



Metro Transit

Chuck Kamp, Transit General Manager

Suite 201
1245 East Washington Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
Administrative Office: 608 266 4904
Customer Information: 608 266 4466
www.mymetrobus.com

Date: September 20, 2012

To: Members, ADA Transit Subcommittee, Transit & Parking Commission

RE: **Metro Paratransit Pilot Program - ADA Paratransit In-Person Eligibility Determinations**

Metro plans to conduct in-person ADA paratransit eligibility determinations, 2 days per week for a 2 month pilot program and is seeking input for the project.

Purpose

To determine the practicality and effectiveness of an in-person assessment process for Metro's ADA paratransit eligibility determinations.

Background

The goals of the eligibility process are:

- Determine travel ability of individual applicant.
- Determine the mode(s) of service that are most appropriate for the applicant.
- Identify specific conditions when trips can be made on fixed-route or paratransit.

We currently use self certification on a paper application form, with professional verification (as needed) to determine eligibility. In order to meet the above goals with a paper process requires a lengthy 16-page application. The length is off putting to applicants and has been the source of negative feedback from customers and members of the ADA Transit Subcommittee.

Metro certifies 300-400 new* applicants each year with defined service availability.

New Paratransit

Applicants	2011	Percentage	Paratransit Availability
Denied	9	2%	None, disability does not prevent use of fixed route
Unconditional	293	80%	All, no functional capacity to use fixed route
Conditional	4	1%	Some trips to be taken on fixed route
Temporary	56	15%	Eligible for a limited period of time
Visitor	3	1%	21 days of service available within 365 day period
New Applicants	365	78%	of total applications received

* An additional 102 applications received for current customers requesting status changes.

Generally, an in-person process allows for a more accurate and fair eligibility determination. Metro's current process generates high numbers of unconditionally eligible customers and a low number of conditionally or denied applicants. The paper application results in incomplete or inconsistent responses. It also makes it difficult to identify conditionally eligible riders or

individuals that would benefit from travel training. In-person processes generally have higher denial rates and conditional eligibility results. In-person interviews or assessments (skills tests) add a level of gate-keeping to the eligibility process.

The technical training for Metro staff persons and the transit industry is conducted by the National Transit Institute. ADA Paratransit eligibility determinations training now focuses on the in-person component of the process. Top transit systems have evolved to a 100% in-person interview or assessment process. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is preparing to implement in-person assessments, calling itself the last major U.S. transit system to do so. Wisconsin Transit systems are moving to the in-person model, too.

Paratransit Application Processes	Madison	Appleton	Beloit	Eau Claire	Fon du Lac	Green Bay	Kenosha	La Crosse	Manitowoc	Milwaukee	Oshkosh	Racine	Stevens Point	Waukesha	Wausau
Paper Only	x		x								x	x	x		
Paper Interview/ Skills Test		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x

Scope of Pilot Program

The pilot program will operate for 2 consecutive months, 2 days per week, from 9am to 3pm. The location will be a common location within the Metro service area, preferably close to a human service agency office or Area Disability and Resource Center, ADRC. The pilot will be staffed one day per week by the Paratransit Schedule Coordinator and on the other day of the week by the Paratransit Program Manager. Applicants will be seen on a drop-in basis. A shortened application will include: name, address, contact number, and emergency contacts, and a release form for verification purposes. The in-person assessment will include a brief interview, a short video of transit skills, and traveling a path of 15 yards with one step up. Determinations will be completed within the required 21 days from a completed in-person assessment. Metro will also identify individuals that are presumed or currently eligible, notify them in writing to call for a scheduled time to appear for an in-person assessment during the pilot period. Metro will confirm an accurate determination has been made. Denied applicants are encouraged to avail themselves of the fixed route service and are also referred to free travel training funded through Dane County Human Services.

As the pilot is only operating 2 days per week, in-person assessments for new applicants (only) will be optional and the paper process will still be available.

Associated Costs of Pilot Program

Proposed staff persons for the pilot already work in the paratransit unit. Approximately 15% of two person’s staff time will be diverted to the pilot. As 2013 is also a paratransit re-certification year, progressing each month through the customer list with mailings and follow up, staff will generate an estimated 3-6 hours weekly of overtime during the pilot, roughly \$2500 - \$3000. Metro is hopeful that a shared space/facility can be located for no costs or in kind services during the pilot

period. Marketing materials will cost an estimated \$1,000.

The impact on Metro's paratransit program of minimally increased conditional determinations or denied applications goes directly to costs and directly to migration to fixed route service for people with disabilities. The average number of trips for Metro's active paratransit customers is 120 trips per year. At \$30 per trip, a conditional eligibility determination as opposed to a non-conditional that resulted in half of a person's trips to move to fixed route service instead of paratransit would result in \$1,800 in reduced costs per person - annually.

Preparation

An in-person assessment process will be developed to include a brief written application, an interview script, and a path of travel for observation. Metro will work with agencies in advance to inform them of the pilot and encourage participation for new applicants that they may refer. A location will be determined and appropriately equipped and identified with signage. Metro will also contact individuals whose applications indicated that it would have been useful to have an in-person review.

Data Comparison

Metro tracks the number of applicants assigned eligibility by category, conditional, non-conditional, temporary, visitor, and denied. Pilot data will be compared to non-pilot data for differences.

Metro's current distribution of new applicant paratransit status by age is below.

Age of Applicant	Conditional	Unconditional	Temporary	Visitor	Denied
0-20		24	2		
21-40		23	17		3
41-60	2	44	25	3	6
61-70	1	58	9		
71-80	1	46	3		
81-90		53			
90 +		35			