



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

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**Agenda Item Number:** 2.

**Agenda Date:** 10/14/2015

**In Control:** Transportation, Technology and Utilities Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Transportation & Capital Improvements

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Mike Frisbie

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

### **SUBJECT:**

Briefing on the Advanced Transportation District (ATD)

### **SUMMARY:**

This briefing will provide information on the creation, partners and the purpose of the Advanced Transportation District (ATD), the allocation of funds and expenditures, and potential alternative use options that could provide additional funding to VIA Metropolitan Transit.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In 1977, VIA Metropolitan Transit was created and funded through a one-half cent sales tax approved by voters via the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) tax under provisions of the Texas civil statutes. Changes in the Texas Transportation Code in 1999 and 2003 permitted VIA to create an Advanced Transportation District (ATD), in partnership with the City of San Antonio, Bexar County and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and specify a portion of sales tax to fund the ATD.

In November 2004, the ATD was approved by San Antonio voters and established a one-quarter cent increase in the sales tax within the City limits. This was, and remains, the first ATD in the State of Texas. The purpose of the ATD, as approved by the voters, was to reduce traffic congestion and increase mobility within San Antonio through the following five objectives:

- Improve traffic flow at busy intersections.
- Add and improve sidewalks to enhance connectivity between neighborhood and major roadways.
- Minimize highway congestion by expediting state projects.
- Utilize technology to provide faster bus trips and extend bus service hours.

- Offer more transit options, passenger facilities and other rider conveniences.

The one-quarter cent tax increase, collected by VIA, is divided and allocated in the following manner, as approved by the voters.

- **VIA (50%)** - One-half of the tax proceeds is to be used for projects including advanced transportation services, operations, passenger amenities, equipment and other advanced transportation purposes.
- **City of San Antonio (25%)** - One-fourth is to be used to construct, improve and maintain streets, sidewalks and related infrastructure designed to improve mobility, and other advanced transportation or mobility enhancement purposes with the District.
- **TxDOT (25%)** - One-fourth is to be used as the local share for state and federal grants for improved highways, transportation infrastructure designed to improve mobility, and other advanced transportation or mobility enhancement purposes within the District.

Below is a breakdown of each partner's ATD program.

### ***City of San Antonio***

Since the ATD creation in November 2004, the City of San Antonio has collected a total of \$129.5 million in ATD revenue, which has been used towards projects and support staff focused on increasing mobility, reducing traffic congestion, and improving neighborhood connectivity and pedestrian safety through the construction of sidewalks, streets, intersection improvements, bike lanes, and traffic signal improvements citywide.

In FY 2016, the City anticipates to collect approximately \$16.0 million in ATD revenues. Of total expenditures, \$9.1 million is allocated towards sidewalk, bike, pedestrian safety, signal system upgrades, bus pads and intersection improvement projects. \$4.5 million is allocated for the operating cost of the City Traffic Signal System Modernization (TSSM) project and 24 positions that support ATD projects and functions. \$3 million is allocated to pay towards the debt that funded the \$31 million traffic signal synchronization project and \$300,000 towards transfers to General Fund indirect cost and the Solid Waste Fund.

### ***VIA Metropolitan Transit***

In FY 2016, VIA is anticipated to collect \$32 million in ATD revenues. VIA uses its ATD funds to add new routes and extend existing routes, increase bus service hours and to improve frequencies on several routes. New routes include limited service, express service (park and ride), and bus rapid transit (Primo service)

### ***Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)***

In FY 2016, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) & Bexar County are anticipated to collect \$16 million in ATD revenues. TxDOT & Bexar County have been using the ATD funds to leverage additional federal and state funds. This leverage allows TxDOT/Bexar County to accelerate projects across the region, sometimes by up to four to ten years.

### **ISSUE:**

On July 31, 2015, an article written by District 4 Councilman Rey Saldana titled "Put City's ATD allotment into

buses” was published in the local media. In the article, Councilman Saldana described his 30-day experience without his car as frustrating and grueling and credits the experience to a transit system that fails to provide convenience and frequency to riders due to insufficient funding. The Councilman’s proposed solution outlined in the article to improve the transit system is to provide VIA the 25% of the one-quarter cent tax in ATD revenues the City collects annually.

During the briefing, TCI will present information on the ATD tax and use and will then proceed to identify various options explored to alternatively provide additional funding to VIA Metropolitan Transit and the associated impacts to the City’s current programs and projects funded by ATD revenues.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only. The City Council will receive a similar briefing during the October 21 “B” Session.