

SUBJECT

Fully Integrated Wheelchair Securement

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation for the Board of Directors to authorize the President and CEO to enter into a contract with Complete Coach Works (CCW), of Riverside, for the installation of the 4One Q'POD system, a fully integrated forward-facing wheelchair securement station, on 153 Long Beach Transit (LBT) coaches, for a total cost not to exceed \$1,638,981.

BACKGROUND

New Flyer Industries, Inc., a well-known bus manufacturer in North America, alerted the transit industry to a possible risk to passengers who occupy the front, forward-facing, flip-up seats adjacent to the areas designated for wheelchairs. The manufacturer based its claims on three separate incidents that involved passengers who were propelled forward from those seats and sustained extensive injuries. The manufacturer suggests that the lack of a barrier in front of these flip-up seats increases the possible risk of injuries sustained during impact braking incidents or collisions.

New Flyer believes the existing seat configuration is not defective and will not issue a recall. However, they are recommending a specific modification to disable the forward-facing, flip-up seats, preventing passengers from occupying these seats. Furthermore, New Flyer has decided to discontinue installing front-row seats without barriers on their future buses.

Staff has explored a variety of options to remove this possible risk and to minimize the impact to overall seating and wheelchair capacity.

After numerous options were considered, LBT staff is recommending a reconfiguration of the area designated for wheelchairs as well as the installation of a fully integrated wheelchair securement system which removes the forward-facing seats and installs a barrier. Staff recommends the reconfiguration of 153 coaches, which have at least five years of life remaining. These vehicles would consist of 89 gasoline hybrids (2005-2009 model years) and 64 compressed natural gas coaches (2012-2013 model years). The forward-facing seats of the remaining coaches, which are scheduled for replacement within the next three years, will be permanently disabled. All future orders will include a fully integrated wheelchair securement system.

PROCUREMENT

In anticipation of the cost, limited seating suppliers, and the need to make a value based decision, Long Beach Transit issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this project. The RFP required

suppliers to demonstrate the installation of their product on an LBT coach for evaluation purposes. Two proposals were received: one from American Seating, suggesting the use of their Reliant system, and another from Complete Coach Works (CCW) proposing the use of 4One's Q'POD system. Both of these proposals are considered fully integrated wheelchair securement systems that would resolve the possible risk identified.

Four LBT led groups, consisting of a total of 16 evaluators, were asked to access the functionality and operability of the system, accounting for 40 percent of the evaluation criteria. These groups were comprised as follows:

- LBT Transit Services Delivery and Training Departments
- LBT Risk / Safety Department
- LBT Maintenance and Infrastructure Department
- LBT operators and ADA community members (end users)

At the conclusion of the evaluation, every member ranked the Q'POD system, proposed by CCW, as the best option.

The evaluation by the project team also included an assessment of the work plan (30 percent) team and price (30 percent).

After a thorough evaluation of both proposals and consideration of all evaluation criteria, it was determined that CCW submitted the best proposal. The proposed solution will maintain the original amount of seating in the compressed natural gas coaches and have a net loss of one seat in the gasoline hybrid coaches. The other proposal had a net loss of two seats in all coaches. CCW's option will not only eliminate the possible risk, it will provide an enhanced wheelchair securement option that improves the boarding and alighting by two minutes each way. The ADA focus group expressed high confidence in the Q'POD system. The operators were very pleased with the ease in use and recommended this system on a two to one margin.

Staff was able to negotiate the cost of each unit to \$9,984 per coach, amounting to \$1,527,593 for the number of coaches recommended. Costs to install the units on all coaches totaled \$111,388, bringing the total amount requested to \$1,638,981 to upgrade 153 coaches. This price does not include sales tax, as ADA equipment is exempt. The cost for the Reliant system, from American Seating, averaged \$4,272 less per coach than the Q'POD system. This lower price is a result of two less seats proposed and a less rugged construction. The evaluation team took all of this into consideration when making its final recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may elect to continue to operate the existing buses as currently designed. Staff believes that declining to install these fully integrated wheelchair securement systems in 153 of

LBT coaches could possibly risk injury to passengers who occupy the forward-facing, flip-up seats. Staff does not recommend this option.

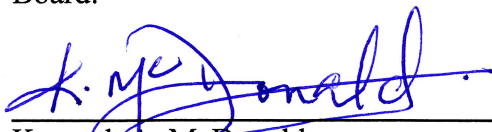
The Board could elect to disable the four forward-facing seated positions on all coaches at minimal costs, thus creating a barrier and eliminating this risk. Unfortunately, this option would reduce the amount of seating available to passengers and increase standee load. With an average bus load of 45 passengers per vehicle service hour (higher than seating capacity), staff does not recommend this option.

The implementation of this project will likely reduce the possible risk highlighted by the manufacturer.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT

Staff is requesting authorization to enter into a contract with Complete Coach Works (CCW) for the installation of the 4ONE Q'POD on 153 of Long Beach Transit coaches for a cost not to exceed \$1,638,981.

Funds for this project were included in the FY15 capital budgets previously approved by the Board.



Kenneth A. McDonald
President and Chief Executive Officer