

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Jim Throop, Director of Administrative Services
SUBJECT: Summer 2012 Beach shuttle service
DATE: March 6, 2012

Needs: For the City Council to give direction on a pilot summer-time shuttle service to the coast.

- Facts:
1. Existing public transportation service from Paso Robles to the coast is indirect. Currently, it takes at least 2 hours for a transit rider to get to any of the Central Coast beaches from Paso Robles, via existing public transit.
 2. A service connecting Paso Robles with the coastal town of Cayucos from June through August 2012 could provide direct service to the beach for Paso residents, particularly youth riders.
 3. The City contracts with First Transit, Inc. for transit operations, and First Transit has indicated they maintain their current hourly rate of \$22.26 per revenue hour without adjusting their monthly fixed rate.
 4. Increases in state funding in the current fiscal year, along with recent service reductions, have made available sufficient funds for a pilot service, though exact levels for the current fiscal year are still to be determined.
 5. Various levels of service could be provided, from two to three round trips daily, and three to five service days per week, depending on demand and available resources.
 6. The Paso Robles Transit staff suggested this option to RTA, but was essentially told that Paso Robles Transit would need to cover the entire cost. Other agencies that would benefit from the new route would not be required to assist in the funding.

Analysis & Conclusion: The purpose of the service is to provide to the residents and visitors of the City, especially those who do not drive, or are in town without a rental car or an easy means of reaching the coast and beach during the hot summer months. The service can be designed to provide anywhere from 6 to 15 round trips per week, and fares can range from \$2.00 per trip to \$3.00 per trip. Final pricing and number/frequency of trips would be determined at a later date. The service and marketing efforts can be modified to meet demand and/or available resources. A possible discounted summer pass is also being reviewed. Transit staff is attempting to poll riders and survey residents/students to help determine the most effective service design.

To help market the proposed route, Transit staff will work with merchants in the Cayucos area to offer discounts to food, rentals and other items to the riders of the proposed service in order to promote ridership. Additional marketing would be through print and radio media, as well as through the local school system. Conversely, Transit staff would also work with Cayucos businesses (hotels/motels/condos) to let their guests know that affordable transportation to Paso Robles is available. Potential opportunities exist to have Paso Robles business offer discounts to ticket holders. Transit staff will attempt to work with local businesses, too.

This service is not limited to only citizens and visitors of Paso Robles, but would be open to all riders in the North County. Both the Atascadero El Camino Shuttle and the RTA Route 9 can be used by riders outside of the city to transfer to this proposed route. In addition, residents and tourists visiting/staying in Cayucos can take the bus to Paso Robles on return trips and enjoy the city, restaurants and shops.

The proposed service would run from approximately the beginning of June to the end of August. It is designed to coincide with the warmer weather and school schedules, as the typical rider may be young teens.

Policy: Economic Strategy: Promote transit access...to recreation, entertainment, shopping.

Fiscal

Impact: Based on current available figures, the city has sufficient funding to provide a pilot summer-time service. The net cost of operating the pilot summer service would range from \$10K to \$40K, depending on the level of service provided. Marketing costs can vary significantly, based on the level and type of marketing (i.e. print or radio) used. Current financial forecasts show that the Transit fund will have enough capacity to cover the costs of the program.

It is important to note that should the program prove successful, the shuttle ridership may help the farebox ratio, given that the cost of the ride will be more than the typical local bus service.

- Options:
- A. Direct Transit staff to begin planning and implementation of the pilot summer-time shuttle service, or
 - B. Direct Transit staff to not offer a pilot summer-time beach shuttle service, or
 - C. Amend, modify or reject the above options