

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: 06/26/2023

From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Reviewed by:

SUBJECT: Thank You For Riding Campaign

Background:

It's no secret that the pandemic had a major, negative impact on the public transportation industry, from which it may never fully recover. From a marketing standpoint, much of the messaging that has emerged in recent years from both our transit partners and passengers has focused on financial decline, safety and cleanliness, service reliability and operator shortages, and particularly on lost ridership—passengers who are permanently working from home and choice-riders whose commute habits have changed to driving alone. While it is important to continue to acknowledge and have an ongoing conversation with our former riders and the ongoing issues facing public transit, the *Thank You For Riding* campaign is intended to recognize those who have continued to use County Connection fixed-route and paratransit service even through the worst of times. To them—the essential workers, students, our senior and disabled community members—we want to simply say *thank you*. No call to action.

Marketing Campaign:

The *Thank You For Riding* campaign will launch in July 2023 and includes a 1-minute video (filmed around Contra Costa and featuring staff), printed interior bus panels, and targeted social media postings. The primary message is to thank those who have continued to utilize our service. The secondary message is softer and aimed at our former riders, shown through a visual narrative that County Connection buses are clean, well-maintained, and that our staff are friendly and here to serve (when former riders are ready to return). Additionally, showing our operators on film, the community we serve, and the interior of our buses aims to dispel any negative perceptions the larger public may have built up since last riding with us.

From this campaign, staff will work to set a tone for future public engagement, one that emphasizes our commitment to public service and builds upon regional pride for our decades-long bus service in Central Contra Costa. In the coming year, marketing efforts that will branch off the Thank You For Riding campaign will include an educational series (e.g. pro-tips on how to use our service, a look into operations), youth/family programming (e.g. regional landmark travel guide, points of interest accessible via County Connection), and working to better engage with our Spanish-speaking riders (e.g. partnering with the San Francisco Bay Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Monument Crisis Center, other community orgs).

Financial Implications:

All costs associated with this marketing campaign are included in the Promotions budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None