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## Accessibility Advisory Committee

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: June 20, 2016**

In attendance: Mr. Paul Semelfort (Chair), Ms. Denise Rush (Co-Chair), Mr. Edward McEntee, Ms. Marisa Laios, Mr. Charles Crawford, Ms. Darnise Bush, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Mr. Patrick Sheehan, Dr. William Staderman, Ms. Phillippa Mezile, and Ms. Carolyn Bellamy.

#### **Call to Order**

Mr. Paul Semelfort called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:00pm.

#### **Review of June 2016 Agenda**

The agenda was amended to include an update on Abilities-Ride, and the impact SafeTrack is having on MetroAccess. The agenda was approved with the amendments.

#### **Review of May 2016 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were approved without amendments.

#### **Customer Service and Outreach Report**

Ms. Jennifer Weber, Quality Assurance, MTM, reported all public comments from the previous meetings were addressed.

Ms. Janice Carpenter, Service Monitor, MetroAccess, reported that MetroAccess staff attended an outreach event on May 26, 2016 at Washington Senior Wellness Center. On June 20, 2016, MetroAccess staff also attended the Greater 202 Coalition monthly meeting in Capitol Heights, MD. During these events, information was shared and questions were answered regarding MetroAccess service.

#### **MetroAccess Employee Recognition**

Ms. Stephanie Newsome, Service Monitor, MetroAccess, recognized MV Transportation employee, Ms. Sheneka Clary as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Ms. Clary's accomplishments can be found in the accompanying document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the June 2016 heading at [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm)

#### **MetroAccess Customer Service Review**

Mr. Carlton Brown, Quality Assurance Administrative Manager, MTM Inc., explained the role of MTM as a contractor with MetroAccess. He stated that MTM provides a thorough investigation and unbiased feedback to all customer inquiries and complaints. In collaboration with WMATA staff, his team identifies areas of deficiencies brought to light through the MetroAccess customer experience to be utilized for service improvements. Mr. Brown said the process begins with the receipt of a complaint made by the

customer through phone, email, general mail, or during AAC meetings. When inquiries or complaints are made through the web, WMATA Customer Service catalogs the complaint and provides the information to MTM. Once the information is received, MTM utilizes a multi-stage process to build a foundation in understanding what occurred. Systems such as Trapeze, GPS, and Google maps are utilized to verify trip information, vehicle location, and pick-up and drop-off locations. Reservations and Dispatch calls are also useful in gathering the information necessary to provide a thorough investigation. Once all the information is gathered related to the logistics of the complaint, MetroAccess policy is referenced to determine if any infractions occurred. The process is concluded within five business days and a phone call is made to the customer to report the findings of the investigation. Mr. Brown commented that the top feedback received included early or late vehicle arrivals; excessive time on board the vehicle, and vehicle no-shows. Top feedback received at the AAC meetings: excessive time on board the vehicle; driver conduct; and operator commendations.

**Comments from the MAS:**

Mr. Crawford said his trip to today's MAS meeting was the worst trip he has had with MetroAccess. The air conditioner was not working properly, and he was concerned that his service animal would expire due to the heat. He asked if MetroAccess vehicles are allowed to leave the garage if the air conditioner is not functioning.

**Mr. Donald Scruggs, Assistant Director, MetroAccess, said per policy, MetroAccess vehicles are not to leave the garage with any malfunctions. He said there is a challenge when the vehicle doors open often to pick-up or drop-off customers and heat or cold air enters the vehicle. It may take the vehicle a while to recover and the internal temperature to stabilize. Mr. Scruggs said that he would get the vehicle number and have the reported vehicle inspected.**

Ms. Rush commented that when the customer is contacted by the investigator, it sounds as if they are reciting a script. She said they are very polite, but generally just apologize for the inconvenience.

**Ms. Weber said this information was helpful to improve the customer experience. She also stated that there are limitations to what can be shared during the follow-up call.**

**Mr. Brown stated that there is no script for the follow-up call. He agreed the information shared would be utilized to improve the follow-up call process.**

Ms. Bush commented about inconsistencies with the No-Show policy. She said some drivers will adhere to the 5-minute wait for customers to present themselves, as per policy, but others will wait longer. She said there are also times when customers are on

the vehicle waiting extended times for another customer to board the vehicle or waiting for the other customer's pick-up window to begin.

**Mr. Brown explained that each no-show is reviewed by the No-Show team to ensure the policy is followed.**

**Ms. Allison Anderson, MetroAccess Operations Manager, reiterated Mr. Brown's comments. Every no-show is examined to determine if there were steps overlooked in the no-show process. The investigator examines: whether the driver waited the applicable amount of time before requesting the no-show; the dispatch agent called all contact numbers on file; whether trip notes document a description of the location; and confirmation that the driver performed door-to-door service. This process is to be followed at all times. If it is not followed, WMATA is notified, and corrective action is requested for the employees involved.**

Ms. Rush inquired as to the appropriate amount of time a customer should wait on the vehicle for another customer's pick-up window to begin. She said it seems like it may be an issue with scheduling.

**Ms. Anderson said with the large service area, there may be some instances in which a vehicle will arrive at a location earlier than anticipated, based on the scheduling parameters. If this is happening frequently, staff can review the system components to assess the root cause. She said traffic and other external circumstances also contribute to route timing. Ms. Anderson stated that she could not give a specific time as there are variables with each trip, but she felt that 30 minutes would be considered excessive.**

Dr. Banerjee asked how web and phone complaints are answered, how many complaints are received per month, and how many Quality Coordinators there are to perform these functions. He stated he did not receive a response to a complaint he made via the web.

**Ms. Anderson stated letters and email complaints go to WMATA Customer Service, which is separate from MTM. Customer Service will print the emails and input them into the Trapeze COM system, which is where MTM will retrieve the complaint to begin the investigation. The system recently underwent an upgrade and may have the capability to transfer complaints directly to the COM system without input from the Customer Service staff. She will verify if the upgrade has made those changes. Ms. Anderson requested the date of the complaint so it could be located. She explained that there is a separation of duties to ensure impartiality and to establish internal control.**

Ms. Laios recommended calling a dispatch supervisor if you are on a vehicle for an excessive amount of time.

A customer in the audience asked if MTM is responsible for reducing the on board time and trip insertions and ensuring the vehicle is not bypassing a customer's location. If changes for improvements are being made, when will the customer see the improvement?

**Mr. Brown stated when incidents are identified, MTM reports the findings to the service providers to make the necessary changes. If there is a continued issue with a particular customer, the investigator will conduct a trip history to identify where the issue lies.**

**Q & A from May 2016 OCC tour**

Mr. Semelfort explained the tour and the MAS experience viewing the real-time operations of the Reservations, Dispatch, and Scheduling departments.

Mr. Crawford commented he was very impressed with the operations, employees, and their professionalism.

Dr. Banerjee agreed with Mr. Crawford's comments.

Ms. Bush commented she observed courteous and professional agents, and was impressed with the way in which the agents handle the number of calls they receive.

Ms. Mezile said the experience was enlightening and interesting. The division of duties was organized and efficient.

Dr. Staderman echoed the comments of the others before him. He relayed his experiences with the overall service.

Ms. Rush stated she noticed and appreciated the call center employing former drivers.

Ms. Bellamy said she was surprised to see agents observing and following vehicle movements at various times of the day. Her concern is that dispatchers need to be more proactive.

Mr. McEntee agreed with the professionalism of the call center staff. He commented on booking his trips by appointment time, which usually requires him to be picked up two hours early and arrive to his destination two hours early. He would have liked to have gotten an answer as to why that occurs during the tour.

**Ms. Anderson stated the scheduling department works to get all of the trips for a particular day scheduled and that appointment times are met. However,**

**on the day of service, there are changes that take place, such as cancellations, which may impact a specific trip. She said if this happens on a consistent basis, MetroAccess staff can review and make corrections, if possible.** (Please refer to page 3 of the Complaint Resolution Report for the findings of the investigation)

Ms. Laios stated she enjoyed the tour as it allowed her to see the people she interacts with regularly.

Mr. Semelfort commented that he noticed the positive affirmations and professional improvements. He also commented on a trip where the vehicle was 90 minutes late.

**Mr. John Gray, Acting Project Manager, MV Transportation, responded to Mr. Semelfort, stating the positive aspect of his trip was the dispatcher showed a level of professionalism by admitting her fault in the mishap with the trip. Mr. Gray said this has not happened in the past but is the type of environment MV is striving to build. He said with regard to appointment time trips, the system attempts to look for the best solution, and in doing so, it may take a long time, especially on busier days. If there are last minute cancellations, it may result in a trip arriving earlier than expected. He then thanked everyone who visited the Call Center and appreciates that everyone observed the professionalism of the staff.**

Mr. Semelfort said he would like to add the tour to the work plan as a yearly event.

### **Update on Abilities-Ride**

Mr. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services, stated the input the AAC provided was given to Procurement to formulate the Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP was forwarded to WMATA's Legal Counsel for review. There has been very little movement on the RFP as the GM has not yet received the document. The issues that have been raised by the AAC will be brought to the attention of the GM. Staff will reiterate to the GM the AAC Committee requests on the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles, the ability to access the service by phone and not just by internet; concerns about insurance, background checks, and driver training; and a general recognition of the rights of customers under the ADA.

The timeline to present the RFP is taking longer than expected as Procurement's focus now is SafeTrack. The expectation is that the RFP will be prepared by the end of summer.

Mr. Kent shared information about a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that has been produced by the District of Columbia requesting interested consultants to come forward to give advice on how specialized transportation services can be coordinated in the District of Columbia. Maryland is requesting that WMATA take an active role in solutions

to coordinated services in Maryland, which is what Abilities-Ride will accomplish. Virginia has accomplished providing coordinated services for some time, but may be interested in providing more.

Mr. Sheehan asked if the AAC would have an opportunity to view the scope of work before it is placed into the RFP.

**Mr. Kent stated this question should be posed to Procurement, but he suggested it would be difficult, because the solicitation could be compromised by people viewing various versions of the actual document prior to its official release. He suggested the committee ask staff if the document includes all of the information the committee wants said prior to it going public.**

Ms. Rush commented that the committee has been requesting that for quite some time.

**Mr. Kent there are limitations when working with legal documents and procurements, but there was no intention to mislead the committee. The document will not be released until the end of the summer, which will give the committee an opportunity to offer additional advice.**

### **Public Comments**

Comments received were with regard to: No-shows; a circuitous trip; a vehicle being dispatched to pick-up someone who was allegedly deceased; a customer not being informed of the OCC tour; a request for a pre-bid conference with the vendors; and commendations to dispatch supervisors.

### **Comments from the MAS:**

Ms. Rush asked (1) if the cost of a no-strand trip is changed from the original fee; and (2) the effects of SafeTrack on MetroAccess ridership.

**Mr. Kent stated the customer's fare does not change when a No Strand Trip is booked, and that SafeTrack had not impacted MetroAccess ridership.**

Ms. Bellamy asked if consideration will be given to prior MetroAccess contractors for the Abilities-Ride program. She also asked if free trip credits are still being dispensed, and if that money can be utilized for other programs.

**Mr. Kent said the requirements for MetroAccess are difficult for some contractors to meet. The standard has increased for the better with input from the committee. He said he is in favor of promoting small businesses.**

**The free trip credits are a part of WMATA's Fare Policy, which is written in the Tariff and can only be changed by the Board of Directors. The Board will only make changes to the Tariff every other year, coinciding with the budget process. The Fare Policy working group should consider this topic when the Board next discusses fare policy and considers making changes.**

Mr. Sheehan agreed that a pre-bid conference should take place.

For detailed descriptions and resolutions of public comments made during the meeting, please refer to the June 2016 Complaint Resolution Report located at [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm).

Dr. B Moore-Gwynn reminded the committee of the Virginia Emergency Exercise taking place on June 26, 2016 at the Greensboro Metrorail Station. She requested that members interested in participating let her know and complete a waiver.

Mr. Semelfort acknowledged and thanked Dr. Staderman for his service to the AAC, and announced that Dr. Staderman will step down from the MAS.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:06pm.**