

Shelby Public Transit Makes “Getting Around” a Bit Easier

By Mike Barhorst

Shelby Public Transit began operation in 1980. At the time service within the City of Sidney was known as *Dial-a-Ride*. The system operated with two vehicles and provided limited service within the city limits.

Nearly 20 years later, Shelby County Commissioners began operation of the Shelby County Transportation System (S.C.A.T.S.). That system provided limited transportation within the county.

In 2003, the Ohio Department of Transportation conducted a study to consider the impact of the merger of the two entities. By the end of 2004, consolidation was initiated and Shelby Public Transit was created.

Today, Shelby Public Transit is the demand-responsive, origin-to-destination, shared-ride public transit system for both the residents of the City of Sidney and for Shelby County. The fleet has grown, and consists of 11 wheelchair accessible vehicles.

In a cooperative arrangement with the Shelby County Commissioners, the transit system is operated by the City of Sidney. The system operates with funding from the fares generated, the City of Sidney, the Shelby County Commissioners, the Ohio Department of Transportation Office of Transit and the Federal Transit Administration.

Some funding is also provided through the Older Americans Act (Title III). That funding is administered through the Area Agency on Aging PSA 2.

Oversight for Shelby Public Transit is provided by the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC is comprised of the City Manager, one member of City Council, one County Commissioner and one County Department Head along with two to four citizens. The TAC meets on the first Thursday of May and November.

Recently I received a complaint about a passenger whom the complainant believed should have received additional assistance. Passenger assistance is available upon request. Transit riders need to let the dispatcher know about any special mobility needs, assistance needed to and from the vehicle, or if the rider will require additional boarding time.

Drivers have a three-minute wait-time for passengers to board unless the dispatcher is notified in advance of mobility issues that require additional boarding time. This benefits everyone, as it helps to provide a schedule for other passengers waiting to be picked up.

For wheelchair passengers, the driver secures wheelchairs with a four-point securement/lap belt system. Drivers also secure all walkers, oxygen tanks and assist with getting the wheelchair on and off the van. Drivers are not required to assist with carry-on items. If assistance is needed due to age or disability, drivers may assist riders with getting items to the door.

The staff at Shelby Public Transit does its best to accommodate requests for same-day service. However, same day service is limited.

Rides are scheduled on a first come, first serve, space available basis. Passengers are encouraged to schedule their trip no later than 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the trip.

Reservations are taken by phone (937.492.6117) from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 pm. Drivers do not accept schedule changes or make trip reservations.

Shelby Public Transit provides city service from 6:45 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Service within the county is provided from 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. In extreme weather conditions, Shelby Public Transit may cease operations for the safety of passengers and drivers.

It is important for passengers to remember that the vehicle may arrive 10 minutes before or after the scheduled pickup time. Due to complaints, drivers are instructed to never honk to signal their arrival.

Shelby Public Transit is affordable. A one-way, general public, per-person trip within the city is \$2.50. The same trip for seniors aged 65 and older and the disabled is just \$1.00.

A one-way, general public, per-person trip within the county is \$5.00. The same trip for seniors aged 65 and older and the disabled is just \$2.50.

Children under the age of five and accompanied by an adult ride for free. There is also no charge for a personal care attendant or helper traveling with the passenger on their scheduled trip so long as they are picked up and dropped off at the same location as rider. All fares must be paid before the vehicle leaves the pickup point.

To show appreciation to their senior and disabled customers, Save-A-Lot, Bunny's Pharmacy and Lochard's give a free token to qualifying customers for their ride home. Those who shop at those locations should stop by the service desk after making their purchase to receive a token.

Despite not being available on weekends, Shelby Public Transit provides an invaluable service to residents. Last year, the system provided 42,648 rides for city residents, and 5,622 rides for passengers picked up in the county.

The next time you need a ride, I would encourage you to consider Shelby Public Transit (937.492.6117). If you have suggestions on improving the service, don't hesitate to contact any member of the Transit Advisory Committee.