King County METRO Access Transportation

ACCESS PARATRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, April 24, 2023
TIME: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM PST
LOCATION: Microsoft Teams (Register Here)

APAC MEMBERS: Deborah Artis, Kristina Sawyckyj, Dorene Cornwell, Steven Field

METRO STAFF: Gwen Clemens, Mark Nash, Lorrie Alfonsi, Jordan Hoover, Casey Gifford, Jeremy Trenhaile, Ashish John

GUESTS: Eddie Cranford, Cristina Gonzalez, Kayla Chaterji, Don Okazaki, Alle Brown-Law, Sophia Witte

Time	Facilitator/ Presenter	Topic
6:00p	**Jordan**	**Welcome** • Agenda overview
6:05p	**Kristina**	**Introductions (if needed)** • Name you go by • What pronoun you use *(she/her; he/him; they/them; no pronouns)* •

6:10p	**Jordan**	**Housekeeping and Reoccurring updates**
		• **March meeting minutes approval**
		  ○ Deborah moved to approve the meeting minutes from March. Dorene seconded.
		  ○ March meeting minutes are approved.
		• **Recruitment Update**
		  ○ Currently have 18 applicants so far. There are 6 days left in the open application period. Please share the application with your networks.

		• **APAC business cards are ready!** ○ Metro liaison will follow up with APAC members to coordinate pick up for business cards.

6:20p	**Casey & Jeremy**	**Same-Day Service**
		• Problem Statement: Access customers have limited or no affordable, accessible, reliable options for taking spontaneous trips or trips that require flexibility.
		• Metro Flex is a new brand that consolidates 3 previous on-demand services. It is an on-demand service open to the public, with the same rate as a Metro bus ride. It utilizes minivans with backdoor wheelchair loading by request. Available in 7 service areas.
		• Metro is planning to launch Phase 1 of the pilot this fall. Phase 2 is planned for 2024 and would add in TNCs (like Uber and Lyft) and taxis.
		• There are two options for customers to sign up:
		  ○ Option 1: Customers would sign themselves up. Metro would invite a small group of Access riders to test the pilot. Customers would be able to sign themselves up in the Metro flex app or call center.
		  ○ Option 2: Metro sets customers' accounts up. When they're ready to take a trip, they use the Metro Flex app or call center.
		• On average, wait times will be 20 – 30 min.
		• Pilot participants will be customers who take trips within the service area, and customers who have participated in Metro pilots before or are interested in this service.
		• **Phase 1 Recommended Service Parameters**

		Service parameters are key components of the service that impact how the service is structured and used by riders. ○ ***Service hours:*** weekdays 5am – 7pm; weekends 7am – 7pm. ○ APAC members shared concerns about wheelchair accessibility. Just because wheelchair accessible service is available, there might not be wheelchair accessible vehicles available. How will Metro monitor that? ▪ This will be a key component of monitoring during the pilot. Metro will be monitoring response times for WAVs vs. non-WAVs. ▪ APAC members asked what is possible if course correction is needed for WAVs. Can Metro increase the number of WAVs? If we don't have enough WAVs, people will be left out. ▪ If we see a significant discrepancy, Metro will respond based on the demand. One of the reasons Metro has suggested using Metro Flex is because they have WAVs and can add more WAVs. We can add WAVs – either dedicated WAVs in the Metro Flex fleet or non-dedicated service providers that have WAVs (for example, taxis). The other option is to reduce the service that we offer to ensure we have enough WAVs, but that's the less desirable option.

		▪ APAC members asked if Metro was looking at a percentage of wheelchair users in the pilot? ▪ Metro is working with our Data Analyst to understand what groups we want to have representation of in the pilot. Wheelchair users are a really important group, so we will have a decent number of wheelchair users. ○ ***Service areas:*** We picked this service area because we wanted to start as large as possible. 60% of the service area includes equity priority areas. Most of the Metro Flex service area overlaps with this. ○ APAC members asked if riders have to always start trips at home, or could you call and request a ride from any location (like the doctor's office)? ▪ The trip itself must start and end within the service area, but you don't have to be picked up at home. You can be going to or from any location within the service area. ○ APAC members asked what the percentage of wheelchair users in Access is. ▪ The percentage of lift boarding for this year is about 38%. This includes anyone using a lift to board, not just wheelchair users. ▪ APAC members asked what percentage of users and what percentage of Access trips involve wheelchairs? • Metro report back to APAC members with this number in the May meeting.

		○ APAC members wondered how people will pay for the service. ○ ***Fare Payment:*** $1.75/trip, with a low-income fare if Access has one. Riders must pay with credit/debit or prepaid cards. Riders cannot pay with cash or an ORCA card. ORCA cards are not available because riders can't pay third-party service providers (like Uber and Lyft) with an ORCA card. ○ APAC members asked if riders could use the Transit Go app? ▪ The Transit Go app has similar issues as ORCA, non-dedicated service providers cannot accept Transit Go. ○ An APAC member shared that when they pay with cash, sometimes the cash receptacle grabs more than the exact fare. It is also important to not have extra fees. ○ An APAC member commented that they participated in the City of Seattle's voucher program for Uber and Lyft, and it was really successful. The program was called "Seattle Ride Now," and was run by Margo Iñiguez Dawes. Could vouchers be available for Metro's same-day service? ▪ Metro will research more about this voucher program. ○ APAC members asked if the pilot asks exit questions when complete, to learn how it went for people? ▪ The pilot will include interviews, surveys, and more!

		○ An APAC member noted that the fare sounds very fair. They commented that we need to ensure we are covering unbanked people. ○ APAC members asked, if we could get a voucher program approved, could vouchers be added to the ORCA vending machines around Seattle? ▪ It is unlikely that Metro could add vouchers to the ORCA vending machines, since ORCA is a regional program. However, since this is a pilot, we have the opportunity and flexibility to try unique things. ○ Metro would appreciate feedback on whether ORCA cards are a good fare payment option, particularly to solve issues for unbanked riders, since there already existing methods to load cash onto an ORCA card. ▪ APAC members commented that yes, an ORCA card seems like a simpler option than trying to figure out a prepaid card. People are already used to loading their ORCA card. Would there be some way that drivers with a phone could receive payment through their phone? • Future capability will allow ORCA payments to occur directly through the Metro Flex app, no matter whether you are assigned to a Metro Flex ride, a taxi, or Uber. ○ APAC members would like to hear from the ORCA next gen team.

		○ ***When to book rides:*** It will be on-demand booking, with an average of 20-30 min wait times. Wait times will range from 2-60 min. ○ APAC members asked if there was a maximum wait time, like no more than 2 hours? ▪ Metro can set a max wait time with the Metro Flex site. If the wait time is higher than that max, it would not book a ride for you, and it will say "We're at capacity, please try again." • APAC members approved of that system. ▪ The Metro Flex site will tell you the expected wait time before you book, so you can always decide not to book based on the wait time. Using the Metro Flex app will also allow you to see your vehicle in real time. ○ An APAC member shared that they really liked how Via texted before the vehicle arrived, like: "We're about 10 minutes out." Would that be possible? ▪ Via is the provider for Metro Flex, so Metro can look into making this happen. ○ An APAC member commented that sometimes transit providers don't pick up blind people because they are overwhelmed by the person or dogs. How can you proactively discourage that behavior? ▪ Metro staff noted that Metro Flex will be a public transportation service. We must adhere to accessibility regulations. No driver is allowed to refuse service for someone who is

		blind or has a service animal. When private providers provide service for Metro, they have to follow the same regulations, since they are providing a public transit service. ▪ An APAC member noted that TNCs love to pretend like ADA regulations don't apply to them. If TNC drivers are aware of it and make sure it doesn't occur here, that will be good. ○ Metro staff also noted that Metro drivers have training that extends above and beyond taxi and TNC trainings. When we incorporate third-party service providers like TNCs, drivers might only have federal training requirements. ○ Metro will be monitoring wait times and ride refusals very closely. We want it to be convenient for people. Wait times will depend on demand. ○ ***Trip distance:*** Max trip distance is 10 miles. ○ APAC members asked what will happen when someone tries to book a trip that's longer than 10 miles? ▪ A message would pop up on the app that says, "This is outside of the service area." In the future, we may have the capability to include fixed route in the app, so it could suggest people combining Metro Flex and fixed route service to get to a destination. ○ ***Trip caps:*** monthly trip caps would be based on a customer's historic use of Access and Same-Day Service (in the past 6 months). See table below:

Access Trips	Access/SDS Trips	SDS Trip Cap
<25%	0-6/month	6/month
25%-50%	7-21/month	12/month
50-100%	22+/month	24/month

- APAC members noted that the number of rides you need can change month-to-month. Is there a way to appeal or expand your trip cap?
- APAC members suggested capping the number of trips by quarter, rather than month. It could be useful to have a trip cap over three months, to account for month-to-month variations.
    - Metro staff commented that a lesson learned by other peer agencies is that without trip caps, they couldn't project ridership to know how many vehicles are needed and plan for capacity. Metro pulled this trip cap model from several other agency trip cap models that were successful. People still have an unlimited number of rides that they can book a day or more in advance. This trip cap only applies to same-day service. Metro staff will check with Via about the capability to roll over unused trips.
- What is APAC's feeling about quarterly vs. monthly caps?
    - An APAC member noted that quarterly caps may be less bookkeeping.
    - An APAC member asked, for the people who take the most trips, is the bump-up automatic

		from Metro? Metro might need to evaluate trip caps for folks every 3 months, since it's so variable. ▪ APAC members agreed that some way to request more trips would be helpful. ▪ Metro staff shared that the purpose of trip caps is to provide good service while also not blowing through our budget too quickly. ▪ APAC members agreed that Metro should see how the pilot seems to be going and adjust as needed. • **Next Steps** ○ Metro staff will update their recommendations based on APAC feedback, then will present the pilot recommendations to Metro leadership for approval. ○ The tentative launch date for Phase 1 of the pilot is Q3 2023. ○ As the pilot continues, the Metro team would like to attend APAC meetings and get feedback. We would love to hear opportunities and suggestions.
7:20p	**Kristina**	**Next Agenda Drafting** • **Draft May Meeting Agenda** ○ Complaints Data ▪ Lorrie sent out the complaints data tonight. APAC can look through it and discuss it at the next meeting. ▪ An APAC member commented that they were interested in seeing complaints that don't fit

		completely into categories. They would like to see the full text of the complaint. ○ Year-End Report ▪ The year-end report is due in August. Next meeting, APAC will map out a workplan for the report, based on past notes and agendas. ○ Recruitment – Application Review ▪ APAC application is closing this Sunday. ▪ APAC members all agree that they will participate in all applicant interviews. APAC members would like to receive all the applications after it closes. Members will then review the applications before the May meeting. • Liaison will send the applications to APAC members for their review. ▪ An APAC member shared that the last scoring rubric sucked, and they want the scoring rubric for this round to focus on representation from varied geographic locations, cultures, and disability types. They are also very interested in some younger members. ▪ Liaison will send APAC members the individual applications next week. In the May meeting, we can spend time on the scoring rubric.
7:25p	**Kristina** **All**	**Meeting wrap-up** • **Next monthly APAC meeting:** May 8, 2023