



June 2001

Communication and information bulletin for paratransit services users

## Reservation for medical appointment

### *Testing a new procedure*

**I**n the past, in spite of all the benefits linked to advance transportation requests, some customers who were making an advance request for a medical appointment could not always meet deadlines. The normal procedure is very specific; to qualify as an advance transportation request, the request must have been received, either by mail or fax, at least ten days in advance.

But it so happens that medical appointments will often be granted on a shorter notice than that. With the result that when customers got a last minute medical appointment, they couldn't file an advance transportation request as they do not qualify. They ended up trying to get transportation by submitting an occasional transportation request; something that can really tax anybody's patience, as the Call Centre phone lines are so busy sometimes that connections become nearly impossible to establish. In a worst-case scenario the customer cannot get the necessary transportation and will not be able to show up for the medical appointment. After that, months can go by for a new appointment to be set or a specific test to be carried out.

To address this pressing need a new procedure was tested some months ago to accommodate last minute medical appointments. This proved very successful, and so, in accordance with representatives from our customers, the procedure has now become permanent. More than ever now, it is easier to request transportation for a medical appointment when time is short.

#### **Reservation procedure**

A **transportation request for a medical appointment** can be submitted at any moment, as long as :

1. **Requests sent by fax or mail must be received at least three (3) days in advance.**

2. **If the appointment is scheduled within two days or less, only a phone request is accepted.**

**You can submit a request by phone at any time. However, we strongly suggest your request be faxed or mailed instead; that way you will avoid any problem getting through to our Call Centre.**

On page 3 you will find attached a new medical appointment form created especially for this very type of request. When filled out, it will contain all your required trip information. Make copies and use it each time as needed.

*(see form on page 3)*

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TRANSPORT



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Si vous désirez un exemplaire  
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**STCUM**

Paratransit services center  
3111 East Jarry St.  
Montreal, Quebec  
H1Z 2C2  
<http://www.stcum.qc.ca>

# Change of address

**J**uly is right around the corner. Every year, many of our customers move. If this is your case, avoid problems. Notify us in time of your change of address.

This is all the more important if you have a regular transportation schedule. You must know that most changes of address require us to cancel the programmed schedule, and develop a new one based on the new address.

**There are two ways in which you can do this**

The first requires that you register your change of address using the Interactive Line. You simply have to dial 280-7400. After selecting Module 3 (Modifying a Personal File) and at the request of the system, you punch in your **file number and personal access code (consisting of the day and month of your birth in that order : if your date of birth is June 1st, you punch in 01-06). Pressing 1 will give you access to the change of address voice mail. The system will provide the information you need before you record your message. You can then listen to your message and confirm the information provided therein. It's easy. You'll see!**

The other way of registering your change of address is to call Customer Service at 280-5341, Monday to Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

The agent who take your call will enter your new address and ensure that your trips will be programmed from there, as of the requested starting date.

## Summer camp reservations

**T**he following points are important to consider when planning group transportation for a summer camp. You must :

- Send us the group reservation at least 10 days in advance.
- Validate the complete list of individuals who will be using our services as soon as possible.
- If need be, make all required cancellations as soon as possible, before the date of departure.

**See to it that luggage which cannot be handled by clients is transported to departure and arrival point by a vehicle other than those provided by Paratransit Services.**



# FORM



## Transportation request for medical appointment

### CUSTOMER IDENTIFICATION

File number: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Walking  Manual wheelchair  Electric wheelchair  Electric scooter  Guide dog

Non-folding walker  With a personal aide  With children (How many?) \_\_\_\_\_

Person in charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

### TRIP INFORMATIONS

Date of travel: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Starting address: \_\_\_\_\_

Destination address: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival time: \_\_\_\_\_ Return time : \_\_\_\_\_

### FORWARDING YOUR REQUEST



By mail



By fax



By teletype (TTY) :

**STCUM - Paratransit service**

**280-6313**

**280-5308**

Medical appointment

3111 East Jarry Street

Montreal, Quebec

H1Z 2C2



By telephone

**280-5353 (minibus) or 280-5445 (taxi)**

### TO SECURE YOUR CONFIRMATION

Two (2) days before your travel date (**do not call earlier than that**) dial the following number:  
280-5313 (minibus) or 280-5444 (taxi) after 6 p.m. preferably.

- ✓ To get the most out of this new service make sure that your request is received **at least three (3) days before your appointment**. Forward it to us preferably by mail or by fax. **As a final resort**, you can also make your reservation by phone.
- ✓ After this period, the following numbers will accept phone requests only:  
280-5353 (minibus) or 280-5445 (taxi).

Confirmation for transportation requests are subject to the availability of our resources and cannot be guaranteed.

# ***IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICES***

**D**espite the adverse effects on ridership imposed by the current budgetary problems, during the year 2000 and since the beginning of 2001 many aspects of the services offered to the customers were improved through continuous efforts and a productive consultative process.

## **A PRODUCTIVE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS**

### **Training**

On the basis of the problems that were addressed during the regular meetings of the Users/Carrier Consultative Committee a number of issues made progress.

During the year 2000 the employee training program was reviewed to include a section on Better understanding the disabled person. The work team benefitted from the collaboration of Mrs. Murielle Larivière-Lebret from the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) and Mr. Jean-Marie Grenier from the Association québécoise des personnes aphasiques (AQPA).

### **Services to people with communication impairment**

At the same time exploratory meetings were held in order to enhance services to customers with communication impairment. With the usual collaboration of the AQPA, potential solutions are under study right now and announcements will come in due time.

### **Resumption of group transportation services**

After consulting with many organizations, the measure announced last fall that suspended the processing of group transportation requests is revoked.

The consultation enabled the development of new modalities that take into account both current budgetary constraints and what constraints organizations are facing.

So, and especially so when an activity will involve a great number of participants, organizers should inquire as soon as possible about the availability of our resources by letting us know the number of people that will need transportation to this activity. We will then be able, in the last week of the month that precedes the activity, to confirm whether we can or cannot provide transportation service at the expected time. By proceeding this way, organizations have enough time to adjust if need be, and we can thus manage a better service offer. Once the availability is okayed, we will need the detailed list of participants at least 10 days before the activity is due to take place. Forms for both steps are available and can be obtained by contacting Customer Service.

Organizers of small parties need only, as in the past, to forward a request ten days before the activity is to take place.

### **Services to customers with intellectual impairment**

For over a year now meetings were held with representatives from the readaptation centres for people with intellectual disabilities in order to improve aspects of the services that are provided.

We first reviewed our own in-house procedures for cases when a customer is reported missing. Some huge legal clarification work was conducted regarding the responsibilities we assume as carrier. Consequently, modifications

were brought in order to give a more appropriate service to customers with a higher level of independence.

Contrary to a majority of clients with an intellectual impairment, some customers do not need to be taken charge of at the drop-off point, as required by the STCUM. This measure was even felt as an obstacle to their independence.

Consequently a new way of doing things was implemented. After an evaluation of each case brought to our attention, it is now possible to adjust the level to which a passenger is to be taken charge of by the driver and parents or persons responsible.

Please note that this new procedure apply only to the rare case where a customer doesn't need to be taken charge of at the drop-off point, whatever the destination. In all other cases, the customer must be taken charge of.

### **Minibus service**

Our 89-minibus fleet comprises now 34 multi-purpose vehicles. These vehicles come equipped with folding seats that can be folded back to let in up to six wheelchairs. When seats are not folded back, the vehicle can accommodate up to fourteen ambulatory customers.

At the same time, for almost a year now, lap belts are now mandatory in our minibuses. In this regard, the STCUM participated to the review of the new provincial safety standards.

Finally, regarding the maintenance of vehicles, we would like to point out that the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec edicted

new standards. Those are stricter and include numerous types of inspection. Having met the standards, the STCUM is now registered by the SAAQ and can perform the maintenance of its own fleet of vehicles.

### **Taxi service**

Since May 2000, the number of accessible taxi has reached 20 vehicles. What's more, direct contracting with 10 owners allows for the enhancement of the service offered to the ambulatory clientele.

During the year we welcomed two more companies, Champlain and Coop de Montréal, as suppliers of service.

Finally, the STCUM was very active during the consultative process surrounding the Reform of the act regarding the taxi industry. Among other things, the document handed out to the Quebec Transportation Dept. contained proposals to end the problem of shortage of vehicles during peak hours.

### **Permanent service to Laval and the South Shore**

A service agreement between the transit bodies of Laval, the South Shore, the STCUM and the AMT ensures that the paratransit transportation service linking the Island of Montreal with Laval and the South Shore is now a permanent service.

This service was the result of a pilot project funded by the AMT.

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## **Call Center**

### *Give the agent a break*

**I**t's Monday and you've been on the line for what seems a long time now. The phone could be lifted off anytime soon and a voice could finally come in: "Paratransit, hello. Gilles Bédard speaking."

He will first file in your request and before doing the research will inform you he's putting you on hold. Gilles, or whoever might answer your call, will have to use the 1984 version of ACCES, our old computer system in need to be retired. The system is obsolete to such an extent that it could be the one accountable factor for your waiting on line. The more extensive the search by the agent, the longer the wait. And why is that? Because the agent is trying as hard as he can to find you a place.

Another scenario. You want to go shopping at the mall tomorrow morning and need transportation during rush hour. The party at the other end probably knows right

away that this will not be possible. How come? Because of a shortage in taxicabs, our suppliers are barely able to keep up to the volume of programmed requests (over 60 % of all transportation are regular transportation, programmed beforehand). And if a severe weather condition is expected, the situation will only go downhill from there. In such circumstances a search would be futile. The agent must enforce the procedure.

More examples would add little. More than anybody else we know how much the situation affects you and is frustrating... The person at the other end who is trying to serve you has no other choice; day after day, with means that are insufficient, the agent can only do his or her very best.

Next time you call, the answer might well be: "Paratransit, hello. Gilles speaking." But whoever is on the phone, remember that this person wants to help you out – even if it does take a little time.



### **PARTNERS, LET'S GET CONNECTED!**

Hospitals, CLSC,  
rehabilitation centers,  
community centers,  
CHSLD, promotion  
organizations, etc;

***Let's keep in  
touch by sending  
us your Email  
and Internet  
address***

Our email:  
[Transport.adapte@stcum.qc.ca](mailto:Transport.adapte@stcum.qc.ca)

# Review of the organizational and financial framework of paratransit\*

**T**he Minister for Transportation, Mr. Guy Chèvrette, announced last December a public consultation on the propositions of a consultation document titled Paratransit, for a better access to services.

This consultation was to allow the major partners of the Transportation Department to develop a position on a proposition for reform that concerned not only the Paratransit Assistance Program as such, but also the way paratransit services are organized and financed in Quebec.

The consultation vied to shed new lights on various proposals such as

regrouping the financial resources allocated by the Government for the transportation of handicapped persons, the contribution of other Departments and bodies to this type of service, and the relaxation of the eligibility conditions to the Assistance Program in order to enable the smaller municipalities with the capacity to provide paratransit services.

After the evaluation of all proposals by the Government, the choices that will be made will be aimed at finding permanent solutions to the challenges facing the clientele of paratransit.

\* Source : Quebec Transportation Department.

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## Financing and the growth of ridership

**O**ur current budget fixes at 1,273,000 the number of trips we expect to carry out in 2001, an increase of 0.8% over the year 2000. However, just to respond to the actual demand of 2001, we would have to carry out 1,455,000 trips, an increase in ridership of over 15% compared to 2000.

For this reason we have been forced to maintain the measures announced in November 2000.

### Those measures were :

- Creation of a waiting list to include all new customers registered since November 1, 2000.

- Creation of a waiting list based on all new requests for regular transportation.

However, the suspension that applied to the processing of new requests for group transportation is revoked.

As these lines are being written in March 2001, the available financial resources still do not allow us to respond to the growing increase in service demand. We are waiting for an answer from the Quebec Transportation Dept. about an increase of its contribution.

Avoid long waiting lines and the rush to buy your CAM, instead have it deliver at home each month !

The STCUM gives you the opportunity to subscribe to **CAM BY MAIL** and to receive your Bus and metro pass (your CAM) each month without having to leave your home. This way, you avoid to get out and wait in line at the beginning of the month. Your CAM is delivered by mail.

You can also take advantage of a gift subscription for someone you care about without having to get out of your home.

Your monthly payment is automatically deducted from either your bank account or your credit card (MasterCard and Visa). A fee of one dollar is added for each monthly mail item. You won't need to carry cash to buy your fare.

Fill out a subscription form or call **(514) 875-4444**, or visit our Web site **www.stcum.qc.ca** for more information.

*Easy and convenient..*



# Ridership

## *A comparison between 1999 & 2000*

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	Actual 1999	Actual 2000	Variation
Minibus Total	468,702	468,892	+ 0.04%
Regular taxi	733,238	719,663	-1.9%
Accessible taxi	51,438	73,189	+42.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,253,378</b>	<b>1,261,744</b>	<b>+0.7%</b>

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**A**t the end of 2000, ridership was once again on the rise from the previous year. This time the variation was + 0.7% compared to 1999. However, if the difficult weather conditions of February and December 2000 are taken into account, along with missed trips caused by pressure tactics applied by the taxi industry in December (-28,000 trips) and the fact that 2000 was a two-business days shorter year, we come to a +3.5% variation.

It must be noted that ridership of accessible taxi showed an impressive growth. This is due to the greater number of vehicles on the road (20 this year as compared to 10 in 1999). These vehicles can carry two wheelchair users at once, whereas previous vehicles were limited to a single wheelchair. And at last, trips carried out by ten minivans, boarded now by regular taxi users, are added to the total amount of trips carried out by accessible taxis.

Accessible taxi users utilize as much regular taxis as minibuses. Consequently, the significant increase (+42.3%) in the ridership

of accessible taxi is somewhat obscuring the importance of the rise in trips done by frequent users of the adapted minibus and regular taxi.

### **Emerging trends**

Up until 2002, the fact that the waiting lists of the five readaptation centres for people with intellectual disabilities located on the Montreal Island are being freed up will bear a strong impact on ridership in the years to come. Those centers are the Miriam Home and Services, Centre Lisette-Dupras, Centre Gabrielle-Major, West Island Readaptation Services and L'Intégrale.

Service requests arising from the social and professional programs set up by these centres is estimated at about 10 trips per week for each new customer. Some 600 people will be entering these programs through 2002.

During 2000 the readaptation centres continued restructuring their services. And services that are more attune to the individual's needs and capabilities have a significant impact on the transportation demands these people will express. For

example, we were able to observe that for a same number of customers, starting locations and destination points multiplied. This is what is called the *spreading* of the demand.

As a smaller number of customers initiate their trip from the same starting location, the need for regular minibus-type vehicles is decreasing (this only applies to users who are able to walk). This partly explains why multipurpose minibuses were put into service starting at the end of 1999. Seats that can be folded sideways and hydraulic power gate allow for a maximum of either fourteen non-wheelchair using customers or six wheelchair using customers along with four non-wheelchair using passengers. With the passing of time, every type of minibuses in service right now will be replaced by multipurpose minibuses.

**Fall 2001**

## ***DON'T WAIT TO PLAN REGULAR TRANSPORTATION***



### **During summer vacation Cancelling regular transportation**

**I**f you're going on vacation and you've got a regular transportation schedule, don't forget to contact us to cancel trips you won't be needing during this period. **Right after the cancellation period, your regular schedule will be automatically reinstated.**

Trips can be cancelled for up to 8 weeks.

**If you plan to cancel for a longer period of time, however, it will be necessary to cancel your regular schedule altogether.**

These cancellations are most important. Not only do we avoid sending you a driver when you're absent, but we can also make your seat available to users in need of occasional transportation.

**I**n provision for fall, and as the number of requests for regular transportation rises, it becomes important for you to get your request in early. This year, you can request a regular schedule for your fall transportation as soon as July 15.

Forwarding your request early enhances the chance that it will be processed quickly.

As to any follow-up to your request, necessary information will be made available at our Call Center during the month of August.

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## ***Change to the schedule at the Reservation Call Center***

**F**or those of you who have not made a transportation request in the past months, take notice that the **weekend schedule** of our Call Center is modified. Since the beginning of 2000, the Call Center's lines are open for business **from 7.00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.**

This modification applies only to the business hours of the Call Center and does not change in any way the starting time of the bus service during the weekend.

Our aim is to serve you as best we can; we hope that this modification will prove useful to you.

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## **Handy numbers**

Request for regular or occasional transportation  
and reservation changes

**Minibus – 280-5353    Taxi – 280-5445**

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Interactive Line                      Teleprinter (TTY)  
**280-7400                                      280-5308**

Info-Delay, Confirmation, On-Call Return Trips

**Minibus – 280-5313    Taxi – 280-5444**

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Cancellation  
**280-6325**

Customer Service  
**280-5341**

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Web Site  
**[www.stcum.qc.ca](http://www.stcum.qc.ca)**

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