

To: O&S Committee

Date: May 29, 2020

From: Rashida Kamara, Manager of Accessible Services

Reviewed by: *WC.*

SUBJECT: Paratransit Report COVID-19 Update #2

Background:

California Governor issued a shelter-in place order on March 16, 2020. Since then Paratransit service has dropped by 80%. Although the governor has eased up on some of the restrictions, it has not dramatically increased paratransit service. In an effort to still support the community, County Connection in partnership with Transdev, identified essential needs in the community, in which we have participated in for the past three months.

In May 2020, staff updated the committees on these essential efforts. In addition, the board authorized the General Manager to amend the Paratransit contract to allow for such essential services to be provided. This has had a huge impact on the community. It has provided constant work for our drivers and allowed seniors and high-risk individuals to remain safely at home as essential meals and groceries are brought to them. Below is an update of services provided so far.

Service Adjustments and Community Partnerships:

Meals on wheels: Meals on wheels lost most of their drivers due to the fact they were volunteers, and either over the age of 65 or were at high risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. We contacted Meals on wheel during the first week of the shelter in place order, our drivers registered for their program, this was especially important because drivers have to be vetted to volunteer to drive and our drivers already go through a thorough vetting process to qualify to drive Paratransit passengers. This made it easier for meals on wheels to continue and even increase their deliveries to seniors in need, knowing that our drivers already fit the bill.

- 39 Drivers registered
- 3700 meals delivered to date
- Cities include (Bay Point, Concord, Walnut Creek, San Ramon, Danville, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, Antioch, Brentwood, Discovery Bay, Oakley, Concord, clayton, Bethel Island)
- Service provided 5 days a week

Church of the Bay in Collaboration with the Mt. Diablo School district (Bel Air Elementary, and Riverview Middle School)

- Service provided 3 days a week
- Serving upward of 200 students
- 577 meals
- 277 bags of groceries, toilet rolls, and paper towels

- Cities include Bay Point, Martinez, Concord, Walnut Creek

City of San Ramon Senior Meal Delivery Program:

- Service provided 2 days a week
- Meals delivered to 84 participants

Contra Costa County Food back program: In collaboration with the Contra Costa County and the food bank, County Connection was asked to assist in delivery groceries to families at risk. These grocery boxes contained food that would last between 4-7 days. The county provided volunteers to accompany the drivers to deliver the food boxes. Each food box weighed 22lbs. This program started on May 11th as a pilot and with each successful delivery week, more names have been added. To date we have delivered 2134lbs of food.

- Week 1, 19 food boxes
- Week 2, 27 food boxes
- Week 3, 51 food boxes

The feedback from the families have been a pleasure to hear:

“I received my two boxes and the process has been so simple and wonderful. The food lasts me around 4 days to a week and I am trying to limit my use of rice or macaroni and cheese as I’m trying to eat healthy, but the canned vegetables and meat has been fantastic. Tell everyone in the program, I say Thanks!”

“The boxes of food have been very helpful. I’m thankful for the food, as it allows me to cook meals for my son and I. The canned vegetables last longer than the fruit. The pastas and rice are what I eat first”

EOC COVID-19 TRANSPORT- This particular collaboration was born of the Contra Costa County EOC. A call was made to all Transit Providers in the county and in Alameda county for assistance in transporting both positive and Persons Under Investigation (PUI) passengers from hospitals to hotels or other congregant living facilities. County Connection, although willing to assist, felt ill equipped to handle the sensitive nature of the request. Upon working with the county health department, we determined we needed training, PPE’s and volunteer drivers. The county provided the training and we worked together with our contractor to modify several vehicles for COVID 19 transport. County Connection quickly developed protocols that have now been shared with AC Transit, BART, and the Marin County Health department.

- Service provided 7 days a week
- 68 Positive transport to date (March 30 request came, Training held April 6th, Transport, started April 11th, 2020)
- 4 dedicated drivers
- 4 Dedicated vehicles
- Vehicles cleaned after each transport
- County provided PPE, mask, and gloves.
- CCCTA provided overalls.
- Contractor provided Face shields.

Homeless relocation Transport: As reported last month, at the start of this collaboration, we were transporting up to 30 passengers in the first week. As the COVID-19 cases stabilize in the county, transport of PUI homeless individuals has been on the decline. For the past two weeks, we have transported less than 15 in

a week. The county health department will call Transdev and we would dispatch a driver to transport the individual, sometimes two individuals at a time to a hotel. The other transit agency participating at this time is Tri-Delta. As a result, we receive calls to transport passengers also from West County to Central County or vice versa.

- service provided 7 days a week
- Dedicated drivers
- Dedicated fleet
- Drivers in full PPE (as in the county has these individuals listed as PUI persons under investigation for possible COVID-19 exposure)
- Vehicle sanitized after each trip

Lift in restriction:

As the county continues to open gradually, there has been a slight increase in paratransit riders. Staff anticipates social distancing will continue to be a part in which we operate paratransit services, making it difficult to meet our productivity goals. We are currently transporting one passenger at a time. With social distancing, Paratransit vehicles can only transport 3 passengers at a time. Consideration will have to be given for passengers traveling with attendants which will further limit actual ADA passengers on the bus. On-going enhanced vehicle sanitation will be required in order for us not to be caught up in the anticipated second wave. Passengers will continue to be required to wear face covering as directed by the CDC and the county. We will continue to look to them for guidance in enforcing transit operations for the protection of drivers and passengers alike.

Recommendation:

None for Information only