

**To:** Operations and Scheduling Committee

**Date:** 01/30/2024

**From:** John Sanderson, Director of ADA and Specialized Services

**Reviewed by:**



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**SUBJECT: Travel Training Program – Countywide Pilot Expansion**

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### **Background:**

Among the recommended strategies for addressing “gaps” in available public transit service identified in the Contra Costa Transportation Authority’s (CCTA) Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan (ATSP) was Strategy 14: Travel Training (including inter-operator trips) to help riders with disabilities learn to use accessible community transportation options beyond just Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit to meet their travel needs.

County Connection already has a well-established travel training program for Central County, provided under a contract with Independent Living Resources of Solano and Contra Costa (ILRSCC). In addition, the Western Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) has recently completed a successful travel training pilot in West County. There is currently no public travel training program in East County.

### **Project Update:**

The Countywide Travel Training pilot plan will incorporate both the County Connection and WCCTAC travel training programs, as well as a new travel training program to be implemented in East County, under a single administrative structure for a one-year pilot term. Anticipated benefits include some reduction in per-trainee administrative costs from slightly increased economies of scale, as well as a substantial public benefit in the form of increased relevance, usefulness, and flexibility of the travel training options available to meet the needs of the community.

Under the new Countywide Travel Training pilot program, trainees will not be limited to their home agency’s service area. Instead, travel trainers and trainees will be able to access the full range of public transit options throughout Contra Costa County, including trips that involve more than one operator. For example, a trip from Antioch to Concord, using Tri Delta, BART, and County Connection, is not currently within the scope of any travel training program, but would be under the new countywide pilot.

With lessons learned from the existing County Connection program and the WCCTAC pilot, as well as input from our partner agencies, existing programs will operate effectively as one, under a common umbrella. Staff anticipates that additional lessons will be learned over the course of the pilot term, which can then be leveraged to either transition the pilot to a permanent program or inform future efforts.

**Financial Implications:**

The Countywide Travel Training pilot program is fully funded through a combination of Measure J and Measure X grants and would be cost-neutral to County Connection. The West County satellite is fully supported by Measure J funds, the Central County program will also continue to operate using Measure J funds (in the form of a grant from TRANSPAC), and Measure X funds will be used to support the startup and operation of the East County satellite.

**Recommendation:**

Given the identification of countywide travel training as a priority initiative under the ATSP, the likely benefit to the community, and the availability of outside funding to cover the cost of the pilot program, staff recommends the implementation of countywide travel training pilot program.

**Action Requested:**

Staff respectfully requests that the Operations & Scheduling Committee forward to the Board of Directors a recommendation that approval be granted for the General Manager to enter into an MOU with CCTA allowing for the reimbursement of County Connection’s costs associated with operating the Countywide Travel Training pilot program.

**Attachments:**

None