

Needs Assessment Study

of West County Measure J-Funded Services for Seniors and People with Disabilities



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

February 2018

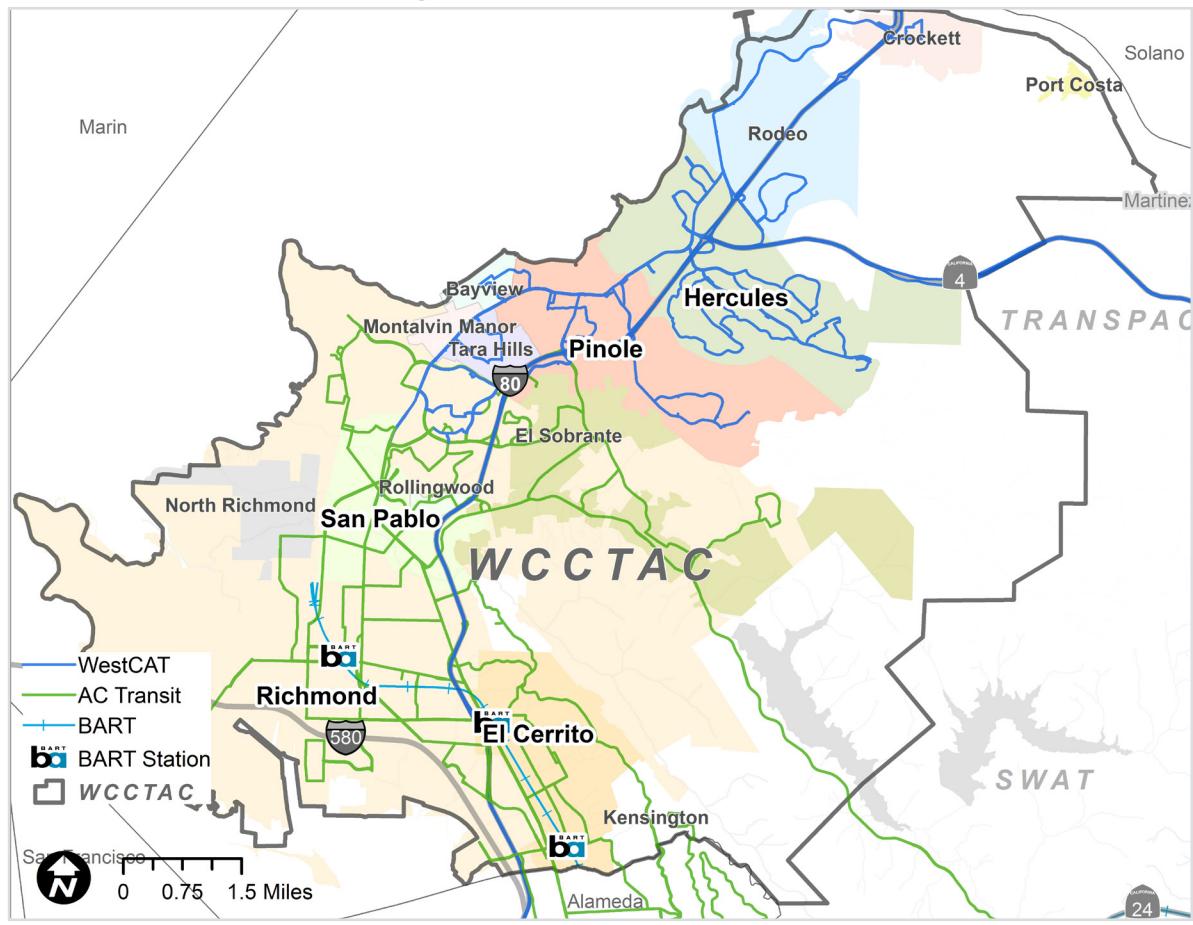
Prepared by

N NELSON
NYGAARD

Study Purpose

To evaluate existing West County paratransit programs funded by Measure J and determine potential enhancements, improved coordination, and possible new services to better meet the changing needs of the area's senior and disabled residents

WCCTAC's Coverage Area





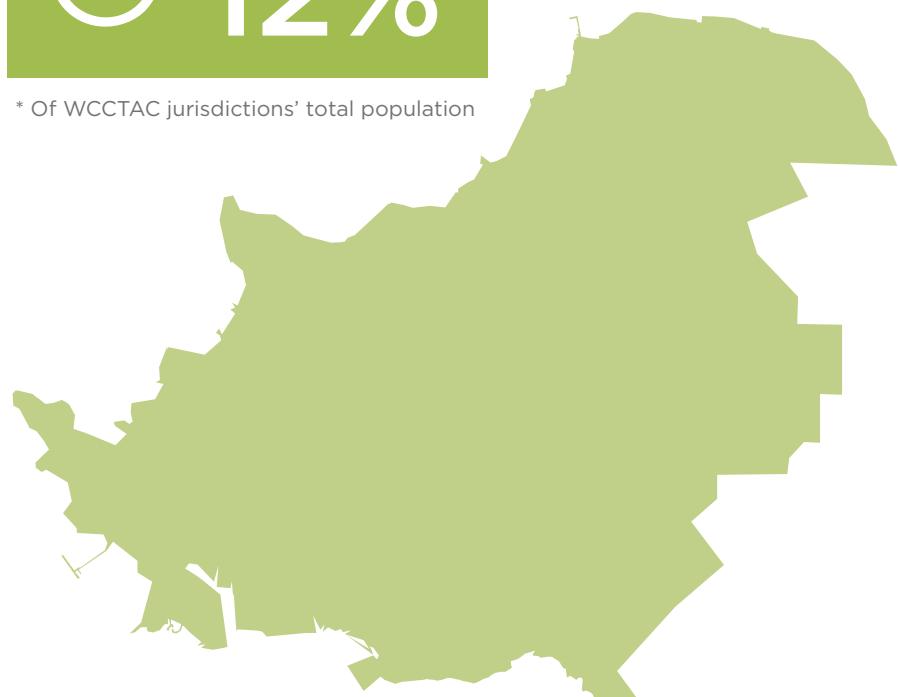
Measure J was approved by 71% of Contra Costa voters in 2004

MEASURE J provides vital transportation services to Western Contra Costa County seniors and people with disabilities.

The two service populations overlap—some seniors are also disabled



* Of WCCTAC jurisdictions' total population



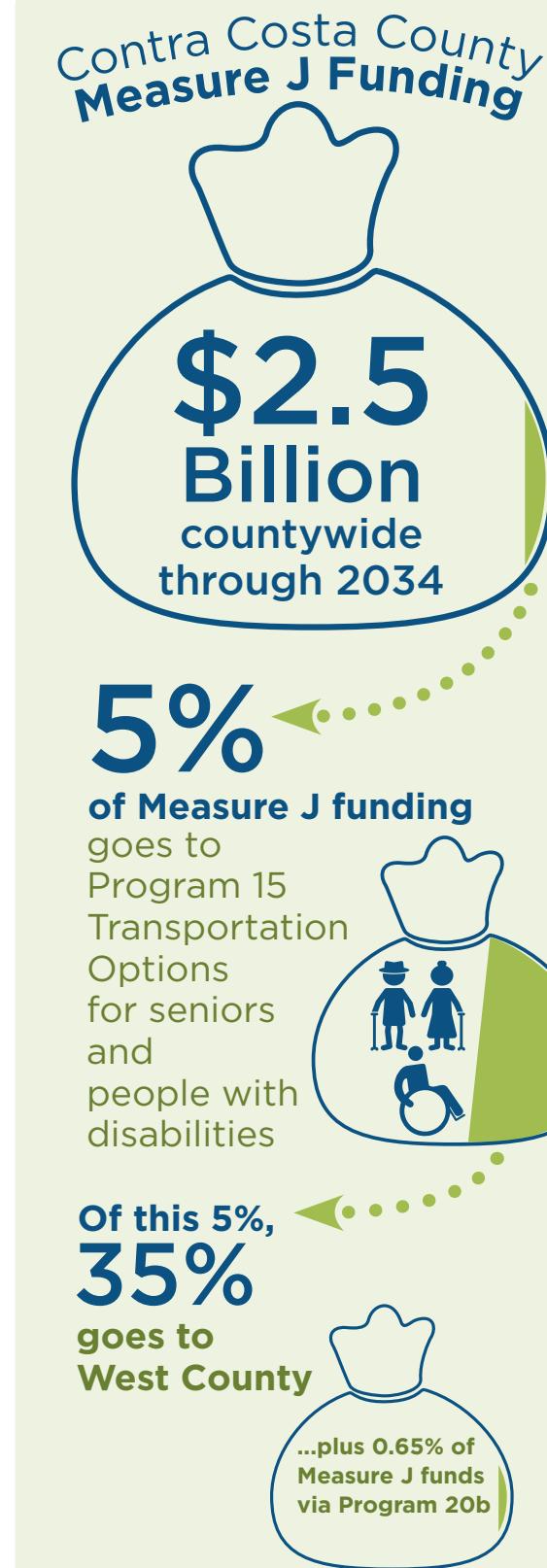


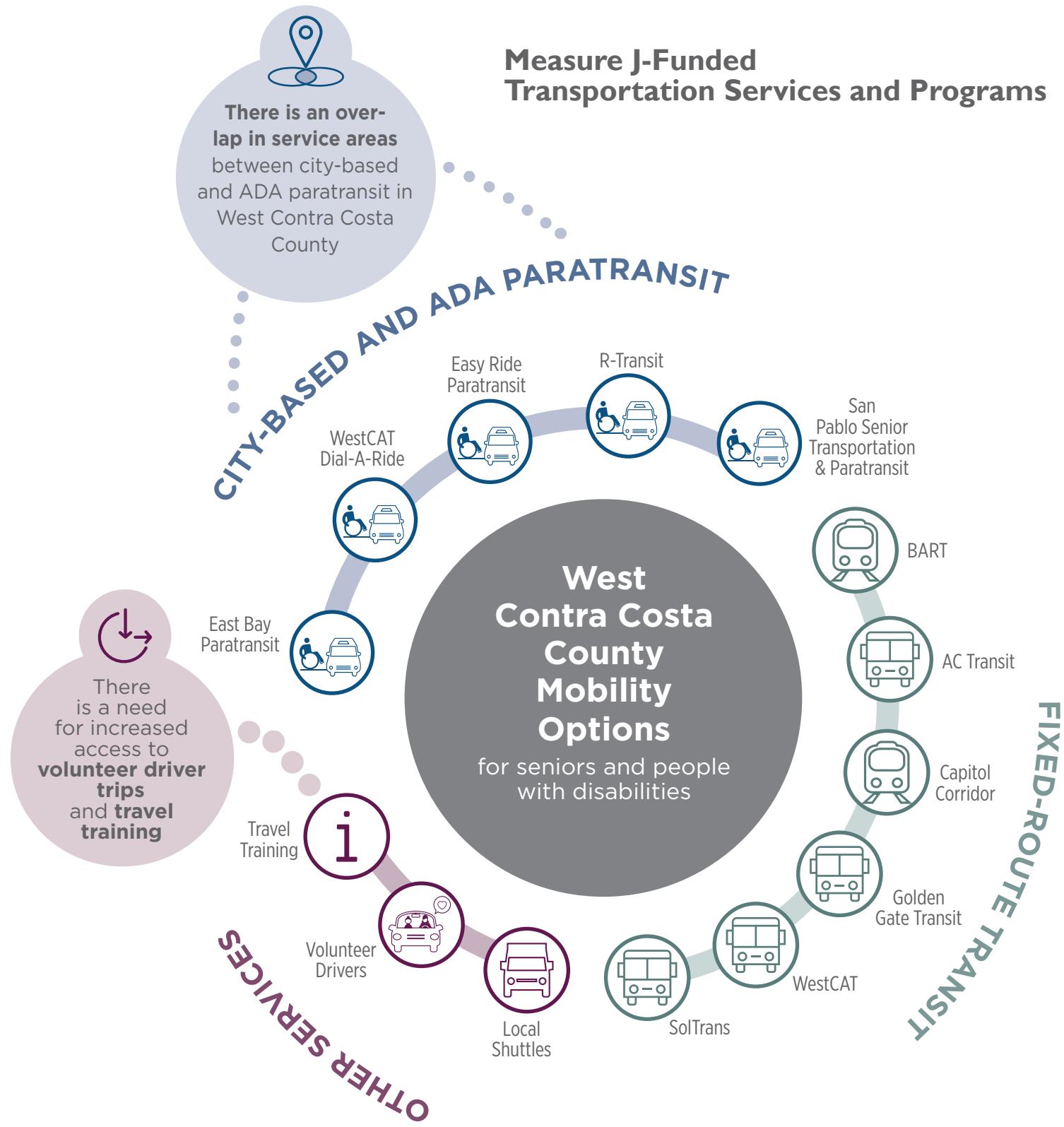
Existing Conditions



Funding Landscape

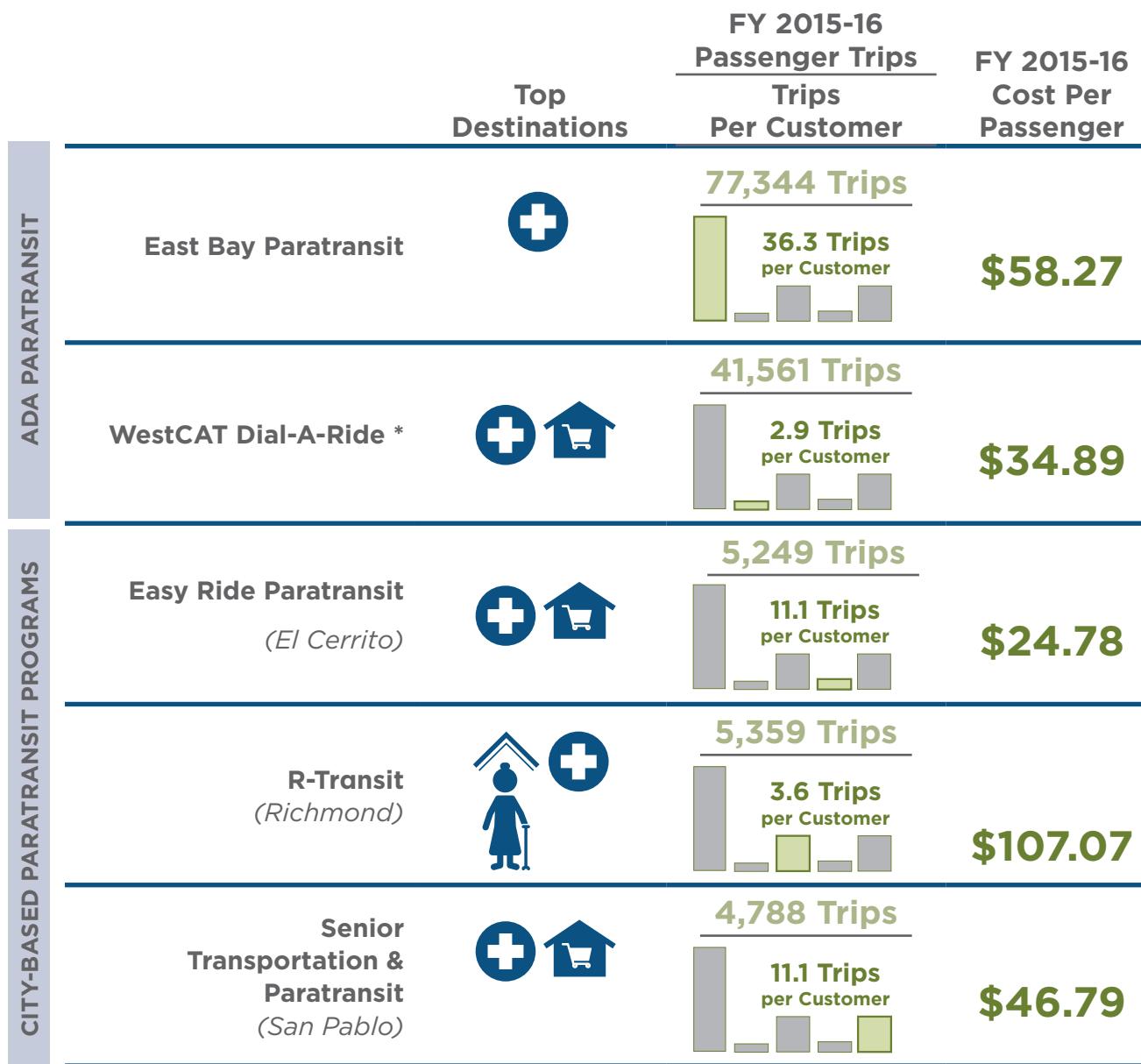
The Expenditure Plan allocates 5% of Measure J to Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities countywide through Program 15. Of this 5%, 35% is allocated to West Contra Costa service providers. Additionally, Program 20b (a Subregional Program) allocates 0.65% to West Contra Costa for Additional Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities. Program 20b funds are approved by WCCTAC and can be used for such non-ADA services as shuttles, sedan/taxi service, fare subsidies, and/or other supplemental services beyond the ADA service. However, ADA service does qualify, and 20b can be used to expand the same “base” program expenditures that Program 15 is used for. Currently, the Measure J transportation programs are in fact using 20b funds as part of the same pool as Program 15 funds.





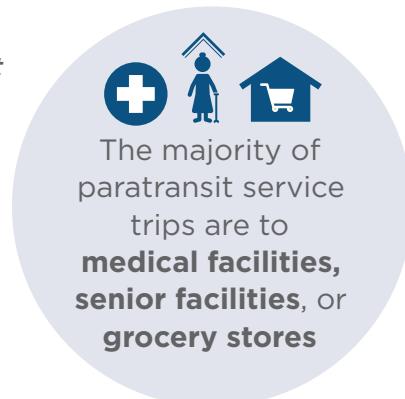


Measure J-Funded Paratransit Services in West Contra Costa



* WestCAT provides paratransit trips and trips to seniors 65+.

[†] \$163.84 per passenger in FY 2016-17 from May 23, 2017 Staff Report to Richmond City Council.



Public Participation

The study team heard a breadth of perspectives from West County seniors, people with disabilities, and their service providers and advocates.



Three Key Groups Identified Needs and Suggested Improvements

These groups shaped a collective understanding of the transportation needs of the region's seniors and people with disabilities:

- **Cities** of El Cerrito, San Pablo, and Richmond
- **ADA Paratransit providers** East Bay Paratransit and WestCAT
- **Non-profits** Mobility Matters and the Center for Independent Living
- **The District I Board of Supervisors**
- **Seniors at Centers** in the Cities of Richmond, San Pablo, Hercules, Pinole, and North Richmond
- Seniors and people with disabilities at **Community Centers in El Cerrito and Kensington**
- Other constituents through an **online survey**





Major Transportation Needs & Gaps

Most Significant Transportation Needs of Seniors and People with Disabilities in West Contra Costa County



Travel Training Services. There is a need and desire for more of these services, both to mitigate the trend toward driving in advanced age and to educate seniors and people with disabilities on how to use existing services and internet-based mobility information.



Medical appointments are the most difficult for seniors and people with disabilities to access. This need was exacerbated by the closure of Doctors Medical Center and the subsequent need to access services outside West County.



Same-day, evening, and weekend trip needs are not being met. There is currently no reliable source of same-day transportation for seniors and people with disabilities who cannot access public transit.



Outreach. A potentially large group of eligible but uncertified seniors and people with disabilities suggests a need for a more robust outreach program.



Richmond's R-Transit struggles to serve its customers, including assigned unincorporated areas. The program has low trip numbers and a high cost per trip.



Improved coordination between paratransit providers is a stakeholder priority. Transfers between ADA Paratransit, city-based services, and other service areas can be costly, time-consuming, difficult to arrange, and raise concerns about passenger safety.



Ride-hailing services are a newer option that constituents are interested in incorporating into the available services. These types of services include Uber, Lyft, and taxi services.





Over the last decade, several studies identified needs and proposals for senior and disabled mobility programs, both in Contra Costa specifically and across the Bay Area. Prior studies highlight these additional needs:



Improve coordination, regulation, training programs, and oversight of paratransit services



Enhance existing fixed-route transit services to better serve seniors and people with disabilities



Enhance and supplement traditional paratransit services



Implement and/or expand non-traditional paratransit services that can improve independence and quality of life



→ Short-Term Strategies



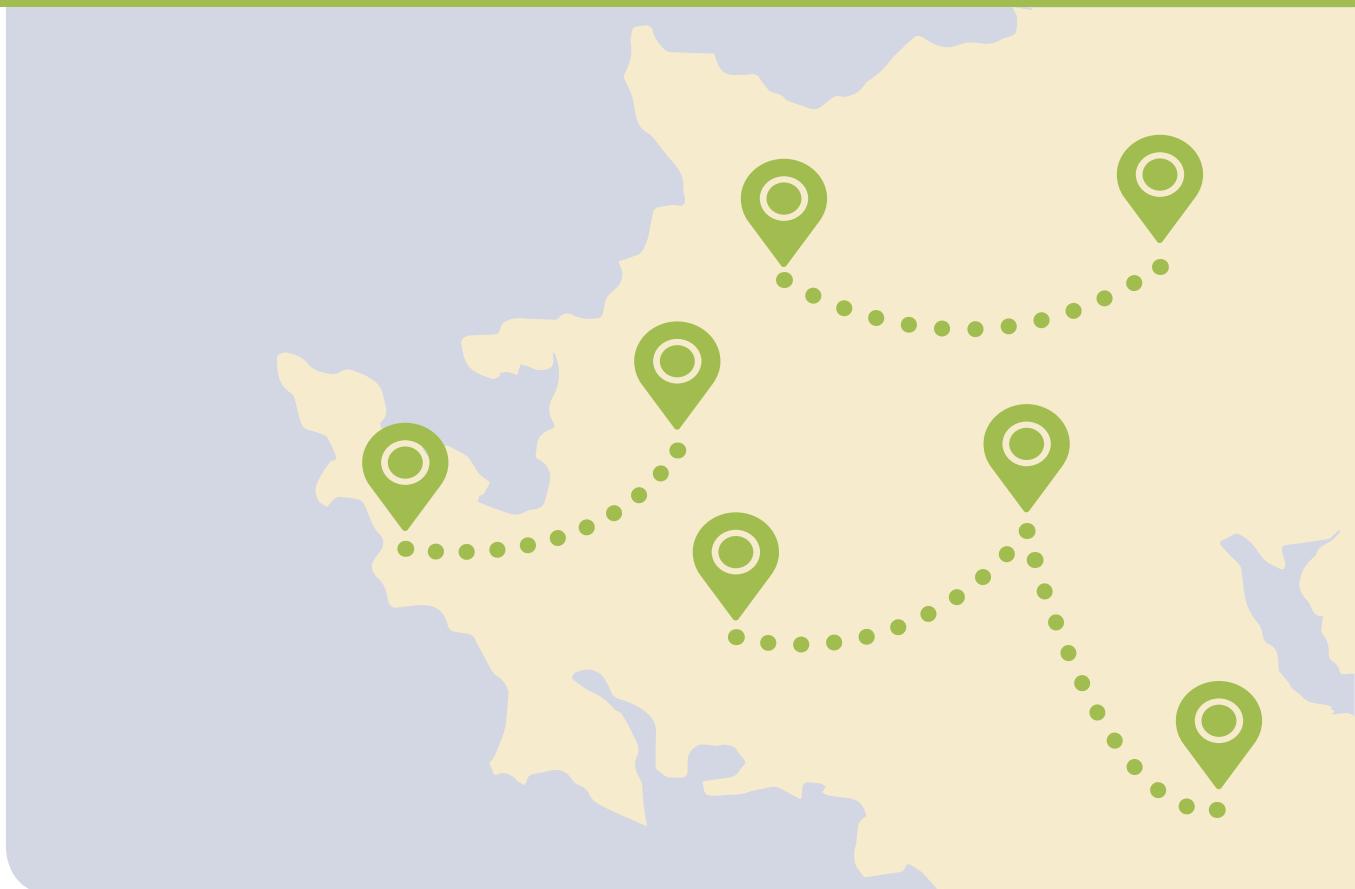
Better Coordination of West County Non-ADA Services



To create better communication between transportation service providers, WCCTAC should expand existing West County Mobility Management Group to improve service coordination amongst providers.



Improve City of Richmond Program



Work with City of Richmond program to look at alternative service options.



Create a Travel Orientation Program



Travel orientation, also known as transit orientation, is less formal and involved than traditional travel training and explains transportation systems by sharing information about trip planning, schedules, maps, fare systems, mobility devices, new mobility services, and benefits and services. It may be conducted in a group or one-on-one.



Investigate Role of Ride-Hailing Concierge Service



Ride-hailing concierge platforms enable program sponsors to provide ride-hailing trips (on Lyft and Uber) to individuals *without smartphones*, and offer organizations the opportunity to manage and pay for rides for their customers and clients. The implementation process for a ride-hailing concierge can be fast. The time consuming components involve identifying funding and staffing, and preparing West County's existing mobility managers (e.g. municipal travel trainers) for training partners and individuals on the program.

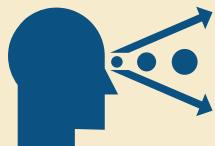


Expand Volunteer Driver Program in West County



Image from Shawn Fong

Volunteer driver programs are defined by Easter Seals Project Action (ESPA) as a “*network of volunteers that provides one-way, round-trip, and multi-stop rides. These programs are provided free of charge, on a donation basis, through membership dues, or at a minimal cost, and typically have an eligibility process and advance reservation requirements.*” There are two models of volunteer driver programs that are being recommended to supplement Mobility Matters’ program in West Contra Costa County: a traditional model—currently served by Mobility Matters—and a TRIP model—which is a self-directed volunteer recruitment model.



Long-Term Strategies



Establish a Comprehensive West County Mobility Management Program

**Low-income Households,
Individuals with Disabilities,
Seniors**



Mobility Manager



A West County Mobility Management Program

could take steps toward implementing a centralized call center, allowing consumers to call one number to get information and service from a variety of transportation options. West County can provide an example for Contra Costa County, as they explore countywide mobility management efforts.

A longer-term vision might provide more extensive mobility management, such as a brokerage and one call/one click service for West County, or all of Contra Costa County.



Assessment and Eligibility



Information and Referral



Travel Training



Fare Subsidy



**Volunteer
Driver
Program**



**Community
Shuttle**



Transit



Paratransit



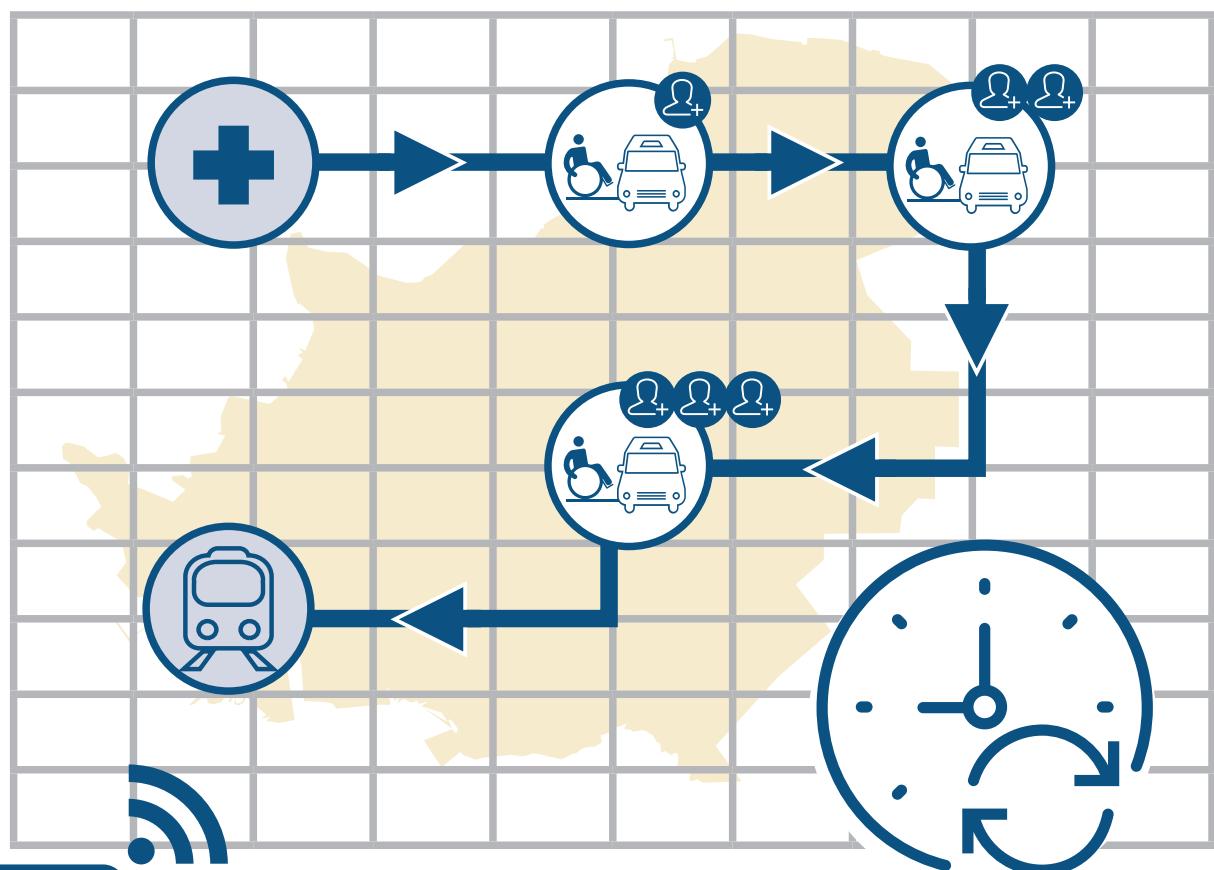
Vanpool



**Taxi/
Ride-Hail**

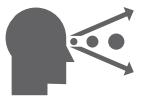


Explore Investing in Microtransit Platform for Same-Day Trips



Microtransit's primary benefit to West Contra Costa would be the introduction of a same-day transportation option. It offers an opportunity to link together individual paratransit programs in West County, providing a more seamless experience for the user.





Support Increase in Available Funding for Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities

A future ballot initiative, similar to the 2016 Measure X Sales Tax Measure, could increase funding for seniors and people with disabilities.





Next Steps

One of the biggest challenges West County faces moving forward is meeting the growing needs of the senior and disabled population.



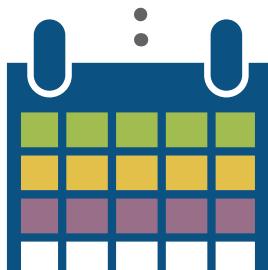
Coordinate to Keep the Momentum

This Plan fostered increased collaboration between the region's ADA and city-based paratransit providers and non-profits by way of regular West County Mobility Management Group meetings. It will be reviewed by the WCCTAC Board of Directors in February 2018. In the immediate near-term, throughout the first half of 2018, WCCTAC and the West County Mobility Management Group should reach a decision on key short-term strategies to implement in the next one to two years, and further assign responsibilities for implementation.



Implement Key Short-Term Strategies

In the one to two years after this Plan's completion, WCCTAC should provide leadership to its fund recipients in ensuring key plan outcomes move forward.



Plan and Commit to Prioritized Long-Term Strategies

WCCTAC should support Contra Costa County leadership in committing to its top long-term strategies to improve mobility for seniors and people with disabilities. This may involve strategic coordination on developing a new funding program as well as making adjustments or improvements to implemented short-term strategies.

**For more information, contact:**

Joanna Pallock
WCCTAC Project Manager
(510) 210-5934
jpallock@wcctac.org

Prepared by