

**To:** Operations & Scheduling Committee

**Date:** 10/28/2024

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

**Reviewed by:**

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**SUBJECT: Paratransit One-Seat Ride Program – Permanent MOU**

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### **Background:**

In November 2020, the Board of Directors approved a six-month One-Seat Ride (OSR) pilot program serving paratransit-eligible passengers across multiple transit agency service areas, governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between participating agencies including: Tri-Delta Transit, WestCat, LAVTA, and County Connection. The pilot program simplified regional travel by eliminating the need for transfers when crossing between paratransit service areas, ensuring passengers have a continuous One-Seat ride throughout their journey.

### **Pilot Extensions:**

The pilot program was extended in April 2021, November 2022, and November 2023, while the program matured and partner agencies implemented a variety of innovations and improvements, including: streamlining customer service procedures, expanding fare payment options to include County Connection prepaid fare accounts and Tri Delta, LAVTA, and WestCat paratransit tickets, unified data management and invoicing algorithms, and procedures for reporting OSR program data to the National Transit Database (NTD).

### **Ongoing Program & Permanent MOU:**

After an extended pilot phase, the OSR program has proven itself to be enormously beneficial for riders as well as operationally advantageous and cost-effective for the partnering agencies, when compared to the previous system of coordinated inter-operator transfer trips. Customers benefit from shorter and more comfortable origin to destination rides as well as lower fares, while OSR partner agencies benefit from significantly greater predictability and much lower shared per-trip costs.

All OSR trips are booked and dispatched through County Connection's LINK paratransit call center. OSR trips are performed primarily by County Connection's paratransit subcontractor, with the primary contractor providing "reverse rescue" service in cases where the subcontractor is unable to provide the trip – typically about 12% of monthly OSR trips. OSR passengers are charged the local ADA paratransit fare for the jurisdiction where each one-way trip originates. Following the close of each month, County Connection invoices the other partner agencies for the actual hours and reverse rescue miles operated within each partner's jurisdiction. Going forward, County Connection will report all OSR operations data to the NTD in the same way as ADA paratransit service is reported, and the partners will report program costs through coordinated reports.

In consultation with the partner agencies and Legal, staff has prepared a draft permanent MOU to govern the OSR program going forward. The draft MOU is based largely on the earlier pilot-phase agreements

and incorporates significant changes at the request of all parties involved. Notable changes from the pilot MOUs include clarification of party roles and responsibilities, and new provisions for cost sharing and monthly reporting. As before, the operating costs for OSR service will be apportioned between the partners based on the actual time and distance traveled in each agency's service area. However, the new MOU also includes partial support for County Connection's overhead costs. The new MOU also includes a list of specific metrics that will be reported to the partner agencies every month – which is also expected to facilitate more detailed and timely reporting and analysis to the Board.

**Financial Implications:**

Negligible. The FY 2025 budget for Paratransit services incorporated the expenses associated with the OSR program at approximately \$738,000. Staff anticipates that the new MOU's provision for overhead cost sharing will offset OSR program costs by up to 10%.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the One-Seat ride program be made permanent through the execution of a permanent MOU.

**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 a permanent MOU with Tri Delta Transit, LAVTA, and WestCat to continue the One-Seat Ride program indefinitely.

**Attachments:**

None