



ITEM ID: 2024-282-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: October 18, 2024

MEETING DATE: October 25, 2024

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer

SUBJECT: Contract No. SP494-19 Passenger Services Call Center - Increase Contract Authority for Alta Resources Call Center

Issue

On December 1, 2023, the Authority amended the contract to exercise the three-year option, using the tiered pricing system, but there was no Board request to increase contract funding. In order to maintain support for Metrolink customers through phone and text communications, it is necessary to increase contract authority for passenger call center services.

Recommendation

Contracts, Operations, Maintenance, and Safety Committee recommended (5-0) the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to increase contract authority for Contract No. SP494-19 Passenger Services Call Center with Alta Resources (Alta), by \$4,000,000 for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$12,252,664.

Strategic Commitment

The report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan Commitment of:

- **Customers Are Our Business:** We respect and value our customers, putting them at the heart of all we do, and work hard to attract and retain new customers by understanding their needs and finding new and innovative ways to bring them on board. Increasing contract authority for this agreement will ensure passengers needing assistance with all aspects of Metrolink service, including alternative transport during service disruptions, marketing campaigns, fares, schedules, questions about partner agencies, etc., are provided.

Background

Metrolink's customer service number, (800) 371-5465 (LINK), is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for customers needing help with Metrolink services. Alta is the Authority's contracted provider for call center services and has done so for more than 20 consecutive years. Alta handles approximately 1.6 million customer calls, text, and teletypewriter (TTY) calls from hearing and speech-impaired individuals each year and over 90% of all customer feedback. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day via a voice recognition system that provides information about schedules, fares, lost and found, group travel, marketing promotions, service disruption alerts, and special event trains. Live customer service representatives answer text messages, phone and TTY calls from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm Monday through Friday and 6:30 am to 8:00 pm Saturday and Sunday.

On September 14, 2018, the Board awarded Contract No. SP494-19 to Alta for passenger services call center operations for a not-to-exceed amount of \$8,252,664 for a base term of five (5) years with a single three (3) year option for a not-to-exceed amount of \$5,358,348.

On December 10, 2021, the Authority amended the contract from a fixed monthly rate to a tiered pricing system based on volume of inbound calls and text, thereby reducing monthly costs.

Discussion

An increase in contract authority for Contract No. SP494-19 is necessary to maintain call center services for Metrolink customers.

Due to the reduction in monthly expenses, the full not-to-exceed amount for the option years is not required. Therefore, it is recommended to increase contract authority by \$4,000,000 for expenses through the end of the three-year option, November 30, 2026.

Budget Impact

There is no impact to the budget. A portion of the amount for which contract authority is requested is included in the FY2024-25 Adopted Operating Budget: \$1.6M approved for FY25; \$386,866.29 remains under the current contract authority. Funding for subsequent years (FY26 and FY27) will be requested through the annual budget or an equivalent process.

Next Steps

Upon Board approval of this recommendation, staff will execute contract amendment to increase contract authority with Alta Resources Call Center to \$12,252,664.

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Approved by: Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer