



Agenda Report

File #: 19-0516

AGENDA REPORT REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 6/5/2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Public Works Department

SUBJECT:

City Council consideration of the proposed Short Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 2021-22; and authorize revisions to the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget following approval of the Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 2021-22 Short Range Transit Plan from the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

1. Adopt the proposed Short Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 2021-22.
2. Forward the Short Range Transit Plan to the Riverside County Transportation Commission for approval.
3. Authorize revisions to the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget following approval of the Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 2021-22 Short Range Transit Plan from the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

ANALYSIS:

The City of Corona (City) operates Dial-A-Ride and Corona Cruiser fixed route service. Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service began in 1977, while the Corona Cruiser service commenced in 2001. Dial-A-Ride began as a general public DAR service, however on August 16, 2017, City Council approved the transition from General Public to Specialized Service effective January 2, 2018. The City contracts with the private sector to provide transit operations.

The City is required to submit an annual update of the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) to the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) for approval. The SRTP summarizes the

operating and capital plan, and outlines funding requirements. Although the SRTP is a three-year plan, RCTC funds the initial year, with remaining years provided for planning purposes.

City of Corona Transit Services staff is proposing an estimated balanced operating budget of \$2,769,156; the proposed Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget is 4 percent or \$115,438, less than the current year budget.

The decrease in cost can be attributed to the following:

- Contracted services - While the cost for contracting transit operations has increased by over 20 percent (new contract awarded July 2018 to MV Transportation), the overall budget for contracting services in Fiscal Year 2019-20 has decreased (9.9 percent or \$216,000) as compared to the Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget. Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget included costs for increased revenue hours for service improvements and consulting services for the following projects: comprehensive operations analysis; vehicle maintenance oversight; and fixed route planning and scheduling. These projects were not implemented as much of staff time was dedicated towards transitioning and oversight of the new transit operations contractor.

Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget will continue to allocate funds for a vehicle maintenance oversight project and for a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of the fixed route system. The vehicle maintenance oversight project is necessary to ensure the state of good repair for city-owned buses that are maintained by the contractor. The COA is necessary to examine current service delivery and efficiency for future service improvements.

- Fuel - 7.4 percent decrease compared to Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget. Lower cost in fuel attributed to all vehicles using Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fuel vs. gasoline; eight gasoline-powered Dial-A-Ride vehicles were replaced with Compressed Natural Gas vehicles. In addition, reduced fixed route fuel budget to reflect the usage based on last three years, which has been averaging \$95,000 annually.
- Materials, Marketing, and Utilities - 2.5 percent decrease; reduced budget for line items based on actual expenses in the past three years.

The table below shows key performance indicators for the current year plan and next year's plan.

<i>Performance Indicator</i>	<i>Fiscal Year 2018-19 Plan</i>	<i>Fiscal Year 2019- 20 Plan</i>	<i>Percent Variance</i>
Operating Expense	\$2,884,594	\$2,769,156	-4.0%
Fare Revenue	\$422,153	\$415,750	-1.5%
Passenger Trips	200,305	178,000	-11.1%
Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH)	32,457	29,444	-9.3%
Operating Cost per VRH	\$88.88	\$94.05	5.8%

FY 2018/19 operating expense included cost to operate additional vehicle revenue hours for service improvements which were not implemented.

System-wide passenger trips were projected to total approximately 200,000 in Fiscal Year 2018-19. Using data collected during the first nine months of the year as a basis for estimating annual totals, passenger trips are anticipated to total approximately 178,000, or 11 percent less than projected.

It is difficult to pinpoint with certainty the cause of declining passenger trips. However, increased congestion throughout most of the service area has made it challenging for buses to remain on schedule; thus lending to the perception that buses are less reliable, and prompting passengers to seek out other transportation alternatives.

A new schedule is still anticipated, however, the schedule will be revised based on assessment/study. The study will look at the current routes for opportunities for improvements including increasing frequency, expanding the routes by adding additional stops, and more frequent stops to the Metrolink Station. The revised schedule will better reflect actual trip times, and ensure that buses run according to the published schedule; thereby improving reliability. In addition, Transit staff is working closely with the City's contract operator to address short-term improvements and identify long-term improvements that will benefit the program.

Staff is cautiously optimistic that the passenger trips will slowly improve throughout Fiscal Year 2019-20 with increased marketing efforts. Marketing efforts include implementing a Free Fare Program, use of social media, participation in events, meet with various organizations and implementation of a training program on the use of public transit. A Free Fare Program will provide opportunities for riders to experience the service with little to no cost to them with the intent that the rider will continue to use the service. Social media will be used to market transit services available and to update the public with ongoing changes. City staff and/or the contractor's staff will participate in events to provide an information booth, and work with organizations such as the school district, apartment complexes, and Corona Senior Center to provide them with information regarding transportation options available to them.

The Capital Plan consists of the following projects for the next three years:

- Intelligent Transportation System
- Purchase ADA Accessible Van
- Digital Lan Mobile Radio System

A copy of the Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 2021-22 SRTP is attached to this report as Exhibit "A."

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the City's Strategic Plan Goal 5: Improve Circulation and Reduce Traffic; Objective a: Proactively work with local and regional transportation agencies to develop opportunities to reduce traffic, improve local circulation and improve regional roadways by coordinating funding through the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (Riverside County Transportation Commission) to maintain and enhance the City's local public transit service. The Corona Cruiser transports nine passengers

per revenue hour which reduces the number of automobile trips required to make the same trip if not taken on a public transit bus. Fewer automobile trips reduces congestion and promotes better local circulation. Corona Cruiser buses continue to provide connections to regional bus service, which encourages the use of public transit both locally and regionally. The Corona Cruiser serves the North Main Metrolink Station via the Corona Transit Center, while Dial-A-Ride serves both of the City's train stations. Connectivity to train stations promotes use of regional commuter trains which also reduces automobile trips.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of operations for transit service for Fiscal Year 2019-20 is \$2,769,156. Operating revenues consist of Local Transportation Funds, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 funds, Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds, State of Good Repair and farebox revenues. State Transit Assistance (STA) and Proposition 1B California Transit Security Grant Program (CTSGP) funds, State of Good Repair and FTA 5307 funds will be used to fund the capital plan.

The Fiscal Year 2019-20 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget may require adjustments following RCTC approval of the proposed Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 2021-22 SRTP.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the common sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action merely provides funding for continued operation of the public transit system. Since there is no possibility that adopting this action will have a significant effect on the environment, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: SUDESH PAUL, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING SUPERVISOR

REVIEWED BY: NELSON D. NELSON, P.E., PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

REVIEWED BY: KIM SITTON, FINANCE MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: KERRY D. EDEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR

REVIEWED BY: MICHELE NISSEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: MITCHELL LANSDELL, ACTING CITY MANAGER

Attachment:

1. Exhibit "A" - Fiscal Year 2019-20 through Fiscal Year 202-2Short Range Transit Plan