

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR PARATRANSIT (Dial-a-Ride)

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- **Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride Service**

- Serving the cities of: St Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell, Waite Park
- Transporting over 11,000 passengers per month

- **Challenges**

- 300 calls per day
- Logistics issues (size of the service area)
- High Volume of Medical returns
- Fiscal Year 2016 averaged 37 new ADA approvals per month

Background of Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride Service

- July 1969 - St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (Metro Bus) was officially organized.
- Summer of 1970 – Metro Bus levied its first property tax in the three communities of St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park.
- December 1974 - In cooperation with the St. Cloud Area Council for the Handicapped (which was called the Disabilities Council of the St. Cloud Area) and various other local social service agencies, Metro Bus began their “Specialized Service”. **This was the first transit service for disabled people of its kind in Minnesota.**
- “Specialized Service” started with three lift-equipped mini-buses and provided service to approximately 1,000 registered passengers.

- July 1, 1986, Metro Bus completely re-organized the system and became a “public” system.
- The first Specialized Service Eligibility Committee was formed; a volunteer citizen advisory board to determine program eligibility and act in an advisory capacity.
- 2000 – Implemented state-of-the-art computerized scheduling system and added late night, extended area and Sunday service as part of the General Public service that Dial-a-Ride provides.
- 2008 – General Public Sunday service was eliminated due to Fixed route providing Sunday service.
- 2011- Extended area and General Public Dial-a-Ride service was eliminated in an effort to contain the growth of Dial-a-Ride while meeting the demands of individuals in the core service area.
- 2014 – Mobility Center opened and all interviews/assessments were conducted in-house by Metro Bus staff.

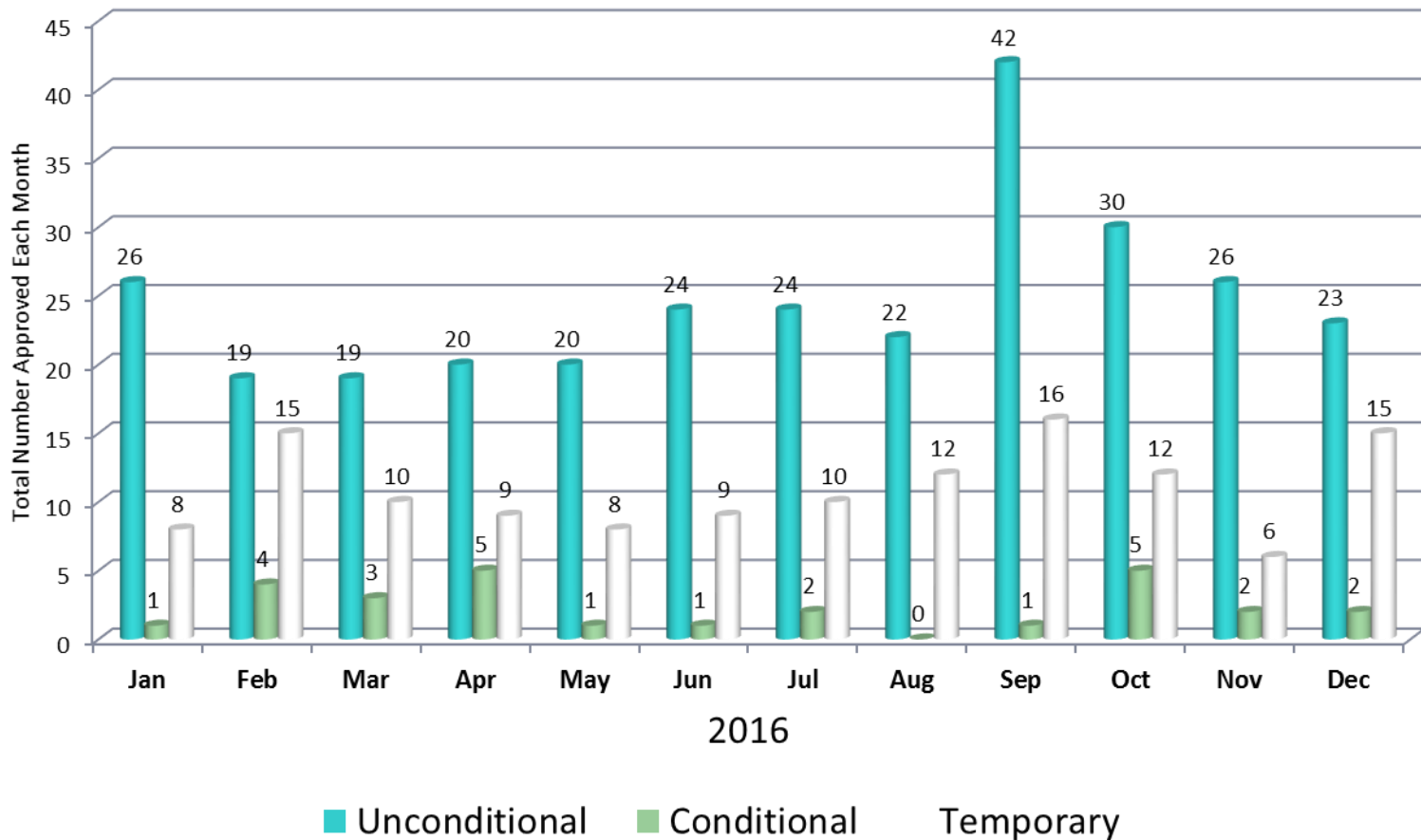
Eligibility Process

- Application
- Interview w/possible Cognitive or Physical Functional Assessment
- Follow-up with medical professional
- Eligibility Determination
- Appeal (if requested)

Types of Certification

- Unconditional: Allows use year-round and under any condition.
- Conditional: Allows use when a condition/barrier doesn't allow individual to utilize Fixed Route system. Ex: presence of snow and ice, complexity of trip (i.e. multiple transfers to complete a trip), distance to bus stop.
- Temporary: Allows use when disability is temporary for a limited, specific amount of time due to post-operative recovery, broken bones, etc.
- Non-Resident: If applicant lives outside the Metro Bus Service area and meets eligibility criteria, he or she may use Dial-a-Ride for trips within the service area.

Total ADA Approvals for Dial-a-Ride



2017	Unconditional	Conditional	Temporary	Totals
Jan	18	3	11	32
Feb	44	2	10	56
Mar	14	1	4	19
Apr	36	2	12	50
May	23	2	10	35
Jun	25	1	12	38
Jul	19	0	8	27
Aug	20	3	12	35
Sep	26	1	11	38
Oct	16	2	4	22
Nov				
Dec				
Totals	241	17	94	352
Avg	24.10	1.70	9.40	35.20

Cognitive Assessments

- We are using the Functional Assessment of Cognitive Transit Skills (FACTS) developed in 1996 for Easter Seals Project ACTION.
- FACTS is the only assessment tool developed and validated to specifically predict the abilities of persons with cognitive disabilities to use fixed route public transit services.

- FACTS was intended to be administered to individuals with developmental cognitive disabilities, specifically mental retardation.
- FACTS is not, by itself, intended to determine eligibility for ADA paratransit service. It is one element of a thorough process that includes information from the applicant, from professionals and others who know and have worked with the individual.

FACTS Cognitive Assessment

- 1) Orientation Items
- 2) Simple Trip
- 3) Simple Trip Sequence
- 4) Travel/Community Safety Skills
- 5) Complex Trip
- 6) Complex Trip Sequence

1) Orientation Items

- Appropriate greeting
- Provide name, address, phone number, contact information
- Follows simple directions. (Arrows showing direction to room, where to sit)
- Monitors time (applicant is told the assessment will take 20 minutes – a clock is set out for them to monitor time)

2) Simple Trip

- Select correct Bus Stop Sign
- Identify first bus and driver
- Present bus pass
- Determine where to get off
- Rings bell
- Walk from church to McDonalds (final destination)

3) Simple Trip Sequence

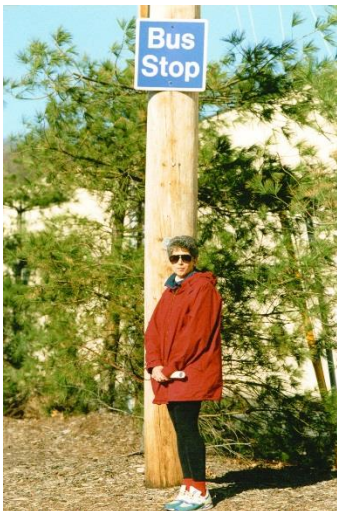
- Go back to room and repeat process
- Repeat walking route from church to McDonalds

4) Travel/Community Safety Skills

- Seat Selection



- Sitting correctly
- Approached by Stranger
- Dressed Correctly
- Wait at Bus Stop



- Street Crossing (safe time to cross)



- Getting lost (best place to go to for help)
 - Who do you ask for help?
 - Where is the best place to go for help?
- If you're weren't sure where to go and you saw a police officer, what would you do?

5) Complex Trip

- Transfer – new bus stop, board different bus, new location for deboarding

6) Complex Trip Sequence

- Repeat entire sequence from start to finish
- Check time – finish on time or late?

Physical Functional Assessments

Assessing Abilities to Use Fixed Route Transit Services

- 1) Stand at a Bus Stop for 10 minutes
- 2) Tinnetti Balance Test:
 - Sitting balance
 - Rising from sitting position
 - Standing balance
 - Balance upon being nudged
 - Nudged with eyes closed
 - Turning 360 degrees
 - Sitting down after turning

3) Tinnetti Gait Test:

- Initiation of Gait
- Feet pass each other and clear floor
- Step symmetry
- Step continuity
- Path deviation
- Trunk (sway, use walking aid)
- Walking stance (heels apart or touching)

4) Signal for Destination

- Ability to use stop calling system

5) Navigating Variety of Surfaces

- Sidewalk in good condition
- Uneven surface
- Grassy surface
- Loose dirt/gravel
- Negotiate ramps

6) Navigating Curbs/Curb Cuts

7) Street Crossing

8) Distance/Endurance

No Show Policy (effective 8/20/15)

- If an individual receives more than five (5) no-shows in a 30-day period AND the no-shows equal more than 10% of their total trips scheduled for that 30-day period of time, they will be suspended. The 30-day period is determined by the date of the first no-show.
- When an individual receives a no-show, a letter is sent containing information about when the no-show occurred and information on how to appeal.
- An individual who receives a sixth (6) no-show (and the no-shows equal more than 10% of total trips), they are notified by letter that they will be suspended. The suspension goes into effect fifteen (15) days from the date of the letter. Metro Bus staff will issue the suspension.

- 1st suspension – loss of riding privileges for seven (7) days
- 2nd suspension – loss of riding privileges for fourteen (14) days
- 3rd suspension – loss of riding privileges for twenty-one (21) days
- 4th suspension – loss of riding privileges for thirty (30) days

If an individual goes one year without any suspensions (counting from the previous suspension's start date), their next suspension will revert back to a 1st suspension of seven (7) days.

Appeals Committee

Committee consists of individuals with disabilities, representatives from human service agencies, senior living sites, city attorney, and physical therapist.

- Committee reviews both eligibility appeals as well as no-show suspension appeals.
- Since Eligibility and No-show process was changed, the committee has only had one No-show suspension appeal since August 2015. There have been no eligibility appeals.

Recertification

- Individuals are recertified every three years.
- A recertification application is mailed out within 60 days of eligibility expiring. Unless the applicant is requesting a change in eligibility (ex. was a conditional, now requesting unconditional), an interview/assessment is not conducted. Approval letter is mailed to the applicant.

Questions:

- Contact information:

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