

# Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: April 12, 2004

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF A 20-RIDE TICKET BOOK PROGRAM FOR THE PASADENA AREA RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM (ARTS) AND AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT A MARKETING PROGRAM

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Receive and file information relative to a 20-ride ticket book program for the Pasadena Area Rapid Transit System (ARTS); and
2. Authorize a journal voucher amending the FY 2004 Adopted Operating Budget for the ARTS (Fund 209), increasing it by \$60,000 in line item 8115-209-775412 to implement a marketing program to increase ridership; funds to come from the Proposition C Reserve.

## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION:**

The Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) reviewed the 20-ride ticket book program at their regular meetings on January 16, 2004 and March 12, 2004. At the March 12, meeting the TAC voted to recommend that the City Council not implement a prepaid fare program at this time but invest in a marketing program to encourage greater use of the Pasadena Area Rapid Transit System (ARTS). Staff concurs with this recommendation.

While the TAC was supportive of the concept to provide a method of making fare payment more convenient for passengers, it was determined that the benefit to provide a program, such as the 20-ride ticket book, did not offset the additional expense. This decision took into account that there has not been a significant demand for such a program from current users, and the existing EZ Transit Pass program is available to ARTS transit users and provides a convenient prepaid fare method. Additionally, the TAC determined that a strong marketing program for ARTS would be a better use of limited funds, as staff reported to TAC that ridership levels for the first six months are at 65 percent of the forecasted levels.

**BACKGROUND:**

In July 2003, the ARTS service expanded, and a fare was implemented. At the time the fare was approved there was a request made to examine the feasibility of a bus pass program to increase the ease of use of the ARTS in conjunction with other transit services in the City.

Shortly thereafter, in August 2003, the City joined the EZ Transit Pass program, which is sponsored by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). Many municipal operators in Los Angeles County have joined in this program, which saves people money and increases convenience if they use more than one transit agency or type of transit to travel. The EZ Transit Pass allows the user to board any of the 17 participating Los Angeles County transit operator's buses and trains. The charge for this monthly pass is \$58, and there is a special discounted monthly pass for seniors and persons with disabilities for \$29. There is no special discounted EZ Transit Pass for students available. Without an EZ Pass, multiple fares and transfers would have to be purchased depending on the origin and destination of the trip.

On January 16, 2004 and March 12, 2004, staff presented reports to the TAC on a proposed 20-ride ticket book program for the ARTS. The recommendation was for the implementation of a 20-ride ticket book program for the City's ARTS service, which would complement the existing regional EZ Transit Pass program that is available to ARTS transit users (a summary of the proposed program is attached). The combination of the two programs – a ticket book program and the EZ Transit Pass program – would meet the direction given to staff to put into place a means to make the ARTS system more convenient to transit users.

Following discussions with the TAC, staff no longer recommends implementation of the 20-ride ticket book for the following reasons:

- While the 20-ride ticket book program provides the benefit of convenience, this does not off-set the cost of the program at this time;
- No evidence that a prepaid fare program will increase ridership; and
- There have been few requests for a prepaid fare medium; however staff will re-evaluate the need in one year and report back to TAC.

Marketing is a more proven tool to increase ridership. The proposed expenditure of \$60,000 on a marketing program will generate a campaign that will include creative concepts, newspaper ads, ad panels in bus shelters and other print materials. A marketing campaign is recommended at this time to improve ridership.

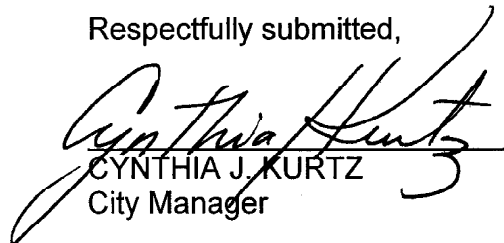
In October and November of 2003, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) experienced an employee strike. The MTA employee strike had a significant impact on Gold Line ridership and it is projected that it will take six

months to a year for ridership levels to recover and the projected use grow as originally anticipated. The ridership projections for the City's ARTS included use by Gold Line riders; therefore, the lower ridership on the Gold Line has a direct impact on the ARTS ridership.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The approval of the recommended marketing program will require an amendment to the FY 2004 Adopted Operating Budget for the ARTS in the amount of \$60,000 in line item 8115-209-775412. A journal voucher appropriating \$60,000 from the Proposition C Reserve for Future Light Rail Projects will be needed. The current balance in the reserve is \$1,372,163, and this appropriation will result in a new reserve balance of \$1,312,163.

Respectfully submitted,



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Approved by:



JOYCE A. AMERSON  
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Attachment