



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

MetroAccess Subcommittee Meeting Minutes: November 19, 2018

Attendees

Present: Paul Semelfort (Chair), Denish Rush (Vice-Chair), Alvir Ariza-Silva, Darnise Bush, Carolyn Bellamy, Charlie Crawford, Melanie Jackson, Phillia Mezille, Phil Posner, and Patrick Sheehan

Call to Order

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

Chair Semelfort started the introductions of the Committee members.

Approval of Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes:

The meeting agenda was approved.

The October 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes were approved.

Customer Service & Outreach Reports:

Customer Service: Carlton Brown, MTM, provided an update on the customer that had a concern about late trip credit(s). The customer's concerns have been resolved.

Outreach Report: Allison Anderson, MetroAccess, along with David Shaffer, ADAP, attended the transportation fair provided by the Department of Homeland Security(DHS). They provided information on several travel options to DHS employees including Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess. DHS is going to be moving to a new location in southeast DC; the old Saint Elizabeth's complex.

Mr. Shaffer also did an outreach with *The Society for Prevention of the Blindness* and provided tips on using Metro for passengers who are blind or have low vision. He also gave a presentation on the Abilities-Ride program to *The Capitol Veterans Engage of War for Access* for the disabled veterans.

Michael Wilson and Rush Awards:

Michael Wilson Award: Michael Rademacher, MV, Project Manager, presented the award to Ronette Weaver, dispatch supervisor, for her excellent service of six years.

Rush Award: Ms. Rush presented the award to Bill Orleans. He is not a direct employee of MetroAccess, however, he attends all the transportation meetings and helps Ms. Rush with the system updates and information that helps her in making informed decisions.

Easterseals Project Update:

Ms. Anderson provided an update on the Easterseals Project. There had been very good attendance at the two meetings held thus far. The first meeting was primarily to create a

foundation, and provide the basic information on how MetroAccess operates, information about its policies and procedures. The second meeting was to create a wish-list as to what customers would like to see in the potential MetroAccess mobile application (app). The third meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2018 from 10 am to 2 pm. This meeting is going to be centered on the technical side to determine what can be implemented from the received wish-list. Anyone interested can attend the meeting at 1420 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD.

Customer Guide Update

Ms. Anderson provide an update on the revision of the Customer Guide, which is at the beginning stage. Additional information/update can be provided in the next two months. The first draft was shared with the committee members. Many of the recommendations made by the committee have been incorporated. The Customer Guide will not be used to implement any operational or policy changes, there will be other venues for that purpose. The Access leadership will have the final approval and the AAC will see the final version before publication takes place. Some of the photos may need to be updated. Committee members were asked for their participation if they would like to do so. Photos will include people with different disabilities. Mr. Blake stated if he must make any changes to the final version, he will inform the Committee members accordingly.

Ms. Rush asked for a list of recommendations by the committee members, that were not incorporated in the revision of the MetroAccess Customer Guide. Ms. Anderson will provide the list.

There was also a discussion about designated stops for MetroAccess vehicles, at Metrorail station with bus bays. A complete list will be received from the Office of Bus Planning, to be included in the updated Customer Guide.

Mr. Crawford asked what is the life cycle of the Customer Guide? Ms. Anderson stated currently, for various reasons – cost being one of them, there is none. However, that may be reviewed for future. Mr. Blake stated it may be too early to have a life cycle. There can be a discussion as we get closer to the final version of the Customer Guide. A limited number of guides are printed for MetroAccess customer on the fixed routes, as well as for community meetings. If there are many changes, then all the customers need to get an updated version. If there are minor changes then other avenues may be used to communicate with customers.

Ms. Jackson asked about the Customer Guide and Ms. Anderson explained that it provides helpful information about the service. Ms. Mezille asked if the updated version will include information about the Transport DC? Ms. Anderson stated that general information about Transport DC and Abilities-Ride, as well as other alternative transportation will be included.

Abilities-Ride Update:

Chair Semelfort asked for an update about the Mystery Riders Program, Scope of Work, potential vendor meeting, and about the current timeline. Mr. Blake stated about the

Mystery Riders Program, as the application form gets finalized, the committee will be notified. As for the solicitation package, it was expected to be done by now. A couple of things that to be changed. The potential providers will be allowed to choose the portion of the service area they wish to serve. The tentative date for pre-proposal is December 11, 2018, from 4 pm to 6 pm. There was also a discussion about the fare structure, which will remain the same.

Chair Semelfort stated that the MetroAccess ridership decreased in Montgomery County, but increased in Prince George's County. Mr. Blake stated he would work on improving the marketing of the service. Another reason that the ridership did not increase as much, could be because of dissatisfied customers with the service providers in the Prince George's County. Chair Semelfort stated that with Silver cab, customer do not know when the ride will arrive for the pickup, unless customers make extra efforts to find out.

Ms. Bush stated that the pool (shared) rides on TransportDC are not up-to customers, they are up-to the staff. A customer may not know whether the pool ride will arrive until the ride shows up. Mr. Ariza-Silva shared his experience about the pool rides: when he requested the service, the staff asked if he wanted a pool ride or a ride by himself? Mr. Ariza-Silva told the staff he wanted a shared ride. Afterwards, the driver came to pick him up, and stated no other customer was riding and took him to his destination.

Public Comments:

Dr. Posner stated that there is no first-aid kit on MetroAccess vehicles. During an emergency on the MetroAccess vehicles, drivers are required to call the OCC instead of calling 911. Making a contact with the OCC takes a long time, therefore, it was suggested that either drivers should be able to call 911 when needed or to set up a hotline for immediate response.

There was a discussion with a proposed resolution that in case of an imminent emergency, MetroAccess drivers will be allowed to call 911 first, and then call the OCC. The OCC will be able to provide additional assistance as needed, as well as the emergency contact person for the customer (involved) will be contacted and information will be provided accordingly.

Regarding the first-aid-kits on MetroAccess vehicles, it may involve a liability issue, and that matter would need further review.

Dr. Posner also commented about the upcoming Yellow line service disruption from November 26, 2018 through December 9, 2018. The Blue Line will run from Franconia/Springfield to Largo, and from Huntington to Largo. During this time frame, Metro staff needs to be at the platforms providing information to customers. Train destinations need to be marked clearly, and not be marked *special*. There should be announcements made prior to train departure with ample time for riders to be able to board the correct train. It is critical to the disabled community to have accurate information.

Mr. Orleans asked if the new Abilities-Ride solicitation is going to be open to providers from other than Montgomery and Prince George's counties? Would they be able to travel through the service area, and he asked about the payment/fare structure? Mr. Blake confirmed that the solicitation will be open to service providers other than from the two counties in Maryland, and that the providers will be able to travel through the service area. The payment/fare structure will remain as it is. If a client wants to travel to a greater distance, MetroAccess may be more advantageous for them as the Abilities-Ride trip will probably cost more than \$6.50

Mr. Orleans also asked for data about complaints received on the Abilities-Ride service to be shared in the next full committee meeting.

Dr. Posner stated that for the budget public comments on the budget hearings, the Accessibility Advisor Committee will have talking points. One of the points to be talked about is the \$2 flat weekend fare on Metrobus service (proposed), which will make the MetroAccess weekend fares flat \$4. Another point to be discussed is about passes. There ought to be a MetroAccess pass. As per the General Manager/CEO Paul Wiedefeld, WMATA is not a business but a service-oriented organization.

Chair Semelfort stated there are other agencies that have passes for the paratransit service. The comment has been noted on the record.

There was a discussion about the committee members' attendance. Ms. Rush stated her issue that attendance of the AAC members. The issue is with the commitment or lack of, by the members. Dr. Posner stated that the WMATA Board has reduced the number of the Riders Advisory Council (RAC) from 20 to 11, and we do not want the same to happen to the AAC. Mr. Sheehan also stated that the RAC does not have subcommittees and that is not as effective.

Ms. Rush also commented about Metro service being cut in the Prince George's County, and it's negative impact on the MetroAccess customers. Is there a plan to grand-father those MetroAccess customer who may be negatively impacted? Mr. Blake stated that the matter is being reviewed. An extension of the current grand-father program is not being considered, however, alternate transportation may be an option.

Meeting adjourned at 5:42 pm.