

# Big Blue Bus Proposed Fare Changes 2025-2027

Public Hearing



# Overview



## Big Blue Bus is Proposing Fare Changes to:

- Address fiscal challenges
- Support planned customer experience enhancements

## Proposed Fare Changes include:

- Increased costs for single rides and passes
- Elimination of underutilized passes
- Two-phase implementation over a two-year period

## No changes to:

- Free BBB transfers and contactless incentives
- Access to discounted fares on Big Blue Bus through LIFE (low-income) and GoPass (student K-12) regional programs



## Fiscal Challenges

- Declining fare revenue per passenger
  - Currently \$0.70; Pre-pandemic \$0.87
- Rising operational costs
  - Currently \$182 per revenue hour; Pre-pandemic \$150
- Uncertainty of future federal funding
  - New Federal Administration

## Planned Customer Experience Enhancements

- Implementation of Brighter Blue 5-Year Service Plan
- Ongoing Motor Coach Operator Recruitment & Retention
- Safety Initiatives (e.g., Transit Safety Officers, Prohibition Orders)



# Recent Fare Changes

- **Fare Change in 2022**
  - Conclusion of Contactless Pilot
  - Introduction of Free BBB to BBB Transfers
  - Introduction of 10 Rides Pass
  - Elimination of paper passes
  - Increase age for free rides from 4 to 5 years old
- **Fare Change in 2017**
  - Contactless fare (i.e., TAP) reduced to \$1.10 (from \$1.25)
  - Introduction of Annual Pass
- **Fare Change in 2016**
  - Last fare increase
  - Increased Regular Single Ride fare from \$1.00 to \$1.25
  - Other fare increases across the board

# Proposed Fare Changes

Increase cost of Regular and Senior/Disabled/Medicare (SDM):

- Single Ride
- 1-Day Pass
- 7-Day Pass (Available only for Regular)
- 10 Rides Pass
- 30-Day Pass

Eliminate:

- Annual Pass (Regular)
- Youth 30-Day Pass

Maintain:

- Free BBB to BBB transfers
- Cheaper fares on TAP and Mobile



# Proposed Fare Changes: 2025-2027 – Regular

Regular Fares	Current	August 10, 2025	Summer 2027
Single Ride (Tap & Mobile) ^	\$1.10	\$1.25	\$1.50
Single Ride (Cash)	\$1.25	\$1.50	\$1.75
1 Day Pass	\$4	\$4.50	\$5
7 Day Pass	\$14	\$16	\$18
10 Rides Pass^	\$9	\$10	\$12
30 Day Pass	\$50	\$55	\$60
Annual Pass	\$500	Eliminate	-

^Includes one free Big Blue Bus to Big Blue Bus transfer within 2 hours.

# Proposed Fare Changes: 2025-2027 – SDM & Youth

Senior/Disabled/Medicare (SDM)	Current	August 10, 2025	Summer 2027
Single Ride (Tap & Mobile) ^	\$0.50	\$0.60	\$0.65
Single Ride (Cash)	\$0.50	\$0.75	\$0.75
1-Day Pass	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2
10 Rides Pass^	\$4.50	\$5	\$6
30-Day Pass	\$24	\$27	\$30

^Includes one free Big Blue Bus to Big Blue Bus transfer within 2 hours.

Youth	Current	August 10, 2025	Summer 2027
30-Day Pass	\$19	Eliminate	-

# Discounted Fare Programs

- Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE)
- GoPass
  - K-12 Schools (SMMUSD and LAUSD)
  - Community Colleges (Santa Monica College)
- UCLA Bruin U-Pass and Grad Pass
- Access Services





# Alternatives Considered

- **No Fare Increase**

- Risks not implementing full Brighter Blue service enhancements (e.g., frequency improvements, early/late and weekend service)
- Risks Motor Coach Operator recruitment and retention efforts, and safety initiatives

- **Elimination of Free Transfers**

- Results in increase in fare revenue, but limited impact on fiscal challenges
- Decision to maintain:
  - Proven to increase ridership
  - Reduces burden on low-income riders



# Financial & Budget Impacts



Fully implementing proposed changes:

- Increases revenue by about 13 percent or \$780,000 annually
- Increases Average Fare per Rider to 85 cents by 2028
- Projected ridership decline of 7 percent
  - Actual ridership and revenue impacts may vary due to other factors such as:
    - Economic trends
    - Service quality
    - Demographic changes
    - Alternative transportation options

# Future Enhancement: Open Payments

- Big Blue Bus participating in LA Metro's 'TAP Plus' Initiative
- Onboard fare payment via credit/debit card or Apple/Google Pay expected in 2026





# Next Steps

- Public Hearings – April 2 (Virtual) and April 3, 2025 (In-Person)
- Public Comment Period Closes – April 20, 2025
- **Present Proposal to City Council for Approval – May 13, 2025**
- Notify Riders and Community – May to August 2025
- **Implement Phase 1 – August 10, 2025**
- **Implement Phase 2 – Summer 2027**