

To: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Date: 09/23/2019

From: Ruby Horta – Director of Planning, Marketing & Innovation

Reviewed by: WC.

SUBJECT: 600 Series Ridership Comparison

Background:

County Connection has been providing public transportation to various schools in its service area for over 30 years. In 1986, County Connection established a policy to accommodate requests for early dismissals. Over time, the service requested by the schools has increased in complexity and goes beyond early dismissals. Now, it includes varying start/end times, minimum days, and conference and finals week, to name a few. Accommodating school service can conflict with County Connection's role as the public transportation agency providing efficient and effective service to commuters at peak hours and connecting riders to BART and other transit providers.

Every spring, County Connection staff undertakes a rather exhaustive effort to develop the 600 series service, also known as "school trippers". County Connection typically obtains the school bell times in May and must finalize fall schedules in early June. In some cases, schools are not able to meet the deadline, which creates additional challenges, due to federal regulations requiring service to appear on published timetables.

600 Series:

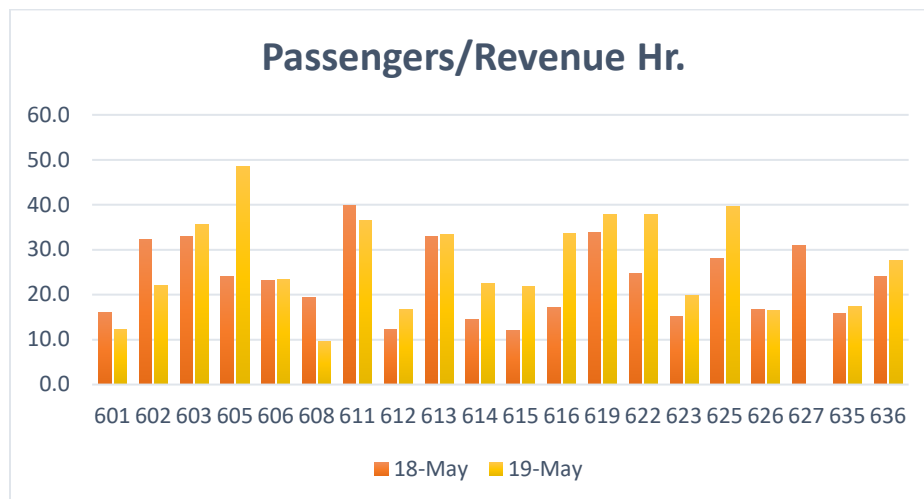
At the request of the Marketing, Planning & Scheduling Committee, staff prepared the following analysis comparing 600 series ridership. County Connection provides nineteen (19) weekday 600 series routes with varying degrees of service. The 600 series services typically experiences ridership fluctuations and service is often adjusted, added and or removed based on demand and operational capabilities. Currently, about half of the routes operate both morning and afternoon trips. See complete schedule on the following page.

Route*	Schools Served	AM Trips	PM Trips
601	Walnut Creek Intermediate (WCI)	2	2
602	Walnut Creek Intermediate (WCI)	1	1
603	Campolindo High		1
605	Walnut Creek Intermediate (WCI)	1	1
606	Miramonte High, Orinda Intermediate (OIS)	4	2
608	Diablo Valley College (DVC), College Park High, Valley View Middle	1	1
611	Oak Grove Middle	1	1
612	Pine Hollow Middle	1	1
613	Oak Grove Middle		1
614	Pine Hollow Middle		1
615	Concord High, El Dorado Middle, Olympic High		1
616	Oak Grove Middle	1	1
619	Oak Grove Middle		1
622	California High, Pine Valley Middle		1
623	Monte Vista High		1
625	Acalanes High	1	1
626	Stanley Middle		2
635	Windemere Ranch Middle, Gale Ranch Middle, Dougherty Valley High		1
636	Iron Horse Middle, California High, Pine Valley Middle		1

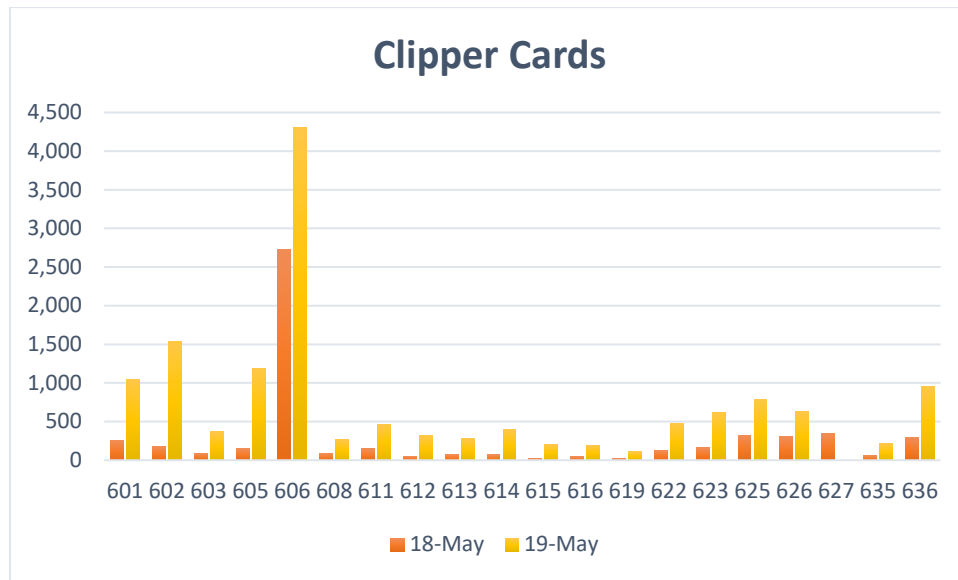
*Minimum day schedules vary.

Year-to-Year Comparison

The chart on the following page compares the month of May 2018 to May 2019 and shows variations in the ridership levels, by route. The overall total decreased by approximately 1,000 passengers from 26,483 in 2018 to 25,580 in 2019.



When we analyze the fare demographic changes, it appears that the loss of approximately 1,000 passengers can be attributed to the increase in cash fares from \$2 to \$2.50. Based on the fare demographics, “Adult Cash” entries decreased by 986. Meanwhile, Clipper Card tags increased by over 8,800 (see chart below). It can be assumed that the Clipper Card absorbed the majority of the paper punch card usage, since Clipper usage almost tripled. This trend is strikingly similar to what has been observed throughout our service area. Routes with heavy cash use experienced decreases in ridership.



Conclusion:

The service and fare changes were implemented in mid-March 2019 and by May, Clipper Card usage on the 600 routes almost tripled. However, this adoption trend has not been distributed equally throughout our service area. With schools being back in session, staff plans to target schools with fewer Clipper Cards tags and promote the benefits of the Youth Clipper Card.

Financial Implications:

Since staff is working on the outreach plan total expense is unknown, however all costs associated with the outreach is accounted for in the Promotions budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.