



TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Deputy Mayor Keith Blocker
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: A Resolution directing the City Manager to conduct a feasibility study to determine the best methods for supporting accessible options for residents with disabilities
DATE: August 14, 2020

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution directing the City Manager to conduct a feasibility study to determine the best methods to support a sustainable and accessible option for residents with disabilities living in Tacoma.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Deputy Mayor Keith Blocker, and Council Members Beale and Ushka.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Tacoma collects a 0.10 cent surcharge for each taxi, Uber, and Lyft fare received in the city, and these funds have been specifically dedicated to creating a sustainable and accessible ridership service for people with disabilities.

Since the passage of ordinance 28251 in September of 2014, establishing this fee, the City has collected over \$350,000. The Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities (TACOD) has devoted a portion of the past three years exploring the most viable means to support a sustainable service and engage the most effective partner(s) to deliver this service. It has become clear that the City's commitment to providing accessible taxi services that are Wheel Chair Accessible (WAT) requires an ongoing partnering approach, potentially with county, state and federal sources. TACOD is recommending that the City commission a feasibility study to explore the best methods to support accessible taxi services for people with disabilities in the City of Tacoma.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

Drawing from current data from United States Census, TACOD estimates that a minimum of 9.8% of all Tacoma residents have a disability and that over 53,000 Pierce County residents have an ambulatory disability which includes the need for a wheelchair, walker or cane or other form of movement assistance. When this percentage of the County is applied to the City of Tacoma, approximately 12,000 Tacoma residents live with an ambulatory disability. Current shuttle services offer narrow eligibility requirements that disqualify applicants who may encounter significant difficulties taking existing modes of public transportation.

In April, TACOD met to address immediate transportation concerns. Commissioners received input from several community members who participated on the remote Zoom platform and



reaffirmed the need for accessible taxi services for many residents who remain isolated, and, at times, are unable to reach essential services including access to healthy food and medical services.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

The implementation of a comprehensive feasibility study builds a path forward to meet the essential needs of a significant community of Tacoma residents who have remained functionally isolated for many years because the impact of disabilities has a disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color).

Economy/Workforce: Moderate Opportunity.

An accessible taxi alternative provides a subset of the communities with disabilities an opportunity to engage in sustained employment as contributing members of the workforce.

Livability: High Opportunity

Improve access to essential services such as medical care, access to fresh and healthy food, to people with ambulatory and other disabilities.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

The request to conduct an accessible transportation feasibility study will offer a deep analysis around how to best partner with regional and national partners to create a sustainable model. The nature of subsequent actions will be informed by this initial research which will likely lead to specific steps to build a durable model of funding and support.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Do not conduct feasibility study	1. The City would not have a plan for providing a sustainable and accessible option for residents with disabilities.	Many residents with ambulatory disabilities will continue to lack a viable option for transport for essential needs including groceries and medical care.



EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The feasibility study findings will be reviewed by the Mayor and City Council in partnership with OEHR and TACOD in order to determine a way forward to build an accessible option for people with disabilities in Tacoma.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECOMMENDATION:

In support of Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities, I recommend commissioning a feasibility study that explores accessible taxi models, potential sources of partnering and offers an accessible taxi option for people with disabilities, including but not limited to those with ambulatory and sight disabilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1185 – ADA (For Hire Accessible Services Fund)	620400- Accessible Services	5310100 - Professional Services	Up to \$10,000
TOTAL			

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

The funding would come from the Accessible Services Fund and associated fee.

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium’s current budget?

The expenditure is not currently in this biennium’s budget, however, the Accessible Services Fund was established as a funding source to create more accessible services in Tacoma, and a feasibility study to learn the best methods for creating accessible taxi services meets the intent of the fund.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No.

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No.

Will the legislation change the City’s FTE/personnel counts?

No.