

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/25/2019

Staff Report No. 19-294

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Enhanced Mobility Grant Application

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing the General Manager or his designee to file and execute an application with Caltrans for fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22 for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program on behalf of the East Bay Paratransit Consortium (EBPC), for a Regional Paratransit Program (RPP) pilot.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The District, on behalf of the EBPC, plans to apply for up to \$400,000 over the two-year funding period. No District funds will be utilized. Matching funds will be provided via the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) with toll credits.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Caltrans has released a funding opportunity for FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22 FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. Section 5310 funding is for improving mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. Given the release date of the application forms and the Board schedule in August, staff was unable to present this information prior to the submission deadline of September 6, 2019. Therefore, staff is seeking ratification of the application submittal. Should the Board decline to support the application staff can cancel the applications without any penalties.

In order to better serve paratransit customers making regional connections across transit agency service areas, staff is recommending that the District apply for a grant to look at best practices and conduct a pilot that will improve the trip quality for these customers.

Per the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between AC Transit and BART (the EBPC), the District is responsible for grant coordination. The proposed RPP is a two phase program that will address concerns that have been identified by both providers and customers of mandated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service since the implementation of ADA and the EBPC in the mid-1990s. While ADA paratransit programs have been determined compliant with the minimum ADA requirements, they do not adequately address the customer experience when traveling between agency service areas. They also don't address the financial and operational impacts on providers. Some Bay Area paratransit providers have developed protocols to ease the

travel burden on customers, such as providing a one-seat ride into adjoining service areas or ensuring that customers are not left stranded through a "hand-off" policy, in which the operator waits for the arrival of the second paratransit provider before leaving the transfer point. However, these approaches are both limited in their application, and inconsistent across the region.

The RPP will consist of two phases:

Phase 1) Planning:

Phase 1 will identify the scope of the problem and document current practices at paratransit providers throughout the region as well as build on research that has already been conducted among some of the key paratransit providers in the region. This will include identifying the volume of inter-agency trips on an annual basis; documenting current practices and the extent to which these have been formalized in inter-agency agreements; documenting current practices, such as one-seat rides or hand-off policies, guidelines for transfer locations, etc.

Staff will also use this opportunity to solicit input from providers throughout the region about potential solutions that can be tested in the second phase of the program. As the process develops, staff will clarify MTC's role, both in terms of overall coordination and funding, in advancing the implementation of the RPP.

Phase 2) Conduct Pilot Program:

Under Phase 2, staff will select two or more providers that are willing to participate in a pilot program, and whose experience will be most replicable for application throughout the region. The actual design of the pilot will depend on the findings from the first phase, but it is anticipated that the pilot duration will be one year, including program design, securement of participation from the relevant providers, and post-pilot evaluation. All the project findings and an implementation plan will be presented in a final report.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Staff cannot identify any disadvantages to applying for the funds.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There are no alternatives to the course of action recommended in this report except to not apply for the grant. Staff views this application as low risk with potentially high benefit and recommends to proceed with the application.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Approved by:

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Reviewed by:

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