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## Accessibility Advisory Committee

### **METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: May 18, 2015**

In attendance: Mr. Paul Semelfort (Chair), Ms. Denise Rush (Co-Chair), Ms. Carolyn Bellamy, Dr. Phil Posner, Mr. Charles Crawford, Ms. Marisa Laios, Ms. Doris Ray, Dr. Tappan Banerjee, Mr. Edward McEntee, Mr. Elver Ariza-Silva, Dr. William Staderman, and Mr. Patrick Sheehan.

#### **Call to Order**

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

#### **Review of May 2015 Agenda**

Committee member New Business was redirected to the public comment period. Agenda approved with amendments.

#### **Review of March 2015 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were approved without amendments.

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

Ms. Sara Morris, Senior Administrative Coordinator, MTM, reported that all public comments from the previous meetings were addressed.

Ms. Celisse Outlaw, Service Monitor, Office of MetroAccess Service, reported her participation in the Updates on Waivers & Adult Support Workshop in Fairfax, Virginia for individuals with disabilities. She advised that many of the attendees expressed an interest in WMATA's Travel Training Program, and materials were disseminated to provide information.

#### **MetroAccess Employee Recognition**

Ms. Celisse Outlaw, Service Monitor, Office of MetroAccess Service, recognized Mr. Stephen Smith as the Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award winner. A detailed description of Mr. Smith's accomplishments can be found in the document titled "Michael Wilson Staff Recognition Award" located under the May 2015 heading at

[http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm)

### **Work Plan**

Mr. Semelfort read the FY16 MetroAccess Subcommittee Work Plan and requested committee member suggestions for additions.

Dr. Posner requested the FY16 Budget, Fare Policy, and the effects of the new payment plan on MetroAccess be included.

Ms. Bellamy requested an update from staff on the seat belt waiver. She asked that this include how many customers utilize this waiver, and if customers understand the repercussions of not wearing the seat belt on board the vehicle.

Dr. Posner requested additional information on driver knowledge of the manifest codes. He advised that this evening a customer will discuss an occasion when their driver did not understand the manifest codes.

Ms. Rush requested a presentation on the MetroAccess Service Area and the Grandfathering Policy.

Dr. Posner requested a presentation on the new MetroAccess vehicle design and specifications.

Mr. Ariza-Silva requested a presentation from the Transport DC Program service delivery provider.

Mr. Semelfort requested a presentation on the MetroAccess Driver Sensitivity Program.

### **Questions/Comments:**

Ms. Carolyn Bellamy inquired on the process for MetroAccess customers traveling via the Transport DC Program. She inquired if a customer can change their destination an hour before pickup with the Transport DC Program.

Mr. Christaan Blake, Director, ADA Policy and Planning, stated that a MetroAccess customer can be transported by the taxi company an hour before travel through Transport DC if the customer is a DC resident.

Mr. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Department of Access Services, advised that a customer in the audience asked if additional discussion would take place regarding the Long Term Sustainability Study. Mr. Kent informed that staff is prepared to return and discuss the study with members if they desire. Mr. Kent stated that the study is scheduled for submission to Metro's Board of Directors at the end of June. Mr. Kent also advised that prior to the end of June a meeting is scheduled with the Board Executive Committee with AAC leadership where this can be discussed.

### **Travel Training Program**

Mr. Christopher Colbert, Operations Manager, Office of Eligibility Certification and Outreach, discussed the Travel Training Program, strategies for advancement, and support to organizations. Mr. Colbert stated that the travel training program is designed to assist individuals with disabilities and seniors with utilizing public transportation independently. He advised that travel training provides knowledge on how to plan trips, utilize accessibility features and travel safely within the transit system. If a customer expresses an interest in the program, a referral is written and forwarded to the appropriate staff for coordination. Mr. Colbert explained that advertising includes signage in buses, rail cars and MetroAccess vehicles, newspaper ads, and staff presentation at customer outreach events and workshops. Mr. Colbert also stated that WMATA holds Train-the-Trainer Workshops to teach organizations' staff members how to travel train their clients who are interested in traveling on fixed route. Mr. Colbert reported that in FY-15 (year-to-date) 1,600 individuals have been travel trained.

#### Questions/Comments:

Mr. Ariza-Silva inquired on if travel training is solely for MetroAccess riders.

**Mr. Colbert stated that the program is for individuals with disabilities and is not restricted to MetroAccess customers.**

Mr. Ariza-Silva inquired if travel training is available for illiterate individuals.

**Mr. Colbert stated that travel trainers do not perform verification on a person's disability. He advised that individuals will not be rejected from participating in the Travel Training Program.**

**Mr. Kent added that the ADA does not recognize limited language proficiency and illiteracy as a disability. Mr. Kent advised that Metro is willing to assist all individuals wishing to travel on fixed route service.**

Ms. Laios recommended using Facebook to promote travel training. She also recommended added travel training videos.

**Mr. Kent stated that Metro currently has a presence on Facebook; through this method, WMATA provides updates on changes in service, schedules and outages. He stated that there is currently a wait to add information; however, he will make this a priority.**

**Mr. Colbert stated that The Office of Eligibility Certification and Outreach plans to utilize Facebook and Twitter for travel training promotions once a quarter.**

Ms. Bellamy recommended placing advertisements for travel training in Senior and Gazette newspapers.

Dr. Banerjee recommended placing advertisements in the Fairfax County newspaper and Fairfax County website. He also requested that a travel training representative speak at their monthly meeting.

Mr. Semefort read several questions from the audience; questions included the process of becoming a visually impaired travel trainer, if people are more familiar with the term Mobility Orientation Specialist, and by what means do the low vision communities obtain information for travel training.

**Mr. Kent stated that the demand for travel training has increased and Metro has provided over twenty Train-the-Trainer Workshops. If Metro is unable to assist an individual, that person is referred to an organization that has completed this training and is capable of meeting an individual's needs.**

**Mr. Colbert stated that his employees are classified as Travel Trainers. Orientation Mobility Specialists require certification to assist blind or low vision individuals. He stated that his office has a partnership with The Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind, and they handle visually impaired travel training requests. WMATA currently has four travel training employees, and six travel training contractors.**

Mr. Sheehan requested clarification on if there are any Certified Mobility Orientation Specialists on staff. He also inquired about the steps involved with training a visually impaired customer at a street intersection and how travel training is offered to individuals with guide dogs.

**Mr. Colbert stated that his travel training employees do not assist visually impaired customers at this time, and those requests are referred to The Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind. He has one employee on staff that is a Certified Mobility Orientation Specialist; however, she is currently on medical leave. Mr. Colbert advised that specialists canvass the area prior to a travel training session, assess crosswalks, sidewalks and intersections then determine the most suitable approach for the individual.**

**Mr. Kent recommended that committee members recruit organizations to partner with WMATA to assist with travel training. He also advised that there is grant money available to assist with improving this program.**

Mr. Ariza-Silva inquired on if travel trainers will meet a customer at their home, and on the timeframe and the cost of the training.

**Mr. Colbert stated that after the referral is given for travel training, the customer is contacted by staff to coordinate the specifics of the trip. The meeting point and timeframe allocated to train a customer is based on the individual's needs. He stated that there are no fees assessed for the travel training session.**

Mr. Sheehan expressed his interest in the available grant money for the Travel Training Program.

**Mr. Kent advised that the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) meets periodically to review proposals for the region and provides grant money to support these objectives. Mr. Kent stated that the AAC can promote and support the organizations that apply for this grant money. He stated that Mr. Frank Roth, Director, Office of Eligibility Certification and Outreach can assist with initiating this process.**

Dr. Posner inquired if WMATA's Trip Advisory for fixed route informs customers of challenges and obstructions at specific crosswalks or intersections.

**Mr. Kent stated that this feature is not available at this time. He stated that WMATA will look to include this information in the future.**

### **Public Comments**

Members of the public commented on grandfathering; the long-term sustainability study report; fares; travel training communication; GPS outages; geo-coding; faring changes; and travel time.

### **Committee member comments**

Committee members commented on recertification applications; travel time, routing of trips, recertification application, and the seat belt waiver.

For detailed descriptions and resolutions of public comments made during the meeting, please refer to the May 2015 Complaint Resolution Report located at [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy\\_policy/subcommittee.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/advocacy_policy/subcommittee.cfm).

**Meeting adjourned at 6:02pm.**