



**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

*Metropolitan Planning • Public Transportation & Operations • Engineering & Construction*

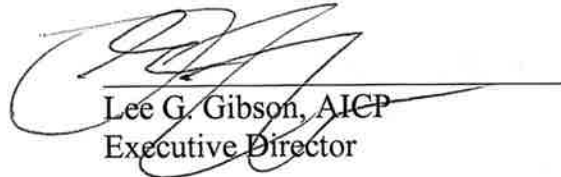
Metropolitan Planning Organization of Washoe County, Nevada

February 15, 2019

**AGENDA ITEM 5.1**

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission

**FROM:** Mark Maloney  
Transit Operations Manager



Lee G. Gibson, AICP  
Executive Director

**SUBJECT: Microtransit Pilot Project**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Acknowledge receipt of a report on the proposed Microtransit Pilot Project.

**SUMMARY**

Over the past year, RTC staff has been evaluating the potential for microtransit, an emerging trend in public transportation designed to serve lower density areas of the community more effectively than traditional fixed-route service. With the use of mobile communication, microtransit is essentially a public version of a Transportation Network Company (TNC) such as Uber or LYFT, and employs the same technology in use by TNC's. Two regions within the RTC RIDE service area were evaluated for a potential pilot project and northeastern Sparks, currently served by Routes 25 and 26, was determined to offer the greatest potential. A number of public outreach events were held to explain the microtransit concept, including surveying passengers on every trip operated by the two existing routes. Of those passengers surveyed, 62% responded favorably or extremely favorably to the concept of microtransit replacing the existing fixed-route service. More recently, staff held two open houses in the past month to describe the proposed pilot project in greater detail. Public support for microtransit improved to 81% who were favorable or extremely favorable to having the microtransit service. Overall, the proposed microtransit pilot project, FlexRIDE, has been well received by the public.

A final recommendation for the pilot project will be refined through continued input from the RTC Board, RTC RIDE passengers and bus operators and public input, and presented for approval at a Public Hearing scheduled for the March 15, 2019, Board meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

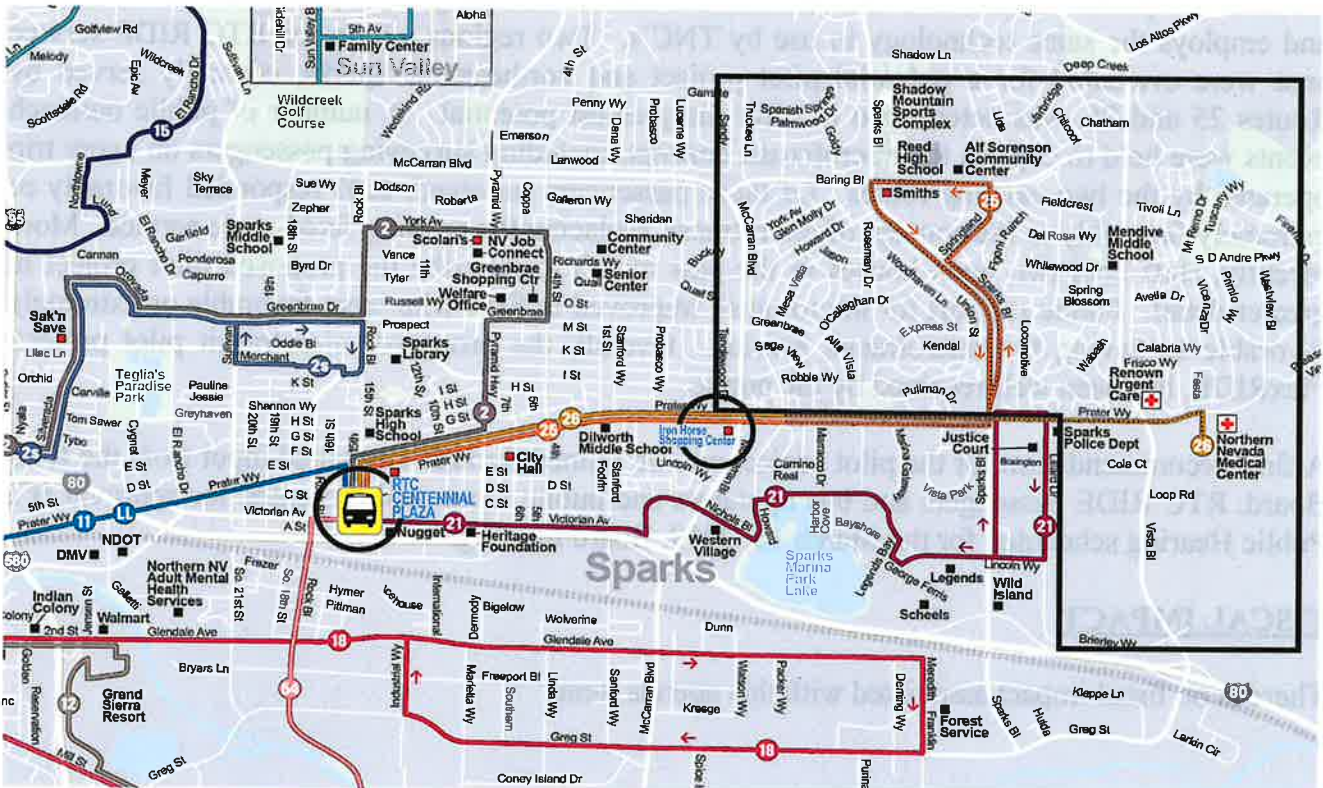
There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

**PREVIOUS ACTIONS BY BOARD**

- April 5, 2018 Acknowledged receipt of the RTC RIDE Fall 2018 service change concepts update.
- January 19, 2018 Acknowledged receipt of the preliminary service change and fare concepts for RTC RIDE and RTC ACCESS planned for 2018.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

**Microtransit Demonstration Project** – With the advent of new technology, transit agencies are exploring the microtransit concept, which is equivalent to the public transit version a ‘transportation network company’ (TNC) (e.g., similar to Uber or LYFT) and employs the same technology in use by the TNC’s. Since this concept and technology is so new to the transit industry there are few real world examples to learn from. RTC contracted with Translōc, a firm that specializes in helping agencies plan and model microtransit in their community. With the help of Translōc two areas were modeled: 1) Reno north valleys (Stead, Lemmon and Golden Valley); and 2) northeast Sparks. The results of these modeling efforts suggested the potential for success was much greater in Sparks than in the Reno north valleys. The Sparks model was refined to show that with just two vehicles an expanded area could be successfully covered while keeping wait times down to under 15 minutes for ride requests. A pilot 6-month project to introduce microtransit to our region is proposed for northeast Sparks as a replacement for a portion of Routes 25 and 26 respectively shown in the black box below.

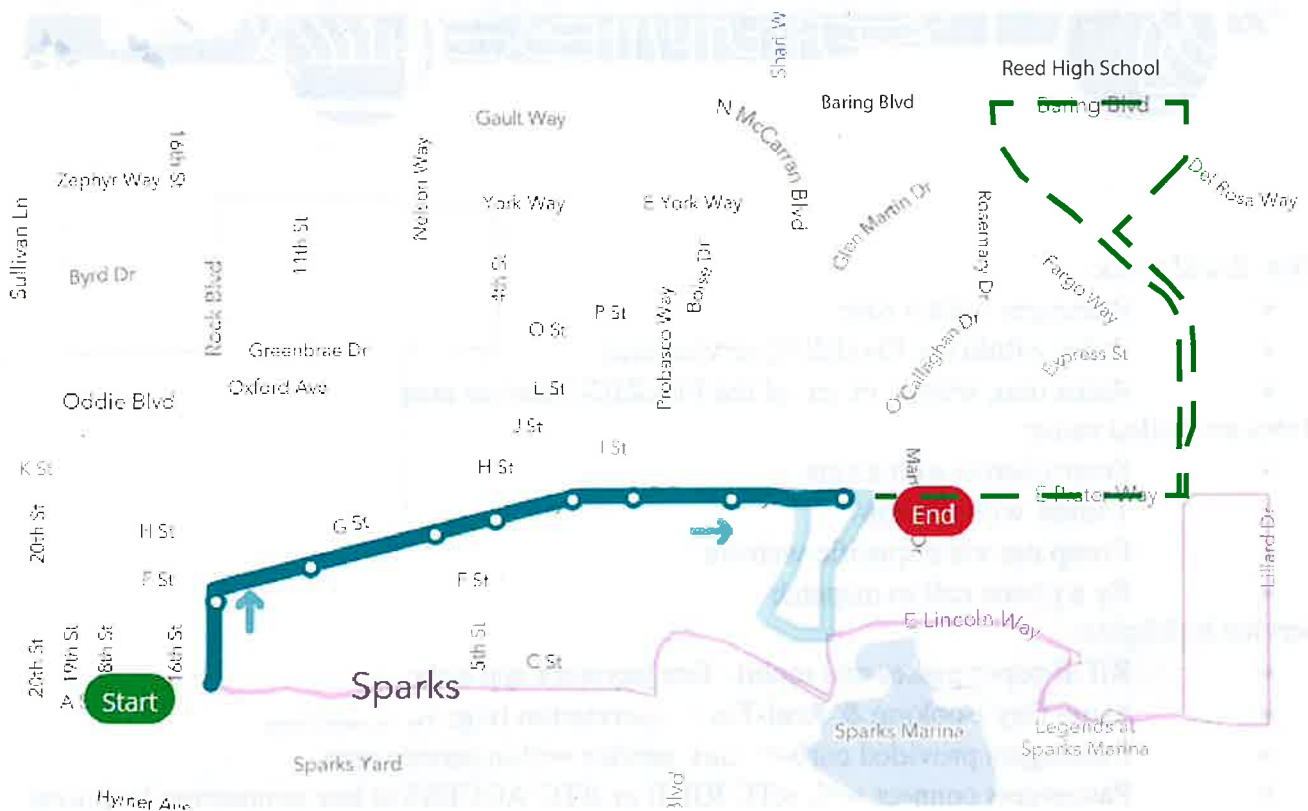


The ridership is projected to be 100 a day and possibly increasing with successful marketing to 200 a day. Staff conducted a survey of existing ridership on Route 25 and Route 26, results of that survey showed only 9% were unfavorable or extremely unfavorable. Surveyed customers were made up of:

- 65% full fare
- 14% youth
- 10% senior
- 10% disabled
- 1% veterans

The service allows you to book using a smart phone or to call a live reservationist to complete your trip request. Of the passengers surveyed on Routes 25 and 26, 77% of them had a smartphone.

The new Route 25 (see map below) and the proposed microtransit service will operate 7 days a week.



The proposed microtransit service will be called FlexRIDE and have a distinctive paint scheme (see illustration below). The vehicles will be surplus RTC ACCESS cut-away vans and will be operated and maintained by Ride Right our current ACCESS contractor.



How it will work:

- Passenger hails a ride:
- Rides within the FlexRIDE service area
- Rides into, within or out of the FlexRIDE service area

Rides are hailed using:

- Smartphones with an app
- Tablets with the app
- Computer via a specific website
- By a phone call to dispatch

Service highlights:

- RIDE paper passes and mobile fare payment app only
- Same Day Booking & Real-Time Information (e.g: van location)
- Passengers provided curb-to-curb service within service area
- Passengers connect with RTC RIDE or RTC ACCESS at key connection locations
- Can call for a trip within 30-minutes of your expected departure time

If successful:

- RTC will issue a request for proposals for a long term software contract
- RTC will transition to the selected software at the end of the 6 month demonstration

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) RECOMMENDATION**

The Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee will review the microtransit pilot project proposal at their February 6, 2019 meetings.

**ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS**

Jan 29, 2019 RTC 4TH STREET STATION  
Jan 28, 2019 RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA  
Mar 15, 2018 City of Reno Ward 4 Neighborhood Advisory Board  
Mar 14, 2018 Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition  
Mar 8, 2018 Sparks Citizens Advisory Committee  
Mar 2, 2018 Senior Coalition  
Feb 27, 2018 Reno Access Advisory Committee  
Feb 22, 2018 RTC 4TH STREET STATION  
Feb 21, 2018 Stead Elementary School  
Feb 21, 2108 Meadowood Mall  
Feb 21, 2018 RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA  
Feb 12, 2018 Washoe County Senior Center  
Feb 5, 2018 Washoe County Sun Valley Citizens Advisory Board