

**Transit Plus Advisory Council
November 19, 2024 Minutes**

PLACE: Milwaukee County Transit System Administration Building, 1942 N. 17th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Large Conference Room & via Microsoft Teams Meeting

PRESENT: David Buck - Chair, Jim Bahneman- Vice Chair, Janice Briggs-Simmon, Laurel Henschel, Terry Hogans, Elois Reed, Nilda Rivera, Kelley Santi, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

ABSENT: Gerald Balezentis

GUESTS: Rev. William Jackson, Anita Spight – TPAC Applicants; Kevin Meyers - guest; Patrick O'Brien – Transdev; Joe Pietrek – Via; Jeff Sponcia – MCDOT; Fran Musci, Megan Newman, Paula Schultz and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the October 15, 2024 meeting were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: no report

Membership Committee: David Buck reported that Gerald Balezentis has resigned from the Council. Applicant Patricia Martin will be interviewed in December. Nilda Rivera was interviewed and approved for membership by the Council today.

Public Relations Committee: David Buck reported that the CDC recommends that persons with serious health conditions who are 60 years or older get two vaccinations.

Nominating Committee for 2025 Officers: David Buck is running unopposed for Chair and Terry Hogans is running unopposed for Vice-Chair.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Same Day Ride Pilot: Fran Musci reported that ridership in the program is low but is growing. There were 10 trips provided in September, 10 trips provided in October and so far in November 13 trips have been provided. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for tomorrow on Zoom. Consideration is being given to automatically enrolling all Transit Plus riders into the pilot, expanding uses for the service, and/or changing the fare.

Paratransit Customer Relations Manager: Fran Musci introduced Megan Newman. We are excited to have her work with Lisa Walters through the end of January. Megan advised that she was involved with transit in Wausau. She was the Deputy Director of Wausau's transit system and as that was a small organization, she had an opportunity to work in many

different areas of public transit.

TPAC Bylaws: Laurel Henschel recommended that on page 1, Section 3a that an explanation of the types of disabilities be added, i.e. intellectual, physical, sensory. She also suggested that in Section 3c the different categories of eligibility be named, i.e. conditional or unconditional. David Buck suggested that any references in the bylaws to Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public works be changed to MCDOT. The Council voted on and approved these changes.

NEW BUSINESS:

2025 Milwaukee County Budget Update: Fran Musci reported that the County Executive signed the 2025 budget last week. There were no major cuts to fixed route transit or paratransit. MCTS will be going to the County Board's next Transportation Committee meeting to report on the same day ride pilot. David Buck inquired about possible cuts in the County's Budget in 2026 and after. Fran advised that The State is getting ready to discuss their next two year budget. In the State's last budget, transit was moved from the Transportation fund into the General fund. Also in the past budget, the State cut the budget for transit to offset the federal funding transit received. MCTS is facing a fiscal cliff in 2026 due to Cares Act money running out.

TPAC Virtual Access: Fran explained that a new link was sent out for today's meeting and that it seems to be working. A problem was experienced the last two meeting for those people who were trying to call in. Hopefully we have resolved the issue by creating a new link.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Paula Schultz reported that the team provided 4 Freedom on Wheels group travel training sessions, 3 individuals were trained one on one to ride the bus, and 1 new driver ADA sensitivity training. The team is working on a new driver training video regarding mobility device securement on fixed route. That should be finished in mid-December. MCTS is still covering the cost of AIRA. AIRA is a wayfinding app that helps fixed route riders who are blind or have low vision to use the bus. On Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and the New Years Day holidays the fixed route buses will follow the Sunday schedule

TRANSDEV REPORT: Patrick O'Brien reported that new driver schedules began on November 10, 2024. However, some imperfections were found in those schedules. Fifteen drivers are in training. These new drivers will fill the holes in the schedules. Rebecca Rabatin of Independence First will be providing some sensitivity training at Transdev. October had the highest ridership volume since COVID.

VIA REPORT: Joe Pietrek reported that Via has been working with Transit Plus to increase ridership. November has been the highest ridership month so far. Ridership is growing slowly.

TRANSIT PLUS REPORT: Fran Musci reported that ridership was up in October. There were 33,674 rides provided. Pre-COVID there were between 36,000-37,000 rides per month.

In September there were 30,479 trips were provided. In September there were 117 missed trips. On-time was at 93.41%. Productivity was at 1.42. There were 87 complaints received in September, 20 were on-time complaints, 12 were for ride duration, 10 were for pick up/drop off problems. Additionally, there were 3 commendations. Fran read MCTS's responses to the questions asked by the Independence First Advisory Team. Fran also advised that an FTA triennial is coming up.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

David Buck reported that last Tuesday the driver on his return ride from a restaurant did not want to put the lift down for him.

Laurel Henschel asked how Transit Plus compares the length of paratransit rides to fixed route. She believes her son should be getting home earlier than he does and thought this may be related to routing issues. Fran Musci explained that Transit Plus looks at the total percentage of rides that compare to fixed route. This is done by overall data matching and looking for patterns. Long rides may also relate to the number of drivers available.

Arlene Washington had questions about the same day ride pilot as she had trouble using the service last week with a verification issue. Fran explained that riders need to have a credit card number on file or buy voucher codes from the MCTS cashier window.

Reverend Jackson mentioned that he was recently dropped off late for church because the van had been routed to west Froedert. He also wanted the drivers to be reminded to slow down over potholes. He also stated that drivers will not come into the gate at his residence. Patrick O'Brien explained that drivers should not be put into a situation where they must back up the van.

Kevin Meyers inquired whether Transdev's sensitivity training program includes working with persons who use mobility devices, or incorporates how to guide riders with visual impairments. Patrick said yes, and that Transdev will be bringing in more new ideas for sensitivity training and has reached out to Independence First, IBVI, and the Center for Deaf Blind Persons for assistance.

Terry Hogans stated that he works at IBVI and that the drivers are not getting out of the van to assist riders and don't seem to know how to assist riders. Patrick advised that riders should also be sure to ask for the assistance they need and to report any failures.

ADJOURNMENT