



M E M O R A N D U M
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
TRANSIT DIVISION
County of Placer

TO: Board of Supervisors DATE: March 30, 2021
FROM: Ken Grehm, Director of Public Works
By: Will Garner, Deputy Director of Public Works
SUBJECT: North Tahoe Microtransit Pilot Program

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize the Director of Public Works, or designee to award and execute an agreement with Squaw Downtowner, LLC to develop and implement a microtransit service pilot program in North Tahoe in the amount of \$465,000, in substantial conformance with the agreement on file, and authorize the Director of Public works, or designee, to execute any amendments consistent with Placer County Procurement Policy.

Approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$134,258 to Fund 10201 – Lake Tahoe Tourism and Promotions Fund and Fund 21402 Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART) (Budget Amendment AM-00-448).

BACKGROUND

The Resort Triangle Transportation Plan (RTTP), which was accepted by the Board of Supervisors on October 27, 2020, developed goals and recommendations to improve the efficiency of transportation, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and reduce dependency on personal vehicles through increased travel on other modes the eastern portion of Placer County shaped by Highways 89, 267 and 28 north of Lake Tahoe known as the Resort Triangle. The RTTP included a recommendation to implement an on-demand shuttle system known as microtransit in north Tahoe.

Microtransit is a widely used term in the transit industry that describes an on-demand shuttle service using small transit vehicles that passengers request on smartphones or computers through an app provided by the private transportation carrier. Similar to well-known Uber and Lyft services, the passenger is notified of the pick-up time and the vehicle location.

On March 9, 2021, as part of the approval of the Tahoe Tourism Business Improvement District, your Board approved the allocation of \$1,105,000 in Transient Occupancy Tax funds to implement projects and services recommended by the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association. This included the implementation of a microtransit pilot project in the summer of 2021. In preparation for this, staff has been coordinating with Squaw Downtowner, LLC (“Downtowner”), the microtransit operator that provides the Mountaineer service in Squaw Valley, to develop a pilot program for the upcoming summer of 2021 within two zones in North Tahoe. The two zones are Tahoe City/Westshore and Kings Beach/Brockway Vista. Using their proprietary modeling software, Downtowner has estimated that 350 trips per day can be served in these two zones using a total of 8 vehicles with wait times not exceeding 15 minutes. Downtowner can provide vehicles, drivers, and the software in time to operate the service beginning July 1, 2021 through September 6, 2021 (Labor Day). In addition to taking passengers from their origin to destination, the microtransit will also connect with the regional TART bus routes. The service will be free of charge to passengers.

Placer County Procurement Policy 3.6A allows the award of a contract without a competitive process if the service is the only such service that meets the County’s operational requirements because of a technological, specialized, or unique character or proprietary nature. In this case, Downtowner has been operating in Squaw Valley for two years, has a fleet, employees, and a management presence.

No other private microtransit operator has this type of operation currently in North Tahoe. Downtowner can also meet all of the requirements needed to successfully implement a microtransit pilot program in a short amount of time. Staff is proposing to contract with Downtowner for a period of two years to implement the microtransit pilot project in summer of 2021 with the potential to implement additional pilot projects within the next two years. In addition to this agreement, staff is also working on developing the branding and marketing campaign for the microtransit service. Using the results of the pilot in summer of 2021 and future potential pilot programs, the County would develop a competitive solicitation for ongoing microtransit services.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The approval of this contract is not subject to environmental review. In addition, this action is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(10).

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed contract has a not to exceed cost of \$465,000 for the summer of 2021. In the current fiscal year, \$134,258 will need to be paid to Squaw Downtowner, LLC, which will require a budget revision to the Lake Tahoe Tourism and Promotions Fund – Fund 10201 and the DPW TART – Fund 21402 (AM-00448). The remaining \$330,742 is included in the proposed FY 2021-22 budgets for TART and the Lake Tahoe Tourism and Promotion Fund. Budget Amendment (AM-00448) and the remaining project in FY 2021-22 will be funded with Transient Occupancy Tax funds.

ATTACHMENTS

None

On File with Clerk of the Board: Draft Contract with Squaw Downtowner, LLC to provide Microtransit Service