

Date: November 16, 2007

Committee Meeting Date: November 14, 2007

Board Meeting Date: December 13, 2007

BOARD MEMORANDUM

ACTION ITEM

TO: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael T. Burns
General Manager

FROM: Donald A. Smith, Jr.
Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Bus Service Plan and Impacts to ADA Paratransit Service Area

Policy-Related Action: Yes

Government Code Section 84308 Applies: No

RECOMMENDATION:

Reaffirm existing policy and practice to conform the new Bus Service Plan (to be implemented January 14, 2008) with the ADA paratransit service area in the north county and charge a Service Area Surcharge for trips originating or ending outside the service area. Further, implement the Service Area Surcharge after providing affected paratransit users with a 90-day advance notice.

BACKGROUND:

ADA complementary paratransit regulations require VTA to provide paratransit service within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of bus routes and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile around each light rail station on the same days per week and hours per day that fixed route service is provided. Currently, VTA imposes a surcharge (Service Area Surcharge) for non-ADA paratransit trips beginning or ending outside of the paratransit service area. The surcharge is 2 times the base paratransit fare (\$7.00), which is added to the base paratransit fare (\$3.50) for a one-way trip charge of \$10.50. This service option exceeds the level of paratransit service mandated by the ADA.

DISCUSSION:

The Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) requested that VTA work with Outreach to determine how the new Bus Service Plan would impact paratransit customers. Outreach and VTA determined that 33 current paratransit customers could be impacted beginning January 14, 2008 when the new Bus Service Plan is implemented, if VTA continues its current policy and practice regarding the paratransit service area in the North County.

The CTA was asked to provide input on two policy options at its meeting on November 7, 2007:

1. Continue existing policy and practice to conform to ADA paratransit service area and charge a Service Area Surcharge for trips originating or ending outside the service area.
 - a. Impacts 33 existing Outreach clients who would have to pay a Service Area Surcharge.
 - b. Consistent with Board direction of June 2003 to continue to serve paratransit customers but charge a higher rate for service over and above ADA requirements.
 - c. Would continue Board direction to exceed ADA requirements.

2. Continue to serve (“grandfather”) these 33 impacted Outreach clients at current fare (without Service Area Surcharge).
 - a. Would treat customers impacted by the new Bus Service Plan differently than the 230 customers impacted by June 2003 change (who have been paying Service Area Surcharge). New customers would pay Service Area Surcharge.
 - b. Would exceed ADA requirements.

The CTA acted to endorse option 1 with a modification to provide a 90-day grace period before imposing the Service Area Surcharge.

The CTA’s recommendation was presented to the Transit Planning & Operations (TP&O) Committee at its November 14, 2007 meeting, and TP&O approved the CTA’s recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could select option 2, or request that staff develop additional alternatives.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the Board adopts a new policy (option 2) to “grandfather” the 33 paratransit customers impacted by the new Bus Service Plan, the fiscal impact on fare revenue would be minimal. However, there would be a significant cost to Outreach associated with implementing this option, for rewriting software to account for trips taken by these 33 customers and charge them correct fares.