# County Connection

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| **To:** | Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee | **Date:** | 05/27/2020 |
| **From:** | Ruby Horta, Director of Planning, Marketing & Innovation | **Reviewed by:** | *W.C.* |

## SUBJECT: Fall Bid Planning Update

### Background

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, is a law meant to address the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is responsible for allocating approximately $1.3 billion to the Bay Area transit agencies. The first tranche has been disbursed and will provide County Connection with $7 million in funding. A second tranche is expected to be divided amongst the Bay Area operators with recommendations from MTC's Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF). The CARES funding will allow County Connection to continue to operate most of its current service with some service level adjustments to address health and safety protocols established by the County and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### Fall Bid

Given the uncertainties around the public transit patronage, planning staff has been preparing service changes based on needs surrounding essential service and its workers for the upcoming Fall bid. Additionally, we recognize service on our school trippers will likely require a certain level of flexibility. Therefore, the service package will revolve around coordinating service with BART to the best of our ability, maintaining appropriate service levels along essential service routes and adjusting service to school once that information is available. All these plans are subject to workforce availability. The maintenance and operations staff are doing their best to ensure driver and passenger safety.

### Title VI

In normal times, the planning work for Fall bid would have been finalized in mid-May. Due to COVID-19, we are delaying final decisions as much as possible. Fortunately, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) does provide some relief as it relates to Title VI. The frequently asked questions (FAQs) include the following, under Civil Rights:

CR2: Are Title VI equity analyses required for emergency service cuts and changes during COVID-19?

A: No. Under FTA's Title VI Circular 4702.1B, transit providers that operate 50-or-more fixed route vehicles in peak service and are located in an urbanized area (UZA) with a population of 200,000 or more, must perform a service equity analysis whenever they make a major service change. The service equity analysis evaluates the impacts of the proposed service changes on Title VI-protected populations and low-income populations. Temporary service changes in response to an emergency do not rise to the level of a major service change, so a service equity analysis is not required. Similarly, FTA exempts all temporary fare changes enacted as a result of an emergency from the fare equity analysis requirement. However, if a transit agency chooses to make permanent any changes made during an emergency, then the transit agency must perform a service or fare equity analysis.

FTA does expect that all transit agencies take reasonable measures to implement temporary service or fare changes equitably to prevent unintentional discrimination. FTA does not require a transit agency to document this process, get board approval prior to implementing changes, or share documentation on the changes with FTA, but FTA recommends that transit agencies document the rationale for specific service reductions, as well as steps taken to ensure equitable reductions in service, in the event someone files a complaint.

Any changes implemented due to COVID-19 will not be permanent until we can more adequately evaluate the impacts on transit ridership once the economy opens.

**Financial Implications:**

Any financial implications are yet to be determined, based on new levels of service. However, the CARES Act provides a certain level of financial stability.

**Recommendation:**

None, for information only.

**Action Requested:**

None, for information only.