

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: July 13, 2009

For Metropolitan Council meeting: July 22, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	July 7, 2009
Subject:	Approval of Regional Dial-a-Ride Program Parameters
District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Mn Stat. 473.3, Subd. 2a; Mn Stat. 473.384
Staff Prepared/Presented	Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS (651-602-1754) Gerri Sutton, Assistant Director, MTS (651-602-1672) John Harper, Supervisor Contracted Transit Serv. (651-602-1744) Sheila Williams, Project Administrator (651-602-1708)
Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the attached (Exhibit A) Regional Dial-a-Ride Program Parameters recommended by the Coordination Advisory Committee (CAC).

Background

One of the Council's legislatively defined goals is "to provide, to the greatest feasible extent, a basic level of mobility for all people in the metropolitan area" (Mn Stat. 473.3, Subd. 2a). There are a number of deficiencies in the existing approach and process by which grants are awarded and service delivered within the seven county metro area not served by fixed route. On February 25, 2009, the Council approved implementation of a restructured regional dial-a-ride transit program to begin in January 2010 and to be developed and delivered collaboratively between the Council and each of the seven metro area counties.

Rationale

The dial-a-ride restructuring project represents a significant change for the Council and residents of the seven county metro area. Council and county staff formed a committee called the Coordination Advisory Committee (CAC) which met on numerous occasions and developed program parameter recommendations aimed at accomplishing the following project goals:

- a. Standardize operating policies and procedures
- b. Eliminate the arbitrary distribution of funds
- c. Streamline administrative efforts
- d. Assure eligibility for federal funds (e.g. eliminate sole source contracts)
- e. Provide equitable coverage throughout the metropolitan area
- f. Eliminate duplicative services
- g. Require coordination with fixed route services and other regional dial-a-ride programs
- h. Assure that services are equally available to the general public
- i. Allow future flexibility in service delivery area as fixed route services evolve

MTS is requesting Council approval of the initial program parameters. As the service matures, Council or county staff may suggest that new parameters be added or existing parameters modified. Council staff will discuss these items with the CAC and make modifications as necessary with the exception of fare structure modifications which require Council approval.

Funding

Existing dial-a-ride funding will be maintained under the regional structure.

Known Support / Opposition

The CAC has discussed and supports these recommendations as a whole. The only notable exceptions to the committee recommendation are as follows:

1. Hennepin County staff prefers that operating parameter #11 (Walking Distance to Fixed Route Stop) remain at ¼ mile for the entire year.
2. Hennepin County staff believes that seniors will be the largest users of the regional dial-a-ride program and prefers that operating parameter #15 (Funding Formula) include seniors as a funding factor and evenly distributes funds to all five factors: seniors, disabled, total population, low income population, geographic area served.

The City of Hastings desires to retain its own stand-alone dial-a-ride service providing trips only within the city limits.

Dial-a-Ride Coordination Advisory Committee

Program Parameter Recommendations

#	Program Parameter	Tentative CAC Recommendation	CAC Recommendation Decision Date
1	Hours of Service	<u>Weekday minimum window</u> 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. up to an additional three hours per day if paid by County <u>Weekend</u> 8 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (recommended window) if paid by County	7/1/09
2	Reservation Scheduling Hours	Weekdays 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	6/3/09
3	Advance Reservation Window	Up to 5 business days in advance through same day.	6/3/09
4	Service Type	Curb to Curb with limited assistance. This includes help with up to four bags (groceries size) and first door <u>to</u> first door escort <u>if</u> ADA certified <u>and</u> the rider requests extra assistance.	6/3/09
5	Pick-Up Window	0-30 Minutes	6/3/09
6	Standing Order Placement	No more than 75% standing order trips during any hour of the service day. Existing standing orders will be grandfathered into the new service if they can not be accomplished using fixed route service per parameter #11.	6/3/09
7	No Show Suspensions	Three no-shows within 30 days results in a warning letter. Additional no-shows in next 30 days results in suspension. First suspension - 2 wks Second Suspension - 4 wks Third or more - 6 wks	6/3/09
8	Advance Cancellation Window	Riders that fail to cancel a scheduled ride within one hour of the established pick-up time will be charged with one no-show per incident.	6/3/09
9	Fare Structure	As approved by the Metropolitan Council. The fare structure should include group ride discounts and mileage based rates. Table 1 will be recommended to the Council for Public Hearing.	7/1/09

#	Program Parameter	Tentative CAC Recommendation	CAC Recommendation Decision Date
10	Vehicle Wait Time	Drivers will wait no more than three minutes for riders to board the vehicle after arrival at a pick-up address. In the event that the vehicle arrives in advance of the 30 minute pick-up window, the rider is not obligated to board the vehicle until 3 minutes in to the pick-up window. Special consideration is allowed for transfer connections from fixed route.	6/3/09
11	Walking Distance To Fixed Route Stop	Trips are eligible for dial-a-ride if not within ½ mile between April 1 – Oct. 31 ¼ mile between Nov. 1 - March 31	6/17/09
12	Fee for Standing Order Placement	Standing orders can be placed upon request after three consecutive weeks of using the same trip without any no-shows. No fee.	6/17/09
13	Revocation of Standing Orders	Standing orders are revoked upon suspension from service due to no-shows.	6/17/09
14	Service Boundaries	Initially service will be provided only within the seven county boarder. The CAC will monitor the demand for trips to destinations adjacent to the seven counties and may consider adding specific medical facilities and major business districts in the future. These locations will be determined by the Metropolitan Council under advisement by the CAC.	7/1/09
15	Funding Formula	Council funding is distributed based on the following assumptions: 1. Four factor formula (using U.S. Census data) in the area outside of a ½ mile corridor around all-day fixed route; disability population, total population, low income population and geographic area. Each of the four factors shall be evenly weighted in the distribution process. 2. This formula should be considered an interim methodology and reconsidered when the demand for service by area is better known. 3. The Council will mitigate, for at least the first year, any funding shortfalls created by the new funding formula.	7/1/09
#	Program Parameter	Tentative CAC Recommendation	CAC Recommendation Decision Date
16	Car Seats	As required by law	7/1/09

17	Minimum Age	Riders must be at least 10 years old to ride without an accompanying adult.	7/1/09
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As the service matures, Council or county staff may suggest that new parameters be added or existing parameters modified. Council staff will discuss these items with the CAC and make modifications as necessary with the exception of fare structure modifications which require Council approval.

Table 1

**Coordination Advisory Committee
Recommended Fare Structure**

<u>Fare Set</u>	<u>**Trip Distance</u>	<u>General Public Riders*</u>	<u>Group Discounts</u>	
			<u>Paid Fares Threshold</u>	<u>Fare</u>
Tier 1	Up to 10 miles	\$2.25	4+	Free return ride
Tier 2	>10 – 20 miles	\$4.50	3+	\$2.25/each
Tier 3	>20 miles	\$6.75	3+	\$4.50/each

* ADA certified riders capped at \$4.50

** Trip distance is calculated on a point to point or straight line basis.

Counties can establish “Routine Runs” between specific cities on specified days and at specified times and charge \$2.25 per passenger.

- Transfers dial-a-ride to dial-a-ride: fee based on full distance. Originating provider collects fee and transfer is free.
- Sponsored trips (third party payment) may be booked in advance of the reservation window and fares are not restricted to the regional fare policy rates.
- Children 5 years old and under ride free with paying adult (up to 4 children per adult).