



## Legislation Text

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### **CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

#### **ACTION REQUESTED:**

Adopt the resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application to the Regional Transportation Authority requesting a continuation of federal funding for the Ride DuPage to Work program

**DEPARTMENT:** Transportation, Engineering and Development

**SUBMITTED BY:** Andrea Nair, Project Manager - Transportation

#### **BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:**

N/A

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Ride DuPage to Work program is a sub-program of the Ride DuPage program and began operation in March 2008. Ride DuPage to Work is designed to provide a reduced fare for seniors and people with disabilities to travel to and from work. The Ride DuPage to Work program currently operates under a federal Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities grant that was secured in 2019 from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) through an application submitted by the City of Naperville on behalf of the Ride DuPage to Work Partners (City of Naperville, Naperville Township, Lisle Township, Wheatland Township, the Village of Glen Ellyn, the City of Wheaton, and Milton Township).

The Section 5310 grant provides a 50/50 split of trip costs taken under the program. Each local partner supports the grant by sharing the responsibility of a 50% local match to the grant award. Without the grant funding, Ride DuPage to Work trips would be fully funded by the local partners. Pace Suburban Bus functions as an additional partner by operating the service. In 2021, approximately 14,000 trips were taken through Ride DuPage to Work. This is a slight increase from 2020 when ridership was at its lowest due to COVID-19 pandemic; ridership was at 10,300 in 2020. In 2022, ridership decreased again to 12,200. It is anticipated that ridership will increase as the impact of the pandemic subsides.

In April 2021, the City responded to a Call for Projects from the RTA and submitted an application for additional grant funding. The City and our partners were approved for an award amount anticipated to provide an additional 24 months of funding. Due to lower ridership, the City and our partners are still using the grant from 2019. There is approximately \$380,000 remaining from the \$660,000 2019 grant. The City and partners were awarded another grant in 2021 for \$600,000. These two grants will likely continue to fund the Ride DuPage to Work program for the next three to four years, depending on ridership. The City is applying for the 2023 grant to ensure the longevity of this vital program. However, the City and our partners will be asking for less funds this grant cycle because the ridership

does not justify funding at pre-pandemic levels.

**DISCUSSION:**

On March 20, 2023, the RTA announced another Call for Projects for a Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities grant. This Call for Projects is anticipated to provide an additional 24 months of grant funding, contributing to services provided from May 2026 to April 2028. The partners expressed interest in securing additional grant funding so that the Ride DuPage to Work program can continue to offer a reduced fare structure for participants traveling to and from work.

The City of Naperville will submit a joint application requesting continued funding for Ride DuPage to Work on behalf of the Ride DuPage to Work Partners through the federal Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities grant program. The attached resolution will be submitted as part of the application authorizing the City Manager as the appropriate authority to submit the application.

Based on ridership levels of each partnering agency, it is anticipated that the City of Naperville and its partners will contribute a local match of approximately \$195,000 for the first year of continued funding and approximately \$220,000 for the second year of grant funding. These funding estimates assume a 10% increase in ridership from 2022 to 2023 and a 15% increase in ridership from 2023 to 2024. These contribution amounts represent 50% of the local match for trips taken by the Ride DuPage to Work Partners. The City's local share amount will be included as part of the Ride DuPage annual budget. The Section 5310 grant funding will be used to reimburse the partners for trips taken as a part of the Ride DuPage to Work program and will help to ensure that the program costs continue to be at or below the program budget.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

If awarded, the City of Naperville and its partners will receive a 50% reimbursement for the local share of the cost of trips taken under the Ride DuPage to Work Program. The City's local share for Ride DuPage, which includes the Ride DuPage to Work sub-program is included in the General Fund budget each year.