

AGENDA ITEM 2 A  
Action Item

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 25, 2018

**TO:** El Dorado County Transit Authority  
Transit Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Scott Ousley, Operations Manager

**SUBJECT:** Dial-A-Ride Focus Group Proposed Changes

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

**BY MOTION,**

**Make recommendations for the proposed changes to Dial-A-Ride from the Dial-A-Ride Focus Group Report**

**BACKGROUND**

The El Dorado County Transit Authority (El Dorado Transit) Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service has provided an important lifeline transportation link to the residents of El Dorado County, especially for the transit dependent senior and disabled community who reside in areas where there are no local fixed route services. DAR is used for a variety of purposes such as trips to medical appointments, pharmacies and grocery stores to name a few.

DAR operates primarily using Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessible minivan vehicles and currently has twelve (12) geographic zones within El Dorado County (EDC) in which the population density varies. Examples of some of the areas with higher population are Placerville, Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills. Areas served with lower population are Garden Valley, Lotus, Rescue and Pleasant Valley.

In February 2016, the El Dorado Transit Board of Directors adopted the Dial-A-Ride Zone Assessment Study and Implementation Plan for the Western Slope of El Dorado County (study) produced by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (LSC). As cited in the document the goals of the study were:

- *Increase the equity of the Dial-A-Ride program by ensuring that passengers imposing equal costs on the system are treated equally.*
- *Improve the cost-effectiveness of the program by focusing limited resources on those trips that can be more effectively served.*
- *Provide an opportunity to refine the zone system in a systematic and careful manner.*

- *Aid the ability of El Dorado Transit staff and management to clearly communicate information on the system, and to explain the rationale behind its design.*
- *Provide clear maps of the zone system.*
- *Improve understanding among transit staff, riders, and decision makers regarding the actual cost of Dial-A-Ride service to various portions of the community.*
- *Fully meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*
- *Ensure that Dial-A-Ride services best meet the overall goals of El Dorado Transit.*
- *Develop concise, accurate and readily-understandable summaries of the financial and managerial conditions of El Dorado Transit.*
- *Provide local decision-makers with valuable information regarding the condition of the transit operations and transportation planning organizations.*
- *Allow El Dorado Transit staff to gain an understanding of their organization’s strengths and weaknesses, from an objective perspective.*

The study provided the following service improvement recommendations to the Dial-A-Ride program:

- *Eliminate General Public Service*
- *Eliminate Service to High Subsidy Zones*
- *Eliminate Individual Zones and Adopt a Flat Fare*
- *4 Zone System*

It is important for El Dorado Transit to evaluate each of these proposed service improvements and make changes if necessary. To do this, El Dorado Transit staff formed an objective ad hoc Dial-A-Ride Focus Group (group) consisting of users and stakeholders within the community. This group was asked to evaluate and make recommendations on service improvements and review the following customer service policies to determine if changes were warranted:

- *Reservation Process*
- *No Show and Cancellation Policy*
- *Ride Pickup Window*

Midway through this evaluation process staff research found several transit districts throughout the country were using a “mileage-based fare system” for their DAR services. A mileage-based system is similar to using a metered taxi service in which the length of a trip would determine the fare charged. To ensure that the Focus Group was evaluating all potential types of fare systems, LSC was asked to conduct further analysis of a mileage-based fare system and on January 12, 2018 LSC produced a memorandum of their analysis. In their memorandum it states, *“The current system has added confusion among passengers and added staff time to identify the specific zones associated with a specific trip. It has also raised questions of equity, in that a short trip in an outlying zoned requires a higher fare than a trip*

*of similar length in a core zoned. With the recent improvements in mapping technologies, it is now simple to identify the point-to-point roadway trip length of any specific requested trip. The current proposal under consideration is to change the fare program to a base fare of \$2.00 plus \$0.50 for every additional mile (with no upper limit).”*

**DISCUSSION**

Attached is the Final 2018 Dial-A-Ride Focus Group Report which summarizes each area the Focus Group analyzed. In the report the following recommendations are made by the Focus Group:

- Eliminate the general public’s use of DAR
- Eliminate service to high subsidy zones
- Implement a mileage-based fare system
- No changes to the existing reservation system
- No changes to the no show or cancellation policy
- Change the pickup window to a 30 minute window (15 minutes before and after the requested time) to allow for more scheduling flexibility for shared rides.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

**Dial-A-Ride 2016/17**

Total 2016/17 Trips	20,880
Total 2016/17 Fares	\$60,485.50
2016/17 Average Fare per Trip	\$2.90

**Estimated Mileage-Based Fare**

	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Anticipate 3% to 5% Reduction in Ridership	20,254	19,836
Anticipate 11% Increase in Fares Per Trip	\$3.22	
Total Anticipated Fares	\$65,124.74	\$63,781.96
Anticipated % Increase in Fare Revenue	7.67%	5.45%