

ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDTAC)
Committee Meeting Minutes
Via Teams & Teleconference
Wednesday, May 14, 2025
1:00 - 3:00 pm

The Elderly and Disable Transit Advisory Committee (EDTAC) met Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 1:00 pm via Teams and Teleconference.

In attendance:

EDTAC Members:

- Blake Roberts, Chair
- Kathleen McCool, Co-Chair
- Emily Van Vlack
- James Shiber

Members Absent:

- Laura Waterland
- Lewis Rolph (Ken)

Guest:

- Dionne Chinn
- Nina Kegelmann
- Shannon Spray
- Christie Grant
- Selina Butcher
- Joe Aukward
- Venkata Patlolla, Product Specialist 2 (DeIDOT)

DTC Representatives:

- Margaret Webb, Paratransit Director
- Shannon Lugo, Civil Rights Specialist
- Lorachel Baldwin, Civil Rights Specialist
- Lori Yeager, Paratransit Support Manager
- Zachary Zawodny, Application Support Specialist
- Lynette Shannon, Reservation Supervisor
- Courtney DeVane, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
- Paul Kulesza, Fixed Route Director
- Patico Owens, Eligibility Supervisor
- Paul Curran, Application Administrator
- Catherine Smith, Deputy Chief Customer Experience Officer
- Tremica Cherry Walls, Planner

Call to Order

Blake Roberts, Chair, called meeting to order. February 12, 2025, meeting minutes were approved by the committee.

Round Table Introductions

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

Transit App Concerns:

- Ken was unable to attend the meeting, but he shared a concern by email. He reported that the app does not automatically refresh the ride time. He has to repeatedly tap between tabs to get an updated arrival time.
- Venkata Patlolla explained that the app should automatically refresh every 30 seconds once a ride is within 15–20 minutes of arrival. Users should not need to manually refresh. He invited Ken to reach out directly for troubleshooting.
- Emily shared a similar issue. Her app showed the driver was two minutes away, but the driver arrived 15 minutes later. She noted the app may show drivers nearby who are on break.
- Guests raised concerns about accountability and communication between drivers and the Control Center, stressing that human interaction and real-time oversight are just as important as the app. They also noted that the app's estimated arrival times often don't update when there are extra pick-ups or drop-offs.
- Margaret Webb clarified that drivers are instructed to contact the Control Center in the event of issues or emergencies. The Control Center does not interact directly with the customer app.
- Venkata responded that estimated arrival times may not adjust dynamically until the vehicle is within 15 minutes of the destination. He acknowledged this is a known issue but described it as infrequent. Multiple guests disagreed, saying these delays and timing discrepancies are common.
- A guest asked if DeIDOT is tracking how often these issues happen and how they affect riders, and how the public can help.
- Paul Curran explained that many factors like traffic and shared ride logistics impact timing. They noted arrival times are always estimates and welcomed public suggestions.

Paratransit On-Time Performance (OTP):

February 2025

Statewide trip count: 65,041

- New Castle County: 34,248 trips, 65 percent on-time performance
- Kent County: 13,825 trips, 83 percent on-time performance
- Sussex County: 13,968 trips
 - DTC on-time performance: 83 percent
 - Transdev on-time performance: 74 percent

March 2025

Statewide trip count: 73,800

- New Castle County: 41,646 trips, 65 percent on-time performance
- Kent County: 15,528 trips, 82 percent on-time performance
- Sussex County: 16,626 trips
 - DTC on-time performance: 82 percent
 - Transdev on-time performance: 72 percent

April 2025

Statewide trip count: 74,953

- New Castle County: 42,240 trips, 64 percent on-time performance
- Kent County: 15,502 trips, 82 percent on-time performance
- Sussex County: 17,211 trips
 - DTC on-time performance: 83 percent
 - Transdev on-time performance: 74 percent

Fixed Route On-Time Performance:

- On-time performance is measured as arriving no more than five minutes late or one minute early.
- Key factors affecting on-time performance include accidents and traffic congestion on I-95 and Route 1.
- DelDOT continues to collaborate with planning and scheduling teams to improve performance.

On-Time Performance

- New Castle County
 - Fiscal Year 2024: 9 percent early, 67 percent on time, 23 percent late
 - Fiscal Year 2025: 6 percent early, 71 percent on time, 22 percent late
- Kent County
 - Fiscal Year 2024: 10 percent early, 79 percent on time, 11 percent late
 - Fiscal Year 2025: 6 percent early, 81 percent on time, 14 percent late
- Sussex County
 - Fiscal Year 2024: 3 percent early, 66 percent on time, 32 percent late

- Fiscal Year 2025: 4 percent early, 73 percent on time, 24 percent late
- All Counties Combined
 - Fiscal Year 2024: 7 percent early, 66 percent on time, 27 percent late
 - Fiscal Year 2025: 6 percent early, 74 percent on time, 20 percent late
- New fixed-route service launches on:
 - Sunday, May 18 (New Castle County)
 - Monday, May 19 (Dover)
 - Beach Bus service (Route 305) resumes weekend and holiday operations starting Saturday, May 24
- New Castle County changes include:
 - Route 2 weekday evening service enhanced with a 10 PM trip to Brandywine Town Center.
 - Route 5 select trips now serve Christiana Mall and provide direct service to Fairplay Station during PM runs to Wilmington.
 - Route 20 schedule revised to better serve the adult school at A.I. DuPont during evening hours.

Updates from DTC:

Service Update – Catherine C. Smith (DeIDOT)

- Confirmed details shared by Paul Kulesza regarding upcoming service changes.
- Noted that the resort service officially begins on May 19.
- Route 305 Beach Bus will begin operating on Saturday, May 24.
 - Service runs on weekends and holidays, including Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day.
 - The Beach Bus service will end on Monday, September 1.

Open Forum:

• Inquiry on Bus Allocation:

A concern was shared regarding newer buses being sent downstate while older, high-mileage buses are being used in New Castle County, causing frustration among drivers.

• Response by Courtney DeVane (DeIDOT):

- Buses have a federally mandated 12-year lifespan; 2017 models are not yet eligible for retirement.
- New Castle County is currently short on buses due to 10 of 14 electric buses being out of service. The manufacturer went out of business, causing delays in receiving necessary parts.

- Older buses from downstate were temporarily reassigned to maintain service in New Castle County.
- Each county follows its own bus procurement plan.
- 42 paratransit buses expected in the previous year have been delayed due to supply chain issues. Of those, 21 are allocated for New Castle County and 21 for Sussex County. Kent County received its new buses in 2022.
- No specific update yet on delivery timing due to ongoing supply delays.
- Bus manufacturers must meet federal Buy America standards, requiring a percentage of parts to be produced in the U.S. It is unclear if current international conditions will impact parts availability.

Adjourn