

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	April 28, 2020
SUBJECT:	Approve Reallocation of Fiscal Year 2019/20 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Funding to Expand ShastaConnect Services
AGENDA ITEM:	10
STAFF CONTACT:	Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The fiscal year (FY) 2019/20 allocation of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds to the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) totals \$326,992. The board of directors approved allocating those funds to the Sunday On-Demand Transit service free fare program at its February 25, 2020, meeting. In light of ridership impacts due to COVID-19, staff recommends revising the application to change the reimbursement structure to cover operational costs directly rather than rely solely on free fares. This requires a change to existing services. The FY 2019/20 LCTOP application scope has been revised to cover operational costs for expanding the Sunday On-Demand Transit service area and expanding rider eligibility for Monday through Friday Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) services.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors:

1. Adopt Resolution 20-03, reallocating \$135,848 in FY 2019/20 LCTOP funds to the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit Service Expansion Project and \$191,144 to the ShastaConnect CTSA Rider Eligibility Expansion Project; and
2. Authorize the executive director to sign the Certifications and Assurances and Authorized Agent forms for the LCTOP applications, including any amendments as may be necessary.

DISCUSSION:

LCTOP provides public transportation funding for new or enhanced transit services that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility. LCTOP funds must be allocated to an approved project by the application deadline or the funds are redistributed elsewhere in California. Projects that serve disadvantaged or low-income communities receive priority. LCTOP funds cannot supplant existing services or funding, and expenditures toward those funds must start within six months of award.

In February, the board of directors approved allocating FY 2019/20 LCTOP funds toward a second year of free fares for the Sunday On-Demand Transit service. However, the temporary suspension of Sunday transit services due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic makes it difficult to expend prior cycle LCTOP free fare funds and start charging Sunday transit service free fares against FY 2019/20 funds by December 31, 2020. Staff is seeking a different basis to allocate funds to support Dignity Health Connected Living (DHCL) services, including Sunday transit service, because allocation based

on ridership is no longer stable or practical. Although, significant federal stimulus funds will be available to address public transportation impacts to RABA, DHCL services are not eligible. This action will help to partially offset impacts associated with higher costs and reduced sales tax revenue for CTSA services due to COVID-19.

Sunday On-Demand Transit Service Expansion Project – This project consists of expanding the Sunday On-Demand Transit service area to include the cities of Anderson and Shasta Lake for the duration of the pilot program. The expansion allows changes to the LCTOP reimbursement structure from one that is dependent on ridership, to one that covers actual operational costs.

Current monthly DHCL operating costs for Sunday transit services are averaging 50% of originally estimated costs. Expansion of the Sunday transit service area fits within originally estimated operational costs and would be LCTOP grant-funded. Free fares from a prior cycle LCTOP application remain available and can be used in addition to the operational reimbursements provided in this application. The benefit of this project is that it covers operational costs for staff hours (DHCL and SRTA), driver training, outreach materials, and some software/technology costs associated with expanded services (e.g. adding software licenses on additional tablets).

ShastaConnect CTSA Rider Eligibility Expansion Project – This project consists of expanding rider eligibility in the current CTSA service area to the general public, for an initial one-year period. CTSA services cover trips with origins or destinations outside the RABA service area. Expanding rider eligibility within the CTSA service area has been a community request and a long-term goal under SRTA's contract with DHCL.

Using LCTOP funds to expand rider eligibility in the existing CTSA service area provides funds for needed software and communication equipment upgrades, as well as operating funds to cover the expanded rider eligibility. Because DHCL provides staffing and resources for both CTSA and Sunday services, there will be cost savings and improved efficiency for both services with shared technology and communication upgrades. Additional LCTOP funds could be requested in the future. The cost should be lower in the years after initial start-up because the service will utilize excess capacity on existing vehicles to accommodate riders other than seniors or people with disabilities.

Staff submitted applications requesting allocations of FY 2019/20 LCTOP funds toward both projects on April 17, 2020. LCTOP funds will be available as early as July, however the service expansions will likely occur later this summer.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may decline to allocate FY 2019/20 LCTOP funds to the proposed projects and allocate to a different project that meets LCTOP eligibility criteria.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Caltrans and the California Air Resources Board administer the LCTOP funds. DHCL operates the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit service. SRTA and DHCL staff mutually agreed on the scope of work for the revised applications.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This action would re-allocate \$326,992 previously approved by the board of directors for Sunday Service free fares to two projects: Sunday On-Demand Transit expanded service operations (\$135,848) and Monday through Friday CTSA expanded rider eligibility services (\$191,144). In addition, FY 2017/18 LCTOP funds totaling \$143,310 remain available to support Sunday On-Demand Transit service costs through free fares. Current CTSA services are paid through the 5% set aside of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds. These are based on sales tax revenue that will see significant reductions this year and next. The LCTOP funds will help offset these revenue losses.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments:

A: Resolution 20-03

RESOLUTION



RESOLUTION NUMBER:	20-03
SUBJECT:	Authorization for the Execution of the Certifications and Assurances and Authorized Agent Forms for the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program for the following Projects: ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit Service Expansion Project, for \$135,848, and ShastaConnect CTSA Rider Eligibility Expansion Project for \$191,144.

WHEREAS, the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) is an eligible project sponsor and may receive state funding from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) for transit projects; and

WHEREAS, the statutes related to state-funded transit projects require a local or regional implementing agency to abide by various regulations; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 862 (2014) named the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as the administrative agency for the LCTOP; and

WHEREAS, Caltrans has developed guidelines for the purpose of administering and distributing LCTOP funds to eligible project sponsors; and

WHEREAS, the SRTA Board of Directors wishes to delegate authorization to execute the fiscal year 2019/20 LCTOP certifications, assurances and authorized agent forms and any amendments thereto to the executive director; and

WHEREAS, the SRTA Board of Directors wishes to implement the LCTOP project listed above.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency:

1. Agrees to comply with all conditions and requirements set forth in the Certification and Assurances and the Authorized Agent documents and applicable statutes, regulations, and guidelines for LCTOP funded transit projects; and
2. Authorizes the Executive Director to execute all required documents of the LCTOP program and any amendments thereto with Caltrans; and
3. Authorizes submittal of the following project nomination(s) and allocation request(s) to Caltrans in FY 2019/20 LCTOP funds:

Project Name: ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit Service Expansion Project

Amount of LCTOP funds requested: \$135,848

Short description of project: Expansion of the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit service area to include the cities of Anderson and Shasta Lake, and some nearby unincorporated county areas.

Benefit to a Priority Population: Provides increased access to public transportation

Project Name: ShastaConnect CTSA Rider Eligibility Expansion Project

Amount of LCTOP funds requested: \$191,144

Short description of project: Expansion of rider eligibility for ShastaConnect Monday-Friday CTSA service.

Benefit to a Priority Population: Provides increased access to public transportation

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 28th day of April 2020, by the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency.

Leonard Moty, Chair

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency