

Metro Mobility Enhancements Study

March 2026

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The total cost of preparing this study was approximately \$175,000. For a full breakdown of cost allocation, please reach out to the MnDOT study coordinator, Glenn Gadbois at Glenn.Gadbois@state.mn.us, for more details.

Cover Letter

March 3, 2026

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The Honorable Jon Koznick, Co-Chair
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The Honorable Scott Dibble, Chair
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Saint Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable John Jasinski
Ranking Minority Member
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RE: Metro Mobility Enhancements Study report

Dear Legislators,

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is pleased to present the Metro Mobility Enhancements Study. The Minnesota Legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Transportation to conduct a “Metro Mobility enhancement and service study to develop recommendations to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, reliability, dignity, and experience of riders of the special transportation service under Minnesota Statutes” ([MN Laws Chapter 127, Section 125](#)). The directive contained several specific requirements for the study and the study also assessed the extent to which the Met Council has addressed and continues to progress on recommendations from two previous reports.

Please let me know if you have questions. You can also contact Glenn Gadbois, MnDOT Study Coordinator, at Glenn.Gadbois@state.mn.us or 651.366.5629.

Sincerely,



Nancy Daubenberger, P.E. (MN)
Commissioner

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Executive Summary

The Metropolitan Council (Met Council) is the regional governmental agency responsible for providing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit (branded as *Metro Mobility*) and other demand-responsive transportation options for the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region. The Minnesota Legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to conduct a “Metro Mobility enhancement and service study to develop recommendations to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, reliability, dignity, and experience of riders of the special transportation service under Minnesota Statutes” ([MN Laws Chapter 127, Section 125](#)). The directive contained several specific requirements for the study (detailed in this report), and the study also assessed the extent to which the Met Council has addressed and continues to progress on recommendations from two previous reports: a 2018 Metro Mobility Task Force Report and a 2024 Office of the Legislative Auditor Report. MnDOT engaged Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and Palo Consulting Group (hereinafter referred to as the *Study Team*) to complete the study. Findings and recommendations from the study are documented in the report submitted to the legislature. This technical report documents the critical background research conducted by the Study Team, which is the foundation for the Study Team’s findings and recommendations.

To complete the study, the Study Team collected and scrutinized documents, data, and files from the Met Council; analyzed service and cost data; performed a site visit; interviewed staff from Met Council and the contractors providing Metro Mobility service; reviewed contracts with service providers; compared Metro Mobility against peer services; analyzed survey data from Metro Mobility users; held discussions with representatives of seven organizations focused on the needs of older adults and people with disabilities; and engaged with Metro Mobility riders via discussions and focus groups. The Study Team also analyzed and evaluated additional demand-responsive services provided by Met Council, including:

- Premium On-Demand (POD): A same-day, on-demand service available to Metro Mobility customers for trips made throughout the Metro Mobility service area.
- Metro Move: A service focused on the transportation of Medicaid-waiver individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities going to/from day programs and competitive employment.
- Metro micro: A general public on-demand microtransit service.
- Transit Link: A general public dial-a-ride service serving the outer portions of the seven-county area not served by fixed-route transit and designed to link up residents from these areas with fixed-route and Metro Mobility service.

Metro Mobility ranks fourth in ADA paratransit ridership per capita out of the 39 transit agencies serving areas with populations of 2 million or more. Approximately 73 percent of Metro Mobility’s passenger trips (hereinafter referred to as *trips*) are in the federally mandated service area, while the remaining 27 percent fell within the state-mandated service area.

Regarding Metro Mobility, the Study Team found that:

- Metro Mobility is meeting its performance goals in both the federally mandated and state-mandated service areas across all key metrics (e.g., trip denials, on-time performance, on-board ride times, missed trips, telephone hold times, preventable accidents, preventive maintenance adherence, and miles between road calls).
- While not having to serve the State-mandated service area would significantly decrease the resources required to deliver Metro Mobility service, the current difference between the performance in the federally mandated and State-mandated service areas is insignificant—suggesting that the Met Council has been able to meet the demand in both areas while maintaining consistent service quality.
- Metro Mobility compares well against peer systems, ranking between first and third of six agencies across a wide variety of performance metrics.
- The Met Council has implemented changes to the complaint process, greatly improving complaint management.
- With only a few, well-reasoned exceptions, the Met Council has acted upon the recommendations from the 2018 Task Force Report and the 2024 Office of the Legislative Auditor Report.

Perceptions of stakeholder organizations and riders, however, are mixed. The rider survey, with 2,584 responses, suggested that rider perceptions were mostly positive. Areas where riders saw the need for most improvement (albeit the majority of riders were satisfied) were on-time pick-ups, accuracy of estimate time of arrivals, reasonable ride times, and eligibility staff. Interviews with stakeholder organizations revealed three themes: (1) more effort is needed to recognize and adapt to the unique needs of different Metro Mobility riders, (2) accessibility could be improved with improvements in customer-facing technology, and (3) improvement is needed in drivers’ interactions with riders, especially riders with service animals or those that required hands-on assistance. DeafBlind focus group participants hope for more engagement with Met Council when Met Council is planning, designing, and implementing changes.

Table ES-1, below, itemizes the Study Team’s recommendations. The full details and rationale for each recommendation can be found in the listed report section.

Table ES-1 Summary of recommendations

No.	Recommendation for Met Council	Technical Report Section
*1	Mention an escort waiver as an example of a reasonable modification to Metro Mobility’s procedures and policies.	Section 2.15
*2	Create a reasonable modification form so Metro Mobility users can request reasonable modifications (e.g., an escort waiver).	Section 2.15
*3	Consider extending the Metro Mobility contract term to 10 years in the next Metro Mobility procurement.	Section 6.2.1

No.	Recommendation for Met Council	Technical Report Section
4	Explore owning or leasing the Metro Mobility/Metro Move operations and maintenance facilities.	Section 6.2.1
*5	Consider changing Metro Mobility's contractor payment structure to a split structure (a fixed fee plus variable rate) in the next Metro Mobility procurement.	Section 6.2.2
6	Calculate key performance metrics for each call center function, date, and hour to better monitor call center performance. If possible, separate data by federally mandated and State-mandated trips.	Section 6.6.4
7	Modify the phone tree to separate reservation calls from service-day calls.	Section 7.6.3
*8	Improve driver-dispatcher communication. Work to reduce the driver-to-dispatcher ratio. Consider requiring a 20:1 driver-to-dispatcher ratio in future Metro Mobility provider contracts.	Section 7.6.3
9	Increase the proportion of Metro Mobility's fleet that is non-WAVs to at least 10% (potentially increasing to 20% over time).	Section 7.10.1
10	Work toward providing enough Metro Mobility vehicles so that contractors can have more than a 10% spare ratio—one that takes into account current operational and fleet conditions.	Section 7.10.1
*11	Do not extend the zero-denial policy for Metro Mobility to the state-mandated service area.	Section 8.4
*12	Fix the Trapeze issue associated with scheduling pickup times for appointment trips.	Section 16.2 and Section 19.7
*13	Train reservation agents to state a <i>be ready window</i> to Metro Mobility users rather than a specific pickup time when confirming trip booking details. Update online booking interfaces to do the same.	Section 17.3
14	Implement a consistent approach to scheduling across all Metro Mobility contractors and retain a run-cutting expert with Trapeze skills to perform a full run cut.	Section 18.1 and Section 19.2
15	Investigate the potential benefits to Metro Mobility from centralizing scheduling, eliminating the provider zones, and/or centralizing other call-and-control center functions (e.g., reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and responding to service-day calls).	Section 18.6.2
16	Explore options for demand-responsive scheduling/dispatching software using a two-step RFI/RFP process.	Section 18.6.3
*17	Continue to replace the Rangers with DriverMate loaded on tablets.	Section 19.1
18	Augment Metro Mobility's in-department IT staff to solve mission-critical needs (especially if decentralized scheduling and Trapeze use continue).	Section 19.2
*19	Add the missed trip percentage and MBRC performance standards (and associated bonuses and credits) to Metro Mobility provider contracts.	Section 19.7

No.	Recommendation for Met Council	Technical Report Section
20	Develop procedures for detecting patterns that might indicate a capacity constraint on Metro Mobility (i.e., based on denials, untimely trips, missed trips, long ride times, and long hold times in the call center, etc.) associated with specific geographies, days and times of day, or rider/population subgroups.	Section 19.7
*21	Fix several Metro Mobility data tracking and reporting issues related to denials, missed trips, and OTP.	Section 19.7
*22	Update Metro Mobility complaint processing procedures and add a new step to send a final resolution or closure letter to all complainants.	Section 19.8
*23	Enforce a more consistent approach to handling no-show requests.	Section 19.9.3
*24	Allow contractors to use their current vehicle maintenance software as long as those systems can effectively integrating their data with the Met Council's new Hexagon EAM.	Section 19.9.5
*25	Allow the Metro Mobility Enhancement Pilot Program (i.e., POD extended hours) to sunset in December 2025.	Section 20.3

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that the Met Council has already implemented or is in the process of implementing the recommendation.

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; EAM = Enterprise Management System; IT = information technology; MBRC = miles between road calls; POD = Premium On-Demand; OTP = on-time performance; RFI = request for information;

RFP = request for proposal; WAV = wheelchair-accessible vehicle

In conclusion, Met Council's Metro Mobility service ranks favorably among peer ADA paratransit systems and is reaching its performance targets. Met Council is effectively managing its contractors and is working toward addressing larger, complex technical challenges associated with the hardware and software supporting Metro Mobility service. Met Council is navigating the balance between service quality and cost-effectiveness—a tension inherent in all demand-responsive transportation services. Opportunities for improvement mainly lie in improving consistency across contractors and in improving customer touch points through technology enhancements and driver training.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Background, Methodology, and Report Organization

1.1 Introduction

The Metropolitan Council (Met Council) is the regional governmental agency and metropolitan planning organization in Minnesota serving the Twin Cities' seven-county metropolitan area. The Met Council has two divisions that provide public transit services. Metro Transit is responsible for operating fixed-route bus (including bus rapid transit), light rail, and commuter rail services. The second division, Metropolitan Transportation Services, provides transit service through contractors, providing 10% of the Met Council's fixed-route bus service and a variety of demand-responsive transportation (DRT) programs including:

- Metro Mobility: The Met Council's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service.
- Premium On-Demand (POD): An on-demand alternative service for Metro Mobility customers. This service began in 2004 and has seen modest changes over the years. Through legislative language, a pilot was launched in September 2023 that expanded POD's operating hours. The pilot will end on December 31, 2025.
- Metro Move: A premium DRT service, oriented toward the needs of Medicaid waiver individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This service started in May 2024.
- Metro micro: An on-demand microtransit service for the general public (only provided in certain zones). This service started in September 2022.
- Transit Link: A general public dial-a-ride service that serves the outer portions of the seven-county area not served by fixed-route transit and is designed to link residents from these areas with fixed-route and Metro Mobility service.

In its 2024 legislative session, the Minnesota State Legislature asked the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), in cooperation with the Met Council, to conduct an Enhancement and Service Study of Metro Mobility to follow up on two previous reviews of Metro Mobility.¹ The Legislature's specific directives for the Enhancement and Service Study of Metro Mobility are found in Appendix A. The two previous reviews were documented in the following two reports from 2018 and 2024:

- The first report was the Metro Mobility 2018 Taskforce Report. In [2017 Special Session Laws Chapter 3](#), Section 140, Subdivision 1, the Legislature required the formation of a taskforce to examine the Metro Mobility program under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.386. The goal of the task force was to identify options and methods to increase program effectiveness and efficiency, minimize program costs, and improve service including through potential partnership with taxi service providers and transportation network companies (TNCs), as defined in

¹ 129 Article 3 Sec. 125. [HF No. 5247, Conference Committee Report - 93rd Legislature \(2023-2024\)](#)

Minnesota Statutes, section 65B.472, subdivision 1, paragraph (e). The full report, which was released in 2018, can be found online at [Metro Mobility Taskforce Legislative Report](#).

- The second report, the Metro Mobility: 2024 Evaluation Report, from the Program Evaluation Division of the Minnesota State Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA), was released in April 2024. The OLA report stated that the Met Council was applying different service standards when scheduling Metro Mobility rides for the federally mandated ADA paratransit service area vs. the expanded State-mandated service area, and that the two Metro Mobility operational providers were struggling to meet on-time performance (OTP) goals in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. The report also identified several issues with the complaints process. The report concluded with several recommendations to the Met Council for improvements. The full report can be found at <https://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedrep/2024-metro-mobility.pdf>. A summary of the report can be found at <https://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2024/metro-mobility-sum.htm>.

In a competitive procurement, MnDOT retained the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and the Palo Consulting Group to conduct the study. The Study Team's efforts began with a project kickoff meeting and data collection effort in late February 2025.

Prior to discussing the work performed and the results and recommendations, the Study Team wishes to highlight a foundational reality of public transit operations—especially DRT operations. It is obvious that public transit customers want high-quality service. A key element of service quality is on-time performance; that is, that vehicles pick up and drop off customers on time. Although public transit agencies strive for service quality, they also must be good stewards of the resources they have, which means public transit agencies must also strive for cost-effectiveness and efficiency. In DRT operations, cost-effectiveness is principally achieved by carrying as many riders as possible for each hour a vehicle is in operation. However, in DRT operations, there is a tension between service quality and cost-effectiveness. To have higher service quality, transit agencies can reduce how many passengers they try to carry on the same vehicle and can add more buffer time into vehicle schedules. These actions make it easier for vehicles to pick up and drop off passengers on time, but these actions also increase cost while carrying fewer passengers. On the other hand, to increase cost effectiveness, transit agencies can try to carry more passengers on the same vehicle and can reduce buffer time in schedules. But these actions will make it harder for service to be on time. As readers review the results of this study, it is important to keep this tension in mind. Ultimately, the balance between service quality and cost-effectiveness is a policy decision that is then operationalized through the goals and standards adopted and implemented in day-to-day operations.

1.2 Metro Mobility Background/Service Summary

Metro Mobility is the metropolitan area's ADA complementary paratransit service and, as such, is provided to persons who cannot use or access fixed-route transit services in the region because of their disability or disabilities. By receiving grant funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Met Council is obligated under the ADA to provide Metro Mobility services where and when fixed-route services are provided in the seven-county metropolitan area. Complementary ADA paratransit service is

a civil right as detailed in Title II of the ADA of 1990. The FTA details the technical requirements for ADA paratransit service (and ADA requirements for public transit agencies, in general) in FTA Circular 4710.1.

Metro Mobility began in Minneapolis in 1976 as Project Mobility, in response to Section 504 requirements, and in 1979 evolved into Metro Mobility with the concurrent expansion into St. Paul. With passage of the ADA into law, Metro Mobility was reframed to meet the Met Council's ADA paratransit service obligations in 1994.

In 2006, the Minnesota Legislature formalized the existing Metro Mobility geographic service area to include a service area (referred to as the *State-mandated* area) that is broader than the ADA paratransit service area defined by the federally mandated 0.75-mile corridors around fixed routes. These two service areas are shown in Figure 1-1.

The intent of the added legislative language in 2006 was to guarantee service availability for customers that were being served prior to 2006. In other words, it prohibited the Met Council from eliminating service in communities based on the availability of fixed-route service. However, there are now differences in how trip requests are managed and scheduled that evolved over the next 18 years in response to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) focus on splitting federally mandated ADA paratransit trip data from other services and the need to prioritize the federally mandated trips. The OLA report found that the State-mandated area impacted the overall OTP, noting that this study will analyze this further.



Figure 1-1 Weekday federally mandated ADA paratransit and State-mandated service areas.

The service model for Metro Mobility may best be described as a decentralized service model. The Met Council performs the program planning/policy, administrative, contractor procurement/oversight, eligibility determination, and support functions, including the provision of vehicles and technology (Trapeze scheduling/dispatch and in-vehicle equipment).

The turnkey/operations contractors handle the day-to-day functions in three different zones—the West Zone, which includes St. Paul; the West Zone, which includes Minneapolis; and the South Zone. The East Zone is operated by Transdev, and the West and South Zones are operated by Transit Team. These three zones are shown in Figure 1-2.

METRO MOBILITY SERVICE ZONES

TRIP PROVIDER SERVICE AREAS

Metro West Zone: Transit Team

Phone: 651.602.1100
TTY: 612.332.5081
Email: WReservations@metc.state.mn.us
FAX: 312.332.4116

Metro East Zone: First Transit *now Transdev*

East Phone: 651.602.1120
TTY: 612.636.4000
Email: EReservations@metc.state.mn.us
FAX: 612.628.0211

Metro South Zone: Transit Team

South Phone: 651.602.1180
TTY: 952.895.3449
Email: SReservations@metc.state.mn.us
FAX: 952.736.5952

1. Spring Park
2. Minnetonka Beach
3. Tonka Bay
4. Excelsior
5. Greenwood

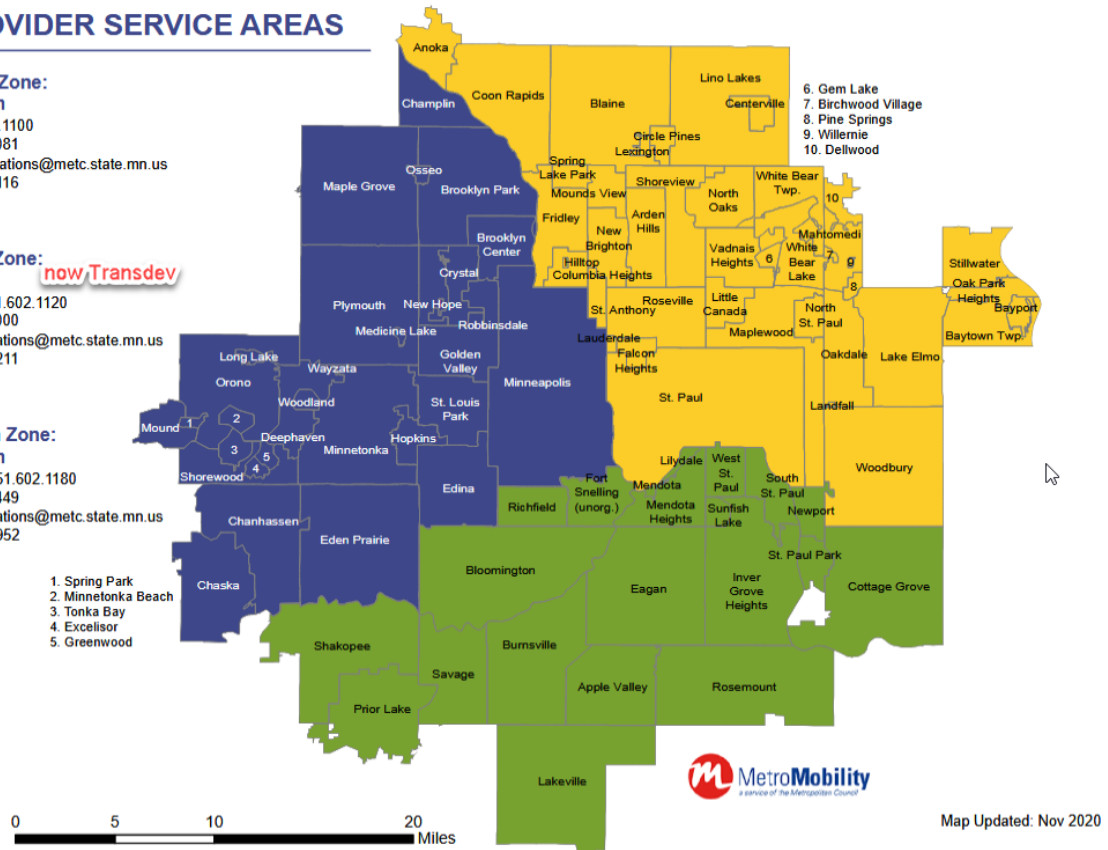


Figure 1-2 Metro Mobility service zones.

Customers are assigned to a contractor based on residential address. For example, a customer who lives in the East Zone calls Transdev to request a trip or roundtrip throughout the three-zone service area. Transdev staff would schedule, route, and serve the trip aided by Transdev dispatchers. Most customers, once certified, are eligible for up to four years before they need to recertify.

The ADA requires public transit agencies to provide ADA paratransit service at the same times that local fixed-route service is available at a minimum. Metro Mobility service hours are not the same in all communities and correspond to fixed-route transit service hours unless communities do not have fixed-route transit. In those communities, Met Council established a minimum service hours window of weekdays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on weekends from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Appendix C contains a list of Metro Mobility service hours by community). In some communities, Metro Mobility services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Customers can book a trip one to two days in advance up until 5:00 p.m. on the day before the trip. The base fare is \$4.00 during peak periods and \$3.50 during off-peak periods. A Metro Mobility service level distinction is that it provides first door-*through*-first door service—an upgrade over door-to-door service provided by most ADA paratransit services, either universally for all riders or by special request.

Metro Mobility provided 1,411,915 ADA paratransit trips in 2024, making it the fourth-largest ADA paratransit service in the United States based on ridership (out of 39 transit agencies serving areas with 2,000,000 or more in population).

1.3. Methodology

In addition to managing the project and keeping the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) engaged with study findings and recommendations, the major study tasks included:

- Collecting and analyzing service information and cost data; the Study Team had direct access to the Trapeze system and Power BI reporting system.
- Interviewing, and for certain functions, observing Met Council, Transit Team, and Transdev staff involved in various Metro Mobility functional areas. These interviews and observations (in the case of the contractors) of staff performing their duties, took place during the week of March 17, 2025. Three days were spent with Met Council staff, while the other two days were spent with the East Zone contractor (Transdev) and the West Zone contractor (Transit Team). For the Transit Team site visit, the Study Team visited only the Minneapolis facility because most of the management staff were located there. The Study Team did not visit Transit Team's Maple Grove facility or their South Zone facility. In conversations with Met Council and Transit Team management, it was decided that the one visit to the Minneapolis facility would be sufficient for the purposes of the study. Additional information/data was also collected at and after these site visits from staff interviewed. Also, while the Study Team was at the contractors' sites, driver focus groups were conducted.
- Engaging representatives of the state-level stakeholder agencies identified by the State Legislature in the OLA. Interviews with these agencies and other agencies identified by Met Council and TTI staff were conducted in two waves. The first wave consisted of remote interviews in late March and early April 2025. A follow-up, in-person meeting of these agencies was conducted in late May 2025. The purpose of this meeting was to make sure that the Study Team accurately documented the information and feedback gleaned from the interviews and to provide a second opportunity to collect additional feedback. Themes from these engagement efforts are found in Chapter 15.
- Collecting feedback from riders. This task was accomplished in two parts. The Met Council is a member of the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG), which provides peer information from other ABBG members and conducts rider surveys in exchange for an annual membership fee. In conjunction with this study, and in cooperation with Met Council and TTI staff who added a few questions to the survey, ABBG conducted a satisfaction survey of Metro Mobility riders in April–May 2025. Raw data from the survey was made available to TTI in June 2025. The second effort to gain additional rider feedback was undertaken in late May 2025, with the conduct of two in-person rider focus groups. The first group consisted of randomly selected riders. The second group involved riders from the DeafBlind community. TTI's preliminary analysis of this rider survey and the findings from the two focus groups are found in Chapter 16.

- Developing a service profile of Metro Mobility based on information on the website; information provided by the Met Council, Transdev, and Transit Team; and data gleaned from Trapeze and various Power PI reports.
- Assessing Metro Mobility's performance including:
 - Analyzing trends of various service and cost performance metrics and the extent to which actual performance compared to stated goals/standards.
 - Assessing how Metro Mobility's metrics compared to other ADA paratransit services; for this, the Study Team primarily relied on data from AABG's group (one of the other services AABG offers is to perform a peer review of key metrics for its members).
 - Assessing Met Council's follow-up to recommended actions previously brought forth by the task force and OLA reports.
 - Assessing the contractor oversight function and the complaint/feedback management processes in a more detailed fashion.
 - Assessing the extent to which Metro Mobility's run structure conforms to its demand profile and identifying the impacts of certain policies, such as the allowance of curbside reservations.
 - Assessing the extent to which other related demand-responsive services (Met Move, POD and its Enhanced Pilot Program, Metro micro, and Transit Link) are also used by ADA-certified customers.
 - Assessing the impact of State-mandated policies on Metro Mobility performance.
 - Developing improvement scenarios and recommendations for Met Council.
 - Evaluating the POD service and its Enhancement Pilot Program.

The PAC was composed of key members of MnDOT and the Met Council. It was the Study Team's responsibility to present key findings to the PAC at key times during the project, to define their role in guiding The Study Team's efforts, to provide a reality check to the study's initial findings, and to subsequently provide input to and help prioritize improvement strategies and recommendations. Subsequent to the kickoff meeting, the Study Team presented preliminary findings—short of the development of strategies—to the PAC in mid-June 2025. Later, a workshop attended by the PAC members was held at which strategies and recommendations were discussed. The PAC was also provided with the opportunity to review and comment on the draft and final reports.

Staff from the Legislative Affairs offices of both MnDOT and the Met Council also provided a review of the final reports.

The Study Team wishes to particularly thank the Met Council and its contractors for their unfettered cooperation in this study and willingness to provide the study team with all the data requested.

Chapter 2: General Service Design, Standards, and Policies

In Chapter 2, the Study Team documents the organizational structure, operating characteristics, policies, and practices of the Met Council's Metro Mobility service.

2.1 Organizational Charts

The organizational charts for Metro Mobility are shown in Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2. Figure 2-1 shows the organizational structure of Met Council employees who are involved in managing, coordinating with and performing various functions around Metro Mobility service. Figure 2-2 was distilled down from five Information technology (IT) organizational charts to show those that *touch* Metro Mobility in one way or another. Each Metro Mobility contractor (Transdev [East Zone] and Transit Team [West Zone and South Zone]) also has its own set of management and front-line staff involved in delivering Metro Mobility service.

As shown in Figure 2-1, the Met Council staff is largely organized by function as follows:

- The director of Contracted Transit Services oversees Metro Mobility and other Met Council services that use contractors for service delivery such as POD, Metro Move, Metro micro, Transit Link, 12% of the Met Council's fixed-route bus service, and Metro Vanpool. The director of Contracted Transit Services reports to the executive director of the Met Council's Metropolitan Transportation Services division.
- Reporting to the director of Contracted Transit Services is the assistant director of Metro Mobility. Reporting to the assistant director is the Customer Service manager and the Operations manager. Metro Mobility recently hired a complaints investigator who reports to the Customer Service manager and oversees the complaint investigation, management, and response process. The customer service function includes customer service call intake, management of customer complaints/feedback, and eligibility determination. The operations function focuses on performance/compliance oversight of the two contractors, as conducted by the two project administrators (PAs). The two PAs work closely with the Customer Service staff who are focused on complaint processing.
- Also reporting to the director of Contracted Transit Services are staff that support Metro Mobility and other contracted services including a Technology Manager, Fleet Services Manager, Report and Data Analysis Manager, Finance and RFP Administrator, and Bus Safety Manager.

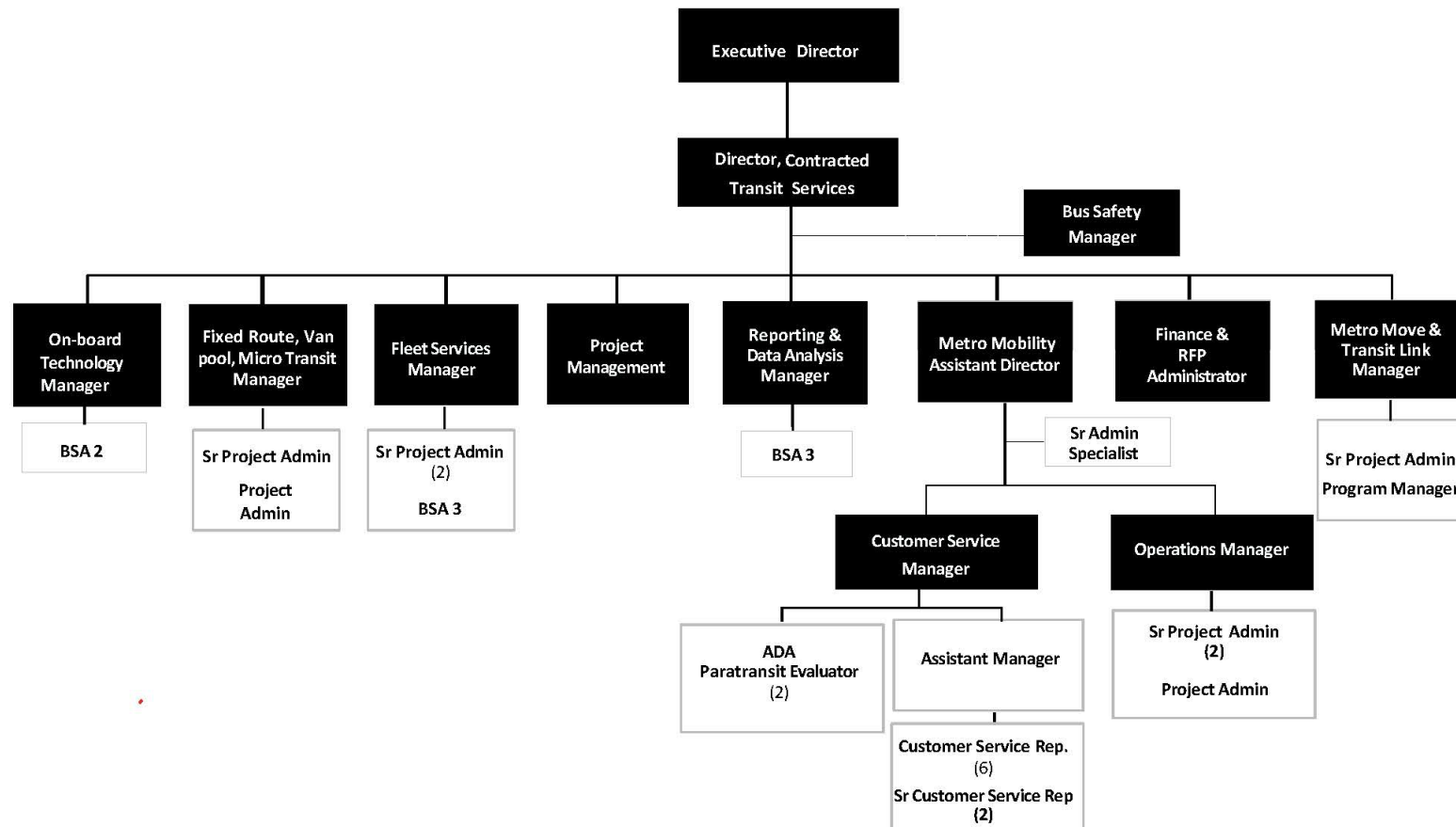


Figure 2-1 Met Council contracted services organizational chart.

The Met Council recently completed significant staffing changes that address recommendations in the 2024 Office of Legislative Auditors report. The changes include realignment of responsibilities and the addition of new positions with procurement, finance and data management technical expertise. New positions include:

- Sr Customer Service Rep/Complaints Investigator (Metro Mobility Service Center, MMSC),
- Assistant Manager Customer Service (MMSC),
- Fleet Services Senior Project Administrator,
- Reporting and Data Analysis Manager, and
- Finance and RFP Administrator.

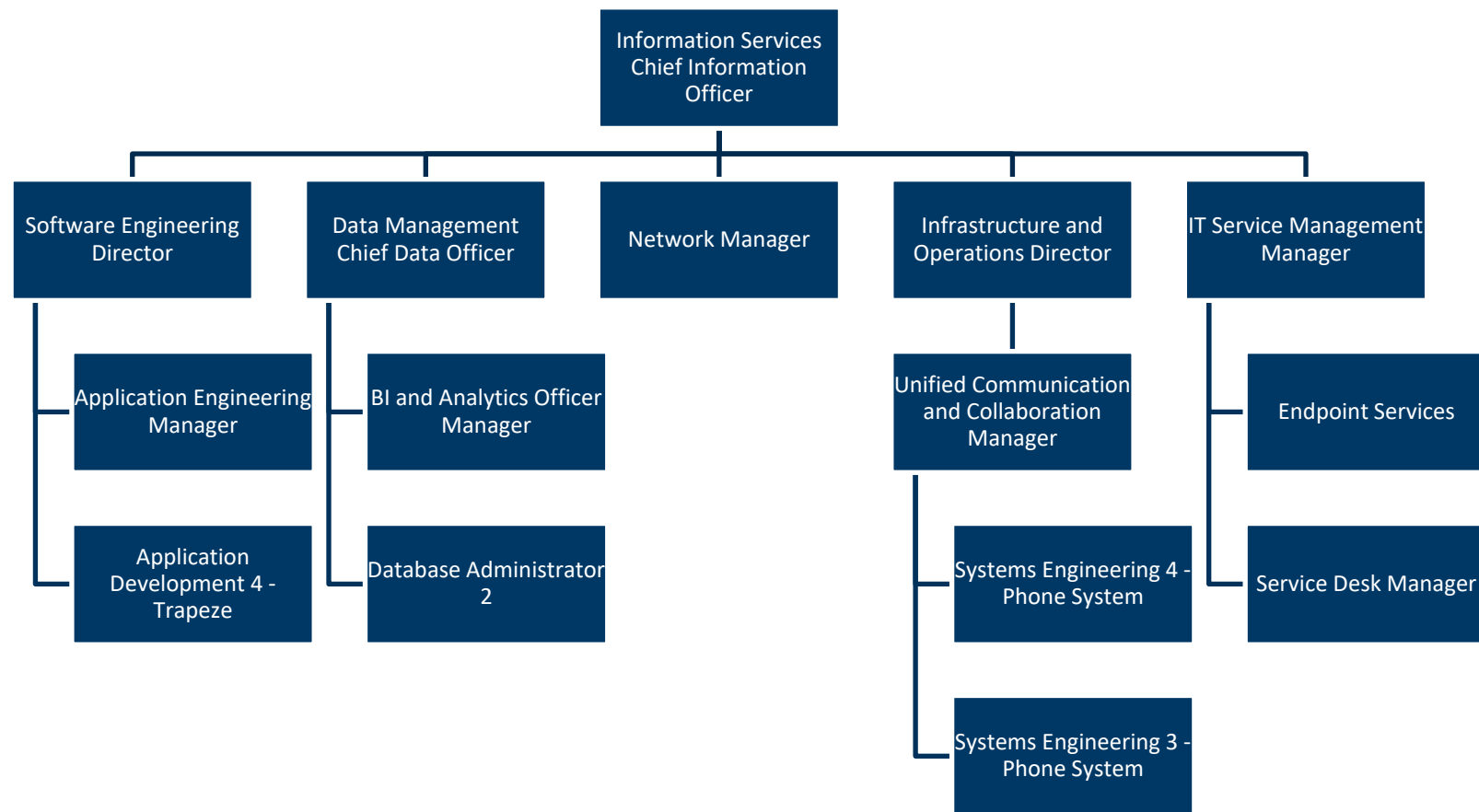


Figure 2-2 Met Council IT staff supporting Metro Mobility.

In addition (not shown in Figure 2-1), the Met Council's Regional Administration Division provides various additional services associated with contracting and procurement, finance, information systems, risk management, budget, human resources, communications, audit, and government affairs. Staff from the Regional Administration Division support vehicle purchases, technology infrastructure and supporting software, and in-vehicle equipment. The Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) radio system is supported by Metro Transit staff.

2.2 Service Area

Metro Mobility provides service under two different regulatory bodies:

- ADA Paratransit (Federally Mandated) Service Area: This service area covers the 0.75-mile transit corridors, as prescribed by federal guidelines. All Metro Mobility trips that begin and end within this service area are a federally protected civil right and are guaranteed.
- State-Mandated Service Area: This expanded service area as mandated by the Minnesota Legislature. Trips that begin or end outside of the ADA paratransit service area but within the State-mandated area are accommodated by the Metro Mobility contractors (see Section 2.3) on a standby, space-available basis only. If such a trip cannot be provided by a Metro Mobility contractor, the customer will be informed of the POD service option, where Metro Mobility customers can arrange for a subsidized ride. In practical terms, virtually all trips to and/or from the State-mandated service area are currently being accommodated by Metro Mobility contractors.

A map of the federal and State-mandated service areas is presented in Figure 1-1 in Chapter 1.

2.3 Service Design/Model

Metro Mobility may best be described as a decentralized model in that the zoned operational contractors are responsible for the daily call-and-control functions associated with reservations, scheduling, and dispatching, as well as service-day (estimated time of arrival [ETA] and where's my ride? [WMR]) calls from customers. In addition, the operational contractors are responsible for providing their own operational facilities and vehicle maintenance. They are also allowed to add their own dashcam and telematics if they choose.

There are three zones—East, South, and West (see Figure 1-2 in Chapter 1). Minneapolis is in the West Zone and St. Paul is in the East Zone. Currently, there are two operations contractors—Transdev assigned to the East Zone and Transit Team assigned to the South and West Zones. The contractors for the South and West Zones are procured separately but are currently the same contractor. As with most decentralized models, riders call the contractor located where their trip or roundtrip originates, which in most cases will be the contractor serving the zone in which they reside.

The Met Council monitors and processes invoices from its operational contractors and ensures that the appropriate performance-based adjustments are applied to invoices in line with the terms of the

contracts. (Met Council’s contracts with the Metro Mobility providers include performance-based bonuses that increase the amounts paid to contractors and performance-based adjustments [referred to as *invoice credits*] that decrease the amounts paid to contractors.) The Met Council is also responsible for providing the paratransit reservation/scheduling/dispatch system (Trapeze), vehicles, and in-vehicle technology used to support operations. The in-vehicle technology includes the Ranger mobile data terminals (MDTs), radio system, primary camera system, vehicle routers, and onboard cell service. The Met Council’s Information Services department provides the garage WIFI equipment and back-end networking. Trapeze supports most reporting functions, Cubic provides the fare information, and Power BI is used to summarize data.

This decentralized model is not that common among large ADA paratransit systems. Among the 10 largest (by ridership) ADA paratransit services, only one other system—Access Services in Los Angeles—has a similar decentralized design.

2.4 Service Days and Hours

Metro Mobility operates 7 days a week with varying hours specific to communities, with service hours aligned with fixed-route transit hours in each community. Communities with no fixed route service (State-mandated service area) receive a minimum span of service; 6 a.m.—6 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m.—4 p.m. on weekends. Weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service hours by community are detailed in Appendix C.

2.5 Fares and Fare Collection

Met Council has different fares depending on the time of day, day of the week, and location of the trip. The general fare structure for Metro Mobility is as follows:

- Peak Fare: \$4.00 (Monday–Friday, 6:30–9:30 a.m. and 2:00–5:30 p.m.).
- Off-Peak Fare: \$3.50 (All other times, including holidays).
- Holidays (All Day): \$3.50 (Holidays include New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the next Friday, and Christmas Day.)
- Downtown Fare: \$1.00 (Within downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul).
- Surcharge: \$0.75 (Trips over 15 miles outside of the ADA paratransit service area).

2.5.1 Go-To Fare Collection System

Met Council utilizes the Go-To Fare Collection System, although exact cash fares are also accepted. Go-To cards are also used on the regional transit system (Metro Transit, Maple Grove Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, Plymouth Metrolink, and Southwest Transit).

Metro Mobility customers can purchase a Go-To card programmed as a pass and/or with stored value; only stored value cards are accepted on Metro Mobility. Go-To cards can be purchased through:

- Metro Transit’s online store at <https://store.metrotransit.org/FareCard/New>.

- Various (100+) retailers, including all Cub Food Stores.
- Metro Transit’s retail stores.
- The Metro Mobility Service Center (MMSC).

Once the account has been set up and Go-To card is in hand, customers can load up to \$400 on the card. When boarding the Metro Mobility vehicle, customers touch their Go-To card to the electronic card reader to pay their fare, which has been automatically precalculated in the Trapeze system. Metro Mobility customers can also tag their Go-To card on fixed-route services and ride for free.

2.5.2 Fare Refund for Late Trips/Missed Appointments

Fares for late trips (based on the confirmed pickup window or a requested drop-off/appointment time) are automatically refunded to the customer’s Go-To card account. Customers who paid cash for a late trip are directed to contact Metro Mobility’s Customer Service Department for a fare refund. Refunds to customers are deducted from the contractors’ monthly bills.

2.5.3 Fare Refund for Excessively Long Trips

Customers who paid a fare with a Go-To card for a ride that was longer than the allowable maximum on-board time (OBT) are directed to contact Metro Mobility’s Customer Service Department for a fare refund. Refunds to customers are deducted from the contractors’ monthly bills.

2.5.4 Free Transit Fare

Effective June 14, 2025, Metro Mobility customers may also ride fixed-route services throughout the region for free. When boarding a bus or train platform, the Metro Mobility customer touches their Go-To card to the card reader to record the free fare transaction.

2.6 Reservation Hours and Booking Policies

Metro Mobility customers may request a trip 1–4 days in advance by calling the operations contractor (Transdev in the East Zone and Transit Team in the West and South Zones) in the zone in which they reside or by booking a trip online. Same-day trips can sometimes be accommodated on a space-available basis only. Customers can also book a trip by email or by fax, with some limitations. Reservation options include the following:

- Call-In Requests: Hours for call-in reservations are daily from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Interestingly, the reservation agents answer the phone call by saying “Transdev” or “Transit Team” rather than “Metro Mobility.” This detail is not specified in the contracts. The reservation agents prompt customers to provide:
 - Their name and Metro Mobility ID number.
 - The day and date of the trip.

- The exact pickup address and drop-off address, along with any additional information that might be helpful, including a building name or description and phone number.
- The desired pickup or drop-off/appointment time.
- A description of any mobility aids in use for the trip.
- The number of people traveling with the customer. Customers may take one personal care attendant (PCA) and one guest with them; additional passengers may be accommodated on a case-by-case basis as space permits (see Section 2.12).

When requesting a drop-off time for an appointment trip, customers are encouraged to leave enough time to get from the drop-off location to the location of the actual appointment. Customers may also qualify their desired pickup time by indicating a no-earlier-than time (e.g., when a customer has a firm workday end time or after the last class at school).

- Language Lines: Met Council uses Language Line Solutions to assist customers with limited English proficiency. As needed, contractors will connect the customer with an interpreter who speaks their language as part of the call.
- End-of-Call Confirmations: Before ending a call with a customer, reservation agents must verify the information for all trips booked with the customer, including the day and date, pickup time, and origin/destination. Documented calls where this verification is not done are subject to an invoice credit.
- Online Requests: Customers may also request trips online through the MyMetroMobility service. According to the Metro Mobility Service Guide, customers can utilize MyMetroMobility to book trips under the same rules as call-in-requests, noting that the Met Council needs to update its Service Guide to reflect those policies. To register for online booking, customers are directed to contact the MMSC at 651-602-1111 or metromobility@metc.state.mn.us. Once an account is set up, customers can:
 - Go to the Metro Mobility [online booking page](#) and log in with their rider ID and password.
 - Select Book Trip to enter their pickup and drop-off addresses, trip date and pickup or drop-off times, trip instructions, and additional passenger information.
 - Review and modify the trip information and click Request Trip at the bottom of the screen.

Customers will then receive a booking confirmation in a pop-up window as well as an option to book a return trip, book another trip, or view all trips.

- Requests by Email or Fax: Requests for trips submitted by fax or email will be processed twice each day between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. and between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. Requests that come in after 1:00 p.m. will not be considered until the following day at 5:00 a.m. Same-day trip requests cannot be submitted by fax or email.
- Curbside Trip Requests: A curbside trips policy that began during the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued allows customers to chain trips together when scheduling. There are some limits to booking these chained trips, however. There can be no more than 20 minutes between the

first leg's drop-off at the destination and the pickup of the second leg, and a customer is limited to one curbside trip per day.

Policies regarding trip time negotiations and pickup time confirmations differ for the federally mandated and State-mandated service areas as follows:

- For trips within the federally mandated area:
 - Reservation agents will perform real-time scheduling (i.e., use Trapeze to find solutions for a given trip).
 - If a trip request is based on a desired pickup time, the reservation agent will provide the system-generated pickup time for one or more solutions (as scheduled by Trapeze on a specific vehicle run with availability). In searching for solutions based on a requested pickup, Trapeze will search for a vehicle with availability within one hour on either side of the requested pickup time, as allowed by federal guidance. This practice is commonly referred to as trip time negotiations. For example, if a customer requests an 8:00 a.m. pickup time, Trapeze will look for a pickup solution between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.; the reservation agent will try to find a solution as close to the requested pickup time as possible from the identified solutions. Once the customer has agreed to a specific solution offered, the scheduled pickup time becomes the confirmed pickup time. This confirmed pickup time is the time that the customer needs to be ready and serves as the basis for OTP (see Section 2.9).
 - If a trip request is based on a desired appointment time or drop-off time, as voiced by the customer, the reservation agent will also go over solutions and provide the customer with both the scheduled drop-off time and the scheduled pickup time. The Metro Mobility Service Guide makes a point of describing appointment time as “the latest time the vehicle can arrive at the curb near the first entry door of your destination” and suggests to customers that specifying an earlier drop-off time may give them more time to get from the first entry door to another part of the building, if needed, to improve the chance of being at the actual appointment on time. As discussed previously, the scheduled pickup time of the accepted solution becomes the confirmed pickup time. This confirmed pickup time is the starting point of the pickup window and determines if a vehicle is on time.
 - In the event a reservation agent cannot find a solution for a particular trip, the reservation agent will schedule the trip at the time requested and schedulers will be charged with reviewing route options and moving around other scheduled trips to make it fit within the schedule parameters.
- For trips that begin and/or end in the State-mandated area:
 - The reservation agent will negotiate trips times as necessary to ensure prioritization and compliance with federal regulatory requirements for the ADA paratransit trips on the system. Met Council has a related operating policy that all trips to, from, or within the

State-mandated area be treated as standby trips. One of the contractors (Transdev) uses real-time scheduling to schedule such trips, while the other contractor (Transit Team) treats these trip requests as standby trips, per Met Council policy. As a result, Transit Team conducts a significant number of callbacks to customers after scheduling has been completed to inform them of their confirmed pickup time. The contractor will contact the customer before 8:00 p.m. the evening before the trip date to provide the customer with a confirmed pickup time or to let the customer know they were unsuccessful in placing their trip.

2.7 Standing Order Policies

Met Council provides standing order (also called subscription trip) service to customers even though the provision of such trips is not required under the ADA or federal guidelines for ADA paratransit service. Met Council also abides by FTA's guidance that no more than 50% of the trips during peak periods be standing orders (even though such guidance is superseded by capacity constraints; that is, standing orders can exceed 50% of the capacity as long as there are no capacity constraints on random advance-reservation trips).

FTA determines whether a system is capacity constrained by looking at the presence of denied trip requests, as well as the system's ability to meet federal standards around service quality. The inability to globally and sustainably meet service quality standards, including on-time pickups, appointment time drop-offs, OBTs, and call hold times, constitute a capacity constrained system. Until Met Council can consistently comply with all performance standards, standing orders will be capped at 50% during each hour of the day.

Met Council defines a standing order as a recurring trip that is made to and from the same origin and destination at the same time(s) on the same day(s) of the week. There is no policy for a minimum number of times per week to receive standing order trips; hence, a customer can request a once-per-week standing order. In general, preference is given to standing orders within the federally mandated service area. Standing order requests that are not entirely within the federally mandated service area may be considered only if the trip is for life-sustaining medical appointments or for work/school purposes or if the customer has full eligibility (i.e., is not *conditionally eligible* [see Section 6.1.1]).

Customers need to complete and submit a Standing Order Request Form. These forms can be obtained by contacting the MMSC or can be downloaded from the Metro Mobility website. Contractor schedulers process these requests on a monthly basis to determine whether there is capacity to accommodate each request; standing orders are not guaranteed.

Changes to standing orders, such as one-time cancellation or a suspension of service because the customer is going away for a vacation, can be made by calling the reservation line of the contractor serving the standing order or via online booking. An ongoing change will, however, require submittal of a Standing Order Change Form.

Customers can request a temporary hold of their standing order for up to 30 days within a rolling 90-day period. Standing order service is automatically suspended on all federal holidays; hence, if a customer needs to travel on a holiday, they need to make a separate request as an advance reservation service request (1–4 days in advance).

Met Council reviews standing orders on a monthly basis to ensure they can be accommodated; however, there is no firm maximum standing order length (e.g., how long the standing order is active) in Met Council policy.

Moreover, if a customer cancels or no-shows 20% or more of their standing order trips, Met Council may remove the standing order. In such an event, the customer will have to wait at least 12 months before requesting a new standing order. In the meantime, the customer would have to request trips one by one. While policy allows for cancellation of a standing order due to a 20% nonuse rate, Met Council only considers standing order cancellation when the nonuse rate reaches or exceeds 40% in a quarter in practice.

2.8 Denial Policy

Met Council's goal is to have zero denials for trips that are within the federally mandated service area. This goal is stated in the provider contracts, along with a monthly bonus of \$5,000 for achieving this standard and a \$5,000 invoice credit assessed for each denial. In the contracts, a denial of a federally mandated trip is defined as a customer request for a trip within the federally mandated service area and times that the contractor is unable to provide within 60 minutes of the requested time due to capacity constraints.

In the State-mandated service area, if no solution is found for a trip, the reservation agent might cancel the request and enter a new request at a different time or put the customer on standby. The plus/minus one hour search window limitation in an ADA complementary paratransit requirement that does not apply to trips in the State-mandated service area; thus, accommodations outside the plus/minus one hour window are not tracked as a trip denial. Moreover, contractors may deny trip requests for trips to, from, or within the State-mandated service area.

2.9 Pickup and Drop-Off Windows and Related OTP Policies

Metro Mobility contractors will always provide a confirmed pickup time to customers at the time of booking (real-time scheduling) for ADA complementary trips and before 8:00 p.m. on the evening before the service date for State-mandated trips that were placed on standby during the booking process (see related discussion in Section 2.6).

Met Council has a 0/+30 pickup window policy, which means that its on-time pickup window starts at the confirmed pickup time and extends for the next 30 minutes. If the vehicle arrives within this 30-minute span, it is considered on time. Met Council strives for its contractors to be on time at the pickup location at least 95% of the time, noting there are contractual bonuses for exceeding the 95% OTP goal and a schedule of contractual invoice credits assessed for an OTP of below 93%.

If the vehicle arrives before the confirmed pickup time, the driver must wait at least 5 minutes after the confirmed pickup time for the customer to board the vehicle. If the customer cannot be located, the driver may submit a no-show request to the dispatcher and await the dispatcher's release before leaving the pickup location for their next stop. If the vehicle arrives after the pickup window and the customer still wishes to make the trip, the trip is deemed a *late trip*. If the vehicle arrives after the pickup window and the customer does not appear or cancels-at-door, the trip is deemed a *missed trip* (see also Section 2.14).

Met Council's drop-off window policy (for trips requested by drop-off or appointment time) is 60/0. This means that a vehicle arriving up to an hour before a stated appointment or requested drop-off time is considered on time. Trips are deemed to be late if the vehicle arrives after the appointment time, and early if the vehicle arrives before the one-hour drop-off window. Met Council expects its trip providers to get customers to their destination on or before the time stated at least 95% of the time. Similarly, the provider contracts include monthly bonuses for an OTP of 95% and above and a schedule of monthly invoice credits for an OTP of 93% and below. In addition, contractors are assessed \$500 per day for each day where the drop-off OTP is below 90% for appointment trips.

2.10 Maximum OBT Policy

The Metro Mobility Service Guide provides a table of maximum OBTs by mileage (using triangulated distance estimates). The maximum OBTs for each mileage interval are comparable to fixed-route travel times (including walk time to/from the bus stop). The resulting maximum OBT by trip distance is presented in Table 2-1. Table 2-1 also serves a scheduling parameter in Trapeze; Trapeze uses direct travel time as the foundation for OBT calculations in the scheduling process (see Section 7.2.3).

In the provider contracts, Met Council establishes a maximum ride time standard—at least 95% of all trips should have ride times that are at or below these maximum OBTs. An invoice credit is assessed for each percentage point below 95%.

Table 2-1 Metro Mobility maximum OBTs

Distance	Maximum OBT	Distance	Maximum OBT
1 mile	34 minutes	16 miles	94 minutes
2 miles	38 minutes	17 miles	98 minutes
3 miles	42 minutes	18 miles	102 minutes
4 miles	46 minutes	19 miles	106 minutes
5 miles	50 minutes	20 miles	110 minutes
6 miles	54 minutes	21 miles	114 minutes
7 miles	58 minutes	22 miles	118 minutes
8 miles	62 minutes	23 miles	122 minutes
9 miles	66 minutes	24 miles	126 minutes
10 miles	70 minutes	25 miles	130 minutes

Distance	Maximum OBT	Distance	Maximum OBT
11 miles	74 minutes	26 miles	134 minutes
12 miles	78 minutes	27 miles	138 minutes
13 miles	82 minutes	28 miles	142 minutes
14 miles	86 minutes	29 miles	146 minutes
15 miles	90 minutes	30+ miles	150 minutes

2.11 Level of Driver Assistance Policies

ADA paratransit service is framed by federal guidelines as an origin-to-destination service. Many transit agencies interpret this requirement as providing door-to-door service, meaning the driver is available to assist a customer from the door/entrance of the requested origin address into the vehicle at the pickup location and from the vehicle to the door/entrance at the destination. Other transit agencies offer, as a default, curb-to-curb driver assistance, meaning the driver will assist the customer in and out of the vehicle. For these transit agencies, customers may request door-to-door service at booking.

Met Council, in contrast, offers door-*through*-door service. The driver will meet a customer at the first entry door at the customer's pickup location (i.e., the door that takes a customer directly to the outside of the customer's home or apartment building). At the customer's destination, the driver will escort the customer *through* the first entry door (as opposed to leaving the customer at the threshold). However, drivers will not go beyond the first set of outside doors. If a customer is using a mobility device, the driver will help the customer go up and down outside stairs and ramps, as long as they are properly maintained. Drivers are not permitted to assist riders beyond the first door of any building.

If requested by the customer, drivers will also assist customers with up to four grocery-sized bags or the equivalent. This service can include helping to load and unload packages. Shopping bags should be able to fit in the area around the rider without taking the space of any other rider. A small folding grocery cart is also acceptable.

2.12 Personal Care Attendants, Guests, and Children Policies

Metro Mobility customers who require assistance beyond what drivers are permitted to provide are welcome to bring along with them a PCA to help them. PCAs may accompany the customer on the trip at no charge and must have the same origin, destination, and pickup times as the customer they are helping. A PCA does not have to be a registered or paid professional; they can be anyone who comes along to assist.

Metro Mobility customers may also bring along one guest; additional guests may come along on the trip if space allows. Each guest pays a standard fare. The guest fares can be paid for in cash, with the guest's personal Go-To card, or with the customer's Go-To card at the end of the trip. In the latter case, a double tap decrementing two fares is allowed on the system if the taps are 20 minutes apart. If the trip

is less than 20 minutes and a second tap is tried and does not register, Met Council does not collect the guest fare.

By policy, children aged 5 years and under may ride in the vehicle as a guest at no additional charge. Children aged 6 years and over will be charged the regular fare. For safety reasons, children must be secured in their own seats. A child younger than 4 years of age or weighing 40 pounds or less must be in a car seat provided by the customer. Customers (or their PCAs) are responsible for properly securing the child's car seat in the vehicle. Drivers may assist with empty car seats but will not carry children.

At the time of booking, customers will need to tell the reservation agents if a PCA will be accompanying the customer on the trip. Customers will also need to tell the reservation agents how many guests and/or children will accompany them, if any (see also Section 2.6.).

2.13 Service/Therapy Animal and Pet Policies

Metro Mobility customers can bring service and therapy animals with them on Metro Mobility vehicles. They are expected to sit or lie on the floor (not on a seat) near the customer and must be under the customer's (or PCA's) control at all times. Pets are also allowed but must be in carriers. In addition, the intention to being a pet carrier on board needs to be made known at booking.

2.14 No-Shows, Missed Trips, and Cancellation Policies

Met Council definitions related to no-shows, missed trips, and cancellations are as follows:

- **No-Show:** Met Council defines a no-show as an event where the vehicle (to which a trip is assigned) arrives or is present within the confirmed pickup window, the driver has read all the relevant pickup notes, and the customer does not appear after 5 minutes of driver wait time or cancels-at-door. If the vehicle arrives late (i.e., after the pickup window) and the customer does begin the boarding process within the 5-minute driver wait time, the event is designated a missed trip (described next) rather than a no-show. If the existing trip is a no-show or a missed trip, Met Council does not assume that the return trip is cancelled, per federal guidance. In such events, customers are directed to specifically cancel return trips (and/or other trips to be taken that day) if no longer needed.
- **Missed Trip:** Specifically defined in the provider contracts, missed trips are events where the:
 - Vehicle arrives early and departs before the pickup window begins.
 - Driver of the vehicle arrives at the pickup location on time but departs without waiting the full 5-minute driver wait time.
 - Vehicle is late and the customer is not present or cancels the trip (by telephone or with the driver).
 - Vehicle to which a trip has been assigned does not show up at the pickup location.

A fifth definition for a missed trip needs to be added to the contracts—an event where the driver ignores special notes for pickups that are part of the trip record (e.g., pick up the

customer at the rear entrance) and leaves the pickup location. In querying some of the contractor dispatchers, they were not aware of all of these definitions.

- Advance vs. Late Cancellations: Metro Mobility customers may cancel at any time. Customers are encouraged to cancel a trip at least one hour before their confirmed pickup time. Cancellations made within one hour of the pickup time or during the pickup window, including cancels-at-door, are deemed to be *late cancellations* and are equivalent to no-shows.
- Excessive No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy: As allowed by federal guidance, transit agencies may establish an excessive no-show/late cancellation policy to ensure efficient and reliable service for all customers as follows:
 - Warning Letter: Accumulating three no-shows within a 30-day period that amount to more than 6% of the customer's requested trips will result in a letter of warning from your service contractor.
 - Suspension: A fourth no-show within 30 days of the first no-show, exceeding the 6% threshold, may lead to suspension of service.
 - Suspension Duration: The first suspension within a 12-month period is typically 15 calendar days; subsequent suspensions within that period increase to 30 calendar days.
- No-Show/Suspension Appeals: Customers can dispute a no-show or suspension by contacting the MMSC to provide the reason for the dispute and request that the no-show be excused. Legitimate reasons include especially circumstances not under the customer's control, such as hospitalization for an emergency procedure, delays at a medical/dialysis, or being stuck in a malfunctioning elevator.

2.15 Reasonable Accommodation

'Met Council's policy statement for reasonable accommodations appears on the Metro Mobility website (<https://metro council.org/Transportation/Services/Metro-Mobility-Home/Riding-Metro-Mobility.aspx>).

Metro Mobility is committed to providing safe, reliable, courteous, accessible, and user-friendly services to its customers. To ensure equality and fairness, Metro Mobility is committed to making reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure programs and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Requests for modifications can be made by calling 651-602-1111 or emailing metromobility@metc.state.mn.us.

An example of a reasonable modification might be a request to waive the driver escort for a customer who feels they do not need the default door-through-door driver assistance. While examples such as this are not called out in the Rider Guide, Met Council management has indicated that they have granted driver escort waiver requests 100% of the time requested. The Study Team recommends adding driver escort waivers as an example of a reasonable modification in Met Council's policies and procedures. The Study Team also recommends that Met Council create a user-facing reasonable modification request form and include the form on the Metro Mobility website.

2.16 Service Productivity Standard

One of the responsibilities of Met Council is to be a good steward of funding that supports Metro Mobility. With Metro Mobility providing dedicated vehicle service, the efficiency of trip scheduling comes into play. A more efficient the schedule leads to fewer required vehicle hours, which is important because Met Council's contractual rate for dedicated service is based on a per revenue vehicle hour (RVH) rate. As RVHs increase, system costs increase. The scheduling efficiency of a dedicated service can be measured in terms of passenger trips per RVH; higher productivity levels lead to lower per-trip costs. The challenge for any transit agency is finding the proper productivity level that also achieves service quality requirements.

When the contract was developed in the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, Met Council retained a minimum monthly productivity of 1.65 passenger trips per RVH in the new contract. If a contractor underperforms, the contractors must deduct from their invoices all RVHs necessary to increase the productivity to 1.65 for the calendar month.

That said, the trip productivity goal for Metro Mobility contractors has been lowered from 1.65 to 1.30 passenger trips per RVH. This contract amendment was driven by a significant shift in customer travel patterns during and after the pandemic. In addition, Met Council feels pressure to focus on improved customer experience and meeting upcoming goals of achieving a 93%–95% OTP. Bonuses are provided to the contractors for achieving a 95% or higher OTP for both pickups and requested drop-offs (for appointment-based trips), while invoice credits are assessed if the OTP at pickup and drop-off falls below 93% (see Section 6.3.3.). In a system composed of dedicated vehicle service, OTP and service productivity usually have an inverse relationship. As productivity decreases, OTP usually increases (and vice versa) because a lower productivity typically means less shared trips and more direct trips. Also, low productivity can be a result of a high slack time (i.e., where drivers do not face a tight schedule). In either case, this reduction in passenger trips per RVH will tend to improve OTP at the expense of higher productivity (and service/cost efficiency).

2.17 Not-to-Exceed Hold-Time Standards

Met Council has contractually established maximum hold-time standards for incoming customer calls—95% of calls should be no more than 3 minutes, and 99% of calls should be no more than 5 minutes for a given date. An invoice credit is assessed for each day in the calendar month when both standards have not been achieved.

Many transit agencies have a lower threshold of 2 minutes for average hold times and no call hold times more than 5 minutes. However, the Met Council stated that the thresholds used were suggested by FTA triennial reviewers. Many other transit agencies have program parameters more closely aligned with the minimal federal requirements resulting in a smaller customer base.

2.18 Complaint Response Standards and Nonreported Complaint Response Infraction Policies

In the Metro Mobility Service Guide, customers are directed to report complaints and other feedback to the MMSC. These complaints are entered into the Metro Mobility Customer Feedback Module, which was upgraded in 2024 in response to the OLA report findings regarding the quality of complaint processing.

Met Council also directs contractors to redirect any customer complaints to the MMSC. If a customer wishes to register the complaint immediately, but the MMSC is not open, the contractor is directed to enter the complaint through a portal into the Customer Feedback Module. An invoice credit is assessed for each occurrence where a contractor does not enter a complaint or feedback it receives directly into the Customer Feedback Module.

Met Council alerts a contractor when further investigation on their part is required. In such cases, contractors are required to investigate the complaint (as directed by Met Council staff) and respond within 48 hours (excluding holidays) by way of the issue tracking system. An invoice credit is assessed for each time the contractor fails to meet this deadline.

Since the OLA report was published, the Met Council has improved its complaint handling process, bolstering the MMSC with complaint management staff focused on the complaint process. These staff are responsible for interacting with complainants, investigating complaints, and providing resolutions back to the complainants. In November 2025, the Met Council hired another department manager responsible for creating operational reports/dashboards and analyzing the complaint data.

2.19 Safety Metric Standards

The preventable accident frequency ratio (AFR) presents a common metric for safety. Most transit agencies strive to keep preventable accidents under 1 for every 100,000 total miles. Met Council has adopted this threshold in the provider contracts, with a bonus based on achieving less than 1 preventable accident per 150,000 total vehicle miles and an invoice credit for each preventable accident over 1 for every 100,000 total vehicle miles.

2.20 Collision Incident and Critical Incident Reporting Response Standards

Met Council introduced the Incident Web Portal in 2024 and established a 24-hour period within which all accidents or incidents involving customers or Metro Mobility vehicles must be reported. Driver statements and road supervisor reports are part of this reporting requirement. An invoice credit is assessed for each late report.

The 24-hour notification period is shortened to 30 minutes for certain types of critical incidents where:

- A collision occurs that involves:
 - A Metro Mobility customer on board.
 - Any customer or other person receiving medical attention.
 - A fatality.
 - A Metro Mobility vehicle being towed from the scene.
- There is a major medical or security emergency or significant operational system failure; and
- Police are called to the scene or whether there is an arrest.

Here too, there is an invoice credit assessed for each report over 30 minutes and over 60 minutes.

2.21 Preventive Maintenance Standards

In its provider contracts, Met Council specifies that preventive maintenance (PM) will be done on each Metro Mobility vehicle within 110% of each PM mileage threshold, as outlined in the contractor's maintenance plan. The contractor's maintenance plan must meet the vehicle manufacturer's original equipment manufacturer minimum preventive maintenance thresholds. The contractor's maintenance plan must also meet the requirements of the Met Council's Use and Maintenance Agreement. An invoice credit is assessed for each PM that exceeds the 110% threshold.

2.22 Driver Infraction Policies

In its provider contracts, Met Council has also established per-occurrence invoice credits that are assessed for various violations including drivers:

- Being out of uniform.
- Not escorting riders.
- Using personal electronic devices while on duty.
- Not complying with engine shut-down policies.
- Not checking customers' photo IDs.
- Using tobacco products while in revenue service.
- Incurring Class A operating violations.

2.23 Other Contractor Infraction Policies

In its provider contracts, Met Council has also established per-occurrence invoice credits to assess for other contractor violations including:

- Reporting inaccurate data/key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Egregious acts that expose customers to significant harm or the Met Council to liability.
- Excessive radio use.
- Unauthorized use of a Metro Mobility vehicle.

Chapter 3: Service Infrastructure

3.1 Facilities

3.1.1 Met Council/Metro Mobility

Met Council administration and support services, such as ADA Paratransit Eligibility, Contractor Oversight, Information Services, and the Metro Mobility Customer Service Department are housed at the Met Council's administrative building located at 390 Roberts Street North, in St. Paul.

3.1.2 Transdev (East Zone)

Transdev is the East Zone contractor for Metro Mobility service (see Figure 1-2). Its facility is located at 1 Ridder Circle in St. Paul, across the Mississippi River from downtown St. Paul. The facility provides space for all management and administrative personnel, as well as all day-to-day functions associated with reservations, scheduling, dispatching, the handling of customer service-day calls, operations and maintenance, and vehicle cleaning. There is sufficient indoor and outdoor vehicle storage space to accommodate Transdev's revenue and nonrevenue fleet for the East Zone, as well as personal staff/driver vehicles.

3.1.3 Transit Team (West and South Zone)

3.1.3.1 West Zone

Transit Team has two facilities supporting its West Zone services. The primary facility supporting the West Zone is located at 1154 North 5th Street in Minneapolis. The facility provides space for all management and administrative personnel, as well as all day-to-day functions associated with reservations, scheduling, dispatching, the handling of customer service-day calls, operations and maintenance, and vehicle cleaning. The second (remote) operations/maintenance facility is located at 10751 89th Avenue North in Maple Grove.

There are 89 Metro Mobility vehicles stationed at the Minneapolis facility, with a peak pull-out of 50–60 vehicle runs. Comparatively, there are 175 Metro Mobility vehicles stationed at the Maple Grove facility, with a peak pull-out of 110 vehicle runs. In an interview, Transit Team's maintenance manager noted that maintenance staffing is roughly the same between the two facilities, consisting of one maintenance manager and six to seven technicians at each facility. He also reported that Transit Team has been trying to augment its maintenance staff in Maple Grove to accommodate the maintenance needs of the larger fleet; however, recruitment activities have been a challenge. Consequently, a portion of the Maple Grove fleet in need of maintenance has been shuttled to their Minneapolis facility for maintenance to balance the load.

3.1.3.1 South Zone

Transit Team has one facility supporting its South Zone services, located at 14420 County Road 5 in Burnsville. Like Transit Team's Minneapolis facility, the Burnsville facility houses all management and administrative personnel, as well as all day-to-day functions associated with reservations, scheduling, dispatching, the handling of customer service-day calls, operations and maintenance, and vehicle cleaning for the South Zone operations. There are 104 Metro Mobility vehicles based in the Burnsville facility, with a maintenance staff composed of one maintenance manager and five technicians.

The Transit Team facilities also support Transit Link contracts and school bus contracts.

3.2 Telephone System

The Met Council utilizes the Mitel internet-based phone system network. The Mitel phone system is used to support the Met Council and its two Metro Mobility contractors (and Transit Link providers). The Met Council supplies physical phones to the contractors to support call center activities. The maintenance of the phone system is contracted out to Allstream, Inc.

One of the hallmarks of the Mitel system, in support of Met Council and contractor functions, is its call-recording features and customizable phone trees. Even though Metro Mobility customers are directed to contact a specific phone number for the service delivery contractor in their home location, the Mitel auto-attendant front-ends the call with a single message before announcing options.

The phone numbers associated with each zone are as follows:

- Transdev: Metro East Zone, Phone: 651-602-1120.
- Transit Team: Metro West Zone, Phone: 651-602-1100.
- Transit Team: Metro South Zone, Phone: 651-602-1180.

The following centralized announcement is used for all Metro Mobility call centers:

Did you know you could save time by booking and managing your own trips online? To register for online booking, call Metro Mobility Customer Service at 651-602-1111 or e-mail MetroMobility@metc.state.mn.us. Thank you.

The following automated message is for calls routed to a particular provider:

Thank you for calling Metro Mobility West zone with service provided by Transit Team. Your call may be recorded for quality assurance purposes.

To speak with the reservationist, press 1. [This option transfers the call via automatic call distribution to a provider call center].

To check on or cancel an existing ride using the automated phone system, press 2. [This option transfers the call to the Trapeze interactive voice response (IVR)].

To use the automated fare system to check your Go-To balance, press 3. [This option transfers the call to the Go-To system].

To repeat these options, press 8.

For the Metro Mobility customer service center, press 9. [This option transfers the call to 651-651-1111].

Chapter 4: Vehicle Fleet

Chapter 4 focuses on Metro Mobility’s fleet of revenue vehicles. Table 4-1 presents a summary of the fleet by zone and by accessibility. Of the 542 revenue vehicles assigned to the three zones as of June 4, 2025, 507 vehicles (94%) were wheelchair accessible. The West Zone has the largest fleet with 244, followed by the East Zone with 181 vehicles and the South Zone with 117 vehicles. All vehicles used for Metro Mobility service are powered by gasoline.

Table 4-1 Metro Mobility fleet summary

Fleet	East Zone	West Zone	South Zone	Total	Percentage
WAVs	172	222	113	507	94%
Non-WAVs	9	22	4	35	6%
Total	181	244	117	542	100%
Percent	33%	45%	22%	100%	

WAV = wheelchair-accessible vehicle

4.1 East Zone/Transdev

Metro Mobility’s fleet assigned to the East Zone and operated by Transdev is summarized by vehicle type in Table 4-2. Of the 181-vehicle fleet, all but 9 (5%) are wheelchair accessible. The nonaccessible fleet includes two cutaways that can seat up to 14 and 12 passengers, respectively, plus seven 2019 Ford Flex sport utility vehicles (SUVs) (2019 was the last year these vehicles were made). The predominant seating configuration for the cutaways, reflecting 92% of the fleet, is 8 & 3, meaning the vehicle can sit up to eight passengers on permanent (rather than flip) seats while accommodating up to three wheelchairs. This East Zone fleet is relatively new—92% of the fleet has a model year of 2023 or later.

Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2 below show photos of some of the Metro Mobility East Zone fleet. Figure 4-3 shows the exterior of the cutaways.

Table 4-2 Metro Mobility fleet—East Zone (June 4, 2025)

Vehicle Type	Year	Make/Model	Seating Capacity	Number
Cutaway	2025	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	42
Cutaway	2025	Glaval Universal	8 & 3	1
Cutaway	2024	Elkhart Coach	8 & 3	68
Cutaway	2024	Glaval Universal	8 & 3	25
Cutaway	2024	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	8
Cutaway	2023	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	16
Cutaway	2019	Elkhart Coach	8 & 3	5
Cutaway	2019	Glaval Universal	8 & 3	1
Minivan	2024	Micro Bird	5 & 2	1
Minivan	2023	Chrysler Voyager	4 & 1	5

Vehicle Type	Year	Make/Model	Seating Capacity	Number
Cutaway	2018	Elkhart Coach	14 & 0	1
Cutaway	2018	Glaval Universal	12 & 0	1
SUV	2019	Ford Flex	3 & 0	7
Total				181

SUV = sport utility vehicle



Figure 4-1 East Zone fleet in Transdev's indoor garage.

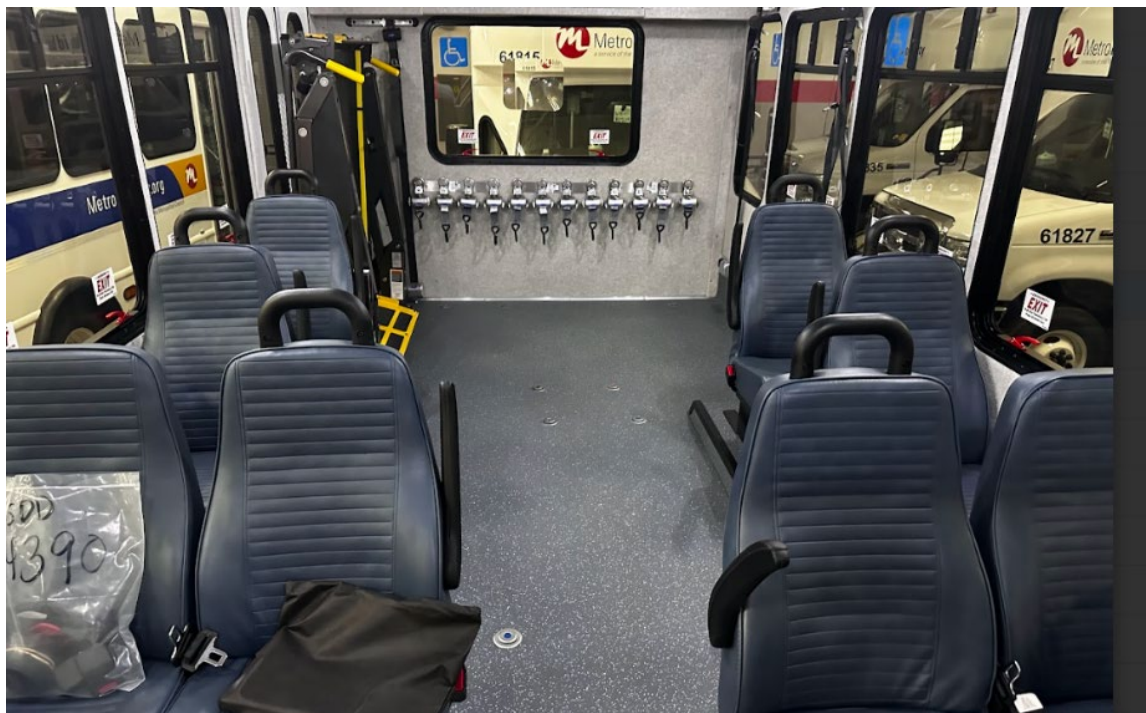


Figure 4-2 Interior of 8 & 3 cutaway.



Figure 4-3 Exterior of 8 & 3 cutaway.

4.2 West Zone/Transit Team

Metro Mobility’s fleet assigned to the West Zone and operated by Transit Team is summarized by vehicle type in Table 4-3. Of the 244 vehicles, 222 (91%) are wheelchair accessible and 22 (9%) are not. The nonaccessible fleet includes three cutaways that can seat up to 12–14 passengers, 12 Ford Flexes and seven Toyota Highlanders. As with the East Zone, the predominant seating configuration for the cutaways—reflecting 87% (212 vehicles) of the West Zone fleet—is 8 & 3. The West Zone fleet is relatively new—199 vehicles (82% of the fleet) are model year 2023 or later.

Of the 244 Metro Mobility vehicles in the West Zone, 157 (64%) are assigned to Transit Team’s Maple Grove facility, with the remaining 87 vehicles (36%) assigned to the Transit Team’s Minneapolis facility.

Table 4-3 Metro Mobility fleet—West Zone (June 4, 2025)

Vehicle Type	Year	Make/Model	Seating Capacity	Minn	MG	Total
Cutaway	2025	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	48	11	59
Cutaway	2024	Elkhart Coach	8 & 3		79	79
Cutaway	2024	Glaval Universal	8 & 3		35	35
Cutaway	2023	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	15		15
Cutaway	2019	Elkhart Coach	8 & 3	8	16	24
Minivan	2024	Micro Bird	5 & 2	1		1
Minivan	2023	Chrysler Voyager	4 & 1		9	9
Cutaway	2018	Elkhart Coach	14 & 0	2		2
Cutaway	2018	Glaval Universal	12 & 0		1	1
SUV	2024	Toyota Highlander	3 & 0	1		1
SUV	2021	Toyota Highlander	3 & 0	6		6
SUV	2019	Ford Flex	3 & 0	6	6	12
Total				87	157	244

Minn = Minneapolis facility; MG = Maple Grove facility; SUV = sport utility vehicle

4.3 South Zone/Transit Team

Metro Mobility’s fleet assigned to the South Zone and operated by Transit Team is summarized by vehicle type in Table 4-4. Of the 117 vehicles, 113 (97%) are wheelchair accessible. The nonaccessible fleet includes four 2019 Ford Flexes. Most of the cutaways can accommodate three wheelchairs; eight cutaways can accommodate four wheelchairs and two additional vehicles can accommodate five wheelchairs. This fleet is relatively new—88% of the fleet has a model year of 2023 or later.

Table 4-4 Metro Mobility fleet—South Zone (June 4, 2025)

Vehicle Type	Year	Make/Model	Seating Capacity	Total
Cutaway	2025	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	28
Cutaway	2024	Elkhart Coach	8 & 3	42
Cutaway	2024	Glaval Universal	8 & 3	18
Cutaway	2023	Star Trans Senator II	8 & 3	8
Cutaway	2018	Glaval Universal	12 & 5	8
Cutaway	2017	Elkhart Coach	8 & 4	2
Minivan	2024	Micro Bird	5 & 2	2
Minivan	2023	Chrysler Voyager	4 & 1	5
SUV	2019	Ford Flex	3 & 0	4
Total				117

SUV = sport utility vehicle

4.4 In-Vehicle Systems and Equipment

While the Met Council is responsible for providing the Rangers, radio, the Go-To equipment, and an in-vehicle camera system (described in Chapter 5), contractors are required to provide the following:

- Body fluid cleanup kit.
- First aid kit.
- Strap cutter.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Flashlight.
- Spare fuses.
- Adult blanket.
- Warning triangles (3).
- Ice scraper.
- No smoking sign.

The contractor is also responsible for maintaining cleaning supplies in each vehicle including:

- Paper towels.
- Throw-away plastic gloves.
- Nontoxic disinfectant cleaning solutions.
- A waste receptacle (to be emptied daily).
- A broom and dustpan.

In addition, the contractor is required to supply each vehicle with the following:

- Receipt books.
- Paratransit transfer tickets.

- A King's map book or other reference (as specified by the MMSC) that is current as of the start of the contract.
- Pre-trip forms (the contractor must use a pre-trip form that is compliant with all federal and state laws and regulatory requirements and includes a section for the security check of the interior and undercarriage of the vehicle, to be completed both before and after the trip).

4.4 Contactor Use of Vehicle

The following two provisions in the contract govern contractor use of Met Council vehicles:

The Contractor will not use Vehicles for anything except the provision of Metro Mobility Service unless express written permission is granted in advance by the Council. If the Contractor uses the Vehicle for anything other than its intended purpose of providing authorized service, the Vehicle will not be allowed back into service until a DOT inspection of the Vehicle is completed. The cost of this inspection, as well as any other cost as a result of the unauthorized usage, will be the responsibility of the Contractor.

and

The Contractor will transport ADA Metro Mobility certified Customers, customer's guest(s) and Personal Care Attendants only unless otherwise directed by the Council in writing. The Contractor will not transport customers outside the Metro Mobility geographic service area or after the designated service times within each community unless approved in advance by the MMSC. A performance credit will be assessed for each documented violation.

There is an invoice credit of \$5,000 per occurrence for violating this provision (see Section 6.3.3).

4.5 Met Council Inspection of Vehicles

Regarding the inspection of vehicles by the Met Council, the contract provisions state the following:

The Met Council reserves the right to conduct inspections of any Vehicle being used for Metro Mobility Demand Service. Inspection or monitoring will be conducted with or without Contractor advance notification. Inspections will not interfere with the Contractor's ability to meet service obligations.

4.6 Met Council Vehicle Replacement Plan

The Study Team's understanding of the Met Council's Vehicle Replacement Plan is that the Met Council strives to replace about 20% of the fleet annually because most of the vehicles have a 5-year/175,000-mile life. The Met Council has established a standard practice of replacing vehicles after 5 years; vehicles typically accumulate 250,000–300,000 miles prior to replacement.

As with most transit agencies, execution of this plan took a hit during the COVID-19 pandemic when production of cutaways, in particular, was slowed because of the availability of parts. During this time, delivery windows soared to 1.2–2 years after the purchase orders were submitted. Since then, production timelines have grown increasingly shorter. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, vehicle expansion is being curtailed—not because of new vehicle shortages but because of the lack of availability of Rangers. The Met Council Information Systems department has not been able to successfully navigate a transition to tablets—something that has routinely been accomplished at other transit agencies.

Chapter 5: Technology and Related In-Vehicle Hardware

5.1 Trapeze and Modules

Met Council is a long-standing Trapeze software customer, utilizing its core PASS system for reservations, scheduling, and dispatch for well over two decades. The Met Council has made a substantial, long-term investment in maintaining and building on the core service of Trapeze PASS.

Over the years, Met Council has implemented several add-on modules to expand functionality. These add-ons include itinerary planning tools, in-vehicle technology (MDTs), IVR systems for trip confirmations, self-service phone-based trip cancellation features, and both a mobile application (launched in the first quarter of 2025) and web-based tools for trip booking.

In the third quarter of 2025, Met Council will launch a new customer policy management tool called Service Infractions. This system will automate the enforcement of policies related to no-shows, disruptive behavior, and fare avoidance by generating warnings and suspensions for noncompliant riders.

Looking ahead, the following two additional initiatives are planned in collaboration with Trapeze:

- Implementation of EZ Wallet: A prepaid faring module that will integrate with the Council-wide Cubic payment card industry-compliant enterprise system. This implementation will enable account-based, media-less fare payment capabilities.
- Replacement of Rangers with DriverMate: A transition to tablet-based driver tools, as further detailed in Section 5.3.

Table 5-1 outlines the Trapeze modules currently in use, including those with implementation dates as of late 2024.

5.2 PASS-IVR

One of the Trapeze modules in use at Met Council is PASS-IVR. PASS-IVR includes the capability for multiple outbound notification types, such as late trip courtesy calls, no show warnings, upcoming eligibility expiration, and EZ Wallet low-balance alerts. For Metro Mobility service, outbound IVR calls are configured for day-in-advance trip reminder calls, as well as imminent arrival calls (these calls go out a few minutes before the vehicle is estimated to arrive at a customer pickup location). The module is also configured to send out email confirmations for web and mobile app trips, but it is not configured to send short message service (SMS)/text messages to customers at all. The trip reminder call service (on the night before the service date) has an extended feature that allows customers to enter their credentials and cancel their trip(s) if they are no longer needed. This one-call solution improves the customer experience and reduces call volumes in the call center. Table 5-2 shows the average number of outbound notifications generated per day—by email or by voice—in March 2025.

Table 5-1 Metro Mobility—Trapeze module maintenance schedule

Product	Period	Operational Characteristics
PASS, PASS-CT & Mapmaker	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips & 57 w/s
PASS, PASS-CT & Mapmaker	February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips & 57 w/s
PASS WEB	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS WEB	February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS IPA	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS IPA	February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS MON/RANGER *	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025	up to 653 paratransit vehicles
PASS MON/RANGER *	February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	up to 653 paratransit vehicles
PASS IVR (c/c, callbacks)	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS IVR (c/c, callbacks)	February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS EMAIL/SMS	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS EMAIL/SMS	February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS APPS	Year 1	up to 10,173 booked trips (including Spanish)
PASS APPS	Year 2	up to 10,173 booked trips (including Spanish)
PASS Service Infractions	Year 1	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS Service Infractions	Year 2	up to 11,000 booked paratransit trips
PASS DriverMate (with VoIP)	Year 1	up to 100 paratransit vehicles
PASS DriverMate (with VoIP)	Year 2	up to 100 paratransit vehicles

Table 5-2 Average daily number of IVR outbound notifications (March 2025)

IVR Outbound Notifications	Daily Average
Email	
Forgot Password/Verify Email Address	2
Vehicle Imminent Arrival	10
Advance Reminder (Evening before Service)	13
Web Trip Booking Confirmation	16
Web Trip Cancellation Confirmation	3
Voice	
Vehicle Imminent Arrival	629
Advance Reminder (evening before service)	211
Average Total Notifications per Day	884

5.3 Rangers

Met Council currently uses the Trapeze proprietary, legacy Ranger MDTs for data communications between the contractor dispatch centers and drivers. Rangers have reached the end of their life and are no longer being manufactured by Trapeze. Thus, transit agencies across the country have been migrating to the replacement mobile application, DriverMate, which runs on standard, commercially available Android tablets. A photo of a Ranger, showing its position relative to the driver, is presented in Figure 5-1.



Figure 5-1 Ranger proximity to driver.

A major issue with the Rangers that will have been addressed by the time this report is complete is that the proprietary map installed in the Rangers has not been updated in several years. A number of new

communities in the service area have not been properly geocoded in PASS. As such, drivers are often unable to use the Rangers to successfully navigate to addresses for customers and businesses without navigational help from dispatch.

Another issue with the Rangers is their reliability, which is clearly due to their having reached the end of their useful life. The contractors came up with a work-around to address at least one of the issues impacting pull-out efficiency, specifically related to the touchpad screens. A computer mouse is now connected via USB to some Rangers to aid with driver screen navigation. When not driving, drivers use the mouse on their thigh (or a hard surface positioned on their thigh) to navigate the cursor.

With no units available for purchase from Trapeze, the Met Council has had trouble procuring Rangers to replace inoperable units and to expand the number of vehicles that can be put into service at peak times. That said, the Met Council was able to obtain 120 Rangers in the fall of 2024; another 50 Rangers are scheduled to be received in the summer of 2025.

At the time of the Study Team's site visit in March 2025, the pilot program to replace Rangers with DriverMate, which had been put in place approximately nine months earlier, was suspended. A number of issues related to network connectivity and reliability caused the DriverMate units to lose trip information and require full resets. The Study Team had not witnessed such challenges ever before with DriverMate implementation at a transit agency. While the root cause is not fully identified, the problems appear to stem from challenging, security-related requirements for IT networks at the Met Council.

5.4 Radios

For voice communications between dispatch and drivers, two of the three contractor entities for Metro Mobility use the ARMER system. MnDOT owns the core infrastructure providing the 700-800 MHz trunked public safety radio system backbone and 95% mobile coverage. ARMER currently serves as the primary communications tool for the majority of state, county, and local public safety entities in Minnesota. The ARMER system gives contractors access to the Metro Transit control center as well as law enforcement in case of a regional emergency. Use of the ARMER system is of no cost to Met Council, because Met Council contributed to the initial investment for the ARMER infrastructure. Transdev and Transit Team West use licenses on the ARMER system. While there are no subscription costs associated with the system, Met Council has had difficulties obtaining the appropriate number of licenses to equip the entire Metro Mobility fleet.

Because the ARMER system is used by law enforcement, emergency services, transit, and other entities, to manage contractor use/abuse of the system, the Met Council has had to restrict the use of the live (open-microphone) system to emergencies only, requiring drivers to request voice communications from dispatchers via their Ranger. Dispatchers, through their consoles, can then initiate private channel communications to interact with drivers. Transit Team South uses the ANCOM service, which is a 700-MHz trunked system with usage costs. Figure 5-2 shows the radios and their proximity to the driver inside the vehicles being operated by Transdev and Transit Team, respectively.

5.5 In-Vehicle Cameras

All vehicles in the Metro Mobility fleet have two security camera systems. One is installed by the Met Council and is the same system used on the fixed-route system. The other, Lytx (formerly DriveCam), is installed and managed by the contractors. Both contractors use their installed systems to monitor incidents and counsel drivers, with Transit Team actively addressing concerns with drivers during both pull-out and pull-in. Figure 5-3 shows photos of the two in-vehicle cameras.

5.6 Go-To Fare Collection System

The Met Council utilizes Cubic's Go-To Fare Collection System, which allows riders to use contactless cards to pay fares directly, eliminating the need for a separate smart card or ticket. The Go-To card is a stored-value card, onto which riders can load funds. Metro Mobility customers can purchase a Go-To card at <https://store.metrotransit.org/FareCard/New>; at 100+ retailers, including all Cub Food Stores, at a Metro Transit retail store, and through the MMSC. Once the account has been set up and a Go-To card is in hand, customers can load up to \$400 on the card. When boarding a Metro Mobility vehicle, riders touch their Go-To card to the electronic card reader to pay their fare. One of the on-going challenges voiced by the staff and the contractors alike has been fare card touches where the green light (indicating the fare card transaction has registered) illuminates but the fare is not decremented. Figure 5-4 shows the Go-To card reader.

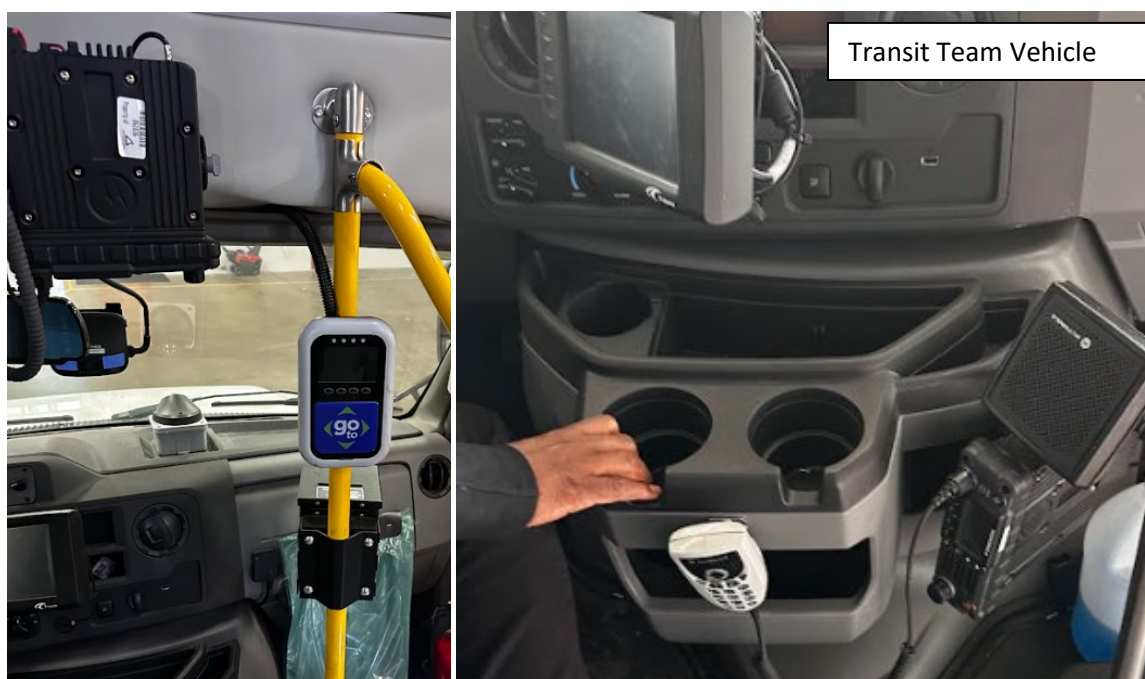


Figure 5-2 Radio placement.



Figure 5-3 In-Vehicle cameras placement.



Figure 5-4 Go-To fare card reader.

Chapter 6: Functions and Practices—Met Council

This chapter details the functions and practices for operating and administering Metro Mobility that are performed by the Met Council.

6.1 Eligibility Certification, Customer Registration, Suspensions, and Appeals

The eligibility function for Metro Mobility is performed by two eligibility evaluators, who are organizationally housed in the MMSC and report to the customer service manager (see Figure 2-1). The two eligibility evaluators have occupational therapist and physical therapist credentials—considered best industry practice to conduct ADA eligibility. The MMSC is housed at the Met Council headquarters at 390 Robert Street North in St. Paul.

Applications are available online or applicants may contact the MMSC to request materials, which are available in alternative languages and accessible formats.

According to staff, approximately 35,000 individuals are currently certified to use Metro Mobility services. Of the 35,000 eligible customers, 18,000–25,000 are considered *active*, defined as completing at least one trip in the last 12 months.

6.1.1 Eligibility Application and Assessment Process

The Metro Mobility ADA paratransit application form contains two parts—the Certification Questionnaire and the Professional Verification Form. The Certification Questionnaire is completed by the individual applying or an advocate and includes a required signature. The Professional Verification Form must be completed by a licensed professional healthcare provider. This two-part paper application is a common transit industry practice.

The two-part application is submitted together and is reviewed by eligibility staff. Follow-up calls are made to the healthcare professionals as needed to clarify certain responses or to address missing information. According to staff, the paper application process makes it difficult to verify reported information. In the interview, eligibility staff suggested using an e-submittal form and having less costly staff perform the initial screening (i.e., review the applications for completeness and collect any missing information). Staff also noted that the application was updated a year ago and is in the process of being updated again to clarify questions that are commonly misinterpreted.

As applications are received, they are logged into the Trapeze system. The date logged is important, because ADA requirements dictate that a decision must be rendered within 21 days. If a decision is not made within 21 days, the applicant receives presumptive eligibility until the application is processed. According to staff, this does not routinely happen under normal operations because they are almost always able to render a decision within the 21-day period. During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff invoked

presumptive eligibility until in-person assessments resumed and until the pandemic-related backlog was cleared. Staff also commented that the Trapeze interface to enter application decisions is *clunky*.

Eligibility is determined using the following FTA's ADA eligibility standards:

- Not physically able to get to or from a bus in an area where regular-route buses operate because of a disability or health condition.
- Not able to determine how to use the regular-route bus system.
- Not able to get on or get off a regular-route bus.

If eligibility cannot be determined from the two-part application (and follow-up telephone calls), then the applicant will be asked to come to the Met Council headquarters for an in-person assessment. Transportation to and from the Met Council headquarters is provided free of charge within the service area. The eligibility staff also takes the eligibility evaluation process out into the community.

In the functional assessment, the professional evaluators assess applicants as follows:

- For Applicants with Developmental Delays: The Functional Assessment of Cognitive Transit Skills (FACTS) are typically used. See the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center's (NADTC) [Determining ADA Paratransit Eligibility](#) for score sheets, methodology, and operating parameters of the FACTS.
- For Applicants with Physical Disabilities: The Tinetti Balance and Gait tests may be used. See NADTC's [Determining ADA Paratransit Eligibility](#) for score sheets, methodology, and operating parameters of the Tinetti Balance and Gait tests. An outdoor walk test also may be used. Outdoor walks are conducted along consistent paths of travel for all applicants and are 0.75 miles in roundtrip length.

Assessment outcomes are documented in the Trapeze software and hard copy evaluator notes are filed and maintained with the person's application.

Once eligibility has been determined, staff send an eligibility determination letter to the applicant, register the applicant into Trapeze, and send a Service Guide to the applicant. Generally, individuals are eligible for up to four years. Certification dates are set to coincide with the expiration date on the rider's Minnesota State ID card or driver's license when possible. In limited cases where a person is of advanced age or has a deteriorating health condition and is fully ADA paratransit eligible, Met Council may grant permanent or lifetime certification.

Eligibility is assessed in the following categories:

- Full Eligibility: The customer is eligible for Metro Mobility because the customer's health condition or disability prevents the customer from *ever* taking regular-route transit independently.
- Conditional Eligibility: The customer is eligible for Metro Mobility because the customer's health condition or disability *sometimes* prevents the customer from taking regular-route transit independently.

- **Temporary Eligibility:** The customer is eligible for Metro Mobility for a short period of time while the customer recovers from an injury or condition that is currently preventing the customer from accessing regular-route transit independently.
- **Ineligibility:** The customer's application for Metro Mobility service has been denied because the customer's disability or health condition does not prevent the customer from accessing or using regular-route transit independently.

6.1.2 Eligibility Assessment Outcomes

Of the applications received, staff reported the following:

- About 80% of applications received are approved after review of the two-part application, which commonly includes a call to a healthcare provider to confirm, clarify, or gain additional information helpful to the understanding of an applicant's disability that prevents them from riding the fixed-route system. An applicant's approval to release information is part of the application submittal.
- About 10% of the applications received are sent back to the applicant for missing information.
- The remaining 10% of the applications received are scheduled for an in-person assessment. Of the requests for in-person assessments, some applicants self-select out and do not schedule or show up for the in-person assessment. Staff sends a cream-colored card to reschedule for no-shows and a subsequent blue card if the applicant does not respond to the request for in-person assessment. The application is then filed and considered closed. Staff estimates that about six or seven in-person assessments are conducted each day.
- Of all applicants that complete the process, an average of one per month is denied certification, according to staff. However, six and a half years of data obtained from the Met Council indicate that the denied eligibility rate is about 2.6% of applications (see Section 8.1) starting in 2022. Using the application data in Section 8.1, the Study Team found that an average of 18 applications per month are denied which includes applicants that abandoned the application process and a shift in data entry procedures. The majority of in-person assessments are completed with a sit-down interview, without having to conduct a community-based trip where assessments are conducted outside of the building to assess the physical capability to navigate the fixed-route transit system. Most of the in-person assessments are cognitive assessments, best evaluated using the FACTS test.

6.1.3 Eligibility Evaluation Appeals

According to staff, about three appeals per year are submitted for denial of eligibility. Per the federally prescribed process, applicants may appeal an eligibility decision through the following two-step process:

- **Step One:** Denied applicants are directed to send a written letter stating that they are appealing the decision. In this letter, the applicant may provide additional information if it is available.

- Step Two: The Met Council staff in the Office of Equal Opportunity schedule an appeal hearing with an independent panel to review the appeal. The applicant may attend the appeal hearing, but their attendance is not required.

6.1.4 Eligibility Suspensions

As noted in Section 2.14, the Met Council has a policy for suspending customer eligibility because of an excessive number of no-show and late cancellations, which are tracked in Trapeze. If a customer accumulates three no-shows within a 30-day period, which amount to more than 6% of a customer's requested trips as determined by Customer Service staff, a warning letter is sent to the customer indicating that future no-shows may result in a suspension. If there is a fourth no-show (or more) within 30 days of the first occurrence, exceeding the 6% threshold, a letter is sent to the customer indicating that a suspension will be invoked and providing the duration and start/end dates of the suspension.

According to Customer Service staff interviewed, a significant problem in understanding whether or not the no-show was beyond the control of the customer is the lack of no-show notes from the driver or dispatcher or from the reservation agent in the case of late cancellations. Consequently, Customer Service staff will check with the contractor to verify whether the no-shows were valid from the standpoint of the vehicle being in the right location and within the pickup window according to global positioning system (GPS) timestamps and video footage.

Once it is determined by Customer Service staff that a warning or suspension letter needs to be sent to the customer, it is the contractor who sends out these letters—not the MMSC staff. According to Met Council management, this practice stems from a past FTA triennial reviewer who deemed it more appropriate that Met Council not be the entity that sends the letters, because Met Council customer service staff are empowered to reduce and remove no-show suspensions in certain circumstances. Such modifications could be seen as the first stage in an appeal process. As such it is not appropriate that Met Council issue the letter and also be the entity involved in reviewing appeals.

Per policy, the first suspension within a 12-month period is typically 15 calendar days, while subsequent suspensions within that period will be for 30 calendar days. MMSC staff have access to Metro Mobility customer profiles in Trapeze and can add the suspension to the profile. During the suspension, customers may not use Metro Mobility to travel. However, during the suspension period, customers may request advance reservation trips for a service date beyond the suspension period within the established trip scheduling policy.

6.1.5 Eligibility Suspensions Appeals

Often, no-shows are beyond the control of the customer. In consideration of these events, customers may dispute a no-show or suspension by contacting the MMSC to provide the reason for the dispute and request that the no-show be excused. Legitimate reasons include circumstances not under the customer's control, such as hospitalization for an emergency procedure, delays at a medical/dialysis, or being stuck in a malfunctioning elevator. Customer Service staff will consider the circumstances of the

detailed information in determining whether or not the factors causing one or more no-shows were beyond the control of the customer and may reverse the suspension depending on the findings.

6.1.6 Standing Order Suspensions and Appeals

As discussed in Section 2.7, Met Council is not required to provide standing orders. Instead, Met Council provides standing orders as a convenience to Metro Mobility customers for recurring ADA paratransit trips, as well as for recurring trips in the State-mandated area if the standing order is for life-sustaining medical appointments or for work/school purposes or if the customer has full eligibility, when capacity allows.

The cancellation of standing orders is tracked and provided to the MMSC staff in a report that staff reviews on a quarterly basis. If the MMSC staff finds that a customer has cancelled or no-showed 20% or more of their standing order trips, the MMSC calls the customer—and follows the call up with a letter—indicating that the standing order will be removed as of a specified date. In the letter, customers are encouraged to call the MMSC if they believe the data is inaccurate or if the cancellations are beyond the customer’s control or due to a temporary extenuating circumstance.

If a suspension is invoked, MMSC staff cancels the standing order in Trapeze on the effective date of the suspension; this action also cancels all standing order trips already scheduled after the suspension date. The customer would then need to revert to requesting individual trips (or roundtrips) for each date desired; the suspended customer must wait 12 months before requesting a new standing order. That is, the customer would not be able to apply for the same standing order (that was suspended) or a new standing order for the 12 months following the effective suspension date.

6.2 Contractor Procurement, Invoice Processing, and Oversight/Monitoring

6.2.1 Contractor Procurement and Contract Years

Met Council staff relies on the Procurement Department to inform potential vendors and facilitate procurement of its providers. There are currently three Metro Mobility contracts—one for each zone (East, West, and South). Transdev is the provider for East Zone and Transit Team was contracted (separately) to provide service in the West Zone and the South Zone (see Figure 1-2 in Chapter 1).

The competitive RFP process was conducted in 2019–2021. The RFP was advertised nationally and culminated in the three contracts. As specified, the contract terms consisted of a 5-year base term with an option for a sixth year (see Table 6-1).

Table 6-1 Metro Mobility contract years

Contract Year	East	West	South
RFP Date	9/4/20	9/4/20	11/15/20
1	9/1/21–8/31/22	7/1/21–6/30/22	8/1/20–7/31/21
2	9/1/22–8/31/23	7/1/22–6/30/23	8/1/21–7/31/22
3	9/1/23–8/31/24	7/1/23–6/30/24	8/1/22–7/31/23
4	9/1/24–8/31/25	7/1/24–6/30/25	8/1/23–7/31/24
5	9/1/25–8/31/26	7/1/25–6/30/26	8/1/24–7/31/25
6 (Option Year)	9/1/26–8/31/27	7/1/26–6/30/27	8/1/25–7/31/26

RFP = request for proposal

In each zone’s RFP, the Met Council provided an estimate of the number of revenue service hours to be provided for each contract year, along with a scope of services and service standards (see Chapter 2). Proposers in their technical proposal were asked to describe their approach to conducting the scope, as well as to provide their corporate qualifications and relevant experience of the key members of the proposed staff. Proposers were also asked to provide a cost proposal for each of the contract years and for any ramp-up activities, with a detailed supporting backup. The RFP also described the process for evaluating the proposals.

Selection committee participants, recommended by Met Council management and assembled by the Procurement Department, were asked to review and evaluate the proposals. Interviews with the finalists were scheduled, after which a final score and ranking for each proposer was made. Contract negotiations with the selected proposers were undertaken, followed by a staff presentation and award recommendation/approval by the Met Council’s Transportation Committee and then the full Met Council.

Contract terms can impact the cost and quality of service and the competitiveness of the procurement, which indirectly impacts cost. Cost efficiencies can be realized with longer-term contracts for equipment costs, and service quality can be impacted by employee retainment. As such, although the current contract term of five years plus one option year is moderate in term, the Study Team recommends that Met Council explore extending the next RFP’s contract term to 10 years.

In a contract where the provision of the operations facility is the responsibility of the contractor, as is the case currently with Met Council contracted services, longer-term contracts enable longer-term leases, which tend to be less pricy. Such savings can be passed along to the Met Council through lower rates.

Yet another related strategy, which was recently outlined in the Met Council’s May 2025 Facility Plan, was for the Met Council to acquire the operations/maintenance facilities for the three Metro Mobility zones. This strategy saves costs by:

- Reducing the risk for contractors.

- Leveling the playing field between current contractors and new proposers on the next procurement and adding competition to the process, which often translates into reduced rates.
- Enabling capital purchases to be funded at an 80/20 match vs. the 50/50 match if facilities are included in the contractor rates.

TTI conducted a study for Access Services in Los Angeles (see Chapter 14, Peer Review) in 2020, reviewing the benefits that accrued to their peers who embraced this strategy. Access Services has now obtained and readied their third operations/maintenance facility. The Study Team recommends that the Met Council continue pursuing owning or leasing the operations/maintenance facilities.

Many transit/paratransit industry contracts for dedicated DRT service also treat fuel costs as a pass-through cost. Conversely, such contracts that do include fuel costs as part of the rate structure need to include a fuel price adjustment clause, providing for increases or decreases in the rate depending on changes in fuel prices.

6.2.2 Contractor Rate Structure

Hourly rates for dedicated service work well if productivity is balanced with high OTP. In dedicated service, productivity and OTP are inversely related—as one goes up, the other goes down. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Met Council to define its desired balance of the two. Based on the contractual 1.3 passenger trips per RVH productivity standard and the contractual 93% OTP standard, the Study Team (and Met Council’s contractors) understand that Met Council is weighing service quality more heavily than service/cost efficiency.

With a rate per RVH the contractor can predict their revenue regardless of changes to average trip lengths or productivity. That said, a transit agency should include incentives and/or penalties tied to productivity, OTP, and excessively long trips to ensure that the contractor is not billing for unproductive (and untimely) service (see Section 6.2.3).

A per-trip rate may work well if productivity is low. A prospective proposer can also predict costs in a system where trip lengths are comparatively homogeneous. If the operations contractor is also responsible for scheduling and dispatching, a performance-based penalty structure tied to OTP must be in place to counteract a contractor’s natural inclination to jam trips into each vehicle’s manifest to maximize revenue.

Met Council’s contract rate structures for all three contractors are on a per RVH—where RVHs are defined as first pickup to last drop-off for a dedicated vehicle run—and do not include deadheading from/to the garage or significant breaks such as meal breaks. This rate structure is very common for dedicated paratransit services.

A common variation is to use the rate per RVH to cover a contractor’s variable costs only and to include a monthly fixed rate to cover a contractor’s fixed costs. In this way, a contractor is assured that its fixed costs will be covered, regardless of fluctuations in service. This variation protects the contractor in the event actual RVHs are reduced from what is expected. At the same time, it protects the transit agency if

RVHs increase. The Study Team has found, based on past experience, that this fixed-plus-variable rate structure is an effective way to not only reduce risk to the contractor but to also avoid complex schemes for contractors to charge merely by the RVH. The Study Team recommends that Met Council consider changing the contractor payment structure to this fixed-plus-variable structure in the next Metro Mobility procurement.

That said, the Met Council came up with another way to handle this kind of variance in its contracts. In its RFP, the Met Council asked proposers to propose different rates—one in anticipation that its estimated annual number of RVHs will actually occur (at 100%), and others based on lower annual RVHs (at 80%, 90%, and 95% the number of RVHs) and higher annual RVHs (at 105%, 110%, 115%, and 120% the number of annual RVHs). As one might expect, the lower the number of RVHs, the higher the rate (to cover fixed costs with a lower number of hours), whereas the higher the number of RVHs, the lower the rate (because the fixed costs are spread over more hours). Thus, when the number of RVHs sink or rise to the number reflected by the percentages in a given month, the new payment rate kicks in. However, contractors need prior written approval from Met Council management to adjust RVHs to the point where these rate-change thresholds are crossed, noting that contractors are expected to adjust their daily run structure (RVHs) to correspond with demand while maintaining the required hourly productivity of 1.3 passenger trips per RVH or higher (see Section 2.16).

Lastly, Met Council has been contemplating the possibility of moving call-and-control functions (i.e., reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and the handling of customer service-day calls) to a centralized function, as is the case with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) in Boston, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Denver, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit in Washington D.C., and several other ADA paratransit systems. In the procurement—and the eventual contract—the Met Council asked the proposers to propose a Part One rate for operations and maintenance services and a Part Two rate for the call-and-control center functions. If the contractors wound up doing both Part One and Part Two functions (as has been the case), their rate would be the combination of the Part One and Part Two rates. Using this approach, the Met Council would not have to change the contracts should it decide to remove the four call-and-control center functions from the contractors.

6.2.3 Invoice Payments and Performance-Based Bonuses and Adjustments (Invoice Credits)

Because the payment structure is based on a per RVH rate and contractual variations in rates that are triggered by fluctuations in RVHs must be preapproved by Met Council in writing, the base payments can easily be verified. Met Council financial staff will also review invoices for cash fares kept (and deducted from the invoice). Once the Met Council staff confirms with the contractor that all of the data for the previous month is complete, staff assembles all of the information for bonuses and invoice credits (pulling from multiple reports) and provides the draft billing to the contractor for concurrence before processing the payment. Incentive bonuses cannot collectively exceed \$30,000 per month per contractor. Contractual bonuses are described in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Monthly performance bonuses

Category	Amount
Zero Passenger Denials	\$5,000
OTP (95.01%–96.99%)	\$2,500
OTP (>96.99%)	An additional \$2,500
Appointment Time Performance (93%+) at –45/0	\$2,500
Appointment Time Performance (93%+) at –30/0	An additional \$2,500
Preventable AFR (<1 preventable accident per 150,000 total vehicle service miles)	\$5,000
Documented Non-escorts (0)	\$5,000
CFR (≤0.5 valid complaints per 1,000 rides)	\$5,000

AFR = accident frequency ratio; CFR = complaint frequency ratio; OTP = on-time performance percentage

Performance-based adjustments take the form of invoice credits (i.e., reductions to the payment owed to contractors) based on substandard performance. Unlike the bonuses, there is no practical upper limit to the number of invoice credits that can be racked up in a given month by a contractor. These invoice credits for Metro Mobility contractors are shown in Table 6-3.

The Met Council has a robust set of performance service standards and related bonuses and invoice credits. These standards are important to include in operational contracts—the standards describe the service that is expected, while the incentives and disincentives nudge the contractors in that direction. Without them, the only recourse for a transit agency faced with an underperforming contractor is replacement.

Actual OTP for both pickups and drop-offs for appointment trips are perhaps the most important measure of service quality from a DRT rider’s perspective. Balancing OTP with productivity becomes especially important in systems where the operations contractor is responsible for scheduling and dispatching.

Met Council has bonuses and invoice credits tied to KPIs related to OTP, safety (preventable AFRs), and unfulfilled driver assistance (documented non-escorts). Met Council also has a bonus for not exceeding a specified level of complaints (complaint frequency ratio [CFR]). Met Council also assesses invoice credits for not achieving standards associated with productivity, not-to-exceed OBTs, and not-to-exceed hold times, as well as several other more minor standards (see Table 6-3). There is no counterpart bonus for overachieving in productivity, which—along with the recent reduction of 1.65 to 1.30 as a productivity standard—seems to cement Met Council’s more heavily weighted focus on service quality.

Table 6-3 Monthly performance-based adjustments (invoice credits to the benefit of Met Council)

Category	Invoice Credit Amount
Denials >0	\$5,000 per denial
Pickup OTP (0/+30) 92%–92.99%	\$500

Category	Invoice Credit Amount
91%–91.99%	\$1,000
90%–90.99%	\$1,500
89%–89.99%	\$2,500
88%–88.99%	\$3,500
87%–87.99%	\$4,500
86%–86.99%	\$5,500
85%–85.99%	\$6,500
84%–84.99%	\$8,500
83%–83.99%	\$10,500
82%–82.99%	\$12,500
81%–81.99%	\$14,500
80%–80.99%	\$16,500
Appointment time performance at –60/0	
92%–92.99%	\$500
91%–91.99%	\$1,000
90%–90.99%	\$1,500
89%–89.99%	\$2,500
88%–88.99%	\$3,500
87%–87.99%	\$4,500
86%–86.99%	\$5,500
85%–85.99%	\$6,500
84%–84.99%	\$8,500
83%–83.99%	\$10,500
82%–82.99%	\$12,500
81%–81.99%	\$14,500
80%–80.99%	\$16,500
Appointment time performance daily average <90%	\$500 per day
Maximum OBT >5%	\$500 per percentage under 95%
Daily productivity <1.65 passenger trips per RVH (recently reduced to 1.30 passenger trips per RVH)	Deduct hours in calendar month until 1.65 is reached (now until 1.30 is reached)
Maximum hold times—95% <3 minutes; 99% <5 minutes	\$250 per day where both percentages are not reached
Preventable AFR >1 preventable accident per 100,000 total vehicle service miles	\$1,000 for each accident over standard
Collison incident reporting (within 24 hours)	\$1,000 for each incident not reported within 24 hours
Critical incident reporting (within 30 minutes)	\$500 for each incident not reported within 30 minutes \$1,000 for each incident not reported within 60 minutes
Drivers out of uniform	\$50 per violation

Category	Invoice Credit Amount
Documented non-escort	\$100 per violation multiplied by repeat violations per driver
Driver use of personal electronic devices	\$100 per violation
Improper engine shutdown	\$50 per violation
Failure to check customer photo ID	\$100 per violation
Failure to respond to complaint within 48 hours	\$50 per occurrence
Driver use of tobacco in revenue service	\$50 per violation
Failure to confirm reservation details	\$50 per violation
Inaccurate data	\$100 per occurrence
Egregious act	\$1,000 per occurrence
Class A operating violation	\$100 per occurrence
Nonreported customer complaint	\$50 per occurrence
Excessive radio use	\$100 per occurrence
Adherence to Preventive Maintenance Plan (over 110%)	\$500 per occurrence
Unauthorized use of a Metro Mobility vehicle	\$5,000 per violation

AFR = accident frequency ratio; OBT = on-board time

Two metrics that have been adopted by many transit agencies but are noticeably absent from Table 6-2 and Table 6-3 include missed trips and miles between road calls (MBRC).

Missed trips (see definition in Section 2.14) is an important service quality measure that should probably have an associated not-to-exceed standard, as well as a related invoice credit and possibly a bonus. Moreover, it is a metric that must be tracked and analyzed for possible patterns that may point to capacity constraints (see Section 6.6). As previously discussed, the industry standard would appear to be a not-to-exceed standard of 0.5% of scheduled trips; some transit agencies use completed trips as the denominator.

While Met Council assesses an invoice credit for failing to meet the preventive maintenance (PM) timeliness standard, another related KPI that the Met Council may wish to consider adding to the contracts (for the next procurement) is MBRC. While there appears to be no industry standard for this metric, TTI analyzed National Transit Database (NTD) data and found that the average MBRC was 14,743 miles for directly operated DRT and 21,025 miles for purchased DRT service. In various RFPs and contracts collected by TTI over time, the paratransit goals/standards for MBRC range from 5,500 miles to 12,500 miles. Other MBRC standards seen by the Study Team include 25,000 miles (New Orleans Regional Transit Authority) and 30,000 miles (Orange County Transportation Authority), both of which use operational contractors for their ADA paratransit services. Also, in an FTA document on safety performance targets, it was reported that “an [unnamed] large transit provider adopted an MBRC target of 55,000 miles between failures for its fleet of paratransit vans.”

The Study Team recommends that Met Council adds both a missed trips percentage and an MBRC standard to provider contracts (see Section 19.7 for the full recommendation).

6.2.4 Contractor Oversight/Monitoring

The contractor oversight function for Metro Mobility service is performed by the Operations manager and two PAs. In addition, the Fleet manager oversees the contracted services fleet staff responsible for vehicle maintenance oversight. On a daily basis, this staff uses APEX/Oracle reports to track—in real time—KPIs such as OTPs at pickup and drop-off locations for appointment trips and maximum OBTs. Service violations are flagged on a red screen. Power BI reports are used to look at historical data summaries and trend analyses. Data feeding the Power BI reports are refreshed daily at 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

In addition to reviewing the service data, the PAs assist with the following tasks:

- Reviewing complaint data to ensure that contractors have responded in a timely fashion and to ensure that invoice credits are assessed when there are late responses. .
- Reviewing in-vehicle videos following an accident/incident as a follow-up to a complaint and periodically monitoring drivers. PAs may also need to request a contractor's video history, if warranted.
- Reviewing contractor's employee training data to ensure that drivers put into Metro Mobility service have been properly trained.
- Reviewing accident reports.
- Assessing levels of radio communication.

PAs meet remotely with the Metro Mobility providers multiple (two to three) times per week. In-person general-topic meetings with each contractor are held biweekly. There are also two additional biweekly meetings that focus on maintenance and safety, respectively. Met Council staff also meet with management from both contractors (together) quarterly to identify and jointly resolve any service issues. PAs also interact and coordinate with the contractors by identifying various factors that may impair service, such as on-street construction, bad weather, street closures, and access to high-demand sites.

6.3 Complaint Processing/Management

The processing and management of complaints—a function of Met Council's Metro Mobility Customer Service department—was flagged in the OLA report as an area in which the Legislature felt that Met Council needed to take on more direct control because contractors handling complaints posed inherent conflicts.

Met Council has taken several steps since the OLA report was published toward this objective. Met Council's current policy and procedures for handling complaints include the following:

- Through onboard vehicle signage, Metro Mobility newsletters, and the Metro Mobility Service Guide, customers are directed to register complaints with MMSC. The Service Guide provides different ways that this can be done. When fielding the complaint, staff enter the complaint into the Metro Mobility's Customer Feedback Module.

- If a contractor fields a complaint from a customer, the contractors' call-takers are directed to redirect the complainant to register the complaint with the MMSC and can transfer calls to Customer Service staff. If the MMSC department is not open, the contractor's call-takers are directed to provide the hours for the MMSC and will encourage the complainant to call the MMSC during their hours of availability. If the complainant is adamant about making the complaint to the contractor instead, the contract staff is directed to enter the complaint into Metro Mobility's Customer Feedback Module. There is an invoice credit per occurrence for any such instance where a contractor does not enter a complaint or feedback it receives directly into the Customer Feedback Module.
- Met Council alerts a contractor when further investigation on their part is required. In such cases, contractors are required to investigate the complaint (as directed by Met Council staff), and respond within 48 hours (excluding holidays) by way of the issue tracking system. An invoice credit of \$50 is assessed for each occurrence where the contractor fails to meet this deadline.
- As noted in Section 6.2.3, Metro Mobility contractors are paid a bonus of \$5,000 for each month that the CFR is ≤ 0.5 valid complaints per 1,000 completed passenger trips. As noted previously, the 0.5 complaints/1,000 trips threshold for attaining this bonus is congruous with excellent service. Based on the Study Team's personal experience, a paratransit CFR of ≤ 1 is excellent, a paratransit CFR of 2–3 is acceptable, and a paratransit CFR of ≥ 4 poor (based on 1,000 trips). Interesting though, Met Council does not have counterpart invoice credit to assess for substandard CFRs (e.g., ≥ 4).

The Met Council has in place a set of written procedures for processing a complaint. When taking down the complaint and entering it into the Customer Feedback Module, Customer Service staff make a point of categorizing the complaint into the correct type (for subsequent analysis) and attempting to ascertain the validity of the complaint. A complaint is categorized as a *nonissue* if no policy was violated and contractor performance and staff behavior is compliant with contract language and program rules. For example, a complaint about a late pickup would be deemed a nonissue if, upon checking, the GPS data shows the pickup occurred within the 30-minute on-time pickup window. In contrast, if the GPS shows the vehicle arrival after the 30-minute pickup window, the complaint would be correctly deemed an issue. Another nonissue would be a complaint about the lack of service availability in a community where there is no fixed-route transit. Another example of a nonissue is a complaint about the 5-minute vehicle wait time policy in view of the 30-minute on-time pickup window. These complaints are tracked for data collection purposes, but no follow-up is required. Any Title VI allegation is flagged in the system and automatically forwarded to the Met Council's Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity for further investigation directly with the complainant.

In the past (and at the time of the Study Team's site visit), PAs helped with the process of determining whether a complaint was valid or nonvalid. However, with the recent bolstering of the Customer Service staff, PAs have since been removed from this process. Complaints and materials associated with ADA-related complaints must be kept for 7 years in a separate file.

A majority of complaints involve the contractors' drivers (or staff) or vehicles. For these complaints, the MMSC staff alert the contractor in question if further investigation on the contractor's part is required.

On the complaint form, there is a box to check that indicates the complainant's desire to speak with the contractor.

Herein lies a problem—when to call the complainant is left up to the contractor. It is not known if the contractor staff called the complainant and what was discussed. It is also unclear whether the call was made before or after discussing the issue with the contractor driver (or whoever was involved in the complaint). And lastly, it is unclear whether the contractor call to the complainant just involved seeking information from the complainant or whether a resolution—a curing action stemming from the event that the contractor will now make to mitigate such events in the future—was discussed with the customer on that call, especially if the call to the complainant was made before discussing the event with the contractor staff involved (see also Chapter 16, where riders in the ABBG survey were asked about these calls).

The Met Council, in recognition that this practice is fraught with shortcomings and feeling strongly that any communication about the complaint should be between MMSC staff and the customer, has bolstered its MMSC complaint management staff and removed direct communication between the contractor and the customer. There is still a role for the contractor in investigating the complaint (if called upon to do so by MMSC staff) and reporting back to the MMSC within the 48-hour period. If more information is needed to resolve the complaint, the MMSC staff can always contact the complainant in writing.

Otherwise, it is unclear whether complaints are currently being analyzed for trends. In the Study Team's interview with the Customer Service staff, neither interviewee could identify the most common complaint (although in fairness, the manager was in her first week on the job). Therefore, a periodic (perhaps quarterly) analysis should be scheduled, over and above the CFR analysis that is undertaken as part of invoice processing.

6.4 Financial Planning

The Met Council's Finance Division, in cooperation with the Metro Mobility management team, annually generates a budget for the upcoming year. The budget is split into operational expenses, which includes Met Council in-house labor, telephone/radio/technology licenses, contractor costs for the three zones, and capital expenses. Capital expenses are currently focused on vehicles but may include operations/maintenance facilities in the future if the Met Council decides to transfer the responsibility of providing the facilities housing the call-and-control center/operations/maintenance functions from the contractors to the Met Council.

6.5 Community Outreach/Engagement

In addition to performing eligibility evaluations and managing complaints and feedback, Met Council staff perform several different kinds of community outreach and engagement. These activities include:

- Visiting human service agencies that serve—and in some cases provide housing for—persons with disabilities. The staff will typically set up two to four meetings per month, split evenly between in-person and remote meetings.
- Taking the eligibility determination process out into the community for those who may find it difficult to get to the Met Council building in downtown St. Paul to meet with Customer Service staff (see Section 6.1).
- Sending out a newsletter twice a year to active riders.

In addition, Met Council has recently become a member of the ABBG, which performs peer reviews and rider surveys for its members. In coordination with this study, the ABBG conducted a rider survey in May 2025, the results of which are found in Chapter 16 of this report.

6.6 ADA Paratransit Capacity Constraint Monitoring

Per FTA guidelines, an ADA paratransit service may be capacity constrained if it exhibits a pattern of denials, late trips, missed trips, and excessively long trips. If such patterns can be traced to capacity constraints, the service is in violation of ADA guidelines. There is also a fifth service quality/capacity metric—telephone access—which is typically measured in average and maximum hold times. If there is a pattern of access issues (by ADA paratransit customers), this metric too is considered by FTA to be a capacity constraint. Each of these five metrics is discussed below.

6.6.1 Denials

Met Council has a goal of zero denials for federally mandated ADA paratransit trips, noting that this policy pertains to ADA paratransit trips and not trips to/from or within the State-mandated areas. A denial is defined as follows:

- A federally mandated trip request that cannot be accommodated at the requested time ± 60 minutes (within reason) because of capacity constraints.
- A federally mandated trip request that can be accommodated but beyond the ± 60 -minute negotiation period, with the rider either choosing to accept or to refuse the offered pickup time.

One cautionary note about the first part of the definition. The phrase, *within reason*, is part of the definition because there are circumstances when a pickup time is available and offered within 60 minutes of the requested pickup time but that time is incompatible with appointment times, work or class start or end times, building opening and closing times, etc. For example, the pickup time for a return trip is offered at time when the rider has not yet concluded his/her workday.

With respect to the second definition, Trapeze’s scheduling process is configured so that no trip solutions beyond the ± 1 hour trip negotiating window are suggested for federally mandated trips. Consequently, Met Council management feels confident that denials of federally mandated trips under the second definition do not happen (unless a reservation agent were to manually schedule such a trip outside the ± 1 hour window). See Section 8.4 for denial statistics from 2024.

6.6.2 Late Trips

Met Council does a good job tracking OTP for all ADA paratransit trip pickups, as well as for drop-offs for trips requested based on drop-off time or appointment times. Indeed, the Met Council—using Power BI reports—has the ability to separately track and report late trips in 5-minute increments after the scheduled pickup time.

In both cases (for pickups and appointment trip drop-offs), FTA has established a threshold of 90% or better. Met Council has established a goal of 93%, to which the actual OTP is compared. Actual OTP for 2024 is reported in Section 8.4.

Regardless of whether or not the 93% goal has been met based on the numbers and percentages of late trips completed by specific customers documented in the Power BI reports, there still needs to be a process for identifying *patterns* of late trips (e.g., late trips from certain areas, at certain days and times, and for certain population groups or specific customers).

6.6.3 Missed Trips

Dispatchers for Metro Mobility have a basic understanding to differentiate missed trips from no-shows but not a complete understanding of missed trips, as defined in Section 2.14. Missed trips are currently tracked in Trapeze and are reported in Power BI reports (see Section 8.4 for actual missed trips statistics). As with late (completed) trips, the MMSC is interested in the percentage of missed trips and severity of late arrivals at pickup locations that result in missed trips. The MMSC, through Power BI reports, can observe the numbers and percentages of missed trips by late arrivals in 5-minute increments. Power BI can also show missed trips for individual customers.

Met Council does not, however, have a not-to-exceed standard or goal as a policy or a contractual standard. Large peer systems have not-to-exceed standards of 0.5%–1.0% of scheduled trips; some transit agencies use completed trips as the denominator (see the discussion and recommendations in Section 19.7).

As with late trips, Power BI can be used to look at missed trip data for specific customers, but there does not appear to be procedures in place to identify whether or not there are spatial patterns (from certain areas of the service area), temporal patterns (during certain days and time periods), and/or demographic patterns (specific to certain customer subpopulations or riders) that might suggest a capacity constraint (see the discussion and recommendations in Section 19.7).

6.6.4 Excessively Long Ride Times

The percentage of excessively long ADA paratransit trips is another service quality metric that can also point to capacity issues. Not-to-exceed maximum OBTs for different trip distances are found in Table 2-1 in Section 2.10. The maximum OBTs in the table were derived for comparable trips made on fixed-route transit, including walk times, wait times, ride times, and transfer times, in concert with federal guidance. ADA paratransit trips that violate these maximum OBTs are tracked in Trapeze and reported in Power BI.

The maximum OBT table is used instead of comparing a sample of paratransit trip travel times with results from a transit trip planner because of the way the transit network is set up. For example, a trip from downtown Anoka County Government Center to Shoreview Community Center (both addresses within the federal ADA paratransit service area) on a weekday early afternoon would take a little over 2 hours and would involve two transfers. And if the trip started after 3:30 p.m., the trip cannot be completed at all until the next morning.

Met Council has not established an explicit service goal or standard for trips that do not violate these times. However, Met Council has established a contractual standard of at least 95% of all trips that are at or below these maximum OBTs. To put it another way, excessively long trips are not to exceed 5% of the completed trips. An invoice credit is assessed for each percentage above 5%.

Even if the 95%/5% standard is met, and even though such violations can be called up for specific customers in Power BI, a set of procedures used to identify whether or not patterns exist that may suggest a capacity constraint appears to be lacking, as discussed previously (see the discussion and recommendations in Section 19.7).

6.6.4 Substandard Telephone Access (Excessively Long Hold Times)

Telephone access is another service quality metric that can also point to an ADA paratransit capacity constraint if there is an insufficient number of call-takers (or telephone lines) to handle the demand. Contractually, Met Council has established maximum hold times for incoming customer calls—95% of calls should be no more than 3 minutes and 99% of calls should be no more than 5 minutes for a given date. An invoice credit is assessed for each day in the calendar month when both standards have not been achieved. Because the telephone system used by the contractors is part of one big system (Mitel) used by Met Council, these statistics are readily available.

Best practices for determining possible capacity constraints first involve splitting up the data for various phone tree lines that respectively support the following four functions (the first three are more critical for identifying capacity issues)

- Service requests.
- Cancellations.
- Same-day customer issues (e.g., ETA requests and WMR calls).
- General requests for information.

The Study Team recommends that the Met Council calculate KPIs for each call center function to better monitor call center performance.

If call center functions are split by way of a phone tree, Met Council should calculate average on hold time, longest hold time, number of calls, number of abandoned calls (including the average caller wait time (in seconds) before abandoning the call), and call time for each function in hourly increments. Splitting up the functions also provides an opportunity, if desired, to have different standards for each function. For example, Met Council may wish to set a more stringent standard (e.g., no more than 2 minutes) for customer service-day calls.

The Study Team also recommends that, if possible, call center KPIs be calculated separately for federally mandated and State-mandated trips to be able to differentiate performance and identify potential capacity constraints on ADA paratransit calls. The Study Team does not know whether federally mandated trip requests can be separated from State-mandated trip requests.

While Met Council staff does monitor the daily hold-time averages to see if invoice credits are due back to the Met Council, there is no procedure to identify patterns of excessively long hold times that might point to a capacity constraint (or not enough call-takers or lines). The Study Team recommends that such a process is implemented (see Section 19.7).

Chapter 7: Functions and Practices—Contractors

This chapter details the functions and practices for operating Metro Mobility that are performed by the contractors.

7.1 Contractor Staffs

7.1.1 Transdev

The East Zone contractor, Transdev, has 396 employees, including their general manager, an assistant general manager, various other managers responsible for operations, finance, safety and training, customer service, dispatch, and fleet maintenance. In addition, Transdev has 325 drivers (roughly 60 of whom work part-time); 26 reservation agents (12 of whom are on duty on any given day); 10 dispatchers (5 of whom are on duty on any given day); and a maintenance staff of 2 leads, 10 technicians, and 1 parts clerk. Fuelers and washers are subbed out to Sun Transit, a disadvantaged business enterprise.

7.1.2 Transit Team

Transit Team has a general manager and a director of paratransit; Transit Team also has contracts for school bus and transit operations. Under the director of paratransit, there is a Minneapolis operations manager, a Maple Grove operations manager, and a South Zone operations manager. Under the Minneapolis operations manager, there is an asset coordinator lead, a dispatch lead, an on-street road supervisor lead, and a customer service (reservations) lead. Dispatch, road supervisors, and customer service representatives report to their respective leaders. A similar structure exists in Maple Grove and Burnsville; 30 customer service representatives in Minneapolis perform the reservations function for the entire West Zone. There are 12 customer service representatives in the South Zone. Transit Team's fleet maintenance staff, headed by a director of maintenance for all three facilities, and a shop lead at each of the facilities, is discussed in Section 7.15.2. Transit Team also supplies a safety manager and trainers, a human resource manager and recruiter (bolstered by corporate support), and operational support staff. Asset coordinators (a new term for the Study Team) help to coordinate vehicles during pull-out, clean and refuel the vehicles, make sure that vehicle-related equipment is available for the driver, and keep the facility grounds clean.

7.2 Next-Day and Advance Reservations and Scheduling

7.2.1 Reservations Call Center

Contractually, contractors must provide a call center at their primary facility that has:

- Adequate space to house an appropriate number of reservationists for the zone.
- A location on a common wall where an electronic call center wallboard displaying real-time call performance can be mounted. The contractor will supply power and a minimum CAT5E Ethernet

connection for the Met Council hardware. The contractor will be responsible for mounting the monitor to the wall. The monitor size will be determined based on the dimensions of the call center.

- Separate individual workspaces with partitions that minimize the amount of ambient background noise for individual reservationists.
- Individual workspaces with enough space to house a telephone, computer terminal, mouse, keyboard, and dual 21-inch monitors.
- A minimum of CAT5E cabling running to each of the individual workspaces.

7.2.2 Next-Day and Advance Reservations

Metro Mobility customers may request a trip 1–4 days in advance by calling the contracted providers (Transdev in the East Zone, and Transit Team in the West and South Zones) in the zone in which they reside or by booking a trip online. Customers can also book a trip by email or by fax, with some limits. Same-day trips can sometimes be accommodated on a space-available basis.

Curiously, the contractors' reservation agents answer the incoming phone call by saying "Transdev" or "Transit Team" rather than "Metro Mobility."

In both locations visited (the East Zone and the West Zone), reservation agents prompt customers to provide the caller's name, Metro Mobility ID number, and details about the trip(s) being requested. The Study Team observed reservation agents utilizing past trips taken by the customer as templates for the trip being requested (if appropriate). When specifying a requested arrival time at the destination for an appointment trip, customers are encouraged by the reservation agent to leave enough time to get from the drop-off location to the location of the actual appointment. Customers can also indicate a no-earlier-than time as a qualifier for a pickup.

The Trapeze system has been configured for *paraservices* for Metro Mobility paratransit trips—such that reservation agents are notified if a trip origin or destination is outside the federally mandated ADA service area. For ADA paratransit trips (in the federally mandated area), the reservation agents at both contractors conducted real-time scheduling by asking Trapeze for solutions and offering to the customer the solution that best matches the customer's requested pickup time or drop-off/appointment time. If the first solution offered is not acceptable to the customer, the reservation agent is trained to offer the next best match within the ± 1 hour negotiating window. If the customer does not accept a solution within the ADA required ± 1 hour window, the reservationist records the inquiry as a *refusal*. If there are no solutions, the reservationist enters the exact time requested and puts it in the system as *unscheduled*, which prompts the scheduler to manually place it on a route.

7.2.2.1 Transdev

At Transdev, the Study Team observed real-time scheduling for federally mandated ADA paratransit trips and for State-mandated trips alike. For State-mandated trips, reservation agents have been instructed, through MMSC operating bulletins, to put trips on *standby* as a matter of course, but this procedure is not followed at Transdev. Instead, the Study Team observed the reservation agent negotiating trips,

including those outside the federally mandated service area. In one instance, however, the agent worked with the customer to change their ride time so that it would not be impacted by a relatively new policy preventing State-mandated trips from being scheduled during peak hours (2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.). Then, the trip was scheduled into the system in the same manner as other trip requests.

For appointment-based trips, this agent entered the appointment time on the destination leg of the booking screen, then—mostly from memory—applied a 1-hour offset to enter the request time on the origin leg. The agent then used the Schedule Booking Wizard to look for scheduling solutions for the trip. Entering the request time in this manner is a manual way of setting the pickup window for appointment-based trips, rather than using the Requested Drop-off Logic feature in Trapeze, which uses the maximum OBT factors matrix to calculate the origin request time based on expected OBTs.

During the Study Team’s observations, the customer almost always chose the first solution offered, and there were no instances of no available solutions. The concept is that subsequent advance cancellations will open up holes and provide new solutions for trips on standby that did not exist at the time the trip was booked. The Study Team also observed one instance of a reservation agent book a curbside trip.

The Study Team observed one case where the reservation agent accepted a same-day trip request from a customer who said they needed to travel as soon as possible. The agent entered the trip information with a request time in 1 hour, left the trip unscheduled, and told the customer to call back in 15 minutes to see if the trip had been scheduled by one of the dispatchers.

There was also another instance where the reservation agent allowed a customer to change their current curbside trip to a standard roundtrip with a later return time because the customer said they found out they would take longer than 20 minutes to complete their business at the drop-off location.

At the end of each call, the reservation agent observed by the Study Team did verify with the customer the information for all trips booked, including the day and date of the trip, the confirmed pickup time and other trip details.

In observing another reservation agent at Transdev, there were some differences in the way trips were booked, most notably for appointment-based trips. This agent also entered the appointment time on the destination leg of the booking; however, she left the request time on the origin blank and opened the Schedule Booking Wizard. When this task was done, the system automatically entered a request time significantly earlier than it should—up to 2+ hours before the appointment time. This discrepancy indicates that the Requested Drop-off Logic feature in Trapeze is not properly configured for all agents.

During the observation period of approximately 1 hour, the Trapeze system found solutions for all trips requested (i.e., there were no situations of no solutions found). Both reservation agents indicated that they only came across those situations in the late afternoon and that their practice is to leave those trips unscheduled at the request time. The two reservation agents reported that they had not noticed a particular pattern of customers trying to *game the system* by purposely calling late in the afternoon (so that their trip was not negotiated to a different time).

During the Study Team's observation period, calls were evenly distributed between reservations, confirm/cancel, and WMR calls.

All in all, the two Transdev reservation agents the Study Team observed seemed to be very comfortable with the Trapeze PASS trip booking and trip administration screens, and even though there is no reservations script per se, the Study Team found that the process for handling calls is consistent.

One of the reservation agents mentioned that they have had challenges with headsets because of loose connections and poor audio.

7.2.2.2 Transit Team

The Transit Team reservation agents were also adept at using Trapeze. The Study Team observed particular practices in booking and real-time scheduling at the Transit Team call centers that were not observed at the Transdev call center.

Consistent with Met Council's direction, Transit Team's reservation agents never schedule State-mandated trips in real time except when it is a curbside trip outside of restricted rush hours. For appointment trips, the reservation agent entered the appointment time of the destination and request time of the origin, depending on trip distance. The reservation agent said there is a distance/time matrix document distributed to staff that should be used to determine and enter the request time for appointment-based trips; however, a copy was not available at the time. The reservation agent had access to all of the Trapeze scheduling Solution and Violation Sets, which could cause scheduling issues if she accidentally uses the wrong one. The Study Team observed a trip using a specialized Solution Set that negotiated the booking by 70 minutes; this duration would technically result in a denial. A best practice is to allow reservation agents limited access to these Solution and Violation Sets to remove confusion and avoid unintended consequences.

One reservation agent mentioned that she *mouse-geocodes* a pickup or drop-off location about five times per week. She uses a combination of Trapeze and Google Maps to try to get correct points. One customer called to rebook her trip, meaning they were ready early for their return trip. The reservation agent started a new booking and called the dispatcher to see if they could handle it. The dispatcher responded affirmatively, so the agent saved the new booking as unscheduled and cancelled the original return trip. Another customer called in advance of a return trip to indicate that they would be later (to avoid a no-show). The reservation agent cancelled the return trip and told customer to call when they were ready because they cannot do same-day booking; the customer would get picked up because of the no-strand policy. During the Study Team's observations, calls seemed evenly split among reservations, WMR calls, and lost and found calls.

7.2.2.3 Other Ways to Requests Trips

In addition to calling in requests via the contractor's respective call centers, customers may submit trip requests by email or by fax. Reservation agents check to see whether trips requests have come in this way and transfer these trips to Trapeze, where they are scheduled twice each day between 5:00 a.m.

and 6:00 a.m. and between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. Requests that come in after 1:00 p.m. will not be considered until the following day at 5:00 a.m. Same-day trip requests cannot be submitted by fax or email. Confirmations are sent to the customers via IVR on the evening before the trip date.

Requests for the federally mandated service area can only be made via the self-service web portal accessible at <https://mtsonline.metc.state.mn.us/#/auth/signinregister>. For such requests, Metro Mobility Customer Service staff suggests that trips be booked 1–4 days in advance to ensure a confirmed pickup time (i.e., scheduled onto a specific vehicle run by the system). These confirmations show up in a pop-up window. Otherwise, the customer may have to wait for the IVR confirmation the evening before. Customers can also check their trip requests 24 hours a day. The portal cannot be used to book a trip in the State-mandated area or any trip after 5:00 p.m. on the evening before the trip date (to align with the availability of call-in reservations). While the portal can be used to cancel trips, customers may not use it to cancel a trip less than 1 hour before the confirmed pickup time. Metro Mobility has disallowed the portal option to request trips based on appointment time because of issues with confirming a pickup window.

7.2.3 Schedule Optimization

Trapeze comes with an almost limitless number of configurable *job agents* to batch optimize a schedule while observing specified parameters such as maximum OBTs. Trapeze includes slide bars that can be used to instruct the system to schedule trips based on Met Council's desired balance between service/cost efficiency and service quality. Optimization job agents can be set up to run at certain times or frequencies and to optimize only certain types of trips (e.g., trips requiring a wheelchair-accessible vehicle [WAV]). If a frequency for an optimization job agent is set up to run every 5 minutes and it typically takes 6 minutes to complete the process, Trapeze will run the optimization process continuously (i.e., continuous dynamic optimization [CDO]). In this way, optimization job agents can be run in the days preceding the service date to automatically reschedule advance trip requests as they are booked and to take advantage of holes opening up because of advance cancellations. In reoptimizing the schedule, there are certain parameters set up so that confirmed pickup times are maintained. In addition, Trapeze offers CDO on the service day to fix problems that will happen later in the day before they manifest themselves in real-time for the dispatchers to fix. Transdev utilize several different scheduled and manually triggered job agents to optimize the schedule during the days leading up to the service date but not on the service date, preferring changes on the service date to be the province of their dispatchers.

7.2.3.1 Transdev

Transdev's router is in charge of optimizing the next-day schedule, seeding routes to minimize deadhead. He uses two regional routes restricted by polygons to keep vehicles in designated areas (North 5042 = Coons Rapids, East 5043 = Stillwater/Woodbury), has additional runs available for service, and has a set of unassigned 5900 replacement runs that he uses in the event of a vehicle breakdown. His 5600 series of runs are for overtime.

At the close of reservations, all demand and unfrozen (unanchored) trips are rebatched with the use of taxi run(s) to filter/hold trips until assignment. The 190–220 runs accommodate approximately 2,000–2,220 trips. According to the router, approximately 5% of these trips are State-mandated trips. The 100–120 runs are used for curbside roundtrips taken by approximately 50–60 customers on weekdays.

After rebatching, there are up to 20 trips that may be left as unscheduled. The router then tries to fit these into the schedule one-by-one. He then reviews the individual routes for logical order. He reviews for each run, including the first/last trip, and may reassign trips to reduced deadhead (and maximize RVHs). Lastly, he reviews the curbside trips to make sure they have been properly scheduled. The next day's schedule is typically completed by 7:30 p.m.

The router uses Violation Sets ERROR4 and ERROR5 as backup, because he has found that these will provide solutions (without violations) compared to the DEFAULT Violation Set. This type of unexpected, automated scheduling behavior has been seen at other Trapeze sites; unfortunately, no clear cause or resolution has been identified to address it.

The router noted that there is only one vehicle type assigned with capacity types, where it is best practice to assign these categories on a one-to-one basis. The single vehicle type can cause an issue with other parts of the PASS application; for example, if a customer has been approved for sedan-only transportation, their customer master should be updated to include a vehicle type exclusion for van or cutaway capacity types. However, with a single vehicle type, the functionality would effectively prevent the customer from travelling on any type of vehicle in the fleet.

7.2.3.2 Transit Team

Because they were unhappy with the results (and have a lack of trust in batch scheduling large numbers of trips), Transit Team has mostly (but not all together) given up on using batch optimization job agents. From time to time, the router (really, the lead dispatcher) will experiment with small batches. He has also tried adjusting the appointment time buffer which automatically shifts a requested drop-off/appointment time earlier (by a certain number of minutes as configured), but this practice was apparently not successful. Transit Team dispatchers also use a scheduling job agent on the day of service (see Section 7.6).

Instead of utilizing job agents to optimize the final schedule, Transit Team relies mostly on the schedules put together by reservation agents real-time scheduling around the standing orders. On the day before the service date, the router does adjust the next-day schedule as he sees fit (to incrementally improve the schedule) by reassigning trips with or without Trapeze's help. The Transit Team general manager has developed Excel macros to take trip administration exports and assist with scheduling. For example, one of the macros identifies trips that are estimated to arrive at end of the confirmed pickup window for the router. The router will then reschedule these trips one-by-one to a pickup time earlier in the window.

The router also uses Trapeze to schedule stand-by trips, but again, one trip at a time. The reservation agents then call each of the stand-by customers to provide the confirmed scheduled time for their trips. In contrast to Transdev, Transit Team's scheduling process is much more labor intensive and time-

consuming, especially considering that approximately 30% of the trips served by Transit Team are State-mandated trips.

7.2.4 Trapeze's OBT Calculations

As mentioned in Section 2.10, one of the many scheduling parameters that is used in suggesting solutions and optimizing the schedule is maximum OBT, abiding by the distance-based constraints laid out in Table 2-1. That said, Trapeze uses direct travel time as the foundation for calculating maximum OBT. This relationship makes sense. While the distance between the origin and destination remains constant (as calculated by street routing), travel times between the two points change depending on the day, time, and direction of travel. To help calculate direct travel time, Trapeze maintains a cache of trips taken during different times of day and uses the travel times from similar trips (day, time, direction of travel) when estimating the travel time for a particular trip. This travel time is then compared to the limits in Table 2-1 to determine whether there is a maximum OBT violation.

Other Trapeze sites have adopted the use of the PASS Itinerary Planning Analysis module to perform real-time lookup of fixed-route service travel time (inclusive of walking time and transfers) at the time of trip booking to set the maximum OBT for the booking. In this case, the OBT violation occurs when the scheduled fixed-route travel time is exceeded. This process is not viable for Metro Mobility trips because many rides on the system that are classified as federally mandated trips could not be reasonably accomplished on fixed-route services. For example, a trip from the Anoka County Government Center to the Shoreview Community Center is considered a federally mandated trip (both ends in the 0.75-mile corridor) but would take a little over 2 hours and require two transfers on a weekday afternoon. If the trip started after 3:30 pm on a weekday, the trip could not be completed until the following morning.

Met Council uses the Itinerary Planning Analysis module periodically to assess the appropriateness of the current formula using actual trips provided on Metro Mobility.

7.3 Operationalization of Requests From Conditional Eligible Riders

According to the eligibility and contractor staff, conditional eligibility is not being enforced or used in the scheduling of trips. This omission is the primary reason why Met Council does not use the Trapeze CERT software.

Very few ADA paratransit services do, in fact, operationalize the checking of requests made by conditionally eligible riders to determine whether or not the trip is eligible. The New York City Transit's Access-a-Ride, Pittsburgh's ACCESS, and San Diego Metropolitan Transit System's Access are notable exceptions. The process employed in Pittsburgh is exemplary and has been credited in the past with identifying 2,000 trips per month as ineligible.

7.4 Standing Order Requests, Scheduling, and Maintenance

As mentioned in Section 2.7, Metro Mobility customers may request standing orders for trips as infrequent as once per week as long as they are going to/from the same locations at the same time and within the federally mandated service area. Standing order requests that are not entirely within the federally mandated service area may be considered only if the trip is for life-sustaining medical appointments or for work/school purposes or if the customer has full eligibility. Contractor staff considering standing order requests generally prioritize the granting of requests for standing order rides that occur multiple times per week.

Standing order requests are not called in. Instead, customers request standing orders by completing and submitting a Standing Order Request Form from the MMSC. These completed forms are sent to the MMSC, reviewed and then distributed to the contractor. The router/schedulers then process these requests on a monthly basis to determine whether there is capacity to accommodate each request—standing orders are not guaranteed. The contractors are also responsible for rescheduling, as needed, requested changes to standing orders that come through the contractors reservations staff.

Contractor router/schedulers input the request into Trapeze and then look for solutions on the master schedules (of scheduled standing orders) for each day that the trip is to be served. The master schedules are used as a template for the creation of each dated schedule. For example, the Monday master schedule is used to create the June 16, 2025, schedule five days before the date so that advance reservations for the date can be scheduled four days before the service date.

The contractors' schedulers use Trapeze and their own sense of each run to find solutions for the standing order, while attempting to schedule the standing order to the same run on each day that the standing order is to be served and with other similar standing orders (going to the same destination) whenever possible.

Both contractor's freeze (or anchor) standing orders, meaning that any batch optimization process will not cause the standing orders to be automatically reassigned to another run or to shift their confirmed pickup time beyond a reasonable amount (and always within the confirmed pickup window).

With standing orders changing or ending from time to time, it is important that the scheduling of the standing order trips on these master schedules be reviewed frequently (ideally, once a month but at least once a quarter) to determine if the scheduling still makes sense. In the interviews with the Metro Mobility contractor schedulers, there seems to be no regular schedule for standing order maintenance. Instead, the schedulers take a more organic approach—adjusting the master schedules as new standing order trips are added. Contractors are required by contract language to review all standing orders at least quarterly.

Met Council also asks contractors to abide by the 50% policy (see Section 2.7). For example, at Transdev, their router almost always rejects requests for standing orders that are during the morning or afternoon/evening peak service, citing that the 50% rule would be violated. In such case, standing order

requests are kept on a waiting list awaiting an opening in the schedule because of the permanent cancellation of a standing order or an expansion of runs.

7.5 Run Structure Development and Adjustment

For each zone, the development and adjustment of the dedicated run structure is the responsibility of the respective contractors. Both contractors understand that the strategy used to put together a run structure is to mirror the demand curve as closely as possible so that there is not an undersupply of service during the peak periods or an oversupply of service during the off period. A run structure that does not accomplish this strategy will tend to have poor OTP during the peak periods and lots of slack time (and poor productivity) during the off-peak periods. The current run structures of each of the zones are discussed in Chapter 9.

Transdev's lead dispatcher works closely with Transdev's assistant general manager to put together run cuts and shift bids for the teamster drivers. Shift lengths are a function of what is allowable under the union collective bargaining agreement. Transdev only performs a service pick once per year (in the November timeframe). In the Study Team's experience, this is not normal in the industry. Most transit paratransit operations run driver picks two to three times per year. Meanwhile, with nonunion drivers, Transit Team does not have organized picks at all. Based on the demand for a given day, Transit Team's approach is to put together a fluid set of runs of mostly 8 or 10 hours over the 4-day advance reservation period and assign the runs to drivers on a daily basis.

7.6 Dispatching and Dispatcher-Driver Communication

7.6.1 Dispatching Center

Contractually, the contractors must provide a dispatch area at their primary facility in each zone that:

- Has adequate space to house at least three separate dispatch stations.
- Provides each dispatcher a work area with sufficient desktop space to house two separate central processing units (scheduling and radio control stations), three monitors, a keyboard, a mouse, and a Met Council phone.
- Is climate controlled for staff comfort and equipment longevity.
- Has enough wall space for the dispatch big board, which displays real-time operating information. The big board may include up to a 60-inch monitor connected to a separate central processing unit and must have a dedicated, wired minimum CAT 5E connection to the network.

7.6.2 Dispatching

Trapeze is used to support the following dispatching functions:

- Monitoring the dispatch screen to make sure that runs are not falling behind.
- Reassigning trips as needed to get later-running vehicles back on schedule or in response to driver callouts or accidents/breakdowns while a vehicle is in service.

- Processing no-shows, including calling customers as described previously.
- Assigning reemerging no-shows to runs.
- Assisting drivers with navigation or incidents.
- Responding to reservationists who do not have the relevant information for WMR or ETA calls from customers.
- Coordinating with Metro Transit's transit control center to assist with accidents or other law enforcement-related service issues.

7.6.2.1 Transdev

At the East Zone facility (Transdev), the dispatchers are located in two separate areas of the building. One to two frontend dispatchers primarily greet drivers and assign runs at the window and secondarily handle radio calls, service monitoring, and escalated WMR or other customer-concern phone calls. The two backend dispatchers (see Figure 7-1) are located in a separate area and primarily handle radio calls, service monitoring (including reviewing APEX real-time red dashboards for projected late and other report tools), and customer calls.



Figure 7-1 Backend dispatcher at Transdev.

Collectively, the dispatchers serve to ensure that vehicles are on time and to assist the drivers as needed. The Study Team observed that the Trapeze MDT center screen was being well-managed, with very few active incidents at any one time. The observation occurred between approximately 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., so the Study Team cannot speak to effective use during peak hours.

Transdev's lead dispatcher (at the back dispatching desk) reported that he uses the Trapeze scheduling job agents extensively to assist with managing day-of-service changes to the day's schedule, as well as optimizing the schedules for the four days in advance of the service date. The indications are that these

efforts are effective in ensuring high OTP, although it was clear to both the lead dispatcher and the Study Team that the optimization job agents are not organized efficiently. That is, several dozen copied jobs most likely could be combined into a single job that executes at prescribed intervals. The lead dispatcher also mentioned that some jobs simply did not execute at their designated intervals, possibly because of congestion in the system.

During the Study Team's observations, driver no-show requests did not require follow-up efforts to contact the customer by phone, nor was any additional information required from the driver to include tracking notes with the no-show. The dispatchers said that drivers are trained to wait the required five minutes at the pickup location before requesting the no-show, while the dispatchers' responsibilities—absent a specific request for clarification of address or door location from the driver—were to verify the vehicle location and grant the no-show. The Transdev dispatchers also said that because customers are supposed to receive an imminent arrival automated phone call, they do not need to place a follow-up call based on the no-show request from the driver. These procedures are not common in industry. It is the Study Team's experience that most ADA paratransit services, dispatchers (or dispatch assistants) have additional responsibilities such as:

- Documenting that the vehicle location was checked.
- Checking descriptive information about the pickup location included the notes.
- Calling customers at one or more available phone numbers to see if they still want the trip (and if not, encouraging them to cancel their other trips scheduled for the day if they indeed no longer need them).

The Transdev dispatchers mentioned that one of their biggest challenges is efficient and effective scheduling of curbside trips, anecdotally referencing situations where a driver's entire 8-hour shift might consist of only 4 curbside roundtrips per day (which represents productivity of 0.5 trips per hour). The dispatchers opined that the Trapeze PASS system does not have a good way to include these curbside trips in batch scheduling efforts, requiring manual time-consuming tasks to place these trips on drivers' manifests. That said, the lead dispatcher also indicated that he has had some success with scheduling of curbside trips using Trapeze features such as *linking* and invoking *common runs* in the Schedule Booking Wizard; however, he has not been able to get the system's job agents to automate the scheduling optimization of these trips.

7.6.2.2 Transit Team

Transit Team's dispatchers are located in the same room, which helps with communication between them. There are four dispatch stations, three of which are equipped with radios (on the ARMER system). The ARMER system provides for private communication between the dispatcher and a specific driver in contrast to the South Zone's ANCOM radio system that is all *open mic*, meaning that conversations can be heard by all drivers.

Unlike some paratransit dispatch departments that split up the fleet among the dispatchers, the Transit Team dispatchers are both responsible for the entire fleet. They did try using the Trapeze Run Groups feature for dispatcher/driver management, but they reported that this did not work well.

The dispatchers at Transit Team rely on real-time dispatch screens (also called chip reports) and red screens to monitor the progress of the vehicles during the service day. On the red screen, vehicles that are currently, or projected to be, in violation of certain ground rules pertaining to OTP or maximum OBT, for example, are highlighted in orange or red, depending on the severity of the violation.

On the day of service, Transit Team dispatchers also use a schedule job agent, which runs every 5 minutes, looking 45–90 minutes out for vehicle type, capacity type, and late schedule violations, which are then rescheduled using Trapeze. It is interesting that Transdev has espoused Trapeze’s optimizing job agents for advance scheduling but does not use job agents for same-day proactive dispatching—the opposite happens at Transit Team.

The Transit Team dispatch team also does not place callouts to customers when drivers request a no-show.

Lastly, Transit Team’s dispatchers rely heavily on the MDT center screen for driver issues such as responding to voice and no-show/cancel-at-door requests, and first-in/first-out issues that the drivers identify.

7.6.3 Driver-Dispatcher Communications

As mentioned previously, drivers mostly communicate with dispatchers (and vice versa) by sending and receiving messages on the Rangers—drivers see their itineraries of stops on the Rangers and use the Rangers to perform events at pickups and drop-offs. If a dispatcher reassigns a trip from or to a run, it will appear on the Rangers of the impacted vehicles. However, it is important to note that both contractors report a network latency, which cause operational issues when drivers are waiting for an authorization to proceed.

With many paratransit systems, voice communication is the primary or secondary means of communication between the drivers and dispatchers, especially if communication is time-sensitive. For Metro Mobility, voice communication is discouraged for all but essential communication, particularly in the East and West Zones because of the usage constraints of the ARMER radio system. (The ARMER system is used by law enforcement, emergency services, transit, and other entities, so, all parties must work to maintain adequate capacity in the system.)

For the ARMER system especially, Met Council has had difficulties obtaining the appropriate number of licenses to use the system (contributing to challenges with expanding the fleet, similar to the Ranger issues). Met Council has also had difficulties managing contractor use/abuse of the system; Met Council had to restrict the use of the live (open microphone) system to emergencies only and require drivers to first request voice communications from dispatchers via their Ranger. Dispatchers, through their consoles, can then initiate private channel communications to interact with drivers.

There are inherent delays with this approach where radio communication must first be initiated by the driver through the Ranger. The delays in dispatchers getting back to the driver are exacerbated by the high dispatcher to driver ratio, estimated to be about 40:1 or higher. This ratio is much higher than

recommended for ADA paratransit operations and is something the Met Council should consider including in future contracts with service delivery providers. Ideal ratios are between 20:1 and 25:1, which are more standard for ADA paratransit services. The Study Team recommends that the Met Council work with contractors to improve driver-dispatcher communication, including improvements to the driver-to-dispatcher radio system and the addition of a 20:1 driver-to-dispatcher ratio requirement in future provider contracts.

Some paratransit agencies have solved the dispatcher ratio bottleneck by adding a dispatch assistant per shift to handle incoming and outgoing telephone calls for customers' same-day issues, rather than having the reservation agents handling these calls and transferring many of such calls to the dispatchers. A designated phone line for such calls (or phone tree selection) may also result in a decrease in hold times for such calls. The Study Team recommends that the Met Council modifies the phone tree so that reservation calls are separated from service-day calls.

Another strategy is to split the fleet between dispatchers rather than having each dispatcher be responsible for the entire set of runs. For example, 40 vehicles could be split evenly between the two dispatchers with each being responsible for 20 vehicles. The Study Team is not sure why this was unsuccessful at Transit Team, but such a strategy has been successfully employed at numerous paratransit systems. The only coordination needed between the dispatchers would be if one dispatcher wants to assign a trip to one of the other dispatcher's vehicles. For this coordination, it would help to have the dispatchers in the same room (unlike the current arrangement at Transdev).

With two teams, there could be friendly competitions (with rewards) between the driver-dispatcher teams. Such incentives have been shown to improve both productivity and OTP, as well as morale (to address some tension between drivers and some dispatchers).

Moreover, some transit agencies have dispatch assistants who also serve as liaisons with dialysis facilities and patients. It is not unreasonable to conceive that the same dispatch assistant who works the phones could also be the liaison for the dialysis trips.

Another issue the Study Team observed at Transdev is that the front dispatcher's attention to dispatching is diffused, especially during pull-out and pull-in times, because they also have window dispatcher duties. A dispatcher's job is challenging enough without having to break their concentration with window dispatch duties, which includes a general hubbub inside the window and outside the window in the lobby.

7.7 Handling of Customer Service-Day Calls

At both Transdev and Transit Team, service day customer calls such WMR calls and ETA requests are fielded by the reservation agents. Staff estimate that approximately 80% of these calls are successfully handled by the reservation staff. The other 20% of calls that the reservation agents cannot answer are transferred to dispatch.

7.8 Contractor Complaint Processing

A detailed description of the current complaint process, which is shared between Metro Mobility Customer Service staff and contractor staff, is discussed in Section 6.3. The contractors have had a key role in the complaint management process. In addition to redirecting complaints that they field and redirecting customers to Customer Service, the contractors do speak with the complainants for many complaints that involve them, especially if the complainant has indicated a desire to speak with the contractor. For such complaints, the contractor is required to submit a written report to Metro Mobility Customer Service within 48 hours.

However, as discussed in Section 6.3, the Study Team's interviews with Customer Service staff and with the contractors clarified that only one call is made. It remains unclear whether the call was purely to get the complainant's perspective before further investigation with contractor's drivers or staff or after the in-house investigation and resolution.

7.9 Window Dispatching and Pull-Outs/Pull-Ins

At both contractors, window dispatching duties at pull-out include assigning specific vehicles and vehicle runs to drivers. After checking in with the window dispatchers who assign a particular vehicle to a driver (see Section 7.6.2), drivers perform a 15-minute pre-trip inspection check of the vehicle. If the driver deems that a vehicle is unsafe based on an issue identified during the pre-trip inspection, the driver will alert the window dispatcher and another vehicle (if available) will be swapped in for that run. If there is a delay, dispatchers may be alerted to reassign the first trip or two to another run. In swapping in a vehicle, the window dispatchers make sure to swap in a vehicle of the same type and seating configuration. If such a vehicle is not available, the window dispatcher checks to see that the replacement vehicle can accommodate the trips assigned to that run; an incompatible replacement vehicle may trigger the need for additional trip reassignments. If the vehicle passes the pre-trip inspection, the driver heads out for their first pickup.

A big part of the pre-trip inspection is making sure that the Ranger and the Go-To fare collection system are functioning properly; one of the contractors estimated that 5%–10% of pull-outs may be delayed and/or require an equipment swap.

The window dispatchers also must respond to last-minute driver callouts; there is typically not a backup driver on the premises ready to go.

For all these reasons, delayed and missed pull-outs may involve having to reassign trips to other vehicle runs. Delayed and missed pull-outs have been an issue in the past, but both contractors have taken steps (e.g., with designated window dispatchers) to address this problem. If the window dispatchers are busy at the time of pull-out (with dispatching duties), the road supervisors will pitch in as needed. The Study Team observed this practice for both contractors.

Interestingly, at Transdev, the front desk dispatcher doubles as the window dispatcher. There is also an extra step to pull-outs at Transdev—they have a garage door gatekeeper who is responsible for opening and closing the garage door (see Figure 7-2).

At pull-in, window dispatchers are responsible for ensuring that the drivers have completed their driver logs and post-trip inspections and have turned in their cash revenue. Both the driver and the window dispatcher check to see whether the total fare collected matches the driver's log before the cash fare revenue is stored in a safe.

7.10 Vehicle Operations, Service Delivery, and Service Data Collection

Table 4-1 summarizes the current fleets for each of the three zones.

- The East Zone fleet (see Table 4-2) has a total of 181 Metro Mobility vehicles (vs. the 184 vehicles available to Transdev during the Study Team's site visit).
- The West Zone fleet (see Table 4-3) has a total of 244 Metro Mobility vehicles (vs. the 263 vehicles available to Transit Team during the Study Team's site visit).
- The South Zone fleet (see Table 4-4) has a total of 117 Metro Mobility vehicles.



Figure 7-2 Transdev's gatekeeper.

7.10.1 Fleet Needs

There is currently a very low spare vehicle ratio of 10%, according to the contractors. The Study Team's experience with large ADA paratransit services is that 10% barely covers the vehicles that are out for routine maintenance, leaving very few backup vehicles to swap in at pull-out if pre-trip inspections sideline some vehicles. Most transit agencies try to maintain a spare ratio closer to 25%; 20% may suffice for systems with very new fleets, but higher spare ratios may be needed for older fleets or fleets that have higher service requirements (i.e., more hours and miles per bus). The Study Team recommends that the Met Council work toward providing enough vehicles so that contractors can have more than a 10% spare ratio—increasing to a spare ratio that accounts for current operational requirements and fleet conditions.

The Met Council is just completing the replacement of the entire fleet because new builds were not available for more than 3 years because of pandemic-related manufacturing delays. The Met Council expects to receive a significant number of expansion vehicles before the end of 2025. However, as explained next, Metro Mobility cannot expand its active fleet unless it finds a way to obtain the necessary onboard technology.

As discussed in Section 5.3, the biggest factor in not being able to expand the fleet are the Rangers, which are failing and no longer able to be reliably replaced because they are no longer being manufactured. As a result, Met Council has not been able to expand the number of *active* vehicles despite the arrival of recently purchased vehicles and the increased availability of vehicles from manufacturers. New vehicles are put into service as older vehicles are retired and once they are equipped with the scavenged (and working) Rangers and other in-vehicle equipment (radios, in-vehicle cameras, Go-To fare card readers, and cash fare boxes). However, this action does not allow for fleet expansion. Accordingly, the contractors are doing the best they can with the current fleet sizes, although both contractors expressed challenges in meeting certain service standards without more vehicles.

As noted in Chapter 4, 94% of the current Metro Mobility fleet is wheelchair accessible. Most vehicles are cutaways with 8 standard seats and 3 wheelchair positions (8 & 3). Published in 2023, the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Synthesis 174 on Paratransit Fleet Configurations found that many larger paratransit fleets tended to reflect a nonuniform fleet mix of WAVs and non-WAVs. Many transit agencies have found that their ADA paratransit ridership is comprised of 20%–30% WAV trips and 70%–80% ambulatory trips, suggesting that a mix of WAVs and non-WAVs will work operationally. For example, MBTA's ADA paratransit service (The RIDE) has had a mixed fleet of 70% WAVs and 30% sedans for decades. Both Metro Mobility contractors stated that they saw the value in, and are in favor of, using more non-WAVs as a way of saving costs (i.e., non-WAVs are less costly to purchase and operate, and parts are more readily available), better matching operational needs, and improving the customer's riding experience. In the driver focus groups, both sets of drivers reported that that ambulatory riders love the existing Flexes and Highlanders. While Flexes are no longer made, other transit agencies in colder climates have had success with Pacificas and Siennas.

The Study Team recommends that the Met Council increase the non-WAV proportion of the fleet to at least 10%—potentially increasing to 20% over time. The Study Team’s scheduling analysis in Chapter 18 confirms that such a fleet mix would be able to meet Metro Mobility’s actual demand for ambulatory and WAV trips.

7.10.2 Service Delivery

The drivers’ itineraries (driver manifests) are displayed on the mounted Rangers (see Section 5.3). The information on the Ranger tells the driver when they need to be at a pickup and when they need to be at a destination (e.g., in the case of an appointment trip). The drivers also use the Rangers to confirm special notes about the pickup, the number of riders (including PCAs and guests, if any), the rider’s use of a mobility device, etc. If there are more riders than expected, the driver will alert the dispatcher to ascertain whether or not the extra passengers present a vehicle capacity-related issue. A critical function of the Ranger is providing turn-by-turn driving directions to the next pickup or drop-off address.

Remembering that Metro Mobility provides door-through-door service as a default level of driver assistance, drivers are directed to leave the vehicle and approach the first entry door of the pickup location to escort the rider to the vehicle, to help them into the vehicle, and to secure mobility devices, if any. If the customer is not present, drivers are instructed to wait 5 minutes from the beginning of the pickup window or from the point when they arrive within the pickup window, before asking for a no-show request from the dispatcher (see the discussion of no-show request procedures in Section 7.6).

As riders board the vehicle, they are required to pay a fare. As discussed in Section 2.5, customers may pay a cash fare or use a Go-To fare card. If there are guests for the trip, the guests may pay for their own trip using either method as they board the vehicle, or the customer may pay for them with cash or the customer’s Go-To fare card at the destination. The system will not recognize the second tap (for the guest) unless the second tap is 20 minutes after the first tap.

The contractors estimate that approximately 80% of customers use the Go-To system. However, there is no integration between the Trapeze Rangers and the Go-To system, so drivers must manually indicate how a fare is paid on the Ranger. Consequently, a post-trip reconciliation process is required to reconcile the information transferred from the Rangers into Trapeze with the Go-To data and cash fare collected.

The drivers use the Rangers to time-stamp and geo-stamp their arrivals and departures at each stop (whether it be a pickup or a drop-off), as well as their pull-out departure from the garage at the beginning of their shift and their pull-in arrival at the garage at the end of their shift. The timestamps are later used to determine OTP and distinguish no-shows vs. missed trips. Geo-stamps are used to verify that the trips are federally mandated trips vs. trips with an origin and/or destination in the State-mandated service area. Geo-stamps—and the real-time location of vehicles as determined by the automatic vehicle location system—also used in the no-show appeal process.

After performing an event, the Ranger screen will flash with the next event (pickup or drop-off) to be performed. If there has been a change to the schedule, such as when a dispatcher adds a trip to the schedule, the driver is alerted to refresh the screen.

7.11 Driver Focus Group Feedback

In the course of the site visits to the contractors, the Study Team conducted focus groups with randomly selected drivers coming off the morning shifts or in early for their afternoon shifts. Each of the focus groups at the West and East Zone facilities consisted of between 5 and 10 drivers. The drivers ranged from newer drivers with 1–2 years of experience to one driver who has part of the system for 34 years. The following driver feedback themes were identified:

- All of the drivers were appreciative of their job and their role in providing mobility to Metro Mobility customers. Virtually all the drivers mentioned that they have a great relationship with their riders, adding that they are part of family. They routinely hear compliments from their riders, which make their day.
- At both contractors, the drivers mentioned appreciating management. “It’s a good place to work, with good benefits.” There also appeared to be universal appreciation for the helpfulness of the road supervisors and maintenance staff. Regarding the latter, the drivers marvel that they can keep the older vehicles—one with over 300,000 miles—safely functioning.
- At both contractors, getting dispatchers to respond to requests to discuss an issue over the radio—after requesting such via the Rangers—can be fraught with delays. Among the drivers who mentioned this issue, the Study Team learned that most delays range between 3 minutes and 1 hour but average 7–10 minutes. The drivers universally agreed that a 7- to 10-minute delay can create havoc. A more senior driver reported that there have been several times when dispatchers never got back to him at all. A few drivers mentioned having to use their cell phone to call dispatchers when they were not getting a response over the radio.
- It is not uncommon for drivers to receive dispatcher messages to them about add-ons after the trip was to be picked up. These add-ons did not show up on the Rangers because the dispatcher direction to refresh the screen either was delayed or never sent.
- Drivers also mentioned that they categorize dispatchers into proactive and reactive, much preferring the former.
- Approximately 5%–20% of their pull-outs are delayed due to Ranger issues, particularly related to logging in; it takes several tries due to issues with the network connection. Drivers also mentioned that they have encountered similar network-related problems with the Go-To system, causing both log-on problems and lost fare revenue.
- Extra time is needed for pull-outs during cold weather because the batteries need time to recharge.
- Additional Ranger issues include having to use a mouse because the touch screen calibration is off. This requirement impacts the zoom in/out feature.
- The underlying map on the Rangers is very outdated. Drivers have been sent to streets that do not appear on the map. Several drivers also remarked that the Rangers show an address on the wrong side of the street.
- On the road, the drivers noted Go-To power failures once every two weeks, as well as card tap failures averaging once per week.

- The drivers also felt that the navigation system offered on the Rangers is not very good; several drivers note that they rely on their phone's navigation app (when not driving).
- Several drivers felt the quality of the routing could be improved. Specific examples focused on zigzagging, which could lead to late arrivals for appointment trips and, in some cases, excessively long ride times. The consensus was that each driver encountered zig-zagging routes two to three times a week on average.
- Several of the drivers also mentioned that there is way too much slack, noting that pickups are evenly spaced 1 hour apart. At the same time, they also mentioned that more vehicles are needed during the peak.
- Issues with the wheelchair shuffle (first-in/first-out issue) still remain, which passengers do not appreciate, especially in the winter. Some of the drivers mentioned that there are still too many of these first-in/first-out events; other drivers noted they are not that prevalent.
- Drivers noticed that the curbside trips especially during the peak were "keeping the vehicle hostage" and did not seem to be in keeping with a shared ride system.
- Some dispatchers are adamant about drivers following the schedule of stops as directed. Other dispatchers will allow the drivers (especially senior drivers) to deviate from the manifest (e.g., serve stops in different order) if the drivers believe it will improve OTP or decrease a rider's OBT.
- There are next to no extra-board drivers (i.e., backup drivers) and very few drivers available for floater runs.
- Regarding the vehicle lifts, drivers mentioned that the spring-loaded door was a safety issue (one driver reported getting smacked in the face), the hydraulic fluid cord on one vehicle snapped, and the bar can catch on the pole. One driver also mentioned that with the station near the driver seat being moved back, driver seat adjustments are more limited.
- Several of the drivers also noticed that the full capacity of the cutaways is rarely utilized. "Vehicles are way bigger than they need to be." Others chimed in, advocating for a different fleet mix with more SUVs and a smaller number of vehicles with three wheelchair positions.
- One of the contractors encourages their drivers to tell the dispatcher when they encounter an incorrect address; drivers are also encouraged to also fill out a wrong address form after their shift. Drivers report that, "sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't," adding that the needed changes to standing orders are often slow to change. Some of the drivers have stopped filling out forms because things do not change. Drivers voiced a desire for a better system to improve the accuracy of information. The Study Team suspects that this may have to do with not changing standing order trips in a timely fashion, as well as not changing the standing order trips that have already been copied into dated schedules.
- Drivers desire a regular (e.g., quarterly) meeting where they can meet with reservation agents, schedulers, dispatchers, and managers to discuss problems they have previously identified and that still need to be fixed. Requests for better trip and stop notes seem to have gone unanswered. Some better mechanism for driver feedback is desired.
- Several drivers had issues with the accuracy and appropriateness of the Lytx DriveCam verbal warnings.

- One of the drivers mentioned that there does not appear to be any ramifications for missing required safety meetings.

7.12 Data Reconciliation

The trip reconciliation function involves adding missing or incorrect arrival/departure times. These data holes exist if a driver forgets to perform an arrival or a departure at a particular stop or performs it early or late. Contractor staff compare the performed time against the geo-time stamps in the GPS system records showing that the vehicle is at the pickup or drop-off location.

Reconciliation of the trip data collected, as well as Go-To fare data collected, is required because of lost network connections.

7.13 Driver Requirements and Training

7.13.1 Driver Requirements and Starting Wages

The contractual provisions regarding driver requirements and starting wages specify that:

All drivers providing Metro Mobility demand services shall meet Minnesota Rules 8840 for driver qualifications and all other applicable state and federal regulations. In addition, the Contractor shall maintain driver personnel files in accordance with Chapter 8840.

and

The Contractor shall pay a starting wage at or above \$17.75/hour as of the start of the contract. The Contractor will further propose annual increases which reflect the projected regional rate of inflation throughout the term of the contract. The minimum wage requirement is intended to ensure that drivers are compensated at an hourly rate adequate to attract and retain qualified and suitable drivers.

The contract was subsequently amended twice to increase driver wages. The last increase, effective in 2022, provided a minimum starting wage of \$23 for drivers and, at minimum, cost of living increases thereafter.

7.13.2 Driver Training

The contractual provisions regarding driver training specify that:

The Contractor is responsible for ensuring that all drivers receive all required training prior to being placed in revenue service.

Required training includes:

- All training requirements found in Minnesota Rules 8840.5640.

- A minimum of three hours of training in Customer Service, Disability Awareness, and Conflict Resolution.
- A minimum of two hours of training on all relevant Metro Mobility policies and procedures.
- Use of the mobile data computer (MDC), i.e., the Rangers.
- Use of the Council radio system and procedures regarding appropriate use of the radio system.
- Use of the Cubic (or other Council-provided) fare collection device, i.e., the Go-To system.
- Map book training.

Per contractual requirements, the contractors also provide Met Council management with the date and time of each driver training class at least 1 week prior to the meetings, so that staff may attend the meetings, if desired.

At Transdev, new hire training consists of 40 hours of training, which includes all of the previously identified requirements plus 4 hours of defensive driver training, and 4 hours of first-aid training. Their behind-the-wheel training consists of 10 hours in a closed skills course, 4 hours of basic road work and 10 hours of advanced road work with a behind-the-wheel trainer, and 16 hours of cadeting. Transdev management reports that they begin training classes with an average of 10 trainees and wind up with an average of 10 new drivers per month.

Transit Team provides each new hire with 80 hours of training. The first week of training focuses on 32 hours of classroom training, which includes ADA paratransit requirements, Metro Mobility policies, and their job responsibilities, as well as a condensed version of The Transit and Paratransit Company's (TAPTCO) paratransit operator training, which includes both trainer instruction and instructional videos.

The TAPTCO course includes safety practices; look ahead, look around, leave room, and communicate defensive driving practices; hazard identification and mitigation; vehicle familiarity (including the Rangers and in-vehicle equipment); prevention of rear-end, intersection, and backing accidents; performance of merging, lane changes, and passing; recognition and handling of adverse driving conditions; prevention of driver fatigue and distractions; drug and alcohol awareness; first aid and blood borne pathogen avoidance procedures; passenger assistance and disability awareness, especially of vulnerable adults; securement of wheelchairs and other mobility devices; wayfinding; and reporting.

During the middle of the first week of training at Transit Team, trainees are required to take a written test; those who do not pass are given the chance to retake the test the following day and remain with the training class if they pass. At the end of the first week, trainees are trained in vehicle operations on a closed course. If they score a passing grade, they move onto the behind-the-wheel training and cadet training during the second week.

A new 2-week training class begins every week. Training classes start with an average of 8 trainees. Transit Team management reports that 3 of the 8 make it past the 2 weeks.

As needed, 8 hours of refresher training is provided but no more than every 2 years. Retraining is provided following an accident or incident or can be triggered by a valid complaint or a pattern of

complaints. Policy changes are woven into the new hire and refresher training and are also covered in the monthly safety meetings.

7.13.3 Driver Safety Training

The contractors hold monthly safety meetings for all drivers. Topics include information that is relevant to current issues and challenges faced by the drivers. The Met Council contracts also require that the training meetings focus on service dogs at least twice per year. Figure 7-3 shows a photo of one such safety meeting.

Per contractual requirements, the contractors also provide Met Council management with the date and time of all safety meetings at least 1 week prior to the meetings so that staff may attend the meetings, if desired.



Figure 7-3 Driver safety meeting.

7.14 Road Supervision

For both contractors, the road supervisors primarily assist with pull-outs and pull-ins and assist drivers in service as needed (e.g., in response to a rider incident or accident or when loading a passenger if two people are required). In addition, road supervisors monitor/evaluate the performance of drivers in the field and via the Lytx DriveCam video. Road supervisors are sometimes used to serve trips, especially as a result of a vehicle breakdown or accident while in service. Road supervisors are also called upon to serve a trip that cannot be served by one of the dedicated vehicles, but this practice is very infrequent.

7.14.1 Transdev

Transdev has two road supervisors that cover the daily periods of (9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.). During the overlap period (1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.), one road supervisor will perform office duties, while the other will be in the field. Transdev's road supervisors double as window dispatchers, checking the interior of the buses and ensuring that the wheelchair securements are functionable and making sure that the drivers are properly in uniform before they head out on their run. Much of the office duties center around reviewing Lytx DriveCam video footage, either as part of a routine observation of drivers or in response to a complaint investigation request or an accident or incident. Transdev's road supervisors also use the Lytx DriveCam videos for coachable moments and retraining, as needed. Other office duties include following up on complaints and accidents or incidents and notifying or responding to Met Council PAs and insurance companies. While Transdev's road supervisors do get out on the road to monitor drivers and respond to accidents and incidents, the Study Team got the impression from the interviews that most of their time is spent at the facility.

7.14.2 Transit Team

There are three road supervisors based at Transit Team's Minneapolis Facility—one working weekdays from 5:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., a second working Saturday through Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. or sometimes 8:00 p.m., and a third working Wednesday through Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (working out of Maple Grove on the weekends). Transit Team also has two additional road supervisors at Maple Grove and two road supervisors based at their South Zone facility.

The lead road supervisor oversees the early morning pull-out, actively monitoring the pre-trip inspections. The general manager also keeps a punctuality spreadsheet on which he records drivers who consistently pull out on time and drivers who do not. In the latter case, it is the job of the lead road supervisor to work with the stragglers to improve their performance. The lead supervisor works with dispatch to handle last-minute driver callouts using Microsoft Teams chats. The lead road supervisor is also involved in reviewing driver incident reports and ensuring that these reports get to the Met Council in a timely fashion (see Section 6.2.3 for reporting response standards). The lead supervisor and all road supervisors at Transit Team are involved in reviewing the Lytx DriveCam footage and coaching and retraining, if needed. In the field, they try to monitor drivers 3 to 4 times a week, especially with drivers who are the focus of a pattern of customer complaints. The road supervisors also respond to accidents, incidents, and in-service driver reports of unsafe accessibility equipment. In the interviews, the lead road supervisor mentioned that the road supervisors in the South Zone spend "a little more time" in the field monitoring drivers. The road supervisors also provide safety support as needed and help with the drug and alcohol testing programs.

The lead road supervisors confirmed one of the observations from the driver focus group—forms filled out by the drivers and submitted to the dispatch office to identify inaccurate information in the driver manifests (e.g., an incorrect address) get solved but only about half the time, indicating a need for a better process. In general, he mentioned that while Transit Team strives to have an accessible open-door management style, communication opportunities between management and drivers could be

improved. A forum for dialogue between drivers, management, and managers from other departments, possibly by extending the monthly safety meetings, would be welcomed by the drivers.

7.15 Fleet Maintenance, Cleaning, and Fueling

While the Met Council is responsible for providing the vehicles, the contractors are responsible for maintaining them. Specific related provisions in the contracts are discussed in this section.

7.15.1 Met Council Requirements

7.15.1.1 Maintenance Facilities

The contractual provisions regarding maintenance facilities specify that:

The Contractor's maintenance facility must be appropriately sized to maintain the number of Vehicles assigned to that zone, The facility must meet all federal, state, and local guidance for safety including, but not limited to, fire codes, building codes, OSHA requirements, and all EPA, PCA and local environmental regulations.

The Contractor is solely responsible for providing and supplying all tools, lifts and related equipment needed to properly maintain the Vehicles assigned to them under the contract.

The Contractor's maintenance facility must:

- Have enough maintenance bays to conduct maintenance on all Vehicles assigned to the Contractor in the proposed zone.
- Provide a secure parts storage area sufficient in size to house the necessary parts.
- Comply with all state, federal and local requirements for Vehicle repair and maintenance which are applicable to the Contractor.
- Provide a secured office space for maintaining Vehicle records.
- Have a minimum of two operable Vehicle lifts appropriate for under Vehicle service.

7.15.1.2 Fueling Stations

The contractual provisions regarding fueling stations specify that:

The Contractor shall have fuel storage and a fueling station at their facility. The Contractor shall fuel only vehicles used to provide Metro Mobility service at the fueling station.

The Contractor's onsite storage must have a minimum storage capacity of 10,000 gallons. The Contractor shall be responsible for ensuring that tanks are cleaned during the course of this contract. All costs associated with the fuel tanks shall be the responsibility of the Contractor including but not limited to installation, removal, insurance, cleaning, and maintenance.

The fueling station must:

- Be a stand-alone unit that meets all applicable local, state and federal requirements including zoning, fire, and pollution prevention codes.
- Have a security system which allows the Contractor to restrict access to the fuel pump.
- Be capable of producing detailed reports documenting all activity at the fueling station including Driver, Vehicle, date, time, and number of gallons pumped.
- Have security lighting which is on during all nondaylight hours.
- Be in a secure location in the Contractor's facility.
- Be in an area where security cameras are installed with a clear view of the pump.

7.15.1.3 Maintenance Staff

Per the contractual provisions, the contractor must have a dedicated maintenance manager position "responsible for overseeing all aspects of maintenance for all Vehicles assigned to the contract." In addition:

An ASE certified mechanic must oversee and approve or perform any repair work of drivetrain components (engines and transmissions) and safety repairs. If the Contractor does not have an ASE drivetrain certified mechanic on staff, the Contractor must use a third-party ASE certified mechanic at an outside vendor.

7.15.1.4 Responsibilities for Vehicle Maintenance and Repair

The contractual provisions regarding the responsibilities for vehicle maintenance and repair specify that:

The Contractor is responsible for maintaining all Vehicles and equipment in optimal working condition. The Contractor will comply with all portions of the Vehicle Use and Maintenance agreement.

The Contractor is responsible for repairing or replacing all damaged Vehicles in a timely manner. Vehicles must be maintained at a level equal to or better than the condition except for normal wear and tear. Replacement parts must be equal to or better than original parts.

Vehicles that are deemed "totaled" by an insurance company as the result of an accident or other incident shall be replaced at the Contractor's expense. The Contractor will pay the Council the remaining 60-month straight-line depreciated value of the Vehicle at the time of loss. If the asset is fully depreciated the amount due the Council will be based on average sale proceeds of comparable vehicles.

7.15.1.5 Vehicle Warranties

The contractual provisions regarding vehicle warranties specify that:

The Council will purchase all Vehicles with a standard manufacturer's warranty. The Contractor shall be notified of the warranty on each Vehicle. The Contractor shall be responsible for coordinating all warranty work on Council owned Vehicles. Warranty work may be done at an authorized dealer,

independent garage, or at the Contractors facility if the Contractor is authorized to conduct warranty work. The Contractor will notify the Council's Fleet Manager in writing any time warranty work is performed on the Vehicles.

7.15.1.6 Preventive Maintenance

There is an invoice credit assessed if the contractors do not adhere closely to each PM's mileage interval, as stated in the contractor's maintenance plan as follows:

Preventive Maintenance (PM) will be done on each Vehicle within 110% of the mileage threshold outlined in the contractor's maintenance plan. The contractor's maintenance plan must meet the vehicle manufacturer's OEM (original equipment manufacturer) minimum preventative maintenance thresholds. The contractor's maintenance plan must also meet the requirements of the [the Met Council's] Use and Maintenance Agreement. Preventative Maintenance thresholds and will be measured at each PM cycle.

The invoice credit is \$500 per vehicle when a vehicle is placed in revenue service and is more than 110% past the PM threshold.

7.15.1.7 Annual Securement Device Inspections

The contractual provisions regarding annual securement device inspections specify that:

The Contractor is required to arrange for the annual inspection of securement devices, as required under Minnesota Statute 299A.14. The Contractor will ensure that all lifts have valid certification before being placed in service.

7.15.1.8 Vehicle Cleaning

The contractual provisions regarding vehicle cleaning specify that:

The Contractor is responsible for cleaning the vehicles "on a regular basis" as described below:

- Daily—Interiors shall be swept and trash removed.
- Twice Weekly—Interiors shall be fully cleaned throughout including dashboard, seats, ceilings, walls and all other interior areas and surfaces and floors will be mopped. Exteriors washed, with more frequent washing as required during periods of inclement weather.

The interior passenger compartment of each Vehicle shall be maintained free of noxious odors from cleaning products and exhaust fumes emitted by the engine."

In the event of pandemic, or other emergency circumstance, Enhanced Cleaning protocols may be prescribed by the MMSC under a separate procedure. The Contractor shall keep a log of all cleaning activity performed on Council Vehicles. This log will be available to Council Staff upon request.

7.15.1.9 Vehicle Maintenance Software and Asset Tracking Software

Per the contract provisions:

Contractors must use a Vehicle Maintenance Software package which has the ability to define and track preventive maintenance schedules and repairs; calculate when maintenance is due; schedule PM notifications by date, mileage or hours; provide a detailed maintenance history and cost summary. The Contractor shall provide Council staff with direct administrative access to the software available at any time for monitoring Vehicle repairs. This access must be available through a dedicated network connection or via the internet. Major Mechanical Failures, as defined in the Council's Agency Safety Plan must be separately reported in the Councils' Incident Reporting Application.

In addition, the Met Council may require that the contractor track vehicle assets and maintenance using the Met Council's asset tracking and maintenance system.

7.15.1.10 Fueling

Per the contract provisions, the Met Council will be responsible for the cost of fuel for all Metro Mobility vehicles. It is also the Met Council's responsibility to apply for and receive all fuel tax rebates that may be available for fuel paid for by the Met Council under this agreement.

The contractor is responsible for ensuring that only Metro Mobility vehicles are fueled at the fueling station and preventing any abuse or theft that occurs at their fueling station. In addition, the contractors are required to "provide the Met Council with a detailed monthly report summarizing all activity at the fueling station including driver name or number, Vehicle number, date, time, and number of gallons pumped."

7.15.2 Contractor Response to Fleet Maintenance Requirements

7.15.2.1 Transdev

Transdev's response to the Met Council's fleet maintenance requirements is as follows:

- **Facilities:** Transdev's maintenance facilities are located at its St. Paul location. Figure 7-4 shows a photo of the maintenance bays.
- **Staffing:** Transit Team's maintenance department consists of 1 maintenance manager, 2 leads (morning and afternoon/evening), 10 technicians, and 1 parts clerk. Fuelers and washers are subbed out to Sun Transit, a disadvantaged business enterprise. Not including the maintenance manager but including the two shop leads, the ratio of 181 vehicles to 12 maintenance staff is 15:1. While this seems reasonable, the Study Team's experience is that transit/paratransit systems more typically have a vehicle/maintenance staff ratio of 10:1.



Figure 7-4 Maintenance bays at Transdev’s East Zone facility.

- Software: Transdev uses the Hexagon fleet maintenance system. The Study Team understands that the Met Council has recently also selected and procured Hexagon for their own asset management and fleet maintenance tracking needs. This procurement should simply Transdev’s transfer of maintenance records to Metro Mobility’s fleet manager.
- Parts Inventory: Transdev maintains about a \$140,000 parts inventory.
- MBRC: Transdev’s maintenance manager noted that they achieved an MBRC metric of 1 road call per every 175,000 miles. If this can be confirmed, and road calls are being tracked correctly, this metric is quite an achievement. For a previous study in New Orleans, the Study Team analyzed NTD data and found that the average MBRC was 14,743 miles for directly operated DRT and 21,025 miles for purchased DRT service. Also, in a document focusing on safety performance metrics, FTA reported that a large transit provider had established an MBRC of 55,000 miles for its fleet of paratransit vans.
- Maintenance Manager Comments: In the interview with Transdev’s maintenance manager, he mentioned the following maintenance-related issues, mostly related to the newer vehicles:
 - The vehicles do not generate enough heat to heat the interior of the vehicles in cold weather. Also, while idling, the front heater fails.
 - The aftermarket driver seat is extremely uncomfortable and not particularly supportive, which adds to driver fatigue.
 - The newer Braun lifts have structural issues.
 - Because of the Rangers issue, they only have 20 or so vehicles available for backup purposes, equating to a spare vehicle ratio just over 10%. This percentage covers the normal set of vehicles that are out for routine maintenance but does not cover vehicles sidelined at the pre-trip inspection, involved in accidents, or that breakdown while in service. The limited vehicle fleet presents challenges at pull-out and for dispatching.

7.15.2.1 Transit Team

Transit Team's response to the Met Council's fleet maintenance requirements is as follows:

- Facilities: Transit Team has maintenance facilities and equipment at its three facilities in West Minneapolis, Maple Grove, and Burnsville.
- Staffing: Transit Team's maintenance department for all three facilities includes 1 director of maintenance and 1 shop lead at each of the three facilities. Reporting to each shop lead are 7 technicians at the West Minneapolis facility, 6 technicians at the Maple Grove facility, and 5 technicians at the Burnsville facility. There is 1 parts manager who is based in West Minneapolis but who handles parts inventory for all three facilities. The Study Team noticed that the size of the maintenance staff at Maple Grove (with 157 vehicles) and West Minneapolis (with 87 vehicles) is disproportional to the number of maintenance technicians assigned to those two facilities. Including the shop leads, the vehicle to maintenance staff ratios are 22:1 (157 vehicles to 7 maintenance staff) in Maple Grove, 11:1 in West Minneapolis (87 vehicles to 8 maintenance staff), and 20:1 (117 vehicles to 6 maintenance staff) in Burnsville. As mentioned previously, the Study Team's experience is that a 10:1 ratio is more common in transit/paratransit operations.
- PM Adherence: The maintenance manager reports a 97% PM adherence.
- Software: Transit Team uses Beacon Mobility's preferred fleet maintenance software system, FleetWave.
- Maintenance Manager Comments: Transit Team's maintenance manager mentioned the following maintenance-related issues:
 - Transit Team's maintenance manager was well aware of the staffing imbalance between Maple Grove and West Minneapolis (described previously) and has been trying to recruit additional maintenance technicians for their Maple Grove facility, citing challenges in attracting mechanics willing to commute to Maple Grove. To address this issue in the meantime, he has been shuttling several vehicles in need of maintenance from Maple Grove to West Minneapolis to better balance the load on their mechanics.
 - He noted that FleetWave is designed more for school buses, but they are making do.
 - He also noted that the newer vehicles have issues related to coolant/hydraulic hoses, premature failure of electrical components, heater issues (engines do not produce enough heat to heat the vehicle in cold weather), and inferior quality hardware.
 - He was proud of his 97% PM adherence. When queried, he did not know about MBRC "off the top of his head" because he does not regularly check this metric (there is no contractual requirement to do so).

The Met Council hires a third-party inspector to review the condition of each bus annually to identify any lapses in maintenance or vehicle care. This inspection includes an extensive checklist of bus components including brakes, tire tread, leaking fluids, body damage, etc. The inspector submits a report for each vehicle to the Met Council and highlights any items in need of repair. The Met Council follows up and confirms completion of any noted items.

7.16 Reporting and Recordkeeping

7.16.1 Collection and Reporting of Service Data

Most of the service data that goes into Trapeze originates from data collected on the Rangers. Go-To data is collected separately because there is no integration between the Trapeze and Go-To systems. In addition, the contractors are required to ensure that the following data is accurately recorded:

- Actual pull-out and pull-in times at the garage.
- Vehicle odometer readings at both pull-out and pull-in.
- Actual arrival and departure times at every customer origin/destination.
- Vehicle odometer readings at every customer origin/destination.
- Beginning and end times of driver breaks and any out-of-service time greater than 10 minutes.
- All incidents, accidents, or service disruptions.

In the contracts, there is an invoice credit of \$100 per occurrence for inaccurate reporting.

7.16.2 NTD Reporting

Using forms approved by the Met Council, the contractor is required to prepare and submit a monthly report for data required for the NTD. While much of service information needed for NTD reporting is already collected via the Rangers, Trapeze, and the Go-To system, the contractor must provide access, during reasonable business hours, to any source documents needed to meet the NTD reporting requirements, including:

- Vehicle manifests or trip sheets.
- Vehicle maintenance records.
- Contract budget information.
- Customer complaints.
- Incident reports.
- Aggregated drug and alcohol test results.

7.16.3 Vehicle Reporting

Contractors are also required to prepare and submit to their PA a monthly report detailing all mechanical or equipment failures that prevented a vehicle from being placed into revenue service or caused a vehicle to be removed from revenue service. Common issues preventing revenue service include:

- Mechanical failure.
- Equipment or body damage.
- Lift failure.
- Cubic Mobile Validator failure.

- Mobile data computer failure.
- Two-way radio failure.
- Scheduled warranty work.

7.16.4 Accident and Incident Reporting

Contractors must report all accidents and incidents involving customers or Met Council vehicles within 24 hours. Contractors must submit the report using the Met Council's incident reporting system.

Critical Incident notifications are required within 30 minutes under the following circumstances:

- Any incident or accident that results in:
 - Any person receiving emergency medical attention at the scene or a fatality.
 - A Met Council vehicle being towed from the scene.
 - A collision with a customer on board.
 - A customer in the contractor's care that cannot be accounted for.
 - A collision with a pedestrian or bicyclist.
- Any incident or accident requiring immediate Met Council action or of potential media interest because it involves:
 - A major medical emergency.
 - Police being called to scene.
 - A significant security-related incident (e.g., vehicle theft, assault, threat to life/safety).
 - A significant service disruption or operations systems failure (e.g., scheduling system failure, reservations phones down, vehicle fire, etc.).
 - A contractor employee receiving a moving violation or being arrested while operating a Met Council vehicle.

The contractors are also required to prepare and submit to the Met Council a monthly summary report detailing all accidents and incidents, formatted in accordance with the Met Council's Accident and Incident Report Form.

7.16.5 Recordkeeping/Data Retention

The contractors are required to retain prescribed data and information—at their expense—throughout the term of the contract and for 4 years after the completion of the contract. These data and information include the following:

- Training records for contractor employees.
- Maintenance records for the Met Council-owned vehicles.
- Safety inspections and vehicle condition reports.
- Vehicle accident and incident reports.
- Lawsuit-related items.

- Financial records related to the Met Council contracts.
- Customer correspondence between vendors and the Met Council.
- Company policies.
- Evidence of insurance.

7.17 Invoicing

Contractors are required to invoice Met Council monthly, using the designated format. Each request for payment must be submitted no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the month, with the exception of the final invoice, which may be submitted within 60 calendar days of the last day services are provided.

The Met Council will review the contractor's monthly request for payment and issue a payment within 30 calendar days from receipt of a properly completed request for payment. Invoices may be adjusted based on a review of bonuses and the performance-related invoice credits (see Section 6.2.3).

Upon either completion or termination of the contract, each vehicle will be inspected for needed repairs beyond normal wear and tear. Any necessary vehicle repairs identified in the inspection must be repaired prior to the vehicles being transferred to a different contractor. Any identified repairs not completed by the contractor prior to transfer will be repaired by the Met Council and will be the financial responsibility of the contractor. These repair costs will be deducted from the final contract payment.

Chapter 8: Service Statistics

8.1 Eligibility Statistics (January 1, 2019–Nov 30, 2025)

Figure 8-1 provides year-by-year eligibility related statistics for Metro Mobility applications beginning January 1, 2019, and extending through Nov 30, 2025. As expected, the number of applications decreased in 2020 and 2021 (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) but increased in 2022 and peaked in 2023. Figure 8-1 also contains the yearly number of denied and abandoned eligibility applications. The numbers equate to a very low denial percentage of about 2.6% beginning in 2022, which includes applicants that abandoned the certification process at the in-person assessment stage.

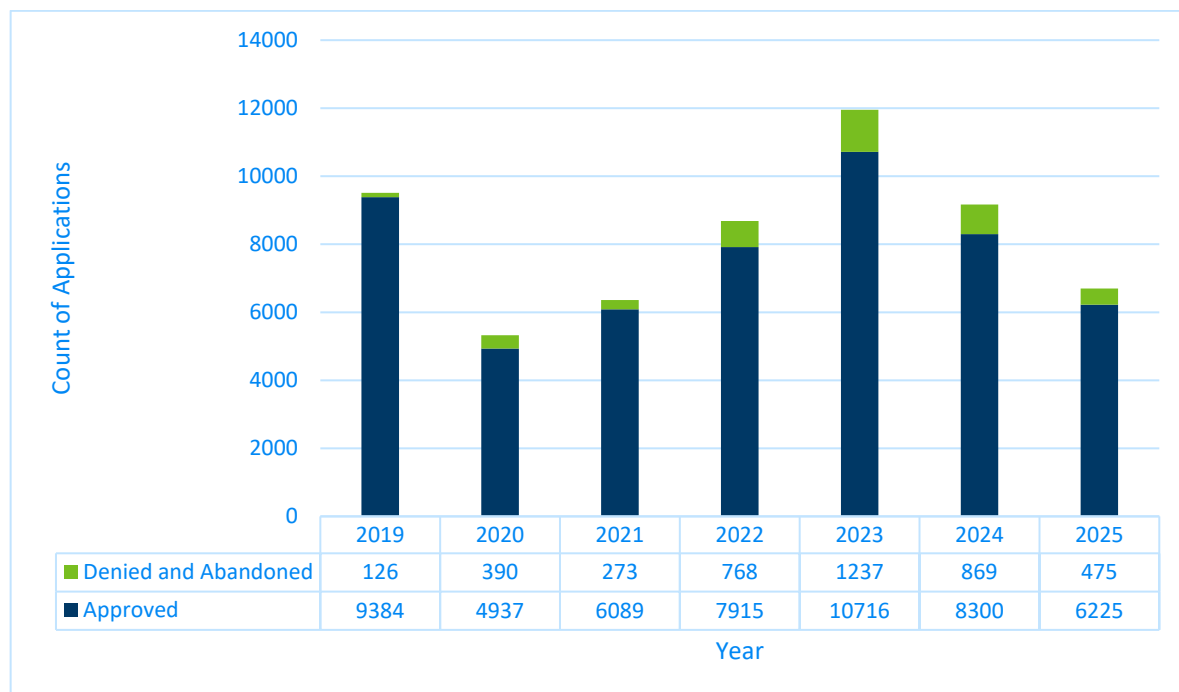


Figure 8-1 Number of eligibility applications received (January 1, 2019–Nov 30, 2025).

By percentage, the different eligibility determination types from 2019 through current can be categorized as follows:

- Permanently unconditional: 47%.
- Unconditional: 17%.
- Temporary: 4%.
- Conditional: 31%.
- NA: 1%.

Pittsburgh’s ACCESS system, which has what many consider a model eligibility determination process, has a very similar conditional eligibility percentage of 32%. The executive director of ACCESS, who has also been an instructor for the National Transit Institute’s ADA paratransit eligibility course, states that a

thorough eligibility determination process will yield between 30% and 45% conditionally eligible. While there is a significant percentage of conditionally eligible customers, conditional eligibility has not yet been operationalized, meaning that the conditions of eligibility are not being checked when a trip is booked. The ACCESS program—by performing trip screening while booking—finds that about 2,000 trips requested per month by conditionally eligible customers are ineligible.

8.2 Ridership by Month

Table 8-1 shows eligible passenger trips performed by month in 2024. The highest ridership month was April, while the lowest ridership month was December. The Agency Service program—focused on a subset of Metro Mobility ADA-certified riders attending nine day support service locations within the federally mandated service area—formally ceased in August.

Table 8-1 Metro Mobility trips by month (2024)

Month	East Zone Trips	South Zone Trips	West Zone Trips	Agency Service Trips	Total Trips
January	49,880	27,683	59,468	25,183	162,214
February	48,541	27,187	57,528	24,270	157,526
March	49,815	27,733	58,501	24,309	160,258
April	50,987	29,024	61,320	26,066	167,397
May	51,812	29,975	62,314	21,983	166,084
June	48,620	26,743	58,187	11,876	145,426
July	51,530	28,093	60,814	5,982	146,419
August	52,977	28,404	62,276	1,144	144,801
September	51,144	26,749	58,421	0	136,314
October	55,134	28,492	63,972	0	147,598
November	49,825	25,767	56,935	0	132,527
December	48,213	25,003	76,281	0	128,227
Total Trips	608,478	330,753	714,747	140,813	1,794,791
Percentage	33.9%	18.4%	39.8%	7.8%	

8.3 Ridership by Zone/Provider

Table 8-2 details various booking and ridership statistics for Metro Mobility zone/provider ridership in 2024. As shown, the 2024 ridership totaled 1,794,791 trips taken by eligible passengers.

In addition to the eligible passenger trips, Metro Mobility also carried PCAs, guests, and dependents as shown in Table 8-2. These additional riders made up about 7% of the total passengers.

Table 8-2 Total passenger trips performed by passenger type by zone/provider

Zone/ Provider	Eligible Passengers	PCAs	Guests	Dependents	Non-clients	Total Passenger Trips	Percentage of Non- clients
East/ Transdev	608,478	42,585	8,531	3,214	54,330	662,808	8%
South/ Transit Team	330,753	17,472	2,664	419	20,555	351,308	6%
West/ Transit Team	714,747	42,645	5,213	1,329	49,187	763,934	6%
Agency Service/ Transit Team	140,813	1,342	586	0	1,928	142,741	1%
Total	1,794,791	104,044	16,994	4,962	126,000	1,920,794	7%

PCA = personal care attendant

The percentage of trips served in each zone, as well as in the Agency Service program, is shown in Table 8-3. The West Zone had the highest percentage of trips (49%), followed by the East Zone (34%), and the South Zone (18%). The Agency Service program, which ended midyear, had only 8% of the trips in 2024.

Table 8-3 Ridership by zone/provider

Zone/Provider	Eligible Passenger Trips Performed	Percentage
East/Transdev	608,478	34%
South/Transit Team	330,753	18%
West/Transit Team	714,747	40%
Agency Service/Transit Team	140,813	8%
Total	1,794,791	100%

8.4 Federally Mandated vs. State-Mandated Ridership and Service Quality KPIs

Table 8-4 shows trips and service quality KPIs for Metro Mobility federally mandated vs. State-mandated trips in 2024.²

Table 8-4 Metro Mobility ridership summary and KPIs (2024)

Metric	Federally Mandated Trips	State-Mandated Trips	Total Trips
Total Passenger Trips Booked	1,836,733	654,810	2,491,543
Total Trips with Revenue Hours	1,411,903	509,009	1,920,912
Eligible Passenger Trips Booked	1,697,522	617,011	2,314,533
Eligible Passenger Trips Performed	1,312,669	482,243	1,794,912
All Denials	2	113	115
Trips for OTP	964,786	312,548	1,277,334
OTP Violations	80,603	29,307	109,910
OTP Performance	91.60%	90.60%	91.40%
Trips for Appointments	375,180	177,129	552,309
Appointment Early Violations	4,360	2,039	6,399
Appointment Late Violations	36,274	18,180	54,454
Appointment All Violations	40,634	20,219	60,853
Appointment Performance	89.20%	88.60%	89.00%
Trips for OBT	1,312,555	482,236	1,794,791
OBT Violations	61,214	15,142	76,356
OBT Performance	95.30%	96.90%	95.70%
Trips for Missed Trips	199,991	62,431	262,422
Missed Trip Violations	5,860	1,728	7,588

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; OBT = on-board time; OPT = on-time performance

² The data contained in the table do not exactly match the NTD-reported data for FY 2024 due to slight differences in how data are collected and reported for internal purposes vs. for the NTD.

Key observations from Table 8-4 include the following:

- Booked vs. Performed Trips: Of the 2,314,533 trips booked by eligible passengers in 2024, 1,794,912 were completed. The difference (519,621 or 22.4% of the trips booked) reflects cancellations, no-shows (and cancels-at-door), and missed trips. This value is reasonable.
- Federally Mandated vs. State-Mandated Trips: Based on eligible passenger trips completed in 2024, 73.3% of the trips taken on Metro Mobility were federally mandated ADA paratransit trips, while 26.7% were State-mandated trips (i.e., trips with origins and/or destinations in the State-mandated service area).
- Pickup Trip OTP: Of the 1,277,334 (69%) eligible passenger trips requested by pickup time (and served) in 2024, Metro Mobility achieved an overall OTP of 91.4% (91.6% for federally mandated trips and 90.6% for State-mandated trips). These OTP achievements were above the federal suggested minimum standard of 90% but below Met Council's OTP goal of 93% for pickups. However, by relaxing productivity goals, the Met Council has been able to boost OTP. In the first quarter of 2025, the OTP for pickup trips increased to 94.2% (94.2% for federally mandated trips and 94.1% for State-mandated trips), both of which exceed the Met Council's 93% OTP goal. According to federal guidance, the pickup OTP is to be calculated for all trips, including the pickup time for appointment trips.
- Appointment Trip OTP: Of the 552,309 (31%) eligible passenger trips requested by appointment time (and served), Met Council achieved an overall OTP of 89.0% (89.2% for federally mandated trips and 88.6% for State-mandated trips.) This 2024 OTP performance for appointment trips is below both the Met Council's OTP goal of 93% and the federal suggested minimum standard of 90%. However, for the first quarter of 2025, the OTP for nonlate appointment trips was 94.1% (94.3% for federally mandated trips and 93.8% for State-mandated trips), which exceeds the Met Council's 93% goal.
- Maximum OBT: The overall percentage of trips that did not violate the maximum OBT limit was 95.7% (95.3% for federally mandated trips and 96.9% for State-mandated trips). Each of these values exceeds Met Council's standard of 95% and the federal minimum standard of 95%.

Table 8-5 shows no-shows, cancel-at-door occurrences, late cancellations, same-day cancellations, advance cancellations, cancellations due to site closures, missed trips, and denials by zone and provider for 2024.

Key takeaways from Table 8-5 are as follows:

- No-Shows, Late Cancellations, and Cancel-at-Door Occurrences: Of the 1,794,791 trips booked, 26,847 were no-shows, 15,684 were cancel-at-door occurrences, and 23,164 were late cancellations—a total of 65,695. Approximately 78% of no-shows were associated with federally mandated; 22% were associated with State-mandated trips. Typically, a no-show rate is calculated based on trips scheduled, which the Study Team calculated to be 1,916,132 (2,358,778 total bookings less 242,757 advance cancellations less 199,889 same-day cancellations). Based on these figures, the no-show rate (including late cancellations and cancel-at-door occurrences) was 3.4%. Typically, the Study Team sees transit agencies striving to have

no-show rates under 5.0%. Hence, the Met Council's no-show rate is well within reason. Of the zone/provider pairings, the Study Team also calculated no-show rates of 3.8% for the West Zone, 3.5% for the East Zone, 3.3% for the South Zone, and 1.6% for the agency trips.

Table 8-5 Booking and ridership statistics by zone/provider (2024)

Zone/ Provider	Total Bookings	Total Bookings Performed	No-Show Bookings	Cancel- at-Door Bookings	Late- Cancel Bookings	Same- Day Cancel Bookings	Advance -Cancel Bookings	Site Closure Cancel Bookings	Missed Trip Booking	Federally Mandated Area Denials	State- Mandated Area Denials
Agency/ Transit Team	167,023	140,813	322	1,564	456	6,631	12,513	4,408	371	0	0
East/ Transdev	808,273	608,478	9,393	4,199	9,326	76,034	82,937	4,541	3,091	0	3
South/ Transit Team	436,450	330,753	4,370	3,139	4,046	35,877	48,139	3,534	1,165	0	0
West/ Transit Team	947,032	714,747	12,762	6,782	9,336	81,347	99,168	8,337	2,957	2	110
Total	2,358,778	1,794,791	26,847	15,684	23,164	199,889	242,757	20,820	7,584	2	113

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act

- **Advance and Same-Day Cancellations:** Cancellations made by passengers without repercussions (because they were made at least 1 hour in advance) totaled 442,646 cancellations in 2024. Among these cancellations, 242,757 were advance cancellations, and 199,889 were same-day cancellations. Based on the number of trips booked (2,358,778), the cancellation rate was 18.8%. This percentage is slightly higher than most transit agencies, which strive to keep this figure below 15%.
- **Missed Trips:** Table 8-5 shows that there were 7,584 missed trips in 2024. Dividing the 7,584 missed trips by the total number of eligible passenger trips performed (1,794,912) produces a missed trip rate of 0.42%. As discussed previously in this report, Met Council does not have a not-to-exceed standard or goal defined as a policy or contractual standard. Most transit agencies that have established such a standard have adopted a not-to-exceed standard of 0.5%. Hence, Met Council’s missed trip rate is within this not-to-exceed parameter.
- **Denials:** There were only 2 denials of federally mandated trip requests in 2024, suggesting that the Met Council essentially met its zero-denial policy for federally mandated ADA paratransit trips. Meanwhile, there were 113 denials of State-mandated trips, almost all of which (110 denials) were in the West Zone. The 113 denials reflect only 0.02% of the total State-mandated bookings in 2024, while the 110 denials in the West Zone reflect 0.05% of the total State-mandated trip bookings in West Zone. Given that Met Council is not required to have zero denials in the State-mandated service area, the larger number of denials for State-mandated trips is not problematic. Even though the number of State-mandated trip denials is small, the Study Team does not recommend that Met Council expand its federally mandated area no-denial policy to the State-mandated service area due to the inherent increased complexity of serving the State-mandated service area.

8.5 Trip Distances and Travel Times in 2024

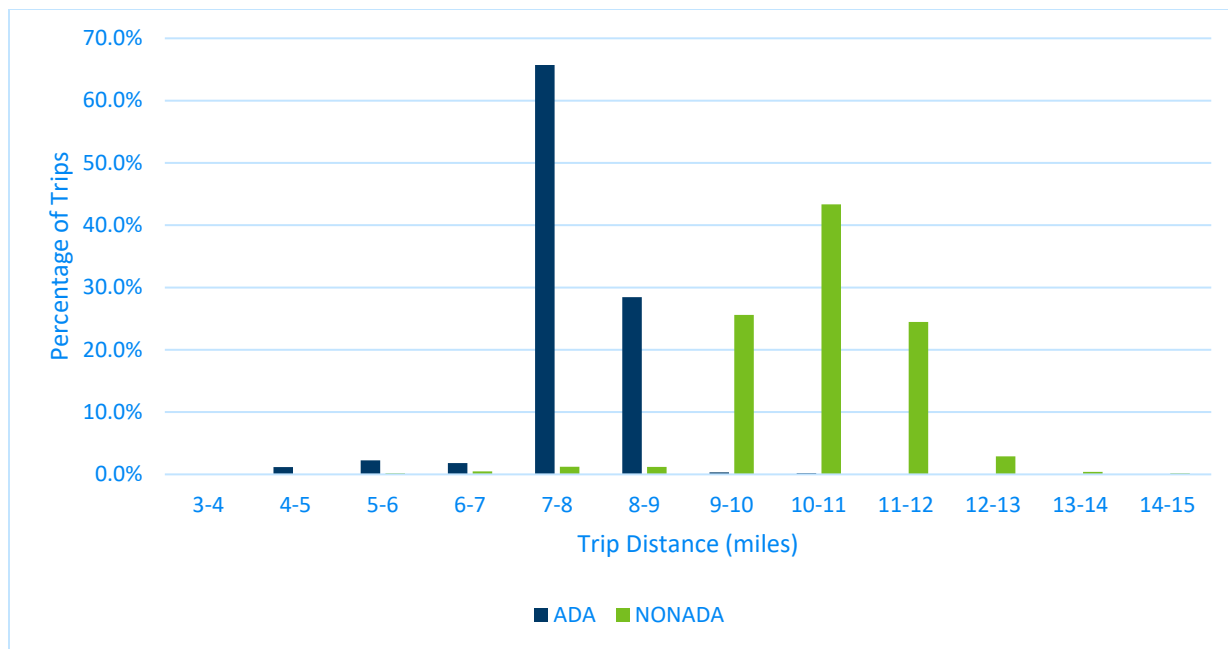
8.5.1 Trip Distances

In Trapeze, each booking stores its *direct distance*, which is a calculation of the distance between the origin geolocation (longitude and latitude) and the destination geolocation. As shown in Table 8-6, the average distance for completed federally mandated trips in 2024 was 7.6 miles and 10.7 miles for State-mandated trips.

Table 8-6 Average trip distance—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (2024)

Metro Mobility Completed Trips	Federally Mandated Trips	State-Mandated Trips	Combined
Average Distance (miles)	7.6	10.7	9.1

The breakdown of the percentage of trips booked by direct distance (in miles) is shown in Figure 8-2. As shown in this figure (and in Table 8-7), 94.1% of the federally mandated trips have a trip distance between 7 and 9 miles, while 93.4% of the State-mandated trips have a trip distance between 9 and 12 miles.



ADA = Trips in the federally mandated area; NONADA = Trips in the State-mandated area.

Figure 8-2 Percentage of trips by direct distance—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (2024).

Table 8-7 Percentage of trips by direct distance—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (2024)

Distance (miles)	Federally Mandated	State-Mandated	Percentage of All Trips
3–4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4–5	1.2%	0.0%	0.9%
5–6	2.2%	0.2%	1.7%
6–7	1.8%	0.5%	1.5%
7–8	65.7%	1.2%	48.3%
8–9	28.4%	1.2%	21.1%
9–10	0.3%	25.6%	7.1%
10–11	0.2%	43.3%	11.8%
11–12	0.0%	24.5%	6.6%
12–13	0.0%	2.9%	0.8%
13–14	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%
14–15	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%

8.5.2 Travel Time

In Trapeze, each booking stores its *direct travel time*, which is a calculation of the amount of time the system expects the trip to take from the origin to destination without any stops in between.

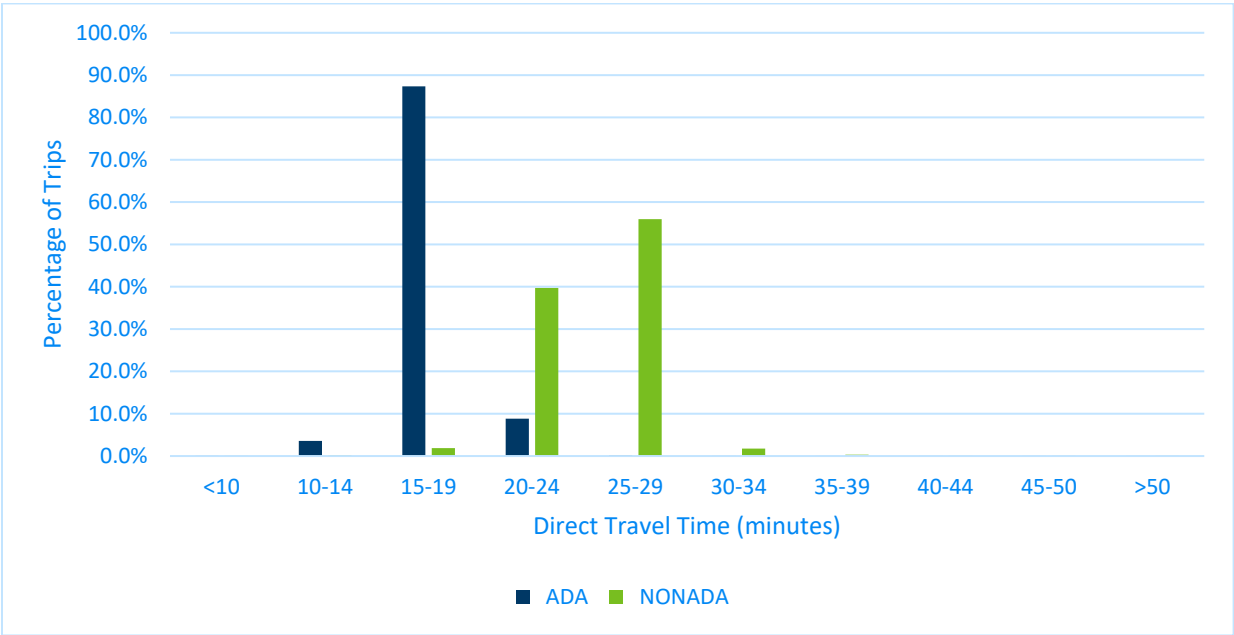
Table 8-8 shows that the average direct travel time in 2024 for completed federally mandated trips was 18.3 minutes and 25.7 minutes for State-mandated trips. Another way to think about this difference is that a State-mandated trip (i.e., a trip in the State-mandated service area) takes about 1.4 times longer

than an federally mandated trip (i.e., a trip in the federally mandated service area). Because *hours of revenue service* is the main cost driver in dedicated fleet demand response, it is reasonable to say that State-mandated trips cost about 1.4 times more per trip than ADA trips.

Table 8-8 Average direct travel time (2024)

Metro Mobility Completed Trips	Federally Mandated Trips	State-Mandated Trips	Combined
Average Direct Travel Time (minutes)	18.3	25.7	21.8

The breakdown of the direct travel time for 2024 is shown Figure 8-3. As highlighted in the supporting Table 8-9, 87.4% of the federally mandated trips have a direct travel time of between 15 and 19 minutes, while 95.7% of the State-mandated trips have a direct travel time of between 20 and 29 minutes. Direct travel time considers the weekday vs. weekend speed factors set up in the system properties (i.e., a lower percentage from base speeds for rush hours and a higher percentage for after hours).



ADA = Trips in the federally mandated area; NONADA = Trips in the State-mandated area.

Figure 8-3 Percentage of trips by direct travel time—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (2024).

Table 8-9 Percentage of trips by direct travel time—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (2024)

Direct Travel Time (minutes)	Federally Mandated Trips	State-Mandated Trips	Total
<10	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
10–14	3.6%	0.2%	2.7%
15–19	87.4%	1.9%	64.3%
20–24	8.8%	39.7%	17.2%
25–29	0.2%	56.0%	15.3%
30–34	0.0%	1.8%	0.5%
35–39	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
40–44	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
45–50	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
>50	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

8.6 Telephone Statistics

The Study Team was provided with daily, hour-by-hour telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025, for each of the three Metro Mobility zones.

8.6.1 East Zone (Transdev)

East Zone telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025, are shown in Table 8-10. For the week of June 22, the performance of Transdev’s call-takers in the East Zone appears to be very good, with average hold times all under 2 minutes and longest hold times under 3 minutes, and with efficient average handling times (call time) of between 2:03 and 2:32. Monitoring staff should keep their eye on Monday late afternoons to see if there is a pattern of longer hold times.

Table 8-10 East Zone telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025

Day	Incoming Calls	Calls Handled	Average Hold Time	Longest Hold Time	Average Handling Time
Sun, 6/22	1,092	1,087	0:12	0:20 (12:00 p.m.)	2:22
Mon, 6/23	1,441	1,351	1:13	2:16 (3:00 p.m.); 2:48 (4:00 p.m.)	2:32
Tue, 6/24	1,376	1,347	0:27	0:51 (11:00 a.m.)	2:15
Wed, 6/25	1,479	1,470	0:19	0:27 (2:00 p.m.)	2:05
Thu, 6/26	1,438	1,429	0:11	0:19 (11:00 a.m.)	2:04
Fri, 6/27	1,399	1,388	0:13	0:22 (11:00 a.m.)	2:03
Sat, 6/28	997	987	0:14	0:20 (3:00pm)	2:08

8.6.2 South Zone (Transit Team)

South Zone telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025, are shown in Table 8-11. For the subject week, the performance of Transit Team call-takers in the South Zone appears to be mostly satisfactory, with average hold times all under 2 minutes. However, the longest hold time of 9:28 on Wednesday at

4:00 p.m. is clearly unacceptable. Met Council staff should especially look at late afternoons on Wednesday and other days to see if long hold-time patterns emerge. Otherwise, the handling times were fairly efficient, ranging between 2:12 and 2:41.

Table 8-11 South Zone telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025

Day	Incoming Calls	Calls Handled	Average Hold Time	Longest Hold Time	Average Handling Time
Sun, 6/22	473	469	0:19	0:34 (2:00 p.m.)	2:28
Mon, 6/23	726	703	0:53	2:06 (3:00 p.m.); 3:03 (4:00 p.m.)	2:41
Tue, 6/24	801	776	0:47	1:53 (3:00 p.m.)	2:41
Wed, 6/25	813	745	1:36	9:28 (4:00 p.m.)	2:21
Thu, 6/26	662	657	0:20	0:37 (6:00 a.m.)	2:12
Fri, 6/27	651	633	0:52	2:27 (4:00 p.m.)	2:14
Sat, 6/28	430	428	0:13	0:23 (6:00 a.m.)	2:11

8.6.3 West Zone (Transit Team)

West Zone telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025, are shown in Table 8-12. For the subject week, the performance of Transit Team call-takers in the West Zone appears to be mostly satisfactory, with average hold times all under 1 minute. However, long hold times of 6:13 and 3:43 occurred on Monday on Tuesday, both at 6:00 a.m. Metro Mobility staff should look at the 6:00 a.m. hour and the 4:00 p.m. hour to determine whether those hours are being staffed to appropriately meet the volume of calls. Otherwise, the handling times were fairly efficient, ranging between 1:56 and 2:23.

Table 8-12 West Zone telephone statistics for the week of June 22, 2025

Day	Incoming Calls	Calls Handled	Average Hold Time	Longest Hold Time	Average Handling Time
Sun 6/22	1,032	1,010	0:39	0:57 (3 p.m.); 0:56 (6:00 a.m.)	2:23
Mon 6/23	1,643	1,580	0:36	6:13 (6:00 a.m.)	2:18
Tue 6/24	1,475	1,445	0:29	3:43 (6:00 a.m.)	1:59
Wed 6/25	1,666	1,576	0:48	2:17 (4:00 p.m.)	1:56
Thu 6/26	1,593	1,572	0:32	1:48 (6:00 a.m.)	1:56
Fri 6/27	1,427	1,394	0:28	1:30 (4:00 p.m.)	2:08
Sat 6/28	1,030	989	0:55	3:09 (4:00 p.m.); 1:56 (1:00 p.m.)	2:21

Chapter 9: Service Supply/Service Efficiency

Chapter 9 presents data on revenue vehicles, sourced from provider and invoice tracking spreadsheets, as well as data on productivity, sourced from both a Power BI report and an analysis conducted by the Study Team.

9.1 RVHs

Table 9-1 shows the total RVHs by zone/provider for 2024. Over 1.24 million RVHs of service were provided in 2024. Transit Team in the West Zone had the highest number of RVHs at 512,607 hours, which reflects 41.3% of the RVHs invoiced.

Table 9-1 Metro Mobility RVHs by month (2024)

Month	East Zone RVHs (hours)	South Zone RVHs (hours)	West Zone RVHs (hours)	Agency Service RVHs (hours)	Total RVHs (hours)
January	34,499.56	18,630.03	42,060.53	11,536.05	106,726.16
February	33,944.62	18,340.04	39,260.98	10,973.18	102,518.81
March	35,512.94	19,595.27	39,680.22	10,484.13	105,272.57
April	35,776.32	20,091.46	41,942.11	10,736.34	108,546.23
May	36,896.99	20,259.42	43,330.60	9,812.76	110,299.76
June	34,462.37	19,185.92	42,826.51	5,820.88	102,295.68
July	36,334.54	20,630.58	43,572.65	3,637.03	104,174.80
August	36,869.41	21,020.48	47,364.24	946.86	106,201.00
September	34,906.34	20,514.02	42,859.06	0	98,279.42
October	37,193.30	21,658.42	47,167.94	0	106,019.66
November	33,906.16	20,180.34	41,329.68	0	95,416.17
December	33,863.14	19,817.70	41,212.79	0	94,893.63
Total RVHs	424,165.67	239,923.68	512,607.31	63,947.22	1,240,643.88
Percentage RVHs	34.2%	19.3%	41.3%	5.2%	100%
Total EPTs	608,478	330,753	714,747	140,813	1,794,791
Percentage EPTs	33.9%	18.4%	39.8%	7.8%	100%

EPT =eligible passenger trip; RVH = revenue vehicle hour

At the bottom of Table 9-1, the Study Team also included the counterpart number and percentage of eligible passenger trips as a point of comparison. The three zones match up fairly closely, while the previous Agency Service contract—restricted to a small subset of customers—was conducive to RVHs being used more efficiently. The Study Team would expect a comparable level of efficiency transfer to the new Metro Move service.

9.2 Productivity

Table 9-2 shows productivity in terms of both total passenger trips and eligible passenger trips per RVH. The productivity figures in this table were derived from total passenger/eligible passenger trip data from Table 8-2 and Table 8-4.

Table 9-2 Metro Mobility productivity (2024)

Metric	East Zone	South Zone	West Zone	Agency Service	Total
Total Passenger Trips	662,808	351,308	763,934	142,741	1,920,794
Total EPTs	608,478	330,753	714,747	140,813	1,794,791
Total RVHs	424,165.67	239,923.68	512,607.31	63,947.22	1,240,643.88
Total Trips per RVH	1.56	1.46	1.49	2.23	1.55
EPTs per RVH	1.43	1.38	1.39	2.20	1.45

EPT =eligible passenger trip; RVH = revenue vehicle hour

The Study Team also performed a productivity analysis for a representative week in the first quarter of 2025. In performing the analysis for Section 10.4 Impact of State Mandates on ADA Paratransit, the Study Team selected seven high-volume days for each day of the week between February and March as their representative week rather than using seven concurrent days. Productivity for this representative week ranged from 1.33 in the South Zone to 1.36/1.37 in the West Zone. This decrease in productivity from the 2024 figures in Table 9-2 is in part due to the Met Council pushing the contractors to achieve an appointment trip OTP of 90% or better (see Section 8.4). Productivity and OTP generally have an inverse relationship with a system built on dedicated service—the less productive the service is (with fewer shared rides and more direct service), the higher OTP tends to be. More shared rides challenge the ability of service providers to be on-time.

Chapter 10: Supply vs. Demand and Impact of Policies and Related Services

Chapter 10 focuses on supply vs. demand and the impact of policies and other services on Metro Mobility. The analyses in Sections 10.1 through 10.4 were all based on a representative week comprising 7 noncontinuous days in the first quarter of 2025, chosen because they were all high ridership days. A summary of the service characteristics for these 7 days is presented in Table 10-1.

Table 10-1 Service characteristics of a representative week in the first quarter of 2025

Service Characteristics	Sun, Mar 2	Mon, Mar 3	Tue, Feb 4	Wed, Feb 12	Thu, Mar 20	Fri, Mar 14	Sat, Mar 8
Total Passengers	2,553	5,668	5,950	6,246	6,028	5,670	2,775
Total Trips	2,253	5,387	5,611	5,900	5,650	5,288	2,449
Standing Order Trips	133	1,765	1,706	1,826	1,720	1,667	181
Standing Order Trip Percentage	5.9%	32.8%	30.4%	30.9%	30.4%	31.5%	7.4%
Demand Trips	2,120	3,622	3,905	4,074	3,930	3,621	2,268
Demand Trip Percentage	94.1%	67.2%	69.6%	69.1%	69.6%	68.5%	92.6%
RVHs	1,988.9	3,795.7	3,952.6	4,125.8	4,028.6	3,851.3	2,210.5
Service Hours	2,091.5	3,986.0	4,156.7	4,338.3	4,224.2	4,038.8	2,323.3
Productivity (Passengers/RVH)	1.28	1.49	1.51	1.51	1.5	1.47	1.26
Shared Hours	147.98	569.18	598.54	622.37	618.38	528.23	128.35
Shared Hour Percentage	7.44%	15.0%	15.1%	15.1%	15.3%	13.7%	5.8%
Maximum Vehicles per Day	236	409	423	429	425	408	255
Peak Hour (Vehicles in Service)	13:00	13:00	11:30	12:00/13:00	13:00	10:00/11:00	13:00

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

10.1 Service Supply vs. Demand Profile

TTI performed an analysis comparing the amount of service provided in terms of RVHs vs. the demand profile (i.e., number of trips performed) for each half hour of each day of the representative week. The results of this analysis are shown in Figure 10-1.

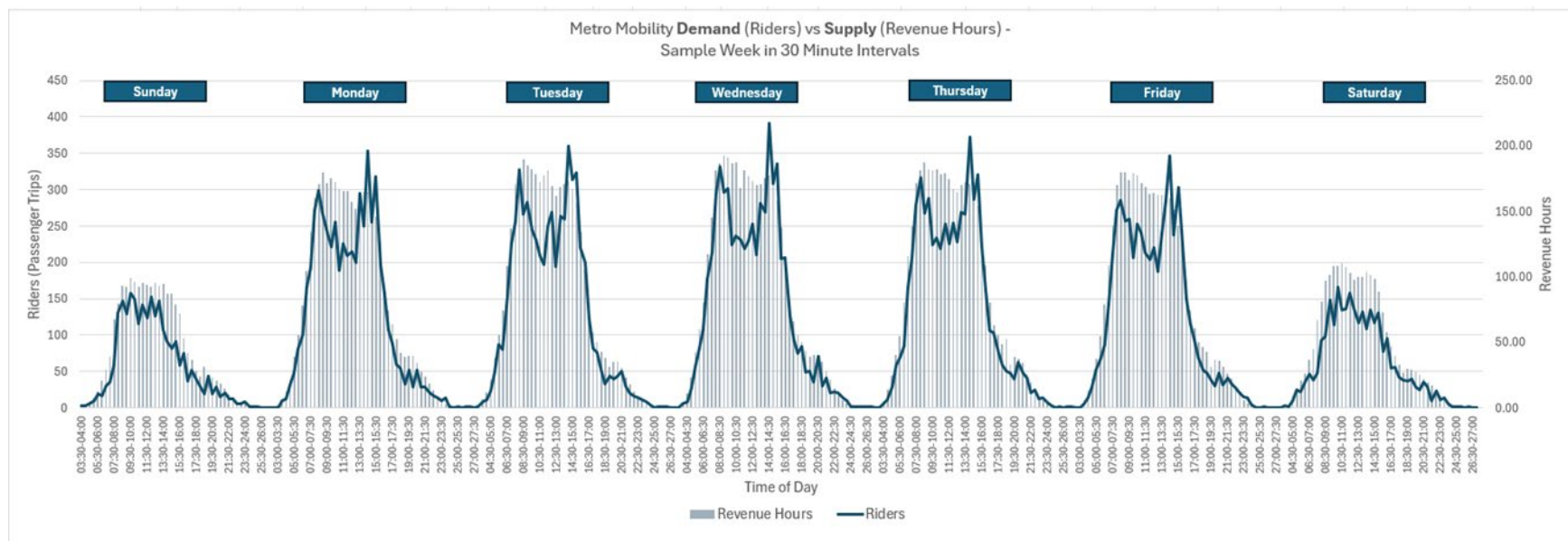


Figure 10-1 Run structure vs. demand profile analysis.

In Figure 10-1, the line graph represents the demand, with the left-hand X-axis reflecting the number of trips in each half-hour segment, while the bars represent the service supply in terms of the number of RVHs of service provided in each half hour. The right-hand X-axis reflects the scale for the number of RVHs.

Based on this analysis, the weekday run structures provide more service on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and slightly less service on Monday and Friday. On all weekdays, the buildup of service matches the demand profile up until 9:00 a.m., after which there appears to be an oversupply of service through 2:00 p.m. However, during the peak afternoon demand, there appears to be an undersupply of service through about 4:00 p.m., after which the two curves are matched up nicely through the evening hours. Meanwhile, the Sunday and Saturday graphs show a similar matching pattern in the morning and late afternoon/evening with an oversupply of service from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Another way of stating this finding is that there appears to be an abundance of slack during the midday period from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the weekends. It would behoove the providers to transfer some of those extra revenue hours to the 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. slot on weekends to better meet the afternoon peak demand. How much slack is there? The extent of slack is estimated in Section 10.2.

10.2 Slack Time Analysis

In Trapeze lingo, *slack time* or *TRAP slack hours* is defined as the hours when the service is operating with available capacity that is not being used for active service delivery. Trapeze does not have a good way to measure slack time on runs once the day of service has passed. The reported slack time is often far underreported, in this case by a factor of 10. This discrepancy can be seen in Figure 10-2, where run itinerary information is copied out of the Trapeze Schedule Editor screen into Excel and compared to calculations from the raw data.

Specifically, Figure 10-2 illustrates this shortcoming by way of a screenshot of the itinerary from an actual run on Monday, March 3. In column V, Trapeze is reporting a total slack time of 81 minutes for the entire run, but in column O, the calculated slack time is a more accurate 171 minutes. The discrepancy in slack reporting is particularly highlighted by the times between the vehicle leaving 12200 River Ridge Boulevard (4:14 a.m.) and arriving to pick up the next customer at 12700 Nicollet Avenue (5:14 a.m.). The travel time between these two addresses is 4 minutes, so the 56 minutes of calculated slack in column O is appropriate.

Applying this methodology to a representative week of data, approximately 21% of revenue hours are reportable as slack time. This is shown in Table 10-2.

Trapeze (and the Power BI tables that draw from this data) suggest that slack hours represent about 2% of the RVHs. The Study Team believes that the slack time reported by Trapeze and Power BI is off by a factor of 10 and that the slack time percentage is closer to between 20% and 25%.

	K	L	M	O	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Calculated Slack - Run 3000 - Monday 3/3/2025					Trapezoid Schedule Editor					
O	ONSTREET	CITY	TRAVEL	Slack	Travel	Slack	Sched	Neg	Act.Arr	Act.Dep
	COUNTY ROAD 5	BURNSVILLE	0	0		17	3:15		3:15	3:32
	GARRETT AVE	APPLE VALLEY	13	0	13	6	3:43	3:43	3:42	3:49
	PORTLAND AVE	BURNSVILLE	11	7	11	1	4:00	4:00	4:06	4:08
	RIVER RIDGE BLVD	BURNSVILLE	7	0	7				4:14	4:14
	NICOLLET AVE	BURNSVILLE	4	56	4	0	5:15	5:15	5:14	5:15
	FRANCE AVE S	EDINA	16	0	16				5:28	5:29
	W 66TH ST	RICHFIELD	4	1	4	1	5:45	5:45	5:34	5:35
	FRANCE AVE S	EDINA	5	0	5				5:39	5:40
	COMPUTER AVE	BLOOMINGTON	6	13	6	3	6:00	6:00	6:00	6:03
	WILD HERON PT	EDEN PRAIRIE	14	0	14	1	6:20	6:20	6:28	6:30
	LYNDALE AVE S	BLOOMINGTON	18	0	18				6:13	6:14
	BOBCAT TRL NW	PRIOR LAKE	26	0	26				6:45	6:47
	APPLE VIEW LN	BURNSVILLE	22	29	22	7	7:30	7:30	7:38	7:45
	KINGSWOOD POND R	EAGAN	13	0	13	4	7:45	7:45	7:58	8:03
	GRAND AVE S	BLOOMINGTON	19	0	19	1	8:00	8:00	8:21	8:22
	31ST ST E	MINNEAPOLIS	22	0	22	7			8:48	8:57
	31ST ST E	MINNEAPOLIS	0	0					8:48	8:57
	31ST ST E	MINNEAPOLIS	0	0					8:48	8:57
	CHARLTON ST	WEST SAINT PAUL	24	0	24	7	9:10	9:10	9:19	9:27
	SMITH AVE N	ST PAUL	9	0	9	3			9:35	9:43
			11	6	11		10:00		10:00	10:30
	LIVINGSTON AVE	WEST ST PAUL	0	16	0	9	10:44	10:44	10:46	10:56
	SLOAN PL	MAPLEWOOD	16	5	16	2	11:00	11:00	11:16	11:19
	SLOAN PL	MAPLEWOOD	0	0		0	11:15	11:15	11:16	11:19
	BEEBE AVE	MENDOTA HEIGHTS	17	0	17				11:34	11:35
	EMERSON AVE E	WEST SAINT PAUL	6	0	6	0			11:43	11:45
	BARBARA AVE	INVER GROVE HEIGHTS	9	14	9	1	12:05	12:05	12:08	12:10
	3RD AVE S	SOUTH ST PAUL	8	0	8				12:19	12:21
	11TH AVE N	SOUTH ST PAUL	4	17	4	0	12:40	12:40	12:42	12:43
	BLAINE AVE	INVER GROVE HEIGHTS	6	0	6				12:49	12:50
	SMITH AVE N	ST PAUL	15	2	15	4	13:10	13:10	13:07	13:12
	OAKDALE AVE	WEST SAINT PAUL	13	0	13				13:26	13:29
	ROBERT ST	WEST ST PAUL	3	3	3	2	13:41	13:41	13:35	13:38
	NICOLS RD	EAGAN	19	0	19	2			14:02	14:06
	COUNTY ROAD 5	BURNSVILLE	14	2	14	3	0.604		14:22	14:26
			374	171	374	81				

Figure 10-2 Slack time calculation discrepancy.

Table 10-2 Slack time by zone/provider

Program or Zone/Provider/Garage	Trips/Stops	RVHs	Slack Hours
Metro Mobility			
East Zone/Transdev/St. Paul	11,878	8,976.48	25%
West Zone/Transit Team/Maple Grove	8,743	6,502.31	20%
West Zone/Transit Team/Minneapolis	5,417	4,098.48	20%
South Zone/Transit Team/Burnsville	6,500	5,141.37	21%
Metro Move/Transdev			
Burnsville	2,221	932.41	12%
St. Paul	772	332.10	6%
Spring Street	1,255	552.71	6%
Total	36,786	26,535.86	21%

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

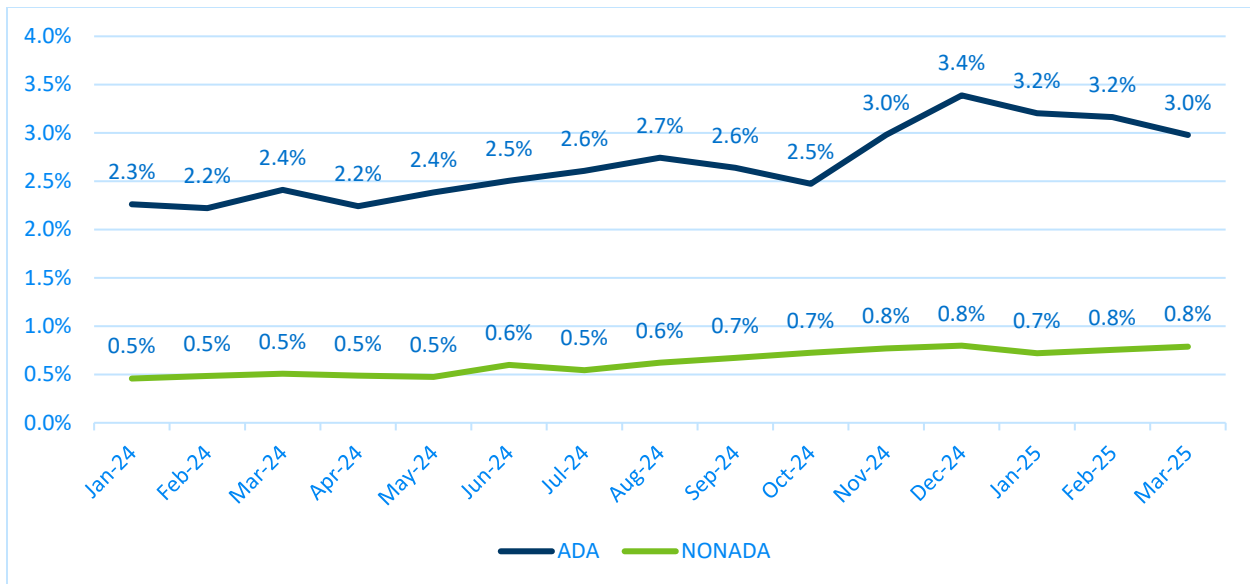
10.3 Impact of Curbside Trip Policy

Met Council introduced curbside service during the COVID-19 pandemic as a way for customers to book roundtrips, which have a short duration at the drop-off point, such that the vehicle can wait at the drop-off for the customer to conduct their business and then take the customer home again. When first introduced, there were few restrictions on how customers could request these rides; however, limits on travel now include a maximum of 1 trip per day, a wait time at the drop-off of not more than 20 minutes, and no trips allowed during peak hours (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.). This service appears to be a unique offering in the Study Team’s experience.

The contractors noted that curbside trips impede efficient and effective scheduling. One of the contractors anecdotally referenced a situation where a driver’s entire 8-hour shift might consist of only 4 curbside roundtrips per day. Upon checking a random set of vehicle runs in the first half of 2025, there were no such occurrences, with the longest stretch of 4 hours being a rarity. The lead scheduler at Transdev indicated that he has had some success with scheduling of curbside trips using Trapeze features such as *linking* and invoking *common runs* in the Schedule Booking Wizard; however, he has not been able to get the system’s Schedule Job Agent to automate the scheduling optimization of these trips. Thus, curbside trips require manual time-consuming tasks to place these trips on drivers’ manifests.

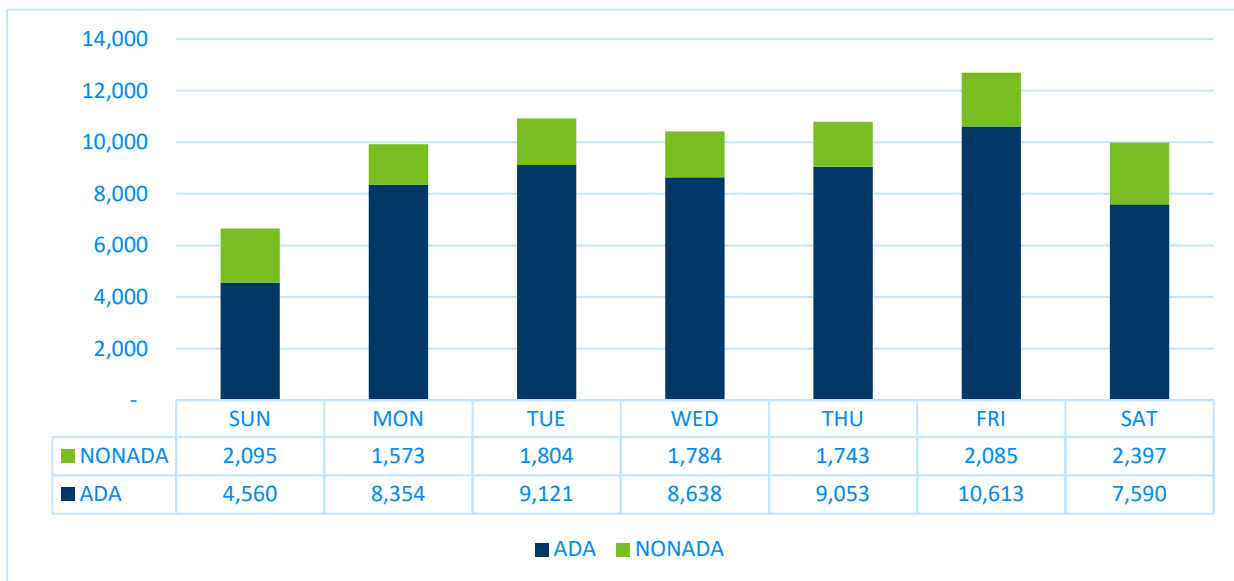
Figure 10-3 shows the percentage of curbside trips for the 15-month period from January 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025, broken down by the federally mandated service area (called *ADA* in the charts below) and the State-mandated service area (called *NONADA* in the charts below).

Figure 10-4 shows the curbside trips per day of week over the same 15-month time period. As shown, Friday is the busiest day for curbside trips.



ADA = federally mandated trips; NONADA = State-mandated trips.

Figure 10-3 Percentage of curbside trips—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (January 2024–March 2025).

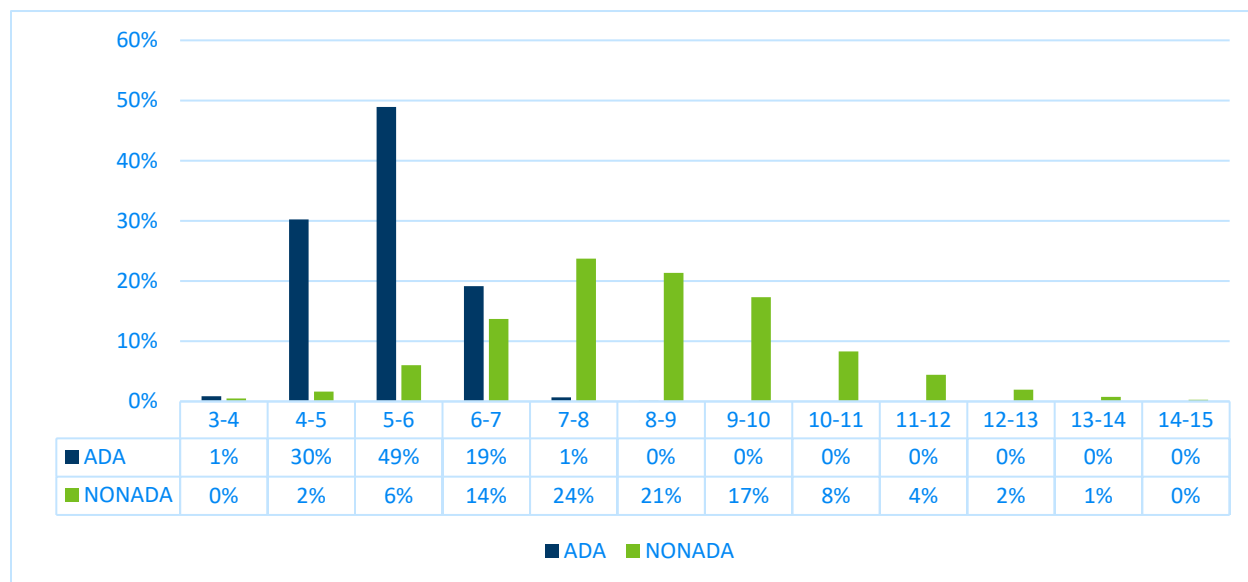


ADA = federally mandated trips; NONADA = State-mandated trips.

Figure 10-4 Curbside trips per day of week—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (January 2024–March 2025).

Figure 10-5 shows the average trip distance for completed curbside trips for both federally mandated and State-mandated trips. (Data supporting the figure are in Table 10-3.) The average length for curbside federally mandated trips was about 5 miles, while counterpart trip lengths for State-mandated curbside trips was about 8 miles. For a representative week with a total of 32,539 completed trips, 1,357 curbside trips were taken by 480 Metro Mobility customers. The average time for a complete roundtrip

was 55 minutes, with an average dwell time at a location of 11 minutes. The top 10 common locations for curbside trips are shown in Table 10-4.



ADA = federally mandated trips; NONADA = State-mandated trips.

Figure 10-5 Curbside trip lengths (in miles)—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (January 2024–March 2025).

Table 10-3. Metro Mobility curbside trip lengths—federally mandated trips vs. State-mandated trips (January 2024–March 2025)

Distance (miles)	Federally Mandated Trips	State-Mandated	Percentage of Total Trips
3–4	1%	0%	1%
4–5	30%	2%	25%
5–6	49%	6%	41%
6–7	19%	14%	18%
7–8	1%	24%	5%
8–9	0%	21%	4%
9–10	0%	17%	3%
10–11	0%	8%	2%
11–12	0%	4%	1%
12–13	0%	2%	0%
13–14	0%	1%	0%
14–15	0%	0%	0%

Table 10-4 Top 10 curbside trip destinations (representative week – Q1 2025)

Destination
Walmart-BP
Cub Foods-Fri (57th Avenue NE)
Cub Foods-Stp (University Avenue W)
Target-Stp (University)
Cub Foods-Blo (Lyndale Avenue S)
Cub Foods-Mpl (26th Avenue S)
Legends of Blaine Apartments
Walmart-Fri
Walmart-Rsvl
Cub Foods-Stp (Sun Ray)
Salvation Army-Fridley
Walmart-Brn (Riverridge)
Cub Foods-Rvl (Larpenteur)

Table 10-5 shows the top four booking subtypes for shared-ride trips. Overall, the number of shared rides was 17,276 or 53% of the total. Curbside trips, however, only benefited from shared rides approximately 10% of the time.

Table 10-5 Shared-ride trips—curbside trips vs. other trips

Booking Subtype	Trips	Shared-Ride Trips	Percentage
Curbside	1,357	137	10%
On-Demand	19,181	9,037	47%
Standing Order	9,005	6,575	73%
Self-Service	2,231	1,193	53%
Total	32,539	17,276	53%

10.4 Impact of State Mandates on ADA Paratransit

For a preliminary gauge of the impact of the State-mandated vs. federally mandated service areas, the review team performed a simplified version of a scheduling scenario in the Met Council Trapeze test environment (PreProd). A typical service day was selected—Wednesday April 9, 2025—and the Metro Mobility ADA trips were copied to a future date. These trips are identified in the software as having an origin and destination within the federally mandated service area boundary. The Trapeze Batch Scheduler was then used to schedule only those trips to existing runs operated by the contractors.

Two batch scheduling steps were employed for this effort. The first (Batch 1) allowed the system to use all of the runs that would have been available for the full service load. The system attempts to be efficient in the assignment of vehicles to trips; however, it was understood that at the end of this batch, there would be a material number of nonproductive runs (i.e., those with only 1 or 2 trips assigned).

For the second batch scheduling step (Batch 2), all runs that received fewer than 2 trips were removed from the system so that a more efficient distribution of the trips could be achieved.

Table 10-6 shows the results of these batch scheduling efforts, along with the original baseline from April 9 as performed. The *as performed* results include all Metro Mobility trips, whereas the batch scenarios focused solely on those identified in the federally mandated service area.

Table 10-6 Results of the scheduling exercise to evaluate impacts of the State-mandated area

Description	As Performed on April 9, 2025 (Including Federally and State-Mandated Trips)	Scheduling Batch 1 (Federally mandated only)	Scheduling Batch 2 (Federally mandated only)
Run Count	548	475	384
Trips	5879	4,590	4,579
Passengers	6,277	4,943	4,927
Scheduled Service Hours	4,941.4	4,317.54	3,511.19
RVH	4,394.56	3,105.34	2,736.62
Service Vehicle Hours	4,912.12	3,418.51	2,943.18
Deadhead Hours	489.52	313.28	206.59
Passengers per RVH	1.38	1.65	1.83
Trips per RVH	1.29	1.53	1.7
Unscheduled Trips	0	50	62

RVH = revenue service hour

The results from the two batches were as expected—not having to serve the State-mandated service area resulted in a significant decrease in the number of runs necessary to perform the service, along with corresponding reductions in revenue hours. Unscheduled trips are typically scheduled/dispatched as cancellations and same-day holes in the schedule open up.

As performed, the productivity was 1.29, which is nearly equivalent to the Met Council’s new productivity goal of 1.3. As discussed previously, the reason why this was lowered from a productivity of 1.65 was to improve the OTP of the system, especially for appointment trips. The number of runs needed for Batch 1 was 475—73 fewer than would have been needed at a productivity level of 1.3. For Batch 2, there were an additional 91 unproductive runs removed. This finding suggests that there are a significant number of dropped runs (164) that could be reinstated to balance out the load to improve productivity, while also abiding by OTP parameters. Hypothetically, if the State-mandated service area were to be dropped, the current number of vehicles could be ratcheted down to a number that achieves Met Council’s desired balance between productivity and OTP.

Also, as discussed in Chapter 8, the OTP of both federally mandated and State-mandated trip pickups were both above 90% for 2024, with federally mandated trips having an OTP slightly higher than state-

mandated trips (91.6% vs. 90.6%). This indicates that having to serve the State-mandated service area does not materially impact the OTP of ADA paratransit service.

The Study Team also cannot state, with confidence, that the removal of the State-mandated service area would result in the federally mandated OTP of 91.6% increasing to the Met Council goal of 93% because there are too many additional factors involved, notably, the number of runs and RVHs that would be supplied in a federally mandated ADA paratransit only scenario. However, it is important to stress that the scheduling exercises discussed previously meet all OTP parameters (i.e., as optimized by Trapeze, all trips as scheduled are predicted to be on time).

10.5 Impact of Related Services

In addition to ADA paratransit services, the Met Council also provides the following DRT services:

- Metro Move: A shared-ride demand response separate from Metro Mobility service provided to people with disabilities who receive certain waivers to connect to regularly scheduled trips to day support services, jobs, and community resources.
- POD Service Expansion Pilot: A legislatively required pilot expansion to the POD service for Metro Mobility customers. The pilot began on September 1, 2023, and is running through December 31, 2025.
- Metro micro: A microtransit shared-ride service where rides can be booked via the Metro micro app (or by phone). Metro micro is currently available in the North Minneapolis, Roseville, and Woodbury, Bloomington, and Blaine areas.
- Transit Link: A general public dial-a-ride service that requires a reservation and connects to the fixed-route system. This curb-to-curb transit service is provided in areas of the seven-county region not served by regular transit route service.

10.5.1 Metro Move

10.5.1.1 Introduction and Summary

Metro Move is a shared-ride service that connects people with disabilities to day support services, jobs, and community resources and specifically offers more tailored services to individuals who receive certain waivers. Eligibility is currently provided to people who participate in the following waiver programs:

- Brain injury.
- Developmental disabilities.
- Community access for disability inclusion.

Provided by Transdev under a separate contract, Metro Move provides regularly scheduled trips to help these individuals access regularly scheduled destinations. Metro Mobility customers who also are eligible for Metro Move can continue to use Metro Mobility for their standing order trips, as many do, or they can choose to have their standing order trips served through the Metro Move service.

Metro Move service is available Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Metro Move is not currently providing any evening service but does hope to expand the service to provide trips to/from community-based employment (including evening jobs). Fares are paid through an individual's waiver program and are fare-free upon boarding. Service is provided by the driver first-door-through-first-door. The customer or caregiver completes a Service Request Form. If Metro Move can accommodate the request, a service authorization is sent to appropriate county lead who contacts the customer with the start date.

10.5.1.2 Background

For years, the Met Council competitively procured and managed what was branded *Agency Service*—a service focused on a subset of Metro Mobility ADA-certified riders attending nine of the region's largest day support service locations within the federally mandated service area. In the most recent contract, Transit Team was selected to provide Agency Service.

With many Agency Service customers attending day support service locations each weekday, trips were offered as standing order trips with well-established routes for morning and afternoon/evening trips during peak hours. Customers were not able to use the Agency Service program to travel to/from other locations, other than the nine day support service locations, or for other purposes, such as community employment. The fare paid by the riders was the Met Council adopted Metro Mobility rate (\$4.50/peak hour/ride). Meanwhile, riders who attended one of these nine day programs and lived outside the federally mandated service area were not able to use the Agency Service program, but instead, used Metro Mobility. Participants at the other 40+ day support service locations not included among the initial nine sites were also excluded from this contract.

In 2022, the Met Council decided to discontinue the Agency Service contract and officially ended the contract with Transit Team in August 2024. While there were multiple reasons for the discontinuation of the contract, the most compelling was the recognition that this premium service option was not equally available to all day support services programs and their participants.

With the discontinuation of the Agency Service program, the Met Council began planning and directing resources to the specific needs and opportunities available in serving individuals with significant disabilities that participated in the Home-and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver program administered and managed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services' Medical Assistance (or Medicaid) program. Many Agency Service program riders, as well as those relying on Metro Mobility to travel to/from day support services programs, were HCBS waiver participants. The HCBS Transportation Waiver Program can be described as follows:

As authorized by §1915(c) of the Social Security Act, states are provided with the authority to use Medicaid funds to provide HCBS services, a set of long-term services and supports to eligible individuals who live in the community, in addition to those uniformly offered by the state's Medicaid program. In Minnesota, the three largest of these federally approved programs are Brain Injury (BI), Developmental Disabilities (DD), and Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI) waivers. All

three waivers include day support services; prevocational services and employment development, exploration, and support services; and transportation to approved waiver-eligible locations.

In the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region in 2023, approximately 32,000 residents participated in one of these three HCBS waiver programs, with the federal and state share of waiver services totaling approximately \$2.7 billion.

10.5.1.3 Implementation

One of the first steps undertaken by the Met Council was to collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to decouple the bundled rate for transportation and day support service programs. The motive for this change was to access DHS Medicaid transportation funding for what the Met Council was contemplating—a first-door-through-first-door transportation service for brain injury, developmental disabilities, and community access for disability inclusion waiver participants. The decoupling was enacted in 2019 and involved a transition from Day Training and Habilitation (with transportation bundled) to Day Support Services (where transportation was carved out). Day program agencies began transitioning to the Day Support Services designation in 2021. The Met Council enrolled as a fee-for-service transportation services provider in the Medicaid program in late 2021.

With transportation services carved out and the Met Council designated as a Medicaid vendor, the Met Council released a competitive procurement in June 2023, opting to use only one contractor for the region. Under this procurement, the selected contractor would provide and operate a service compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, as required by DHS. The Met Council required that the selected contractor use Met Council-provided vehicles and technology, staff the requisite operations, and provide a dedicated customer service center to manage minor changes to a person's schedule, such as cancellation of an individual's trips. The contract also specified that service would be uniformly available across the region, which included both the federally mandated service area (the blue area in Figure 1-1) and the State-mandated area (the gray area in Figure 1-1). Transdev, which has provided both Metro Mobility and Transit Link service in the region, was selected as the contractor. The 5-year Metro Move contract with Transdev was executed in January 2024.

To ensure compliance with DHS requirements, the Met Council manages the service authorization process, ensures that the customer is waiver-eligible, and ensures that trips are to/from a waiver-eligible location. The Met Council's scheduling software (Trapeze PASS) tracks the number of one-way trips authorized. The Met Council manages renewals and bills DHS for each trip. Major changes to service, such as additional days, locations, etc., are directed to the Met Council to ensure that the changes are consistent with the individual's support plan and service authorizations and are updated, as needed.

Using a phased approach, Metro Move service began on May 6, 2024.

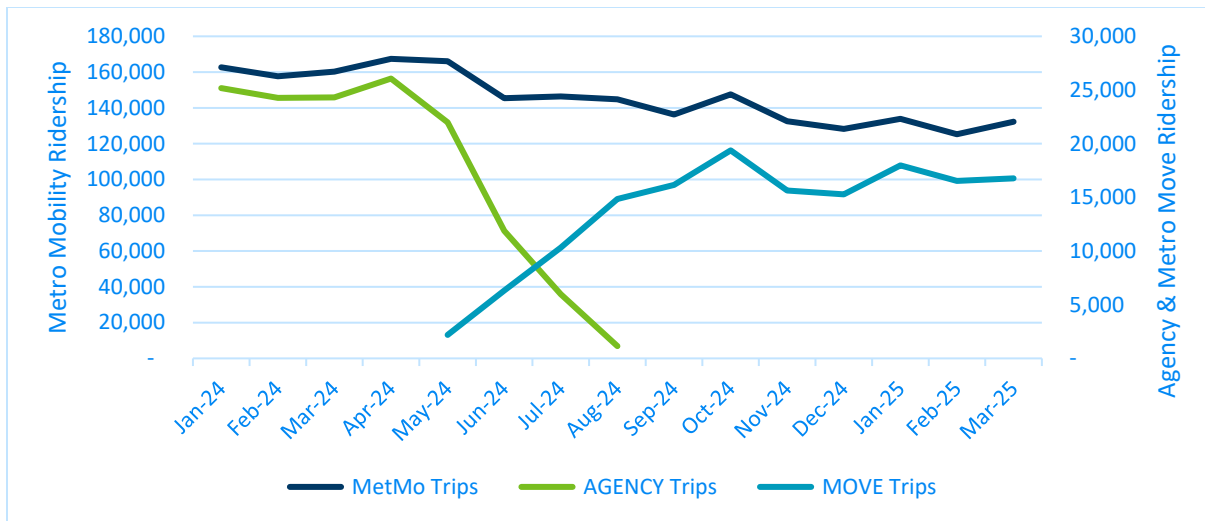
- **Phase 1:** Between May 6, 2024, and August 31, 2024, the Met Council focused on the voluntary transition of eligible Agency Service participants to Metro Move, with a corresponding transition of the 94-vehicle Agency Service fleet to Transdev through close coordination between Metro

Mobility and Metro Move staff. Each of the nine Agency Service locations was transitioned systematically, with customers starting service as their service authorizations were forwarded by their county case managers. Wherever possible, trips to/from employment and community activities were integrated into the schedule. Approximately 77% of individuals who were served by the Agency Service program transitioned to Metro Move with 42,971 passenger trips booked during this period. Other eligible waiver individuals opted to remain on Metro Mobility demand service or use alternative services. In late June, the Met Council extended Metro Move's hours of operations to include evening service until 10:00 p.m. and initiated weekend service from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.—a uniform expansion across the service area intended to improve competitive community employment opportunities particularly in retail, restaurant, and other hospitality jobs.

- **Phase 2:** Beginning on September 1, 2024, the Met Council has continued to add customers from the nine Agency Service day support service locations, as well as customers going to other day support service locations previously not eligible for service under the Agency Service contract, employment trips (including internships), and community activities. Between September 1 and November 24, approximately 57,962 passenger trips have been booked. Waiver participants/caregivers or county/tribal case managers complete a Service Request Form that allows Met Council staff to see if the trip can be provided without negatively impacting current customers. The Met Council provides customers requesting trips of 8 miles or more with an estimate of the length of time that they will spend on-board with an estimated pickup/drop-off time to support their informed choice to use or not use Metro Move. If the trip cannot be provided, the Met Council provides information to the individual requesting the trip. If the trip can be provided and the customer agrees, the Met Council requests the preauthorization of trips from the individual's county or tribal agency. Once the service authorization is received, Metro Move shares the information with Transdev and operations begin.
- **Phase 3:** In addition to standing order trips, on-demand trips will be offered through Metro Move.

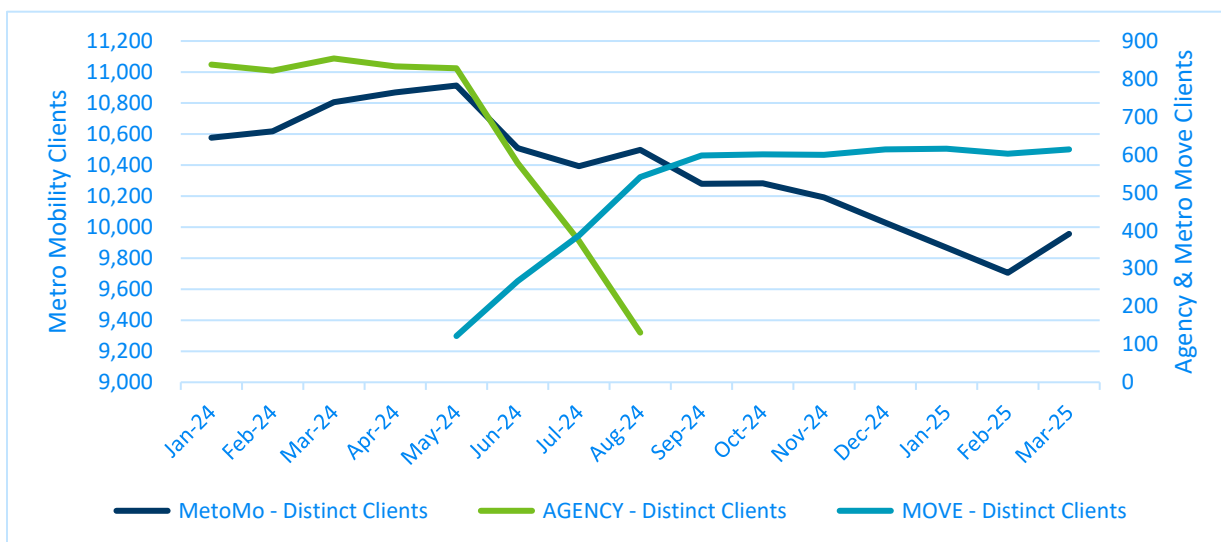
10.5.1.4 Ridership

Ridership by month is shown in Figure 10-6. In this figure, the Metro Mobility ridership scale is on the left axis, and the Agency Service and Metro Move ridership scale is on the right axis. While the Agency Service program was being phased out in mid-2024, ridership on Metro Move service was picking up. Not surprisingly then, the net ridership on Metro Mobility has decreased with the implementation of Metro Move. Figure 10-7 displays the count of distinct clients per month.



MetMo = Metro Mobility; AGENCY = Agency Service; MOVE = Metro Move.

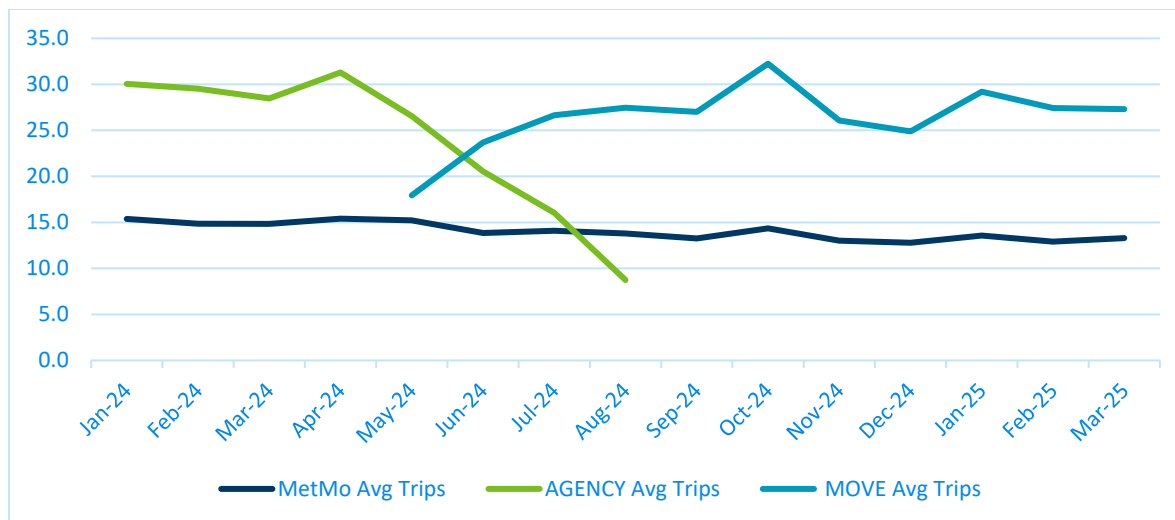
Figure 10-6 Completed trips—Metro Mobility vs. Agency Service vs. Metro Move (January 2024–March 2025).



MetMo = Metro Mobility; AGENCY = Agency Service; MOVE = Metro Move.

Figure 10-7 Distinct clients—Metro Mobility vs. Agency Service vs. Metro Move (January 2024–March 2025).

Figure 10-8 shows trends for the average number of trips per customer among Metro Mobility, Agency Service, and Metro Move. Looking before the midyear transition period, the trips made by customers has not materially changed.



MetMo = Metro Mobility; AGENCY = Agency Service; MOVE = Metro Move.

Figure 10-8 Average number of trips per customer—Metro Mobility vs. Agency Service vs. Metro Move (January 2024–March 2025).

10.5.1.5 Key Benefits to Waiver Individuals

As a service distinct from other available options, the implementation of Metro Move provided several key benefits to its riders:

- Access to More Day Support Services Programs and Community Jobs: Metro Move customers are able to access many more day programs (see Figure 10-9) compared to the nine programs in the federally mandated service area previously served by the Agency Service program, as well as community jobs.
- Standing Order Service and Uniform Days/Hours of Service: Individuals eligible for Metro Mobility whose recurring trips begin and end in the federally mandated service area have access to standing order services, but service may or may not be granted. Individuals eligible for Metro Mobility whose trips begin, end, or are within the expanded State-mandated service area are placed on standby and do not have access to standing orders. Conversely, Metro Move offers standing orders to those in both the federally mandated and State-mandated service areas with no standbys.

Metro Counties Day Support Services Locations

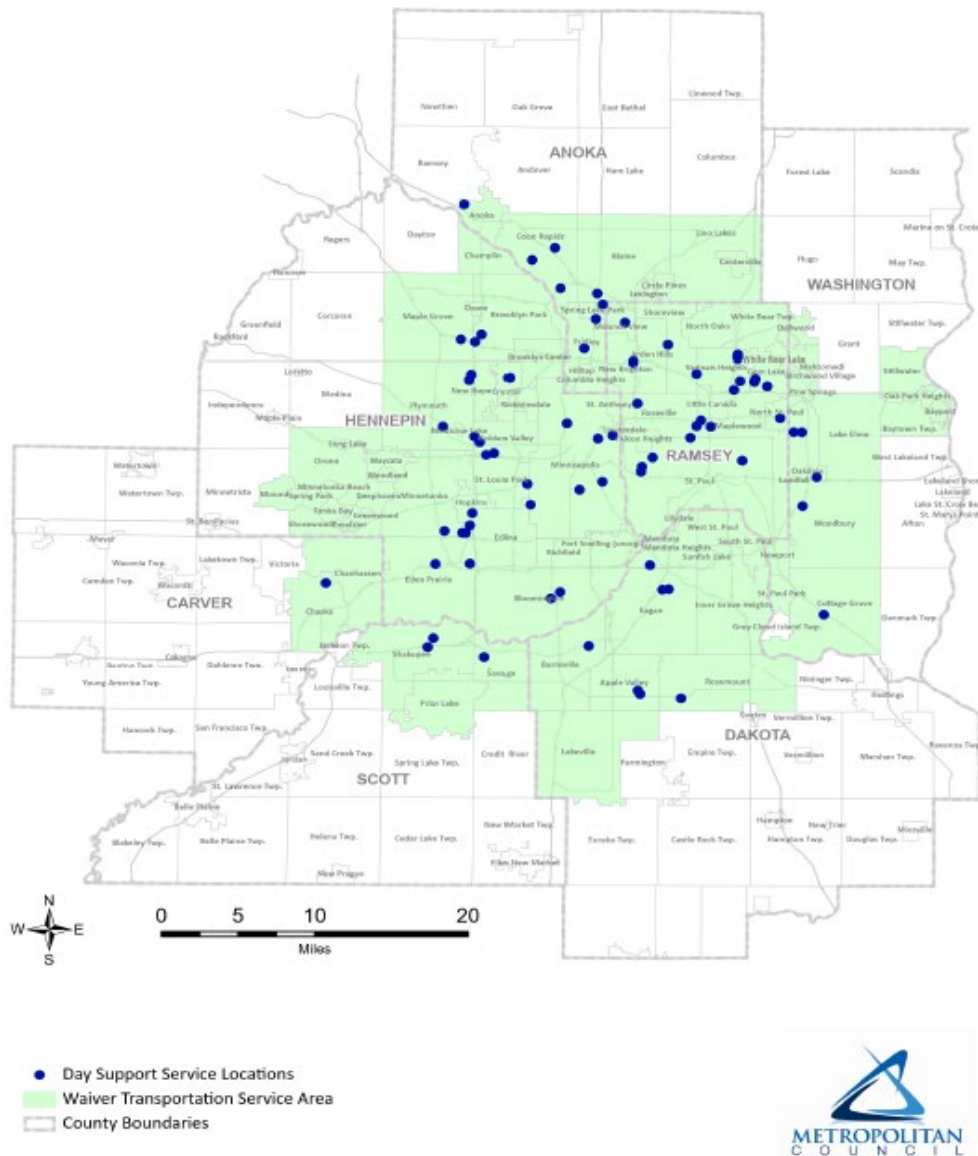


Figure 10-9 Metro Move service area.

- **WAVs:** Metro Move provides the option of accessible vehicles during days and hours when other options are not necessarily available or predictable. Indeed, while Metro Move does not need to abide by ADA paratransit guidelines, it complies with the ADA's service equivalence requirements for DRT services. Trips of transportation waiver clients requiring WAV service can be accommodated on Metro Move.
- **No Onboard Fares:** Metro Move customers do not have to worry about paying fares; fares are not paid on board by customers. Instead, the Met Council bills DHS for each trip taken. The elimination of cash fares and Go-To fare cards is a major bonus for Metro Move customers.
- **Ensured and Enhanced Service Quality:** While the Met Council uses a zero-denial policy for Metro Mobility trips in the federally mandated service area, Metro Move does not have to

provide each trip requested. Because newly requested trips can be excluded if they have a negative impact on current customers, Metro Move can ensure service quality remains high.

10.5.1.6 Key Benefits to the Met Council

Key benefits to the Met Council include:

- **Cost Offsets:** Cost offsets are available for riders who are eligible for both Metro Mobility and HCBS waivers who use Metro Move for their trips. The impacts from these cost offsets are as follows:
 - In 2024, payments to Metro Mobility (and Agency Service) contractors totaled \$86,261,204 (see Chapter 11). Based on the number of eligible passenger trips (1,794,791) and total passenger trips (1,920,794), as reported in Chapter 8, the unit operating cost equates to \$48.06 per eligible passenger trip, and \$44.91 per passenger trip in 2024. Looking at just the Agency Service, the unit operating costs in 2024 were \$35.48 per eligible passenger trip and \$35.00 per passenger trip.
 - Excluding capital, but including all contract expenses—one-time start-up expenses and internal expenses, including payroll, fringe, indirect, and contract expenses assumed by Met Council between May 2024 and December 2024—the cost per one-way ride on Metro Move was \$70.20. However, using the maximum recovery values from DHS and FTA (see Table 10-7), the one-way ride cost dropped to \$38.40 during this same period. Having DHS bear a significant portion of these costs was not possible until Metro Move was initiated.
 - The \$38.40 per-trip portion for which the Met Council is responsible is \$9.66 (20%) lower than the average Metro Mobility unit cost of \$48.06 and \$2.92 (8%) higher than the Agency Service average cost of \$35.46 per eligible passenger trip. However, for that additional \$2.92 per trip, the Metro Move program serves many more day programs and individuals going to those day programs and to jobs. Additionally, the cost per trip should go down in 2025 with no start-up costs and more efficient routing.

Table 10-7 Breakdown of trip cost reimbursement by funding source

Trip Cost Offset Element	Non-WAV Trip	WAV Trip
One-Way Trip Rate	\$26.00	\$35.00
Medicaid Federal DHS Share: 51.49%	\$13.39	\$18.02
Medicaid State DHS Share: 48.51%	\$12.61	16.98
Total Medicaid Offset	\$26.00	\$35.00
FTA Section 5307 Offset ^a	\$4.00	\$4.00
Total Offset	\$30.00	\$39.00

^a The FTA Section 5307 offset is estimated by Met Council, not by the Study Team.

DHS = Department of Human Services; FTA = Federal Transit Administration; WAV = wheelchair-accessible vehicle

- Higher Reliability (After Transition): As day programs were systematically onboarded and customers started service (as their service authorizations were received), routing was both challenging and challenged. During the initial transition from Agency Service to Metro Move, as many as 60+ new individuals were onboarded on a single day. Working with a different provider presented its own complexities with respect to routing/scheduling of current customers. As a result, OTP was averaging 93% from May 2024 to August 2024, which achieved Met Council standards but was not reliable enough for Metro Move customers. In mid-September, the Met Council worked with Transdev to overhaul the routes and schedules. From September 15, 2024, through December 31, 2024, OTP increased to 94.2%. Between January 1, 2025, and March 31, 2025, OTP for Metro Move averaged 96.8%. During that same three-month period, the OTP for Metro Mobility was 94.2%.
- Improved OTP for Metro Mobility: Opening up availability on Metro Mobility during the peak hours (due to the shift in trips to Metro Move) has had a positive impact on OTP. To evidence this, the Study Team compared Metro Mobility's 92.4% OTP for the first quarter of 2024 to its 94.2% OTP for the first quarter of 2025—a 2% improvement. More importantly, it puts Metro Mobility beyond its 93% OTP goal.
- Improved Productivity: In 2024, average productivity for Agency Service was 2.23 passenger trips per RVH. Metro Move productivity ranges between 2.22 and 2.51 passenger trips per RVH.

10.5.2 POD

A program to subsidize taxi service—as an alternative service available to Metro Mobility-certified customers—was launched as Same-Day Service in 2004. The program evolved modestly over the next 20 years and is now called POD.

10.5.2.1 Fare and Fare Collection

When the service was first implemented, customers would pay the first \$7.00 of a trip, with the Met Council's per-trip subsidy capped at \$13.00. Customers would pay any amount of the fare over \$20.00.

Currently, for trips without surcharges, the customer pays the first \$5.00 of the fare, Met Council pays up to the next \$20.00, and the customer pays any fare cost over \$25.00. Fares must be paid with cash or a debit or credit card; Go-To cards are not accepted. Table 10-8 presents the current fare structure for several typical trips during the day, including the shared payment responsibilities for customers and Met Council. As discussed later in this report, trips in the evenings and on weekends cost the Met Council more due to provider surcharges.

10.5.2.2 WAV Service and Level of Driver Assistance

A limited number of POD vehicles are equipped with ramps and tie-downs for customers that use mobility devices. POD is designed as a curb-to-curb service. If a customer requires driver assistance to/from the door, assistance boarding the vehicle, or help with packages, the customer may wish to make that trip on Metro Mobility because POD drivers are not trained or required to assist customers in the same way Metro Mobility drivers are.

Table 10-8 POD customer fares and Met Council subsidies (based on sample fares)

Final Fare	Customer Payment	Metro Mobility Payment
\$5	\$5	\$0
\$8	\$5	\$3
\$10	\$5	\$5
\$15	\$5	\$10
\$20	\$5	\$15
\$25	\$10	\$15

10.5.2.3 Trip Booking

When POD was first implemented, customers would book trips by calling their Metro Mobility provider, getting an authorization number, and then calling the taxi provider. This process has evolved so that customers no longer need to involve the Metro Mobility provider and instead reserve a trip directly with a POD provider of choice. There are now three carriers—Transportation Plus, CarePool, and UZURV—all of whom bid on the Met Council’s June 6, 2024, RFP and have contracts for service with the Met Council.

The Met Council feeds eligible customer data to providers on a daily automated schedule. The provider is then responsible for ensuring only certified customers (from that database) book and take trips.

To book a trip, the customer can use an app designed by the provider of choice (see example in Figure 10-10) or call the provider directly. The latter provides an option (per Title VI requirements) for customers who do not have a smart phone or access to the internet; however, over 90% of the bookings are still made by customers via phone call. POD providers allow trips to be booked for immediate-fulfillment and same-day trips during core hours and for advance trips (1–4 days in advance) taken any time. The POD providers can deny a trip if they are unable to serve it.

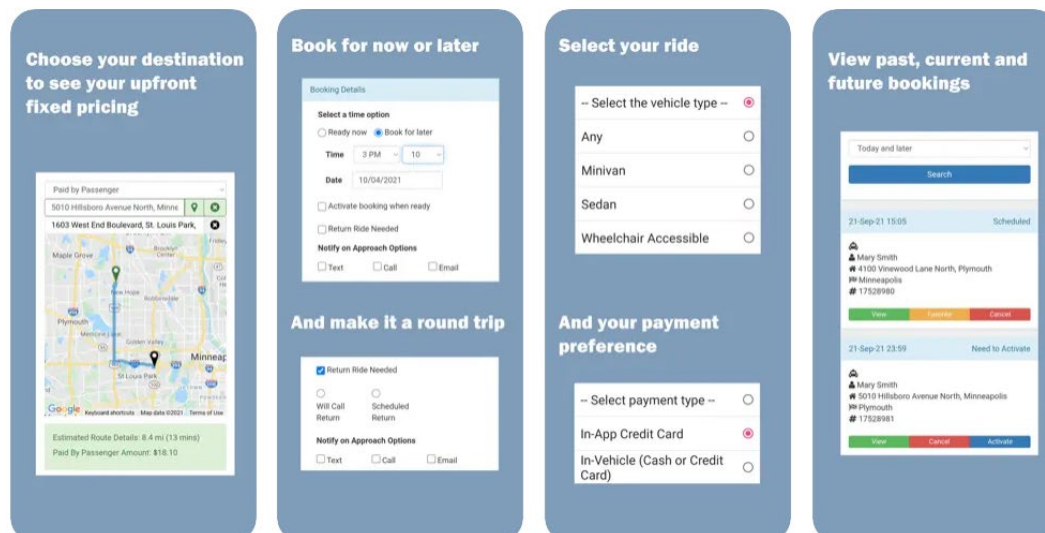


Figure 10-10 iHail app booking screens for POD service.

10.5.2.4 Hours of Operation

Since the beginning of the program and up until recently, trip eligibility had been limited to communities and times that matched the availability of Metro Mobility service, which varies by community (see Appendix C). In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the Metro Mobility Enhancement Pilot Program ([Mn Law Chapter 68, Sec 121](#)). The Metro Mobility Enhancement Pilot Program (hereinafter referred to as the extended hours pilot) extended POD hours throughout the service area to a minimum span of 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays. Some communities already had POD service that exceeded these minimum spans. These extended hours went into effect on September 1, 2023. The extended hours pilot is scheduled to end on December 31, 2025. Table 10-9 compares the operating hours of Metro Mobility, POD service prepilot, and POD service during the extended hours pilot. It is important to reiterate, as shown in Table 10-9, that the operating hours of POD *before* the extended hours pilot varied by community and matched Metro Mobility (Metro Mobility operating hours vary by community to match the hours of fixed-route services). During the extended hours pilot, POD operating hours continue to vary by community; however, all communities are guaranteed a minimum service window (e.g., at least 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays. Communities in which Metro Mobility starts earlier or ends later than the guaranteed minimum service window continue to have POD service that matches Metro Mobility's operating hours.

Table 10-9 Operating hours for Metro Mobility and POD service (before and during pilot)

Service/Phase	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
Metro Mobility	Varies by community Maximum: 24 hours ^a Minimum: 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ^b	Varies by community Maximum: 24 hours Minimum: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Varies by community Maximum: 24 hours Minimum: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
POD/Prepilot ^c	Varies by community Maximum: 24 hours Minimum: 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Varies by community Maximum: 24 hours Minimum: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Varies by community Maximum: 24 hours Minimum: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
POD/Extended Hours Pilot	At least: 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Or Metro Mobility hours if longer	At least: 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Or Metro Mobility hours if longer	At least: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Or Metro Mobility hours if longer

^a All maximum operating hours in the table are for the community of Columbia Heights (see Appendix C).

^b All minimum operating hours in the table are for the community of Bayport (see Appendix C).

^c POD prepilot operating hours varied by community but matched those of Metro Mobility.

10.5.2.5 Provider Payment Structure

Beginning in 2023 and closely aligned with the implementation of the extended hours pilot, the Met Council payment structure to providers changed from a simple structure (see Table 10-8) to a more complex structure that includes the provider's base rate, a mileage rate, WAV surcharges, and time surcharges applied to trips that fall into a nonstandard time window (i.e., weekdays after 6:00 p.m. and

before 6:00 a.m. and weekends). These surcharges vary significantly, depending on the nature of the trip and the provider; all surcharges are 100% covered by the Met Council. Table 10-10 summarizes the first contract year payment structures for the three POD providers.

Table 10-10 POD provider payment structures (first contract year)

Fee Type	Carepool	Transportation Plus	UZURV
Base Rate	\$22.50 for 0–5 miles	\$20.00 for 0–8 miles	\$15.00
Mileage Rate	\$3.05 per mile >30 miles	\$2.50 per mile >8 miles	\$2.25 per mile
Time Surcharge	\$10.50	\$12.50–\$22.50 based on pickup/drop-off zip code	\$0
WAV Surcharge	\$32.50	\$10.00	\$35.00
Other	Escalating distance-based surcharges ^a		\$3.50 call center use fee

Source: Providers' contracts provided by the Met Council.

^a Carepool's payment structure includes distance-based surcharges that increase with distance for trips under 30 miles. The surcharges are higher for nonambulatory (i.e., WAV) trips.

WAV = wheelchair-accessible vehicles

10.5.2.6 Ridership and Cost Statistics

Figure 10-11 displays monthly POD ridership from June 2023 through December 2024 (the extended hours pilot started on September 1, 2023). Ridership has grown steadily since the pilot's inception. POD ridership (red line) peaked at over 14,666 trips in October 2024. Figure 10-11 also shows the monthly subsidies paid by the Met Council (including provider surcharges), the portion of trip subsidies from surcharges, and the fares paid by the customers. The data in Figure 10-11 are detailed in Table 10-11.

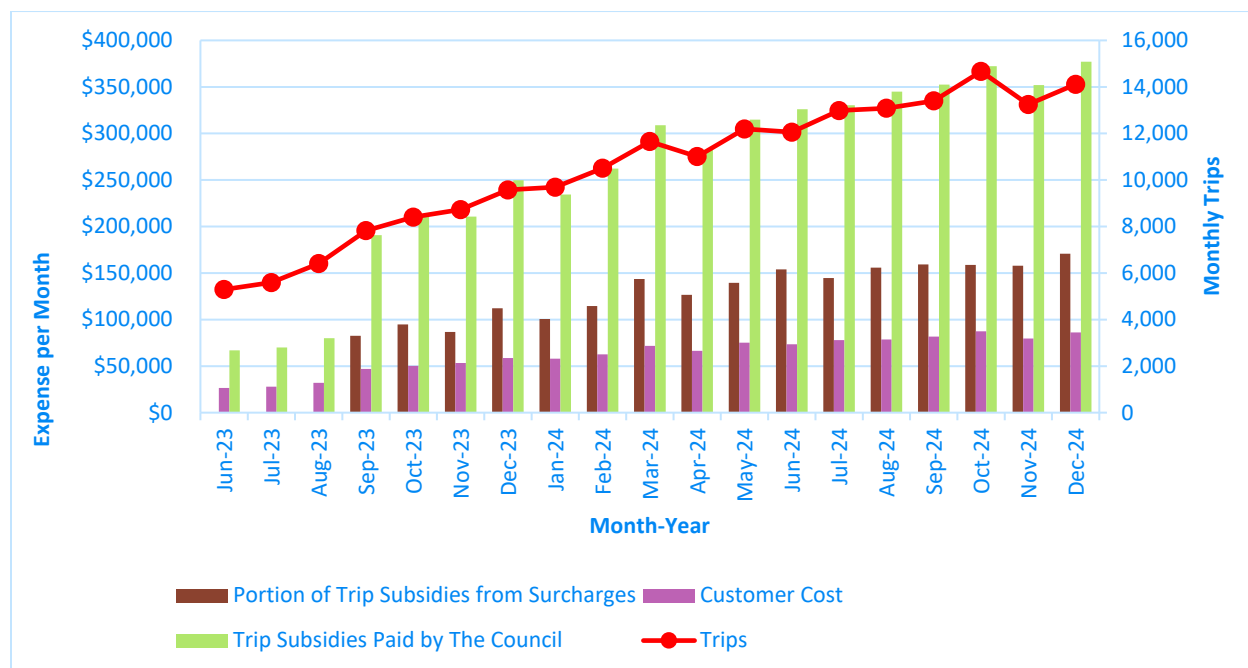


Figure 10-11 POD ridership and costs statistics (June 2023 through December 2024).

Table 10-11 POD monthly financial and ridership statistics

Month and Year	Trip Subsidies Paid by the Met Council	Trip Subsidies from Surcharges ^a	Trips	Customer Costs
June 2023	\$66,903	\$0	5,293	\$26,465
July 2023	\$70,005	\$0	5,593	\$27,965
August 2023	\$80,062	\$0	6,407	\$32,035
September 2023	\$190,735	\$82,630	7,823	\$47,061
October 2023	\$211,558	\$94,846	8,404	\$50,320
November 2023	\$210,582	\$86,740	8,727	\$53,387
December 2023	\$249,748	\$112,140	9,574	\$58,755
January 2024	\$234,450	\$100,663	9,689	\$57,944
February 2024	\$262,310	\$114,633	10,506	\$62,612
March 2024	\$308,859	\$143,535	11,652	\$71,731
April 2024	\$282,413	\$126,555	11,006	\$66,359
May 2024	\$314,798	\$139,533	12,192	\$75,126
June 2024	\$326,038	\$153,908	12,057	\$73,551
July 2024	\$330,241	\$144,643	12,983	\$77,865
August 2024	\$344,924	\$155,758	13,085	\$78,556
September 2024	\$352,512	\$159,303	13,402	\$81,707
October 2024	\$372,243	\$158,730	14,666	\$87,387
November 2024	\$351,958	\$157,853	13,244	\$79,722
December 2024	\$377,159	\$170,740	14,112	\$86,259
Total	\$4,937,498	\$2,102,206	200,415	\$1,194,805
Total 2024	\$3,857,906	\$1,725,850	148,594	\$898,818

^a The trip subsidies from surcharges values are included in the trip subsidies paid by the Met Council. Surcharges reflect additional costs charged by providers during nonstandard days/hours and for trips for people with mobility devices.

For 2024 alone, trip subsidies totaled \$3,857,906 (including surcharges). Based on a total 2024 ridership of 148,594 trips, this total equates to a subsidy per trip of \$25.96. Metro Mobility's operating cost per trip in 2024 was \$48.06. Comparing the POD subsidy per trip to Metro Mobility's cost per trip indicates that the Met Council saves \$22.10 per POD trip but only for trips taken on POD that would have been taken on Metro Mobility. However, the lower cost per trip on POD (and the implied savings) is only part of the story. POD, as a premium service, not only may cause some current Metro Mobility riders to take their regular trips using POD but also may motivate Metro Mobility riders to take *additional* trips on POD that they may have not taken otherwise and may motivate nonriders (i.e., Metro Mobility-eligible riders who do not use Metro Mobility) to start taking POD trips.

Unfortunately, data are not available to analyze whether riders have shifted their regular trips from Metro Mobility to POD, which would save the Met Council money. However, it is certain that any POD extended-hours trips taken add cost to the Met Council because those trips would not have been possible prior to the extended hours pilot. A more detailed evaluation of the extended hours pilot is available in Chapter 20.

As a last point, unlike Metro Mobility, POD is not a shared-ride service. POD provides exclusive, direct trips. As such, POD service is not considered public transit for NTD reporting purposes and is not included in FTA's apportionment of Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Funds to the Met Council. The Met Council estimates the Section 5307 revenue loss to be about \$4.00 per trip (this estimate is based on the Met Council's analysis).

10.5.3 Metro micro

10.5.3.1 Introduction

Metro micro is a microtransit service—an on-demand, shared-ride service for the general public—provided by the Met Council. Currently, it is provided in five zones and is meant to fill gaps in the transit network, serving areas where traditional bus routes may not be efficient and providing connections to high frequency fixed-route corridors.

Metro micro was first implemented in a 2.5 square-mile zone in North Minneapolis in September 2022, with Transit Team under contract to operate the service with five wheelchair-accessible minibuses. An RFP was released in 2023 to provide Metro micro service for the current north Minneapolis zone in addition to two new zones each year for the next 4 years. The service contract was awarded to Schmitt and Sons, and the supporting software contract was awarded to Spare Labs. Service was subsequently implemented in two new zones—Roseville area and Woodbury area—in January 2024, with Schmitt and Sons providing the service under contract. Two more Metro micro zones have been implemented in 2025, including Bloomington area and Blaine area

Customers request rides via a smartphone app or by phone to be picked up at virtual stops at or near their requested pickup and drop-off locations. Spare technology is used for:

- The customer-facing app, which allows customers to book and cancel trips, pay their fare, and track vehicle locations.
- Trip matching, scheduling, and auto-dispatching.
- The driver app, which provides details of trips to be served and collects trip service details.

10.5.3.2 Eligibility

Metro micro is a service for the general public.

10.5.3.3 Service Areas and Hours

Metro micro is currently available in designated zones in North Minneapolis, Roseville area, Woodbury area, Bloomington area, and Blaine area. These areas are shown in Figure 10-12 through Figure 10-16. Local transit bus routes and Metro lines are also shown on these maps. Indeed, Metro micro provides a way for the general public who live in an area or are going to area beyond the walkshed of these services to access the transit network.

All trips must start and end within the designated service zone within hours of operation (Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.).

10.5.3.4 Registration and Booking

Customers must first register with the service via the Metro micro app or by calling the contractor assigned to their zone. The Metro micro app can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play.

Once registered (customers can register themselves under any name or nickname), customers can then book service through the Metro micro app. Customers without a smartphone or access to the internet can also book trips by calling the contractor's customer service representative.

10.5.3.5 Tracking ETAs and Vehicle Locations

Once a request is made, customers are instructed to arrive at their designated pickup location when the minibus is 5 minutes away. Wait times will vary, but given the small service area, pickups generally occur within a few minutes. Customers can also use the app to track the minibus and view the ETA at the designated stop.

10.5.3.6 Driver Wait Time Policy

Drivers will wait up to 2 minutes at the pickup spot.

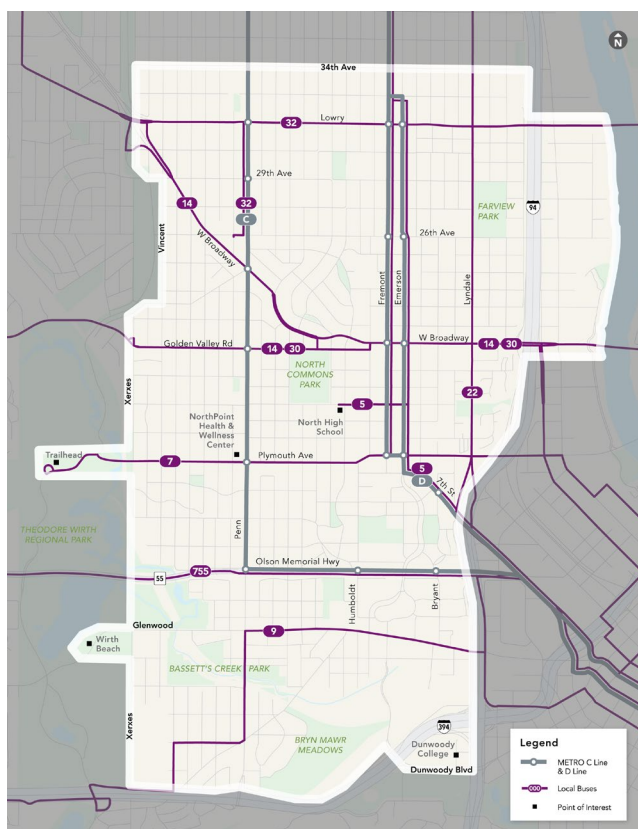


Figure 10-12 North Minneapolis Metro micro zone.

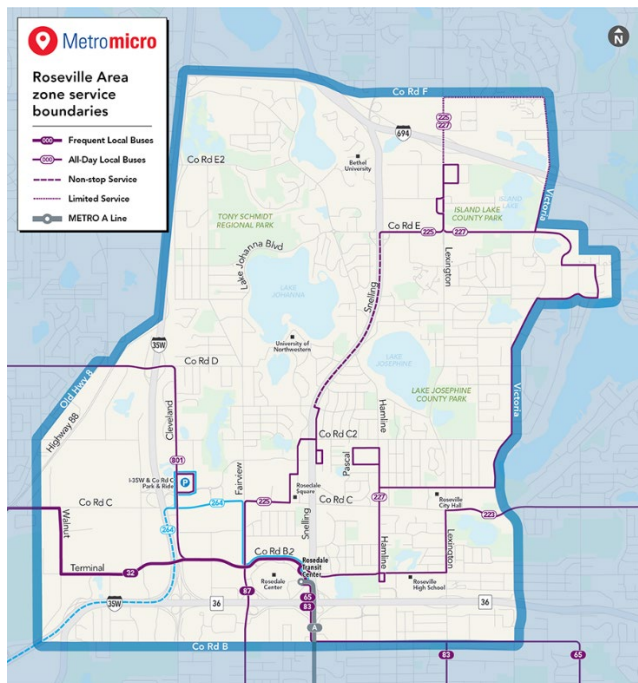


Figure 10-13 Roseville area Metro micro zone.

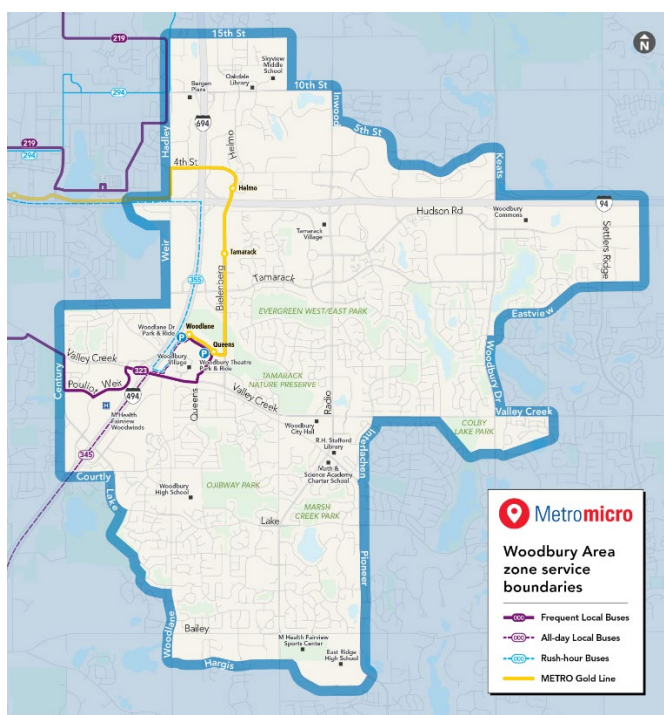


Figure 10-14 Woodbury area Metro micro zone.

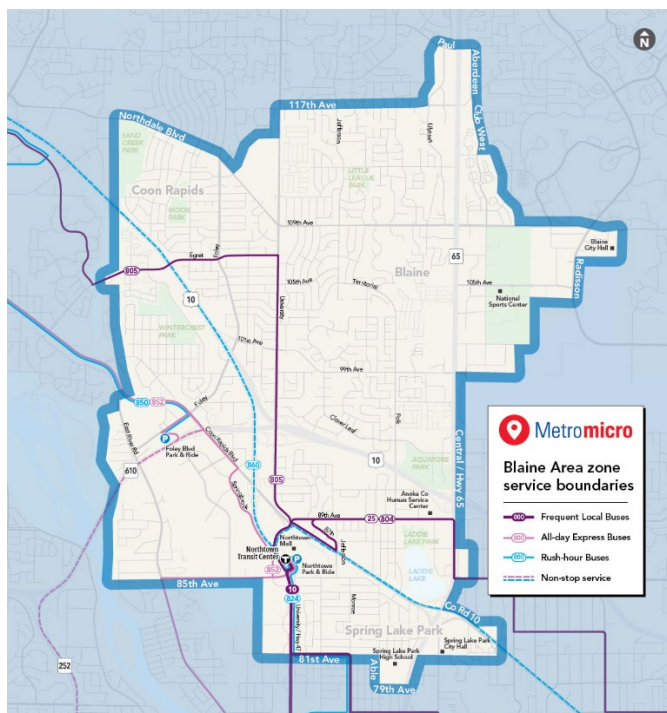


Figure 10-15 Blaine area Metro micro zone.



Bloomington Area zone
service boundaries

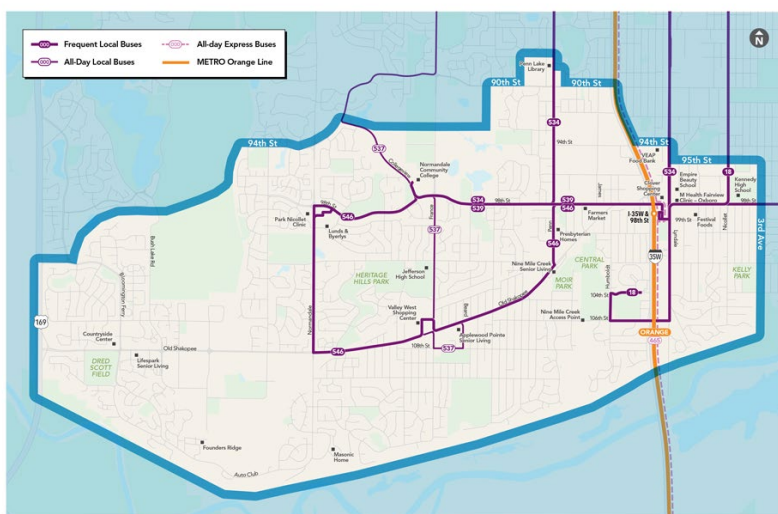


Figure 10-16 Bloomington area Metro micro zone.

10.5.3.7 Fares and Fare Collection

The fare schedule for Metro micro is shown in Table 10-12. Metro Mobility customers can ride Metro micro for \$1.00. Metro micro customers can pay their fare with cash, their Go-To card (including Transit Assistance Program cards, MetroPass, College Pass, Universal Pass, Residential Pass, or Student Pass), or via the Metro Transit app. Transfers between Metro micro, local buses, and Metro lines are free (for 2.5 hours.)

Table 10-12 Metro micro fare schedule

Metro micro Fares	Nonpeak hours	Peak hours (Monday–Friday, 6–9 a.m. and 3–6:30 p.m.)
Adults (13–64)	\$2.50	\$3.25
Go-To Card	\$1	\$1
Mobility Fare (Persons with Disabilities)	\$1	\$1
Reduced Fare (Youth [6–12], Seniors [65+], and Medicaid Card Holders)	\$1	\$3.25

10.5.3.7 Impact on Metro Mobility

Anecdotally, the Study Team understands that some Metro Mobility customers use Metro micro. However, because Metro Mobility and Metro micro use two different technologies, and because Metro micro customers can register themselves under any name (or nickname), Metro Mobility and Metro micro customers cannot be cross-referenced to determine the extent that Metro Mobility customers are using Metro micro instead of or in addition to using Metro Mobility.

10.5.4 Transit Link

10.5.4.1 Introduction

Transit Link is an advance-reservation, shared-ride dial-a-ride service for the Twin Cities metro area that operates where regular route transit service is infrequent or unavailable, mostly on the outskirts of the region. Transit Link serves general public trips that cannot be completed using regular transit routes alone based on a 0.25-mile walking distance. Trips may begin on Transit Link and connect to regular route buses or Metro Mobility at a transit hub or begin on regular route transit or Metro Mobility and transfer to Transit Link. Transit Link is operated by both Transdev and Transit Link, as well as some county-based providers under contract to the Met Council. Transit Link uses Trapeze to book, schedule, and dispatch trips and Rangers and DriverMate to collect service data.

10.5.4.2 Eligibility

Transit Link is a general public service.

10.5.4.3 Service Areas and Hours

A Transit Link map is provided in Figure 10-17. The Transit Link service area is divided into five service areas serving all or portions of the following counties:

- Anoka/Ramsey: All of Anoka County and the Ramsey County communities of Arden Hills, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Mounds View, New Brighton, Roseville, St. Anthony, and Shoreview.
- Carver/Scott: All of Carver and Scott counties.
- Dakota: All of Dakota County.
- Hennepin: All of Hennepin County.
- Ramsey/Washington: All of Washington County and the Ramsey County communities of Gem Lake, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, North St. Paul, St. Paul, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, and White Bear Township.

Each service area is operated by a different contractor (or County).

Transit Link's base level of service is provided Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with no weekend service. Counties may provide additional service beyond those hours or on weekends as their resources allow. Service is not provided on Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year's Day.

TransitLink Dial-A-Ride Service Areas and Transit Hubs

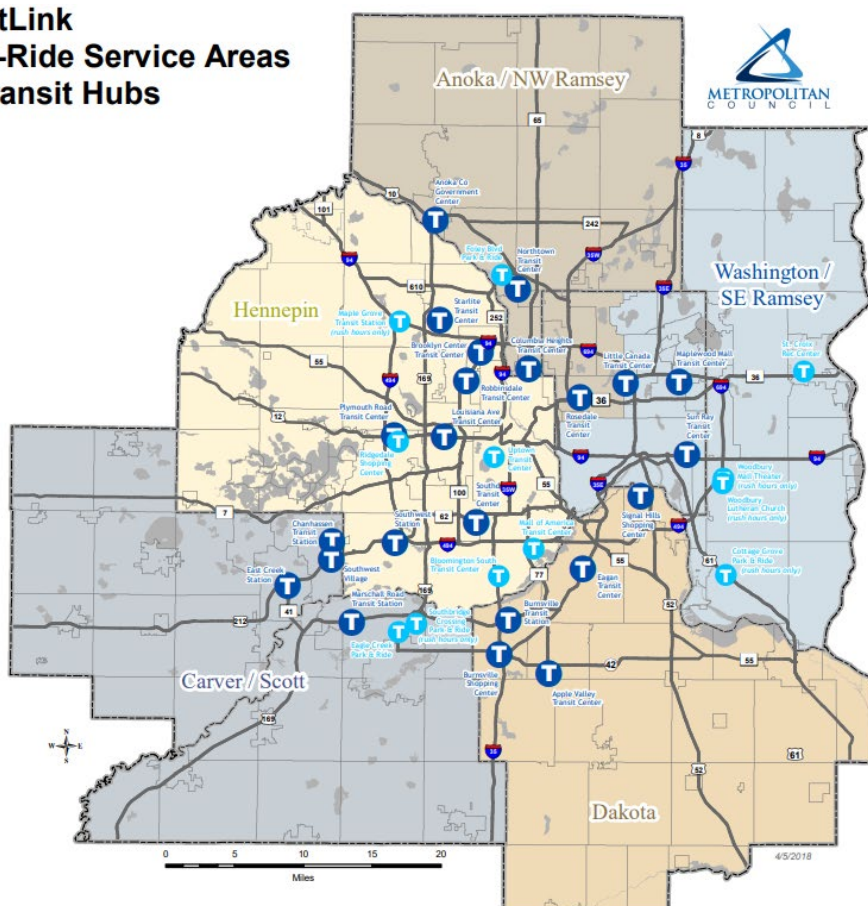


Figure 10-17 Transit Link service area.

10.5.4.4 Booking, Pickup Windows, and Driver Wait Times

Trips can be requested by phone 1–5 business days in advance on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and are subject to availability. Standing order trips may also be booked and are also subject to availability. When a customer’s trip is scheduled, the customer will receive a scheduled pickup time. The pickup window is within 30 minutes of the scheduled pickup time. Passengers must board within 3 minutes once the bus arrives or may be subject to a no-show.

Transit Link contractors will attempt to schedule trips as close to the requested time as possible (given other trips that have already been scheduled and the limited capacity of the system). Customers are advised that the scheduled pickup time may or may not be the same as the pickup time requested, and that the customer’s trip will be scheduled based on the availability of vehicles operating at that time in that area. Similar to Metro Mobility, reservation agents will look 1 hour before, and 1 hour after the requested time for a vehicle in the requested area. For example, if the request is for an 8:00 a.m. pickup, the reservation agent will look for solutions between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

10.5.4.5 Fare and Fare Collection

Transit Link can be paid with cash or a Go-To card. The fare structure is as follows:

- Peak fares each way are \$4.50 weekdays from 6–9 a.m. and 3–6:30 p.m.
- Off-peak fares each way are \$3.50.
- Holidays fares are \$3.50 on Memorial Day (observed), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day, and the following Friday after Thanksgiving Day.
- A \$0.75 surcharge will be assessed for trips longer than 15 miles.
- Children aged 5 years and under ride free; up to four children can ride free.
- If the vehicle arrives more than 1 hour after the scheduled pickup time, the trip is free.

10.5.4.6 Impact on Metro Mobility

In an analysis prepared by the Met Council staff based on Go-To card data comparisons, staff found that only 15 Metro Mobility customers transferred to or from Transit Link between July 1, 2023, and April 8, 2025—a 21-month period. During that span and beginning in August 2024, these 15 clients transferred between Transit Link and Metro Mobility (or vice versa) 152 times. The top 2 clients transferred 78 and 16 times. Based on this analysis, the impact of Transit Link on Metro Mobility in general is minimal.

Chapter 11: Operating Cost and Cost Efficiency

11.1 Operating Cost

For the purposes of this study, the Study Team equated operating costs with payments to the Metro Mobility contractors. The payment figures and RVHs in Table 11-1 were sourced from Met Council’s invoice tracking spreadsheet. The number of eligible passenger trips and total passenger trips come from Table 8-4. The payments to the providers totaled \$86.2 million in 2024.

Table 11-1 Metro Mobility operating costs (2024)

Metric	East Zone	South Zone	West Zone	Agency Service	Total
Payment	\$28,661,492	\$16,679,744	\$35,924,339	\$4,995,629	\$86,261,204
Total RVHs	424,166	239,924	512,607	63,947	1,240,644
Cost per RVH	\$67.57	\$69.52	\$70.08	\$78.12	\$69.53
Total EPTs	608,478	330,753	714,747	140,813	1,794,791
Cost per EPT	\$47.10	\$50.43	\$50.26	\$35.48	\$48.06
Total Passenger Trips	662,808	351,308	763,934	142,741	1,920,794
Cost per Total Passenger Trip	\$43.24	\$47.48	\$47.03	\$35.00	\$44.91

EPT =eligible passenger trip; RVH = revenue vehicle hour

11.2 Operating Cost per RVH

Table 11-1 also shows the 2024 operating cost per RVH for Metro Mobility’s zones and Agency Service. Cost per RVH is impacted by the rate paid to the contractors; performance bonuses and invoice credits impact the total amount paid. As a system, the Metro Mobility operating cost per RVH was \$69.53. The highest operating cost per RVH was \$78.12 for the Agency Service (Transit Team), followed by \$70.08 in the West Zone (Transit Team), \$69.52 in the South Zone (Transit Team), and \$67.57 in the East Zone (Transdev). Clearly, when comparing the provider payments per RVH, the Transdev contract for the East Zone is the more economical.

11.3 Operating Cost per Eligible and Total Passenger Trips

Table 11-1 also shows unit operating costs per trip for the system as a whole and for each zone/provider. As a system, the Metro Mobility unit operating cost was \$48.06 per eligible passenger-trip and \$44.91 per total passenger trip, including PCAs, companions (guests), and dependents.

In 2024, Transit Team had the highest operating costs per eligible and total passenger trip in the South Zone (\$50.43/\$47.48) and the West Zone (\$50.26/\$47.03), followed by Transdev in the East Zone (\$47.10/\$43.24). Because of its higher productivity, the unit operating cost of the Agency Service represents the highest cost efficiency at \$35.48/\$35.00 per eligible and total passenger trip.

Chapter 12: Actual Performance vs. Service Quality Standards

Chapter 12 focuses on how Metro Mobility performed vs. service quality standards.

12.1 Denials

12.1.1 Standard

Metro Mobility's standard is to have zero denials. This standard appears in the provider contracts, which include a monthly bonus of \$5,000 for zero denials in the given month, but no invoice credit for denying trips (see Table 6-3 in Section 6.2.3).

12.1.2 Actual Performance in 2024

As shown previously in Table 8-4 and discussed in Section 8.4, there were only 2 denials of federally mandated trip requests in 2024, suggesting that the Met Council essentially met its zero-denial policy for federally mandated ADA paratransit trips. Comparatively, there were 113 denials of State-mandated trips, almost all of which (110 denials) were in the West Zone. While there is no policy for the number or percentage of denials that may be made for State-mandated trips, the 113 denials reflect only 0.02% of State-mandated trip bookings, while the 110 denials in the West Zone reflect only 0.05% of the total West Zone bookings.

12.1.3 Analysis

Having only 2 denials for federally mandated trips in 2024 is quite an accomplishment, assuming that denials are being recorded correctly. Having only 113 denials for trips in the State-mandated service area is also a significant accomplishment, averaging 9 denials per month or about 0.3 denials per day (or 1 denial every 3 days). Patterns of ADA paratransit trip denials are prohibited by federal guidance, but with only 2 denials in 2024, it is safe to say there is no pattern.

12.1.4 Commentary

Interestingly, it makes sense that the standard of (and bonus for) zero denials should pertain to federally mandated ADA paratransit trips only because it partially reflects whether a pattern of denials exists for ADA paratransit service, which again is prohibited (see Section 6.6.1). Otherwise, the capacity constraint criterion of ADA's service equivalence requirements (impacting DRT services) comes into play for the services that are not federally mandated ADA paratransit. That is, capacity constraints impact riders with and without disabilities equally. Additionally, there is no federal requirement that might influence having a zero-denial policy for the State-mandated service area. It is perhaps with this understanding that the two providers focus on zero denials for federally mandated trips. Thus, if given the choice

between denying a trip for a federally mandated trip request vs. a State-mandated trip request, the providers will place a greater weight on the former.

12.2 Untimely Trips

12.2.1 Standard

The Met Council’s goal for OTP is 93% for both trips requested by pickups and trips requested by appointment times; this standard is higher than the federal minimum standard of 90%. For pickups, the provider contracts have a monthly bonus of \$2,500 for achieving a 95% OTP in a given month and an additional \$2,500 bonus for achieving a 97% or higher OTP. For trips with requested drop-offs, there is a \$2,500 bonus for achieving a 93% OTP where drop-offs are within 45 minutes before the requested time and an additional \$2,500 bonus for achieving a 93% OTP where drop-offs are within 30 minutes before the requested time (see Table 6-2). In addition, there are invoice credits ranging from \$500 to \$16,500 per month for not achieving a pickup OTP of 93% and for not achieving a drop-off OTP of 93%. An additional daily invoice credit is applied for not achieving a 90% on-time daily average for drop-off/appointment trips (see Table 6-3).

12.2.2 Actual Performance in 2024

As shown in Table 8-4 in Section 8.4, the pickup performance for 91.6% of the 964,786 federally mandated trips in 2024 considered for the OTP calculation were on time. The counterpart OTP for the 312,548 State-mandated trips was 90.6%. For appointment trips, the OTP was 89.2% for the 375,180 federally mandated appointment trips and 88.6% for the 177,129 State-mandated trips. Of the 375,180 federally mandated appointment trips, 40,634 trips were not on time—4,360 (10.7%) were too early, and 36,274 (89.3%) were late. Of the 20,219 State-mandated appointment trips that were not on time, 2,039 (10.1%) were too early and 18,180 (89.9%) were late.

12.2.3 Analysis

Met Council’s federally mandated pickup trip OTP of 91.6% is slightly below the 93% standard. However, the federally mandated appointment trip drop-off OTP of 89.2% is well below the 93% goal and needs to be improved, especially given the higher weight that most systems put on getting to appointments on time. The counterpart OTP figures for State-mandated trips show a 90.6% OTP for pickups and an 88.6% OTP for appointment trip drop-offs—both percentages are below the 93% standard. In addition, the 10%/90% splits on early vs. late trips among the untimely appointment trips appear to be consistent between federally mandated trips and State-mandated trips.

12.2.4 Commentary

While being below Met Council’s goal of 93%, the pickup OTPs of 91.6% and 90.6% for federally and State-mandated trips, respectively, is above FTA’s suggested 90% minimum, which has been established by many transit systems. The drop-off OTPs for appointment trips of 89.2% and 88.6% for federally and State-mandated, respectively, are clearly substandard and need to be improved, especially considering

that drop-offs for appointment trips hold more weight for paratransit riders. Another issue, discussed previously, is that federal guidelines require providing riders with a confirmed pickup time for all trips, including trips requested based on a drop-off or appointment time. It would appear that on-time calculations do not include the OTP for these pickups; instead, they just include the OTP for trips requested by pickup time. The pickup time for these trips should be added into the calculations.

Lastly, Met Council has dropped the standard for productivity from 1.65 to 1.3 passenger trips per RVH in hopes that service quality, particularly the OTP for appointment trips, would improve in 2025. If it does not, Met Council can either readjust the scheduling parameters to put more weight on OTP vs. productivity and/or revise the contractual bonuses and invoice credits to reflect a higher level of incentives and disincentives that focus on OTP, especially the OTP for appointment trips. Met Council might also consider putting a caveat on the productivity bonus—the bonus would be granted only if there are no OTP violations. While increasing the supply of service (in general) would normally be another tool to improve OTP, the Study Team does not advise this option based on the slack analysis results (see Section 10.2). However, readjusting the run structures to provide more service in the peak hours and less service in the off-peak hours could also contribute toward improving OTP.

12.3 Missed Trips

12.3.1 Standard

Met Council has not established a not-to-exceed standard for missed trips, nor has it established any contractual bonuses or invoice credits associated with missed trips.

12.3.2 Actual Performance in 2024

As shown in Table 8-4 in Section 8.4, there were 5,860 missed trip violations among federally mandated trips and 1,728 missed trip violations among State-mandated trips. Based on 1,312,669 eligible passenger trips in the federally mandated area and 482,243 eligible passenger trips in the State-mandated area, the missed trip percentages are 0.45% for federally mandated trips and 0.36% for State-mandated trips.

12.3.3 Analysis

While FTA has not suggested any guidance on not-to-exceed missed trip percentages, goals of large peer systems with which the Study Team is familiar range from 0.5% to 1.0%. The missed trip percentages of 0.45% and 0.36%, as calculated previously, are below this range.

12.3.4 Commentary

The Study Team recommends that Met Council establish a not-to-exceed standard of 0.5% missed trips, and that the Power BI report be changed to use the total eligible passenger trip totals as the new denominators in calculating the missed trip percentages.

12.4 Excessively Long Ride Times

12.4.1 Standard

Met Council's not-to-exceed standard for excessively long ride times appears to be 5%, based on the \$500 monthly bonus for staying within the maximum OBT threshold for 95% of trips. This standard is within the 2% (Pittsburgh and New Jersey Transit) to 5% (Pittsburgh) range seen among ADA paratransit services with which the Study Team is familiar.

12.4.2 Actual Performance in 2024

As shown in Table 8-4 in Section 8.4, there were 61,214 maximum OBT violations among the 1,312,555 eligible passenger trips in the federally mandated service area and 15,142 maximum OBT violations among the 482,236 eligible paratransit trips in the State-mandated service area. These values equate to 4.7% of federally mandated trips and 3.1% of State-mandated trips.

12.4.3 Analysis

Both scores are under the 5% not-to-exceed standard. In the calculations, the Study Team used denominators that were slightly different from the number of eligible passenger trips in Table 8-4. For federally mandated trips, the denominator used in the calculation was 114 trips lower. For the State-mandated trips, the denominator used in the calculation was 7 trips lower. Neither difference significantly impacted the analysis.

12.4.4 Commentary

Given the results of the rider survey (see Section 16.4), where reasonable ride time was the third-lowest ranked aspect of the service, Met Council might consider raising the not-to-exceed standard to 2% and to add a healthy bonus for achieving at least a 98% level without any maximum OBT violations. Similar to the commentary in Section 12.2, Met Council might also consider putting a caveat on the monthly productivity bonus in months where there are no maximum OBT violations.

12.5 Excessively Long Hold Times

12.5.1 Standard

The Met Council's not-to-exceed average hold time for any day is 3 minutes. This threshold was taken from Table 6-3 (in Section 6.2.3). Contractors are subject to an invoice credit of \$250 for every day in a calendar month that 95% of all calls are not answered within 3 minutes and 99% of the calls are not answered within 5 minutes (both thresholds are considered concurrently).

12.5.2 Actual Performance in 2024

Table 12-1 shows the average hold time per month per zone for 2024. The average hold times are well below the not-to-exceed 3-minute goal.

Table 12-1 Average monthly telephone hold times by zone (2024)

Month	East Zone	South Zone	West Zone
January	0:43	0:30	1:07
February	0:36	0:26	0:37
March	0:39	0:28	0:39
April	0:53	0:30	0:50
May	0:45	0:26	0:42
June	0:49	0:23	1:02
July	0:54	0:31	0:51
August	0:39	0:43	0:53
September	0:51	0:51	0:48
October	1:02	0:48	0:53
November	0:51	0:40	1:16
December	1:19	1:01	2:32
Yearly Average	0:50	0:36	1:00

12.5.3 Analysis

While the monthly and yearly averages for average hold times are below the Met Council’s not-to-exceed goals, they do not tell the entire story, which can only be unveiled by an hour-by-hour analysis. The Met Council tracks these statistics, as evidenced by the tables and analyses provided in Section 8.6. However, these tables and analyses consider day-to-day/hour-by-hour statistics (for each zone) for one week only.

12.5.4 Commentary

The analyses undertaken in Section 8.6 need to be regularly conducted every week to see if there are patterns of long hold times pertinent to certain hours of certain days of the week. If such patterns exist, Met Council should work with the contractors to determine whether the call-taking shifts need to be altered to lower the average hold times in certain hours. If such patterns emerge, the culprit does not appear to be the result of inefficient call-handling time, which seems to be quite reasonable for the three zones.

12.6 CFRs

12.6.1 Standard

As discussed previously, Met Council has a CFR standard of 0.5 complaints per 1,000 eligible passenger trips performed, couched as the threshold for contractors to earn a bonus. Metro Mobility providers

receive a monthly bonus of \$5,000 if the CFR during the reporting month is 0.5 or less; however, there are no counterpart invoice credits for substandard CFRs.

12.6.2 Actual Performance in 2024

In 2024, there were 5,261 complaints registered in the Customer Feedback Module. Of these 5,261 complaints, 2,397 (47%) were found to be valid issues, while 2,897 (53%) were found to be nonissues. Based on the number of valid complaints and the 1,794,912 eligible passenger trips performed in 2024, the CFR for Met Council is 1.33. If one were to include all complaints, including the ones that were deemed to be a nonissue, the CFR for 2024 would be 2.9 (see description and examples of nonissues in Section 6.3).

12.6.3 Analysis

As discussed in Section 2.18, the Study Team often recommends the following interpretation of CFR scores, based on the Study Team's experience in the industry:

- 0–0.9 Excellent.
- 1–1.9 Very good.
- 2–2.9 Good.
- 3–3.9 Acceptable.
- ≥ 4 Poor.

Using this scale, Met Council's CFR score of 1.33 falls into the *very good* category.

The Study Team performed a more detailed analysis of the valid issues by type and by provider for 2024. Table 12-2 summarizes these results, where complaints are ranked by complaint type and CFRs are presented in total and for each of the three zones/providers and for Agency Service (served by Transit Team). Transdev had the highest CFR at 1.65, while Transit Team's CFR for the West and South Zones are exactly the same at 1.51. The CFR for the Agency Service trips was remarkably low at 0.18.

Surprisingly, the top complaint by far was no-show disputes (33% of the total valid complaints). In addition to the 789 valid no-show disputes, there were also 1,594 no-show disputes that were deemed to be nonvalid, representing 56% of the nonvalid complaints. The next highest complaint was late rides, with Transdev in the East Zone reflecting a disproportionate 57% of the late trip complaints. Another related and perhaps anomalous result is the 0 complaints regarding appointment times in the South Zone, especially when one compares this value with the appointment time complaints in the East and West Zones, which are both over 80.

12.6.4 Commentary

Met Council's 0.5 threshold for contractors earning a bonus makes perfect sense; however, given that the CFR is currently at 1.33, Met Council may wish to consider a higher bonus. Options are discussed more in Section 17.2. Met Council should also consider levying an invoice credit in its future contracts or

contract amendments, especially if other Study Team recommendations associated with the complaint process are followed. Thresholds and invoice credits to consider include a \$5,000 credit assessed for CFRs 3.0–3.9 and a \$10,000 credit assessed for CFRs ≥ 4 .

Table 12-2 Valid complaints by type and CFRs by zone/provider (2024)

Complaint Type	East Zone/ Transdev	West Zone/ Transit Team	South Zone/ Transit Team	Agency Service	Total	Percentage
No-Show Dispute	331	326	132	0	789	33%
Ride Late	186	125	11	2	324	14%
Appointment Time	89	82	0	2	173	7%
Ride Too Long	52	77	4	1	134	6%
Rude	41	67	0	1	109	5%
Reservation Error	52	39	2	0	93	4%
Safety Concern/Driving	27	54	1	5	87	4%
Behavior Issue— Driver	23	38	8	1	70	3%
Non-escort	14	20	5	0	39	2%
Incorrect Fare	15	11	9	1	36	2%
Safety Concern/Nondriving	7	19	1	1	28	1%
Inappropriate/Rude Comment	6	10	7	2	25	1%
Policy Issue	6	8	0	0	14	1%
Ride Early	4	6	0	0	10	0%
Equipment	6	4	2	0	12	1%
Behavior Issue— Customer	0	4	3	0	7	0%
Photo ID	1	3	0	0	4	0%
Driver Use of Electronic Device	0	1	2	0	3	0%
Data Discrepancy	1	0	1	0	2	0%
Online Booking	1	0	1	0	2	0%
Tie-Down Policy	1	0	1	0	2	0%
Engine Shut Down Policy	0	1	0	0	1	0%
Driver Out of Uniform	0	1	0	0	1	0%
Railroad Crossing	0	1	0	0	1	0%
Other	138	180	83	9	410	17%
Total	1,001	1,077	502	25	2,376	100%
Percentage of Valid Complaints	42%	45%	21%	1%	100%	
EPTs Performed	608,478	714,747	330,753	140,813	1,794,912	
CFR	1.65	1.51	1.51	0.18	1.32	
Valid Complaints	1,001	1,077	502	25	2,376	45%

Complaint Type	East Zone/ Transdev	West Zone/ Transit Team	South Zone/ Transit Team	Agency Service	Total	Percentage
Nonissue Complaints	1,248	1,037	552	27	2,864	55%
Total Complaints	2,249	2,114	1,054	52	5,240	100%

CFR = complaint frequency ratio; EPT = eligible passenger trip

Chapter 13: Safety and Maintenance Effectiveness

Chapter 13 focuses on safety and maintenance effectiveness.

13.1 Preventable AFR

To establish a preventable AFR (number of preventable accidents per 100,000 miles), the Study Team used the number of accidents from Table 13-1, recognizing that this data only captured preventable accidents from the two months (August–September 2024) for which data was made available. Agency Service was discontinued in August; thus, the Study Team assumed that no preventable accidents occurred for Agency Service in August.

Preventable AFRs for Metro Mobility by zone/provider were then calculated for these months (see Table 13-2). AFRs are typically based on total miles. With total miles data unavailable, the Study Team used revenue vehicle miles as a surrogate. If total miles were used, preventable AFRs would be lower.

Most transit agencies strive to keep preventable AFRs under 1 accident for every 100,000 total miles. The Met Council has also established a monthly bonus having a preventable AFR of 1 accident in 150,000 (or more) miles and a monthly invoice credit for exceeding a preventable AFR of 1 accident for every 100,000 miles. As shown in Table 13-2, both 100,000 and 150,000 miles are used as denominators in the AFR due to the structuring of the contractual bonus and invoice credit; the preventable AFRs for each zone and the system are well below 1 for both.

Table 13-1 Metro Mobility incident report (August–September 2024)

Year	2024							
Month	August				September			
Incidents	Metro Mobility Demand East Zone	Metro Mobility Demand South Zone	Metro Mobility Demand West Zone	Total	Metro Mobility Demand East Zone	Metro Mobility Demand South Zone	Metro Mobility Demand West Zone	Total
▣ Accident Pass	4	5	4	13	2	1	6	9
Boarding/Alighting - Steps							1	1
Boarding/Alighting-Lift	1	1	1	3			1	1
Boarding/Alighting-Other*	1	3	3	7				
NA - Not Applicable	1			1				
Other						1		1
Other in Vehicle - Not a Securement Issue		1		1	2		3	5
Other in Vehicle - Securement Issue	1			1			1	1
▣ Accident PD*	13	6	17	36	12	12	15	39
Backing	2	1	3	6		3	4	7
Inadequate Clearance Over Vehicle	2		1	3		3	3	6
Lane Encroachment	1			1		1	1	2
NA - Not Applicable	1	1	2	4	3	1	2	6
Operator Inattention					1			1
Other	1		3	4			1	1
Total	41	22	49	112	35	23	56	114

Table 13-2 Preventable AFRs for Metro Mobility by zone/provider (Aug-Sep 2024)

Metric	East Zone/ Transdev	South Zone/ Transit Team	West Zone/ Transit Team	Total
Preventable Accidents	4	5	4	13
Revenue Vehicle Miles (August–September 2024)	9,171,051	5,337,353	11,741,727	26,250,131
Preventable AFR (150,000 miles)	0.06	0.14	0.05	0.06
Preventable AFR (100,000 miles)	0.04	0.09	0.03	0.04

AFR = accident frequency ratio; Note: the preventable accident counts listed in the table were provided by Met Council.

13.2 PM Adherence

The Met Council provided PM adherence reports for 2024 for both Transdev and Transit Team.

The information for Transdev was robust and sorted by month, identifying each PM inspection; its completion date; the mileage at which it was conducted; and whether it was completed early, on-time,

or late. Transdev performed 1,819 PM inspections during the year, averaging 152 PM inspections per month. Actual PM inspections ranged from 130 in February to 167 in October. All but 11 PM inspections were performed early or on-time. Hence, only 0.60% of the 1,819 PM inspections were late.

For Transit Team, the PM data was not sorted by zone. The Study Team was provided with a report that considered a sample of 456 PM inspections for January–February 2024 only. According to this data, there were three instances of late PM inspections, where each actual inspection was conducted more than 5,000 miles beyond the scheduled mileage at which the inspection was supposed to be conducted. Hence, the percentage of late PM inspections performed by Transit Team represented 0.65% of the 456 PM inspections in the sample. Nonetheless, these percentages indicate that PM adherence is exceptionally good for both Transdev and Transit Team.

13.3 MBRC

MBRC is another common metric that is used to gauge the performance of the vehicle maintenance program and staff. While there appears to be no industry standard for MBRC, the Study Team compared Metro Mobility to other transit agencies, which have much lower thresholds (1 road call every 25,000–55,000 miles). A study TTI performed for the Regional Transit Authority in New Orleans found that their contactor (also Transdev) had achieved an MBRC that ranged from 1 road call every 61,105 miles to 1 road call every 298,243 over a 5-year period, averaging just over 1 road call every 150,000 miles. Table 13-3 provides the number of mechanical failures in revenue service reported by each zone/provider per month. Based on the number of revenue vehicle miles (see Table 13-4), the total MBRC is 1 road call every 174,559 miles (see Table 13-5). Compared to peer agencies, this MBRC appears to be a terrific achievement, although the data in Table 13-3 is based on road calls involving major mechanical incidents vs. all road calls. Of the two contractors, it would appear that Transit Team’s MBRC figures for 2024 are superior to Transdev’s.

Table 13-3 Monthly road calls by zone/provider (2024)

Month	Agency Trips (Transit Team)	East Zone (Transdev)	South Zone (Transit Team)	West Zone (Transit Team)	Grand Total
January	1	5	5	4	15
February	1	5	5	4	10
March		2		2	2
April		3		2	5
May		15	2	5	22
June	1	7	4	8	20
July	1	4	3	4	12
August		10	1	3	14
September		7	2	7	16
October		5	2	2	9
November		2	2	1	5

Month	Agency Trips (Transit Team)	East Zone (Transdev)	South Zone (Transit Team)	West Zone (Transit Team)	Grand Total
December		5		4	9
Grand Total	4	65	26	44	139
Less: Not coded properly	1	6	2	1	10
Adjusted Total	3	59	24	43	129

Table 13-4 Monthly revenue miles by zone/provider (2024)

Month	Agency Trips (Transit Team)	East Zone (Transdev)	South Zone (Transit Team)	West Zone (Transit Team)	Grand Total
January	194,215	611,406	337,840	715,771	1,859,231
February	187,703	589,042	360,143	716,125	1,853,013
March	181,346	617,230	377,901	737,418	1,913,895
April	187,337	623,711	397,968	767,989	1,977,004
May	167,677	675,503	402,046	786,174	2,031,399
June	102,314	624,907	373,666	760,983	1,861,869
July	67,228	658,202	396,208	786,454	1,908,093
August	19,111	673,129	402,726	838,787	1,933,754
September		642,319	385,297	767,709	1,795,325
October		687,335	423,694	844,836	1,955,866
November		609,582	385,488	737,736	1,732,806
December		599,109	372,452	724,237	1,695,798
Grand Total	1,106,931	7,611,476	4,615,428	9,184,218	22,518,054

Table 13-5 Miles between road call by zone/provider (2024)

Metric	Agency Trips (Transit Team)	East Zone (Transdev)	South Zone (Transit Team)	West Zone (Transit Team)	Grand Total
Miles Between Road Calls	368,977	129,008	192,310	213,586	174,559

Chapter 14: Peer Review

14.1 Introduction and Rationale for Peer Selection

The Study Team identified five peer agencies for the Metro Mobility program. The final peer agencies selected—each providing ADA paratransit in a large metropolitan area—include:

- Baltimore: Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)—MobilityLink.
- Denver: RTD—Access-a-Ride.
- Houston: Houston METRO—METROLift.
- Los Angeles: Access Services.
- Seattle: King County Metro—Access Transportation.

The selection of peers was primarily based on similarities in ADA paratransit ridership, service area size and density, and key metrics such as trip length. The Study Team sought to select peers from cold-weather regions. Initial screening was conducted using NTD data; however, the figures in Table 14-1 were supplied by the transit agencies.

Table 14-1 Data from Metro Mobility peers

Location/ Agency/ ADA Paratransit Name	Service Area (miles ²)	Service Area Population	ADA Paratransit Ridership	Average Trip Length (miles)	Alternative Service Ridership	Other DRT Ridership	Microtransit Ridership
Twin Cities/ Met Council/ Metro Mobility	907	3.7M	1.8M	9.1	148,594	100,132 + 131,112 ^b	67,287
Baltimore/ MTA/ MobilityLink	369	2.9M	2.1M ^a	7.2	1,249,736	--	--
Denver/RTD/ Access-a-Ride	2345	3.1M	503,195	14.8	688,613	NA ^b	428,000 ^d
Houston/ METRO/ METROLift	808	8.0M	1.8M	12.5	152,215	--	233,025
Los Angeles/ Access Services	1680	9.7M	4.2M	8.5	--	--	--
Seattle/King County Metro/ Access Transportation	2134	2.2M	830,201 ^a	7.5	--	292,593 ^c	324,676

^a Includes ADA paratransit trips provided by supplemental (ADA paratransit-compliant), nondedicated providers.

^b The Met Council's other DRT services are Met Move (100,132 riders) and Transit Link (131,112 riders).

^c Seattle's other DRT service includes specialized dial-a-ride services under its Community Access Transportation umbrella.

^d RTD chose not to provide data for its SeniorRide (other DRT) and FlexRide (microtransit); FlexRide ridership for 2024 was sourced from the RTD website.

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; DRT = demand-responsive transportation; MTA = Maryland Transit Administration; RTD = Regional Transportation District

The Study Team wanted to include at least one peer with a decentralized model design like Metro Mobility. With ACCESS in Pittsburgh bowing out from participating in the peer review, the Study Team was able to get Access Service in Los Angeles (with its decentralized design) to participate, despite its ridership being significantly higher than Metro Mobility’s ridership. The Study Team also attempted but failed to get Pace in Chicago to participate because of its unique design with zoned reservation intake and centralized scheduling. In the final selection, the Study Team also wanted to include peer systems, that, like the Met Council, provided a family of DRT services, including alternatives services, other DRT services, and microtransit.

Profiles of each agency’s ADA paratransit service (and other DRT services) are provided below, followed by tables comparing service characteristics and performance metrics.

14.2 Peer System Profiles

Profiles of the five peer agencies’ ADA paratransit service and other DRT services are presented below. Tables for each peer, showing key characteristics and KPIs, may be found in Appendix D.

14.2.1 Baltimore: MTA—MobilityLink

MTA’s MobilityLink service in Baltimore was selected as a peer due to its comparable population, ridership, and cold-weather climate. MTA’s service area covers 369 square miles, with a service area population of nearly 2.9 million. In 2024, the MobilityLink ridership totaled over 2.1 million passenger trips, fairly close to Metro Mobility’s 1.8 million passenger trips. Like Metro Mobility, MobilityLink is supported by Trapeze, with in-vehicle Rangers for driver-dispatcher communications. MobilityLink operates 7 days a week. The advance reservation period is 1–7 days. The default level of driver assistance is door-to-door.

Most of the service delivery (1,992,465 ADA paratransit trips in 2024) is performed by three carriers—MV Transportation, Transdev, and First Transit—operating dedicated vehicles supplied by MTA Mobility. The Transdev and First Transit fleets are operated separately with two different sets of management staff, drivers, and support staff. However, unlike Metro Mobility, these three providers are not zoned but rather sent trips based on a negotiated set of RVHs derived from run cuts performed separately by MTA Mobility staff. The dedicated fleet is composed of 500 vehicles, of which 376 are WAVs and 124 are non-WAVs, equating to a service mix of 75%/25%. Supplementing these dedicated fleets is UZURV, which served 152,680 trips in 2024 (300–500 trips per day) with its set of nondedicated ADA-compliant drivers.

Another key difference is how the call-and-control center functions are handled. The model design of MobilityLink has MTA Mobility staff handling reservations (and real-time scheduling) and day-of-service calls, while the final scheduling and dispatching functions are the responsibility of MV Transportation. These MV Transportation employees are located within the same operations center as MTA Mobility

call-takers. A couple of notes on this design. First, MV Transportation has Trapeze running optimizations almost in a continuous fashion (CDO). Second, it is a bit unusual to have dispatchers from one company be performing final scheduling and dispatching to drivers/vehicles of a fellow operations contractor, yet this seems to work well in Baltimore. With one contractor doing 100% of the dispatching, it also avoids the finger-pointing that can alternatively ensue with dispatchers of the three operations contractors (centrally located and overseen by the transit agency) not working well as a unit—a problem that occurred and was addressed in a similar fashion in Washington D.C.

Total ADA paratransit ridership was 2,145,145 passenger trips in 2024. The productivity for 2024 for the dedicated fleet was 1.66 passenger trips per RVH, with an average trip length of 7.19 miles. The 2024 cost per ADA passenger trip was \$48.52. The agency's OTP for pickups was 91.8% vs. their 93.5% goal.

The history of OTP in Baltimore has been rocky but ultimately has a happy ending. In late 2021/early 2022, OTP was well below 70%, hitting rock bottom at 60%. In May 2022, MTA added a third service delivery provider, MV Transportation, who was given the largest share of the trips (40% vs. 30% vs. 30%). With this change, OTP soared back over 90%. In the summer of 2025, OTP averaged 93.6%.

MTA also has a very robust alternative service, Call-a-Ride, which served 1.25 million trips in 2024 (vs. 2.15 million ADA paratransit trips.) The service is overseen by MJM Innovations with several taxi companies and TNCs participating and collectively operating approximately 430 nondedicated vehicles.

14.2.2 Denver: RTD—Access-a-Ride

In Denver, RTD's ADA paratransit service, Access-a-Ride, was chosen as a peer because of the similar service area population and cold-weather climate, as well as its family of DRT services.

Access-a-Ride covers a 2,345-square-mile area across seven counties in the Denver region, serving 3.08 million residents. Operating 20–24 hours a day, 7 days a week, trips can be reserved 1–7 days in advance. The default level of driver assistance is door-to door.

The service delivery network consists of two unzoned operations vendors—Transdev and MTM—each operating a dedicated fleet of vehicles. The RTD collectively supplies 339 dedicated vehicles, which are roughly proportioned based on the respective negotiated service packages of service hours with the contractors. Transdev gets 65% of the RVHs, MTM gets 25% of the RVHs, and Transdev—operating in a nondedicated mode—gets 10% of the RVHs. This apportionment evolved from a service model where there were three dedicated service providers with a 50%/25%/25% split.

Meanwhile, the contracted call-and-control center contractor—responsible for reservations, scheduling dispatching, and the handling of service-day calls from customers—is also Transdev. The supporting technology provided by the RTD is the HBSS Q-Ryde, which replaced RouteMatch within the last year.

In FY 2024, Access-a-Ride delivered 503,195 one-way trips averaging 14.82 miles, with a productivity of 1.25 trips per RVH, a cost of \$106.60 per trip, and a 91.1% OTP. Of the 503,195 ADA paratransit passenger trips, Transdev served 296,873 (59%) of the trips, and MTM served 130,296 (26%) passenger

trips. Collectively, these two carriers served 85% of the Access-a-Ride trips. The remaining 76,056 (15%) passenger trips were served by Transdev operating approximately 50 taxis in a nondedicated mode.

RTD also offers Access-on-Demand (a rebranding of its long-time alternative service, Access-a-Cab)—a subsidized curb-to-curb option using providers such as Uber, Lyft, zTrip, and Metro Taxi covering the same service area as Access-a-Ride. Interestingly, these carriers provide ambulatory service, while 25 WAVs, operated by Access-a-Ride contractors, are used to handle Access-on-Demand WAV trips. With Access-a-Cab, riders would call the Access-a-Ride call center to request service, indicating their carrier of choice. The call-takers would then e-fax the request to that carrier. With the evolution of this service, customers generally make their own reservations directly with the carriers, mostly via apps, with one exception—customers wishing to utilize Metro Taxi must still call the Access-a-Ride call center, and these requests are forwarded to Metro Taxi electronically. With Access-on-Demand, RTD will subsidize the first \$25 of the fare, above which (for longer trips) the rider is responsible. The basic level of driver assistance is curb-to-curb, noting that WAV drivers provide ADA paratransit level assistance. In 2024, 688,613 Access-on-Demand trips were provided at an average subsidy of \$16.64 per trip.

RTD in Denver also provides the following two other DRT services—SeniorRide and FlexRide:

- SeniorRide: An advance-reservation, shared-ride, curb-to-curb service for seniors over 65 years of age and who meet at least one of the following additional criteria:
 - Have a disability.
 - Be experiencing income hardship (based on federal poverty guidelines).
 - Have difficulty using regular fixed-route services.

The RTD did not provide any statistics for SeniorRide for 2024, nor could any be found on the RTD website.

- FlexRide: RTD's on-demand, curb-to-curb microtransit service for the general public is available in 24 zones throughout the Denver metropolitan area. Many customers use FlexRide to make intrazonal trips to a variety of destinations, as well to access the RTD bus and rail system. Same-day requests with 90-minute advance notice can be made, or advance reservation trips can be made up to 30 days in advance. Subscription trip requests can also be made. While RTD also did not provide any statistics for FlexRide, the RTD website indicated that approximately 428,000 FlexRide trips were served in 2024. This value reflects an increase of 8,4% over the 395,000 trips served in 2023, but prepandemic ridership in 2019 totaled 819,000 trips.

14.2.3 Houston: METRO—METROLift

Houston METRO's ADA paratransit service, METROLift, was chosen as a peer for its comparable ridership of 1.8 million passenger trips and 808 square-mile service area, as well as its 7-day-a-week operations, like Metro Mobility. Houston METRO also uses Trapeze (and EZ Wallet) and Rangers to support its ADA paratransit service. Houston METRO also provides an alternative service and microtransit service.

A distinguishing characteristic of METROLift is that it takes next-day reservations only. The level of driver assistance is door-to-door.

All call-center functions for METROLift are performed by Houston METRO, with all services provided by two dedicated contractors—Transdev and MV Transportation—both of whom provide dedicated service with 487 vehicles provided by Houston METRO. METROLift operates without zones; instead, service providers are given trips based on scheduled runs.

Formerly, Houston METRO provided METROLift with First Transit operating METROLift-provided accessible vans and Yellow Cab operating accessible minivans. First Transit served about 40% of the trips while operating dedicated service, and Yellow Cab served about 60% of the trips while operating a mix of dedicated and nondedicated service. Approximately 11% of the trips—mostly peak overflow trips—were served on nondedicated taxis. The service model changed, however, when Yellow Cab filed for bankruptcy, while zTrip picked up some of Yellow Cab’s contracts, Houston METRO went in a different direction.

In FY 2024, METROLift provided approximately 1,821,713 passenger trips, with an average trip length of 12.5 miles, a productivity of 1.5 passenger trips per RVH, and an average cost per trip of \$50.01. OTP was 89.81%.

Houston METRO also provides an on-demand alternative service program called the METROLift Subsidy Program (MSP). MSP is available throughout the same service area as METROLift, with zTrip and other taxi companies participating in the program. In 2024, 152,215 MSP trips were subsidized.

Houston METRO also has a robust microtransit service, Curb-to-Curb, which is available in three zones—Missouri City (18 square miles), Hiram Clarks (22 square miles), and Acres Home (7 square miles)—plus a late night microtransit service in Kashmere (16 square miles). Curb-to-Curb is available 7 days a week and can be accessed through the RideCo app (RideCo is the supporting technology). The default level of service is curb-to-curb, although door-to-door service will be provided upon request. Collectively, Curb-to-Curb service is provided in-house with 73 WAVs. In 2024, 233,025 Curb-to-Curb trips were served with an average trip length of 13.6 miles, a productivity of 2.51 passenger trips per RVH, and a cost of \$21.31 per trip. OTP was 91.30%.

14.2.4 Los Angeles: Access Services

Access Services in Los Angeles was chosen as a peer primarily because of its decentralized model and its service area, which, like Metro Mobility’s service area, extends beyond the federally mandated minimum. It also has an average trip length fairly similar to Metro Mobility’s average trip length.

Access Services is a local public entity that provides ADA paratransit on behalf of 46 public transit agencies that provide local fixed-route transit in Los Angeles. Access Services is now the largest ADA paratransit provider in the United States, serving approximately 4.2 million passenger trips per year. While this ridership is significantly higher than Metro Mobility’s ridership, Access Services was selected primarily because of its decentralized design. Like Metro Mobility, it has multiple zones—each with a

turnkey contractor—where day-to-day functions of reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and service delivery are all performed in a decentralized fashion.

There are six Access Services zones. The Eastern Region served by San Gabriel Transit; the Southern Region served by Global Paratransit; the West Central Region served by California Transit, the Northern Region served by MV Transportation; the Antelope Valley Region served by Transdev, and the Santa Clarita Region served by the City of Santa Clarita. Collectively, these six zones cover a service area of approximately 1,680 square miles and serve a population of over 9.7 million. The providers operate a fleet of small buses, minivans, and sedans supplied by Access Services, supplemented by taxis. Fares are distance-based and, within the Los Angeles Basin, range from \$2.75 to \$3.50 for each one-way trip.

Access Paratransit operates 7 days a week, 24 hours a day in most areas of Los Angeles County. The default level of service is curb-to-curb, with beyond-the-curb service available upon request.

Access Services does not provide the technology used by the contractors; the provision of technology is the responsibility of the contractors. Access Services contractors in four of the six regions use TSS Paratransit's 5M software, which supports reservations, scheduling, and dispatching functions for 81% of the trips in the Access Services system. The contractors in the other two zones use Trapeze, although one of these contractors is transitioning to Spare.

Interestingly, Access Services has a 20-minute pickup window—one of the few larger paratransit services besides New York City's Access-a-Ride service with this span.

Access Services has also begun the process of migrating from contractor-owned or leased facilities to obtaining facilities and providing them to the contractors. To date, Access Services now provides three of the operations/maintenance facilities.

Like the Met Council, Access Services is also the regional entity responsible for coordination planning.

In FY 2024, Access Services provided approximately 4.2 million passenger trips, with an average one-way trip length of 8.5 miles. In 2024, Access Services achieved an OTP of 92.30% (with a 20-minute pickup window), with missed trips under 0.33%.

14.2.5 Seattle: King County Metro—Access Transportation

King County Metro in Seattle was selected for its urban service area, robust ADA paratransit program, geographic similarity to the Twin Cities, diverse models, and family of DRT services. King County Metro covers a service area of 2,134 square miles and a service area population of approximately 2.2 million.

Since October 2019, King County Metro has used a single-contractor model for Access Transportation—its ADA paratransit service. The contractor, MV Transportation, is responsible for reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and service delivery functions, operating a dedicated fleet. MV Transportation also uses a network of taxi operators to provide supplemental overflow ADA paratransit service during peak hours and to serve other trips that cannot be scheduled on dedicated runs, long or out-of-the-way trips that cannot be shared, and trips in low-demand areas and/or at low-density times. Taxis are also

used to respond to breakdowns and accidents. Access Transportation’s default level of driver assistance is curb-to-curb, although beyond-the-curb service can be requested.

Prior to October 2019, there was a very different service model. In the former model, King County Metro contracted out its call center and service delivery functions separately. King County contracted with First Transit to be the call-and-control center manager, handling reservations and scheduling, as well as dispatching and same-day issues. King County concurrently contracted with two dedicated service providers—Veolia/Transdev and Solid Ground—who collectively provided roughly 91% of all trips. Separately, First Transit assigned the remaining 9% of the trips to six nondedicated taxi companies to provide ADA paratransit supplemental service. For taxi trips, trip status calls were handled by First Transit; however, customers were required to call the actual provider for ETA information.

Toward the tail end of this contract term, the operations contractors had been reduced to one primary contractor (Transdev) and one smaller provider (Solid Ground). In addition, King County Metro felt that:

- The former model made it more difficult to pinpoint responsibility and resolve issues effectively.
- Customer service was inconsistent across different contractors, particularly regarding pickup and drop-off windows, and dedicated Metro customer service for Access riders was lacking.
- Feedback from riders, caregivers, and community organizations highlighted a need for improved service reliability, clearer communication, and greater responsiveness to rider concerns.
- Streamlining operations under a single contractor would improve scheduling, routing, and overall service delivery.

For these reasons, King County Metro changed to a single-contractor model.

Like Metro Mobility, King County Metro has been long-time user of Trapeze and utilizes an in-house Customer Service Department to manage and investigate complaints.

In FY 2024, King County Metro provided 830,201 ADA paratransit passenger trips, of which 718,702 (87%) passenger trips were served by MV Transportation’s dedicated fleet, and 11,489 (13%) were served on taxis. The systemwide productivity was 1.29 passenger trips per RVH with an average trip length of 7.53 miles. Conditional eligibility is operationalized, and the agency utilizes Trapeze scheduling software.

King County Metro also provides the following two other DRT services:

- Community Access Transportation: A family of next-day shared-ride DRT services for individuals who have difficulty using traditional bus service. Community Access Transportation encompasses a wider range of initiatives and programs aimed at improving transportation accessibility for specific, vulnerable groups. Access Transportation, as described previously, is a specific program that falls within the framework of Community Access Transportation. In addition to Access Transportation, Community Access Transportation includes the following:
 - The Hyde Shuttle: Provides door-to-door transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.

- Solid Ground Transportation: Provides transportation services for people who cannot use the bus, including a downtown circulator.
- Hopelink: Provides transportation to medical appointments.
- Volunteer Driver Program: Provides transportation to medical appointments.

On top of the ADA paratransit trips mentioned previously, King County provided an additional 292,593 Community Access Transportation trips in 2024.

- Metro Flex: An on-demand general public microtransit service operated by Via Transportation in eight zones. Customers access on-demand service through Via's app. Fares are equivalent to fixed-route fares, with reduced fares for seniors, persons with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. In 2024, King County Metro provided 324,676 Metro Flex trips.

Including (other) Community Access Transportation trips and Metro Flex trips, King County Metro provided nearly 1.45 million DRT trips in 2024.

14.3 Comparative Analysis

To assess how Metro Mobility compares with similar ADA paratransit services provided by five peer transit agencies, a series of comparative analyses were conducted. These analyses focused on ridership levels, trip lengths, operating costs, service productivity, and KPIs such as OTP and missed trips.

14.3.1 Congestion Information

To provide context for interpreting differences in service performance among the peer ADA paratransit systems, the Study Team first compiled congestion data for each of the six metropolitan areas. The data comes from the 2022 Urban Mobility Report published by TTI, which uses crowdsourced travel data from INRIX and national highway inventory data from the Federal Highway Administration. The latest report is available for download (or as a visualization map) at <https://mobility.tamu.edu/umr/>.

Three key congestion metrics were examined:

- Delay per Auto Commuter: The annual hours of delay experienced by a typical auto commuter during peak travel periods.
- Planning Time Index: A measure of travel time reliability, indicating how much total time a commuter should plan to ensure their on-time arrival 95% of the time.
- Travel Time Index: A ratio comparing peak-period travel time to free-flow travel time, reflecting how much longer trips take in congested conditions.

As shown in Table 14-2, Los Angeles faces the most significant congestion, with 122 annual hours of delay per commuter and the highest planning time index and travel time index values. In contrast, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Denver experience the lowest congestion among the peer regions, which may contribute to comparatively higher scheduling reliability and operational productivity. Seattle, Houston, and Denver fall in the mid-range for congestion.

Table 14-2 Comparison of congestion metrics for peer group cities (2022)

Metric	Los Angeles	Seattle	Houston	Denver	Twin Cities	Baltimore
Delay per Auto Commuter (hours)	122	82	69	66	59	54
Planning Time Index (minutes)	2.54	1.98	1.77	1.73	1.66	1.55
Travel Time Index (minutes)	1.5	1.32	1.27	1.28	1.24	1.19

14.3.2 Total Passenger Trips in 2024

Figure 14-1 shows that Metro Mobility in Minnesota provided 1,794,791 ADA paratransit service passenger trips in 2024, placing it in the mid-range among its five peer agencies. Access Services in Los Angeles—the largest ADA paratransit service in the United States in 2024—reported the highest volume with 4,201,486 trips, more than twice Metro Mobility’s total. The transit agencies in Baltimore (2,145,145 trips) and Houston (1,821,713 trips) posted slightly higher volumes than Metro Mobility. Baltimore’s figure included trips from supplemental, ADA-compliant, nondedicated providers. Like Baltimore, the ridership in Seattle (830,201 trips) also include ADA-compliant supplemental provider trips. Denver recorded the lowest volume at 503,195 trips.

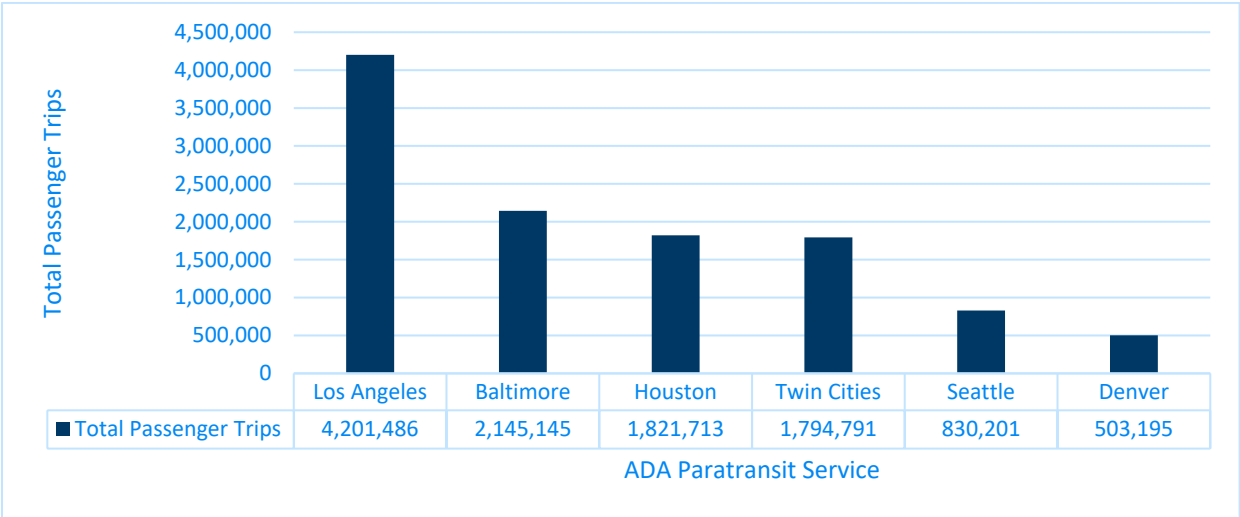


Figure 14-1 ADA paratransit ridership for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.3 Average Trip Length in 2024

Average trip length generally has an impact on productivity—the longer the average trip length, the lower the productivity tends to be, and vice versa. Figure 14-2 shows the comparison of average ADA paratransit passenger trip lengths. Denver recorded the longest average trip length at 14.8 miles, followed by Houston Metro at 12.5 miles. The average trip lengths of Metro Mobility (9.1 miles) and Los Angeles (8.5 miles) were in the mid-range, with Seattle (7.5 miles), and Baltimore (7.2 miles) reporting the shortest average trip lengths among the peers.

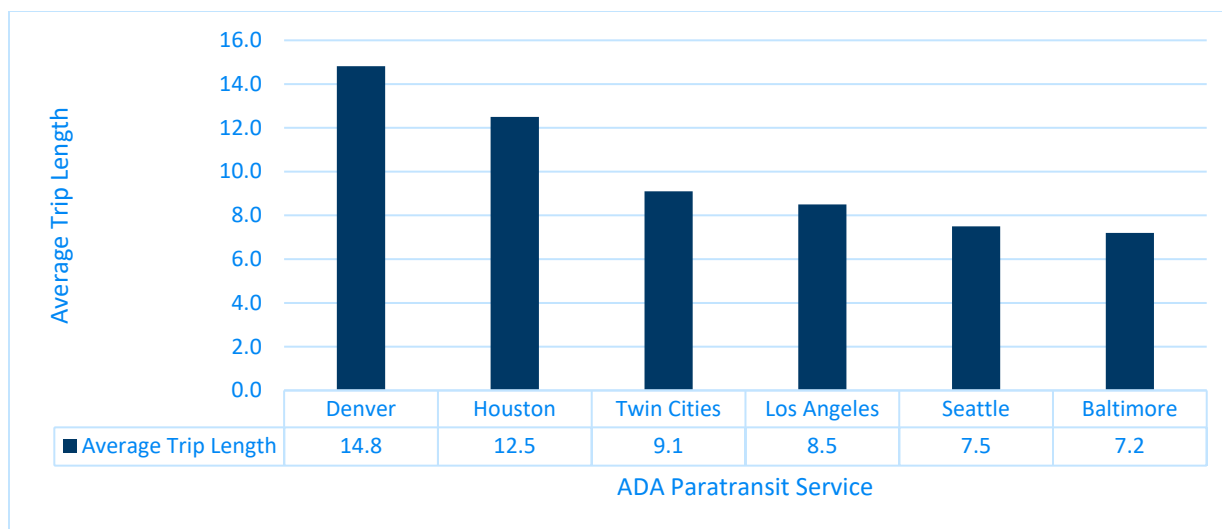


Figure 14-2 Average trip length for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.4 Productivity in 2024

Figure 14-3 shows a comparison of dedicated fleet productivities as measured in ADA paratransit passenger trips per RVH. All were fairly close, with Baltimore being top ranked with 1.66 passenger trips per RVH. Metro Mobility's productivity was second highest at 1.55 passenger trips per RVH, followed by Houston at 1.50 passenger trips per RVH. Seattle (1.28 passenger trips per RVH) and Denver (1.25 passenger trips per RVH) had the lowest productivity. No productivity data was reported for Los Angeles, but the 2023 NTD data showed Access Services with a 1.8 passenger trips per RVH productivity.

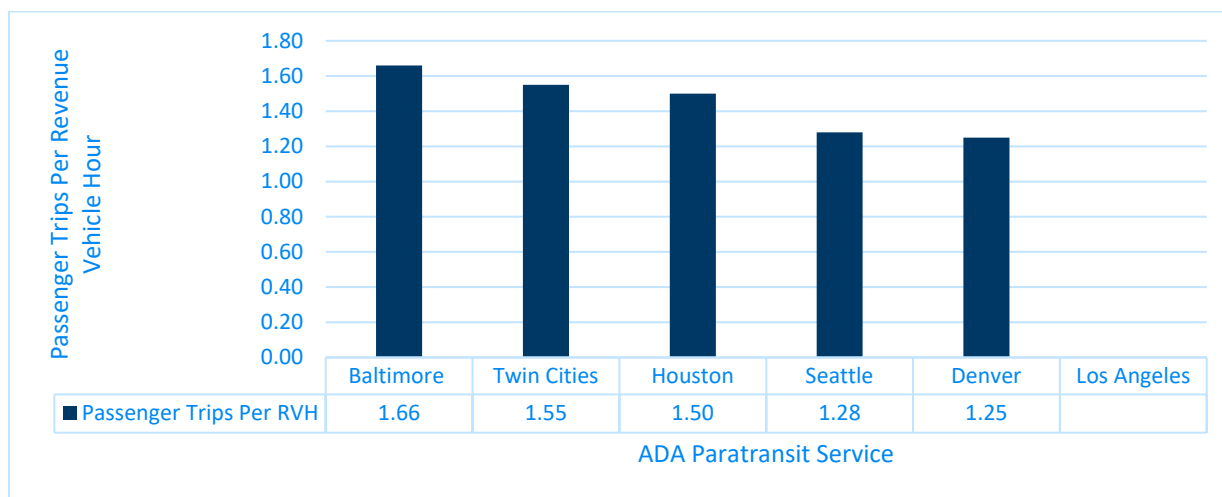


Figure 14-3 Productivity for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.5 Cost per Passenger Trip in 2024

Figure 14-4 shows the comparison of reported costs per passenger trip. As shown, Metro Mobility had the lowest cost per trip at \$44.91, followed closely by Baltimore at \$48.52 and Houston at \$50.01. In the middle of the pack was Los Angeles at \$77.62. Seattle and Denver were much higher at \$103.76 and

\$106.60, respectively. This comparison highlights the cost efficiency of Metro Mobility. Note the correlation between higher productivity and lower costs per trip.

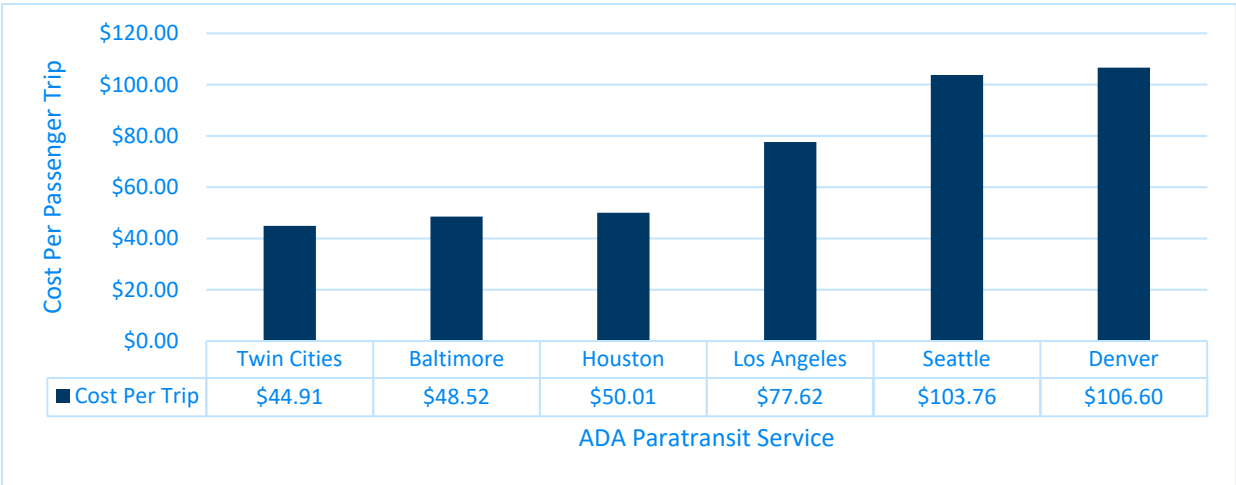


Figure 14-4 Cost per trip for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.6 Cost per RVH in 2024

Figure 14-5 compares cost per RVH. Metro Mobility had one of the lowest costs per RVH, second only to Houston’s \$59.61. Seattle reported the highest cost per RVH at \$147.27, followed closely by Baltimore’s \$135.96 and Denver’s \$132.72. Cost data for Access Services in Los Angeles was not reported.

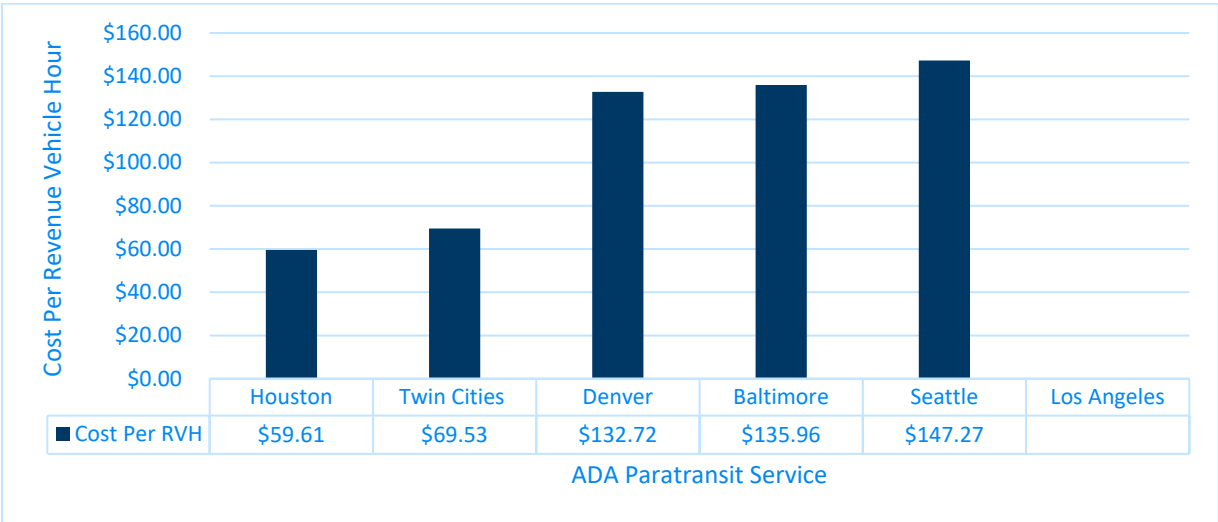


Figure 14-5 ADA paratransit cost per RVH for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.7 Actual OTP in 2024

Figure 14-6 compares actual OTP. Four agencies had OTPs above 90%—Metro Mobility (91.6%), Los Angeles (92.30%), Baltimore (91.80%), and Denver (91.10%); Houston and Denver were slightly below 90%. As reported in Chapter 8 of this report, Metro Mobility’s OTP performance, while below its 93% goal in 2024, has increased to above 94% in the first quarter of 2025.

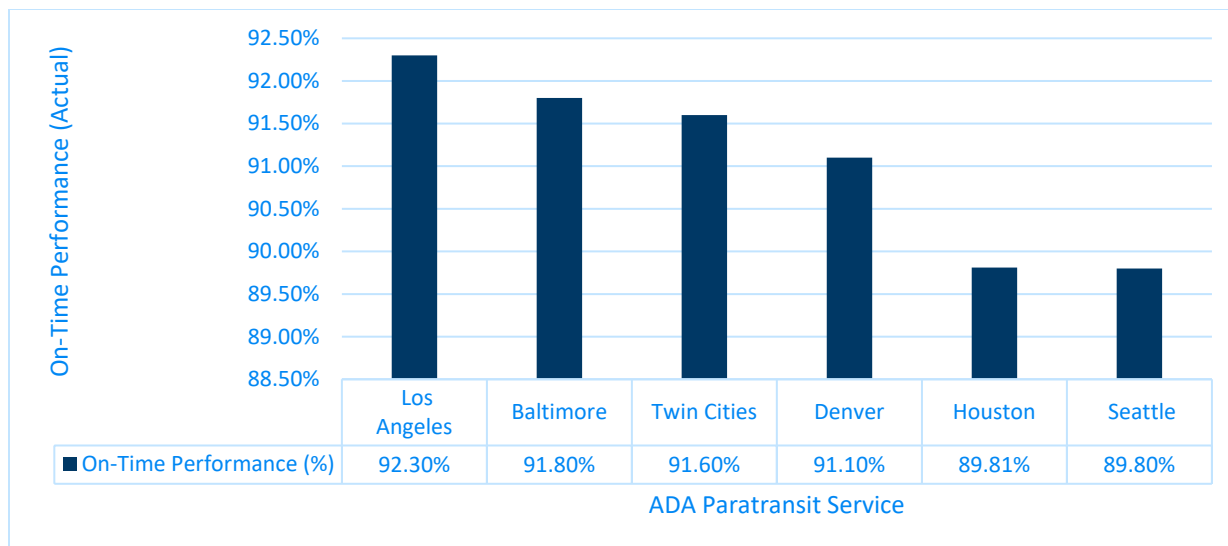


Figure 14-6 Comparison of actual OTP for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.8 OTP Standards in 2024

Figure 14-7 presents a comparison of the OTP standards against which actual OTP is gauged. Of those systems that reported their OTP standards, all were above 91%. Metro Mobility had one of the highest standards at 93%, second only to Baltimore at 93.5%, reflecting the Met Council’s emphasis on maintaining a high level of service reliability for ADA paratransit trips. OTP standard data were not available for Houston and Denver. All of the standards reported are higher than the FTA’s minimum guideline of 90%.

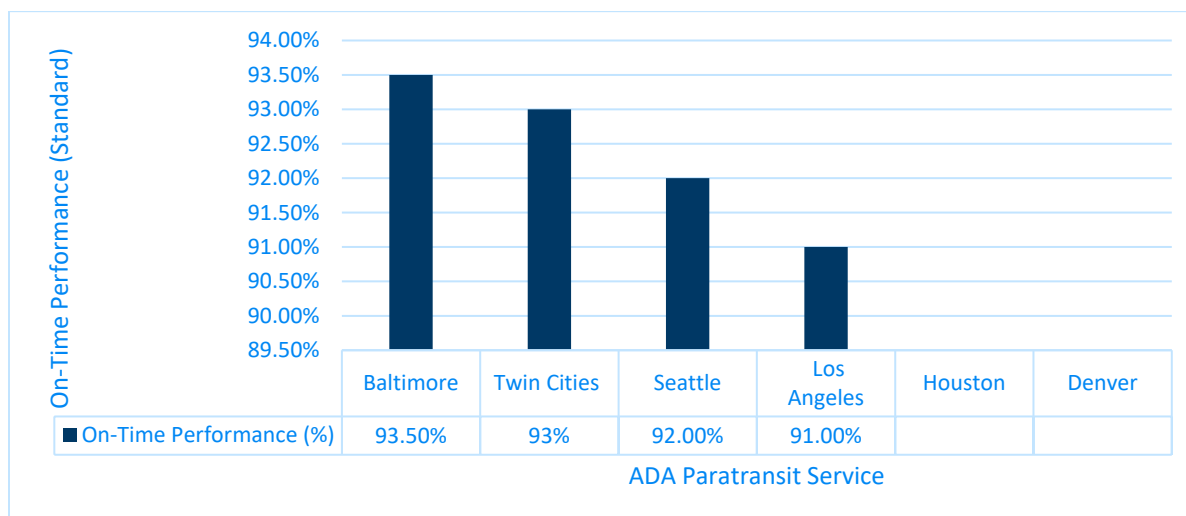


Figure 14-7 OTP standards for peer agencies (2024).

14.3.9 Missed Trip Percentage

Figure 14-8 shows the comparison of missed trip percentages for 2024. Metro Mobility and three of its peers reported missed trip percentages of $\leq 0.5\%$, which is par for the industry although Denver’s

reported 0% is hard to believe. On the other end of the scale, the missed trip percentages for Seattle (7.2%) and Houston (6.44%) are also hard to believe. The Study Team suspects these might have been miscalculated and be off by a factor of 10.

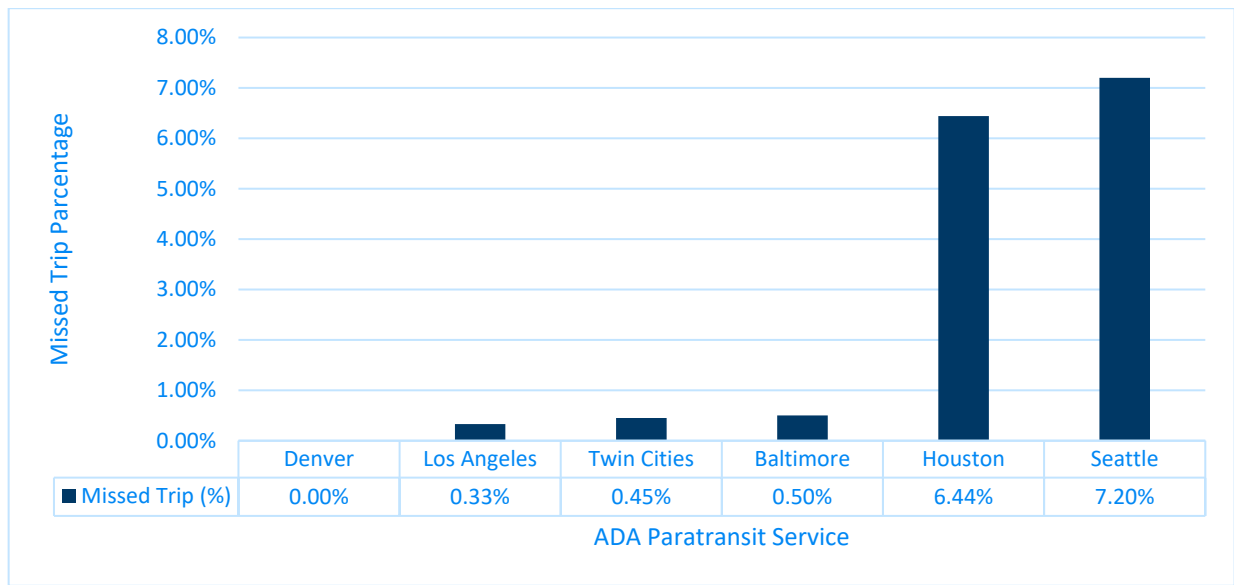


Figure 14-8 Missed trip percentage for peer agencies (2024).

Note: Data reported for Denver, Houston, and Seattle are likely incorrect.

14.4 Summary Comparison of KPIs in 2024

As shown in Table 14-3, Metro Mobility’s performance in 2024 holds up very well in comparison to the five peers chosen by the Study Team. What stands out in this table is the high level of service and cost efficiency compared to the peers, while faring well in the OTP comparison (Metro Mobility would have placed first in OTP with in the first quarter of 2025).

Table 14-3 Metro Mobility’s rank among peers for KPIs (2024)

KPI	Top-Ranked Agency	Metro Mobility’s Rank among Peers	Number of Peers with Credible Data
Productivity (high)	Baltimore: MTA	2 nd	5
Cost per Trip (low)	Metro Mobility	1 st	6
Cost per RVH (low)	Houston: Houston METRO	2 nd	5
OTP (high)	Los Angeles: Access Services	3 rd	6
Missed Trip Percentage (low)	Baltimore: MTA	2 nd	3

KPI = key performance indicator; MTA = Maryland Transit Administration; OTP = on-time performance percentage

14.5 Supplemental Peer Agency Feedback

In addition to the quantitative performance measures presented previously, each peer agency provided qualitative responses to three supplemental survey questions. Their feedback, presented in Table 14-4, offers further context on operational priorities, challenges, and improvement strategies.

Table 14-4 Additional survey responses from peer agencies (2024)

Agency	Other Performance Measures/KPIs	Areas of Improvement in Past 5 Years	Actions Taken to Address Improvements
Baltimore: MTA	None.	Scheduling software is not keeping up with latest advances in technology. Driver retention is an issue for providers, resulting in closed routes and diminished OTP.	MTA issued an RFI for new scheduling software, to be followed by an RFP. MTA also instituted an equitable pay adjustment to help providers attract drivers to MTA rather than Uber, Lift, Amazon Delivery, etc.
Denver: RTD	Excessive OBT, fixed-route equivalent time.	Productivity and OTP increased through the use of new paratransit software and a fleet mix adjustment to include a greater percentage of ambulatory trips dispatched to nondedicated taxi contractors.	RTD monitors productivity and OTP through incremental adjustments each month. RTD monitors fleet mix through deployment adjustments three times per year.
Houston: Houston METRO	In addition to data provided, Houston METRO tracks several internal KPIs to monitor service performance including vehicle utilization, mean distance between failures, on-time performance for pickups and drop-offs within the scheduled window, no-show and late cancellation rates, passengers per vehicle hour for microtransit, and cost per revenue hour and mile. Vehicle maintenance trends and ADA compliance indicators are also regularly reviewed to ensure reliability and accessibility across the system.	A key area for improvement has been the paratransit scheduling system. The current platform relies on static scheduling, which limits the ability to optimize routes in real time and fully utilize the fleet. The new system offers continuous optimization capabilities to improve efficiency, reduce wait times, and enhance overall service reliability for riders.	Houston METRO issued an RFP 2 months ago, has selected a vendor, and is now in the early stages of implementation. Houston METRO is working closely with their IT department and the contractor to define system requirements, review best practices, and develop a phased project timeline to ensure a smooth transition and successful deployment.

Agency	Other Performance Measures/KPIs	Areas of Improvement in Past 5 Years	Actions Taken to Address Improvements
Los Angeles: Access Services	Excessively late trips (arriving ≥ 60 minutes outside the pickup window) should not exceed 0.10%. Average initial hold times should not be >120 seconds for reservations or >5 minutes for ETA or cancellation calls. MBRC should exceed 25,000 miles. CFR should not exceed 4.0 complaints per 1,000 trips. Preventable AFRs should not exceed 0.75 collisions and 0.25 incidents per 100,000 miles, respectively. Additional safety KPIs are included in the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.	Excessively long trips, safety, and phone reservations.	Access Services implemented a route efficiency index that penalizes trips that are excessively indirect. Significant safety improvements have been implemented through the agency's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Implementation of online reservations has increased significantly (now 18% of all reservations).
Seattle: King County Metro	Passenger and vehicle miles travelled and trips served in Equity Priority Areas.	King County Metro has been deploying demand-responsive services that are duplicative and uncoordinated—each operating with separate overhead, technology, policies, assets, etc. This approach has resulted in inefficient use of resources and limited ability to contain costs while expanding demand-responsive services.	King County Metro launched the Integrated Services Planning project to define a 7-year vision to integrate services and operate cost-effectively. This process entails major changes to the organization and affects all aspects of demand-response programs. King County Metro is developing a set of open-source application programming interfaces and software frameworks that enable integration of elements from numerous software vendors and avoid single-vendor lock-in.

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; AFR = accident frequency ratio; CFR = complaint frequency ratio; ETA = estimated time of arrival; KPI = key performance indicator; MTA = Maryland Transit Administration; OBT = on-board time; OTP = on-time performance; RFI = request for information; RFP = request for proposal; RTD = Regional Transportation District

Chapter 15: Stakeholder Engagement

Chapter 15 focuses on stakeholder engagement, which includes interviews with the agencies identified in the legislation and other agencies suggested by the stakeholders. Researchers also provided an opportunity for ground-truthing the information recorded in the stakeholder interviews at a report-back meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity for confirmation and clarification of the agency stakeholder interview findings, as documented in this chapter.

15.1 Purpose

The legislation initiating this service study specifically directed consultation with:

Interested parties and stakeholders in conducting the service study and report, including representatives from the Minnesota Council on Disability, the American Council of the Blind of Minnesota, The Minnesota Deaf Blind Association, the National Federation of the Blind – Minnesota Chapter, the Minnesota Board on Aging, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, identified riders of Metro Mobility, Metro Mobility drivers, transit providers and any other interested party with experience in providing mobility services for disabled persons.

The purpose of these interviews was to identify key issues and obtain an understanding of unmet needs among the stakeholders' clients and constituents. The findings from the interviews, along with other qualitative and quantitative data, were used to shape recommendations for enhancing Metro Mobility's service delivery.

15.2 Methodology

To accomplish this purpose, the Study Team relied on staff from MnDOT's Office of Transit and Active Transportation to identify representatives from the various agencies. An introductory email was sent that indicated that researchers from TTI would be contacting them to schedule an interview to support the study. Researchers from TTI emailed each of the provided contacts asking respondents to indicate their availability for a 45- to 60-minute virtual meeting. Once an agreeable time and day was found, participants were sent a calendar appointment that included a Microsoft Teams link for the meeting. In one instance, researchers were asked to use a provided Zoom link because participants felt that the Zoom software platform was more accessible. In some instances, researchers were referred to other/additional individuals to participate. As interviews were scheduled, researchers asked participants if any accommodation was needed. In a few instances, the services of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and Protactile ASL interpreters were engaged to enable meaningful participation of interviewees who are Deaf or DeafBlind.

An interview guide was developed that asked participants about their perceptions of Metro Mobility services based on either their personal experience and/or feedback received from their constituents. The following interview questions were included:

- Please give a short overview of your (or your constituents') perceptions of Metro Mobility.
- What is working well?
- Are there additional needs not being met?
- Are the particular aspects (scheduling, pickup, drop-off, vehicle availability, etc.) that are particularly challenging?
- Are there gaps in service areas? How could these be addressed?
- Are there other agencies the Study Team should talk to about Metro Mobility services?

During March 2025, seven virtual semi-structured stakeholder interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams with a total of 13 interviewees. Groups consisted of one to four interviewees each, not including ASL interpreters. The interviews lasted 45–60 minutes. With the interviewees' permission, the interviews were recorded to aid in the researchers' notetaking. Themes from these discussions follow.

15.3 Interview Summaries

15.3.1 Minnesota Board on Aging

Researchers conducted a virtual interview on March 13, 2025, with the Minnesota Board on Aging. Interviewees included staff and board members. Participants explained that Minnesota Board on Aging is a state entity housed within DHS. The primary responsibility is to support older adults and their caregivers to allow more senior adults to stay in their homes and communities. They do this through the administration of grant funding from state and federal sources. Many of their constituents rely on Metro Mobility services for transportation. Participants agreed that many improvements have been made over the years to make Metro Mobility service more user-friendly. Concerns that they have heard from users relate to excessive wait times and the broad windows for pickups and drop-offs. They expressed concern about people not getting to appointments on time. The participants expressed that numerous Metro Mobility vans often show up at one location, giving the perception of a lack of coordination.

Older adults often suffer from dementia or have other memory care needs. Specialized training of drivers could help support their transport. A PCA or companion who accompanies a rider to a destination is not able to book a return trip without the client. It is inconvenient for the companion if the client is at a destination for an extended time.

The participants expressed a desire for more coordinated service between providers and hoped this study would allow for more extended coverage. They also expressed that, because caregivers are often arranging rides for older clients, a more convenient reservation system would be beneficial.

15.3.2 Age-Friendly Minnesota

Researchers conducted a virtual interview on March 18, 2025, with Age-Friendly Minnesota. Interviewees included staff and appointed leaders. Participants explained that the two biggest challenges facing seniors are housing and transportation. The goal of Age-Friendly Minnesota is to help older adults stay in their homes and communities. One participant is a Metro Mobility user and primarily uses the service to supplement limited driving. She uses both the standard paratransit service and the POD service but prefers the door-through-door service offered by Metro Mobility. However, this participant shared several concerns with the research team. She reported the difficulty that she experiences when trying to schedule rides to and from surgeries and other medical appointments, noting the uncertainty surrounding actual start and end times for these appointments as well as the wait time involved. She discussed concerns with the accuracy of the maps used by drivers, indicating that routes are erratic and inefficient, resulting in extensive time on the bus waiting to be dropped off. She also indicated that she would prefer to ride in a car rather than a bus and shared her preference for the texts she receives to notify her that her driver will arrive in X minutes when she uses the POD service. Participants also discussed geographic limitations with the service area; one explained that she lives 10 miles from the nearest hospital but is unable to use Metro Mobility to get there because it is not in the service area. The participant was also concerned that some older adults who could benefit from ADA paratransit service may find it difficult to apply, with the requirements to get medical documentation from a provider, mail in paperwork, travel downtown to pick up an ID card, and load a fare card with funds.

15.3.3 American Council of the Blind of Minnesota

On March 14, 2025, researchers interviewed two leaders of the American Council of the Blind's Minnesota chapter. Both are users of Metro Mobility and the POD service. While they agreed that Metro Mobility has made some improvements over the years, they both brought up concerns that affect the quality of the service. Specific concerns involved some drivers' unwillingness to touch riders when they request hands-on assistance, and their reticence or refusal to transport guide dogs. One participant specified that once or twice a month, a POD driver never arrives, even though she has received a notification that they are nearby. She indicated that these drivers mark her as a no-show to avoid interacting with her guide dog. The participants discussed the need for improved training and expressed their hope that Metro Mobility will aim for transparency about the requirements of the job in recruitment efforts so that those unable to perform the essential functions of the job due to religious and/or cultural reasons can opt out. Participants also shared that the service area is a limiting factor, indicating that the farther one lives from the city center, the more challenging it is to get a ride. Standby trips, which involve requesting a ride 1–4 days in advance and learning if the trip was granted the night before the appointment, were described as a possibility for users who have limited bus service in their community.

15.3.4 Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing

On March 21, 2025, researchers interviewed four members of the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing. The interview was conducted virtually, with one ASL interpreter who participated on screen and one Protactile ASL interpreter who travelled to the participant's home. Participants compared standard ADA paratransit service with POD service and with their experiences using Uber and Lyft. Two participants who are DeafBlind described past experiences with Metro Mobility that did not meet their accessibility needs, primarily in their interactions with schedulers and drivers. They described the need to call to schedule rides as being near impossible for someone who is DeafBlind and desired a way to interact with Metro Mobility that is text-based. They also shared that Metro Mobility drivers did not seem to be trained in the proper ways of engaging with users who are DeafBlind, indicating that drivers should approach the user and tap them on the shoulder to let them know they have arrived. They described the ease in which they can request rides using the Uber and Lyft apps, preferring the way that these companies offer the ability to set up a user profile that includes preferences for the in-vehicle experience, as well as an accessible way to communicate with the driver. One participant posed the opportunity to integrate applications such as an intercom to remove accessibility barriers from the user experience. Participants also mentioned concerns about religious and cultural attitudes of drivers, which affect their willingness to perform the full functions of the job. One participant shared that Muslim leaders have issued guidance that allows drivers to interact with guide dogs if they wash their hands after the interaction. Finally, one participant recommended rescheduling a town hall involving riders, drivers, and Metro Mobility decision-makers that had been planned prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but was subsequently cancelled. This recommendation was partially accomplished as part of this study and is documented in the focus group results in Chapter 16.

15.3.5 Minnesota DHS, Disability Services Division

TTI researchers interviewed two leaders from the Minnesota DHS, Disability Services Division on March 14, 2025. Both participants administer programs that pay for transportation for people with disabilities. Neither uses Metro Mobility, but each was able to provide feedback from program participants on their experiences. They indicated that the people they serve depend on Metro Mobility as their primary mode of transportation. While recognizing resource constraints, both agreed that users would benefit from any expansion in the services Metro Mobility can provide, including travelling beyond the Metro Mobility service area and offering more on-demand rides. They also mentioned the challenges associated with booking rides a day or more in advance and highlighted the detrimental consequences of missing medical appointments (resulting from limited transportation options). These participants also described the role of the county in providing and coordinating transportation programs for people with disabilities.

15.3.5 Minnesota Council on Disability

On March 19, 2025, the Study Team interviewed a leader at the Minnesota Council on Disability. The mission of the agency was described as ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are alive and well at the Capitol and around the state. The leader is not a Metro Mobility user but serves on various

transportation-related committees. The primary topics of conversation included the desire for more on-demand trips for Metro Mobility users; the prohibition of the Met Council from partnering with Uber and Lyft due to the limited availability of WAVs; and the need to use more reliable, up-to-date GPS technology like Google Maps. This interviewee also mentioned Metro Mobility's policy of door-through-door service, which is not required of ADA paratransit providers but is nonetheless offered because of the risk to users of being left outside in cold weather. Finally, issues related to drivers' cultural attitudes and willingness to carry out the essential functions of their job were shared as a concern for Metro Mobility users who travel with guide dogs.

15.3.6 National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota

Researchers interviewed one leader of Minnesota's chapter of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) on March 19, 2025. The leader drew upon his own experiences as a Metro Mobility user, as well as feedback from other NFB members. The interviewee highlighted the importance and outsized impact of TNCs on Minnesotans who are blind, indicating that Uber and Lyft have twice threatened to withdraw from the state, making access to Metro Mobility more critical. This interviewee explained that NFB members tend to prefer getting rides from friends or family, taking Uber or Lyft, or using fixed-route transit (Metro Transit) over the standard ADA paratransit service because of its limitations on meeting the travel needs of active adults with disabilities. He shared that many NFB members are parents with full-time jobs and children that need to be dropped off at daycare. While trip chaining used to be offered by Metro Mobility—allowing parents the freedom and flexibility to drop children off at daycare on their way to work—these types of trips are no longer offered (although the Study Team confirmed that curbside trips for daycare drops are still available and are still being provided). He recognized that this type of offering could be difficult to execute due to the uncertainty about the amount of time each stop would take. He also discussed the need for Metro Mobility to clearly communicate with users when policies are being changed and why the changes are going to occur. A specific concern of his was drivers not being empowered to act on guidance provided by users, especially when onboard maps fail to direct the driver to the desired destination. The policy of returning a user home when the driver cannot find a destination was underscored as a major concern for NFB members. Many have strong orientation and mobility skills and would prefer to be dropped off near their destination so that they could walk the rest of the way, rather than being taken back home (Metro Mobility's policy is to return people back home only when the destination they requested cannot be accessed because of locked doors or if there is such a significant delay that there is no point in dropping them off). This interviewee also discussed problems with some Metro Mobility and POD service drivers failing to perform essential functions of their jobs because of cultural and religious attitudes about interacting with guide dogs or offering hands-on assistance when requested.

15.4 Cross-Cutting Themes

Interviews with users and agency staff speaking on behalf of their constituents revealed three primary themes. Discussions of these themes and related subthemes follow.

15.4.1 Theme 1: Recognizing Different Types of Riders and Needs

There were marked differences in the transportation needs and preferences of Metro Mobility users as described by the participants involved in this study. Participants that represent organizations serving older adults reported that their customers appreciate the door-through-door service that the program offers users. This level of service involves drivers making sure that users get in and out of the vehicle safely and make it through the front door of their intended destination. As required, drivers even carry bags of groceries or other items into the rider's home.

In contrast, working age and active adult users felt that they should be allowed more autonomy in working with drivers to meet their needs. When describing his perception of Metro Mobility's paradigm, one leader in the disability advocacy community stated, "Assumption of competence is a problem—when drivers assume that riders are incompetent." This leader explained that confident travelers with disabilities can and should be afforded more control over procedures and protocols related to dropping off passengers. For example, they would like to see Metro Mobility drivers be empowered to act on guidance from the user, especially when routing technology fails to direct the driver to the desired destination (the Study Team notes that such a policy would be problematic because the driver has no ability to assess the customers' abilities or inabilities; for example, traumatic brain injury or dementia customers are known to give directions to a location at which they no longer reside). Metro Mobility does have a policy for reasonable accommodation requests that could include, for example, waiving the default escort assistance—a request that Metro Mobility by and large has granted. However, such a request must be submitted in writing and would become effective only after the request has been granted and the client file and standing orders, if any, have been modified accordingly.

To improve the user experience, participants recommended designing a system that recognizes the level of assistance that a user needs and matches them with the appropriate service and vehicle. The Metro Mobility service can currently be tailored (up to a point) based on the needs of an individual via a reasonable modification request. That said, too many variations could make the job of driving for an ADA paratransit service exponentially more challenging, while increasing the liability risk for the contractor. Federal guidance states that transit providers do not need to provide a modification if it:

- Causes a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Results in a fundamental alteration of the service.
- Is unnecessary for the individual with the disability to receive services.
- Results in an undue financial or administrative burden to the transit agency. As an example, an individual who requests a specific driver for a paratransit trip may be denied this request because this would cause an administrative burden.³

³ <https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-reasonable-transport-mods>

15.4.1.1 The Plea for More On-Demand Rides

According to some interviewees, one of the most commonly expressed desires among their clients/constituents is to increase the availability of on-demand service. Based on what interviewees have heard from constituents and actual experiences from riders, Metro Mobility is perceived as more of a last-resort option due to its next-day reservation requirements, unpredictable arrival times, and inflexible return trips. In contrast, their clients/constituents have voiced a strong preference for the POD service. Participants described POD as a subsidized taxi service, but many expressed a desire for Metro Mobility to partner with TNCs like Uber and Lyft to make the service more user-friendly. Underscoring this point, one participant said:

I would force Uber and Lyft to have accessible vehicles. That would solve the problem. Met Council would give contracts to them, but they can't because they don't have accessible vehicles. There are some on-demand pilot projects, and I would like to see them expanded. Why can't Metro Mobility become on-demand? Would it increase cost? Would routing be harder? It is already a heavily subsidized program. It takes courage and budgets, and we don't have that when it comes to people with disabilities.

A leader of the Minnesota chapter of a national disability advocacy group concurred, "People wish they would partner with Uber or Lyft." Another participant, who is a disability advocate and Metro Mobility user, shared, "I use Uber and Lyft very frequently. It is so easy. They have a profile for me, and they know that I like the heat on and the windows up. This makes it so smooth and so easy for me."

Working age and other active adults with disabilities communicated a strong preference for an on-demand transportation service that resembles the simplicity of the TNC model, both to have access to on-demand rides and to take advantage of technologies that are more accessible to them (see Theme 2).

15.4.1.2 Scheduling Rides That Meet Needs

As noted by a participant who is a leader in the aging community:

The biggest challenge is trying to schedule rides around surgeries and medical appointments. If you miss your ride, they won't reschedule you. They have a blackout window during which you can't reschedule. You also can't change your pickup address. If they take you to an address and you can't get in, they can't take you to another address; they have to take you home.

The above quote was made by a participant who is a leader in the aging community. Scheduling rides was a clear pain point for participants. Appointments do not often begin at their scheduled time or end at predictable times. Therefore, knowing when to reserve a return trip involves guesswork. The research team heard time and time again that planning one's life around the availability of a shared ride service with a rigid reservation system necessitated a lot of waiting around. One state agency leader summed up the concerns of those he serves, "If my appointment ends early, I don't want to sit there and wait for my ride."

One advocate shared a story about their struggles to get to work during a summer internship. The pickup windows offered by Metro Mobility frequently dropped off the participant two hours early, before the office opened. This participant also described difficulties with arranging pickup times that coincided with the end of the workday, explaining that it became necessary to negotiate work hours with supervisors because of limited flexibility of return trips offered by Metro Mobility. However, this participant expressed support for the POD service, “With Transportation Plus I can get a direct trip.”

A participant who is a leader in a disability advocacy group shared his disappointment with Metro Mobility’s decision not to offer trip chaining that would allow parents to drop off children and then get to work. “It is a challenge. Metro Mobility is the least dependable option in that scenario, and there is a lot of frustration around that.”

Standard ADA paratransit programs have made it difficult or impossible for users to run errands. Many people who can drive a car are able to drop mail or packages off at the post office, stop by the grocery store to buy the ingredients for tonight’s dinner, pick up dry cleaning, and stop by the drive-through for lunch. With a paratransit model, it is not possible to schedule rides that would support these brief trips. However, trip chaining would be more doable using a TNC-type model for service delivery.

15.4.1.3 Geographic Barriers: Service Area Limitations

One state agency leader noted, “Folks’ lives don’t stop at the Metro Mobility limit.” Researchers heard this theme multiple times across the seven stakeholder interviews. One leader in the aging community stated the nearest hospital is 10 miles from her home, but she cannot get to it because it is outside the Metro Mobility service area.

“In the city it works well, but for people outside the city, it doesn’t work as well.” This statement sums up the concerns expressed by participants about the geographic range of Metro Mobility. A state agency representative explained, “There are parts of the seven-county area that are not covered by the Metro Mobility service area. The rural areas can have challenges with pickups.” Although some recognized the fact that Metro Mobility goes above and beyond the ADA-required 0.75-mile distance from fixed-route transit, participants shared the sentiment that many people outside the service area go without transportation, while others in the service area still cannot get to the places they need to go.

Some participants that do not live near a fixed-route stop or station described being able to get on standby, which allows them to request a ride that is not guaranteed and find out if it was scheduled the night before the requested trip. A resounding request for an expanded service area was heard, while participants acknowledged the reality of resource constraints.

One participant offered the idea of coordinating human services transportation providers to better connect the dots and meet the needs of those needing rides in the seven-county region. Mobility managers from around the region could work together to build capacity for transportation services that meet the needs of more residents and bridge gaps in existing service.

15.4.2 Theme 2: Improving Accessibility Through Technology

Technology was also a frequently discussed topic across stakeholder interviews in this study. According to participants, user experience would be vastly improved if Metro Mobility implemented app-based ride scheduling; integrated accessible tools that facilitate communication between users, drivers, and dispatchers; and upgraded onboard GPS to the most up-to-date mapping technology.

15.4.2.1 Scheduling Access

According to the interviewees, riders have expressed a desire for a more flexible, technology-based scheduling solution. One advocate stated, “You have to call and that is really difficult for a DeafBlind person. We prefer being able to text. You would not believe how much effort it takes to call as a Deafblind person.” The participant related their experience with Uber and Lyft, “I can communicate with them through the app.” Another advocate advised, “An app would centralize a way that we can communicate with the scheduler.”

15.4.2.2 Communicating With Drivers and Dispatchers

Another area where technology would improve the user experience as reported by participants was communicating with drivers and dispatchers. One older adult advocate and state leader conveyed her satisfaction with a feature of the POD program, “There is a new transportation option that, when you book with them, you get a call or text saying that your driver will arrive in five minutes. This is good because when you are in a place where you can’t see them pull up, the message helps you know when to go outside.” Other participants wanted a way to have real-time awareness of the driver’s location and an ETA. This feature is especially important for users who are blind or visually impaired. “There is no way to know when the bus arrives. [It would help if Metro Mobility could provide an ETA/real-time update on arrival.] You can just say 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes.”

Connecting with the driver was an important topic among users who are DeafBlind. “My friend called Metro Mobility from their iPad using Video Relay Service. We didn’t know that the driver was coming because we are DeafBlind. The driver didn’t know how to interact with us. There was a sighted friend there that helped connect the driver with us.” The same advocate recommended that Metro Mobility integrate a technology platform that would remove access barriers, “Something similar to Intercom, where you have an account, and they already know who is contacting them. The technology is there; you just need to integrate it.”

15.4.2.3 Accurate GPS

Many participants shared their concerns that the onboard GPS that standard paratransit drivers use is outdated, sometimes even preventing the user from reaching their intended destination. One leader in the disability advocacy community mentioned that the GPS provides incorrect information to her drivers when they are dropping her off at home. She indicated that this often results in extra time on the bus as the driver attempts to find the correct drop-off location. One state agency leader asked, “Why can’t you use Google maps?” Adding context to this query, one participant shared, “The onboard GPS is so

outdated that the drivers have to use their phones [for more accurate GPS directions], but they are scared to use their phones because they are on camera being recorded.”

Some interviewees reported being returned home because a driver was unable to locate the destination address, according to Metro Mobility policy:

I was trying to help my driver with directions to a library when the GPS wouldn't work. The driver wouldn't listen to me. I was frustrated when the driver wouldn't let me off a few blocks away so that I could walk the rest of the way. The driver called the dispatcher and said the library was closed [even though it was open], and the dispatcher told the driver to take me home. I asked if the driver would just look for the library on the trip back, and fortunately he did see it and dropped me off.

Although this user was glad to have eventually reached his destination, he described the experience of a fellow advocacy group member who didn't make it to hers and even faced additional repercussions:

One of our members used Metro Mobility to take her children to an activity downtown and the driver couldn't find the drop-off location. The driver took her back home and picked up other riders along the way. Someone turned in a complaint that her kids were misbehaving on the trip home, which was the case because the kids were restless from being in the vehicle for so long and not getting to go where they thought they were going.

15.4.3 Theme 3: Improving Rider Interactions With Drivers

Participants who were either Metro Mobility users themselves or who represented agencies that serve users raised concerns about some drivers' cultural attitudes and the needs of Metro Mobility users. This concern applies to Metro Mobility drivers and to Transportation Plus drivers operating the POD service. According to participants, the pool of drivers includes those from a local Somali Muslim community. Many participants expressed empathy for the drivers coming from this cultural background, sharing concerns that the drivers' religion prevented them from interacting with service animals and affected their willingness to touch Metro Mobility users, even to offer an arm to users who ask for hands-on assistance. Remarks from leaders of the two disability advocacy groups were as follows:

In some cases, the driver doesn't want to touch you because of cultural things. This is not acceptable because sometimes I need to grab their arm. These drivers want to keep a distance and that is not ok because they were hired to do this job. Maybe it would help if, during training, they were blindfolded to develop empathy for the blind customers they are transporting.

We have issues both with Metro Mobility drivers and Uber/Lyft drivers. There is a large community of Muslim Somali immigrants who are not comfortable interacting with service dogs. This is a larger problem in our area because this population isn't comfortable providing the service needed. They just don't get it, and I don't blame them. They don't understand because they are told to do this or lose your job, but they don't have any recourse when it violates their religion. Education is a big part of it. There could be an option for drivers to opt in and out of transporting service animals. I don't know how that would balance with the ADA. It is a really big problem.

One of the interviewees indicated that at least once or twice a month, she is marked as a no-show by a POD driver who sees her service animal and passes her by. When asked how she knows this is happening, she explained that her text alerts notify her that the driver is nearby, but the driver never arrives. Another interviewee explained that he puts a note in his reservation that he does not use a service animal to reduce his chances of being passed by. Another participant noted that the Minnesota Deaf Muslim community has weighed in on this issue, resulting in Muslim leaders in the state offering guidance allowing drivers to interact with guide dogs if they wash their hands after dropping off the user.

Some participants offered solutions to this challenge. Several recommended allowing drivers to opt out of transporting users traveling with service animals but wondered how this would square with their own rights under the ADA. Others offered the idea of explaining what is expected of Metro Mobility drivers earlier in the driver recruitment process, so that any prospective drivers can remove themselves from the process if they are unwilling or unable to perform the essential functions of the job.

15.4.3.1 The Need for More Training

Many participants indicated that more training is needed for drivers, particularly around best practices for interacting with their riders with different types of disabilities. “There is an opportunity for partnership with those who have knowledge of disability issues,” recommended one state agency leader.

Representing the DeafBlind community, one participant noted:

They know from our application [to qualify for Metro Mobility/Paratransit services] that we are DeafBlind, so they [the driver] should know to come up and tap us on the shoulder [when they arrive]. It seems like there is a big lack of training [for Metro Mobility drivers] on the disability spectrum - how a hearing blind person is different from a DeafBlind person, how a blind person with Autism is different than a Deaf person with Autism.

One state agency leader mentioned the need for drivers to be fully briefed on the ways they can be supportive of riders with memory loss and other cognitive disabilities to improve the experience of these users and others on the bus with them.

One participant suggested, “Maybe it would be a good idea to set up a town hall. [Advocacy] organizations use Metro Mobility to get to events. We were scheduled to have a town hall with Metro Mobility, but it got cancelled during COVID.” A listening session or town hall, as proposed by this advocate, could bring together Metro Mobility leaders, drivers, and riders to discuss the challenges they face and brainstorm opportunities to address them together.

15.5 Summary

In summary, study participants expressed a desire for Metro Mobility leaders to recognize the difference in needs and preferences among its users. Older adult advocates and agency leaders who serve them

appreciate more assistance from the driver, while active adults with disabilities want a program designed for confident travelers with strong orientation and mobility skills. All participants wanted more on-demand rides and the ability to get picked up and dropped off at the places they need to go (whether or not it is in the designated service area). A resounding call for Metro Mobility to upgrade their technology, including for purposes of scheduling, communication, and mapping, was heard from study participants. Finally, participants identified the need for more driver training, specifically to address cultural attitudes that affect service delivery and to develop a strong understanding of the full range of disabilities and associated needs. Participants offered solutions like having a town hall to bring together riders, drivers, and program leaders to collaboratively address challenges and work together to ensure that the program is meeting its mission.

15.5.1 The Need for Informational Campaigns for User Education and Awareness

After analyzing participant feedback from the seven stakeholder interviews, researchers identified a gap in awareness of the full range of options and features available to Metro Mobility users.

One user shared that she has difficulty scheduling rides around surgeries and medical appointments and noted that missed rides cannot be rescheduled due to a blackout window. Upon further investigation, researchers learned that Met Council has a no-stranded policy and offers users marked as a no-show the option of calling the dispatcher when they are ready to be picked up. Metro Mobility will pick up the reemerging no-show as soon as possible; however, this may involve a delay if all drivers are transporting other users at the time. Another option available to users is to request a POD trip to return home from appointments.

Similarly, an interviewee who is a caregiver for her mother (a Metro Mobility user) indicated that she finds it difficult to schedule trips for her mother because she cannot make reservations on the weekend. However, the Met Council's website states, "Reservations are taken 7 days a week and 365 days a year from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.," indicating that customers can make a reservation on the weekend.

The participant who reported arriving too early for a summer internship (before the office was open) would have benefitted from knowing about the no-earlier-than qualifier that a user can include in their reservation. According to the Met Council website:

If you are requesting a pickup and you cannot leave before a specific time, you can request a "no earlier than" time. For example, if you are done at work at 4 p.m., you can request a 4 p.m. "no earlier than" time. When looking for Metro Mobility buses in your area, the reservationist won't offer you a time earlier than when you are able to leave.

It follows that this user could have made a reservation with a no-earlier-than drop-off time and specified the earliest time they could be dropped off at their office.

Another interviewee described the need for trip chaining, especially for working parents to drop children off at daycare on their way to the office. Researchers followed up on this item and discovered Met Council's policy of curbside trips, offering users the ability to chain two trips together.

Some participants advocated for the Met Council to implement app-based scheduling. Met Council has launched an app, and, users without the app can still schedule trips online using a web browser.

Finally, there was a common refrain among participants supporting partnerships between Met Council and TNCs to make the program more user-centered, noting that the Met Council recently added UZURV (an adaptive TNC) and Carepool as POD carriers. All three carriers (including the current provider, Transportation Plus) have WAVs.

As indicated by the qualitative data gathered in these stakeholder interviews, there is a need to raise awareness among Metro Mobility users of the full range of services and options available to them. Communicating these offerings and features of the program through targeted information campaigns is likely to result in improved user experience across the board.

15.6 Stakeholder Interview Report-Back Meeting

After the stakeholder interviews and in conjunction with the focus groups and community meetings (see Chapter 16), the researchers arranged for a report-back meeting with interviewees and any other interested parties. At this meeting, the researchers presented the findings from the interviews and asked for confirmation, clarification, or further input. The meeting invitation, shown in Figure 15-1, was emailed to all previous interviewees. Interested parties were asked to RSVP with any requirements for accommodation. TTI and MnDOT arranged for ASL interpretation at the meeting.



Figure 15-1 Stakeholders report-back meeting invitation.

The meeting was held at the MnDOT headquarters building, which is conveniently located and served by various transit services, including Metro Mobility. The meeting was attended by four participants. A presentation made by TTI researchers identified cross-cutting themes. Participants were then asked for any comments about the identified themes. During the discussion that followed, participants focused

primarily on confirming and reiterating what had already been documented. The attendees expressed a desire for a more concerted effort to allow riders more autonomy and to recognize that needs are different depending on disabilities. Riders should be allowed to dictate the level of service that they need. A one-size-fits-all solution is not helpful. Service should also recognize that needs can change from season to season. Attempting to match riders and drivers is one way this could be achieved. Drivers can get to know riders and become familiar with their needs and preferences. Likewise, drivers would not be put in positions where they may feel uncomfortable (e.g., handling service animals). Moreover, riders would like to be able to communicate with drivers and/or dispatchers while enroute, leading to better outcomes.

A large portion of the discussion focused on a topic not directly covered in the stakeholder interviews—geographic access. Interviewees previously mentioned the geographic boundaries and the limitations caused by these boundaries. At the same time, interviewees acknowledged that the state is already surpassing the federal requirements. This conversation focused on the nexus between transportation and housing, specifically accessible housing. The meeting participants explained the interconnected nature of supportive social services, which often dictates where one must live, but transportation accessibility does not always match up. Metro Mobility users are de facto required to live in a service area; the further out they go from the central city areas, the more limited the options become. The participants would like to see more coordination between all supportive services.

Other suggestions from the group for improving service delivery included the following:

- Participants suggested having a check-in with the rider on the day of the ride to see what assistance is needed.
- Participants suggested that it would be helpful for caregivers to either be able to track the progress of their loved one's trip or to receive a text notifying them that their loved one has arrived at their destination safely. Met Council already makes this information available—customers (or their caregivers) just need to sign up to get this information through the app or Web reservations. Met Council staff also connect with disability organizations on a regular basis.
- Finally, participants suggested that Met Council use the disability community as a resource that can help with training, solution development, etc. They have a vested interest in a positive outcome as well.

Chapter 16: Community Conversations, Focus Groups, and Rider Survey

Chapter 16 focuses on input from the community via Met Council-hosted community conversations, focus groups with riders and the DeafBlind community cohort specifically, and data from an externally administered rider survey.

16.1 Metro Mobility 2025 Spring Community Conversations

The Met Council periodically hosts community conversations as a way for customers and advocates to provide input and engage about Metro Mobility services. TTI researchers attended one virtual and one in-person conversation as observers to augment other planned qualitative data collection methods.

16.1.1 Virtual Community Conversation

The virtual community conversation was hosted by Met Council and held via Microsoft Teams on May 27, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The meeting was attended by approximately 22 people who were not associated with Metro Mobility or a service provider. The event began with a welcome from Andy Streasick, assistant director of Metro Mobility. Mr. Streasick provided several performance statistics indicating how well Metro Mobility is providing services. He indicated that Metro Mobility had very recently conducted a rider survey (see Section 16.4), and that initial indications of responses were mostly positive. The meeting participants were then divided into virtual breakout groups. Each group included a facilitator to help guide the conversation through a series of questions aimed at how well Metro Mobility is meeting customer needs. After about 20 minutes in breakout groups, the large group was reconvened to report their findings.

16.1.1.1 Findings

Overall, most participants are at least somewhat satisfied with existing Metro Mobility services. The following observations were reported after the large group reconvened:

- Participants were very appreciative of the \$0.01 or free fare available to customers who use fixed-route service.
- One participant reported a bad routing experience.
- No participants were aware or had even heard of Metro micro. Mr. Streasick explained that this service was currently operating in a limited service area in three locations.
- Most participants were aware of the POD service.
- Some participants liked that Metro Mobility vehicles are readily identifiable.
- One participant, who was a fairly new user, lamented that Metro Mobility seemed to have a very poor reputation among her peers and wondered what could be done to address that.
- Participants suggested the need for more staff training on specific disabilities (e.g., visual impairment).

- Nearly all participants expressed a desire for expanded service area boundaries.
- Participants expressed a desire for a return to the appointment time booking feature in online booking. They indicated that this feature was previously available.
- Users reported having good experiences with contractor staff (especially the people confirming rides) and with drivers.
- As expected, most participants expressed a desire to keep fares free or priced as low as possible.
- Some participants noted that bus drivers needed more training on bus features (e.g., how to turn on lights) and more knowledge of the major streets to allow for easier navigation.
- Participants also seemed confused between Metro Mobility services and Limited Mobility services—a subsidy for people who are riding fixed-route service that have a disability but are not eligible for Metro Mobility service.

16.1.2 In-Person Community Conversation

An in-person community conversation was held at the Wilder Center on May 29, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. The in-person meeting followed a similar format to the virtual meeting, with Mr. Streasick reporting performance statistics and participants breaking into groups for facilitated discussion.

16.1.2.1 Findings

During the report-back portion of the meeting, many of the same comments were heard as in the virtual meeting. The following observations were reported after the large group reconvened:

- Regarding rider awareness of services offered, many new and some veteran riders did not know what services were available to them.
- Regarding hours of service and service area:
 - Participants wished that service hours would be extended; one referred to service hour timing limitations as a curfew.
 - Participants liked the night rides available through the POD service and wished these night rides were available through the ADA paratransit service too.
 - Participants wished the service area could be expanded, especially the State-mandated zone.
- When scheduling rides:
 - Communication with schedulers can be challenging—there is a lack of flexibility in scheduling rides.
 - Participants experienced challenges with online booking; there is no ability to include a note for specific arrival instructions, and appointment time has been removed as a scheduling option.
 - Participants noted that pickup windows are difficult to work with.
- When waiting for and connecting with the driver:

- Participants noted that wait times are long and do not work well for them.
- Participants would like to receive/have real-time access to the driver's ETA.
- Participants wished that drivers had more knowledge of their needs and preferences, especially with regard to communication and touch.
- Regarding GPS issues and associated driver training:
 - Participants expressed that current onboard maps provide inefficient routing of pickup and drop-offs for shared rides (the maps used by the Rangers have all been recently updated).
 - Many drivers have difficulty locating the rider's intended drop-off address.
 - Drivers need to be trained and empowered to problem-solve when GPS fails to direct them to the rider's intended drop-off address.
- Regarding the POD service:
 - Participants love the on-demand service and the flexibility it provides them.
 - Metro Mobility needs to raise awareness of their on-demand service.
 - A participant said he contacted the Governor's office to say that riders want Transportation Plus to continue operating past its current end date of December 31, 2025.

16.2 Focus Group Feedback From DeafBlind Riders

When researchers conducted stakeholder interviews with representatives of the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, participants expressed a desire for additional members of the community to provide input. In an effort to hear from as many affected individuals as possible, TTI researchers worked with the commission and MnDOT to arrange for a focus group of these individuals. Commission staff identified potential participants and invited them to attend the focus group, which was scheduled at MnDOT headquarters on May 28, 2025, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Because this group had unique needs and the discussion was scheduled to last about 2 hours, multiple interpreters were required for each participant. In addition to ASL interpreters, tactile and Protactile interpreters were provided for participants. Staff from the commission and MnDOT's Equity office worked together with the TTI researchers to ensure that all participants had the means necessary to fully participate in the meeting. A discussion guide was developed that was similar to the questions included in the interviews. The commission regularly contracts with two individuals that serve as civic engagement specialists. These individuals work with the commission to engage this community on various topics. For this study, the contractors took the lead in ensuring that all questions were asked and that all participants had an opportunity to provide input. These individuals were instrumental to the success of the focus group. Photos from the event are shown in Figure 16-1 and Figure 16-2.



Figure 16-1 Metro Mobility users who are DeafBlind participating in the focus group.



Figure 16-2 Participants in the focus group of users who are DeafBlind.

Participants in this focus group expressed a number of comments and some concerns about Metro Mobility services. Likewise, participants were quick to offer potential solutions as well. These comments and concerns, grouped by category, are as follows:

- Communications:
 - From scheduling to drop-off, riders who are DeafBlind raised significant concerns about Met Council's efforts to facilitate clear and effective communication between the rider and schedulers, drivers, and others in the process.

- These communication barriers often result in reticence to use the service, missed trips, and fear of not reaching their intended destination or being left alone and unsure where a driver has dropped them off.
 - Riders identified a range of possible solutions, including training drivers to finger spell, implementing user profiles that contain photos of the rider and information about their disability and needs, and using an app for scheduling and communicating with drivers and dispatchers that is compatible with a Braille display. To the Study Team’s knowledge, no other U.S. transit agency does this. What this community is asking for here—in the Study Team’s opinion—crosses the line into a more tailored social service transportation service. For example, Metro Mobility drivers are not even medically trained so having an expectation that they would be trained in sign language may not be realistic.
 - Many riders wish Met Council would implement technology solutions to make the experience accessible to them, such as the ability to text with the scheduler to book rides. Met Council already accommodates emailed requests for service, which could be emailed from most smart phones.
 - Some riders travel with a sign around their neck that includes information for drivers such as their name, home address, and information about their disability.
- Rider awareness and perceptions of services:
 - Some participants had not heard of the POD service and were interested in learning more, while some were under the impression that Uber and Lyft are now options in the program along with Transportation Plus.
 - At least one rider said she had stopped using Metro Mobility more than 2 years ago because of poor service quality and wondered if more federal funding would improve rider experience in the future.
 - Locating the vehicle/connecting with the driver:
 - Many participants who are DeafBlind explained that, even though they might have some vision, they may not be able to locate a vehicle that has arrived to pick them up and may not be able to hear a driver calling their name.
 - Continuing with the theme of communication barriers, participants explained that “English is our second language,” and described the challenges that exist between themselves (who use ASL or other tactile versions of signing) and drivers for whom spoken English is also their second language.
 - Accessibility of scheduling options:

- Participants described the challenges, advantages, and disadvantages of scheduling options available to them as follows:
 - Some participants preferred booking with a live agent through Video Relay Service because it enables them to negotiate pickup times but indicated that this option is not fully accessible to them due to challenges seeing the on-screen ASL interpreter.
 - Some indicated that ASL interpreters on Video Relay Service occasionally get addresses wrong, so riders have to wait for an email confirmation from Met Council to ensure that the address spoken aloud to the scheduler was consistent with the address the rider signed to the interpreter.
 - Online booking was preferred by some participants, but they mentioned the lack of flexibility with pickup windows and noted their disappointment with the removal of appointment time as a field in the online booking form. The removal of this field from the app is a result of a technical issue, which also impacts call-in requests for appointment trips and reservation agent workarounds because Trapeze otherwise offers pickup times that cannot possibly get riders to their appointments on time. Met Council management has informed the Study Team that they are already working with the Trapeze team to resolve the issue in such a way that the appointment time option can be returned to the app.
- Rider needs vs. drivers' willingness to meet them:

Many riders in this focus group discussed the mismatch of rider needs with drivers' attitudes toward providing touch-based assistance or interacting with service animals, which are shaped by cultural/religious views. Some riders asked if it would be possible to match drivers and riders based on certain criteria. For example, only match drivers who are willing to interact with service animals with riders who have them and pairing riders who request hands-on assistance with drivers willing to provide this type of service.

 - Participants also wondered what was being shared with potential drivers during recruitment regarding expectations of the job.
 - There was uncertainty around Met Council's policy regarding when the driver can leave the rider—some were under the impression that drivers must ensure the rider has entered the door of the destination, while others noted that drivers often leave them outside with little information on where they are or what path to take to find a building entrance.
- In-vehicle experience and location awareness:
 - Some riders who are DeafBlind wished that they were able to have real-time awareness of where they are, the route they are travelling, and when and where they have arrived. Some participants advocated for a technology-based solution that would provide this

awareness in an accessible way (e.g., a smartphone notification that works with a Braille display).

- Advocacy for standard pickup/drop-off zones:
 - Many participants indicated that they find it easier to travel to and from destinations that have standard/predictable pickup and drop-off zones like malls and airports. Most agreed with one participant's idea to implement standard Metro Mobility zones at common destinations to enable riders who are DeafBlind to be better oriented to their space and path to their intended entrance or point within the drop-off address.
- Features desired in a Metro Mobility app:
 - Multiple transportation options, including fixed-route, ADA paratransit, and POD service.
 - The ability to schedule trips through the app (compatible with text-to-speech and Braille displays).
 - The option to fill out a user profile, which could include a photo, information about the disability, and notes on preferences for communication and touch, to make it easier for drivers to find and interact with riders.
 - Real-time awareness of the driver's ETA.
 - Trip progress notifications letting a rider know their current location and when they can expect to arrive at their destination.
 - An alert notification of arrival at drop-off location.
 - Confirmation of arrival at the specified address.
 - Wayfinding support to help orient a rider to surroundings once dropped off and identify a path to the building entrance or desired point within the drop-off address.

16.3 Metro Mobility Rider Focus Group Feedback

TTI researchers arranged for a focus group of Metro Mobility riders with the help of Met Council staff. Staff identified and recruited Metro Mobility users to participate in a focus group held at the Met Council offices on May 29, 2025, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The group included individuals with various disabilities, both seen and unseen, including one rider who is blind, two wheelchair users, two riders with cognitive disabilities, and others for a total of eight participants. No interpreters were requested for the group although this service was offered. Three of the participants were also members of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. The moderator followed a discussion guide to facilitate the discussion.

The participants were all familiar riders of Metro Mobility services, with the one participant, who is blind, also using Metro Transit services. There was discussion around the free or \$0.01 fare for Metro Mobility-eligible customers on the fixed-route system. Some participants were unaware of this option and expressed a desire for more information.

One person reported issues with rides being denied because she lives outside the 0.75-mile service area. To meet her needs, she relies on Lyft through another disability waiver program. One participant reported that he regularly uses Metro Mobility to get to and from work without issue, but he believes the lack of issues is primarily because he lives in the city and his work is only 8 miles from his home. Another participant reported using Metro Mobility van services, primarily for appointments and church. One person reported only being able to travel in sedans and not in vans or buses, which sometimes presents a challenge. Overall, participants reported that Metro Mobility is meeting their needs through various service offerings but commented that it is often hard to know which services will best meet their needs for the lowest cost.

As with other engagement activities, this group also commented on the problematic Ranger systems in navigation and the need to address this as soon as possible.

All the participants were aware that there are different transportation providers in each zone, but none had experience using a provider other than the one associated with their home address. Additional participants acknowledged the geographic constraints of the system.

Other themes, organized by category, included the following:

- Using Metro Mobility as a last resort:
 - Several riders admitted that Metro Mobility is their last resort because other transportation options better meet their needs (e.g., POD service, fixed-route service, and Lyft).
 - One participant described her experience traveling to the State Capitol, which involved being picked up by Metro Mobility at 7:00 a.m. for a 10:00 a.m. appointment, participating in advocacy for 2 hours, waiting 1 hour for her return trip home, and arriving at home at 7:00 p.m.—a 12-hour day for a 2-hour meeting. This trip was 22 miles, which would require about 2 hours if taken on fixed-route transit, according to Table 2-1.
 - One participant mentioned only using Metro Mobility when she needs help with bags, preferring to use the city bus when she does not need assistance.
- Variations of perceived service quality based on provider:
 - Participants shared that among riders, there is a perception that the region served by Transit Team receives better service than the region served by Transdev.
- Scheduling options:
 - Many riders preferred scheduling trips online but wished it gave them as much flexibility as speaking with a scheduler via phone.
- Need for support to locate vehicles:

- Participants mentioned having difficulty finding the vehicle that has arrived to pick them up.
- They liked the idea of implementing standard pickup/drop-off zones at common destinations, similar to the designated pickup and drop-off zones at malls and airports.
- Communicating with drivers:
 - Several participants described challenges with drivers not understanding invisible disabilities and making assumptions about what assistance the rider needs, rather than asking first.
 - One participant explained, “Some drivers do not understand English, which makes it difficult to explain disability issues to them.”
 - Several participants indicated that they include information in the trip reservation notes about their preferences for being touched (or their belongings being moved), but drivers do not always receive or read these notes.
- Driver training needs:
 - Because of the above concerns with drivers’ lack of understanding of the proper ways to interact with riders, participants recommended having people with disabilities train the drivers.
- POD service:
 - One participant summed up her need for on-demand service by sharing, “Scheduling a ride in advance can be difficult when you have a cognitive disability, which makes on-demand access crucial.”
 - Participants wished that Lyft was an option as part of the POD service.

16.4 Metro Mobility Rider Survey

16.4.1 Introduction

As of April 1, 2025, Met Council became a member of the ABBG—a service managed by the Imperial College in the United Kingdom for U.S. transit agencies that provides service data and other information from members in a peer-review format. One of ABBG’s services is performance of rider satisfaction surveys.

Prior to April 1, 2025, Met Council and TTI reached out to ABBG to see if a rider survey could be conducted in one of the early slots for such surveys (from mid-April to mid-July). The early slot was indeed available, so ABBG proceeded with an online rider survey for Metro Mobility customers. AABG used their standard paratransit rider survey questions, but, as part of the service, Met Council was allowed to ask two additional questions. Because the OLA report raised concerns regarding Met Council’s complaint management process, the two additional questions centered around that process.

The survey was publicized in myriad ways, and respondents were given the option to complete the survey online or to complete a paper version and mail it in. A total of 2,584 responses were received; 528 respondents completed the survey online, and 2,056 mailed in their survey response. For the mailed-in surveys, Met Council staff entered the data into an online web survey instrument.

The raw data was provided to TTI researchers in early June and subsequently analyzed. The Study Team focused less on the demographic responses and cross-referencing those demographic categories with the satisfaction levels and more the on the satisfaction levels between the Metro Mobility customers living in the federally mandated service area vs. the State-mandated service area.

While the Metro Mobility customers living in the State-mandated service area are certainly eligible to make trips within the federally mandated ADA paratransit service area (and vice versa), the Study Team assumed in the analysis that Metro Mobility customers living in the federally mandated service area mostly or always make trips in the federally mandated area, while the Metro Mobility customers living in the State-mandated service area mostly or always make trips in the State-mandated area. The purpose in splitting up the answers for the satisfaction questions in this way was to see if there was a noticeable difference in their satisfaction with various aspects of Metro Mobility.

As such, two pie-charts are presented for each question—the first for respondents living in the federally mandated service area and the second for respondents living in the State-mandated service area. Of the 2,584 survey respondents, 2,112 respondents (81.7%) were deemed to be users in the federally mandated area, while 372 respondents (14.4%) were deemed to be users in the State-mandated area. The missing 100 respondents had addresses that were not in either area; these surveys were not considered in the analysis. By omitting these 100 respondents, the split became 85% riders from the federally mandated area, and 15% riders from the State-mandated area.

16.4.2 Responses to the Survey's Satisfaction Questions

This section details the rider responses. Each question (most in the form of a agree/disagree statement) is included as a subheading, followed by a discussion of the responses and a graphical presentation of the results using two pie charts—one for respondents in the federally mandated area (referred to as *federal-area respondents*) and one for respondents in the State-mandated area (referred to as *State-area respondents*). Across all the questions below, there are some respondents who did not answer the question. Non-response rates per question range from 1 to 3 percent of respondents.

16.4.2.1 It Is Easy to Get Information About the Service and How to Use It

Among federal-area respondents, a significant majority (81%) either agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to access information about the service and how to use it (see Figure 16-3), indicating a high level of satisfaction with the availability of service information. However, the small percentage of respondents who reported difficulties highlights an opportunity to improve and address the specific barriers that some users may face.

Among State-area respondents, most (75%) reported that they find it easy to access service information, a slightly lower share compared to federal-area respondents (see Figure 16-4). This finding was supported by positive comments about helpful staff. However, some respondents expressed confusion regarding the booking process, unclear cancellation policies, and challenges reaching customer service. This sentiment is reflected in the approximately 9% of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the satisfaction of these aspects.

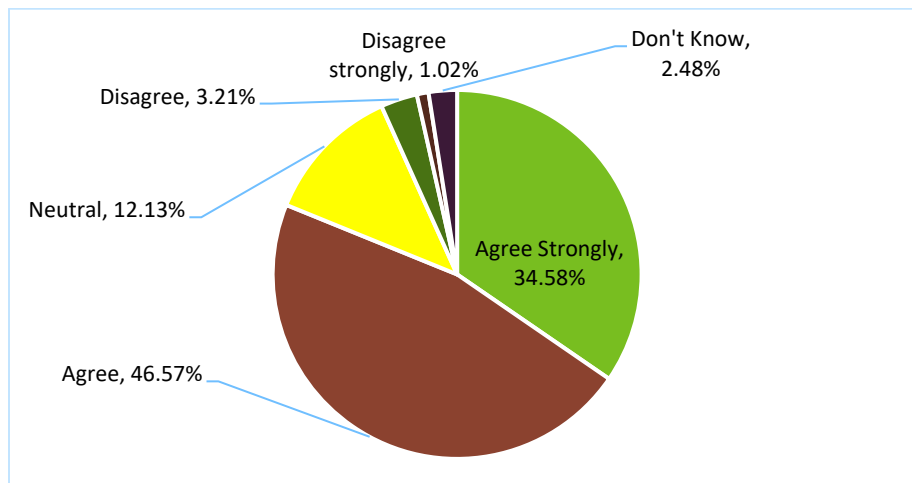


Figure 16-3 Ease of obtaining information—federal-area respondents.

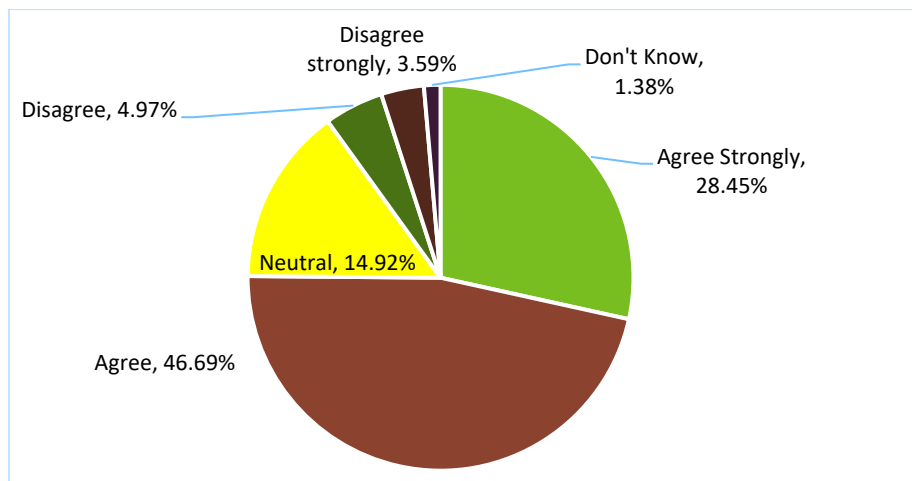


Figure 16-4 Ease of obtaining information—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.2 Information Regarding the Paratransit Service Eligibility Application and Recertification Process Is Easy to Access and Clear

Among federal-area respondents, most (71%) reported that it is easy to find and understand information about the eligibility application and recertification process (see Figure 16-5). Positive feedback indicates that respondents appreciated clear instructions and straightforward procedures, especially when customer service is helpful and applications are user-friendly. However, some respondents (4.5%) expressed confusion regarding eligibility requirements, unclear timelines for recertification, difficulty finding complete information, and inconsistent communication from staff.

Among State-area respondents, approximately 65% reported that they either strongly agreed or agreed the statement that it is easy to find and understand information about the eligibility application and recertification process, indicating generally positive feedback (see Figure 16-6). The level of satisfaction was slightly lower than the satisfaction expressed by federal-area respondents (71% vs. 65%). Also, 10% of State-area respondents cited issues such as confusion over the application steps, unclear eligibility requirements, and difficulties in receiving timely assistance, compared to 4.5% of federal-area respondents citing similar concerns.

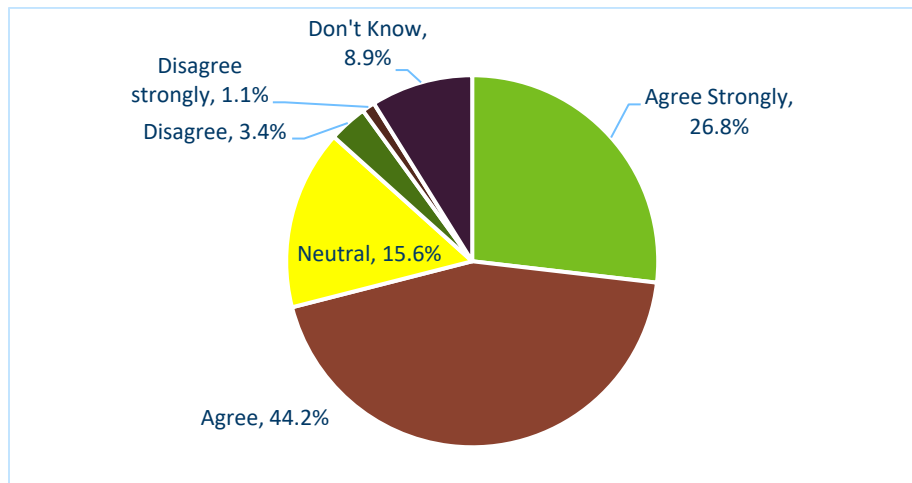


Figure 16-5 Perceptions of ease of access and clarity of eligibility and recertification process information—federal-area respondents.

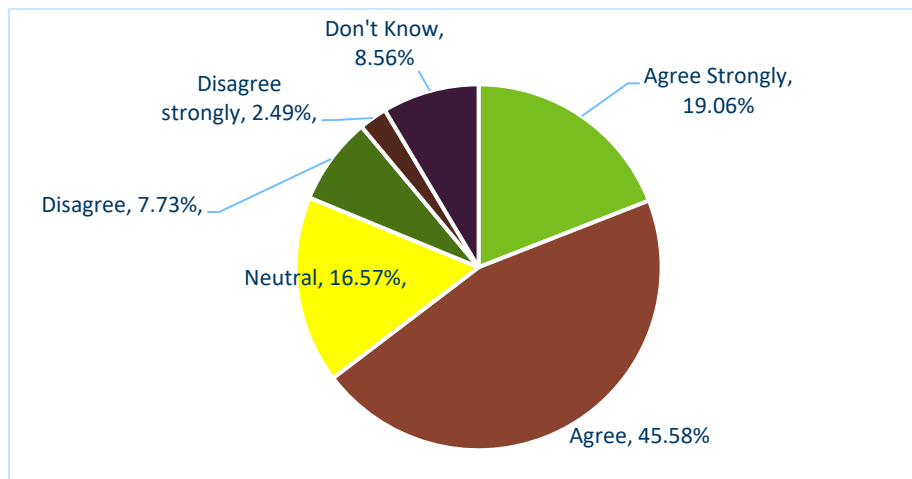


Figure 16-6 Perceptions of ease of access and clarity of eligibility and recertification process information—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.3 The Eligibility Certification Staff Are Friendly and Knowledgeable

Among federal-area respondents, nearly three-quarters (74%) indicated that they have had positive experiences with the staff who handle eligibility certification (see Figure 16-7). They mentioned that the staff is friendly and professional, as well as patient, knowledgeable, and clear in their guidance for both initial applications and recertifications. Very few federal-area respondents (2%) expressed concerns; concerns that were raised focused on inconsistent information or limited staff availability. Some comments suggested that staff sometimes struggled to explain eligibility criteria clearly or resolve complex questions.

Approximately 67% of State-area respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement (see Figure 16-8). This finding correlates with the positive feedback regarding the helpfulness and courtesy of the staff. Here again, the positive responses were slightly lower than the responses received by federal-area respondents. A small portion of State-area respondents (4%) encountered inconsistent service or found that staff members were unable to fully address their questions about eligibility and certification.

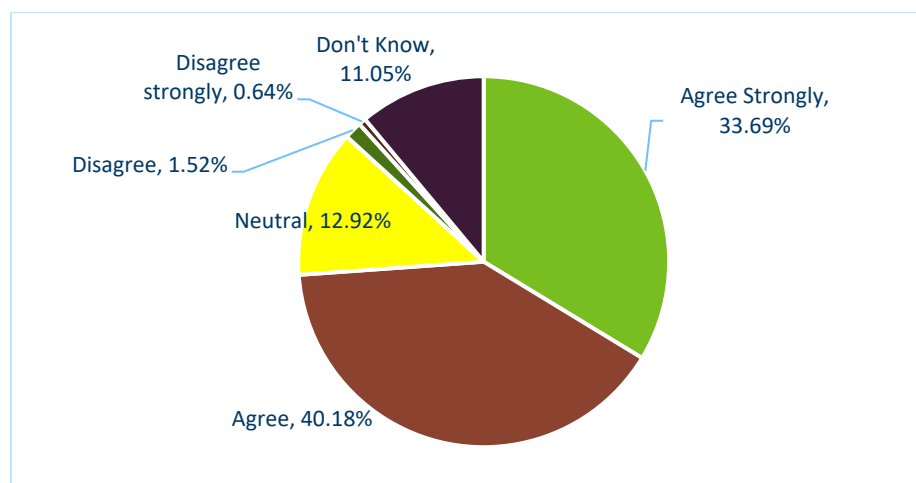


Figure 16-7 Friendliness and knowledge of eligibility certification staff—federal-area respondents.

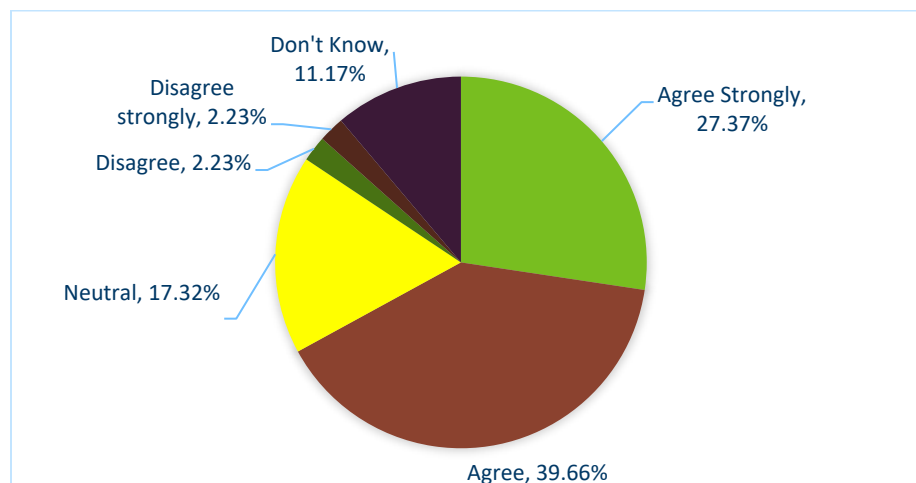


Figure 16-8 Friendliness and knowledge of eligibility certification staff—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.4 When I Call the Paratransit Service, My Calls Are Answered Promptly

Most federal-area respondents (79%) were satisfied or very satisfied with how quickly their calls are answered (see Figure 16-9). Many respondents praised the professionalism and helpfulness of the contractors' call-center staff. Approximately 8% of federal-area respondents expressed concerns about long hold times, challenges in getting through during busy hours, having calls dropped, and having to make repeated calls to resolve scheduling or trip issues. Some respondents also mentioned delays and difficulties when trying to reach customer service.

Approximately 73% of State-area respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, slightly lower than the percentage of federal-area respondents (see Figure 16-10). Positive comments noted helpful staff and good customer service experiences. About 12% of State-area respondents were dissatisfied. Specific comments included concerns about long hold times, difficulty reaching agents during peak hours, and occasional dropped calls.

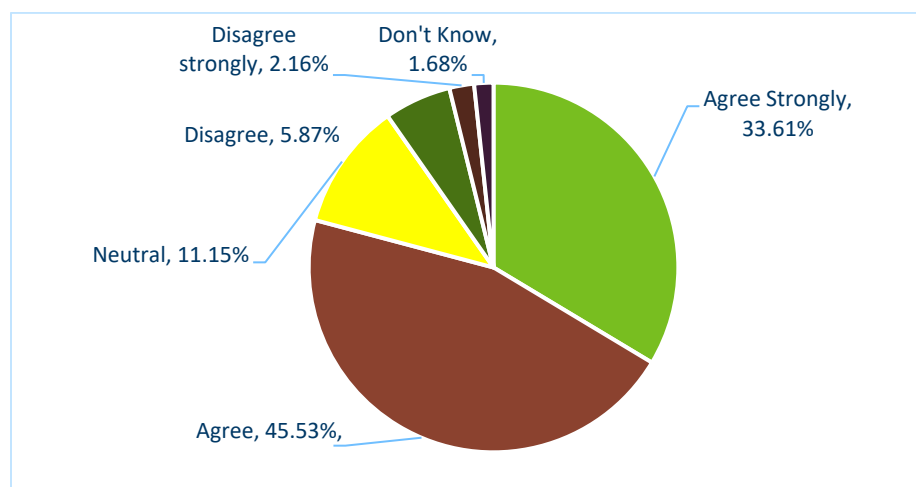


Figure 16-9 Perception of calls being answered promptly—federal-area respondents.

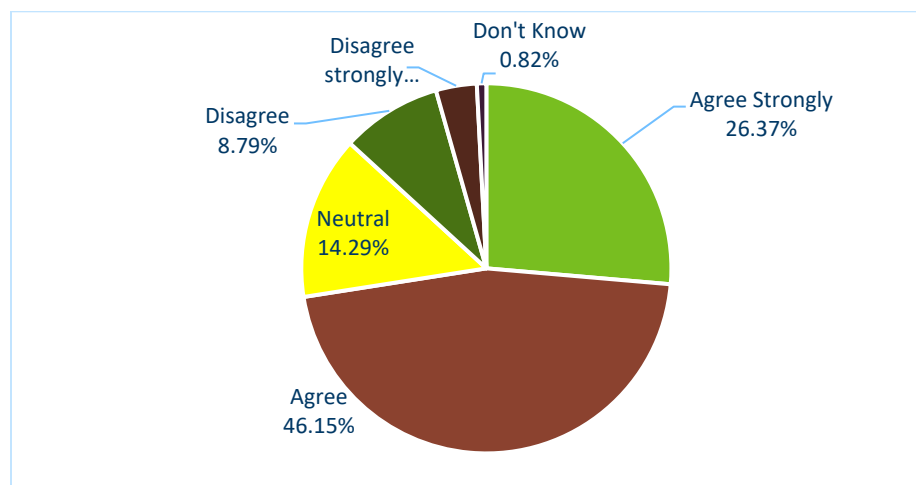


Figure 16-10 Perception of calls being answered promptly—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.5 Staff Who Answer My Call Are Professional and Knowledgeable

Most federal-area respondents (81%) reported that the staff answering their calls are professional and knowledgeable (see Figure 16-11). This finding shows strong confidence in the call-center staff abilities. Many respondents praised staff for being polite, respectful, and helpful, which aligns with the high satisfaction scores. At the same time, nearly 6% of federal-area respondents expressed concerns about inconsistent information, limited problem-solving skills, and difficulties with more complex eligibility or scheduling issues. Some respondents mentioned that although the frontline staff are courteous, they sometimes do not have the authority or expertise to resolve nonroutine issues quickly.

About 76% of State-area respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the professionalism and knowledge of the staff answering calls (see Figure 16-12). This finding aligns with the positive feedback praising the courteous and helpful nature of the customer service representatives. The satisfaction for State-area respondents was slightly lower than the satisfaction of federal-area respondents (81% vs. 76%). About 9% of State-area rider respondents expressed dissatisfaction, noting inconsistent information, occasional unfamiliarity of staff with procedures, and frustration when dealing with complex issues.

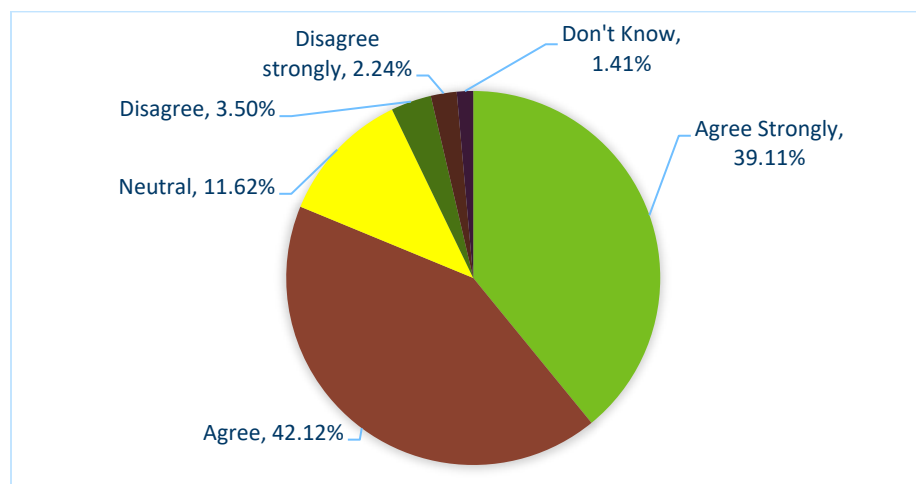


Figure 16-11 Professionalism and knowledge of call-taking staff—federal-area respondents.

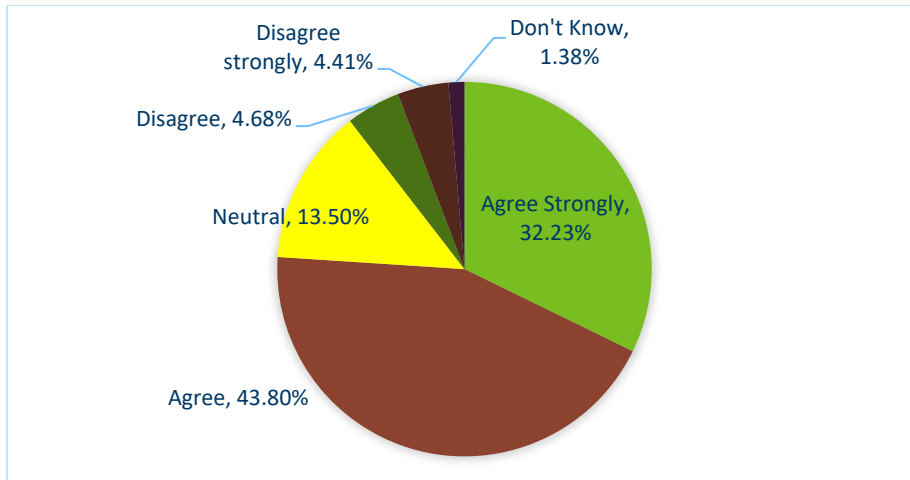


Figure 16-12 Professionalism and knowledge of call-taking Staff—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.6 Booking or Changing a Trip Is Easy and Convenient

Approximately 80% of federal-area respondents expressed satisfaction with the ease and convenience of booking or changing a trip (see Figure 16-13). Respondent comments reinforced this overall positive trend, with many respondents appreciating the flexibility and helpfulness of staff when making or changing reservations. At the same time, nearly 9% of federal-area respondents indicated recurring concerns regarding difficulty making last-minute changes and challenges in managing recurring or complex trips.

Approximately 71% of State-area respondents reported being satisfied (see Figure 16-14). Many positive comments highlighted the assistance provided by the booking staff. However, 12% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, noting issues such as confusion with the reservation system, difficulties in modifying trips, and occasional system errors or communication gaps when changes were necessary.

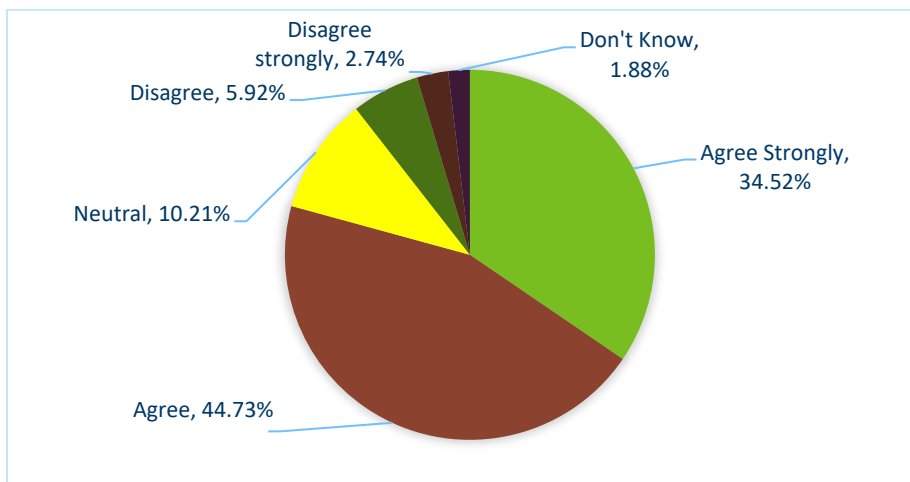


Figure 16-13 Convenience of booking or changing a trip—federal-area respondents.

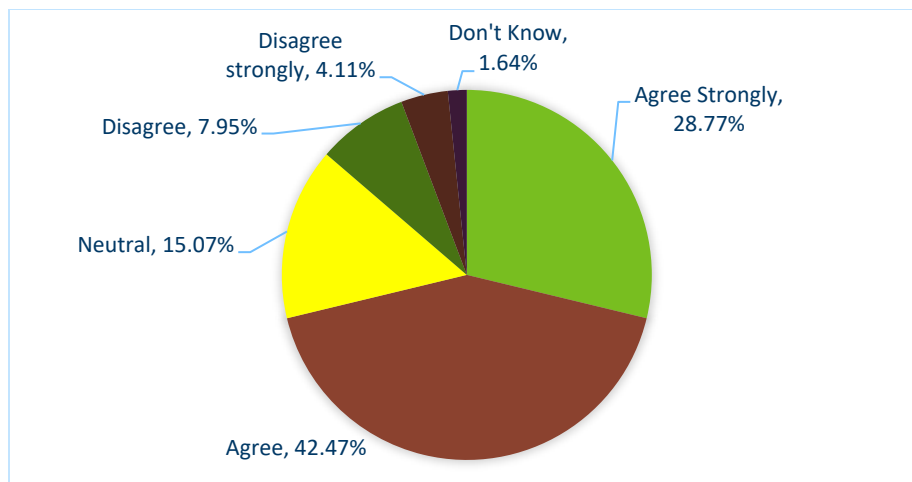


Figure 16-14 Convenience of booking or changing a trip—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.7 I Can Schedule a Trip Within 60 Minutes of the Pickup Time I Request

This statement refers to the ± 1 hour trip negotiation period allowed by federal guidance. Approximately 44% of federal-area respondents reported satisfaction with their ability to schedule a trip within 60 minutes of their requested pickup time, 14% were neutral, and 21% expressed dissatisfaction (see Figure 16-15). Respondent comments revealed mixed experiences. While some respondents indicated that scheduling generally aligns with their requested times, others experienced challenges securing their desired times for last-minute requests. The relatively high rate of dissatisfaction suggests that the system may not adequately accommodate users who had had tighter scheduling windows or that respondents misunderstood the question. Indeed, given the very low level of denials (see Table 8-4), the Study Team suspects that respondents may have misunderstood the question. For example, Metro Mobility’s assistant director followed up with one respondent who answered *strongly disagree*, and added in writing, “60 minutes?! You need to schedule the trip the day before.”

Only 35% of State-area respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the ability to schedule a trip within 60 minutes of the requested pickup time, while 28% disagreed (see Figure 16-16). This feedback aligns with respondent comments expressing frustration about limited scheduling flexibility. And as discussed previously, the high rate of dissatisfaction may be partly due to a misunderstanding of the question.

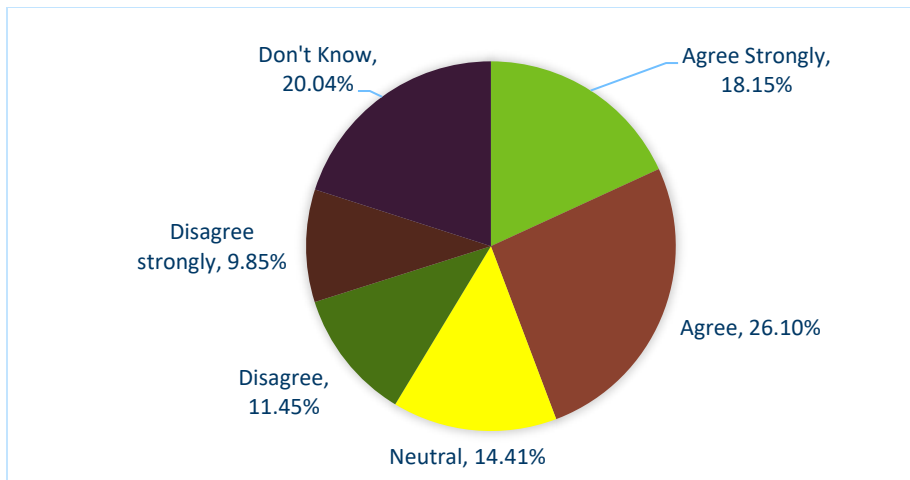


Figure 16-15 Ability to schedule a trip within 60 minutes of requested pickup time—federal-area respondents.

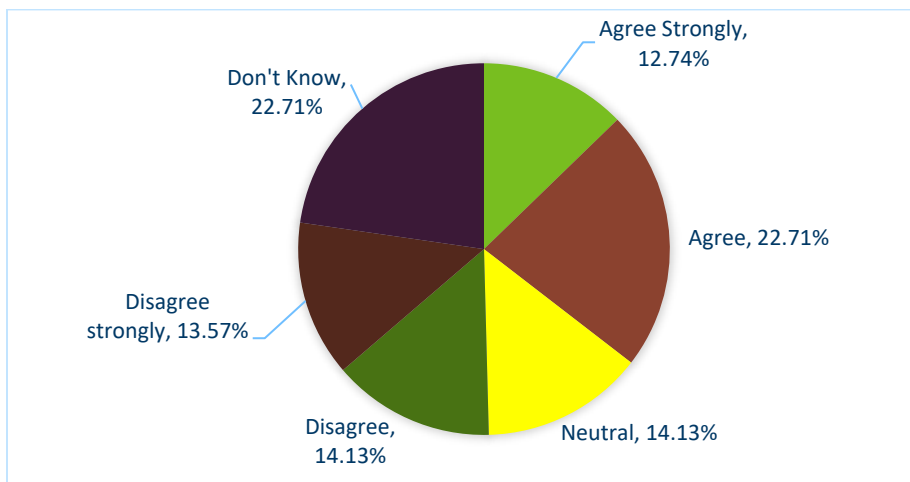


Figure 16-16 Ability to schedule a trip within 60 minutes of requested pickup time—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.8 Cancelling a Trip Is Easy and Convenient

About 79% of federal-area respondents reported satisfaction with the ease and convenience of canceling a trip (see Figure 16-17). Respondent comments generally reflected positive experiences, with many respondents finding the cancellation process straightforward—whether done by phone or online. However, nearly 5% of federal-area respondents reported issues such as long hold times when calling to cancel, difficulty confirming cancellations, or concerns about cancellation penalties if not done far enough in advance.

74% of State-area respondents expressed that the ease and convenience of canceling a trip were only slightly lower than the level of satisfaction reported by federal-area respondents (see Figure 16-18). Overall, many State-area respondents found the cancellation process to be straightforward. However, over 7% of State-area respondents encountered issues similar to those reported by federal-area respondents, including long hold times when calling to cancel and concerns about potential penalties for canceling without sufficient advance notice.

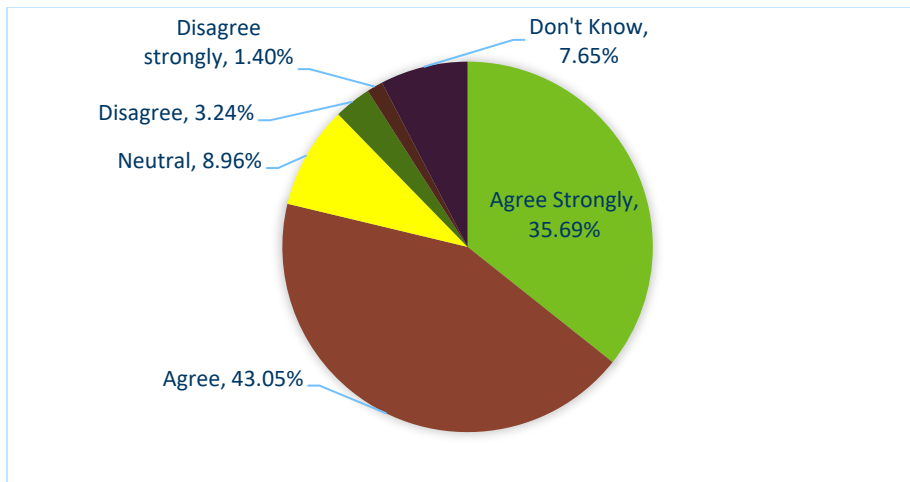


Figure 16-17 Ease and convenience of cancelling a trip—federal-area respondents.

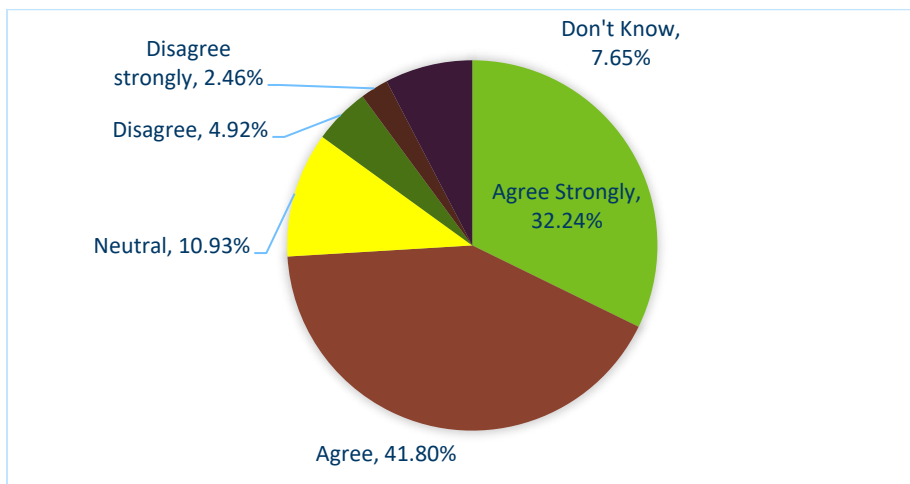


Figure 16-18 Ease and convenience of cancelling a trip—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.9 It Is Easy to Find Out Exactly When My Vehicle Will Arrive

Approximately 65% of federal-area respondents reported satisfaction with the ease of finding out exactly when their vehicle will arrive (see Figure 16-19). Most of the positive comments focused on appreciation for receiving timely arrival information and updates. At the same time, 17% expressed dissatisfaction, mentioning inconsistent or inaccurate ETAs, delayed notifications, and limited real-time tracking functionality.

About 55% of State-area respondents reported satisfaction with the ease of determining exactly when their vehicle will arrive, while 27% expressed dissatisfaction, noting similar issues as those expressed by federal-area respondents (see Figure 16-20). In this instance, a 10% difference in satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels existed between federal-area and State-area respondents.

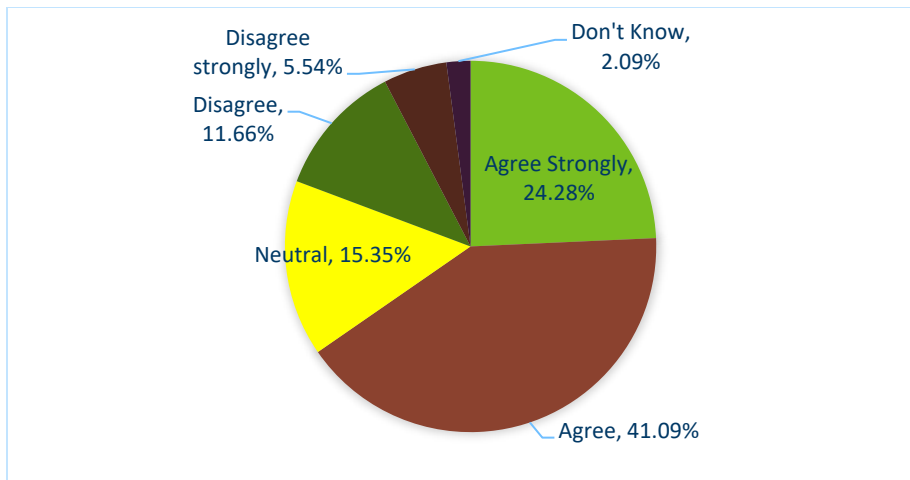


Figure 16-19 Ease of finding exact vehicle arrival information—federal-area respondents.

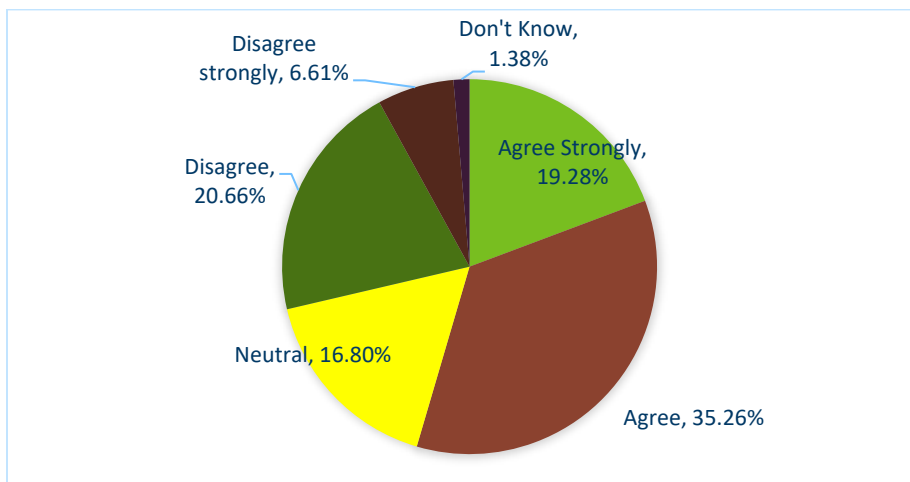


Figure 16-20 Ease of finding exact vehicle arrival information—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.10 The Vehicle Picks Me Up Within the Pickup Window

Approximately 63% of federal-area respondents reported satisfaction with vehicles arriving within the scheduled pickup window, while 17% expressed dissatisfaction (see Figure 16-21). Respondent comments show that while many riders consistently experienced on-time pickups, a significant portion reported challenges with early, late, or inconsistent arrivals. Some respondents mentioned that unpredictable pickup times created anxiety or required extended waiting periods, particularly for those with medical appointments or tight schedules.

Approximately 59% of State-area respondents reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied, mentioning consistent, on-time pickups (see Figure 16-22). However, over 24% of State-area respondents indicated dissatisfaction, noting challenges with early, late, or inconsistent arrivals.

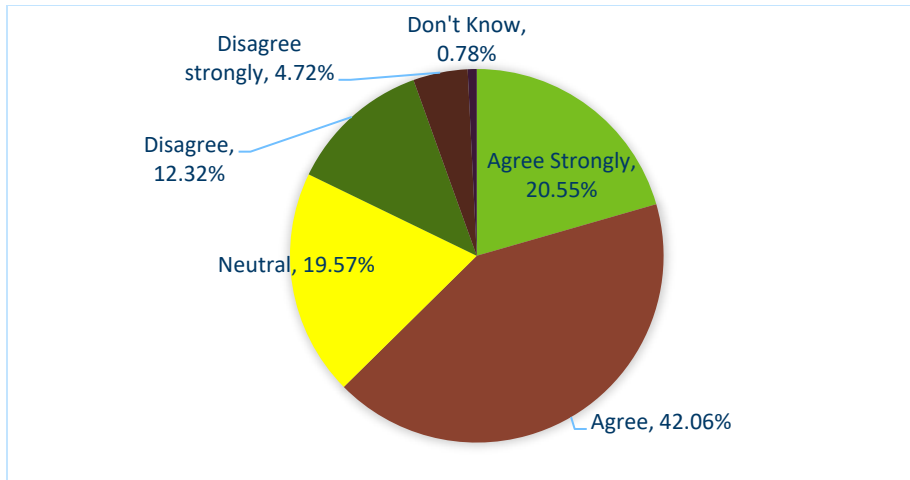


Figure 16-21 On-time pick up (within the pickup window)—federal-area respondents.

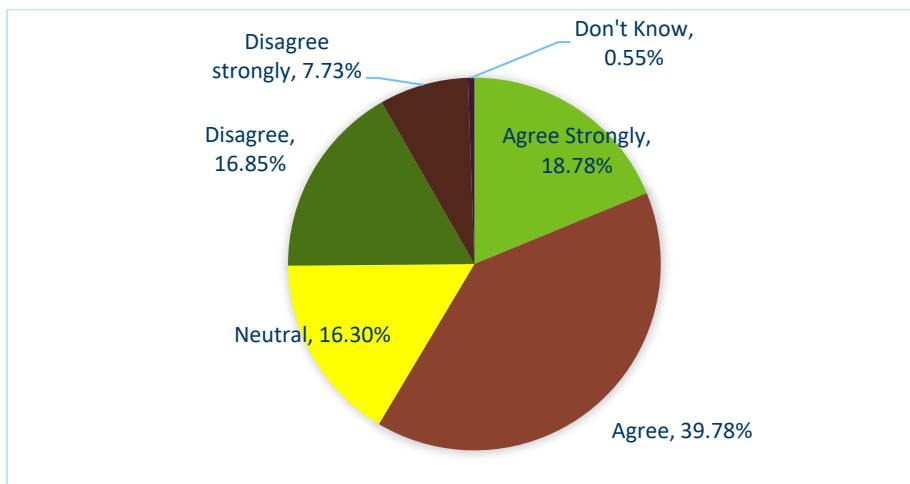


Figure 16-22 On-time pick up (within the pickup window)—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.11 It Is Easy to Get Into the Vehicle, Be Securely Seated, and Get Off the Vehicle

A very high percentage (93%) of federal-area respondents strongly agreed that it is easy to get into the vehicle, be securely seated, and get out of the vehicle (see Figure 16-23). Respondent comments mentioned the helpfulness of drivers, the accessibility of the vehicles, and the care taken during boarding and securement. Less than 2% did not agree with this statement, mentioning rushed securement or inadequate driver training.

Approximately 89% of State-area respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with getting into the vehicle and being securely seated (see Figure 16-24). Positive comments noted helpful drivers and accessible vehicles that support smooth boarding and securement. Less than 3% of State-area respondents expressed dissatisfaction.

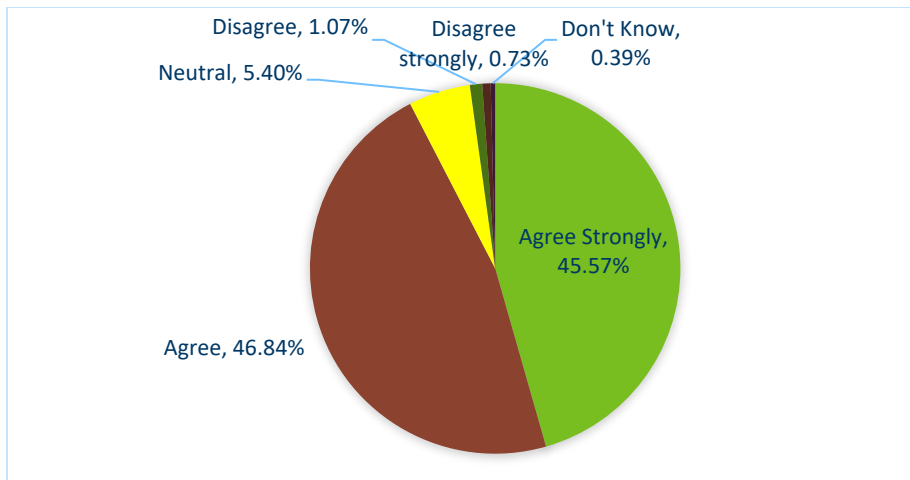


Figure 16-23 Ease of boarding and getting off the vehicle—federal-area respondents.

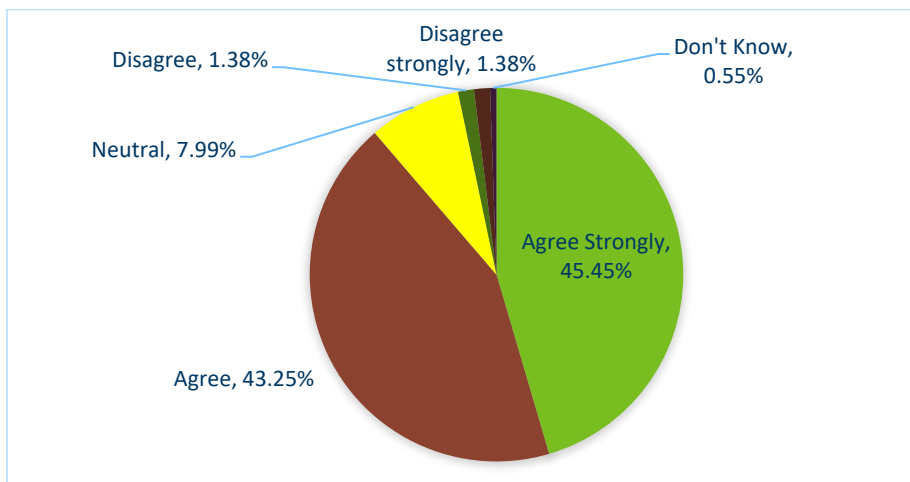


Figure 16-24 Ease of boarding and getting off the vehicle—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.12 Paying for a Trip Is Easy and Convenient

Approximately 91% of federal-area respondents agreed that paying for a trip is easy and convenient, while only 2% disagreed (see Figure 16-25). Respondent comments largely reflect these high satisfaction levels. A small number of respondents reported occasional issues, including malfunctions with fare media, drivers not having change, or confusion regarding fare policies; however, these instances were relatively limited. Drivers do not make change on the Met Council’s fixed-route or paratransit services.

Approximately 87% of State-area respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied, mentioning that the current system is straightforward and accessible (see Figure 16-26). Only about 3% were dissatisfied, noting occasional issues such as unclear fare policies or limited payment options.

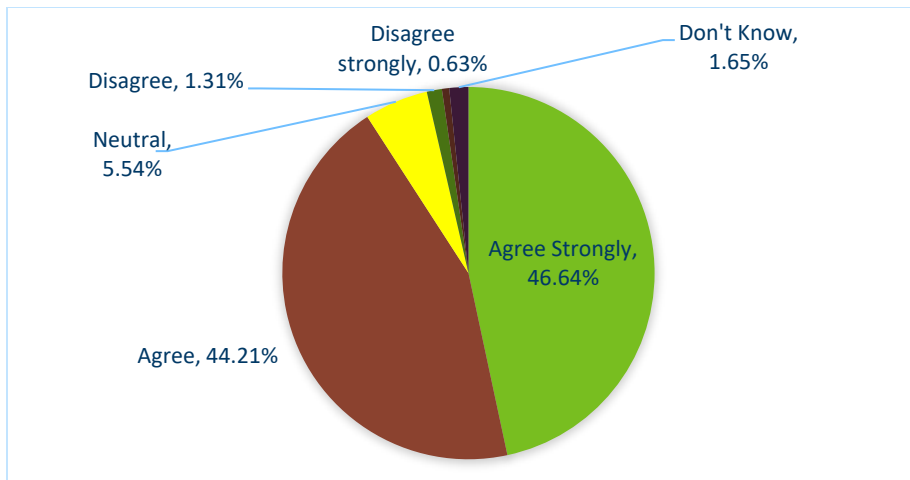


Figure 16-25 Ease and convenience of paying—federal-area respondents.

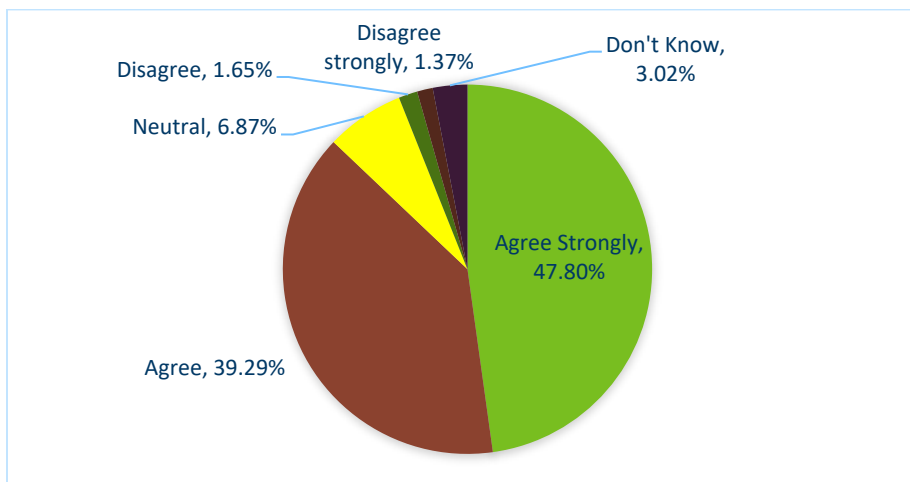


Figure 16-26 Ease and convenience of paying—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.13 The Drivers Are Professional and Knowledgeable and Provide the Level of Assistance I Need to Take the Trip

Approximately 85% of federal-area respondents agreed that the drivers demonstrate professionalism, knowledge, and helpfulness; only around 5% disagreed (see Figure 16-27). Rider comments consistently mentioned the drivers as one of the service’s strongest features, with many riders praising their courtesy, helpfulness, and attentiveness to individual needs, including securement assistance and sensitivity to disabilities. Almost 5% of federal-area respondents had negative feedback, noting occasional instances of rushed securements, lack of attentiveness, or inconsistent levels of assistance.

Approximately 81% of State-area respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the drivers’ professionalism, knowledge, and assistance (see Figure 16-28). Positive comments referred to courteous, helpful, and well-trained drivers who effectively assist passengers. Approximately 8% of State-area respondents expressed dissatisfaction, with comments mentioning inconsistent assistance or unfamiliarity with specific rider needs.

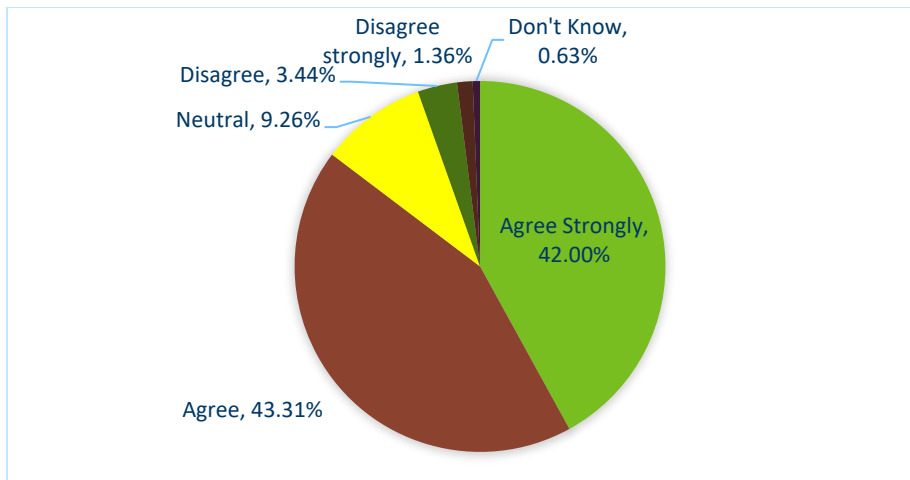


Figure 16-27 Professionalism, knowledge, and assistance of the drivers—federal-area respondents.

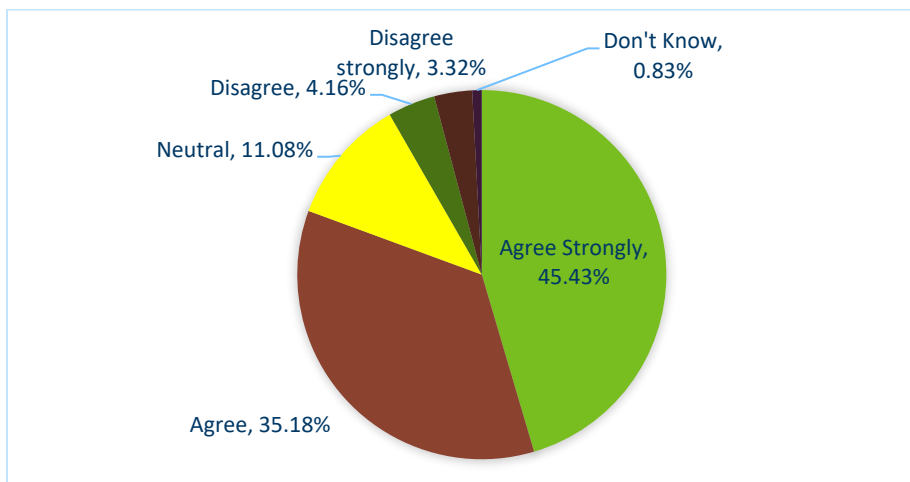


Figure 16-28 Professionalism, knowledge, and assistance of the drivers—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.14 The Ride Is Comfortable

About 80% of federal-area respondents reported satisfaction with the comfort of their ride, while around 7% expressed dissatisfaction (see Figure 16-29). Positive comments noted that the vehicles are typically clean, well-maintained, and provide a smooth ride.

Around 86% of State-area respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied (see Figure 16-30). This finding is consistent with positive comments noting that vehicles are typically clean, well-maintained, and provide a smooth ride. Nearly 8% expressed dissatisfaction. Interestingly, and considering the same vehicles are used in both areas, this statement is one of the few statements where a higher percentage of State-area respondents expressed satisfaction, compared to federal-area respondents.

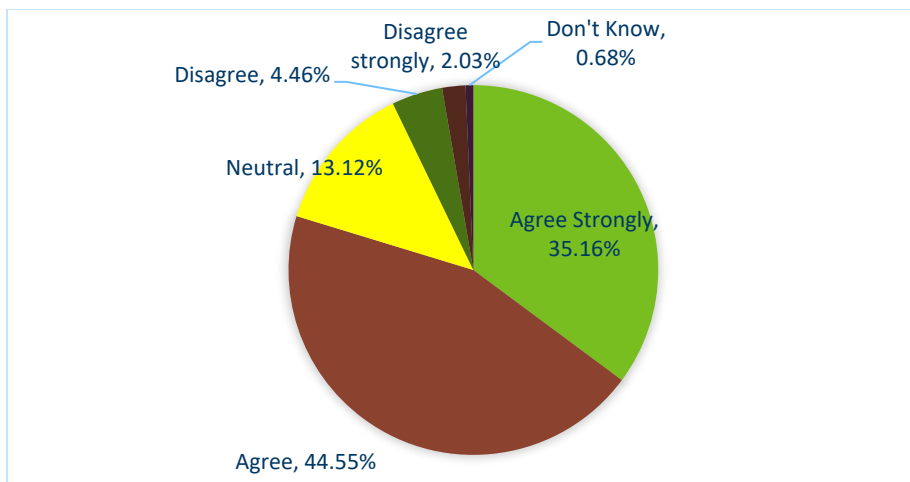


Figure 16-29 Ride comfort—federal-area respondents.

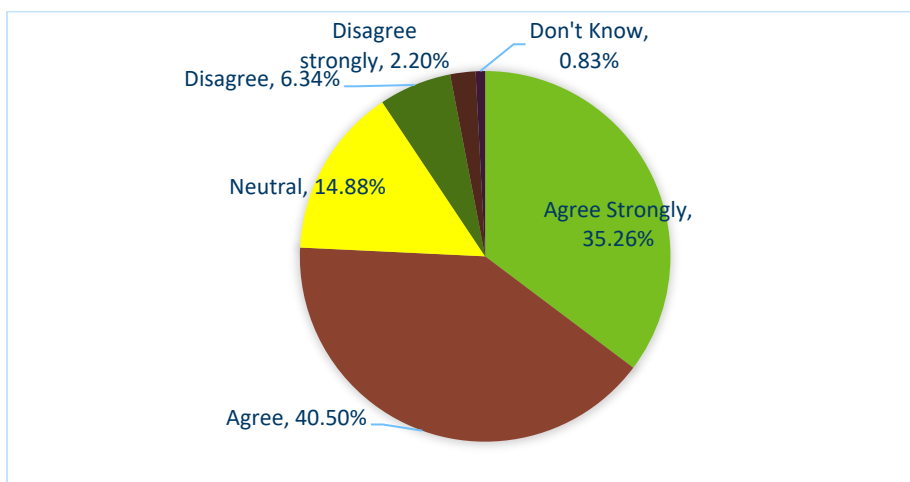


Figure 16-30 Ride comfort—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.15 The Vehicle Is Clean

Approximately 88% of federal-area respondents reported satisfaction with the comfort of their ride, while only 3% expressed dissatisfaction (see Figure 16-31). Comments reflect positive experiences, with respondents noting that vehicles are typically clean.

Nearly 84% of State-area respondents expressed satisfaction with vehicle cleanliness (see Figure 16-32). Only about 5% expressed dissatisfaction.

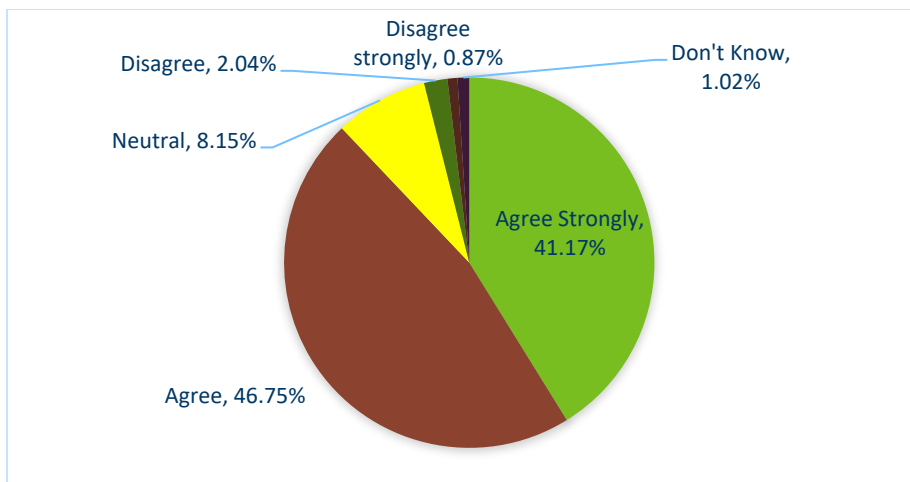


Figure 16-31 Vehicle cleanliness—federal-area respondents.

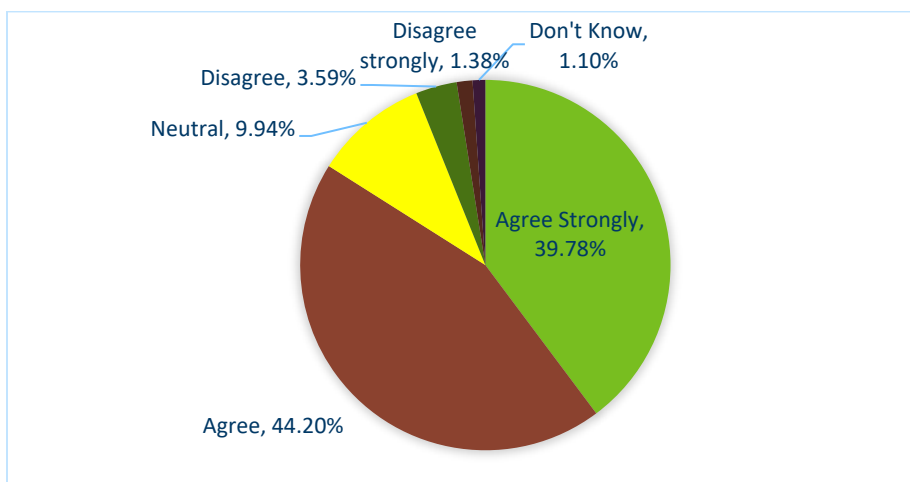


Figure 16-32 Vehicle cleanliness—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.16 I Feel Safe Riding on the Vehicle

Approximately 90% of federal-area respondents agreed that they feel safe using the system, while only around 2% disagreed (see Figure 16-33). Respondent comments consistently highlight the drivers as one of the strongest features contributing to a secure and reliable experience. The few negative comments noted occasional instances of aggressive driving behavior that made some respondents feel unsafe.

About 85% of State-area respondents reported feeling safe using the system, while only around 3% disagreed with the statement (see Figure 16-34). Key factors highlighting the positive response were the professionalism and knowledge of the drivers.

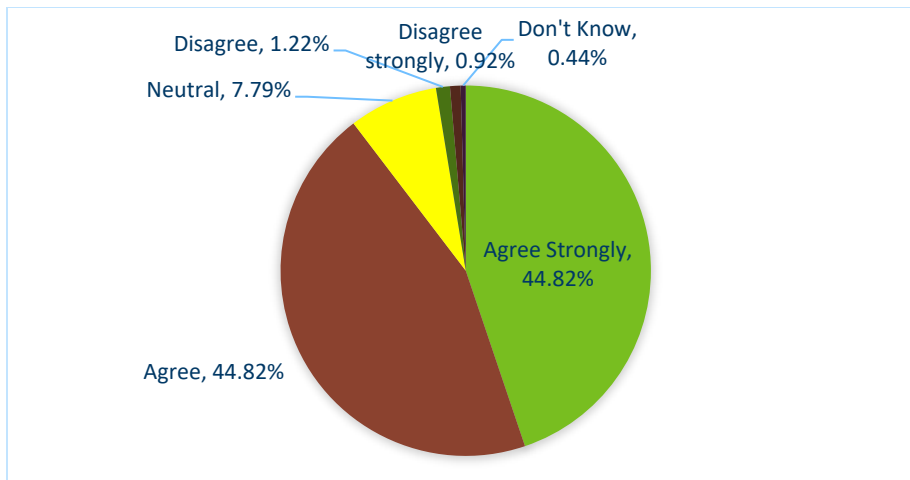


Figure 16-33 Feeling of safety while riding on the vehicle—federal-area respondents.

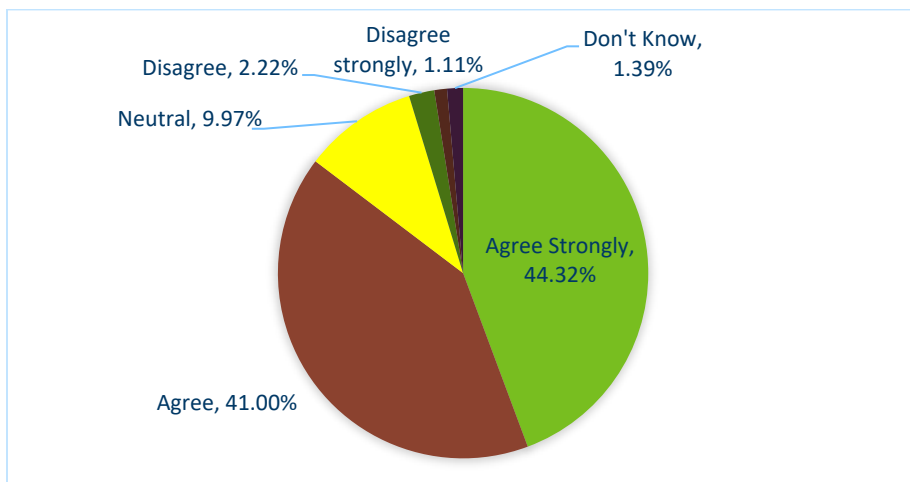


Figure 16-34 Feeling of safety while riding on the vehicle—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.17 The Service Gets Me to My Destination Within a Reasonable Time (from Pickup to Drop-Off)

Approximately 73% of federal-area respondents agreed that they are transported to their destinations in a reasonable amount of time, while 12% disagreed (see Figure 16-35). Negative comments included concerns about long ride durations, indirect routing, and excessive detours during shared rides. Some riders reported that their trips took much longer than necessary, especially when multiple passengers were picked up or dropped off along the way.

Approximately 68% of State-area respondents agreed that they are transported to their destinations in a reasonable amount of time, while 17% disagreed (see Figure 16-36). Respondent comments indicate a varied experience, similar to those shared by federal-area respondents. While many of the riders felt that travel times are generally reasonable, some expressed concerns about long ride durations for short distances, indirect routing, and excessive detours resulting from shared rides.

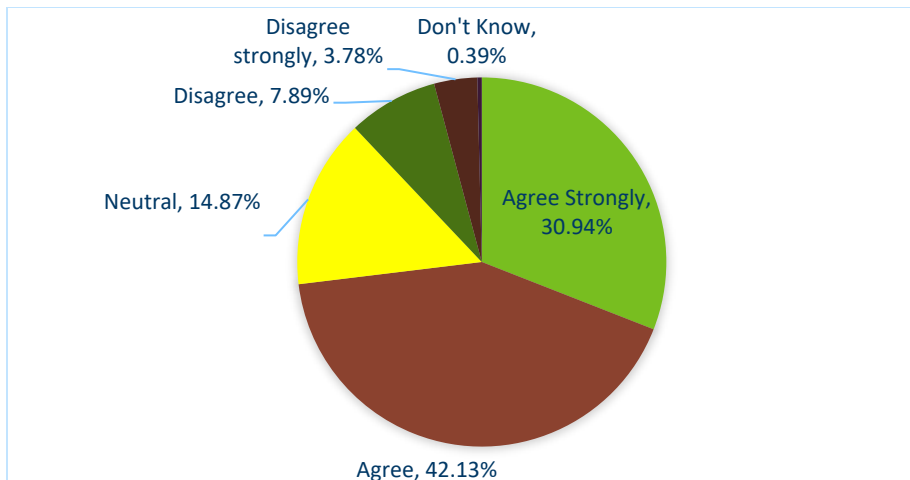


Figure 16-35 Service gets to destination within a reasonable time—federal-area respondents.

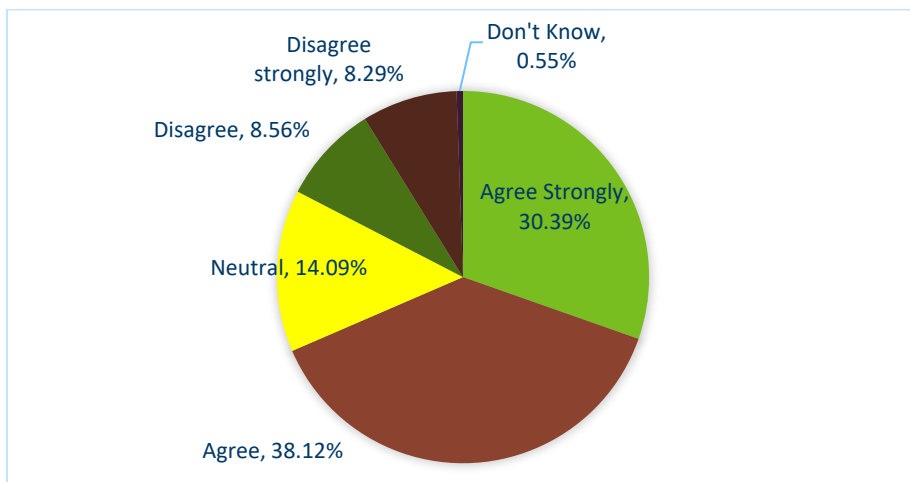


Figure 16-36 Service gets to destination within a reasonable time—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.18 I Arrive at My Destination on Time (for My Purpose/Objective)

Approximately 75% of federal-area respondents reported that they arrived at their destination on time for their intended purposes, while around 11% disagreed (see Figure 16-37). Positive comments noted consistently meeting their appointments and commitments on time. Negative comments included concerns about late arrivals due to extended shared rides, traffic delays, scheduling complications, or unpredictable pickup times.

Approximately 67% of State-area respondents agreed with this statement, while 14% disagreed (see Figure 16-38). While many State-area respondents found the OTP generally acceptable, some reported significant delays lasting anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours. These delays have led to serious consequences because respondents were unable to arrive on time for work or medical appointments.

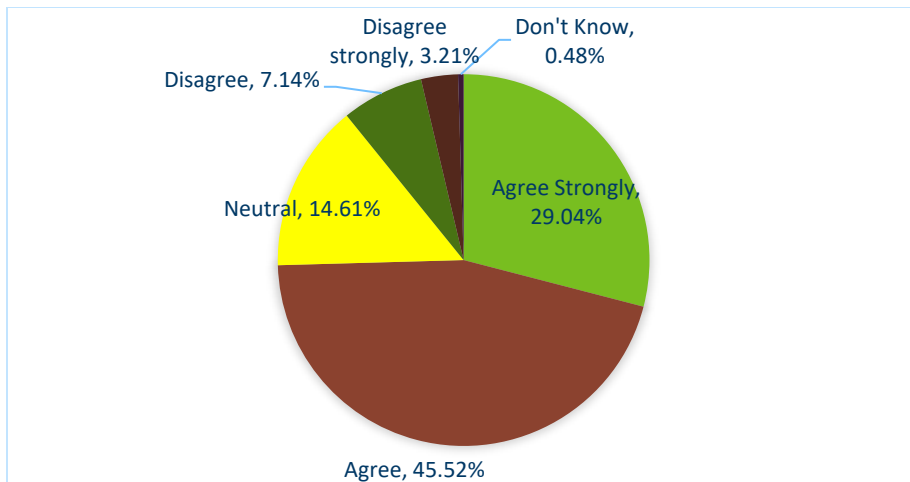


Figure 16-37 On-time destination arrival—federal-area respondents.

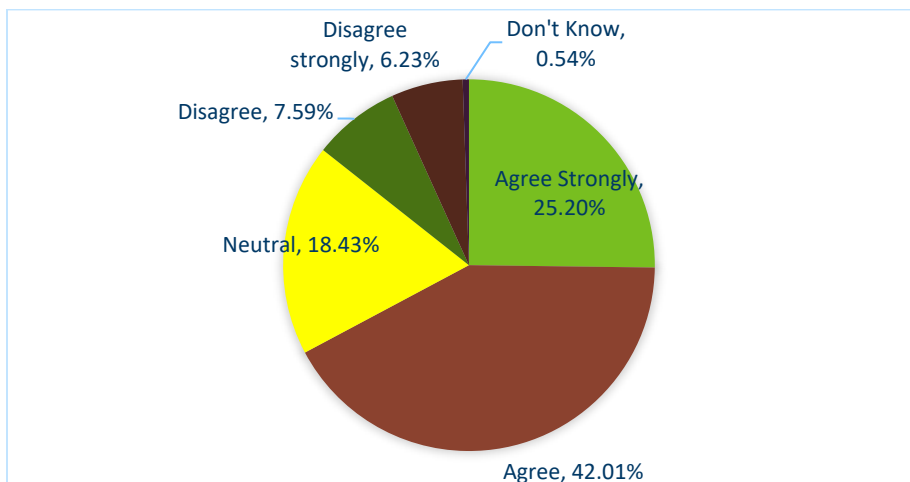


Figure 16-38 On-time destination arrival—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.19 How Satisfied Are You Overall With the Paratransit Service?

Approximately 83% of federal-area respondents reported being satisfied with the paratransit service, and 7% expressed dissatisfaction (see Figure 16-39). Respondent comments mostly reflect this overall satisfaction, with many riders praising the courteous drivers, helpful reservation staff, and reliable service. Negative comments included recurring concerns associated with scheduling challenges, long ride times due to shared routing, occasional late arrivals, and inconsistent communication about vehicle arrival times. These comments suggest that while the system effectively meets the needs of the majority of users, improvements in trip scheduling, OTP, and shared rides are needed to improve customer satisfaction.

Nearly 76% of State-area respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the paratransit service (see Figure 16-40). This positive feedback is supported by respondent comments that praise reliable drivers, the ease of scheduling, and professional staff. However, about 12% of State-area respondents expressed dissatisfaction, often related to recurring concerns such as long wait times, inconsistent pickup windows, and poor OTP.

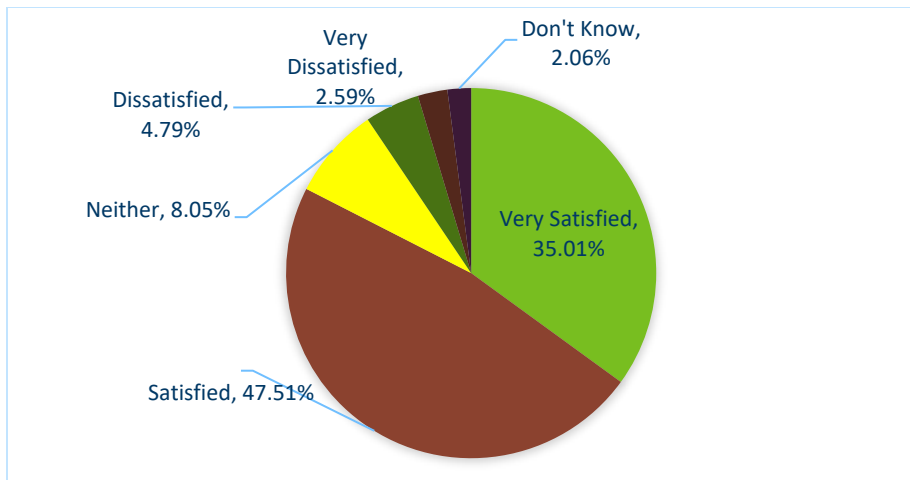


Figure 16-39 Overall satisfaction with the paratransit service—federal-area respondents.

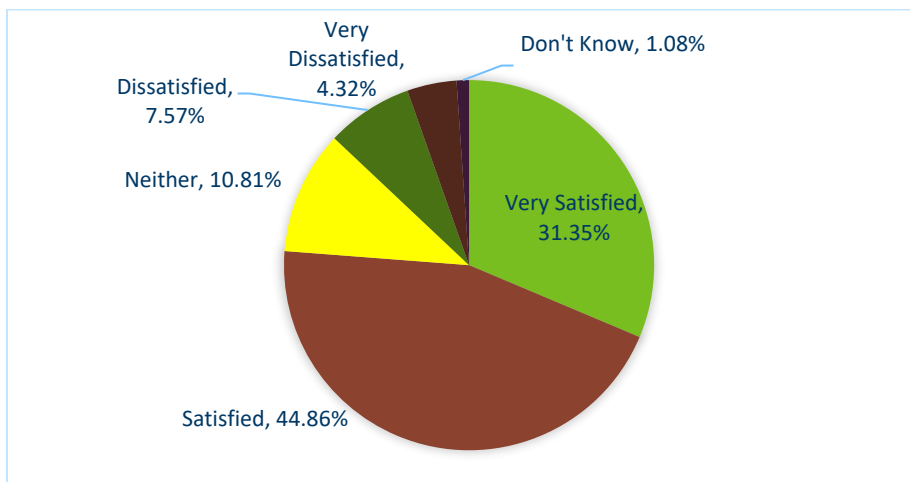


Figure 16-40 Overall satisfaction with the paratransit service—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.20 How Likely Is It That You Would Recommend the Paratransit Service to an Eligible Friend or Family Member?

Among federal-area respondents, 76% reported that they were highly likely (scores between 1 and 4) to recommend the paratransit service to an eligible friend or family member (see Figure 16-41). In contrast, about 4% reported that they were either very unlikely or not at all likely (scores of 10 and 11) to recommend the service. Additionally, 15% provided mid-range scores between 5 and 9, indicating a significant level of mixed feelings among respondents.

Among State-area respondents, 69% reported that they were highly likely (scores between 1 and 4) to recommend the paratransit service to an eligible friend or family member, while about 6% were very unlikely or not at all likely (scores of 10 and 11) to recommend the service (see Figure 16-42). Additionally, 20% provided mid-range scores between 5 and 9, indicating a significant level of mixed feelings among respondents. The mix of comments among State-area respondents echoed those of federal-area respondents, with respondents noting particular concerns with scheduling, OTP, and variability in travel time.

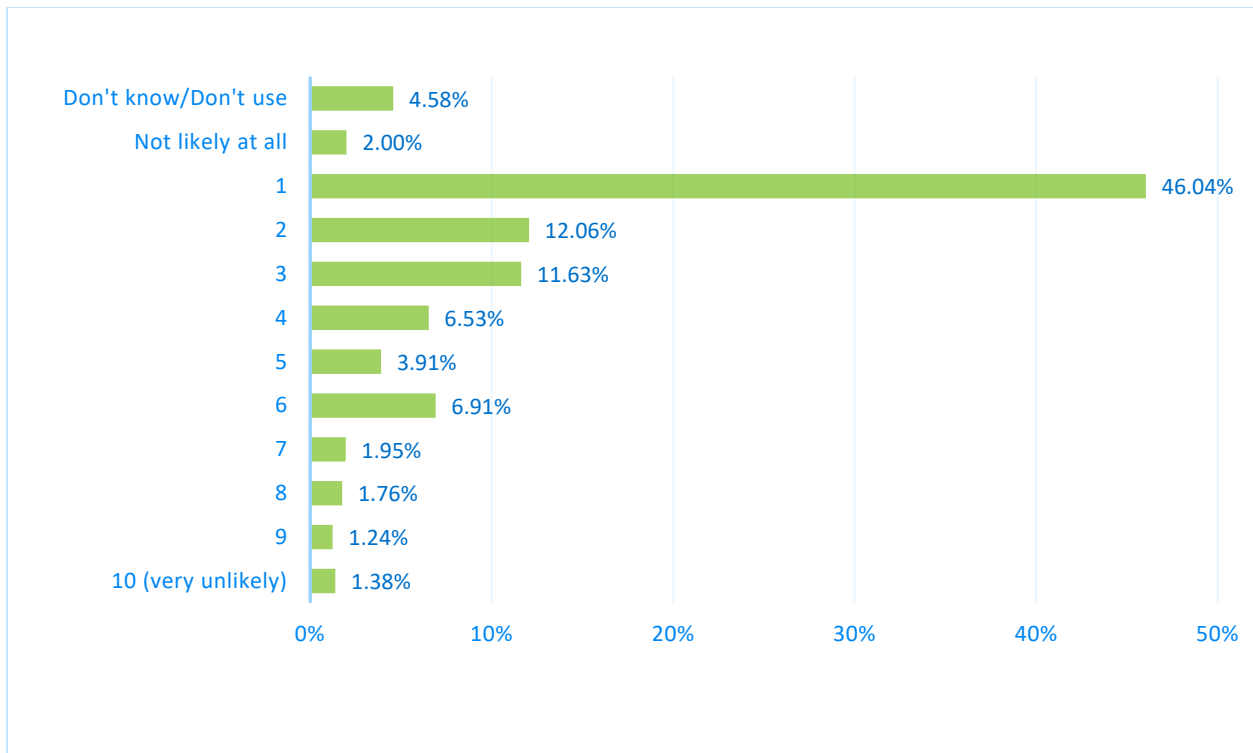


Figure 16-41 Likelihood of recommending the paratransit service—federal-area respondents.

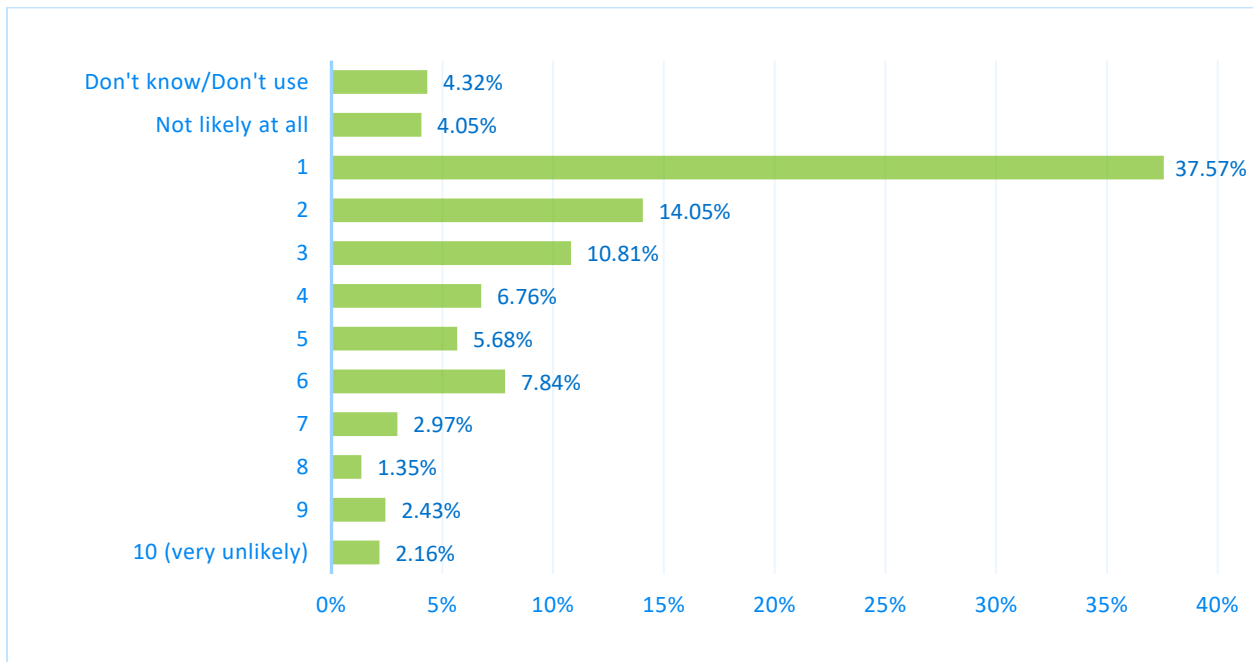


Figure 16-42 Likelihood of recommending the paratransit service—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.21 Which One of the Following Areas Is the Most Important to Improve?

When federal-area respondents were asked what they would most like to see improved, around 39% said OTP (see Figure 16-43). The next priority was real-time information at around 20%, followed by trip scheduling at 12%. Comments focused on frustrations about unpredictable pickup and drop-off times, shared-ride detours, and limited flexibility in scheduling. Federal-area respondents also stressed the need for more accurate and easy-to-access real-time updates, especially for those who rely on phone notifications. Overall, riders were satisfied with drivers, payments, and vehicle experiences. At the same time, improving on-time reliability, real-time communication, and scheduling consistency would best address rider concerns and improve overall satisfaction with the service.

State-area respondents provided a priority list that closely resembled that of federal-area respondents. About 43% of State-area respondents emphasized the importance of OTP as their top priority (see Figure 16-44). Following this, 15% indicated that real-time information and trip scheduling are their top priorities. State-area respondents commonly requested user-friendly tools that would allow them to arrange their journeys more conveniently.

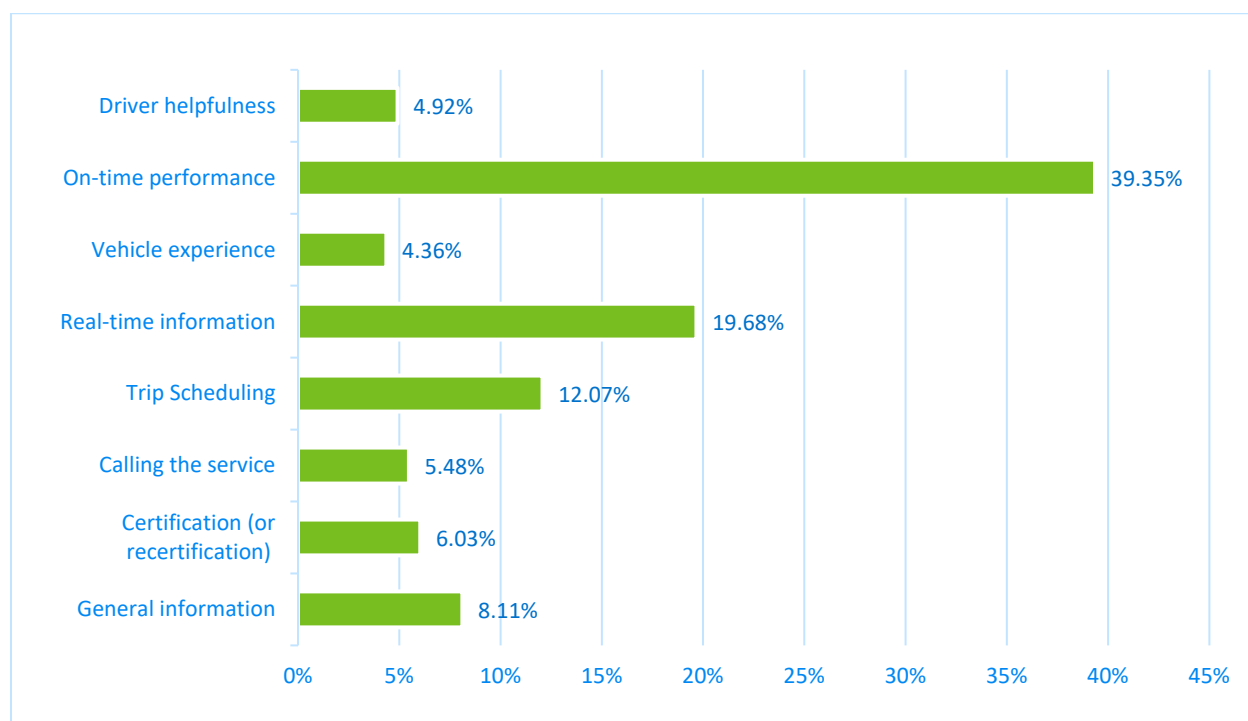


Figure 16-43 Most important areas for improvement—federal-area respondents.

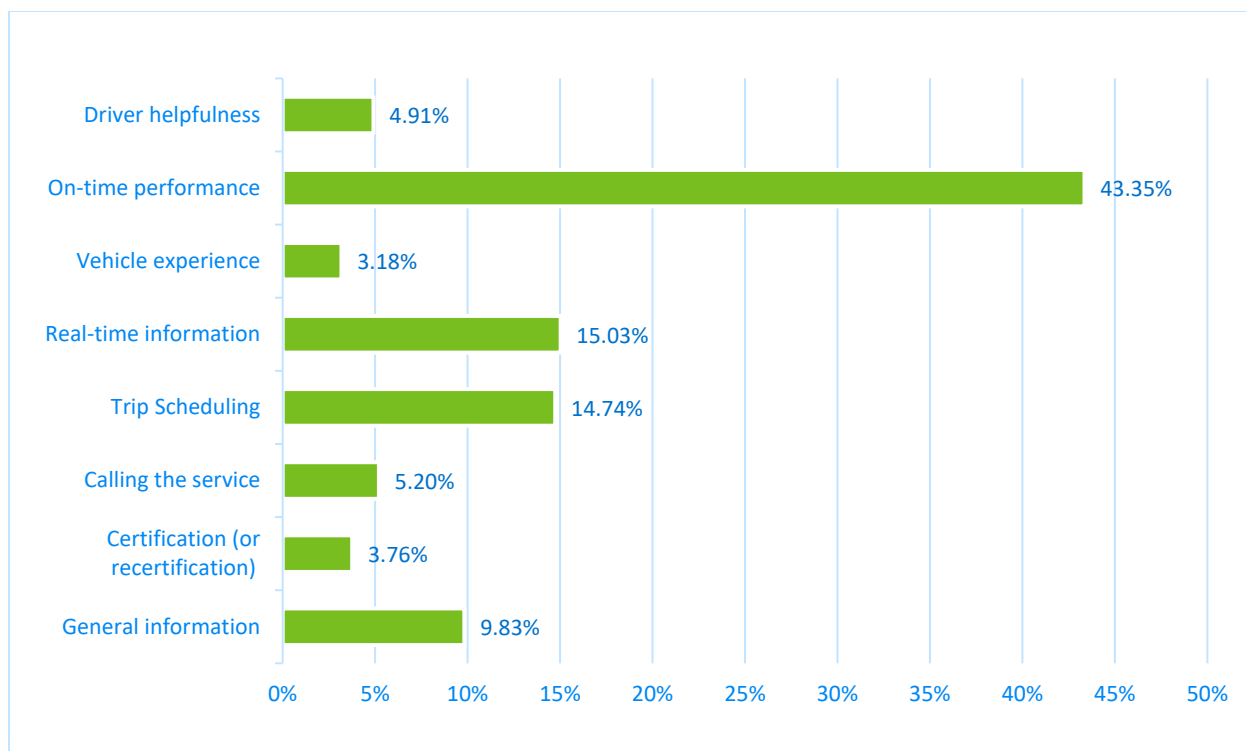


Figure 16-44 Most important areas for improvement—State-area respondents.

16.4.2.22 If You Filed a Complaint in the Last Year With Metro Mobility With an Accompanying Request for Someone to Call You Back, Did Your Most Recent Complaint Result in Someone Getting Back to You With a Satisfactory Response?

Among the federal-area respondents, 73% indicated that they had not filed a complaint in the past year. Among the respondents who did file a complaint:

- 48% reported that their most recent complaint was resolved satisfactorily.
- 14% received a call about their latest complaint, but the resolution was unsatisfactory.
- 12% received a call about their latest complaint, but there was no resolution.
- 27% never received a call, even though one was requested (see Figure 16-45).

Respondent comments reflected a mix of satisfaction and frustration with the complaint process. Some respondents appreciated the staff's professional response and handling of their issues, while others expressed disappointment, feeling that follow-up was inadequate, their concerns were ignored, or that the outcomes were unclear after filing a complaint.

Among the State-area respondents, 75% had not filed a complaint in the past year. Among the 83 respondents who did file a complaint:

- 41% reported that their most recent complaint was resolved satisfactorily.
- 17% received a call about their latest complaint, but the resolution was unsatisfactory.
- 11% received a call about their latest complaint but there was no resolution.

- 31% never received a call, even though one was requested (see Figure 16-46).

Comments from State-area respondents regarding the complaint process mirrored those of federal-area respondents.

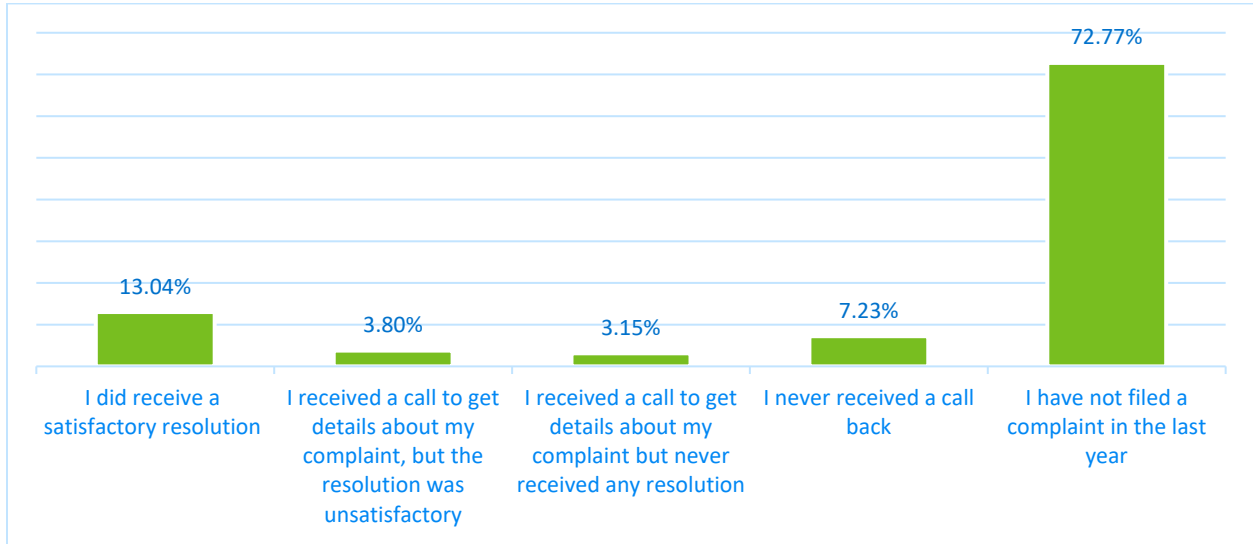


Figure 16-45 Response to filed complaints—federal-area respondents.

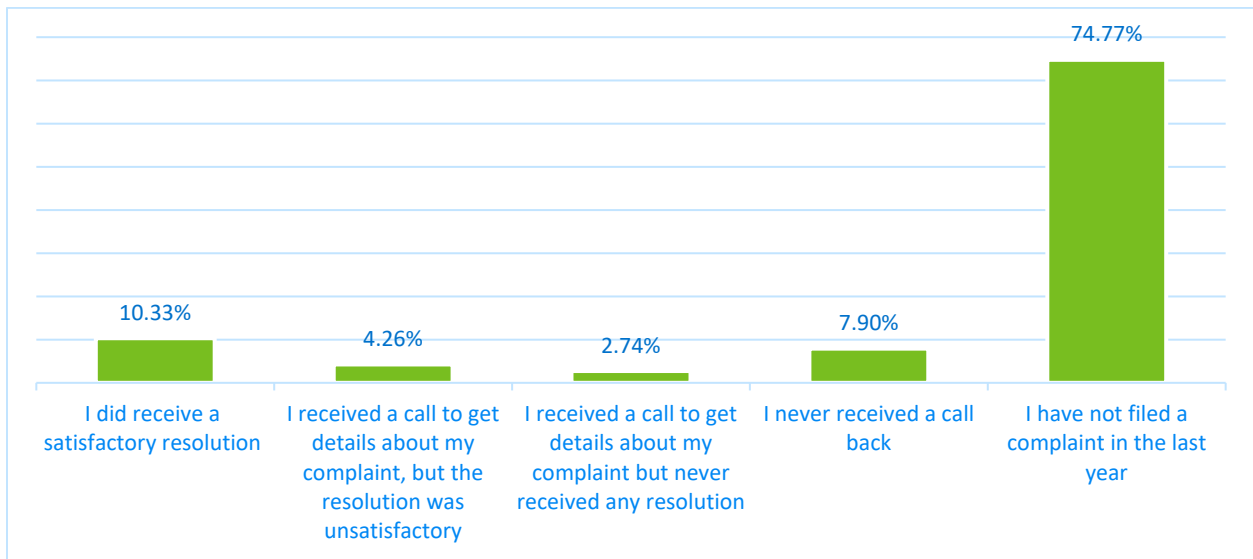


Figure 16-46 Response to filed complaints—State-area respondents.

16.4.3 Summary of Rider Survey Results

In general, the responses from the rider survey indicate a fairly high satisfaction level with Metro Mobility service among users in both the federally mandated and State-mandated service areas. Aspects of the Metro Mobility program are ranked with respect to level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Table 16-1; the question about getting trips within the ± 1 hour trip negotiation span was excluded from this table because the Study Team believes the survey respondents misunderstood the question. Overall satisfaction of Metro Mobility service was high—83% for federal-area respondents and 77% for State-area respondents, which is pretty good for paratransit services. As an accuracy check, the Study Team compared these overall satisfaction results to the levels of satisfaction reported for the 16 individual satisfaction-related questions. Among the 16 satisfaction-related questions, the average level of satisfaction was 80% for federal-area respondents and 74% for State-area respondents—a 3% difference from the responses to the overall satisfaction question. Thus, the Study Team believes the overall level of satisfaction result is accurate.

On average, the level of satisfaction for State-area respondents is about 6% below that of federal-area respondents, while the level of dissatisfaction for State-area respondents is about 3% above that of federal-area respondents, meaning the difference between the two groups on average is not that significant. The aspect of the program that showed the greatest difference between the two groups is accurate ETAs, with a 10% difference between federal-area and State-area respondents for both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This aspect received the lowest score of the survey (55% satisfied) among State-area respondents and the next to the lowest score (65% satisfied) among federal-area respondents.

A review of the survey respondents' scores and comments revealed that many riders in both groups appreciate the service's accessibility, safety, vehicle comfort and cleanliness, ease of paying fares, and level of driver assistance and professionalism. All of the scores for these aspects of Metro Mobility service were 80% and over for both groups of respondents.

Table 16-1 Satisfaction/dissatisfaction rankings for different aspects of Metro Mobility service—federal-area respondents vs. State-area respondents

Ranking	Metro Mobility Aspect	Satisfaction Level	Federal-Area Respondents	State-Area Respondents	Difference
1	Safely Seated and Secured	Satisfied	93%	87%	-4%
		Dissatisfied	2%	3%	1%
2	Ease of Paying Fare	Satisfied	91%	87%	-4%
		Dissatisfied	2%	3%	1%
3	Safe Ride	Satisfied	90%	85%	-5%
		Dissatisfied	2%	3%	1%
4	Clean Vehicle	Satisfied	88%	84%	-4%
		Dissatisfied	3%	5%	2%
5	Professional Drivers	Satisfied	85%	81%	-4%
		Dissatisfied	5%	8%	3%
6	Knowledgeable Call Takers	Satisfied	81%	76%	-5%

Ranking	Metro Mobility Aspect	Satisfaction Level	Federal-Area Respondents	State-Area Respondents	Difference
		Dissatisfied	6%	9%	3%
7	Comfortable Ride	Satisfied	80%	86%	6%
		Dissatisfied	7%	8%	1%
8	Ease of Booking	Satisfied	80%	71%	-9%
		Dissatisfied	9%	12%	3%
9	Ease of Canceling	Satisfied	79%	74%	-5%
		Dissatisfied	5%	7%	2%
10	Prompt Call Taking	Satisfied	79%	75%	-4%
		Dissatisfied	8%	12%	4%
11	Recommend to Family / Friend	Satisfied	76%	69%	-7%
		Dissatisfied	4%	6%	2%
12	On-Time Drop-Offs	Satisfied	75%	67%	-8%
		Dissatisfied	11%	14%	3%
13	Eligibility Staff	Satisfied	74%	67%	-7%
		Dissatisfied	2%	2%	0%
14	Reasonable Ride Time	Satisfied	73%	68%	-5%
		Dissatisfied	12%	17%	5%
15	Accuracy of ETAs	Satisfied	65%	55%	-10%
		Dissatisfied	17%	27%	10%
16	On-Time Pick-Ups	Satisfied	63%	59%	-4%
		Dissatisfied	17%	24%	7%
	Average	Satisfied	80%	74%	-6%
		Dissatisfied	7%	10%	3%
	Overall Satisfaction	Satisfied	83%	77%	-6%
		Dissatisfied	7%	12%	5%

Other comments and scores revealed more negative feedback regarding long ride times, inaccurate or delayed ETAs, untimely pickups, and untimely drop-offs for appointment trips. All scored below 75% for both groups of riders. Both sets of riders also scored the eligibility staff below 75%. The lowest ranking aspect of Metro Mobility service was on-time pickups; the levels of satisfaction for this were 63% for federal-area respondents and 59% for State-area respondents. This finding is interesting because it is in stark contrast to the actual pickup performance, which for both groups was above 90% for 2024, and has increased to above the 93% threshold during the first quarter of 2025.

Consistent with these findings, a significant number of riders in both groups would like to see improvements to OTP and access to real-time ETAs.

Regarding the added question about complaint handling, the good news is that 73% of federal-area respondents and 75% of State-area respondents did not file a complaint in the last year. This finding can be interpreted as a general level of satisfaction with the service, which seems to correspond to the 83% and 77% overall satisfaction scores for federal-area and State-area respondents, respectively. On top of this, 48% of federal-area respondents and 41% of State-area respondents who did file a complaint and were called back were satisfied with the resolution.

On the other hand, some riders may not have filed a complaint because of the shortcomings of the complaint handling process. Approximately 52% of federal-area respondents and 59% of State-area respondents were dissatisfied with the complaint handling process because:

- They were unhappy with the resolution.
- There was a callback, but the discussion included no resolution (the Study Team suspects that these calls were more fact finding in nature).
- They were never called back after requesting a callback.

The associated comments, which were consistent between the two groups of riders, included inadequate follow-ups, staff ignoring the rider's concerns, and unclear outcomes. The Met Council's efforts to improve the complaint process and act upon other OLA recommendations are discussed in Chapter 17.

Chapter 17: Improvement Assessment

As part of this study, the Study Team was asked to comment on the Met Council's progress on recommendations from two documents—the 2017–2018 Metro Mobility Task Force Legislative Report; and the April 2024 Minnesota State OLA Report from the Legislature's Program Evaluation Division.

The recommendations from these two documents and the progress made are detailed in Sections 17.1 and 17.2, respectively. To assist the reader in navigating these sections, each recommendation is provided as a subheading, with any supporting discussion to follow, as required. The Met Council's progress toward each recommendation is provided in boxed and italicized text. In general, the Study Team found that the Met Council has taken the recommendations seriously and has made great progress on several of the recommendations, noting that some of the recommendations conflict with compliance requirements or are ill-advised at this time, in the Study Team's opinion.

17.1 Met Council Progress on Recommendations From the 2017–2018 Task Force Report

The legislative task force reviewing Metro Mobility services developed sets of recommendations related to legislative actions, service model/program changes, and actions.

17.1.1 Recommended Legislative Actions

17.1.1.1 Establish a Dedicated Funding Source to Ensure Metro Mobility Demand Is Met

In 2021, the Legislature enacted Minnesota Statute 473.386, Special Transportation Service. This statute, which took effect on July 1, 2025, ensures that the State fully funds Metro Mobility's (and Metro Move's) operating and capital expenses.

Based on Met Council forecasts, \$112 million and \$118 million are being provided to the Met Council for FY 25–26 and FY 26–27, respectively. This funding is codified, meaning that the only way it could be changed is by legislative action. Indeed, under Section 16A.103, the Commissioner of Management and Budget must incorporate a State obligation from the general fund for the annual net costs to the council to implement the STS under this section. The net costs are based on forecasts provided by the Met Council each February and November. The stated objectives of Statute 473.386 are to:

- Provide greater access to transportation for the elderly, people with disabilities, and others with special transportation needs in the metropolitan area.*
- Develop an integrated system of STS providing transportation tailored to meet special individual needs in the most cost-efficient manner.*
- Use existing public, private, and private nonprofit providers of service (when feasible and cost-efficient) to supplement rather than replace existing service and to increase the productivity of all special transportation vehicles available in the area.*

Ultimately, it is the commissioner's task to determine the net costs needed to:

- Maintain service levels while accounting for expected demand, including service area, hours of service, ride scheduling requirements, and fares, per council policy.
- Maintain the general existing condition of the STS bus fleet, including bus maintenance and replacement.
- Meet the requirements of this section.

The statute also provides for forecasting adjustments necessary to match the actual STS program costs in the prior fiscal year and the adjusted program costs forecasted for the second year of the current biennium (for a forecast prepared in the first year of the biennium), less funds identified for the STS from nonstate sources.

In conjunction with each February and November forecast, the Met Council must submit a financial review of the STS to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and finance and to the commissioner of management and budget. At a minimum, the financial review must include:

- A summary of STS sources of funds and expenditures for the prior two fiscal years and each fiscal year of the forecast period, which must include a breakout by expenditures categories, and information that is sufficient to identify a conversion between state fiscal years and the fiscal years of the council.
- Details on cost assumptions used in the forecast.
- Information on ridership and farebox recovery rates for the prior two fiscal years and each fiscal year of the forecast period.
- An identification of the amount of appropriations necessary for any forecast adjustments.

All these actions have been completed by the Met Council. MnDOT is also currently running a procurement for a transit financial analyst to review the Met Council's ridership and budget forecasting methodology to determine whether the methodology is sound or needs to be modified.

Some of the other key directives in the statute focused on customer feedback. The first is to ensure that the service administrator establishes a system for registering and expeditiously responding to complaints by users, informing users of how to register complaints, and requiring providers to report on incidents that impair the safety and well-being of users or the quality of the service. Another directive was to provide, on an annual basis, an opportunity for users and other interested people to provide testimony to the council concerning services provided under this section.

Both of these directives have been implemented by the Met Council.

Yet another directive was to ensure that service standards are met. The statute also requires the Met Council to report KPIs relative to corresponding standards.

The Met Council has implemented a robust service monitoring process to ensure that various KPIs and standards are being met. In addition, bonuses and invoice credits that have been added to the provider contracts help to incentivize providers to provide service that emulates the desired balance between service quality and service efficiency metrics. The Met Council regularly submits requested reports to the Legislature.

Some of the major duties of the Met Council stipulated in the statute include:

- Encouraging the participation of public, private, and private nonprofit providers, especially those who can effectively provide service at a reasonable cost.

The Met Council has recently added two carriers (UZURV and Carepool) to its POD program to provide additional mobility options and to be able to exercise the taxi exception, which comes with user choice.

- Encouraging individuals using special transportation to use the type of service most appropriate to their particular needs, while observing client/trip eligibility criteria.

The Met Council now has publicized, and continues to publicize, a family of DRT services (Metro Mobility, Metro Move, POD, Metro micro, and Transit Link).

- Orchestrating shared rides to the greatest extent practicable.

This action is accomplished via the scheduling/dispatching technologies used for DRT services.

- Coordinating with human service transportation programs through sponsorship agreements.

The Met Council has developed transportation coordination plans to increase understanding among stakeholders and identify potential for better coordination with the assistance of federal funding, including finding strategies for associated federal funding sources that support coordination within human services transportation delivery. Actual coordination has been accomplished through Metro Move, which has resulted in clear financial benefits. Using Metro Mobility to transport Medicaid nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT) trips is still under consideration, noting that that such coordination does not seem to be needed for FTA funding leverage, nor is it obvious that productivity would increase because of the specific characteristics and requirements for NEMT trips. Moreover, using Metro Mobility to also serve NEMT would pose a significant logistical challenge—yet another reason why most large ADA paratransit services do not also serve Medicaid NEMT trips. That said, the Study Team does recommend that the Met Council seek DHS/Medicaid sponsorship of dually eligible (Metro Mobility/Medicaid NEMT) trips that Metro Mobility is already serving. This action is consistent with the federal interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidance.

- Consulting with the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee in a timely manner before changes are made.

The Met Council has abided by this directive.

17.1.1.2 Fund a Study to Determine How County/DHS and Metro Mobility Can Coordinate Services and Funding to Capture All Eligible Federal Dollars for Waivered Service and Medical Assistance Client Transportation

As mentioned previously, such a study was undertaken, resulting in the implementation of Metro Move for the transportation of waiver clients. Also, for the reasons discussed previously, the use of Metro Mobility to also serve Medicaid NEMT trips has not been actively pursued. Met Council's determination is that the regulatory requirements for providing Medicaid NEMT service make providing NEMT infeasible.

17.1.1.3 Provide Funding to Study/Invest in Technology Innovations Such as a Single-Point Reservation System to Allow Customers to Self-Choose Between All Available Service Options When Scheduling a Ride, and Fund Staffing to Support Recommendations From This Study

The Study Team presumed that the task force was referring to one-call/one-click software, also known as mobility-as-a-service technology. Such systems have been implemented in many metropolitan regions as a result of the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grants put out by FTA in 2021 and 2012 (see the 2016 National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 832, State Departments of Transportation Connecting Specialized Transportation Users and Rides, Volumes 1 and 2). Many such systems have utilized the existing 2-1-1 call centers, often operated out of the regional United Way. A mobility specialist at Metro Transit has been looking into this for a few years now, but Metro Transit has not made any recommendation on whether or not this should be pursued as of this writing. One of the common issues that confronts such systems is not the technology but rather keeping the information about all the various providers (public, not-for-profit, for-profit) current. If data is not current, users soon lose confidence in the resulting solutions.

17.1.1.4 Provide Incentives to Increase the Number of On-Demand WAVs Operated by Private Companies to Increase Availability to Persons With Accessibility Needs and Provide an Equivalent Response Time for On-Demand Services

Statutory language allows the Met Council to donate retired accessible vehicles to taxi providers. This option was mentioned in the most recent RFP for POD service. In addition, as part of the POD provider contracted rate structures, the providers charge extra for WAV rides, with the Met Council covering 100% of the extra cost, providing an incentive for prospective drivers to operate a WAV. In addition, the State

also provides various incentives by way of protections for TNC drivers, which include a minimum compensation of \$2.19 per mile and \$0.31 per minute) that a TNC must pay to a driver of a WAV.⁴

17.1.2 Recommended Service Model or Program Changes

The task force recommended pilot service expansion options to better meet a variety of transportation needs such as on-demand options, driver consistency, direct rides (not shared), non-escort rides, shorter pickup windows, and more sedan service.

17.1.2.1 On-Demand Options

The Met Council has had an on-demand service—initially called Same-Day Service and then rebranded as POD—since 2004. In 2023, the State Legislature enacted An Expanded (POD) Service Pilot, which was launched in September 2023 and is in effect through December 2025. This pilot expanded the POD’s service hours to 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturdays, and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays. Just recently, the Met Council also added two new carriers (UZURV and Carepool) to participate in the program; Transportation Plus (a taxi company) has been the sole provider for most of the pilot period. In addition, Metro micro—an on-demand, general public microtransit service—was launched in September 2022 and is now provided in five zones.

17.1.2.2 Driver Consistency

The Met Council and its contractors recognize the benefits that come with driver consistency (i.e., having the same driver serve the same standing orders to the extent possible). For the customer, and especially vulnerable customers, being served by the same driver creates a trusting relationship, and friendships often ensue. For the service, driver familiarity can often increase both productivity and OTP.

To the extent possible, the Metro Mobility and Metro Move contractors strive to assign the same driver to standing orders (on each day of the week that the standing order is served). This action involves assigning the standing order to the same vehicle run, recognizing that another driver may end up operating that vehicle run on a particular date due to other circumstances (e.g., vacations, sick leave, callouts, etc.). Such driver consistency is a part of scheduling the standing order but cannot always be guaranteed. This action really pertains only to standing orders because random, advance-reservation trips are assigned to vehicle runs to optimize the schedule.

17.1.2.3 Direct Rides (Not Shared)

Direct rides are of course preferred by customers; however, ADA paratransit service is—by definition—a shared-ride service. Ridesharing was a key part of the original ADA paratransit service as a way to cost-efficiently serve similar, ride-sharable trips; otherwise, it would be a taxi service, which was never the intent. Moreover, a directive to the Met Council under Statute 473.386 is “to coordinate shared rides to

⁴ [Protections for transportation network company \(TNC\) drivers | Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry](#)

the greatest extent practicable.” All shared-ride services, including fixed-route transit, are reportable to FTA’s NTD, the data from which is used to calculate federal transit funding. Exclusive ride services, which are essentially direct-ride services, are not reportable to the NTD.

Metro Mobility, Metro Move, and Metro micro are inherently shared-ride services. In the case of Metro Move, the service is a many-to-one group trip, serving waiver clients living out in the community and bringing them to/from their day program. In the case of Metro Mobility and Metro micro, several trips end up being direct, only because there are no other similar trips that could be commingled on the same vehicle. However, because Metro Move does not have to provide a trip, the service can manage demand and productivity in a way that Metro Mobility cannot. For Metro Mobility, an analysis of a representative week in the first quarter of 2025 unveiled that the overall percentage split between shared-ride trips and direct trips was 53%/47% (see Table 10-5 in Section 10.3).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Met Council also initiated—and has since continued—the curbside trip policy for Metro Mobility, which leans toward more direct trips. As detailed in Table 10-5, the split of curbside trips for the representative week in the first quarter of 2025 was 10% shared-ride trips and 90% direct trips.

The POD service, on the other hand, is designed as an exclusive and direct ride service. These service characteristics are the primary reasons (besides being an on-demand service) why a Metro Mobility customer might choose to use this service instead of using Metro Mobility service for a particular trip. Customers who decide not to use POD may do so because POD does not have to abide by ADA paratransit guidelines, especially those guidelines that ensure that Metro Mobility drivers are trained to proficiency and participate in approved drug and alcohol testing programs. POD fares are also higher. Indeed, for these reasons, most Metro Mobility customers choose to take all or some of their trips on Metro Mobility service, despite it being a shared-ride service.

17.1.2.4 Non-escort Rides

The Study Team surmised that the desired non-escort ride characteristic was to give customers more independence in navigating to/from the vehicle at their origin and destination.

The Met Council’s default policy for the level of drive assistance is door-through-door service—one of the few (if only) major ADA paratransit services that has this level of service as a default policy. The Met Council also has had a long-running policy where Metro Mobility customers can ask for reasonable modifications; this opportunity is prominently mentioned in the Metro Mobility (Riders’) Service Guide. That said, there is no mention of an escort waiver as an example of a reasonable modification. The Met Council could prominently mention an escort waiver as an example of a reasonable modification (where the door-through-door escort policy is mentioned and/or include an escort waiver request form in the Reasonable Modification section. In terms of logistics, the granting of such an escort waiver would be implemented in the client notes (that appear for each trip).

The Metro Move service, which tailors service to the needs of the intellectual/developmental disability waiver customers, day program staff, and caregivers at home, requires a hand-to-hand handoff as a default level of driver assistance. Hence, an escort waiver would not apply for Metro Move.

In contrast, Metro micro and POD are designed as curb-to-curb services for which there are no driver escorts to/from the vehicle.

17.1.2.5 Shorter Pickup Windows

A shorter pickup window can provide more convenience for riders. At the same time, a shorter pickup (or drop-off) window challenges the ability to meet OTP standards, while reducing opportunities for shared-rides and, hence, decreasing productivity. FTA guidelines suggest a maximum span of 30 minutes for both a pickup window and a drop-off window—the latter for appointment trips or trips requested by drop-off time.

The Met Council’s default span for both pickup windows and drop-off windows is 30 minutes, noting that the drop-off windows of 0/+30 and –30/0, respectively, meet federal guidelines. The OTP of 93% is also in the upper range of peers and well above the minimum OTP of 90% suggested by FTA guidelines. The Study Team knows of only two large paratransit services—Access Services in Los Angeles and Access-a-Ride in New York City—that have shortened their pickup windows to 20 minutes. The vast majority of large paratransit services have established 30-minute windows for both pickup and drop-off with OTP standards typically varying from 90% to 94%. The Met Council initially had a drop-off window of –60/0, which was later reduced to –45/0 and then to –30/0 (its current drop-off window). The Met Council has also relaxed service productivity standards with the Metro Mobility contractors, boosting the OTP from slightly below to slightly above the 93% OTP goal, based on a preliminary analysis of first quarter statistics from 2024 vs. 2005. Given this success, shortening the pickup window from 30 minutes to 20 minutes is not advised at this time.

17.1.2.6 More Sedan Service

The use of sedans for ADA paratransit service is a long-established practice in the industry. Typically, the percentage of trips requiring WAVs ranges between 20% and 30%. Several transit agencies, in response, have put together a mixed fleet with 20% to 30% sedans/nonaccessible SUVs and minivans and 70% to 80% WAVs. The concept of a mixed fleet revolves around the lower operating and capital cost of smaller, nonaccessible vehicles. Smaller vehicles also do not require drivers to have commercial driver licenses, which opens up potential hires from a larger pool of prospects (which is critical in this era of driver shortages). In addition, smaller vehicles can access places that larger cutaways cannot and are generally more comfortable for customers. The arguments for maintaining a more uniform accessible fleet revolve around the more cost-efficient bulk purchase of vehicles and parts (and maintenance of fewer parts), more vehicle familiarity for drivers and mechanics, less need for reassignments when vehicles are swapped out at pull-out, and less scheduling errors (where a customer requiring a WAV is accidentally scheduled to a nonaccessible vehicle even though the Trapeze system flags such violations. These issues are detailed in the TCRP Syntheses 174, Paratransit Fleet Configurations.

The Met Council has historically favored uniform fleets. The current fleet mix is 93% WAVs and 7% non-WAVs, with most of the WAVs being cutaways with 8 seats and 3 wheelchair positions. That said, rider and driver focus groups favored adding to the few nonaccessible vehicles in the current fleet; contractor managers were also in favor of such a fleet mix. It appears that the Met Council's management is similarly open to this concept.

In view of this, the TTI Study Team conducted a few different scenarios with fleet mixes of 90%/10% and 80%/20% with promising results. Based on these results, the Study Team suggests a follow-up study to look into this further.

The POD service is predominantly served with sedans and Metro micro is served with smaller, accessible vehicles.

17.1.3 Actions

In the task force report, recommended changes to Metro Mobility's service began with Action 2; there was no recommended Action 1. The numbered actions that follow reflect their numbering in the task report.

17.1.3.1 Action 2: Negotiate Agreements by March 31, 2019, and Expand and Promote On-Demand Service Providers

The expansion and promotion of on-demand service providers should include, at a minimum, the following service options:

- Metro Mobility ADA service (existing service).

Done

- Metro Mobility non-ADA service (existing service).

Done

- Shared-ride, accessible STS.

This recommendation seems to be advocating either for an alternative service (where the customer directly arranges the trip with the provider) or for an opt-in program (where the customer, by signing an opt-in agreement, would allow the Met Council to reassign any of the customers' trips to a subcontractor who is not ADA compliant). In either case, the resulting service is a shared ride by definition.

The Met Council has not implemented such services or programs specific to ADA paratransit customers but has implemented on-demand, shared-ride, general public, microtransit service in five zones. Note also that it is possible to add such a provider as an overflow ADA paratransit provider as long as the service provided is ADA paratransit-compliant.

- Shared-ride, nonaccessible STS.

As described previously for shared-ride, accessible STS, the Study Team is interpreting this recommended action to include an alternative service or an opt-in program where the providers operate shared-ride service but with nonaccessible vehicles.

The Met Council has not implemented such an alternative service or opt-in program that specifically uses nonaccessible vehicles, nor is this possible under the ADA's service equivalence requirements. In other words, implementing a separate service such as this would render the Met Council noncompliant with the ADA.

- Nonshared-ride, accessible STS.

This action essentially reflects the POD service, where the (now) three providers offer WAV service and exclusive ride (nonshared) trips. The Met Council has not implemented an opt-in program that involves such providers.

- Nonshared-ride, nonaccessible STS.

Customers who do not need a WAV can request service via POD, whose providers have a mixed fleet of accessible and nonaccessible vehicles. Implementing a separate alternative service or opt-in program that cannot accommodate riders needing WAVs is not possible because of the ADA's service equivalence requirements, as discussed previously.

17.1.3.2 Action 3: Explore Creating a Service Specifically for DHS/County Waivered Clients and the Medical Assistance Transportation Program Post-2020, Which Would Require Legislative Support

In mid-2024, the Met Council launched Metro Move for waiver clients (see Section 10.5.1). The Met Council has not pursued serving Medicaid NEMT trips on their Metro Mobility service platform, as discussed previously.

17.1.3.3 Action 4: Evaluate Options Available for Increased Flexibility on Metro Mobility Non-ADA Trips Such as Conditional Eligibility of Customers, Differential Fares, Service Quality Standards, and Span of Service That Could Improve ADA Service and Overall System Performance

Conditional Eligibility

The Met Council is already obligated to—and does—determine conditional eligibility status as part of the eligibility review for any applicant, regardless of where they live. Indeed, 31% of applicants in 2024 were determined to be conditionally eligible. The Met Council, in conjunction with its providers, does not operationalize conditional eligibility at the time of booking. Hence, all conditionally eligible customers are booked the same as customers with unconditional eligibility. As mentioned in Section 8.1,

Pittsburgh's ACCESS system, with a very similar conditional eligibility percentage of 32%, has for decades operationalized conditional eligibility, which has been credited with screening out about 2,000 trips per month. This process does not screen 100% of conditionally eligible customers trips—just the most frequent ones. Determinations (eligible vs. ineligible) are made offline and made available to the reservation agents when a customer tries to book these trips.

The Met Council could implement a similar process for customers making State-mandated area trips, although this action may require hiring an additional eligibility specialist(s), and may trigger some backlash from conditionally eligible customers whose eligibility conditions have never been considered when booking a State-mandated area trip. The Met Council could nonetheless implement such a process for all federally mandated and State-mandated trips.

Different Fare

The Study Team interprets that, under this action, higher fares would be charged for State-mandated trips.

The Met Council has historically charged the same fares for federally mandated and State-mandated trips. As part of this structure, a surcharge of \$0.75 has been charged for State-mandated trips over 15 miles. As of July 1, 2025, the free fares on fixed-route transit pilot program for Metro Mobility customers became a permanent service feature after having first been implemented as a pilot in July 2023. A significant fare increase for State-mandated trips could trigger a significant decrease in the number of trips, resulting in a neutral impact on the total fare revenue from Metro Mobility but a lower NTD ridership figure, which could lower federal transit funding for the Met Council. Still, the larger question is whether such an action produces any benefits. As reported, the serving of State-mandated trips at their current level does not seem to have a significant impact on service quality metrics for federally mandated service; service quality metrics for State-mandated service were only slightly below service quality metrics for federally mandated service. Hence, there would not seem to be much motivation for implementing a small to moderate fare increase for State-mandated trips. Because State-mandated trips represent only 26.7% of the total Metro Mobility trips, a significant fare increase would slightly lower overall costs and have a potentially negligible impact on fare revenue. As described previously, the benefits of this action must be weighed against the backlash from customers in the State-mandated area (and their representatives). In the Study Team's opinion, any type of fare increase, beyond the \$0.75 long-distance surcharge for State-mandated trips only, is not advised.

Service Quality Standards and Span of Service

The Study Team surmises here that the recommended action involved exploring whether a different set of service quality standards—such as broader pickup/drop-off windows, a lower OTP standard longer maximum OBTs, a higher missed trip allowance, longer hold times, and a narrower span when State-mandated service is available—would decrease demand in the State-mandated area and hence decrease overall cost.

The Met Council does in fact set federally mandated and State-mandated service hours based on the fixed-route service days and hours of the fixed-route system, as minimally required under the ADA. In addition, the main differences between existing federally mandated and State-mandated service are that standing orders for State-mandated trips are not accepted, and trip bookings are (supposed to be) first put on standby, with pickup times confirmed after the scheduling function has been completed the day before the service date.

The same arguments discussed previously apply here as well. State-mandated trips represent only 26.7% of the total ridership. At their current volume, they do not appear to be impacting the quality of federally mandated service. Implementing different standards would likely have only a marginal impact on overall demand (and cost), while exponentially increasing the complexity of the service and service delivery logistics. Hence, creating a different set of service standards would result in minor gains, while creating significant operational and reporting challenges and customer backlash. Such an action is not recommended.

17.1.3.4 Action 5: Invest in Robust Public Information and Outreach to Explain the Current and New Service Options

By in large, the Met Council is effective in providing information according to accessibility standards, updating the general public, and meeting its community outreach obligations (see Section 6.5).

17.1.3.5 Action 6: Conduct Routine Market Analysis to Evaluate Effects of Driver Wages on Workforce Stability and Service Quality/Performance and Adjust as Warranted and Funding Allows

The Met Council conducted such analyses in 2021 and 2022, which respectively resulted in contract adjustments involving driver wage increases of \$2.00 and later \$3.00 (a total \$5.00), which significantly helped driver recruitment and retention, which in turn positively impacted service quality metrics.

17.2 Met Council Progress on Recommendations from the OLA Report

The April 2024 OLA report found that the Met Council was applying different service standards when scheduling Metro Mobility rides for federally mandated vs. State-mandated trips and that the two Metro Mobility operational providers were struggling to meet OTP goals in FY 2023. The report also identified several issues with the complaints process. The report concluded with several recommendations to the Met Council for improvements. A discussion of these recommendations, along with progress made on implementing or acting upon those recommendations, follows.

In the OLA report, it was recommended that the Met Council:

- Take additional steps to address service quality issues.
- With respect to complaints:

- Systematically track data related to all rider concerns and use the information to improve riders’ experiences.
 - Change the incentive structure in contracts with trip providers to encourage providers to forward complaints to the Met Council.
 - Limit the role of trip providers in the complaints process.
 - Update its written complaint processing procedures to provide more complete guidance to staff.
 - Ensure that it only pays complaint-cased bonuses to providers when those bonuses are earned.
 - Systematically track data related to all rider concerns and use the information to improve riders’ experiences.
- Explore alternative technologies for scheduling and providing ride services.

17.2.1 Addressing Service Quality Issues

The first recommendation was to take actions that would improve service quality.

Productivity and OTP are inversely proportional in a service such as Metro Mobility that operates dedicated service. As productivity increases (which also decreases cost per trip), service quality decreases. Another way to explain this relationship is that the more trips that are scheduled onto a vehicle run, and the more shared trips there are, the harder it is to be on-time and effectively manage customer OBT. Conversely, if there are not a lot of trips scheduled onto a vehicle run, and the trips are not shared, the easier it is to be on time and to minimize the ride time, excluding day-to-day factors that are outside of the control of the Met Council and their providers.

Because of the inverse relationship between OTP and productivity, the Met Council took steps to lower the productivity expectations from 1.65 to 1.3 passenger trips per RVH (per provisions in the contract relating to performance-based invoice credits). This decrease has contributed to a noticeable improvement in OTP. As reported in Section 8.4, the OTP for pickup trips increased from 91.4% in 2024 to 94.2% (94.2% for federally mandated trips vs. 94.1% for State-mandated trips in the first quarter of 2025—both of which exceed the Met Council’s 93% OTP goal. Moreover, the OTP for appointment trips increased from 89% in 2024 to 94.1% (94.3% for federally mandated trips vs. 93.8% for State-mandated trips) in the first quarter of 2025.

In addition, the Met Council joined the ABBG in April 2025. With this membership, ABBG provides the Met Council with peer data from other ABBG members (by which to compare service quality standards and performance). ABBG also can be called upon to conduct rider surveys—the first of which was performed in April–May 2025. The results of this survey are found in Section 16.4.

Results from this study’s stakeholder engagement efforts (see Chapters 15 and 16) echoed the findings of the OLA report—participants expressed concerns regarding reliability, which affects OTP and other standards connected to service quality, such as maximum OBT (travel time) standards. In the Rider Survey (see Section 16.4.3), on-time pickups was the lowest ranked aspect of Metro Mobility service,

with only 63% of the respondents being satisfied, and 17% being unsatisfied. This survey response is in stark contrast to the actual pickup trip and appointment trip OTP for the first quarter of 2025 (see Section 8.4). The discrepancy between the survey responses and the actual OTP data seems to suggest that there may still be some confusion on the part of riders with respect to the on-time pickup window, the confirmed pickup time, and their expectations. When booking trips, riders are given confirmed pickup times and are expected to understand that the trip will be deemed on-time if the vehicle shows up within 30 minutes after the confirmed pickup time; however, given the stakeholder and rider survey feedback, it is plausible to believe that their expectations are a pickup time exactly at the confirmed pickup time. To address this issue, other transit agencies have changed the way reservation agents confirm the trip information at the end of the booking process—instead of giving the exact confirmed pickup time (e.g., 8:00 a.m.), they say “be ready between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.”

17.2.2 Addressing Complaint Processing

The OLA report also noted some shortcomings with the complaint process that “undermine its effectiveness, resulting in a process that does not ensure that the Council receives all riders’ complaints or that appropriate action is taken to address rider complaints.” The OLA report recommended revising the process as follows:

- Riders’ concerns must meet certain conditions for the Met Council to track them as *actionable* complaints, distinguishing between valid and nonvalid complaints.

Prior to the OLA audit, the Met Council had implemented a process for categorizing a complaint by complaint type (for subsequent analysis) and for ascertaining the validity of the complaint. Up until recently, the process involved MMSC staff providing an initial assessment, with PAs regularly helping to distinguish issues from nonissues.

Since the OLA audit, the Met Council has bolstered its complaint management staff with an assistant manager in Customer Service to focus on and oversee the intake and processing of complaints and a customer complaint investigator to engage more directly with contractors to investigate complaints and communicate with the customer and to ensure all requested callbacks are made. With these additions, the PAs have been removed from the complaint management process. In addition, the Met Council has recently hired another new department manager who will be responsible for creating operational reports/dashboards and conducting data analytics. This position will be responsible for the analysis of complaint data.

- The Met Council should systematically track data related to all rider concerns and use the information to improve riders’ experiences, referring to a process of tracking and analyzing valid complaint data and addressing patterns.

Prior to the OLA audit, the Met Council established a process of using the Customer Feedback system to register and time-stamp complaints, categorize (for analysis purposes) the complaint type, and designate whether a callback for the contractor is requested. The system is also used

as a repository for associated contractor reports and to timestamp the submission of those reports (untimely response times can generate an invoice credit). With the bolstering of the MMSC complaints staff, the Met Council will be implementing a more systematic approach to analyzing complaint types, qualifying patterns against relevant data, and addressing shortcomings as needed.

- Because provider contracts disincentivize trip providers from forwarding complaints to the Met Council—despite the Met Council contracts requiring the providers to do so—the Met Council should change the incentive structure in their contracts with providers to encourage providers to forward complaints to the Met Council.

Prior to the OLA audit, the Met Council had changed its website materials to clarify that customers should register complaints with Metro Mobility’s Customer Service Department and not call the contractors to make a complaint. Since the audit, the Met Council has posted new messaging on each bus about how to file a complaint, including information about how to obtain a fare receipt.

The Met Council has also directed its providers to redirect complainants to Metro Mobility’s Customer Service Department (when it is open). When it is not open, the contractors are directed to suggest that the complaint wait until Customer Service is available to register their complaint. If the complainant still wishes to register the complaint on that call with the contractor, the contractors have been directed to register the complaint in the Customer Feedback system. However, the Met Council has not put in place a contractual disincentive for not following this process, in large part because it would be difficult to prove that the contractors did not follow the procedure.

- Because the role that trip providers play in processing Metro Mobility riders’ complaints undermines the integrity of the complaints process, the Met Council should limit the role of trip providers in the complaints process.

The Met Council agreed with this assessment, and, with the addition of MMSC staff focused on complaint management, has removed the contractors from directly contacting the riders. Now, all communication with the rider regarding the complaint is conducted by the new customer complaint investigator. The Met Council is also implementing a new Trapeze software module, Service Infractions, to automate and better manage written customer communications.

The Met Council continues to alert a contractor when further investigation (on the part of the contractor) is required. In such cases, contractors are required to investigate the complaint and respond back to the MMSC within 48 hours (excluding holidays) by way of the issue tracking system. The investigative report prepared by the contractor is still very important to the overall complaint process, but this report should focus on the contractor’s exchange with involved drivers (or staff) and a review of Lytx DriveCam footage if relevant. The report form should also prompt for actions to be taken by the contractor to preempt such complaints in the future. If

more information is needed to resolve the complaint, the customer complaint investigator can always contact the complainant in writing to request required information.

Before the OLA audit, the provider contracts included an invoice credit of \$50 for each occurrence where the contractor failed to meet this deadline. A long-standing bonus of \$5,000 is also paid to a contractor in any month where the CFR for their zone is ≤ 0.5 valid complaints per 1,000 completed passenger trips.

- Because the Met Council has not established clear guidance for how staff should consistently resolve complaints, the Met Council should update its written procedures to provide more complete guidance for staff.

The Met Council has detailed written procedures for the staff handling complaints. With the expansion of the customer service staff to focus on the complaint process, new procedures are being implemented. Existing written procedures are in the process of being updated.

- Because the Met Council has sometimes paid trip providers a complaints-based bonus when they have not earned it, the Met Council should ensure that it only pays bonuses to providers when those bonuses are earned.

With the new complaint process procedures being implemented, related bonuses paid to the contractors are based only on complaints that have been deemed issues and as further qualified by any Met Council staff discussions with the complainant and contractor investigations.

As part of its complaint management procedures, the Study Team recommends that the Met Council, as a matter of policy, should respond to each valid complainant with a resolution in a timely fashion. It is suggested that such a response to the complainant either be a closure letter or a letter of finding that summarizes the complaint (or allegations), and describes either the reasoning behind the complaint closure or the proposed complaint resolution that involves a specific action or set of actions or policy changes designed to mitigate similar complaints in the future. The Study Team also suggests that the Met Council send a letter to complainants who have registered a complaint deemed to be a nonissue that explains the reasoning behind this designation. Currently, no such letters are being sent and the Met Council treats the contractor call as the sole response. Although time consuming, the implementation of these policies will show that the Met Council is actively listening to and considering complaints and actively participating as a partner in resolving complaints. The Study Team suggests that such responses, by policy, be sent to the complainant within 30 days of the complaint being registered, although some transit agencies set the response period at 60 days. If more information is requested from the complainant and that information is not provided within 30 days, the Met Council customer service staff would be free to close the complaint due to the complainant's nonresponsiveness.

One of the new data analytics manager's tasks should focus on computing CFRs for each zone/provider each month (and each fiscal or calendar year) and providing data to the PAs who, in turn, will work with the contractors to get to the bottom of the top complaint patterns (especially no-show disputes).

As discussed previously and in Section 12.6, contractors are paid a monthly bonus of \$5,000 if the CFR during the reporting month is ≤ 0.5 . The Met Council's CFR for 2024 was 1.33. To put this in perspective, the Study Team typically uses the following scale for ADA paratransit services:

- 0–0.9 Excellent.
- 1–1.9 Very good.
- 2–2.9 Good.
- 3–3.9 Acceptable.
- ≥ 4 Poor.

Thus, based on this scale, the Met Council's CFR is currently very good. To move the needle to the excellent rating, the Met Council could either increase the CFR threshold from ≤ 0.5 to ≤ 1.0 or maintain the ≤ 0.5 CFR threshold but increase the contractor bonus to \$10,000 (or \$5,000 for achieving a CFR ≤ 1.0 , and \$10,000 for achieving a CFR ≤ 0.5). The Met Council could also establish parallel performance-based invoice credits of \$5,000 assessed for a CFR > 3.0 and \$10,000 assessed for a CFR > 4 , although the Study Team suspects that the change in the bonus schedule may have more of a positive impact on reducing complaints, given the current CFR of 1.33.

With the actions already taken by the Met Council, implementation of the new complaints investigator, and incorporation of the above recommendations, the Met Council staff will be taking more control of the process. The new process, combined with new tracking capabilities, should deliver a more accurate analysis of when related bonuses are earned and when related invoice credits should be assessed.

Lastly, updated policies and procedures related to complaint processing should be documented and distributed to the Met Council staff and the contractors. The Metro Mobility Service Guide should also be amended to reflect relevant new policies pertinent to customers.

17.2.3 Exploring New Technologies

The OLA report also stated that the Met Council “should explore alternative technologies for scheduling and providing ride service.”

The Met Council has made a significant long-term investment in maintaining and building upon Trapeze PASS. For example, the Met Council has added modules for itinerary planning, in-vehicle technology (MDTs), IVR phone calls for trip confirmations, and self-service phone-based trip cancellation tools. For trip booking, the Met Council also added web-based tools, and, in the first quarter of 2025, a mobile app. The Met Council also recently updated the 5-year-old underlying map, which had been creating issues for trips going to/from addresses not on the map.

In the third quarter of 2025, the Met Council will be adding a customer policy management tool, Service Infractions, which automates processes and generates warnings and suspensions for customers who violate no-show, disruptive behavior, and fare avoidance policies.

The Met Council’s roadmap also includes implementing EZ Wallet, which enables customers to set up a centralized fare account that automatically pays fares (expected to be integrated with the Council-wide Cubic payment card industry-compliant enterprise system) and replacing Rangers with DriverMate-loaded tablets. The Met Council is also currently working with Trapeze to solve the appointment time scheduling issue, whose work-around helps with producing more realistic scheduling of pickup times and on-time nonlate arrivals at the destination but circumvents the drop-off window logic, resulting in early drop-offs.

Pertinent to the previous recommendation, the Met Council did explore one new scheduling/dispatching technology—Ecolane—in 2019–2021 as a pilot on Transit Link. If the pilot proved to be successful, the longer-term intent was to expand its use to Metro Mobility service. The pilot—using Ecolane software and tablets—was not successful, however, and the pilot was discontinued in 2021.

In addition, Spare Lab’s technology is currently being used for the Metro micro microtransit service. Spare has software that also supports ADA paratransit.

The Met Council staff should continue to monitor the market for alternatives to Trapeze and should wait for the new technologies to mature and prove successful before considering replacement to minimize operational risk.

The Study Team believes that the time is now right for the Met Council to accelerate seeking new technologies, as is discussed in Section 18.6.3. For ADA paratransit, there are now several alternatives to Trapeze and Ecolane. (Inclusion in this report is not an endorsement by the Study Team.) The following four technologies have replaced systems in large metropolitan locations; the bottom three technologies emerged from the on-demand space:

- HBSS Q-Ryde: Replaced Trapeze in Denver and was recently installed in Sacramento.
- RideCo: Replaced RouteMatch in Philadelphia.
- Spare Labs Technologies: Replaced Trapeze in Austin and was recently selected by the MBTA in Boston to replace StrataGen’s ADEPT system (which was formerly replaced by RouteMatch but reinstalled after an unsuccessful stint).
- Via Transportation: which replaced Trapeze in Charlotte

Other large transit agencies, such as MTA in Baltimore and New Jersey Transit—both long-time users of Trapeze—are currently seeking new technologies.

One of the important aspects of the RideCo and Spare technologies, in particular, is that their implementations have led to the increased use of CDO on the days leading up to the day of service and during the day of service for various ADA paratransit services (see TCRP Synthesis 168, Continuous Dynamic Optimization: Impacts on ADA Paratransit Services (<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26907/continuous-dynamic-optimization-impacts-on-ada-paratransit-services>)). For some agencies, such as CapMetro in Austin, the transition from Trapeze to Spare technologies led to the virtual elimination of the scheduling department and a reduction of dispatchers, with Spare taking over the proactive dispatching function. While Trapeze does have the

capability to perform CDO with job agents, this function is not being used consistently by the contractors (as discussed in Section 7.2 and 7.6).

The new software companies' approach to addressing the needs of ADA paratransit's core functionality—reservations, scheduling, and dispatch—is through the use of high-availability, cloud-based software-as-a-service solutions. In addition to redefining the traditional approach of roles such as scheduler and dispatcher, these solutions leverage the cloud to support their systems. They require little to no on-premises, capital-intensive, IT infrastructure. Without servers and applications to maintain, IT staff (both dedicated to keeping the applications running, as well as database and network administrators) are less critical to the operation and maintenance of the solution.

The Met Council has some experience with Spare's technology because it supports Metro micro; however, this is not the same as Spare's ADA paratransit technology that is currently supporting Cap Metro and will be supporting the RIDE for the MBTA.

Replacing Trapeze is not an easy task, especially when much of the day-to-day functional processes that have been in place for decades have been built around Trapeze. That said, Trapeze is a significant investment, and the responsiveness of Trapeze staff has waned in the last few years. Moreover, there is still the problem with the Rangers—the Met Council IT department's inability to come up with a solution is directly and solely inhibiting the expansion of Metro Mobility's fleet. This same issue may also impact the use of tablets under a new software system.

The Study Team recommends that the Met Council first develop and issue a request for information (RFI) to better understand what options are available, how each vendor would approach the task of achieving the Met Council's desired balance between service quality and service efficiency, and what capabilities they bring to the table, including support and experiences with implementing their technology elsewhere. The resulting statements of interest (submitted to the Met Council in response to the RFI) would then be used to inform an RFP. Based on the subsequent proposals, the Met Council could decide whether to stay with or replace Trapeze.

One possible solution for tablets under a new system is for the technology vendor to provide the tablets and ensure their connectivity.

One of the reasons that the Met Council has not taken steps to explore new technologies has to do with the work-in-progress relationship between the Met Council's IT department and the Metro Mobility business unit staff. From the Study Team's observations, the IT department seems to be somewhat disinterested in solving a real problem for Metro Mobility service—the Ranger/tablet issue. The Study Team hopes that the addition of the new IT specialist will help move the needle. Regardless, the Metro Mobility business unit and the Met Council's IT department need to get better in synch as they work with the Met Council Procurement Department to issue the technology RFI and eventually the technology RFP.

17.3 Met Council Actions on Task Force and OLA Recommendations

The Met Council has followed most of the recommendations by taking actions to improve:

- OTP.
- Trapeze's functionality (e.g., with the addition of the mobile app and new map).
- Customer information.
- The complaint process by taking over communicating with the complainants and improving the tracking and analysis of complaints via an expand staff (i.e., customer service assistant manager, complaint investigator, and reports/data analytics manager) and the soon-to-be implemented Trapeze Service Infractions module.

Further related steps recommended by the Study Team include:

- Replacing the confirmed pickup time with a confirmed be ready pickup window at booking.
- Adjusting the CFR bonus/invoice credit schedule, noting that the Met Council's CFR of 1.33 valid complaints per 1,000 trips is already very good.
- Fixing the appointment trip scheduling logic in Trapeze so that the system generates realistic pickup times and utilizes the drop-off window logic for both call-in and app bookings.
- Further exploring the new technologies by way of an RFI; the responses from which would be used to inform a subsequent RFP.

Chapter 18: Service Model Scenarios and Recommendations

18.1 Scenarios Considered and Analyzed

Chapter 18 describes the Study Team’s attempts to define and analyze some alternative models for providing Metro Mobility service. In the current *decentralized* service model, the providers take reservation (and service-day) calls from Metro Mobility customers in their zone and schedule, dispatch and deliver service to those customers out of leased facilities (vehicles, software, and some communications are provided by the Met Council). Among the top 10 largest ADA paratransit services, there is only one other agency—Access Services in Los Angeles—that uses this model, with some noted differences. Access Service customers have to make separate calls to different providers for an interzone roundtrip, and Access Services has begun procuring facilities rather than using contractor-leased facilities. Most large and small ADA paratransit services with multiple dedicated service delivery providers have instead adopted a service model where either the transit agency itself or a third-party call-and-control contractor performs scheduling.

To test the efficacy of how such a *centralized* scheduling model would fare in the Metro Mobility area, the Study Team created a base scenario (the status quo) and two other projection models. In the first model (Scenario 1), an entity—either the Met Council or a third-party contractor—performs the scheduling function, while keeping the three contractors zoned. In the second model (Scenario 2), the fleets operate out of their current facilities but allows for a trip from one zone to be more efficiently served by a vehicle operated by a provider from a different zone. In the scenarios, provider zones are referred to as *polygons*. One of the concepts behind the testing of these two scenarios is that, in the current system, trips are scheduled in a very inconsistent manner between the two providers. If these inconsistencies could be ironed out, while keeping the same decentralized structure, the Study Team believes that the Met Council would see some service improvements. In Scenarios 1 and 2, consistency in approach is inherent because there is only one entity performing scheduling. Table 18-1 presents a summary of the differences between the base scenario and Scenarios 1 and 2. In Scenario 2, the Study Team noted in the analyses where the service could be run with a higher percentage of non-WAVs (10% vs. the current 6%) (Scenario 2A) and conducted an additional analysis to understand the potential impacts of increasing the percentage of non-WAVs to 20% of the fleet (Scenario 2B). Ultimately, the objective of this analysis was to determine potential increases in productivity (and decreases in RVH) while maintaining service quality metrics.

Another common approach among larger ADA paratransit services is to use a dedicated fleet (as is the case for Metro Mobility service) but augment the fleet with one or more supplementary nondedicated ADA-compliant providers. This model is most commonly used where dedicated service is constrained or a transit agency wishes to reduce costs by using less-costly providers to serve the peak overflow demand, while obviating an oversupply of dedicated service during the midday and off-peak times. The nondedicated resources are used to serve trips that would otherwise adversely impact the productivity

of the dedicated fleet (e.g., long, out-of-the-way single trips or reemerging no-show or will-call return trips). Because the Study Team found that existing fleet resources were sufficient to handle current demand, the Study Team did not analyze a service mix involving nondedicated service providers.

Table 18-1 Scenarios analyzed

Scenario	Brief Description	Additional Comments
Baseline	Date selected: Wednesday, April 16, 2025	- Includes federally mandated and State-mandated. - Separate home providers. - Separate, nonuniform scheduling processes. - Fleet mix unchanged.
Scenario 1	Polygons unchanged, potential fleet mix	- Includes federally mandated and State-mandated. - Separate home providers with run polygons intact. - Single batch scheduling process. - Identifies runs that could be served by sedan.
Scenario 2A	Polygon restrictions removed, potential fleet mix, 10% non-WAVs	- Includes federally mandated and State-mandated. - Single reservation process, allowing trips to be scheduled to most appropriate vehicle. - Single batch scheduling process. - Identifies runs that could be served by sedan.
Scenario 2B	Same as Scenario 2A except with 20% non-WAVs	Same as Scenario 2A

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; WAV = wheelchair accessible vehicle

18.2 Projection Methodology

For the Study Team’s analyses of these scenarios, the Met Council made their PreProd Trapeze test environment available, allowing the Study Team to conduct a series of what if scenarios using tools already available in the system’s Trapeze PASS v21 reservations, scheduling, and dispatch software.

The Met Council is using the latest version of software available for large DRT systems. Although Trapeze has been working on developing a cloud-based replacement for their software for well over 7 years, they have been unable to bring a full working solution to the industry. As noted in Section 17.2.3, a number of peer agencies have been actively looking for a replacement for Trapeze, and within the past few years, a handful of companies have come to the forefront, leading with innovative solutions that leverage the necessary elements of CDO, combined with advanced artificial intelligence technologies, to come up with a set of products to upend traditional ways of scheduling and delivering rides to customers. As of the time of this writing, no agency with as large of a presence as the Met Council has made the change from Trapeze, but this use is expected to change in the near future; transit agencies

such as MTA in Baltimore and New Jersey Transit—both long-time users of Trapeze—are preparing (or have already advertised) RFIs and RFPs.

The methodology used for the scenario analyses involved identifying a recent historical, representative, high-volume day of service—Wednesday, April 16, 2025, was chosen—and then recreating that day in the future such that the actual supply and demand originally available to the contractor schedulers was simulated. Then, those trips were batch scheduled to vehicles using techniques commonly used at other agencies.

Three projections were estimated in these analyses:

- The first projection (Scenario 1 in Table 18-1) involved no changes from current processes except that instead of trips being scheduled by separate providers using different scheduling techniques, all the trips were scheduled using a centralized approach with single set of procedures.
- The second projection (Scenario 2A in Table 18-1) was similar to the first projection; however, for this analysis, the intent was to simulate a single reservations and scheduling system, with no zone restrictions placed on the contractor assignments. That is, the system allowed trips to be handled by the most appropriate (closest) vehicle, regardless of which contractor was operating the vehicle. This second projection unveiled that the proportion of non-WAVs (currently at 6% of the fleet) could be increased to around 10%.
- The third projection (Scenario 2B Table 18-1) built upon the projection results for Scenario 2A, but modified the fleet mix such that 20% of the vehicles available were non-WAVs.

As indicated previously, the date selected as the baseline day from which the supply of vehicles (shifts) and customer demand were copied, was Wednesday April 16, 2025. That day was chosen because both the federally mandated and State-mandated service demand ranked in the top five of service demand days for the first half of 2025.

For reference, actual metrics for April 16, 2025, are provided in Table 18-2. Because approximately 20 runs were missing actual times for pull-outs and/or pull-ins, some statistics were not available. Also, because Trapeze does not properly track slack time once the day of service has passed (as discussed in Section 10.2), the Study Team used a more accurate calculation to determine the actual slack hours for the April 16, 2025, results.

Table 18-2 Performance statistics for baseline day of Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Metric	East Zone/ Transdev	West Zone/ Transit Team	South Zone/ Transit Team	Actual Results for April 16,2025
Runs	218	231	105	554
Trips	2,091	2,567	1,205	5,863
Passengers	2,241	2,733	1,288	6,262
Scheduled Service Hours	1,835.00	2,155.20	965.8	4,956.00
Total Service Hours ^a	1,764.90	2,190.20	989.3	4,944.40
RVHs ^a	1,609.40	1,885.60	872	4,366.90
Deadhead Hours ^a	185.4	206	92.4	483.8
Passengers per RVH	1.39	1.45	1.48	1.43
Trips per RVH	1.3	1.36	1.38	1.34
Calculated Slack Hours	366.9	392.3	136.7	895.9

^a Approximately 20 runs were missing actual times for pull-outs and/or pull-ins.

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

As mentioned previously, the date of April 16, 2025, was selected as the baseline day from which the demand (i.e., trips) and supply (i.e., runs) were copied to establish future projection days that could be used to, in effect, reimagine how changing the overall scheduling processes might affect key indicators, such as service and revenue hours and productivity.

From a trip-booking perspective, all trips present at that time of final scheduling on the evening prior to the baseline day were copied to the projection days to ensure that the analysis closely mirrored the final scheduling efforts of the team responsible for preparing driver itineraries the evening before the service day. That is, all trips except advance cancels were used for the analysis. When the trips were copied to the new schedule date, any aspects of the scheduling or rescheduling activities associated with the baseline were not carried forward; however, critical elements such as the request time and negotiated time, as well as the estimated direct travel times and distances, were maintained. In Trapeze terms, the Booking and BookingLegs information was copied, but Events information was not.

With the new schedule in place, including simulated customer trip demand (i.e., trips) and dedicated resource supply (i.e., runs), the next step was to execute Trapeze Batch Scheduling tasks that somewhat represent typical final scheduling efforts at other transit agencies. For many agencies that are constrained by an under supply of available runs, they first batch scheduled trips requiring transfers and trips being made (1) by customers who use mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters, (2) by customers who require the use of a lift, and then (3) customers who are ambulatory. The next step taken by these agencies is to schedule as many unscheduled trips as possible (that fall out of the optimization runs) by allowing more minor violations. The last step is to manually schedule as many of the remaining unscheduled trips as possible; this last step would be done by master schedulers familiar with the local operations to bring the number of unscheduled trips down. At many transit agencies, this

last step often does not result in all unscheduled trips being scheduled. In these cases, these unscheduled trips might be left for the evening or early morning dispatcher to schedule these trips into holes in the schedule that open up with overnight cancellations or day-of-service cancellations, late cancellations, and no-shows. As a strategy, some of these agencies are okay leaving a certain percentage of trips unscheduled, assuming that a sufficient number of holes will open up as discussed previously. Other agencies may direct the scheduling staff to schedule all trips up to a certain early morning hour, with the idea that the day begins as scheduled with adjustments made based on the dynamics of paratransit operations. If supplemental, nondedicated, ADA-compliant providers are used, any remaining unscheduled trips can be assigned to serve these overflow providers after the scheduling process has been completed (and sometimes during the day of service, as needed). Such services are also handy for serving reemerging no-show trips and will-call returns, rather than turning around a dedicated vehicle that has left the pickup location or disrupting another vehicle run's schedule. For this effort, the team did not perform any manual scheduling efforts or assume any offloading of demand for the baseline.

In the case of Metro Mobility, the number of steps required to achieve a projected OTP of 100% with a minimal number of unscheduled trips was relatively small. In fact, the results using existing resources identified several runs that ended up with no trips (or <3 trips) assigned for a 6- to 8-hour shift. So, the iterations of batch scheduling involved closing multiple runs to improve potential efficiencies.

18.3 Projection Results

The results of the three projections, by zone/provider and in total, are presented in Table 18-3, Table 18-4, and Table 18-5, respectively. As discussed and defined in Section 10.2, TRAP slack hours are the hours when the service is operating with available capacity that is not being used for active service delivery.

Table 18-3 Projection 1 results (100% planned OTP, 97.6% trips scheduled)

Metric	East Zone/ Transdev	West Zone/ Transit Team	South Zone/ Transit Team	Total
Runs	201	217	102	520
Scheduled Service Hours	1,725.20	2,033.40	937.5	4,696.20
Total Service Hours	1,586.80	1,835.70	841.8	4,264.40
RVHs	1,475.30	1,743.70	789.5	4,008.40
Deadhead Hours	111.7	92.1	52.4	256.1
Passengers per RVH	1.68	1.8	1.79	1.75
Trips per RVH	1.56	1.69	1.66	1.64
TRAP Slack Hours	355.9	576.8	250.6	1,183.30

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

Table 18-4 Projection 2A results (100% planned OTP, 98.2% trips scheduled)

Metric	East Zone/ Transdev	West Zone/ Transit Team	South Zone/ Transit Team	Total
Runs	204	208	78	490
Scheduled Service Hours	1,744.90	1,955.00	725.5	4,425.40
Total Service Hours	1,600.90	1,715.80	633	3,949.70
RVHs	1,492.10	1,549.20	586	3,627.40
Deadhead Hours	109	166.5	46.9	322.5
Passengers per RVH	1.94	1.93	2.04	1.95
Trips per RVH	1.81	1.81	1.88	1.82
TRAP Slack Hours	284.8	578.2	176.1	1,039.10

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

Table 18-5 Projection 2B results (100% planned OTP, 97.9% trips scheduled)

Metric	East Zone/ Transdev	West Zone/ Transit Team	South Zone/ Transit Team	Total
Runs	211	218	78	507
Scheduled Service Hours	1,786.70	2,048.80	725.5	4,561.00
Total Service Hours	1,606.10	1,757.80	655.6	4,019.60
RVHs	1,500.00	1,567.70	611	3,678.60
Deadhead Hours	106.2	190.1	44.7	340.9
Passengers per RVH	1.91	1.88	2	1.91
Trips per RVH	1.78	1.78	1.84	1.79
TRAP Slack Hours	343.6	659.2	152.4	1,155.10

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

Table 18-6 summarizes results from the baseline day (showing actual results impacted by day-of-service factors), as well as results from the three projections (showing expected results). Results are expressed as both counts and percentage change relative to the actual performance on April 16, 2025. **Note that the Baseline day is showing actual results, which are impacted by day-of-serve factors, whereas the Projections are planned expected results.** When reviewing these results, it is important to keep in mind that they represent a best case situation and are not likely to be fully achieved, as further described in Section 18.5.

Table 18-6 Summary of projection results

Metric	Baseline (Actual)	Count			Percentage Change		
		Projection 1	Projection 2A	Projection 2B	Projection 1	Projection 2A	Projection 2B
Runs	554	520	490	507	-6%	-12%	-8%
Scheduled Service Hours	4,956.00	4,696.20	4,425.40	4,561.00	-5%	-11%	-8%
Total Service Hours	4,944.40	4,264.40	3,949.70	4,019.60	-14%	-20%	-19%
RVHs	4,366.90	4,008.40	3,627.40	3,678.60	-8%	-17%	-16%
Deadhead Hours	483.8	256.1	322.5	340.9	-47%	-33%	-30%
Passengers per RVH	1.43	1.75	1.95	1.91	22%	36%	34%
Trips per RVH	1.34	1.64	1.82	1.79	22%	36%	33%
TRAP Slack Hours	895.9	1,183.30	1,039.10	1,155.10	32%	16%	29%

RVH = revenue vehicle hour

18.4 Assumptions and Limitations of This Analysis

For this analysis, no changes were made to the run structure in terms of the number of runs or hours per run, so the runs that went out on the street on the baseline day (April, 16, 2025) were copied to the projection days. Transdev management noted that they do a service pick for shifts about once per year; Transit Team does not have a similar system in place. Most transit agencies perform periodic run cuts, typically two to three times per year. The purpose of the run cut process is to determine the best allocation of driver shifts to match required service hours.

No adjustments were made to the Met Council Trapeze scheduling system's core settings or parameters. That is, system speeds and other scheduling weights already assigned to the batch scheduling Solution Sets were used for this analysis.

As discussed previously, the batch scheduling procedures used for the projections were similar to those used at other large ADA paratransit systems that use Trapeze but were different than those currently used by the Metro Mobility providers. For example, once reservations are no longer accepted for the following day's service, many agencies have their scheduling team perform a series of final batches to reoptimize the assignment of runs to trips. This optimization is beneficial because the cancellation and addition of trips during the entire multiday reservations cycle will create opportunities for better service alignment.

No changes were made to how the trips were booked. For example, for the baseline day, only 20% of the 1,478 demand appointment trips and 8% of the 786 standing order trips had an appointment window applied. If the appointment window had been applied, the Trapeze scheduling algorithm would respect it and ensure no vehicle arrived earlier than 30 minutes before the appointment time.

When analyzing the gains in productivity, slightly lower productivity would likely result from service-day factors. As a rule, paratransit operations experience a decline in productivity when comparing planned vs. actual results. This decline also occurs when comparing planned vs. actual OTP. Currently at Metro

Mobility, pre-day-of-service planned productivity is not obtained by the providers, and, because of the disparate way the providers go about preparing for the next day's service, it would be difficult to recreate those activities in a test scenario. The Study Team was able to capture a limited sample set of planned vs. actual productivity for a few summer weekdays and found that the drop was approximately 0.08 passengers per hour.

18.5 Observations

The results show the potential for efficiencies to be gained by changing the model for scheduling trips from a decentralized process where each provider is responsible for scheduling to a centralized process where scheduling is performed by the Met Council or a third-party contractor. Highlights include significant gains in productivity and a significant reduction in the number of service and revenue hours required to operate the service, which in turn would translate to a smaller overall fleet and reduced capital and operating costs.

The high number of slack hours in the projections revealed that the system would benefit from a comprehensive run cut. Most agencies perform run cuts two to three times per year, often timing them with known seasonal changes in the service demand profile. Run cuts are a time-consuming and specialized task that is not within the scope of this project. However, looking more closely at individual runs within the projections using Trapeze, the Study Team was able to quickly identify areas where the value of a run cut is evident. This finding is shown in Figure 18-1, which is a composite screenshot of Projection 2A taken from the Trapeze Schedule Editor *Run Graphical View* showing significant slack time on many runs, indicating a potential mismatch of supply and demand.

18.6 Recommendations

18.6.1 Conduct a Run Cut

Based on in-person observations at the contractor provider locations and the results of the scheduling scenario analyses, the Study Team believes that the Met Council would benefit from a comprehensive run cut for Metro Mobility service to be conducted at least once per year. The look-back period for the evaluation of service demand should be at least 1 year in order to avoid changes to the system caused by the introduction of Metro Move in the summer of 2024. The run cut should not be performed by the contractor providers because they have a vested interest in maintaining their billable revenue hours. Instead, the run cuts should be performed by a neutral expert, preferably someone who is familiar with Trapeze.

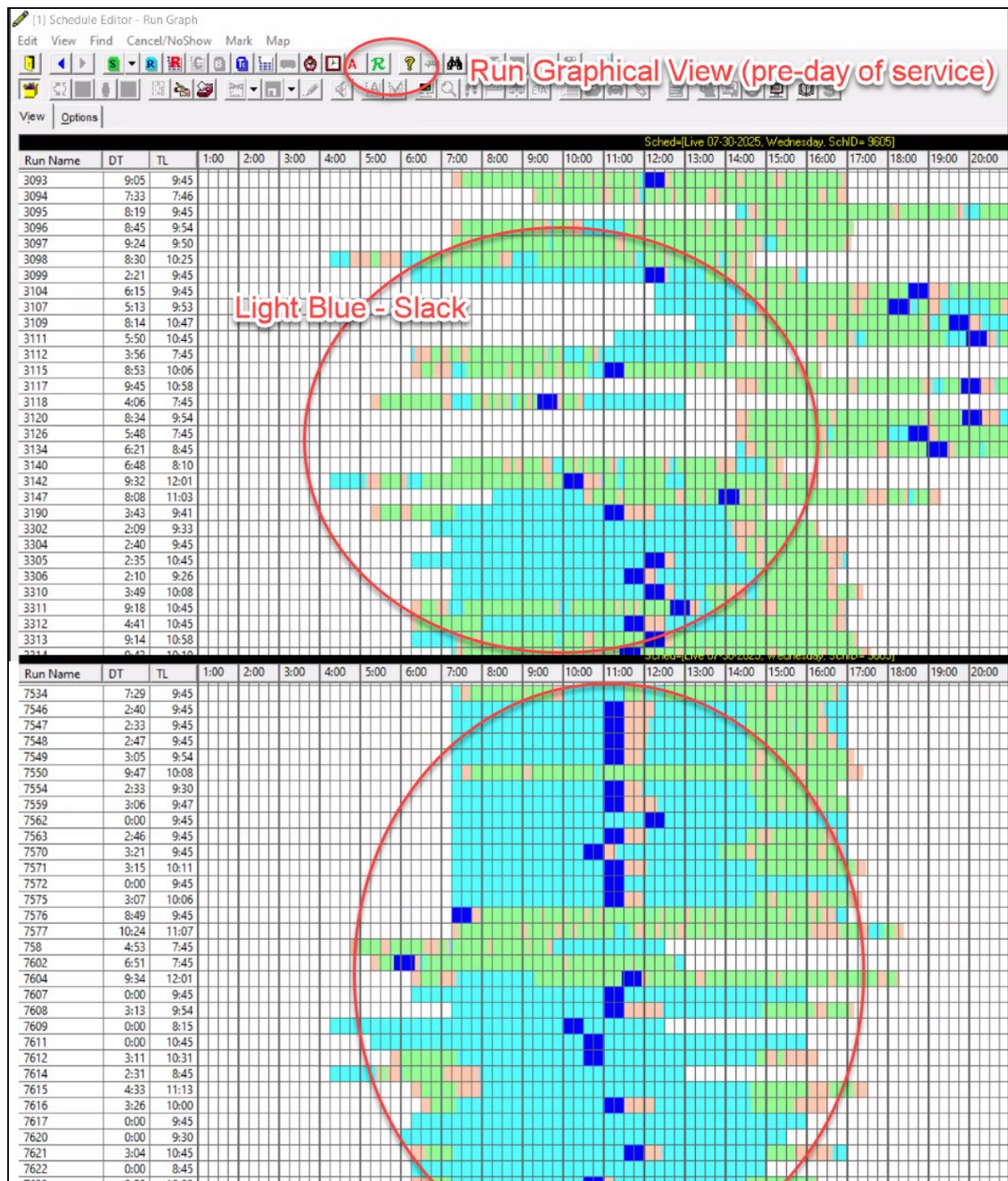


Figure 18-1 Slack hours from Projection 2A (April 16, 2025).

18.6.2 Consider Migrating to a Model of Centralized Scheduling

The scheduling scenarios highlighted the value of a centralized scheduling process just prior to the day of service, and, as mentioned previously, those efforts should be carried out independently of the existing contractor provider scheduling efforts.

One option is to bring this function in-house and leverage the capabilities of the Trapeze system to automate the majority of scheduling activities. This could serve as a step in the direction of moving toward a different operating model for Metro Mobility service, with the Met Council retaining a call-and-control center manager contractor or a scheduling manager to schedule the trips.

Carving the scheduling process away from the providers also typically means carving away the responsibility for reservations—these two functions usually go together (with the same entity). Dispatching is different. Some transit agencies with contracted call-and-control managers have also vested them with dispatching functions, while others have left dispatching with the operations providers.

In Chicago, Pace retains a regional mobility manager who takes reservations and schedules trip requests for several of its ADA and other paratransit services throughout the region. However, for the ADA paratransit serving the City of Chicago (and some of its suburbs), Pace (at least for a while) uses the regional mobility manager primarily as a scheduling manager. Here, the operations contractors are zoned, and customers call their zoned provider much like with Metro Mobility service. The difference is that the regional mobility manager centrally schedules the trips to any of the providers much like in Projection 2A, (i.e., a trip request that is received and booked by one provider might be scheduled to another provider). This Pace model for Chicago was reported in the 2017 TCRP Synthesis 135, ADA Paratransit Service Models; this model may have since changed.

If the Met Council does migrate to a contracted call-and-control center manager, that contractor and the operations contractors would then share the responsibility for achieving specified Met Council goals; therefore, contractual bonuses and invoice credits would need to be shared as well.

18.6.3 Explore Options for Demand-Responsive Software Providers

The Met Council should start the process of evaluating options for dispatching/scheduling software as potential replacements for the Trapeze scheduling system. Like many other large ADA paratransit operations, the Met Council has the benefit of maintaining its Trapeze core reservations, scheduling, and dispatch system separated from its other transit software, so procuring and implementing a new solution would not be constrained by impacts of those systems. There are three main reasons why exploring options is recommended:

- Trapeze PASS software has failed to innovate and adopt modern technology to replace its aging platform.
- Transit-oriented software vendors, which entered the market 5 to 10 years ago with on-demand technology, have created ADA paratransit versions that have now matured and can demonstrate

understanding and incorporation of ADA-specific requirements. Also, they have now proven their ability to scale and support paratransit operations of different sizes, including large ones.

- The new technologies require little or no on-premises IT infrastructure, and virtually no dedicated IT support staff.

Trapeze has always been the industry leader—consistently outperforming other products that have come and gone over the past 30 years. Trapeze PASS has dominated market share in the ADA paratransit software space for decades; however, in the past 3–5 years, they have begun to lose clients—particularly smaller agencies—to new companies that offer cloud-based software-as-a-service solutions.

The new companies, which include Via Transportation, Spare Labs, and RideCo, first came onto the scene with microtransit solutions for transit agencies. (Mention of a company in this report does not constitute an endorsement by the Study Team.) They offered what could be referred to as *ADA-lite* options, which did not fit well into the regulatory framework of federal requirements. As these companies' software began to evolve and support true ADA compliance, they were not able to scale up to support large paratransit programs. But within the past 12–18 months, each of these three companies, as well others, have invested significant development resources and come up with enterprise-level solutions to meet both the federal requirements associated with providing ADA services, as well as leverage modern improvements in technologies such as artificial intelligence to transform the way the software works. The best-of-breed of these solutions has introduced a sea-change in the way software solves problems. This new approach has been embraced by agencies such as CapMetro in Austin and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority in the greater Philadelphia region.

While these new companies have been innovating, Trapeze's innovations have been lagging. The PASS software application has used the same client/server software architecture since its inception, and the desktop application experience looks almost identical to when the first Microsoft Windows version of PASS was introduced 1997. Trapeze has tried to modernize the application a couple of times by making it a lightweight, browser-based offering, with the most recent effort in 2017. The next-generation software has gone through several name changes and data modelers since that time and is currently referred to as *One Mobility*. It does not appear at this time that the long-awaited cloud-based One Mobility solution will be able to support large agencies any time soon.

The new software providers leverage software-as-a-service in cloud-based, lightweight platforms in hosted data centers that offer 99.9999% uptime, as well as geographic redundancy to minimize impacts from localized outages. Because of the fault-tolerant nature of these hosted solutions, some of these companies are able to perform software updates and patches to their products with limited to no downtime at all. This technology is a significant change from the current Trapeze technology.

From an in-vehicle technology perspective, the new software companies are embracing a holistic approach to ensuring data and voice communications are supported end-to-end. For example, RideCo recently launched its one-tablet solution at the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority,

which not only incorporates real-time traditional mobile data exchanges for trip updates on an Android device but also integrates with the fare collection system and provides voice over internet protocol audio between operators and dispatchers in the control room. That solution also includes management of the wireless communications component with carrier redundancy so that if one carrier's signal is weak in a particular geographic area, the secondary carrier's network automatically handles the traffic.

Perhaps the most important consideration when looking at alternatives to Trapeze is the sea-change in the user's interactions with the application. Entire job functions are either no longer required or have transitioned from one role to another. For example, because the system is always aware of what is happening in real-time—think upcoming projected late pull-outs or a sudden traffic jam—the dispatcher's function becomes less about trying to identify the situation and manually make adjustments and more about confirming that the system's automatic handling of those adjustments has occurred. Thus, a dispatcher can spend more time responding to exceptions such as no-shows or vehicle incidents. Similarly, from a reservations and scheduling perspective, the system is always reshuffling the deck, meaning that with each new booking and trip cancellation, the CDO is adjusting itineraries for both the day of service as well as future days.

Chapter 19: Other Recommendations

This chapter presents several recommendations, over and above the recommendations contained elsewhere in this report.

19.1 Replace Rangers With DriverMate/Tablets

The biggest unsolved problem for the Met Council is the Ranger issue. The Study Team's recommendation reflects the continued use of Trapeze for the foreseeable future, but also the emerging use of driver tablets, with the tailored software, for virtually all other new technologies supporting ADA paratransit. Most systems that have relied on Rangers in the past have either already replaced their Rangers with tablets or are planning to do so.

From an operational standpoint, the Ranger issue is tied to an insufficient spare vehicle ratio, which in turn creates operational issues. The current spare vehicle ratio is effectively around 10% for Metro Mobility fleets. This ratio is low compared to the ratio typically recommended for paratransit—a ratio of between 20% and 30% depending on the age of the vehicles and operational conditions. The bottleneck, however, is not the vehicles themselves—there is a surplus of new vehicles in hand that can be used to swap in for vehicles being retired. The bottleneck is that there are not enough working Rangers, and the contractors are forbidden to operate Metro Mobility vehicles in revenue service that do not have working Rangers.

The underlying issue is that Rangers are no longer being manufactured, replacement (used) Rangers are difficult to find, and existing Rangers are failing. Rangers are also difficult to use (e.g., drivers use a computer mouse attached to the Rangers to move the cursor because the touch screen calibrations are not accurate).

With no units available for purchase from Trapeze, the Met Council has been “beating the bushes” to get working Rangers from other transit agencies that have successfully converted to tablets, but even those sources are dwindling. Consequently, there is shortage of vehicles to properly meet pull-out demand, which results in trip reassignments, delays in OTP at the beginning of the run shifts, and the inability to meet a growing demand. The Met Council is looking forward to a new batch of Rangers that were found that will “stem the tide,” but this influx is really only a temporary band-aid. A better, more lasting solution needs to be found. Fortunately, one exists.

Most transit agencies, whether supported by Trapeze or another scheduling/dispatching technology, have successfully navigated the conversion from Rangers and other MDTs to tablets. However, the Met Council has been trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to move to tablets for several years now. The culprit seems to lie with issues related to an overly complicated network design and reliability issues that stem from the Met Council IT network security requirements. When DriverMate and tablets were piloted, trip information was lost and the units required frequent and full resets. Meanwhile, transit agencies all over the United States have solved this problem—the only difference seems to be linked to the overly engineered network at the Met Council. The problems with the Rangers continue to be real and

significant, and as more Rangers fail, the problem continues to grow. However, Met Council staff have recently been making headway after hiring an on-board technology manager. Assuming progress continues, Met Council hopes to start rolling out solutions in early 2026.

19.2 Move Mission-Critical IT Under Metro Mobility and Implement a More Consistent Approach to Scheduling

In the Study Team's opinion, there needs to be a separation between the Met Council's IT department staff and the Metro Mobility business unit with respect to mission-critical IT needs. Such an organizational restructuring would involve the expansion of staff familiar with Trapeze and tablet-based solutions who are willing to do what needs to be done to implement the required changes and who have the authority to change the network to effectuate the changes.

The in-department expansion of Trapeze experts will also help with the slack issue, which in the Study Team's opinion, is contributing to the costly supply of unneeded resources. Currently, the Met Council manages the Trapeze parameter settings, the servers, the updates, etc., while the contractors are responsible for using the tools available to manage service delivery. The Met Council does conduct training periodically to inform the contractors of the tools available to support them. At the same time, the Met Council does not require contractors to use the Trapeze system in a specific way, which the Study Team believes is resulting in significant slack and suboptimal performance. To gain more consistency and improve productivity without compromising on service quality standards, the Met Council needs additional in-house Trapeze expertise to help the contractors put together and maintain a more productive run structure. While the Met Council has shied away from micromanaging the providers' operations and their scheduling (as long as they generally meet service quality expectations), a more hands-on approach is needed if the current decentralized model continues. The Met Council management has indicated that they are not opposed to requiring a more prescriptive use of the tools to encourage more consistency.

The Study Team found that Trapeze, especially with large systems such as Metro Mobility, significantly benefits from dedicated staff who are extremely knowledgeable about the product and the way it is being used. Currently, the contractors have the responsibility to operate the system, but do not have access to all the tools available or the appropriate training. As one small but important example, the test environment should be updated more frequently so that effective scenario testing can be conducted with near-time datasets. The Study Team also recommends that contractors use the system in the same way, requiring centralized oversight, as well as periodic collaboration between all parties. Lastly, testing new features/patches/upgrades requires more robust involvement from contractor staff and from all levels (i.e., each role should participate in testing to confirm that no issues exist and avoid unintended consequences when pushed to live environment).

19.3 Consider Ways to Reduce Risk in the Contractor Payment Structure to Achieve Lower Rates

The current payment structure, based on a per RVH rate, carries more risk than necessary, which, in turn, drives up proposed rates. Payment rates that are based on the number of revenue service hours—increasing or lowering the rate only if certain threshold are crossed—brings with it a risk for the contractors where fixed costs are not covered if RVHs are significantly reduced but short of the threshold. The same is true for the Met Council in terms of overpaying based on increased service hours that have not yet reached the threshold for reduced rates.

A less-risky approach for both parties is to split payment into two components—a monthly fixed fee that covers *approved* fixed costs and a variable per RVH rate that covers variable costs, with an accompanying set of bonuses and performance-based invoice credits tuned to provide the desired balance between service quality (OTP, etc.) and productivity. This two-piece rate structure is fairly common in industry because decreased risk will result in more competitive rates.

Because of the volatility of fuel prices, many contracts for dedicated DRT service also treat fuel costs as a pass-through cost, rather than include a fuel price adjustment clause for the exact same reasons described previously related to lowering risk for the contractors.

19.4 Elongate the Provider Contract Term to Achieve More Competitive Rates

The Met Council’s contracts with its Metro Mobility providers have a 5-year base term with an optional sixth year. The trend in the transit industry is to go with longer contracts because longer-term contracts bring with them two real-benefits:

- They create more stability for both parties, helping to establish more of a partnership.
- In cases where the contractors are responsible for their own facilities, longer contract terms can translate into longer (and lower) facility leases, which in turn generates lower provider rates.

Regardless of the contract term, the Met Council can always end a contract due to nonperformance (a provision in the current contracts). In the next procurement’s RFP, the Met Council could ask for costs using both structures.

The Met Council may wish to consider going with a 10-year contract terms for these reasons. While FTA did impose 5-year limits in the past, this constraint was rescinded in 2002, although there is still a 5-year limit on contracts for rolling stock and replacement parts. Details can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/procurement/third-party-procurement/contract-term-limitations>.

19.5 Consider Providing the Operations/Maintenance Facilities

A case can also be made for the Met Council to supply operations/maintenance facilities for the Metro Mobility providers. This strategy was recently outlined in the Met Council's May 2025 Facility Plan. The concept involves the Met Council acquiring (and building or retrofitting as needed) the operations/maintenance facilities for the three Metro Mobility zones.

Here again, the idea is to reduce costs, which can be achieved in the following ways:

- Capital purchases can be funded at 80/20 match vs. the 50/50 match if facilities are included in the contractor rates; if the Met Council were to purchase the facility, the capital costs can also be amortized to spread out the costs for the life of the facility.
- Contractors will not have to build a risk factor into their rates to account for facility lease commitments, nor will the Met Council have to pay retrofitting costs incurred by the contractor.
- By having the Met Council take on this responsibility, the playing field would be leveled between current contractors and new proposers on the next procurement, adding competition to the process, which often translates into reduced rates.
- If contracts do end prematurely, the replacement vendor would not have to scramble to find a facility; moreover, the facility issue would not be the stumbling block for not ending a contract early if desired by the Met Council.

TTI conducted a study for Access Services in Los Angeles in 2020, reviewing the benefits that accrued to their peers who embraced this strategy. Access Services followed up on the Study Team's recommendation to provide the operations/maintenance facilities and has now obtained and readied their third operations/maintenance facility (among their four zones in the Los Angeles Basin).

If the Met Council decides to continue vesting this responsibility with the providers, the Met Council could also add a contract/lease provision for taking over a lease should the contract end prematurely and if taking over the lease for that specific property is desired by the Met Council. This provision reduces the risk for the contractors and provides an avenue of sorts to the longer-term end game of the Met Council providing the facility. In the meantime, this should also reduce costs (by reducing risk) and provide more flexibility to the Met Council in the case of scheduled or emergency procurements that result in a new or replacement provider.

19.6 Consider Adding More Non-WAVs to the Fleet

The Metro Mobility fleet is mostly composed of the same type of vehicle—a cutaway with 8 seats and three wheelchair positions. As of June 2025, 33 (or 6%) vehicles of the active Metro Mobility fleet of 540 vehicles were non-WAVs.

In the 2023 TCRP Synthesis 174 Paratransit Fleet Configurations, it was found that many larger paratransit fleets are instead composed of a nonuniform fleet mix of WAVs and non-WAVs. These transit agencies have found that their ADA paratransit ridership is comprised of 20%–30% WAV trips and 70%–

80% ambulatory trips, suggesting that a mix of WAVs and non-WAVs will work operationally. As an example, the MBTA in Boston has long been served by a fleet mix of 70% WAVs and 30% sedans.

Both Metro Mobility contractors stated that they see the value of—and are in favor of—a fleet mix of WAVs and non-WAVs for the following reasons:

- Using smaller, non-WAVs are less costly to operate, less costly for the Met Council to purchase, and do not require drivers with commercial driver’s licenses to operate, opening up the pool of potential drivers.
- Their parts are more readily available.
- Using smaller vehicles—and having a mix of vehicles—can better match operational needs; the cutaways are rarely at full capacity, and smaller vehicles can access more places than a cutaway.
- Smaller non-WAVs tend to be more comfortable, enhancing riding experience of customers that can use them.

19.7 Address Missing Goals/Standards, Procedures to Identify Possible Capacity Constraints, and Data Tracking Issues

Federal ADA paratransit guidelines forbid limitations in service due to capacity constraints. Section 6.6 details five metrics—denials, untimely trips, missed trips, excessively long ride times, and excessively long hold times—any of which could potentially reveal patterns that point to a capacity constraint. Not-to-exceed goals/standards provide an initial clue that there may be a capacity constraint. While the Met Council has established not-to-exceed standards for most of these metrics, some are needed or need attention. More so, procedures to detect whether or not patterns exist are lacking and need to be developed and executed.

19.7.1 Missing Goals/Standards

Current not-to-exceed goals for the five metrics include:

- Denials: 0%.
- Untimely trips: ≤7% (derived from the 93% OTP goal) with 30-minute pickup and drop-off windows.
- Missed trips: None.
- Long Ride Times: ≤5%.
- Long Hold Times: ≤5% with an average of 3 minutes on any day and ≤1% with an average of 5 minutes on any day.

The Study Team recommends adding a goal/standard of ≤0.5% missed trips and revising the long hold-time goal/standard to any hour (vs. any day). The Study Team also suggests revising contractual invoice credits to include instances for any hour where the 3-minute and 5-minute hold time averages are exceeded—both of these statistics are provided in the telephone system reports. The Met Council might

also consider bonuses when the daily average hold time is <2 minutes and in months with no hold times >5 minutes.

The Study Team also recommends adding a minimum standard for MBRC. Based on Table 13-3, Transdev in the East Zone is achieving an MBRC of 129,000 miles, while Transit Team is achieving an MBRC of 192,000 in the South and 213,000 miles in the West Zone. Because these MBRC figures are currently based on major maintenance failures, there is no reason to change this as a metric. Given the actual figures, setting the standard at 200,000 miles (the approximate average of Transit Team's two zones) is reasonable, because this is demonstrably achievable. Accompanying this standard, the Met Council could set a bonus for achieving an MBRC of 225,000 miles and an invoice credit assessed for an MBRC of 175,000 miles. Prior to setting this standard and accompanying bonuses and invoice credits, the Study Team recommends that the Met Council look into how the providers are defining and identifying major mechanical failures to make sure their procedures are consistent.

19.7.2 Procedures to Detect Patterns

For the first four metrics—denials, untimely trips, missed trips, and excessively long ride times—the Met Council needs to develop procedures to identify spatial patterns (within each zone), temporal patterns (for certain days and time periods), or demographic patterns (involving a specific rider or population subgroup) that may point to a capacity constraint.

Regarding call-center performance (explicitly hold-time data), the pattern-detection process should include looking at hourly slots on different days of the week throughout the month to see if a pattern may exist. For example, while a daily hold-time average may not be substandard, the hold times when the phones open up Monday morning or when the last reservations are made on Friday morning may be excessively long. Another time period where patterns may emerge is during or right after a lunch break, especially if call-takers are lax in getting back to work after their breaks. Indeed, staffing the reservation function based on the day and hourly volume of incoming calls is much the same as establishing a run structure to mirror the demand. If call hold times are long, it typically points to an insufficient number of call-takers at key times (or not enough lines).

The pattern-detection process should be conducted at least quarterly. If patterns are detected that are found to be limiting the provision of service, steps need to be taken to address the capacity constraint (e.g., through a restructuring of runs and/or floater vans, or the addition or restructuring of reservation agent hours).

19.7.3 Data Tracking Issues

When tracking these metrics, the Met Council needs to ensure the following:

- Contractors are using both definitions of denials and all five definitions of missed tips (see Section 6.6).
- The calculation of the missed trip percentage in the Power BI reports uses the total eligible passenger trip as the denominator.

- Pickup OTP needs to be calculated for all trips—not just the trips that are requested by pickup times, as appears to be the current practice.

Also, the current way that appointment trips are being entered eliminates the drop-off window from the on-time logic in Trapeze. As the Met Council expands its pickup time OTP calculations to include pickups for appointment trips, the results will not include early pickups trips. The Study Team has provided the Met Council with a work-around for call-in trips, which needs to be put into effect as soon as possible. This work-around will infuse the boundary for early trips so that Trapeze does not schedule an early pickup (as it does now because of the way these trips are being booked). This work-around, because of its complexity, is not appropriate nor recommended for customers booking appointment trips on the app. Thus, this prohibition on booking appointment trips will unfortunately continue until a solution to the underlying problem—manifested in unrealistic pickup times for appointment trips—is found and installed. This fix will likely need the assistance of a Trapeze expert. Once solved, Metro Mobility customers will be able to book appointment trips on the app with realistic pickup solutions.

19.8 Update and Add to Complaint Processing Procedures

Following up on one of the OLA report recommendations, the Met Council should update its complaint processing procedures, including the removal of customer contact duties for the contractors and the tracking of complaints in the new Service Infractions module. The Study Team understands that the new MMSC assistant manager has this on her agenda, and that these new procedures will be documented and distributed to the MMSC staff and the contractors. The Metro Mobility Service Guide should also be amended to reflect relevant new policies pertinent to customers.

As part of the new procedures, the Study Team also understands that, in recording the complaint, there will be box to check if the complainant wants a response from the MMSC (presumably after the complaint has been deemed to be an issue or a nonissue and after an investigation [if needed] has been conducted). The Study Team recommends that, at a minimum, the Met Council should respond to each complainant (whether they request a response or not) with a:

- Resolution letter that summarizes the complaint deemed to be an issue and indicates a specific action, set of actions, or policy change designed to mitigate similar complaints in the future.
- Closure letter that summarizes the complaint deemed to be an issue or nonissue and provides the reasons for complaint closure.

The Study Team also recommends that such responses be sent to the complainant within 30 days of the complaint being registered, although some transit agencies set the response period at 60 days. These new procedures, if implemented, will show that the Met Council is actively listening to and considering complaints and actively participating as a partner in resolving complaints. If more information is requested from the complainant and that information is not provided within 30 days of the request, MMSC would be free to close the complaint due to the complainant's nonresponsiveness.

With the hiring of the new complaints investigator and incorporation of the previously described recommendations, Met Council staff will be taking more control of the process. This new process and the new tracking capabilities should deliver a more accurate analysis of when related bonuses are earned and when invoice credits should be assessed.

19.9 Other Miscellaneous Recommendations

19.9.1 Revise Contractor Branding and Summary Details at Booking

Reservation agents answer the calls from customers by saying “Transdev” or “Transit Team.” The Study Team recommends that they answer the phone by saying “Metro Mobility.”

Based on the discrepancy between OTP pickup data (above the 93% goal based on data from a representative week in the first quarter of 2025) and the low satisfaction ratings for on-time pickups in the rider survey, the Study Team believes that that riders have a different expectation than the Met Council’s definition of on time. To address this issue, the Study Team recommends that reservation agents be instructed to revise the way they confirm the trip reservation information at the end of the booking process. Instead of giving the exact confirmed pickup time (e.g., 8:00 a.m.), they should say “be ready between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.” This simple change has resulted in much less confusion at several transit agencies with which the Study Team is familiar.

19.9.2 Split Up Reservation Calls and Service-Day Calls

Currently, customer calls to book or cancel a trip and calls to ask about an ETA for trip that is already late (a WMR call) on the day of service come into the same queue. If these types of calls were split into separate queues, agents would know what type of call is coming in, and the contractor could staff the service-day line with more experienced agents (who could also field booking calls when not handling service-day calls). In addition, hold times for the two lines could be distinguished, allowing the Met Council to establish different standards for hold times based on call type.

19.9.3 Address Inconsistent Operating Practices

The Met Council has a current hands-off policy for operations, allowing the contractors leeway in operations as long as service quality KPIs are met. However, the two contractors have wildly different practices for handling WMR calls, for when and how State-mandated trips are scheduled (and when and how those customers are notified), and for using Trapeze’s optimizing job agents. Some of these differences, especially in the scheduling process, result in significant differences in productivity (as documented in Chapter 18) and the associated cost per trip. For customers in the State-mandated area, their experiences differs depending on where they live.

New procedures should also be put in place regarding the handling of no-show requests from the drivers, specifically to reduce the number of no-shows and complaints. These procedures should include strict adherence to required documentation so that no-show investigations are robust and address the top complaint among riders—no-show disputes.

The Study Team recommends that the Met Council take steps to infuse more consistency into these processes by adding these requirements to the contract via amendments.

19.9.4 Improve Driver-Dispatcher Communication

Effective communication between drivers and dispatchers is inhibited by the high ratio of drivers to dispatchers. Some past challenges have occurred from limited-use restriction of the ARMER radio system; however, these restrictions are not currently a significant issue. Communication challenges create operations issues that have a negative impact on OTP. The Study Team recommends that the Met Council require a 20:1 driver-to-dispatcher ratio in future contracts and consider improving voice communications. The Met Council may want to investigate other voice communication technologies (e.g., voice over internet protocol) as an additional, albeit costly, strategy if communication challenges remain.

19.9.5 Limit Linkage with New Fleet Maintenance System

Contractors should be allowed to continue to use their vehicle maintenance software for work orders/day-to-day operations and report only required elements to the new Hexagon Enterprise Asset Management system.

19.9.6 Work With Contractors on Specific Suggestions

Transdev could use some additional supervisory help at pull-out; drivers end up troubleshooting equipment on their own. Also, because the dispatchers at the front desk are doing double-duty (dispatching and window dispatching), their attention to dispatching is lacking. The Study Team recommends that Transdev staff be devoted to radio dispatching and window dispatching separately.

There is a huge imbalance between Transit Team's maintenance staff in North Minneapolis and Maple Grove. Transit Team is currently addressing this issue by shuttling vehicles from their Maple Grove facility to their Minneapolis facility because there are not enough maintenance technicians at the Maple Grove facility. The Study Team recommends that a contractual provision specifying a minimum mechanic-to-vehicle ratio (e.g., 10:1) be included for each facility where maintenance is performed.

Chapter 20: Evaluation of POD Extended Hours Pilot

Section 10.5.2 contains the Study Team’s analysis of the Met Council’s POD service. This chapter contains a more in-depth evaluation of the extended hours pilot, which extended the POD hours of operation as directed by the Minnesota State Legislature. Because Section 10.5.2 already contains an analysis of POD, this chapter starts with a brief recap of the service followed by an analysis of POD data, an industry review of similar programs, and recommendations regarding the POD pilot program.

20.1 Recap of the POD Service

POD is an alternative service program—a transit agency program that offers subsidized same-day/on-demand service to Metro Mobility customers. Use of the service in no way infringes on the customers’ eligibility for Metro Mobility. The Minnesota Legislature enacted the Metro Mobility Enhancement Pilot Program, which extended POD operating hours so that POD service is available to Metro Mobility customers from at least 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays. (In some communities, Metro Mobility operating hours are already longer than those guaranteed by the extended hours pilot program. In these communities, because POD’s hours match Metro Mobility’s, POD was already operating during the periods guaranteed by the extended hours pilot.) The extended hours pilot started September 1, 2023, and sunsets December 31, 2025.

POD service is operated by three providers—Carepool, UZURV, and Transportation Plus—who each responded to the Met Council’s June 6, 2024, RFP for POD service. The three providers have varying payment structures that include:

- The provider’s base rate per trip.
- The provider’s rate per mile (for trips that exceed a provider-set distance).
- Surcharges for trips after 6:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m. on weekdays and all trips on weekends.
- Surcharges for WAV rides.

The Met Council covers 100% of costs from provider surcharges.

20.2 Analysis of POD Ridership and Cost Statistics

To evaluate the POD service, and, in particular, the extended hours pilot, the Study Team analyzed several statistics including POD ridership, subsidies and surcharges, and POD pilot-hour users’ trip characteristics.

20.2.1 Monthly Trends

Month-by-month POD ridership and subsidy amounts for 2024 are shown in Table 20-1.⁵ This table shows that ridership has grown steadily in 2024.

Table 20-1 POD ridership, subsidies, and customer fares (2024)

Month (2024)	Trip Subsidies Paid by the Met Council	Portion of Trip Subsidies from Nonstandard Trip Surcharges ^a	Trips	Subsidy per Trip ^b
January	\$234,450	\$100,663	9,689	\$24.20
February	\$262,310	\$114,633	10,506	\$24.97
March	\$308,859	\$143,535	11,652	\$26.51
April	\$282,413	\$126,555	11,006	\$25.66
May	\$314,798	\$139,533	12,192	\$25.82
June	\$326,038	\$153,908	12,057	\$27.04
July	\$330,241	\$144,643	12,983	\$25.44
August	\$344,924	\$155,758	13,085	\$26.36
September	\$352,512	\$159,303	13,402	\$26.30
October	\$372,243	\$158,730	14,666	\$25.38
November	\$351,958	\$157,853	13,244	\$26.57
December	\$377,159	\$170,740	14,113	\$26.72
Calendar Year	\$3,857,906	\$1,725,850	148,594	\$25.96

^a The trip subsidies from surcharges values are included in the trip subsidies paid by the Met Council values. Surcharges reflect additional costs charged by providers during nonstandard days/hours and for trips for people with mobility devices.

^b Calculated by dividing the trip subsidies paid by the Met Council by the number of trips.

Table 20-1 also shows that subsidies and surcharges paid by the Met Council totaled \$3,857,906. Based on the 148,594 POD trips in 2024, this equates to an average subsidy per trip of \$25.96. With the 2024 average operating cost of Metro Mobility trips at \$48.06, the Met Council presumably saves money for trips taken on POD. However, the following caveats are important to consider when evaluating the savings:

- POD trip lengths are half of the average trip length of trips on Metro Mobility, making an apples-to-apples comparison difficult.
- The presumed per-trip savings of POD trips are only valid for POD trips taken that would have otherwise been taken on Metro Mobility.
- Some unknown portion of POD trips are new trips (not trips shifted from Metro Mobility), representing either latent demand (trips that Metro Mobility users wanted to take but were not able due to the service characteristics of Metro Mobility) or induced demand (new trips that Metro Mobility users started taking only because POD service was now available). Any new trips

⁵ Data in Table 20-1 are the same as those contained in Table 10-10, except Table 20-1 only contains 2024 data and includes the Met Council's calculated subsidy per trip.

on POD are not a cost savings to the Met Council—they are simply *potentially cheaper* than providing the new trip on Metro Mobility.

- All pilot-hour trips are new trips because they were not possible prior to the extended hours pilot.
- Unlike Metro Mobility trips, there is no financial support from FTA because the POD service is not shared and therefore not reportable for the NTD for federal formula funding support. The Met Council estimates the per-trip federal revenue from Metro Mobility trips to be about \$4.00.

Finally, although POD trips may be cheaper per trip, POD service does not offer the same customer support as Metro Mobility service.

20.2.2 Cost Analysis of Extended Hours Pilot

To arrive at the cost implications of the extended hours pilot, the Study Team analyzed POD data from December 2024 (see Table 20-2). The table displays key statistics for POD trips—disaggregated by *standard trips* (trips that occurred between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays) and *nonstandard trips* (trips that occurred before 6:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays or that occurred on weekends).

Table 20-2 POD average trip length and subsidies per trip (December 2024)

Trip Type	Trips ^a	Call-Ins	App Reservations	Average Trip Length (miles)	Subsidy	Subsidy per Trip
Standard Trips (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays)	7,950 (56.3%)	7,366 (92.6%)	584 (7.4%)	5.66	\$105,948 (29.4%)	\$13.33
Nonstandard Trips ^b (6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays and weekends)	6,163 (43.7%)	5,813 (94.3%)	350 (5.7%)	5.97	\$254,055 (70.6%)	\$41.22
Total	14,113 (100%)	13,179 (93.4%)	934 (6.6%)	5.80	\$360,003 (100%)	\$25.47

^a For analytical purposes, trips with no reported mileage were removed.

^b Nonstandard trips are not the same as *pilot-hour* trips. The nonstandard period is the period in which providers levy additional surcharges.

From this data, the standard trips represent 56.3% of the POD trips but only 29.4% of the subsidy, whereas nonstandard trips represent 43.7% of the POD trip and 70.6% of the subsidy. Each nonstandard trip incurs a surcharge (discussed previously) and are typically longer. For standard trips, the average subsidy was \$13.33 per trip. For nonstandard trips, the average subsidy was \$41.22 per trip. When factoring in the loss of approximately \$4 per trip for lost federal revenue (POD trips are not reportable to the NTD), the cost per trip during the nonstandard period was \$45.22 (\$41.22 + \$4), which is almost equivalent to the average Metro Mobility operating cost per trip of \$48.06. When analyzing potential cost savings related to POD, one must differentiate between the cost savings from mode-shift trips (i.e., when a Metro Mobility user takes a trip on POD instead of Metro Mobility) from new trips (when a Metro Mobility user takes a trip on POD that would not have been taken on Metro Mobility). Mode-shift

POD trips during standard hours saved the Met Council \$30.73 per trip.⁶ Mode-shift POD trips during the nonstandard hours resulted only in minor cost savings (\$2.84 per trip).

Moreover, as mentioned previously, these per-trip savings calculations are only valid for mode-shift POD trips. The savings estimates are not valid when discussing new trips because any new POD trip that would not have otherwise been taken on Metro Mobility is a new cost to the Met Council. It is also important to remember that, although there is a significant difference in the average subsidy per trip of standard and nonstandard trips, the nonstandard period analyzed in Table 20-2 was not synonymous with what would constitute a pilot-hour trip. Instead, the nonstandard period is defined by the contract with the POD providers. The pilot-hour period actually varies by community.

20.2.3 Analysis of Pilot-Hour Users

To further evaluate the extended hours pilot, the Study Team asked the Met Council to conduct additional analyses on the ridership patterns specifically for pilot-hour trips. In these analyses, *pilot-hour trips* refers to trips that started outside the window for Metro Mobility service (i.e., the operating hours of fixed-route transit). Trips classified as pilot-hour trips vary by community because each community has different Metro Mobility operating hours. The pilot-hour trips in this section reflect that nuance.

Table 20-3 displays monthly POD pilot-hour trip data from January 2025 through July 2025. As seen in the table, the number of pilot-hour trips varied between 269 and 434 per month, with between 114 and 140 unique users taking those trips. In an average month during this period, users took 2.76 pilot-hour trips per user. However, there is significant variation in the frequency of use by individuals. In some months, a single user took over 20 pilot-hour trips.

Table 20-3 2025 monthly POD pilot-hour trip data (January 2025–July 2025)

Month (2025)	Total Pilot-Hour Trips	Unique Users	Average Pilot-Hour Trips per User	Maximum Pilot-Hour Trips per User
January	387	124	3.12	20
February	335	123	2.72	17
March	383	127	3.02	22
April	434	140	3.10	18
May	289	128	2.26	15
June	269	114	2.36	12
July	340	124	2.74	25

Source: Data provided and analyzed by the Met Council.

⁶ Value reflects cost after factoring in the estimated \$4.00 per trip of lost federal funds (Metro Mobility cost per trip of \$48.06 – POD standard trip subsidy of \$13.33 + lost federal funds of \$4.00).

Another important aspect to consider when evaluating the extended hours pilot is the proportion of rides taken by infrequent users (i.e., occasional extended hours users) vs. the proportion of rides taken by frequent users (i.e., users who take many pilot-hour trips in a month). POD pilot-hour users were divided into five groups based on their pilot-hour trip frequency, ranging from users who took 1–5 pilot-hour trips per month to users who took ≥ 21 pilot-hour trips per month. Figure 20-1 displays the count of unique users that fall into each of the five usage frequency categories. Most users took 1–5 trips per month, with very small numbers of users taking ≥ 6 trips per month.

Considering the same groups of users (based on monthly usage frequency), Figure 20-2 shows the number of POD pilot-hour trips taken by users in each group. Again, most of the pilot-hour POD trips were taken by users who only take a 1–5 trips per month.

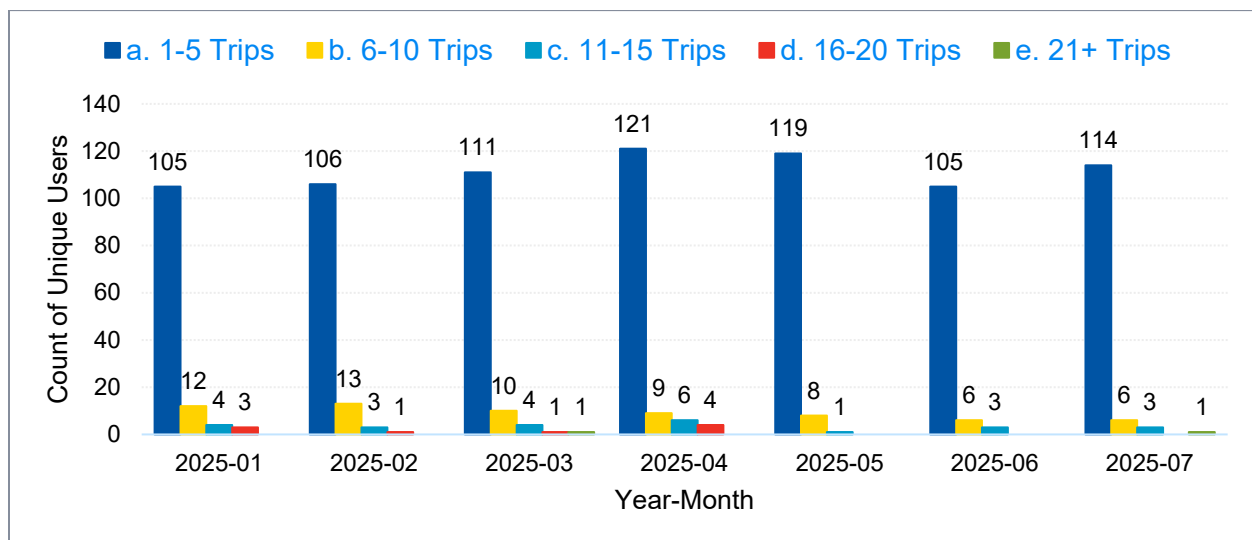


Figure 20-1 Count of unique pilot-hour users categorized by monthly usage frequency (January 2025–July 2025).

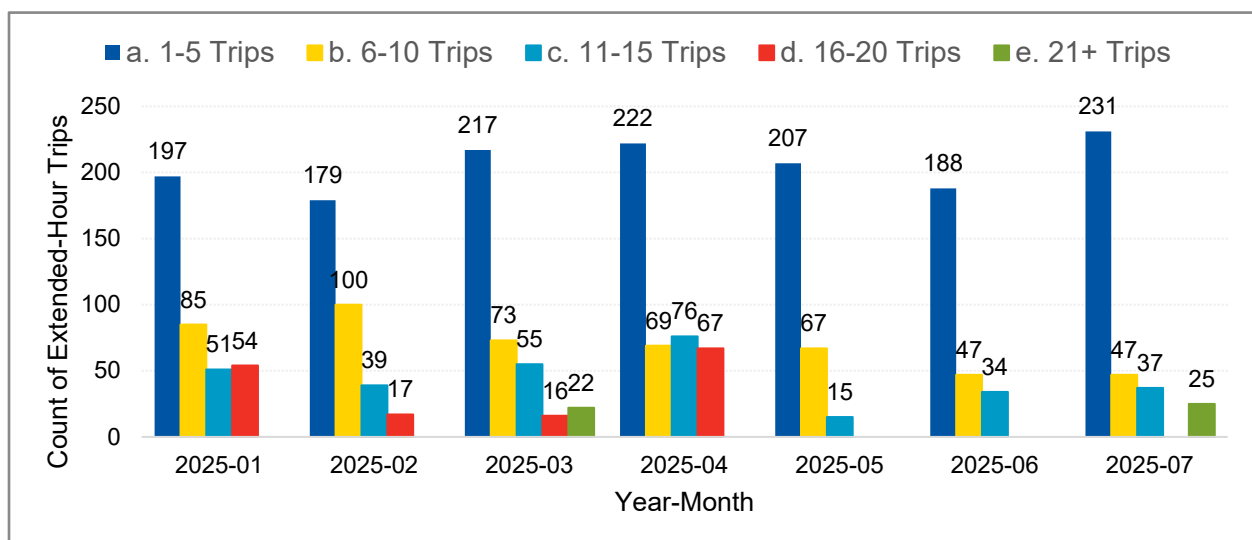


Figure 20-2 Count of pilot-hour trips categorized by monthly usage frequency (January 2025–July 2025).

Finally, the Met Council analyzed data to help answer the question, “Did the implementation of the extended hours pilot *add demand* (in the form of new users) to POD that otherwise may not have existed?” The Met Council queried its POD and Metro Mobility trip data and identified all unique users who took at least one pilot-hour POD trip during the pilot. The Met Council then examined the Metro Mobility and POD usage patterns for those users in the 6 months prior to the start of the extended hours pilot (i.e., from March 2023 to August 2024). Users were classified based on their Metro Mobility and POD 6-month usage patterns into one of three categories:

- Regular: The user had at least 1 ride per month.
- No Usage: The user did not use either POD or Metro Mobility in the 6 months prior to the pilot.
- Infrequent: The user had <1 ride per month in the 6 months prior to the pilot.

Figure 20-3 and Figure 20-4 show the results of this analysis, as count and percentage values, respectively. The Met Council identified 795 unique users taking pilot-hour trips. Of the 795 users, 244 users (30.7%) were *no usage* riders. That is, approximately 31% of pilot-hour users did not take even 1 trip on POD or Metro Mobility prior to the pilot. Although not a perfect measure, this relatively high value suggests that at least one of the impacts of the extended hours pilot was that 244 people who were not using POD or Metro Mobility before the pilot started using POD service. These users were new to the system and did not represent mode-shift trips or a cost savings to the Met Council.

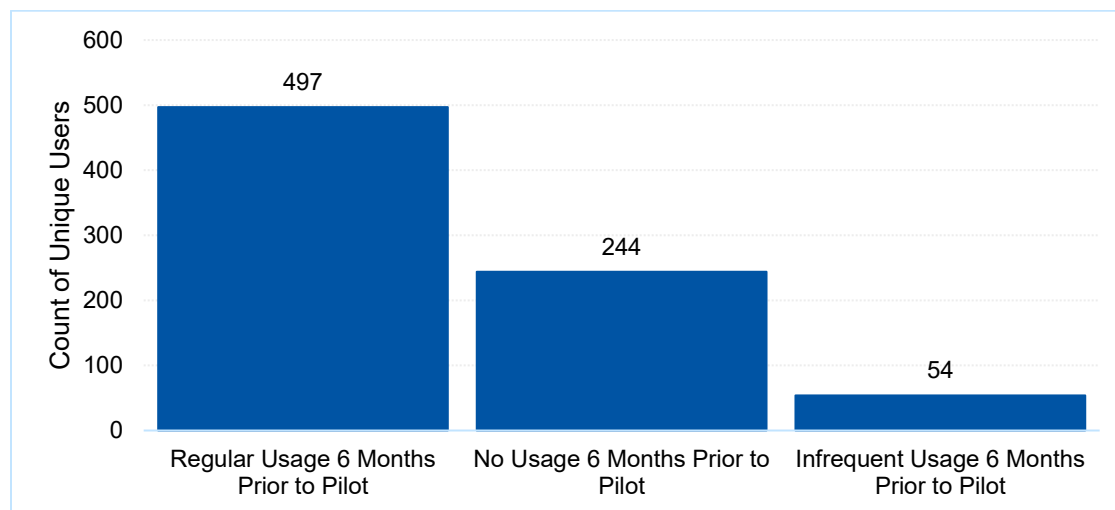


Figure 20-3 Count of unique pilot-hour users across prior Metro Mobility and POD usage categories.

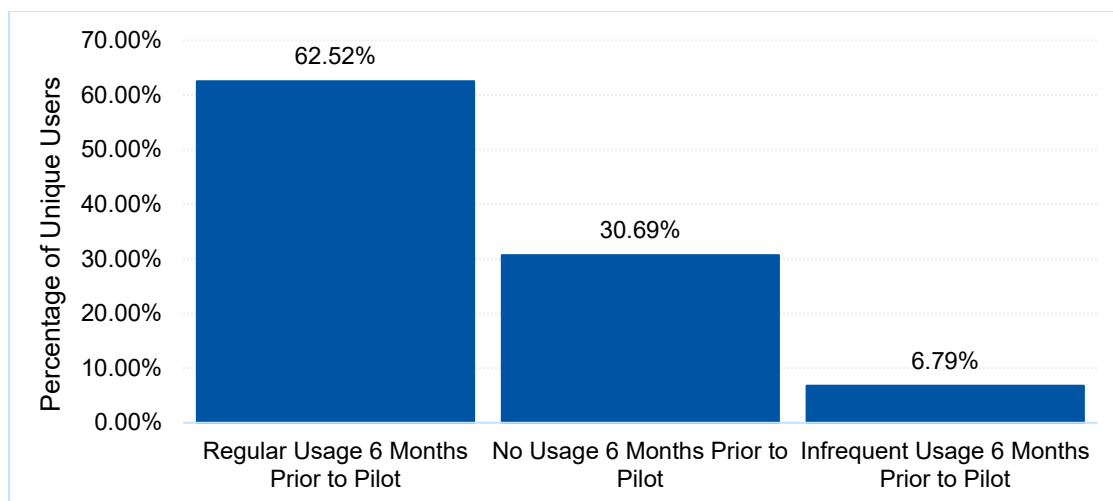


Figure 20-4 Percentage of unique pilot-hour users across prior Metro Mobility and POD usage categories.

20.3 Industry Review

Another aspect to consider when evaluating the POD extended hours pilot and developing recommendations is whether there are other options for service including partnership models, technologies, etc. that may be applicable to the POD service as a whole and to the extended hours pilot in particular. The Study Team helped lead a recent national research project, sponsored by TCRP, that contains an excellent review of state-of-the-practice services similar to POD. Published in 2023, TCRP Research Report 239 Provision of Alternative Services by Transit Agencies: The Intersection of Regulation and Program explores how transit agencies are using alternative services, such as taxis, TNCs (e.g., Uber, Lyft), and other nondedicated providers, to supplement or replace traditional ADA paratransit services for riders with disabilities. Most of the information contained in this industry review comes directly from TCRP Report 239.

20.3.1 TCRP Report 239 Survey Findings

TCRP Report 239 included a survey to better understand how transit agencies implemented alternative services, such as partnerships with TNCs and taxi providers, for ADA paratransit riders. Of the 24 agencies invited to participate, 18 responded. The survey aimed to uncover the goals, challenges, and operational practices associated with these alternative service models.

Agencies reported several goals for launching alternative services. Most (14) of the agencies cited reducing overall or per-trip costs as a top priority. An equal number emphasized the importance of providing on-demand or same-day mobility options. Additionally, 12 agencies aimed to reduce demand for traditional ADA paratransit services.

Despite these benefits, agencies also identified challenges. Safety was the most frequently cited concern (mentioned by 12 agencies), followed by difficulties in ensuring equivalent response times for WAVs (mentioned by 11 agencies) and challenges in collecting data for NTD reporting and performance monitoring (mentioned by 10 agencies). Other concerns included vehicle safety; limited availability of

WAV taxis; compliance with state and local regulations; and Title VI issues related to access for riders without smartphones, internet, or bank accounts.

In terms of program design and operations, most agencies relied on formal service contracts, while others used data-sharing agreements or reimbursement models (i.e., the transit agency reimburses the rider or the provider). Eligibility typically included ADA paratransit-certified riders, though some programs also served seniors and veterans. Providers ranged from TNCs like Uber and Lyft to taxi and NEMT companies. While most programs offered WAV service, transit agencies reported that response times may not be comparable to those of non-WAV trips, which violates the ADA. Fare policies varied widely, but a common model included a base fare with the rider responsible for costs beyond a subsidy cap. Half of the programs impose trip limits to manage costs or prevent overuse. Service areas often extended beyond the ADA-required zones, and service hours ranged from matching ADA paratransit schedules to full 24/7 availability. Booking methods typically included both call centers and mobile apps, although some programs restricted booking to phone calls.

Data and evaluation practices also varied. More than half of the agencies received all requested data from providers, while others reported gaps, particularly in trip-level details. Common performance metrics included cost per trip, overall program cost, ridership, and customer satisfaction. Eight agencies developed methods to estimate cost savings from mode shifts (i.e., ADA paratransit customers switching to the alternative service), and an equal number had data showing reduced per-trip costs.

Agencies shared advice for others considering similar programs. They emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with local providers, starting with pilot programs, and scaling based on data. Respondents also underscored the need to ensure that riders without access to smartphones or bank accounts can still use the service. Agencies recommended using fare pricing to manage demand, prioritizing data collection and formal agreements, and engaging rider advocacy groups early in the planning process.

20.3.2 TCRP Report 239 Program Case Studies

TCRP Research Report 239 featured alternative service program case studies from five transit agencies. A brief description of these case studies follows.

20.3.2.1 MBTA's The RIDE Flex

In Boston, MBTA launched a program called The RIDE Flex, which allowed ADA paratransit users to opt into using TNCs like Uber and Lyft instead of traditional paratransit vehicles. Launched as a pilot in 2016 and formalized as the RIDE Flex program in 2019, the goal was to offer more flexible, same-day service while reducing ADA paratransit costs. Riders could book trips directly through the TNC apps, with MBTA subsidizing up to \$40 per ride. The program proved successful, cutting the average cost per trip significantly. Riders appreciated the convenience and independence, although challenges remained around providing WAVs and obtaining detailed data from TNCs.

20.3.2.2 Broward County Transit’s Rider’s Choice

In Florida, Broward County Transit implemented the Rider’s Choice program as a pilot in 2018. The transit agency partnered with local taxi companies to offer subsidized rides to ADA paratransit users. Riders received a payment card that allowed them to take up to 2 trips per day, with an \$18 subsidy cap. Made permanent in 2021, the program aimed to support the local taxi industry while offering more spontaneous travel options for ADA eligible riders. It achieved notable cost savings compared to traditional paratransit and was generally well received by users. However, issues such as inconsistent service quality, limited WAV availability, and driver shortages posed ongoing challenges.

20.3.2.3 Mountain Line’s Paratransit Taxi Program

Flagstaff, Arizona’s Mountain Line transit agency originally developed a Paratransit Taxi Program in 2007. The early iteration of the program used paper vouchers but later transitioned to a payment card system. The program allowed ADA paratransit riders to pay just 20% of the fare, with the agency covering the rest, up to a monthly cap. This approach dramatically reduced the cost per trip and expanded provider options to include Uber and Lyft. Riders praised the program for its flexibility and ease of use, although the agency faced hurdles in managing the transition to cards and ensuring sufficient WAV service.

20.3.2.4 Greater Richmond Transit Company’s CARE On-Demand

The Greater Richmond Transit Company introduced CARE On-Demand in 2017 as a same-day service using specialized TNCs like UZURV and Roundtrip. Riders paid a flat \$6 fare, with the transit agency subsidizing up to \$15 per trip. The service offered direct, unshared rides and quickly gained popularity, eventually accounting for 14% of all paratransit trips. It also delivered substantial cost savings vs. ADA paratransit service. Riders favored the program for its speed and convenience, although some needed help understanding surge pricing and how to use the service effectively.

20.3.2.5 VIA’s Taxi Subsidy Program

The last case study profiled San Antonio’s VIA Metropolitan Transit’s Taxi Subsidy Program, first launched in 2013. The transit agency offered ADA paratransit users a subsidized taxi option in which riders paid a \$2 fare, and VIA covered \$11 for ambulatory riders or \$13 for those needing a WAV ride. The program allowed up to 20 trips per month and was designed to reduce pressure on the traditional VIATrans ADA service. While the program achieved significant cost savings and offered greater flexibility, rider feedback was mixed. Some preferred the reliability of VIATrans, while others valued the spontaneity and shorter travel times of the taxi option. Challenges included WAV availability and inconsistent response times.

20.3.3 Additional Industry Review Information

Since the TCRP Research Report 239 was published in 2023, some transit agencies’ alternative service programs have undergone changes or have begun new iterations of the service provided. The Study

Team reviewed available published information about each of the agencies profiled in TCRP Report 239 and followed up with those that seemed to have changed since the report was published. Of particular interest was VIA, who is in the process of making changes to better serve their ADA riders. Additionally, the Study Team identified two additional transit agencies that are implementing innovative strategies to serve ADA riders—WeGo’s Access-on-Demand and Dallas Area Rapid Transit’s (DART’s) On-Demand Paratransit Pilot.

20.3.3.1 VIA’s Evolving Approach to Serving Riders With Disabilities

VIA is currently experiencing unsustainable growth in demand for its paratransit service. The average operating cost of an ADA paratransit trip is \$55. The agency is actively working toward implementing solutions that will result in greater efficiencies, cost savings, and expanded mobility options for their riders. Their available funding source is Section 5310, which supports enhanced mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

To relieve pressure on the next-day ADA paratransit service, VIA implemented their Taxi Subsidy Program—a same-day service using ZTrip. Riders have access to 20 subsidized taxi rides per month, and they pay a \$2 fare for these trips. VIA subsidizes \$11 for ambulatory riders and \$13 for those needing a more expensive WAV trip. Riders must pay any additional charges beyond the base fare and subsidy amount but can make most trips (under approximately 3 miles) without paying anything above their \$2 fare. The services operate from 4 a.m. to midnight on weekdays, and from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends. Although the service was well-utilized before the COVID-19 pandemic, the program is now substantially underutilized due to uncertainty around ride availability and wait times.

To manage demand and cut costs, VIA is currently preparing an RFP to revamp the Taxi Subsidy Program, which will include a TNC overflow component. Once available, riders must opt in to use this service. VIA is also exploring a voucher-based program using Uber, in which VIA would subsidize up to \$20 per trip. With each ADA paratransit trip costing VIA an average of \$55, a \$20 per trip Uber subsidy is likely to result in significant cost savings for the agency for trips that switch from ADA paratransit to Uber. This model will begin as a pilot as part of the VIA Link microtransit service.

20.3.3.2 WeGo’s Access-on-Demand

Nashville’s WeGo transit agency offers an alternative service to their ADA eligible riders, including those who require WAVs. Access-On-Demand gives riders the option of booking with the provider of their choice—Mobility Solutions, Z-Trip, American Music City Taxi, or Uber. To schedule with Mobility Solutions, Z-Trip, or American Music City Taxi, riders must book by phone. For Uber, trips must be booked via the Uber app. The service operates from 6 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday.

Trips can be scheduled as little as 15 minutes in advance. Riders pay a \$5 fare, and WeGo subsidizes up to the next \$30. Any amount more than a total cost of \$35 is the responsibility of the rider. Riders may take up to 100 total Access-On-Demand trips per month.

20.3.3.3 DART's On-Demand Paratransit Pilot

Although it was not featured in TCRP Research Report 239's case studies, DART's Paratransit On-Demand Pilot Program, which offers on-demand trips to a cohort of ADA Paratransit riders, is noteworthy. When interviewed, program managers reported that users appreciate the program. The pilot program started in 2017, and DART has been updating and improving the program since its inception. By partnering with TNCs, DART was able to improve the program's cost effectiveness over time, while supporting spontaneous mobility for its users.

DART's program was designed to test rider interest in using TNCs, reduce pressure on ADA-dedicated vehicles, and improve rider flexibility. The current iteration offers ADA-certified riders a flexible, same-day transportation option through Uber. Eligible participants receive a voucher—delivered via text—that is applied to their Uber account, allowing them to book subsidized rides using UberX vehicles. Riders must have a smartphone and an active Uber account to participate. Once the voucher is applied, they can begin using the on-demand service. Importantly, riders can continue to use traditional ADA paratransit services and switch between the two options as needed.

Launched initially with Lyft as the provider, the pilot program's user base grew by word of mouth from a handful of users in 2017 to several hundred users who now have a DART On-Demand electronic voucher in the wallet of their Uber app. Riders can take up to four subsidized trips per day, paying the first \$3.50 of each trip, with DART covering up to \$30. Any cost beyond \$33.50 is the rider's responsibility; however, program managers report that 90% of trips do not cost the user more than the \$3.50 base fare. The service operates during the same hours as ADA paratransit and covers all 13 DART member cities.

While the pilot program offers greater spontaneity and convenience, ensuring WAV capability across partnerships with TNCs and tech platforms remains a challenge. Funded through DART's general budget, the program has seen strong rider satisfaction and now accounts for over 10% of paratransit ridership, with 7,000–8,000 trips per month. Looking ahead, DART plans to integrate all mobility services into the GoPass app by 2027 and is exploring distance-based fares to manage costs and encourage efficient use.

20.3.4 Industry Review Summary

Table 20-4 summarizes the programs highlighted in the Study Team's industry review—both from TCRP Report 239 and from the Study Team's additional review.

20.4 Recommendations

The Met Council's POD program is a very beneficial program overall. For users, the program offers an alternative to advanced reservation ADA paratransit trips—enhancing ADA-paratransit-eligible riders' freedom and mobility. For the Met Council, the program offers a cost savings, but only in some cases as follows (see the analysis in Section 20.2):

- Significant Cost Savings From Standard Hours Mode-Switch Trips: For trips during standard hours that would have been taken on Metro Mobility but instead were taken on POD, the Met Council saves about \$30.73 per trip.⁷
- Minor Cost Savings From Nonstandard Hours Mode-Switch Trips: For trips during nonstandard hours (but still within the Metro Mobility operating hours) that would have been taken on Metro Mobility but instead were taken on POD, the Met Council saves about \$2.84 per trip.⁸
- Added Costs Incurred From Pilot-Hour Trips: For trips that a user would not have taken on Metro Mobility but did take on POD due to POD's convenience or operating hours that exceed Metro Mobility's operating hours, the Met Council incurs additional costs.

⁷ Value of \$30.73 reflects cost after factoring in the estimated \$4.00 per trip of lost federal funds (Metro Mobility cost per trip of \$48.06 – POD standard trip subsidy of \$13.33 + lost federal funds of \$4.00).

⁸ Value of \$2.84 per-trip reflects savings between trip types after factoring in the estimated \$4.00 per trip of lost federal funds (Metro Mobility cost per trip of \$48.06 – POD standard trip subsidy of \$13.33 – lost federal funds of \$4.00).

Table 20-4 Transit agency alternative service programs

Transit Agency	Program Name	Launch Year	Service Type	Fare Structure	Subsidy Limit	Trip Limits	Traditional ADA Cost/Trip	Alternative Service Cost/Trip	Service Hours
MBTA (Boston, MA)	The RIDE Flex	2016	TNC-based on-demand	\$3 base fare; MBTA pays up to \$40	Up to \$40/trip	Based on historic RIDE use	\$56.62	\$15.92	Same as fixed-route + ADA
BCT (Broward County, FL)	Rider's Choice	2017	Taxi subsidy	No base fare; BCT pays up to \$18	\$18/trip	2 trips/day	\$26.03	\$13.56	24/7
Mountain Line (Flagstaff, AZ)	Paratransit Taxi Program	2007	Taxi/TNC user-side subsidy	Rider pays 20%; agency pays 80%	\$300/month	No trip limit; monthly cap	\$46.05	\$10.62	Same as fixed-route + ADA
GRTC (Richmond, VA)	CARE On-Demand	2017	Adaptive TNC	\$6 fare; GRTC pays next \$15	\$21/trip total	No stated limit	--	--	Weekdays 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; weekends 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (exceeds ADA)
VIA (San Antonio, TX)	Taxi Subsidy Program	2016	Taxi-based on-demand	\$2 fare; VIA pays next \$9–\$11	\$9–\$11/trip	20 trips/month; daily caps	--	--	Same as fixed-route + ADA
WeGo (Nashville, TN)	Access-On-Demand	2021	TNC/taxi-based on-demand	\$5 fare; WeGo pays up to \$30	\$30/trip	100 trips/month	--	--	Weekdays 6 a.m. to midnight; Saturdays 4:45 a.m. to 1 a.m.; Sundays/holidays 4:45 a.m. to 11 p.m.
DART (Dallas, TX)	Paratransit On-Demand	2017	TNC-based on-demand	\$3.50 fare; DART pays next \$30	\$30 per trip	4 trips/day	--	--	Same as fixed-route + ADA

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; BCT = Broward County Transit; DART = Dallas Area Rapid Transit; GRTC = Greater Richmond Transit Company; MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority; TNC = transportation network company

An important question to answer is, “To what extent did the pilot hours result in new trips on POD?” Based on the analysis contained in Section 20.2.3, approximately 30.7% (244) of pilot-hour POD users are new users (i.e., they took no Metro Mobility or POD rides within the 6 months prior to the extended hours pilot (see the analysis in Section 20.2). The data suggest that the extended hours pilot definitely added new users and therefore new trips, adding cost for the Met Council.

Therefore, the Study Team offers a number of considerations and recommendations regarding the extended hours pilot.

The extended hours pilot, as demonstrated by its upward ridership trends (see Table 20-1) and the number of new users (i.e., people who did not use POD or Metro Mobility before the extended hours), does help provide enhanced mobility for ADA-paratransit-eligible riders. However, the extended hours pilot offers service over and above the Met Council’s scope to provide public transportation. POD service data are not reportable to NTD because POD does not meet the federal definition of public transportation. When POD results in a cost savings, which it does during times when Metro Mobility service is operating, investment in POD makes financial sense while also enhancing mobility for ADA-paratransit-eligible riders. However, when POD results in added costs, which it does during the pilot hours, investment in POD must be more carefully scrutinized—weighing investment decisions against desired outcomes. The pilot hours service goes above and beyond being an alternative service—instead, it provides a form of subsidized taxi service.

Given that the extended hours pilot ultimately adds cost for the Met Council and is outside of the Met Council’s scope to provide public transportation, the Study Team recommends that the extended hours pilot be allowed to sunset on December 31, 2025. The financial resources used to pay for pilot-hour trips may be better utilized to expand the capacity for POD trips during Metro Mobility hours.

However, the Study Team also provides the following considerations if additional funding were made available to support extended hours (i.e., exceeding Metro Mobility operating hours) for the POD service:

- Consider Setting Extended-Hour Restrictions: As seen in the industry review, it was common for transit agencies to set trip limits for individual users (e.g., 20 trips per month) using the alternative service. It is also reasonable for the Met Council to set trip limits that specifically apply to extended-hour POD trips. The limits could be in the form of a maximum number of trips per day, per week, or per month. The limits could also be in the form of maximum distances.
- Consider Passing Nonstandard-Hour Surcharges to Riders During Extended Hours: Because some of POD providers levy surcharges for nonstandard hours trips, the Met Council could pass a portion or all nonstandard-hour surcharges along to the user, reducing the portion of the extended-hour cost subsidized by the Met Council.⁹ Passing the nonstandard hours surcharges along to extended-hour POD users will also help manage demand for extended-hour trips and encourage providers to consider how their time surcharge compares with their competitors(

⁹ The Study Team is not recommending passing the WAV surcharge along to riders because this would likely be a violation of the ADA.

extended-hour users will be able to see to the surcharges that were previously fully subsidized by the Met Council).

- Consider Setting a Lower Subsidy Amount During Extended Hours: Because the extended-hour service would be a premium service offering, the Met Council could change the subsidy structure for extended-hour trips so that more of the trip cost is passed to the customer by default. For example, instead of the customer paying for the first \$5 of a trip, customers taking POD trips during extended hours could pay the first \$10 of a trip, with the Met Council subsidizing the next \$10. A \$15 fare would be paid \$10 by the customer and \$5 by the Met Council (as opposed to the Met Council currently paying \$10 of a \$15 fare). A \$25 fare would be paid \$15 by the customer and \$10 by the Met Council (as opposed to the Met Council currently paying \$15 of a \$25 fare). These examples provided possible changes in the subsidy amount and are not specific recommendations.

These considerations and recommendations are provided with a caveat—any potential change in the POD fare structure and/or trip-taking policies should be carefully vetted, analyzed, and communicated to POD users prior to finalizing and implementing the change.

Appendix A: Minnesota Legislature Directive

Section 125. HF No. 5247, Conference Committee Report of the 93rd Legislature (2023-2024): METRO MOBILITY ENHANCEMENTS REPORT.

(a) The commissioner of transportation must, in consultation with the chair of the Metropolitan Council, perform a Metro Mobility enhancement and service study and develop recommendations to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, reliability, dignity, and experience of riders of the special transportation service under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.386. 129.22 129.23 129.24

(b) The study must include:

- (1) an evaluation of the Metropolitan Council's efforts to deliver improvements in the reliability, effectiveness, and efficiency of services as required by state and federal law, including workforce and procurement efforts to meet the demand for Metro Mobility services; 129.27 129.28
- (2) an analysis of the extent to which Metro Mobility can fully meet demand for its services in both the federally defined and state-defined services areas, including a comprehensive examination of the Metropolitan Council's on-demand taxi alternative for Metro Mobility-certified riders and Metro Move services; 129.30 129.21 129.25 129.26 129.29, 130.2
- (3) an evaluation of whether Metro Mobility met performance goals for the fulfillment of ride requests in the state-mandated service area under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.386, subdivision 1, paragraph (a); 130.4 130.5
- (4) an analysis of whether state service requirements in law should be amended to prohibit or restrict the denial of ride requests in the state-mandated service area and whether such a requirement in service can be met with existing resources; 130.7 130.8
- (5) suggested improvements to the Metropolitan Council's oversight and management of its reservation and dispatch structure and a detailed analysis and recommendations on a Metropolitan Council-operated centralized reservation system; 130.10 130.11
- (6) a comprehensive analysis of the Metropolitan Council's oversight and management of transit providers contracted to provide rides for Metro Mobility, including services plans, payment and bonus structure, and performance standards; 130.13 130.14
- (7) recommendations on the adequacy of the Metro Mobility complaints process and an evaluation of whether the Metropolitan Council receives all rider concerns and whether concerns are addressed appropriately; 130.16 130.17
- (8) an evaluation of the Metro Mobility enhancement pilot program instituted under Laws 2023, chapter 68, article 4, section 121; 130.19
- (9) an evaluation and assessment of how to implement the use of transportation network companies or taxi services to provide an enhanced service option in which riders may pay a higher fare than other users of Metro Mobility services; 130.21 130.22

- (10) an evaluation of the feasibility of nonsubsidized, subsidized, and tiered ride services handled by a dispatching service provider; and 130.24
- (11) an analysis of and recommendations for comprehensive improvements in route coordination, call sequencing and customer service, integration with transportation network company applications, and cataloging rides for maximum efficiency and driver compensation. 130.26 130.27

(c) The Metropolitan Council must cooperate with the Department of Transportation and provide information requested in a timely fashion to implement and conduct the study. 130.29

(d) The commissioner must consult with interested parties and stakeholders in conducting the service study and report, including representatives from the Minnesota Council on Disability, American Council of the Blind of Minnesota, the Minnesota DeafBlind Association, the National Federation of the Blind's Minnesota chapter, metro-area private transportation companies, identified riders of Metro Mobility, transit providers, Metro Mobility drivers, the Board on Aging, the Department of Human Services, and any other interested party with experience in providing mobility services for disabled persons.130.31 130.32 130.3 130.6 130.9 130.12 130.15 130.18 130.20 130.23 130.25 130.28 130.30, 131.2 131.3 131.4

(e) By February 15, 2026, the commissioner must submit the report and findings to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and finance. 131.6 131.7 131.5

Appendix B: The Legislative Directive Mapped to Chapters in the Technical Report

Analysis	Report Location(s)
An evaluation of the Met Council's efforts to deliver improvements in the reliability, effectiveness, and efficiency of Metro Mobility, including workforce and procurement efforts to meet the demand for service.	Chapters 2–7 and 17
An analysis of the extent to which Metro Mobility fully meets the demand in both the federally mandated and State-mandated service areas, including a comprehensive examination of POD and Metro Move.	Chapters 8–11 and 20
An evaluation of whether Metro Mobility met performance goals for the fulfillment of ride requests in the State-mandated service area.	Chapters 12–14
An analysis of whether State service requirements should be amended to prohibit or restrict the denial of ride requests in the State-mandated service area and whether such a requirement can be met with existing resource.	Chapter 10
Suggested improvements to the Met Council's oversight and management of its reservation and dispatch structure and a detailed analysis and recommendations on a Met Council-operated centralized reservation system.	Chapters 6 and 18
A comprehensive analysis of the Met Council's oversight and management of Metro Mobility providers, including services plans, payment and bonus structures, and performance standards.	Chapter 6
Recommendations on the adequacy of the Metro Mobility complaints process and an evaluation of whether the Met Council receives all rider concerns and addresses concerns appropriately.	Chapters 6, 16, 17, and 19
An evaluation of the Metro Mobility enhancement pilot program.	Chapter 20
An evaluation and assessment of how to implement the use of TNCs or taxi services to provide an enhanced service option in which riders may pay a higher fare than other Metro Mobility users.	Chapter 17
An evaluation of the feasibility of nonsubsidized, subsidized, and tiered ride services handled by a dispatching service provider.	Chapter 17
An analysis of and recommendations for comprehensive improvements in route coordination, call sequencing and customer service, integration with TNCs, and cataloging rides for maximum efficiency and driver compensation.	Chapters 17 and 19
Engagement with the Minnesota Council on Disability, American Council of the Blind of Minnesota, Minnesota DeafBlind Association, National Federation of the Blind's Minnesota chapter, metro-area private transportation companies, identified riders of Metro Mobility, transit providers, Metro Mobility drivers, Board on Aging, Department of Human Services, and any other interested party with experience in providing mobility services for disabled persons.	Chapters 15 and 16

POD = Premium On-Demand; TNC = transportation network company

Appendix C: Metro Mobility Service Hours by Community

City	Weekdays	Saturday	Sunday
Anoka	6 AM – 8:15 PM	5:15 AM – 8 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Apple Valley	3:30 AM – 12:45 AM	3:45 AM – 12:45 AM	3:45 AM – 12:45 AM
Arden Hills	5 AM – 10 PM	8 AM – 8 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Bayport	6 AM – 6 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Baytown Township	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Birchwood Village	5:30 AM – 10:15 PM	6:15 AM – 8:15 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Blaine	4 AM – 1 AM	5:45 AM – 12 AM	7:30 AM – 10:45 PM
Bloomington	3 AM – 2 AM	3 AM – 2 AM	3 AM – 2 AM
Brooklyn Center	4 AM – 2:15 AM	4 AM – 2:15 AM	4:15 AM – 2:00 AM
Brooklyn Park	3:45 AM – 2 AM	5 AM – 2 AM	4:45 AM – 1 AM
Burnsville	3:45 AM – 12:30 AM	3:45 AM – 12:15 AM	3:45 AM – 12:30 AM
Centerville	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Champlin	6 AM – 8:15 PM	7 AM – 8 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Chanhassen	5:15 AM – 9:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Chaska	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Circle Pines	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Columbia Heights	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
Coon Rapids	4 AM – 1 AM	7:30 AM – 10:45 PM	5:45 AM – 12 AM
Cottage Grove	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Crystal	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	3:45 AM – 2 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
Deephaven	5:15 AM – 7 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Dellwood	6 AM – 6 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Eagan	3 AM – 1 AM	3 AM – 1 AM	3 AM – 1:15 AM
Eden Prairie	4:45 AM – 12:45 AM	5 AM – 12 AM	6 AM – 12 AM
Edina	4:15 AM – 2:30 AM	4:15 AM – 2:30 AM	4:15 AM – 2:30 AM
Excelsior	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Falcon Heights	4 AM – 2:30 AM	4 AM – 3 AM	4 AM – 2:15 AM
Fort Snelling	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
Fridley	4 AM – 2 AM	4 AM – 2 AM	4 AM – 2 AM
Gem Lake	6 AM – 6 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Golden Valley	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:30 AM
Greenwood	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM

City	Weekdays	Saturday	Sunday
Hilltop	4 AM – 1:45 AM	4 AM – 1 AM	4 AM – 1:45 AM
Hopkins	4:15 AM – 2:30 AM	4:45 AM – 2:15 AM	4:45 AM – 2:15 AM
Inver Grove Heights	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
Lake Elmo	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Lakeville	3:30 AM – 12:45 AM	3:45 AM – 12:30 AM	3:45 AM – 12:30 AM
Landfall	5:15 AM – 10:30 PM	6:15 AM – 8:15 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Lauderdale	4 AM – 2:30 AM	4 AM – 2:30 AM	4 AM – 2:15 AM
Lexington	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Lilydale	3 AM – 1:45 PM	3 AM – 1:45 AM	3 AM – 1:45 AM
Lino Lakes	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Little Canada	4 AM – 2 AM	5 AM – 2 AM	5 AM – 1:45 AM
Long Lake	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Mahtomedi	5:15 AM – 10:30 PM	6:15 AM – 8 PM	5 AM – 1:45 AM
Maple Grove	5:30 AM – 10:30 PM	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM
Maplewood	3:15 AM – 2 AM	3:30 AM – 2 AM	3:30 AM – 2 AM
Medicine Lake	5:30 AM – 9:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Mendota	4:45 AM – 11 PM	5:30 AM – 11 PM	5:30 AM – 9:30 PM
Mendota Heights	3 AM – 1 AM	3 AM – 1 AM	3 AM – 1:15 AM
Minneapolis	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
Minnetonka	4:15 AM – 2:30 AM	4:45 AM – 2:15 AM	4:45 AM – 2:15 AM
Mound	5:15 AM – 8:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Mounds View	5 AM – 1 AM	5:45 AM – 12 AM	8 AM – 10:45 PM
MSP Airport	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
New Brighton	4:15 AM – 2 AM	4:15 AM – 2 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
New Hope	5:15 AM – 12:15 AM	6:30 AM – 8:15 PM	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM
Newport	4:30 AM – 7:45 PM	6:15 AM – 8:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
North Oaks	5 AM – 7:30 PM	5:15 AM – 7 PM	5:15 AM – 7 PM
North St. Paul	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	5 AM – 12:30 AM
Oak Park Heights	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Oakdale	3:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	5 AM – 12:30 AM
Orono	5:15 AM – 8 PM	6:15 AM – 10 PM	8:15 AM – 8 PM
Osseo	5:30 AM – 11 PM	7:45 AM – 7:15 PM	8 AM – 7 PM
Pine Springs	6 AM – 6 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Plymouth	4:15 AM – 12 AM	5:15 AM – 12:45	6:30 AM – 12 AM
Prior Lake	5:15 AM – 9:15 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Richfield	3 AM – 2:45 AM	3 AM – 2:45 AM	3 AM – 2 AM

City	Weekdays	Saturday	Sunday
Robbinsdale	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 12:45 AM
Rosemount	5:15 AM – 8:15 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Roseville	4 AM – 2 AM	4 AM – 2 AM	4 AM – 2 AM
Savage	5 AM – 11:30 PM	6:30 AM – 11:30 PM	6:30 AM – 11:30 PM
Shakopee	5 AM – 9:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	7:30 AM – 4 PM
Shoreview	4 AM – 9:45 PM	5 AM – 8:15 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Shorewood	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
South St. Paul	4 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
Spring Lake Park	4 AM – 1 AM	5:45 AM – 12 AM	7:30 AM – 10:45 PM
Spring Park	5:15 AM – 8:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
St. Anthony	4:15 AM – 2 AM	4:15 AM – 2 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
St. Louis Park	3:45 AM – 2:30 AM	3:45 AM – 2:15 AM	3:45 AM – 2:15 AM
St. Paul	24 hours	24 hours	3 AM – 2:15 AM
St. Paul Park	4:45 AM – 1 AM	5 AM – 1:15 AM	3 AM – 2:15 AM
Stillwater	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Sunfish Lake	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
Tonka Bay	5:15 AM – 8:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Vadnais Heights	5:15 AM – 7 PM	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Wayzata	5:15 AM – 8 PM	6:15 AM – 10 PM	8:15 AM – 8 PM
West St. Paul	4 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM	4:15 AM – 1:45 AM
White Bear Lake	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	5 AM – 12:30 AM
White Bear Township	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	4:45 AM – 1:15 AM	5 AM – 12:15 AM
Willernie	5:15 AM – 6:45 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM
Woodbury	5 AM – 1:15 AM	5:15 AM – 1:15 AM	5:45 AM – 1 AM
Woodland	5:35 AM – 8 PM	8 AM – 4 PM	8 AM – 4 PM

Appendix D: Metro Mobility Peer Tables

Service characteristics and performance metrics for the five peer ADA paratransit services, introduced and compared in Chapter 14, are presented in Appendix D.

Table D-1 Baltimore, MD—Maryland Transit Administration

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	MobilityLink		Call-A-Ride
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Paratransit Supplemental Service	Alternative Service
Service Characteristics			
Service Area			
Service Area	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Beyond minimum required by ADA
Service Area Size (square miles)	369.18	369.18	369.18
Service Area Population	2,859,024	2,859,024	2,859,024
Service Area Density	7,744.25	7,744.25	7,744.25
Service Days and Hours			
Service Days per Week	7	5	7
Service Hours per Day	20–24	11–13	20–24
Fare Policy			
One-Way Base Fare	2.2	2.2	3
Trip Reservation Policy			
Advanced Reservation Policy	1–7 days in advance	1–7 days in advance	1–7 days in advance
Same-Day Reservations	None	None	On demand (immediate fulfillment)
Subscription Trips	Yes	Yes	No
Division of Responsibilities			
Direct Management/ Supervision	Transit agency	Transit agency	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MTA Mobility	MTA Mobility	MJM
Eligibility Assessment/ Registration	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Biokinetix	Biokinetix	Biokinetix
Operations	Operations contractor		Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation, Transdev, Transdev (Legacy First Transit)	Transdev, Transdev (Legacy First Transit)	MJM
Reservations	Transit agency	Transit agency	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MTA Mobility	MTA Mobility	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Scheduling	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Dispatching	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Individual taxi/TNC companies

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	MobilityLink		Call-A-Ride
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Paratransit Supplemental Service	Alternative Service
Day-of-Trip Calls	Other	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MTA Mobility during the day, MV Transportation overnight	MTA Mobility during the day, MV Transportation overnight	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Scheduling/Dispatch Technology License Holder	Transit agency	Transit agency	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MTA Mobility	MTA Mobility	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Vehicle Ownership	Transit agency	Other	Other
Vehicle Ownership Description (if Other)	MTA Mobility	Currently sole overflow is TNC; operators supply own vehicles	Individual taxi companies/TNC employees
Driver Training	Operations contractor	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation, Transdev, Transdev (Legacy First Transit)	TNC (currently UZURV)	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Maintenance	Operations contractor	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation, Transdev, Transdev (Legacy First Transit)	N/A	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Fuel	Operations contractor	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation, Transdev, Transdev (Legacy First Transit)	N/A	Individual taxi/TNC companies
Marketing	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	MDOT/MTA	MDOT/MTA	MDOT/MTA
Customer Service	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MTM, Inc.	MTM Inc	MJM
Operations Parameters			
Use of Service Zones	No	No	No
Use of Service Zones Description (if Other)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pickup/Drop-off Locations	Curb-to-curb	Curb-to-curb	Curb-to-curb
Pickup/Drop-off Locations Description (if Other)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Level of Driver Assistance	Door-to-door	Door-to-door	Door-to-door
Level of Driver Assistance Description (if Other)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	MobilityLink		Call-A-Ride
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Paratransit Supplemental Service	Alternative Service
Fleet Characteristics			
Number of Vehicles in Dedicated Fleet	500	0	0
Number of WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	376	0	0
Number of Non-WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	124	0	0
Number of Vehicles in Nondedicated Fleet	0	40	430
Number of WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	0	0	0
Number of Non-WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	0	0	430
Technology Used			
Scheduling/Dispatching Software	Yes	Yes	No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze	Trapeze	N/A
In-Vehicle Equipment	Yes	No	Yes
In-Vehicle Equipment Used	Ranger/MDT	N/A	Card swipe
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze	N/A	MJM
Integrated Agency Dispatch to Drivers	No	No	No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Interactive Voice Response	Yes	Yes	No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze	Trapeze	N/A
Rider Apps	Yes	Yes	N/A
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze	Trapeze	N/A
Other Technology (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance Metrics			
Ridership			
One-Way Passenger Trips (including PCAs and companions)	1,992,465	152,680	1,249,736
Average One-Way Trip Length (miles)	7.19	7.45	5.5
Productivity			
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Actual	1.66	0.71	N/A
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Standard	N/A	N/A	N/A

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	MobilityLink		Call-A-Ride
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Paratransit Supplemental Service	Alternative Service
Cost Efficiency			
Cost per Passenger Trip	48.52	Not measured separately	48.52
Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour	135.96	Not measured separately	Not measured
Reliability			
On-Time Performance Percentage—Actual	91.80%	98.40%	N/A
On-Time Performance Percentage—Standard	93.50%	93.50%	N/A
Response Time			
Average Response Time—Ambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average Response Time—Nonambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Reliability			
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Actual	33,579	4,774	Not measured
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Standard	0.50%	0.50%	N/A
Service Quality			
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Actual	15.90%	Not measured separately	Not measured separately
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Standard	Based on FRE: <15% of trips should exceed FRE	Not measured separately	Not measured separately
Reservation Hold Times			
Customers' Trip Request Line—Actual	0.7	Included in ADA paratransit	Not measured
Customers' Trip Request Line—Standard	3	N/A	N/A
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Actual	0.5	Included in ADA paratransit	Not measured
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Standard	2	N/A	N/A

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; FRE = fixed-route equivalence; MDOT = Maryland Department of Transportation; MDT = mobile data terminal; MTA = Maryland Transit Administration; PCA = personal care attendant; TNC = transportation network company; WAV = wheelchair accessible vehicle

Table D-2 Denver, CO—Regional Transportation District

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access-a-Ride	Access-on-Demand
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service
Service Characteristics		
Service Area		
Service Area	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Beyond minimum required by ADA
Service Area Description (if Other)	Trips can be scheduled within Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties in Colorado, as long as the starting point and destination are within 0.75 miles of RTD's local fixed-route transit system.	Entire RTD service area does not operate beyond its designated boundaries.
Service Area Size (square miles)	2,345	2,345
Service Area Population	3.08 million	5,506
Service Area Density	1313.43	1313.43
Service Days and Hours		
Service Days per Week	7	7
Service Hours per Day	20–24	20–24
Eligible Riders or Trips	Access-a-Ride is RTD's ADA complementary paratransit service. It is a shared-ride service intended for those who cannot use regular fixed-route bus/light rail service due to a disability. Trips on Access-a-Ride may be used for any purpose. Access-a-Ride is available during the same days and hours as the local bus service.	Access-on-Demand is an optional, subsidized curb-to-curb service using taxi and ride-share providers. Individuals with current certification for Access-a-Ride are eligible to use the service. If the certification is lapsed and an extension is provided, the extension does not apply to Access-on-Demand services.
Fare Policy		
One-Way Base Fare	One-way: \$4.50/\$2.25 Airport: \$19.00/\$9.50 Information: https://www.rtd-denver.com/fares-passes/pass-programs/live	RTD will subsidize the first \$25 of each trip. Any amount exceeding the \$25 subsidy will be paid by the customer.
Trip Reservation Policy		
Advanced Reservation Policy	1–7 days in advance	None
Reservation Policy Description (if Other)	https://www.rtd-denver.com/other-services/access-a-ride/schedule-a-trip	Depending on the provider, customers are able to call to schedule or use a provider-based app to reserve trips.
Same-Day Reservations	None	On demand
Subscription Trips	Yes	No
Same-Day Reservations Description (if Other)		Within 30 minutes of booking

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access-a-Ride	Access-on-Demand
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service
Subscription Trips Description (if Other)	Subscription service is limited to customers traveling to the same place, at the same time, at least once per week	N/A
Division of Responsibilities		
Direct Management/Supervision	Transit agency	Third-party call-and-control manager
Name of Entity or Entities	RTD Paratransit Services	Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro Taxi
Eligibility Assessment/Registration	Broker	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	MTM, Inc. (eligibility assessments and travel training)	RTD Paratransit Services
Operations	Operations contractor	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev and MTM	RTD Paratransit Services
Reservations	Operations contractor	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev call center	Transdev call center or apps provided by each operations contractor
Scheduling	Operations contractor	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev call center	Transdev call center or apps provided by each operations contractor
Dispatching	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev call center	Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro Taxi
Day-of-Trip Calls	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev call center	Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro Taxi
Scheduling/Dispatch Technology License Holder	Transit agency	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	RTD	Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro Taxi
Vehicle Ownership	Transit agency	Other
Vehicle Ownership Description (if Other)	RTD	RTD provides vehicles for WAV under Uber. The other vehicles are provided by the respective providers for ambulatory trips.
Driver Training	Operations contractor	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev; Transdev On-Demand; and MTM, Inc. provide in-house driver training.	Transdev; Transdev On-Demand; MTM, Inc.; Uber; Lyft; Metro Taxi; and zTrip provide in-house driver training.
Maintenance	Operations contractor	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev; Transdev On-Demand; and MTM, Inc. provide in-house maintenance.	Transdev; Transdev On-Demand; MTM, Inc.; Uber; Lyft; Metro Taxi; and zTrip provide in-house maintenance.

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access-a-Ride	Access-on-Demand
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service
Fuel	Operations contractor	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	Pass-through subcontracts	Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro Taxi
Marketing	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	RTD	RTD
Customer Service	Transit agency	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	RTD Customer Care	RTD Customer Care and contractor customer care for Civil Rights and ADA complaints or each contractor for all other complaints
Operations Parameters		
Use of Service Zones	Yes	Yes
Use of Service Zones Description (if Other)	Regular one-way trip zone, airport zone, free mall zone, Longmont city zone	RTD agency boundary
Pickup/Drop-off Locations	Other or combination of above	Curb-to-curb
Pickup/Drop-off Locations Description (if Other)	Booked address within ADA service boundary	
Level of Driver Assistance	Door-to-door	Curb-to-curb
Level of Driver Assistance Description (if Other)	Outlined in Access-a-Ride customer guide: https://www.rtd-denver.com/other-services/access-a-ride/customer-guide	WAV drivers provide ADA trained assistance. Other contractors (Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro) provide basic levels of assistance.
Fleet Characteristics		
Number of Vehicles in Dedicated Fleet	339	N/A
Number of WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	339	Demand specific—currently 25 (provided by RTD-dedicated contractors)
Number of Non-WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	0	N/A
Number of Vehicles in Nondedicated Fleet	50	Demand specific by contractor
Number of WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	0	Unknown—not contracted for WAV service
Number of Non-WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	50	Demand specific by contractor

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access-a-Ride	Access-on-Demand
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service
Technology Used		
Scheduling/Dispatching Software	Yes	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	HBSS/QRyde	Each uses their own platform (Metro Taxi Platform, zTrip Platform, Uber Transit)
In-Vehicle Equipment	Yes	Yes
In-Vehicle Equipment Used	Tablet	Tablet for WAV, phone, or other equipment for taxi and TNC ambulatory trips
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	HBSS/QRyde	Uber driver app used for WAV vehicles; individual apps used for taxi and TNC ambulatory trips
Integrated Agency Dispatch to Drivers	Yes	
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	HBSS/QRyde	
Interactive Voice Response	Yes	No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	HBSS/Bandwidth	
Rider Apps	Yes	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	HBSS	Uber, Lyft, zTrip, Metro Taxi
Other Technology (if applicable)	N/A	
Performance Metrics		
Ridership		
One-Way Passenger Trips (including PCAs and companions)	503,195	688,613
Average One-Way Trip Length (miles)	14.82	N/A
Productivity		
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Actual	1.25	N/A
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Standard	Fuel and contract costs	
Cost Efficiency		
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$106.6	\$16.64
Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour	\$132.72	N/A

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access-a-Ride	Access-on-Demand
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service
Reliability		
On-Time Performance Percentage—Actual	91.1%	N/A
On-Time Performance Percentage—Standard	On Time customer pickups	
Response Time		
Average Response Time—Ambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	≤30
Average Response Time—Nonambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	≤30
Service Reliability		
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Actual	0%	0%
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Standard	A trip where the service provider arrives 1 hour or later after the close of the 30-minute operating window (e.g. for an operating window of noon to 12:30 p.m., a trip is categorized as missed at 1:30 p.m.). A trip where the service provider fails to notify the RTD call center that they cannot perform the work until after the 30-minute ready window has begun, thus causing another service provider to arrive 1 hour or later after the close of the operating window. A trip that is not completed in its entirety. Transporting the wrong passenger. A trip for which the passenger is dropped off at an incorrect or unauthorized drop-off location.	N/A
Service Quality		
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Actual	Unknown	Unknown
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Standard	Unknown	Unknown

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access-a-Ride	Access-on-Demand
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service
Reservation Hold Times		
Customers' Trip Request Line—Actual	Queue or hold	N/A
Customers' Trip Request Line—Standard	<2-minute average	N/A
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Actual	≤5%	N/A
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Standard	Dropped calls	N/A

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; PCA = personal care attendant; RTD = Regional Transportation District; TNC = transportation network company; WAV = wheelchair accessible vehicle

Table D-3 Houston, TX—Houston METRO

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	METROLift	METROLift Subsidy Program	Curb2Curb
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service	Microtransit
Service Characteristics			
Service Area			
Service Area	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Other
Service Area Description (if Other)		Premium service not required by the ADA for standard METROLift. It offers same-day transportation options, unlike regular trips that require one-day advance scheduling.	On-demand service, available in certain communities without immediate access to a METRO bus route.
Service Area Size (square miles)	808	808	Missouri City: 18 sq mi Hiram Clarke: 22 sq mi Acres Homes: 7 sq mi Kashmere (late night): 16 sq mi
Service Area Population			
Service Area Density			
Service Days and Hours			
Service Days per Week	7	7	7
Service Hours per Day	20–24	20–24	14–16
Trips			
Eligible Riders or Trips	28,385	28,385	Available to anyone within the zone
Fare Policy			
One-Way Base Fare	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.25
Trip Reservation Policy			
Advanced Reservation Policy	Next day only	None	Other
Reservation Policy Description	On Fridays, booking for Saturday–Monday	Customers call the day of/on-demand	Customers can book a ride as early as 7 days in advance, or 10 minutes before desired pickup
Same-Day Reservations	None	On demand (immediate fulfillment)	On demand (immediate fulfillment)
Subscription Trips	Yes	No	Yes

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	METROLift	METROLift Subsidy Program	Curb2Curb
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service	Microtransit
Division of Responsibilities			
Direct Management/Supervision	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO—Paratransit Manager	Houston METRO—Microtransit Manager	Houston METRO—Microtransit Manager
Eligibility Assessment/Registration	Other	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	METRO (eligibility applications)	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Operations	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Reservations	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Scheduling	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Dispatching	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Day-of-Trip Calls	Operations contractor	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	Transdev (auto call-out)	Houston METRO RideCo (SMS notifications)	Houston METRO RideCo (SMS notifications)
Scheduling/Dispatch Technology License Holder	Transit agency	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	RideCo	RideCo
Vehicle Ownership	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Vehicle Ownership Description (if Other)	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Driver Training	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation Transdev	MV Transportation Transdev	MV Transportation Transdev
Maintenance	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation and Transdev	MV Transportation and Transdev	MV Transportation and Transdev
Fuel	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation and Transdev	MV Transportation and Transdev	MV Transportation and METRO
Marketing	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	METROLift	METROLift Subsidy Program	Curb2Curb
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service	Microtransit
Customer Service	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	Houston METRO	Houston METRO	Houston METRO
Operations Parameters			
Use of Service Zones	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of Service Zones Description (if Other)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pickup/Drop-off Locations	Curb-to-curb	Curb-to-curb	Other or combination of above
Pickup/Drop-off Locations Description (if Other)	N/A	N/A	Anchored fixed stops, curb-to-curb
Level of Driver Assistance	Other	Other	Other
Level of Driver Assistance Description (if Other)	Curb-to-curb or door-to-door upon request	Curb-to-curb or door-to-door upon request	Curb-to-curb or door-to-door upon request
Fleet Characteristics			
Number of Vehicles in Dedicated Fleet	487	44	73
Number of WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	487	0	73
Number of Non-WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	0	44	0
Number of Vehicles in Nondedicated Fleet	0	9	0
Number of WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	0	9	0
Number of Non-WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	0	0	0
Technology Used			
Scheduling/Dispatching Software	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze	RideCo	RideCo
In-Vehicle Equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes
In-Vehicle Equipment Used	Motorola 2500-Radio Ranger MDT	Motorola 2500-Radio and Samsung TAB A Tablets	Motorola 2500-Radio and Samsung TAB A Tablets
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)			

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	METROLift	METROLift Subsidy Program	Curb2Curb
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service	Microtransit
Integrated Agency Dispatch to Drivers	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze	RideCo	RideCo
Interactive Voice Response	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Transdev (calls, reminders)	RideCo (SMS notifications)	RideCo (SMS notifications)
Rider Apps	Yes	No	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Enghouse (web bookings) IVR (phone bookings)	N/A	RideCo
Other Technology (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance Metrics			
Ridership			
One-Way Passenger Trips (including PCAs and companions)	1,821,713	152,215	233,025
Average One-Way Trip Length (miles)	12.5	19.3	13.6
Productivity			
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Actual	1.5	1.22	2.51
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Standard		124,644	92,962
Cost Efficiency			
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$50.01	\$47.75	\$21.31
Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour	\$59.61	\$58.31	\$53.42
Reliability			
On-Time Performance Percentage—Actual	89.81%	87.90%	91.30%
On-Time Performance Percentage—Standard	90% on-time performance for pickup trips (± 20-minute window) 100% on-time performance for drop-off appointment trips (–60/0-minute window)	66.60%	93.60%

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	METROLift	METROLift Subsidy Program	Curb2Curb
	ADA Paratransit	Alternative Service	Microtransit
Response Time			
Average Response Time—Ambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average Response Time—Nonambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Reliability			
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Actual	6.44%	6.70%	6.90%
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Standard			
Service Quality			
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Actual			
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Standard			
Reservation Hold Times			
Customers' Trip Request Line—Actual	0:01:02	0:00:58	0:01:29
Customers' Trip Request Line—Standard	No standard set for holds, instead KPIs for calls answered within 180 seconds and 300 seconds are monitored		No standard set for holds, instead app reservations vs. calls presented are monitored
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Actual	0:01:28	0:00:58	0:01:29
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Standard	No standard set for holds, instead KPIs for calls answered within 180 seconds and 300 seconds are monitored		No standard set for holds, instead app reservations vs. calls presented are monitored

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; IVR = interactive voice response; MDT = mobile data terminal; PCA = personal care attendant; SMS = short message service; WAV = wheelchair accessible vehicle

Table D-4 Los Angeles, CA—Access Services

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Services
	ADA Paratransit
Service Characteristics	
Service Area	
Service Name	Access Services
Service Area	Beyond minimum required by ADA
Service Area Description (if Other)	Service area includes 0.75 miles from fixed-route for 46 different fixed-route operations. Small sections beyond 0.75 miles have been grandfathered in.
Service Area Size (square miles)	1,680
Service Area Population	9.7M
Service Area Density	5,773.81
Service Days and Hours	
Service Days per Week	7
Service Hours per Day	20–24
Trips	
Eligible Riders or Trips	118,300
Fare Policy	
One-Way Base Fare	\$2.75 for trips ≤20 miles; \$3.50 for trips >20 miles
Trip Reservation Policy	
Advanced Reservation Policy	Next day only
Same-Day Reservations	None
Subscription Trips	Yes
Division of Responsibilities	
Direct Management/Supervision	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Varies by region; contractors include MV Transportation, First Transit, San Gabriel Transit, California Transit, Global Paratransit, and Santa Clarita Transit
Eligibility Assessment/Registration	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MTM
Operations	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Reservations	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Scheduling	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Dispatching	Operations contractor

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Services
	ADA Paratransit
Name of Entity or Entities	
Day-of-Trip Calls	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Scheduling/Dispatch Tech License Holder	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Vehicle Ownership	Transit agency
Vehicle Ownership Description (if Other)	Vehicles also provided by contractor and subcontractors
Driver Training	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Maintenance	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Fuel	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	
Marketing	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	
Customer Service	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Alta Resources
Operations Parameters	
Use of Service Zones	Yes
Use of Service Zones Description (if Other)	6 regions
Pickup/Drop-off Locations	Curb-to-curb
Pickup/Drop-off Locations Description (if Other)	N/A
Level of Driver Assistance	Other
Level of Driver Assistance Description (if Other)	Base service is curb-to-curb but door-to-door service is provided upon request
Fleet Characteristics	
Number of Vehicles in Dedicated Fleet	1,061
Number of WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	807
Number of Non-WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	254
Number of Vehicles in Nondedicated Fleet	807
Number of WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	0
Number of Non-WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	807
Technology Used	
Scheduling/Dispatching Software	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Of the 6 regions, 2 use Trapeze and 4 use 5M; one of the Trapeze regions is transitioning to Spare

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Services
	ADA Paratransit
In-Vehicle Equipment	Yes
In-Vehicle Equipment Used	Tablets
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Various
Integrated Agency Dispatch to Drivers	No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	N/A
Interactive Voice Response	No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	N/A
Rider Apps	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	IT Curves
Other Technology (if applicable)	SmartDrive video cameras on all dedicated vehicles
Performance Metrics	
Ridership	
One-Way Passenger Trips (including PCAs and companions)	4,201,486
Average One-Way Trip Length (miles)	8.49
Productivity	
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Actual	N/A
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Standard	N/A
Cost Efficiency	
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$77.62 before depreciation
Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour	N/A
Reliability	
On-Time Performance Percentage—Actual	92.30%
On-Time Performance Percentage—Standard	91.00%
Response Time	
Average Response Time—Ambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A
Average Response Time—Nonambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A
Service Reliability	
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Actual	0.33%
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Standard	0.75%
Service Quality	

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Services
	ADA Paratransit
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Actual	3.80%
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Standard	5.00%
Reservation Hold Times	
Customers' Trip Request Line—Actual	2.60%
Customers' Trip Request Line—Standard	Call-on-hold >5 minutes will not exceed 5.0%
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Actual	N/A
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Standard	N/A

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; PCA = personal care attendant; WAV = wheelchair accessible vehicle

Table D-5 Seattle, WA—King County Metro

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Transportation		Community Access Transportation	Metro Flex
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Para Supplemental	Specialized DAR	Microtransit
Service Characteristics				
Service Area				
Service Area	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Beyond minimum required by ADA	Other	Other
Service Area Description (if Other)	See https://metrotransit.net/access/service-map/	See https://metrotransit.net/access/service-map/	Service area is either different or undefined for each individual CAT agency	9 service areas, see https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/travel-options/metro-flex
Service Area Size (square miles)	Varies	Varies	Varies	75
Service Area Population	2.2M	2.2M	2.2M	330,400
Service Area Density				4,405.33
Service Days and Hours				
Service Days per Week	7	7		7
Service Hours per Day	20–24	20–24		20–24
Trips				
Eligible Riders or Trips	718,702	111,499	292,593	324,676
Fare Policy				
One-Way Base Fare	\$1.75	\$1.75	Free or donation	2.75
Trip Reservation Policy				
Advanced Reservation Policy	1–7 days in advance	1–7 days in advance	Other	None
Reservation Policy Description			Varies by agency	
Same-Day Reservations	None	None	Other	On demand (immediate fulfillment)
Subscription Trips	Yes	Yes	Varies by agency	
Subscription Trips Description (if Other)			Varies by agency	No
Division of Responsibilities				
Direct Management/Supervision	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	30 different agencies	Via Transportation

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Transportation		Community Access Transportation	Metro Flex
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Para Supplemental	Specialized DAR	Microtransit
Eligibility Assessment/Registration	Transit agency	Transit agency	Other	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	King County Metro	King County Metro	Agencies manage eligibility for their own clients but Metro requires agencies to serve older adults, youth, low-income individuals, or persons with disabilities	General public, no eligibility required
Operations	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Each individual agency manages their own operations	Via Transportation
Reservations	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Managed by respective agency	Via Transportation
Scheduling	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Managed by respective agency	Via Transportation
Dispatching	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Managed by respective agency	Via Transportation
Day-of-Trip Calls	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Managed by respective agency	Via Transportation
Scheduling/Dispatch Technology License Holder	Other	Other	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Mixed	Mixed	Varies by agency	Via Transportation
Vehicle Ownership	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency	Other
Name of Entity or Entities	King County Metro	King County Metro	King County Metro	Lease agreements managed by Via
Driver Training	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Managed by respective agency	Via Transportation

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Transportation		Community Access Transportation	Metro Flex
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Para Supplemental	Specialized DAR	Microtransit
Maintenance	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	MV Transportation	Via Transportation
Fuel	Transit agency	Transit agency	Transit agency	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Sold to contractor at fixed rate	Sold to contractor at fixed rate	Reimbursed by transit agency	Via Transportation
Marketing	Transit agency	Transit agency	Other	Transit agency
Name of Entity or Entities	King County Metro	King County Metro	Managed by respective agency	King County Metro
Customer Service	Other	Other	Other	Operations contractor
Name of Entity or Entities	Mixed	Mixed	Managed by respective agency	Via Transportation
Operations Parameters				
Use of Service Zones	No	No	Other	Yes
Use of Service Zones Description (if Other)	N/A	N/A	Certain agencies operate within prescribed zones; others do not	
Pickup/Drop-off Locations	Curb-to-curb	Curb-to-curb	Other or combination of above	Virtual stops
Pickup/Drop-off Locations Description (if Other)			Certain agencies provide curb-to-curb or door-to-door service depending on client needs	
Level of Driver Assistance	Other	Other	Other	Curb-to-curb
Level of Driver Assistance Description (if Other)	Mixed	Mixed	Certain agencies provide curb-to-curb or door-to-door service depending on client needs	
Fleet Characteristics				
Number of Vehicles in Dedicated Fleet	392	0	190	55
Number of WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	392	0	190	22
Number of Non-WAVs in Dedicated Fleet	0	0	0	23

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Transportation		Community Access Transportation	Metro Flex
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Para Supplemental	Specialized DAR	Microtransit
Number of Vehicles in Nondedicated Fleet	N/A	Unknown—managed by contractor	N/A	N/A
Number of WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	N/A	Unknown—managed by contractor	N/A	N/A
Number of Non-WAVs in Nondedicated Fleet	N/A	Unknown—managed by contractor	N/A	N/A
Technology Used				
Scheduling/Dispatching Software	Yes		Yes	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	Trapeze PASS	Mixed	CTS	Via Transportation
In-Vehicle Equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
In-Vehicle Equipment Used	Tablet, video recording, radios, EAM tracking	Unknown	Tablet	Tablet, video recording
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	DriverMate, Moto TRBO radios, DriveCam, Zonar	Unknown	Unknown	
Integrated Agency Dispatch to Drivers	No	No		No
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	TRBOWest	Unknown		
Interactive Voice Response	Yes	No	No	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)	System developed and managed in-house			Via Transportation
Rider Apps	No	No	No	Yes
Name of Vendor or Vendors (if applicable)				Via Transportation
Other Technology (if applicable)	Spare (eligibility processing)	Unknown		
Performance Metrics				
Ridership				
One-Way Passenger Trips (including PCAs and companions)	718,702	111,499	292,593	324,676
Average One-Way Trip Length (miles)	9.14	9.14 (system)		2.59

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Transportation		Community Access Transportation	Metro Flex
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Para Supplemental	Specialized DAR	Microtransit
Productivity				
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Actual	1.28	N/A	N/A	2.7
Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour—Standard	None	N/A	N/A	
Cost Efficiency				
Cost per Passenger Trip	103.76 (system)	103.76 (system)	\$24.14	\$31.03
Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour	147.27	N/A	N/A	\$68.97
Reliability				
On-Time Performance Percentage—Actual	89.8% (system)	89.8% (system)	N/A	98.20%
On-Time Performance Percentage—Standard	92% (system)	92% (system)	N/A	Scheduled arrival time
Response Time				
Average Response Time—Ambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	N/A	N/A	18.6
Average Response Time—Nonambulatory Trips (minutes)	N/A	N/A	N/A	20.0
Service Reliability				
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Actual	62 (system)	62 (system)	N/A	7.20%
Missed Trips (not to exceed percentage)—Standard	0	0	0	Trips declined due to excessive wait times (>40-minute estimated time of arrival)
Service Quality				
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Actual	2.24% (system)	2.24% (system)	N/A	N/A
Excessively Long Trips (minutes and/or not to exceed percentage)—Standard	3%	3%	N/A	N/A

Service Characteristics and Performance Metrics	Access Transportation		Community Access Transportation	Metro Flex
	ADA Paratransit	ADA Para Supplemental	Specialized DAR	Microtransit
Reservation Hold Times				
Customers' Trip Request Line—Actual	Under 3 minutes ≥90.43%; under 5 minutes ≥96.45%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Customers' Trip Request Line—Standard	Under 3 minutes ≥90%; under 5 minutes ≥95%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Actual	Not broken out; included in above	Not broken out; included above	N/A	N/A
Customers' Service-Day Calls—Standard	Not broken out; included above	Not broken out; included above	N/A	N/A

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act; CAT = Community Access Transit; EAM = enterprise asset management; PCA = personal care attendant; WAV = wheelchair accessible vehicle