

AGENDA ITEM: #3

DEPARTMENT: Transportation Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Tomika Monterville, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICT IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority Update and Discussion

SUMMARY:

VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority will provide a briefing to the City Council's Transportation & Mobility Committee on the current status of the VIA system including implementation of plans authorized by voters in the November 2020 election, update on current ridership statistics and operational performance, and discussion on the current financial health of the agency.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Created in 1977 by voters, VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA) began operations in 1978, replacing the prior City of San Antonio bus system. As part of the 1977 authorization, the citizens of the region elected to impose a ½ cent sales tax to fund operations and capital for VIA, which has been collected to present day. Subsequent transit elections in Houston, Dallas and Austin were authorized by voters to collect a full penny of sales tax in each community.

In 2004, VIA in partnership with the City of San Antonio and Bexar County, took before voters in the City of San Antonio a ballot proposition creating the Advanced Transportation District (ATD), which imposed a ¼ cent sales tax within the city limits of San Antonio. The ATD sales tax is split three ways, with transit operations (VIA) receiving 50% of the tax revenue, the City of San Antonio receiving 25% of the tax revenue and the remaining 25% being utilized for leveraged project funding, which has primarily been used by Bexar County in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation.

The City of San Antonio has previously entered into an interlocal agreement with VIA wherein the City provided up to \$10 Million in annual payments to support increased frequency on 18 routes within the VIA system. This arrangement continued until the Spring of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began. As part of the fiscal year 2020 adjustments, and with VIA needing to adjust service frequencies in light of the pandemic, the City provided \$7 million, retaining \$3 million to help offset COVID-19 expenses. With the fiscal year 2021 budget, the City and VIA entered into a modified interlocal agreement allowing VIA flexibility for the usage of the \$10

Million annual payment beyond the 18 previously identified routes to support systemwide frequency and operations.

For the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, the City and VIA are entering into an extension of the modified partnership plan for continuation of the \$10 million in operating support for this fiscal year.

In November 2020, the Advanced Transportation District received voter approval to increase the sales tax rate by 1/8th of a cent, starting on January 1, 2026, to fund projects within the Keep San Antonio Moving plan.

VIA will present details on the financial status of the agency, the ridership performance on the system, and the plans for future expansion and innovation. This will be the first of a regular series of updates to the Transportation & Mobility Committee by VIA.

ISSUE:

This is a briefing only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is a briefing only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is a briefing only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is a briefing only.