

# **Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC)**

**June 6, 2024**

## **Meeting Minutes**

The PAC meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.

### **1. Welcome from PAC Leadership**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson RueZalia Watkins at 5:10 p.m.

The agenda was updated to include # 5 (2) Maintenance for Dedicated and Supplemental Service.

### **2. Confirmation of participants and approval of minutes**

#### *PAC Members*

Thomas Coppola, Luda Demikovskaya, Ketrina Hazell, Jose Hernandez, Billy Mitchell, Mark Anthony Phifer, Jean Ryan, Sharada Veerubhotla, RueZalia Watkins, Sharlene Kraft.

Absent – Tucker Salovaara, Ellen Rubin, Mindy Jacobson

#### *MTA/NYCT Paratransit*

Patricia Ibarguen, Diane McFarlane, Frank Camp, Eugene Griffith, Beverlyn Richards, Shari Bhushun-Ogbourne, Lynda Edmond, Nathasha Parris, Rachel Cohen, Tammie Francisque, Kevin Flores, Rachel Cohen, Scott Pantano, Cindy Myers, Rosemarie Venero, Tejpal Prajapati, Simone Harvard.

Minutes from the April 11, 2024, meeting was approved.

### **3. AAR Service Updates / Dashboard AAR Report**

R. Cohen delivered the report.

S. Veerubhotla expressed concerns regarding CTG drivers arriving at locations across the street or nearby the requested location, either due to inaccurate GPS systems, or other reasons, which are further complicated by

limitations presented with language barriers. T. Prajapati noted address correction feature is being tested with CTG, and it should be fully rolled-out in a few days. This should address the wrong side of street concerns.

L. Demikovskaya shared that in her experience, as one who uses dedicated-only, the quality of performance has diminished, not improved.

J. Ryan is pleased that the text box is larger on the App, but offered the text could be bolded to assist visually.

R. Watkins offered that although improvements are acknowledged and appreciated, there are customers who are still unable to use the app (no smart phones, visual impairments, etc.).

R. Cohen acknowledged not everyone can use the app, and recognized the goal is not to have all customers using the app, but to make it accessible for those who are able to so that it is an option.

K. Hazell noted that those with speech impairments and difficulty communicating with drivers, if a message box could be added to the app, this would be helpful.

B. Mitchell suggests, as part of training, drivers be instructed to not just use GPS but to put more thought into how to perform a successful pick-up.

#### **4. Paratransit Topics:**

##### **20-Minute Service Window**

R. Cohen noted Paratransit has been tracking toward the 20-minute wait window, monitoring, reporting and pushing vendors toward the goal, we've seen positive trending up to 90%+ in the window. In terms of customer experience, we are addressing same-day concerns regarding what customers must do when vehicles are past 20-minutes. We are still phasing in taxi authorization and recovery contingency. The goal is to make the 20-minute service window the standard. An update will be provided next month, if not fully implemented by that time.

### **E-Hail Phase 3**

R. Cohen thanks the PAC for feedback throughout the move to Phase 3. The proposal changed significantly and brought to the Board a 2-part program for Phase 3 and will implement starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. per trip subsidy cap goes up to \$60, with some customers in either a 25 trip or 40 trip per month. Customers should have received an email a few weeks ago with instructions to register before June 30<sup>th</sup>. Forty percent of e-hail customers have registered for Phase 3. Correspondence sent advises customers have until June 30<sup>th</sup> to register. However, if customers do not register by the deadline, they will not be cut off from using e-hail. Reminders will be sent. July will be focused on transitioning, and then in August the focus will move toward considerations for expansion (approximately 800 additional customers). Names of those interested in participating in the program are being collected. However, being added to the list is not a guarantee they will be added.

Regarding Staten Island, approximately 4% of current On-Demand customers are S.I. residents. That's a little less than the overall percentage of customers who live on Staten Island. No issues of concern are apparent in this area.

T. Coppola requested that a copy of the e-hail phase 3 information be sent to him so that he may be educated and share the information with others. He is not interested in participating in the program. However, he would like the information to share.

S. Kraft asked how can those customers invited to Phase 3 get help with registration? If customers do not have smart phones or computers, how can they participate in the program?

R. Cohen noted a paper mail campaign was used for Phase 2, and there is a phone-in component for reserving trips.

P. Ibarquen offered that customers may call the comment line to request assistance, and it will be assigned to Paratransit Outreach team who will provide step-by-step instructions to register.

J. Ryan said some customers searched their emails and said they could not find the May 23<sup>rd</sup> email about Phase 3. Some found it in their SPAM folder. What happens by July 1<sup>st</sup> if they do not register?

R. Cohen reiterated reminders will be sent. Also, they can reach out to AAR. They will not lose e-hail service. Again, customers may call the comment line for assistance.

R. Watkins expressed gratitude for those who have access to same day service, but wanted to note in the record that access for all customers is the goal, which will hopefully be available soon.

S. Veerubhotla shared her concern that those not receiving notification and not meet the deadline will be left without access to e-hail. This should be explored further, possibly via a robo call.

R. Watkins also offered that maybe another method besides email could be considered to notify customers about Phase 3. She asked if there is an end date projected for the E-hail Pilot Program.

R. Cohen advised the program is currently committed to run through to the end of 2024. However, the intention is to go beyond that. Reaffirmed that no one currently in the program will lose their access to the program.

J. Ryan suggests texting a message to Phase 2 participants.

P. Ibarquen advised that customers were sent letters by postal mail in various languages and formats.

S. Kraft noted she has never received a letter and will reach out to her constituents to see if they ever received letters. She reiterated her concern is for customers who can only phone AAR by phone and can't use app and other features offered via smartphones.

J. Ryan clarified that those who provided emails would have received notification by email (not paper mail).

S. Veerubhotla and R. Watkins affirmed that conversations must continue around access to different levels of service and equity for all customers. E-hail will not work well for every customer.

S. Kraft responded that this sounds like 'separate but equal', for which she does not agree.

## **5. PAC Topics**

### **1) Vehicle Maintenance – AAR Dedicated and Supplemental Service**

S. Pantano reported on the contractors' responsibilities regarding maintenance compliance and how Paratransit oversees this process. Contractors must maintain vehicles via a preventative and repair worksheet.

Vehicles are set on a 30-day cycle plus 3 days (33 days), with a 4,000-mile limit with a 500 buffer.

All carriers must conduct 100 pt plus inspection, every part of the vehicle, suspension, steering, wheelchair lift, suppression. Along with that, every 6 months DOT inspection.

Regarding T. Coppola's previously presented concerns about vehicles that appear to be devoid of shocks and appropriately working suspension, Mr. Pantano noted although these older vehicles may not perform rides that are as smooth as a newer vehicle, but they are safe, up to manufacturing standard, and DOT safety standards.

T. Coppola reiterated that the standards should be readjusted, because the ride is painful. The age does not matter, it's the maintenance. J. Ryan and B. Mitchell agreed.

### **2) AVL Updates**

T. Prajapati advised we are working on publishing the RFP at the end of June. Award is anticipated in Q1 of 2025. In the interim, Paratransit is still using ADEPT system to track and plan trips. Using interim plan called CTG Resiliency and outfitted our current dedicated vehicles with iPads with CTG app that talks directly with our scheduling system which allowed us to track trips in real time.

How has the system has been impacted (moving trips around)? There is no impact to the actual system. The only issue is that when dispatchers move trips around, it may impact performance.

L. Demikovskaya said over the past few months she has not received notification about her trips, waiting over one hour. She is not receiving robo calls or receiving late notifications.

P. Ibarguen advised that a staff member contact L. Demikovskaya, investigate and address these concerns.

K. Hazell inquired about whether receipts could be provided via email.

R. Watkins offered that receipts can be accessed via the app.

T. Prajapati added that App team has been working on dark mode for the app. An update will be provided at a later date.

R. Watkins noted that the last internal meeting among PAC members all agreed that the response from the call center has improved and it is appreciated.

## **6. New Business**

No new business was discussed.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

# Paratransit Report

Statistical results for the month of April 2024 are shown below.

| Paratransit Operations - Monthly Operations Report Service Indicators |   |                           |           |          |                  |           |          |
|---|---|---------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------|----------|
| Category  | Performance Indicator   | Current Month: April 2024 |           |          | 12-Month Average |           |          |
|   |   | This Year                 | Last Year | % Change | This Year        | Last Year | % Change |
| Ridership   | Total Trips Completed*  | 741,063                   | 610,958   | +21.3%   | 669,146          | 573,413   | +16.7%   |
|   | Total Ridership   | 1,064,789                 | 892,478   | +19.3%   | 976,718          | 827,872   | +18.0%   |
| On-Time Performance   | Pick-up Primary 20 Minute   | 89.0%                     | 91.0%     | -2.0%    | 88.8%            | n/a       | n/a      |
|   | Pick-up Broker 20 Minute  | 93.0%                     | 86.0%     | +7.0%    | 88.4%            | n/a       | n/a      |
|   | Appointment OTP Trips Primary - 30 Min Early to <1 Late (On-Time)*                                      | 48.0%                     | 51.0%     | -3.0%    | 46.3%            | 51.3%     | -5.0%    |
|   | Appointment OTP Trips Primary - Early*  | 42.0%                     | 44.0%     | -2.0%    | 44.5%            | 40.6%     | +3.9%    |
|   | Appointment OTP Trips Broker - 30 Min Early to <1 Late (On-Time)*                                       | 50.0%                     | 40.0%     | +10.0%   | 45.3%            | 40.0%     | +5.3%    |
|   | Appointment OTP Trips Broker - Early*   | 39.0%                     | 51.0%     | -12.0%   | 43.1%            | 49.8%     | -6.7%    |
| Ride Time   | Ride Time Variance Performance: Actual Trip Duration vs. Planned Trip Duration - At or Better Than Plan | 81.0%                     | 84.0%     | -3.0%    | 80.7%            | 81.5%     | -0.8%    |
|   | Average Actual Trip Duration in Minutes   | 37                        | 36        | +2.8%    | 39               | 37        | +4.1%    |
|   | Max Ride Time Performance Primary   | 99.0%                     | 99.0%     | 0.0%     | 98.3%            | 97.8%     | +0.5%    |
|   | Max Ride Time Performance Broker  | 99.0%                     | 99.0%     | 0.0%     | 98.9%            | 99.0%     | -0.1%    |
| Customer Experience   | Frequent Rider Experience Primary*  | 85.0%                     | 86.0%     | -1.0%    | 83.8%            | 85.8%     | -1.9%    |
|   | Frequent Rider Experience Broker*   | 90.0%                     | 94.0%     | -4.0%    | 86.2%            | 92.9%     | -6.7%    |
| Provider No-Shows   | Provider No-Shows per 1,000 Schedule Trips Primary  | 0.90                      | 0.54      | +66.7%   | 0.73             | 1.14      | -36.2%   |
|   | Provider No-Shows per 1,000 Schedule Trips Broker   | 0.90                      | 2.94      | -69.4%   | 1.80             | 4.07      | -55.8%   |
| Customer Complaints   | Passenger Complaints - Transportation Service Quality Per 1000 Completed Trips                          | 4.1                       | 2.3       | +78.3%   | 4.1              | 2.0       | +105.5%  |
|   | Passenger Complaints - Non-Transportation Service Quality Per 1000 Completed Trips                      | 1.2                       | 3.1       | -61.3%   | 1.2              | 3.7       | -66.7%   |
| Call Center   | Percent of Calls Answered   | 98.0%                     | 95.0%     | +3.0%    | 96.4%            | 93.8%     | +2.6%    |
|   | Average Call Answer Speed in Seconds  | 17                        | 59        | -71.2%   | 35               | 90        | -61.5%   |
| Eligibility   | Total Registrants   | n/a                       | 176,390   | n/a      | n/a              | 172,887   | n/a      |

\*\*\* For all Paratransit performance metrics, visit <https://metrics.mta.info/>

The reporting of Drop-off On-Time Performance and Customer Experience metrics resumed in September. The yearly data comparison is not available due to the temporary suspension of appointment time booking of trips associated with the COVID-19 pandemic which started in March 2020. Consequently, the last year's 12-Month Average rate for these two metrics cannot be calculated.

Note: 1) The percentage comparisons are the percentage point change instead of the percentage change.  
2) Trip data and resulting metrics are preliminary and subject to adjustments.  
3) Total Registrants data for April 2024 is not available until the following report.