

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: May 22, 2017

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 14, 2017

Subject: Transit Link – Airport Pilot Contract Amendment

District(s), Member(s): District 5 – Steve Elkins, District 8 – Cara Letofsky, District 13 – Richard Kramer, District 14 – Jon Commers

Policy/Legal Reference: Council Policy 3-3 Expenditures – Procurement of Goods and Services over \$500,000

Staff Prepared/Presented: Nick Thompson, Director MTS (651) 602-1754

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John Harper, Manager, Contracted Transit Services (651) 602-1744

Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to amend contract 15M126 with Midwest Paratransit Services, Inc. for operation of a pilot transit project at MSP airport. The amendment adds \$250,000, for a total contract amount of \$795,000, and extends the termination date to June 30, 2018.

Background

This program provides a dial-a-ride connection for employees from areas of concentrated unemployment and poverty to entry level positions at the airport. Shift start and end times occur primarily between 11:00pm and 6:00am when regular route bus service is unavailable near their residence. Therefore, one commute trip is provided by this service while existing regular route service is available for the other, providing employment opportunities and increased productivity on existing routes.

The program is provided using Transit Link infrastructure during times when traditional Transit Link service is not available. Because of this, some program modifications have been made. First, all customers using this service must be employed by specific employers at MSP. Each employer included in the program has agreed to pay a matching fare, so fare collections are double that of traditional Transit Link service. Finally, each trip is requested directly by the employer and is scheduled as a standing order to ensure each customer is eligible to ride and to reduce overhead expenses.

The Council is partnering with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and MSP airport employer staff to implement this service. The program began in November 2015 with one bus and a few daily hours and has expanded to three buses on most days and approximately 20 hours. The program partners continue to actively monitor and refine program elements to improve the service.

Rationale

The service uses Transit Link infrastructure and is in a geographic area that is served by Midwest Paratransit Services, so we are leveraging that relationship to facilitate the pilot.

The scope of the program is quite modest and utilizing an existing Transit Link

contractor to operate the service allows us to provide additional hours of service without additional capital costs and system complexity.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The primary foci of this service are the Outcomes of Prosperity and Equity. The primary purpose of this service is to connect residents in areas of concentrated poverty to entry level jobs. Many users have limited English language proficiency, so having a guaranteed ride to stable employment is critical. Employers and airport users benefit because businesses are able to extend business hours and improve airport customer experience. Butch Howard, General Manager of HMS Host, says he is now able to open Starbucks and French Meadow Bakery locations at 4:30am and Michele Gressman, LSG Program Director, says she has enjoyed working with the Council and she knows her employees truly appreciate the service.

In addition, the Thrive Outcome of Stewardship is enhanced because this program leverages the Council's existing technology and vehicle capital to provide a small, but critical, service.

Funding

Funding for this service is included in the annual MTS operating budget.

Known Support / Opposition

This item has no known opposition.