

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: VISTA Transit Service

MEETING DATE: July 11, 2012

AGENDA ITEM: 5

STAFF CONTACT: Jim Kemp, Scott Spaulding

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive update on status of SBCAG/VCTC funded VISTA service between Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

DISCUSSION:

SBCAG and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) jointly provide VISTA service to the South Coast pursuant to an MOU originally signed in 2001. Under the terms of the MOU, VCTC is the lead agency responsible for administering the service and contracting with a transportation operator. SBCAG and VCTC split the net cost of the service equally (after deducting federal grant funds and fare revenues). SBCAG's share is funded solely from the Measure A South Coast Interregional Transit program. The FY 12/13 SBCAG budget includes \$344,000 for our share of the cost of the service. The VISTA service to Santa Barbara/Goleta operates over 50 daily one-way trips between the two counties and carries about 1,100 passengers per day.

VCTC has contracted with CUSA CC, LLC for over a decade to operate all VISTA services, but on June 15 the SBCAG board was notified that the pending bankruptcy and sale of the company may disrupt the service. The VISTA service to the South Coast is one of five intercity bus services in the VISTA system, and hundreds of Santa Barbara and Ventura County residents and workers rely on the service for interregional transportation. The suspension of the service would require riders to find alternative transportation and add many vehicle trips to the congested 101 corridor.

The existing agreement with CUSA expired on June 30, 2012, but VCTC has signed a one month extension to continue providing service until July 31st. It is anticipated that in August, CUSA will be sold, its assets will be transferred to the new buyer and CUSA will no longer be able to operate the service.

VCTC has been negotiating an agreement with a new operator to continue the service from August 31 through June 30, 2013. The VCTC board is meeting July 13th and is expected to approve an agreement to ensure that VISTA service continues after the end of July.

At its June meeting, the SBCAG board considered an ex-agenda item concerning the potential disruption of the VISTA/Coastal Express service. The board directed the Executive Director to notify VCTC at their June 21 special meeting of the following:

- Support VCTC's efforts to maintain existing VISTA Coastal Express service
- Direct staff to review the draft agreement between VCTC and VISTA service operator
- To preserve Measure A revenues, the SBCAG contribution to the VISTA Coastal Express service shall not exceed the budgeted amount of \$344,000
- If costs increase, fares must be evaluated by the Coastal Express Policy Advisory Committee and adjusted if necessary to maintain a farebox recovery ratio of approximately 75%

Additional current information available after the posting of the agenda will be presented at the Committee meeting regarding the status of the VISTA service including the status of a new contract.

Attachments: None