

TPAG Meeting Notes
October 22, 2025

This is the final meeting of the Transportation Planning Advisory Group. A plan from the WRTA Administrator regarding continued public input is outlined below. These meeting notes are for informational purposes only.

Attendees: Mark Binnall; Mike Kennedy; Sharon Strzalkowski; Mary Haroyan; Joe Bellil; Nancy Garr-Colzie; Kathy Kulesza; Nona Haroyan; Sue Moriarty; Monique Gerard; Benji Kemper; Bill Clark, Worcester Yellow Cab; Carolyn Foley, PBSTM; Josh Rickman, WRTA; Jamie Winters, WRTA; Sujatha Krishnan, CMRPC; Connie Mellis, CMRPC

Minutes of Sept meeting were accepted as presented.

TPAG Questions, Follow Up Items and Next Steps were addressed by Josh Rickman, WRTA Administrator. This includes the plans for future outreach by WRTA and how to continue the work TPAG has done through the years. Beginning in Jan 2026 WRTA will begin quarterly paratransit rider forums which will be held virtually. WRTAs on-call planning firm Nelson\Nygaard will moderate and organize the meetings which will be attended by WRTA administration and operations so that WRTA can have direct engagement with the riders. This will complement the fixed route rider forums that have been conducted for the past two years. WRTA will be making significant investments in the paratransit service including the procurement of new paratransit software which will be discussed. Additionally, the VIP task force will discuss ways to make the hub more friendly for riders with visual impairments. This is important for WRTA and helps WRTA to hear from riders directly and oversee the process. The format of the 1.5 hour paratransit rider forums will be 20 minutes of upcoming changes, service updates, project ideas and feedback from previous meetings, one hour for question and answer and 10 minutes for preparing for the next meeting. All efforts will be made to make the meetings as accessible as possible. Information will be posted on the WRTA website with meeting notes included. There will also be an opportunity for breakout rooms so riders can discuss their individual concerns or personal information. This is a great way for WRTA to get critical

feedback and ground truth its investments. WRTA will be widely marketing these forums to catch a broader audience. One of the first things that will be shared in Jan is the results of the paratransit rider survey. WRTA will also be developing a newsletter for WRTA at-large which will also include information on these forums. WRTA will be taking the charge, be accountable, and have direct contact with riders. Information on these meetings will be posted on vehicles, put on social media and outreach will be conducted to be able to cast a wider net of riders. WRTA will own the process and be accountable for the process and improve direct communication and feedback with riders. The virtual format of the forums will allow people from all of WRTA's 37 communities to participate in the meeting without having to go to a central location for an in-person meeting. We will also have a message at the end of paratransit calls alerting people to the forum. Email addresses on record can also be used to notify riders. End of call scripts for paratransit calls will also be used to alert riders. All the info will be made accessible as needed. Paratransit and Customer Service reports will be shared at the quarterly forums. The forums will also likely be theme based with the Jan forum focusing on winter preparedness. Major investments like lobby renovation and vehicle procurement will also be presented as appropriate. Riders were excited to hear that this info will be shared directly from WRTA with an opportunity to discuss with different staff members. The forums will also include WRTAs large contractors including Yellow Cab, TransDev and SCM Elderbus. COA van providers can also be included if appropriate. Via Transportation service can also be discussed. WRTAs public engagement approach will be a great change for riders. Sujatha added that CMRPC will be reaching out to TPAG members to discuss transit in a more holistic and meaningful way within the lens of public health.

Paratransit Report for Sept was read aloud.

Application Trips Requested = 1
Trips Requested = 15196
Capacity Denials = 0
Total Trips Scheduled = 15196
Cancellations = 2827 (18.3% of scheduled trips)
No Shows = 291 (1.9% of scheduled trips)
Missed Trips = 1

Trips Completed = 12078
Companion(s) = 484
PCA(s) = 1077
Total Trips Scheduled (including Companions & PCAs) = 13639
Elder Shopper = 210
Applications Requested = 35
Applications Completed = 40
Incomplete Applications = 0
Total New Eligible = 77
Total ADA Eligible = 2246
Total ADA Conditional Eligibility = 125
No Longer Eligible = 42
Total In-eligible = 1
No-Shows Excused = 37
No-Show Suspensions = 0

One rider asked about a recent article highlighting the difficulty of food shopping with the closure of Stop and Shop. It was noted that Eldershopper Service serves many apartment buildings and many supermarkets on a fixed route and is open to the general public. Additional information, including schedules, is available on the website or by calling customer service.

The WRTA travel trainers conduct paratransit promotion during their group and individual sessions. Information on travel training is available on the website or by calling customer service.

Customer Service Report for Sept was read. There were a total of 121 complaints that were closed. Of the 121 closed complaints, 10 were related to paratransit. Five cases reference driver behavior, one referenced a missed trip, one was related to safety and 3 were classified as 'other'.

Riders noted that recently call backs for trips later in the day are not being completed causing riders to have to contact PBSTM or dispatch.

WRTA Advisory Board discussed the lobby renovation at the Hub and the upcoming new branding.

This is the Final Meeting of TPAG. Information regarding upcoming WRTA Paratransit Riders Forum will come directly from WRTA.