

STAFF REPORT

- SUBJECT:** Unmet Transit Needs Annual Review of Weekend BART and Mountain House Transit Services
- RECOMMENDED ACTION:**
- (1) Approve the expenditure of \$462,225 of State Transit Assistance (STA) funds held in reserve for weekend service to BART, not to exceed \$175,000 per year
 - (2) Discontinue funding of County Hopper Route 99 serving Tracy to Mountain House with transit service to be provided through Van Go, subject to annual review in April 2020
- DISCUSSION:**
- SUMMARY:**

In June 2018, the Board adopted findings that weekend service from San Joaquin County to BART and transit service between Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College are unmet transit needs that are “reasonable to meet” and approved the expenditure of \$175,000 of State Transit Assistance (STA) funds on weekend service to BART. The Board also directed staff to work with the San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD), City of Tracy, and Delta College to develop a service and funding plan for service between Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College. In September 2018, the Board approved the scope and funding strategy for the first year of service between Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College, and expenditure of \$46,667 of Measure K Bus Transit Funds. This service also received funds from City of Tracy 5307 (\$110,000) and City of Tracy LTF (\$46,667).

Both transit services began operation on October 29, 2018. This staff report serves as the first annual review of the services and will provide the Board an opportunity to consider whether to allocate additional transportation funds beyond the first year of service.

On October 15, RTD submitted year-end reports providing ridership, costs, and fare revenue for Route 150 Weekend Service to BART and County Hopper 99 Tracy to Mountain House. These figures are summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Summary of Route Performance

	Weekend BART	Mountain House <-> Tracy
Description	5 roundtrips per weekend day	8 roundtrips per weekday
Funds Provided	STA (\$175,000)	Tracy 5307 (\$110,000) Tracy LTF (\$46,667) Measure K Transit (\$46,667)
Operating Cost	\$177,243	\$204,056
Fares	\$36,904	\$754
Funds Remaining	\$34,661	\$31
Passengers	6,363	1,305
Farebox Ratio	20.82%	0.37%

Route 150 Weekend BART Service

The performance of the Route 150 Weekend BART Service is on par with other interregional bus services and it appears to be a cost-effective use of transit funds. Also, the costs ended up lower than expected due to a reduction in RTD's contract rate for commuter services. RTD requested to add a sixth roundtrip to the route, which would be feasible within the original \$175,000 annual budget approved by the Board.

In August, the Board canceled Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) service leaving \$287,225 unspent STA funds held in reserve. The same month the Board also approved the STA Revenue & Apportionment Schedule which included \$175,000 in reserve for this service. Staff recommends the Board approve expenditure of the total reserved funds of \$462,225 for continuation of Route 150 Weekend BART Service including the addition of a sixth roundtrip, not to exceed \$175,000 per year. The service will be reviewed on an annual basis.

County Hopper 99 to Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College

Even with a robust marketing campaign and close coordination with Delta College on the development of the route schedule, the ridership is below expectations at approximately 5 boarding's per weekday. Based on the data reported by RTD, staff recommends discontinuing the current fixed route bus service. Transit service between Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College will continue to be provided by RTD's mobility-on-demand service, Van Go. This service began operation in April 2019 and includes three vans serving the Tracy Urbanized Area. The Board will have the opportunity to evaluate Van Go and determine future funding allocations after a full year of service in April 2020.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board: (1) Approved the expenditure of \$462,225 of State Transit Assistance (STA) funds held in reserve for weekend service to BART, not to exceed \$175,000 per year, and (2) Discontinue funding of County Hopper Route 99 serving Tracy to Mountain House. Transit service will be provided through Van Go, subject to annual review in April 2020.

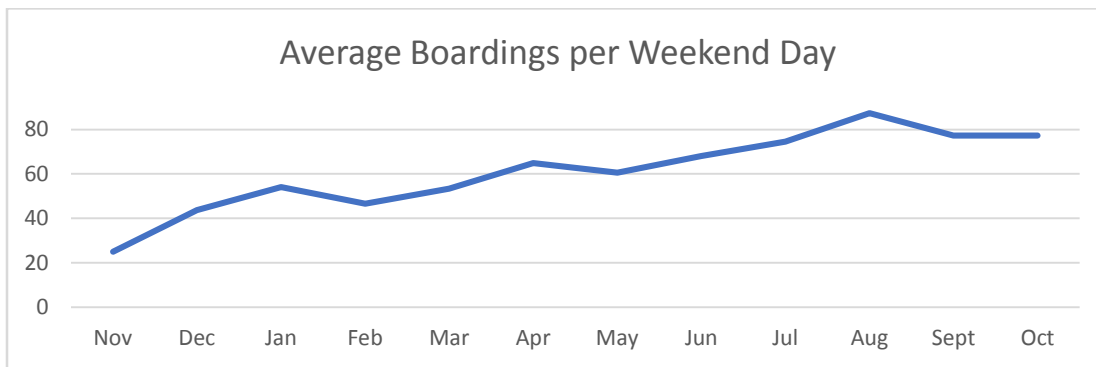
FISCAL IMPACT:

The budget authority has already been approved by the Board so there is no fiscal impact other than expenditure of funds.

BACKGROUND:

Route 150 Weekend Service to BART

RTD extended their popular weekday-only service from Downtown Stockton and Tracy to the Dublin/ Pleasanton BART station, offering five roundtrips per day on weekends. The fare is \$7 per trip. Since the service started, ridership has steadily grown:

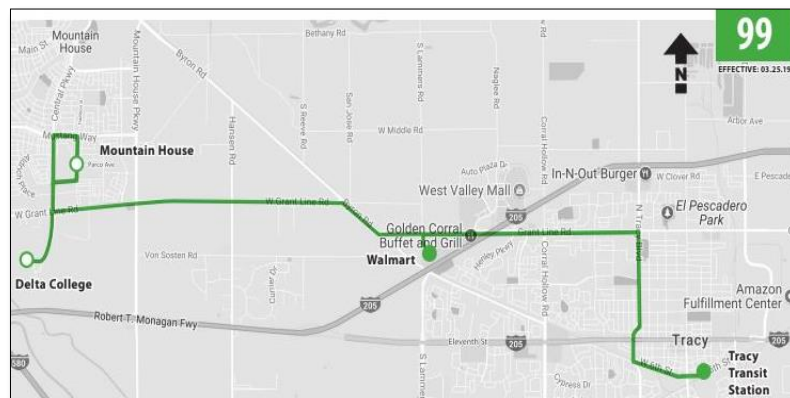


The popularity and cost effectiveness of the service makes it reasonable to support continuation of the service with the addition of a sixth roundtrip and an expected annual budget of \$175,000.

County Hopper 99

County Hopper 99 runs from Tracy Transit Center to Walmart, Delta College Mountain House Campus, and Mountain House community, with eight roundtrips per weekday. Originally, the route also included a stop at Tracy ACE Station; but based on feedback from Mountain House residents this stop was removed and a new route to Vasco ACE Station was implemented (see “Direct Connection” box below).

SJCOG and RTD worked directly with Delta College to develop the route schedule and marketing efforts. However, after one year of operation the route is averaging only five riders per weekday. Given the low ridership, staff believes it would be more cost effective



to provide transit service through the existing Van Go program operating in the area. Staff will continue to reach out on a regular basis to Delta College to determine the effectiveness of this program.

Responding to Feedback: RTD Direct Connection

On November 17, 2018, the Mountain House Community Service District (MHCS D) invited SJCOG, RTD, ACE, and San Joaquin County to speak at a workshop on commuter alternatives. One message that came loud and clear from the participants was the need for a direct service from Mountain House to Vasco ACE Station. Adapting to this feedback, RTD developed a new route, “Direct Connection,” funded through the \$46,667 ACE contribution. The ACE funds were originally part of the funding package for the Tracy – Mountain House – Delta College route, but by removing the Tracy ACE Station from that route, RTD could maintain the same number of roundtrips per day while offering the additional service to Vasco ACE.

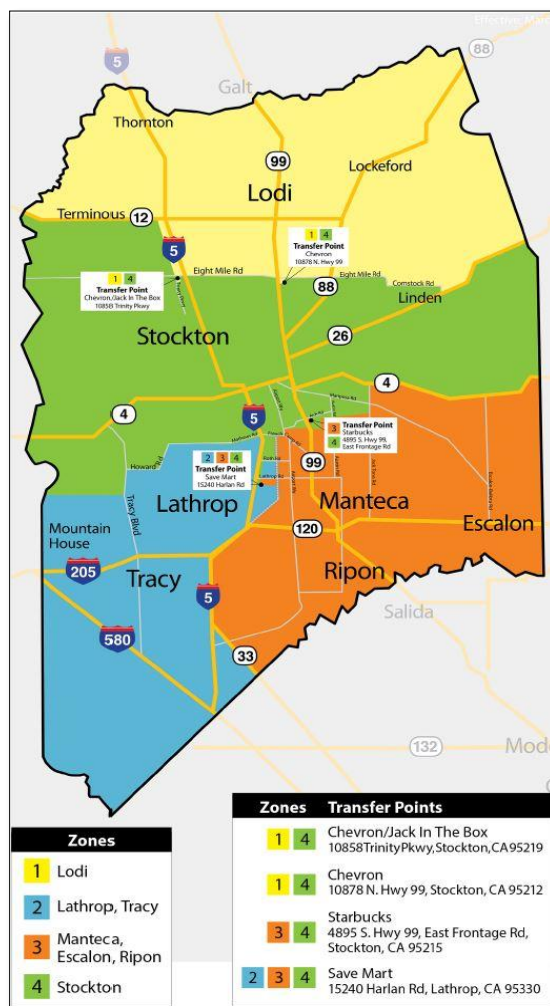
Although not directly identified or funded through Unmet Transit Needs, “Direct Connection” has been a successful service to date with growing ridership and a strong farebox recovery ratio. With a new infusion of funds from MHCS D, RTD was able to increase the service to meet three trains per day in each direction starting October 28, 2019.

Van Go

Van Go is RTD’s new mobility-on-demand program that started in April 2019. This is a rideshare service that allows point-to-point trips for \$4 within “Zones” (see map to the right). Passengers book trips through the Van Go app and may transfer for free to RTD fixed route services. Within Zone 2, Van Go is an available option for travel between Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College. More information can be found at <http://sanjoaquinrtd.com/vango/>.

Specific to the Tracy UZA, the program received \$439,712 of City of Tracy 5307 funds for purchase of three vans (\$189,000) and one year of operations (\$250,712). The required 50% match for operations funding was provided from Measure K, for a total of \$501,424 funding for one year of operations.

SJCOG is working with RTD to determine the ridership, costs, and fare revenue in the Tracy area. These figures will be reported to the Board in April 2020 after Van Go has completed a full year of service.



COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

- **Technical Advisory Committee** – Unanimously approved of staff’s recommendation. City of Tracy requested that no additional funding be programmed Van Go prior to further review of the program.
- **Social Service Transportation Advisory Council** – Unanimously approved of staff’s recommendation. RTD requested for the performance review be conducted prior to one of service for any future “reasonable to meet” UTN service.
- **Citizens Advisory Committee** – Unanimously approved of staff’s recommendation. City of Lodi requested we perform bi-annual instead of annual review of Weekend BART service.
- **Management and Finance Committee** – Unanimously approved staff’s recommendation. No questions or comments.
- **Executive Committee** – Unanimously approved staff’s recommendation. No questions or comments.

NEXT STEPS:

If the Board approves staff’s recommendation:

- STA funds held in reserve totaling \$462,225 will be expended to continue Route 150 Weekend BART Service including the addition of a sixth roundtrip, not to exceed \$175,000 per year. The service will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- County Hopper Route 99 service will be cancelled and transit service between Tracy, Mountain House, and Delta College will be provided by Van Go. The Board will have the opportunity to evaluate Van Go service including consideration of funding for additional vans serving the Tracy Urbanized Area in April 2020.

Report prepared by Rob Cunningham, Senior Regional Planner