



Agenda Item No. 3

To Transportation Committee/Committee of the Whole
Meeting of March 8, 2007

From: Ron Downing, Principal Planner
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Subject: **APPROVE IMPLEMENTATION OF A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
FOR OPERATION OF A MIDDAY-ONLY SHUTTLE SERVICE
BETWEEN THE SAN RAFAEL TRANSIT CENTER AND THE LARKSPUR
FERRY TERMINAL**

Recommendation

The Transportation Committee recommends that the Board of Directors approve a demonstration project to operate a midday shuttle bus between the San Rafael Transit Center and the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, with the understanding that the proposed service is intended to be sustainable without additional District subsidy.

This recommendation will be presented to the Board of Directors at its March 9, 2007, meeting for appropriate action.

Summary

Midday Larkspur ferry crossings have excess capacity, yet opportunities for new riders to use midday ferry services are constrained by lack of available parking and limited alternative transit access options. The nearly 1,600 public parking spaces at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal are almost all utilized by morning peak period ferry riders.

To address the lack of parking and reasonable transit access options for weekday, midday ferry patrons and to do so in a manner that does not require additional subsidy from the District, a demonstration project is proposed that will provide dedicated weekday, midday shuttle bus service from the SRTC to the LFT directly via U.S. 101 using available GGT bus resources.

This regional bus service (proposed to be designated GGT Route 91) would be approximately 2.6 miles in length and take about seven minutes to connect the two transit hubs. The short distance of this route allows it to connect every Larkspur Ferry departure and arrival with the “pulse” times of local and regional buses at the SRTC. In addition to the many regional and local transit connections available at the SRTC from throughout the GGT service area, park and ride spaces are available at Caltrans lots under the freeway a short distance from the SRTC.

Although the Route 91 would provide only midday service, passengers could take this bus in one direction to the ferry to reach San Francisco and return later in the afternoon on GGT transbay basic and commute bus service to the SRTC or other points in the GGT service area.

It is recommended that this service operate for six months beginning in June 2007, with a significant review point in December 2007 to assess the cost-effectiveness of the service. At that time a decision will be made as to whether the service should be continued. If not, the service would be discontinued in March 2008. The important determinants will be how many new regional ferry passengers are generated relative to the operating cost of the service such that the service can continue operating without subsidy. Regional passengers would pay the ferry fare to San Francisco upon boarding this shuttle bus in San Rafael and receive a bus transfer to the ferry as a means of expediting their transfer at LFT. Like all other GGT regional bus routes, local passengers would also be permitted to ride for the local bus fare set by MCTD.

The success of the demonstration service will require adequate public notification of its availability and customer outreach. Intensive marketing efforts will be conducted with communication pieces produced by the District's Marketing and Communications department. Communication pieces include the web site, Transit Guide, Golden Gate Gazette, and "e-blast" e-mail communications. Other promotional materials would include posters on-board the buses and at the transit hubs in Larkspur, San Rafael and San Francisco, and "Notice to Customers" flyers.

Fiscal Impact

The proposed total additional cost for operating the nine-month service is \$40,500. It is projected that cost will be offset by additional passenger revenue. The review will be undertaken to determine if the projection is correct. The District's current FY 06/07 internal cost rate for midday bus service is \$147.98 per hour, which represents a "fully-allocated" rate that includes expenses for all budgeted costs, such as drivers, dispatchers, road supervisors, maintenance labor, facilities security, and Bus Division administration. Because this route is a very small-scale demonstration project, no additional facilities, administrative or supervisory expenses would be generated. Driver resources and buses are also available in the midday. Thus, a large portion of the costs that would be associated with this shuttle are already funded in the budget. The additional cost of operating this shuttle would be limited to the direct operation of the bus, such as fuel, tires, parts and additional labor for servicers and mechanics.