Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation
Bureau of Public Transportation
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Shared Ride Advisory Committee (SRAC) – Meeting #3 Highlights

Overview

The Shared Ride Advisory Committee (SRAC) held its third meeting on Monday, August 31, 2026, 9:30 am – noon. The Committee is charged with developing a sustainable funding and service delivery model for Pennsylvania's Shared Ride Program within existing funding levels. During the meeting, members examined demand-responsive transportation program structures in other states, reviewed feedback from members regarding the sample service models presented at Meeting #2, and discussed considerations they want to include in further model refinement and testing.

Other States' Experiences

Pennsylvania's shared-ride program is distinctive for offering coordinated statewide transportation to the general public in all 67 counties, subsidized fare programs for seniors and other human service program clients, and a fare-based reimbursement model for local operators. Other states provide examples of alternative service concepts being considered for inclusion in potential service models. Highlighted examples include:

- Maryland: State operating assistance is distributed so that 60 percent of funds are equally dispersed among the counties, and the remaining amount is allocated proportionally to each county's share of the State's combined elderly and handicapped population. **Elderly and handicapped trips are prioritized**, and some counties, such as St. Mary's, use **volunteer drivers and vehicles** while **limiting the number of trips** an individual can take within a period of time.
- Minnesota: Select regions are implementing microtransit and transportation network (TNCs) options. In the Twin Cities area, a **premium non-shared ride service through TNCs** is available, with the rider paying the initial $5 of the trip cost, the next $20 covered by the Metropolitan Council, and any additional costs paid by the rider. Arrowhead Transit, operating in 10 counties in the northern region of the state, **offers a dial-a-ride microtransit service in 15 communities**.
- North Carolina: The Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) provides **state operating assistance** for elderly, disabled, employment, and rural general public trips (general public trips require a local match). Program **funding varies with the state budget, and administrative costs are ineligible**.
- Ohio: Mobility Ohio is a collaboration among the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and six other state agencies to coordinate fragmented human services transportation statewide by **establishing standardized policies and regional**

mobility management centers that assign trips to appropriate local providers. The program is still in the development phase.

- Wisconsin: Counties **receive an annual formula grant determined by the number of elderly and disabled persons** through the County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance program, with a local match. The counties have the flexibility to determine their own trip fares and service delivery methods.

Committee Member Survey Feedback

During Meeting #2, Committee members were presented with various service concepts and five sample alternative service models. Following the meeting, Committee members completed a survey, providing comments on the service concepts and models. Aggregated feedback collected included:

- **Modernize and strengthen the existing system,** rather than replace it.
- None of the sample models emerged as a preferred solution; take the strongest components of each model and merge them into a **hybrid approach**.
- Make **incremental changes and use pilots and phased implementation** before making statewide structural changes.
- Explore **hybrid funding structures** with predictable grants and per-trip reimbursements, ensuring **built-in adjustments** for inflation, growth, etc.
- **Strategic investments should be supplemental** to core funding.

Based on the collected feedback, an overall emerging path forward for the program was created:

1. **Strengthen** – Improve the existing shared-ride program and protect essential mobility.
2. **Stabilize** – Establish predictable, sustainable operating funding with protections for inflation, demand, and rural/urban differences.
3. **Invest** – Fund technology, artificial intelligence (AI), fleet, workforce, and efficiency initiatives with measurable returns.
4. **Enable Managed Mobility** – Give providers flexibility to match customers with the most appropriate transportation option.
5. **Expand Coordination** – Progressively integrate regional, healthcare, and human service mobility where it produces measurable benefits.

Alternatives Discussion

Following Meeting #3, the Committee support team will begin building, testing, and measuring the impacts of different service scenarios to inform model refinement. Committee members offered additional guidance to the support team, highlighting concepts, measures, and considerations to include in the analysis, such as:

- Impacts on service providers' ability to deliver Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) trips resulting from program changes.
- Defining the state's minimum service levels for shared-ride providers to align with customer expectations.
- Ensuring rider experience is considered in all potential service changes.
- Remaining sensitive to fare adjustments that will be absorbed by the riders.
- Identifying opportunities to reduce administrative costs.
- Measure societal costs and savings of program changes.
- Explore alternative options, such as telehealth visits, delivery services, and mobile hospital units, to eliminate the need for some trips.
- Performance-based incentives to increase funding.
- Defining core service hours and restricting the use of state funding to them.
- Shared-ride programs' interdependence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service.
- Implementing technological solutions and artificial intelligence to cut costs and reduce administrative burdens.
- Adjusting the 15 percent fare co-pay percentages to reduce the burden on riders.
- Developing a fare increase policy.
- Increasing general public trips through fare flexibility.
- Building a full price scenario, using the current model.
- Identifying additional funding streams for the program.
- Comparing the per-trip, block grant, and hybrid funding models.
- Prioritizing trip types by limiting trip availability or increasing trip fares.
- Limiting riders to set trip budgets for specific periods of time.

Action Items

The Committee support team will use information from the completed surveys and discussions during Meeting #3 to define and test potential scenarios and assess their impacts, providing Committee members with data to inform future discussions.