



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE:	December 13, 2016
SUBJECT:	Authorize Request for Proposals for Physical Design of a Sunday Transit Service Demonstration Project
AGENDA ITEM:	13
STAFF CONTACT:	Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

The SRTA Board of Directors authorized a Federal Transit Administration grant application to implement “on-demand” Sunday transit service. The grant was denied, however SRTA continues to support efforts to explore Sunday transit service for the region and staff recommends moving forward with the planning phase of the demonstration project using SRTA’s planning funds.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the Phase 1 design of a Sunday transit service demonstration project.

DISCUSSION:

SRTA is working on several initiatives with regional partners for on-demand solutions to make transit services more cost-effective. One initiative is a demonstration project to provide Sunday transit service. This service has been a long-standing public request and is an identified need in RABA’s short-range transit plan and SRTA’s fiscal year 2016/17 Unmet Transit Needs findings. A demonstration project would explore the emerging practice of “on-demand” transit, which utilizes smart phone applications, GPS vehicle tracking, and advanced dispatch software to provide rider-responsive mobility when and where it’s needed.

In May 2016, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced a competitive grant program for “on-demand” transit solutions. The SRTA Board of Directors approved an application for a demonstration project for on-demand Sunday transit service in June 2016. SRTA was not awarded grant funding.

Staff recommends moving forward with the Sunday transit service demonstration project using SRTA planning funds. If the demonstration project is successful, it can be replicated to serve other needs. It is proposed that SRTA pursue the project in two phases: Phase 1 is for the design of the service and Phase 2 is for implementation. A draft scope of work based on the original grant application is attached for board consideration.

Phase 1: Service Design – SRTA will acquire a consultant to help design the demonstration project. The scope of work includes: evaluating existing resources; service area planning; public outreach; identification of a marketing strategy; and budgeting. Phase 1 will take up to twelve months with an estimated cost of \$75,000. The results of Phase 1 will be presented to the SRTA Board of Directors for review and consideration of implementation in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Demonstration Project – If approved by the board of directors, Phase 2 would implement the service. This would include technology procurement, contracting with a service provider, marketing, data collection and customer feedback to track the performance of the routes and gauge effectiveness. The demonstration project should last at least a year. The service area for the Sunday transit service project would be a portion of the RABA service area, focused on the highest demand areas. Staff would present findings to both the SRTA and RABA Board of Directors to determine future actions. Costs for Phase 2 are scalable depending on the size of the service area. For example, \$198,000 may finance six roving vehicles every Sunday for one year. Fund sources could include fare revenues, formula funds from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), FTA grant or formula funds, or Consolidated Transit Services Agency (CTSA) funds.

The timing of this project is appropriate given other concurrent efforts in the region, including:

- The board of directors' approval of \$42,500 for the city of Shasta Lake to conduct an on-demand feasibility study for transit services. Staff is exploring an option to combine these studies;
- Shasta Senior Nutrition Program has expressed a willingness to be a partner on this project. They're interested in providing more on-demand transit services to replace their current service model and will be purchasing new hybrid or all-electric vehicles with better on-demand capabilities; and
- The demonstration project is a relatively inexpensive way to gauge Sunday demand compared to utilizing the RABA fixed-route system for the entire service area.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may request modifications to the scope of work. The board of directors may defer this item to the February meeting and request more information. The board of directors may decline to issue an RFP at this time.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

SRTA and Shasta Senior Nutrition Program (SSNP) collaborated on the scope of work for the FTA 'Mobility-On-Demand' Sandbox grant application. Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) staff was consulted for input and is invited to advise, observe and participate in the project as resources allow. SRTA may coordinate or combine efforts with the city of Shasta Lake, who will be conducting a similar study using SRTA funds. *The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) concurs with the staff recommendation.*

FINANCING:

Phase 1 costs are estimated at \$75,000, with \$15,000 for staff time and \$60,000 for consultant services. FHWA and FTA Planning funds are proposed in Amendment #2 to SRTA's fiscal year 2016/17 budget. Phase 2 requires subsequent discretionary approval based on Phase 1 results. Funds such as LCTOP are available for operations and can only be used for new transit service proposals such as this.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments: Sunday Transit Service Demonstration Project Scope of Work (DRAFT)

Sunday On-Demand Transit Service Demonstration Project

Scope of Work – DRAFT

PHASE 1

The purpose of Phase 1 is to develop a plan for implementing an “on-demand” transit service demonstration project. Initial efforts will focus on a portion of area within the RABA service area. The transit service will connect residents to key employment, social and cultural destination areas.

Task A: Service Area Planning

1. Existing Conditions
 - 1.1. Work with SRTA to identify key:
 - 1.1.1. Employment, social and cultural destination centers.
 - 1.1.2. Residential areas, including transit dependent populations.
 - 1.2. Assist in identifying available transit capital resources (i.e. vehicles, drivers, dispatchers, etc.)
 - 1.3. Identify potential social organization or businesses willing to help market the service.
2. Service Area Planning
 - 2.1. Develop draft service area based on existing conditions and available resources (i.e. vehicles).
 - 2.2. Include details on transit schedule, hours of service, fare structure, location of routes or stops (if applicable), Strategies to maximize coverage of service area and maximize use/availability of vehicles, etc.
 - 2.3. Provide opportunity for public input on draft service area (example: provide website map where potential users can add ‘pins’ to locations they would like service to) and refine service area.
3. Budgeting
 - 3.1. Determine budget for implementation of the service, including technology and other capital startup costs, as well as operational costs.
4. Transit Service Provider Analysis
 - 4.1. Assist SRTA in determining transit provider requirements for purposes of service contracting. Resources should consist of but is not limited to the following: vehicles, drivers, dispatchers, maintenance personnel, etc.
 - 4.2. Determine performance standards and develop incentives.

Deliverables:

1. Existing conditions memo
2. Service area plan, including geographic boundaries.
3. Fare structure and budget for the service
4. Memo on transit provider requirements

Task B: Software and Hardware Needs

1. Existing Conditions
 - 1.1. Review existing Information Technology capabilities of transit provider(s). Including a review of computer and phone system capabilities to handle dispatching for the service and
2. Software Provider Analysis
 - 2.1. Assist SRTA in determining the most appropriate “on-demand” software for implementing the service, based on needs identified during the project. Potential needs may include:
 - 2.1.1. Dispatching;
 - 2.1.2. App or website ride requests;

- 2.1.3. Ability for advanced ride scheduling; and
- 2.1.4. Allow for various payment options including (app, online account with credit/debit card, on-site credit/debit card, and/or cash).
- 2.2. Identify any hardware (i.e. phones, computers, servers, etc.) necessary to conduct dispatching and coordinating of rides with the identified software.

Deliverables:

- 1. Existing software/hardware conditions memo
- 2. Identification of available “on-demand” software that fits project needs
- 3. Draft document for procurement of software and hardware.

Task C: Branding, Marketing and Public Outreach

- 1. Assist in identifying potential “branding” for the service, including:
 - 1.1. A name for the service
 - 1.2. Slogan that helps describe the purpose of the service
- 2. Develop a marketing strategy for making the public aware of the new service. Strategies may include the use of posters, decals, flyers, a website, social media, newspaper ads, and/or commercials. The strategy should include ways to market the service before its implementation and also throughout the duration of the service.
- 3. Identify materials and potential incentives for businesses and social organizations to share with employees and informational materials that can be shared with the public.
- 4. Determine marketing costs and develop an appropriate budget based on available resources

Deliverables:

- 1. Marketing strategy plan and associated budget
- 2. Marketing schedule
- 3. Branding concepts