



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700
Tel: 510.464.7700
TDD/TTY: 510.464.7769
Fax: 510.464.7848

Memorandum

TO: Operations Committee

DATE: May 7, 2010

FR: Executive Director

RE: Contract Amendment – Marketing, Web, and Communications Services: Swirl, Inc.

Staff recommends that the Committee approve a contract amendment with Swirl, Inc. for marketing, web, and communication services for MTC and BATA customer service programs in an amount not to exceed \$1,715,000 for FY 2010-11. This amendment also extends the term of the contract for one year.

Background

MTC manages regional programs, including the 511 traveler information system, the ClipperSM regional fare payment system, incident management program and freeway traffic operations projects. The Marketing, Web, and Communication Services Contract provides customer education, public outreach, market research and web-related services for the regional operations program. This consolidated approach minimizes the need for multiple procurements and supports efficiency in promoting operational projects.

In July 2006, this Committee approved a four-year contract term with Swirl Inc. through June 2010 with an option to extend the contract for up to six additional years. A summary of key accomplishments from FY 2009-10 is provided in Attachment A.

FY 2010-11 Contract Budget and Scope

As envisioned in the initial procurement, Swirl has developed knowledge and a level of familiarity about MTC's operational projects that allows them to recognize synergies between projects, serving as a strong resource to staff.

While the terms of the original procurement would allow a contract extension of up to six years and MTC is satisfied with Swirl's performance, staff is only recommending a one-year contract extension. We plan to assess the need to re-bid this contract in the coming year. There are several considerations for this assessment:

- With the re-branding of TransLink[®] to ClipperSM just beginning, continuity in marketing contractor support is particularly important in the coming year. It is unclear how fundamental it will be in future years.
- While extending the contract is beneficial in terms of continuity, it is also important, given the economic environment, to confirm if our contract is cost-competitive.
- As we adjust our overall program budgets to address revenue reductions, we may need to reassess our capacity to market operational programs in the future.
- Staff will revisit the most cost-effective approach for delivering the services provided by Swirl, especially the operation/management of the different program websites. Alternatives may include bringing certain services within MTC and/or using other contractors.

The recommended addition of \$1,715,000 in funding would be used to implement the following tasks:

Program	Major Tasks	FY 2010-11	FY 2009-10	Difference
511	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of 511.org site Promotion of new 511 features 	\$410,000	\$982,000	(\$572,000)
ClipperSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support initiatives supporting transition of fare media to smart card-only availability Overall coordination of customer education projects Manage program website content Increase participation in pre-tax transit benefit program 	\$1,000,000	\$2,340,000	(\$1,340,000)
Hub Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups 	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
FasTrak[®]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-store retail advertising, low-cost media buys Support for launch of new Express Lanes Online Customer Satisfaction Surveys Update website 	\$275,000	\$700,000	(\$425,000)
Total		\$1,715,000	\$4,022,000	(\$2,307,000)

The following provides more detail on the proposed work plans.

- 511. (\$410,000) 511 is a mature program that continues to offer new features. Swirl will provide web operations and maintenance for 511.org and will support special web pages for regional emergencies if required. Swirl will execute a customer outreach effort to inform users about new real-time transit information available on 511.org and the ability to obtain real-time information through text messaging.
- ClipperSM. (\$1,000,000) This Committee previously approved an amendment enabling Swirl to implement a customer education program beginning in summer 2010 to introduce ClipperSM to AC Transit, BART, Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit, and SFMTA customers. Under the proposed amendment, Swirl will provide the following services that would be necessary under either the TransLink[®] or ClipperSM brand: continued support with transit agencies to educate customers about the transition of transit passes to smart card-only; overall coordinator of customer education initiatives; design services for customer materials; management of program's website; and support for ClipperSM pre-tax transit benefit program.
- Hub Signage Program. (\$30,000) Swirl will conduct focus groups to confirm sign messages, maps, and information are as easy-to-understand as possible.
- FasTrak[®]. (\$275,000) The goal for FasTrak[®] this year is to sustain general awareness and to provide marketing support services for the launch of new Express Lanes in the Bay Area. Swirl will execute limited low-cost media advertising, in-store promotions, customer satisfaction surveys, and provide other marketing services as needed.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that this Committee authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment with Swirl, Inc. for marketing, web, and communication services for MTC, MTC SAFE, and BATA customer service programs in an amount not to exceed \$1,715,000 for work activities in FY 2010-11.

Steve Heminger

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Attachment A
Summary of Key Accomplishments from FY 2009-10

In FY 2009-10, Swirl provided various services, including the development of marketing campaigns, web design services, public outreach assistance, and development of a range of program materials. A summary of some key accomplishments from FY2009-10 is described below:

- 511. (\$982,000) 1) Multiple enhancements to 511.org, including user interface design and functionality for a real-time transit departure predictions tool for the home page, a new developer resources page including a security token retrieval process for the application programming interface (API), and user interface design and functionality for a Rideshare quick match tool for the home page; 2) Focus groups for 511 Traffic/MY 511 and the forthcoming Multimodal Trip Planner and 511 Parking feature; 3) Marketing campaign for 511 Transit features (forthcoming in June) and design and posting of Departure Times Stop ID decals at Bay Area transit stops (currently in process); 4) Accessibility studies for the 511.org home page and the MY511.org home page; 5) Support during regional transportation disruptions, including multiple Bay Bridge closures and the potential BART strike; 6) Brochure updates and maintenance of existing street banner permits and locations; and 7) Ongoing maintenance of the 511.org website, support of modal contractor implementation of the new 511.org design toolkit, and usage tracking.
- TransLink[®]. (\$2,340,000) 1) Developed new brand name (“ClipperSM”) and logo for fare payment system; 2) Implementing (forthcoming) campaign to introduce new brand name to current TransLink[®] customers including notifications to current customers about the pending change, advertising to announce the new brand name, etc. 3) Implementing (forthcoming) campaign to introduce ClipperSM to new customers including advertising that explains how the card works, where to get a card and where to add value; and 4) Supported launch of TransLink[®] Direct Benefits employer program and website; 5) Marketing support for SFMTA including the TransLink[®] soft launch; 6) Ongoing coordination between transit agency-specific initiatives and the regional program; and 7) Managed content and developed graphics for TransLink[®] website.
- FasTrak[®]. (\$700,000) 1) Creation and development of a major advertising campaign (including media buys, in-store retailer advertising, bridge banners, etc.) to educate bridge users prior to the new toll increase and carpool toll, which is scheduled to begin in mid-May and continue to mid-July; and 2) Other marketing services, including the creation and installation of toll booth wraps at the Bay Bridge, creation of in-store advertising for the launch of Walgreens as a new FasTrak[®] Retailer; and the implementation of an online customer satisfaction survey.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Summary of Proposed Contract Amendment

Work Item No.: 1223

Consultant: Swirl Inc.
San Francisco, California

Work Project Title: Marketing, Web, and Communication Services

Purpose of Project: Provide marketing, web, and communication services and support for MTC, MTC SAFE, and BATA's customer service programs.

Brief Scope of Work: Provide services in the areas of marketing, partnership building, design and production, market/product design research, web site design and maintenance, emergency response, user feedback, and public relations for MTC, MTC SAFE, and BATA's customer service programs. Projects supported by this contract include 511, ClipperSM, and FasTrak[®].

Project Cost Not to Exceed: \$1,715,000 for work activities in FY 2010-11 (previous total contract amount = \$14,183,475)

Funding Source: CMAQ, STP, SAFE, TDA, Toll Revenue, RM-2, STA, PTMISEA, UPP.

Fiscal Impact: Funds for the relevant customer service programs are subject to adoption of the FY 2010-11 MTC, MTC SAFE and BATA budgets.

Motion by Committee: That the Executive Director or his designee is authorized to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment with Swirl Inc. for Marketing, Web, and Communication Services. Staff also requests that the Committee authorize the Chief Financial Officer to set aside \$1,715,000 in funds for such contract amendment.

Operations Committee: _____
Amy Rein Worth, Chair

Approved: Date: May 14, 2010