

To: Board of Directors

Date: 2/11/2019

From: Ruby Horta – Director of Planning & Marketing

Reviewed by: *W.C.*

SUBJECT: Bishop Ranch Service Restructure

Background:

County Connection has had a partnership with Sunset Development, the owners of Bishop Ranch, since 1997. This partnership provides a fare agreement for employees at Bishop Ranch, as well as frequent commute period service on Routes 96X from Walnut Creek BART and 97X from Dublin BART. This service has not been modified since March 2015.

As part of Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA), which was conducted in late 2017/early 2018, staff identified some possible improvements to these routes. The COA looked at running times and ridership, including stop level boardings. This data showed that passengers riding to Bishop Ranch make rational decisions based upon travel time. The data shows that most riders elect not to ride through to the end of lengthy stop sequences, but instead electing to get off upon arriving in the Bishop Ranch area. Taking this into account, staff has proposed a new service plan that has a simpler, more streamlined service to better address passenger needs.

Existing Service:

The existing service, Route 96X and 97X, provides express freeway running Bishop Ranch branded buses on I-680. The routing includes an all stops loop pattern for various stops within the ranch itself. The current alignment is rather confusing, with two different stop sequences, one for the morning trips and another for the evening trips. This was done to shorten travel times to BART for Chevron and Bishop Ranch 1 passengers. As part of the route and its travel times, the buses spend almost as much time making all stops inside Bishop Ranch as they do on the freeway from Walnut Creek BART. The route maps for 96X and 97X are included as Attachment 1.

The existing Route 96X service comprises of fifteen morning departures from Walnut Creek BART with nine reverse direction trips. In the afternoon, Route 96X also has fifteen trips to Walnut Creek BART and ten reverse direction trips. The service runs every 10-20 minutes during peak times with one 12:30pm midday trip. Route 97X existing service includes six departures from Dublin BART in the morning (four reverse direction) and four in the afternoon (two reverse direction). Route 97X makes all of the same stops as Route 96X with the same sequence.

New Service Plan:

Taking into account this information, staff came up with an alternative service plan that improves travel times for most Bishop Ranch locations, while acknowledging that some of the benefits of

the current routing must be balanced with new benefits of a streamlined system that would allow for more direct service to more locations as a whole. This service plan focuses on both routes 96X and 97X originating from Walnut Creek BART with service to the San Ramon Transit Center via Bishop Ranch stops. Route 97X would serve Bishop Ranch locations north of the transit center and Route 96X would serve the southern segment of the ranch.

The main benefit of the new service plan would be reducing the travel time to allow for more direct service. Staff acknowledges that this proposal will inconvenience some passengers who will now have to walk a few blocks further to access a bus stop, whereas now they have front door service. However, Bishop Ranch has implemented two local shuttles that travel between all Bishop Ranch locations and can help mitigate these inconveniences.

In March 2019, Route 35 will go to every 15-20 minutes at peak times from Dublin BART to the San Ramon Transit Center via Bishop Ranch. This could replace existing Route 97X service from Dublin BART. Additionally, Route 95X (traveling between Walnut Creek BART and San Ramon Transit Center) could also be replaced by the proposed 97X. These savings could be used to fund new weekend service in San Ramon, providing Route 35 riders with seven day a week service. See Attachment 2 for the proposed new routing of Routes 96X and 97X, overlaid with the new Spring 2019 alignment of Route 35.

Public Comment and Stakeholder Outreach

Staff has presented this new service plan to Bishop Ranch and to the City of San Ramon. After reviewing staff's proposal, city and Sunset Development staff are in support of the proposal. Next steps include a public outreach process and Title VI Analysis, due to the changes amounting to more than 25% of each route's service hours and miles. This would likely include informing current riders about alternative boarding locations for some of the stops that will be eliminated as part of the streamlining efforts. Due to the project's location and demographics, no significant Title VI impacts are projected.

Financial Implications:

To be determined, but the goal is to be revenue neutral.

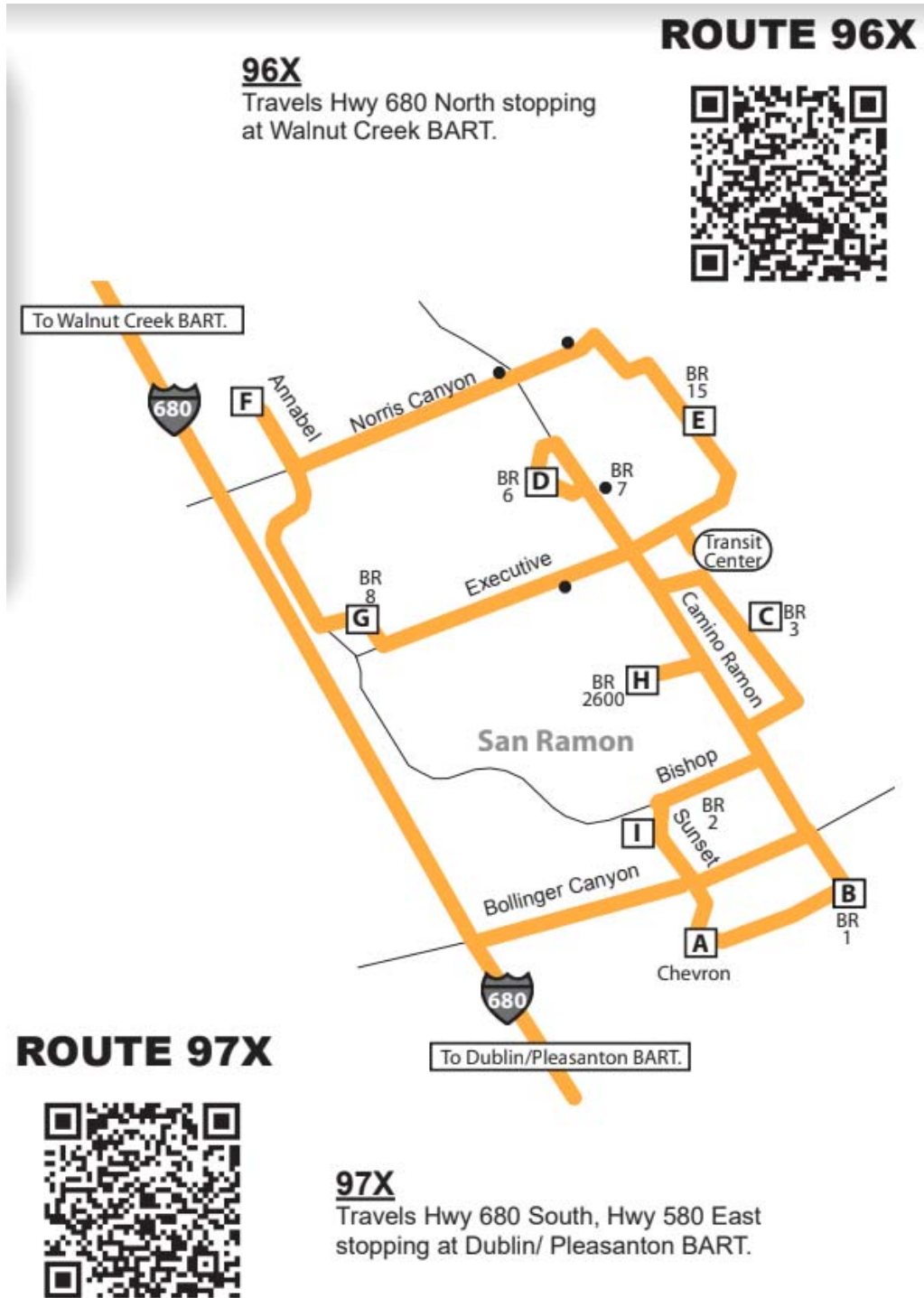
Recommendation:

The O&S Committee and staff recommend that the Board authorize staff to proceed with public hearing process on the proposed service restructure for BR routes 96X/97X.

Attachment 1: Existing Routes 96X/97X schedule and map

Attachment 2: Proposed Bishop Ranch Service Plan

Attachment 1: Existing Routes 96X/97X schedule and map



Attachment 2: Proposed Service Plan

Proposed Routes 35, 96X and 97X in Bishop Ranch

