

**Arlington Transit Advisory Committee
Accessibility Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2019
7:00 p.m.
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Conference Room 311**

Attendees:

Members: William Staderman, Laura Miles MacNeil

County Staff: William Jones, Andy Wexler, Cala Fils

Contractors:

- Diamond Transportation – Tom Furlong
- Red Top Cab – Brian Shaw, Josh McCullough
- STAR Call Center – Sabrina Brown, Mary Blyther

Public: Catherine Bonnette, Scherrone Dunham, Quincy Springs, Rae Carole Tekeste

Note: Due to several major traffic incidents in the region, traffic congestion was unusually severe before the meeting, which caused delays for several attendees riding in STAR vehicles. The meeting convened at 7:30pm to allow them extra time to arrive.

Introductions and Approval of Minutes

Attendees introduced themselves. The meeting did not have a quorum of Subcommittee members, so the August meeting minutes were tabled. The Subcommittee will consider both the August and October minutes at its next scheduled meeting in December.

Reading of Written Comments

Two written comments were received and read aloud at the meeting. Full text can be found in Appendix A.

Public Comment Open Forum and Discussion

Members of the public shared their concerns about the following topics:

- Recent experiences with Red Top:
 - Drivers continue to show up very early or very late for scheduled pick-ups.
 - Riders know how long their riders normally take and do not appreciate having to schedule them much earlier than needed. Some drivers do not like being dispatched so early, and riders worry that frustration may discourage drivers from accepting STAR trips. Red Top explained that higher lead times are necessary for certain trips based on location and travel time.

- Call-outs remain problematic. Some drivers do not provide them even when asked to do so. One visually impaired rider has opted out of text call-outs because they are hard to retrieve via cellphone, but not all drivers honor her requests for voice call-outs; Red Top promised to fix the problem by making a notation in her account.
 - Riders do feel that Red Top appears committed to addressing problems, and they appreciate when call takers and managers troubleshoot problems for them.
 - Riders who call Red Top directly remain concerned about Red Top's use of out-of-town call center staff who do not know the DC region, and continue to experience long hold times for Special Accounts. Red Top is working to ensure that only the Special Accounts call center handles STAR-related calls.
- A rider expressed confusion over whether MetroAccess provides weekend service to Zone 3 destinations in Maryland. Call Center staff noted that her destinations may be too far away from bus routes that operate on weekends.
 - One rider feels the no-show policy is sometimes applied punitively, even when the reasons for not showing up are beyond her control.

Staff Updates

The Transit Bureau continues to work on procuring better communications tools for the STAR Call Center, including computers, software, and telephones. The new system will let the Call Center resume answering phone calls automatically.

The County has asked the STAR Call Center to compile data on various aspects of Red Top's performance. Red Top and the Call Center will identify locations that Red Top has had difficulty serving, and Diamond will play a back-up role for trips to and from those locations.

The County will try to obtain more information about the status of MetroAccess' pilot program to fulfill selected trips using transportation network companies (TNCs).

Adjournment 9:00 PM

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, December 19, 2019, 5:00pm
Courthouse Plaza, Cherry/Dogwood Conference Rooms