MARTA ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

**Date: March 10, 2020**

**Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Location: MARTA Headquarters – Atrium**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Committee Members Present:**

**Paula Nash,** Executive Director MARTA Office of Diversity & Inclusion

**Leonard Stinson**, Vice-Chairperson

**Robert Smith,** Representing seniors

**Brent Reynolds**, Representing the blind community

**Mark Gasaway**, Representing the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/blind

**Robert Lossie,** Representing Upper/lower extremities

**Jimmy Peterson**, Representing the deaf community

**Sandra Owen,** Representing Personal Mobillity Aid/Wheelchair User

**Kay Sibetta,** Representing Seniors

**Committee Members Absent:**

**Jorge Urrea,** Chair

**Jordan Hall,** Personal Mobility Aid/Wheelchair User

**Dr. Brad Fain,** Upper/Lower Extremity

**Staff Present:**

Denise Brown

Evelyn Richards

Adoraeu Jouett

Katrina Jones

Shomeka Brown GM MV

Melvin Barkley GM GTS

Laura Lawson

Peter Bruno

Ashley Cole

Roosevelt Stripling

Jalyn Radziminski

Tamara Hunte

Leslie Porter

LaHoya Blount

Keith Chambers

**Participants:**

Lafayette Wood

Theresa Watkins

Leonardo Banes

Sophia Turner

Laverne Sonson

Lee Rogers

**CALL TO ORDER**

Leonard Stinson – Vice-Chairperson: Called the meeting to order on March 10, 2020, at 10:10 am with Member introductions

Chairperson remarks – Ms. Stinson; thanked MARTA and spoke about February 5, 2020, meeting with Thomas Young from Mobility to discuss the issues from the Town Hall Meeting in October 2019 and expressed his appreciation for the collaboration and partnership with the MAC to address those issues.

Mr. Stinson asked the subcommittee chairs to give their reports:

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Customer Focus Committee:** The Customer Focus Committee did not meet.

**No-Show and Appeals Committee -** Brent Reynolds: The No‑Show Appeals Subcommittee did not meet. There were no appeals.

**Accessibility Committee -** Leonard Stinson: The accessibility committee, did not meet.

MARTA Diversity and Inclusion - Executive Director Updates – PAULA NASH: MARTA has implemented or is in the process of starting a MARTA Riders Advisory Council. This Council will look at ridership as a whole throughout the system. It is a new council, and applications are available on MARTA's website. I want to encourage people to apply. I believe Saturday is the application deadline. March 14, whenever that is. That is when applications are due. You do have to be a member of our jurisdictions, City of Atlanta, Clayton County, Fulton County, and DeKalb County. It will ask you some questions like how often do you ride MARTA and which rail lines if you ride the rails or bus lines if you ride the bus. It will ask whether or not you use regional services. We want to know about the connectivity of MARTA to Regional services. That is one of the areas we are also looking at if it is Xpress or Cobb link or something along those lines.  What you use MARTA for if it is personal or work or to go to school. I am just encouraging anybody interested to apply to that particular committee.

And the other bit of information I want to share is that we will have new MAC committee members. We are in the process of filling some vacancies and some expired positions.  So we had some interviews.  We chose three new people. Denise Brown informed the group that we have selected one member for the Agency – representing Blind/Low Vision, one member for Agency – representing Cognitive/Developmental, and one Individual – representing Blind/Low Vision.

**MARTA UPDATES**

**ADA Related Customer Inquiries**

LaHoya Blount, Customer Care Field Rep.  – reported the customer service inquiries for December 2019. Authority-wide; 755. 188 were ADA related complaints. 37 of the 188 were valid complaints at 19.7 percent.  Breakdown by department: Mobility received 155 complaints. Bus operations received 13 complaints. Mobility reservations received 8. Mobility eligibility received 7. Mobility maintenance received 1. Rail operations received 1. Police services received 1. Bus maintenance received 1.

Top complaint categories are late pick up 30 plus minutes received 32. Late drop off received 29. No show received 28. Excessive time on van received 9. Tone of voice received 5.

Top non-mobility complaints. Pass up received 3. Incorrect reservation info received 2. Won't let board 2. Change/cancel pickup 2. Tone of voice. 1. Authority wide we received 56 accommodations. 27 were mobility accommodations at 48.2 percent.

Brent Reynolds inquired into the resolution of the Eligibility Complaints. Ms. Blount will bring that information to the next meeting.

SANDRA OWEN: stated that she looked at the numbers to decide what the numbers might be telling us.   She had the following comments: Under the breakdown by department, mobility reservations and mobility eligibility and mobility maintenance. Those comments or complaints added up to 49, Out of the 49, 30 related to mobility reservations. That is a 61 percent issue. So I'm curious for us to make a note of that and try to have those folks in the mobility leadership tell us what that mobility reservation issue might be. Another one is mobility eligibility. And when we had the conference call with Tom Young in early February, he did talk about the issue of Eligibility and the need for education of our users. That, again, was one of the significant problems. As you look down under the top complaint category, the largest one there was late pickups. That tends to be a continuing problem. It is going down, and I appreciate the fact that we have multiple groups that are helping MARTA with transportation. I think that is beginning to have an impact, but the late pick up is still a problem. I would like somebody to address what might be happening there. And late drop off. The other issue is time on the van. That seems to be slowing down a little bit as far as the number of complaints in that area. However, I continue to get communication with our users that say they have been on the van 2 and 3 hours, and for the disabled, that is an issue. The area under top non-mobility complaints, the largest issue; there are incorrect reservations. And you will find that we talked about reservations in another category as being a problem. So there we have two areas of validating the same problem. So I think that is an issue, again, that I believe it is important for us to consider as we talk with the leadership today on what are some of these problems with reservations. So what I encourage folks to do is when we get the sheet, look, and see what the data tells us.

LAFAYETTE WOOD: commented on the issue of Eligibility, he stated that he was on the phone for over 30 minutes, and nobody picked up the phone in Eligibility. I'm not sure what was going on that particular day, but there should be no way that you have to wait 30 minutes. I finally got a voicemail through MARTA reservations. I was able to leave a voicemail, and I did get a call back regarding my issue with the Eligibility, but I don't understand why it took over 30 minutes.

Another related issue to Eligibility is with MTM. Mr. Woods stated that he left three messages because you can't get anybody on the MTM staff. His Eligibility is almost up, and being proactive, he tried to contact them to find out when I can come in for my assessment. They did not return my three calls. When a person answers, they didn't say they are with MTM. You just get a name. If I get a call back from the 5000 number, I wouldn't know who is trying to get in touch with me unless they leave a voicemail. I don't know what is going on, but MARTA needs to look into this old issue. Brent Reynolds also spoke about problems with the MTM Eligibility Assessment process.

Sandra Owen reiterated continued interest in working on the issues identified at the Town Hall meeting; Eligibility Education for Patrons, Door-to-Door Service,

**Mobility updates.**

Peter Bruno, Acting Director of Mobility: The town hall was a success. The team and I at the Mobility oversight group are considering, maybe late spring or early summer, we will have another town hall. A larger space is also being considered.

The other thing that is going on right now is Gresham Transportation Services (GTS) is slowly taking over routes. We appreciate MV, our partner. They have been of great assistance in working with GTS and helping with their mobilization. We expect their full scope of service to roll out on March 23, 2020. We are having conference calls with GTS on a formal basis, on an ad hoc basis, we are continually talking with GTS and the crew and making sure they are doing the things they need to do, and MARTA is assisting in their success. Other initiatives we are looking at is: the Eligibility process and looking at a way we can do some streamlining of that process; The streamlining will not focus at all on the numbers of eligible, it will be looking at the process individuals go through. We are looking at ways to make it easier for people to go through the process. Peter Bruno also stated that educating the community about the eligibility process and qualifications will be a priority. He also noted that he believes mobility exercised the last year of the MTM option on their contract. We have been going through the preliminary process of looking at that program and doing some evaluation. I think we will be reaching out to the MAC members and other constituents on the mobility program to get feedback as we develop the technical specification and put that service out for RFP again. Then generally, we are just performing the day to day oversite that you have come to expect. We are working with the maintenance crews, safety, and operation crews.

Mr. Layfette Wood – spoke about an incident where bodily fluids were on the floor of one of the vans, and dispatch did not instruct the operator to take the bus out of service and only asked if he could continue to drive the van. Brent Reynolds recalled a time when he was on the van, and bodily fluids were present and not addressed. Peter Bruno insured the group that there is a process for handling hazardous material that should be followed; he will follow up to ensure that process is being followed.

Peter Bruno stated that he was informed by the Mobility Oversight Committee how instrumental the MAC has been in assisting with moving Mobility initiatives forward, and he plans to continue to look to utilize the MAC in this capacity. Work will continue to solve the issues identified from the Town Hall, and include the MAC in the planning process for the next Town Hall.

**Elevator and Escalator Renovation Project**

Keith Chambers, Director of Verticle Transportation - Provided the following updates to the Elevator/Escalator Rehabilitation Project. If any long term elevator outage/rehab project is directly affecting mobility, they are putting two teams on it in an attempt to complete that process in half the time. His department is working with IT to implement a new advisory page on the MARTA website that is very interactive, more detailed, and identifiable about the workaround for an outage or rehab project implemented almost immediately. For long term outages, we are looking at implementing placards on every elevator at every level if someone happens to make it to the station, and the alert missed. The Placard can provide specific workaround details for that location will be on there. The need for some kind of assistance beyond an easy workaround, a number will be on the Placard. All of that information will also be in Braille.

ROBERT SMITH: Asked if there any current stations other than East Lake and West Lake station you are working on right now? Mr. Chambers stated that Edgewood Candler Park has the south parking elevator that is out of service. East Lake should be back up today. There is a Mobility Shuttle from Inman Park to Candler Park. These are water issues affecting the ceiling of the elevator.

LaFayette Wood suggested that whatever the workaround, human interaction would be the best interaction, especially for the blind community. A person who is blind will not know the location of the Braille information. Mr. Chambers stated the process would be documented, so we don't have to worry about these things being missed. The idea of a dedicated line in the operations call center to a specific person who handles elevator/escalator outages and workaround.

**AVIS – Audio Visual Information System**

CATRINA JONES: AVIS project manager. For those of you who may not know, AVIS stands for Audio Visual Information Systems. The AVIS project will upgrade all of the electronic signs throughout all 38 rail stations as well as speakers. Also, cabling, amplifiers, and conduit. We are 77 percent complete with the project.  We have 3,928 speakers installed today, and 164 signs installed. I will give you the percentage of completion for each line. North line, 30 percent. South Line, 75 percent. East Line, 85 percent. West line, 90 percent. There will be a feedback session again in early summer 2020 on the signage layout. Many of you came up in December to give feedback on the signs. We are trying to incorporate as much of that feedback as possible, especially those relating to ADA requirements. We are looking to install the Nucleus software in late summer 2020. You can view the sign on the 5th floor. It is the corner office on the 5th floor. You can always go and visit. You can email catjones@itsmarta.com with any feedback you may have. That concludes my updates.

**Technology Updates**

Mr. Talbot, the CIO of Technology, asked if anyone had any specific Technology questions.

BRENT REYNOLDS: asked about information on precisely what happened on Friday with the hard drive failure and why didn't ETA answer the phones. Several meeting participants and MAC members also expressed concern over the incident, which occurred last week and through the weekend, in which the entire Mobility Technology System malfunctioned. There was little to no communication with Mobility patrons. There needs to be more of a proactive approach to patrons when there is a significant disruption as we had this past weekend that if you can't get it up in a reasonable amount of time, you cannot give the patrons an answer of when the system is going to come up. There should be a message letting the patrons know what they can expect because people were trying to get to work. People are trying to get to church. People are trying to get to their events. There are physical health impact on patrons when their routine delayed.

Kirk Talbert - CIO - I apologize for the outage. It was a catastrophic failure of the system that was restored Saturday afternoon. We knew what technical systems were down. It took us a few hours to figure out what the impact was. Information is not as readily available. When we go into the failed state, we put up communication notices. It took down communication methods through the mobile app. It took down just about every system. It was not a lack of desire to communicate. It was a lack of ability to communicate. I apologize for that.  However, we will work on how we can communicate better. It was not an overload of the hard drive.  This hard drive is scheduled for replacement. We are in the processing of moving to a newer unit that has redundancy. It happened on the wrong weekend when the president was here. This is not a technology that we are keeping. We recently have transitioned the technology back from MV to MARTA for the technology that drives para transit technology. In the process of bringing that back we have identified some additional capabilities that have not been turned on. We are researching the ability to have that active. We are looking at adding texting and e‑mail and other communication as an extension of IVR.

MALE SPEAKER - if the system goes down is there a backup they can switch to like a home generator kicking in when your main power goes down. This question will be forwarded to Mr. Talbot for the next meeting.

Leonard Stinson - I would also like to say thank you Brent Reynolds because you have been a major impact on this committee and today is your last day as far as a MAC member. So I would like to say thank you on behalf of the MAC committee as well as on behalf of your constituents.  You have been a true advocate for them. Thank you for your service. I hope to see you at the next meeting giving us some of that great impute. So again thank you and the meeting is adjourned.

Leonard Stinson adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am. The next MAC meeting is May 12, 2020.