



**DATE:** March 16, 2020

**TO:** Transportation Authority of Marin Citizens' Oversight Committee

**FROM:** Scott McDonald, Senior Transportation Planner

**SUBJECT:** Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Pilot Program Update (Discussion), Agenda Item No. 6

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Discussion Item. Receive a presentation regarding the Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Pilot Program that TAM is overseeing in partnership with the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA).

In July 2018, TAM entered into a cooperative agreement with SCTA regarding the bike sharing pilot program based on a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Under the cooperative agreement, SCTA is the contracting entity for bike sharing services. As such, SCTA approved an agreement with Gotcha Mobility LLC on February 10, 2020 as the operator selected through the procurement process for the program. To assure consistency with the requirements of the cooperative agreement, TAM staff (with the concurrence of County Counsel) provided input to SCTA during the procurement process.

Staff presented this item to the TAM Funding, Programs & Legislation Executive Committee and TAM Board last month and received valuable input and guidance.

## **BACKGROUND**

As bike share programs were expanding throughout the country, initial work to explore the viability of a bike share program in Marin County took place in 2012 when TAM formed a Bike Share Advisory Working Group and commissioned a feasibility study to consider opportunities, funding, and system designs for a program in Marin. The feasibility study encouraged TAM to identify grants to launch a program and also seek private sponsors for operating support, while monitoring emerging models suitable to Marin's topography and suburban landscape that would require less capital-intensive infrastructure than the traditional docking stations used at the time. With a Bike Share Ad Hoc Committee of the TAM Board created to review progress, TAM subsequently sought sponsorship pledges which confirmed potential private support, while advancing discussions with SCTA about a regional bike share program focused at Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Train (SMART) stations.

TAM and SCTA partnered in the summer of 2017 to submit a grant application to MTC for a bike share pilot program offering first/last-mile connections for commuters along the SMART corridor. In November 2017, MTC first announced an award of \$826,000 in federal CMAQ funds for the program. Given the administrative requirements associated with a federal grant, TAM and SCTA subsequently negotiated with MTC to ultimately receive \$826,000 in local funds from MTC reserves. SCTA was designated the lead fiscal agent to sign a funding agreement with MTC, and TAM and SCTA signed a separate cooperative agreement for joint oversight of the program in July 2018.

Working together TAM and SCTA initiated a contractor procurement process by releasing a Request for Information (RFI) to initially identify the latest technologies, models, and costs for bike share vendors along with the size and appropriate system. Based on input from the RFI process, the Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Program Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to solicit proposals to implement and operate a 300-bike share program using Global Positioning System (GPS) enabled technology.

The RFP yielded eight proposals which were reviewed by a review committee. The committee included staff from the following agencies: TAM, SCTA, City of Santa Rosa, City of Petaluma, City of Novato, City of San Rafael, and SMART. Three interviews were conducted, and the committee recommended the selection of Gotcha Mobility, LLC (Gotcha Mobility) as the operator of the Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Program.

TAM and SCTA staff negotiated the scope of the program with Gotcha Mobility to develop the contract approved by the SCTA Board this month. With this agreement in place, Gotcha Mobility will now begin program development to launch the program.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Program has been scoped to include a fleet of 300 electric bikes under the agreement with Gotcha Mobility, along with an optional task to expand the system with an additional 50 electric bikes dependent upon future demand and system performance. The initial system network will be established through a demand analysis considering densities around SMART stations, a survey of potential sites with participating agencies, and through soliciting input from the public to confirm appropriate distribution of bikes.

### Program Development & Coordination

The program will include participation from the City of Santa Rosa, City of Rohnert Park, City of Cotati, City of Petaluma, City of Novato, City of San Rafael, City of Larkspur, and SMART through a technical advisory committee, with potential expansion to additional nearby public agencies with properties along the corridor. Participating agencies and properties will be confirmed along with their respective roles and responsibilities within the coming months. Staff representatives which included public works and transportation professionals from the abovementioned agencies convened as a technical advisory committee in January and will continue to meet regularly as the program develops.

SCTA and TAM are in the process of developing a coordination agreement modeled after the agreement that MTC utilized for the Bay Area Bike Share Program it manages. The purpose of the coordination agreement is to establish roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies, SCTA, TAM and the operator, as well as a process for new jurisdictions to join the program as it matures. SCTA and TAM will be seeking input on the coordination agreement from the technical advisory committee and developing a process for agencies involved to seek approval for participation in the program prior to initial operations.

Prior to launching the system, Gotcha Mobility will:

- Develop and implement a customized outreach and marketing campaign;
- Establish local warehouse spaces and rebalancing vehicles;
- Procure and install equipment;
- Develop website and branding; and
- Hire local staff to manage, operate, and maintain the system.

In addition to working closely with the technical advisory committee, Gotcha Mobility will work with each participating agency directly to explore locations for bikes within its respective jurisdiction.

### Program Operating Period

While MTC's grant was initially established to specifically support bike share capital equipment costs, SCTA and TAM reached an agreement with MTC to allow for a leasing or use arrangement of a bike share system during a pilot period rather than requiring the purchase of equipment that may become outdated with rapid technology development. The pilot program under the agreement with Gotcha Mobility will cover a three-year operating period to initially include 300 electric bikes with an optional task of adding up to 50 more bikes after the initial network is established. The contract total is for \$826,000 (the full amount of the MTC Grant) which includes a \$165,000 optional task for system expansion with the 50 additional bikes.

During the three-year operating period, Gotcha Mobility will receive revenue from ridership as well as sponsorships and advertising, with the goal of building a program which is self-sustaining without additional public funding after the completion of the three-year pilot program. TAM and STCA will provide the contractor with information regarding previously expressed interest among potential sponsors. Program expansion above and beyond the scope of the contract, either within or outside the pilot service area, will not be precluded through the contract but would require negotiations directly between local agencies and the operator for additional bikes and services.

Riders will be able to access the bikes at hubs throughout the SMART corridor by using the Gotcha Mobility smart phone app or Clipper® card with memberships. Gotcha Mobility will also work with local organizations to set up memberships for individuals without access to smart phones or Clipper® cards. The program will be promoted heavily by Gotcha Mobility throughout Marin and Sonoma to build ridership and promoted through the local outreach departments of the participating agencies.

### **FISCAL IMPACTS**

The MTC Bike Share Funding Agreement provides \$826,000 to SCTA for the implementation of a bike share pilot program. A complementary Cooperative Agreement between TAM and SCTA, approved by the TAM Board in July 2018, established a shared funding and project management arrangement based on the grant award from MTC. This provided that \$413,000 of the funds in the MTC Bike Share Funding Agreement will be used for TAM on behalf of agencies in Marin to benefit the Marin County portion of the program. The remaining half of the funds would be for the benefit of Sonoma County. It also clarified that SCTA and TAM must provide a local match of 11.47% or \$94,700, which can be covered through in-kind staff time divided between the two agencies. Since SCTA was designated as the fiscal agent by MTC, SCTA will provide reimbursement requests to MTC for expenditures billed by the operator. Therefore, other than staff time associated with implementing the program, there is not a direct budget impact for TAM based on the program funding structure.

### **NEXT STEPS**

TAM and SCTA staff will work with Gotcha Mobility on program development to launch the pilot program. This will also require working with Gotcha Mobility and the technical advisory committee to finalize a service area analysis to confirm the public right-of-way necessary for bike share parking, along with the distribution of bikes. With input from the technical advisory committee, a coordination agreement will also be developed and approved by each of the participating agencies. TAM staff will continue to provide progress updates as the program develops,

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None