



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2024
TO: Chair Bryson and the CBJ Public Works and Facilities Committee
THRU: Denise Koch, Engineering & Public Works Director
FROM: Rich Ross, Capital Transit, Transit Superintendent
SUBJECT: Capital Transit Tripper Service During Tourist Season

The 2023 summer cruise season highlighted significant challenges for Capital Transit in effectively serving both cruise tourists and Juneau residents. Overcrowding on routes, particularly those from which tourists could get off at the Dredge Lakes stop on Mendenhall Loop Road and walk 1.5 miles to the Mendenhall Glacier, resulted in local riders being bypassed at stops. Hundreds of local bus riders, including people in wheelchairs, were unable to board buses during the summer of 2023 because they were full. Despite attempts to mitigate overcrowding by running unscheduled Valley/Downtown Express Route 8 service when resources allowed, the situation underscored the need for improved planning for future peak seasons. During the February 12, 2024, COW meeting, the assembly directed staff to come up with options for providing “tripper” service to mitigate impacts to local riders from cruise tour passengers.

FY24

With the 2024 summer cruise season approaching, Capital Transit's capacity to increase service is limited by our 17 buses. To address immediate needs, we are:

- Restoring mid-day Valley/Downtown Express Route 8¹ service on weekdays.
- Extending Valley/Downtown Express Route 8 service to Saturdays and Sundays.

For the FY24 portion of the Summer of 2024, it will cost Capital Transit \$164,000 to add this augmented service. We recommend that this cost be covered by Marine Passenger Fees.

FY25

Capital Transit will provide the level of service described above for the period of July through mid-September 2024.

We anticipate the arrival of 7 new Gillig electric buses in fall 2024, and plan to retain some older diesel buses. The additional buses will allow for expanded service during the Summer of 2025. Capital Transit sees the following potential options for the Summer of 2025 to enhance service and mitigate overcrowding:

¹ Find Valley Express Route information here: <https://juneaucapitaltransit.org/routes/downtown-valley-express/>



Options	Service	Impact	Cost
1A. *NEW* Egan Express Service	<p>15 Minute Service</p> <p>4 additional buses per hour on a new route connecting the Valley and Downtown.</p> <p>Buses would travel directly between DTC and VTC along Egan drive and then proceed to the Loop Road</p> <p>7 days/week from 8am-5pm. Saturday level core service for Sundays, Memorial & Labor Day</p>	<p>Eliminate overcrowding</p> <p>Attract local riders seeking faster commute</p> <p>Provide service on 2 holidays with no service, earlier and later service on Sundays to better match cruise ship schedules.</p>	Up to \$1M
1B. *NEW* Egan Express Service	Same as above but with no added Sunday or Holiday Service.	<p>Eliminate overcrowding,</p> <p>Attract local riders seeking faster commute</p>	\$815K
2. Increased Route 8 Frequency	<p>15 Minute Service</p> <p>2 additional buses per hour by increasing route 8 service frequency from 30-minute service to 15-minute service</p> <p>8am-5pm, 7 days/week.</p>	<p>Reduced core route overcrowding</p> <p>Improved access for existing local riders,</p> <p>Less likely to attract new local riders</p>	\$735K

With a projected 15-minute travel time between downtown and the valley, Egan Express cuts ten minutes off the current Route 8 schedule, making it a more attractive choice for many commuters. This efficiency, combined with the convenience of the Valley Transit Center park & ride lot is likely to incentivize new local riders.

Staff Recommendation:

- 1) Make a motion to use \$164,000 of Marine Passenger Fees in FY24 to support the Tripper service and move to the full Assembly.
- 2) Make a motion of support to use \$1 million of Marine Passenger Fees in FY25 to support Tripper Service Option 1A and move to the full Assembly.

Enc: Route 8 Map

