

2012 Council Study Issue

DPW 11-09 Community Bus Feasibility Study**Lead Department** Public Works**History** 1 year ago Deferred 2 years ago None**1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?**

This study would examine the feasibility of establishing a community bus service to link schools (including Fremont High School), downtown, the civic center, and the northern portion of the City. The study would identify institutional, logistical, financial, and operational issues with community bus service. Subsidy of a Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority service or creation of a City-operated service would be potential alternatives.

This study issue was sponsored by Councilmember Chu and co-sponsored by Councilmember Whittum and Vice Mayor Moylan at the January 29, 2010 Study/Budget Issues Workshop.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?

Land Use and Transportation Element C3.5, Support a variety of transportation modes.

3. Origin of issue

Council Member(s) Chu, Whittum, Moylan

4. Staff effort required to conduct study Moderate**Briefly explain the level of staff effort required**

Development of an operating concept and research of costs and logistical issues would require a moderate level of effort, resulting in the preparation of a study document. Coordination with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority would also be involved.

5. Multiple Year Project? No **Planned Completion Year** 2012**6. Expected participation involved in the study issue process?**

Does Council need to approve a work plan? No

Does this issue require review by a Board/Commission? No

If so, which?

Is a Council Study Session anticipated? No

7. Briefly explain if a budget modification will be required to study this issue

Amount of budget modification required 10000

Explanation

This study would be conducted by Division of Transportation and Traffic staff. Impacted program would be Program 119. Retention of a transit service planning expert would assist in completing the study.

8. Briefly explain potential costs of implementing study results, note estimated capital and operating costs, as well as estimated revenue/savings, include dollar amounts

Are there costs of implementation? Yes

Explanation

Minimum capital costs would be approximately \$300,000, and minimum annual operating costs would be approximately \$250,000. This might be offset slightly by farebox revenue, although the level of fares would impact the ridership of a proposed service.

9. Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommendation Drop

If 'Support', 'Drop' or 'Defer', explain

Community bus service has been studied previously in 2001 and in the 1990's. Service was found to be cost prohibitive and would generate low ridership. Costs would be on the order of \$250,000/year per bus. To generate ridership, it would be necessary to structure fares in such a way that they attract riders and are balanced with the cost of administering fares. Many small bus systems opt not to collect fares in order to improve service cost effectiveness. Given low transit use in Sunnyvale (around 3% of all trips) and applying farebox elasticity information, a free fare system might at best double transit use, but cost effectiveness would be in the range of over \$9 per auto trip removed from the roadway. A community bus could also cause the VTA to modify or eliminate portions of their service in the City, resulting in no net increase or a decrease in transit service. The City does not have the financial resources to provide the level of subsidy for a bus service without considerable re-prioritization of operating priorities.

Reviewed by

Kent Steffens

Department Director

10-6-11

Date

Approved by

Andy Lubbus

City Manager

10/18/11

Date