

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Access Advisory Committee

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

5:30 PM

Virtual Presentation

CapMetro Employees: Chad Ballentine, Peter Breton, Kevin Conlan, Lawrence Deeter, Louise Friedlander, Matin Kareithi, Julie Lampkin, Emma Martinez, Chris Mojica, Edna Parra, Isacc Perez, Sara Sanford, Randy Slaughter, Emmanuel Toutin, Dottie Watkins.

Supporting Staff Attendees: Christopher Westbrook, Raul Vela

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

Guests: Rebecca Allbritton, Amelia Casas, Celia Israel, Debra Miller.

Meeting called to order at 5:31 PM

Welcome / Introductions / Call to Order

Chair Hunt

Public Communications

Audrea Diaz outlines inappropriate incidents regarding harassment she has experienced while using MetroAccess, specifically by operators, and asks for CapMetro action plans for the incidents, as well as other issues she's reported on regarding instances where she believes that operators were not adhering to a high standard of conduct.

Celia Israel explains that **Audrea Diaz** reached out to her, and that she is excited to see CapMetro address the issue in depth.

Estrella Barrera asks if there's been action taken to address the issues from operators that's been reported by **Audrea Diaz**. **Dottie Watkins** responds that CapMetro is taking multiple steps to address the issues that were reported.

Chad Ballentine adds that CapMetro staff is creating a plan to reach out to all the staff within the MetroAccess department to have in-depth conversations and training to help address and prevent any issues. They are looking for consultants to bring into train operators.

Paul Hunt asks if there's a way to prevent drivers being assigned to certain riders. **Chad Ballentine** says there's not an immediate option to do so, but CapMetro staff is both trying to make that happen and trying to address issues with the driver, especially with future, new technology.

Audrea Diaz asks what the process is if the operator is reassigned to her, and **Chad Ballentine** says that she would not be penalized but that she would need to cancel the ride and call dispatch again. She doesn't have to go into detail about why she is requesting a new operator, she can simply ask for a new operator.

Paul Hunt expresses his gratitude to committee and community members for piloting various CapMetro programs, and says that he would like to have a work session for Fare Capping to integrate it with MetroAccess.

Glenda Born asks if the paratransit service area takes into account rail service, and **Sara Sanford** says no, rail service is not taken into account.

MetroAccess Staff Sensitivity Training

Chad Ballentine, VP of Demand Response and Innovative Mobility

Sara Sanford, Director of Eligibility, Training, and Customer Management

Chad Ballentine and **Sara Sanford** overview their efforts to train all MetroAccess Staff (not just operators) on professional conduct and communication.

Glenda Born asks if the training will happen in groups or in a one-on-one setting and expresses her interest in attending a training to understand the steps being taken to train MetroAccess Staff.

Chad Ballentine explains that there will be at least 20 trainings, since there are 450-500 total staff needing to be trained.

Sara Sanford says that they can attempt to work it into the scope of the eventual consultant contract to have a presentation at the committee outlining the training.

Audrea Diaz mentions that special attention may need to be considered for training operators who have been employed by MetroAccess for many years.

Chad Ballentine explains they're involving the union regarding trainings and that they'll take that feedback into account.

Initial FY2024 Budget Review

Kevin Conlan, Deputy CFO

Kevin Conlan overviews the initial budget for FY2024, including investments in a Demand Response operations and maintenance facility, paratransit van replacements, and bus stop enhancements.

Glenda Born asks if light rail infrastructure is being included in the budget, and **Kevin Conlan** explains that Austin Transit Partnership is developing that system and the budget belongs to them.

Celia Israel asks how staff raises are being included in the budget, and **Kevin Conlan** explains that there's an average annualized pay increase included in the budget, but that the specific number isn't finalized yet.

Debra Miller explains that electrical outlets are needed for riders at stops, and **Martin Kareithi** agrees and says that CapMetro will be adding outlets to the new Pleasant Valley and Expo CapMetro Rapid stops and continues to work to add that functionality to other stops.

Mike Gorse asks if CapMetro can take out bonds with its revenue, and **Kevin Conlan** explains that, due to CapMetro's designation as a transportation agency, its ability to issue bonds is very limited.

Proposed August Service Changes

Lawrence Deeter, Manager of Systems Development

Lawrence Deeter outlines the June and August service changes.

Audrea Diaz asks if the e-bus service will be re-instated, and **Lawrence Deeter** says that CapMetro continues to be cautious of re-instituting services to pre-pandemic levels before they can be sure they can provide it at the quality it deserves. He also mentions that just before the pandemic, CapMetro had seen lower ridership on the E-Bus service, and that service in particular presents issues for maintenance and upkeep of vehicles.

Glenda Born asks what is involved in developing a new route. **Lawrence Deeter** says customer feedback and other data would inform proposals for new services. Once a proposal is made, the Planning department would evaluate the proposal for equity and cost feasibility, gather feedback, and determine whether to implement the change or go back to the drawing board.

Paul Hunt asks about restoring the Route 335 frequency to 15 minutes, and **Lawrence Deeter** explains that CapMetro continues to be conscious of re-instituting service so that they can always serve customers effectively.

Service Standards and Guidelines

Emma Martinez, Transportation Planner I

Emma Martinez gives a short update on the Service Standards and Guidelines, and shares that the feedback period is open until June 14.

Advisory Committee Updates

Peter Breton, Community Engagement Coordinator

Peter Breton outlines the work CapMetro staff will take to support the advisory committees and formalize procedures within the committees during the July recess. That includes public communications, time-keeping, and other systems.

Travel Training Program

Sara Sanford, Director of Eligibility, Training, and Customer Management

Isacc Perez, Travel Trainer

Isacc Perez overviews CapMetro's travel training program, and how to sign up.

Paul Hunt mentions that he's unable to find a file called stops.txt through MetroLabs, and is trying to regain access to it. **Martin Kareithi** says that he'll follow up.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM