

Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC)

September 8, 2020 Conference Call Minutes

Due to the Covid19 Pandemic the PAC meeting date, time and format was changed. A WebEx conference call was conducted.

Meeting commenced at 4:30pm.

Attendees on Conference Call:

PAC Members: Thomas Coppola, David DePorte, Lyudmila Demikhovskaya, Ketrina Hazell, Mindy Jacobsen, Sharlene Kraft, John Moynihan, Jean Ryan, Ellen Rubin, Tucker Salovaara, Sharada Veerubhotla, Stanley Weinblatt

MTA/NYCT Paratransit: Brian Altschul, John Barry, Michael Cosgrove, Lynda Edmond, Tammie Francisque, Donna Fredericksen, Ami Freyberger, Eugene Griffith, Patricia Ibarguen, Diane McFarlane, Chris Messina, Stephanie Palmadesso, Donald Raimondi, John Salerno, Shirley Teran-Marty

Guest: Victor Calise (Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities), Inat German (MOPD), Norah Orezzaoli (Senior Vice President of Sales CTG), Fadi Toska (Operation Manager of CTG)

1. AAR Service Report – Michael Cosgrove, Vice President, Paratransit

VP Cosgrove provided a summary of operating statistics from the Paratransit Report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

PAC Member Discussion and Feedback

Mr. Salovaara asked if carriers are conducting surprise observations to see if drivers are wearing masks. He wants to make sure drivers adhere to the safety regulations.

VP Cosgrove explained that during the carrier pullouts AAR Superintendents are monitoring the drivers. The carriers are also enforcing this policy and are constantly reminding the drivers. He stated that he thinks observations are a good idea.

2. Paratransit Topic - CTG Presentation

Eugene Griffith, Non-Dedicated Services Operations Officer, introduced CTG Broker Service's speakers who discussed proactive initiatives to help improve their overall operations, specifically the implementation of the PAC's suggestion of photo ID capabilities to assist in locating customers.

Nora Orezza, Senior Vice President of Sales for CTG, expressed how they are focused, always, on improving the customer experience and increasing the dialogue with all. She commended the PAC for their photo ID suggestion and explained that CTG is working with the MTA technology team to implement this pilot program to improve the connectivity rate. Ms. Orezza noted that the photo ID is a strong tool, along with "call out and assist," to ensure a successful connection with the customer. The picture helps to identify the customer successfully. She also noted that they will also be sharing, later in their presentation, CTG's operational enhancements regarding resources, training and safety.

Fadi Toska, Operation Manager of CTG, elaborated on the implementation of the photo ID pilot program. He explained that when a driver arrives at the pick-up location, the driver clicks a

button which communicates with CTG dispatch. At that time CTG will transmit the customer's ID number (unique to each customer) to MTA IT via a secure channel and the driver will receive the digital photograph the customer has on file. This streamlined sequence takes a matter of seconds. Drivers are unable to see the picture before they are at the pick-up location. This information is not stored. Screenshots are disabled. Once a driver arrives and indicates that he/she has made the pick-up, the driver will no longer have access to the picture. The drivers who participated in the pilot have provided positive feedback and stated that it increases the probability of a successful connection with customers, especially those who especially those customers that are having trouble identifying or seeing the vehicle and in locations where there are multiple AAR customers. CTG looks forward to expanding the pilot to all drivers. So far we have not received any negative feedback from drivers or customers.

The picture stays from the time the driver states they are on location until the time that the driver says that the pick-up has been completed. Until then, the picture is still available.

Mr. Toska then said because these pictures are being sent from the MTA database, if someone was to update their picture, the next time they ride, we will receive the latest picture. Ms. Orezza continued her presentation noting that CTG's goal is to provide vehicles that meet the transportation needs of all customers. We have continued efforts to ensure coverage all around the five boroughs, she said. During this past year, they have introduced ambulette vehicles into their fleet resources which can accommodate oversized wheelchairs.

Ms. Orezza stated that our goal is to ensure that we are being all-inclusive and we have the various options to meet everyone's needs across the board.

Ms. Orezza continues: The training of drivers is constantly updated and adjusted. Customers' experiences get reported back to us and we take that feedback and adjust our training processes

accordingly. We have been working with the MTA to make internal adjustments to the training program. Also, safety protocols have been put in place which follow Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) guidelines for sterilization protocol. At the beginning, end and throughout the duration of the shift, sterilization products are used to clean the most touched areas such as seatbelts, doorknobs, interior, window controls, etc. All drivers are provided with PPE, and in addition they are providing customers with additional masks and sanitizer for those who may not have it available. This is free of charge.

CTG has zero tolerance for drivers failing to wear a mask. Drivers are required to take a “selfie” to confirm compliance prior to every trip. In addition, CTG has field supervisors that monitor and perform undercover rides to make sure drivers are compliant.

PAC Member Discussion and Feedback

Ms. Veerubhotla asked what happens if drivers still have flip phones, can they participate in the Pilot Program? Mr. Toska stated CTG will provide drivers with smartphones if they do not have one. Smartphones allows for the CTG app interface to be utilized. Ms. Veerubhotla also recommended that the MTA allow picture updates, especially if a client or a user feels that they have had a change in their appearance. We should be able to update our profile, she said.

Mr. Coppola inquired as to how trips are being tracked? Mr. Toska explained that smartphones have a live interface that provides MTA data on the driver’s location. This system mimics AVL, which is what the carriers use.

Ms. Ryan asked how many participants are in the pilot and how long it takes for the photo ID to be transmitted to the driver? CTG

responded that 65% of their total trips are using the pilot and the ID photo is transmitted seamlessly and instantaneously. Ms. Ryan also asked about CTG drivers who refused to take the tunnel during her trips. CTG responded that drivers must take the most efficient route. CTG communicates this policy very clearly to the drivers throughout the training process, audits for quality control and addresses it directly with the responsible party.

VP Cosgrove discussed the need to expand fleets in non-dedicated service. However, he noted, AAR is not eliminating Dedicated Carriers. The purpose of this expansion is to provide more options for customers. Ms. Orezzaoli responded that ambulette vehicles can accommodate multiple wheelchairs.

Ms. Demikhovskaya and Mr. Weinblatt questioned the weight restrictions and inquired about whether the vehicles are accessible by side or rear entry. Both emphasized how they preferred the dedicated carriers. Mr. Toska stated they have both side and rear, but most are rear entry. They will also follow-up on the lifts weight's accommodations.

Taxi Reimbursement

Deputy VP Raimondi introduced the new online Taxi Reimbursement process. This new process allows customers to complete all paperwork and attach a receipt online to send to us for processing. This eliminates a customer having to mail in their receipts. The customer will fill in their name, ID #, address and additional information. This form is readable through accessible formats and available in different languages. It is our first iteration of it and we wanted to share this with you today. Our internal control and technology and system wide accessibility teams have all worked on this project. It will eventually be connected to the MTA website and the process will improve over time.

5. New/Old Business

Ms. Jacobsen and Ms. Hazell asked whether there are updates about fare increases, resumption of the collection of fares or the pilot program. VP Cosgrove responded that there were no updates at this time and that there had been no change for any of the items that we had previously discussed. However, PAC members will be informed as soon as there were other updates.

Mr. Salovaara suggested to hold the November PAC meeting via ZOOM. Ms. Ryan agrees with this - people can be on phone too but if people can read lips it will make it easier. Other members said Zoom had various issues. VP Cosgrove noted it is up to the PAC what best meets their needs and welcomed the opportunity to try it out for the next meeting.

Closing

The meeting ended at 6:30pm.

Monthly Paratransit Advisory Committee Report (September 2020)

CATEGORY	September-2019	September-2020	Increase/Decrease Sept-19 vs. Sept-20
AAR Registrants	159,358	161,481	1.3%
Trips Requested (Total)	817,460	563,274	-31.1%
Trips Scheduled (Total)	713,232	488,350	-31.5%
On-Demand Trips Completed	35,750	26,792	-25.1%
Trips Completed (Total)	680,335	460,746	-32.3%
Total Boardings	900,628	594,424	-34.0%
Trips Scheduled (Primary)	281,937	139,203	-50.6%
Customer No-Shows	8,862	4,731	
<i>As a % of Trips Scheduled</i>	3.1%	3.4%	0.3%
Carrier No-Shows	468	64	
<i>As a % of Trips Scheduled</i>	0.2%	0.0%	-0.2%
No Fault No-Shows	2,865	831	
<i>As a % of Trips Scheduled</i>	1.0%	0.6%	-0.4%
Trips Scheduled (Broker)	375,275	351,255	-6.4%
Customer No-Shows	9,226	7,315	
<i>As a % of Trips Scheduled</i>	2.5%	2.1%	-0.4%
Broker No-Shows	324	165	
<i>As a % of Trips Scheduled</i>	0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
Pick-up On Time Performance (Primary) <i>less than or equal to 30 minutes</i>	95%	98%	3.0%
Pick-up On Time Performance (Broker) <i>less than or equal to 30 minutes</i>	95%	98%	3.0%
Appointment OTP Trips (Primary) *			
<i>On-time (30 minutes Early to < 1 minute Late)</i>	48%	Suspended	N/A
<i>Early (31 minutes to 45 minutes Early)</i>	42%	Suspended	N/A
Appointment OTP Trips (Broker) *			
<i>On-time (30 minutes Early to < 1 minute Late)</i>	35%	Suspended	N/A
<i>Early (31 minutes to 45 minutes Early)</i>	55%	Suspended	N/A
Complaints	3,765	1,357	
<i>per 1,000 Completed Trips</i>	5.5	2.9	-2.6
Commendations	805	418	
<i>per 1,000 Completed Trips</i>	1.2	0.9	-0.2

* September service continues to change due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Full service has been provided throughout the Pandemic. To further promote the safety of our customers and operators, shared ride service was also suspended. As a result, appointment time booking of trips would have led to excessively early drop offs and has been temporarily suspended. Customers can still book trips with a pickup time.

* 'Drop Off Trips' have been temporarily suspended since March 2020, and therefore excluded in the 'Customer Experience' Reporting for September 2020.