

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: YURI KOSLEN, TRANSIT PLANNER  
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
SUBJECT: SECOND AMENDMENT TO MOU WITH SANTA ROSA JUNIOR  
COLLEGE TO EXTEND PILOT PROGRAM FOR UNLIMITED  
ACCESS PASS TO STUDENTS THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018  
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council, by resolution, approve Amendment No. 2 to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Sonoma County Junior College District (SCJCD) and the SCJCD Associated Students, extending the pilot CityBus unlimited pass program for Santa Rosa Junior College students through December 31, 2018.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Rosa Junior College approached the City of Santa Rosa with a pilot program to provide Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) students with an unlimited number of transit rides for the fall 2017 semester. With Council approval, this program was initiated on September 20, 2017, and extended through June 30, 2018.

The Transportation and Public Works Department is returning to Council to report on the success of this pilot program and seek a second Amendment to extend the program further through December 31, 2018.

The Transportation and Public Works Department will return to Council in fall 2018 to further report on the pilot program and bring to Council an agreement that provides unlimited ridership for SRJC students beyond December 2018.

BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Rosa has heard from the community about the benefits of providing “free fares” to college students. The students of the SCJCD recognized the importance of transit services and elected to use revenue generated from the Student Transportation Fee (STF), which passed in spring 2017 to seek agreements with the transit providers within Sonoma County (Sonoma County Transit, Petaluma and Santa

Rosa CityBus) to provide an unlimited transit ridership program. The program allows SRJC students to ride CityBus an unlimited number of times during the fall 2017 and spring 2018 semester.

Prior to the implementation of this program, CityBus staff estimated weekly ridership at over 4,000 riders per week. City staff expect the maturation of the program to take up to two years, which is consistent with similar college/transit programs. Ridership during the fall 2017 semester averaged about 2,500 riders per week and has increased steadily during the spring 2018 semester to about 3,500 rides per week.

The original concern with this unlimited ridership program related to whether the funds generated by the SCJCD Student Transportation Fee was sufficient to cover the costs of the program (in terms of lost fare revenue). To date, the SCJCD Student Transportation Fee was adequate to cover the program cost for the fall 2017 semester and is on-track to fully cover program costs for the spring 2018 semester.

The SRJC staff intend to work with the three Sonoma County fixed-route bus transit providers (CityBus, Sonoma County Transit and Petaluma Transit) during the fall 2018 to develop a consistent agreement with all the operators.

#### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On September 19, 2017 Council reviewed and authorized the launch of the Unlimited Access Pass pilot program for the fall 2017.

On December 19, 2017 Council reviewed and authorized the extension of the Unlimited Access Pass pilot program through June 30, 2018.

#### ANALYSIS

Transit Division staff had initially estimated that the pilot unlimited pass program would generate between \$60,000 - \$75,000 in fare revenue per semester. Even with the success of the program, the ridership during the fall 2017 semester resulted in \$31,500 worth of rides and the spring 2018 semester is expected to result in about \$57,000 worth of rides. These expenses are fully covered by the current MOU and Amendment which provides for \$100,000 in funding from the SCJCD through June 30, 2018.

The proposed second Amendment to the MOU would extend the agreement through December 2018. The SCJCD has agreed to provide \$80,000 in the 2018/19 fiscal year (\$30,000 for summer 2018 and \$50,000 for fall 2018) to pay for the extension of the program. Additionally, the SCJCD is agreeing to increase the reimbursement to the City of Santa Rosa to \$.83 per ride starting on July 1, 2018 (from September 2017-June 30, 2018 the SRJC paid \$.77 per ride). The combination of increasing ridership and the increase per ridership rate associated with reimbursement to CityBus, may exceed the funds collected by the SCJCD Student Transportation Fee during the fall 2018 semester by up to an estimated \$10,000.

In accordance with the stipulation in the original agreement, in the event of lower than expected ridership during the summer 2018 semester, any remaining summer funds could be utilized during the fall 2018 semester to cover financial gaps between the funds collected and anticipated for reimbursement. Per the original agreement, CityBus may be awarded additional funding from the Student Transportation Fee if CityBus ridership exceeds the available funds of \$80,000. The term of the proposed amendment to the original agreement will expire on December 31, 2018 or be amended prior to this date.

The SRJC and the Transit Division will continue to analyze this pilot program and evaluate its outcomes. Once the STF funding and CityBus ridership is better understood it is the intention of CityBus and the SRJC to develop a multi-year agreement that details funding participation by both parties.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the success of the fall 2017 and spring 2018 semesters, Transit Division staff expect that STF funds will be sufficient to cover lost fare revenue through the December 2018. However, it is possible that due to a combination of increasing ridership and the increased per rider reimbursement rate to \$.83 for summer and fall 2018 semesters, the City's lost revenue may exceed the available SCJCD Student Transportation Fee funds by up to an estimated \$10,000 during this period. The SCJCD and the City will work in good faith to pursue a remedy for any lost revenue.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

### NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

### ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution/ Amendment No. 2 to MOU with the Sonoma County Junior College District

### CONTACT

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