



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** James R. Helmer

**SUBJECT:** DASH SHUTTLE

**DATE:** 5-27-08

Approved

Date

5/30/08

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 3

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approval of an amendment to an existing \$600,000 three-year grant agreement with the San Jose Downtown Association (SJDA) to coordinate and implement a Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) program to be provided by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), extending the term one year (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) for an amount not-to-exceed \$200,000; bringing the total agreement to an amount not to exceed \$800,000.

## **BACKGROUND**

In February 1996, the VTA, in conjunction with the SJDA and City of San Jose, began operation of a Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) program to connect the Diridon Station with VTA Light Rail and major Downtown destinations during commute hours every 15 minutes. In 1996, the DASH program carried a daily ridership averaging 280 persons.

In December 1998, the City Council approved a grant agreement with the SJDA to coordinate an expansion of the DASH service. The expanded program provided for two additional shuttles with connections every 10 minutes during peak periods. This expansion was projected to carry 580 passengers each day and was primarily in response to the increasingly difficult parking situation in Downtown San Jose. The service was provided by a contractor through VTA.

The City Council approved one year grant agreements with the SJDA in June 1999, June 2000 and June 2001 and three year grant agreements in June 2002 and June 2005 for the purposes of continuing implementation of the DASH program. The current three-year agreement with the SJDA is for \$600,000 (\$200,000 per fiscal year) and ends on June 30, 2008.

In August 2007, the VTA changed the service delivery model by bringing the service in-house and improved the shuttle vehicles and schedule, which has resulted in increased ridership. Ridership during fiscal year 2007-2008 for the July to March time period increased 21% over the same time period in 2006-2007. Today, the DASH program is the most successful of VTA's shuttle services, averaging nearly 1,000 riders each day.

## ANALYSIS

The overall goal of providing the DASH program is to encourage the use of mass transit at the Diridon Station (Caltrain, Amtrak and Altamont Commuter Express-ACE) and Downtown Light Rail Stations and reduce vehicular traffic and parking demand in the Downtown core.

The recent improvements VTA has made since bringing the service in-house include three new 25 passenger shuttle buses for increased passenger comfort and capacity during the heavy morning commute, new graphics for increased visibility, and increased trip frequencies during peak demand times. These improvements have resulted in a more reliable service to get passengers to their final destination and, as mentioned earlier, a 21% increase in ridership over the last year.

The DASH program is jointly funded by grants and contributions from VTA, Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air, San Jose Downtown Association and the City of San Jose's Parking Fund. City's contribution to the program for the 2008-09 fiscal year remains the same as the current year. The annual cost of the DASH Program is over \$1.2 million. Staff recommends continuing the partnership with the SJDA to coordinate the DASH service through VTA for the 2008-09 Fiscal Year.

The Downtown Parking Management Plan (PMP) update approved, by the City Council in June 2007, includes a recommendation to study a "free transit zone" for buses and the LRT in the Downtown, in lieu of or in conjunction with the DASH program. VTA, SJDA, Redevelopment Agency and City staff will study the concept this coming year and report findings in spring of 2009 to the Downtown Parking Board.

## COORDINATION

This agreement has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the San Jose Downtown Association and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

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The Downtown Parking Board reviewed this item at its May 7, 2008 meeting and unanimously supported approval of the amendment to extend the grant agreement through the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

**COST IMPLICATIONS**

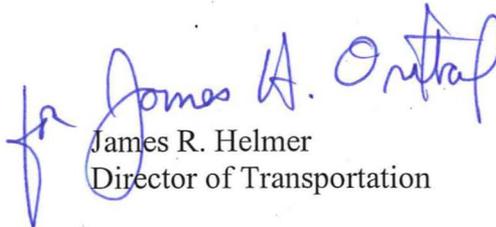
The City's contribution under this amendment remains the same as the current agreement, \$200,000 per year and it will be fully funded by the General Purpose Parking Fund, bringing the total compensation for the amended agreement to \$800,000

**BUDGET REFERENCE**

Fund: General Purpose Parking Fund  
Amount: \$8,968,671  
Documents: 2008-2009 Proposed Operating Budget, Pg. VIII-132

**CEQA**

Not a project

  
James R. Helmer  
Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Joe Garcia, Division Manager with the Department of Transportation at 535-3833.