

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/12/2020

Staff Report No. 20-433

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: December 2020 Sign-up Report

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on the District's planned service changes associated with the December 2020 Sign-up.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

The service changes going into effect on December 22, 2020, will address on-time performance and crowding issues that were identified following a review of system performance after the August 2020 sign-up. Beyond reliability, two key elements of the December sign-up are: 1) removing Supplementary Service from the schedule, and 2) adding two Tempo standby buses in the run-cut that are currently being used informally off of the extra board.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Total weekday vehicle platform hours have decreased from August 2020 service levels by 431.1, and Saturday and Sunday hours have decreased by 15.1 and 42.8 hours, respectively. In total, these changes yield an annual decrease of 86,311 platform hours, largely due to the removal of Supplementary Service from assigned runs in the run-cut. While this large decrease in platform hours might indicate a corresponding large decrease in cost, the District's costs are largely based on headcount. Because the District is not planning on any layoffs or furloughs, any actual cost savings would be based on reduced fuel and maintenance costs, along with natural staff attrition.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit typically conducts four sign-ups each year as required by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with ATU Local 192. These occur in March, June, August, and December. After the Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa Health Departments issued a Shelter In Place (SIP) Order, the District operated under an Emergency Service Plan (ESP) focused on Sunday service levels since March 31, 2020. The June sign-up was canceled given the concerns over the availability of workforce and the ability to maintain the health and safety of employees during the bid process. In August, the District implemented Line 1T Tempo BRT, included the

potential to operate Supplementary Service, resumed a minimal amount of Transbay trips and increased service levels on lines with overcrowding and rider pass-ups.

In terms of service levels, this December service change is only a modest change to the actual service on the road and is focused primarily on improving reliability and removing Supplementary Service from the schedule to allow for better flexibility in the event schools return to in-person instruction with different bell times and/or days of instruction. No major changes to the network are planned. The Supplementary Service was included in the August sign-up but never operated as schools never returned to in-person instruction. This includes extra trips on local lines such as the 51A and 72 lines. As a result, Attachment 1 will reflect what appears to be reductions in service on some regular lines but those are Supplementary trips that have been removed from the timetable. There is also a significant increase in Line 1T (Tempo) operating cost in Attachment 1. This is the result of adding two standby buses (four operator shifts) into the run-cut so the assignments are available for bid. Today, the standbys are operated using the Extra Board. This will allow for more certainty for the Transportation Department and will improve Tempo reliability.

Following the December service changes, District staff will continue to monitor ridership and service conditions related to the pandemic and work to address critical issues using available resources.

Equity Analysis

AC Transit conducted a high-level equity analysis in September 2020. Staff wanted to ensure that emergency service changes implemented in March 2020, in response to State and County Health Orders, did not have a discriminatory effect on populations protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Staff analyzed the number of trips available to customers prior to the Emergency Service Plan implementation and compared it to the number of trips available to customers in the Fall 2020 sign-up. Staff further reviewed the data to count the number of trips available to people in the populations protected by Title VI (people of color and low-income persons) and people not in the protected populations. The change in access for the protected populations was then compared to the change in access for non-protected populations.

The analysis revealed the switch to the Emergency Service Plan reduced the number of available trips to people of color by 11.2 percent and to non-people of color by 14.5 percent. The analysis also revealed the switch to the Emergency Service Plan reduced the number of trips available to low-income persons by 10.2 percent and to non-low-income persons by 13.1 percent. In both cases, the negative effects of the change, i.e. a greater cut in service, fell more heavily on the non-protected population than on the protected population. Accordingly, the analysis found that the changes did not carry any Title VI concern.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Implementation of the changes described above allows the District to improve reliability of existing service with runtimes that better match current ridership trends and traffic conditions.

The primary disadvantage is not having the Supplementary Service in the run-cut, which means if schools decide to resume in-person instruction, the District will need to find a means of operating some form of service using the Extra Board or conducting an emergency sign-up.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff evaluated other alternatives, including not implementing these changes, but the disadvantages were too great. Service would remain unreliable with early departures and the District would have a Supplementary Service network that likely would not match the calendar and bell schedules of schools as they resume in-person learning.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 20-223 August 2020 Sign-up Report

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Service Change Summary

Prepared by:

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