

Summary Minutes
Operations & Scheduling Committee
Friday, June 6, 8:30 a.m.

Directors: Robert Storer, Marisol Rubio
Staff: Bill Churchill, Ruby Horta, Scott Mitchell, Andrew Smith, John Sanderson, Pranjal Dixit
Public: None

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

1. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda.

2. Public Communication

None.

3. Approval of Minutes of May 2, 2025

The Committee approved the minutes.

4. Summer Bid Update

Mr. Dixit briefed the committee on the Summer Bid (effective June 8, 2025), which introduces weekend route service adjustments. These changes are a direct result of the Bay Area TRANSFER Plan, an MTC-led regional schedule coordination effort since December 2023, aiming to improve customer transfer timings at key hubs, especially with BART. He added that the initial focus is on weekend bus-to-bus transfers at Concord BART, as implementing weekday recommendations would require a more extensive schedule realignment to preserve existing bus-to-bus transfers across many BART connections. Mr. Churchill highlighted this project as a prime example of successful interagency coordination, achieving its goals without requiring consolidation.

Mr. Dixit, responding to Director Rubio's question about frequency changes, clarified that service frequency will remain the same. However, trip start times are being adjusted to ensure seamless passenger transfers.

5. Fuel Cell Project

Mr. Mitchell briefed that in July 2022, CCTA secured \$13.18 million in federal funds from the TIRCP Cycle 5 for its I-680 Express Bus Program, with County Connection's \$6.59 million share dedicated to a temporary hydrogen fueling station. This station will support three hydrogen fuel cell express buses for service between the Martinez Amtrak and Dublin BART stations.

He added that the program faces significant hurdles: high bus costs from limited manufacturers, potential performance issues on uphill routes, hydrogen fuel being four times more expensive than renewable diesel with limited suppliers, and an inefficient hydrogen supply network that vents a

large portion of fuel during transfer and storage. Additionally, a lack of specialized maintenance training and necessary facility upgrades add to these challenges, with no identified funds to cover the increased operational expenses despite grants for initial purchases. Responding to Director Rubio's inquiry about emissions, Mr. Mitchell explained that renewable diesel is 98% cleaner than the regular diesel fuel used a decade ago. He further highlighted that modern buses utilize after-treatment systems to significantly reduce particulate matter (PM) emissions. Directors Rubio and Storer welcomed the idea of staff inviting representatives from Gillig to present to the Board.

6. Youth Ride Free Update

Mr. Smith presented an update to the Committee on the Youth Ride Free program, highlighting its initial ridership figures. He emphasized the program's focus on understanding how removing barriers to entry—like those associated with the Summer Youth Pass, Pass2Class, and Clipper Youth Card— influences youth ridership, as this pilot program allows youth to ride transit without needing a pass or ID (however, operators retain the discretion to request identification for passengers who appear too old to qualify). Early data indicates the Youth Ride Free program's ridership is on track to significantly exceed the previous year's Summer Youth Pass figures.

Directors Storer and Rubio underscored the critical role of the pilot program in changing travel behavior among young people.

7. Monthly Ridership Reports

Mr. Dixit reported a 1% rise in ridership compared to April 2024, bringing the year-to-date recovery to 85% of pre-pandemic levels. Systemwide productivity remains robust at 14.3 passengers per revenue hour, though slightly below pre-pandemic figures. Mr. Dixit highlighted that a persistent operator shortage has led to an elevated number of missed trips. However, a recent resolution with the DMV will facilitate the hiring and training of operators holding only Class C licenses.

Mr. Sanderson reported eight consecutive months of ridership growth. While productivity is exceeding standards, staff are considering future revisions to these metrics. He noted a slight drop in on-time performance, leading to an increase in complaints which was above the threshold. He added that although cost per ride decreased, cumulative costs rose and will be discussed at a future Board workshop. To address Director Rubio's concern about miscommunication, Mr. Sanderson confirmed additional training for call center staff is planned to improve booking and reservation communications.

8. Committee Comments

None

9. Future Agenda Items

Director Rubio requested staff present an overview of scheduling and the role the Union plays at County Connection.

10. Next Scheduled Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for July 1 at 8:30 a.m. in the Small Community Meeting Room at the Pleasant Hill City Hall located at 100 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: Pranjali Dixit, Manager of Planning