

December 23, 2008

Mr. Michael S. Jackson  
Acting Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Haslet Armory  
122 William Penn Street  
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I write on behalf of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) in strong support of Statewide paratransit services for individuals with disabilities in Delaware. As background, it is Council's understanding that the Office of Management & Budget (OMB) may have requested information from the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) regarding potential cost savings if the non-ADA paratransit service area is reduced. The non-ADA service is that area served outside the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius of fixed route service. Council has requested information from DTC to determine the impact on the budget and users of the transportation system, but DTC reported that "the information is not available. No decision has been made about which service is to be cut". If the possibility of reducing the non-ADA service area exists, Council assumes that OMB would have been provided various financial "scenarios" so it could accurately assess the situation, the impact on the budget and ultimately the constituents. SCPD attempted to clarify this issue but, to date, has not received a response. Please see attached correspondence. Given this background, Council has the following observations.

Paratransit services complement a fixed route bus system. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that paratransit services be provided within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius of a fixed route. At present, DTC goes beyond the ADA and provides paratransit services statewide.

SCPD applauds DTC for its commitment to providing paratransit services beyond the non-ADA mandated area. If services are reduced to only  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radiuses of fixed routes, it could have a critical negative impact on people with disabilities who rely on the system. Most of the fixed route services are provided in New Castle County and many communities in Delaware do not have a fixed route system. The attached information from the Wikipedia website indicates that there are 43 "fixed-route bus routes" in New Castle County; 12 in Kent County and no "fixed" routes in Sussex County. In addition, the inter-county bus route

is not considered a “fixed” route. Reducing the paratransit service area would result in individuals not having accessible transit services for many areas in Delaware. Individuals with disabilities would not be able to work, go to medical appointments, enjoy social and recreational activities, or be active members of the community. Other transportation options are not a viable option for people with disabilities since they are generally not accessible and are cost prohibitive.

Statewide Paratransit service has brought positive national attention to the Delaware Transit Corporation and such a service should be maintained as an example for the rest of the nation.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions or comments regarding our observations on this issue.

Sincerely,

Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chair  
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

cc: Developmental Disabilities Council  
Delaware Transit Corporation

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