

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Public Hearing: Route 201 – Service to Emerald High School

FROM: Christy Wegener, Executive Director
Mike Tobin, Director of Operations

DATE: December 2, 2024

Action Requested

The Board of Directors will hold a public hearing to receive input on the formalization of Route 201.

Background

At the November Board meeting, the Board approved staff’s recommendation and took action to open the public comment period and set the public hearing date for December 2nd to receive input on the formalization of Route 201.

Emerald High School, located in Dublin, CA, opened in August 2024. In response, LAVTA launched Route 201, a bus route that is convenient for Emerald High School students in the Positano and Dublin Ranch neighborhoods.

Initial projections indicated that approximately 40 students would use the service in the morning and 80 students in the afternoon, which led to the recommendation of one morning bus and two afternoon buses, with resources reallocated from existing school tripper 500-series routes serving Dublin High School (DHS).

Staff recommended that Route 201 be implemented in August 2024 as a pilot program, with the understanding that service levels could be revisited once ridership data was collected after the start of the school year. Based on data from August through October, the demand has aligned with initial projections, and no further adjustments to service are needed at this time.

| Month | AWB |
|-----------|-----|
| August | 91 |
| September | 92 |
| October | 72 |

Table 1 Average Weekday Boardings by month for Route 201

Additionally, according to the Dublin Unified School District, Emerald High School's enrollment is projected to reach 1,172 students by the 2024/2025 school year and grow to 1,765 students by 2025/2026. Based on these projections, the current resource allocation for Route 201 is expected to adequately meet demand as enrollment increases over the next year. Staff will continue to monitor ridership closely and adjust service levels if necessary to ensure that capacity remains aligned with demand.

Discussion

LAVTA’s Title VI and Major Service Change Policy mandates that a public hearing be held for the introduction of any new permanent route. As Route 201 has been operating on a pilot basis and the data supports maintaining the current service level, staff are recommending that the route now be made permanent, which necessitates a public hearing.

A public hearing provides a venue for Wheels riders, stakeholders, and the community to provide comments on the implementation of a new route.

Since the November Board meeting, Wheels staff have been advertising the public hearing and through a variety of channels in English, Spanish, and Chinese (Mandarin). Notice was published in the following publication:

| Publication | Posting Date |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| East Bay Times (Valley Times Zone) | November 20, 2024 |

Details of the public hearing and Route 201 were posted to the Wheelsbus.com website on a dedicated landing page containing a form for comment submissions.

Social media including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were utilized with “pinned” posts at the top of news feeds for the duration of the comment period. An announcement about the proposed scenario was made at the November Tri-Valley Accessible Advisory Committee (TAAC) meeting.

Notices were delivered to the Dublin Unified School District in English, Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin) for PeachJar or equivalent distribution. Printed public notices were displayed on the interior of all Wheels buses. The LAVTA administrative office and the Livermore Transit Center Customer Service facility displayed notices in public access areas.

Budget

There is no direct budget impact associated with the adoption of Route 201, as resources for this route were included in the FY25 budget. are reallocated from the current school route overflow capacity.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board hold the public hearing to receive input on the formalization of Route 201.