

REPORT BY THE U.S.

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# General Accounting Office

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## Status Of Special Efforts To Meet Transportation Needs Of The Elderly And Handicapped

GAO surveyed the special efforts being undertaken by transit systems to accommodate the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped after rescission of a Federal rule that required all federally assisted transit systems to make their systems accessible to the handicapped.

The 84 transit systems GAO contacted have certified that they are making these special efforts. GAO found that while some of these systems are continuing to make their conventional transit services accessible to the handicapped, the majority are providing some form of demand-responsive paratransit service using buses, vans, or taxis. Comments on the adequacy of these special efforts were also obtained from representatives of organizations for the elderly and handicapped.



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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

B-207076

The Honorable Alan Cranston

The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes

The Honorable Donald W. Riegle

The Honorable Christopher Dodd  
Committee on Banking, Housing and  
Urban Affairs  
United States Senate

As requested in your joint letter of January 27, 1982, we have conducted a survey of special efforts being taken by localities to accommodate the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped. This report provides information we obtained from our survey of transportation system operators and discussions with representatives of handicapped organizations and officials of the Department of Transportation.

As requested by your offices, we did not take the additional time needed to obtain agency comments on the matters discussed in this report.

As arranged with your offices, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of the report. At that time, we will send copies to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of Transportation; and other interested parties. We will also make copies available to others on request.

Sincerely yours,

  
for Henry Eschwege  
Director



D I G E S T

GAO was requested by five members of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs to conduct a survey of special efforts being made by localities to accommodate the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped. Through telephone inquiry, GAO gathered information from 84 transit systems in 33 States and the District of Columbia.

GAO found that

- all of the transit systems (including the 84 contacted by GAO) currently receiving Federal transit assistance have certified that they are making special efforts to meet the transportation needs of the handicapped;
- of the 84 transit systems contacted, 70 provide bus service only, 13 provide a combination of bus and rail service, and 1 provides only rail service;
- about 48 percent of the 83 bus systems contacted currently offer regularly scheduled service using lift-equipped buses or intend to start such service this year;
- only 4 of the 14 rail systems currently have a significant portion of their stations accessible to the handicapped;
- since the accessibility requirements were removed by the Department of Transportation, only 30 of the 83 bus systems and 6 of the 14 rail systems still intend to reach the level of accessibility previously required; and
- almost 80 percent of the systems contacted provide some type of paratransit service for the handicapped (usually demand-responsive systems using buses, vans, or taxis).

DOT's ADMINISTRATION OF RECENT  
CHANGES IN FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

On July 20, 1981, the Department of Transportation issued an interim rule rescinding a May 31, 1979, regulation requiring that all federally assisted mass transit systems make their systems accessible to the handicapped. The 1981 interim rule substituted a local option approach. Recipients of Federal mass transit assistance are still obligated to provide transportation for the elderly and handicapped, but it is up to the local communities to decide how such transportation is to be provided. (See pp. 1 and 2.)

The Department of Transportation now requires recipients of financial assistance to certify that they are making special efforts to provide transportation to the elderly and handicapped. The Department is not monitoring to determine if transit system operators are actually carrying out these special efforts. The Department's Office of Civil Rights plans to undertake investigations only when complaints are received alleging that a transit system operator has consistently failed to make these special efforts. (See p. 2.)

ACCESSIBILITY OF BUS SYSTEMS

As their special efforts to meet the transportation needs of the handicapped, some bus system operators are continuing to make their conventional service accessible through the use of wheelchair lift-equipped buses. Of the 83 bus systems that GAO contacted, only 8 currently have 50 percent or more of their fleets equipped with lifts--the level of accessibility they were required to reach by 1989 under the 1979 regulations. However, 30 (or about 36 percent) indicated that they still intend to equip at least 50 percent of their fleets with lifts. (See pp. 5 to 7.)

On the other hand, 19 bus systems have deleted lifts from buses that were on order at the time the 1979 regulations were rescinded; and 15 of the 35 bus systems that have ordered new buses since then will not have lifts on any of the buses ordered. (See p. 8.)

## ACCESSIBILITY OF RAIL SYSTEMS

Of the 14 transit systems GAO contacted which provide rail service, 3 are fully accessible to wheelchair users, 1 has 90 percent of its stations accessible, 5 have less than 10 percent of their stations accessible, and 5 are not accessible at all.

As of March 1982, the three fully accessible systems intended to maintain full accessibility on all new construction, the 90-percent accessible system intends to achieve full accessibility, and two systems intend to achieve at least 50 percent accessibility. Three systems do not intend to provide accessibility beyond the minimal amount they have now, and the remaining five systems had not made any decisions on system accessibility at the time of GAO's survey. (See pp. 9 and 10.)

## PARATRANSIT SERVICES PROVIDED

As their special efforts to meet the transportation needs of the handicapped, most systems are providing paratransit services. Of the 84 transit systems GAO contacted, 66 provide paratransit services. (See p. 10.)

Of the 66 systems with paratransit services, 38 prioritize service when demand exceeds capacity, and most of these give highest priority to either medical or work trips. Fifty-three of the systems require 24 hours or less advance request time for use of the service. While 16 of the 66 systems never had to deny requests for service, the majority of them deny service from 1 to 25 percent of the time. (See pp. 11 to 13.)

Compared with conventional bus service in their areas, about 30 percent of the systems surveyed with paratransit services operated more than or the same number of hours, about 47 percent operated more than or the same number of days per week, and about 76 percent served the same or a larger geographic area. (See pp. 12 to 14.) Generally the paratransit services have stayed the same or increased since the new regulations were issued in July 1981. A number of service operators, however, related their uncertainties

about the continued availability of adequate funding and the impact this could have on their paratransit services in the next year. (See pp. 16 and 17.)

#### COORDINATION WITH HANDICAPPED GROUPS

Seventy-two of the 84 transit system operators contacted indicated that they coordinate their special efforts transportation programs extensively with local handicapped groups. The representatives of handicapped groups contacted generally believed that coordination with elderly and handicapped groups could be improved. (See pp. 18 and 19.)

#### AGENCY COMMENTS

As requested, GAO did not take the additional time needed to obtain agency comments on the matters discussed in this report.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOT	Department of Transportation
GAO	General Accounting Office
UMTA	Urban Mass Transportation Administration



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION FOR THE ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), states that no otherwise qualified individual shall solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Section 16 of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended (49 U.S.C. 1612), and section 105 of the Federal-Aid Highway Admendments of 1974 (23 U.S.C. 142 nt), also require that special efforts be made in the planning and design of mass transportation facilities and services to assure the availability of mass transportation which can be effectively utilized by the elderly and handicapped.

In April 1976, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) issued regulations requiring transit operators receiving financial assistance from UMTA to make special efforts to provide transportation that handicapped persons could use. After the Department of Health, Education and Welfare issued guidelines in January 1978 on the responsibilities of each Federal agency under section 504, the Department of Transportation (DOT) issued on May 31, 1979, a regulation that required all recipients of financial assistance from DOT to make their facilities and programs accessible to handicapped persons by specified deadlines. These regulations superseded the existing UMTA regulations.

For recipients of mass transportation funds, DOT's regulations meant that all buses purchased had to be equipped with wheelchair lifts until at least half of their peak-hour fleets were equipped with lifts; all new rapid rail facilities had to be accessible; key stations of existing rail systems had to be retrofitted to make them accessible, and, by July 1982, interim accessible transportation had to be provided for handicapped persons until transit service accessibility was achieved.

These regulations aroused considerable controversy among DOT, the transit systems receiving Federal mass transit assistance, and the various organizations for the elderly and handicapped. The American Public Transit Association, among others, filed a suit challenging the rule; and on May 26, 1981, a Federal court decided that the rule exceeded the authority provided by section 504 and returned the regulations to the Secretary of Transportation for a determination of whether the mass transit accessibility requirements might be authorized by other statutes.

Accordingly, DOT issued an interim rule on July 20, 1981, rescinding the accessible mass transit requirement by substituting a local option approach. It is now DOT's policy that ensuring the provision of transportation for handicapped persons is an obligation of recipients of Federal assistance for mass transit, but the responsibility for deciding how such transportation is to be provided should be returned to local communities. Under the interim rule, DOT requires that recipients of financial assistance certify that they are making special efforts to provide transportation to handicapped persons through locally determined methods.

The July 1981 interim rule is to remain in effect until a new, permanent regulation is published. At the time the interim rule was published, DOT also requested comments on how the Department should carry out its responsibility under section 504 and the other statutes. As of April 1982, DOT was still in the process of analyzing the comments received and exploring various options concerning the permanent regulation. DOT has not established a formal target date for issuing the notice of proposed rulemaking for the permanent regulation.

#### DOT's ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVISED REGULATIONS

Since adopting the local option approach, DOT has had a very small role in administering the regulations on nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap. Other than providing transit system operators with copies of the July 1981 interim rule and informing them of the requirement for submitting the required certification, almost no guidance or assistance has been provided.

While UMTA regional office employees have indicated to us that they will have a general knowledge of what special efforts are being undertaken from their reviews of regional transportation improvement plans and other planning documents, we have been informed by UMTA regional and headquarters officials that they do not plan to actively monitor transit operators to determine if they are complying with the interim regulations. Because of this administration's philosophy of minimizing Federal involvement in local operations, the monitoring will be left to the local community. UMTA will take action only if a grantee fails to certify it is making special efforts or if UMTA receives a complaint of noncompliance. As pointed out in the regulations, noncompliance must be based on a consistent pattern of failing to make special efforts to provide transportation for the handicapped and not just isolated problems such as the failure of a paratransit vehicle to arrive as scheduled. Therefore, DOT's Office of Civil Rights will investigate only complaints alleging a consistent pattern of failure to make special efforts.

## OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In a January 27, 1982, letter, five members, including the then Ranking Minority Member, of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, asked us to conduct a survey of special efforts being made by localities to accommodate the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped. They also asked us to review DOT's administration of the related regulations and determine the extent to which organizations for the handicapped have been consulted in developing these special efforts. (See app. IV.)

The objectives of our work on this survey were to provide

- a description of DOT's implementation of the interim regulations and its review of local activities under the regulations,
- a summary of changes in programs for the handicapped made by recipients of Federal transit assistance since the interim regulations were issued,
- a description of the special efforts being undertaken by these recipients to meet the transportation needs of the handicapped, and
- a discussion of the extent and nature of local consultation with representative organizations for the handicapped in the planning and design of these services.

We examined DOT's current and prior regulations concerning nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap and discussed DOT's implementation of these regulations with officials at headquarters and in all 10 UMTA regional offices. We also discussed with these officials the extent of monitoring that has been done or is planned regarding localities' special efforts, procedures for responding to any complaints relative to these special efforts, and plans for issuing permanent regulations on this subject.

We examined a number of studies of special transportation services for the elderly and handicapped and obtained background information from representatives of the American Public Transit Association and the Congressional Budget Office. We also gathered information from visits with transit providers in Washington, D.C.; Baltimore, Maryland; and Richmond, Virginia. Using this information, we designed a questionnaire to gather information on changes to transportation programs for the handicapped since issuance of the interim regulations, the special efforts being made to meet the transportation needs of the handicapped, and the extent to which these programs were coordinated with handicapped groups. (The questionnaire is reproduced in app. III.)

Over 350 organizations, in 279 urbanized areas (based on the 1970 census), received UMTA financial assistance in 1981 and thus are required to comply with the requirement that they make special efforts to meet the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped. Because the requestors indicated that they were most interested in obtaining information on the special efforts being made in the larger urbanized areas, we administered a telephone survey to the following recipients of Federal transit assistance:

- Large: Eighteen transit systems in the 10 largest urbanized areas with a peak-hour fleet of 200 or more vehicles.
- Medium: Twenty-nine transit systems in the 11th through the 40th largest urbanized areas with a peak-hour fleet of 100 or more vehicles.
- Small: Thirty-seven of the 73 transit systems in the remaining urbanized areas with a peak-hour fleet of 40 or more vehicles.

As a result, we were able to gather information on 84 transit systems providing bus, rail, paratransit, or combined services in 33 States plus the District of Columbia. (See app. I for a list of the systems contacted.) The results of our survey are summarized in this report by the three categories above. Because we excluded certain transit systems (those with less than 200, 100, and 40 vehicles in the large, medium, and small urbanized areas, respectively) and included only half of the transit systems in the small urbanized areas with 40 or more vehicles, the information presented in this report is representative of only the 84 systems contacted; it cannot be projected to all transit systems in the country.

This information was gathered by telephone and, because we did not have enough time, we were not able to verify the accuracy of the data gathered. We did, however, contact members of the handicapped advisory groups for 12 of the transit systems included in our survey to confirm information provided by the transit operators and obtain comments concerning the locality's approach to meeting the transportation needs of the handicapped. In selecting groups to contact, we picked locations in States with a large number of handicapped persons that would also give us a mix of different size urbanized areas. Appendix II lists the 12 representatives of organizations for the elderly and handicapped contacted.

## CHAPTER 2

### SPECIAL EFFORTS BEING MADE TO MEET THE

#### TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED

All of the transit systems that received Federal assistance have certified to UMTA that they are making special efforts to meet the transportation needs of the handicapped. Of the 84 recipients of Federal transit assistance that we surveyed, 35 bus service operators use lift-equipped buses for some portion of their regularly scheduled service, 9 rail system operators have some portion of their systems accessible, and 66 operators provide paratransit service <sup>1/</sup> that can be used by the handicapped. We found only two localities that did not provide either an accessible transit service or a paratransit system, and these localities indicated that they plan to institute a paratransit service in the near future. Appendix I provides an overview of the current level of accessibility of the transit service in the localities surveyed and indicates which areas provide paratransit service.

Thirty bus system operators still intend to have at least 50 percent of their fleet equipped with lifts, and four rail system operators intend to have fully accessible systems. Most systems providing paratransit services have maintained or increased the service provided since the interim regulations were issued in July 1981.

#### ACCESSIBILITY OF BUS SYSTEMS SURVEYED

Of the 84 transit assistance recipients contacted, 83 provide bus service; one recipient, the Bay Area Rapid Transit District in San Francisco, California, provides only rail service. Of the recipients that provide bus service, 55 systems, or about 66 percent, have lift-equipped buses. Chart 1 shows the number of systems operating bus service, the number of systems with lift-equipped buses, the total number of buses operated, and the number of lift-equipped buses for each of the three sizes of localities we contacted.

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<sup>1/</sup>Paratransit is generally considered to include modes of intra-urban passenger transportation available to the public (excluding conventional scheduled transit) such as taxi, demand-responsive, and jitney services; subscription van services; and car-pools. The paratransit services in the areas surveyed generally consisted of subsidized demand-responsive systems using buses, specialized vehicles, and taxis.

Chart 1

Number of Lift-Equipped Buses and Total Number  
of Buses Operated by Transit Systems Surveyed

	<u>Size of localities (note a)</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
Number of systems operating bus service	37	29	17	83
Number of systems with lift-equipped buses	21	20	14	55
Number of standard buses operated by systems surveyed	4,116	13,981	20,351	38,448
Number of standard buses with wheelchair-lifts operated by systems surveyed	546	1,986	4,423	6,955
Percent of buses with lifts	13	14	22	18

a/The responses in all of the charts have been summarized by the three categories in our survey (see p. 4).

Under the 1979 regulations all bus system operators receiving Federal assistance were required to have 50 percent of their peak-hour bus fleet equipped with wheelchair lifts by 1989 at the latest, but this requirement was rescinded by the July 1981 interim regulations. Of the 83 bus system operators contacted, only 8 (or about 10 percent) had 50 percent or more of their fleet equipped with lifts. Thirty of the bus system operators (or about 36 percent) indicated that they still intend to have at least 50 percent of their fleet equipped with lifts, and 16 (or 19 percent) intend to have from 1 to 49 percent of their fleet lift equipped. Twenty-four systems intend to have no lift-equipped buses, and 13 systems told us that no decision had been made yet regarding lift-equipped buses. (See chart 2.)

Chart 2

Number of Systems With  
Current and Planned Percentage of Bus  
Fleets Equipped With Wheelchair Lifts

<u>Percent of bus fleet</u>	<u>Size of localities</u>						<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Small</u>		<u>Medium</u>		<u>Large</u>		<u>Current</u>	<u>Planned</u>
	<u>Current</u>	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Planned</u>
	----- (Number of systems) -----							
0	17	11	11	12	3	1	31	24
1-24	11	7	13	5	8	0	32	12
25-49	5	3	3	1	4	0	12	4
50-74	2	5	2	4	2	5	6	14
75-99	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
100	0	4	0	5	0	6	0	15
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>37</u></b>	<b><u>37</u></b>	<b><u>29</u></b>	<b><u>29</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>	<b><u>83</u></b>	<b><u>83</u></b>

Under the 1979 regulations, all new buses had to be equipped with wheelchair lifts until the system's fleet had reached the required level of accessibility. Nineteen system operators told us they had deleted the wheelchair lifts from a total of 707 buses that were on order at the time this requirement was rescinded by the interim regulations in July 1981. In addition, of the 35 system operators that have started new bus procurements since then, 15 (or 43 percent) are buying buses without wheelchair lifts. (See chart 3.)

Chart 3

Changes in Purchases of Lift-Equipped Buses  
Since the July 1981 Interim Regulations

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
Number of systems that deleted lifts on buses on order at the time the interim regulations were published	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>19</u>
Number of buses on which lifts were deleted	<u>95</u>	<u>457</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>707</u>
Number of systems that have initiated bus procurements since the interim regulations were published	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>35</u>
Number of systems with the following percentage of new buses that will be equipped with lifts:				
0%	6	8	1	15
1-49%	0	1	0	1
50-99%	1	1	1	3
100%	5	4	6	15
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>35</u>

Of the 46 bus system operators (see chart 2) that still intend to have some portion of their fleet equipped with wheelchair lifts, 37 plan to reach their planned level of accessibility by 1989, (the date established by the 1979 interim regulations) and 5 by 1990 or later. Four bus system operators did not know when they would reach their planned level of accessibility. One pointed out that it would depend on the availability of funds to buy new buses or to retrofit existing buses.

Of the 55 bus systems that currently have wheelchair lift-equipped buses, 35 make special efforts to make these buses available for use and 5 intend to start such service in 1982. Of the 15 operators that do not use the lift-equipped buses at all or make no special effort to make them available for use, 3 operators have only one lift-equipped bus each, 1 has 5 buses which are only used for charter service, and 3 have had problems making the lifts operable. (See chart 4.)

Chart 4

Use of Wheelchair Lift-Equipped Buses

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
Lift-equipped buses are not used at all	5	5	1	11
No special efforts made to make lift-equipped buses available for use	2	1	1	4
Accessible service to be started in 1982	2	1	2	5
Special efforts made to schedule lift-equipped buses on specific routes	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>35</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>21</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>55</u>

For the systems that make special efforts to make lift-equipped buses available for use, service is generally concentrated on the system's main routes and on routes where a need for lift service has been identified. Many system operators reported that they worked with representatives of handicapped groups in their area to identify the routes where lift-equipped buses would be scheduled. Three operators reported that their lift-equipped buses are scheduled on all routes at all times, and several system operators have established or are considering establishing a demand-responsive type of service where an individual could request that a lift-equipped bus be available on a specified route at a certain scheduled time.

ACCESSIBILITY OF RAIL SYSTEMS SURVEYED

Only 14 of the transit systems contacted provided rail service. Of these, three are fully accessible to wheelchair users, one has 90 percent of its stations accessible, five have less than 10 percent of their stations accessible, and five are not accessible at all.

Under the rescinded 1979 regulations, accessibility for commuter, light, and heavy rail systems required that all new systems be fully accessible and that key stations of existing systems be made accessible to wheelchair users. Key stations included heavily used stations, transfer or interchange points, and stations serving major activity centers. As of March 1982,

six systems still intend to reach the level of accessibility that was required by the 1979 regulations. The three fully accessible systems intended to maintain full accessibility on all new construction, the 90 percent accessible system intends to achieve full accessibility, and two systems intend to achieve at least 50 percent accessibility. Three systems do not intend to provide accessibility beyond the minimal amount they have now. The remaining five systems had not made any decision on system accessibility at the time of our review.

Chart 5

Number and Percentage of Accessible Stations in Rail Systems Surveyed

	<u>Size of localities</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----		
Transit systems with rail service	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>14</u>
Percentage of rail stations currently accessible to wheelchair users			
0%	2	1	3
1-49%	0	5	5
50-99%	0	1	1
100%	1	2	3
Don't know (note a)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>14</u>

a/Systems did not know how many stations were accessible, but none of the railcars were accessible.

PARATRANSIT SERVICES PROVIDED IN LOCALITIES SURVEYED

Sixty-six of the 84 transit operators included in our review provided paratransit services. (See chart 6.) The type of operation was split almost evenly with 30 transit authorities operating their own and 29 transit authorities contracting out for paratransit service. The other seven transit authorities operated a combination of the above or the paratransit service was provided by a separate agency.

Two-thirds of the paratransit systems had at least 75 percent of their vehicles that were accessible to wheelchair users. Only two systems had no accessible vehicles and two systems did not know what percentage of their vehicles were accessible.

Chart 6

Types of Operations and Wheelchair Accessibility of  
Paratransit Systems Surveyed (note a)

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
Systems operating paratransit service	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>
Type of operation:				
Operated by transit system	17	11	2	30
Contracted out	12	12	5	29
Combination of the above	0	0	2	2
Operated by another agency	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>
Percentage of vehicles accessible to wheelchair users				
0%	1	1	0	2
1-25%	2	2	1	5
26-49%	4	0	0	4
50-74%	2	4	3	9
75-99%	4	3	0	7
100%	18	14	5	37
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>

a/Statistics relate only to primary system operated, not to any secondary or auxiliary systems such as a taxi company.

Paratransit service characteristics

Thirty-eight, or 58 percent, of the 66 paratransit systems set priorities for service by trip purpose when demand for service exceeds availability. Of those 38 systems, 23, or 61 percent, gave highest priority to trips for medical purposes.

Waiting lists and denial of requests for service provide an indication of the system's ability to meet demand for service. One-third, or 22, of the systems maintained waiting lists of people wanting to use the service for their daily commutes. In addition, 40, or about 61 percent, of the systems denied requests for service from 1 to 25 percent of the time. Sixteen reported that they never denied service, and 26 reported that they denied service 5 percent of the time or less. Some systems that said they never denied service pointed out that they were

usually able to negotiate with riders so that service could be provided. For example, if a person was requesting service for a medical appointment at a time when no vehicles were available, the service requestor could be accommodated by moving the appointment back a few hours.

As shown on chart 7, 53 of the 66 paratransit services, or 80 percent, required 24 hours or less advance notice. In many instances this requirement applied to the casual or nonregular rider. Regular riders such as commuters or kidney dialysis patients were handled on a subscription basis, and they had to notify the paratransit operator only when they did not need the service.

Four paratransit operators volunteered the comment that although the requirement for advance notice is 24 hours, in reality it is frequently necessary for a rider to request service 48 or more hours in advance to be sure of getting a ride at the time needed. Three of the paratransit operators that made this comment did not set priorities for service.

Eligibility requirements for using the paratransit services varied from all those individuals who are entitled to the elderly and handicapped discount fares on the regular transit service to only those individuals whose handicap prevented them from using regular transit service. Mobility impairment was cited most often as an eligibility factor, followed by use of wheelchairs, blindness, mental retardation, and deafness. Elderly people with no specific physical handicap were cited less frequently than any other eligibility factor. As part of the application process, many operators require medical certification verifying the individual's reported handicap.

#### Comparability of paratransit services with conventional transit service

Chart 8 compares hours and days of service and geographic coverage of paratransit service and conventional bus service. As can be seen on the questionnaire (see app. III), we did not try to identify the extent of differences between systems for each of the above service characteristics, but rather asked for overall evaluative comments. For example, if paratransit did not operate between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. but the bus company did operate a minimal service on the main routes, bus service would be shown as providing longer hours of service. Considering these caveats, this comparison should be considered only a general indicator of service comparability.

In terms of hours of service, the paratransit systems in about 30 percent of the cases operated the same or longer hours than the bus systems. In days of service, paratransit systems operated more than or the same as bus systems in 47 percent of the cases. With regard to geographic coverage, paratransit systems covered the same or larger geographic areas than bus systems in 76 percent of the cases.

Chart 7

Service Characteristics of Paratransit Systems

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
Systems that set service priorities by trip purpose	<u>21</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>38</u>
Trip purposes given highest priority:				
Medical	14	6	3	23
Work	4	6	0	10
Medical and work	2	0	0	2
Work and school	0	1	0	1
Medical, work, and school	1	0	0	1
Did not respond	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>21</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>38</u>
Systems that maintain a waiting list	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>22</u>
Advance notice required:				
Less than 24 hours	0	3	1	4
24 hours	25	17	7	49
More than 24 hours	6	5	1	12
Did not respond	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>
Percentage of time the requests for service were denied				
0%	7	7	2	16
1-25%	19	14	7	40
26-49%	0	1	0	1
50-74%	0	2	0	2
75-99%	0	0	0	0
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>

Chart 8

Comparison of Paratransit Service  
to Conventional Bus Service

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	-----(Number of systems)----			
<b>Hours of service for paratransit:</b>				
Same as bus	11	5	0	16
Longer than bus	3	1	0	4
Shorter than bus	16	20	9	45
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>
<b>Days of service for paratransit:</b>				
Same as bus	15	8	4	27
More than bus	3	1	0	4
Fewer than bus	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>35</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>
<b>Geographic coverage for paratransit:</b>				
Same as bus	17	6	4	27
Larger than bus	12	10	1	23
Smaller than bus	2	9	4	15
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>66</u>

Paratransit systems generally covered a larger area than rail systems in the seven localities that operated both types of service. With regard to hours of service, rail service was longer than paratransit in six of the seven localities; and for days of service, paratransit service was the same as rail service in four localities and shorter in three localities. In terms of geographic coverage, paratransit systems covered the same or larger areas than rail systems in five localities, and in one, the rail coverage was more extensive than paratransit. One transit operator could not compare geographic coverage because the rail only serves a corridor.

Changes in planned paratransit services for the handicapped since the interim regulations

The 1979 regulations required that if a transit system was not going to meet the minimum accessibility requirements by July 1982, it must provide or assure the provision of interim

accessible transportation service for the handicapped by that date. This interim service was to have continued until the minimum level of accessibility for the transit system had been achieved. Of the 84 transit systems contacted, 65 said that their transition plan had provided for this interim service. Fifty-two of these have already implemented this service (which generally was their paratransit service described in the previous section), five still plan to, and six have decided not to implement this service. Of the 57 systems that had started or planned to start an interim accessible service, 10 reported that this service is more extensive than that described in their transition plans, 8 have services that are less extensive, and 39 have services that are the same. (See chart 9.)

Chart 9

Comparison of Interim Service with  
Present and Planned Service

	<u>Size of localities</u>			
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	<u>Total</u>
	-----(number of systems)----			
Systems providing for interim service until bus system becomes accessible:				
Yes	28	24	13	65
No	8	5	4	17
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>37</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>84</u>
Systems implementing or intending to implement the interim service:				
Already providing service	24	22	6	52
Plan to provide service	2	2	1	5
No longer intend to provide service	2	0	4	6
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>28</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>65</u>
Systems' current or planned service compared to the service outlined in the transition plan:				
Same	19	15	5	39
More extensive	3	7	0	10
Less extensive	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>57</u>

Since the new regulations were issued in July 1981, 22 of the 55 systems providing interim accessible service have increased their number of vehicles, 4 have increased the geographic area they serve, 11 have increased the number of hours their service is available, and 2 have decreased their eligibility requirements, which means more people would be eligible to use the service. As shown in chart 10, while some systems have decreases in these service characteristics, most systems generally have stayed the same or increased services since the regulations were changed in July 1981.

Chart 10

Changes in Interim Accessible Service  
for the Handicapped Since July 1981

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
<b>Number of vehicles:</b>				
No change	15	12	4	31
Increased	9	10	3	22
Decreased	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>
<b>Geographic area served:</b>				
No change	21	21	5	47
Increased	1	1	2	4
Decreased	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>
<b>Number of hours of service:</b>				
No change	18	17	6	41
Increased	4	7	0	11
Decreased	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>
<b>Eligibility requirements:</b>				
No change	21	21	7	49
Increased	2	2	0	4
Decreased	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>

As shown on chart 11, most systems also reported that they planned no changes or increases in these service characteristics during the next year. A number of operators, however, also commented on uncertainties about the availability of adequate funding and the impact this could have on their services. Harrisburg,

Pennsylvania; Fort Worth, Texas; and New Bedford, Massachusetts; for example, said that they could not maintain their current levels of service next year if Federal funds are reduced. Omaha, Nebraska, indicated that because of Federal budget cuts it will have to reduce its whole system and the paratransit service would have to take its share of the cuts. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, mentioned that because of budget limitations they may have to tighten their eligibility requirements to control the costs of their paratransit services.

Chart 11

Changes in Accessible Service for the Handicapped Planned in the Next Year

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
<b>Number of vehicles:</b>				
No change	11	7	1	19
Increased	10	17	5	32
Decreased	1	0	1	2
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>
<b>Geographic area:</b>				
No change	18	16	3	37
Increased	2	7	3	12
Decreased	1	0	0	1
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>
<b>Number of hours of service:</b>				
No change	14	10	4	28
Increased	3	10	1	14
Decreased	3	1	1	5
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>
<b>Eligibility requirements:</b>				
No change	20	21	4	45
Increased	1	0	2	3
Decreased	1	1	1	3
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>55</u>

### Chapter 3

#### COORDINATION OF SPECIAL EFFORTS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED GROUPS

Although the interim rule states that handicapped persons should be involved in the transportation planning process to meet the special efforts requirement, no specific reference is made to what extent the handicapped community should be involved. Under DOT's previous section 504 regulation, mass transit providers were required to use citizen participation via handicapped persons, advocacy organizations of handicapped persons, and other interested persons in planning, programing, and implementing accessible transportation services.

According to a representative from the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, since the interim rule does not detail any specific requirements for involving handicapped advisors in the transportation planning stage, transit systems now have the option of retaining or terminating their advisory committees.

As indicated on chart 12, 72 of the 84 transit systems contacted coordinated their special efforts programs with local handicapped groups extensively. Only two operators reported little coordination with the handicapped community.

Chart 12

#### Extent of Program Coordination of Special Efforts with Elderly and Handicapped Groups

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
None	0	0	0	0
Little	0	2	0	2
Moderate	8	1	1	10
Great	15	12	9	36
Very great	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>36</u>
Total	<u>37</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>84</u>

With the exception of how well the transit system coordinated with elderly and handicapped groups, the 12 representatives of advisory committees and organizations for the handicapped that we contacted (see app. II) generally agreed with the factual information on system accessibility and service characteristics provided by the transit operators in their areas. The representatives generally felt that such coordination could be improved.

DOT in the July 1981 interim rule pointed out that short-term transportation benefits for the handicapped could be realized from coordination and use of existing transportation resources of Government health and welfare agencies and private, nonprofit organizations. As indicated in chart 13, of the 84 transit systems, only 31 extensively coordinated their services with other local handicapped transportation providers. Ten systems reported no coordination at all with other local providers. Most representatives of handicapped organizations that we contacted generally agreed that there was either very little or no coordination between their respective transit providers and other local agencies with specialized services for the handicapped.

Chart 13

Extent of Coordination of Transit Systems' Special Efforts With Transportation Services Provided by Other Local Organizations

	<u>Size of localities</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
	----- (number of systems) -----			
Not at all	4	1	5	10
Little	9	6	1	16
Moderate	5	10	6	21
Great	4	5	4	13
Very great	10	6	2	18
Not applicable	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	<u>37</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>84</u>

Other comments provided by the handicapped representatives included:

- Wheelchair lifts are poorly made and are unreliable.
- Criteria for eligibility for paratransit are too lax and as a result the system is overloaded.
- Most mobility impaired people cannot use fixed-route systems because they cannot get to the bus stops or rail stations.
- A fully accessible transit system provides more security to the mobility impaired because it will always be there while a paratransit system is more vulnerable to budget cuts.

SUMMARY OF ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
IN LOCALITIES SURVEYED

	<u>Percent of buses accessible</u>	<u>Percent of rail stations accessible</u>	<u>Para- transit available</u>
<b>Large:</b>			
Boston, MA	7	9	Yes
Chicago, IL	0	7	Yes
Cleveland, OH	0	0	Yes
Detroit, MI:			
City of Detroit DOT	29	-	<u>a</u> /No
Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority	30	-	Yes
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA:			
Orange County Transit District	37	-	Yes
Southern California Rapid Transit District	56	-	No
New York, NY-Northeastern, NJ:			
New Jersey Transit Corporation	21	1	No
Metropolitan Transportation Authority	27	2	No
Queens Transit, Inc.	7	-	No
Philadelphia, PA	19	7	Yes
San Francisco-Oakland, CA			
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District	21	-	No
Bay Area Rapid Transit District (note b)	-	100	No
Golden Gate Transit Bus Division	0	-	Yes
San Francisco Municipal Railway	5	90	Yes
San Mateo County Transit District	65	(c)	Yes
St. Louis, MO	16	-	No
Washington, DC	9	100	No
<b>Medium:</b>			
Atlanta, GA	0	100	Yes
Baltimore, MD	0	-	Yes
Buffalo, NY	5	-	No
Cincinnati, OH	21	-	Yes
Columbus, OH	0	-	Yes

	<u>Percent of buses accessible</u>	<u>Percent of rail stations accessible</u>	<u>Para transit available</u>
Medium (cont.):			
Dallas, TX	14	-	Yes
Dayton, OH	35	-	Yes
Denver, CO	52	-	Yes
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	17	-	Yes
Ft. Worth, TX	21	-	Yes
Houston, TX	0	-	Yes
Indianapolis, IN	0	-	Yes
Kansas City, MO	2	-	Yes
Louisville, KY	35	-	Yes
Memphis, TN	0	-	Yes
Miami, FL	4	-	Yes
Milwaukee, WI	42	-	Yes
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	0	-	Yes
New Orleans, LA	14	<u>d/0</u>	Yes
Norfolk-Portsmouth, VA	0	-	Yes
Phoenix, AZ	6	-	Yes
Pittsburgh, PA	0	0	Yes
Portland, OR	8	-	Yes
Providence, RI	20	-	No
Sacramento, CA	0	-	Yes
San Antonio, TX	0	-	Yes
San Diego, CA	22	-	Yes
San Jose, CA	63	(c)	No
Seattle, WA	34	-	Yes

## Small:

Albany-Schenectady, NY	0	-	<u>f/No</u>
Albuquerque, NM	29	-	Yes
Canton, OH	18	-	No
Des Moines, IA	5	-	Yes
Duluth, MN	0	-	Yes
Erie, PA	10	-	Yes
Eugene, OR	29	-	Yes
Grand Rapids, MI	26	-	Yes
Harrisburg, PA	0	-	Yes
Hartford, CT	<u>g/50</u>	-	Yes
Jacksonville, FL	0	-	Yes
Joliet, IL	0	-	Yes
Kalamazoo, MI	92	-	Yes
Lincoln, NE	0	-	Yes
Little Rock, AR	15	-	No
Madison, WI	0	-	Yes
New Bedford, MA	11	-	Yes
New Haven, CT	79	-	<u>a/No</u>
Newport News-Hampton, VA	0	-	Yes
Ogden, UT	7	-	Yes

	<u>Percent of buses accessible</u>	<u>Percent of rail stations accessible</u>	<u>Para- transit available</u>
Small (cont.):			
Oklahoma City, OK	28	-	Yes
Omaha, NE	2	-	Yes
Peoria, IL	0	-	f/No
Portland, ME	0	-	Yes
Reading, PA	0	-	Yes
Richmond, VA	0	-	Yes
Rochester, NY	0	-	Yes
Santa Cruz, CA	60	-	Yes
Springfield, MA,- Holyoke, CT (note e)	7	-	Yes
Stockton, CA	10	-	Yes
St. Petersburg, FL	0	-	Yes
Syracuse, NY	14	-	Yes
Tampa, FL	0	-	Yes
Trenton, NJ	25	-	No
Tucson, AZ	12	-	Yes
Wilkes-Barre, PA	0	-	Yes
Youngstown-Warren, OH	0	-	Yes

a/Paratransit service is operated by State or local government agencies, but we did not get information on these systems.

b/Rail service only; system does not operate any buses.

c/These two systems operate commuter rail service and the respondents did not know if any of the stations were accessible to wheelchair users.

d/The street car system service is exempt from the accessibility requirement because it is a historical monument.

e/Not just one operation; transit authority buys the buses and funds the operating deficit for seven small systems.

f/System planning to initiate paratransit service in the near future.

g/In 1978, 270 Grumman buses were purchased. At that time wheelchair-lift buses comprised 90 percent of the fleet. All of these buses had to be sent back for repairs, and not all of them have been returned to service yet.

REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL ELDERLY AND  
HANDICAPPED ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Robert Wiesenberger	Cleveland, OH	Citizen's Advisory Group
Mary Claybrooke	Indianapolis, IN	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Committee
Bonnie Gellman	Philadelphia, PA	Mayor's Office for the Handicapped
Mary L. Court	Albuquerque, NM	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Group
Betsy Buxer	Phoenix, AZ	Elderly and Handicapped Community Council
Mary L. Spies	Stockton, CA	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Committee
Susan Gross	Los Angeles, CA	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Committee
Jim Beeson	Houston, TX	Citizen Advisory Board
Ruth Weber and Mildred Levinson	Miami, FL	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Committee
Marvin Dobbins	Tampa, FL	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Committee
Dick Hedding	Washington, DC	Washington Metropolitan Accessible Transportation Alliance
Steve Janick	New Jersey	Elderly and Handicapped Advisory Committee

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Telephone Survey of the

Special transit services for the elderly and handicapped

Transit system: / / / / /  
(6 - 9)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

1st Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

3rd Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Call Back for Information on Questions:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Case Number  
(1 - 3)

Size of System  
(4)

Card Number  
(5)

Attempted calls

Day/Time      Result

1st \_\_\_\_\_

2nd \_\_\_\_\_

3rd \_\_\_\_\_

Caller: \_\_\_\_\_

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm with the U.S. General Accounting Office in Washington, D.C. We have been asked by some of the members of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs to survey a sample of local transit authorities. We are trying to determine what changes have been made to transportation programs for the elderly and handicapped, since the Department of Transportation issued revised regulations on July 20, 1981. Since your transit system was selected as part of our survey, I would appreciate it if you would answer some questions about your program. It should take about 20 minutes to cover the questions.

I. This group of questions deals with the bus service.

1. About how many standard buses are in your fleet for regular fixed-route service?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number) (10-13)

2. About how many of your standard buses have wheelchair lifts?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number) or (14-17)

\_\_\_\_\_ (calculate %) (18-20)  
(if none, skip to #7)

3. To what extent do you make your wheelchair lift buses available for use? (21)

1  Not at all (skip to #7)

2  Little

3  Moderate amount or more

4. Do you assign the buses with wheelchair lifts to specific routes on a regular basis? (22)

1  Yes

2  No (skip to #6)

5. Tell me more about these routes and schedules for wheelchair lift buses. (Check one block in each row)

	Never (1)	All times (2)	Rush hr. only (3)	Non-rush hrs. only (4)	On request (5)	
All routes						(23)
Main routes						(24)
Special routes						(25)

6. About how many one-way trips do you estimate are currently made by wheelchair users on a typical weekday?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number per day) (26-29)

7. Since July 20, 1981, have wheelchair lifts been deleted from any of your bus procurements that were already in process? (30)

1  Yes

2  No (skip to #9)

8. On how many of these procured buses were the wheelchair lifts deleted?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number) (31-34)

9. How many buses have you ordered since July 1981?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number) (35-39)

(If none, skip to #11)

10. What percentage of the buses that you ordered since July 1981 will be equipped with lifts?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number) (40-42)

11. What percentage of new buses that you plan to order over the next 2 years will be equipped with lifts?

\_\_\_\_\_ % (43-45)

12. About how many one-way bus trips are taken by people entitled to the elderly and handicapped discount fares on a typical weekday?

\_\_\_\_\_ (trips per day) (46-51)

II. The next set of questions deals with the rail service.

13. Do you operate or oversee a rail service?

1  Yes (52)

2  No (skip to #16)

14. About what percentage of your stations are accessible to wheelchair users?

\_\_\_\_\_ % (53-55)

(if none, skip to #16)

15. About how many one-way trips do you estimate are currently made by wheelchair users on a typical weekday?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number per day) (56-61)

III. The next group of questions deals with the paratransit service.

16. Does your organization have any paratransit service for the elderly and handicapped?

1  Yes (62)

2  No (skip to #37)

17. How many systems are operated or contracted for?

\_\_\_\_\_ (number operated) (63-64)

\_\_\_\_\_ (number contracted for) (65-66)

18. What kinds of paratransit systems do you have? (Start with the primary system, and use key words, e.g. neighborhood, supplemental taxi, etc., to describe them)

Primary

\_\_\_\_\_

Secondary

\_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_

[Use question 18 to sort out the primary and secondary systems; where there are several subsystems with the same function, i.e., eligibility, etc., but just cover different geographic areas, group these subsystems together into one system.]

(1 - 3)

Case Number

(4)

Size of System

(5)

Card Number

Provide details for the system(s)

Primary

Supplemental

19. The service is: (Check one)

Operated by us

1  (6)

1  (7)

Contracted for

2

2

Combination

3

3

20. About how many vehicles are there in the system?

\_\_\_\_\_ # (8-11)

\_\_\_\_\_ # (12-15)

21. What percentage of the vehicles are primarily dedicated to the elderly and handicapped?

\_\_\_\_\_ % (16-18)

\_\_\_\_\_ % (19-21)

22. What percentage of the vehicles are accessible for wheelchair users?

\_\_\_\_\_ % (22-24)

\_\_\_\_\_ % (25-27)

23. Who is eligible to use the service? (Check all that apply)

Wheelchair users

1  (28-34)

1  (35-41)

Mobility impaired

2

2

Blind

3

3

Deaf

4

4

Mentally retarded

5

5

Elderly, if not otherwise handicapped

6

6

Other \_\_\_\_\_

7

7

24. What limitations, if any, are there on the number of one-way trips per week an individual may use the system?

No limitation, OR

1  (42)

1  (43)

Number of trips permitted

\_\_\_\_\_ # (44-45)

\_\_\_\_\_ # (46-47)

25. What kind of trips can the service be used for? (Check all that apply)

Medical

1  (48-53)

1  (54-59)

Work

2

2

School

3

3

Shopping

4

4

Social/Recreation

5

5

Other \_\_\_\_\_

6

6

- |  | Primary                         | Supplemental                    |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 26. Do you ever use trip purpose to prioritize service when demand exceeds availability? (Check one) |                                 |                                 |
| Yes  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (60) | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (61) |
| No (Skip to #28)   | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| Demand never exceeded supply (Skip to #28)   | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| 27. In prioritizing service, which trip purpose gets the highest priority? (Check one)               |                                 |                                 |
| Medical  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (62) | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (63) |
| Work   | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| School   | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| Shopping   | 4 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 4 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| Social/Recreation  | 5 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 5 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| Other _____  | 6 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 6 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| 28. Is there a waiting list of people who want to use the service for their regular commute trip?    |                                 |                                 |
| Yes  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (64) | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (65) |
| No   | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| Not applicable (Skip to #30)   | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>      | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| 29. What is the number of people on the waiting list?  | _____ # (66-70)                 | _____ # (71-75)                 |

(1 - 3)

Case Number

(4)

Size of System

3  
(5)

Card Number

30. Typically, how much advance notice is required for users of the service? \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. (6-8) \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. (9-11)
31. About what percentage of the time are requests for service denied? \_\_\_\_\_ % (12-13) \_\_\_\_\_ % (14-15)
32. About how many one-way trips are currently provided to elderly and handicapped persons on a typical weekday? \_\_\_\_\_ # (16-22) \_\_\_\_\_ # (23-29)
33. What percentage of these trips are made by wheelchair users? \_\_\_\_\_ % (30-32) \_\_\_\_\_ % (33-35)

34. If there are more than two subsystems, enter any comments on the other subsystems. (36)

Coverage \_\_\_\_\_  
 Eligibility \_\_\_\_\_  
 Demand \_\_\_\_\_

35. Considering your paratransit system as a whole (i.e., all subsystems), how does it compare to your conventional bus system in terms of service? (Check one for each row)

	Same as Bus (1)	Longer (More, Larger) Than Bus (2)	Shorter (Fewer, Smaller) Than Bus (3)	
Hours of Service				(37)
Days of Service				(38)
Geographic Coverage				(39)

[Skip next question if they do not have rail service]

36. Considering your paratransit system as a whole (i.e., all subsystems), how does it compare to your conventional rail system in terms of service? (Check one for each row)

	Same as Rail (1)	Longer (More, Larger) Than Rail (2)	Shorter (Fewer, Smaller) Than Rail (3)	
Hours of Service				(40)
Days of Service				(41)
Geographic Coverage				(42)

IV. The next set of questions deals with comparisons between current activities and those in your transition plan under the prior regulations.

37. Did you prepare and submit the transition plan required under the May 1979 regulations?

1  Yes (43)  
 2  No Why? \_\_\_\_\_ (Skip to #52)

38. Under your transition plan, did you intend to have your fixed route bus service fully accessible by July 1982 or July 1989?

1  By July 1982 (44)  
 2  By July 1989

39. What percentage of your bus fleet do you currently plan to have equipped with wheelchair lifts?

\_\_\_\_\_ % (45-47)

[If none, skip to #41 or #45, if they have no rail service]

40. By what date do you now plan to have achieved this level of accessible service?

\_\_\_\_\_ (year) (48-49)

[Skip to #45, if they do not have rail service]

41. Under your transition plan, what percentage of your stations did you plan to make accessible? (50-52)  
 \_\_\_\_\_% (If none, skip to #43)
42. Do you still intend to make these stations accessible?  
 1  Yes (53)  
 2  No
43. Do you provide or plan to provide connector or substitute service for those stations that are inaccessible?  
 1  Yes (54)  
 2  No (Skip to #45)
44. Is this service the same, greater, or less than that provided for in your transition plan?  
 1  Same (55)  
 2  Greater  
 3  Less
45. Did your transition plan provide for any kind of interim service for handicapped riders until you bus system became accessible?  
 1  Yes (56)  
 2  No (Skip to #52)
46. Have you implemented this interim service, or do you still intend to do so?  
 1  Yes - Implemented (57)  
 2  Yes - Plan to  
 3  No (Skip to #52)
47. Is your interim service for the handicapped the same, more extensive, or less extensive than that outlined in your transition plan?  
 1  Same (58)  
 2  More extensive  
 3  Less extensive
48. Have you increased or decreased the number of vehicles available for this service since July 1981? Are you planning to do so in the next year? (Check one line in each column)

	Already done (59)	Planned within next year (60)
No change *	(1) _____	_____
Increased	(2) _____	_____
Decreased	(3) _____	_____
Don't know	(4) _____	_____

49. Have you made any increases or decreases in the geographic area served by your system since July 1981? Do you plan to do so in the next year? (Check one line for each column)

	<u>Already done</u> (61)	<u>Planned within next year</u> (62)
No change	(1) _____	_____
Increased	(2) _____	_____
Decreased	(3) _____	_____
Don't know	(4) _____	_____

50. Have you made any increases or decreases in the number of hours of service since July 1981? Are you planning to do so in the next year? (Check one line for each column)

	<u>Already done</u> (63)	<u>Planned within next year</u> (64)
No change	(1) _____	_____
Increased	(2) _____	_____
Decreased	(3) _____	_____
Don't know	(4) _____	_____

51. Have you increased or decreased the eligibility requirements for your service since July 1981? Are you planning to do so in the next year? (Check one line for each column)

	<u>Already done</u> (65)	<u>Planned within next year</u> (66)
No change	(1) _____	_____
Increased	(2) _____	_____
Decreased	(3) _____	_____
Don't know	(4) _____	_____

V. The next set of questions deals with the coordination of your program for the elderly and handicapped.

52. To your knowledge, has the Urban Mass Transportation Administration done any monitoring since July 1981 of your special efforts for the elderly and handicapped?

- (67)
- (1)  Yes - What? \_\_\_\_\_
- (2)  No
- (3)  Don't know

53. To what extent has your program of special efforts been coordinated with elderly and handicapped groups?

- (1)  None (68)  
(2)  Little  
(3)  Moderate  
(4)  Great  
(5)  Very Great

54. Are there other non-profit or subsidized organizations in your community that provide transportation for the elderly and handicapped?

- (1)  Yes (69)  
(2)  No (Skip to #56)  
(3)  Don't know (Skip to #56)

55. Over all, to what extent do you coordinate your elderly and handicapped transportation efforts with these other organizations?

- (1)  Not at all (70)  
(2)  Little  
(3)  Moderate  
(4)  Great  
(5)  Very Great

56. Do you have any comments on other significant aspects of your special efforts to meet the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped that we have not covered in this interview?

(71)

57. Could you give us the name and phone number of an individual on your handicapped advisory group that would be knowledgeable about transportation programs for the elderly and handicapped in your area?

---

Thank you for your help.

RICHARD S. LUGAR, IND., CHAIRMAN  
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# United States Senate

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
 AND URBAN AFFAIRS  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510  
 January 27, 1982

PETER B. HARKINS, STAFF DIRECTOR  
 ALBERT C. EISENBERG, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Charles A. Bowsher  
 Comptroller General of the United States  
 General Accounting Office  
 441 G Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Bowsher:

Last July the Department of Transportation modified its regulations concerning transportation of handicapped persons pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The modified, interim regulations dropped the controversial provisions requiring accessibility to bus and rail systems and substituted a "local option" approach allowing localities to meet the requirements of section 504 by making "special efforts" to accommodate the transportation needs of elderly and handicapped persons. No specific mandatory program criteria or service criteria were contained in those regulations.

Since this Committee will soon be considering legislation reauthorizing the transit program, it would be helpful to members of the Committee to have some information as to the services being made available under these regulations and the processes being followed locally in determining what services to provide.

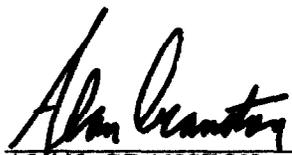
We therefore request that the General Accounting Office conduct an expedited survey of the services that localities have planned or implemented under the interim regulations. This could be done by taking a significant and representative sample of cities of various sizes. Additionally, we ask that your study include a description and analysis of DOT's implementation of the regulations and its review of local activities under the regulations as well as a discussion of the extent and nature of local consultation with representative handicapped organizations in the planning and design of services.

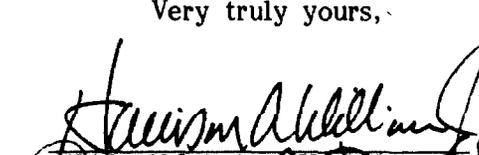
In order to meet the time limitations imposed on this Committee for reporting authorizing legislation, the results of your study would be needed by April 15 of this year.

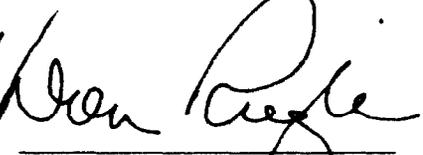
If you have any questions about this request please contact David Yudin of the Committee staff at 224-9206.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
 ALAN CRANSTON

  
 HARRISON A. WILLIAMS, JR.

  
 DONALD RIEGLE

  
 PAUL SARBANES

  
 CHRISTOPHER DODD





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