rather, shuttle frequency is the most important factor.
<p>Lafayette Shuttle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports increased development along Mount Diablo Boulevard and existing businesses/employers ▪ Enables additional transit options for those living along Mount Diablo Boulevard (and near intersection with Pleasant Hill Road) ▪ Supplements less frequent County Connection service (Route 25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited service area along Mount Diablo Boulevard ▪ Currently, only proposed to operate during peak commute hours (give focus of study) ▪ Shuttle access is still contingent on safe pedestrian access and connections across Mount Diablo Boulevard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for lunchtime shuttle along Mt. Diablo Blvd., but it does not solve an priority need for most respondents ▪ Desire to provide transportation for seniors along the corridor, but senior stakeholders indicate a taxi subsidy program would be more effective for their clientele 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This service alternative is recommended to continue into the Implementation Plan as a low priority.

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Service Alternative	Benefits	Drawbacks	Public Feedback	Initial Recommendations
Zone Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides basic level of access to the transit system across a wide service area ▪ Effectively serves as a community general public Dial-a-Ride (with specific time-points) ▪ Increases transit access to BART and other community services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service quality (speed) is limited based on the wide service area and deviations ▪ Unlikely to be a productive (passengers per hour) service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall, preference to prioritize service response time over service area, but this is more common among younger respondents ▪ Respondents over age 55 prioritize door-to-door nature of flex services over response time ▪ Worried about the costs of such a service (\$5 on top of BART fare); may be more relevant for an occasional need (seniors) than recurring commute trips ▪ Lack of proximity to home of existing County Connection services doesn't seem to be the most concerning issue (among current riders) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given preference for response time among commuters and senior stakeholders' preference for the taxi subsidy solution, zone service is not recommended at this time.
Deviated Fixed-Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to provide transit service to residents north of CA-24 ▪ Likely to be more productive than zone services ▪ Increases transit access to BART and other community services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service quality (speed) is limited based on deviations ▪ Unlikely to be a productive (passengers per hour) service, but more so than zone service alternatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given preference for response time among commuters and senior stakeholders' preference for the taxi subsidy solution, zone service is not recommended at this time.

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Service Alternative	Benefits	Drawbacks	Public Feedback	Initial Recommendations
<p>Taxi Subsidy Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New mobility option for seniors and people with disabilities ▪ Offers same-day transportation for people who otherwise have to schedule a day in advance ▪ Can offer lower cost per trip than ADA paratransit ▪ Opportunity to serve connecting trip to BART at discounted price for occasional need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires administration costs ▪ Opportunity for fraud through re-sale of vouchers ▪ Due to cost constraints, could only serve occasional-need trips for the general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About 2/3 of respondents support program for seniors and people with disabilities; only 42% for the general public ▪ Lafayette residents most likely to support specialized program, but at least 50% of residents in Orinda and Moraga also support ▪ The older the respondent, the more likely to support (85% of people over age 65 support it) ▪ General public subsidy program gets most support from Moraga residents (54% of whom support it)—75% of respondents would use this type of program to get to/from BART ▪ Respondents hold a belief that such a program could attract new private transportation providers to Lamorinda. ▪ Strong level of support from key stakeholders; recommend to prioritize taxis over TNCs for the service. ▪ There is concern about finding continuous funding source. ▪ The demand for a general public subsidy program from residents of Moraga highlights the effect of BART parking constraints on residents' desire for additional mobility options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This alternative is recommended to continue into the Implementation Plan. ▪ It is clear that there is public support for a taxi subsidy program to supplement trips currently provided by County Connection's LINK paratransit and Lamorinda Spirit Van services. Also, it supports the goals of this study in providing enhanced midday service to the community. ▪ Because this option would serve a similar market to some of the other alternatives—which also garner significant support—and due to the costliness of opening a subsidy program to the general public, it is recommended to treat a general public taxi subsidy program as a secondary priority to one focused on seniors and people with disabilities at this time.

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Service Alternative	Benefits	Drawbacks	Public Feedback	Initial Recommendations
<p>School Transportation Services Expansion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased school bus ridership ▪ Potential to reduce school trip-related congestion ▪ Addresses increasing school-aged population in Lamorinda ▪ Easy to implement from an operations standpoint through existing service provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional cost for expanded service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High level of engagement with school transportation topic ▪ Widespread belief that school transportation plays a role in local traffic congestion, but some (~30% of respondents) lack confidence in school bus program's effectiveness at solving the issue ▪ About 66% of students that are currently dropped off by parents attend schools where new service is proposed (high potential for mode shift) ▪ High level of support for all the expansion options, but most support won for increasing existing capacity to Orinda Intermediate and Stanley Middle School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of Orinda Intermediate students also among the most likely to use new service • New service (to Happy Valley, Del Rey, and Lafayette Elementary) is least supported, but parents of students at Happy Valley would be overwhelmingly likely to use it • Parents of students at Lafayette are least likely to take advantage of the new option; most currently walk or bike to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is recommended that this service option continue into the Implementation Plan ▪ Prioritize expansion of capacity to Orinda Intermediate and Stanley Middle and new service to Happy Valley Elementary ▪ Initial considerations may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating a ballot measure to fund the expansion ○ Decreasing the cost of the program by creating more bulk pass options ○ Charging for permits to access school drop-off/pick-up zones ○ Charging for high school parking ○ Incentivizing taking the bus through monthly drawings/prizes ○ Supplementing investment with developing better biking and walking facilities and programs¹

¹ Recent research suggests that school districts can save money by improving bicycling and walking conditions to shift current bus users to those modes; such a shift opens up bus services to students that live farther from school than reasonable walking or bicycling distance. See UNC Center for Urban and Regional Studies, "Economic Benefits of Safe Routes to School." Available online at <https://curs.unc.edu/files/2013/05/SRTS-McDonald-FINAL-6.23.15.pdf>.

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<p>Increased School Transportation Program Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased awareness of program changes and offerings among program administrators and parents ▪ Coordination benefits—program changes can leverage other resources, outreach efforts, and strategically coordinate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires in-person meetings ▪ Additional administrative burden to organize and attend quarterly or bi-annual meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In free form comments, many respondents indicated an increased focus on bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements and programs to encourage more biking, walking, and carpooling to school ▪ Incentives and marketing programs were suggested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is recommended that this service option continue into the Implementation Plan, given the potentially low costs of implementing coordination. Possible implementation steps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate/convene meetings between the Southwest Area Transportation Committee (SWAT), Lamorinda School District Superintendents, Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Oversight Committee, 511 Contra Costa/Safe Routes to School, and Sustainable Lafayette Green Schools Committee to facilitate conversation around bike/ped issues at schools.
<p>Technology-based Transportation²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer supporting services that address the gaps unfilled by traditional transit ▪ New services range from providing on-demand, point-to-point options (also known as “transportation network companies” or “ridesourcing” apps) to private fixed-route services that rely on 15-passenger vans or buses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Companies launching new businesses could choose not to respond in particular markets for factors outside the public entity’s control ▪ Using public funds for private operational support is unlikely, due both to the public sector’s need to tie funding to requirements for serving the public at large and private companies’ need for operational flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Almost 81% of respondents indicated that the primary focus of an on-demand type service should be faster response times with smaller service areas, rather than larger service areas at the expense of longer response times. ▪ Desire for the more frequent and convenient service that TNCs could provide, but caution that price makes the private solutions inaccessible for more than just occasional trips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is recommended that this service concept continue to the Implementation Plan as a concept only; the Implementation Plan will further specify strategies for public options to incorporate elements of new private tech-enabled transportation models and policy implications.

² Note: to date, this topic has not been described as a standalone option. A full description of the challenges and opportunities are described in the following section.

INITIAL PRIORITIZATION

Figure 4 Summary of Alternatives

Alternatives	Service Approach	Market Focus	Initial Priority*
BART Feeder Services	Vanpool to BART	Commuters	--
	Moraga/Orinda BART Shuttle	Commuters	1
	Downtown Lafayette BART Shuttle	Commuters	2
Flexible Transit Services	Zone Service	Commuters, Senior Mobility	3
	Deviated Fixed Route Service	Commuters, Senior Mobility	3
	Taxi Subsidy Program	Senior Mobility, Commuters	1
	Technology-based Transportation Solutions	Commuters, Senior Mobility, School Trips	2
School Services	Expansion of School Bus Program	School Trips	1
	Increased School Transportation Program Coordination	School Trips	1
* 1 = next year; 2 = next 2-3 years; 3 = reconsider at a later date			