



Item # 8

**DATE** July 11, 2018

**TO** GCTD Board of Directors

**FROM** Marlena Kohler, Purchasing Manager/DBE Officer *MLK*  
Margaret Schoep, Paratransit & Special Projects Manager

**SUBJECT** Consider Authorization for the Purchase for Five (5) Ford Transit 350 Vehicles for ACCESS Paratransit Service from A-Z Bus Sales

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The October 2016 update to the GCTD Fleet Management Plan noted the FTA recommendations for the minimal useful life of medium-size, light-duty transit buses under FTA Circular 5010.1D is five years, or 150,000 miles. In January 2017, GCTD established the useful life benchmark for paratransit vehicles as eight years. The paratransit fleet currently has five (5) 2008 cut-away vehicles purchased with federal funds that have an average odometer of 246,781 miles. These aging vehicles have served their useful life and should be replaced to maintain reliable service for our customers.

As a member of the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CALACT), GCTD has access to purchase a variety of transit vehicles from the CALACT/MBTA purchasing cooperative. These contracts are restricted to FTA grantees geographically located within the State of California.

Staff recommends the purchase of five (5) Ford Transit 350 vehicles from A-Z Bus Sales to replace the five (5) 2008 El Dorado cutaways, using Federal and state compliant competitive pricing available from the CALACT contract. The cost per vehicle is \$63,836.47.

The 2016 Fleet Management Plan recognized the dwindling availability of natural gas powered vehicles and recommended an analysis to determine fuel type of future vehicles. Natural gas powered vehicles in this smaller class of paratransit vehicles are no longer manufactured. The five (5) vehicles recommended for purchase will be fueled by gasoline.

Purchase of these vehicles will be funded using California Proposition 1B - Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account Program (PTMISEA) allocations GCTD received.

**It is recommended that the Board of Directors authorize the purchase five (5) Ford Transit 350 vehicles from A-Z Bus Sales, for a total cost not-to-exceed \$319,182.35 and authorize up to an additional \$10,000 (2.2%) to cover contingencies during the contract period. The cost includes five (5) units at a cost of \$63,836.47 each.**

## GOLD COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT

## **BACKGROUND**

The Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) GO ACCESS provides ADA paratransit service complementary to GCTD's fixed services in compliance with federal regulations. Complementary paratransit service is best described as an origin to destination program, requiring the service to assist passengers beyond the curb when necessary. Reliable and accessible transportation is important to a growing portion of our constituency. According to the California Department of Finance, by 2020 the population of seniors (60 years of age and older) in Ventura county is projected to increase 16% while the total population is expected to increase by 1%.

The FTA Circular 5010.1D classifies cutaway vehicles like ones used in the GO ACCESS service as medium-size, light duty vehicles and recommends a minimal useful life of five years or 150,000 miles. GCTD has adopted a useful life benchmark of eight years. The GO ACCESS fleet currently has five (5) cutaways that have been in revenue service more than ten years with an average odometer exceeding 245,000 miles. These aging and progressively less reliable vehicles have served their useful lives. They are subject to an increasing number of time consuming road calls and repairs; they should be replaced to maintain reliable service provision to our customers.

GCTD currently utilizes two types of vehicles for its paratransit service; cutaways and MV-1 vans. There are a total of 26 vehicles available for our ACCESS service. Cutaways feature a bus body mounted on top of a heavy-duty truck chassis whereas the MV-1's are smaller passenger-style vans. Both configurations meet all ADA accessibility requirements. The 23-ft cutaways are necessary to serve passengers with oversized mobility devices that do not fit in the MV-1 van and common destination groups. Passengers who travel to congregate locations for Senior Nutrition or Low Vision support classes are grouped where possible. The smaller MV-1 van provides greater maneuverability in tight spaces, is easier for passengers to get in and out of and offers greater fuel economy and lower maintenance costs. However, despite serving the needs of our paratransit customers well, manufacturing of the MV-1 van has ceased. Demand continues to increase in areas difficult to safely access with a traditional 23-ft cutaway altering the fleet's vehicle requirements.

Staff researched available vehicles in the same class as the discontinued MV-1 vehicles and realized no natural gas powered vehicles exist in today's market. With lack of availability of natural gas engines on the market, and the need to purchase smaller passenger-style vans, GCTD staff recommends purchasing vehicles powered by gasoline. Staff located and evaluated the Ford Transit 350, a vehicle fueled by gasoline vehicles. These vehicles are ADA complaint and are able to meet GCTD's paratransit services needs. It was also determined that it is not feasible to convert these smaller vans to run on CNG, however staff will continue to research alternative fueled vehicles for future purchases as they become available on the open market.

As a member of California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CALACT), GCTD has access to purchase a variety of transit vehicles from the CALACT/MBTA purchasing cooperative. The Cooperative provides a Federal and California State compliant purchasing solution that offers a variety of ADA compliant vehicles at pricing GCTD would be unable to

secure independently. The contracts are restricted to FTA grantees geographically located within the State of California. In 2010, the California Department of General Services (DGS) and Caltrans authorized CALACT and Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) to establish a "Purchasing Cooperative" for use by Caltrans and other FTA grantees in the State of California. Following a competitive procurement process, MBTA and CalACT awarded contracts to A-Z Bus Sales and Creative Bus Sales. Staff inspected several models that would best accommodate the needs of GO ACCESS service and identified the Ford Transit 350 as the preferred option.

ACCESS vehicles need to maneuver in tight spaces and have flexibility to change passenger capacity as necessary. The Ford Transit meets all ADA accessibility requirements. Competitively priced at \$63,836.47 per unit, the Ford Transit is 43% less expensive than the cutaway. The Ford Transit 350 floor plan provides flexibility to change the vehicle's capacity to various configurations throughout the course of a day's service. The floor plan can be changed to carry:



- up to five (5) ambulatory passengers or
- two (2) passengers with mobility devices along with one (1) ambulatory passenger or
- one (1) passenger using a wheelchair with two (2) ambulatory passengers

This increased seating flexibility will allow the vehicle to serve up to 95% of the currently dispatched service. The recently installed Ecolane scheduling and dispatching software has thus far successfully absorbed monthly increases averaging 15% or more while reducing peak vehicle requirements. The current paratransit fleet requirements permit GCTD to replace five (5) 2008 cutaways with five (5) Ford Transit 350 vehicles. As paratransit demand increases, the need for more vehicles may require staff to procure additional vehicle units and staff will come back to the board for approval if this need is warranted.

GCTD has sufficient PTMISEA funding available for the paratransit vehicle replacements requested. In addition, this project was included in the approved FY 2018-19 Budget and 10-Year Capital Plan.

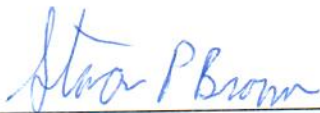
Additionally, staff is requesting approval to dispose of the five (5) 2008 cut-away vehicles, that are to be replaced by the purchase of these Ford Transit 350s, by selling them to the highest bidder through Ken Porter's Auctions.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that the Board of Directors authorize the purchase five (5) Ford Transit 350 vehicles from A-Z Bus Sales, for a total cost not-to-exceed \$319,182.35 and authorize up to an additional \$10,000 (2.2%) to cover contingencies during the contract period. The cost includes five (5) units at a cost of \$63,836.47 each.**

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**GENERAL MANAGER'S CONCURRENCE**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven P. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Steven P. Brown  
General Manager