

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Operations & Scheduling Committee

Date: 2/20/2022

From: Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning

Reviewed by: MR

SUBJECT: LCTOP Service Change Proposal

Background:

The Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) cap and trade funding first became available in FY 14-15. The initial three years of funding were primarily used to operate the Martinez Shuttle – Route 3. Prior to FY 17-18, at least 50% of LCTOP funds had to be used **within ½ mile** of a disadvantaged community (DAC). The FY 17-18 guidelines stated that eligible projects must be “**within a DAC**”. At the time, the only DAC within County Connection’s service area was in Martinez along Pacheco Blvd. Route 3 was ½ mile from the DAC, thus no longer eligible for the funds. Due to low productivity and lack of alternate funding sources, Route 3 was eliminated in Fall 2018.

Starting in August 2018, County Connection launched Route 99X, which was designed to meet the new guidelines. The route runs from Martinez Amtrak to North Concord BART during peak hours and serves the Pacheco Transit Center, Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, Contra Costa County offices at Glacier and Muir, and the courthouse in Martinez. Route 99X serves the section around Pacheco and Morello which is part of the DAC in Martinez as shown in the map below. Beginning in FY 21-22, DAC definitions were updated and there are now three additional DACs in County Connection’s service area in Concord.

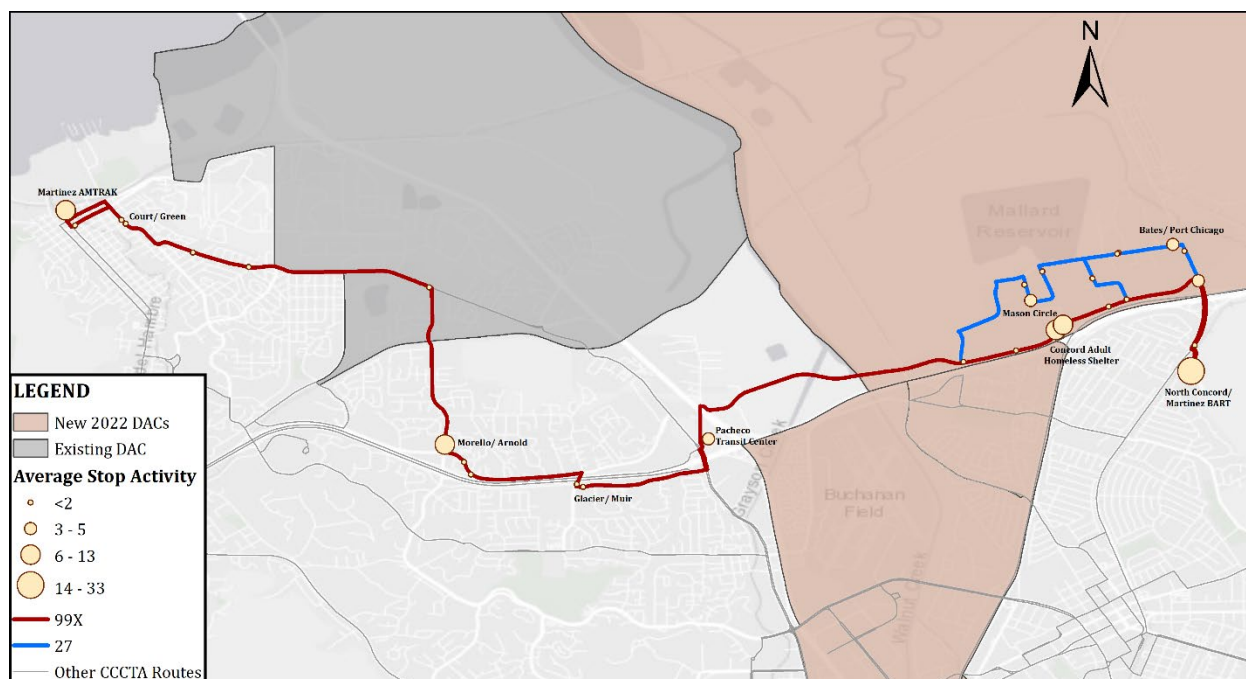


Figure 1: Current Alignment

Ridership Trends:

Since the launch of the route in August 2018, the route has not attracted much ridership and even at its peak, its performance was below the overall express route average. During the pandemic, 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. Although the overall Express route ridership continues to lag, Route 99X continues to underperform compared to other express routes. Currently the route operates 19 trips during the peak commute hours and averages 44 passengers a day at 3.5 passengers per hour, which is below the current express route average of 6.6.

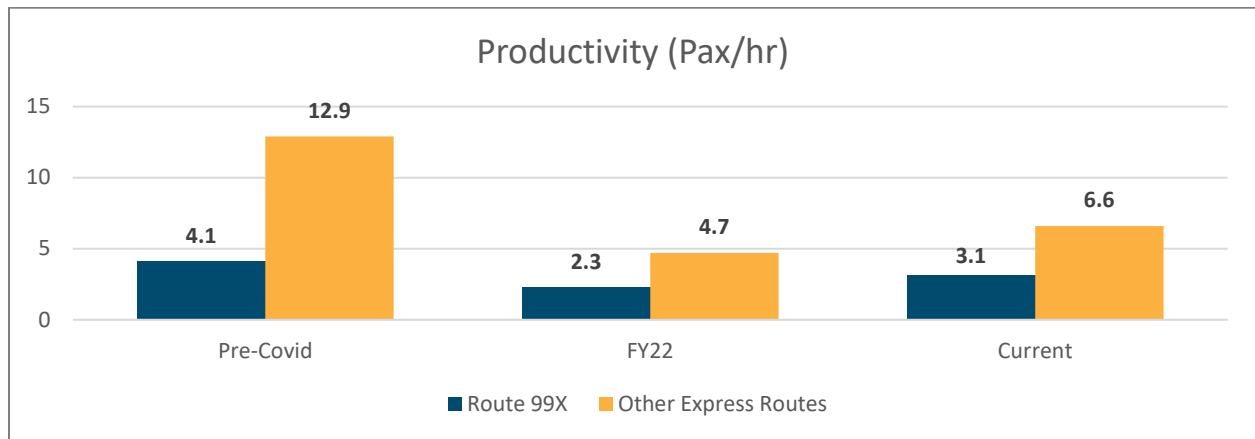


Figure 2: Ridership Trend

Service Change:

Given the low performance of the route, staff has developed changes that are intended to increase efficiency and productivity. The proposal also includes consolidation of Route 27, which currently provides limited trips within North Concord. The proposed new alignment and schedule would:

- Provide a faster and more direct connection between North Concord BART and Martinez Amtrak;
- Continue serving high usage stops like North Concord BART, Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, Morello/Arnold, Martinez Amtrak, and Mason Circle;
- Eliminate route segments with little to no ridership on both Routes 27 and 99X, including Pike Ln, the Pacheco Transit Center, Muir Rd, and Arnold Dr; and
- Improve transfer connections with Amtrak.

Since the proposal includes elimination of Route 27 and a change to the Route 99X alignment that affects more than 25% of the daily transit revenue miles, it is considered a “major” service change under County Connection’s Major Service Change Policy and will require an Equity Analysis under the Title VI regulations. The Title VI analysis will be presented along with a subsequent public hearing at the May Board meeting for potential approval.

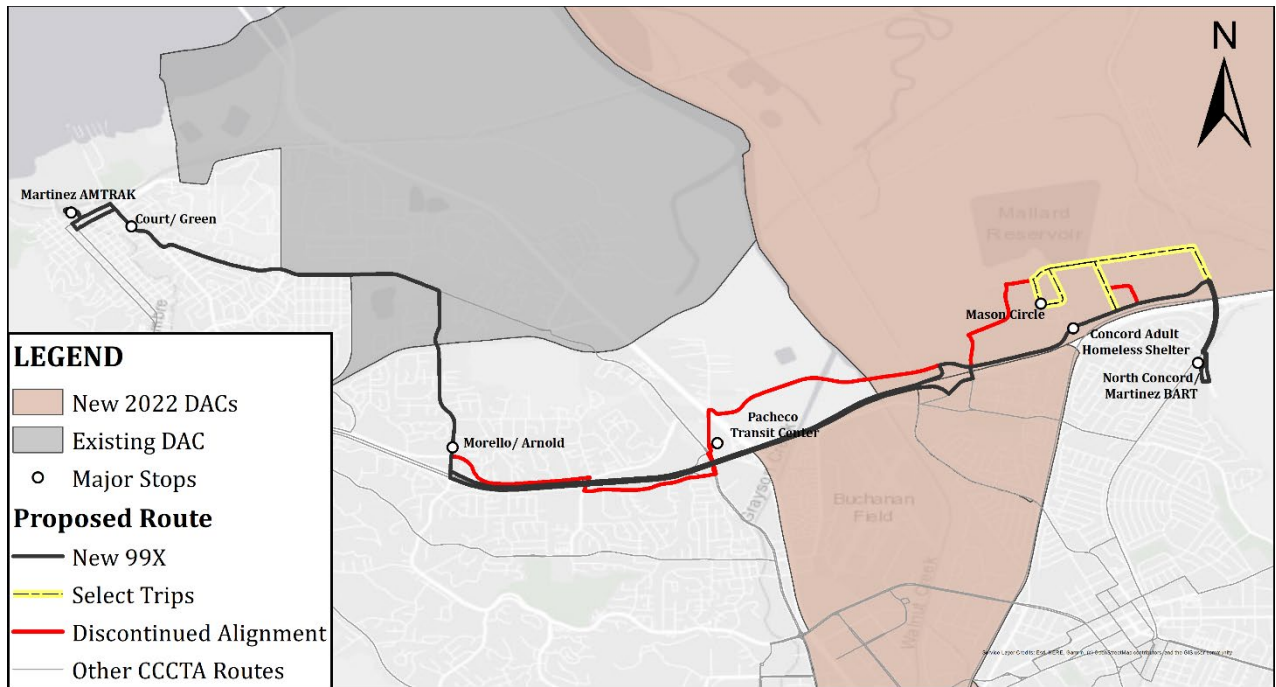


Figure 3: Proposed Alignment

Financial Implications:

The service would continue to be operated using LCTOP funds. At least 50% of these funds must be utilized within a DAC.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends proceeding with a Title VI Equity Analysis and holding a public hearing at the May Board meeting.

Action Requested:

Staff requests that the O&S Committee forward the proposed changes to the Board and authorize staff to proceed with the public hearing process.

Attachments:

None.