

**Building Successful  
Working Relationships  
with Seniors and/or  
People with Disabilities**

## Committee on Accessible Transportation

In 1985, the TriMet Board of Directors created the Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT) as a standing committee to advise the staff and Board of Directors on issues in regard to TriMet transportation plans, policies, and programs for persons with disabilities and/or seniors.

The goal was to develop a committee that would be able to:

- *Represent* seniors and/or people with disabilities community-wide;
- *Communicate* with these constituencies, and convey community views to TriMet, and;
- *Be well-informed* about TriMet's services, programs and customer needs.

## CAT Membership

- *Eight Consumer Positions* – Persons with disabilities and/or senior citizens who use or are familiar with TriMet’s public transportation services
- *Six Representative Positions* – Members representing persons with disabilities and/or senior citizens who use or are familiar with TriMet’s public transportation services and typically have direct affiliations with agencies and organizations providing services or advocacy.
- *One Representative Position* for the TriMet Board of Directors

Consumer and representative positions serve for two-year terms and may apply for reappointment. The Board Representative position serves at the pleasure of the TriMet Board President. All other members are appointed by the General Manager.

## Membership Recruitment

CAT membership recruitment includes public outreach to:

- State, county, and city agencies that serve seniors and/or people with disabilities in the tri-county area,
- Organizations that provide services and advocacy for seniors and/or people with disabilities, and the
- Community at large.

## **Committee Structure**

**Executive Committee** – Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Committee Member-at-Large. Meets monthly with administrative staff to create meeting agendas and address any open issues.

**Nominating Committee** – Appointed by the Chair and makes membership recommendations based on application and interview process. CAT forwards a pool of applicants to General Manager for consideration for appointment.

**Ad Hoc Committees** - Smaller sub-committees of the CAT to work with staff to address specific issues. Membership determined based on interest and expertise.

## **CAT Work Plan**

Each year staff work with the CAT to develop an annual work plan. Sections include:

### **Section 1- Fixed Route Services (Bus, Light Rail, Commuter Rail)**

- Awareness and sensitivity to E&D customer need
- Stop announcements, space management and use of priority seating area
- Securement systems
- Safety & security
- Signage
- Other policies and practices related to accessibility

### **Section 2 - Capital Projects & Facilities**

- Light rail expansion
- Transit station updates and improvements
- Access & safety issues

## **Section 3 - LIFT Program (Paratransit Service)**

- Monitor LIFT service quality through quarterly reports
- Find ways to better use existing resources and improve performance
- Educate LIFT customers and raise their awareness on service provision
- Support customers' informed choice of travel options and encourage choice of fixed route when appropriate
- LIFT staff and operator training

## **Section 4 - Services and Financial Plans**

- Transit Investment Plan (TIP) and annual Service Plan
- Annual operating and capital budget
- LIFT and Honored Citizen Fares

## **Section 5 – Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Tri-County Area (CHSTP)**

- Statewide ADA eligibility reciprocity
- Peer to peer program
- Full coordination of ADA eligibility for LIFT paratransit service with RideWise (travel training program)

## What are the keys to CAT's Effectiveness?

- Membership*** CAT members include a cross-section of service consumers with disabilities and/or who are seniors, human service and advocacy organization staff, plus a TriMet Board member.
- Partnership*** The CAT works in partnership with the wide community of persons with disabilities and seniors area-wide, and with TriMet's staff and Board. Partnerships put the CAT and its members in a position to be leaders.
- Leadership*** A cooperative relationship between the CAT and staff provides a framework for effective leadership.
- Organization*** The CAT's process and structure are well defined. An Executive Committee and subcommittees are in place. Bylaws have been adopted; minutes are kept and widely distributed.

## What are the keys to CAT's Effectiveness? (cont.)

- Process*** The annual work plan identifies issues in advance, and issues may be directed to subcommittees for more detailed review. New issues are referred to the CAT's Executive Committee. The CAT's actions and recommendations are conveyed to TriMet's Board and staff in a timely manner.
- Regular Meetings*** The meetings calendar is set in advance. Meeting dates, time, and location are well publicized.
- Public Comment*** All agendas include time set aside for public comment.
- Staff Support*** TriMet assigns senior staff as primary support to the CAT. Liaison staff in TriMet's major divisions and operating departments work with the CAT on specific issues and projects.

## What are the keys to Members' Effectiveness?

- Be present***            CAT needs full participation at scheduled meetings.
- Be informed***            Gain a working knowledge of TriMet's services, policies, and programs.
- Be prepared***            Review agendas and packet materials before the meeting.
- Be focused***             Discuss the topic at hand. Be brief and to the point.
- Be representative***        Communicate with your "constituency" about the CAT's work and seek feedback. Share community views and consider the broader goals of TriMet. Place community needs ahead of your personal agenda.

## What are the keys to Effective Meetings?

Effective meetings are a shared responsibility. Observing these guidelines help to promote effective and positive meetings.

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| <b><i>All Views Respected</i></b>      | Members represent persons with disabilities and the elderly. Views of all participants are treated with respect.  |
| <b><i>Comments Are Focused</i></b>     | Members stay focused on the issue, and keep comments brief and succinct.  |
| <b><i>Time Limits Are Followed</i></b> | Time limits for discussion of topics are set and followed.  |
| <b><i>Disagreement</i></b>             | Disagreements can result in better decisions. When conflict arises, members should actively listen to other's views, maintain respect for their peers and work toward resolving conflicts and reaching consensus. |