Transit Plus Advisory Council

October 20, 2026

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

PRESENT: Terry Hogans - Chair, Helen White – Vice Chair, Nilda Rivera, Anita Spight, Kelley Santi, Elois Reed, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo, Laurel Henschel

EXCUSED: Patricia Martin

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: Patrick O'Brien - Transdev; Joe Pietrek – Via Transportation; Megan Newman, Fran Musci, Paula Schultz - Transit Plus; Claire Enders – Milwaukee County Aging and Disability Services; Jeff Sponcia – MCDOT; Jeff Young, Kevin Meyers, Rita Bruce – Guests; Nikki Todd – Milwaukee County Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the September 15, 2026, meeting were unanimously approved. Motion by Antia Spight, 2nd by Kelley Santi.

COMMITTEES:

Provider Employee Recognition Committee: No Updates.

Membership Committee: The committee will be interviewing two applicants in November at 1:00 PM. Laurel feels that the interview questions are adequate. She encourages members with suggestions to reach out to her.

Public Relations Committee: No updates.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Transit Plus Same Day Pilot: August ridership: 490 trips transporting 599 passengers. Ridership is up slightly from July: 488 trips for 580 passengers. Ridership remains relatively consistent.

Next meeting for the Taxi Task Force will be October 29, 2026, at 9:30 AM on Zoom. Mark Tillman can send the meeting link to anyone interested in attending. Please let Megan know.

Software Implementation Update: The launch to Spare is quickly approaching. Reservationists will start booking in the Spare system this Sunday October 25, 2026, to accommodate rides booked seven days in advance and the system will be fully transitioned from Trapeze to Spare on Sunday November 1, 2026.

Phase two will take place once Spare software is stable. Phase two will include tweaks to increase efficiency and the launch of the self-booking features for clients in the Transit Plus Ride Manager app. Transit Plus is working with the MCTS Marketing team and Spare to coordinate communication with riders. Dates will be announced for the launch of the features for phase two when staff is comfortable with service that is scheduled in Spare.

On October 31, 2026, IVR calls will be coming from a new phone number. There will be an IVR call through My Transit Manager that will notify riders and give the new phone number so riders are aware of the change. The new phone number that will deliver the automated messages is (414) 441-6561.

Laurel Henschel asks if she will need two apps; one for her and one for her son who also uses Transit Plus service. Fran said that when we roll out Spare, the function of the app will be to check on scheduled rides and van arrivals only, until phase two is launched for scheduling. Once rides can be scheduled on the app, Fran states her recollection is that Laurel will manage her son's rides through her app as a "manager", but Fran will check and give a firm answer at a later time.

MCTS Fixed Route Redesign Public Outreach: We need your input! If you haven't already done so, please review the Ridership Concept Map and the Coverage Concept Map and weigh in with your opinions by taking our survey – open until 10/26. The information can be found at https://www.ridemcts.com/programs/mcts-forward. Even if you do not ride fixed route, decisions could affect paratransit in the future. Federal requirement for paratransit service area is within ¾ of a mile of a fixed bus route. At this time, we are continuing paratransit service at the current level through 2027, but it could affect future decisions based on budget.

Jeff Young states that the online survey is limited to one submission per IP address. This poses is an issue if there are multiple riders from the same household or someone submits the survey from work. Fran states she will inform the Planning Department of this. Megan Newman states that the survey can be submitted on paper or by calling fixed route customer service.

NEW BUSINESS:

2027 County Executive's Budget: The proposed budget for 2027 maintains fixed route and paratransit service at same levels and maintains border to border paratransit service. In addition, there is a supplemental budget request for continuation of the Same Day Ride Pilot. Transit Plus is anticipating the same level of funding for the Same Day Ride Pilot, maintaining approx. capacity of 500 trips per month. The budget is finalized in mid-November.

Transit Plus applied for 5310 Grant funds to maintain the mobility management program and new fare collection system. In addition, Transit Plus applied for 5310 Grant funds to implement the eligibility module to connect with our scheduling software that will streamline processes for assessments. Responses to the grant requests are expected in December 2026.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT:

Year to date totals as of 9/30/2026:

- Rides taken on fixed route bus by TP clients: 121,311
- Mobility Management Team completed:
- Individual travel training sessions: 200
- New Operator ADA Sensitivity Classes: 3
- Operator ADA Refresher Trainings: 12
- Resource Fairs: 5
- Freedom on Wheels Community Bus presentations: 51

The Mobility Management team has completed 10 events so far in October. Currently, Mobility Management has 14 scheduled events between now and end of year. More events are expected based on the prior year data. If you know of a group or facility that would like a Freedom on Wheels group bus orientation session or individual travel training, please have them contact us. The team is also assisting with the software transition as needed.

Mobility Management is currently recruiting a part-time travel trainer.

Paula and one of the assessors are retiring March 1. Those positions will be posted soon.

Carrier Report:

Transdev – Patrick O'Brien reports world series is coming to Milwaukee! If riders plan to attend, he encourages them to allow extra time due to increased traffic and construction in the area.

Patrick states he was reluctant as we began implementing new scheduling software but since has settled in and is confident it will be a better experience for riders. That said, change arises questions and it will take some time to smooth the kinks, so he asks that riders are patient with staff as we learn the new processes.

Construction on second level is complete and phase 2 of the project, reconstructing the first level of the building, is now underway. Staff on first floor have moved to trailers during construction. This includes dispatch.

Transdev is hiring drivers to meet service expectations prior to Spare implementation. New drivers have completed training and there have been noticeable service improvements in the past couple of days.

Transdev recognized a driver who rescued a passenger from a burning van. The van was a total loss, but both the driver and rider escaped the van before it became engulfed in flames. Fran suggests that the employee recognition committee recognizes him as they consider the drivers that they award at the end of Q4 2026.

Via – Joe from Via reports that they are looking for a few drivers so if anyone has recommendations, please reach out.

TRANSIT PLUS REPORT:

- Ridership: August: **29,936** rides.
- OTP: August: **87.72%** down significantly from July (shortage of drivers).
- Productivity: August: **1.54**.
- <u>August feedback:</u>
    - 93 complaints: On time 27, Ride duration 12, Late appointment drop off 9.
    - 6 Staff commendations- including driver who rescued a rider from a burning van.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Terry Hogans states that he will be looking for volunteers for a nominating committee. Members of this committee will be responsible for asking each TPAC member if they would like to run for 2027 Chair and Vice Chair. Helen and Arlene volunteer for the role of nominating committee. Election will be in December.

Mae Wingo asked why it can take so long to get picked up on the Same Day Ride Pilot. Fran states that the service can take up to an hour for a driver to arrive. You may experience longer waits because, as Joe from Via states that they are hiring some drivers.

Rita Bruce asks how the productivity measure is calculated. Fran states productivity is the number of passengers carried per service hour. This does not include fuel breaks, but it does include lunch breaks. Rita asked Patrick if there is a policy regarding drivers taking tips. Patrick states drivers should not accept tips. Many clients live on fixed incomes and allowing tips creates an imposition for some individuals. This is not acceptable. Rita asks if this is the same expectation on the Same Day Ride Pilot. Fran states no tips are accepted.

Arlene Washington asks how often you have events to show appreciation for drivers. Patrick states there are several organizational appreciation days, and local team does an appreciation banquet and end of year awards to recognize employees.

Kevin Meyers states there is a listening session regarding the budget on Monday October 26, 2026, at 6PM @ Milwaukee Art Museum. Kevin encourages TPAC members to attend and speak about the importance of Public Transportation at that meeting. It is important that elected officials hear from as many people as possible.

Fran states that with the software transition to Spare, it will reschedule as it optimizes service which means that you will not have the same drivers or ride with the same individuals. That said, it is expected to give riders what they have been asking for a more efficient service.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Helen White, 2nd by Kelley Santi. Motion carried. Adjourned 3:17 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, November 17, 2026, from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm.