

First Transit

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the mobility company

June 27, 2024

Donna Brown-Martin
Director
Milwaukee County Department of Transportation
10320 W. Watertown Plank Road
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Dear Ms. Brown-Martin,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to riders' concerns expressed at the June 1st customer service meeting. Since that meeting, Transdev has worked diligently to restore service quality and consistency to exceed the expectations of riders.

In the days and weeks leading up to the June 1 meeting, we recognized that service was not performing to expectations and undertook an investigation of the root causes. We identified that what was at the root of inconsistent service was three things:

- Failure to maintain the integrity of standing order templates.
- Imbalance of driver staffing between AM and PM peaks.
- Staff not empowered to take actions needed to solve service challenges.

The service manifestations of these root causes were inefficient routing, late trips, long rides, and frustrated riders and drivers.

Beginning in the last half of May, Transdev took the following actions to improve service quality and consistency:

- Rebuild standing order templates.
 - Standing order templates are now restored in the correct quantity to meet service needs.
 - With templates repaired, booking demand rides will be more logical, reducing inefficient routing, late pickups and long ride times.
 - Optimizing templates for group trips and centers to improve the efficiency, and service quality of group trips.
 - For day of service monitoring, we have also assigned a router, not in dispatch, to continuously work ahead 1-2 hours out to look for inefficient trips and correct. Dispatchers continue to focus on solving more immediate routing needs.
- Add Drivers, Adjust Schedules.
 - Supplemented the local staff with up to 21 out of town drivers.
 - Drivers were voluntarily shifted from the morning to the afternoon.
 - New drivers are primarily scheduled for afternoons and weekend shifts to balance peak staffing needs.
 - Corporate resources are engaged to candidate engagement and maximize training output, adding new local drivers in larger numbers.
 - We expect to reach the ideal staffing number of local drivers by mid to late July.
- Empower staff.
 - Following the June 1 meeting Mark and I met in groups and individually with the operations team members both to understand their perspective. The conversations revealed a very siloed perspective.

- Empower Staff – Cont.
 - Following up from those first meetings, we have since empowered the operations team members to collaborate to improve service. The effect of this empowerment was immediate and tangible.
 - We have rallied the local team around our chief purpose, to bring freedom and mobility to Transit Plus riders. A common purpose is vital to keeping the team focused on the goal of service excellence.
 - To improve and sustain daily communications, AGM Patrick O'Brien has implemented a daily standup meeting in which each department comes together to review prior day service results, discuss today's challenges, and collaborate on solutions.

The above steps are already in action, and we are seeing consistent improved service quality. The service improvements will be sustained by the actions put in place.

I also want to address the concerns expressed about customer service. Improved service delivery will improve customer experience and result in less opportunity for conflict. We have taken several additional steps to improve overall customer experience.

- We continue to work with our dispatchers and drivers to build awareness on professionalism and radio etiquette.
 - Frequent MDT messages
 - Coaching touchpoints
 - In service meetings
- We continue to work with the drivers on their use of GPS and routing skills.
- We continue to work with the drivers on de-escalation skills.
- MCTS recently audited the Transdev new driver class mobility assistance section and suggested the following to improve customer assistance and customer experience. We will also bring these enhancements to the existing drivers through in-service meetings.
 - Enhanced training for the hearing and sight impaired.
 - Education in better use of Person First Language

As you may also be aware, we have a recent change in management at the Transdev Milwaukee operation. Director of Operations Mark Ward is serving as interim GM while we recruit a seasoned paratransit GM. Patrick O'Brien was recently appointed our permanent Assistant General Manager. Both Mark and Patrick are both experienced in paratransit operations in a Trapeze software environment. They are keenly focused on sustaining the improvements we have already made in our Transit Plus service and making continuous improvements now and in the future. I have the full support of Transdev for any resources necessary to support the Milwaukee operation.

Please feel free to reach out to me if there are any questions about our ongoing efforts for service improvements.

Sincerely,

Paul Buharin

Paul Buharin
Region Vice President

CC: Fran Musci - Director of Paratransit/Transit Plus
Susan Sweat – COO Transdev