

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Wheels Service to the 2023 Alameda County Fair  
FROM: Tony McCaulay, Director of Planning and Marketing  
DATE: March 27, 2023

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**Action Requested**

Forward a recommendation to the LAVTA Board of Directors to operate a dedicated shuttle during the 2023 Alameda County Fair.

**Background**

The summer version of the Alameda County Fair is returning again this year. This year's Fair will be held between Friday June 16 and Sunday July 9, 2023 at the Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. During this time, the event will be open Wednesdays thru Sundays, and operate between the hours of noon and 11PM, as well as July 3 and 4. The Fair will also operate reduced hours on Monday July 4 with gates closing at 4PM and an earlier closing time of 8PM. The Fair is a major event that draws visitors from across the Tri-Valley as well as other parts of Alameda County and the Bay Area.

Most fairgoers from outside the Tri-Valley that are taking public transportation to the event travel on BART and then transfer to a Wheels route to complete their trip to the Alameda County Fairgrounds, which is not within walking distance from a BART station.

**Discussion**

The accommodation of fairgoers on Wheels service has varied over the years. Through 2004, a dedicated BART shuttle was provided, whereas from 2005 through 2016, the agency accommodated these trips by applying detours and extensions to one or more existing routes. However, our current fixed route service does not lend itself to detouring without substantial disruption and delays to regular service. As a result, in 2017 the Board of Directors approved a return to a dedicated shuttle (Route 52), which was operated during the 2017, 2018, and 2019 and 2022 fairs.

**Dedicated Shuttle**

Staff is again proposing a dedicated shuttle service between BART and the Fairgrounds for the 2023 Alameda County Fair, with similar parameters and budget as last year. The shuttle would be provided during days that the Fair will be open and run between the hours of approximately 11:30AM and 11:30PM, with an earlier last trip on July 4. Using one bus, the service would operate hourly between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and the

Pleasanton ACE bus stop on Pleasanton Avenue, which is located just across from the Fairgrounds main entrance. Similar to the past operation, the shuttle would use Hopyard Road between BART and the Fair, and pick up at local bus stops in order to serve local fairgoers wishing to use the service as well. All regular Wheels fares and policies would apply to this service, and its schedule would be published through the same channels as that of regular Wheels routes as well as via additional dissemination through the Fair Association's information channels.

If approved, a dedicated shuttle service as outlined above would incur approximately 256 revenue hours and 10 deadhead hours of service. The incremental cost to operate the proposed shuttle is estimated at approximately \$15,915. Based on last year's ridership, the service would be expected to see approximately 1,700 passenger boardings, resulting in an estimated total net cost of \$13,700 after fare revenues.

### **Other Wheels Service Available to the Fair**

Route 10R operates between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and the Transit Center in Livermore, via downtown Pleasanton, from early morning to late evening, every day of the week. Serving a pair of bus stops on Peters Avenue, it provides another option for accessing the east Fairgrounds gate on Pleasanton Avenue with a short walk.

Route 8 operates between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and downtown Pleasanton via Valley Avenue and with stops near the west entrances to the Fairgrounds.

### **Marketing and Coordination with the Fair Association**

LAVTA staff and County Fair staff have discussed the continuation of the dedicated shuttle service. The fair staff is very supportive of continuing the service and committed to providing marketing and in-kind support to help promote ridership and defray the cost of operation for LAVTA.

Last year, the Fair agreed to provide prime space near the entrance to the horse track to display our Memorial Madden Cruiser bus, as well as space by the bus display for a tent and information booth. The Madden bus was a very popular attraction for fairgoers. Fair staff have indicated they would like the Madden bus to return again this year.

The Fair has also promoted the Wheels connection from BART as an integrated message. An ad for our shuttle has also been in the rotation on the video display sign at the corner of Bernal and Valley. The Fair has also traditionally purchased advertising on our buses.

### **Budget**

If approved, the 225 additional revenue hours associated with the proposed service will be incorporated with the concurrent budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year, and will require no amendments.

### **Recommendation**

Forward a recommendation to the LAVTA Board of Directors to operate a dedicated shuttle during the 2023 Alameda County Fair, as outlined above.