

S T A F F R E P O R T

SUBJECT: Go Tri-Valley: Potential Program Modifications

FROM: Mike Tobin, Director of Operations

DATE: January 26, 2024

Action Requested

Staff requests the Projects and Services Committee recommend modifications to the Go Tri-Valley Program so that the program remains fiscally sustainable.

Background

Go Tri-Valley is a Transportation Network Company (TNC) rideshare program that offers a 50% subsidy up to \$5 dollars per trip for trips that start and end within the LAVTA service area. The program launched in 2017 as Go Dublin and was originally designed to offer an alternative transportation service to eliminated low-ridership bus service in the City of Dublin. The program was expanded during the COVID pandemic to include Livermore and Pleasanton in order to offset temporary service reductions and mandated travel restrictions and was rebranded as Go Tri-Valley. Go Tri-Valley users are granted an unlimited number of uses each month across TNC partners.

At the end of February 2023, a Tik-Tok style social media marketing campaign was released to advertise the program since many customers were still unaware of this supplemental transportation option. Ridership unexpectedly grew exponentially, and program costs were in danger of exceeding contract budgets with both service providers.

In September 2023, the Board authorized budget amendments to the Go Tri-Valley contracts with Lyft, Inc. and Uber Technologies, Inc. to accommodate the sudden increase in ridership and annual program costs. Staff agreed to return to the Board in the New Year with program modification alternatives for consideration in order to reduce program costs.

Discussion

Although the contract budgets were amended, the current level of Go Tri-Valley usage is not sustainable with unrestricted program parameters.

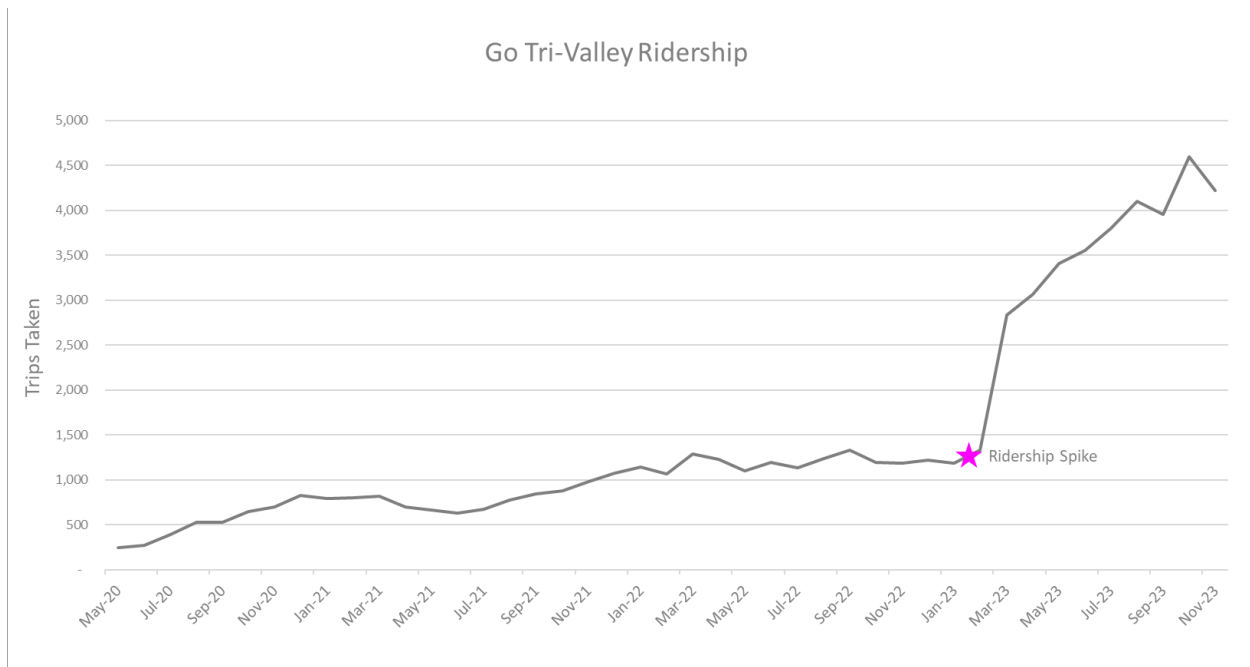
Prior to Campaign

Program Growth	+6% average every month
Annual Cost	\$70k (47% increase from previous year)

Post-Campaign

Program Growth	+17% average every month
Annual Cost	\$201k (91% increase from previous year)

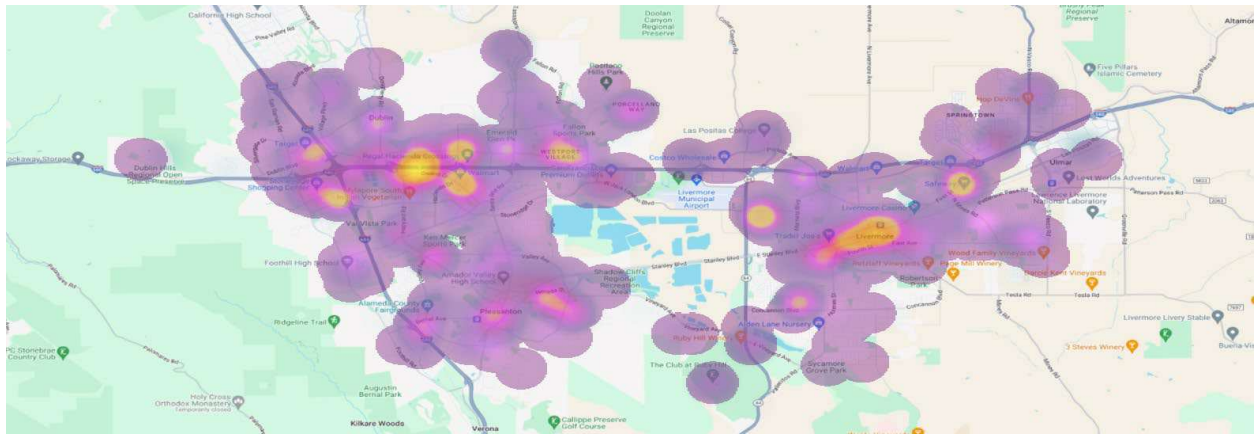
The following chart shows the growth of the program since its inception. The average subsidy of \$4.65 per trip was not impacted by the ridership spike.



Staff has continued to monitor Go Tri-Valley ridership closely and has been working with program partners to analyze customer travel patterns and gain insight on travel to and from transit hubs and outside of our fixed-route network. One notable observation is that there is a small percentage of “super users” responsible for at least 25% of the total ridership, due to taking over 30 trips per month each.

With the upcoming Wheels in Motion service change, which will restore bus service coverage in Livermore and Dublin, it is an appropriate time to consider modifications to Go Tri-Valley while promoting additional fixed-route offerings.

The following heat map depicts more concentrated usage of Go Tri-Valley at certain transit hubs and retail/business areas but also wide usage throughout the Tri-Valley. This map represents trips taken through one TNC partner that was able to share more detailed data.



Based on our analysis, we've prepared the following program alternatives:

Alternative 1

Action	No changes to Go Tri-Valley program
Rider Impact	No impact
Fiscal Impact	High impact – not fiscally sustainable due to the exponential growth of this program and lack of dedicated funds

Alternative 2

Action	Eliminate Go Tri-Valley program due to Wheels in Motion reintroducing service area coverage
Rider Impact	Most if not all current riders will be impacted; a lot of communication is anticipated to explain elimination of the program
Fiscal Impact	High impact – current funding can go towards other services and endeavors

Alternative 3a

Action	Introduce a trip cap of 10 trips per month, per user on each TNC platform
Rider Impact	Estimate 20% of riders impacted; technically riders will be able to receive a subsidy for up to 20 trips if they use both platforms; communication to explain trip cap to current and new riders should be straightforward
Fiscal Impact	Estimate 38% reduction in costs; post-campaign annual cost would have been approximately \$125k vs \$201k

Alternative 3b

Action	Introduce a trip cap of 6 trips per month, per user on each TNC platform
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Rider Impact	Estimate 28% of riders impacted; technically riders will be able to receive a subsidy for up to 12 trips if they use both platforms; communication to explain trip cap to current and new riders should be straightforward
Fiscal Impact	Estimate 52% reduction in costs; post-campaign annual cost would have been approximately \$96k vs \$201k

Alternative 4

Action	Restrict Go Tri-Valley program hours to when fixed-route buses are not running (~11pm – 4am)
Rider Impact	Estimate 87-97% of riders impacted; would impede riders from potentially using Go Tri-Valley to connect to transit lines that operate during the day or riders traveling to/from areas that Wheels buses cannot accommodate
Fiscal Impact	Estimate 89% reduction in program costs but may shift some ambulatory rides of disabled riders to paratransit; post-campaign annual cost would have been approximately \$23k vs \$201k

Alternative 5

Action	Restrict Go Tri-Valley service area to mirror fixed-route bus lines
Rider Impact	Estimate 88% of riders impacted; although there are some trip hotspots at transit hubs and shopping centers, most trips occur throughout the service area, including residential neighborhoods where buses cannot access; difficult to implement numerous geofences but easy to circumvent since riders can still take trips to/from a bus stop solely using Go Tri-Valley
Fiscal Impact	Not enough data available to predict

Given the program’s ability to provide service coverage in areas of the Tri-Valley that cannot be served by traditional bus service, staff does not recommend significantly curtailing the program’s geographic reach or time availability. With the goal of impacting the fewest number of riders while achieving programmatic savings, Staff recommends implementing Alternative 3a: a monthly trip cap of 10 trips per user per TNC platform. Executing this for both platforms would be a simple step and communicating the change to riders would be relatively straightforward. This option also allows Staff to continue to monitor the program and scale back incrementally as needed.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Projects and Services Committee approve and forward to the Board for consideration changes to the Go Tri-Valley program, including implementing Alternative 3a – a monthly trip cap of 10 trips per user per TNC platform.