

S T A F F R E P O R T

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Paratransit Services
FROM: Toan Tran, Director of Operations and Innovation
DATE: January 25, 2021

Action Requested

Authorize Executive Director to reject all proposals from RFP 2020-04 for Paratransit Operations and Maintenance, and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA) to establish a 15-month pilot where LAVTA will share CCCTA’s paratransit contractor in an effort to more efficiently achieve common goals toward a more seamless paratransit program.

Background/Discussion

Please refer to Attachments 1 and 2 for more information from the last staff report and board meeting minutes.

As a follow-up, at the December meeting the Board of Directors directed staff to continue discussions with CCCTA to evaluate the concept of sharing the same contractor for paratransit operations. Key topics of exploration have been potential cost savings while sharing the same operator, branding of vehicles and the paratransit program, and clarifying how the management and governance would function.

LAVTA has confirmed that by sharing the same contractor with CCCTA to provide paratransit for both service areas there would be a significant cost savings (see Cost Benefit bullet point below). Staff has also confirmed that the LAVTA management team will oversee the shared paratransit contractor as it relates to rides that are provided to residents in the Wheels service area. Additionally, the LAVTA Board will continue to provide the policy for those rides. Finally, the vehicles used by the shared contractor for rides to residents in the Wheels service area will carry the Wheels branding as currently found on Wheels paratransit vehicles.

Staff has identified the following benefits to a partnership with CCCTA in sharing the same paratransit contractor and working towards a more streamlined service between the two areas:

- Better customer experience
 - Call center and dispatching will be performed locally to assist customers in securing a ride and understanding local circumstances, such as COVID conditions. The call center is currently in the mid-west.

- One seat ride is offered throughout the two service areas, enhancing accessibility and convenience to important destinations, such as medical care.
- A dedicated fleet will have newer vehicles.
- Improved oversight of paratransit program
 - Road Supervisors will be available in the field to monitor drivers and assist with issues that arise in the transport of riders. Currently, LAVTA has no Road Supervisors with the Wheels paratransit program.
- Improved capacity to provide services for member agencies during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic the CCCTA has had the capacity to assist the County of Contra Costa with services that include Meals for Wheels and transportation impacted individuals to medical care. Using a shared contractor with CCCTA will improve the ability of LAVTA to respond to and assist its member agencies.
- Cost benefits
 - In comparing costs between the proposed program with CCCTA using a common paratransit provider with the next best option from vendors offering the same level of service, the savings is approximately \$300,000. This due to an economy of scale from using the same contractor.
- Governance
 - During the pilot, LAVTA and CCCTA hope to explore opportunities to align service policies and integrate functions such as eligibility assessments as a way creating a more seamless paratransit program. During this time period, staff proposes the formation of a joint agency committee consisting of two board members from each agency to provide guidance to the process.
- Branding
 - Service will continue with LAVTA's branding, both with the vehicles and the driver uniforms, to ensure an easy transition for riders.

Regarding current discussions with City of Pleasanton to transition to LAVTA ADA rides in February of 2021, staff does not anticipate a capacity issue with the shared paratransit contractor. LAVTA and City of Pleasanton will coordinate to conduct proper outreach and educate existing Pleasanton Paratransit Service (PPS) passengers on the changes.

The pilot with CCCTA is anticipated to begin April 1, 2021. During the pilot, staff and the joint agency committee will evaluate the outcomes of the policy efforts to create a more seamless paratransit program. The outcome of the pilot will be a recommendation to the LAVTA Board to either conduct a joint procurement with CCCTA to continue the efforts to work together, or to conduct an independent procurement.

Recommendation

Staff requests that the Finance and Administration Committee recommend the Board of Directors authorize Executive Director to reject all proposals from RFP 2020-04 for Paratransit Operations and Maintenance, and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA) to establish a 15-month pilot where LAVTA will share CCCTA's paratransit contractor in an effort to more efficiently achieve common goals toward a more seamless paratransit program.

Attachments:

1. December 2020 Paratransit Services Staff Report
2. December 2020 Board of Directors Draft Meeting Minutes

LIVERMORE AMADOR VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

STAFF REPORT

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: _____

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 8, 2020 ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
LAVTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Bob Woerner at 4:02pm.

Board Chair Bob Woerner informed the public that LAVTA's meeting is being conducted according to the COVID-19 rules that are detailed at the beginning of the agenda explaining why this is a Zoom teleconference and stated the Pledge of Allegiance will be dispensed.

2. Roll Call of Members

[Melissa Hernandez, from City of Dublin, arrived during Roll Call of Members.]

Members Present

David Haubert – City of Dublin

Melissa Hernandez – City of Dublin [Arrived at 4:03pm]

Scott Haggerty – County of Alameda

Jerry Pentin – City of Pleasanton

Karla Brown – City of Pleasanton

Bob Woerner – City of Livermore

Bob Coomber – City of Livermore

3. Meeting Open to Public

No comments.

4. November Tri-Valley Accessible Advisory Committee Minutes

Chair Herb Hastings of the Tri-Valley Accessible Advisory Committee (TAAC) reported on the minutes of the November 4, 2020 TAAC Zoom teleconference meeting. Discussed at the TAAC meeting was the Fare Update, Paratransit Operations and Maintenance RFP Update, and service updates and concerns. Herb Hastings noted that the PAPCO report was not provided during this meeting.

5. Consent Agenda

Recommend approval of all items on Consent Agenda as follows:

A. Minutes of the November 2, 2020 Board of Directors meeting.

B. Treasurer's Report for October 2020

The Board of Directors approved the LAVTA Treasurer's Report for October 2020.

C. Solicit Public Input on COVID Related Service Reductions

The Board of Directors approved to open a public comment period regarding emergency service changes that have been implemented as a result of reduced ridership attributable

to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approved: Brown/Pentin

Aye: Pentin, Woerner, Brown, Haggerty, Coomber, Haubert, Hernandez

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

6. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan

Staff presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board of Directors regarding the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Safety Management System (SMS) that provided the background and objectives. Staff explained what the four pillars of a SMS are: Safety Management Policy, Risk Management, Safety Assurance, and Safety Promotion.

The item was discussed by the Board of Directors and staff. Director Karla Brown asked staff to highlight any comments received after review and asked if there was anything substantial that needed to be changed within LAVTA's safety system. Staff informed that there were no specific comments, but the FTA suggested the structure of the plan be changed to include an oversight piece to ensure the contractors follow their own SMS. Director Karla Brown also had concerns regarding contractor reporting and communication with LAVTA. Staff explained part of the plan is to establish a bi-weekly safety committee. Chair Bob Woerner had concerns about targets being set on a five year average. Staff informed that the FTA requested this target to be used as a baseline for the first plan and the revision for the next version can be adjusted accordingly. Chair Bob Woerner requested in a future version to have the concept of continuous improvements added in the plan and targets set relative to comparable agencies and first quartile performance. Executive Director Michael Tree responded with hesitation on changing the current plan and encouraged approval, but will discuss things further with the FTA for enhanced language in a subsequent plan revision.

Legal Counsel Michael Conneran provided the Board of Directors one addition to Resolution 32-2020 the resolve clause needs to add that the Board of Directors is approving the Safety Management System and the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan is being adopted.

The Board of Directors approved the SMS and PTASP and designated a Chief Safety Officer as required by the Federal Transit Administration and adopted Resolution 32-2020. The Board of Directors also approved the revised job description in order to streamline the current operations oversight duties of the Director of Operations and Innovation with the additional safety oversight responsibilities of the Chief Safety Officer.

Approved: Haggerty/Pentin

Aye: Pentin, Woerner, Brown, Haggerty, Coomber, Haubert, Hernandez

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

7. Evaluation of Paratransit Services

Executive Director Michael Tree provided the Board of Directors a background on the

advertised Request for Proposals (RFP) for paratransit services. Executive Director Michael Tree informed LAVTA received and evaluated four paratransit proposals and has been cognizant of the regions goals to create a connected, efficient, and user-focused mobility network that is more seamless. Executive Director Michael Tree explained that LAVTA entered into discussions with Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA) about integrating paratransit programs through a shared contractor and noted all the potential benefits of having a seamless service.

The item was discussed by the Board of Directors and staff. Director Scott Haggerty informed this is a piecemeal approach and explained there are too many transit agencies in the bay area, so LAVTA should look at a merge with other smaller operators. Executive Director Michael Tree stated that County Connection's and LAVTA's Board of Directors could talk about a potential merge and that General Manager Rick Ramacier thought there's some very easy wins as both agencies look at ways to integrate services and perhaps consolidate positions moving forward. Executive Director Michael Tree noted that the paratransit programs at both agencies are operated in a similar way and there would be a multitude of benefits and probably very minimal problems in integrating the two paratransit programs. Director Scott Haggerty questioned what the difference is in the two paratransit services. Executive Director Michael Tree noted that both agencies run a brokerage model.

Vice Chair Jerry Pentin informed that Pleasanton Paratransit is transferring their ADA service to LAVTA in February and wanted to know how they would be affected. Executive Director Michael Tree stated that the work would be provided with County Connection's management and support team and would include their service area and ours. Vice Chair Jerry Pentin followed-up regarding Pleasanton Paratransit's merge with LAVTA in February and expressed concerns about how a double transition would work. Executive Director Michael Tree stated that this agenda item would come back to the Board in January and that would give LAVTA a month to work with the City of Pleasanton.

Public Comment was provided by Rich Fierro from Teamsters Local 70. Rich Fierro thanked everyone for their leadership during these tough times and acknowledged LAVTA being a premier transit agency. Rich Fierro noted that MV provided a bid for the Paratransit RFP and they provide most of the things LAVTA is looking for. Rich Fierro urged LAVTA to not take the easiest road right now and figure out a way for MV to provide paratransit service for LAVTA.

The item continued to be discussed by the Board of Directors and staff. Director Karla Brown felt Director Scott Haggerty and Vice Chair Jerry Pentin brought up good points and she wants to move forwards with Pleasanton Paratransit transferring ADA rides back to LAVTA, since they've been working on it for years. Chair Woerner noted the areas of concern from Board Members and asked Executive Director Michael Tree to be aware of this when talks continue with County Connection. Director David Haubert stated he's cautiously optimistic based on the comments and he supported proceeding, but to bring this back for a deeper discussion. as LAVTA learns more. Director David Haubert also requested as LAVTA learns more to be sensitive to the governance, so that it would be steered more towards the Boards liking or just stay with LAVTA.

8. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Michael Tree noted that he spoke to the Projects and Services (P&S)

Committee and discussed the contents of the Executive Director's Report. Discussed at the P&S Committee were projects moving forward and given the restraints on time Executive Director Michael Tree concluded his report.

9. Matters Initiated by the Board of Directors

None.

10. Recognition of Outgoing Board Members

Due to time constraints Legal Counsel Michael Conneran informed the Board of Directors that adoption of a resolution is conducted at the next meeting recognizing Board Members that have left. Executive Director Michael Tree informed resolutions will be provided at the next Board of Directors meeting and continued with a brief acknowledgment of accomplishments by recognizing outgoing Board Members: Supervisor Scott Haggerty, Councilmember Jerry Pentin, and Councilmember Bob Coomber. Executive Director Michael Tree thanked the outgoing Board Members on behalf of LAVTA staff for their service and noted it was a great ride. Executive Director Michael Tree highlighted the following projects that Supervisor Scott Haggerty contributed to, as well as Councilmember Jerry Pentin and Councilmember Bob Coomber over the last few years: Creation of the Rapid, Atlantis Property, Transit Signal Priority Queue Jumps, Shared Autonomous Vehicle Project, Customer Standards, and the Historic Train Depot.

11. Next Meeting Date is Scheduled for: January 4, 2021

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:59pm.