

Summary - Paratransit Directly Operated Service Phase-Out

In response to federal funding cuts and shortages, the city's adopted capital and operating budgets do not include funds for replacing Metro's directly-operated paratransit buses, nor the provision of directly operated paratransit service. As the paratransit fleet has reached the end of its useful life and beyond, going forward, all paratransit service will be contracted out. Paratransit unit operators will be absorbed into Metro's workforce. No lay-offs are anticipated.

In March, the City provided Teamsters 695 with notice of its intent to initiate a process for integrating paratransit-unit operators into the other represented positions within Metro. Metro is currently in discussions with the union regarding the orderly process of this transition. In response to questions by the union, the City provided an opinion by the City Attorney's Office on the applicability of labor regulations formerly known as 13(c) which specifically provides labor protections to transit workers. The City has also provided a proposed plan for the phase – out of directly operated paratransit services. The city anticipates modifications to the proposed phase-out plan to meet any obligations identified from discussions with labor.

Once notices are provided to affected operators, Metro plans to inventory paratransit unit operators requests for integrating into other positions, including fixed-route operator. Employees must meet minimum qualifications and will train for new positions. Employees train for fixed-route service on a timeline that will allow them to pick a regular run and avoid any potentially undesired time working as an extra with a highly varied schedule. At this time, it is anticipated that the paratransit operators will be transitioned in two phases: one corresponding to the May schedule pick and one corresponding to the August schedule pick.