



MEMO TO CITY COUNCIL

From: Miranda Carson, Comprehensive Associate Coordination Planner

Date: May 4, 2021

Topic: Community Development: Valley Regional Transit FY2022 Update

The intent of this memo is to provide an update for the new Valley Regional Transit (VRT) local route in Meridian and a brief estimate of the FY2022 VRT budget request.

New Local Route



Background

VRT began working with the City of Meridian to extend service to Meridian in Fiscal Year 2019. From inception the service concept was to connect three major Meridian nodes, namely Ten Mile Crossing, Downtown Meridian, and Kleiner Park/The Village, with peak period service. In 2019 VRT conducted public outreach to gauge public support and collect feedback. As the project built momentum, VRT staff began discussing funding and capital requirements with the City of Meridian. As a peak period service, VRT determined additional vehicles would be needed, and budgeted to increase the existing fleet procurement count for electric vehicles. The initial expected delivery date for the electric vehicles was December 2020. Final alignment was approved by the VRT Board in April of 2020, and necessary capital such as bus stops and shelters were scheduled. The original expected start date for the new service was early 2021.

The City's FY 2020 contribution to VRT (paid in October 2019) included a payment in the amount of \$367,750 for the capital needs of the new route. VRT coordinated shelter placement and amenities with the City and Meridian Development Corporation. Plans moved forward for the construction of bus stop pads in Ten Mile, downtown Meridian, and at Kleiner Park. In the summer of 2020, VRT contractors built four bus stop and shelter pads along the Meridian route and coordinated the construction of a fifth pad as part of the new roadway connecting Cobalt to Vanguard in Ten Mile Crossing. The additional signs and passenger amenities were scheduled to be completed closer to the service implementation.

Delay Due to COVID

When the COVID pandemic hit in early 2020, the City and VRT discussed that with the stay at home there would be a decline in demand. There were also supply chain delays pushed the electric vehicle delivery back from December of 2020 to June of 2021. It was determined that the launch of the new route should be delayed; VRT also delayed planned service changes throughout the rest of their system. The Meridian service launch was postponed to October 2021 to provide more time for the community to recover from COVID-19.

Next Steps

- The remainder of bus stops and final passenger amenities including shelters and benches will be installed late summer 2021.
- Outreach and promotion plans are being drafted at VRT. These plans include work with Meridian staff, the Chamber, and other businesses to raise awareness of this service and Treasure Valley's first battery electric transit vehicles through the summer and fall.
- VRT has received public interest in how this service could connect to the East with Boise. VRT's current May in Motion campaign includes a question about this priority. VRT has discussed with City staff that they plan to hold a workshop with City of Meridian and City of Boise elected officials to review public outreach comments and discuss this important regional connection.

FY 2022 Budget Estimate

VRT and City Staff have begun the conversation for the FY 2022 budget request. The below table outlines the most recent estimated request compared to the FY 2021 request. This is an informational update and no approval is being sought after at this time.

With the new route, new VA shuttle service, and inflation, it was estimated that costs would be greater in FY22 than FY21. The below table shows my estimate before meeting with VRT (\$716,693) and the VRT baseline costs (\$718,291) are very close. The "baseline" refers to the service amount expected to be incurred prior to limited available federal funds being applied. VRT explored and applied additional federal funding available, namely CRSSA and CARES funding, to the baseline to reduce the requested amount. The estimate received from VRT last week for the FY22 budget request is \$595,569. VRT will continue their budget cycle through September; during that time the final request amount may change slightly. We will have an updated request for our Finance department by the end of May to comply with the City's budget cycle.

	FY 2021		FY2022 Estimated Request	FY 2022		
	FY2021 Initial Request	FY2021 Updated Request		FY2022 Baseline Request	FY2022 Updated Request	Notes
Annual Assessment	\$62,941	\$62,941	\$64,577	\$67,052.26	\$67,052.26	
Capital Assessment				\$9,223.22	\$9,223.22	
Local Service	\$170,442 -\$51,250 credit \$119,192	\$0	\$349,747	\$375,770.58	\$312,076.58	*CARES funds to be applied to urban services is being distributed among the jurisdictions.
Limited Stop Service	\$54,722	\$54,722	\$56,145	\$60,412.83	\$23,361.40	
Express Service	\$32,457	\$32,457	\$33,301	\$35,832.37	\$13,856.24	
Harvest Transit	\$132,414	\$132,414	\$135,857	\$130,000.00	\$130,000.00	*CRSSA applied to VA, Harvest, and R2W.
Rides2Wellness	\$41,000	\$41,000	\$77,066	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	
		-\$51,250 credit				
Requested Total	\$442,706	\$ 272,284	\$ 716,693	\$ 718,291.26	\$ 595,569.70	

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the new local service or estimated FY 2022 budget request. VRT staff will also be available at the Council meeting to answer questions.