

Transit Plus Advisory Council
October 21, 2025 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, Terry Hogans - Vice Chair, Nilda Rivera, Laurel Henschel, Kelley Santi, Anita Spight, Arlene Washington, Patricia Martin, Helen White, Rev. William Jackson, Mae Wingo, Elois Reed

ABSENT: Janice Briggs-Simmon

GUESTS: Patrick O'Brien, Mark Ward - Transdev; Fran Musci, Paula Schultz, Megan Newman, Ludys Ebratt-Irizarry - Transit Plus; Joe Pietriek – Via; Kevin Meyers, Rita Bruce - Guests

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the July 15, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved. Motion by Terry Hogans, seconded by Kelley Santi.

COMMITTEES:

Provider Employee Recognition Committee: No update.

Membership Committee: David Buck, Terry Hogans, Janice Briggs-Simmon, and Kelly Santi all stated that they plan to stay on the committee through 2025 and 2026. Mae Wingo was not present to state her preference.

Public Relations Committee: David Buck reminded the group that there is a public meeting Monday, October 27, 2025, regarding the 2026 Milwaukee County budget. The county supervisors will be present to listen to constituent input on the budget. David encouraged everyone to attend if they are able. The meeting will be held at the Milwaukee County Domes and begins at 6:00 PM – doors open at 5:00 PM.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK DATABASE UPDATE: The customer feedback database is up and running. It can be used for both complaints and commendations. This is a shared resource with Transdev so that they can respond in a more efficient manner. When a complaint is resolved, and a response is requested, the customer receives an email with a summary of the resolution. Complaints and commendations can also be made by phone, the Transit Plus website, or the My Transit Manager app. Please do not duplicate submissions as all are reviewed by Transit Plus staff.

ACCOUNT BASED FARE COLLECTION PROJECT UPDATE: The team is working on reporting, training documents, determining who needs access to the system, and the process for rolling it out to the community. Once implemented, riders will be able to use their Transit Plus WisGo ID to pay on the van. There will still be the option to pay cash.

Tickets will be accepted throughout 2026.

LETTER TO MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: The letter Nilda wrote and reviewed by the Council, was sent to Transportation and Transit Committee Chair (Supervisor Shea) and Vice Chair (Supervisor Martinez). The response from Supervisor Shea was “I will fight against any cuts to paratransit”.

MCTS 2026 BUDGET:

- **Fixed Route:** MCTS faces a significant shortfall in 2026. Because of this there is a proposed fare increase for adult full fare to \$2.75 and reduced fare to \$1.25. Six bus routes might be eliminated including Routes 20, 28, 33, 34, 55, and 58. Five routes might be modified including Routes 11, 22, 24, 80, and 88. In addition to these changes, there would be frequency reductions on 22 other routes. Also in the proposed 2026 budget, there would be funding for a partnership between MCTS and the Milwaukee County Sheriff Office to support safety and security for operators and riders.
- **Paratransit:** The impact of proposed route eliminations is being evaluated. The service area within Milwaukee County will not change. There will be no fare increase in 2026.
- **Same Day Pilot:** Funds to extend the Transit Plus Same Day Pilot were not included in the 2026 budget. Funding is due to run out at the end of 2025 or early 2026. The cost per trip in August 2025 was just over \$136, compared to the average van trip, which costs \$53 per trip. The estimated cost of this program for 2026 would be \$1.9 million in operational and administrative costs.

TRANSDEV UPDATE: Service has been inconsistent over the past few weeks. August and September service issues were due to not having enough drivers scheduled in the mid-day/early afternoon timeframe where ridership has increased the most. The new driver pick seems to have targeted service to the appropriate times of day, but not currently enough drivers to meet demand.

SAME DAY RIDE PILOT UPDATE: July ridership totaled 332 trips with 405 passengers, August had 372 trips with 464 passengers, September had 399 trips with 496 passengers. Via conducted training for four new drivers. Transit Plus coordinated volunteers to present the ADA sensitivity training component.

NEW BUSINESS:

TPAC MEETING STRUCTURE: Traditionally, TPAC meetings have been held from 2:00 PM -3:30 PM with the Director, Customer Relations Manager, and Mobility Manager in the meetings to provide reports, technical support, take minutes, and answer questions. As of this Fall, Fran has a conflict that will require her to leave the meetings promptly at 3 pm. The question was raised whether the Council would like to adjust the meeting times so that the Director can be in attendance for the entire meeting. Other options could be to limit the meeting to one hour from 2 pm to 3 pm, or to start the meeting earlier and run from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm. The committee made the decision to keep the meeting times the same as usual but make sure Fran's report is early on the agenda so that she is finished by 3 pm.

MCTS New President and CEO: Steve Fuentes, is the new President and CEO. He is a 30+ year veteran from CTA in Chicago. Steve was unable to attend today but will be invited to a future meeting.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: David recommended the following people for the nominating committee: Arlene Washington (Chair), Terry Hogans (Vice-Chair), and Laurel Henshel. All three accepted their roles. David stated that he will not run for chair in 2026.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: The new Travel Training Specialist, Ludys Ebratt-Irizarry, was introduced to the committee. She has a wealth of experience working within the Milwaukee community and we are very excited that she has joined our team. Mobility management has been busy with resource fairs, Freedom on Wheels group bus orientations, and individual travel training. Our last 2025 ADA sensitivity training class for new bus operators will be Thursday, November 20.

TRANSDEV REPORT: Patrick O'Brien reports that Transdev has had some issues lately due to driver shortages. They are continuing to actively recruit and have a new class starting each week.

VIA REPORT: No report.

TRANSIT PLUS REPORT:

- Ridership: July: 32,617 rides, August: 31,398 rides, September: 31,873 rides. For the year we are trending at approximately 85% of pre-Covid rides.
- On time performance: July: 92.2%, August 91.29%. Baseline goal is 93%. Have seen OTP decline slightly as Transdev works to improve productivity.
- 2025 Budget Update: Lower than contracted passengers per service hour and increased ridership are leading to projected budget overages in 2025. The contract productivity target is 1.7 passengers per service hour (PPSH). Year to date average productivity is 1.44 PPSH. More service hours are needed to provide service, so the amount owed to Transdev goes up as they are paid on a per hour basis. Liquidated Damages are applied as outlined in our contract, but they do not fully offset the increased service cost. We are working with our attorney on these issues and cannot share additional information at this time.
- June feedback: 50 complaints: On-time 17, Safety 7, Late appointment drop offs 6. There were 2 staff commendations.
- July feedback: 59 complaints: On-time 16, Late appointment drop offs 9, Door to Door 8, Safety 7. There were 5 staff commendations.
- August feedback: 70 complaints: On-time 33, Pick up/drop off problems 8, Ride duration 6, Late appointment drop offs 5. There were 3 staff commendations.
- Triennial Review: The review is completed. Transit Plus is proud to say there were no findings in the area of ADA Paratransit.

OPEN DISCUSSION: Several committee members raised concerns about long ride durations which appear to be caused by inefficient routing. Others were frustrated that they get voicemail when trying to reach dispatch. Patrick stated that Transdev is planning to hire 15 new drivers to make things more efficient. He also stated that having too many “will calls” makes routing more complicated since Transdev has to add those rides to existing routes. He states that they have about 95 vans on the road and 4 to 5 dispatchers handling those rides. He apologized and states that Transdev is working hard to improve these areas. There was also discussion about paying cash on the van and the need to have the exact amount. Patrick stated that the biggest bill they will take is \$5 because they don’t have change. The new fare collection system will help with this situation since riders can add money to their card and there will be no need for change. Kevin Meyers asked if liquidated damages had been assessed to Transdev and how best to make complaints to receive a response.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Terry Hogans, seconded by Helen White. Unanimously approved.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, November 18, 2025