

To: Board of Directors

Date: 9/10/2024

From: John Sanderson, Director of ADA and Specialized Services

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: Year-End Paratransit Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2024

Background:

Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) was an important year for County Connection's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and non-ADA paratransit programs and services. Most of the temporary COVID-19 mitigation programs adopted in FY20 and FY21 (including Meals on Wheels deliveries, school nutrition transportation, and food bank trips) ended in FY23. In FY24 monthly trip counts on both County Connection's LINK paratransit program and the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) Dial-a-Ride (provided by County Connection under contract to LAVTA) remained lower than the pre-covid baselines, however the gap continues to narrow. At the same time, the One-Seat Ride (OSR) program grew significantly in FY24, and several other related programs also saw significant development, including the Low-Income Fare Equity (LIFE) program, the Travel Training program, and the nascent Autonomous Driving System (ADS) pilot partnership with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and May Mobility.

ADA Paratransit Programs:

LINK Operations, Costs, and Performance: Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH) (time when the LINK vehicle is in service and available for passengers to ride) increased by over 29% from FY23 to FY24. Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM) (miles driven within Revenue Hours) only increased by about half as much, and Vehicle Revenue Speed decreased by 14.5%. Deadhead Hours and Miles (DHH/DHM) (miles and hours when the vehicle is on the road but not in service) also increased significantly. Total Unlinked Passenger Trips (UPT) (one-way rides, regardless of passenger type – paratransit customer, attendant, etc.) increased by nearly 14% percent, while Average Passenger Trip Length (the distance the average passenger rode while on the vehicle) increased by nearly 22%.

The confluence of more riders, taking longer, slower trips, combined with substantial increases in Deadhead Hours and Miles resulted in an overall cost increase of about 28% from FY23 to FY24, and associated increases in the cost per VRH and per UPT. Non-contract costs declined by about 2% year-over-year. Farebox revenue increased by about 54%, however the farebox recovery ratio remained well below County Connection's traditional goal of 10.7% for paratransit.

The Contractor met all performance standards in FY24, except for Preventable Accidents per 100,000 miles and Employee Turnover. While providing high quality ADA paratransit service is and likely always will be a challenging endeavor, overall contract performance in FY24 was much better than in FY23 which led to a significant increase in customer satisfaction and corresponding decrease in the rate of validated complaints received. Great credit is due to the Contractor's local staff and management team for their diligent efforts leading to the overall improvement in service quality.

LAVTA Dial-a-Ride Operations: LAVTA's Unlinked Passenger Trips increased by 16.5% from FY23 to FY24. Their Revenue Hours increased by just under 26% from FY23 to FY24, however Revenue Miles only increased by 1.7%, leading to an overall Revenue Speed decrease of 19%. Consequently, LAVTA's paratransit program costs increased by about 17% year-over-year, in place of the substantial (but unrealized) decrease that had been forecast. While providing LAVTA service is cost neutral to County Connection, it is worth noting that the unanticipated increase in Revenue Speed combined with the substantial increase in passengers resulted in a budget shortfall of about 37%, which was preliminarily presented to the Board in April.

Non-ADA Programs:

Low Income Fare Equity (LIFE): In coordination with Tri Delta Transit, WestCat and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), County Connection began offering fare subsidies to qualifying low-income paratransit riders during the fourth quarter of FY24. Participants in the County Connection LIFE program are given \$50 per month in pre-paid LINK fare credits, which allows them to take ten (10) one-way rides per month.

Travel Training: In coordination with Tri Delta, CCTA, and the Western Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) County Connection is in the process of building a countywide travel training program. Once operational, the program will offer free guidance and practical training for adults throughout the county who could use fixed-route transit but are unfamiliar with the system.

Autonomous Driving System (ADS) Pilot: County Connection has partnered with CCTA and May Mobility to run a one-year pilot program centered around the County Hospital in Martinez, in which qualified patients will have access to specialized transportation to access nutrition and medication resources via autonomous (self-driving) vehicles. While largely self-sufficient, each vehicle must have a safety driver, known as an Autonomous Vehicle Operator (AVO) while in service. County Connection is providing the AVOs for the project through our paratransit contractor, Transdev.

One-Seat Ride (OSR) Pilot: County Connection continues to operate the paratransit One-Seat Ride program in partnership with Tri Delta, WestCat, and LAVTA. Traditionally, a rider taking paratransit from Antioch to Pinole would have to take three separate vehicles to complete their trip. They would be picked up in Antioch by a Tri Delta vehicle and driven to a transfer point, typically the North Concord/Martinez BART station. A County Connection vehicle would pick up the rider from the BART station and drive them to a second transfer point in Martinez. The rider would then board a WestCat vehicle for the final leg of their trip from Martinez to Pinole. Under the OSR program, the same rider would be driven from Antioch to Pinole in a single vehicle, without the need to transfer. The OSR program provides a much more comfortable experience for the rider and has also proven to be far more cost effective for the operators. In FY24, the OSR program accounted for about 17% of County Connection's total paratransit trips and 22% of the total miles traveled by paratransit riders.

Financial Implication:

Staff budgeted \$6,791,000 for LINK operations, \$1,320,000 for LAVTA Dial-a-Ride operations, and \$758,667 for other associated costs in FY24. Unfortunately, the increase in trip demand, combined with the increase in average trip length, and the decrease in revenue speeds led to actual costs coming in higher than expected, which required a mid-year budget correction that was presented to the Board in April. Final unaudited LINK costs exceeded the initial FY24 budget by 5.1%, LAVTA costs by 36.5% (reimbursed by LAVTA), and non-operational costs by 11.4%. The OSR pilot is excluded from most reporting, but actual program costs fell well within the \$600,000 budgeted. The higher-than-expected costs incurred in FY24 have been included in all calculations for the FY25 budget.

Recommendation:

None, for Information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

1. Paratransit Performance Measurement
2. Paratransit Cost Measurement
3. Paratransit Performance Indicators

Attachment 1: LINK Paratransit Performance Measurement

Fiscal Years 2023 & 2024

Performance Measure	FY23	FY24	% Change	
Revenue Miles	858,445	979,593	↑	14.1%
Deadhead Miles	93,697	137,669	↑	46.9%
Total Vehicle Miles	952,143	1,117,263	↑	17.3%
DH Miles %	9.8%	12.3%	↑	25.2%
Revenue Hours	53,859	69,689	↑	29.4%
Deadhead Hours	8,204	13,862	↑	69.0%
Total Vehicle Hours	62,063	83,551	↑	34.6%
Deadhead Hours %	11.2%	11.2%	↑	0.0%
Revenue Speed (MPH)	15.94	14.06	↓	-11.8%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	83,888	95,341	↑	13.7%
Passenger Miles Traveled	985,682	1,050,499	↑	6.6%
Avg. Passenger Trip Length	11.75	11.02	↓	-6.2%

LAVTA Paratransit Performance Measurement

Performance Measure	FY23	FY24	% Change	
Total Vehicle Miles*	235,305	239,286	↑	1.7%
Total Vehicle Hours*	15,847	19,895	↑	25.5%
Revenue Speed (MPH)	14.85	12.03	↓	-19.0%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	29,647	34,549	↑	16.5%
Passenger Miles Traveled	209,049	221,433	↑	5.9%
Avg. Passenger Trip Length	7.05	6.41	↓	-9.1%

*Note: Deadhead is NOT included in the LAVTA contract

One-Seat Ride Performance Measurement

Performance Measure	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	
Revenue Miles	253,534	316,578	↑	24.9%
Deadhead Miles	64,258	69,292	↑	7.8%
Total Vehicle Miles	317,791	385,870	↑	21.4%
Revenue Hours	12,832	16,799	↑	30.9%
Deadhead Hours	3,535	4,734	↑	33.9%
Total Vehicle Hours	16,367	21,533	↑	31.6%
Deadhead Hours %	21.6%	21.98%	↑	1.8%
Revenue Speed (MPH)	19.76	18.85	↓	-4.6%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	16,014	19,313	↑	20.6%
Passenger Miles Traveled	238,977	295,463	↑	23.6%
Avg. Passenger Trip Length	14.92	15.30	↑	2.5%

Attachment 2: LINK Paratransit Cost Measurement

Fiscal Years 2023 & 2024

Cost Measure	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	
Direct Contract Cost	\$5,270,529	\$7,137,938	↑	31.2%
Other (Non-Contract) Cost	\$861,518	\$845,055	↓	-1.9%
Total Program Cost	\$6,132,047	\$7,982,993	↑	27.5%
Cost per Revenue Hour	\$113.85	\$114.55	↑	3.6%
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$73.10	\$83.73	↑	17.1%
Fare Revenue	\$338,231	\$490,658	↑	54.4%

LAVTA Paratransit Cost Measurement

Cost Measure	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	
Total Cost	\$1,544,046	\$1,802,400	↑	16.7%%
Cost per Revenue Hour	\$97.43	\$90.60	↓	-7.6%
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$52.08	\$52.17	↓	-25.2%
Fare Revenue	\$25,922	\$31,410	↑	21.2%

Attachment 3: LINK Paratransit Performance Indicators

Fiscal Years 2023 & 2024

Performance Metric	Standard	Met?	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	
On-Time Performance	>90%	✓	83.4%	97.8%	↑	17.3%
Passengers/VRH	>1.5	✓	1.85	1.64	↓	-11.6%
Complaints/1,000 Trips	<2.0	✓	3.85	1.13	↓	-70.6%
Capacity Denials	0	✓	0	0		N/A
Farebox Recovery %	>10.7%	X	4.2%	5.1%	↑	20.0%
Revenue Hour Cost Increase	<Inflation	X			↑	3.6%
Per Passenger Cost Increase	<Inflation	X			↑	17.1%
Roadcalls/100k Miles	<4.0	✓	1.02	0.91	↓	-10.3%
Accidents/100k Miles	<0.5	X	0.46	0.83	↑	79.3%
Employee Turnover	<5.0%	X	26%	31%	↑	17.8%
Lift Availability	100%	✓	100%	100%		N/A