



Item 7

April 11, 2023

**MEMO TO: CITIZEN'S TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CTAC) SOCIAL SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC)**

FROM: HEATHER MILLER, PROGRAM MANAGER

SUBJECT: 2023 ACCESS FOR ALL PROGRAM - SELECTION OF ACCESS PROVIDERS

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2018, SB 1376 was signed into law requiring the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as part of its regulation of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, establish a program to improve the accessibility of persons with disabilities to on-demand transportation services. As a result, the CPUC established the TNC Access for All Program (AFA) requiring TNCs collect a fee in the amount of \$0.10 for each TNC trip provided and remit such fees to the CPUC based on the geographic area (county) in which the trip originated. These "Access Funds" are set aside to distribute through approved Local Access Fund Administrators (LAFAs) to qualified "Access Providers" that establish on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) transportation programs within their county.

As the designated Lafa for Ventura County, VCTC developed program guidelines (Attachment A) and a call for projects schedule. On January 9, the VCTC approved local Access for All Program Guidelines and issued a call for projects for FY 2022/23 Access Funds totaling \$ 249,713, with applications due February 10. VCTC received two applications requesting a total funding amount of \$499,426.

Both applicants were screened for eligibility by VCTC staff according to the Program Guidelines. The Gold Coast Transit District (GCDT), a public transit operator, and the Ventura Transit System (VTS), a private transportation operator, were considered eligible to receive funds and their respective project proposals were advanced through a scoring process. A three-member evaluation panel scored each application according to the criteria in the adopted Guidelines which emphasized program goals, project readiness, operational capacity/capability, potential for WAV service improvements in Ventura County, organizational ability to provide on-demand response, and planned public outreach. The following table provides a summary of the results of the panel's review including an average score for each applicant/section and total application score:

Evaluation Criteria		Max Score	GCTD	VTS
PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION (TOTAL 25 POINTS)	• Description of Applicant Agency/Organization's Operations	10	10	10
	• Description of the Proposed Project	15	15	10
	Part I	25	25	20
PART II: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, OBJECTIVE AND BENEFITS (TOTAL 75 POINTS)	• Project Readiness and Technical Capacity	15	15	15
	• Project Implementation Plan	20	18	17
	• WAV Service Improvements	15	13	12
	• Program Outreach	15	13	13
	• Expenses/Revenue	10	8	10
	Part II	75	67	67
	TOTAL	100	92	87

DISCUSSION:

The Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) proposal requested funding to purchase as many as four (4) expansion wheelchair accessible vehicles to support demand for the GO Now South Oxnard Micro-transit pilot project. The application received a score of 92 with GCTD demonstrating strong organizational experience, technical capacity, project readiness, and a sound implementation plan to deliver the project as proposed.

The GO Now pilot project provides on-demand public transit in an area of Oxnard where traditional fixed-route service has proven difficult to successfully operate. The service area targets 22,000 residents and 7,000 jobs with service transporting passengers to locations within the zone and to transit hubs such as the Oxnard Transit Center to connect passengers to the larger transit network. Although the proposed GO Now service area is concentrated in South Oxnard, the pilot project serves as a test run that could potentially be replicated in other communities if successful or expanded locally as opportunities are identified. GCTD will utilize the TransLoc app for trip requests with the new service anticipated to launch in Spring 2023.

Ventura Transit System, Incorporated (VTS) proposed a fare subsidy program to provide on-demand wheelchair accessible transportation service across Ventura County 24 hours a day/365 days a year at an affordable rate for the consumer. The proposal received a score of 87 with VTS providing the organizational experience, resources, existing fleet, and personnel to deliver the project as proposed.

VTS is a private transportation provider with a total fleet of eighty-five (85) wheelchair accessible vehicles with fifty-five (55) stationed in Ventura County and an ability to pull vehicles from the adjacent counties in which VTS operates. VTS currently contracts Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) in Ventura County for the Gold Coast Health Plan and CenCal Health Plan.

With a background in traditional cab service, VTS proposes a target 30-minute response time or less employing a 24-hour dispatch/call center and use of TripSpark Transportation Management System software to track vehicle locations and availability. The subsidized fare program proposes an on-demand WAV fare rate of \$2.50 per mile for the passenger at any time of the day. The anticipated demand for a program of this scale is difficult to predict, therefore an important part of the program will be gathering data to better understand that demand.

Due to the merits of each project, but limited funds, VCTC staff recommends \$131,246 in funding for the purchase of two (2) wheelchair accessible vans to support GCTD's GO Now South Oxnard Micro-transit pilot project. The van purchases will be made through a CalACT contract with GCTD providing matching funds to install security cameras and pay tax and CalACT fees. Staff recommends the remainder of FY 22/23 Access funds totaling \$118,467 be awarded to VTS for a fare subsidy program to support the expansion of on-demand WAV transportation across Ventura County. The fare subsidy program would be processed on a quarterly reimbursement basis for trips performed.

Staff recommendation and contract agreements will be brought to the Commission for approval on May 12, 2023, with funds obligated no later than June 30, 2023. Funds must be expended within 12 months of award.