MARTA ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

**Date:** September 8, 2020

**Time:** 10:00 am – 11:30 am

**Location:** Virtual via WebEx

**CALL TO ORDER**

Leonard Stinson – Vice Chairperson: Called the meeting to order on September 8, 2020, at 10:16 am with Member self-introductions. Jorge Urrea – Chairperson was unable to connect to the WebEx due to technical issues. He was able to listen in on the meeting. Leonard Stinson Chaired the meeting.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Committee Members Present:**

**Jorge Urrea,** Chair

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

**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

**Absent:**

**Robert Smith,** Seniors

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

**Mark Gasaway,** Representing Deaf/Blind

**Kay Sibetta,** Representing Seniors **–** Organization

**Staff Present:**

**Diversity & Inclusion** - Denise Brown, Adoraeu Jouette, Paula Nash, Evelyn Richards, Jalyn Radziminski; **Mobility** - Peter Bruno, Roosevelt Stripling, Jessalyn Smiley Clark, Calisha Davis, Delton Quarles, Eric Knowles, Jonathan Weaver; **Customer Services** - Donna DeJesus, Tiffany Guillory; **Vertical Transportation** – Keith Chambers; **Technology** – Kirk Talbott, Victor Hall, Catrina Jones; **Rail Operations** – George Wright; **External Affairs** – Toni Thornton

**Mobility Contractors:** Shomeka Brown, MV Transportation, Arlette Whitley, Gresham Transportation.

Leonard Stinson called meeting to order and moved to subcommittee reports:

**Customer Focus: Sandra Owen** reported on behalf of Kay Sibetta the subcommittee met and discussed the project to develop an informational video to engage and provide information that may be useful to MARTA patrons to help understand how MARTA’s accessibility services.

**No Show** -– Did not meet, but is planning to meet at the end of September, if there are customers who request to appeal their pending No Show suspension.

**Accessibility – Leonard Stinson** reported that the committee met to discuss ways to help Mobility streamline the eligibility process. The subcommittee would like to submit the following suggestions to Marta Mobility. During the mobility recertification process, customers often incur expenses to get to part B of the application completed by their health care professionals. There is also the cost and inconvenience of traveling to a healthcare professional’s office and possibility to a post office to mail or fax the completed document. Below are the Committee’s suggestions:

* If the initial certification process resulted in a unconditional eligibility status and part B of the application that was completed by the healthcare professional indicated a permanent disability; the recertifcation process should not require the application or the in‑person assessment.
* If the initial assessment indicated that the customer could not safely navigate the simulated terrain, an in-person recertification would not be beneficial:
* A virtual/telephonic Recertification Process should be implemented
* The patron should receive an unconditional eligibility determination

Mr. Stinson asked if there were any questions as he wanted to make sure that everybody understands what we're suggesting. There were no questions. There wasn’t enough members present to have a quorum to vote on these suggestions so voting on the suggestions was tabled until the next meeting.

**Executive Director – Paula Nash:** stated that the information will be report by the various MARTA departments on the agenda. Ms. Nash thanked everyone for participating in the MAC virtual meetings as they seem to be working well. We will continue through the end of the year and probably some time beyond that. The last MAC meeting for the year will be in November and will be virtual.

Question: Sandra Owen asked about the various open positions in MARTA management and expressed concerns about how this will negatively impact MARTA operations. Ms. Nash pointed out that some of the positions have employees in an “acting” role, while MARTA is seeking candidates. The vacancies will not adversely impact MARTA operations. Ms. Nash indicated that the MAC has heard presentations/reports from Peter Bruno on several occasions. He is Acting Director of Mobility.

**Customer Service - Tiffany Gilory:** Provided the ADA linked customer inquiries for the month of June, 2020. Authority wide, customer service inquiries for June there were 384. ADA linked complaints were 93. Out of the ADA linked complaints, 55 were valid complaints and the percentage of total ADA complaints were 59.1 percent.

The break down by department, June 2020, mobility 53. Bus operations, 33. Mobility reservations, 6. Mobility maintenance, 1.

Top complaint categories for June 2020. Late pickups, 30 plus minutes, seven. Late drop offs, six. No show, five. Excessive time on van, four. Tone of voice, three.

Top none mobility complaints for June 2020. Won't let board received 18. Incorrect reservation information received three. Tone of voice, two. Pass up, one.

Accommodations for June 2020 authority wide received 21. Out of the 21, 9 were mobility, at 42.9 percent.

Comment - MS. OWENS: Although the numbers are small, the movement is large and it looks like we are beginning to get some issues developing in the accommodations and so I just give that as the warning as we look at the data in the next coming months. Ms. Owens suggested that the Committee also look at the Mystery Customer reports and see if there are any commalities between that report and the Customer Service report. Mr. Stinson asked that the Customer Focus Subcommittee look at the Mystery Customer Report and bring that analysis back to the Committee.

Question – Leonard Stinson – of the people that were not allowed to board, are those people not being allowed to board because of not wearing masks? Ms. Gulory stated that those complaints were largely with fixed route. George Wright, Deputy Chief of Rail Operations provided the following response regarding fixed route complaints of not allowing to board the bus. In order to adhere to social distancing mandates, there are limits on the number of people allowed on a fixed route bus. When a fixed route bus meets it’s social distancing limit no other passesngers will be picked up, however another bus will be dispatched right behind that bus.

Comment – Bob Lossie expressed that his experience with operators since the mask requirement has been favorable. The drivers have been appropriately letting the rider know that the masks must be appropriatey worn over the nose. There were instances when a rider didn’t have a mask and was turned away. He also stated that there is plexy glass barrier separating the drivers from the riders who board the bus. Mr Wright stated that it has since been remedied masks are now available on the buses in dispensers for those who do not have a mask. Mr. Wright also stated MARTA is tracking the mask compliance and it is consistently in the 90 percentile range.

**Elevator and Escalators – Keith Chamber, Director Vertical Transportation -**

* Five Points – South and East Platform unit 1, forecasted return to service date October 22, 2020
* Peachtree Center Station – South Entrance Concourse to Platform unit 4, forecasted return to service date October October 22, 2020
* Civic Center Station – South Platform unit 1, forecasted return to service date October November 27, 2020

Keith Chambers stated that they didn’t plan to go back to an elevator that required a Mobility Shuttle but it looks like Brookhaven will require a Mobility shuttle next month.

Keith Chambers stated that there are signs for the elevators, detailing the workarounds. There are updates that comes out on the MARTA website under the alert tab that gives instant updates on whatever is out, the elevators will be updated daily.

Every morning, they will put out that update and then the rest of the outages are going to be on the elevator and escalator advisory's page. People can sign up for instant text or email alerts and get all of the elevator outages and alerts daily and as they happen.

So if something goes down and a Mobility van needs to be staged, you can find out immediately when it happens. IT developed this, its directly updated through E-news System when the call is made it's a really a good feature that we have, stability in outages and getting that information out.

We have developed signage for all the stations at the elevators and we have many completed. At each elevator we have a board and if an elevator goes out of service, the board is flipped down and it becomes a work-around from that location. There is an order for 51 more and we will install them as soon as they arrive.

We have installed Antimicrobal defense film on the braille, the buttons, the entrances of each elevator.

Question: Bob Lossie and Jorge Urrea asked about getting the announcement about the elevator outage on the bus and train. Keith Chambers stated that is already in place when the call goes out a notification is sent every hour. Paula Nash further explained that through our monitoring we realize that there have been issues of operators making the announcements. We have made announcements particulary elevator/escalator announcements be a focus of the operator recertification training. Sections were added to the training in hopes of correcting the issues with operators making announcements.

**Audio Visual Information System – Catrina Jones,** Technology Project Manager for the AVIS Project. AVIS stands for audio, visual, information systems. The scope of the project is to upgrade and replace existing speakers, signs, infrastructures such as cabling and conduit, amplifiers within the stations at Marta, 38 stations total. It will also include the installation of new software that will drive the content on the signs. The stat is as of September 8, 2020 is the project is 83.09 percent complete. The construction is expected to end by December 2020. The installation of the Nucleus software will take place around December 2020, and the project is on schedule to end June 2021. To date, there are a total of 4540 speakers installed. Out of the 4549, that leaves the remaining of nine speakers to be installed without derailing all of the 38 rail stations. They are 297 signs installed out of 326 throughout all of the route stations. The total project cost to date, are 34 million and that includes all pending changes to date. Construction is in progress throughout all of the lines. Specifically, this week and next week, we are working at Vine City Station, Peachtree Center Station, and Lindbergh Station, and North Spring Station.

**Mobility Updates – Peter Bruno, Acting Director Mobility Services**

**Covid19 update**s - We've been for quite some time now requiring customers to wear masks. I think, we've spoke with the MAC committee in May when we were just contemplating with this. Our operators, had been wearing masks since March when the authorities put that mandate in place as standard operator uniform for all Marta operators. Implemented the customer mask efforts, and it seems like most of our customers were wearing mask anyway so and it really wasn't a big change and that's been very positively received. Operators are given roughly 10 masks in their running board. When they start out every day in their Zip‑Loc bags and they are sterilized so if a customer does not have one, they can simply give them a mask.

We did a pilot program installing hand sanitizers, actual dispensers on board the vehicle, they are installed on the Plexy glass panel directly behind the driver. They are installed at the ADA height and they have a lever that could be easily used by any one, it is fully accessible and so we did an initial run of ten. Hand sanitizing dispensers on board, were extremely well received by the customers and the drivers so now we are rolling that out to the entire fleet of vehicles over the next couple of weeks so as you use this service you will be seeing those more and more.

We are continuing our two passengers per vehicle plan that we implemented on April 3rd. We had a trip count last week of roughly, 1200 to 1400 and that is under our typical 2,000 or so. This helps with social distancing efforts.

We have reconfigured the assessment center. We've made it more of a hospital intake setup with the unique cubicles where the customers will sit on one side and a staff members from the eligible group will sit on the other. Plexy glass shields between that setup. Anyone who comes into the MARTA headquarters buildings will be required to wear a mask.

Question Sandra Owen - I am interested in the filtration level of the filters in the vans. I know there was recently guidance from the CDC that it should be at least 13. Peter Bruno responded:

I have two responses there, number one response, we moved for replacing filters in the HVAC unit in the heating and air primarily every month. We used to do that every six months but now we are doing it on a monthly basis. The second response is the authority is looking at a preventive filter that we're going to be rolling out to all the rolling stock vehicles that would be the entire fleet of fixed route buses plus the mobility vans that does a much better job. Peter will provide the name of the product for the next meeting.

**Mobility Fiscal year of 2020 KPI**

**On-time Performance** - our fiscal year ended on June 30th, 2020, In September of 2019, we experienced our low and that was roughly at 85 percent. However, we finished FY20 at roughly 96 percent, so we finished on a high note. Our peak during the fiscal year was in May, we actually hit 96 percent for the month of May so that was good. On a comparative basis FY19 the prior fiscal year, we ended in June roughly at 90 percent which is right at the target. In FY20 we improved that by 6 points again where we ended at 96 percent. So fiscal year to fiscal year which we improved very well in serving our customers.

**Revenue hours -**  we had our revenue hours peek on a monthly basis? In October, where we hit roughly 49,000 revenue hours quite significant. We had a low of revenue hours in April which was the height of the shelter in place order and so we had roughly 20,000 revenue hours. So you can see from the height of roughly 49,000 in October to our valley, if you will, of 20,000 so the shelter in place order health safety measures people were really paying attention and we've dropped quite a bit. We finished FY20 on the up plain at roughly 27,000 revenue hours and that is continuing our service is continuing to go up.

**Trips** - In October 2019 the peek trip count was 53,361. Our lowest point was in April 2020 it was 16,965. Again the shelter in place order having an impact and we ended FY20 at 25,000 trips in June so again we are picking up trips.

**Mean** **Distance Between Failures** which is the measure of the maintenance of the fleets and the reliability. We were greatly assisted this year by the purchasing of a significant number of new vehicles. We began FY20 with June 2019 and our mean distance between failures was roughly 27,000 miles, but that's still above the target of 15,000 but that was our low. With the impact of the new fleet in February 2020, we hit 247 thousand mean distance miles between failures and that was significant. We finished June 2020 at roughly 68,000 main distance miles. We are still finishing very strong.

**Complaints -** we talked about that earlier and our top three complaints for the fiscal year continues to be no shows, late drop offs and late pick‑ups which is 30‑minute or more or so. We are continuing to track this and work with our partners in customer service and our contractors to tackle those trends

**Functional assessments** - Because of the temporary suspension of the in‑person assessments and that was in the April timeframe. Our temporary eligibility numbers were quit high, if you recall we automatically gave individuals a six months extension due to the suspension of the in‑person. So our temporary eligibility numbers were at 44 percent of all applicants or that's recertified. We are going to be picking that up here quit soon. As a point, our unconditional eligibility was at 20 percent of applicants. Conditional was at 33 percent and our ineligible denied was very small 31 of applicants roughly at a small 3 percent only. And that breaks things down to our functional assessment and that's all I have for key performance indicators.

Question: Lenardo Banes – are the foggers still being used at night continuing and he still hears a lot of unprofessional communications between the dispatchers and the drivers. MR. BRUNO: The first part yes, the foggers are still being used every day, we did come to a backpack unit which is quite handy, it has a container that holds quite a bit of fluid and as they go on the bus they start the front end work to the back and then they come back to the front end.

The dispatcher and the drive communication the Program Manager of operations worked with our contractors and developed a new set of radio communications procedures. We trained both our contractors. Members of the team are constantly monitoring the radio during the day. If we hear any kind of unprofessional discussion over the air wave we'll immediately address that with the dispatchers.We are handing out corrections.

Question: MS. OWENS - is there any update on the ticketing? Automatic ticketing or electronic ticketing. Peter Bruno asked this on this for now as he as a meeting later this week with IT to discuss that but I think we are moving forward towards that and now so we've got to make sure that the customer interactions is correct, that it is assessable to everyone. Once the usage of the unit itself is right now we will work on the standard operating procedures.

Question: Bob Lossie – asked if the masks on the vehicles are individually wrapped for safety. Peter Bruno – no they are not individually wrapped but put into ziplock type bags with gloves, but a mask dispenser is be considered.

Question: MR. STINSON - Can the customer service inquiries report include a comparison to a prior month or a prior year? That kind of gives a better picture and I could see that it looks like that every June of our percentages look very bad. Then we, the MAC committee, as well as MARTA can say, what's going on in June every year or what's going on in September every year and it could be people are coming out of training, it could be something else is going on, I don't know, but it gives us a better picture of what we're looking at. MS. NASH: you are absolutely correct. It is a lot easier to track trends and do a better analysis when you have historical data whether it’s the previous month or last year or the same month so we will make an effort of getting that together so it is more helpful and easier to do an analysis or track. We will look into providing the information in a comparison format.

The meeting was adjourned 11:30 am. The next meeting will be a vitril meeting on November 10, 2020.