

ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDTAC)
Committee Meeting Minutes
Via Teams & Teleconference
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
1:00 - 3:00 pm

The Elderly and Disable Transit Advisory Committee (EDTAC) met Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 1:00 pm via Teams and Teleconference.

In attendance:

EDTAC Members:

- Blake Roberts, Chair
- Kathleen McCool, Co-Chair
- Laura Waterland
- Lewis Rolph

Members Absent:

- James Shiber

Guest:

- Emily Van Vlack
- Carol King-Ries

DTC Representatives:

- John Sisson, Chief Executive Officer
- Margaret Webb, Paratransit Director
- Shannon Lugo, Civil Rights Specialist
- Lorachel Baldwin, Civil Rights Specialist
- Lori Yeager, Paratransit Support Manager
- Albert Loyola, Deputy Chief Customer Experience Officer

Call to Order

Blake Roberts, Chair, called meeting to order. November 13, 2024, meeting minutes were approved by the committee.

Round Table Introductions

Introductions by committee members and DTC's staff.

Concerns Regarding DTC Budget:

- John Sisson does not anticipate any significant changes at the state or federal level. DTC's budget range is still under review, currently there is no reduction planned. There is a possibility that DTC may not receive discretionary grants,

which are used for electric buses and are not included in DTC's current funding. The state is taking a conservative approach to budgeting, expecting to maintain a cautious fiscal stance.

- Inflation has been a significant factor in the FY23 budget, with \$151 million allocated on the operator side. This includes fixed-route, paratransit, SEPTA, and micro transit, as well as operator salaries and maintenance costs, which collectively add up to around \$150 million.

Paratransit Ridership & Trends:

- Paratransit ridership is on the rise. Before COVID, ridership was nearly 1 million trips per year; last fiscal year it was 858,000, and currently trending towards 870,000. Trip lengths are increasing, with an average of 13 miles per trip, especially in Sussex County, which has longer trips due to its size. DART Connect services have helped reduce travel distances for paratransit customers by allowing them to take shorter, more local trips, improving efficiency.

Service Delays & Bus Availability:

- A paratransit rider reported frequent service delays and inquired about the availability of new buses in New Castle County, which has the highest ridership. John Sisson confirmed that although there are enough buses, driver shortages are affecting service. All available drivers are working, but additional drivers are needed to meet demand.

New Scheduling Software (QRyde):

- QRyde, a new test system will be introduced in Dover in June-July on Saturdays, with weekday testing to follow. The software aims to improve efficiency, reduce manual adjustments, and provide real-time data for trip management. The new software will streamline booking for Micro-transit, improving service once fully implemented. As current processes involve manual steps despite appearing automated online.

Prospective Member(s) Q&A and Vote to Join EDTAC:

EDTAC voted yes for Emily Van Vlack to become an EDTAC member.

DTC Updates:

Paratransit On-Time Performance (OTP):

Margaret Webb, Paratransit Director Paratransit (Data sent via email)

- **November 2024 – statewide trip count 66,269:** NCC – 37,736 63% on-time; KC – 13,645 82% on-time; SC – 14,888 84% on-time.
- **December 2024 – statewide trip count 66,194:** NCC – 37,375 63% on-time; KC – 13,647 83% on-time; SC – 15,172 83% on-time.

- **January 2025 – statewide trip count 64,377:** NCC – 37,318 65% on-time; KC – 13,180 82% on-time; SC – 13,359 82% on-time.

Fixed Route On-Time Performance:

- Shannon Lugo provided an update on behalf of Fixed Route, announcing that new Fixed Route runs will begin on 2/23/25. Additionally, service changes for 2025 are scheduled for May and November. Shannon will send the Fixed Route On-Time Performance numbers to EDTAC members once the information is available

Updates from DTC:

- Routes with schedule changes effective February 23, 2025, for New Castle and Kent Counties, as well as Inner County services:
 - New Castle County: Routes 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 28, 30, 33, 40, 46, 51, 53, 54, 61, and 64.
 - Kent County: Route 117.
 - Inner County Service: Routes 301, 302, 303, and 307.
 - Updated schedules will be posted on the DelDOT website, including accessible formats.

Open Forum:

- EDTAC raised concerns about the functionality of DTC's paratransit app, noting that it does not always work properly. Blake Roberts acknowledged the issue and proposed inviting an IT representative to provide an update on the app at the next meeting.

Action Items:

- Shannon Lugo will send OTP data to members.
- IT representative to discuss paratransit app issues in the next meeting.

Adjourn