

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: August 2024 Service Change Update

FROM: Mike Tobin, Director of Operations

DATE: August 26, 2024

Action Requested

None – Information only.

Background

On August 10, 2024, LAVTA implemented a series of schedule changes on local, express and Rapid (mainline) routes to align with the new BART schedule that took effect August 12, 2024. In addition to schedule changes, in August LAVTA resumed operation of its supplemental bus service to middle and high schools across the Tri-Valley. In Dublin, these routes include 501 – 504 and the new route 201, which serves Emerald High School. Pleasanton is served by supplemental routes 601-611, while Livermore schools are served by mainline routes. The majority of the supplemental school service operates as "trippers", which are dedicated individual trips during the peak AM and PM hours scheduled to connect with the AM and PM bells. 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 operations contractor staff to proactively address operational and logistical challenges that may arise from providing supplemental school services. Because LAVTA offers the “Try Transit to School” promotion with free rides on buses for the first few weeks of school, many routes experience heavy passenger loads.

Discussion

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

- **Dublin:**
 - **Route 201** began service to the newly opened Emerald High School
 - Route 201 includes one bus in the AM, and two buses in the PM.
 - These buses were “drained” or reassigned from Dublin High School Routes 501 and 502.
 - Schedules for **Routes 501, 502, 503, 504** were adjusted to better connect to the bell times.
- **Pleasanton:**

- Schedule for **Routes 602 (Del Prado Park)** and **604 (Fairlands)** was adjusted to better time with Foothill High School.

The Try Transit to School promotion runs from August 8 - August 31, offering free rides for all middle and high school students throughout the Tri-Valley.

School bus service for the Pleasanton Unified School District began on August 8th, followed by the Dublin Unified School District and Livermore Unified School District on August 13th. In preparation for the school year, LAVTA and MV management staff were strategically positioned at various schools across the service area. These team members acted as ambassadors, assisting with student inquiries, ensuring the safe and orderly boarding of buses, and addressing any behavioral concerns among student riders.

Daily staff meetings have been held to review scheduling, assess passenger counts from the previous day, and proactively address any concerns regarding passenger overloads or crowded bus stops. During the first two weeks of service, nearly all school routes faced on-time performance challenges, which are expected to improve as traffic conditions normalize after Labor Day.

While most supplemental school routes have seen strong ridership, several Pleasanton routes have experienced heavy passenger loads. A heavy load is generally defined as carrying 1.5 times the seated capacity of a 40-foot bus, which equates to more than 60 passengers. The routes most affected include Routes 602 & 604 (Foothill High School), and Route 606 (Pleasanton Middle School) in the afternoon, as well as Routes 603 and 610 (Hart Middle School) in the morning. To mitigate these high passenger loads, Operations has been deploying additional overflow buses as manpower allows. It is anticipated that loads will normalize once the Try Transit campaign has ended in early September.

Recommendation

Receive and file an update from staff on the August service change.