

# Bus riders face new round of higher fares

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY  
TRIBUNE

Steve Scauzillo November 3, 2017

In the past week, riders of Foothill Transit buses have experienced the most fare changes and route re-alignments in the history of the agency, with another round of higher fares coming in September 2019.

Adults, seniors, disabled and students are now paying 25 cents more for a one-way local ride. A single bus ride jumped from \$1.25 to \$1.50. Riders swiping their pre-loaded TAP cards get a discount. In some cases, the fares remained the same, while in others the fare increases were less than those paying with cash.

Fares have either risen or stayed the same in every category, with one exception: An adult monthly pass has dropped to \$50, from \$70 - a 28.5 percent decrease.

Students seemed to shoulder the brunt of the fare increases. A student 31-day pass on the popular Silver Streak line has gone up a whopping 44 percent, from \$52 to \$75.

The agency is implementing its first fare increase in seven years, according to Felicia Friesema, a spokeswoman for the bus system. Fare changes were announced in March. Public hearings were held. Fare increases are predicted to bump up revenues by 7 percent in the first phase, an additional 10 percent by the second phase starting in 2019, she said.

The small, independent bus agency serving 48,000 riders per week in the San Gabriel and Pomona valleys has also eliminated some routes, split others lines and increased coverage along the Pasadena-to-Azusa Metro Gold Line stations to move riders to and from the light-rail train instead of to their ultimate destination, said Friesema. "Changes of this magnitude are always going to have their challenges. But so far things have gone smoothly," Friesema said the afternoon of Oct. 26.

Foothill Transit needs to stop the drop in revenues, mostly due to declining ridership, rising expenses and competition with new train lines, the agency reported. Some bus riders have switched over to the Metro Gold Line in the foothills region. The elimination of routes and merging of others will save \$588,000, the agency reported. Foothill Transit's operating budget is nearly \$100 million.

For example, Line 481 from El Monte to downtown L.A. was canceled; riders are being redirected to Silver Streak from the El Monte Bus Station to Union Station and to the Metro Purple and Red lines. Line 187, an east-west route from Pasadena to Montclair has been split into two routes: 187 and 188, with a de-emphasis on connections between Azusa and Pasadena, served by the Gold Line. Other changes include:

- Monthly passes for seniors and disabled riders increased from \$22 to \$25.
- Monthly passes for student riders increased from \$33 to \$36.
- A Day Pass is available for the first time. The cost is \$5 and \$2.50 for seniors.
- A new electric bus made by Proterra will be running along Azusa Avenue from the Downtown Azusa Gold Line Station to the Puente Hills Mall.

For a full list of service and fare changes, go to [www.foothilltransit.org/changes](http://www.foothilltransit.org/changes).