



## **CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** Honorable City Council

**Item No.** \_\_\_\_\_

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT:** A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Commerce, California, Approving Professional Service Agreement with Nelson/Nygaard for a Comprehensive Operational Analysis

**MEETING DATE:** March 17, 2020

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

The City Council will consider approving professional service Agreement with Nelson/Nygaard for a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of the City's Transit and Dial-A-Ride (DAR) services.

### **BACKGROUND**

A COA is an in-depth program review of the services a transit agency provides to determine system strengths and weaknesses. Generally, COA's achieve this by determining the effectiveness of current Transit/DAR services and how efficient those services are being delivered. The goals of a COA are to optimize current services and maximize underutilized resources so that people can capitalize on fully functioning and dependable Transit/DAR systems. A COA achieves this by surveying the community, seniors, existing riders and potential customers, measuring the effectiveness of current services, and determining whether current services are fulfilling the revealed needs of people within the service area and community.

### **ANALYSIS**

On November 19, 2019, City Council approved an open Request for Proposal (RFP) process for professional services to develop a Comprehensive Operational Analysis of the City's Transit and Dial-A-Ride services. The RFP was posted and advertised for thirty (30) days on the City's website via PlanetBids.com. A total of twenty (20) firms downloaded the RFP for review; however, the City did not receive any responses to the RFP. Therefore, staff contacted three of the firms that had indicated intent to submit a proposal; and learned of the reason(s) in their decision to not submit. The main factor is a capacity issue; firms indicated there are numerous transit planning studies underway in California and consulting firms that focus on this type work are already committed to existing or upcoming contracts; and do not have available personnel at this time.

On January 15, 2020, Nelson/Nygaard contacted the City and indicated they will be able to assist with the COA based on an opening in their work schedule. Nelson/Nygaard is a highly qualified and reputable transit planning and traffic engineering firm, with substantial experience in public outreach and coordinating community participation, which is extremely important to the success of an effective COA plan. Reference checks were performed on Nelson/Nygaard and previous clients rated their service as excellent in terms of on-time performance, effective public outreach strategies, on-budget completion and quality of work. It should be noted, a few of their local references includes: City of Norwalk, Long Beach, Culver City, Torrance, Foothill Transit and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Staff negotiated a professional service Agreement with Nelson/Nygaard for an amount not to exceed \$99,968 for the completion of the COA. Prior to agreeing to the negotiated amount, staff conducted an independent cost estimate, and the cost of the proposal is consistent and within range of industry standards based on price comparisons for similar COA projects.

The scope of work includes:

#### **Task 1.1 Kickoff Meeting**

- Meet City points of contact who will have a significant role in the project
- Clarify project expectations, work products, project management, and reporting procedures
- Discuss project goals in terms of community priorities and needs
- Discuss opportunities to obtain available data
- Identify stakeholders to engage during the project
- Plan immediate next steps and discuss first deliverable

#### **Task 1.2 Ongoing Project Management**

Nelson\Nygaard will set up ongoing communication protocols to ensure that City of Commerce staff is kept up to date on progress and that any questions that arise may be answered in a timely manner. We recommend bi-weekly phone calls to take place between the consultant team and City staff. In addition, a progress report will be provided with each monthly invoice describing the activities that took place and the work accomplished during that time period.

#### **Task 2.1 Public Involvement Plan**

Following the kickoff meeting, Nelson\Nygaard will work with the City of Commerce to develop a public involvement plan reflecting desired stakeholders to engage, protocols for developing public facing materials, publicizing community engagement events, and coordinating meeting logistics. The PIP will clearly define roles and responsibilities between the consultant team and the City of Commerce, but generally, it is our expectation that the consultant team will develop materials (posters, flyers, presentations, etc.) and facilitate meetings, while the City will secure meeting locations, correspond with stakeholders, and coordinate publicity and advertising of meetings and surveys.

#### **Task 2.2 Stakeholder Interviews**

In collaboration with City of Commerce staff, we will identify stakeholders to interview during the initial project stages.

These stakeholders may include elected officials, city staff, medical centers, schools, chambers of commerce, developers, major employers (such as the Commerce Casino and the Citadel Outlets), and human service agencies. To encourage participants to speak frankly during interviews, our typical approach is to ensure participants their comments are anonymous and present results so that comments are not attributed to specific individuals but are instead are presented by theme. We propose conducting up to five interviews with individuals or groups, to be completed by phone prior to developing any recommendations. Nelson\Nygaard will develop an interview guide with the input of City of Commerce staff and deliver a written summary of findings with the Existing Conditions report in Task 3.

### **Task 2.3 Public Meetings**

The public meetings will take place following the completion of the existing conditions (Task 3) and then again following the development of service concepts (Task 4). We propose conducting two meetings during each round to accommodate a range of work schedules and locations in the city. The first meetings will be focused around collecting comments on needs and desires for transit service in Commerce. The second round of meetings will present a set of potential service concepts to the community on which they can provide their input. These meeting will be conducted in conjunction with the Online Survey (Task 2.4) and help inform the selection of a preferred service concept. Nelson\Nygaard will prepare presentation materials and facilitate the meetings. The City of Commerce will be responsible for securing meeting locations and publicizing the meetings.

### **Task 2.4 Online Survey**

The route concepts developed in Task 4.1 will be incorporated into an online survey to allow the community to provide input on what they do and do not like about each potential service concept. The online survey will be launched prior to the public meeting. Nelson\Nygaard will work with City of Commerce staff to promote the online survey. We suggest that Staff utilize some or all following methods:

- Publicize survey link in a city-wide utility mailer or monthly e-newsletter
- Send press release to local newspaper
- Post survey link of City website and social media pages

Results of the survey will be analyzed and used to inform the refinement of a preferred concept and documented in the final report.

### **Task 3.1 Ridership Assessment**

Nelson\Nygaard will analyze the City's APC and AVL data for all routes in order to understand existing rider travel patterns and major trip generators at the stop and trip level. It is assumed that the City can provide average daily boarding and alighting data by stop, trip, and day type. In addition, it is assumed that the City can provide on-time performance data by route segment. In addition, Nelson\Nygaard will collect ridership data for LA Metro Lines 762, 62, 108, 258, 256, 260, and any other lines serving Commerce. If available, Nelson\Nygaard will obtain ridership data from Montebello Bus Lines for Routes 30 and 50.

### **Task 3.2 On-Board Survey**

Nelson\Nygaard will conduct an on-board survey in order to gain an understanding of customer satisfaction, rider demographics, and desired service improvements.

We will work with City staff to develop a survey instrument. Survey data will be tabulated and summarized using charts and narrative.

### **Task 3.3 Transit Service Analysis**

Nelson\Nygaard will review existing performance data on the City of Commerce routes and dial-a-ride service. Nelson\Nygaard will request the following datasets from the City of Commerce to complete this analysis:

- Average weekday, Saturday, and Sunday boarding's by route/trip/service
- Average weekday, Saturday, and Sunday revenue hours by route/trip/service
- Operating cost by route
- Customer requests (call records – if available)
- Historical ridership and revenue hours by route (past 5 years)

These data sets, as well as data collected in Task 3.1, will be summarized through maps, charts, and tables to depict the performance characteristics of each service and highlight the challenges and opportunities within the existing service structure. Another focus of this analysis will be to understand how Commerce Municipal Bus Lines services function in the larger regional context. We will document how City of Commerce's policies compare to neighboring and regional transit providers in order to identify how transit riders may travel using the City of Commerce services, as well as the range of travel choices that are available for local and regional trips.

### **Task 3.4 Review of Existing Plans and Study Documents**

We will review plans and studies relevant to the Comprehensive Operational Analysis, including previously completed transit plans for the City of Commerce, the city's comprehensive plan, specific plans, regional transit studies such as LA Metro's NextGen service plan, and others as recommended by City staff. In addition, planned development that may have an impact on the transit market in Commerce will be requested from City staff and documented.

### **Task 3.5 Market Analysis**

In order to understand the market for transit in Commerce, Nelson\Nygaard will create maps of population and employment density, as well as concentrations of demographic characteristics such as youth, seniors, renters, zero car households, and household income, which can indicate a propensity to use transit. These maps will be compared against the existing route structure in order to identify gaps or opportunities to improve service. Task 3 will culminate in a technical memorandum that details the findings of the analyses described above.

### **Task 4.1 Develop Goals and Objectives**

Before setting out to develop recommendations for improving Commerce services it is crucial that the project team understands the goals and objectives of Commerce in the short-, mid-, and long-term timeframe. To do so, Nelson\Nygaard proposes to hold a workshop with City of Commerce staff to discuss the feedback collected during stakeholder and public meeting conversations, as well as the technical findings from the Existing Conditions to develop the goals and objectives for each time frame.

A service restructure can be designed to meet goals such as increased ridership or expanded service coverage, but typically cannot address all desires simultaneously, especially within a constrained budget. A summary of the staff workshop and relevant input from the first phase of public involvement will be developed to describe the process through which each set of goals and objectives was developed.

#### **Task 4.2 Route Concepts**

Following the goal setting workshop, Nelson\Nygaard will develop service concepts for redesigning fixed route and Dial-A-Ride (DAR) to better meet the needs of the community. Nelson\Nygaard proposes a workshop with City of Commerce staff in which Nelson\Nygaard will present initial service concepts and provide staff an opportunity to collaborate in the development of up to three sets of route-change concepts. Service concepts will consider route alignment, frequency, span, estimated operating costs, and vehicle needs. Following the workshop, the initial three service concepts will be delivered to City staff to review using maps and brief descriptive narrative. Once staff has approved the initial three service concepts, they will be presented to the community through the online survey and public meeting discussed in Task 2.3 and Task 2.4.

#### **Task 4.3 Preferred Concept**

Based on feedback from City staff, the online survey, and the public meetings, Nelson\Nygaard will develop a preferred service concept. The preferred concept will be documented including a service map and detailed operating plan in the final report.

#### **Task 5.1**

Our comprehensive evaluation of the Commerce transit system and public engagement efforts will likely reveal opportunities for investments, policy changes, or additional planning efforts beyond service delivery. Based on our findings, we will conduct research and develop recommendations for up to three additional topic areas. Examples of these topics include:

- **Operations and maintenance facilities:** Are the existing facilities sufficient?
- **Passenger facilities:** Do bus stops meet the needs of passengers? Does the city need to implement a system for bus stop improvements? Are there specific transfer points or transit centers that need improvement either for operations or passenger comfort? Are there specific intersections, streets, or sidewalks that need pedestrian enhancements to facilitate access?
- **Vehicles:** Does the existing fleet meet the community's needs? Is there a desire to look at other vehicle sizes? Is the City prepared to convert its fleet to electric vehicles in line with state requirements?
- **Funding:** Is there a need to diversify or expand funding for transit in order to meet the community's needs? How can this best be accomplished through grants at the local, state, and federal levels? Are there partners in the community who can be engaged to support transit?
- **New service types:** Are there areas in Commerce that could benefit from non-traditional service models? Where are they and what should the City do to further understand the feasibility of these models?
- **Public information/branding:** Does the City successfully communicate to existing and potential customers?

Are print, digital, and posted materials easy to find and understand? How can the City better integrate its communication channels with mobile technologies?

Nelson\Nygaard will confirm which of these topics are most important the City staff and develop three short memorandums to address those that are chosen. Supporting recommendations will be incorporated into the final report.

#### **Task 6.1 Draft Report**

Nelson\Nygaard will develop a draft report which documents the technical analysis, three initial service concepts, and basis for recommendation of the preferred service concept. The draft report will be delivered to City of Commerce staff for review.

#### **Task 6.2 Final Presentation**

Following review by City staff, Nelson\Nygaard will present the preferred service concept to either key stakeholders or City Council.

#### **Task 6.3 Final Report**

Following the presentation of the preferred service concept to key stakeholders/City Council, Nelson\Nygaard will revise the draft report based on feedback received from City leaders and one set of non-conflicting comments from City staff and deliver a Final Report.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The cost of the project shall be covered 100% with a Federal Grant using (5307 Funds) and have no impact to the City's operational budget. This COA has been approved by Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority (Metro) and the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA); and included as part of the regional Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (FTIP - Project ID: LAOG1295).

### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS**

This agenda item relates to the 2016 Strategic Plan - Goal #6: "Enhance Quality of Life Goal"; as this project shall improve operational efficiency and helps maximize City resources.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve staff's recommendation
2. Reject staff's recommendation
3. Provide staff with further direction

Approved by:	Claude McFerguson, Director of Transportation
Reviewed by:	Josh Brooks, Acting Director of Finance
Approved as to form:	Noel Tapia, City Attorney
Respectfully submitted:	Edgar P. Cisneros, City Manager

**ATTACHMENT:** Agreement