

**Transit Plus Advisory Council  
September 17, 2024 Minutes**

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

**PRESENT:** David Buck - Chair, Laurel Henschel, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

**ABSENT:** Jim Bahneman – Vice-Chair, Gerald Balezentis

**GUESTS:** Kelley Santi and Rev. William Jackson – TPAC Applicants; Kevin Meyers - guest; Mark Ward, and Patrick O'Brien – Transdev; Joe Pietrek – Via, Claire Enders – Milwaukee County Aging and Disability Transportation Coordinator; Tom Bertrand – MCTS Service Development; Fran Musci, Chris Fox, Paula Schultz and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the July 16, 2024 meeting were approved.

**COMMITTEES:**

**Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee:** no report

**Membership Committee:** David Buck reported that five TPAC applicants have all been interviewed. Kelley Santi is attending her third meeting today and will need to be interviewed. There are other applicants who still need to attend two meetings. The Membership Committee met today and is recommending applicants Terry Hogans and Janice Briggs-Simon for membership. The Council subsequently voted to recommend these applicants for MCDOT's approval. Other applicants will be considered for membership in October and thereafter until 7 new members are brought onto the Council. David urged all applicants to continue their interest in TPAC and to continue to attend meetings.

**Public Relations Committee:** David Buck recommended that everyone get out and get their COVID and flu shots. David also mentioned that the Connect 2, which is the north-south BRT on 27<sup>th</sup> Street, has been put on hold due to anticipated future Milwaukee County budget shortfalls

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Paratransit Taxi Task Force:** Fran Musci reported that the next meeting of the Task Force will be held on September 26, 2024.

**Transdev Management Report:** Fran Musci reported that in June Brian Kading resigned as General Manager and that the new General Manager is Patrick O'Brien. This is an extension of what Patrick was already doing as Assistant General Manager. Transdev is now looking for a new Assistant General Manager. Mark Ward Transdev's Regional General Manager is

supporting Patrick in day-to-day operations until all positions are full.

**Paratransit Project Coordinator Update:** Fran Musci reported that this job posting has been canceled for budgetary reasons. Lisa's position has instead been posted as a Customer Relations Manager. The Customer Relations Manager will be responsible for complaints, assisting TPAC, managing programs, etc. Interviews will be conducted soon so that someone can be hired.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Same Day Ride Pilot:** Fran Musci explained that the same day ride pilot is not a taxi program. It is a pilot program for Transit Plus riders who need a same day ride for health and employment purposes that could not be scheduled a day before. The requirements of this program were set forth by the County Board. The contract for this program was awarded to Via. The contract is for one year or until the funds run out. The program is available for both ambulatory riders and those who use mobility aids. Rides can be booked using an app or over the phone. The fare is \$10.00 one way. A PCA is free. A companion is allowed for an additional \$10.00. Fares can be paid by credit or debit card in the app. A voucher number can be purchased at the Transit Plus Office so that credit can be put onto your account. Riders have been enrolled into the program in waves. So far more than 370 riders have been enrolled in the program. Riders must sign an agreement stating they will abide by the purpose of the program before they can ride. Kevin Meyers was one of the first test riders.

**2025-2027 Area Aging Plan for Transportation:** Claire Enders reported that the Milwaukee County Area Agency on Aging focuses on adults over age 60. They update their plan goals every three years. They are updating their goals for 2025-2027 and are looking for community input. The State requires particular goal topics. 2022-2044 goals topics included health equity, coordination and communication and dimensions of wellness. The older adult population is 20% of the population in Milwaukee County. 30.2% of older adults have a disability. 40% or more of Milwaukee County residents are non-drivers. Focus groups have found that safe, timely affordable transportation is necessary for accessing older adult programming and meeting socialization needs. Fixed route transportation is not convenient. Specialized transportation coverage is not broad enough. Having to use public transportation forces older adults into greater social isolation and loneliness. 2025-2027 goals include scheduling tours for clients at six cultural assets or recreation sites. Identify and advocate for a transportation policy that will facilitate transportation coordination throughout the southeastern Wisconsin region by forming two new partnerships and conducting one coordinated advocacy effort per year. Increase education and communication regarding available transportation options for older adults, particularly for those without access to a vehicle by providing travel training to 12 residents per year to address barriers to becoming an MCTS user. Expand the group grocery shopping program to increase food access and independence by adding 2 new group grocery sites per month. Lease one vehicle per year from 5310 grant to expand connections with minority and woman-owned businesses.

**Transit Plus No-show Policy:** Fran Musci advised that the Transit Plus No-show policy was suspended during the contract transition. Transdev has been meeting the 93% on-time standard. Now that service has been stable for three months, we will be reinstating the No-show policy. We have sent out letters to let people know the policy will be reinstated soon. Trips must be canceled 2 hours in advance.

**MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT:** Paula Schultz reported that the team is focusing on bus driver training. They spent two days at Kinnickinnic Station last week providing refresher training to drivers on securement. Next week they will be at Fond du Lac Station. This Thursday a new driver ADA training session will be provided. Eleven Freedom on Wheels presentations are coming up. The August 25<sup>th</sup> fixed route changes will increase bus frequency, some routes will still be on construction detours through the fall, service to Greendale will move from Route 76 to Route 24, new service will be provided on HF1 and HF2 to Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy, the Connect 1 will run every 15 minutes, the Route 60 detour will become permanent. Check the website, the UMO app or call customer service for more information. The Doors Open Milwaukee event at the Fleet Maintenance Building on Vine Street will be held on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

**TRANSDEV REPORT:** Patrick O'Brien reported that in the last 75 days Transdev has increased the number of drivers. They are bringing in resources to help train drivers. Their workforce is new, young, fresh and excited. Many drivers are new to helping. They are increasing sensitivity training for drivers and are reaching out to Easter Seals and the Center for Deaf Blind for guidance. They are building schedules to disperse drivers to meet peak times.

**TRANSIT PLUS REPORT:** Fran Musci introduced Joe Pietrek Via's General Manager. He will be managing the same day ride pilot program. Joe advised that he lives in Green Bay and manages Green Bay Metro and the Flex Ride program in Milwaukee. Micro transit and paratransit are his specialties. Joe stated that Via operates micro transit and paratransit operations in 50 countries. Via has 750 partners worldwide, and 55 partners in the United States. Joe has been on site weekly in Milwaukee and will be joining the monthly TPAC meeting. Via is in the process of hiring a local person to manage the day-to-day operation in Milwaukee. Fran advised that Joe has brought one of their vans over today, if anyone would like to take a look at it after the meeting.

Fran also reported that Transit Plus provided 31,045 rides in July. July had 1.61 productivity, 95.68% on time performance, 56 missed trips, and 75 complaints. There were 12 pickup/drop off complaints, 10 ride duration complaints, 9 on-time complaints and 7 commendations. The feedback being given on the My Transit Manager app is mostly positive. Transdev is sharing the positive comments with their drivers. Fran also advised that Transit Plus is in receipt of a letter from the Transportation Advocacy Team at Independence First with many questions about how the program works. We are in the process of gathering information and preparing a response. Transit Plus applied for three 5310 grants. The grants provide funding for 2025-2026. The grant applications were for funding mobility management activities, funding an account-based fare collection system, and funding for an extension of the same day ride pilot. We should hear back in November whether we get the full amount requested, whether we get a reduced amount, or get nothing at all.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION:**

Laurel Henschel advised that she had a driver this morning who did not come to the door and sat in the van instead. Laurel stated that the driver said the dispatcher will call and then I can go. The driver also did not help her get onto the lift backwards. Laurel also was concerned

about the entrances at 2801 W. Kinnickinnic River Parkway. There is an east and a west entrance. The west is mostly used, but sometimes the east is used. Laurel stated she wants to use the east entrance when it is more convenient for her. Laurel suggested that Transdev contact Joshua at St. Lukes for more information about the use of the entrances at this location.

Reverend Jackson asked Transdev to tell their drivers to slow down over deep potholes.

Arlene Washington complained that she had a pickup for 12:09 p.m. today but did not get picked up until 12:54 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**