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DATE: February 8, 2024  
TO: Transit Advisory Committee  
FROM: Jared Hall, Transit Manager  
SUBJECT: Transit Manager Report

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## **Transit Manager's Report to Transit Advisory Committee**

Ridership on Petaluma Transit provided 20,611 rides in December 2023 compared to 16,664 rides provided in December 2022 a 24% ridership increase.

Ridership on Petaluma Paratransit service provided 728 rides in December 2023 compared to 622 in December 2022, an increase of 17%.

### **Electric Bus Purchase**

Council approved the purchase of the first electric transit buses for Petaluma Transit at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting. Staff is currently executing documentation to purchase the four New Flyer Battery electric buses. The vehicles are estimated for delivery in February 2025. In the interim staff will continue to develop and implement electric bus training curriculum for its staff in advance of the buses beginning service.

### **Transit Facility Electrification**

Work continues on making electrical infrastructure improvements to the Transit operations yard. These improvements are needed in order to be able to accommodate the first wave of battery electric buses that Petaluma will be ordering in FY24.

Design work for the project continues prior to the project being issued for bid in the latter half of 2024. The City anticipates taking a two-phase approach to the project due to fiscal constraints and needing to identify additional funding to complete a second phase of the project. The first project phase will include trenching and the installation of five power cabinets, five dual-plug chargers, electric switchgear, and associated components (cabling, conduits, etc.). The second project phase will purchase and install additional power cabinets and chargers to be able to charge a fully electric bus fleet by 2030.

## **Paratransit Evaluation and Programs**

Staff continues to self-administer the paratransit evaluation process. Recent highlights of the paratransit evaluation process include:

- Staff Received and processed 14 applications for December 2023
- Staff mailed out 0 Eligibility reminder letter for December 2023

The average number of processing days in December (from when a fully completed application is received to when its processed) was nine days (the Federal Transit Administration requires processing of applications within 21 days).

## **Microtransit Update**

Petaluma Transit staff provided an update on the Microtransit pilot program at the January 2024 TAC meeting. The meeting provided the first in-depth conversation with the full TAC on the Petaluma Microtransit pilot program. Feedback received from the Committee will be incorporated into the pilot design and framework.

Staff is currently creating and executing service contracts for the software platform that the microtransit service would utilize (i.e. user interface). The service will be operated by MV Transportation, the current Petaluma Transit operations contractor.

Staff is currently working towards finalizing the Microtransit pilot zone area and starting to develop program branding, marketing and communications.

Implementation of the program will occur by June 2024.

## **Fare Free Update**

Petaluma Transit staff presented an update on the fare free pilot program at the January 2024 TAC meeting in order to receive input from the public and committee members.

Recently, staff has begun discussions with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) on the program, its framework and how it would interact with Clipper and other regional transit fare pass programs.

Staff have begun policy and safety discussions for the program in order to ensure a smooth program rollout and execution. This includes meeting with members of the Petaluma Police Department staff and the Petaluma Safe Team Director in January to discuss project structure, implementation, coordination between agencies, needed resources, shared goals/priorities, amongst other topics.

Staff will continue to develop the program framework and next begin creation of program branding, marketing and communication in Q1 2024.

Implementation of the program will occur by June 2024.

### **Marketing and Outreach**

Staff attended the following community outreach events recently:

- Regional Mapping and Wayfinding User Experience Working Group-December 27
- BAPAC-Bay Area Transit Accessibility Working Group-January 8
- SCTA Transit Technical Advisory Committee – January 10
- SCTA Transit Paratransit Coordinating Committee-January 16
  - Maria Arce Elected as Committee Chair
- Bergin College of Canine Studies Visit-January 23

Staff has also held meetings with community organizations as part of their outreach efforts:

- Blue Zones-January 18
- Safe Routes to School- January 18

Petaluma Transit promotions:

- Petaluma Transit offered shuttle services to City of Petaluma staff at the Annual City Holiday Brunch-December 20

- In collaboration with Sonoma County Transit and Santa Rosa CityBus, Petaluma Transit provided free fares in recognition of Equity Day on 02/04. Promotional items were placed on the buses providing a timeline of the people and events that ended segregation in the U.S.



Figure 1. Fare Box Cover in recognition of Equity Day



Figure 2. Rosa Parks infographic displayed on the window of a Petaluma Transit fixed route bus in recognition of Rosa Parks Day/Equity Day on February 4, 2024.



*Figure 3. Students from Bergin College of Canine visited to allow for dogs and students to get exposure the boarding and riding a bus.*



*Figure 4. Bergin College of Canine Studies is an ADI-accredited service dog organization that trains service dogs for mobility and PTSD for Veterans.*

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment A. Fixed Route Monthly Ridership - December 2023
- Attachment B. Paratransit Monthly Ridership - December 2023

## **Standing Item – Recent Development Review Notes**

*No Items to report*

### **Next Meeting**

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2024.

## **Future Transit Advisory Committee Meeting** **Agenda Items for Consideration**

- Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality
- FY2024 TAC Goal Workshop
- Bus Stop shelter and bench Procurement
- Electric Paratransit Bus Procurement
- FY25 budget

*Transit Advisory Committee members are requested to provide ideas and recommendations for additional items*