

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 1/26/2022

Staff Report No. 22-011

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Supplementary Service

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on planning for future Supplementary Service needs. [Requested by Director Shaw 7/28/21].

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

Student ridership supported by Supplementary Service is an important component of the District's overall ridership. Scheduling Supplementary Service this school year has been challenging due to effects that the pandemic has had on schools. The District has implemented additional service changes this past December to improve service for riders.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

This report is informational only. No action is being taken with this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit provides basic, fixed route bus service to most public and private junior high/middle schools and high schools within its service area using its regular route network. In addition, Supplementary Service trips are provided to meet the demand for increased system capacity at bell times. Pre-COVID, staff estimates the District provided 30,000 rides per day to students through a combination of supplemental and fixed route service.

AC Transit must comply with state regulations (Section 545 of the California Vehicle Code) and federal regulations (Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 605) when operating Supplementary Service. Board Policy 546 provides operational standards for how the District is to go about operating Supplementary Service.

At the request of the Board of Directors, staff developed the **Supplementary Service Overview** report that summarizes AC Transit's Supplementary Service program, including ridership data and school bell-time coordination. The report is included as an attachment and is summarized below.

Service Levels

In Fall 2021, the District operated 145 Supplementary Service trips per day on forty-four (44) 600-series lines and an additional twenty-two (22) Supplementary Service trips added to nine (9) basic lines. These supplementary service trips were coordinated with bell times at 38 schools (both public and private schools).

For comparison, in Fall 2019, the District operated 146 Supplementary Service trips per day on forty-six (46) 600-series lines and an additional nineteen (19) Supplementary Service trips added to nine (9) basic lines. These Supplementary Service trips were also coordinated with bell times at 38 schools (both public and private).

School districts with schools served by Supplementary Service include Alameda Unified School District (AUSD), Fremont Unified School District (FUSD), Hayward Unified School District (HUSD), Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), Newark Unified School District (NUSD) and West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD).

Supplementary Service is also coordinated with bell times at five (5) private schools, including Bishop O'Dowd High School, Bentley School, Head-Royce School, Oakland Hebrew Day School and St. Mary's High School.

Other schools within each of the previously mentioned school districts are also served by regular, fixed route service. In addition, schools within other school districts (Albany Unified, Berkeley Unified, New Haven Unified, San Leandro Unified and San Lorenzo Unified) are served as well.

Coordination

Staff coordinates with individual school districts and schools on an ongoing basis. Schools/school districts are expected to provide potential changes to bell schedules in time to allow staff to plan service changes for the upcoming school year.

Major schedule changes to Supplementary Service lines typically take place in the fall and bus schedules typically remain unchanged until the following school year. Since staff was not able to obtain accurate bell schedule data in time to develop service for the Fall 2021 Sign-up, numerous changes were implemented as part of the Winter 2021 Sign-up to address long wait times before or after school based on the actual bell times schools used.

Staff adjusted Supplementary Service trips to improve connections to the maximum extent possible, using the limited available resources. Any additional significant modifications to schedules to improve connections are likely to require additional bus operators and buses.

State Mandated Bell Times

State Senate Bill 328 (SB 328) was signed in 2019. Under this new law, California's middle schools are required to start classes no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and high schools no earlier than 8:30 a.m. These guidelines go into effect starting July 2022.

The majority of schools that the District serves have already adjusted their bell schedules in advance of the July 2022 deadline. Staff implemented several service changes in the fall to mitigate the impacts from the adjusted school bell schedules.

One school that has yet to move their bell schedule is Skyline High School. Moving Skyline High School's bell time from 8:05 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. has the potential to have major cost/resource impacts to the District due to how service to the school is interlined with service to other schools. Staff has been coordinating with OUSD staff regarding the impact that moving Skyline High School's bell time will have on Supplementary Service to OUSD schools as well as developing potential solutions to mitigate those impacts.

Ridership

During the Fall 2021 sign-up, 600-series lines carried an average of 4,359 riders per day. This is a 12% decrease from 2015 to 2017 when that figure averaged approximately 5,000 riders per day. 600-Series lines to OUSD schools carried 47.8% of Supplementary Service ridership. District-wide, Supplementary Service trips carry approximately 30 passengers per trip.

Crowding on-board buses has not been a problem this school year. Pre-COVID, many trips would operate with a vehicle load factor well above the comfortable standee load limit established in Board Policy 545 (1.25 times the number of seats on-board).

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Service trips, when possible, also has a benefit of providing minor deviations and combining of route segments to better serve schools.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff did not consider any alternatives to this briefing report

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Board Policies 545 and 546

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Supplementary Service Overview

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