

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Board of Directors

Date: December 14, 2023

From: Bill Churchill, General Manager

SUBJECT: Multi-Operator Joint Procurement of State & Federal Lobbyist Services

Background:

As staff looks to the future and strives to position County Connection to remain financially viable, achieve compliance with zero emission vehicle (ZEV) regulations and new California reporting regulations resulting from SB 125, and chart a path through a fractured Congress, we believe it may be time to consider seeking outside support. As the four partnering East Bay operators represented by County Connection, LAVTA, Tri Delta Transit, and WestCAT have collaborated on a host of projects, there have been growing challenges in obtaining operational funding, navigating regulatory constraints, and obtaining the meetings necessary to address these issues with state agency staffers and elected officials in a timely manner. As the four operators continue to collaborate on projects and innovative solutions for transportation options, the need for access to our state and federal regulators will only increase.

Toward that end, County Connection, LAVTA, Tri Delta, and WestCAT staff have been considering a joint procurement for state and federal lobbyist services to help ensure our respective Authorities' future success. Staff from each of the Authorities will be exploring with their Boards the potential value in obtaining lobbyist services as well the potential for a joint operator procurement.

The Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee and staff engaged in a robust discussion regarding the relative merits of obtaining the services of a lobbyist with particular consideration for a multi-operator collaborative contracting approach. Given the myriad of challenges faced by the East Bay transit operators it was concluded there was significant potential value in seeking lobbyist to help navigate a path forward.

Financial Implications:

Staff have evaluated contracts across other similarly sized agencies for state and federal lobbyist services, and the annual expense ranges from \$130,000 to \$155,000. One consideration for a multi-agency procurement is the potential to realize savings through economies of scale as well as through multi-operator coalition style meetings with regulators and elected officials, ultimately reducing the total number of meetings needed.

Recommendation:

The MP&L Committee and staff recommend moving forward with a joint procurement of state and federal lobbying services with LAVTA, Tri Delta, and Westcat for a one-year trial period. Staff would consult with legal to develop a joint operator contract methodology and bring it back to the Board for final approval.

Action Requested:

None, for information only

Attachments:

None