



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: October 21, 2013

In attendance: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Denise Rush (Vice-Chair), Mr. George Aguehoude, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Carolyn Bellamy, Heidi Case, Kevin Hanretta, Chanelle Houston, 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 4:00pm.

Review of October 2013 Agenda

The October 2013 meeting agenda was amended to delete discussion on the MetroAccess Quick Start Guide and Essential MetroAccess Policies Brochure.

Review of September 2013 Meeting Meetings

The September 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

Customer Service and Outreach Report

Michael Weidger, General Manager, MTM, reported that all public comments have been investigated and resolved.

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

Dr. Posner asked if the securement issue with customer Marisa Laios had been resolved. He suggested that the customer have a letter signed by the General Manager explaining that seatbelts cannot be used for this customer due to the injuries they inflict on the customer. He also questioned whether this would be legal. Ms. Laios responded that it had not been resolved. Omari June, Director, Office of MetroAccess Service, explained that seat belts must be used by all customers per Metro policy. This is distinct from the Posey belts used to secure customers within their mobility device. The use of the Posey belt is optional. Mr. June agreed that other labeling may be necessary to assist the operators in their effort at placing the seat belt on her comfortably. MetroAccess staff will discuss options with Ms. Laios to determine what will work best for her.

Allison Anderson, Operations Manager - Operations Control Center, MetroAccess Service, reported attendance at the following outreach events: the Montgomery Transportation Providers' Round Table sponsored by the Jewish Council for the Aging, the DC 2013 Annual Mayor's Disabilities Awareness Expo, and the National Federation of the Blind of DC 2013 State Convention.

MetroAccess Employee Recognition

In lieu of the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award, Ms. Anderson recognized the MetroAccess Roadeo Award recipients; the winners were: first place - James Hickson, Veolia Transportation, Capitol Heights, MD; second place - Murid Omid, First Transit, Gaithersburg, MD; and third place - D'Andrey Condrey, Veolia Transportation, Capitol Heights, MD. A detailed description of their accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "MetroAccess Employee Recognition" located under the October 2013 heading at

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

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

A question was asked about the events that occur during the MetroAccess Roadeo. Ms. Anderson and Antonio Hamlin, Field Operations Manager, MetroAccess Service, explained the components of the roadeo. Mr. June commented that the roadeo was originally held for Metrobus and Metrorail operators only, and had been occurring for several decades prior to MetroAccess inclusion. He said that these roadeos are conducted nationally and internationally. Our operators have the opportunity to participate in the national competition. The AAC will be made aware of future MetroAccess roadeos.

MetroAccess Performance Report

Leroy Hayford, Financial Operations Manager, MetroAccess Service, explained the performance measures for July and August 2013. He stated that the full first quarter performance report will be available in November 2013.

Mr. Hayford presented to the committee a handout labeled *MetroAccess Fares as a Percentage of All Fares (Paying Passengers Only)*. He explained the graph represented the percentage of fare paying passengers by fare group broken into ranges in fifty cent increments up to the maximum of seven dollars. He explained that the dark lines on the graph reflect fiscal year 2013 and the lighter lines reflect fiscal year 2012. The graph shows the ranges by value. This information reflects quarter versus quarter for fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013 to understand the fares and fare profiles. These numbers do not include trips by personal care attendants, ADA ridership, eligibility trips, or fare credit trips.

The data shows that the percentage of people paying the maximum fare has dropped. The majority fare falls in the range of three dollars to three dollars and forty-nine cents. Fares that fell below the majority range were influenced by local bus services. Mr. Hayford concluded stating the main point of the histogram was to show the percentage of individuals paying the maximum fare did decrease as a result of the fare calculator and that most of the ridership fare stayed within the three dollar to three forty-nine range.

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

1. A request was made for a copy of the material by email to all of the committee members who have vision problems. It will be necessary to verbalize the bar graphs as the graphs may not be transferable. Mr. Hayford agreed to provide the material by email.
2. Is the Circulator bus service on the fare calculator? Mr. June stated the Circulator is captured in the fare calculator.
3. A comment was made stating that including the free trips would skew the percentages. Having the information presented in this manner provides the worst case scenario. A committee member made the point that during the last fiscal year thirty percent of individuals paid seven dollars whereas now only twenty-five percent of individuals pay seven dollars. Previously, forty percent of customers were paying the three dollar to three dollar forty cent amount whereas now forty six percent are paying this amount. This shows the fare calculator has made positive movement toward decreasing fare.
4. A committee member commented on the free trips stating it is actually reimbursement for late trips. One reason for the decrease in the number of individuals paying seven dollars could be the reduction of ridership due to a number of individuals who may have been paying the maximum amount and they became unable to pay the seven dollar fare.
5. Is there a way to compare the performance data with other major city paratransit systems? Mr. Hayford stated that the parameters and criteria in terms of service miles and service aspect would need to be very similar to MetroAccess, but it could be done if those parameters were in place.
6. The change in registrants increased by ten percent between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013; however, the completed trips only increased by one percent.
7. A suggestion was made to break total registrants into fully eligible and conditionally eligible when presenting the statistics relative to ridership. Mr. June commented that the numbers illuminate the increased efforts of ELIG with travel training and free rides on bus and rail. He agreed to provide the breakdown of fully eligible and conditionally eligible riders, but stressed that the data will not provide a complete depiction.
8. Comments were made regarding the free ride program on bus and rail. There are no upcoming plan changes as free rides save MetroAccess money.
9. Is there a reason why collisions per one thousand service miles increased? Mr. Hamlin stated that the reason for the increase was that August 2012 was a stellar month for lack of collisions for MetroAccess. Therefore the comparison to August 2013 gives the appearance of a substantially poor month. He stated that although the percentages appear to be substantial, MetroAccess remained below the goal for the month. Mr. Hayford added that looking at the standard number alone does not fully provide context. The severity of the issues is also considered.
10. A comment was made regarding number of hours the operators work relative to the increase in collisions. Mr. June spoke to the work hours of operators stating that

MetroAccess has a very strict policy for fatigue management. He stated since the work hours were implemented there has been a decrease in the overall incidents.

11.A comment was made that MetroAccess is asking a lot of the operators relative to the number of hours they work.

MetroAccess Fare Calculator (update)

Ms. Anderson presented a scenario which exhibited how the fare is calculated. This scenario illuminated that the fare calculator will provide the lowest fare within a thirty minute window.

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

1. A statement was made that the fare may change if the next day is a weekend where there may be fewer buses running or construction occurring. The cheaper fare offered the day before may not be offered or is a higher fare. It depends on what's available to make the trip. The fare may also decrease if there is construction on the rail system due to shuttle service replacement.
2. If a trip is scheduled days in advance, there may be no knowledge of construction or inclement weather. Mr. June responded that during inclement weather, MetroAccess would not be in service if Metrorail were closed. He also stated rail construction is planned a year in advance.
3. There is more to trip planner and the fare calculator that should be explained to customers. To receive the lowest fare may require travel from a station or bus stop to a destination versus traveling from a specific address to a specific address which most times results in a higher fare. Mr. June stated the walk time on either end of the trip must be explained to customers as this is incorporated in the trip planner itinerary which MetroAccess mirrors.
4. Customers that are grandfathered or live a distance away from a bus stop or rail station will always be at a disadvantage in pricing. It may be more advantageous for these customers to travel by local bus service. Mr. June said trips are calculated through trip planner with the fastest route including walk time from address to address. There is no disparity in any region of the service area relative to the calculation basis.

New Business

Committee members discussed the need for all members to attend meetings and participate in discussions. They feel too much time is spent on repeating topics that were previously discussed or are not useful to the people they represent. Attention to detail is necessary to prevent missed opportunities to make changes or stay proposed changes to MetroAccess service.

Public Comments

In response to comments from a new MetroAccess customers regarding the “no strand” policy and carry-on packages, Kim Clark, Regional Vice President, MTM, stated that she would follow-up with the customer immediately following the MAS meeting.

A comment was made about an array of MetroAccess policies that included the 24-hour notice for booking trips, five-minute wait time of vehicles, thirty-minute pickup window, unfairness of trip booking process, lack of consistency with service, and timing of eligibility process. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager-Operations Control Center, Office of MetroAccess Service, stated MetroAccess was a form of public transportation, fulfilling the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement to provide a transportation option to those customers whose disability does not allow them to safely ride on public bus or rail system(s).

An MAS member expressed an interest in the status of employment of individuals from Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind. Mr. Leland Petersen, MV Transportation Regional Vice President, stated all previous employees who were hired through the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind were retained after the updates with MetroAccess contractors.

A MAS member expressed her overall satisfaction with MetroAccess service indicating that she has consistently received higher quality of service since 2010.

For detailed descriptions and resolutions of public comments made during the meeting, please refer to the October 2013 Complaint Resolution Report located at http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:01pm.