

Spontaneous Living, Public Transit, and the ADA: Riders/Advocates/Service Providers



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Meeting the Challenge, Inc.

- For individuals with rights and organizations with responsibilities for compliance with federal disability laws, Meeting the Challenge, Inc. (MTC) is an information services consulting firm that:
 - Generates materials and products that support accessibility
 - Offers customized consulting services
 - Provides training on various disability rights laws

MTC Consulting Services

Providing customized solutions for:

- Municipal Self Evaluations and Transition Plans
- Municipal and County Facility and Program Accessibility
- Transit Facility and Program Accessibility
- Commercial Facility Accessibility
- School District Accessibility
- Architectural Plan Review
- Public Housing Accessibility

Projects of Meeting the Challenge

- **Transit Access Project** - MTC just completed a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation which consisted of developing materials for individuals and organizations to help them better understand and implement the regulations for public transit systems under the ADA. As part of this effort, MTC has completed a research project, and developed materials, a transit portal, and trainings for transit providers and riders with disabilities.



Projects of Meeting the Challenge

- **Rocky Mountain ADA Center** - One of the 10 regional ADA centers composing the ADA National Network. We provide technical assistance on the ADA to individuals and organizations in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana.



Regional ADA Centers



1-800-949-4232

www.adata.org

www.adainformation.org


DBTAC Rocky Mountain
ADA CENTER

ADA Center services

- Technical assistance / ADA information
- Referral and networking with other disability organizations
- Training
- Material dissemination
- Research

Disclaimer

- Information, materials, and/or technical assistance are intended solely as informal guidance, and are neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the ADA, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA.
- ADA Center authorized by NIDRR to provide information, materials, and technical assistance to individuals and entities that are covered by the ADA.

Basic ADA for Transit

- Basic knowledge you need to know
 - Fixed route – bus, light rail, rapid rail (subway system) on which a vehicle is operated along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule
 - Comparability between ADA complementary paratransit service and fixed route service
 - ADA complementary paratransit is intimately tied to fixed route
 - Fixed route agencies provide paratransit or contract with another service to provide paratransit

Basic ADA for Transit

- Not every person with a disability is eligible for paratransit
- A rider with a disability is eligible for paratransit only if they are unable to ride fixed route

Paratransit Eligibility Criteria

The following individuals with disabilities are eligible for ADA complementary paratransit:

1. Unable to independently navigate the fixed route system.
2. No accessible fixed route vehicle is available.
3. Unable to get to or from transit stop or station because of disability or disability prevents negotiating environmental barriers

Basic ADA for Transit

- Paratransit serves a similar geographical location as the fixed route
- Paratransit provides service at the same time as fixed route service
- A paratransit ride can take a comparable amount of time as a fixed route ride
- Just as you share your fixed route ride with other riders, you also must share your paratransit ride with other riders
- If the fixed route service alters routes or service hours, the paratransit service may experience comparable changes

Basic ADA for Transit

- If you need more background information on the ADA and public transit regulations
 - See our Riders' Guide to Public Transit for People with Disabilities
<http://www.transitaccessproject.com/InternalDocs/RiderInfo/ridersguide.pdf>
 - If you need additional background information, we can talk with you more in-depth after this session.

Accessible Public Transit???

- Lex Frieden - “Research reveals that many barriers to transportation continue to exist that prevent full inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities in society.”

Lex Frieden, Chairperson, National Council on Disability, The current State of Transportation for People with Disabilities in the United States, June 13, 2005

Our Proposition

- Binary model of separate fixed route and ADA complementary paratransit service is broken
- Riders with disabilities face “short-bus” segregation
- Result of failed implementation of the ADA.
- We will recommend solutions to facilitate integration of riders with disabilities, promote community inclusion, and cut costs

The Broken Paradigm

- Paratransit riders experience capacity constraints and service problems
- Transit systems experience unsustainable escalation of paratransit costs
- Resources diverted to provide paratransit are not available to increase accessibility on the fixed route
- Riders who could use *accessible* fixed route must continue to depend on paratransit

The Intention of the ADA

Promotes civil rights and equality, not special privileges

- Promotes integration
- Intended paratransit to be a safety net, only to be used until fixed routes were made accessible, or for those few individuals who are unable to access fixed route even when all barriers are removed
- Never intended paratransit to operate like a taxi service, but expected paratransit rides to be as long as fixed route rides and be comparable in all areas

ADA Expectations

- Fixed route services would become fully accessible
- State and local governments would
 - Identify barriers through Self Evaluation and Transition Plans
 - Remove barriers
 - Make all public rights-of-way accessible
- Accessible fixed route would – over time – reduce the demand for paratransit

21 Years Later

- Many street corners lack curb cuts
- Sidewalks are inaccessible or missing
- Busy intersections lack safe pedestrian crossings, very few have Accessible Pedestrian Signals
- Stops and stations are inaccessible, disconnected from accessible pedestrian routes
- Many bus drivers fail to announce stops or identify their routes

21 Years Later

- Bus drivers pass by people who use wheelchairs or have service animals
- Fixed route systems fail to adequately maintain accessibility features such as elevators, lifts, and securements
- Drivers are poorly trained in disability etiquette
- Conditional eligibility processes for paratransit do not identify barriers and thus don't remove barriers
- Travel training that would assist people with disabilities from transitioning from paratransit to fixed route is not available, or is ineffective or unused

National Transportation Access Research Project: A Survey of Riders with Disabilities

- What barriers have you encountered in your use of public transportation in the last 12 months?
 - 29% Drivers not calling out stops
 - 25% No accessible route to the public transit stop
 - 25% Driver attitude
 - 22% Drivers lack knowledge
 - 19% Inability to navigate system
 - 19% Inaccessible public transit stop or station

National Transportation Access Research Project: A Survey of Riders with Disabilities

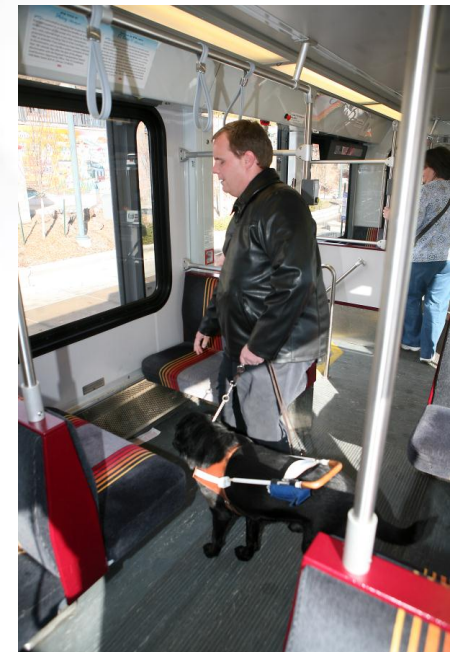
- 18% Gap or step to transit vehicle
- 16% Problems with lifts
- 13% Drivers refusing to stop
- 7% Securement issues
- 5% Service animal issues

National Transportation Access Research Project: A Survey of Riders with Disabilities, Meeting the Challenge, Inc., 2010

<http://www.transitaccessproject.org/InternalDocs/Research/SurveyOfRidersWith%20Disabilities2009-MTC.pdf>

Fixed Route Barriers = Paratransit

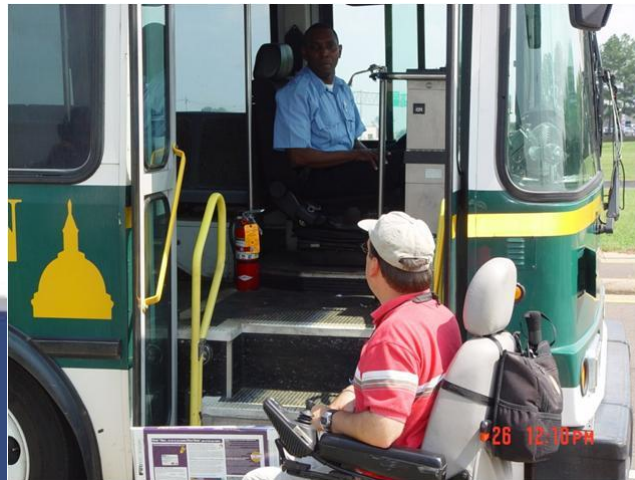
- For people who are blind or have low vision, lack of stop announcements is a barrier
- For people who have mobility disabilities inaccessible stops, inaccessible sidewalks, inaccessible intersections, inoperable lifts, and unmaintained securements are barriers




DBTAC Rocky Mountain
ADA CENTER

The Stats

- 1989 – 36% of the bus fleet nationally, was accessible
- 2002 – 91.4% of transit buses were equipped with ADA lifts/ramps and securements



The Stats

- 1991 – ADA related paratransit services accounted for about 16 million trips
- 2001 – ADA related paratransit services accounted for almost 48 million trips



21 Years Post ADA

- Segregated transportation for people with disabilities used three times as much as it was before the ADA
- Despite the fact that three times as many fixed route vehicles are now accessible

Trebling of Demand for Paratransit

- Represents an enormous expansion of mobility for people with disabilities
- Suggests that significant and widespread barriers continue to exclude many people with disabilities from accessing fixed route
- Segregation persists
- Integration remains beyond the grasp

To Clarify (And Emphasize!)

- There will always be individuals with disabilities who will be unable to use even the most accessible fixed route system and will always need paratransit services
- We are not suggesting kicking these individuals off of paratransit

But . . .

Segregation

- For those who are able to ride *accessible* fixed route systems, continued diversion to paratransit with its advance reservation structure amounts to continued discrimination and segregation on the basis of disability
- Separate is not equal

A History of Transit and Disability Rights

- *To Ride the Public's Buses: The Fight that Built a Movement*
- Edited by Mary Johnson and Barrett Shaw
- Anthology of articles from “The Disability Rag” (1983-1990) relating events of the disability rights movement’s struggle to access public transit

History



- From 1978 through the 1980's, prior to the passage of the ADA, ADAPT* members with disabilities chained themselves to public buses and shut down public bus service while demanding that they be given an opportunity to ride integrated public buses.
- * American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation, a project of Atlantis, an independent living center in Denver

History



- ADAPT activist Mark Johnson – “Black people fought for the right to ride on the front of the bus. We’re fighting for the right to get on the bus.”

“Protest, Power, and Change, An Encyclopedia of Nonviolent Action from ACT-UP to Women’s Suffrage”, Roger S. Powers, et al., 1997, pg. 11.

History



- Activists were inspired by Rosa Parks and sometimes wore name tags saying “My name is Rosa Parks.”
- From “The Disability Rag”: “ADAPT members - like Rosa Parks - are not ‘radical’. Like Rosa Parks, they are tired. They wish to ride the bus, the same as the able-bodied. They are tired of 8 am busy signals, of refusals, of being picked up three hours early for an appointment.”

History

- During this time, APTA (American Public Transportation Association) opposed access to public buses
- APTA insisted that paratransit was a better alternative

History

- ADAPT member disagreed and continued to block buses *because they did not believe paratransit rides would give them equal rights...*



Trespassing on Public Buses

- “On Monday May 19, [1986] Bob Kafka and George Cooper... got out of their wheelchairs and crawled onto a Metro bus, paid their fares, and were preparing to ride when police forcibly dragged them from the bus for ‘trespassing’ and arrested them.”
 - *Cincinnati, Ohio*
 - *To Ride the Public’s Buses: The Fight that Built a Movement*, p.77

History

- The preference for paratransit was maintained by the transit industry despite the cost difference.
 - Robert Reuter, Access Systems, Baltimore, in “The Disability Rag”, September/October 1986
 - “ So the average cost to a transit company of operating a lift bus, per year, is \$398.20 (the capital cost plus the operating cost).
 - “The yearly cost to operate a [paratransit] van, when the capital cost is added, is \$88,720.00 – plus dispatching costs, which aren’t included.”

History

- “Baltimore’s 15 vans [paratransit], says its transit authority, cost \$1,330,800 per year to operate. A mainline transit system of 1000 lift equipped buses would cost \$398,000 per year more than it would cost to operate the same buses without lifts.”

History

- When the ADA was signed into law in 1990, it did not create the idea of paratransit
 - Put parameters on how paratransit must be operated
 - Set the expectation that paratransit would be a safety net, until the fixed route buses became accessible
 - Set requirements for fixed route accessibility

Reduced Expectations

- For decades, people with disabilities were told to ride paratransit, so they did.
- Although lifts and ramps are now on fixed route buses, many other barriers still exist, which means often people with disabilities have no choice but paratransit.
- People with disabilities have become so accustomed to paratransit they often no longer advocate for access to fixed route.
- However, they find paratransit's negotiated advance reservation system, sometimes poorly implemented, to be inadequate.

Reduced Expectations with a Twist

- Sometimes, in their efforts to improve paratransit services, people with disabilities advocate for paratransit services that the ADA does not require, in an effort to make paratransit look more like a taxi ride so that it is more convenient
- This misguided effort results in requests that look more like requests for special privileges instead of requests for equal opportunity

Is segregated transportation as good as it gets
for people with disabilities?

Win – Win for Everyone

- Creating maximum accessibility on fixed route systems is a win for riders with disabilities, it's a win for transit agencies, and it's a win for communities.



Riders with Disabilities Win

- When riding an accessible fixed route system, people with disabilities
 - Are integrated into the mainstream of society
 - Are offered the opportunity for spontaneous travel, no need for reservations for next day travel
 - Are able to travel at the time they want to travel, not an hour before or an hour after
 - Spend less time waiting for the bus to arrive, no need to be at the curb for 30 minutes to accommodate the 15 minute window on either side of pick-up time

Riders with Disabilities Win

- Spend much less time arguing about service problems
- Have reliable transportation which allows them to consistently arrive to work, social and medical appointments on time, not late or early
- Have greater independence
- Spend less money: paratransit fare is as much as four times fixed route fare for a person with a disability

Riders with Disabilities Win

- Facebook post from Kelly Tobin, a wheelchair user who utilizes Denver's integrated fixed route system:

“Back to back appointments today for prosthetic casting. (Tough as an above-the-knee amputee!) Plus wheelchair stuck in the snow five times. RTD is still better than the stigma, expense, and time demanded by the short bus!”

People Who Still Need Paratransit Win

- Improving accessibility on fixed route will mean:
 - More riders with disabilities will ride fixed route
 - Fewer riders will be on paratransit
 - With fewer riders on paratransit, capacity concerns are resolved and service on paratransit automatically will improve

Transit Agencies Win

- When transit agencies and communities remove barriers that prevent riders with disabilities from riding fixed routes, transit agencies are able to
 - Increase fixed route ridership
 - Reduce the number of paratransit trips
 - **Save money** and reduce budget problems
 - Retain routes and service levels on fixed route
 - Reduce capacity constraints on paratransit
 - Reduce service problems related to capacity constraints on paratransit
 - Reduce complaints from paratransit riders

Transit Agencies Win

- Cost to benefit
 - If an individual with a disability is riding paratransit to commute to her job 5 days per week, 50 weeks per year (500 trips a year), and
 - The cost of each of those paratransit trips for the transit agency is \$25 per trip (a conservative estimate),
 - The total yearly cost for the transit agency to provide paratransit to that one individual to go to work is \$12,500.
 - If those trips can be converted to fixed route trips, the transit agency will save \$12,500 for that one individual.

Our Communities Win

- Better use of tax money
- Cost to benefit
 - For our individual riding paratransit to work at a cost of \$12,500 per year,
 - Perhaps the barrier preventing that individual who is a wheelchair user from riding fixed route is the need for two curb ramps.
 - The average cost of constructing two curb ramps can be estimated at \$5,000.
 - Fiscally responsible to construct the curb ramps and convert these trips to fixed route trips.

The Problem...

- Is transit districts sometimes lack jurisdiction to construct the needed curb ramps
- City or county, having jurisdiction, must pay for the curb ramps, has its own budget problems and doesn't see the immediate benefit for them
- But the taxpayer who pays taxes to the transit district and the city/county – would benefit from tax stewardship of the transit district and the city/county working together to remove barriers

Our Communities Win

- When riders with disabilities are able to consistently ride fixed route, they are then able to consistently get to their jobs on time and then . . .
 - tax users become tax payers!

What's in it for You?

- Knowing the economic benefits for transit systems when you use fixed route instead of paratransit for all or even some of your trips gives you power
 - To negotiate with transit providers
 - To persuade fellow taxpayers to join your cause
 - To get policy makers/political leaders on your side

Contractors – Conflict of Interest?

- Contractors that provide paratransit service are often paid by how many trips they provide. They have a financial incentive to encourage people with disabilities to remain dependent on paratransit.
- Contractors that provide fixed route service are usually paid a base amount regardless of the number of riders. They have no financial incentive to improve accessibility so that people with disabilities can ride the fixed route and may view carrying passengers with disabilities as an operational challenge.

Bring all stakeholders to the table

- Transit agencies must commit to removing barriers from fixed route transit systems
- Local governments must commit to accessible public rights-of-way
- Riders with disabilities must commit to getting on the integrated fixed route buses if they are able and must expect and advocate for accessibility on the fixed route
- Disability advocacy organizations must advocate for accessible fixed route and encourage their consumers to ride the fixed route when able

Adjusting Priorities

- The highest priority must be creating and using accessible fixed route systems . . .
 . . . not paratransit.



Adjusting Priorities

- Instead of focusing on paratransit issues:
 - eligibility criteria and processes
 - reservations processes
 - trip denials
 - no-show policies
 - appeals procedures

Adjusting Priorities

- Focus on creating accessibility on the fixed route:
 - accessibility/connectivity of stops and public rights-of-way
 - consistent stop and route announcements
 - maintenance of lifts and securements
 - disability awareness training for drivers and other staff
 - provision of trip-specific travel training

To Clarify . . .

- Paratransit eligible riders should not be kicked off of paratransit
- Accessibility on fixed route should be increased, so that more paratransit riders have the opportunity to ride fixed route when they are able

Advocate Strategically

- Use economic leverage to persuade policy makers
- Accessible fixed route transit can provide more rides for less cost
- Back to the basics – integration is a fundamental civil right

Methods to Improve Fixed Route Accessibility

- Conditional eligibility: a trip-by-trip accessibility checklist
- Accessible public rights-of-way
- Travel training
- Driver and staff training
- Flexible fixed route services
- Re-prioritizing advocacy toward integration

Conditional Eligibility: A Trip-by-Trip Accessibility Checklist

- Paratransit eligibility granted for some trips but not all
- Problem: sometimes conditional eligibility limits mobility
- Goal: using paratransit eligibility process to identify and eliminate fixed route barriers and increase fixed route access without inappropriately eliminating paratransit eligibility

Conditional Eligibility: A Trip-by-Trip Accessibility Checklist

- Paratransit eligibility procedures should identify barriers that prevent the rider from using fixed route for specific common trips (e.g., going to work)
 - Missing sidewalks and curb ramps
 - Inadequate traffic control at a busy intersection
 - Inaccessible bus stops
 - Failure of drivers to make stop announcements or identify route
 - Need for effective travel training
- Systematically remove those barriers
 - Form coalitions between transit agencies and local governmental entities

Conditional Eligibility

- Once those barriers are removed, you can use fixed route for that trip and still use paratransit for other trips for which barriers still exist
- Eligibility conditioned on episodic limitations of an individual's disability or on environmental conditions, such as extreme temperatures or precipitation, **must** err in favor of more eligibility, not less.

Accessible Public Rights-of-Way

- Jurisdictional issues
- DOJ findings in Project Civic Action settlement agreements identify sidewalks as facilities that must be altered in order to provide equal programmatic access under Title II of the ADA.
- <http://www.ada.gov/civicac.htm>

Accessible Public Rights-of-Way

- When structural barriers in the public right-of-way effectively exclude use by people with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs, then the public entities responsible for those pedestrian routes are excluding people with disabilities from participation in that service, program or activity.



Accessible Public Rights-of-Way

- Local government responsibilities
 - All pedestrian routes or walkways that have been newly constructed or altered since 1992 must have been built accessible
 - Must identify and list all existing intersections and walkways that need accessibility improvements (self-evaluation) and develop a plan to prioritize and schedule the removal of barriers (transition plan)



Accessible Public Rights-of-Way

- Kinney v. Yerusalem
 - The court concluded that resurfacing of streets is an alteration to an existing facility.
 - The court ordered the City of Philadelphia “to install curb ramps on those portions of city streets for which resurfacing bids had been taken since January 26, 1992.”
 - <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/yerusalim.htm>

Accessible Public Rights-of-Way

- “Revised Draft Guidelines for Accessible Public Rights-of-Way”
 - From the U.S. Access Board
 - Adopted by the Federal Highway Administration as best practices
 - Access Board is predicting adoption by early 2012
 - Will there be safe harbor???
 - <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/index.htm>

Travel Training

- Riders who are blind/low vision and riders with intellectual disabilities may have difficulty navigating the system.
- Providing effective travel training can allow them to ride fixed route.
- Many riders with disabilities are quite nervous about using fixed route - stick with paratransit out of fear.
- Providing effective travel training can make fixed route feel more secure for them
- Allows independence and successful use of fixed route.

Travel Training

- Benefits to riders with disabilities
 - Empowerment
 - Independence
 - Self-sufficiency
 - Spontaneous travel
- Benefits to transit agencies
 - Provides opportunity to identify and remove barriers along route
 - Reduces paratransit usage

Effective Travel Training

- Specific to routes that will be used by rider
- One-on-one training actually riding the route that will be used
- Uses peer trainers when available
- Identifies barriers and looks for solutions
- Removes barriers when possible

Engage the Community

- Form coalitions between transit agencies and local governmental entities to remove barriers
- Partner with community resources when appropriate.
- Many independent living centers, public school programs, and other service providers are available to assist with travel training

Driver and Staff Training: Proficiency Required

- Includes
 - Announcing stops
 - Identifying routes
 - Picking up passengers who use wheelchairs or service animals
 - Securing mobility devices
 - Utilizing lifts and ramps
 - Maintenance of accessibility features (including cycling of lifts and including features in stops and stations such as elevators)

Driver and Staff Training: Proficiency Required

- Providing accessible, integrated service must be a priority for all personnel
 - **Top down operating priority**
- There must be incentives to transit personnel to provide accessible service
- It's not about driving the bus; its about serving customers.
- Ongoing training is critical and must be a priority
 - Until proficiency is reached
 - Ongoing refresher training to maintain proficiency

Driver and Staff Training: Proficiency Required

- Remember that one of the biggest barriers is attitudes.
 - Prejudice and paternalism toward riders with disabilities must be eliminated.
 - Assumptions that riders with disabilities are unable to act independently must be eliminated.
 - Judgments based on generalizations or stereotypes that people with disabilities cannot independently travel safely must be eliminated.

Driver and Staff Training: Proficiency Required

- DOT regulations
 - Each public or private entity which operates a fixed route or demand responsive system shall ensure personnel are trained to proficiency, as appropriate to their duties, so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly and assist and **treat individuals with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way**, with appropriate attention to the difference among individuals with disabilities. (37.173)

Flexible Fixed Route

- How can flexible fixed route alternatives reduce your reliance on paratransit?
- Deviations of the fixed route – the fixed route bus deviates from normal route to pick up/drop off riders with disabilities, then returns to its usual route
- Varies in degree and method depending on community need
- Demand responsive – eligible rider calls to schedule
 - Real time or same day request preferred
 - Day in advance reservations, but this limits spontaneity

Flexible Fixed Route

- The route deviations can fulfill the requirement for ADA complementary paratransit services if
 - Deviations offered up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the fixed route
 - Hours of service and time on the bus is comparable to the usual fixed route service
 - Real time scheduling or next day reservations are offered
 - Fixed route driver can offer door-to-door service if needed (or keep that a conventional paratransit trip)

Flexible Fixed Route Examples

- Not every example will work in every community
- Designed and customized based on local needs and resources
 - Population density
 - Infrastructure capacity (urban vs. rural)
 - Ridership patterns
 - Demographics

Flexible Fixed Route Examples

- ADA Flag Stops
- Request Stops
- Flexible Route Segments
- Route Deviation
- Point Deviation
- Demand-Responsive Connector
- Zone Route

Flexible Fixed Route

- Can be offered to all passengers, not just passengers with disabilities to provide service in areas with limited demand
- One fixed route system can use a variety of these methods within their system to deal with differing needs in different areas
- Fixed route systems must be willing to build a little extra time in their schedule to accommodate these deviations

TCRP Synthesis 53

- Operational Experiences with Flexible Transit Services: A Synthesis of Transit Practices

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_syn_53.pdf

- Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) (Virginia)

- Flexible fixed route services constitute the entire transit system and there is an emphasis on serving people with disabilities with the same service used for other riders.
- “From a financial perspective, PRTC estimates that converting to separate fixed-route and paratransit operations would require an operating budget increase of at least 50%.”

Self- Advocacy for Riders with Disabilities

- Transit Access Project:
Achieving Transit Access: An Action Guide

<http://www.transitaccessproject.org/InternalDocs/General/AchievingTransitAccessActionGuide MTC 3-8-2011.pdf>

Includes:

Crawford et al. v. City of Jackson (MS) and City of Jackson Public Transportation System (JATRAN): A Case Study

<http://www.transitaccessproject.org/InternalDocs/General/JacksonCampaign MTC 3-8-2011.pdf>

Self- Advocacy for Riders with Disabilities

- Crawford et al. v. City of Jackson (MS) and City of Jackson Public Transportation System (JATRAM): A Case Study
 - Scott M. Crawford, Ph.D., a wheelchair user, focused his advocacy campaign not on paratransit but on his right to access the integrated fixed route system in Jackson
 - He was eligible for paratransit but experienced repeated trip denials
 - Chose instead to focus on the fixed route

Self- Advocacy for Riders with Disabilities

Dr. Crawford's advocacy efforts included:

- making phone calls
- writing emails and letters
- researching the ADA
- filing FTA and DOJ complaints
- speaking at City Council meetings
- joining with the local ILC, LIFE of Mississippi to organize a peaceful protest
- conducting an audit of all of the bus stops and connecting public rights-of-way
- filing a class action lawsuit for access to the integrated fixed route

Self- Advocacy for Riders with Disabilities

Resulted in a consent decree

http://www.ada.gov/jackson_transit.htm




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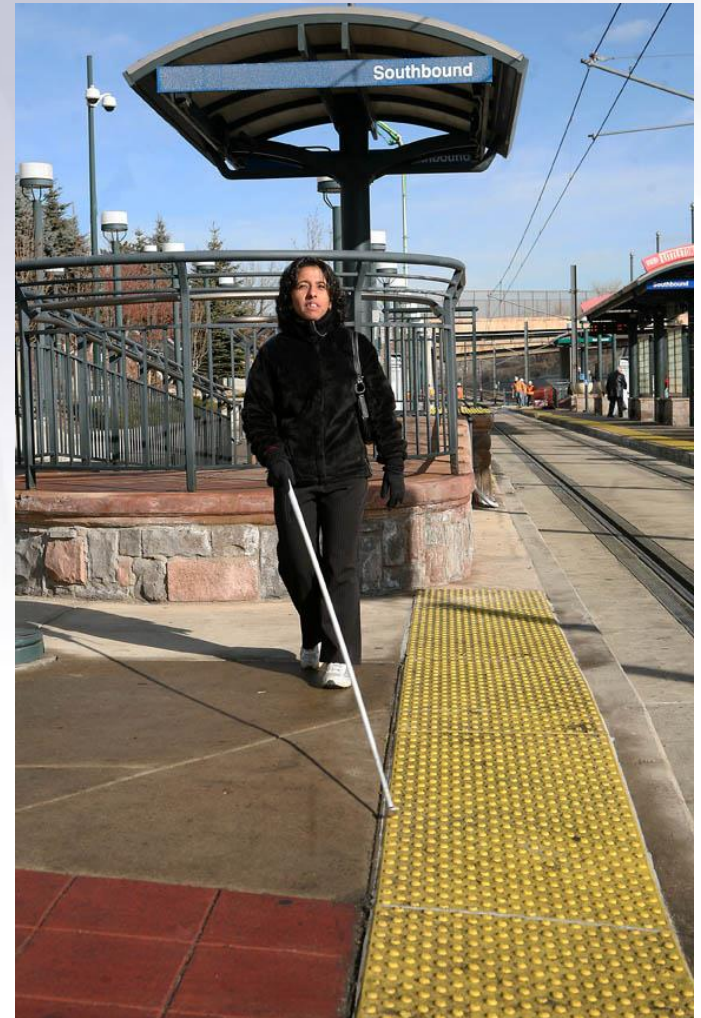
Achieving Transit Access: An Action Guide

- Step 1: Advocate at the individual level
- Step 2: Organize an action coalition
- Step 3: Conduct research
- Step 4: Establish pattern or practice with documentation
- Step 5: Develop strategy
- Step 6: Host initial meetings
- Step 7: File FTA and/or DOJ complaints

Achieving Transit Access: An Action Guide

- Step 8: Hold a public forum
- Step 9: Schedule follow-up meetings
- Step 10: Organize a media ride-along
- Step 11: Stage a peaceful protest
- Step 12: Continue negotiation
- Step 13: File a class action lawsuit

In conclusion . . .



Paratransit

- Advance reservation demand-responsive in lieu of integration
- 2nd class segregated service: separate & unequal
- Fails promise of inclusion/denies spontaneous mobility
- Short bus stigma, outside the mainstream
- Not 1st choice – last resort
- Unsustainable

Remember the History

- “...a struggle that began with a group of people knowing exactly what they wanted: a right to ride the public’s buses.”
 - *To Ride the Public’s Buses: The Fight that Built a Movement*, page 6.
- Paratransit was invented to exclude people with disabilities from public buses.
- Many in the transit industry fought, until the very eve of the ADA, any requirement to provide lifts on public buses.

Possible Solutions:

- Trip-by-trip eligibility
- Removing barriers in public rights-of-way
- Travel training
- Driver & staff training
- Flexible fixed routes
- Re-direct advocacy efforts to *get on the bus*
- Think outside-the-box

Win-Win Opportunity

- Involve everyone
- Involve & solicit input from people with disabilities
- Value inclusion, integration, independence & spontaneity above minimum compliance
- Better service for those who must rely on paratransit when those who *can*, convert trips to fixed route
- Reduce paratransit operations/costs

Win-Win Opportunity

- All stakeholders must benefit
- Create incentives for
 - Customers to get travel training
 - Drivers to announce stops
 - Paratransit contractor to assist trip conversions
 - Fixed route contractor to carry more people with disabilities
 - All jurisdictions to contribute to solutions

Meeting the Challenge Resources

Transit Access Project

www.transitaccessproject.org

Check out our transit blog!

[http://www.transitaccessproject.org/transit-
blog.html](http://www.transitaccessproject.org/transit-blog.html)

Meeting the Challenge Resources

- Riders' Guide to Public Transit for People with Disabilities

<http://www.transitaccessproject.org/InternalDocs/RiderInfo/ridersguide.pdf>

- National Transportation Access Research Project: A Survey of Riders with Disabilities

<http://www.transitaccessproject.org/InternalDocs/Research/SurveyOfRidersWith%20Disabilities2009-MTC.pdf>

Resources

- Rocky Mountain ADA Center
www.adainformation.org
1-800-949-4232 (Voice, TTY)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
www.fta.dot.gov/ada
1-888-446-4511 (Voice) 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)
- U.S. Department of Justice
www.ada.gov
1-800-514-0301 (Voice) 1-800-514-0383 (TTY)

Resources

- Easter Seals Project ACTION
www.projectaction.easterseals.com
1-800-659-6428 (Voice) 1-202-347-7385 (TTY)
- TCRP - Transit Cooperative Research Program
www.tcrponline.org
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
www.dredf.org/transportation
1-800-348-4232 (Voice/TTY)

Newsletter

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