



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: INCREASE FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS IN THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION DIVISION'S PERSONNEL DETAIL BUDGET TO INCLUDE SIX ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME MINIBUS DRIVER POSITIONS

ISSUE:

Approve an increase in the number of Full-Time Equivalents in the Special Transportation Division's personnel detail budget to include an additional six full-time minibus driver positions, going from 25.00 FTE to 31.00 FTE in PCN 5200203950 position.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve an increase in the number of Full-Time Equivalents in the Special Transportation Division's budget to include an additional six full-time minibus driver positions, going from 25.00 FTE to 31.00 FTE in PCN 5200203950 position.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Riverside Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department Special Transportation Division operates the Riverside Connect service and receives annual funding allocations from various federal, state, and local sources administered by both the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The funds are used to support 100 percent of the operating budget, including employee salaries and benefits, as well as all capital projects.

The Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act (SB 325) was enacted by the California Legislature to improve existing public transportation services and encourage regional transportation coordination. Known as the Transportation Development Act (TDA) of 1971, this law provides funding to be allocated to transit and non-transit related purposes that comply with regional transportation plans.

The TDA provides two funding sources:

1. Local Transportation Fund (LTF), which is derived from a ¼ cent of the general sales tax collected statewide.

2. State Transit Assistance (STA) fund, which is derived from the statewide sales tax on diesel fuel.

The State Board of Equalization, based on sales tax collected in each county, returns the general sales tax revenues to each county's LTF. The STA funds are appropriated by the Legislature to the State Controller's Office; that Office then allocates the tax revenue, by formula, to planning agencies and other selected agencies. The Statute requires 50% of STA funds to be allocated according to population and 50% be allocated according to operator revenues from the prior fiscal year.

DISCUSSION:

Riverside Connect is a citywide paratransit service for seniors 60 years old and better and disabled individuals of all ages. It was established in 1975 and subsequently operates through a mutual agreement between the City of Riverside and the Riverside Transit Agency. This year Riverside Connect is celebrating 50 years of service to the residents of Riverside. The program, implemented with just five buses in 1975, currently has a fleet of: (32) 16-passenger compressed natural gas (CNG) buses, (2) 9-passenger Transit vans, a sedan, and a passenger van.

Riverside Connect allows seniors and individuals living with a disability the ability to live an independent life by providing equitable access to transportation. Riverside Connect travels over 400,000 miles annually, transporting senior and disabled residents to the grocery store, senior centers, medical appointments, and more.

In Fiscal Year 2018/2019, the program averaged 600 to 700 rides per day. However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced service demand, and, over time, vacant minibuses driver positions were eliminated. Ridership levels have since been steadily recovering, with current averages of 300 to 350 rides per day. To maintain efficiency, ensure on-time service, and uphold high standards of customer satisfaction, Riverside Connect requires additional drivers to meet the growing demand for passenger trips.

Riverside Connect is a cornerstone of an inclusive and compassionate community. By addressing transportation services, Riverside Connect contributes to the overall well-being, independence, and active participation of diverse community members. The continued support and enhancement of Riverside Connect aligns with the City's commitment to creating a community that is accessible and supportive to all.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact of this action is \$412,838. Local Transportation Funds to support this specific action were included in the Special Transportation Fiscal Year 2025/2026 – Fiscal Year 2027/2028 Short Range Transit Plan approved by the City Council on July 15, 2025. Funds are available in the accounts below.

Fund	Account	Description	Amount
560	5200200-411100	Salaries-Regular	\$306,938
560	5200200-4XXXXX	Benefits	\$105,900
		Total	\$412,838

Prepared by: Ron Profeta, Special Transit Manager
Approved by: Pamela M. Galera, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney