

Regional Network Management Council

September 22, 2025

Agenda Item 3a

Regional Paratransit Pilot Programs Update

Subject

Informational update on Regional Paratransit pilot programs, including Regional Paratransit Trips (One-Seat Rides) and the Regional Paratransit Trip Booking pilot project

Background

As with fixed routes, paratransit service requires a transfer when traveling across transit agency service boundaries. Although paratransit transfer trips account for less than 10% of all paratransit trips, they have an outsized impact on operations and customers. In many cases, riders must book their trip with multiple agencies. Transfer trips can be physically rigorous, and when vehicles are delayed in reaching the transfer point, riders can be left to wait in potentially vulnerable situations for the next vehicle. Delays during the transfer trip can cause significant vehicle dwell time and hinder on-time performance. Transfer trips take considerable resources and time for transit agencies to book, schedule, dispatch, and deliver a cross-jurisdictional paratransit trip. Currently, there are few tools for agencies to use to coordinate and streamline a transfer trip. MTC is working with the region's transit agencies on two pilot programs to address paratransit transfer trip challenges: (1) Regional Paratransit Trip opportunities including one-seat rides, which provides direct service on the same vehicle between two service provider service areas, and (2) Regional Paratransit Trip *Booking* opportunities to streamline the process of reserving paratransit trips involving a transfer between two service providers .

1) Transit Transformation Action Plan Initiative: Regional Paratransit Trips (One-Seat Rides)

Action 22 of the Transit Transformation Action Plan tasks MTC with funding one-seat paratransit rides, which provide a trip to a rider's destination, eliminating the need for a transfer when crossing transit agency service boundaries. MTC has been working with transit agencies to advance this pilot program with the following operational goals: (1) implementation without new vehicles or staff; (2) no changes to existing labor agreements; and (3) testing of a variety of pilot

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concepts in different locations under varying circumstances. Funding for pilot service has been secured in the amount of approximately \$1,000,000.

To determine likely pilot projects, MTC and transit staff, with consultant support, (1) screened transfer trip data across the region for common origins and destinations outside candidate transit agency service areas, (2) used trip data to prepare maps to identify popular destinations outside these service areas, (3) discussed opportunities with transit agencies for partnerships and operating models of one-seat service, and (4) selected draft list of pilots to test as many different models as possible.

The following table identifies potential pilot options:

#	Area	Pilot Type	Status
1	San Francisco and San Mateo counties	Extending into neighboring jurisdictions	Feasible; advance to final planning with SamTrans and SFMTA
2	Vallejo	Expansion beyond existing corridor in adjacent service areas	Feasible; advance to final planning with NVTa
3	Southern Alameda County and extended areas around Santa Clara BART stations	Mutual limited-service area with existing fleet	Feasible; advance to final planning with East Bay Paratransit (AC Transit and BART) and VTA
4	Sonoma and Marin counties	Multi-agency cooperative cost-sharing service	Feasible; advance to final planning with Marin and Sonoma operators
5	Southern Solano County and Contra Costa County	Expanding current program into a new service area with a dedicated third-party operator	Under consideration for future post-pilot implementation; SolTrans not able to participate currently

Non-One-Seat Ride Pilot Concepts

In addition to developing potential one-seat ride pilots, MTC staff has developed two additional pilot concepts for consideration:

#	Area	Pilot Type	Description	Status
6	Regionwide	Other	A program to establish a reimbursement fund for trips by agencies who want to try one-seat rides but do not want to join a pilot.	Feasible; Determining if worth exploring
7	Destinations near BART	Other	A program to escort paratransit riders on BART trips instead of taking paratransit for a cheaper, faster trip.	Feasible; Determining if worth exploring

Next Steps for Regional Paratransit Trips (One-Seat Rides)

After receiving feedback from the RNM Council, MTC staff will continue to work with transit agency staff and paratransit coordinating councils to finalize details for the pilot options. If the RNM Council expresses support for the additional concepts identified above, MTC and agency staff will work to refine the concepts and address implementation issues.

In the winter, staff will seek final endorsement and approval from the Regional Network Management Customer Advisory Group, Regional Network Management Council, Regional Network Management Committee, and Commission for the final pilot program. Following this, MTC staff will work with transit agency staff to begin pilots in the first half of 2026.

Staff has also issued a Request for Proposal for consultant assistance to evaluate the pilot projects and existing regional paratransit ride services in the region to discover best practices and lessons learned. MTC is aiming to have the evaluation of existing service begin in early 2026.

- **Regional Paratransit Trip Booking (RPTB) Pilot Project**

MTC is pursuing a Regional Paratransit Trip Booking pilot project to demonstrate a technology-driven, regional solution for booking paratransit transfer trips involving two service providers.

The pilot's estimated cost of \$900,000, is funded by a \$500,000 grant from the Federal Transit Administration Enhancing Mobility Innovation program and \$400,000 from State Transit Assistance Population-Based Funds. Working with a consultant, MTC and transit agencies will develop a software platform that automates cross-jurisdictional paratransit trip booking through an Application Programming Interface (API) that connects to paratransit service providers' trip booking software platforms. Paratransit operators including East Bay Paratransit (AC Transit and BART's joint paratransit services), VTA Access, and SamTrans Redi-Wheels currently follow a manual process for coordinating and booking regional paratransit trips in separate systems. This project will create a new software platform that will enable data communication across these paratransit operators' trip booking software platforms and support a streamlined and automated process for cross-agency trips.

In June 2025, the Regional Network Management Committee approved the selection of Flexlynqs, LLC as the software development vendor for the RPTB system for a not-to-exceed amount of \$600,000. The RPTB system development will begin in fall 2025 and expected to be deployed in September/October 2026. The system will support trip transfers between 1) East Bay Paratransit and VTA Access, 2) SamTrans Redi-Wheels and East Bay Paratransit, and 3) SamTrans Redi-Wheels and VTA Access. For the pilot, MTC focused on these operators to improve access to essential services and medical facilities for Equity Priority Communities, especially neighborhoods in northern and central Alameda County, San Mateo and Redwood City, and Central and East San Jose. (Currently, East Bay Paratransit already directly serves locations with San Francisco with a one-seat ride.)

Issues:

None identified.

Action: Information and Feedback

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Presentation