

**To:** Board of Directors

**Date:** 1/13/2022

**From:** Rashida Kamara Director of ADA and Specialized Services **Reviewed by:**

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**SUBJECT: New One-Year Demonstration Project with Choice in Aging**

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### **Background:**

In response to a growing number of complaints from Choice in Aging regarding service failures, County Connection retained the Consulting Services of an ADA Paratransit expert to investigate, summarize and recommend best practices to improve service. Both County Connection's General Manager and Choice in Aging President and CEO, Debbie Toth agreed that insight from a neutral third party would be mutually beneficial in assessing the issues and making a recommendation to improve the paratransit experience.

As a result, the Board approved a six-month pilot project, in which Choice in Aging would retain the services of Silver Ride, a Transportation Network Company (TNC) company to transport passengers to and from their facility. The pilot included 24 passengers that were identified as having the most difficult time riding paratransit. These challenges included, long ride times (even when ride times were compliant with ADA standards, multiple stops, changing drivers and bumpy trips). These trips were especially difficult for passengers with cognitive issues, like Alzheimer's and continued to have a detrimental effect on their therapeutic time at Choice in Aging.

The cost with Silver Ride was \$34 per trip during the pilot project, while ADA paratransit trips cost \$46. By collaborating with Choice in Aging, County connection saved \$12 per trip.

### **Ongoing Participation**

Following the six-month pilot, staff was programmed to recommend the continued participation in the program with Choice in Aging with the option for same day booking. Unfortunately, effective March 16<sup>th</sup>, there was a Statewide shelter in place order issued by the Governor of California, due to the widespread of COVID-19. Social services like Choice in Aging were forced to close their doors. Since the onset of the pandemic and the slow removal of restrictions, County Connection continues to work with Choice in Aging in their reopening plan. As a result, passengers have started to return to in person participation and Choice in Aging would like to renew participation in the Silver Ride program.

During COVID, Choice in Aging has been flexible in accommodating participants for in-person activities. Most participants have scheduled appointments to attend the program. When cancellations are made, a slot becomes available, but transportation restrictions make it difficult for other participants to easily

take advantage of the opening. By providing same day booking in this new pilot, we provide transportation flexibility and maximize opportunities for passengers to benefit from the program.

As staff reviews the success of the pilot pre-pandemic it is clear the program reduced the cost of transportation to the Authority, provided excellent customer service to those in need and helped build a stronger relationship with Choice in Aging.

**Financial Implications:**

The cost per trip will be \$37.50. Prior to the pandemic, County Connection budgeted \$250,00 but only spent \$115,000 for the program. This year staff budgeted \$300,000 anticipating the program would ramp up this summer and operate for a full year. With the slow start staff anticipates the program expense at \$75,000 for the remainder of FY 22. The extension will not have an additional impact on the paratransit budget because it was included in the approved budget in anticipation of continuing the project.

**Recommendation:**

Due to the success of the pilot program, the O&S Committee and staff recommend Board approval of the new and improved one-year demonstration project with Choice in Aging using the Silver Ride program.

**Action Requested:**

The O&S committee and staff request the Board of Directors approve the new one-year demonstration project with Choice in Aging, through December 2022, adopting resolution No. 2022-021.

**Attachment(s):**

Resolution No. 2020-021

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-021**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

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**AUTHORIZING NEW MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CHOICE IN AGING**

WHEREAS, the County of Contra Costa and the Cities of Clayton, Concord, the Town of Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, the Town of Moraga, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon and Walnut Creek (hereinafter "Member Jurisdictions") have formed the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority ("CCCTA"), a joint exercise of powers agency created under California Government Code Section 6500 *et seq.*, for the joint exercise of certain powers to provide coordinated and integrated public transportation services within the area of its Member Jurisdictions;

WHEREAS, CCCTA retained Douglas Cross Transportation Consulting to investigate, summarize and recommend best practices to improve CCCTA's ADA paratransit services;

WHEREAS, as a result of this investigation, CCCTA's Director of ADA and Specialized Services worked in conjunction with Choice in Aging to launch a one-year demonstration project in 2019 to passengers most affected by the constraints of CCCTA's ADA paratransit services;

WHEREAS, the one-year demonstration project was suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, CCCTA and Choice in Aging have worked together to develop a new Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") setting forth the terms of a new one-year demonstration project and the obligations of the parties, which has been approved by both agencies' legal departments;

WHEREAS, as with the initial one-year project, the new demonstration project will be managed by Choice in Aging and CCCTA will provide guidance and periodic audits to ensure the program is meeting its intended goals;

WHEREAS, Staff will provide the Board quarterly reports on the efforts of this program and will make recommendations on whether the program should continue on a permanent basis after the one-year pilot period; and

WHEREAS, Staff recommends the Board authorize the General Manager to enter into the MOU with Choice in Aging to carry out the demonstration project for an period of one year, commencing February 1, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority Board of Directors hereby authorizes the General Manager to execute the MOU with Choice in Aging and to take all other actions necessary to give effect to this Resolution.

Regularly passed and adopted this 20th day of January, 2022 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

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Dave Hudson, Chair, Board of Directors

ATTEST:

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Lathina Hill, Clerk to the Board