

Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC)

July 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Meeting commenced at 5:10 p.m.

PAC Attendees: Lyudmila Demikhovskaya, David H. DePorte, Edward S. Friedman, Ketrina Hazell, Marisa Mia Ragozino, Ellen Rubin, Jean Ryan, Tucker B. Salovaara, Ken Stewart, Sharada Veerubhotla, RueZalia Watkins, Stan Weinblatt

Absent: Thomas J. Coppola, Mindy Jacobsen, John Moynihan, Stan Weinblatt

NYC Transit Staff Attendees: Brandon Anderson, Michael Cosgrove, Donna Fredericksen, Lynda Edmond, Eddie Griffith, Patricia Ibarguen, Felicia D. Jones, Shirley Teran-Marty, Steven Lo Piano, Denise Ann McQuade, Tejpal Prajapati, Cassandra Lubin-Richards, Russell Schmid, Kenneth Stuart, Chantal Sealy Walker

Guests: Quemuel Arroyo (DOT), Carlos Duque (MOPD) and Frank Camp (GCS), Uwvie Obodo (PCA for Tucker B. Salovaara))

Introductions – David H. DePorte, PAC Chair

Mr. DePorte reminded the PAC and attendees that since he is blind he would appreciate if PAC members present would introduce themselves and that attendees provide their affiliations and titles.

In addition, Mr. DePorte asked PAC members and attendees to raise their hands and ask to be acknowledged. Chantal Sealy Walker, a Paratransit staff member, kept track of those wishing to be recognized for Mr. DePorte.

Mr. DePorte reminded PAC members that they would be limited to one question or one comment at a time.

Announcements – PAC Chair David H. DePorte

Mr. DePorte informed the committee that PAC member Thomas Coppola's son passed away on July 15.

I. Approval of Minutes – PAC Chair David H. DePorte

Mr. DePorte called for the approval of the May 24, 2016 minutes and asked if PAC members had any corrections or changes to the minutes. Hearing none, Ellen Rubin moved to approve minutes and Lyudmila Demikhovskaya seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously

II. AAR Service Report – Vice President Steve LoPiano

Vice President LoPiano asked the PAC if they had any questions about the AAR Service Report. Committee members asked that Vice President LoPiano provide a summary of the report.

Registrants increased 5.2% comparing 136,693 Registrants in April 2015 to 143,772 registrants in April 2016.

Trips requested decreased 1.4% comparing 676,455 Trips Requested in April 2015 to 667,141 Trips Requested in April 2016.

Net Customer Refusals increased 1.5% comparing 5,677 Net Customer Refusals in April 2015 to 5,764 Net Customer Refusals in April 2016.

Early Cancellations increased 6.0% comparing 81,807 Early Cancellations in April 2015 to 86,685 Early Cancellations in April 2016.

Trips Scheduled decreased 2.4% comparing 588,971 Trips Scheduled in April 2015 to 574,692 Trips Scheduled in April 2016.

Late Cancellations increased 4.4% comparing 16,072 Late Cancellations in April 2015 to 16,718 Late Cancellations in April 2016.

Trips Completed decreased 2.3% comparing 558,795 Trips Completed in April 2015 to 546,018 Trips Completed in April 2016.

Customer No-Shows decreased 6.6% comparing 8,644 Customer No-Shows in April 2015 to 8,076 Customer No-Shows in April 2016.

Carrier No-Shows decreased 40.5% comparing 1,757 Carrier No-Shows in April 2015 to 1,046 Carrier o-Shows in April 2016.

No Fault No-Shows decreased 25.2% comparing 3,703 No Fault No-Shows in April 2015 to 2,771 No Fault No-Shows in April 2016.

Total No-Shows decreased 15.7% comparing 14,104 Total No-Shows in April 2015 to 11,893 Total No-Shows in April 2016.

On Time Performance increased 2.1% comparing 89.9% On Time Performance in April 2015 to 92.0% On Time Performance in April 2016.

Appointments on Time increased 1.0% comparing 85.0 % in April 2015 to 86.0% in April 2016.

Late Trips by Carrier decreased 25.3% comparing 41,557 Late Trips by Carrier in April 2015 to 31,060 Late Trips by Carrier in April 2016.

Reservation Average Answering Speed in April 2015 was 35 seconds and in April 2016 it was 32 seconds.

Reservation Average Talk Time in April 2015 was 4 minutes 32 seconds and in April 2016 it was 4 minutes 46 seconds.

Transit Control Average Answering Speed in April 2015 was 27 seconds and in April 2016 it was 19 seconds.

Transit Control Average Talk Time in April 2015 was 2 minutes 19 seconds and in April 2016 it was 2 minutes 24 seconds.

Complaints decreased 3.9% comparing 3,140 complaints in April 2015 to 3,017 complaints in April 2016.

There was a 2.1% decrease in complaints per 1,000 boardings comparing 4.05 complaints per 1,000 boardings in April 2015 to 3.97 complaints per 1,000 boardings in April 2016.

Commendations increased 61.2% comparing 418 Commendations in April 2015 to 674 Commendations in April 2016.

Total Boardings decreased 1.8% comparing 774,742 Total Boardings in April 2015 to 760,716 Total Boardings in April 2016.

PAC Comments

Edward S. Friedman asked if we responded to Comptroller Stringer's Audit on Paratransit and Vice President LoPiano responded that the recommendations were reviewed and

responses drafted. Mr. Friedman then requested a copy of our response and Vice President LoPiano explained that our draft responses are undergoing an internal review process and have not been approved yet for release. Mr. Friedman asked if he could have a copy once the final response is approved for the public and Vice President LoPiano said “yes.”

Jean Ryan asked if the “Late Trip by Carrier” category on the Monthly Paratransit advisory Committee Report records late pickups or late drop offs by carriers? Vice President LoPiano responded “late pickups.” Ms. Ryan suggested there should be another category for a “Late Drop Off.” Luda Demikhovskaya agreed that there should be a category for a “Late Drop Off.” Deputy Vice President Michael Cosgrove clarified that the performance of trips that were scheduled with an appointment times is captured.

RueZalia Watkins asked for the definition of “OTP” and Vice President LoPiano responded “On Time Performance.” RuZalia asked if carriers don’t arrive on time and there are sufficient lateness what do we do? There are consequences for a customer when she is frequently late for a doctor’s appointment.

Deputy Vice President Cosgrove responded that carrier performance is reviewed monthly, carriers are put on notice when they fail to meet contract standards, and LDs / CPDs are applied as appropriate. Vice President LoPiano reiterated that LDs are being assessed against carriers who haven’t improved their performance.

Sharada Veerubhotla inquired as to when a carrier is penalized? Deputy Vice Present Cosgrove responded carriers are to minimally arrive within 30 minutes of scheduled pickup times for a minimum of 92% of their trips otherwise Liquidated Damages (LDs) and or

Credits for Performance Deficiencies (CPDs) are assessed as defined in the carrier contracts.

Ms. Veerubhotla stated that most of the problems with trips are occur in the afternoon. Deputy Vice President Cosgrove informed the PAC that the Scheduling Unit has recently performed an analysis where the performance of trips was examined by time and location to identify when and where late pick-ups occur. Based on this review, targeted scheduled speed reductions will be introduced on Thursday to help address problem areas.

Vice President LoPiano added that we're looking at a next generation GPS and want to track and monitor the entire trip enabling dynamic dispatching so trips can be adjusted and alternate service providers identified when routes encounter unforeseen on-street difficulties. While functional, the current system was designed several years ago and technologies have improved since then. The current GPS system was installed several years ago under the Capital Program and while it will remain in service until the end of its planed life, we are beginning to explore newer technologies.

[Tucker said something I could not understand]

Mr. Friedman said he had a situation where he knew he would be late for his AAR pickup and called Travel Services to advise that he needed a later pick up and was told by a customer service agent that he could not cancel his return trip and reserve a later pick up because this is only done for medical appointments that run late. Mr. Friedman was advised by Paratransit staff and Frank Camp from Global Contract Services that he was given inaccurate information and corrective action would be taken.

II. Paratransit Topic: Broker Service – Vice President Steve LoPiano

The PAC was advised that Paratransit met with Brokers and they were informed that improvements in the delivery of service are required. Vice President Steve LoPiano went into a discussion on the status of broker service and discussed the steps that are being taken to improve this program. The PAC opted to stay on this topic for the entire meeting and open discussion took place as follows:

The Vice President reviewed Broker complaints over time compared to those of the dedicated Carriers. For a two year period, Broker Complaint levels were similar to those of the dedicated Carriers. The pattern has since changed and Broker complaint levels are now more than double those of the dedicated Carriers. Of the complaints, about 70% of them are concerning late trips and no-shows. Vice President LoPiano presented on the need to improve the broker service and steps being taken to bring about that improvement. Vice LoPiano focused on the importance of improving the broker program not just from an economic perspective but because this is a part of a more multi-modal service where customer needs can better be addressed with different platforms to deliver trips.

During the period when Broker complaint levels were on a par with that of the dedicated Carriers, Broker companies were assigned a full representative mix of AAR trips. This provided consistency and the ability for the broker to engage drivers for a full work day. When drivers are engaged, brokers can attract better drivers, effectively train them and retain them. Over the last two years, the mix of trips assigned changed and both Brokers stated that this negatively impacted their ability to perform. Both Brokers requested we reevaluate how trips are assigned to them and AAR has agreed to do.

In the past, we reduced the trip assignments to Brokers in an attempt to incentivize better performance. This approach did not work and further hampered the Brokers' ability to engage drivers. Vice President LoPiano stated that we are no longer dialing back on Broker Service but we're not expanding it until it improves.

Ms. Ragozino has asked, is there a way to eliminate a person from Broker service. Vice President LoPiano said that Broker service isn't an option for all customers but is part of a multi-modal platform. Certain disabilities such as cognitive ones and the need for door-to-door assistance have to be considered. Vice President LoPiano added that other customers that have been precluded from Broker service due to quality issues, won't be put back on Broker until we see improvement.

While GPS is in use in this industry, there has not been any standards or uniformity in the devices and systems being used. Both Brokers committed to being fully on GPS by the end of the year. GPS will allow for dynamic dispatching and accurate monitoring of broker performance.

Mr. Friedman, Ms. Rubin and Mr. Arroyo inquired about the need to call the Broker directly to obtain the status of a trip or for assistance moving forward. Vice President LoPiano responded advised that for now customers should continue to call the Brokers because they currently only have access to the information on GPS equipped vehicles and they are better equipped to assist customers.

Ms. Watkins asked if there is a different line to complain about Broker service. Same day issues with Broker service are to be made to Travel Services 877-337-2017 and press 5. The Travel Service staff provides the customer with the telephone for Broker dispatch. If the customer does not receive assistance from the Broker, the customer lets Travel Services know.

Ms. Ryan said she received a Broker trip and she was given a Virginia telephone exchange to reach the service. A general discussion ensued. This was the first report of something like this occurring. It is possible that the Broker driver left his/her personal cell number for Ms. Ryan to call back. Paratransit will be watching to see if we receive similar reports.

The Brokers have their own Quality Assurance Programs but AAR is also performing undercover ride checks and surveying customers that recently used Broker service. Edward Griffith of Paratransit informed the PAC that we also call about 20 customers from Broker Service and we share their comments with Brokers as part of an ongoing survey. The feedback is provided to both Brokers. AAR is looking to invest further in not only monitoring Broker performance but incenting better performance. A performance based incentive program is currently being considered.

Vice President LoPiano further explained that we have also begun to capitalize on the increasing fleet of street hail accessible taxis. One broker has begun assigning non-ambulatory trips to a base that has accessible street hail vehicles and we are looking to expend this to the other broker. We intend slowly grow this service and monitor the performance of accessible trips.

Mr. Friedman stated that if Broker drivers arrive early, Broker dispatch will send drivers to another pickup instead of waiting if the customer isn't ready. Mr. Friedman and Ms. Demikhovskaya both raised that it is often difficult to identify the appropriate broker vehicle. Vice President LoPiano agreed that making sure customers and vehicles meet and find each other is important. Connecting with the customer and having visible signage is being emphasized with the Brokers. Ms. Rubin asked will we extend an additional five minutes waiting time for Brokers and dedicated

Carriers. Vice President LoPiano, responded that we have to be considerate of other trips and appointments scheduled on the route. Increasing dwell time would have an adverse effects on future trips and other customers. Vice President LoPiano said that we see a lot of near misses on the Broker service and we are interested addressing them. Another issue with identifying Broker vehicles was raised by Mr. Friedman who indicated that Brokers often call the customer line at home and leave a message about the pick-up vehicle that doesn't reach the customer. Pertinent phone numbers are given to the Broker so that they may apprise customers of their pick up. A campaign to improve the cell phone records is underway.

Mr. Friedman posed that sometimes if a broker can't make contact with the customer prior to the trip, they don't send the vehicle. The Director of Customer Relations, Ken Stuart stated that we were aware that one of a broker's affiliated bases in particular was doing this and the issue has been communicated to the Broker management for corrective action.

Ms. Ragozino asked if Broker drivers are supposed to take Transit Checks. Deputy Vice President Cosgrove confirmed that they are to accept valid blue Transit Check coupons.

Deputy Vice President Cosgrove closed by saying that we have a very aggressive plan with brokers and improvement will take time but we expect the quality of service to improve and complaints to come down.

III. PAC Topic:

Due to the PAC's opting to focus on Broker service for this meeting, a PAC topic was not discussed. The PAC topic was to discuss ETAs given when calling Travel Services. An additional topic concerning the Paratransit organization structure was also suggested. The Chairperson David DePort will advise on the selected PAC Topic for the next meeting.

David DePorte, Chair, reminded PAC members that PAC member complaints don't have to wait for response to our next meeting. Rather, PAC members should call 877-337-2017 and press #8 or email www.mta.info and click on Contact Us.

A motion to close was made Edward Friedman and seconded by Tucker B Salovaara. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55.