

**To:** Operations and Scheduling Committee

**Date:** 11/26/2024

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

**Reviewed by:** *RS*

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**SUBJECT: Choice in Aging Memorandum of Understanding**

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## **Background:**

Choice in Aging (CiA), an adult social service agency accounted for about 20% of County Connection's daily paratransit trip volume, before the COVID-19 pandemic. In the summer of 2017, under the prior paratransit service contractor, CiA and its clients experienced a number of challenges related to County Connection LINK paratransit service. To address these issues, County Connection retained a consultant to make recommendations to improve communication between County Connection and CiA, and to improve service outcomes for CiA's most vulnerable clients.

One of the solutions proposed by the consultant was that County Connection and CiA work together to provide a more tailored service using an accessible Transportation Network Company (TNC) partner for the small number of CiA clients that were unable to use LINK paratransit to access the CiA program. As a result, in March 2019, the Board approved a six-month pilot project, in which Choice in Aging would retain the services of SilverRide.

In January 2022, following a nearly two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Board again approved a demonstration pilot project as County Connection staff worked with Choice in Aging staff to reopen and identify new passengers. The new pilot also included a same-day booking option for the first time, enabling qualified program participants to book same-day trips to CiA using SilverRide. The same-day option was intended to eliminate unforeseen no-shows to the CiA day program and gave other clients the opportunity to benefit from the program by reducing or eliminating unused program placements.

## **Program Update**

In January 2023, the Board took action to make the CiA - SilverRide program permanent and authorized the General Manager to enter into a one-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CiA for reimbursement of program expenses. The Board acted again in December of 2023 to authorize a new MOU allowing County Connection to continue reimbursing CiA's program expenses through December 2024.

Staff has continued to monitor the program over the past two years. On-time performance has remained exemplary, while the anticipated decrease CiA day-program no shows due to late LINK rides has been sustained since the beginning of the program. At the same time, the CiA - SilverRide program has benefited the LINK program by reducing both trip demand and the administrative load for dispatch

during the busiest hours of the day. The proven success of the program for all parties more than justifies County Connection's continued support.

**Financial Implications:**

Total CiA - SilverRide program costs of slightly under \$400,000 are expected for the current Fiscal Year (FY2025) and are included in the FY2025 budget. The SilverRide per-trip price of \$36.95 falls well below the average LINK paratransit trip cost of \$74.85, observed over the past 28 months.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends executing a new MOU with Choice in Aging, to enable them to extend their contract with SilverRide. This will continue to provide an alternative transportation service, offered by County Connection through CiA which is safe reliable and cost effective for a vulnerable population in our service area.

**Action Requested:**

Staff respectfully requests the Operations & Scheduling Committee forward to the Board of Directors authorization for the General Manager to enter a new one-year MOU permitting County Connection to reimburse CiA for their SilverRide trip costs.

**Attachments:**

None