

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Fare Free Transit Programs

FROM: Jonathan Steketee, Customer Service & Contract Compliance Manager

DATE: March 4, 2020

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**Action Required**

Authorize the Chair of the TAAC to submit a letter of support to the Board of Directors in regards to the possibility of going fare free on bus routes.

**Background**

As you are likely aware, Assembly Member Lorena Gonzales (San Diego) amended her bill, AB 1350, to require all transit agencies in California to provide free transit passes to persons 18 years of age and under. A similar measure, AB 2012 by Assembly Member Kansen Chu (San Jose) was introduced on January 28<sup>th</sup> to require all transit agencies to provide free transit passes to persons over 65 years of age.

Additionally, throughout the nation many transit systems are considering the benefits of operating fare free. An example is Kansas City, Missouri, which could become the first major city to eliminate bus fares in June under a proposal being reviewed by the City Council. Benefits of fare free can include a significant increase in ridership, reductions in operating expenses through the elimination of fare collection infrastructure and managing fares, quicker boarding and alighting to improve system performance, and the return on investment for social justice, compassion and empathy.

**Discussion**

Staff will brief the LAVTA Tri Valley Accessibility Advisory Committee on the movement towards fare free and a few opportunities to better understand the benefits and disadvantages of a fare free environment on the Wheels system.

**Recommendation**

If the committee finds fare free on bus routes favorable, authorize the Chair to submit a letter of support for fare free bus routes.