

Request for Quotes (RFQ) – On-Demand Ride Subsidies

January 14, 2022

Synopsis

Join the Seattle Department of Transportation in piloting a proof-of-concept mobility solution in the Seattle market! Put \$20,000-\$50,000 into the hands of your drivers today and inform future funding opportunities for tomorrow.

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is requesting quotes from transportation/technology providers (e.g., taxi associations and transportation network companies, or TNCs) for on-demand rides for older adults and people with disabilities.

SDOT will purchase ride subsidies or vouchers from responsive providers to fully or partially subsidize these rides for the intended population. SDOT intends to operate this service as a pilot program lasting between one and five months, depending on rider participation, beginning in February 2022.

SDOT is working closely with partners—including King County Metro, Sound Transit, Hopelink, and Sound Generations—to use the results of this pilot to inform future programming involving on-demand transportation services. Help us shape this exciting new opportunity by responding today!

Instructions

1. Complete the response form in Appendix A
2. Return completed responses by email as a Microsoft Word or PDF attachment to:
Margo Dawes, Inclusive Mobility on Demand Project Manager
margo.dawes@seattle.gov
Subject: On-Demand Ride Subsidy Quote
3. Responses are due by Friday, January 21, 2022, at 5:00pm PT
4. SDOT welcomes questions and clarifications about the response process. For further information, please contact Margo Dawes (margo.dawes@seattle.gov)

Project Background

In 2020, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) received a small grant from the program [Transit Planning 4 All](#) to fund an inclusive planning process and pilot implementation. This project is called “Inclusive Mobility on Demand – A Ride to Transit.”

Project Goal: Inclusively plan and implement a mobility on demand solution by and for older adults and people with disabilities.

Eligible Riders:

- Older adults: Individuals aged 65 and older
- People with disabilities: Individuals with any type of disability that impacts their ability to access transit, including physical and cognitive disabilities
- Caregivers: Individuals who travel with the above eligible riders

SDOT will identify eligible riders and connect them with subsidies/vouchers. This will not be a responsibility of the provider.

Stakeholder Engagement Process: The project is led by a compensated steering committee of 7 individual stakeholders (eligible riders) and 3 partner organizations that provide transportation or other services to the focus population. The steering committee has met monthly since March 2021 to 1) identify transportation needs that could be served by a mobility on demand solution, and 2) develop a mobility on demand solution to test in early 2022. The steering committee also surveyed over 400 potential riders on their needs and preferences to help shape the pilot.

Pilot Objectives: An on-demand ride to transit that is:

- Accessible: Riders are able to request a ride through a variety of methods, and the right vehicle and trained driver arrive for a rider's given access needs.
- Convenient: The ride arrives within 10-20 minutes of being requested.
- Affordable: Ride subsidies/vouchers make rides free or deeply subsidized, and riders pay no more than the cost of transit (\$2.75) for their trip.

Timeline:

- Planning phase: March 2021 – September 2021 (complete)
- Implementation phase: October 2021 – June 2022
 - Demo with steering committee members: February 2022
 - Launch pilot: February/March 2022, to run through the conclusion of the grant or the full expenditure of the budget, whichever comes first.

Budget: Up to \$55,000, depending on number of responsive providers.

- At a rate of \$10-20 per subsidy, SDOT intends to purchase a total of 2,750-5,500 subsidies/vouchers.

More information: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/inclusive-planning-for-mobility-on-demand>

Service Parameters

Through its stakeholder engagement process, SDOT has identified the following mobility and technology needs for the pilot:

1. Multiple methods to request a ride: Through a smartphone app, using a computer or laptop, and over the phone or through a call center. Caregivers or service providers should also be able to request a ride on the rider's behalf.
2. Ability to connect riders with drivers on-demand: Within 10-20 minutes of ride request (i.e., riders do not need to book rides hours or days in advance).
3. Access to multiple types of vehicles, including wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs): Not all riders will need a WAV, but some will, including power wheelchair users. Some riders travel with a walker and will need a vehicle that can accommodate/store their walker during the ride.
4. Other access needs: Some riders communicate in languages other than English, some travel with service animals, and some may need assistance entering the vehicle. Most will need drivers to pick them up on the right side of the street and to pull up to the curb rather than double parking.
5. Multiple methods for delivering and using the ride subsidies/vouchers: Digital promotion codes (unique to the rider) and paper vouchers.

6. Ability to set expiration dates for subsidies/vouchers: Weekly, monthly, and/or at the conclusion of the grant period.
7. Multiple subsidy structures, including driver reimbursements: Larger subsidies for trips connecting to transit and all WAV trips, and additional reimbursements for WAV drivers.
8. Multiple methods for a rider to pay remaining balance after application of subsidy/voucher: Credit/debit card, stored value card, cash. Caregivers or service providers should also be able to pay the remaining balance on the rider's behalf.
9. Driver/vehicle confirmation: Information about the vehicle or driver (e.g., license plate, vehicle number, and/or driver name/photo) to assure rider they are entering correct vehicle.
10. Ability to set parameters for qualifying rides: Subsidies are applied only to qualifying rides, which may begin or end in a certain geographical area or within a certain distance of preselected public transit stations.

These and other service parameters are described in greater detail in Appendix A.

SDOT understands that no one provider currently operating in the Seattle area is able to meet all the needs identified above, so SDOT intends to select **multiple providers** from which to purchase ride subsidies/vouchers. This will allow SDOT to offer riders options and the ability to choose a provider that best meets their needs.

Terms and Conditions

Upon selection, SDOT and each provider will agree to the City of Seattle's standard [terms and conditions](#) for contracts, as well as additional terms and conditions regarding:

- Marketing and promotion
- Reporting needs (e.g., total trips by date, approximate trip geography, trips starting/ending near transit, cost per trip, rider satisfaction, etc.)
- Customer service (e.g., riders must have a way to report mistreatment)
- Invoicing (e.g., provider will bill SDOT within 15 days of the end of the month for subsidies used/redeemed during that month, and SDOT will pay the invoice within 30 days of receipt)
- Additional terms and conditions assigned from SDOT's federal grant contract with the Transit Planning 4 All program

Appendix A: Response Form

1. Respondent Information

Company Name		Email Address	
Point of Contact (Name)		Phone Number	

2. Respondent Ability to Fulfill Service Parameters

Respondents must indicate with a “Yes” or “No” if they are able to fulfill each defined service parameter, including specific components of parameters denoted by a, b, c, etc. Respondents may also explain their ability to fulfill each service parameter. SDOT understands that most providers will not be able to meet each service parameter, so indicating “No” is not necessarily grounds for rejection.

Service Parameter	Description	Ability to Fulfill (Y/N)	Explanation (Optional)
1. Pilot term	Between one (1) and five (5) months beginning in February 2022, depending on volume of rider participation.	1.	1.
2. Service area a. Within city limits b. Ability to differentiate trips starting or ending at a transit hub	a. Trip origin OR destination must be within Seattle city limits. SDOT may introduce a narrower geography for the service area at any time before or during the pilot. b. Ability to identify trips starting or ending at eligible transit hubs (SDOT will provide a list) to apply a larger subsidy.	2a. 2b.	3a. 3b.
3. Service time/ operating hours	24 hours per day, 7 days per week.	3.	4.
4. Ride request methods: a. Smartphone b. Computer c. Phone call d. Third party	Riders must have multiple options for requesting a ride: a. Through a smartphone app b. Using a computer or laptop c. Over the phone or through a call center d. Third party (e.g., caregiver or service provider) on behalf of rider	4a. 4b. 4c. 4d.	5a. 5b. 5c. 5d.
5. Response time	Riders should be picked up within 10-20 minutes of requesting a ride (i.e., riders do not need to book rides hours or days in advance).	5.	6.
6. Ride type	Single rider/ single party trips (i.e., rides not shared with strangers, but riders may travel with a caregiver or other companions, up to the capacity of the vehicle).	6.	7.

<p>7. Vehicle type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) b. Non-WAV with storage 	<p>Multiple vehicle types, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)</u>: For non-ambulatory riders who travel with wheelchairs (including power wheelchairs) or other mobility devices. b. <u>Non-WAVs with storage</u>: Some ambulatory riders travel with a walker or other mobility device and will need a vehicle that can accommodate/ store their device during the ride. 	<p>7a. 7b.</p>	<p>8a. 8b.</p>
<p>8. Other access needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Language b. Service animal c. Assistance entering vehicle d. Pick up and drop off at curb e. Driver picks up rider on rider’s side of the street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Language access</u>: Ride request platform (app or webpage) should be available in Seattle’s Tier 1 languages.* Riders should also be able to request an interpreter when booking by phone. Wherever possible, riders should be placed with drivers that communicate in their preferred language. b. <u>Service animal</u>: Riders with service animals must be permitted to have their service animal with them at all times. Riders must not be denied a ride due to having a service animal. c. <u>Assistance entering vehicle</u>: Riders must have a way to communicate with the driver in advance if they need assistance entering the vehicle (including assistance storing mobility devices). Drivers are not expected to enter any buildings to assist riders. d. <u>Pick up and drop off at curb</u>: Drivers must pull over at the curb to pick up and drop off riders. Riders should not be expected to enter a vehicle that is double parked or waiting in a travel lane. Riders must also have a way to communicate with the driver in advance if they need the vehicle parked a specific distance from curb (e.g., touching the curb, 12”, or 18”). e. <u>Driver picks up rider on rider’s side of the street</u>: Some riders will be unable to cross the street safely if the driver stops on the opposite 	<p>8a. 8b. 8c. 8d. 8e.</p>	<p>9a. 9b. 9c. 9d. 9e.</p>

	side of the street. Drivers must be willing to turn around to pick the rider up on the correct side of the street.		
9. Subsidy/voucher mechanism: a. Promo code b. Paper voucher	Multiple methods for delivering and using the ride subsidies/vouchers: a. Digital promotion codes (unique to each rider) b. Paper vouchers Both mechanisms must be able to carry an expiration date (e.g., weekly, monthly, and/or at the conclusion of the grant period).	9a. 9b.	10a. 10b.
10. Subsidy structure and driver reimbursement	Riders pay no up-front cost, and SDOT will provide the following per-ride subsidies: a. \$15 off trips that connect to transit hubs (SDOT will provide a list of eligible hubs) and for all WAV trips b. \$10 off all other trips (intended to fully cover or deeply subsidize short trips of 1-2 miles to nearby destinations not well served by transit) Riders will pay any remaining balance out of pocket. SDOT may change the per-trip subsidy at any time before or during the pilot. WAV drivers may also receive a reimbursement for providing WAV trips.	10a. 10b.	11a. 11b.
11. Payment method for remaining balance a. Credit/debit card b. Stored value card c. Cash d. Third party	Riders must have multiple options to pay remaining balance of trip fare after application of subsidy/voucher: a. Credit/debit card b. Stored value card c. Cash d. Third party (e.g., caregiver or service provider) on behalf of rider	11a. 11b. 11c. 11d.	12a. 12b. 12c. 12d.
12. Driver/ vehicle confirmation	Riders must be provided some information about the vehicle and/or driver (e.g., license plate, vehicle number, and/or driver name/photo) to ensure they are entering an authorized vehicle. Drivers may be asked to provide verbal or visual confirmation.	12.	13.

13. Limit on number of subsidies per rider per month	Riders will be eligible for up to five (5) subsidies per calendar month. SDOT may adjust the ride limit at any time before or during the pilot.	13.	14.
14. Reporting requirements	<p>Providers will report pilot data at least monthly, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Total subsidized trips (WAV, non-WAV, overall) b. Total number of trips starting or ending at transit hubs (WAV, non-WAV, overall) c. Total unique riders (WAV, non-WAV, overall) d. Trip origins and destinations, aggregated to protect rider privacy (WAV, non-WAV, overall) e. Trip distance (miles) and duration (minutes) (minimum, median, average, maximum, total) (WAV, non-WAV, overall) f. Overall cost per trip and cost to rider (minimum, median, average, maximum, total) (WAV, non-WAV, overall) g. Trip fulfillment reliability (percentage of trips fulfilled) (WAV, non-WAV, overall) h. Trip fulfillment time (minutes) (WAV, non-WAV, overall) i. Trip requests initiated by smartphone app, computer/webpage, phone call (WAV, non-WAV, overall) j. Rider satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5 stars (WAV, non-WAV, overall) 	<p>14a. 14b. 14c. 14d. 14e. 14f. 14g. 14h. 14i. 14j.</p>	<p>15a. 15b. 15c. 15d. 15e. 15f. 15g. 15h. 15i. 15j.</p>
15. Budget limitations: a. Overall b. Per month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Overall</u>: SDOT’s total budget for one (1)- to five (5)-month pilot is \$55,000. SDOT will determine a “not to exceed” budget limit for each provider (e.g., \$20,000), depending on the number of providers selected. b. <u>Per month</u>: SDOT would like to cap the total value of subsidies disbursed per month (e.g., \$5,000) as a project control. 	<p>15a. 15b.</p>	<p>16a. 16b.</p>

*Seattle [Tier 1 languages](#) include Chinese (if written, simplified and traditional; if spoken, Mandarin and Cantonese), Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Korean, and Tagalog. For the purposes of this project, please include Tigrinya and Oromo as well, as possible.

3. Cost Estimates

Respondents must include estimated costs (overall trip cost, including any necessary administrative fees or driver reimbursements, and cost to rider following application of subsidy/voucher) for the following sample trips, in two categories: trips to/from transit and short trips with any origin/destination. Both categories include trips that this pilot is intending to serve as well as trips this pilot is not designed to serve but that riders may nonetheless take.

Trips to/from transit hubs:

	Origin	Destination	Estimated total trip cost to SDOT	Estimated cost to rider after \$15 subsidy
Trip 1 (2.7 mi - intended)	Lake City Community Center 12531 28th Ave NE Seattle, WA 98125	Northgate Link Station		
Trip 2 (2.8 mi - intended)	Northgate Link Station	Bitter Lake Manor 620 N 130th St Seattle, WA 98133		
Trip 3 (2.7 mi - intended)	Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church 7500 Greenwood Ave N Seattle, WA 98103	Roosevelt Link Station		
Trip 4 (1.4 mi - intended)	Alaska Junction	High Point Library 3411 SW Raymond St Seattle, WA 98126		
Trip 5 (7.9 mi - longer than intended)	Walgreens 4412 Rainier Ave S Seattle, WA 98118	UW Link Station		

Short trips with any origin/destination:

	Origin	Destination	Estimated total trip cost to SDOT	Estimated cost to rider after \$10 subsidy
Trip 1 (2.1 mi - intended)	QFC Rainier Avenue 2707 Rainier Ave S Seattle, WA 98144	26 th Ave S and S Dawson St Seattle, WA 98144		
Trip 2 (2.8 mi - intended)	Carroll Terrace Apartments 600 5 th Ave W Seattle, WA 98119	Swedish Hospital – First Hill 747 Broadway Seattle, WA 98122		
Trip 3 (3.7 mi - intended)	Hiawatha Pl S and S Bush Pl Seattle, WA 98144	Climate Pledge Arena 334 1 st Ave N Seattle, WA 98109		
Trip 4 (3.1 mi - intended)	Holden Court Apartments 931 SW Holden St Seattle, WA 98106	Lincoln Park 8011 Fauntleroy Way SW Seattle, WA 98136		
Trip 5 (6.7 mi - longer than intended)	NewHolly Library 7058 32nd Ave S #104 Seattle, WA 98118	Immaculate Conception Church 820 18th Ave Seattle, WA 98122		
Trip 6 (8.4 mi - longer than intended)	Seattle Children’s Hospital 4800 Sand Point Way NE Seattle, WA 98105	Golden Gardens Park 8498 Seaview Pl NW Seattle, WA 98117		