



To: Edina Transportation Commission

Agenda Item #: VI. B.

From: Mark K. Nolan, AICP, Transportation Planner

Action

Date: March 20, 2014

Discussion

Subject: Transportation Options Workshop

Information

Action Requested:

No action requested.

Information / Background:

In April 2013 the ETC's Transportation Options Working Group recommended that the City Council authorize PRISM Express dial-a-ride transportation to expand into the City of Edina and to include appropriate funding, estimated in an amount of \$10,000, in the 2014 budget, to cover a portion of the operating expenses to do so. A Human Services Grant for that amount was established. However, last Fall PRISM Express discontinued its dial-a-ride service and the Human Services Grant became unavailable.

At the December 19, 2014 ETC meeting, commissioner Whited led a discussion about transportation options, with a focus on what steps to take (if any) to continue to look for a reasonably-priced, accessible and flexible transportation option for residents who do not meet eligibility guidelines for other services. At that time, the ETC decided to hold a workshop at a future meeting on this topic. Commissioner Whited will facilitate this workshop at the March ETC meeting.

Attachments:

ETC Advisory Communication: Transportation Options Working Group Formal Recommendation (presented to City Council on May 21, 2013)

Edina Transportation Commission Advisory Communication

Date: April 18, 2013

Subject: Transportation Options Working Group Formal Recommendation

Attachments: Additional information regarding PRISM Express & demographics on the population it will serve.

Situation:

Edina lacks a reasonable priced, accessible and flexible transportation option for residents who do not meet eligibility guidelines for other services. This type of service is critical to enable Edina residents to continue living in our city as they age and maintain independence.

Background:

The Edina Transportation Commission Transportation Options (ETC-TO) working group came together to review current transportation options and to make recommendations on additional transportation options for Edina residents, particularly senior and disabled citizens. Additionally the ETC-TO will recommend partnerships and outside sources of funding to meet these needs. The ETC-TO established an evaluation checklist to be used while they met with and reviewed the current transit options. The ETC-TO interviewed and reviewed the current transit options for the residents of Edina. In January 2013, two ETC-TO members made a formal presentation of their findings to the ETC.

Assessment:

The current transportation options for the residents of Edina include Metro Transit, Transit Link, Metro Mobility and VEAP volunteer driver transportation. Some senior living buildings have their own bus & taxi services. The ETC-TO's primary focus was assessing the services for Edina residents who:

- are transit dependent and need to be transported in and around Edina,
- require a different option than the "big bus" because it does not provide good intra-city circulation or door-to-door service.
- May not meet the eligibility guidelines for physical limitations or income guidelines that other services require.

This services serves everyone from the 40 year old temporary transplant from out of the country that is living in Edina and needs transportation to/from work to the 80 year old that uses a wheelchair but is not disabled enough to qualify for Metro Mobility and needs transportation to the doctor next week. (Metro Mobility has a three week application process)

The ETC-TO did not review a taxi service because that service is not set up to serve the population that requires a standing order or needs multiple rides a month. Taxi service is expensive and generally is intended for the occasional ride.

The ETC-TO did not review the individual senior living buildings bus options because they are not widely available. There are very few of these available in Edina and the vehicles operate on a set schedule of mainly recreational transportation options and may offer one day/week transportation to specific medical facilities.

After meeting with and reviewing the Metro Transit "big buses", Transit Link & VEAP transportation options, the working group determined that these options are not all encompassing because they either require a walk to access the final destination, an application & wait period with physical requirements to ride, or have income guidelines and limitations on destinations.

It was determined that PRISM Express is the all encompassing option for any resident in Edina because it does not have eligibility guidelines, no application, no wait period to ride, cost to ride is based on a sliding scale fee based on the rider's stated income, can transport riders to/from any destination within their service area (includes 7 other adjoining cities to Edina), vehicles are wheelchair lift-equipped, service is assistive door-to-door and is willing to grow and coordinate with other programs.

PRISM Express has applied for the Metropolitan Council's New Freedom funding (from the Metropolitan Council) to cover the purchase cost of a wheelchair lift-equipped bus. The Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging funding (is set at a reimbursement per ride provided rate of \$5.80 per ride) & the rider fares will both cover the other portion of the cost to operate PRISM Express in the City of Edina. (See attached PRISM Express Cost Share Policy with Sliding Fee Schedule for rider fare info. On average riders pay \$3.50) The true cost per ride to operate this service is \$10.98 per one way ride.

Recommendation:

ETC recommends that the council authorize PRISM Express dial-a-ride transportation to expand into the City of Edina and to include appropriate funding, estimated in an amount of \$10,000, in the 2014 budget, to cover a portion of the operating expense to do so.

Routing

From	Reviewed By	To	Action Requested
Courtney L.B. Whited	Katherine Bass & Tom LaForce	Wayne Houle	Distribute to the Council Place on Council agenda for April 2013