

Commission on Disability

January 16, 2019

Approve the City of Alameda Transportation Program Plan for Seniors and People with Disabilities for Fiscal Year 2019/2020

Background

Measures B and BB provide the City of Alameda with dedicated funding sources for non-mandated, locally based transportation services for people with disabilities and seniors, which are not required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). East Bay Paratransit provides the ADA required and mandated paratransit service that supplements AC Transit and BART's fixed route services. As required by the funding agency – the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) – the City of Alameda uses the Measure B and BB paratransit funds to reduce transportation gaps experienced by people with disabilities and by seniors.

The City of Alameda paratransit program includes the following locally developed solutions to address the mobility challenges of older adults and people with disabilities:

- Discounted taxi services including scholarships
- Free Alameda Loop Shuttle (www.AlamedaLoopShuttle.com)
- Group trips: monthly Mastick trips for seniors, bi-weekly Leisure Club trips for adults with special needs and an annual picnic for Skilled Nursing Facility residents
- Free AC Transit bus passes for Alameda Point Collaborative qualifying residents and Alameda Housing Authority qualifying residents at some facilities
- One-time capital investments
- Customer service, materials and outreach
- Staff to ensure that these programs are effectively managed

Information about the City of Alameda transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities is available at: www.AlamedaParatransit.com. The Alameda CTC requires each jurisdiction to annually submit a program plan application to receive the local Measure B/BB funds, which is the purpose of this staff report.

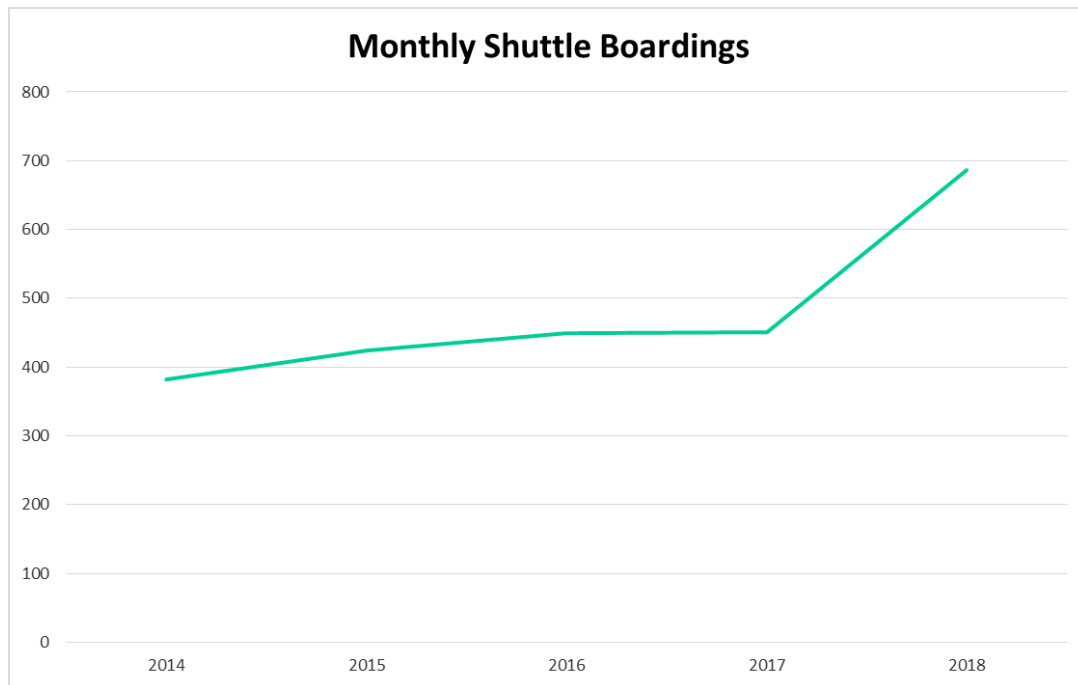
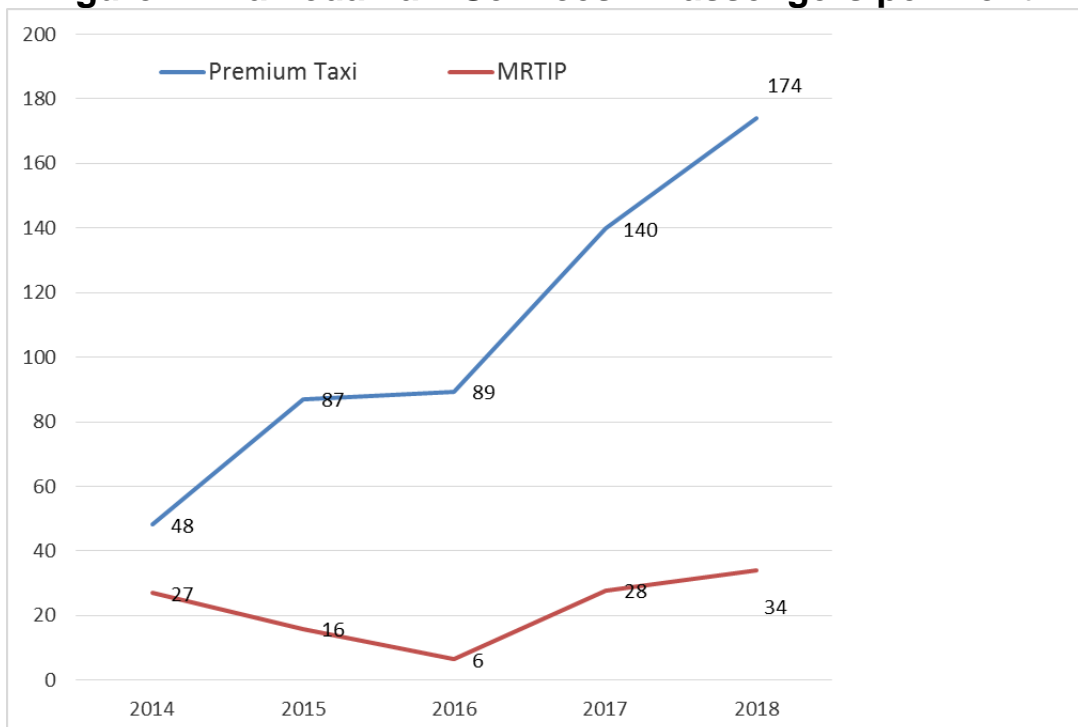
Discussion

The City of Alameda Transportation Program Plan for Seniors and People with Disabilities for fiscal year 2019-20 is recommended to total \$543,939, which is less than the current year's application of \$975,109 due to the funding balance that currently is being expended this fiscal year. In January 2017, staff hired a paratransit coordinator – Victoria Williams – to ensure that this specialized transportation program for seniors and people with disabilities is implemented effectively and best meets customer needs.

Accomplishments

In general, more community members are using the paratransit services provided by the City due to the dedicated part-time staff, a more frequent and attractive shuttle service, a local Alameda taxi provider, increased budget for group trips and continued free bus passes. Accomplishments in the current fiscal year 2018-19 include:

- **Alameda Loop Shuttle:** As of October 31, 2017, two new shuttle buses are now on the road with a 30-minute frequency and a rebranded service equipped with bike racks and wheelchair lifts. As a result, the ridership has grown from 450 monthly boardings to 680 monthly boardings (Figure 1). Furthermore, the cost of the shuttle is just over \$20 per trip, which is the required maximum specified in the Alameda CTC's *Paratransit Program Implementation Guidelines* at the end of the second fiscal year of service – October 31, 2019.
- **Free Bus Passes:** The number of Alameda Point Collaborative residents who use the free bus passes continues to grow averaging 87 unique users in 2018 compared to 78 in 2017. The City and Alameda Housing Authority also are establishing a partnership for qualifying residents of their facilities to obtain free bus passes.
- **Subsidized Taxi Program:** The taxi program continues to serve more riders, and now provides an average of 207 monthly rides compared to 150 monthly rides in 2017 and 96 monthly rides in 2016 (Figure 2). During 2018, 7 consumers received scholarships for the subsidized taxi program.
- **Group Trips:** In fiscal year 2017/18, the group trip program subsidized 1,758 one-way passenger trips, which is more than the previous fiscal year at 943 trips. The trips include over 1,000 Mastick monthly trips, 314 trips to/from the annual Skilled Nursing Facility picnic and 364 trips for the bi-weekly Leisure Club.
- **Enhanced Outreach:** The following outreach took place in 2018: delivered shuttle schedules to key destinations, distributed 500 postcards during the July 4th parade, presented transportation orientations to 66 community members, hung the cross street banner on Park Street, Central Avenue and Webster Street, advertised services in the Alameda Sun and Mastick Senior Center newsletter one time per month and at the Alameda Theatre as a pre-movie advertisement, listed services in the quarterly City Recreation Guides, promoted International Day of Persons with Disability – December 3 – via social media, issued a press release on the annual survey and presented to 160 people at various community events.

Figure 1: Alameda Loop Shuttle – Boardings per Month**Figure 2: Alameda Taxi Services – Passengers per Month**

Proposed Program for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The fiscal year 2019-2020 plan is being developed with input from key stakeholders and program participants by conducting a survey in December 2017 and by reaching out to four City Commissions: Commission on Disability (January 16) Transportation Commission (January 23), Recreation and Parks Commission (February 14), and Social Service Human Relations Board (February 28). The section below describes the City's proposed transportation program for seniors and people with disabilities.

Alameda Loop Shuttle (\$165,000, a \$10,000 decrease from last year): Web site: www.AlamedaLoopShuttle.com In 2010, the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle service began with the goal of reducing motor vehicle trips by seniors and individuals with disabilities and reducing the dependence on the subsidized taxi services within the City. In October 2017, the shuttle was rebranded as the Alameda Loop Shuttle with increased frequency to every 30 minutes. The shuttle service is open to the public yet the primary purpose of the shuttle is to serve people with disabilities and seniors by providing access to shopping destinations and medical facilities around the City. The drivers may 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 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The shuttle routes are as follows:

- ***Tuesdays:*** West Loop (between Alameda Landing, Marina Village and downtown Alameda)
- ***Wednesdays:*** East Loop (between Bay Farm Island, downtown Alameda and Mastick Senior Center)
- ***Thursdays:*** Central Loop (between downtown Alameda, South Shore Center and Bridgeside Center/Nob Hill Market)

Recommended changes: Staff recommends providing the same service and also exploring the use of real-time technology that allows riders to view the real-time location of the shuttle buses.

Subsidized Taxi Service (\$80,000, a \$15,000 increase from last year): The City provides two different subsidized taxi services in sedans or lift-equipped vans Mondays to Fridays - 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays - 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. as follows:

- ***Medical Return Trip Improvement Program (MRTIP):*** Is available only to Alameda residents who are East Bay Paratransit-certified riders, and provides a flexible option for returning home from medical appointments within Alameda County, thereby eliminating the uncertainty of coordinating return trips with East Bay Paratransit. Participants may purchase up to ten MRTIP travel vouchers per month. MRTIP vouchers cost \$2.50 each and cover the total cost of the ride.
- ***Premium Taxi Service:*** Provides subsidized taxi trips for Alameda residents age 70 and older and for residents certified to use East Bay Paratransit. This service provides a 70 percent discount for taxi rides within Alameda County, and is

available for all types of trips in Alameda County. Premium vouchers cost \$1.50 each and have a \$5 value. Multiple travel vouchers may be used per trip. Participants may purchase up to 30 vouchers per quarter (every three months).

Recommended changes: Staff recommends providing the same services, and will monitor the budget to ensure an adequate supply of travel vouchers is available for the entire fiscal year. The proposed budget accommodates continued growth, and also potential budget to shift towards Uber/Lyft type shared ride services, if needed, due to an industrywide driver shortage.

Group Trips (\$35,000, a \$2,577 increase from last year): The City's program supports transportation for recreation programs run through Mastick Senior Center and Alameda Recreation and Park Department as follows:

- **Mastick Monthly Trips:** Provides financial assistance for the Mastick Senior Center's monthly trip program with travel destinations to various Bay Area locations (i.e. San Francisco, Livermore, etc.).
- **Leisure Club:** Supports the driver and the shuttle bus maintenance for the Alameda Recreation and Park Department's Leisure Club. The Leisure Club is a social recreation program offered for adults - 18 years or older - with developmental disabilities that meets twice a month.
- **Crown Memorial Beach:** Subsidizes the transportation expenses to/from Crown Memorial Beach for the Annual Skilled Nursing Facility Picnic.

Recommended changes: Staff recommends providing the same services.

Scholarship Programs (\$34,000, an \$1,000 increase from last year): There are three different types of scholarships as described below:

- **Free Bus Passes (\$32,000):** The City provides free AC Transit bus passes to up to 167 seniors or people with disabilities residing in the Alameda Point Collaborative, which is a low-income, supportive housing community in Alameda Point, and to Alameda Housing Authority properties that focus on low-income seniors or people with disabilities such as Anne B. Diamant Plaza (65 units) and Jack Capon Villa (19 apartment homes), respectively.
- **Matching Funds for Taxi Programs (\$1,000):** Matching funds are available to assist individuals with Premium Taxi Service and MRTIP expenses totaling \$1,000. 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 \$90 in matching funds per household is available each fiscal year as long as funding is available.
- **Emergency Wheelchair Breakdown Service (\$1,000):** Staff is negotiating with the local taxi provider – First American Transit – to provide trips for Alamedans who need a ride within Alameda County after their wheelchairs have a breakdown, which would be done with one of the accessible taxi vehicles.

Recommended changes: Staff recommends providing the same services and

adding the emergency wheelchair breakdown service pending an agreement with the local taxi provider or another transportation provider.

Capital Investments (\$120,000, a decrease of \$460,000): The capital program allows staff to spend down the funding balance in a fiscally responsible way with one-time investments that will not have an on-going, long-term impact on the program's operational budget. Staff recommends that the capital budget cover the cost of adding new bus benches at Alameda Loop Shuttle and AC Transit bus stops, replacing up to six bus shelters at AC Transit and Alameda Loop Shuttle bus stops and ensuring compliance with ADA at bus stops.

Recommended changes: Staff recommends providing less monies than previous years towards capital investments due to the success at spending down reserves.

Customer Service and Outreach (\$38,000, a decrease of \$8,020): The outreach program includes printing shuttle schedules and flyers, advertisements, limited program incentives, banners, orientations at Mastick Senior Center, presentations with community members, providing taxi vouchers to consumers and producing informational mailings. As a service to East Bay Paratransit customers in the City of Alameda, staff also sells East Bay Paratransit tickets.

Recommended changes: The outreach budget is lower than the current fiscal year since the campaign to promote the more frequent and improved branding of the shuttle service is occurring in the current fiscal year.

Program Management (\$66,439, an increase of \$22,773): The management funds the part-time paratransit coordinator and the group trip driver as well as on-call experts. The program management includes providing program oversight, completing the Alameda CTC application and reporting requirements, reviewing program data and invoices, participating in Alameda CTC's paratransit committees, renewing or establishing new contracts and programs, conducting outreach meetings and other outreach activities, and coordinating with transportation providers and City staff.

Recommended changes: The higher budget amount will be spent on transitioning the subsidized taxi program to Uber and Lyft type shared ride services, if needed.

Financial Impact

The Transportation Services - Paratransit Program Application (Fund 287, Program 9161103), as outlined above, totals \$543,939. The program will be funded from the following sources (all at projected amounts): Alameda CTC Measure B/BB (Funds 215.4 and 215.41) paratransit funding allocation (\$357,109), fund balance (\$227,128), EBP ticket sales (\$4,000) and sales of travel vouchers (\$8,000). The remaining unallocated funds (\$52,298) will be placed in reserves for future years. 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 transportation program for seniors and people with disabilities 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 City of Alameda transportation program plan for seniors and people with disabilities for fiscal year 2019/2020.

Respectfully submitted by,

Gail Payne
Senior Transportation Coordinator

Victoria Williams
Paratransit Coordinator

Exhibit
1: Presentation