



## Transportation Committee

May 8, 2014

### Connect Card Subrecipient Agreement for Sacramento Regional Transit District Temporary Staffing

**Issue:** Should SACOG enter into a Subrecipient Agreement with Sacramento Regional Transit (SRTD) to fund temporary staffing for the Connect Card?

**Recommendation:** That the Transportation Committee recommend that the Board grant the Chief Executive Officer authority to negotiate and execute a subrecipient funding agreement with SRTD in an amount not to exceed \$175,000 to fund temporary staffing for the Connect Card roll out.

**Discussion:** The Connect Card project is currently in the system pilot phase, and the Consortium is looking to secure temporary staffing to implement plans for the system roll out. SACOG and transit agency staffs have studied the experience of smart card roll outs in other cities and regions, striving to learn best practices. SRTD has relevant experience in the course of introducing new systems and processes to their customers. Experience shows that a large influx of customer support is needed during this critical time. Additional work includes a high volume of card fulfillment orders through the Connect Card website, increased walk-up transit fare orders, questions and concerns, significantly higher call center volumes, and high patron confusion in the early days of transitioning to a smart card. The more responsive project and transit agency staff are to patrons' needs in the early days of a roll out, the smoother the transition to the smart card system and the better public response overall. Early experiences heavily influence the perception of worth among the riding public.

Staff recommends adopting a staffing plan for temporary assistance that will cost up to \$175,000. Staff will be added at SRTD because they run the Regional Service Center (RSC). The RSC fulfills website orders, answers customer service calls, and provides other technical support for the entire Consortium. SRTD is the largest partner and will implement the Connect Card first. Staff resources will also be available to assist the other transit agencies as they roll out in later phases. Added staff will provide assistance with the call center, the demonstration bus, the customer point of sale, smart card fulfillment, and customer advocacy.

The staffing plan would be funded with Congestion Management and Air Quality funds (CMAQ) currently in the project and transferred to SRTD through a subrecipient agreement. This expense is not currently in the project budget. Although this expense has been anticipated for some time, development of a staffing plan was premature until implementation was more advanced and SRTD had sufficient information to make accurate staffing estimates. Funds would be drawn from the project budget contingency, which currently stands at \$547,308. With this expenditure, the contingency would be reduced to \$372,308, which is 2.8 percent of the total project budget and six percent of the unspent budget. The proposed expense was highlighted in a previous communication to Committee as the most likely, significant future use of contingency. The Light Rail Station Preparations contract with SRTD is running below budget and SRTD has assured SACOG that at least \$200,000 will be returned to the project.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Chief Executive Officer

MM:RM: gg

Key Staff: Sharon Sprowls, Senior Program Specialist, (916) 340-6235  
Robert McCrary, Senior Planner, (916) 340-6228