

TO: James L. App, City Manager

FROM: Mike Compton, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Presentation of Preliminary Short Range Transit Plan Update and Preliminary Marketing Plan

DATE: May 25, 2006

Needs: For the Council to provide direction to staff relative to the finalization of the preliminary Short Range Transit Plan and preliminary Marketing Plan presented by the Transit Resource Center.

Facts:

1. The Council awarded a contract to Transit Resource Center to update the City's Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) as required by Transportation Development Act regulations and to prepare a marketing plan for the transit system.
2. Both Plans in draft form have been previously distributed to Council and copies were made available for the public in the library and city clerk's office.
3. Transit Resource Center made a similar presentation to the Council's ad hoc committee on May 10th.
4. The Council ad hoc committee has not made any recommendations relative to either of the Plans.

Analysis
and
Conclusion:

Transportation Development Act (TDA) regulations require recipient transit agencies to prepare short range transit plans and update said plans every five years. The Council awarded a contract to Transit Resource Center to update the City's SRTP. Funding for the update is paid from TDA funding.

Additionally, the City awarded a contract to Transit Resource Center, subcontracted with Transit Marketing, LLC, to prepare a marketing plan for City transit operations. The marketing plan is mostly funded with Federal planning funds through San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (COG); \$26,000 federal and \$4,000 local match.

The SRTP update relied heavily upon the North County Transit Plan, a study undertaken by COG in 2004, to some degree upon the Long Range Transit Study

undertaken by COG in 2005 as well as numerous interviews with stakeholders, including but not limited to:

Paso Robles Elected Officials
County of San Luis Obispo Elected Officials
City of Paso Robles
Regional Transit Authority
Council of Governments
Various Social Services Agencies
Cuesta College
Local Businesses
Transit reliant populations; i.e. seniors and youth

The consultant has made “core” service recommendations and they identified as follows:

- a. Keep fixed Routes A and B intact. No changes proposed.
- b. Eliminate Route C as “core” service and consider in the context of other supplemental services and/or “super loop”.
- c. Reduce fixed route service hours to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays.
- d. Eliminate Saturday service to Cuesta College.

The consultant has identified several options for Council consideration. These supplemental options do not necessarily reflect consultant recommendations but simply any and all service enhancements mentioned by the stakeholders noted above.

- Fixed Route / add earlier morning service – 6:00 a.m. or 5:00 a.m.
- Fixed Route / add Sunday service
- Fixed Route / add limited stop express service on Spring/Niblick
- Fixed Route / add mid-day shuttle
- Dial-a-Ride / add second bus at all times
- Dial-a-Ride / add second bus at peak times
- Dial-a-Ride / add Sunday service

Consideration of any supplemental transit services should be made in the context of whether or not to continue pursuing implementation of the super loop, financial impact, and capacity to continue other transit support related efforts.

Converting Route C to the super loop has both positive and negative attributes. On the positive side, it would provide seamless travel between Paso and Atascadero without need to transfer; reduce travel cost to payment of one fare ; and, as proposed, eliminate duplication of service to Cuesta College while shortening RTA Route 9 travel time.

On the negative side, Route C has never been productive. While the seamless connecton with Atascadero and the potential layover at Cuesta College may improve ridership, it is expected that its poor performance will continue due to low service demand on Saturdays; the long one loop at the north end is a disincentive to rider use;

and adherence to schedule is problematic making the service unreliable. Additionally, if the “mid-day shuttle” service were implemented, there would be another duplication of service during the shuttle’s operational hours along Theatre Drive to Twin Cities Hospital area.

Additional complications arise from Atascadero’s position that the super loop must serve Cuesta College.

The consultant has made specific recommendations regarding dial-a-ride services. These recommendations are as follows:

- Pursue joint procurement opportunities with all North County transit providers.
- Implement “mid-day shuttle” service before considering adding second dial-a-ride van.
- Reduce fares from \$3 to \$2 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Accept advanced reservations for 25% of existing trip slots for up to 7 days in advance.
- Add Sunday service subject to rigid performance criteria.

The marketing plan proposed by Selena Barow contains many excellent ideas. The Council has the option to implement the Plan with the current logo that ties the transit service to the high school mascot or developing an entirely new look for rolling out potential new and/or modified transit services.

Fiscal
Impact:

The costs of the the various supplemental options identified in the SRTP range from \$18,200 for limited Sunday service to \$133,100 for the Spring/Niblick Express. The total cost of all supplemental options is \$284,400.

If the implementation of supplemental options are not offset by other service adjustments, then additional TDA resources would be required. There are sufficient TDA resources available to fund any of the supplemental options. Except for fiscal years 2004, 2005 and 2006, (\$200,000; \$100,000 and \$400,000, respectively), the allocation of TDA for street & road maintenance has been limited to \$35,000 annually. The current two year budget/four year financial plan projectes a return to \$35,000 annually beginning in fiscal year 2007 and all subsequent fiscal years. However, the Council has full discretion, subject to transit unmet needs hearing and findings, to allocate more than \$35,000 in TDA resources to street & road maintenance given the lack of sufficient gas tax resources to meet the existing maintenance challenge.

Options:

- a. That the Council, provide direction to finalize Plans and establish priorities for implementation; or
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.