



Agenda Item No. (5)

To: Transportation Committee/Committee of the Whole  
Meeting of October 21, 2021

From: Ron Downing, Director of Planning  
James P. Swindler, Deputy General Manager, Ferry Division  
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **AUTHORIZE ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO PROVIDE GOLDEN GATE FERRY  
SERVICE BETWEEN THE SAN FRANCISCO FERRY TERMINAL AND  
ANGEL ISLAND**

### **Recommendation**

The Transportation Committee recommends that the Board of Directors authorize the General Manager: (1) to negotiate and execute a joint exercise of powers agreement with the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation for the use of ferry berthing facilities on Angel Island, in a form approved by the Attorney, and (2) to implement a new ferry route between the San Francisco Ferry Terminal and Angel Island, to be implemented initially as a one year demonstration project, and (3) to schedule a public hearing to receive public comment on proposed fares for this demonstration route.

This matter will be presented to the Board of Directors at its meeting on October 22, 2021 for appropriate action.

### **Summary**

In December 2020, Blue & Gold Fleet notified the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation ("State Parks") of its intent to end its contract for ferry service between San Francisco and Angel Island. Blue & Gold's application with the California Public Utilities Commission to be relieved of its obligation to provide this service is still pending. In anticipation that Blue & Gold will cease its operations in the near future, and as previously reported by the General Manager to the Board of Directors (Board), Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) staff has been in discussions with State Parks to explore the possibility of the District assuming this service. Over the past several months the District and State Parks have negotiated the terms of a joint exercise of powers agreement, whereby the District would operate ferry service using the State Parks' berthing facilities at Angel Island. The basic terms of the agreement are as follows:

Type of Agreement:	Joint Exercise of Powers
Term:	10 years, mutual option to extend for 10 more years
Termination:	365 days' notice by either party
Dock Fees:	\$3,000 per month payment to Facility Improvement and Maintenance Fund (FIMA)
Maintenance:	Responsibility of State, using FIMA funds
Repair:	Responsibility of District
ADA modifications:	Modifications to accommodate catamarans at the berthing facility are the responsibility of District
Service:	Plan to operate 5 trips per day, between hours of 10 am and 6 pm
Fares and Fees:	District to collect fares and park entrance fees via the Clipper system
Risk Management:	Mutual indemnity
Advertising:	Shared use of logos, cooperation in publicity

This agreement is a fundamental step to the District operating ferry service between San Francisco and Angel Island. Staff recommends that the District operate service between San Francisco and Angel Island initially as a one-year demonstration project, upon Blue & Gold's cessation of service, in order to ensure uninterrupted, reliable ferry service.

An additional fundamental step for the Angel Island Service is to establish the fares for the demonstration service after holding a public hearing to receive public comments, in accordance with Board policy.

Future Board actions include approval of a Title VI equity analysis as a prerequisite to making the new ferry service permanent. The one-year demonstration period will allow the collection of demographic information and analysis to ensure that the ferry service and rates do not cause a disparate impact on minority communities, nor a disproportionate burden on low income communities, in compliance with Board policy and Federal Transit Administration requirements.

The District will set and collect fares and the State Park entrance fee (\$2.00 for children 5-18 and \$3.00 for adults 19 and over). The District will remit the fees collected to the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation.

The proposed single ride fare is the same fare as the Tiburon service plus the pass-thru State Park entrance fee, and will be available exclusively through the Clipper system (currently \$14.00 plus State Park Entrance Fee for a single ride adult fare each way, or \$7.50 plus State Park Entrance Fee using a stored value Clipper Card). Group fares (amount to be determined), i.e. school and other groups, will be available through the District's customer service department.

### **Discussion**

It is recommended that a demonstration project be implemented to initially provide approximately five Golden Gate Ferry trips each day year-round between the San Francisco Ferry Terminal and Angel Island. The San Francisco Ferry Terminal location offers more convenient transit connections than the terminal used by Blue and Gold for the current service, which is located at Pier 41.

The service will utilize vessels already operating on other scheduled routes, i.e. San Francisco, Sausalito and Tiburon. Generally, the increased cost to the District would be fuel (approximately an additional 480 gallons per weekday and approximately 1,200 gallons on the weekend) and other incidentals such as consumables. The exception to this would be the addition of a second vessel on weekends and crew on weekends between November and March (six months of the year). This would be necessary once ferry service returns to near pre-COVID levels.

The service will be provided using available ferry capacity, in terms of both vessels and crews that are currently operated for commute service. It is anticipated that a nominal maintenance cost will be incurred related to this service due to a small number of additional miles traveled. Six months out of the year, ferry operations would add an extra vessel to complete Angel Island service on weekends, requiring an additional 24 hours for a vessel master and 66 hours for three deckhands per weekend. The estimated costs for this service is projected to be \$920,000 - \$1 million.

It is anticipated that collected fare revenue will cover some portion of the incremental cost associated with Angel Island service. To give some context, Blue & Gold Fleet sold, on average, 136,000 tickets annually to Angel Island over a three-year period.

It is recommended that this service be implemented initially as a demonstration project for a number of reasons. First, current Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Title VI guidelines specifically address demonstration projects, and give transit agencies the latitude to introduce a demonstration project for up to one year before a Title VI equity analysis is required. One of the cornerstones of the Title VI Equity Analysis is that demographic data be used to demonstrate how the service would address the transportation needs of disadvantaged communities. The demonstration period would allow the District to collect and analyze demographic data on the riders of the new service to fully inform the Equity Analysis. Second, with this new service, the District needs latitude to review ridership patterns on the new service and potentially make adjustments without going through a full public review process. Third, with the region still emerging from the pandemic, the District needs the leeway to adjust the underlying service on regular revenue ferry trips serving the Tiburon and Sausalito areas, on which the new service would be dependent.

As a demonstration project, this service will be evaluated at the six-month mark to assess ridership and determine any necessary modifications. While the Title VI analysis is required at the one-year mark of the demonstration, the District has the ability at that one-year mark to either make the service a permanent feature, or extend the demonstration beyond that point if the service needs more time to mature. Staff will report back to the Board at the six-month point to determine whether the service needs to be made permanent or extend the demonstration.

Based on the assumption that we will begin service as soon as late November 2021, our initial weekday service (including Angel Island service) for winter to early spring will include existing AM and PM Sausalito and Tiburon commute crew.

**WEEKDAY**

ADDED SERVICE to Angel Island with existing commute crews								
	Arrive San Francisco	Depart San Francisco	Arrive Angel Island	Depart Angel Island	Arrive Tiburon	Depart Tiburon	Arrive Sausalito	Depart Sausalito
existing AM CREW Sausalito/Tiburon commute						7:40	8:00	8:05
	8:35	8:45	9:15	9:25				
	9:55	10:10	10:40	10:50				
	11:50	12:30	1:00	1:10				
existing PM CREW Sausalito/Tiburon commute	2:20	3:00	3:30	3:40				
	4:10	4:20					4:50	5:00
					5:20	5:25		
	5:55	6:05					6:35	6:45
					7:05			

Based on the assumption that we will begin service as soon as late November 2021, our initial weekend service six months out of the year (November through April) will require a second vessel and crew.

**WEEKEND**

ADDED SERVICE to Angel Island			
Arrive San Francisco	Depart San Francisco	Arrive Angel Island	Depart Angel Island
	9:20	9:50	10:00
10:30	10:40	11:10	11:20
12:25	12:40	1:10	1:20
2:20	3:00	3:30	3:40
4:10	4:20	4:50	5:00
5:30			

**Fiscal Impact**

The pilot service as outlined is estimated to cost between \$920,000 - \$1 million annually. As described earlier, the primary costs of this additional service are principally in the categories of fuel, maintenance and other incidental costs such as landing fees. This cost will be partially offset by the fares collected from patrons travelling between San Francisco and Angel Island. Accordingly, the fiscal impact is tied to ridership. Additionally, if the District chooses to modify the berthing facility to accommodate its catamarans, then there will be an additional one-time cost of approximately \$300,000. Detailed cost and revenue information will be provided along with the Title VI analysis and other information when the Board considers making this a permanent route at a future meeting.