

[News](#)[Business](#)[Sports](#)[HS Sports](#)[Convention](#)[Politics](#)[A&E](#)[Food](#)**Trending:** [Who is Baby Gronk?](#) | [Wilonsky](#) | [National Cheeseburger Day deals](#) | [Centurion Ame](#)**NEWS // TRANSPORTATION**

Did cost considerations cause DART's rise in paratransit problems? Contractor thinks so

Ex-DART contractor says the agency was 'motivated solely by financial constraints' during its RFP process.

By **Amber Gaudet**

March 26, 2025



We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).





A DART bus pulls away from an Commerce St. stop in downtown Dallas, March 12, 2025.

Tom Fox/Staff Photographer

Dallas Area Rapid Transit provides paratransit services to more than 11,000 North Texans with physical and intellectual disabilities.

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

An investigation by *The Dallas Morning News* found that the service has generated more than 1,900 complaints in just two months. Private transit company Transdev began management of DART's mobility services including paratransit and GoLink rides on Oct. 1, 2024, taking control from previous contractor MV Transportation.

Get Digital Access and Stay Informed With Trusted Local News.

ACT NOW



Sign up for Traffic Tracker

Get alerts on traffic, road closures and construction impacting your commute.

Email

Sign Up

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms Of Use](#) and acknowledge that your information will be used as described in our [Privacy](#)

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

But MV Transportation representatives have alleged that DART, facing public scrutiny over its financial management, saw the selection process as a way to cut costs at the expense of service.

ADVERTISEMENT

Article continues below this ad

Related: [Paratransit is critical for people with disabilities. Dallas residents say it failed them](#)

'Motivated solely by financial constraints'

Following intense financial scrutiny and [a desire by half of DART's member cities to cut funding to the agency](#), DART has been focused on "good faith" efforts to scale back spending. Disagreements over whether — or by how much — to preemptively reduce its budget growth [dominated its 2025 budget approval process](#).

An attorney for MV Transportation submitted a formal protest to DART in June about the way the request for proposals process was conducted. In it, MV Transportation alleges that the transit agency's decision to switch to Transdev "seemed to be motivated solely by financial constraints."

DART staff met with MV Transportation and Transdev in May 2024, a follow-up letter to the initial protest said, and informed them that offers far exceeded DART's financial plan capacity of \$555 million over eight years.

As a result, DART "made significant changes to the RFP [request for proposal's] scope of work, such that the services to be provided under the recommended award do not resemble the services required pursuant to the RFP.

"The instructions...were to find a way to hit the target expenditures total regardless of the original scope [of the RFP]," the letter reads.

"As a result, DART allowed for material deviations from the RFP including, but not limited to, changing the number of microtransit, ADA paratransit and on-demand service hours on which to bid, removal of core service offerings, removal of the living wage requirements, altering the number of required vehicles and the vehicle replacement requirements and extending the base term from five years to eight years."

In DART's evaluation criteria, the cost category was weighted more heavily than any of the other evaluation categories, its contract with Transdev shows.

DART also "arbitrarily" changed MV Transportation's submitted price, used an "auction technique" asking applicants to price their offers below a specified sum and did not allow MV Transportation to submit a best and final offer, MV Transportation's protest letter said.

DART denied the accusations put forward by MV Transportation, according to its July follow-up letter.

"DART asked all bidders to provide innovative transportation solutions consistent with the request for production, financial considerations and most importantly mobility services that were in the best interest of the customer," DART spokesperson Anna Kurian said in response to MV Transportation's accusations.

Paratransit service is expensive, and costs have risen rapidly over the past decade compared to increases in ridership, according to [research examining costs in the Texas Triangle](#) from the Cooperative Mobility for Competitive Megaregions.

"Most systems are spending many times more for the average [Americans with Disabilities Act] paratransit rider than for any of their other riders," a research brief by the consortium reads.

In 2018, DART spent about 7% of its operating budget to provide services to just 1.3% of its total ridership.

Rising costs have led transit operators to tighten eligibility requirements and reduce paratransit service areas to the minimum required by law. The ADA requires transit operators to provide paratransit services within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of an existing bus route.

"Some operators in the US have, in fact, refused to extend regular bus services to avoid the extremely costly ADA mandates that accompany those services; some systems have been accused of actually cutting regular bus services in suburban areas to do so," the brief states.

Transit agencies, including DART, often encourage even those who currently use paratransit to eventually learn to navigate the fixed-route system, if possible, through training programs. Paratransit users get free rides on DART buses and trains.

"It [paratransit] really brings in no money for them," said Tyler Beck, Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities' Transportation Task Force co-chair.

Harry Wilson, MV Transportation board of directors executive chairman, declined to comment when reached by phone, as did the company's attorney. The DART board of directors [approved a \\$425,000 settlement with MV](#) Transportation during its December 2024 meeting.

'Too many cooks in the kitchen'

Outsourcing paratransit service - a common practice among urban transit providers - can help curb costs, too.

Transdev and Uzuurv have touted the success of their partnership [in markets like Baltimore and Phoenix](#) for their ability to relieve the demand burden on primary paratransit providers - and to save transit agencies money.

According to a case study on its website, "Uzurv's approach is highly scalable, has no set-up or integration fees, and allowed MTA [Maryland Transit Administration] to pay only per trip completed."

It added: "As a result, the average cost for a trip on UZURV is consistently lower than the average cost for the same trip on traditional paratransit."

The National Council on Disability recommends transit agencies that use third parties like taxi companies to supplement service use technology that allows them to monitor and directly communicate with drivers rather than relying on dispatch, and choose a company that directly employs drivers.

"If drivers are independent, the taxi company has little control over them, so contractual provisions with the taxi company would not yield much control over the drivers," the council wrote in a 2015 report.

At least 45% of mobility management services provided by Transdev - which include paratransit, microtransit and rider assistance programs - must be operated by directly employed drivers, according to its contract. DART says about 70% of calls are dispatched to staffed employees versus independent contractors.

In complaints to DART, clients have said the actions of drivers, including subcontractors, have led to their injury.

In a Sept. 18 complaint - when MV Transportation still managed mobility services for

The following day, another client's caregiver told DART the elderly client was hospitalized after a driver took her out of her wheelchair to put her in a nonaccessible vehicle and dropped her.

Pinching pennies on paratransit, particularly by outsourcing service, can lead to poor outcomes for clients, according to Christopher McGreal, an attorney with Disability Rights Texas.

"If you've got too many cooks in the kitchen ... that's going to create a mess as far as scheduling rides, making sure there's on-time performance and just a host of issues," McGreal said.

"There are problems even when it's all done in-house with one organization. If you go to two then things are going to get lost and if you add a third entity to that equation, that's going to be rife with problems."

Complaints filed with DART before and after Transdev assumed management of mobility services mention repeat errors like being dropped off at the wrong address or sending vehicles without ramps to wheelchair-bound patients despite notes in their file.

DART and Transdev work to prevent inaccessible vehicles from being sent to clients, according to Transdev spokesperson Mitun Seguin, but if it does happen, drivers should inform dispatch so the ride can be rescheduled.

But DART staff have told customers they have "little control" over the actions of third-party drivers.

"This trip was performed by provider (Uzurv) and we will address this with them, but we will educate that Uzurv is still a TNC [transportation network company] provider, just like Uber and Lyft, and we (Transdev/DART collectively) have little control over TNC drivers, except to ban them from our platform," DART staffer Stephanie Revolus responded to a February 2025 complaint.

And TNC rides don't have cameras on board that DART can access when incidents do occur, Revolus admitted in a January complaint. That came from a caregiver about a client being dropped off and left alone, despite notes on her file.

Riders can call another department – DART certifications - and opt out of rides with third-party drivers. Yet riders have said they are repeatedly sent vehicles they should not be regardless of their requests.

"All you need is one person, that one link in the chain, to drop the ball and you could end up with a missed trip or the wrong vehicle being sent," McGreal said. "The more you decentralize it, the higher a chance you have of something going wrong."

Amber Gaudet

See more on:

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

Help us make our journalism better. If you have a question, comment or concern about this story, send a note to readerresponse@dallasnews.com. We will direct it to the editor overseeing this journalism, and he or she will respond.

Have an opinion about this? Send a letter to the editor [using our letters form](#) or email letters@dallasnews.com. Letters should be no more than 200 words and include the first and last name of the writer and city of residence.

Latest Headlines



WEATHER

Drought, heat push Dallas water use to 600 million gallons a day

The majority of Dallas County is now experiencing extreme drought conditions, according to the U.S....



NEWS

Amazon Prime customers may be eligible to receive \$200 as settlement grows

Here's what to know about the \$2.5 billion settlement between Amazon and the Federal Trade...



CRIME

Arlington man |

Arlington
Thursday
person

Around the Web

Powered by **REVCONTENT**

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

After 60, Leg Strength Comes From One Simple Daily Move

By [ApexLabs](#)

98% of Americans Are Using Toxic Frying Pans - The Chefs Are Doing This Now

By [Plateful](#)

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

Neurologists Beg Seniors With Neuropathy: Stop Doing This Now

By [Health Weekly](#)

Put a Toilet Paper Roll Under The Toilet Seat at Night if Alone (Here's Why)

By [LifeHacks Insider](#)

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

Caitlin Clark Steps out With Her New Partner and Stuns Fans

By [Rank Upwards](#)

This Rug Just Changed Halloween Forever

By [Fanyli](#)

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

Illuminate Your Charlotte Garden With Enchanting Dragon Light

By [Ribili](#)

Memory Decline Begins When Elders Say These 3 Phrases (See Which Ones)

By [BrightView Journal](#)

Watch The Hummingbirds Flock to Your Garden

By [Ribili](#)

We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

Even The Oldest Nail Fungus Will Disappear (Recipe)

By [True Health Practices](#)

No Poop for More Than 2 Days - It's The First Sign of

By [Native Fiber](#)

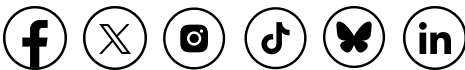
We use technologies that provide information about your interactions with this site to others for functionality, analytics, targeted advertising, and other purposes. [Learn more in our Privacy Notice](#). You agree that your use of this website and the Hearst Services is governed by the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)).

How to Beat Spinal Stenosis: The Hidden Cause Most Doctors Miss

By [SmoothSpine](#)

The Dallas Morning News

Top ^



About ▼

Contact ▼

Services ▼

Account ▼