



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-6060

Accessibility Advisory Committee

METROACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: March 20, 2017

In attendance: Mr. Paul Semelfort (Chair), Ms. Denise Rush (Vice-Chair), Mr. Edward McEntee, Mr. Patrick Sheehan, Ms. Carolyn Bellamy, Ms. Darnise Bush, Mr. Charles Crawford, Dr. Tapan Banerjee, Mr. Elver Ariza-Silva, and Mr. Steve Kaffen.

Call to Order

Ms. Denise Rush called the MetroAccess Subcommittee (MAS) meeting to order at 4:02pm.

Review of February 2017 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Rush advised that she made the comments in regards to changes in bus fares on page six of the minutes, not Ms. Darnise Bush. The minutes were approved as amended.

Review of February 2017 Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Customer Service and Outreach Report

Mr. Carlton Brown, Quality Assurance Administrative Services Manager, MTM, reported all public comments from the previous meetings were investigated, addressed with the appropriate Service Providers, and communicated to the customers.

Ms. Stephanie Thorne, Service Monitor, MetroAccess, reported staff attended a Transportation Town Hall Meeting on March 2, 2017 at The Vida Senior Center in Washington, DC. Ms. Thorne advised that this location was a Spanish-speaking center, and included a discussion regarding the Spanish translation of the Customer Guide to MetroAccess. Education on acquiring MetroAccess Service and the Senior SmarTrip Card were also covered.

Michael Wilson Award Presentation

Mr. Pavel Lesho, Assistant Project Manager, MV Transportation, recognized Dispatch Supervisor, Christina Randolph as the Michael Wilson Award Recipient for March 2017. Mr. Lesho provided a summary of Ms. Randolph's key contributions, leadership skills, and accomplishments during her tenure with MetroAccess.

Ms. Denise Rush recognized Dr. B. Moore Gwynn, Accessibility Advisory Committee Coordinator, ADA Policy & Planning, for her dedication and support to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Ms. Rush also recognized Operations Control Center (OCC) Reservationist Ciara Silver and Reservationist Roland Thompson, for going above and beyond to provide exceptional customer support. Ms. Rush advised she will offer an award following the Michael Wilson Award presentation each month.

MetroAccess Customer Satisfaction

Mr. Jason Minser, Director, WMATA Customer Research, provided an overview of the MetroAccess Research Program. Improvements to the MetroAccess Research Program include customer satisfaction ratings of MetroAccess Service, customer knowledge and usage of MetroAccess, perception of MetroAccess in general, and the likelihood to use travel training in the future. The MetroAccess Research Program conducts two separate surveys: Customer Satisfaction and Knowledge and Usage. The Customer Satisfaction Survey measures customer favorability, overall customer satisfaction, and fifteen aspects of MetroAccess service. The Knowledge and Usage Survey focuses on registrants' understanding of MetroAccess and the service provided. Mr. Minser advised that the Customer Satisfaction Survey in the past was conducted semiannually and the Knowledge and Usage Survey was conducted quarterly. In an effort to improve data quality, analytics, comparability, and provide cost savings to the Authority, both surveys have been combined. This allows further insight gathering, improves and aligns the MetroAccess Research Program with the fixed-route program, and also provides similar metrics and data points on a quarterly basis. The award for the new contract is currently in progress. When complete, an update will be provided to the Committee.

Mr. Minser stated in the last 18 months, the number of registrants has increased from 34,000 to 42,000. The profile of registrants is broken down into three groups: light user, moderate user, and heavy user. Light users account for 68% of customers and make up 4% of trips made with MetroAccess; moderate users account for 18% of customers and make up 18% of trips; heavy users account for 14% of customers and make up 78% of trips. This means the smallest group of customers have been most impactful on the service. Mr. Minser stated customer favorability towards MetroAccess has declined from 41% in 2015 to 16% in 2016. As it relates to overall customer satisfaction, there has been a 10% decrease at the close of 2016; this could be a result of seasonality, as well as, service level delivery. The decline in customer satisfaction is largely driven by the following survey categories: trip routed in an efficient way, dispatcher/driver coordination, and arrived to destination on time.

In the Knowledge and Usage Survey, there has been an increase in InstantAccess and e-Alert familiarity. Knowledge and usage has decreased for web booking and the Free

Ride Program familiarity. Based on this survey, 61% of customer's state they are unlikely to utilize the travel training program in the future.

Comments/Questions from the MAS:

Mr. Crawford inquired on resolution efforts being taken to address the areas of concern outlined in the survey. He also inquired on what was being done to mitigate the poor routing of MetroAccess vehicles.

Mr. Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager, Access Services, stated Ms. Allison Anderson, Operations Manager, MetroAccess, ensures that the outlined procedures are followed. MV Transportation monitors the timeliness of MetroAccess trips. Mr. Kent stated that given the operator shortages and vehicle restrictions at this time, the dispatch department has been moving trips quickly to ensure customers are picked up on time or limiting the extent of customer lateness. In some instances, the dispatch department has had to make difficult decisions related to trip movement, as the choices are limited. Hiring additional operators, having an actively involved dispatch team, and exceptional management personnel will reduce some of the routing issues; however, Washington, DC is faced with massive traffic delays which also contribute to service challenges.

Mr. McEntee inquired if customer favorability is attributed to the increased number of customers riding the service due to SafeTrack. Mr. McEntee stated that operators are pushed and pulled in many directions when they encounter changes in their manifests.

Mr. Kent stated these surveys are based on customer perception and not statistical data. Mr. Kent stated that there are instances when customers report routing of trips are not logical and this information does not reflect real time service challenges such as customer no shows, traffic detours, and issues with driver resources.

Mr. Minser stated SafeTrack work has impacted service; however, there are various other factors that have contributed.

Dr. Banerjee stated statistics in this survey related to the usage of the travel training program show that customers do not intend to use this program. He inquired if WMATA personnel should evaluate this program for potential budget cuts.

Mr. Kent stated the majority of individuals that utilize the travel training program are not existing MetroAccess customers, even though they do have a disability. Prior to providing MetroAccess service, travel training is offered

for fixed-route service. Although some may become MetroAccess customers in the future, they are given an opportunity to use the Free Ride Program. This survey is an opportunity to ask the MetroAccess customer if they are willing to use fixed-route service.

Ms. Bush inquired on the difference between dispatch courteousness and dispatch/driver coordination. Ms. Bush stated that dispatch/driver coordination should be lower than 64%, as she has encountered several situations in which dispatch continues to contact the driver while the operator is driving, dispatch fails to communicate changes to the driver's route, and drivers are frequently lost while trying to locate her home. She also advised that this area requires additional attention.

Mr. Minser stated that dispatcher courteousness is measured when a customer calls to the Where's My Ride line. It is the customer's perception regarding the politeness and professionalism of the agent. Dispatch/driver coordination is the interaction between the dispatcher and driver to communicate the customer's desired drop off point.

Mr. Kent stated the information provided by Ms. Bush is very insightful and warrants additional attention, as has the lowered score. With the assistance of OCC management, Staff will utilize and build off the available tools to make necessary improvements.

Mr. Kent thanked Mr. Minser for his partnership and assistance in providing this data. He stated that Mr. Minser has been involved in leadership meetings and developed an understanding of Access Services. He also advised that this information assists staff in understanding what is taking place to develop in areas that are not as strong as others. Mr. Kent stated that continual customer education is needed to improve knowledge. The survey displays that the following areas require immediate attention: knowledge on MetroAccess e-Alerts and the Free Ride Program. Mr. Kent advised that any recommendations from the Committee on how to disseminate this information would be welcome.

Ms. Bellamy stated that following the assessment process in the Office of Eligibility, Certification, and Outreach, there should be an additional training session explaining MetroAccess service from start to finish. This training would provide specific details on MetroAccess policies and procedures.

Mr. Ariza-Silva stated he is in agreement with Ms. Bellamy's comments. Mr. Ariza-Silva recommended providing additional guidance to customers on MetroAccess card use, offering preferred language accommodations to prospective customers, and

dissemination of MetroAccess customer education information through agencies such as Social Services.

Mr. Kent stated that Mr. Minser advised that he may be able to measure and report back to the committee data as it relates to customer retention of MetroAccess information over a period of time. Mr. Kent also advised Ms. Cheryl O'Konek, Operations Manager, Office of Eligibility Certification and Outreach, to speak with Ms. Bellamy and Mr. Ariza-Silva in regards to their suggestions.

Customer Comment:

Customer #1: Customer inquired if door-to-door service was used as a factor in the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Mr. Minser stated door-to-door service has been included in the 91% satisfaction rate in the driver helpfulness category.

Customer #2: Customer inquired if customer lateness is being monitored. The customer also advised that she never received resolution regarding the customer complaint brought forth at last month's meeting.

Mr. Kent stated that staff will follow up with the customer in regards to the complaint investigation. He also stated the survey suggests that recently MetroAccess has not done an acceptable job in managing the category of arriving at destinations on time. Mr. Kent stated this is a major area of concern and staff has been working to make improvements.

Ms. Rush stated customers must be present at the meeting in order to discuss their complaint during the public comment period. Any written complaints should be provided to staff for investigation.

Customer Education Campaign

Mr. Carlton Brown provided an overview of MTM's Operational Quality Assurance measures and functions. Mr. Brown stated that MTM is an independent monitoring and review provider for MetroAccess Service. MTM provides transparency to the customer, service providers, and leadership of MetroAccess through understanding what is taking place with service on a day-to-day basis. MTM proactively identifies problems within the service and confirms that corrective actions have taken place. QA functions include no show/late cancellation reviews, customer service investigations, data analysis, facility and maintenance, safety and street monitoring, and OCC monitoring. Mr. Brown stated

that safety and street monitoring includes personnel in the field observing door-to-door service, following MetroAccess vehicles, identifying unsafe acts, reviewing high-volume locations, and review of serviceable/non-serviceable door-to-door locations. The documented infractions are brought to the attention of the service provider contractor for immediate action.

Mr. Brown stated the facility and maintenance function includes dedicated personnel that travel to service delivery provider bases to assess vehicle condition at pullouts, perform maintenance file inspections, fleet inspections and audits, and operator file audits from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. The findings of these audits are documented and distributed for corrective action. OCC monitoring includes review of where's my ride (WMR) and reservations calls for adherence to the script. An evaluation of each agent is administered utilizing a scorecard to ensure that service standards are being met. MTM also reviews processes and policies to determine if compliance is being met. This includes identifying a service issue, notifying the appropriate parties, and providing recommendations on corrective measures.

Comments/Questions from the MAS:

Mr. Ariza-Silva thanked Mr. Brown for the presentation and stated that the information provided appears to have a strong foundation; however, he inquired on the reason the same service issues continue to occur.

Mr. Brown advised that managing this process is a team effort, the controls in place are not as solid as they should be, and in this case, some aspects get missed. He advised that MTM continues to evaluate the service and propose adjustments for process improvement.

Ms. Rush stated that within the last week, Trapeze has been scheduling her trips within the same hour. She stated that one trip was scheduled for 5:00pm and the other was scheduled for 5:40pm. She requested staff look into this issue.

Ms. Anderson stated that they will investigate this issue and report back with the findings.

Mr. Sheehan inquired if service issues are tracked and evaluated to determine the root cause and if MTM has seen progress.

Mr. Brown stated that MTM trends complaints from a reactive standpoint. On a weekly and monthly basis, MTM provides recommendations to service providers and MetroAccess leadership for improvement. Recently, the source of most complaints stem from the shortage of operators. Through operational reviews, MTM is able to identify failures within the service. Although the customer may not directly see changes occur, improvements

have been made to facilities, operator conduct, and procedures which improve the overall customer experience.

Mr. Kent stated the previous contract had a single contractor managing the service and also performing the quality assurance function. The new model separates the OCC and quality assurance functions. Mr. Kent also stated that due to human error, customers will continue to see issues with service; however, Quality Assurance brings these failures to management's attention for resolution. Mr. Kent stated that with MTM as a Quality Assurance provider, MetroAccess has a dedicated team of professionals designated to watch and evaluate service, both administratively and operationally. Mr. Kent advised committee members to inform staff if there are specific aspects of the MetroAccess performance that you would like to review. Both MTM and MetroAccess staff will be available to provide information.

Public Comments

Comments received were with regard to: late pick-ups; fare issues; improvements to service; driver compensation; customer communication during severe weather events; and customer privacy.

For detailed descriptions and resolutions of public comments made during the meeting, please refer to the March 2017/AAC MAS March Meeting located at <https://www.wmata.com/about/accessibility-advisory-committee/subcommittee.cfm>.

Meeting adjourned at 6:02pm.

