



Annual Report of the
West San Leandro Shuttle (LINKS)
Business Improvement District
For Fiscal Year 2023-24





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Executive Summary & Recommendation

The Annual Report includes a brief history of the LINKS shuttle and the West San Leandro Shuttle Business Improvement District (BID), ridership statistics; current and planned operations, the LINKS budget and the proposed BID assessment for 2024.

Organization

The West San Leandro Shuttle Business Improvement District was formed in 2000 to provide management and funding for the LINKS Shuttle Program. In 2015, the BID was reauthorized for a period of 15 years and the service area was expanded. In addition to the BID, LINKS is funded by grants, advertising revenue and a financial contribution from the City of San Leandro.

The LINKS Shuttle service is administered by the San Leandro Transportation Management Organization (SLTMO), a 501(C) 4 non-profit corporation.

Oversight of the BID is conducted by the West San Leandro Business Improvement District Advisory Board (Advisory Board). The five to seven member Advisory Board includes two City staff designees and three to five business representatives. The Advisory Board's duties include annual review of the LINKS performance for submission to the City Council and annual BID rate recommendation.

LINKS Shuttle Service

The free shuttle provides critical first-last mile transportation from the San Leandro BART station to the industrial area west of I-880 and Marina Blvd. LINKS operates Monday – Friday during peak commute hours (5:45 – 9:45 am and 3:00 – 7:00 pm). With 20 years of service to the community, LINKS has provided over 3 million rides.

FY 2022-23 Activities

Over the last year, the SLTMO provided reliable transportation to LINKS riders as the SF Bay Area recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although operations and ridership were impacted, the service continued to operate, providing critical first/last mile public transportation for employees in West San Leandro.

Due to a projected budget shortfall beginning in FY 2022/23, on July 1, 2022, the LINKS Shuttle service launched a new routing configuration in which it utilizes dual-interlaced loops to maximize the efficiency of the shuttles in operation as well as allowing passengers to reach more destinations without having to transfer vehicles. This configuration reduced the number of vehicles from 4 to 2, allowing the program to operate within the reduced budget, with only a 10-minute decrease in frequency, from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes. Most importantly, there were no changes to stops, service area, or operating hours.

Over the course of the fiscal year, the LINKS shuttle provided 91,134 passenger trips, or 353 trips per day.



FY 2023-24 Planned Activities

Following is a summary of planned activities for FY 2023-24:

- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Dual Interlaced Loop configuration and modify service as needed to meet rider needs.
- Increase ridership through employer/employee outreach, digital awareness via Twitter and digital marketing opportunities and the publishing of the LINKS routes and schedules on online mapping systems.
- Aggressively seek local, state, and federal grant and other funding opportunities.

West San Leandro Business Improvement District (BID)

The enabling BID Ordinance requires that the Advisory Board annually review the performance of LINKS service and recommended BID rate adjustment for submission to the City Council. The Ordinance provides that the City Council may increase the annual assessment in an amount not to exceed the increase of the Consumer Price Index (San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose), as part of its review of the annual report.

BID Advisory Board- Rate Recommendation

Increase the BID per employee assessment rate equal to the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as provided for in Ordinance No. 2009-002. For 2024 the applicable CPI factor is 4.2 percent. This would result in the BID per employee rate increasing from \$27.63 to \$28.79. Businesses with three or fewer owner/employees, landlords, and non-profits will continue to be exempt from the BID assessment. The CPI adjustment will raise approximately \$18,000.



Annual Report

Background

In 2000, the City of San Leandro evaluated the feasibility of implementing a commuter shuttle service connecting west San Leandro employment sites with the San Leandro BART station. Based on the results of that study, the San Leandro Transportation Management Organization (SLTMO) and a Business Improvement District (BID) were formed to provide management and funding for the LINKS Shuttle program.

The SLTMO is a 501(C)4 non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors that includes representation from businesses included in the BID and the City of San Leandro. The SLTMO administers the LINKS Shuttle program.

Oversight of the BID is conducted by the West San Leandro Shuttle Business Improvement District Advisory Board (Advisory Board). The five to seven member Advisory Board includes two City staff designees and three to five business representatives. The Advisory Board's duties include annual review of the LINKS performance for submission to the City Council. The Ordinance authorizing the BID also provides that the City Council may increase the annual BID assessment in an amount not to exceed the increase of the Consumer Price Index as part of its review of the annual report.

LINKS Shuttle Service

The LINKS Shuttle provides free transportation from the San Leandro BART station to the industrial area west of I-880 and Marina Blvd., a major employment center of the City and the region. LINKS operates Monday – Friday during peak commute hours (5:45 – 9:45 am and 3:00 – 7:00 pm). In July 2022, the service was modified to a Dual Interlaced Loop configuration operating two buses, both of which travel on a North and South Loop. Historically, LINKS provides 200,000 rides per year with an average of 700 rides per day. Like all public transportation services, the number of rides dropped since COVID. Ridership gradually increased and was over 500 rides per day by the end of FY 21-22. Upon the implementation of the Dual Interlaced Loop configuration, the program did experience an expected drop in ridership due to the decrease in frequency. At the end of FY 22-23 ridership was averaging 350 rides per day. This represents a 50% pre-pandemic recovery, a trend consistent with BART's recover levels.

LINKS provides critical "first and last mile" connection between transit and employers in West San Leandro, serving major employers including Amazon, Walmart and Costco, as well as small employers. There are over 800 businesses and almost 15,000 employees in the LINKS service area. LINKS also provides transportation to commercial nodes including Marina Square Shopping Center and community services such as Davis Street Family Resource Center which serves 10,000 low-income people each year.

Participation in the LINKS BID service area helps businesses comply with the BAAQMD Commuter Benefit requirements. In 2014, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) implemented the Commuter Benefits Program that requires all employers with 50 or more full-time employees to provide commuter benefits to their employees. To comply with the Program, employers must select one (or more) of four commuter benefit options and register with BAAQMD. Participation in the LINKS BID satisfies Option 3 ("Employer Provided Transit") under the requirements, allowing businesses to save time and money.



BID Renewal

In 2015, the Business Improvement District was re-authorized for 15-years. When the BID was renewed, the service area was expanded providing more frequent service, shorter round-trip rides and connections to businesses that previously could not access LINKS. BID fees are collected through the City's business license process.

Summary of Annual Activities

FY 2015-16 – The SLTMO focused on getting the expanded service up and running smoothly and updating the LINKS branding with new signage, brochure and website. Bus benches and new signs were installed.

FY 2016-17 – The SLTMO focused on stabilizing LINKS funding by applying for grants and renewing service contracts with Kaiser Permanente and Marina Square Shopping Center. LINKS received a five year Measure BB grant which helped to stabilize funding for the next several years.

FY 2017-18 – The SLTMO focused on further enhancing the service through the installation of Nextbus technology. Using a mobile app, Nextbus allows riders to find real time arrival predictions for nearby stops instantly, find stops and vehicles on a map, get walking directions and set alerts for favorite stops and times. Nextbus also provides useful administrative reports including on-time performance and passenger count information. Google translate and transportation resources were also added to the website further increasing accessibility to riders.

FY 2018-19 – The SLTMO continued its focus on improved performance and rider experience, replacing the LINKS fleet with four new buses. The exterior bus branding was updated, signage on the bus exterior was improved and information racks added to the bus interior. Each bus was fitted with a drive cam which can record the interior and exterior of the bus in the event of an incident.

FY 2019-20 - The SLTMO focused on continuing service reliability, securing grants and responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. The SLTMO implemented a variety of safety protocols allowing the shuttle to continue to operate on its normal schedule during the uncertainty of the pandemic.

FY 2020-21 – The SLTMO continued to focus on providing reliable transportation to LINKS riders during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although ridership dropped, LINKS ridership rebounded much more quickly than larger transportation providers. As part of the reconfiguration of the San Leandro BART Station, the LINKS shuttle stops were permanently moved to a convenient location on San Leandro Blvd with access to cross walk and benches.

FY 2021-22 - The SLTMO identified a projected budget shortfall beginning FY 2022-23 resulting from funding decreases and cost increases. As a result the SLTMO contracted with a transit consulting firm to review the LINKS service and develop service options that would maximize service levels while reducing service costs.

2022-23 Activities

In response to the transit consulting firm's recommendations, on July 1, 2022, the LINKS shuttle program implemented a Dual Interlaced Loop service, reducing the number of buses from four to two. The Dual Loop configuration maintained the existing North and South loops with the central stop at the San



Leandro BART Station, where both routes meet. The configuration allows for a one-seat ride from any stop to any stop on the route for customers without having to transfer between vehicles. Headway time is saved by reducing the dwell time between loops. With the Dual Loop services, buses run every 30 minutes rather than every 20 minutes. This alternative provides the most service under projected funding levels, reduces operational costs by approximately 50% with only a 10-minute decrease in shuttle frequency and allows for expansion in service if new funding is identified. There is no change to shuttle stops, service area or operating hours.

Average daily ridership dropped from 771 in February 2020 to a low of 200 in April. Since then, ridership steadily increased with average daily ridership in June 2022 of 518 rides or 71% of pre-Covid levels. LINKS ridership rebounded much more quickly during 2020 and 2021 than large transit operators such as AC Transit and BART. LINKS ridership during Covid demonstrated that the LINKS Shuttle provides essential transportation to San Leandro businesses, employees and the community. As anticipated with the reduction in service vehicles and headway, with the implementation of the Dual Loop configuration came a reduction in ridership. At the end of FY 22-23 ridership was averaging 350 rides per day. This represents a 50% pre-pandemic recovery, a trend consistent with BART's recover levels.

LINKS Budget

Funding for LINKS comes from the BID, grants, the City of San Leandro and advertising revenue from Marina Square Shopping Center, in which they purchase advertising space on the LINKS buses.

2022 Alameda CTC CIP Grant (Vehicle Registration Fees & TFCA)- \$1,180,088

The SLTMO received a 2022 Alameda CTC CIP grant for the periods FY 2021-22 through FY 2025-26 in the amount of \$1,180,088. Although the full grant request was allocated, the matching requirement for this grant cycle went from 50% to 75% reducing the allowable request and significantly impacting the LINKS budget for the next five years.

2024 Alameda CTC CIP Grant (Measure BB & TFCA)- \$331,000

In May 2023, the Alameda CTC the SLTMO's application for FY 2026-27 and 2027-28 CIP grant funds (Measure BB & TFCA) in the amount of \$331,000. The agreements are pending.

Business Improvement District Revenue

BID revenue declined significantly year over year in 2020 but 2021, 2022, and 2023 revenue has increased back to pre-Covid levels of approximately \$400,000.

Projected Budget Deficit

The SLTMO projected a budget deficit beginning in FY 2022-23 as a result of:

- New Alameda CTC matching requirements that limit the allowable grant request.
- Unpredictable drop in BID revenue.
- Projected transportation cost increases.

Budget Reduction – Service Modification

Implementation of the Dual Loop configuration provides the most service under projected funding levels and reduces operational costs by approximately 50% with the goal of stabilizing LINKS funding for the next five years.



2023-24 Planned Activities

Following is a summary of planned activities for FY 2023-24:

Dual Interlaced Loop

Continue to monitor and modify the service as needed to meet rider needs.

Outreach

SLTMO Management will increase outreach to employers and employees to promote LINKS ridership now that riders are coming back to public transportation.

The LINKS shuttle program has launched a Twitter account to increase digital awareness, as well as provide up-to-date service information.

In addition to the route map and schedule being available on the NextBus app/website, the information will be available on Google Maps, Apple Maps, and the Transit App.

Grants

Aggressively seek local, state, and federal grant and other funding opportunities. The Board will continue to work with the City of San Leandro and Alameda County Transportation Commission to secure critical funding. Historically, the City of San Leandro has served as the financial administrator and sponsor for grants, which are typically awarded to transit agencies and cities.

Revenue Diversification

Continue to diversify revenue sources by maintaining current contract with Marina Square (advertising) and seek other revenue generating opportunities.

Business Improvement District Authorization

The BID is a levied benefit assessment on businesses within the BID Area, the proceeds of which shall be used for the public purpose benefit of the businesses in the BID, pursuant to the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 Section 36500 et seq. of Division 18 of the California Streets and Highways Code. All of the assessments imposed by the BID Ordinance shall be reviewed by the City Council annually based upon the annual report prepared by the advisory board appointed pursuant to Sections 36530 and 36533 of the California Streets and Highways Code. Pursuant to Section 36533(c), the City Council may approve the report as filed by the advisory board or may modify any particular contained in the report and approve it as modified.

The ordinance defines the boundaries of the BID, the amount of the annual assessment, the approved use of the assessment funds, and the effective period of the assessment. The Ordinance requires that an Advisory Board annually review the performance of LINKS for submission to the City Council. In addition, the Ordinance provides that the City Council may increase the annual assessment in an amount not to exceed the increase of the Consumer Price Index (San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose), as part of its review of the annual report.



Annual BID Rate Recommendation – 2024 Business Improvement District Assessment

In order to ensure that funding for LINKS stays current with operating costs, it is recommended that the 2024 BID rate be adjusted by the applicable Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Per the approved Ordinance, the BID per employee rate may be increased annually by the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). For 2024 the applicable CPI factor is 4.2 percent. This would result in the BID per employee rate increasing from \$27.63 to \$28.79. Businesses with three or fewer owner/employees, landlords, and non-profits will continue to be exempt from the BID assessment. The CPI adjustment will raise approximately \$18,000.

Exhibit A: Ridership Statistics

Years of Service: 22

Total # of Rides Provided: 3,385,440

	Monthly Total Ridership				
	Pre-COVID Total FY 19	Previous FY Total FY 22	Previous FY Total FY 23	+/- from Previous Year	% Pre-COVID Baseline (FY 19)
July	15,733	7,983	7,957	0%	51%
August	17,585	8,537	9,288	9%	53%
September	15,506	8,682	7,950	-8%	51%
October	18,931	8,626	8,565	-1%	45%
November	15,963	8,651	7,278	-16%	46%
December	14,787	8,425	6,653	-21%	45%
January	17,779	8,282	6,611	-20%	37%
February	15,329	9,131	6,697	-27%	44%
March	16,188	10,454	7,715	-26%	48%
April	17,420	10,634	6,779	-36%	39%
May	17,327	11,838	8,061	-32%	47%
June	15,532	11,645	7,580	-35%	49%
FY Total	198,080	112,888	91,134	-19%	46%

	Daily Average Ridership				
	Pre-COVID Average FY 19	Previous FY Average FY 22	Previous FY Average FY 23	+/- from Previous Year	% Pre-COVID Baseline (FY 19)
July	749	380	379	0%	51%
August	765	388	404	4%	53%
September	775	395	361	-8%	47%
October	823	411	407	-1%	50%
November	760	412	346	-16%	46%
December	739	401	316	-21%	43%
January	773	394	314	-20%	41%
February	766	457	334	-27%	44%
March	771	455	335	-26%	44%
April	792	506	338	-33%	43%
May	753	538	350	-35%	47%
June	777	529	344	-35%	44%
FY Ave.	770	439	353	-20%	46%

Fiscal Year	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total	Avg/Mo	Avg/Day
FY 16	16,080	14,646	16,037	18,015	14,685	15,005	15,107	17,309	18,717	17,548	18,144	18,383	199,676	16,640	777
FY 17	16,272	18,573	9,117	8,169	16,455	15,329	15,585	15,389	18,292	16,667	17,815	16,354	204,017	17,001	791
FY 18	16,582	18,746	17,134	18,642	16,732	14,136	15,381	14,519	15,491	15,046	15,777	15,681	193,867	16,156	757
FY 19	15,733	17,585	15,506	18,931	15,963	14,787	17,779	15,329	16,188	17,420	17,327	15,532	198,080	16,507	771
FY 20	16,811	17,344	16,817	19,463	14,465	14,501	15,593	14,633	9,918	4,506	4,888	5,575	154,514	12,876	647
FY 21	6,113	6,374	6,778	7,650	7,129	7,833	6,261	6,531	7,880	7,875	7,252	8,099	85,775	7,148	332
FY 22	7,983	8,537	8,682	8,626	8,651	8,425	8,282	9,131	10,454	10,634	11,838	11,645	112,888	9,407	439
FY 23	7,957	9,288	7,950	8,565	7,278	6,653	6,611	6,697	7,715	6,779	8,061	7,580	91,134	7,595	353

COVID Shelter in Place Order - March 16, 2020

Dual Interlaced Loop Service Started - July 1, 2022

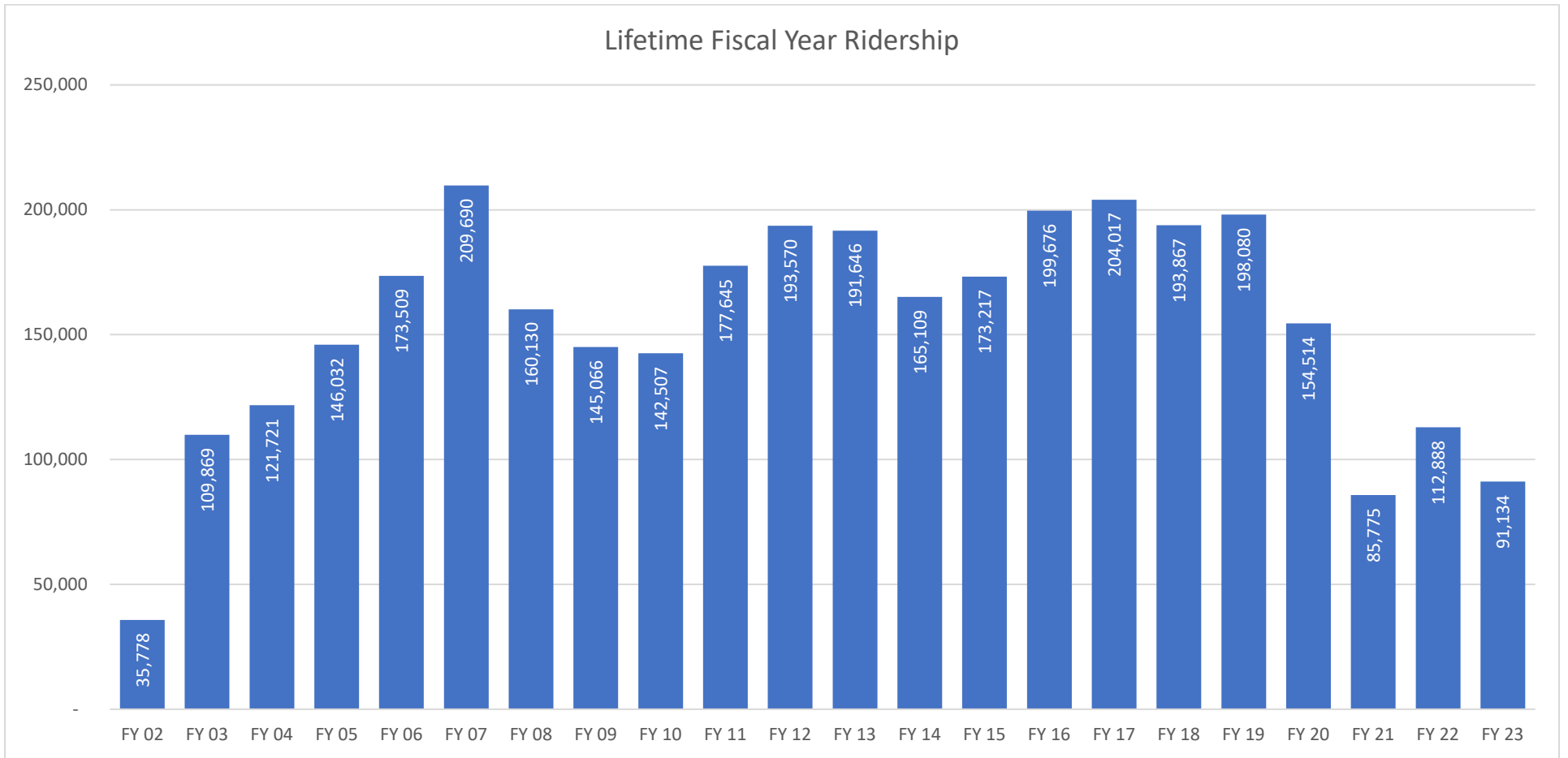


Exhibit B: LINKS Shuttle Map

SHUTTLE ROUTE MAP

SHUTTLE STOPS

NORTH LOOP

EVERY 20 MINUTES

- 19 FIRSTSTOP - BART
- 20 MARINA @ ALVARADO
- 21 MARINA @ TEAGARDEN
- 22 MERCED @ MARINA
- 23 WILLIAMS @ WESTGATE
- 24 WILLIAMS @ 21ST AMENDMENT BREWERY
- 25 WILLIAMS @ DOOLITTLE
- 26 DOOLITTLE @ POLYOROSA
- 27 DAVIS @ DOOLITTLE
- 28 DAVIS @ TIMOTHY (WESTGATE)
- 29 DAVIS @ PIERCE
- 30 DAVIS @ ORCHARD (THRASHER PARK)

SOUTH LOOP

EVERY 20 MINUTES

- 1 FIRSTSTOP - BART
- 2 ALVARADO @ MARINA
- 3 ALVARADO @ MONTAGUE
- 4 ALVARADO @ TEAGARDEN
- 5 TEAGARDEN BEFORE ALADDIN
- 6 FAIRWAY @ MILLER (KASER)
- 7 MERCED @ FAIRWAY
- 8 WICKS @ BURROUGHS
- 9 WICKS @ PIKE
- 10 WICKS @ FARALLON
- 11 FARALLON BEFORE GRIFFITH
- 12 FARALLON @ CATALINA
- 13 DOOLITTLE @ BERMUDA
- 14 DOOLITTLE @ FAIRWAY
- 15 DOOLITTLE @ MARINA
- 16 MARINA @ VERNA COURT
- 17 MARINA @ TEAGARDEN (MARINA SQUARE)
- 18 ALVARADO @ MARINA

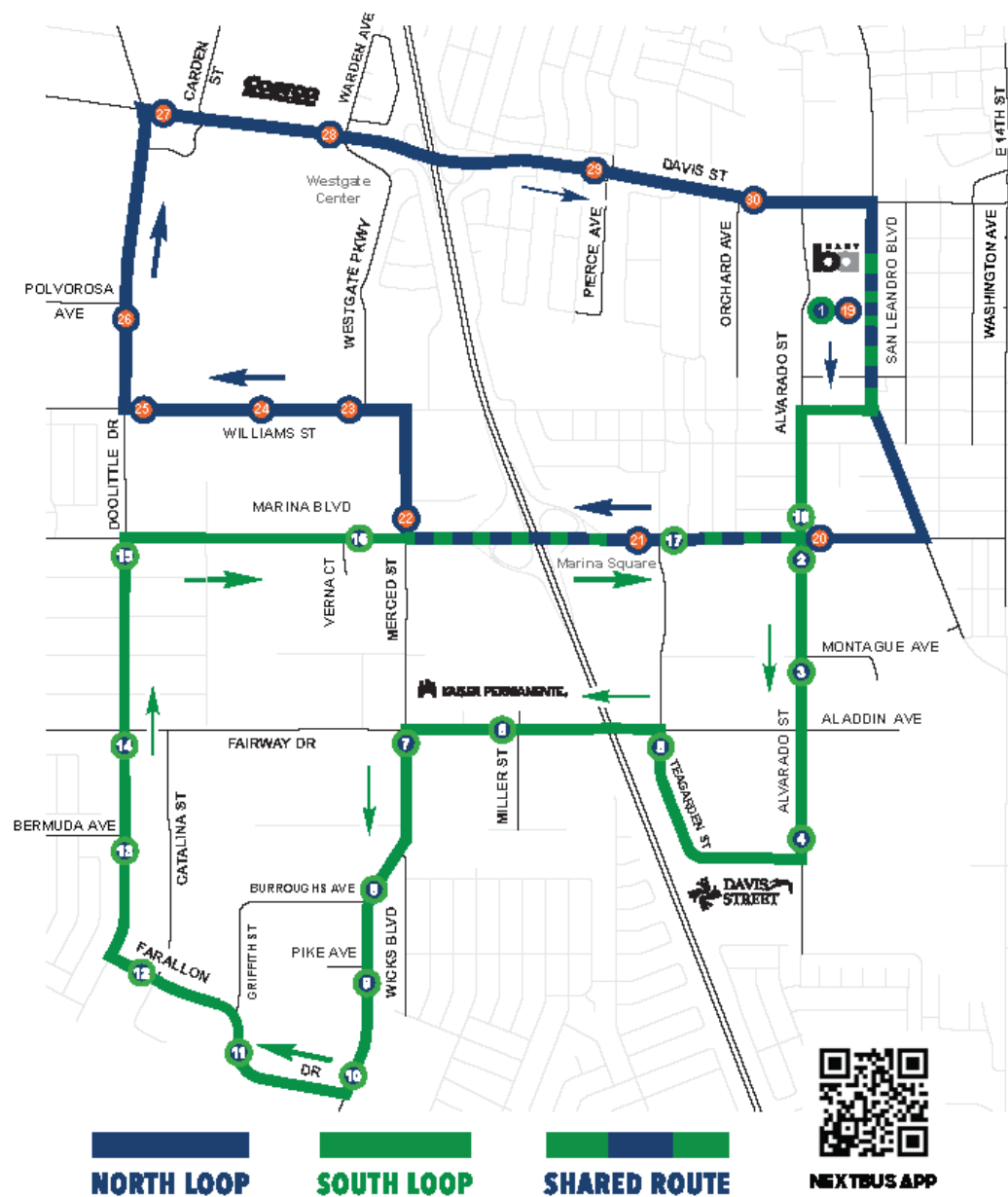


Exhibit C: Budget

	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
REVENUE	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
Business Improvement District	326,475	367,921	400,381	409,338	355,607	407,501	404,182	373,546	400,000	400,000
Grants	339,750	76,250	193,909	-	362,859	382,000	324,989	107,106	114,824	117,883
Other - Shuttle Services, Advertising	4,375	3,000	5,500	8,137	7,045	7,500	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Interest	1,293	914	1,809	6,552	4,588	2,656	1,914			
RDA/City Contribution	95,000	75,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Kaiser Shuttle & TDM Mgmt.	444,549	545,249	482,133	131,108						
TOTAL REVENUE	1,211,442	1,068,334	1,133,732	605,135	780,099	849,657	787,085	536,652	570,824	573,883

EXPENSES	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
LINKS Shuttle – Transportation*	430,221	536,927	599,102	590,644	672,978	773,147	746,221	423,457	441,900	465,675
Consulting Services - SLTMO Admin	95,048	83,960	60,880	65,121	59,760	69,720	59,880	75,664	77,516	79,841
Consulting (Audit and Rider Survey)		5,000	-	-			29,505	-	10,000	5,000
Marketing, Advertising, and Misc.	2,624	1,256	-	8,934	3,673	7,192	2,408	2,938	5,000	5,000
Ins., Taxes, Bank Fees, NPO Fees	3,687	3,069	4,089	5,270	3,343	3,561	2,786	3,532	5,000	5,000
Improvements/Information Systems/Technology			48,406	5,736	22,583	6,000	19,089	6,630	18,500	6,990
Kaiser Shuttle - Transportation	314,756	443,230	493,048							
TOTAL EXPENSES	846,336	1,073,442	1,205,525	675,705	762,336	859,620	859,889	512,221	557,916	567,506

Estimated Balance/Overrun	365,106	(5,108)	(71,793)	(70,570)	17,763	(9,962)	(72,804)	24,431	12,908	6,376
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2023-24 Estimated Fiscal-Year-End Banking/BID Revenue Balance: \$598,339

**2023-24 and 2024-25 Transportation costs based on an estimated annual increase of 5%*

2021-22 - Deficit result of increased transportation costs, transit study and Nextbus upgrade to 4G.

2022-23 - Modified service to Dual Interlaced Loop and went from 4 buses to 2 buses reducing transportation costs.

2022-25 - 2022 CIP Grant revenue based on projected reimbursement not full grant allocation.



West San Leandro LINKS Shuttle Business Improvement District (BID) Fee & Service Explanation

The LINKS shuttle serves businesses in West San Leandro by providing a free transportation link between places of employment and the Downtown San Leandro BART Station. With 22 years of service to the community, LINKS has provided over 3 million rides.

Funding for LINKS comes from grants, the City of San Leandro, business and property-owner partnerships, and the Business Improvement District (BID). The BID funds approximately half of the total LINKS budget.

Following are answers to some frequently asked questions about the BID. If you have questions about how to fill out your business license form, contact the Finance Department at cashiers@sanleandro.org or 510-577-3378. If you have additional questions about the BID, please contact Lars Halle at lhalle@sanleandro.org or 510-577-3311.

- **Purpose:** All fees collected from the assessment will partially fund the operation of the LINKS shuttle service to and from the downtown San Leandro BART Station. The shuttle service is free to riders.
- **Type of Assessment:** The BID assessment is levied only on businesses in the affected service area, within ¼ mile of the shuttle route (see attached map.)
- **Who is Exempt:** Businesses with three or fewer owners and employees, rental property owners, home businesses, and nonprofit businesses are exempt from the fees.
- **How the Assessment Is Collected:** The annual assessment is levied and collected each year in January as part of the Business License Tax renewal process. The fee is levied on a calendar year basis (January 1 to December 31).
- **Amount of the BID Assessment:** \$28.79 per owner and number of employees per year. In future years, the annual assessment may be increased in an amount up to the increase, if any, of the Bay Area Consumer Price Index.
- **Find your bus with Nextbus:** The LINKS Shuttle is now easier to use than ever! You can now use your mobile device to find your bus and see how soon it will arrive, find stops, get walking directions, save favorites and set alerts for your stop. Go to www.nextbus.com or download the NextBus app. LINKS is listed as San Leandro Links.
- **Service Alerts:** Get up-to-date service alerts and notifications by following us on Twitter, twitter.com/sanleandrolinks
- **Businesses with 50+ employees will comply with 2014 Air Quality rules:** Participation in the LINKS Business Improvement District satisfies Option 3 ("Employer Provided Transit") under the Bay Area Air Quality Management District program which requires all employers with 50 or more full-time employees to provide commuter benefits to their employees.