

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Complaint about Regional Paratransit Service
FROM: Christy Wegener, Director of Planning and Operations
DATE: June 26, 2017

Action Requested

None – Information only

Background

On April 9th, staff received a complaint about transportation service between Livermore and Castro Valley, a service provided by the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB). At the request of Vice Chair Karla Brown, staff presented an information item about the complaint to the Projects and Services Committee at their May 22nd meeting. At that meeting, the Committee requested that staff follow-up on several items and bring an update back to the Committee.

Discussion

Attachment 1 includes the staff report that went to the Committee on May 22nd, detailing the complaint received about the quality of the Regional Center of the East Bay's (RBEB) transportation service to STRIDES in Castro Valley (CV). The complaints about the service include unreliable maintenance, unsafe vehicles, late arriving drivers, late drop offs, poor customer service, poor communication, lengthy travel times on the vehicle, overcrowded vehicles, and discourteous drivers. After additional research, staff has learned the following information about the RCEB – the Regional Center of the East Bay is a not-for-profit agency that has a contract with the State Department of Developmental Services. Per an excerpt taken from a 2006 Financial Audit: *“The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is responsible, under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Lanterman Act), for ensuring that persons with developmental disabilities (DD) receive the services and supports they need to lead more independent, productive, and normal lives. To ensure that these services and supports are available, DDS contracts with 21 private, nonprofit community agencies/corporations that provide fixed points of contact in the community for serving eligible individuals with DD and their families in California. These fixed points of contact are referred to as regional centers. The regional centers are responsible under State law to help ensure that such persons receive access to the programs and services that are best suited to them throughout their lifetime.”*

The Regional Center of the East Bay contracts with private transportation companies to provide services to/from certain programs. Earlier in the year, the contract for service to STRIDES was

held by A-Paratransit. In spring 2017, the contract changed hands to De Soto Access, who currently provides the service. Complaints about De Soto Access include crowded vehicles, poor customer service, and on-time performance issues.

Staff has looked at the implications of opening up the paratransit service area to Castro Valley to allow for one-seat rides via LAVTA's Dial-A-Ride service. When preparing the May 22nd Projects and Services Committee Staff Report, LAVTA staff used the existing FY16 contractual cost per trip (~\$30) to estimate the cost of service for 10 passengers. After speaking with LAVTA's paratransit contractor MTM, the per trip rate to/from Castro Valley would need to be negotiated as it is outside of the service area used to prepare their rates for the Paratransit Contract. MTM staff anticipate the rate could be as high as \$80 per trip. Just for transportation to/from STRIDES, the revised cost estimate is at least \$380,000 per year. After speaking with East Bay Paratransit and BART Staff, who currently provide this service between CV and the Tri-Valley BART Stations, the number of new daily trips absorbed by LAVTA could be 60, resulting in an annual cost of over \$1,000,000.

Staff contacted the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) to inquire about potential funding opportunities. Per ACTC staff, the Regional Center would be eligible to apply for discretionary funds and the next opportunity would be in 2018.

Recommendation

None –Information Only

Attachment:

1. May 22, 2017 Projects and Services Committee Staff Report