



Social Service Human Relations Board Meeting

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Approve City of Alameda Paratransit Program Review for Fiscal Year 2015/2016

Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies to offer transportation services (paratransit) for persons certified as unable to use regular fixed route transit. Paratransit services must be made available to eligible users within 3/4 mile of the existing fixed transit routes during normal operating hours. The mandated paratransit service in Alameda is provided by East Bay Paratransit (EBP). Measure B/BB, the Alameda County one-cent sales tax for transportation, provides a dedicated funding source to local jurisdictions for non-mandated, locally-based paratransit services for individuals with disabilities and seniors, which is not required under ADA. In November 2014, voters passed Measure BB, which increased the transportation sales tax from one-half cent to one cent. Information about the various City of Alameda Paratransit Program services is available at <http://alamedaca.gov/public-works/city-alameda-paratransit-services>. The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC), which administers Measure B/BB funds, requires each jurisdiction to annually submit a City Council resolution to apply and receive these funds.

Discussion

The City's Fiscal Year 2015-16 Alameda CTC paratransit funding application for \$521,000, is over double last year's application due to the passage of Measure BB in November 2014. The application is being developed with input from the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Transportation Commission, the Social Services Human Relations Board, key stakeholders and program participants. The section below describes the City's proposed paratransit program, the results of its annual paratransit program survey, and a service cost analysis.

Proposed Alameda Paratransit Program:

Alameda Paratransit Shuttle (\$162,000, a \$66,000 increase from last year): On November 3, 2009, the City Council approved the initiation of the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle service with the goal to reduce motor vehicle trips by seniors and by individuals

with disabilities and to reduce the dependence on paratransit taxi services within the City. The shuttle service is open to the public yet the primary purpose of the shuttle is to serve individuals with disabilities and seniors with access to major shopping destinations and medical facilities around the City. The driver can assist riders with boarding and exiting the shuttle, securing wheelchairs and carrying up to five bags of groceries or a folding shopping cart. The shuttle operates from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and has a one hour frequency.

The shuttle routes are as follows:

- **Tuesdays:** West Loop (between Alameda Landing and downtown Alameda)
- **Wednesdays:** East Loop (between Bay Farm Island, downtown Alameda and Mastick Senior Center)
- **Thursdays:** Central Loop (between downtown Alameda, Shore Line Drive and Bridgeside Center)

Staff proposes to implement the following changes to the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle:

1. **Serve Fruitvale BART on Thursday – Central Loop Route:** Staff recommends revising the Central Loop on Thursdays to extend it to Fruitvale BART. The underutilized shuttle stops along Shore Line Drive and the Marketplace would be eliminated to accommodate the extension to Fruitvale BART station.
2. **Increase Shuttle Service Frequency:** Staff recommends increasing the shuttle service frequency from every one hour to every 30 minutes. The higher frequency service will reduce the waiting times of shuttle riders.

Medical Return Trip Improvement Program - MRTIP (\$50,000, no increase from last year): The Medical Return Trip Improvement Program (MRTIP) is available only to Alameda residents who are East Bay Paratransit-certified riders. MRTIP provides transportation for individuals returning home from medical appointments, thereby eliminating the uncertainty of coordinating return trips with East Bay Paratransit. Since it is difficult to predict when a medical appointment might end, MRTIP offers the option of calling the City of Alameda's transportation provider for a trip home at the time participants need it. Participants are eligible to receive ten MRTIP vouchers per month. Vouchers must be purchased in advance for \$2.50 each, and expire after one year. The voucher covers the cost of transportation within Alameda County. Staff will monitor the budget to ensure an adequate supply of MRTIP vouchers is available for the entire fiscal year.

Premium Taxi Service (\$10,000, no increase from last year): The Premium Taxi Service provides a 50 percent discount for taxi rides with the City of Alameda's transportation provider. This service is open to East Bay Paratransit customers as well as to seniors age 70 and older without a driver license and age 75 and older to any senior. The service is available for all types of trips in Alameda County. It is especially

valuable as a convenient backup option for East Bay Paratransit or for travel on short notice. Discount travel vouchers, which must be purchased in advance, are worth \$5.00 toward taxi fare, but cost the user only \$2.50. Multiple travel vouchers may be used per trip. Taxi drivers are not allowed to provide change. Individuals are limited to a maximum of 20 travel vouchers per quarter (every three months). ***Staff recommends reducing the eligible age to all seniors age 70 and older – with or without a driver license.*** Staff will monitor the budget to ensure an adequate supply of Premium Taxi Service vouchers is available for the entire fiscal year.

Group Trips (\$137,000, \$122,000 increase from last year): This program provides financial assistance toward transportation expenses for the Mastick Senior Center's monthly trip program. Travel destinations may include various Bay Area locations (i.e. San Francisco, Livermore, etc.). The Group Trip program also subsidizes a portion of the transportation expense to/from Crown Memorial Beach for the Annual Nursing Home Picnic. ***Staff recommends purchasing a low floor shuttle bus for group trips and other potential uses, which is expected to cost \$122,000.***

Scholarship Program (\$30,000, a \$27,500 increase from last year): Matching funds are available to assist individuals with Premium Taxi Service and MRTIP expenses totaling \$1,500. To be eligible, individuals must be Alameda residents, be certified for the Premium Taxi Service or MRTIP, and meet the very low-income requirements. A limit of \$50 in matching funds per household is available each fiscal year as long as funding is available. ***For Alameda Point Collaborative seniors and individuals with disabilities, staff recommends providing them with subsidized monthly AC Transit passes. This scholarship program will act as a pilot program for other potential fixed route transit pass subsidies. For Alameda Family Services senior clients receiving case management services through Mastick Senior Center, staff recommends providing transportation services for the Case Manager and client to needed appointments and services.***

Program Management (\$25,250, a \$1,850 increase from last year): This amount funds the Public Works Department staff time to complete the Alameda CTC application and reporting requirements, provide program oversight, review program data and invoices, participate in Alameda CTC's paratransit committees, renew or establish new contracts, conduct outreach meetings, and coordinate with the transportation providers and Mastick Senior Center staff. This line item also includes cost allocation, workers compensation charges and risk management charges.

Customer Service and Outreach (\$91,750, a \$35,650 increase from last year): This program funds a part-time staff person at the Mastick Senior Center who is responsible for customer service and public outreach. The outreach program includes printing schedules and flyers, advertisements, coordinating advertisements, and producing informational mailings. As a service to East Bay Paratransit customers in the City of

Alameda, staff also sells East Bay Paratransit tickets. This program also includes staff and a van for the Alameda Recreation and Park Department's Leisure Club. The Leisure Club is a social recreation program offered for young adults, 18 years or older, with special needs. ***Staff recommends a significant increase in outreach to promote the more frequent shuttle service with the goal to increase shuttle ridership.***

Volunteer Driver Program (\$15,000, NEW!): Staff recommends assisting the [Senior Helpline Services](#) program to help this service expand in the City of Alameda. This program assists ambulatory, home-bound seniors in Alameda with door-through-door rides provided by volunteer drivers.

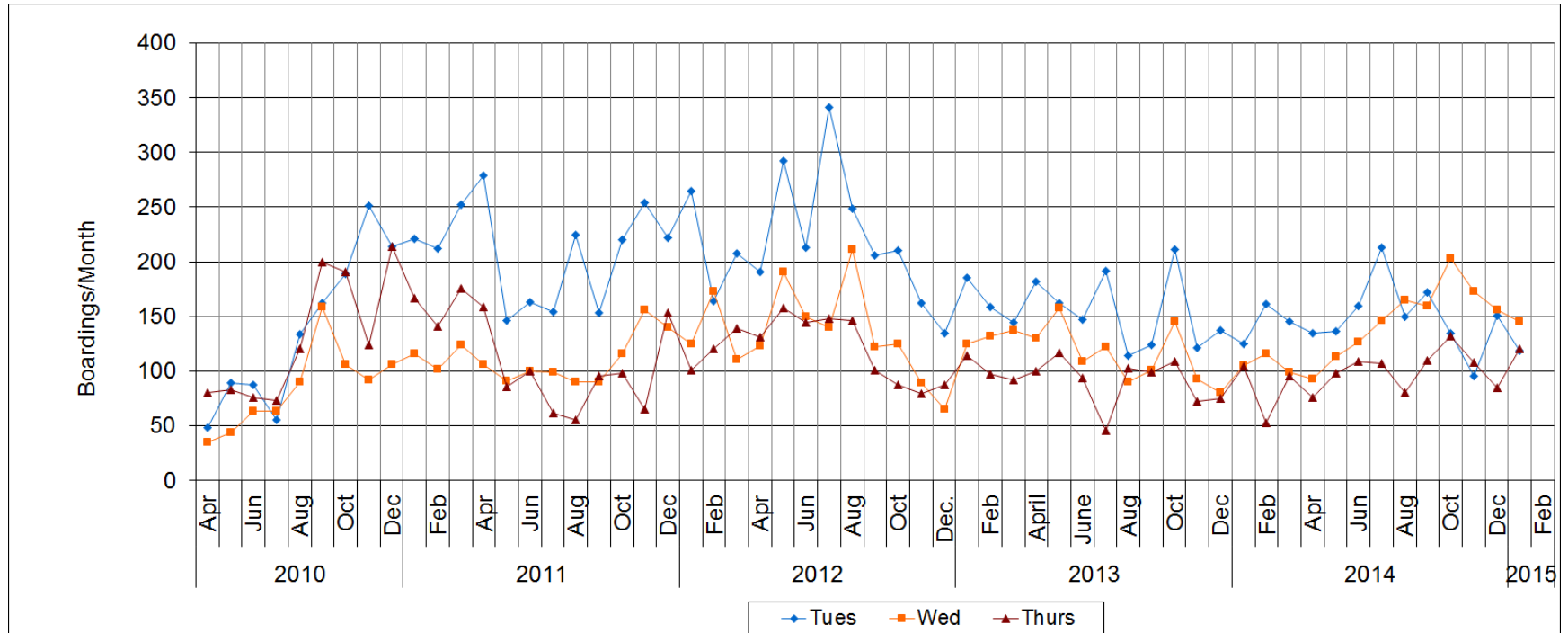
Annual Paratransit Survey:

To ensure the City's paratransit program meets the community's needs, staff from Mastick Senior Center and the Public Works Department conduct an annual survey. This year's survey was conducted in December 2014, and the City received a total of 97 completed questionnaires. The majority of the survey respondents stated that the drivers were courteous; the vehicles were clean; the services were punctual; and the respondents were satisfied. When applicable, service animals were treated properly.

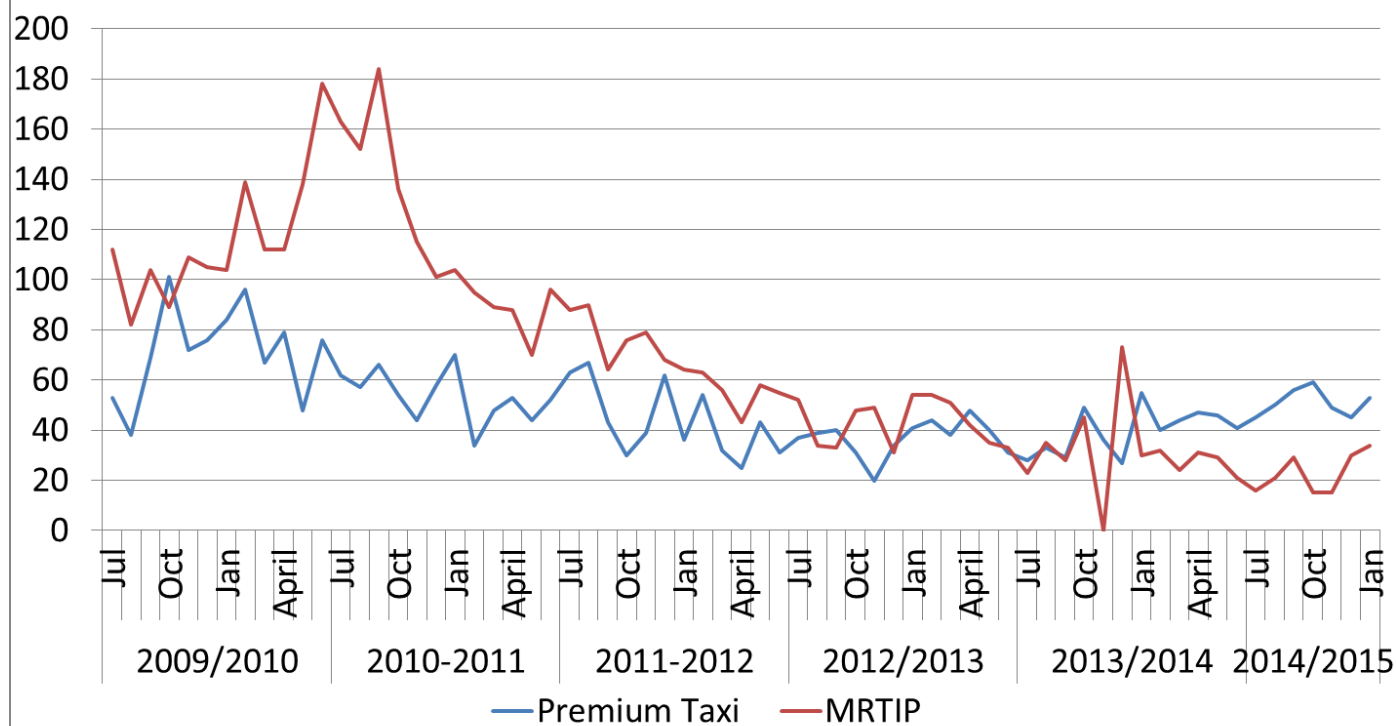
Service Cost Analysis:

The shuttle service is more cost effective than the taxi services. The cost for the shuttle service averages about \$16 per trip while the MRTIP taxi program averages about \$27.50 per trip and the Premium Taxi Service averages about \$6 per trip. The shuttle service cost per trip is less than the \$20 maximum specified in the Alameda CTC's *Paratransit Program Implementation Guidelines*. The shuttle ridership is averaging 387 trips per month, and there are about 74 taxi trips per month (Figures 1 and 2). A total of 548 individuals are registered participants in the City of Alameda paratransit taxi programs.

Figure 1: Alameda Paratransit Shuttle – Boardings per Month



**Figure 2: City of Alameda - Paratransit Taxi Services
(Passengers per Month)**



Financial Impact

The Transportation Services - Paratransit Program Application (Fund 287, Program 4225287), as outlined above, totals \$521,000. The program will be funded from an Alameda CTC Measure B/BB (Fund 215.4) paratransit funding allocation (\$346,667), fund balance (\$151,333), EBP ticket sales (\$15,000) and anticipated revenues from travel vouchers (\$8,000). There is no impact to the General Fund.

Municipal Code/Policy Document Cross Reference

This action does not affect the Alameda Municipal Code. The City's Paratransit Program supports the General Plan Objective 4.1.5 "Consider the transportation needs of the community, including those with limited mobility options", and the General Plan Policy 4.1.5.b: "Continue to support the Paratransit program."

Recommendation

Approve the application for Measure B Paratransit funding in the amount of \$521,000 for FY15-16.

Respectfully submitted by,

Gail Payne
Transportation Coordinator