



Accessibility Advisory Committee

600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: July 21, 2014

In attendance: Mr. Paul Semelfort (Chair), Ms. Denise Rush (Vice-Chair), Ms. Carolyn Bellamy, Ms. Heidi Case, Ms. Doris Ray, Dr. Phil Posner, Dr. William Staderman, Mr. Elver Ariza-Silva, Mr. Edward McEntee, Mr. Roger Stanley, Ms. Phillipa Mezile.

Call to Order

Chair Semelfort called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:01pm.

Review of June 2014 Agenda

The agenda was approved without amendments.

Review of May 2014 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved without amendments.

Customer Service and Outreach Report

Stephanie Audette, Program Manager, MTM, reported that all public comments from the previous meetings have been addressed.

Janice Carpenter, Service Monitor, MetroAccess, reported the attendance at the Fort Davis Civic Association Meeting, attendance at a meeting with staff at the Arc of Prince Georges County, and attendance at Evergreen Senior Residence to provide information related to MetroAccess Service.

MetroAccess Employee Recognition

Ms. Celisse Outlaw recognized Kevin Morris as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Mr. Morris' accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the July 2014 heading at

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

Travel Training and Outreach update

Frank Roth, Director, Office of Eligibility Certification & Outreach, took questions from the committee related to travel training.

Ms. Case asked why travel trainers train customers to utilize the middle cars on the train. Ms. Case said she spoke with travel trainer Brigid Doherty and was told that the two front cars and the last two cars are the newer model cars which would have accessible wheelchair space. This trainer stated that they utilize the front two cars while conducting trainings but do not make use of the last two cars. Mr. Roth explained that Ms. Doherty trains visually impaired customers and therefore utilizes the front and

middle cars on the train as they are the closest to the escalators. Ms. Case expressed her concern that customers with wheelchairs should be informed that the cars in the front and rear are better able to accommodate their mobility devices. Mr. Roth stated he would verify the information regarding travel training and usage of the front and rear cars on the trains and report back.

Work Plan

Mr. Semelfort read through the current work plan and asked committee members to weigh in on other items that should be added for the new fiscal year.

Mr. Semelfort requested an update of the bus stops on the silver line.

Dr. Posner asked for geocoding of all stops on the silver line.

[Mr. Omari June, Director, Office of MetroAccess Service, stated that MetroAccess would provide the location codes in trapeze for the silver line stations.](#)

Ms. B Moore-Gwynn, Accessibility Advisory Committee Coordinator requested that the MAS committee complete their work plan. She said that there are items for discussion through March 2015, but it must be completed through June 2015.

Ms. Rush asked when the new customer guide would be available and if there would be a letter addressing the seatbelt policy.

[Mr. June stated that the customer guide was at printing and should be mailed by the end of July 2014. Mr. June said that the seatbelt policy is included in the guide. He also stated that the MetroAccess Essential Policies Brochure that the AAC developed with MetroAccess staff is included and serves as a pull out brochure for quick reference of specific policies.](#)

Dr. Posner and Ms. Rush inquired about the mystery rider program and asked when it would be implemented. Ms. Rush explained what she felt the mystery rider's tasks would be, and who could serve as a mystery rider. She stated that she felt that all of the modes of transportation provided by Metro should have this program.

[Mr. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Service, commented that having a clear understanding of what the committee expects to learn or gather from the suggested titles or items on the work plan would ensure that the presenter has the correct information and materials to present. Mr. Kent also stated that he was not aware of a mystery rider program for MetroAccess. He suggested having a discussion about the quality assurance contractor, MTM, and the checks and balances that they provide related to vehicles, drivers and the overall service to determine if other measures are necessary. Mr. Kent stated that it would be difficult for MetroAccess to fund an initiative that hires individuals to act as mystery riders. He said however, if committee member's or other volunteers from the community would be willing to serve in this capacity the Office of ADA Policy and Planning, and the Office of MetroAccess would work with individuals to gather and provide information to improve the service on the three modes of transportation.](#)

Mr. Kent thanked members of the committee who volunteered for the evacuation drill. He then commented on the committees request to have a report on the Office of Customer Research surveys and stated that Allison Simon as she is no longer with WMATA. Mr. Kent announced that Ms. Simon's successor is Jason Minser.

Ms. Rush asked why Ms. Simons departure was not announce when it occurred.

Mr. Kent explained that there was a gap between Ms. Simon's departure and Mr. Minser's arrival.

Mr. Kent requested clarification on the work plan item titled "Same Day Service".

Dr. Posner asked about the possibility for providing same day service for medical emergencies.

Ms. Rush commented that MetroAccess is not medical transportation.

Mr. Ariza-Silva offered his comments regarding same day service stating that individuals may have an emergent situation requiring them to make a reservation on the day of travel.

Mr. Kent explained that same day service is beyond what the ADA requires and carries additional costs. It would make MetroAccess a different service than that of other ADA public transit sponsored paratransit services. He said that if the nature of the service was to change, all of the contracts with the service providers would need to be amended, which would require Board authorization.

Ms. Rush commented that customers have problems meeting the twenty-four hour advance notice requirement. She said she could not envision how customers would manage same day requests.

Ms. Bellamy stated that MetroAccess is public transportation. She voiced her concern with the rising cost of the service and the impact of additional service which the committee continues to suggest.

Ms. Mezile suggested changing the recertification process for MetroAccess.

Mr. Kent reminded the committee of the sustainability study for MetroAccess that the Board requested when the budget was passed. Mr. Kent stated that he committed to keeping the committee informed about this study. He requested that the committee add an item on their work plan to receive periodic updates on the study. Mr. Kent explained to the new MAS members the how the budget and sustainability study were introduced.

Ms. Rush suggested a work plan item to strategize and discuss the fare policy.

Mr. McEntee commented on the travel time and routing of vehicles in the MetroAccess service area.

Dr. Posner suggested a visit for the committee members to the Operations Control Center.

Additions to the work plan include:

Long-term sustainability work group study update

Study on door-to-door and its effectiveness

Update on customer surveys

Presentation of the Eligibility process

Mystery Rider Discussion

Presentation of the eligibility process

Presentation by MV Transit regarding the scheduling process

Fare policy strategy discussion

Coordination of Alternatives to Paratransit Service: DC Taxi Dialysis Pilot Project & Other Pilot Projects

Mr. Kent stated that in an attempt to not deprive the service of the resources it needs to do a good job, WMATA has researched partners to help with the job of transporting our customers. Providers in the region were contacted to inquire if they had the vehicle fleet to transport MetroAccess customers. Though taxis have been utilized as a resource, there are not enough taxi providers around the WMATA service area. The majority of MetroAccess trips provided are in the Maryland jurisdictional areas. These areas lack the taxi resources to meet the needs of our customers. WMATA has required taxi companies that work for MetroAccess to adhere to stringent requirements in the best interest of the customer. Currently taxi service on MetroAccess is managed by Veolia Transportation as a part of their contract. There are a few other taxi providers working with Veolia, none of these providers are based in the District of Columbia. The Commissioner of the DC Taxi Cab commission and members of the DC City Council approached WMATA expressing an interest in seeing more accessible taxi cabs in the District of Columbia, and to utilize taxi cabs presently in circulation in transporting customers with disabilities. The taxi program will be a pilot program for a period of time that will provide transportation to dialysis patients who are residents of the District of Columbia and attend dialysis centers in the District of Columbia. The customer will have an ID that identifies them to the taxi driver, and pay five dollars cash for a trip that may be requested the on the day of travel. The advantage to Metro is a financial savings, and more room on MetroAccess vehicles to transport other customers. Metro will provide vehicles to the District of Columbia so that they are able to increase the fleet of accessible vehicles and provide service to District of Columbia residents. The pilot will study all of the ramifications of this service in an effort to expand beyond dialysis patients.

Ms. Rush asked if at the conclusion of the District of Columbia pilot program the program will extend to Maryland dialysis patients.

[Mr. Kent affirmed that it would.](#)

Dr. Posner asked if MetroAccess is contributing to the cost of the taxi ride.

[Mr. Kent said the money to fund this project is coming from the savings that the District of Columbia is not spending with Metro. The amount of money the District pays for MetroAccess is established annually based on historical. The jurisdictions are charged on a quarterly basis. The money reserved, assuming that they will transport more people on MetroAccess than what they actually will transport after the pilot begins, is what funds the program. In essence the District of Columbia would receive the difference from the reduction in their jurisdictional contribution.](#)

Ms. Ray commented that the pilot program is a great idea. She asked if at some point the program will be able to assist customers who need transportation for testing that would require them to be anesthetized. She said that Fairfax County would soon double their accessible taxi fleet.

[Mr. Kent agreed with Ms. Ray stating that her example would be a candidate for expansion of this program. He stated that the District of Columbia wants to have the](#)

maximum use of those cabs as possible. They will also want to know the next population segments to add to the program. Mr. Kent mentioned that an arrangement with the District of Columbia has been agreed upon that after the taxi companies have operated a certain number of trips they will be asked to purchase more accessible taxi cabs. This arrangement would create a self-sustaining system with the contributions from the taxi providers.

Ms. Bellamy asked the total cost of the taxi trip. She also asked if customers who live in the District of Columbia but travel to Montgomery County for dialysis will be able to utilize this program.

Mr. Kent stated that the total cost is approximately thirty-three dollars as opposed to the fifty-six dollars that it costs to transport a customer on MetroAccess. Mr. Kent stated that taxis will not be able to cross jurisdictional lines under this program. He said that he hoped that the other jurisdictions would notice the program and desire to duplicate it.

Ms. Ray asked what would prevent taxi drivers in this pilot program from refusing these trips. This may create a problem leaving customers waiting on taxis to finish regular revenue trips before taking a MetroAccess trip.

Mr. Kent stated that the companies participating in the pilot program were pre-selected, and the owners of these companies have agreed to abide by making these trips a priority.

Public Comments

Comments were received with regard to: grandfathering, No-Shows/Late Cancel letter, mistreatment of drivers, issues with dispatch department, request of a listing of airports that MetroAccess services.

For detailed descriptions and resolutions of public comments made during the meeting, please refer to the July 2014 Complaint Resolution Report located at http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm.

Meeting adjourned at 5:51pm.