

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Lompoc to Santa Ynez Valley Regional Transit Service

MEETING DATE: January 17, 2008

AGENDA ITEM: 14

STAFF CONTACT: Sarkes Khachek

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a status report on the implementation of transit service between the cities of Lompoc, Buellton and Solvang.

SUMMARY:

A memorandum of understanding to implement transit service between the cities of Lompoc, Buellton, and Solvang has been developed by a working group including staff from those agencies, SBCAG, Breeze (City of Santa Maria) and the County of Santa Barbara. The service is required as a result of an unmet need finding made by the SBCAG board in May 2007. The MOU proposes that service be operated by the City of Lompoc Transit as a pilot program starting in July 2008. The three cities, plus the County of Santa Barbara would be responsible for funding the service in the draft Memorandum of Understanding.

DISCUSSION:

In May 2007, the SBCAG Board determined that an unmet transit need between the City of Lompoc and the Santa Ynez Valley was reasonable to meet based on projected ridership and operating costs. Requests for service from the Santa Ynez Valley to the City of Lompoc were made for employment, medical, and social service trips.

As a result of this finding, a working group composed of staff from the cities of Buellton, Lompoc, Santa Maria and Solvang, the County of Santa Barbara, Breeze (City of Santa Maria) and SBCAG has been meeting to discuss implementation of the service. The working group has discussed such items as scope of service, schedule, fares, coordination with other transit services and implementation roles for the affected agencies.

The preliminary scope is to initiate a service in July 2008 operated by City of Lompoc Transit (COLT) that will provide three daily weekday roundtrips in the morning, mid-day and afternoon, from Lompoc to Solvang with a stop in Buellton consistent with Attachment A: Proposed Service Route and Bus Stops. The service is being developed to provide connections with the City of Lompoc Transit (COLT), Santa Ynez Valley Transit (SYVT) and the Breeze Intercommunity Service.

The working group discussed extending the Breeze service from Lompoc to Solvang to address the unmet need requirement. The concern with this approach is the estimated Breeze operating costs were higher than COLT which would adversely impact the farebox recovery ratio of the

new service. The advantages of COLT operating the service are lower operating costs and a consensus among the working group that COLT's existing fleet can better meet the fleet demand of the service. Additionally, COLT is better positioned to provide this service during the pilot program due to its geographic proximity to the service corridor.

SBCAG has assisted in implementing the service by developing a draft Memorandum of Understanding which is being reviewed for approval in February by city councils in Solvang, Buellton and Lompoc, and the County of Santa Barbara. These agencies would provide funding for the service and be parties to the MOU. The MOU requires the formation of a policy committee consisting of elected officials from the four agencies to review service performance at periodic intervals. This will help assure that the service is viable, operating efficiently and meeting a 10% farebox recovery ratio that has been established as a performance standard.

Public outreach for this new service is expected to begin in February 2008 with presentations to Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Committee and various social service groups in Lompoc and the Santa Ynez Valley. Additional public outreach will begin in March to market the service prior to its initiation in July 2008.

ATTACHMENT A: Proposed Lompoc to Santa Ynez Valley Transit Service Map

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