

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 2/9/2022

Staff Report No. 22-140

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Set Public Hearing for Extension of Line 60 and Line 78 Pilots

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing staff to set and hold a Public Hearing in spring 2022 regarding the authorization of an additional year-long pilot period for the Line 60 and Line 78 pilot services.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

Pilots allow the District to respond to requests from customers and communities, testing new service concepts and evaluating their performance to inform future permanent planning decisions. Both pilots under consideration tie directly to the District's goal of improving customer satisfaction through better transit access to origins and destinations potential riders might want to travel.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Setting the date and time for the public hearing will have a minimal fiscal impact on the District for items such as the cost to publish appropriate public notices and conduct the public hearings.

The resources needed for each of the two pilots, based on annualized numbers from the Winter 2021-22 signup and their estimated costs are detailed below.

Pilot	Daily Hours	Service Days per Week	Annual Service Days	Annual Hours	Hourly Cost	Annual Cost
Line 60 - South Hayward BART Extension	18.2	7	365	6,656	\$140.00	\$931,980
Line 78 - Seaplane Lagoon	17.8	5	255	4,539	\$140.00	\$635,460

The South Hayward BART service requires two operators. The Seaplane Lagoon service requires three operators. If approved, both pilots would continue to be funded through the District's operating budget. Because of the connection to regional Transbay service, the Line 78 pilot may be eligible for future Regional

Measure 3 funding when that source becomes available.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Section B.1.e of Board Policy No. 544 allows the District to operate pilot services for no more than 12 months before conducting a public hearing in accordance with Board Policy No. 110 (Public Hearing Process for the Board of Directors) and conducting a Title VI Service Equity Analysis per Board Policy No. 518 (Title VI and Environmental Justice Service Review and Compliance Report). This allows the District to test new service options and gather real-world feedback before making a commitment to include them in the network long-term. If staff requires more time to evaluate these pilots - a possibility given the pandemic - a separate public hearing may be conducted before the end of the 12-month mark for each line.

The pilots depicted below are currently under consideration for continuation past the one-year mark in compliance with AC Transit Board policies and Federal Transit Administration requirements.

Line 60 Pilot

Since Line 22 was eliminated in 2017 to improve frequency on the other lines with which it overlapped, students and administrators at Chabot College have been requesting a direct connection between the South Hayward BART Station and Chabot College via Tennyson Road. In December 2021, Line 60 was extended from Chabot College along Hesperian Boulevard and Tennyson Road to the South Hayward BART Station as a one-year pilot that would address those concerns.

Line 78 Pilot

In August 2022, the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), which operates the San Francisco Bay Ferry, opened their new ferry terminal at Seaplane Lagoon in Alameda Point with robust direct service to San Francisco. AC Transit provides a peak-hour timed connection to the ferry terminal that operates across the island along Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway and Santa Clara Avenue and up to the Fruitvale BART Station. The alignment takes advantage of the new stops located in the Alameda Point development and serves as a first step toward 15-minute service planned at full build-out. Residents and employees now have a line connecting them to the ferry as well as back across the island to Webster and Park Street corridors. This overlay also provides critical additional capacity along the 51A corridor for those looking to make trips to and from Fruitvale BART and within Alameda.

The ongoing pandemic has had significant impacts on the District's service levels but has also led to changes in staff's approach to near-to-mid-term planning. When these pilots were approved by the Board, staff meant for a system-wide planning process to take place and a resulting new network to serve post-pandemic travel needs to be implemented in August 2022. However, given the arc of the pandemic and the rise of the Omicron variant, in November 2021, staff indefinitely delayed its planned network redesign to refocus on recovering the existing service network.

In the interim, these pilots have served as a near-term opportunity to respond to feedback from the community over the last several years about what works with the existing network and what does not. With near-term responsiveness in mind, staff is proposing a one-year extension of the Line 60 pilot until December 2023 and a one-year extension of the Line 78 pilot until August 2023. Staff hopes that with an additional year for the region to see more consistent demand patterns emerge, we will be able to better gauge success over

the long term.

In accordance with Board policies and federal compliance obligations, staff will undertake a Title VI major service change analysis for both service pilots, which will be presented along with the materials for the proposed public hearing.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantages of these proposals are three-fold:

- 1) The proposals respond to issues raised by the communities we serve;
- 2) They serve as a nimbler way of trying out new ideas within the context of a pilot and can yield critical information about what works and what does not; and
- 3) Extending the evaluation period for these pilots will allow staff to better understand how they will integrate into the rest of the transit network as the region continues to emerge from pandemic market trends.

The primary disadvantage is these services require bus operators and funding. The District is on a path toward service recovery to pre-pandemic levels but is still significantly short of the levels the network required pre-pandemic. However, the pilots help in transit recovery by restoring service, improving key connections, serving key destinations and/or more efficiently serving commuters. As previously stated, these pilots are covered under the District's operating budget.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There were several alternatives considered to these lines, with the primary alternative being to not continue them. This alternative would save the District money and operators but would not be responsive to requests from customers and the community. A secondary alternative would be to bring a proposal forward to make these pilot service permanent. However, this alternative would not allow for flexibility and further assessment as the region emerges from the pandemic.

For the Seaplane Lagoon service, staff has long looked at Line 96 as an option for Seaplane Lagoon service but the ferry riders in Alameda are primarily east of Webster and Line 96 would not serve them at all, so a cross-town option was needed. Staff evaluated converting Line O trips from Transbay to ferry-serving trips but elected to move forward with a new line to ensure Line O has capacity as the region recovers.

For the Line 60 extension, staff looked at reviving Line 22 but it would require as many as 14 operators to run and overlaps with service on every street on which it runs.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Board Policy No. 110 Public Hearing Process for the Board of Directors
Board Policy No. 518 Title VI and Environmental Justice Service Review and Compliance Report
Board Policy No. 544 Service Adjustments
Staff Report 21-255 Proposed Pilot Services
Staff Report 21-311 Service Recovery Priorities
Staff Report 21-508 Network Redesign Timeline Update

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

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