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## Accessibility Advisory Committee

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: February 18, 2014**

In attendance: Mr. Paul Semelfort (Chair), Ms. Denise Rush (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Ms. Carolyn Bellamy, Ms. Heidi Case, Dr. Phil Posner, Mr. George Aguehoude, Mr. Elver Ariza-Silva, Ms. Regina Lee, Mr. Patrick Sheehan, Ms. Doris Ray.

#### **Call to Order**

Chair Semelfort called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:00pm.

#### **Review of February 2014 Agenda**

The MAS made a motion to add to the meeting agenda a discussion of the letter to the Board regarding fare policy.

#### **Review of January 2014 Meeting Meetings**

The minutes were approved without amendments.

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

Kimberly Clark, Regional Vice President of Operations, MTM, reported that all public comments from the previous meetings have been addressed.

#### **MetroAccess Employee Recognition**

Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess Service, recognized Tyrone Breland as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Mr. Breland's accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the February 2014 heading at [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm).

#### **GPS System on MetroAccess Vehicle**

Efon Epanty, ACCS Projects Control Officer, MetroAccess Service, provided an overview of the GPS system used on MetroAccess vehicles. He stated that the system known as Ranger is a mini computer that operators access to receive customer and trip information. The Ranger provides operators point-to-point navigation information to drop off and pick up locations. This information is also utilized by dispatch staff to manage operations. Dispatch relays information to operators through the Ranger, and is able to determine the location of vehicles at all times.

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

1. The GPS system does not provide the most appropriate or direct routing to a location. How often is the software updated?

Omari June, Director, MetroAccess Service, stated that there are some areas of efficiency that need to be addressed. He added that Mr. Epanty is researching other vendors to integrate their real time traffic overlay information.

2. Is there a timeline for the integration? MapQuest should be considered as a tool for integration. The framework should allow operators to report on what they see on the street regarding street closures, accidents, etc.

Mr. June stated that there is no timeline at the moment, but research to locate a tool to integrate is underway. Coordination of the integration will take time as it will require an outside party such as TomTom or Google. This will allow MetroAccess to provide real time and smart phone information to customers. Operators frequently call dispatch to provide information regarding what is going on with traffic or weather, and Dispatch in turn uses the information to relay to other operators.

3. Operators do not scroll to the end of the comments on the Ranger.

Mr. June stated that operators are taught in training to go to the second page of the comments field on the Ranger. He said that the contractors will reiterate to the operators to look at the second page to ensure they have all of the information.

Ms. Anderson commented that the Ranger will only hold sixty-four characters in the comment field therefore it is important for customers to provide the most important information related to their travel.

4. Are customers allowed to give the operator directions?

Mr. June stated that operators are allowed to take an alternate route if they know that a particular route is faster. They are sometimes required to take routes that are different than what the Ranger may provide, including any information they may receive from customers. The operator must make a judgment call regarding utilizing information from customers.

5. Is there a way to put traffic and weather information on the Rangers for operators?

Mr. June said that this is something that is being sought in the new integration.

6. Will the new GPS system be able to pick up construction sites?

Mr. June stated that working with other parties to bring real time information related to street closures and construction is important, and will be a part of the new system.

7. Do all vehicles have paper maps?

Mr. June stated that all vehicles have maps, and operators are trained to read the maps.

8. When you get to a location the vehicle does not say the location is to your left or right. When will there be updates to take into account a new location?

Mr. June said the current software does not provide the most up to date information, which will be sought with the new tools.

9. The suggestion was made to have the jurisdictions provide information regarding long-term construction or street closures in their portions of the MetroAccess service area.

Mr. June requested that Dr. Posner be available to assist Mr. Epanty with that sort of insightful information during the integration project.

### **MetroAccess Bus Stop in High Density Areas**

Christiaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that this topic is a follow-up to the work Metro conducted to establish MetroAccess stops at 46 rail stations. The idea is to identify possible locations in high density areas where MetroAccess stops could be installed to help alleviate problems with pick-up locations. Mr. Blake stated that this topic would be added to the work plan of the Bus Stop Accessibility Workgroup chaired by Ms. Lee.

### **Board Letter Discussion**

Ms. Case read the letter drafted by the AAC intended for the Board regarding fare policy.

Questions/Comments:

1. Are all buses calculated in the trip planner?

Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Service, stated that all regional bus services are considered in the calculated fare.

2. Mr. Kent commented that the letter was very well done. He said, however, that the letter is requesting the Board to direct Metro staff to make changes. He said that the letter should be requesting to have the fare policy changed.

He added that points in the letter that take the focus away from what the issue is and alternatives are should probably be removed. For instance, the Fare Calculator discussion may be a distraction and should not be the focus of this particular letter.

A powerful one page letter is what is needed to explain that customers need relief from the increase in fares. A sentence discussing the Fare Calculator in relation to the calculation of the fare is all that is necessary for the letter.

Mr. Kent suggested addressing the letter to the Chair and the entire Board. He suggested that perhaps the statement should say that though the AAC appreciates Metro's effort to incorporate the fare calculator to help reduce the fare, it did not meet the need to make the fare affordable.

3. A suggestion was made to have an outside impartial group, possibly MTM, audit the efficacy of the Fare Calculator.

Mr. Kent stated that comments regarding the Fare Calculator are irrelevant if the AAC is requesting to reduce fare. He said that MTM's role is to provide quality assurance on the operations of the other contractors, not WMATA.

4. If the bus and rail fare increase is approved, the MetroAccess fare will be increased.
5. The letter should continue to include "seniors" in the descriptor as there is currently an impetus in the District of Columbia to make the District affordable to seniors. The letter currently states the elderly.
6. A comment that the AAC is opposed to a fare increase was recommended.

A motion to accept the letter with suggested changes, removing the Fare Calculator historical information, and including the AAC's opposition to the fare increase was approved.

### **Public Comments**

Comments were received with regard to: scheduling; unprofessional dispatch staff; problems with fare; vehicle routing; dispatch calling wrong numbers; and a customer who feels operators should have customers' phone numbers.

### **Public Comment from committee members:**

Ms. Rush thanked the committee members who attended public hearings. Ms. Case reported issues with her trip to the MAS meeting.

For detailed descriptions and resolutions of public comments made during the meeting, please refer to the February 2014 Complaint Resolution Report located at [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm).

### **New Business**

Dr. B. Moore-Gwynn, AAC Coordinator, announced the recruitment of AAC committee members. She stated that there were seven vacancies, and applications are available.

Committee members asked if those vacancies were assigned to specific jurisdictions and commented that applicants should be required to attend some of the meetings to gain an understanding of the role of a committee member before being considered for a position.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:49pm.**