

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Authorization of STA Funds for  
Operation of Non-Emergency Medical  
Transportation Service

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Approve expenditure of \$250,000 from  
the section 99313 regional portion of  
the FY 17/18 State Transit Assistance  
Program for Non-Emergency  
Transportation Service

### SUMMARY:

In June 2017, the Board adopted the finding that Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) from San Joaquin County to medical facilities outside the region is an Unmet Transit Need that is “Reasonable to Meet,” and set aside \$250,000 of the section 99313 regional portion of the FY 17/18 State Transit Assistance (STA) Program to plan and implement the service. The approved motion also included the requirement that SJCOG and RTD staff conduct further research into the Board’s questions regarding implementation of the service, and bring back a scope of services for Board approval before the STA funding could be expended on operations. Of the \$250,000, \$35,000 was identified as allowable for this initial planning of the service.

SJCOG has worked closely with RTD to develop a feasible plan for a pilot implementation of NEMT service in San Joaquin County. RTD, as the regional transit provider, has taken the lead role in this transit planning effort, with SJCOG in a supportive role. The scope of services outlined in this report would provide 16 roundtrips to medical facilities in the Bay Area and Sacramento, with door-to-door connecting service. Assuming ridership equivalent to Stanislaus County – where NEMT service to the Bay Area currently exists – the cost would be approximately \$180,000 per year. RTD and SJCOG staff propose this as a pilot implementation that would be thoroughly evaluated after one fiscal year of operation, at which point the Board will have the opportunity to review and consider revisions to the service plan.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the expenditure of \$250,000 from the section 99313 regional portion of the FY 17/18 State Transit Assistance Program for Non-Emergency Transportation Service.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The budget authority has already been approved by the Board so there is no fiscal impact other than expenditure of funds.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### *Unmet Transit Needs Process*

Each year, pursuant to state law, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) must identify any unmet transit needs that may exist in San Joaquin County. If needs are found, a further determination must be made to determine whether those needs are reasonable to meet. State law requires SJCOG to ensure that reasonable needs are met before Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds are allocated to local jurisdictions for non-transit purposes.

The annual unmet transit needs assessment requires SJCOG to meet the following minimum requirements:

- Ensure that several factors have been considered in the planning process, including:
  1. Size and location of groups likely to be dependent on transit,
  2. Adequacy of existing services and potential alternative services
  3. Service improvements that could meet all or part of the travel demand.
- Hold a public hearing to receive testimony on unmet needs.
- Determine definitions for "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet."
- Adopt a finding regarding unmet transit needs and allocate funds to address those needs, if necessary, before street and road TDA allocations.

### *Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)*

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is defined as transportation used to ensure patients can travel to and from their medical appointments, the pharmacy, urgent care, specialized treatment, or the hospital. Of those comments received during the public outreach process for the FY 17-18 Unmet Transit Needs Report, the most frequently requested service was NEMT service to medical facilities in the Bay Area. During discussions at SJCOG committees and the Board, NEMT service to Sacramento was also raised as an important need, although it hadn't been raised during the formal comment period.

### *NEMT Example: StaRT Medi-Van Service*

During this process, SJCOG learned that neighboring Stanislaus County previously identified NEMT as an Unmet Transit Need that was reasonable to meet, and has been offering service for its residents going to and from Bay Area medical facilities for 17 years. The Stanislaus Regional Transit (StaRT) provides a bus from Modesto Downtown Transportation Center to Bay Area medical facilities, four days per week (approximately \$210,000 per year). The StaRT NEMT

service has sufficient ridership to support 4 days of service per week, carrying 2,300+ riders at \$11 per ride.

#### Board Actions Related to NEMT To Date

On June 22, 2017, the Board passed a motion to:

- (1) adopt the Unmet Transit Needs Findings for FY 2017-18 which identify NEMT as an unmet transit need that is reasonable to meet;
- (2) Set aside \$250,000 from the section 99313 regional portion of the FY 17/18 State Transit Assistance Program for planning and implementation of NEMT service;
- (3) The expenditure will initially be for planning to get all the answers to the questions related to the scope of services and no expenditure shall occur on the actual operations until it comes back to the Board to hear what the planning level analysis has shown, what the scope of services would be, and have the Board then consider authorizing expenditure for operations.

On August 24, 2017, the Board passed a motion to adopt the proposed FY17/18 STA apportionments with the \$250,000 set-aside for NEMT.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **San Joaquin RTD Service Proposal for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation**

RTD's service proposal would use existing transit service offered by RTD, StaRT, ACE and other operators to provide 16 total options per day for NEMT service to medical facilities in the Bay Area and Sacramento. These options are described in further detail below:

#### Bay Area service via StaRT Medivan

StaRT currently provides a Medivan service from Modesto to the Bay Area. The service operates four days per week, leaving Modesto Transportation Center at 6:30 AM and stopping at medical facilities in Livermore, Oakland, San Francisco, Palo Alto and other locations. The Medivan makes one return trip in the afternoon. Passengers must call and request NEMT service in advance, and the fare is \$11.

RTD has worked with StaRT to add a connection stop in Tracy on the Medivan route. San Joaquin County passengers would pay the same fare as Stanislaus County passengers. Passengers can access the stop in Tracy by their own means (e.g. be driven by a friend/family member) or use RTD-contracted curb-to-curb service via Uber or Journey Via Gurney – see “Dispatch and Connecting Services” below.

#### Bay Area Service via RTD Commuter Route 150 and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE)

Interregional transportation between San Joaquin County and the Bay Area is currently provided by RTD and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE). RTD's Commuter Route 150 provides nine round trips daily, five days per week from Stockton's Downtown Transit Center to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, with stops in Manteca, Lathrop and Tracy. One-way fares are

\$7. ACE provides four daily roundtrip trains from San Joaquin County to the Bay Area, with stops in Stockton, Lathrop/Manteca, Tracy, Livermore, Pleasanton, Fremont, Santa Clara and San Jose. One-way fares range from \$7.50 to \$14.50.

These existing services are able to provide additional connections to Bay Area medical facilities. One important role these services could play is providing rides to/from the Bay Area at alternate times of day from the single round trip provided by the StaRT Medivan, potentially reducing waiting times for passengers and resulting in a more convenient trip. These options could also allow NEMT patrons to travel to additional medical destinations in the Bay Area and allow appointments to be scheduled on Friday (not currently available on StaRT's service schedule). The station stops in the Bay Area for RTD Commuter 150 and ACE, for the most part, are not directly adjacent to medical facilities. Passengers would need to arrange connecting transportation from the station stops to medical facilities.

#### Sacramento Service via RTD Routes 163 and 165

RTD currently runs two commuter routes from Stockton to Downtown Sacramento, 163 (via SR 99) and 165 (via I-5). Both routes currently travel northbound in the morning, terminating on N Street near the State Capitol, and provide return service in the afternoon. RTD's proposal would allow NEMT passengers to access medical destinations within 2 miles of the existing terminus of the routes after the commuting passengers have been dropped off. Medical destinations include Kaiser Medical Center, Sutter Medical Center, UC Davis Medical Center, Cares Community Health, C.O.R.E. Medical Clinic, Inc. and Sacramento Naturopathic Medical Center. Passengers would request NEMT service in advance and pay the regular fare of \$7 per trip for the commuter bus.

#### Dispatch and Connecting Services

To coordinate the various NEMT services offered, RTD will establish a centralized booking and dispatch system. San Joaquin County residents who wish to request NEMT service will call RTD in advance to book the service. RTD will assist the passenger in identifying the appropriate service based on the desired origin and destination (e.g. StaRT service, RTD/ACE to Bay Area, or RTD to Sacramento), and arrange connecting service if needed.

Connecting service to the San Joaquin County origin points for StaRT, RTD, and ACE services could be arranged through RTD. RTD has already contracted with Uber to provide the RTD Go! service, which could be expanded and used for this purpose. Passengers with special needs or requiring ADA-accessible service may use Journey Via Gurney, who is also under contract with RTD. NEMT passengers would be charged \$3 per trip for either of these services. In addition, it is expected that a certain percentage of the passengers will arrange their own connecting transportation, such as being dropped off by a family member or friend.

#### Marketing, Launch of Service and Evaluation

RTD and SJCOG are currently conducting a survey, distributed to health care providers and human service agencies, to estimate demand for the NEMT services, with preliminary results indicating strong support for the services to be offered.

Upon Board approval of the use of STA funds for operation of the service, RTD has identified the following short-term implementation steps:

- Develop and implement marketing campaigns (radio, TV, newspaper)
- Conduct community outreach
- Develop program management plan:
  - Develop application form
  - Develop customer database

After pilot implementation of one year, RTD and SJCOG staff will evaluate the program in terms of ridership, costs and other factors, and present the results to the Board for further direction.

### **COMMITTEE ACTIONS:**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Management & Finance Advisory Committee (M&F) had not met at the time of the “mail out” of this item to the Board. The actions taken by those committees will be noted as part of the record and may be reported verbally if requested by the Board.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

- If approved, RTD will begin implementation of NEMT service plan immediately, starting with the marketing, outreach and program management steps identified above.
- RTD and SJCOG will evaluate the pilot service and return to the Board for further direction within one year.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A: RTD Presentation to SJCOG Board on NEMT Service Plan, October 26, 2017

*Report prepared by Rob Cunningham, Senior Regional Planner.*



# Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Service Plan

San Joaquin Council of Governments Board  
of Directors Meeting

October 26, 2017

Donna DeMartino – Chief Executive Officer

# Stanislaus County Existing Service

## Bay Area service via StaRT Medivan

- Access to medical facilities in Livermore, Oakland, San Francisco, Menlo Park, Stanford and Palo Alto
- Costs \$260,000 annually

One option per day, four trips per week

All passengers ride the same route and make all stops along the way

# San Joaquin RTD Proposal

- Stanislaus = 1 option per day  
San Joaquin = 16 options per day
- Stanislaus = \$260,000 annual cost  
San Joaquin = \$180,000 annual cost  
(based on 2,600 trips per year)



# San Joaquin RTD Service Proposal

- **Connecting daily service** to Bay Area and Sacramento
  - Bay Area service via StaRT Medivan
    - Access to medical facilities in Livermore, Oakland, San Francisco, Menlo Park, Stanford and Palo Alto
  - Bay Area service via RTD Commuter Route 150 and ACE
    - RTD – Nine round trips daily, five days per week
    - ACE – Four round trips per day, five days per week
    - Access to all Bay Area and San Jose medical facilities
  - Sacramento service via RTD routes 163 and 165
    - Access to medical facilities in Sacramento including: Kaiser Medical Center, Sutter Health Medical Center, UC Davis Medical Center, Cares Community Health, C.O.R.E. Medical Clinic and Sacramento Naturopathic Medical Center etc.

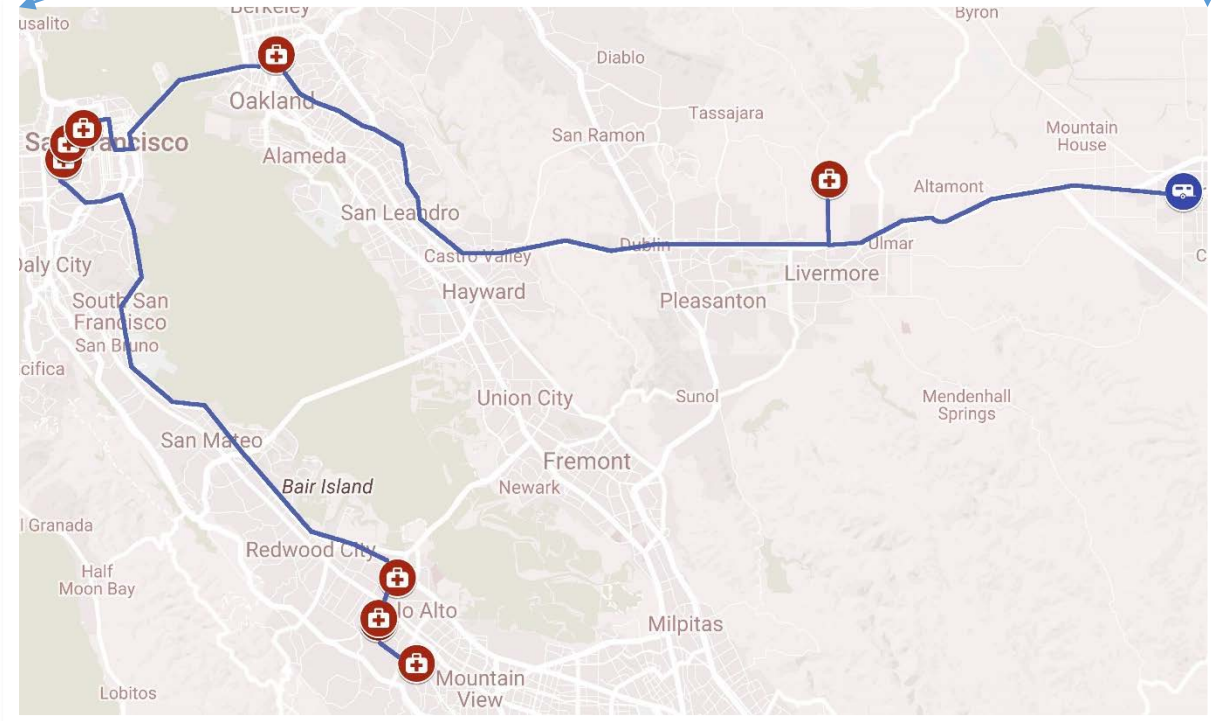
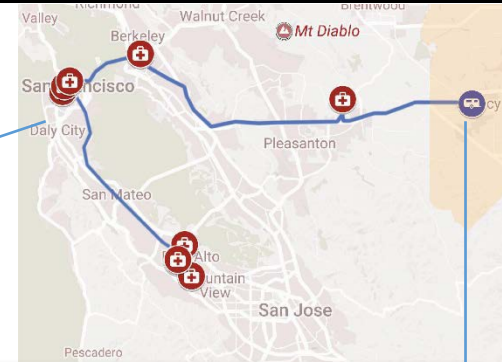
# NEMT Service to Bay Area

San Joaquin County (Uber/JVG coverage)



## Examples of Medical Facilities






- UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland
- Stanford Hospital
- Livermore VA Hospital
- UCSF Medical Center
- Menlo Park VA Hospital
- Palo Alto Veterans Hospital
- St.Mary's Medical Center
- Lucile Packard Children's Hospital
- Mt. Zion Clinic

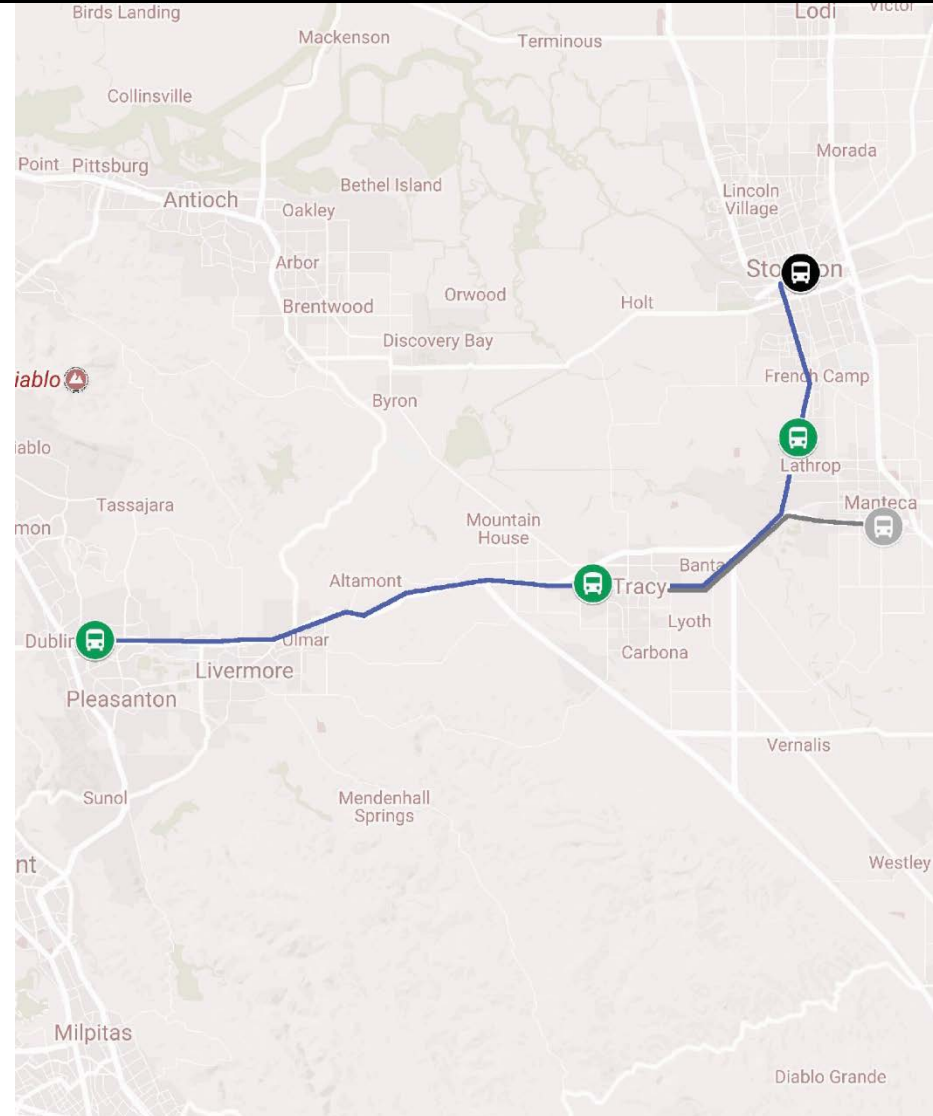


# Bay Area Service via RTD Commuter Route 150

- Stockton to Bay Area
- 9 daily trips, M – F

150

-  Stockton
-  Lathrop
-  Tracy
-  Manteca Shuttle
-  Dublin/BART



# ACE Connection to Bay Area

- Stockton to Bay Area
- 4 daily trips, M – F

- ● Stockton
- ● Lathrop/Manteca
- ● Tracy
- ● Vasco Rd
- ● Livermore
- ● Pleasanton
- ● Fremont
- ● Great America
- ● Santa Clara
- ● San Jose



# NEMT Service to Sacramento via RTD Commuter Routes 165 & 163



San Joaquin County (Uber/JVG coverage)

165



N St/14thSt (Last Stop for Commuter)

163



N St/15th St (Last Stop for Commuter)

## Examples of Medical Facilities



Kaiser Medical Center



Sutter Medical Center



UC Davis Medical Center



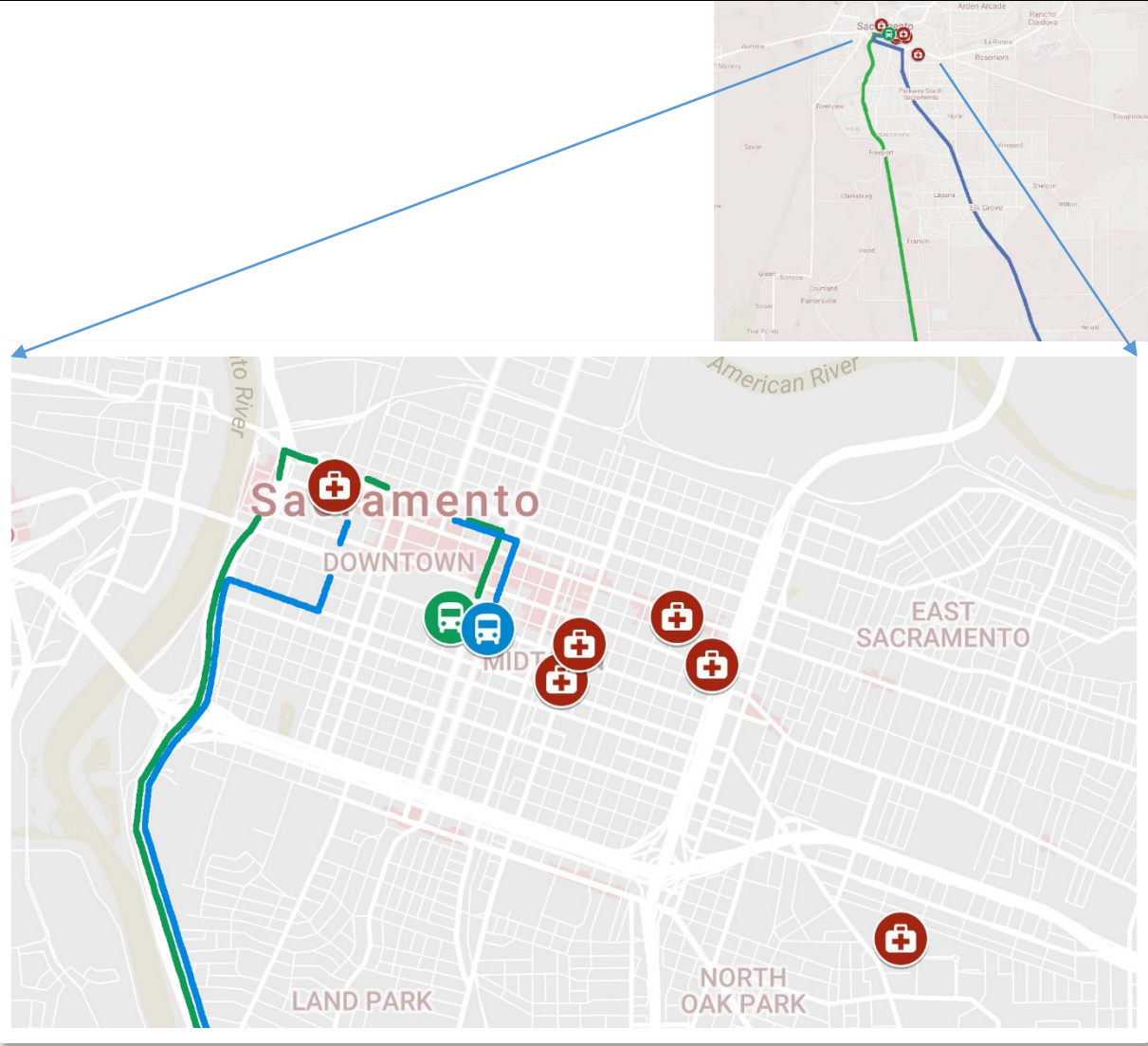
Cares Community Health



C.O.R.E. Medical Clinic, Inc.



Sacramento Naturopathic Medical Center





# Cost Estimates

Initial Startup	
• Startup	\$15,000.00
• Marketing and Outreach	\$15,000.00
Fixed Cost	Annual Cost
• Program Management, Customer Service, Reservations, Dispatch	\$50,000.00
Variable Cost	Amount
• Cost per Trip	\$50.00
Proposed Passenger Fare	Cost per Trip
• Connection Service to Pick-up Location	\$3.00
• StaRT Medivan	\$11.00
• Bay Area Service (150)*	\$7.00
• Sacramento Service (165 & 163)	\$7.00
• ACE Service to Bay Area	\$7.25 – \$14.50

\*Free for ADA-certified customers enrolled in RTD's FREEdom program



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# Next Steps

- Currently, survey (distributed to health care providers and human services agencies) is being conducted to gauge the demand for additional transportation services
- Short-term plan (2–3 months)
  - Bring item back to SJCOG Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting in November
    - Provide a detailed service plan
    - If BOD approves plan, launch the program
    - Develop and implement marketing campaigns (radio, TV, newspaper)
    - Conduct community outreach
    - Develop program management plan
      - Develop application form
      - Develop customer database
- Long-term plan (1 year)
  - Financial reconciliation and review with SJCOG staff at end of pilot program

