

Letters to the Editor

Well wishes

I was saddened to hear that Jeanette Frisky was stepping down from the Town Council. When I had the opportunity to work with her before and after she was elected, Jeanette was able to look

at both sides of an issue and work with the community to find a logical solution. It is easy to be on a team with her because of her high level of integrity. There are those who only complain with no solutions to the problem. And then there are people like Jeanette who see something wrong, listen to all

sides and come up with an appropriate answer to the problem. I look forward to Jeanette having a speedy recovery and back helping us keep Moraga a wonderful place to live.

Barry Behr
Moraga

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

County Connection Transit Agency announces proposed fare and route changes

By John T. Miller



James Mason, a driver with the County Connection Transit Agency, steps out of the No. 6 bus to greet passengers at the Lafayette BART station.

Photo John T. Miller

The County Connection Transit Agency is proposing changes to routes and fares effective March 2019.

According to Ruby Horta, director of planning and marketing for the transportation system, budget estimates project that at the current rate – without any changes to the system – money will run out by 2023. “By making service adjustments that increase productivity and reduce costs, County Connection will be better positioned to address future financial constraints,” she says.

In July 2017, County Connection began a Comprehensive Operational Analysis to deal with the projected shortfall and came up with a proposal for a number of changes to the existing service, along with fare increases and an elimination of the midday free pass for seniors and disabled between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The transit company held meetings with various stakeholders and partner transit agencies, along with community meetings, public workshops, and a public hearing to receive input on the proposed changes.

According to Horta, “Opposition to the elimination of the midday fare was a constant theme behind the public comment process.”

Currently, the Midday Free Program accounts for over 260,000 rides on an annual basis.

The proposed fare increases

would only impact passengers paying cash. These include a 50-cent raise for adults and youth on regular routes, and a 25-cent raise on express routes, bringing the total to \$2.50 per ride. Fares for seniors would be raised 25 cents to \$1.25. Children under 6 years old will continue to ride free.

Paper passes, including paper transfers, will be eliminated; however, Clipper will continue to support transfers.

“We’ve seen the trend of passengers going to Clipper since BART added the surcharge on paper tickets,” says Horta. “There will be no changes in the price of rides using Clipper.”

Clipper provides a Day Pass and Day Pass Accumulator. The Day Pass deducts regular and express bus fares, and discounted transfer fares from the stored cash value. Clipper cards can also save money by allowing unlimited rides on most County Connection, Tri Delta Transit, WestCat and Wheels routes. Once \$3.75 in fares is reached in a day (\$1.75 for senior and RTC customers) on any combination of participating transit services, rides are free for the rest of the day.

The only restructure of routes to the Lamorinda area will be the elimination of Route 25 due to low ridership, and a potential increase in peak service on Route 6, which runs from the Orinda BART station to Saint Mary’s College and on to

the Lafayette BART station. It then returns via the same route. There are no changes planned for the 600 series that serves the local schools.

The last time the system was overhauled was in spring 2009. Horta acknowledge a number of changes since then, including hous-

ing developments, traffic patterns, demographic shifts, job centers and increased congestion.

Horta summed up the process, saying, “As transit planners, we would want more service to our customers, but the financial outlook is forcing us to make some

difficult decisions in order to create long-term financial viability.”

While final adjustments may be made, the changes should be put in place early next spring, assuming the board approves the plans in November of this year.

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