

M E M O R A N D U M

April 27, 2022

TO: Transportation and Environment Committee

FROM: Glenn Orlin, Senior Analyst

SUBJECT: **Department of Transportation Mass Transit Fund's FY23 Operating Budget, Transportation Services Improvement Fund (continuation)¹**

PURPOSE: Develop Committee recommendations for Council consideration

The Committee has had considerable discussion about ways to help the struggling taxi industry, to put more wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in service for people with disabilities and keep them on the road longer once in service, and to provide better service to low income and disabled persons generally. The Executive has proposed several new incentives in this regard. They are summarized below and more fully explained on ©1-5:

Executive's New Recommended Initiatives	Cost in FY23
1. Establish an accessibility and customer service training program for all Montgomery County taxicab drivers	\$190,000
2. Increase the per mile payment for WAV taxicabs from \$0.10 to \$0.25	\$295,113
3. Increase the per trip payment for WAV taxicabs from \$15 for daytime and \$20 for overnight trips to \$20 for all trips	\$368,200
4. Increase the reimbursement for the purchase or retrofit of a WAV taxicab from \$15,000 to \$30,000	\$360,000
5. Establish a capital grant award program for local nonprofit organizations that provide transportation services for individuals who are disabled, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes	\$800,000
6. Establish an operating expense grant award program for local nonprofit organizations that provide transportation services for individuals who are disabled, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes	\$200,000
7. Increase both the income and age eligibility for the Call-n-Ride Program	\$150,000
8. Continue the ongoing Call-n-Ride participants' \$5.25/month co-pay reduction after COG's Enhanced Mobility grant funding period ends in August 2023	(starts in FY24)
9. Allow funds to be used interdepartmentally for transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes	\$550,000
Total Added Cost in FY23	\$2,913,313

¹ Key words: #FY23 Operating Budget, plus search terms transportation, taxis, wheelchair accessible vehicles.

At Council staff's request, DOT has prepared a six-year fund display—in effect, a mini fiscal plan—for the TSIF, including the new proposals (©6-7). Over the next few years, the fund balance would be drawn down considerably, but in later years it levels out and even grows a bit.

Under the letter of the law, all these initiatives are eligible to be funded by the TSIF. But Council staff has concerns about whether the TSIF is the most appropriate funding source for some of these initiatives:

- Capital grants to non-profit transportation providers to acquire or retrofit vehicles to be wheelchair accessible addresses the same objective as providing such financial incentives to taxi drivers. However, offering operating grants to these same organizations strays beyond the TSIFs core goals, unless the grants are restricted to the direct incremental cost of operating and maintaining WAVs.
- Expanding the age range for Call-n-Ride (from 65 down to 63) and expanding the income eligibility range (from \$39,000 to \$44,100) are laudable. But why would this increment be funded annually by the TSIF while the rest of the Call-n-Ride subsidy is funded by the general public through the Mass Transit Tax?
- Allowing TSIF funds to be used by other County departments strays furthest of all. If the Recreation Department needs a new vehicle, why wouldn't the funds come directly from its budget? Think of it this way: if DOT needed to replace the wheelchair lift on a Ride On bus, would that be considered an eligible use of TSIF revenue?

Councilmember Riemer recommends reallocating the funding to incentivize more directly putting more WAVs in service and on the street longer (©8-9). He proposes to:

- Remove TSIF funding for Recommendations 1, 6, 7, and 9. This frees up \$1,090,000.
- Increase the TSIF funding for Recommendations 2, 3, and 4 by increasing the incentives as follows
 - Recommendation 2: Increase the per mile payment from \$0.10 to \$0.40 (instead of to \$0.25). Cost = ~\$295,000.
 - Recommendation 3: Increase the per trip payment to from \$15 in the daytime and \$20 overnight to \$25 all the time (instead of to \$20 all the time). Cost = ~\$400,000.
 - Recommendation 4: Increase the reimbursement for new WAV and retrofit from \$15,000 to \$45,000 (instead of \$30,000). Cost = \$360,000.

These three incentives would cost an estimated \$1,055,000.

- Maintain Recommendation #5 at \$800,000 but allow MCDOT to also award grants in this category for operating expenses, at their proposed capital-to-operating ratio of 4:1.
- Put Recommendation #7 on the Council's Reconciliation List. Cost = \$150,000.
- Put \$350,000 of the \$550,000 proposed in Recommendation #9 on the Council's Reconciliation List for the purpose of allowing the Recreation Department to purchase a bus to support its senior programs.

Council staff recommends Councilmember Riemer's proposal, or something close to it. It proposes increasing the incentives for taxi operators and non-profits to put more WAVs on the street and to keep them on the street for more hours during the week. The Committee might consider placing Recommendation #1 on the Reconciliation List as well.

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Recommendation #1 - Establish an accessibility and customer service training program for all Montgomery County taxicab drivers.

Cost - \$190,000 annually

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is in discussions with Montgomery College regarding the implementation of the Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensitivity (PASS) training program, provided by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) which would improve the customer experience when taking taxicabs and expand customer service skills for drivers.

Rationale:

Chapter 53 Section 53-503, currently requires any licensee who transports passengers who use wheelchairs or scooters to train each driver about the special needs of individuals with disabilities. Chapter 53 also allows expenditures from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF) to be used for the costs associated with receiving training in providing accessible transportation services.

The training programs currently in use by taxicab companies address proper transportation protocol for individuals who are disabled in a piecemeal fashion and lack a consistent curriculum. The Commission on Aging and the Commission on People with Disabilities have advocated for more robust training to ensure that taxicab drivers understand their responsibilities when transporting individuals with disabilities and seniors. Respondents to a recent survey about taxicab usage, conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Transportation, indicated that patrons believed that taxicab drivers have a general lack of awareness of the proper protocols of transporting individuals with disabilities. The County's Call-n-Ride subsidized trips that involve residents that are high needs is a growing percentage of taxicab trips.

Benefits:

The goals of this recommendation are to ensure that taxicab drivers are aware of, and use, best practices when transporting all passengers with a focus on individuals with disabilities and senior residents. Additionally, this training will improve the customer experience and improve consistency of service for passengers across the industry.

Recommendation #2 - Increase the per mile payment for WAV taxicabs from \$.10 cents to \$.25 cents.

Cost - \$295,113 annually

Rationale:

The Taxicab Services Commission (TSC) suggested increasing this incentive as a measure to encourage drivers to remain on the road and in-service for longer periods, thereby ensuring that more WAV trip requests by residents are fulfilled. According to AAA, Montgomery County currently has the highest gas prices in the State of Maryland. The legislation that established the TSIF, Bill 33-15, permitted TSIF money to be used to offset the higher costs of operating an accessible taxicab. This incentive has a direct impact on the taxicab driver and was highly ranked among suggestions from the TSC.

Benefits:

The goal of this recommendation is to provide direct financial relief to incentivize taxicab drivers to remain on the road longer and fulfil more residents' trip requests.

How it would work:

Wheelchair accessible vehicle taxicab drivers in Montgomery County currently receive \$.10 cents for every mile traveled while in service. This reimbursement payment is paid to drivers monthly in conjunction with the either \$15 or \$20 reimbursement payment for wheelchair trips. Drivers currently submit monthly reimbursement requests, along with supporting/back-up documentation to MCDOT, and they are reimbursed by Finance. This process would remain the same, however regulations will need to be updated to reflect the new \$.25 amount.

Recommendation #3 - Increase the per trip payment for WAV taxicabs from \$15 for daytime and \$20 for overnight trips to \$20 for all trips.

Cost - \$368,200 annually

Rationale:

Taxicab drivers who provide wheelchair accessible taxicab vehicle transportation for individuals who are disabled currently receive \$15 for trips between 6 a.m. and 11:59 p.m., and \$20 for trips from midnight until 5:59 a.m. The overwhelming majority of wheelchair accessible taxicab vehicle trips take place during the 6 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Providing two separate amounts for two different timeframes is not effective. MCDOT believes that substantially increasing the overall incentive will not only motivate drivers already in the taxicab industry to provide additional wheelchair accessible taxicab vehicle service, but this increased incentive could also attract individuals who are not yet in the industry.

Benefits:

The goal of this recommendation is to provide an improved incentive for wheelchair accessible vehicle taxicab drivers to remain available and in service. This change will benefit County residents by having the highest number of WAV taxis in service for the peak trip request times.

How it would work:

Wheelchair accessible vehicle taxicab drivers currently submit monthly reimbursement request to MCDOT in conjunction with their manifest and a request for reimbursement mileage traveled and the flat fees. This process would remain the same, however, regulations will need to be updated to reflect the new flat rate of \$20.

Recommendation #4 - Increase the reimbursement for the purchase or retrofit of a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) taxicab from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

Cost - \$360,000 annually

Rationale:

TSC members believe that an increase in the amount provided toward the purchase or retrofit of a wheelchair accessible taxicab vehicle would provide financial relief to struggling operators of taxicab fleets and lead to more WAV taxicabs. A \$15,000 reimbursement increase would also offset near term inflationary pressures that are currently being escalated by supply chain issues. This suggestion was ranked the highest among suggestions from members of the TSC. It is important to note that, while this suggestion was ranked the highest by the TSC, members also expressed their belief that the taxicab companies also needed to have a financial stake in the purchase of vehicles.

Benefits:

The goal of this recommendation is to relieve some of the financial pressure facing taxicab drivers and fleet owners and lead to the availability of more WAV taxicabs to meet residents' taxi service needs.

Recommendation #5 - Establish a capital grant award program for local nonprofit organizations that provide transportation services for individuals who are disabled, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes.

Cost - \$800,000 annually in FY23-24

Rationale:

MCDOT recognizes the need to liberalize expenditures from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund. The Commission on Aging and the Commission on People with Disabilities support this recommendation. The taxicab industry has long been the sole beneficiary of the expenditures of the fund. The taxicab industry has experienced severe contraction in recent years, while the need for transportation services for high-needs clients has increased.

Allowing the TSIF money to be used for capital grant funding would enable non-profit service providers to address transportation service deficiencies in high-needs communities. These non-profit service providers also have access, through their various human service programs and established relationships, with individuals that may not be typically served by the taxicab industry.

Benefits:

The goal of this recommendation is to expand the transportation options offered to our residents through established community partners who have pre-existing relationships with the intended populations and to promote expanded access to existing health and welfare services.

Recommendation #6 - Establish an operating expense grant award program for local nonprofit organizations that provide transportation services for individuals who are disabled, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes

Cost - \$200,000 annually

Rationale:

The number of applicants that compete annually through Montgomery County's Community Grants Program continues to grow. Implementing a program that assists nonprofit service providers access funds to address the transportation needs of County residents is essential. These funds would be used for personnel costs, administrative costs and other operating costs associated with providing transportation services for the intended population, as they work to keep pace with the rising minimum wage and other competitive costs.

Benefits:

The goal of this recommendation is to provide an additional funding opportunity for nonprofit organizations that provide transportation services to individuals who are disabled, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes.

Recommendation #7 - Increase both the income and age eligibility for the Call-n-Ride Program.

Cost - \$150,000 annually

Rationale:

The taxicab industry is the sole provider of Call-n-Ride service. The Commission on Aging, the Commission on People with Disabilities, and the Taxicab Services Commission have each suggested that reducing the age requirement and increasing the income eligibility requirement to participate in the County's Call-n-Ride Program would be beneficial to low-income seniors and individuals who are disabled.

In January of this year, the Federal Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) was raised by 5.9 percent, which was the largest single year increase in nearly 40 years. The COLA increase coupled with increasing minimum wage amounts may disadvantage the working poor by placing them slightly above certain income guidelines to participate in the Call-n-Ride Program.

Benefits:

The goal of this recommendation is to increase the number of residents who are eligible to receive Call-n-Ride service, which will provide additional transportation options for more seniors, disabled and individuals with low income.

How it would work:

MCDOT's Call-n-Ride Program currently serves residents with limited incomes who are disabled and seniors. Currently, individuals who are disabled and are between the ages of 18 and 64 are eligible to participate in the program. Seniors, age 65 and older are also eligible to participate. The current highest income rate for participants is approximately \$39,000. MCDOT will change the highest income rate to \$44,100 and reduce eligibility age to 63 for participation. Program application, approval and notification process would remain the same.

Recommendation #8 - Continue the ongoing Call-n-Ride participants' \$5.25/month co-pay reduction after COG's enhanced mobility grant funding period ends in August 2023

Cost - \$155,000 annually, beginning in FY24

Rationale:

In 2018, MCDOT applied for Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's (MWCOG) Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities grant. MCDOT received an award of \$554,430 to reduce the monthly co-payment of all Call-n-Ride participants by \$5.25. The grant period ends in August 2023. This recommendation will extend the benefit and ensure that these low-income program participants continue to receive this discounted co-payment.

Benefits:

Call-n-Ride participants are low-income County residents who could benefit financially from this discount. Prior to the grant award many participants were unable to consistently make their co-payment, due to lack of funds. It also ensures that they always have value on their cards to take taxi trips when needed.

Recommendation #9 - Allow funds to be used interdepartmentally for transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, seniors and individuals with limited incomes.

Cost - \$550,000

Rationale:

Reductions to senior transportation in the Recreation Department in recent years have led to lower use and further reductions. The services provided at senior centers are critically important for vulnerable seniors and may provide the

only opportunities for social interaction and meals. The number of senior centers, senior programs, and senior housing communities are on the rise. The Recreation Department has been in contact with MCDOT regarding this initiative and is interested in potential funding opportunities to acquire a dedicated vehicle for senior center transportation services. Other departments, which provide programs and services for seniors, disabled and low-income residents, would also take advantage of this transportation program for their clients' transportation needs.

How it will work:

In the first year of implementation, MCDOT will coordinate with the Recreation Department to fund senior transportation services, by providing funds to purchase a vehicle that could provide dedicated, or ad hoc service to Montgomery County's senior centers.

Additionally, the funds will allow other County departments who serve or have programs for seniors, individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited incomes to utilize MCDOT's transportation vendor at no charge, for their clients, when there is a need for transportation. When clients need transportation the using program staff will contact MCDOT's listed vendors.

FY23-28

TSIF FY	Projected Revenue	WAV Taxicab \$.25 per mile traveled	Capital Expenses: WAV taxicab purchase and retrofit (Increase to \$30,000)	Increase WAV trip incentive to \$20 for all trips	Passenger Vehicle License and Insurance Fees	Call-n-Ride Guaranteed \$10 Per Trip Program	Continue Co-pay reduction of \$5.25/month for CNR Participants after COG's EM grant ends in August 2023	Increase both income and age eligibility for the Call-n-Ride Program.	FY23 & 24 Capital Grant Program for Non-Profits
Fund Balance									
FY22 ROY	\$350,000								
FY23	\$1,410,889	\$295,113	\$360,000	\$368,200	\$75,000	\$79,286	\$0	\$150,000	\$800,000
FY24	\$1,693,067	\$324,624	\$360,000	\$405,020	\$75,000	\$83,250	\$155,000	\$150,000	\$800,000
FY25	\$2,031,680	\$357,086	\$360,000	\$445,520	\$80,000	\$87,413	\$155,000	\$150,000	\$0
FY26	\$2,438,016	\$392,794	\$360,000	\$490,060	\$82,000	\$91,783	\$155,000	\$150,000	\$0
FY27	\$2,952,619	\$432,073	\$360,000	\$539,060	\$83,000	\$96,372	\$155,000	\$150,000	\$0
FY28	\$3,543,143	\$475,280	\$360,000	\$592,960	\$85,000	\$101,190	\$155,000	\$150,000	\$0

FY23-28

TSIF FY	Annual Operating Grant for Non-Profits	Training Course for Drivers. Partnership with Montgomery College (PASS)	Allow funds to be used for other department's transportation needs for those who are disabled, seniors or low income. First year Dept of Recreation Senior Transportation Programs.	Partner with Public Health Services, the Commission on Health, and the Montgomery Cares Advisory Board on incentives to improve and expand transportation options for individuals with limited incomes	Total Expenditures	Fund Balance and Year to Year Carryover Amount
Fund Balance						\$3,607,376
FY22 ROY					\$200,000	\$3,757,376
FY23	\$200,000	\$190,000	\$550,000	\$0	\$3,067,599	\$2,100,666
FY24	\$200,000	\$120,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$2,872,894	\$920,839
FY25	\$300,000	\$126,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$2,261,019	\$691,500
FY26	\$300,000	\$132,300	\$200,000	\$0	\$2,353,937	\$775,579
FY27	\$300,000	\$138,915	\$200,000	\$0	\$2,454,420	\$1,273,778
FY28	\$300,000	\$145,104	\$200,000	\$0	\$2,564,534	\$2,252,387

Highlights reflect existing TSIF payments with changes and new recommendations

Revenue - Projected 20 percent growth year over year for the TSIF; *Under this scenario, the TSIF returns to pre-pandemic revenue levels in FY26. The pre-pandemic high for the TSIF is approximately \$2.4 million

Increase in mileage reimbursement (.10 to .25) – Increased the FY21 .10 per mile rate total of \$107,314, then increased the total amount by 10 percent each year.

CNR \$10 - Calculated a five percent year-over-year increase based on FY20 and FY21 totals.

Capital Expenses for WAV taxicabs – These totals project 12 WAV placed in service in FY23 and then ten percent more each additional year.

PVL & Insurance Fees - Currently we have approximately 66 WAV insurance reimbursements, a new reduced PVL fee of \$50, and the vehicle transfer fee Grant program will start with \$1,000,000 in FY23 awards, and reduced to \$300K in subsequent years


Fund Balance is as of 2.24.22 and reflects FY22 revenues collected of \$1.06M covering 3 quarterly payments.

FY22 Rest-of-Year projection calls for a final revenue payment of \$350K and assumes an additional \$200K in expenses driven by higher than average wheelchair reimbursements.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Hucker and Councilmember Glass
From: Councilmember Riemer 
Date: April 26, 2022
Re: Proposed changes to the uses of TSIF revenue

Following up on our productive discussion of the Transportation Service Improvement Fund (TSIF) at the April 25th T&E Workession, I am outlining my proposal below to tailor the TSIF more narrowly to the task of getting and keeping more wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) on the road.

In 2015, the Council enacted Bill 33-15, which a) imposed a new charge on Transportation Network Companies (Uber and Lyft) rides and b) established the TSIF to administer the revenue from the charge. The legislative history makes clear the Council's primary intent was to narrowly address the lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) specifically in those companies' fleets and the more general lack of WAVs for hire.

Since the creation of the fund, the County has struggled to deploy the revenue in the fund, which has led to years of high fund balances and hasn't meaningfully addressed the continued deficit of WAVs on the road. In that context, I was pleased to see that the County Department of Transportation developed strengthened incentives for WAVs in this year's TSIF budget submission.

However, the administration's proposal also contains several other uses for TSIF revenue. While these proposed uses may be worthy expenditures on their own merits and broadly fall within the text of legislation that created the TSIF, they run further afield from the fund's primary purpose and would dilute its impact on yielding more WAVs.

As such, I am proposing the following changes:

1. Remove TSIF funding for Recommendations 1, 6, 7, and 9. This frees up ~\$1,090,000.
2. Increase the funding for Recommendations 2, 3, and 4 by increasing the incentives as follows
 - a) Recommendation 2: Increase the per mile payment from \$0.10 to \$0.40 (instead of to \$0.25). Cost = \$295,000
 - b) Recommendation 3: Increase the per trip payment to from \$15 in the daytime and \$20 overnight to \$25 all the time (instead of to \$20 all the time). Cost = \$400,000.
 - c) Recommendation 4: Increase the reimbursement for new WAV and retrofit from \$15,000 to \$45,000 (instead of \$30,000). Cost = \$360,000
 - d) These three incentives would cost an estimated \$1,055,000.
3. Maintain Recommendation #5 at \$800,000, but allow MCDOT to also award grants in this category for operating expenses, at their proposed capital to operating ratio of 4:1.
4. Put Recommendation #7 on the Council's Reconciliation List. Cost = \$150,000
5. Put \$350,000 of the \$550,000 proposed in Recommendation #9 on the Council's Reconciliation List for the purpose of allowing the Recreation Department to purchase a bus to support its senior programs

All told, the changes I am recommending within the TSIF itself are relatively budget neutral and more tightly focus the TSIF on its primary mission. The other changes I recommend are appropriate for the Council to weigh as part of their broader budget discussions. I appreciate your consideration of this proposal.

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Transportation and Environment Committee

FROM: Glenn Orlin, Senior Analyst

SUBJECT: **ADDENDUM - Department of Transportation Mass Transit Fund's FY23 Operating Budget, Transportation Services Improvement Fund (continuation)¹ – comments received**

PURPOSE: Develop Committee recommendations for Council consideration

During the Committee's April 25 worksession on the Mass Transit Fund budget, Committee members asked for stakeholder feedback on proposals for the use of the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF). Since then, the Committee has received the following comments:

Montgomery Cares Advisory Board, Wayne L. Swann, Chair	©1
Commission on People with Disabilities, Dr. Seth Morgan, Chair	©2
Montgomery County Commission on Health, Jessica Kronstadt, Chair	©3
Montgomery County Taxi Services Commission, Buffy Ellis, Chair	©4-6

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¹ Key words: #FY23 Operating Budget, plus search terms transportation, taxis, wheelchair accessible vehicles.

From: [Wayne L. Swann](#)
To: [County Council](#); [Albornoz, Gabriel](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Hucker, Thomas](#); [Hucker's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass, Evan](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Reimer, Hans](#); [Reimer's Office, Councilmember](#); [Orlin, Glenn](#); [Shuman, Beth](#)
Cc: [Saladini, Diana](#)
Subject: Improving or Expanding Access to Transportation Services for Health Care
Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2022 3:27:45 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Council President Albornoz, Chair Hucker, Councilmember Glass, and Councilmember Reimer:

As Chair of the Montgomery Cares Advisory Board (MCAB), I know all too well the unfortunate transportation barriers that low-income Montgomery County residents face when attempting to access medical services or personal activities of daily living. The transportation barriers that low-income Montgomery County residents face were underscored in *OLO Report 2021-11 Transportation Barriers to Medical Appointments* as an issue to be resolved by Montgomery County. Therefore, I am thankful for the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF). As you are aware, the TSIF uses surcharges imposed on transportation network companies to provide incentives for improving or expanding transportation options for eligible senior citizens or persons of limited income. This is why the MCAB supported a recommendation to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) that \$150,000 per year of the TSIF be used interdepartmentally for transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes. Residents being serviced from programs such as Montgomery Cares, Care for Kids, Maternity Partnership Program, Dental Services, and HIV Services will benefit and have transportation barriers eliminated with the use of TSIFs. Incentives could include the purchase of taxicab vouchers from Anytime Taxi, Action Taxi, and Regency/Barwood Taxi to transport clients with unmet transportation needs to and from essential activities, e.g., accessing medical services or personal activities of daily living. Thank you for your attention and support for this recommendation.

Wayne L. Swann
MCAB, Chair
wswann@earthlink.net
301 266-7789 cell



COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Dr. Seth Morgan, Chair

April 28, 2022

Response to Council Member Riemer's Memo on Proposed TSIF Use FY 23

The Commission is making recommendations based on achieving the goal of having transportation available 24/7 and what would best serve the public interest of both people who need the transportation service and incentives to the taxicab industry to have accessible vehicles on the road. Along those lines, we are in general agreement with Council Member Riemer's suggestions outlined in his Memorandum dated April 26, 2022 with comments.

We concur with the removal of Recommendations 1, 6 and 7.

We also are in support of the increase in funding as outlined to recommendations 2, 3 and 4.

The Commission recommends decreasing the funding of #5 to \$400,000 and #9 to \$400,000 (which would still be relatively budget neutral; in keeping with Council Member Riemer's proposal).

While funding transportation services provided by non-profit organizations is commendable, the reality is that vehicles used by such non-profits are of only limited impact on the overall problem of WAV service provision. Generally, non-profits do not use their vehicles for 24 hour-a-day general population car service. These non-profits generally limit car service to individuals in their programs and, other than transporting individuals to or from their programs and appointments during usual workday times, the cars sit parked and not in-service. Cars for this limited use can be applied for more appropriately via charitable grant funders and State and Federal grants.

The idea of creating a centralized dispatch center for all taxi service not unlike the service used by companies such as Uber or Lyft to coordinate accessible taxi use across the County is an idea that warrants further consideration as well.

From: [jlkronstadt00](#)
To: [County Council](#); [Albornoz, Gabriel](#); [Albornoz's Office, Councilmember](#); [Hucker, Thomas](#); [Hucker's Office, Councilmember](#); [Glass, Evan](#); [Glass's Office, Councilmember](#); [Reimer, Hans](#); [Reimer's Office, Councilmember](#)
Cc: [Shuman, Beth](#); [Orlin, Glenn](#); [Rogers, Christopher](#)
Subject: Improving or Expanding Access to Transportation Services for Low-Income Residents
Date: Thursday, April 28, 2022 9:01:33 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Council President Albornoz, Chair Hucker, Councilmember Glass, and Councilmember Reimer:

It is my understanding that the County Council is currently considering a proposal that a portion of funds from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF) be used interdepartmentally for transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes. I would like to note that the Montgomery County Commission on Health (COH) discussed this topic during its October 2021 [meeting](#). The COH subsequently voted in support of the allocation of TSIF funding for improvements or expansion of transportation services for low-income residents accessing health care programs and services operated by Public Health Services or community partners. Although the COH, for which I serve as chair, has not discussed the matter since last fall, the Commission holds equity as one of its current and ongoing priorities and has frequently discussed the importance of improving access to needed services.

Sincerely,
Jess Kronstadt

From: bellis@kfngroup.com
To: [Orlin, Glenn](#)
Cc: [Hucker, Thomas](#); [Glass, Evan](#); [Riemer, Hans](#); [Conklin, Christopher](#)
Subject: RE: Transportation Services Improvement Fund
Date: Friday, April 29, 2022 11:12:50 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[UBER rates up - July 2021.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To Councilmembers Hucker, Glass and Riemer, Chris Conklin and Glenn Orlin –

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide comments on the discussion regarding the use of the TSIF.

My comments are based on the recommendations of the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) for use of the fund, and I provide them as the current Chair of the TSC. (Note that I served on the predecessor to the TSC from 1997 to 2005 and the Chair for six of those years. I also bring 30 years of experience with public transportation, with a particular expertise in the Americans with Disabilities Act and paratransit services for older adults and people with disabilities).

At TSC meetings last summer and fall of 2021, our Committee developed and ranked recommendations for the use of TSIF funds, which we provided to the DOT. We grouped our recommendations into (1) increasing the supply of WAVs provided by taxi companies and (2) increasing the demand for Call n Ride trips, which are served only by our taxi companies. (Our taxi drivers need business. And given the pandemic, most trips they serve are subsidized trips – including Call n Ride and Medicaid trips.)

The TSC's most highly ranked recommendations include:

Supply:

- a. Increase the subsidy to purchase a WAV from \$15,000 to up to \$30,000
- b. Increase the per mile payment for WAV taxi trips from \$0.10 to \$0.20 or \$0.30
- c. Increase the annual vehicle insurance incentive for WAVs from \$1000 to \$2000 per annum.

Demand:

- d. Increase income limits for eligibility to the Call-n-Ride Program.
- e. Expand eligibility for Call-n-Ride for people with low incomes

Our recommendations with the exception of c) correspond to items #2, 4, and 7 put forth by the DOT. Importantly, I am sure I can speak for the Commission to say that we certainly support the added funding recommended by Councilmember Riemer for items #2 and 4, as well as the recommendation in item #3 to increase the per trip payment for WAV taxi trips to \$25 for both daytime and nighttime trips.

Regarding item #1 for customer service training, the taxi use survey we helped sponsor does suggest that some of the taxi drivers would benefit from targeted training to enhance customer service. Perhaps there is a way to do that more cost effectively, for example, involving the Commission on People with Disabilities. I would also suggest that each driver that attends a training session receive a small stipend, recognizing that otherwise they could be on the road providing trips. This is the approach I have recommended in several of my consulting projects that involve taxi service. And some years ago, I provided consulting assistance to the COG when WAV taxis were introduced in D.C., and I helped arrange training for the taxi drivers selected to drive the original 20 WAV taxis in the District.

Regarding items #5 and 6 that benefit non-profits, I do not see those as aligning with the intent of the TSIF. The seniors and people with disabilities served by the non-profits are the agencies' clients, traveling to and from the agencies' services. This is not supporting an increase in taxi WAVs. I would say the same thing about #9 – how does that help the taxi industry increase the supply of WAVs? Could not the Rec Dept use a retired RideOn vehicle? One that has reached its FTA-defined useful life but is still mechanically safe and sound?

Finally, I would like to reiterate what I have said in recent testimony to the County Council relevant to our taxi industry, and that is this: Uber and Lyft (known as transportation network companies or TNCs) are venture-capital funded services that operate with far less regulations than do our local taxis. They unfairly damaged our taxi industry (as they did to taxi services throughout the country). It seems to me that the fees that come from those TNC trips should directly benefit the taxi industry, in line with the intent of the TSIF, which is increasing the wheelchair accessibility of our taxi service. This responds to the fact that Uber and Lyft have ignored an obligation to serve riders who use wheelchairs and need an accessible vehicle and in fact they have litigated against that obligation.

I am also attaching an interesting article about Uber and its increasing cost for trips. One take-away is that Montgomery County's revenue stream from the TNC per trip fee is not immutable. I suggest that we should make sure that the funds adhere to the intent of the TSIF while the funding stream remains strong.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments. Please let me know if you need more information.

Buffy Ellis
Chair, Taxi Services Commission



From: Orlin, Glenn <Glenn.Orlin@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2022 11:39 AM

To: Seth Morgan <cpwdchair@gmail.com>; Peter Ibik <po.ibik@anytimeuniontaxi.com>;

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Cc: Hucker, Thomas <Tom.Hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Glass, Evan <Evan.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Riemer, Hans <Hans.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Orlin, Glenn <Glenn.Orlin@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Subject: Transportation Services Improvement Fund

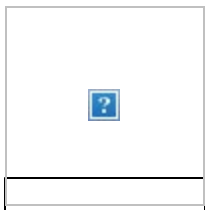
To all,

On Monday afternoon the T&E Committee had a 50-minute-long discussion about the use of TSIF funds in the Executive's proposed budget. You can watch it here (between 52:00 and 1:42:00): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy9wBHif6J4>

During the discussion, Councilmember Riemer made a proposal to reallocate the use of the funds. Because of the lengthy agenda, T&E had no time to extend the discussion and make a decision. So it is coming back with this item next Monday afternoon, May 2. (The meeting starts at 1:30; this will be the second agenda item.) The staff report for this item is attached: it describes the Executive's recommendations and Mr. Riemer's alternative.

Several times members noted that they would like to get feedback on both proposals from key stakeholders. So please look over the staff report and, if you wish, provide any feedback you wish directly to all the cc's on this email: the T&E members, DOT Director Conklin, and me.

Thanks, Glenn



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.cisa.gov/be-cyber-smart>