

Regional Network Management Council

December 15, 2025

Agenda Item 3b

Proposed Regional Paratransit Trips Pilot Recommendations (One-Seat Rides)

Subject

Proposed project recommendations for the Regional Paratransit Trip Pilots (One-Seat Rides)

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 rides, they have an outsized impact on operations and riders. 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 may be left waiting in potentially vulnerable situations for the next vehicle. Delays during transfer trips 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.

Through the Transit Transformation Action Plan, MTC is working with the region's transit agencies to address paratransit transfer trip challenges by piloting regional paratransit "one-seat ride" service that will provide a trip to a rider's destination, eliminating the need for a transfer when crossing transit agency service boundaries. In September 2025, the Commission set aside (programmed) approximately \$1.05 million in Transit Transformation Action Plan funding to support one-seat ride paratransit pilot activities for a term of one year.

Pilots Selection Process

MTC has been working with transit agencies to advance pilot projects 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 concepts in different locations under varying circumstances.

To determine likely pilot projects, project staff (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, (4)

presented seven pilot options to the Regional Network Management Council for discussion, and (5) selected the four currently feasible pilot options for the draft recommended Regional Paratransit Trip Pilots. The recommended pilots are ready to be implemented by Spring 2026 and will last for one year.

Recommended Pilots

Table 1 below lists the recommended pilots and provides details such as the general service area, participating transit agencies, the type of pilot, and the estimated pilot costs.

Table 1. Recommended Projects for the Regional Paratransit Trip Pilots

#	Area	Transit Agencies	Pilot Type	Estimated Pilot Costs for 1 Year
1	Marin County and Sonoma County	Golden Gate Transit, Marin Transit, Sonoma County Transit	Multi-agency cooperative cost-sharing service	\$60,000
2	San Francisco and San Mateo County	SFMTA, SamTrans	Limited service extending into neighboring jurisdiction for medical trips	\$52,000
3	Napa County and City of Vallejo	Napa Valley Transportation Authority	Expansion beyond existing service area to an adjacent service area corridor	\$17,000
4	Alameda County and Santa Clara County	AC Transit, BART, VTA	Limited mutual service area	\$201,000
			TOTAL	\$330,000

The estimated pilot costs are based on the incremental costs for providing one-seat rides instead of traditional transfer trips for the term of one year. MTC will provide a fixed baseline allocation

for pilot costs. If the actual pilot costs exceed the estimated pilot costs, MTC may allocate additional funds to ensure each agency is made whole for the incremental cost in providing one-seat ride pilot service. Unused funding will be returned to the overall pool to be used in other Transformation Action Plan for accessibility-related initiatives. The detailed cost estimate methodology for the Regional Paratransit Trip Pilots is in Attachment B.

Pilot Evaluations

MTC received a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot service as well as existing one-seat ride service in the region. MTC issued a request for proposals; and an evaluation team of MTC staff, a current Bay Area transit agency ADA services manager, and a former Bay Area transit agency general manager evaluated proposals. Staff will seek approval of a contract in January 2026 from the Regional Network Management Committee. The evaluation will provide real-time, live research, monitoring, and documenting changes in demand and uncover operational efficiencies. Transit agency representatives will serve as technical advisory committee members and will work with the consultant to select evaluation criteria. The evaluation will also quantify customer benefits and evaluate feasibility and scalability, along with other factors needed to determine whether one-seat ride services should be adopted by the region's transit agencies in the long-term. The project team is aiming to have the evaluation of all existing one-seat ride services and the pilots beginning in Spring 2026. The evaluation of the pilot service must be finalized by June 30, 2027.

Next Steps

If endorsed by the Council, staff will seek approval from the Regional Network Management Committee and subsequent funding allocations for the Transit Transformation Action Plan funding (State Transit Assistance (STA) Population based) funds. Participating transit agencies could move forward with pilot service in early 2026. Staff will provide a progress update to the Regional Network Management Council towards the end of 2026 once the pilots have commenced.

Issues

If the transit agencies experience substantial delays in launching the pilot service beyond Spring 2026, the one-year pilot period may extend past the evaluation grant's completion deadline of June 30, 2027.

Recommendation

Refer the Regional Paratransit Trip Pilot project recommendations (Table 1) to the Regional Network Management Committee for approval.

Attachments

- Attachment A: Presentation
- Attachment B: Regional Paratransit Trip Pilot Cost Estimate Methodology
- Attachment C: Regional Paratransit Trip Pilot Recommendations