

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 7/14/2021

Staff Report No. 21-310

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: August 2021 Service Changes

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on the District's planned service changes associated with the August 2021 Sign-up, including a summary of Supplementary Service scheduled to operate in the fall.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

The service changes going into effect on August 8, 2021, are focused on improving schedule reliability, resuming Supplementary Service, implementing a pilot to the Seaplane Lagoon Ferry Terminal, and increasing Transbay service.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Total daily weekday vehicle platform hours have increased from June 2021 service levels by 235.1, Saturday hours have decreased by 24.3 and Sunday hours have decreased by 27.4 hours. In total, these changes yield an annual increase of 45,996 platform hours, resulting in an annual estimated cost of \$7,226,457. This increase can be attributed to three key groups of changes:

- 1) Resumption of Supplementary Service - \$6,440,680 annually
- 2) Pilot Line 78 to Seaplane Lagoon Ferry - \$582,011 annually
- 3) Expanded Transbay Service - \$2,552,221

The remainder of the changes - to OWL all-nighter service and to multiple lines through blocking changes - amounted to a net cost savings of \$2,348,455. This overall net increase in the number of platform hours and the costs associated with it have been included in the FY 2021-22 operating budget.

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 beginning March 31, 2020.

The District initially included Supplementary Service in the operating schedule in August 2020, absent communication from schools or school districts about the status of the fall semester. It then became clear that in-person schooling in the service area was not going to be viable and the service was not operated. It was removed from the schedule for the December 2020 Sign-up.

Staff resumed some Supplementary Service in Spring 2021 but it was lightly used as schools were only resuming in-person learning for a small segment of the student body at any given time. That school service ended in early June as schools recessed for summer.

System-wide, the District will be at 83 percent of pre-pandemic service levels in August 2021. Much of this increase is the result of the resumption of Supplementary Service. The District will be resuming nearly full Supplementary Service in August 2021, with 197 daily platform hours versus 207 pre-pandemic (about 95.2 percent of the levels operated in August 2019). The slight decrease in hours is attributed to the removal of inefficiencies in Supplementary Service and limitations in operator availability.

Coupled with the resumption of Supplementary Service will be an expansion of Transbay service. The two are tied together through the scheduling process, with buses used for Supplementary Service then used to provide Transbay service, allowing the District to expand Transbay without requiring buses and operators above and beyond those used for Supplementary Service. There will be 353 total Transbay trips operating as of August 2021, or about 55.4 percent of pre-pandemic level of 638 daily trips. This is up from 184 weekday trips following the shelter-in-place orders and 279 weekday trips starting in August 2020. These quantities comprise all-day trips on lines F, NL and O, which the District operated throughout the pandemic.

The final key service change for August 2021 is the launch of Line 78 pilot service to the Seaplane Lagoon Ferry Terminal. The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) was initially planning on launching San Francisco Bay Ferry service between the Seaplane Lagoon and San Francisco in August but have since moved that launch date up to July 1, 2021. This new terminal will become the primary terminal for service from Alameda to San Francisco, with service from the Main Street Ferry Terminal going to Jack London Square before going to San Francisco. Line 78 will be timed to carry riders to the Seaplane Lagoon Ferry Terminal in the morning and pick them up in the evenings. It will mimic Line 51A's routing from Fruitvale BART, using Santa Clara Avenue to cross the island before turning right onto Webster Street then left onto Atlantic/Ralph Appezzato Way to serve the new developments in Alameda Point as well as the ferry terminal. This pilot was approved by the Board on May 26, 2021. Staff will monitor ridership and performance and adjust the service as necessary under the 2022 new network plan.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Implementation of the changes described above allows the District to improve reliability of existing service, turn on Supplementary Service for the new school year, activate Transbay service to aid in regional recovery, and serve the new ferry terminal in Alameda. Staff cannot identify any disadvantages with the restoration of service for the District and its riders.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff evaluated other alternatives, including not implementing these changes, but the disadvantages were too

great. Service would remain unreliable on the routes scheduled for adjustments and there would be no Supplementary Service for the new school year or service to the new ferry terminal.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 21-233 June 2021 Sign-up
SR 21-255 Pilot Services

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Service Change Summary

Prepared by:

Michael Eshleman, Service Planning Manager
Ajay Martin, Scheduling Manager

Approved/Reviewed by:

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning
Derik Calhoun, Director of Transportation
Cecil Blandon, Director of Maintenance
Salvador Llamas, Chief Operating Officer
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
Chris Andrichak, Chief Financial Officer