



January 12, 2023

To: Transit Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Measure M2 Community-Based Transit Circulators Program
Project V Ridership Report

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is located in the upper right quadrant of the page.

Overview

Measure M2 includes a program to fund community-based transit circulators known as Project V. The goal of the program is to provide local transit services in areas not well-served by regional transit services. Funding is awarded to local jurisdictions through a competitive call for projects. Local jurisdictions then implement the awarded services and commit to meeting minimum performance standards including ridership metrics. The ridership information for these awarded services is presented to the Board of Directors twice annually. The ridership report from April 2022 through September 2022 is presented herein.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Measure M2 (M2) Community-Based Transit Circulators program, known as Project V, is a competitive grant program that provides funding to develop and implement local transit services. Currently, funded services include community-based circulators, shuttles, trolleys, and demand-responsive services intended to complement regional transit, while better meeting specific local needs.

Project V services are required to adhere to established minimum performance standards. These standards were modified by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors (Board) in January 2021 to allow for additional flexibility to continue low-performing services, should a jurisdiction desire to do so contingent on supplemental local subsidies.

Project V-funded services are to remain within a maximum cost per boarding standard, which is equal to twice the M2 Project V per boarding subsidy. Services not meeting this standard are required to disclose the cost per boarding information to their governing boards and seek direction to continue, restructure, or cancel the service. This approach provides local jurisdictions with the flexibility to deliver Project V services in a post-coronavirus (COVID-19) environment, while shifting evaluation metrics to be more financially focused, context sensitive, and locally driven. For fiscal year (FY) 2021-22, the maximum cost per boarding was established at \$20.47 (two times the FY 2021-22 M2 subsidy per boarding of \$10.24), and for FY 2022-23, the maximum cost per boarding was established at \$20.85 (two times the FY 2022-23 M2 subsidy per boarding of \$10.43).

This ridership report covers the period from April 2022 to September 2022 and provides information on boardings per revenue vehicle hour, cost per boarding, customer satisfaction, and on-time performance.

Discussion

During this reporting period, Project V services in operation included a combination of seasonal, special event, commuter, fixed route, and demand-response projects, which meet a variety of community needs. In comparison to last year, April 2022 through September 2022, the active services demonstrated an overall increase in ridership, with several services closely approaching pre-pandemic levels. During this period, one new Project V grant-funded service, the Laguna Niguel Summer Trolley, was started by the City of Laguna Niguel.

Current active Project V services (15 in total) are identified below. Detailed grant and service operating information is provided in Attachment A. During this reporting period, all services successfully met the required program performance standards including the Board-approved maximum cost per boarding requirement.

The La Habra Special Event Shuttle Service did not operate during this reporting period. Therefore, no information is provided in this update or attachment for that service.

Community shuttles that were in service and met the average cost per boarding requirement, include the following:

- Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Connector Service,
- County of Orange Ranch Ride Service,
- Dana Point Trolley (2014 grant),
- Dana Point Summer Trolley Expansion (2016 grant),

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- Dana Point Trolley Continuity and Expansion and Weekend Service (2018 grant),
 - Laguna Beach Summer Breeze (2018 grant),
 - Laguna Beach Off-Season Weekend Trolley Service (2020 grant),
 - Laguna Niguel Summer Trolley (2019 grant),
 - Mission Viejo Community Circulator,
 - Newport Beach Balboa Peninsula Trolley (2016 grant),
 - Newport Beach Balboa Peninsula Trolley Expansion (2018 grant),
 - San Clemente Summer Weekend Trolley and Seasonal Service (2016 grant),
 - San Clemente Summer Weekday Trolley and Seasonal Service Expansion (2018 grant),
 - San Clemente's SC Rides Service (2016 grant), and
 - San Juan Capistrano Special Event and Weekend Summer Trolley Service.

Concluded or cancelled projects during this reporting period (three in total) include the following:

- Huntington Beach Special Events (2014 grant),
- Irvine iShuttle Route E – Irvine Metrolink Station Service – East, and
- Irvine iShuttle Route F – Tustin Metrolink Station/Irvine Business Complex West.

The City of Huntington Beach Special Events (2014 grant) project grant expired and is now considered concluded. OCTA confirmed with City of Huntington Beach staff that an extension was not desired and the project had been concluded.

On June 14, 2022, the City of Irvine (City) requested that OCTA cancel the iShuttle Route E and Route F services. Late last year, OCTA notified the City that iShuttle Route F was not meeting the maximum cost per boarding standard. The City agreed to support iShuttle Route F through the end of the FY with hopes that ridership would increase. Unfortunately, ridership levels did not improve during the remainder of the FY. The Route E service was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and was never reinstated. Route E ridership was below the performance standard pre-pandemic and also lower than ridership on Route F. Given the performance of Route F and the prior low ridership on Route E, the City took action to cancel both routes.

To ensure compliance and meet the intent of the Project V guidelines, in January 2021, local jurisdictions were asked to report on-time performance and customer satisfaction on an annual basis, as indicated in their cooperative agreements. While some local jurisdictions are still developing the tools to meet

this requirement¹, based upon the reporting provided in Attachment A, it appears that steady progress is being made toward complete implementation. For those local jurisdictions that were able to report during this period, all successfully met their on-time performance and customer satisfaction thresholds.

Summary

A ridership and status report on Project V services is provided for information purposes. Staff will continue working with local jurisdictions as they resume services and implement recently approved Project V programmatic changes including on-time performance and customer satisfaction reporting. A status update on these efforts will continue to be provided to the Board semi-annually, with the next scheduled update occurring in July 2023.

Attachment

A. Project V Services – Ridership Report

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¹ Only San Clemente trolley services remain to establish a target threshold for customer satisfaction.