



Meeting Summary

VMAAG (Valley Metro Accessibility Advisory Group) Meeting

Thursday, April 23, 2020

WebEx / 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

VMAAG Members

Present

John Federico
Howard May
Jean Moriki
Paige Reatz
Toni Young

Not Present

David Andreen
Kathryn Chandler
Paula Considine
Katie Griffith
Darrell Hilliker
Lynn Houston
Andraéa LaVant

Valley Metro Staff

Present

Guillermo Gonzalez
Joe Gregory
Brittany Hoffman
Becky Johnson
Lee Ann Jones
Carol Ketcherside
Brenda Kreitinger
James Rosa
Larry Sanchez
Lisa Scott
Wyatt Skar
Scott Wisner
Tom Young

Valley Metro Contractors

Present

Trish Tezer
Jhashe Holloway

Public Participants

Present

Emanuel Caddy
Mary Hartle
Amy London
Hezequias Rocha, MAG

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1. Welcome and Introductions – Tom Young, Manager, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro
 2. Invitation for Comments from the Public – Members of the public are invited to provide comments on any item not on the agenda. Each speaker is limited to two minutes, and comments must be relevant to the accessibility of Valley Metro programs and services.

Amy London: I was directed to this meeting as the best place to start this. I am a regular rider of Dial-a-Ride and Valley Metro Paratransit and there is a significant difference in not only my impressions of feeling safe or safety within the vehicle and the driver, but there is also a significant difference in my experience with the vehicles themselves. Both with the cabs and with the paratransit authorized or registered vehicles. I just wanted to bring this to attention so then I could possibly direct this to someone who could approach that at a larger level.

I have called customer service and after extensive conversations with them and was told on several occasions that there was not much that they could do. For example, a lot of times, if not many times, paratransit will issue a Yellow Cab and I am ambulatory. I have experienced cabs with rude people, taillights that are broken, and drivers that are speeding or talking on their cell phones with a speaker so I can hear some inappropriate conversations. With the drivers themselves in paratransit vehicles there have been anger issues, when the driver has not been unable to find the destination, and then the driver saying that this is just their second job and not as important as their first. For someone who depends on this service, it should be important, to the driver and they should have stability. That is why I wanted to bring this to your attention.

When I am a passenger with Dial-a-Ride, the drivers have an awareness of accessibility, disability, mobility, and they will take their time. It is almost like they have been educated in a way that my experience with paratransit does not mirror. That is why I also wanted to bring this to your attention. That is why I will not go to locations outside of the Phoenix area if I absolutely do not have to for these specific reasons. Thank you very much for listening and I am happy to leave my number or email, or if someone wants to give me a call regarding further other comments. I can talk more in-depth.

Tom Young: Thank you Amy and I think Lisa got your number and email contact information and emailed it to me earlier today. I will make sure that either one of my staff or I gets back and makes contact with you.

3. Review of February 27, 2020, VMAAG Meeting Summary – All – No Comments.
4. COVID-19 Contingency Plan – Scott Wisner, Business Services Delivery Manager, Operations/Maintenance, Valley Metro

Tom Young: I do not know if many are aware of this, but since our February meeting, most of Valley Metro's concentration has moved away from previous agenda and towards the pandemic. I would like to introduce Scott Wisner now who will update us on some of the activities that Valley Metro has undertaken in response to the pandemic.

Scott Wisner: Thank you Tom, I am the Business Services Delivery Manager in Operations/Maintenance with Valley Metro. I oversee all of the Valley Metro operated contracts; these primarily include the east valley, west valley that operates express service as well as some circulator service in the west valley, a rural connector route from Ajo to Gila Bend, and Phoenix circulator service as well. I oversee those contracts and those contractors so I have been working with those folks for many years now and we have worked through many events and have been very, very busy working now with COVID-19 and protecting all of our employees and passengers. As you probably know, back on January 26 was our first reported case of Covid-19 here in the Valley. Since that date, we have been very busy and active trying to stay ahead of that and trying to protect all of our staff. One of the first things we started using was a different type of disinfectant that was rated effective for the Covid-19 virus and started using that to clean all of our facilities and the interiors of our buses. Early on in the process, our contractors handed out some personal protective equipment (PPE) to their employees. First, we started out with hand sanitizers and as gloves became available, we started giving out those as well as reusable and washable facemasks. As you know in order to provide those items, resources in getting them have been very scarce and our contractors have done a good job in getting their hands on that and making sure their employees have those items when they are in their vehicles operating service. Then we started we started issuing social distancing measures at our facilities, as well as on our buses.

The beginning of February, as more and more cases are being reported, we really ramped up our cleaning efforts. Typically, buses are cleaned on the interior twice per week; we have ramped that cleaning up to daily now. Every day every vehicle is cleaned and three times per week with a high-grade disinfectant. Three times a week we are fogging the vehicles and there is an image in the PowerPoint on the right hand side that shows the vehicle being sprayed. We have a third party vendor who comes in and fogs our vehicles. This fog sprays a disinfectant through the vehicle that that has a residual value to it so it stays on the surfaces longer and prevents diseases like Covid from living on the surfaces as long as they normally could if they were not treated. This has helped a great deal that we are keeping our vehicles clean and safe. We are also cleaning the HVAC cabin filters, just as you have in your homes, but these are done on a daily basis and we spray those with a high-grade disinfectant. Our staff are working on a daily basis conducting spot checks on fleet throughout the day and ensuring sanitation and cleanliness once buses arrive back to bus garages. Any bus that is suspected to have an infected passenger or driver is placed out of service until it is sanitized and fogged and before it goes back out.

Early on in the process in March, one of the measures we took to help protect our operators was to start rear door boarding. Obviously, when boarding through the front door, the passengers come into close proximity to the operators. To protect our operators so they can continue to provide this valuable service, we started having customers board at the rear door. Our first effort in the photo in the PowerPoint on the left hand side shows where we taped off the front door so

passengers cannot go up to the driver or near the driver. Since that time, we have been moving towards more of a plastic shield. The photo on the right shows a piece of plastic that goes across the same area where the tape was, and has a sign reminding passengers to not enter and do not go beyond this point. This way if the passengers are standing near there, no germs would be moving forward and the operator would be protected as much as possible.

As the disease progressed and more and more cases became prevalent, we started promoting rides as a last resort and for essential trips only. Formerly, we are always promoting transit and encourage people to ride transit as much as they want and as often as they want. But, we are in a different world right now. We are also trying to prevent the spread of this disease and reserve vehicles as much as possible for essential rides only. We reprogrammed headsigns to flash "Essential Trips Only" across the entire fleet to encourage customers to only ride on essential trips that are absolutely necessary.

One of the challenges that we have had is not all of our buses had two doors as in the case of some of our circulator vehicles. Through the actions of some service cuts we had to make on Express as well as some cuts made on our circulators, we were able to replace those buses that only had one door with double-door buses. This has allowed us to do rear door boarding on 100% of our routes now. It took us a couple of weeks to accomplish this and by April 6, all of our buses were doing rear door boarding. We had to swap some buses around between contractors and worked to ready those four buses for temporary transfer from East Valley to West Valley to ensure rear door boardings on Zoom. Our Zoom buses only take cash and we installed manual fareboxes near rear door on 40' Zoom buses. One of the other things about the rear door boarding is sometimes it is confusing because we are asking customers to still have their fares. We are asking customers to go and buy fares, a one-ride or all day pass, and flash it to the driver as they board so bus trips are meant not to be a free fare. So it is a challenging way to verify it. But, on our cash paying routes, like Zoom, we have moved the cash box to the rear door and are asking customers to deposit their cash in the box.

We have been placing a lot of signage up in our buses to encourage social distancing and to advise customers of potential boarding limitations. As of April 13, 2020, we are only allowing approximately 10 people on a 40-foot bus and no more than 15 people on a 60-foot bus. This allows us to maintain a 6-foot social distancing for the riding public and so far, it has worked pretty well. There have been a few overcrowding concerns, but by and large we have been able to prevent it and maintain the over-crowding and proper social distancing. In the east valley, if we do have an overcrowded situation, we are able to dispatch another vehicle out there in order to pick people up as quickly as possible for those who may be left at the stop because the vehicle is already full.

Policy Changes

These are some of the policy changes we have had to do very quickly in a very fluid manner:

- Local & Express Bus Rear-Door Boarding: March 21
- Orbit Rear-Door Boarding: April 6
- ZOOM Rear-Door Boarding: April 13
- Limiting bus ridership to maintain social distancing: April 13

There has been a lot of activity to get word out to the public and with our operators and our operations staff to make all this happen.

Service Reductions

We have had significant ridership drops especially on our Express and Rapid service, our commuter routes, because most of the downtown businesses are allowing their employees work from home. As a result of the huge drop in ridership, we have scaled back services on those trips by 50%. By doing so, we have been able to put two of those buses on our regular routes.

We also reduced circulator routes, such as the Tempe Orbit, going from a 15-minute service to a 30-minute service. This has also allowed us to put double door buses on those routes.

Unfortunately, we had to suspend the Peoria on the Go (POGO) neighborhood circulator, per the request of Peoria, due to ridership concerns.

Service Reduction Scenarios

Throughout this process, we have been very concerned about the impact COVID-19 could have on our staff, especially our operators and our operations personnel. We have been doing many contingency plans, so that we could prepare for a drastic staffing shortage if we had a big infestation of Covid in one of our garages. Shown below are three different levels of service reduction plans that we have developed in case one of them was needed. Right now, we have been very fortunate and have very few COVID-19 cases among our drivers. Right now, we have only four drivers in the whole valley who have been infected. We have been very fortunate and I think some of the measures we have taken have been instrumental in keeping the employees safe and healthy. In the event that we had to reduce service, we are prepared to do so, but only if manpower dictates. Right now, we have service levels ready to go, but we have not had to implement any of these so far. Other than to changes to Express, Rapid, Orbit, and POGO we have made no other reductions.

Level 1 – reduces drivers required by approximately 20%

- Service Area – Maintain including Express/RAPID
- Service Frequency – decrease to 30-60 minutes on most routes. 60 minute on route with low ridership & all routes after 9:00 pm.
- Service hours – Maintain

Level 2 – reduces drivers required by 25% (Phx) to 44% (VM)

- Service Area – Maintain including Express/RAPID
- Service Frequency – decrease to Sunday levels (30-60 minutes on most routes).
- Service Hours – Eliminate Fri & Sat service after 12:00 pm.

Level 3 – reduces drivers required by 40% (Phx) to 55% (VM)

- **Service Area** – Maintain Mon-Saturday. Standard Sunday area. Eliminate Express/RAPID.
- **Service Frequency** – decrease to 60 minutes on most routes
- **Service Hours** – 6:00 am to 8:00 pm (VM) or 6:00 am to 11:00pm (Phx)

Future Service Reductions

Currently, the City of Phoenix is weighing service reduction options and their city council is meeting tonight. They are going to decide if they are going to cut some late night and very early morning service in the City of Phoenix boundaries only. They are looking at this because of ridership, as well as financial impacts to the sales tax revenues and other factors. They are going to weigh those options tonight and let us know if any of those changes will be implemented. If they proceed, they would reduce service from 4 AM to 5 AM on weekdays and Saturday service from 5 AM to 11 PM. No trips will begin after 11 PM. If they do move forward, we will start making notifications throughout the valley. These changes will impact East Valley service, where they run service into Phoenix. Valley Metro will need to decide whether to make comparable changes to East Valley routes for regional consistency.

Questions and Answers

John Federico: Would you go back to the three levels of scenarios you showed? Did you say that we are not at any of those scenarios right now?

Scott Wisner: No, we are not in any of those scenarios now. We did make reductions on Express and Rapid, as well as some of our neighborhood circulators and, by making those reductions, it has significantly helped us with manpower because there has been an increase in operator shortages. Some operators have taken leave of absences because they are in the high-risk

category, over 60 years of age for instance, but by them taking leaves and making these cuts, it has allowed us to maintain all the rest of our service. None of these other levels have been implemented yet and only would be implemented if we needed to base it on a reduction in drivers. Level 1, for example, if we lost 20% of operators this is the service we would start implementing as soon as possible. Level 2 would be if we lost additional operators we would have to implement that service, and level 3 is losing up to 50% of our operators and we would have to implement service of that nature. But, so far so good and we hope, we won't have to do that.

John Federico: Do you separate levels to maintain and keep the Express and Rapid or mainly use separate criteria to determine those based on levels?

Scott Wisner: We based these levels on staffing levels. As you decrease the number of operators, you obviously cannot run as much service and they are based on priorities. Right now, local service is our priority because more people use it and our daily frequency is on our arterial roads so we are trying to maintain local service as much as possible. If you notice on some of these levels, eventually, we would have to cancel Express and Rapid on level 3 because we would not have enough operators to run it. But, by and large, we are able to maintain some levels of Express and Rapid service on levels 1 and 2.

5. Valley Metro to Implement Google's Recaptcha on all Web Forms – Larry Sanchez, Accessible Content Coordinator (Knowledge Services), Agency Business and Technical Services, Valley Metro

It is nice to be introduced to VMAAG and I do not believe I have met anyone yet, so it is a pleasure to speak with you.

What is CAPTCHA?

- CAPTCHA is an acronym for **C**ompletely **A**utomated **P**ublic Turing-test to tell **C**omputers and **H**umans **A**part.
- It is a challenged used by many websites to distinguish human users from automated bots. Often used to prevent spam.
- When you are ordering on a website and it asks you questions or type in a phrase or numbers or you have to identify certain pictures to verify or prove that you are not a robot.

Why add reCAPTCHA?

- Valley Metro Network Security has requested the use on all online forms to protect from fraudulent submissions. So we have been asked to add CAPTCHA to all of our online forms.
- There have been some submissions that have come through that have caused security concerns.
- Currently it has been a low occurrence. This move is to help prevent it from possibly becoming a larger concern.
- reCAPTCHA is already in use on some forms on the Valley Metro website.

Advantages of Googles reCAPTCHA

- Valley Metro is using the Googles reCAPTCHA aka No CAPTCHA reCAPTCHA. This a tool and you may have seen it on some of our forms. Google monitors everything, checks your cookies, and sees what kind of activity you have been doing. So it does not present you a caption, it gives you a checkbox that says, "I am not a robot". So, it makes it very simply and is accessible to assisted technology that is very important.
- Analyzes the user's browser activity to determine if they are a bot and reduces the number of times a CAPTCHA is displayed.
- Does not require users to solve a CAPTCHA.
- Presents users a simple checkbox of "I am not a robot".
- Checkbox is accessible to Assistive Technologies.
- Is in wide use on the web today.

Disadvantage of reCAPTCHA

- Although not a common occurrence, if the risk engine is unable to determine if a user is bot, then a traditional CAPTCHA may be displayed.

- Traditionally CAPTCHA's require users to type text from a distorted image, or select specific images based on a question.
- The Audio challenge option can be difficult to interpret.
- The questions and audio challenge are in English making it difficult for non-English speakers.
- ReCAPTCHA is more user friendly, but if the risk engines suspects anything, it will revert back to CAPTCHA with the pictures, questions, etc. If you cannot see the pictures, you can also use the audio challenge, the disadvantage it has language limitations, it is very hard to hear and the visual challenge, obviously, if you have sight impairments that can be a challenge as well.
- I want stress that we do not think this is going to be an issue, but we want to get your thoughts and input.

Questions and Answers

Howard May: I deal with CAPTCHAs from time-to-time and I hate them, because the ones with the pictures, I cannot do them, the audio ones they are O.K., but they are a pain in the butt. The checkmark is the best one that I like.

Larry Sanchez: That is what this is ideally, as long as it does not think you are a suspicious user, it is going to present you with a checkbox you click that says I am not a robot and you are good to go.

Tom Young: Are there any other questions for Larry? I wanted to have an opportunity for you to comment in before we fully begin implementing this on our website.

Larry Sanchez: I want to put my name out there and if anyone has any issues with our application, you can contact me to discuss.

6. April Service Changes – Joe Gregory, Manager, Service Planning, Capital & Service Development, Valley Metro

Proposed Service Changes that will be in effect on Monday, April 27:

Route 7 – Phoenix

This would remove the small deviation on Jesse Owens Parkway. It would just stay on 7th Street to Dobbins.

Route 60 – Phoenix

This is simplifying the current turnaround, where the route is using Missouri Ave, 20th, and 24th Streets in one direction and go the other direction on Bethany Home Road. This will eliminate those areas, go straight on 16th Street, and end at Camelback Road and 24th Street.

Route 81 – Scottsdale

Currently, the route goes through the Mustang Transit Center, continues north, comes back down on Shea Boulevard and back on to 90th Street. This would eliminate the northern portion, north of Mustang Transit Center and the turnaround in Mustang Transit Center, which has a roundabout. It will be using the northbound stop on the southeast corner from the roundabout; it will turn around within that roundabout and continue southbound. Those who need to travel southbound will have to get on at the northbound stop. This is one of the biggest outreach efforts, because we are trying to make sure that riders do not get confused.

Route 136 – Mesa

This is on Gilbert Road and there used to be some trips during the peak hours that would serve Boeing, so there was a deviation on this route going along University Drive and end up on McDowell Road at the Boeing plant. There was very low ridership on that portion of the route and we decided, with the City of Mesa, to eliminate that deviation. Now, all of the trips on Gilbert Road will stay on Gilbert Road.

Route 184 – Mesa

Current route has a slight deviation into Red Mountain Community College Campus and turns around there. We are eliminating that deviation and the route will stay on Power Road. There will be access to the campus from Power Road.

SMART Circulator – Phoenix

This circulator will be able to serve and give riders better access to Mountain View Park, Food Bank, and Walmart at Central and Dunlap. It will cut down on walking time for some of these destinations.

Route 685 Ajo/Gila Bend Connector

Small change in very far west Phoenix. Existing route has been traveling on 95th Lane in order to connect back to 95th Avenue over to Encanto Boulevard. We are going to eliminate the portion on 95th Lane due to a lot of semi-truck parking there and it is a dangerous situation to run buses through there. Route will stay on McDowell Road to 95th Avenue to meet with Encanto Boulevard.

Schedule Changes

Route 542 Chandler Express

Change inbound and outbound trip times to better serve riders. As Scott Wisner was saying before, basically, we have cut all of the Express Routes in half for now because of the COVID-19 so this will currently effect one trip which is the 542 , that will change by 10 minutes later and the rest will stay 2 to 3 minutes of what they are running now. When we reinstate all of the trips, we will do additional outreach to make sure everyone knows what all of the new trip times will be. For now, it is only effecting this one trip.

Peoria on the Go Circulator: Revisit schedule and run times. This change was going to be made in July, but this has been suspended and we anticipate it will be back in October and it will be an entirely new route using five routes if we go according to the plans. They will be operating at different times, currently operate Monday through Friday; new routes will run Friday through Sunday.

Alignment Changes

Route 96 - Dobson Road: Permanent change routing to serve inside Sycamore Transit Center, which will be a permanent detour. There used to be a stop on Main Street, but due to some construction in the area this stop has been eliminated. So, we are serving within the Sycamore Transit Center in order to make sure we are maintaining those connections for all the riders.

Questions and Answers

Howard May: In the past, there has been some giving negative feedback about the original deviation connecting to the Brown Multi-Generational Center and have you been getting any feedback? Did the college give you any feedback when you proposed this?

Joe Gregory: When we proposed this, we did get some feedback on Route 136 serving Boeing, but again, we are looking at the actual ridership and there were times when we were just running empty buses back and forth. We only received a small amount of feedback from that. From the college, we almost received no feedback. We are still maintaining a connection there, a slightly further connection, but they will be dropped off on Power Road right in front of the campus.

Howard May: I saw some negative feedback about the Jesse Owens deletion. Just so you know.

Joe Gregory: We have seen that too. We have gone through a full month of outreach for these changes and we really tried to get all of the feedback that we could, and really take it seriously and not rubber-stamping it. Making sure, they really understand it based on data and what the riders are telling us to make sure we are still maintaining service as well as we can with the recognition that we are not going to make everyone happy.

Tom Young: You will come back to present the October changes next month?

Joe Gregory: Since all of the services changes take six months to implement, as soon as these April changes are implemented, usually we take about a week off from working on them and then we go back out and start the public outreach on the October changes. Next month, I will probably back to talk about the proposed October service changes and we hope to get more good feedback about that.

7. **Paratransit & RideChoice Updates**, Wyatt Skar, Paratransit & RideChoice Program Supervisor, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business, Technology & Services, Valley Metro

Upcoming Service Changes

Chandler 4/27/2020

- Moving non-ADA and same day trips to RideChoice only so customers are not losing any service.

Gilbert 10/26/2020 (Tabled)

- Gilbert city council on March 3 decided to table this for further review.
- Changing to federally mandated ADA service area.
 - Currently declares entire town as service area.

Tempe 10/26/2020 (*Proposed*)

- Moving non-ADA and same day trips to RideChoice.

Paratransit – Transdev

- Opportunities for on time performance (OTP) improvements
 - No shows will be discussed later in this presentation.
 - Audit/review of how Trapeze and scheduling system being used. Since Tom Young has joined our team, he is well versed in Trapeze and we have been looking at different opportunities to improve that.
- COVID-19 Actions
 - Valley Metro is working closely with Transdev and have moved to single rider trips with the exception of same household riders sharing a trip.
 - Single rider trips with some exceptions
 - Looking for opportunities for riders to avoid trips
 - Pickup and delivery of prescriptions, meals from organizations, and groceries.
 - Daily disinfecting of vehicles every night. Drivers are disinfecting touch points between trips.
 - Strongly encouraging to wear face/mouth coverings in accordance with the CDC.

RideChoice – ALC

- Currently we have 13 transportation providers and we have another one to add, we are always looking for more providers.
- Eleven communities including Unincorporated Maricopa County are in the program.
- Finalizing performance standards.
 - Many items behind the scenes going on, such as data.
 - On the service level with customers, we want their OTP to mirror or be the same as Transdev's 30-minute window for those who are pre-booked and 0-45 minute window for on-demand from the time they are called.
 - No-shows will be counted against the customer and more detail will be discussed later in this presentation. We will also be talking about what is early, late, and excessively late. A lot of this does not match up with what we are doing with Paratransit. We are concerned that we get the service level to the customers. It is what the customers see and it is the OTP.
 - Review at next ATS Partners meeting.
 - Final notarizations between Valley Metro and ALC.

- Instigate contract Change Order.
- Review at next ATS Partners meeting.
- Final notarizations between Valley Metro and ALC.
- Instigate contract Change Order.
- COVID-19 actions
 - Valley Metro is working closely with ALC to make sure that we become aware if any drivers has been infected and to date there have not been any.
 - Constant contact with providers.
 - Will not transport passenger if identified as being positive or going to be tested.

Questions and Answers – None.

Paratransit No Show Notification Process – Wyatt Skar, Paratransit & RideChoice Program Supervisor, Accessible Transit Services, Agency Business, Technology & Services, Valley Metro

RideChoice:

No shows have to be validated. It has to happen within the pick-up window. If the customer cannot be found or if the customer cancels at the door when their driver shows up within that window, verification will be made that the vehicle was there via GPS verification, the driver attempted to contact the customer, and the driver waited for the customer for five minutes within that window. We would go back and verify to make sure there were no errors in the booking from the reservationist or the driver going to the wrong address. We make sure everything was done correctly on the provider side. We are also looking at complaint levels, which have gone down. We make sure they are answering complaints within a reasonable time, which is within 10 days.

Questions and Answers

Mary Hartle: I have occasionally tried to use Uber by myself; I am totally blind and the driver expects you to find them rather than the driver finding the customer. I only use Uber if I cannot avoid it. So, I have had many problems with drivers driving by or they are not using the directions given to the reservationist. I am concerned I would be flagged with no shows

Wyatt Skar: That is a no show validation. They have to show that they made attempt to call you and the GPS verification. We want that verification before we count no show against a passenger. Mary, it sounds like you are leaving a comment after you book your trips, just include that you need additional assistance. When you are booking your trip, you can ask the reservationist to add a note to your trip for the driver. Or, let them know you are visually impaired and need additional assistance.

Mary Hartle: I always try to indicate that I am visually impaired, but they do not always read the notes or they say they do not always get the notes.

Wyatt Skar: That is why we are going to do a validation to make sure they are taking all of the steps. We are also in discussion with Uber directly as they have been using their Uber Assist which is a little more training for these drivers and getting that training stronger here in Phoenix. They have not offered it to RideChoice; because they did not have that many drivers, and they did not want us have to rely on it yet. But, we are in conversations with staff and getting that added and in place of their current Uber.

Mary Hartle: Are these new reasons or No Shows for RideChoice going to be sent out to customers?

Wyatt Skar: Yes, once we get this complete, along with the Paratransit, we are going to send out an initial communication to everybody to make sure they are fully aware of the steps.

Paratransit

We have been starting this new notification process and we do have a No Show Policy for paratransit. We are just going through the annual review of the policy to see if it needed any updating.

Why No Show Policy Review?

- No shows reduce the efficiency of the service and cause delays for other riders. We have noticed this has increased to 10%.
- Current policy has had minimum enforcement. We have not enforced it and we want to enforce it because we are seeing a steady increase in the number of no shows and cancellations.
- Seeing a steady increase in the number of no shows and late cancels. We have also identified some riders because we have not enforced the policy; this is affecting the other riders overall.
- Abuse by some riders is increasing because of non-enforcement.

Review and Notification Process

- Annual review and updating of current No Show policy and procedures. We have not identified anything that needs to be changed, other than it being enforced.
- Finalize warning and suspension letters to riders.
- Send a general letter out to all paratransit riders.
 - No show policy notification. Once you have three no shows in a month and we validate that they are no shows, we send out a warning letter if validated.
 - Starting of strict enforcement. The second time they get a 7-day suspension, third time it is a 14-day suspension, and the fourth time it is a 30-day suspension from the program.
- Start enforcement of No Show policy

We will send out a general letter to the riders to let them know about this no show policy and we will be doing strict enforcement. This program is having a good effect on the OTP for paratransit and we need to enforce it on the RideChoice program as well.

Questions and Answers

Tom Young: I think one comment that I want to make is we are taking our time making sure we map out a clear notification process to any customer that has a no show, because we want to give all customers the opportunity to give us proper information and facts to the true reason why there was a no show. Whether the reason is medical or something else. We also want to make sure that we have a process in place that clearly shows the vehicle was where it was supposed to be at time it was supposed to be there. We want to make sure that we are not penalizing anybody with a no show that really should not have been.

Wyatt Skar: I should have expanded on that a little bit, we understand that emergencies come up to what might not be considered no show and would be excused. Also, attached to this policy, there is actually a few other policies; we are also looking at the attached such as the appeals process. If a person wants to appeal, what are the exact steps they should do, what is that process. Also, the late cancel process, what is it and making sure everybody understands that. When it is a late cancel, it is also considered a no show. So we are looking at several policies tied together and are going to use every avenue to get those no shows percentages down. The warning letters will have the no show policy to give the customer the opportunity to see those listed, so if they want to explain why it was a no show or not, we will definitely hear them. We are not rushing this. It is important to get it out, but we want to make sure we take every step to make sure it is going well.

Howard May: in the past, when you multiple riders on one vehicle, sometimes you will have on the second or third pick-up where the driver is late due to the multiple pick-ups. I know this happened to someone I knew at Best Western, and a few other instances, where the driver was at fault and not the rider. I also know a rider that has been using alternate modes instead of paratransit because of the issues that person was having.

Wyatt Skar: We are looking at how they are using the scheduling system and the Trapeze system and maybe do a few tweaks in there. If they are provided enough time in between, the grouping or trips and I have heard drivers going out of the way to pick-up or drop-off somebody when one person is right by where they need to be dropped off. We are making sure that this is tweaked.

Tom Young: But definitely, if the vehicle shows up before the pick-up time or is later than 30 minutes and the customer no shows, the customer will not be held accountable for that.

Wyatt Skar: No, that is what we call a provider issue or mistake.

Tom Young: The next steps, will we be providing a draft copy to this group for formal comments? Then we will take it to the ATS Partners?

Wyatt Skar: We went through the drafts and I have to make a couple of updates. If anybody in this group has comments, or wants to reach out or make suggestions, we are willing to listen and take them to our next ATS Partners meeting on May 12, 2020. I am not sure if we can make that deadline. If we push it out the next partner's meeting, it would be July.

Tom Young: Ok. We will get that figured out, but definitely want to distribute a copy to everybody on this committee first.

Howard May: I have discovered some interesting things and have sent them to Lisa to have someone contact me about the Next Ride. VMAAG members may not know the Next Ride history or how it came about. One thing I have been asking and I have gotten a comment from Customer Service about Next Ride signs that are missing and a bus shelter was put back in and it has been about a year and some signs have not been put back in after the city replaced the bus stop. Another city put up a brand new sign and who gave them direction on the design changes? I told Lisa about this and the Next Ride signs at the Glendale bus stop at 43rd and Peoria has a slightly different color and slightly smaller font. I frankly like the original big fonts that we had for the numbers. I just wanted to put that out there.

8. Introductions – Follow-up

Tom Young: I have been asked to do one thing before we go to the next meeting update and the adjournment, and that is to go back to the beginning of the meeting and ask if anyone has joined us since we did the introductions. If you did, will you please speak up and let Lisa know for the minutes.

Howard May, Lee Ann Jones, and Hezequias Rocha

9. Next Meeting – May 28, 2020 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. via WebEx

10. Adjournment – 3:56 PM