

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Wheels Service to the 2022 Alameda County Fair
FROM: Tony McCaulay, Director of Planning and Marketing
DATE: March 7, 2022

Action Requested

Approve a recommendation to operate a dedicated shuttle during the 2022 Alameda County Fair.

Background

The summer version of the Alameda County Fair is returning this year. This year's Fair will be held between Friday June 17 and Sunday July 10, 2022 at the Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. During this time, the event will be open Wednesdays thru Sundays, and operate between the hours of 11AM and 11PM. The Fair will also operate reduced hours on Monday July 4 with gates closing at 4PM and an earlier closing time of 8PM. The Fair is a major event that draws visitors from across the Tri-Valley as well as other parts of Alameda County and the Bay Area.

Most fairgoers from outside the Tri-Valley that are taking public transportation to the event travel on BART and then transfer to a Wheels route to complete their trip to the Alameda County Fairgrounds, which is not within walking distance from a BART station.

Discussion

The accommodation of fairgoers on Wheels service has varied over the years. Through 2004, a dedicated BART shuttle was provided, whereas in most subsequent years the agency accommodated these trips by applying detours and extensions to one or more existing routes. However, the current route setup does not lend itself to detouring without substantial disruption and delays to regular service. As a result, in 2017 the Board of Directors approved a return to a dedicated shuttle (Route 52), which was operated during the 2017, 2018, and 2019 fairs.

Dedicated Shuttle

Staff is again proposing a dedicated shuttle service between BART and the Fairgrounds for the 2022 County Fair, with similar parameters and budget as previous years. The shuttle would be provided during days that the Fair will be open and run between the hours of approximately 10:30AM and 11:30PM, with an earlier last trip on July 4. Using one bus, the service would operate hourly between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and the

Pleasanton ACE bus stop on Pleasanton Avenue, which is located just across from the Fairgrounds main entrance. Similar to the past operation, the shuttle would use Hopyard Road between BART and the Fair, and pick up at local bus stops in order to serve local fairgoers wishing to use the service as well. All regular Wheels fares and policies would apply to this service, and its schedule would be published through the same channels as that of regular Wheels routes as well as via additional dissemination through the Fair Association's information channels.

If approved, a dedicated shuttle service as outlined above would incur approximately 225 revenue hours of service. The incremental cost to operate the proposed shuttle is estimated at approximately \$19,000. Based on previous year's ridership, the service would be expected to see approximately 3,000 passenger boardings, resulting in an estimated total net cost of \$13,000-\$15,000 after fare revenues.

Other Wheels Service Available to the Fair

Route 10R operates between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and the Transit Center in Livermore, via downtown Pleasanton, from early morning to late evening, every day of the week. Serving a pair of bus stops on Peters Avenue, it provides another option for accessing the east Fairgrounds gate on Pleasanton Avenue with a short walk.

Route 8 operates between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and downtown Pleasanton via Valley Avenue and with stops near the west entrances to the Fairgrounds.

Marketing and Coordination with the Fair Association

LAVTA staff and County Fair staff have discussed the resumption of the dedicated shuttle service. The fair staff is very supportive of continuing the service and committed to providing financial, marketing and in-kind support to help promote ridership and defray the cost of operation for LAVTA.

In past years, the Fair has agreed to provide prime space near the entrance to the horse track to display our Rideo bus, as well as space by the bus display for a tent and information booth. The Fair has also paid for the printing of the Route 52 timetables and provided our riders with special 2 for 1 admission tickets that are made available on all Wheels and Rapid buses.

The Fair has also promoted the Wheels connection from BART as an integrated message. An ad for our shuttle has also been in the rotation on the video display sign at the corner of Bernal and Valley. The Fair has traditionally purchased a great deal of advertising on our buses.

Budget

If approved, the 225 additional revenue hours associated with the proposed service will be incorporated with the concurrent budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year, and will require no amendments.

Recommendation

Operate an hourly shuttle service between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and the Fairgrounds during the 2022 Alameda County Fair, as outlined above.

Approved: _____