MARTA MAC MEETING

09/12/2023

10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

>> First of all, good morning everybody that's on the line, and I'd like to call the MARTA advisory committee, better known as MAC, to order. Today's date is September the 12th, 2023. I'd like all of the MAC members to introduce themselves. After that, we'll let the MARTA members introduce themselves. So MAC members introduce yourself.   
>> This is Bob Lossie. I'm a volunteer and representing people on wheelchairs.   
>> This is Mark Pierre representing the deaf/blind.   
>> Okay. Any other MAC members?   
>> Keith is here.   
>> Then I'll move on to the MARTA members.   
>> Denise Brown. I work in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and my title is equity administrator.   
>> (Indiscernible), director of vertical transportation.   
>> Okay. Anybody else?   
>> Angelita Armour, Mobility customer service field rep.   
>> Okay. Okay. So after that --   
>> All of them are just attendees, and they're muted.   
>> Okay. We'll move on because, you know, we don't have a whole lot of reports to make, and I don't have any remarks. I can go down to our subcommittee reports. None of our subcommittee met, but we had a -- we had an eligibility committee -- I mean, a eligibility committee where we upheld the decision of the -- of the committee. We had two people to come before us, and two were upheld. And is our Diversity and Inclusion director, Ms. Paula Nash, is she on the line and if she have any remarks.   
>> I can't see that she's on the line, but she didn't have any remarks.   
>> Okay, no remarks. Okay. Okay.   
>> Keith Chambers.   
>> Customer experience, do we have anybody from there?   
>> No, we're starting with rail operations today by Keith Chambers.   
>> Okay, we'll go on to rail operations, Mr. Keith Chambers.   
>> Good morning, everyone. I'm going to be real brief too. This may be a quick meeting. For the elevator project update, we are complete with all station elevators except for Sandy Springs. There are five elevators in that station presently, and we are replacing the ones in the parking garage first, but there are alternate elevators for use there, so no need for mobility shuttle support or any kind of manual work‑around for that. And the only elevators left besides those inside Sandy Spring stations are parking garages, maintenance facilities, and headquarters. Like I said, that was going to be a brief update.   
>> Okay. Thank you Mr. Chambers. Are there any questions? Well, thank you Mr. Chambers.   
>> Yes, sir.   
>> Okay. We'll move on to customer update. Do we have anybody from there, Denise?   
>> Yes, Angelita Amour is on the line.   
>> Okay. Ms. Armour.   
>> Yes, can you hear me?   
>> Yes.   
>> Yes, she can.   
>> Okay. Good morning, everyone. My name is Angelita Armour. Good morning. From the customer service -- mobility customer service field rep, and I do have the report for the ADA link customer complaints report out for July 2023. We'll start with the authority‑wide complaints, that number is 597. Of the 597, we have 205 ADA link complaints which is 34.3%. Of the 205 ADA link complaints, we have 124 of those that are valid complaints, which is 60.5%. Next we have 191 complaints for mobility. We have 8 for mobility reservations. We have 4 for bus operations. 2 for mobility maintenance, and 0 for vertical transportation and station maintenance. Next we have the top complaint categories. Starting with late pick‑ups, we have 59. Late drop‑offs we have 51. We have 16 no‑shows. We have discourteous and vehicle stopping location we have 10. Didn't offer assistance, we have 7. Tone of voice and excessive time on the van we have 5. And next we have top non‑mobility complaints. Starting with incorrect reservations information we have 3, and we have 1 of pass‑ups, discourteous, bus early, and won't let board we have one of those each. And last but not least, we have accommodations. Authority‑wide we have 68. Of the 68, we have 26 mobility accommodations which is 38.2%. And that concludes the ADA link complaints -- customer complaints for July 2023. Do anyone have any questions or concerns?   
>> This is Bob Lossie.   
>> Okay, Bob.   
>> Just something that I was curious. A driver wouldn't let somebody board. What might be a reason that they might not let them board?   
>> So once they board, we have various reasons for that, and that particular case it could have been a situation where there was a dispute maybe with the operator and the passenger or a case where the passenger wasn't supposed to board the van for various reasons. And we do have a situation where it could have been a situation with a PCA or a companion. We do have services, contract services where the passenger spoke about he couldn't board one of the contractors van, they're not suitable for wheelchairs. So we we have anything of that nature that would not let board.   
>> And one other thing I'm just curious about, you know, I don't know if this would be your department, but you could let me know, but I was wondering MARTA has been struggling for some months of getting employees because there are just so few people that are applying. How is that going now?   
>> They're continuously aggressively hiring for operators, so it's just a thing where we're trying to get people to remain here to stay with the company, and we're trying to work with the contractors aggressively to hire more people, it's just a point of having the operators remain, you know, and just as a part of their career. So we're just doing -- they're doing different incentives and, you know, having different management personnel being hired to see if they could, you know, make that a thing where they're able to keep the drivers.   
>> Okay. Thank you.   
>> You're welcome.   
>> Any other questions for MAC members? Ms. Armour, I have a couple of questions. Since the addition of the 15 mini vans that MARTA got and put in the revenue service and the ride share company that MARTA has contracted with --   
>> Robert, excuse me. I don't want to interrupt, but that sounds like a question that's going to be for Rick Gonzalez of Mobility. He's up next.   
>> Okay, Mr. Gonzalez, okay. Sure thing. Okay. Well, thank you Ms. Armour for your report.   
>> Okay.   
>> Okay.   
>> Rick?   
>> Now, Mr. Gonzalez, Richard Gonzalez, we'll move right on into the MARTA mobility report. Mr. Richard Gonzalez. I don't hear him on the line.   
>> Keith, I don't know.   
>> There you are.   
>> Yeah, I can hear you now.   
>> Okay. I'm going to try to (audio distortion) --   
>> You're going up and down. The volume is going up and down.   
>> We can't hear you if you're speaking.   
>> I apologize.   
>> No, we can barely hear you. We hear you somewhat, but not clear.   
>> All right. Let's try this. How about now?

>> Yeah.

>> That's it?   
>> And we can see the screen.   
>> Oh, heck. Well, there we go. The magic formula. I got the I.T. guy, but let's go ahead and move forward. So this is September 2023 mobility services update to the people at the MAC. And we're going to be talking about overcoming some challenges that we have in front of us. Now let's talk about the first KPI that is important, and that is on‑time performance. So, you know, right now, we have a very -- we have a tough time with our MDBF which is miles -- Marta's distance between failures that affect on‑time performance because that means breakdown. We're going to have more discussions on that, but also we talked about breakdowns. We have this inconsistent OTP. So since March the average OTP was 88.5, and at the end of August, the average OTP was 81.29. So our cure for this to turn it around, we really are putting pressure on our providers, holding them more accountable, and we're adding more service on the road. Now, I would like to point out that at the same time last year, you know, the OTP was slightly -- it was slightly worse, it was at 83.25 for the mean average. So let's talk about the distance between failures, that's another KPI. We have an older fleet that needs to be updated, so the cured 15 vehicles will be delivered to MARTA at the end of September. I apologize, they're not in service, they're having problems finding the amounts we need for our mobile data terminal tablets. Not only will these newer vehicles put more service on the road, they're going to have less problems, and that's going to lower or MDBF, Marta's distance between failures, and that's going to help improve our overall services, okay. So the vehicles that we should be receiving at the end of this month, of course, the Chrysler Voyager. Very excited about them. We will receive 15, 5 will go to the carrier First Transit, and 10 will go to A‑National. Even more exciting, we are in the process of ordering the Ram Pro Floor, and that is a paratransit vehicle, a little larger than those mini vans. The capacity will be six ambulatory, two wheelchair. We're going to order 52 a year for the next four years. Another exciting features about this, we're going with ramps not lifts. Lifts break down. The ramp is electronically deployable, but heaven forbids if that breaks down, the ramp can be manually deployed a lot easier than a lift. A couple other additions to our service, First Transit is bringing on Silver Ride and Big Star Transit. Now these are two DBE's that are going to add more service on the road, approximately 20 more vehicles, and they will be coming on board in October. And these are all going to be new vehicles that are owned by the subcontractor. Another exciting thing that's happening, we're bringing back the town hall meetings. The first one will be held here at the headquarters. They're going to be held quarterly, so after that, we'll be rotating to different neighborhoods, and the schedule for these meetings will be posted soon. Any questions?   
>> This is Bob Lossie. I have a question about the Ram Pro and the Big Star. It seems to be the low profile entrance which personally I like it. The thing that they had gotten in trouble for is are there lifts for the wheelchairs for the mobility? Are you converting over to these smaller ones? I mean, they seem like they're roomy to accommodate as many passengers?   
>> Indeed. Indeed. Well done, sir. They are roomier -- my apologizes -- just as roomy, and it is going to help services overall. They're going to get better gas mileage. As you pointed out, the lifts can be troublesome, so this is going to be the model. The ones we're using now are called cutaways, and so over time, we'll be phasing out cutaways and going with something like this.   
>> And the cutaways are the ones that we're used to, the great big flunky lifts on them?   
>> Yes.   
>> Okay.   
>> I'm excited about this. It looks better for the ecology as well as less inhibiting for somebody getting on with a wheelchair. Great.   
>> Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.   
>> Are there any other questions for MARTA members for Mr. Gonzalez? Well, Mr. Gonzalez, I have two questions that I was asking the -- I wanted to ask this question. Since the addition of these 15 vans that supposed to be received this year and the partnering with UZURV, the ride share company, was supposed to reduce the number of on‑time performance. Have we made any -- do you see any progress in the addition of the 15 vans and the use of the ride share program?   
>> Well, sir, and I apologize. I have been babbling. Ms. Davis is trying to correct me of it, but the 15 vans have not arrived yet and will not be in service until --   
>> They have not? I'm under the impression that they came in around about February or March. They were supposed to under your previous predecessor, Mr. Turpin, Miles Turpin, and he promised us, the MAC committee, that we'll get the first glance at them when they come in because we wanted to give our opinion of those particular vans. Now, with these new ones you say that we are going to be bringing on and the additional companies that are going to be coming with their own vehicles, will the MAC committee, or will you allow the MAC committee to take a glance at these new vehicles that's coming in? And I think you mentioned we were going to get about what 51 for the next -- 51 vehicles a year for the next four years. Did I understand you correctly?   
>> Yes, we're going to get 52 actually a year for the next four years.   
>> Okay. 52, I was one off.   
>> Not too bad. So yes, I apologize if the timeline is not what was presented to you. We will not be getting those until the end of September, the mini vans, and the minute they get here, I would love then to present one to the MAC committee. I will work with you sir to set up dates and a time and get everybody here, pick them up if you would like to crawl around in it and check it out.   
>> Yes, sir. We would just like to check it out because we were told some of the vans or at least I've gotten feedback from the mini vans that are currently being used, and so the big vehicle that you send out with the lift and all, that big step from the ground up into the van because I myself have ridden the van, but for me, it's no problem because I'm tall so it's no problem, but for a lot of shorter people, we were talking about from the feedback that I got that would MARTA be using some type of small stool or something so that they could step up then get into the mini van that you're currently using now? So those are the vans that I thought that came in earlier this year, but I could be mistaken, but I know you -- they were using them because I took a ride in one. So I was just wondering since the addition of those vans and the UZURV service that you've partnered with, MARTA has partnered with, do you see that it has cut down on a lot of the late pick‑ups and late drop‑offs?   
>> At this time they are having a positive impact, but the one of the issues that we are facing -- and it's not an issue, you know. I shouldn't call it that, and if someone can give me a better word, please let me know so I can use it. We are growing at a pace of 22% year over year, so that means in approximately, you know, four to five years, you know, our ridership is going to double. So right now, UZURV is just barely holding back the times, and luckily, like I said, we have those 15 vans coming in. You said there were some other vans that were before my time that I'm not familiar with. So I can tell you right now, we will see a -- we will see a very positive and telling impact on the OTP by the end of September beginning October with the new service that's being put on the road. And then after that, once we have plenty of vans on the road, plenty of buses, we're going to look at our efficiencies, you know, because all these new vans cost money relative revenue to our contractors, you know, so God bless them. So keep the service on the road, and then from there, we'll pay attention to efficiencies.   
>> And to Mr. Gonzalez, we were told, the MAC committee was told that when these vans are put in use, the patron were to get a call letting them know that they was going to use a car from the ride share program, UZURV program, they were going to be called the day before letting them know instead of sending a big MARTA vehicle out, they would send a car out for ambulatory patrons to letting them know they'll send a car, and that's still being done, I hope. I haven't heard anything otherwise that the patrons are being called a day before. Now, some say that they don't receive a call, but they receive a call the day of letting the patron know that is a car that's coming to pick them up. Is that still being done on a regular basis?   
>> I will follow up at the next meeting and find out. I don't believe that is happening, but I will verify whether it is or not.   
>> Okay. All right. Well, that was my last question then.   
>> Thank you, sir.   
>> Any other questions from any other MAC members at this time for Mr. Gonzalez?   
>> This is Bob Lossie, can I ask another quick question? As I kind of assume the larger one van that had been around were going to be retired with the newer ones coming in, but it sounds like you're anticipating an increase in ridership, so you're going to maintain still. You plan on maintaining the older fleets?   
>> For the foreseeable future, yes, sir. Once the extra service is on the road and we have that capacity, we are going to look at retiring the old fleets. Once again, we get the service on the road, we get the efficiencies where we need it to be, I can start retiring out older vehicles.   
>> And one other question. I don't know if this would be for you Mr. Gonzalez, but I don't recall ever hearing that anybody was denied a reservation, booking a reservation because you were filled to capacity. Has that ever happened? Does anybody know?   
>> I have -- sir, we just got through a triannual FTA audit which we passed, and part of their inspection was to ensure that no one was denied a trip.   
>> That's great. Thank you.   
>> Thank you, sir.   
>> Any other questions? Hearing none, thank you, Mr. Gonzalez.   
>> Robert, I'm letting you know that Kay Sibatta and Jordan Hall they were on the call, but they were muted, but I don't see any questions from them.   
>> Okay, they were muted. Okay. Well, that brings the MAC committee to an end, and I want to -- before I adjourn the meeting, is there anything else to come before this committee? Okay.   
>> Robert? Mark Gassaway has a question.   
>> Okay. Mark?   
>> He says he wants to talk about signage and legibility. So at the bus phase, at the train station when the buses are coming into the bays, you actually can't read the ticker that's coming across and telling you what bus is at what bay, you can't really read that as a person with low vision. Now, I can read the front of the bus and the bus number just fine, that's big and legible, but on the ticker on the schedule, I know that hearing people there's a verbal announcement what bus is arriving at what bay, but as a deaf blind person, person with low vision, I'm not able to see that ticker. So I'm trying to be self‑reliant, depend on myself, and be able to navigate these things. I can't always depend on someone telling me what bus is at what bay on a one on one basis. So is there a way to have the ticker in the bus bay maybe lowered to the ground and maybe larger so individuals with low vision can read it or have a Braille option, a Braille ticker option?   
>> Well, that would have been --   
>> Yeah, I just had a lot of problems trying to read the ticker that's way up in the air, and I can't read it.   
>> I will definitely pass this on to bus operations.   
>> Yeah. That would have been a question for bus operations according to signage.   
>> I will definitely pass that on.   
>> Okay.   
>> I'll do it now.   
>> All right. Well, that's it then. I now adjourn the MAC committee until our next meeting which is -- Denise, what is our next MAC meeting?   
>> November the 14th.   
>> November the 14th. So this meeting stands adjourned.   
>> Bye, everyone, and thank you for participating.   
>> Thank you.