



Sun Van
Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)
Final Report
October 2025

Prepared by:



Developed for:



Table of Contents

1	<i>Executive Summary</i>	4
1.1	Introduction.....	4
1.2	Project Overview.....	4
1.3	Summary of Findings.....	5
1.4	Implementation Plan.....	10
2	<i>Sun Van Usage and Preferences</i>	12
2.1	Service Overview.....	12
2.2	Ridership Analysis	14
2.3	Sun Van Existing Service Outreach	20
2.4	Sun Van Usage and Preference Key Findings	34
3	<i>Operations Review</i>	35
3.1	Service Eligibility.....	35
3.2	Reservations.....	39
3.3	Operations.....	42
3.4	Premium and Non-ADA Services.....	46
4	<i>Peer City Paratransit Review</i>	52
4.1	Methodology.....	52
4.2	NTD Data Analysis	52
4.3	Peer Survey results	62
4.4	Key Findings of Peer Survey	71
5	<i>Draft Recommendations</i>	72
5.1	Service Eligibility Recommendations.....	72
5.2	Reservations Recommendations	72
5.3	Operations Recommendations	73
5.4	Premium and Non-ADA Service Recommendations	73
5.5	Draft Recommendation Outreach	74

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Findings by Federal Requirement	8
Figure 2: Sun Van Service Area Map	13
Figure 3: Annual City of Tucson Demand Response Boardings by Calendar Year	14
Figure 4: Sun Van Boardings by Day of Week (2019 vs. 2023)	15
Figure 5: Sun Van Weekday Boardings by Hour (2019 vs. 2023)	16
Figure 6: 2019 Monthly Boardings by Number of Clients	17
Figure 7: 2023 Monthly Boardings by Number of Clients	17
Figure 8: Sun Van Average Weekday Boardings (2019 vs 2023)	19
Figure 9: In the last month, how often have you used the following transportation services?	21
Figure 10: In the last month, how often have you used the following transportation services?	22
Figure 11: Do you use a mobility device?	23
Figure 12: Current sun van clients.....	29
Figure 13: Non-clients over the age of 65.....	30
Figure 14: Willingness to pay	31
Figure 15: Same-Day Clients by Monthly Same-Day Trip Ranges (Oct-23)	46
Figure 16: Example Survey Question	75
Figure 17: Recommendation Sentiment Percentages	76
Figure 18: Mobility Choice Ride Frequency by Fare	77

Table of Tables

Table 1: Weekday Trip Data by Service and Year	14
Table 2: Sun Van Boardings and Trip Length by Service Type (2019 vs. 2023)	16
Table 3: Top Weekday Boarding Locations (2019 vs 2023)	18
Table 4: Clients who use Sun Van at least five times per week.....	24
Table 5: Clients who use Sun Van less than five times per week	25
Table 6: Clients over the age of 65.....	26
Table 7: Clients under the age of 35	27
Table 8: Non-Clients Preferences	28
Table 9: Percent of Current Clients Willing to Pay at least \$3.00 per Same-Day Trip	31

Table 10: Percent of Non-Clients over 65 Willing to Pay at least \$3.00 per Same-Day Trip	31
Table 11: Peer Eligibility Models	36
Table 12: Fiscal Year 24/25 Call Hold Data	40
Table 13: On-Time Performance by Year and Day Type.....	43
Table 14: October 2023 Weekday On-Time Performance	43
Table 15: Alternative Transportation Service Peer Summary.....	48
Table 16: Demand Response Mode Percent of Total Operating	53
Table 17: Demand Response Boardings per Service Area Capita	54
Table 18: Demand Response Operating Expense per Service Area Capita	55
Table 19: Average Demand Response Trip Length Miles	56
Table 20: Average Demand Response Bus Speed	57
Table 21: Average Demand Response Bus Trip Length (minutes)	58
Table 22: Demand Response Boardings per Revenue Hour	59
Table 23: Demand Response Operating Expense.....	60
Table 24: On-Time Performance	62
Table 25: Excessive Length Trip.....	63
Table 26: Average Answer Call Time	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 27: Complaints	64
Table 28: Missed Trips	65
Table 29: Trips cancelled by customer	66
Table 30: Operators count and budgeted count.....	67
Table 31: Labor Overtime Rate.....	68
Table 32: Paratransit Price.....	69
Table 33: Estimated Rides by Survey Response Type	77

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Sun Van is a complementary paratransit service designed to meet the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the local fixed-route bus service (Sun Tran) or streetcar (Sun Link), due to their disability. Sun Van operates to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, ensuring that eligible individuals have access to safe, reliable, and comparable transportation. Sun Van is operated by RATP Dev USA (RATP Dev), except for the eligibility determination from the City of Tucson (City).

TMD conducted an extensive review of Sun Van over the past year and half and when compared to Peer Systems, finds the system provides reliable, cost-effective, and accessible transportation for people with disabilities, meeting most key federal requirements. However, the report identifies challenges with on-time performance during peak hours, call-hold times, and operational efficiency—highlighting the need to streamline reservations, improve scheduling, and address capacity constraints to further enhance service quality and client satisfaction.

1.2 Project Overview

The primary purpose of this project is to assess the current performance, policies, and procedures of Sun Van, identify areas for improvement, and develop actionable recommendations to optimize service delivery, operational efficiency, and client satisfaction. The following objectives were used when conducting the review and developing recommendations:

- 1. Evaluate existing Sun Van service, policies, and procedures**
- 2. Identify opportunities for improvement to Sun Van and create a more equitable, effective, and efficient transit system**
- 3. Propose changes or expansions for Sun Van service to better serve the community**
- 4. Complement the [Sun Tran COA](#) by developing recommendations for complementary paratransit service**

This project report is divided into the following sections:

- Sun Van Usage and Preferences: This section provides detailed information about where and when Sun Van clients use the service and how these have changed since the pandemic. This section also includes the results of a survey conducted to determine what aspects of the service exceed client expectations and areas that need to be improved.
- Operations Review: This section is based on an on-site review of the service, interviews with key staff, and a review of existing policies and procedures. The section is divided into Service Eligibility, Reservations, Operations, and Premium and Non-ADA Services.

- **Peer Review:** A peer review was conducted of 12 paratransit operations of similar-sized fixed-route agencies. The first part was a review of performance indicators using National Transit Database. The second part was an email survey to collect additional performance metrics and policies.
- **Recommendations:** Based on the evaluation, the project team developed draft recommendations for each of the operational areas reviewed as part of this study. These draft recommendations were then presented to the public for their consideration and feedback was collected at meetings and using a second survey. The results of the survey and in-person outreach events are summarized in this section.

1.3 Summary of Findings

1.3.1 Key Findings by Report Section

The following is a summary of the key findings by report section. Additional details and analysis are available in each section. The findings outline items that need to be addressed for ADA compliance as well as items that could be improved for a more efficient operation or to provide improved client experience.

SUN VAN USAGE AND PREFERENCES

- Sun Van trips returned to 93% of pre-pandemic levels by Fall 2023. During the pandemic, trips decreased by 46% but have steadily increased and have almost reached 2019 levels by the end of 2024.
- Usage is highest on weekdays, with Wednesday seeing the highest number of average daily boardings. Trips had decreased between 2019 and 2023, except for Saturday which saw a slight increase.
- Usage during weekday peak hours has decreased about 19% between 2019 and 2023. Trip usage during midday and hours adjacent to the morning peak have seen an increase.
- Average monthly usage by clients has remained mostly unchanged between 2019 and 2023. The number of unique monthly clients decreased slightly between 2019 and 2023.
- The top boarding locations remained mostly the same between 2019 and 2023. Top destinations are generally social service providers, some of which have newly opened or closed since the pandemic.
- Based on the Sun Van survey #1, the most important aspects of Sun Van for frequent clients are hours when the service is available, on-time drop-off at their destination, and where service is available. The least important are the Sun Van app, reservation call answer time, and cost of riding.
- Based on the Sun Van survey #1, frequent usage clients are most satisfied with safety on-board the vehicle, the cost of riding, and the professionalism of the drivers. They are least satisfied with the Sun Van app, on-time pickups within the 30-minute window, and the length of the ride time.

SERVICE ELIGIBILITY

New applications for service are processed at about the same rate in 2023 as in 2019. The City processed an average of 28 new applications per week in 2024.

- The denial rate for new applicants of 4.5% is lower than average based on the eligibility process. Similar processes to Sun Van see about 7% denial rate based on industry studies.
- The existing medical verification process takes on average 8.9 days based on interviews with eligibility office staff and best practices.
- On-site software is slow for eligibility staff, potentially because of City / Sun Van network overhead connecting via Remote Desktop Access.

RESERVATIONS

- Call hold times regularly exceed five minutes based on on-site observations.
- Reservationists schedule the rides and perform routing tasks while on the phone, which appears to have a significant impact on call lengths and hold times.
- Social service agencies call to make many trips at one time on behalf of clients, which impacts hold time based on staff feedback.
- All calls (ETA's, Cancellations, and Trip Booking) currently flow into one queue. Best practice is to have multiple queues to allow other departments to answer non trip booking calls.
- Trip negotiation is not being used by Reservationists. Clients are always provided with their requested time based on data from the reservation software.
- Pick-up times are being rounded to every five minutes to enable streamlined client communication, instead of using times recommended by scheduling software.
- No dedicated Scheduler as Reservationists schedule trips manually. This appears to impact hold time and cause routing inefficiencies. Currently the Reservationists have an average of one day per week where they are performing scheduling "cleanup" duties off the phone.
- Verifying conditional eligibility trips is time-consuming based on interviews.
- Conditional eligibility is not being consistently enforced by staff.
- Reservationists indicated that they inquire about trip purpose for some same-day trips, though trip purpose limitations are not noted in client-facing materials.
- Subscription trips do not exceed 50% on average (32% in October 2023). Subscription rates slightly exceed 50% on weekdays during the 7am and 3pm hours, which is allowable under the ADA.
- Sun Van noted zero trip denials in October 2023.

OPERATIONS

- Sun Van is not currently meeting their goal of 90% to 91% On-Time Performance (OTP) for pickups. During calendar year 2024, OTP was 87.06%.
- OTP drops below 80% on weekdays during peak periods between 3pm and 5pm.

- Fixed-route comparability is described as 10% more than fixed-route time in Sun Van brochure. Sun Van Monthly Operating Report tracks comparison to transit trip time and 110% of transit plus five minutes, neither of which match language in brochure.
- 15% of weekday trips exceed the on-board time outlined as outlined in the brochure. Sun Van reporting showed that 10% of trips did not meet that standard.
- Five-minute call outs take excessive time based on discussion with Dispatch staff pulling Dispatchers away from actual service monitoring to ensure smooth service delivery.
- Dispatch staff is not fully utilizing Trapeze based on on-site observations. Dispatchers appeared to use the basic features available within the Trapeze application.

PREMIUM AND NON-ADA SERVICES

- Sun Van currently provides premium service (called Optional Service) outside the ADA service area and fixed-route hours. Many of these trips overlap with peak Sun Van trip hours.
- Trips provided to some social service agency sites appear to exceed ADA requirements based on interviews and data analysis. Agencies request that their clients ride in the same dedicated vehicles. Bookings also appear to have the same pick-up and drop-off times, most likely at the request of the agency.
- Social service agencies tie up phone lines to make dozens of trips for clients during peak call periods based on discussion with staff.
- The preference survey had the following findings regarding same-day services:
 - 37% of existing Sun Van clients used Uber or Lyft in the previous month, indicating that many existing clients are familiar with these services.
 - Half of clients indicated that they would use Uber or Lyft if it was offered. Half of those that would use service less than three times per month.
 - Over 92% of clients indicated that they would take Sun OnDemand if available.
 - Clients indicated that they would pay more for Uber/Lyft trips than Sun OnDemand trips of a comparable length.

PEER REVIEW KEY FINDINGS

- The City of Tucson makes a significant investment in demand response transit services compared to its peers.
- Sun Van is highly cost-effective, whether measured per boarding, per revenue hour, or per revenue mile.
- Sun Van has lower on-time performance than its peers.
- Sun Van has an average call-response time for clients.
- Rates of trip cancellation by clients is higher than peers.
- Sun Van is not doing as well as peers in hiring operators to fill open positions since pandemic.
- Sun Van operates more premium services than their peers.

1.3.2 How Sun Van Meets Federal Requirements

Paratransit regulations are established to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to reliable and equitable transportation services. These regulations, mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), require transit agencies to provide complementary paratransit services that are comparable to the fixed-route services offered to the general public. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for Sun Van, as it guarantees that all passengers, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities, can travel with dignity and independence. Meeting these standards not only reflects Sun Van's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility but also helps avoid potential legal repercussions and enhances the overall quality of service provided to the community.

Figure 1 outlines each of the federal requirements for ADA paratransit and indicates areas where there were findings based on our analysis. The actions included in the Implementation Plan were primarily developed to address the areas where Sun Van is deficient and secondarily to improve the efficiency of the service and improve the client experience.

Figure 1: Findings by Federal Requirement

Federal Requirement	References	Findings
Comparable complementary paratransit service	37.121	None
Absence of administrative burden	37.125 & 37.5	None
ADA paratransit eligibility standards	37.123(e) (1)-(3)	None
Accessible information	37.125(b)	None
Eligibility determinations within 21 days	37.125(c)	Small number of eligibility determinations exceeded 21 days
Written eligibility determinations including specific reasons for denials or temporary or conditional eligibility	37.125(d)(e)	None
Recertification of eligibility at reasonable intervals	35.125(f)	None
Administrative appeals process for denials and conditional eligibility	37.125(g)	None
Complementary paratransit for visitors	37.127	None
Types of service	37.129	
Service area	37.131(a)	Exceed service area boundaries as premium service
Response time	37.131(b)	None
Fares	37.131(c)	None
No trip purpose restrictions	37.131(d)	Feedback received during interviews that same-day medical trips received preference over other trip types. Otherwise, trip purposes have not been tracked or used for next day service.
Hours and days of service	37.131(e)	Exceed federal regulations by allowing Sun Van clients to book trips outside service hours as premium service
Absence of capacity constraints	37.131(f)	Long hold times and low on-time performance on weekdays may be capacity constraints

Federal Requirement	References	Findings
No restrictions on the number of trips provided to an individual	37.131(f)(1)	None
No waiting list for access to the service	37.131(f)(2)	None
No substantial numbers of significantly untimely pickups for initial or return trips	37.131(f)(3)(i)(a)	Sun Van is not meeting their On-Time Performance goal during weekday peak and midday hours.
No substantial numbers of trip denials or missed trips	37.131(f)(3)(i)(b)	None
No substantial numbers of trips with excessive trip lengths	37.131(f)(3)(i)(c)	Sun Van does not have a goal, but 10-15% of trips exceed their current standards
No operational patterns or practices significantly limiting service availability (telephone hold times)	37.131(f)	Call hold times for reservations are long and may be limiting availability
No operational patterns or practices significantly limiting service availability (untimely drop-offs)	37.131(f)	Sun Van is not meeting their On-Time Performance goal during weekday morning and afternoon peak hours.
Subscription Service	37.133	None
No-show, late cancel and reasonable service suspension & appeal policies	37.125(h)(1)-(3)	No-Show policy needs to include allowance for circumstances outside of client's control.
Complaint Resolution & Compliance Information	27.13(a)(b)&27.121	None
Nondiscrimination	37.5	None
Training	37.173	None
Service under contract with a private entity	37.23	None
Service provided by another public entity	37.21(b)	None
Coordination of service	37.139(g)	None

1.4 Implementation Plan

The study identified 26 actions to improve Sun Van service. Some of the actions are client-facing and others are internal to City and/or Sun Van operations as noted. The client-facing actions have been refined based on input received from the public. Implementation has been divided into short, medium, and long-term timeframes based on importance and lead time needed. Sun Van has already begun implementing many of these actions as noted in bold parenthesis below.

SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS (LESS THAN 6 MONTHS)

Category	Action	Responsible Parties	Client-Facing/ Internal Change
Service Eligibility	Diagnose technology issues that make Trapeze CERT slow for City eligibility staff	City & Sun Van	Internal
Reservations	Offer negotiated trip times (Implemented Jul-25)	Sun Van	Client Facing
Reservations	Provide pick-up windows to the minute instead of rounding to every five minutes (Implemented Jul-25)	Sun Van	Client Facing
Reservations	Update telephone script with trip negotiation steps. (Implemented Jul-25)	Sun Van	Internal
Reservations	Conduct training on trip negotiation (Implemented Jun-25)	Sun Van	Internal
Reservations	Implement Trip Negotiation in Pass Web and App to mirror call-in book parameters (Implemented Jul-25)	Sun Van	Internal
Reservations	Convert two Reservationist positions to new “Router” positions (In Progress)	Sun Van	Internal
Operations	Conduct software training for Dispatchers on strategic route monitoring (Implemented Jun-25)	Sun Van	Internal
Operations	Establish on-time performance procedures for Dispatchers, Operators, and Road Supervisors (In Progress)	Sun Van	Internal
Operations	Change On-Board comparability standard to less than 5% of trips exceeding fixed-route time plus 25 minutes	Sun Van	Internal
Premium and Non-ADA Services	Following implementation of above recs and following assessment of progress towards improved OTP, consider temporarily narrowing Sun Van “Optional” service to before 7am, between 10am-2pm and after 7pm on weekdays until on-time performance and on-board time meet standards.	City & Sun Van	Client Facing

MEDIUM-TERM IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS (LESS THAN 18 MONTHS)

Category	Action	Responsible Parties	Client-Facing/ Internal Change
Service Eligibility	Develop process to consistently track and enforce No-Show policy. (In Progress)	City or Sun Van	Internal
Service Eligibility	Update the No-Show policy to reflect ADA requirements and industry best practices. (In Progress)	City or Sun Van	Internal
Reservation	Implement a new phone tree to have dedicated sub-queues for each call category. (Implemented Jul-25)	Sun Van	Internal
Reservations	Limit calls to no more than ten reservations per call to reduce call hold times.	City & Sun Van	Client-Facing
Operations	Restore paratransit driver shifts to 2019 levels to improve on-time performance and on-board time (180 total operators).	Sun Van	Internal
Operations	Track and report service performance data by service type (ex. Sun Van and Pima Co) and ADA vs Premium services.	City & Sun Van	Internal
Premium and Non-ADA Services	Negotiate premium trip rates with social service agencies or require these trips to be handled the same way as non-agency trips.	City & Sun Van	Internal

LONG TERM IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS (18 TO 36 MONTHS)

Category	Action	Responsible Parties	Client-Facing/ Internal Change
Service Eligibility	Explore moving eligibility process within Sun Van. (In Progress)	City	Internal
Service Eligibility	Simplify medical verification form and require applicants to provide the medical verification form with the rest of application.	City	Client-Facing
Reservations	Implement voice response and/or texting options for clients to receive updates on the ride status.	Sun Van	Client-Facing
Operations	Implement voice response and/or texting options for five-minute calls before your ride arrives.	Sun Van	Client-Facing
Premium and Non-ADA Services	Consider offering Alternative Transportation pilot program to Sun Van clients for same-day trips.	City & Sun Van	Client-Facing
Premium and Non-ADA Services	Evaluate co-mingling of premium service trips with Sun On-Demand service where there are overlaps.	City & Sun Van	Internal
Premium and Non-ADA Services	Sunset premium ADA service 12 months after implementation of Alternative RTransportation pilot program.	City & Sun Van	Internal

2 Sun Van Usage and Preferences

2.1 Service Overview

To use Sun Van, clients must be found eligible through the City’s ADA Paratransit Eligibility Office. Some clients are considered unconditionally eligible if their disability prevents them from boarding or riding, the bus or streetcar service, even with the lift or ramp, or getting to or from a bus stop. Some clients are found to be conditionally eligible if their disability prevents them from using fixed-route or streetcar service some of the time, due to factors like specific medical conditions that make travel unsafe or impossible, the inability to navigate certain routes or environments, or temporary disabilities.

Sun Van provides next-day service within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the bus and streetcar network during the hours that these service operate as required by the ADA. Sun Van also offers premium service to areas in the City and Tucson, outside of the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile minimum requirement. The complementary paratransit areas are shown in yellow, peach, and green in Figure 2. The premium service area (also known as “Optional”) is shown in blue.

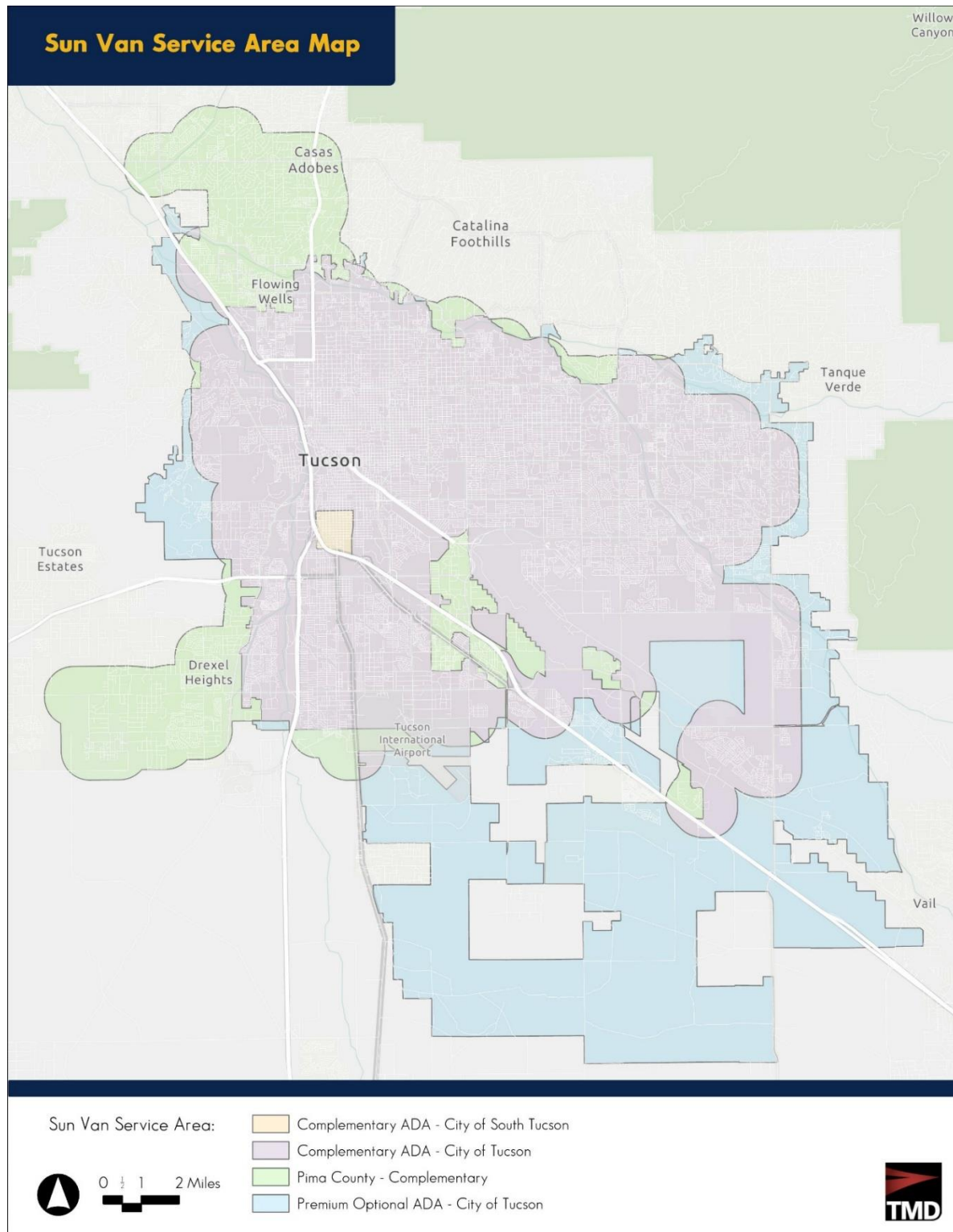
Sun Van offers rides during times that reflect the nearest fixed-route schedule. These hours generally fall between 4:30a.m. and midnight but vary depending on the route. Sun Van rides should take no more than 10% longer than a similar trip on Sun Tran, Sun Link, or Sun Shuttle Route 450, including time needed to walk to/from the stop and transfer between routes. Sun Van provides service to the same areas as Sun Tran, covering most of the Tucson metropolitan area. Sun Van offers premium service to clients wanting to travel outside of the fixed-route operating hours.

Sun Van has been fare-free since 2020, when the City of Tucson made all public transportation services free. Sun Van service must remain free while the Sun Tran and Sun Link are free per ADA regulations, which allows transit agencies to only charge Sun Van clients double the fixed-route fare. Note that this fare restriction does not apply to the Sun Van premium service, which is not regulated by ADA.

Sun Van can transport all mobility devices regardless of size or weight as long as the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them. A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) with the same origin and destination can travel with the client if authorized by the ADA Paratransit Eligibility Office ahead of time. PCA’s travel for free even when fares are charged. Sun Van allows up to four bags or packages per client. The driver is not allowed to carry items into homes.

If a client does not cancel their trip at least two hours in advance, a no-show will be recorded. No-shows for reasons beyond a clients control or due to Sun Van error will not be counted against a client.

Figure 2: Sun Van Service Area Map



2.2 Ridership Analysis

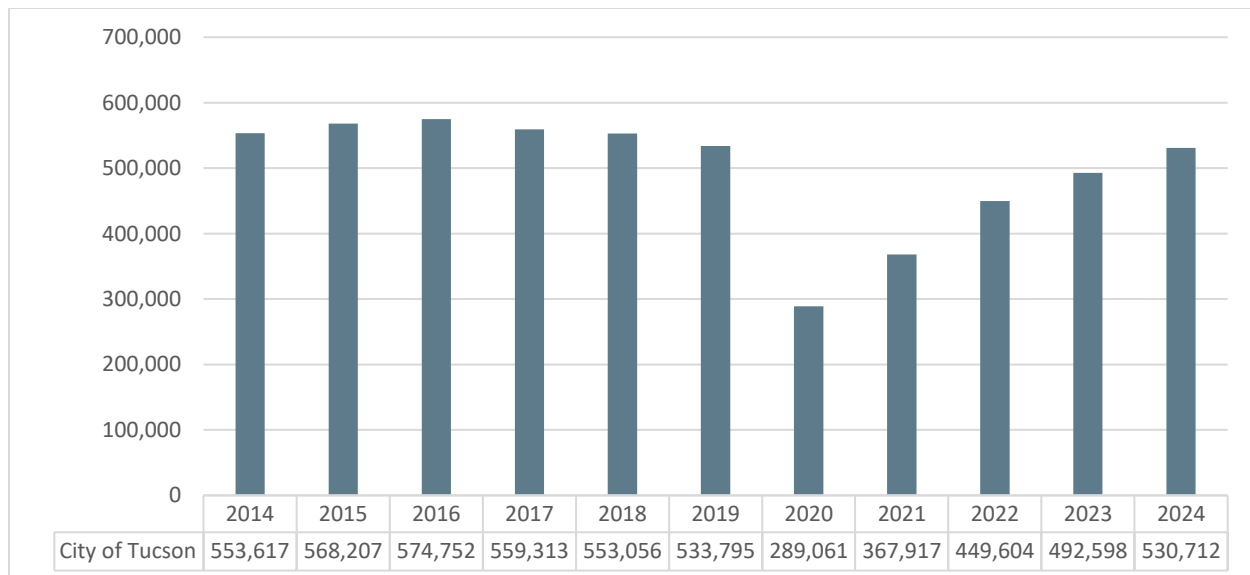
The consultant team was provided with one month of Sun Van trip data for both October 2019 and October 2023 to compare how the service has changed since the pandemic. The analysis focused on Sun Van trips, though trips were provided for other services as shown in Table 1. Across all the services, average weekday trips provided were 3.9% lower in 2023 than 2019.

Table 1: Weekday Trip Data by Service and Year

Service	2019 Average Weekday Trips	2023 Average Weekday Trips	Weekday Change in Trips
Sun Van (Tucson)	1,516.8	1,433.7	(83.1)
Pima County	233.6	193.8	(39.8)
South Tucson	14.5	13.1	(1.4)
Marana	5.0	1.8	(3.2)
Oro Valley	0.3	0.1	(0.2)
Sahuarita	0.8	0.0	(0.8)
Total	1,771.0	1,642.5	(68.5)

Based on data reported to the National Transit Database, annual Demand Response boardings reported by the City of Tucson have continued to recover to near pre-pandemic levels since 2023 as shown in Figure 3. It is important to note that the NTD data includes both the Sun Van and Sun On Demand microtransit service which started during the pandemic.

Figure 3: Annual City of Tucson Demand Response Boardings by Calendar Year



2.2.1 Usage by Day Type

The Sun Van service is used more frequently on weekdays than weekends, with Wednesdays being the most popular. Figure 4 compares average boardings by day of the week between 2019 and 2023. Boardings in 2023 are down across all day types, with the exception of Saturdays. This is likely because of changing travel patterns post-pandemic, which has seen higher weekend activity for all travel.

Figure 4: Sun Van Boardings by Day of Week (2019 vs. 2023)

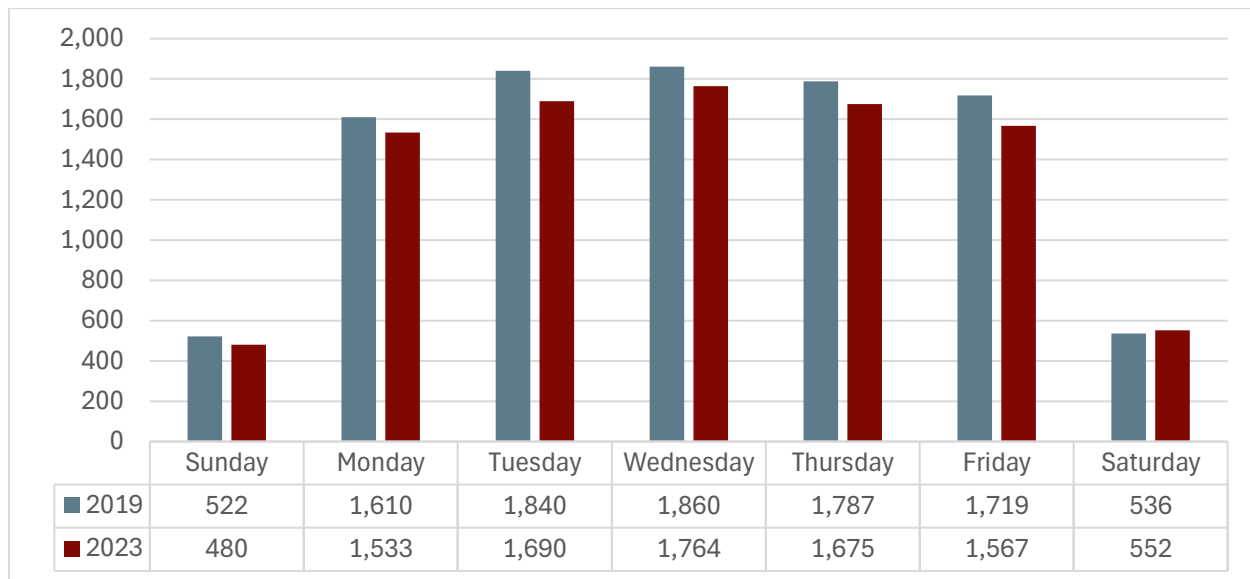
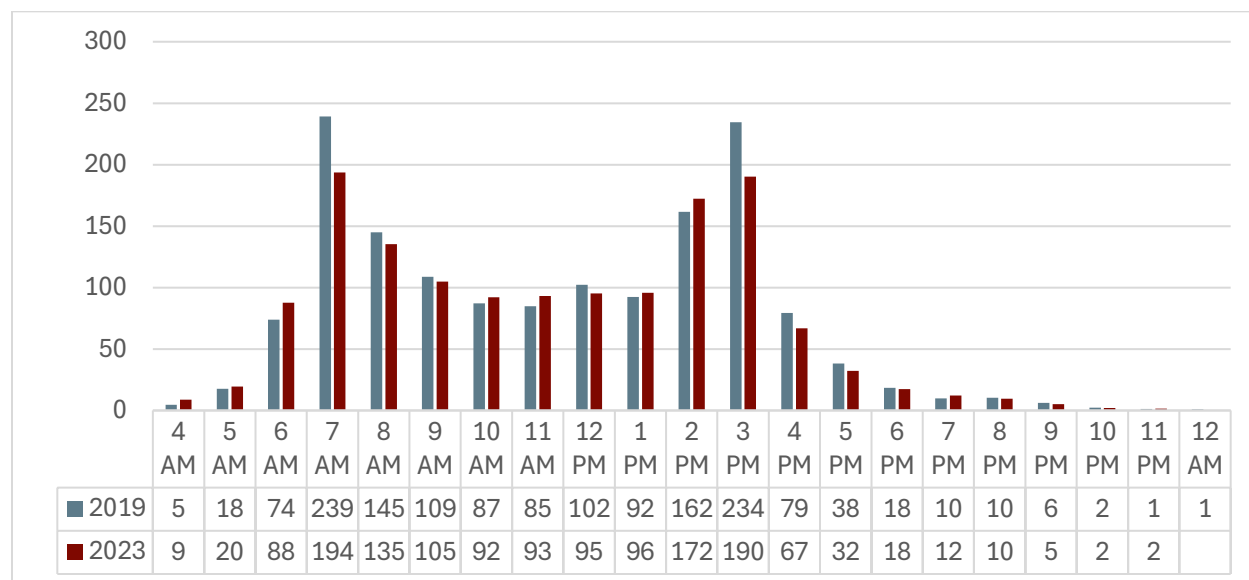


Figure 5 shows the change in average weekday boardings by hour between the two years. The 2023 trips are more distributed throughout the day with the largest decrease during the 7am and 3pm hours. Trips have increased in 2023 during midday and just before and after the peak hours. Early morning and late evening trips are about the same. This flattening of the peaks is advantageous to paratransit operations as it should not require as many overall vehicles during the peak hours, which are the most difficult times to serve.

Figure 5: Sun Van Weekday Boardings by Hour (2019 vs. 2023)



2.2.2 Average Trip Length

The average trip length for ADA trips on Sun Van increased slightly between 2019 and 2023. In 2023 the average trip was 6.2 miles and took 31 minutes. Premium service trips were longer at 8.1 miles and 31.5 minutes. The premium trip length decreased between 2019 and 2023. The premium trips are likely longer because of the extended geographic area covered by the premium service zone. The 60 premium trips per day represents only 5% of the total Sun Van trips.

Table 2: Sun Van Boardings and Trip Length by Service Type (2019 vs. 2023)

Service	2019 Avg Daily Boardings	2019 Avg Trip Length (Miles)	2019 Avg Trip Length (Min)	2023 Avg Daily Boardings	2023 Avg Trip Length (Miles)	2023 Avg Trip Length (Min)
ADA	1,181	6.1	29.5	1,085	6.2	31.0
Premium	60	8.9	35.8	67	8.1	31.5
Total	1,241	6.3	29.8	1,152	6.3	31.0

2.2.3 Boardings by Client

The number of unique monthly clients decreased from 1,449 in 2019 to 1,223 in 2023. Of the 1,223 unique clients in 2023, 1,014 also used the service in 2019. This means that more clients stopped using the service between 2023 and 2019 than started using the service. Overall monthly trips per client increased 2% from 15.7 to 16.0 trips.

A sentiment discussed with the project team was that the Fare Free program was causing existing clients to use the service more often. To analyze this, we grouped clients usage frequency by year as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Each bar represents the number of trips a client used during the month, with the first column representing clients taking between 1 and 6 trips. In general, the number of clients using the service between 20 and 40 times per month increased by 4.2%, while the number of clients using it more than 40 times per month decreased by 2.3%.

Figure 6: 2019 Monthly Boardings by Number of Clients

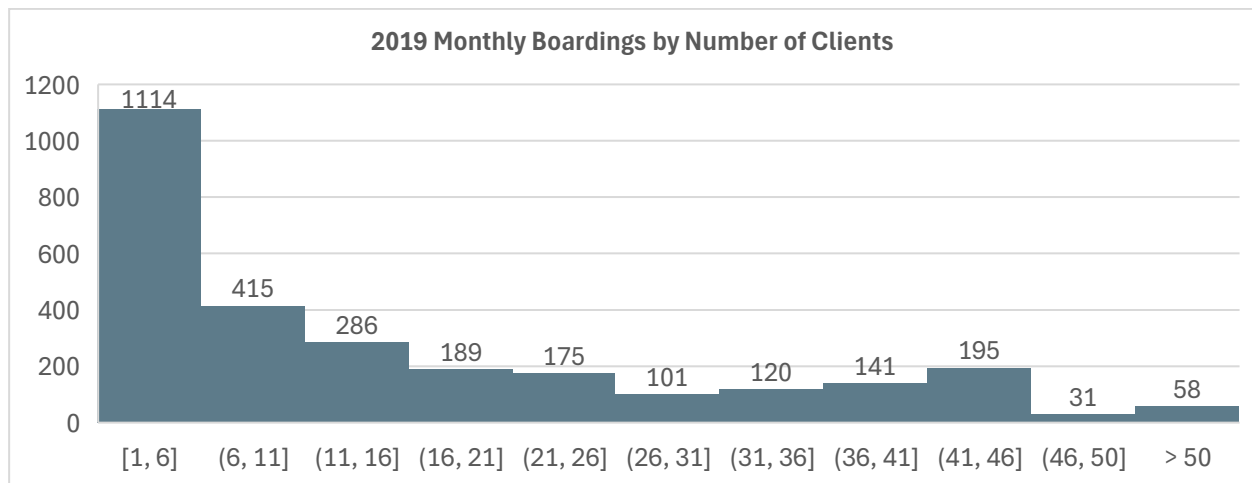
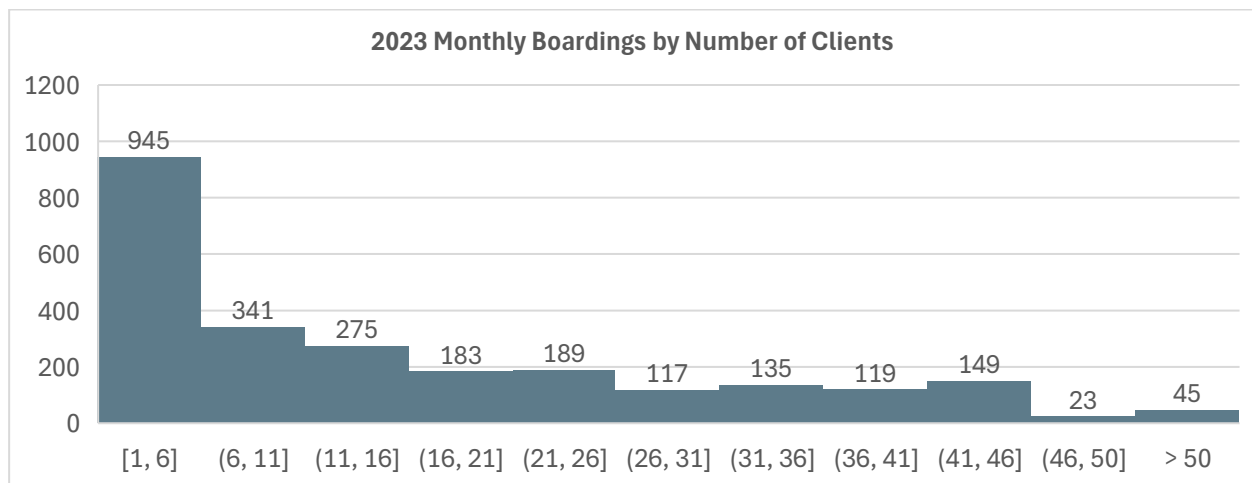


Figure 7: 2023 Monthly Boardings by Number of Clients



2.2.4 Top Boardings Locations

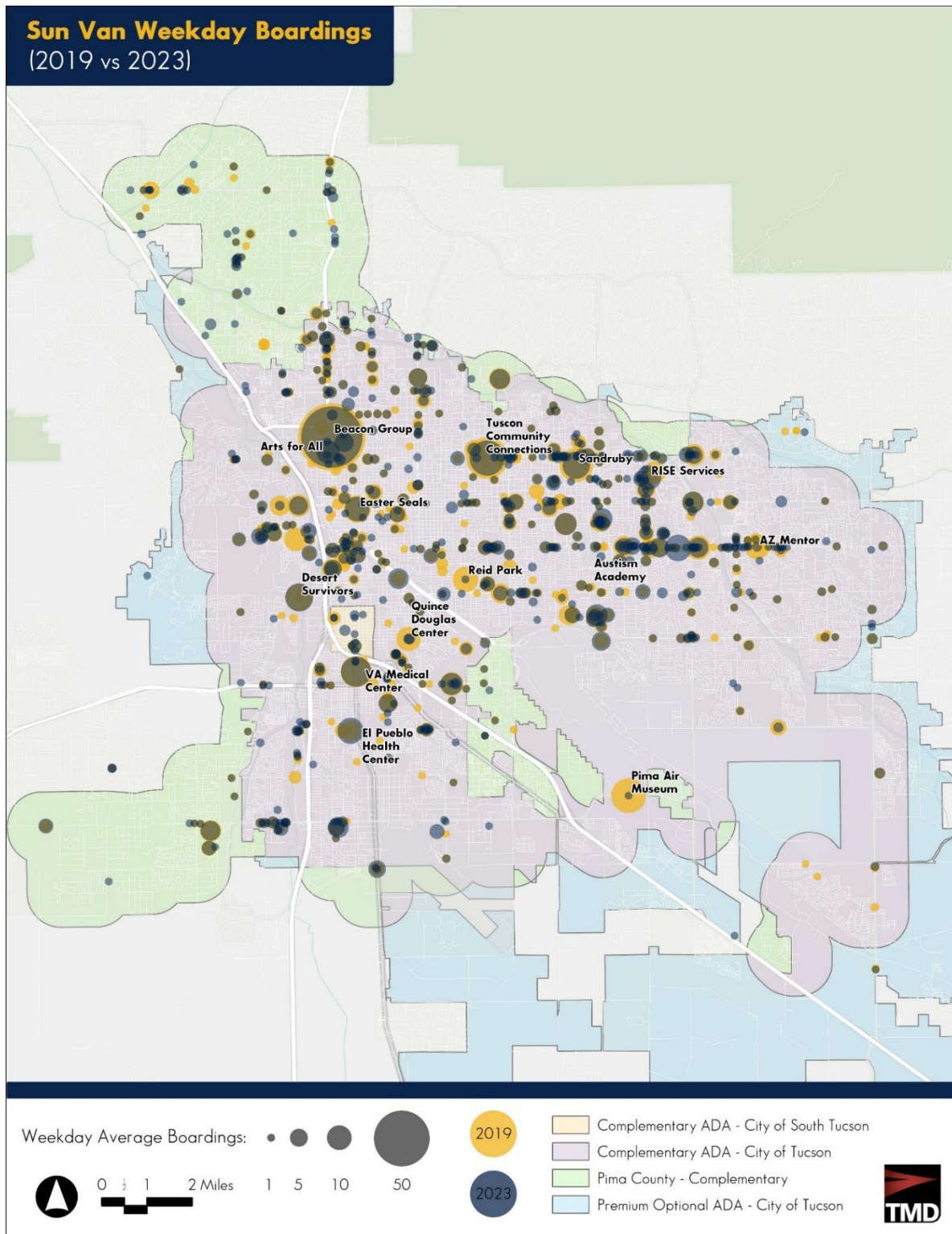
Another area we explored was whether the destination clients were going to and from changed between the two years. During the pandemic, many social service providers closed or moved their services online because of social distancing. Table 3 is a summary of the top weekday boarding locations across both years. Many of the locations are the same and have similar trip numbers. They are almost all service providers for persons with disabilities. The largest location, Beacon Group, had a slight reduction in daily trips from 74.3 to 61.6. Autism Academy and El Pueblo Health Center had the largest increase. In addition to Beacon Group, Tucson Community Connections, Quincie Douglas Center, AZ Mentor, Pima Air Museum, and Reid Park saw the largest decreases. The change in the top destinations makes sense because of the pandemic and time between years as service providers have opened and closed during this time.

Table 3: Top Weekday Boarding Locations (2019 vs 2023)

Location	2019 Average Weekday Boardings	2023 Average Weekday Boardings
Beacon Group	74.3	61.6
Tucson Community Connections	28.2	20.5
VA Medical Center	15.7	15.3
Desert Survivors	12.1	13.0
Sandrubby	18.7	12.4
Autism Academy	1.0	11.8
El Pueblo Health Center	6.8	11.3
RISE Services	4.4	9.9
Easter Seals	12.2	9.9
Arts for All	5.4	8.9
Quincie Douglas Center	9.8	1.8
AZ Mentor	9.9	1.5
Pima Air Museum	20.0	1.0
Reid Park	10.5	1.0

Figure 4 is a map of the average weekday boardings by location comparing 2019 in orange and 2023 in blue. The size of circle represents the number of daily boardings. The top locations are shown on the map for reference. Most of the boardings are in the central and eastern parts of Tucson, with activity clusters along East Broadway, North Oracle Rd, and East Grant Rd.

Figure 8: Sun Van Average Weekday Boardings (2019 vs 2023)



2.3 Sun Van Existing Service Outreach

2.3.1 Introduction

In March 2024, Sun Van launched a survey to collect feedback on how current clients use the service as well as priorities for future potential service improvements. Over two months, Sun Van collected a total of 912 responses. Survey responses are analyzed based on whether respondents were current Sun Van clients or potential Sun Van clients (respondents over the age of 65 or respondents with a disability not currently registered with Sun Van). This report summarizes the key takeaways from the survey responses.

2.3.2 Current Use of Services

CLIENT STATUS

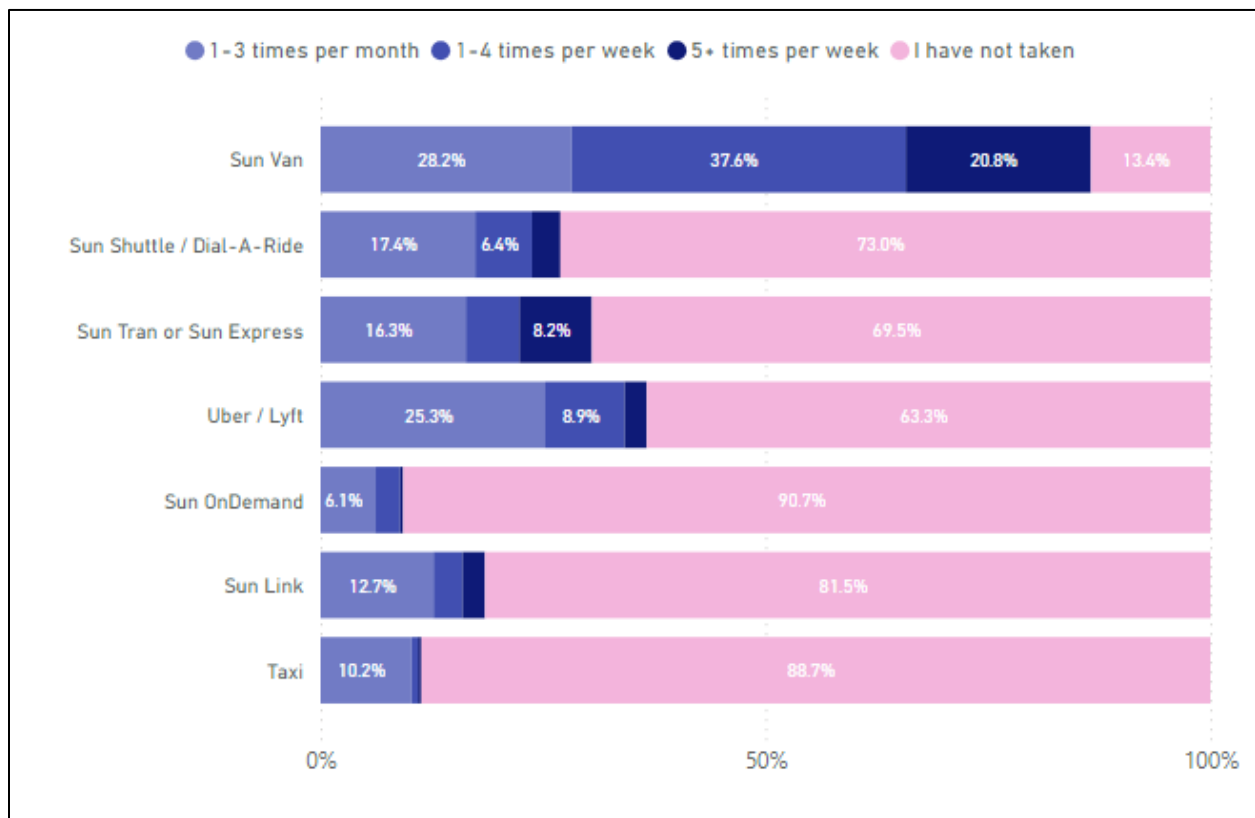
The survey was open to both current Sun Van clients and the general public. Responses from non-clients were further split into seniors over the age of 65 not currently eligible for Sun Van and persons with disabilities not currently eligible for Sun Van. Overall, 34% of responses were from current clients. A small percentage of these respondents (14%) said they used Sun Van at least 1-3 times per month, contradicting the statement that they are not current Sun Van clients. These could be companions who are not Sun Van clients but use Sun Van services.

TRIP FREQUENCY

Current clients

Out of the 308 respondents who are current Sun Van clients, 21% use Sun Van more than five times a week, 38% use it one to four times per week, and 28% use it one to three times per month. Sun Van clients also use available fixed-route services (30%), Sun Shuttle/Dial-a-Ride (27%), Sun Link (18%), and Sun On Demand (9%). The second most common mode of travel for Sun Van clients is Uber/Lyft, used by 37%. Taxis are about one third as popular as Uber/Lyft.

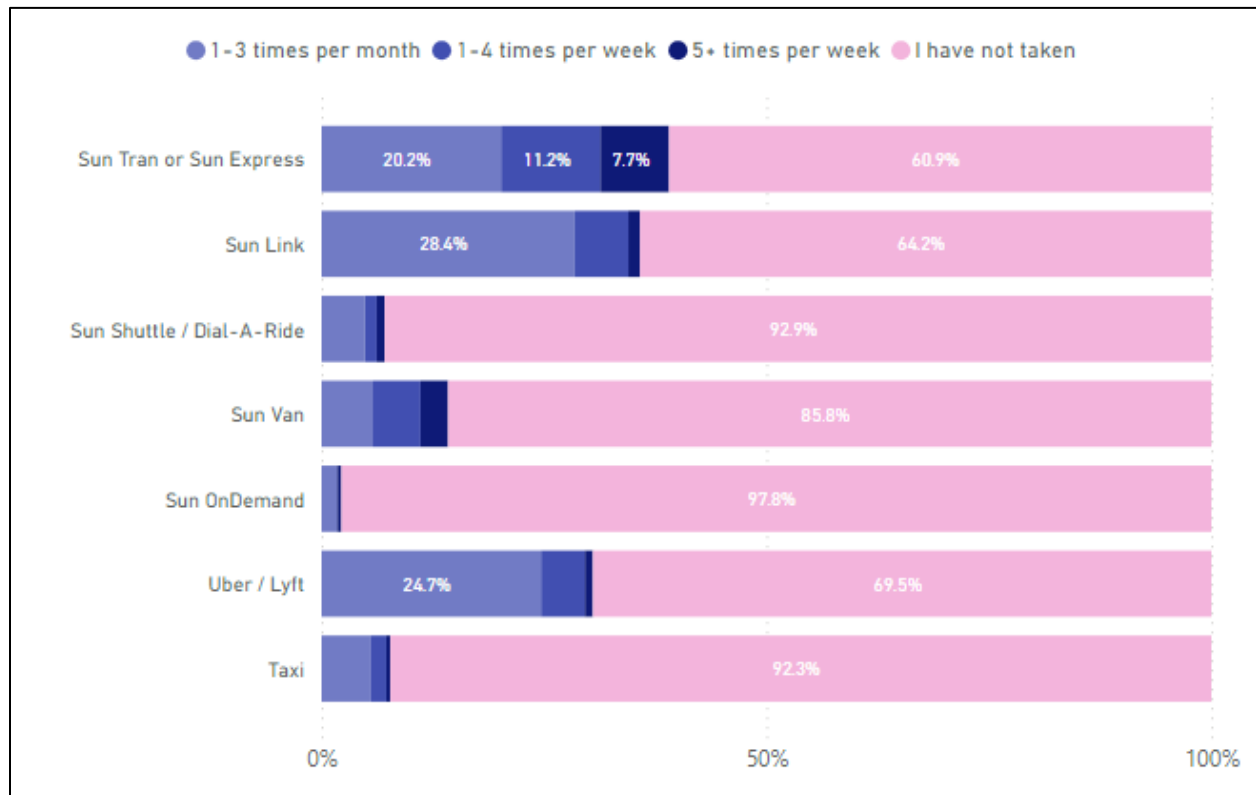
Figure 9: In the last month, how often have you used the following transportation services?



Non-clients over the age of 65

There were 246 respondents who reported they were not current Sun Van clients but were over the age of 65. These respondents would potentially be eligible for proposed same-day services provided by a third party. About 40% of these clients use Sun Tran or Sun Express, 36% use Sun Link (double the percentage of current Sun Van clients), and 7% use Sun Shuttle or Dial-a-Ride. Use of Uber/Lyft outweighs taxis by a factor of 4:1.

Figure 10: In the last month, how often have you used the following transportation services?

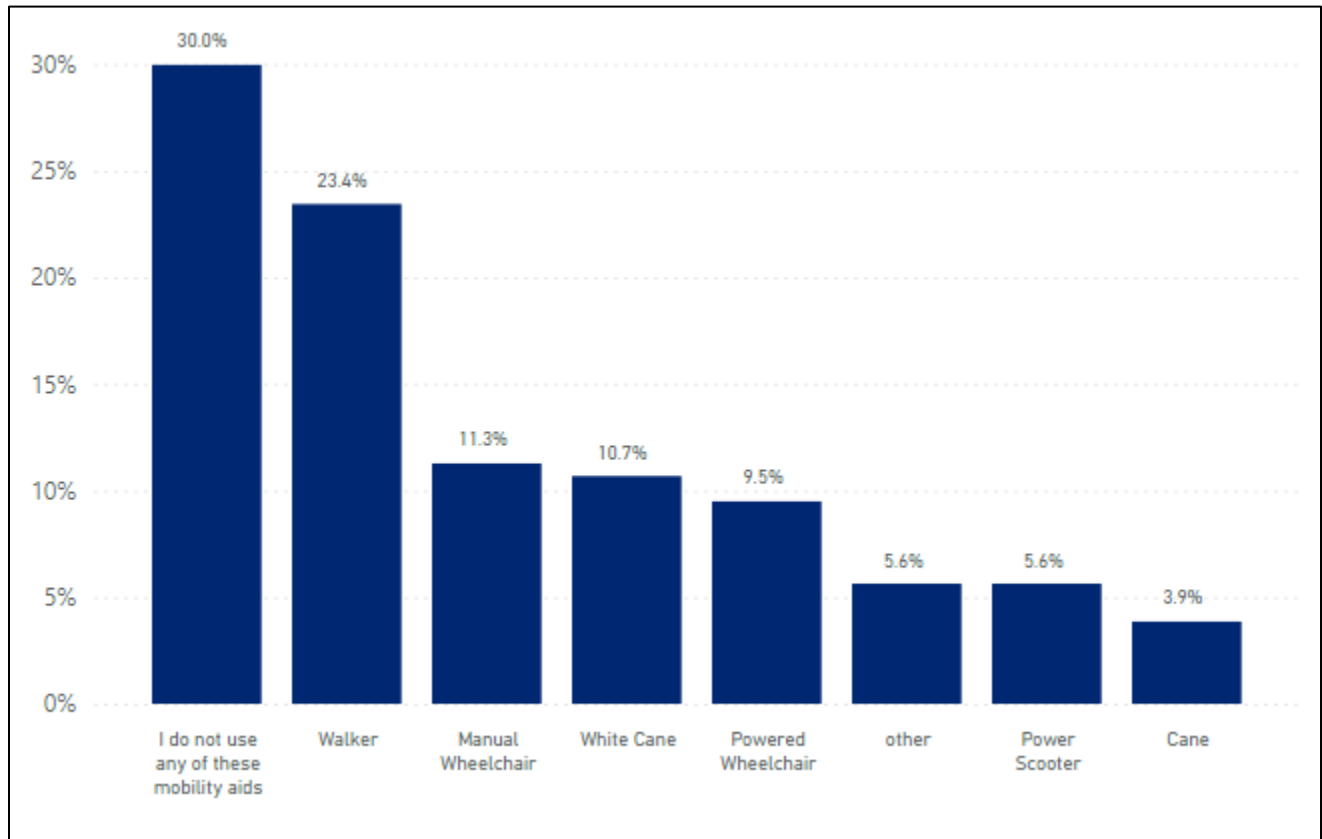


TRIP CHARACTERISTICS

The following applies to the 308 respondents who currently use Sun Van:

- 25% have a personal care attendant or a companion that accompanies them on their trips. For those who have someone ride with them, 58% are accompanied 1-3 times a month, 26% are accompanied 1-4 times per week, and 16% are accompanied more than five times per week.
- 70% of respondents use a mobility aid.

Figure 11: Do you use a mobility device?



2.3.3 Client Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rank on a scale of 1-5 how important 14 different service attributes are to them, with a score of 5 being the highest. Current clients were also asked how satisfied they were with the same attributes. The relationship between the “importance rating” and the “satisfaction rating” can identify gaps where Sun Van is falling below client expectations in service delivery.

CURRENT CLIENTS

Clients who use sun van at least five times per week

There were 62 respondents who currently ride Sun Van service at least five times per week, giving it an average rating of 3.87/5.00, and an average importance vs. satisfaction gap score of 0.64.

- **Most important** to frequent clients is hours when service is available, on-time drop-off at their destination, and where service is available to, all receiving importance scores over 4.85.
- **Least important** is the Sun Van app, reservation call answer time, and cost of riding, all scoring below 4.5 (Sun Van app scores as low as 3.9).
- Current clients are **most satisfied** with safety on-board the vehicle, the cost of riding, and the professionalism of the drivers, all receiving satisfaction scores over 4.4.

- Current clients are **least satisfied** with the Sun Van app, on-time pickups within the 30-minute window, and the length of the ride time, all receiving satisfaction scores below 3.6.

Table 4: Clients who use Sun Van at least five times per week

Attribute	Average of Importance	Average of Satisfaction	Import Satisfaction Gap
on-time drop-off at your destination	4.89	3.64	-1.25
on-time pickup within the 30-minute window	4.75	3.53	-1.22
ability to schedule a ride when you want it	4.77	3.77	-1.00
length of the ride time	4.57	3.58	-1.00
how far in advance trips reservation are accepted	4.74	3.88	-0.85
where service is available to	4.85	4.02	-0.84
hours when service is available	4.93	4.21	-0.72
reservation call answer time	4.45	3.83	-0.62
Sun Van App	3.90	3.43	-0.47
comfort of ride	4.50	4.10	-0.40
professionalism of reservations staff	4.74	4.35	-0.39
professionalism of driver	4.62	4.36	-0.26
safety onboard vehicle	4.78	4.65	-0.14
cost of riding	4.49	4.59	0.10
Total	4.65	4.01	-0.64

Clients who use sun van less than five times per week

There were 236 respondents who currently ride Sun Van service less than five times per week, giving it an average rating of 4.12/5.00, and an average importance vs. satisfaction gap score of 0.34.

- **Most important** to less frequent clients is on-time drop-off at their destination, the ability to schedule a ride when they want it, and an on-time pickup within the 30-minute window, all receiving importance scores over 4.75.
- **Least important** is the Sun Van app, comfort of the ride, and length of the ride time, all scoring below 4.25 (Sun Van app scores as low as 3.58).
- Less frequent clients are **most satisfied** with safety on-board the vehicle, the cost of riding, and the professionalism of the drivers, all receiving satisfaction scores over 4.5.
- Less frequent clients are **least satisfied** with the Sun Van app, the ability to schedule a ride when they want it, and the length of their ride time, all receiving satisfaction scores below 3.82 (Sun Van app as low as 3.23).

Table 5: Clients who use Sun Van less than five times per week

Attribute	Average of Importance	Average of Satisfaction	Import Satisfaction Gap
ability to schedule a ride when you want it	4.80	3.76	-1.03
on-time drop-off at your destination	4.83	4.01	-0.81
on-time pickup within the 30-minute window	4.76	3.98	-0.78
where service is available to	4.71	4.00	-0.71
length of the ride time	4.22	3.82	-0.40
hours when service is available	4.63	4.23	-0.39
Sun Van App	3.58	3.23	-0.35
reservation call answer time	4.28	3.96	-0.33
how far in advance trips reservation are accepted	4.32	4.11	-0.21
professionalism of reservations staff	4.57	4.45	-0.12
professionalism of driver	4.55	4.57	0.02
comfort of ride	4.18	4.20	0.02
safety onboard vehicle	4.64	4.67	0.03
cost of riding	4.42	4.67	0.24
Total	4.48	4.14	-0.34

Clients over the age of 65

There were 148 respondents over the age of 65 who currently ride Sun Van service, giving it an average rating of 4.33/5.00, and an average importance vs. satisfaction score of 0.08.

- **Most important** to clients over 65 is an on-time drop-off at their destination, the ability to schedule a ride when they want it, and safety on-board the vehicle, all receiving importance scores over 4.7.
- **Least important** is the Sun Van app, length of the ride time, comfort of the ride, all scoring below 4.2 (Sun Van app scores as low as 3.25).
- Current clients are **most satisfied** with safety on-board the vehicle, the cost of riding, and the professionalism of the drivers, all receiving satisfaction scores over 4.7.
- Current clients are **least satisfied** with the Sun Van app, the length of the ride time, and the ability to schedule a ride when they want it, all receiving satisfaction scores below 4.1.

Table 6: Clients over the age of 65

Attribute	Average of Importance	Average of Satisfaction	Import Satisfaction Gap
ability to schedule a ride when you want it	4.71	4.13	-0.58
on-time drop-off at your destination	4.79	4.24	-0.55
on-time pickup within the 30-minute window	4.67	4.22	-0.45
where service is available to	4.70	4.30	-0.40
length of the ride time	4.12	4.04	-0.08
hours when service is available	4.56	4.50	-0.07
reservation call answer time	4.18	4.18	-0.01
how far in advance trips reservation are accepted	4.28	4.32	0.04
professionalism of reservations staff	4.61	4.67	0.06
comfort of ride	4.17	4.24	0.07
safety onboard vehicle	4.70	4.81	0.11
professionalism of driver	4.60	4.73	0.13
Sun Van App	3.25	3.46	0.21
cost of riding	4.39	4.73	0.34
Total	4.43	4.36	-0.08

Clients under the age of 35

There were 42 respondents under the age of 35 who current ride Sun Van service, giving it an average rating of 3.81/5.00, and an average importance vs. satisfaction score of 0.73.

- **Most important** to clients under 35 is the ability to schedule a ride when they want it, and safety on-board the vehicle, all receiving importance scores over 4.7.
- **Least important** is the Sun Van app, length of the ride time, comfort of the ride, all scoring below 4.2 (Sun Van app scores as low as 3.25).
- Current clients are **most satisfied** with safety on-board the vehicle, the cost of riding, and the professionalism of the drivers, all receiving satisfaction scores over 4.7.
- Current clients are **least satisfied** with the Sun Van app, the length of the ride time, and the ability to schedule a ride when they want it, all receiving satisfaction scores below 4.1.

Table 7: Clients under the age of 35

Attribute	Average of Importance	Average of Satisfaction	Import Satisfaction Gap
on-time drop-off at your destination	4.88	3.46	-1.41
ability to schedule a ride when you want it	4.93	3.57	-1.36
on-time pickup within the 30-minute window	4.85	3.51	-1.34
where service is available to	4.74	3.63	-1.11
length of the ride time	4.54	3.44	-1.10
reservation call answer time	4.49	3.76	-0.73
Sun Van App	4.00	3.29	-0.71
professionalism of reservations staff	4.83	4.17	-0.66
hours when service is available	4.73	4.14	-0.59
how far in advance trips reservation are accepted	4.39	3.86	-0.53
safety onboard vehicle	4.79	4.55	-0.24
professionalism of driver	4.73	4.53	-0.21
comfort of ride	4.51	4.35	-0.16
cost of riding	4.58	4.58	0.00
Total	4.65	3.92	-0.73

Non-clients

While the 604 non-clients cannot provide satisfaction scores, they can rank the service attributes in order of importance to them. Average importance scores were overall lower, averaging 4.22 while current clients had an average importance score of 4.51. Scoring the highest was safety on-board the vehicle – not an uncommon response from non-clients who are concerned about the perceived safety of public transportation. The geographic area where service is available is the second highest in importance, and may have been from respondents who live outside of the Sun Van service area. On-time drop-offs ranked third highest in importance, consistent with responses from current clients. Least important were how far in advance trips can be reserved, the Sun Van app, and the length of the ride.

Table 8: Non-Clients Preferences

Attribute	Average of Importance
safety onboard vehicle	4.53
where service is available to	4.52
on-time drop-off at your destination	4.49
on-time pickup within the 30-minute window	4.40
hours when service is available	4.39
professionalism of driver	4.32
ability to schedule a ride when you want it	4.27
professionalism of reservations staff	4.27
cost of riding	4.19
reservation call answer time	4.03
comfort of ride	4.00
how far in advance trips reservation are accepted	3.92
Sun Van App	3.85
length of the ride time	3.80
Total	4.22

2.3.4 Same-Day Trips

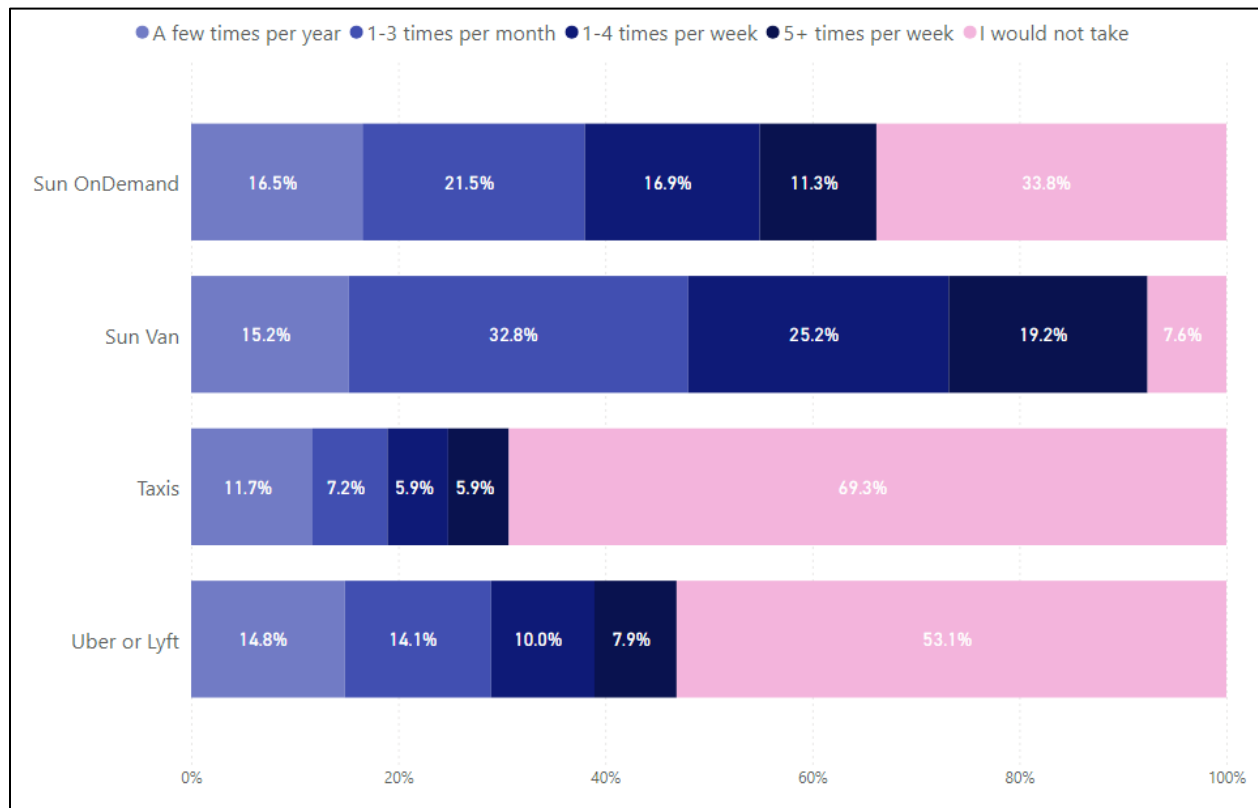
As part of this survey, respondents were asked questions about their interest in the City providing additional same-day transportation service to both existing Sun Van clients, seniors, and persons with disabilities not qualified to use Sun Van. Questions were asked regarding how frequently they would use this potential service and how much they be willing to pay based on the length of the trip.

FREQUENCY OF USE

Respondents were asked how often they would use the different same-day services if they were available for same-day rides within the Sun Van service area.

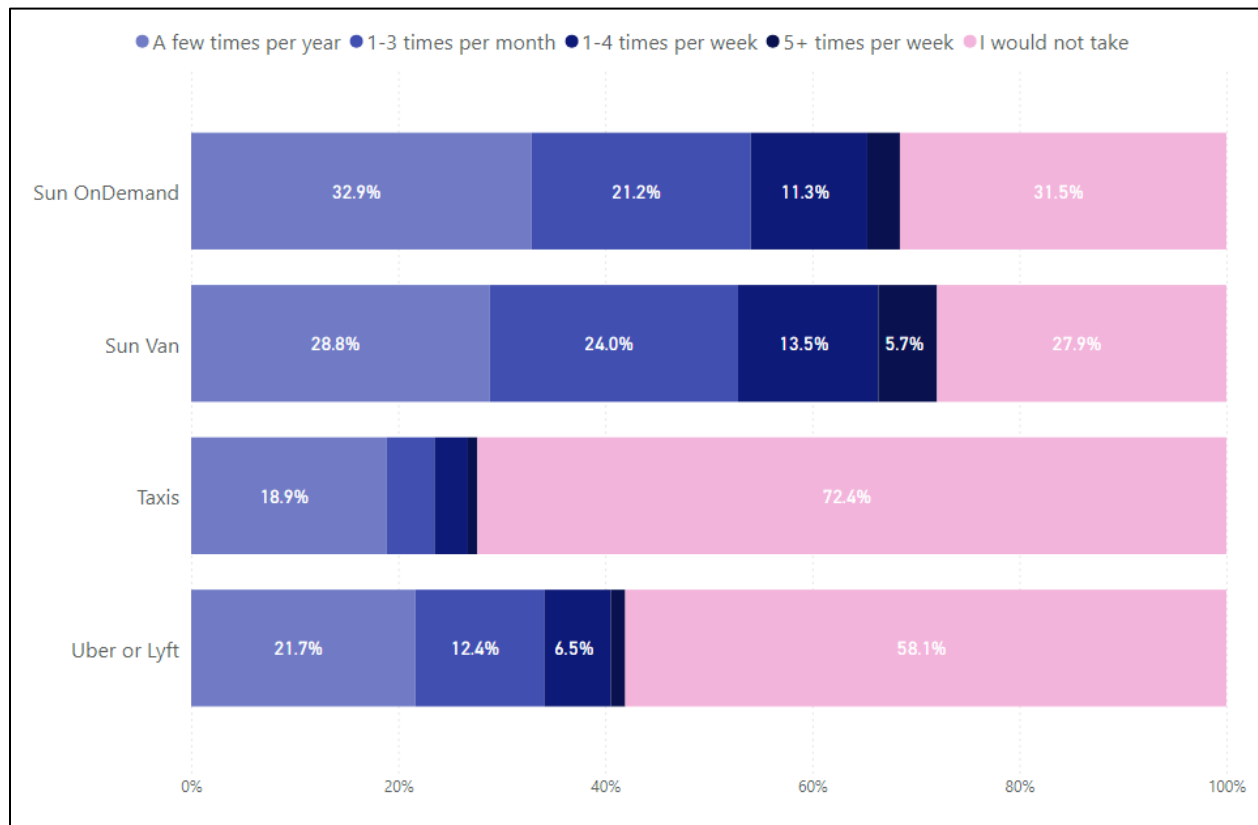
Current Sun Van Clients

Unsurprisingly, the current Sun Van clients showed a strong preference for Sun Van services, with 93% saying they would take advantage of same-day service. Sun On Demand was the second most common, despite the relatively low current use of Sun On Demand service among clients. Out of those who said they would use same-day service, the percentage who would ride the service less than three times a month was 52% for Sun Van, 57% for Sun On Demand, 62% for Uber or Lyft, and 62% for Taxis.

Figure 12: Current sun van clients


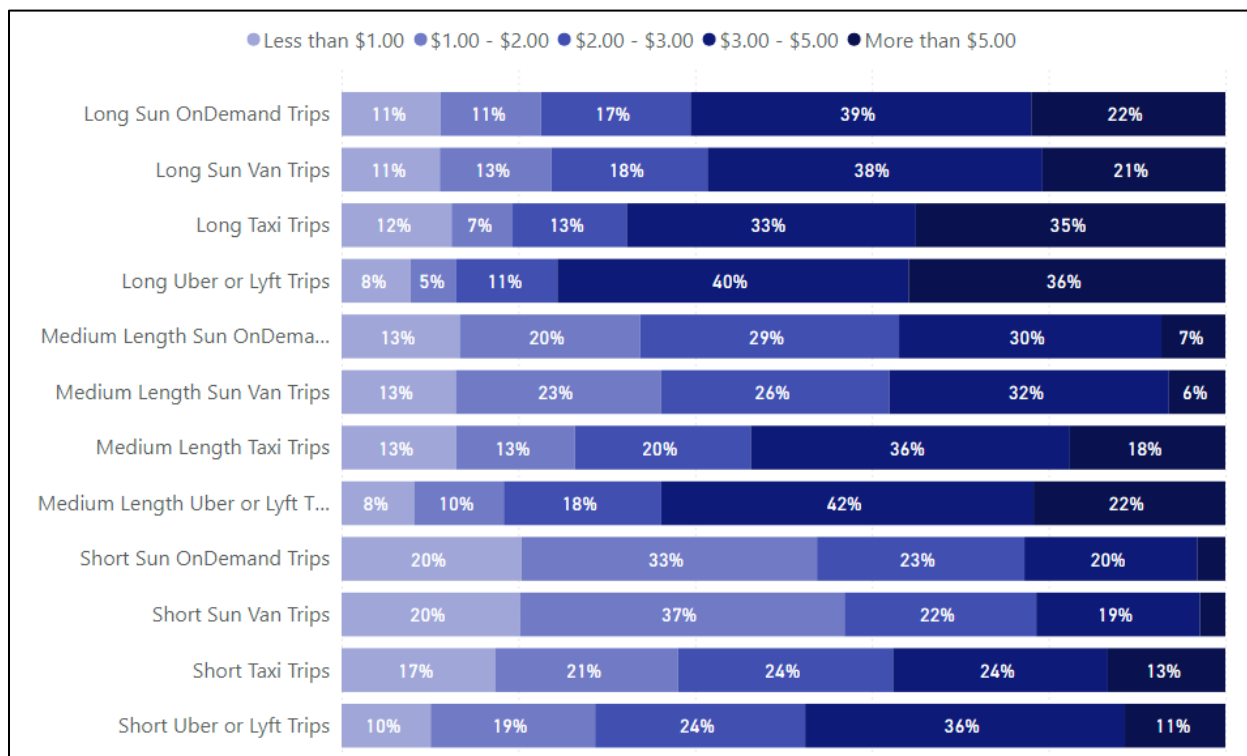
Non-clients over the age of 65

Non-clients over the age of 65 were almost equally as likely to use same-day Sun On Demand or Sun Van service. Out of those who said they would use same-day service, the percentage who would ride the service less than three times a month was 73% for Sun Van, 79% for Sun On Demand, 85% for Uber or Lyft, and 81% for Taxis.

Figure 13: Non-clients over the age of 65


WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SAME-DAY SERVICE

Respondents who said they would use same-day service were asked how much they would be willing to pay per trip, based on the trip length. Fares on Sun Van service are currently free. Unsurprisingly, willingness to pay increased with trip length; respondents were willing to pay more for longer-distance trips. Respondents were also willing to pay more for Taxi and Uber/Lyft rides than for Sun Van or Sun On Demand rides of comparable length. This may be due to multiple factors – the perception of paying more for services provided by private companies or the prospect of not having to share trips with other clients.

Figure 14: Willingness to pay

Table 9: Percent of Current Clients Willing to Pay at least \$3.00 per Same-Day Trip

Trip Length/Mode	Sun Van	Sun On Demand	Taxi	Uber/Lyft
Short Trips (<5 miles)	20%	19%	27%	32%
Medium Trips (5-10 miles)	39%	33%	47%	53%
Long Trips (10+ miles)	54%	55%	64%	67%

Table 10: Percent of Non-Clients over 65 Willing to Pay at least \$3.00 per Same-Day Trip

Trip Length/Mode	Sun Van	Sun On Demand	Taxi	Uber/Lyft
Short Trips (<5 miles)	28%	31%	49%	58%
Medium Trips (5-10 miles)	41%	43%	68%	70%
Long Trips (10+ miles)	61%	71%	88%	84%

2.3.5 Demographics

Respondents were asked to answer multiple demographic questions related to their age, ethnicity, race, annual household income, vehicle access, and smartphone access.

Key demographics of **current Sun Van clients** include:

- 48% are over the age of 65
- 77% identify as White/Caucasian
- 24% identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- 53% come from zero-vehicle households
- 67% have annual household incomes below \$25,000, and 4% have annual household incomes above \$75,000
- 85% have a smartphone, 11% have a non-smartphone, and the remaining 4% do not have any phone access

Key demographics of those respondents who are **not current Sun Van clients** include:

- 41% are over the age of 65
- 81% identify as White/Caucasian
- 22% identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- 17% come from zero-vehicle households
- 30% have annual household incomes below \$25,000, and 25% have annual household incomes above \$75,000
- 94% have a smartphone, 4% have a non-smartphone, and the remaining 2% do not have any phone access

2.3.6 Additional Survey Comments

Respondents were asked if there were any additional comments they wanted to provide, and the responses fell into a few key themes.

- Overall satisfaction (68 responses)
 - General comments expressing gratitude for Sun Van saying it is a vital service they rely on to maintain independence and quality of life
 - For many, Sun Van is their only transportation option to access critical needs like medical appointments, groceries, or work
- Scheduling and reliability (71 responses)
 - Frequent complaints about long wait times, scheduling difficulties, and poor on-time performance

- Dislike of shared rides and indirect routing that lead to very long travel times
 - 30-minute pickup windows are problematic, desire for shorter windows or same-day rides
 - Requests to allow scheduling further in advance than 7 days
- Drivers and staff (52 responses)
 - Compliments for friendly and helpful drivers and reservation staff
 - Some negative comments about rude or unhelpful drivers, Reservationists, or Dispatchers
 - Desire for drivers to be well-trained in assisting passengers with disabilities
- Fares and eligibility (44 responses)
 - Widespread appreciation for free fares and a desire for that to continue, especially from low-income individuals
 - Some feel free fares are being abused and rides should have a small cost
 - Desire to expand eligibility criteria and service area boundaries
- Vehicles (19 responses)
 - Requests for improved wheelchair securement and safer boarding
 - Desire for better vehicle cleanliness and sanitation
 - Some find the vans uncomfortable, noisy, hot, or bumpy
- Technology (17 responses)
 - Phone reservation process is difficult with long hold times
 - Mixed feedback on the app, some find it useful, others encounter limitations
 - Desire for real-time notifications when vehicle is arriving

Respondents were also asked why they had not taken Sun Van in the last month, and 21 current Sun Van clients provided responses with the following two main themes:

- Didn't need the service (no appointments, been sick, or only use it at certain times of year)
- Service takes too long and does not get them where they need to go on time

2.3.7 Outreach Meetings Summary

Sun Tran, and Department of Transportation and Mobility, staff conducted six (6) in-person meetings to provide community members with an opportunity to offer feedback and complete a paper survey.

Meetings were held at locations across the city, with at least one meeting in each council ward:

- Tucson Ward 2 Council Office
- William M. Clements Center

- El Rio Neighborhood Center
- Quincie Douglas Center
- Tucson Ward 6 Council Office
- Woods Memorial Library

In addition, two (2) virtual meetings were held to broaden access and reach a wider audience:

- **Virtual Zoom Meeting** | Tuesday, April 2, 2024 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.
- **Virtual Zoom Meeting** | Tuesday, April 9, 2024 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.

One (1) focus group was also held at **Saavi Services for the Blind** to ensure inclusive feedback from the visually impaired community.

A dedicated webpage was created to centralize all related information, including recordings of the virtual meetings.

To support outreach efforts, informational materials were posted on-board Sun Tran buses, where clients had access to posters and take-away strip cards (flyers). Additional promotional materials were distributed at major transit centers and shared across Sun Tran's various social media platforms.

Sun Tran actively utilized social media to boost public engagement and awareness of the Sun Van COA process. This included:

- Instructional videos on how to complete the survey
- Informational carousels summarizing meeting content and announcing upcoming meetings
- Uploading recordings of virtual meetings to YouTube to maximize accessibility and reach

2.4 Sun Van Usage and Preference Key Findings

SUN VAN USAGE PREFERENCES

- Sun Van trips returned to 93% of pre-pandemic levels by Fall 2023. Trips continued to increase in 2024 and have almost reached 2019 levels.
- Usage is highest on weekdays, with Wednesday seeing the highest number of average daily boardings. Trips decreased between 2019 and 2023, except for Saturday which saw a slight increase.
- Usage during weekday peak hours has decreased about 19% between 2019 and 2023. Trip usage during midday and hours adjacent to the morning peak have seen an increase.
- Average monthly usage by clients has remained mostly unchanged between 2019 and 2023. The number of unique monthly clients decreased slightly between 2019 and 2023.

- The top boarding locations remained mostly the same between 2019 and 2023. Top destinations are generally social service providers, some of which have newly opened or closed since the pandemic.

SURVEY PREFERENCES

- Based on the survey, the most important aspects of Sun Van for frequent users are hours when the service is available, on-time drop-off at their destination, and where service is available. The least important are the Sun Van app, reservation call answer time, and cost of riding.
- Survey findings indicate frequent clients are most satisfied with safety on-board the vehicle, the cost of riding, and the professionalism of the drivers. They are least satisfied with the Sun Van app, on-time pickups within the 30-minute window, and the length of the ride time.

3 Operations Review

3.1 Service Eligibility

The City of Tucson's ADA Paratransit Eligibility Office currently assesses and determines eligibility for Sun Van, Sun Shuttle Dial-A-Ride, and Oro Valley Dial-A-Ride. The eligibility office is typically staffed with two full-time positions and a supervisor for a total of 3 FTEs. Functional assessments are outsourced to a local medical provider. In addition to determining eligibility, the staff administer the No-Show policy.

3.1.1 Eligibility Process

The eligibility process begins with obtaining an application, which can be requested via phone, the ADA website, or in person. The application includes a checklist and a self-addressed stamped envelope for convenience. Once the application is received, it is entered into the Trapeze Certification (CERT) Database. The eligibility process involves several steps, including initial data entry, application review, telephone interviews, and sometimes functional assessments. The types of eligibility determined include unconditional, conditional, and temporary, based on the applicant's ability to use the fixed-route system under various conditions. Sun Van also provides paratransit eligibility for visitors to the service area as required by the ADA.

The eligibility process includes thorough documentation and follow-up with professional references to verify the applicant's disability and functional limitations. Functional assessments are conducted to evaluate the applicant's physical, cognitive, and sensory abilities. The process also includes an appeals mechanism for applicants who are denied eligibility, ensuring that they have the opportunity to present additional information and arguments. Appeals are reviewed by two City staff members outside of the office and an employee from the Regional Transportation Authority. The City has a very thorough procedure manual for their eligibility process.

3.1.2 Determinations

The eligibility office received 1,401 applications for new service in 2024. The office found 4.5% of new applicants were not eligible for service, which is lower than 7% expected based on industry studies. Of the 1,338 applicants approved for the service, 109 were found conditionally eligible and 1,229 were unconditionally eligible. The 7.8% conditional eligibility rate is lower than would be expected based on 30% of new applicants being functionally assessed. Industry studies and peer reviews show that the industry average is closer to 60%. In 2024, the average application took 9.7 days to process, with nine new applications and seven recertifications exceeding the 21-day requirement in the ADA regulation.

The office processed 1,954 recertifications in 2024. The recertification window is currently two years for conditionally eligible clients and three years for unconditionally eligible clients.

3.1.3 Peer Eligibility Models

As part of the review, the City requested the project team to look at how their peer agency models to determine what process they use and who did the work. Table 11 outlines which processes each peer follows and whether they use in-house staff or contract out the work to a third-party vendor. Overall, most of the peers use in-house staff and have varying levels in how they perform assessments. All peers required medical verification, and most either interviewed applicants or performed functional assessments. Industry studies have shown that functional assessments are more expensive but yield more thorough results which lead to more conditional eligibility determinations.

Table 11: Peer Eligibility Models

Agency	Medical Verification Form	Phone Interview	Functional Assessment	Contractor
Central Ohio Transit Authority	Submit w/ Application		All	In-house
City of Albuquerque	Agency Contacts	Some	Some	In-house
City of Colorado Springs	Agency Contacts Provider		All	In-house
City of El Paso	Agency Contacts	All	Some	In-house
City of Memphis	Agency Contacts	All	Some	In-house
City of Phoenix	Agency Contacts		All	MTM Transit
City of Tucson	Agency Contacts	Some	Some	In-house
Greater Dayton RTA	Submit w/ Application		All	In-house
Jacksonville (JTA)	Agency Contacts		All	In-house
Kansas City	Submit w/ Application	Some	Some	In-house
Metropolitan Tulsa	Contractor Contacts	Some	None	ADA Ride
Milwaukee County	Submit w/ Application		All	In-house
RTC Washoe County	Submit w/ Application	Some	Some	MTM/ In-house

3.1.4 No-Show Policy

Federal regulations allow transit agencies to suspend paratransit service for a reasonable period to clients who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips, also known as No-Shows. This regulation acknowledges that repeated no-shows can negatively impact operational efficiency, increase costs, and degrade the quality of service for other clients. It is crucial for transit agencies to have and enforce a no-show policy to maintain the reliability and efficiency of their services. By managing no-shows effectively, agencies can ensure that resources are used optimally, and service quality is upheld for all clients, including those with disabilities who rely on paratransit services for their mobility needs.

Sun Van has an existing No-Show policy which outlines a process for determining when a client has violated the policy, when the percentage of violations is excessive, and a progressive enforcement that includes suspension of service. Based on discussions with City and Sun Van staff, the policy is not being actively implemented and enforced. A review of Sun Van trip data shows that 6.9% of trips booked in October 2023 were No-Shows, which exceeds the industry target of less than 5%. Cancellations were 20% of booked trips in October 2023, which exceeds the industry target of less than 15%. Given both No-Shows and cancellations exceed industry targets, enforcement of the No-Show policy will improve the efficiency of service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATED SUN VAN NO-SHOW POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT

The following recommended updates would make the No Show Policy easier to enforce, easier for clients to understand, and more compliant with FTA best practices.

Clarify and Expand “Beyond the Rider’s Control” Exceptions

- Explicitly list examples of acceptable reasons for no-shows that are beyond the client’s control (e.g., sudden illness, family emergency, mobility aid failure, late-arriving personal care attendants, etc.).
- Inform clients of their right to contest no-shows and provide a dedicated phone line or contact method for reporting such circumstances.

Use Proportional Metrics, Not Just Absolute Counts

- Maintain the current percentage-based approach but consider raising the threshold for suspension to a 10% no-show rate to avoid penalizing frequent riders unfairly.
- Implement a minimum number of no-shows (e.g., 5 in a month) before calculating percentages to ensure a true pattern or practice of abuse.

Avoid Automatic Cancellation of Return Trips

- Update the policy to explicitly state that return trips will not be automatically canceled if the outbound trip is missed, unless the rider confirms cancellation.

Enhance Client Notification and Appeal Process

- Notify clients after each no-show with clear instructions on how to dispute it and what qualifies as a valid exemption.
- Ensure that all suspension notices include detailed trip information and are provided in accessible formats as required by ADA regulations.

Shorten and Scale Suspension Periods

- Adopt a progressive discipline model with shorter initial suspensions (e.g., 3–7 days) and gradually increasing durations only for repeated offenses.
- Avoid long suspensions (e.g., 30 days) unless clearly justified by repeated, intentional no-shows.

3.1.5 Service Eligibility Key Findings

The project team made the following key findings regarding the Sun Van eligibility process and No-Show policy.

PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

- New applications for service are processed at about the same rate in 2023 as in 2019. This contrasts with sentiment during interviews that applications had doubled since 2019.
- Approximately 30% of completed applications are sent to functional assessment (no data in eligibility statistics provided to confirm)
- The denial rate of 4.5% seems low based on the eligibility process. Similar processes see closer to a 7% denial rate.
- The 7.8% conditional eligibility rate is lower than would be expected based on the number of applicants being functionally assessed.
- A small amount of applications extended beyond the 21-day requirement for making a determination.
- The medical verification process seems to take too much time based on our experience with other agencies. Eligibility staff noted that there are over 100 different forms depending on the type of disability. Most peers have one form.
- Unconditional determinations are recertified every three years, conditional every two years.
- On-site software is slow for eligibility staff, potentially because of City / Sun Van network overhead
- There is not a well-defined process for client eligibility cleanup in the CERT database (i.e. deceased clients).

NO-SHOW POLICY

- No-Shows were 6.9% of booked trips in October 2023, which exceeds the industry target of less than 5%.

- Cancellations were 20% of booked trips in October 2023, which exceeds the industry target of less than 15%.
- The No-Show policy is not being monitored or enforced based on our interviews with Sun Van staff.
- The No-Show policy does not have clear language about circumstances outside of the clients control which should not be counted against them.

3.2 Reservations

Reservations for the Sun Van service are conducted at a call center at the Sun Van facility. There are approximately 20 Reservationists and two call center supervisors for a total of 22 FTEs. The findings for this section were based on on-site observations, interviews with key staff, and a review of trip reservation data.

3.2.1 Trip Scheduling

The Reservationists currently handle both scheduling and routing of trips during each call. This approach means they are determining which vehicle run a trip should be scheduled on, rather than relying solely on the scheduling software to provide the most efficient solution. While this method allows for direct input, it may not fully utilize the software's ability to optimize vehicle schedules and can result in longer call times as Reservationists review various options. Occasionally, trips are placed onto vehicles already scheduled to be busy during peak times, which can add to scheduling challenges and may affect timeliness.

Additionally, Reservationists tend to provide clients with their preferred pick-up times in the majority of cases, rather than negotiating alternate times. While this is responsive to client preference, negotiating trip times can help make the most effective use of resources, support efficient fleet management, and contribute to improved on-time performance.

Another point to note is that pick-up windows are communicated to clients as rounded to every five minutes. While this ensures consistent communication, it may not always align perfectly with the routing algorithms of the scheduling software and could influence efficiency and on-time performance.

A review of subscription trip data shows that Sun Van manages these trips effectively, maintaining a subscription to non-subscription trip ratio below the 50% threshold. It is also positive to note that Sun Van was able to accommodate all next-day trip requests and did not deny any trips in October 2023.

3.2.2 Call Hold Time

Sun Van is required to ensure that their systems do not impose capacity constraints that limit access for eligible riders. One such constraint is excessive telephone hold times, which can prevent individuals from making timely trip reservations or obtaining critical ride information. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has made it clear that agencies must design and implement systems that avoid busy signals and achieve minimal telephone wait times. Monitoring call hold times is essential to identifying service gaps, ensuring equitable access, and maintaining compliance with ADA regulations.

For this study, the consultant reviewed 12 months of call hold time data for Sun Van. The data was separated into three call queues: English Reservations, Spanish Reservations, and Dispatch. Each call queue is important for clients. The reservation line hold times must be reasonable to allow clients to reserve trips and excessive times are considered a capacity constraint on service. The dispatch line hold times are important because these calls typically are clients trying to figure out the status of their ride, which may already be late. Table 12 is a summary of the calls received based on the hold times experienced by customers.

Table 12: Fiscal Year 24/25 Call Hold Data

Line	Annual Calls Received	Annual Calls Abandoned	Annual Calls Answered	Answered Under 2.5 min	Answered Under 3 Min	Answered Under 5 Min
English Reservations	189,984	15,513 (8.2%)	174,471	68%	71%	80%
Spanish Reservations	11,342	1,138 (10.0%)	10,204	62%	66%	76%
Dispatch	204,173	184,640 (9.8%)	184,640	81%	84%	91%
Total	406,139	36,824	369,315	74%	77%	85%

Sun Van's existing hold time standard is 90% of calls answered within 2.5 minutes. As shown in the table, 74% of all calls were answered within 2.5 minutes in FY24-25. This dispatch queue performance is reported to the City as part of the Sun Van monthly performance report. It is important for each of these queues to be reported and meet the standard. Based on FTA guidance and best practices, a call hold time standard of 95% of calls answered in three minutes and 99% in five minutes should be used for Sun Van. As shown in Table XX, Sun Van currently answers 77% of call in under 3 minutes and 85% of calls in five minutes.

Monitoring abandoned calls is essential because a high abandonment rate often signals serious issues with telephone access for ADA paratransit riders. When callers hang up before being served, typically due to long hold times or confusing call menus, it can prevent them from making trip reservations or obtaining critical ride information. This not only frustrates riders but may also constitute a capacity constraint under ADA regulations, limiting access to required services. Sun Van's abandoned call rate was 8.2% for English Reservations, 10.0% for Spanish Reservations, and 9.8% for dispatch. Sun Van should target call abandonment rates between 5% to 7% for all queues based on best practices. Having a higher Dispatch abandonment rate would make sense since some clients will hang up on their own if on hold when their vehicle arrives.

3.2.3 Reservations Key Findings

TELEPHONE HOLD TIMES

- Call hold times are regularly exceeding five minutes.
- Reservationists schedule the rides and perform routing tasks while on the phone, which appears to have a significant impact on call lengths and hold times. Some calls last over twenty minutes.
- Social service agencies call to make many trips at one time on behalf of clients, which impacts hold times (based on interviews).
- Reservationists use booking script inconsistent with proper Trapeze booking screen flow.
- All calls (ETA's, Cancellations, and Trip Booking) flow into one queue.

TRIP SCHEDULING

- Trip negotiation not being used by Reservationists. Many were observed using the Schedule Booking Wizard without the "Search W" enabled, which if enabled, would allow for proper trip negotiation to take place.
- Reservationists are using a web browser and Google Maps to determine if a trip is eligible (from call script and observations).
- Existing call script does not include how to trip negotiate.
- Pick-up times are being rounded to every five minutes to enable streamlined client communication, instead of using times recommended by software.
- Reservationists use the "Pend List" when the schedule provides no solutions found. Some trips were observed to be scheduled with violations by the Reservationist such as booking rides with a scheduled late (SL) violation (Trapeze "violations").
- No dedicated Scheduler as Reservationists schedule trips manually. This appears to impact hold time and cause routing inefficiencies.
- Verifying conditional eligibility trips is time consuming based on interviews.

TRIP PURPOSE RESTRICTIONS

- Reservationists indicated that they inquire about trip purpose for some same-day trips though trip purpose is not tracked in PASS.
- Sun Van tracks trip purpose by the location address but does not appear to use this information to determine trip eligibility.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE & DENIALS

- Subscriptions do not exceed 50% on average (32% in October 2023).
- Subscription rates slightly exceed 50% on weekdays during the 7:00am and 3:00pm hours. These correspond with the times when service is the most busy.
- Sun Van noted zero trip denials on the October 2023 Monthly Operating Summary.

3.3 Operations

The service is monitored in the Sun Van dispatch center at the Sun Van facility. There are approximately eight Dispatchers and a Dispatcher Supervisor for a total of nine FTEs. The findings for this section were based on on-site observations, interviews with key staff, and a review of trip performance data.

3.3.1 On-Board Time

The on-board time requirement for ADA paratransit services is a critical aspect of ensuring that the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities are met efficiently and effectively. On-board time refers to the duration a passenger spends on the vehicle from the time of pickup to the time of drop-off. Federal regulations emphasize that transit agencies must avoid operational patterns or practices that result in significantly untimely pickups, drop-offs, or trips with excessive lengths. This means that on-board times should be reasonable and comparable to the travel times of fixed-route services for similar distances.

A review of the on-board time documents show conflicting information on the definition of what is an excessive on-board time. In the Sun Van brochure, it indicates that Sun Van trips will be no more than 10% longer than a fixed-route trip between the origin destination. Sun Van Monthly Operating Summary measures trips that are 110% of the transit plus five minutes. Neither standard has a percentage goal for compliance. The Sun Van Monthly Operating shows that about 10% of trips exceed that standard. A review of October 2023 service data shows that 15% of weekday trips exceed the standard outlined in the Sun Van brochure. Both of these are higher than best practices which target around 5% of trips.

3.3.2 On-Time Performance

Sun Van defines a trip as being on-time when the vehicle arrives at the pick-up location between 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after the scheduled time. Sun Van has a goal of being on-time

between 90-91% of the time. A review of October 2023 data showed that trips were 86.3% on-time, compared to 92.7% in October 2019. Table 13 breaks down the on-time performance by year and day type. In 2023, the weekday on-time performance was within the standard, while weekend was 85.6%, which was well below the standard.

Table 13: On-Time Performance by Year and Day Type

On-Time Status	2019 Weekday	2019 Weekend	2023 Weekday	2023 Weekend
Early	1.9%	1.6%	2.1%	2.6%
On Time	92.5%	94.4%	85.6%	91.0%
Late	5.7%	4.0%	12.3%	6.4%

Table 14 breaks down the October 2023 weekday on-time performance by hour. The service is below 90% on-time from 7am to 9pm. The hours with the lowest performance are 7am, 3pm, and 4pm where over 15% of the trips are late.

Table 14: October 2023 Weekday On-Time Performance

Hour	Early	On Time	Late
4 AM	0.0%	95.9%	4.1%
5 AM	0.2%	93.1%	6.7%
6 AM	1.0%	93.8%	5.3%
7 AM	1.0%	86.7%	12.3%
8 AM	1.4%	81.5%	17.0%
9 AM	1.4%	86.3%	12.3%
10 AM	1.6%	87.7%	10.7%
11 AM	1.6%	89.7%	8.7%
12 PM	2.0%	87.5%	10.5%
1 PM	2.3%	88.5%	9.3%
2 PM	3.3%	87.2%	9.6%
3 PM	3.0%	79.1%	17.9%
4 PM	3.2%	76.2%	20.6%
5 PM	3.4%	83.8%	12.8%
6 PM	4.0%	84.4%	11.6%
7 PM	4.0%	87.3%	8.7%
8 PM	5.9%	87.7%	6.4%
9 PM	2.4%	90.3%	7.3%
10 PM	5.3%	94.7%	0.0%
11 PM	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%

Hour	Early	On Time	Late
Grand Total	2.1%	85.6%	12.3%

3.3.3 Dispatch

During the on-site visit, we observed dispatch operations to determine how the service was being managed. In addition to managing vehicle operator pull-out and issues, the Dispatchers should be managing the service throughout the day to address service issues such as missed trips or late vehicles.

Based on our observations, the Dispatchers were not effectively using the Trapeze PASS dispatch screens to monitor and manage the service. Dispatchers were heavily relying on Trapeze “Schedule Editor” to manually monitor run violations and move trips, rarely using the “Schedule Booking Wizard” to re-schedule trips using the system parameters set in place.

Additionally, Dispatchers would use the old version of the Trapeze “Dispatch Center” to monitor inbound text messages, unscheduled trips, and run violations. The “Dispatch Center” screen requires manual refreshing of grids to see accurate data flow. The “Dispatch Center” does not display all relevant information that a Dispatcher needs to see, such as Late Pull Outs from base, Late Pull Ins, a clear separation between Scheduled Late Pickups, Scheduled Late Drop offs, and Dispatcher notes.

All Dispatchers were not aware on how to track vehicles using the “In-AVL Agent Break Event” tool in Schedule Editor to track vehicles on the map in real time. Instead, Dispatchers were constantly calling Operators to gather their current location.

Staff also noted that they spend an excessive amount of time calling clients to give them a five-minute ETA. Based on outgoing call data from dispatch, 23% of trips require a call. This consumes almost 2.5 hours of dispatch time on an average day.

Recommended Software Training

We recommend that Dispatchers receive training on how to most effectively use Trapeze PASS to actively monitor the service using the built-in tools. The training should include how to effectively use the following components:

- **Dispatch Manager Real Time Views:** Serves as an interactive monitoring dashboard for Dispatchers. Real Time Views allows Dispatchers to monitor:
 - Late Pull Outs from Sun Van (Critical for On Time Performance)
 - Late Pull Ins (Critical For CBA Compliance and Wage Efficiency)
 - Late Pickups (Trips Outside of The Pickup Window)
 - Late Dropoffs (Trips Outside of The Scheduled Dropoff Time)
 - Unscheduled Trips
 - Dispatcher Notes
 - Onboard Time
 - MDT Message History

- **Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Center:** Serves as a primary tool to communicate with Operators and respond to communication events such as:
 - Late Trip Warnings
 - Rider No Show Requests
 - Rider Cancel @ Door Requests
 - Non-Responsive MDT Tablet Devices
 - Canned Messaging
- **“In-AVL Agent Break Event” Live Monitoring of Violations and Tracking:** This tool allows Dispatchers to identify current vehicle location against the Map and real time schedule status as Automotive Vehicle Location (AVL) updates constantly moving through the live routes and providing projected schedule estimates based on vehicle location. Using this tool proactively helps improve on time performance and monitor the current location of vehicles.

3.3.4 Operations Key Findings

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

- Trip considered on-time if arriving 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after schedule pick-up time per Sun Van brochure though it was determined many Vehicle Operators often target to arrive at the center of the window which is the scheduled time and do not go based off the early time of the window.
- Sun Van not currently meeting goal of 90% to 91% OTP (86.25% in October 2023)
- OTP drops below 80% on weekdays between 3:00pm and 5:00pm
- Unable to locate a clear SOP to define on-time performance monitoring standards for Dispatch staff.
- Unclear practice between clients and Sun Van regarding the wait period once a vehicle arrives.
- Not currently utilizing Trapeze batch “same day run cleanup” to fix late rides or rides which are inefficient.

ON-BOARD TIME

- Fixed-route comparability is noted as 10% more than fixed-route time in Sun Van brochure. Sun Van Monthly Operating Report tracks comparison to transit trip time and 110% of transit plus five minutes.
- No indication of what goal is for trip comparability (ie. No more than 5% of trips exceed 110% of fixed-route)
- 15% of weekday trips exceed on-board time outlined in brochure, which is too high.

DISPATCH

- Five-minute call outs take excessive time, with 23% of clients receiving calls.
- It was observed during onsite visits that many Dispatchers are pulled away from monitoring the necessary screens in PASS due to being on the phone constantly. In addition, radio response times are poor and many MDT messages are overlooked. This is likely a result of the five-minute call outs.
- Dispatch not fully utilizing Trapeze. Dispatchers appeared to use the basic features available within the Trapeze application.
- Observed heavy reliance on Trapeze Schedule Editor compared to more use of run tools, AVL, and real-time views.

3.4 Premium and Non-ADA Services

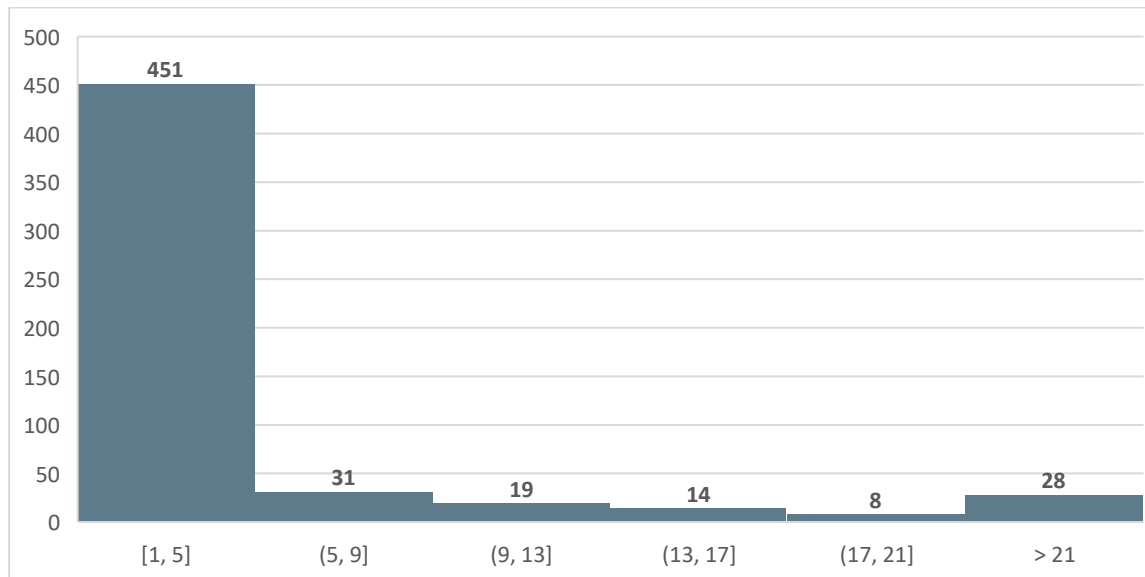
3.4.1 Existing Non-ADA Trip Profile

Sun Van averaged 92.8 same-day trips per weekday in October 2023. This represents 5.6% of the 1,643 average weekday Sun Van trips. On weekends, there is an average of 52.4 same-day trips. This represents 10.2% of the 514 average weekend Sun Van trips.

There were 551 unique same-day Sun Van clients in October 2023. This compares to 2,445 next-day (ADA) Sun Van clients. There were a total of 2,521 unique clients of any type of Sun Van service during this month. This means that 21.8% of Sun Van clients used same-day service and 76 clients used same-day service exclusively.

The average number of monthly same-day clients per client using the service in October was 4.5. For comparison, the average number of monthly next-day rides per client was 15.7. Of the 551 unique users, 451 took 1 to 5 same-day trips per month (82%). Figure 15 shows the number of same-day clients by ranges of trips taken during the month. This analysis can be used to develop monthly trips limits which would be workable for most Sun Van clients.

Figure 15: Same-Day Clients by Monthly Same-Day Trip Ranges (Oct-23)



3.4.2 Alternative Transportation Service Concept

As part of this project, the project team was asked to explore an Alternative Transportation Service (Alternative Service) for Sun Van clients which could supplement or replace the existing premium services. This section provides an overview of the regulatory and operational consideration for a potential pilot project.

Public transit agencies have provided subsidy programs for private transportation options for decades. Most of these programs were taxi voucher programs where customers were provided paper vouchers, which they could use as credit towards taxi fares. The agency could limit their overall subsidy by limiting who could use the voucher and how much credit the vouchers had per client and/or per time period (example \$40 of credit per month). Typically, these taxi voucher programs were only offered to senior and/or disabled residents who may have limited mobility options. Over the last decade, with the introduction of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft, transit agencies have expanded to offering subsidies on these services as they have added additional vehicle-for-hire capacity at a lower overall cost.

Alternative Services are typically offered by transit agencies to reduce the overall cost of their ADA paratransit service. This is possible because the overall subsidy per Alternative Service trip is less than the cost for the agency to provide ADA paratransit trips. However, the agency must carefully manage the program subsidy to prevent increasing overall trip demand, which could increase the overall cost to providing service to paratransit customers. Agencies typically do this by either limiting the subsidy per trip or number of trips customers can make per month.

Another reason why agencies offer this type of service is to provide additional mobility for ADA paratransit customers, seniors, and/or persons with disabilities. For ADA paratransit customers, this type of service can be made available same-day, compared to the next day ADA service. Sun Van currently provides some existing same-day service, so this program could either extend or replace this existing service. Sun Van also offers “Optional” or “Premium” service to areas outside of the required $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ADA paratransit service area and during times when fixed-route is not operating. Most of these trips are good candidates for Alternative Service.

PEER REVIEW

This section provides a summary of some existing Alternative Services programs offered by other transit agencies. They include both programs limited to ADA paratransit customers and programs offered to seniors and persons with disabilities. Table 15 is a summary of the programs including customer fares and service limits.

Table 15: Alternative Transportation Service Peer Summary

Agency	Eligibility	Fares	Service Limit
Valley Metro RideChoice Website	ADA Certified people with disabilities and seniors aged 65 and above who reside in certain places within the service area.	\$3 per 8 miles or less trip, and \$2 for every extra mile	20 trips per month; can call to request more trips
RTC Washoe Lyft/Uber Rides Voucher Program Website	Washoe County residents 60 years and older, RTC ACCESS clients (any age), and Washoe County Veterans (any age)	\$60 voucher given to participants at the start of each month. Pays for 100% of trips up to \$60 per month.	No trip cap, but vouchers are limited to \$60 and additional cost is charged to the customer's card on file
MBTA The RIDE Flex Website	For current The RIDE customers. Need to be enrolled to sign up for the program	\$3 base fare, and MBTA will subsidize up to \$40 for each trip. Customer pays any cost above \$43.	Frequent riders: "based on how often you use the RIDE" Occasional or new riders: 2 trips per month to start.
RTD Denver Access-on-Demand Website	For current Access-a-Ride certified individuals.	RTD will subsidize the first \$25 of a trip. Any cost over \$25 will be paid by the customer.	60 trips per month

SUN VAN PILOT-PROGRAM OPTIONS

The recent TCRP B-48 "Alternative Services Report" provides a summary of the current state of Alternative Service for ADA paratransit service customers. The report contains info on the pros and cons of using alternative service providers and several key options transit agencies should consider when implementing an alternative service for paratransit clients. This section provides an overview of these options and our recommendations based on the report, the peer review, and our understanding of Sun Van.

Service Model

When implementing a new Alternative Service model, Sun Van must choose between a provider-side or user-side subsidy approach. In a provider-side model, the agency contracts directly with transportation providers and pays them for the trips, whereas in a user-side model, clients receive a subsidy to use on eligible services. Given current fare collection practices, it is recommended that Sun Van adopt the provider-side model, where service costs are paid directly to vendors and fares deducted from clients' wallet balances, allowing Sun Van to manage provider selection based on client abilities. Additionally, Sun Van should consider whether to use a single or multiple providers. While multiple providers can offer greater choice and capacity, they add complexity. It is advised that Sun Van issue a Request for Information to identify interested providers who can meet operational requirements, including the availability of accessible vehicles with responsive service equal to that of non-accessible vehicles.

Trip Booking Method

The trip booking process is key to Alternative Service design. Some agencies use centralized reservations for better oversight, while others let clients book directly with providers for convenience. To ensure ADA compliance, both app and phone booking should be available. We recommend that rides be booked through the Sun Van reservation center, allowing for effective data collection, provider selection based on cost, and fare deductions from the client's wallet.

Service Area

Defining the service area is an important consideration. Some agencies choose to match their ADA paratransit service area, which simplifies administration and ensures consistency. Others extend the service area beyond ADA paratransit boundaries, providing greater mobility options for clients but potentially increasing costs. For the Sun Van pilot we recommend using the same boundaries as the existing Optional/Premium service. This would include within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of fixed-route service, even when the route is not operating, and all areas within the City of Tucson. The service could be expanded to other areas of Pima County if there is interest and funding is available in the future.

Service Hours

The hours of operation for Alternative Service can significantly impact its usability and cost. Many agencies match their ADA paratransit service hours, maintaining consistency across services. However, some extend hours beyond ADA paratransit, even offering 24/7 service, which can greatly enhance mobility but may increase costs. We recommend that Sun Van provide the Alternative Service during the same hours that most of the Sun Tran routes operate. This would be from 5:00am to 10:00pm on weekdays and 6:00am to 8:00pm on weekends.

Fare / Subsidy

The fare and subsidy structure is critical in balancing client affordability with program sustainability. Common approaches include requiring an initial fare from the client plus a subsidy up to a maximum amount or providing a full subsidy up to a maximum with the client responsible for any overage. It is

important to note that the fare for the Alternative Service is not capped by ADA law and does not require a Title VI equity analysis. For user-side subsidy models, agencies often provide a monthly subsidy amount that clients can use flexibly. The chosen structure should incentivize efficient use of the service while ensuring it remains an attractive option compared to ADA paratransit.

Trip Limits

Implementing trip limits is a common strategy to control costs and ensure equitable access. Some agencies choose not to impose limits, maximizing flexibility for clients. Others set daily or monthly trip limits to manage demand and budget. An innovative approach used by some agencies is to set individual limits based on a client's historical ADA paratransit usage. This can help prevent the subsidization of trips that wouldn't have been taken on ADA paratransit. For Sun Van we recommend limiting Alternative Service Trips to four per month. As noted earlier, 82% of current optional service users take five or less trips per month. Also, only 8% of survey respondents indicated that they use a TNC service provided by Sun Van more than four times per week.

Vehicle Accessibility

Ensuring wheelchair accessibility is essential for ADA compliance. Agencies may require all providers to offer wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs), contract separately for WAVs, or lease/provide them to providers. About 25% of Sun Van clients use mobility devices, so the pilot could need 30–50 accessible trips per day.

Sun Van could dedicate part of its fleet for accessible trips, work with TNCs/taxi operators to assess their accessible fleets, or contract with a provider like UZURV for dispatchable WAVs, though this last option is usually costlier.

Insurance Requirements

Setting appropriate insurance requirements is important for managing risk. Some agencies match the insurance requirements for their ADA paratransit service, while others set lower or higher requirements based on their risk assessment and local regulations. Higher insurance requirements can provide greater protection but may limit the pool of eligible providers or increase costs. The City and/or Sun Van should consult with their risk management and legal departments when setting these requirements.

Driver Requirements

Driver requirements are typically implemented for service quality and safety. Agencies must decide what level of training to require for drivers, which may include disability awareness and passenger assistance techniques. Background check requirements should also be established.

Drug and alcohol testing is another consideration, though the FTA's taxicab exception may apply if clients have a choice of providers. Driver requirements should balance safety considerations with the need to maintain an adequate driver pool.

3.4.3 Premium and Non-ADA Service Key Findings

SUN VAN PREMIUM SERVICES

- Sun Van currently provides premium service (called “Optional Service”) outside ADA service and fixed-route hours
- No fare is currently charged as part of City Fare-Free program. Premium service had a higher fare when they were charged.

PREMIUM SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY TRIPS

- Trips to social service agency sites appear to exceed ADA requirements based on interviews and data analysis.
- Agencies tie-up phone lines to make dozens of trips for clients. They could be required to call back after a certain number of bookings or call during off-peak times to book a large number of trips.
- Agencies request that their clients ride in the same dedicated vehicles. This may not be the most efficient for Sun Van operations.
- Bookings appear to have the same pick-up and drop-off times, most likely at the request of the agency.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CONCEPT

- Based on the preference survey, 37% of existing Sun Van clients used Uber or Lyft in the previous month. This indicates that many clients are already familiar with these services.
- About half of clients indicated that they would use Uber or Lyft if it was offered. About half of those that would use the service indicated that they would use it less than three times per month.
- Clients were less likely to use taxis and less likely to take same-day taxi rides if offered
- Over 92% of clients indicated that they would take Sun OnDemand if available.
- Clients indicated that they would pay more for Uber/Lyft trips than Sun OnDemand trips of a comparable length.

4 Peer City Paratransit Review

4.1 Methodology

The first step involved a peer identification process to select comparable peers for benchmarking purposes. These peers were carefully chosen based on factors such as service size, operational characteristics, and project team suggestions to ensure relevance and meaningful comparison.

Data collection formed a cornerstone of the methodology, with a dual focus on comprehensive industry data and specific peer insights. Initially, data was gathered from the National Transit Database (NTD) to establish key performance indicators (KPIs) spanning the years 2022-2023. This provided a foundational understanding of industry norms and trends. Note that some data from 2023 has been rationalized using NTD data from 2022. While this may not be completely accurate, it provides a clearer vision and better understanding of the rationalized data.

Subsequently, a targeted survey was conducted among nine peers consisting of a series of questions designed to capture detailed insights into their paratransit operations and performance during the specified timeframe. This direct peer feedback supplemented the NTD data, gathering new data, both quantitative and qualitative, to offer a broader perspective on operational practices and challenges.

4.2 NTD Data Analysis

This section will focus on the NTD data collected from 13 agencies for the year 2022, including Tucson. The metrics are organized into service supply, service effectiveness, and service efficiency. For each category, Tucson is highlighted to allow for easy identification among its peers.

4.2.1 Service Supply

Demand Response Mode Percent of Total Operating Cost: This metric provides insight into the overall contribution of demand response transit services within the entire transit system.

With 19.83% of its total transit system, Tucson is average, positioning itself 5th out of 13th, close to Albuquerque. A lower value is preferable for this metric since transit agencies aim to control their paratransit costs. A ratio exceeding 10% suggests that paratransit expenses consume too much of the budget, thereby restricting the expansion of fixed-route services. However, most of the agencies are above this 10% ratio, except for two.

Table 16: Demand Response Mode Percent of Total Operating

NTD 2022	Demand Response Mode Percent of Total Operating Cost
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	24.31%
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	22.75%
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	22.27%
City of Colorado Springs	20.73%
City of Tucson	19.83%
City of Albuquerque	19.26%
City of El Paso	14.94%
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	14.61%
City of Memphis	14.41%
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	13.09%
Central Ohio Transit Authority	11.29%
Milwaukee County	10.05%
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	9.58%
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	17%

(Low is good)

Demand Response Boardings per Service Area Capita: This metric is an indicator of the agency's allocation of resources to paratransit services. The data shows that the City of Tucson provides more demand response boardings per capita than all of their peers. This may be an indication that the eligibility process is too permissive or it could be because of unique demographics in this region.

Table 17: Demand Response Boardings per Service Area Capita

NTD 2022	Demand Response Boardings per Service Area Capita
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	0.28
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	0.14
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	0.18
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	0.20
City of Albuquerque	0.24
City of Colorado Springs	0.26
City of El Paso	0.27
Central Ohio Transit Authority	0.28
City of Memphis	0.30
Milwaukee County	0.35
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	0.37
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	0.53
City of Tucson	0.54
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	0.30

(Low is good)

Demand Response Operating Expense per Service Area Capita: This ratio provides insight into the cost of providing demand response transit services relative to the population they serve. Representing how much it costs on average to operate demand response transit services for each resident within the service area.

In Tucson, it ranks second highest, indicating a relatively elevated cost compared to its counterparts. That could mean that Tucson invests more money than its peers to provide these services. A more detailed examination of costs in the service efficiency section could provide a better understanding of the cost per passenger and mitigate this cost.

Table 18: Demand Response Operating Expense per Service Area Capita

City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Service Area Capita
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	\$ 8.88
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	\$ 9.87
City of El Paso	\$ 10.30
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	\$ 10.37
Central Ohio Transit Authority	\$ 12.24
City of Memphis	\$ 12.50
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	\$ 13.42
City of Colorado Springs	\$ 15.36
Milwaukee County	\$ 16.42
City of Albuquerque	\$ 16.94
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	\$ 21.12
City of Tucson	\$ 22.06
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	\$ 28.00
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	\$ 15.19

(Low is good)

3.2. Service effectiveness

Average Demand Response Trip Length Miles: This metric refers to the distance traveled by passengers using demand response transit services from their origin to their destination. For Tucson, the average stands at 9.45 miles, reflecting a notable 5.33-mile difference between demand response and fixed-route services.

While Tucson ranks average for fixed routes, it secures the third position for demand response services, with Central Ohio Transit Authority and Jacksonville claiming the top spots. This gives a piece of answer to the Demand Response Operating Expense per Service Area Capita high ratio above, with longer distances to travel for these services.

Table 19: Average Demand Response Trip Length Miles

City	Average Demand Response Trip Length Miles
Central Ohio Transit Authority	11.71
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	11.46
City of Tucson	9.45
City of El Paso	9.4
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	9.15
City of Colorado Springs	8.86
City of Albuquerque	8.61
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	8.55
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	8.38
City of Memphis	7.4
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	7.34
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	7.32
Milwaukee County	6.64
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	8.79

(Average is good)

Average Demand Response Van Speed: The average speed for Tucson’s Demand Response van is 14.1, in the 10th position out of 13. The average speed for Tucson’s motor buses is 11.93, positioning itself 11th out of 13.

Slower operating speed may be indicative of inefficiencies in how the current service is scheduled and how vehicles are allocated. Developing more efficient schedules and routing can help improve the operating speed which should increase productivity.

Table 20: Average Demand Response Bus Speed

City	Average Demand Response Speed
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	18.75
Central Ohio Transit Authority	18.34
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	18.01
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	17.45
City of El Paso	17.29
City of Albuquerque	16.74
City of Colorado Springs	15.44
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	15.24
City of Memphis	14.85
City of Tucson	14.10
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	13.71
Milwaukee County	13.29
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	12.94
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	15.86

(Average is good)

Average Demand Response Van Trip Length (minutes): For demand response vans, Tucson's average is higher, almost double with 40:12, ranking last amongst its peers on that metric. In comparison, the shortest trip length is Kansas City with an average trip of 25:10, a 15-minute difference.

Table 21: Average Demand Response Bus Trip Length (minutes)

City	Average Demand Response Trip Length Minutes	Rank Average Demand Response Trip Length (minutes)
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	25.17	1
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	28.90	2
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	29.28	3
City of Memphis	29.90	4
Milwaukee County	29.98	5
City of Albuquerque	30.86	6
City of El Paso	32.62	7
City of Colorado Springs	34.43	8
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	37.42	9
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	38.18	10
Central Ohio Transit Authority	38.31	11
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	38.86	12
City of Tucson	40.21	13
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	33.39	

(Average is good)

A proper data analysis can be made if this data is crossed with the average speed and the average trip in miles.

- The average miles per trip and average speed suggest that Tucson's demand response transit vehicles are covering relatively long distances at a moderate speed. This could indicate that the service area is expansive, and demand response vehicles are efficiently covering these distances.
- The average trip duration is relatively long, which may indicate that despite covering long distances, there are factors such as traffic congestion or a spread-out location distribution.

Overall, Tucson's demand response transit operation seems to traverse longer distances compared to its counterparts, maintaining a moderate speed. This tendency may be attributed to Tucson's geographical spread, which likely differs from that of its peers.

Demand Response Boardings per Revenue Hour: This ratio provides insight into the efficiency and utilization of demand response transit services by measuring how many passenger boardings occur per hour of service provided.

Tucson stands at 2.02 passengers per hour, ranking favorably compared to its counterparts (5th out of 13). It suggests good efficiency and effectiveness in serving passengers within the service area.

Table 22: Demand Response Boardings per Revenue Hour

City	Demand Response Boardings per Revenue Hour	Rank Demand Response Boardings per Revenue Hour
City of Memphis	2.09	1
City of El Paso	2.06	2
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	2.04	3
Milwaukee County	2.04	4
City of Tucson	2.02	5
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	2.02	6
City of Colorado Springs	1.89	7
City of Albuquerque	1.86	8
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	1.73	9
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	1.61	10
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	1.61	11
Central Ohio Transit Authority	1.37	12
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	1.2	13
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	1.81	

(High is good)

4.2.2 Service Efficiency

Table 23: Demand Response Operating Expense

City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Boarding	Rank Demand Response Operating Expense per Boarding	City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	Rank Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Mile	Rank Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Mile
City of El Paso	\$38.57	1	City of El Paso	\$79.54	1	City of El Paso	\$4.60	1
City of Tucson	\$40.97	2	City of Tucson	\$82.88	2	Central Ohio Transit Authority	\$5.00	2
City of Memphis	\$42.25	3	City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	\$84.42	3	City of Tucson	\$5.88	3
Milwaukee County	\$46.77	4	City of Memphis	\$88.43	4	City of Memphis	\$5.96	4
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	\$57.60	5	Central Ohio Transit Authority	\$91.75	5	Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	\$6.45	5
Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	\$59.23	6	Milwaukee County	\$95.43	6	Jacksonville Transportation Authority	\$6.49	6
City of Colorado Springs	\$60.58	7	City of Colorado Springs	\$114.75	7	City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	\$6.52	7
Central Ohio Transit Authority	\$66.79	8	Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	\$116.28	8	Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	\$7.12	8
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	\$67.60	9	Jacksonville Transportation Authority	\$116.81	9	Milwaukee County	\$7.18	9

City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Boarding	Rank Demand Response Operating Expense per Boarding	City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	Rank Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	City	Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Mile	Rank Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Mile
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department	\$70.64	10	Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority	\$120.87	10	City of Colorado Springs	\$7.43	10
City of Albuquerque	\$71.72	11	Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	\$124.20	11	Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County	\$7.63	11
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	\$77.21	12	City of Albuquerque	\$133.19	12	City of Albuquerque	\$7.96	12
Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	\$98.73	13	Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	\$158.84	13	Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority	\$11.58	13
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	\$61.44			\$108.26			\$6.91	

(Low is good)

Demand Response Operating Expense per Boarding: This ratio provides insight into the cost efficiency of demand response transit operations on a per-passenger basis. This is a measure of the efficiency of transporting riders; one of the key indicators of comparative performance of transit properties since it reflects both the efficiency with which service is delivered and the market demands for the service.

Tucson positions itself 2nd, with an expense of \$40.97 per boarding, compared to \$98.73 for Dayton, last among its peers. This expense indicates lower operating costs relative to the number of passengers served, implying higher cost efficiency.

Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Hour: This ratio provides insight into the cost efficiency of demand response transit operations on a per-hour basis. *Note that this key comparative measure differs from operating expense per vehicle mile in that it excludes the influence of vehicle speed.* This exclusion is significant because vehicle speed is heavily impacted by local traffic conditions.

Tucson once again is 2nd with a low cost of \$82.88 per revenue hour, indicating superior cost efficiency compared to peers like Dayton or Albuquerque.

Demand Response Operating Expense per Revenue Mile: Tucson claims the 3rd position in this metric, with a ratio of \$5.88 per mile. This favorable ratio signifies lower operating costs relative to the distance traveled by vehicles, implying higher cost efficiency.

Overall, Tucson's services emerge as leaders among its peers in terms of operating expenses, whether measured per boarding, per revenue hour, or per revenue mile.

4.3 Peer Survey results

An email survey was conducted to gather both quantitative and qualitative data for a more in-depth analysis of Tucson's paratransit services. Nine peers answered, which allowed comparison of their services with Sun Van's. These peers are Greensboro, Sun Metro, RTC Washoe, Greater Dayton, COTA, Wake County, Tulsa, Milwaukee and Phoenix.

Please note that due to variations in peer responses, not every topic will be analyzed with all nine peers. It is also important to acknowledge that due to the varying sizes of the peer systems, the peer system average numbers might be higher than if data was collected only from peers similar in size to Sun Van (e.g. Phoenix).

4.3.1 On-Time Performance

Regarding On-Time Performance, Sun Van ranks 8th out of 10 paratransit services with an OTP rate of 84.5%. This is below the top 5 performers, all of which have OTP rates of 93% or higher, and also below the peer average of 88%.

Table 24: On-Time Performance

	OTP Rate
COTA	97%
Milwaukee	96.39%
Tulsa	95%
RTC Washoe	93%
Greensboro	93%
SunMetro	91%
Phoenix	85%
Sun Van	84.5%
GreaterDayton	78.14%
Wake County	74%
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	89%

(High is good)

4.3.2 Excessive Trip Length

With an average of 10.09% of its trips classified as ‘excessive length trips,’ Tucson is 5 percentage points above the peer system average. This can be correlated with NTD data, which indicates that Tucson generally travels longer distances than its peers.

However, definitions of trip length vary between agencies:

- **Sun Van:** Defines an excessively long trip as one that exceeds the comparable Sun Tran fixed route trip by 110%, plus an additional 5 minutes, in alignment with ADA standards.
- **Other Locations:** Consider a trip excessively long if the rider is on the vehicle for more than an hour from the time of pickup (e.g., Tulsa, Greensboro) or even 1.5 hours in Wake County.

This variability in definitions should be considered when comparing excessive trip length data across different systems.

Table 25: Excessive Length Trip

Excessive Length trip	
RTC Washoe	1%
COTA	1%
Wake County	1%
SunMetro	1%
Tulsa	2%
Greensboro	2.65%
Phoenix	2.95%
GreaterDayton	4.70%
Sun Van	10.09%
Milwaukee	16.80%
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	4.32%

(Low is good)

4.3.3 Customer Complaints

Tucson receives fewer complaints compared to its peers, ranking 4th out of 8 peers providing data on this metric, with fewer than 200 complaints per year. This is below the peer system average of 361 complaints, indicating a high level of customer satisfaction with the service provided by Tucson. Normalized per 10,000 passengers, the ratio still remains better than its peers, with 10.73 customers complaints.

Table 26: Complaints

City	Normalization customer complaints/10,000 passengers
Wake County	5.09
RTC Washoe	6.68
COTA	7.32
Sun Van	10.73
GreaterDayton	14.02
SunMetro	14.07
Milwaukee	28.51
Phoenix	76.02

(Low is good)

4.3.4 Missed trips

A missed trip defines a failure to provide a scheduled service, affecting both operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Sun Van performs well on this aspect with 0.09 missed trips per 10,000 boardings. This reflects the absence of issues in scheduling and coordination and can explain the few customer complaints Sun Van receives regarding missed trips. Tulsa gets to the number of zero missed trips explaining that “*if needed, we provide an extra vehicle whether it’s our supervisor’s or extra board*”.

Table 27: Missed Trips

FY23	Normalization missed trips /10,000 passengers
Tulsa	0.00
Sun Van	0.09
Sun Metro	5.82
Wake County	6.64
RTC Washoe	6.92
COTA	7.96
GreaterDayton	27.06
Greensboro	27.25
Milwaukee	70.28
Phoenix	84.40

(Low is good)

4.3.5 Trip Cancellations

With 155,173 trips canceled by customers and a 9,074/100,000 ratio, Tucson ranks last among its peers, experiencing significantly more cancellations than other systems. This large discrepancy warrants careful analysis and interpretation.

Potential causes for this high number of cancellations could be explored by gathering feedback from customers. Possible reasons might include difficulties in booking a trip, scheduling conflicts, dissatisfaction with the service, or the availability of alternative transportation options. Tucson could explore implementing negative incentives in case of numerous cancellations by customers (e.g. not being able to book a trip for a certain amount of time after x cancellations).

Overall, a high number of trips canceled by customers indicates various challenges that a paratransit agency must address to improve operational efficiency, financial health, and customer satisfaction.

Table 28: Trips cancelled by customer

City	Normalization trips canceled by customers /100,000 passengers
Tulsa	92
COTA	306
Wake County	476
RTC Washoe	1,054
Greensboro	2,207
SunMetro	3,738
Milwaukee	3,791
GreaterDayton	4,032
Sun Van	9,074

(Low is good)

4.3.6 Workforce Resources

This section focuses on the performance of Sun Van regarding their workforce. On average, Tucson has more operators than its peers, which could indicate a greater need for operators due to more extensive service coverage.

Sun Van also has a discrepancy between its actual operator count and its budgeted operator count (162 actual vs. 180 budgeted, an 18-operator difference). This gap is larger than that of its peers, whose budgeted numbers more closely match their actual operator counts. A discrepancy between budgeted and actual operator counts generally indicates that the organization is operating with fewer staff than planned or needed. That could mean that the agency may be facing challenges in recruiting qualified candidates, possibly due to a competitive job market, location, or specific skill requirements.

Operators count and budgeted count

Table 29: Operators count and budgeted count

	Actual Operator Count	Budgeted Operator Count
RTC Washoe	N/A	N/A
Sun Van	162	180
Milwaukee	140	N/A
COTA	140	158
Phoenix	128	N/A
Wake County	94	94
GreaterDayton	90	110
SunMetro	76	76
Tulsa	42	50
Greensboro	41	39
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	101	101

Labor overtime rate

On this metric, Sun Van has a higher overtime rate than its peers. This elevated rate may impact operations, staffing, and resource management, potentially indicating a staff shortage and a need for additional hiring (although hiring has increased since 2023). Overall, Sun Van appears to be less efficient than its peers in terms of workforce resource management.

Table 30: Labor Overtime Rate

Labor overtime rate	
GreaterDayton	9%
Wake County	11%
COTA	12%
Greensboro	14%
Sun Van	16%
Milwaukee	N/A
Phoenix	N/A
RTC Washoe	N/A
Tulsa	N/A
SunMetro	N/A
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	12%

(Low is good)

4.3.7 Fares and Pricing

Examining the cost for passengers of paratransit services, the average fare is \$3. Sun Van stands out as the only paratransit agency offering free transportation to its customers. GoRaleigh, a smaller peer, currently offers free rides but will reinstate a \$2.50 fare by July 2024.

Regarding fare policy changes, 7 out of 10 peers have maintained the same policy over time. Two peers have implemented modest fare increases: Greensboro increased its fare by \$1, and Milwaukee raised its agency fare on January 1, 2024, to \$20.55 per trip, although the base fare has not changed since 2012.

Despite stable fares, many peers have modernized their payment systems. Several have introduced digital payment options and integrated this feature into their transit apps, including Dayton, Wake County, and Greensboro.

Table 31: Paratransit Price

City	Paratransit Price
Sun Van	\$ -
Greensboro	\$2.50
SunMetro	\$2.50
RTC Washoe	\$3.00
GreaterDayton	\$3.50
COTA	\$3.50
Wake County	\$3.50
Tulsa	\$3.50
Milwaukee	\$4.00
Phoenix	\$4.00
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	\$3.00

4.3.8 Premium Services and Exceeding ADA Requirements

PREMIUM SERVICES

When asked if agencies offer premium service, four agencies out of ten responded affirmatively, including Tucson:

- COTA (Ohio): Offers "Mainstream on Demand" with a fare of \$1/mile and a \$5 minimum charge.
- Greensboro: Provides a service called IRide, a private, door-to-door transportation service for passengers aged 65+ and individuals with disabilities.
- Milwaukee: Charges an "Agency Fare" of \$35 per ride for clients with managed care funding or Medicaid, and for those living in group homes or nursing homes who take medical and day program trips.
- Tucson has additional services but does not charge for them.

SERVICES EXCEEDING ADA REQUIREMENTS

- Almost all of the peer agencies offer services exceeding ADA requirements (eight out of ten including Tucson).
- All of those offering services exceeding ADA requirements offer to go over the ¾ mile limit (Tucson, Greater Dayton, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Wake County, Greensboro, Tulsa). However, while Tucson offers trips outside the hours of operation for fixed route services, most of its peers do not. The remaining peers adhere to the hours of fixed routes (Milwaukee, Phoenix, Tulsa).

- Four peers offer the possibility to book same-day trips, including Tucson, along with COTA, Greensboro (IRide). In comparison, Go Wake for Wake County asks their customers to book a minimum of one week in advance.

4.3.9 Programs and partnerships

Peers were asked if they had ongoing programs and partnerships to decrease their paratransit costs or to improve their efficiency. Some solutions were repeated several times.

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED

Microtransit: Sun On-Demand, Tulsa, and Wake County have utilized microtransit as a means to reduce the number of paratransit trips.

Encouraging Fixed Route Services: Several locations incentivize the use of fixed route services:

- Greater Dayton offers free fixed route services.
- Milwaukee provides fixed route services for \$2 per day.
- Greensboro offers fixed route services at half price.

Travel Training: Sun Van, COTA, Milwaukee, and Greensboro offer travel training programs for paratransit customers interested in using fixed routes, aiming to promote fixed route utilization.

Other initiatives:

- COTA imposes productivity-based liquidated damages on paratransit contractors to maintain efficiency.
- Wake County has adopted *Ecolane*, a paratransit and microtransit scheduling software, resulting in significant benefits. Since implementing the software, on-time performance has increased by 40-45%. Trip numbers have also seen substantial growth: Wake services increased from 7,000-8,000 to 12,500-15,000.
- Sun Metro in El Paso, TX, offers a 5% discount for the Amistad project, a program transporting elderly residents and persons with disabilities to their medical destinations.

PARTNERSHIPS

Even though Tucson hasn't implemented any partnerships with private transportation companies, five of its peers did.

Taxis partnership: Three peers chose to implement a partnership with local taxis.

- **Phoenix:** Ride Choice offers a taxi service to seniors aged 65 + ADA Paratransit eligible at a deeply discounted rate
- **Washoe:** offers senior taxi rides at a discounted rate.
- **Wake county:** 49 taxis vendors for 26,800 trips a month

Uber and Lyft: Four peers partnered with companies such as Uber or Lyft to improve their paratransit offerings.

- RTA Greater Dayton
- Valley Metro, Phoenix
- RTC Washoe
- COTA

Local transportation providers: Three peers also partnered with local transportation providers.

- Greater Dayton
- Phoenix
- COTA

This part is interesting for Tucson if they aim to enhance their client service and provide greater flexibility. Notably, peers like COTA have expanded their service offerings by forming partnerships with local transportation providers as well as larger companies such as Uber or Lyft.

4.4 Key Findings of Peer Survey

Based on the analysis of NTD data and the results from the survey, here are the main findings of this peer review:

- Tucson has lower on-time performance than its peers, and initiatives could be explored to improve that specific metric.
- Sun Van has an average call-response time for customers
- Sun Van offers trip booking with an application which is not offered by most peers
- Customer cancellations are significantly higher than peers
- Customer satisfaction is higher than peers
- Sun Van number of current drivers compared to the budget driver positions is low and they have a higher overtime rate
- Sun Van is the only paratransit service operating for free, and the only one having an evolution of prices going down (small increase for others)
- Sun Van offers numerous services that exceed ADA requirements, ensuring a great customer experience. However, this also poses internal challenges, such as accommodating same-day trips and operating outside of fixed route hours.
- Tucson doesn't have any partnerships with private services. However, some of its peers partnered with companies like Uber or Lyft, and with taxis or local transportation agencies. On that matter, Phoenix, RTC Washoe, RTA Greater Dayton, and COTA are leaders, cumulating multiple partnerships to deliver better services to their customers.

5 Draft Recommendations

Based on the findings from the previous sections, a series of recommended improvements were developed to address findings with the current operation which are intended to help Sun Van meet ADA requirements and improve the client experience. Some of the recommendations are internal to City and Sun Van operations, while others will directly impact how clients use the service. The following sections outline the draft recommendations and if they are internal or client-facing. The client-facing recommendations were presented to the public for their feedback as outlined in Section 5.1.

5.1 Service Eligibility Recommendations

CLIENT FACING

- Simplify medical verification form and require applicants to provide the medical verification form with the rest of the Sun Van eligibility application for more efficient processing.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- Explore outsourcing eligibility process to turn-key provider for functional assessments and eligibility management.
- Sun Van staff should develop a process to consistently track and enforce No-Show policy. City to have resources to conduct appeals.
- Update the No-Show policy to reflect more industry standard language, referencing the FTA ADA Circular.
- Diagnose technology issues that make Trapeze CERT slow for City eligibility staff

5.2 Reservations Recommendations

CLIENT FACING

- Offer negotiated trip times, so if rides are requested during peak travel times, an alternative may be suggested to improve on time performance.
- Provide pick-up windows to the minute instead of rounding to every five minutes. This change can reduce the delays on the system over the course of many rides and throughout the day.
- Limit calls to no more than ten reservations per call to reduce call hold times.
- Implement voice response and/or texting options to receive updates on the status of your ride. This will free up reservations staff and dispatch staff for other calls.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- Reduce call hold times so that 95% of calls are answered in three minutes and 99% in five minutes.
- Implement new phone tree to have dedicated sub-queues for each call category (i.e OPT 1 for Booking, OPT 2 for ETA's, OPT 3 for Cancellations, OPT 4 Premium Service, etc.)

- Update telephone script with trip negotiation steps.
- Conduct training on Trapeze trip negotiation.
- Implement Trip Negotiation in Pass Web and App to mirror default booking parameters.
- Make updates to Sun Van App so that bookings can be made in the same time increments as through calling; remove the current “timeout after 30 mins” so people don’t get kicked off the App before they are done reserving a trip; improve accessibility of log in screen (perhaps by introducing Face Recognition/Face ID).
- Convert two Reservationist positions to Router positions to reduce call duration and for more efficient trip and vehicle scheduling.

5.3 Operations Recommendations

CLIENT FACING

- Implement voice response and/or texting options for five-minute calls before your ride arrives. This will free up reservations staff to better monitor the service.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- Restore paratransit driver shifts to 2019 levels to improve on-time performance and on-board time (180 total operators).
- Conduct Trapeze training for Dispatchers on strategic route monitoring using real-time views and Trapeze tools.
- Change On-Board comparability standard to less than 5% of trips exceeding fixed-route time plus 25 minutes (based on review of recent FTA compliance reviews).
- Establish a series of on-time performance SOP’s to be shared with Dispatchers, Operators, and Road Supervisors.
- Track and report service performance data by service type (ex. Sun Van and Pima Co) and ADA vs Premium services. Includes hold-time, on-time performance, and on-board time. Target meeting standards on ADA services.

5.4 Premium and Non-ADA Service Recommendations

CLIENT FACING

- Temporarily narrow Sun Van “Optional” service to before 7am, between 10am-2pm and after 7pm on weekdays until on-time performance and on-board time meet standards. Optional service is for trips beyond 3/4 miles of bus and streetcar routes or outside their operating hours.
- Consider offering a pilot program to Sun Van clients where they could take same-day trips using a Transportation Network Company like Uber/Lyft or with an accessible transportation provider. Trips would be within the current Sun Van operating area but may be expanded in partnership with regional transit providers. Consider charging a \$15 fare for trips of any length or charging a \$12 fare and limiting trips to eight miles or less.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- Negotiate premium trip rates with social service agencies or require these trips be handled the same way as non-agency trips.
- Consider co-mingling of premium service trips with Sun On-Demand service where there are overlaps.
- Sunset premium ADA service after implementation of “Mobility Choices” program.
- Change references from “optional service” to “premium service” in client-facing materials.

5.5 Draft Recommendation Outreach

5.5.1 Introduction

In Spring 2025, Sun Van conducted public outreach regarding the Sun Van COA Draft Recommendations. The outreach included a combination of efforts to receive feedback which included:

- **Online Survey:** An online survey was developed to solicit feedback on the draft recommendations.
- **Sun Van Caller Prompts:** Message while on hold during for Sun Van notifying riders of the survey
- **Paper Survey Distribution:** At several of the community events and at key stakeholder locations, paper surveys were distributed and collected.
- **Outreach Meetings:** Both virtual and in-person meetings were held to provide an overview of the recommendations, answer questions, and solicit survey responses.
- **Sun Van COA Website:** The Sun Van COA website was updated with materials regarding the draft recommendations including a recorded presentation from the virtual meeting.

The survey was open from March 26th through May 9th. The survey responses received by hand vote at community meetings and paper surveys were combined with those received online. A total of 565 survey responses were received.

5.5.2 Sun Van Recommendation Survey

RECOMMENDATIONS SENTIMENT

Survey respondents were asked about how they felt about each of the draft recommendations. They were presented with an overview of the recommendation and then were asked to select to what extent they agree or disagree ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

Figure 16: Example Survey Question

1

Eligibility Recommendation: Simplify medical verification form and require applicants to provide the medical verification form with the rest of the Sun Van eligibility application for more efficient processing

Do you agree with this proposed change to the eligibility process?

☐ Strongly Disagree

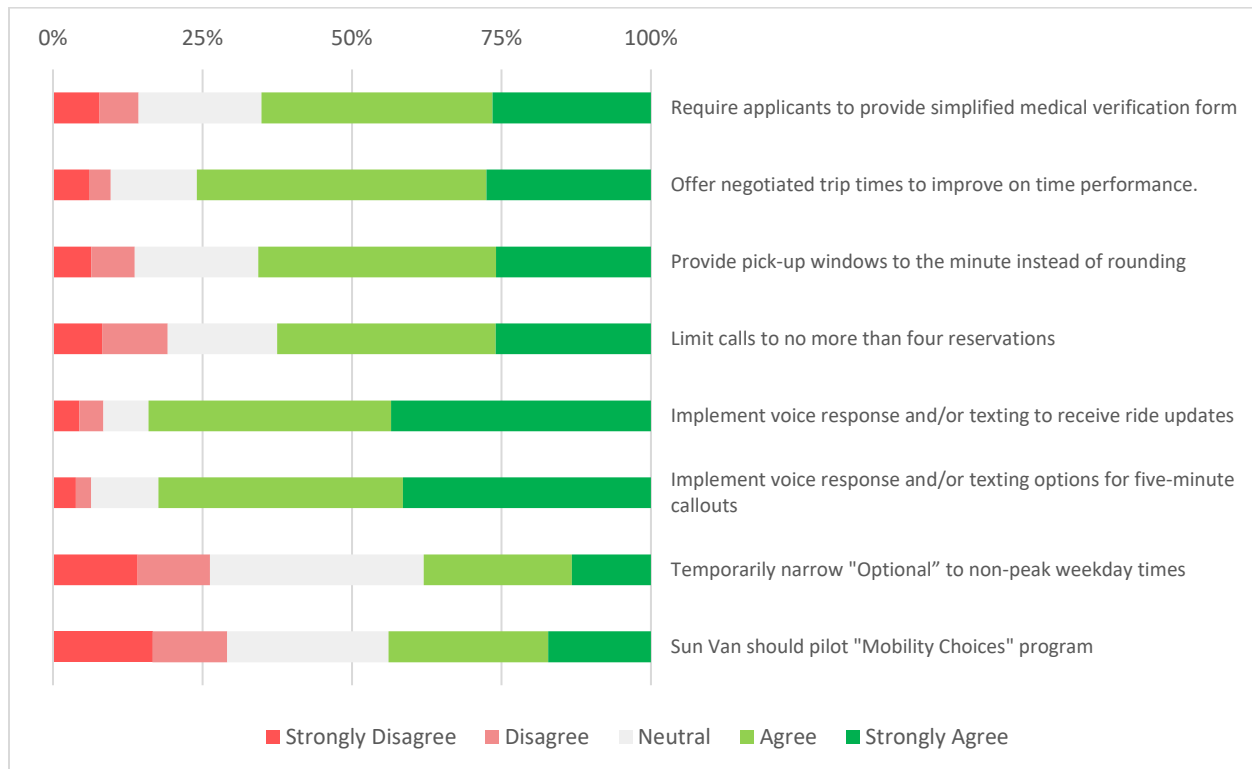
☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

Figure 17 shows the overall sentiment for each question. The percentages are based on the number of people responding to each question. The “disagree” and “strongly disagree” are shown in red, the “agree” and “strongly agree” in green, and neutral in gray.

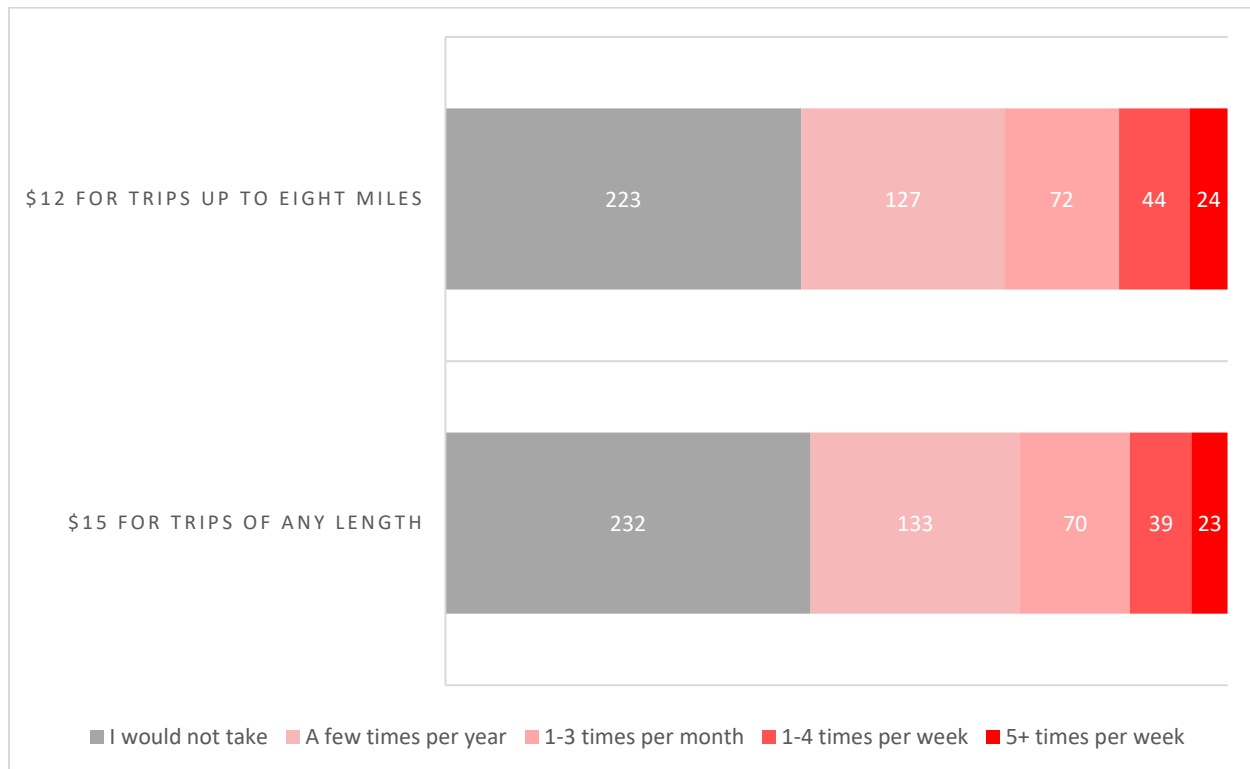
Figure 17: Recommendation Sentiment Percentages


All but two of the recommendations had more than 50% of the responses in the “agree” and “strongly agree” categories. The recommendations with the greatest support were the automated ride updates and call outs. The change to the eligibility process and reservations processes also had broad support.

The recommendations regarding suspending optional service during peak times and implementing the “Mobility Choices” pilot did not receive a majority of positive sentiment, but the positive percentages exceeded the negative ones.

MOBILITY CHOICES FARE OPTIONS

There were two questions which asked client about how often they would ride a pilot “Mobility Choices” service as described in the recommendation section. The questions had two different fare options for consideration. Survey respondents showed roughly the same interest in Mobility Choices between the two options. Approximately 46% of respondents indicated that they would not take the pilot service regardless of price option. The \$12 per trip (up to 8 miles) option received a little more interest and usage would be slightly higher than the \$15 per trips of any length option.

Figure 18: Mobility Choice Ride Frequency by Fare


To estimate average usage frequency, the responses were converted to annual ride amounts based on the values shown in Table 32. Based on this, it was estimated that the \$12 fare option would generate 35 annual rides per active user and the \$15 fare would generate 32 annual rides per user. Based on the 2,239 distinct Sun Van riders in 2023, this would translate into 78,365 annual rides at the \$12 fare and 71,648 rides at the \$15 fare.

Table 32: Estimated Rides by Survey Response Type

Survey Response	Estimated Annual Rides
I would not take	0
A few times per year	6
1-3 times per month	24
1-4 times per week	130
5+ times per week	365

ADDITIONAL SURVEY COMMENTS

Respondents were asked if there were any additional comments they wanted to provide, and their responses fell into a few key themes.

- On-time performance (35 responses)
 - The largest category is respondents flagging late, early and even dropped trips as their main obstacle to use.
 - Example Comment: "My last pickup was 90 minutes late, causing me to wait in an unsecured area by myself. The doctor's office had closed. I did not receive any notice of this delay, so I could have taken a taxi home instead."
- Confusion about \$12/\$15 Mobility Choices Fare, assuming this is proposed fare increase (32 responses)
 - The second largest category is respondents misinterpreting the quoted \$12/\$15 fare as a proposed fare for all Sun Van trips.
 - Example Comment: "We on fixed and limited incomes will become housebound if fares run 12-15 dollars one way or even round trips"
 - Example Comment: "\$30 a round trip is beyond the budget for many of your clients including me. I simply could not afford it and would end up home bound instead."
- Bringing back Sun Van fares (27 responses)
 - 12 responses for reinstating fares, 15 for keeping fares free
 - Sun Tran's extended free fare program was divisive. While some appreciated the free fares and consider it worth the equity value, others believe the free fares have worsened cleanliness and the presence of non-destination riders, or believe the extra funding could fix more pressing problems.
 - Example Pro Fare Comment: "All Sun Van rides should be two dollars each way. This could give the drivers a small raise and get some cleaners to clean vans as they are quite dirty."
 - Example Con Fare Comment: [I am a person who lives thanks to the help of my daughter, and my Social Security income is very little and I would not have money to pay.] Original: "Soy una persona que vivo gracias a la ayuda de mi hija porque mis Ingresos de seguro social son muy pocos y no tendría dinero para pagar"
- Mobility Choices Proposal (26 responses)
 - 18 supportive responses , 8 unsupportive
 - Supportive respondents see the Mobility Choices proposal as a useful option for more convenient rides. Unsupportive respondents worry that it could begin a cycle of disinvestment and outsourcing. Some of them also worry about the qualifications of taxi/TNC drivers.

- Example Pro Comment: "...I also think it would free up the SunVan buses/vans if other avenues were used such as Uber and Lyft. Clients like myself who don't need wheelchair access could easily take that alternate provider."
- Example Con Comment: "The optional rides questions say nothing about the safety of the passenger in a Lyft or Uber ride. What is the knowledge of the driver concerning seizures, have they been vetted for physical/sexual abuse with vulnerable persons"
- Customer Service /Safety (25 responses)
 - There were some complaints about Dispatchers' disposition toward customers and toward drivers. There are also a few complaints about drivers being disrespectful or not following safety protocol, such as not locking seats in place after adjusting them. But like with the app, the complaints were vague and difficult to use, and some of the customer service complaints are simply about long hold times.
 - Example Comment: "New Employees should be hire due to the current ones who abuse their power or status by using, favoritism, nepotism and retaliate against members who speak up!"
 - Example Comment: "As a Sun Van client, I personally feel like Sun Van higher-ups should take incident reports more seriously. I have been physically and emotionally harassed by many drivers."
- Tech issues with App (23 responses)
 - Some respondents are satisfied with the app while others say the app needs improvement. Though many of the complaints are vague and may be due to low user proficiency. For instance, the number one request is to add a feature allowing users to track their arrival time. Some commenters also appear unaware that the app exists, or don't have smartphones, so would prefer a browser-based version.
 - Example Comment: "Booking online with real time updates would be nice. This would free up the phone calls and everyone would be looking at the same schedules. Also, being able to see the Van's location on a map in real time, similar to Domino's Pizza, as it gets closer to picking one up would be great."
- Coverage and Accessibility (20 responses)
 - Some users wish that Sun Van would run to all of Pima County, go further from bus routes or run where abandoned routes no longer exist.
 - Example Comment: "First, the boundaries should be revised to incorporate the entire residency of pima county. Every resident of pima county should be afforded the same services regardless of where they live."
- Fraudulent Use Concerns (7 responses)
 - A few respondents believe there is widespread fraudulent use of Sun Van by people who technically should not be eligible. Others believe that those who are eligible might be taking more than their share of trips. These comments often overlap with concerns that Sun Tran as a whole is being abused due to the absence of fares.

- Example Comment: “Sun Tran should strive to reduce the abuse of this system by those riders who are not in fact disabled. Those purporting to be disabled by hobbling around on walkers and wheelchairs only when in public view should be charged a full-fare market-rate cab fee for their Sun Van transportation.”
- Other Comment
 - "The company absolutely needs to put solar tint on the side windows of every single van to cut down on the amount of sweltering heat."

5.5.3 Recommendation Outreach Meetings Summary

Sun Tran and the Department of Transportation and Mobility (DTM) staff conducted twelve (12) public input meetings between March 24 and April 24, 2024, providing community members with the opportunity to offer feedback and complete a paper survey.

These meetings were held across the city, with at least one meeting in each ward:

- Tucson Ward 2 Council Office
- Pascua Yaqui Tribal Chambers
- El Rio Neighborhood Center
- Woods Memorial Library
- Nanini Library
- Miller-Golf Link Library
- Quincie Douglas Library
- Joel D. Valdez Main Library
- University of Arizona Student Union Memorial Center

Additionally, two (2) virtual meetings were held:

- Virtual Zoom Meeting | Tuesday, April 10, 2024 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.
- Virtual Zoom Meeting | Tuesday, April 24, 2024 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.

To ensure inclusive feedback, three (3) targeted focus groups were conducted for the following communities:

- SAAVI Services for the Blind
 - On May 1, 2024, Sun Van and City of Tucson staff met with Saavi – Services for the Blind with 11 of their clients to discuss transportation experiences and accessibility needs. Riders shared generally positive feedback on comfort and customer service but raised concerns about app accessibility, ride scheduling delays, inconsistent driver practices, and limited weekend service. Suggestions included improved app features (FaceID, location pinning, shorter booking increments), better driver training

for assisting visually impaired riders, and potential partnerships with Uber/Lyft to fill service gaps. Full meeting notes are provided in [Appendix A](#).

- Commission on Disability Issues (CODI)
 - On April 16, 2025, Sun Van staff presented the findings from the first Sun Van COA Survey to the Commission on Disability Issues (CODI). The presentation outlined key survey results, highlighted rider feedback, and provided an overview of next steps for addressing identified service needs. CODI members reviewed the materials, asked questions, and offered suggestions for future data collection and reporting. This virtual meeting was recorded, and a copy is available upon request from the City Clerk's Office.
- United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Arizona:
 - On April 30, 2025, Sun Van and City of Tucson staff met with 23 community members at the United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Arizona to discuss service concerns. Key issues included long ride times, uncertainty about standing appointments, a need for clearer Sun Van driver policies, improved operator and dispatch training, and the need for increased reliability of the Sun Van app. Riders also requested faster eligibility processing, better communication, and consideration of fare changes with medical trips remaining free. Full meeting notes are provided in [Appendix B](#).

The dedicated webpage, created to centralize all relevant information, was updated to include new meeting details, recordings of virtual sessions, and the reports and findings from the initial round of the Sun Van COA.

A comprehensive outreach campaign was executed across multiple platforms to ensure broad community engagement in the Sun Van COA process. Outreach efforts included email campaigns, social media engagement, in-person meetings, and paper surveys.

EMAIL & DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Mass Email Blasts: Two major email campaigns were sent to a distribution list of 44,000 subscribers consisting of clients, community members, non-profits, and local community partners, informing them about the Sun Van COA and encouraging participation.

City Employee Communication: An update was distributed via News Net for City Employees, ensuring internal stakeholders were informed of the ongoing process.

PAPER SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

Paper surveys were made available through multiple channels, including Sun Van drivers, community organizations (e.g., Beacon Group, SAAVI), and training events. Surveys were distributed at key locations such as the Ward 2 office, TTAC, and Banner South CHW Training Groups.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE OUTREACH

Sun Tran utilized various social media platforms to share information, post instructional videos, and promote upcoming meetings. Recordings of virtual meetings were uploaded to YouTube to ensure maximum accessibility.

ADDITIONAL PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

Informational posters and flyers were distributed on Sun Tran buses and at major transit centers to extend outreach efforts. Updates regarding the COA were also included in the Ward 2 newsletters scheduled for April 2025.

Appendix A

SAAVI - Services for the Blind: Focus Group Meeting

05/1/2024

Participants (11)

Jason Andrews

Ethan Sullivan

Harvey Hall

Junior Martinez

Chloe Ganshorn

Clancy Jow

Philip Young

Sirena Corroll

Wesley

Jeffery Lutz

Melanie

*Melanie: Saavi does offer translation services. There is no known limit.

Prior Questions:

Sirena: Do you have control over the app? Yes.

Phillip: Who is the parent company? City, RATPD.

Start of Focus Group Notes

Question 1: Did any of you take the survey?

Wesley- Yes. Rest: No.

Question 2: What Screen Reader do you use?

Sirena: NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access).

Wesley: ZoomText.

Sirena and Wesley: Voiceover on iPhone.

Jason: Google TalkBack on android.

Harvey and Jason: Voiceover, Jaws on computer.

Philip: Voiceover on phone, not enough memory on computer for another application.

Sirena: Voiceover on the mac works differently.

Melanie: Anyone use Magic? I know it's an older screen reader.

Sirena: Narrator, not common.

Question 3: How many of you use Sun Van or Sun Tran?

Harvey, Welsey, and Sirena: Yes

Sun Tran Only?

Jason, Harvey, Philip, and JR. (4)

Sun Van Only?

Sirena (1): There is no bus close to home (Southeast Tucson). The closes one is on South Harrison, but the route is only one way and comes every 2 hours. The bus stop at PCC is too far, especially with kids. I've used Sun Van twice but its too difficult with my son.

Question 4: How is Sun Van's customer service?

Phillip: Nice.

Sirena: No issues.

Welsey: App uses issues where it books instantly. Called customer services regarding delay in route, was 15 minutes on hold with no hold music to know I was on hold.

Welsey: Customer service should be able to look up a destination without needing to provide a specific address. Some locations don't have specific addresses.

Philip: I agree, places like Tucson airport doesn't have a specific address.

Question 5: How is the process for applying for Sun Van eligibility?

Jason: The qualifying process was simple. Just application and documentation on disability. Got a letter in the mail, that good for a year.

Harvey: I applied 6 months ago and got approved for a year.

Melanie: They still request the forms be faxed but fax machines are not as common in doctors' offices anymore.

Sirena: I know not all users of Sun Van are visually impaired/blind, but no sight assistance.

Question 6: What was your timeline from application to approval?

Harvey: It was quick, 1 week for me.

Sirena: A month, my document was lost.

Melanie: Most students receive approval in less than 30 days.

Question 7: Any Sun Van issues?

Jason: Are they aware of the visually impaired? A driver once parked in a weird spot (bus entrance blocked by trash can) in a weird angle. I have some vision so I was able to navigate through, but others might not have been able to.

Maybe there should be a designated spot, handicap spot.

Melanie: There was an issue with a student and pick up at an apartment complex, was able to work with the apartment complex and the service.

Welsey: Saying what seats are available would be great, some drivers do it some don't. Had an issue at Hotel Congress where the driver parked 100+ feet away from the door and yelled they were there, didn't approach.

Question 8: Are the rides comfortable?

Majority: Yes, and they are not crowded. The minivans are quiet and more comfortable.

Sirena: I fell off the step once.

Majority: Its easier to back out the van

Sirena: I travel with a guide dog and kids. Drivers should be aware of the child in rear facing car seats, front face is okay, depends on age (2+). Drivers have made a comment before. Has a car seat backpack.

Question 9: Any app issues?

Wesley: Booking should be in 5 min increments. Currently only 30-minute increments. Tried to book at 50 after the hour, couldn't. Login screen not accessible. Timeouts after 30 mins.

Sirena agrees. Every other app has FaceID, this one doesn't.

Sirena: App should have an option to remember login information.

Phillip: I was in Phoenix for a sporting event and the bus ticket served as a event ticket, does that work here.

Question 10: Does the app send notifications?

Sirena: Yes, you can see it on lock screen but the time jumps based on arrival .

Question 11: What other apps are accessible?

Sirena: Google, Uber, Lyft. Nothing is unlabeled. No accessibility issues with Sun Van but scheduling is difficult.

Jason: Uber Eats, Lyft, Google Map.

Question 12: Anyone use Sun On Demand?

Jason: Yes, but the 2.5-hour scheduling doesn't work well. Based on where I live I have to book at 4 am and when I used it the queue was full, I was the last to be dropped off and was late. Took 10-15 minutes per person to get off. The service Jason used was confirmed to be Sun Shuttle not Sun On Demand.

Sirena: For Sun Van it was 1-3 days out for booking, now it's a week in advance. Having issues were booking turning into optional drop off/pickup. May not get picked up or dropped off despite scheduling. Should notify you if its optional or remove the optional feature.

Welsey: Had a similar experience.

Question 13: Do you use Uber/Lyft to fill in the gap in service?

Jason: Yes, to both. They are good quicker. Got an uber/Lyft within 3 mins of booking. Talks back when confirming payment.

Sirena: Yes, great with speed. App is good. Has been denied because of guide dog, however Sun Van is guide dog accessible. Uber is expensive.

Wesley: Uses uber to fill in the gap, especially cause of the lack in Sun Van weekend services/issues. Uber/Lyft does have issues with the driver finding us despite descriptions (white cane)

Question 14: Other forms of transportation?

Wesley: Friends.

Jason: Wife.

Siera: Driver at Saavi but based on their availability.

Melanie: Saavi's transportation service. Can receive 8-10 students daily getting to and from school. With overcrowding they use Lyft/uber.

Question 15: App comments/feedback?

Wesley: Use dark mode.

Siera: Optional ride (?). Maybe charge fee.

Jason: Should be an uber/Lyft collab with Sun Van. Increases accessibility with timing.

Sierra: Should be able to rate your driver with feedback.

Pickup issues: being able to pinpoint your location would be helpful.

Question 16: Do you think the fare is fair?

Yes= 4+

Wesley: I was in New Jersey traveling for 1 hour and 15 mins and they charged me 22.50. A distance-based travel fee=BAD. I am okay with a lower fee for shorter rider and an increase for longer rides.

Closing Remarks

Melanie: Where can we find the survey? Website, email?

Narrator: We will be providing 4-5 large print copies of the survey. Jeffery and Chloe expressed wanting one.

Appendix B

United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Arizona: Focus Group

04/30/2025

Participants (23)

Doreen	Chris	Debora	Christina
Art	Amber	Tina	Heather T
Kim	Amy	Heather R	Lorelei
Vero	Luis	Karina	Matthew
Baylee	Chelsie	Patty	Jesus
Hector	Cassandra	Ronda	

Staff:

- Ian (CoT, DTM)
- Shawn (Sun Van)
- Stephanie (Sun Van)
- Luz (Sun Van)

Issues brought up by participants:

- Length of Time on vehicle exceeds expectations
- When will booking standing appointments return?
 - Answered by Stephanie: A separate call line will be created so larger groups do not tie up lines. Group reservations need to cancel trips if they will not be utilizing them.
- Question: Why is there a two minute wait time?
 - Answer: Operators will not leave a rider's home without calling dispatch. Dispatch will try to get ahold of rider, operator will not leave without dispatch's approval.
- Question: How to get notes to drivers, so that they are going to the right place for pick-up?
 - Answer: Having those notes when booking a trip is key. They are given to the driver in their manifest for the day.
- Request an updated no-show policy for the public.
- Request Sensitivity Training for Operators:
 - Not every driver is aware of every disability.
 - Disabilities can be unique to each person.

- Operators can learn to better approach communication with riders.
- Dispatch Training:
 - Sun Van team explained that other software could be used to more efficiently book rides.
 - Comments: Sometimes the riders don't make sense and take too long to get there.
- Questions/ Concerns on the Sun Van App – all issues have been taken to the app team.
- Request for Sun Van team to call all riders who have not used the Sun Van app and help them set up account.
 - Sun Van team is working on gathering emails for all Sun Van riders to create a database to help with this type of communication.
 - Other comments on App: In order for people to rely on the app it has to actually work and be accurate.
- Questions about whether the eligibility department would be going to a third party? And what the advantages of that would be?
 - Having a focused third-party doing it may make it more efficient, it could also be brought and done in-house at Sun Van. No plan is set.
 - Comments:
 - Will it actually make the process more efficient? We need the approval process to move quicker.
 - New format should have accessible forms.
 - How many denials? Answer: 3-4%
- Comment: Sun Van Operators show up late and hurry people.
 - Explained policy of operators, will bring comment to training team.
- Question on when standing rides will come back?
 - There are some historic standing rides, but we have not decided when we will bring those back.
- Comment: Fares should be implemented and maybe keep medical appointments free.