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METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: November 19, 2012

In attendance: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Regina Lee, Marilyn Lutter, Dr. Phil Posner, Doris Ray, Denise Rush, Patrick Sheehan, and William Staderman.

Call to Order

Chair Semelfort called the meeting to order.

Approve October 2012 Meeting Report

The October 2012 meeting report was approved.

Approve November 2012 Agenda

The November 2012 agenda was amended to include an update on the MetroAccess Fare Calculator and remove the MV Transportation/Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind Partnership update. MV made a request to present this update at the next MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting.

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 she visited residence at Thomas Circle in Washington, DC; the National Federation of the Blind State Convention; and the Community Options Kennedy Institute in Gaithersburg, Md.

Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award

Ms. Anderson and Leland Petersen, MV Transportation, recognized Sharon Faxio as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner.

A detailed description of Ms. Faxio's accomplishments can be found in the document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the November 2012 heading at

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

MetroAccess Cost Analysis

Dr. Posner reported on the meeting of the Finance Committee of Metro's Board of Directors related to the upcoming budget and the relative cost of transporting customers via Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess. Dr. Posner stated that there is a very large difference between the cost of MetroAccess compared to bus and rail service. Christian Kent, AGM, Access Services, explained that Dr. Posner was referencing the proposed budget for FY14, which will begin July 1, 2013.

At the last AAC meeting, there was a presentation by Andrea Burnside, Chief Performance Officer, which explained the cost of service from all modes of public transportation offered by WMATA. Mr. Kent indicated that the report portrayed MetroAccess to be somewhat problematic as a result of the expenses associated with operating the service. However, the slower growth rate and the decrease in ridership due to services offered by Metro's Office of Eligibility, such as travel training, have assisted in the sustainability of MetroAccess. Mr. Kent stated that the information was meant to illustrate that the source of the greatest share of money needed to manage Metro is provided by the local jurisdictions (Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia).

Mr. Kent stated that there is no effort to take funds away from MetroAccess or impact its ability to deliver quality service. He urged MAS members to help staff communicate to the public the role of MetroAccess, and to encourage others to try using the fixed route service. Mr. Kent acknowledged that the Customer Service Task Force has been working toward this goal.

Mr. Kent addressed a question raised by Dr. Banerjee related to the Fare Policy Working Group and the role of the MAS in the recommending changes to Metro's fare structure. Mr. Kent explained that when there is a problem with customers' understanding of the services or lack of knowledge regarding the amount of fare to pay, it is an accessibility issue, and within the purview of the MAS to discuss. However, issues involving the economic impact of fares on customers are governed by Metro's Compact, which requires public hearings to address any changes in fare. Mr. Kent also addressed a comment by Ms. Ray regarding the possibility of Metro's fares violating the ADA, as it will prevent people with disabilities from being able to use the service. Mr. Kent stated that if Metro was in violation of the ADA regarding the fare policy, it would have been addressed two years ago when the fare policy was being reviewed.

Mr. Sheehan commented that there are discussions that occur with the Riders Advisory Council (RAC) and the Budget Working Group about Metro's fare policy. He stated that the Fare Calculator will provide fare simplicity, allowing individuals to receive the lowest fare within a thirty minute window. He also commented about the impact on the MetroAccess system if there are more riders as a result of lower fares. Mr. Sheehan stated this will need to be reviewed as it will impact the whole system. He stated that

the AAC and the Fare Policy Working Group will have more involvement in making decisions related to these issues once the Fare Calculator is in place. Mr. Sheehan indicated that he was in agreement with Mr. Kent stating that neither MAS nor the full Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) has the right to determine what MetroAccess fares should be. Dan O'Reilly, Director, MetroAccess, confirmed that the agreement for the integration of the Fare Calculator with trapeze is complete and the actual work will begin soon.

Customer Service Task Force

Ms. Bellamy announced that the Customer Service Task Force will not meet in December 2012. Ms. Lee informed the MAS that the Task Force has put together a brochure of information related to role of the MetroAccess service and its drivers. She stated that the brochure is being reviewed and will be provided to Mr. O'Reilly for final review and approval. Once the brochure has been approved, she recommended that the Eligibility Office distribute the brochures to customers during the assessment process. An agreement was made that a final draft of the new guide will be completed by March 2013 for review by the AAC. There was a comment that the Task Force meetings should occur in a public place, and staff confirmed that this is required and that the meeting locations be accessible.

Transition to New Paratransit Contract and Customer Expectations

Mr. Kent discussed the process of transitioning from one MetroAccess contractor to another. He described what occurred in 2005 and 2006 when MV Transit was installed as the new contractor and that some issues were overlooked during the transition. Mr. Kent stated that in an effort to ensure there is a smooth process in the upcoming transition of contractors, surveys were conducted and questions asked early as to how the transition can be better accomplished.

Mr. Kent stated that the contract with MV ends June 30, 2013; however, preparing for the transition needs to begin well before that time. He said some of the things needing discussion are: (1) communicate the changes with the public; and (2) assign who would be responsible for communicating these changes. Mr. Kent recommended that a working group be developed to discuss the best way to make the transition and the needed changes. After much discussion, a motion was approved to dedicate the December 17, 2012 MAS meeting entirely to a discussion on the transition to the new MetroAccess contract. Staff will provide information via email on the new contract to the Subcommittee prior to the next meeting. Mr. Semelfort stated that public comment will remain on the agenda for the December 2012 meeting.

Public Comment

Customers made comments related to the MetroAccess door-to-door policy as it relates to waiting in vestibule areas; the five minute wait time for customer to be present for boarding vehicle; the arrival button being pushed early; the need to have drivers be

provided with customers telephone numbers in order to make contact with the customers; supervisory monitoring of dispatch staff; a compliment to Mr. O'Reilly; and a thank you to Ms. Bellamy for the turkey baskets provided.

Please refer to November'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 5:48pm