



CONTRA COSTA
transportation
authority



Contra Costa Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BRIEFING

MEETING OBJECTIVES:

- Educate about Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan and provide an update on activities to date
- Discuss how current accessible transportation is structured
- Provide history of previous studies and barriers to implementation
- Prepare PAC for review of potential scenarios in second PAC meeting

MEETING #1 | AUGUST 10, 2020

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BRIEFING PACKET

Meeting #1 | August 10, 2020

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SUMMARY OF THE ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC PLAN PURPOSE

This Accessible Transportation Strategic (ATS) Plan was born from the 2017 Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP found a need to address the challenges associated with: (1) different types of accessible transportation services; (2) multiple transportation providers including cities, transit operators, social services agencies, and non-profit organizations; and (3) diverse, and sometimes overlapping, service areas.

The ATS Plan is also intended to address the unfulfilled recommendations of three previous studies which were similar in scope. While the 2016 and 2020 Transportation Expenditure Plans (TEP) did not succeed in accessing sales tax measure funds, they did further set expectations for the Plan to ultimately "implement a customer-focused, user-friendly, seamless coordinated system".

Finally, the ATS Plan helps fulfill a requirement by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in its Resolution 4321, that CTAs/CMAs must meet the following mobility management requirement:

"Each county must establish or enhance mobility management programs to help provide equitable and effective access to transportation."

MTC uses the following to define mobility management activities:

- The region's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan directs counties to develop mobility management programs with three key components:
 - 1) Countywide travel training,
 - 2) In-person ADA paratransit certification, and
 - 3) Coordination of information and referrals (I&R) through the provision of a mobility manager.
- Mobility management can be led by CMAs, transit operators or other agencies.
- The following considerations apply:
 - Current performance of mobility management functions and relevance of activities to current coordination objectives.
 - Scale of geography covered within the county.
 - Extent to which the process involves multiple stakeholder agencies who are aiming to improve mobility and transportation coordination for transportation-disadvantaged populations.
 - The county's existing and potential capacity for carrying out mobility management functions.
 - Institutional relationships and support, both financial and in-kind, including evidence of coordination efforts with other public and private transportation and human services providers.

The ATS Plan began in 2019 and will continue through 2020. We anticipate the plan to be complete by February 2021.

Success of the ATS Plan hinges on several factors. Currently, inclusive, and equitable public engagement is our primary task. This includes input from organizations, key stakeholders, and the broader Contra Costa community. The study process is assisted and overseen by a Technical Advisory Committee and a Policy Advisory Committee. In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the project team reconfigured the outreach plan to go "virtual" to allow people to participate safely.

- **Link to ATS Plan Scope of Work - <https://cocodcd.egnyte.com/dl/rRNDw6wITP>**



Current Transportation Services

- **Paratransit/Transit Services**
 - Tri Delta Transit Paratransit
 - County Connection LINK
 - WestCAT Dial-A-Ride
 - East Bay Paratransit (AC Transit)
 - BART
- **City Based Transportation Service**
 - El Cerrito Easy Ride
 - Get Around Taxi Program (Concord)
 - Go San Ramon!
 - Lamorinda Spirit Van
 - Pleasant Hill Senior Van Service
 - R-Transit (Richmond)
 - Rossmoor Dial-a-Bus
 - San Pablo Senior Transportation
 - Senior Express Van (San Ramon)
 - Walnut Creek Senior's Club Mini-Bus
- **Public Sector Agency (transportation/referrals)**
 - Contra Costa Health Plan / Health Services - Transportation
- **Non-Profit Organizations (transportation/referrals)**
 - Centers for Elders Independence
 - Contra Costa 211 / Contra Costa Crisis Center
 - Mobility Matters
 - Seniors Around Town
 - Choice in Aging
 - Contra Costa ARC

PROJECT TIMELINE

2019												SHELTER IN PLACE		"CAUTIONARY" TIME						2021	
JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	February		
Project Beginning	Drafted Public Engagement Plan		Began Compiling Contacts	Technical Advisory Committee Meetings Began	Began Public Engagement			Revised Public Engagement Plan		Data Collection				Phase 2 Public Engagement - Scenarios / Telephone Townhall	Prepare Final Report & Implementation Plan		Final Action: Acceptance/ Approval and/or Other Action by Appropriate Policy Body(ies)				
	Determined and Appointed Oversight Committees							Virtual Public Engagement					Policy Advisory Committee Meeting	Draft Final Report with Local Evaluation recommendations and Countywide preferred design	Policy Advisory Committee Meeting	Finish Public Engagement Memo		Policy Advisory Committee Meeting			
												Virtual Public Engagement	Draft Public Engagement Memo								

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Potential Barriers in the Implementation of Coordinated Transportation

Two central complexities have combined to create an environment that results in difficulty making progress.

First are the different types of agencies providing, requiring, or potentially funding the service, transit agencies, social service agencies, non-profits, and insurance providers all have different requirements, unreliable funding streams, needs, and elected or Board representation.

Second, accessible transit is somewhat unique in terms of transportation governance; there is no agency that has the established, sole authority to assume leadership in this area. Conversely, roadway maintenance/construction, administration of federal/state/local transportation revenues, operation of public transit, etc. all have unambiguous responsible parties.

One potential solution to the “no sole authority” problem is the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) mechanism established by the Social Services Transportation Act in the 70’s. However, CTSA’s are established at local/regional discretion and do not necessarily remove all barriers. There is currently one CTSA in the Bay Area, in Solano County.

Serving the mobility needs of transportation disadvantaged communities through coordinated efforts has been a goal for decades throughout the United States. In recent years, federal coordination mandates tied to funding have tried to accelerate this trend. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), as the Bay Area’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for completing and updating the Bay Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Many communities have successfully implemented varying degrees of coordination. However, for many communities, including large Counties with multiple providers like Contra Costa, this remains an elusive goal.

One of the key factors to the success of coordination efforts that may be recommended by the Plan, will be the need to identify a champion and allies, whether it be a public figure, citizen group, agency, or private interest, willing to take a leadership role in moving the transportation services coordination mission or initiative forward. No such transportation services group or agency currently exists or has been identified. This will be one of the items to be determined with the PAC at a future meeting.

Contra Costa County has numerous entities with varying responsibility for policy oversight and provision of transportation service to disadvantaged communities. The following is a partial list of some of the key players:

- Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA)
- Public transit operators and their associated paratransit services
 - Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (County Connection)
 - Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority (Tri Delta Transit)
 - Western Contra Costa Transit Authority (WestCAT)
 - Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit)
 - San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)
- Various County departments such as Health Services, and Employment and Human Services
- Local providers such as the Lamorinda Spirit
- Non-profits such as Mobility Matters and Choice in Aging

Since no one agency has been designated as potentially responsible for overseeing transportation service coordination efforts in the County, identifying the current roles and responsibilities of each of these agencies will be critical in future coordination efforts.

Several Contra Costa-focused studies have recommended various forms of coordination in recent years, and very few of these strategies have been implemented. Since all stakeholders involved in this study are committed to avoiding a similar outcome, it is incumbent upon study partners to recognize the reasons for the failure to implement previous recommendations. In addition, lessons may be learned from industry experience regarding what barriers have arisen in other locations that have attempted to implement coordination strategies, and how those were addressed. Below is a brief description of previous study efforts in the County, followed by discussion of barriers that have been identified in other locations.

Previous Study Efforts

Below are excerpts of recommendations and policies from a variety of documents that were intended to guide how paratransit and more generally accessible transit services should be provided in Contra Costa County.

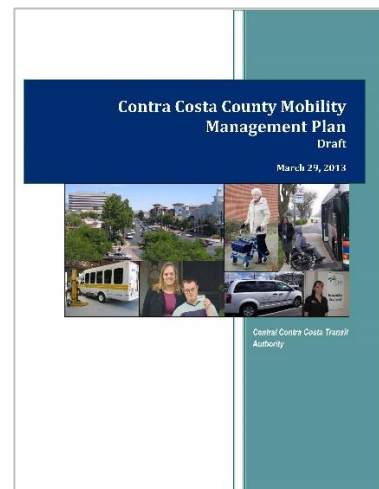
A significant majority of the policies and recommendations have not been implemented.

1. Contra Costa Mobility Management Plan 2013
2. CCTA Paratransit Improvement Study – 2004
3. Contra Costa County Paratransit Plan 1990

Contra Costa Mobility Management Plan 2013

The plan had broad support from CCTA, transit operators, and human service agencies in most sub-regions of the county. It recommended the formation of an organization to take the lead in implementing a broad range of mobility management strategies. Specifically, a Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) was recommended for Contra Costa County. Further, careful consideration was given to alternative legal structures for a CTSA.

The result of that dialog was an agreement to pursue a non-profit corporation model. The principal basis for recommending this structural model was the level of success in other communities that have adopted this structure. However, since the release of the report, two of the three successful models cited in the Plan (Outreach in Santa Clara County, and Paratransit Inc. in Sacramento), have undergone a major reduction in their scope of services.



Paratransit Improvement Study 2004

This study recommended continued delivery of ADA paratransit in Contra Costa under the existing decentralized model. However, it should be noted that this approach was indirectly addressed in the subsequent 2013 Mobility Management Plan which indicated that *“...a major impediment to action is the lack of a structural platform.”* That plan stated that *“many recommendations are difficult, expensive or*

effectively impossible to implement in a “decentralized model”. Aside from the decentralized recommendation, the 2004 Study had a number of other recommendations, including establishment of a separate operating entity to coordinate transfers; standardization of administrative, operational and service delivery policies and processes; automating scheduling of inter-agency transfers; dedicated fleet of vehicles for inter-agency transfers; coordination of community based agency transportation through the use of a mobility manager; and the preparation of a technology plan, etc.

Contra Costa County Paratransit Plan 1990

The purpose of this plan was to promote a comprehensive, integrated quality paratransit system to meet the special needs of persons, who, because of age or disability, are unable to use the County's fixed-route public transportation services. Goals included standardized service policies; a coordinated paratransit service network within the County to maximize convenience and ease of use; and ensuring the most efficient and effective service within available funding. The 1990 plan also established an allocation formula for the transportation sales tax measure at the time, Measure C. It is important to note that the 1990 plan and its recommended allocation formula preceded the adoption of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) which significantly changed the delivery of transportation services to people with disabilities.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICY IN TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION

According to a national research study on coordinated transportation (see TCRP report listed in links below) “not recognizing coordination as a political process has led to the downfall of some otherwise vital and beneficial coordinated transportation operations.”

The report goes on to say that “If successful, a coordinated transportation system becomes much larger than the individual operations that it replaces and becomes a new force within the community to be reckoned with. Larger transportation operations attract more attention, not all of which may be positive or friendly. Political individuals and organizations with vested interests in “the status quo” will often view expanded transportation services as a threat to their own power or influence and may, therefore, take steps to derail both personal and organizational capital invested in the coordinated transportation system.....”

Assuming the ATS Plan is successful, and sufficient leadership arises to pursue implementation, some of the barriers that could impact the success of the ATS Plan and coordination in Contra Costa County in general include the following:

- Differing service priorities of different agencies
- Local influence and cost issues
- Lack of stable funding
- Need for building more permanent, positive coordination relationships
- Failure to account for the effects of COVID-19
- Regulatory factors imposed on individual agencies

The TCRP report summarizes with the following words of caution which bear consideration in the PAC's discussion of potential coordination recommendations that could emerge from the ATS study:

“The best way to maximize the probability of successful coordination efforts is to fully understand coordination's potential achievements and potential pitfalls. Fundamentally, coordination is a fluid process involving working relationships among persons who come from different backgrounds and may

have at least some differing objectives. Coordination needs to be understood and respected as a political process, one in which power and administrative responsibilities are shared, not controlled by one party or another. For coordinated relationships to survive and prosper, they need to have the continued support of key decisionmakers, they need to continue to demonstrate real benefits to all the parties involved, and they need to be relatively free from the influence of personal political agendas. Coordination is also best applied to certain circumstances, such as the inefficient use of resources, and not to others, like the insufficiency of resources. Having a realistic understanding of the benefits that coordination can be expected to produce will eliminate most cases of unrealistic and unsatisfied expectations.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Reports

- MTC Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan
<http://files.mtc.ca.gov/library/pub/30126.pdf>
- Transportation Cooperative Research Program TCRP Report #91, [Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services](#) [Transit Services](#)

Organizations

- Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)
<https://ctaa.org/>
- National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)
<https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>
- National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC)
<https://www.nadtc.org/>