

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, October 2, 2017, on Senior Mobility and Accessibility.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:08 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Konrad E. Herling, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Edward V. J. Putens and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Jessica Bellah, City Planner; Christal Batey, Community Resource Advocate; Karen Haseley, Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Senior Citizens Advisory Committee (SCAC), the Greenbelt Intergenerational Volunteer Exchange Service (GIVES); the Golden Age Club; Kathleen Gallagher, News Review; Lucinda Shannon, Consultant Transportation Planner at KFH.

Ms. Bellah discussed the background on the report, prepared by the KFH Group, Inc. of Bethesda on the Senior Mobility and Accessibility Needs and Barriers Study. She initially wrote the grant which was funded through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC). The Technical Assistance Program brought together stakeholders in the Greenbelt community and solicited residents' input to identify key areas where Greenbelt older adult and disabled populations are understood and recommend transportation projects to serve these populations.

Ms. Shannon presented the study which was designed to identify transportation needs and barriers for older adults and people with disabilities in Greenbelt. She has special interest and experience in working with transportation for seniors and paratransit along with expertise in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In order to identify the needs and barriers faced by older adults and people with disabilities in Greenbelt, there were two primary approaches: review of the demographic and land-use data and outreach to the community through a survey and focus group meetings with stakeholders. Options were then developed for addressing needs and barriers that had been identified.

The residents on the North side of the city over 65 had the highest concentration, followed by the center of the city, south of Crescent and west of Southway. The study also mapped the trips taken by seniors, such as for shopping and to medical offices, government locations, and residential housing, and public transportation routes, which created a model of frequency and available access for them. Mobility management is a new type of social service that focuses on individuals' needs and manages a coordinated community-wide transportation services network of multiple transportation providers in partnership with each other. There are many types of mobility management models, which communities develop to meet the needs of people who cannot drive and/or choose not to drive. Mobility management activities can include travel training, transportation coordination among multiple agencies, advocating for transportation services, providing a one-call center, information and referral, coordinating volunteer rides, and coordinating van service.

Mayor Jordan mentioned that citizens leave Greenbelt in order to access different types of medical service.

Ms. Shannon said that the survey included a wide range of questions about transportation. She collected 178 surveys, which accounted for about 10% of the Greenbelt population that is 65 or older. Only 3% were aged 90 or above. Those 80 to 89 and those 59 or younger each represented 12%. Those 60 to 69 represented 36% of respondents while those 70 to 79 comprised 39%.

Ms. Shannon discussed the five other barriers that had been identified. Transportation services with inadequate capacity to accommodate demand are a barrier because they require trips to be scheduled in advance. She also noted weekend service and service to destinations beyond the range of the Greenbelt Connection can be a problem. The single most important enhancement that would improve transportation for seniors and people with disabilities living in Greenbelt is the pedestrian infrastructure. Pathway improvements were mentioned the most frequently. Needing more information and easier access to transportation services were also popular topics.

Ms. Davis stated that the city would love to increase the capacity of the Greenbelt Connection but that more support from Prince George's County is needed for the buses.

Mayor Jordan asked about the pros and cons of a fixed-route circulator bus versus a call-a-bus like the Greenbelt Connection. Ms. Shannon responded that the Connection meets a very specific need that cannot be met by a fixed-route bus, since users need to be picked up at the door. Other transportation modes have processes to go through that can be difficult, such as the purchase of senior Smart Cards or qualifying for Metro ACCESS. She also stated that the study identifies various locations in the city with pathways that need maintenance or improved street crossing. There is a shortage of wheelchair-accessible taxi service as well. She also acknowledged the support provided by GIVES volunteers.

Some recommendations stated were mobility management, travel training, volunteer driving, senior travel clubs and a voucher program. The demographic analysis uses US Census Data and geographic information system tools to predict the amount and location of demand for transportation services that meet the needs of older adults. A geographic origin and destination analysis provides insight into key destinations for older adults. The geographic analysis also graphically represents the Prince George's County TheBus and WMATA bus service.

Ms. Shannon stated that there is matching grant funding from the Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) to enhance mobility for seniors and those with disabilities. Ms. Bellah commented that one of the big contributions of this study is the available information and possibilities; however, it would be difficult to absorb many of the programs into current city programs. The Senior Mobility Study is available on the city website.

Informational Items

Several informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bonita Anderson, CMC
City Clerk*