

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 7/14/14		Item Number: <u>PH-3</u>	
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM: PUBLIC HEARING – Consideration of the Implementation of a Change to the Fare Charged by Culver CityBus for Sight-Impaired Passengers (Blind Passengers).			
Contact Person/Dept.: Samantha M. Blackshire/Transportation		Phone Number: (310) 253-6535	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☒		Action Item: ☐ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐		Date: 06/11/14)	
Disability Advisory Committee			
Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas – City Council (07/08/14); (E-Mail) Ongoing Topics – Culver CityBus (07/08/14); (Publication) Culver City News (06/05/14 and 06/12/14) Furthermore, to comply with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) notification policy, (USPS) Letters Describing the Proposed Blind Passenger Fare Increase to Stakeholders (06/02/14) ; (USPS) Letter to Braille Institute and the Junior Blind of America (06/12/14); Notices Posted in English and Spanish on Busses and Culver CityBus Webpage; (Dedicated Phone Line) Phone Message System (06/18/14); Public Outreach Meeting (06/18/14); (Website) Public Notice Webpage (07/07/14)			
Department Approval: Art Ida (07/01/14)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (07/09/14)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (07/09/14)		City Manager Approval: John M. Nachbar (07/09/14)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council consider a change to the fare charged to Sight Impaired (Blind) passengers on Culver CityBus as outlined in this report with an effective date of August 4, 2014. <u>PROCEDURE:</u> 1. Mayor seeks a motion to receive and file the affidavits of publication and posting of notices and correspondence received in response to the public hearing notices; and, 2. Mayor calls for a staff report and City Council Members may pose questions to staff as desired; and, 3. Mayor seeks a motion to open the public hearing; and, 4. Mayor seeks motion to close the public hearing after all public testimony has been presented; and,			

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5. City Council discusses the item and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND:

Culver CityBus operates eight routes, serving approximately 6 million riders annually with a service area encompassing 25.5 square miles, which includes the following Westside communities: Venice, Westchester, Westwood, West Los Angeles, Palms, Marina Del Rey, Rancho Park, Mar Vista, Century City, and Culver City.

Historically, Culver CityBus has allowed blind passengers to ride for free. Staff was recently contacted by a bus riding patron, who alleged this practice may be in violation of the law. The individual complained that the City may not give a benefit (in this instance, free bus fare) to blind patrons beyond what is offered to other disabled persons or to senior citizens.

DISCUSSION:

Staff contacted three (3) other transit agencies in Los Angeles County that have provided free fares for the blind: Torrance Transit Systems, Long Beach Transit, and Gardena Municipal Bus Lines. Torrance Transit Systems has not taken any action to change its blind passenger fare. Long Beach Transit is in the process of conducting research (as a larger transit agency it must adhere to other federal Title VI requirements prior to changing its blind passenger fare). Gardena Municipal Bus Lines changed its blind passenger fare recently after receiving a similar complaint. To our knowledge, the other transit agencies in the area charge blind passengers the same reduced fare as other disabled passengers.

Given the entirety of the circumstances, including the information received from the other cities and consultation with the City Attorney's Office regarding the bus patron's allegations, Staff proposes that the City Council approve a single fare applicable to all senior/disabled passengers (including blind passengers) at the following rate:

	Fare	Local Transf.	IAT
Senior (62+)/Disabled/Medicare/Blind	35¢	10¢	20¢

During the public comment period, from June 2 – 23, 2014, staff received comments at its Public Outreach meeting and after presenting the information item to the Disability Advisory Committee. The primary question received was why does the blind passenger fare need to change if it is not due to financial reasons? Commenters at the Public Outreach meeting stressed that the individual who raised this issue should take the approach of having his disability category approved to ride

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the bus for free. Once Transportation Director Art Ida explained the information surrounding the recent raising of this issue, those in attendance understood the relevance of staff's proposal. Staff also encouraged those impacted by the fare change to apply for an Access Services TAP card, which would allow them to ride for free under the Free Fare Partnership Program established with several of the municipal operators including Culver CityBus. At the Public Outreach meeting staff also informed those attending of the availability of the Metro Rider Relief Transportation Program (RRTP). RRTP provides fare subsidy coupons to eligible riders who purchase daily, weekly, or monthly passes, TAP cash purse and EZ transit passes from participating transit systems (including Culver CityBus).

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

If the blind passenger fare change is approved, the fiscal impact would be minimal since the impacted rider group does not represent a large number of Culver CityBus customers.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Stakeholder List
- B. Fare Survey
- C. Customer Feedback

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Approve the Culver CityBus proposed blind fare change effective on August 4, 2014