



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Metropolitan Planning • Public Transportation & Operations • Engineering & Construction

Metropolitan Planning Organization of Washoe County, Nevada

September 18, 2020

AGENDA ITEM 3.6

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: James Gee
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and Innovation

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Executive Director

SUBJECT: Criteria for evaluation of microtransit services

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the establishment of transit performance standards for RTC’s microtransit (FlexRIDE) services.

SUMMARY

RTC continuously seeks to allocate its resources in the most efficient and effective way possible. In support of this effort, standards for monitoring fixed route transit service were created and are contained in the board adopted Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP). At the time of the publication of this report, the establishment of microtransit was recommended but no standards for its implementation were created. This policy creates tracking mechanisms to be used for evaluating existing FlexRIDE services and the criteria used for determining potential areas of future modifications and expansions.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS BY BOARD

March 17, 2017 Approval of the FY 2018-2022 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP).

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Performance measurement is a management tool used by transit agencies to meet regulatory requirements, assess the quality of its service, and support the decision making process for determining the locations for expansion or contractions of its service. Standards for the provision of RTC RIDE’s services have been adopted by the Board and are contained in the SRTP. While the SRTP contained a recommendation for the creation of FlexRIDE service, no parameters for its performance were created. Since FlexRIDE was created after the publication of this plan, the criteria

below is recommended for monitoring existing microtransit service and guiding future expansion (if any). These standards will be incorporated into the next SRTP when completed.

FlexRIDE is an on-demand, curb-to-curb service that extends or complements RTC RIDE services provided in the region. The intention of FlexRIDE is to provide a transit option in areas either not adequately served by the existing and planned fixed-route bus network or have recently had unproductive fixed-route bus service removed.

In November 2019, RTC began the FlexRIDE service in Sparks, Nevada. Riders can schedule an on-demand trip by using a smartphone/tablet application, website, or by calling a dispatcher. Walk-up trips are also accepted at RTC RIDE bus stops within the FlexRIDE zone. The service is operated by RTC’s contractor for paratransit service, MTM, and utilizes RTC owned cutaway style buses and minivans. The fare structure for the FlexRIDE service matches the fare structure for RTC RIDE.

In May 2020, RTC launched a second FlexRIDE pilot service for the North Valleys area of Washoe County. Additional microtransit services are planned for Somerset/Verdi and Spanish Springs in October of this year.

The following performance measures are recommended for the evaluation of FlexRIDE service.

Key Performance Indicators

The following describes each proposed key performance measurement for the FlexRIDE service.

Performance measure	Measurement	Proposed Goal
Passengers per vehicle revenue hour	Productivity	3.5 passengers per hour
Operating cost per passenger trip	Cost effectiveness	50% of average cost per trip of RTC ACCESS
Median Wait time	Quality of service	20 minutes

Data will be collected for each of these measurements through the use of the FlexRIDE management software. This data will be collected on a daily basis and will be evaluated as needed to assess the quality, provide guidance on the appropriate level of resources, and ultimately help determine the success of each individual FlexRIDE service.

Guidelines for FlexRIDE Expansion

As FlexRIDE continues to be successful, it will be desirable to expand coverage and provide transit services either as a replacement to an existing fixed route or as a new transportation option in an area with no preexisting transit service. To ensure that RTC is allocating its resources in the most appropriate manner, it is necessary to develop guidelines identifying the best potential coverage areas to improve the chances for success. These zones should have high ridership potential and link to existing transit services to create improved regional transportation connectivity.

When areas of FlexRIDE service are proposed, staff will collect data on the criteria listed below. This criteria has been developed to measure the potential level of success for each FlexRIDE service. Areas will then be scored by this criteria with a recommendation to be presented to the Board of Commissioners for their action.

- a. Population density
- b. Employment
- c. % poverty
- d. % minority
- e. % senior
- f. % disabled
- g. % zero car
- h. Distance to nearest bus stop
- i. Distance to nearest BRT stop

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) REPORT

There are no advisory committee recommendations pertaining to this agenda item.