

BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE  
METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING THE	)	RESOLUTION NO. 85-577
INTERIM SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTA-	)	
TION PLAN	)	Introduced by the Joint
	)	Policy Advisory Committee
	)	on Transportation

WHEREAS, The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) calls for the inclusion of a Special Needs Transportation element; and

WHEREAS, A broad-based effort was established to obtain community input into a plan for the development of transportation services for the elderly and disabled; and

WHEREAS, This effort resulted in the formulation of the policies included in the Interim Special Needs Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, These policies were adopted by the Tri-Met Board in July 1984; and

WHEREAS, This plan was reviewed and unanimously recommended for approval by Tri-Met's Committee on Accessible Transportation; now, therefore,

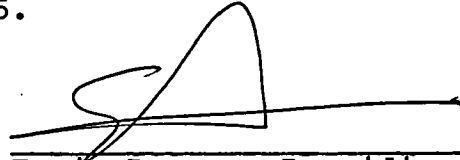
BE IT RESOLVED,

1. That the Council of the Metropolitan Service District hereby adopts the Interim Special Needs Transportation Plan as an Appendix to the RTP.

2. That the appropriate goals, policies, and programs will be incorporated into the RTP at its next update.

3. That this interim plan will be amended in approximately two years following the evaluation of alternative service experiments now underway.

ADOPTED by the Council of the Metropolitan Service District  
this 27th day of June, 1985.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ernie Bonner', written over a horizontal line.

Ernie Bonner, Presiding Officer

RB/srs  
3624C/411-4  
06/13/85

**DRAFT**

INTERIM SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Metropolitan Service District  
and  
Tri-Met

May, 1985

## INTERIM SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### Introduction

Since 1980, Tri-Met has assumed the responsibility for coordinating regional transportation for the elderly and disabled. In addition to providing regular fixed route transit service, services include some fixed route transit lines with accessible buses, and for those unable to use Tri-Met buses, the Tri-County door-to-door LIFT program. Other services include the registration of clients, the distribution of Federal Section 18 funds which provide capital and operating assistance for special needs transportation services in rural areas, the purchasing of equipment, and funding for subcontracted special transportation services. The total FY 1985 Tri-Met operating budget for special needs transportation is approximately \$2.6 million, excluding the capital cost of lift devices.

Tri-Met's transportation efforts for the Transit Handicapped have been guided by its "Section 504 Transition Plan" which was adopted by the Tri-Met Board of Directors in 1980. The Transition Plan was required by the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) from any transit agency receiving federal funds, but not yet 50 percent fixed-route accessible. Tri-Met's efforts are also directed by Section 267.240 of the Oregon Revised Statutes.

In 1981, DOT's Transportation Handicapped regulations and ORS 267.240 were revised to allow more flexibility in providing special transportation. The federal government now requires that "special efforts" be made to provide accessible transit service and has released new proposed regulations. The state of Oregon requires that transit districts provide a program of transportation for the disabled that is comparable to regular transit service. The decision as to the extent of the service provided, and the manner in which it is provided, is left to the discretion of the transit agency with significant input from the disabled community.

In addition to regulations governing service for the Transportation Handicapped, Tri-Met also operates under state and federal regulations requiring discounted fares for the elderly. State and federal regulations mandate a maximum half-fare for the elderly and handicapped during non-peak hours.

In 1984, the Tri-Met Board created a Special Needs Transportation Advisory Committee. The report and recommendations of this committee form the basis of the Interim Special Needs Transportation Plan.

### Statement of Purpose

Transit handicapped people are citizens with the same needs as other transit riders and, therefore, certain costs must be incurred to meet those needs.

Thus, it is the intent of this plan to provide parity of transit service between transit handicapped and non-transit handicapped people within realistic costs and the intent of the federal guidelines.

### System Requirements

A multi-modal system should be used to address the needs of the transit handicapped. It is estimated that there are 50,000 transit handicapped people in this region (Attachment II); 40,000 of them can use the regular transit system with varying degrees of difficulty. Of the remaining 10,000 transit handicapped people, 7,200 need door-to-door service for a variety of reasons.

The majority of transit handicapped people are over the age of 65, and this population, as well as other transit handicapped groups, will continue to grow. Recognizing this trend, paratransit services need to be an integral part of the special needs transportation program. However, there should be a consistent effort to provide the transit disabled sufficient opportunity to mainstream by operating some accessible fixed-route service and/or light rail service in each section of the metropolitan area.

### Standards for the System

The following standards should be applied to the system to ensure quality service:

- Is regular consumer feedback built in to the system?
- Is the service reliable?
- Does the service meet minimum federal, state and local regulations?
- Does the service have accessible public information?

### Criteria to be Considered when Developing Programs and Budgets

- Maximizes number of rides provided
- Optimizes cost-effectiveness of alternative service options
- Provides parity of service (waiting time, fares) with general population
- Mainstreams into general public to extent possible
- Considers impact on non-disabled rider
- Maximizes other Tri-Met funding and is, in fact, fundable
- Does not significantly hinder bus or rail schedules
- Program additions/deletions are properly prioritized and an appropriate timetable for phasing is developed
- Program additions/deletions contribute to a multi-modal system so that no subgroup is excluded

### Policies

In July 1984, the Tri-Met Board adopted the following as policies with respect to special needs transportation services. The policies are based on the final recommendations of the Special Needs

Transportation Advisory Committee and are now being implemented by Tri-Met staff:

1. Establish a standing committee on special needs transportation.
2. Develop an independent, annual program and financial audit of all Tri-Met special needs transportation services.
3. Consolidate all Tri-Met special needs transportation staff and budget resources.
4. Examine the feasibility of using a paratransit corporation to broker all special needs transportation services.
5. Retain the optimum number of fixed-route accessible routes (up to 11 -- not less than four) using the more reliable ADB lift-equipped buses.
6. Establish a two-year experiment providing alternative demand/response service along the routes served by the articulated buses. When the experiment begins, eliminate lift use on the articulated buses.
7. Paratransit service:
  - a. Continue Tri-County LIFT program.
  - b. Evaluate the following experiments:
    - corridor service
    - rapid response, taxi-type service to supplement both the Tri-County LIFT program and corridor service
    - increased use of volunteers
  - c. Examine cutting the Tri-County LIFT program prior notice requirement to 24 hours or less.
  - d. Examine establishment of a computerized dispatch system for the Tri-County LIFT program.
8. To increase community accessibility, Tri-Met will work cooperatively with the cab companies to make accessible cabs (accessible without transferring) available at the same fare charged non-disabled users. Tri-Met will look into availability of federal grant money to assist in the purchase of accessible taxis.
9. Establish wayside lifts at all Banfield light rail stations. The standing committee should study the feasibility of high platform access for all future light rail stations.

10. Establish 16-hour daily special needs transportation non-recorded telephone service (to include a TTY system for people who are hearing impaired) subcontracted for times other than regular Tri-Met business hours.
11. Seek additional and/or alternative funding specifically for special needs transportation programs (over and above the 3 percent proposed federal requirement):
  - a. Consider an increased fare for Honored Citizens not to exceed \$.10 which is within the federal guidelines.
  - b. Consider a standardized Tri-County LIFT fare of \$.50.
  - c. For the purposes of continuity and consistency, Tri-Met will explore the establishment of an ongoing, dedicated source of funding for the special needs transportation program.
12. In cooperation with people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids, improve securement systems on all vehicles.

### Current Service

In July 1984, the Tri-Met Board resolved that, until a dedicated source of special needs transportation funding is secured, Tri-Met's annual funding of all SNT services shall not exceed 3.5 percent of Tri-Met's total annual operating budget. The majority of these funds are being expended to operate the LIFT program and to provide accessible fixed route service.

Fixed route accessibility is presently provided by 162 lift-equipped buses which provide accessibility on approximately 25 percent of Tri-Met's regionwide service. It is also important to note that, in 1985, only 33 percent of all transit stops are accessible to wheelchair users.

LIFT Program (subcontracted door-to-door) service is provided by approximately 80 vehicles. Fifty-four of these vehicles are owned by Tri-Met with the remainder provided by contractors or agencies receiving rides. It is Tri-Met's goal to ultimately provide all vehicles to reduce the cost of service purchased through the subcontractors.

In addition to these services, a number of private, nonprofit social service agencies provide special needs transportation services to their clients using 16(b)(2) capital assistance funds from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. The services these agencies provide are reviewed by Tri-Met to assure that Tri-Met cannot provide the same service more efficiently.

An ongoing Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT) is meeting at least monthly to review all special needs transportation services provided in the region and to consider policy changes to produce

higher efficiency and/or quality. Following an evaluation of the alternative service experiments currently being implemented, this interim plan will be revised to reflect a more definitive long-range objective with respect to special needs transportation services.

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STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No. 6.3

Meeting Date June 27, 1985

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 85-577 FOR THE  
PURPOSE OF ADOPTING AN INTERIM SPECIAL NEEDS  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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Date: May 23, 1985

Presented by: Richard Brandman

Proposed Action

Recommend adoption of the attached resolution which would amend the Regional Transportation Plan to incorporate an Interim Special Needs Transportation Plan.

This plan establishes goals and policy direction for serving the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped populations during the next several years. The plan provides the basis for approving capital expenditures for special needs transportation during this timeframe.

This plan is an interim plan because it calls for the evaluation of a number of alternative service experiments now underway. When the evaluation of these experiments is completed, the plan will be revised to reflect a more definitive long-range objective.

TPAC and JPACT have reviewed this plan and recommend approval of Resolution No. 85-577.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration planning regulations require metropolitan areas to plan and provide for the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped by making "special efforts" to provide accessible transit service to those populations.

In this region, accessible transit service is provided by Tri-Met through a combination of modes. The modes include "regular" transit service to the able-bodied elderly, wheelchair accessible buses on a portion of Tri-Met's routes, and the Tri-County LIFT program, which provides wheelchair accessible door-to-door service.

During the past 18 months, Tri-Met has engaged a Special Needs Transportation Advisory Committee (SNTAC) to examine the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped, and to make recommendations to the Tri-Met Board regarding improving service and optimizing cost-effectiveness of service to these groups.

SNTAC met for several months and held two public meetings to formulate its recommendations which were adopted as policies by the Tri-Met Board in July 1984. These policy recommendations are the basis of this interim plan.

One of the recommendations of the SNTAC group was for Tri-Met to establish a standing Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT) to further examine special needs transportation service issues. This committee was established and is composed primarily of affected user groups, as well as Tri-Met and Metro representatives. CAT has reviewed this interim plan and unanimously recommends its approval to the Metro Council and the Tri-Met Board.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Officer recommends approval of Resolution No. 85-577.

RB/srs  
3624C/411-4  
06/13/85