



Safety and Operations Committee

Board Information Item III-A

MetroAccess Update

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

Document
Number:
205603

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

Presentation Name:

MetroAccess Spotlight

Project Manager:

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Project Department:

Access Services

Purpose/Key Highlights:

Metro continues to focus on improving the safety, customer service, and operational delivery of its paratransit system, MetroAccess. This presentation provides an update on the performance of MetroAccess, changes to its contracting model, and technology initiatives.

Key Highlights:

- Performance
- Contracting Model
- Technology Initiatives

Interested Parties:

MetroAccess Contractors:
Challenger Transportation
MTM
MV Transportation
National Express
Transdev

Abilities-Ride Providers:
Action Taxi
BBC
Curb
Falcon Transport

Old Dominion
Regency Taxi
Silver Cab
Transco
Uber
Yellow Cab

Background:

Metro continues to focus on improving the safety, customer service, and operational delivery of its paratransit system, MetroAccess. This presentation provides an update on the performance of MetroAccess, changes to its contracting model, and technology initiatives.

Discussion:

MetroAccess Basics

MetroAccess customers must apply for eligibility to ride. After they're eligible, customers book trips no later than 4:30pm the day before. Trips are scheduled as shared rides and take into consideration the fixed route equivalent time.

Fares are twice the fastest fixed route fare with a maximum of \$4. Customers are provided door-to-door service in vans, minivans, and sedans. There are currently 36,000 individuals eligible to ride MetroAccess.

ADA Tracking and Requirements

Paratransit service is required under 49 CFR Part 37 Subpart F, "Paratransit as a Complement to Fixed Route Service." Paratransit service must be comparable to available Fixed Route Service. The pickup and drop off areas must encompass at least three-fourths of a mile of available Fixed Route Service, as well as the same hours as fixed route. It must have equivalent on-board times, and fares must not be more than twice the fastest Fixed Route Service equivalent fare.

Current System Set-Up

The MetroAccess system currently is comprised of six key contractors: four service delivery providers, one call center contractor, and one quality assurance provider. There are 766 vehicles in the fleet and 986 contracted, unionized drivers. MetroAccess delivers service 24 hours, 7 days a week for the entire service area. The service area extends beyond three-fourths of a mile of available Fixed Route Service.

MetroAccess also provides the Abilities-Ride program. This is a program that diverts trips from the MetroAccess contracted service and allows customers to ride in a non-marked vehicle from CURB, Uber, taxis, and van services. Customers opt-in to the service and are currently not charged for the service. The cost difference is stark, with

an Abilities-Ride trip costing \$28.53 while MetroAccess revenue service hours average at \$64.34. MetroAccess chooses if the trip is provided by Abilities-Ride. This service also supports operational challenges like high demand times and shift changes. Criteria include the number of trips, origin, time, and distance.

Eligibility, Trips, and Transport

MetroAccess customers apply for eligibility. They must have a disability that prevents them from using bus or rail for at least some of their trips. The process includes a doctor's note, an interview, and a functional assessment.

Customers book trips through a reservation system. They negotiate a pick-up time. Once the pick-up time is agreed to, a 30-minute pick-up window is established.

In the pick-up window, MetroAccess arrives at the location and meets the customer at the door. The driver is responsible for securing the customer in the vehicle.

Performance

Safety

MetroAccess safety performance was strong, with 11 out of 12 months MetroAccess met its Safety Incidents metric of no more than 30 incidents per 10 million revenue miles, and in 9 out of 12 months MetroAccess met its Injury metric of no more than 20 Injuries per 10 million revenue miles.

On-Time Performance

MetroAccess on-time performance continues to be strong, having no month under 90%. However, the current MetroAccess on-time performance of 91.5% is under its target metric of 93%.

Customer Satisfaction

MetroAccess is closely trailing its Customer Satisfaction metric of 80% with quarters fluctuating between 75% and 81%.

Contract Solicitations

In 2023, MetroAccess brought on consultants with paratransit subject matter expertise to consider changes to the contracting model. The consultants considered interviews with American paratransit peers as well as their own experience. The consultants' recommendations were considered when drafting Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to begin in 2024.

Service Delivery

The Service Delivery contracts are the core providers of vehicle service for

MetroAccess. The current model has four vendors, each with a designated service area. The vendors use Metro-owned vehicles and coordinate with the MetroAccess Operations Control Center. The vendors are paid per revenue service hour with four service zones.

A key change in the service delivery model is a reduction in vendors and service zones from four to two. The vendors will still use Metro-owned vehicles and coordinate with the control center.

Abilities-Ride Program

We are continuing our Abilities-Ride program. Currently there are 10 participating providers, including CURB, Uber, taxis, and van services. We expect to add Lyft to the program in the near future.

Non-Dedicated Service

MetroAccess is reintroducing Non-Dedicated ADA paratransit service. These paratransit trips will be provided by independent companies, using their own vehicles, and employees. The trips will be short, shuttle-like trips divided into six zones around the region.

Operations Control Center

The Operations Control Center is focused on reservation, scheduling, dispatch and handling the Where's My Ride phone calls. Previously, the OCC contractor was prohibited from being awarded a Service Delivery contract. That restriction has been removed.

Performance Assessment Support

As part of an effort to transition quality assurance functions in-house, the QA contract will be changed to a performance assessment support function, primarily centered on gathering data.

Technology Enhancements

MetroAccess continues to add technology to support the service and improve the customer experience. Safety-related technology additions include driver attention warning, collision avoidance "MobileEye", Alert Meter for operator fitness evaluations. Customer experience technology additions include Find-My-Ride web application, an AI digital assistant for booking trips, and SMS/text message option for trip inquiries.

Funding Impact:

No funding impact to this project.

Previous Actions:

Fall/Winter 2023: Developed business model recommendations and wrote RFPs.

Next Steps:

Spring – Summer 2024: Release RFPs and award new contracts.

Recommendation:

Information Only

MetroAccess

Spotlight

Safety & Operations Committee
February 22, 2024



Service Excellence, a strategic goal from Your Metro, the Way Forward

Focus today



Service excellence

Deliver safe, reliable, convenient, equitable, accessible, and enjoyable service for customers.



Talented teams

Attract, develop, and retain top talent where individuals feel valued, supported, and proud of their contribution.



Regional opportunity & partnership

Design transit service to move more people and equitably connect a growing region.



Sustainability

Manage resources responsibly to achieve a sustainable operating, capital, and environmental model.



Objectives of Service Excellence Goal

Safety & security | Ensure all customers and employees feel safe and secure using and delivering services

Reliability | Provide dependable service that the community trusts

Convenience | Deliver frequent and accessible service that modernizes and enhances the customer experience

MetroAccess Basics

- Apply for eligibility
- Book trips no later than 4:30pm the day before
 - Trips are scheduled as shared-rides and take into consideration the fixed route equivalent time
 - Fares are twice the fastest fixed route fare with a maximum of \$4
- Provides door-to-door service
- Round-the-clock operation
- 36,000 individuals eligible to use MetroAccess



Service Plan at a Glance

Business Needs and Actions

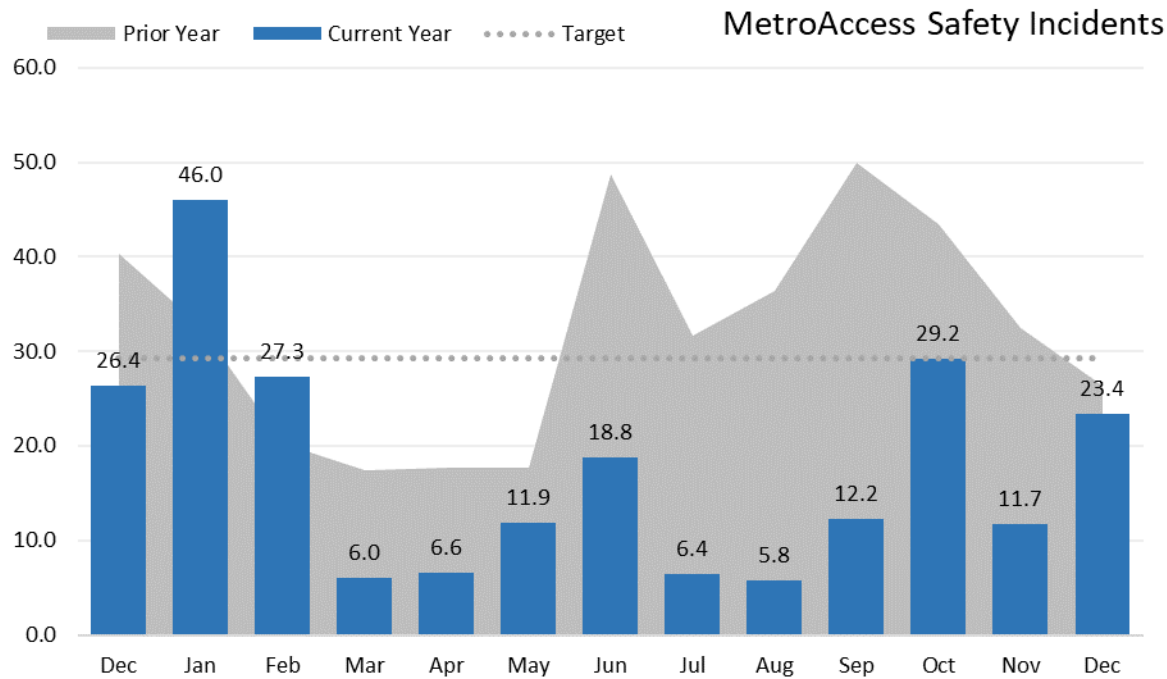
- Expenses increased
- Reduce expenses without sacrificing service quality
- Began Abilities-Ride program
- Maximize alternative services while protecting ADA service

Results

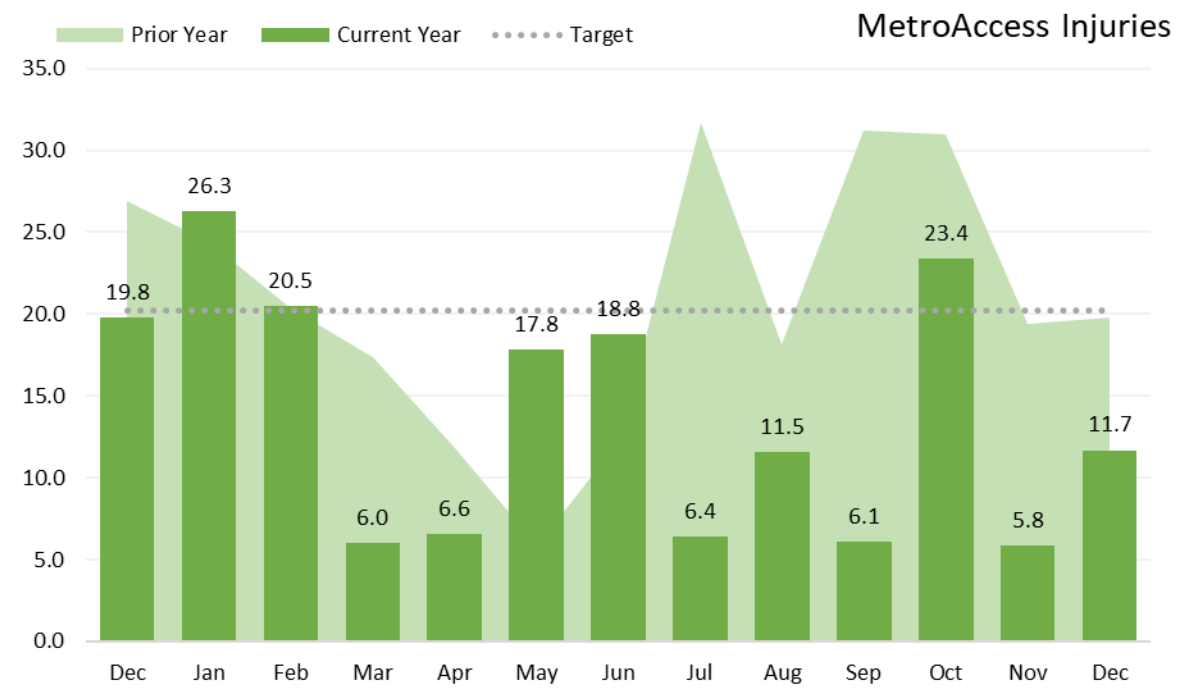
- Lowered expenses by reducing dedicated service hours from 185k to 135k per month
- Maintained quality with 51 consecutive months of 90% or greater on-time performance
- Preserved the most customer-friendly paratransit policies in the nation

Strong year of Safety

Safety Incidents per 10M Revenue Miles

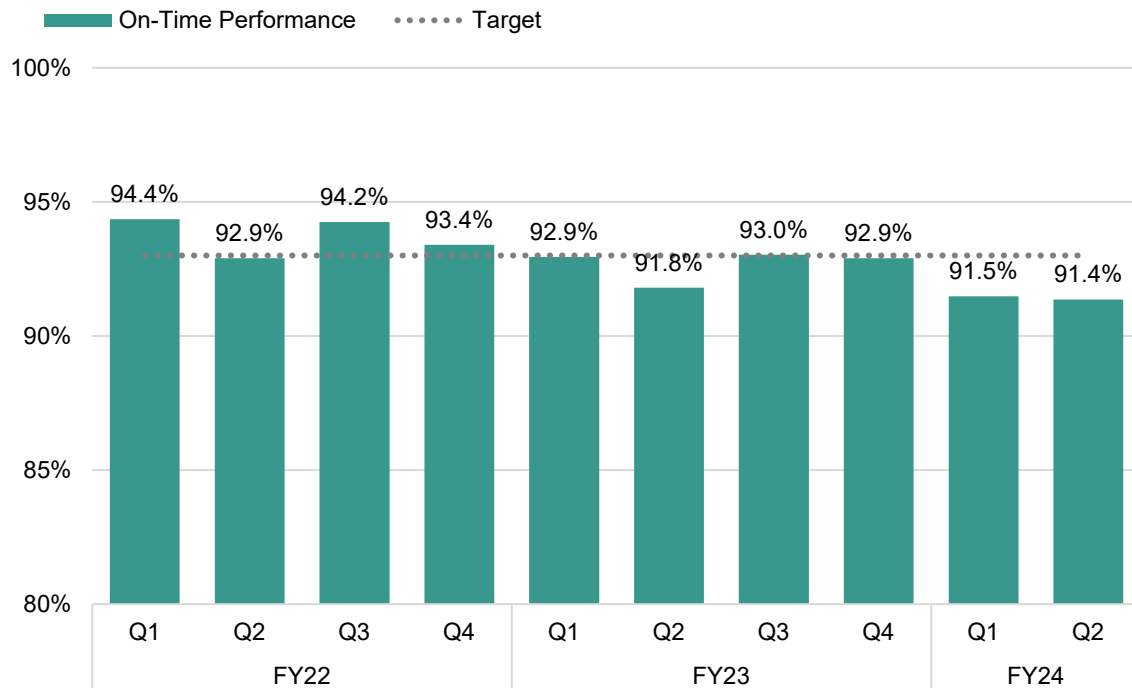


Injuries per 10M Revenue Miles

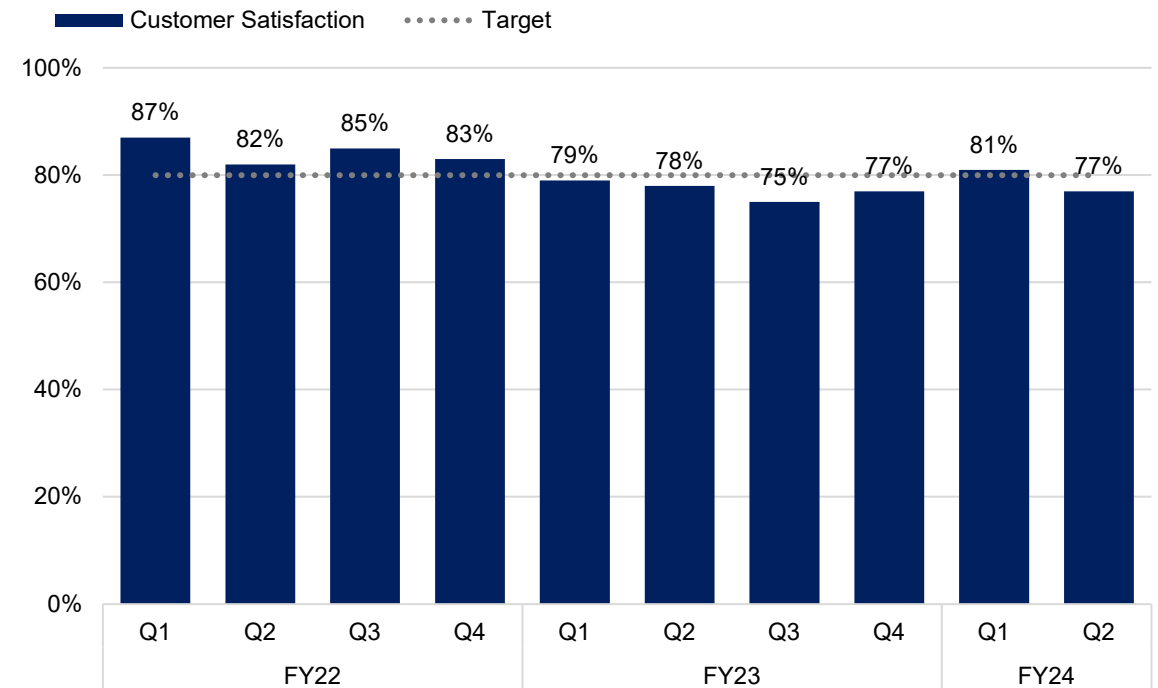


Continued solid performance throughout FY22 - FY24

On-Time Performance, FY22 – Q2 FY24



Customer Satisfaction, FY22 – Q2 FY24





Technology Enhancements

Safety-related Technology Initiatives

Safety is the prime responsibility

- MetroAccess has successfully utilized monthly safety campaigns and daily safety messages



Technology's role in improving safety

- Driver attention warning
- Collision Avoidance "MobileEye"
- Alert Meter automation for operator fitness evaluations



AlertMeter

Cognitive tests accurately identify alertness and risks associated with fatigue

Every operator completes before allowed to enter revenue service

Operators have a 1–120-day baseline development period

Promote daily self-evaluations during the baseline development period

Trains managers to conduct sensitive readiness conversations in a represented environment

Develops leadership sensitivity to real-life fatigue management issues



Customer-Facing Technology Initiatives



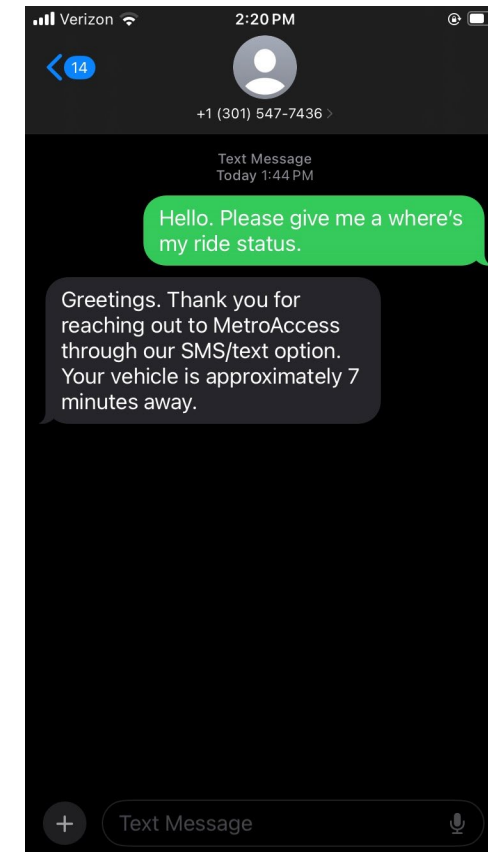
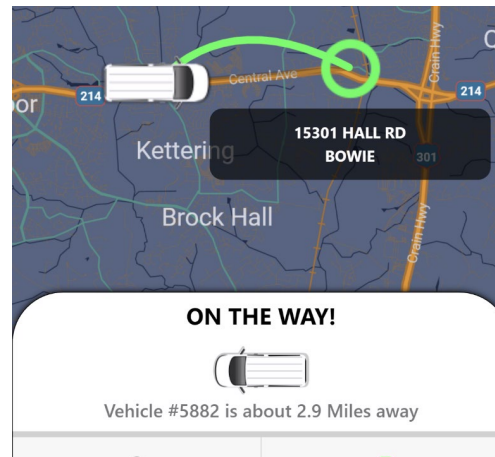
Find My Ride web application for trip tracking



Text messaging for trip updates and adjustments



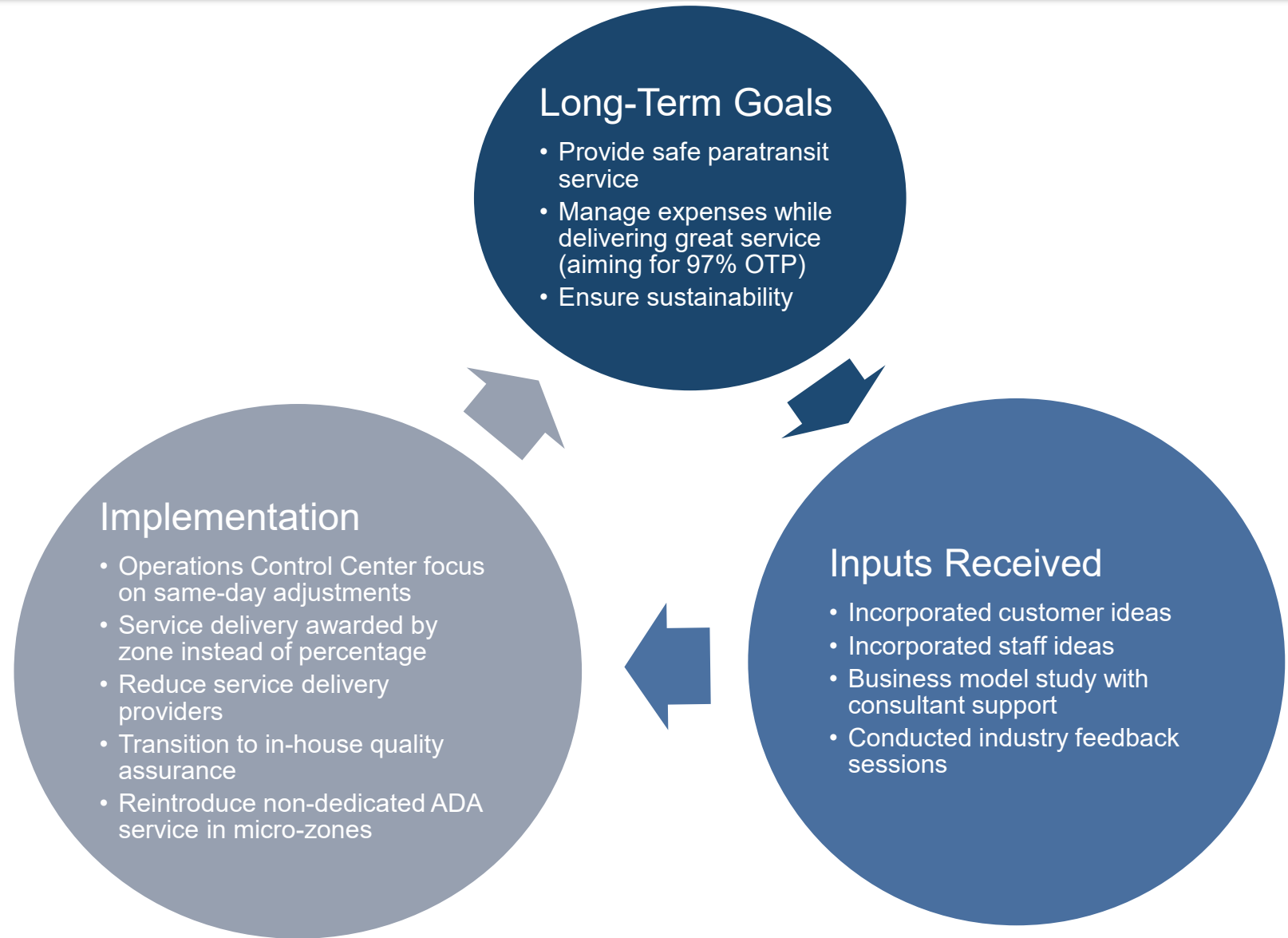
TiM digital assistant for booking trips and call support





What's Next

Road to Excellence



Operations Control Center

- Reservations
 - Phone calls
 - Web Booking
- Scheduling
 - Dedicated trips
 - Non-Dedicated trips
 - Alternative services
- Dispatch
 - Same-Day optimization
 - Emergencies
- Where's My Ride
 - Phone call inquiries
 - Added SMS (text message) option



Service Delivery

Future Service Delivery Model

- Provided by one or two contractors
- Metro-owned vehicles
- Two service zones



Quality Assurance



Hybrid approach of contracted and in-house functions



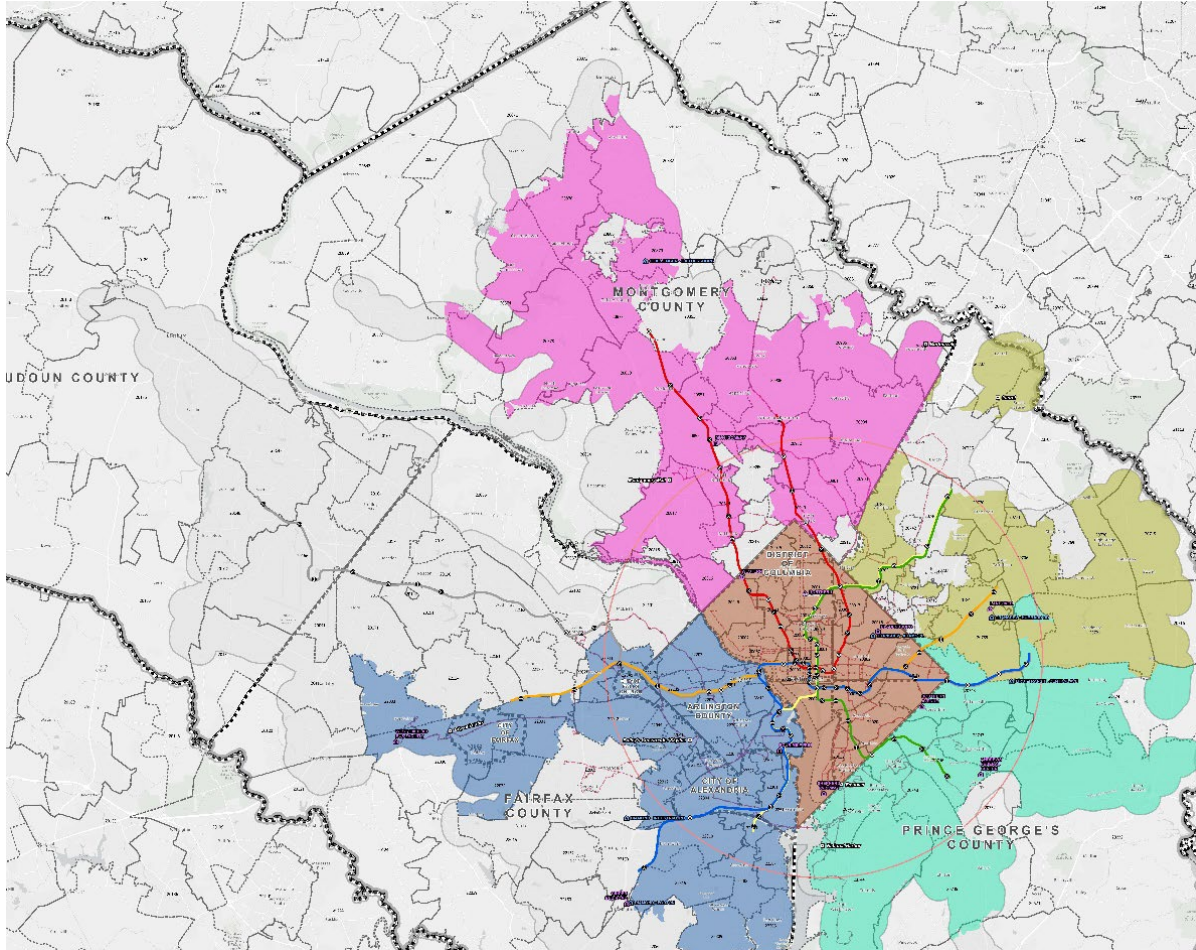
Performance Assessment Support to Quality Assurance team



Duties to include:

- Data collection
- Street observations
- Mystery rides
- Phone call observations
- Complaint investigations and follow-up

Non-Dedicated Service

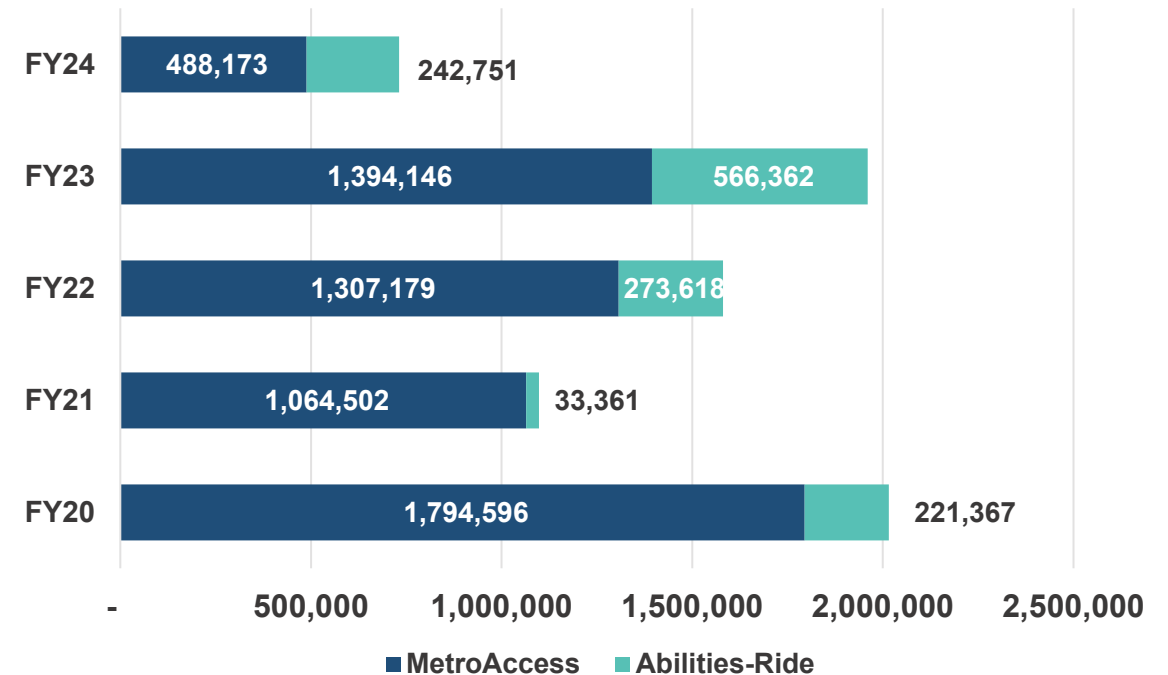


- Recorded as ADA paratransit trips
- Private companies use own wheelchair-accessible vehicles and software (no MetroAccess branding)
- Companies paid per complete trip
- Short, shuttle-like trips that can be a precursor to limited same-day service
- Six service zones

Abilities-Ride Program

- Discounted fare program that uses CURB, Uber, taxis, and van service
- Customers opt-in
- MetroAccess assigns an Abilities-Ride trip based on criteria
- Cost effective:
 - average \$85 per trip vs. \$28.53 per Abilities-Ride trip

Share of Abilities-Ride Trips





Appendix

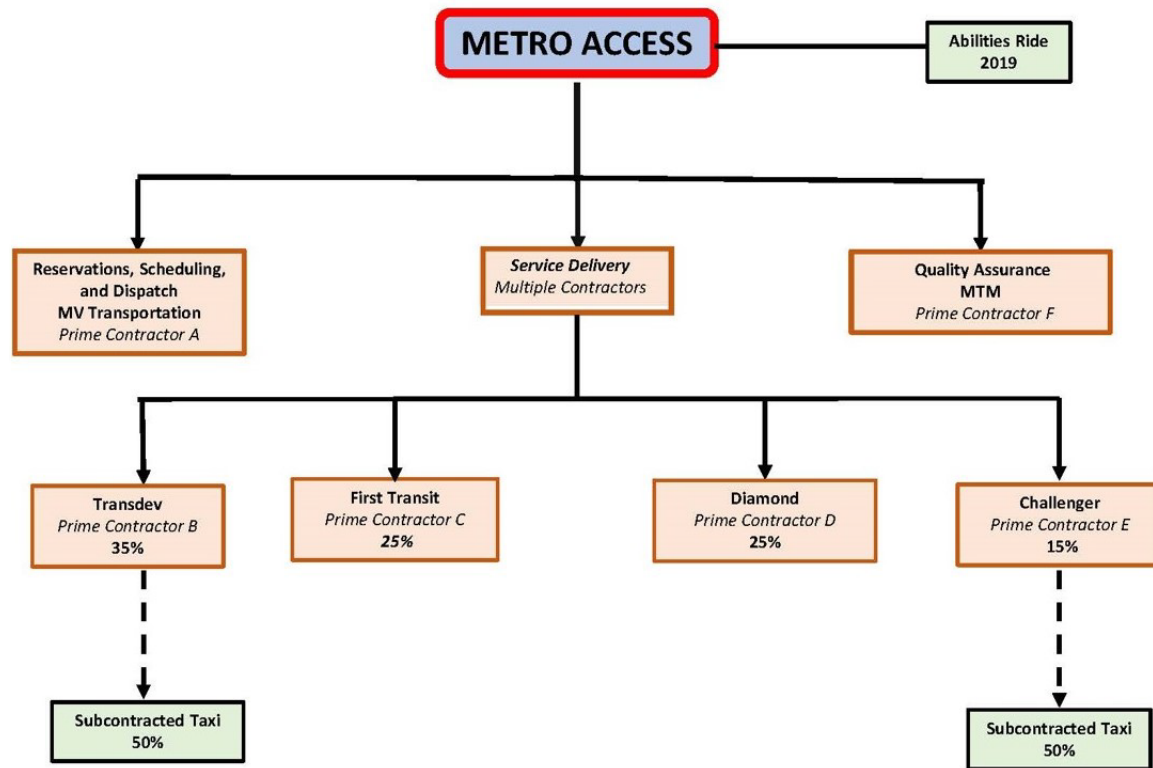
ADA Tracking and Requirements

- Title 49 / Subtitle A / Part 37 / Subpart F
- Service comparable to available Fixed Route Service (FRS)
- Within at least 3/4 of mile of available FRS
- Same hours as available FRS
- Scheduling window and pick-up window
- Fixed route equivalent on-board times
- Fares are not more than twice the fastest fixed route equivalent fare



MetroAccess System Set Up

2019-Present MACS Business Model



- Six key contractors
 - Call center
 - (Four) Service delivery providers
 - Quality assurance
- 766 Vehicles
- 986 Drivers
- 24/7 Service
- Service area extends beyond 3/4-mile available FRS
- Abilities-Ride Program

How it Works – Eligibility

- Eligibility application
- Must have disability that prevents use of bus or rail for at least some trips
- Process includes doctor's note, interview, and functional assessment
- 36,000 individuals eligible to use MetroAccess



How it Works – Trip Booking

- Book Reservations
- Negotiate a pick-up time
- 30-minute pick-up window established



How it Works – Transport

- MetroAccess vehicle arrives at the pick-up location
- Driver meets customer at the door
- Driver secures customer on vehicle
- Travel time can be less than or equal to the Fixed Route equivalent time

