



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

Accessibility Advisory Committee

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: January 22, 2013

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

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Rush called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Review of January 2013 Agenda

The January 2013 meeting agenda was approved.

Review of December 2012 Meeting Report

The December 2012 meeting report was approved.

Customer Service and Outreach Report

Allison Anderson, MV Transportation, stated that all of the public comments submitted at the previous MAS meeting have been addressed.

Ms. Anderson reported that there were no outreach events in December due to the holidays. She reported those outreaches are events scheduled for February. She will report on these events during the February MAS meeting.

Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award

Ms. Anderson and Leland Petersen, MV, recognized Tania Santana as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Mrs. Santana's accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the January 2013 heading at http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subCommittee.cfm.

Transition to New Paratransit Contract Discussion

Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services, thanked the MAS for allowing MetroAccess staff time to discuss the upcoming contractor transition. Mr. Kent assured the MAS that preparations for the transition have begun with the goal of providing a seamless service turnover to the new contractors. Mr. Kent stated that during the previous transition some problems arose as a result of changing the system used to schedule trips. There will not be any such change this time. The current system, Trapeze, will continue to be utilized, ensuring that all customer information is retained. Mr. Kent requested that the MAS provide recommendations to MetroAccess staff on how best to inform the public about the contract transition. Mr. Kent suggested possible forums to allow the public to obtain information, ask questions, and voice concerns.

Daniel O'Reilly, Director, MetroAccess, stated that he received a list of questions regarding the contract transition from the MAS and wanted to address the questions. Mr. O'Reilly noted that answers to some of the questions will not be known until the contracts are awarded.

MAS members asked the following questions:

1. Will On Time Performance be maintained?

Mr. O'Reilly stated that service contractors will be required to meet or exceed an on-time performance of 92%, which is the current standard.

2. Will the data be accurate?

The same database will continue to be used, so no data will be lost. The current vehicles and on-board equipment will continue to be utilized as well.

3. Will all of the contractors work together?

The business model includes checks and balances to encourage teamwork.

4. Will the contractors accept all of the trips assigned to them?

Contractors will be responsible for completing work assigned to them. The Call Center will be responsible for assigning trips.

5. Are new contractors expected to have "growing pains"?

There is an expectation that new contractors will be experienced and can deliver the service as required and outlined in the RFP. There will be a period of adjustment, which will include the training of new drivers and staff. However, all staff will be held to the same standard. Contractors will be provided ample start-up time to ensure that they are prepared to provide MetroAccess service as of July 1, 2013. Mr. O'Reilly noted that while there are currently subcontractors working for the prime contractor, in the new model all contractors will hold contracts directly with Metro.

6. Is Metro prepared for the transition?

Metro has and will continue to work responsibly, professionally and diligently to ensure that the transition will occur with minimal disruption to the customer.

A MAS member commented that a full list of service characteristics that will not change may be needed to help reassure customers during the transition. A member commented on the need for training to ensure that all drivers and staff understand all policies. A member asked if drivers would be employed by WMATA, and the need for changes in the Reservations script. A member commented that having separate contractors for the Call Center and service delivery may cause confusion. A member asked what would be done if a new contractor had a policy that adversely affected on-time performance. A member asked when the award of the contracts would be made and how it will be announced. A member of the public asked whether the team reviewing the RFP had knowledge of paratransit or solely contract management.

Mr. Kent responded to the comments starting with stating that MetroAccess policies will not change when new contractors begin providing MetroAccess service. He informed the MAS that there is a provision in the contract stipulating that both the incoming and outgoing contractor are to cooperate and facilitate the transition. Mr. Kent said WMATA believes that the coordination of assigning, scheduling, and communicating trip information is more dependent upon the skill set of the individuals performing the job than the separation of the management of the Call Center and service delivery. He continued by stating that training is a key element in the success of the transition and ongoing MetroAccess service. He stated that the Quality Assurance department will visit all of the contractors to ensure congruity of all training material, and that sensitivity training is of utmost importance. WMATA will require the assistance of the AAC and the disability community to guarantee the training is adequate. Regarding policies for performance standards, providers will have no policies counter to MetroAccess performance standards. Mr. Kent stated that subject matter expertise is represented on the RFP team. Mr. Kent stated that the Office of Procurement is working diligently to award the contracts as soon as possible. He stated that he will seek an answer as to how the announcement of the contract awards will be made.

Public Comment

Customers made comments related to the blood pressure monitor use during eligibility assessments, the Customer Service Task Force meeting dates and meeting minutes, seatbelts, driver unfamiliarity of college campuses, and a statement of appreciation to a staff member.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm