



Administrative Report

N.2., File # 26-0141

Meeting Date: 3/10/2026

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: ELIZABETH HAUSE, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING AN ANALYSIS OF BEACH CITIES TRANSIT YOUTH RIDERSHIP AND PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Plan includes an objective to, “analyze Beach Cities Transit (BCT) routes and determine if there are other route options that could enhance youth ridership.” To advance this objective, staff evaluated opportunities to improve youth access by adding new service locations or making route adjustments.

Because fleet and funding resources are fully allocated, it was determined that any new bus stops or service area expansions would require a proportional reduction in existing service. Based on this evaluation, staff would like to implement a minor route adjustment in June 2026 that improves youth access without increasing service hours or costs. Specifically, BCT is proposing to modify the southern termini of Lines 102 and 109 by reassigning the segment between the Redondo Beach Pier and Riviera Village from Line 109 to Line 102. This change would extend Line 102 from its current terminus at the Pier to Riviera Village. Under this configuration, South Redondo students would have a one-seat ride to Redondo Union High School (RUHS), while North Redondo students would gain direct access to Riviera Village. The adjustment would also improve transfer efficiency by establishing a shared transfer point for Lines 102 and 109 at the Redondo Beach Pier roundabout, while increasing access to the Redondo Beach Transit Center.

In addition to the route modification, staff continues to implement service improvements intended to enhance youth ridership overall. These efforts include administrative changes to simplify access to bus passes, enhancements to real-time bus tracking and on-time performance, and adjustments to procurement strategies to better support the system’s local character. Staff are also working to increase brand awareness among students and parents through targeted outreach and communication efforts.

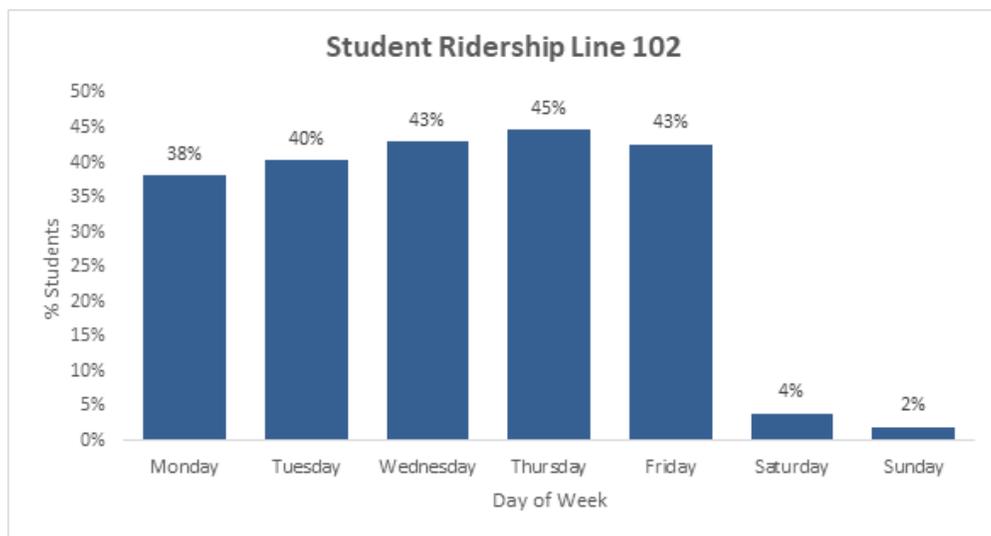
BACKGROUND

BCT operates two fixed routes, Line 102 and Line 109. Line 109 operates between Riviera Village and the LAX/Metro Station, serving the downtown areas of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, and El Segundo. Line 102 operates between the Redondo Beach Pier and the Redondo Beach C Line Station, serving RUHS and North Redondo. RUHS is BCT’s most utilized stop, and “school trippers” are operated as extensions of regular Line 102 service to accommodate peak travel periods for

students traveling to and from the high school.

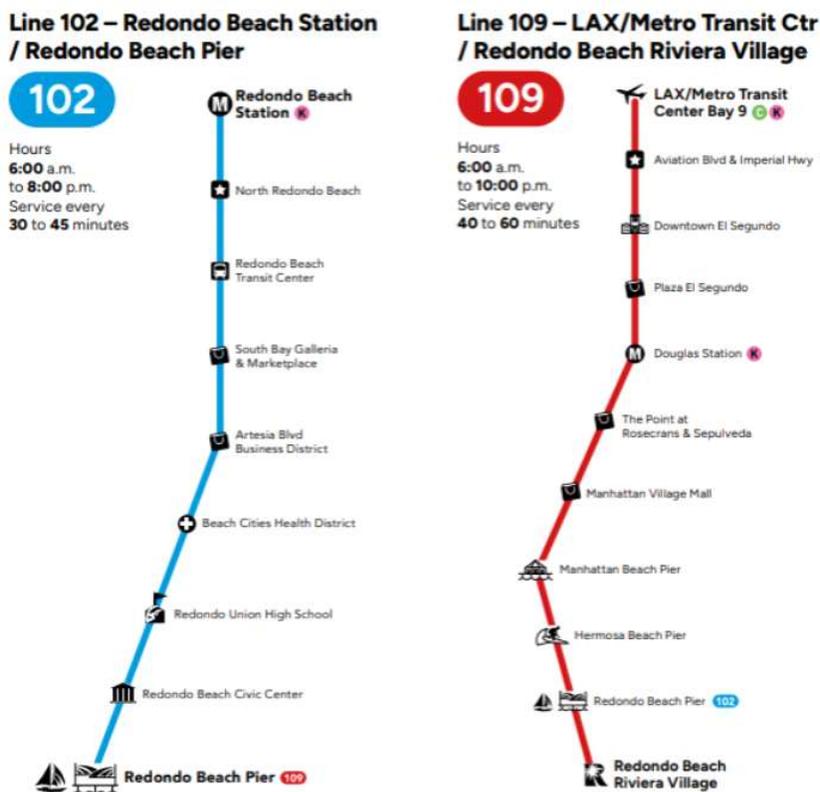
Staff considered a number of constraints in this analysis. BCT is funded through a combination of local, state, and federal transit-dedicated funds, which are allocated based on ridership data from the prior calendar year. Based on historic funding levels, BCT operates under an agreement that limits annual service to 42,000 hours, all of which are fully utilized by existing routes. In addition, BCT's fixed-route fleet of 14 buses limits the ability to expand service, and vehicle size restricts which streets can be safely served. It is also important to note that Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations prohibit public transportation agencies from operating shuttle services, further limiting flexibility in tailoring service for student or youth-specific trips. Expanding service hours beyond current levels would require sustained ridership growth or budget adjustments. Accordingly, staff focused on near-term improvements that could be achieved using existing resources within current service constraints, while ridership growth is addressed through service quality, fare access, and targeted outreach.

To better understand where improvements can have the greatest impact, staff reviewed existing ridership patterns among youth riders. An analysis of fare counts from September through December of the current school year indicates that student bus pass holders comprise a substantial portion of ridership on Line 102. This analysis does not include young riders who pay fares using cash or a Los Angeles Metro Transit Access Pass (TAP) card. On weekdays, student bus pass holders account for an average of approximately 42% of total ridership. However, student ridership declines significantly on weekends, representing approximately 3% of total ridership. This disparity suggests that students who are familiar with the route and already possess unlimited-ride bus passes primarily use BCT for school-related travel rather than discretionary trips. Increasing youth ridership outside of school travel would likely require a broader behavioral and cultural shift, rather than a route modification alone.



In addition to reviewing ridership data, staff engaged directly with youth to better understand how BCT is used by this demographic and where gaps may exist. Staff met with the Youth Commission on February 5, 2026, to gather feedback on the travel needs of younger residents. Staff presented the current stops of interest along Line 102 and Line 109 and requested input on additional service changes that may attract youth ridership. Commissioners noted that long wait times and reliability

concerns often impact their ability to use the system effectively. Suggestions included adding a new bus stop on Vincent Street to improve access to RUHS sporting events and Parras Middle School. The Commission also discussed the potential use of smaller buses to improve access within residential neighborhoods.



Route Evaluation and Proposed Adjustment

Staff evaluated several potential modifications to BCT routes with the goal of increasing youth ridership:

- **Redondo Beach Teen Center:** A new stop was evaluated but not advanced, as the Teen Center is located approximately 0.2 miles from an existing stop at Rindge Ln. / Grant Ave.
- **Adams Middle School:** Routing service was considered; however, the school is too far from the current route path to be feasible within current operational and budgetary constraints.
- **Parras Middle School:** The school is close enough to Line 102 to be a potential new stop; however, conflicting bell schedules with RUHS and limited revenue service hours prevent implementation at this time.
- **RUHS:** Access for South Redondo students could be improved through a route adjustment.
- **Redondo Beach Pier and Riviera Village:** Access to both locations could be increased through a route adjustment.

Based on this evaluation, BCT plans to implement an adjustment that shifts the southern end of Line 109 onto the current end of Line 102. This concept was originally proposed in 2023 by a Technical Working Group composed of representatives from Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, El Segundo, Torrance Transit, Metro, GTrans, and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit

Authority. This is expected to reduce round-trip travel time on the 109 by approximately 10 minutes, improving operational efficiency, and would also extend Line 102 to span the entire length of the City. The transfer point, where the two lines meet, would be moved from Catalina Avenue, to the roundabout between Veterans Park and the Pier.

BCT plans to implement this route adjustment in June 2026. To ensure riders are informed in advance of the change, notices are scheduled to be posted at all affected bus stops at least one month prior to implementation. Staff would also leverage the City's social media platforms to share updates and reminders regarding the service adjustment, with a focus on reaching students and parents, and informational advertisements would be placed in local newspapers to broaden community awareness. Updated brochures would be made available on buses and at City facilities, including libraries, the Teen Center, and City Hall, and the City's website would be updated to reflect the revised service information. Staff also plan to return to the Youth Commission to present the route adjustment and its impact on enhancing connectivity between North and South Redondo and the other Beach Cities.

Swapping the termini of Line 109 and Line 102 is considered a minor service adjustment. Less than 25 percent of each route is affected, so BCT is not required to conduct extensive community outreach under the adopted Community Outreach Plan, though, as noted above, staff would conduct a targeted outreach effort for the youth demographic. No bus stops would be removed, and no new stops added. Since the adjustment redistributes existing service, rather than expanding it, impacts to riders are expected to be minimal. The adjustment also improves the transfer experience, as passengers would wait in a commercial and recreational area with enhanced amenities. Additionally, BCT would work with transit schedulers to ensure that the updated bus schedule considers efficient transfer timing. The schedule update would also provide an opportunity to adjust scheduled timepoints to reflect current traffic congestion trends, further improving on-time performance and service reliability.

Fleet, Service, and Outreach Improvements

To address cultural factors contributing to low youth ridership, and to increase overall ridership, staff have developed a new procurement strategy. This strategy is intended to support a more approachable and flexible transit system, particularly for youth and first-time riders. The current fixed-route fleet, consisting of twelve 32-foot buses and two 25-foot cutaway buses, does not reflect the small beach-town character of BCT and the Beach Cities. Under the new approach, when an existing 32-foot bus reaches the end of its useful life, it will be replaced by two smaller cutaway buses.

While full size buses provide higher capacity, they are less maneuverable on narrow streets and can feel imposing to first time riders. In contrast, cutaway buses are smaller, usually carrying 15 to 25 passengers, and are built on a truck chassis. These vehicles are more agile on narrow streets and provide a more approachable, community-friendly appearance. Cutaways also cost significantly less than full-size buses, allowing BCT to acquire more vehicles and increase service flexibility.

In addition to route and fleet enhancements, staff have implemented several service improvements aimed at improving reliability, customer convenience, and overall rider experience. Efforts are underway to improve on-time performance and there have been substantial improvements in real-time bus tracking with assistance from the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP), which provides more accurate and accessible online service information. Staff have also improved bus

pass accessibility by introducing a school-year student pass. This new pass option eliminates the need for parents to resubmit applications monthly. Staff are working to further simplify the bus pass application process and to expand customer service counter hours. Looking ahead, BCT is preparing to welcome contactless fare payment through the regional TAP system, with deployment anticipated in Spring 2026, further simplifying fare payment and improving ease of use for all riders.

To increase brand awareness and encourage youth ridership, staff are expanding social media engagement and community outreach efforts that emphasize BCT as a safe and reliable travel alternative for young riders. Outreach efforts highlight system safety performance, including the fact that BCT has experienced only two National Transit Database (NTD) reportable accidents since January 2024. Staff plan to use Instagram, in particular, to highlight recent and upcoming service improvements. By reinforcing safety, reliability, and accessibility, staff intends to build confidence among parents and students to support increased use of BCT services.

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated by the Community Services Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost associated with the minor route adjustment includes a one-time expenditure of approximately \$6,000. Transit operations do not utilize General Fund resources, and sufficient funding is available in the Transit Division's FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget to cover the expense.

APPROVED BY:

Mike Witzansky, City Manager