

To: Board of Directors

Date: April 9, 2026

From: Andrew M. Smith, Director of Planning & Marketing

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: Revised Draft Alternative Service Plan

Background:

At the March 2026 Board of Directors and Operations & Scheduling Committee meetings, staff presented two scenarios for an Alternative Service Plan to address the budget reductions necessary should Bay Area voters not approve the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative in November. The two scenarios varied in that Scenario 1 relied on cutting County Connection's lower productivity routes (as measured by passengers per revenue hour), while Scenario 2 took a more balanced approach of cutting only the very least productive routes and reducing frequency on the remaining routes in ascending order of productivity. Both the Board and the Committee expressed a preference for the approach taken in Scenario 2, as well as keeping all of County Connection's 600-series school routes.

Alternative Service Plan Scenarios:

Based on input provided by the Board and Committee, staff has created a new Scenario 3, which is a variant of the previously reviewed Scenario 2. This new scenario includes all of the service cuts and frequency reductions included in Scenario 2, except that it also proposes to end service on the weekday Route 18 (a lower-ridership route that runs between the Pleasant Hill BART and Martinez Amtrak stations), in order to preserve the existing frequency/headways on the weekday Route 10 (County Connection's second-highest ridership route, travelling east on Clayton Road from the Concord BART station), the weekend Route 4 (the downtown Walnut Creek "trolley", County Connection's second-most productive weekend route), and the afternoon portion of the weekday Route 20 (County Connection's third-highest ridership route, connecting the Concord BART station with DVC). Both scenarios preserve all of County Connection's 600-series school routes, and both propose to discontinue paratransit service for trips beginning or ending more than the federally mandated three-quarter-mile buffer from any fixed route.

In addition to the service reductions included in the two scenarios described above, staff would also recommend the Board's adoption of austerity measures should the Connect Bay Area initiative fail at the ballot box. These measures include reductions of approximately \$170,000 in marketing expenses and \$130,000 in conferences and travel, as well as an estimated \$300,000 in savings from temporarily suspending MERIT and step increases and cost-of-living adjustments for administrative staff, for a combined total of approximately \$600,000 annually. While these actions provide meaningful near-term savings and help to limit the depth of service reductions, staff notes that the suspension of salary increases is not a sustainable long-term strategy and should be viewed as a temporary measure rather than a recurring source of ongoing savings.

Fare Increase Option:

Staff also evaluated the possibility of filling the anticipated budget gap by raising fares. Using data from several studies on price elasticity for transit fares, staff found that this is not a viable option because the resulting reduction in ridership outpaces the increase in fare revenue. Simply stated, there would be fewer people riding the bus to pay the higher fare. Using the most conservative estimates (i.e. assuming the lowest levels of price sensitivity), County Connection could fill approximately 22% of the anticipated budget gap through a 120% fare increase (\$5.50 adult cash fare, \$11.00 paratransit fare) that would result in a one-third reduction in fixed-route ridership and a two-thirds reduction in paratransit ridership. Any further fare increases would result in lower overall fare revenues due to reduced ridership.

Financial Implications:

Either of the two scenarios presented above are expected to close anticipated budget gap should the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative fail at the ballot box in November.

Recommendation:

Between the two scenarios, the Operations & Scheduling Committee and staff recommend Scenario 3, as it preserves existing levels of service on more of County Connection's highest-ridership routes, while still maintaining regional connectivity (most notably to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station – also a regional bus hub) and preserving all of County Connection's 600-series school routes.

Action Requested:

Staff and the O&S Committee request that the Board approve a preferred scenario and adopt the Alternative Service Plan.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Scenarios 2 & 3 by route (listed in descending order of productivity)

Attachment 2: Map of Scenario 2

Attachment 3: Map of Scenario 3

Scenarios 2 & 3 by route (listed in descending order of productivity)

Route	Location	Productivity (pass/rev hr)	Existing Service	Scenario #2	Scenario #3	Service Period	Subarea
314	Concord BART / Downtown Pleasant Hill / DVC	20+	30	30	30	Weekends	Central
14	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART / Walnut Creek BART	20+	30	30	30	Weekdays	Central
11	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART	20+	45-90	45-90	45-90	Weekdays	Central
10	Concord BART / Clayton	10-20	15-30	30	15-30	Weekdays	Central
4 (wkdy)	Walnut Creek BART / Broadway Plaza	10-20	15	15	15	Weekdays	Central
4 (wknd)	Walnut Creek BART / Broadway Plaza	10-20	20	30	20	Weekends	Central
20	Concord BART / DVC	10-20	15	30	15-30	Weekdays	Central
311	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART / Walnut Creek BART	10-20	60	60	60	Weekends	Central
16	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill / Martinez Amtrak	10-20	40	60	60	Weekdays	Central
310	Concord BART / Clayton	10-20	40	60	60	Weekends	Central
5	Walnut Creek BART / Creekside	10-20	45	60	60	Weekdays	Central
7	Pleasant Hill BART / Mitchell Park 'n Ride	10-20	20	30	30	Peak only	Central
316	Pleasant Hill BART / Martinez Amtrak	10-20	80	80	80	Weekends	Central
17	Concord BART / North Concord/Martinez BART	10-20	50	60	60	Weekdays	Central
91X	Concord Commuter Express	10-20	30	30	30	Peak only	Central
9	Walnut Creek BART / DVC	10-20	60	60	60	Weekdays	Central
320	Concord BART / DVC	10-20	40	60	60	Weekends	Central
35	San Ramon Transit Center / Dublin/Pleasanton BART	10-20	30-60	60	60	Weekdays	SRV
6 (wknd)	Orinda BART / Moraga / Lafayette BART	10-20	80	80	80	Weekends	Lamorinda
15	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART	10-20	60	60	60	Weekdays	Central
98X	Walnut Creek BART / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	40-60	40-60	40-60	Weekdays	Central
1	Rossmoor Shopping Center / Mitchell Park 'n Ride	0-10	60	60	60	Weekdays	Central
21	BART Walnut Creek / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	30-60	60	60	Weekdays	SRV
6 (wkdy)	Orinda BART / Moraga / Lafayette BART	0-10	30-60	60	60	Weekdays	Lamorinda
19	Concord BART / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	90	90	90	Weekdays	Central
321	BART Walnut Creek / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	60	60	60	Weekends	SRV
99X	North Concord/Martinez BART / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	30	30	30	Peak only	Central
335	San Ramon Transit Center / Dublin/Pleasanton BART	0-10	40	60	60	Weekends	SRV
18	Pleasant Hill BART / DVC / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	80	80	X	Weekdays	Central
28	Martinez Amtrak / DVC / Concord BART	0-10	50	X	X	Weekdays	Central
96X	Walnut Creek BART / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	30	30	30	Peak only	SRV
93X	Antioch BART / Walnut Creek BART	0-10	20-60	X	X	Peak only	Central
95X	Walnut Creek BART / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	30	X	X	Peak only	SRV
97X	Dublin/Pleasanton BART / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	60	X	X	Peak only	SRV
315	Concord BART / Bel Air Drive	0-10	60	X	X	Weekends	Central
301	Walnut Creek BART / Shadelands	0-10	60	X	X	Weekends	Central
92X	Pleasanton ACE / Mitchell Park 'n Ride	0-10	60	X	X	Peak only	SRV
600s	School Service	n/a	1-2/day	1-2/day	1-2/day	School Days	All
			Time (in minutes) between buses:		30		
			Frequency partially reduced:		15-30		
			Frequency reduced:		60		
			Service discontinued:		X		



