

County Express Newsletter:

News that Travels with You

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

MAY 2008

APPROVED: 2008 Short Range Transit Plan

Since most of us in the real world are not professional planners, what is a Short Range Transit Plan?

A Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) is a really long document that has contains the following:

- Overview of the system performance
- A comparison of with other similar systems in the area
- Route, service, and overall system recommendations
- Implementation strategies

For County Express, the Short Range Transit Plan found that there is a need for a Fixed Route service in San Benito County because of its high transit dependent population. The transit dependent commu-

nity typically includes the youths, seniors, disabled, and people that do not have a way of getting around.

In a comparison study, County Express appears to be on track with public transit systems of Madera, Tulare, Amador and Kings Counties. Fixed Route and Dial-A-Ride operating costs appear to be close to or below the average between the five counties. Passenger indicators show that the system is close to or above the average of the five Counties. However, there is always room for improvement.

Additional highlights from the

Short Range Transit Plan are:

- Going back to the 2004 Fixed Route service area with some minor changes
- Three fare increase options
- Changing Fixed Route names back to colors

Although the Plan provides a general five year timeline for all of its services and recommendations, it cannot predict the future. So if there are unforeseeable events in the future, plans may change and County Express will do its best to face the challenges head on.

To view the entire plan, visit the San Benito Free Library, the Local Transportation Authority office or view it at www.SanBenitoCountyExpress.org.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Changes for Fixed Route 2

Bike Week: May 11-17, 2008 4

WHO is the Local Transportation Authority? 4

Tickets and Passes Set to Increase

Fares for the Fixed Route have not changed since the beginning of its service in 1999. So why increase the fares now after nine years?

There are several reasons for the fare hike. The most obvious one is that price of fuel has been dramatically rising, and will not decrease anytime soon. The cost of maintenance and labor has also been increasing,

which affects the farebox recovery ratio that County Express must maintain in order to keep going.

The farebox recovery ratio is an amount of fares County Express must meet that is set by the State of California's Transportation Development Act in order to receive funding for its operations.

In addition to the required fare-

box recovery, County Express is also making improvements to the system. Since October 2007, County Express has been slowly replacing its fleet with new and more comfortable vehicles for all of its services. There will also be improved Fixed Route services such as an expansion of the Red Line.

See *Fares*, Page 3

Welcomed Changes to Fixed Route

Changes to the Fixed Route will hopefully be welcomed by the current and potential County Express customers of the Fixed Route.

Names like Clockwise and Counter-Clockwise Routes will be a distant memory as the names will be changed to the Blue and Green Line. The Business District Line will be renamed to the Red Line and the 4th Street Line will be replaced by all day Blue and Green Service.

The new Blue and Green Lines will run throughout the day from about 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., while the Red Line will start at 7:00 a.m. and will end at about 6:00 p.m. The Blue and Green Lines will travel along Memorial Drive between Meridian Street and Sunset Drive. Currently the Clockwise and Counter-Clockwise travel along El Toro between Hillcrest Road and Sunnyslope Road.

The Red Line will be extended to Technology Parkway (Milgard, Hope Services, San Benito County Child Support Services, USDA Farm Service Agency) and Flynn Road. The map below shows the new Blue, Green and Red Lines and

also the new Paratransit service area.

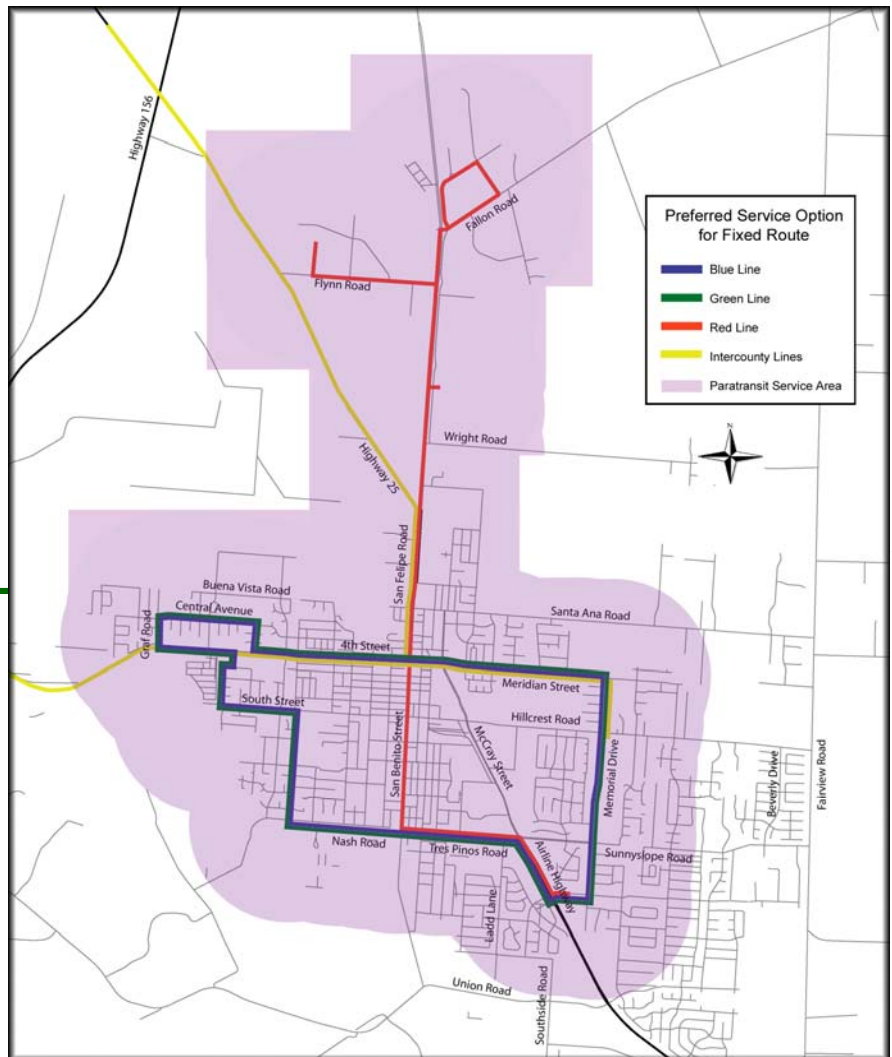
The Paratransit service area will also be modified in order to comply with the Americans with Disability Act of 1992. County Express is required to provide Paratransit service 3/4 mile on both sides of a Fixed Route for people who are not able to get to a bus stop.

An On-Time Performance Tracker is also being used by County Express to monitor the on-time performance of all its Fixed Routes and Inter-county Services. The Tracker would let the dispatchers know exactly when the bus arrived and departed and where the bus is in real-time. If

a customer calls and complains that the bus never showed up, dispatch can tell them the exact time it arrived and departed.

The Tracker will also be used by the Local Transportation Authority (See Page 4) to monitor and assess if the routes and schedule need any changes.

The implementation process has already begun. The Local Transportation Authority is estimating that the all changes will be completed by the end of Summer 2008. ■



Right:
New Fixed Route
and Paratransit
Service Area

FARES: To fund operations

continued from Page 1

There are three options were considered are:

Option 1:

Annual increases for Fixed Route of 10¢ for Regular and 5¢ for Discount fares.

Option 2:

One time fare increase for Fixed Route of 25¢ for Regular and 15¢ for Discount fares.

Option 3:

Includes the fare increase in Option 2 and the introduction of a Discount Fare for Intercounty Services and Day Pass for Fixed Route and Intercounty. Zone B of the Dial-A-Ride service will be eliminated. Under Option 3, the fares on the Intercounty, Dial-A-Ride, and the Sunnyslope

Southside Discount Area Reservation Service may be used on each of the service. In other words, tickets

can be transferable between the services. Transferring from one County Express service to another County Express service will not count as a transferrable ticket. Tickets may only be used for one service at a time and are only for one-way trips.

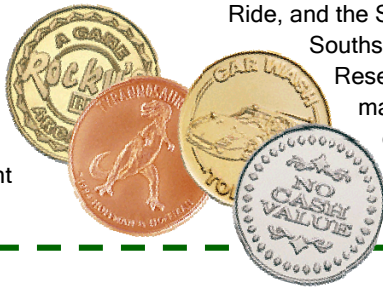
One of the recommendations from the 2008 Short Range Transit Plan is to introduce a Day Pass for Fixed Route and Intercounty. A Day Pass works exactly the same way as a Monthly Pass, but it is only valid for one day.

Another recommendation is to switch from tickets to tokens because it decrease the amount of paper waste help County Express become a greener public transit service. All of the County Express tickets are used only once and then shredded. Using tokens would eliminate the paper waste and also save money because tokens may be used over and over again.

The three fare increase options that the Local Transportation Authority Board (see Page 4) considered can be seen on the left. The option that the Board directed staff to proceed with was Option 3.

The adoption hearing for Option 3 will be held on June 19, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. A Spanish interpreter will be provided. For more information, please visit www.SanBenitoCountyExpress.org or call (831) 637-7665. ■

“...decrease the amount of paper waste and help County Express become a greener public transit service.”



Fare Increase

Option 1: Annual Increases

Cash Fare	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	5 th Year
Regular	\$0.75	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Discount	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.65	\$0.65	\$0.65

Option 2: One Time Increase

Cash Fare	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	5 th Year
Regular	\$0.75	\$0.85	\$0.95	\$1.05	\$1.10
Discount	\$.50	\$0.55	\$0.60	\$0.65	\$0.65

Option 3: New Fare Structure

Service	Rider	One-Way
Fixed Route	Regular	\$1.00
	Discount	\$0.75
Intercounty	Regular	\$1.75
	Discount	\$1.00
Southside Sunnyslope Discount Area Reservation Service	Regular	\$1.75
	Discount	\$1.00
Dial-A-Ride	Regular	\$1.75
	Discount	\$1.00
Paratransit	ADA Eligible	\$1.00
	Personal Care Attendant	Free
	Companion	\$1.00

BIKE WEEK: May 11 - 17, 2008

Get ready to put your bicycle helmets on because Bike Week is just around the corner.

San Benito County will be pedaling towards its 14th Annual Bike Week on May 11-17, 2008. Bike Week's goal is promote bicycling as a healthy transportation alternative that reduces traffic and air pollution.

There are several events during Bike Week that includes Off the Chain Bikes Rides, Bike to School Day and Bike to Work Day.

Did you know that each mile you bike instead of driving, one pound of carbon dioxide is not emitted into the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas?

Throughout the week, County Express will also be offering 25¢ off each Fixed Route or Intercounty trip when people ride their bike to

the bus stop during Bike Week. All Fixed Route and Intercounty buses have bike racks that can hold up to two bicycles.

Participants of Bike Week will also be eligible to win a \$1,000 cash prize by filling out survey or registering online.

On Bike To School Day, one stu-

dent from each participating school will have the chance of winning a new bike.

Bike Week would not have been possible without the generous donations from members of the community. Past donations have included bicycle safety items, food for the participants, and volunteer time at the numerous Bike Week events. If you are interested in donating or volunteering during Bike Week, visit the website at www.Bike2Week.com or call 831.637.7665. ■



WHO is the Local Transportation Authority?

Ever wonder who or what the San Benito County Local Transportation Authority is? No, it is not the same as the Council of San Benito County Governments nor is it the Authority on all aspects of transportation. The Local Transportation Authority is the agency that has been designated to run the bus service in San Benito County.

The Authority was formed in 1990 through a Joint Powers Agreement between the Hollister, San Juan Bautista and San Benito County to provide public transit throughout the County.

Under the name of County Express, the Authority provides Fixed Route, Intercounty, Paratransit, and Dial-A-Ride services. Tickets and monthly passes are available for purchase at the County Express facility at 3240 Southside Road in Hollister and at the Authority's office at 330 Tres

Pinos Road, Suite C7 in Hollister. For more information about County Express services, please call 831.636.4161 or visit its website at www.SanBenitoCountyExpress.org.

In addition to County Express, specialized transportation services are also provided through Jovenes de Antaño (Youths of Yesteryears). Jovenes de Antaño is a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to improving the general welfare of the elderly and disabled individuals of San Benito County. They provide a variety of services such as:

- Senior nutrition services
- Meals on Wheels
- Adult Day Care Center
- Family Caregiver Support Program

Jovenes de Antaño's specialized transportation services include non-emergency medical transportation out of San Benito County,

transportation to the Senior Nutrition Program, and Medical and Shopping Assistance. For more information about Jovenes de Antaño services, please call 831.637.9275 or go online to www.JDASeniors.org.

The Authority's Board of Directors meets every 3rd Thursday of every month at 2:00 p.m. at 481 Fourth Street at the Board of Supervisors Chambers in Hollister. Agenda packets can be viewed online at www.SanBenitoCOG.org. The public is welcomed and encouraged to attend these meetings.

The Local Transportation Authority is located at 330 Tres Pinos Road, Suite C7 and is open Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Authority can be reached at 831.636.7665 or by email at info@sanbenitocog.org. ■