



Accessibility Advisory Committee

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Washington, DC 20001
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METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: June 17, 2013

In attendance: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Denise Rush (Vice-Chair), Elver Ariza-Silva, George Aguehounde, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Chanelle Houston, Regina Lee, Marilyn Lutter, Brian Miller, Mary Jane Owens, Dr. Phil Posner, Doris Ray, Patrick Sheehan, and Dr. William Staderman.

Call to Order

Chair Semelfort called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

Review of June 2013 Agenda

The June 2013 meeting agenda was approved with adjustments to the order of the topics for discussion.

Review of May 2013 Meeting Report

The May 2013 meeting report was approved with a request to have answers to all questions immediately follow the question posed.

Customer Service and Outreach Report

Leland Petersen, MV Transportation, stated that all but one of the public comments submitted at the previous MAS meeting have been addressed. He stated that staff has been attempting to contact the customer in reference to the one outstanding issues in order to report the finding(s).

Allison Anderson, MetroAccess, reported the attendance of Janice Carpenter, MetroAccess Service Monitor, at the Seabury Senior Health Fair at Friendship Terrace Senior Living Community in Tenleytown. The focus of this event was to provide information to the attendees regarding MetroAccess.

Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award

Mr. Petersen recognized Timothy Larocque as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Mr. Larocque's accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the June 2013 heading at

http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm.

New Contract Implementation Update

Omari June, Director, MetroAccess, stated the transition is 85% to 90% complete. He explained that the transition of service from MV Transportation to the new providers has been taking place each weekend over the last month, one garage at a time, to ensure as seamless a process as possible. The entirety of the transition will be complete by the weekend of June 22nd through June 23rd, completing the 50% of service to Veolia Transportation, 35% to First Transit, and 15% to Diamond Transportation.

MTM, Inc., the Quality Assurance contractor, has begun the complaint investigation and telephone monitoring processes. Mr. June stated that the success of a smooth transition has been the result of months of planning, and the support of many WMATA and MetroAccess staff, as well as the incoming contractors.

Questions and comments from the committee were as follows:

1. What was the hardest task in transitioning the service? What was stipulated in the contract to ensure all contractors worked together?

Mr. June stated that the most challenging aspect of the transition is the coordination of all contractors.

Mr. June explained that the incentives and disincentives are tied together as a group. No contractor will receive incentives or disincentives individually. It will be completely based on how they all performed as a group to ensure quality service.

2. Is the conformed contract posted online? What is the formula for reimbursement to the contractors? Is there a problem with scheduling, as there are a number of individuals having problems receiving their requested time? These individuals are being offered trips two hours earlier or later than the request.

Mr. Kent requested clarification of what was asked, stating that the RFP is posted on the website, and there is a commitment to have the signed contract posted. The contract from procurement is an award letter with the dollar amount offered, and the company acknowledging that for this amount we agree to do what is in the RFP. The manner in which the contractors are paid is in the RFP and has not changed through negotiations. He went on to say that service delivery contractors are paid by revenue service hours. This is time during which a passenger is on-board a vehicle and each contractor provided their rate for this. The Operations Control Center is paid on the volume of calls handled. QA is paid by a combination of the two because they oversee service delivery on the street, and complete audits of data and administrative procedures. During negotiations the numbers are negotiated, however, the terms in the RFP remain the same.

Mr. June responded to the issue with scheduling by stating that MetroAccess is not aware of issues with the scheduling, but stated that the incident will be investigated.

Ms. Rush stated that it has been very difficult getting trips scheduled since the transition began. She stated that in her opinion, it could be due to limited drivers. She said that there are now less options for pick-up windows, requiring that a customer travel much earlier than necessary. Because of this, she feels that she is being denied transportation as the service does not meet her need.

Mr. Kent commented that the number of drivers has no bearing on MetroAccess' ability to schedule trips. MetroAccess' policy is to take all customer requests. He requested that Committee members contact MetroAccess real-time when there is an issue.

3. It is helpful if customers give descriptions of the locations of their travel as well as the address to assist the drivers in locating buildings or common places?

Mr. June stated that common locations are on file, and the file is updated continually. If there is a location that is not on file it can be added. The file is built internally and compiled by known common locations and locations given by customers. The location is then geo-coded so that the information is recognized by the vehicle MDT system.

4. A comment was made regarding the cleanliness of the vehicle, and pleasant driver for a recent trip taken. There was a problem with the web booking process and would not allow the booking to continue as it made the customer start over.

Mr. June asked for specific information to have this investigated.

5. The call center continues to have problems even though the company handling the call center has not changed. Still having issue with drivers providing door-to-door.

6. What is left to be implemented for the transition?

Mr. June said that some vehicles are being replaced so there is a coordinated effort to replace the vehicles while turning over one last garage to the new contractor. Once that is done the transition will be complete.

7. What conditions are in the contract stating that if a Contractor is not adhering to the requirements of the contract they can be removed?

Mr. June stated that a contractor is held to specific performance measures. If the contractor is not maintaining performance there are steps that can be taken prior to terminating a contractor. However having a model such as this with multiple contractors will prevent disruption in service should it be necessary to remove a contractor.

8. Will the internal structure of the vehicle change?

Mr. June said there have been slight modifications to the interior of the vehicle due to design changes from the manufacturer. A couple of changes were made a couple of years ago to the wheelchair securements as to where they were placed and drop seats. There are no planned design changes to be made to new vehicles.

9. Is the amount of resources (vehicles and drivers) equivalent to last year's numbers?

Mr. June stated that there is a slight decrease in the number of driver's at this time. However, there are driver trainings being conducted and that number will increase soon. Another question about when the contract will be posted was raised.

10. Is the issue of hiring drivers for late night and early morning hours being address?

Mr. Kent commented that the new contractors have attempted to retain as many previous MV drivers as possible. However, with the change of contractors there have been many turnovers. All drivers (new and old) were required to apply for the position with the new contractors and undergo a background check. A number of applicants were denied employment due to issues with their background which has

contributed to some decrease in the number of incumbent drivers. The scheduling system continues to allow all trip requests to be accepted, and the parameters and expectations for on time performance remain the same. He stated that what is occurring with trip issues is not related to the number of drivers. MetroAccess feels that the transition has been successful given that the transition is approximately ninety percent complete. He continued by saying that this system, with a fleet of six hundred vehicles, is transporting customers in the usual manner in compliance with our performance standards.

11. A comment was made that Mr. Kent informed the Bus/Rail committee that the transition was complete at their meeting. There have been many issues since the transition, and it's hard to believe that the performance measures have been within the standard.

12. Comments that customers are being picked-up on time, but driven out of their way. There are new rules being made to ensure on-time performance is maintained. Reservationists and dispatch are talking too fast and rushing the reservation call.

Mr. Kent stated that these comments need to be investigated. He said that feedback from surveys and customer complaint reports have been consistently positive. He asked that individuals inform MetroAccess about problems at the time of the occurrence and allow MetroAccess the opportunity to investigate.

MetroAccess Fare Calculator Update

Mr. June stated that the fare calculator has been implemented as of May 31, 2013, which was the agreed upon date. It is working as intended and returning the lowest fare over the thirty minute pick-up window.

Questions and comments for the MAS:

1. When the fare calculator crashed was it due to overuse of the calculator?

Mr. June stated that the outage was not due to the fare calculator but a major Metro wide system outage which affected MetroAccess. Because the computer servers are located at the Jackson Graham building, when the Metro system crashes it affects Trapeze and therefore the fare calculator.

2. How is it known that the lowest fare is being offered by Reservationist or online? What happens when the fare is increased, will the fare calculator be able to adjust the fare smoothly? The fare calculator will not allow booking by appointment time, only by pick-up time. Who should be contacted when there are issues with the service?

Mr. June responded saying that extensive testing continues to ensure the correct fare. The fares are cross referenced based on fares that were offered to customers ensuring that they are the fares that should have been offered. He went on to say that the fare optimizer works for trips booked by appointment time. Trapeze will utilize the generated request time and search across the thirty

minute pick-up window. When fares are changed the system taps into ATIS, the system used to generate fares for fixed route, and automatically updates.

3. Are reservationists required to state that a customer will be provided the lowest fare?

Mr. June said that the reservation script has been updated and they are required to make that statement.

4. A fare was generated for two dollars and twenty cents for a trip that is normally six dollars.

Mr. O'Reilly stated that it was due to data that fixed route uses. Data in trip planning system need to be corrected.

MetroAccess Safety and Evacuation Procedures and Training

Omar Browne and Antonio Hamlin, MetroAccess, presented information regarding consistency and quality of training and safety procedures during the transition. He assured the MAS that the training is consistent amongst the provider to ensure that WMATA standards are maintained.

Mr. Browne outlined the steps taken to ensure consistency and continuity of information through all providers. He stated that MetroAccess and WMATA's safety department have thoroughly reviewed all training materials as well as provided MetroAccess specific topics to be incorporated into their programs. These topics include door-to-door service, securement, electronic device policy, fatigue management policy, sexual harassment and inappropriate conduct. MetroAccess reviewed all service delivery providers' training programs and found them to meet industry standards and MetroAccess requirements; and approved them for use. Incumbent classroom and behind the wheel training instructors, road supervisor, and mid-level safety management staff have been retained by each of the service providers to ensure institutional knowledge is preserved within the service. Approximately eighty percent of the drivers have been retained by all service providers as well. MetroAccess staff has attended some of the classroom and behind the wheel trainings to ensure the providers are adhering to the standard for required training. MetroAccess, WMATA Safety Department, and the QA contractor (MTM), will continuously audit and monitor training as well as operator performance. This monitoring will be conducted through behind the wheel observations, reviewing training files and a ride along with operators in revenue service. Training materials will periodically be reviewed for necessary enhancements.

Mr. Hamlin continued giving a step-by-step explanation of the emergency process. In an incident the operator is to safely secure the vehicle and check the condition of the passengers, and call the Operations Control Center. If necessary the operator or the OCC will call emergency services, and the operator can evacuate the vehicle. The OCC will send out electronic notification to WMATA, and all MetroAccess contractors to include the QA contractor. The OCC will contact the service delivery provider whose operator was involved in the incident, and the provider will dispatch a road supervisor

and any necessary support staff to the scene. The road supervisor is to secure the scene; conduct an investigation; document the facts of the incident; arrange alternate transportation for the customers and take the operator for drug and alcohol testing, as appropriate. All contractors follow Federal Transit Administration guidelines regarding drug and alcohol testing and are required to comply with WMATA's drug and alcohol program. The Road Supervisor may coordinate with emergency services and provide real time updates. All information is provided to WMATA for review, who determines preventability, ensures corrective actions are taken and documented, and partners with WMATA Safety Department to prepare reports both internally and externally.

Questions and comments from the MAS:

1. What is the response time that a customer should expect for an alternate vehicle to arrive, and/or how will Metrobus assist in transporting customers from an incident as was reported at a previous meeting?

Mr. Hamlin reported that the Road Supervisor response time is between thirty to forty-five minutes. If the driver indicated that another vehicle is needed, a vehicle may be dispatched. However, every effort is made to prevent two vehicles from sitting at an incident. WMATA Safety Department is exploring the use of Metrobus to shorten the process. He said that each service provider has ample road supervisor coverage to ensure the timeliness of responding to an incident.

Ms. Raquelle Gilbert, Deputy Chief of Metrobus and MetroAccess Safety and Mr. Charles Briscoe Deputy Chief of Corporate Quality Assurance, stated that measures are being taken to ensure the response time for incidents is reasonable and viable.

2. The response time can be decreased if the communication between dispatch and the driver were better.
3. Is there a procedure in place as to when emergency services is to be called? What is available in the first-aid kit on the vehicle?

Mr. Hamlin said that drivers are able to contact emergency services during an incident if necessary. He continued stating that all first-aid kits have been removed from the vehicles as drivers are not trained to administer medical attention.

4. Is there going to be evacuation training for the Silver Line and where can that information be found?

Ms. Gilbert offered to be the contact person for this information pertaining to the Silver Line.

5. Is there a checklist and protocol for drivers to follow and follow-up by management staff to ensure vehicles are in good working condition before being put on the street?

Mr. Hamlin stated that drivers from all service providers perform daily pre-trip and post-trip vehicle inspections. If a vehicle is found to have problems, it will not be dispatched and the driver will be provided with another vehicle. Scheduled maintenance occurs regularly. While in service, there are processes by WMATA safety, MetroAccess staff, and quality assurance to monitor each contractor related to safety concerns.

Mr. Leroy Hayford commented that there is also a third party inspection company which is paid for by WMATA to inspect all vehicles on a quarterly basis.

6. What is the justification for removing first-aid kits from the vehicles?

Mr. Hamlin said that it was a decision made due to the lack of training by drivers to perform emergency services.

Mr. Kent continued stating that the WMATA Safety Department was consulted about the removal of the first-aid kits which were also removed from Metrobus. Drivers are urged to contact emergency services for assistance as the level of proficiency of each individual is not guaranteed to be at a level it should be.

7. Is there a checklist that drivers go through before leaving the garage? What are the best practices of other paratransit agencies around the country with respect to first-aid kits?

Mr. Hamlin affirmed that there is a daily vehicle inspection (DVI) checklist that drivers follow which covers inspection of areas of the vehicle such as adequate tire pressure, properly functioning wheel chair lifts, etc.

Work Plan

Dr. B. Moore-Gwynn requested 2013 accomplishments from the MAS work plan to include to the Board report for Metro's executive board meeting in July. MAS members named: the Fare Calculator, the MetroAccess transition, MetroAccess signage and pick-up locations at rail stations, and the safety briefing. She asked that the MAS look over the 2014 work plan and email her any additions to the plan.

Public Comment

Customers made comments related to pick-up locations during construction at a customer's building, proper coding for common locations, map reading training for drivers, customers and committee members trips to MAS or other MetroAccess committee meetings, displaying identifying markers on MetroAccess vehicles, drivers carrying drivers licenses, drivers having maps to all college campuses, injuries due to seatbelt securement, incorrect fare, compensation for late drivers, complaint about a particular dispatch supervisor, lack of improvements to the web-booking process and complaint process, removal of first-aid kits from vehicles, more driver training on handling visually impaired customers, excessive trips, toll road use for MetroAccess

vehicles, providing brochures in accessible formats, drivers waiting for pick-up window when a customer is ready for boarding, a suggestion to have Committee members on one side of the table and MetroAccess staff on the other, and a compliment for how smoothly the transition has gone.

Please refer to June'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 6:21pm