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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Katherine Smith, Community Resources Department Director

Prepared By:

Linda Haley, Senior Resources Division Manager.

Presenter: Linda Haley, Senior Resources Division Manager

Subject:

10:00 AM *Senior Resources Transportation/Chore Program

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this study session is to provide information to the Board of County Commissioners on our senior programs and to seek direction regarding the future of the Transportation and Chore Services Programs.

Background and Discussion: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

In 2005 the decision was made as part of the reorganization of the Community Services Department into the Community Resources Department, to have a Senior Resources Division to respond to the needs of our

growing senior population. We began with the Homemaker Program which was already in existence, and added in the management of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Transportation Grant followed by the addition of the Chore Services Grant (DRCOG) in 2007. We also have worked collaboratively with Volunteer Connections over the years standing up programs such as Dig out Your Neighbor, Elves for Seniors, and the Volunteer Shopper program to meet senior needs. Additionally we provide Ombudsman services to seniors and their families throughout Arapahoe County.

Managing the DRCOG funded Chore and Transportation programs has had the added benefit of allowing us a “seat at the table” with the Area Agency on Aging and an opportunity to strongly represent the needs of our seniors with DRCOG as our Area Agency on Aging. This is especially important for us in Arapahoe County as we do not have any of the large service agencies that serve the entire county and act as advocates based here in our county.

In 2007 when we began this discussion the population of seniors age 65 and over in Arapahoe County was 50,879 or 9%. In 2020 the population of seniors age 65 and over was approximately 80,453 or 13.5% of our total population. The projections for 2025 are a population of age 65 plus of 110,780 or 16% of our total population and in 2030 we will be at 128,513 or 17.5% of our population. The need for Arapahoe County to ensure that there are adequate supports for seniors to remain independent in their own homes has not changed.

Our transportation program typically serves approximately 500 unduplicated seniors per year with trips to medical appointments, dialysis, and nutrition related activities. This program has had many challenges over the past several years. We lost a solid provider due to changes that DRCOG made in 2015 and subsequently had 5 years of uphill work with a provider who in 2020 decided to leave the transportation business. At that point we worked closely with DRCOG and they agreed to take over the contract for 6 months for both Arapahoe and Adams Counties as the exit of the previous provider occurred suddenly and didn’t allow time for us to develop solutions. In previous discussions with the BOCC there has been agreement that we should stay involved in transportation and manage the contract to ensure our senior’s needs were represented.

We recently learned that Adams County has ended their involvement with DRCOG and transportation at least for the time being. Arapahoe County is currently the only County in the metro area still managing a senior transportation contract making this an appropriate time to consider our future options.

Transportation is currently being provided in the 4 county metro area by VIA Mobility who has provided services in the Boulder/Longmont area for many years. They were also Arapahoe County’s provider through Aid to Agencies for the Eastern Plains. We have rolled the Eastern Plains program into the DRCOG grant though they still must apply for additional funds Aid to Agencies funds to match Federal Transportation funds to supplement due to the cost per trip in the rural areas. They have an excellent reputation for quality service. DRCOG is managing the contract for Jefferson, Denver, and Adams Counties while we manage the Arapahoe County contract. Managing this contract requires that we provide a 10% match or approximately \$43,000 per year for this program and that we provide the staff time to manage the program. Our total match budget is \$49,000 as services were increasing prior to Covid but have dipped slightly at present. We can anticipate the need for services and therefore the funding and match requirements to continue to grow over the next decade.

Our other DRCOG funded program is our Chore Services Program which provides non-routine heavy duty chores, deep cleaning, decluttering, unpacking, and yard clean-ups to 500 plus seniors in Arapahoe County each year. Currently we receive a grant from DRCOG for \$105,000 for this program but while the rules of the program require only a 10% match, this is an expensive program to manage and we typically provide match of closer to 33 - 35% or \$35 - \$40,000 in staff time and costs. We have traditionally covered the additional Chore Program match needs through savings in other Community Resources General Fund programs each year. As other costs increase, that is becoming more difficult.

The regional changes in Transportation provide us with an opportunity to consider whether we should continue

managing the DRCOG transportation contract or let DRCOG take over the management of that contract. Allowing DRCOG to take over would relieve us of the need to provide the match and could allow us to right size the budget for Chore by moving \$35,000 to the Chore match budget and provide an additional \$14,000 in overall savings to the County.

The Chore Services program is an important program to the seniors in Arapahoe County. Maintaining this program allows us to stay involved with DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging and keep our overall voice in representing our seniors. If we were to give up both programs we would lose that involvement with DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging and our opportunity to be part of aging discussions for our area.

We have discussed the possibility of the outlined changes with both DRCOG and VIA. DRCOG understands the financial implications for us in continuing to manage transportation while at the same time would be willing to have us stay involved. VIA has said that while it would be more streamlined for them to have just one contract with DRCOG for the entire metro area they are also very willing to continue with business as is. They are also willing to keep providing statistics to us and meeting regularly regardless of who hold the contract.

Fiscal Impact: The fiscal impact would be an overall budget savings of \$14,000 for the County and the ability to adequately cover the Chore Services budget needed to provide this program.

Alternatives:

The alternative would be to continue managing the transportation program as we currently do and to continue attempting to cover the Chore Services budget through creative budgeting or future budget increase requests.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- ☒ Be fiscally sustainable
- ☒ Provide essential and mandated service
- ☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: This option is supported by Senior Resources Staff.

Concurrence: This option has been reviewed and is supported by the Administrative Services Division and the Community Resources Department Director.