

May 17, 2007

Dear City Commissioners:

We are writing this letter, as chair and vice-chair of PTAC, in response to the proposal that Cliff Galante forwarded for consideration by the city commission. This proposal as written by Mr. Galante is not the proposal that was voted on and approved by PTAC. In particular, we would like to report the discussion of the need to set an age limit to ride the bus. The committee discussed this item at length and with great deliberation. Because the most important use of the bus by young children is to ride to and from school, the committee felt that all school-aged children should be permitted to ride without an adult. Our belief is that for children of all ages, parents are the appropriate authorities to determine whether a child is mature enough to ride safely. We also believe that setting an age limit implies that the city deems any child of that age mature and responsible enough to ride the bus unsupervised, which we do not believe is the case. This is the concern of "implied warranty" mentioned in the staff report. You may wish to ask the city's legal staff for an opinion on this aspect of the question. Thus, the committee requested that all reference to an age limit to ride be stricken from the recommendations.

Please note that contrary to Mr. Galante's contention that most city transit systems set an age limit, the PTAC chair has researched the websites of a few of the larger transit systems such as Washington DC, New Orleans, Boston, and Albuquerque and none of these websites mention an age limit to ride.

Mr. Galante suggested that without an age limit a bus driver might be faced with a situation where a toddler or immature child might get on the bus or be put on the bus. This is highly improbable, but this could occur regardless of the setting of an age limit. In the highly unlikely event that this should occur, the driver would treat this as any other emergency (such as an accident or passenger illness) that would require calling the police or emergency personnel.

PTAC strongly recommends to the city commission that NO age limit be imposed on riders of the T and T-lift transit system in Lawrence.

Sincerely,

Marian K. Hukle, Chair-PTAC
David Dunfield, Vice-chair-PTAC