

Senior transit's future weighed

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MONTEBELLO - Montebello City Council members this week will consider approving a pilot program that would allow a private company to take over Dial-A-Ride services for seniors and the disabled.

MidValley Yellow Cab has proposed operating the Dial-A-Ride service, which is now run by the city's transportation department. Under Yellow Cab's proposal, which the council will look at at its meeting Wednesday, the company says it can save the city money while increasing service hours.

But exactly how much MidValley would charge riders, along with its proposed service hours, won't be discussed until after the council approves opening negotiations with the company, said Laura Cornejo, strategic planning manager for Montebello's transportation department. In fiscal year 2006-07, the city spent \$384,760 on its Dial-A-Ride service, which provides in-city transportation to seniors and the disabled using five Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant vans. About 14,700 riders used the service during that period, Cornejo said.

The Dial-A-Ride program is available to all Montebello seniors 62 and older and to qualified disabled residents any age and their attendants. It runs from 8:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Sunday. Passengers pay \$1.10 per ride.

Once details of MidValley's proposals are worked out, and if the council approves the plan, the company could begin providing services in June, Cornejo said. After three months, city officials will evaluate the service to see whether Montebello will continue with MidValley.

"Customer service is key," said Cornejo. "It's one of our most popular services, so we will definitely want MidValley to provide the same or superior customer service."

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