

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Administration Committee

October 14, 2020

Agenda Item 3b - 20-1336

Contract Amendment – Back-to-Transit Opinion Research: EMC Research, Inc. (\$160,000)

Subject: This item requests Committee approval to enter into a contract amendment in an amount not to exceed \$160,000 with EMC Research, Inc. (EMC) to provide opinion research support for the Bay Area's Return-to-Transit Plan. This work is a component of the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force.

Background: Bay Area public transit ridership remains down by 80 percent compared to pre-Covid-19 levels. To address this and other significant challenges, MTC has launched the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force, a 30-member panel comprised of local elected officials as well as advocates for people with disabilities; representatives from the state Senate and Assembly; the California State Transportation Agency; transit operators; business and labor groups; and transit and social justice advocates. The task force provides guidance on the future of the Bay Area's public transportation network as the region adjusts to new conditions created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This memo provides information on a proposed opinion research and communications plan to prepare for and encourage the Bay Area public's return to transit. Called the Return-to-Transit Plan (Plan), the project will be a close partnership among MTC, transit operators, employers and civic groups and is an element of the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force effort. The Plan is proposed to be implemented in two phases. The first phase of the Plan will focus on opinion research to determine barriers to riding transit among two major groups: a range of the public both riding, and not riding transit currently; and a range of employers throughout the Bay Area. The second phase will include use of the research to develop a communications and public engagement strategy to be implemented by employers, transit operators and MTC. The Plan is aimed at safely welcoming people back to transit when the time is right.

Contract Overview: In November 2017, MTC issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to establish an on-call bench of pre-qualified firms to provide services for Public Engagement, Digital Engagement and Market/Opinion Research Support. The RFQ contained three service categories in which firms were invited to submit qualifications: 1) Public Engagement; 2) Digital Engagement and Promotion; and 3) Market/Opinion Research. In February 2018, this Committee approved eight firms for placement on an on-call bench for a period ending June 30, 2021, including EMC, which qualified in the market or opinion research category.

In February 2020, MTC entered into a contract with EMC for opinion research support to conduct a public opinion poll on the strategies included in Plan Bay Area 2050's Draft Blueprint, as well as identification of key concerns faced by Bay Area residents. The results of the poll, presented to the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administration Committee in September 2020, helped the Commission and ABAG Executive Board narrow down the strategies that will be

included in the Draft Plan Bay Area 2050 document, expected in early 2021. In addition to this work, EMC has also conducted several other recent, transit-related public opinion polls, including polls for AC Transit, Caltrain and VTA.

The proposed contract amendment with EMC would focus on opinion and employer research to gauge barriers to transit ridership and to lay the groundwork to develop messaging to encourage a return to transit when the time is right. MTC and the transit operators will work with EMC to develop the following:

1. Opinion research: Conduct a statistically significant poll to gauge the public's opinions and barriers to riding transit, across all manner of trip need; and
2. Employer research: Working with employers, conduct focus groups to gauge employers' expectations and plans about the return of the Bay Area workforce to a physical workplace.

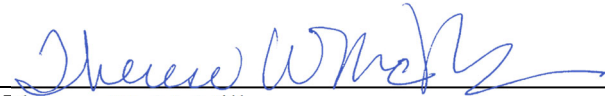
Within the next few months, we will follow up with the Committee for approval on the second phase of this work: a public engagement and digital promotion strategy.

EMC is neither a small business enterprise nor a disadvantaged business enterprise and has no subcontractors.

Issues: None.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Committee authorize the Executive Director or designee to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment with EMC to add \$160,000 to the current contract, for a total new contract not to exceed amount of \$315,000 for the work described above.

Attachments: Request for Committee Approval – Summary of Proposed Contract Amendment


Therese W. McMillan

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Summary of Proposed Contract Amendment

Work Item No.:	1514
Consultant:	EMC Research, Inc. San Francisco, CA
Work Project Title:	Opinion and employer research for the Return-to-Transit Plan, a component of the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force.
Purpose of Project:	Conduct opinion and employer research to gauge barriers to transit ridership and to develop messaging to encourage a return to transit when the time is right.
Project Cost Not to Exceed:	This amendment: \$160,000 Current contract amount before this amendment: \$155,000 Maximum contract amount after the amendment: \$315,000
Funding Source:	RM2 Marketing Funds
Fiscal Impact:	\$160,000 is included in the FY 2020-21 BATA Budget
Motion by Committee:	That the Executive Director or designee is authorized to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment with EMC Research, Inc. for opinion and employer research services described above and in the Administration Committee Summary Sheet dated October 14, 2020 and the Chief Financial Officer is authorized to set aside \$160,000 for such contract amendment.
Administration Committee:	<hr/> Federal D. Glover, Chair
Approved:	Date: October 14, 2020