

AGENDA ITEM #: _____

DATE: July 11, 2022

CAR #: 951



CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

SUBJECT: Approve Amendment 11 to the IGA between the City of Goodyear and the Regional Public Transit Authority for the continued provision of transit services.

STAFF PRESENTER(S): Christine McMurdy, Project Management Coordinator

OTHER PRESENTER(S): N/A

Summary: The eleventh amendment to the IGA will renew Valley Metro's obligation to provide express bus trips at the Goodyear Park and Ride, fixed route bus service on Route 3 and Route 17, Zoom Circulator service along Litchfield and McDowell Roads for four months and Paratransit/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) services via Dial A Ride and the RideChoice program. Small Urbanized Area federal transit funding will offset \$135,054 of the city's cost to provide FY2023 Zoom, Dial A Ride and RideChoice services, requiring a city share of \$340,032.

Recommendation:

Authorize the City Manager to approve Transit Services Amendment 11 between the City of Goodyear and the Regional Public Transit Authority for the continued provision of transit services in Goodyear and related FY2023 budget transfer.

Fiscal Impact: The FY2023 total cost of the city's share of services under this agreement is \$340,032, which is comprised of \$71,391 for approximately four months of Avondale Zoom service in Goodyear, \$140,148 for Regional Paratransit and \$128,493 for RideChoice services.

The Zoom cost is only for the portion of the route in Goodyear for four months of service. The cost, net of fare revenue, is split between Federal operating assistance and the city. The city share of \$140,148 is included in the FY2023 base budget using revenue from Arizona Lottery Funds (ALF) to cover the cost of service.

The last day of service on the Zoom extension in Goodyear is October 23, 2022. The City of Avondale is moving the route from the northern portion of their city to the south effective October 24, 2022.

The FY2023 estimated city share of the cost of federally mandated regional paratransit service (Dial A Ride) is \$140,148 after fare revenue, federal operating funds, and \$15,700 in Public Transportation Funds (Prop 400) is deducted.

The FY2023 city share of the cost to provide RideChoice service is \$128,493 after fare revenue and federal operating funding is deducted.

Staff is requesting a budget transfer of \$340,032 from the ALF fund balance (\$547,232.86) to cover the cost for FY2023 transit services.

Background and Previous Actions

Schedule A of the Amendment refers to regionally funded Fixed Route Bus Service, which includes the Route 562 Express bus operating out of the Goodyear Park and Ride Monday through Friday, Route 17 (McDowell Road) and Route 3 (Van Buren), which operate Monday through Sunday. Regional Public Transportation Funds (Prop 400) pay for these services.

Schedule B refers to the Avondale ZOOM neighborhood circulator, which connects residents of Goodyear, Avondale and Tolleson to local destinations for \$0.50 per ride. In Goodyear, the route operates from Dysart & McDowell Road west to Litchfield Road, north to Indian School Road and east to north 138th Drive. The Circulator operates Monday-Friday from 5am-9pm, and Saturday, and Sunday from 6am-6pm. The cost for four months of service for FY2023 is \$71,391. The City of Avondale is moving the Zoom circulator to the southern portion of their city, which will eliminate the Goodyear portion of the route effective October 23, 2022.

Schedule C refers to federally mandated ADA paratransit (Dial A Ride) service, which is required to be provided within ¾ miles of Route 17, Route 3 and the ZOOM circulator route. Schedule C of the Amendment shows that after the city's allocation of Proposition 400 Paratransit funds (identified in Schedule E), the cost for paratransit service in FY23 is \$140,148.

Schedule D refers to the RideChoice program, which offers ADA certified residents of Goodyear a trip to work, school or medical appointments for \$3 for up to 8 miles or a mileage-based option that allows customers up to 400 miles per month, for trips of up to 50 miles in length, for \$3 per trip. The cost of service for FY2023 is \$128,493. The city pays for RideChoice services using advertising revenue from the Digital Marquee at the Park and Ride.

Staff Analysis

Post-Covid-19 Transit Operations

Over the last year, transit agencies across the country, including Valley Metro, found themselves adapting to a new landscape in public transit. Operator shortages, changing commute patterns and lagging ridership recovery have hamstrung transit agencies.

At Valley Metro, a combination of inflation and worker shortages led to a rapid increase in wages for transit operators and related support service agencies. As a result, several existing fixed-price service contracts that Valley Metro depends upon for transit services are now unable to hire and retain the staff to meet their contractual obligations - causing missed and degraded services to the region. While ridership is still well below pre-pandemic levels, staff is seeing almost normal or

pre-pandemic passenger boardings on Paratransit and RideChoice services. Express bus continues to lag in boardings due to ongoing remote working arrangements that may become permanent. Most express bus riders are choice riders – they have options on whether to telecommute, drive or ride the bus. Despite the low ridership on the express buses in the region, weekly vehicle counts at the Goodyear Park and Ride are increasing, which is most likely a sign of additional vanpool and carpool activity in response to higher gasoline prices.

Public transit exists to meet the needs of the communities it serves and it has the potential to be more nimble and provide an incredibly valuable service to those who need it. Zoom was introduced in Goodyear five years ago as an experiment for Goodyear residents and an opportunity for Avondale residents to reach Target and other commercial destinations nearby. The Southwest Valley Local Transit System Study conducted by MAG and adopted by Goodyear in 2013 recommended an expansion of Zoom to Goodyear in order to build on the success of the ZOOM circulator by increasing the service area to the north and increase transit capacity in the southwest area.

When it became clear that the Avondale/Goodyear UZA would be absorbed into the larger Phoenix/Mesa UZA because of the 2020 Census, both cities engaged the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) in a new study, the Avondale/Goodyear Transit Study, to seek direction on how best to continue to provide transit services locally. MAG's consultant completed the Study in 2021, recommending reduced service coverage on the Zoom neighborhood circulator in north Avondale where ridership was at its lowest levels. The study also recommended initiating a Microtransit pilot program focused on a zone in the southern part of Goodyear where transit demand is greatest (based on public outreach information during the study period).

Since the Goodyear City Council approved the pilot project in January, staff in Goodyear and Avondale worked with the City of Phoenix Public Transit staff to secure approval to use federal funds for a portion of the pilot. The Request for Proposals to invite transit service providers to bid on the service was issued in March with an early April deadline. Out of the five companies that submitted proposals, two were selected for interviews in early June and negotiations with a finalist are expected to wrap up in mid-July. Staff expects to bring a contract for a Microtransit provider to Council for consideration in August, along with an IGA from the City of Phoenix to accept federal funds for the pilot. Communications and marketing will take begin once the contracts are approved, with an expected launch of the service in early October.

Attachments:

RPTA IGA Amendment 11 FY23