

## SBCAG STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Clean Air Express Fare Adjustment Policy

**MEETING DATE:** December 19, 2019

**AGENDA ITEM:** 4C

**STAFF CONTACT:** Scott Spaulding

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve an update to the Clean Air Express Fare Adjustment policy.

**DISCUSSION:**

SBCAG began operating and managing the Clean Air Express in 2001 after assuming responsibility for administering the service from the Air Pollution Control District, which created the service in 1990. The Clean Air Express serves residents of North Santa Barbara County who work in Goleta and Santa Barbara and currently serves Lompoc with seven weekday round trips, Santa Maria with five weekday round trips, and the Santa Ynez Valley with one weekday round trip that originates in Solvang. SBCAG is the Clean Air Express policy board, acting on recommendations from the North County Subregional Committee. The Clean Air Express serves about 180,000 passengers annually and removes about ten million vehicle miles travelled (VMTs) from the county's roads annually.

In accordance with Federal Transit Administration requirements, the SBCAG Board approved a Clean Air Express Fare Policy in April 2003, and under this policy, the SBCAG Board last adjusted Clean Air Express fares in December 2007. The recently adopted Clean Air Express Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) includes a recommendation to adjust Clean Air Express fares based on the funding shortfall facing the service and the twelve year period in which there has been no adjustment to the fare structure. Prior to developing recommendations for fare adjustments that would be presented to the Board for consideration, the current Fare Adjustment Policy should be updated to reflect current service characteristics and the advent of social media channels for customer communication.

**ATTACHMENT:**

- A. Draft Clean Air Express Fare Policy

# ATTACHMENT A

## POLICY FOR RECEIVING PUBLIC COMMENTS ON FARE INCREASES AND MAJOR SERVICE REDUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATION OF MINOR SERVICE REVISIONS

The following shall be the policy of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) for adopting fare structure changes and/or implementing Clean Air Express service revisions.

The public comment and notification policy shall be implemented as described below.

### A. Policy Definitions:

1. **Minor Service Revisions:** *Minor service revisions* are defined as follows:

- a. The removal or relocation of an existing Clean Air Express stop or the addition of a new Clean Air Express stop; or
- b. Changes made to the initial departure times of an existing Clean Air Express trip.

2. **Major Service Reductions:** *A major service reduction* is defined as follows:

- a. The discontinuation of a Clean Air Express trip; or
- b. A system-wide service reduction that results in a 20% or greater reduction in service hours.

3. **Fare Increase:** *A fare increase* is defined as any increase in the cost of a Clean Air Express Monthly pass, 10-Ride pass, or cash fare.

### B. Notifications:

*Minor Service Revisions:* Clean Air Express customers will be given written notice at least two weeks prior to implementing a *minor service revision*. The written notifications shall be posted to the Clean Air Express website and distributed to Clean Air Express customers on all relevant bus trips. Customers will also be notified via social media channels and text/email notification lists.

*Major Service Reductions and Fare Increases:* Clean Air Express customers and the general public shall be notified of any proposed Clean Air Express *major service reduction* or *fare increase* and shall be given an opportunity to submit written comments and/or attend a scheduled public meeting held for the proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase*. Written notification shall be posted to the Clean Air Express website and distributed to Clean Air Express customers on all bus trips. In addition, customers will be notified via social media channels and text/email notification lists. The public notice shall generally describe the proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase* and shall include a mail and email address where written comments can be sent, and include the time, day and location of the scheduled public meeting.

**C. Public Meeting:**

A public meeting shall be held for any proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase*. SBCAG staff shall provide information regarding the proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase*, as well provide an opportunity for Clean Air Express customers and/or the general public to voice their comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding the proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase*. Written and oral comments received at the public meeting will be summarized by SBCAG Staff and provided to the SBCAG Board of Directors for review at a regular SBCAG Board meeting.

**D. Staff Recommendation:**

SBCAG Staff shall consider all written comments and oral testimony regarding the proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase*. Public comments will be evaluated and included in a Staff Report to the SBCAG Board of Directors on the proposed *major service reduction* or *fare increase*.

**E. SBCAG Approval of Major Service Reductions and Fare Increases:**

Upon receipt of the staff report and a summary of the public comments, the SBCAG Board of Directors will take formal action on the recommended *major service reduction* or *fare increase*.

**F. Notification of Board Action:**

Clean Air Express customers shall be notified no less than 30 days prior to implementing a board-adopted *fare increase* or *major service reduction*. Written notification shall be posted to the Clean Air Express website and distributed to Clean Air Express customers on all bus routes.