



City Council Report

Date: February 11, 2019
To: City Council
Through: Scott Butler, Deputy City Manager
From: Jodi Sorrell, Transit Services Director
Subject: Intergovernmental Agreement with the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) for citywide Fixed Route Bus, Dial-a-Ride, Ride Choice and ADA Platinum Pass services for Fiscal Year 2018/19. Citywide

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to review the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Mesa and Valley Metro for operation and administration of \$20,511,398 of transit services operated within the city of Mesa. Staff recommends City Council adoption of the attached resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute the amendment with the RPTA. Total cost to the City for the transit services included in the Agreement for FY 2018/19 is \$6,863,235. The balance, \$13,648,163 will be paid for from grants and Mesa's allocation of Public Transportation Funds (PTF).

Background

The City of Mesa contracts with Valley Metro to operate and administrator fixed-route bus, Dial-a-Ride, RideChoice and the ADA Platinum Pass services for Mesa residents. The City enters into a new master IGA with RPTA every five years. In the subsequent years the IGA is amended to adjust the estimated annual costs to provide the services.

Fixed Route Bus Service

There are 19 bus routes that operate within the city of Mesa. These include 15 local fixed-routes, 4 express routes and a downtown circulator route. Over 60 percent of the bus routes are funded by the Public Transportation Funds (PTF). The remaining routes are funded by City funds (General Fund).

Paratransit Service

Valley Metro Paratransit (formerly known as Dial-a-Ride) provides door-to-door transportation for the disabled who are unable to navigate fixed route bus service. The system also fulfills the City's obligation to provide paratransit service within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of fixed route bus service for persons who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The cities of Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert, Scottsdale and Tempe have been providing Dial-a-Ride service to residents in the East Valley under the umbrella name of EVDAR.

During the in-person assessments for Dial-a-Ride, qualifying individuals are offered the option of receiving an ADA Bus and Rail Pass. This program is intended to reduce ADA operational costs by encouraging ADA certified passengers to use fixed route buses and light rail service in-lieu of more traditional ADA paratransit services whenever possible. Fares associated with participation in this program are paid for by RPTA on behalf of the City and are eligible for reimbursement by PTF.

RideChoice

RideChoice a mobility option seniors and persons with disabilities can take advantage of instead of using paratransit. In addition, the RideChoice program offers participating residents more flexibility to go where they wish to go, which also helps to stabilize Mesa's costs for the Dial-a-Ride program.

Discussion

Fixed Route Bus Service

As outlined in Schedule A of the agreement, Valley Metro will apply \$9,917,440 of regional funding toward the cost of fixed route service in Mesa. The funding will be applied to the following routes: Route 40 (Main Street), Route 45 (Broadway Road), Route 61 (Southern Avenue), 96 (Dobson Road), 108 (Elliot Road), 112 (Country Club Drive), Route 136 (Gilbert Road), Route 156 (Williams Field Road), Route 184 (Power Road), Route 531 (Mesa/Gilbert Express), Route 533 (East Mesa Express), Route 535 (Northeast Mesa/Downtown Express) and Route 541 (Mesa Express).

The City of Mesa will contribute \$4,748,696 toward the cost of the remaining bus routes operated in the City. Schedule B outlines the City funding for Route 30 (University Drive), Route 45 (Broadway Road), Route 61 (one weekday trip on Southern Avenue), Route 77 (Baseline Road), Route 104 (Alma School Road), Route 120 (Mesa Drive), Route 128 (Stapley Drive), and the Mesa Downtown BUZZ.

The only change to bus service in FY 2018/19 is to add two additional evening trips on the Downtown Buzz. The increase in service will be funded by the General Fund.

Paratransit Service

It is estimated Mesa residents will take approximately 114,000 local and regional Dial-a-Ride trips during FY 2018/19. As identified in the attached agreement in Schedule C, the total cost of ADA Dial-a-Ride service in Mesa for this fiscal year is \$5,312,014. PTF contributes \$3,730,723 to fund this service. The remaining balance of \$1,581,291 is the responsibility of the City.

In December 2018, Valley Metro executed a contract change order with the paratransit provider that increased the City's local contribution from \$221,946 to \$1,581,291. This increase is a result of revised trip projections for the region reflecting the actual experience of going from a taxi-based model to a van-based, shared-ride model. Infrastructure and staffing enhancements contributed to the additional cost.

RideChoice

Schedule D outlines the RideChoice funding sources. The total estimated costs for FY 2018/19 are \$865,362 to provide 38,545 trips. The City's estimated contribution to this program is \$593,354. The remaining estimated costs will be funded by a combination of New Freedom Grants and program revenue.

Some modifications were made to the RideChoice program this year to make the service more attractive to our residents. Between July 1 and November 30, 2018, residents paid \$3 for trips that cost \$18 or less and 100 percent of the meter for trips that cost over \$18. The program has a cap of 16 one-way trips per month.

On December 1, 2018, a new vendor began providing the RideChoice service and some modifications were made to the program. Residents using RideChoice pay \$3 for the first 8 miles of a one-way trip and 100 percent of the meter for trips over 8 miles. The program has a cap of 20 one-way trips per month. Exceptions can be made for trips used to travel to work, school or reoccurring medical visits.

For many trips RideChoice may be a more attractive alternative for Mesa residents because there is no shared trip requirement and trips do not need to be scheduled 24 hours in advance.

Mutual Aid

On occasion, a need arises to request resources (i.e. vehicles, equipment, and/or staff) from other municipalities during times of emergency or when an unusual number of vehicles are out of service. A recent example of such an occurrence is when the City of Mesa experienced a flood in 2014. The surrounding cities provided Mesa with personnel and vehicles to assist with removing debris from the impacted area. This IGA also includes provisions (Attachment J) between the City and Valley Metro for expanding the City's options for fueling vehicles in the case of an emergency.

Alternatives

The City Council could choose not to authorize the City Manager to execute Agreement with the RPTA. Not executing this agreement would discontinue the provision of fixed-route, Dial-a-Ride and RideChoice services in the City.

Fiscal Impact

The total cost for RPTA provided transit, administrative, marketing and customer service activities during FY 2018/19 is \$20,511,398. The City funded portion of the total cost is \$6,863,235, which is budgeted in the FY 2018/19 City budget using General Funds.

Coordinated With

This Intergovernmental Agreement has coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, Environmental Management and Sustainability and the Regional Public Transportation Authority.