SUBJECT: Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan Staff Summary

Background:

In October of 2019, Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) received a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant, to engage in a regional transportation study, specifically focusing on the gaps in services associated with seniors, persons with disabilities and disadvantaged persons. To conduct this study and offer recommendations, CCTA engaged Nelson Nygaard consulting firm. Nelson Nygaard convened two committees, one a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that was familiar with the transportation needs of the area as well as a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). The TAC comprised of, ADA managers, volunteer service organizers specializing in transportation for seniors, transit riders and various senior advocacy groups. The PAC was mainly comprised of Transportation Agency General Managers, CEOs of Social Service Agencies, and City Council members.

In order to engage the public, a survey was created and mailed out to 23,000 individuals in Contra Costa County of which 1,149 participated. It was made available in English, Spanish and Mandarin. As part of the study the consultant interviewed senior managers of transit agencies, including public, volunteer, and non-profit transit agencies. Several townhall meetings were scheduled, but due to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, these townhall meetings moved to a virtual platform. As the study progressed, updates were given to both the PAC and TAC for further discussion. Due to grant constraints the study was required to be completed by February 28, 2021.

Staff Update:
Unfortunately, most of the study was conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic, preventing many entities from participating fully. Transit agencies were faced with many challenges as they struggled with plummeting service levels and keeping their drivers, customers and staff safe. For some volunteer transit agencies, shutting down was the only option as they were unable to sustain their transportation services even for essential services. Most of their drivers were either volunteers or at higher risk for contracting the virus. In addition to plummeting service levels, agencies were also dealing with service emergencies such as passenger COVID-19 outbreaks and being called on to participate in emergency services which took priority in managing the spread of the virus. Finally, as the study was coming to a close, transit agencies were busy attempting to vaccinate their operators and public facing staff in order to protect their employees and passengers.
Due to these afore mentioned challenges the study was unsuccessful in completing the development of all recommendations and has therefore suggested the establishment of a task force to continue the work of the study.

Highlighted in the study are three primary items:

- Identified 21 Potential Transit Strategies for improving the existing system.
- Establishing a task force responsible for continuing the work of the study and bringing strategies to life
- The task force shall be responsible for identifying a Countywide Coordinated Entity (CE) which could be an existing non-profit or public agency or new entity with the purpose of consolidating the myriad of transportation entities into one.

Implementing this plan would be profoundly challenging across a number of different aspects ranging from a lack of identified funding sources to overcoming existing federal regulations that dictate how, when and where federally funded vehicles may be used. Additionally, the sheer magnitude of consolidating a multitude of service models with different customer bases, performance criteria, software packages, and service areas is one that will take years of effort to complete.

Despite the challenges identified, County Connection along with many other transit partners have already identified gaps in service and are collaborating to address them as identified in the above-mentioned transit strategies. This includes the One Seat Regional Program. This is a six-month pilot, which offers a one seat ride for passengers crossing multiple transit jurisdictions, without transferring. The other transit strategy includes a collaboration with CCCTA/LAVTA to use one contractor to manage paratransit services for both agencies thus sharing resources, like scheduling software, vehicles, and call centers. These Transit Strategies have already improved the rider experience is multiple agencies to meet some of studies to life, improve ridership experience for the rider and show that transit agencies can work together for the common goal.

Attachment:

CCTA ATS Executive Summary

Financial Implications:

Unknown at this time

Recommendations:

None, Information only
CONTRA COSTA ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 2021
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Contra Costa Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan was funded by a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant.

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Executive Summary

STUDY BACKGROUND

The Accessible Transportation Strategic (ATS) Plan provides a coordination structure with strategies to improve accessible transportation services, based on an examination of transportation challenges facing seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans in Contra Costa County.

Sponsored by a partnership between CCTA and the County, the ATS was funded by a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning grant.

Inclusive and equitable public engagement was a key focus of the Plan, with input from organizations, key stakeholders, and the broader Contra Costa community.

Project Oversight

The ATS process was overseen by Technical Advisory and Policy Advisory Committees. In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the project team started working “virtually” to allow people to participate safely.

- **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**
  Provided subject matter expertise and public policy implications on service concepts

- **Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)**
  Provided input on addressing policy barriers, communicating with stakeholders about the Study, liaising with elected or appointed Boards, and reviewing and prioritizing recommended strategies
Executive Summary

**STUDY CONTEXT**
Contra Costa County has a diverse population spread across a relatively large area.

**Population**
1,160,000

**Square Miles**
804

**3rd largest population and area in Bay Area**

**Related Planning Initiatives 2016-2020**

- **2016 and 2020 Transportation Expenditure Plan**
  “CCTA will develop an Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan to implement a customer-focused, user-friendly, seamless coordinated system…”

- **2017 Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan**
  “Initiate the ATS Plan: Ensure services are delivered in a coordinated system…”

- **2019 Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Resolution 4321**
  “Each county must establish or enhance mobility management programs to help provide equitable and effective access to transportation.”

*Not including census-designated places and unincorporated areas*
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities

The distribution of older adults and people with disabilities reflects the general population spread throughout the county, with a few areas of unusual concentration. Rossmoor has a higher population both of older adults and people with disabilities—countywide, those two groups constitute 23% of the population.

**Older Adults**

Three areas have a higher density of older adults: 1) **Rossmoor** (between Moraga and Walnut Creek), 2) **Crow Canyon** (north of San Ramon), and the area 3) **South of Brentwood**.

**People with Disabilities**

People with disabilities have a similar geographic spread as the general population, except one concentrated area in **Rossmoor**.
Executive Summary

Equity Considerations

**Household Income**
Low income population concentrations include West County, mid-County, and North county locations.

**People of Color**
Nearly half of the county population identifies as people of color or other non-white ethnicity.

**Countywide Ethnicity**

- 52% White
- 48% People of Color/Other
Transportation Need and Services

Access to Medical Facilities
Most medical facilities are clustered in the center of the County between Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek (2). Two facilities needed by residents throughout the County are the Contra Costa County Medical Center and the VA Medical Center, both in Martinez (2).

Community-Based Transportation
Services areas don’t always overlap areas of greatest demand, increasing the need for transit and paratransit services provided by community-transportation programs from public sector services or non-profit organizations.
OUTREACH

Outreach Toolkit

A virtual and paper flyer, along with tweets and postings on provider websites were distributed via social media, encouraging people to provide input through the online survey.
Public Engagement Collateral

We are looking for older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans to participate in a short transportation survey that will gather information on ways to make transportation convenient in the community. Survey participants could win a $25 gift card! Participate in the survey (English and Spanish) and learn more.

Thank you to subscribers of Contra Costa County.

Let’s make transportation convenient for older adults and people with disabilities.

We are gathering input from the community on ways to make transportation convenient for older adults and people with disabilities. Please visit atp CONTRA COSTA dot com/participate as your input will help us better meet your transportation needs and be entered to win a $25 gift card!

Keywords: @CCTA, transportation
Reach 4k
Tag • Translate • Share
Pre-COVID Outreach

Before the onset of the pandemic, surveys and engagement flyers were distributed and the project team made public presentations at the Developmental Disabilities Council of Contra Costa County and the Pleasant Hill Commission on Aging.

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), in coordination with Contra Costa County, is conducting a study to find out how to improve transportation services for seniors, people with disabilities, and eligible veterans who live or travel in Contra Costa County. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and return it to the person who gave it to you, or you can also take the survey on-line at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCTA_Survey. If you have any questions or need assistance filling out this survey, please contact 510-506-7586 or info@atspcontracosta.com.

### Survey Questions

1. Which modes of transportation do you usually use? (Check all that apply; answer any related follow-up questions for BUS, ADA PARATRANSIT and LYFT/UBER)
   - [ ] BART
   - [ ] Bus → Answer follow-up Q 2-4
   - [ ] Bicycle
   - [ ] Walk/Roll
   - [ ] ADA Paratransit (East Bay Paratransit, WestCAT Dial-a-Ride, County Connection LINK, Tri Delta Paratransit) → Answer follow-up Q 5-7
   - [ ] Drive myself
   - [ ] Lyft/Uber → Answer follow-up Q 8-9
   - [ ] Taxi
   - [ ] Family, neighbor, or paid helper drives me
   - [ ] Other (please specify): ______________________

2. If you use the BUS, what service(s) do you use?
   - [ ] AC Transit
   - [ ] Tri Delta
   - [ ] WestCAT
   - [ ] County Connection
   - [ ] Other (please specify): ______________________

3. Please tell us about your BUS-riding experience and interactions with drivers:
   - [ ] Excellent
   - [ ] Satisfactory
   - [ ] Poor
   - Additional comments: ______________________

4. Please share any other comments about your BUS-riding experience, such as ease of use, maintenance issues, or vehicle cleanliness:
   __________________________________________

5. If you use ADA PARATRANSIT, what service(s) do you use?
   - [ ] East Bay Paratransit
   - [ ] WestCAT Dial-a-Ride
   - [ ] County Connection LINK
   - [ ] Tri Delta Paratransit
   - [ ] Other (please specify): ______________________

6. Please tell us about your ADA PARATRANSIT-riding experience and interactions with drivers:
   - [ ] Excellent
   - [ ] Satisfactory
   - [ ] Poor
   - Additional comments: ______________________

7. Please share any other comments about your ADA PARATRANSIT-riding experience, such as ease of use, maintenance issues, or vehicle cleanliness:
   __________________________________________

8. If you use LYFT/UBER, please tell us about your riding experience and interactions with drivers:
   - [ ] Excellent
   - [ ] Satisfactory
   - [ ] Poor
   - Additional comments: ______________________

9. Please share any other comments about your LYFT/UBER-riding experience, such as ease of use, maintenance issues, or vehicle cleanliness:
   __________________________________________

10. Where are you usually going? (Please select up to three)
    I go to...
    - [ ] Medical appointment
    - [ ] Grocery shopping/drugstore
    - [ ] Non-medical appointment
    - [ ] See friends or family
    - [ ] Attend a class
    - [ ] The Senior Center
    - [ ] Church
    - [ ] Work or Volunteer position
    - [ ] Other (please specify): ______________________
Post-COVID Outreach

Once the pandemic set in, the project team moved all outreach activities to safe platforms, utilizing virtual focus groups, stakeholder interviews, an online survey, and virtual town hall to safely interact with participants.

Focus Groups

Five virtual focus groups with seniors and persons with disabilities involved in-depth conversations with the project team, with an emphasis on reaching populations often overlooked through other forms of public engagement, such as adults with disabilities, people with Limited English Proficiency, and West County residents.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interview commencing in March of 2020 were put on hold in light of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interview questions were reevaluated to reflect the circumstances, and the interviews with public and nonprofit agencies, representing an array of stakeholder groups and interests, were completed between September and November.

Telephone Town Hall

Nelson\'Nygaard hosted a live Telephone Town Hall on October 27, 2020 to outline the project and answer questions.

5 Focus Groups

11 Interviews

1,149 participants out of 23,000 invitations

3 languages

English, Spanish, Mandarin
SURVEY RESULTS

Trip Destinations and Challenges
An online survey provided insight into how respondents get where they are going, where they go, and what factors complicate their trips.

Mode to Destination
Trips were most commonly made by solo drivers, followed by those driven by a family, neighbor or paid helper. BART was used by about a third of respondents, with ADA paratransit utilized by 10% of the entire survey sample.

Destinations
The top destination was medical appointments, with grocery/drugstore shopping in second place. Senior Center trips and non-medical appointments each accounted for an 8% share of destinations.

* Respondents could choose as many modes as they used. Percentages reflect total respondents (1,063) selecting a particular mode they used.

* Respondents could choose up to three trips that they take most often. Percentages reflect total respondents (1,063) identifying each trip type.
Trip Challenges
Almost one-third of respondents feel unsafe while traveling, with about a quarter unable to go where or when they want, or feeling their trip takes too long.

* Respondents could choose up to three challenges that they faced most often. Percentages reflect total respondents (1,063) identifying each trip type.

Trip Difficulty
Mirroring the top destinations, respondents had the most difficulty with medical appointments and making grocery/drugstore trips. Seeing friends/family and getting to the Senior Center rounded up the top four types of difficult trips.

* Respondents could choose up to three trips that they take most often. Percentages reflect total respondents (1,063) for each trip type.
Executive Summary

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND GAPS
The project team’s review of existing conditions and survey data identified key needs and gaps in accessible transportation in Contra Costa County. These include:

- **New Funding** – Grants are sometimes available for planning and pilots, but all recommendations will require new sustainable funding.

- **Safety** – Many respondents feel unsafe while traveling.

- **Volunteer Driving Programs** – Additional volunteers are needed, with more reliable funding to increase capacity.

- **Medical Access** – The Regional Medical Center and VA Medical Center in Martinez need reliable access throughout the county.

- **Quality of Life Visits** – Consumers have difficulty making quality-of-life essential trips to visit friends and family, the senior center, and church.

- **Service Coordination** – Accessible services need improved coordination because they are siloed between agencies, cities, and non-profit organizations.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Accessible Transportation Plan identified an urgent need for a coordinated structure to address transportation needs and gaps in Contra Costa County accessible transportation. A crucial first step would be the creation of an Accessible Transportation Task Force.

Accessible Transportation Task Force

The Task Force would:

- **Oversee Strategic Planning**, identifying coordinated strategies to be implemented by existing agencies/non-profits
- **Create a Countywide Coordination Entity** responsible for countywide strategy implementation
- **Investigate** funding opportunities

Countywide Coordinated Entity (CE)

- **The countywide CE Organization** could be an existing non-profit or public agency—or an entirely new entity
- **Strategy implementation** would be a key function of the CE, prioritizing projects to improve and expand countywide accessible transportation
**Strategies and Implementation**

A five-year timeline for strategy development and implementation was developed, with recommended strategies divided into tiered groups.

### Tier I

- High transportation benefit
- Strong community support
- Leverages existing programs/resources
- Easy to implement (in stages or because of lower cost)

### Tier II

High ranking strategies, sorted by:
- Service impact
- Cost
- Implementation challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Implement Short-Term Strategies" /></td>
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**ESTABLISH**
Transportation Task Force

**ESTABLISH**
Countywide Coordinated Entity

**IMPLEMENT**
Countywide Coordinated Entity

Plan Countywide Coordinated Entity
Implementation Timeframes

Tiered Strategies will be implemented in phases, pending ATSP approval.

- **Immediate-Term**
  - Within 1 Year

- **Short-Term**
  - Within 2 Years

- **Long-Term**
  - 2 Years or on-going implementation beyond five years

Implementation Agency

Recommended agencies for each strategy have been identified across three categories.

- **Public Agency**
  - (e.g. Contra Costa Transportation Authority, County Administrator’s Office, County Health Services)

- **Non-Profit**
  - (e.g. Mobility Matters, Choice in Aging)

- **Transit Agency**
  - (e.g. County Connection, Tri Delta Transit, WestCAT)
## Implementation Workplan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Description</th>
<th>Implementation Term</th>
<th>Implementation Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase Local and Regional Mobility</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Increase Local and Regional Mobility</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Public Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Same-day trip programs (including wheelchair-accessible service)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Transit Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Expand existing and add new Volunteer Driver programs</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Transit Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Service beyond ADA service areas</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Transit Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Early morning and late-night service</td>
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<td>Transit Agency</td>
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<td>6 On-demand subsidies</td>
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<td>Transit Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Improve Coordination Among Providers and Community Stakeholders</strong></td>
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<td>7 Shopping trips with package assistance</td>
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<td>Public Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Hospital discharge service</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Customized guaranteed ride home programs for people with disabilities</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Transit Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Means-based car-share including accessible option</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 One-call / one-click; information &amp; referral (I&amp;R)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Programs for disabled/senior veterans</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Real-time transportation information (paratransit vehicle location, BART</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Travel training (including inter-operator trips)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Develop Partnerships for Supportive Infrastructure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Administer a uniform countywide ADA paratransit eligibility certification program</td>
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<td>Public Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Fare integration</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Public Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Procure joint paratransit scheduling software</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>Public Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Sidewalk improvements to enhance safety for older adults and wheelchair accessibility in high-priority locations</td>
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<td>Public Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Means-based fare subsidy</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Public Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Wheelchair breakdown service</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Public Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Accessible bikeshare program</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Public Agency</td>
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How A Countywide Coordinated Entity Improves Accessible Transportation in Contra Costa County

Functions of the Coordinated Entity

- **Identifies/pursues** new funding
- **Develops and administers** uniform countywide ADA paratransit eligibility certification
- **Expands** mobility management
- **Implements** joint paratransit scheduling software
Oversees seamless rides for inter-jurisdictional trips inside and outside the county

Supports Service beyond ADA service areas and regular service times

Expands Travel Training

Advocates for Safe Routes for Seniors/ Safe Routes for All

Helps establish means-based fare subsidy