Access Advisory Committee  
September 6th, 2017  
624 Pleasant Valley Rd., Austin, Texas 78702  
5:30 – 6:50 p.m.

Call to Order:  
Chairman Chris Prentice, Access Advisory Committee

Chairman Prentice called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Introductions:

Committee members present were Chairman Chris Prentice, Vice Chairman Paul Hunt, Estrella Barrera, Molly Birrell, Tom Turner, and Glenda Born.

Capital Metro staff members present were Chad Ballentine, Jessica McHarg, Martin Kareithi, Paul Hamilton, Kendall Jackson, and Lawrence Deeter.

Citizen and Committee Communication:

Members of the public present included Cheryl Hunt.

Mrs. Cheryl Hunt

Mrs. Hunt complimented MetroAccess reservations staff who has been working with her regarding her problems with media and phone. She also thanked Mr. Ballentine. Her complaint – which she wished to file online, but the online system did not seem to be working – is that she had a pickup scheduled for the previous Friday where the vehicle did not arrive on time. This occurred at 12:45 p.m. The driver eventually arrived but did not get out of the vehicle. Also, her drivers do not know where the pickup location is at her church: they always go to the adjacent buildings. Mr. Hamilton will follow up regarding a site visit to 3407 Red River.

Mr. Paul Hunt

Mr. Hunt regrets that the customer complaint form does not work online. Nothing happens when you press the “Submit” button, and it does not show which fields have errors if the form does not go through. Mr. Kareithi responded that Capital Metro hired a contractor to fix these issues. He has tested the new version, which is now in IT, and will be online soon. Mr. Kareithi will email the Committee when it is.

MetroAccess Statistics Update  
Chad Ballentine, Director of Paratransit, Capital Metro

Mr. Ballentine presented the August MetroAccess statistics to the committee. There was high ridership in August despite the heat. The system saw 57,000 riders in August, and on-time performance beat the metric. Thirty-five percent of trips were subscription-based in August – which is the highest percentage in a few
months. This means trips are generally more reliable since they are not being scheduled last-minute. Ms. Birrell asked if there is a goal for subscription trips. Mr. Ballentine responded that many trips are not the type that could be a subscription, but subscription trips are easier to schedule. Customer complaints are higher than the previous month, but that is sometimes due to August heat. Pickup ridership continues to grow, to 947 in August.

**Pickup Pilot Project Update**  
*Mr. Chad Ballentine, Director of Paratransit, Capital Metro*

Mr. Ballentine shared that the Pickup Pilot will be expanding. The goal is to learn as much as possible in the 12 months that we have the service. Frequency will increase to six days a week (there will not be service on Sunday). It will operate in the same location, but trips will now be allowed to go to the MLK train station in an attempt to address the last mile problem. Service hours will also expand and will last from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. This new schedule will begin Oct 1st. Thus far, around 30% of Pickup riders are registered paratransit users. The service will remain free throughout duration of pilot. There are now three vehicles (up from two), and soon there will be six. The goal is to reach a response time of 15 minutes or less.

**Technology Update**  
*Mr. Martin Kareithi, Accessible Transportation Specialist, Capital Metro*

Mr. Kareithi shared that his team has been talking about how to better serve folks that are deaf blind. They have come up with an item that drivers will carry, and pass to deaf blind clients upon pickup. It is a piece of plastic made by the same people who make braille tiles. The driver can hand the client this piece so that it can be certain that it is indeed the MetroAccess service. Martin thanked Mr. Turner for keeping this this top of mind. Ms. Hunt wished to speak for the deaf blind community in saying thank you. The next step is to figure out how to train the drivers and the riders.

**New Business**

**Proposed June 2018 Service Changes**  
*Mr. Lawrence Deeter, Transportation Planner, Capital Metro*

Connections 2025 was approved in February after a year of public input – including some from this committee. The team will be seeking approval for June 2018 service changes at the Board Meeting on November 15th. The changes are big, so there will be extra time for outreach. One of the large positive impacts on ADA clients is that many routes will double in frequency. This means waiting only 15 minutes if the wheelchair spots on one bus are full. There will be no changes to MetroRapid, but some other fixed routes will have new numbers and names.

There is a MetroAccess service area impact that would affect about 100 MetroAccess customers. In Southwest Austin, Route 333 will no longer service the Travis County Precinct Office. This will affect 19 MetroAccess clients. Route 393 in Northwest Austin will be streamlined. This will impact 16 MetroAccess clients. Route 243 is changing and will impact 26 MetroAccess clients. Changes to Route 323 will affect 14 MetroAccess clients. Chairman Prentice pointed out that Lawrence said both that MetroAccess clients will not be affected, and that some will be. He mentioned that there are people who have purchased houses near transit. Lawrence thinks that there is a way people will be able to retain their MetroAccess service. It is not possible to permanently grandfather in people who lose service, but they can keep service for 90 days and petition for up to one year. There is an equity issue associated with grandfathering people in, since a new neighbor might have moved in too late to be included in service.

Vice Chair Hunt did not see anything about the change to Route 243 on the June 2018 service change email. He believes that this is the route that keeps him in the service area. If it does keep him in the area, he needs to know if it will change. Each Committee member would like to know if their service will continue.
Mr. Ballentine stated that there are other ways people can continue with the same kind of service, even if it is not from MetroAccess. There will be 12 retired paratransit vehicles given to non-profits, especially those that serve people in the affected areas. Mrs. Hunt responded that many of those services have very limited hours and do not work as effectively as MetroAccess.

Mr. Ballentine will come back to the Committee with an overview addressing people’s concerns.

**Action Items**

**Approval of June and August Meeting Minutes**

The June and August minutes were approved unanimously on a motion from Vice Chair Hunt, seconded by the entire Committee and approved unanimously.

**Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 7:25 p.m.