

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 12/8/2021

Staff Report No. 11-256L

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Dumbarton Express Contract Extension

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing the General Manager to enter into an extension of the contract with MV Transportation to operate the Dumbarton Express service for the period of January 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

The Dumbarton Express is a vital transit service that principally 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. While the Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium (DBROC) that oversees the service intended to have a service provider in place January 1, 2022, the procurement process has been delayed. Extending the current contract ensures continuity of the Dumbarton Express service while the procurement process continues.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The Dumbarton Express operation is funded entirely through revenues from Regional Measure 2 bridge tolls and AC Transit EasyPass sales to Stanford University. 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.

The contract extension with MV Transportation may result in an increased hourly rate resulting in a cost that exceeds the available funding to operate the service. If this is the case, staff will request additional Regional Measure 2 funding and may also reach out to the DBROC to request equal financial contribution to close the funding gap. If additional funds are not available, staff will need to reduce service during the contract extension period to match available funds and reassess service levels prior to entering into the longer-term service contract after June 30, 2022.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The Dumbarton Express services connects southern Alameda County with the southern portion of San Mateo County and the northern portion of Santa Clara County and has been in operation since 1984. The Dumbarton

Express service is overseen by the Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium (DBROC or 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 has been the administrator of the service on behalf of the DBROC for the entire term of the current contract with MV Transportation as the service provider, beginning with an initial five-year contract from 2011 to 2016 and five exercised single-year options since. The last single-year option was exercised for calendar year 2021, with an end date of December 31, 2021; a service provider needed to be selected and in place prior to calendar year 2022 in order to continue service without interruption.

The Consortium fully intended to have a service provider in place by January 1, 2022 with the City of Union City leading the procurement and award process. The City of Union City recently informed District staff that the release of Request for Proposal (RFP) was delayed. Unfortunately, the goal of having a new contract and vendor in place by the January 1, 2022 cannot be met due the delays in the procurement process. In order to avoid an interruption of Dumbarton Express service and to permit the procurement to continue, the Consortium came to a consensus to recommend an extension of the contract with MV Transportation for a period of performance at the discretion granted by the AC Transit Board of Directors.

Like the vast majority of transit service across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in reduced ridership on the Dumbarton Express. Pre-pandemic, the two Dumbarton Express routes combined carried approximately 1,100 daily passengers. During April 2020, the first full month of the statewide lockdown due to the pandemic, average daily ridership dropped to 256. To better align service levels with demand and protect funding, revenue hours were reduced by 15% in June 2020. Since the beginning of 2021, the average daily ridership has increased each month. As of September 2021, the average daily ridership is 459 or over 40% of pre-pandemic ridership levels; in contrast, AC Transit's own Transbay service-which is comparable to the Dumbarton Express in several respects-currently has ridership levels at about 12%.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantage of granting the extension is that it is an important step in ensuring continuity of the Dumbarton Express service after December 31, 2021 and enables the RFP process to select a service provider to continue. There are no known disadvantages other than a delay to enter into the new long-term contract.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

The alternative would be to let the final option expire on December 31, 2021 with an interruption in service for an unknown amount of time until a service provider is in place. This alternative is not recommended as the DBROC believes that such an outcome is detrimental for the travelling public.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Report 21-022 Dumbarton Express Request For Proposals (RFP)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Dumbarton Express Monthly Report September 2021

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