

## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Wheels Access Update

FROM: Kadri Klm, Paratransit Planner

DATE: May 7, 2025

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### Action Requested

Information only.

### Background

LAVTA is a recipient of Alameda CTC Paratransit Discretionary Gap Grant funds for a 5-year grant to implement a comprehensive mobility program called “Wheels Access – Expanding Mobility Options in the Tri Valley”. The Wheels Access Program envisions three principal project components: (1) establishing a new Mobility Management program to provide individualized consultation (travel navigator) and travel training targeting seniors and persons with disabilities, (2) continuing the popular Para-Taxi Reimbursement/PEX Debit Card program, which provides a same-day accessible travel option, and (3) providing operating support within Alameda County for the multi-jurisdictional One Seat Ride program, an enhanced ADA paratransit service developed in response to long-standing community requests.

### Discussion

In order to implement the Wheels Access program LAVTA released the latest Request for Proposals (RFP) on 3/10/25 with the proposals due date 3/10/25. LAVTA received two proposals.

With this RFP LAVTA is seeking for a third-party contractor to perform the following services for LAVTA:

1. Travel Navigator Program (travel counseling, information and referral to resources).

Travel Navigators are a one-stop resource for program information and eligibility for all LAVTA ADA paratransit and accessibility programs for seniors and persons with disabilities. Travel navigators will provide

a customized approach to riders' mobility options based on their specific needs. Once a customer calls the Travel Navigators, a representative will learn more about their mobility goals and personal circumstances. With this information, the Travel Navigators will then help the individual to determine which programs best suit them - or a friend, client, or loved one.

2. ADA Paratransit eligibility determination phone/Zoom interviews.

Under the Wheels Access program LAVTA is requesting the contractor to conduct ADA paratransit eligibility assessment interviews over the phone or via Zoom/Teams in addition to paper applications. Paratransit eligibility is currently conducted in-house based on paper applications and the applicant's medical care professional's verification; however, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, LAVTA's eligibility determination process included in-person assessments for all new and most re-certifying applicants in addition to the paper applications and medical care professional's verification.

3. Travel Training on fixed route

Travel training is a service available to the general public and offers the additional support passengers may need to feel comfortable using public transit. Because using public transit can be intimidating for some riders who are unfamiliar with the system, have special needs, or use mobility aids, an effective travel training program is essential to providing equitable access to public transit by empowering potential riders with the skills and knowledge to comfortably navigate LAVTA's fixed route transit system.

### **Next Steps**

Proposals have been received and will be scored by the evaluation committee. Following scoring, the vendors will be invited for an interview. The preferred vendor will be recommended to the Board for contract award at an upcoming meeting. The Wheels Access program is tentatively scheduled to launch in summer 2025.

### **Action Requested**

Information only.