

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Short Range Transit Plan FY2016-2025

FROM: Christy Wegener, Director of Planning & Communications

DATE: March 28, 2016

Action

Review the draft Short Range Transit Plan FY2016-2025.

Background

Federal transportation statutes require that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in partnership with state and local agencies, develop and periodically update a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which implements the RTP by programming federal funds to transportation projects contained in the RTP. In order to effectively execute these planning and programming responsibilities, MTC requires that each transit operator in its region which receives federal funding through the TIP, prepare, adopt, and submit to MTC a “full” Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) every four years and a “mini” SRTP in the intervening three years. This 2016 SRTP represents a “full” SRTP.

Since the last full SRTP update in 2012, major events impacting LAVTA include:

- 2013 Phase I and II of the Atlantis Satellite Fuel and Wash Facility opened
- 2014 Medical Transportation Management (MTM) was awarded a contract to deliver high quality, on demand paratransit service. Under the MTM business model, a flexible mobile fleet is owned and operated by independent subcontractors, eliminating fleet maintenance and fleet replacement costs to LAVTA. Additional efficiencies include a streamlined call center which takes reservations, dispatches trips, and provides customer service.
- 2015 LAVTA began providing static schedule information to Google® for the Google® Transit Trip Planner
- 2015 LAVTA began its first ever Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) study, which examines the existing fixed route service and makes recommendations for immediate improvements. The study involves significant public input and direction from policy makers.

2015 Clipper began to be accepted on Wheels Buses in November 2015

2015 LAVTA launched a new www.Wheelsbus.com website

Discussion

This SRTP update was built upon the detailed analysis that was undertaken as a part of LAVTA's 2015 Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). The SRTP provides an opportunity to examine if LAVTA's service redesign as a part of the COA is able to meet the needs of future Tri-Valley markets. In making the service recommendations, the COA considered population and employment data from the 2010 Census, fiscal year 2014 and 2015 ridership data, prior SRTPs, on-time performance data, feedback from both riders and non-riders, input from Board members and stakeholders, as well as existing and future land uses. Nelson Nygaard was tasked with leading the COA and with making recommendations for service improvements to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2017.

Fixed Route

For the fixed route system, Nelson Nygaard made significant recommendations to change the routes to become more streamlined, more productive, less circuitous, and to reduce duplication of services along certain route segments. For example, Nelson Nygaard has recommended that Route 10 and the Rapid no longer overlap along the East Ave segment in Livermore, and that Route 12 be eliminated and the Rapid be realigned to serve Portola Ave, Las Positas College, Canyons Parkway and Dublin Blvd. The Rapid is also recommended to terminate at the West Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station. Route 10 is recommended to operate between the Livermore Transit Center and the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station, and to move to 15-minute headways during the day (effectively doubling the existing service levels). Route 8 is recommended to change from two one-way loops to a bi-directional line and to no longer serve Santa Rita Road, where Route 10 would provide service. Due to extremely low ridership, Routes 3 is recommended to be realigned to serve the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and the Stoneridge Mall, no longer providing service to the City of Dublin. Additionally, due to low ridership, Route 2 is recommended to be eliminated. Due to coverage availability of other routes, Route 9 is recommended to be eliminated. Route 14 in Livermore is recommended to be modified to provide service along Jack London Blvd to Stoneridge Drive, terminating at the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station.

The COA recommends the elimination of the low productivity services in Dublin (routes 2 and 3), replacing the routes with a demonstration project called *Wheels-on-Demand*. *Wheels-on-Demand* is envisioned to be a real time dynamic ridesharing service provided through collaborative partnerships.

The service changes that are recommended represent a flat level of service hours from what exists today. After the implementation of the COA changes in FY 2017, staff will be closely monitoring system performance and is expected to make minor adjustments to improve operations and respond to customer requests over time. However, no substantial growth in hours is expected in the system for the next 10 years.

The ridership on the system is projected to grow at a modest rate, beginning in FY2018 with a 5% increase associated with the maturation of the COA changes. From FY19-25, we have projected a modest 2% ridership increase per year.

Paratransit

The LAVTA paratransit service is a premium service with a service delivery model that provides beyond the minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Paratransit ridership has grown significantly between FY14 and FY15, and is on an upward trend for FY16. In order to contain costs and manage demand for service, plans for an analysis of the Paratransit service delivery model are being considered for FY17. Staff is also looking into immediate program modifications, include the eligibility process, trip negotiation, fares, and subscription trip rates.

Finances and Fares

In addition to service planning, the SRTP includes a ten year financial and capital plan. The financial plan assumes revenue hours to remain fairly flat or slightly rising over the next ten years. Fares are assumed to rise commensurate with ridership over the next ten years. Staff is going to take a series of fare change recommendations to the LAVTA Board for approval in mid-2016.

With the passage of Measure BB in 2014, additional funding for transit operations is available starting in 2015. However, LAVTA has lost some revenue from expired complete Measure B grants, so rather than seeing a growth in total revenues, LAVTA was able to use BB funds to maintain previous revenue levels. LAVTA is currently receiving a number of other competitive grants and anticipates additional ones to become available during the period. Additionally, a few new non-competitive funding sources such as Cap and Trade funding have become available to LAVTA. RM2 funding for the Rapid was put on hold by MTC for FY16, but is expected to return to LAVTA in FY17 after the Board approves the COA changes.

Through FY22, reserves are sufficient to offset the difference between revenues and expenses, but starting in FY23, there is a deficit, and LAVTA would no longer be able to balance its budget. The deficit is shown to continue to increase through FY2025, reaching a total of \$10 million. LAVTA will pursue strategies to achieve a balanced budget. These strategies may include:

- Reduce expenses/costs (e.g. paratransit)
- Increase current revenue sources (e.g. fares, advertising, contract services)
- Pursue other revenue sources (e.g. new local taxes, grants, etc.)

The SRTP informs LAVTA to be conservative in service planning and to continue to strive for opportunities to build ridership. There are several capital projects on the horizon within the next five years, including bus stop maintenance and development, electric bus technology, Historic Depot relocation in Livermore, next phases of the Atlantis maintenance facility, additional Transit Signal Priority, a real time passenger information phone app, and

technology upgrades such as Wi-Fi on the buses. LAVTA staff will have to continue to be resourceful with identifying local, state, and federal dollars to fund the capital projects.

Next Steps

The draft SRTP will be submitted to the MTC for review and comment by mid-April. Staff will take the Committee's and MTC's comments into consideration when developing the final SRTP. The final approved SRTP is due to MTC in May 2016.

Attachments:

1. Draft Short Range Transit Plan, 2016-2025