



EMPLOYEE MEMO

TO: All Employees

FROM: Ben Capelle, CEO

DATE: 10-26-22

RE: First Come, First Served Dial-a-Ride

As you know the current demand for Dial-a-Ride trips is very high. Many of you have asked me why are we not limiting trips? The simple answer is, it isn't that simple.

Before we get into some changes we are making, it is important to understand how we schedule trips now.

We use a system built around what we call "essential trips". Essential trips are trips to work, medical appointments, ADA, senior centers, and adult daycare. When someone needs one of those types of trips, we always say yes to the customer. This means customers with an essential trip always get where they need to go, even if they are late.

Work and medical trips make up over 70% of our total trips. The other three essential trip types are a smaller percentage of our total trips. We are required by law to provide ADA trips as essential trips, and senior centers and adult day care are both small percentages of the overall total trip count.

We already deny trips that do not fit into the "essential trip" categories and we have for many years.

So, if I make the decision to limit trips, do I restrict people going to the doctor or people going to work? The answer is, I cannot pick either.

Based on current regulations from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) my only option is to move all of Laketran Dial-a-Ride to First Come, First Served. This means we will no longer guarantee any type of trip, except ADA, which is required by law.

So what does implementing First Come, First Served mean?

Well, it means total trip loads will go down, so there is less stress on drivers, dispatchers, schedulers, etc. It also means we will tell seniors and people with disabilities, "no, we cannot get you to the doctor" or "no, we can't get you to work", even though we have for 20 years. This will be the first time, in over 35 years, that we tell people we cannot take them to medical





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or work destinations.

I am sure some of you will tell me we should have done this years ago, others will ask me how can we deny taking a senior to the doctor. I have been agonizing over this decision for a long time. I am more worried than I can convey in writing, that this will have a massive, negative ripple in the community.

When you think about the Laketran stories people share with each other. Do you think customers will tell others we get them to an appointment late or will they tell people we denied them access?

My bet is denying access.

The reason I share my thoughts is to help you understand how difficult of a choice this is. Why this is not something, I am doing quickly or lightly. Changing to First Come, First Served has a significant risk to irreparably harm our relationship with the community, the very same community that votes on our levies to keep us open.

I hope you better understand why I have agonized over this decision, but ultimately instructed Matt, Tammy and Customer Service to begin rolling out this change this week.

While these changes will reduce stress on Dial-a-Ride drivers and dispatch it will skyrocket stress on Customer Service as they begin to deny service to people. If you talk to a customer about Customer Service, encourage them to book online and let them know they are working as hard as they can to book trips when they fit.

Will First Come, First Served negatively affect service in the long term?

No, I don't think so. We will continue to hire people at as rapid a pace as practical. As you can see in the attached ridership graph, trip demand can unpredictably rise at any time and can go up at the drop of a hat. It takes months to train new drivers, so no matter how fast we react or how hard we push people through training, we can only move so fast when trips go up.

If people are able, please encourage them to use Local Routes, because in this new system they will quite literally be taking a trip away from someone who might need it.

I have included a graph of ridership for the last 5 years so you can get a sense for where ridership is in relation to pre-pandemic levels.





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Laketrans Ridership Chart (Jan. 2018 – Sept. 2022)

Blue=Local Routes Red=Dial-a-Ride Green= Park-n-Ride

