



San Francisco Bay Ferry

A SERVICE OF WETA

WETA FY2024 – 2028 SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

Prepared by Gabriel Chan
Chan@watertransit.org

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Purpose	3
Planning Scenarios	3
Outreach	3
Data Request	4
Fields and Categories	4
Assumptions.....	4
Pre-Pandemic State of Service FY19	6
Overview	6
Service and Ridership by Route	6
Pre-Pandemic Fare Chart	7
Current State of Service FY23	8
Overview	8
Service and Ridership by Route	8
Pandemic Recovery Program (PRP)	10
Current Fare Chart	11
Route Changes	12
Scenario Planning Analysis (FY 24-28)	13
Planned System and Fleet Expansion	13
Projected Service Impacts.....	13
<i>Scenario 1: “Robust Recovery” – 100% ridership, 100% other revenue</i>	14
<i>Scenario 2: “Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders” – 50% ridership, 100% other revenue</i>	14
<i>Scenario 3: “Some Progress” – 85% ridership, 85% other revenue</i>	14
<i>Scenario 4: “Fiscal Cliff” – 85% ridership, 85% other revenue, no RM3 funds</i>	14
Conclusion	16
Attachment A. Data Request Template	

Executive Summary

In January 2013 the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) adopted its first SRTP, setting forth an operating and capital improvement plan for FY12 to FY22. In February 2016 WETA updated its ten-year SRTP for FY16 to FY25. The most recent SRTP document presented the operating plan for the ten-year period from FY20 to FY29. The current document represents a restructuring of the SRTP with a shorter planning horizon (FY24-FY28) given the significant changes in our region from the COVID-19 pandemic.

For WETA, funding from farebox recovery and Regional Measure 3 (RM3) are critical to the ongoing operation of ferry service on San Francisco Bay. In any scenario where either fare or RM3 revenues are significantly lower, the agency will likely have to make service cuts and defer currently planned expansion services within the SRTP’s planning horizon. This report discusses the potential budget and service delivery impacts under three different planning scenarios of varying revenue levels set forth by MTC. Additionally—given the importance of RM3 funding for ferry operations—WETA has prepared an extra fourth “Fiscal Cliff” scenario that details the potential service impacts for the agency without RM3 funding.

This document is for regional planning purposes only. WETA’s own revenue and ridership projections are subject to future changes.

The preparation of this report has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) through section 5303 of the Federal Transit Act. The contents of this SRTP reflect the views of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), and not necessarily those of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or MTC. WETA is solely responsible for the accuracy of the information presented in this SRTP.

Background

Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted transit operations, ridership, and revenues. The decrease in ridership, changes in travel patterns and uncertainties in farebox revenues have created enormous planning and operational challenges for Bay Area transit operators. As transit operators spend down their COVID-19 federal relief funds, MTC has adopted a revised approach that narrows the scope of the SRTP to a five-year planning horizon focused on service and financial planning.

Unlike previous SRTPs, this revised approach will also include scenario planning, which asks operators to consider how service plans might be adapted under different revenue planning scenarios. This reduction in the scale of the deliverables is intended to facilitate the development of a more narrowly focused SRTP for this planning cycle on a much shorter timeline than has been required for previous SRTPs. Deliverables include a data response template, specific revenue forecasts, and a brief supporting narrative document.

Planning Scenarios

WETA considered four different revenue planning scenarios in this SRTP. Scenarios 1, 2, and 3 are required by MTC. WETA staff later added a fourth fiscal cliff scenario to reflect the uncertainty surrounding Regional Measure 3 funds—a significant operating funding source for the agency.

1. **Robust Recovery.** 100% of ridership and revenue escalated from pre-pandemic. Does not assume proportionate recovery among all revenue sources.
2. **Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders.** Non-farebox funds recover to 100%. Farebox revenue remains at 20-50% of pre-pandemic. Federal relief funds exhausted.
3. **Some Progress.** Total revenue for the agency remains at 85% of pre-pandemic. Federal relief funds exhausted.
4. **Fiscal Cliff.** Ridership recovers to 85% of pre-pandemic. Regional Measure 3 funds are unavailable. Federal relief funds exhausted.

Outreach

WETA conducted a 30-day outreach process to ensure that the public and key stakeholders could make comments and suggestions on the draft SRTP. The draft document was available for public comment between November 11th, 2022 and December 12th, 2022. The full document was made available on the WETA website as well as through WETA's social media channels. In addition to public outreach, staff requested comments and review from the WETA Board of Directors as well as the various congestion management agencies (CMAs) within WETA's service area. WETA staff submitted the final draft to MTC with WETA Board approval in January 2023.

Data Request

Fields and Categories

Along with this report, WETA is submitting the data template (attachment A). The following fields are included for pre-pandemic (FY19), current (FY23), three MTC revenue scenario projections (FY24-28), and fourth “Fiscal Cliff” scenario that excludes RM3:

- Revenue Vehicle Hours
- Revenue Vehicle Miles
- Number of Routes Operated
- Total Route Miles
- Ridership
- Total Operating Budget
- Total Revenue Vehicles
- Vehicles Required for Maximum Service
- Employees

Assumptions

Given the significant uncertainty surrounding revenues and funding in the next five years, WETA staff made some assumptions during the scenario planning and projection process. They include the following:

1. **WETA’s assumed operating costs are for “Full Service” on existing and planned expansion routes.** This is consistent with the ongoing 2050 WETA Business Plan effort. Scenario 4 operating costs assume that the only expansion service that comes online is Treasure Island in FY26.

"Full Service"			
Route	Year	Weekday	Weekend
Alameda Harbor Bay	Existing	yes - peak only	no
Alameda Seaplane Lagoon	Existing	yes - peak only	no
Oakland/Alameda	Existing	yes	yes
Richmond	Existing	yes	yes
South San Francisco	Existing	yes - peak only	no
Vallejo	Existing	yes	yes
Pier 41	Existing	no	yes
Treasure Island	FY 2026	yes	yes
Mission Bay	FY 2026	yes	yes
Berkeley - SF	FY 2027	yes	yes
Berkeley - Larkspur	FY 2027	no	yes
Redwood City - SF	FY 2028	yes - peak only	no
Redwood City - Oakland	FY 2028	yes - peak only	no

2. **WETA will have \$21 million in federal relief funds remaining for FY24.** This is subject to change depending on FY23 actual costs. Fuel is a large expense for the agency, and prices have been especially unpredictable in recent months.

3. **Regional Measure 3 funds are available starting in FY25 for scenarios 1, 2, and 3.** Regional Measure 3 is currently being litigated and the funds are unavailable pending a California Supreme Court decision on the case. For planning purposes, WETA assumes that \$35 million in RM3 money will be available starting in FY25 in scenarios 1, 2, and 3. Scenario 4 assumes that RM3 is struck down and there are no funds available.
4. **WETA fleet and system expansion proceeds on schedule for scenarios 1, 2, and 3.** WETA's projections assume that the agency's capital program proceeds on budget and on schedule—increasing the fleet to 26 boats and opening four new terminals through FY28. Due to the significant funding gaps in scenario 4 without RM3 funds, we assume that fleet expansion stalls and the agency is only able to launch FY26 Treasure Island service.

Pre-Pandemic State of Service FY19

Overview

Before the pandemic, WETA operated five (5) routes on San Francisco Bay—Alameda/Oakland, Harbor Bay, Vallejo, South San Francisco, and Richmond—with a fleet of 15 vessels in service. WETA also provided additional seasonal special event service to Oracle Park and Chase Center from the East Bay on select event days. The bulk of ferry service was focused on commute trips during the weekday peak periods in the morning and evening with less weekend and off-peak service.

Service and Ridership by Route

Alameda/Oakland

The Alameda/Oakland provided all-day weekday and weekend service between the Alameda Main Street and Oakland terminals in the East Bay and the downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal and San Francisco Pier 41 Terminal. Local “Short Hop” service was provided between Alameda and Oakland and between downtown San Francisco and Pier 41. Special event service was provided to Oracle Park/China Basin terminal for select San Francisco Giants games and other events. Special event service for select Warriors games and concerts from Alameda/Oakland to a temporary facility at Pier 48 1/2 near the Chase Center began in late 2019. The Alameda/Oakland service had an annual ridership of approximately 1,384,000 in FY19.

Harbor Bay

The Alameda Harbor Bay Ferry Service provided commute-only weekday service between the Alameda Harbor Bay Terminal and the downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal. A pilot program for weekday commute service between Alameda Harbor Bay and the South San Francisco Terminal occurred in 2018. The Alameda Harbor Bay service had an annual ridership of approximately 355,700 in FY19.

Vallejo

The Vallejo service provided all-day weekday and weekend service between Mare Island, Vallejo terminal, downtown San Francisco Ferry Building and San Francisco Pier 41 terminal. Local “Short Hop” service was provided between downtown San Francisco and Pier 41 and between Mare Island and Vallejo. Special event service was provided to Oracle Park/China Basin for select San Francisco Giants games and other events. The Vallejo service had an annual ridership of approximately 1,078,000 in FY19.

Richmond

The Richmond Ferry Service was launched by WETA in January 2019; it provided commute-only weekday service between the Richmond terminal and the downtown San Francisco Ferry terminal. In August 2019, WETA added a summer weekend pilot service between the Richmond terminal and the downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal. The Richmond service had a ridership of approximately 200,300 during its first twelve months of operation.

South San Francisco

The South San Francisco Ferry Service provided commute-only weekday service between the Alameda Main Street and Oakland terminals in the East Bay and the South San Francisco terminal at Oyster Point. The limited midday service between the South San Francisco terminal and downtown San Francisco Ferry terminal was discontinued in 2018 due to low ridership. The South San Francisco service had an annual ridership of approximately 142,400 in FY19.

Pre-Pandemic Fare Chart

	Alameda/ Oakland	Harbor Bay	South San Francisco	Vallejo	Richmond
One-Way	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard
Adult	\$7.20	\$7.50	\$9.40	\$15.10	\$9.30
Adult (Clipper Only)	\$5.40	\$5.60	\$8.10	\$11.30	\$7.00
Youth (5-18 yrs.)	\$3.60	\$3.70	\$4.70	\$7.50	\$4.60
Senior/Disabled/Medicare (65+ valid ID) ¹	\$3.60	\$3.70	\$4.70	\$7.50	\$4.60
Children (under 5 with paying adult)	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
School Groups ²	\$2.40	\$2.50	\$3.10	\$5.00	\$3.10
Short Hop - Adult ³	\$1.70	N/A	\$1.70	\$1.70	N/A
Short Hop - Youth/Senior/Disabled ³	\$0.80	N/A	\$0.80	\$0.80	N/A
Monthly Pass	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$388.00	N/A
Oracle Park/Chase Center Event Services (one-way)	Special ⁴	No Service	No Service	Special ⁵	No Service
Adult	\$9.60	N/A	N/A	\$15.90	N/A
Youth (5-18 yrs.)	\$7.20	N/A	N/A	\$11.80	N/A
Senior/Disabled/Medicare (65+ valid ID) ¹	\$7.20	N/A	N/A	\$11.80	N/A
Children (under 5 with paying adult)	Free	N/A	N/A	Free	N/A

¹. Seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare cardholders may ride at a discount if they hold a Regional Transit Connection Discount Card, Medicare card, DMV Disabled Placard ID, or proof of age 65 or older.

². To qualify, school groups must call (415) 705-8214 for advance approval and reservations.

³. One-way between Oakland and Alameda or between the SF Ferry Building and Pier 41 or between Mare Island and Vallejo.

⁴. Service between Oracle Park and Alameda-Oakland. Also, service between Chase Center and Alameda-Oakland began in October 2019.

⁵. Service between Oracle Park and Vallejo. There is no service between Chase Center and Vallejo.

Current State of Service FY23

Overview

With the opening of the new Alameda Seaplane terminal in July 2021, WETA now operates six regional routes—Alameda & Oakland, Alameda Seaplane, Harbor Bay, Vallejo, Richmond, and South San Francisco. The Alameda Seaplane, Harbor Bay, and South San Francisco routes are weekday-only services. In addition to the regional routes, WETA continues to offer short hop services between Vallejo & Mare Island, Alameda Main St. & Oakland, and on weekends between Downtown San Francisco & Pier 41. With the return of in-person events at Oracle Park and Chase Center in 2021, WETA has also resumed its reservation-based special event services.

WETA’s fleet expansion program is ongoing, and the agency is in the process of procurement and construction of four new Dorado-class vessels—the first of which began revenue service in May 2022. The remaining three vessels will enter revenue service over the course of FY23 and FY24.

Service and Ridership by Route

Alameda Main St. & Oakland

Terminals	Service Hours	Total Transit Time	Typical Vessel Capacity	Total Ridership FY22
Oakland Alameda Main Street Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal	Weekdays: 6:30am – 9:10pm Weekends: 8:30am – 9:40pm	40 minutes	400	479,196

Alameda Seaplane

Terminals	Service Hours	Total Transit Time	Typical Vessel Capacity	Total Ridership FY22
Alameda Seaplane Lagoon Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal	Weekdays: 6:30am – 10:20pm	20 minutes	400	145,786

Harbor Bay

Terminals	Service Hours	Total Transit Time	Typical Vessel Capacity	Total Ridership FY22
Alameda Harbor Bay Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal	Weekdays: 6:30am – 6:40pm	25 minutes	330	113,207

Vallejo

Terminals	Service Hours	Total Transit Time	Typical Vessel Capacity	Total Ridership FY22
Mare Island Vallejo Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal	Weekdays: 5:15am – 8:00pm Weekends: 9:00am – 8:50pm	60 minutes	445	484,686

Richmond

Terminals	Service Hours	Total Transit Time	Typical Vessel Capacity	Total Ridership FY22
Richmond Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal	Weekdays: 6:30am – 8:25pm Weekends: 9:50am – 8:10pm	35 minutes	400	158,986

South San Francisco

Terminals	Service Hours	Total Transit Time	Typical Vessel Capacity	Total Ridership FY22
Alameda Main Street Oakland South San Francisco	Weekdays peak only: 6:05am – 8:00am; 3:20pm – 5:20pm	60 minutes	225	24,075

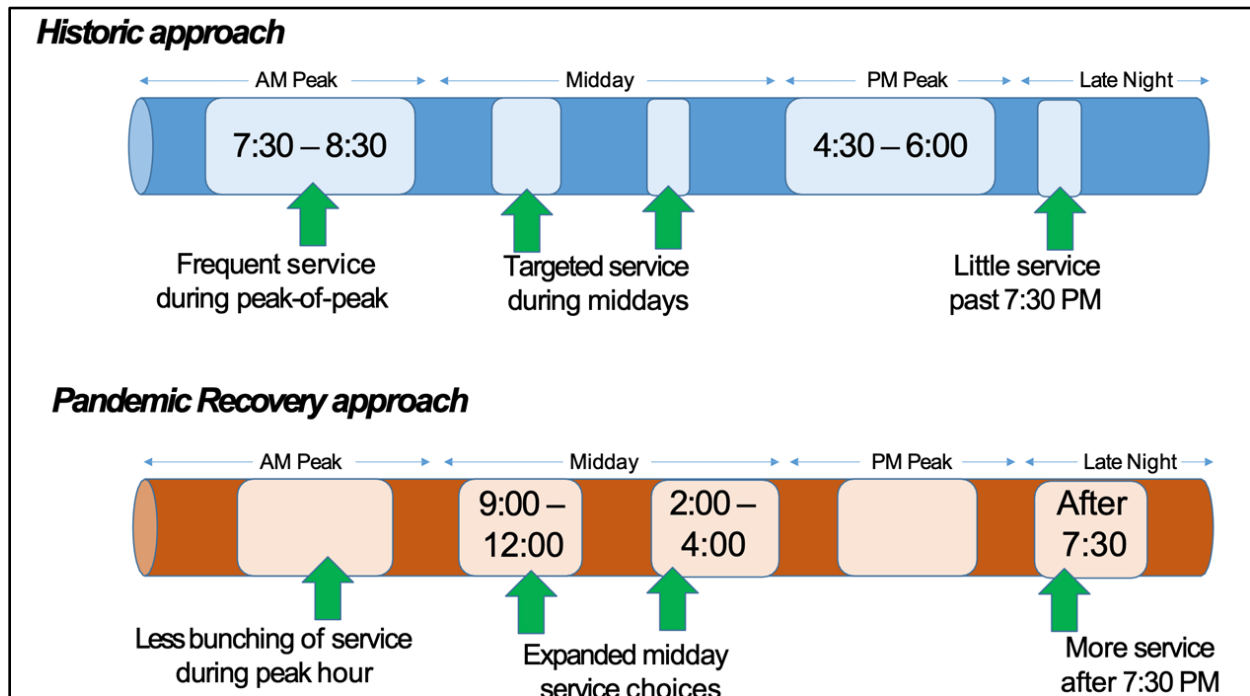
Pandemic Recovery Program (PRP)

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, WETA fare revenue covered approximately half of all operating costs—one of the highest farebox recovery rates in the nation. The agency was largely successful in achieving its financial sustainability and ridership goals by offering a premium commute service across the Bay—appealing to riders willing to pay a higher fare in exchange for avoiding traffic congestion on the Bay Bridge or crush loads on BART trains. The booming regional economy with high employment rates and congestion helped bolster demand for WETA’s services.

Shelter-in-place orders and remote work arrangements during the pandemic resulted in significant ridership and fare revenue loss. Even though WETA received relief funds from the federal government, the agency could not rely on these funds for continued financial viability. As the economy began to recover in 2021, WETA proposed the Pandemic Recovery Program (PRP) to entice riders back on the ferry using 13 guiding principles:

- 1) Proceed with phased service increases throughout the WETA system in FY2022, to reflect the continued return to in person work and restart of the Bay Area regional economy.
- 2) Set fares to be competitive with comparable regional transit options.
- 3) Work with other transit operators in the Bay Bridge corridor to explore coordinated fare strategies.
- 4) Develop programs and initiatives that complement and reinforce the goals of the Clipper START program, to expand access to the ferry for disadvantaged communities and to enhance equity.
- 5) Pursue options for enhancing service outside of traditional peak periods. WETA recognizes that off-peak service can make the system more relevant for transit dependent riders with travel patterns not oriented around traditional office work schedules.
- 6) Develop service schedules that could ultimately be expanded to achieve the goals of 15- and 30-minute frequencies systemwide.
- 7) Adapt fare products, fare media, and fare payment processes to reflect shifts in work schedules, travel patterns, and passenger expectations.
- 8) Prioritize ridership growth and acknowledge that systemwide and route-specific farebox recovery targets are unlikely to be met during recovery.
- 9) Improve and encourage better connectivity to local bus service and other feeder services, preserve and expand transfer incentives with local bus services and other first/last mile modes, and coordinate schedules with local operators.
- 10) Explore pilot programs and trial initiatives that may encourage ridership and broaden ferry service to a wider cross section of riders.
- 11) Deliver more for less by maximizing the efficiency of crews, overall system service design, and strategic deployment of vessels.
- 12) Be flexible and continually monitor performance to adjust and modify as demand shifts over time.
- 13) Commit to transparent communication with WETA riders, stakeholders, peer transit operators, and the public.

The plan culminated in expanded service offerings especially in the off-peak periods, evenings, and weekends in response to changing travel patterns.



The PRP also lowered fares on all routes to incentivize the return of riders to the system, accommodate expected changes in travel patterns, and attract a new, more diverse ridership base. The program was approved as a one-year temporary program and implemented in July 2021. The PRP has been extended through FY23 at which point the Board of Directors will revisit the program.

Current Fare Chart

	Alameda Seaplane	Alameda/Oakland	Alameda Harbor Bay	South San Francisco	Vallejo	Richmond	Short Hop ³
One-Way	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard
Adult	\$5.75	\$5.75	\$5.75	\$8.50	\$11.25	\$5.75	\$1.25
Adult (Clipper Only)	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$6.75	\$9.00	\$4.50	\$1.00
Youth (5-18 yrs.)	\$2.25	\$2.25	\$2.25	\$3.24	\$4.50	\$2.25	\$0.50
Senior/Disabled/Medicare (65+ valid ID) ¹	\$2.25	\$2.25	\$2.25	\$3.24	\$4.50	\$2.25	\$0.50
Children (under 5 with paying adult)	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
School Groups ²	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$2.75	\$3.50	\$1.75	N/A

Monthly Pass	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oracle Park/Chase Center Event Services (one-way)	No Service	Special ⁴	No Service	No Service	Special ⁵	No Service	No Service
Adult	N/A	\$9.60	N/A	N/A	\$15.90	N/A	N/A
Youth (5-18 yrs.)	N/A	\$7.20	N/A	N/A	\$11.80	N/A	N/A
Senior/Disabled/Medicare (65+ valid ID) ¹	N/A	\$7.20	N/A	N/A	\$11.80	N/A	N/A
Children (under 5 with paying adult)	N/A	Free	N/A	N/A	Free	N/A	N/A

- ¹. Seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare cardholders may ride at a discount if they hold a Regional Transit Connection Discount Card, Medicare card, DMV Disabled Placard ID, or proof of age 65 or older.
- ². To qualify, school groups must call (415) 705-8214 for advance approval and reservations.
- ³. One-way between Oakland and Alameda or between the SF Ferry Building and Pier 41 or between Mare Island and Vallejo.
- ⁴. Service between Oracle Park and Alameda-Oakland. Also, service between Chase Center and Alameda-Oakland began in October 2019.
- ⁵. Service between Oracle Park and Vallejo. There is no service between Chase Center and Vallejo.

Route Changes

In conjunction with the PRP, WETA also launched service to the new Alameda Seaplane terminal in July 2021. The terminal infrastructure had been completed in 2020, but the launch of ferry service was deferred due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This new commuter route offers faster 20-minute travel times between the new Seaplane Lagoon terminal in Alameda and Downtown San Francisco. It also allows the agency to provide 25-minute nonstop service between Oakland and Downtown San Francisco on the reconfigured Oakland/Alameda route. With the new service configuration, Oakland customers are now able to travel to downtown San Francisco without stopping at Alameda Main Street. For Alameda customers, the new Alameda Seaplane route offers a faster trip to and from Downtown San Francisco.

No other major route changes occurred since the start of the pandemic in March of 2020.

Scenario Planning Analysis (FY 24-28)

Planned System and Fleet Expansion

WETA’s capital program continues to move forward over the next five years with many significant growth milestones. The agency plans to open four new ferry terminals at Treasure Island (FY2026), Mission Bay (FY2026), Berkeley (FY2027), and Redwood City (FY2028) and expand the fleet from 16 to 26 vessels by FY28. However, in a scenario where RM3 funds are unavailable, some or all of these capital projects and procurements may be delayed until the agency identifies the necessary operating funds.

FY23 and FY24 Dorado-Class Vessels

Currently, WETA operates a fleet of 16 vessels. In May 2022, the first of the newest Dorado-class of vessels was added to the fleet. By spring 2023, the agency’s fleet will grow to 17 after adding the remaining three Dorado-class vessels and retiring two aging boats at the end of their useful life.

FY26: Treasure Island

WETA plans to launch fully electric ferry service between Treasure Island and downtown San Francisco in FY2026. This service will initially add one new electric ferry to the fleet with additional vessels added as early as 2030—bringing the total to 18 boats.

FY26: Mission Bay

Before the pandemic, there were plans to open a ferry terminal at Mission Bay in San Francisco to serve the rapidly growing neighborhood, Chase Center arena, and UCSF. While the pandemic put plans for revenue ferry service on hold in 2020, WETA is now anticipating the launch of service to Mission Bay in FY2026.

FY27: Berkeley

By FY27, WETA plans to launch ferry service at a newly constructed terminal at the Berkeley marina with service to San Francisco and weekend service to Larkspur in Marin County. The project also includes construction and procurement of three new vessels—bringing the total fleet size to 21.

FY28: Redwood City

In the final year of the S RTP planning horizon, WETA expects to launch service at a new Redwood City terminal with service to San Francisco and to Oakland in the East Bay. This service will add five boats and bring the total fleet size to 26.

Projected Service Impacts

	Revenues		% Full Service Delivery				
	Ridership	Other Revenues	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Scenario 1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Scenario 2	50%	100%	91%	100%	100%	100%	84%
Scenario 3	85%	85%	96%	100%	100%	100%	91%

Scenario 1: “Robust Recovery” – 100% ridership, 100% other revenue

In Scenario 1, staff assumes that WETA recovers 100% of ridership from pre-pandemic projections. This would result in just over 7 million annual riders by FY28. Since WETA generally has a high farebox recovery rate, this scenario is the most optimistic with a significant increase in fare revenue. The remaining federal relief funds are sufficient to maintain current service in FY24 with RM3 replacing that source in FY25 and beyond. WETA can operate 100% of current and planned expansion service for the entire planning horizon until FY28 under this revenue scenario.

Scenario 2: “Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders” – 50% ridership, 100% other revenue

In Scenario 2, ferry ridership stagnates at about 50% of pre-pandemic projections for the entire duration of the planning horizon. In FY24, the agency can expect an operating shortfall of about \$5.4 million as it spends down the remaining federal relief funds. With 50% of pre-pandemic fare revenue under this scenario, WETA can only deliver about 91% of the current level of service in FY24. Once RM3 funds become available starting in FY25, the agency can operate 100% of current service and planned expansion service for three years through FY27. However, by FY28 without ridership recovery beyond 50%, the resulting farebox revenue is not enough to run full Berkeley and Redwood City service. WETA may need to cut service systemwide by up to 16% in FY28.

Since fare revenue is such a large revenue source for WETA’s operations, this scenario presents the most pessimistic projection of the three scenarios.

Scenario 3: “Some Progress” – 85% ridership, 85% other revenue

Scenario 3 assumes all revenue sources (including ridership) recover to 85% of pre-pandemic projections. Under this scenario, WETA can deliver 96% of full service in FY24, 100% in FY25-27, and 91% in FY28. This scenario is a more modest service and budget impact compared to scenario 2, but it would still pose a challenge for the agency in the medium and longer term.

Scenario 4: “Fiscal Cliff” – 85% ridership, 85% other revenue, no RM3 funds

	Revenues		% Existing + FY26 Treasure Island Service Delivery				
	Ridership	Other Revenues	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Scenario 4	85%	85% & no RM3	96%	62%	68%	71%	75%

Scenario 4 assumes ridership recovers to 85% of pre-pandemic projections. It also assumes non-farebox revenues are at 85% of pre-pandemic levels and Regional Measure 3 is struck down in the California Supreme Court. RM3 is a critical operating funding source for WETA’s planned expansion services at Mission Bay, Berkeley, and Redwood City. Under this scenario, we assume that WETA is unable to launch these planned expansion services. Instead, the agency can only operate the existing network on a reduced schedule with Treasure Island service (starting in FY26) for the entire planning horizon.

Without RM3 to replace spent down federal relief funds, WETA would face significant operating funding challenges starting in FY25. The agency would have to cut service by almost 40%. This may include eliminating weekday midday service, weekend service, and potentially entire routes. Even though the effect on ridership growth with such a large service cut is difficult to predict, this scenario is optimistic and assumes that ridership continues to grow on pace with projections used in the WETA Business Plan. By FY28, the projected growth in ridership only allows WETA to restore service back to 75% of the network.

Conclusion

While MTC’s pre-determined revenue scenarios are an effective way to standardize the different SRTP documents in the Bay Area region, none of the three are necessarily reflective of the most likely future for WETA. Scenario 1 is overly optimistic and assumes a full return to pre-pandemic transit ridership and operating funding. In contrast, scenario 2 is overly pessimistic and assumes ridership stagnates through FY28 at 10-30% below current levels. Scenario 3 is more likely with 85% of transit ridership recovery, but it underestimates the other operating revenue sources for the agency. For this reason, the most likely future for WETA falls somewhere between scenarios 1 and 3. Additionally, given the importance of Regional Measure 3 funds to WETA’s operating budget, staff have prepared a fourth “Fiscal Cliff” scenario. This scenario mirrors the assumptions made in scenario 3 but excludes RM3 funds.

Regardless of the revenue scenario, these projections highlight the ongoing importance of farebox revenue for WETA. In the near-term, the remaining federal funds are not sufficient to deliver 100% of our current service in FY24 without robust ridership recovery. If ridership recovery follows scenario 2 and stagnates at 50%, WETA would face a \$5.4 million operating shortfall in FY24. Scenario 3 would result in a \$2 million shortfall. Scenario 4 would result in a \$22 million shortfall in FY25. Preliminary analysis of raising fares to pre-pandemic levels show that the nominal increase in fare revenue is not enough to erase the expected deficits through FY28.

This scenario planning exercise has illuminated the funding challenges transit operators face for the next five years. Despite this, WETA is prepared to use the tools at its disposal to address a potential future operating shortfall—including raising fares, cutting service, dipping into reserves, and pursuing other funding sources.

Attachment A. Data Request Template

	Prepandemic	Current	SRTP Planning Horizon - Scenario 1				
Data Category (Annual amounts)	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Revenue Vehicle Hours	21,487	23,940	23,940	23,940	31,440	36,440	41,440
Revenue Vehicle Miles	436,950	490,908	490,908	490,908	644,701	747,230	849,759
Number of Routes Operated	5	6	6	6	8	10	12
Total Route Miles	69	76	76	76	81	97	142
Ridership	3,048,733	1,951,550	3,240,000	3,665,000	4,691,000	6,002,000	7,151,500
Operating Budget	\$42,051,295	\$58,311,508	\$57,613,218	\$59,341,614	\$67,076,838	\$79,550,824	\$100,434,398
Total Revenue Vehicles	15	16	17	17	18	21	26
Vehicles Required For Max Service	15	16	17	17	18	21	26
Employees (Full Time Equivalent)	16	18	18	18	24	28	30

	Prepandemic	Current	SRTP Planning Horizon - Scenario 2				
Data Category (Annual amounts)	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Revenue Vehicle Hours	21,487	23,940	21,714	23,940	31,440	36,379	34,613
Revenue Vehicle Miles	436,950	490,908	445,270	490,908	644,701	745,973	709,756
Number of Routes Operated	5	6	6	6	8	10	12
Total Route Miles	69	76	76	76	81	97	142
Ridership	3,048,733	1,951,550	1,620,000	1,832,500	2,345,500	3,001,000	3,575,750
Operating Budget	\$42,051,295	\$58,311,508	\$52,257,071	\$59,341,614	\$67,076,838	\$79,417,050	\$83,887,234
Total Revenue Vehicles	15	16	17	17	18	21	26
Vehicles Required For Max Service	15	16	17	17	18	21	26
Employees (Full Time Equivalent)	16	18	17	18	24	28	27

	Prepandemic	Current	SRTP Planning Horizon - Scenario 3				
Data Category (Annual amounts)	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Revenue Vehicle Hours	21,487	23,940	23,079	23,940	23,940	31,440	33,011
Revenue Vehicle Miles	436,950	490,908	473,243	490,908	490,908	644,701	676,922
Number of Routes Operated	5	6	6	6	8	10	12
Total Route Miles	69	76	76	76	81	97	142
Ridership	3,048,733	1,951,550	2,754,000	3,115,250	3,987,350	5,101,700	6,078,775
Operating Budget	\$42,051,295	\$58,311,508	\$55,540,082	\$59,341,614	\$67,076,838	\$79,550,824	\$90,984,341
Total Revenue Vehicles	15	16	17	17	18	21	26
Vehicles Required For Max Service	15	16	17	17	18	21	26
Employees (Full Time Equivalent)	16	18	18	18	18	24	25

Data Category (Annual amounts)	Prepandemic	Current	SRTP Planning Horizon - Scenario 4				
	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
Revenue Vehicle Hours	21,487	23,940	23,079	14,889	17,226	18,155	19,084
Revenue Vehicle Miles	436,950	490,908	473,243	305,315	333,895	351,887	369,910
Number of Routes Operated	5	6	6	6	7	7	7
Total Route Miles	69	76	76	76	78	78	78
Ridership	3,048,733	1,951,550	2,754,000	3,115,250	3,677,100	4,142,900	4,608,700
Operating Budget	\$42,051,295	\$58,311,508	\$55,540,082	\$36,906,867	\$44,000,770	\$47,762,848	\$51,715,529
Total Revenue Vehicles	15	16	17	17	18	18	18
Vehicles Required For Max Service	15	16	17	17	18	18	18
Employees (Full Time Equivalent)	16	18	18	18	18	18	18