

# **Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC)**

## **July 17, 2018 Minutes**

Meeting commenced at 5:00 p.m.

**PAC Attendees:** Thomas Coppola, Lyudmila Demikhovskaya, David H. DePorte, Sharlene Kraft, Ellen Rubin, Jean Ryan, Ken Stewart, Sharada Veerubhotla, RueZalia Watkins

**PAC members on the phone:** Mindy Jacobsen, John Moynihan, Tucker B. Salovaara, Stanley Weinblatt,

**NYC Transit Staff Attendees:** Brian Altschul, Brandon Anderson, Michael Cosgrove, Jayashri Srinivasan Cuffey, Tom Chin, Lynda Edmond, Evette C. Ennis, Tammie Francisque, Donna Fredericksen, Eugene Griffith, Simone Harvard, Patricia Ibarguen, Felicia Jones, Carol Jones, Evan Kelly, Michael Levy, Cassandra Lubin-Richards, Michael Lugo, Diane McFarlane, Elese Mullins, Margaret O'Halloran, John Salerno, Chantal Sealy Walker, Kenneth Stuart, Shirley Teran-Marty, Cassandra Tillman, Rosemarie Venero

**Guests:** Frank Camp (GCS), Judith Buckley (Deputy Chief ADA Officer), Jason Gross (Curb), Uwvie Obodo (PCA for Tucker B. Salovaara)

**Telephone Conferenced Guest:** Quemuel Arroyo (DOT Policy Officer for Accessibility & ADA Coordinator)

**Introductions** – Ellen Rubin, PAC Co-Chair

**I. Approval of Minutes** – Ellen Rubin, PAC Co-Chair  
The approval of the May 15, 2018 minutes, approved unanimously.

## **II. AAR Service Report VP Michael Cosgrove**

As requested by the PAC, VP Cosgrove provided a summary of the Paratransit Report, copy attached to these minutes.

### **PAC Feedback**

Ms. Demikhovskaya inquired if the Curb On-Demand Pilot Program will be cut off. Mr. Cosgrove informed PAC members that discussion and developments on this program continues.

Ms. Veerubhotla expressed that E-hail drivers have not been reading the information or assisting customers. At times the address that the app locates is not always the correct location.

Mr. Gross explained how his team has communicated with Google and found that Google Maps may not always target the exact entrance or address. Updates are always taking place to improve accuracy.

## **III. PAC Topic Evette C. Ennis – Director of Appeals**

Ms. Ennis, Director of Appeals, spoke regarding the proposed revisions to the No Show/Late Cancellation policy. Over the years several changes have been made to this policy. The Eligibility Unit continues to review policies and is proposing a more customer friendly revision to the existing policy. The proposed policy changes are a result of reevaluating how no-shows and late cancels generate suspensions.

Under the new proposed draft policy:

- Customers to be allocated seven (7) points each month that allows seven occurrences of no-shows and late cancels before being deemed a “pattern or practice” resulting in a Notice of Suspension being generated. The points will restart each month.
- Customers who exceed seven points on their first violation will receive a warning call or letter. Subsequent violations will result in a Notice of Suspension being sent to the customer. The following suspension periods shall apply to violations that occur within a rolling 12-month period.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> suspension 1-week period
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> suspension 2-week period
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> suspension 3-week period
  - 4<sup>th</sup> suspension 4-week period
  - The 5<sup>th</sup> and subsequent suspensions during a rolling 12-month period will be for a 4-week period.
- A customer has the right to appeal any proposed suspension. The customer must submit a completed Notice of Intention to Appeal Suspension and can elect to appeal in person or by mail.

Ms. Ennis explained that her staff reviews call logs, trip logs and the in-person or written appeal before any decision is made. All efforts are made not to suspend a customer and the majority of proposed suspensions are waived.

The PAC will be briefed later in the year as to how the draft policy is progressing.

#### **IV. MYmta app Brian Altschul**

Brian Altschul the Technology Officer for Paratransit, discussed the My AAR app that is integrated into the new MYmta app and website. This is an initiative from NYCT President Andy Byford which is one of the items in the Fast Forward Plan.

There was a Beta launch to 100 people to use this unified web and mobile app for Access-A-Ride. The vision for this app is to allow customers to book their trips online with their smartphones, as well as set up subscription service and receive immediate confirmation. You can track your vehicle before it arrives and see if additional pickups are scheduled. Once the trip is completed you can rate both your trip and driver. Another feature is called Eligibility Process Digitization. Today, initial inquiry into Paratransit eligibility is only available over the phone. Upon app launch, you will be able to submit your application using the new online form. In addition, a customer will be able update contact information and address.

The anticipated MYmta release to all AAR customers is late summer/ early fall.

#### **Discussions and Member Feedback**

Ms. Ryan asked if a reservation can be booked at any time using the app. She was told that while using the app she can book at any time of the day, unlike the 9am-5pm range expected when booking with reservations with a telephone call.

Mr. Altschul explained that customers who are not technologically savvy or don't have a smartphone can be assured that the Call Center will always be available.

#### **IV. Curb**

##### **Jason Gross- Curb**

Mr. Gross explained that CURB continues to refine the program especially helping people who are struggling with the app. Mr. Gross encourages customers to reach out to the Curb call center for help if something has gone wrong with their app or if they have questions regarding how the app works.

Ms. Watkins and Ms. Ryan expressed that typing an address into the location provides a precise location, instead of the preset location. If the address still indicates an error, they should communicate this information to the helpdesk. Mr. Gross explained that he continues to work with Google maps to locate certain addresses that currently does not recognize.

Ms. Ryan vocalized that she continues to have difficulty with drivers when picking her up in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Mr. Gross stated they are working with TLC to have drivers accept trips using wheelchairs outside of the Manhattan and provide more accessible vehicles.

Mr. Gross explained that while they continue to address immediate situations all suggestions and feedback are welcome.

##### **New Business/Old Business**

Mr. DePorte stated the time for his Subscription service has been changed causing him to be picked up extremely early. Ms. Edmond explained the updates in scheduling was to allow ample time to load and off load clients without impacting the performance of the route. If customers have trouble with scheduling updates they may call the Subscriptions Unit at our General AAR number, option #6.

**Closing**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.