Access Advisory Committee
February 7th, 2018
2910 E. 5th Street, Austin, Texas 78702
5:30 p.m. – 7:15 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, Molly Birrell, Glenda Born, John McNabb, Pat Thomas, and Mike Gorse.

Capital Metro staff members present were Chad Ballentine, Martin Kareithi, Kendall Jackson, Andrew Murphy, Jacob Calhoun, Paul Hamilton, and Jeff Dennin.

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

Citizens’ Communication
Members of the public

Ms. Hunt took a MetroAccess ride with a friend, but after getting in the vehicle from HEB she was told that she was not able to take the ride. If she could not afford Uber, she would have been stranded. She would like an apology.

Mr. Hunt was on the committee a while ago, and there was a great relationship. Now it’s more of a “reports-only” committee. He’d like to see more transparency and wants the committee to weigh in on contracts. He also wants the agency to be honest about the financial strain on the agency. He would also like the minutes 24 hours in advance.

Chair Prentice was riding home yesterday on the 271 and there was a combative passenger. The driver stopped the bus and wouldn’t move until security showed up. He wishes either bus drivers would be more empowered to remove passengers, or security would have a faster response. He also requests that the new CEO drops in on one of the first meetings. Glenda Born added that she would like the new CEO to give his vision for all citizens. Paul Hunt would like someone from Legal to speak about the responsibilities of the committee.

MetroAccess Statistics & Tech Update
Chad Ballentine, Director of Paratransit, Capital Metro
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.

MetroAccess Vehicle Replacement Project

Andrew Murphy, Manager in Maintenance Standards and Projects, Capital Metro

Andrew informed the committee that Capital Metro is purchasing 23 replacement vans. They are identical to the big vans in the fleet. A minor change is that the fuel type has gone from diesel to gas. There are two configurations, one has three wheelchair passengers instead of two. Capital Metro is proceeding with procurement and expects delivery at the end of June. The wheelchair lift is toward the front of the vehicle. Paul Hunt said that in the past, the Access Committee goes along to look at new vehicles. Andrew responded that these are same as existing vehicles, so this step was not necessary. However, the new configuration for RideRight vehicles was a surprise, so they’re being replaced. Paul responded that before Capital Metro agrees on a contract, the committee should visit. Chad responded that that is standard procedure. The MV contract is almost up, and a decision for the next 10 years will go before the board in March. This is mostly for staffing.

Project Connect Update

Jacob Calhoun, Long Range Transportation Planner

Jacob presented an update on Project Connect. He provided an overview of the plan, as well as next steps for the planning team and in the public involvement plan for the project. Chair Prentice noted that because Austin is getting so expensive, the people that need transit live farther out. Perhaps there be less focus on the central core. Jacob responded that light rail is indeed cost prohibitive in lower density areas, but a bus express system could work better. Chair Prentice asked why the project is still called Project Connect. Jacob responded that there has been some success associated with the name, so it is wise to keep it. Pat Thomas asked about Park & Rides. Jacob responded that the idea is to have Park & Rides at terminuses of corridors, and to partner with municipalities to have Park & Rides there as well.

MetroAccess 10-year Plan

Chad Ballentine, Director of Paratransit, Capital Metro

Chad explained that he will present to both board committees this month. MetroAccess is the most expensive service that Capital Metro has, so it is important to keep the board informed. The presentation is attached.

Technology Update

Martin Kareithi, Accessible Transportation Specialist

Martin informed the group that the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M is studying accessible wayfinding. They have been using Bluetooth beacons to get someone the last 50 feet to their destination (after a maps application has gotten them close). An internal group at Capital Metro gave Martin approval to move
forward with a transit IDEA grant that Martin applied for with TTI. He just found out that they won the grant. Martin will keep the committee informed and expects involvement down the line.

Approval of January Minutes

Ms. Born motioned to approve the January Minutes. Mr. McNabb seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was approved 7-0.

Adjournment
The committee adjourned at 7:15 p.m.