

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/10/2025

Staff Report No. 11-256t

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Salvador Llamas, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Dumbarton Express Operations

ACTION ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☐

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider exercising the second of three one-year options with MV Transportation to continue operating the Dumbarton Express service under the existing contract through December 31, 2026.

Staff Contact:
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Financial Efficiency and Revenue Maximization

The Dumbarton Express is a vital transit service that primarily serves the journey-to-work travel market between the East Bay and the Peninsula. It has been in operation since 1984 and continues to be an important commute alternative in the Dumbarton Bridge corridor.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The Dumbarton Express operation is funded entirely through revenues from Regional Measure 2 (RM2) bridge tolls, fares collected on the service, and AC Transit EasyPass sales to Stanford University and Stanford Health Care. Aside from a minor amount of staff time to administer the service contract, no other District funds or resources are used to support the Dumbarton Express.

Exercising the option will result in a rate escalation of 5.4% effective January 1, 2026, from \$127.96 per hour to \$134.86 per hour, excluding fuel and other incidental costs, such as on-board WiFi service. The total projected cost of the Dumbarton Express service for calendar year 2026 is approximately \$3.6 million. The exact cost will depend on the actual cost of fuel. While the calendar year and fiscal years do not align, the RM2 allocation for Fiscal Year 2025-26 is up to \$3.1 million. Additionally, EasyPass revenues from Stanford University, Stanford Health Care, and Stanford Research Park are expected to account for \$1.1 million.

In the unlikely event that costs exceed the budgeted amounts during the second option year, staff will request additional RM2 funding and may also reach out to the Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium

("DBROC" or "the Consortium") to request equal financial contributions to close the funding gap. In addition, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) staff have indicated Regional Measure 3 (RM3) funds may become available to support Dumbarton Express operations, if needed.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The Dumbarton Express bus service connects southern Alameda County with the southern portion of San Mateo County and the northern portion of Santa Clara County via the Dumbarton Bridge and has been in operation since 1984. The Dumbarton Express service is overseen by the Consortium, a group of five Bay Area transit agencies, of which AC Transit is a member. The other DBROC member agencies are the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), the City of Union City (Union City Transit), the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans), and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). AC Transit acts as the administrator of the service on behalf of the Consortium.

The Dumbarton Express has been in existence for over 40 years, and has seen service and ridership increase during its existence, with the major exception being the years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership reached its low point in FY 2020-2021 but has since recovered to over 75% of pre-pandemic levels, or nearly 800 daily riders. Dumbarton Express currently is operating 85% of pre-pandemic service levels.

The current base contract with MV Transportation to operate the Dumbarton Express began July 1, 2023 and ended December 31, 2024. The contract procurement was done by the City of Union City, and the Board of Directors agreed to accept assignment of the awarded contract in June 2023. The contract contains options to extend the term one year at a time for up to a maximum of three years. The Board of Directors approved the first one-year option in November 2024 for service through December 31, 2025. MV Transportation has performed in a satisfactory manner and has been responsive to issues and concerns that have arisen during the contract term and first option year to date.

The Consortium met on August 14, 2025, to discuss the status of the contract between AC Transit and MV Transportation to operate the Dumbarton Express on the Consortium's behalf. The Consortium was unanimous in recommending exercise of the second one-year option at MV's proposed rate of \$134.86 per hour (not including fuel and other incidental charges) effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantage of exercising the option is that it is an important step in ensuring uninterrupted Dumbarton Express service after December 31, 2025. Possible disadvantages are an increase in cost during the option year (s); however, staff anticipates costs to be covered by a combination of EasyPass revenue and RM2 funds.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff has considered not exercising the second one-year option and let the first one-year option expire on December 31, 2025, which would lead to an interruption in service for an undetermined amount of time. Staff does not recommended letting the contract end, as the Consortium believes that such an outcome is detrimental for current and potential Dumbarton Express riders.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Report 24-329 Dumbarton Express Operations.

Staff Report 11-256s Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium Cooperative Agreement

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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