

County Connection

2477 Arnold Industrial Way Concord, CA 94520-5326 (925) 676-7500 countyconnection.com

MARKETING, PLANNING & LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, December 1, 2022

8:30 a.m.

PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ASSEMBLY BILL 361, WHICH SUSPENDS CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF THE RALPH M. BROWN ACT, THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED AS A TELECONFERENCE.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY NOT ATTEND THIS MEETING IN PERSON.

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Public comment may be submitted via email to hill@cccta.org. Please indicate in your email the agenda item to which your comment applies. Comments submitted before the meeting will be provided to the committee Directors before or during the meeting. Comments submitted after the meeting is called to order will be included in the correspondence that will be provided to the full Board.

Should zoom not be operational, please check online at www.countyconnection.com for any updates or further instruction.

FY2022/2023 MP&L Committee

Candace Andersen – Contra Costa County, Don Tatzin – Lafayette, Rob Schroder – Martinez, Kevin Wilk – Walnut Creek

Clayton • Concord • Contra Costa County • Danville • Lafayette • Martinez
Moraga • Orinda • Pleasant Hill • San Ramon • Walnut Creek

CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The committee may take action on each item on the agenda, even items that are listed as “information only”. The action may consist of the recommended action, a related action, or no action. Staff recommendations are subject to action and/or change by the Committee.

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Communication
3. Approval of Minutes from November 3, 2022*
4. Final Short-Range Transit Plan*
(Staff will present the final FY 2023-28 Short Range Transit Plan and request that the Committee forward to the Board for approval.)
5. Weekend Monument Free Expansion Title VI Fare Equity Analysis*
(Staff will present the Title VI analysis for the proposed continuation of the Monument Free Program to weekend routes. Staff will request the item be forwarded to the Board for approval.)
6. October Free Ride Campaign – Information Only*
(Staff will inform the Committee about impact of the October Free Ride campaign.)
7. Community Events – Information Only*
8. Committee Comments
9. Future Agenda Items
10. Next Meeting – January 5, 2023 (8:30am, location to be determined)
11. Adjournment

General Information

Public Comment: If you wish to address the Committee, please follow the direction at the top of the agenda. If you have anything you wish distributed to the Committee and included for the official record, please include it in your email. Comments that require a response may be deferred for staff reply.

Consent Items: All matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered by the committee to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by committee member or a member of the public prior to when the committee votes on the motion to adopt.

Availability of Public Records: The agenda and enclosures for this meeting are posted on our website at www.countyconnection.com

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Currently Scheduled Board and Committee Meetings

Board of Directors:	Thursday, December 15, 9:00 a.m., via teleconference
Administration & Finance:	Wednesday, December 7, 2:00 p.m., via teleconference
Advisory Committee:	Tuesday, January 10, 1:00 p.m., via teleconference
Operations & Scheduling:	Friday, December 6, 8:15 a.m., via teleconference

The above meeting schedules are subject to change. Please check the County Connection Website (www.countyconnection.com) or contact County Connection Staff at (925) 676-1976 to verify date, time and location prior to attending the meeting.

This agenda is posted on County Connection's Website (www.countyconnection.com) and at the County Connection Administrative Offices, 2477 Arnold Industrial Way, Concord, California.

Summary Minutes
Marketing, Planning, and Legislative Committee
Thursday, November 3, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Due to COVID-19, this meeting was conducted as a teleconference pursuant to the provisions of Assembly Bill 361.

Directors: Candace Andersen, Don Tatzin, Rob Schroder, Kevin Wilk
Staff: Bill Churchill, Ruby Horta, Melody Reebbs, Pranjal Dixit, Ryan Jones,
and Julie Sherman
Public: None

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Director Andersen.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda.

2. Public Communication

None

3. Approval of Minutes from October 6, 2022

The Committee approved the minutes.

4. Selection of Committee Chair

The Committee selected and unanimously approved Director Andersen as Committee Chair.

5. Pass2Class

The Pass2Class Program was funded by 511 Contra Costa as part of an effort to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution by reducing the number of cars being driven to schools. Ridership totaled about 28,700 with 75.6% of the trips being taken on school routes. The remaining trips (24.4%) were used on regular fixed routes. 511 Contra Costa will be reimbursing County Connection at the rate of \$1.60 per ride for a total amount of about \$46,000. This item was put on consent.

6. On-Call Planning Services

Ms. Reebbs informed the Committee that staff has previously had on-call contracts for planning services. The previous contract was awarded to Nelson/Nygaard in 2017 and expired during the pandemic. We have the opportunity seek new grant funding opportunities post-COVID, finding ways to reimagine our services, transitioning our fleet to zero emissions, and

advancing regional coordination efforts. Upcoming projects that will require consultant support include our federally required onboard passenger survey as well as updates to our Title VI program. Staff plans to release an RPF this winter and award a contract in the spring. This item was put on consent.

7. Food Drive and Giving Tuesday

Mr. Jones provided an update on the Food Drive, which County Connection has participated in for many years. The Food Drive is in partnership with the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano and all County Connection buses will have a donation bin aboard for canned/dried goods food donations, as well as two barrels located within the CCCTA building. The drive will run from November 27-December 11. On Giving Tuesday, November 29, County Connection will also offer free rides for any donation aboard a bus (1 donation=1 ride, no transfers). A virtual giving page will also be set up. The Committee asked for an update at the Board Meeting.

8. Community Events

Mr. Jones shared the outreach calendar for November, which included 22 Mobile Lobby events scheduled at select locations throughout the month.

9. Committee Comments

None.

10. Future Agenda Items

None.

11. Next Scheduled Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for December 1, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. via teleconference.

12. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 a.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: 11/18/2022

From: Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning

Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: Final FY 2023-28 Short-Range Transit Plan

Background:

The Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) is County Connection's operations and financial planning document. In order to effectively execute planning and programming responsibilities, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) requires each transit operator receiving federal funding through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to prepare, adopt, and submit an SRTP to MTC every four years in order to remain eligible to receive federal funding.

County Connection's last Full SRTP was completed in 2016 and the current effort will result in an updated SRTP covering FY2023 through FY2028. Revised guidelines were established as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and narrow the scope to a five-year planning horizon with a focus on financial and service planning.

A draft was submitted to MTC on September 30th, 2022, and the plan was revised based on the comments received by the staff from MTC.

Planning Scenarios:

The plan focuses on evaluating existing service and developing future service plans based on three scenarios of varying revenue recovery over the next 5 years. The operating budget assumed for each scenario is based on the level of federal stimulus available, recovery of revenue from other sources, and ridership recovery as outlined in the MTC Resolution No. 4512 adopted on March 23, 2022. The service plans are aimed to align resources available in each of the scenarios with ridership demand as well as feedback received from the passenger survey conducted during September 2022.

The **Robust Recovery** scenario assumes there is adequate funding to return overall revenue to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, with escalation. Projected operating revenue over the five-year period is estimated to be roughly \$221M. However, due to the increased cost of operations, under this scenario, overall service levels would be reduced and some resources would be shifted from commuter routes to provide additional service along the Monument Corridor and on weekends, where ridership recovery has been the strongest.

The **Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders** scenario assumes that federal relief funds are eventually exhausted and are replaced by subsequent recovery of other funds to pre-pandemic levels. The scenario also assumes that farebox recovery remains stagnant and below pre-pandemic levels for the next 5 years. Projected operating revenue over the five-year period is estimated to be roughly \$215M. Under this scenario, along with the reduction and reallocation of resources from the previous scenario, service

levels would be further reduced on commuter routes along with service level reduction on routes serving Diablo Valley College (DVC) during peak hours, where ridership growth has been lagging.

The **Some Progress** scenario assumes that federal relief funds are eventually exhausted, and total revenue available is 15% below pre-pandemic levels for the next 5 years. Projected operating revenue over the five-year period is estimated to be roughly \$188M. Under this scenario, service levels would need to be significantly reduced. The proposed service plan aims to preserve service coverage to essential destinations through reductions in service levels on some high-frequency corridors such as Clayton Road and downtown Walnut Creek and reductions in span of service.

The service planning concepts are based on the revenue projections outlined in the MTC Resolution and the actual service may vary based on changes in demand and revenue levels.

Comments and Revisions:

The most significant change to the draft presented in October was to the operating cost and revenue assumptions. While staff originally based projections on the current FY 2023 budget, MTC is requiring the use of their revenue forecasts, which reflect a lower level of recovery. Thus, even in the most optimistic “Robust Recovery” scenario, service cuts would still be necessary.

The draft plan was also released for public comment on November 7, 2022. A Public Hearing has been scheduled for December 15, 2022, preceding the Board meeting. The public may also submit written comments via mail, email, and online through County Connection’s website. A summary of written comments and staff responses will be included in the plan presented to the Board for final approval.

Financial Implications:

The service plan scenarios aim to match projected revenues with expenses. Based on the assumptions presented, County Connection would maintain a fully balanced budget during the SRTP period under each of the three scenarios.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the MP&L Committee forward the attached Final SRTP to the Board for review and approval upon completion of public hearing at the December Board meeting.

Action Requested:

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee forward this item to the Board for approval.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Final Short-Range Transit Plan FY2023 – FY2028

COUNTY CONNECTION | 2023–2028 SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN



County Connection

CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (CCCTA)

Bill Churchill, General Manager

Board of Directors

Amy Worth, Chair

Don Tatzin, Vice Chair

Kevin Wilk, Secretary

Keith L. Haydon, Jr.

Laura Hoffmeister

Candace Andersen

Robert Storer

Rob Schroder

Mike McCluer

Sue Noack

Dave Hudson

City of Orinda

City of Lafayette

City of Walnut Creek

City of Clayton

City of Concord

Contra Costa County

Town of Danville

City of Martinez

Town of Moraga

City of Pleasant Hill

City of San Ramon

Adopted by the CCCTA Board of Directors on _____.

Federal transportation statutes require that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in partnership with state and local agencies, develop and periodically update a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which implements the RTP by programming federal funds to transportation projects contained in the RTP. In order to effectively execute these planning and programming responsibilities, MTC requires that each transit operator in its region which receives federal funding through the TIP, prepare, adopt and submit to MTC a Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP). The preparation of this report has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) through section 5303 of the Federal Transit Act. The contents of this SRTP reflect the views of the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority, and not necessarily those of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or MTC. The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority is solely responsible for the accuracy of the information presented in this SRTP.

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1. TRANSIT SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA, also known as County Connection) is the primary public transit system for the central area of Contra Costa County.

1.1 Agency History

On March 27, 1980, County Connection was created to coordinate, integrate, and expand transit service in the central portion of Contra Costa County. On July 1, 1980, CCCTA began operating service with its first route serving Walnut Creek. Within three years, a hodgepodge of locally operated and contract services had been restructured into a system connecting all of the member communities and integrating local services within each community. In 1990, three private paratransit operators were combined to form County Connection's LINK paratransit service, and BART feeder service became a part of County Connection's responsibility in 1994.

Today, County Connection covers a service area of over 200 square miles with a network of 59 fixed-routes, as well as paratransit service. The fixed-routes include a mix of local, select, express, and weekend services. Most routes run at 30 to 60 minute headways. These services help connect people to jobs, school, recreational activities, and appointments within Central Contra Costa and beyond. Connections to the surrounding areas around Central Contra Costa are made possible through coordinated schedules and transfer agreements with ACE, Amtrak, BART, FAST, Tri Delta Transit, SolTrans, WestCAT, and Wheels.

County Connection provides ADA compliant paratransit service within $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1.5 miles of all its routes, as well as ADA service on behalf of BART during certain hours. Both fixed-route and paratransit services operate seven days a week.

1.2 Governance

County Connection is organized as a Joint Powers Agency (JPA) of eleven jurisdictions. Members include the cities of Clayton, Concord, Lafayette, Martinez, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek; the towns of Danville and Moraga; and the unincorporated areas of central Contra Costa County.

2. SERVICE AREA

2.1 Population

County Connection's 200+ square mile service area has a population of over 500,000 people (including the adjacent unincorporated jurisdictions).

The city of Concord currently has the largest population of all the jurisdictions in Central Contra Costa followed by San Ramon and Walnut Creek.

2.2 Population Growth

The population of the service area is expected to increase by approximately 10% over the coming decade. Over half (55%) of the total population will reside in the three cities of Concord, Walnut Creek and San Ramon. Most of the total growth in the service area over the coming decade will occur in the city of Concord, which is expected to grow over 30% by 2030. Much of this growth will be part of the Concord Community Reuse Project, with some additional growth planned in the downtown area.

The central portion of the county has largely developed around a traditional suburban housing and retail model (i.e., low-density single-family homes bolstered by parking oriented small retail developments).

Higher levels of housing density and accompanying retail and commercial development can be found in downtown Walnut Creek, downtown Concord, and Pleasant Hill along Contra Costa Blvd. Though Pleasant Hill is certainly not one of the large cities in the service area, it does have the highest population density. Pleasant Hill's density is expected to further increase as higher-density housing is planned for development over the next 10 years. This is something worth exploring in more detail when assessing where to allocate transit service in the future.

On the other side of the spectrum, Orinda, Lafayette, and Moraga are the least densely incorporated jurisdictions in Central Contra Costa, with an average of roughly 1,700 people per square mile. Low population density tends to track fairly closely with lower levels of transit use and subsequently the County Connection route network within these areas is fairly limited. Though these jurisdictions do have plans for some higher density in-fill developments, the overall level of density in each community isn't expected to change significantly over the coming decade. County Connection will continue to work with these jurisdictions to understand their mobility needs and continue providing them with service that works most efficiently and effectively.

2.3 Demographics

The majority of residents in the County Connection service area are White followed by Asians. About 16% of the residents are Hispanic or of Latino Origin.⁽¹⁾ 60% of households is estimated to have an annual household income above \$100,000, whereas 9% of households have an annual household income below \$25,000.⁽¹⁾

Vehicle availability is a key metric to understand the transit dependency of the population. It is estimated that about 1.8% of the total workers in Central Contra Costa County did not have access to a vehicle and about 5.3% of total households did not have access to a vehicle.⁽¹⁾

Compared to the average resident, County Connection riders tend to have fewer vehicles available, larger household sizes, more workers per household, and lower annual incomes. They also tend to be younger in age and do not self-identify as White.

3. TRANSIT SERVICES

3.1 Fixed Route

County Connection provides fixed-route services to the ten jurisdictions and the unincorporated areas of Central Contra Costa County. All routes are operated using vehicles that can accommodate up to two wheelchairs and two bicycles. The service area can be divided into five service areas:

- Core Service Area – Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, Concord and Clayton areas
- North Service Area – Martinez and North Concord areas
- Lamorinda Service Area – Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda areas
- South Service Area – Danville, San Ramon and Dublin areas
- Miscellaneous Service Area – Oakland and Events

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2025 American Community Survey

Service Types

There are three main types of designated services within County Connection’s transit system:

- **Regional Routes** are limited-stop and/or weekday, peak hour services that primarily connect commuters with regional transit hubs like BART, ACE, and Capitol Corridor stations for access to other areas around and outside of Central Contra Costa County
- **Local Routes** are routes that tend to operate all day schedules, either on weekdays only or seven days a week and cater to the people who travel within the boundaries of Central Contra Costa County.
- **Community Routes** are often designed to serve a localized travel need and may only operate on certain days of the week (e.g., weekends only) or hours of the day (e.g., peak/off-peak). They can also add extra capacity to the network during periods of high ridership demand. These services typically operate seasonally with irregular frequencies and are timed around a specific event or school bell time.

3.2 Paratransit

County Connection provides paratransit service called LINK for people with disabilities who are unable to take fixed-route transit services. This is a door-to-door service run by a contractor, Transdev, and a subcontractor, Big Star. County Connection owns the vehicles and provides a maintenance facility for their use, while Transdev is responsible for labor, scheduling, management, ride reservations, and maintenance.

LINK rider eligibility is determined in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) using regional application materials. County Connection staff performs eligibility tasks and in-person assessments when deemed appropriate. LINK’s service is provided within a 1.5-mile buffer around weekday and weekend routes. LINK’s hours of service vary depending on the area and are based on the operating hours of fixed-route services.

3.3 Other Services

In March 2020, County Connection launched an on-demand pilot program in partnership with the City of San Ramon and the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA). The program provides a discount on rideshare trips on Lyft and Uber within a designated service area. The service area includes portions of south San Ramon, where fixed-route service was recently discontinued, and several key destinations in San Ramon and Dublin, including BART stations, the San Ramon Transit Center, and the San Ramon Regional Medical Center.

The program provides 50% off the fare for a Lyft Shared or Uber Pool trip within the service area, with a maximum discount of \$5 per trip. The trip must also be taken within County Connection’s regular fixed-route hours of operation in order to qualify for the discount.

4. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

4.1 Pre-Pandemic State of Service (FY 2018-19)

Fixed Route

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, County Connection operated a total of 58 routes and carried a total of 3,118,041 passengers over 218,385 hours of service in FY 2018-19. During that year, County Connection implemented a major service change in March 2019 which saw 6 unproductive routes being eliminated, redeployment of resources to increase peak frequency, added new trips, streamlined routes, made alignment changes and implemented the new Route 27.

Additionally, County Connection introduced the new express Route 99X between North Concord BART and Martinez AMTRAK station in August 2018, and in February 2019, County Connection began operating two new 700-series routes as part of the Early Bird Express network, which was established to allow BART extra time for a seismic retrofit of the Transbay Tube.

Ridership Trends

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 provide a summary of FY 2018-19 ridership and service provided based on Service Type and Service Area.

- Local routes ridership constituted 75% of total ridership, on par with the 77.5% of total scheduled revenue hours and was followed by Community routes which carried 16.5% of total passengers
- In terms of service area, the Core service area routes carried 62% of total ridership followed by South service area routes at 18.5%.

Service Type	Total Passengers	% Passengers	Total Revenue Hours	% Revenue Hours	Productivity (Pax/Rev Hr.)
Local	2,333,052	75.0%	168,492	77.5%	13.8
Community	513,728	16.5%	27,440	12.6%	18.7
Regional	265,730	8.5%	21,348	9.8%	12.4
Grand Total	3,112,509	100.0%	217,279	100.0%	14.3

Table 4.1 Pre-Pandemic Service Distribution by Service Type

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Service Area	Total Passengers	% Passengers	Total Revenue Hours	% Revenue Hours	Productivity (Pax/Rev Hr.)
Core	1,958,702	62.9%	121,904	56.1%	16.1
South	559,792	18.0%	47,322	21.8%	11.8
North	302,337	9.7%	29,744	13.7%	10.2
Lamorinda	226,356	7.3%	16,342	7.5%	13.9
Miscellaneous	65,323	2.1%	1,967	0.9%	33.2
Grand Total	3,112,509	100.0%	217,279	100.0%	14.3

Table 4.2 Pre-Pandemic Service Distribution by Service Area

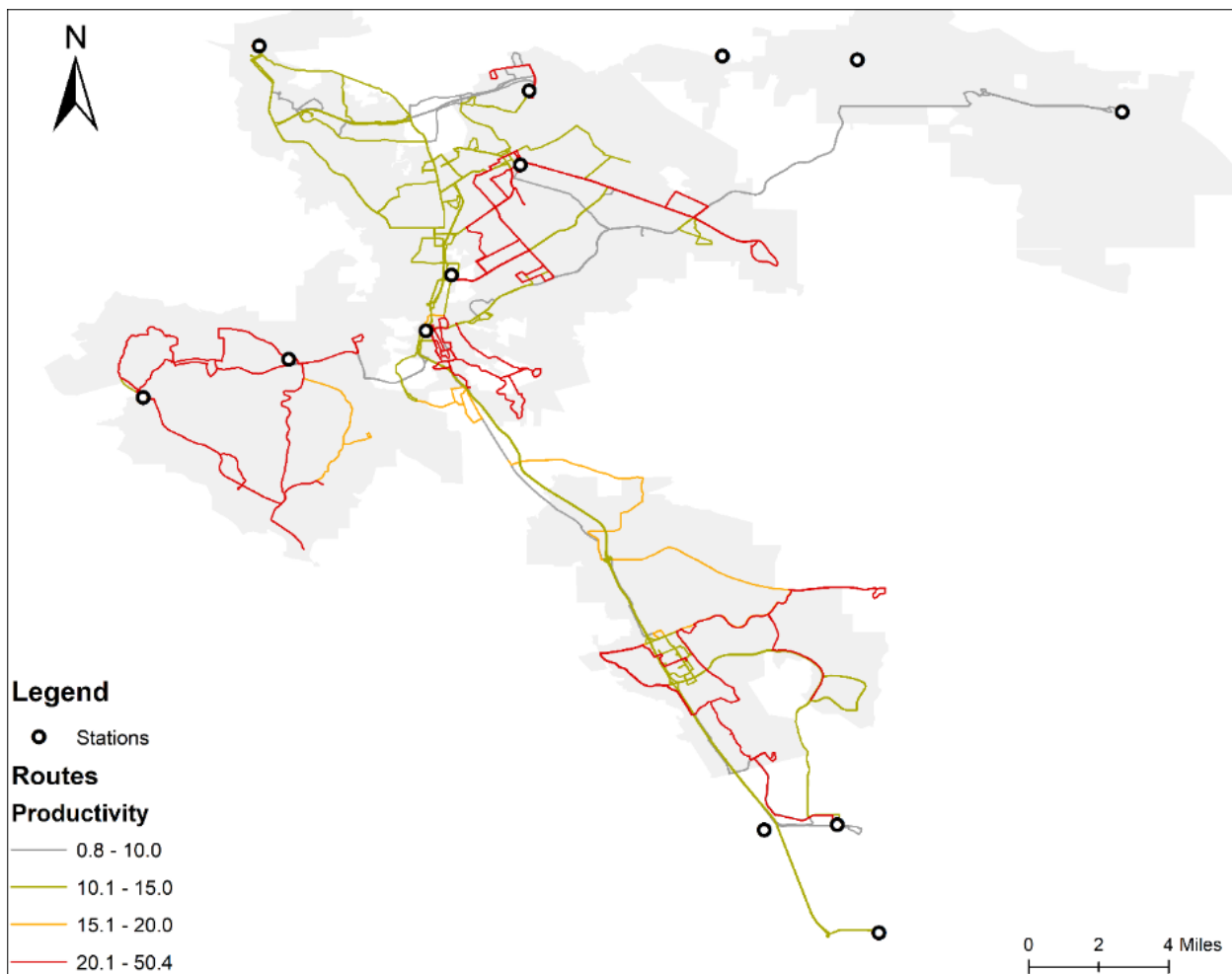


Figure 4.1 Productivity by Route – FY 2019

Paratransit

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, County Connection LINK Paratransit operated an average of 47 cutaway buses and carried a total of 152,606 passengers over 101,256 hours of service in FY 2018-19. Of those trips, 36% originated in Concord, followed by Pleasant Hill at 17% and Walnut Creek with 12%. The average trip length was 7.3 miles, and 35% of the trips were attributed to adult day care trips, followed by medical trips at 17% and school trips at 16%.

During the latter half of FY 2018-19, County Connection implemented a pilot project to address the transportation needs of a subset of ADA Paratransit-eligible riders who participated in programs through Choice in Aging and required more assistance and shorter travel times. SilverRide, a local Transportation Network Company (TNC), was able to provide door-through-door transportation for those riders.

Additionally, County Connection entered a contract with a new operations contractor, Transdev, for paratransit services, which started July 1, 2019. This allowed LINK riders to have access to more technological features due to the new contractor's experience with existing software as well as new technologies, including a mobile app that allows riders to track their paratransit vehicle's location, submit feedback, and cancel rides.

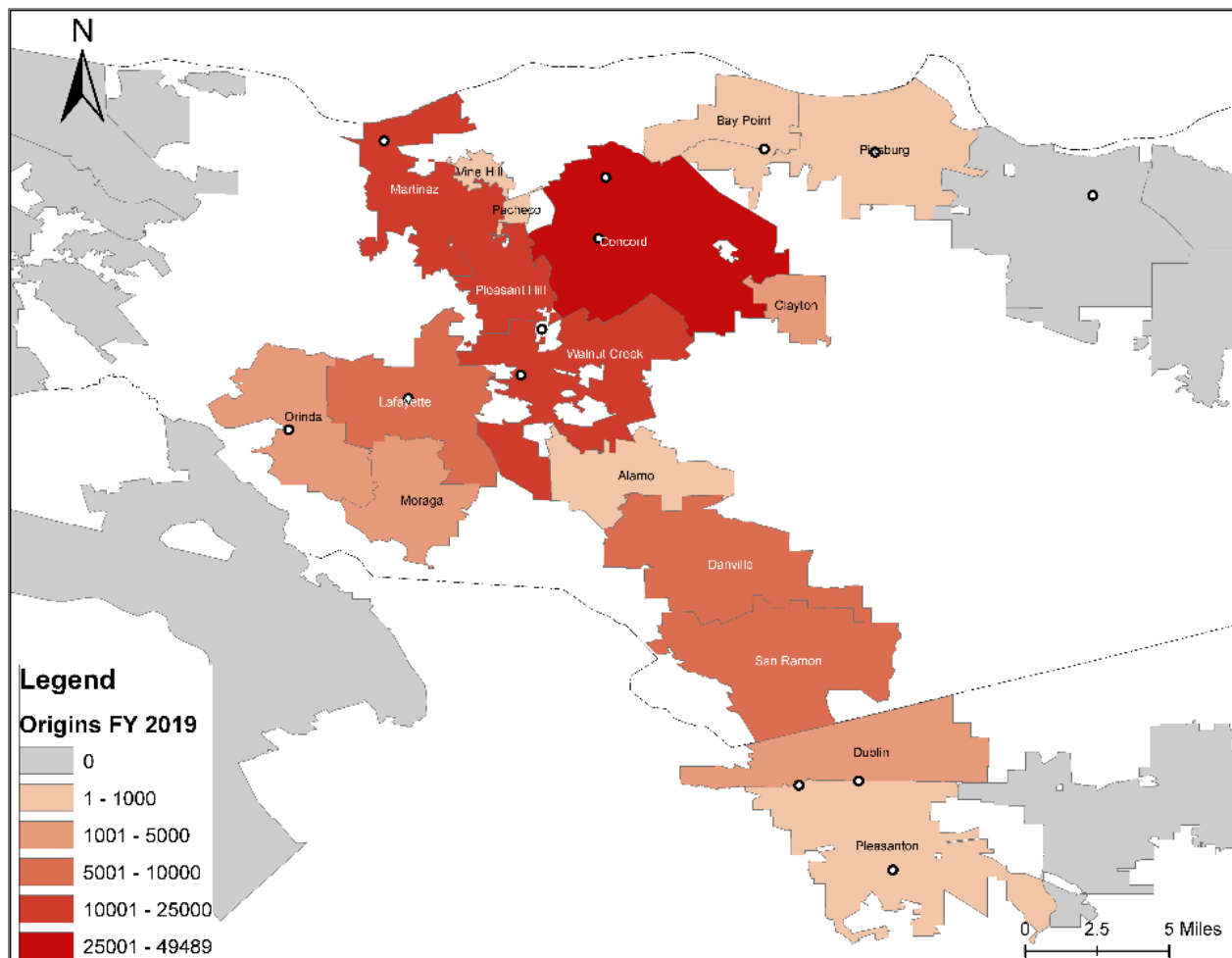


Figure 4.2 Trip Origins by City – FY 2019

4.2 Current State of Service (FY 2022-23)

Fixed Route

Early Pandemic Response

At the start of the pandemic, there were significant service disruptions due to reduced operator availability. County Connection temporarily implemented rear-door boarding and stopped collecting fares starting in March 2020 to allow for social distancing. Fare collection resumed in November 2020.

Schedule changes were made effective August 2020 in response to this reduced workforce in an effort to minimize service disruptions. The service changes were also made in response to ridership demand and sought to prioritize essential services and workers.

In October 2020 additional temporary service changes were made that included about a 13% reduction in service hours compared to pre-COVID service levels through service frequency reduction and alignment changes. In the winter of 2020, the Board authorized a public comment process and subsequently approved the 2021 Service Plan, which continued the reduced service levels operated since October 2020.

Service Restoration

In August 2021, service on the 600-series routes was reintroduced in response to schools resuming in-person instruction. Schedule changes to redistribute resources from underperforming routes to other routes were made in February 2022 in response to changing ridership demand along with modifying trips to connect with the new BART schedule. Additionally, minor schedule changes were made to improve connectivity between buses, adjust recovery times, and modify run times in accordance with the change in traffic conditions.

County Connection implemented various fare promotions in coordination with other transit agencies in the Bay Area to encourage the public to return to transit. The Pass2Class program was implemented to allow students to ride the buses for free for two months starting in August 2021. Additionally, County Connection provided free rides for all passengers for the month of September 2021, which led to increased ridership; however, the rise in Omicron variant thereafter led to a subsequent drop in ridership and slow recovery.

Ridership Trends

Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 provides a summary of FY 2021-22 ridership and service provided based on Service Type and Service Area.

- Local routes ridership constituted 77% of total ridership, on par with the 79.8% of total scheduled revenue hours and was followed by Community routes which carried 20% of total passengers
- In terms of service area, the Core service area routes carried 66% of total ridership followed by North service area routes at 13.1%.
- The South service area saw a large decline in ridership due to the extended remote work policies at offices in Bishop Ranch that are served by Express routes. Similarly, this trend is also evident in the sharp decline in Regional service ridership which mainly includes Express routes.
- Average weekday ridership fluctuated between 45%-60% below normal pre-COVID levels throughout FY 2022.

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- Weekend ridership recovered more quickly than on weekdays and was down between 18%-38% compared to before the pandemic.

Service Type	Total Passengers	% Passengers	Total Revenue Hours	% Revenue Hours	Productivity (Pax/Rev Hr.)
Local	1,415,603	77.2%	150,598	79.8%	9.4
Community	368,717	20.1%	23,853	12.6%	15.5
Regional	50,214	2.7%	14,193	7.5%	3.5
Grand Total	1,834,533	100.0%	188,644	100.0%	9.7

Table 4.3 Current Service Distribution by Service Type

Service Area	Total Passengers	% Passengers	Total Revenue Hours	% Revenue Hours	Productivity (Pax/Rev Hr.)
Core	1,221,942	66.6%	10,7267	56.9%	11.4
North	241,024	13.1%	30,231	16.0%	8.0
South	233,826	12.7%	38,523	20.4%	6.1
Lamorinda	137,673	7.5%	12,619	6.7%	10.9
Miscellaneous	69	0.0%	3.5	0.0%	19.8
Grand Total	1,834,533	100.0%	188,644	100.0%	9.7

Table 4.4 Current Service Distribution by Service Area

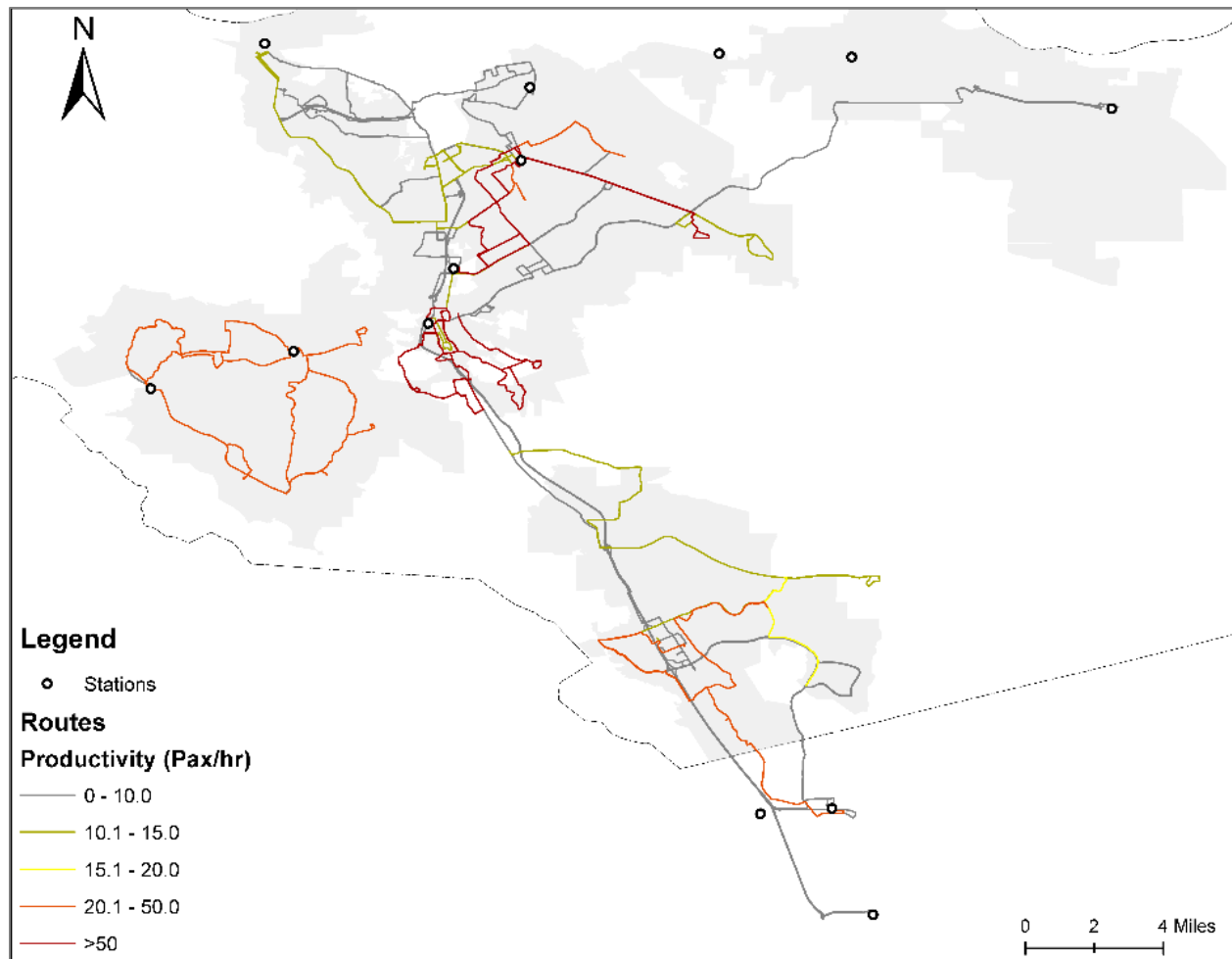


Figure 4.3 Productivity by Route – FY 2022

Challenges

Although the ridership grew in FY 2022 on a year-over-year basis, the operator shortage, despite extensive recruitment and training efforts, continues to be a main hurdle to expanding service levels. About 1.8% of scheduled trips were missed over the course of FY 2022, mostly because of the operator shortage. Currently, the full-time operator count is at 133 in comparison with the estimated requirement of 138.

Wages and benefits are the Agency’s largest expense. Even before the pandemic, the tight labor market was putting a stress on transit operator recruitment efforts with an effective attrition rate⁽²⁾ of 13% pre-pandemic, making it difficult to attract and retain qualified bus operators and mechanics. These challenges were only exacerbated by the pandemic as the effective attrition rate increased through the pandemic to 19% due to operator retirements and temporary suspension in recruitment activities until the beginning of FY 2022. Currently, operator recruitment continues to be challenging despite wages being increased significantly. County Connection has made changes to its pay scale for operators in response to these challenges, resulting in a more competitive compensation package.

² *Effective Attrition Rate* = $\frac{(\text{Operators lost}) - (\text{Operators Hired})}{\text{Average Operator Count}}$

Time Period	Average Operator Count	Operators Lost	Operators Hired	Balance	Attrition Rate	Hiring Rate	Effective Attrition Rate
July 2018 – March 2020	158	59	39	20	37%	25%	13%
April 2020 – June 2022	145	45	17	28	31%	12%	19%

Table 4.5 Recruitment Stats

The FY 2023 budget includes a 12.5% increase to starting wages for fixed-route operators and trainers to aid the recruitment process. County Connection also offers paid training, so candidates do not need a Commercial driver’s license when applying. County Connection continues to participate in local hiring and career fairs and works with agencies such as the California Employment Development Department and the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County.

Along with the increase in ridership, as widespread opening of businesses continued, traffic conditions worsened, leading to a decline in on-time performance. Upcoming service changes will include a robust analysis of running times and optimization of schedules to improve on-time performance based on new traffic conditions.

Passenger Survey

In September 2022, staff conducted passenger surveys to collect demographic and trip purpose data used to support future local and regional transit planning efforts. The survey included questions related to demographic information, travel pattern/choice information, and service quality. Additionally, questions related to current and future remote working was also included as part of the survey to better understand post-pandemic commute patterns for improved service planning. The survey was conducted both onboard the buses and online and was available in both English and Spanish.

The onboard survey was aimed to capture the travel patterns of our existing riders, while the online survey helped reach a wider audience to capture former riders who have not yet returned to transit as well as potential new riders in the region.

Staff received 314 responses over a 4-week period and following are the observations:

- 27% of the respondents chose to use the service due to unavailability of car
- 23% of the respondents reported that they would use TNCs like Uber/ Lyft if the bus was unavailable followed by 21% reported they would get a ride from a friend/ family
- 41% of the respondents were White followed by 23% Hispanic/Latino, 14% Asian, and 7% Black/ African American
- 26% of respondents spoke Spanish either as their primary or secondary language

- 20% of the respondents reported working remotely more than 3 days a week in the previous month, whereas 16% reported they would be working more than 3 times a week remotely in the next year
- 36% of the respondents requested more frequent service followed by 12% for both early/late service, reliable service and more weekend service
- Operator courtesy and condition of buses were rated the highest, whereas frequency of service and time when service ends were rated the lowest.

Paratransit

Early Pandemic Response

In the beginning of the FY 2021, paratransit ridership was down 80% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like most transit agencies, ridership and associated fare collection impacted overall service. As a result, an amendment to the contract for ADA Paratransit services was made to ensure the retention of drivers, transporting one passenger at a time, and finding new ways to service the community. This meant establishing relationships with the County Health Department; activating the Emergency Operations Center with the County; and reaching out to social service groups, senior advocacy groups, and other health groups to offer our resources.

In an effort to keep serving the community, County Connection LINK offered services to deliver meals to seniors, meals to schools, provide transportation services for the County Emergency Department for COVID-19 positive passengers, and trips to vaccination sites once vaccines became available.

One Seat Pilot Project

To minimize contact tracing, staff started the One Seat Pilot program, which enables passengers to utilize only one bus to travel across service jurisdictions versus multiple buses and multiple drivers. In addition to County Connection, the partners involved in the pilot program include Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority, Eastern Contra Costa County Authority, and Western Contra Costa Transit Authority. This pilot program started in November 2020 after Board approval and has continued successfully through an extension.

My Transit Manager

County Connection's paratransit contractor, Transdev, rolled out the My Transit Manager mobile app in November of 2019 to County Connection LINK Paratransit riders. For riders who are familiar with mobile apps, it provides some tools including:

- Ability to monitor trips in real time
- Locate on a map where the paratransit vehicle is located
- Ability to rate a ride/trip
- Ability to receive notifications when a vehicle is about to arrive or if it's waiting at your door
- Allows caretakers/family members similar access to the above-mentioned features

Transdev is preparing to launch an additional feature on the My Transit app. The new ride booking feature will allow riders/users the ability to schedule rides to recently traveled destinations directly from their mobile app. Beta testing for a select group of Paratransit riders has been in effect since July of 2022.

Ridership Trends

The following map shows trip origins on LINK paratransit for FY 2022. During that year, 38% of the trips originated in Concord, followed by Walnut Creek at 16% and Pleasant Hill with 12%. The average trip length was 6.6 miles, and 39% of the trips were attributed to Medical trips, followed by Adult Day Care trips at 17%.

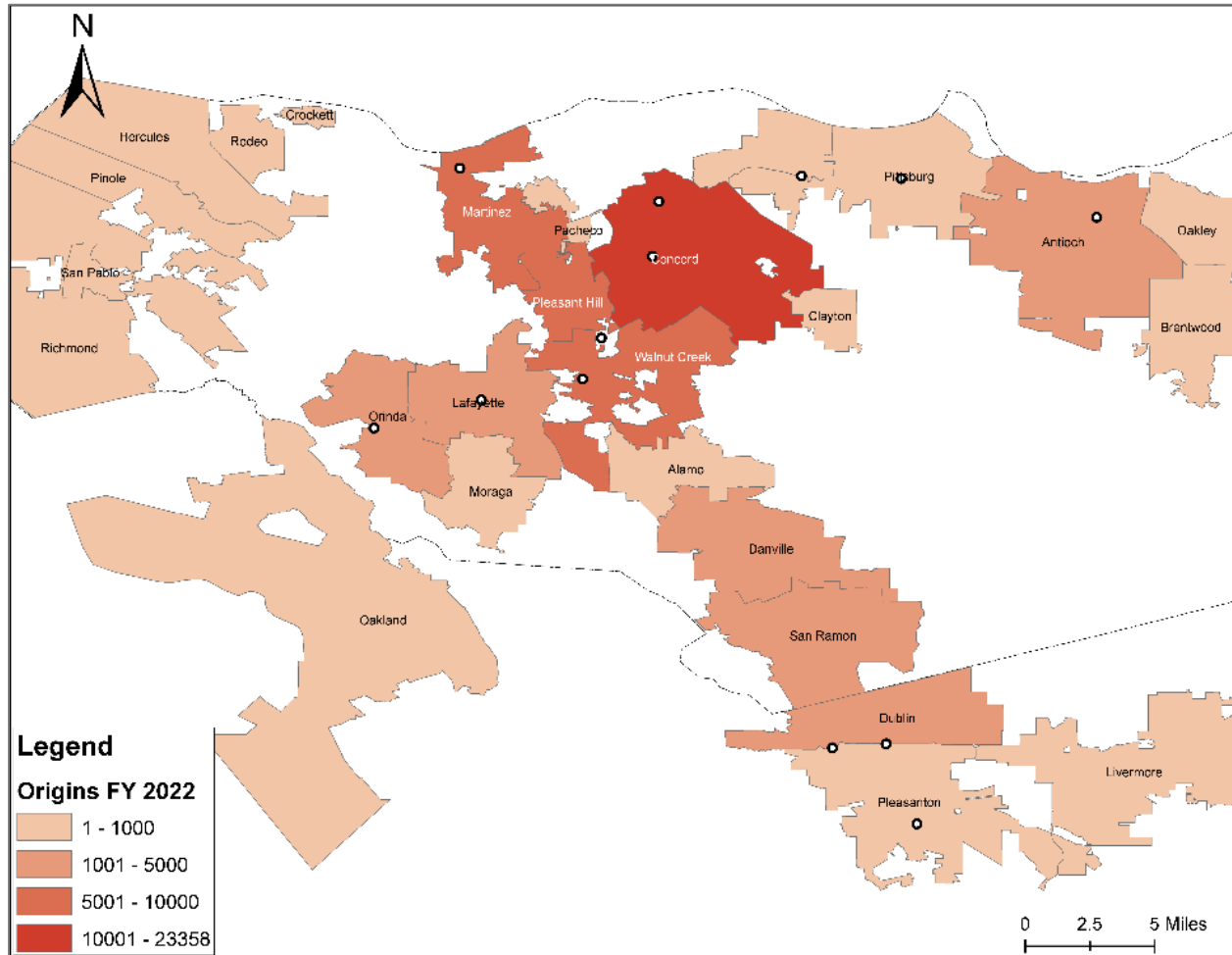


Figure 4.4 Trip Origins FY 2022

5. SCENARIO PLANNING CONCEPTS (FY 2023-24 THROUGH FY 2027-28)

The following service planning concepts are based on the revenue projections outlined in the MTC Resolution No. 4512 on March 23, 2022, and the actual service may vary based on change in demand and revenue levels. However, the increased cost of recruitment, training and overall operational cost have risen due to the inflationary environment currently and will continue to pose challenges for increasing the service levels.

5.1 Robust Recovery

This scenario assumes that adequate funding has returned to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, with an escalation based on 2.2% inflation. The projected manpower requirement for the scenario is 138 for fixed route and 44 for paratransit. The total projected operational cost for the scenario is \$221,200,000.

	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28
MTC Revenue Projections (M\$)	\$42.3	\$43.3	\$44.2	\$45.2	\$46.2
Fixed Route Operating Cost (M\$)	\$33.84	\$34.64	\$35.36	\$36.16	\$36.96
Paratransit Operating Cost (M\$)	\$8.46	\$8.66	\$8.84	\$9.04	\$9.24
Operating Cost/Hour	\$180.82	\$186.24	\$191.83	\$197.58	\$203.51
Service Available (hours)	187,151	185,996	184,332	183,012	181,612

Table 5.1 Service Projections for Scenario 1

As the ridership began recovering from the pandemic lows, it has been observed that weekend ridership has been recovering faster than weekday ridership. Most of County Connection weekend routes operate on a 30-60 minute headway, except two routes. Increasing frequency over the weekend to provide frequent access to BART is essential to attract more ridership.

As people started working remotely, commuter trips went down and have remained significantly below pre-pandemic levels as many workers have not yet returned to the office full time. However, weekend transit usage has grown, and while this is partly due to an increase in recreational, social, and shopping trips as the economy has reopened, it is also reflective of the non-traditional work schedules of transit riders. On the recent passenger survey, 32% of the respondents who indicated that they either worked onsite or did not have the ability to work remotely also reported an annual household income of less than \$35,000 a year. Hence, reallocating of resources from commuter routes to increase service on weekend routes is necessary to balance the rising cost of operations and ensuring quality service coverage for transit dependent riders.

Through the pandemic, the routes along the Monument Corridor which serve low-income communities have shown strong recovery. The Monument Free program was also expanded to include weekend routes in July 2022. Increasing of service levels along the Monument Corridor will not only help boost ridership, but also help connect low-income and minority populations to schools and jobs.

Description	Current Service (Peak/Off-Peak)	Proposed Service (Peak/Off-Peak)
Increasing service along the Monument Corridor	40m/40m	30m/30m
Increasing frequency of service on weekends	75m/75m	60m/60m
Reducing service levels on Commuter routes	Peak trips only	Reduce peak trips and consolidate routes

Table 5.2 Service Recommendations for Scenario 1

5.2 Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders

This scenario assumes that federal relief funds are eventually exhausted and are replaced by subsequent recovery of other funds to pre-pandemic levels. The scenario also assumes that farebox recovery remains stagnant and are below the pre-pandemic levels for the next 5 years. The projected manpower requirement for the scenario is 135 for fixed route and 41 for paratransit. The total projected operational cost for the scenario is \$215,400,000.

	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28
MTC Revenue Projections (M\$)	\$41.2	\$42.10	\$43.10	\$44.00	\$45.00
Fixed Route Operating Cost (M\$)	\$32.96	\$33.68	\$34.48	\$35.20	\$36.00
Paratransit Operating Cost (M\$)	\$8.24	\$8.42	\$8.62	\$8.80	\$9.00
Operating Cost/Hour	\$180.82	\$186.24	\$191.83	\$197.58	\$203.51
Service Available (hours)	182,284	180,841	179,744	178,153	176,895

Table 5.3 Service Projections for Scenario 2

As overall ridership undergoes recovery, it has been observed that Commuter express routes have lagged significantly compared to Weekend and Local routes.

The express routes serving Antioch and the South service area have significantly underperformed post-pandemic due the drop in commuter ridership to offices at Bishop Ranch and Pleasanton ACE Train. Additionally, routes serving colleges like Diablo Valley College have lower loads despite frequent service.

To balance the service levels in accordance with the demand, express routes would be consolidated to reduce overall service levels, along with reductions in frequency and span on local routes in order to free up resources for the increased service on weekend and Monument Corridor routes.

Description	Current Service (Peak/Off-Peak)	Proposed Service (Peak/Off-Peak)
Increasing service along the Monument Corridor	40m/40m	30m/30m
Increasing frequency of service on weekend	75m/75m	60m/60m
Reducing service levels on Commuter routes	Peak trips only	Reduce peak trips and consolidate/suspend underperforming routes
Reduce peak hour service level on routes serving DVC	15m/30m	30m/30m

Table 5.4 Service recommendations for Scenario 2

5.3 Some Progress

This scenario assumes that federal relief funds are eventually exhausted, and total revenue available is 15% below pre-pandemic levels for the next 5 years. The projected manpower requirement for the scenario is 117 for fixed route and 36 for paratransit. The total projected operational cost for the scenario is \$188,000,000.

	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28
CCCTA Revenue Projections (M\$)	\$36.00	\$36.80	\$37.60	\$38.40	\$39.20
Fixed Route Operating Cost (M\$)	\$28.80	\$29.44	\$30.08	\$30.72	\$31.36
Paratransit Operating Cost (M\$)	\$7.20	\$7.36	\$7.52	\$7.68	\$7.84
Operating Cost/Hour	\$180.82	\$186.24	\$191.83	\$197.58	\$203.51
Service Available (hours)	159,277	158,075	156,807	155,479	154,095

Table 5.5 Service Projections for Scenario 3

County Connection received timely and significant federal funding for transit operations through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2021 (CRRSAA), and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

The funding was used to offset the cost of suspending fare collection between March 2020 and November 2020, restoring service as ridership recovered, hiring and training operators, and fare promotions like free rides during September 2021 and October 2022. Although the reopening of businesses and fare promotions have helped in attracting some passengers back on transit, the rising cost of operations and stagnant commuter ridership recovery will pose challenges to maintaining current service levels once the federal stimulus funding have been exhausted.

To balance the service levels in accordance with the demand, service levels on commuter routes would be reduced. Also, in order to preserve service coverage to essential destinations, service levels on some

high-frequency corridors such as Clayton Rd, Monument Blvd, and downtown Walnut Creek would need to be reduced along with reductions in span of service.

Description	Current Service (Peak/Off-Peak)	Proposed Service (Peak/Off-Peak)
Reduce service levels on Commuter routes	Peak trips only	Reduce peak trips and consolidate/suspend underperforming routes
Reduce service levels on high-frequency routes	15-20m/20-30m	30m/30m
Reduce Service level on routes serving DVC	15m/30m	30m/30m

Table 5.6 Service recommendations for Scenario 3

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: 11/22/2022

From: Melody Reeb, Director of Planning, Marketing, & Innovation

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: Weekend Monument Free Expansion Title VI Fare Equity Analysis

Background:

In July 2019, County Connection started offering free rides on three of its weekday bus routes: Routes 11, 14, and 16. All three routes served the Monument Corridor in Concord and connect Concord BART to various destinations in Martinez, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek, including BART stations, the Martinez Amtrak station and Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. The project is being funded by a grant through California's Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which distributes cap-and-trade proceeds to support programs and projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and serve disadvantaged communities.

At the March 2020 meeting, the Board approved an expansion of the Monument Corridor free fares to include three weekend routes: Routes 311, 314 and 316. This was a result of increased available funding for FY 2021-22, as well as rollover funding from previous years that wasn't spent due to reduced ridership as a result of COVID-19.

Ridership:

The free fare program expansion (Program) was initially implemented as a six-month pilot in July 2022, and the goal was to increase ridership and make transit more accessible and affordable, particularly to low-income communities along the Monument Corridor. The expansion of free rides to weekend Routes 311, 314 and 316 had an instant impact on ridership, with all three routes performing better than during the previous fiscal year. In just the first three months, ridership on the weekend Monument Corridor routes grew by 32% compared to the previous fiscal year average, while ridership on other weekend routes grew by only 19%.

Given the Program's success, County Connection is proposing to continue it for as long as funding remains available through LCTOP or another funding source. The Program is subject to termination if funding becomes unavailable in the future.

Title VI Requirement:

As a federal grant recipient, County Connection is required to maintain and provide to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) information on its compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which prohibits discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. The FTA further requires that recipients of FTA financial assistance conduct an analysis on all non-exempt fare changes to assess the impacts of those changes on low-income and minority populations. As the Program will reduce the fares

on the three included routes, its implementation is a fare change requiring an equity analysis under the FTA's Title VI regulations.

Equity Analysis:

A fare reduction is deemed to be a benefit, and the required disparate impact analysis examines the allocation of benefits from the fare reduction among minority riders on the affected routes relative to the proportion of minority riders among the system ridership as a whole. Similarly, the required disproportionate burden analysis examines the allocation of benefits from the fare reduction among low-income riders on the affected routes relative to proportion of low-income riders among the system ridership as a whole.

Based on 2019 onboard survey data, 55.9% of all County Connection riders identify as minority (i.e., non-white and non-Hispanic, or Latino), and 45.7% are considered low-income (i.e., with household incomes less than 150% of the federal poverty limit). On the three weekend routes that would be free under the Weekend Monument Free Expansion Program, 60.0% of riders identify as minority and 64.1% are low-income.

	% Minority	% Low-Income
Route 311	60.0%	33.3%
Route 314	70.0%	56.3%
Route 316	46.7%	92.9%
Weekend Monument Free Program Total	60.0%	64.1%
Systemwide	55.9%	45.7%
Difference from Systemwide	4.1%	18.4%

There is no disparate impact on minority riders from the continuation of the Program based on County Connection's Disparate Impact Policy. The Program's routes have a minority ridership of approximately 60.0%, which is 4.1% higher than the system as a whole, which is 55.9%.

There is also no disproportionate burden on low-income riders from the continuation of the Program based on County Connection's Disproportionate Burden Policy. The usage of the Program's routes by low-income riders is 64.1%, which is 18.4% higher than their share of the ridership on the system as a whole, which is 45.7%.

Public Outreach:

In November 2022, staff began outreach to receive public comment on the proposed continuation of the Program. A public hearing has been scheduled for December 15, 2022 preceding the Board of Directors meeting. The public may also submit written comments via mail, email, and online through County Connection's website. The comments received will be included in the final Title VI report, which will be presented to the FTA.

Financial Implications:

LCTOP funds will be used to subsidize fares on Routes 311, 314, and 316 for this Program during fiscal year (FY) 2023. Continuation of the Program beyond FY 2023 will be contingent upon available LCTOP or other similar funding.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the MP&L Committee forward the attached Title VI Fare Equity Analysis to the Board for review and approval. The analysis has been reviewed by legal counsel, and the public outreach section will be updated upon completion of the scheduled public hearing.

Action Requested:

Staff requests that the MP&L Committee forward this item to the Board for approval to enable continuation of the Program beyond the initial six-month pilot period.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Title VI Fare Equity Analysis



Title VI Fare Equity Analysis

Weekend Monument Free Expansion

CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
December 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

As a federal grant recipient, the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (County Connection) is required to maintain and provide to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) information on its compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which prohibits discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. The FTA further requires that recipients of FTA financial assistance conduct an analysis on all fare changes to assess the impacts of those changes on low-income and minority populations.

County Connection is proposing the continuation of the Weekend Free Monument Expansion Pilot Program that began on July 1, 2022, and which offers free fares on weekend Routes 311, 314, and 316 (Program). County Connection intends to operate the Program as long as funding remains available through California's Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) or through another funding source. This analysis also addresses the impacts of the potential discontinuation of the Program in the event that funds are no longer available.

Since the Program is a free fare program that reduces the fares on Routes 311, 314, and 316, continuation of the Program beyond six months is a fare change requiring an equity analysis under the FTA's Title VI regulations. Conversely, discontinuation of the Program is a fare increase requiring an equity analysis under the FTA's Title VI regulations.

County Connection's Program equity analysis concludes the following: (i) the Program's ridership is similar to the ridership of the system as a whole; (ii) the continuation of the Program will not have a disparate impact based on race; and (iii) continuing or discontinuing the Program will not have a disproportionate burden on low-income riders.

2 TITLE VI POLICIES

In October 2012, the FTA released Circular 4702.1B (Circular), which provides guidelines for compliance with Title VI. Under the Circular, transit operators are required to study proposed fare changes and “major” service changes before the changes are adopted to ensure that they do not have a discriminatory effect based on race, color, national origin or low-income status of affected populations. As a first step, public transit providers must adopt their own “Major Service Change,” “Disparate Impact,” and “Disproportionate Burden,” policies. County Connection’s Board of Directors adopted these policies in June 2013. The adopted Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden policies, which apply to fare equity analyses, are described below.

2.1 Disparate Impact Policy

The Disparate Impact Policy establishes a threshold for determining whether proposed fare or major service changes have a disproportionately adverse effect on minority populations relative to non-minority populations on the basis of race, ethnicity or national origin.

The threshold is the difference between the burdens borne by, or benefits experienced by, minority populations compared to non-minority populations. Exceeding the threshold means either that a fare or major service change negatively impacts minority populations more than non-minority populations, or that the change benefits non-minority populations more than minority populations. A change with disparate impacts that exceed the threshold can only be adopted (a) if there is substantial legitimate justification for the change, and (b) if no other alternatives exist that would serve the same legitimate objectives but with less disproportionate effects on the basis of race, color or national origin

County Connection establishes that a fare change, major service change or other policy has a disparate impact if minority populations will experience 20% more of the cumulative burden, or experience 20% less of the cumulative benefit, relative to non-minority populations, unless (a) there is substantial legitimate justification for the change, and (b) no other alternatives exist that would serve the same legitimate objectives but with less disproportionate effects on the basis of race, color or national origin.

2.2 Disproportionate Burden Policy

The Disproportionate Burden Policy establishes a threshold for determining whether proposed fare or major service changes have a disproportionately adverse effect on low-income populations relative to non-low-income populations.

The threshold is the difference between the burdens borne by, and benefits experienced by, low-income populations compared to non-low-income populations. Exceeding the threshold means either that a fare or service change negatively impacts low-income populations more than non-low-income populations, or that the change benefits non-low-income populations more than low-income populations. If the threshold is exceeded, County Connection must avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts where practicable.

County Connection establishes that a fare change, major service change or other policy has a disproportionate burden if low-income populations will experience 20% more of the cumulative burden, or experience 20% less of the cumulative benefit, relative to non-low-income populations unless the disproportionate effects are mitigated.

2.3 Public Outreach

In developing its Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden policies, County Connection Staff (Staff) conducted public outreach (detailed below), including three public meetings with language services available, to provide information and receive feedback on the draft policies. Staff incorporated public input gathered through this outreach into the policies proposed for Board approval.

March 28, 2013 – Monument Corridor Transportation Action Team

Public Comment(s): Include an annual review to ensure that major service change threshold has not been exceeded.

April 15, 2013 – Public Meeting at the San Ramon Community Center

Public Comment(s): Include an annual review for major service changes.

May 14, 2013 - Public Meeting at the Walnut Creek Library

Public Comment(s): None

April 1st – June 1st, 2013 – Draft policies made available for public comments on County Connection Website, <https://countyconnection.com/weekend-monument-free/>

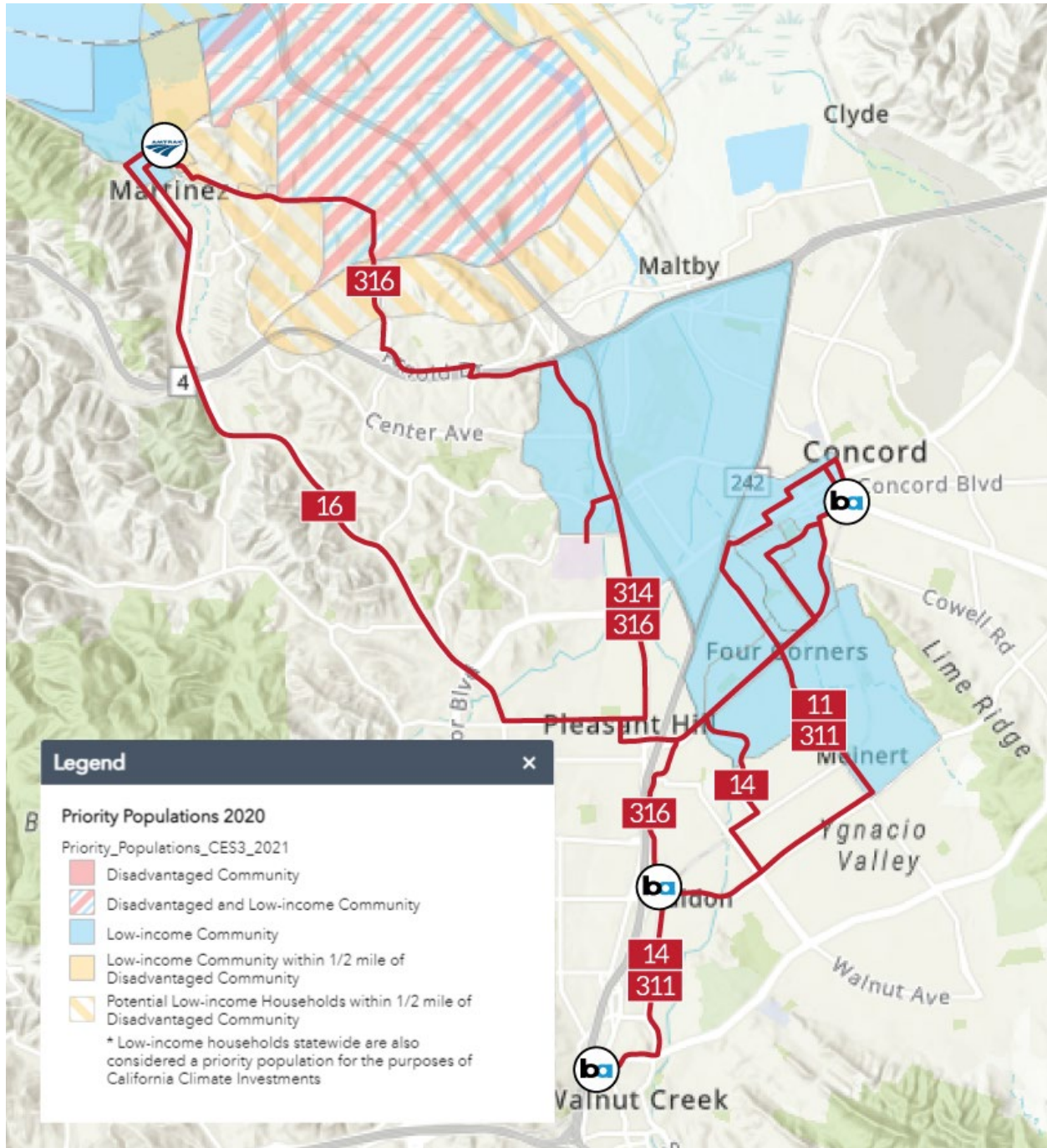
June 20, 2013 – Public Hearing and Proposed Adoption at the County Connection Board of Directors Meeting

Public Comments: None

3 PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

On July 1, 2022, County Connection began the Program, offering free fares on weekend Routes 311, 314, and 316. The Program was an expansion complements the existing Monument Free Program, which provides free fares on corresponding weekday Routes 11, 14, and 16. The Program and Monument Free Program serve low-income communities along the Monument Corridor and connects the Concord Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station to various destinations in the cities of Martinez, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek, including BART stations within those cities, the Martinez Amtrak station and Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. Combined, the six (6) weekday and weekend routes provide daily, zero-cost transportation to some of the communities with the greatest need in the service area. Figure 1 shows a map of the three Program routes, as well as the Monument Free Program weekday routes that are already permanent. Figure 1 also shows the disadvantaged and low-income communities in County Connection's service area.

Figure 1: Expanded Monument Free Route Map



The Program is being funded by a grant through California's Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which distributes cap-and-trade proceeds to support a wide range of programs and projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deliver other economic, environmental, and public health benefits for Californians, with a priority on benefitting low-income and disadvantaged communities. LCTOP is one

of several programs that are a part of the Transit, Affordable Housing, and Sustainable Communities Program established by the California Legislature in 2014 by Senate Bill 862.

The goal of the Program is to increase ridership and make transit more accessible and affordable, particularly to low-income communities along the Monument Corridor. The expansion of free rides to weekend Routes 311, 314 and 316 had an instant impact on ridership with all three routes performing better than the previous fiscal year. In the Program's first three months, the weekend Routes 311, 314, and 316 ridership grew by 32% compared to the same period in fiscal year 2022, while the other weekend routes grew by only 19% for the same time period. Route 314 grew by 30% compared to the fiscal year 2022 average and was 8% higher than its pre-COVID levels, making it the only non-school route on which ridership has fully returned. Route 311 grew by 29% and Route 316 grew by 38% compared to fiscal year 2022 (see Table 1). Given the Program's success, County Connection is proposing to continue the Program, as long as funding remains available through LCTOP or another funding source. The Program is subject to termination if funding becomes unavailable in the future.

Table 1: Weekend Monument Free Expansion Average Daily Ridership by Route

	FY 2019 (Pre-COVID)	FY 2022	FY 2023 (YTD)	% Change (FY 23 v. FY 22)
Route 311	261	173	223	28.9%
Route 314	476	391	512	30.9%
Route 316	302	165	227	37.6%
Total	1,039	729	962	32.0%

4 EQUITY ANALYSIS

Pursuant to the Circular, a reduction in fare is a fare change. Accordingly, the Circular's equity analysis requirement applies. A fare reduction is deemed to be a benefit and the required disparate impact analysis examines the allocation of benefits from the fare reduction among minority riders on the affected routes relative to their share of the ridership as a whole. Similarly, the required disproportionate burden analysis examines the allocation of benefits from the fare reduction among low-income riders on the affected routes relative to their share of the ridership as a whole.

Conversely, the elimination of a free fare program results in a fare increase, which the Circular deems to be a fare change. A fare increase is examined through the same analytical framework as a fare reduction, outlined above.

4.1 Data and Methodology

Methodology

The Circular requires County Connection to conduct a fare equity analysis for all fare changes, regardless of the amount of increase or decrease, to evaluate the effects of fare changes on low-income populations in addition to Title VI-protected populations. A fare equity analysis is not required when a fare change is due to:

- (i) “Spare the air days” or other instances when a local municipality or transit agency has declared that all passengers ride free.
- (ii) Temporary fare reductions that are mitigating measures for other actions.
- (iii) Promotional fare reductions. If a promotional or temporary fare reduction lasts longer than six months, FTA considers the fare reduction permanent, and the transit provider must conduct a fare equity analysis.

For proposed changes that would increase or decrease fares on the entire system, or on certain transit modes, or by fare payment type or fare media, the fare equity analysis must analyze available information generated from ridership surveys indicating whether minority and/or low-income riders are disproportionately more likely to use the mode of service, payment type, or payment media that would be subject to the fare change.

Both the disparate impact policy and the disproportionate burden policy examine the cumulative impacts of a fare change. As a result, this analysis determines potential impacts of the proposed program by comparing the percentages of low-income and minority riders who use Routes 311, 314, and 316 based on relative ridership against the percentages of low-income and minority riders who use the system as a whole. These metrics will identify whether low-income and/or minority riders would experience a disproportionately lower benefit due to the free fares program.

Definitions

Minority – FTA defines a minority person as anyone who is American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

Low-Income – FTA defines a low-income person as a person whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines. However, FTA encourages the use of any locally developed threshold provided that the threshold is at least as inclusive as the HHS poverty guidelines. Due to Contra Costa County's higher cost of living, County Connection defines low-income as 150% of the federal poverty level, which is more inclusive than the HHS Poverty Guidelines.

Data Source

An onboard passenger survey was conducted on County Connection buses in October 2019 and a total of 1,188 responses were collected (2019 Survey). The 2019 Survey was conducted on both weekdays and weekends using handheld tablet personal computers on which the online survey was administered. A sampling plan was developed to ensure that the distribution of completed surveys mirrored the actual distribution of passengers using the system. The plan included completion goals that were set by route and time period based on ridership. Because the number of surveys collected on each route is based on relative ridership, the percentages of low-income and minority riders for the overall Weekend Monument Free Expansion Program were determined by summing up the numbers from the surveys from Routes 311, 314, and 316.

The 2019 Survey data provides demographic information on County Connection's riders, including race and income, by route. Respondents who declined to answer questions about income or ethnicity are excluded from the analysis. In order to protect privacy, survey respondents were asked to report their income bracket as opposed to their specific income. Because of this, the analysis uses the median of the selected income bracket to compare against the federal poverty level. Table 2 below shows how low-income status—defined in this analysis as 150% of the 2019 federal poverty guidelines—is determined based on household size and income bracket. Using these thresholds, each individual survey response was categorized as either low-income or non-low-income based on responses to the questions about household size and income.

Table 2: Low-Income Thresholds by Household Size

Household Size	Low-Income Threshold
1-2	Under \$25,000
3-4	Under \$35,000
5-7	Under \$50,000
8-10	Under \$75,000

As COVID-19 continues to impact ridership, more recent passenger demographic data was not utilized for the analysis since it would not accurately reflect ridership, which is continually shifting as people start returning to transit. In addition, because the Program has only been in place for a few months, the effects of the free fares on ridership and utilization are not yet fully realized. However, a limited survey was conducted both onboard and online in September 2022 (2022 Survey), which provides some additional data, though not statistically significant to the Program's routes. There were 7 surveys collected from passengers who indicated they use at least one of the three weekend routes and responded to questions regarding race and income.

4.2 Impact Assessment

Based on the 2019 Survey data, 55.9% of all County Connection riders identify as minority and 45.7% are considered low-income. On the three weekend routes that would be free under the Weekend Monument Free Expansion Program, 60.0% of riders identify as minority and 64.1% are low-income. From the more recent 2022 survey, 4 out of the 7 respondents identified as minority and 4 as low-income, which is relatively consistent with 2019 Survey results.

Continuation

There is no disparate impact on minority riders from the continuation of the Program. The Program's routes have a minority ridership of approximately 60.0%, which is 4.1% higher than the system as a whole, which is 55.9%.

There is also no disproportionate burden on low-income riders from the continuation of the Program. The usage of the Program's routes by low-income riders is 64.1%, which is 18.4% higher than their share of the ridership on the system as a whole, which is 45.7%.

Table 3: Impact Analysis Results

	% Minority	% Low-Income
Route 311	60.0%	33.3%
Route 314	70.0%	56.3%
Route 316	46.7%	92.9%
Weekend Monument Free Program Total	60.0%	64.1%
Systemwide	55.9%	45.7%
Difference from Systemwide	4.1%	18.4%

As noted above, the Program is funded by a LCTOP grant, which is intended to deliver environmental benefits to low-income communities. The Program serves AB 1550 low-income communities and a Metropolitan Transportation Commission Equity Priority Community (formerly known as communities of concern), furthering a main goal of the LCTOP grant, which is to improve mobility for disadvantaged and low-income communities.

Discontinuation

Discontinuation of the Program would not result in a disparate impact on minority riders. The discontinuation would result in a fare increase that would burden routes that have 60.0% minority ridership, which is slightly higher than the system as a whole, which is 55.9%. The resulting 4.1% margin is within the 20% threshold established by County Connection's Disparate Impact Policy.

The discontinuation of the Program would also not have a disproportionate burden on low-income riders. The usage of the affected routes by low-income riders is 64.1%, which is significantly higher than their share of the ridership on the system as a whole, which is 45.7%. However this 18.4% differential is within the 20% threshold established by County Connection's Disparate Impact Policy.

Notably, the discontinuation of the Program would result in a fare increase, but the increase would place the affected riders in the same position as all other riders on the system.

5 PUBLIC OUTREACH

Implementation

As part of the initial launch of the Program, Staff launched a bilingual marketing campaign to inform riders of the expanded free fare program on Routes 311, 314, and 316. This included notices on buses, information on County Connection's website, and posts on County Connection's social media accounts, as well as distribution of materials to local jurisdictions and various community-based organizations, including Monument Crisis Center and Monument Impact. Staff has also conducted outreach at senior centers and community events within the service area, as well as at major bus stops and BART stations.

Discontinuation

In the event funds are no longer available to support the program, Staff will conduct public outreach prior to discontinuation of the Program, that is similar to the outreach done for the Program's implementation.

5.1 Public Comment

Implementation

In November 2022, Staff began outreach to receive public comment on the proposed continuation of the Program. The public was able to comment on the proposed changes at a public hearing on December 15, 2022, as well as via mail, email, and online through County Connection's website.

Notices for the public hearing were placed on all buses, as well as in the East Bay Times, and information about the proposed continuation of the Program was available on County Connection's website and announced through County Connection's social media accounts.

[Placeholder for summary of public comment]

Discontinuation

In the event funds are no longer available to support the Program, Staff will solicit public comment prior to discontinuation of the Program.

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: 11/21/2022

From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: October Free Ride Campaign

Background:

The October Free Ride Campaign provided a month of free rides on all County Connection buses and paratransit, made possible by federal stimulus funding. The month of free rides was intended to not only help essential workers save money on transit costs but encourage commuters to take public transit...perhaps beyond October. County Connection ran a similar campaign last year in September as part of a regional "Return to Transit" marketing effort.

Promotional Campaign:

Similar to last year, staff partnered with Zero Company, a digital marketing company that specializes in online engagement and content promotion, not only across social media platforms, but through ads/banners on websites. Digital ads were run in both English and Spanish from the end of September through October to help amplify our outreach efforts, which drove a lot of traffic to County Connection's website and social media pages. Staff was also able to use results from last year's campaign to refine the target audiences. Below are high-level stats from the month-long campaign:

SOURCE	CLICKS	IMPRESSIONS	CTR (CLICKS/IMPRESSIONS)
Programmatic	5,008	3,200,000*	0.16%
Google	8,682	2,120,084	0.41%
Facebook	3,513	485,417	0.72%
Twitter	1,540	717,632	0.21%
TOTAL	18,743	6,523,133	0.29%

*Approximately

Terms (for reference):

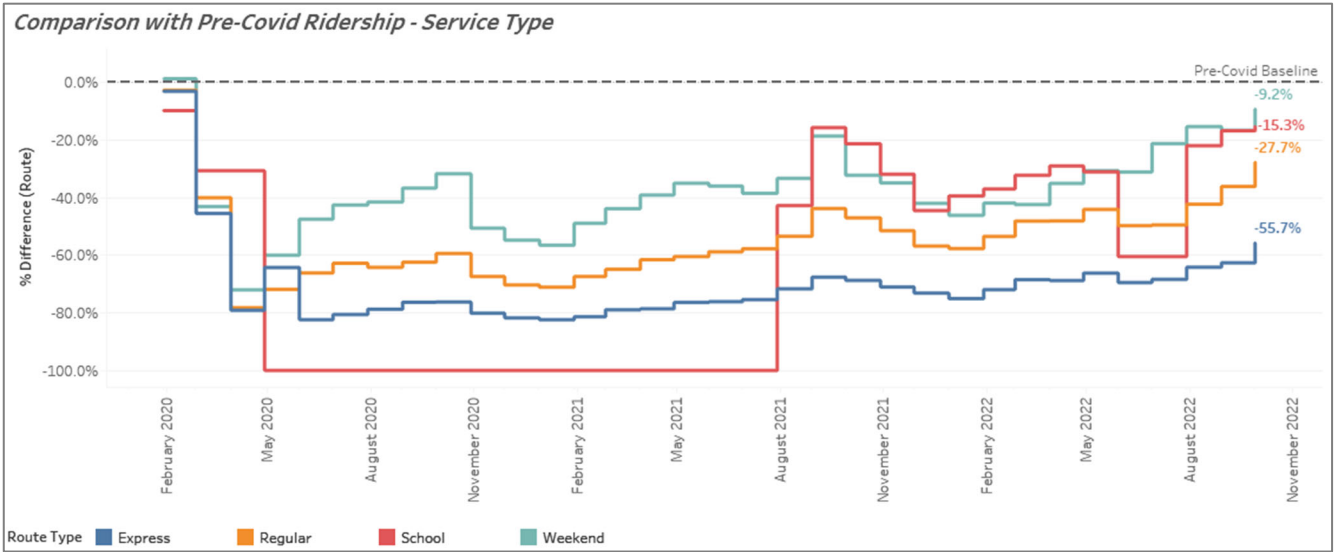
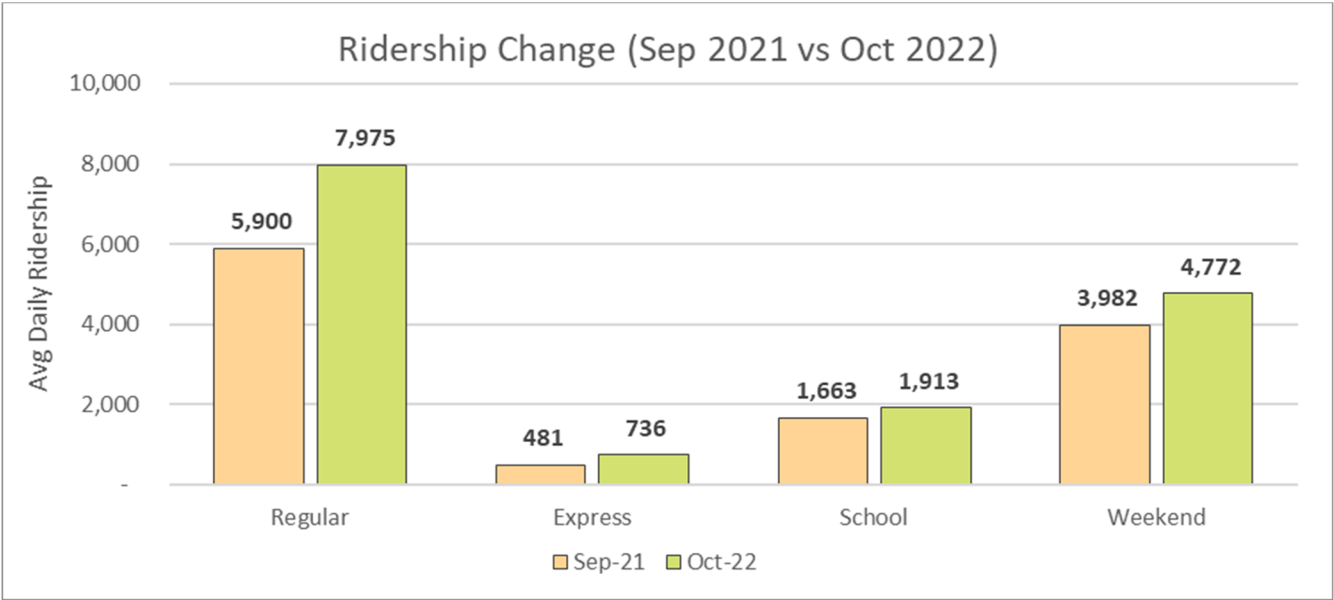
- **Programmatic** – Purchased advertising space (e.g., web banners, ads on side menus, etc.)
- **Clicks** – Represents when someone has seen the ad/post and clicks on it.
- **Impressions** – Represents when someone has seen the ad/post.
- **CTR** – Click Through Rate represents clicks divided by impressions to give a sense of how often people who see the ad end up clicking it.

Overall, engagement rates for this year’s campaign were lower than last September. However, this year’s campaign had a more limited audience size and duration and did not have the benefit of joint promotion with BART and other transit agencies. Also, there were some differences in how the ads on each platform performed relative to last year. Click-through-rates were relatively similar for Google and programmatic ads, whereas they were significantly lower for Facebook and especially Twitter.

Impact on Ridership:

While working with Zero Company did result in a lot of impressions for our digital marketing campaign, what’s more important is how that effort online translated to real-world ridership numbers. The chart below compares the free ride campaign from September 2021 against the free ride campaign from October 2022. Overall, there was a 26% increase in ridership during this year’s promotion compared to last year’s.

The second chart shows ridership trends by route type since the beginning of the pandemic as a percentage compared to pre-COVID levels. The October Free Ride campaign resulted in a 15% increase in ridership compared to the previous month (September 2022).



The express routes had the largest percentage increase in ridership but are still significantly down from pre-COVID levels. In terms of total volume, the local routes had the highest jump in ridership compared to last September. The table below summarizes the increases in ridership by route type, as well as a comparison to pre-COVID levels.

ROUTE TYPE	INCREASE FROM SEPTEMBER 2021	% CHANGE VS. SEPTEMBER 2021	% BELOW PRE- COVID
Regular Local	+2,075	+30%	-27%
Express	+255	+42%	-56%
School	+250	+14%	-15%
Weekend	+790	+20%	-9%

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: 11/21/2022

From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: Community Events

Background:

County Connection offers a mobile lobby, where staff visit areas within the service area. When possible, we also participate in select community and business events, and coordinate Class Pass field trips for schools with service along fixed-routes.

Additional Information:

County Connection continued customer outreach with the mobile lobby in November throughout Central Contra Costa County. We scheduled 22 mobile lobby events, which included visiting libraries, farmer's markets, senior centers, and transit hubs where we helped people with trip planning, RTC and LINK (paratransit) applications, signing up with the Clipper app, and answered other general inquiries of our services. We have found that many of our customers, particularly our senior customers and underserved communities, find it is convenient to meet our staff while we're out in their respective neighborhoods. For those who wish to come to our office, our lobby is open to the public, 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. Customers Service Representatives also answer phones from 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. We also are participating with Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano to collect nonperishable food donations on all of our buses, November 27-December 11. People may also donate food in bins placed in our lobby and back entrance, as well as through our virtual giving page. On Giving Tuesday, November 29, any onboard food donation allows for a free ride, no transfers.

In December, we have 22 mobile lobby event scheduled as well as two community events; the Holiday Parade of Lights in Walnut Creek (12/1) and the Holiday Frolic & Children's Light Parade in Martinez (12/2). County Connection staff will decorate on of our buses and walk along the parade route greeting guests.

Financial Implications:

Any costs associated with events are included in the Promotions budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: November 2022 Calendar

Attachment 2: December 2022 Calendar

Attachment 1

NOVEMBER -- 2022						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<u>1</u> Concord Farmers Market 9-2	<u>2</u> Orinda BART 8:30-10:30	<u>3</u> Rossmoor Senior Health Fair 9-2	<u>4</u> Ride Route 10 Leaves: Con BART @9:30AM Clayton Library @9:59AM RUN# 101051	<u>5</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> Walnut Creek Library 11:30-1:30	<u>8</u> Moraga Library 2-4	<u>9</u> Pleasant Hill BART 8:30-10:30 Latinx + Native American Heritage Festival - Miramonte High 5-8	<u>10</u> Lafayette Library 10-12 <u>Class Pass</u> Las Juntas Elementary - Martinez 48 students/6adults	<u>11</u> Walnut Creek BART 9-11	<u>12</u>
<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> San Ramon Transit Center 9-11	<u>15</u> Clayton Library 2-4	<u>16</u> Concord Library 12-2	<u>17</u> Orinda Library 9-11	<u>18</u> Pleasant Hill Senior Center 10-12	<u>19</u>
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> Martinez Senior Center 10-12	<u>22</u> Danville Library 10-12	<u>23</u> Ride Route 35 Leaves: SRTC @9:01AM Dub BART@10:06AM RUN# 351031/351011	<u>24</u> Thanksgiving Day - Closed	<u>25</u> Walnut Creek Kaiser Shadelands 8:30-10:30	<u>26</u>
<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> Danville Senior Center 10:30-12:30	<u>29</u> Lafayette BART 8:30-10:30	<u>30</u> Concord EDD Office 9:30-12			

Attachment 2

DECEMBER -- 2022						
<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>
				<u>1</u> Martinez Amtrak 10-12 Walnut Creek Parade of Lights at Broadway Plaza 6:00PM-9:00PM	<u>2</u> Ride Route 10 Leaves: Concord BART @9:30AM Clayton Library @9:59AM Martinez Lighted Parade City Hall 6:30PM-7:30PM	<u>3</u> Walnut Creek Downtown ride the FREE Route 4 leaving Walnut Creek BART: 3:00, 3:40, 4:20, 5:00, 5:40
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> Walnut Creek Library 11:30-1:30	<u>6</u> North Concord BART 12:30-2:30	<u>7</u> Orinda BART 10-12	<u>8</u> Lafayette Library 10-12	<u>9</u> Danville Library 11:30-1:30	<u>10</u>
<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> Ride Route 35 Leaves: SRTC @7:31AM Dublin BART @8:06AM	<u>13</u> Moraga Library 12:30-2:30	<u>14</u> Pleasant Hill Library 11-1	<u>15</u> Orinda Library 11:30-1:30	<u>16</u> Pleasant Hill Senior Center 10-12	<u>17</u>
<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> Martinez Senior Center 10-12	<u>20</u> Clayton Library 12-2	<u>21</u> Concord Library 12-2	<u>22</u> Ride Route 6 Leaves: Lafayette BART @11:00AM Orinda BART @12:15PM	<u>23</u> Ride Route 1 Leaves: Rossmoor @9:14AM Mitchell P&R @10:05AM	<u>24</u>
<u>25</u>	<u>26</u> Holiday	<u>27</u> Ride Route 21 Leaves: WC BART @11:40AM SRTC @12:45PM	<u>28</u> Concord EDD Office 9:30-12:00	<u>29</u> Ride Route 9 Leaves: DVC @11:00AM WC BART @11:51AM	<u>30</u> Ride Route 98X Leaves: Amtrak @8:43AM WC BART @9:22AM	<u>31</u>