



August 2025 Proposed Elimination of the Lift Premium Service Area

Public Input Summary

The Lift Service paratransit system, which began in 1976, provides origin-to-destination service to eligible passengers with a disability who, because of that disability, are unable to independently get to or use the accessible fixed route system. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates a service area that goes $\frac{3}{4}$ miles beyond any regular fixed route. In October 2012, the Board of Directors (Board) at the time voted to introduce a premium Lift service area extending from the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor out to the contiguous corporate city limits of Topeka. The fare to or from any location in the premium service area is currently \$15.00 one way.

In April, May, and June of 2025, the Board of Directors and Topeka Metro staff discussed concerns with the expansion of the Lift premium service area, as well as possible solutions.

Premium service area concerns include:

1. The increased per trip cost of providing paratransit service to an area not mandated by law.
2. The continuing expansion of Topeka city limit areas due to annexation, which results in a continually expanding service area along with unknown future budgetary needs.
3. Longer trips that place a burden on agency resources (operators, vehicles, fuel, etc.).

At the June 23, 2025, monthly Board meeting, staff recommended that the premium service area be eliminated. Only the ADA-mandated $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service area would continue to be served. There would be no changes to the regular Lift Service regarding routes, vehicles, service days and hours, or fares. Further, Lift passengers currently receiving service to or from the premium service area would be “grandfathered in”. The Lift would continue to provide them trips for \$15.00 one way even though outside the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor until they no longer need services or fail to recertify. Approximately ten (10) passengers are expected to be grandfathered in.

Although public meetings were not required, both the Board and staff believed it was important to reach out to all active Lift passengers regarding the proposed change and encourage input. Having public meetings was deemed unfeasible due to Lift passenger constraints such as limited mobility, inability to attend an external meeting, and personal technological limitations. The Board directed staff to proceed with the notification of all active Lift passengers.

If approved by the Board of Directors, the changes would be effective August 3, 2025.

On June 24, 2025, a letter regarding the proposal and options for providing input was mailed to each certified Lift passenger. The letter was also sent via e-mail to Operations staff and supervisors, Capitol City Transportation, Planning, and Marketing. In addition to the letters, staff personally called the 10 current premium passengers to inform them they would be grandfathered in.

Members of the public could submit input in person at QSS (820 SE Quincy Street), by phone at 785-783-7000, by fax at 785-354-8476, on Topeka Metro social media, and on the Topeka Metro website.

Public Comments

Although public comments regarding service are always accepted, comments specific to the proposed August 2025 Lift Premium Service Area Elimination that were received through Friday, July 18, 2025, were added to this summary in order to be considered by the Board of Directors at their meeting on July 21, 2025. Any additional public comment after July 18, 2025, will be presented to the Board at their Decision Meeting. Input was primarily received through phone calls, the QSS comment line, and e-mail.

Please note that comment wording appears as submitted by the individual.

- Guadalupe Mosqueda (6/25/25 voicemail) – First it was \$4 each way. Then it went to \$15 (when the fixed route changed). When I come home from dialysis I pass out and am very unsteady. I have no other way except take the bus, transfer, then transfer again to the California. How will I get to dialysis? There is no way I can do it. I tried to get into Gage Center Dialysis but they have no openings. *(Note: Guadalupe resides in the ¾ mile ADA service area but travels to dialysis in the premium service area. She was informed that her premium trips would be grandfathered in.)*
- Michael Foster (6/25/25 phone call) – It's a needed service. I've been depending on it for a year. It's a vital service. My dialysis has been moved from SE Croco to Gage Center. I would still need the service to get to the doctor's office. My new doctor's address is 6300 SW 6th. *(Note: Michael resides in the ¾ mile ADA service area, but was informed that his premium trips would be grandfathered in.)*
- Ashly Stewart (6/25/25 phone call) – I am currently not going out to SE 29th & Walnut, but I will be in the future. I have multiple appointments coming up. I would like to see the premium service area stay. I try to use the MOD service, but some appointments are out of the MOD service area. *(Note: Ashly resides in the ¾ mile ADA service area, but was informed that her premium trips would be grandfathered in.)*
- Art Schreiner (6/25/25 voicemail) – I pay extra money to get to the doctor and now you're saying I can't? I am confined to a wheelchair, and I don't have a driver's license. When using a walker, friends could take me. All those rides are gone due to being in a wheelchair. I cannot get in or out of a vehicle. This is a very valuable service to get me to the doctor. If it wasn't available, it would be a real problem. *(Note: Art resides in the premium area and was informed that his trips would be grandfathered in.)*
- Dona Peterson (6/25/25 voicemail) – I live just a ¼ mile out. My friend lives 1 mile and only pays \$4. It's hard for seniors to use the Lift on fixed income, which is why I haven't used it yet.
- Michael King (6/25/25 phone call) – I have a friend north of Rossville. I had to miss an appointment because my friend had to work. I will be needing the service for wound care, pain management at Stormont, and primary care in Topeka. I need the service. The VA never told me about being eligible for the Lift. That is why I haven't booked any rides yet. *(Note: Michael resides in the premium area and was informed that his trips would be grandfathered in.)*
- Annette Caraway (6/25/25 phone call) – I really need this service to go to the doctor (primary care physician). I haven't been consistently going but will be and will need transportation. I don't want to have

to change doctors. I just really need it to continue. *(Note: Annette resides in the ¾ mile ADA service area, but was informed that her premium doctor's trips to SE 29th & Walnut would be grandfathered in.)*

- Deana York (6/26/25 voicemail) – I go to the dentist office (at 3316 SE 28th Terrace) every 6 months. Next, in August. If I lose this service, I don't know what I will do. I have been going to the same dental office since 2003. I would hate to lose them. I would pay more to keep the service. No plan B. Even though I'm not in a wheelchair, I have very limited transportation options. I cannot get into most vehicles because of my disability. I need the service. *(Note: Deana resides in the ¾ mile ADA service area, but occasionally travels to the premium service area. She was informed her trips would be grandfathered in.)*
- Katharine Shepard (7/7/25 e-mail) – I received letter with notice to notify you for new mailing address. My uncle (Timothy O'Connor) passed away in January and no longer will require services. Can you please remove him from your system? In regards to end of 15 dollar premium lift service, I can tell you that Topeka gave my Uncle Independence he couldn't get elsewhere. Born with Cerebral Palsy communication and physical movement was slow, but his mind was sharp as a tack. He was hospitalized for the first time in 75 years and the first hospital couldn't believe he could live without assistance, but he did. The second hospital the case worker knew Tim so we had an advocate who stopped asking how and telling us he couldn't...and started taking action on getting him services. Unfortunately that was too late. Services like Topeka Metro let him skip asking for services and just provided services to get him his basic needs/transportation without having to burden family, friends or a broken health care system. He was able to use it and maintain dignity. We appreciate that and hope you can continue to serve those in need even if they are outside the 3/4 mile corridor.
- Art Schreiner (7/8/25 phone call) – Art said he lives on NW Gordon St which is in the premium Lift service area. He received his letter and wanted to let us know he does rely on this service and would hate for it to end. He has no car and no other way to get to his appointments. He appreciates being grandfathered in.

Staff Recommendation

The recommendation is to eliminate the Lift premium service area as proposed and to make the changes effective August 3, 2025, pending a Reveal software feature that will grandfather trips for current premium service users.

Board of Director's Decision Meeting

July 21, 2025 – Quincy Street Station Board Room, 820 SE Quincy Street
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.