

SUBJECT: INFORMING THE ASSEMBLY OF THE TIME EXTENSION ON THE CENTRALIZED DISPATCH PROJECT GRANT FROM THE MAT-SU HEALTH FOUNDATION, AND THE ANTICIPATED TIME EXTENSION OF THE CENTRALIZED DISPATCH PROJECT GRANT FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023.

AGENDA OF: November 22, 2022

ASSEMBLY ACTION:

presented to the Assembly
11-22-22 BSA

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION: For information only.

APPROVED BY MICHAEL BROWN, BOROUGH MANAGER:

MB

Route To:	Department/Individual	Initials	Remarks
	Originator - P. Graham	<i>PG</i>	
	Finance Director	<i>BSA for GRM</i>	
	Borough Attorney	<i>BS</i>	
	Borough Clerk	<i>BSA for GRM</i>	

ATTACHMENT (S) : NONE

SUMMARY STATEMENT: In 2020 the Matanuska-Susitna Borough received a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to implement a Centralized Dispatch Pilot Project with four transit providers. At that same time, the borough also received a grant from the Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) to cover the required match funding for the FTA grant.

The Borough, in coordination with the Mat-Su Health Foundation, Valley Transit, Sunshine Transit, Chickaloon Transit, and Mat-Su Senior Services, have been meeting monthly for several years. The intent was first to develop the grant applications to begin the pilot project, and while the grant was pending, the group developed a data sharing agreement, and reviewed a number of dispatch software programs.

Once the FTA grant was received and agreements finalized, Valley Transit, acting as lead agency for the providers, secured TripSpark Software. The project has seen a number of delays, from COVID and the windstorm, but implementation is ongoing. The installation and training on the various modules are in process. Issues that have arisen during the process include the reliability of Bing and Google mapping in some of the service areas, and more recently the determination that TripSpark will not meet the needs of Sunshine transit. Action Memorandum 22-137, also on the November 22, 2022 agenda, will authorize an agreement with Sunshine Transit, using the grant funding, to secure a second software, TripMaster, designed for rural providers.

The FTA grant is set to expire on December 31, 2022, and the MSHF grant was set to expire on September 30, 2022. Time extensions through December 31, 2023 have been requested for both the Federal grant and the matching grant from the MSHF. The MSHF has approved the extension on the match funding, and that approval was provided to the FTA once their system reopened after the fiscal year end, and the extension request is being processed.

Over the next year, the beta testers for the TripSpark software will receive training and begin testing the centralized dispatch service. Each beta tester will then submit their response to a series of questions on their experience using the system. In addition to the survey developed by the providers group, the FTA has hired independent evaluators to evaluate the pilot project. The Providers group worked with the independent evaluators to coordinate questions to eliminate duplication while still securing the needed data. Once the pilot project is complete all data acquired will be available through the borough website, along with a link to the dispatch service for the providers.

Both agreements and extension are electronic and there is no formal signature from the manager needed for the extensions.