



Public Hearing - Paratransit Service Changes

Wednesday, October 11, 6:00 PM

Feedback Received (As of Wednesday, October 11 at 12 p.m.)

Total Comments Received: 25*

**Some comments refer to multiple proposal topics. Each topic mention is counted below.*

Breakdown of Comments by Topic:

General	3
Transition to Curb-to-Curb	15
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Feedback Contains Multiple Topics

1. I am writing in response to the proposed changes to Madison Metro and would like these comments to be part of the public hearing. My adult son is developmentally disabled and not able to ride unattended. I understand that Metro is eliminating of "leave attended" service and the transition to "curb-to-curb" service. If this is implemented, my son will no longer be able to utilize metro. This unfairly discriminates against individuals who are disabled. My son is also unable to pay in cash or be responsible for a 'ticket'. Please reconsider the effect this will have on a significant member of society that is not able to drive or have another form of transportation.
2. I believe cutting Paratransit services in the way described is a pretext for actions they always wanted to take. The leave attended policy in its current form is not even used by my residential agency — Dreamweavers, Inc — as it would require a supervisor to ride along with each individual passenger after the first infraction. I believe they never intended to continue this service. I'd like to see data indicating what the usage is, and how often they have problems with it, as some of it should be fixed at a different level.

I believe curb to curb would impact the large majority of disabled consumers/friends who use power chairs. I do not believe there are high incidences of fraud. I believe tickets are necessary for some riders that cannot understand/use money.

What are we accomplishing here? I would be happy to talk about how to save money over the long-term. It's called GPS and same-day service, so we don't have to spend money on dispatching.

I do not think the city council has tracked this effectively, and it needs to start doing so. There are ways to reduce human labor, but Paratransit has rejected many of my ideas, including having the photos of riders on file. (Although it wasn't a formal proposal.) they said they weren't "legally



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required to do that." I think we can do better. Disabled people need to do things, like attend this meeting. I can't regretably for other reasons. Paratransit already requires advanced notice.

3. Hello, as a social worker for 14 clients with significant disabilities, I am asking that you not change the way Metro currently provides door to door service for our clients. All of my clients are unable to understand safety in the same way you and I would. They are unable to get into their homes safely without assistance from your staff. Some of them would wonder away and it is completely possible that something very tragic could occur to them.

All of our clients receive financial assistance because they live under the poverty level so if they had to pay \$4 for each ride, many of them would not be able to afford getting into the wonderful community we have here in Madison and some of them earn so little money at their jobs, they would probably have to decide to stay home instead of working in the community, further isolating them.

The way things are headed in our community, our already disadvantaged will become more disenfranchised. Please do not change the services our clients so desperately need and deserve.

4. I have many concerns about the changes you are making to para transit services.

One is the increase in fare from \$3.25 to \$ 4.00 per ride. I am on Disability and live on a very low income. I have a hard time affording rides now. My parents buy my para transit tickets for me. I'm sure this increase in fare will negatively impact many riders.

The next issue is eliminating para transit convenience tickets. My parents purchase my tickets. This is the only way I can afford to use para transit services. They cannot give me cash directly because of income laws of Disability.

Another issue I have is "curb to curb" service. Take Journey Mental Health Center, for example. They have 2 driveways that can't be seen from inside the building. How am I supposed to watch for my ride? Go out in -14 degrees below weather and wait? In summer I have heat sensitivity issues, so waiting outdoors is not always an option.

Also there is the issue of winter. Sidewalks are not always cleared after a snowstorm. Sidewalks, parking lots, & driveways can be icy. The city lets large amounts on curbs. My suggestion is that you allow "door to door" service during winter months.

My last concern is my ride waiting for me at the curb of a busy street. Perhaps you have thought of this already.

5. I have used the paratransit system for many years. I have some thoughts here that I wanted to share. The \$4.00 per ride to me is unacceptable. Many riders are on fixed incomes etc. Raising the fare might be better if it is a smaller amount.

The fact that companions paying the \$4 fare also seems a bit high since we have never had to pay such a far for companions.



Cash fares only: For some this seems to be not necessarily a good idea. Myself I have been using tickets for a long time. Folks who take the mainline do they buy passes or tickets? Please consider keeping tickets for paratransit.

Curb-to-curb: Myself I cannot stand out in the cold very long and you could check my records if you wish. I am also totally blind and how would I know if my ride was out there and where it is? And I might go out a door to find out my ride is not there but if I come back and the door is locked? If I go somewhere I am not familiar how do I find the door? And if I were to get dropped off at a wrong place then what would I do?

I do understand that these changes don't all occur at the same time. It is my hope that reconsiderations will be made. Thank you for reading my email.

6. I am the guardian of my brother, a resident of Dale Heights, a Madison home for disabled people. I live in Eau Claire and cannot be in Madison often. My brother is 64. I am 71. My brother is diagnosed with severe cognitive disability and autism. He is totally blind. He has very little speech.

My brother utilizes Madison Metro services for his transportation to MARC West sheltered workshop for vocational and day services, which contributes greatly to his quality of life. He likes it. It is his only contact with life and work outside his residence.

He, obviously, absolutely requires door to door services. The fare increase would hurt many, and decrease or eliminate needed community and work transportation for the disabled.

Please reconsider these cuts and policy changes.

7. I am a tax-paying resident of the City of Madison living at 25 Elver Court, Madison, 53719.

Additionally, I have been a user of the paratransit services since November, 2015. I use paratransit daily to travel to and from my full-time work and occasionally to and from work related meetings, medical and other appointments. With the exception of the riding on the substandard equipment used by the sub-contractors, I have been very satisfied with the services provided.

I am fully aware the decisions have already been made regarding the proposed changes and I will therefore not waste time questioning the plans. I will, however, make two statements regarding the proposed changes. My comments are:

1. It is a sad day for Madison when a conscious decision is made to reduce the level of service provided to our most vulnerable citizens from "above and beyond" what is required to the lowest, legally required level.

2. Those of you who are making this decision to eliminate Metro Plus and use sub-contractors should be required to ride on the vehicles used by those sub-contractors and driven by individuals who seem to have received little training. You will be shocked and appalled by what the passengers experience. Just as a personal example, a recent ride was so jarring that my "life line"



was activated as if I had fallen (my wheel chair was strapped in and I had lap seat belt on at the time). If Metro is handing over the paratransit passengers to these sub-contractors, at least put some requirements in place requiring the vehicles provide some level of comfort to the passengers.

Now, for my comments regarding the paratransit services you have decided to end.

First, the Metro Customer Service staff has been very professional and competent in performing their jobs. They have handled any schedule changes and/or cancellations I have made with ease and accuracy. In those stressful situations when my scheduled pick-ups are 20 minutes – or more – late, they have been calm and efficient in finding out when the late bus might arrive. I will add here that when the scheduled pick-up is a Metro Plus vehicle, they have never been late – it is only the sub-contractors that have ever been late.

Second, I want to compliment the Metro Plus drivers. To a person they have been caring, compassionate, conscientious and courteous people. My opinion is based not just on how I am treated but by my observations of how they treat other riders. Your Committee and the whole of Metro should be proud of these drivers and how they perform day in and day out. Losing them and their skills is a real and unfortunate waste of talent.

One final comment, as a resident of Madison, I have believed that transparency and citizen involvement were two of the principles that guided the work of city officials and the committees and commissions that helped the city function. To my knowledge, the announcement of this scheduled public hearing on October 11, 2017 is the first time the public has been informed of this plan and is the first time public input has been solicited. With a decision this impactful, I would both expect and demand more openness and accountability on the part of this commission.

General Comments

1. I live in the Madison Wexford neighborhood. My son receives vocational services and day program Monday through Friday.

I am concerned about the reductions in paratransit services because he uses paratransit services to get to his workshop place. With these reductions, I am worried that he won't be able to get to his day program which is so important to him and to which he looks so forward to going to. It is so much a part of his day to be with his peers and the programs that they participate in.

I appreciate that Madison Metro has worked hard to keep the reductions to a minimum. I urge the City Council and the Mayor to restore these cuts.

My son's access to future employment as well as his day program is at risk. The city's investment in these services is critically important.

Thank you for reading this, thank you for your commitment over the years to working with the County and people with disabilities. Thank you for continuing to work with us, during and after the mandated transition to Family Care/IRIS.



2. I reside on the west side of Madison. My son receives vocational and residential services in Dane County.

I am extremely concerned regarding the reductions in paratransit services because my son uses approximately 20+ rides per week to and from various job sites. He currently has 4 different employers and has been fortunate enough to maintain these jobs for 10-15 years because of the transportation system for disabled individuals provided in Dane County.

With the reduction of transportation, my son has no way to get to his various job sites. He does not have the ability to ride the bus system on his own and this would not be a safe option for him. He relies solely on paratransit services. Currently, my son is picked up for work at his residence 5 days per week and dropped off at various job sites. Most days, he works 2 different jobs so he needs to get to and from these jobs with reliable transportation service.

He participates in various activities such as water walking, dances, Best Buddies and swims at the YMCA. I do not want him to miss out on these activities and having outside interests is important to all of us. Again, he relies heavily on paratransit services which enable him to participate in sports and social events.

My son thrives in this community as do so many other disabled individuals here in Madison. He is reliable and a good worker and truly enjoys going to work every day. By not having him work, this would cost the county more money in the long run. I do not know what he would do without his employment. It is more beneficial for him to go to work as this gives him purpose and something to look forward to every day.

These are people's lives we are talking about and disabled people have the same rights as the rest of us. We have challenges in our daily lives but they have more. The majority are not able to get in a car and drive to work or ride a bike. Their options are limited in comparison to ours so I urge the City County and the Mayor to restore these cuts. My son enjoys being out in the community and I want him to live a full life and the City's investment in these services is critically important.

I appreciate and realize that Madison Metro has worked hard to keep the reduction at a minimum. However, I urge the City Council and the Mayor to restore these cuts. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I do appreciate your commitment over the years to working in partnership with the County and people with disabilities. Most importantly, thank you for continuing to work with us, during and after the mandated transition to Family Care/IRIS.

3. Shame on you all!!!! The disabled and elderly are already getting stripped of so much money and care now by forcing county benefits to be run by the State now that it has put terror and fear in all the lives of loved ones that have a disabled or elderly person who need extra help but not so bad that they need a nursing home. Good thing because now feds are stripping funding on these people that need it most.

SHAME ON ALL THE GREEDY HEARTLESS PEOPLE THAT APPROVE OF THIS BUDGET CUT. SHAME
SHAME SHAME!!!!!!



Transition to Curb-to-Curb Service

1. I am unable to attend the hearing tomorrow night, so I am pleased for the opportunity to offer comments via email.

My son has been using the door-to-door services of Madison Metro Paratransit every weekday since he left high school in June 2012. He has four jobs throughout the community and this transportation is a critical element supporting him to work in jobs he loves (and has maintained since exiting school in 2012). My son has a significant developmental disability and cannot learn to utilize the regular bus routes in a safe and effective manner.

My concern is that by eliminating door-to-door services, my son will not be able to know when his ride is there for him, and will be forced to wait in inclement weather outside for the ride to arrive. Furthermore, my son does not recognize who might be a safe person to travel with and who might not be, so I fear that his vulnerability will lead him to unsafe situations. Additionally, my son does not have the ability to ensure that he will always have cash (he lives in his own apartment with support) to pay for his rides; he has always relied upon his vocational agencies to deal with the transportation payment.

While I do understand that the changing long term care system is necessitating changes to Paratransit, the reality is that people utilizing these services still will have a need for these services even after the larger DD service system changes. I urge you to keep the curb-to-curb option for folks who need it and instituting a more reasonable payment mechanism, such as a transportation "debit" card.

2. Please keep the Door to Door & Leave Attended Service for people with special needs. For my loved one, it is the equivalent of driving away from a 5-year-old at an unattended doorstep. Without these services, my loved one's security & quality of life will be negatively impacted. Thank you.
3. Our daughter NEEDS door to door transportation as she is in a wheelchair and needs to get back and forth to work. If she is unable to go to work she will be sitting at home (Supportive Living) and caregivers will need to be hired for that time that she would normally be at work. Please consider maintaining the service you have now with Dane County for the disabled.
4. I am concerned that I will have more problems with curb to curb service As opposed to door service. Sometimes I need All the help I can get. Having to have multiple 1 bills would be a pain.
5. Marian is concerned about the curb to curb that is being proposed. She said that her husband can't be dropped at the curb and get himself in the building.
6. The caller is a paratransit client who is blind, and he expressed concern about the paratransit change to D2D service to curb-2-curb. He said he has witnessed and experienced instances of drivers dropping clients to the wrong location, which often becomes apparent when they reach the door.
7. I would appreciate your assessment of the following remarks:



I am considering moving into the Madison area within the next 18 months to a year. I have utilized the Paratransit service while visiting. Although it never happened to me, as totally blind riders, there have been occurrences when my friends have been dropped off at the incorrect address. Because they had "Door-to-Door" service, they were able to assess the mistake, instructing the driver to transport them to the correct location. On one occasion, a friend was actually left before he discovered the error. Upon being made aware that the "Door-to-Door" service could be discontinued, my concern is that if i, or totally blind riders would be let off at the wrong location, we wouldn't realize it until the driver had left. Therefore, we would have to call the Metro office and reschedule a ride to retrieve us. Not only would this be a major inconvenience, it might also pose a safety threat if forced to stand outside for a long period of time. Also totally blind as well as a stranger to the area, I would be reluctant to ride, being faced with the possibility of this occurring.

8. I am writing in response to the proposed changes to Madison Metro and would like these comments to be part of the public hearing. My adult son is developmentally disabled and not able to ride unattended. I understand that Metro is eliminating of "leave attended" service and the transition to "curb-to-curb" service. If this is implemented, my son will no longer be able to utilize metro. This unfairly discriminates against individuals who are disabled. My son is also unable to pay in cash or be responsible for a 'ticket'. Please reconsider the effect this will have on a significant member of society that is not able to drive or have another form of transportation. Please confirm receipt.

Fare Increase

1. I would like to express my frustration and opposition to the proposal to increase fares for paratransit customers. This is reportedly due to a loss of funding because of the introduction of Family Care in Dane County. Individuals who use paratransit are the least able in our county to afford such an increase. They rely on this service to get to medical appointments, work – if they can find an employer who will hire them often at minimum wage, and grocery stores where many rely on public assistance to feed themselves. Additionally, many of these citizens have already had their lives turned upside down with the move to Family Care. They have lost their trusted brokers who have helped them navigate the confusing state and county services that sustain a respectful way of life for them and face unknown staff and budgetary challenges with the new program. We in Madison and Dane County pride ourselves in quality of life by remodeling concert venues for social gatherings, investing in downtown infrastructure, building community centers, and developing a public market – none of which our citizens with disabilities will be able to visit or enjoy if they have no way of getting there or cannot afford to pay the cost of transportation. Support our citizens with disabilities and find another way to provide this very necessary support.
2. The proposed change in price will definitely impact my use of Paratransit service. I previously was using Paratransit to attend monthly business forums, but increased medical expenses now prevents that. At this point I use Paratransit only for transportation to/from medical appointments and the increased cost will create an additional hardship that may require my making fewer appointments.



Elimination of Tickets

1. We oppose the proposal to switch from tickets to cash for paratransit rides. This would adversely affect our daughter, who is on disability. She uses paratransit often, to get to activities essential to her wellbeing.

She lives well below the poverty line. Disability law allows us to buy her paratransit tickets to help her make ends meet. However, if the system switches to cash fare only, we would no longer be legally allowed to help her pay transportation expenses, since we cannot subsidize her with cash. We are sure there are other people on disability who are in the same situation.

To summarize: Switching to cash fares would hurt our daughter and others like her. The whole point of paratransit is to help the less fortunate. We believe the benefits of the current system to users should outweigh any advantages accruing to Metro Transit from the switch. If the intent is to save money, we would be willing to pay more to cover the cost of providing tickets.

One solution would be to allow use of either tickets or cash to pay fares,

2. He is against eliminating the use of paratransit tickets.
3. I am not opposed to reasonable changes in terms of service for Paratransit users which conform to federal ADA guidelines.

But a change to daily cash payments works against the welfare of the very population you are entrusted to serve. Many persons challenged with mobility difficulties are also challenged with cognitive disabilities in handling monetary transactions.

Safety is compromised for both riders and drivers when cash is involved in daily transactions. Disabled riders become more vulnerable when it known they always carry cash. The driver is vulnerable in collecting, accounting, and disposing of the daily cash received. And how is the security of cash safeguarded when the driver leaves the vehicle to assist passengers?

Removing the availability of convenience tickets – without the option of other non-cash payments - increases the personal risk of harm to both drivers and customers of Paratransit. Other transportation agencies have modified cashless systems – involving prepaid cards, signature vouchers, and other banking innovations. Such systems in our modern society protect and serve a variety of needs.

Using Contracted Service Only

1. I just got word that MCO's will be replacing Metro drivers with MCO- hired drivers because it will save money.

I must reply on the people who drive me places. I would like to see experienced and knowledgeable drivers, like Metro drivers, stay on rather than replaced by less expensive, sub- standard drivers. I have been fortunate in that I have had many good drivers who cared about me & cared about their jobs. They know the routes and drive safely.



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I would hate to see MCO drivers who would be less experienced & less caring about their passengers, replace Metro drivers,

Please reconsider and think about how it would affect the disabled population. Driving safely should be a top priority.

2. We have heard that experienced Metro drivers may no longer be used on Paratransit, to be replaced by less experienced drivers hired by participating managed care organizations. As parents of a disabled child who relies heavily on Paratransit, we strongly object to such a switch. Madison traffic, especially in winter and other bad weather, is increasingly difficult for even experienced drivers to navigate safely.

