



CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Consideration of a resolution requesting Oakland County amend its agreement with People's Express (PEX) to add transportation services to the City of Novi.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: City Manager
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services/OAS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Older Adult Needs Committee was formed by City Council in January 2023 to advise Council on the needs of older adults in Novi, identify best practices for service delivery needs, as well as to formulate and recommend plans to meet the critical needs of older adults and adults with disabilities.

Senior Transportation was one of the focus areas identified for research and discussion by the Older Adult Needs Committee. City staff provided ridership statistics and discussed the challenges facing Novi's Senior transportation services. The OAS Needs Committee presented their findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on October 9, 2023. At that time, the Committee recommended City Council contract a 3rd party provider covered under the Oakland County transportation millage to expand transportation to include more hours and days of service and potentially open services to all residents.

Novi Youth Council, representing potential teen riders, has expressed interest in the service, citing feeling safer with a City of Novi-approved provider than Uber or Lyft and favoring a more affordable option.

In November 2022, Oakland County voters approved the Oakland County Public Transportation millage. This is a 10-year, .95 mill tax dedicated to expanding and maintaining public transit services throughout Oakland County. The millage amounts to approximately \$4.4 million, which Novi residents pay to Oakland County for public transportation services. Current services provided to Novi by the millage are the two SMART fixed bus routes operating on 12 Mile and Grand River Ave. Oakland County is utilizing selected providers (PEX, WOTA, NOTA, OPC, and SMART) to provide curb-to-

curb services within each community. Novi is currently the only community operating its own system.

To expand and improve Senior Transportation for Novi residents, staff recommends approving the following resolution which would initiate the creation of an implementation strategy with PEX to begin delivering services here in Novi. They have an established operation, offering more hours and a much shorter time to make a ride reservation (three days, compared to a week). PEX's driver pool is well-trained with a full-time support network to ensure they are up to date on all necessary protocols/procedures related to offering services to vulnerable populations.

People's Express (PEX) was born in Northfield Human Services, which was incorporated in 1991 to address the human service needs of Northfield Township. The organization initially sought to address the transportation needs of low-income individuals within their community. As a result of these efforts, PEX transportation service was launched with only one bus and one driver. In 2007, PEX grew from a specialized service program to its own organization. Today, PEX maintains a fleet of 74 vehicles, has 81 employees, and services the transit needs for the Wixom, South Lyon, Lyon Township, Milford Township, Commerce Township, and the Villages of Milford and Wolverine Lake along with the City of Detroit.

If Council agrees with this course of action, City administration can engage PEX representatives regarding ridership fare deals or programs for Novi residents, using the current budget allocation. More importantly, the proposed move to PEX through the County's expanded transportation millage means there is no increase in expenditure from the City's budget. These expanded hours and services to all residents aged 14 and older (including non-disabled) all fall under the new millage.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval of a resolution requesting Oakland County amend its agreement with People's Express (PEX) to add transportation services to the City of Novi.