OCTA

November 8, 2018

To: Transit Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Measure M2 Senior Mobility Program Update

Overview

The Senior Mobility Program is designed to offer transportation alternatives to seniors in addition to local fixed-route, paratransit, or the OC ACCESS service. Through the program, participating local agencies are eligible to receive funding and vehicles from the Orange County Transportation Authority to help design and operate a transit program that best meets the needs of seniors living within those communities. Recommended revisions to the funding and policy guidelines are presented in the report.

Recommendation

Adopt the revised Measure M2 Senior Mobility Program Project U Funding and Policy Guidelines.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) established the Senior Mobility Program (SMP) in 2001 to help expand transportation services for seniors. The SMP was funded with Transportation Development Act funds from 2001 through 2011. On November 7, 2006, Orange County voters approved the renewal of Measure M (M2), the one-half cent sales tax for transportation improvements. M2, Project U, includes funding to support specialized transportation programs for seniors and persons with disabilities, including the SMP. One percent of net M2 revenues is allocated to the SMP and distributed via formula to participating Orange County cities. The formula is based upon each city's population of residents age 60 and older.

Discussion

Currently, 31 cities (funded through M2) and four non-profit agencies (utilizing local funding) participate in the SMP, offering a variety of senior transportation for medical, nutrition, shopping, personal care, and social/recreational trips. The SMP allows participating cities and eligible agencies to identify the specific

mobility needs for seniors in their communities and develop transportation programs to best meet those needs.

Since 2011, cities and eligible participating agencies have received more than $16.5 million in funding and have provided approximately two million trips. The SMP, funded through M2, Project U, is available to all Orange County cities. For those cities that have not joined the SMP, two do not have the required local match, and the third provides similar services but will consider joining the SMP when the current agreement is re-procured. Four non-profits agencies joined the SMP prior to the availability of M2 funding and have been included in the SMP. These programs are funded with other local funds each year due to being ineligible to receive M2 funds. The cooperative agreements with these agencies are amended as needed to reflect the annual allocation of funds.

SMP Benefits

Some of the key benefits of the SMP are highlighted below:

- **Expands Transportation Options** – The addition of local services for seniors who need transportation only within their community; provides another option that is complementary to OCTA's regional bus and the OC ACCESS service.

- **Funding Reliability** – Project U provides a stable and dedicated source of funding and allows cities and eligible agencies to commit to ongoing services for seniors.

- **Local Control** - Participating cities and eligible agencies are able to tailor transportation services to specifically meet the needs of the community. Depending upon the area, examples include provision of shopping trips, medical trips, and local demand-responsive services, in addition to senior center trips.

- **Lower Cost for Service** - Local agencies provide more specialized service at an average of $20.24 per trip, which is 57.2 percent lower than the average cost of an OC ACCESS trip at $47.32. The difference can be attributed to local versus countywide coverage, grouping opportunities, and scheduling flexibilities.

SMP Funding and Policy Guidelines

To ensure compliance with the M2 Ordinance No. 3, the SMP Funding and Policy Guidelines (Guidelines) were established and approved by the Board of Directors in February 2011, and subsequently updated in 2016. In early 2018, an evaluation of the SMP administration was completed and recommendations were made to modify some of the oversight activities and reporting requirements. To ensure the use of SMP funds continues to meet the intent of Project U and provides the greatest transportation benefit, staff has revised the guidelines to incorporate recommendations from that administrative review. Staff recommends the following changes:

1. **Include all program requirements in the SMP Guidelines** – The SMP guidelines/requirements are established in three documents: the SMP Project U Funding and Policy Guidelines, funding agreements, and the SMP service plans. All SMP requirements are covered within these documents; however, to ensure understanding of the administration requirements of the SMP, all three documents must be separately referenced.

   Recommended revisions ensure that all requirements are identified in the SMP Guidelines, providing a single source, ensuring clarity, and consistency.

2. **Modify reporting timelines** – Currently, local agencies are required to submit operating and financial reports within 30 days of the service month end. This does not provide local agencies enough time to compile and verify data required for the financial report.

   Recommended revisions extend the financial reporting deadline from 30 days after the end of the month of service to 60 days after the end of the quarter, and require certification from the local agency's finance director or designee on the submitted reports. The operating report will continue to be submitted monthly.

3. **Modify amendment process** – Currently, any change to a service plan requires an amendment to the funding agreement, which is not necessary, given the nature of these changes which do not materially impact the agreement.

Recommended revisions require amendments to the funding agreement only when a change in trip type is made. This will not change the requirement that any deviation from the adopted SMP service plan must be submitted to OCTA for review and approval prior to implementing a change in program services, but it removes the requirement for an amendment to the cooperative funding agreement, unless the change is related to trip type. Examples of other than trip type changes to the service plan include: hours of operation, change in fare structure, change in number of vehicles, and change in projected annual ridership.

4. **Implement a local agency certification process** – The SMP Guidelines do not currently include a certification process for the cities and eligible agencies. Self-certification is a standard requirement for most funding programs and will aid in OCTA's annual site reviews.

   Recommended revisions require that the program administrator review and have the city manager or designee verify that all requirements are being met, as specified. This will improve the efficiency of the compliance review process and further ensure agency accountability by providing an annual questionnaire and document request (AQDR) form to the local jurisdiction prior to site visits. The AQDR form will require the program administrator review and collect necessary documents to certify, along with a signature from the city manager or designee, that all the SMP requirements are met, as specified. OCTA staff will continue to conduct annual site visits.

These recommended revisions to the SMP Guidelines will continue to ensure compliance with M2 Ordinance No. 3, while providing improvements to local agency reporting and increased efficiencies in the SMP administration.
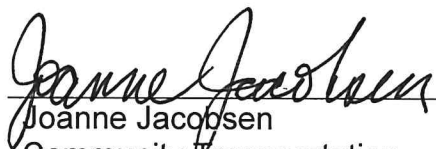
Summary

The Measure M2 Senior Mobility Program, designed to offer transportation alternatives to seniors, in addition to local fixed-route buses and paratransit service, allocates funding to participating local agencies in Orange County to provide local transportation services to seniors. Recommendations for adjustments to the program guidelines are presented for approval by the Board of Directors.

Attachments

A.   Senior Mobility Program Project U Funding and Policy Guidelines
B.   Senior Mobility Program: Annual Questionnaire and Document Request
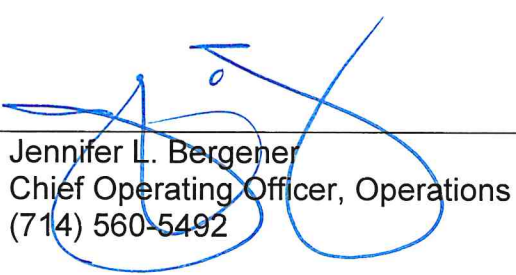
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