

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: City of Alameda Affordable Senior/Disabled Transit Pass Program

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing the General Manager to execute an agreement with City of Alameda for an Affordable Senior/Disabled Transit Pass Three-Year Pilot Program.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Financial Stability and Resiliency

Initiative - Financial Efficiency and Revenue Maximization

The City of Alameda assessed senior and disabled transportation needs in the county and identified an approach to meet those needs. This three-year pilot to increase senior and disabled transportation access to necessities, such as health appointments and grocery shopping.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

AC Transit is to be paid in full for the number of total rides taken by participant and reimbursed for the additional administrative and direct costs, billed on a monthly basis.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit previously partnered with Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) and launched a successful Student Transit Pass Program (STPP) that provided low-income middle and high school students across Alameda County with an institutional pass loaded Clipper card allowing unlimited access to local rides on AC Transit. Started as a three-year pilot program in 2016, the program has become such a tremendous benefit to the student participants that the program has been funded until 2024.

The City of Alameda has previously expressed interest in a senior and disabled transit pass program to assist those disproportionately lower income Alameda residents with funding their transportation needs. In coordination with the City of Alameda, staff is seeking Board approval to offer seniors and people with disabilities with disproportionately lower income in Alameda a program with unlimited access to local rides on AC Transit similar to the STPP. Given the fact that many seniors and people with disabilities are on a fixed income, this program would allow those eligible to travel on transit without having to make difficult choices and running the risk of being unable to cover necessary expenses, such as rent, medication, or doctor's fees.

The pilot program with the City of Alameda would offer a Pay-per-Ride model that would enable senior and disabled participants with an institutional pass for unlimited local line ridership. Fares would be assessed by boarding at a senior or disabled Clipper rate. The City will be seeking

approval for a \$175,000 annual expenditure from their City Council on February 15, 2022, for a three-year pilot program. The \$175,000 would allow up to 315 participants with an estimated ridership average of 33 rides per month in a Pay-per-Ride model, although invoicing will be based on actual boardings from Clipper cards. Fare revenue for subsequent pilot years will depend on the number of seniors included in the pilot and the number of boardings.

As this is not a program identified in Board Policies 333 or 334, Board of Directors approval is required prior to program development. This program will be a tremendous benefit for East Bay disabled and senior residents. The initial program will start with 65 seniors enrolled in Mastick Senior Center. The City of Alameda will be seeking City Council approval subsequently after the AC Transit Board of Directors' vote.

Program Extension

AC Transit's "Pay-per-Ride" model can provide adult or youth Clipper cards loaded with an institutional pass allowing for access to unlimited rides on AC Transit. Institutional passes are not available on senior or disabled cards in the current Clipper system, so the eligible population needs to be defined up front to allow for the proper ride pricing. This model could be extended to other cities that are willing to provide funding. Currently staff is aware that the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) is also interested in such a program and will be starting discussions with the City of San Pablo.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

This is an opportunity for the District to support an important service to seniors and disabled riders in increasing the use of transit, focusing on seniors and people with disabilities with disproportionately lower income, potentially improving boarding time and fare collection.

The Pay-per-Ride model as opposed to the Pass model allows maximizing the number of seniors in the program. Attachment 1 itemizes program pricing for pilot. With an estimated 315 participants in the first pilot year, the District will receive approximately \$172,826. Estimating additional 50 participants annually, the second year brings a total of 365 participants and will receive \$211,553; and the third and final pilot year having 415 participants will receive \$258,869.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

No changes to current process. Seniors and disabled riders will continue to purchase fare media at local vendors or transit ticket offices.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Estimated Pilot Program Pricing

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