

To: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Date: 06/28/2023

From: Rashida Kamara, Director of ADA & Special Services

Reviewed by:



SUBJECT: Service Area Analysis

Background:

County Connection was formed in 1980 and provides transportation services in the 10 cities and unincorporated areas of Central Contra Costa County. This included fixed route services and other transit options for seniors. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed, and paratransit services became a requirement within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius from all fixed route service. In 2005, the County Connection's Board of Directors adopted a more expansive policy increasing from the mandatory minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1.5 miles for their newly established LINK Paratransit program.

ADA Service Area

Since 2005, fixed route service has changed to adapt to shifting ridership patterns and funding cuts. As a result, several passengers utilizing our transportation options prior to the implementation of the ADA service area technically fell outside of the newly developed criteria. These passengers who are referred to as "grandfathered passengers" were granted an exception and allowed to continue using our services despite falling outside the designated area. The decision to grandfather these passengers was based on several factors. Firstly, it was essential to acknowledge the longstanding relationship and reliance that these individuals had developed with the paratransit service. Discontinuing their access to our services would have caused undue hardship and hindered their ability to maintain their daily routine. Additionally, it was crucial to consider the limited alternative transportation options available to these grandfathered passengers. Displacing them from our services would have left them without a reliable means of transportation, significantly impacting their quality of life and access to essential resources.

COVID-19 Implications

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, an analysis of the service area has become necessary. During this time, passengers were granted service (even though they fell out of the service area) to meet basic needs. In addition, as we were coming out of the pandemic, ridership trends changed, and service delivery challenges continued to rise. Currently, less than 1% of trips are provided outside of our service area, but there are no clear policies on when to provide service and when to pull them back when core service levels are jeopardized.

Over the years travel patterns have changed, posing several challenges, from excessive ride times, poor on-time performance (OTP) and inconsistencies in access to service offerings. To offer the best quality of service to both our core ADA passengers and other transit users, it is imperative that staff do an in-depth analysis of travel patterns and resources that are impacted by our current service area.

The purpose of the staff analysis is to provide the MP&L Committee members with a summary of the issues that will guide policy decisions regarding paratransit services moving forward.

Financial Implications:

None, for information only.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None