

4-4-05



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To <Jackie.Henderson@alexandriava.gov>
cc
bcc
Subject Senior Taxi Shortfall

History: This message has been forwarded.

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of the Alexandria City Council:

The City's Senior Taxi program which is a partnership between the City of Alexandria and Senior Services of Alexandria has been underfunded the past two years, and current projections are it will be underfunded in the FY 06 budget by at least \$20,000.

The Alexandria's Senior Taxi program is vital for the well-being of hundreds of it's senior citizens. It provides transportation to get to the important services they need – grocery stores, medical appointments, pharmacies, the social security office, and senior centers. This program is the only affordable transportation service for hundreds of Alexandria senior citizens who utilize over 12,400 trips each year.

The City has contracted with Senior Services of Alexandria to provide reservation services for this program. In addition to providing the reservation services for the program, Senior Services also subcontracts with the taxi company for the transportation. Therein lies a major part of the problem.

The reservation costs are stable and can be predicted, but the costs for taxi rides fluctuates and costs cannot be predicted. Taxi costs vary based on three factors:
the number of trips,
the length of the trips, and
the fare costs.

Predicting future taxi costs have been compounded by the decision three years ago to extend trips (for medical appointments only) up to five miles outside the city limits (because one of the most used Alexandria Inova Hospital medical buildings moved outside of the city). The need for this increased service has grown quicker than anyone anticipated.

A Brief History:

1. Sep '02 thru Aug '03 budgeted as trial for \$2,500 per month (\$30,000 a year was added to the base Senior Taxi budget of \$120,000). At the end of the 12 month trial when an analysis showed that the program was greatly needed and the costs to be within budget, the decision was made to continue funding the program at \$2,500 a month through June '04.
2. By the end of June '04 usage had increased more than budgeted by \$16,000, which Senior Services had to pay for out of general donations.
3. The City's FY 05 budget was increased to \$159,000 but current projections show there will be a \$30,000 deficit by the end of Jun '05, which Senior Services will again have to pay for out of general donations.
4. The City's proposed budget for FY '06 was increased to \$179,000 with the hope that it would be sufficient to cover all the costs. However, based on

experience after the budget was first submitted in Oct 2004 it seems clear this amount will not be sufficient.

Because Senior Services cannot continue to pay the overruns in this program we are asking \$20,000 be added to the budget.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter for the Seniors who live in Alexandria.

Susan Winn
Vice President Senior Services Board of Directors