

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOARD

**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
ON METRO MOBILITY
COMPLAINTS**

August 1, 1988

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An effective customer complaint process is an important means of measuring service quality as viewed by customers. Complaints about poor service are an opportunity for the Metro Mobility Administrative Center (MMAC) to "watch-dog" the performance of providers, resolve individual service problems, and assess overall program functioning to determine if specific preventive actions or policies are needed to improve Metro Mobility service delivery.

As described in the recent "Legislative Report on Metro Mobility," dated June 1, 1988, there are several problems with the customer complaint process that require improvement. The customer complaint process has not been responsive enough in resolving customer problems. Specifically, it was found that there was a lack of communication to customers about the process for filing and resolving service complaints; that the process was not as supportive and customer oriented as it needed to be; and that customers have not always been satisfied with (or aware of) the resolution of complaints.

Beyond problems related to the resolution of individual customer service complaints, the MMAC has not taken a strong systems analysis approach to the customer service complaint data it collects. The information gained from the complaint reports has not been routinely shared with all providers to encourage service improvements. The MMAC has not provided strong leadership in responding to recurring problems with recommended program solutions.

The MMAC has taken steps to address its performance in some of these problem areas. The MMAC has developed a complaint process that has improved over the last year and a half. Customers have been made aware of and encouraged to use a defined complaint process, which is outlined in the revised Riders' Guide.

Since February 1988 the MMAC has produced a bimonthly newsletter, the Metro Memo, which encourages persons to register any service complaints they may have. Moreover, the MMAC has effectively used service complaints by customer to identify and correct recurring problems of individual providers.

The MMAC, however, must further improve Metro Mobility customers' ease of registering complaints and satisfaction getting service problems resolved, and the MMAC must move beyond individual complaint resolution to a complaint process that monitors systemwide trends and identifies issues or needs for improvement.

To this end, the RTB and the MMAC have initiated several actions to improve the Metro Mobility complaint system. As examples: (1) the 1988 provider contracts require increased complaint reporting and resolution by the providers, incorporating specific complaint handling procedures which had been suggested to the RTB by the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living; (2) the RTB is launching a customer service enhancement

project, which will begin in August 1988; and (3) the MMAC is developing written operational policies and procedures as well as provider performance standards by the end of this summer.

In the coming months, the RTB and MMAC will focus efforts on the key areas of increasing customer satisfaction with the complaint process and using the complaint system to identify systemwide service issues to develop program improvements. Progress will be reported in the next report to the Legislature, due December 1, 1988.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared in response to House File 1009 effective August 1, 1987, requiring the Regional Transit Board (RTB) to annually submit a report on Metro Mobility service complaints to the Commissioner of Transportation and to the Legislature. The stated purpose of this legislative request was to ensure that the Metro Mobility Administrative Center (MMAC), which is operated by the Metropolitan Transit Commission, establish a customer complaint system that:

- Informs customers how to register complaints.
- Registers and expeditiously responds to complaints by riders.
- Requires providers to report on incidents that impair the safety and well being of customers or the quality of Metro Mobility service.

Further, the legislative report was to address:

- Complaints and provider reports.
- Response of the MMAC to complaints.
- Steps taken by the RTB and the MMAC to identify causes and provide remedies to recurring problems.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter II describes the existing process of the MMAC to collect and resolve service complaints from customers. It details the reporting requirements for accidents and incidents occurring during Metro Mobility service. Finally the contract enforcement and policy development roles of the MMAC and the RTB in complaint resolution are discussed.
- Chapter III highlights several actions that will improve the effectiveness and user-friendliness of the MMAC's customer service function. It describes 1988 contract language that requires providers to report to the MMAC those customer complaints they receive directly; a recently initiated customer service enhancement project; and the development of performance standards for Metro Mobility service.
- Chapter IV presents a summary and analysis of customer complaint and accident/incident report data. It describes the most frequently received complaints and the actions taken to address these service problems.
- Chapter V contains copies of the forms used by the MMAC to report complaints and accidents/incidents in the Metro Mobility program.

II. DESCRIPTION OF METRO MOBILITY COMPLAINT PROCESS

A. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The Metro Mobility Administrative Center (MMAC) is responsible for the quick and effective resolution of customer service problems and the identification of areas of customer dissatisfaction so that new policies to improve service may be considered and developed by the Regional Transit Board (RTB).

Complaint Process

Currently Metro Mobility passengers who have problems or safety concerns are advised to register a complaint with the MMAC. The complaint procedure is described in the Metro Mobility Riders' Guide, which is distributed to each person certified to use Metro Mobility. A recent market survey indicated that the majority of Metro Mobility customers have received the Riders' Guide and keep it handy for reference. In addition, since February 1988, each issue of the bimonthly newsletter, Metro Memo, sent to registered customers has encouraged persons to call the MMAC with any questions or concerns they may have.

As described in the Riders' Guide, customer complaints for the most part should be reported directly to the MMAC. The Riders Guide directs customers to call the MMAC for:

- Recurring problems such as late vehicles, persistent trip denials
- Unsafe rides
- Rude treatment
- Poor or unsafe vehicle conditions including wheelchair restraints, seatbelts, lift or ramp, cleanliness

In some instances, it is appropriate for the customer to contact the provider directly in order to resolve a current service difficulty. Customers are asked to contact the provider when:

- A ride is more than 15 minutes late
- There are questions about time changes or referrals
- Something has been lost on the vehicle

In the event of any complaint involving personal injury or property damage, customers are urged to contact both the MMAC and the provider. In addition, providers are required to report to the MMAC all incidents and accidents that have resulted in personal injury or property damage (see Accident and Incident Reporting section of this chapter).

The MMAC is open from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., seven days a week during which time a rider representative is available to respond to problems. In the event of an after hours emergency, (for instance, if a passenger is stranded without a ride) the MMAC has arranged for its phone number to roll-over to the MTC Control Center which is open 24 hours a day. Their staff are trained to contact providers to dispatch vehicles to resolve the problem and/or to contact the on-call MMAC staff person whenever necessary. Although the emergency procedure has been communicated to riders (most recently in the April 1988 Metro Memo), riders may still be unaware of the procedure. There have been some instances where stranded riders have not utilized the emergency procedure. Increased communication efforts are warranted.

With regard to complaint handling, a complaint may be filed with the MMAC in person, in writing or by telephone. When a complaint is filed with the MMAC, the Rider Representative will:

- Record the description of the problem on a Service Report Form (See Chapter V) and maintain a file of all pertinent written and oral communications regarding the complaint.
- Research the complaint further with the provider(s), customer, and all other relevant parties.
- Require a prompt response from provider(s) regarding the complaint.
- Work with the provider to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the customer.
- Notify the customer of the progress and resolution of the problem.

In order to assist the MMAC and the provider to research a problem, assess its cause and develop a solution, the following information is requested from a customer reporting a complaint:

- Name of passenger
- Date and time of incident
- Certification number
- Phone number
- Address
- Trip destination
- Provider
- Employee name/vehicle number
- Scheduled pick-up time
- Actual pick-up time
- Details of incident

In many instances this level of detail may be required in order to achieve effective resolution of a problem. However, the person making the complaint is not required to give his/her name. When the person files the details of a complaint he/she is informed that a copy of the report will be sent both to him/her and to the provider, The individual is also asked if they want their name removed from the report sent to the provider.

It should be noted that filing a complaint requires assertive risk-taking behavior on the part of the passenger since in order to resolve a problem fully, the person shares information that may identify him/her not only to the provider but also to a driver or other employee with whom the passenger has frequent contact. This is common in all customer service operations but may be particularly problematic when resolving Metro Mobility service complaints because a disabled passenger may fear he/she will receive poor service or not be able to schedule a ride if a complaint is filed.

In general, it is the experience of the MMAC that providers are receptive to receiving complaints and work to keep customers satisfied. In an instance where an employee did chastise a customer who had filed a complaint against the provider, the MMAC contacted the management of the company. The company sent a letter to the customer assuring that he/she had every right to file a complaint, apologizing for that employee, and encouraged the customer to give the company another chance. The MMAC needs to ensure that this type of resolution occurs in every instance.

Customer Problem Resolution

In the Metro Mobility program, providers are under contract to the RTB to “coordinate, manage, provide and control all necessary activities to operate the Special Transportation Service.” This includes performing such functions as employee hiring, training, management, and discipline. The provider must “develop methods to maximize service quality and safety” and must “provide competent technical service to handle and correct any and all problems” associated with the delivery of Metro Mobility service.

After receiving a customer complaint, the rider representative will contact and send to the provider the complaint report along with supporting material indicating where there may be contract violations or failure to follow operational procedures. The provider must then review the complaint and follow up with a report to the MMAC of how the problem will be resolved. For instance, if a customer complains about the rude or inappropriate behavior of a driver, the provider will use the information to identify which driver is involved and document the details of the alleged incident. Based on this investigation the provider might discipline and/or require remedial training for the employee, establish preventive procedures such as not scheduling the customer to ride with that driver, apologize to the customer on behalf of the driver, communicate to other employees any required behavior changes or warnings at the next safety meeting, and report these actions to the MMAC. It is the provider’s responsibility to correct the problem and the MMAC’s role to assess

the adequacy of the response initiated by the provider.

The MMAC, if satisfied with the provider's response, will communicate to the customer the steps taken to resolve his or her complaint. This communication is generally by letter but may include telephone updating about the ongoing progress towards addressing the problem.

If the MMAC is not satisfied with the resolution offered by the provider, the range of options available to MMAC are working with the provider to develop a satisfactory solution, requiring the provider to perform necessary actions or beginning the contract non-performance process to assign fines or penalties. The MMAC's Rider Representative role is to continue to update the customer about the progress made toward solving the problem. If the customer is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she should contact the MMAC so the Rider Representative can further pursue the matter. Customer satisfaction is a key component of the customer service enhancement project, scheduled to begin in August 1988, as discussed in Chapter III.

Service Quality Data Collection

The MMAC collects and summarizes data on all customer complaints it receives. The MMAC is required to analyze and track the complaints monthly to document complaint levels by type, identify recurring problems, and monitor customer satisfaction with individual providers. A summary of these statistics is presented later in this report.

B. ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

In addition to responding to the complaints generated by customers, the MMAC responds to and collects data on accidents and incidents occurring on Metro Mobility. Providers are required by contract to report to the MMAC all occurrences involving Metro Mobility service in which injury and/or property damage occurs. Providers must file a telephone report within 24 hours and send the MMAC a written report within 48 hours. In this report, the provider must describe the incident/accident, the immediate action taken, the probable cause and any preventive measures. The MMAC reviews the report and the actions taken by a provider to prevent similar occurrences and, if necessary, recommends additional actions or initiates disciplinary procedures.

Data is collected on accidents and incidents and is summarized by the MMAC. The MMAC maintains an ongoing record of these accidents by provider, by month and by type and severity of the occurrence. A summary of these statistics is presented later in this report.

C. ROLE OF THE MMAC AND THE RTB

Contract Enforcement

Contracts to provide special transportation services in Metro Mobility are held between the RTB and individual providers. However, the MMAC has full authority to monitor provider performance for compliance with operating procedures and contractual obligations and to initiate disciplinary procedures and penalties. Customer complaint reports and provider accident/incident reports are two methods that the MMAC uses to assess service quality problems requiring resolution.

As stated previously, the MMAC is responsible for documenting these service problems, communicating them to all affected parties and bringing the problems to resolution. If a provider does not resolve a problem to the satisfaction of the MMAC and the problem is one clearly arising from a violation of the contract agreement, the MMAC may initiate disciplinary action, or if warranted, declare a provider in default of its contractual obligations.

By contract, the MMAC may assess reasonable financial penalties against the provider not to exceed \$500 per occurrence or may suspend contract service and related payments to the provider for up to 30 days. If a default is declared, the MMAC must notify the provider in writing of this default and give the provider an opportunity to cure the default within a specified amount of time. The MMAC can recommend to the RTB that the RTB immediately terminate the contract.

For example, this past winter, a provider stranded two passengers late at night and the passengers were unable to reach the provider by phone to resolve the situation. Upon learning of the situation from the customer, the MMAC contacted the provider to gather all the facts surrounding the performance failure. The MMAC sent a letter to the provider documenting the facts, citing the specific contract violations that occurred and detailing the steps that the company should have taken to prevent the situation. The MMAC examined the incident in relation to the past performance history of the provider and penalized the company with a five day suspension of service. Further, the MMAC required the provider to issue an immediate safety bulletin addressing this issue to all of its drivers and to develop and implement procedures to address late night dispatcher coverage by a specified date.

Policy Development

The RTB is responsible for overall policy development for the Metro Mobility program, but the MMAC has a strong role in this area as well. For complaints and problems that may not be clearly in violation of the contract, the MMAC is expected to analyze their impact and forward such analysis and any recommended policy actions to the RTB for consideration. Then, the RTB with public input from the

Transportation Handicapped Advisory Committee and other relevant parties, can develop and implement policy changes to the Metro Mobility program.

The MMAC, as part of the 1988 contract development process, recommended several operational policy changes to the RTB. However, the MMAC has not exhibited strong leadership in examining program performance on an ongoing basis and proactively offering policies to improve Metro Mobility services.

III. RECENT ACTIONS TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE FUNCTION

A. PROVIDER CUSTOMER COMPLAINT SERVICE

Thus far this report has addressed the complaint process used by a customer to contact the MMAC as well as the responsibility of Metro Mobility providers to respond to complaints made known to it by the MMAC and to report accidents/incidents resulting in injury or property damage. However, those complaints initiated by a customer to a provider may never enter the formal MMAC complaint process or data collection system.

To address this deficiency, the 1988 provider contracts (effective May 1, 1988) require the provider to establish and communicate to customers its company complaint process, report complaints received directly by the provider to the MMAC, resolve problems and communicate the resolution of them to customers and the MMAC, and refer any complaints not satisfactorily resolved to the MMAC for review. These procedures had been suggested to the RTB by the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living for inclusion in the provider contract.

In another effort, the MMAC has recently initiated daily rider satisfaction surveys through random telephone calls to passengers. The addition of this data source to the MMAC's existing complaint process further strengthens the MMAC's assessment of how customers view the service quality of Metro Mobility and provides added incentive for providers to resolve customer complaints effectively.

B. CUSTOMER SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

In the recent "Legislative Report on Metro Mobility," dated June 1, 1988, the RTB stated that the MMAC has faced criticism that the complaint process is not adequately communicated to customers, is not as supportive and customer oriented as it needs to be, and that customers have not been satisfied with the resolution of problems or aware that resolution has occurred.

In addition, though a basic data collection system is in place, there is concern about the consistency with which providers report complaints, incidents, and accidents, and therefore the validity of using the data for comparative purposes. Further, the summary data collected has not generally been communicated to providers as a source of information with which to improve their service quality as a means of competing with other providers.

To improve the customer service orientation of the MMAC as well as the complaint information reporting system, the RTB has launched a customer service enhancement project. An organizational training and development consultant has been hired to work closely with the MMAC and receive input from the Transportation

Handicapped Advisory Committee and disabled advocacy groups such as the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living, the United Handicapped Federation, and the State Council on Disability. The consultant work plan will focus on improved complaint procedures and reporting, ultimately to improve individual customer satisfaction with complaint resolution. The consultant will provide hands-on assistance so that the MMAC:

- Gathers and accurately documents reports of service problems and concerns made by and on behalf of Metro Mobility customers.
- Responds to the person who reports a problem in a timely, professional and documented manner and with genuine intent and effort to resolve the problem.
- Communicates to Metro Mobility customers the process for reporting concerns and commendations and assures confidentiality, as requested.
- Documents customer service reports by type and quantity and consolidates them into a useful management information system for timely and relevant follow-up by the MMAC, corrective action by the provider, and reporting to the RTB for policy review purposes.
- Integrates customer service reports into a format that invokes consequences and performance motivations for Metro Mobility providers.
- Designs a behavioral intervention program, including discipline and reward, available to all the Metro Mobility providers to motivate the performance of individual drivers.
- Ensures that each customer service report has adequate and meaningful disposition to all parties involved.

C. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

It is essential that the MMAC clearly communicate to providers and customers the expected performance levels in the Metro Mobility program. The RTB has directed the MMAC to develop comprehensive written operating policy and procedures for the Metro Mobility program to be completed in August 1988. The MMAC recently convened a task force of providers and disabled advocates to participate in this effort. Operating procedures, as an example, may describe the exact nature of assistance that a driver is expected to provide to a customer. With this level of service clearly understood by both the provider and the customer, the Metro Mobility program is less likely to receive complaints for service that exceeds the definition

The RTB has also directed the MMAC to develop written contract enforcement procedures and provider performance standards to be completed in September 1988.

An example of a performance standard would be setting an acceptable minimum percent of on-time trips or maximum allowable percent of late trips delivered by a provider. With these performance expectations clearly defined, it will become easier to achieve service problem resolutions that satisfy the concerns of individual customers as well as lead to improvements in Metro Mobility service. For instance, a customer complaining of a late trip will know that the MMAC will have a means to evaluate that provider's on-time performance and penalize performance that is below the set standard. The MMAC will be able to monitor the system's on-time performance and institute mechanisms to achieve improved performance.

IV. METRO MOBILITY PROVIDER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

A. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS ABOUT METRO MOBILITY SERVICE

Historical Trends

In 1987 the MMAC received and documented 514 complaints about Metro Mobility service. The Metro Mobility system delivered 952,945 one-way trips during that same period of time. This represents a complaint ratio of .05 percent, or five complaints for every 10,000 trips.

In the first two quarters of 1988, the MMAC recorded 599 complaints out of 612,854 trips for a complaint ratio of .1 percent, or 10 complaints for every 10,000 trips. Though this ratio is still quite small, the 1988 data does represent a doubling of 1987 service complaints of the Metro Mobility program. The MMAC attributes this increase to two factors: first, to the increased awareness of customers of the complaint process since communications to customers from late 1987 to the present have better described the customer complaint process and encouraged customers to use the process to file complaints about service delivery; second, to the difficulties experienced in the system during a period of tremendous growth. Figures 1 and 2 represent the quarterly ridership since October 1986 and the corresponding quarterly complaint ratio, respectively.

In 1987, as shown in Figure 3, the types of complaints most frequently reported were late pick ups representing 37 percent of all complaints, no shows at 13 percent, and courtesy at 9 percent. In 1988, as shown in Figure 4, these complaints continued in a similar pattern with 42 percent of all complaints occurring for late pick ups, 16 percent for no shows, and 10 percent related to courtesy.

In addition, trip denial complaints increased from 3.5 percent in 1987 to 6.5 percent in 1988. This sharp increase in trip denials reflects the emergence of trip denials as a systemwide problem as the number of monthly trips continues to increase.

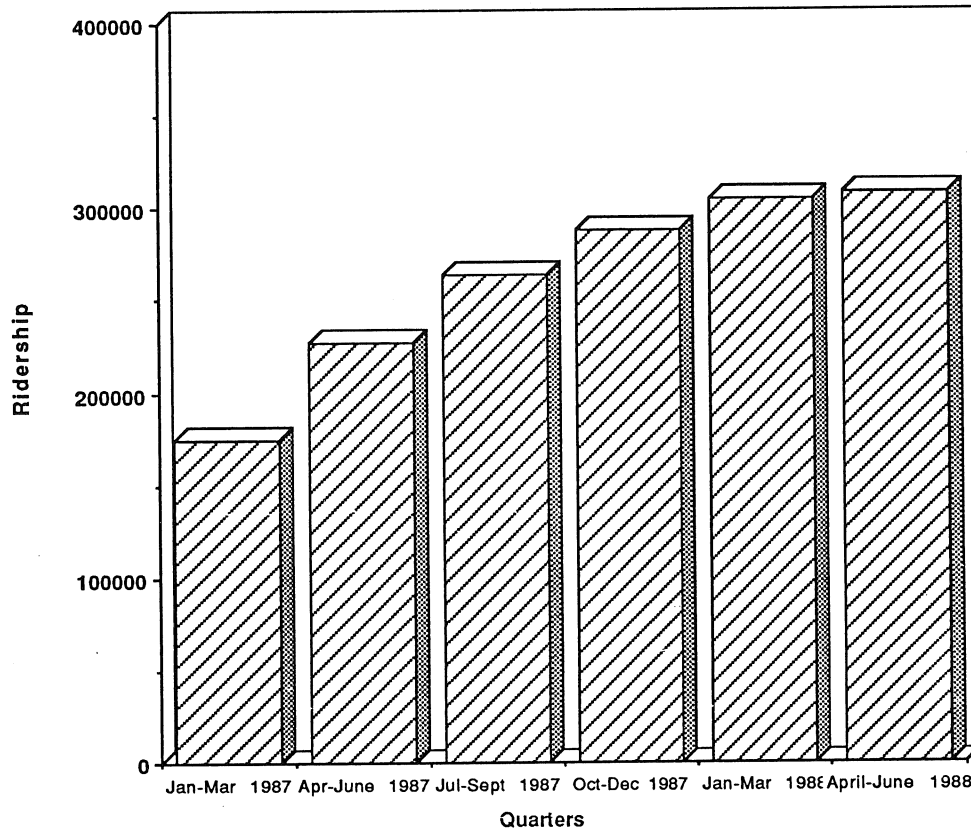
Figures 5 and 6 represent a breakdown of complaint types per 10,000 trips.

Late Pick-Up Complaints

Further analysis of the complaints made for late pick ups reveals that in 1987, 41 percent of these complaints were directed toward three transportation providers whose contracts were not renewed largely for performance reasons (Blue and White Taxi, Kare Kabs, and Transportation Management Incorporated). (See Figures 7 and 8.) The MMAC had investigated each of these providers for recurring problems brought to light by the complaint system. Each was given an opportunity to respond but was unable or unwilling to develop a solution to the problems cited. On

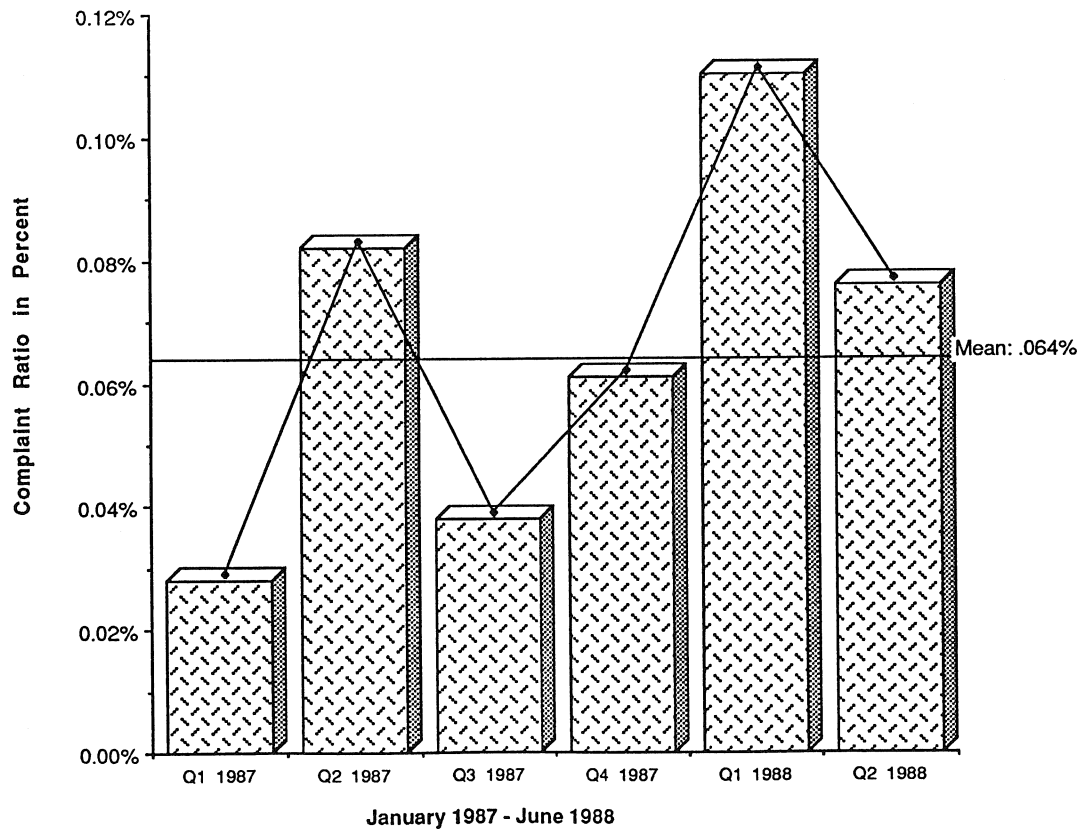
Metro Mobility Quarterly Ridership: January 1987- June 1988

Figure 1



Metro Mobility Quarterly Complaint Ratio
(Number of complaints/number of trips)

Figure 2



1987 Complaint Types

Total Complaints: 514

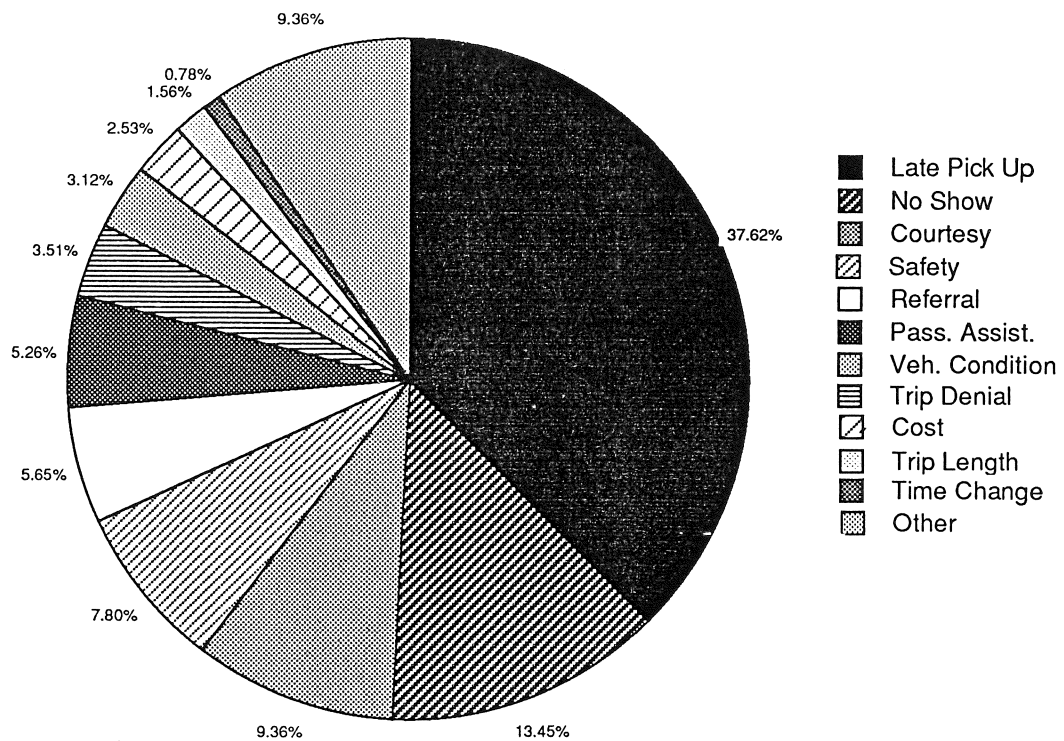


Figure 3

1988 YTD Complaint Types

January - June 1988

Total complaints: 599

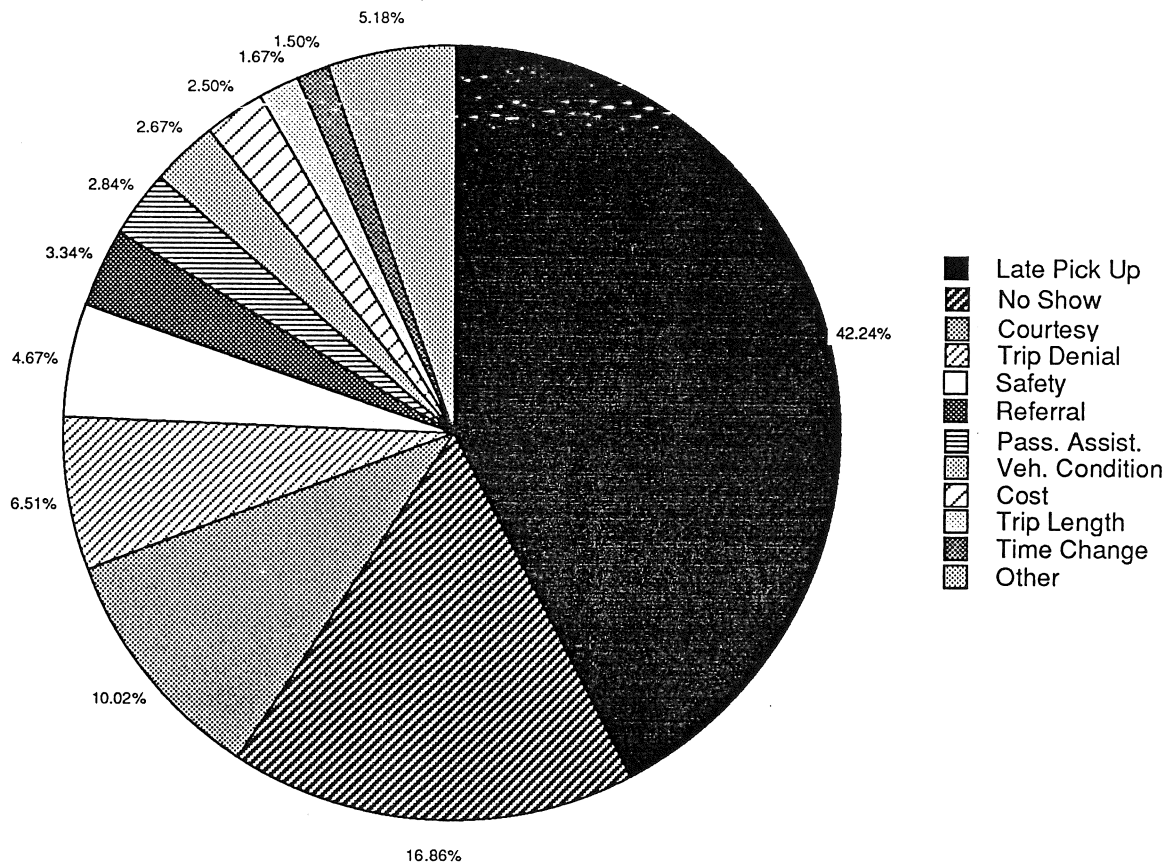


Figure 4

1987 Complaint Types per 10,000 Trips

Total: 5.3 complaints per 10,000

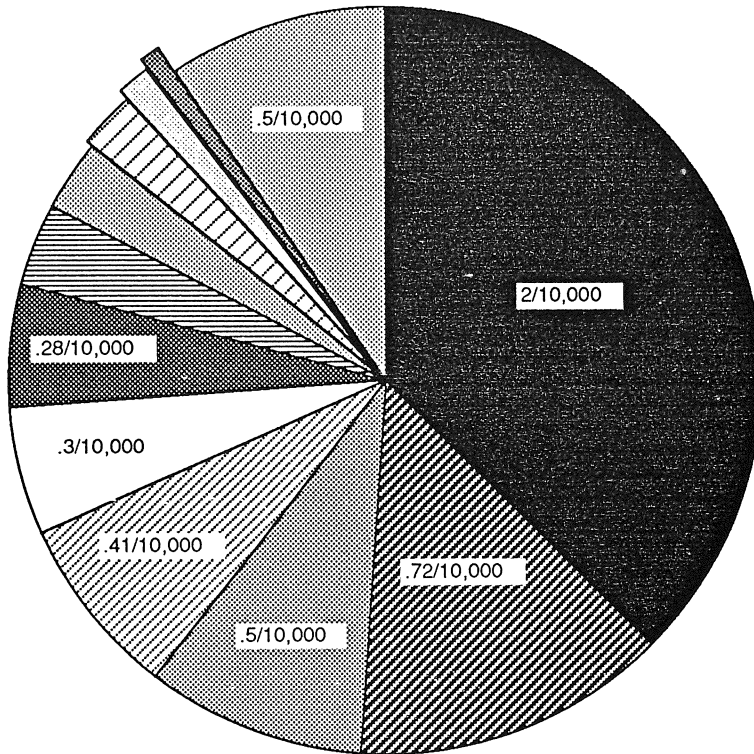


Figure 5

1988 YTD Complaint Types per 10,000 Trips

Total: 10 complaints per 10,000 trips

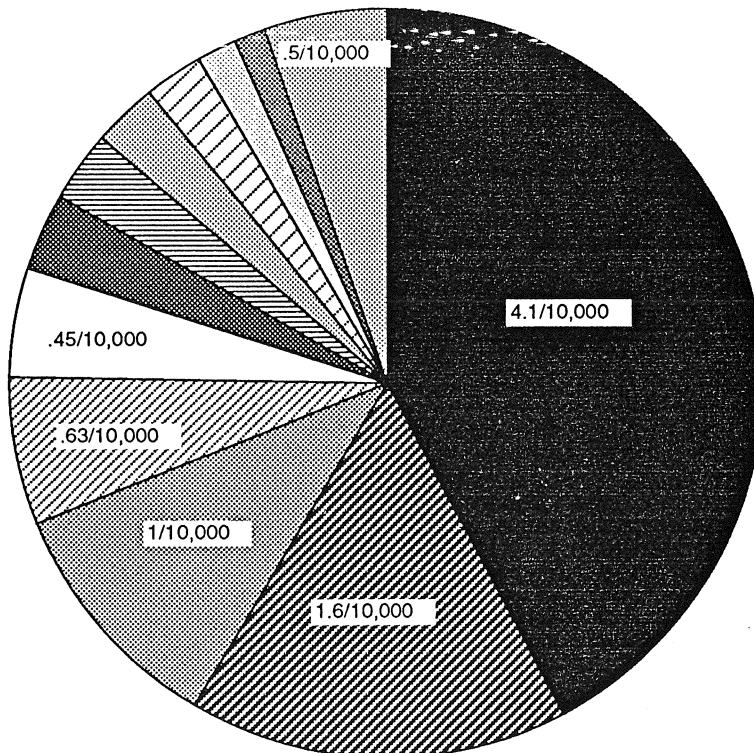
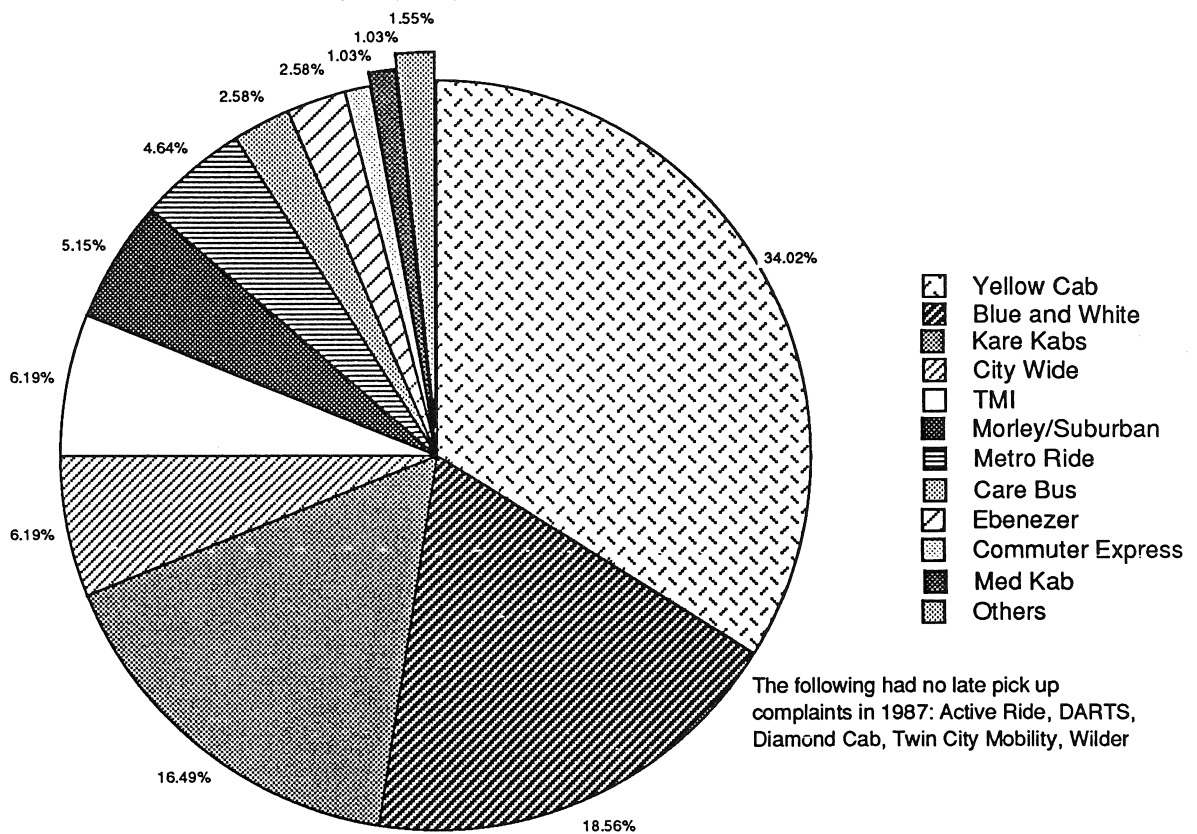


Figure 6

1987 Late Pick Up Complaints by Provider

Total late pick up complaints: 193

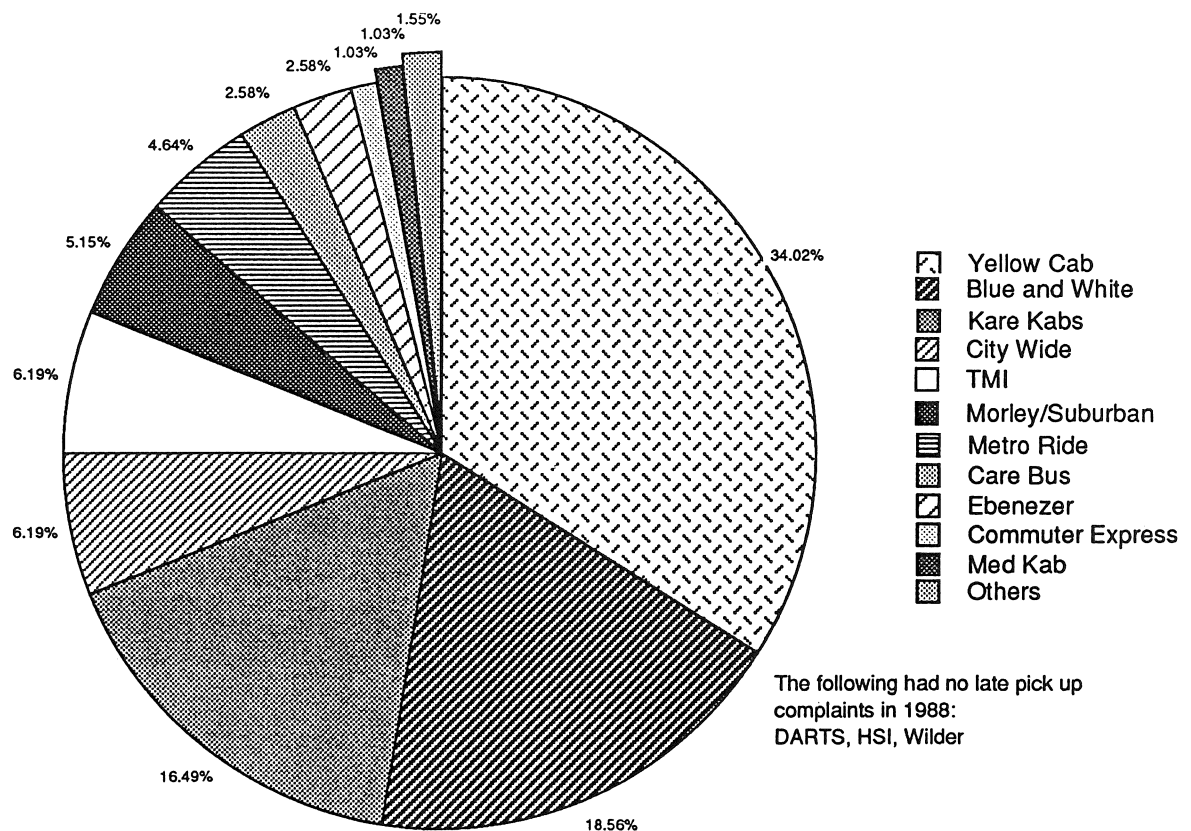
Figure 7



1988 YTD Late Pick Up Complaints by Provider January - June

Total late pick up complaints: 253

Figure 8



the basis of analysis by the MMAC, the RTB did not renew contracts with two of the providers. The third provider withdrew its application for contract renewal.

A third of the complaints in 1987 and more than one-half of complaints in the first two quarters of 1988 were for late pick ups by the largest taxi provider in the program, Minneapolis Yellow Taxi. As a result of this provider's complaint record, the MMAC cited its poor performance and required the provider to develop a corrective action plan. As a result of the MMAC's monitoring efforts and Yellow Taxi's responsiveness, late pick-up complaints in the second quarter of 1988 dropped by more than 50 percent.

Timeliness of service, as measured by the number of complaints received by the MMAC, is of importance to customers and may require improvement on a system-wide basis. A key tool for improving timeliness will be using the MMAC management information system to record how many trips are late and the degree of lateness of the trips. This information will be used to assess the cause(s) for late trips and to establish a program standard for service timeliness that can be used to decrease the number of late trips. It is expected that the MMAC will have this system in place in September 1988.

No Show Complaints

No show complaints are made by customers when a provider has not arrived to pick them up at the scheduled time, and has not called them to cancel the ride or inform them of any delay. The Metro Mobility program requires passengers to be at the boarding point between 10 minutes before and 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

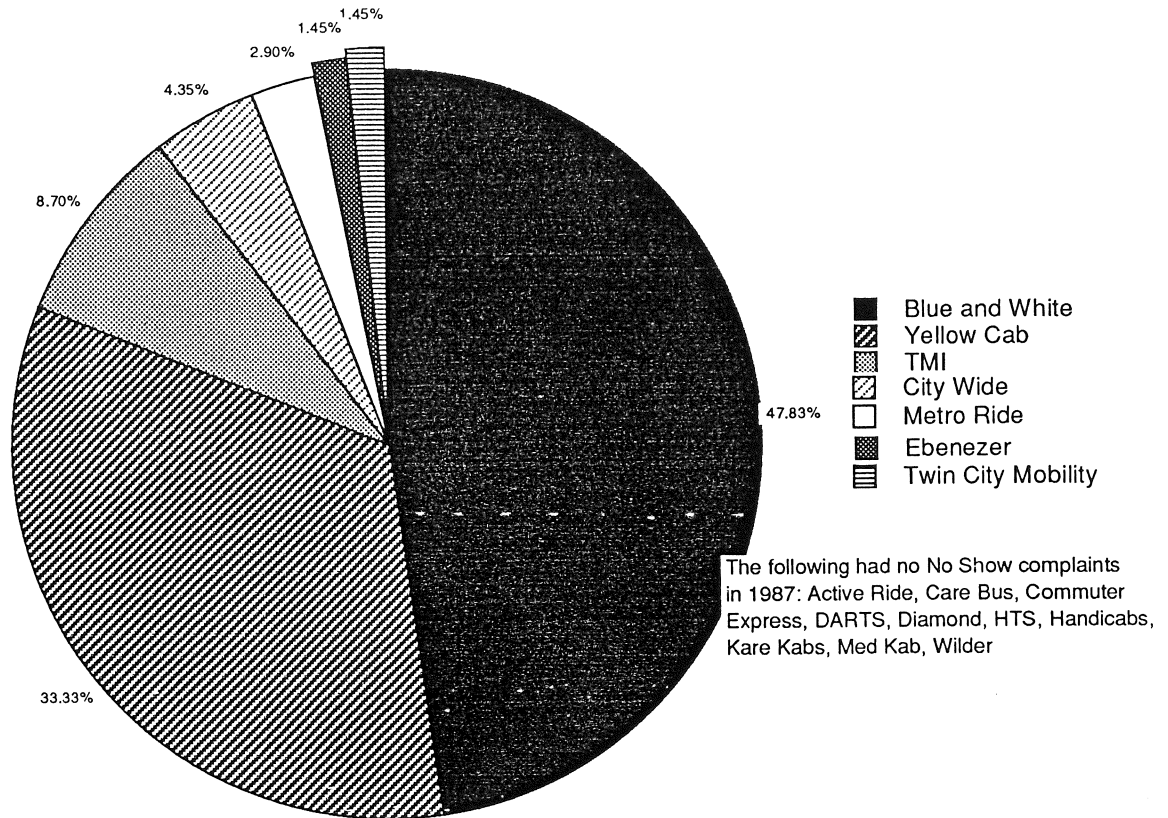
In 1987 and the first two quarters of 1988, 90 percent of all complaints about no shows were directed at taxi providers. Each of two taxi providers had about one half of these no show complaints. Blue and White Taxi, as discussed earlier, is no longer a provider for the Metro Mobility program and Minneapolis Yellow Taxi has been cited for its poor performance in this area. These two taxi providers do not tour return trips, which means that when it is time for a customer's return trip, a dispatcher puts out a call to taxi drivers in the area to find someone able to deliver the trip. Investigation of no show trips generally reveals that there was no driver in the area able to provide the trip at the needed time. The MMAC is working with the taxi provider to determine the feasibility of a taxi provider improving its timeliness and reducing its number of no shows by adding some toured vehicles to the taxi fleet. (See Figures 9 and 10.)

Courtesy Complaints

The third most frequent complaint about Metro Mobility service is not being treated courteously, whether it is by the transportation company's driver or dispatcher, or

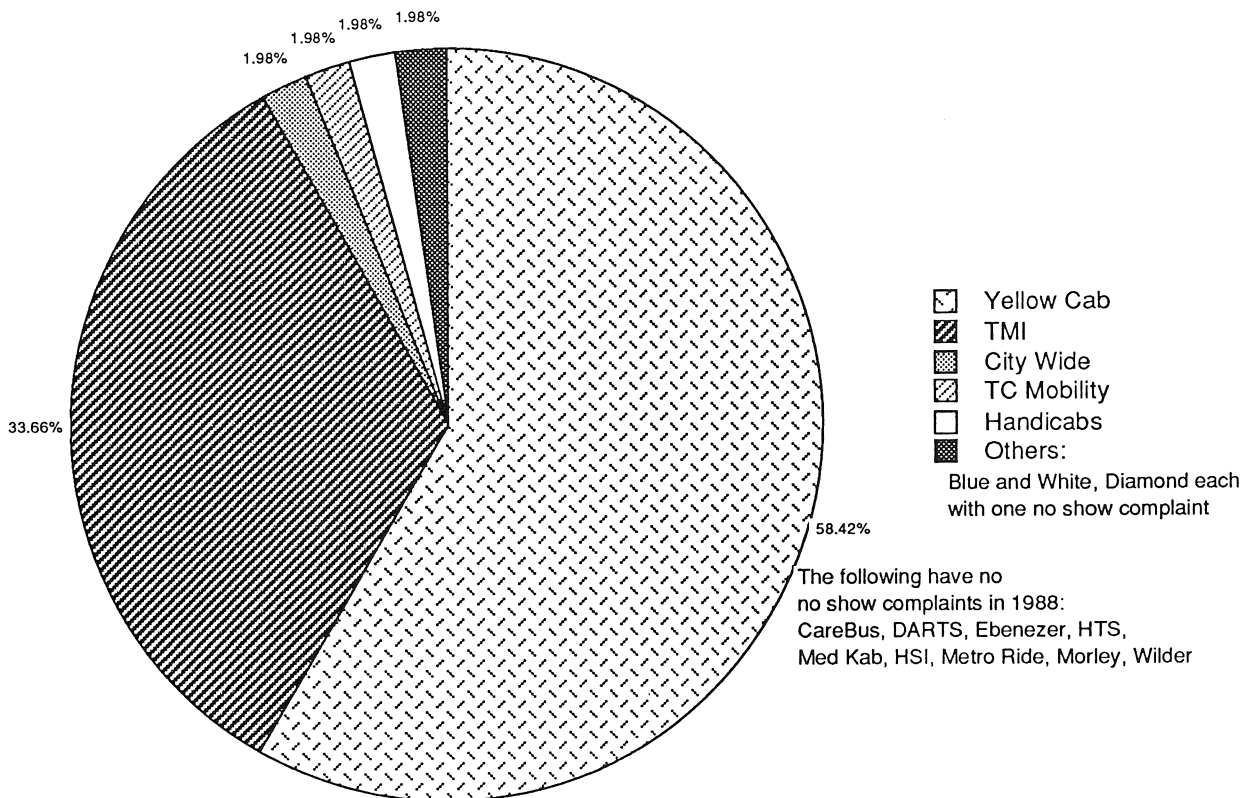
1987 No Show Complaints by Provider
Total no show complaints: 69

Figure 9



1988 YTD No Show Complaints by Provider
January - June
Total no show complaints: 101

Figure 10



by a staff person at the MMAC. In 1987, nine percent and in 1988 ten percent of all complaints were related to courtesy. These ranged from someone being abrupt with a customer on the phone to a driver berating a customer for complaining about lateness. As one might imagine, this category correlates quite closely with the complaint categories of late trips and no shows. The three providers with the most complaints in the category of courtesy are Blue and White, Transportation Management Incorporated and Yellow Taxi with a cumulative total of 55 percent of these complaints. (See Figure 11.)

As shown in Figure 12, complaints of courtesy for 1988, though not frequent, are distributed among 11 of the 18 providers of Metro Mobility service. These type of complaints may be the ones most amenable to change through an improved complaint system. The Customer Service Enhancement Project proposes to establish mechanisms to publicly report this complaint data on a periodic basis to providers so that this information can be used by providers to improve performance.

Trip Denials

Trip denial complaints are recorded when a customer reports that a provider was unable to schedule his/her trip request. In 1987, trip denial complaints accounted for 3.5 percent of all complaints and were the 8th most frequently reported complaint. In 1988, trip denials have increased to 6.5 percent of all complaints and are the fourth most frequent complaint. This sharp increase in trip denial complaints is another indication of how customers are experiencing the tremendous ridership growth in Metro Mobility.

Trip denials generally occur when 1) a provider "tours" all rides requested on a particular day to maximize the number of persons on each vehicle and those trip requests that do not "fit in" to the schedule, often trips to outlying areas, are denied; or 2) the provider has scheduled all available vehicles and no more trips are available at a particular time of the day, often during the peak travel times of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. or 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

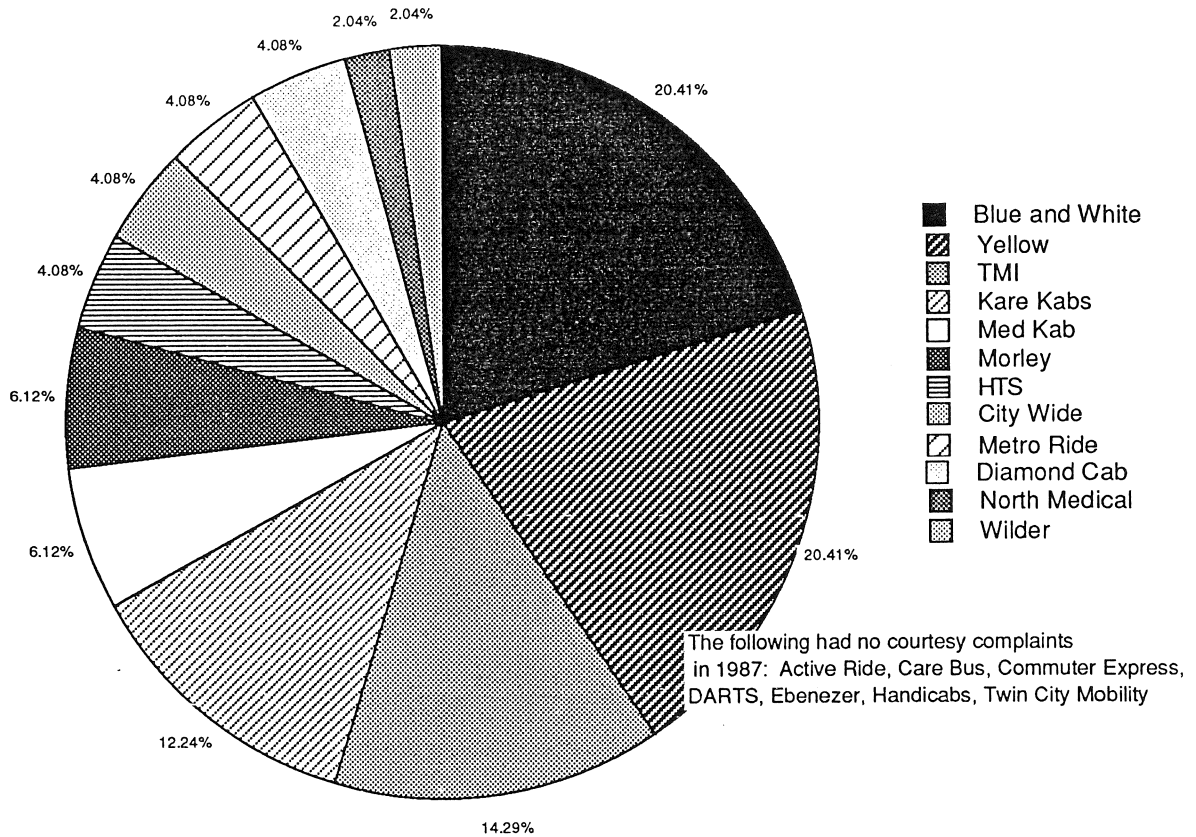
In addition to customer complaints about trip denials, providers are required to report monthly to the MMAC, the total number of service requests that it denies. The MMAC monitors these denials and with its newly implemented computer information system will be able to analyze denials by community, by provider and by time of trip to determine if an individual provider appropriately denied a service request. The MMAC will also use this information to assess the adequacy of the overall system's vehicle capacity to meet service demand.

The RTB/MMAC recently implemented an action to address trip denials. As of May 1, 1988, outlying communities in the Metro Mobility service area receive transportation from providers who designate vehicles to remain in that outlying area and are reimbursed at a higher rate than the central service area. It is anticipated that this will increase the service availability to outlying areas by eliminating the

1987 Courtesy Complaints by Provider

Total courtesy complaints: 48

Figure 11

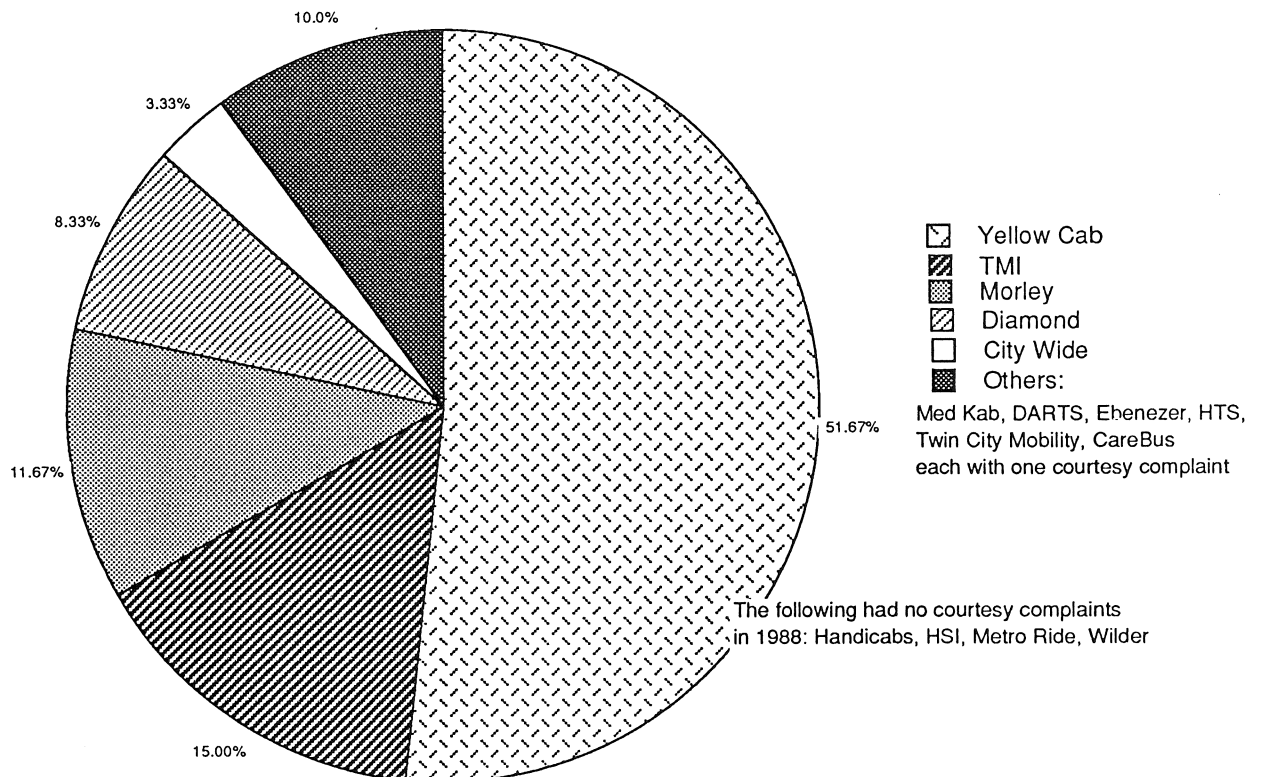


1988 YTD Courtesy Complaints by Provider

January - June

Total courtesy complaints: 60

Figure 12



competition of the outlying trip requests with those from the central "more easily served" areas and by more adequately compensating the longer trips taken in outlying areas. This should result in fewer complaints of trip denials to outlying areas.

The MMAC has documented that as many as 80 percent of all trips taken during peak travel hours are for standing order trips, regularly scheduled trips to the same location at least three times a week. This has increased the competition for rides that customers experience when trying to schedule a trip during peak hours. A large proportion of these standing order trips during peak hours are for travel to training and habilitaton centers or to rehabilitation facilities. The RTB is currently exploring this peak hour travel demand to determine if a more efficient trip delivery or funding mechanism will lessen the demand on the Metro Mobility system during peak hours.

B. ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

In 1987, 71 accidents or incidents were recorded by the MMAC. This includes any accident involving personal injury or property damage as well as any significant incidents occuring during the provision of Metro Mobility service. Of these reported accidents/incidents, 56 percent resulted in personal injury, 25 percent in vehicle damage, one percent in property damage, and 16 percent were classified as other occurences. (See Figures 13 and 14.)

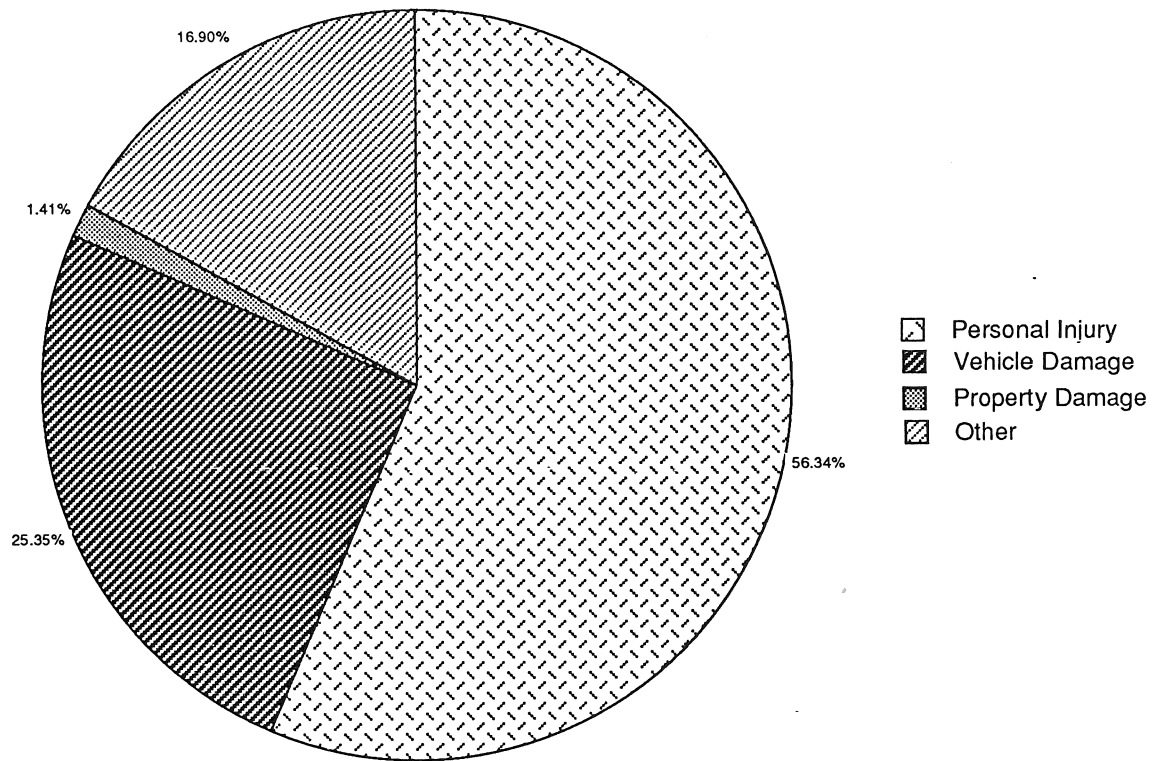
The other category includes such occurrences as accusations of robbery or improper touching by either the driver or passenger, a vulnerable person dropped off at a wrong address, passenger unbuckling seatbelt and standing up in vehicle, passenger reported missing by relatives, driver bitten by dog, passenger assaulting another passenger and harrassment by passenger or driver.

The MMAC currently ranks each of the accidents/incidents by its severity. For instance, in 1987, of the 40 accidents/incidents resulting in personal injury 31 (78 percent) were ranked as minor, seven (16 percent) as moderate, one (3 percent) as substantial and one (3 percent) as major.

One way of measuring safety in the transit industry is the number of accidents/incidents occuring per 100,000 vehicle miles of service. In the recent evaluation of the Metro Mobility, Carter Goble Associates estimated the average Metro Mobility trip to be 6.5 miles long. Since Metro Mobility is a toured service, this estimate of passenger trip miles must be adjusted to reflect vehicle miles. If one assumes that every trip had an average of two passengers, in 1987 the Metro Mobility program experienced 2.28 accidents/incidents per 100,000 miles. For comparison purposes only, during the same period of time, the Metropolitan Transit Commission's experience in regular route service was 4.41 traffic and passenger accidents per 100,000 miles of service. Some caution needs to be exercised in making judgments about this comparison, since the operating characteristics of a fixed regular route service

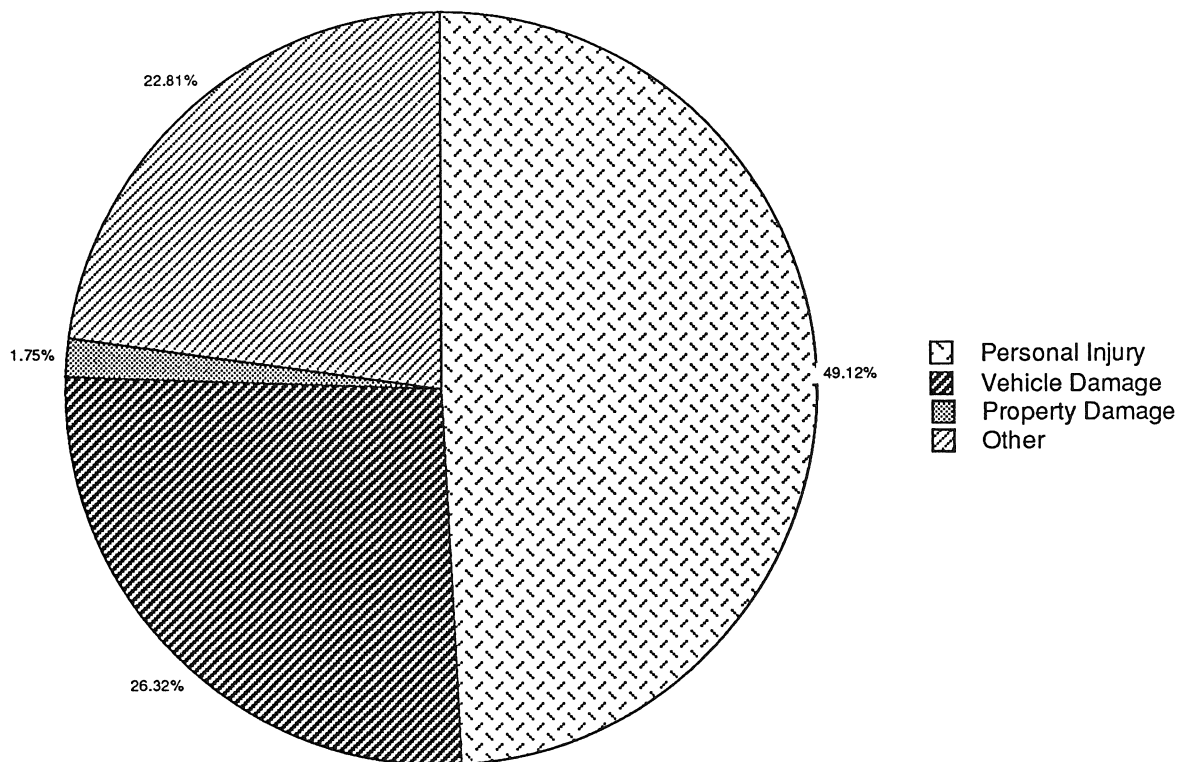
1987 Accident and Incident Types
Total Accidents and Incidents: 71

Figure 13



1988 YTD Accidents and Incidents
January - June
Total accidents and incidents: 57

Figure 14



differ significantly from those of a demand responsive service like Metro Mobility. Fixed regular route service, in particular, is characterized by a greater number of passenger boardings and vehicle stops. Nevertheless, based on the available data, the Metro Mobility program has generally proven to be a safe means of transporting disabled persons.

Though the Metro Mobility program's safety record has been good, the MMAC needs to analyze the accidents/incidents that do occur in a more consistent and rigorous fashion to:

- Identify trends or patterns in the types of accidents occurring.
- Determine if there are actions or policies that would prevent such accidents.
- Recommend policies to the RTB and implement preventive actions.

Based on a review of the performance of providers in 1987, the MMAC recommended several changes to the 1988 provider contracts that were implemented by the RTB to improve overall program safety. These included establishing more stringent vehicle specifications and requiring providers to have a dispatcher available at all times that vehicles are in service.

Prior to that, legislation passed in 1987 under House File 1009 called for a strengthening of the operating standards for special transportation services. Contained in the legislation was the directive for the Minnesota Department of Transportation to develop new vehicle specifications and provide annual vehicle and equipment inspections. The implementation of these standards during 1988 and 1989 serve to ensure the safety of the Metro Mobility program.

* * *

To conclude, the RTB's next report to the Legislature will be submitted on December 1, 1988. It will present a comprehensive update of Metro Mobility service improvements implemented during the year. The next report will document changes in provide safety performance and complaint statistics as well.

V. ATTACHMENTS



JD:10/87

Telephone Report ☐
Follow Up Report ☐

Administration Center
560 6th Avenue North
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411
612-349-7480

METRO MOBILITY PROVIDER ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT

All accidents or incidents involving personal injury or property damage must be reported to Metro Mobility Administration Center within 24 hours. This written report must be completed and sent to MMAC within 48 hours.

Date of Report _____

Date of Incident _____

Provider _____ Phone # _____

Driver _____ Vehicle # _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____

Passenger _____ Cert. # _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Passenger _____ Cert. # _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Day, Date & Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Description of Accident/Incident: _____

Immediate Action Taken: _____

Describe personal injuries or property damage: _____

Describe immediate medical treatment and any follow up treatment or care:_____

Explain cause or possible cause of accident:_____

How could this accident have been prevented?_____

What steps or procedures are being taken to prevent future occurrences of this type?

Has the involved driver completed the required Passenger Assistance Course?_____

If yes, list date of course completion_____

If not, list date of hire_____

Signature of person filing this report_____

Report received at MMAC by_____date_____