

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 1/25/2023

Staff Report No. 23-087

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Supplementary Service Cost Overview

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☒

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on current costs for Supplementary Service to schools in the Oakland Hills and the current arrangement for reimbursement for those costs. [Requested by Director Peeples - 10/26/2022]

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

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 service profile in the East Bay.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

This report is informational only. No action is being taken with this report and as such there are no additional fiscal impacts associated with it.

Cost of Supplementary Service

Staff estimates that Supplementary Service costs the District approximately \$12.2 million per year to operate. Supplementary Service to Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is estimated to cost \$5 million per year, with \$4.09 million attributed to bus lines serving Skyline High, Montera Middle and Rudsdale High.

Cost Reimbursement

The history of cost reimbursement for service provided to OUSD schools is detailed Attachment 1. This year, the District was provided \$300,000 in Regional Measure 2 Marketing funds by Metropolitan Transportation Commission to subsidize OUSD Supplementary Service operating costs. This will be the last year this funding will be provided. OUSD provided the District with \$500,000 last fiscal year but has not yet informed the District if they will provide any funding this fiscal year.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The District 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, which coincide with peak travel demand. Staff estimates the District provided 30,000 rides per day to students through a combination of Supplementary and fixed route service pre-COVID. Scheduling Supplementary Service these past two school years has been challenging due to effects that the pandemic has had on schools. The District implemented additional service changes this past December to improve service for student riders.

The District 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 operates Supplementary Service.

In response to the Agenda Planning Request, staff developed the Supplementary Service Cost Memo to Oakland schools that summarizes service levels, resources expended (platform hours and number of vehicles) and estimated costs. The cost memo is included as Attachment 1 and is summarized below. This report provides high-level findings from the analysis and further detail is available in the report.

Service Levels

The District operates 157 Supplementary Service trips per weekday, district-wide. This includes 60 trips in the morning and 97 in the afternoon, requiring 55 vehicles in the morning and 82 vehicles in the afternoon. The District operates Supplementary Service to schools within seven school districts. Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has more Supplementary Service operating to its schools than any other school district. This is due to the location of key schools in the Oakland Hills that are not in proximity of basic fixed route service.

The District provides Supplementary Service to six schools within OUSD: Bret Harte Middle School, Montera Middle, Oakland High, Oakland Technical High, Ruidsdale High and Skyline High. Supplementary Service to these schools accounts for about 40 percent (62 of 157) of all daily Supplementary Service trips.

Supplementary Service trips to schools within the Oakland hills (Skyline High, Montera Middle, Ruidsdale High) account for 31.8 percent of all daily Supplementary Service trips (50 of 157). The District schedules 12 buses in the morning and 11 buses in the afternoon that leave the bus yard, operate one or two Supplementary trips to these schools, and head back to the bus yard.

State Mandated Bell Times

State Senate Bill 328 (SB 328) was signed by Governor Newsom in 2019. Under this 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. California schools were required to comply with this new law no later than July 2022.

The majority of schools that the District serves adjusted their bell schedules during the 2021-2022 school year, with Oakland Unified adjusting their schedules at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. Staff implemented several service changes at the start of both school years to mitigate the impacts of those bell schedule changes.

The changes to bell schedules associated with SB 328 had a major impact on the resources (vehicles/operators) required to provide Supplementary Service in the morning. Winter 2022 required seven more operator/buses than in Winter 2019, even though fewer trips were operated. This was due to a reduction in the opportunities to interline school trips with each other.

Transbay Service Reductions

Supplementary Service has historically been interlined with Transbay service in the afternoon. This is due to the afternoon peak Transbay service starting over an hour after most schools have been dismissed. Interlining Supplementary Service trips with Transbay allows for buses and operators to work multiple trips - one or two school trips and then one or two Transbay trips. A significant reduction in the amount of Transbay service being provided since the pandemic has impacted how Supplementary Service is scheduled in the afternoon. The District saw a reduction in the number of interlines between Supplementary trips and Transbay trips. In addition, there was a significant increase in the number of buses that only operate a single trip.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Supplementary Service to schools in the Oakland Hills provides a critical mode for students to get to/from school and introduces students to the AC Transit service network, making them more likely to ride transit for other transportation needs. In addition, the Supplementary Service reduces overcrowding on existing service to schools where local service exists. For example, students attending Montera Middle would have to travel to/from Montclair Village to utilize Line 33, which could lead to crowding on that line.

The primary disadvantage of Supplementary Service is that it uses resources that would otherwise go to other lines in the network for regular or Transbay service.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff did not consider any alternatives as there is no action for this briefing report.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Board Policy 546 - Standards for Operation of Supplementary Service

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Supplementary Service Cost Memo

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