

Communication and information newsletter for paratransit service users

OBJECTIVE: AIM AT A ZERO REFUSAL RATE

The last two issues of Transport Contact described the efforts of the STM and its funders to provide better service to clients who always have to travel by minibuss or accessible taxi. In our jargon, these clients are *non-transferable*. These efforts have led the STM to adopt a new objective: aim at a zero refusal rate for all clients.

History

Longstanding STM Paratransit clients remember the difficult years that preceded implementation and debugging of the ACCÈS 5 system and its related business processes. With the limited tools of that period, clients, and especially non-transferable clients, had to put up with many trip requests being refused.

The refusal rate was as high as 5% of all trips. Moreover, these adverse service conditions jammed our call centre with many requests, as clients tried to obtain the last places available.

Approach to achieve the zero refusal objective

The encouraging results obtained in providing better service to non-transferable clients led the management of STM Paratransit to ask the Service Planning Team to take on the challenge of gradually achieving the zero refusal objective. A plan was developed during the summer.



In the usual order, Alain Gravel – Zero Refusal team, Yves Guèvremont – Service Delivery Support, Richard Saulnier – Head of section Call centre and Zero Refusal team coordinator, Nevine Tadros – Paratransit Director, Sylvain Laplante – Superintendent Planning of service, Benoît De Roy jr – Service Delivery Support.

Under this plan, the planning team's expertise would be applied by going farther in using the tools offered by the ACCÈS 5 system. As a first step, to ensure winning conditions, it was necessary to modify certain internal processes and obtain the collaboration of all of our taxi industry partners. The plan then had to be applied progressively to consolidate results.

The first target was to satisfy all occasional trip requests made three days in advance.

This target was achieved in early summer. The second target concerned occasional trip requests made two days in advance. This was achieved a little later in the summer. The third target involved occasional trip requests made the day before the trip. After many efforts, this target was achieved on August 23, a first in the history of Montreal Paratransit.

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As of early October, apart from a few exceptional cases, the zero refusal objective for requests made between three days and the day before the trip has been achieved every day since August 23, 2007*. By comparison, 444 trips were refused in September 2006. Only four were refused in September 2007!

Next objectives

Given the strong growth in the number of trip requests, it will be a major challenge to maintain a zero refusal rate for trip requests made between three days and one day in advance. Maintaining service at this level is an objective in itself. Nonetheless, the Service Planning Team is already at work to find ways to achieve the zero refusal objective for requests made the same day! Stay tuned.

Recognition

It is worth noting the creativity and extraordinary work achieved by the *Zero Refusal* team in the planning section, as well as the important contribution by the Service Delivery Support group. On behalf of all clients and STM management, thank you!

**Currently, the only trip refusals recorded are for occasional trip requests made the same day and for metropolitan trip requests. In the latter case, as explained in the June 2007 issue of Transport Contact: "The AMT authorized a budget of \$498 000 for 2007, an increase of slightly more than 5% in comparison with the 2006 budget." Consequently, as the STM decided to comply rigorously with the allocated budget, trips are refused once the budget allocated for a given period is reached.*

RIDERSHIP AND CALL CENTRE PERFORMANCE

Ridership

The following table shows the strong growth (+15.7%) of ridership among non-transferable clients. These clients use the minibus or accessible taxi. The sizeable difference is explained by the constant growth in demand for service, the extra \$2 million added to the budget in April 2006 and renewed in 2007, and the pursuit of the zero refusal objective.

Ridership at September 30, 2007	2006	2007 DIFFERENCE
Trips by non-transferable clients <i>(minibus + taxis)</i>	446 072	516 255 +15.7%
Trips by regular taxi clients	971 844	1 034 636 + 6.5%
Total	1 417 916	1 550 891 + 9.4%

Call Centre Performance (at September 30, 2007)

Option 1

The indicators show very fine achievements in call centre performance in 2007. Since the beginning of the year, the goal of a 3-minute average waiting time, established when the ACCÈS 5 system was implemented, has nearly been achieved with a time of 3 min 19. This is a 22% reduction in waiting time compared to 2006.

Demand growth is maintained, with 294 802 calls handled since the beginning of the year, for a 19.9% increase over the same period in 2006. The average attempt/answered call ratio is 2.20 since the beginning of the year, a 28.3% improvement over 2006.

Option 2

In option 2, with 160 048 calls handled, the number of calls increased by 13.2% over 2006. The average waiting time of 1 min 39 was down 6.6% compared to 2006.

These data confirm the improvement of call centre accessibility since the beginning of the year.

TEST:

NEW WHEELCHAIR ANCHORING SYSTEM BEING TESTED

Minibus users have probably noticed that some vehicles are equipped with a new fastening system. Since mid-October, a new wheelchair anchoring system is being tested in four STM minibuses. These tests should last three to six months.

The parity committee responsible for the project has adopted different layout scenarios, based on new components of the Slide'N Click anchoring system.

The driver anchors the winders to disk-shaped floor anchor plates to stabilize the wheelchair.

This system's retractable winders are equipped with a tension knob allowing the driver to attach the loop of the retractable belt to the floor with a single gesture. He then only has to fasten the hook to the wheelchair.

The system meets the safety and strength standards in force (Regulation respecting road vehicles adapted for the transport of handicapped persons).

Ms. Nevine Tadros Takes Charge of STM Paratransit

Last April 30, Ms. Nevine Tadros was appointed Director of the STM Paratransit Service. Before her arrival at Paratransit, Ms. Tadros headed the Staffing and Human Resources Planning Division. Employed by the STM for over 24 years, she has held several positions in the human resources field and as Superintendent of Operations with the Bus Network.

Mr. Daniel Beauchamp managed Paratransit from October 2003 to October 2006, when he was promoted to the position of Senior Director of the STM Bus Network.

Until Ms. Tadros' arrival, Mr. Jacques Lussier served as Interim Director.

JACQUES LUSSIER, RECIPIENT OF THE 2007 PRIX GILLES-COUTU

On September 27, at the Gala Dinner marking the 20th anniversary of the *Québec Specialized Transit Workshop*, Mr. Jacques Lussier, Superintendent - Minibus Service Delivery, with the STM Paratransit Service, received the 2007 edition of the Prix Gilles-Coutu.

This award was presented in recognition of his involvement in the improvement of Paratransit services and the defense of the rights of the people who use them.

The Prix Gilles-Coutu was created in 2001 as a tribute to the founder of ARUTAQ, who died that same year. This award is presented each year at the conference on transport for disabled persons, the *Colloque sur le transport des personnes à mobilité réduite*.

Mr. Lussier began his career at the STM in 1981 as a bus driver. In 1987, he was promoted to the position of Route Supervisor with the Paratransit Service. He has held the position of Superintendent – Minibus Service Delivery since 1998.

TRANSED 2007: a success!

Canada hosted the 11th *International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons* (TRANSED), held June 18 to 22, 2007, at the Palais des congrès de Montréal under the theme: "Benchmarking, Evaluation and Vision for the Future".

The Conference highlighted advances in research, profiled international breakthroughs and explored perspectives for technological innovations related to the mobility challenges of an aging population and of persons with disabilities, as part of an inclusive society. The Conference also featured an exhibition where participants were given an overview of the deployment of innovation in the field of accessible transportation, a dynamic poster session, and technical tours of local facilities.

Within the context of these tours, on June 18 and 22, groups of about forty participants visited the STM Paratransit Service.

Hong Kong will host the next Conference in 2010.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY RESERVATION PROCEDURE

As indicated in the *User's Guide*, all regular schedules are cancelled from **December 25, 2007 to January 2, 2008 inclusively**. To meet your transport needs, the special holiday reservation procedure will be in effect again this year. Thus, for each trip you want to make during that period, **regardless of the reason**, you can make your request 7 days before the scheduled trip.

December 24, 2007

Also, given that several regular activities will end sooner than usual on December 24, any request to *change the return time of a regular trip scheduled for December 24* can also be made starting December 17.

Conditions

All these trip requests will have to be made by telephone. Starting 7 days before the scheduled trip, telephone 514-280-8211 (option 1). You can obtain your confirmation when you call.

ADVANCE TRIP REQUEST

Please note that *advance trip requests*, whether for a medical appointment, a hiring interview or test, a Board of Directors meeting, a court appearance, a show, a departure to or return from P.-E. Trudeau Airport, the Central Bus Terminal or Central train station can also be made **by telephone 7 days before the trip**.

These requests can also be made **by fax to 514-280-6313, at least 7 days in advance**.

However, particularly in the case of medical appointments, given that many things can happen between the date of the request and the appointment, **please avoid sending us your request several months in advance**. Instead we invite you to **fax your request about one month before your trip**.

Confirmation

To obtain confirmation of a request made by fax, you can use Automated Services at 280-8211 (option 3) or contact a call centre agent at 280-8211 (option 2).

SNOW REMOVAL AND SAFETY OF BOARDING/DEBOARDING AREAS

Winter is approaching. Snow and ice accumulating in stairways and various boarding areas can hinder access. Sometimes, certain areas become inaccessible or unsafe.

The STM reminds you that it's very important that entrances, stairways and parking areas be adequately cleared of snow and ice.

Snow banks formed after snow clearing on streets and sidewalks are the main obstacles to boarding and deboarding.

Before the paratransit vehicle arrives, ensure that the projected boarding areas at your home and at your destination are accessible and safe. This is your responsibility.

For this purpose, you may have to telephone your destination to check the condition of the deboarding area. Neglecting this simple step could have negative consequences for you, for a person close to you, for a driver or for other clients. An icy or poorly cleared access will cause delays and inconvenience for others.

As soon as possible before our vehicle arrives, if you find that the access is blocked and that the snow or ice can't be cleared suitably, please cancel your trip so that the driver doesn't visit you needlessly.

Your cooperation is essential. Think about it!

TO HELP YOU

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

THE STM HAS TO CONTACT YOU QUICKLY!

STM Paratransit often needs to contact a relative or a responsible person quickly when certain emergencies arise. Too often the telephone numbers in the client's file aren't up to date or it's impossible to speak to someone quickly.

You will understand that the STM wants to speak to someone quickly if a user is injured or becomes ill during a trip. The STM will also want to contact someone immediately if a driver reports that there is nobody at home to take charge of a non-autonomous, intellectually handicapped user.

If you are one of the people the STM would need to reach quickly, please ensure that the telephone numbers in the file of a given client allow us to reach you.

If possible, it would be ideal to provide us with a cell phone or pager number or a telephone number at work.

By telephone

Just contact Customer Service at 514 280-8211 (option 1) to validate the telephone numbers in the client's file and make the necessary updates.

By email

You can also do this by email. You should then provide us with the client's name and file number with the mention "telephone in case of emergency". Send this to the following address: [**transport.adapte@stm.info**](mailto:transport.adapte@stm.info).

Please do this. It's important!

DURING A SNOWSTORM

The STM wishes to remind you that, because of the chaos generated by every snowstorm and the risks for the safety of clients and drivers, the STM's strategy in such circumstances is based on caution.

Well before the first flakes have fallen, measures must be considered to adjust the service to the conditions that will prevail on the street.

If a storm is approaching...

As a user, you can take certain actions that would greatly help the STM on these difficult days.

Before the storm

▶ For each day of a major storm, **except in circumstances beyond your control**, it's better to cancel any regular trip already scheduled. Doing this in advance reduces the number of trips the STM has to revise and the number of calls the day of the storm.

The day of the storm

▶ It's important to limit your calls to those that are important or urgent.

▶ Make sure that the information regarding maintenance or interruption of service comes from a reliable source. Rumours create a lot of confusion. You must avoid spreading them at any price.

• The decision to suspend service for a given day will always be made BEFORE the call centre lines are opened and before the first passengers board that morning.

▶ The media are informed as soon as possible so that they announce any service interruption. So pay attention!

ARE YOU CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET?

Register in our CYBERCONTACT LIST

The personal computer and the Internet are communications tools that have transformed our environment. The STM Paratransit Service would like to hear from its "connected" clients.

If you're a web user, contact us! Send us a brief email with your **name** and **file number**. We will register you in our CyberContact list, which will allow us to communicate with the registered clients quickly and directly. Here's our address:

[**transport.adapte@stm.info**](mailto:transport.adapte@stm.info)

We look forward to hearing from you!

A PARATRANSIT PIONEER HAS LEFT US

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Mr. Jean-Marc Forest. This Québec paratransit pioneer died at age 72 on September 23, after a long illness.

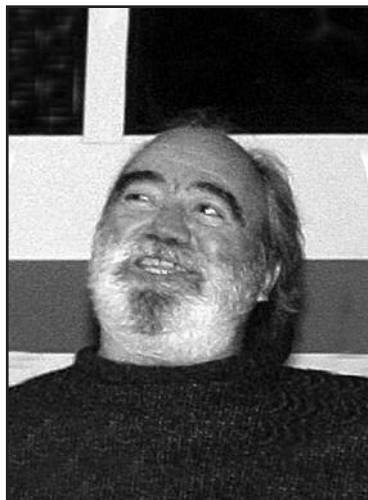


Photo : Sandrine De Pas

A visionary and a pioneer

In the early 70s, Jean-Marc and his brother Jacques shared a vision. Suffering from a degenerative disease that confined them to a wheelchair, they were convinced that social integration of the disabled required the establishment of means of transportation adapted to their condition. Their vision became a reality in 1972, when Minibus Forest began its operations, acquiring its first adapted vehicle.

This service grew strongly year after year. In 1979, Minibus Forest made over 70 000 trips. The previous year, in the wake of the movement for recognition of the rights of the disabled, the Government of Québec had legislated that all of the province's transit corporations had to provide paratransit services. Thus, in 1980, the CTCUM paratransit service was born. Of course, the fleet and many of the employees of Minibus Forest were integrated into the new service.

A man who inspired respect

Thus, Jean-Marc was able to continue his work at the CTCUM. His great wisdom and strong personality left indelible traces on everyone who worked with him. His career at the CTCUM and the STCUM continued until 1990, when he took a well deserved retirement.

In 2005, during the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of its paratransit service, the STM presented a souvenir plaque to Jean-Marc bearing the following words: "*Certains disent qu'il faut que ça change, puis d'autres agissent pour que ça change*". (Some say that things have to change, while others act to make them change). Jean-Marc was one of the leaders of the second group. He blazed the trail with his determination and profound humanism.

The STM wishes to express its sincerest condolences to Jean-Marc's family and friends.

DANIEL BEAUCHAMP RECEIVES THE 2007 PRIX GUY-CHARTRAND

On May 30, at a benefit luncheon marking its thirtieth anniversary, Transport 2000 Québec presented the 2007 Prix Guy-Chartrand to Mr. Daniel Beauchamp, former Director of the STM Paratransit Service, in the "*Development and improvement of public transit*" category.

This award recognized Mr. Beauchamp's achievements in his three years (2003-2006) as Director of Paratransit at the STM.

A man of action and a team builder determined to make paratransit a collective success, Daniel Beauchamp, an STM employee since 1980, succeeded in meeting the quality challenge. Under his leadership, ridership increased by 35%, the number of complaints decreased by nearly 40% and the costs per trip diminished by 10%.

In October 2006, Mr. Beauchamp was promoted to the position of Senior Director – Bus Network of the STM.

20TH EDITION OF THE QUÉBEC SPECIALIZED TRANSIT WORKSHOP

Passenger transportation, a shared responsibility” was the theme of the 20th edition of the *Québec Specialized Transit Workshop / Colloque sur le transport des personnes à mobilité réduite*, held from September 26 to 28. This year, Rivière-du-Loup hosted participants from every region of Québec.

One of the workshop sessions was facilitated by Jean-Noël Quessy (President) and Daniel Bouchard (General Manager), of the *Comité provincial de concertation et de développement de l'industrie du taxi* (CPCDIT) and Jacques Sicard, Superintendent – Taxi Service Delivery with STM Paratransit. This session dealt with operational problems in the taxi industry.

The topics discussed in this session included driver training, understanding the reality of the disabled, ways to solve operational problems, vehicles, and the volume of trips required.

Some history

The Québec Specialized Transit Workshop was created in 1988 as the *Colloque sur le transport adapté*, on the initiative of the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), in collaboration with the ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ). Over 160 people already showed their interest by attending.

In that period, the participating clientele mainly consisted of the stakeholders directly involved in the organization of paratransit – the public carriers and the ministère des Transports du Québec. Their concerns were mainly related to questions of operation and organization of transportation, since these questions were associated with the clients' pressing needs and rapid growth of the services offered.

The findings after fifteen years led to an update of this conference's annual formula: expansion of transit services to new clienteles, emergence of new partners and a clear assertion of the needs of the different clienteles.

During the same period, the Alliance des Regroupements des usagers du transport adapté du Québec (ARUTAQ) organized two major events: in 1992, a provincial conference on the theme “Green light for paratransit” and in 1998, a provincial forum on the theme “Access to transportation for all... dream or reality”. These two events and their success led CUTA to review its objectives.

Thus, in 1999, a strategic alliance was established between CUTA and ARUTAQ to hold the Québec Specialized Transit Workshop on an annual basis.

This transition represented a very stimulating challenge for the Organizing Committee, because the Workshop became a preferred discussion forum both for the carriers and for clients from different regions of Québec. This collaboration not only enriched the content and the variety of means of presenting it, but broadened the range of stakeholders concerned by the question of specialized transit. Gradually, the “Colloque sur le transport adapté”

evolved into the “Colloque sur le transport des personnes à mobilité réduite”, covering the whole range of specialized transit for people with reduced mobility, managed by a Board of Directors assisted by volunteer services from the community for the logistical organization of the event.

Since this unification, all the workshops have confirmed that it is possible to establish a sustainable partnership among different stakeholders, in a perspective of developing specialized transit that meets its users' real needs.

In addition to CUTA and ARUTAQ, several partners are involved every year in organizing the Québec Specialized Transit Workshop: Alliance des services de transport adapté du Québec (ASTAQ), Association du transport urbain du Québec (ATUQ), ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) and Regroupement des organismes de transport adapté du Québec (ROTAQ).

To favour participation by all the stakeholders concerned by specialized transit, the Workshop is held in a different region each year.

BEST WISHES



The employees of the STM Paratransit Service, the members of the Admission Committee and the Client/Carrier Committee wish you a Merry Christmas and a healthy, prosperous and happy New Year 2008.

CONTACT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER

Telephone

Only one number to remember

514 280-8211

Our address

**Centre de transport adapté
3111 Rue Jarry Est
Montréal (Québec) H1Z 2C2**

Requests for group transportation only

Fax:

514 280-5317

Email:

groupes.ta@stm.info

Regular transportation requests

Advance transportation requests

Fax:

514 280-6313

Teletype (TTY)

514 280-5308

Only for Paratransit users unable to communicate orally

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

For more information, please contact Customer Service.

THE STM MAKES ME CLICK!

Website

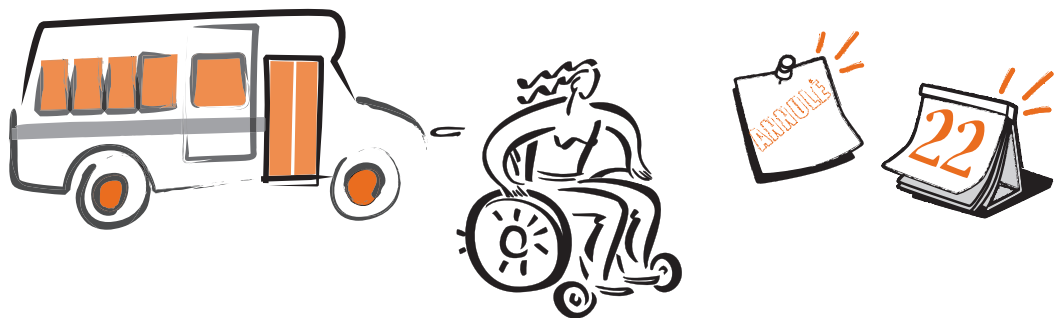
www.stm.info

Customer Service - email

transport.adapte@stm.info

FAVOURITE ADDRESSES – email

adresses.favorites@stm.info



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