

Transit Plus Advisory Council
October 15, 2024, Minutes

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

PRESENT: David Buck – Chair, Jim Bahneman – Vice Chair, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo, Kelley Santi, Terry Hogans, Janice Briggs-Simmon

ABSENT: Gerald Balezentis, Laurel Henschel

GUESTS: Kevin Meyers, Helen White, Patricia Martin, Jeff Sponcia – Milwaukee County, Mark Ward and Patrick O'Brien – Transdev, Joe Pietrek – Via, Fran Musci and Paula Schultz – Transit Plus.

CALL TO ORDER: Welcome, Guest Policy, Introductions

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The meeting minutes from September 17, 2024, were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: Arlene stated that a driver whose name she thinks is Audry was very good, patient, and did a great job. Fran reminded everyone that commendations can be made on the My Transit Manager app or by calling the Transit Plus office.

Membership Committee: Two new council applicants were approved. Elois Reed and Kelley Santi will have their names submitted to Donna Brown-Martin for formal appointment to the Council. David Buck stated that, every October, council members who are in their second year are asked if they wish to stay for 2 more years. David Buck and Mae Wingo both wish to stay on the council. Marcia Perkins's Transit Plus eligibility expired making her ineligible to be on the council. David called her. Marcia is planning to re-apply to the council once she gets her Transit Plus eligibility renewed.

Public Relations: David Buck reminded everyone to get their flu, COVID, and RSV shots. He also stated that county budget hearings are happening. He stated that TPAC needs to be involved. Try to get to those meetings and advocate for paratransit.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Paratransit Taxi Task Force/Same Day Pilot – Fran Musci reported that ridership on the same day pilot remains low with 10 rides in September and 7 rides so far in October. MCTS Marketing and Via are working together to get the word out. MCTS

Marketing is developing a targeted social media toolkit that the task force can share with contacts. Printed brochures have been ordered. The program has capacity to do many more rides. All Transit Plus riders who have signed the agreement can use the program. It is for health and employment rides that can't be scheduled the day before. The cost is \$10 each way. Rides are available within Milwaukee County. Via reported that 356 riders have signed up for the program. Some questions that were asked: Do I need to print or sign my name on the form? Answer: Either one is fine. Will the van wait for me at the pharmacy? Answer: No, but it will likely still be close by when you call for a return ride. Can I ride with someone else? Answer: If you are acting as that person's PCA you can ride along for free.

Paratransit Customer Relations Manager Update – Fran reported that Lisa is retiring February 1. The new Customer Relations Manager is Megan Newman. She will be joining us from Wausau where she most recently served as Deputy Transit Director. With over 8 years of experience in both fixed route and paratransit services, we are looking forward to having her join our team. Megan's start date will be October 28.

Transit Plus No Show Policy – Fran reported that Transit Plus is reinstating the No Show Policy that existed before COVID. Transit Plus began tracking no shows again October 1. As outlined in the Rider's Guide, the No Show Policy works on a points system. No Shows and Cancels at the Door are 1 point each while late cancels are .5 points each. To receive a warning letter, a rider would have to accumulate 3.5 points and cancel/no show for 10% of their rides. If the cancellation was outside of the rider's control, such as a hospitalization, the rider will not be assigned any points. Fran reminded the council that cancellations must be made with at least a 2-hour notice to avoid a late cancel. Question: Can warning letters be disputed? Answer: Yes, call the Transit Plus office.

NEW BUSINESS:

Election Day Service – Milwaukee County was considering free or reduced cost for transportation for voting in the upcoming election. However, due to State law limiting the value of "incentives" for voting and Federal law limiting the cost of paratransit to no more than double fixed route, the proposal was tabled with no action by the Milwaukee County Finance Committee.

Nominations for TPAC Chair and Vice Chair – David Buck asked Jim Bahneman to be Chair and Arlene Washington to be Vice Chair of the Nominations Committee. In November they will accept nominations for TPAC Chair and Vice Chair. Let the committee know if you are interested in serving in one of these positions. There will be a vote in December. If there is a tie, it will be settled by a coin toss.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Paula Schultz reported that the mobility management team outreach for October includes 13 Freedom on Wheels group bus training sessions and 3 Resource Fairs.

It's time to start preparing for winter weather. Remind friends and neighbors to keep sidewalks shoveled. Per city of Milwaukee ordinance, sidewalks are required to be clear of snow and ice 24 hours after snow stops falling. It is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to clear the public sidewalks and fire hydrants. Owners of properties on corners are required to clear the crosswalk. If you know of an area that is not being shoveled, you can report it to the City at (414) 286-CITY (2489) or online at city.milwaukee.gov.

Dress warmly for your van trips. The large door must open frequently making it difficult to maintain a steady temperature inside the van.

Detailed bus stop and schedule information will be added to the next UMO app release. The update has been delayed but is now expected by the end of October.

Keep in mind that, on holidays, fixed route buses follow the Sunday schedule. Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day will all be on the Sunday schedule. The day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and New Years Eve will be on the regular schedule.

CARRIER REPORT:

Transdev - Patrick O'Brien reported that they are continuing to disburse new hires to spread them out to cover peak times. They continue to talk with the Center for Deaf/Blind about adding sensitivity training. Make sure to dress warm in cooler weather. Cold air gets in when the van door is open and must stay open for a few minutes to board passengers.

Via – Joe Pietrek reported that Via is fully staffed but they are still hiring. They are waiting for rides to increase. They are working with MCTS on Marketing for the Same Day Pilot Program.

TRANSIT PLUS REPORT:

Service update – Total ridership for August was 31,491. Productivity was 1.40, missed trips 85 (when van arrives outside the window and trip is not taken), On Time Performance was 94.03%. Total complaints were 74. The highest categories of complaints were On-time with 18, Ride duration with 9, Pick up/drop off problem with 9. There were also 4 formal commendations.

Transit Plus is still in the process of responding to the letter from the Transportation Advocacy Team from Independence First asking several questions about how our program works.

Transit Plus continues to meet with Transdev a minimum of 3 times per week to discuss service. Transdev is hiring drivers and administrative staff. They are also still searching for an Assistant General Manager.

Transit Plus meets with Via a minimum of 1 time per week to discuss service.

Milwaukee County Finance Committee went over the Transit budget last week. There were no cuts in the 2025 transit budget. The county supervisors are holding listening sessions. The budget is due November 1.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Kevin Meyers asked Transdev if they had heard back from Easter Seals on possible driver sensitivity training. Patrick stated that they had not. Kevin also asked if they had checked with Vision Forward or Independence First. Patrick answered that they have not yet but they will try those resources. Kevin asked how many drivers Transdev currently has and if any are from out of town. Patrick answered that they currently have about 150 with some of them still in training. Yes, they are currently using some out of town drivers. Kevin reported that his neighbor told him she had made a complaint through the My Transit Manager app. She complained that the driver took her bag and would not give it back until they reached the destination and that some netting was thrown on her in the van. Fran reported that she does monitor the complaints through the app but did not see a complaint like this come through. She asked Kevin to report back specific date and time of the incident so it could be investigated.

Arlene Washington asked if all of the vans have the safety belt on the lift. Patrick answered that most have it but not all.

Helen White reported that some people are confused about the same day ride and think that it operates the same as the previous taxi program. Fran stated that the new program was limited by the county board.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.