

AGENDA ITEM 2 B
Action Item

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 3, 2023

TO: El Dorado County Transit Authority

FROM: Brian James, Interim Executive Director

SUBJECT: My Ride - Mileage Reimbursement Program Policy Update

REQUESTED ACTION:

BY MOTION,

Approve the My Ride Mileage Reimbursement Program Policy Update as Proposed

BACKGROUND

The My Ride Mileage Reimbursement Program enables seniors (60 or older), veterans, or disabled residents of El Dorado County who are registered for the My Ride program at El Dorado Transit to reimburse their friends, neighbors, or family members for providing them with transportation in their personal vehicles. Trips can be for any purpose, and there are no fees to participate in this program. The trips are free for the passenger, and the driver receives reimbursement for providing a valuable service for the passenger.

Since implementation in August 2022, the My Ride program has provided 5,642 passenger trips or an average of just over 500 passenger trips per month. It is becoming an invaluable program for many residents of our community.

DISCUSSION

Staff have been overseeing the program to look for any signs of unintended use by participants. Since the program's inception, a pattern has emerged with a few participants benefiting as both a driver and passenger for opposite legs of the same round trip. This use case is outside the intent of the program to assist eligible passengers that would otherwise be unable to transport themselves. Based on this assertion, staff is recommending policy clarification.

The current program rules state, "Participants cannot be both the passenger and the driver," which leaves room for misinterpretation. Staff obtained help from LSC Transportation Consultants (LSC) to analyze best practices from other transit agencies who operate similar programs. With the help of LSC, and with advice from our Legal Counsel Mike Tucker, staff recommends that the policy be clarified with the following:

1. That the passenger and the driver be limited to 350 miles per trip and cannot share driving responsibilities to increase the mileage limitation.
2. That the program is intended to assist El Dorado County residents who are unable to drive or may otherwise not have access to transportation.
3. That the reimbursement is subject to El Dorado Transit's sole discretion.

In addition, it is recommended that a statement asserting that the volunteer driver is not a professional driver should be added to the waiver. This would help alleviate potential claims that the volunteer driver is actually a Transit employee.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the My Ride Mileage Reimbursement Program Policy Update as proposed to help alleviate the unintended use of the program by participants, and to help strengthen the language in the waiver.

FISCAL IMPACT

None