

Off-island trips

Growth crisis

Since 1998 users of the STM's Paratransit service have been able to travel to Longueuil and Laval. Since January 2003, it has also been possible for them to travel to the northern and southern fringes. These are what we call off-island trips. This regional service is the responsibility of the Agence métropolitaine de transport, but if you go to the AMT's web site, under «Comment puis-je réserver?», you will see the following: «Il est possible que votre demande de déplacement soit refusée par manque de ressources.» (Your trip request might be refused due to lack of resources). With a strong growth in demand since the middle of 2006, there has been a higher incidence of refused trips because of this shortage of resources.

In fact, despite the additional efforts of the financing provider, the increased demand for service could not be absorbed. Refusals even reached a peak of 45% in February 2007. However, an analysis of the situation enabled us to recognize the classic signs of a growth crisis.

The genesis and evolution of the service

In 1998, with the collaboration of the three transit companies (the STM, the RTL and the STL) and the ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ), the AMT implemented a pilot project dealing with



this type of trip. In January 2002 the project became a permanent service. The aim of this service was to respond more effectively to the needs of adapted transit users in the greater metropolitan area while respecting the services already provided on the respective territories of each participating transporter.

Remember that it is the MTQ's adapted transit assistance program that finances local paratransit services, but off-island trips are taken outside the operating area

of a given transporter. It therefore seemed logical to finance these trips from a separate budget managed by a regional authority, the AMT.

During the early years, certain irritants contributed to slowing down demand for service. In fact, several trips to Laval or the South Shore were very long. When the departure point on the island of Montréal was located outside the service corridors of the RTL or the STL, these trips were carried out in two stages.

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The STM would handle the first segment to a transfer point. Then the STL or the RTL would handle the second segment from the designated transfer point, either the Henri-Bourassa terminus for the STL or the Lucie-Bruneau rehabilitation centre for the RTL, to its territory.

In addition, this type of trip placed a further constraint on the planning aspect of the trip. A waiting time had to be built in so that the transfer would be carried out properly with the second transporter. This waiting period lengthened the overall time of the trip even more.

With experience we learned that by transporting clients directly to their destination, without a transfer, the total cost of the trip would be lower. The AMT then authorized the transporters to take the costs into account when planning these trips. By proceeding in this way, not only was the cost per trip reduced, but the «product» also became a lot more interesting for clients. They no longer had to endure a wait at the transfer point in addition to a second embarking/ disembarking procedure. They also benefited from a quality of service superior to the services provided by the regular public transit networks. These long trips thus became more attractive.

Another irritant was eliminated in the summer of 2006. Up until that point, users had to telephone three days in advance and call back the day before the trip to obtain confirmation. In June 2006, this additional constraint was removed. Users of the STM's Paratransit could finally make their off-island trip requests using the existing methods for local service. The elimination of these various irritants had a significant effect on demand.

On the other hand, the explosion in demand during the summer of 2006 led to a rise in the overall cost of the service. As a result, in spite of a considerable increase in the budget by the AMT, the demand was a lot higher than anticipated for 2006. Despite the quotas that were eventually imposed, the STM ended up with an operating deficit. Fortunately, the STM and the AMT have since agreed to assume an equal share of the 2006 operating deficit for off-island trips for STM clients.

Guidelines for 2007

In order to avoid a similar deficit in 2007, the STM has since the start of the year applied a policy for distributing the service offer throughout the year. In addition, the STM is applying the principle of «first come, first served». A trip refusal occurs when the trip quota for a given day is reached.

Over the first two months of the year, this quota led to higher rates of refusal for requests for occasional trips. After reaching a high of 45% in February, the refusal rate dropped to 17% in March. This decrease in refusals is primarily due to an adjustment in the demand.

The AMT authorized a budget of \$498 000 for 2007, an increase of slightly more than 5% in comparison with the 2006 budget. In turn, STM clients made 3 844 off-island trips during the first quarter of 2007.

OFF-ISLAND TRIPS

FARES

The *User's Guide* clearly states in its *In Brief* section that for trips outside of Montréal, users must pay a double fare or use a TRAM pass.

NO-TRANSFER TRIPS WITHIN THE GREATER MONTREAL AREA UNDER THE AMT'S AUTHORITY

The monthly TRAM pass, zones 3 to 8 (according to area).

Two tickets or twice the cash fare for that transit service.

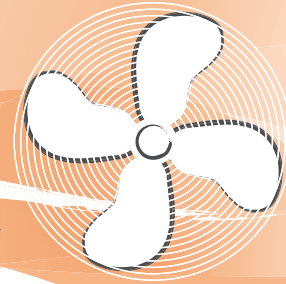
The STM's own transit passes to which you add another cash fare or STM ticket.

TRIPS WITH A TRANSFER

(travelling with two different public transit companies):

Separate payment to each public transit or paratransit carrier (OTA), according to each ones' usual fares (local monthly pass, strip of tickets, or cash).

THIS SUMMER, STAY COOL!



Temperatures are warming up all over the planet, and Québec is not being spared by this trend. In the next few years, summers will probably get very hot. Better to be prepared !

Oppressive heat can cause a variety of health problems such as dehydration, fatigue, dizziness, discomfort, cramps, fainting, exhaustion and sunstroke. The most vulnerable are older people and those who suffer from chronic cardiovascular, respiratory or kidney diseases, diabetes or mental disorders. Children under the age of five and pets should also be monitored closely.

Heat is not something to be taken lightly. As summer nears, the Direction de la santé publique de l'Agence de la santé et

des services sociaux de Montréal (public health branch of Montréal's health and social services agency) invites the population to head the following advice in case of a heat wave:

- Drink often, without waiting to be thirsty, unless not recommended for medical reasons.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages or those with high caffeine content, like coffee or tea.
- Wear a hat and light-weight clothing, in light colours.
- Find a cool location, in the shade or air-conditioned.
- Avoid intense physical activity.

■ Take a shower or bath as often as needed, or cool off with a wet washcloth.

■ If possible, spend time in an air-conditioned location like a shopping centre or movie theatre.

■ Reduce the heat in your home, by closing curtains during the day, creating slight breezes, etc.

■ Never leave a child or animal alone in a car, even for a few minutes, or in a poorly ventilated room.

To find out more, consult the Info-Santé office in your area. You can also visit the Direction de la santé publique website at: www.santepub-mtl.qc.ca.

Source : Direction de la santé publique de l'Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal

RIDERSHIP

Despite the number of trips cancelled due to a greater number of snow storms in winter 2007 than in 2006, the final ridership figures for the first quarter of 2007 show an 8.1% increase over the same period during the previous year. If these snow storms had not caused so many cancellations, the growth in ridership would have reached 11.8%.

The chart below shows the strong increase in ridership (14.2%) among non-transferable clients, who use either minibus or accessible taxi. Such a big

difference can be explained by the extra \$2 million added to the budget in April 2006 and carried over to 2007. As a result, the impact on ridership was only felt from

mid-April 2006, which shows a marked increase over the first three months of 2006.

RIDERSHIP AT MARCH 31, 2007	2006	2007	DIFFERENCE
Trips by non-transferable clients (<i>minibus + accessible taxi</i>)	144 610	165 094	+ 14.2%
Trips by other clients	334 885	353 187	+ 5.5%
Total	479 495	518 281	+ 8.1 %

OUT OF TOWN SUMMER CAMPS REQUEST FOR GROUP TRANSPORTATION

Are you going to a summer camp outside of Montréal ? Do you need to use our services to gather camp-goers in one location for their departure and their return?

If so, make sure to follow these steps:

■ Send in your request for group transportation at least 10 days in advance. Send it by fax to **514 280-5317** or by email to **groupes.ta@stm.info**.

■ Fill out the *Group transportation request* form available from our website at this address: **www.stm.info/english/t-adapte/a-depgroupe.doc**

YOU HAVE A REGULAR TRANSPORT SCHEDULE AND YOU ARE MOVING? REMEMBER YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS!

July is fast approaching. So if you have a regular transport schedule and you are moving, avoid any problems by changing your address as soon as possible. It is important to not forget. Once you update this information, the STM can cancel your current schedule on the appropriate day and program a new transport schedule for you from your new home address.

You may also obtain this form from Customer Service.

As soon as possible, confirm to us the names of the campers who will be needing our services. Avoid wasting resources by advising us quickly of any cancellations, prior to the departure day.

Make sure that any luggage that cannot be handled by the campers themselves will be taken to the departure / return point by other means than a Paratransit vehicle.

To change your address, you must contact Customer Service by calling **514 280-8211, option 4**. Internet users can use the *Change of address* form available on the STM website at **www.stm.info/english/t-adapte/a-formchadr.doc**

DAY CAMP

SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST FOR TRANSPORTATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

The STM would like to remind all parents and advocates that day camp season will be starting soon. To get there, your child will need to use the STM's services. Please send in your request for transportation **at least seven days in advance**.

Moreover, it is best to proceed as follows:

Contact our Customer Service (**514 280-8211, option 4**) to obtain the form Day camp transportation request form.

Fill out the form and return it to us **by mail** or **by fax** at the address or fax number indicated on the form.

Confirmation

To obtain confirmation, call the usual number (**514 280-8211, option 2**) two days prior to the first trip. Avoid unnecessary calls and respect the two-day waiting period.

STM – FARES AND FARE COLLECTION

The chart shows current fares for 2007.

Boarding is always faster when you have your ticket, CAM pass or cash on hand, prior to the vehicle's arrival.

STM 2007 FARES

	Regular fares	Reduced fares
CAM	\$65	\$35
CAM Hebdo	\$19	\$10.75
Strip of 6 tickets	\$11.75	\$6.25
Cash	\$2.75	\$1.75
Tourist Pass	\$9 / 1 day	\$17 / 3 days

TO HELP YOU

Going on vacation?

REMEMBER TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND YOUR REGULAR TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULE !

Each summer, we unnecessarily send out vehicles to pick up clients who are gone on vacation. You can easily help us prevent such wastes of time and resources by temporarily suspending your regular transportation schedule. The ACCÈS 5 system can handle short-term changes effortlessly and, at the end of your service suspension, your regular transportation schedule is automatically re-activated.

Fast and easy !

All it takes is a telephone call. You can make all your arrangements with a Call centre agent (option 2). As indicated in the *User's Guide*, "A regular transportation schedule can be temporarily suspended for up to eight weeks. For longer periods of time, the regular schedule will be cancelled." So do it early ! Once you know your definite vacation dates, contact us ! This way, you will save us unnecessary trips. Moreover, seats will become available for other paratransit clients.

Cancelling as soon as possible is IMPORTANT !

If you no longer need transportation that you had already planned and confirmed with the STM's paratransit service, we ask that you cancel it as soon as possible.

REGULAR SCHEDULE OF TRIPS USED ONLY ONCE IN A WHILE

An old habit that needs changing...

In the years preceding the introduction of both the ACCÈS 5 computer system and of the modern telephone systems now currently in use, processing transportation requests took so much time, that call centre telephone lines were always busy. Over time, however, some clients had discovered a neat trick to avoid the hassle... a regular transportation schedule.

Indeed, even though they did not need to travel to a specific destination each week, these clients requested regular transportation... even if it meant cancelling often or even modifying their trip for a given day. Considering the situation, the STM was quite tolerant.

This way of doing things can no longer be justified, as the call centre is usually easy to reach now.

Consequently, some paratransit users should not be surprised to receive a letter bringing this subject to their attention. Statistics drawn from their transportation records will clearly show there is a problem in that respect. These clients will be invited to reassess their needs for regular transportation and to cancel those

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A TAX CREDIT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Since July 1, 2006, paratransit clients preparing their federal tax returns can ask for a 15.25% tax credit for 2006 and a 15.5% credit from 2007 on with respect to the cost of their monthly public transit passes.

The federal tax credit can be claimed by the user, or their married or common-law spouse regarding the cost of public transit passes purchased for the user, their married or common-law spouse and/or dependent children under the age of 19.

Paratransit users who wish to claim this tax credit must keep their monthly public transit passes, should they later be needed for auditing purposes.

For any questions, please refer to the federal government's website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca.

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REGULAR SCHEDULE OF TRIPS USED ONLY ONCE IN A WHILE

scheduled trips that are only used once in a while.

Clients who receive such a letter and fail to act on it will eventually be contacted by telephone. The situation will then be reviewed and discussed one last time and all unused transportation will be cancelled.

So should you receive this letter, please take a moment to review your actual needs and follow up accordingly. Please do not wait for us to call you.

Moreover, if you wish to modify the point of departure or destination of a regularly scheduled trip, please note that you must first cancel the currently programmed trip and then submit a new request for transportation.

You will have to request occasional transportation until you receive confirmation of your new schedule. Once you receive it, make a note of the new times for each day, as they should no longer change.

Paratransit user Fannie Prévost is being accompanied to the door by driver Claire Leblanc. Centre Miriam's Katherine Patterson is on hand to take charge of her.

• PARTNERS •

SAFETY OF CLIENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS

When everyone plays their part...

Many users are accepted as paratransit clients on the basis of disabilities stemming from intellectual or psychological impairments. These are such that a specific procedure must be established to ensure the safety of users, particularly when arriving at their destination.

Moreover, the STM requires that drivers accompany their passengers to their building door. In return, the STM also expects the person responsible for that client to be on hand at the door and easily identifiable when the driver announces his presence.

However, if no one is around to take charge of the paratransit user, the driver must remain with his passenger for safety reasons. As soon as the STM is advised of the situation, a supervisor is dispatched on location to take over, while attempting to minimize the impact on any other passengers already aboard the vehicle. The STM will also try to contact a family member or caregiver. In the end, appropriate action will be taken to allow the driver to continue with his route as soon as possible.

By acting this way, the STM complies with its obligation of care, as prescribed by law. Indeed, one can only imagine the problems that would arise if a driver did not follow these instructions or if the person responsible for taking charge of our client was absent or refused to be on hand at the door. As with any stage production, if one actor forgets his part, chaos ensues !

The STM must therefore assume its leading role and send out reminders to those involved. So when everyone plays their part, most problems can easily be avoided.



ATTESTING A CLIENT'S DEGREE OF AUTONOMY

Not all paratransit users with an intellectual or psychological impairment need to be taken charge of upon arriving at their destination. Their degree of autonomy is such that being taken charge of is not required at most destinations. These clients are considered **autonomous**. In other cases, the degree of autonomy will only be sufficient for certain destinations, usually at their place of residence. These clients **can be left unattended at certain destinations**.

A few years ago, in order to respect the autonomy of these clients, the STM modified its ways and adapted its computerized systems to take these conditions into account. As a result, a procedure aimed at attesting a client's degree of autonomy was established and tested. Transportation advisers working for customer service are now responsible for validating the degree of autonomy of a given client. This step can be carried out when a client is first admitted to Paratransit or following a report by a driver, parent or advocate. Advisers must ensure that these parameters are modified in the client's computerized file, so that an autonomous client may, in the end, forgo being taken charge of at the door.

IS A CLIENT STILL AUTONOMOUS ?

Someone's autonomy is not necessarily permanent. Clients who could orient themselves in time and space in 2002 may quite possibly be unable to do so in 2007. Someone with a psychological impairment may also need to have their medication re-assessed; in the interval, that person may experience anxiety to such an extent that their personal safety is at risk, and must now be taken charge of when arriving at their destination. When that happens, the client's closest family and friends have an important part to play: they must consider having that person's status (**autonomous** or **can be left unattended at certain destinations**) re-assessed.

To do so, one must consider the risks to which clients are exposed if they are not taken charge of at the door.

In such cases, the STM will act cautiously, and as soon as a situation or piece of information casts a reasonable doubt on the actual degree of autonomy of a paratransit client during transportation, the validation process is immediately called into play. If needed, a client's file will be modified accordingly and the restriction regarding having someone responsible on hand will be activated without further delay.

If you are the parent, caregiver or advocate of a client that can no longer do without being taken charge of at the door, do not hesitate to contact Paratransit's Customer Service department (514 280-8211, option 4). Your request will be referred to an adviser, who will treat it as a priority.

INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR OUR PARTNERS

Regardless of whether you are a patient in a healthcare facility or work in one, an advocate in a CLSC, or a member of an association for the disabled, if you want to know more about the services we offer, we will gladly meet with you. To arrange for such a meeting, you need only contact Customer Service at 514 280-8211, option 4, Monday to Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Simply submit your request to the agent answering your call. In turn, it will be forwarded to a Paratransit adviser who will clearly determine your needs and contact you afterwards to confirm any arrangements.

CELL PHONE USE BY PARATRANSIT DRIVERS

The STM imposes limits on cell phone use by drivers to ensure the safety of clients using paratransit services.

TAXI

- **Authorized communications** – The STM authorizes paratransit drivers to make very short calls related to operational needs when operating vehicles on the road.
- **Non-authorized communications** – Whether a telephone call is for personal or for operational reasons, drivers are not allowed to engage in long conversations while driving their vehicle or while assisting a client during embarkation or disembarkation manoeuvres.

MINIBUS

Minibus drivers **are not allowed** to use a cell phone in their minibus.

Telephone

Only one number to remember

514 280-8211

Our mailing address

STM Paratransit Service
3111 Jarry St. East
Montréal, Québec H1Z 2C2

Requests for group transportation only

Fax:

514 280-5317

E-mail:

groupes.ta@stm.info

Teletype (TTY)

514 280-5308

Only for Paratransit users unable to verbally communicate

In order to facilitate contacts with our services, special arrangements are available to paratransit users who have major speech impediments or verbal communication limitations.

For more information, please contact Customer Service.

THE STM MAKES ME CLICK!

Website

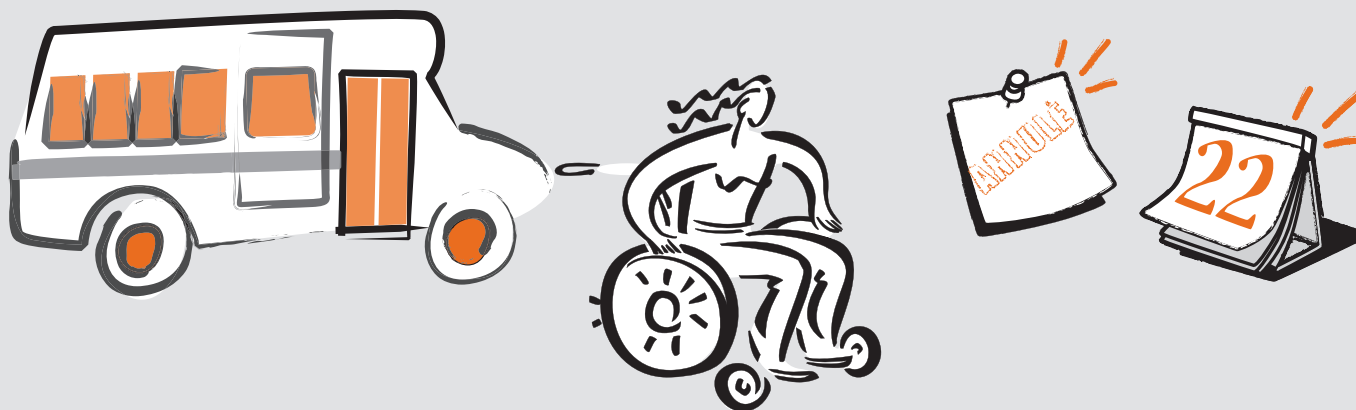
www.stm.info

Customer Service – e-mail

transport.adapte@stm.info

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adresses.favorites@stm.info



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*Pour obtenir un exemplaire en français du Transport Contact, veuillez
communiquer avec le Service à la clientèle au 514 280-8211 – option 4.
Nous vous le posterons avec plaisir.*