



CITY OF WAUKESHA

Administration

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Committee: Transit Commission	Date: 7/7/2016
Common Council Item Number: 16-1040	Date: 7/19/2016
Submitted By: Fred Abadi- Public Works	City Administrator Approval: Kevin Lahner, City Administrator KL
Finance Department Review: Rich Abbott, Finance Director RA	City Attorney's Office Review: Brian Running, City Attorney BER
Subject: Approval to Purchase Replacement Paratransit Scheduling and Dispatching Software and Five Year Service Agreement from Ecolane USA, Inc.	

Details:

This item is to seek the approval to purchase replacement paratransit scheduling and dispatching software and a five year service agreement from Ecolane USA, Inc. This software will replace our existing Trapeze Pass software which has been operating since October of 2001. A Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new Paratransit Software System was conducted this Spring by Transit staff with assistance from City IT staff. Ecolane was the top rate vendor by the Evaluation Committee for Technical and Cost during both the initial and finalist rounds of scoring and had 2 excellent references including Sheboygan Transit.

Background

Due to limited staff and the time needed to complete, Transit has not been able to commit to more than two major upgrades over the course of owning the Trapeze software. In addition, the software was designed for a much larger paratransit operation. At the time of purchase, Trapeze was the best solution on the market, but the technology has changed greatly over the past 15 years. The Trapeze has recommended that Transit switch to a different product that would better fit the size of the operation. In addition, there are sporadic episodes of downtime due to issues between the software and server.

Many processes within the paratransit operations are still manual. The staff member scheduling trips many times has to manually place trips on buses vs letting the system schedule automatically because the system will not produce as an efficient result. Drivers are then given a paper manifest to fill out drop offs and pick ups. The data from paper manifests is then manually input into the system. In addition, the only way for a passenger to currently schedule a ride is to leave a voicemail. The scheduler then needs to listen to the voicemail and input the information into the system.

The Ecolane System automates many of these processes with automate vehicle location (AVL) built into a mobile data terminal (MDT). The MDT can display the manifest and the driver can input drop off, pick ups and other information on the MDT, eliminating the need for paper manifests and for the Operations staff to manually input the trip data later. Also, if there are changes to the manifest like for a cancellation or change to a trip, the manifest can automatically be updated on the MDT and change the schedule to make the service as



efficient as possible.

Once fully operational with MDTs, it is estimated Transit will save 2 hours/day of staff time by not having to complete data entry of trip history information. The time saved would allow Supervisors more time to devote to field supervision of operations or other projects related to operations. In addition, the reporting features automate various federal reporting requirements which can result in additional Operations and Administrative staff time savings. A new system also provides an opportunity to provide better customer service by having the ability to purchase optional customer scheduling portal and call confirmation feature. Last, the Ecolane system has many more parameters that can be set that takes into account the driver, type of vehicle, etc. that can better optimize scheduling. Plus, the MDT can provide turn by turn navigation that can help new drivers. While difficult to estimate an exact savings, these features will likely lead to more efficient scheduling and routing of trips resulting in additional cost savings.

Last, the new system would be hosted which eliminates the need for Transit and IT to maintain the system in house. Prior to the release of the RFP, the City Information Technology Board approved the project.

Options & Alternatives:

The options are to approve the Ecolane purchase or to continue with the Trapeze product. As stated in the details, there are many shortfalls of the current system and the Trapeze systems annual maintenance costs is higher than the annual costs for Ecolane. Therefore, the best option is to approve the Ecolane purchase.

Financial Remarks:

The capital costs of the Ecolane proposal is \$47,765 and includes the licensing, training and set up costs. Transit will buy the tablets directly from Verizon through the City contract and buy mounting hardware in the vehicles for the tables from another vendor. The cost of all the hardware will be around \$3,200. All totaled, the capital/start up costs of the new system will be just under \$51,000. \$40,800 of these costs (80%) can be covered by federal funds with the remaining \$10,200 coming from Transit local operating funds. Ecolane has also proposed that if passenger productivity does not increase in the first 90 days of going live, they will refund half of the license fee (\$8,942.50).

The ongoing operating cost for the Ecolane System is \$0 for Year 1 and \$4,900/year for years 2-5. These also is data charge cost from Verizon at \$1,340/year which is a total operating cost for the new system of: Year 1: \$1,340 and Years 2-5: \$6,240/year. The operating cost includes all hosting, maintenance and upgrades to the system. The Trapeze maintenance agreement for 2016 is \$11,900 and has increased 3-5% per year. The operating cost savings moving to Ecolane would be a minimum of \$10,560 in Year 1 and \$5,660/year in Years 2-5. The operating costs for the software comes are funded through Transit operating funds.

Executive Recommendation:

Recommend approval.