



## Staff Report

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Elizabeth Gibbs, Community Services Director  
**DATE:** October 6, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Phase II Findings of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis

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### Background and Analysis:

In October 2019, City Council awarded a contract to Moore & Associates, Inc. (M&A) to perform a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) of the City's public transit fixed routes, commuter routes, and paratransit services. The scope of services included three phases with the first phase being data collection and analysis, which was presented to City Council on May 19, 2020.

The second phase of the COA includes an analysis of operating and capital funding; a fare equity analysis; goals, objectives, and performance standards; and finally, service recommendations. Below is a summary of the consultant's submitted Phase II findings.

### Operating and Capital Funding Analysis

The City of Beaumont is presently categorized as rural (under 50,000 population), which means that 10% of operating costs must come from fare revenue and other locally generated funds. The consultant anticipates that the 2020 Census will reflect an increase in population to more than 50,000, moving Beaumont into the small urban city category as defined by the TDA. This will automatically increase Beaumont's fare revenue requirement to 20% of operating costs. The TDA allows agencies five years to realize this threshold; Beaumont will be required to meet the 20% revenue threshold by FY2021.

Recommended operational funding suggestions to help Beaumont reach the required 20% revenue threshold include a combination of programs. Such programs include revenue from the electric vehicle charging station, the proposed compressed natural gas fueling station, a fare increase, route guarantees, partner contributions, Measure A funds, and contributions from the City's general fund. Partner opportunities come from agencies that directly benefit from the service being provided, such as the school

district, neighboring cities in which Beaumont provides sole public transit services, and businesses located in key commercial and industrial areas.

### Fare Equity Analysis

Beaumont's fare structure falls in the middle when compared with other agencies' fare schedules. Where Beaumont charges \$1.25 for a single ride, OmniTrans charges \$2 and RTA \$1.75. On the lower end, Banning charges \$1.15 and Sunline \$1.00. Beaumont could increase its base fare by 20% to \$1.50 which would increase Beaumont's fare to 30% higher than Banning's existing fare. It is the opinion of the consultant that there is opportunity for fare elasticity and that Banning, and Sunline are both underpriced.

Any fare increase has the potential to cause a loss of ridership. The Simpson-Curtin Rule states that for every 3% fare increase, ridership will drop by 1%. Should Beaumont increase the fare by 20%, the number of passengers will decrease by 6.67% but would result in an overall 12% increase of fare revenue.

An introduction of a fare increase is best suited to occur with a service or schedule change, introduction of a new service area, response to a disaster, or when other transportation options are available. Special attention should be made to ensure that multi-ride options offer value and savings versus the cash fare.

### Goals, Objectives, and Performance Standards

The City of Beaumont's General Plan contains goals related to the transit program. Goals include increased connectivity and coordination with other agencies and operators. Beaumont Transit needs to ensure future transit demands are met through various strategies that include working with other City departments and developers to create 'transit ready' developments.

### Service Recommendations

- *Ensure service information is accurate, consistent and effectively distributed.*  
Digital schedules and route maps should always be current, and any printed material comes from the digital version. A new schedule and map should be generated to reflect new branding and make old printed material easier to identify.
- *Develop a driver relief policy that does not negatively impact service.*

Current schedules do not have enough time for driver breaks, especially if the route is running late. Schedules and routes need to be revised to allow for adequate break time without sacrificing service delivery. The consultant offers three options to satisfy this recommendation: 1) utilize an existing facility such as Walmart, the hospital or Beaumont Civic Center as a break area or construct a small restroom/break facility at the Walmart Transfer Station; 2) Include a passenger area into the new admin building on Fourth Street, although this area is not currently served by routes; and 3) Identify a centrally located location that can be incorporated into existing routes for breaks and passenger waiting.

- *Develop a vehicle fueling policy and schedule.*

Fueling is done mid-route which means passengers must alight the bus to fuel. To avoid negative service impacts, it is recommended that buses be fully fueled at the start of their shift. Second shift drivers could take their own bus out on route to relieve first shift, or drivers could swap out buses. Either way, passengers should not have to wait while a bus is fueled.

- *Determine how to address service to Calimesa.*

Beaumont's commuter links are the only transit service in Calimesa. Calimesa is within the Riverside Transit Agency's service area and Calimesa does not contribute funding to operate their service. It is recommended that Beaumont work with RCTC, RTA and Calimesa regarding a reasonable contribution to help support and sustain the commuter service.

- *Ensure all stops are served per the published schedule, unless marked as 'drop-off only.'*

At the end of the route, drivers often bypass the last stops when there are no passengers on board. It is logical to assume that if there are no passengers to drop off at the last stops, then no one is waiting for the bus either. However, schedules should reflect that it is 'drop-off only' if that is the policy.

- *Implement a 20% fare increase.*

Beaumont is moving into the 20% farebox recovery ratio mandate. A fare increase will bring in additional revenue. Suggestions of a robust public information outreach to show the value of multi-use passes is encouraged.

- *Work with private employers and develop partnerships.*

It is reasonable to approach employers and commercial development managers to help fund expanded service to business parks developing near Fourth Street. Working with employers and conducting a survey of employees would help to determine the type of service that should be provided.

- *Eliminate the flag stop policy.*

All flag stops should be eliminated because they potentially erode on-time performance. All stops should be marked and located no closer than  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile.

- *Improve service reliability.*

Building in enough recovery time ensures that there is not a cascading effect of late trips throughout the day. Time points that were serviced late generally occurred in the afternoon on most routes suggestive that small late trips in the morning cascaded into the afternoon. Retiming current routes and building in additional time is suggested.

- *Incorporate school service into regular local service.*

Providing school service is problematic and consumes an inordinate amount of resources. Incorporation of school service as a deviation eliminates the need for dedicated vehicles and drivers for school runs. Route 7 is problematic because there is not a need for transit service in the area outside of school transportation. To continue this transportation service, it is recommended that Beaumont request a contribution from the school district for the operation.

- *Improve service along Highland Springs Ave.*

No service is provided north of Eighth Street along Highland Springs Avenue by either Beaumont or Banning transit operations. With the new housing developments, it is recommended that Route 3 be amended. Amendments to Route 3 will require coordination and approval of the City of Banning.

- *Improve connectivity between Banning and Beaumont.*

This can be achieved in two ways. First, carefully coordinate timed transfers at the two transfer points to facilitate travel in both directions. Second, allow for closed-door service between city limits and the intended destination to not 'poach' passengers.

- *Extend service to the Crossroads Logistics Center/Rolling Hills Business Park.*

Further insight into the type of service is required before implementing expansion into the area. A vanpool could be a solution, or a properly timed modification to Route 4. Beaumont should work with employers to determine the level of service desired and explore opportunities for partnerships and financial support.

- *Work with Sunline and RCTC to minimize duplication.*

Although Sunline's proposed Route 10 and Beaumont's Commuter Link 120 both travel to San Bernardino, it is stated by Sunline that Beaumont passengers are not going to CSUSB, which is Sunline's destination. However, Beaumont's passengers could take Sunline Route 10 as an alternative. It is suggested that Beaumont work with RCTC to resolve duplication of service with Sunline.

- *Rebrand and update vehicles and signage.*

It is suggested that to differentiate itself from Banning, Beaumont should develop a unique color scheme and brand for the vehicles, signage, etc. to give Beaumont a fresh new look and promote a new image.

- *Prepare a fleet replacement plan to address transition to zero-emission fleet.*

Since Beaumont does not receive federal transportation funding, there is not a written vehicle replacement plan in place. It is recommended that Beaumont create a replacement plan that includes the definition of useful life for each asset type, the likely replacement year, and details its plan for transition to battery electric vehicles.

In conclusion, M&A is currently developing an action plan that will be presented to City Council for discussion and input at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

**Fiscal Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact.

**Recommended Action:**

Receive and file.