

STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Special MTC FY24-28 Short Range Transit Plan

**FROM:** Tony McCaulay, Director of Planning & Marketing

**DATE:** November 28, 2022

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**Action**

Endorse and forward the Special MTC FY24-28 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) to the Board of Directors for approval.

**Background**

Federal transportation statutes require that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in partnership with state and local agencies, develop and periodically update a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which implements the RTP by programming federal funds to transportation projects contained in the RTP. In order to effectively execute these planning and programming responsibilities, MTC requires that each transit operator in its region which receives federal funding through the TIP, prepare, adopt, and submit to MTC a Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP). The Board approved LAVTA's FY22-27 SRTP in June 2022 and that document has been submitted to MTC.

**Discussion**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted transit operations, ridership, and revenues of Bay Area transit operators. While federal relief funds provided a significant stop gap, MTC anticipates that these funds will be exhausted within the next two fiscal years for most transit operators.

In light of the current situation, MTC has mandated that all Bay Area transit operators prepare an abbreviated SRTP, with a focus on financial and service planning by the end of 2022, using MTC's mandated format and financial projections to facilitate a regional understanding of transit priorities and plans over the next five years. This revised approach includes scenario planning, which asks operators to consider how service plans might be adapted under different revenue scenarios provided by MTC.

The abbreviated SRTP includes a spreadsheet that covers nine data categories including service provided, ridership and budget for each mode operated. In addition, a brief narrative has been requested for each of the following components of the spreadsheet:

1. Pre-pandemic State of Service – FY 2018-19
2. Current State of Service – FY 2022-23
3. Scenario Planning Concepts – FY 2023-24 through FY 2027-28
  - a. Robust Recovery - Adequate funding to return overall revenue to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, but does not assume proportionate recovery across all revenue sources.
  - b. Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders - Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted, although other funds recover to pre-pandemic levels. However, farebox revenue remains stagnant for the next five years.
  - c. Some Progress - Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted and total revenue available to the agency is 15% below pre-pandemic levels for the next five years.

MTC requested that each transit agency submit a draft version of this document by September 30, 2022 for review and comment by MTC staff and that each agency's Board of Directors approve the submittal of a final SRTP prior to the end of 2022.

**Recommendation**

Endorse and forward the Special MTC FY24-28 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) to the Board of Directors for approval.

Attachments:

1. Special MTC FY24-28 Short Range Transit Plan
2. Resolution 43-2022



**FY24 - FY28 Short Range Transit Plan**  
**Prepared for the**  
**Metropolitan Transportation Commission**  
**by the**  
**Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority**

**November 2022**

## **DISCLAIMER**

The preparation of this report has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) through section 5303 of the Federal Transit Act. The contents of this SRTP reflect the views of the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority, and not necessarily those of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or MTC. The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority is solely responsible for the accuracy of the information presented in this SRTP.

## BACKGROUND

### **MTC's Short-Range Transit Plan: Bay Area Transit Recovery Scenario Planning**

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the San Francisco Bay Area, charged with carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning and fund programming processes required to maintain the region's eligibility for federal funds for transportation planning, capital improvements, and operations. Federal statutes require that the MTC, in partnership with the state and with local agencies, develop and periodically update a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which implements the RTP by programming federal funds to transportation projects contained in the RTP. To effectively execute these planning and fund programming responsibilities, MTC, in cooperation with Region IX of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), requires each transit operator receiving federal funding through the TIP (federal grantees within the MTC region) to prepare, adopt, and submit an SRTP to MTC. Transit operators are required by MTC to prepare an SRTP every four years in order to remain eligible to receive federal funding.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted transit operations, ridership, and revenues. The decrease in ridership, changes in travel patterns and uncertainties in farebox revenues have created enormous planning and operational challenges for Bay Area transit operators. While federal relief funds provided a significant stop gap, MTC anticipates that these funds will be exhausted within the next two fiscal years for most transit operators. In light of the current crisis, MTC has reimaged and restructured the SRTP process to help plan for and navigate through the continued uncertainties.

The revised approach narrows the scope to a five-year planning horizon with a focus on financial and service planning. In another departure from past practice, all Bay Area transit operators are required to prepare an SRTP in this cycle using the same MTC mandated format to facilitate a regional understanding of transit priorities and plans over the next five years. This revised approach includes scenario planning, which asks operators to consider how service plans might be adapted under different revenue scenarios. This reduction in the scale of the deliverables is intended to facilitate the development of a more narrowly focused SRTP for this planning cycle on a much shorter timeline than has been required for traditional SRTPs.

MTC guidelines ask each Bay Area transit property to complete a spreadsheet that covers 9 data categories including service provided, ridership and budget for each mode operated. In addition, a brief narrative has been requested for each of the following components of the spreadsheet:

1. Pre-pandemic State of Service – FY 2018-19
2. Current State of Service – FY 2022-23
3. Scenario Planning Concepts – FY 2023-24 through FY 2027-28
  - a. Robust Recovery - Adequate funding to return overall revenue to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, but does not assume proportionate recovery across all revenue sources.
  - b. Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders - Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted, although other funds recover to pre-pandemic levels. However, farebox revenue remains stagnant for the next five years.
  - c. Some Progress - Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted and total revenue available to the agency is 15% below pre-pandemic levels for the next five years.

## SECTION 1

### Pre-pandemic State of Service – FY 2018-19

Prior to the pandemic, the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) operated seven local routes (1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 14, and 15), two Rapid routes (10R and 30R), three Express routes (20X, 70X and 580X), and fifteen routes that provided service focused on middle and high schools in Pleasanton and Dublin. During FY19, LAVTA provided approximately 126,000 revenue hours of service. Ridership for the fiscal year totaled 1,660,443. The map below shows LAVTA's local, express and rapid routes in FY19.

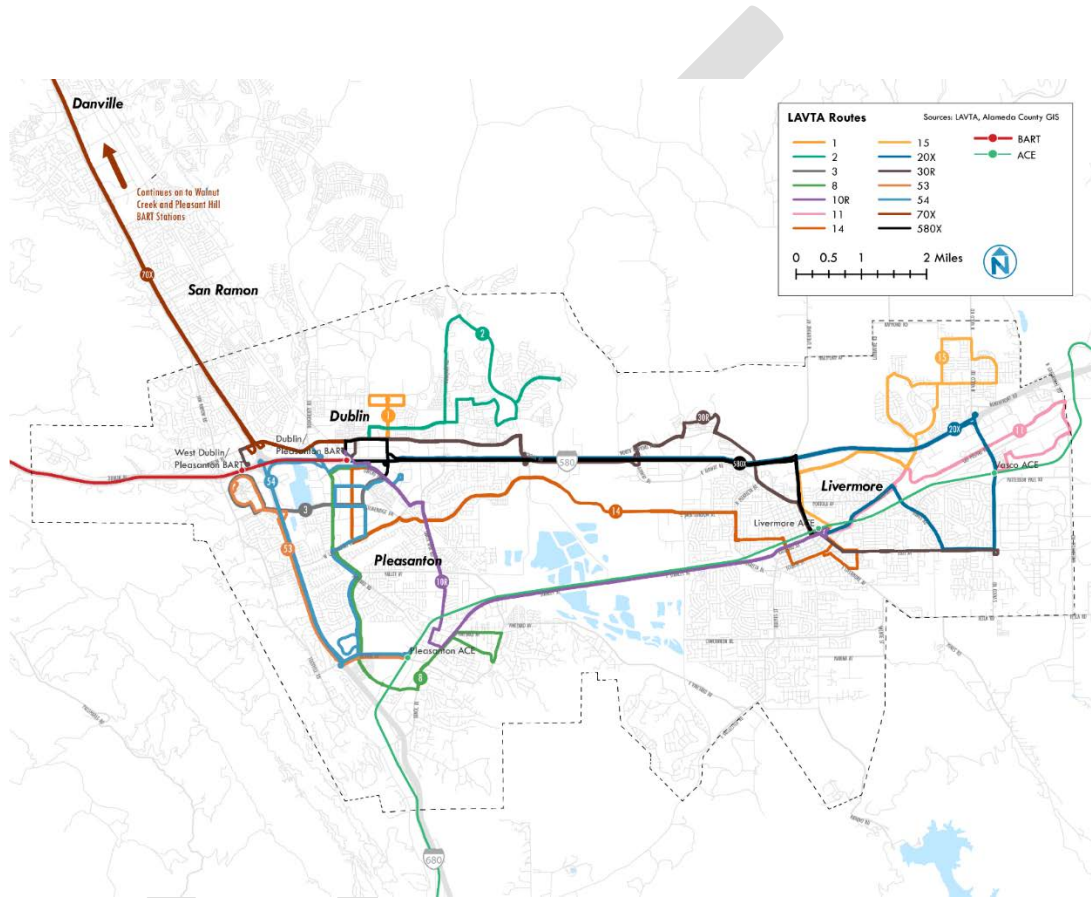


Figure 1. LAVTA Pre-pandemic system map

During the period from September 2019 through February 2020, LAVTA was experiencing unprecedented ridership growth, with six consecutive months of double-digit ridership growth over the previous year. The two Rapid Routes (10R and 30R) accounted for approximately 50 percent of systemwide ridership. Routes 14 and 15 are the next highest ridership routes and accounted for approximately 12 percent of annual ridership. School focused routes, which operate on weekdays when school is in session, accounted for approximately 25 percent of weekday boardings. Students at Las Positas College (LPC) voted to approve a student fee based unlimited access pass program beginning with the Fall 2018 semester. Prior to the start of the pandemic, LPC student ridership accounted for approximately eight percent of monthly boardings.

## SECTION 2

### Current State of Service – FY 2022-23

On March 16, 2020, the Alameda County Public Health Department announced that as of the following day all residents were to shelter at home limiting activity, travel and business functions to only the most essential needs. In anticipation of declining resources, ridership, and this public health mandate, LAVTA staff developed a five-level service reduction process to provide our passengers with an easy way to find out what services were still available. Attachment 1 details the five service levels.

Service Level 1 was implemented on March 17, 2020. All regular service was still operational, except school routes since in classroom instruction was halted effective March 16. Ridership on our remaining fixed routes dropped dramatically following the shelter at home order, from a high of 7,404 passengers on March 2 to a low of 786 on March 26.

Because of the nearly 90 percent ridership loss, Service Level 2 was implemented on Monday March 30, 2020. Additional cuts were implemented on Monday April 6, as we began operating at Service Level 3, which included discontinued service on three express routes as well as the Routes 2 and 11, all of which were either performing poorly prior to the pandemic or served areas where alternate service was available. The remaining routes were reduced to a weekend level of service and service after 11 pm was discontinued.

In February 2021, service to area schools returned concurrent with the resumption of in classroom instruction. The State of California announced its intention to fully reopen the economy on June 15, 2021. As a result, effective Monday June 14, weekday service was reinstated to pre-COVID levels from approximately 6:00-9:00 am and 3:00-6:00 pm on Routes 1, 3, 8, 10R, 14, and 30R. Route 15 returned to all-day pre-COVID service levels. Service continued to end at 11 pm. As a result of a severe bus operator shortage, routes 10R and 30 were returned to 30-minute frequencies in September 2021. In June 2022, limited service was reinstated on the Routes 20X and 70X.

Route	Weekday Revenue Hours – Pre-Covid	Weekday Revenue Hours – Pandemic Low	Weekday Revenue Hours - Current
1	14.78	5.13	9.82
2	6.23	0	1.17
3	19.52	13.87	17.77
8	26.62	12.80	26.67
10R	100.27	53.43	49.90
11	5.53	0	0
14	36.12	22.60	31.37
15	32.65	15.80	30.87
30R	135.27	77.90	131.03
20X	2.87	0	3.25
70X	13.52	0	4.73
580X	8.00	0	0

The assumptions made in the development of LAVTA's FY23 Budget reflected the continuing shortage of bus operators that has impacted our ability to achieve the full resumption of all hours of fixed route service. The table on the prior page shows weekday revenue service hours for all of LAVTA's regular fixed route service at three points in time: pre-pandemic; at the pandemic low point; and at the present time.

The following provides a brief overview of current services:

- All school focused services resumed in mid-August. Ridership thus far has been about 5 percent higher than pre-pandemic levels. Four vehicles have been added thus far to address overload conditions on specific trips.
- Rapid Route 10R remains at 30-minute headways on weekdays. On October 1, Route 30R returned to 15-minute headways from morning peak through evening peak. As soon as a sufficient number of new bus operators have been hired and trained the same service level will return to Route 10R.
- The three lowest productivity routes in our operation, the 2, 11 and 580X, remain suspended, with the exception of one school focused trip on the Route 2.
- Service still ends at 11 pm.
- With the exception of the routes noted above, most routes are at or very near pre-pandemic weekday service hours.
- Total systemwide ridership for the first four months of FY23 is up approximately 40 percent over the same four months last year, but is still about 40 percent lower than pre-pandemic ridership during the first four months of FY20.
- Weekend ridership has recovered at a faster rate than weekday. Weekend ridership for the first four months of FY23 is only about 25 percent below pre-pandemic levels.



## SECTION 3

### Scenario Planning Concepts – FY 2023-24 through FY 2027-28

As part the development of this Bay Area Transit Recovery SRTP, MTC has asked all transit operators to consider and make projections of service levels under three scenarios over a 5-year planning horizon:

- 1. Robust Recovery:** There is adequate funding to return overall revenue to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, with escalation. This would not assume proportionate recovery across all revenue sources.
- 2. Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders:** Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted, although other funds recover to pre-pandemic levels. However, farebox revenue remains stagnant (20-50% below pre-pandemic levels, depending on current status) for the next five years.
- 3. Some Progress:** Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted and total revenue available to the agency is 15% below pre-pandemic levels for the next five years.

The data requested for each scenario included anticipated hours and miles of service provided, ridership and budget. That spreadsheet is included as Attachment 2 to this document. MTC has also asked each transit agency to briefly describe the assumptions that were used in the development of the three scenarios. For LAVTA, the following assumptions were used.

#### Scenario 1: Robust Recovery

- The MTC provided estimate for this scenario assumes revenue at 100% of FY2019 pre-pandemic figures, with an assumed escalation of approximately 2% per year through FY28.
- FY24 fixed route ridership is assumed to increase by 5% over estimated FY23 figures and then 5% annually through FY28.
- FY24 ADA Paratransit ridership is assumed to increase by 20% over estimated FY23 figures and then 10% annually through FY28.
- ADA Paratransit service hours and miles, ridership and operating costs are assumed to be the same under all three revenue constraint categories.
- Fixed route service allocation decisions under this scenario would be demand based, subject to the availability of sufficient bus operators, with the goal of resuming pre-pandemic service levels, subject to possible reallocations of resources to better serve Tri-Valley residents.

#### Scenario 2: Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders

- The MTC provided estimate for this scenario assumes revenue at 95% of FY2019 pre-pandemic figures, with an assumed escalation of approximately 2% per year through FY28.
- MTC also provided the fixed route ridership estimates to be used under Scenario 2, with FY28 ridership assumed to be 70% of pre-pandemic figures.
- Under this scenario, fixed route ridership is assumed to grow approximately 3% each year reaching 70% of pre-pandemic levels in FY28.
- Fixed route service hours are assumed to be 6% less than assumed under Scenario 1. This assumption would require some service reductions from what is currently operated. Discontinuing the two Express routes currently operating (20X and 70X) and returning the Rapid Route 30R to 30 minutes peak hour service (from the current 15-minute service) would be sufficient to meet the service hour assumption.

### Scenario 3: Some Progress

- The MTC provided estimate for this scenario assumes revenue at 85% of FY2019 pre-pandemic figures, with an assumed escalation of approximately 2% per year through FY28.
- The reduced revenue estimates provided under this scenario would require service reductions similar to those shown in Service Level 3 on the following page in Attachment 1. This includes:
  - Rapid Routes 10R and 30R would operate on a 30-minute frequency during hours when 15-minute frequency was offered pre-pandemic
  - Routes 1, 3, 8, 14 and 15 would operate on weekend schedules
  - No service after 11 pm
  - Supplemental school routes would operate
- Ridership is assumed to show no growth over the expected FY23 ridership during the five-year horizon of this planning exercise.

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## Attachment 1

# COVID-19 Five-Level Service Reduction Plan

### **Service Level 1: Regular service, no disruptions**

- All Wheels and Rapid buses operating on regular schedules
- Dial-a-Ride Paratransit, Para-taxi and Go Tri-Valley still available
- Supplemental school routes discontinued until school resumes

### **Service Level 2: Frequency reductions on Rapid Routes, other reductions**

- Rapid Routes 10R and 30R will operate on a 30-minute frequency during hours when 15-minute frequency was previously offered
- Routes 20X and 580X will not operate due to extremely low ridership; alternate service available using Route 30R
- Route 2 will not operate due to extremely low ridership; alternate service available using LAVTA's Go Tri-Valley program
- Routes 53 and 54 continue to operate subject to continuation of ACE service
- Dial-a-Ride Paratransit, Para-taxi and Go Tri-Valley still available

### **Service Level 3: Weekend service schedules except for Rapid routes**

- Rapid Routes 10R and 30R will continue to operate at the Service Level 2 frequencies
- Routes 1, 3, 8, 14 and 15 will operate on weekend schedules
- Routes 53 and 54 continue to operate subject to continuation of ACE service
- Route 2, 11, 20X, 70X and 580X will not operate
- All service after 11pm discontinued
- Dial-a-Ride Paratransit, Para-taxi and Go Tri-Valley still available

### **Service Level 4: Additional service frequency reductions**

- Service frequency on Rapid Routes 10R and 30R changed to hourly
- Weekend service level continues on Routes 1, 3, 8, 14 and 15
- Routes 53 and 54 continue to operate subject to continuation of ACE service
- All service after 9pm discontinued
- Dial-a-Ride Paratransit, Para-taxi and Go Tri-Valley still available

### **Service Level 5: No service**

- All service discontinued due to public health mandates or other circumstances beyond our control



**RESOLUTION 43-2022**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE LIVERMORE AMADOR VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY ADOPTING THE FY 2024-2028 SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) requires transit operators in the nine-county region including LAVTA to complete a short-range transit plan (SRTP) in compliance with MTC guidelines and financial projections; and

**WHEREAS**, LAVTA staff has completed a FY 2024-2028 short-range transit plan as requested by MTC; and

**WHEREAS**, the LAVTA Board must approve the plan before the plan can be finalized and provided to MTC.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority that the FY 2024- 2028 LAVTA SRTP is adopted and may be delivered in its final format to MTC.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 5th day of December 2022.

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David Haubert, Chair

ATTEST:

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Christy Wegener, Executive Director

Approved as to form:

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Michael Conneran, Legal Counsel