

ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDTAC)
Committee Meeting Minutes
Via Teams & Teleconference
Wednesday, August 13, 2025
1:00 - 3:00 pm

The Elderly and Disable Transit Advisory Committee (EDTAC) met Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 1:00 pm via Teams and Teleconference.

In attendance:

EDTAC Members:

- Blake Roberts, Chair
- Emily Van Vlack
- James Shiber
- Lewis Rolph (Ken)

Members Absent:

- Laura Waterland
- Kathleen McCool, Co-Chair

Guest:

- Nina Kegelman
- Selina Butcher
- Joseph Aukward (Joe)
- Bria Greenlee

DTC Representatives:

- Margaret Webb, Paratransit Director
- Shannon Lugo, Civil Rights Specialist
- Lorachel Baldwin, Civil Rights Specialist
- Lori Yeager, Paratransit Support Manager
- Paul Kulesza, Fixed Route Director
- Catherine Smith, Deputy Chief Customer Experience Officer
- Latanya Steel, Customer Service Supervisor

Call to Order

Chair Blake Roberts called the meeting to order.

Round Table Introductions

Introductions by committee members, guests and DTC's staff.

Motions and Approvals

- The committee approved the minutes of the May 8, 2025, EDTAC meeting.
- Q&A with prospective members, EDTAC voted to approve the membership of Joseph Aukward.

Driver Hiring Update:

Margaret Webb shared the current Paratransit staffing levels:

- New Castle County – 93% staffed (157 of 168 drivers)
- Kent County – 100% staffed (62 drivers)
- Sussex County – 93% staffed (67 of 72 drivers)

Paul Kulesza shared Fixed Route staffing update, reporting that 255 full-time operator positions are allocated, with 244 currently filled. Staffing numbers fluctuate due to constant turnover every 2–3 weeks and upcoming retirements. Some new hires begin without CDLs, requiring additional training. In several cases, operators complete training but resign shortly afterward, often citing dissatisfaction with night shifts.

Automated Scheduling System

Margaret reported that DTC is transitioning from the Trapeze system to the new Q-Ride platform. Implementation is taking place in stages.

- A pilot was conducted last Saturday in Kent County, covering over 100 trips using driver tablets.
- In two weeks, a larger test is planned in Kent County on a Tuesday, with 600–700 trips scheduled to help evaluate performance, identify issues, and apply fixes.
- The target date for full implementation in Kent County is mid-September, after which the process will expand to Sussex County.
- New Castle County will be the largest task, with 700–2,300 trips daily.
- Q-Ride incorporates AI capabilities to help improve scheduling and travel time estimates; however, it does not mitigate staffing challenges or the human element of operations.

Paratransit On-Time Performance (OTP):

May 2025

Statewide trip count: 74,267

- New Castle County: 41,695 trips, 61 percent on-time performance
- Kent County: 15,872 trips, 82 percent on-time performance
- Sussex County: 16,700 trips
 - DTC on-time performance: 71 percent
 - Transdev on-time performance: 79 percent

June 2025

Statewide trip count: 67,712

- New Castle County: 38,156 trips, 64 percent on-time performance
- Kent County: 13,386 trips, 85 percent on-time performance

- Sussex County: 16,170 trips
 - DTC on-time performance: 70 percent
 - Transdev on-time performance: 78 percent

July 2025

Statewide trip count: 72,781

- New Castle County: 40,590 trips, 64 percent on-time performance
- Kent County: 14,967 trips, 83 percent on-time performance
- Sussex County: 17,224 trips
 - DTC on-time performance: 72 percent
 - Transdev on-time performance: 79 percent

Note: July 2024 statewide trips 68,334 – July 2025 statewide trips 72,781 increased 6%

Fixed Route On-Time Performance (OTP):

- **New Castle County:** Improved from 68% at the February 2025 service change to a range of 71–73% in July and early August.
- **Kent County:** Held steady around 77–79%, with a slight increase to 81% the week of August 4.
- **Sussex County:** Increased from 73% in February to 80–81% by late July and early August.
- **Inter County:** Rose from 58% in February to 70–72% by July and August.

Paul's Discussion Points:

- Paul shared that additional time was added to runs that were consistently late.
- Service changes occur about every six months; operators require time to adjust to new runs.
- Improvements have been noted with support from Planning & Scheduling and Operations.

Updates from DTC:

Cathy Smith Reported:

- SEPTA Funding Update
 - Currently, service cuts are not anticipated.
 - SEPTA has approved a \$293 million deficit for mass transit.
 - The funding package must return to the Pennsylvania House, as the revenue stream is being shifted from the General Fund to the Transportation Trust Fund.
 - Additional details will be available on SEPTA's website.
- DART Service Change Proposals
 - Proposed service changes will be posted on DART's website.

- Hard copies will also be available at select public libraries and at the DART Administration desk by September.
- The second round of public hearings will begin on September 17th. More information will be posted on DART's website.

Open Forum:

Heat and Bus Air Conditioning Issues

- Concerns regarding excessive heat, noting that during a recent 93° day and air conditioning on older buses do not function efficiently.
- Propane buses experience AC issues in hot weather and heating issues in cold weather.
- Paul explained that Maintenance has identified a part that can be ordered and installed to fix the issue. He also noted that a boost module from Roush is being added to affected buses to improve performance.
- Margaret noted that when bus doors are opened, especially for lift use, the AC system temporarily shuts down, causing the bus to heat up before cooling again. This cycle makes it difficult to maintain a consistent temperature.
- Blake Roberts read a letter received from the public regarding service concerns.
- Lori Yeager clarified that while reservations may recommend that "Elderly Only" riders consider traveling during slower times, all customers are transported to their programs. No trips are being refused; the recommendation was only a scheduling consideration.

Adjourn