

**To:** Operations & Scheduling Committee

**Date:** 09/21/2017

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

**Reviewed by:**

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**SUBJECT: New School Bus Service Requests**

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**Background:**

Over the last several months, County Connection staff has received two petitions requesting new school bus service to Monte Vista High School in Danville and Stanley Middle School in Lafayette. Currently, each school is served by one afternoon trip. In both cases, morning service was eliminated due to low ridership.

In order to comply with Federal requirements, and ensure fiscally responsible use of limited operating funds, County Connection has a policy to address new bus service to schools. When considering this type of service request, the following factors are taken into account:

- Where service can be interlined with an existing route.
- Where access/egress and boarding locations are not a safety issue.
- Where no new drivers or vehicles are needed to do so OR
- Where the School District (or other third party) pays for additional drivers and/or vehicles needed to provide the service.

Given the nature of school service, requiring specific morning and afternoon trip times, any new service would require additional buses pulling out to complete these individual trips. These additional buses equate to significant additional operating costs. Adding trips in the middle of the day is much more efficient since the buses are already in service.

**Monte Vista High School**

The petition requesting additional bus service to Monte Vista High School includes two morning trips, covering both, zero and first period. The existing route, Route 623, offers one afternoon trip, in one direction, starting at Alamo Plaza in Danville and terminating at Annabel Lane in San Ramon. Monte Vista High School is located southeast of Alamo Plaza. The requested service would complete the trip in the opposite direction, starting at Annabel Lane and ending at Alamo Plaza. There is no opportunity for these trips to be interlined; therefore, the service would require two additional buses. County Connection staff calculated the annual cost at approximately \$102,000. If we only completed one trip, the cost would be cut in half to \$51,000. These are cost estimates. A more refined cost would be determined once the actual schedule is determined.

Additionally, County Connection staff would need to work with local jurisdictions to install new bus stops requested for the northbound trip.

### **Stanley Middle School**

The community around Stanley Middle School is requesting two morning trips and two afternoon trips. The existing route, Route 626, offers two afternoon trips. One trip starts at Lafayette BART, travels along St. Mary's Rd., and ends at St. Mary's College. The other trip is completed in the opposite direction. Stanley Middle School is located south of Lafayette BART. The requested trips would imitate existing Route 626. There is no opportunity for these trips to be interlined; therefore, the service would require two additional buses. County Connection staff calculated the annual cost at approximately \$102,000. These are cost estimates. A more refined cost would be determined once the actual schedule is determined.

### **Summary**

Although the number of trips requested in each petition is different, the cost estimate turned out to be equal. This can be explained by the length of each roundtrip from the bus yard (deadhead) and the trip length, once the bus is in service (revenue time). The service to Monte Vista High School requires deadhead twice as long as the service for Stanley Middle School. The trip time (revenue time) for Monte Vista High School is about an hour and twenty-two minutes (1:22). The revenue time for Stanley Middle School trips is less than an hour. Therefore, the buses serving Stanley Middle School are able to complete more trips in the same period of time.

Both of the requests would add to the Authority's operating expenses. Staff urges the Directors to reference Board policy and be thoughtful about approving new school bus service. Approving these requests would set a precedent for future new service petitions. There may be financial mechanisms staff could pursue to fund new school bus service. However, pursuing partnerships to cover the cost of new school bus service will take time. Without a funding source identified, whether as part of the County Connection's operating budget or via partnerships, County Connection cannot address the petitions described in this memo.

### **Recommendation:**

For information only.

### **Financial Implications:**

None.