

February 27, 2025



**PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT ON A PROPOSED INCREASED IN LARKSPUR
TO SAN FRANCISCO SPECIAL EVENT FARES ON GOLDEN GATE FERRY**

Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
Board Room, Administration Building,
Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza, San Francisco, CA

Background

Special event transit service is defined in the Master Ordinance as Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) bus and ferry service provided on routes that are not part of the regularly scheduled transit route network and to areas that are not more than fifty (50) miles beyond the District's transit service area, consistent with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations. The District's special event ferry service between Larkspur and San Francisco is consistent with FTA requirements, and the District has operated special event ferry service since the San Francisco Giants relocated to their current waterfront home.

The Board of Directors (Board) has a long-standing policy that special event service should be priced to avoid a toll subsidy. Specifically, the Master Ordinance states: "Fares for this special event service are set to cover the total cost of the service and will be updated as needed by the Board."

In order to coincide with the Giants' home baseball season starting on April 4, 2025, staff proposes a three-year fare increase program to annually increase fares by \$0.50 each way on April 1, beginning on April 1, 2025, and continuing with the last increase on April 1, 2027. The purpose of the fare increase program is to keep pace with expenses related to salaries, benefits and fuel costs for special event service. The proposed new fares would apply to any District special event ferry service between Larkspur and San Francisco.

As of April 1, 2025, Ferry special event fares will not have increased for three years. The most recent fare increase in 2022 raised the fare to the current fare of \$15.50 each way. Special Event Fares were excluded from the Five-Year Fare Plan effective July 1, 2022, for several reasons. First, ridership recovery was a consideration. Second, special event fares are on a different cycle than regular fare increases (April 1 versus July 1 of the calendar year), due to a desire not to increase fares partway through the baseball season. Third, the guiding demographic data to support the Title VI Analysis for the 2022 Five-Year Fare Plan was collected in the 2018 MTC Regional Survey, which did not include Golden Gate Ferry special event passengers. While the 2023 District Survey conducted by Corey, Canapary & Galanis (CC&G) did collect information on special event ferry riders, the specific data to support a Title VI Analysis for this ridership group was not available until the last quarter of 2024.

During the 2024 Giants season, special event ferry ridership exceeded previous years with 67,681 total trips to and from Oracle Park, compared to 62,042 total trips in calendar year 2023 and 45,398 total trips in calendar year 2019. For calendar year 2024, 81 Larkspur special event round trips were operated to Oracle

PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT ON A PROPOSED INCREASE IN LARKSPUR TO SAN FRANCISCO SPECIAL EVENT FARES ON GOLDEN GATE FERRY

February 27, 2025

Page 2

Park generating revenues of \$1,030,960, compared to \$1,070,488 in expenses. This resulted in nearly breaking even with a farebox recovery of 96% and a deficit of \$39,528 in 2024.

Overall expenses, including fuel and crewing expenses, have risen each year since the last fare increase, and are expected to continue to increase over the next three years. The proposed increase of \$0.50 per year will help keep pace with rising expenses and avoid using Bridge toll dollars to subsidize special event service. A \$0.50 increase could generate as much as \$32,000 in new revenues for each year of the proposed fare increase program. As a point of reference, Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry transit fares are increasing \$0.25 each year and Bridge tolls are increasing \$0.50 per year under the respective current Five-Year Fare Increase and Five-Year Bridge Toll Increase Programs.

The proposed fare program for three one-year increases would begin at a base fare of \$16.00, effective April 1, 2025, for any sporting event, concert, or other special event at either Oracle Park or the Chase Center. Staff may return to the Board at any time during the three-year period to consider adjusting fares if revenues are not sufficient to recover costs.

Public Comment Process

The District's Rules of the Board require that the District hold a public hearing to obtain input from the public prior to establishing a new fare. Public comments on this proposal may be submitted in several different ways:

1. Attend the public hearing;
2. E-mail publichearing@goldengate.org; and/or,
3. Send written comments to the District Secretary.

All comments are considered equally without regard to the manner in which the comments are submitted. Therefore, individuals do not have to attend the public hearing and provide testimony in person if they have commented through e-mail or written forms. All comments received through the above methods will be considered in the final recommendation. Comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2025.

Title VI Equity Analysis

Any fare change is subject to an equity analysis under the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Final recommendation to the Board after the public hearing will include the results of that Title VI equity analysis. The analysis will be completed after the public hearing in order to reflect any public comments received on the proposal to implement the increased fares.

Public Notification

Outreach on the proposal to increase Golden Gate Ferry special event fares began on January 23, 2025 and continued into late-February prior to the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT ON A PROPOSED INCREASE IN LARKSPUR TO SAN FRANCISCO SPECIAL EVENT FARES ON GOLDEN GATE FERRY

February 27, 2025

Page 3

Public notification activities included:

- A Notice of Public Hearing was posted to the District's website;
- Public hearing notices were published in local publications (*Marin Independent Journal*, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *East Bay Times*, and *La Voz*);
- Posters advertising the public hearing in English and Spanish were placed onboard buses and ferries;
- Social media posts on Facebook and Twitter promoted the public hearing; and
- Email blasts were sent to customers and community-based organizations.

Printed materials were made available in Spanish, per the District's Language Implementation Plan (LIP).

Next Steps

Following the public hearing, staff will evaluate all comments received and determine whether changes or modifications need to be made to the proposal. A final recommendation will be brought back to the Board of Directors at the March 27, 2025 Finance-Auditing Committee meeting and to the full Board on the following day. If approved by the Board on March 28, the first \$0.50 increase to Golden Gate Ferry special event fares would go into effect on April 1, 2025, in time for the beginning of the Giants' home season. Subsequent increases of \$0.50 each way would occur on April 1, 2026 and April 1, 2027, respectively, and continue in effect until March 30, 2028.

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