



Facts and Questions

1. Why do I sometimes see empty MCPT buses?

- a. Sometimes buses are empty because they are coming from the garage to begin their work, going to pick up an individual, or may be running empty after passengers have exited at a destination and are just beginning on the other leg of a scheduled trip to another customer. In rural demand-response systems, where destinations are farther apart than in the cities, chances are you will see an “empty” bus frequently because MCPT has to travel further to pick up a customer or groups of customers.

2. How much does it cost to ride MCPT?

- a. Demand Response Services
 - i. Flat rate of \$4.00 public fare and \$2.00 elderly and disabled fare per trip
 - ii. Out of County trips: additional \$1.00 per trip
- b. Medina Loop Fare
 - i. \$1.50 per trip and \$4.00 all-day pass

MCPT CY2012 FACTS
84,672 Demand Response Trips
22,048 Medina Loop Trips
654,897 Total Vehicle Miles
\$2,113,210 Total Expenses CY2012

3. How do MCPT fares compare with other transit system’s fares?

a. Demand Response Services*

Systems	On Demand	
Near by	Fare	Half Fare
METRO Regional Transit Authority (Akron)	\$2.00	\$0.00
Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority Kent Ohio	\$4.00	\$2.00
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Canton, Ohio	\$3.50	\$2.25
Laketran.	\$10.00	\$2.50
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority	\$2.25	\$2.25
Lorain County Transit	\$7.00	\$3.50
Geauga County Transit	\$6.00	\$3.00

b. Fixed Route Fares*

Systems		
Near by	Fixed	Half Fare
METRO Regional Transit Authority (Akron)	\$2.20	\$1.10
Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority Kent Ohio	\$1.00	\$0.50
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority Canton, Ohio	\$1.50	\$0.75
Laketran.	\$1.75	\$0.75
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority	\$2.25	\$1.00
Lorain County Transit	\$2.20	\$1.10

* NOTE = All of these systems have dedicated local funding from sales or property taxes; “Half fare” refers to subsidized fare for elderly and disabled customer and limited to availability of grant funding and purpose of trip, i.e. medical.

- c. Comparison of MCPT with private sector “taxi” services –
 - i. Private Sector rate in Medina County: \$5.50 to board and \$2.50 per mile (partial miles are rounded up or down).
 - ii. Example Two-way trips – Real Destinations from MCPT Records

ROUND TRIP COST COMPARISONS			
Destinations (mileage one-way)	Local Cab Transportation	MCPT Loop	MCPT Demand*
Medina Office for Older Adults to Medina Hospital CCF (2.5 miles)	\$23.50	\$4.00	\$8.00
Walmart Supercenter Medina Township to Medina Recreation Center (2.2 miles)	\$22.00	\$4.00	\$8.00
Brookdale Mobile Home Park Medina to Medina Hospital CCF (3.8 miles)	\$30.00	Not Available	\$8.00
River Corners Road, Spencer Township to Medina General Hospital CCF (14.5 miles)	\$83.50	Not Available	\$8.00
South Huntington Street Medina to Southwest Urgent Care Brunswick (8.0 miles)	\$51.00	Not Available	\$8.00
Alternative Paths, Northland Drive, Medina to South Main Street, Wadsworth (13.6 miles)	\$78.50	Not Available	\$8.00
Lodi Community Health Center, Highland Drive, Lodi to West Union Street Medina (11.0 miles)	\$66.00	Not Available	\$8.00
* General public fare (Elderly & Disabled fare is 50% of this fare rate)			
Table does not include Faith in Action/United Way subsidized pass program for elderly & disabled			

4. Why doesn't MCPT charge the full operating costs to people using the bus?

- a. There are a number of reasons why MCPT does not charge the full operating costs to our passengers.
 - i. Benefit to Poor, Elderly and Disabled: First and foremost is consideration of the public good that the service provides to the transit dependent population of our county. An extremely large proportion of MCPT ridership (80% to 90%) is the poor, aged, medically frail, disabled and mentally challenged. Typically, the disposable income for members of our community that have these challenges is extremely low. Many riders are recipients of some type of public assistance or largely dependent upon fixed incomes such as social security and private retirement accounts.
 - 1. Local agencies that provide some type of service to many of these MCPT customers already pay our agency the “fully allocated cost” through a contract with the Medina County Commissioners for specific types of trips. This means that their sponsoring agency is often paying the full operating costs for specific kinds of trips. However, given the recent recession (2009 to present) and dramatic cut in funding to government agencies and non-profit organizations, many of these agencies have been forced to restrict the

number of subsidized trips to balance their budgets. Any increase in fares to these agencies would mean either a reduction in the number of trips that they can provide for their clients or a reduction in the other services provided by their agencies or a combination of the two.

- ii. Reduction of Ridership: The average cost per passenger per trip in 2012 was \$16.05 system-wide, i.e., Demand-Response and Deviated Fixed Route in Medina. Public transit operators are under constant pressure to obtain sufficient fare revenues to provide high-quality service while reducing dependence on government assistance. Across the country, they need an accurate formula to estimate the impacts of fare changes on transit ridership and fare revenues. For years, system managers have typically two choices: construct what is called a fare elasticity model specific to their system or apply an industry formula called the Simpson-Curtin model that postulates a fare elasticity of -0.33; i.e., a ten percent increase in fare will result in a 3.3% decrease in transit patronage. Unfortunately, that industry model is a gross average for a wide range of system types – urban, rural, suburban, fixed route, and paratransit – and diverse populations of riders – disabled, elderly, commuters, medically fragile, and general public “choice” riders. However, without going into extensive research on the effect of past fare increases in Medina County, a number of studies over the years and across the county have come to following informative conclusions:
 1. Transit riders in small cities are more responsive to fare increases than those in large cities.
 2. Transit-dependent riders that have fewer transportation choices will not reduce their frequency of riding as much as those riders that have other choices. However, given the higher propensity of poor and elderly being transit dependent, their ability to “make ends meet” with a meager disposable income will be exacerbated.
 3. Peak hour commuters are much less responsive to fare changes than transit passengers travelling during off-peak hours; i.e. a fare increase does not diminish ridership during peak times as much as off-peak times, therefore it does not provide financial benefits of leveling the costs of meeting peak demand.
- iii. Cyclical Decline of State and Federal Funding: One of the critical components that determine the level of federal and state funding in both rural and urban systems is the number of passengers that are served. It can be said that generally a decline in ridership will eventually result in less federal or state funding in the following years. In 2014, MCPT will compete in the same urban system funding formula with much larger and robust systems like Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Laketran in Lake County, and Akron Metro. In other words, *future funding for MCPT is greatly dependent upon our ridership as it relates to other systems in the urbanized areas of Northeast Ohio*. Anything that starts a cycle of declining ridership in Medina County, like a huge jump in bus fares, will lead to less federal and state grant money, which puts even more pressure on MCPT management to increase fares in the future. Thereby leading to further decreases in ridership and promoting a cycle of transit funding decline and recurring deterioration of public transit services.
- iv. Increasing fares does not take care of local match requirements for federal and state funds: Because the sources of MCPT funding are largely reliant upon federal and state grants, the local match requirements for those capital and operational expenses precludes using local fares. While local tax dollars can be used to provide matching

funds for the grants, the federal policy preference for public transit reveals a significant disincentive to charge the costs to users of public transit through increasing fares. As stated above, increasing the fares would increase the likelihood of creating a cyclical decline in transit usage, as well as materially impact the lowest income and most transit dependent riders – outcomes which federal transportation policy makers seek to avoid.

5. Why doesn't MCPT schedule these pick-ups more efficiently?

- a. MCPT uses a state of the art computer-aided route scheduling software called *Trapeze* that takes into consideration competing requirements to increase ridership, reduce vehicle and operator costs and improve service. The automated software builds driver and vehicle schedules called manifests for demand response services that balance the scheduling needs of the consumer, the distances traveled between varying destinations and optimal use of the vehicle's ridership capacity. Over the last three years, MCPT has invested over \$58,000 to purchase, install and incorporate this system into MCPT scheduling of services, as well as training of MCPT personnel.
- b. In addition, MCPT has used a federal grant to fund installation of GPS/ Mobile Data Terminals in our buses to increase real-time driver manifest updates. In the near future, we will have tablet computers installed on each of our vehicles, which should greatly streamline our operations, provide timely updates of passenger manifests, and improve customer response.

MCPT April 2013 FACTS
4.7 Average Passengers per Hour (Medina Loop)
3.18 Average Passengers per Hour (Demand Response)

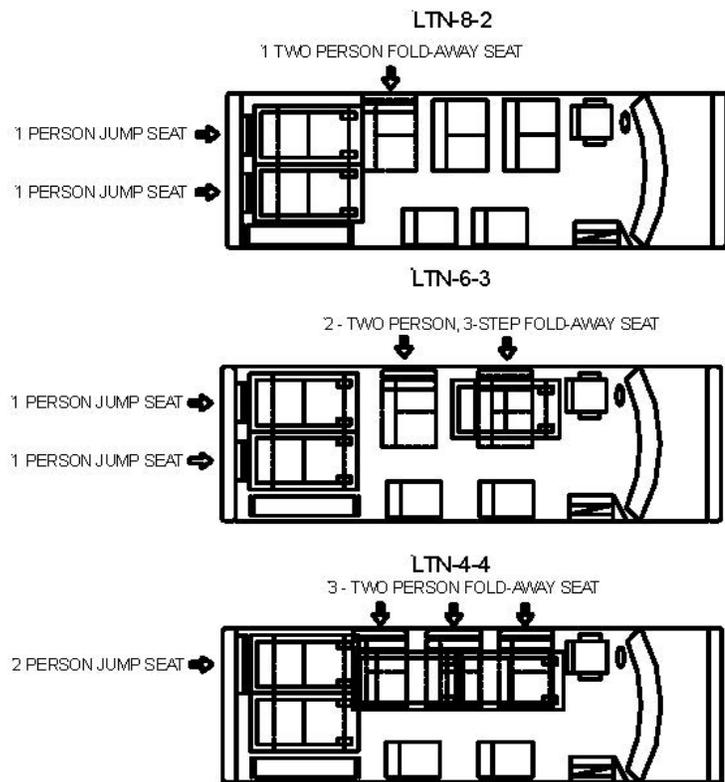
6. Why doesn't MCPT use smaller busses?

- a. MCPT currently has 23 Light Transit Vehicles (see figure below for a typical floor plan) of varying ages that seat typically 16 passengers plus 2 wheel-chair securement positions for non-ambulatory passengers. For MCPT operations the average number of non-ambulatory (wheelchair) passengers that we will transport on a per vehicle trip basis is one, however operations during peak demands increases that number to 2 or more. The number of wheel securement positions needed at one time is a prime consideration in the size of the vehicle. The Modified MiniVans (MMV) standard seating provides for one or three ambulatory passengers and only one wheelchair position, while the Light Transit Vehicle used by MCPT provides for 16 ambulatory passengers and at least two wheelchair positions. Some of our newer LTV buses actually allow for up to six wheelchair positions at one time, thereby providing the maximum flexibility in accommodating a key group of our customer base.
 - i. MCPT also owns three Modified MiniVans that are utilized in a joint program with non-profit Faith in Action and United Way of Medina County to provide out of county transportation for medical necessary trips using volunteer drivers. However, 99% of the passenger trips provided by MCPT uses the Light Transit Vehicles common to similarly sized rural transit systems in the State of Ohio.
- b. The goal of MCPT transportation services is to try and meet peak demand as often as possible, just like other transportation systems including highways and roads. For example, the vehicle traffic at I-71 and SR18 during rush hour is much heavier during rush hour than it is at 2 am.

- c. Another example is the personal automobile, where most people typically drive alone although they buy vehicles that can hold more passengers. US Census information shows that 86% of the trips made by Medina County residents in their own vehicles are alone, even though all of the vehicles have capacity for at least one or more passengers. Consumers tend to buy the size and type of vehicle that balances the cost, style and peak number of passengers they would require to meet the transportation needs of their family at some future time. Transit operators in rural areas have to consider the same need for peak number of passengers on a more frequent basis, in order to provide for the most opportunities for flexible scheduling and routing considering the longer trip times and distances involved. Fixed route transit operations in cities, likewise have to be prepared for peak demand conditions.
- d. MCPT utilizes the current version of *Specialized Transportation Program, Vehicle Catalog and Selection Guide* issued by the Ohio Department of Transportation, Office of Transit as guidance in making the decision in the size of vehicles to purchase. The Selection Guide is widely used by public transit systems and Specialized Transportation Program providers and other government entities to select appropriate vehicles for their clients' transportation needs. Utilizing this Guide, the following factors are considered in making the final choice on transit vehicle purchases:

- i. Capacity needs
- ii. Client needs
- iii. Purchase price
- iv. Type of service
- v. Operating environment
- vi. Operating Cost (salary, insurance, fuel, etc.) and preventive maintenance costs over the life of the vehicle (most vehicles are operated for 6-7 years).
- vii. Safety and comfort
- viii. Weight capacity
- ix. Future needs
- x. Ability to meet regulatory requirements such as annual mandatory bus inspections
- xi. Ability to train or hire employees with Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL)
- xii. Ability to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements (ADA)

EXAMPLE FLOOR PLANS
LIGHT TRANSIT VEHICLE - NARROW BODY



Source: *Specialized Transportation Program, Vehicle Catalog and Selection Guide*, Ohio Department of Transportation.

7. Why doesn't MCPT use smaller buses during less busy times?

- a. MCPT could consider smaller buses for some service needs in the future, but substituting a smaller bus would not always save money.
 - i. For example, a bus that begins work for the morning rush hour may stay out on the road into the afternoon. It would not be practical to bring the larger bus back to the garage after the rush hour and then send out a smaller vehicle for a few hours, and then repeat the need to switch to a larger bus to meet the afternoon rush hour. This would mean lost scheduled time, wasted manpower, and increased operating expenses.
 - ii. Smaller vehicles work most efficiently on designated services that never require a bigger bus even during rush hour, i.e. using the right-sized bus for the average peak in ridership, especially the number of wheelchair secured positions available at one time.

More Questions? Please call MCPT Director Mike Salamone at 330-723-9670