

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council Equity and Access Subcommittee

December 15, 2023

Agenda Item 4a

Progress Report on Action 22 of the Transformation Action Plan: One-Seat Ride Pilot Program

Subject:

Update on Action 22 of the Transformation Action Plan: One-Seat Ride Pilot Program.

Background

In July 2021, MTC’s Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force developed the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan (Action Plan). The Action Plan identified five desired outcomes with associated near-term action items to achieve a more connected, efficient, and user-focused mobility network. One outcome was “Accessibility: Transit services for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes are coordinated efficiently,” and with it came five actions, listed in Attachment A: Transformation Action Plan Accessibility Items.

Action 22 of the Transformation Action Plan is to “fund additional subregional one-seat Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit ride pilots and develop cost-sharing policies for cross-jurisdictional ADA paratransit trips.” This item provides a progress update on Action 22.

As with fixed routes, traveling across transit agency service boundaries on a paratransit ride necessitates a transfer between systems. Although paratransit transfer trips account for around 10% of all paratransit trips, they have an outsized impact on operations. While riders only need to book the trip through the agency managing the trip origination, transit agencies take considerable resources and time to book, schedule, dispatch, and deliver a cross-jurisdictional paratransit trip. The trip can be very expensive for both the agency and the rider, take several hours, and be arduous for the rider due to the transfer process. Transfers often do not go smoothly, leaving riders in potentially vulnerable situations while awaiting their next vehicle. Instead, a one-seat paratransit ride is a trip to a rider’s final destination without transferring vehicles when crossing transit agency service boundaries.

During COVID, County Connection headed up a pilot for Contra Costa county transit agencies to deliver one-seat inter-jurisdictional paratransit trips. Similarly, Santa Rosa CityBus and Sonoma County Transit began providing one-seat paratransit rides. Building upon the work done by Contra Costa County and Sonoma County transit agencies, MTC's One-Seat Ride Pilot Program is intended to test different concepts for delivering non-transfer paratransit trips to improve paratransit service for riders traveling across transit agency boundaries.

Progress Update on Action 22

Staff developed a draft list of service concepts for delivering a non-transfer paratransit trip. The draft concepts list also provides background on existing Bay Area one-seat ride pilots and proposes methods to focus pilot service on existing transfer trip demand. In September 2023, staff held two information sessions with the transit agency and contracted paratransit staff and two information sessions with members of the Bay Area's nine county-based paratransit coordinating councils to discuss the concepts, receive feedback, and field questions about the pilot program. Following these meetings, staff revised the draft concepts (Attachment A, Transformation Action.

Plan One-Seat Ride Pilot Program Draft Concepts) to include more examples of non-transfer paratransit trips service within the Bay Area. Staff invites input and feedback from the Equity and Access Subcommittee on program concepts and considerations to focus service on existing trip demand.

Next Steps

Staff has identified \$1 million for the program and aims to fund three one-year pilots. Staff plans to revise the draft concepts based on additional input and develop draft guidelines for transit agency pilot proposals over the next month and a half. Staff will return in the late winter or early spring with draft guidelines before issuing a call for proposals to transit agencies in spring 2024. Following the pilot awards, staff will work with agencies to evaluate service during and after the pilots.

Later in 2024, staff will begin working on the second part of Action 22, which will examine formal and informal cost-sharing agreements for cross-jurisdictional paratransit trips, and potentially develop new cost-sharing agreements. This work will also include evaluating and identifying safer transfer points and policies for cross-jurisdictional paratransit trips.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Transformation Action Plan Accessibility Items
- Attachment B: Transformation Action Plan One-Seat Ride Pilot Program: Background and Considerations for Discussion, December 2023
- Attachment C: Presentation