



Legislation Text

File #: 17-820, Version: 1

**AGENDA REPORT
REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

DATE: 6/21/2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Public Works Department

SUBJECT:

City Council consideration to adopt the proposed Short Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Year 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2019-20; and authorize revisions to the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget following approval of the Fiscal Year 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2019-20 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 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2019-20.
2. Forward the Short Range Transit Plan to the Riverside County Transportation Commission for approval.
3. Authorize revisions to the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget following approval of the Fiscal Year 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2019-20 Short Range Transit Plan from the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

ANALYSIS:

The City of Corona (City) operates a general public Dial-A-Ride and Corona Cruiser fixed route service. Dial-A-Ride service began in 1977, while Cruiser service commenced in 2001. 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 a balanced operating budget of \$2,516,437; the proposed Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget is 1.7 percent, or \$42,720, more than the current year budget.

The increase in cost can be attributed to increases in:

- Contracted services - (3.2 percent or \$55,799) the increase is a combination of the year-over-year increase in the cost per Vehicle Revenue Hour, per the City's contract with the vendor operating the service, and inclusion of a comprehensive operational analysis to assess the service for future improvements. The Fiscal Year 16-17 budget included additional vehicle revenue hours to accommodate an update to the fixed route bus schedule, however the changes did not materialize. The Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget will continue to reflect costs for those revenue hours to implement a revised bus schedule.
- Materials, Marketing, and Utilities - (24.9 percent or \$14,060) increase due to an increase in the annual cost of licensing for the cloud-based RouteMatch dispatching system.

These cost increases are partially offset by a decrease in the cost of fuel (-10.7 percent or -\$27,000). The reduced fuel cost is due primarily to overestimating fuel costs in the Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget, and expected replacement of five gasoline-powered Dial-A-Ride vehicles with Compressed Natural Gas vehicles.

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

<i>Performance Indicator</i>	<i>Fiscal Year 2016-17 Plan</i>	<i>Fiscal Year 2017- 18 Plan</i>	<i>Percent Variance</i>
Operating Expense	\$2,473,717	\$2,516,437	1.7%
Fare Revenue*	\$494,744	\$368,916	-25.4%
Passenger Trips	225,044	201,841	-10.3%
Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH)	34,270	33,118	-3.4%
Operating Cost per VRH	\$72.18	\$75.98	5.3%

*FY 17-18 Fare Revenues based on 15% farebox recovery ratio due to elimination of general public DAR Services. If general public DAR is not eliminated, then a 20% farebox recovery ratio will apply requiring an additional \$122,971 in farebox revenue (additional general fund contribution may be required to cover the gap in farebox revenues).

System-wide passenger trips were projected to total 225,044 in Fiscal Year 2016-17. Using data collected during the first nine months of the year as a basis for estimating annual totals, passenger trips are anticipated to total 198,457, or 11.8 percent less than projected.

It is difficult to pinpoint with certainty the cause of declining passenger trips. However, increased congestion, due to construction projects 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.

It is anticipated that a new schedule will be implemented in January 2018. 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.

With the 91 Freeway Project nearing completion, updating the fixed route bus schedule, and implementing a no-show policy has staff cautiously optimistic that the passenger trips will slowly improve throughout Fiscal Year 2017-18.

The Capital Plan consists of the following projects:

- Purchase eleven replacement buses for Dial-A-Ride service
- Replacement of batteries on solar-powered lighting

A copy of the Fiscal Year 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2019-20 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. 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 2017-18 is \$2,516,437. Capital projects (bus procurement and solar powered battery replacement) will be paid with funds from prior allocations.

Operating revenues consist of Local Transportation Funds, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 funds, Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds, and farebox revenues. State Transit Assistance (STA) and Proposition 1B Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account grant (PTMISEA) funds, and California Transit Security Grant Program (CTSGP) funds, and Federal Transit Administration Earmark funds will be used to fund the capital plan.

The Fiscal Year 2017-18 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget may require adjustments following RCTC approval of the proposed Fiscal Year 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2019-20 SRTP.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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