

Agenda Item 2
Simplified Summary of Results from the TPB Independent Review of MetroAccess
October 15, 2008

Background

- The TPB Demand Responsive Study recommended an Independent Review of MetroAccess after a difficult transition to a new contractor in January 2006.
- WMATA began a four-year contract with MV in the fall of 2005. The contract has two options for two-year extensions.
- The four-year base period of the MV contract ends in January 2010.
- The Independent Review was conducted between May and September 2008 by TranSystems and was guided by two TPB committees: The Access for All Advisory Committee and the Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force.
- The review included interviews with stakeholders and a thorough on-site review of MetroAccess in July.
- In FY2006, MetroAccess had operating expenses totaling approximately \$52 million and provided an average of _____ trips per month. In FY2008 MetroAccess has a budget of approximately \$62 million and provided an average of _____ trips per month.
- Of the approximately _____ riders registered with MetroAccess, the majority ___% live in Suburban Maryland, ___% in the District of Columbia, and ___% in Northern Virginia. A 2002 survey of MetroAccess riders, conducted by WMATA, revealed the following characteristics:
 - 24% are wheelchair users
 - 64% are female
 - 51% are African American
 - Median income is \$24,000
 - Median age is 60
- This is a summary of a comprehensive draft report prepared by TranSystems Corporation and the KFH Group entitled “Independent Review of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA) MetroAccess Service” dated September 16, 2008. This report provides many more detailed findings and recommendations than what is provided in this summary and is available to the public.

General Observations

- The TPB Independent Review showed that on the items examined, MetroAccess is a different operation and a much improved program compared to 2006 when the service experienced difficulties with the transition to a new contractor.

- WMATA has invested a significant amount of funding and resources in the MetroAccess program which has helped the program tremendously.
- Committee Observation: Recommendations from the TPB Demand Responsive Study, the WMATA Ad-Hoc Committee and the settlement with the Equal Rights Center have contributed to the investments and positive changes.

Improvements:

- On-time performance, missed trips and no-shows have improved over the last year.
- Staffing levels for reservationists, schedulers, dispatchers and contract monitoring has vastly improved since 2006.
- Customer complaints are being tracked and responded to more efficiently than they were.
- WMATA is doing a better job in being clear with customers about MetroAccess policies as shown in the outreach efforts done for the door-to-door service.
- In general, riders commented that they have noticed these improvements in their experiences with MetroAccess.

Remaining Challenges

- Riders also commented that they have concerns about excessively long ride times, early pick-ups and early drop offs.
- Some of these concerns are a result of the following challenges identified by the review:
- Staff turnover of reservationists, dispatchers and drivers remains a concern at 121%, 89% and 111% respectively. Low pay and benefits that MV offers combined with the difficult of the job appears to contribute to this issue.
- Very early pick-ups and drop-offs are an issue; as are a small percentage of very long trips. The review identified some settings in the automated scheduling system that should be tweaked to address these issues.
- Eligibility determinations are taking several months to complete which appears to be due to limited professional capacity provided to WMATA by contractors who conduct the in-person assessments. Service is however being offered to applicants while the determinations are completed.
- For a large metropolitan area, the structure of the MV contract is unusual. MV Transportation acts as a broker or turn-key operation and also operates over 60% of the service. This means that MV is responsible for monitoring it's own service and has the

entire responsibility for reservations, scheduling and dispatching functions. Usually the service providers and functions are broken out with multiple companies to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and functions within a single company.

Recommendations

Service Quality and Performance Monitoring

- A. WMATA should work with the contractor to reduce employee turnover and to retain quality, experienced managers, call center staff, drivers and add an additional scheduler.
- B. WMATA should improve follow-up on complaints by developing and documenting specific corrective actions.
- C. WMATA should work with the contractor to reduce long ride-times and address excessively early and late drop-offs and pick-ups (through scheduling software adjustments and the development of revised on-time performance standards described in the report).

Eligibility Determinations

- A. WMATA should ensure that contractors who conduct eligibility interviews and assessment have adequate and dedicated staff to conduct timely assessments.
- B. WMATA should conduct outreach and gather input from customers on the changes to the eligibility determination process before the changes are finalized.
- C. WMATA should simplify the recertification process for individuals found to be unconditionally ADA paratransit eligible and whose functional ability is not expected to improve over time. Provide these individuals a longer term of eligibility and require only a brief recertification form.

Rider Input and Customer Service

- A. WMATA should analyze telephone performance at the Office of Customer Service and take appropriate actions to eliminate excessively long hold times. WMATA should also provide callers to the Office of Customer Service the option to leave a message regarding service issues on the weekends.
- B. WMATA should change the way that E&D Committee members are selected in order to address concerns about the Committee's objectivity and independence.
- C. WMATA should ensure that customers who require accessible formats consistently receive materials in their preferred format (WMATA should develop and maintain a list of customer's preferred formats).

Policy and Planning

- A. WMATA should complete and adopt a long-term capital plan for the MetroAccess service to ensure that adequate vehicles and equipment will be available in future years. In the short term, WMATA should work with the contractor to add 29 vehicles as soon as possible to increase the fleet spare ratio from 9% to 15%.
- B. WMATA should consider changing the future contract structure to lessen the concentration of responsibilities and operating functions in any one company and to provide for a more stable, experienced workforce.