

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: June 10, 2013

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 26, 2013

Subject: Approval of Pilot Program for Temporary Expansion of Premium Same Day Taxi Service

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: None

Staff Prepared/Presented: Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS (651-602-1754)

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Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) / Metro Mobility

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve changes to Metro Mobility Premium Same Day Taxi (PSD) service on a demonstration basis to:

1. expand the scope of PSD to include all requests for trips between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. that are received on the day of service, and;
2. reduce the customer's share of the initial cost of PSD service from \$7.00 to \$5.00. The Council's maximum payment per trip would increase from \$13.00 to \$15.00. (Customers continue to pay the cost of the trip that's over \$20.)

These changes would be effective July 15, 2013 through January 15, 2014 as a 6-month pilot demonstration.

Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require that rides requested for the same day be provided. However, the Council has traditionally tried to accommodate as many same-day ride requests as possible.

In August 2004, Metro Mobility began Premium Same Day Taxi Service in response to a bill initiated by Rep. Torry Westrom. The proposed bill did not pass. However, Metro Mobility staff worked with Rep. Westrom to develop and implement a program to subsidize same-day rides using taxi service to provide riders with another option and meet unanticipated needs when capacity was not available on the Metro Mobility system.

The subsidy structure established in 2004 requires the customer to pay the initial \$7.00 cost of the taxi ride; Metro Mobility pays up to the next \$13.00, and the customer is responsible for charges in excess of \$20.00.

Metro Mobility provides more than 6,000 rides on an average weekday, including 45 same-day rides on the PSD program and 50 same-day rides with Metro Mobility contractors.

Ridership growth of eight and nine percent the last two years, however, has made it increasingly difficult to place same-day rides without disrupting rides placed in advance and compromising service quality for all customers. As a result, staff is proposing that all same-day rides be provided by the existing PSD taxi program option.

Rationale

This change would allow contractors to focus on reservations that are scheduled prior to the day of service and protect service quality of the system overall during the busiest times of the service day. It would allow contractors to continue to provide same-day rides when space is available during specific periods of lower demand.

Lowering the cost of the taxi option would ease the impact on Metro Mobility customers who are accustomed to paying a fare of \$3 during non-peak hours and \$4 during peak hours.

Customers who prefer not to use the PSD taxi program continue to have the option of making their reservation at least a day in advance of their trip.

The budgetary impact of moving all same-day trips to the PSD taxi program is expected to be cost neutral. Changes to the PSD taxi program will be evaluated during the 6-month pilot period and recommended changes would to be brought back to the Transportation Committee in December 2013.

Funding

The changes are not expected to have a material impact to the Metro Mobility budget. The cost to deliver these rides is in the current budget.

Known Support / Opposition

No known opposition.