

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 1/13/2021

Staff Report No. 21-009

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: BART Bus Bridge Service 2021

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing the General Manager to enter into an agreement with the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) to provide bus bridge services in response to scheduled track maintenance and BART station closures in 2021.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Financial Stability and Resiliency

Initiative - Infrastructure Modernization

Partnering with BART allows them to modernize their system and promotes regional goals of preventative maintenance and service quality. Having strong, reliable partners benefits AC Transit and supporting BART generates coordination and redundancy within the region.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The bus bridge is free to passengers and AC Transit will charge BART for the actual service provided at an hourly rate of \$211. This rate reflects the District's fully allocated cost including all costs related to providing operators and vehicles including maintenance, planning, scheduling, and supervision. The agreement contains a daily budget cap of \$150,000.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

BART will be closing a portion of its track between El Cerrito Del Norte BART and Richmond BART Stations across four weekends in January and February 2021 and portions of its track between South Hayward BART and Union City BART stations across 14 weekends from May to October 2021. These closures will require a combination of bus bridges and local AC Transit service on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays in order to shuttle passengers between stations.

BART and AC Transit have been conducting these coordinated bus bridge efforts across the past several years, including two separate bus bridges in 2020 after the onset of the shelter in place order. At this point, BART is only carrying 10-20 percent of the riders it was carrying before the pandemic, which allows the agency to perform maintenance while impacting fewer customers than in previous years.

Description of Bus Bridge Service

Under this proposed agreement, AC Transit would operate bus bridges across 18 weekends to transport BART passengers between stations on either end of a scheduled track closure.

Staff will coordinate with BART to schedule the appropriate levels of service based on ridership, vehicle capacity limits and projected demand for the specific weekends. BART will allow AC Transit to use the transit centers and other facilities for operations and layovers. This will allow for sufficient bus staging and layover to facilitate operation of the bus bridge.

BART will be responsible for all the public messaging, suggesting passengers travel only if necessary and to allow plenty of time for their journey. BART will ensure AC Transit receives credit for providing the bus bridge in announcements and notices related to the bus bridge.

Coordination between agencies is critical to ensure smooth operations and staff is currently organizing the logistics for each weekend of service. Staging, layover space and circulation at each station is a joint organizational effort between Planning and Supervision from both agencies. As with the previous bus bridges, road supervisors will be on hand at the stations directing operators and assisting passengers.

AC Transit is able to provide the resources for the scheduled bus bridges because they will occur over weekends and holidays. AC Transit will assign road supervisors and request operators to volunteer to operate the bus bridges in return for overtime and/or holiday pay compensation funded by BART.

BART and AC Transit staff will continuously coordinate to monitor and adjust the specifications of the service based on demand, operational challenges and other unforeseen issues that may arise.

Agreement Terms

District and BART staff have drafted an agreement for ratification by the Board with the following key terms:

- Agreement Amount - based on the hourly rate described above:
 - AC Transit will only invoice BART for actual service provided
 - AC Transit will invoice BART on a monthly basis or upon completion of the service
- AC Transit Responsibilities:
 - Provide operators, vehicles, road supervisors, mechanics and planning/scheduling staff, as needed
 - Provide appropriate vehicles to meet the service demand, pending availability
 - Provide support staff to deliver the service
 - Develop schedules and plan operating logistics
 - Coordinate operations at the affected stations

- BART Responsibilities:
 - Provide crowd control and customer service for the entire operations
 - Provide public outreach and information for the bus bridges
 - Provide clean operator restrooms with sufficient lighting and running water within close proximity of the layover point
 - Receive all permissions from the cities for any layover space, bus stops, road closures and parking removals that facilitate bus operations
 - Respond to all customer complaints not related to the operator or the mechanics of the vehicle
 - Provide lunch for the operators and the supervisors
 - Assist with adherence to AC Transit's riding policies and procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic
- In the event of an operator shortage, AC Transit will prioritize filling regularly scheduled runs over the bus bridge runs
- Any adjustments to the plan must be made seven days in advance of implementing the change

Staff from each of the agencies has negotiated terms related to indemnifications, liabilities and insurance.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The service will introduce new riders to AC Transit service and offers the District an opportunity to assist a partner agency with a critical need that has lasting benefits for the region. However, it could place strain on operations and maintenance as this is service not typically operated on weekends so operators and maintenance employees will be working overtime and buses will be incurring mileage that they would not otherwise incur.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff considered not entering into an agreement with BART to provide this service, but does not recommend this alternative as it would require BART to contract with a private charter company that is not well equipped or structured to provide service that is universally accessible and actively managed in the field. In addition, compared to AC Transit, private charter companies do not have the same access to public transit infrastructure such as bus stops and layover space. Also, private charter companies may not have the same familiarity as AC Transit with the roads and intersections between stations.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Reports 15-089a, 16-058, 17-099, 18-161, and 20-238: BART Bus Bridge Agreements

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Bus Bridge Agreement
2. Agreement Attachment A: Scope
3. Agreement Attachment B: Con Ops
4. Agreement Attachment C: Rate Schedule

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Approved/Reviewed by:

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