

To: Board of Directors

Date: October 8, 2026

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

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: Contract Amendment for Fare-Free Paratransit Service on Routes 4 and 5

Background:

County Connection currently operates seven fare-free routes on weekdays and four fare-free routes on weekends. Revenue to offset the loss of fares on these routes comes from a variety of sources, with the revenues for Routes 4 and 5 paid for by the City of Walnut Creek.

County Connection's Link paratransit is a shared-ride service for people who are unable to use regular public transit due to a disability. Federal regulations require the provision of paratransit service within three-quarter miles of all fixed route bus service and permits transit agencies to charge paratransit fares of up to twice the regular adult cash fixed route fares. County Connection generally follows this regulation by charging a \$5.00 fare for Link paratransit service, which is exactly two times the regular adult cash fare for fixed-route rides.

As a recipient of federal funding, every three years County Connection is reviewed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). As part of County Connection's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2025 Triennial Review, the FTA issued a finding requiring County Connection to establish "a fare comparability zone for paratransit, where trips that are comparable to those taken on the fixed route system in the Monument Corridor are not charged a fare". While the Triennial Review specifically called out the LCTOP-funded routes on Monument Boulevard, the FTA's interpretation of the applicable federal regulations applies to all of County Connection's "fare-free" sponsored or grant-funded routes.

Contract Amendment:

The City of Walnut Creek and County Connection first entered into a fare reimbursement agreement for Route 4 in 1985, and for Route 5 in 2014, and both agreements have been amended many times since, typically in response to raising fares or changes in ridership. The agreements must now both be further amended to include fare-free paratransit service within three-quarter miles of either route.

County Connection and City staff are currently negotiating new agreements for both routes that will move from the current annual fixed-fee reimbursement structure to one where the City reimburses County Connection on a per-passenger basis, while also increasing the contracted amounts to reflect the post-COVID ridership recovery. However, as these new agreements will take several more months to finalize, staff is proposing to amend the existing agreements by adding fare-free paratransit, without increasing the contracted reimbursement amounts, as an interim step to accommodate timely compliance with the FTA finding. Under this amendment, fares will not be charged for paratransit trips

which start within three-quarter miles of Routes 4 or 5, and which end within three-quarter miles of any fare-free County Connection route. Reimbursement by the City will be covered by the annual fixed-fee rates specified by the existing agreements for these two routes (\$182,070 per year for Route 4 and \$66,000 per year for Route 5).

Financial Implications:

The anticipated increase in lost fare revenue resulting from the fare-free paratransit service is less than \$3,000 per year across both routes, and, at current ridership levels, the annual fixed-fee reimbursements specified by the existing agreements will be sufficient to cover these costs until the City and County Connection enter into new agreements with a per-passenger fare reimbursement structure.

Recommendation:

The Operations & Scheduling Committee and staff recommend amending the fare reimbursement agreements with the City of Walnut Creek to include fare-free paratransit service within three-quarter miles of Routes 4 and 5.

Action Requested:

The Operations & Scheduling Committee and staff request that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2027-09 authorizing the General Manager to enter into amended agreements with the City of Walnut Creek to include fare-free paratransit service within three-quarter miles of Routes 4 and 5.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Resolution No. 2027-09

RESOLUTION NO. 2027-09
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
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**AUTHORIZING AMENDMENT OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE AGREEMENTS
WITH THE CITY OF WALNUT CREEK FOR ROUTE 4 AND ROUTE 5 SERVICE TO PROVIDE FARE-
FREE COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE**

WHEREAS, the County of Contra Costa and the Cities of Clayton, Concord, the Town of Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, the Town of Moraga, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon and Walnut Creek (Member Jurisdictions) have formed the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA), a joint exercise of powers agency created under California Government Code Section 6500 et seq., for the joint exercise of certain powers to provide coordinated and integrated public transportation services within the area of its Member Jurisdictions and certain unincorporated portions of Contra Costa County;

WHEREAS, CCCTA and the City of Walnut Creek (City) have entered into a fare reimbursement agreement for Route 4 service since 1985 and a fare reimbursement agreement for Route 5 service since 2014, each of which has been amended from time to time to reflect changes in ridership and fares, and under which City currently provides CCCTA an annual fare subsidy of \$182,070 for Route 4 and \$66,000 for Route 5 (collectively, the "Agreements");

WHEREAS, CCCTA operates Route 4 and Route 5 fare-free, the lost fare revenue for which is offset by the Agreements;

WHEREAS, CCCTA's Link paratransit service is a shared-ride service for persons who are unable to use regular fixed route transit service due to a disability;

WHEREAS, CCCTA provides Link service within three-fourths of a mile of all of its fixed routes, including Route 4 and Route 5;

WHEREAS, as part of CCCTA's Fiscal Year 2023-2025 Triennial Review, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued a review finding requiring CCCTA to establish a fare comparability zone for paratransit on all of its fare-free sponsored or grant-funded routes, including Route 4 and Route 5, such that paratransit trips comparable to trips on those routes are not charged a fare;

WHEREAS, CCCTA and City staff are currently negotiating new agreements for Route 4 and Route 5 that will move from the current annual fixed-fee reimbursement structure to a per-passenger reimbursement structure, increase the contracted amounts to reflect post-COVID-19 ridership recovery, and address the FTA finding described above, but these new agreements will take several additional months to finalize;

WHEREAS, in order to timely comply with the FTA's finding, CCCTA staff recommend amending the existing Agreements, as an interim step, to provide that no fare will be charged for Link paratransit trips that begin within three-fourths of a mile of Route 4 or Route 5 and end within three-fourths of a mile of any of CCCTA's fare-free fixed routes, without increasing the annual fixed-fee reimbursement amounts currently specified in the Agreements; and

WHEREAS, the Operations & Scheduling Committee and the General Manager recommend Board approval of the amendments to the Agreements with the City of Walnut Creek.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority Board of Directors authorizes amendments to the Public Transportation Service Agreement for Route 4 and the Public Transportation Service Agreement for Route 5 with the City of Walnut Creek, to provide that no fare will be charged for Link paratransit trips that begin within three-fourths of a mile of Route 4 or Route 5 and end within three-fourths of a mile of any fare-free CCCTA fixed route, without increasing the annual fixed-fee reimbursement amounts currently provided under those Agreements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Manager or his designee is authorized to execute the amendments, in a form approved by Legal Counsel.

Regularly passed and adopted this 15th day of October, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Lathina Hill, Clerk to the Board

Laura Hoffmeister, Chair, Board of Directors