MARTA ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

**Date: July 14, 2020**

**Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Location: Virtual via WebEx**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Jorge Urrea – Chairperson: Called the meeting to order on July 14, 2020, at 10:10 am with Member introductions. He thanked everyone for being on the conference call today.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Committee Members Present:**

**Jorge Urrea,** Chair

**Leonard Stinson**, Vice-Chairperson – Representing Cognitive/Developmental

**Jordan Hall,** Personal Mobility Aid/Wheelchair User - Organization

**Robert Smith,** Representing seniors

**Dr. Brad Fain,** Representing Upper/Lower Extremity - Organization

**Robert Lossie,** Representing Upper/lower extremities

**Jimmy Peterson**, Representing the deaf community - Organization

**Sandra Owen,** Representing Personal Mobility Aid/Wheelchair User

**Leonardo Banes,** Representing Blind/Low Vision

**Lee Rogers,** Representing Blind/Low Vision – Organization

**Jeffrey Easley**, Representing Cognitive/Developmental - Organization

**Mark Gasaway**, Representing the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/ blind

**Absent:** **Kay Sibetta,** Representing Seniors **-** Organization

**Staff Present:**

Denise Brown and Adoraeu Jouett Diversity & Inclusion; Collie Greenwood, Bus Operations and Urban Planning; Santiago Osorio, Bus Operations; Peter Bruno, Calisha Davis, Roosevelt Stripling, Eric Knowles and Joe Weaver, Mobility; William Thomas, Vertical Transportation; Kirk Talbott, Catrina Jones and LaTonya Smith, Information Technology; Donna DeJesus, LaHoya Blount, Tiffany Guillory and Kim Carter Customer Service; and Toni Thornton, External Affairs.

**Mobility Contractors:** Ashley Cole, MV Transportation, Melvin Barkley, Gresham Transportation.

Jorge Urrea called meeting to order and moved to subcommittee reports:

**Customer Focus: Sandra Owen** reported on behalf of Kay Sibetta meeting was very effective. The subcommittee met on reviewed bylaws and the responsibilities of the committee and how to better utilize the Mystery Rider Survey as it will help when conducting needs assessment. Further, Education Outreach was discussed. Developing a webinar video to engage and provide information to committee members and users. Also talked about compiling a list of organizations that can help distribute information to their network. Owen concluded the committee report with telling members to be ready to view the video draft when it is ready, the committee really wants input.

**Adoraeu Jouett, provided the Diversity & Inclusion update on behalf of Paula Nash**.

* Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MAC meetings will be hosted virtually through the 2020. MARTA will provide more details as information becomes available.
* Looking to fill vacant MAC positions that are expired. Denise Brown added that if anyone would like to recommend a person for the position to let her know.
* advised members that MARTA has gone to mandatory masks when on the MARTA system to align with the jurisdictional requirements.

Q: Is the wearing of mask now mandatory? A: Yes. the City of Atlanta has made it mandatory to wear mask.

**Santiago Osorio provided COVID 19 Update.**

* Bus Operations is continuing to provide a healthy environment for customers and employees.
* Aggressively cleaning buses at night at the bus facility and at 8 different in-service locations. MARTA acquired a piece of equipment from Delta Airlines called an electro-static fogger to spray a chemical that sanitizes and kills germs faster and more efficiently.
* All operators are equipped with a spray bottle of sanitizer in the event it is needed.
* Mask are now required on the MARTA system and staff volunteers will be throughout the system to distribute masks to customers and remind people that masks are required.
* Working on a plan and logistics to install a mask dispenser inside the buses.

Q: Will customers continue to board from the rear? A: For now, yes. MARTA is working on a plan to further protect operators that may allow boarding in the front to resume.

Q. Is a bus garage being considered for Clayton County? A: There is not one under construction, but there is a concept being discussed. Information is limited at this time but would be happy to come back to the committee in the future with more information.

Q: The masks being used by MARTA covers the mouth and lips which prevents the deaf from reading lips. Is MARTA considering clear masks to allow the lips to be visual for the hard of hearing passengers who depend of lip reading? A: We do not have this yet but will make a note for consideration.

Q: Can more information be provided about servicing people in wheelchairs? A: MARTA’s policy has not changed. Instruction for operators remain the same when boarding those in a wheelchair and need to go to the front.

Q: How is social distancing maintained when wheelchairs are tied down? A: Floor signs and decals are used to ensure distancing. A seat directly behind a wheelchair should not be used. Customers are bypassed if the bus is at capacity to social distance. Depending on the route the bypassed customer should have a vehicle within minutes of the full bus.

Q: Passing up a passenger in a wheelchair does not seem like the best procedure. Is MARTA considering other alternatives? A: It was explained that when a bus is full, an operator makes an announcement to see if someone is willing to vacate a priority seat. If no one leaves, the operator will call Communications to notify them they were unable to pick up a passenger in a wheelchair and tell the passenger another bus will arrive shortly.

Comment: This is really going to be an issue for the disabled. The MAC committee and MARTA needs to pay close attention. This will be discussed further at the next Customer Focus meeting.

**Catrina Jones provided updates for the AVIS project.**

* MARTA is replacing 26 electronic signs throughout the rail stations as well as approximately 4,600 speakers throughout the rail stations.
* Also, replacing cabling, amplifier network and cabinet conduit and software to improve information for patrons.
* To date the project is 81.6 complete with 4,210 speakers and 234 electronic signs installed. The total cost is 29 million, funded by the State as well as the FTA.
* Construction is underway at all 38 stations.

**Tiffany Guillory provided information about the ADA inquiries.**

* MARTA received 562 Authority wide complaints of which 141 were ADA linked at 25.1 percent and 29 were valid.
* By department Mobility received 106 complaints, Bus Operations 13, Mobility Policy, 11, Reservations, 8, Rail Operations 2, and Mobility maintenance 1.
* Top categories for March 2020 were late picks, 30 plus minutes with 23 complaints and late drop off, 19 and excessive time on van 8.
* Non- mobility complaints received, tone of voice 3, changed pick-up 2, could not board 2, incorrect reservation information 2, passed up 1.
* Received 72 accommodations for March 2020 and 27 were for Mobility.

**Peter Bruno provided updates about Mobility programs, current initiatives and performance measures.**

* In May the suspension of the door to door service was discussed to reinforce as much minimal contact as possible.
* Suspended the requirement for in person eligibility interviews. MARTA is looking at plans to resume that as the Mobility team is seeing applications beginning to stack up.
* MARTA is working on ways to reconfigure set-up on a safe/healthy basis to consider how to reopen.
* Continuing the limit of two passengers per each vehicle which is going well. If we run into equipment availability issues, we may have to rethink it.
* Now requiring masks, with the City of Atlanta going to a mask. If a customer comes and does not have a mask, we will give them one.
* Looking at industrial hand sanitizers for the vehicles behind the driver at a height accessible to anyone in a wheelchair. Will pilot 10 vans.
* Using the electro-static sprayers to disinfect inside the vehicles.

Q: During summer months how is MARTA monitoring HVAC air filters in the vans?

A: Before COVID-19 filters were change in the fall and spring. We have gone to replace it every 4500 miles and once a month for the rear AC unit air filter.

**Peter Bruno moved on with updates.**

* Went before the MARTA Operations and Safety Committee to request the renewal contract of the Eligibility Assessment Services. Finishing the scope and preparing evaluation plans to complete. Target date is March 2021.
* On time performance in May was 97 percent. In June it was 96 percent. July through the 12th was at 90 percent. We have a little work to do with the increase in trips but will meet that challenge.
* Thirty-seven (37) complaints, up 56%. Part of that is attributed to the increase in trips.
* We had a total of 20, 651 passengers. Typically, we are in the 40, 000 range. June, 38,000. July, in the first 12 days it was 13,000. Will possibly get close to 38,000 or 39,000 trips for the month of July.

**LaTonya Smith provide an overview of Mobile Ticketing.**

* MARTA has been working on an application specifically designed to provide ticketing for fixed route buses and rail as well as the Streetcar and the mobility vans.
* We are at a point where we are getting close to the introduction of the application for Streetcar riders.
* As we venture into this new application, we want to bring you along and introduce this to the MAC Committee.
* Some may have seen the additional equipment on buss and some of the rail stations, which are validators used to confirm passengers have a valid ticket.
* To begin one would get an application from the mobile store, which work on Apple and Android devices.
* Once the application is downloaded, an account must be set up and subsequently customers will be able to purchase tickets for all MARTA fare products.
* It will work by scanning the ticket and the gate opens. Once the destination is reached, point and scan the ticket again to get out and continue the trip.
* For those interested in seeing more details about the application a demo is being setup for review to get feedback.
* A review from two to four MAC members will work. We are very conscious that a lot of people are not using the system right now.
* Once the names of participants are provided, IT will provide access to the application.
* We want comments about the app. Is it user friendly for the color and contrast? Much like the feedback given for AVIS

Q: will this new application be publicized to the public, including how to use it? A: Once it is released for roll out, there will be a whole marketing campaign around it.

Q: Is the app going to be accessible for individuals that are blind or visually impaired that use a screen reader such as voice over or talk on their devices to access the information? A: Notating the question, and if there are devices we should look at, that will be helpful.

**William Thomas provide updates for Vertical Transportation- elevator/escalator upgrades.**

* Since January of 2020 Schindler has turned over a total of 10 elevators that have been modernized that include Lindbergh, Avondale shops 1 through 4.
* The dome Omni 1 and 2 and Candler Park elevators 1 through 3.
* Working at Decatur on elevator number 2, which is scheduled to complete by the end of the month. Both elevators at Decatur will have been modernized.
* At East Lake Station working on elevators 1 and 2 and they are scheduled to complete by August 7th.
* Four escalators returned to normal service. Five Points 2. Lake Wood 1 and two at Peachtree center, number 1 and 4.
* Working on Lake Wood escalator 2. It is scheduled to be complete by the end of the month. Five Points escalator is 3 is scheduled to be complete by August 11th. Peachtree center number 2 by August and 5 by October 31st.
* Since the start of the project in June 2017, 40 elevators and 22 escalators have been completed.
* The next units to be modernized will be at the following locations. For elevators we will start Five Points elevator number 1. (All will start August 10th.) Civic center elevator one and Peachtree center elevator 4.
* Also, August 10th, escalator work we will begin at Peachtree center escalator 3 and 6. And Five Points number 4. We will also be doing the last unit at Lake Wood number 3. Further towards the end of year we will start on Lenox escalators number 3 and 4.
* The MARTA websites escalator and elevator alerts tab is active. There are workarounds on the web page and dispatching where needed. We are now updating the access to escalator and elevator daily.
* The installation of new elevator signage will begin in the next couple of weeks. Should there be a service outage the instructions will be on phone call and it will give detailed instructions on what to do.
* Lastly the Airport Station scheduler says the install will start January 2021. That will be a second elevator at the airport.

Two to four names from the MAC committee will be provided to IT for their participation in the Mobile Ticket demo and review process.

The meeting was adjourned 11:30 am. The next meeting will be September 8, 2020.