

Item No. 5



December 19, 2011

TO: Gold Coast Transit Board of Directors

FROM: Helene Buchman
Director of Planning and Marketing

SUBJECT: Consider Approval of Revised Transfer Fee Between Ojai Trolley and Gold Coast Transit

I. Executive Summary

The City of Ojai City Council has directed staff to develop a proposal for reducing a deficit of \$144,000 in the City's transit budget in the current fiscal year. Based on input from a committee comprised of members of local businesses, Trolley passengers, HELP of Ojai, and residents, the City Council on December 13, 2011 voted to raise fares on the Ojai Trolley. Because the fare for all categories will increase, staff is recommending a modification of the transfer differential fee for Trolley passengers transferring to Gold Coast Transit Route 16 to \$0.50 for all fare categories.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Board of Directors adopt a \$0.50 transfer fee from the Ojai Trolley to Gold Coast Transit Route 16 for all fare classifications.

II. Background

Earlier this year, staff at the City of Ojai was tasked to develop options to reduce or fully eliminate a deficit in its General Fund subsidy for transit of approximately \$144,000. At that time, the City Council directed staff to convene an ad hoc committee comprised of representatives of staff, local businesses, Ojai Trolley passengers, HELP of Ojai, City of Ojai Complete Streets Committee, GCT, VCTC and the County of Ventura.

The ad hoc committee met on four occasions to discuss a number of cost-saving options as well as potential revenue enhancements.

301 E Third St, Oxnard, CA 93030-6048 • 805.483.3959 • FAX 805.487.0925 • www.goldcoasttransit.org

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GCT was represented on this ad hoc committee. At the last meeting the committee members (except representatives from GCT, VCTC and the County of Ventura) unanimously voted to support the following recommendations:

1. Withdrawal of the City from the Gold Coast Transit JPA for fixed route service and eliminate funding of Gold Coast Transit fixed route service in the City of Ojai;
2. Increasing Ojai Trolley fares from \$0.50 to \$1.00 for base fares;
3. Modifying Trolley service to mirror the hours formerly operated by GCT
4. Cutting weekend service back to one hour from half-hour frequencies.
5. Potentially changing paratransit service/paratransit operator.

Staff presented these recommendations to the Ojai City Council at the December 13, 2011 meeting. In advance of the meeting, the City conducted three meetings (November 22nd and 30th, and December 3, 2011) to receive input from the public. Due to the potential impacts to passengers of GCT Route 16, flyers on City of Ojai letterhead informing of the proposed transit service modifications and upcoming meetings were distributed to passengers on that route.

The Ojai City Council voted unanimously to adopt the staff/Ad Hoc Transit Committee recommendations. A component of the recommendation is to raise fares for the Ojai Trolley, effective February, 2012:

- Adult base fare: fare increases from \$0.50 to \$1.00
- Senior/Child aged 2-5 years: fare increases from \$0.25 to \$0.50
- ADA/Medicare/children under 2 years: currently is free; will be \$0.25
- All-day fare/day pass: 2X fare listed above

To date, since the Ojai Trolley fares are considerably less than those of GCT, it was agreed to charge a differential to transfer from the Ojai Trolley to Route 16. This was initiated to address the lost revenue to Gold Coast Transit. The differential has been \$1.00 for adult base fares and \$0.55 for other fare categories. The fee is levied at the time an Ojai Trolley passenger transfers to a Gold Coast Transit bus. Passengers transferring to the Ojai Trolley from Route 16 do not pay a differential, as their initial fare is considerably higher.

With the increase in Ojai Trolley fares, staff reviewed the fee charged for Ojai Trolley transfers to GCT Route 16. If the current transfer differential on the base adult fare remains in place, Ojai Trolley adult passengers transferring to Route 16 would pay a higher fare (\$2.00) than the base adult fare for GCT (\$1.50). Staff believes that this inequity would deter riders from using transit for trips from Ojai to the remainder of the GCT area. As a result, staff is recommending the following modifications in the transfer fee for Ojai Trolley passengers transferring to Route 16:

- Adult base fare: decrease from \$1.00 to \$0.50
- Senior/Child aged 2-5 years: decrease from \$0.55 to \$0.50
- ADA/ Medicare: \$0.50
- All-day fare/day pass: \$0.50
- Children under 2 years: no charge as children are free

Assuming the Gold Coast Transit Board of Directors adopts the recommended transfer fees, they would become effective on the same day as the increase in Ojai Trolley fares.

III. Recommendation

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Board of Directors adopt a \$0.50 transfer fee from the Ojai Trolley to Gold Coast Transit Route 16 for all fare classifications.



General Manager's Concurrence