

T Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of November 14, 2007

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: October 23, 2007

Subject: Transit Provider Assistance Agreements for Calendar Year 2008

Summary of Committee Discussion:

John Harper, Supervisor of Contracted Services, and Gerri Sutton, Assistant Director of Contracted Services, presented this item to the committee.

In response to a question by Member Hilker, Harper explained the process of determining funding levels for individual programs.

Additional discussion revolved around the decision to not fund the Reach for Resources program. A. McCarthy described the recent internal audit and its determination that the program is charter service and should not be funded by the Council. McCarthy and Harper explained what constitutes charter service and how it is different from public service.

Reach for Resources representatives Mary Perkins, Executive Director, and Patrick Boley, Board Member, presented to the committee and joined the discussion. Boley stated that Reach for Resources did not concur with the SCS Audit Report which stated that the service provided meets the definition of charter. Perkins testified that it is more difficult for higher functioning participants of the Reach for Resources program to be eligible for Metro Mobility. A. McCarthy added that the certification process has been enhanced and is no longer a self-certification process, but that it now includes a professional verification component. Sutton added that based on the April and May 2007 manifests used during the Council's audit, only a small number of participants are not in Metro Mobility's rider base. Boley asserted that hours and areas covered by Reach service were not well covered by other Council services. Sutton responded that based on the resident addresses listed in the auditor manifests, Metro Mobility has extensive service in many of the communities; four cities receiving 24-hour service and only one, Wayzata, having somewhat restrictive service hours on weekdays. Staff offered to meet with Reach for Resources staff to explore service options for their clients.

Because of the perceived unmet need, Boley requested that the committee reconsider the \$11,000 annual funding. Chair Hill-Smith suggested Boley track the number of trips not served throughout 2008 and return to the Council with a funding request for 2009 if the need remains unmet.

Motion to accept recommendation was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Recommendation:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute transit assistance agreements with transit service providers, not to exceed the amounts listed in Attachment A. The agreements shall be effective for the period January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: October 22, 2007

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	October 15, 2007
Subject:	Transit Provider Assistance Agreements for Calendar Year 2008
District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minnesota Statute 473.384, Financial Assistance to Transit Service Minnesota Statute 473.386, Special Transportation Services
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS (651) 602-1754 Gerri Sutton, Ass't Dir. Contracted Transit Services (651) 602-1672 John Harper, Sup'v Contracted Transit Services (651) 602-1744
Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action/Motion

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute transit assistance agreements with transit service providers, not to exceed the amounts listed in Attachment A. The agreements shall be effective for the period January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

Issue(s)

- Funding for community-based transit providers (Rural and Small Urban) is provided under the legislatively mandated Performance Based Funding (PBF) program, which calls for a reasonable per-passenger subsidy level. This subsidy is determined annually to provide equitable subsidies for comparable services among the various providers. Subsidy amounts illustrated on the following pages are in compliance with this mandate.
- All Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services in the Twin Cities region are funded through Metro Mobility. Metro Mobility is responsible for ADA compliance for the region and, in addition to its two core service contractors, utilizes four programs along the north, east and south fringes of the service area to deliver trips. These programs, DARTS, H.S.I., Anoka County Traveler, and Scott County, are funded on a per ride delivered basis.
- The Westonka, Delano, and Reach For Resources services will not be funded by the Met Council in 2008. Reach for Resources was deemed a charter service in the recent program audit, so is ineligible for general public funding. However, most riders in that program are eligible for Metro Mobility service. The service areas previously included in the Westonka and Delano services will be combined into a new, competitively procured, long-term service agreement, with funding transferred from the PBF program to the Regular Route program to cover the expenses.

Overview and Funding

The Council is authorized by legislation to enter into and administer financial assistance agreements with transit providers in the metropolitan region. These providers include community-based dial-a-ride systems that are funded under the categories of Small Urban, Rural, Regular Route and ADA. This request for authorization covers those programs operating on a year-to-year cycle and which are directly subsidized by the Council in part or in whole. Each of the programs submit full management and service plans for the upcoming year prior to negotiations, as required by law, and actively certify their compliance with all state, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and Federal Transit Administration regulations that may apply.

Attached to this memorandum is a combined program description and budget overview for each of the seven Small Urban and seven Rural programs that are being recommended for funding. Each of the established programs represents a demand response transit system that began on a local initiative, is locally managed, and has a significant local financial contribution to its operation. In addition, two Regular Route programs, the Anoka County Traveler and Osseo Circulator, are funded on an annual basis and are included in this authorization request.

The four county providers, DARTS, H.S.I, Anoka County Traveler, and Scott County Transit, provide mixed service (ADA and general public dial-a-ride) using small buses and are listed as Rural programs as well as ADA complementary paratransit system. All four programs utilize computerized tracking of ADA paratransit rides, using software developed by the Metro Mobility Service Center. This system allows Metro Mobility to evaluate the performance of each program and to reimburse the counties for the actual number of ADA rides delivered.

The annual transit provider contracts require a total Council authorization of \$7,936,559 in calendar year 2008. Of this amount, operating subsidy agreements with community-based systems total \$3,214,900 and represent an increase of 9.5% from 2007. Authorization for county ADA service is requested at \$3,768,174, which represents an 8% increase from the 2007 amended authorization. The rates per trip will remain the same as in 2007 and all of the budget increase will be available to provide additional trips.

The Regular Route service contracts included in this funding request total \$953,485, an 11.5% decrease from 2007 for the same programs. This decrease is due to the transfer of some Anoka County administrative expenses to the Anoka County PBF agreement and results in an offsetting increase to the Rural program.

Funding for these proposed 2008 transit service contracts is included in the draft 2008 Metropolitan Council Unified Budget.