



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0370, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Transportation and Public Works

Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz 707-565-2231

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

FY 2020-21 ADA Paratransit Services Agreement

Recommended Action:

Approve and authorize Chair to execute an Agreement with Center for Volunteer & Non-Profit Leadership (formerly Volunteer Center of Sonoma County) for Countywide Americans with Disabilities Act Paratransit Services for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$2,506,592.

Executive Summary:

As a fixed-route public transit operator, Sonoma County Transit (Transit) is required to provide complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of all its routes during the same days and hours as its fixed-route service. To meet federal ADA requirements, all paratransit trip requests, made by eligible clients, must be provided regardless of trip purpose, cost or number of trips taken within any period of time.

Through February, FY 2019-20 paratransit ridership increased 4.2% when compared with the same period in FY 2018-19. The impacts of COVID-19 began affecting paratransit ridership in early March. Following fixed-route transit reductions on March 18th and the Sonoma County Public Health Officer's "Shelter-in-Place" directives since that time, paratransit services have continued to operate as required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), but at a reduced levels due to changed passenger demand. Since mid-March, paratransit ridership has dropped approximately 87%, with most trips for essential purposes such as dialysis, medical appointments or grocery shopping. Since early April, like other paratransit operators in the region, Sonoma County Paratransit began assisting with meal deliveries to seniors and will continue to do so, as resources permit, while the COVID-19 emergency declaration is in effect.

In recent years, demand for ADA paratransit service, provided under this agreement, has grown over 50% when comparing FY 2012-13 ridership (39,111) with FY 2018-19 (58,771).

This action seeks to renew the County's agreement with the Center for Volunteer and Non-Profit Leadership (CVNL) to provide countywide ADA-compliant paratransit services. Under this agreement, CVNL will continue to serve as Sonoma County Transit's ADA paratransit services provider through FY 2020-21, under the name of "Sonoma County Paratransit".

Discussion:

CVNL has provided ADA paratransit service, on an annual basis, for Sonoma County since 2002. Prior to that time, CVNL provided general public dial-a-ride service for both Sonoma County and the City of Santa Rosa.

Under the ADA and its implementing regulations, fixed-route transit operators are required to provide complementary paratransit service within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of their fixed-route service during the same hours and days that fixed-route services are provided. All trip requests, made by eligible passengers, must be met regardless of their trip purpose. Operators are required to provide, at a minimum, all next-day requested trips.

The ADA requires transit operators to provide a sufficient level of paratransit service such that no eligible passenger is denied paratransit service due to capacity limitations. Transit operators that do not meet the required “no-denial” level of service jeopardize their federal funding eligibility and expose themselves to potential legal liability.

Within Sonoma County, there are approximately 4,800 individuals that have qualified and signed up for paratransit services. For many of these individuals, the services provided under this agreement are their sole access to on-going medical care, as well as, social activities, shopping and educational opportunities.

Sonoma County Paratransit operates a fleet of 30 vehicles including: 20 minibuses, 4 accessible minivans, and 6 sedans. Six new vehicles were introduced into the paratransit fleet in April to replace six retired vehicles. Vehicles are retired in accordance with Federal guidelines regarding miles and years in service.

The proposed FY 2020-21 agreement would permit up to a total of 61,250 paid driver hours (wheelchair accessible fleets) and 4,000 volunteer driver hours (sedan fleet).

The proposed agreement provides for a maximum subsidy of \$2,506,592, reflecting a 2.9% increase over FY 2019-20’s agreement maximum of \$2,435,758. Sonoma County’s subsidy under this agreement compensates CVNL for its operating deficit. The operating deficit is the cost of services provided less passenger fares. It is likely, however, that depending on the length of the COVID-19 crisis and its resulting long term impact on paratransit usage, FY 2020-21 costs associated with the agreement may be 30% to 40% less than projected. The recommended agreement anticipates funding and usage for a typical year.

It should be noted that CVNL provides volunteer drivers to the County at no cost to support this service. Based on the Volunteer Center’s hourly rate, the annualized value of this volunteer service for FY 2019-20 is projected at \$101,800. Due to their scheduling flexibility, CVNL’s use of volunteer drivers has been a key contributor to achieving and maintaining a “no-denial” level of service. The ability to “right-size” the level of service each year due to changes in funding and/or passenger demand is a benefit of utilizing CVNL for this service.

CVNL is the preferred vendor based on their non-profit status, experience and that their use of volunteer drivers reduces the County’s overall operating costs and provides the back-up resources necessary to maintain the federally-required “no-denial” level of ADA paratransit service.

County Purchasing has reviewed this request and concurs with the department’s recommended action.

Prior Board Actions:

5/14/2019 - Board approved agreement with Volunteer Center for FY 2019-20 ADA Paratransit services in the amount of \$2,435,758.

5/08/18 - Board approved agreement with Volunteer Center for FY 2018-19 ADA Paratransit Services in an amount not to exceed \$2,333,292.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$2,506,592	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$2,506,592	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal		\$2,076,112	
Fees/Other- Measure M		\$430,480	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$2,506,592	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Funding for the proposed agreement was included in the recommended FY 2020-21 Transit Division Recommended Budget and is consistent with Sonoma County Transit's FY 2020-21 annual TDA/STA funding claim with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

FY 2020-21 Agreement for ADA Paratransit Service

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None

