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Agenda Date: 2/18/2021
Council Meeting

2021 FEB 18 A 8:12

CITY OF FRESNO
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FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Information Packet

ITEM(S)

File ID 21-284 (1:00 P.M.)
The Zero Fare Clean Air Act

Contents of Supplement: Revised Resolution.

Item(s)

Supplemental Information:

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RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING THE ZERO FARE
CLEAN AIR ACT

WHEREAS, Fresno Area Express (FAX), the City's bus transit system, operates seventeen routes and over 100 buses, including the Q, the City's bus rapid transit system; and

WHEREAS, a zero-fare transit system will have short-term benefits to the residents of Fresno; and

WHEREAS, the City has a large lower income population that use the bus as their only transportation option to access jobs, medical care, and other essential services; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic has uniquely impacted this rider population in terms of job security, access to healthcare, and ability to pay bills, making access to public transportation more important than ever; and

WHEREAS, providing zero-fare transit in a time of a public health crisis may allow Fresnoans to easily access vaccination sites; and

WHEREAS, a zero-fare transit system is an economic relief tool that could help sustain the local economy during the recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, a switch to zero fare may increase our county's overall GDP, generate local sales tax revenue through encouraged local shopping, and create dozens of local jobs; and

WHEREAS, State and Federal grants may be available to help fund a zero-fare transit system; and

WHEREAS, other municipalities such as Clovis, Visalia, and Merced, California have used emergency funds or Measure C funds to suspend fares for the protection of their riders and drivers; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has suspended local matching requirements for grant eligibility until June 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Central Valley is known to have some of the worst air quality in the country, with hundreds of thousands of residents experiencing asthma or other respiratory health issues; and

WHEREAS, a zero-fare transit system may encourage more people to take public transit instead of driving alone, thereby decreasing traffic and its effect on the environment; and

WHEREAS, numerous private partners, including local hospitals, and major local employers have expressed interest in partnering financially with the City to deliver this crucial service; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Council that existing contracts with third parties for discounted fares for their employees, students, and program participants, will remain in effect to support the zero-fare transit concept.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Fresno as follows:

1. The Administration shall suspend bus fares commencing March 1, 2021, due to COVID-19 pandemic (the Emergency Fare Suspension) and utilize any available

COVID-19 or federal emergency relief funding between now and when the current City State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic is lifted by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council or when the Fresno County returns to the “yellow tier” for a period of ninety days.

2. Beginning March 1, 2021, FAX Administration shall begin the process of conducting a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis, required by the FTA.

3. By no later than May 1st, 2021, the Administration shall present to the Transportation Subcommittee options for a one-year funding plan and options for a five-year funding projection for a zero-fare model for all fixed route buses, to include BRT and complementary paratransit service (Handy Ride), utilizing existing public partnerships and potential private partnerships. The Committee may request at this time that the Administration include said model in the FY22 Proposed Budget to be presented to Council.

4. Following continued conversations and presentations to the Transportation Subcommittee, the Administration shall present such options to the Fresno City Council.

5. The Administration shall collaborate with the Fresno County Transportation Authority to advocate for a higher allocation of Measure C funds in the Measure C renewal to be prioritized toward public transportation dollars in the City of Fresno.

6. There shall be no decrease in current routes or services as an effect of this resolution while the Emergency Fare Suspension is in effect.

7. Internal funding used to offset the cost of going zero-fare shall not affect bus driver salaries or benefits.

8. Passengers may not continuously ride the bus with no specific destination for the sole purpose of interim shelter. Passengers may not ride the same bus for more than one full round trip, or remain on the bus for more than two successive hours.

* * * * *

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF FRESNO) ss.
CITY OF FRESNO)

I, YVONNE SPENCE, City Clerk of the City of Fresno, certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Council of the City of Fresno, at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____ 2021.

AYES :
NOES :
ABSENT :
ABSTAIN :

Mayor Approval: _____, 2021
Mayor Approval/No Return: _____, 2021
Mayor Veto: _____, 2021
Council Override Vote: _____, 2021

YVONNE SPENCE, MMC CRM
City Clerk

By: _____
Deputy Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DOUGLAS T. SLOAN
City Attorney

By: _____
Katie Doerr Date
Chief Assistant