STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE:	**June 23, 2020**
SUBJECT:	**Approve Contract with Via Mobility LLC. to Provide Software for the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit Service**
AGENDA ITEM:	**5-8**
STAFF CONTACT:	**Sean Tiedgen, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner**

SUMMARY

SRTA hired Routematch Software, Inc. to provide a software package for the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit service that included tools to manage operations and track performance, a mobile app for riders to request trips, and a driver app to assist drivers in picking up and dropping off riders. On June 1, 2020, SRTA terminated its contract with Routematch due to their inability to meet service needs and ongoing software issues left unresolved. Several vendors from the prior procurement were contacted for their interest in providing software for the Sunday On-Demand Transit service. After an in-depth evaluation of vendor capabilities, SRTA and Dignity Health Connected Living (DHCL) staff determined Via Mobility LLC.'s (Via) software solution best matches service needs and recommends a contract be approved.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize the executive director to:

1. enter into a technical services agreement with Via Mobility LLC., to provide software services for the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit service for a 24-month term, not to exceed $75,896; and
2. make minor administrative contract amendments as appropriate.

DISCUSSION:

In May 2018, SRTA issued a Request for Quotes for vendors to provide software support services for the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit service. The Executive Director signed a contract with Routematch Software, Inc., on September 26, 2018, totaling $49,920. The contract was funded with Fiscal Year 2017/18 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds.

SRTA and DHCL staff worked with Routematch on the planning and preparation of the software to operate the Sunday service. Virtual and real-world testing indicated the software system was ready for service. Soon after launch several software issues appeared that severely impacted DHCL's ability to manage and operate the service. These major issues resulted in:

- riders and dispatchers getting unnecessary trip denials and being unable to reliably book trips on available vehicles;
- dispatchers being required to manually route vehicles; and
- drivers being routed to incorrect stops or inefficiently routed to pick up or drop-off riders.

After the COVID-19 related service suspension was announced, SRTA and DHCL staff evaluated the performance of the Routematch software platform. It was determined that despite efforts to resolve issues, and with several still outstanding, there is no confidence that the software can perform as needed for the remaining duration of the pilot service. Staff at both agencies mutually agreed that a new software vendor is necessary for the success of the service. On June 1, 2020, Routematch was notified that SRTA was terminating its contract with the vendor. $17,000 of the original contract budget remains unused and can be reallocated towards Sunday On-Demand Transit service costs.

SRTA staff contacted several vendors who responded during the prior procurement to see if there was interest in providing software for the Sunday On-Demand Transit service. Discussions were held with three vendors: DoubleMap, TransLoc, and Via. SRTA and DHCL staff conducted in-depth online meetings in which the vendor's product was discussed and demonstrated. SRTA and DHCL staff determined that Via, can provide a software product that best matches the software needs for the Sunday On-Demand Transit service.

The Via software package is a cloud-based solution geared toward micro-transit and paratransit services. With the new software, riders will still be able to pre-book trips or request trips on the day of service. It provides the following added benefits that were not available with the Routematch software:

- Can be used for the CTSA Monday-Friday service.
- Dispatchers have the ability to manage and update rider profiles, can better manage fleet/driver schedules, receive real-time information on the status of each vehicle and rider, and reassign riders to different vehicles if needed.
- Riders will be able to drop a 'pin' on their screen to better tell drivers where they're located or want to be dropped off.
- Drivers receive more information about upcoming and current trips, can "ping" riders to let them know they have arrived, and may request assistance from dispatch all from their app.
- Performance metrics are reported in graph/chart formats with many variables to choose; not just in a downloadable table format.

The contract scope of work includes: 1) Design, setup, and testing of software including dispatch portal, driver app, and mobile rider app; 2) Putting mobile apps on Apple and iOS app stores; 3) Assistance with a launch plan for restarting the service; 4) Training of SRTA and DHCL staff on use of all aspects of the software; and 5) Monthly and "day of service" support.

Via is familiar with migrating clients from other software platforms and will assist in the transition. SRTA staff has already acquired existing service data and basic registered rider information necessary for the transition. It's anticipated that the software would be ready for use by September 2020, with Sunday service resuming soon after.

ALTERNATIVES

The board of directors may choose to not award a contract to VIA and direct staff to issue a new Request for Proposals.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

SRTA contracts with DHCL to operate the ShastaConnect Sunday On-Demand Transit Service.

FISCAL IMPACT

Initial costs for the contract totals $49,000, with options to add more software licenses to vehicles if the service is expanded, for a maximum contract amount of $75,896. The contract will be covered by LCTOP funds: $21,896 in FY 2017/18 LCTOP funds ($17,000 in unused funds from Routematch contract, $615 in unused “start-up” funds, and $4,281 in interest earned) and $54,000 in FY 2019/20 LCTOP funds. No Transportation Development Act (TDA) or other regional funds are anticipated to be used toward this contract.

Dan Little

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director