

## **CATA Service Changes currently under consideration**

The transit funding crisis that has already beset the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in Philadelphia and Port Authority Transit (PAT) in Pittsburgh will soon affect almost every other transit system in the Commonwealth including CATA. Without both a dedicated and a predictable source of funding for Pennsylvania transit systems, CATA and all the other transit agencies across the State, will face the same budget balancing crisis. General Operating subsidies from the State have not kept pace with increased operating cost and most systems have responded by cutting service over the years. CATA has been able to hold off major service cuts for the past several years by utilizing their budget surplus. That surplus is now gone.

We at CATA are hopeful that the Administration and the Legislature in Harrisburg will be able to engineer a new transit funding mechanism that will allow systems like CATA to not only maintain its current service levels but respond to expanding needs in a growing community like State College. The CATA staff has begun work on the Authority's Fiscal Year 2005/2006 Budget, which takes affect on July 1, and if there is no relief on the horizon, we will be faced with extremely difficult choices.

If a solution to the Transit Funding issue in Pennsylvania is not reached by early March, staff will have no choice but to create a service plan for next year that scales back services (and possibly raises fares) by the amount necessary to balance costs with the limited resources we currently have available to us. Absent the funding needed to balance our budget the CATA staff is considering the following combination of service cuts and additional sources of revenue:

### Expense reductions under consideration:

- The elimination of all weekday evening and all Saturday service on the H, W and P Routes.
- The elimination of the midday trip on the A, C, F and S Routes.
- The elimination of some of the midday trips and some of the Saturday service on the B and X Routes.
- The elimination of Sunday service on the M Route during Reduced Service .
- Starting Saturday and Sunday morning service later on the N, R and V Routes.
- Reducing frequency on the Friday and Saturday evening N, R and V Route service.

### Additional Revenue possibilities under consideration:

- Asking the Authority's local member municipalities for increased funding support.
- Requesting larger payments from the Authority's private sector contract partners such as Penn State and some local Apartment Complexes.
- Consider selling exterior bus advertising.
- Raise fares and the cost of passes.

The Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Board of Directors will hold its annual public hearing on service changes in conjunction with its February Board Meeting scheduled for Monday, February 28, 2005, at 4:00 p.m. in the State College Borough Council Chambers of the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, State College. This hearing is an annual event aimed at gathering community ideas and input (i.e. suggestions for service improvements, route changes, fare and pass structure, performance standards, etc.) regarding local public transportation services.

Anyone who wishes to present their suggestions or comments on service, including the changes under consideration, to the CATA Board should plan to attend. If you cannot attend, but would like your suggestions and viewpoints expressed at the meeting, please send them to:

L. Eric Bernier, Service Development Manager  
Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)  
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Suggestions and comments may also be forwarded to Mr. Bernier via e-mail at [dirsedev@catabus.com](mailto:dirsedev@catabus.com) or by telephone at (814) 238-2282, extension 140.