



Agenda Item No. (7)

To: Finance-Auditing Committee/Committee of the Whole
Meeting of March 27, 2025

From: Ron Downing, Director of Planning
Kellee J. Hopper, Deputy General Manager, Administration and Development
Jennifer H. Mennucci, Auditor-Controller
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **APPROVE A THREE-YEAR FARE INCREASE PLAN FOR LARKSPUR
TO SAN FRANCISCO SPECIAL EVENT FERRY SERVICE AND
RELATED ACTIONS**

Recommendation

The Finance-Auditing Committee recommends that the Board of Directors approve a Three-Year Fare Increase Plan for Larkspur to San Francisco Special Event Ferry Service, approve the associated Title VI Equity Analysis, and amend the Master Ordinance accordingly, with the understanding that, if approved, the Three-Year Fare Increase Plan would be implemented on April 1, 2025, with its first increment of a \$0.50 increase, with subsequent \$0.50 increases on April 1, 2026, and April 1, 2027, respectively.

This matter will be presented to the Board of Directors at its March 28, 2025, meeting for appropriate action.

Summary

Special event transit service is defined in the Master Ordinance as Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) bus and ferry service provided on routes that are not part of the regularly scheduled transit route network and to areas that are not more than fifty (50) miles beyond the District's transit service area, consistent with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations. The District's special event ferry service between Larkspur and San Francisco is consistent with FTA requirements, and the District has operated special event ferry service since the San Francisco Giants relocated to their current waterfront home.

The Board of Directors (Board) has a long-standing policy that special event service should be priced to avoid a toll subsidy. Specifically, the Master Ordinance states: "Fares for this special event service are set to cover the total cost of the service and will be updated as needed by the Board."

In order to coincide with the Giants' home baseball season starting on April 4, 2025, staff proposes a three-year fare increase program to annually increase fares by \$0.50 each way on April 1, beginning on April 1, 2025, and continuing with the last increase on April 1, 2027. The purpose of the fare increase program is to keep pace with expenses related to salaries, benefits and fuel costs for special event service. The proposed new fares would apply to any District special event ferry service between Larkspur and San Francisco.

As of April 1, 2025, Ferry special event fares will not have increased for three years. The most recent fare increase in 2022 raised the fare to the current fare of \$15.50 each way. Special Event Fares were excluded from the Five-Year Fare Plan effective July 1, 2022, for several reasons. First, ridership recovery was a consideration. Second, special event fares are on a different cycle than regular fare increases (April 1 versus July 1 of the calendar year), due to a desire not to increase fares partway through the baseball season. Third, the guiding demographic data to support the Title VI Analysis for the 2022 Five-Year Fare Plan was collected in the 2018 MTC Regional Survey, which did not include Golden Gate Ferry special event passengers. While the 2023 District Survey conducted by Corey, Canapary & Galanis (CC&G) did collect information on special event ferry riders, the specific data to support a Title VI Analysis for this ridership group was not available until the last quarter of 2024.

During the 2024 Giants season, special event ferry ridership exceeded previous years with 67,681 total trips to and from Oracle Park, compared to 62,042 total trips in calendar year 2023 and 45,398 total trips in calendar year 2019. For calendar year 2024, 81 Larkspur special event round trips were operated to Oracle Park generating revenues of \$1,030,960, compared to \$1,070,488 in expenses. This resulted in nearly breaking even with a farebox recovery of 96% and a deficit of \$39,528 in 2024.

Overall expenses, including fuel and crewing expenses, have risen each year since the last fare increase, and are expected to continue to increase over the next three years. The proposed increase of \$0.50 per year will help keep pace with rising expenses and avoid using Bridge toll dollars to subsidize special event service. A \$0.50 increase could generate as much as \$32,000 in new revenues for each year of the proposed fare increase program. As a point of reference, Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry transit fares are increasing \$0.25 each year and Bridge tolls are increasing \$0.50 per year under the respective current Five-Year Fare Increase and Five-Year Bridge Toll Increase Programs.

The proposed fare program for three one-year increases would begin at a one-way base fare of \$16.00, effective April 1, 2025, for any sporting event, concert, or other special event at either Oracle Park or the Chase Center. The Table below summarizes the Special Event Ferry Fares over the three-year plan. Staff may return to the Board at any time during the three-year period to consider adjusting fares if revenues are not sufficient to recover costs.

Current and Proposed Larkspur to San Francisco Special Event Ferry Fares

Current Fare Effective April 1, 2022	\$15.50
Effective April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026	\$16.00
Effective April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027	\$16.50
Effective April 1, 2027 through March 31, 2028	\$17.00

Public Involvement Process for the Larkspur to San Francisco Special Event Ferry Fare Program and Comments Received

Outreach on the proposal to increase Golden Gate Ferry special event fares began on January 23, 2025, and continued into late-February prior to the public hearing.

Public notification activities included:

- A Notice of Public Hearing was posted to the District’s website;
- Public hearing notices were published in local publications (*Marin Independent Journal*, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *East Bay Times*, and *La Voz*);
- Posters advertising the public hearing in English and Spanish were placed onboard buses and ferries;
- Social media posts on Facebook and Twitter promoted the public hearing; and
- Email blasts were sent to customers and community-based organizations.

Printed materials were made available in Spanish, per the District’s Language Implementation Plan (LIP).

Public Comment Process

Public comments on this proposal could be submitted in several ways:

1. Commenting during the public hearing;
2. Sending email to publichearing@goldengate.org ;and/or,
3. Sending written comments by mail to the District Secretary.

The District’s practice is to treat all comments equally without regard to the manner in which they are submitted or received. Therefore, individuals did not have to attend the public hearing and provide input in person. Comments needed to be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on February 28, 2025.

Prior to the public hearing, no comments were received on the fare increase proposal. At the public hearing on February 27, 2025, no public comments were submitted during the hearing. When the public hearing comment period closed on Friday, February 28, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., no comments had been received.

Title VI Equity Analysis

In accordance with the Federal Transit Administration regulations and guidance implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as the District's Title VI Policies, staff conducted a Title VI Equity Analysis to determine whether adoption of the proposed Three-Year Special Event Ferry Fare Increase Plan would result in a disparate impact to minority populations or impose a disproportionate burden on low-income populations.

Overall, the analysis concludes that no disproportionate burden on low-income populations nor disparate impact on minority populations will result from the proposed fare increases.

The detailed Title VI Equity Analysis of the proposed fare increase is shown in Appendix A.

California Environmental Quality Act

Staff concludes that the Proposed Three-Year Fare Increase Plan for Larkspur to San Francisco Special Event Ferry Services is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 21080(b)(8) of the Public Resources Code because it is for the purpose of: (a) meeting operating expenses, (b) purchasing or leasing supplies, equipment, or materials, (c) meeting financial reserve needs and requirements, and (d) obtaining funds for capital projects necessary to maintain service within existing service areas. Staff recommends that the Board direct the General Manager to file a Notice of Exemption in the offices of the county clerk of Marin County and the City and County of San Francisco.

Fiscal Impact

If approved, this three-year fare increase plan is estimated to generate approximately \$200,000 in new revenues over the three years to offset operating expenses associated with Special Event Ferry Service.

Attachment: Appendix A - Title VI Equity Analysis

APPENDIX A
Title VI Equity Analysis: Special Event Ferry Fare Increase
Presented to the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District
Finance-Auditing Committee
March 27, 2025

I. Background

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's (District) Master Ordinance defines special event transit service as District bus and ferry service provided on routes that are not part of the regularly scheduled transit route network and to areas that are not more than fifty (50) miles beyond the District's transit service area, consistent with regulations of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and subject to premium fares determined by the District as necessary to fully cover their operating expenses. The District's special event ferry service between Larkspur and San Francisco is consistent with FTA requirements. The Master Ordinance also states that "The District shall provide direct ferry service between Larkspur and Oracle Park for Giants baseball games and other special events . . . Fares for this special event service are set to cover the total cost of the service and will be updated as needed by the Board."

In order to coincide with the start of the baseball season this spring, the District proposes annual special event Golden Gate Ferry (GGF) fare increases of \$.50 for the coming three years, with the first increase effective April 1, 2025 and subsequent increases in April 2026 and April 2027. The goal is to keep pace with expenses, including crewing costs, for special event service to Oracle Park. This proposal is specific to special event ferry service to Oracle Park and does not include special event ferry service to any other venues.

GGF began offering Special Event Service to Oracle Park on March 31, 2000. This service is offered during all San Francisco Giants' home games and a number of other special events. Fares have been adjusted on an almost-yearly basis since 2000, with the most recent adjustment taking place on March 1, 2022, when the fare was increased from \$15.00 to \$15.50.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance. Before the District's Board of Directors (Board) can adopt the proposed fare changes, the Board must consider whether the proposed changes will disparately impact minority populations and/or disproportionately burden low-income populations. The required components of this Title VI Equity Analysis are set forth in the FTA regulations and FTA Circular 4702.1B ("Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients") implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and in the District's Title VI Policies. This analysis indicates that the proposed Special Event Ferry fare increase does not have a disparate impact on minority riders nor a disproportionate burden on low-income riders of GGF services.

II. Adopted District Title VI Policies

The District adopted its Major Service Change, Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policies (together referred to as "Title VI Policies") on August 9, 2013. The latter two policies set forth the standards used in fare equity analyses. The District's Disparate Impact policy provides:

- The District defines its Disparate Impact Threshold for determining whether the burdens or benefits of a major service change . . . or a fare adjustment are equitable to be 10%, based on the cumulative impact of the proposed service and/or fare changes. This threshold applies to the difference of the impacts borne by minority populations compared to the same impacts borne by non-minority populations.

The District's Disproportionate Burden Policy provides:

- The District defines its Disproportionate Burden Threshold for determining whether the burdens or benefits of a major service change ... or a fare adjustment are equitable to be 10%, based on the cumulative impact of the proposed service and/or fare changes. This threshold applies to the difference of the impacts borne by low-income populations compared to the same impacts borne by non-low-income populations.

Public Outreach on the District's Proposed Title VI Policies (2013)

Prior to Board adoption of the District's Title VI Policies, public outreach regarding the policy proposals included:

- Informational meetings on July 8, 9 and 10, 2013, in Marin City, Novato and Rohnert Park, respectively, between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- Legal notices published in the *Marin Independent Journal*, the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* on June 18 and 25, 2013
- Signage posted onboard the ferryboats, at the Ferry Terminals, at transit hubs in Marin and Sonoma counties, at major bus stops and at the Customer Service Center at the San Rafael Transit Center
- Display boards, staff report and comment forms, including Spanish translations
- A press release issued and posted to the District's web site on June 17, 2013, including links to the staff report in both English and Spanish
- A public hearing agenda and an associated staff report posted to the District's web site on July 8, 2013
- Information e-blasted to the Bus and Ferry Subscriber's list on June 20 and July 2, 2013
- Information posted to transit-specific social media channels on July 2 and July 8, 2013
- A public hearing agenda mailed to organizations and individuals on the District's mailing list on July 8, 2013, and posted on District bulletin boards.

Comments Received on the District's Proposed Title VI Policies (2013)

Of the comments received by the District, one alerted the District to the need to apply Title VI principles to the allocation of resources between bus and ferry services; one commented on the inconvenience of the time and location of the public hearing, service reliability, and driver attitudes; and another urged the District to reach out to community partners and agencies to get the word out about Title VI-related public hearings.

The resolution evidencing the Board's discussion and approval of the policies is attached as Exhibit A.

III. Golden Gate Ferry Services

The fare change proposal concerns GGF services, which are summarized below.

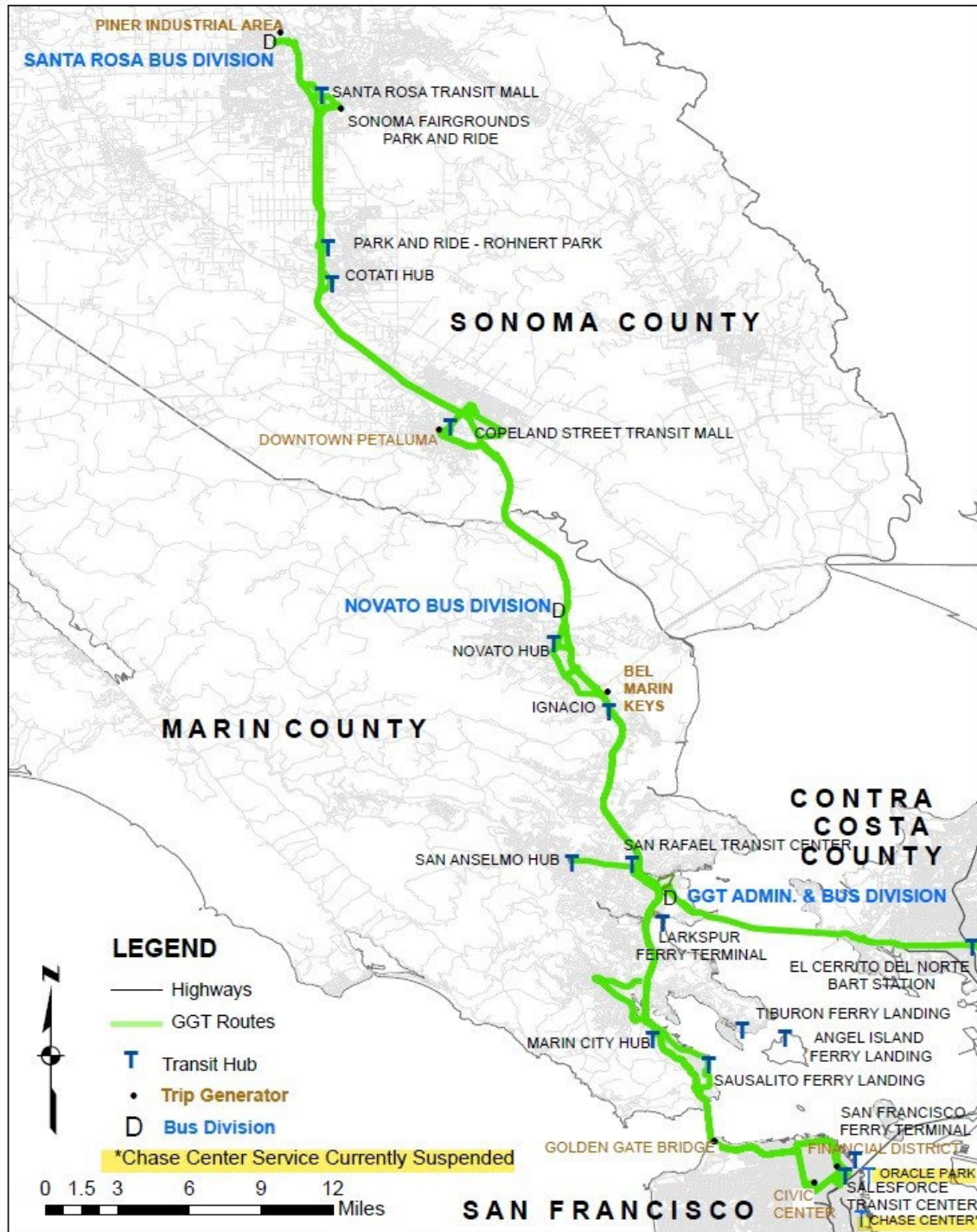
Golden Gate Ferry Services

The District's GGF service includes five routes between Marin County and San Francisco: Sausalito, Larkspur, Tiburon, Angel Island, and Special Event service to Oracle Park. Special Event service to Chase Center in San Francisco was suspended in 2020 and has not resumed. Regular Ferry service operates daily except on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

- *Sausalito Ferry Service* provides daily connections between the GGF landing in Sausalito and the San Francisco Ferry Terminal. This 5.5 nautical-mile route has been in operation since 1970 and currently provides 14 crossings on weekdays and 10 crossings on weekend days and holidays. The service operates between 7:05 am and 7:45 pm on weekdays, and between 10:15 am and 7:25 pm on weekends and holidays.
- *Larkspur Ferry Service* features an 11.25 nautical-mile route between the Larkspur Ferry Terminal and the San Francisco Ferry Terminal. The 38 weekday and 15 weekend day/holiday crossings require a fleet of two vessels. Services operate between 6:00 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. on weekdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 8:45 p.m. on weekends and holidays.
- *Tiburon Ferry Service* provides 14 weekday crossings and seven weekend day/holiday crossings. Services operate between 6:35 am and 6:35 pm on weekdays and between 11:50 am and 5:40 pm on weekends and holidays. This 6.84 nautical-mile route was previously operated by the Blue and Gold Fleet since 1997 and before that by the Red and White Fleet.
- *Special Event Service to Oracle Park* is offered during all San Francisco Giants' home games and a number of other special events. The 13.1 nautical-mile route between the Larkspur Ferry Terminal and the dock at Oracle Park takes approximately 60 minutes. One round trip is offered for each event served, typically totaling between 80 and 90 round trips per year.
- *Angel Island Ferry Service* currently provides eight weekday crossings and six weekend day and holiday crossings between the GGF landing in Angel Island and the San Francisco Ferry Terminal. Services operate between 9:25 am and 5:00 pm on weekdays and between 10:15 am and 5:35 pm on weekends and holidays. This 6.7 nautical-mile route has been in operation since 2021.

Map 1. Golden Gate Transit and Ferry Service Area

EXHIBIT 1: 2021-2024 GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT SERVICE AREA OVERVIEW



IV. Public Outreach for the Proposed Special Event Ferry Fare Increase

Public Notification

Outreach on the proposal to increase special event ferry fares began on January 24, 2025 after the Board authorized the public hearing on February 27, 2025, and continued into late February, prior to the public hearing.

Public notification activities prior to the public hearing included:

- A Notice of Public Hearing was posted to the District's website;
- Public hearing notices were published in local publications (*Marin Independent Journal*, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *La Voz*);
- Posters advertising the public hearing in English and Spanish were placed onboard buses and ferries;
- Social media posts on Facebook and X promoted the public hearing; and
- Email blasts were sent to customers and community-based organizations.

Printed materials were available in Spanish, per the District's Language Implementation Plan.

Public Comment Process

Public comments on this proposal were accepted in several different ways:

1. Attend the public hearing;
2. E-mail publichearing@goldengate.org; and/or,
3. Send written comments to the District Secretary.

The District's practice is to treat all comments equally without regard to the manner in which the comments are submitted. Therefore, individuals did not have to attend the public hearing and provide testimony in person if they commented through e-mail or written forms. All comments received through the above methods were considered in the final recommendation. The deadline for comments to be received was 4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2025.

Comments Received

Prior to the public hearing, no comments were received on the fare increase proposal. At the public hearing on February 27, 2025, no public comments were submitted during the hearing. When the public hearing comment period closed on Friday, February 28, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., no comments had been received.

V. Title VI Equity Analysis Methodology

Based on FTA Circular 4702.1B, the District is required to a Title VI Equity Analysis to determine whether any elements of the proposal will result in a disparate impact to minority populations or a disproportionate burden on low-income populations using GGF, based on the District's Title VI

Policies. This analysis compares the Special Event ferry ridership against the ridership of the ferry system as a whole.

Staff developed and applied the following methodology:

1. Identify Ridership Data Source: 2023 District System-Wide Survey

In 2023, the District conducted a comprehensive system-wide survey of riders and non-riders. The District's consultant surveyed all of the District's services, including GGF's Special Event service. Data was collected on board a sample of bus and ferry trips. Questionnaires were in Spanish and English and included questions about the trip being taken and demographics.

2. Analyze the percent change of the proposed fare adjustment for each fare payment method.

In this case, the proposal is to raise the fare only on Special Event ferry service. There is only one fare payment type for Special Events service, which is tickets purchased through tickets.com. All Special Event service riders will be impacted, so the equity analysis compares Special Event service ridership with ferry ridership, as a whole, to determine whether low-income or minority riders are disproportionately negatively impacted by this fare proposal.

3. Define the term "low-income" as those with an annual household income at or below \$75,000, which is approximately 90% of the median for the service area.

Marin County and Sonoma Counties, which are included in the District's service area, have a comparatively high income (median income was \$135,341 for Marin County and \$90,240 for Sonoma County as of the 2018-2022 American Community Survey). In the District's most recent Title VI Program, District staff used \$75,000 for the annual income cut-off for defining low income for Marin County and Sonoma County. This figure is derived by taking 90% of the median annual income by census tract using the most recent statistics available. For this equity analysis, staff decreased the low-income threshold to \$75,000, which is the closest income strata break in the survey data, and which provides a more protective assessment of disproportionate burden for lower-income earners.

4. Define the term "minority" to mean those who self-identified as any ethnicity other than "white" alone in the 2023 District System-Wide Survey.

5. Determine the usage of each fare product by minority, non-minority, low-income and non-low-income riders.

6. Derive the differential between the usage of the Special Event ferry fare for minority riders relative to riders overall, and low-income riders relative to riders overall.

7. Compare the differential between minority riders and riders overall to the District's disparate impact threshold, and the differential between low-income riders and riders overall to the District's disproportionate burden threshold.

VI. Title VI Equity Analysis Findings

The fare structure for Special Event ferry service is very simple. There is a single one-way fare purchased via the tickets.com website. The proposed fare increase will increase GGF Special Event ferry service fares by \$.50 annually for all riders on April 1 in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

Table 1: Low Income and Non-Low-Income Comparison for Disproportionate Burden Analysis

	Special Events Ferry	All Ferry	Difference
Low-Income	19.90%	17.10%	2.80%
Non-Low-Income	80.10%	82.90%	-2.80%

This fare proposal will affect all Special Event ferry riders. Special Event ferry riders are slightly more likely to fall into the low-income category than ferry riders in general, however the difference is only 2.80%, which is below the District's disproportionate burden threshold of 10%. Therefore, the proposed fare increase does not constitute a disproportionate burden on low-income riders.

Table 2: Minority and Non-Minority Comparison for Disparate Impact Analysis

	Special Events Ferry	All Ferry	Difference
Minority	9.10%	25.60%	-16.50%
Non-Minority	90.90%	74.40%	16.50%

This fare proposal will affect all Special Event ferry riders. Special Event ferry riders are less likely to identify as a member of a minority group than ferry riders overall, by a difference of -16.50%. Therefore, the fare proposal does not constitute a disparate impact on minority riders.

C. Conclusion

As shown on Tables 1 and 2, immediately above, the proposed Special Event Ferry fare increase will constitute neither a disproportionate burden on low-income customers nor a disparate impact on minority customers.

Attachment: EXHIBIT A: Resolution 2013-78 Adopting Title VI Policies

EXHIBIT A

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-078

**APPROVE ADOPTION OF POLICIES FOR GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT
AND GOLDEN GATE FERRY SERVICE AND FARE CHANGES,
UNDER TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, AS AMENDED**

August 9, 2013

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) operates Golden Gate Transit (GGT) bus service and Golden Gate Ferry (GGF) service, both of which are public transportation services that occasionally receive federal funding to maintain or improve service scope and quality; and,

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2012, staff presented the Transportation Committee (Committee) with an overview of Title VI as applied to federal funding recipients, such as the District, subject to the new Circular Order issued by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and,

WHEREAS, on February 22, 2013, the Board approved the first action required by the new FTA Circular by adopting the required service standards and policies; and,

WHEREAS, to further comply with the new FTA Circular, the District must establish the following three policies: a Major Service Change Policy, a Disparate Impact Policy and a Disproportionate Burden Policy (Three Policies); and,

WHEREAS, the Three Policies will guide when and how the District analyzes the effects of potential future fare and service changes on minority and low-income populations and, in the event the District finds disparities, the District must evaluate whether there is an alternative that has a more equitable impact; and,

WHEREAS, the new FTA Circular requires transit providers, such as the District, to solicit and consider public input before establishing such policies; and,

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WHEREAS, staff presented the Three Policies to the Committee on June 13, 2013, and the Committee recommended and the Board, by Resolution No. 2013-054 at its meeting of June 14, 2013, authorized the setting of a public hearing on a proposal to establish policies for Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry Service and for fare changes under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended; and,

WHEREAS, the District conducted outreach relative to this proposal, as follows: (1) a press release was issued on July 17, 2013; (2) information was posted on the District's website, emailed to District's opt-in subscription lists and community-based organizations, posted on District's social media sites, and published as advertisements and legal notices in several periodicals including *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Marin Independent Journal* and the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*; (3) Public Outreach Meetings were held on July 8, 2013 in Marin City, on July 9, 2013 in Novato, and on July 10, 2013 in Rohnert Park; and, (4) Spanish translations of printed materials, website information, and community meetings were available at all public outreach meetings and at the public hearing; and,

WHEREAS, public comments on the Three Policies could be submitted by either attending the public hearing or the public outreach meetings, emailing publichearing@goldengate.org or sending written comments to the District; and,

WHEREAS, due to concerns about Marin City residents not having received sufficient advance notice of the opportunity to comment on the Three Policies, the District extended the comment period by two weeks and held an additional public outreach meeting at the Marin City Library on July 25, 2013; and,

WHEREAS, seven public comments were received by the District as of July 25, 2013, and while several comments were related to the overall topic of Title VI, none of the comments were specific to the Three Policies; and,

WHEREAS, complete copies of the Three Policies and staff's underlying analysis, as well as a summary of the comments received and staff responses, are included herein as Attachments; and,

WHEREAS, the Transportation Committee at its meeting of August 2, 2013, has so recommended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District hereby approves adoption of policies for Golden Gate Transit and Golden Gate Ferry Service and fare changes, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and attached hereto.

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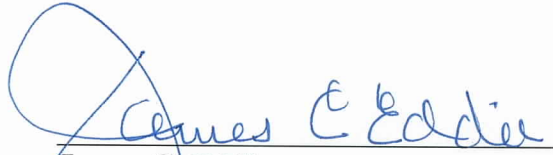
ADOPTED this 9th day of August 2013, by the following vote of the Board of Directors:

AYES (15): Directors Arnold, Belforte, Breed, Cochran, Fredericks, Moylan, Pahre, Rabbitt, Reilly, Sears, Snyder, Sobel and Theriault; Second Vice President


Stroeh; President Eddie

NOES (0): None

ABSENT (4): Directors Campos, Wiener and Yee; First Vice President Grosboll


James C. Eddie
President, Board of Directors

ATTEST:


Janet S. Tarantino
Secretary of the District

Attachment 1 - Three Policies and Analysis

Attachment 2 - Summary of Comments Received and Staff Responses

ATTACHMENT 1

Proposed Title VI Policies Pertaining to Major Service Changes, Disparate Impacts, and Disproportionate Burdens

Major Service Change Policy

The District must ensure that its services are provided equitably, without discrimination based on race, color, national origin or socio-economic status. To that end, the District must evaluate potential “major” service changes and all fare changes (except for those specifically exempt in the FTA Title VI Circular, such as Spare-the-Air Days and short-term promotional service demonstrations or fare decreases) for their impact on low-income and minority populations in its service area. Before this can occur, the District must adopt a Major Service Change policy to provide a concrete basis for determining which service changes need to be analyzed for equity.

Staff proposes the following for the District’s Major Service Change Policy:

- A major service change is defined as a reduction or increase of 25 percent (25%) or more in total vehicle revenue miles in service on any specific route, with the change(s) occurring at one time or over any twenty-four month period.

Staff further proposes the following exemptions such that these changes would not be subject to a Title VI Equity Analysis:

- Changes to service on a route with fewer than 10 total trips in a typical service day are not considered “major” unless service on that route is eliminated completely on any such day.
- The introduction or discontinuation of short- or limited-term service (such as promotional, demonstration, seasonal or emergency service, or service provided as mitigation or diversions for construction or other similar activities) is not considered “major,” as long as the service will be/has been operated for no more than twelve months.
- If District-operated transit service is replaced by a different mode or operator providing a service with the same or better headways, fare, transfer options, span of service, and stops served, the change is not considered “major.”

The following examples will assist the public in understanding the impact of the proposed policy.

- Example 1: If Route 11 has 20 trips a day, and the District proposes to cancel six of those trips (30%) in January 2014, then that is a major service change, and a Title VI Equity Analysis must be completed. However, if only four trips are proposed for cancellation (20%), then no analysis is required. If the District cancels these four trips and then decides to cancel two more trips in January 2015 on this same Route 11, then the percentage will again be 30% over a twenty-four month period, and an analysis will be required.
- Example 2: If Route 12 has eight trips per day and four trips are proposed for cancellation, then under the proposed policy, a Title VI Analysis is not required because the route has fewer than ten total trips per day. However, if the entire route is proposed for cancellation, then an analysis is required.
- Example 3: If Route 13 is introduced in January 1, 2014 as a demonstration service, and the District proposes to discontinue it effective December 31, 2015, then no analysis

is required when the service is introduced or discontinued. However, if the District proposes to continue the service beyond January 1, 2015, then an analysis is required for it to continue, and for it to be discontinued thereafter.

- Example 4: If Route 14 operated four times a day from Corte Madera to Petaluma, and the District planned to cease operating this trip while another transit system planned to operate the same route four times a day at the same times, with the same or better fares and transfer options, then no analysis would be required.

Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policies

When a fare change or major service change is proposed, the District must analyze whether the change will result in a fair distribution of both negative effects (such as service cuts or fare increases) and positive effects (service expansions or fare reductions, such as new discounts).

In the case of the Disparate Impact Policy, the analysis focuses on whether minority riders or residents bear a disproportionately greater burden – or receive a disproportionately lesser benefit – than non-minority riders or residents.

Similarly, in the case of the Disproportionate Burden Policy, the analysis focuses on whether low-income riders or residents bear a disproportionately greater burden – or receive a disproportionately lesser benefit – than non-low-income riders or residents.

Disparate Impact Policy

In conducting equity analyses, the Disparate Impact policy provides the threshold used to determine whether greater negative impacts – or lesser positive impacts – on **minority** riders and residents are significant.

If a proposed action would have a negative impact that affects minorities more than non-minorities with a disparity that exceeds the adopted Disparate Impact Threshold, or a benefit that would be available to non-minorities more than minorities with a disparity that exceeds the adopted Disparate Impact Threshold, the District must evaluate whether there is an alternative that has a more equitable impact. If no option with a less disparate effect exists, the District must take measures to mitigate the impact of the proposed action on the affected minority population **and** demonstrate that a legitimate business purpose cannot otherwise be accomplished.

Staff proposes the following for the District's Disparate Impact Policy:

1. The District defines its Disparate Impact Threshold for determining whether the burdens or benefits of a major service change (as defined in the first part of this document) or a fare adjustment are equitable to be 10%, based on the cumulative impact of the proposed service and/or fare changes. This threshold applies to the difference of the impacts borne by minority populations compared to the same impacts borne by non-minority populations.

The question that must be answered for every major service change and every fare change is: are minority riders more negatively affected (or less positively affected) by this change than riders as a whole? This is determined primarily by calculating the percentage of minority riders on

Golden Gate buses (or ferries, for a ferry service or fare change) and by calculating the percentage of minority riders affected by the change. If minorities represent a higher percentage in the impacted group than in the general ridership as a whole, the question is, how much higher? If the difference is ten percent or higher, then there is a disparate impact. As a secondary aspect of, and important precursor to, this comparative analysis, the District must define the adverse effects and/or benefits being measured for the change in question.

Some hypothetical examples of how the policy could be applied follow:

- Example 1: The District proposes to discontinue Route 16. Fifty percent of Route 16's riders belong to a minority group. If ridership on the District's bus service as a whole is 35% minority, the difference in the percentage of affected riders who are minorities and the percentage of all bus riders who are minorities is 15 percentage points. That indicates that there is a disparate impact on minority riders, and in this situation, the District would be required to evaluate whether there is an alternative with a less disparate impact on minority riders. If there is no other alternative, the District would need to mitigate the negative impact of the service cancellation on minority riders **and** demonstrate that the service reduction serves a legitimate business purpose that cannot be accomplished with less impact on minority riders.
- Example 2: The District proposes to raise fares from Zone 4 to Zone 1 by 10% and the rest of the fares only 5%. Whereas the overall ridership is 35% minority, if Zone 4 to Zone 1 riders is, for example, 46% minority, then the difference between the two groups is 11 percentage points, exceeding the 10% threshold, and there would be a disparate impact. The District would have to seek alternatives with a more equitable impact. If no such alternatives are available, then the District would have to mitigate the impact on minority riders **and** demonstrate that this fare increase serves a legitimate business purpose that cannot be accomplished in another less-discriminatory way.

Disproportionate Burden Policy

As with the Disparate Impact Policy, the Disproportionate Burden Policy comes into play when a fare change or major service change is analyzed for its equity. In this case, staff determines whether **low-income** riders and residents bear a disproportionate burden of the negative effects of – or enjoy a disproportionately low benefit from – the proposed change.

The proposed Disproportionate Burden Policy is very similar to the proposed Disparate Impact Policy and reads as follow:

2. The District defines its Disproportionate Burden Threshold for determining whether the burdens or benefits of a major service change (as defined in the first part of this document) or a fare adjustment are equitable to be 10%, based on the cumulative impact of the proposed service and/or fare changes. This threshold applies to the difference of the impacts borne by low-income populations compared to the same impacts borne by non-low-income populations.

If, in the course of performing a Title VI Equity Analysis, the District finds that a proposed fare or major service change has a negative impact that affects low-income riders as compared to

non-low-income riders with a disparity that exceeds the adopted Disproportionate Burden Threshold, or that benefits non-low-income riders more than low-income riders with a disparity that exceeds the adopted Disproportionate Burden Threshold, the District must evaluate whether there is an alternative that has a more equitable impact. Otherwise, the District must take measures to mitigate the impact of the proposed action on the affected low-income population.

Again, illustrative examples can make the uses of the policy more transparent:

- Example 1: The District proposes to discontinue Route 16. The ridership of Route 16 is 66% low-income. If ridership on the District's bus service as a whole is 50% low-income, then the difference between the low-income ridership of the Route 16 and the overall bus ridership is 16 percentage points, which means this change exceeds the threshold for disproportionate burden, or in other words, that low-income riders are bearing a disproportionate burden of this service change. In this situation, the District would be required to take measures to mitigate or lessen the impact of this change on the low-income riders of Route 16.
- Example 2: The District proposes to cut four trips on Route 21. The ridership of Route 21 is 45% low-income. If the ridership on the District's bus service as a whole is 50% low-income, then the difference is negative five percentage points (meaning the affected ridership is five percent less low-income than the overall ridership), and the burden of this change does not fall more on low-income riders than on riders as a whole.
- Example 3: The District proposes to add a new route. The residents of the areas served are 25% low-income. If the District's ridership as a whole is 50% low-income, those benefiting from the service addition are 25% less low-income than the overall ridership. There is a disproportionate benefit, and the District would be required to consider options for mitigating this disproportion.

ATTACHMENT 2

Summary of Comments Received and Staff Responses

1. **Comment:** Special fares for minorities?? Racism of the worst order.

Staff response: The public comment process is not about setting special fares for minorities but instead setting a framework for evaluating the impacts of future service or fare changes on disadvantaged communities.

2. **Comment:** I have been advocating for Title VI populations in Marin City. In order to get proper notification to minority and low-income populations adequate communication must be provided as an outreach mechanism to ensure against a community not being left out. Inasmuch as this did not happen in Marin City, where both low-income and minority residents were left out with no notification of an Open House on July 8 at the Senior Center, there is a violation of Title VI. I noticed an 8 1/2 by 11 inches poster (only one hour before the meeting) at the Marin City Hub. This was another disappointment to me and others in our community. Our shuttle service is inadequate for serving our community because of the hilly terrain.

Staff response: Given concern about the adequacy of the notification process for Marin City residents, the public comment period was extended by two weeks, additional communications were sent out, notices were posted at all bus stops in that community, and leaflets were handed out to bus riders advising that an additional public outreach meeting was scheduled in Marin City. The proposed policies are specific to regional bus and ferry services operated by the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District. Shuttle and other fixed route and demand responsive service operated by Marin Transit and policies related to those services are the responsibility of Marin Transit.

3. **Comment:** I'm glad that you're having an additional comment period for Marin City, but in the future it's important that more advertising and outreach is implemented. Many residents were unaware about the meeting and the comment period.

Staff response: See response to Comment #2. Future outreach efforts in Marin City will include more extensive communication efforts.

4. **Comment:** It appears the proposals brought to the hearing are all about raising fares and arguing about whether or not the District can raise some and not others without discrimination. The point should be THERE SHOULD BE NO FARE INCREASES, BUT FARE DECREASES.

Staff response: The proposed policies provide a framework to evaluate future potential service and fare changes. No fare changes are proposed at this time.

5. **Comment:** The District's Allocation of resources between bus and ferry services needs to be re-evaluated in view of Title VI. There is a disproportionate amount of resources going to wealthy ferry riders and not to low-income bus riders.

Response: Duly noted. The proposed policies do not address specific to the District's allocation of transit resources between modes. The District plans to analyze the demographic characteristics of its ferry and regional bus riderships.

6. **Comment:** The job of the Golden Gate Transit District is to provide public transportation, in order to reduce automobile traffic and provide a reasonable-cost alternative to driving. The job of the District is transportation, NOT social justice, affirmative action or welfare. All this would do is raise the cost of transportation due to the additional resources needed to determine, implement and monitor these Title VI items. It is ridiculous to put the Transit District into this situation. The \$5,000 to conduct this initial public hearing will be pocket change to the cost of implementation. The bottom line is stick to your primary objective and tell the feds to make their own determinations that the Transit District is discriminatory, and make them prove it. Focus on serving the communities you service, while keeping costs down, and not on Washington D.C's social justice schemes.

Response: The proposed policies and overall compliance with Title VI is a condition of the District continuing to receive federal financial assistance for its public transportation programs.

7. **Comment:** I oppose any fare increases for the Golden Gate transit ferries, buses and bridge. The fares are exorbitant as they are now and are a huge burden on the average person's finances. This is supposed to be PUBLIC transportation, not ELITE transportation. It is only affordable to the rich.

Response: The proposed policies are not specific to any fare increase at this time. They will be used to evaluate future fare increase proposals.