

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Update on Start of School Service
FROM: Mike Tobin, Director of Operations
DATE: August 28, 2023

Action Requested

None – Information only.

Background

LAVTA currently offers bus services to middle and high schools across the Tri-Valley area through various routes. In Dublin, these routes include 2, 30R, and 501 – 504. Pleasanton is served by routes 10R, 601-611, while Livermore is covered by routes 10R, 30R, 14, and 15. The majority of this service operates as "trippers", which are dedicated individual trips during the peak AM and PM hours specifically for schools. It's important to note that these "trippers" are not limited to students but are open to the general public as well.

Before each school year begins, LAVTA collaborates closely with its contractor staff to proactively address operational and logistical challenges that may arise from providing school services.

In addition, LAVTA recently conducted its inaugural joint meeting with Tri-Valley School leadership on August 4th. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the upcoming school term and share crucial updates.

Discussion

This year, there were multiple schedule changes for the school routes, including the following:

- **Dublin:**
 - Schedules for **Routes 501, 502, 503, 504** were adjusted to better connect to the bell times.
 - **Route 502** (Emerald Glen) was rerouted off Wildwood for a faster connection to DHS and due to low ridership.
- **Pleasanton:**
 - Schedule for **Routes 602 (Del Prado Park)** and **604 (Fairlands)** was adjusted to better time with Foothill High School.
- **Livermore:**
 - **Route 15 (Springtown)** schedule adjustment to better connect with Christensen MS.

The Try Transit to School promotion runs from August 7-September 4, offering free rides for all middle and high school students throughout the Tri-Valley.

School service for Dublin and Pleasanton school districts began on August 10th, 2023. To help prepare, LAVTA management staff and MV management staff were positioned at various schools throughout the service area to act as ambassadors, which included answering questions from students, ensuring safe and proper boarding of buses, and addressing any student rider behavioral issues.

Staff also met on a daily basis to review any schedule issues and to review passenger counts of students from the day prior to address any concerns of passenger overloads on the buses. Nearly all the school routes experienced on-time performance challenges the first two weeks of the school year; staff expects on-time performance to improve as traffic normalizes after Labor Day. While most of the school-focused routes were seeing strong ridership, since the start of school, two routes (routes 501 and 604), have been experiencing very heavy passenger loads and may need additional resources if those passenger loads remain constant.

Staff are closely monitoring the loads on Route 501 and may add a later afternoon trip in the Fall to alleviate heavy loads if they remain constant. As a temporary adjustment, on Route 604 between Fairlands and Foothill High School, staff added an additional trip 15 minutes prior that began at the midpoint of the route and serviced the second half of the route, thereby reducing the number of students on each of the buses to a reasonable amount. This change was enacted on Monday, August 21st. Staff are monitoring the change and will make any additional changes as necessary.

Recommendation

Receive and file an update from staff on the start of school service.