TE Committee #1
March 24, 2025
Worksession

M E M O R A N D U M

March 19, 2025

TO: Transportation and Environment (TE) Committee

FROM: Stephen Kenny, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Executive Regulation 18-24, Transportation Services Improvement Fund

PURPOSE: **Worksession** to develop recommendations for Council consideration

Expected Participants:

- Christopher Conklin, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)
- Phil McLaughlin, General Manager, Division of Transit Services, MCDOT
- Sam Oji, Deputy General Manager, Division of Transit Services, MCDOT
- Walton Harris, Program Manager, Taxicab Regulation Unit, MCDOT

This worksession will cover the proposed Executive Regulation 18-24, Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF). This regulation amends the existing Executive Regulation 10-22, which establishes the rates and procedures for distributing TSIF funds to taxicab operators who provide transportation services to individuals who are disabled, seniors, and to those with limited incomes. The proposed regulation can be found on © 4-14, with a redlined version showing edits on © 15-25.

Executive Regulation 18-24 was advertised in the Montgomery County Register for more than 30 days from December 1, 2024, until December 31, 2024, for public comment. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation received no comments regarding the proposed changes to the regulation.

In accordance with County Code 2A-15, this Method 2 regulation must be approved by the Council no later than April 4, unless that deadline is extended by Council resolution. Pending a recommendation by this Committee, Council action is currently scheduled for April 1.

A. Background

In 2015 the Montgomery County Council created a 25-cent per ride surcharge on Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft, directing the revenues collected into a new "Transportation Services Improvement Fund" (TSIF). The purpose of the TSIF was (and remains) to improve the delivery of accessible transportation services to people with disabilities, seniors, and those with limited incomes. More information on the legislative history of the TSIF can be found on © 29-31.

To promote the provision of these accessible transportation services, the TSIF provides the following incentives to taxicab services companies:

- $25 per trip and $0.40 per mile of operation for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)
- $45,000 reimbursement for taxicab companies to purchase a WAV.
- $1000 reimbursement for WAV insurance.
- Guaranteed $10 fare for Call-n-Ride service to incentivize the provision of shorter rides.
- Reimbursement of application fees for Passenger Vehicle Licenses (PVLs) for WAVs.

The FY23 and FY24 County budgets each also included $800,000 from the TSIF to nonprofits in the County that serve people with disabilities, though that program was not renewed.

In terms of improving access to taxicab services for people with disabilities, the TSIF has been a success. In 2013 there were only 26 WAVs operating in the County. Now, despite the total number of non-TNC taxicabs in the County decreasing from 750 to 200 since 2013, there are 80 WAVs in operation.

Demand for TSIF incentives have begun to outstrip TNC surcharge revenue – in FY25 the TSIF is budgeted for $3.5 million in expenditures despite only $2.4 million in revenues. The fund ended FY24 with a fund balance of slightly more than $1 million, so this deficit is expected to bring the fund balance into the negative. The per-trip and per-mile incentives make up over 70% of TSIF expenditures, totaling $2.5 million in FY24. The following table pulled from the attached Fiscal Impact Statement (© 26-28) lays out the current and projected TSIF fund balances:

Projected TSIF Balances Under Current Regulation

Fiscal Year	TSIF Revenues	TSIF Expenditures	TSIF Fund Balance
FY25	$2,398,521	$3,560,312	-$150,034
FY26	$2,470,477	$3,707,578	-$1,387,135
FY27	$2,544,591	$3,776,707	-$2,619,251
FY28	$2,646,375	$3,867,508	-$3,840,381
FY28	$2,752,230	$3,961,033	-$5,049,188
FY30	$2,834,797	$4,057,384	-$8,271,758

In its 2024 biennial report (© 32-42), the Taxicab Services Commission (TSC) recommended addressing the fiscal issues in the TSIF by reducing the per-trip reimbursement from $25 to $20 and reducing the per-mile fee from $0.40 to $0.25.

MCDOT has also documented two other issues with the current TSIF reimbursement system. First, while the goal of the TSIF is to incentivize better WAV availability for passengers who use wheelchairs, MCDOT has found that only about 52% of the miles for which the County was reimbursing WAV operators were while a passenger was in the vehicle. 48% of those miles were spent seeking out more advantageous locations for potential fares or simply addressing personal matters. Second, some WAV drivers are making long trips to locations far outside the County, reducing the availability of WAVs for County residents.

Note: During the 2024 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly imposed an additional 25-cent per trip fee on TNCs separate from the one that funds the Montgomery County TSIF. This new fee, however, was earmarked for the State's Transportation Trust Fund to close that fund's gap, setting back the TSC's long time effort to increase TNC fees directed into the TSIF.

B. Proposed Changes

Executive Regulation 18-24 would make three main changes to how TSIF incentives are dispersed:

- Reduce the per-trip WAV reimbursement from $25 to $20
- Only pay $0.40 per-mile reimbursement for the miles traveled while providing site to site transportation service with a passenger in the vehicle.
- Limit reimbursement to trips of less then 75 miles from the pickup location, in line with the County's definition of "local travel".

In addition to reducing non-passenger trip activity by only reimbursing passenger miles and promoting the availability of WAVs for local trips by limiting distance, these changes stabilize the TSIF fund balance for FY25-30. This is reflected in the following table pulled from the Fiscal Impact Statement (©26-28):

Projected TSIF Balances Under Executive Regulation 18-24

Fiscal Year	TSIF Revenues	TSIF Expenditures	TSIF Fund Balance
FY25	$2,398,521	$2,818,250	$794,028
FY26	$2,470,477	$2,716,313	$548,192
FY27	$2,544,591	$2,735,878	$356,904
FY28	$2,646,375	$2,795,455	$207,824
FY28	$2,752,230	$2,856,818	$103,235
FY30	$2,834,797	$2,980,023	$18,009

These changes are reflected in the County Executive's FY26 Operating Budget for Community Mobility Services under the Transit Services section via a $991,265 reduction to "Transportation Services Improvement Fund Taxicab Reimbursements to Ensure the Sustainability of the Fund".

To ensure the sustainability of the TSIF while continuing its successes in promoting WAV availability, **Council staff suggests that the Committee recommend approving Executive Regulation 18-24.**

<u>This report contains:</u>

- Executive's transmittal memo requesting approval of ER 18-24 © 1-3
- Draft regulation (clean) © 4-14
- Draft regulation (redlined with edits) © 15-25
- Fiscal impact statement © 26-28
- Background document on TSIF prepared by MCDOT © 29-31
- 2024 Taxicab Services Commission Biennial Report © 32-42

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

February 4, 2025

TO: Kate Stewart, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive
Office of the County Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Regulation 18-24 – Transportation Services Improvement Fund

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit Executive Regulation 18-24 – Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF) to the County Council for approval. This regulation establishes the procedures for distributing monies from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund and will supersede Executive Regulation 10-22. The TSIF provides financial incentives for providing transportation services for individuals who are disabled, seniors, and for individuals with limited incomes.

Executive Regulation 18-24 was advertised in the Montgomery County Register for more than 30 days from December 1, 2024, until December 31, 2025, for public comment. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation received no comments regarding the proposed changes to the regulation.

Prior to the FY22 budget deliberations, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) collaborated with community partners, including the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities, the Montgomery County Commission on Aging, and the Montgomery County Commission on Health. MCDOT also engaged taxicab industry stakeholders, such as the Montgomery County Taxicab Services Commission, to develop recommendations for using the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF) to enhance transportation services for seniors, low-income individuals, and those requiring wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) taxicabs.

Based on this engagement, MCDOT proposed and the County Executive supported modest increases to TSIF reimbursement rates. These included:

- Increasing the mileage reimbursement for in-service trips from 10 cents to 25 cents per mile.
- Increasing reimbursement for WAV taxicab trips to $20, regardless of the time of day (a change from $15 for daytime and $20 for nighttime trips).
- Increasing the reimbursement for purchasing or retrofitting a WAV taxicab from $15,000 to $30,000.

During budget deliberations, the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee recommended further increases, which were adopted by the full Council. Final adjustments included:

- Increasing mileage reimbursement to from 10 cents to 40 cents per mile.
- Increasing the reimbursement rate for a WAV trip from $15 for daytime and $20 for nighttime trips to $25 regardless of the time of day.
- Increasing the reimbursement for WAV purchases or retrofits from $15,000 to $45,000.

Additionally, MCDOT launched a new capital and operating grant program to support local nonprofit service providers.

Challenges with TSIF Sustainability

The higher-than-anticipated reimbursement rates, coupled with a significant influx of WAV taxicabs and operators, have placed pressure on the TSIF balance. The FY23 Targeted and Specialized Mobility Grant Program also contributed to this financial strain. To ensure TSIF's long-term viability, MCDOT is proposing the following revisions to the reimbursement policies.

Proposed Adjustments

1. **Reimbursement Reductions:**
    - Reduce the WAV trip reimbursement from $25 to $20 per trip.
    - Retain the 40 cents per-mile reimbursement but limit it to miles traveled while transporting passengers (site-to-site). A review found that 52% of recorded miles were passenger-related, with the remaining 48% often linked to non-revenue activities such as personal errands.
2. **Trip Limits:**
    - Implement a 75-mile one-way and 150-mile round-trip limit for WAV trips. This aligns with the County's definition of local travel and ensures resources focus on residents requiring wheelchair-accessible services. Trips to specialized medical facilities like Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore or Inova Hospital in Fairfax are within the 75-mile radius and thus would remain eligible for reimbursement.

The Taxicab Services Commission (TSC) recently addressed both the reimbursement rates for miles traveled and for WAV taxicab trips. The TSC also recommended reducing the

reimbursement for WAV taxicab trips from $25 to $20. The TSC suggested reducing the reimbursement for miles traveled while in service to from 40 cents to 25 cents per mile, however, the department has decided not to advance that recommendation as the previously mentioned issue regarding non-revenue activities would remain.

These measures aim to balance the availability of WAV services with responsible fund management, addressing instances where operators have been reimbursed for long-distance trips outside the County's intended scope.

MCDOT remains committed to ensuring accessible and efficient transportation for Montgomery County residents and guests who depend on WAV taxicabs. By refining reimbursement rates, introducing trip limits, and addressing increased demand, the proposed changes will preserve TSIF's sustainability while maintaining essential services for vulnerable populations. These adjustments represent a prudent approach to balancing community needs with fiscal responsibility, ensuring that WAV taxicabs remain a reliable resource for those who need them most.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Walton Harris at (240)-777-7193.

ME:wh

Enclosures: *Executive Regulation 18-24*
Executive Regulation 18-24 bracketed and underlined copy
Fiscal Impact Statement from the Office of Management and Budget

cc: Ken Hartman-Espada, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive
Christopher Conklin, Director, Department of Transportation
Robert Birenbaum, Attorney, Office of the County Attorney

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject Transportation Services Improvement Fund	Number 18-24
Originating Department Transportation	Effective Date

Montgomery County Regulation on:

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IMPROVEMENT FUND REQUIREMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Issued by: County Executive
COMCOR 53.801.01
Authority: Code Section 53-801
Supersedes: Executive Regulation 10-22
Council Review Method (2) Regulation Under Code Section 2A-15
Register Vol. 41, Issue 12
Comment Deadline: December 31, 2024
Effective Date:
Sunset Date: None

SUMMARY: The regulation establishes the procedures for disbursing monies from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund.

ADDRESS: Director, Department of Transportation
Executive Office Building, 10th Floor
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

STAFF: Walton Harris, Transit Division
CONTACT 240-777-7193

53.801.01.01 Background Information

In 2015, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation regulating Transportation Network Companies (TNC), including ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft. The legislation (which is codified at § 10-401, *et seq* of the Public Utilities Article) created a new regulatory framework in which TNCs in the State must operate. In addition to its regulatory function, the legislation also authorizes a county or municipality to impose an assessment on TNC trips that originate within the county or municipality. Pursuant to the State's enabling legislation, Montgomery County has imposed a 25 cent assessment fee (or "surcharge") on TNCs for each trip originating in the County. All revenue generated from the imposed assessments and disbursed by the State to the County are placed in a Transportation Services Improvement Fund (referred to hereafter as "the Fund") and must be used for transportation purposes that are specified in § 53-801 of the Montgomery County Code.

Section 53-801 of the Montgomery County Code requires the County Executive to establish, by regulation, procedures for disbursing monies from the Fund. The monies from the Fund are to be used to ensure the continued viability of accessible service throughout the County for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, and persons of limited income.

53.801.01.02 Purpose

The purpose of this Regulation is to:

(a) establish programs to offset the increased costs of owning and operating accessible vehicles for which taxicab Owners and Drivers may be eligible for disbursement from the Fund;

(b) establish incentive programs for improving or expanding transportation options for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, and persons of limited income, for which taxicab Owners and Drivers may be eligible for distributions from the Fund; and

(c) establish rules and procedures for distributing monies from the Fund to eligible applicants who desire to participate in the authorized programs.

53.801.01.03 Regulation

(a) Applicants must use an application form provided by the Department, complete the form fully, and agree to all terms contained in the application.

(b) The application must provide that a person who makes a false statement to any questions on the application form will be denied disbursement from the Fund, and that funds already disbursed based on false information must be returned to the County.

(c) Applicants must submit all required documentation to the Department to qualify for the distribution or reimbursement from the Fund.

(d) The Fund provides many programs of opportunity for reimbursement or distribution of monies to eligible applicants. In order for an eligible applicant to qualify for any reimbursement or distribution of monies from the Fund, the applicant must have satisfied all reporting requirements required by this Regulation or the County Code. The County must not disburse any monies from the Fund to an applicant if the applicant is not in compliance with the reporting requirements of any program provided for in this Regulation in which the applicant has participated.

(e) Fleets and Associations seeking disbursements from the Fund must provide dispatch system data to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) as necessary to verify reported trip information.

(f) Fleets and Associations participating in programs defined in this Regulation must work with MCDOT to disseminate program information and opportunities related to the Fund to drivers.

(g) The application must provide that a recipient of monies disbursed from the Fund must agree to return those monies to the County if the recipient's PVL or Taxicab Driver Identification Card is revoked, suspended, or denied by the County within five years of disbursement from the Fund.

53.801.01.04 Definitions

(a) **Accessible Taxicab** - means a taxicab that is a wheelchair accessible vehicle that the Department has authorized to transport passengers with disabilities.

(b) **Association** - means individual licensees who join together to form a business entity to provide taxicab service utilizing a single trade name consisting of a minimum of six licenses.

(c) **Department** - means the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT).

(d) **Driver** - means an individual authorized to operate a taxicab under Chapter 53 of the Montgomery County Code who has been issued a Montgomery County Taxicab Driver Identification Card.

(e) **Fleet** - means any entity that holds in its own name six or more licenses.

(f) **License** - means a Passenger Vehicle License issued by Montgomery County.

(g) **Licensee** - means an individual or fleet to whom the Director of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has issued a Passenger Vehicle License (PVL) to provide taxicab service.

(h) **Owner** - means a Licensee who has been issued and holds a valid PVL to provide taxicab services in Montgomery County with a specified motor vehicle, and:

(1) is listed with the state motor vehicle agency as holding legal title to the specific motor vehicle for which the PVL was issued;

(2) is a conditional vendee or lessee of the vehicle for which the PVL is issued that is the subject of an agreement for conditional sale or lease, if the conditional vendee or lessee has assumed liability, and is authorized to pay judgments and accept any legal notice or service of process, with respect to the vehicle; or

(3) acts as the agent of the registered owner for all purposes, including acceptance of liability, payment of judgments and other legal obligations, and receipt of any legal notice of process.

(i) **Passenger Vehicle License (PVL)** - means a County-issued license to provide taxicab service using a specified motor vehicle.

(j) **Taxicab Service -** means carrying one or more passengers for compensation between points chosen by the passenger:

(1) regardless of how or when engaged, for a fare that is based on the distance traveled, time elapsed, or both, except as expressly authorized in this Chapter; or

(2) after being engaged by hail from a street, or from a parking lot, taxi stand, or other location where the vehicle is waiting for a request for service.

53.801.01.05 Reimbursements and Distributions

In this Regulation, reimbursements and distributions are based on:

(a) the increased costs incurred by Drivers and Owners of Accessible Taxicabs;

(b) the need to incentivize the operation of Accessible Taxicabs;

(c) the desire to maintain an adequate number of licensed Drivers providing Accessible Taxicab services; and

(d) the need to incentivize taxi services for Call-n-Ride customers requiring short trips.

These reimbursements and distributions are broken down into three categories: (a) Accessible Taxicab Ownership, (b) Accessible Taxicab Operating/Driver Expenses, and (c) Taxicab Service Incentives, and will be disbursed from the Fund as provided below. All disbursements are subject to the availability and appropriation of monies in the Fund.

(a) **Accessible Taxicab Ownership**

Background

The cost to purchase a larger vehicle and convert it to an Accessible Taxicab is significantly more than that of a standard sedan. In 2022, it was estimated that the costs to convert a vehicle was between $21,000 and $40,000 depending on the type of vehicle and extent of the modifications. Additionally, the cost to maintain these vehicles is higher due to the additional systems associated with the lifts and increased wear on brakes and transmissions. The Fund will reimburse a portion of these costs to encourage the operation of Accessible Taxicabs in the County.

Funding Opportunities

To address the higher initial costs and ongoing maintenance costs of Accessible Taxicabs, up to $45,000 per eligible vehicle may be available for reimbursement as set forth in this Regulation. Except as set forth in this Regulation, an Owner is not eligible for a disbursement from the Fund for the purchase of an Accessible Taxicab or the conversion of a vehicle into an Accessible Taxicab if a previous disbursement was made from the Fund for the purchase or conversion of that particular vehicle.

To be eligible for reimbursement of up to $45,000 the Owner must complete and submit a reimbursement application along with documentation of: (1) the purchase of an Accessible Taxicab on or after July 1, 2022, that is presently not more than three model years old, or (2) the conversion of a vehicle that is presently not more than three model years old to an Accessible Taxicab on or after July 1, 2022. An Owner who applies for capital reimbursement under this program must agree that the PVL associated with the Accessible Taxicab will be required to be associated with an Accessible Taxicab for all subsequent renewals of the PVL.

As part of the reimbursement application, the Owner must agree that following reimbursement, and on a quarterly basis, the Owner must demonstrate that the Accessible Taxicab has been in operation for a minimum of 40 hours per week for at least 48 weeks (or equivalent thereof) each year for five years immediately following payment. The Owner must agree that if these required hours of operation are not met and demonstrated by manifests or data deemed acceptable by MCDOT's Taxicab Unit, that the Owner will be required, upon demand by the County, to return the disbursed funds to the County, and the County may take legal action against any recipient in violation of program requirements.

(b) **Accessible Taxicab Operating/Driver Expenses**

Background

There are often higher costs associated with providing accessible passenger service that are not reflected in a standard taxicab meter rate. MCDOT will reimburse taxicab operators for the additional time required to assist passengers in wheelchairs or motorized scooters to safely board and disembark an Accessible Taxicab.

Funding Opportunities

Wheelchair Trips

The County will reimburse Drivers of Accessible Taxicabs who successfully transport passengers requiring wheelchair service at a rate of $20 per trip completed.

To receive a disbursement, the Driver must complete and submit a reimbursement application along with a signed manifest documenting all trips provided in the previous month, with any wheelchair trips clearly identified. Taxicab drivers must submit trip manifests to the Taxicab Regulation Unit on, or before, the fifth day of every month, unless such day is not a County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit, in which case the driver must submit the trip manifest by the following County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit. The applicant

must highlight all dispatched and transported passenger wheelchair trip pickups listed on trip records submitted to MCDOT. MCDOT may verify the trip records with the affiliated Fleet or Association's record.

(c) **Taxicab Service Incentives**

Background

In order to entice more Owners and Drivers into purchasing, retrofitting and driving Accessible Taxicabs, and to provide improved transportation services for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, and persons of limited income, additional incentives must be offered to reach the goal set forth in § 53-506(e) of the County Code and improve and expand service options as set forth in § 53-80l(d)(2) of the County Code.

Funding Opportunities

Mileage

Drivers of Accessible Taxicabs are eligible for disbursement from the Fund at the rate of 40 cents per mile for every mile that the Accessible Taxicab travels when providing Taxicab Service, regardless of passenger type. To receive a disbursement, the Driver must complete and submit a reimbursement application along with a signed manifest documenting all trips provided in the previous month, with any wheelchair trips clearly identified. Taxicab drivers must submit trip manifests to the Taxicab Regulation Unit on, or before, the fifth day of every month unless such day is not a County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit, in which case the driver must submit the trip manifest by the following County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit. The applicant must highlight all dispatched and transported passenger wheelchair trip pickups listed on trip records submitted to MCDOT. MCDOT may verify the trip records with the affiliated Fleet or Association's record. MCDOT may verify mileage claims by examination of vehicle equipment or other available data.

To ensure the continued availability of robust on-demand Taxicab Service for Montgomery County residents and guests, MCDOT will not provide mileage reimbursement for any taxicab trip that is farther than 75 miles from the initial pick-up location, or 150 miles round trip.

Insurance

For Accessible Taxicabs operating a minimum 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week, or an equivalent thereof as demonstrated by manifests or data deemed acceptable by MCDOT's Taxicab

Unit, Licensees may apply to be reimbursed for costs to purchase a third-party policy of insurance meeting the minimum amounts required by § 53-224(a) of the Montgomery County Code. The Licensee must apply for reimbursement and demonstrate the expenditure for a third-party policy of insurance meeting the minimum amounts required by § 53-224(a) of the Montgomery County Code. If the Licensee demonstrates that the Accessible Taxicab has operated for a minimum of 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week (or equivalent thereof), the Licensee may be approved to be reimbursed $1,000 per year for the actual costs spent on purchasing a policy of insurance for the Accessible Taxicab. Licensees are eligible for reimbursement at the time they can demonstrate adequate levels of Accessible Taxicab service for one year prior to the date of reimbursement.

Fees to MCDOT

For Accessible Taxicabs operating a minimum 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week, or an equivalent thereof as demonstrated by manifests or data deemed acceptable by MCDOT's Taxicab Unit, Licensees are eligible to be reimbursed for the payment of certain fees as set forth in this Regulation.

(1) *PVL Renewal Fee*: Licensees may apply for reimbursement from the Fund for their annual PVL renewal fee after demonstrating the provision of accessible service in the Accessible Taxicab for the year following the PVL renewal.

(2) *PVL Transfer Fee*: For a PVL transfer that involves changing the vehicle associated with that PVL from a sedan to an Accessible Taxicab, the new Licensee may apply to MCDOT, at the time of fee payment, for reimbursement from the Fund for the PVL transfer fee. A Licensee who applies for reimbursement of the PVL Transfer Fee must agree that the PVL will be required to be associated with an Accessible Taxicab, and that all subsequent renewals of that PVL will be for an Accessible Taxicab.

(3) *Application and Initial License Fee for Newly Issued Licenses*: If the Department issues new Licenses for Accessible Taxicabs, an applicant for the License who is found qualified to compete for a PVL by the Department may, after being found qualified, apply for reimbursement of the application fee, irrespective of whether the applicant is issued a License. An applicant who is issued a PVL for an Accessible Taxicab may apply to MCDOT, at the time of fee payment, for reimbursement from the Fund for costs to pay the initial license fee.

Call-n-Ride Guaranteed Fare

Background

Call-n-Ride customers requiring taxicab transportation for shorter trips are less attractive trips for taxi dispatch because of the low resulting fare, but Call-n-Ride customers may have no alternative to transportation by taxi, including trips across relatively short distances.

Funding Opportunity

To encourage timely and more reliable service to Call-n-Ride customers, MCDOT will round up any Call-n-Ride fare to $10, resulting in a $10 guaranteed fare to taxicab Drivers for both accessible and non-accessible Call-n-Ride trips, and regardless of taxicab vehicle type. The difference between the meter rate charged to the Call-n-Ride customer and the $10 guaranteed fare will be paid to Drivers and be based on the Driver's trip manifest and any standard verifications conducted by the Call-n-Ride program staff.

53.801.01.06 Reimbursement and Transparency

Reimbursements from the Fund will be reported annually by the Department of Transportation's Taxicab Services Section.

53.801.01.07 Application and Requirements

All applications and required documentation shall be on forms and in a format approved by the Director of MCDOT.

53.801.01.08 Minimum Fund Levels and Prorated Disbursements

All disbursements from the Fund are subject to the availability and appropriation of adequate funding.

MCDOT may halt or temporarily freeze the application process for any or all reimbursement opportunities included in this Regulation if projected financial obligations for previously approved applicants meet or exceed funds already transferred from the State to the Fund.

53.801.01.09 Misuse of Funds

Any recipient of a disbursement under this regulation who uses the monies for any purpose other than as permitted by the County hereunder must refund all monies received within seven (7) days of a County demand for a refund. Any individual who makes a false statement or submits fraudulent information in order to obtain a disbursement from the fund to which the person is not entitled, or any recipient who misuses a disbursement from the fund is barred from participating in this program and is subject to any action that may be brought in law or in equity, including all actions and penalties contained in Chapter 53 of the Montgomery County Code.

53.801.01.10 Reimbursement Not to Exceed the Purchase Price of the Accessible Taxicab

Reimbursement from the Fund to purchase an Accessible Taxicab or retrofit the vehicle into an Accessible Taxicab may not exceed the amount the applicant actually paid to purchase or retrofit the vehicle. Awardees of federal, state, or private funding grants towards the procurement of an Accessible Taxicab are ineligible to receive reimbursement from the Fund for costs incurred to purchase or retrofit the vehicle, such that the total amount of grants and reimbursements exceeds the purchase price of the vehicle.

53.801.01.11 Transportation Enhancements

At the end of each calendar year, the Director will review the Fund balance to determine what portion of the Fund may be used to improve or expand transportation options for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, or persons with limited income.

53.801.01.12 Effective Date

This Regulation becomes effective when the Council adopts a resolution approving the Regulation or on a later date specified in the Regulation. If the Council does not approve or disapprove the proposed Regulation within 60 days after receiving it, or by any subsequent deadline set by resolution, the Regulation is automatically approved.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject Transportation Services Improvement Fund	Number 18-24
Originating Department Transportation	Effective Date

Approved:

Marc Elrich, County Executive — Date: 2/3/2025

Approved as to form and legality:

Robert Birenbaum
Assistant County Attorney — Date: 11/19/2024

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject Transportation Services Improvement Fund	Number 18-24
Originating Department Transportation	Effective Date

Montgomery County Regulation on:

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IMPROVEMENT FUND REQUIREMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Issued by: County Executive
COMCOR 53.801.01
Authority: Code Section 53-801
Supersedes: Executive Regulation 10-22
Council Review Method (2) Regulation Under Code Section 2A-15
Register Vol. 41, Issue 12
Comment Deadline: December 31, 2024
Effective Date:
Sunset Date: None

SUMMARY: The regulation establishes the procedures for disbursing monies from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund.

ADDRESS: Director, Department of Transportation
Executive Office Building, 10th Floor
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

STAFF: Walton Harris, Transit Division
CONTACT 240-777-7193

53.801.01.01 Background Information

In 2015, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation regulating Transportation Network Companies (TNC), including ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft. The legislation (which is codified at § 10-401, *et seq* of the Public Utilities Article) created a new regulatory framework in which TNCs in the State must operate. In addition to its regulatory function, the legislation also authorizes a county or municipality to impose an assessment on TNC trips that originate within the county or municipality. Pursuant to the State's enabling legislation, Montgomery County has imposed a [$0.25] 25 cent assessment fee (or "surcharge") on TNCs for each trip originating in the County. All revenue generated from the imposed assessments and disbursed by the State to the County are placed in a Transportation Services Improvement Fund (referred to hereafter as "the Fund") and must be used for transportation purposes that are specified in § 53-801 of the Montgomery County Code.

Section 53-801 of the Montgomery County Code requires the County Executive to establish, by regulation, procedures for disbursing monies from the Fund. The monies from the Fund are to be used to ensure the continued viability of accessible service throughout the County for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, and persons of limited income.

53.801.01.02 Purpose

The purpose of this Regulation is to:

(a) establish programs to offset the increased costs of owning and operating accessible vehicles for which taxicab Owners and Drivers may be eligible for disbursement from the Fund;

(b) establish incentive programs for improving or expanding transportation options for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, and persons of limited income, for which taxicab Owners and Drivers may be eligible for distributions from the Fund; and

(c) establish rules and procedures for distributing monies from the Fund to eligible applicants who desire to participate in the authorized programs.

53.801.01.03 Regulation

(a) Applicants must use an application form provided by the Department, complete the form fully, and agree to all terms contained in the application.

(b) The application must provide that a person who makes a false statement to any questions on the application form will be denied disbursement from the Fund, and that funds already disbursed based on false information must be returned to the County.

(c) Applicants must submit all required documentation to the Department to qualify for the distribution or reimbursement from the Fund.

(d) The Fund provides many programs of opportunity for reimbursement or distribution of monies to eligible applicants. In order for an eligible applicant to qualify for any reimbursement or distribution of monies from the Fund, the applicant must have satisfied all reporting requirements required by this Regulation or the County Code. The County must not disburse any monies from the Fund to an applicant if the applicant is not in compliance with the reporting requirements of any program provided for in this Regulation in which the applicant has participated.

(e) Fleets and Associations seeking disbursements from the Fund must provide dispatch system data to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) as necessary to verify reported trip information.

(f) Fleets and Associations participating in programs defined in this Regulation must work with MCDOT to disseminate program information and opportunities related to the Fund to drivers.

(g) The application must provide that a recipient of monies disbursed from the Fund must agree to return those monies to the County if the recipient's PVL or Taxicab Driver Identification Card is revoked, suspended, or denied by the County within five years of disbursement from the Fund.

53.801.01.04 Definitions

(a) **Accessible Taxicab** - means a taxicab that is a wheelchair accessible vehicle that the Department has authorized to transport passengers with disabilities.

(b) **Association** - means individual licensees who join together to form a business entity to provide taxicab service utilizing a single trade name consisting of a minimum of six licenses.

(c) **Department** - means the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT).

(d) **Driver** - means an individual authorized to operate a taxicab under Chapter 53 of the Montgomery County Code who has been issued a Montgomery County Taxicab Driver Identification Card.

(e) **Fleet** - means any entity that holds in its own name six or more licenses.

(f) **License** - means a Passenger Vehicle License issued by Montgomery County.

(g) **Licensee** - means an individual or fleet to whom the Director of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has issued a Passenger Vehicle License (PVL) to provide taxicab service.

(h) **Owner** - means a Licensee who has been issued and holds a valid PVL to provide taxicab services in Montgomery County with a specified motor vehicle, and:

(1) is listed with the state motor vehicle agency as holding legal title to the specific motor vehicle for which the PVL was issued;

(2) is a conditional vendee or lessee of the vehicle for which the PVL is issued that is the subject of an agreement for conditional sale or lease, if the conditional vendee or lessee has assumed liability, and is authorized to pay judgments and accept any legal notice or service of process, with respect to the vehicle; or

(3) acts as the agent of the registered owner for all purposes, including acceptance of liability, payment of judgments and other legal obligations, and receipt of any legal notice of process.

(i) **Passenger Vehicle License (PVL)** - means a County-issued license to provide taxicab service using a specified motor vehicle.

(j) **Taxicab Service -** means carrying one or more passengers for compensation between points chosen by the passenger:

(1) regardless of how or when engaged, for a fare that is based on the distance traveled, time elapsed, or both, except as expressly authorized in this Chapter; or

(2) after being engaged by hail from a street, or from a parking lot, taxi stand, or other location where the vehicle is waiting for a request for service.

53.801.01.05 Reimbursements and Distributions

In this Regulation, reimbursements and distributions are based on:

(a) the increased costs incurred by Drivers and Owners of Accessible Taxicabs;

(b) the need to incentivize the operation of Accessible Taxicabs;

(c) the desire to maintain an adequate number of licensed Drivers providing Accessible Taxicab services; and

(d) the need to incentivize taxi services for Call-n-Ride customers requiring short trips.

These reimbursements and distributions are broken down into three categories: (a) Accessible Taxicab Ownership, (b) Accessible Taxicab Operating/Driver Expenses, and (c) Taxicab Service Incentives, and will be disbursed from the Fund as provided below. All disbursements are subject to the availability and appropriation of monies in the Fund.

(a) **Accessible Taxicab Ownership**

Background

The cost to purchase a larger vehicle and convert it to an Accessible Taxicab is significantly more than that of a standard sedan. In 2022, it was estimated that the costs to convert a vehicle was between $21,000 and $40,000 depending on the type of vehicle and extent of the modifications. Additionally, the cost to maintain these vehicles is higher due to the additional systems associated with the lifts and increased wear on brakes and transmissions. The Fund will reimburse a portion of these costs to encourage the operation of Accessible Taxicabs in the County.

Funding Opportunities

[In order to] To address the higher initial costs and ongoing maintenance costs of Accessible Taxicabs, up to $45,000 per eligible vehicle may be available for reimbursement as set forth in this Regulation. Except as set forth in this Regulation, an Owner is not eligible for a disbursement from the Fund for the purchase of an Accessible Taxicab or the conversion of a vehicle into an Accessible Taxicab if a previous disbursement was made from the Fund for the purchase or conversion of that particular vehicle.

To be eligible for reimbursement of up to $45,000 the Owner must complete and submit a reimbursement application along with documentation of: (1) the purchase of an Accessible Taxicab on or after July 1, 2022, that is presently not more than three model years old, or (2) the conversion of a vehicle that is presently not more than three model years old to an Accessible Taxicab on or after July 1, 2022. An Owner who applies for capital reimbursement under this program must agree that the PVL associated with the Accessible Taxicab will be required to be associated with an Accessible Taxicab for all subsequent renewals of the PVL.

As part of the reimbursement application, the Owner must agree that following reimbursement, and on a quarterly basis, the Owner must demonstrate that the Accessible Taxicab has been in operation for a minimum of 40 hours per week for at least 48 weeks (or equivalent thereof) each year for five years immediately following payment. The Owner must agree that if these required hours of operation are not met and demonstrated by manifests or data deemed acceptable by MCDOT's Taxicab Unit, that the Owner will be required, upon demand by the County, to return the disbursed funds to the County, and the County may take legal action against any recipient in violation of program requirements.

(b) **Accessible Taxicab Operating/Driver Expenses**

Background

There are often higher costs associated with providing accessible passenger service that are not reflected in a standard taxicab meter rate. [These costs include the greater travel distances Accessible Taxicabs experience at the time of dispatch to the service pickup location due to the lower density of Accessible Taxicabs throughout the County, as well as additional time to safely load and unload passengers in wheelchairs.] MCDOT will reimburse taxicab operators for the additional time required to assist passengers in wheelchairs or motorized scooters to safely board and disembark an Accessible Taxicab.

Funding Opportunities

Wheelchair Trips

The County will reimburse Drivers of Accessible Taxicabs who successfully transport passengers requiring wheelchair service at a rate of [$25] $20 per trip completed.

[Disbursements for the wheelchair trip provision will be made monthly.] To receive a disbursement, the Driver must complete and submit a reimbursement application along with a signed manifest documenting all trips provided in the previous month, with any wheelchair trips

clearly identified. Taxicab drivers must submit trip manifests to the Taxicab Regulation Unit on, or before, the fifth day of every month, unless such day is not a County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit, in which case the driver must submit the trip manifest by the following County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit. The applicant must highlight all dispatched and transported passenger wheelchair trip pickups listed on trip records submitted to MCDOT. MCDOT may verify the trip records with the affiliated Fleet or Association's record.

(c) **Taxicab Service Incentives**

Background

In order to entice more Owners and Drivers into purchasing, retrofitting and driving Accessible Taxicabs, and to provide improved transportation services for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, and persons of limited income, additional incentives must be offered to reach the goal set forth in § 53-506(e) of the County Code and improve and expand service options as set forth in § 53-80l(d)(2) of the County Code.

Funding Opportunities

Mileage

Drivers of Accessible Taxicabs are eligible for disbursement from the Fund at the rate of [$0.40] 40 cents per mile for every mile that the Accessible Taxicab travels [while in service, whether or not a passenger is in the Accessible Taxicab, and] when providing Taxicab Service, regardless of passenger type. [Disbursements for the mileage provision will be made monthly.] To receive a disbursement, the Driver must complete and submit a reimbursement application along with a signed manifest documenting all trips provided in the previous month, with any wheelchair trips clearly identified. Taxicab drivers must submit trip manifests to the Taxicab Regulation Unit on, or before, the fifth day of every month unless such day is not a County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit, in which case the driver must submit the trip manifest by the following County day of business for the Taxicab Regulation Unit. The applicant must highlight all dispatched and transported passenger wheelchair trip pickups listed on trip records submitted to MCDOT. MCDOT may verify the trip records with the affiliated Fleet or Association's record. MCDOT may verify mileage claims by examination of vehicle equipment or other available data.

To ensure the continued availability of robust on-demand Taxicab Service for Montgomery County residents and guests, MCDOT will not provide mileage reimbursement for any taxicab trip that is farther than 75 miles from the initial pick-up location, or 150 miles round trip.

Insurance

For Accessible Taxicabs operating a minimum 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week, or an equivalent thereof as demonstrated by manifests or data deemed acceptable by MCDOT's Taxicab Unit, Licensees may apply to be reimbursed for costs to purchase a third-party policy of insurance meeting the minimum amounts required by § 53-224(a) of the Montgomery County Code. The Licensee must apply for reimbursement and demonstrate the expenditure for a third-party policy of insurance meeting the minimum amounts required by § 53-224(a) of the Montgomery County Code. If the Licensee demonstrates that the Accessible Taxicab has operated for a minimum of 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week (or equivalent thereof), the Licensee may be approved to be reimbursed $1,000 per year for the actual costs spent on purchasing a policy of insurance for the Accessible Taxicab. Licensees are eligible for reimbursement at the time they can demonstrate adequate levels of Accessible Taxicab service for one year prior to the date of reimbursement.

Fees to MCDOT

For Accessible Taxicabs operating a minimum 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week, or an equivalent thereof as demonstrated by manifests or data deemed acceptable by MCDOT's Taxicab Unit, Licensees are eligible to be reimbursed for the payment of certain fees as set forth in this Regulation.

(1) *PVL Renewal Fee*: Licensees may apply for reimbursement from the Fund for their annual PVL renewal fee after demonstrating the provision of accessible service in the Accessible Taxicab for the year following the PVL renewal.

(2) *PVL Transfer Fee*: For a PVL transfer that involves changing the vehicle associated with that PVL from a sedan to an Accessible Taxicab, the new Licensee may apply to MCDOT, at the time of fee payment, for reimbursement from the Fund for the PVL transfer fee. A Licensee who applies for reimbursement of the PVL Transfer Fee must agree that the PVL will be required to be associated with an Accessible Taxicab, and that all subsequent renewals of that PVL will be for an Accessible Taxicab.

(3) *Application and Initial License Fee for Newly Issued Licenses*: If the Department issues new Licenses for Accessible Taxicabs, an applicant for the License who is found qualified to compete for a PVL by the Department may, after being found qualified, apply for reimbursement of the application fee, irrespective of whether the applicant is [actually] issued a License. An applicant who is issued a PVL for an Accessible Taxicab may apply

to MCDOT, at the time of fee payment, for reimbursement from the Fund for costs to pay the initial license fee.

Call-n-Ride Guaranteed Fare

Background

Call-n-Ride customers requiring taxicab transportation for shorter trips are less attractive trips for taxi dispatch because of the low resulting fare, but Call-n-Ride customers may have no alternative to transportation by taxi, including trips across relatively short distances.

Funding Opportunity

To encourage timely and more reliable service to Call-n-Ride customers, MCDOT will round up any Call-n-Ride fare to $10, resulting in a $10 guaranteed fare to taxicab Drivers for both accessible and non-accessible Call-n-Ride trips, and regardless of taxicab vehicle type. The difference between the meter rate charged to the Call-n-Ride customer and the $10 guaranteed fare will be paid to Drivers and be based on the Driver's trip manifest and any standard verifications conducted by the Call-n-Ride program staff.

53.801.01.06 Reimbursement and Transparency

Reimbursements from the Fund will be reported annually by the Department of Transportation's Taxicab Services Section.

53.801.01.07 Application and Requirements

All applications and required documentation shall be on forms and in a format approved by the Director of MCDOT.

53.801.01.08 Minimum Fund Levels and Prorated Disbursements

All disbursements from the Fund are subject to the availability and appropriation of adequate funding.

MCDOT may halt or temporarily freeze the application process for any or all reimbursement opportunities included in this Regulation if projected financial obligations for previously approved applicants meet or exceed funds already transferred from the State to the Fund.

53.801.01.09 Misuse of Funds

Any recipient of a disbursement under this regulation who uses the monies for any purpose other than as permitted by the County hereunder must refund all monies received within seven (7) days of a County demand for a refund. Any individual who makes a false statement or submits fraudulent information in order to obtain a disbursement from the fund to which the person is not entitled, or [Any] any recipient who misuses a disbursement from the fund is barred from participating in this program and is subject to any action that may be brought in law or in equity, including all actions and penalties contained in Chapter 53 of the Montgomery County Code.

53.801.01.10 Reimbursement Not to Exceed the Purchase Price of the Accessible Taxicab

Reimbursement from the Fund to purchase an Accessible Taxicab or retrofit the vehicle into an Accessible Taxicab may not exceed the amount the applicant actually paid to purchase or retrofit the vehicle. Awardees of federal, state, or private funding grants towards the procurement of an Accessible Taxicab are ineligible to receive reimbursement from the Fund for costs incurred to purchase or retrofit the vehicle, such that the total amount of grants and reimbursements exceeds the purchase price of the vehicle.

53.801.01.11 Transportation Enhancements

At the end of each calendar year, the Director will review the Fund balance to determine what portion of the Fund may be used to improve or expand transportation options for persons with disabilities, eligible senior citizens, or persons with limited income.

53.801.01.12 Effective Date

This Regulation becomes effective when the Council adopts a resolution approving the Regulation or on a later date specified in the Regulation. If the Council does not approve or disapprove the proposed Regulation within 60 days after receiving it, or by any subsequent deadline set by resolution, the Regulation is automatically approved.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject Transportation Services Improvement Fund	Number 18-24
Originating Department Transportation	Effective Date

Approved:

Marc Elrich, County Executive

2/3/2025
Date

Approved as to form and legality:

Robert Birenbaum
Assistant County Attorney

11/21/2024
Date

Fiscal Impact Statement

Office of Management and Budget

Executive Regulation 18-24

Transportation Services Improvement Fund

Regulation Summary

This regulation amends the rates of certain incentive payments to taxicab operators who operate wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) taxicabs for transportation services.

Fiscal Impact Summary

This regulation will decrease incentives paid out from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF). The regulation ensures the continued sustainability of the fund by modifying and slightly reducing certain reimbursement rates for taxicab operators.

Fiscal Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Total
Personnel Costs	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Operating Expenses	($944,062)	($991,265)	($1,040,829)	($1,072,053)	($1,104,215)	($1,077,341)	($6,229,765)
Total Expenditures	**($944,062)**	**($991,265)**	**($1,040,829)**	**($1,072,053)**	**($1,104,215)**	**($1,077,341)**	**($6,229,765)**
Revenues	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Total Impact	**$944,062**	**$991,265**	**$1,040,829**	**$1,072,053**	**$1,104,215**	**$1,077,341**	**$6,229,765**
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Changes to incentive rates are as follows:

Incentive Program	Current reimbursement rate	New reimbursement rate
WAV taxicab per-mile reimbursement	$0.40	$0.40 - Only paid for miles traveled while providing site to site transportation service with a passenger in the vehicle
WAV taxicab per-trip incentive	$25	$20

In FY24, the expenditures for these two incentive categories totaled $2,467,827. FY25 expenditures for these two incentive categories following above changes in incentive rates are estimated to be $1,765,935. The net change in expenditures accounts for reimbursing only for site-to-site transportation with a passenger in the vehicle, and an increase in wheelchair accessible vehicle trips.

A recent review of miles traveled while in revenue service versus miles traveled as provided by a taxicab company's trip record shows that approximately 52 percent of miles traveled were while a passenger was in the vehicle. The remaining 48 percent could be attributed to a taxicab operator driving to a more advantageous location for potential taxicab fares, however, taxicab operators will frequently take breaks throughout the day to address personal matters. Often these operators will neglect to

omit the miles traveled from their manifest, which has become more problematic as the number of taxicab operators providing WAV taxicab service has increased.

Wheelchair accessible vehicle trips and mileage reimbursements, which are the two largest categories for reimbursements, are estimated to increase approximately five percent year over year from FY25 through FY30.

This regulation is not expected to impact TSIF revenues, which are received from the Transportation Network Company (TNC) assessments as authorized under State law. Because TSIF expenditures are funded by these revenues, which are restricted to programs that improve transportation services for seniors, individuals who are disabled, and individuals with limited incomes, these expenditures do not have any impact on the County's tax-supported budget if current fund resources are not exceeded. The fund balance in the TSIF at the beginning of FY25 was slightly more than $1 million.

The proposed changes to reimbursement rates have been calculated to ensure that TSIF revenues are fully utilized while maintaining a positive fund balance. It is assumed that TSIF revenues will increase at a rate of three percent in FY25 and FY26, and then an average increase of 3.25 percent from FY27 through FY30.

The charts below illustrate the necessity of adjusting reimbursement rates to maintain the health of the fund. If rates are not adjusted, then funding shortfalls starting in FY25 will result in the need to appropriate new funding to TSIF programs or else reduce other TSIF expenditures.

Scenario A: Status Quo

Fiscal Year	TSIF Revenues	TSIF Expenditures	TSIF Fund Balance and Year to Year Carryover Amount
FY25	$2,398,521	$3,560,312	-$150,034
FY26	$2,470,477	$3,707,578	-$1,387,135
FY27	$2,544,591	$3,776,707	-$2,619,251
FY28	$2,646,375	$3,867,508	-$3,840,381
FY29	$2,752,230	$3,961,033	-$5,049,188
FY30	$2,834,797	$4,057,384	-$8,271,758

Scenario B: Proposed Change

Fiscal Year	TSIF Revenues	TSIF Expenditures	TSIF Fund Balance and Year to Year Carryover Amount
FY25	$2,398,521	$2,818,250	$794,028
FY26	$2,470,477	$2,716,313	$548,192
FY27	$2,544,591	$2,735,878	$356,904
FY28	$2,646,375	$2,795,455	$207,824
FY29	$2,752,230	$2,856,818	$103,235
FY30	$2,834,797	$2,980,023	$18,009

Staff Impact	Changing the reimbursement rates to taxicab operators will not impose any additional workload on staff. The change to pay taxicab operators for only the miles traveled while providing transportation service will simplify and streamline work for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation Taxicab Regulation Unit staff who currently must compare information from hand-written taxicab operator manifests and taxicab trip records provided by taxicab companies. This regulation adds no new responsibilities beyond existing staff duties.
Actuarial Analysis	The regulation is not expected to impact retiree pension or group insurance costs.
Information Technology Impact	The regulation is not expected to impact the County Information Technology (IT) or Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.
Other Information	
Later actions that may impact revenue or expenditures if future spending is projected	During the 2024 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 362. This legislation, which went into effect on July 1, 2024, imposed a new fee of 25 cents per trip on rides provided statewide through a Transportation Network Company (TNC) originating in Maryland. The revenue from this new fee on rides provided by TNC's has been earmarked for the State of Maryland's Transportation Trust Fund. The Taxicab Services Commission, one of Montgomery County's Boards, Committees, and Commissions, have strongly lobbied state leaders to increase the 25-cent surcharge on TNC that provides revenue to the TSIF. The passage of Senate Bill 362 makes another increase of the surcharge that benefits the TSIF less likely, but not impossible.
Ranges of revenue or expenditures that are uncertain or difficult to project	Miles traveled by taxicab operators, and thus reimbursement amounts, are difficult to predict due to the volatile nature of the taxicab utilization.
Sources of information	Projections of TSIF expenditures and revenues are based on historical data compiled by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.
Contributors	Walton Harris, Department of Transportation Gary Nalven, Office of Management and Budget

Background

In 2015 the Montgomery County Council enacted Bill 33-15, Taxicabs – Transportation Services Improvement Fund, to impose a charge authorized by the State of Maryland in its then-newly enacted law regarding Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) including ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft. In addition, Bill 33-15 created the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF) to receive and distribute the revenue which is to be used to offset the higher cost of operating accessible taxicabs in the County and to provide incentives for improving or expanding transportation options for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with limited incomes. This legislation was enacted in July of 2015 and went into effect in December of the same year.

Key Events

Executive Regulation 1-17

On July 25, 2017, Executive Regulation 1-17 was adopted to provide guidance regarding the distribution of funding from the TSIF to taxicab owners and operators to offset the increased costs of owning and operating accessible vehicles and to provide incentives for improving or expanding transportation options for eligible seniors, persons with limited income, and individuals who are disabled. Executive Regulation 1-17 established a reimbursement model for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to distribute money from the TSIF. For fiscal years 2017 and 2018, the regulation established a $15,000 reimbursement per eligible vehicle to be distributed in five annual payments as follows: $4,000 in year one; $4,000 in year two; $3,000 in year three; $2,000 in year four; and $2,000 in year five. These funds were available for vehicles that were purchased or retrofitted.

Executive Regulation 1-17 also established a reimbursement to drivers of accessible taxicabs for the increased fuel cost of 10 cents per mile for every mile driven while in service. Additionally, MCDOT would reimburse drivers for dispatched and transported passenger wheelchair trip pickups at the rate of $10 per trip.

FY19 Budget/Resolution 18-1144

On May 24, 2018, the County Council approved the fiscal year 2019 budget. At that time, the TSIF had grown to approximately $2.9 million, of which only $61,600 had been spent or encumbered for taxicab improvements for seniors, individuals with disabilities or individuals with limited incomes. At the time, it was assumed that the balance of these funds and the approximately $1.3 million in TNC user fees projected to be collected in FY19 would be used to support the County Executive's recommended Mass Transit Fund budget. The total of $4,146,279 was to be used to support the Call-n-Ride, Seniors Ride Free, and Connect-a-Ride programs, which would free up an equivalent amount of funding for use elsewhere in the budget.

Expedited Bill 13-18

On October 16, 2018, the County Council enacted Expedited Bill 13-18. This legislation required that the TSIF be used to supplement, and not supplant, previously appropriated FY19 expenditures. This means that TSIF monies may be used in addition to already budgeted funds to programs including the Call-n-Ride, Seniors Ride Free, Connect-a-Ride, and other transportation programs that benefit individuals who are disabled, seniors and individuals with limited incomes. This change meant that funding from the TSIF could be added to already budgeted amounts for certain programs, but the Fund cannot be used to replace money in these, or other programs.

Executive Regulation 11-19

On July 30, 2019, Executive Regulation 11-19 was adopted. This regulation made substantial changes and enhancements for spending money from the TSIF. The initial piecemeal fashion for reimbursing the $15,000 for purchasing or retrofitting an accessible vehicle led to a slow rate of migration to wheelchair accessible vehicle taxicabs. Executive Regulation 11-19 allowed for the full $15,000 to be reimbursed at the time of purchase or retrofit of an eligible vehicle.

A change was also made to the driver incentive for transporting individuals requiring wheelchair service. Under the previous regulation, a flat $10 amount was paid to drivers for providing this service. Executive Regulation 11-19 raised that amount to $15 for trips provided between 6 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. and $20 for trips between midnight and 5:59 a.m. This new regulation also provided a reimbursement for certain fees incurred by the owners of accessible vehicles including Passenger Vehicle License (PVL) renewal fees, PVL transfer fees, and application and initial license fees for newly issued licenses. Additionally, PVL holders who operated, or allowed a vehicle to be operated for 48 weeks per year and 40 hours per week (or equivalent thereof), were eligible to receive a reimbursement of $1,000 per year of the actual costs spent on purchasing a policy of insurance for the accessible taxicab.

A $10 guaranteed fare program was implemented to improve timely and reliable service to Call-n-Ride program participants. Due to a low fare because of a shorter trip distance, some Call-n-Ride participants had trouble obtaining taxicab rides. This program allowed for a guaranteed fare of $10 to taxicab drivers for both accessible and non-accessible service by paying the difference between meter rate charged to the client and the $10 guaranteed fare.

FY23 Budget/Resolution 19-1285

On May 26, 2022, the Council adopted budget Resolution 19-1285. That budget established an Enhanced Mobility Capital and Operating Grant program to distribute funds to nonprofit organizations that provide service to the key target populations. The FY23 Operating Budget designed $800,000 from the fund at a 4:1 dollar ration for capital and operating projects. This means that $640,000 will be used for capital expenditures and $160,000 will be used for operating expenses.

Similarly, budget resolution 20-184, which was adopted on May 23, 2023 also included $800,000 designated for nonprofit service providers.

Temporary Executive Regulation 15-22T

On September 6, 2022, County Executive Marc Elrich transmitted Temporary Executive Regulation 15-22T. This temporary regulation made significant enhancements to established reimbursement opportunities from the TSIF. The $15,000 reimbursement provided for the purchase of a new wheelchair accessible vehicle or retrofit of an existing vehicle to a wheelchair accessible vehicle was increased to $45,000. The bifurcated time-of-day wheelchair trip policy was eliminated and a new policy of a flat $25 per trip regardless of time of day was established. The County also increased the reimbursement rate for vehicle miles traveled by wheelchair accessible vehicles while in service from $.10 cents to $.40 cents per mile.

On November 29, 2022, County Executive Marc Elrich transmitted Resolution 19-1465 to request that the County Council approve the extension of Temporary Executive Regulation 15-22T for approximately 90 days. The additional time was needed to ensure that Executive Regulation 10-22 met the legal posting and advertising requirements.

Executive Regulation 10-22

On February 7, 2023, Executive Regulation 10-22 was adopted. This regulation removed the temporary status of enhancements established under Temporary Executive Regulation 15-22T. Executive Regulation 10-22 funding opportunities enhancements mirrored the distribution amounts in the temporary regulation. The $15,000 reimbursement provided for the purchase of a new wheelchair accessible vehicle or retrofit of an existing vehicle to a wheelchair accessible vehicle was increased to $45,000. The bifurcated time-of-day wheelchair trip policy was eliminated and a new policy of a flat $25 per trip regardless of time of day was established. The County also increased the reimbursement rate for vehicle miles traveled by wheelchair accessible vehicles while in service from $.10 cents to $.40 cents per mile. The insurance provisions remained the same.

Executive Regulation 18-24

TBD

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Christopher R. Conklin
Director

M E M O R A N D U M

January 8, 2025

To: Kate Stewart, President
Montgomery County Council

From: Christopher Conklin, Director
Department of Transportation

Christopher Conklin (Jan 8, 2025 10:35 EST)

Subject**:** Transmittal of the 2024 Taxicab Services Commission Biennial Report

Chapter 53 Section 53-103A – Biennial Review of the Taxicab Industry, of the Montgomery County Code, requires that the Taxicab Services Commission conduct a review of the County's taxicab industry during each even numbered calendar year. The code further reads that the Commission must submit a report, to the County Executive and to the County Council, not later than December 1 of the year the review is conducted describing the status of the industry and identifying any changes to the regulation of the industry that the Commission finds necessary or desirable.

On behalf of the Taxicab Services Commission, I am transmitting the 2024 Biennial Report for your review. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of taxicab services in Montgomery County, including an analysis and recommendations to ensure that the taxicab industry remains a viable transportation option for Montgomery County residents and guests.

CC:wh

Enclosure: *2024 Biennial Report of the Taxicab Services Commission*

Biennial Review of the Montgomery County, Maryland Taxicab Industry 2024

Submitted to Montgomery County, Maryland
December 2024

Prepared by the
Taxicab Services Commission

Introduction

The Montgomery County, Maryland Code Chapter 53 *Taxicabs* requires that the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) conduct a review of the County's taxi industry each even-numbered year. This being an even-numbered year – 2024 – the TSC has developed this review, titled *Biennial Review of the Montgomery County, Maryland Taxicab Industry 2024*.

Status of the Industry

The County's taxi industry has been in decline for more than 10 years, beginning with competition from the less-regulated transportation network companies (TNCs) and then from the pandemic. In the late 1990's and early 2000's, the County had more than 700 licensed taxis; today that number is barely over 200. Another factor challenging the industry is a shortage of drivers. This is an issue across the country's transportation industry: public transit agencies, school districts, trucking companies and other transportation organizations are having difficulty recruiting and retaining drivers.

The County has made efforts to support the taxi industry, in particular with funding from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF). This fund was established in 2015 using 25 cents from each TNC trip in the county, with an explicit objective of supporting and increasing wheelchair accessible taxi service. In practice, the County uses the TSIF funds to support not only wheelchair accessible taxi service but also specialized transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities, particularly those with limited incomes,

A TSIF focus on wheelchair accessible service is important since transportation network companies (TNCs) traditionally provide only sedan service; the major TNC companies have fought compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), claiming they are technology companies and not transportation companies.

There are three licensed taxi service providers in the county: Regency/Barwood, Action, and Anytime. The latter is a cooperative. The largest company by market share is Regency/Barwood.

Taxi meter rates have not changed since 2009. A meter rate increase has been a primary topic for the TSC in developing this Review and has resulted in our recommendation for an increase, described below.

According to data from the County's Taxi Unit, there are currently 209 valid taxi licenses (formally referred to as Passenger Vehicles Licenses or PVLs).

Of the total licenses, 47% are held by the three taxi providers, with the remining 53% owned by individuals. Drivers who drive a vehicle where the license is held by the taxi provider lease the vehicle from the company or association. Note that the percentage of licenses held by individual drivers is significantly higher than in the early 2000s, when less than 20% of licenses were individually owned.

Recommended Changes to Regulation of the Industry

Changes To The Number Of Licenses In Circulation:

- The TSC recommends no change.

Changes In Taxicab Rates:

- This topic generated significant discussion, from both the public hearing held on September 17, 2024 and at two TSC meetings this past summer and fall.

  With consideration of input heard at the public hearing, the rates set by neighboring jurisdictions (see Attachment A, prepared by the County's Taxi Unit) and discussion at TSC meetings, we recommend the following for taxi rates: see Table 1. Note the nighttime charge is new and intended to encourage drivers to be available for trips in the evenings. There have been complaints about the lack of taxis during the evening hours.

Table 1

Component of Fare	Currently	Recommendations for Change?
Initial Charge	$4.00	No change
Cost per Mile	$2.00	$2.50
Add New Nighttime Charge?	n/a	Yes - $2.00
If Nighttime Charge, When Does it Apply?	n/a	10 pm to 5 am

Please note that our recommendations for a fare change come with recommendations for a decrease in certain incentive payments provided for wheelchair accessible trips through the TSIF; see Table 2.

Table 2

Component of TSIF	Currently	Recommendations for Change?
Mileage in wheelchair accessible taxi	$0.40/mile	Reduce to $0.25
Wheelchair trips	$25/completed trip	Reduce to $20

For example, should the cost per mile be increased – which would apply to all trips – we recommend that the incentive payment for mileage in wheelchair accessible taxis be reduced to 25 cents from the current rate of 40 cents. With the proposed increase in the cost per mile for

all taxi trips and a decrease in the mileage for wheelchair accessible trips, drivers of accessible trips would receive $2.50 plus 25 cents or $2.75 per mile.

Changes In Fees:

- The fees paid for drivers, license holders, and fleet operators were reviewed several years ago and revised in 2022. Those revisions provided reductions in numerous fees implemented to help the taxi industry's struggles from TNC competition and the pandemic.

  Input at the public hearing included the following comments regarding the fees:
  - General complaints about the fees.

Changes In Insurance Requirements:

- The TSC recommends no change.

Changes To the Accessibility Requirements:

- The Code requires that the overall number of accessible taxi licenses must not be less than 5% of the total of available County taxi licenses. According to data from the Taxi Unit, 79 of the total 209 licenses are for a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). The result is that the County's taxi fleet is 38% accessible, significantly higher than the 5% currently set out in the Code and, based on experience in the transportation industry, one of the highest accessible taxi fleets in the country. Note that the Code requires the DOT to develop a plan to increase the number of accessible taxis, "with a goal of having 100% accessible taxicabs in the County by 2025." The TCS believes that a goal of a 100% accessible fleet is not necessary and should be removed. There are many taxi riders, such as frail but ambulatory seniors who have difficulty boarding and deboarding a WAV and essentially need a sedan for their trips. Having a mixed fleet with both WAVs and sedans is the preferred approach and ensures effective service for all taxi users.

Changes To the Affiliation and Dispatch Requirements:

- Comments were voiced in the public hearing questioning why drivers are required by the Code to affiliate with a particular licensed taxi provider.

Any Other Changes That The Commission Determines Would Improve The Delivery Of Taxicab Services.

- The TSC believes that TNCs need more regulation to help counter the unfair competition with taxis. We recommended an additional fee on TNCs trips in the County that would be designated to help support the taxi industry. The County presented legislation for such a change however it was not put forward in Annapolis. A similar but statewide bill did pass, intended to help address a shortfall in the State's Transportation Fund.

- It may also be that to compete with TNCs, the County's taxi service should consider adopting some of the characteristics of TNCs, such as the upfront pricing that TNC riders like as they know what the cost will be of the trip they booked. Uber has become a verb, and many general public riders in the County don't even think "taxi" when they need a trip to downtown D.C. on a weekend evening to avoid parking hassles or need a ride home from an evening event in Silver Spring or Bethesda after consuming alcohol.

Public Hearing and Comments from Stakeholders

A public hearing was held the evening of September 17, 2024, from 6 to 8 pm.
It is estimated that 40 to 50 drivers and other representatives of the three taxi providers attended. They are key stakeholders in the taxi industry. Many comments were provided.

In no particular order, comments addressed:

- Complaints in general about fees that drivers must pay (also noted above).
- Desire for additional companies from which to purchase the required insurance. (This is something that is beyond the control of the County.)
- Concern that the drivers receive a flat fare for Medicaid trips rather than the meter fare. The County pays the driver's company for the Medicaid trip and the company then pays the driver, but apparently not the full meter fare.
- A large majority of comments regarding a change to taxi fares supported an increase to the mileage fee.
- An estimated half or so supported an increase in the drop charge.
- An important difference among comments about a fare change was evident in the comments by drivers of a WAV vs. drivers of a sedan. The former seemed not supportive of fare increases, as those drivers receive TSIF subsidies for their use of a WAV. The only TSIF subsidy that sedan drivers receive is the guaranteed minimum fare for a Call-n-Ride trip. The sedan drivers voiced more supportive for a fare increase.
- Complaints about the lot fees that drivers are required to pay to the companies. This comment seemed to pertain to the County's largest taxi company.

Review of the Economic Condition of the Taxi Industry

A valid review of the economic condition of the County's taxi industry requires a consultant study, with research into factors that impact the economic conditions. This would include, for example, analysis of the financial relationship between the cost of the County's regulatory structure on the industry vs. profits of the taxi providers and incomes of the drivers. Such study is beyond what a small group of citizen volunteers can do as part of our membership on the TSC. We can say that the economic condition is poor. One telling proof of that is the severe decline in the number of taxis that provide service. Much of current taxi business is serving subsidized trips – through Call-n-Ride, Same-Day Access, and Medicaid – as well as contract service that the taxi providers have to serve human service agencies and other entities with needs for taxi service. Most of the general public trips have by and large gone to Uber and Lyft.

Attachment A: Biennial Review of the Taxicab Industry 2024

DECEMBER 18

Montgomery County
Taxicab Regulations

Legal Requirements

Sec. 53-103A. Biennial Review of the Taxicab Industry. (Chapter 53. TAXICAB)

(a) Between September 1 and November 15 of each even-numbered year, the Taxicab Services

Commission must conduct a review of the County taxicab industry including:

(1) at least one public hearing;

(2) solicitation of comments from stakeholders;

(3) an evaluation of:

(A) the economic condition of the taxicab industry; and

(B) the adequacy of service rendered by the industry.

(b) The Commission must submit a report to the Executive and County Council not later than December 1 of the year the review is conducted, describing the status of the industry and identifying any changes to the regulation of the industry that the Commission finds necessary or desirable, including:

(1) changes to the number of licenses in circulation;

(2) changes in taxicab rates set under Section 53-106;

(3) changes in fees set under Section 53-107;

(4) changes in insurance requirements under Section 53-225 or applicable regulation;

(5) changes to the accessibility requirements under Article 5;

(6) changes to the affiliation and dispatch requirements under this Chapter; and

(7) any other changes that the Commission determines would improve the delivery of taxicab services.

(c) The review of economic condition of the industry must include consideration of taxicab rates, lease and affiliation rates, and industry fees charged to and by licensees and drivers. In reviewing the rates and fees, the Commission must consider:

(1) driver income compared to the County minimum wage; and

(2) the cost of industry-related regulatory and enforcement expenditures. (2015 L.M.C., ch. 39, § 1.)

Current number of valid PVLs: 227 PVL

Changes in wheelchair disbursement rates (effective on 7/1/2022):

	Previous rates	Current rates
Payment per mile	$0.1	$0.4
Payment per WC trip	$15	$25

Taxicab Fees

Taxicab Fees for Drivers, Passenger Vehicle License Holders and Fleet Operators

I. Driver Identification Card (ID)	**Previous fees (2021)**	**Current fees**
Application	$ 20.00	$ -
New one year	$ 50.00	$ 50.00
Renewal two years	$ 150.00	$ 100.00
Duplicate	$ 25.00	$ 25.00
II. Passenger Vehicle License (PVL)		
Renewal	$ 495.00	$ 50.00
Vehicle Replacement	$ 75.00	$ 75.00
Affiliate Company Transfer	$ 150.00	$ 150.00
Application for Individual PVL	$ 500.00	$ 100.00
Application for Fleet PVLs	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00
New Taxicab PVL in Service (Individual)	$ 5,000.00	$ -
New Taxicab PVL in Service (Fleet)	$ 2,500.00	$ -
III. License Transfer		
1 - 4 PVLs	$ 3,995/PVL	$ 3,995/PVL
5 - 100 PVLs	$10,000 +$500/PVL over 4	$10,000 +$500/PVL over 4
101 + PVLs	$58,000 + $250/PVL over 100	$58,000 + $250/PVL over 100

In 2021 County agreed to change following fees:

- Eliminate the $20 test fee
- Implement a flat $50 reinspection fee

Taxi Fares

Rates Comparison from Neighboring Jurisdictions.

	Montgomery County	Arlington County [5]	Prince George County [6]	Fairfax County [7]	City of Alexandria[8]	Washington D.C.[9]
Initial charge	$4.00	$3.50	$3.00	$4.00	$5.00	$4.00
Cost for distance traveled	$0.50 cents for each additional quarter mile	$0.40 cents for each additional one-sixth of a mile	$0.30 cents for each additional one-seventh of a mile	$0.40 cents for each additional one-sixth of a mile	$0.52 cents for each additional one-sixth of a mile	$2.56 cents for each additional mile
Per Mile	$2.00	$2.4	$2.10	$2.40	$2.60	$2.56
Waiting and Traffic Delay Time	$0.47/min	$0.43/min	$0.30/min	$0.35/min	$0.41/min	$0.42/min
Additional Passengers	$1.00	$1.00	$1.00	$1.00	$1.25	$1.00
Personal Service for Loading Items	$1.00	-	$1.00	$1.00	$0.50/per item	-
Pick-up and Delivery	$2.00	-	-	-	-	same rate as single passenger unless vehicle hired by the hour
Snow Emergency	$2.50	-	$3.00	-	$5.00	15.00
Animal Service	$0.00	-	-	$1.00	$2.00	-
Cleaning Fee	$0.00	$25.00	-	$25.00	-	-

5. https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Transportation/Taxis#:~:text=For%20each%20additional%20passenger%2012%20or%20older%3A%20%241
6. Prince George's county department of public works and transportation taxi licensing section, https://pgcwebsitestg.prod.acquia-sites.com/sites/default/files/media-document/dcv26775_revised-taxi-rates-and-bill-of-rights-091919.pdf
7. Fairfax County, Virginia - Code Of Ordinances CHAPTER 84.1 - Public Transportation. ARTICLE 6., https://library.municode.com/va/fairfax_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=THCOCOFAVI1976_CH84.1PUTR_ART6RURERAFACH_S84.1-6-3RAFACHES
8. City Of Alexandria, Virginia Taxicab Rates, https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/TaxiRates_2023.pdf

Department of For-Hire Vehicles, https://dfhv.dc.gov/page/taxicab-fares

Change in cost of operations of the taxicab industry

The table below determines how inflation impacted the taxicab industry during the two-year period. Here we use a weighting of each category based on overall importance (based on the methodology of the Alington County (1)). For the more accurate numbers about Montgomery County staff needs to work with the local Taxi Companies to determine the Weight.

* The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change overtime in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services (4).

BLS Index	Weight[1]	Sep-21[2]	Sep-23[3]	Increase or Decrease	Increase or Decrease, %	Weighted Change
CPI	0.62	274.31	307.789	1.12	12.20	0.70
New Cars	0.15	160.244	179.75	1.12	12.17	0.17
Motor Fuel	0.1	279.367	340.6	1.22	21.92	0.12
Insurance	0.08	566.211	742.292	1.31	31.10	0.10
Maintenance and Repair	0.05	320.446	392.222	1.22	22.40	0.06
Sum/Average	1	1600.578	1,962.65	1.20	19.96	1.20

1. Formula to Determine Changes in cost of operations of the taxicab industry, County Board Agenda Item Meeting of April 22, 2023, https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/commissions/documents/transportation/23_03_30_tc/des-apr-taxi-cab-rates.pdf
2. Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average, by expenditure category, September 2021, BLS.gov, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/cpi_10132021.pdf
3. Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average, by expenditure category, September 2023, BLS.gov, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf
4. Consumer Price Index Frequently Asked Questions https://www.bls.gov/cpi/questions-and-answers.htm