

Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC)

April 27, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the PAC meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.

1. Welcome from PAC Leadership

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson RueZalia Watkins at 5:12 pm.

2. Confirmation of participants and approval of minutes

PAC Members

Thomas Coppola, Luda Demikhovskaya, Ketrina Hazell, Billy Mitchell, Sharlene Kraft, Mark Anthony Phifer, Jean Ryan, RueZalia Watkins, Sharada Veerubhotla

Absent – Tom Coppola, Tucker Salovaara, Jose Hernandez, Ellen Rubin, Mindy Jacobson

MTA/NYCT Paratransit

Donna Fredericksen, Eugene Griffith, Simone Harvard, Robin Hernandez, Patricia Ibarguen, Diane McFarlane, Chris Pangilinan, Nathasha Parris, Tammie Francisque, Donald Raimondi, Natalie Garcia, Lynda Edmond, Shari Bhushun-Ogbourne, Kevin Flores, Beverlyn Richards, Frank Camp

Chairperson Watkins made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes, with one correction that Paratransit's Deputy Director, Shari Bhushun-Ogbourne was present.

3. Paratransit Dashboard AAR Report

A summary of the February 2023 operating statistics from the Paratransit Report (pg. 8) was sent to PAC members and reviewed by VP Chris Pangilinan.

PAC Member Discussion and Feedback

Ms. Ryan: Inquired about the actions Paratransit is taking regarding previously reported late drop-offs for appointment times?

Mr. Pangilinan: Part of the new scheduling engine efforts is to replace the previous engine and meet immediate operating needs as soon as possible. Paratransit is looking to achieve this goal by the end of 2023. Longer term, 1-1 1/2 years from now, a more permanent solution would be for the engine to understand traffic patterns, travel times and pick-up times.

Ms. Veerubhotla: Acknowledged wait times have improved. However, she is pushing for the improved scheduling engine to avoid long wait times for customers who are the most health compromised.

Ms. Hazell: Inquired about the 30-minute wait window and asked whether consideration is being given to passengers arriving to their appointments on-time.

Mr. Pangilinan: Goal is to get customers to their destination on-time (rather than too early or too late). The balance Paratransit is working to find is to avoid late pick-ups and, also manage early drop-offs due to last minute cancellations by customers.

Mr. Phifer: Noted he appreciates an early pick-up. However, he would prefer drivers refrain from demanding customers come out early.

Ms. Ryan: Will the new engine account for less traffic on holidays to avoid trips being too early?

Mr. Phifer: Asked if a courtesy can be given to students who receive late AAR cancellation penalties because their exam times are extended.

Mr. Harvard: Explained, as is AAR practice, all customers (or their representatives) may phone the command center for assistance if they encounter delays in meeting their return trips. And any potential penalties incurred in such situations may be addressed by bringing it to the attention of a command center supervisor.

Chair Watkins: Suggested that this practice of contacting command center for assistance and avoiding cancellation penalties be printed in the AAR On the Move newsletter. An additional inquiry about what the average wait time is to speak with a supervisor who can resolve this kind of escalated issue.

Mr. Harvard: Offered that this matter can be placed on the agenda for next meeting and noted he will meet with Frank Camp to ensure this matter is discussed and addressed to ensure supervisor responsiveness.

4. Paratransit Topics:

NEW Q-Straint and Seats Demo

Ms. Fredericksen shared a PPT presentation of the Q-Straint One All-in-One Wheelchair Securement system, and the Freedman

GO ES seating with Seat Link. As audio was unavailable for the video presentation, Ms. Fredericksen agreed to send the presentation to all PAC members, which includes links to the highlighted videos.

PAC Member Discussion and Feedback

Mr. Phifer: Offered that on NJ Access Link, the seats have protective plastic shields on either side of the headrests and asked if AAR would be considering a similar addition.

Chair Watkins: Noted all suggestions not directly related to the Q-Straint presentation be added to a future PAC meeting discussion (refer to New Business below).

Ms. Ryan: Made an observation that the floor system appears to be somewhat raised and inquired about strength and durability (specifically to support heavier power chairs).

Ms. Fredericksen: Explained the edges are smooth, solid, beveled, and bright yellow making it easy to roll onto and identify clearly. She noted they are embedded into the floor, so they are very strong.

Chair Watkins: Asked that maybe the PAC could get feedback about where the system has been tested previously, and possibly be involved in the testing period to provide feedback.

Ms. Veerubhotla: Also inquired about what other sources have tested this system and what kind of feedback is available.

Ms. Fredericksen: Will make the inquiry with Paratransit Standards & Compliance staff (Chris Messina) regarding this feedback and will get back to the committee. This new system cuts loading time down to 2 minutes.

Ms. Ryan: Asked if a demonstration and testing of the Q-Straint and Seat Link systems could be arranged at the 2 Broadway location. Ms. Fredericksen will try to schedule a demo for the PAC. If not at 2 Broadway, another location will be secured.

MY AAR – Book Online, Save Time Campaign

Ms. Fredericksen: Reviewed the booking online feature and directed attention to the most recent, newly published virtual edition of the [On the Move newsletter](#), via the mta.info website.

Mr. Pangilinan: Encouraged PAC and all AAR customers to utilize this [MY AAR online booking feature](#).

5. PAC Topics:

Expected to hear from one of the broker providers today. However, it will be added to next meeting's agenda.

E-hail Pilot Program Update

Mr. Pangilinan: Phase II of E-hail pilot program is expected to launch this summer. Structure of the program should be available, hopefully, in the next couple of weeks. Update will be provided to the Chair Watkins and the PAC prior to release to the public.

PAC Member Discussion and Feedback

Chair Watkins: Asked that any information about the implications Phase II may have on current users be shared.

Ms. Veerubhotla: Requested that the PAC also be informed about the details of Phase II implementation prior to public release.

Mr. Pangilinan: Agreed to provide information about implementation and noted this information should be available sometime in May. If any changes, PAC will be updated.

Ms. Kraft: In the E-hail program, can customers only get taxi authorizations when e-hail fails, or is a rescue supposed to be available when e-hail trips fail?

Ms. Ibarguen: Clarified that taxi authorizations are the first option when e-hail trips fail?

Mr. Pangilinan: In Phase II, the reliability will be improved which will eliminate the need for rescue or taxi authorization.

Ms. Hazell: In Phase II, will new passengers be added into the program? And, in some accessible vans there is Q-Straint QLK-150 electronic docking system. Is this something that could be investigated for AAR in the future?

AVLM Update

Mr. Pangilinan: First delivery of 150 iPads completed last week. Next 150 in the following week. Installation of these iPads to be completed during the month of May. The next order will be in June, which should be adding several vehicles (or more) per week over the next two months (confirmed with Chair that approximately 300 will start to be installed in May).

PAC Member Discussion and Feedback

Chair Watkins: Asked if specific carriers were marked to receive these first orders of iPads.

Mr. Pangilinan: Confirmed that carriers who have been utilizing paper manifests will be the first to receive the iPads (2 carriers).

Ms. Veerubhotla: What will be the process for protecting and securing the iPads? How will the software updates be maintained?

Mr. Pangilinan: Special brackets to be installed so iPads cannot be removed. Also, the iPads will be screen blocked so that no other applications can be used. AAR's current software vendor will maintain and update iPads.

Chair Watkins: When will all the iPads be delivered and installed?

Mr. Pangilinan: Currently, it appears delivery will be no later than July 2023 (depending on delivery schedule).

6. New Business

Mr. Phifer and Ms. Hazell: Both support the installation of a shield to protect the health of passengers (hygiene theater).

Mr. Mitchell: Was interested in knowing when supplemental service would end (re: concerns about being on buses with 16 passengers).

Chair Watkins: Would like to know the number of diesel vehicles in the fleet, and the timeline for when they will be replaced.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Paratransit Report

Statistical results for the month of February 2023 are shown below.

Paratransit Operations - Monthly Operations Report Service Indicators							
Category	Performance Indicator	Current Month: February 2023			12-Month Average		
		This Year	Last Year	% Change	This Year	Last Year	% Change
Ridership	Total Trips Completed*	557,263	440,179	+26.6%	556,468	467,474	+19.0%
	Total Ridership	795,674	620,160	+28.3%	799,244	656,824	+21.7%
On-Time Performance	Pick-up Primary 30 Minute	97.0%	95.0%	+2.0%	95.3%	93.9%	+1.3%
	Pick-up Primary 15 Minute	90.0%	84.0%	+6.0%	85.4%	83.1%	+2.3%
	Pick-up Broker 30 Minute	96.0%	93.0%	+3.0%	93.3%	90.7%	+2.7%
	Pick-up Broker 15 Minute	84.0%	79.0%	+5.0%	79.3%	75.3%	+4.1%
	Appointment OTP Trips Primary - 30 Min Early to <1 Late (On-Time)*	56.0%	n/a	n/a	50.7%	n/a	n/a
	Appointment OTP Trips Primary - Early*	39.0%	n/a	n/a	40.5%	n/a	n/a
	Appointment OTP Trips Broker - 30 Min Early to <1 Late (On-Time)*	38.0%	n/a	n/a	39.8%	n/a	n/a
Ride Time	Appointment OTP Trips Broker - Early*	54.0%	n/a	n/a	49.7%	n/a	n/a
	Ride Time Variance Performance: Actual Trip Duration vs. Planned Trip Duration - At or Better Than Plan	81.0%	80.0%	+1.0%	80.9%	81.7%	-0.8%
	Average Actual Trip Duration in Minutes	36	35	+2.9%	37	34	+9.3%
	Max Ride Time Performance Primary	98.0%	98.0%	0.0%	97.7%	98.6%	-0.9%
Customer Experience	Max Ride Time Performance Broker	99.0%	99.0%	0.0%	99.0%	98.6%	+0.4%
	Frequent Rider Experience Primary*	87.0%	n/a	n/a	85.7%	n/a	n/a
Provider No-Shows	Frequent Rider Experience Broker*	95.0%	n/a	n/a	92.7%	n/a	n/a
	Provider No-Shows per 1,000 Schedule Trips Primary	0.71	1.21	-41.3%	1.28	2.68	-52.1%
Customer Complaints	Provider No-Shows per 1,000 Schedule Trips Broker	1.66	4.74	-65.0%	4.10	5.03	-18.6%
	Passenger Complaints - Transportation Service Quality Per 1000 Completed Trips	0.4	2.9	-86.2%	2.2	4.9	-55.8%
Call Center	Passenger Complaints - Non-Transportation Service Quality Per 1000 Completed Trips	4.6	2.7	+70.4%	3.6	2.8	+27.5%
	Percent of Calls Answered	96.0%	95.0%	+1.0%	93.6%	90.1%	+3.5%
Eligibility	Average Call Answer Speed in Seconds	48	66	-27.3%	97	151	-36.8%
	Total Registrants	175,027	168,247	+4.0%	171,689	164,879	+4.1%

*NOTE: 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.