

hb1199_MTI.pdf

Uploaded by: Cinzia Cirillo

Position: FAV

The Maryland Transportation Institute credentials

The Maryland Transportation Institute (MTI) unites scholars with diverse expertise to develop innovative solutions for pressing transportation challenges. At MTI, our specialization lies in delivering data-driven independent research to bolster responsible policymaking. Each of our experts is equipped with state-of-the-art tools and resources to support their work. Since its establishment in 2018, MTI has consistently prioritized bridging the divide between research and action, remaining our central imperative in all the projects we undertake.

Some examples of previous and ongoing projects in the realm of accessibility to public transportation and equity include a study assessing the potential impact of fare reduction and enhanced service on public transit utilization, research exploring how technology can mitigate pedestrian and cyclist fatalities, and continuous efforts on understanding the influence of Complete Streets on the inclination to walk, bike, and use public transportation. These studies have received support from reputable organizations such as the National Science Foundation (NSF), Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), and the US Department of Transportation (USDOT).

We envision that the study about MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements, will be conducted collaboratively by Dr. Cinzia Cirillo and Dr. Paul Schonfeld and their research teams.

Qualifications of Cinzia Cirillo for Paratransit Project

Cinzia Cirillo holds the position of Professor at the University of Maryland (USA), where she serves as the Interim Director of the Maryland Transportation Institute and the Director of the USDOT Center for Multi-Modal Mobility. Her research, backed by funding from esteemed public institutions such as the National Science Foundation, the European Commission, the US Department of Transportation, the Maryland Highway Administration, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, has significantly contributed to the field. Beyond academia, Dr. Cirillo also acts as an expert for scientific panels, a technical advisor for agencies worldwide, and a consultant for private companies.

Significant contributions to the comprehension of public transportation usage include multi-modal choice models, predicting and explaining market shares for various modal alternatives (e.g., metro, bus, tram, train); investigation into the willingness to adopt new services, such as new metro lines, high-speed rail, and on-demand services, along with studies on the willingness to pay for these services; and an investigation of accessibility to jobs and services through public transportation.

She is also deeply dedicated to exploring transportation systems with a focus on equity. She has developed methods that facilitate the examination of population characteristics at a very granular geographical or domain level. For example, these methods can predict the locations of low-income populations or people with disabilities and identify their specific transportation needs. A recent model, based on real data, has highlighted the necessity to enhance pedestrian safety, particularly among children and the low-income population in Baltimore City.

Dr. Cirillo has extensive international experience working on large-scale projects, encompassing data collection, model estimation, and policy analysis. She is actively involved in designing the Household Travel Survey for Dubai and is currently gathering behavioral data on the willingness to use bus and metro services in the Dubai metropolitan area. The team is also studying various

policies related to public transportation services, access modes to public transport, and parking facilities.

Relevant publications in peer reviewed journals

1. Javier Bas, Mohammad B. Al-Khasawneh, Sevgi Erdogan, Cinzia Cirillo. "How the design of Complete Streets affects mode choice: Understanding the behavioral responses to the level of traffic stress", *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 2023, 173, 103698.
2. Mohammad Motalleb Nejad, Sevgi Erdogan, Cinzia Cirillo. "A Statistical Approach to Synthetic Population Generation as a Basis for Carless Evacuation Planning". *Transportation Geography*, 2021, 90, 1029.
3. Nayel Urena Serulle, Cinzia Cirillo, "Transportation needs of low income population: A policy analysis for the Washington D.C. metropolitan region", *Public Transport*, 2016, 8(1), pp. 103-123.
4. Pratt Hetrakul, Cinzia Cirillo, "Customer heterogeneity in revenue management for railways services", *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management*, 2015, 14(1), pp. 28-49
5. Yangwen Liu, Cinzia Cirillo, "Measuring transit service impacts on vehicle ownership and use", *Public Transport*, 2015, 7(2), 203-222.
6. Pratt Hetrakul, Cinzia Cirillo, "A latent class choice based model system for railway optimal pricing and seat allocation", *Transportation Research Part E*, 2014, 61(1), pp.68-83.

Qualifications of Paul Schonfeld for Paratransit Project

Prof. Paul Schonfeld, has over 40 years of experience in analyzing public transportation services, especially flexible-route paratransit services and their integration with other transportation systems. He has B.S. and M.S. degrees from MIT and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. He has advised the relevant theses of numerous students, including 23 who received faculty appointments at research universities. He has directed 118 funded research projects, published over 230 peer-reviewed journal papers, and served as Editor of the *Journal of Advanced Transportation* and of ASCE's *Journal of Transportation Engineering*. He is a Fellow of the Maryland Transportation Institute (MTI), ASCE and ITE. He received ASCE's 2018 James Laurie Prize for career achievements in transportation engineering.

In various projects Dr. Schonfeld and his students developed methods for designing and operating efficient several types of flexible-route transportation services, focusing especially on spatial allocation of services, fleet selection, routing, scheduling, assignment of riders to vehicles and, in some cases, coordinating various types of paratransit and fixed-route services. The coordination often involved using flexible-route services to feed passengers to other transportation modes or to minimize delays at transfer terminals by optimizing vehicle schedules, providing appropriate reserve factors in the schedules and controlling dispatching decisions in real-time when some vehicle arrivals at transfer stations were delayed.

In a series of projects, Dr. Schonfeld collaborated with private paratransit operators to develop operating systems and software for operating ridesharing systems, including those serving ADA passengers, and particularly dealing with variability and surprising events, such as demand fluctuations, unexpected traffic congestion, vehicle breakdowns and missing drivers or passengers. Data resulting from actual operations were used to frequently test and refine the operating systems. For example, when due to unusual traffic congestion, the services ran the risk of failing to satisfy the promised delivery time windows, passengers were reassigned to reliever

ridesharing vehicles, or even transferred to taxis. Some “outlier” passengers, with remote origins or destinations, were sometimes served individually by taxis.

Some of work on flexible-route ridesharing services is documented in the 46 journal papers listed below, as well as numerous project reports and graduate student theses which are not listed here.

Some relevant projects directed or co-directed by Dr. Paul Schonfeld:

1. **Non - motorized Transportation for Asian Cities**, World Bank, 1991 - 92.
2. **Adaptive Control of Transit Operations**, Federal Transit Administration, 1993 - 1995.
3. **Evaluation of DARTS Transportation Services**, Charles County Department of Community Services, 1995 - 1996.
4. **Integration of Conventional Transit and Paratransit Services**, USDOT, Nov. 2009 – Nov. 2011.
5. **Development and Testing of Ridesharing Algorithms**, IT Curves, Jan. 2011 – Jan. 2012, Co-directed with Dr. E. Miller-Hooks.
6. **Smart Ridesharing Algorithms**, Maryland Industrial Partnerships Program and Information Technology Curves, July 2011 – June 2012, Co-directed with Dr. E. Miller-Hooks.
7. **Flexibility and Responsiveness in Public Transportation Systems**, USDOT, Oct. 2011 – Oct. 2012.
8. **Improved Methods for Operating Public Transportation Services**, Mid-Atlantic University Transportation Center, Jan. – Dec. 2012.
9. **Integration of Multi-modal Public Transportation Systems**, Mid-Atlantic University Transportation Center, June 2012 – May 2013.
10. **Next Generation Algorithms and Decision Support Tools for Managing Ridesharing Services**, Maryland Industrial Partnerships Program and Information Technology Curves, July 2012 – June 2013, Co-directed with Dr. E. Miller-Hooks.
11. **Integration of Multimodal Transportation Services**, Mid-Atlantic University Transportation Center, May 2013 – June 2015, \$76,550, Co-directed with Dr. E. Miller-Hooks.
12. **Smarter Algorithms for Managing Ridesharing Services**, Maryland Industrial Partnerships Program and Information Technology Curves, July 2013 – Sept. 2014, \$135,000, Co-directed with Dr. E. Miller-Hooks.
13. **Optimization with Data Acquisition in Transportation Engineering**, National Science Foundation, Aug. 2017 – July 2018, \$150,000.
14. **Innovative Methods for Delivering Fresh Foods to Underserved Populations**, Urban Mobility and Equity Center, Oct. 2017 – Sept. 2018, \$140,000, Co-directed with Drs. Hyeon-Shic Shin and Young-Jae Lee of Morgan State University.
15. **Deployment of Personalized and Dynamic Travel Demand Management Technology**, Federal Highway Administration and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Nov. 2020 – Nov. 2023, \$1,673,097.
16. **User Preference Analysis for Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) and Its Impact in Maryland**, Urban Mobility and Equity Center, Oct. 2021 – June 2023, \$120,000, Co-directed with Drs. Young-Jae Lee and Hyeon-Shic Shin.
17. **Development of Advanced Multimodal Travel Demand Management and Continuous Operations of incenTrip Smartphone Technology in Maryland**, Maryland Dept. of Transportation, Nov. 2022 – Aug. 2023, \$150,000.
18. **Optimized Development of Multi-modal Transportation Networks**, CMMM Center, Sept. 2023 – Aug. 2024 \$100,000.

Some relevant articles in peer-reviewed journals:

1. Chang, S.K. and Schonfeld, P. “Optimization Models for Comparing Conventional and Subscription Bus Feeder Services,” *Transp. Science*, 25-4, Nov. 1991, 281-298.
2. Chang, S.K. and Schonfeld, P. “Multiple Period Optimization of Bus Transit Systems,” *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, 25B-6, Dec. 1991, 453-478.

3. Lee, K.T. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimal Slack Times for Timed Transfers at a Transit Terminal," *J. of Advanced Transp.*, 25-3, Fall 1991, 281-308.
4. Chang, S.K. and Schonfeld, P. "Integration of Fixed and Flexible Route Bus Systems," *Transp. Research Record 1308*, 1991, 51-57.
5. Chang, S.K. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimal Dimensions of Bus Service Zones," *J. of Transp. Engineering*, ASCE, 119-4, July/Aug. 1993, 567-585.
6. Chang, S.K. and Schonfeld, P. "Welfare Maximization with Financial Constraints for Bus Transit Systems," *Transp. Research Record 1395*, Aug. 1993, 48-57.
7. Spasovic, L.N. and Schonfeld, P. "A Method for Optimizing Transit Service Coverage," *Transp. Research Record 1402*, Oct. 1993, 28-39.
8. Lee, K.T. and Schonfeld, P. "Real - time Dispatching Control for Coordinated Operations in Transit Terminals," *Transp. Research Record 1433*, Sept. 1994, 3-9.
9. Lee, K.T., Kuo, H.F. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimal Mixed Bus Fleet for Urban Operations," *Transp. Research Record 1503*, July 1995, 39-48.
10. Chien, S. and Schonfeld, P. "Joint Optimization of a Rail Transit Line and its Feeder Bus System," *J. of Advanced Transp.*, 32-3, Fall 1998, 253-284.
11. Ting, C.J. and Schonfeld, P. "Schedule Coordination in a Multiple - hub Transit Network," *J. of Urban Planning and Development*, ASCE, 131-2, June 2005, 112-124.
12. Ting, C.J. and Schonfeld, P. "Dispatching Control at Transfer Stations in Multi-Hub Transit Networks," *J. of Advanced Transp.*, 41-3, Fall 2007, 217-243.
13. Luo, Y. and Schonfeld, P., "A Rejected-Reinsertion Algorithm for the Static Dial-A-Ride Problem", *Transp. Research - Part B: Methodological*, 41B-7, Aug. 2007, 736-755.
14. Zhou, Y., Kim, H.S., Schonfeld, P. and Kim, E., "Subsidies and Welfare Maximization Tradeoffs in Bus Transit Systems," *Annals of Regional Science*, 42-3, Nov. 2008, 643-660.
15. Luo, Y. and Schonfeld, P. "Online Rejected-Reinsertion Heuristics for the Dynamic Multi-Vehicle Dial-a-Ride Problem," *Transp. Res. Record 2218*, Sep. 2011, 59-67.
16. Kim, M. and Schonfeld, P. "Conventional, Flexible and Variable-type Bus Services," *J. of Transp. Engineering*, ASCE, 138-3, March 2012, 263-273.
17. Markovic, N. and Schonfeld, P. "Stochastic Scheduling for a Single-Terminal Transfer System with Poisson Arrivals," *Strojniski Vestnik (Slovenian J. of Mechanical Eng.)*, 59-9, Sept. 2013, 564-572.
18. Kim, M. and Schonfeld, P. "Integrating Bus Services with Mixed Fleets," *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, 55B, Sept. 2013, 227-244.
19. Juster, R. and Schonfeld, P. "Personal Rapid Transit as Urban Transportation," *Transp. Res. Record 2350*, Dec. 2013, 128-135.
20. Markovic, B., Milinkovic, S., Schonfeld, P. and Drobnjak, Z. "Planning Dial-a-Ride Services: Statistical and Metamodeling Approach," *Transp. Res. Record 2352*, Dec. 2013, 120-127.
21. Kim, M. and Schonfeld, P. "Integration of Conventional and Flexible Bus Services with Timed Transfers," *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, 68B-2, Oct. 2014, 76-97.
22. Feng, L., Miller-Hooks, E., Schonfeld, P. and Mohebbi, M. "Optimizing Ridesharing Services for Airport Access," *Transp. Res. Record 2467*, Dec. 2014, 157-176.
23. Markovic, N., Nair, R., Schonfeld, P., Miller-Hooks, E. and Mohebbi, M. "Optimizing Dial-a-Ride Services in Maryland: Benefits of Computerized Routing and Scheduling," *Transp. Res. Part C: Emerging Technologies*, vol. 55, Jan. 2015, 156-165.
24. Markovic, N., Milinkovic, S., Tikhonov, K.S. and Schonfeld, P. "Analyzing Passenger Train Arrival Delays with Support Vector Regression," *Transp. Res. Part C: Emerging Technologies*, vol. 56, July 2015, 251-262.
25. Kim, M. and Schonfeld, P. "Maximizing Net Benefits for Conventional and Flexible Bus Services," *Transp. Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, v80, Oct. 2015, 116-133.
26. Sun, Y. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimization Models for Public Transportation Operations under Subsidization and Regulation," *Transp. Res. Record 2530*, Dec. 2015, 44-54.
27. Chen, L., Schonfeld, P. and Miller-Hooks, E. "Welfare Maximization for Bus Transit Systems with Timed Transfers and Financial Constraints," *J. of Advanced Transp.* 50-4, June 2016, 421-433.
28. Markovic, N., Kim, M. and Schonfeld, P. "Statistical and Machine Learning Approach for Planning Dial-A-Ride Services," *Transp. Res. Part A: Policy and Practice*, v89, July 2016, 41-55.
29. Sun, Y., Shi, J. and Schonfeld, P. "Identifying Passenger Flow Characteristics and Evaluating Travel Time Reliability by Visualizing AFC Data: A Case Study of Shanghai Metro," *Public Transport*, v8,

- Aug. 2016, 341-363.
30. Sun, Y., Guo, Q., Schonfeld, P. and Li, Z. "Implications of the Cost of Public Funds in Public Transit Subsidization and Regulation," *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, v91, Sep. 2016, 236-250.
 31. Sun, Y. Guo, Q., Schonfeld, P. and Li, Z. "Evolution of Public Transportation Modes in a Commuter Corridor," *Transp. Research Part C: Emerging Technologies*, v75, Feb. 2017, 84-102.
 32. Guo, Q., Chow, J.Y.J. and Schonfeld, P. "Stochastic Dynamic Switching in Fixed and Flexible Transit Services as Market Entry-exit Real Options," *Transp. Research Part C: Emerging Technologies*, v23, 2017, 380-399.
 33. Guo, Q., Chen, S., Schonfeld, P. and Li, Z. "How Time-Inconsistent Preferences Affect Investment Timing for Rail Transit," *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, v118, Dec. 2018, 172-192.
 34. Peng, Y., Li, Z. and Schonfeld P. "Development of Rail Transit Network over Multiple Time Periods," *Transp. Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, v121, March 2019, 235-250.
 35. Kim, M., Levy, J. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimal Zone Sizes and Headways for Flexible-Route Bus Services," *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, v130, Dec. 2019, 67-81.
 36. Shi, Z., Zhang, N., Schonfeld, P. and Zhang, J. "Short-term Metro Passenger Flow Forecasting Using Ensemble Learning with Chaos Support Vector Regression," *Transportmetrica A: Transport Science*, 16-2, Feb 2020, 194-212.
 37. Liu, S. and Schonfeld. P. "Effects of Driverless Vehicles on the Competitiveness of Bus Transit Services," *J. of Transportation Engineering, Part A: Systems*, 146-4, April 2020, 12 pages.
 38. Sun, Y., Gong, H., Schonfeld, P., Guo, Q. and Li, Z. "Regulating a Public Transit Monopoly under Asymmetric Cost Information," *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, v139, Sept. 2020, 496-522.
 39. Choi, Y., Schonfeld, P., Lee, Y. and Shin, H. "Innovative Methods for Fresh Food Deliveries to Underserved Populations," *J. of Transportation Engineering, Part A: Systems*, 147-1, 04020140, Jan. 2021, 14 pages.
 40. Choi, Y. and Schonfeld, P. "A Comparison of Optimized Deliveries by Drones and Trucks," *Transp. Planning & Technology*, 44-3, March 2021, 319-336.
 41. Guo, Q., Sun, Y., Schonfeld, P. and Li, Z. "Time-dependent Transit Fare Optimization with Elastic and Spatially Distributed Demand," *Transp. Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, v148, June 2021, 353-378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2021.04.002>
 42. Choi, Y. and Schonfeld, P. "Review of Length Approximations for Tours with Few Stops," *Transportation Research Record*, 2676-3, published Oct. 28, 2021. doi.org/10.1177/03611981211049433
 43. Chen, Y., Markovic, N., Ryzhov, I. and Schonfeld, P. "Data-driven Robust Resource Allocation with Monotonic Cost Functions," *Operations Research*, 70-1, Jan. 2022, 73-94; winner of INFORMS TSL 2022 best paper award. <https://doi.org/10.1287/opre.2021.2145>
 44. Wu, F. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimized Two-directional Phased Development of a Rail Transit Line," *Transp. Research Part B: Methodological*, v155, 2022, 424-447.
 45. Chen, L. and Schonfeld, P. "Optimized Zone Sizes and Headways for Flexible-route Bus Services - A Two Zone Case," *KSCE J. of Civil Engineering*, 26(7) July 2022, 3136-3149; DOI 10.1007/s12205-022-1381-x
 46. Kim, M., Schonfeld, P. Roche, A. and Raleigh, C. "Optimizing Service Zones and Frequencies for Flexible-route Freight Deliveries," *Transp. Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, v159, May 2022, 182-199.

HB 1199 Daria Pugh - Disability Rights Maryland_fa

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Position: FAV



Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

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HB 1199: MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements Study

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 29, 2024

Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland and allied partners submit this testimony in support of HB 1199: MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements Study. This testimony has been signed on to by 19 other advocacy organizations.

Disability Rights Maryland is the federally designated Protection and Advocacy agency in Maryland, mandated to defend and advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. An enumerated purpose of DRM's legal work is to continue to secure improvements in the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)'s paratransit and work with community members to improve transportation access for individuals with disabilities.

DRM supports the MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements Study because it mandates an independent study of MTA's MobilityLink service delivery and quality, and will provide valuable recommendations to policymakers on how to improve MobilityLink. Paratransit plays a vital role for people with disabilities in accessing meaningful participation in economic, social, and recreational activities.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, MobilityLink service must be comparable to the level of service and response time as MTA's fixed route lines.¹ Over the years, however, MobilityLink riders have seen inconsistent levels of service, often falling far below comparable service levels. MobilityLink rides have to arrive within a half-hour window of the appointment time to be considered "on-time." In the past seven years, MobilityLink's on-time performance has dropped below its 93.5% goal far too frequently. On-time performance fell to the lowest point at 59.2% in 2021, with late pick-ups on over 38,600 occasions.² Performance gradually increased, but suddenly dropped again in March 2022 to 73.3%.³

Poor service, such as late pick-ups and drop-offs, long trip times, missed rides, and lengthy wait times for customer service calls, have negative implications for riders. These poor service issues cause riders to be late for work, miss medical appointments, and miss entire events. Riders have been stranded all night when their MobilityLink ride has failed to show. This is unacceptable; people with disabilities who rely on MobilityLink deserve dependability. Riders

¹ 42 U.S.C.A. § 12143.

² MTA MobilityLink On-Time Performance, available at <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/performance-improvement>.

³ *Id.*

must be able to rely on getting to their appointments without concern that their ride might be late or not show up.

MobilityLink currently uses third-party contractors to provide more than 99% of its rides. The third-party contractors have had high levels of employee turnover, reaching rates of over 100% a year. There is also a substantial level of absenteeism, leaving the remaining operators to work longer shifts to cover the demand. The third-party contractors start MobilityLink operators' pay at a level that is \$5 per hour lower than their peers who work for MTA's fixed-route service. Fixed-route operators' pay increases to over \$12 per hour, the top rate for the contracted paratransit operators. Low wages, unaffordable health care plans, and limited retirement benefits deter operators who are passionate about providing safe rides to passengers with disabilities from staying in their jobs long term.

HB 1199 proposes an independent study by the Maryland Transportation Institute (MTI) at the University of Maryland to identify methods to improve the paratransit service. It is critical that this study is performed by an independent third party. The legislature has required the Maryland Department of Transportation's MTA to study and report on its paratransit service in the past, yet the areas of concern identified by the legislature in these requests remain today. MTI will provide an objective report to policymakers on MobilityLink service, quality, and workforce. The report will serve as an excellent starting point for reforming MobilityLink.

The MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements Study will compare MobilityLink with other paratransit entities around the country to identify the best method for service delivery. It will conduct a cost-benefit analysis of paratransit service quality, reliability, and financial costs. The study will analyze and compare paratransit services nationwide, including turnover and absenteeism rates, average length of employment, preventable accidents, average wages and benefits, and career training opportunities, among other workforce metrics.

MobilityLink riders will also be consulted to provide valuable input about their experiences using the service. MTI will share its findings and recommendations with state and local officials. DRM is confident that this study will provide key information our state can use to ensure that MobilityLink service works optimally for its riders.

[Signatures continued on next page.]

For these reasons, we support HB 1199. For more information or questions, contact:
Daria Pugh, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Maryland, DariaP@DisabilityRightsMD.org or (443)
692-2487.

Respectfully submitted,

Daria Pugh
Disability Rights Maryland

Accessible Resources for Independence, Center for Independent Living
The Arc of Baltimore
The Arc of Maryland
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Consumers for Accessible Ride Services (CARS)
The Coordinating Center
Elders Climate Action Maryland
Fix Maryland Rail
Freedom Center, Center for Independent Living
Kennedy Krieger Institute: Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities
Independence Now, Center for Independent Living
The League for People with Disabilities
Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
Maryland Down Syndrome Association Coalition
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Maryland Sierra Club
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
People on the Go
Shared Support Maryland, Inc.

HB 1199 - Transportation - MobilityLink Paratransit

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**HB 1199 - Transportation - MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements - Study
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 29, 2024**

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1199. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 300,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

HB 1199 requires the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland to conduct a study on the Maryland Transit Administration's ADA MobilityLink Paratransit service. This study is required to issue recommendations to improve the paratransit service and share its findings with the Governor, General Assembly, and County Executives within the MobilityLink service area.

In 2023, the U.S. Attorney's Office issued the results of their investigation of MobilityLink paratransit service and found violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.¹ For years, MTA has contracted out its paratransit services to private contractors like MV Transit that have treated workers and riders poorly.² The paratransit system in Maryland is clearly failing to meet the full needs of paratransit riders and workers.

It is essential that the State studies the issue thoroughly and takes all parts of the problem into consideration. HB 1199 tasks the Maryland Transportation Institute with conducting the study. This outside independence is important and ensures that MTA is not tasked with investigating itself. HB 1199 also requires studying not only rider concerns on all ADA performance metrics, but also requires workforce concerns, including: turnover rate, workplace injury rates, average wages and benefits, and morale.

For the future of paratransit in Maryland, we urge a favorable report on HB 1199.

¹ Bryan P. Sears, "U.S. Attorney: Maryland paratransit system does not comply with ADA; lawsuit threatened." Maryland Matters. July 19, 2023.

² Daniel Zawodny, "Bedbugs and other reasons why MobilityLink drivers want a better contract." Baltimore Banner. August 23, 2024.

MD HB 1199 Paratransit Study Testimony EC 2-27-202

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Amalgamated Transit Union

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Statement of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) HB 1199 – MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements Study February 28, 2024

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) is the largest labor organization representing transit workers in the United States and Canada. The ATU is comprised of nearly 200,000 members in 267 local unions spread across 46 states and nine provinces. ATU Locals 689, 1300, 1764 and 1777 collectively represent nearly 2,000 paratransit workers in Maryland who work as both in-house and contracted workers for MTA MobilityLink, as well as at WMATA's MetroAccess system and the Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation. Our members work as paratransit operators, mechanics, dispatchers, safety instructors, road supervisors, trainers, and clerks.

The ATU supports HB 1199 which would direct the University of Maryland's Maryland Transportation Institute to conduct a study to improve MTA's MobilityLink. This study would not only provide independent data on the status of paratransit service in the Baltimore Area but would also compare models of paratransit service provision at other transit agencies. In addition, the study will make recommendations for policymakers and the Administration to ensure that riders are able to fully depend on MobilityLink to get to work, school, medical appointments and back home. The ATU supports UMD's Transportation Institute to study this issue as they are an impartial body.

ATU members who provide vital paratransit service do this work because they are committed to serving passengers who rely on it. Unfortunately, too often subpar wages and benefits lead to high staff turnover and absenteeism, erodes the service quality. The workers who do stay must work overtime and cover for their colleagues while other staff are hired and trained, which leads to burnout and prevents ATU members who want to serve their community from staying in their jobs long-term.

We have seen that these issues often arise when paratransit service is contracted out to private companies who are encouraged to win state contracts through low bids that do not provide family-sustaining jobs. The starting rate for an in-house MTA paratransit operator is higher than the current top rate for a contracted paratransit operator. In-house operators' wages increase with experience on the job by more than twice as much as contracted paratransit operators.

These challenging working conditions and low salaries contribute to the fact that it is uncommon for contracted MTA paratransit workers to make it to their one-year anniversary. This constant churn of hiring and training has a strong negative impact on paratransit service. To this end, the study will analyze workforce and service performance metrics at paratransit services across the country and compare both in-house and contracted models.

We must ensure that we are doing everything we can to provide not only the minimum service required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (which mandates that MobilityLink service be comparable to MTA's fixed route service), but paratransit service that truly supports riders.

In closing, the Amalgamated Transit Union supports HB 1199. We appreciate the Committee's interest in this issue and commitment to improving paratransit service for workers and riders.

Emma Cleveland
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HB1199_CARS_FAV

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Position: FAV



HB 1199: MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements Study
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 29, 2024

Testimony of Floyd Hartley, Chair of Consumers for Accessible Ride Services
Position: Support

My name is Floyd Hartley. I am a 71-year-old wheelchair user. I have relied on Mobility for the last 20 years. I am the chair of Consumers for Accessible Ride Services (CARS), an advocacy group for paratransit riders. I have been involved with CARS for about 18 years.

I wish I could have been with you in person to support HB 1199, but it is too challenging for me to travel to Annapolis by paratransit. I could have ended up missing the whole hearing or getting stuck in Annapolis for many hours.

CARS supports the MobilityLink Study because paratransit is essential to the well-being of Marylanders with disabilities. Mobility riders need safe and reliable paratransit to access our communities. HB 1199 creates an independent study of Mobility and its workforce, to identify ways we can make real, lasting improvements to Mobility.

I have seen the inadequacies of Mobility firsthand. Mobility riders have to deal with late pick-ups, excessively long rides, vehicles showing up at the wrong location or not at all, or equipment failures. Sometimes the heating or air conditioning in the vehicle does not work, and we have to travel in uncomfortable, or even dangerous conditions.

Mobility's service fluctuates. Sometimes, we see improvements after lawsuits. But then we see the same issues come back again, and again.

Mobility riders are often treated as second-class citizens. Sometimes doing one errand can take the whole day. We have to account for the thirty-minute window before and after our pick-up time for our ride to arrive, as well as a buffer in case our ride arrives late, and for a long transit time aboard Mobility.

We are often in fear that Mobility will not arrive and we will be stuck. This is especially true for people who use power wheelchairs. If a non-disabled person



misses their bus, they can call a taxi, or ask a friend for a ride. People who use power wheelchairs can't do that. If Mobility doesn't come after an appointment, we are stuck, with no safe way home.

We deserve better. We deserve safety and reliability in our public transit. We deserve to have Mobility studied by an objective and skilled team of researchers. This is necessary to make improvements to Mobility, so people with disabilities who use paratransit never feel like second-class citizens again.

For these reasons, CARS strongly supports HB 1199 and urges a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Floyd Hartley

2024 MOTA HB 1199 House Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ mota-members.com

Committee:	House Environment and Transportation Committee
Bill Number:	House Bill 1199
Title:	Transportation - MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements - Study
Hearing Date:	February 29, 2024
Position:	Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 1199 - Transportation - MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements – Study*. The bill requires the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland to conduct a study to identify methods to improve the Maryland Transit Administration’s ADA MobilityLink paratransit service.

Occupational therapists support an improved transit system. This is because accessible transportation plays a crucial role in promoting independence, mobility, and overall well-being for people with disabilities. A reliable and inclusive transit system allows individuals to access essential services, such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. It also enables them to engage in social activities and participate in their communities. Occupational therapists understand the barriers that individuals with disabilities face when using public transportation, such as inaccessible infrastructure and limited assistance. We support the development of an improved transit system that addresses these challenges and ensures equal access for all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Michael Paddy at mpaddy@policypartners.net.

2024 TCC HB 1199 House Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



THE COORDINATING CENTER
INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 1199- Transportation – MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvement Study

Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Position: Support

The Coordinating Center supports *House Bill 1199 – Transportation – MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvement Study*. This bill would commission a study on needed improvements in the MobilityLink Paratransit Service Program.

Our organization provides care coordination to clients enrolled in Community First Choice and many of Maryland Medicaid’s home and community-based service waivers. Many of our clients have mobility issues and rely on transportation program to travel for medical appointments, work, and family obligations. However, the paratransit services are not consistently available, making it challenging for our clients to get their basic needs met.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information that is helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

HB_1199_FAV_LateTestimony_NFBMD_RonzaOthman

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FAV

Subject: Support of HB1199/SB891

Date: February 29, 2024

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002, Baltimore, MD 21201

president@nfbmd.org

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee to support HB1199/SB891. This bill requires an independent study of MobilityLink by the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland. This study will be very thorough, looking at everything from services to the customers to workforce morale and working conditions. Costs cannot be the only thing considered, MobilityLink must provide quality services. It is time for the governor and the General Assembly to commit to the recommendations that will come from this report.

The key word is independent. Many studies do not require sufficient research of other successful systems and fail to get the desired results of reform. By seeking the input of users, this study will avoid bias and will lead to a better system that will make the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act a reality. The current system holds users in bondage leading to missed medical appointments and care, demotions or even loss of employment, the opportunity for an education and to participate in community activities. Freedom of movement is as important to persons with disabilities as it is to the rest of society.

Many elderly people are also persons with disabilities. Too often they are subject to lives of isolation and loneliness. A vote for HB1199/SB891 can bring the elderly and persons with disabilities a chance to live the life we want. Please vote in favor of HB1199/SB891.

HB 1199 NMSS Shannon Wood Favorable Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Shannon Wood

Position: FAV

HB 1199: MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements - Study
National MS Society Testimony: Favorable
Shannon Wood, Director of Advocacy and Policy
2/29/2024: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair Korman, members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee: I'm Shannon Wood with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and we support HB 1199, to require the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland to identify methods to improve the Maryland Transit Administration's ADA MobilityLink paratransit service.

MS is an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. Currently, there is no cure. Symptoms vary from person to person and may include disabling fatigue, mobility challenges, cognitive changes, and vision issues. An estimated 1 million people live with MS in the United States, and early diagnosis and treatment are critical to minimize disability.

When people with MS face challenges with mobility, the accessibility of the environment can be a major factor in determining their ability to be active and engaged. To remain as mobile as possible, transportation options must be suited to meet the needs of people affected by MS.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination and protects the rights of people with disabilities; it applies to both public and private ground transportation providers, including paratransit. The ADA requires public transportation systems to offer ADA paratransit service to those unable to use local bus service due to their disability. ADA complementary paratransit service provides origin-to-destination service where fixed-route service exists. The ADA paratransit service minimum requirements include:

- Service area: generally, within three-quarter miles on either side of a fixed route,
- Hours and days of service: same hours and days as fixed route,
- Fare: fares may not exceed twice the fare that would be charged to an individual paying full fare for a fixed-route trip of similar length, at a similar time of day. A personal care attendant shall not be charged
- Response time: Paratransit service must be provided at any requested time on a particular day in response to a request for service made the previous day. Real time scheduling, in which a call to the transit provider would result in pickup the same day, is allowed but not mandated,
- Trip purpose restrictions: No restrictions or priorities based on trip purpose are allowed.

A federal investigation in June 2023 found Maryland's paratransit program, MobilityLink, not in compliance with the intent and standards of the ADA. Specifically, Department of Justice investigators found that MTA's MobilityLink "fails to provide service that is 'comparable to the level of designated public transportation services provided to individuals without disabilities using such system,'" in violation of the ADA¹. The Department outlined several areas for potential reform, which the Society supports:

- Investing in more vehicles and drivers
- Ensuring adequate staffing to the service's call center
- Providing better data metrics to the Department of Justice

¹ https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-07/letter_of_finding-maryland_transit_administration_0.pdf

This Society is supportive of these recommendations, and HB 1199, to conduct a study to identify methods to improve MobilityLink paratransit service, including comparisons to similar entities nationwide, and how these entities manage fleet ownership, fleet maintenance, dispatch, reservations, scheduling, operators, mechanics, customer service, quality assurance and control, and other aspects of paratransit deemed necessary. This study would also analyze performance metrics based on the Federal Transit Administration's ADA Guidance for metrics, including on-time performance for pick-ups and drop-offs, missed trips, onboard transit times, excessive trip lengths, call center hold times and performance, rate of customer complaints and resolution, and safety conditions and practices on paratransit vehicles. The findings from this study would help shed light on potential solutions to address the challenges with paratransit in Maryland – challenges the Society routinely hears about when assisting Marylanders affected by MS.

Chandra, of Fort Washington, has used paratransit throughout her journey with MS in order to return home from hospital stays, to reach doctor and therapy appointments, and for routine life activities such as working out, shopping, movies, dining out and work. Paratransit enables Chandra to leave the house, see new places and meet new people, but she encounters barriers along the way – including timeliness and ensuring that vehicles can fully accommodate her accessibility needs.

David Brooks, of Owings Mills, provides care for his wife Letha. Letha lives with secondary progressive MS and requires the use of a power wheelchair having lost the ability to modulate herself on a push chair a decade ago. Letha relies on paratransit for all medical appointments, lab work, and MRIs. David travels with her as a personal care associate. In their experience, drivers frequently get lost, with David needing to provide directions since Letha does not drive and would not be able to do so. David and Letha always wait outside for their ride, but David consistently must run after the driver for pick-up. While small improvements have been made, such as the new app that allows for tracking drivers, David and Letha continue to face barriers to paratransit as recently as last month.

On January 18, David and Letha were being picked up from Letha's neurologist appointment, which David had booked five days in advance through the app. The size and weight of Letha's large power wheelchair is indicated in her profile, to eliminate surprises at pickup and ensure space, given that there is only room in most trucks for two scooters or smaller chairs. To David and Letha's surprise, upon pick-up, there was already a rider using a wheelchair strapped into the back. After being lifted into the truck it was clear that there was not enough space for Letha and her chair to be secured. David solved the issue by lifting his wife off the chair and placing her into the seat next to him, so that her wheelchair could fit with only 1 side buckled and secured. The driver had panicked and didn't know what to do, so David acted – because otherwise, he and Letha would have been left stranded for hours. Letha and David had experienced enough challenges over the years that David was able to problem solve, but many others in a similar situation would have had no real solution.

The very next week, David and Letha went to LabCorp for blood work. Their ride picking them up at home was on time and without issue, but when waiting for the return ride that had been pre-scheduled for between 4:05 and 4:35, the app malfunctioned and showed that the pick-up wouldn't occur until after 5:30 PM. LabCorp and the adjoining building both closed at 5, leaving them standing outside alone in the dark. David called the call center and talked to an understanding operator who told them that with the Ravens Game Sunday, they were short staffed that evening and she could not locate

another driver. They were ultimately picked up at 5:45, more than an hour after their original pickup window closed.

The Society appreciates David and Letha allowing us to share their story in an effort to improve paratransit in Maryland and we thank Delegate Edelson for his attention to this important issue. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support. We urge the committee to favorably report HB 1199.

Shannon Wood

Director of Advocacy and Policy

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: William DuSold

Position: FAV

HB 1199/ SB 891

This is my testimony in support of House Bill 1199 Titled MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements – Study. I am writing in support of HB 1199 because a Mobility Link Paratransit Service Study is needed to find out what is causing the Mobility Link Paratransit Service problems. In closing, I urge you to give this bill a favorable report.

HB1199_MobilityLinkStudy_KennedyKrieger_Support.pd

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FWA

HB1199 - MTA - Mobility Study_LOI_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1199 – Transportation – MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements – Study

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on House Bill 1199 for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 1199 would require the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland to conduct a study on the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) Mobility paratransit service, with a report due by July 1, 2025.

The MTA operates Mobility paratransit, which is a specialized transit service available to those who, because of a functional or cognitive disability, are unable to get to a bus stop, wait unassisted at a stop or station or board or ride a bus or train by themselves. Mobility is a shared ride door-to-door service, which is federally required to operate within three-quarters of a mile radius of MTA's fixed route service.

The MTA recognizes the critical service that Mobility provides to riders. To understand existing and future needs, the MTA will be undertaking an internal study of Mobility, including but not limited to six key tasks: the collection and review of existing information, interviews with Mobility riders and MTA staff, defining existing conditions, updating service strategies, ridership and fleet forecasting, and developing a fleet and operations management plan. As a result, MTA will be producing a 10-year projection on ridership and staffing levels needed to operate Mobility services, as well as determining information on system improvements and any necessary vehicle replacements. MTA would be happy to add the requirements of this bill to the existing study. MTA is currently expecting work to begin Spring 2024, with work completed in Fall 2024.

Additionally, MTA is currently engaged in discussions with the United States Department of Justice (DoJ) to resolve a service complaint and DoJ letter finding noncompliance. As a result of these discussions, the MTA would request to be the responsible party for conducting a study on Mobility improvements. The agency is committed to continuous improvements for our paratransit riders and believes that MTA is best situated to complete the study.

The Honorable Marc Korman
Page Two

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1199.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Einhorn
Director of Governmental Affairs
Maryland Transit Administration
410-767-0820

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090