



METRO 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Metro Link Introduced!

New App-Based Service Expands Metro's Reach

Kalamazoo County's public transportation system – Metro – now has more ways to take more people more places.

The new Metro Link has its own app for on-demand scheduling. Metro Link service provides shared rides to destinations the bus doesn't reach. Rides are \$1.50 or less.

"Public input and ridership studies made it clear we needed an on-demand microtransit option," said Sean McBride, Executive Director of Metro. "Metro Link fills that gap. Metro Link expands and enhances the versatility of Metro Connect, primarily used by persons with disabilities and seniors because they receive a discount for that service.

The service grew out of a once-a-decade comprehensive analysis that showed the demand was there. "Public input played an important part in the overall analysis," McBride said.

Also in that report were data showing that Kalamazoo County's Metro system performed favorably against peers for cost efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Metro fared less favorably on market

penetration, something Metro Link addresses.

"We continue to rebound from the COVID rider slump," said McBride, "and we feel we have the traction now, thanks to this array of services."

Metro also provides service through Metro Share, in which it provides vehicles to approved agencies that serve seniors and persons with disabilities. Funded in part by the Michigan Department of Transportation, Metro Share uses volunteer drivers who are trained and certified by Metro.

Meanwhile, the backbone of Metro – the collection of 21 scheduled bus routes – continues to attract more riders who use the pay-by-phone app, Token Transit. And a large percentage of riders track their bus in real time on their phones (myStop Mobile) and on the system's web site, kmetro.com.

Riders also use kmetro.com to check on service interruptions caused by road repairs, weather and the like.



How to Use Metro Link

Could Metro Link work for you? Sure. Just download the app. There are no qualifications, like residency, for ridership.

Like any ride-sharing app, Metro Link asks you where you want to go. It knows where you are.

Put in where you want to go and then it tells you how the Metro system can get you there. It might be a car. It might be a bus. It might be both. It will tell you pickup times and arrival times.

People most likely to use Metro Link are people who live in suburban and rural areas away from bus stops. But the app works in every part of Kalamazoo County. Metro Link cars are assigned to specific districts, or zones.

The best way to see if Metro Link can meet your transportation needs is to download the app and try it!



How We Serve You!

Metro Bus – Traditional bus routes in the urban area of Kalamazoo County. Fares \$1.50 or less.

Metro Connect – A countywide ridesharing service available to all Kalamazoo County residents for any reason. Registered riders can schedule trips up to seven days in advance. Provides transportation anywhere in Kalamazoo County and to the VA Medical Center in Battle Creek. One-way fares: Base fare is \$12; seniors 62+ and those with disabilities ride for \$4.

Metro Share – Providing vehicles to approved non-profit groups and government agencies serving seniors and individuals with disabilities at no cost. The program is partially funded by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Metro Link – Blending traditional and modern transportation models. App-based, on-demand ride sharing. Operates in specific zones, most often in association with traditional bus transportation. Fares \$1.50 per ride.

Meet Our New Leader

Aardema Stresses Growth, Equity

The public bodies overseeing Metro operations, KCTA and CCTA, have only had two leaders over the past 16 years.

“Linda Teeter and Greg Rosine are two of the most respected public officials in our community,” says the man recently elected to succeed them, Curt Aardema. “I definitely have big shoes to fill.”

Along with eight other members of the countywide authority and eight other members of the central county authority, Aardema’s job is to serve the public interest.

Those members represent a cross-section of constituencies, including governmental units, businesses, the general public and users of the Metro system (See all authority members listed on page 4).

Teeter, a community activist, and Rosine, a governmental relations specialist, were both instrumental in creating the system which exists today. Aardema, though, is no stranger to public transportation. As with his predecessors, public transportation is a passion.

In addition to chairing both authorities (KCTA and CCTA), Aardema serves on the advisory board for Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. He also serves on the City of Kalamazoo Downtown Development Authority.

Like his predecessors and current authority members, Aardema is focused on the needs of riders and the role of transportation in economic development.

“There’s a strong equity piece,” says Aardema. “We help make it possible for all people to fully contribute to the quality of life here.” Aardema cherishes Metro’s partnerships with schools, businesses and nonprofits – including people who can’t afford cars or who can’t drive -- to make this a complete community.

Aardema and his Metro authority colleagues oversee the work of a staff of 110, a budget of roughly \$25 million and more than 100 vehicles.

Aardema’s tenure on the KCTA board is the same as Sean McBride, who joined Metro as executive director in 2012.

“Sean is progressive,” says Aardema. “Under his leadership, we’ve been able to be on the front end of new ideas in transportation . . . environmental responsibility, technology, accessibility and adaptability. Sean also has put together a team that can handle the complexities that come with working with state and federal funds and agencies.”

Authority members find a number of ways to stay in touch with the people they serve. They visit local governments, service clubs, accessibility partners and other organizations to receive public input.

They also support the work of a Local Advisory Board for additional input from riders and other citizens. All their meetings are open to the public.

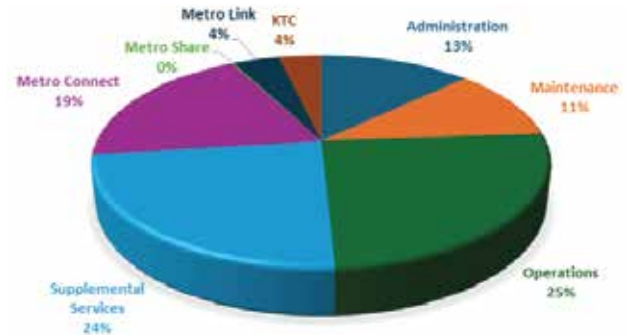


Curtis Aardema, CCTA & KCTA Chair

2024 Operating Revenue & Expenses

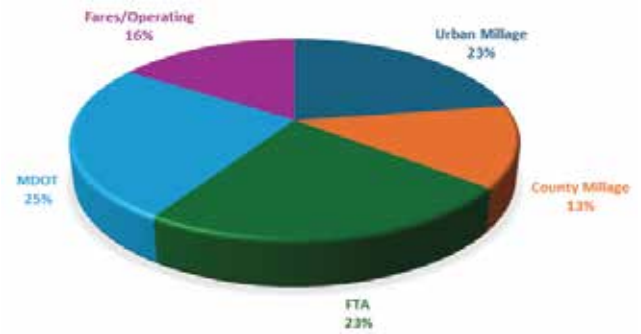
Operating Expenses - \$22,218,314

Administration	\$3,750,790
Maintenance	\$3,192,163
Operations	\$7,363,363
Metro Connect	\$5,664,427
Metro Share	\$58,812
Metro Link	\$1,132,661
Kalamazoo Transportation Center (KTC)	\$1,056,099



Operating Revenue - \$25,717,768

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)	\$6,498,018
Urban Millage	\$5,825,452
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	\$5,995,677
County Millage	\$3,359,069
Fares/Operation	\$4,039,552



Who's Riding Metro?

Once a week, the Brain Injury Association of Michigan (BIAMI) holds a chapter meeting at Disability Network in Kalamazoo. Diverse members from all walks of life gather in the meeting room to discuss important issues facing folks with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), learn about resources and socialize with others who share similar experiences living with a complex disability. A topic that comes up frequently is transportation for members, many of whom are unable to drive themselves.



"Without Connect, I wouldn't be able to get here," said Chapter Secretary Sharon, "I have had my challenges with public transportation, but without it, I wouldn't be able to get anywhere."

"This is why [Metro] is important," said the current chapter president, Tim Sloan, who also sits on the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) said, "Metro programs can help get more people here so we can meet face-to-face." TBIs often impact brain functions such as memory, so face-to-face meetings are a more concrete experience and the sense of camaraderie among members is more satisfying, more impactful and helps build stronger relationships, something group members agreed was important to a fulfilling life.

"We do not have the luxury of driving," stated group member Jayne, "We need public transportation options because we can't just get in a car and go somewhere. We make it work!"

"I ride the bus all the time!" said group member Bobby with an enthusiastic thumbs up. "Awesome!"



While the key subject of the chapter meeting was learning more about how members could benefit from Metro Share and Metro Link, it was also a chance for members to meet in-person and virtually to socialize, talk about challenges they face due to their disability and share how other members have dealt with similar issues.



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LINK**

METRO

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Central County Transportation Authority Board

- Nicole Beauchamp
- Chris Burns
- Dusty Farmer
- Christyn Johnson
- Lisa Mackie
- Jim Pearson
- Greg Rosine
- Garrylee McCormick – Vice-Chair
- Curtis Aardema – Chair

Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority Board

- James Ayers
- Tafari Brown
- Paul Ecklund
- Aditya Rama
- Greg Rosine
- Gary Sigman
- Tim Sloan
- Dusty Farmer – Vice-Chair
- Curtis Aardema – Chair

Metro Leadership

Sean McBride, Executive Director
Greg Vlietstra, Director of Support Services
Keshia Woodson-Sow, Director of Operations
Robert Branch, Deputy Director Fleet & Facilities
Sarah Joshi, Deputy Director of On-Demand Services & Planning