

SUBJECT: 2013 UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS - REQUEST FOR TRANSIT SERVICE EXPANSION

SOURCE: Public Works Department - Transit

COMMENT: The California State Transportation Development Act (TDA), which was passed in 1971, provides a major source of funding for local transit, bicycle/pedestrian and street projects. The legislation, as amended, authorizes the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) to administer the local TDA process and oversee regulatory and fiscal compliance.

The legislative intent for use of TDA money is stated in the law as follows:

It is in the interest of the State that funds available for transit development be fully expended to meet the transit needs that exist in California. Furthermore, it is also in the interest of the State that such funds be expended for physical improvement – to improve the movement of transit vehicles, the comfort of patrons, and the exchange of patrons from one transportation mode to another. To assure full consideration is given to meeting the intent of the law, a public hearing to discuss transit needs must be held every year.

This hearing is especially important in areas like Tulare County where the TDA allows use of funds for street and road projects. The purpose of the hearing is to take testimony on local and/or regional transit needs, and assure that all reasonable transit needs are satisfied. TCAG is required to make those findings and provide them to the State for review and concurrence prior to allocation of TDA funds to the cities/county for any street or road purposes.

TCAG develops the findings after a review of the testimony and from a review of regional and local transportation plans. This review takes into consideration adopted goals, policies, actions already identified in area plans, and tries to identify projects that will improve the environment and the public transportation needs of groups likely to be transit dependent, such as the physically/ cognitively challenged, senior citizens and/or low income individuals.

Dir BSZ Appropriated/Funded MF CM J

Item No. 7

It is important to recognize that in addition to testimony offered at the hearing, any applicable comments received at other local meetings held earlier this year (e.g. City Council meetings, community advisory groups and/or transit advisory groups) will be added to the public hearing record for Board consideration. Also added to the public record will be comments received by mail, email, and telephone; this allows for the broadest public participation.

After review of all the aforementioned information, TCAG must decide by adopting a resolution that:

1. There are no unmet transit needs;
2. There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet; or
3. There are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet.

TCAG adopted the definition of an unmet transit need reasonable to meet as follows:

Unmet Transit Need:

An unmet transit need, as identified during the TCAG annual unmet needs process, exists where local residents do not have access to private vehicles or other forms of transportation to conduct daily life activities.

Reasonable to Meet:

It is reasonable to meet the above needs if the new, expanded, or revised service can be expected to meet all of the following criteria:

1. The service can be operated while maintaining, on a system-wide basis, the farebox ratio required by the TDA (for urbanized areas 20%; for non-urbanized areas 10%).
2. Service shall meet the minimum ratio of fare revenue to operating costs of 10% (represents half of the system-wide performance standard for urbanized areas).
3. There is data and community input to support the necessary ridership to meet the required minimum fare ratio as referenced in criteria No. 2.

4. The service, if implemented or funded, would not cause the operator to incur expenditures in excess of the maximum amount of TDA funds available to each member agency.
5. The service shall have a reasonable expectation of future demand and available funding on a long-term basis to maintain the service.
6. The service must be safe to operate and there must be adequate roadways and turnouts for transit vehicles. Potential providers are available to implement the service.

Pursuant to the California Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 94401.5 (c), the schedule for the 2013 unmet transit needs process is as follows:

- March 2013 - Tulare County residents can comment on unmet transit needs in Tulare County.
- March 18, 2013 - A public hearing on unmet needs before the TCAG Board.
- May 28, 2013 – Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) meets to review unmet transit needs submitted and responses from transit providers.
- June 17, 2013 – TCAG Board takes action on unmet needs findings by SSTAC.
- August 15, 2013 – Unmet needs findings and supporting documentation is submitted to Caltrans.

On April 3, 2013, the City received 15 out of the 36 unmet needs comments received for all transit providers in Tulare County. Of the 15 comments received, eight (8) of the requests were for extended hours during the week and Sunday transit service. The seven (7) remaining requests were for operational improvements, such as additional bus stop locations and reserved seating on transit vehicles.

Staff believes the increase in unmet needs comments regarding City transit service is due, in part, to the Sunday service that was implemented by the County Transit system (TCaT) in January 2011, funded in full by Measure R, that brings passengers to the Porterville Transit Center 7 days a week.

The effect is the County transit system provides Sunday service to the Porterville Transit Center with no local public transportation service connection. Based on ridership figures provided by the County, the County transit system averages 430 passengers per month on the route that services Porterville.

The need was also identified in the 2012 Short Range Transit Plan and supported by surveys distributed to the community. Survey respondents were asked to choose from a list of system improvements that they would most like to see addressed. A total of 239 survey forms were completed, with each of the routes being represented during the survey period. Responses from the surveys indicated that 52% of passengers would like to see evening service and 76% would like to have service on Sundays. Another 22% would like to see more frequent service and 23% preferred to have service available earlier in the day.

In order for Staff to provide comment on the 2013 unmet needs, Staff first performed an operational analysis to see if the expanded service would be feasible. From the analysis, Staff determined that additional transit vehicles would not be required; however, additional back-up vehicles would be beneficial to both the operational and maintenance departments. This is due, in part, to the location of authorized repair facilities located in Fresno and the availability of spare parts. In an effort to increase the transit fleet, Staff is planning to utilize the back-up vehicles past their "useful-life expectancy" and apply for additional capital funding. It should be noted that the City is expected to receive two new transit buses by mid-December 2013.

Staff also evaluated the operational characteristics of the department. Historically, the maintenance facility operates from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and utilizes "call-out" requests to handle any vehicle issues outside of those operating hours or days.

Staff determined that the most economical way to operate, if the transit system were to expand, would be to continue utilizing the "call-out" procedures during the five additional hours during the week and all hours on the weekend. This was determined after a historical review of transit "call-out" requests. During the last fiscal year, the transit division requested 13 call-outs for a total cost of \$1,850. Based on the relatively low call volume, this would not trigger the need for additional maintenance hours, days or Staff.

Secondly, Staff performed a financial analysis to identify possible funding solutions for the requested expansion of transit service. Staff determined that the expanded service would cost approximately \$250,000 and identified sufficient TDA funding that is available to implement the expanded transit services. Historically, the transit division requests less than 50% of the City's TDA allocation for transit operations; the remaining balance is transferred to the streets division. For example, during this fiscal year, the transit division requested \$382,000 while transferring \$1 Million to the streets division. Although this year's transfer is substantial, the transfer totals fluctuate year-to-year, depending on TDA revenues and transit operating and capital projects. Grants have been and will continue to be sought after to offset capital and operating costs.

Staff has identified additional funding sources as a possible replacement of LTF funds. Often those funding sources are either competitive grants, (Indian Gaming Funds, CMAQ, JARC and New Freedom), or not allocated to the City at this time (excess Measure R).

Lastly, Staff evaluated the projected ridership to determine if there was sufficient support to meet the required 20% farebox recovery. Using historical data from ridership surveys, Porterville's Saturday service and County (TCaT) Sunday service, Visalia's Sunday service, Staff determined that the projected ridership would increase by approximately 100,000 passengers annually and approximately \$60,000 in passenger revenues, which represents a 24% farebox ratio. System-wide the transit system is expected to operate at a 25% farebox ratio, well above the required 20%.

It was Staff's determination that Sunday service could generate ridership typical to Saturday service due to the similar need for employment, shopping, recreation and other activities that would benefit the general public. Expansion of Sunday service and weekday hours has also been shown to increase overall transit ridership as availability of routes becomes more convenient.

Therefore, based on Staff's analysis, it was determined that there is sufficient support to reasonably meet the six required criteria areas: 1) the transit service can be operated system-wide while maintaining the 20% farebox ratio; 2) the expanded service will meet the 10% farebox ratio; 3) there is data to support the expected ridership to meet the required farebox ratio; 4) the City has TDA funding available; 5) there is support for a long-term basis; and 6) the service can be operated safely.

It is Staff's determination that the City can reasonably meet the 2013 unmet needs requests to expand the transit evening service on weekdays and implement Sunday service.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

1. Authorize Staff to extend weekday transit service to 10:00 p.m. and implement Sunday service from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., effective July 1, 2013;
2. Authorize Staff to negotiate a contract change order with Tree's Sierra Management, Inc. at an anticipated fee not to exceed \$164,219 for the expansion of transit service;
3. Authorize Staff to sign all contract documents;
4. Authorize a 10% contingency to cover unforeseen changes to the scope of work required; and
5. Authorize staff to update the Council in six (6) months to demonstrate the ridership growth/pattern.

ATTACHMENT: Transit Change Order

CITY OF PORTERVILLE
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
CONTRACT CHANGE ORDER

Change
Order No.
2

Contract No.
11/12-AC1764

Issued To: (Name of Contractor or Consultant)
Tree's Sierra Management, Inc.

Date
05/21/2013

Project Description: Transit Management and Operations Agreement

YOU ARE HEREBY requested to make the following changes to the contract or to do the work described below which is not included in the contract. (Give brief description of work, estimate of quantities, fees or prices to be paid, etc.)

Effective July 1, 2013 the City of Porterville requests expansion of transit service for evening service until 10:00 p.m. and Sunday service from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. This expansion of service will increase transit revenue hours for weekdays by 24 hours per day and Sunday transit service by 74 hours per day.

There is no change to paratransit service since it currently operates during the weekdays to 10:00 p.m. and on Sundays.

The change in transit service will result in a service cost increase of \$164,219.

1. Amount of this
Change Order
FY2013-2014
(\$164,219)

2. Amount of
Prior Change
Orders
\$362,043

3. Original Contract
Amount
(\$971,383)

4. Adjusted Contract Amount.
(\$1,497,645)

ACCEPTANCE

We, the undersigned, have given consideration to the change proposed, and hereby agree if this proposal is approved that we will provide all equipment, furnish all materials, except as may otherwise be noted above, and perform all services necessary for the work specified, and will accept as full payment therefore the fees or prices shown above.

FIRM: Tree's Sierra Management, Inc.

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

ENDORSEMENTS

REQUESTED BY:	DATE

Steven E. Tree, President	

RECOMMENDED BY:	DATE

Baldo Rodriguez, Public Works Director	

APPROVED BY:	DATE

John D. Lollis, City Manager	

CITY OF PORTERVILLE
PURCHASE OF TRANSIT SERVICE
CONTRACT ESTIMATE
FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014
EXPANDED TRANSIT SERVICE

<u>Service</u>	<u>Provider</u>	<u>Hours Per Day</u>	<u>Service Days</u>	<u>Total Hours</u>	<u>Rate Per Hour</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
Weekday	Sierra	24	261	6264	\$ 16.24	\$ 101,727.36
Sunday	Sierra	74	52	4218	\$ 16.24	\$ 62,491.52
Sub-Total						\$ 164,218.88