

County Connection

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CCCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

December 15, 2022

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/CONFIRM QUORUM

Chair Amy Worth called the regular meeting of the Board of Directors to order at 9:00 a.m. Board Members present were Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth. Directors McCluer and Storer were absent.

Staff: Churchill, Sherman, Dixit, Duran, Glenn, Hill, Horta, Johnson, Kamara, Martinez, McCarthy, Mitchell, Reeb and Rettig

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: None

PUBLIC HEARING: FY 2023-28 Short Range Transit Plan

The Public Hearing started at 9:05 a.m.

CHAIR:

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive public comment on the Short Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Years 2023 to 2028

Staff will summarize the public outreach efforts for the proposed Plan

PRANJAL DIXIT, MANAGER OF PLANNING:

- Staff reports were posted on the County Connection website.
- Legal Notices were published in the East Bay Times
- The Notice of Public Hearing was posted on the County Connection website and on all fixed route vehicles.
- All printed materials and handouts were translated in Spanish, per the County Connection's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

CHAIR:

Does County Connection's public outreach, as described, meet the legal requirements for calling this Public Hearing?

ATTORNEY SHERMAN:

Responds: Yes

CHAIR:

Before proceeding with the public hearing, Manager of Planning, Pranjali Dixit will provide an overview of the proposed SRTP, and the comments that have been received to date.

PRESENTATION BY MANAGER OF PLANNING, PRANJAL DIXIT:

As of December 8, three comments related to the SRTP were received. Two comments suggested increasing weekend service and improving schedule reliability on routes in Walnut Creek and the other suggested increase in frequency and span of service along with adding a microtransit option in the San Ramon and Danville service area

CHAIR:

Thank you. I will outline the procedure that we will now follow to receive public comments:

1. Please honor the three-minute comment period allowed for each speaker.
2. There will be one speaker at a time, and we would appreciate it if the speaker stayed on topic.
3. When a speaker is making his/her remarks, the audience is asked to listen respectfully.

Thank you for your cooperation.

We will now invite the public to comment on the proposed SRTP that staff has outlined.

If you wish to speak, please raise your hand or dial *9. I will call out one speaker at a time and ask that you unmute yourself or dial *6. Before making any remarks, please state your name and any organization you may be here to represent.

No public comment was made.

CHAIR (AT THE COMPLETION OF PUBLIC COMMENT):

The Public Comment portion of this Public Hearing is now closed at 9:09 a.m.

The staff recommendation will be presented to the regular Board of Directors meeting that follows immediately after this hearing. The Board will take into account the comments that have been received, as well as the staff's recommendations, and may take action at that time.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors we wish to thank all the members of the public who have joined us this morning to provide us with your feedback on this very important topic.

PUBLIC HEARING: Weekend Monument Free Expansion and Title VI Fare Equity Analysis

CHAIR:

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed continuation of the Weekend Monument Free Program, which provides free rides on weekend Routes 311, 314, and 316.

Staff will summarize the public outreach efforts for the proposed program.

MELODY REEBS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING:

- Staff reports were posted on the County Connection website.
- Legal Notices were published in the East Bay Times
- The Notice of Public Hearing was posted on the County Connection website and on all fixed route vehicles.
- All printed materials and handouts were translated in Spanish, per the County Connection's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

CHAIR:

Does County Connection's public outreach as described, meet the legal requirements for calling this Public Hearing?

ATTORNEY SHERMAN: Yes

CHAIR:

Before proceeding with the public hearing, Director of Planning Melody Reebbs will provide an overview of the proposal, and the comments that have been received to date.

PRESENTATION BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING MELODY REEBBS

As of December 8th, three comments were received relative to the proposed continuation of the Program. Two were in favor of continuing the proposed discounts, and one suggested that increased service frequency and hours might be a better use of funding. Staff did respond to the individual who made the latter comment to explain the limitations of the funding source as well as resources to be able to expand service.

CHAIR:

Thank you. I will outline the procedure that we will now follow to receive public comments:

1. Please honor the three-minute comment period allowed for each speaker.
2. There will be one speaker at a time, and we would appreciate it if the speaker stays on topic.
3. When a speaker is making his/her remarks, the audience is asked to listen respectfully.

Thank you for your cooperation.

We will now invite the public to comment on the proposed continuation of the Weekend Monument Free Program that staff has outlined.

If you wish to speak please raise your hand or dial *9. I will call out one speaker at a time and ask that you unmute yourself or dial *6. Before making any remarks, please state your name and any organization you may be here to represent.

No public comment was made.

The Public Comment portion of this Public Hearing is now closed at 9: 13 a.m.

The staff recommendation will be presented to the regular Board of Directors meeting that follows immediately after this hearing. The Board will take into account the comments that have been received, as well as the staff's recommendations, and may take action at that time.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors we wish to thank all the members of the public who have joined us this morning to provide us with your feedback on this very important topic.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: Director Noack moved approval of the Consent Calendar, consisting of the following items: (a) Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of November 17, 2022; (b) Resolution No. 2023-020, Declaring that the Proclaimed State of Emergency for the COVID-19 Pandemic Continues to Impact the Ability for the Board and its Committees to Meet Safely in Person, and Directing that Virtual Board and Committee Meetings Continue. Director Andersen seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth
No: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

REPORT OF CHAIR: None

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER:

Network Management Business Advisory Group Update

General Manager Bill Churchill informed the Board that the Network Management Business Advisory Group is still in full effect. They are working hard to finalize a Fare Integration model and the Executive Committee will meet in January as will the full MTC Commission. By the time they meet in February, this should become an action item for their consideration. He will continue to update the Board as new information is available.

COVID-19 Update

General Manager Bill Churchill informed the Board that our COVID cases have been pretty steady these last few months. Usually after a holiday, we see a spike in our positive cases but it has seemed to slow down at the current moment.

In Person Meetings

General Manager Bill Churchill informed the Board that with the Governor's state of emergency expiring on February 28, 2023 we are looking to go back in person in March 2023 for committee and Board meetings. We will bring this back to the Board in February in order to update and/or confirm this change.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Administration & Finance Committee

Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Audit

Amber Johnson, CFO, explained that an independent audit was performed by Brown Armstrong Accountancy Corporation. The goal of a financial statement audit is to provide users with a reasonable assurance from an independent source that the information presented in the statements is reliable. There were no material weaknesses or deficiencies noted by the auditors this year. The prior year findings related to inventory counts and reporting of federal operating assistance were determined to be corrected and are no longer listed as audit findings

MOTION: Director Noack moved approval of the Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Audit report prepared by Brown Armstrong Accountancy Corporation. Director Haydon seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

Reimbursement for Administrative Employees (Grade 9 and below)

Lisa Rettig, Director of Human Resources, gave a brief background on the item stating that at the November Board meeting, the County Connection Board of Directors approved extending the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Teamsters Union Local 856 and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) District Lodge No. 190, which included a lump sum payment of two-thousand five-hundred dollars (\$2,500) per employee represented by the two unions. This is as a reimbursement for reasonable living, employment and commute related expenses incurred by the employees over the prior two and one half years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The reimbursement is not for lost wages, COVID-19 related paid sick leave or other COVID-19 related expenses that were the subject of state or federal COVID-19 pandemic relief legislation. As such, this lump sum payment is not subject to state and federal withholdings or payroll deductions.

There are 24 Grade 9 and below Administrative employees who are eligible for this one-time reimbursement. The total cost is \$60,000 which is accounted for in the approved budget.

MOTION: Director Noack moved approval of a one-time reimbursement for living, employment and commute related expenses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, of \$2,500 per non-represented Administrative employees Grade 9 and below. Director Haydon seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Weekend Monument Free Expansion Title VI Fare Equity Analysis and Resolution No. 2023-023

Melody Reeb, Director of Planning, Marketing, & Innovation, explained that the free fare program expansion 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.

In November 2022, staff began outreach to receive public comment on the proposed continuation of the Program. A public hearing was held at the beginning of this Board meeting. The public was also able to submit written comments via mail, email, and online through County Connection's website. All comments received will be included in the final Title VI report, which will be presented to the FTA

MOTION: Director Noack moved adoption of Resolution No. 2023-023 approving the continuation of free rides on weekend routes serving the Monument Corridor Director Haydon seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

October Free Ride Campaign

Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications, gave a brief background of the item stating that 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.

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. This is an information only item.

Final Short-Range Transit Plan and Resolution No. 2023-022

Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning, explained that the plan focuses on evaluating existing service and developing future service plans based on three scenarios of varying revenue recovery over the next five 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 five 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 five 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.

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.

MOTION: Director Andersen moved adoption of Resolution No. 2023-022 approving the Short-Range Transit Plan for FY 2023-28. Director Tatzin seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

Operations & Scheduling Committee

Approval of Revised Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Resolution No. 2023-019

Scott Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer, explained that the purpose of the PTASP is to make working on and managing the bus transit system inseparable from delivering safe and “accident-free” service. This covers all the operations on property, onboard our buses, at our bus stops, and everywhere County Connection operates. To fulfill this purpose, the plan establishes safety programs and practices that prevent accidents, injuries and illnesses; provides guidance on how to prepare for an accident or emergency and provides guidance on how to respond to hazards and incidents.

On February 17, 2022, FTA issued a Dear Colleague Letter regarding changes to PTASP requirements as a result of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). One of the new requirements is for transit agencies that receive Section 5307 funding to establish a Safety Committee compliant with 49 U.S.C. § 5329(d)(5) by July 31, 2022. The Safety Committee is then required to approve an update to the agency’s PTASP to incorporate the new requirements by December 31, 2022.

The Safety Committee is responsible for identifying and recommending risk-based mitigations or strategies as well as deficiencies. The Safety Committee must consist of an equal number of frontline employee and management representatives. County Connection staff established and convened its first Safety Committee meeting on March 29, 2022. The Safety Committee meets quarterly and has approved an update to the PTASP that includes the new BIL/IIJA requirements.

MOTION: Director Hudson moved approval Resolution 2023-019, authorizing the General Manager to approve the revised Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). Director Hoffmeister seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

Authorizing New MOU with Choice in Aging and Resolution No. 2023-021

Rashida Kamara, Director of ADA and Specialized Services, reminded the Board that at the January 2022 Board meeting, the Board of Directors approved a new and improved demonstration project for Choice in Aging customers that provides a same-day option to book trips using SilverRide. This same-day option eliminated unforeseen no-shows and gave other passengers the opportunity to book rides and benefit from the program.

Staff continues to review the success of the project. On time performance has been sustained at 92% and above; and no shows due to late rides have significantly decreased. When the new project started in January 2022, only one vehicle was in use. Given the increase in demand, the program now requires three vehicles. As a result, the growth and the success of the project has called for continued support from County Connection. With labor issues facing traditional paratransit services, having a partnership with Choice in Aging and a TNC service like SilverRide has been beneficial for all.

MOTION: Director Hudson moved adoption of Resolution No. 2023-021 allowing the General Manager to enter a multi-year contract with Choice in Aging, this will extend the contract with SilverRide. Director Noack seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Haydon, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Tatzin, Wilk and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors McCluer and Storer

BOARD COMMUNICATION: None

CLOSED SESSION:

The Board of Directors went into closed session at 10:10 a.m.

Conference with Labor Negotiator (pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6)

Employee Organization:

Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1605, AFL-CIO, Bus Operators

Public Employee Performance Evaluation; Conference with Labor Negotiator
(pursuant to Government Code Sections 54957, 54957.6)

Agency Designated Representative: Board Chair

Position: General Manager

OPEN SESSION:

Report of Action(s) taken during the Closed Session

The Board of Directors came back from closed session at 11:18 a.m.

Director Worth reported that the Board met in closed session with Labor Negotiator, Pat Glenn, regarding the status of negotiations with Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1605

No reportable action was taken in either closed session.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Worth adjourned the regular Board meeting at 11:19 am.

Minutes prepared by:

Lathina Hill

Assistant to the General Manager

Date: January 10, 2023