

AGENDA ITEM 3 B
Information Item

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 19, 2021

TO: El Dorado County Transit Authority
Transit Advisory Committee

FROM: Brian James, Planning and Marketing Manager

SUBJECT: Service Restoration and Expansion after COVID-19 Pandemic

REQUESTED ACTION:
BY MOTION,

None. Information Only.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the El Dorado County Transit Authority (El Dorado Transit) ridership. As a result, all ridership and fare revenue numbers dropped considerably during the reporting period. The Senior Day Care services closed on March 13, 2020 and the Mother Lode Rehabilitation Enterprises (M.O.R.E.) facility closed on March 16, 2020, since reopening with limited in-person services. Commuter services were decreased from eleven (11) to four (4) buses in the morning and afternoon on March 23, 2020 and Local Fixed Route services were modified in July 2020. Demand Response services have been adjusted to match demand.

DISCUSSION

El Dorado Transit staff is anticipating an increase in transit demand as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are lifted. Local Fixed Routes are operating as scheduled, so increases in routes will not be implemented. As state workers return to their offices on a modified schedule, Commuter ridership is expected to incrementally increase. As a result, Commuter schedules will expand from the current modified schedule of four (4) buses to match demand. Demand Response services will be increased to match demand and as M.O.R.E. expands in-person services, transit service will be implemented as needed. The County is unsure at this time if the Senior Day Care program will be reinstated.

California Senate Bill 742 was passed in 2019 and amended SEC. 2. Section 14035.55 of the Government Code authorizing the State's three (3) State-supported intercity passenger rail lines to sell stand-alone tickets for connecting motor coach services. As enacted, the law requires the

intercity rail authorities that operate feeder bus service to collaborate with public transit operators that can provide these services and to avoid conflicts with existing public transit service. El Dorado Transit currently provides commuter service from Placerville to Sacramento along the same corridor used by the region's intercity thruway bus network connecting to the Capital Corridor passenger trains operating out of the Sacramento Valley Station in downtown Sacramento.

The Capital Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) currently contracts with Amtrak which in turn uses a contractor to operate one (1) round trip bus per day between the Sacramento Valley Station and the City of South Lake Tahoe. The CCJPA contacted El Dorado Transit in July 2020 to discuss the potential of partnering on the operation of this daily Sacramento to South Lake Tahoe bus service.

The adopted Western El Dorado County 2019 Short- and Long-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) recommends exploring partnerships with other regional transit agencies for these types of services. In evaluating the potential of partnering with the CCJPA on a Sacramento to South Lake Tahoe daily service, El Dorado Transit staff consulted the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), the Tahoe Regional Transportation Planning Agency, the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD), and LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (LSC) who authored the 2019 SRTP. On October 1, 2020, the Board received a Tahoe Service Analysis Report prepared by LSC and directed staff to continue with negotiations and service implementation planning.

On April 1, 2021 the El Dorado Transit Board approved the principal terms and conditions in the draft MOU and authorization for the Executive Director to negotiate any minor remaining issues in consultation with the CCJPA and legal counsel. The CCJPA Board approved the MOU, and the Executive Director will execute the final agreement with CCJPA in time for a scheduled July 5th starting date for the service.