

# The Future of MetroAccess

## New Contracts Starting in 2013

### BACKGROUND

**Status of Current Contract.** MetroAccess has been operated by contractors since service began in 1994. Metro's paratransit contracts usually run for four or five years with options to extend a little longer (often one or two years at a time). Metro decides whether or not to use the optional extension periods based on the contractor's performance and sometimes for budgetary reasons. The current contract has been extended to its maximum length, and no more extension periods are available. The expiration date is June 30, 2013, and in order to have a new contract ready to begin the next day, Metro has been working over the last year to prepare for this.

**Process for Starting New Contract.** Metro invites interested contractors to submit proposals that demonstrate how they would operate MetroAccess service in accordance with Metro standards. Metro's standards are explained in detail in the Request for Proposals document or RFP. To ensure that we included those standards that are most important to our customers and to make use of best practices in the transit industry, Metro reached out to our stakeholders to get their input. We hosted a vendor conference with a number of companies who are experienced in providing paratransit services; we hosted three town hall meetings in partnership with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to seek input from MetroAccess customers and the public in general; and we hosted a series of customer focus groups comprised of randomly selected customers, disability advocacy organizations, and peer transit agencies. The feedback we obtained through these meetings was directly incorporated into our RFP document and will serve as direction to any company interested in becoming a MetroAccess contractor.

### NEW BUSINESS MODEL

**Purpose.** Many of you have heard Metro refer to the establishment of a "new business model" for MetroAccess. This basically means that our current system of having one contractor responsible for operating the entire service will be changed to allow more companies to participate and to allow each to specialize in the work they do best. The use of multiple contractors also gives Metro more options as the service may change over time. During the course of the current contract, the number of people riding MetroAccess has doubled, and as people live longer and the number of people with disabilities increases, the demand for paratransit service is likely to continue growing in the future. Metro's new business model prepares us for that growth while maintaining and even raising the standards for safety, on-time performance, and customer satisfaction.

An illustration of the new business model, showing how it is different from the current model, appears below:

**CURRENT MODEL**

**MetroAccess Staff (Metro)  
Oversees single contractor (MV)**

- Dispatch
- Reservations
- Scheduling
- Customer Service
- Safety
- Street Operations
- Vehicles
- Computer Systems

**NEW MODEL**

**MetroAccess Staff (Metro)  
Oversees multiple contractors:**

- Dispatch
- Reservations
- Scheduling
- Customer Service
- Safety
- Street Operations
- Vehicles
- Computer Systems

**MetroAccess Call Center  
(Operated by MV)**

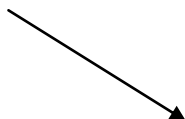
- Reservations
- Scheduling
- Dispatch
- “Where’s My Ride”
- Training
- Quality Assurance**
- Complaint Resolution**
- Computer Systems

**MetroAccess Call Center: Contractor #1**

- Reservations
- Scheduling
- Dispatch
- Where’s My Ride
- Training
- Systems
- Accounting/Reconciliation

**Quality Assurance: Contractor #2**

- Independent Road Supervisors**
- No Show Review**
- Customer Service**
- Data & Operational Audit**



**MetroAccess Service Delivery  
(Operated by MV)**

- Safety
- Driver Hiring, Training, Supervision
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Manage Subcontractors and Taxi

**MetroAccess Service Delivery  
(Contractors 3+)**

- Safety
- Driver Hiring, Training, Supervision
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Manage Taxi

**Customer Benefit.** While safety is always our first priority, our surveys indicate that over 95% of our customers give MetroAccess a high rating in this category. However, customers told us that on-time performance is one of the most important things expected of MetroAccess and that there is room for improvement. In our new contracts, there will be a higher standard for on-time service (and several other areas of performance) and greater disincentives for not meeting those standards.

### **Key Changes to Standards and Enforcement:**

- Failure to meet 92% on-time performance standard will result in a higher disincentive
- Failure to meet 90% on-time performance will result in an additional penalty
- Meeting the efficiency standard without also meeting the on-time performance standard will not qualify the contractor for an incentive payment
- Failure to meet on-time performance standard will result in disincentives being charged to both the call center contractor and the contractor operating the service
- Calls to dispatch and reservations must be answered within two minutes 98% of the time – this is a sizeable increase from the previous standard of 92%
- Meeting the telephone answering standard for reservations but not meeting for dispatch/where's my ride will not qualify the contractor for an incentive payment
- New standards have been added to promote vehicle cleanliness, proper vehicle maintenance and repair, safe driving, timely reporting, and responsiveness to complaints.

The new business model also enables us to address poor performance of individual contractors separately. Contractors providing safe, quality, and courteous service can be rewarded with larger amounts of service, while contractors who are not meeting standards can have their service levels reduced to ensure they are focused on promptly improving until they again meet standards.

## **TRANSITION**

**When is this Occurring?** Proposals were submitted from interested transportation companies in August 2012. The proposals are still being evaluated, and in the meantime, transition planning is already underway. The details will be finalized after the award of contracts, now scheduled for January 2013. It is our intention to bring the new contractors into service gradually so that the transition will be seamless for customers.

MetroAccess will keep customers informed along the way, and we will partner with the AAC to ensure that the customer messaging includes all of the information needed. We will broadcast this information through many different methods, to include:

- WEB Pages
- Phone greeting
- Auto phone calls
- Seat Drops
- Call Center Agents
- On-Hold Messages
- Direct Mailings
- Press Releases
- AAC Meetings

**Role of the AAC.** Metro will partner with the AAC to produce a communications plan that effectively informs the disability community throughout the transition period. As always, the AAC will serve as the customer's voice to Metro.

## **Questions and Answers for Transition:**

### **Will my reservations be affected?**

NO. Reservations will NOT be affected. All trips booked will be delivered and reservations will continue to be taken seven days a week.

### **Will my eligibility be changed?**

NO.

### **Are any Policies going to be changed?**

NO. MetroAccess Policies will NOT change. The same MetroAccess Customer Guide will be used.

### **Is Door to Door going to be changed?**

NO. The Door-to-Door service will continue under the same policy followed today, which is:

- The outermost exterior door must be no more than 150 feet from the vehicle.
- The driver must be able to maintain sight of the vehicle at all times.
- There must be safe access from the vehicle to the door.
- There must be safe parking on a public roadway or public parking lot.
- The parked vehicle must not block or impede traffic.

### **Will my pick-ups be on time?**

MetroAccess will continue to require high levels of performance by each contractor. In many areas, these standards have been strengthened and others have been added. Competing service providers will be evaluated on their overall adherence to standards both against themselves and the other providers.

### **Will the pick-up window be changed?**

NO. MetroAccess Policies will NOT change.

### **Where can I file a complaint?**

The Complaint Phone Number remains the same, **202-637-0128**. This number will still reach the WMATA Customer Service Department who will record each complaint received and ensure follow up action is taken.

### **Will new people know where I live?**

YES. Your address information and special instructions are stored in our computer system which is not changing with the new contract. We anticipate that most of our skilled and experienced MetroAccess drivers will continue to work in our service.

### **Can I request a sedan to pick me up?**

NO. MetroAccess Policies will NOT change. Taxis or sedans cannot be requested.

**Will MetroAccess continue to be a shared-ride service?**

YES. Trips scheduling policies will not be changed. MetroAccess expects the collaboration of multiple contractors to bring together new ideas to provide better service to our customers.

**Will the service area change?**

There will be NO changes to service areas due to the transition.