

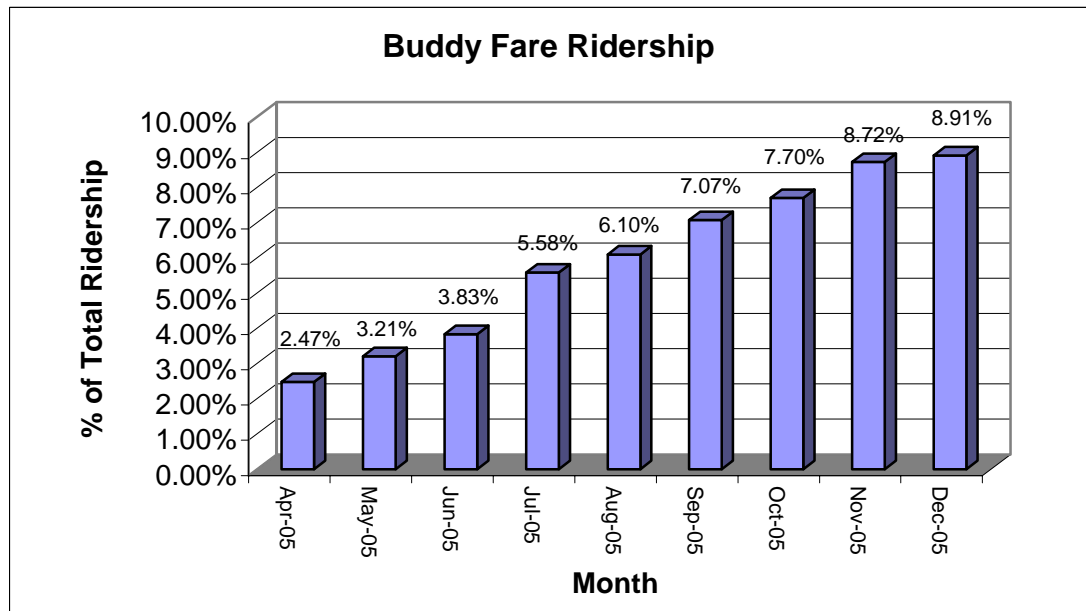
RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY
1825 Third Street
Riverside, CA 92507

January 26, 2006

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THRU: Larry Rubio, Chief Executive Officer *Larry*
FROM: Vince Rouzaud, Director of Purchasing and Materials Management *V. Rouzaud*
SUBJECT: Update on the Agency's Buddy Fare Program

At the September Board of Directors meeting, staff provided the Board with an update on the Agency's recently implemented Buddy Fare program. The Buddy Fare program, introduced in conjunction with the Agency's fare increase in April, was designed to help mitigate the increase in fare for seniors and disabled. In April, the number of passengers that took advantage of the Buddy Fare was 453 or 2.47 percent of total paratransit ridership.

Since its introduction last April, the Buddy Fare program has grown steadily. A total of 1,374 passengers or 8.91 percent of paratransit ridership participated in the reduced fare program during the month of December. The following chart illustrates the month to month percentage increase in Buddy Fare ridership from April through December.



CONTINUING EFFORTS

Staff continues to look for areas to expand the Buddy Fare program. During the past quarter, staff created additional groups of visually impaired clients traveling to the Braille Institute in Hemet; added two new groups of seniors traveling to and from senior centers in Lake Elsinore and Moreno Valley; and, are working with senior centers in other cities to help develop new senior buddy groups. Staff is also working with the Activities Director at The Colony, a 1,600-site mobile home park in Murrieta to encourage the use of the program by its residents that are already ADA certified.

In early October, RCTC staff and RTA staff met with representatives from a large dialysis treatment center to discuss the issues associated with non-emergency medical transportation. Recognizing that non-emergency medical transportation is a growing need in Riverside County, the RCTC is in the process of developing a call for projects for this specific transportation requirement. This project would provide for the needs of dialysis and chemotherapy treatment patients, separate from traditional senior/disabled Dial-A-Ride services provided under the Buddy Fare program.

Staff will continue to reach out to representatives from local senior centers and coordinators of groups for disabled clients to ensure the continued success of this program.

Fiscal Impact:

The average passenger count for each Buddy Fare group is between 4 – 5 passengers. Staff reviewed a representative sample of buddy fare group trips within this range, and determined the average savings to the Agency per-passenger to be \$17.97. This amount includes the reduction in fare revenues that would have been collected absent the Buddy Fare. Using this average, the cost avoidance for December 2005 would be \$24,690.78 (\$17.97 x 1,374 passengers.)

Recommendation:

Receive and file.