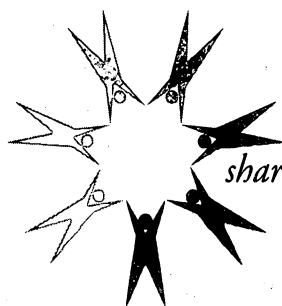


Department of Human Service Programs



sharing resources...building community

Jill Herold
Assistant City Manager

March 26, 1997

TO: Robert W. Healy
FROM: Jill Herold 
RE: Committee Report #001, 1/27/97

Childcare

Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Community and Youth

Community
Learning Center

Coordinating Council for
Children, Youth and Families
(Kids' Council)

Council on Aging;
Elderly Services

Low Income
Fuel Assistance

Multi-Service Center;
Homeless Services

Office of Workforce
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation

In response to the City Council's request for information about the status of transportation to the Citywide Senior Center, I am pleased to report that we are beginning to pilot a new expanded "shuttle" schedule for service to the Center. To accommodate ridership from all neighborhoods of the City, we will be providing service on a daily basis from different areas of the City.

An initial shuttle system for Senior Center transportation has been in place since last year. We have been providing service on a daily basis to and from many areas of the City, serving about 25 sites over the course of the week. In addition, as was described in the recent hearings before the Traffic and Transportation Committee of the City Council, many more individuals have been accessing the Citywide Senior Center by use of taxis. They include a number of people who come to the Center regularly by taxi, funded by Homecare (through Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services). Other seniors come to the Center by taxi, including by the new accessible taxivans, and these individuals pay for the taxis themselves, also making use of the City's taxi coupon program.

With the addition of a full time driver position, we now expect to be able to expand significantly the number of seniors for whom we can provide shuttle service. Service will be provided from 8:30 until 4:00, 5 days a week, shuttling seniors to and from the Center. Each day's schedule will vary to permit seniors from different parts of the City to attend programs and meals at the Center.

With our expanded schedule, we expect initially to be doing pick up and drop off at forty-eight (48) sites. The service sites are generally Senior Housing buildings, those Community Schools which have active senior groups, school and other neighborhood fixtures where people congregate, and a handful of pick-ups along major roads like Massachusetts Avenue. (The preponderance of our pick-ups are at sites where the riders wait inside. For those few pick-ups which occur at open public



sights, we have already established a ridership there, and the riders are then able to reach their homes by walking a brief distance from the drop-off site.)

To give an example of some typical days' runs on the expanded shuttle, the bus would leave the Center at 8:30 and serve the following locations, doing pickups for the morning runs and drop offs for afternoon runs. Some of the pickups are timed so that individuals arrive in time for breakfast, some to arrive in time for morning classes and some to arrive for lunch and afternoon activities.

DAY A SITES:

Putnam Gardens, Magee Street
Wilson Court, Magazine Street
Corner of Pearl Street/ Lopez Street
237 Franklin Street, Manning Apartments
Burns Apartments, Churchill Street
North Cambridge Senior Center
Russell Apartments
Corner Massachusetts Ave./ Porter Street
Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School
CASPAR Shelter
808-812 Memorial Drive
LBJ Apartments, 150 Erie Street

DAY B SITES:

Burns Apartments, Churchill Street
Corner Massachusetts Ave./Cedar Street
Corner Massachusetts Ave./Woodbridge Street
Fresh Pond Apartments (3 buildings)
Jefferson Park
Bristol Arms, Garden Street
Craigie Circle
Ciampa Pharmacy, East Cambridge
Millers River
Jackson Gardens
Corner Columbia Street/Suffolk Street
LBJ Apartments
411 Franklin Street
237 Franklin Street, Manning Apartments

Since the opening of the Citywide Senior Center, staff have developed connections with key individuals at the City's senior housing buildings, the Community Schools senior groups and other public sites which provide centralized access for bus pick-up in various parts of the City. The main component of our outreach has been group meetings with seniors at these locations. Staff presented an overview of the Senior Center, the programs, meals, events and social services available, and then canvassed the group to determine the best days/times to offer transportation services to them.

Our proposed new schedule expands the number of pickup sites and makes changes to our former schedule in response to ridership demand. For example, due to strong interest from the Millers River Apartments in East Cambridge, we have increased the shuttle pick-ups there so that service will now be expanded to four days each week. We expect that the proposed shuttle schedule may be modified based on ridership.

The Council on Aging currently uses a 24-passenger vehicle for its shuttle run. It is a wheelchair accessible vehicle, donated a number of years ago by the Cambridge Trust Bank. At this point, we have received funding from the Friends of the Cambridge Council On Aging to purchase a new vehicle. We are receiving specifications from several companies now, and expect to soon acquire a wheelchair accessible van which will seat approximately 14 individuals. The new van will be a more appropriate vehicle for a shuttle service because of its size, ease of maneuverability, and reliability. We expect to use our current bus both for backup and for larger runs. (That bus is also used by the Department for special needs transportation.)

OTHER SENIOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

A Council on Aging representative presents each month at the Cambridge Taxi School, highlighting the needs of seniors for transportation and the requirement for cab drivers to accept the City's taxi coupons. For any Cambridge senior, or disabled individual of any age, the coupons provide a discount of \$1.25 per one-way ride for a fare up to \$5.00, and a discount of \$2.50 per one-way ride for a fare of \$5.25 or more. These coupons are distributed through the Council on Aging and the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Approximately 500 seniors are expected to make use of the taxi coupons this year.

In addition, Licensing Commissioner Benjamin Barnes has received both verbal and written assurances from all three Cambridge radio dispatch services that they are not charging a fee off the top from drivers who redeem the taxi coupons. There was confusion about this which was causing some drivers to refuse to accept the coupons.

Two taxi stands have been installed in front of the Citywide Senior Center, as well as a HP parking space. The accessible taxivans are scheduled at those stands daily, providing coverage from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

In addition, the Council on Aging provides transportation for seniors to area Malls on Fridays, contracts for transportation for food shopping trips two days a week, and contracts for medical transportation for seniors to area hospitals and doctors.



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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

March 31, 1997

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 9, regarding a status report on transportation to and from the Senior Center, please find attached a report submitted by Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy,
City Manager

RWH/dls
attachment

Consent Agenda #8

5-193

Relative to awaiting Reprot Item Number
Nine, regarding a status report on
transportation to and from the
Senior Center.

In City Council Mrach 31, 1997

Placed on file