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, Molly Birrell, Glenda Born, John McNabb, Pat Thomas, and Mike Gorse.

Capital Metro staff members present were Chad Ballentine, Martin Kareithi, Kendall Jackson, Sam Sargent, Randy Clarke, Jenn Golech, and Paul Hamilton.

Capital Metro contractor staff present were Regina Marshall, Raoul, and Nate Peterson.

Members of the public present were MetroAccess rider Audrey, and Cheryl Hunt.

CEO / Citizen’s Communication:

President / CEO Clarke introduced himself to the committee. He talked about his background and his vision for the agency, then opened the floor for questions.

Chair Prentice said that because the central core of Austin is where its most expensive, the most need for transit may actually be in the suburbs. CEO Clarke replied that the plan is not written in stone after June. Most cities are structured like this now, and every transit agency is struggling with the debate of ridership vs. coverage. Houston and Seattle have found success with the C2025 approach after implementation.

Paul Hunt noted that Access has been in a report-only mode, and he would rather the committee be examining plans and making recommendations. Also, there have been problems with the North-based transit provider because rules are enforced differently by different drivers. CEO Clarke replied that the best part of the committee is the engagement that can happen in the pre-planning stages. Chad wrote down the comment about North Ops – CEO Clarke noted that uniformity is imperative. The more specific the information, the deeper we can dive in.

Mike Gorse asked CEO Clarke how much he is following Code Next. CEO Clarke answered that he is watching the process, but will not weigh in. It is more of a policy / political process than a technical decision at this point, so he does not feel that it is appropriate for him to tell City Council what to do.
Glenda Born noted that in the attempts to straight routes and make service more frequent, people that live outside of corridors will have a harder time. CEO Clarke explained that a straighter route makes for more reliable service, which increases ridership. Instead of looking route by route, the network should be examined as a whole.

Pat Thomas said that being able to get to the airport conveniently should be a priority for Project Connect. CEO Clarke responded that that’s the Riverside Line – Riverside is going to be changing in the next ten years, and there is great transit potential there.

**MetroAccess Statistics & Tech Update**

*Chad Ballentine, Vice President, Demand Response and Innovative Mobility*

Mr. Ballentine presented the January MetroAccess statistics to the committee. January ridership increased from December. On Time Performance was strong but the South Base struggled due to staffing shortages. Abandonment rates decreased but the reservations rate barely missed the metric of under 5%. Eligibility’s active and registered passengers have increased from December.

The Pickup Pilot program continues to increase in popularity. It saw a record of 127 trips in one day in January, but has already beaten that in February. The last day is June 2nd and the average rating is 4.75/5. Paul Hunt said that the Hunts have tried Pickup twice. You can’t call the driver through the app, and that needs to be fixed. Chad said that the drivers just have iPads, so calling is not possible at this time.

Glenda Born asked how many appeals have been filed. Martin said that there were two in December and three in January, and added that there are about 40-45 per year. The new committee members haven’t yet been trained on appeals, but have been emailed.

Chad noted that today is the 50th anniversary of death of Martin Luther King, Jr. He discussed the February Statistics, but March was not ready yet. Pickup is still experiencing constant growth and is still ending in June (the last day is June 2nd). CEO Clarke is pushing for innovation. There is the Ride to Wellness program through TEF, and the partnership with Austin e-cab. We do vehicle donations as the fleet is retired. Martin will talk about the Bluetooth beacon project. There has been interest in autonomous, electric, and connected vehicles. The innovative projects should support high capacity transit, not compete with it. Martin discussed the coach bus that is coming next Monday, and encouraged committee members to come see the bus...the committee’s input is very valuable. The team is looking into vehicles at the North base and will try to have something by the next committee meeting. Fuel standards and crash test requirements are changing. As for the comment on inconsistent standards: they will circle back to the driver training and performance with the contractors. They require 120 hours of driver training, which is some of the highest. They can quiz staff and service providers on the Rider Guide to make sure everyone has a complete knowledge. Paul Hunt asked if MetroAccess divers are allowed to pull into driveways, and if guide dogs are allowed in the front seat. Paul Hamilton responded that drivers are trained not to pull into driveways because backing out can be dangerous. If the animal can fit in the front seat, it’s okay. Paul Hunt asked since Pickup is going away, could something
like this be used for zones where buses are going away? Chad responded that that’s exactly what they’re looking at for Innovation Zones.

**June 2018 Service Change Implementation Update**  
*Sam Sargent, Deputy Chief of Staff, Capital Metro*

Sam gave a presentation which overviewed the June 2018 Service Change. He highlighted the marketing efforts, signage, staffing, and amenities associated with Cap Remap. He will get a slide about the shelter pilot on the agenda next month. Pat Thomas noted a location on Manchaca where the 3 connects with the 803 that needs a shelter. Jenn Golech said that there will be signs going up starting in April. Paul Hunt asked when the new .txd files would be available. Martin will follow up with him, and Jenn says that there is already data, so this shouldn’t be too hard.

**Wayfinding Update**  
*Martin Kareithi, Program Manager – Accessible Services, Capital Metro*

Capital Metro, in partnership with Connectthings, has launched a program to bring bus information to people who are blind or low vision. This pilot program, which will be active for the next 30 days, uses a network of beacons placed at bus stops to deliver real time schedule and alert information to riders via the BlindSquare app. This project is an opportunity for Capital Metro to explore Smart Beacon technology and its potential applications for transit—especially for accessible fixed route service. Technologies like these can help empower people to travel on fixed route with comfort, ease and confidence.

**ABIA Pickup and Dropoff Update**  
*Paul Hamilton, Manager – Paratransit Control Center, Capital Metro*

Paul gave an update on the question on MetroAccess pickup and dropoff location at ABIA. The location goes back to 2008 and is Column L on the lower level. He spoke with Jennifer Williams at the city and made a request to her office, but she said dropping up upstairs would not be feasible because there would not be a guaranteed place. There is future capacity planned on the departure level in the next 5-7 years. He noted the phone number so that passengers can have an escort from Column L to their departure area. He will add this to the drivers’ location file for this location.

**Approval of March Minutes**

Molly Birrell motioned to approve the March Minutes. Mr. McNabb seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was approved 6-0.

**Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 7:30 p.m.