



City of Arts & Innovation

Park and Recreation Commission

TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS **DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION DIVISION, RIVERSIDE CONNECT, FARE INCREASE --- \$0.50 INCREASE OVER THE COURSE OF TWO FISCAL YEARS, STARTING JULY 1, 2024

ISSUE:

Present the proposed Special Transportation Division, Riverside Connect, fare increase proposal. The increase will occur over two fiscal years: \$0.25 each year, starting July 1, 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Park and Recreation Commission provide feedback and support the proposed fare increase.

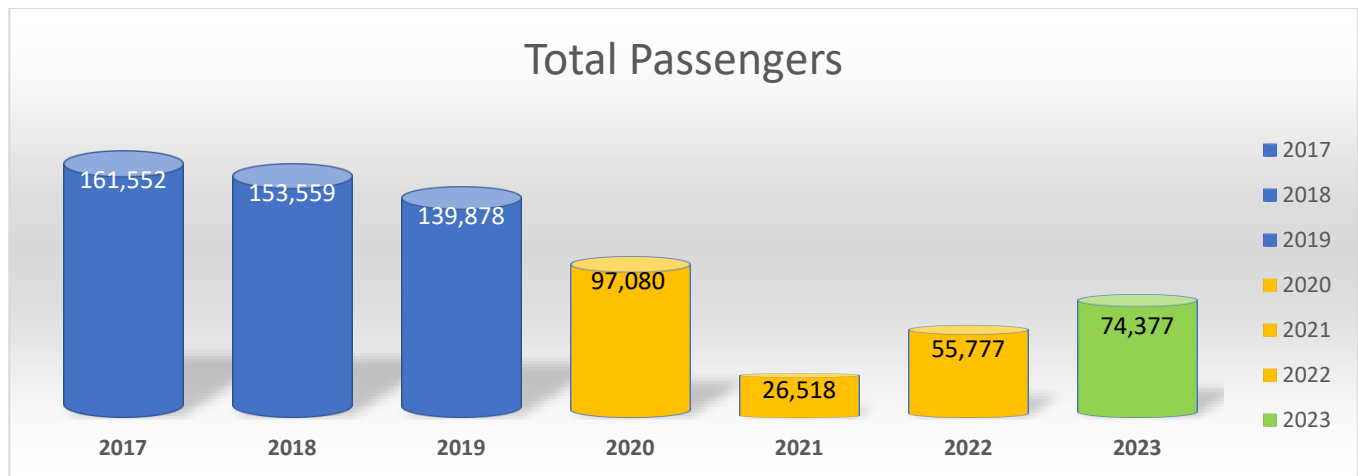
BACKGROUND:

Special Transportation was established in 1975 through a mutual agreement between the City of Riverside and the Riverside Transportation Agency (RTA) to provide paratransit services within the City limits to senior and disabled residents. Special Transportation is owned and operated by the City and is an origin to destination shared ride service anywhere within the 81.5 square miles of Riverside.

To help create a better brand identity, the service name was changed from Special Transportation to Riverside Connect, in 2020. This rebranding included having all 36 buses wrapped in vinyl with the new program name and new image for better awareness of the service.

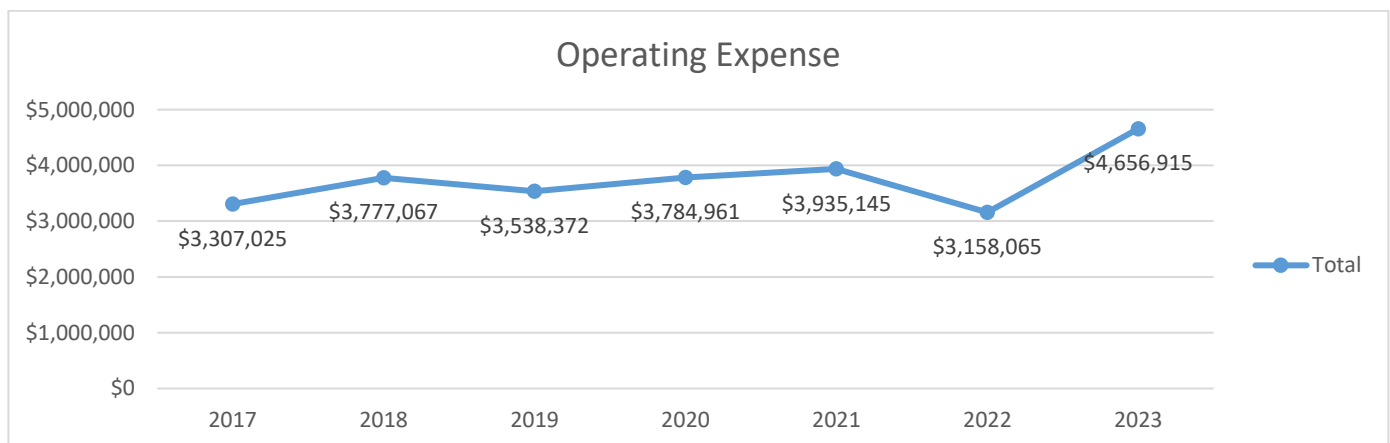
Riverside Connect is a program within the Special Transportation Division of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department. It currently employs a staff of 23 drivers, 5 dispatchers, and 5 administrative staff members. The service operates 7 days a week, 362 days a year and is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day.

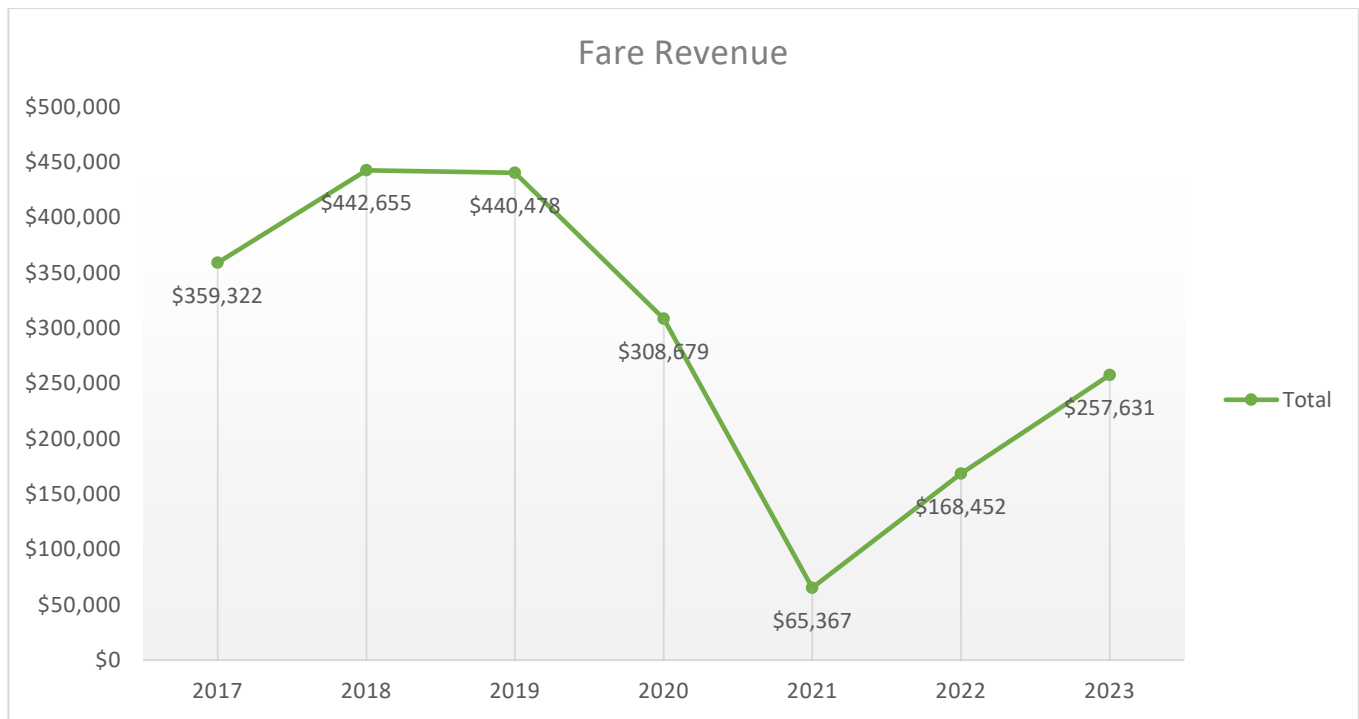
In Fiscal Year 2023, Special Transportation provided 74,377 seniors and disabled residents transportation service to various locations with the City limits. The top 4 destinations for users of the service are Medical and Dialysis Treatments, Shopping, Workshops/Employment, and Restaurant/Social Events. Special Transportation has traveled 418,416 miles in service.



As of September 1, 2017, the fare structure for a one-way trip for City of Riverside Special Transportation is \$3.00 per passenger, per trip. Clients may pay their fare in cash at boarding time or load their electronic account with funds that are deducted each time they use the service.

In order to continue to be eligible to receive local transportation funds, the Transportation Development Act of 1971 requires the Division to recover 10% of its operating costs through fares. Prior to the pandemic, Special Transportation had been able to achieve its mandatory farebox ratio of 10%, or more, but in the years since the last fare increase in 2017 it has become increasingly difficult to meet that farebox obligation with the rising cost of operations and the 40% reduction in overall service demands as an after effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Additionally, Special Transportation has been behind the fare rate that RTA charges for their paratransit service which has charged \$3.50 per trip since 2018. Special Transportation would like to be on par with RTA rates and structure future rate increases based of RTA rates.





The proposed fare increase is listed on the table below:

Effective Date	General Fare	Medical Fare
Current	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.00
July 1, 2024	\$ 3.25	\$ 2.25
July 1, 2025	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.50

DISCUSSION:

Historically, the Department has been cautious about raising any fees for seniors and disabled residents due to their fixed income; however, after 6+ years, a fare increase is inevitable. In order to ease the transition and to answer any questions; the Special Transportation Division Management Team will be hosting Open Forums to inform and educate the community about the process.

Senior Center Open Forums			
Dales Senior Center	3936 Chestnut St.	Wednesday, August 23	9:30 a.m.
Bordwell park	2008 Martin Luther King Blvd.	Tuesday, August 29	10:00 a.m.
La Sierra Senior Center	5215 La Sierra Ave., Bldg. B	Wednesday, August 30	1:00 p.m.
Villegas Park	3091 Esperanza St.	Thursday, September 14	9:30 a.m.
Janet Goeske Senior Center	5257 Sierra St.	Thursday, September 21	10:30 a.m.

In addition to Senior Center Open Forums, the Division will present at the following Boards and Commission, Committees and Council meetings before the end of the year.

Meetings
Park and Recreation Commission
Commission on Aging
Commission on Disabilities
Safety, Wellness & Youth Committee
Financial Performance and Budget Committee
City Council

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The proposed fare increase contributes to the “**High Performing Government**” priority of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, which aims to provide world class public service that is efficient, accessible, and responsive to all.

It aligns with Goals **5.3**. Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making; and **5.4**. Achieve and maintain financial health by addressing gaps between revenues and expenditures and aligning resources with strategic priorities to yield the greatest impact.

The proposed fare increase also contributes to the “**Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity**” priority of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, which Ensure safe, reliable infrastructure that benefits the community and facilitates connection between people, place, and information.

It aligns with Goal **6.1**. Provide, expand, and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, healthcare, and community amenities.

1. **Community Trust** – Riverside is transparent and makes decisions based on sound policy, inclusive community engagement, involvement of City Boards and Commissions, and timely and reliable information. Services offered by the Special Transportation Division serves a public benefit.
2. **Equity** – The Special Transportation Division is supportive of the City’s racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, identity, geographic, and other attributes of diversity and is committed to advancing the fairness of treatment, recognition of rights, and equitable distribution of services to ensure every member of the community has equal access to share the benefits of community progress. The goal of the Special Transportation Division is to provide a service to the senior and disabled community in the City.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Special Transportation Division has stayed within the same rates for 6+ years. In order to keep providing a service to the residents, rates must increase to be in accordance with the Transportation Development Act of 1971, and to align with RTA’s rates.
4. **Innovation** – The Special Transportation Division is inventive is preparing for the

future through the appropriate and necessary fare increases.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Special Transportation Division is committed to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future and ensuring the City's capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during good and difficult times alike.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This action has no negative impact to the General Fund. The Special Transportation Division is funded entirely through federal and state grants, local and state transportation funds, and passenger fares, all of which are allocated in the Special Transportation Fund. The fare increase will not affect the General Fund but will positively impact the Special Transportation Fund and will make the Riverside Connect fare consistent with RTA's Dial A Ride fare.

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Attachment: Presentation