

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 26, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #11: SENIOR TAXI EXTENSION FUNDING FOR FY 2005 (MAYOR EUILLE'S REQUEST)

This memorandum responds to City Council's prior program evaluation request as well as the request from the Commission on Aging for funding to continue Senior Taxi Extension service in FY 2005.

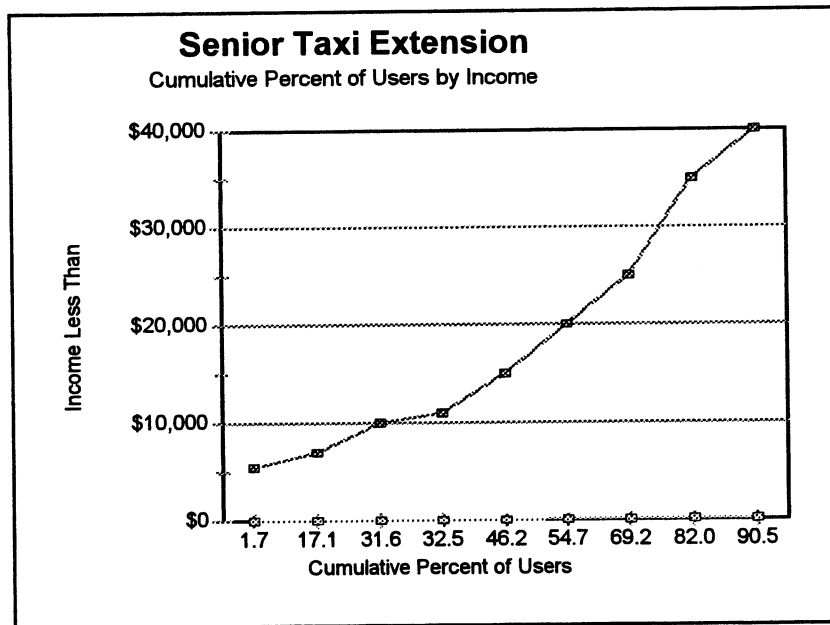
The Senior Taxi Extension, which was started on a pilot basis in FY 2003, provided 1,426 one-way trips to 231 unduplicated riders in FY 2003 at a cost of \$31,234, or \$21.90 per trip. The Senior Taxi Extension provides reduced fare taxi trips for medical appointments up to five miles beyond the City limits for residents age 60 and over regardless of income. Destinations covered by this area include Virginia Hospital Center (Arlington), INOVA Healthplex (Franconia-Springfield), INOVA Fairfax, and Kaiser Permanente (Springfield). The Senior Taxi program is managed by Senior Services of Alexandria and operated under contract with Diamond Cab Company.

A customer satisfaction survey conducted after the first six months of operation indicated that the majority of users were satisfied with the service. According to the survey findings:

- 92% rated the courteousness of the reservation operators as very courteous.
- 92% rated the afford ability of the extension service as very affordable.
- 81% rated the ease of making a reservation for the Senior Taxi Extension very easy.
- 68% rated the comfort of the taxi as very comfortable.
- 62% rated the courteousness of the driver as very courteous.
- 60% rated the timeliness of the drivers as always on time.

When the extension service was being considered for funding in FY 2003, one concern discussed was that the lack of income restrictions would put the program at risk for use by participants who have the resources to provide for their own transportation. A survey of participant incomes indicates that less than 10 percent of participants have annual incomes above \$40,000. Nearly 70 percent reported an annual income of less than \$25,000. The following table illustrates the

complete results of the income survey.



The initial budget for the pilot program was \$30,000, based on an estimate of 1,875 trips at a cost of \$16.00 per trip. The program has been continued in FY 2004 and \$30,000 is included in the FY 2005 budget to continue this program.

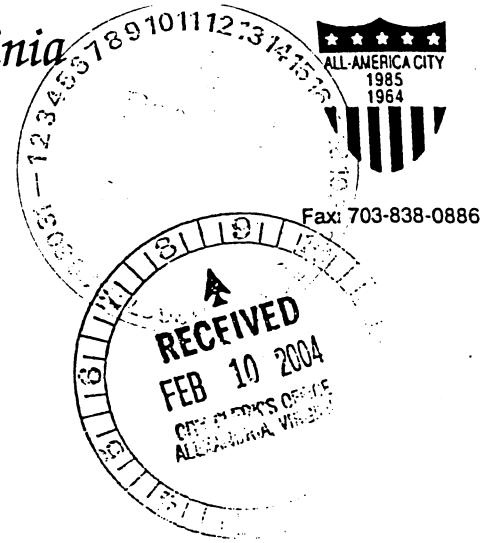
ATTACHMENTS: Commission on Aging February 5, 2004 letter to City Council
FY 2003 Budget Memo #13 - Expansion of Senior Taxi Service Program



Office: 703-838-0920

City of Alexandria, Virginia Commission on Aging

Office of Aging and Adult Services
Division of Community Programs
Department of Human Services
2525 Mount Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22301-1159



February 5, 2004

The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
City Hall, 301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council,

The Alexandria Commission on Aging wishes to thank you for enabling our older citizens to obtain accessible transportation to medically related appointments outside the City limits (the Senior Taxi Extension Program) and we urge your support for the continuation of this important service.

As you may know, the institution of the program came as a result of a Public Hearing held by the Commission on Aging in September, 1999. At that time, eighteen service providers testified to the greatest needs for Alexandria's older residents. The Commission on Aging identified three priorities:

- 1) Assistance with the cost of prescription drugs
- 2) The need for subsidized transportation to medically related appointments outside of City limits
- 3) Increased assistance in the home for frail elderly

The Commission recognized that the cost of prescription drugs needed to be addressed on a national level. Instead, the Commission chose to advocate for the expansion of the Senior Taxi program to include medically related appointments outside the City limits. A pilot program was instituted with a budget of \$30,000.

The program has been rated highly by a majority of its users who are mostly low income. The rate of usage is below projections because the program was never advertised publicly. This was done to stay within the pilot program's financial requirements. We believe if advertised publicly, there would be much greater usage.

With the increased longevity of our aging population, the needs of our frail elderly will continue to grow. Please do not allow this commitment to lapse. This program needs to be continued at the minimum current funding and with the recognition that with advertising, its use will grow.

Sincerely,

Don Fowler, Chair
Commission on Aging

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CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
ALEXANDRIA, VA

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 8, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 13 : EXPANSION OF SENIOR TAXI SERVICE PROGRAM (COUNCILWOMAN PEPPER'S REQUEST)

This memorandum is in response to Councilwoman Pepper's request for information on the cost of expanding the Senior Taxi Service Program (Attachment 1) as proposed by Senior Services of Alexandria. The cost of the proposal is estimated at \$30,000 to \$33,125 depending on the option selected.

The Senior Taxi Service Program, managed by Senior Services of Alexandria, provides transportation services via taxi for medical, senior recreation, and grocery visits within the City limits. The program is provided to City of Alexandria residents, age 60 or older, and has no income restriction for participation. Transportation services for this program are provided through a contract with Diamond Cab. For Fiscal Year 2001, the Senior Taxi Service Program provided a total of 12,515 one-way trips at a cost of \$120,000. The cost per one-way trip in FY 2001 was \$9.60. Currently, riders pay \$1.50 per trip to the driver as a stipend. The \$1.50 stipend is not counted as offsetting revenue to the program. This service program receives its funding from the City through monthly usage reports from the contractor to the Office of Aging and Adult Services. The program is very popular with the 700 senior citizen users and has received very few timeliness or driver complaints.

Senior Services of Alexandria has submitted a proposal to expand the current Senior Taxi Service to either a five or ten mile radius outside of City limits. The expanded trips would be made available for medically-related appointments only. For the five-mile program, riders would pay \$2.50 each way for medical destinations up to five miles beyond the City limits. This is projected to generate an additional 1,875 one-way trips at a cost of \$16.00 per trip for a total cost of \$30,000. For the proposed ten mile program, medically-related trips can be made only to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Washington Medical Center. This program, if funded, is projected to generate an additional 125 one-way trips and is expected to cost \$25.00 per trip for a cost of \$3,125. Riders would be expected to pay \$3.00 each way. The ten mile

proposal would also include the ability to travel within five miles of the City limits, which is previously noted to generate 1,875 trips at a cost of \$30,000. Total cost of implementing the ten-mile proposal would be \$33,125 and may add a total of 2,000 (125 ten-mile + 1,875 five-mile) trips per year. The \$2.50 or \$3.00 stipend paid to the driver would not be considered offsetting revenue for the program.

The medically-related five and ten-mile proposals will not be available to elderly citizens whose medical destinations are beyond these limits. The limited proposed expansion of the Senior Taxi Service beyond the City limits is likely to create new and larger demands for transportation services and the necessary increased budget funds to support them. Medicaid funds are not available to help offset any of these increases in service. The DOT Paratransit program, which also provides medically-related transportation, is available only for disabled persons whose needs cannot be met by mainstream public transportation.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1- Proposed increase to Senior Taxi Service to allow for trips outside the City limits of Alexandria for medical related appointments only

STAFF:

- Susan Dawson, Executive Director, Senior Services of Alexandria, Inc.
- Gene Swearingen, Director, Office of Management and Budget
- Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director of Management and Budget
- Stott Mason, Budget/Management Analyst

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Proposed increase to Senior Taxi Service to allow for trips outside the city limits of Alexandria for medical related appointments only

1 Present Program Based on FY 2000-2001 numbers

<u>One Way Trips</u>	<u>City subsidy</u>	<u>Program Costs</u>
12,500 rides	\$9.60 a trip	\$120,000

2 Increase to 5 mile radius from City limits Rider pays **\$2.50** each way for outside city limit trips

One Way trips inside city	12,500 x \$10.00	\$125,000
One Way trips outside City (15% increase) <u>in trips</u>	1,875 x \$16 a trip Estimated Cost:	<u>\$30,000</u> \$155,000

3 Increase to 10 miles radius from City limits Rider pays **\$3.00** each way
Would allow access to Walter Reed and Washington Medical Centers *only*

One Way trips inside city:	\$12,500 x \$10.00	\$125,000
One Way trips outside City:		
15% at 5 miles	1,875 x \$16 a trip	\$30,000
1% at 10 miles	125 x \$25	<u>\$3,125</u>
	Estimated Cost:	\$158,125