



Agenda Report

Parks and Community Services Commission

File #: 26-143

Meeting Date: 02/12/2026

TITLE: SENIOR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT: PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PRESENTED BY: KEVIN STODDART, SENIOR RECREATION SUPERVISOR

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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Parks and Community Services Commission:

1. Review, discuss and provide direction to the Parks and Community Services Department regarding community outreach efforts and on operational changes to the Senior Transportation Program.

BACKGROUND:

The Senior Transportation Program began in 2011 and primarily exists due to the availability of Tax Measure M2 funding administered by the Orange County Transportation Authority. The program provides curb to curb transportation for any reason Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM within the city's boundaries and curb to curb transportation for non-emergency medical appointments in eleven cities and the Long Beach VA Medical Center.

The City began the current taxi model of the program when the City Council approved an emergency services agreement from May 2020 to June 2021. After a competitive bid process, the City retained the taxi model and entered into the current professional services agreement with Orange County Yellow Cooperative from July 2021 to June 2026. The current rate has been in place since May 2020 and the anticipated rate with a new contract is expected to be approximately double the current rate, Chart 1.

Chart 1: Current Fare & Anticipated Fare

	Fare Per Ride	Additional per mile fee (Medical only)
Current Fare	\$12.50	\$2.50
Anticipated 2026 Fare	\$20.00 - \$21.50	\$4.50 - \$5.50

In addition to the imminent fee increase, program ridership has also increased significantly. Ridership has grown for various reasons, such as a growing senior population, and the accessibility of the program. Unlike most cities, the program is free, has a large service area, and there is no limit to how

many times an individual can use the program each month. Charts two (2) and three (3) plot the growth of the program's ridership and cost since 2021 and its projected growth through fiscal year 2028.

Chart 2: Ridership

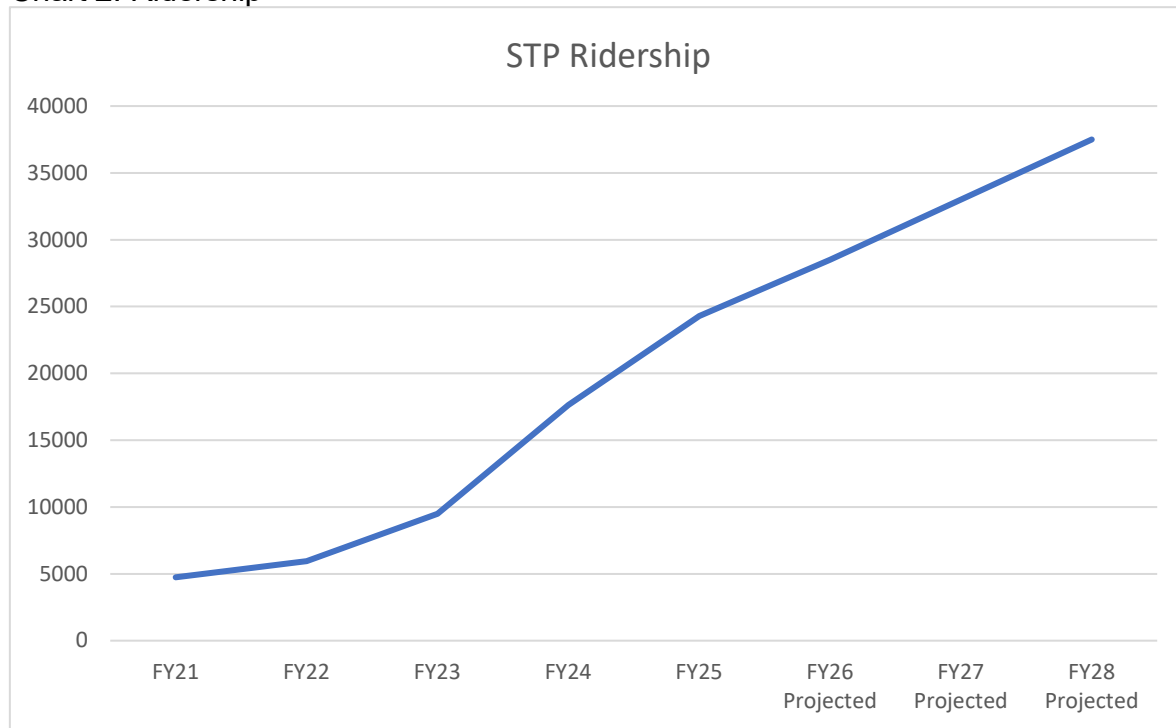
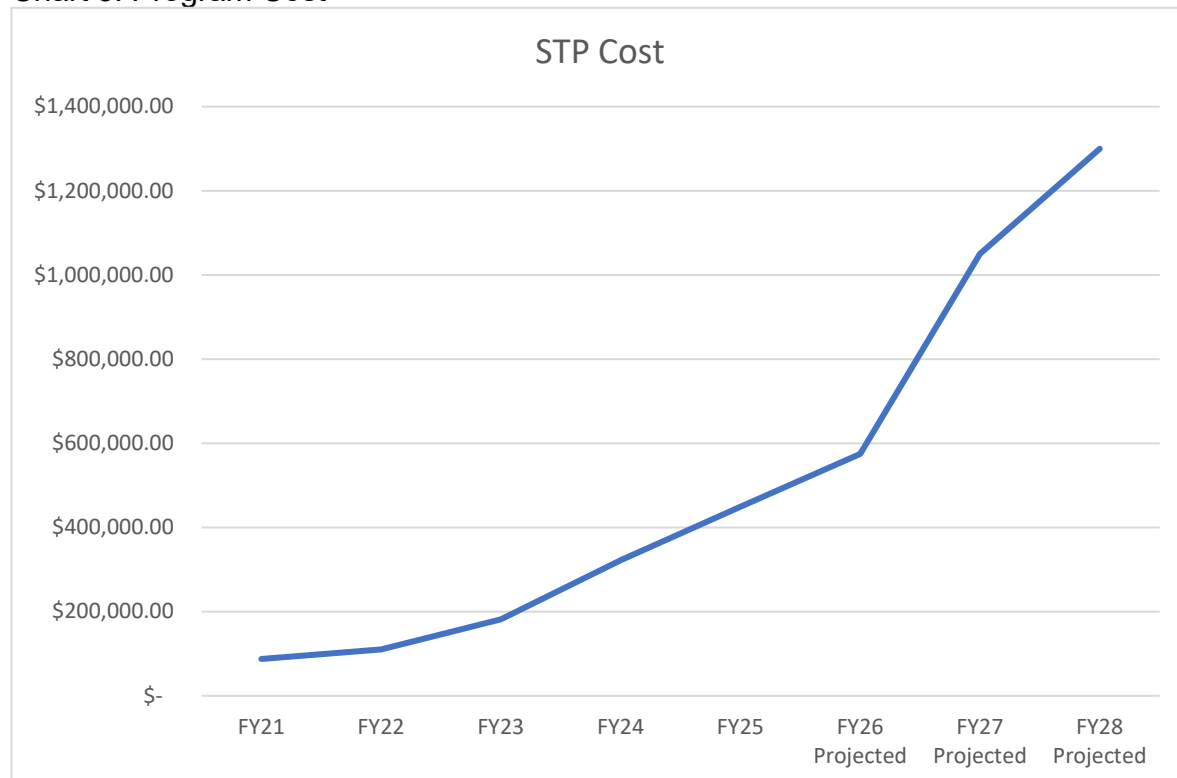


Chart 3: Program Cost



ANALYSIS:

In Fiscal Year 26/27, the current EMSD grant will be exhausted and the cost of a new contract is expected to increase significantly. The only reliable sustainable source of funding for the program are measure M2 Funds and the requisite City match. Hoag's grant is not guaranteed, but the City has sustained the grant award for several years. Collectively, these approximate to \$200,000 in funding. In order to provide a sustainable program using guaranteed funds and no additional general funds, operating a program that costs \$200,000, the program would require operational adjustments. Chart four (4) breaks down funding sources and anticipated contract costs by fiscal year.

Chart 4: Funding Sources

Funding Sources by Fiscal Year		
Funding Source	FY 25/26	FY 26/27
M2 Project U Funding	~\$123,000	~\$126,500
M2 City Match	\$30,750	\$31,625
Hoag Grant	\$50,000	\$50,000
EMSD Grant	\$171,940	\$0
City EMSD Grant Match	\$42,985	\$0
Total Funding Available	\$418,675	\$208,125
Contract Cost	\$500,000	~\$1,000,000

Thirty-four cities currently participate in the Senior Mobility Program funded by M2 revenues. Each city employs a variety of cost control measures to ensure their programs are sustainable. M2 funding is based on sales tax revenue, which means funding for senior transportation fluctuates on a year-to-year basis. Ridership also fluctuates from year-to-year for each city. The result is that few cities remain static in the program's operation; cost control measures fluctuate as needed to ensure the sustainability of the program. The three primary cost control measures used by most cities are: 1) collection of co-pays for rides, 2) limiting rides per month per person, and 3) limited operational areas. Costa Mesa currently does not employ any of these measures.

There are various ways to employ these cost control measures and the City will need to employ at least two of these measures for the program to operate sustainably. Staff have extensive data on the program's current ridership patterns and can model program adjustments sufficiently enough to provide several options for a new operational model.

As these operational changes will adversely impact many people that utilize the service, the Costa Mesa Senior Center will host three in-person question and answer sessions for all current STP users to discuss the program's challenges and seek feedback on how to employ the various cost control measures. The sessions will be held at the Costa Mesa Senior Center on the following dates and times:

Date	Day	Time
March 4	Wednesday	9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
March 5	Thursday	10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
March 10	Tuesday	1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Staff will utilize the extensive data on past program use as well as feedback from current users to propose multiple operational models to the Parks and Community Services Commission in March 2026.

The outreach and re-modeling effort is concurrent with a competitive bid process for a new service provider beginning July 1, 2026. Staff will present the commission's recommended service model to the City Council alongside the award of contract to the new service provider at a later date.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Commission may elect to recommend a continuation of the service model funded primarily through the City's general fund or another available funding source.

FISCAL REVIEW

Without modifications to the Senior Transportation Program, the City will be required to allocate at least an additional \$800,000 from the general fund to continue operations through the next fiscal year.

LEGAL REVIEW

This report is administrative in nature and does not require legal review at this time.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the Parks and Community Services Commission:

1. Review, discuss and provide direction to the Parks and Community Services Department regarding community outreach efforts and on operational changes to the Senior Transportation Program.