

# MINUTES OF PACE BUS ADA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**Oak Lawn Village Hall  
Thursday, November 8, 2007  
2:30 pm – 5:00 pm**

The Committee met on Thursday, November 8, 2007 at 2:30 pm at the Oak Lawn Village Hall, 9446 S. Raymond, Oak Lawn, Illinois.

## **PRESENT**

### **Members**

Pat Byrne  
Vincent Smith  
Larry Biondi  
Sharon Lamp  
Heather Armstrong  
Shelley Begel  
Georgia Cawley  
Suzen Riley  
Garland Armstrong  
Alva Rodriguez  
Michael Grice

### **Pace Bus**

Ken Grish  
Pat Lopez  
Yolanda Salinas  
Tom Groeninger  
Don McIntyre  
Sally Williams  
Randy Comstock  
Mary Beth Clark  
Maurice Sanders  
Melinda Metzger

### **Guests**

Jackie Haas  
Gloria Nichols  
Ryan Frigo  
Carolyn Shaw  
Eva Miles  
James Reynolds  
Darlene Hale  
Venzemma Cotton  
Martha Cooper

Brenda Trotter  
Jeanne Presbitero  
Samuel Knight  
Doreen Bogus (phone)  
Michael Vandekreke  
Troneeko French  
Patty Mangano  
Ernestine Swearnigen

Mr. Biondi called the meeting to order and requested that everyone please refrain from talking when someone is talking to accommodate the interpreter as a common courtesy.

## **I. INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Lamp introduced the Committee members and the members of the public.

## **II. COMMITTEE ROLL CALL**

Ms. Lamp read the Committee roll call noting that the following members were absent: Yvonne Romanas, Brenda Ryonuada, Krista Erickson, and Marsha Trawinski.

## **III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Biondi read the Agenda and it was approved as read.

## **IV. APPROVAL OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER MINUTES**

Due to the fact that some attendees had not received the August and September minutes in time to read them, Mr. Biondi made the motion to table the August and September minutes until the next meeting. The motion passed with a voice vote.

## **V. OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **Member Recruitment**

Ms. Lamp said there is an opening for a Chicago representative and James Reynolds and Sam Knight expressed an interest in filling the position. Ms. Cooper and Ms. Begel voted Mr. Knight to the Committee.

Mr. Smith stated he did not know if he could make every meeting and Ms. Lamp offered Mr. Reynolds to be Mr. Smith's alternate and requested that, if he accepts, then he and Mr. Smith decide how they will work together.

## **Additional Meetings**

Ms. Lamp said the Working Group, as it is being called now, will be a regional meeting and is about the paratransit transition in the City. They want Pace to work with the Steering Committee to get this group started. The people who attend the meeting will determine how the group will be structured, if they are going to be forming a Committee with Chairs, and the number of members that can be on the Committee. The meetings are for paratransit users in the Chicago service areas and for people who live outside the area but use Chicago services. They are particularly trying to reach out to CTA ADA Committee members to attend. She asked to please get the word out. Mr. Smith said he will be part of the Working Group.

Ms. Lamp said the first meeting will be held December 6<sup>th</sup>, from 2:30 to 5:00, at Pace headquarters at Metra, 547 West Jackson Boulevard, in Chicago. The second Working Group will meet again on February 14<sup>th</sup>. The meetings will be held every other month alternating with Pace's monthly ADA Advisory Committee Meetings.

Ms. Cawley asked if it would be possible to start the meetings at 1:30 and end at 4:00. Ms. Metzger said we can take a look at that and talk to the Steering Committee and see what we can work out.

Ms. Lamp asked everyone to take the calendar schedule home, review it and contact Mr. Biondi or herself or ideally Ms. Erickson of any suggested changes or problems that they see.

## **VI. PACE REPORT**

### **Funding**

Ms. Metzger said the funding issue is still real and she can't emphasize it enough. Call your legislators, write your legislators, get your friends to write your legislators, call the Governor and let him know that we need transit in the Chicago and suburban areas and how important it is to each of you and to your friends and to your families.

As you know, the ADA fares are scheduled to go up to \$4.00 in January in both the City and the suburbs. We were supposed to move the fares up in September. Instead, the State gave us next year's money this year. Now we have a bigger deficit as opposed to getting a long-term fix that says here is a designated money source. Our Board of Directors does not want to do these steep fare increases and service cuts.

### **Monthly Pass**

Ms. Metzger said the RTA funds all ADA paratransit which includes the monthly pass. If they don't have enough money, they are going to have to look at this issue and determine what they want to do with it.

Ms. Metzger said the monthly passes are currently on sale for November at the RTA Customer Information Center, 165 Jefferson

Street, and the December monthly pass will be on sale at the currency exchange at 777 North LaSalle.

### **RFP Process – City of Chicago**

Ms. Metzger said we have received numerous proposals and we have a Committee composed of Pace staff and Karen Tamley, the Commissioner for the Mayor's Office on Disabilities, reviewing these proposals. Commissioner Tamley had the opportunity to meet with the contractors and her commitment and input to Pace and our riders has been excellent. This is the first time we have had a non-Pace staff member on our RFP Committee and it has worked very well.

We are currently in the best and final offer stage and we plan to have a recommendation to our Board of Directors in December.

Ms. Metzger said customer satisfaction is factored in by the people who are reviewing these contracts, as well as when you have new contractors, part of the process is to call the different areas and CILs

to see how they have been performing elsewhere. We also plan to do surveys regularly, including suburban rider demographics, once we get this up and going, but, unfortunately, we have been in a funding situation and we have not hired the needed additional staff to do some of this.

### **South Cook ADA Service**

South Cook ADA service is currently up to bid and the new contract will take effect March 2008. We are in the evaluation process and we will make a recommendation to our Board of Directors at the December meeting.

### **CDT Labor Issue**

Ms. Metzger said there was a three day labor dispute. Though service was a little slower, there were no safety issues and all pick ups were made and everything is back to normal. There were both users of the service and some drivers protesting who were slowing down the vehicles coming out of the garage.

## **Statistic Information**

Ms. Metzger said we've been asked to bring the statistics here as CTA has done in the past which is basically the same report that you saw from CDT. We are not satisfied with it as it is off the Mapper system and we cannot change the format. We would like to work with the Committee and make some changes to make it easier to read, make it more accessible, and provide better information, including carrier fines. If they have any comments, to get back to Mr. Groeninger or her as we start developing the new format.

## **Trapeze Implementation at SCR**

Ms. Metzger said we have implemented the Trapeze computerized scheduling system at SCR and the transition went very smoothly. Their management is committed to understanding the system and having it work properly. They have added a lot more staff to take the calls quickly. When we get complaints from our customers, it gives us the ability to give correct statistics as opposed to the best guess. We are now preparing to implement Trapeze at Art's.

## **City of Chicago Signage**

Ms. Metzger said people tend to wait for these meetings to give their comments regarding signage that should be put up at different locations. You can always feel free to call me, Ms. Williams, Mr. Groeninger or Mr. McIntyre because we will go and look at those situations and determine if there is something that we can do.

## **Millennium Park**

Mr. McIntyre said he went to Millennium Park and because of the size of the Park, there has been some confusion as to the drop off and pick up locations. He has looked at a couple of alternative locations but a decision has not been made yet.

Ms. Lamp said the current CTA pick up spot is up a hill and it is a tremendous drain on a power wheelchair. Ms. Armstrong said she agreed and even if you have a manual wheelchair, since the hill is so steep, the chair can tip backwards.

## **Cultural Center**

Mr. McIntyre said he also went to the Cultural Center and found a similar situation, as well as the fact that it is difficult for vehicles to curb on the proper side of the street on either end on Randolph or Wabash so we're looking at Garland which is a side street on the west side of the building.

## **University of Chicago**

Mr. McIntyre said at the outpatient facility at the University Of Chicago Hospital at 5758 South Maryland, the vehicles drop off and pick up underneath the parking garage and the location needs to be better identified for paratransit users. In the summer, there are benches in a small courtyard outside, but when the weather is bad, there is really nowhere to sit inside where it is warm. He is going to be contacting the hospital and see what can be done about getting some seating and having security patrol that area a little bit more frequently.

## **Construction in Chicago**

The last situation is accessibility during the lengthy ongoing streetscape construction project on Wabash that is approximately between Lake to the north and Jackson to the south. He has talked to the City of Chicago Department of Transportation's Project Engineer who was very cooperative. The City says they have maintained an accessible walkway parallel to Wabash as far as they can and there are situations when everything is inaccessible to everyone for a period of time. The concern, especially for the visually impaired, was that when the vehicles come along in the construction zone, they don't have a good place to pick up or drop off. They are getting ready to wind down the current phase in two weeks and he'll be in contact with him and the onsite Project Supervisor to try to designate specific drop off/pick up locations on each block where the next phase will be when it starts in early January. If you give him certain locations that you make frequently at that site, he'll try and keep that clear.

Mr. Smith said the police are very rude and Ms. Metzger said maybe we can get Commissioner Tamley to work with us on the Police Department as that has been somewhat of an ongoing issue with them wanting to clear out our vehicles and not let people on them.

Mr. McIntyre said he spoke to the Traffic Management Authority which is part of the Office of Emergency Management Communications in the City. The gentleman he spoke to was actually quite happy to talk to him because their job is to keep traffic flowing and we have a lot of issues at Millennium Park and the Cultural Center. We are also looking at possibly some alternate sites off on the side along Michigan Avenue. We will probably meet again and try to determine where we can designate a stop and, hopefully, get permission to put a sign up.

Mr. Smith asked if there was a Pace logo on your signs and Mr. McIntyre said yes, we take our regular bus stop sign and put

‘PARATRANSIT’ on it instead of the bus route number so both the drivers and the riders know where the vehicle should stop.

### **TAP Demonstration**

Ms. Metzger said in our Taxi Access Program, we have started a test program where you will have a credit card that is preloaded with money that you can swipe through the credit card reader on the vehicle. We have about fifteen people who have been testing it for about six weeks. There have been little glitches and once they are worked out, we will put this program out to the public.

### **Jay’s Transportation**

Ms. Metzger said there were people who were very concerned with the fact that Jay’s Transportation Company had Jay’s Medicar on their vehicles. They have agreed to take off the word ‘Medicar’ and it should be done within the next two weeks. It will just say Jay’s on it and have the Pace logo.

Ms. Metzger said you will still have to call the three carriers and if they are booked up, you call Pace at the 1-800-606-1282 number, prompt three, and say that you tried all three carriers and we will get you a ride on Jay's. There have been no turndowns in the City of Chicago since August.

### **Kane County, Ride-in-Kane in January**

We have Ride-in-Kane starting in January which is very similar to our Ride DuPage program where there is one central call taking number. We did receive grant funds to start this coordinated transportation program in Kane so that we can provide more people rides and go across jurisdictional boundaries

### **North Cook**

We have observed improvement in service. They are now on track and rides are being picked up on a timely basis.

## **South Cook**

We had some concerns about management and supervision on evenings and weekends. We met with the president of MV in charge of this region and he has been out to look at the site which made some improvement and he is going to continue to work on that.

## **DuPage**

We continue to work with the taxi companies on quality of service issues. The taxi drivers are not Pace employees and are always looking for where they can get the best money, not for providing the best service, and that has been an issue when they get a Ride DuPage call versus a trip to O'Hare. They don't always have the necessary sensitivity training that we would like them to have so we are working with them on those issues.

## **City of Chicago**

We have stressed on-time performance with our carriers. According to the records we have received from the carriers, they are up to

87.4% on-time in the City. Two of the carriers are still on Mapper and one is on Trapeze so we feel strongly that the Trapeze records are much more accurate than the other two.

## **VII. SERVICE AREA REPORTS**

### **Kane County**

Ms. Rodriguez said she doesn't ride suburban paratransit frequently because of the convenience of having a fixed route bus stop right in front, but when she does use paratransit they do a pretty good job in scheduling her and other people according to their times requested.

### **DuPage County**

Ms. Cawley said she went to a meeting on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. She should have gotten on a bus with a girl who lives about a mile from her, but she went with somebody else who was going a couple of towns away which made no sense.

Ms. Cawley said she has heard some legislator downstate ask why they should have to pay for Chicago transportation. Ms. Metzger said there is this image that HB572 helps the CTA; it is money that we are spending on the counties. It's all political posturing.

Ms. Metzger said she thought weekends and evenings is mostly the problem at all the carriers and the reason is that in transportation most things are picked up by seniority and the newest person gets the weekends and evenings, so we have to work on better training for these people.

Ms. Nichols asked if the CDT drivers, for example, got paid on a Friday as fewer drivers show up on the weekends and it is consistent and a serious issue.

Mr. Byrne said he is a Ride DuPage user and he's ridden with the new taxi provider a number of times and they are trying really, really hard; Karla is very good.

## **Will County**

No Report.

## **West Cook**

Ms. Armstrong said she is having some problems with the City carriers and Ms. Lamp said to let them know how it works out.

## **North Cook**

Ms. Lamp said there are no schedules at the Rosemont station.

Ms. Lamp said they need to be careful in how the purposes of travel are being asked. Sometimes the driver forgets to hit the computer button so then he has to write it down and he changes the data. Mr. Groeninger said we are working on developing a report that will generate discrepancies. If they change something in Trapeze we will know it, but not in Mapper. Ms. Nichols said we have a problem with that because if you are not seeing the screen, you don't know that it has been changed.

Ms. Metzger said if you are outside the twenty minute window and you put in a complaint to us, Ms. Clark can go back into the system to the original call, listen to it, and see if it has been changed.

Ms. Begel said the Trapeze system is not giving you all the available times on both sides in the hour before and after.

Ms. Begel said no shows have also been a big problem. A couple of riders told her that dispatchers get paid for okaying no shows. Ms. Metzger said the next time you do your call in, why don't you do it with one of our staff members and we'll watch the whole process in Trapeze. We have to get efficiency out of the system. If we gave everyone the time that they wanted, we would have one person per vehicle.

Ms. Lamp said the ADA does allow, if you're given a ride within an hour window before the requested time or the hour after, it is not considered a turndown. But, the point she wants to make is that

when people are transferring, it becomes an unreasonable system because they are not being asked to do it once, but multiple times. She said she was willing to follow up with Pace on this during the months that Ms. Begel was gone.

### **City of Chicago**

Ms. Riley said people are spending more time on the phone, waiting longer times, and the drivers are later more often. She's lucky to have a cell phone so she can call in her pickup times so they can be documented.

Ms. Riley said she had a personal complaint from last June when she called CDT and asked to be taken to Denny's at First and Fifth Avenues in Melrose Park and was told they didn't go there. Pace came back to her and said we don't go there and that was their final decision. She said as far as she is concerned it hasn't been resolved. Ms. Metzger said we will look into it and get back to you.

Ms. Nichols said until today, she didn't have any issues, but CDT made sure she had two and she would like to have somebody from Pace contact her. Ms. Metzger said we will follow up with you.

Mr. Grice said he knows that SCR has Trapeze, but it seems like they are taking longer with the pickups. He's noticed that since the drivers have the MDTs the dispatchers are constantly taking trips out of the MDTs that don't match up with the trips that are in the vehicles and are taking you totally out of your way. Ms. Metzger said we will take a look at your trips.

Ms. Rodriguez said she sometimes runs into problems on Chicago paratransit when a building does not have a clear address on it. She somewhat blames the driver for not looking closely at the address, but she also blames the City for not putting clearer addresses on the buildings. She hopes CDT can have better communication in telling the driver where a person is going to be at.

## **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS**

Ms. Trotter said her comments were about Trapeze at SCR. On a trip in Forest Park on a Saturday in October, SCR put in another trip or possibly trips between the time he was supposed to pick her up and the time he finally picked her up which made her pick up late. She called it in to Pace and told them about it and Pace called SCR to find out what was going on. Ms. Metzger said we should be able to find it and we'll investigate.

Ms. Trotter said she had a big complaint against CDT's dispatch. She went shopping and had a two o'clock pick up; her ride didn't get there until 2:45. It was a new driver who was very frustrated. She had three pickups at 2:00. One was at 87<sup>th</sup> and Elizabeth and the other was at 105<sup>th</sup> way over east, and then her trip so she didn't get home until 4:00. Dispatch needs to be trained and she heard how they talk to the drivers.

Ms. Trotter said another time she had a 12:00 pickup and she wasn't picked up until 1:00. Dispatch said the driver had a 12:30 pickup before he got her. She found out it was a driver she knew and he apologized and showed her that she was not even in his screen to be picked up.

Ms. Hale said she would like to be a member of the Committee to speak out on behalf of her son, Troneeko French, and others like him. She also wanted to mention that her name was not on the attendance list as being present at the last meeting in September

Ms. Lamp said she wanted to remind everyone that, if you can, please call your complaints in as soon as they happen. To wait for this meeting isn't really how we intend to use the time. In regards to the circuitous route, she has noticed that, too. They get you in the van and just drive all over even though it is in the opposite direction from where you are going.

Ms. Hale said the seatbelts need to be installed or fixed or whatever on the back seats of a CDT vehicle they recently rode in. Ms. Metzger said when this happens give us the vehicle number as we have maintenance staff there daily.

## **IX. NEXT MEETING**

Mr. Biondi said the next meeting is January 11<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 to 5:00 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 West Lake Street, Oak Park.

## **X. ADJOURN**

Ms. Rodriguez made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Byrne. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.