

To: Operations and Scheduling Committee

Date: 03/28/2024

From: John Sanderson, Director of ADA and Specialized Services

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: Automated Driving Systems (ADS) Demonstration Project Update

Background:

In 2019, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) was awarded a \$7.5 Million grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to be used for the development and demonstration of Automated Driving System (ADS) technology in Contra Costa County. The CCTA program includes three projects: a small autonomous shuttle demonstration in Rossmoor, similar to the recently concluded Bishop Ranch Autonomous Vehicle (AV) project, installation and testing of smart road technology on the I-680 corridor, and a demand-responsive ADS service demonstration in Martinez in cooperation with the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and County Connection.

Project Update:

For the past several months, County Connection staff have been working closely with CCTA and their AV contractor to develop a demonstration program that provides a clear benefit to the public, doesn't compete directly with County Connection's fixed route bus service, and satisfies the FTA's grant requirements. County Connection's contribution to the project will be in-kind services, in the form of Autonomous Vehicle Operator (AVO) labor, which we will supply in partnership with our existing paratransit contractor. Importantly, all LINK paratransit operators are members of the same Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) local as County Connection's fixed-route bus operators, meaning that the ADS pilot project will be operated with organized labor, represented by a strong local and national organization.

At the present time, the Martinez ADS pilot project will consist of two main operational parts. The first part will help meet an unmet need by transporting Medicare/MediCal patients round trip from the hospital in Martinez to any one of several different drug stores to fill prescriptions or grocery stores and the food bank to obtain food. Separate funding supports these patients' travel between their homes and the hospital, however there is currently no mechanism to provide dedicated transportation for these patients to fill prescriptions or meet their basic nutritional needs. The second part of the Martinez pilot is expected to provide point to point service, booked in real time through a smartphone app, for the general public between 6:00pm – 10:00pm, Monday through Friday, when the County Connection buses in the area have stopped running.

Financial Implications:

County Connection has committed to funding three full-time AVO positions for one year in support of the project. Additional personnel, if needed, will be provided by County Connection but funded by CCTA. Funding for the three County Connection supported AVOs will be included in the FY 2024-25 paratransit budget.

Recommendation:

None. Information Only.

Action Requested:

None. Information Only.

Attachments:

None