

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Access Advisory Committee

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

5:30 PM

Virtual Presentation

CapMetro Employees: Chad Ballentine, Jeremy Benoit, Peter Breton, Louise Friedlander, Martin Kareithi, Julie Lampkin, Edna Parra, Brian Robinson, Sara Sanford, Randy Slaughter.

Supporting Staff Attendees: Jon Drinkwater, Raul Vela, Christopher Westbrook.

Committee Members: Estrella Barrerra, Andrew Bernet, Audrea Diaz, Otmar Foehner, Mike Gorse, Paul Hunt, John McNabb.

Guests: Rebecca Allbritton, Cameron, Tom Cook, Stacy Landry, Chanam Lee, Jason Miller.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM

Welcome / Introductions / Call to Order

Chair Hunt

Public Communications

Chanam Lee provides information regarding a transit study she is leading and asks participants to join or promote the project.

Mike Gorse outlines his feelings on best practices around operator communication and tone, and **Martin Kareithi** mentions that he'll be in contact to speak more on the subject.

Rebecca Allbritton mentions that her friend went through the evaluation process to be certified to use a wheelchair on MetroAccess, and that when she got a new wheelchair, she was told that she wouldn't be evaluated again in some time due to a backlog of evaluations. **Sara Sanford** explains that waiting for an evaluation shouldn't prevent any rider from using a new mobility device, and that she has presumptive eligibility until she is evaluated again.

Paul Hunt asks if a rider gets a new mobility device, does the equipment information have to be updated before an evaluation, and **Sara Sanford** says that they try to get new measurements.

Rebecca Allbritton mentions that there is a lack of curb cuts in around the city and asks what department handles that in the City of Austin. **Martin Kareithi** outlines that she can contact 311 or call John Eastman.

Paul Hunt asks if operators are given information regarding riders being deaf or blind. **Julie Lampkin** says no, they only provide mobility aid information, and that currently the customer's picture is not provided either. She explains that the implementation of the new Spare software should help remedy issues where operators are unable to identify customers.

Paul Hunt suggests a work session on the issue.

Otmar Foehner asks if the new system will provide more info than just a picture to the operators about the customer, and Julie confirms.

Public Safety Ambassadors – Hiring and General Program Update

Brian Robinson, Public Safety Supervisor

Brian Robinson overviews the public safety ambassador program, including hiring updates, data collected about their work, and the scope of their duties.

Paul Hunt asks for clarification on what the "Check Welfare" call means. **Brian Robinson** explains that most often, those calls are related to someone sleeping on the bus or at a stop and related issues.

Paul Hunt asks if there's a way for a customer to call for a Public Safety Ambassador, and **Brian Robinson** says that currently that's not in the plans, but that they try to be present as much as possible.

Estrella Barrerra asks how the ambassadors are being received, and what kinds of feedback they're getting. **Brian Robinson** says he's getting a lot of positive feedback, and that for many calls where a Temporary Police Officer would usually respond, a Public Safety Ambassador can handle the issue.

Estrella Barrerra asks if the Ambassadors have specialized uniforms, and **Brian Robinson** says that they currently wear the same uniform as operators, but they're looking into obtaining specialized uniforms.

Tom Cook asks about protocols in place for taking calls from the customer service line and how precedence for multiple calls works. **Brian Robinson** says that the customer service line will forward the complaint to dispatch, and that precedence goes to more immediate and sensitive calls.

Sara Sanford mentions that the CapMetro app has a function to report public safety issues.

Transit Police Update

Jeremy Benoit, Captain

Jeremy Benoit overviews new developments for the Transit Police Department formation, including facilities projects, policies and procedures discussions, and future hiring.

Spare Demonstration

Jon Drinkwater, Senior Partner Success Manager at Spare Labs

Jon Drinkwater gives a short overview of the Spare software and demonstrates the software in action.

Otmar Foehner asks if scheduling weekly recurring rides will be available. **Jon Drinkwater** says that subscription trips are available, but they would have to call into the call center to set them up.

Otmar Foehner asks about associating wheelchairs or other mobility aids to a specific account, so that when booking through the app, a user wouldn't have to add them every time. **Jon Drinkwater** says that a user isn't able to do that through the app but if they call in it can be added, and that it's identified as an upgrade as they continue to develop the app.

Stacy Landry asks if that's a limitation of the app itself of the connections between a rider profiles a booking agent may see and Spare. **Jon Drinkwater** says that that specific feature is not implemented yet but will hopefully be added later on.

Otmar Foehner asks about confirming eligibility for additional riders on the app, and **Jon Drinkwater** says that they would have to confirm eligibility when boarding the vehicle.

Audrea Diaz asks if the same rules that apply for booking trips now will apply to the app, and **Jon Drinkwater** confirms.

Audrea Diaz asks if a user can book trips online from any one location to another, as the current web-based booking only allows you to create 5 favorites and book between those 5. **Jon Drinkwater** says yes, there are no limits on where you can select for pickup or drop-off, as long as they are both in the service area.

Audrea Diaz asks about time constraints for booking trips, and **Jon Drinkwater** says there are no constraints other than the ones already in place with the current system.

Julie Lampkin mentions that the current web-based booking has sometimes had issues with booking late night buses and says she's working on resolving that issue.

Audrea Diaz asks if there will be trainings on the software available for riders who may not be as tech savvy. **Sara Sanford** says that they will work on a training curriculum, but the call center will always be an option for riders that don't want to or know how to book through the app.

Audrea Diaz asks how the Where's My Ride capability will shift when Spare is implemented. **Jon Drinkwater** explains that once the vehicle is 2-5 minutes away from the pickup location, the vehicle will be made visible on the map in the app.

Paul Hunt asks how the "dropping pins" option for defining pickup locations will be accessible to those with visual impairments. **Jon Drinkwater** says that the GPS location is the default, so the pickup location will be based on the phone's GPS, which will be accessible.

Paul Hunt asks if Interactive Voice Response (IVR) booking will be a part of the new system, and **Sara Sanford** says no, they're relying on the app and web-based booking for any calls not going through the call center

Approval of the minutes - Motion to approve by John McNabb / 2nd by Otmar Foehner. Passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM