



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
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METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: August 20, 2012

In attendance: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee (Vice-Chair), George Aguehounde, Carolyn Bellamy, Robert Brown, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Marilyn Lutter, Dr. Phil Posner, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, and William Staderman.

Call to Order

Chair Semelfort called the meeting to order.

Approve July 2012 Meeting Report

The July 2012 meeting report was approved as submitted.

Approve August 2012 Agenda

The August 2012 agenda was approved with the addition of time set aside to nominate a new Vice-Chair for the MetroAccess Subcommittee. Dr. Banerjee declined to continue serving as Vice-Chair of the MetroAccess Subcommittee because he was elected to serve as the 2nd Vice-Chair for the full Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Customer Service and Outreach Report

Allison Anderson, MV Transportation, stated that all of the public comments submitted at the previous Subcommittee meeting have been addressed. Ms. Ray stated that she had been told that a customer who submitted a comment at the previous meeting believed there were outstanding issues to resolve. Omari June, Operations Manager, MetroAccess Operations Control Center, stated that Ms. Anderson would follow-up to ensure that her concerns were adequately addressed.

Ms. Anderson described several outreach events she had participated in. Ms. Ray suggested an additional outreach event, which Ms. Anderson noted.

Mr. Staderman requested a change to the meeting room configuration that would permit greater wheelchair accessibility to all sections of the room. Dr. Moore-Gwynn stated that the adjustment would be made for the next meeting.

Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award

Ms. Anderson and Leland Petersen then recognized Bert Smith as the inaugural Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. The award is named in memory of Michael “Mr. Mike” Wilson, a beloved dispatch supervisor who recently passed away. Several of Mr. Mike’s loved ones were in attendance to witness the ceremony and congratulate Mr. Smith as the first award winner.

A detailed description of Mr. Smith’s accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled “Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award” located under the August 2012 heading at http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm.

Seatbelt and Securement Presentation

Donald Scruggs, Fleet Maintenance Officer, MetroAccess, described how seatbelts and the securement devices used to secure mobility devices are maintained. He noted that there are five types of regular inspections in which seatbelts and securement devices are inspected. The inspections range in frequency from daily to monthly, during. He noted that each vehicle is equipped with eight Q’Straint securements and eight web-loops.

Dr. Banerjee suggested a hand-hold be added on the vehicle to assist wheelchair customers in preventing side-to-side sway during travel. Staff will investigate and provide feedback to the committee.

A customer asked if the securement tracks in the vehicle floors are cleaned regularly. Mr. Scruggs confirmed that they are.

Ms. Ray asked for a description of the vehicle cleaning schedule. Mr. Scruggs noted that there are various levels of cleaning, ranging from a daily sweeping and inspection, to a weekly exterior washing and a bi-weekly thorough cleaning of the interior, and disinfecting during cold and flu season.

A customer suggested that other customers with wheelchairs and scooters assist operators in locating proper securement points on their mobility device.

Ms. Lee noted that she prefers that her chair be secured directly with Q’Straint devices, and that web loops not be used because she feels more stable using only Q’Straint devices. Staff assured Ms. Lee that they would follow up with her on the subject.

Ms. Bellamy noted that there are scooters intended for indoor use only, which do not have built-in securement points, and scooters intended to be used outdoors, which have securement points built-in. She noted that many times the indoor-only scooters are less expensive than outdoor scooters and therefore a more attractive purchase, but that many consumers are not aware that the indoor scooters are difficult to secure on vehicles since they lack securement points. Ms. Lutter and Ms. Ray suggested that there be an effort to inform Medicaid and Medicare centers as well as MetroAccess customers of the difference between indoor and outdoor scooters.

Ms. Lee asked for an explanation of the policy for the use of a posey belt. Mr. Hamlin stated that the use of a posey belt is at the option of the customer. He then offered to initiate an operator awareness campaign pertaining to the use of posey belts.

Ms. Houston asked how operators are trained in wheelchair securement when there are such a wide variety of wheelchair types. Mr. Hamlin responded that operators are trained on a variety of wheelchair types and are taught securement techniques that are adaptable to a wide range of wheelchair types. Mr. Scruggs detailed the technical aspects of securement, and noted that there is a range of angles for the securement strap that provide the safest ride for customers who utilize wheelchairs.

Customer Service Task Force Update

Ms. Bellamy stated that the Customer Service Task Force has spent a number of meetings discussing the MetroAccess door-to-door policy. After considering a number of issues, the Task Force concluded that the AAC should recommend that Metro define door-to-door service as service from the most exterior door at the pick-up to the most exterior door at the destination. The MetroAccess Subcommittee will elevate the discussion to the full AAC.

At the September 2012 MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting, the Subcommittee requested that a note be inserted into this report that the Subcommittee was referencing the original door-to-door policy document in the aforementioned discussion.

Ms. Bellamy stated that the Task Force will next review the MetroAccess Customer Guide in its entirety to identify any opportunities to clarify MetroAccess policies and procedures. Mr. Semelfort requested that the Task Force complete this task prior to the November 2012 MetroAccess Subcommittee meeting because he would like to redirect the attention of the Task Force to explaining

what customers should expect during the transition from the current paratransit contract to the next paratransit contracts.

MetroAccess Fare Calculator Update

Dan O'Reilly, Director, MetroAccess, stated that free-text address entry is live on both the standard web booking site as well as the text-only web booking site.

He then stated that the fare calculator is undergoing further testing, and it is hoped that a new beta version of the fare calculator will be available for a wider test audience within the following week.

Mr. Semelfort requested that a wheelchair securement demonstration be added to the work plan for a future date.

Public Comment

Customers made comments pertaining to arrival calls, telephone etiquette, service area, EZ-Pay balances, No Shows, and vehicle cleanliness.

Please refer to August's Complaint Resolution Report at located at http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm for detailed descriptions and resolutions of the public comments.

New Business

The subcommittee discussed candidates for the MAS Vice-Chair position. Upon motion, the Subcommittee recommended that Denise Rush be appointed to the position. At the next meeting, Paul Semelfort will present this to the full committee for approval.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm