

# Metro Mobility

## Project Description

August 2023

### BACKGROUND

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires public entities that operate fixed-route public transportation to offer “paratransit” services to individuals who are unable to use fixed-route transit due to a disability or health condition. The Metropolitan Council oversees and administers Metro Mobility, the paratransit service for individuals in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Paratransit services are subject to federal and state laws and regulations. For example, federal regulations require providers to establish a process for determining eligibility for paratransit services, offer origin-to-destination services, and ensure services are available during the same days and hours as fixed-route services. Federal regulations also require that paratransit services be offered to individuals living within three-quarters of a mile of fixed bus routes and rail stations, and that services be provided door-to-door or curb-to-curb. State law imposes additional requirements, including a larger service area and *door-through-door* service.

The Metropolitan Council contracts with two private companies to provide rides and manage scheduling. The Twin Cities paratransit service area is divided into three geographic zones, each covered by its own contract.

Metro Mobility served nearly 21,500 active riders with nearly 2.4 million rides in 2019. Demand fell during the COVID-19 pandemic, but ridership had begun to recover by 2021. Some legislators have recently expressed concern about the quality of Metro Mobility services.

### EVALUATION ISSUES

1. To what extent does Metro Mobility provide reliable, effective, and efficient services as required by law?
2. How well does Metro Mobility meet the demand for its services?

3. To what degree has the Metropolitan Council established an effective system to address customer complaints?
4. What strategies have paratransit providers in other states used to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of their services?

### DISCUSSION

To evaluate the reliability, effectiveness, and efficiency of Metro Mobility services, we will analyze Metropolitan Council data on rides, riders, and complaints. We will review Council policies and procedures, including those for responding to complaints. In addition, we will survey Metro Mobility riders and their caregivers to gather their perspectives on service quality and the extent to which Metro Mobility services meet their needs. We will also conduct interviews with representatives of organizations working with the disability and aging communities.

We will identify national standards for paratransit delivery and, to the extent such standards exist, compare them to Metropolitan Council procedures. In addition, we will review a limited number of evaluations conducted on strategies paratransit providers in other states have used to improve the quality or cost-effectiveness of services.

This evaluation will focus on the Metropolitan Council’s role in delivering Metro Mobility services. Although we will interview contractor staff to gather their perspectives on Metro Mobility, we will not evaluate the contractors themselves.

We plan to complete this evaluation in early 2024. For additional information, contact Mariyam Naadha, evaluation manager, at 651-296-6973 or [Mariyam.Naadha@state.mn.us](mailto:Mariam.Naadha@state.mn.us).