



CITY *of* CALABASAS

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 14, 2023

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS

FROM: PHILIP LANZAFAME, INTERIM PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
TATIANA HOLDEN, DEPUTY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
TRA'A BEZDECNY, ASSISTANT ENGINEER

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE CITY FOR ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM SOLUTIONS

MEETING
DATE: AUGUST 23, 2023

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Councilmembers discuss options available to the City in regards to creating a permanent microtransit program and provide direction to Staff on preferred parameters.

BACKGROUND:

In January, Council approved an amendment to the Ideal General Services Inc. Contract to create a pilot demand response transit program. The pilot program presented was to provide all residents of the City with On-Demand public transit (microtransit; see Attachment A for a full list of important terms) utilizing our existing Dial-a-Ride contract, vehicles, and drivers. Two drivers are stationed on opposite sides of the City, and riders call in with where they are and where they want to go. Dispatch provides an estimated timeframe to the rider and dispatches the driver to the location. This pilot program operates on the weekend, 9a.m. to 5p.m., allowing

riders door-to-door anywhere in Calabasas and to 10 specified out-of-City destinations (Attachment B).

Council requested Staff return and present innovative solutions in order to move forward with a permanent program. To understand the many aspects and offerings of a microtransit program, in February Staff began meeting with different companies who provide microtransit solutions. Microtransit is a specific term for demand response service, and moving forward the service will be called a microtransit program. Microtransit consists of a multi-passenger transportation service that serves passengers using dynamically generated routes. The companies that Staff met with include Slidr, Spare, RideCo, RouteGenie, The Routing Company, TransLoc, TripSpark, and Via. Staff also studied the programs of other cities and agencies including meeting with Agoura Hills to discuss their new program and attending a Local Transit Systems Subcommittee (LTSS) where LA County Metro presented their program.

The pilot program began on February 18th and has been successful so far. This report discusses the pilot and potential options available to the City to make it a permanent transit program. This report discusses the pilot and aims to provide Council with an understanding of potential options to make it a permanent program creating an innovative and customized package of different solutions which will serve our community's specific needs.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Where are we now?

The City of Calabasas provides multiple transportation services. These programs include:

- Line 1 which operates Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on a fixed route and schedule throughout City Limits (Attachment C);
- Peak Hour Shuttle Routes (Lines 2-5) which also operate on fixed routes during limited hours during the morning and afternoon;
- Seasonal Trolley which operates Saturdays during summer months;
- Seasonal Beach Bus during summer months;
- Dial-a-Ride; and
- The pilot microtransit program.

Between February and July, the pilot program had a total of 360 unique passenger trips (UPT), which is a monthly average of 72 riders. 74% of these riders are not registered with Dial-A-Ride; absent the microtransit pilot, these passengers would not otherwise have access to a weekend transit service in the City. The existing cost per passenger for this program is \$105.60, with a 3% offset generated by fares of \$2.50 for inside City Limits and \$4.00 for outside City Limits. 82% of destinations

are within the city limits, with the rest of the trips going to Topanga Mall, Kaiser Medical, and religious centers outside of the City. Attachment D is a frequency map showing pick-up and drop-off destinations, highlighting areas of higher use. Staff has not collected specific rider profile information, but based on data provided by the service provider, a majority of riders were middle-aged, with some riders in their 20s and a few seniors.

To put these numbers into perspective with our weekday ridership, Line 1 averaged 480 riders in 2022-2023 and had a cost per passenger of \$44.71, with no fare offset (due to this service being free). Line 1 can help us forecast the weekday use of a microtransit program operating 7 days a week and show what areas and times we can expect higher ridership.

According to our service provider, "Within one month, utilizing minimal advertising, we had a full schedule of riders, and many have expressed satisfaction with the service. Our numbers are an indication as to the success of this program." (Attachment E)

What are others doing?

Many cities have already begun implementing microtransit programs, and each one is unique to satisfy the needs of their community. The following are a few local programs that highlight different approaches that can be taken.

Agoura Hills AH GO

- Operates between any two points within Agoura city limits and Malibu Lake area; some other out-of-city locations
- \$1.50/\$3.00 fare structure
- Powered by Spare, offering ability to push demand to Lyft drivers
- Mobile app allowing riders to book and see vehicle come
- Hours of operation are Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 5 to 11 p.m., Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

LACMTA Metro Micro

- Operates in 8 different zones throughout LA County
- Stop-to-stop service within zone limits
- \$1 fare structure during pilot
- Some vans are wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) and/or have bike racks
- Mobile app allowing for immediate, future, and recurring bookings, and to see vehicle come
- Hours of operation vary by zone, but are all Monday-Sunday for a majority of the day

Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA)

- Provides access between rural areas and transit connection centers
- \$0.75/\$1.50 fare structure
- Large 15-passenger vans
- Mobile app allowing to select a pickup window and see vehicle come
- Hours of operation are Monday - Friday, 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Long Beach Circuit

- Operates in downtown Long Beach for peak-hour service Thursday-Sunday
- Free service
- Electric Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs) and ADA-accessible electric shuttles on request
- Mobile app allowing riders to book and see vehicle come
- Hours of operation are Thursday-Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Circuit operates similar programs in other cities such as Santa Monica, Venice and Marina del Rey, and Palm Beach

Go! Santa Clarita

1. Citywide service
2. \$1.00/\$2.00 fare structure
3. Small shuttles
 - Mobile app allowing riders to book and see vehicle come, but trips cannot be booked in advance
4. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 8a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Considerations for Permanent Program

To effectively make this a permanent program, it is essential that the needs of Calabasas residents are understood and that our service provides for these needs. This topic requires discussion and collaboration. From meetings with various service providers and seeing what other cities are doing, there are many options available to us in terms of how our program can operate, and room for customization. In order to create this program, Staff needs to understand what the community wants out of this program. Key questions that need to be answered are:

1. Is this type of service important to our residents to allow flexibility, access and efficiency when compared to other transportation programs?
2. Do we want this service to be turnkey or software? A turnkey service would provide us with software, vehicles, and drivers, while we would need to provide drivers and vehicles if we utilized a software-only service.

3. Does the community want a mobile application? In addition to a mobile application we would need to ensure the apps are ADA compliant and there are other booking options. Most app software will allow Staff to allow for pre-booking and display other information that might be helpful for riders.
4. What kind of vehicles do we want to use for this program?
 - a. Bicycle rack to accommodate "first/last mile" trips?
 - b. Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV)? The City can get a head-start on our ZEV goals by using only electric vehicles which can be supplied by a turnkey provider or will need to be provided by us or another service provider.
 - c. Size of vans/number of passengers? Tolerance for number of stops on a journey or number of people sharing a ride may be important to securing ridership and support for the program. Sizes of vans range between 7, 12, and 15 passenger options.
 - d. Special design to heighten interest and usage?
5. Should the program continue to be door-to-door?
6. How should the program be expanded?
 - a. Should the program be 7 days a week to replace Line 1 or remain weekend-only to supplement Line 1?
 - b. What hours should it be available?
 - c. How many vehicles should be utilized?
7. Based on lower out-of-city use, what should the service area be?
 - a. Inside City Limits only
 - b. Continue with existing service area
 - c. Inside City Limits with only 1 or 2 outside destinations for regional connections
8. Do we want to utilize comingling technology, that is the ability to plan a trip using multiple transit options from multiple transit providers? This would assist riders in utilizing our other transit services and nearby transit like Metro or LADOT.
9. Do we want to implement a Low Speed Vehicle (LSV) microtransit pilot program servicing the just Calabasas Road Business Center (Parkway Calabasas to the Park-and-Ride) as a means to reduce multiple car trips in a defined area?
10. Introducing a full microtransit program will require additional funding. What sources of funding should be utilized to implement the program timeline? Alternative funding sources include income from fares, grants, general funds or other sources.
11. What other things should be included as part of the program?

Where do we go from here?

The next steps are to confirm community "wants" from a microtransit program. Once this has been identified, an RFP will be developed and released soliciting a

service and or software provider. Due to the expected base-cost of the program, Calabasas' policy is to issue an RFP to select the service provider. In the meantime, Staff will continue to look for grant and other funding options.

Staff has met with the Traffic and Transportation Commission (TTC) in a public meeting to gain their perspective on what residents may want out of this program. Staff is presenting the concept to the Council in a public setting to receive their input and allow another opportunity for public input. Staff is seeking direction on further input from the community:

- Staff can take the data and input collected from the pilot program operation and these public presentations and develop an RFP; or
- Staff can outline a program based on all the input to this point and fine-tune program parameters with the community using different methods such as social media, surveys and meetings with community organizations.

TTC Recommendations

At the TTC July 25th meeting, Staff presented this item and requested feedback from Commissioners. Commissioners stated that a mobile application is a necessity for the community and they would like to see commingling as well. Overall, they were in support of the existing pilot and options available for expansion.

FISCAL IMPACT/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The Calabasas Transit Program currently uses Proposition A & C Local Return to fund all transit activities. As noted, introducing a full microtransit program would require extra funding sources.

Once the scope of a program is established, staff can better determine the cost of the program. This may also come from the submittal of proposals that could be tailored to meet the identified funding resources.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends Councilmembers discuss options available to the City in regards to creating a permanent microtransit program and provide direction to Staff on preferred parameters.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Important Terms
Attachment B: Microtransit Destinations
Attachment C: Transit Routes
Attachment D: Destination Frequency Map
Attachment E: Letter from Service Provider on Demand Response Program