

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-office Communication

DATE: 3/21/2025

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
Julie Esch, Interim President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation and the Interim President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System, providing an Information Report regarding the Transit Plus Program including the Same Day Pilot.

FILE TYPE: Informational Report

REQUEST

This report provides information on the current state of paratransit service since the paratransit service update of December 2024.

BACKGROUND

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) paratransit program, known as Transit Plus, provides transportation for persons with disabilities whose disability prevents them from using the fixed route bus system. The primary responsibility of the Transit Plus office is to administer the federally required ADA paratransit program. In addition, Transit Plus also administers the Same Day Pilot program.

Paratransit Van Service

Van service is provided through a contract with First Group (a wholly owned subsidiary of Transdev North America). MCTS pays a negotiated rate per service-hour provided. The current van service contract began in October 2023 and ends in October 2030. Under this contract, the vendor is responsible for all aspects of service provision including maintaining appropriate insurance; hiring, training and managing staff; drug testing, scheduling, dispatching and providing rides; accident/incident investigation; vehicle acquisition; and equipment maintenance.

MCTS closely monitors Transdev's performance in order to make sure service meets federal requirements and contracted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The contract includes performance standards in the areas of on-time performance, ride duration, service availability, appointment drop-offs, and service productivity. Incentives and penalties are applied as warranted.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data since contract start:

Activity	Standard	Nov- Dec 2023	Jan- Dec 2024	Jan 2025
Van Trips	N/A	55,180	364,360	31,557
On- time performance (OTP) -Pick up within 30-minute pick up window	93%	82.6%	93.13%	96.20%
Missed trips- van arrives outside of pick-up window and client does not travel	Less than 0.1% of scheduled trips	1.55%	0.38%	0.15%
On-time appointment drop off	99% of trips with appointment times	89.3%	90.45%	93.97%
Ride duration comparable to fixed route bus	90%	87.5%*	85.62%	89.68%
Telephone calls answered in less than 2 minutes	95%	31.6%	92.6%	97.10%
Productivity - Passengers per service hour	1.70	1.48	1.49	1.30

*Random sampling. Full survey of all trips began in January 2024.

Customer complaints are processed jointly through both Transit Plus and the provider. Once a complaint is received, it is entered into a database and investigated. Resolutions are communicated to the appropriate parties, as needed, and documented in the complaint database. Complaint calls have decreased as service has improved. In addition, Transdev added a Customer Service Manager position in January 2025 which has been key to improved complaint response time and laying the groundwork for a culture of customer service within their organization.

Of note is the decreased Productivity KPI. This efficiency-related KPI has an inverse relationship with many of the customer-facing metrics such as timeliness and ride duration. However, the below standard Productivity KPI is leading to a cost overrun for the program. MCTS is actively working with Transdev to create an action plan for improvement on this metric to mitigate the associated cost of service while maintaining the expected high levels of service to our riders.

Same Day Pilot Program

Service began on the Transit Plus Same Day Pilot at the end of August 2024 and is contracted with Tidewater Transit, dba Via, to run until September 2025 or until budgeted funds are expired. Service is provided on a same day basis rides for trips that could not have been scheduled the day before and thus could not have been scheduled on the existing paratransit vans.

The original parameters for the program limited trip purpose to trips for health/medical or employment purposes only. Some examples of the use cases under this umbrella would include a same day trip to urgent care, going to pick up a sick child, or being called into work. Ridership under the original parameters was very low.

Month	Client Trips	Total Riders
September	10	10
October	10	12
November	22	25
December	29	35
January	24	29
February	30	46

As of March 3, 2025, program parameters were expanded to make better use of vehicle service hours that are already on the road. Clients can now use the service for a wide variety of trip purposes as long as the trip could not have been scheduled the day before. Additionally, all Transit Plus clients are automatically enrolled into the pilot and cash is now accepted on the vans. Preliminary information indicates that these changes have resulted in increased ridership and better utilization of the vehicle service hours provided.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered.
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, MCDOT

John Rodgers, Deputy Director, MCDOT

Julie Esch, Interim President and Managing Director, MCTS (jesch@mcts.org)

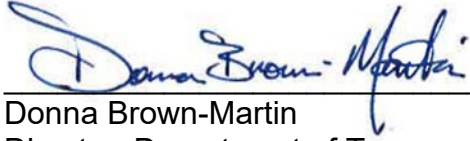
Sandra Kellner, Chief Administrative Officer, MCTS (skellner@mcts.org)

Frances Musci, Director of Paratransit, MCTS (fmusci@mcts.org)

PREPARED BY:

Frances Musci, Director of Paratransit, MCTS

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Donna Brown-Martin", is written over a horizontal line.

Donna Brown-Martin
Director, Department of Transportation

ATTACHMENTS:

PowerPoint

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk