



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
December 15, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Liam Garland, Director, Department of Public Works

Subject: Contract: Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District (AC Transit) for EasyPass Program 2021 to 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract and any amendments with Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District (AC Transit) for the EasyPass bus transit pass program for City of Berkeley employees in an amount not to exceed \$774,453 for the five-year period commencing January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Total projected five-year cost of the EasyPass program is \$774,453. Funds for calendar year 2021 are available in the Payroll Deduction Trust Fund (Fund 013), and future fiscal years funding is subject to appropriation in those annual budgets. Based upon the current estimated minimum pool of 1,402 passes (one pass per employee), the City will remit payment to AC Transit over the life of the contract as projected here:

<b>Contract Period</b>	<b>Minimum Employee Pool</b>	<b>Annual Cost Per Pass</b>	<b>Total Annual Contract Costs<sup>1</sup></b>
1/1/2021 - 12/31/2021	1,402	\$106.15	\$148,826
1/1/2021 - 12/31/2022	1,402	\$106.15	\$148,826
1/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	1,402	\$110.48	\$154,891
1/1/2023 - 12/31/2024	1,402	\$114.80	\$160,955
1/1/2024 - 12/31/2025	1,402	\$114.80	\$160,955
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$774,453</b>

<sup>1</sup> Calculation of total annual contract costs is based upon AC Transit's level of service score allocated to every COB worksite (approximately 30 as of October 2020), combined into a weighted average that is then multiplied by minimum pool of participants.

Due to system responses to the COVID19 pandemic, AC Transit has generally experienced a significant reduction in ridership since March 2020, and City employee ridership has similarly declined. Further, the City may purchase additional passes as needed above the projected minimum employee pool amount for reduced individual rates during the life of the contract, including any amendments or extensions.

#### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Commencing in 2002, the City of Berkeley has participated continuously in AC Transit's EasyPass Program that offers our employees unlimited usage passes for all AC Transit local and Transbay buses. This EasyPass is embedded in a Clipper® card, a reloadable contactless smart card used for electronic transit fare payment for travel on twenty-two other Bay Area transit agency systems.<sup>2</sup> EasyPass/Clipper card holders may separately load additional monies or other fare media onto the cards, thus allowing mass transit users to automatically access transfers and discounts they otherwise would not be able to capture. Further, commencing August 2019, BART discontinued acceptance of paper tickets, and instituted Clipper card only admission to that transit system. Having the EasyPass attached to a free Clipper card (new adult Clipper cards cost \$3 each) is another bonus for City employees participating in the EasyPass program. Additionally, because the EasyPass/Clipper is a contactless smart card, it supports safety protocols implemented to stop the spread of COVID19 infections.

AC Transit's pricing structure for employer pass programs calculates each contract based upon the level of bus service available at work sites, and on the number of employees reporting to each site. For the City of Berkeley, the cost per participant reflects an average of costs for each of the City's thirty work sites, the number of eligible employees per site, and anticipated future fare increases on the AC Transit system.

Terms of the previous contract were extended and are in place through December 31, 2020. Due to COVID 19 impacts, and to new administrative procedures in place at AC Transit, the City and AC Transit recently completed negotiation discussions and have finalized the new contract prior to expiration of that extension. AC Transit is a committed City of Berkeley business partner, and has continued to honor the contract providing uninterrupted service for all Berkeley employees. All terms and pricing of the new contract are favorable and advantageous to the City, particularly as a five-year contract reduces the administrative costs associated with annual renewals, and contract negotiations.

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<sup>2</sup> Clipper Cards are also accepted on Dumbarton Express, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Caltrain, County Connection Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry), Marin Transit, Petaluma Transit, SamTrans, San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni), Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Santa Rosa CityBus, San Francisco Bay Ferry (except for seasonal and Oracle Park service), Sonoma County Transit, Sonoma–Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), Tri-Delta Transit, VINE, WestCAT WHEELS, SolTrans, FAST, Union City Transit, Vacaville City Coach.

Starting in 2002, the City successfully executed a series of two-year contracts, and most recently a five-year contract with AC Transit for this program. Staff expects no major changes in program operations or costs during the recommended five-year period. Moreover, a five-year contract period is beneficial as it insulates the City against substantial price increases during the contract term.

Renewal of this City-funded voluntary employee transit program advances the Strategic Plan Priority Project goals of attracting and retaining a talented and diverse City government workforce by providing employees a travel perquisite; and addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment by encouraging more than 1,400 City employees to use mass transit.

### BACKGROUND

In January 2002 the City and AC Transit formed a partnership to establish an employee transit pass program to provide all eligible City employees unlimited rides on all AC Transit buses. Council approved extensions of the EasyPass (then called EcoPass) program each year beginning in 2003, and then in two-year cycles from 2006 onward. The current contract began in 2015, expired December 31, 2019, and has been extended through December 31, 2020.<sup>3</sup>

Participating City employees receive an EasyPass embedded in a Clipper card that is valid for the duration of their employment with the City. EasyPasses are renewed electronically on an annual basis. City staff administer program enrollment and pass distribution; process replacement of lost and damaged cards; and termination of employees from the program upon separation from City service. Evaluation of EasyPass effectiveness shows a steady increase of employee participation and usage through February 2020, when COVID19-related safety measures instituted by AC Transit, and City of Berkeley took effect and ridership in all Bay Area transit systems declined.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The EasyPass program encourages use of public transit for City employees and contributes to reduction in the use of single occupancy vehicles for work and recreational travel. This in turn, reduces carbon emissions especially greenhouse gasses, which is a goal of the Berkeley Climate Action Plan. Use of mass transit also reduces vehicle traffic, parking demand and congestion near City offices and work sites.

### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The EasyPass program is a proven and popular benefit widely used by City employees for commuting and recreational travel. By continuing to provide this employee benefit program, the City remains a model employer for Berkeley

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<sup>3</sup> By Council Resolution No. 66,888-N.S., authorized 12/16/2014. Contract No. 9976, NTE \$570,000.

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businesses required to offer a Commuter Benefit Program (Berkeley Municipal Code 9.88) or Trip Reduction Information Program (BMC 14.92) to their employees.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Council may opt to authorize a contract with a shorter term. Staff do not recommend a shorter term because the administrative process utilized by AC Transit for new contracts has changed, and is now quite extensive with considerable time needed for completion.

CONTACT PERSON

Leisl Griffith Redmond, Senior Management Analyst, Department of Public Works, (510) 981-6304

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT (AC TRANSIT) FOR  
EASYPASS PROGRAM 2021 TO 2025

WHEREAS, in January 2002 the City and AC Transit formed a partnership to establish an employee transit pass program to provide all eligible City employees unlimited rides on all AC Transit buses.; and

WHEREAS, the concentration of public bus service in Berkeley and the size of the City's workforce support an employee pass program with the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit); and

WHEREAS, the EasyPass program is a proven and popular benefit encouraging use of public transit for City employees, and contributing to reduction in the use of single occupancy vehicles for work and recreational travel; and

WHEREAS, by continuing to provide this employee benefit program, the City remains a model employer for Berkeley businesses required to offer a Commuter Benefit Program (Berkeley Municipal Code 9.88) or Trip Reduction Information Program; and

WHEREAS, since forming a partnership in 2002 to establish the EasyPass (then EcoPass) Program, the City of Berkeley and AC Transit has offered employees unlimited usage passes for all AC Transit local and Transbay buses.; and

WHEREAS, the Council has approved extension of the program since its inception in 2002, and most recently in 2015 (Resolution No. 66,888-N.S.); and

WHEREAS, funds for the EasyPass program for calendar year 2021 are available in the Payroll Deduction Trust Fund (Fund 930), with funding subject to appropriation in future fiscal years' annual budgets.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments with the Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District (AC Transit) for the continuation of the EasyPass annual bus transit pass program for City of Berkeley employees in an amount not to exceed \$774,453 for the 5-year period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2025.

