



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-962-6060

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: August 19, 2013**

In attendance: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Denise Rush (Vice-Chair), Dr. Phil Posner, William Straderman, Carolyn Bellamy, Elver Ariza-Silva, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Heidi Case, Denise Thomas, Kevin Hanretta, Robert Brown, and Chanel Houston.

#### **Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Denise Rush called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:01pm.

#### **Review of August 2013 Agenda**

The August 2013 meeting agenda was approved.

#### **Review of July 2013 Meeting Report**

The July 2013 meeting report was approved.

#### **Customer Service and Outreach Report**

Kim Clark, Regional Vice President of Operations, MTM, stated that all of the customer comments have been investigated for resolution. She stated that there were some individuals that staff had been unable to contact to report the findings. Staff will continue to make attempts to contact the outstanding individuals to ensure they receive notification of the findings.

Allison Anderson, Operations Manager - Operations Control Center, MetroAccess, reported the attendance of MetroAccess Service Monitors at a family event at DSI Dialysis Center in Clinton, MD. The focus of this event was to provide information to the attendees regarding MetroAccess. Ms. Anderson reported that during fiscal year 2013, MetroAccess interacted with 522 customers, at 17 establishments to provide information regarding MetroAccess at outreach events. She welcomed suggestions from the committee for organizations to visit for future outreach opportunities.

Ms. Anderson addressed issues regarding appointment time requests that the MAS raised at the previous meeting.

Ryan Parr, ACCS Projects Control Officer, MetroAccess, explained that an overall look at the system shows that on average there has been no change in the difference between the appointment time and the negotiated time over the past fourteen months. He stated that since the implementation of the new Trapeze build, the time difference between appointment time and negotiated time has decreased by fifteen seconds.

Committee members commented that though on average the system as a whole has not seen a change, there may be deviations from the average.

Omari June, Director, MetroAccess, commented that variations will occur daily as the scheduled routes change based on customer bookings.

### **Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award**

Frank Roth, Director, Eligibility Certification and Outreach (ELIG), recognized Mr. Rubard "Tony" Gillus as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Mr. Gillus's accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the July 2013 heading at

[http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm).

### **New Contract Implementation Update**

Don Scruggs, Fleet Maintenance Officer, MetroAccess, gave an overview of the transition of the MetroAccess vehicle fleet. He stated that the transition began by moving the smaller contractor facilities first, and then the larger facilities. The larger facilities transitioned in a two week time frame, moving half their fleet the first week and the other half the second week. During this period, there were one hundred and thirty-nine new vehicles incorporated into the fleet while older vehicles were retired.

Questions from the Committee were:

**1. Have the new vehicles been delivered:**

Mr. Scruggs stated that all 139 vehicles have been in service since the end of July this year.

**2. Has MetroAccess considered vehicle entry points and accommodation of more passengers.**

Mr. Scruggs said that larger vehicles could be considered, but it would be inefficient based on the number of customers on a vehicle for the average on-board time. The vehicles, as they are now, will accommodate four ambulatory and two mobility devices at the same time. The fuel consumption of larger vehicles would be a concern as well. WMATA has considered purchasing a vehicle where seating can be changed to accommodate more customers.

**3. When stating that two wheelchairs can fit in the vehicle, is that meaning manual or electric chairs?**

The dimensions of the chair have been defined. The input of the public on this will assist in the type and size of vehicles that are chosen in the future.

Cheryl O'Konek, Operations Manager, – ELIG, shared that during the certification process a designation is placed in each customer's profile indicating whether a customer is ambulatory or a wheelchair patron and the size of the wheelchair.

### **Essential MetroAccess Policies Pamphlet Update**

Mr. June requested that the Committee provide feedback on the document so that production of the pamphlet can be underway.

- 1. A comment regarding a statement under fare payment policy stating "all customers have the right to travel with a personal care attendant". It was suggested that the statement read, "all eligible customers have the right to travel with a personal care attendant".**

Ms. O'Konek stated that on a customer profile it states that each person may travel with a personal care attendant, it does not mean that the customer must travel with one.

- 2. If a customer has completed the certification process and is waiting for their MetroAccess ID card, are they able to ride without the ID?**

Mr. June explained that if the customer has a state or federal government issued ID, provides it to the driver, and explain that they are waiting for the MetroAccess card to arrive, the driver will permit the customer to travel.

Upon motion, the MAS moved the Essential MetroAccess Policies Pamphlet to the full AAC for approval.

### **Fixed Route Travel Time**

Leroy Hayford, Financial Operations Manager, MetroAccess, discussed the ADA expectation on travel time explain that paratransit service must be offered at a level comparable to fixed route transportation. He explained that it is MetroAccess responsibility to monitor trip lengths to ensure they are compliant with ADA requirements. The sum of all fixed route segments plus a corresponding buffer time is the FTA standard. Anytime a trip is outside of this equation, the trip is considered excessive. As a shared ride service, the time it takes to pick-up other customers is considered in building the buffer time. WMATA trip planner will include walk time, wait time, and the actual trip time. When adding the buffer time, this would be the equivalent for MetroAccess. Mr. Hayford then gave sample trips to further explain the travel time of a MetroAccess trip. He quantified this explanation stating that for the last four quarters, the compliance for providing comparable transportation has been at a rate of ninety-eight percent.

Questions/comments from the Committee:

- 1. Why is the buffer time lower for the bus than for the rail?**

Mr. Parr explained the larger buffer for rail service is different as the rail does not account for traffic. For the purpose of compliance, MetroAccess adds a fifty minute buffer to a trip that would be provided by rail only.

- 2. Where are the numbers coming from?**

Mr. Hayford explained that fixed route travel time comes from WMATA trip planner.

**3. How will the service change for customers when the area is extended, such as with the addition of the Silver Line?**

Mr. June explained that MetroAccess currently provides service for customers eligible after 2010 from three quarters of a mile around all fixed route bus and rail service. Grandfathered service was granted to some customers going to county lines, which is beyond what is expected by the FTA. Decisions have not been made by the counties that will be affected by the Silver Line how paratransit will be served. If it is decided that MetroAccess will provide ADA paratransit service in those areas, it will be from three quarters of a mile around fixed route bus and rail service.

**4. Does pick-up time or appointment time have any determination in trip comparability time?**

Mr. June stated that comparability time is based on total trip duration regardless whether the trip is booked by pick-up or appointment time.

**5. If MetroAccess does provide ADA paratransit out to the Silver Line, will customers need to be grandfathered to travel to that area?**

Mr. June stated the area would become a part of the ADA core service area and therefore customers could travel without grandfathering.

**6. A comment was made that the service area is expanding while in other areas bus service is being cut.**

**7. Some trips require customers to schedule their pick-ups at very early hours of the morning according to the trip comparability time.**

Mr. June stated that the comparability time takes into account how MetroAccess is measured by the FTA standards, however trips may not necessarily take the time allotted.

**8. Does this comparability time account for the trips outside of the core area?**

Mr. June stated it does not. A different measure is utilized to determine the applicable ride time for those trips.

Mr. Omar Browne, Field Operations Manager, MetroAccess, addressed a policy question related to reporting incidents, which was asked by the Committee at the last MAS meeting. He stated that at all times after an incident MetroAccess drivers contact the Operation Control Center (OCC). The OCC then contacts the Safety Manager or Lead Road Supervisor who will secure the scene and investigate the incident. The Road Supervisor will ensure that all information is exchanged. If the customer is transported to a medical facility, the Road Supervisor will follow up with the customer to inquire about the customers' wellbeing and relay any additional pertinent information. All service providers have been updated to this policy.

Question/comments from the Committee:

**1. What happens when the Road Supervisors do not follow procedure?**

Mr. Browne stated that appropriate disciplinary action will occur.

**2. What is MetroAccess' role in getting a customer to their destination after an incident?**

Mr. Browne stated that after the scene is secured and the investigation is concluded, MetroAccess will ensure all passengers are transported to their destination. At times, another vehicle will be dispatched to continue the travel for customers.

**Public Comment**

Customers and Subcommittee members made comments related to the attrition rate of drivers; continued rude dispatchers; late vehicle arrivals; drivers not performing door-to-door; providing Essential MetroAccess Policies Pamphlet in alternate formats; questions of why drivers aren't permitted to attend AAC meetings; and dispatch constantly calling drivers while operating the vehicle or loading customers.

Please refer to the August Complaint Resolution Report located at [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm) for detailed descriptions and resolutions of the public comments.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:58pm**