

S T A F F R E P O R T

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Paratransit Services

FROM: Michael Tree, Executive Director

DATE: December 7, 2020

Action Requested

Authorize Executive Director to continue discussions and draft an MOU with the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA) to be considered by the LAVTA Board of Directors that establishes an 18-month pilot project to have CCCTA operate the LAVTA paratransit services.

Background/Discussion

LAVTA recently advertised a request for proposals for paratransit services and in that process received four proposals that are currently being evaluated. The goals for the procurement process are to contract with a firm that can improve the customer experience for users of the Wheels paratransit program, as well as improve oversight of the paratransit operations.

Coinciding with the procurement process, LAVTA has been participating in the planning work and opportunities being explored by the Bay Area's Blue Ribbon Task Force, which is both focused on assisting transit agencies with critical funding needs associated with the COVID pandemic, as well as improving the region's transit system into a more connected, efficient and user-focused mobility network.

While evaluating the paratransit proposals staff considered the direction of the region and ways in which it could further assist the Wheels paratransit services in being more connected, efficient and user-focused. Additionally, staff identified the need for a paratransit program with more capacity to assist member agencies with public emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, staff began discussions with neighboring transit agency Central Contra Costa Transit Authority to evaluate the benefits of integrating paratransit programs. Staff has found the following potential benefits:

- Better customer experience
 - Local call center and dispatching to assist users in securing a ride and understanding local circumstances, such as COVID conditions.
 - One seat ride throughout the two service areas, enhancing accessibility and convenience to important destinations, such as medical care.
 - Newer vehicles in fleet

- Improved oversight of paratransit program
 - Supervisors in the field to monitor operators and assist with issues that arise in transport of riders.
- Improved capacity to provide services for member agencies during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority has had the capacity to assist the County of Contra Costa with services that include Meals for Wheels and transporting impacted individuals to medical care. Integrating paratransit programs with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority will improve the ability of LAVTA to respond to and assist its member agencies.
- Cost benefits
 - While staff continues to evaluate the cost of each of the four proposals received and the concept of integrated paratransit programs with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority, early indications are that the integrated paratransit program with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority will be most efficient and cost effective as compared to the highest ranked proposal received in the procurement process.

Staff will provide more detailed information at the LAVTA Board meeting, as well as the latest information in the ongoing evaluation of alternatives.

Recommendation

Authorize Executive Director to continue discussions and draft an MOU with the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA) to be considered by the LAVTA Board of Directors that establishes an 18-month pilot project to integrate paratransit programs with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority.

Submitted: _____