



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 06/04/2025
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Public Works Department

2025-218

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

ADOPT THE PROPOSED SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS
2025/26 THROUGH 2027/28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to adopt the Short-Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Year 2026 through 2028. Each fiscal year, the Riverside County Transportation Commission requires transit operators to submit the Short-Range Transit Plan, in compliance with the Transportation Development Act, to continue eligibility as a recipient of federal and state transit funds. The Plan summarizes the City's local transit planning and financial activities, including fund requests for operating and capital needs. Although the Plan is a three-year document, the Riverside County Transportation Commission only funds the initial year, with the remaining years provided for planning purposes.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Adopt the proposed Short-Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Year 2026 through 2028.
- b. Direct staff to submit the Short-Range Transit Plan for Fiscal Year 2026 through 2028 to the Riverside County Transportation Commission for approval.

- c. Authorize revisions to the Fiscal Year 2026 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget following approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 through 2028 Short-Range Transit Plan by the Riverside County Transportation Commission.
- d. Authorize an appropriation of \$100,000 from the Transit Service Fund 577 to the COA – Citywide Bus Stop Improvements, Capital Improvement Project No. FC-2022-19 for Fiscal Year 2026.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The City's transit services, known as the City of Corona Transit Service, operates under the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) and Corona Cruiser fixed route programs. The City launched the DAR service in 1977, and the Corona Cruiser in 2001. The City contracts a private transit management company, MV Transportation, to operate both programs.

The DAR program is comprised of specialized demand response and ADA complementary paratransit service. This service provides curb-to-curb transportation to qualified individuals, seniors 60 and older, and persons with disabilities, while door-to-door service is available to those certified under the ADA. The DAR service area includes the City of Corona, satellite locations in the City of Norco, and the unincorporated Riverside County areas of Coronita, El Cerrito, and Home Gardens.

The Corona Cruiser is a network of two fixed routes, the Red Line and the Blue Line. These routes provide access to local businesses, retail stores, parks, entertainment venues, municipal services, schools, and residential adjacent areas. They also connect with the Riverside Transit Agency regional bus routes, the Corona Transit Center, and the North Main Corona Metrolink Train Station.

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency with fiduciary and administrative oversight of transit operators in Riverside County. Each year, RCTC reviews and approves the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) and allocates local, State, and federal funding.

The City of Corona Transit Service (CCTS) is a participating transit agency in the region and relies on RCTC to provide the majority of funds needed for day-to-day operations. Therefore, CCTS staff is required to submit an annual update of the SRTP, which represents the City of Corona's transportation services, and compiles operational and financial data for the upcoming fiscal year based on previous years' audited data.

ANALYSIS:

In conformance with RCTC's guidelines, CCTS staff prepared the three-year Short-Range Transit Plan for FY 2026 through 2028. The Plan includes the following four chapters. For a complete, detailed review of all the data points summarized below, a copy of the Plan is attached to this report.

Chapter 1 – System overview and service profile:

This chapter outlines the current service structure, providing information regarding Corona Cruiser and DAR/paratransit program, including a description of the service area, population, and demographics served, current fare structure, transit fleet, facilities, and bus stop amenities. In addition, this chapter covers coordination efforts between CCTS and other transit agencies (i.e., Riverside Transit Agency & RCTC/Metrolink). Further, this chapter provides operating data relating to the current fiscal year and year-end estimates regarding operating expenses, passenger trips, fare revenues, and vehicle miles/hours.

Chapter 2 – Existing service and route performance:

This chapter further details the performance of the current service compared to the plan provided in the prior approved year. It summarizes the year-to-date operating data and compares it to the performance targets set by RCTC. It further provides year-end estimates based on the performance of the first nine months of the fiscal year. Lastly, this chapter highlights improvement efforts to increase productivity and maintain service to major trip generators.

Chapter 3 – Future service plans, fare changes, capital planning, and marketing:

This chapter provides an overview of future service planning, outlining planned service enhancements, marketing and promotion efforts, as well as capital improvement planning. Service enhancements include increasing bus frequency, providing service to areas not currently served, and exploring alternate transit options. These options were explored as part of the City's Comprehensive Operational Analysis report. In November 2022, staff presented to City Council service level changes and followed that effort with public outreach to seek input from riders and the public. On August 6, 2023, the City Council approved Scenario Two (2) of the proposed service recommendation as outlined in the final report of the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). The final report is available on the following link: [Comprehensive Operational Analysis | City of Corona \(coronaca.gov\)](https://www.coronaca.gov/Comprehensive-Operational-Analysis). The COA Plan includes an implementation guide to assist staff with its planning and execution. Further, CCTS's marketing strategies are to increase ridership and awareness of Corona's transit services. Finally, the capital improvement plan includes various projects, and this section provides a brief description of those projects.

Chapter 4 – Financial Planning:

This final chapter provides the funding plan for the three years covered in the Short-Range Transit Plan. It includes the operating and capital budget needs for FY 2026, funded by RCTC. In addition, this chapter includes the funding plan to support the two out years (FY 2027 & FY 2028). This chapter further outlines the regulatory and compliance requirements to ensure CCTS complies as a public transit operator and recipient of federal funds.

Operating Budget:

As RCTC funds the initial year of the Short-Range Transit Plan, CCTS staff is proposing an estimated operating budget of \$3,945,326 for FY 2026, which is 5.1% or \$190,834 more than the current year budget. In addition, \$6,000 has been allocated for the purchase of a storage container as a capital project for RCTC, but as an operating

expense for the City. Additional information is provided under the capital budget below. The proposed Short-Range Transit Plan financial forecast is based on available transit funds, previous years' data, and CCTS's projected operational needs. The budget includes the following sources to fund the Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget:

Revenue Source	\$ Amount
Local Transportation Funds (LTF)	\$1,721,301
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307	\$ 1,838,375
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)	\$300,000
Other Operating Revenues*	\$85,650
General Fund**	\$0.00
SUBTOTAL	\$3,945,326
State Transit Assistance (STA)	\$6,000
TOTAL	\$3,951,326
*Includes passenger fares, bus shelter advertising revenues, and AB2766 bus pass subsidy.	
** Farebox Ratio Mandate requires a local contribution of 20% Cruiser and 10% DAR. If a gap exists at the end of the FY, general funds will need to be contributed to fill the gap.	

CCTS's operating budget supports the following expenses: Salaries-Benefits (9%) and Services-Supplies (91%). Of the \$3.95 million operating budget, contracted services constitute the largest component at 83% of the total budget. These expenses represent transportation services currently provided by MV Transportation for operating Dial-A-Ride and the Corona Cruiser. Other service & supplies expenses include fuel, printing and publications, advertising, Routematch Dispatching software, utilities, office supplies, minor office equipment, and administrative and Information Technology Services support. Additional program activities funded from the operating budget include contracted services and projects, such as:

- 1) Consulting Services to assist staff with various large transit projects, such as the ITS, fleet procurement, and implementation of COA service level changes. This includes preparing solicitations/scope of work and project management oversight.
- 2) Routematch software for computer-aided dispatching includes annual fees for technical support, a data plan, and cloud server hosting, which are necessary for communication between bus operators and dispatching staff to coordinate pick-ups and drop-offs.

The increase in operating budget can be attributed to the following: increase in year-to-year contract cost for transit operations; increase in City staff's salaries; and increase in transit's fair share of administrative costs.

Capital Improvement Plan & Budget:

The Short-Range Transit Plan includes fund requests for the following capital projects/assets:

Project	Project #	Amount
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COA - Citywide Bus Stop Improvements	FC-2022-19	\$ 100,000
CNG Compressor Remediation	76250	\$ 220,000
Storage Container	N / A	\$ 6,000
Total Capital Fund Request:		\$ 326,000

The Bus Stop Improvement CIP noted on this list is a standard operating budget item used to address maintenance issues, as needed. However, major bus stop improvement efforts will occur as part of the COA adopted service recommendations. These efforts will include the removal of some bus stops, the construction of new bus stop pads, the relocation of usable amenities, new signs to match the City's branding efforts, new ADA-accessible stops, etc.

For the CNG Fueling Station Upgrade, the Transit Fund is contributing \$220,000 to the overall project of \$750,000. CNG fuel will continue to be utilized for the next 14-16 years before all vehicles are replaced with zero-emission vehicles. This project is already included in the City's FY 2026 budget, which is pending adoption.

Finally, the purchase of a storage container is necessary to store all transit-related equipment (i.e., bus stop benches, trash receptacles, signage, etc.). Proper storage will prevent early deterioration before the equipment can be installed/utilized. While this item is included in the SRTP as a capital project, it's recognized in the Transit Fund as an operating expense.

The Capital Budget also outlines past SRTP-approved projects, which consist of the following projects to be carried out in the next three years:

- Intelligent Transportation System
- Purchase an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessible Van
- Digital Land Mobile Radio System
- Canopy/Roof structure for Bus Parking Area
- Bus Stop Improvements
- Replacement of two (2) older 2012 DAR buses
- Replacement of eleven (11) 2017 DAR buses
- Zero Emission Bus purchase and related infrastructure

These projects were approved and funded by RCTC in prior SRTPs using State Transit Assistance, FTA Section 5307 & 5339 funds, State of Good Repair, and SB125 TIRCP and ZETCP funds. Prior approved projects and associated funds are listed in the SRTP Section 4.4 of Exhibit 1. These projects have all been included in the City's Transit CIP budget.

Staff recommends approval of the City of Corona Transit Service Short Range Transit Plan for FY2026 through FY2028. If approved by the Council, the Plan will be submitted

to the Riverside County Transportation Commission, in its capacity as Regional Transportation Planning Agency, for ratification.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost of operations for transit services in Fiscal Year 2026 is \$3,951,326 (including \$6,000 for the purchase of a storage container). Funding for all operating activities, in the aggregate, is available from Local Transit Funds, Federal Section 5307, State of Good Repair, Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, and farebox revenues.

RCTC is expecting to go to their Commission on June 11, 2025, for approval of funding for all transit agencies. Following RCTC approval of the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/26 through Fiscal Year 2027/28 SRTP, the Fiscal Year 2026 Transit Service Fund revenue and expense budget will require the following adjustment:

1. Appropriate \$100,000 to the existing COA – Citywide Bus Stop Improvements Capital Improvement Project No. FC-2022-19 in Fiscal Year 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Since this action approves planning documents and a financial plan, there is no possibility that adopting this action will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: SUDESH PAUL, TRANSIT PROGRAM MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: SAVAT KHAMPHOU, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 - Fiscal Year 2025/26 through Fiscal Year 2027/28 Short Range Transit Plan