

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

Inter-office Communication

DATE: 12/28/2023

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation providing an information report regarding an update on the development of options for an on-demand paratransit taxi service in Milwaukee County.

FILE TYPE: Informational Report

BACKGROUND

The Department of Transportation is working in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and members of the Paratransit Task Force to develop options for an on-demand paratransit taxi service in Milwaukee County

This report summarizes the December 7, 2023 Paratransit Task Force meeting in which SEWRPC was enlisted to study comparable on-demand paratransit systems. Commission staff researched nearly 60 transportation programs in response to requests from Milwaukee County and the Paratransit Taxi Task Force. Of those nearly 60 transportation services, the Commission presented information on about 20 services that provide same-day paratransit trips, which were grouped into three categories: (1) taxi voucher programs, (2) same-day paratransit services, and (3) non-profit transportation providers.

During the December 7, 2023 meeting, Paratransit Taxi Task Force members outlined next steps and expectations for the remainder of the SEWRPC research. Paratransit Task Force members have put forth the parameters for a survey in which an opportunity for input from absent members or individuals that may have barriers to speaking at the meeting. Paratransit Task Force members provided guidance and parameters for a potential service model (building on the initial Department of Health and Human Services (Aging) model developed this summer). The survey or needs assessment will be used to define the expected utilization for the on-demand service.

At the request of the Paratransit Task Force, SEWRPC staff is conducting additional research on select on-demand paratransit systems, including operating expenses, funding sources and on-demand technology providers (including services provided by Uber/Lyft). SEWRPC is also drafting survey questions to gather feedback on potential amenities desired by the Task Force. SEWRPC is working with Milwaukee County's Office for Persons with Disabilities to make the survey accessible for all users.

While the Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Human Services and SEWRPC are diligently helping to facilitate the research and work to develop an on-demand service; direction and decisions are being led by the Paratransit Task Force membership. These are the constituents, clients, and businesses that actively use the on-demand services that

traditionally served Milwaukee County residents for more than 15 years. Due to the significant intricacies, level of detail and the full involvement of the paratransit eligible community, the Paratransit Task Force will continue their work until an agreeable option is identified and accepted.

Ultimately, efforts to determine the most appropriate options for an on-demand paratransit taxi service in Milwaukee County is being directed under the guidance of those who utilize and depend on the service. It is expected that a more definitive list of options will be presented to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors in the next Board cycle. It is also entirely possible that these options may be short-term and long-term recommendations that will branch into future initiatives.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes only.

FISCAL EFFECT

There is no fiscal effect.

TERMS (If applicable)

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
Marietta Luster, Administrator, Aging and Disabilities Services, Department of Health and Human Services

PREPARED BY:

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

APPROVED BY:



Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk