

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM ACCESSIBLE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

March 16, 2023

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair George Gastil introduced himself as the new chair of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee and expressed how honored and excited he was to join the committee. He called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A roll call sheet listing the Accessible Services Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

2. Approval of the December 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Chair George Gastil noted that he was not present during the time of the meeting, but asked members if they had any questions or would like to move forward to approve. Mr. Justin Augustine motioned to approve the minutes, Mr. Juan Lopez seconded the motion, and the vote was 13 to 0 in favor with Ms. Ashley Wiley, Ms. Sharlene Ornelas, and Ms. Monique Ball absent at the time of vote.

3. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

4. UZURV Supplemental Paratransit Pilot Presentation (John Duncan and Jess Mooney)

Mr. John Duncan, Executive Vice President of Business Development for UZURV, and Jessica (Jess) Mooney, Senior Director of Client Services, presented information on the supplemental paratransit 90-day pilot plan with the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System's contractor, First Transit, that will provide pre-scheduled trips for ambulatory Access riders beginning March 1, 2023. Mr. John Duncan started the presentation by explaining why adaptive transportation networks are used and provided statistics that detailed UZURV's true door to door rider assistance, ease of technology/accessible support, 98.4% and above on time performance, Prop 22 and FTA compliant, credentialed drivers, and MTS Policy 31 compliant. He then explained how UZURV has united agencies, providers, and riders with automation that has improved service quality and lowered costs. Ms. Jess Mooney continued the presentation by explaining how the drivers are certified through their compliance engine that tracks four required key categories: Document uploads such as driver's license, auto insurance, vehicle registration, and vehicle inspection; criminal background screenings, MVR checks, FTA drug and alcohol screenings; Training and certifications; and signed documents such as terms of service, partner agreement, W-9, and attestation of health. She further stated how 100% of the trips are monitored by UZURV operations team for safety and security, then explained the focus UZURV has on a seamless transition from contract to launch to ongoing operational success and their proven service nationwide that continues to grow every day.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Samantha Stephan questioned whether the fare payment process for the riders is similar to Access, that is \$5.00 per trip. Mr. John Duncan noted that is identical to the MTS ADA paratransit services. Ms. Stephan also asked if the liability insurance would be covered by MTS. Mr. Duncan stated that is not covered by MTS and UZURV would be providing insurance for all of their drivers while they are working for both automotive and general liability, as well as other state requirements that they meet or exceed. Ms. Stephan then asked if the drivers are allowed to refuse trips for whatever the case may be, and how much time in advance would the passenger receive notification of their cancelled trip by the driver. Ms. Mooney explained that the drivers can accept and request trips to be assigned to them, and if for any reason a driver does not request trips that have been provided by First Transit, the UZURV team and First Transit have managed to sustain a standard operating procedure where any trips that haven't been assigned will still run efficiently by First Transit.

Ms. Jana Schwartz questioned if an app or link was available to use for existing MTS Access services. Mr. Duncan stated the service provided is dispatched in a similar way that is in place for their dedicated drivers. He also noted the probability for an app to become available would be once the pilot with MTS Access has ended, and an integration discussion occurs with Trapeze. Mr. Jay Washburn continued to explain that UZURV is solely a sub-contractor of First Transit, and all reservations and trip requests must go through them. He further explained that riders cannot specifically request trips to be taken by either one of their sub-contractors, but the trip determination is based on the rider's eligibility status such as; clients traveling in wheelchairs and those who may have cognitive deficits, which will then be transported by MTS Access drivers only. Mr. Washburn also presented the new MTS Access approved decals for UZURV that will be showcased on their vehicles in order for the Access riders to be able to identify, similar to the Taxi vehicles. He noted that driver's who pick up clients with visual impairments must exit their vehicles and announce their clients name, in order for the client to be aware of the driver's arrival. Ms. Jana Schwartz also questioned if there was a specific wait time for rides in accordance with their on-time performance. Mr. Washburn noted that all reservations are booked within a 30-minute pick-up window and drivers have a 5-minute window upon arrival where they wait, contact client themselves, then notify Dispatch to attempt to contact the client, and the driver cannot leave once Dispatch has authorized the client as a no-show. Ms. Schwartz lastly questioned if UZURV created their training and certification with ADA sensitivity or if it was created by an external resource. Ms. Mooney stated that it was a combination of both with PASS CTAA training and certification. Mr. Washburn noted that the PASS CTAA training is also utilized by the Taxi subcontractors.

Ms. Samantha Stephan questioned how UZURV will be able to maintain and assure there are enough drivers to pick up any extra slack directed their way. Ms. Mooney stated their team and First Transit's team are working together to ramp their capacity and meet the needs of the community efficiently and adaptively. Mr. Washburn also added the new trips sent the night prior to Taxi and UZURV are able for review and may also be returned to First Transit if they do not have the capacity to handle those trips. Mr. Duncan noted what Mr. Washburn had mentioned prior aligns with the calibration period

UZURV is currently in by understanding the current demands, potential for future demands, and programming towards a steady state.

Ms. Casey Myers questioned if the 2-day reservation window would remain the same and how many days ahead of time would a rider have to book a trip. Mr. Washburn noted that the MTS Access reservation policies would remain the same. Ms. Myers questioned whether or not wheelchair riders would be apart of the UZURV program and maintained on busses only. Mr. Washburn stated that all wheelchair transportation is currently serviced by First Transit's Access drivers. Ms. Myer's also questioned how many driver's UZURV currently has and how many are anticipated to be used. Ms. Mooney noted that she did not know the exact number of drivers since they are still working on calibrating the current demands of the service area, trip distances, and how many trips their drivers can complete on any given day, but will continue to grow and meet every demand to the capacity that MTS would need for them to handle.

Ms. Debbie Marshall questioned if the drivers are also registered with Uber and Lyft and if they can be signed up with multiple mobile organizations. Ms. Mooney stated that the drivers can be working with other organizations but clarified when they are working for UZURV, within their platform, they are solely working for UZURV and its clients.

Mr. Todd Lordson questioned when the pilot would end or if it would be determined at a later time. Mr. Justin Augustine, General Manager at First Transit, stated that the program was designed as a 90-day pilot identical to what is ensured with all subcontractors who are interested in doing business with them. Mr. Augustine further explained that the purpose of utilizing UZURV is to help with the current service level MTS Access has seen diminish. Mr. Washburn gave kudos to UZURV and stated the launch had gone faster than what they had hoped for with the start date of March 1st and up to 55-65 trips completed a day. Mr. Augustine also added that First Transit is currently adhering UZURV to take 85 trips per day with the potential to grow to 150 plus trips a day, if allowed.

5. Potential Revision to the Accessible Services Advisory Committee Membership Guidelines (Samantha Leslie)

Ms. Samantha Leslie, MTS Deputy General Counsel, provided an overview of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee membership guidelines and current appointments list. Ms. Leslie requested feedback from staff on the proposed revisions to the ASAC Membership Guidelines and ongoing vacancies on the committee, such as Caltrans. She also suggested for the five internal staff members, who are voting members on the committee, to assist staff with presentations and helping discussion rather than be considered a voting member. She stated that the idea of ASAC would be to receive the communities' feedback and not have MTS staff be part of the decision making, but part of the discussion to help with the agenda items. Ms. Leslie suggested the two revisions of removing MTS staff as voting members and Caltrans to possibly be replaced by another organization, or adding one more fixed route or paratransit passenger to help improve ASAC to be as comprehensive of the community and passengers as possible.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Jana Schwartz questioned if the representatives for Caltrans had been unreachable or if they had voiced their disinterest in participating. Ms. Carla Perez noted that staff had been unable to contact anyone from Caltrans for over two years. Ms. Leslie asked the committee if anyone knew of a representative or staff member at Caltrans to help staff to get in contact with.

Chair George Gastil noted he might know someone to get in contact with at Caltrans and suggested that removing MTS internal staff would be a good idea because the committee is advisory to MTS and the role of the internal staff should be receiving advice from the committee, not on voting what the advice would be. Ms. Leslie suggested on waiting to hear back from contacts at Caltrans and to bring this item back for discussion at the next meeting regarding whether or not a contact was reachable. Mr. Jay Washburn stated that staff is seeking any other advocacy groups that the committee have not included, but would like to have a voice and participate to help guide in all aspects MTS Trolley, Bus, and Access disability services.

Ms. Jana Schwartz questioned if historically, there had been other organizations on the committees, not currently listed. Ms. Samantha Leslie stated a few years ago, staff added several organization's that were not listed, but could not remember if any had been removed.

Mr. Juan Lopez questioned if recommendations for other organizations should be proposed at the next meeting. Ms. Leslie stated that staff could propose recommendations now. Mr. Lopez recommended the MAAC Project based in Chula Vista.

Ms. Debbie Marshall questioned if staff could add a community-based organization rather than an agency, that way the community has a chance to be a part of the conversation on issues regarding transportation. Ms. Leslie stated that a similar application process is done for the fixed route and paratransit consumers on the committee where the application is made available to the community to apply.

Mr. Juan Lopez questioned who the best point of contact would be for other proposed recommendations. Ms. Leslie stated to email MTS staff, Mr. Jay Washburn or Ms. Carla Perez.

Mr. Jay Washburn stated that staff is hopeful to receive any suggestions from the committee before the next meetings recommendations on the item, in order for it to be taken to the Board of Directors for approval on any changes that have been made to the membership guidelines.

Action Taken

No action taken. Discussion item only.

6. ADA Paratransit Reports

MTS Access and MTM monthly reports attached.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

7. Fixed Route Reports

Fixed route monthly reports attached.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

8. Committee Member Communications/Comments

Mr. Jay Washburn provided an update on increased Access trip volume, ridership levels, decreases in staffing and service levels, on-time and on-board time performance, UZURV, driver rate increases, and ads and local outreach First Transit staff has done for recruiting. Mr. Washburn also welcomed and thanked UZURV for their partnership and overall professionalism that has shown in their start up time and positive feedback received. He also provided updates on the electronic cashless fare system for Access, EZ Access app, and the acquirement of First Transit by Transdev. He then shared news of a six month launch pilot starting June 1st for the expansion of the reservation window from two days to ten days to allow more opportunity for the riders to book additional trips in advance.

Ms. Samantha Stephan questioned the EZ Access app and if it was an MTS app or specifically for Access. Mr. Jay Washburn noted that it is an app specifically for Access that individuals can download and register with an access code on their iOS, Android phones, or through the web portal.

Mr. Todd Lordson expressed his thanks and appreciation to MTS staff for their help with an outreach program and also shared his excitement for the launch of the expansion of the reservation window for Access riders.

Ms. Jana Schwartz expressed her curiosity regarding the status of the senior reduced fare and other reduced fares being done online rather than having individuals travel to the MTS Transit Store. Mr. Jay Washburn stated that he would have an MTS staff member reach out to Ms. Schwartz for better assistance with her inquiry regarding the SDM fare program. Ms. Schwartz also asked for a contact staff would be able to share and help with providing outreach and information to the community regarding how to ride MTS transit. Mr. Washburn stated that he would be able to provide a contact and also noted that MTS has several types of outreach programs made available for the community.

Mr. Todd Lordson expressed his interest in receiving information on the reduced fare program as well. Mr. Washburn stated that staff would send out all general information through an email blast to the committee members and asked members to reach out to himself or Ms. Carla Perez anytime with any feedback and suggestions they may have.

Mr. Brent Boyd, Manager of Service Quality and Specialist for MTS Trolley, provided an update on the construction occurring near the Green Line at the 16th and Imperial Transit Center and stated staff are building a new track to help improve the operational flexibility and overall service for specials events. Mr. Boyd also added that the construction should

end around October 2023 and noted for passengers to expect weekend shutdowns for the Green Line between Gaslamp and Imperial Avenue.

Mr. Jorge Rivas asked staff if it was possible to book a reservation at the last-minute. Mr. Washburn stated MTS Access currently allow reservations to be booked up to 5:00 pm the day before, but trips cannot be booked beyond the allotted time due to the hours of work needed to build the schedules and routes after to assign to the drivers.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next Accessible Services Advisory Committee meeting schedule TBD.

10. Adjourn

Chair George Gastil adjourned the meeting at 1:52 pm.

/s/ George Gastil
Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/s/ Carla Perez
Committee Clerk
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet