Legislation Text

File #: 2026-0637, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Public Infrastructure
Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz, 707-565-2550
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:
Amendment to the Sonoma County Transit Fare Subsidy Agreement with Santa Rosa Junior College District

Recommended Action:

Delegate authority to the Director of Sonoma County Public Infrastructure to execute an Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Sonoma County Junior College District (SCJCD) for the Subsidized Transit Fare Program for College Students, increasing the SCJCD maximum annual contribution from $115,000 to $127,000 for Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27, effective July 1, 2025, and increasing the total maximum contribution under the MOU from $345,000 to $369,000.

Executive Summary:

This item recommends approval of an amendment to the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County of Sonoma and the Sonoma County Junior College District (SCJCD) for the Subsidized Transit Fare Program for College Students. Due to increased ridership and utilization of the program by Santa Rosa Junior College students, the amendment increases SCJCD's maximum annual contribution for Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27 from $115,000 to $127,000, raising the total maximum contribution under the three-year MOU from $345,000 to $369,000. The amendment is effective July 1, 2025, and all other terms and conditions of the MOU remain in full force and effect.

Discussion:

Since 2015, the County of Sonoma has supported free use of Sonoma County Transit through the Subsidized Transit Fare Program for College Students. In partnership with the Sonoma County Junior College District (SCJCD) and Sonoma State University, the program provides fare-free transit for enrolled college students who display a valid student ID card. In addition to its environmental benefits, the program directly improves access to educational services for some of the County's most economically challenged students and supports the County's climate and equity goals.

On October 4, 2022, the Board approved a two-year Memoranda of Understanding with SCJCD and Sonoma State University covering Fiscal Years 2022-23 and 2023-24. Building on that program, a successor MOU between the County and SCJCD was executed on September 3, 2024, for the three-year term of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. The 2024 MOU also expanded program eligibility to include intercity Sonoma County Paratransit trips on a pilot basis. Under the 2024 MOU, SCJCD's annual contribution was capped at $115,000,

with a total contract maximum of $345,000 across the three fiscal years.

Since execution of the 2024 MOU, student ridership and utilization of the program have continued to recover and grow beyond the level anticipated when the MOU was negotiated. Eligible trips by SCJCD students on Sonoma County Transit and Sonoma County Paratransit exceeded the funding capacity established for Fiscal Year 2025-26, and projections for Fiscal Year 2026-27 indicate continued growth. SCJCD and County staff jointly determined based on program usage through April 2026 that the existing annual contribution cap is insufficient to fully fund the program at its current and projected utilization level.

The proposed amendment, effective retroactively to July 1, 2025, increases SCJCD's maximum annual contribution for Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27 from $115,000 to $127,000, and increases the total maximum contribution under the MOU from $345,000 to $369,000. Except as expressly amended, all other terms and conditions of the MOU remain in full force and effect, including the County's General Fund *per trip* obligation rate.

Approval of this amendment will enable Sonoma County Transit and Sonoma County Paratransit to continue providing uninterrupted fare-free service to SCJCD students through the end of the current MOU term on June 30, 2027, while preserving the cost-sharing structure approved by the Board.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?
No

Prior Board Actions:

10/4/2022 No. 19 - Board approved Memoranda of Understanding with the Sonoma County Junior College District and Sonoma State University for the continuation of the Subsidized Transit Fare Program for College Students through June 30, 2024, with SCJCD contribution maximum of $237,666 and SSU contribution maximum of $47,376.

12/11/2018 No. 46 - Board approved continuation of the College Student Subsidized Fare Program from January 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022, with County share of $329,243 and authorized execution of MOUs with SRJC and SSU in the amounts of $444,455 and $80,765 respectively.

12/12/2017 No. 30 - Board approved continuation of the College Student Subsidized Fare Program from January 1 through December 31, 2018, in an amount up to $110,247, and authorized execution of MOUs with SRJC and SSU in the amounts of $111,308 and $23,438 respectively.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	**FY26-27 Adopted**	**FY28-29 Projected**	**FY29-30 Projected**
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	$24,000		
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	**$24,000**		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The proposed amendment increases SCJCD's maximum annual contribution from $115,000 to $127,000 for Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27, increasing the total maximum contribution under the MOU from $345,000 to $369,000. The additional $12,000 per year in SCJCD contributions will be used first to pay for eligible student trips on Sonoma County Transit and Sonoma County Paratransit, consistent with the cost-sharing structure established in the underlying MOU. The amendment does not change the County's General Fund contribution rate and does not extend the term of the MOU. SCJCD contribution revenue is included in the Sonoma County Transit operating budget and is billed quarterly in arrears. The increased contribution is retroactive to Fiscal Year 2025-26, and SCT has recorded the additional FY 2025-26 revenue as an accounts receivable. The additional revenue for FY2026-27 will be incorporated into the Budget.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):
None.

Attachments:

Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding - Subsidized Fare Program for College Students on Sonoma County Transit and Sonoma County Paratransit (SCJCD)

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:
None.